

# The dynamics of expressive content

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In this talk, I'll be investigating a compositionality puzzle raised expressive adjectives such as "damn" and "fucking". Consider, e.g., the following example:

(1) Hanson ate my damn sandwich.

This sentence can be felicitously uttered in a context where the speaker has no negative attitude towards their sandwich, or sandwiches in general, but rather has a negative attitude towards *the fact that Hanson ate their sandwich*. The sentence can also be felicitously uttered in a context where the speaker has a negative attitude towards their sandwich, and is glad that Hanson stole it, since they wanted to be rid of it. Gutzmann (2018) analyzed this phenomenon from a syntactic perspective, by conjecturing the presence of an interpretable *expressivity feature* on the expressive adjective, and uninterpretable correlates of this feature, which can be inserted at either the edge of the DP [my damn sandwich], or the CP [Hanson ate my damn sandwich]. Via an agreement mechanism, the expressive semantics of the modifier may be interpreted at different syntactic nodes, thus capturing the observed ambiguity.

I'll instead pursue the idea that the expressive modifiers *take scope*. Straightforward evidence for this position comes from the fact that readings associated with expressive modifiers seem to be sensitive to scope islands. When the expressive modifier is located in an embedded clause, (2) lacks a reading where it conveys that the speaker has a negative attitude towards Lauren's *saying*.

(2) Lauren said that Hanson ate my damn sandwich!

I'll formalize this idea by treating expressive adjectives as *hybrid scope takers*, using Barker & Shan's (2014) continuation semantics.

**References:** • Barker, C. & C. Shan. 2014. Continuations and natural language. Oxford: OUP. • Gutzmann, D. 2018. The dog ate the damn cake. Expressive adjectives at the syntax/semantics interface. Slides from a talk given at LENLS 2018, Yokohama.