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Nominal *that*-complementisers: Eventualities, Situations and Polysemy

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Informational Nouns

Informational Nouns

- nouns with at least one sense that denotes a piece, pieces, a body or bodies of information
 - which could be modelled as e.g., a proposition, some collection of propositions, Record Types...

Examples of informational nouns in English are given in (1)

- (1) *allegation, belief, book, fact, information, knowledge, newspaper, report, statement*

Noun-related propositional complementiser clauses (NCCs)

The neutral term *noun-related complementiser clause* NCC is from Müller 2023

Not all nouns can be used with NCCs

(2) Examples:

- a. the allegation/belief/evidence/fact/information/report/
statement that Bilbo found the ring
- b. #the house that Bilbo met Gandalf
- c. #the event/celebration that Gandalf set off fireworks
- d. #the book/brochure/document/newspaper that Bilbo
found the ring

Some evidence of cross-linguistic robustness:

- Finnish, German, Italian, Spanish

Question: What is the right restriction for licensing NCCs?

NCCs clearly relate to propositions/informational entities etc.

- Naive hypothesis: Informational Nouns can be felicitously used with NCCs in the COMPenvironment
 - Correctly predicts *#the house/event/celebration that...*
 - Does not predict *#the book/brochure/document/newspaper that...*

Plan:

- Summarize one of the main analyses of these data, and discuss some challenges
- Motivate our own alternative analysis:

A situation-theoretic approach:

NCCs select for informational nouns that also denote eventualities
OR situations

Background: The “contentful entities” approach

e.g. Kratzer 2006; Elliott 2020

- Both NCCs and common nouns express properties. These properties compose via predicate modification
- NCCs encode *cont*, a function from worlds and ‘content bearing entities’ to propositions.
- Ns such as *fact* and eventuality denoting Ns (*allegation*, *belief*) denote content bearing entities (a sort of type e , e_c)
- Nouns such as *book* do not (e.g., Elliott 2020)

(3) a. $\llbracket \text{allegation} \rrbracket = \lambda w[\lambda x[\text{allegation}_{\langle s, \langle e_c, t \rangle \rangle}(w)(x)]]$
b. $\llbracket \text{fact} \rrbracket = \lambda w.[\lambda x[\text{fact}_{\langle s, \langle e_c, t \rangle \rangle}(w)(x)]]$

(4) $\llbracket \text{that Alex ran} \rrbracket$
 $= \lambda w[\lambda x[\text{cont}_{\langle s, \langle e_c, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle \rangle}(w)(x) = \lambda w'[run(w')(a)]]]$

(5) $\llbracket \text{fact that Alex ran} \rrbracket$
 $= \lambda w[\lambda x[\text{fact}(w)(x) \wedge \text{cont}(w)(x) = \lambda w'[run(w')(a)]]]$

Objection 1: Ignoring polysemy

Informational nouns that can be composed with NCCs:

1. also have an eventuality-denoting sense: *allegation, belief, statement*
2. plus *fact* (more on which shortly)

Informational nouns that cannot be composed with NCCs:

3. also have a physical-entity-denoting sense: *book, document, newspaper*

Conclusion: Polysemy plays a role in licensing NCCs (Sutton, in prep)

- The “contentful entities” approach simply demarcates contentful entities of type *e* from non-contentful ones
 - “The natural conclusion to draw from such contrasts is that the linguistic notion of a contentful entity is distinct from the intuitive notion.” (Elliott 2020, p.63)
- We think that a more explanatory and predictive analysis can be given

Objection 2: facts are not content-bearing entities

Trying to make sense of content-bearing entities

- One a very broad understanding of *entities*:
 - Mental states such as beliefs are entities that in some sense bear content
 - Communicative events such as statements are entities that in some sense bear content
 - Artefacts such as books are entities, but perhaps they ‘contain’ rather than bear content
- But facts are not entities that bear content
 - If anything, they are content (that in some sense corresponds with how the world is)

It is therefore opaque what entities of sort e_c are denoted by *fact*

Background: Austin vs. Strawson on facts

Strawson 1949; Austin 1949

Austin on truth and facts

- facts are parts of the world (situations)
- *Alex's statement corresponds with the facts* expresses that 'Alex's statement is true'
- Facts/situations are truth makers for statements

Strawson on truth and facts

- Facts are really no more than true propositions (they are what true statements state)
- *Alex's statement corresponds with the facts* is just a way of saying 'Alex's statement is true'

Background: Austin's response

Austin 1970/1954

Different uses of *fact* behave in different ways

- (6) a. The (mangy) condition of the cat is a fact
b.??The (mangy) condition of the cat is a/the fact that ...

Uses of *fact* such as (6-a) do not align with an analysis in terms of true propositions

We see some appeal in both Strawson's and Austin's views: Their views can be reconciled if we analyse *fact* as polysemous:

- i. what makes e.g., statements or beliefs etc. true (i.e. situations)
 - denoted by *a fact* in (6-a)
- ii. (true) propositions (situation types that are witnessed by some situation)
 - denoted by *the fact* in e.g., *Alex expressed the fact that the cat has mange*

From simple to rich type theory

Background

- Seminal work by Ranta (1994)
- Implementing a NL semantics based on Martin-Löf 1984

Move 1: Let types feature as part of the object language

- Simply Typed Semantics: Construct arbitrarily complex expressions of some type which are then interpreted (e.g. in a model)
- Richly typed semantics: Construct types themselves of arbitrary complexity
 - Types have witnesses (things of that type)
 - But are individuated also in terms of their structure (fine-grained intensionality)

From simple to rich type theory

Move 1: Let types feature as part of the object language

Move 2: Treat propositions as types

- Curry-Howard Correspondence (Curry and Feys, 1958; Howard, 1980)

Simple Type Theory (STT)	Rich Type Theory (RTT)
Sets of worlds	Types
Flat	Structured
Individuated by set membership	Individuated by witness set <i>and</i> structure

Hyperintensionality:

- The types $2 + 2 = 4$ and $5 - 3 = 2$ have the same witnesses (situations, worlds etc.)
- But can be individuated in terms of structure (and the manner of construction)

Very short introduction to TTR

Cooper 2023, 2012, a.m.o

Record Types

- (7)
$$\left[\begin{array}{l} x : Ind \\ c_1 : cat(x) \end{array} \right]$$
- *There is a cat*
 - Cf. predicate logic: $\lambda w. \exists x. cat_w(x)$

- Propositions in TTR are types (e.g. situation/record types)
- Witnesses of record types are records (situations)
- Labels x, c_1 are like discourse referents
- *Ind* is a basic type
- *cat* is a type constructor: constructs a type given a value for the label x

Records/Situations

- (8)
$$\left[\begin{array}{l l} x & = f \\ c_1 & = s_1 \end{array} \right]$$
- (8) : (7) iff
 - $f : Ind$
 - $s_1 : cat(f)$

Non-Polysemous Common Nouns in TTR

CNs denote Properties of situations

- Not functions from worlds to sets of entities
- Functions from situations to situations types

$$(9) \quad \textit{cat} \mapsto \lambda r : [x : \textit{Ind}]. [c_{\textit{cat}} : \textit{cat}(r.x)]$$

- Functions from records of some type: $\lambda r : [x : \textit{Ind}]$
 - I.e., situations that contain some individual
- to a proposition
 - I.e., the type of situations in which the entity labelled x is a cat

Simplified example

(9) $\text{cat} \mapsto \lambda r : [\ x \ : \ \text{Ind} \]. \ [\ c_{\text{cat}} \ : \ \text{cat}(r.x) \] \ : \text{Ppty}$

- Proper names as GQs: functions from a property to the proposition that some individual has that property (classic Montague treatment)

(10) $Felix \mapsto \lambda P : \text{Ppty}. P([x = f])$

(11) $Felix \text{ is a cat} \mapsto [\ c_{\text{cat}} \ : \ \text{cat}(f) \]$

Important theoretical point, situation theoretic approaches to semantics:

- CNs do not (directly) denote individuals
- CNs denote properties of situations that contain individuals

Multi-participant situations (Sutton, 2022)

Polysemous nouns denote situations that contain multiple participants

- polysemous Ns constrain situations to witness at least two entities
- e.g., *lunch*: to witness at least some event and some physical entity
- the resulting record type constrains the event to be a lunch eating event and the individual to be the food
- Additionally neo-Davidsonian inspired thematic role relations

(12) *lunch* \mapsto

$$\lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{l} x : \textit{Phys} \\ e : \textit{Ev} \end{array} \right] . \left[\begin{array}{l} c_{\text{food}} : \textit{food}(r.x) \\ c_{\text{eat}} : \textit{eat_lunch}(r.e) \\ c_{\text{pat}} : \textit{patient}(r.x, r.e) \end{array} \right]$$

Proposal Outline

- NCCs select for polysemous nouns that denote either eventualities or situations, as well as propositions
 - So *allegation* and *fact* can be used with NCCs
 - But *book* and *newspaper* cannot
- but crucially, the relationship between the proposition and the eventuality or situation is determined by the lexical semantics of the noun
 - E.g., for *allegation that*, it is not the NCC that encodes e.g., 'contains' as a relation between contents and an eventuality, but the noun
 - And so we do not predict that *fact* denotes content bearing entities

An Eventuality-Informational Polysemous Noun: *allegation*

A function from a record, r

- a pairing of a record type p , and event, x

to a record type, the proposition that:

- r is an allegation-situation — $\text{allegation}(r)$
- and that p is the contents of x — $\text{cont}(r.x, r.p)$

(13) $\text{allegation} \mapsto$

$$\lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{l} p : \text{RecType} \\ x : Ev \end{array} \right] . \left[\begin{array}{l} c_{\text{alleg}} : \text{allegation}(r) \\ c_{\text{alleg_cont}} : \text{cont}(r.x, r.p) \end{array} \right]$$

- allegation is $\text{RecType}/Ev$ polysemous

Our take on *fact*

fact denotes pairings of a proposition and a situation that witnesses the proposition cf. *Austinian proposition* (Barwise, 1989; Ginzburg, 2012)

A function from a record, r

- a pairing of a record type p , and record x to a record type, the proposition that:
- r is an fact-situation ($fact(r)$)
- and that x is a witness (a truth maker) for p i.e., $(r.x : r.p)$
 - Where $f = r.x : r.p$ is a *manifest field* (Coquand et al., 2004; Cooper, 2023)
 - Alternatively represented $[f : p_{r.x}]$
which holds iff $f : p$ and $f = r.x$

$$(14) \ fact \mapsto \lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{c} p : RecType \\ x : Rec \end{array} \right] . \left[\begin{array}{c} c_{fact} : fact(r) \\ f = r.x : r.p \end{array} \right]$$

- *fact* is *RecType/Rec* polysemous
- *facts* can be characterised as *true Austinian propositions*

Analysis of NCCs

A function from a record, r

- a pairing of a record type p , and something, x , that is either a record or an eventuality

to a record type, the proposition that:

- the value of $r.p$ is the proposition *Alex runs*
- plus introduction of a label, q that allows anaphoric reference to the proposition *Alex runs*

(15) *that Alex runs*

$$\mapsto \lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{l} p : \textit{RecType} \\ x : Ev \vee Rec \end{array} \right] . [q = r.p, [c_{ar} : run(a)] : \textit{RecType}]$$

- Where $q = r.p, [c_{ar} : run(a)] : \textit{RecType}$ iff
 - $q : \textit{RecType},$
 - $q = r.p = [c_{ar} : run(a)]$

Analysis of NCCs cont.

(15) *that Alex runs*

$$\mapsto \lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{l} p : RecType \\ x : Ev \vee Rec \end{array} \right] . [q = r.p, [c_{ar} : run(a)] : RecType]$$

Two effects of this analysis

1. A selectional restriction to exclude e.g., *book* (no eventuality- or situation-denoting sense)
2. Underspecification wrt how any bound x is related to p (must come from the semantics of the NP)

Composing Informational Nouns with NCCs

Composition via property modification:

$$(14) \ fact \mapsto \lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{l} p : RecType \\ x : Rec \end{array} \right] . \left[\begin{array}{l} c_{fact} : fact(r) \\ f = r.x : r.p \end{array} \right]$$

(15) *that Alex runs*

$$\mapsto \lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{l} p : RecType \\ x : Ev \vee Rec \end{array} \right] . \left[\begin{array}{l} q = r.p, [c_{\text{ar}} : run(a)] : RecType \end{array} \right]$$

(16) *fact that Alex runs*

$$\mapsto \lambda r : \left[\begin{array}{l} p : RecType \\ x : Rec \end{array} \right] . \left[\begin{array}{l} c_{fact} : fact(r) \\ q = r.p, [c_{\text{ar}} : run(a)] : RecType \\ f = r.x : r.p \end{array} \right]$$

A property of pairs, r of:

- proposition (rec. type), p
- a situation, x

Such that:

- r is a fact
- the proposition is *Alex runs*
- x makes p true

Comparing Analyses

	Contentful entity approach	Our approach
Relation with proposition	Encoded by <i>that</i>	Encoded by the noun
Facts are entities	Yes	No
Principled explanation for restrictions on NCCs?	No	Yes
Polysemy plays a role	No	Yes

Open question: Situations vs. Eventualities

In Cooper 2023:

- Situations and eventualities are not fundamentally distinct
 - E.g., situation/event e can be a witness for the type $\text{run}(\text{alex})$

Here, we assume a more neo-Davidsonian approach:

- Situations and eventualities are distinct
 - E.g., event e can be a witness for the type allegation
 - Situations are witnesses for propositions (Record types) (such that these situations may contain events)

So on a broad understanding of *situation* that included neo-Davidsonian eventualities and the truth-makers for propositions:

- NCCs select for nouns that are information-situation polysemous

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