

Metaphorical Contexts

Metaphors are often characterized in terms of transfer of meaning. In the oft-cited Shakespearean line, when Romeo says *Juliet is the Sun*, he implies that some of the properties which are usually associated with *the Sun* (e.g. giving warmth and light, being the center of the universe, being the source of life), are transferred to Juliet. When reporting Romeo's attitude as a quotation in (1), there is no doubt that this transfer of meaning is attributed to Romeo himself. But what about indirect report of the utterance in (2)? Who is performing the transfer of meaning in this case: Romeo or the speaker? Is it possible that Romeo did not use the metaphorical predicate *the Sun*, but said something that certified its usage by the speaker when reporting Romeo's speech?

1. Romeo said: "Juliet is the Sun".
2. Romeo said that Juliet is the Sun.

Although metaphors are extensively discussed by philosophers, their semantic treatments are rare. One of the recent and influential theories on metaphors is Stern (2000), where an indexical account of metaphors is proposed analogously to Kaplanian indexical account of demonstratives. Stern posits an unpronounced metaphorical operator *Mthat* that is present in the logical form and transforms a literal predicate *is the Sun* into a context-sensitive non-literal *Mthat*['is the Sun']. The question which context precisely can determine denotation of metaphors has ignited additional discussion. Contrary to Stern, who claims that metaphors are always constrained by actual speaking context, Camp (2005) uses reports like (2) to argue for inherent ambiguity between *de dicto* and *de re* readings of metaphor reports. In the former, the speaker reports the subject of report adopting the relevant transfer of meaning, but not necessarily identifies with it. In the latter, it is the speaker who adopts the metaphor.

In this work I propose to extend Camp's distinction between *de dicto* and *de re* interpretation of metaphors to a full-fledge account of metaphors as speaker-oriented content. That is one of the ways the interpretation of a metaphorical expression ϕ is dependent on the utterance context c , is by being relativized to the speaker. That metaphor production and understanding hinges on individual linguistic preferences is independently supported by other linguistic phenomena: the availability of faultless disagreement with metaphorical predications and discourse markers signalling metaphors.

For the formal machinery underlying this account I choose van Genabith's (2001) framework, and further propose that selection of metaphorical predicates, modeled by existential quantification over properties, is parametrized by the speaker. Specifically, in metaphorical attitude reports the existential quantifier can take both wide and narrow scopes, which explains the availability of *de re* and *de dicto* readings.

Bibliography

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