

Evidence, Attitudes, and Counterstance Contingency: Toward a Pragmatic Theory of Subjective
Meaning

Malte Willer (joint work with Chris Kennedy)

This paper focusses on two cross-linguistically robust interpretive and distributional characteristics of subjective predicates that have resisted a comprehensive analysis: subjective predicates introduce experiential evidential requirements, and they differ from objective predicates in their distribution under certain types of propositional attitude verbs. The goal of this paper is to argue that these features can be derived in a uniform way, without introducing special kinds of meanings or interpretive operations for subjective predicates, and within a broadly truth conditional approach to semantic content, given a view of subjective language as an essentially pragmatic, context-sensitive phenomenon. Specifically, we propose that subjectivity reflects speakers' recognition of the possibility of *counterstances*: alternative information carriers that differ only in decisions about how to resolve indeterminacy about linguistic practice, not in non-linguistic facts, and we show how a characterization of subjective predicates as counterstance contingent expressions not only derives their distributional properties but also explains why their use comes with distinct evidential requirements.