

Uniqueness, Mention-Some, and Mention-All

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Facts about singular-marked questions (1) and $\diamond$ -questions (2) cast doubts on the semantics of questions. On the one hand, the presupposition of Dayal's (1996) ANS-operator, namely that a question has a unique strongest true answer, predicts the uniqueness requirement in (1) but has to treat the mention-some reading of (2) as a pragmatic phenomenon. On the other hand, a weaker ANS-operator defined by Fox (2013) can easily capture the mention-some reading of (2) but not the uniqueness requirement in (1). This paper develops an analysis that captures both facts.

- (1) Which boy came? (Presupposes that exactly one boy came)
(2) Where can we get gas? (Admits both mention-some and mention-all answers)

Treating mention-some as a semantic phenomenon, I argue that the uniqueness requirement in (1) can be reduced to the *Supremum Requirement* (SR) on the quantificational domain of the singular-marked *wh*-phrase: a subset of **boy** is qualified to be a possible domain of *which boy* iff the supremum of this subset is also a member of **boy**.

Since the canonical Hamblin-Karttunen semantics of questions has no space for checking SR, I propose that *wh*-questions are higher-ordered: a core constituent **Q** in the LF denotes a family of possible answer sets; each possible answer set names an individual set that satisfies the SR. A question has a uniqueness requirement iff its **Q** contains only singleton sets. Next, an answerhood $\mathfrak{R}$ -operator selects out the minimal strongest true answer set in **Q**, each member of which counts as a good answer. The possible size of the selected set decides the availability of mention-some.

Furthermore, I will extend this analysis to questions with an anti-distributive predicate (3-4) by applying a generalized distributivity operator to the higher-ordered *wh*-trace. If time permits, I will sketch out possible ways of deriving the mention-some/mention-all ambiguity of (2).

- (3) Which boys are in the same team? (Admits only mention-all answers)
(4) Which four boys are in the same team?
a. *abcd* are in the same team.
b. # *ab* are in the same team, and *cd* are in the same team.

References

- Dayal, Veneeta. 1996. *Locality in Wh quantification: Questions and relative clauses in Hindi*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
Fox, Danny. 2013. Mention-some readings of questions, class notes, MIT seminars.