Modal Indefinites

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Roadmap

- On the analysis of the epistemic effect we have discussed
    1. Epistemic effects triggered by indefinites are linked to properties of the domain of quantification.
    2. Different properties of the domain may generate different pragmatic competitors, giving rise to different effects.

Today: Two Case Studies

- Cross-linguistic variation in expressions that convey a 'don't know how many' effect.
- The interaction of *algún* and plurality.

Roadmap

Roadmap

Epistemic Existentials

1. Epistemic Indefinites: 'don't know who/which'

   (1)   Juan compró algún libro.
          Juan bought algún book.

   ⇝ Existential Claim: J. bought a book.
   ⇝ EE: Speaker doesn't know which.

2. Epistemic Modified Numerals: 'don't know how many'

   (2)   Juan bought at least two books. (# To be precise, three.)

   ⇝ Existential Claim: There are at least 2 books J. bought.
   ⇝ EE: Speaker doesn't know how many. Maybe 2. Maybe more.

- Both types of epistemic effects have been analyzed as quantity implicatures.

ℹ For implicature analyses of epistemic modified numerals see, e.g. Büring 2008, Cummins and Katsos 2010, Schwarz 2013, Cohen and Krifka 2014, Coppock and Brochhagen 2013, a.o.

Cross-Linguistic Variation

- We have seen that epistemic indefinites come in different kinds.
- Today: uncovering variation in the domain of 'don't know how many' epistemic effects.
- Contrasting *at least n* with the Spanish complex determiner *algún que otro* (Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito 2013).

Algún que Otro

- Complex Spanish determiner *algún que otro* (literally: *que otro* = 'that other').

  (3)   Juan compró algún que otro   libro. ♯ En
          Juan bought ALGUN QUE OTRO book.   In
          concreto, tres.
          concrete, three
          'Juan bought books. To be precise, three.'

⤳ Existential quantification: Juan bought books.

⤳ Epistemic effect: The speaker does not know how many.

Semantically Plural

- Morphologically singular, but semantically plural.

  (4)   Juan compró algún que otro   libro.
          Juan bought ALGUN QUE OTRO book.
          'Juan bought books.'

1. Empirical Claim: *Algún que otro* differs from *at least n* in that it does not have a lower bound component.
2. Hypothesis: the lower bound contrast can be traced back to the different pragmatic competitors the two items evoke.
ⓘ (Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito, 2013)
3. Open-ended discussion of indifference uses. (From joint presentations with Alonso-Ovalle).

Roadmap

At least n: Lower Bound

(5)   Juan bought at least two books.

 ⤳ According to the speaker,
- Juan might have bought two books ('lower bound'), and
- he might have bought more.

(6)   Juan bought at least two books. ♯ Definitely no less than three.

Algún que otro: No Lower Bound

(7)   Juan compró algún que otro   libro.
        Juan bought ALGUN QUE OTRO book

- Says nothing about the minimum number of books that Juan might have bought.

(8)   Juan compró algún que otro libro, seguro que no menos de tres/cuatro/cinco . . .
        'Juan bought books. Definitely no less than three / four / five...'

The Contrast

   (9)   How many kilometers are there from Barcelona to Sitges?

   (10)   (From Barcelona to Sitges), there are at least 30 kilometres.

⤳ Speaker considers 30 as a live possibility.

   (11)   # De   Barcelona a Sitges hay   algún que
           From Barcelona to Sitges there-is ALGÚN QUE
           otro   kilómetro.
           OTRO kilometer

⤳ compatible with a variety of scenarios (speaker thinks that from Barcelona to Sitges there are 10 kilometres or more, 20 kilometres or more, 30 kilometres or more ...)

⤳ Deviant as an answer to (9).

Roadmap

- To trace back the lower bound contrast between *at least n* and *algún que otro* to the pragmatic competitors that these items evoke.

- (Building on previous work that derives the ignorance effect of *at least n* as an implicature).

At least *n* (à la Büring 2008)

(12) Juan bought at least 2 books.

- Assertion (Büring, 2008):

  (13) J. bought exactly 2 books or more than 2 books.

- (Some) Pragmatic competitors of disjunction:
- ⓘ (see Sauerland 2004 and cf. discussion in Schwarz 2011)

  (14) a. Juan bought exactly 2 books.

  b. Juan bought more than 2 books.

Pragmatic Reasoning

- Both competitors are stronger than the assertion.
- Why didn't the speaker choose any of them? (Quantity)
- It must be because she lacks enough evidence (Quality).

Pragmatic Reasoning

(15)   (Primary) implicatures:
- a. Sp. not certain that J. bought exactly 2 books.
- b. Sp. not certain that J. bought more than 2.

(16)   By Quality: Sp. is certain that J. bought exactly 2 books or more than 2 books.

(17)   Strengthened meaning: (15) plus (16)
- a. Sp. thinks J. might have bought 2 books.
- b. Sp. thinks J. might have bought more than 2.

⤳ Lower bound = 2

1. Some arguments that the epistemic effect of *algún que otro* is an implicature.
2. Deriving the implicature in a way that will predict the absence of lower bound.

Arguments for implicature status

1. Reinforcements
2. Disappearance in DE enviroments

(18) Juan compró algún que otro libro, pero no sé
      Juan bought ALGÚN QUE OTRO book but   not I-know
      cuántos.
      how-many.
      'Juan bought books but I don't know how many.'

Disappearance in DE contexts

(19) Todos los profesores que compraron algún que
      all   the professors that bought   ALGÚN QUE
      otro libro presentaron un presupuesto.
      OTRO book presented   a budget
      'All the professors that bought books presented a
      budget.'

- can be uttered by someone who knows which books each
  professor bought

Deriving the Implicature

- Extending the account of *algún* in Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito 2008, 2010 to *algún que otro* — adopting an idea explored in Nouwen 2015.

Background

- Schwarz (2013) and Nouwen (2015) explore the possibility to achieve a Büring effect by assuming that *at least n* has

    1. *exactly*-competitors: *exactly n, exactly n+1*,... and
    2. scalar competitors: *at least n+1*, *at least n+2* ...

- Nouwen (2015) motivates the *exactly*-competitors by applying to *at least n* the account of *algún* in AO & MB.

- Our claim: *Algún que otro* triggers only the *exactly* competitors.

- This derives an ignorance effect, but no lower bound.

(20)   ⟦*algún que otro*⟧
   a. $\lambda f.\lambda P.\lambda Q.\exists n \in f(\{n : n \geq 2\}) \ \& \ |P \cap Q| = n$
   b. $|f(\{n : n \geq 2\})| > 1$

Working Through an Example

(21)   Juan compró algún   que otro   libro.
        Juan bought ALGÚN QUE OTRO book
        'Juan bought books.'

(22)   Juan bought exactly n books & $n \in f(\{n' : n' \geq 2\})$

(23) $f(\{n' : n' \geq 2\})$ is not a singleton.

(24) a. Juan bought exactly n books & $n \in \{2\}$
      b. Juan bought exactly n books & $n \in \{3\}$
      c. Juan bought exactly n books & $n \in \{4\}$
      d. . . .

Pragmatic Reasoning

- Why didn't the speaker choose the domain {2}, which would have been more informative? (Quantity)
- It must because that she lacks enough evidence (Quality).
- Repeating the reasoning for all the sub-domains: the speaker does not have enough evidence to commit to any of the competitors.

(25)   The speaker is not convinced
    a.   that Juan bought 2 books.
    b.   that Juan bought 3 books
    c.   that Juan bought 4 books
    d.   . . .

⤳ She does not know exactly how many books Juan bought.

No Lower Bound Effect

- The implicature we derive for *algún que otro* is compatible with models where the speaker thinks that Juan might have bought two or more books, three or more books, four or more books, etc . . .

- The speaker does not know exactly how many books J. bought but thinks he bought between 3 and 5.

               w_1:   Juan bought 3 books

(26) w_2:   Juan bought 4 books

               w_3:   Juan bought 5 books

(27)
w_1: Juan bought 4 books
w_2: Juan bought 5 books
w_3: Juan bought 6 books

(28)
w_1: Juan bought 6 books
w_2: Juan bought 8 books
w_3: Juan bought 12 books

No Lower Bound

- The implicature requires that the number of books that Juan bought varies across the epistemic alternatives of the speaker, but the range of variation is left open.

☞ The lower bound contrast between *algún que otro* and *at least n* follows from the different pragmatic competitors these items evoke.

Roadmap

- This account of the lower bound contrasts extends straightforwardly to cases with necessity modals.
- (See paper for discussion of *algún que otro* in possibility sentences).

Background

(29)   The password must be at least 5 characters long.

(Büring, 2008)

- Two readings (Büring, 2008)
    1. Ignorance reading: The password is required to be a specific number of characters, but the speaker does not know how many.
    2. Authoritative Reading: the password is allowed to have exactly 5 characters and it is allowed to have more.
    ⤳ Permitted lower bound: 5

- Next up: Deriving the authoritative reading in a Büring-style account

Assertion and Competitors

- Assertion (Büring, 2008)

  (30) $\boxdot$ (the password has 5 characters or it has more)

- Competitors (à la Sauerland 2004; see Schwarz 2011).

  (31)   a. $\boxdot$ (the password has exactly 5 characters)
         b. $\boxdot$ (the password has more than 5 characters)

(32)   a.   The speaker is not convinced that:
           ⊡ (the password has exactly 5 characters).
       b.   The speaker is not convinced that:
            ⊡ (the password has more than 5 characters).

Secondary Implicatures

- If the speaker is opinionated . . .

   (33) a. The speaker is convinced that not :
              ⊡ (the password has exactly 5 characters).
         b. The speaker is convinced that not:
              ⊡ (the password has more than 5 characters).

Further strengthening

- If the speaker is well-informed . . .

    (34)   a.   not: ⊡ (password has exactly 5 characters)
           b.   not: ⊡ (password has more than 5).

    (35)   a.   The password is not required to have exactly
                 5 characters.
           b.   The password is not required to have more
                 than 5 characters.

- Assertion + Implicature: the password can have 5
  characters and it can have more.

- Why can't we go beyond the primary implicatures in the non-modal case?

  (36) Juan bought at least two books.

  (37) Assertion: J. bought two books or more.

  (38) Primary implicatures:
     a. Speaker is not certain that J. bought two books.
     b. Speaker is not certain that J. bought more.

(39) # La contraseña debe tener algún   que otro
        the password   must have ALGÚN QUE OTRO
      carácter.
      character

- Deviant as an instruction.

- Predicted Interpretation:
    1. the password must have characters (trivial), and
    2. the number of characters varies across the permitted worlds.

- No indication about the range of characters that the password is allowed to have.

⤳ Not useful as an instruction.

Assertion and Competitors

- Assertion

  (40)   ⊡ (The password has exactly *n* characters &
          $n \in f(\{ n' : n' \geq 2 \})$

- Competitors

  (41)   a.   ⊡ (exactly *n* characters & $n \in \{2\}$)
          b.   ⊡ (exactly *n* characters & $n \in \{3\}$)
          c.   ⊡ (exactly *n* characters & $n \in \{4\}$)
          d.   . . .

- Implicature (assuming that the speaker is well informed):

  (42)   a.   The password is not required to have exactly
              two characters,
         b.   The password is not required to have exactly
              three characters.
         c.   The password is not required to have exactly
              four characters.
         d.   . . .

⤳ Compatible with any model in which the number of
  characters varies across permitted worlds. For instance...

- Model 1: the password can only have between 4 and 6 characters.

$$
(43) \quad
\begin{array}{ll}
w_1 : & \text{The character has 4 characters} \\
w_2 : & \text{The character has 5 characters} \\
w_3 : & \text{The character has 6 characters}
\end{array}
$$

- Model 2: the password can only have 6, 8 or 12, characters

$$(44) \quad \begin{array}{ll} w_1 : & \text{The character has 6 characters} \\ w_2 : & \text{The character has 8 characters} \\ w_3 : & \text{The character has 12 characters} \end{array}$$

- Thus: upon hearing (45) the hearer will not know what the allowed range is. Deviant as an instruction.

  (45) # La contraseña debe tener algún   que otro
         the password   must have ALGÚN QUE OTRO
         carácter.
         character

- *Algún que otro* and *at least n* are expected to contrast sharply in contexts where determining a permitted lower bound is relevant.

Lower Bound Relevant: Class Syllabus

(46)   The final paper must have at least ten pages.

⇝ specifies the minimum number of pages (relevant info!)

(47)   # El   trabajo final debe tener alguna   que otra
          the paper   final must have ALGUNA QUE OTRA
          página.
          page
          'The final paper must have pages.'

⇝ Says nothing about the minimum number of pages.

Lower Bound not Relevant

(48)   Tienes   que comer alguna   que otra
You-have that eat   ALGUNA QUE OTRA
verdura.
vegetable
'You have to eat vegetables.'

⤳ can be used to give advice, assuming that the addressee needs not have very specific information about the range of vegetables he should eat.

Roadmap

(49)   a.   The host of the show: How many politicians have you dated?

        b.   The diva: Alguno que otro.

(50)   a.   L: How many A+ did you get this semester?

        b.   P: Alguna que otra.

Only Ignorance?

- Is this option available for *at least n*? (Cf. class discussion)

(51)   a.   The host of the show: How many politicians have you dated?

          b.   The diva: At least three.

(52)   a.   L: How many A+ did you get this semester?

          b.   P: At least two.

Deriving Indifference?

- Our derivation of the ignorance effect

  - Why didn't the speaker utter any of the (stronger) competitors? (Quantity)
  - It must be because she lacks enough evidence (Quality).

- Assumption: cooperativity.

- Suspending the assumption of cooperativity:

  - Why didn't the speaker utter of any of the competitors?
  - Because she prefers not to commit to any of them.

- Note that this inference would not be an implicature, as the underlying assumption is that the speaker is not cooperative.

Epistemic Indefinites

- Epistemic indefinites seem to differ with respect to whether they can signal that the speaker does not want to identify the individual.

  (53)   Juan and Marta are in their office. The phone rings. Juan picks up, and the caller identifies himself as Juan's student, Pedro Martínez.

  (54)   a.   Marta: Who called?
         b.   Juan: Oh, (just) some student.
         c.   Juan: #Oh, algún   estudiante.
                    Oh,   ALGÚN student

- How can we account for this contrast?

- When uttered by, e.g., a war correspondent, (55) is odd, but (57) is fine.

  (55)   # Ha   habido algún   que otro   muerto.
          Has been   ALGÚN QUE OTRO dead
        'There have been casualties.'

  (56)   There have been at least two casualties.

- (Rough) intuition: (55) conveys some sort of indifference on the part of the speaker. Odd in the given context.

But if we can derive both indifference and ignorance, why can't *algún que otro* simply convey ignorance in cases like (57)?

(57)   # Ha habido algún que otro   muerto.
          Has been   ALGÚN QUE OTRO dead
        'There have been casualties.'

Roadmap

- *At least n* contrasts with *algún que otro* in that the latter does not convey a lower bound component.
- Claim: the lower bound contrast results from the different types of alternatives that these items invoke.
- More work on the indifference effect is needed.

Roadmap

- The plural of *algún*, *algunos*, does not signal ignorance.

The Plural: No Epistemic Effect

(58)   María vive con algunos   estudiantes, en concreto
       María lives with ALGUNOS students,   namely
       con Pedro, Juan y   Carlos.
       with Pedro, Juan and Carlos
       'María lives with some students, namely Pedro, Juan,
       and Carlos.'

(59)   a.   María vive con algunos estudiantes.
            María lives with ALGUNOS students
            'María lives with some students.'
       b.   ¿Con quién?
            With whom?

- Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito 2011 on *algunos*.

Preview

- In the account we have presented, the epistemic effect of *algún* comes about via competition with alternative assertions.

- Null hypothesis: *algún* and *algunos* only differ with respect to the semantics of number.

- The interaction of plurality with the anti-singleton constraint will block the pragmatic competition. As a result, the epistemic effect will not arise.

Assumption 1: Ontology (Link 1983)

- D_e, the domain of individuals, contains both atomic individuals (Juan, Pedro) and plural individuals (sums of atomic individuals: Juan $\oplus$ Pedro).
- D_e is closed under sum formation (Link, 1983).

- Plural NPs are number-neutral (see, e.g., Schwarzschild (1996), Sauerland *et al.* (2005) and references therein.)

(60) $[\![\mathit{students}]\!]^w =$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Juan} \oplus \text{Pedro} \oplus \text{Sara} \\ \text{Juan} \oplus \text{Pedro, Juan} \oplus \text{Sara, Pedro} \oplus \text{Sara,} \\ \text{Juan, Pedro, Sara} \end{array} \right\}$$

Assumption 3: Plural Determiners

- *Algunos* introduces a plurality requirement (Martí, 2008).

ℹ️ But cf. Martí 2015 for a different view.

- Putting this together with the claim that this determiner requires an anti-singleton subset selection function:

(61) $[\![algunos]\!]$ =
       $\lambda f.\lambda P_{\langle e,t\rangle} : |f(P)| > 1.\lambda Q_{\langle e,t\rangle}.\exists x[|x| > 1 \,\&\, (f(P))(x) \,\&\, Q(x)]$

Working Through An Example

(62) a. María vive con algunos estudiantes.
         María lives with ALGUNOS students
         'María lives with some students.'
      b. In all accessible worlds, María lives with at least
          one group of students in the contextually restricted
          domain of students picked out by f.
      c. Anti-singleton constraint: $|f(\llbracket \textit{estudiantes} \rrbracket^w)| > 1$

- (Assuming the covert assertoric operator).

- First, we will determine the possible assertions that our example can make.
- Next, we will determine what the potential pragmatic competitors are.
- We will show that none of these potential pragmatic competitors constitute viable alternative assertions.
- As a result, no pragmatic competition will arise.

What are the Possible Assertions?

(63)   María lives with at least one group of students in
          the contextually restricted domain of students
          picked out by *f*.

- The possible assertions correspond to the possible ways of
  restricting (64) (possible values for *f*).

(64) $[\![estudiantes]\!]^w =$

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Juan} \oplus \text{Pedro} \oplus \text{Sara} \\ \text{Juan} \oplus \text{Pedro, Juan} \oplus \text{Sara, Pedro} \oplus \text{Sara,} \\ \text{Juan, Pedro, Sara} \end{array} \right\}$$

What Are the Possible Assertions?

- What are the possible values for $f(\llbracket \textit{estudiantes} \rrbracket^w)$?
- The set of subdomains of $\llbracket \textit{estudiantes} \rrbracket^w$ contains 127 ($2^7 - 1$) elements.
- The anti-singleton constraint requires $f(\llbracket \textit{estudiantes} \rrbracket^w)$ to contain more than one member.
- Three types of subdomains meet this requirement.
  1. Subdomains that contain only singularities, (e.g., {Juan, Pedro}).
  2. Subdomains that contain both singularities and pluralities (e.g., {Juan, Pedro, Juan⊕Pedro}).
  3. Subdomains that contain only pluralities (e.g. {Juan⊕Pedro, Pedro⊕Sara}).

Subdomains with Only Singularities

- The subdomains that contain only singularities give rise to a contradiction:

  (65)   In all acc. worlds , there is a plural individual x in {Juan, Pedro} such that María lives with x.

- These subdomains can be excluded as possible values for $f(\llbracket estudiantes \rrbracket^w)$.

Mixed Subdomains

- What about the 'mixed' subdomains like {Juan, Pedro, Juan⊕Pedro})?
- The atomic individuals in these domains do not make a truth-conditional difference, since the existential quantifier contributed by *algunos* ranges only over pluralities.

Mixed Subdomains

- For instance, the domain {Juan, Pedro⊕Juan} yields the same proposition as the domain {Pedro⊕Juan}.

  (66)   a.   In all acc. worlds , M. lives with a plural individual in {J, P⊕J}

             b.   In all acc. worlds, M. lives with a plural individual in {P⊕J}

- Note: the domain {Juan, Pedro⊕Juan} is a licit (non-singleton) domain, even though it yields the same proposition as the illicit (singleton) domain {Pedro⊕Juan}.

- To determine the propositions generated by the 'mixed' subdomains, we need only consider the plural individuals.
- As there are 15 combinations of pluralities, we get 15 propositions.
- Some of these 15 propositions are logically equivalent.
- 8 logically distinct propositions.
- The non-singleton domains containing only pluralities do not add any new propositions to the set.

Possible Assertions

- In all accessible worlds . . .
  1. M. lives with somebody in {J⊕,P, J⊕S, P⊕S}
  2. M. lives with somebody in {J⊕ P, P⊕S}
  3. M. lives with somebody in {J⊕S, P⊕S}
  4. M. lives with somebody in {J⊕P, J⊕S}
  5. M. lives with somebody in {J⊕P}
  6. M. lives with somebody in {P⊕S}
  7. M. lives with somebody in {J⊕S}
  8. M. lives with somebody in {J⊕P⊕S}

The Privacy Principle

- Crucially, the hearer does not necessarily know which of these propositions the speaker intended to assert (she does not have to know what value for *f* the speaker has in mind.)

- *The Privacy Principle:* Quantifiers can be felicitously used even if the hearer cannot recover the extension of the implicit restriction (Schwarzschild, 2002).

The Privacy Principle

(67)   Me and my partner Fleisch went into debt; serious debt
        and to some not very nice people. I got an idea that I
        could sell that old fish farm I have back home and
        maybe raise a few bucks. I call a lawyer and she tells
        me: "You can only sell the farm, if all of your relatives
        die." Since I haven't heard about any genocidal
        maniacs recently, I give up on that idea. Meanwhile, I
        relate the story to Fleisch who is more desperate than I
        am. He asks who's included in "all your relatives"? I
        say I don't know exactly, but the devilish look in his
        eyes tells me I better go back to the lawyer to find out.
                                                    (Schwarzschild, 2002)

What Are the Pragmatic Competitors?

- Following what we said for *algún*, the pragmatic competitors would in principle be the propositions resulting from restricting the domain to a singleton set.

- These propositions, however, do not constitute viable competitors in the case of *algunos*.

What Are the Pragmatic Competitors?

- Two types of singleton domains to consider:
    1. Singleton domains containing one atomic individual.
    2. Singleton domains containing one plural individual.

No Viable Competitors

- The singleton domains containing just one atomic individual give rise to a contradiction.

  (68)   In all accessible worlds, there is a plural individual x in {Juan} such that María lives with x.

- Hence, the hearer will not consider these as potential alternative assertions.

- What about the singleton domains containing one plural individual?

    1. { Juan ⊕ Pedro }
    2. { Sara ⊕ Pedro }
    3. { Sara ⊕ Juan }
    4. { Juan ⊕ Sara ⊕ Pedro }

No Viable Competitors

1. In all acc. worlds, M. lives with somebody in {J⊕P}
2. In all acc. worlds, M. lives with somebody in {S⊕P}
3. In all acc. worlds, M. lives with somebody in {S⊕J}
4. In all acc. worlds, M. lives with somebody in {J⊕S⊕P}

No Viable Competitors

- Recall: For each illicit (singleton) domain containing only a plural individual $a \oplus b$, there are several licit (non-singleton) domains containing that individual and one or more atomic individuals (e.g., $\{a, b, a \oplus b\}, \{a, a \oplus b\} \ldots$).

- Adding the atomic individuals allows us to circumvent the anti-singleton constraint, yielding a possible assertion.

- But, as *algunos* ranges only over plural individuals, this does not have any truth conditional import!

No Viable Competitors

- As we have seen, the (licit, non-singleton) domain {Juan, Pedro$\oplus$Juan} would yield the same proposition as the (illicit, singleton) domain {Pedro$\oplus$Juan}.

  (69)   a.   In all acc. worlds, M. lives with a plural
             individual in {J, P $\oplus$ J}
         b.   In all acc, worlds, María lives with a plural
             individual in {P$\oplus$J}

- More generally, any domain of the form $\{a_1 \ldots a_n, d\}$, where $\{a_1 \ldots a_n\}$ are atomic individuals and d a plural individual, yields the same proposition as the domain $\{d\}$.

No Viable Competitors

- Each of the potential competitors that result from restricting the domain to just one plural individual corresponds to a possible assertion.
- The Privacy Principle: the hearer does not have to know what proposition the speaker intended to assert.
- The hearer won't be able to rule out any of these potential competitors.
- Any of them could have been the proposition intended by the speaker!

Upshot: No Epistemic Effect

- Potential competitors: propositions that arise from restricting the domain to a singleton.
- But these propositions are not viable competitors.
- Restricting the domain to just one atomic individual yields a contradiction.
- Restricting the domain to just one plural individual yields a possible assertion.
- Since sentences with *algunos* do not have pragmatic competitors, no epistemic effect is expected.

Taking Stock: The Puzzle of Plurality

- The Puzzle: *Algún* signals ignorance; *algunos* doesn't.
- Null hypothesis: *algún* and *algunos* differ only with respect to number morphology.
- The epistemic effect of *algún* arises because this item imposes an anti-singleton constraint on its domain.
- The interaction of the anti-singleton constraint with plurality blocks the epistemic effect.

- Martí (2015) puts forward an account in which the domain of *algún* contains atomic and plural individuals, while the domain of *algunos* contains only plural individuals.
- She notes that her analysis is incompatible with the account in AO & MB 2010, 2011. Under her assumptions
  - The ignorance effect of *algún* gets blocked (as in our proposal for *algunos*).
  - An unattested ignorance effect is predicted when *algunos* combines with collective predicates (see Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito 2011).

- Assessing the implicature account.
- Exploring an alternative proposal.

- The slides for this course are heavily based on a number of joint presentations with Luis Alonso Ovalle.

Funding

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