

WHO'S THE PAD THAI? THAT WOULD BE ME.
A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF EQUATIVES AND OPEN PROPOSITIONS

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In this talk, I analyze two English equative constructions – deferred equatives and epistemic *would* equatives – illustrated in (1)-(2), respectively:

- (1) A: Who ordered what?
B: I'm the Pad Thai.
- (2) A: What did Chris order?
B: That would be the Pad Thai.

I argue that these two types of equatives are focus-presuppositional constructions in that they each require that an OPEN PROPOSITION be contextually salient (i.e., evoked or inferrable) at the time of utterance. They differ, however, in the number of variables being instantiated as foci within that open proposition (OP). The deferred equative in (1) instantiates the two variables in the OP 'X corresponds to Y', while the epistemic *would* equative in (2) instantiates the single variable in the OP 'Chris ordered X', with the demonstrative subject being used to refer deictically to the instantiation of the variable in the OP, as a type of discourse deixis. Unlike marked syntactic constructions that employ noncanonical word order to signal the OP requirement (e.g. clefts, gappings, preposings, inversions), these equatives perform this discourse function by other means, through, e.g., a non-literal equative (as in (1)) or the presence of epistemic *would* (as in (2)).