



# Perceivable properties and inference to emotional states

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## Introduction and background

- **Emotional state adjectives** name an emotional state. Different interpretations for different combinations of A + N.
- Lexical semantics of the noun, context matter.
  - (1) a. sad person (stative)  
b. sad movie/day (causative)  
c. sad smile/letter (manifestive)
- **My focus:** causative and (especially) manifestive interpretations.
- Property named by the adjective is perceivable.
  - (2) a. I saw her make an angry gesture.  
b. #I saw her make a noisy gesture (because her bracelets rattled when her hand moved).
- Commitment by speaker that agent of gesture has mental state.
  - (3) a. #She made an angry gesture, but she was not angry.  
b. #An irritated sigh slipped past his lips, but he was not irritated.
- May encode similar components to other cases of subjective meaning.
- Bouillon (1996), Goy (2000): Analyze these adjectives in Generative Lexicon (Pustejovsky 1995)
- **Downsides:**
  - Manifestive interpretation not explored well.
  - Compositional mechanisms not very developed.
  - Relationship between senses not derived.
  - Overlook subjective meaning.

### Overview

This is a project to better understand the lexical semantics of emotional state adjectives, the issues they present for the interface to lexical semantics, and their possible connection to subjective content.

## Tropes and compositionality

- **Moltmann (2004, 2009):** Natural language expressions may make reference to tropes, concrete manifestations of a property.
  - (4) a. Mary's wisdom b. John's honesty
- Tropes are perceivable objects. Every trope has a bearer (debate on whether it is unique).
- **Maienborn (2021):** No event arguments, contra Larson (1998). Rather, adjective specifies a trope.
  - (5) a. That dancer was elegant.  
b. This king is just.
- Tropes accessible through compositional mechanisms, but not arguments themselves.
- Trope variable  $r$  free in adjective denotation, but pragmatically specified in composition.
  - (6)  $\llbracket beautiful \rrbracket = \lambda y_{\text{ENTITY}} [\text{bearer}(r, y) \wedge \text{beautiful}(r)]$
  - (7) Olga is a beautiful dancer. (event reading)  
$$\exists x \exists r \text{ GEN } e \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{bearer}(r, x) \wedge \text{manifest}(r, e) \wedge \\ \text{dance}(e) \wedge \text{agent}(e, x) \wedge \\ \text{beautiful}(r) \end{array} \right]$$

## Subjective meaning

- Emotional state adjectives are not simply predicates of personal taste. No faultless disagreement?
  - (8) A: John flashed us a friendly smile.  
B: \*I disagree. His smile wasn't friendly.
- Shift in **questions** and **embedded contexts**.
  - (9) a. Did she make an angry gesture?  
b. Molly said Holly gave a friendly wave.
- Not "true" evidentials: Not mandatory or part of a grammatical paradigm.

## (Sketch of an) Analysis

- **Tropes** appear to be implicated with these adjectives.
  - (10) a. Amy's happiness was visible in her smile.  
b. Darcy's anger was heard in her voice.
- Tropes are typed. Emotional state tropes are a subtype of tropes.
  - (11)  $\text{MENTAL-STATE} \sqsubseteq \text{TROPE}$
- **Emotional state adjectives** specify a bearer holds some emotional state trope. (Not necessarily the referential argument!)
  - (12)  $\llbracket friendly \rrbracket = \lambda x. \text{friendly}(r) \wedge \text{bearer}(r) = y \wedge \dots$
- Emotional state adjectives seem to be intersective, suggesting they're fundamentally properties. Type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ .
  - (13) a. Her smile was friendly.  
b. His gesture was angry.
- Same noun can have different readings. Need finer-grained lexical semantics for predication. Lexical decomposition.
  - (14) sad letter (causative or manifestive)
- Certain **nouns** have object as referential argument. Event with agent in lexical representation.
  - (15)  $\llbracket smile \rrbracket = \lambda x [\text{smile}(e, x) \wedge \text{agent}(e) = y \wedge x \sqsubseteq y]$
- **Manifestive and causative senses:** Difference in who the bearer of emotional state trope is. Determined pragmatically.
  - Causative:  $r = \text{speaker}$
  - Manifestive:  $r = \text{agent of event denoted by noun}$
- **Subjective meaning via pragmatics.** Inference from participation in situation.
- Causative interpretation can also be enriched if demonstrative used.
  - (16) a. *Titanic* is a sad movie, but it did not make me sad.  
b. ??This is a sad movie, but it doesn't make me sad.
- **Korotkova (2016):** First person component as indexical, and mental state component rooted in independent cognitive processes.