### Shifting Epithets

#### What factors produce shifted epithet attribution?

### The Puzzle of Judgment

- **Epithets** (that dork) contribute the attitude of a judge toward their referent [8].
- This judge is usually the speaker of the utterance ("Narrator").

#### (1) That dork Joshua got an A in Stats.

- In some contexts, including embedding under a speech predicate (SP), a shifted interpretation is available [2]. e.g. Marie, and not the narrator, thinks Joshua is a dork.
- Marie said that dork Joshua got an A in Stats.

- Shifting can also occur outside of embedding [3] (cf. [9]).

- Marie said her brother Joshua got an A in Stats.
- That dork stayed up all night studying.

### Shifting interpretations are influenced by:

- **type of embedding**: SPs or mental predicates (MPs) [7]
- **characters’ emotions**: matching the epithet or not [6]

How are these shifted interpretations made available?

### Grammar vs. Independent Cognition

- Two major hypotheses in the literature suggest that optional shifting of epithets is produced by:
  - (a) optional binding under operators associated with context-shifting predicates (CSPs) [9], a la shifting indexicals [2].
  - (b) pragmatic reasoning may occur over minds.
  - Optional binding under operators associated with context-shifting and logophoricity [2, 4], would predict shifting, more so than SPs.

**Prediction:** Both the Grammar and ToM hypotheses predict that a SP might increase shifting.

**Discussion:** More participants indicated a shifted interpretation with a SP than without. This supports the intuition that CSPs in preceding discourse are relevant to epithet interpretation.

### Experiment 1: Can Predicates Influence Shifting Across Sentence Boundaries? (N = 16)

I collected judge interpretations on Mechanical Turk for 16 items with either no embedding predicate (NP) (a) or a SP (b).

**Prediction:** If a SP might increase shifting.

**Discussion:** More participants indicated a shifted interpretation with a SP than without. This supports the intuition that CSPs in preceding discourse are relevant to epithet interpretation.

### Experiment 2: Do Speech and Mental Action Behave Differently? (N = 23)

I followed up Exp. 1 by adding an MP-embedding condition, (5c), collecting judge interpretations for 18 items.

**Prediction:** The Grammar hypothesis, given existing research into context-shifting and logophoricity [2, 4], would predict SPs as a stronger host for shifted readings than MPs, unlike ToM.

**Discussion:** No effect was found for the FP manipulation.

### School of Thought

- **grammar** Context-shifting predicates introduce shifted context representations into discourse that provide optional judges for epithets.
- **ToM**: Minds of some agents in discourse are modeled in theory of mind, and are available as optional judges for epithets.

### References