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A CASE OF SEMANTIC-BINDING ILLUSION? SUBJECT-ORIENTED READINGS OF APPOSITIVES.

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The perspectival orientation of appositive relative clauses (ARS) depends on the context in which they are uttered:

(1) Jenny believes that Mike, who's totally insane, is going to win the Song Contest.

The matrix verb doesn't interact with the ARS, which therefore needs to be interpreted with respect to the author of the (actual) speech act. Immunity to embedding and to operators in general is an essential property of conventional implicatures (Potts 2005). (2) appears to contradict this generalisation:

(2) She is surprised that Paul, who lives piously, drinks large quantities of alcohol.

Apparently, the ARS is a complement of the adversative predicate. The effect of surprise arises due to the combination of high level alcohol consumption and religiosity. The ARS doesn't convey the speaker's perspective as in (1), but it seems to pattern with the (grammatical) subject. Sæbø (2010) argues that in downward-entailing environments the source of subject-oriented interpretations is semantic-binding.

I intend to evaluate this conclusion. It fails to explain the fact that positive polarity items (PPI) are licensed:

(3) Er ist überrascht, dass Maria, die eher/ziemlich schüchtern ist, vom 5-Meter-Brett springt.

'He is surprised that Maria, who is PPI chicken-hearted, is jumping off the 5 meter platform.

It would be a sign of semantic disintegration, if the subject-oriented reading is still available in (3). I will present experimental data concerning this possibility.

Referenzen

Potts, Christopher (2005): The Logic of Conventional Implicatures. Oxford.

Sæbø, Kjell (2010): Appositives in Modal Contexts. Vortrag, Sinn & Bedeutung 15, Saarland.