

Day 5: Subjective attitudes & Wrap-up

An opinionated guide to the language of opinion

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Setting the stage I

- ▶ Subjective language: expressions of opinion rather than fact (van Wijnbergen-Huitink 2016; Lasersohn 2017; Vardomskaya 2018; Zakkou 2019)
- ▶ Empirical issue: what are diagnostics of subjectivity?
 - ▶ Classic answer: faultless disagreement
 - ▶ Classic problem: debates about the nature of faultlessness
- ▶ *Find*-verbs: only subjective complements (Stephenson 2007; Sæbø 2009; Bouchard 2012; Kennedy and Willer 2016; Coppock 2018 a.o.)
 - ▶ English *find*
 - ▶ German *finden* (Lande 2009; Reis 2013; Frühauf 2015)
 - ▶ French *trouver* (Bouchard 2012)
 - ▶ Norwegian *synes* (Lande 2009; Sæbø 2009)
 - ▶ Swedish *tycka* (Coppock 2018)
 - ▶ ...

Setting the stage II

- English subjective *find*: only small clauses (Borkin 1973; full CPs only in the discovery sense, Vardomskaya 2018)

- (1) a. I **think** that puerh is ✓**delicious** / ✓**fermented**. [ENGLISH]
b. I **find** puerh ✓**delicious** / #**fermented**.

- Other *find*-verbs: full CPs

- (2) Magda **synes** at ... [NORWEGIAN]
Magda **be.of.opinion** COMP
'Magda is of the opinion that ...'
a. ✓...kjempesequoiatre-et er et **elegant-t** tre.
g.sequoia.tree-DEF.N be.PRES INDEF.N **elegant-N** tree
'... the giant sequoia is an elegant tree.'
b. #...kjempesequoiatre-et er et **evergreen-N** tre.
g.sequoia.tree-DEF.N be.PRES INDEF.N **evergreen-N** tree
'... the giant sequoia is an evergreen tree.'

Setting the stage III

- ▶ Next

- ▶ What can go under *find*
- ▶ What can go under *consider*
- ▶ Ban on epistemic *must*
- ▶ No 'de dicto' readings

Find-complements I

- ▶ Textbook predicates of personal taste (PPTs): *delicious, fun*
(Stephenson 2007)
- ▶ Subjective non-PPT predicates: *authentic, mediocre*
(=evaluatives in Bierwisch 1989)

(3) Mary **finds** this painting **mediocre**.

- ▶ Gradable predicates (*high, tall*) with degree modifiers
(Bylinina 2017; Solt 2018)

- (4) a. # Mo **finds** this wall tall.
b. Mo **finds** this wall **too** tall / tall **enough**.

Find-complements II

- ▶ Appearance (*tastes/looks like*) claims (Coppock 2018, argued to be subjective in Rudolph 2020)
- ▶ Normative claims, e.g., with deontic modals (Sæbø 2009; Coppock 2018)

(5) **Trovo** che [ITALIAN]
find.1SG.PRES COMP
la sanità **debba** essere gratis per tutti.
DEF healthcare □.SUBJ be.INF free for all
≈ 'I am of the opinion that healthcare should be free for everyone.'

Find-complements III

Bottom line

Find-verbs take a lot of expressions that can be construed as subjective (Kennedy and Willer 2016; Reis 2013).

Consider-complements I

- ▶ Ban on “objective” predicates

(6) # Kim **considers** the door **wooden**.

- ▶ SPs

(7) Kim **considers** Sam **fun** / **handsome** / **dull**.

- ▶ Some deontic modals

(8) The scripture **considers** violence **necessary** / **forbidden** / **allowable**.

- ▶ Is it the same set as *find*-complements? No!

Consider-complements II

- ▶ Is it the same set as *find*-complements? No!
- ▶ Gradable adjectives simpliciter

(9) Kim **considers** Sam **tall** / **famous** / **popular** .

- ▶ Vague terms

- (10) a. Kim **considers** 10 people **a crowd**.
b. Kim **considers** Bruce Willis **bald**.

Consider-complements III

- ▶ Definitions / linguistic conventions

(11) Kim **considers** Switzerland **part of Europe**.

- ▶ Controversial topics (at a given time)

(12) a. # Kim **considers** Normandy **part of France**.

b. ✓ Kim **considers** Crimea **part of Russia**.

(Kennedy and Willer 2016)

Consider-complements IV

- ▶ *consider*'s value varies depending on whole proposition, not just the main predicate ... (Willer and Kennedy 2019)

- (13)
- a. Kim considers Crimea part of Russia.
 - b. # Kim considers Siberia part of Russia.

- ▶ **Judgment: is *believe* any better?**
- ▶ ... but improves under negation and with focus

- (14)
- a. They don't consider Siberia part of Russia.
 - b. They don't consider wolves animals.
 - c. They DO consider Siberia part of Russia.
 - d. At least they consider SIBERIA part of Russia.

Consider-complements V

Bottom line

Find-complements are a subset of *consider-complements*.

Cross-linguistic taxonomy

- ▶ Some *find*-verbs are pure verbs of opinion: Norwegian, Swedish
- ▶ Some *find*-verbs have a discovery sense: German, French, Italian, English
- ▶ Some *find*-verbs have a *consider* sense: German
- ▶ Some languages have a separate *consider*-verbs: Russian

Selectional asymmetry

- ▶ Both *find* and *consider* show selection for main predicate position (though there are wrinkles; Sæbø 2009)

- (15)
- a. Kim {found, considered} the wolf a beautiful animal.
 - b. #Kim {found, considered} the beautiful wolf an animal.

- ▶ This asymmetry is a major argument for Sæbø's (2009) approach
 - ▶ main-predicate vs. attributive SPs have a different semantics
 - ▶ but the approach is too rigid vis a vis the position of the subjective expression

Subjective attitudes I

- ▶ Standard view: attitude predicates have unified semantics (Hintikka 1969)
- ▶ Recent research: fine-grained semantics, including lexical distinctions between predicates (Anand and Hacquard 2013, 2014; Močnik 2019; Dorst and Mandelkern 2020 a.o.)
- ▶ Research on *find* and *consider*: doxastic attitudes (\approx *think*, *believe*) with a subjective component

Subjective attitudes II

- ▶ Assumption: *consider* as a weak version of *find*
- ▶ Starting point: research on vagueness (Barker 2002; Sorensen 2018 a.o.)
- ▶ Cf. reductionist approaches to faultless disagreement (Glanzberg 2007; Barker 2013; Plunkett and Sundell 2013)
- ▶ Another option:
 - ▶ *consider* is about discourse/linguistic conventions (cf. Muñoz's (2019) hyperintensions)
 - ▶ *find* is about subjectivity, stay tuned
- ▶ Next: evidential restrictions (based on Korotkova and Anand 2021)

Evidential restrictions

- ▶ *Consider* shows stronger evidential restrictions than *believe*
(Kennedy and Willer 2016)

(16) Lee has never seen Kim ...

- a. # but he considers her tall.
- b. but he believes her tall.

- ▶ and *find* is even stronger

(17) Lee has never eaten sea urchin, but based on his observation of the pleasure that all his friends clearly derive from eating it ...

- a. # he finds it tasty.
- b. he considers it tasty.
- c. he believes it to be tasty.

Find+must ban I

- Systematic ban on epistemic *must*: Catalan, Dutch, German, Italian, Norwegian (first noted in Lande 2009; Sæbø 2009; Reis 2013 on German and Norwegian, see also Coppock 2018 on Swedish)

(18) Der Tee **muss** aus Japan sein. [GERMAN]
DEF.M tea □.3SG.PRES from Japan be.INF
'This tea must be from Japan.'

(i) ✓**epistemic**: e.g., based on the taste and color;

(ii) ✓**deontic**: e.g., based on the tea ceremony requirements.

(19) Magda **findet**, [GERMAN]
Magda **find.3SG.PRES**
dass der Tee aus Japan / **lecker** sein **muss**.
COMP DEF.M tea from Japan / **delicious** be.INF □.3SG.PRES
#**epistemic**, ✓**deontic**: 'Magda is of the opinion that the tea must be Japanese / delicious.'

For some speakers, *müssen* is banned altogether.

Find+must ban II

Previous literature

The *find+must* ban: a clash in subjectivity

- ▶ Epistemics: expected under doxastics (Anand and Hacquard 2013)
- ▶ Embedding under *find*: the most reliable diagnostic of semantic subjectivity (Kennedy 2013; Bylinina 2017; Anand and Korotkova 2021)
- ▶ *Must*-modals: not the right semantic type (Sæbø 2009; Coppock 2018)

Find+must ban III

Our take

The *find+must* ban: a clash in evidentiality (idea mentioned and rejected in van Wijnbergen-Huitink 2016)

- ▶ Epistemics as a class: can be subjective (Egan et al. 2005; Stephenson 2007; MacFarlane 2014; Khoo 2015)
- ▶ *Find*-verbs: encode directness (first proposed by Stephenson 2007)
- ▶ *Must*-modals: encode indirectness (von Fintel and Gillies 2010, 2021)
- ▶ Predictions
 - ▶ indirect evidentials banned
 - ▶ non-evidential epistemics allowed

Directness of *find* I

- ▶ **Claim:** *find*-verbs require firsthand experience (a fact mentioned but not argued for in detail before; Stephenson 2007; Reis 2013; Kennedy and Willer 2016; Umbach 2016; Solt 2018)

- (20)
- a. I **find** baked tofu **delicious**, # but I have never tried it.
 - b. I **think** that baked tofu is **delicious**, ✓but I have never tried it.

- ▶ **Counter-claim**

- ▶ *Find*-verbs: select for PPTs (Bylinina 2017; Vardomszkaya 2018; Muñoz 2019)
- ▶ PPTs: directness on their own (Ninan 2014, 2020; Anand and Korotkova 2018)

- (21) Baked tofu is **delicious**, # but I have never tried it.

Directness of *find* II

- **Support for our claim:** *find*-verbs require directness even with those predicates that do not require it otherwise

(22) Context 1 (direct): The speaker has eaten at this restaurant.
Context 2 (indirect): The speaker read reviews about this restaurant.

- a. Food in this restaurant is **authentic**. ✓Context 1, ✓Context 2
- b. I **find** food in this restaurant **authentic**. ✓Context 1, #Context 2

Directness of *find* III

- (23) Context 1 (direct): The speaker has ridden a bike over the two streets.
Context 2 (indirect): The speaker has seen the description of the streets.
- a. Weserstrasse is **bumpier** than Friedelstrasse.
 ✓Context 1, ✓Context 2
 - b. I **find** Weserstrasse **bumpier** than Friedelstrasse.
 ✓Context 1, # Context 2 (adapted from Solt 2018:83)
- ▶ English for simplicity; same pattern in other languages
 - ▶ Including *find*-verbs without a discovery sense (e.g. Swedish *tycka*)

Directness of *find* IV

- ▶ Wrinkle: directness with abstract concepts? (van Wijnbergen-Huitink (2016) uses it as an objection to the directness idea)

(24) I **find** this outcome **desirable**.

(25) I **find** this attitude **outrageous**.

- ▶ Possible explanation
 - ▶ intellectual acquaintance: a mental experience is an experience (Franzén cf. 2018; Vardomsкая cf. 2018; question largely for cognitive phenomenology)
 - ▶ not direct perception, but what counts as most reliable evidence (see discussion of direct evidentiality in Faller 2002; Krawczyk 2012; McCready 2015)

Directness of *find* V

Bottom line

Find-verbs semantically encode directness

Find-verbs and indirect expressions I

- ▶ Our proposal: the *find*+*must* ban is due to an evidential clash
- ▶ Prediction: other indirect elements also banned under *find*-verbs (cf. a remark in Frühauf 2015:34 on the infelicity of reportative *sollen* under *finden*)
- ▶ Prediction borne out: *find*-verbs, even with a subjective complement, ban expressions independently known to be indirect
 - ▶ German inferential *wohl* (Zimmerman 2008)
 - ▶ Dutch hearsay *schijnen* (Koring 2013)
 - ▶ Bulgarian evidential perfect (Izvorski 1997)

Find-verbs and indirect expressions II

(26) Indirect markers under *find*-verbs

- a. #**Namiram**, če [BULGARIAN]
 find.1SG.PRES COMP
torta-ta (e) bi-l-a **vkusn-a.**
cake-DEF.F be.3SG.PRES be-**IND-F** **tasty-F**
'I am of the opinion that, as I hear/infer, the cake is tasty.'
- b. #Ik **vind** dat [DUTCH]
 I **find.1sg.pres** COMP
het eten hier **goed** **schijnt** te zijn.
DEF food here **good** **REP.3SG** to be.INF
'I am of the opinion that the food here is said to be good.'
- c. #Ich **finde**, dass [GERMAN]
 I **find.1SG.PRES** COMP
der Tee **wohl** **lecker** ist.
DEF tea **INFER** **delicious** be.3SG.PRES
'I am of the opinion that the tea is presumably delicious.'

Find-verbs and indirect expressions III

Bottom line

Find-verbs across languages ban a variety of elements independently argued to be indirect

Find-verbs and indirect expressions IV

- ▶ Target case (repeated from 19)

(27) Magda **findet**, dass der Tee aus Japan sein
Magda **find.3SG.PRES** COMP DEF.M tea from Japan be.INF
muß.
□.3SG.PRES
#epistemic: 'Magda is of the opinion that the tea must be from Japan.'
 r = 'that the tea is from Japan'

- ▶ Proposal: the ban is a conflict of evidence (a different tweak on Anand and Korotkova (2018))
- ▶ Crucial components:
 - ▶ *Find*-verbs and indirect expressions: kernel-sensitive
 - ▶ An indirect expression in *find*-complement: a semantic contradiction (a formal system in which having direct evidence for a $must\phi$ -claim has the same status as having direct evidence for a ϕ -claim)

Find-verbs and indirect expressions V

- ▶ Possible alternatives
 - ▶ Pure pragmatics will not work: not all direct+indirect combinations are bad, cf. *must+tasty*
 - ▶ A more refined epistemology of direct settlement: is it possible to have firsthand experience for an indirect claim?

Recap

- ▶ A novel account of the *find+must* ban rooted in evidential restrictions
- ▶ Support: the behavior of other indirect markers
- ▶ Ramifications of this view for epistemic and evidential expressions at large
 - ▶ only expressions that semantically encode indirectness would be banned under *find*-verbs

Epistemic possibility in *find*-complements I

- ▶ *Might*-modals and epistemic adjectives: frequently assigned similar semantics (Lassiter 2017)
- ▶ Epistemic adjectives: very common

(28) Descartes **findet** es **wahrscheinlich**, dass Gott
 Descartes **find.3SG.PRES** this **likely** COMP God
 die Welt von Beginn an so gemacht hat, wie
 DEF world from beginning on so make.PRT have.3SG.PRES how
 sie sein sollte.
 she be.INF should
 'Descartes finds it likely that from the start God created the
 world the way it should be'.

(<http://www.cosmologica.de/metaphysik/descartes1inh.htm>)

Epistemic possibility in *find*-complements II

- *Might*-modals: banned in the epistemic interpretation

- (29) Der Tee **kann** aus Japan sein. [GERMAN]
DEF.M tea ◇ from Japan be.INF
'The tea may be from Japan.'
(i) ✓**epistemic**: we don't know where the tea is from, it can also be from Japan;
(ii) ✓**deontic**: e.g., the tea served for picky guests is allowed to be Japanese.
- (30) Magda **findet**, dass der Tee aus Japan sein **kann**.
Magda **find.3SG.PRES** COMP the tea from Japan be.INF ◇
#**epistemic**, ✓**deontic**: 'Magda is of the opinion that the tea may be from Japan.'

Epistemic possibility in *find*-complements III

- ▶ Embedding under *find*: diagnostic of **semantic** indirectness
 - ▶ *Might*-modals semantically encode indirectness (cf. von Stechow 2006; von Stechow and Gillies 2010; Matthewson 2015)
 - ▶ Modal adjectives, despite an arguably similar semantics, do not

Evidential expressions in *find*-complements I

Indirectness

- ▶ Not always construed a semantic phenomenon
 - ▶ Can be derived pragmatically (Faller 2004; Davis and Hara 2014; Bowler 2018; Altshuler and Michaelis 2020)
 - ▶ Such expressions: expected to be allowed
-
- ▶ Mandelkern (2019): indirectness of *must* as an implicature
 - ▶ Our analysis: a case against such view

Evidential expressions in *find*-complements II

Bottom line

Find-verbs ban indirect elements and cannot be blindly used as a diagnostic for subjectivity.

(31) The distribution of epistemic and evidential expressions under *find*-verbs

- a. *must*-MODALS: # epistemic, ✓ non-epistemic
- b. *might*-MODALS: # epistemic, ✓ non-epistemic
- c. EPISTEMIC ADJECTIVES: ✓
- d. SEMANTIC EVIDENTIALS: # indirect, ✓ direct (modulo subjectivity)
- e. PRAGMATIC EVIDENTIALS: ✓ (modulo subjectivity)

Lack of *de dicto* readings I

- ▶ Intensional environments: give rise to 'de re' / 'de dicto' ambiguities
- ▶ Most analyses of *find* and *consider* (though see Sæbø 2009): doxastic attitudes
- ▶ Expectation: subjective attitudes give rise to 'de re' / 'de dicto' ambiguities
- ▶ Expectation not borne out

Lack of *de dicto* readings II

- ▶ Neither *find* nor *consider* show clear *de dicto* readings, unlike vanilla doxastic attitudes

- (32)
- a. Marta thinks that baby unicorns are cute.
 \nRightarrow There are unicorns in $w@$.
 - b. Marta {finds, considers} baby unicorns cute.
 \Rightarrow There are unicorns in $w@$.

- (33)
- a. Marta thinks he is a cute Narnian.
 \nRightarrow He is a Narnian in $w@$.
 - b. Marta {finds, considers} him a cute Narnian.
 \Rightarrow He is a Narnian in $w@$.

- ▶ Mistaken identity

Lack of *de dicto* readings III

(34) *Context: Marta tried an dish that she believed was lobio (a Georgian bean dish). She forms a belief that that dish was delicious. In fact, she tried fava beans (a Greek bean dish).*

- a. ✓Marta thinks that lobio is delicious.
- b. # Marta finds lobio delicious.

► English for simplicity; data replicated in other languages

Lack of *de dicto* readings IV

Bottom line

Absence of 'de dicto' readings is a problem for most theories of subjective attitudes.

Summary on *find* and *consider*

- ▶ Sensitivity to subjectivity in the complement
- ▶ Evidential restrictions
- ▶ Ban on epistemic modals
- ▶ Absence of 'de dicto' readings

Summary of the class

- ▶ Natural language: sensitive to SP vs. OP distinction
- ▶ SPs: a distinguished profile
 - ▶ Conversational dynamics
 - ▶ Grammatical properties
- ▶ Most theories of subjective meaning relativize truth to a judge

Open questions

- ▶ Which theory of subjective meaning is right?
- ▶ Do we need to encode subjectivity in semantics, or can we derive it pragmatically?
- ▶ What is the source of acquaintance inferences?
- ▶ What is the nature of direct knowledge?
- ▶ Is *consider* truly a weaker version of *find*?
- ▶ ...

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