Ignorance Implicatures and Non-doxastic Attitude Verbs

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Data

[Bill knows that Ann isn’t at the door]

(1)  a. Bill hopes that Ted is at the door.
    b. ?? Bill hopes that Alice or Ted is at the door.

(2)  a. Bill wonders whether Ted is at the door.
    b. ?? Bill wonders whether-or-not Alice or Ted is at the door.

[Bill knows that Chris passed his exam]

(3)  a. Bill hopes that Mary passed her test.
    b. ?? Bill hopes that Chris passed his exam and Mary passed her test.

(4)  a. Bill wonders whether Mary passed her test.
    b. ?? Bill wonders whether Chris passed his exam and Mary passed her test.
Redundancy 1

[We all just see Federer lose in the Wimbledon semis to Nadal]

(5)  
   a. Nadal will win the final.  
   b. ?? Fed won or Nadal will win the final.

Claim: the infelicity of (1b)-(4b) can be explained in the same way as (5b): all of these sentences have redundant parts.

Simple theory of redundancy (Fox, 2008): $\phi$ cannot be used in context $C$ if $\phi$ is contextually equivalent to $\psi$, and $\psi$ is a simplification of $\phi$
Attitude semantics

Semantics for ‘hope’ (von Fintel, 1999):
‘S hopes that P’ is defined at w iff

- $\text{Dox}_{w,S} \cap p \neq \emptyset$
- $\text{Dox}_{w,S} - p \neq \emptyset$
- $\text{Bul}_{w,S} \subseteq \text{Dox}_{w,S}$

If defined, ‘S hopes that P’ is true at w iff

- $\text{Bul}_{w,S} \subseteq p$

Semantics for ‘wonder’ (Ciardelli and Roelofsen, 2015):
‘S wonders Q’ is true at w iff

- $w \models W_S \phi$ iff
- $\sigma_S(w) \not\in \llbracket \phi \rrbracket$ and $\Sigma_S(w) \subseteq \llbracket \phi \rrbracket$
Quantified cases 1

Scenario: There is a crime with three suspects, Ann, Bill and Carol. There are five detectives investigating the case; one has already ruled out Carol but is still wondering whether it was Ann or Bill. The others don’t know anything yet.

(6) Exactly four detectives are wondering whether it was Ann, Bill or Carol (Roelofsen and Uegaki, 2016).

Seems true, but false on the redundancy account.

Note that the embedded question here is an alternative question.
Quantified cases 2

Scenario: Bill and Alice run a birthday cake delivery service. Five of my friends are waiting for a delivery for my surprise party. Everyone knows that either Alice or Bill will make the delivery, but Ted is the only one that knows Bill is at home sick. Nobody is sure of the exact time of the delivery. The doorbell rings.

(7) ?? Exactly four people are wondering whether-or-not Bill or Alice is at the door.

False on the redundancy account.
Note that the embedded question here is a disjunctive polar question.

Also consider:

(8) ?? Exactly four people hope that Bill or Alice is at the door.
Conclusion

- Ignorance implicatures arise with a variety of attitude verbs, and a uniform treatment is preferred.
- The phenomenon arises for both embedded disjunctions and embedded conjunctions.
- More work is needed!
References


