

Activity 36.

Spell out the presuppositions of the following sentence. As well as the *if* clause, consider existential presuppositions, and how comparisons, and clauses which are not the main clause of the sentence, generate other presuppositions.

Seeing the bagloads of rubbish made this writer wonder how much more litter would be left behind if there had been no stiff \$1,000 fine.

Comment 36.

- Existential presuppositions: >> there were bagloads of rubbish, there is a writer etc.
- Comparison: >> there is some litter (if there is none, there is no possibility of more).
- Non-main clause: >> the writer saw the bagloads of rubbish.
- Subordinate clause: >> more litter would be left behind if there had been no stiff \$1,000 dollar fine.
- *if* clause >> there is a stiff \$1,000 fine.
- main clause >> less litter is left behind [because of the fine].

The manipulative nature of some of these presuppositions is quite clear. Instead of giving any evidence that stiff fines reduce the amount of littering, the writer simply assumes this to be the case.

Activity 37.

In November 2014, there was a by-election in the English constituency of Rochester and Strood, which was won by the nationalist party UKIP (the UK Independence Party). On the day of the poll a member of the Labour Party's shadow cabinet, Emily Thornberry, tweeted the following image without any caption, except to say it was an image from Rochester. The leader of the Labour Party, Ed Miliband, was furious and sacked her from her post. Can you explain why he did so? And what propositional attitude he thought she might have had towards the proposition '[This is] an image from Rochester.'



© @Emily Thornberry/Twitter

(www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/nov/28/emily-thornberry--van-driver-brother-ben)

Comment 37.

Much of the media, who tend to be right-wing and hostile to the Labour Party, and even Miliband himself, its leader, seemed to think that her attitude was one of snobbish scorn for people who are so nationalistic they fly two English flags on their house, and are manual workers who use a large van for their work. If you search for 'Emily Thornberry' on the web, you can get a flavour of the controversy and opposing views on whether she should have been sacked on the basis of an unclear propositional attitude.

Activity 38.

In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Cleopatra applies a snake to her breast in order to commit suicide. She refers to the snake metaphorically as a baby.

*Dost thou not see **my baby** at my breast that sucks the nurse asleep?* (Act V Scene 2 308–309)

Explain the conflicting emotions in this metaphor, our normal reactions to the two things being compared.

Comment 38.

The peculiar character of the metaphor depends on the clashing emotional associations of the metaphorical referent and the literal meaning: the negative feelings about venomous snakes, in contrast with the responses of attraction and protectiveness towards innocent babies feeding at the breast.

Activity 39.

- A. Consider the following headline. **NSA accuses Edward Snowden of spying.** How could this be regarded as irony? Was it intended as such? And what would be the purpose of the humour in suggesting it was ironic?
- B. Look at the following two passages, (1) from a popular science text and (2) from an advertisement. What functions do the metaphors serve in each?

(1) Lymphocytes all originate from stem cells in the bone marrow. Some then migrate to the thymus where they mature into T cells (the 'T' means thymus-derived). As the T cells mature, an important process occurs known as 'thymic education', which prevents the immune system from attacking the body's own cells. Exactly what happens during thymic education is still uncertain. Many immunologists believe that any Th cells with receptors that bind to the body's own molecules are destroyed. This process is called clonal deletion. Others disagree and believe that the educative process may lie with the Ts cells, or elsewhere.... If lymphocytes are thought of as a police force, patrolling the body, then the primary lymphatic organs are the police training colleges where they originate and learn their skills. The secondary lymphatic organs are the local police stations where they congregate and deal with suspect antigens. (*New Scientist*, 24 April 1988, p. 4)

(2) Picked daily there's a fresh edition of Dutch cucumbers on sale each day. Carefully harvested by hand only Class 1 cucumbers are selected and packed by the grower for export to the United Kingdom. Firm crisp Dutch cucumbers straight from Europe's kitchen garden. They're good news indeed.

Your
daily Dutch

Dutch cucumbers
Fresh from Europe's kitchen garden
Holland

Comment 39.

A. Since the NSA (and GCHQ) have been tapping phone records of citizens of the United States (and UK), and even those of foreign leaders like Angela Merkel, and as Edward Snowden drew attention to this spying, it is ironic that he is called a spy! This suggests that irony can be accidental. Pointing out this unintended irony for humorous purposes would likely be an attempt at ideological restructuring and cultivating intimacy in those who understand and accept the irony.

B. The first text uses metaphor exclusively for explanatory purposes, with police force used as a metaphor for lymphocytes, police training colleges for primary lymphatic organs and police stations for secondary lymphatic organs. These explain how immunity is acquired, and infection resisted.

The second text uses the metaphor of a cucumber for a newspaper, probably as an attempt at humour, to cultivate intimacy. There is also a kind of (ideological) restructuring in suggesting Holland (which no doubt has its fair share of industry) is a kitchen garden.

Activity 40.

Context: teacher has just played a recording of a man with a strange accent as a way of introducing a discussion on accents.

Teacher: What are you laughing at?

Pupil: Nothing.

Teacher: Pardon?

Pupil: Nothing.

Teacher: You're laughing at nothing, nothing at all?

Pupil: No.... It's funny really because they don't think as though they were there they might not like it and it sounds rather a pompous attitude.

How does the pupil interpret the underlined utterance initially (up to line 4)? What does he think the teacher is trying to achieve by asking him the underlined question? Teaching involves both a content schema – what the lesson is about – and a regulatory schema – keeping order and discipline in class. Discuss this misinterpretation in terms of these two schemas.

Comment 40.

The pupil thinks that 'what are you laughing at' is a reprimand, part of the schema for keeping control or regulation in the classroom. In fact, the question is part of another content-related schema for lessons: the teacher wishes to elicit an answer to a display question in order to get across to the rest of the class information about the social status of certain accents.

Activity 41.

Find an advertisement that depends heavily for its effect on inferencing, in the same way as the advert for Dorma sheets does. Bring along copies to class and be prepared to discuss the advertisement and how the inferencing works. Does the advert also exploit presuppositions to any extent?