

To flip a judge: Predicates of personal taste in a commitment-based discourse model

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PREDICATES OF PERSONAL TASTE (PPTs) (e.g. *tasty, fun*) have been demonstrated to exhibit a host of subjective and context-dependent behaviors, leading some to conclude the existence of some mentally-active individual JUDGE within their denotation [1–4]. Much of this literature has focused on systematic variation between common autocentric readings, where the speaker is the judge, and somewhat rarer exocentric readings, where a third party is the judge, which seem to be available in certain embedded and root contexts.

In this work, I focus on another phenomenon affecting apparent judge determination, known as INTERROGATIVE FLIP [5]. At first glance, in English polar questions the usual pressure for an autocentric interpretation (1) is replaced with an allocentric reading, where the addressee is the judge (2) [6]. Yet exceptions abound. When a PPT is within presupposed content, e.g. internal to a definite DP (3-4), the PPT appears dependent on both speaker and addressee judgement. In contrast with non-presupposed cases, if speaker Jay knows addressee Kay does not like a certain establishment’s ceviche, it is at best impolite of him to refer to it as *the tasty ceviche*, even in an assertion (3); likewise, if speaker Jay has already established that he does not like the ceviche, it is anomalous and inconsistent for him to refer to it as *the tasty ceviche*, even in a question (4). Appositives also display a failure to flip, remaining solely speaker-oriented in questions (5). Elsewhere, English rising declaratives lack syntactic reflexes of polar questions, but feed interrogative flip all the same (6).

- (1) **J, to K:** The sushi at Stevenson Cafe is tasty. (*tasty to J*)
- (2) **J, to K:** Is the sushi at Stevenson Cafe tasty? (*tasty to K*)
- (3) **J, to K:** The tasty ceviche is in stock. (*tasty to J and K*)
- (4) **J, to K:** Is the tasty ceviche in stock? (*tasty to J and K*)
- (5) **J, to K:** Is the ceviche, which is tasty, in stock? (*tasty to J*)
- (6) **J, to K:** The sushi at Stevenson Cafe is tasty? (*tasty to K*)

These exceptions suggest that we need a more powerful notion of interrogative flip, related to the discourse effects underlying the variation in (1-6). To develop a formal proposal, I turn to the commitment-based discourse model tradition [7–9], where we can capture what seems to be a intuitive generalization: judge-hood for a PPT generally tracks with the locus of commitment. Allocentric readings are most available exactly where speaker commitment is absent, and mutually-judged readings are available when a requirement is placed upon the common ground.

To this end, I present a model of conversation as discourse commitments proceeding towards the determination of the interlocutors’ centered worlds [10]. The centered world formalism, unlike other options, permits a straightforward translation between an individual’s commitments and the conversational table, if we adopt an inquisitive semantics [9]. Because commitment will serve to self-locate, commitment is by default autocentric, and commitment requests allocentric. I will also demonstrate the ways in which such a model, when enriched with theories of subjective authority [11] and default assertion [12], can account for the intuition of faultless disagreement with PPTs.

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