

Differences in Sameness

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I. Observation: *The same x* exhibits ambiguity

- (1) I saw the same girl.
- (2) I wore the same dress.
- (1) assumes a single girl, but (2) can be one entity seen on different occasions, or two different entities of the same kind
- These can be explained in terms of the formal semantic notions of extension and intension:
 - (1') $\exists x \exists y [S(x, y) \leftrightarrow [x = y]]$ (extensional reading only)
 - (2') $\exists x \exists y [S(x, y) \leftrightarrow [x = y]]$ (extensional reading)
 - (2'') $\exists x \exists y [\hat{S}(x, y) \rightarrow [x \neq y \wedge \hat{x} = \hat{y}]]$ (intensional reading)
- (2'') (two dresses) is the definition of what makes that dress “itself” at all world-time pairs, and composed of the **relevant properties** that make it identifiable as such
 - The intension is the “sense” of a thing, or concept; also, a set of sets, which allows here for multiple copies of the NP
- (2') (one dress) is the physical referent evaluated at the time of speech
- The availability of readings is determined by the NP type being modified
 - See Gorian (2007) for a classification of types (Natural, Artifact, Aesthetic, Intellectual, etc. and the uses of *same* that they license)
- N.B.: NP modifier *same* also shows transitivity—see (II) below—(2) refers to a second dress, or dress-seeing event

II. Analysis: *Is the same* is a two-place predicate

- A formal representation of the syntax and semantics:
- I argue that both arguments are themes, due to the stative nature of the adjectival predicate
 - Whether or not this violates the Theta criterion is controversial; if it does, it is justified as per Haegeman (1991), Parsons (1995), Dowty (1989)
 - [N.B.: As per Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet (2000), *theme can* be used for animate arguments (cf. *patient*)]
 - The two arguments make it obligatorily transitive as in (3), although only one theme need be overt, as in (4):
 - (3) This dress is the same as Jane's dress.
 - (4) This dress is the same.
 - By definition, the dress in (4) must be “the same,” as another dress—either itself at another time, or a numerically distinct one. When only one NP is overt, we see a phenomenon similar to “obligatorily” transitive verbs with deleted arguments, such as the classic ‘I ate’. I formalize this transitive/intransitive alternation as per Jackendoff (2002):

Semantics:	X SAME Y/X
Syntax:	NP same (NP)

- N.B.: *is the same* also shows ambiguity—see (I) above—(3) and (4) may refer to one or two dresses/intensional or extensional)

III. Analysis Applied to the Observation

- When one argument is not overt, it is because *same* has undergone a derivation to license this
- I propose Chierchia's (2004) Reflexivization (R) operator in extensional cases of missing arguments, and Detransitivization (D) operator in intensional cases, outlined by Chierchia as follows (applied to *same* here):
 - $\cup[R(\text{is the same as})](x) \leftrightarrow \cup[\text{is the same as}(x)](x)$
- The *same* type—intensional or extensional—selects the operator
 - (R) operator applies when *x* fills both roles (extensional uses):
- (5) That girl is the same.
 - A pragmatic account of valency reduction is not satisfactory
 - These accounts claim that null arguments are obtained contextually, e.g., ‘This dress is the same [as that one]’ = pointing at a second dress, or = an prior utterance in the discourse
 - Yet, with no pragmatic reference, utterances such as (6) are still **grammatical**; conversely, context cannot make (7) grammatical
- (6) Mary's car is the same.
- (7) *Mary devoured.
 - Context in fact provides comprehension for the interlocutor; it doesn't explain the argument's absence from the grammar
 - Conversely, even contextually provided arguments must sometimes still be overt, as in Port's (2010) example:
- (8) Where is my sandwich?
 - #The dog ate.

IV. Open Questions

- This ambiguity is not limited to the word *same*!
- (9) I have seen that dress {before/already}. (extensional or intensional)
- (10) I have seen that girl {before/already}. (extensional only)
 - Do these ambiguity-triggering expressions (*same*, *before*, *already*) form a class?
 - = Dyadic predicates?
 - This suggests the importance of the NP type (*girl* vs. *dress*) as a more significant ambiguity trigger than “sameness”
- Are reciprocal cases exceptions to transitivity, or can *same* take two VP arguments?
- (11) Both teachers {have/favor the same dress/student}.
 - Why does *same* require a definite determiner in all uses, like superlatives (cf. *identical*, *unique*)?
 - This cannot be a reflex of its semantic feature [+uniqueness]
 - Cross-linguistic comparisons of sameness?

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