

Acquaintance inferences as direct evidential effects

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Assertions made using *experiential predicates* like *tasty* commit the speaker to having had certain sorts of direct experience of the subject of predication (cf. Pearson 2013).

- (1) Tripe is tasty.
a. \leftrightarrow The speaker has tasted tripe.
b. \leftrightarrow The speaker's gustatory experience of tripe is pleasant.

I argue that these *acquaintance inferences* (Wollheim 1980) are direct evidential effects: they occur just when a speaker commits to direct evidence for a predication involving an experiential predicate. Following Anand & Korotkova (2018), I note that markers of indirect evidentiality, like the (Standard) Tibetan copula *yod red*, used with adjectives, cancel the inferences (2), and note further that markers of direct evidentiality, like the copula *'dug*, make them obligatory (3).¹

- (2) *kha lag 'di zhim po yod red.*
food this tasty COP.IND
'This food is tasty.'
 \leftrightarrow The speaker has not tasted the food.
- (3) *kha lag 'di zhim po 'dug.*
food this tasty COP.DIR
'This food is tasty.'
 \leftrightarrow The speaker has tasted the food.
 \leftrightarrow The speaker's gustatory experience of the food is highly pleasant.

From these data, the following generalization arises.

- (4) **Generalization:** Where the evidential source for a predication using an experiential predicate is overtly marked, acquaintance inferences arise when, and only when, that marking indicates a direct source of evidence.

I further note that Ninan (2014)'s account of acquaintance inferences, according to which (i) speakers know whether an individual x has experiential property ϵ only if they have direct experience of the subject of predication of the appropriate kind, and (ii) assertion commits a speaker to knowledge of the asserted proposition (following Gazdar 1979), makes

¹Such inferences accompanying a direct evidential further display the desired behaviors of acquaintance inferences noted in Ninan (2014): they project out of negation and external negation, and cannot be overtly canceled.

the incorrect prediction that speakers must disavow claims to knowledge where they commit to a lack of direct experience. In some languages, like (Standard) Tibetan, the prediction is just the opposite, when indirect evidentials are used: claims to knowledge of experiential properties based on indirect evidence are felicitous (5), while disavowals of knowledge against assertions based on indirect evidence are infelicitous (6).

- (5) *kha lag 'di zhim po yod red. ngas shes gi yod.*
 food this tasty COP.IND I.ERG know PRES COP.EGO
 'This food is tasty. I know it.'
- (6) *?kha lag 'di zhim po yod red, yin n'i kha lag 'di zhim po yod med shes gi med.*
 food this tasty COP.IND but food this tasty be-not-be know PRES
 COP.NEG.EGO
 'This food is tasty, but I don't know whether this food is tasty.'

I conclude from this that *pace* Ninan, speakers can be taken to know whether an individual has an experiential property even in the absence of direct experience, and so acquaintance inferences are not epistemic effects, but 'purely' evidential effects.

I then briefly offer a semantics for experiential predicates which, combined with a semantics for direct evidentiality, derives the desired inferences. Experiential predicates are true of individuals just in case they are disposed to produce experience of a certain sort: thus, *tasty* is true of x just in case the gustatory experience that x is disposed to produce is disposed to produce (a non-zero degree of) pleasure. Where GUS represents gustatory experience, PLEASURE experience of pleasure, and '> 0_k' is to be read as 'is an experience of kind k of a non-zero degree.'

- (7) a. $\epsilon'_k(w)(x) :=$ the experience of kind k that x is disposed to produce at w
 b. $\llbracket \textit{zhim po} \rrbracket^{c,w} = \lambda x_e. \epsilon'_{\text{PLEASURE}}(w)(\epsilon'_{\text{GUS}}(w)(x)) > 0_{\text{PLEASURE}}$

A direct evidential like *dug* then composes with a proposition, and contributes the not-at-issue proposition that this proposition is verified by the speaker s_c 's perceptual alternatives $Per_{s_c, w}$ (in the rough spirit of Izvorzki 1997). Where an ordered pair denotation represents the at-issue extension of an expression with its first member, and the not-at-issue proposition expressed with its second member:

- (8) $Per_{x,w} := \{w' : w' \text{ is compatible with the perceptions of } x \text{ at } w\}$
 (9) $\llbracket \textit{dug} \rrbracket^{c,w} = \lambda p_{st}. \langle p(w), \lambda w'_s. \forall w'' \in Per_{s_c, w'} [p(w'')] \rangle$

The result is that, in virtue of asserting an experiential predication with a direct evidential source, the speaker incurs a not-at-issue commitment to the subject of predication having the experiential property in all of his or her perceptual alternatives:

- (10) $\llbracket kha lag 'di zhim po 'dug \rrbracket^{c,w} =$
 $\langle \epsilon'_{\text{PLEASURE}}(w)(\epsilon'_{\text{GUS}}(w)(\iota x [\textit{food}'(w)(x)])) > 0_{\text{PLEASURE}},$
 $\lambda w'_s. \forall w'' \in Per_{s_c, w'} [\epsilon'_{\text{PLEASURE}}(w'')(\epsilon'_{\text{GUS}}(w'')(\iota x [\textit{food}'(w')(x)])) > 0_{\text{PLEASURE}}] \rangle$

On the assumption that in each of an individual's perceptual alternatives in w , every indi-

vidual is disposed to produce that experience which it actually produces in the experiencer in w :

(11) $\epsilon''_k(w)(x)(y) :=$ the experience of kind k that y produces in x at w

(12) For all $x, k, w' \in Per_{y,w}$:
If $\epsilon'_k(w')(x) = \delta$, then $\epsilon''_k(w)(y)(x) = \delta$.

The result is that the speaker commits to the following proposition, which amounts to the relevant acquaintance inferences: the experience of pleasure, produced in the speaker by the gustatory experience that the food produces in the speaker, is of a non-zero degree.

(13) $\lambda w_s. \epsilon''_{\text{PLEASURE}}(w)(s_c)(\epsilon''_{\text{GUS}}(w)(s_c)(\iota x[\text{food}'(w)(x)])) > 0_{\text{PLEASURE}}$

Thus the speaker must have tasted the food, and been pleased by this taste. Acquaintance inferences are the result of the not-at-issue commitments of direct evidentiality combining with the semantics of experiential predicates.

I conclude by briefly speculating on why, in languages that do not mark direct evidentiality overtly, as in (1), speakers must typically commit to a direct source of evidence. I suggest that this is because on the present account, experiential predicates have an innate semantic connection to direct evidence: for an individual to have an experiential property is the very same thing as for it to be disposed to produce direct evidence that it has that property, and so only direct evidence is *ultimately* relevant for the determination of such properties, making direct evidence a privileged commitment, only to be voided by explicit obviators (cf. Anand & Korotkova 2018).

References

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