

On concealed questions and specificational subjects

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I will present a uniform analysis of the definites 'the way to Larissa' and 'the number of planets' as used in (1) and (2):

- (1) Meno knows the way to Larissa. (Plato, Meno)
- (2) The number of planets is eight. (Frege, 1884)

The definite in (1) is an example of a concealed question (e.g. Heim 1979, Romero 2005). The definite in (2) is arguably a specificational subject (Higgins 1973, Romero 2005).

Although syntactically nominals, concealed questions and specificational subjects will be argued to be semantically questions (contra Heim 1979 and Romero 2005). Building on Aloni (2008) and Aloni and Roelofsen (2011) we will assume that questions, concealed questions and specificational subjects, quantify over contextually determined domains of individual concepts (aka 'conceptual covers'). Because of this feature, the proposed semantics can be easily applied to explain more complex cases like (3) and (4):

- (3) John knows the price that Fred knows. (Heim 1979)
- (4) a. The price that Fred thought was \$1.29 was (actually) \$1.79. (Romero 2005)
b. The price that Fred thought was \$1.29 was the price of milk.

Selected References

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