

'AS' PHRASES AS A WINDOW ONTO MULTIDIMENSIONALITY

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Diagnosing two types of 'as' phrases

Dimensional asPs specify scales of multidimensional adjectives.

- (1) Eloise is $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{kind} \\ \text{strict} \end{array} \right\}$ as a teacher.

Capacity asPs link with a wider range of predicates via situations.

- (2) Eloise $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{is on strike} \\ \text{makes 3000 euros} \end{array} \right\}$ as a teacher.

These asPs have been treated as a single class (Landman 1989, Moltmann 1997, Asher 2006, Zobel 2018).

I argue they are semantically distinct due to:

- Differences in their grammatical behavior
- Parallels between dimensional asPs, subjective modifiers, and equatives

Dimensional 'as' vs capacity 'as'

Exceptives Only dimensional asPs occur in exceptives:

- (3) a. Eloise is kind except (for) as a teacher. (dimensional)
b. #Eloise is on strike except (for) as a teacher. (capacity)

Entailment patterns Landman (1989) notes predicates with asPs entail the predicate alone. This is only clearly the case for capacity asPs:

- (4) a. Eloise is kind as a teacher. $\overset{??}{\rightarrow}$ Eloise is kind. (dimensional)
b. Eloise is on strike as a teacher \rightarrow Eloise is on strike. (capacity)

Questions Only dimensional asPs can be questioned with *how* and *way*:

- (5) a. {How/in what way} is Eloise kind? As a teacher. (dimensional)
b. {How/in what way} is Eloise on strike? #As a teacher. (capacity)

- (6) a. One way Eloise is kind is as a teacher. (dimensional)
b. #One way Eloise is on strike is as a teacher. (capacity)

Class nouns Zobel (2018) observes that 'class nouns' (nouns defined by inherent properties as opposed to societal roles) are infelicitous in asPs. This generalization only holds for capacity asPs:

- (7) a. Eloise is {likeable/kind/friendly} as a person. (dimensional)
b. #Eloise {earns 5000 euros/is on strike} as a person. (capacity)

Relational nouns Some relational nouns require a second argument:

- (8) Howard is {#a/my} brother.

Dimensional, but not capacity, asPs facilitate their sortal interpretation:

- (9) a. Howard is $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{kind} \\ \text{caring} \end{array} \right\}$ as a brother. (dimensional)
b. ??Howard $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{takes care of his siblings} \\ \text{sets the table} \end{array} \right\}$ as a brother. (capacity)

Analysis: naming dimensions

Multidimensional adjectives can be evaluated across more than one scale (Sassoon 2013, 2016). I argue dimensional asPs name these scales.

- (10) Bob is $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{strict} \\ \text{kind} \end{array} \right\}$ as a judge, but not as a dad.

Therefore unidimensional adjectives sound odd with dimensional asPs:

- (11) ??Bob is $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{tall} \\ \text{blonde} \end{array} \right\}$ as a judge.

In the spirit of Sassoon, I posit that multidimensional adjectives denote a relation between an individual and a dimension:

$$(12) \llbracket \textit{kind} \rrbracket = \lambda Q_{e,st} \lambda x . \text{GEN } s[Q(x)(s)][\exists s'[s \leq_{\min} s' \wedge \textit{kind}_Q(x)(s')]]$$

$$(13) P_Q(x)(s) \text{ iff } P \text{ holds of } x \text{ and } s \text{ on the dimension } Q \text{ where } Q \text{ is a dimension among those made lexically available by the predicate } P$$

Dimensional asPs saturate the dimensional argument:

$$(14) \llbracket \textit{kind as a teacher} \rrbracket = \lambda x . \text{GEN } s[\textit{teacher}(x)(s)][\exists s'[s \leq_{\min} s' \wedge \textit{kind}_{\textit{teacher}(x)}(s')]]$$

For unmodified predicates, dimensions are universally quantified over:

$$(15) \llbracket \textit{Bob is kind} \rrbracket = \forall Q \text{GEN } s[Q(\textit{Bob})(s)][\exists s'[s \leq_{\min} s' \wedge \textit{kind}_Q(\textit{Bob})(s')]]$$

Capacity as applies to a nominal, then the main predicate. The situations in which the nominal holds of x, s , minimally extend the situations in which the main predicate holds of x, s' .

$$(16) \llbracket \textit{as}_{\text{CAPACITY}} \rrbracket = \lambda P_{(e,st)} \lambda Q_{(e,st)} \lambda x \lambda s' . \exists s[P(x)(s) \wedge Q(x)(s') \wedge s \leq_{\min} s']$$

$$(17) \llbracket \textit{on strike as a teacher} \rrbracket = \lambda x \lambda s' . \exists s[\textit{teacher}(x)(s) \wedge \textit{on.strike}(x)(s') \wedge s \leq_{\min} s']$$

Revisiting data

Exceptives Exceptives are licensed by universal quantification (von Stechow 1991), which is only present in dimensional *as*.

Entailment patterns Being kind on one dimension does not entail being kind across the majority of available dimensions:

Questions I analyze *how* and *in what way* as asking for dimensions.

Class nouns Dimensional asPs with class nouns give rise to the pragmatic effect of setting up a contrast (e.g. *kind as a person, but mean as a teacher*). The contribution of *person* is less informative in capacity asPs.

Relational nouns In dimensional asPs, the nominal is situated in the restrictor, which facilitates a sortal interpretation of relational nouns. This effect also surfaces in characterizing sentences (Sandoval to appear):

- (18) A brother cares for his siblings

Connections in the grammar

Subjective modifiers can be paraphrased using dimensional asPs (Siegel 1976, Morzycki 2016, Sandoval to appear): *kind teacher* \approx *kind as a teacher*

They also give rise to many of the same effects (Sandoval to appear):

- (19) a. Eloise is a kind teacher. (adjective is not entailed)
 \nrightarrow Eloise is kind (overall).
b. Eloise is kind except she's not a kind teacher. (licit in exceptives)
c. A: {How/In what way} is Eloise kind? ('how' and 'way' reference)
B: She's a kind teacher
d. Eloise is a kind person. (class nouns are licit)
e. Bo is a # $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{kind} \\ \text{caring} \end{array} \right\}$ brother. (sortal reading of relational nouns)

Assigning a semantics to subjective modifiers using or derived from this analysis would account for this data and the paraphrase connection.

Generic equatives offer a reading under which a property of two individuals is instantiated in the same way (Rett 2013, 2020):

- (20) Eloise is kind as Mia (is kind).

They are expressed using *as* phrases and can be paraphrased with *how*, and *way*, just as dimension asPs can be.

- (21) Eloise is kind {how/in the way} Mia is kind.

These expressions could be conceptualized by equating the dimensions by which a property holds across two individuals to one another:

$$(22) \exists Q, Q', s, s' [\textit{kind}_Q(\textit{Eloise})(s) \wedge \textit{kind}_{Q'}(\textit{Mia})(s') \wedge Q = Q']$$

Taking stock

- Dimensional asPs specify what is already inherent to the predicate (a dimension). They only occur with multidimensional adjectives.
- Capacity asPs link to a wider range of predicates—they are constrained by world context, not the grammar.
- Conceptualizing dimensional asPs in this way sheds light on its cousinhood to subjective modifiers and equatives.

References

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