Polysemy and Observations in Linguistics

Ofra Magidor (joint work with David Liebesman)

§1. Homonymy vs. Polysemy

examples of homonymy:

1. Jill kicked the **ball**.
2. The **ball** was well-attended.
3. I lit the **match**.
4. The **match** will start at noon.

examples of polysemy:

5. **Lunch** was delicious.
6. **Lunch** was well-attended.
7. The **book** is on the shelf.
8. The **book** was written by Tolstoy.

§2 "Observations" about polysemy

"Observation" 1: Polysemy behaves differently to homonymy with respect to conjunction reduction, anaphora and elision.

9. The **ball** is spherical.
10. The **ball** took place at noon.
11. # The **ball** is spherical and took place at noon.
12. # The **ball** took place at noon and I kicked it hard.

13. **Lunch** took place at noon.
14. **Lunch** was delicious.
15. **Lunch** took place at noon and was delicious.
16. **Lunch** took place at noon and **it** was delicious.

"Observation" 2: the above claims are attested by large-scale speaker data

17. The **record** was set during the 1996 Olympic games and remained unbroken until 2017.
18. The **school** was painted over the holidays and needs to be renovated soon.
19. The **record** was set during the 1996 Olympic games and had a white label with a handwritten note from the artist.
20. The **school** was painted during the holidays and informed parents about this year's events.
21. The **newspaper** fired its editor in chief and got wet from the rain.

"**Observation" 3:** polysemy is processed in a different way than homonymy

Early disambiguation (homonymy):

22. Walking in late, her **date** surprised Jane.

23. Tasting so bitter, her **date** surprised Jane.

Late disambiguation (homonymy):

24. Her **date** surprised Jane, walking in late.

25. Her **date** surprised Jane, tasting so bitter.

Early disambiguation (polysemy):

26. Burning down every other year, the **library** was never used.

27. Ordering fewer books every year, the **library** was never used.

Late disambiguation (polysemy):

28. In fact, the **library** was never used, burning down every other year.

29. In fact, the **library** was never used, ordering fewer books every year.

§3 Detour on copredication

examples of copredication:

30. Lunch, which took place on Tuesday, was delicious.

31. The school was vandalized after expelling Bob.

32. The book on the shelf was written by Tolstoy.

33. One book is on the shelf. [context: there are three copies of *War and Peace* on the shelf]

The polysemy-centric approach to copredication:

34. The red book is written by Tolstoy
    The [physical] book is red and the [informational] book is written by Tolstoy.

35. The lunch was delicious but took hours.
    The lunch [food] was delicious but the lunch [event] took hours.

overgeneration:

36. # The newspaper fired its editor and got wet from the rain.
    The newspaper [institution] fired its editor and the [physical] newspaper got wet from the rain.

37. # The book is very old and is brand new.
    The [informational] book is very old & the [physical] book is brand new.

38. # The lunch took place on Tuesday and weighed 500 grams.
    The lunch [event] took place on Tuesday and the lunch [food] weighed 500 grams.

undergeneration:

39. One book is on the shelf. [context: there are three copies of *War and Peace* on the shelf]

The Property Versatility approach to copredication:

40. The book by Tolstoy is on the shelf.

The puzzle assumed that:

- p-books cannot be by Tolstoy.
- i-books cannot be on shelves.

According to the PV approach, these assumptions are false!

41. *War and Peace* is on the top shelf.
42. The Leningrad Codex is informative.
43. One book is on the shelf.
44. # (Exactly) one book on the shelf is coffee-stained.

§4 The "observations" revisited

"observation" 1:

13. Lunch took place at noon.
14. Lunch was delicious.
15. Lunch took place at noon and was delicious.

45. The ball occurred on Tuesday.
46. The ball was well attended.
47. The ball which occurred on Tuesday was well attended.

"observation" 2:

18. The school was painted over the holidays and needs to be renovated soon.
20. The school was painted during the holidays and informed parents about this year's events.

Against the polysemy of 'school':
48. There is exactly one school in this street.
49. # There are exactly two schools in this street.

"observation" 3:
26. Burning down every other year, the **library** was never used.
27. Ordering fewer books every year, the **library** was never used.
28. In fact, the **library** was never used, burning down every other year.
29. In fact, the **library** was never used, ordering fewer books every year.

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