

NYU talks *Acts, Objects, and Attitudes*

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Handout 4

The Semantics of Attitude Reports and the Structure of Illocutionary Acts

1. The general semantics of attitude reports

The Relational Analysis of attitude reports

That-clauses are referential terms, provide propositions as arguments of the relation expressed by the verb; averbs express dyadic relations between agents and propositions.

(1) a. John thinks/claims that Mary is happy.

b. think/claim(John, [*that Mary is happy*])

The Propositional Analysis of special quantifiers and pronouns

Quantifiers like *something*, *everything*, *something nice* etc quantify over propositions that are to be arguments of the dyadic relation expressed by the attitude verb.

The new view: *That*-clauses as predicates of attitudinal and modal objects

Attitudinal objects:

Cognitive products: thoughts, claims, decisions, imaginations etc

Illocutionary products: claims, requests, promises, threats etc

Mental states: beliefs, intentions, fears, hopes

Modal objects:

Modal products: obligations, permissions

Other modal objects: abilities, logical necessities and possibilities etc

Davidsonian arguments and attitudinal and modal objects

Cognitive and illocutionary products are products of Davidsonian event arguments.

Mental states and modal objects are themselves Davidsonian event arguments and their own 'products').

Function of *that*-clauses

predicates of the products of Davidsonian arguments

(2) a. John thought that S.

b. $\exists e(\text{think}(e, \text{John}) \ \& \ [\textit{that S}](\text{product}(e)))$

(3) a. John claimed that S.

b. $\exists e(\text{claim}(e, \text{John}) \ \& \ [\textit{that S}](\text{product}(e)))$

interpretation based on the syntactic relation: 'being sentential complement of V'

The semantics of nominalizations

(4) a. John's claim that S

b. $\iota e[\text{claim}(e, \text{John}) \ \& \ [\textit{that S}](e)]$

c. John's claim yesterday that S

The semantics of 'special' quantifiers and pronouns

(5) a. John said something nice.

b. $\exists e \exists e'(\text{say}(e, \text{John}) \ \& \ \text{nice}(e') \ \& \ e' = \text{product}(e))$

c. John said something that caused astonishment

d. John said something I could not hear very well.

(6) a. John thought what Mary thought.

b. $\exists e \exists e' \exists e''(\text{think}(e, \text{John}) \ \& \ e' = \text{product-kind}(e) \ \& \ \text{think}(e'', \text{Mary}) \ \& \ e' = \text{product-kind}(e''))$

c. ?? John thought what Mary hopes, that it is raining.

d. ??? John thought what Mary wrote down, that it is Sunday.

(7) a. John hopes what Mary fears.

b. $\exists e \exists e' \exists e''(\text{believe}(e, \text{John}) \ \& \ \text{pos}(\text{product}(e)) \ \& \ e' = \text{product-kind}(e) \ \& \ \text{believe}(e'', \text{Mary}) \ \& \ \text{neg}(\text{product}(e'')) \ \& \ e' = \text{product-kind}(e''))$ (roughly!!)

c. John requested what Mary demanded, that the afternoon will be free.

Conclusion:

No further need for finding a type of object that acts both as the meaning of sentences and as the object of propositional attitudes.

Sentences could be assigned sets of circumstances or structured propositions when characterizing attitudinal or modal objects.

2. Ways for sentences to act as predicates of attitudinal and modal objects

2.1. Specification of truth or satisfaction conditions

Different ways for clauses to characterize attitudinal or modal objects

- specify truth- or satisfaction conditions of attitudinal and modal object
- specify structure of an attitudinal object

(8) [*that S*](d) iff $\forall s$ (S true in s iff d true in s)

Truthmaking/satisfaction of attitudinal and modal objects

Searle's (1983) view of intentionality of mental states and acts, as well as illocutionary acts come with inherent satisfaction conditions

Intentions: satisfiers are actions by way of fulfilling the intention

Requests: satisfiers are actions by way of fulfilling the request

Beliefs: satisfiers are states of affairs making the belief true

Claims: satisfiers are states of affairs making the claim true

Desires: satisfiers are states of affairs or actions satisfying the desire

Fine's (to appear) truthmaker semantics

Use exact truthmaking / satisfaction as a relation between a situation (action and a sentence that holds iff s is wholly relevant for the truth of S.

Exact truthmaking/satisfaction as a relation between situations(actions) and attitudinal or modal objects

General observation

Attitudinal or modal objects themselves may impose particular conditions on their satisfiers not imposed by sentence:

Actions 'by way of' fulfilling the attitudinal / modal object (Searle 1983)

Also:

Underspecification of the content of attitudinal objects by the clausal complement

(9) a. Fiona wants to catch a fish (that she can eat).

- b. John needs to wear a coat (that keeps him warm).
- c. Bill needs to hire an assistant (that speaks French)

(10) a. Mary wants the same thing.

- b. Bill needs the same thing.
- c. Joe needs that too.

(11) a. the desire to catch a fish that they can eat.

- b. need to wear a coat that keeps one warm.
- c. the need to hire an assistant that speaks French

‘Unarticulated constituents’

(12) a. John believes that everyone is happy.

- b. Mary says that it is raining

(13) a. Bill believes the same thing.

- b. Ann said the same thing.

New semantics of clausal complements:

(14) [*that* S] = $\lambda d[\forall s(s \models d \rightarrow S \text{ is true in } s)]$

Works well for:

Implicit belief: clausal complement specifies truth conditions (or better truthmakers: truthmaking situations)

Implicit desire: clausal complement specifies satisfaction conditions (or better satisfiers: actions fulfilling the desire)

Modal sentences: clausal complement (prejacent) as predicates of satisfiers (and perhaps violators) of modal objects, e.g. permissions, obligations, needs, offers

2.2. Specification of structure by clausal complements

More fine-grained content?

(15) a. John was thinking that Mary is nice, always.

- b. John literally said that Mary is nice, always.

With verbs of saying – overt saying or ‘saying to oneself’ -- clausal complement may specify the structure of an illocutionary act.

Proposal:

Clausal complements may specify composition of product in terms of smaller products: concept-conveying products, predicational products, referential / identificational products ...

Think, say: clausal complement may specify smaller products composing the thought or claim:

act of reference – referential product; act of predication – predicational product

(16) a. John thinks that Mary is happy.

- b. [*that Mary is happy*] = the property of a cognitive product x such that x consists of a referential product involving the use of ‘Mary’ and a predicational product involving the use of the concept ‘happy’

Does act of predication carry illocutionary force? Or is it neutral or at least weak (hypothetical acceptance)? Evidence in favor of the latter...

3. Illocutionary and locutionary products

3.1. Properties of illocutionary products

Recall:

Illocutionary products have a physical realization and content related properties:

(17) a. John’s claim made Mary upset.

- b. Bill overheard John’s claim.
c. John made the claim yesterday.

(18) a. John’s claim is true.

- b. John’s claim implies that Mary is guilty.
c. John’s claim contradicts Bill’s claim

Claims, requests, promises are neither acts nor propositions, but objects sui generis (Ulrich 1976, Moltmann 2003, 2004, 2014): they illocutionary products of illocutionary acts.

Similar illocutionary verbs

- (19) a. John suggested what Mary asserted.
 b. John's suggestion was Mary's assertion.
- (20) a. John requested what Mary demanded.
 b. John's request was the same as Mary's demand.

Mismatches

Verbs of saying conveying different physical realizations

- (21) a. ?(?) John screamed what Mary whispered.
 b. ? John shouted what Bill yelled.
- (22) a. ??? John's scream was the same Mary's whisper.
 b. ?? John's shout was the same as Bill's scream.

The verb *say* and verbs of manner of speaking

- (23) a. ??? John said what Mary whispered.
 b. ??? John said what he screamed.

Illocutionary verbs and the verb *say*

- (24) a. ??? John asserted what Mary said.
 b. John asserted that Bill won the race.
 c. Mary said that Bill won the race.
- (25) a. ??? John demanded what May said.
 b. John demanded that Bill should leave.
 c. Mary said that Bill should leave.
- (26) a. ??? John promised what he said.
 b. John promised that he would help Mary.
 c. John said that he would help Mary.

Illocutionary verbs, *say*, and mismatches in physical realization:

- (27) a. John asserted the same thing as Mary.
 b. John whispered that Bill won the race.
 c. Mary screamed that Bill won the race.

- (28) John said the same thing as Mary

3.2. Searle's notion of an illocutionary act

Illocutionary acts are composed of illocutionary force f and propositional content p $f(p)$.

Illocutionary force composed of:

- illocutionary point: the aim of the illocutionary act:
 'assertion': representation of states of affairs as true
 command: making addressee do something
 promise: commitment to do so and so.
- sincerity condition: belief in the case of assertion etc
- preparatory condition ...

Searle's illocutionary acts vs illocutionary products

Illocutionary point is the illocutionary product: product has the relevant representational and normative properties

The problem for the present purposes

Illocutionary acts / products have no physical aspect!

They do not provide objects for the complement of verbs of saying and manner of speaking to apply to.

Moreover, they do not provide a basis for a product-based account of quotation.

3.2. Austin's (1962) distinction between linguistic acts of increasingly higher levels

Locutionary acts

- phonetic acts (the uttering of sounds)
- phatic acts (the uttering of sounds as belonging to phonological, morphological, or syntactic categories)
- rhetic acts: acts of referring to things and saying something about them: referential and predicational acts

Illocutionary acts

making assertions, demands etc).

The by-relation

Austin's acts are ordered by the by-relation, that Goldman's (1970) relation of 'level generation'.

For Austin and Goldman: the by-relation a form of composition of acts

Pulling the trigger is different from killing the king, but the latter has the trigger pulling as a nontemporal part.

Can there also be acts that ‘forget’ or may ‘forget’ the lower level acts that generate them?

Perhaps:

The killing of the king could have been done by throwing a bomb.

Intuitive grounds for Searle’s illocutionary acts?

The very same assertion could have been made in English / by using a softer voice / by whispering.

Austin

Rhetic acts are described in *indirect quotation* (*that*-clauses)

phatic acts are described in *direct quotation*.

Better: direct quotes describe both phatic and rhetic acts (for and content, but without force)

Direct quotes as complements

Say, write: neutrality regarding force (Grimshaw NYU workshop on quotation handout 2014)

(29) a. John said ‘I will come’.

b. John said ‘Can you come?’

c. John said ‘Come as soon as possible!’

(30) a. John wrote ‘Can you come?’

b. John wrote ‘Come as soon as possible!’.

(31) a. John whispered ‘I will come’

b. John whispered ‘Will you come?’

Proposal:

Locutionary products play the role in the semantics of say and verbs of manner of speaking that illocutionary products play in the semantics of illocutionary verbs:

clausal complements of say and verbs of manner of speaking characterize locutionary products, not illocutionary products.

Illocutionary verbs may involve ‘thin’ (Searlean) illocutionary products, without locutionary products.

3.3. The semantics of locutionary products

The action-product distinction for lower-level linguistic acts

Product of a phatic act: has only relevant properties, properties of the linguistic structure the act is meant to realize.

The notion of a token

best conceived of as the product of a lower-level linguistic act (utterance act): phonological product, morpho-syntactic product

Interpreting the data with verbs of saying:Say:

Involves locutionary product only, is neutral regarding force

Manner of speaking verbs:

Involve locutionary + phatic product

Whisper, scream:

Verbs allow decomposition into phatic verb and manner of speaking modifier

How do *that*-clauses characterize locutionary products?

Based on syntactic structure, *that*-clauses can specify locutionary products as composed of smaller products, in particular ‘rhetic products’ (referential and predicational products).

4. A product-based semantics of quotation**4.1. Types of quotation and general approaches**Pure quotation

- (32) a. Mary said ‘hey’.
 b. John translated ‘red’ as ‘rouge’.

Direct quotation

- (32) c. Mary said ‘I will come’.

Two general challenges of quotation

- integration of quotation into syntax
- integration of quotation into compositional semantics

Approaches to pure quotation

Pure quotations as referential terms, referring to expression types

- as names (Quine, Reinach), as descriptions (Geach)
- as complex expressions consisting of quotation marks acting as demonstratives pointing at displayed token within quotation marks (Davidson)
- as names involving quotational use or mentioning, that is, reference to the expression type that is being used (Washington 1992, Saka 1998)

The present approach

Lower-level linguistic acts are performed not or not just in order to perform higher-level linguistic acts, but rather to convey lower-level product types as part of the meaning of the sentence.

Quotational complements: convey form-related product types

4.2. Product-based semantics of pure quotation

Pure quotations convey meanings based on lower-level linguistic acts: phatic or rhetic acts.

Pure quotations may have predicative function, based on their meanings as lower-level product types

A simple case:

(33) a. John said 'hey'

Hey, with its morphological structure within the LF of the sentence and without quotation marks: stands for a morphological product type

Its semantic function is to be predicated of the utterance product:

(33) b. $\exists e(\text{say}(e, \text{John}) \ \& \ [\text{hey}](\text{product}(e)))$

The compositional semantics

Quoted material has lower-level linguistic structure within the syntactic structure that is input to interpretation (LF): phonological, morphological, or syntactic structure within the LF of the sentence. Lower-level linguistic structures are interpreted not as meaning-related product types, but as form-related product types.

The syntactic (LF-) structure of (8)

(34) John [said [_mhey]]_{VP}

Consequences

- Pure quotations need not be considered NPs, but can be of lower-level categories
- Pure quotations need not be considered be referential terms, but may be predicational.

Extension to direct quotation

(35) Mary said ‘I will come’

Direct quotes express both properties of phatic and locutionary products

Fact: Direct quotes are sentential complements of verbs of saying: *say, state, ask, answer, complain, remark*

Property of phatic products is based on a lower-level linguistic structure, possibly a partial structure or mixed structure, such as phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic (non-LF) structure.

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