

## Main points

- SEs exclaim about a property held by the referent of the subject DP
- They are not fixed to a particular polarity of evaluation.
- Intonation carries meaning.
- Different intonations in SEs signal differences in evaluation.

**Experiment:** Do English speakers rate intonation contours as positive/negative?

**Results:** Negative evaluation can be marked intonationally.

**Analysis:** Intonation contributes expressive meaning (Potts 2007, Gutzmann 2015).

## Background

Exclamatives comment on some extreme or unexpected property.

- (1) a. What a large watermelon! (wh-exclamative)  
 b. How beautiful the birds sing! (wh-exclamative)
- (2) The peppers he eats! (nominal exclamative)
- (3) Aren't you happy! (negative inversion exclamative)

**Some-exclamatives** make use of the determiner *some* (Anderson 2018, Israel 2011).

- (4) a. Boy, was she (ever) some dancer!  
 "She was a dancer and she was an exceptional dancer."  
 b. That was some wine she brought to the party!  
 "She brought wine to the party and it was very good wine."  
 c. It's going to be some party!  
 "We're having a party and it's going to be a great party."

**Some-exclamatives** properties include:

- Noteworthiness or scalar extremity.
  - Two variants: in-situ and preposed.
- (5) John is some lawyer!  
 (6) Some lawyer John is!
- Necessity of "exclamative intonation". No exclamative reading without intonation.

- (7) a. John is some lawyer.  
 b. That was some wine we brought to the party.  
 c. *Gulliver's Travels* is some book.

- Intonation can be realized in two ways:
  - Final rising or neutral intonation
  - Final falling intonation

**Question:** How does the intonation used affect the interpretation of the exclamative?

**Hypothesis:** Falling intonation associated with more negative evaluation, compared with other possible intonations

## Stimuli

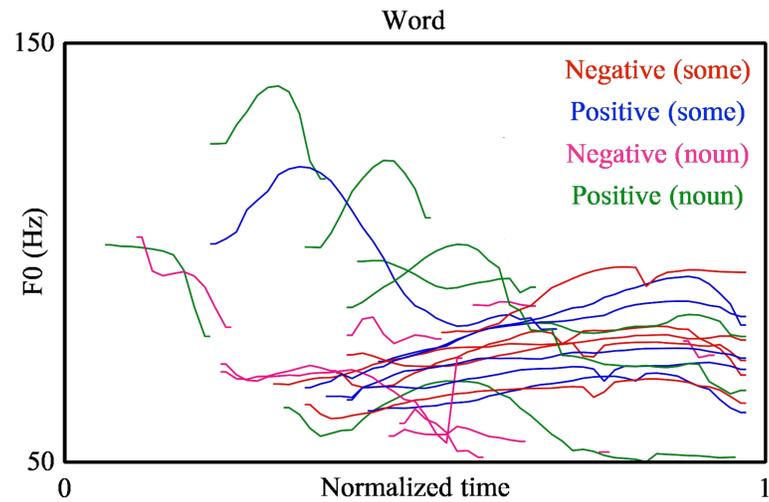
40 different *some*-exclamative sentences with two intonation patterns.

[human]	accountant, architect, artist, author, chef, dentist, doctor, engineer, lawyer, mechanic, musician, barber, employee, student, family, father, friend, professor, husband, colleague, cousin
[artifact]	bicycle, brush, car, chair, computer, headphones, knife, mug, necklace, notebook, pen, cellphone, backpack, rope, scissors, shirt, shoes, plate, stapler, guitar

Exclamative sentences recorded with two intonations:

- an intonation intended to signal a negative evaluation (negative intonation)
- an intonation to signal a positive evaluation (positive intonation)

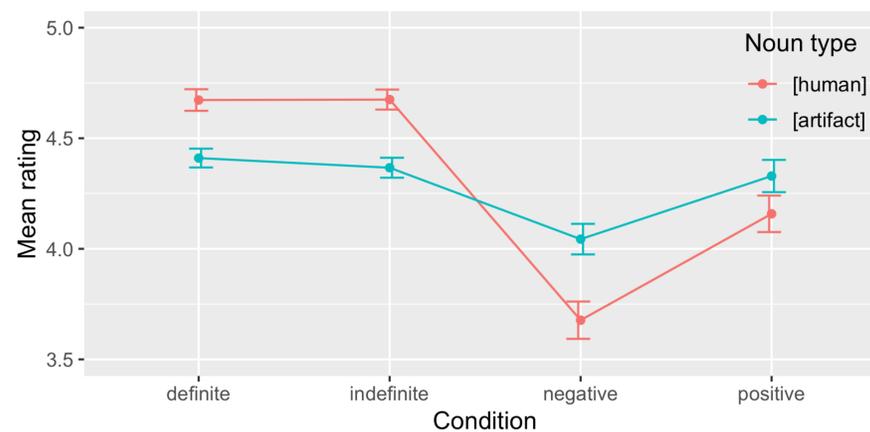
## Where is the pitch accent?



- Qualitatively shows difference lies not in *some*, but by a pitch accent on the noun.
- Higher pitch for nouns in positive condition compared to negative condition.

## Methods and Results

- 24 English speakers recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk
- Presented within-subjects using Experigen (Becker & Levine 2014).
- Audio presentation. Rated on 7 point Likert scale.
- 80 indefinite and definite filler sentences.
- Prompt: How negative or how positive do you think the sentence sounded?



Mixed-effects model with random effects for item and participant.

- positive and negative sentences rated less positive-sounding than fillers ( $p < .001$ ).
- negative sentences were significantly less positive-sounding than positive ( $p < .001$ )
- [human] rated lower than fillers in both the negative and positive conditions ( $p < .001$ );
- [human] rated lower in the negative condition compared to the positive condition ( $p = .001$ )
- [artifact] only differs from fillers in negative condition (negative,  $p = 0.029$ ).

**Conclusion:** Intonations do differ in their evaluation.

- negative differed significantly from fillers. human nouns ( $p < 0.0001$ ), artifact nouns ( $p = .008$ )
- positive differed from fillers with human nouns ( $p < 0.0001$ ) but not artifact nouns ( $p = 0.86$ )

## Expressive meaning

Semantic treatment for negative intonation.

- negative intonation carries a negative evaluation.
- positive intonation does not always carry a positive evaluation.

Potts (2007), Tonhauser et al. (2013), Simons et al. (2010) and many others examine non-at-issue meaning/expressive meaning/projective meaning.

- Expressive meaning: found in words like *damn* and *bastard*
- Often emotionally charged
- Immediately inflict their content on the discourse.

Using diagnostics from Potts's (2007): negative intonation signals the presence of expressive meaning. Two useful diagnostics:

- Intonation's evaluation is not deniable (8).
- Intonation's evaluation is obligatorily anchored to the speaker (see (9)).

- (8) A: John is some friend<sub>low</sub>!  
 B: #That's not true! You think highly of John.

- (9) John said that Mary is some friend<sub>low</sub>.

## Extending Anderson (2018)

Add expressive/use-conditional meaning component to the exclamative, treating intonation as a mixed-type expressive (McCready 2010, Gutzmann & McCready 2016).

- Intonation low combines with a nominal denotation.
- Projects a negative attitude towards the individual and the property denoted by the nominal

The low + nominal combination reflects our finding that lower pitch is on the noun.

- (10) a.  $[[low]] = \lambda f_{(e,t)} \lambda x. f(x) \blacklozenge \mathbf{bad}(f)(x)$ ,  
 where **bad** is type  $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, t^p \rangle\rangle$   
 (a mapping from truth-conditional to use-conditional properties)  
 b.  $[[low]](\llbracket lawyer \rrbracket) = \lambda x. \mathbf{lawyer}(x) \blacklozenge \mathbf{bad}(f)(x)$

**Puzzle:** Why are [human] nouns more negative?

- Speculation: [human] nouns have gradable dimensions more easily accessible by **bad**.
- True* has been offered as one test of nominal gradability (Morzycki 2009, 2012).
- Many [human] nouns we tested dual-character concepts (Knobe et al. 2013). Have a normative dimension.

- (11) a. He is a true friend.  
 b. ??This is a true computer.

## References and Acknowledgements

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