Towards an equative analysis of attitude predicates

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Embedded questions under *to know* have two exhaustive interpretations: the strong exhaustive (SE) reading (1a), and the intermediate exhaustive (IE) reading (1b). The IE-reading is currently considered the basic semantic reading by many (Cremers & Chemla 2016), in opposition to the earlier partition-based SE-semantics (Groenendijk & Stokhof 1984).

(1)   Luca knows [who danced].
   a.   SE: *Luca knows of every person who danced that she danced, and of every person who did not dance that she did not dance.*
   b.   IE: *Luca knows of every person who danced that she danced and does not assume of anyone who did in fact not dance that she danced.*

The goals of this paper are two-fold. We first propose a novel equative-based analysis for the lexical meaning of *to know*, inspired by Heim (1984), which yields the intermediate exhaustive (IE)-reading as the basic semantic interpretation for questions embedded under *to know*. The core idea of this approach is that the lexical meaning of the attitude predicate *to know* contains an equative statement as paraphrased in (2). This yields exhaustification effects in a way reminiscent from literature on cleft exhaustivity (Szabolcsi 1994, Pollard and Yasaful 2016).

(2)   A knows who danced. =
       The strongest subjective answer to the question who danced that A can give (based on his belifes) to the question who danced equals the strongest objectively true answer.

Secondly, we show that this equative-based analysis for *to know* extends to other embedding attitude verbs, thereby paving the way towards a general equative semantics for embedding attitude predicates (and clefts). For example, we suggest that *agree* has a very similar equative paraphrase as *to know* as shown in (3).

(3)   A and B agree on who danced. =
       the maximal subjective answer of A and B equals the conjunction of all answers mutually believed to be true by both A and B.

References: • Cremers, A. & E. Chemla (2016). A psycholinguistic study of the exhaustive readings. *J. Semantics* 33.1: 49-85. • Groenendijk, J. & M. Stokhof (1984). *Semant. of Questions & Pragmatics of Answers*. PhD. U. Amsterdam • Heim, I. (1994). Interrogative Semant. *Proc. of the 9th Conference of the Israel Assoc. for Theor. Ling.* Jerusalem: Academon, 128-144. • Pollard, C. & M. Yasavul (2016). Anaphoric it-clefts, *Proc. CLS 50*: 381-395. • Szabolcsi, A. (1994). All quantifiers are not equal. *Acta Ling. Hung.* 42-43: 171-187.