Habituals, -Er Nominals, and Modality

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The common view of habituality

From C. Bache (1999), *Essentials of Mastering English*:

- The situations referred to by e.g., *John teaches linguistics* and *Sally smokes* are characterizations of John and Sally, cf. *John is a teacher of linguistics* and *Sally is a smoker* (p. 76).

This raises several questions: What is the meaning of *Sally smokes*? Does it mean the same as *Sally is a smoker*? And if not, how are the two meanings related?
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Modality has three components (Kratzer 1981):

- A modal base $W$:
  A set of accessible worlds, indicating the type of modality—logical, physical, epistemic, deontic, etc.

- An ordering source $\leq$:
  If $w_1 \leq w_2$, then $w_2$ is preferred to $w_1$.

- A quantifier over the preferred worlds.
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The habitual quantifier

- Since habituals indicate an activity that is repeated at different times, the habitual quantifier will quantify over world-time pairs (or world-event pairs).
- For our purposes, we will simply call it gen.
- *Sally smokes* = “In gen possible times that are preferred by the ordering source, Sally is smoking”.
- But which modal base and ordering source are appropriate for habituals?
A metaphysical modal base

- Condoravdi (2001):

Worlds are complete histories through time. Two worlds are historical alternatives if they have the same past but possibly different futures. Each world in a metaphysical modal base consists of a historical alternative to the actual world.

Sally smokes implies that there will be many events of Sally's smoking in the future, but is made on the basis of Sally's present and past behavior.

Claim: habituals are interpreted relative to a metaphysical modal base.

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What about the ordering source?
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- What about the ordering source?
1. A stereotypical ordering source?

- A *stereotypical* ordering source prefers:

  'Worlds in which the normal course of events is realized' (Kratzer 1981:47)

  'worlds similar to [the actual world] with regard to the "inherent" or "essential" nature of things' (Schubert and Pelletier 1989:260).

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- Hence, a uniform ordering source prefers worlds that are uniform.
- *Sally smokes* = “In gen possible future times in which Sally continues with her present behavior, she is smoking” (cf. Cohen 1999).
- In other words: there were repeated events of Sally’s smoking, and these events are expected to continue.
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1. Stereotypical theories: habituals are sensitive to what happens in worlds in which essential properties of the actual world are preserved.

2. Uniform theories: habituals are sensitive to what happens in worlds in which stable properties of the actual world are preserved.
Habituals distinguish between stable and non-stable properties

- Assume: Sally’s birthday is on Christmas—December 25th.
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- Fact: there were other meetings between Israeli and Egyptian leaders, at other times, before and after that.
- Then, on December 25th, 1977:

(1) a. Sally drinks on her birthday

\( \neg \) b. Sally drinks when Israeli and Egyptian leaders meet.
Habituals do not distinguish between essential and non-essential properties

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- Hence, there are possible worlds that preserve essential properties of the actual world, in which Sally’s birthday is not on Christmas.
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- But such worlds are not quantified over when a habitual is evaluated:
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(2) a. Sally drinks on her birthday.
Habituals do \textit{not} distinguish between essential and non-essential properties

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- But such worlds are not quantified over when a habitual is evaluated:

  \begin{enumerate}
  \item a. Sally drinks on her birthday.
  \item b. Sally drinks on Christmas.
  \end{enumerate}

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Habituals do *not* distinguish between essential and non-essential properties

Suppose:

- Sally is constantly harassed by a militant smoker who forces her to smoke at gunpoint. Consequently, she smokes several cigarettes every day. ⇒ Sally smokes is true.
- Sally is very fond of cigarettes. But she lives in a building where no smoking is allowed, and never leaves it ⇒ Sally smokes is false.
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Habituals are sensitive to whether a property is stable or not.
The ordering source of habituitals

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Habituals are not sensitive to whether a property is inherent/essential or not.
We can conclude, then, that habituals are evaluated with respect to a uniform, rather than a stereotypical, ordering source.
What if...

How would habituals behave if they were evaluated with respect to a stereotypical ordering source?
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(3) Sally is a smoker.

- I will show that -er nominals, as in (3), are evaluated with respect to a stereotypical ordering source.
Despite the common view of habituality, *Sally smokes* and *Sally is a smoker* do not mean the same thing:
Despite the common view of habituality, *Sally smokes* and *Sally is a smoker* do not mean the same thing:

If we say *Tom smokes*... we are drawing inferences on the basis, in part, of observed behaviour, whereas if we say *Tom is a smoker* to a certain extent we are designating a certain role to the subject (Spencer and Zaretskaya 1999:19).
The Non-Smoking Smoker

- One can be a smoker, yet not smoke, or vice versa.
The Non-Smoking Smoker

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1. smokers
2. non-smokers
3. smoking non-smokers (i.e. passive smokers and free riders)
4. non-smoking smokers (i.e. ‘good’ smokers who keep their cigarettes unlit)

While the habitual depends on frequency, the -er nominal appears not to: “some smokers may bounce back and forth between zero (non-smoking smokers) and more than zero cigarettes smoked (smoking smokers)” R. E. Weiss (2005), *Modeling Longitudinal Data*, p. 233.
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-Er nominals are quantificational

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- von Fintel and Heim (1999):
  
  $\textit{beautiful dancer} \approx > \text{someone } x \text{ such that generally if } x \text{ dances... } x \text{ does so beautifully}$

To develop an approach based on this intuition, we need a way of treating $\textit{dancer}$ as involving a stage-level/episodic predicate (which can be the host of the manner predicate $\textit{beautiful}$) and a generic quantifier. One would hope that such an approach would involve the fact that $\textit{dancer}$ is a deverbal formation and some idea of the semantic contribution of the suffix -er (p. 18; see also Stump 1981 and Larson 1998).
-Er nominals as quantificational modals

- The quantifier: gen (just like with habituals)
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- The quantifier: gen (just like with habituals)
- The modal base: metaphysical (just like with habituals)
-Er nominals as quantificational modals

- The quantifier: gen (just like with habituas)
- The modal base: metaphysical (just like with habituas)
- What about the ordering source?
-Er nominals distinguish between essential and non-essential properties

Assume, as before: In the actual world, Sally’s birthday is December 25th, but there are worlds preserving inherent properties where her birthday is on a different date.
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These worlds are quantified over when the -er nominal is evaluated:
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- Assume, as before: In the actual world, Sally’s birthday is December 25th, but there are worlds preserving inherent properties where her birthday is on a different date.

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(4) a. Sally drinks on her birthday (and only then).
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(4) a. Sally drinks on her birthday (and only then).
⇒ b. Sally is a birthday drinker.
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   ⇒ b. Sally is a birthday drinker.
   ⊬ c. Sally is a Christmas drinker.
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Suppose all animals except dogs suddenly died in the actual world.
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- Suppose all animals except dogs suddenly died in the actual world.
- But they continue to live in other, normal worlds.
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⇔ b. John trains animals.

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Habituals and -er Nominals
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- Suppose all animals except dogs suddenly died in the actual world.
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(6) a. John is a dog trainer.
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(6) a. John is a dog trainer.
⇏ b. John is an animal trainer.
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Suppose, as before:

Sally is constantly harassed by a militant smoker who forces her to smoke at gunpoint. Consequently, she smokes several cigarettes every day. $\Rightarrow$ Sally is a smoker is false.

Now suppose:

Sally is very fond of cigarettes. But she lives in a building where no smoking is allowed, and never leaves it. $\Rightarrow$ Sally is a smoker is true.
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Suppose, as before:
- Sally is constantly harassed by a militant smoker who forces her to smoke at gunpoint.
- Consequently, she smokes several cigarettes every day.
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Two distinct predicates?

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- *Sally smokes* and *Sally is a smoker* have the same quantifier (*gen*), the same modal base, and the same ordering source.
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Two distinct predicates?

But:

Ariel Cohen (Ben-Gurion University, Israel)
Genius II: Dispositions, Abilities, and States
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1. As we have seen, the stereotypical ordering source may be appropriate for -er nominals, but not for habituals.
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1. As we have seen, the stereotypical ordering source may be appropriate for -er nominals, but not for habituials.

2. Chierchia misses the obvious connection between *smoke* and *smoker*, which have the same argument structure (Rappaport-Hovav and Levin 1992)
The ordering source of -er nominals

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The meaning of -er

- What is the connection between smoke and smoker?
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- What is the connection between smoke and smoker?
- Consider smoke+er

The eventive verb smoke is interpreted as a habitual.

What is the contribution of -er?

Claim: -er is a metaphysical modal.

The subject of a modal receives the thematic role that the lower verb assigns to its subject, either by control or by raising (Ross 1967):

(7) a. #John gave birth tonight.
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The same is true of -er nominals:

(8) a. #This ox breeds well.
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The derivation of -er nominals

Claim: -er is a bare modal: it only introduces a (metaphysical) modal base and a (stereotypical) ordering source, but no quantifier.
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The derivation of -er nominals

- **Claim**: -er is a bare modal: it only introduces a (metaphysical) modal base and a (stereotypical) ordering source, but no quantifier.
- In that, it is similar to modals in Lillooet Salish (Rullmann et al. 2008).
- The generic quantifier is introduced by type-shifting.
The generic quantifier in habituals is evaluated with respect to a *uniform* ordering source.

Therefore, habituals express properties that are stable in the actual world, whether essential or not.

The generic quantifier in -er nominals is evaluated with respect to a *stereotypical* ordering source. Therefore, -er nominals express essential properties.

Thus, habituals are indeed similar to -er nominals, but not the same: the ordering source makes all the difference.
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Conclusion

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Conclusion

- The generic quantifier in habituals is evaluated with respect to a *uniform* ordering source.
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- Thus, habituals are indeed similar to -er nominals, but not the same: the ordering source makes all the difference.
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