

## Habituality, frequentativity and plurality

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Habituals and *for*-adverbial sentences pattern alike in a remarkable way: in presence of singular indefinites in object position, they both display “same object” effects that can give rise to oddness. This is shown in (1) and (2):

- (1) a. John drives a sportscar.  
( $\Rightarrow$  John habitually drives the same sportscar.)
- b. ?John drinks a beer.  
( $\Rightarrow$  John habitually drinks the same (bottle of) beer over and over.)
- (2) a. John drove a sportscar for an hour.  
( $\Rightarrow$  John drove the same sportscar for an hour.)
- b. ?John drank a beer for an hour.  
( $\Rightarrow$  John drank the same (bottle of) beer over and over for an hour.)

Attempts have been made to account for the oddness of (2b), following two alternative lines: Dowty (1979) analyzes *for*-adverbials as universal quantifiers over time-intervals, and assumes that an indefinite object obligatorily scopes above the *for*-adverbial, thus predicting for (2b) the odd reading that at all subintervals of a one-hour interval John drank the same beer; Krifka (1992) and Zucchi and White (2001) analyse *for*-adverbials as predicate modifiers presupposing that the modified predicate be non-quantized, and explain (2b)’s oddness on the basis of the predicate *drink a beer* being quantized. Not much, however, has been said about sentences like (1b). Their oddness is difficult to explain on accounts based on a covert generic quantifier (Krifka et al. 1995, Chierchia 1995, Pelletier and Asher 1997): on such accounts, it is not clear why (1b) cannot mean that in all situations that are appropriate for John’s drinking, John drinks a beer – with the beer possibly co-varying with the situations quantified over.

I propose a unified account of (1b)’s and (2b)’s oddness. On my proposal, habituals and *for*-adverbial sentences like (2b) are non-quantificational plurality-based constructions: their meanings involve plural events, but no generic or universal quantifier. The indefinite objects in (1a,b) and (2b) trigger existential quantification over individuals that realize the theme argument of the underlying plural event. Following Kratzer (2008), I assume that plural events are contributed by the verb’s lexical semantics (Kratzer’s Lexical Cumulativity Hypothesis, LCH). The denotation of *drink a beer*, e.g., is given in (3), where the event variable can be instantiated by a plural event, according to LCH.

- (3)  $[[ \text{drink a beer} ] ] = \lambda e. \exists y [ \text{bottle-of-beer}(y) \wedge \text{drink}(e) \wedge \text{Theme}(e) = y ]$

I take habituals to involve plural events whose temporal traces span from the past into the future. E.g., (1b) means that a plural event of John drinking a beer has a trace that spans from the past into the future – where a plural event of drinking a beer has proper parts that are atomic events of drinking that same beer. (1b)’s oddness is so predicted: given that the event plurality comes from the verb’s lexical meaning and not from a scope-bearing pluralization operator that the indefinite object could scopally interact with, it follows that the theme of the plural event is also the theme of its atomic sub-events; as a result, a plurality of events of drinking a beer, all having the same beer as theme, is predicted, which is in conflict with our belief that the same beer cannot be drunk more than once. On the other hand, that the same sportscar is

driven more than once does not conflict with any of our general beliefs, and (1a) is correctly predicted not to give rise to oddness.

Concerning (2a,b), I follow Krifka (1992) in assuming that *for*-adverbials measure out the temporal extent of an event which is further presupposed to be non-quantized. By the presupposition of non-quantization, given that an atomic event of drinking a beer is quantized but a plural event of the same kind is not, (2b) requires that a plural event of drinking a beer be provided by the VP, which is guaranteed by LCH. This correctly predicts the frequentative reading of (2b) and explains (2b)'s oddness on the same basis as (1b)'s oddness. On the other hand, the predicate in (2a) is already non-quantized for atomic events in its denotation, thus (2a) does not require a plural event of driving a sportscar, and the analysis correctly predicts a non-frequentative reading for this sentence.

This paper proposes a non-quantificational analysis for both habituais and *for*-adverbial sentences, where event-plurality plays a key role. The analysis fares better than the generic quantifier analysis in that it allows a simple explanation of why (1b) is odd, and it makes also possible to give a uniform account of the oddness of (1b) and (2b), two apparently unrelated phenomena.

## References

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