

The semantics of emotive markers and other illocutionary content

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I coin the term ‘emotive markers’ to describe words, like *alas*, which encode not-at-issue information about the speaker’s emotive attitude towards the content of the utterances they occur in. Emotive markers can be morphologically or prosodically encoded; other examples include exclamation intonation, or mirative markers.

I argue that there are important differences between emotive markers and other encoders of not-at-issue content that range over propositions, in particular utterance modifiers like *frankly* and evidential adverbs like *apparently*. In contrast to these, emotive markers can result in Moore’s Paradox (Rett & Murray 2013); and they always scope over their local argument. In (1), the two sentences are synonymous; but the contrast in (2) shows that *alas* can only take narrow scope when embedded.

- (1) a. Frankly/Apparently, if the mayor is convicted, she must resign.
b. If, frankly/apparently, the mayor is convicted, she must resign.
- (2) a. #Alas, if the mayor is convicted, at least we’ll have the chance of getting a better one.
b. If, alas, the mayor is convicted, at least we’ll have the chance of getting a better one.

I conclude that the contribution of emotive markers should be treated as ‘illocutionary content’, on par with the sincerity conditions encoded in illocutionary mood (Searle & Vanderveken 1985). I present a formal analysis of illocutionary content in which it differs from other not-at-issue content in restricting the speaker’s Discourse Commitments (Gunlogson 2001) rather than the Common Ground (Farkas & Bruce 2010).

I argue this treatment correctly predicts emotive markers’ behavior with respect to Moore’s Paradox and scope, as well as the observation that emotive markers can only apply to clauses associated with single propositions. I discuss why emotive markers form a class to the exclusion of these other encoders of not-at-issue content, and tentatively extend this explanation to cross-linguistic differences in the types of contributions made by evidentials.

References: • Farkas, D. & K. Bruce. 2010. On reacting to assertions and polar questions. *Journal of Semantics* 27. 81–118. • Gunlogson, C. 2001. *True to form: rising and falling declaratives as questions in English*. New York: Routledge. • Rett, J. & S. Murray. 2013. A semantic account of mirative evidentials. In T. Snider (ed.), *Proceedings of SALT XXIII*. Ithaca: CLC Publications. • Searle, J. & D. Vanderveken. 1985. *Foundations of illocutionary logic*. Cambridge: CUP.