

Evaluative predicates

Tutorial at **SPE 7**

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11.00 – 13.00

Part 1 Evaluative statements – the basic data

Part 2 Current positions in the literature

14.30-16.30

Part 3 Relative truth and first person genericity

Part 4 Separating the semantics of evaluative propositions and the pragmatics of subjective judgments

Open issues

Part 1 Evaluative statements – the basic data (Carla Umbach)

1 The intuition of faultless disagreement

(1) Ann: This table board is made from wood.
Ben: No, it isn't. (It is made from plastic.)

(2) Ann: White glue is water-soluble.
Ben: No, it isn't. (You have to use turpentine.)

→ **genuine disagreement** -- either Ann or Ben must be wrong

(3) Ann: The big wheel in Plänterwald was fun.
Ben: No, it wasn't. (It was boring.)

(4) Ann: Licorice is tasty.
Ben: No, it isn't. (It tastes terrible.)

→ **"faultless disagreement"** – Ann and Ben may both be correct

"there is no arguing about matters of taste"

2 Beyond *fun* and *tasty*

❓ Which predicates give rise to 'faultless disagreement', in addition to *fun* and *tasty* ?

Kölbel (2003) coined the notion 'faultless disagreement'

"A faultless disagreement is a situation where there is a thinker *A*, a thinker *B*, and a proposition (content of judgment) *p*, such that

(a) *A* believes (judges) that *p* and *B* believes (judges) that *not-p*

(b) Neither *A* nor *B* has made a mistake (is at fault)." (53/54)

"... topics [giving rise to faultless disagreement] include aesthetic, culinary or moral value, probability, justification of beliefs, and many others." (53)

- (5) a. Matisse is better than Picasso.
b. Grace Kelly was prettier than Mai Zetterling.

Richard (2004) compared contextualism and relativism

included gradable adjectives in general, *rich*, *urgent*, *dangerous*, *tall*

- (6) Didi: Mary's rich.
Naomi: Mary is not rich at all.

Lasersohn (2005) started the discussion in linguistics

- (7) a. Roller coasters are fun.
b. This chili is tasty.

"Exactly which predicates qualify as predicates of personal taste is an interesting question. The status of predicates such as *good* or *beautiful* immediately raises fundamental issues for ethics and aesthetics; [...]. But in such discussions, the main focus is naturally on the ethical or aesthetic theory, which the semantic theory serves merely to support, advance, or make precise.

If one is studying semantics for its own intrinsic interest, it seems best to set such programs aside. Accordingly, we will concentrate here on relatively mundane predicates such as *fun* and *tasty*, and leave open the status of more philosophically "charged" predicates like *good* and *beautiful*." (645)

"In principle, the analysis should apply in any case where, if one speaker asserts a sentence ϕ and another speaker asserts $\neg\phi$, we have an intuition of contradiction or direct disagreement, but where no objective facts can decide the issue, even in principle." (682)

Research in linguistics focuses on *fun* and *tasty*

fun + *tasty* take **experiencer** arguments (*for / to Anna*) suggesting an interpretation such that there is an experiencer or judge involved. If implicit, the experiencer is the speaker.

- (8) a. Roller coasters are fun. ≈ Roller coasters are fun for me.
b. This chili is tasty. ≈ This chili is tasty to me.

Lasersohn shows that this interpretation is untenable for various reasons (cf. part 2), and he distinguishes three perspectives,

- autocentric (speakers perspective)
- exocentric (speaker stepping in someone else's shoes)
- acentric (like a bird's eye view)

In the case of *fun / tasty*, even if taking an exocentric perspective the speaker must be a potential experiencer

- (9) ?? The cat food is tasty (because the cat has eaten a lot of it). (Nouwen ms.)

❓ Is there an experiencer in the case of aesthetic predicates and of dimensional predicates?

- (10) a. ?? This painting is beautiful for/to me.
b. ?? Matisse is better than Picasso for/to me.
c. ?? Mary is tall to me.

❓ Do predicates of personal taste differ from aesthetic predicates and dimensional predicates ??

Saebo (2009) "Subjective attitude verbs" (SAV)

in particular Norwegian *synes*, Swedish *tycka*, French *trouver*, German *finden* ('find' / 'think')

SAVs do not embed complements expressing factual matters:

- (11) a. * Ich finde / Lisa findet Holzleim wasserlöslich / dass Holzleim wasserlöslich ist.
'I find / Lisa finds white glue water-soluble / that white glue is water-soluble.'

SAVs embed (as the main predicates of their complements) predicates of personal taste, aesthetic predicates, dimensional predicates (among other things)

Saebo suggests that SAVs have a function similar to experiencer arguments: They shift the experiencer or judge such that it is identical to the agent of the attitude verb.

- (12) I find / Lisa finds roller coasters fun. ≈ Roller coasters are fun for me / for Lisa.

Kennedy (2013) Two Sources of Subjectivity

- **(lexically) evaluative predicates:** *tasty, delicious, disgusting, stimulating, annoying, boring, tedious.*
- **dimensional predicates:** *tall, big, large, small, cold, rich, heavy, old*

In their positive form, both giving rise to faultless disagreement
In their comparative form, evaluatives do but dimensionals do not

(13) Anna: The tripe is tastier than the haggis.
Beatrice: No, the haggis is tastier than the tripe.

(14) Anna: The tripe is colder than the haggis.
Beatrice: No, the haggis is colder than the tripe. (=19, 22 in Kennedy 2013)

In the positive and in the comparative form, evaluatives license appearance in the complement of *find* but dimensionals do not.

(15) Anna finds her bowl of pasta tasty/delicious/disgusting.

(16) Anna finds the tripe tastier than the haggis.

(17) (?) Anna finds her bowl of pasta big/large/small/cold.

(18) ?? Anna finds the tripe colder than the haggis. (= 9, 25, 10, 26 in Kennedy 2013)

❓ Is there a linguistic characterization of predicates giving rise to the intuition of faultless disagreement?

That is, a characterization selecting *tasty, tastier, beautiful, more beautiful, tall* while excluding *taller*

- 'license an experiencer argument' fails for *tall, beautiful*
- 'be gradable' fails to exclude taller
- 'be licensed in the complement of a subjective attitude verb' varies across languages. E *find* fails for *tall* while German *finden* selects *lecker, groß, schön, schöner* and excludes *größer*, as required. However, it licenses too many other predicates in addition (*chair, solve the problem, deontic modals, ...*)

→ It seems we have to rely on the intuition of faultless disagreement.

3 Accepting / rejecting the notion of faultless disagreement

- (19) Ann: Licorice is tasty.
Ben: No, it isn't. It tastes terrible.

Accepting the idea of faultless disagreement

- **accounts postulating an implicit experiencer**
speaker, speaker's community, normal individuals, competent perceivers
Stephenson (2007), Cohen (to appear), Hegarty (to appear)
- **relativist accounts** postulating a judge index (in addition to a world / a time index)
Kölbel (2003), Lasersohn (2005)/(2009), Stephenson (2007), Kennedy (2013) (for evaluative predicates)

Rejecting the idea of faultless disagreement

Puzzle of the competent speaker:

A competent speaker of a language will know if a word involves an implicit argument or judge parameter. So why should he bother to express a denial in the first place? For example, if Ben would interpret Ann's assertion in (19) as saying that licorice is tasty to her, or by her judgment, why should he deny her assertion by asserting that licorice is not tasty to himself?

(cf., e.g., Stojanovic 2007, Moltmann 2010, Umbach to appear)

Stojanovic (2007, 2012)

"Disagreement is never faultless – either the two parties genuinely disagree, or their apparent disagreement boils down to a misunderstanding."

- (20) Ann: Licorice is tasty.
Ben: No, it isn't. It tastes terrible.
- a. Ann: It is tasty. And it's not just that I find it tasty; it's tasty *tout court*.
b. Ann': OK. To my taste, Licorice is tasty; that's all I'm saying.

(Analysis refers to 'underspecification', cf. part 2)

Glanzberg (2007)

"... the notion of faultless disagreement is prima facie absurd: if two propositions express disagreement, one must fail to be correct."

"... arguments for relativism lead us back to the bad old days of the index theory."

(Analysis refers to disagreement about the standard (cut-off points) of predicates)

Sundell (2010)

distinguishes between

- character disagreement (about the character of an expression)
- context disagreement (about the relevant context)
- content disagreement (about the truth of the sentence)

"... many disputes about matters of taste are disputes over the selection or appropriateness of a contextually salient aesthetic standard."

Moltmann (2010)

Analysis based on first-person genericity

(apply the predicate to the people with whom the speaker identifies, 'as if to oneself')

"How is faultless disagreement possible with generic *one*-sentences? A generic *one*-sentence requires there to be first-personal grounds for asserting or entertaining its content. If one agent has first-personal grounds for asserting the sentence and another for denying it, then both have reasons for their claim (and in this sense neither is at fault), but at most one of them is right in extending the first personal grounds to anyone in the contextually relevant domain." (p. 25)

Barker (2013)

Analysis distinguishes between disagreement about the worlds (matters of fact) and disagreement about the discourse (the meaning of the words, in particular the standards for gradable expressions)

"Unlike disagreements about the world, disagreements about the discourse can be faultless, given that none of the discourse participants has privileged authority to make pronouncements about conventions for appropriate use of a predicate." (240)

Lasersohn (2009)

(differentiating between autocentric, exocentric and acentric (bird's eye view) perspective)

"It is perhaps worth noting that it is only when we adopt an acentric stance that 'faultless disagreement' really seems faultless." (p.6)

- A bird's eye perspective is not available to discourse participants. From the perspective of the discourse participants Ann claims that licorice is tasty *tout court* and Ben denies this claim expressing genuine disagreement (Umbach to appear).

4 Blocking denial

Gunlogson & Carlson (to appear)

evidential approach to faultless disagreement cases

– predicates of experience (*tasty, fun, cold, exhausting* etc.) have as their 'best' evidence direct experience.

If the experiencer is linguistically overt and it's the speaker, as in (21), denial is odd. This type of disagreement is called "faulty disagreement" (cf. part 2)

(21) (John & Mary just got off the roller coaster)

Mary: That was fun for me.

John: #No it wasn't.

(Gunlogson & Carlson, ex. 5)

→ overt first person experiencer block denial

Umbach (to appear)

(22) Ann: Ich finde Lakritze lecker.

'I find licorice tasty.'

Ben: a. # Nein, Lakritze ist nicht lecker.

'No, licorice is not tasty.'

Ben: b. Ich finde Lakritze nicht lecker. / Finde ich nicht.

'I don't find it tasty.'

c. Ich finde Lakritze auch lecker.

'I find licorice tasty, too.'

d. (?) Ja, Lakritze ist lecker.

'Yes, licorice is tasty.'

→ first person present tense use of German *finden* blocks denial

Blocking is restricted to first person (present tense)

(23) Ann: Lisa findet Lakritze lecker.

'Lisa finds Licorice tasty.'

Ben: Nein, das tut sie nicht. Wir haben gerade darüber gesprochen.

'No, she doesn't. We talked about it recently.'

(The analysis refers to the notion of *individual discourse commitments*, cf. part 4).

→ The two blocking effects found with evaluative predicates are evidence that **there is a pragmatic dimension involved**

❓ Is the possibility of blocking denial the reason for the idea of faultless disagreement – does disagreement about matters of taste appear faultless because denial can be blocked ?

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Friederike Moltmann (CNRS), Carla Umbach (ZAS), 25th June 2014

Part 2 Current positions in the literature (Carla Umbach)

1. Relativist: Lasersohn (2005), Stephenson (2007) (mixed),
2. Contextualist: Cohen (ms), Hegarty (to appear)
3. First-person genericity: Moltman (2010), Pearson (2013)
4. Meta-linguistic: Glanzberg (2007), Sundell (2011), Barker (2013)
5. Underspecification: Stojanovic (2012)
6. Evidentiality: Gunlogson & Carlson (to appear)

7. Kant on judgments of taste
8. Hare on the meaning of *good*

1. Relativist: Lasersohn (2005), Stephenson 2007 (mixed),

1.1 Lasersohn (2005)

Starting point: Disagreement in (1) is faultless

- (1) a. Sue: Roller coasters are fun.
b. Bob: No, roller coasters are no fun.

Option 1: *fun* means *fun-for-me*

- (1a) fun(roller-coasters, Sue)
(1b) \neg fun(roller-coasters, Bob)

Problem: Bob's denial does not express the negation of Sue's statement

Option 2: *fun* means *fun for the relevant group*

suppose $\{sue, bob\} \subseteq$ teenagers

- (1a) fun (roller-coasters, teenagers)
(1b) \neg fun(roller-coasters, teenagers) Bob : *I'm a teenager and it's no fun for me.*

- (2) a. Sue: Roller coasters are no fun.
b. Bob: Oh, yes they are.

- (2a) \neg fun (roller-coasters, teenagers)
(2b) fun(roller-coasters, teenagers) Bob : *It's fun for all teenagers, even for you.*

Problem: In denying Sue's negative statement in (2), Bob claims that he knows Sue better than she knows herself.

→ Disagreement is not a matter of conflicting views about the roller coaster, but about what the majority view is within some group.

Option 3: *fun* means *fun_in general*,
that is, there is a generically quantified hidden argument

Problem: (3a) would be predicted to be o.k. though it is odd, and (3b) would be predicted to be contradictory, although it is o.k.

- (3) a. (?) This is not fun, although I am having fun doing it.
b. This is fun, but most people would hate it.

Option 4: The utterance *This is fun* is a non-assertive act of affective expression, like "Whee!" / "Mm-mm" / "Oh, boy!"

Problem: *This is fun* can be denied and be subject to logical reasoning. Non-assertive utterances of affective expression cannot.

How to explain reasoning if the proposition does not have a truth values?

- (4) John: Whee!
Mary: ?? That's not true!

- (5) If there is a loop, the roller coaster is fun.
There is a loop.
Therefore, the roller coaster is fun.

Option 5: Consider the disagreement in (1) as a disagreement about the meaning of *fun*
--> John and Mary take opposite sides in this conflict over the meaning of the word

Barker (2002): If the interpretation of a sentence varies from context to context, then using the sentence may be informative about the context itself.

For example, uttering a sentence like *Feynman is tall* in a situation where it is clear exactly how tall Feynman is, will not tell us anything about Feynman's height, but will tell us something about where the boundary between the tall and the non-tall is;

Feynman is tall means "tall is being like Feynman"

Problem: If John and Mary both believe that Feynman is 5'9", but John intends a context in which 5'9" counts as tall, and Mary intends a context in which 5'9" does not count as tall, then in a Kaplan-style system, (i) would not properly report that their disagreement is about the context:

(i) *John believes Feynman is tall, but Mary believes Feynman is not tall.*

Lasersohn's relativist semantics

- Kaplanian system: character of a proposition ϕ : [contexts \rightarrow contents]
content of proposition ϕ : [worlds \rightarrow denotations]
- The content of *Roller coasters are fun* is the same proposition in Sue's and Bob's utterance. The truth of this proposition is relative to a **judge index**, in addition to a world index.

\rightarrow The content of a sentence is a set of world-individuals pairs instead of a set of worlds

- The content of predicates – evaluatives as well as non-evaluatives – is independent of the context, $[[\text{fun}]]^c = [[\text{fun}]]^{c'}$, for all c, c' ;
- The truth of propositions with evaluative predicates can vary with contexts, (if the judge varies), $J(c) \neq J(c')$;
- STILL:
 $[[\text{fun}(\text{roller-coaster})]]^c$ and $[[\neg \text{fun}(\text{roller-coaster})]]^{c'}$ is always **contradictory**, even with different contexts c and c' (because negation is defined with a fixed judge)

1.2 Stephenson (2007)

- the intuition of faultless disagreement accepted
 - with respect to faultless disagreement, predicates of personal taste are close to epistemic modals (e.g. *It might be raining*): While predicates of personal taste raise the question of whose taste is relevant, epistemic modals require a specification of whose knowledge is expressed.
 → use of Relativist Semantics to interpret epistemic modals
 - predicates of personal taste are ambiguous between interpretations with an implicit experiencer argument and interpretations referring to a judge – *tasty* can either be interpreted as "tasty to a salient individual" or as "tasty to the judge".
 Stephenson motivates the implicit argument option by the notorious cat food example, which requires additional freedom because – on the preferred reading – the agent of the propositional attitude in (9), who is the identical to the judge, differs from the individual whose taste is under consideration. The problem is solved by binding the implicit argument to the contextually salient cat, thereby yielding the interpretation that Sam (judge) thinks that the cat food is tasty pro_{cat} .
- (6) Mary: How's that new brand of cat food you bought?
 Sam: I think it's tasty, because the cat has eaten a lot of it.
- Stephenson (2007) includes a **pragmatic account of taste judgments in dialog**:
 - The common ground consists of a set of pairs of worlds and judges.
 - There is an "actual judge" representing the group of participants in the conversation who is the judge for all world-judge pairs in the common ground.
 → There is **consensus** concerning matters of taste throughout the common ground.
 - There is a "norm of assertion" allowing the speaker to assert a sentence even if he does not believe that the sentence is true as judged by the group of conversational participants. If the assertion is accepted by the group and added to the common ground, the judge parameter of the proposition will be shifted to the "actual judge".
 → Judges that differ from the actual one occur only temporarily, thereby preserving consensus.

2 Contextualist: Cohen (ms.), Hegarty (to appear)

('contextualist' as far as the judge is provided by the context)

2.1 Cohen (ms.)

- *z is fun/tasty* means that **competent perceivers** would perceive *z* to be tasty.
- competent perceivers are assigned different weights in determining the probability that the proposition is true.
"z is tasty" is true iff the value of the probability model of perceivers is above the threshold for tastiness
- When John and Mary disagree on a judgment of taste, they disagree on what counts as a competent perceiver and what the appropriate weights are, which is **genuine disagreement**.
- The intuition of faultlessness is explained by the fact that John and Mary are, of course, entitled to have different assessments of perceivers.
- John's reason for contradicting Mary in a faultless disagreement dialog is to make her correct her assessment of competent perceivers. He does not want to "to convince her that she likes roller coasters [or licorice] but that she ought to like them" (p.2), since this is what the majority of competent perceivers do. Thus the use of predicates of tastes is normative.

Hegarty (to appear)

- argues that Lasersohn's argument against the generic option relies on excluding the speaker from the domain quantified over
- defines generic quantification over a domain of **potential experiencers** to which the speaker belongs
- argues that statements of subjective taste and preference (*This is fun*)
 - 1) have an indexical interpretation – "*fun for me*" (set aside)
 - 2) have a **descriptive normative** interpretation -- this is fun for the speaker's community, the domain of the generic operator containing people whose physical constitution falls within normal boundaries.
 - 3) have a **prescriptive normative** interpretation -- this should be fun for the speaker's community

Cases where the speaker makes use of codified criteria instead of her own experience in, e.g., judging "*This is a good painting*" are considered as cases of displacement (analogous to little Billy and the cat)

3 First-person genericity: Moltman (2010), Pearson (2013)

Moltmann (2010)

- '*Licorice is tasty*' means '*One finds licorice tasty.*'
- based on her account of *first-person-based-genericity* where sentences involving generic *one* are understood such that the speaker identifies himself with each individual in the quantified domain.

(cf. part 3)

Pearson (2013)

- links the problem of taste sentences to the semantics of attitudes *de se*.
- First person indexicals (implicit experiencer arguments) and the judge parameter, which are distinct ways of representing subjectivity in relativist semantics, are conflated.

4 Meta-linguistic: Glanzberg (2007), Sundell (2011), Barker (2013)

(context determines denotation)

Glanzberg (2007)

- rejects the idea of faultless disagreement (cf. part 1)
- defends a contextualist semantics for predicates of personal taste based on a measure theory interpretation of gradable adjectives, such that the scale is parameterized by a class of experiencers (group of people)
- the scale type *tasty* is associated with: ***gustatory quality as experienced by E***
[[*tasty*]]^c = degree of *gustatory_quality_experienced_by_E*

(meta-semantics – what fixes contextual parameters?)

Sundell (2011)

- distinguishes between
'character disagreement' (about the character of the expression),
'content disagreement' (about the truth of the content) and
'context disagreement' (about the relevant context).
- Disagreement about matters of taste is not about the content of the asserted propositions, and not about the character of the predicates, but about contextual standards, that is, about the interpretation of the predicates.

Barker (2013)

- based on the distinction between **descriptive usage** and **metalinguistic usage** of a proposition proposed in Barker (2002)

Feynman is tall descriptive usage: about the world
informing the hearer about Feynman' height

metalinguistic usage: about the discourse
informs the hearer about the standard of tallness in the context
'*tall is being like Feynman*' / '*the standard is below Feynman's height.*'

- The common ground consists of worlds and discourses, and update may affect either one.
- Disagreement about matters of taste is disagreement about "the discourse". This includes contextual standards of the predicates, and also **norms** saying which aspects are relevant in determining whether a predicate applies.
- The intuition of faultlessness is explained by the fact that none of the participants has privileged authority over the discourse.

5 Underspecification: Stojanovic (2012)

- rejects the idea of faultless disagreement: discourse participants either genuinely disagree, or they are both right but their disagreement boils down to a misunderstanding (Stojanovic (2007), cf. part 1.
- The focus is on expressions of emotion (*sad*, as in *It is sad that...*), which are similar to predicates of taste in giving rise to the intuition of faultlessness.
- The analysis combines contextualist and metalinguistic features:
 - the lexical meaning of the expressions is underspecified with respect to experiencer, respects, comparison class and threshold.
 - In addition, the concepts associated with emotion predicates (as well as taste predicates) are open-ended.
 - In the case of disagreement, discourse participants will first specify the parameters their judgments are based on. If this is done there may be residual disagreement which is metalinguistic in nature.

6 Evidentiality: Gunlogson & Carlson (to appear)

- evidential approach to faultless disagreement cases.
- predicates of experience – *tasty, fun, cold, exhausting* etc.
- three types of disagreement:
 - faultless disagreement, as in (7),
 - ordinary disagreement, as in (8),
 - 'faulty' disagreement, as in (9) and (10).

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| (7) | (John & Mary just got off the roller coaster)
Mary: That was fun!
John: No it wasn't! | faultless |
| (8) | (about Bill's ride on the roller coaster)
Mary: That was fun for Bill.
John: No it wasn't. | ordinary |
| (9) | (John & Mary just got off the roller coaster)
Mary: That was fun for me.
John: #No it wasn't. | faulty |
| (10) | (Mary just got off the roller coaster;
John is standing by the exit waiting for her)
Mary: That was fun!
John: #No it wasn't! | faulty

(= 3, 4, 5, 9 in Gunlogson & Carlson) |

- The strongest evidence for a statement involving predicates of taste is the speaker's direct experience.
- Oddness in (9) is explained such that John presumes to be better in rating Mary's experience than she is herself.
- In the case of ordinary disagreement in (8) neither Mary nor John have direct evidence.
- Prerequisite for disagreements to be considered as faultless: Discourse participants must have equally strong direct evidence. If John does not have direct experience, as in (10), the disagreement is faulty again.

7 Kant on judgments of taste

- In his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790/1928) Kant characterizes judgments of taste – about beauty (*das Schöne*) – and judgments of agreeableness – about pleasure (*das Angenehme*) in a way surprisingly relevant for linguistic interpretation.¹
- First, judgments of taste and agreeableness are distinguished from judgments about factual matters. The latter are about properties of objects, whereas the former are about properties the subject ascribes to the object.
- Next, judgments of taste (in Kant's terminology) are distinguished from judgments of agreeableness. Judgments of agreeableness don't claim to be generally valid – others need not share our judgment:

¹In presenting Kant's ideas extensive use will be made of the clear and comprehensible article on aesthetic judgment by Nick Zangwill in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

"In Ansehung des *Angenehmen* bescheidet sich ein jeder: daß sein Urteil, welches er auf ein Privatgefühl gründet, und wodurch er von einem Gegenstande sagt, daß er ihm gefalle, sich auch bloß auf seine Person einschränke. Daher ist er es gern zufrieden, daß, wenn er sagt: der Kanariensekt ist angenehm, ihm ein anderer den Ausdruck verbessere und ihn erinnere, er solle sagen: **er ist mir angenehm**; [...] Darüber in der Absicht zu streiten und das Urteil anderer, welches von dem unsrigen verschieden ist, gleich als ob es diesem logisch entgegengesetzt wäre, für unrichtig zu schelten, wäre Torheit; und in Ansehung des Angenehmen gilt also der Grundsatz: *Ein jeder hat seinen besonderen Geschmack.*" (p. 54) "

As regards the Agreeable, everyone concedes that his judgment, which he bases on a subjective feeling, and in which he declares that an object pleases him, is restricted merely to himself personally. Thus he does not take it amiss if, when he says that Canary wine is agreeable, another corrects the expression and reminds him that he ought to say: *It is agreeable to me.* [...] To quarrel over such points with the idea of condemning another's judgment as incorrect when it differs from our own, as if the opposition between the two judgments were logical, would be folly. With the Agreeable, therefore, the axiom holds good: *Everyone has his own taste.*

- Judgments of taste demand general validity and thus come with a normative claim – we insist on others agreeing with our taste:

"Mit dem Schönen ist es ganz anders bewandt. Es wäre [...] lächerlich, wenn jemand, der sich auf seinen Geschmack etwas einbildete, sich damit zu rechtfertigen gedächte: dieser Gegenstand (das Gebäude, was wir sehen, das Kleid, was jener trägt, das Konzert, was wir hören, das Gedicht, welches zur Beurteilung aufgestellt ist) ist *für mich* schön. [...] Reiz und Annehmlichkeit mag für ihn vieles haben, darum bekümmert sich niemand; wenn er aber etwas für schön ausgibt, so mutet er andern eben dasselbe Wohlgefallen zu: er urteilt nicht bloß für sich, sondern für jedermann, und spricht alsdann von der Schönheit, als wäre sie eine Eigenschaft der Dinge. Er sagt daher, die Sache ist schön, und rechnet nicht etwa darum auf Anderer Einstimmung in sein Urteil des Wohlgefallens, weil er sie mehrmalen mit dem seinigen einstimmig befunden hat, sondern fordert es von ihnen. Er tadelt sie, wenn sie anders urteilen, und spricht ihnen den Geschmack ab [...] und sofern kann man nicht sagen: *Ein jeder hat seinen besonderen Geschmack.*" (p. 55)"

The Beautiful stands on quite a different footing. It would, on the contrary, be ridiculous if any one who prides himself on his taste were to think of justifying himself by saying: This object (the building we see, the dress that person has on, the concert we hear, the poem submitted to our criticism) is beautiful for me. [...] Many things may for him possess charm and agreeableness – no one cares about that; but when he puts a thing on a pedestal and calls it beautiful, he demands the same delight from others. He judges not merely for himself, but for all men, and then speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things. Thus he says that the thing is beautiful; and it is not as if he counts on others agreeing with him in his judgment of liking owing to his having found them in such agreement on a number of occasions, but he demands this agreement of them. He blames them if they judge differently, and denies them taste, which he still requires of them as something they ought to have; and to this extent it is not open to men to say: *Everyone has his own taste.* (translation by J. C. Meredith, cf. wikisource)

To conclude from Kant's characterization:

- judgments of the agreeableness come with an implicit experiencer argument, and they don't license genuine denial.
- Judgments of taste do not allow for an experiencer, and they do license denial.

Lexical distinction?

- Predicate like *schön* 'beautiful' give rise to general judgments – disagreement is genuine. Judgments are essentially normative (for the notion of normativity and its role in Kant's system see Zangwill 2007)
- Predicates like *angenehm* 'pleasant' express mere personal feelings – disagreement is faultless. Judgments reporting internal experience cannot be mistaken, for example *I am freezing* or *I am in pain*. – Does *tasty* belongs to that category? (justifying a judge-dependent analysis à la Lasersohn).
On the other hand, people fight about matters of gustatory taste as they fight about matters of beauty, claiming general validity (moreover, German *lecker* does not license an experiencer argument). See also the experimental study by Meier (2012)

8 Hare (1952) on the meaning of *good*

- In "The Language of Morals" (Hare 1952) prescriptive language is investigated including imperatives and value judgments.
- Hare's prime example of value judgments is based on the predicate *good*.
- There is no property shared by good things – a good motor car and a good picture and a good meal have nothing in common apart from being good. So there is no denotational meaning of *good*.
- But there is the "commending function" of *good*: calling a motor car or a picture or a meal good means commending it. This is the **evaluative meaning component** of *good*.
- Although there is no property denoted by *good* there are **criteria**, relative to comparison class, speaker community, time etc., establishing a standard for something to be called *good*. The criteria relate to factual properties thereby creating a – highly context-dependent – denotational meaning. This is the **descriptive meaning component**.
- The descriptive meaning component of value judgments may provide **factual** information: Suppose someone has been told that a particular car M is a good motor car. Suppose, moreover, this person knows nothing about M, but he knows what the accepted standard of goodness in motor cars is:

"He will complain that I have misled him, if he subsequently discovers that M will not go over 30 m.p.h., or uses as much oil as petrol, or is covered with rust, or has large holes in the roof. His reason for complaining will be the same as it would have been if I had said that the car was red and he subsequently discovered that it was black. I should have led him to expect the motor-car to be of a certain description when in fact it was of a quite different description." (Hare 1952, p.113).

Two consequences of the lack of a regular denotation:

- The predicate *good*, in contrast to *red*, cannot be taught by ostension – there is no common property to infer from examples as diverse as good motor cars, good pictures and good meals.

Restricting the domain to motor cars someone may be taught by ostension to distinguish good motor cars from bad ones. Still, he will not have learned that calling something good means commending it.

- The predicate *good*, in contrast to *red*, cannot be redefined in the sense of changing the denotation.

"It may happen that motor-cars will in the near future change considerably in design [...].

It may be that then we shall cease giving the name 'a good motor-car' to a car that now would rightly and with the concurrence of all be allowed that name. [...] we may begin to say 'No cars of the nineteen-fifties were really good; there weren't any good ones till 1960'."

Such a shift in meaning is not a redefinition but a change of standard and makes essential use of the fact that the evaluative meaning of good, that is, the commending function, stays constant.

"[...] we are doing what would be called, if 'good' were a purely descriptive word, redefining it. But we cannot call it that, for the evaluative meaning remains constant; we are rather altering the standard." (p.119).

(12) A Honda Civic is a good motor car.

- Suppose the addressee is familiar with Honda Civics but he knows nothing about criteria for good motor cars. Then (12) provides information on which criteria count as good-making criteria, that is, it provides information about the standard of *good* in the context of motor cars – being a good motor car is being like a Honda Civic. This is what Barker calls a meta-linguistic usage.
- Now suppose that the addressee is not familiar with Honda Civics. But he agrees with the speaker on what criteria for good motor cars are. Then (12) provides information on Honda Civics, namely that they satisfy the agreed-on criteria for good motor cars. This is what Barker calls the descriptive usage of a proposition.

→ There is a descriptive usage in addition to the interpretational usage for evaluative propositions (contra Barker and Sundell).

Tutorial *Evaluative Predicates*

Semantics and Philosophy in Europe 7

June 25, 2014

Friederike Moltmann

First-Person-Based Genericity and Evaluative Predicates

The claim

Evaluative predicates, at least in their main use, involve first-person-based genericity as would overtly be expressed by generic *one* or arbitrary PRO. At least some evaluative predicates involve arbitrary PRO in their argument structure.

1. Generic *One*

The peculiarity of generic *one*

Generic *one* does not just contribute to truth conditions, but imposes conditions on appropriate use of sentences: the content of the sentence must be based in an actual or simulated first-person-based experience or directed toward an application to the first person (by the addressee).

First-person-based genericity

(1) a. One can see the picture from the entrance.

First-person-directed genericity

(1) b. One is not allowed to enter the room.

Generic *one* in indicative conditionals: Inference from the Simulating Self

(1) c. When one is an angel, one is neither human nor divine.

Strategies for licencing generic *one*

Strategy 1: Inference from the First Person

Generic *one* is licensed in a (simple) sentence establishing a generalization based on a first-person application of the predicate.

Strategy 2: Inference to the First Person

Generic *one* is licensed in a (simple) sentence stating an (already established) generalization that is to allow for an immediate application to the first person in the reasoning relevant in the context of discourse.

Strategy 3: Inference from the Simulating Self

Generic *one* is licensed in a sentence expressing an inference from the first person pretending to meet certain conditions.

2. The semantic status of generic *one*

Generic *one* and arbitrary PRO:

- (2) a. PRO_{arb} to live a great life is to realize one's true potential.
 b. The tailor knows what PRO_{arb} to wear at one's own wedding.

Generic *one* leads to generic sentences, not just universally quantified sentences

- (3) a. John doubts that people can see the picture from the entrance.
 b. John doubts that one can see the picture from the entrance.
 c. John doubts that everyone can see the picture from the entrance.

Genericity-inducing and bound-variable occurrences of generic *one*:

- (4) a. One sometimes thinks one's life is too short.
 b. $\text{Gn } x \text{ } x \text{ sometimes thinks that } x \text{'s life is too short.}$
 c. $\forall w \forall x (wRw_0 \ \& \ x \in D(w) \ \& \ N(w)(x) \ \& \ C(w)(x) \rightarrow P(w)(x))$

Some further observations:

Bound variable use of generic *one* without first-person orientation

- (5) a. I am the only one that has done my homework.
 b. Sometimes one thinks one is the only one that has not done one's homework.

Generic *one* cannot be bound by adverbs of quantification but only the generic operator

- (6) a. People sometimes are not talented enough to write great fiction.
 b. One sometimes is not talented enough to write great fiction.

3. First-person based genericity

The restriction of generic *one* to conscious beings

- (7) a. If one is a Martian, one is not susceptible to human disease.
 b. ?If one is a horse, one eats hay.
 c. ???If one is a box, one is put on the shelf.

(8) One can see the picture from the entrance.

I can see the picture from the entrance.

- (9) a. One can see the picture from the entrance
 b. A normal person can see the picture from the entrance.

'First person' as the agent meant to accept the statement: first-person-directed genericity

- (10) a. One should not enter this room.
 b. An ordinary person should not enter this room.

First person as the described agent in an attitude report

(11) John thinks that one can lift the box with one hand.

As the described addressee / theme

(12) John convinced Mary that one can see the picture from entrance.

Restriction on predicates

Sentences expressing physical possibility

- (13) a. One can die from eating these mushrooms.
 b. One can open the bottle with one hand.
 c. One can easily jump over the fence.

Experiences in certain types of situations:

- (14) a. One feels tired after such a long day.
 b. One gets really upset when something like this happens.

Impossible predicates:

- (15) a. ?? One has a nose.
 b. The typical person has a nose.
 (16) a. ?? One lives in a big city.
 b. People live in a big city.

First-person-based genericity

(17) a. John found out that one can see the picture from the entrance.

b. John found out that people (a normal person) can see the picture from the entrance.

(18) a. John found that one can easily forget one's own past experiences.

b. John found that people (a normal person) can easily forget their (his) past experiences.

(19) a. John suddenly knew how one feels after a major victory.

b. John suddenly knew how people feel after a major victory.

Contextual restriction:

(20) One has to hand in the essay tomorrow.

Generic *one* ranges over individuals in a contextually restricted class, but as individuals with whom the agent identifies.

Application of the predicate to everyone in the group on the basis of applying the predicate to oneself and abstracting from the peculiarity of one's own situation

Application of the predicate on the basis of *detached self-reference* or simulation

(21) a. One can see me from the entrance.

b. One can solve the equation.

(22) a. Looking at Bill, John realized how one looks with unkempt hair and shabby clothes.

b. Looking at what turned out to be a mirror in the bus, John realized how one looks with unkempt hair and shabby clothes.

Application of the predicate to everyone meeting relevant conditions as if to oneself, in the detached sense of 'self'.

Application of the predicate on the basis of projecting oneself onto everyone meeting relevant condition / by simulating everyone meeting relevant conditions

Simulation: projecting oneself onto / identifying with / immediately taking the perspective of the other person.

Generic simulation: projecting oneself onto anyone meeting relevant conditions.

4. How to account for first-person-oriented genericity

(25) a. One can see the picture from the entrance.

b. For any one x , x as someone with whom the speaker identifies can see the picture from the entrance.

(26) a. John as a father knows how children behave.

b. Jean as a true Frenchman knows about wine.

Moltmann (2006): objects under a perspective as pairs consisting of object and property

(27) $\lambda y[\text{Gn } x \text{ can see the picture from the entrance}(\langle x, \lambda z[z = y] \rangle)]$

Moltmann (2010): objects under a perspective as qua objects

(28) For a property P and an individual d ,

1. d qua P exists in a world w at a time t iff P holds of d in w at t .

2. d qua P is identical to a qua object d' qua P' just in case $d = d'$ and $P = P'$.

3. d qua P has a property Q just in case d has Q at the time it is P .

4. d qua P has only those properties of d that d has in virtue of being P / for which being P is relevant or has some purpose.

(29) $\lambda z[\text{Gn } x \text{ can see the picture from the entrance}(\text{qua}(x, \lambda y[\text{I } y \text{ } z]))]$

5. Evaluative predicates

5.1. Predicates of personal taste

Co-variation of the experiencer with generic *one*

(30) a. It is pleasant when one is walking in the park.

b. It is pleasant PRO_{arb} to walk in the park.

c. When one drinks this cold, it is delicious.

d. When wine does not taste good, one should throw it away.

(31) Chocolate tastes good.

One should eat what tastes good.

One should eat chocolate.

Faultless disagreement

(32) A: Frog legs taste good.

B: Frog legs do not taste good.

'Faulty agreement'

(33) a. A and B agree that frog legs taste good.

b. A and B think the same thing.

Faultless disagreement only in truth-directed contexts

(34) a. ? John exclaimed that the wine tastes good. Mary disagreed with him.

b. John claimed that white chocolate tastes good. Mary disagreed with him.

Faultless disagreement with generic *one*:

(35) a. One can sleep on this sofa.

b. One cannot sleep on this sofa.

'Faulty agreement':

(36) John and Mary agreed that one can sleep on this sofa.

(37) A discovered that one can see the picture from the entrance.

B discovered that one can see the picture from the entrance.

A and B discovered the same thing (namely that one can see the picture from the entrance) / made the same discovery.

Detached self-reference:

Mother to child:

(38) You should eat apple sauce. It is tasty.

Logical form:

(39) $\lambda x[\text{Gn } z \text{ pleasant}(\wedge \text{walk in the park}(\text{qua}(z, \lambda y[\text{I } y \text{ } x]), \text{qua}(z, \lambda y[\text{I } y \text{ } x]))]$

Sentences expressing personal judgments:

(40) a. I find this tasty.

b. I find that one can sleep on the sofa.

First-person-directed genericity

(41) a. The dinner will be tasty.

b. The homework will be easy.

5.2. Predicates of moral evaluation

- (42) a. It is good PRO_{arb} to treat others with respect.
 b. PRO_{arb} to tortue animals is terrible.

5.3. Ability predicates

Equivalences:

- (43) a. One can see the picture from the entrance.
 b. The picture is visible from the entrance.
- (44) a. One can carry the case.
 b. The case is portable.

5.4. Predicates of appearance

- (45) A: Mary looks tired.
 B: No she does not
 C: I agree.
- (46) When one looks at Mary more closely, she looks very tired.
- (47) a. John is handsome
 b. John looks good
 c. ?? One likes John's appearance.

5.5. Epistemic modals

- (48) a. For all I know, John may be in Paris.
 b. For all one knows, John may be in Paris.

Faultless disagreement

- (49) a. John could be at home.
 b. No, John could not be at home
- (50) a. John may be in Paris.
 b. For all one knows, John may be in Paris.

Evaluative predicates, Tutorial at **SPE 7**

Friederike Moltmann (CNRS), Carla Umbach (ZAS), 25th June 2014

Part 4 Separating the semantics of evaluative propositions and the pragmatics of subjective judgments (Carla Umbach)

Umbach, C. (to appear) Evaluative propositions and subjective judgments. In Huitnik, J. and C. Meier (eds), *Subjective Meaning*.
(final draft in www.zas.gwz-berlin.de/umbach.html)

1 Semantic vs. pragmatic aspects of evaluativity

Starting points

- (i) the puzzle of the competent speaker
 - (ii) the blocking-of-denial effect of 1st ps German *finden* and first person experiencer arguments
(cf. part 1, section 3 and 4)
- (i) the puzzle of the competent speaker suggests that denial is genuine
no bird's eye perspective for participants in a dialog
- semantics: explain the normative force
- (ii) the blocking-of-denial effects suggests that evaluative propositions are special in communication (although first person *finden* and first person experiencer arguments need not be equivalent)
- pragmatic: explain blocking of denial

Focus on

- gradable adjectives: *beautiful, tall*
- German *finden*

(i) + (ii) suggest a 2x2 classification – non-evaluative vs. evaluative propositions
– general vs. subjective judgments

to be revised!	non-evaluative prop.	evaluative propositions
general judgments	x is tall x is taller than y	x is beautiful x is tall x is more beautiful than y
subjective judgments		ich finde x schön / groß / schöner als y 'I find x beautiful / tall / more beautiful than y

Semantics of evaluative propositions

Disagreement in the "faultless disagreement"-dialogs is genuine

A meta-linguistic interpretation of evaluative propositions (as, e.g., in Barker, Sundell)

- explains for the normative force of evaluative statements
- predicts that evaluative propositions have only an interpretational (meta-linguistic) usage, and never have a descriptive usage – WRONG (cf. part 2, section 8)
- Are interpretational uses always evaluative? Correct for *tall*.
- German *finden* embeds only interpretationally used propositions

(revised)	descriptive usage	interpretational usage	
	<i>non-evaluative propositions</i>	<i>evaluative propositions</i>	
general judgments	<p><i>A ist schön.</i> 'A is beautiful.'</p> <p><i>A ist schöner als B.</i> 'A is more beautiful than B.'</p> <p><i>A ist groß.</i> 'A is tall.'</p> <p><i>A ist größer als B.</i> 'A is taller than B.'</p>	<p><i>A ist schön.</i> 'A is beautiful.'</p> <p><i>A ist schöner als B.</i> 'A is more beautiful than B.'</p>	<p><i>A ist schön.</i> 'A is beautiful.'</p> <p><i>A ist schöner als B.</i> 'A is more beautiful than B.'</p> <p><i>A ist groß.</i> 'A is tall.'</p> <p>--</p>
subjective judgments	[??]	<p><i>Ich finde A schön.</i> 'I think A is beautiful.'</p> <p><i>Ich finde A schöner als B.</i> 'I think A is more beautiful than B.'</p> <p><i>Ich finde A groß.</i> 'I think A is tall.'</p>	

2 The semantic dimension

2.1 Descriptive vs. interpretational usage

Barker (2002): propositions based on gradable predicates have two types of uses:
a descriptive use and a metalinguistic use (called *interpretational* in this paper).

Feynman is tall

- descriptive use: provides information about Feynman's height by asserting that he exceeds the standard of tallness in the given context
- interpretational use: provides information about what counts as tall in that context by asserting that Feynman exceeds the standard.

The two uses are also found with non-gradable predicates, although the interpretational use is adequate only in borderline cases.

- (1) a. (delivery of goods context, speaker pointing to a bulky package)
This is a chair.
- b. (Max Black's chair museum, speaker pointing to a borderline object)
This is a chair.

[German *finden* embeds only interpretational usages,
cf. the 'alternative interpretation' analysis in Reis (2013), referring to Ducrot (1980)]

Update

Barker (2002): CG is a set of pairs of worlds and discourses, $\langle w, d \rangle$

Krifka (2012): CG is a pair of sets of worlds and interpretations, $\langle W, I \rangle$

Descriptive update $\langle I, W \rangle + \text{DES}(\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket) = \langle I, \{w \in W \mid \exists i \in I. \llbracket \varphi \rrbracket^{i,w}\} \rangle$
Interpretational (definitional) update $\langle I, W \rangle + \text{INT}(\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket) = \langle \{i \in I \mid \forall w \in W \llbracket \varphi \rrbracket^{i,w}\}, W \rangle$

Umbach (to appear)

Evaluative update $\langle I, W \rangle + \text{DES} \circ \text{INT}(\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket) = (\langle I, W \rangle + \text{DES}(\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket)) + \text{INT}(\llbracket \varphi \rrbracket)$

2.2 Four dialogues

- phone situation: Ann informs Ben on the phone about a sculpture she saw in an exhibition, and Ben has not seen it himself.
- vis-à-vis situation: Ann and Ben stand vis-à-vis the sculpture.

In each of these situations Ann and Ben have

- a dispute involving a dimensional adjective and
- a dispute involving an evaluative adjective.

(2) Dialogue 1: phone / *tall*

- a. Ann: Die Skulptur ist groß.
'The sculpture is tall.'
- b. Ben: ?? Nein, ist sie nicht.
'No, it is not.'
- c. Ben': Nein, sie kann nicht groß sein. Sie hätte sonst nicht durch die Tür gepasst.
'No, it can't be tall. Otherwise it wouldn't have passed through the door.'

(3) Dialogue 2: vis-à-vis / *tall*

- a. Ann: Die Skulptur ist groß.
'The sculpture is tall.'
- b. Ben: Nein, ist sie nicht. (Ich finde sie klein.)
'No, it is not. (I think it is small.)'

(4) Dialogue 3: phone / *beautiful*

- a. Ann: Die Skulptur ist schön.
'The sculpture is beautiful.'
- b. Ben: ?? Nein, ist sie nicht.
'No, it is not.'
- c. Ben': Nein, sie kann nicht schön sein, sonst hätte meine Tante sie nicht verkauft.
'No, it can't be beautiful. Otherwise my aunt wouldn't have sold it.'

(5) Dialogue 4: vis-à-vis / *beautiful*

- a. Ann: Die Skulptur ist schön.
'The sculpture is beautiful.'
- b. Ben: Nein, ist sie nicht. (Ich finde sie häßlich.)
'No, it is not. (I find it ugly.)'

phone/tall

- Ann informs Ben about a property of the sculpture: Its height exceeds the standard height of sculptures presented in art galleries.
- Descriptive usage
- Since Ben cannot see the sculpture, he can deny her assertion only by citing indirect evidence

vis-à-vis/tall

- Ann cannot reasonably try to inform Ben about the height of the sculpture.
- She asserts that the sculpture is included in what should be considered as tall for a sculpture in this context.
- Interpretational usage
- When denying her assertion, Ben does not question her measuring skills but her assessment of what counts as tall for a sculpture in that context.

vis-à-vis /beautiful

- as in *vis-à-vis/tall* situation, the Ann cannot reasonably try to inform Ben about properties of the sculpture (assume that their sensory experience is more or less the same)
- Ann's assertion addresses the standard of comparison for the beauty of sculptures in this context.
- Interpretational usage
- Direct denial is fine but, as in the dimensional case, Ben doesn't question Ann's perception of the sculpture but her assessment of what counts as beautiful for a sculpture in that particular context.

phone/beautiful

- Does Ann inform Ben that the sculpture has some property that makes it exceed a contextually fixed standard of beauty?

Are there degrees of beauty?

"The beauty of the sculpture is n beauty-units, which is above the generally accepted standard of comparison for the beauty of sculptures in this context".

There are no beauty units inherent to the sculpture. Unlike a certain degree of height, a certain degree of beauty is not a property of an object and instead a property ascribed by the subject (→ there is no descriptive use?)

But there are criteria of beauty

Suppose Ann and Ben agree in disliking sculptures with a rusty surface. Then Ben learns from Ann that the sculpture under debate does not have a rusty surface.

→ there is a descriptive usage

2.3 "Measuring beauty"

Transfer Hare's analysis of *good to beautiful*

- evaluative meaning component: commending as to appearance
- quasi-denotational meaning established by criteria (depending on speaker community, time etc.), for example, criteria for what counts as a beautiful apartment / skulpture

Grounding criteria

- criteria may be directly related to factual properties
e.g., for an apartment to count as beautiful it has to be provided with a parquet floor, stucco ceilings and an unobstructed view over the roofs of the city
- criteria may be related to evaluative properties again
e.g., for an apartment, *stylish furnishing*.
- failure of grounding:
criteria related to subjective perceptual experience, like sensation of cold.
(Kant: das Angenehme ?)

beautiful vs. tall – evaluative vs. dimensional predicates

- *beautiful*: no denotation of independent of comparison class and context.
- *tall*: no denotation independent of comparison class and context.
- *beautiful*: change of standard of, e.g., what counts as a beautiful apartment, cannot be considered as a redefinition since it makes use of a fixed meaning component, that is, commending
- *tall*: change of standard of, e.g., what counts as tall for a 12 year old girl, cannot be considered as a redefinition since it makes use of a fixed meaning component, say, outstanding in height (see Kennedy 2007).
- *beautiful*: multiple criteria, none of it fixed by the lexical meaning
multiple dimensions, scales of various types (ratio, ordinal, nominal, ...).
- *tall*: one criterion, fixed by the lexical meaning 'satisfy the standard of height'
dimension: height – ratio scale (degrees)

Similarities:

- *tall* as well as *beautiful* allow for a descriptive use relying on context-dependent criteria, thereby conveying factual information about an individual;
- *tall* as well as *beautiful* allow for an interpretational use (in non-borderline situations) thereby negotiating criteria
- for *tall* as well as *beautiful*, the interpretational use is regarded as evaluative because standards are negotiated

Differences:

- *tall* and *beautiful* differ in number / nature of criteria
- in the case of *beautiful*, the descriptive use is evaluative because criteria are not fixed by the lexical meaning
- in the case of *tall*, the descriptive use is not evaluative because the criterion is fixed by the lexical meaning and is factually grounded

Comparatives

- (6) a. Diese Skulptur ist schöner als die, die wir gestern gesehen haben.
'This sculpture is more beautiful than the one we saw yesterday.'
- b. Diese Skulptur ist grösser als die, die wir gestern gesehen haben.
'This sculpture is taller than the one we saw yesterday.'
- *more beautiful* allows for a descriptive and an interpretational use:
descriptive: A satisfies more of the standard criteria than B
interpretational: There are criteria satisfied by A and not by B which have to be considered as beauty criteria (in this context)
the descriptive and the interpretational use of *more beautiful* are evaluative because criteria are not fixed
 - *taller* allows for a descriptive use, but not for interpretational use:
no context-dependence – what counts as taller is determined by the scale of height
→ *taller* is never considered as evaluative

In fact, taller cannot occur in a complement of the German attitude verb *finden*

- (7) a. Ich finde diese Skulptur groß.
'I think this sculpture is tall.'
- b. * Ich finde diese Skulptur größer als die, die wir gestern gesehen haben.
'I think this sculpture is taller than the one we saw yesterday.'

2.4 Generalized measure functions and multi-dimensional spaces

Multi-dimensional spaces

- are given by a number of dimensions ('features') with scales of various types (ratio, ordinal, nominal, ...),
- integrated into truth-conditional semantics by generalized measure functions mapping individuals into multi-dimensional spaces
- similarity is defined as indistinguishability with respect to classification functions defined on dimensions (qualitative notion of similarity)
cf. Umbach & Gust (2014)

In the case of dimensional adjectives:

measure functions map individuals to degrees in a single ratio scale dimension (cf. Kennedy 1999)

- (8) *large* (attributed to apartments)
dimension: size

$$\mu_{\text{SIZE}}: U \rightarrow \mathfrak{R}$$

In the case of evaluative adjectives:

generalized measure functions map individuals point-wise into multi-dimensional spaces

- (9) *beautiful* (attributed to apartments).
dimensions: floor, ceiling, number of windows, size

$$\mu_{\text{BEAUTY}}: U \rightarrow \langle \text{FLOOR, CEILING, WINDOWS, SIZE, ...} \rangle,$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{where } \mu_{\text{BEAUTY}}(x) &= \langle \mu_{\text{FLOOR}}(x), \mu_{\text{CEILING}}(x), \mu_{\text{WINDOWS}}(x), \mu_{\text{SIZE}}(x), \dots \rangle \\ \text{and } \mu_{\text{FLOOR}}(x) &\in \{\text{parquet, marble, carpeting, ...}\}, \\ \mu_{\text{CEILING}}(x) &\in \{\text{stucco, suspended, plasterboard, ...}\}, \\ \mu_{\text{WINDOWS}}(x) &\in \mathbb{N} \\ \mu_{\text{SIZE}} &\in \mathfrak{R} \end{aligned}$$

Dimensions are associated with a set $C(F)$ of classification functions

approximating natural language predicates on a conceptual level yielding corresponding truth values (modulo fuzzy membership). The role of classification functions is twofold.

1. First, while generalized measure functions take individuals to points in attribute spaces, classification functions link points to regular predicates.
2. Secondly, classification functions determine the level of granularity.

"similar" Two individuals are similar with respect to a set of dimensions F and an associated set of classification functions $C(F)$ iff the classification functions yield the same result when applied to corresponding points in the attribute space.

$$(10) \text{ sim}(x, y, F, C(F)) \text{ iff } \forall p^* \in C(F): p^*(\mu_F(x)) = p^*(\mu_F(y))$$

The sets of classification functions associated with an attribute space F are (partially) **ordered** with respect to the granularity they allow for:

"more similar" x is more similar than y to z iff there is a more fine-grained set of classification functions according to which x is similar to z but y is not.

$$(11) \text{ more-sim}(x, y, z, F, C(F)) \text{ iff } \exists C' \text{ sim}(x, z, F, C'(F)) \ \& \ \neg \text{sim}(y, z, F, C'(F)) \ \& \ C'(F) < C(F)$$

Evaluative adjectives, like *beautiful*, are interpreted in multi-dimensional spaces analogous to dimensional adjectives:

beautiful An individual x is beautiful iff it is sufficiently similar to the standard (that is, similar according to the granularity of the set of classifications)

$$(12) \text{ beautiful}(x)_{F,C,STD} \text{ iff } \text{sim}(x, \text{std}, F, C(F)) \text{ }^1$$

more beautiful x is more beautiful than y iff x is more similar to the standard than y , that is, iff there is a classification set $C'(F)$ such that x is beautiful according to $C'(F)$ but y is not, where $C'(F)$ is more fine-grained than $C(F)$.²

$$(13) \text{ more-beautiful}(x,y)_{F,C,STD} \text{ iff more-sim}(x, y, \text{std}, F, C(F))$$

- It has to be kept in mind, that the implementation of evaluative adjectives in multi-dimensional spaces does **not capture the evaluative meaning component**, that is, the commending function in the case of *good* and *beautiful*, which is, following Hare, the primary meaning of these expressions.

¹ To be precise, it should be $\text{sim}(x, \mu^{-1}(\text{std}), F, C(F))$ because the first two arguments of the sim relation are individuals and *std* is a point in the attribute space. The problem is technically fixed by postulating a unique urbild.

² Note that the standard cannot be dropped in the interpretation of the comparative because dimensions need not relate to ordinal/ratio scales. The standard provides the 'direction' of the comparative. Since classification sets can be arbitrarily fine-grained the standard will never be 'reached', that is, beauty is still 'open-scale'.

Note also that the comparative as defined above entails that x is beautiful in $C'(F)$ and both x and y are beautiful in $C(F)$. This might provide an explanation for the puzzling findings on Normbezug in Bierwisch (1987).

3 The pragmatic dimension

3.1 Farkas & Bruce (2010)

Discourse structure extending Stalnaker's common ground by individual – but public!! – discourse commitments:

- the common ground includes the discourse commitments shared by the participants
- individuals discourse commitments are not, mutually shared.
- Assertions are proposals addressing the question under discussion and are added to the common ground only after confirmation by the other discourse participants.
- The idea of individual discourse commitments accounts for the fact that an assertion involves a public commitment of the speaker even if it is not accepted by the other discourse participants (cf. Gunlogson 2001).

They have a twofold task in the Farkas & Bruce system: First, they serve as a temporary parking position for propositions waiting for confirmation, and secondly they serve as a representation of controversial information.

A discourse structure K such contains

- a (possibly empty) set of propositions DC_x for each participant X – propositions that X is publicly committed to, which are not shared by the participants of the conversation;
- a set of propositions cg – common ground – shared by the participants of the conversation;
- the **table** representing the issues to be resolved, implemented as a stack of pairs of syntactic objects and their denotations;
- a projected set ps comprising future common grounds projected by the elements of the table.

Update rules

Assertion the asserted proposition p is pushed onto the table and is added to the individual discourse commitments of the speaker. When p is confirmed it is added to the individual discourse commitments of the confirming participant. If p is confirmed by each discourse participant, that is, included in each individual discourse commitment set, it will be moved from the individuals commitment sets into the common ground and removed from the table.

Denial ends in a 'crisis' because neither p nor $\neg p$ can become common ground and be removed from the table.

Agree to disagree removing the controversial proposition from the table while leaving it in the individual discourse commitment sets.

3.2 General vs. subjective judgments

The distinction between general and subjective judgments is a pragmatic distinction reflecting different intentions of the speaker:

- General judgments – with descriptive as well as evaluative propositions – are regular assertions waiting for confirmation or denial. If confirmed the propositions are included in the common ground. If denied the conversation is in a crisis and the issue under debate (on the table) remains unresolved, unless the participants 'agree to disagree'.

- Subjective judgments present their propositions as mere opinions, not intended to enter the common ground. The proposition will be an element of the discourse commitment set of the speaker **without, however, being placed 'on the table'**. This accounts for the fact that subjective judgments are immune against denial. The other discourse participant can express agreement and disagreement by using subjective judgments again.
- In the case of agreement the proposition will be shifted from the individual commitments sets to the common ground (and can no longer be distinguished from propositions that entered the common ground via a general judgment).
- In the case of disagreement the controversial propositions remain individual commitments. Since there is no controversial proposition on the table, the discourse will not be 'in crisis'.
- Speakers may use subjective judgments as a way out of a controversy, similar to the 'agree-to-disagree' discourse move, cmp. (14) and (15). They may even use a subjective judgment from the beginning and just wait for agreement. This would be a discourse strategy of hopefully achieving compliance without risking denial.

(14) *agree to disagree*

- Ann: Holzleim ist wasserlöslich.
'White glue is water-soluble.'
- Ben: Nein, er ist nicht wasserlöslich.
'No, it is not.'
- Ann: Reden wir über was anderes.
'Let's not pursue this further.'
- Ben: O.k.

(15) *retreat to opinion*

- Ann: Die Skulptur ist schön.
'The sculpture is beautiful.'
- Ben: Nein! Sie ist nicht schön.
'No, it is not..'
- Ann: Ich finde sie jedenfalls schön.
'Anyway, I think it is beautiful.'
- Ben: Ich finde sie nicht schön.
'I don't.'

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