

**The role of semantic composition
in the setting of adjectival dimensions and comparison classes**

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The interpretation of adjectives is mediated by a variety of implicit parameters. For example, in any use of the adjective *good*, discourse participants select contextually relevant dimensions of goodness ('good in what respect?'), a comparison class ('good compared to which entities?'), and a membership standard ('to what extent do entities have to exemplify the dimensions to count as *good*?'). Many questions arise concerning the methods speakers employ for the specification of these parameters within contexts, and the order at which they specify them. The talk will focus on the process of selection of a dimension set and comparison class, and the extent to which this process is dominated by compositional mechanisms.

For example, it is well known that adjectives (like, other modifiers) can occur in a variety of constructions—in particular, attributive- (as in *good mother*), predicative- (*Billy's mother is good*), and relative-constructions (*Mothers who are good*). In pronominal position, they can stack in different orderings (*Good Polish mother* vs. *Good mother from Poland*), and they can apply to different types of arguments (*Billy, The table, The boy, Every boy, A boy*). Considering such linguistic contexts, the talk will criticize a previous attempt to define a syntactic criterion for the selection of comparison classes (Ludlow 1989), and it will highlight the role of constituent structure plus semantic triviality filters.