

How does composition work in de Groote’s dynamic continuation semantics? Let us compute the meaning of “John admires Mary. He smiles at her.” We have the following meanings:

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket \text{John admires Mary} \rrbracket &= \lambda i \lambda k'. \text{Admire}(j, m) \wedge k'(m :: j :: i) \\ \llbracket \text{He smiles at her} \rrbracket &= \lambda i \lambda k'. \text{Smile}(\text{sel}_{\text{He}}(i), \text{sel}_{\text{Her}}(i)) \wedge k'(i) \end{aligned}$$

In other words, “John admires Mary” asserts that $\text{Admire}(j, m)$, and also pushes j and m onto the left context i . “He smiles at her” selects an entity for He and an entity for Her from the left context, and asserts that a Smile relation holds between them.

In addition, we define the following rule:

$$\llbracket S_1.S_2 \rrbracket = \lambda i \lambda k. \llbracket S_1 \rrbracket(i)(\lambda i'. \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket(i')(k))$$

Given a left context i , we first apply $\llbracket S_1 \rrbracket$ to i . For simplicity, we will assume that “John admires Mary” is the first sentence of our discourse, and therefore let i be the empty list $[]$. Then $(m :: j :: i)$ is just the list $[m, j]$:

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket S_1 \rrbracket([]) &= (\lambda i \lambda k'. \text{Admire}(j, m) \wedge k'(m :: j :: i))([]) \\ &= \lambda k'. \text{Admire}(j, m) \wedge k'([m, j]) \end{aligned}$$

The right context of S_1 is $(\lambda i'. \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket(i')(k))$, and therefore we apply the above expression to it. This successively plugs in $(\lambda i'. \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket(i')(k))$ for k' , and then $[m, j]$ for i' :

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket S_1 \rrbracket([])(\lambda i'. \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket(i')(k)) &= (\lambda k'. \text{Admire}(j, m) \wedge k'([m, j]))(\lambda i'. \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket(i')(k)) \\ &= \text{Admire}(j, m) \wedge (\lambda i'. \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket(i')(k))([m, j]) \\ &= \text{Admire}(j, m) \wedge \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket([m, j])(k) \end{aligned}$$

Then we can evaluate $\llbracket S_2 \rrbracket([m, j])(k)$. We plug in $[m, j]$ for i and k for k' :

$$\begin{aligned} \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket([m, j])(k) &= (\lambda i \lambda k'. \text{Smile}(\text{sel}_{\text{He}}(i), \text{sel}_{\text{Her}}(i)) \wedge k'(i))([m, j])(k) \\ &= (\lambda k'. \text{Smile}(\text{sel}_{\text{He}}([m, j]), \text{sel}_{\text{Her}}([m, j])) \wedge k'([m, j]))(k) \\ &= \text{Smile}(\text{sel}_{\text{He}}([m, j]), \text{sel}_{\text{Her}}([m, j])) \wedge k([m, j]) \end{aligned}$$

Then, assuming sel_{He} selects j from $[m, j]$, and sel_{Her} selects m , we get:

$$\llbracket S_2 \rrbracket([m, j])(k) = \text{Smile}(j, m) \wedge k([m, j])$$

In this way, we can see that the right context is the rest of the discourse!

Putting it all together, we get:

$$\llbracket S_1 \rrbracket(\square)(\lambda i'. \llbracket S_2 \rrbracket(i')(k)) = \mathbf{Admire}(j, m) \wedge \mathbf{Smile}(j, m) \wedge k([m, j])$$

All of this is in a λk -expression, so finally we get:

$$\llbracket S_1.S_2 \rrbracket(\square) = \lambda k. \mathbf{Admire}(j, m) \wedge \mathbf{Smile}(j, m) \wedge k([m, j])$$

To get a truth value, we must give it a right context k , which is the right context for the whole discourse. What is k ? See HW4 for details.