Spectrum of kinds,
workshop at DGfS 2024, 28.Feb – 1.Mar 2024, Bochum

schedule and abstracts
Feb 2024

AG 9 The spectrum of kinds (Cécile Meier & Carla Umbach)		
Wednesday, 28.Feb 2024		
13.45 – 14.15	**Introduction**	Cécile Meier & Carla Umbach (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt / Universität Köln)
14.15 – 15.15	**Generating a spectrum of kind representations**	Sandeep Prasada (Hunter College, CUNY)
15.15 – 15.45	**The well-defined kind restriction: experimental evidence from Greek, German and Catalan**	Dimitra Lazaridou-Chatzigoga, Artemis Alexiadou & Elena Castroviejo-Miró (University of Cambridge / Humboldt Universität Berlin / Universidad del País Vasco)
coffee break + poster session 1 of section *Computational Linguistics*		
16:30 – 17.30	**Kinds, Generics and Definite Singulars**	Luca Gasparri & Gerhard Schaden (Université de Lille)
17.30 – 18.00	**Innovated Compounds, Concepts, and Prototypes**	Regine Eckardt (Universität Konstanz)
Reception (starting 19.00)		
Thursday 29.Feb 2024		
9.00 – 10.00	**The ambiguity of kind, demonstratives and the ontology of kinds**	Carmen Dobrovie-Sorin (CNRS) Mara Panaitescu (CNRS)
10.00 – 10.30	**Gerunds as ad-hoc event kinds**	Zi Huang (Universitat Pompeu Fabra)
coffee break + poster session 2 of section *Computational Linguistics*		
11:15 – 12:15	**Facilitating Factors for Concept Formation**	Barbara Kaup (Universität Tübingen)
12.15 – 12.45	**The role of features of similarity in ad-hoc kind construction**	Britta Stolterfoht & Carla Umbach (Universität Tübingen / Universität Köln)
lunch break + DFG information on third party funding		
13.45 – 14.45	**Well-establishedness, deep genericity, and the naming of subkinds**	Olav Mueller-Reichau (Universität Leipzig)
DGfS Members Meeting (starting 15.00) Conference Dinner (starting 19.00)		
Friday, 1.March		
11:45 – 12.45	**Indefinite Singular vs. Bare Plural Generics: Essential Interpretations and Quantification over Samples**	Manfred Krifka (Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft Berlin)
12.45 – 13.45	**A grammatical recipe for kind construction**	Jon Ander Mendia (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)
13.45 – 14.15	**Final discussion**	

For an overview over the full program including plenary talks see www.dgfs2024.ruhr-uni-bochum.de

Innovated Compounds, Concepts, and Prototypes: A Road to Framing

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Innovated compounds (ICs) are frequently used in headlines to heighten readers' interest. German BILD, in particular, is famous for its use of ICs such as „Griechen-Fischer" (Greek-fisherman), „Kopftuch-Praktikantin" (hijab-intern) or „China-Maske" (China-mask). Yu et al. (2022) measure the attitudinal meaning-triggering effect of ICs (e.g., "China-mask") by comparing ICs with two control conditions: (a) phrasal alternatives (e.g., "Chinese mask") and (b) simple neutral alternatives (e.g., "mask"). Their results show a weak but significant effect of innovated compounds on triggering stronger attitudinal meanings. In this work, we propose an explanation for this effect, combining semantics and cognitition.

Sassoon (2011) distinguishes between the semantic structure of *nouns* and *adjectives.* The meaning of a noun N is defined by a prototype structure based on *dimensions* (e.g., color, size, shape) and ideal values in each dimension. The extension of N is determined by the weighted distance of objects x to the prototypical N exemplar. Speakers implicitly reason with prototype structures; they achieve fast categorization but can not reason explicitly about their decisions. Adjectives A, in contrast, refer to one dimension and speakers can reason explicitly whether A applies to a given object or not.

We show that Sassoon's linguistic tests side ICs with nouns; ICs thus rest on a prototype structure. An IC (e.g. „Kopftuch-Praktikantin") introduces a prototype structure of its own, whereas phrasal alternatives rest on the prototype structure of the noun („Praktikantin") and simple modification („mit Kopftuch"). Thus, ICs and their phrasal alternatives are *not* semantically equivalent, even if their extensions may be identical. —Finally, we take a closer look at the attitudinal meanings of ICs. While Sassoon (2011) offers a general basis to predict semantic differences between ICs and phrasal alternatives, examples are too varied to predict *specific* attitudinal effects. We use a range of ICs to demonstrate how novel prototype structures can flavor a referent positively (Olympia-Mädchen) or negatively (China-Maske), exoticize other nations (Griechen-Fischer), or frame religions as the cause of trouble (Kopftuch-Praktikantin).

References: Sassoon, G. W. (2011). Adjectival versus nominal categorization processes: The rule vs. similarity hypothesis. *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 25, 104–147. https://doi.org/10.1075/bjl.25.06sas • Yu, Q., F. Schlotterbeck, R. Eckardt & B.Stolterfoht (2022). An experimental study on ad hoc compounds in political discourse. In Frau, F. et al. (eds.), *Book of Abstracts of the 9th Experimental Pragmatics Conference (XPRAG 2022)*. OSF.io https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/C4KP2

top

Kinds, Generics and Definite Singulars

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Compared to other types of generics (e.g., bare plurals or indefinite singular generics), definite singular generics (DSGs) show a distinct, and typically more restricted distribution pattern, which, however, has garnered less attention in the literature than other types of generics. We will begin with Partee's observation about the relevance of well-established kinds to generic sentences (cf. 1a-b), which, as is known, is not replicable with the bare plural version (cf. Krifka et al., 1995:11). The usual reasoning is that DSGs should be felicitous when they refer to a well-established kind. However, the distribution of DSGs does not conform neatly to Partee's observation.

(1) a. The Coke bottle has a narrow neck. [✓generic, ✓token reference]
b. The green bottle has a narrow neck. [*generic, ✓token reference]
c. The bottle has a narrow neck. [*generic, ✓token reference]

"*Bottle*" – lexicalized in English as a simple word – should be an uncontroversial instance of a well-established kind, yet (1c) patterns with the presumed ad hoc kind *green bottle* (1b) against the well-established *Coke bottle* (1a). We will show that the difference in acceptability in (1) can be attributed neither exclusively to the type of kind denoted by the subject, nor to the predicate alone. We will therefore suggest that the determining influence on the acceptability must either be contextual, be located in the relation between the predicate and the subject, or be due to a combination of these two aspects.

This is not to say that DSGs do not impose any restrictions on their subject; for instance, high-level entities in a taxonomy are generally infelicitous as DSGs, as has been observed by Mari et al. (2012: 29).

(2) a. The mammal suckles its young. [*generic, ✓token reference]
b. ?*The mammal is extinct.

Our talk – focusing on DSGs in English – will provide an orderly formulation of the several challenges posed by DSGs, especially in relation to the issue of the types of kinds they can admissibly denote, with an eye to further refining the distinction between well established and ad hoc kinds.

References: • Krifka, M. (2012). Definitional Generics. In A. Mari et al. (eds.), *Genericity*. Oxford: OUP, 372–89. • Krifka, M. et al. (1995). Genericity: An Introduction. In G.N. Carlson & F.J. Pelletier (eds.), *The Generic Book*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. • Mari, A. et al. (2012). Introduction. In A. Mari et al. (eds.), *Genericity*. Oxford: OUP, 1–92. • Mendia, J.A. (2020). Reference to *Ad Hoc* Kinds. *Linguistics and Philosophy 43,* 589–631.

top

Gerunds as *ad hoc* event kinds

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This talk extends the notion of *ad hoc* kinds from the nominal domain (Mendia 2019) to the event domain, and proposes that POSS-*ing* gerunds in English such as *John's visiting Mary* are a consistent way of forming *ad hoc* event kinds.

POSS-*ing* is an -ing form that takes direct complements and a preceding possessor interpreted always as the subject and is analyzed as event kind descriptions by Grimm & McNally (2015). Such expressions lack reference to event tokens, being incompatible with eventive predicates and adjectives that assign properties to events ("narrow containers" in Vendler 1967):

(1) *John's drawing the picture {happened/took place} yesterday/was {slow/fast}.

I argue that POSS-*ing* denotes *ad hoc* kinds, which are different from well-established event kinds. First, they can be formed in an unrestricted manner. POSS-*ing* freely takes referential arguments and spatiotemporal modification:

(2) Hannah's breaking John's vase yesterday at the party was astonishing.

Second, instead of partitioning a (super)kind, these *ad hoc* event kinds are constructed by generalizing over one (or some) event tokens. The token event that the kind is built upon is sometimes present in the discourse or, as is usually the case, presupposed to exist:

(3) John did not imagine Hannah's breaking his vase. → Hannah broke John's vase.

Although this presupposition is not always present, it can be argued that POSS-*ing* is a referential expression, and referentiality does not necessarily correspond to presupposition or discourse givenness. With the event token in mind as an instantiation, the kind is constructed with descriptive content to identify it.

This analysis will shed new light on the contrast between narrow containers (1) and predicates that accept POSS-*ing* as an argument ("loose containers", e.g. *surprised me*). The traditional view is that narrow containers only select for event tokens. With the POSS-*ing* in the subject position denoting a kind, I argue that the sentence must express a generalization which holds in virtue of the subject's descriptive content, also accounting for POSS-*ing*'s opacity.

References: • Grimm, S., & McNally, L. (2015). The -*ing* dynasty: Rebuilding the semantics of nominalizations. In S. D'Antonio, M. Moroney, & C. R. Little (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 25th Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference (SALT)* (Vol. 25, pp. 82–102). Ithaca, NY: LSA and CLC Publications. • Mendia, J. A. (2019). Reference to *ad hoc* kinds. *Linguistics and philosophy*, 43, 589-631. • Vendler, Z. (1967). *Linguistics in philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

top

Indefinite Singular vs. Bare Plural Generics: Essential Interpretations and Quantification over Samples.

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It is well-known that indefinite singular generics (ISGs) and bare plural generics (BPGs) cannot always be interchanged, as illustrated in (1):

(1) a. #A rat reached / Rats reached Australia in 1770 (Krifka et al. 1995)
b. #A madrigal is / Madrigals are popular. (Lawler 1973)
c. #An elephant lives / Elephants live in Africa and Asia. (Nickel 2008)
d. #A barn is / Barns are red. (Leslie et al. 2009, on New England barns)

Various proposals have been made to capture this difference: In addition to the established fact that BPGs, but not ISGs, can refer to kinds and hence allow for episodic kind-level properties like (a), ISGs have been argued to be restricted to predications that are "essential" (Lawler 1973), "principled" (Prasada & Dilling–ham 2006, Leslie et al. 2009), "normative" (Knobe et al. 2013), "definitional" (Krifka 2013) or "causal" (van Rooij & Schulz 2020). I will review these proposals and argue that ISGs occur in a wider range of environments, as in (2), which are based on non-essential, purely statistical generalizations.

(2) A 2$ bill is / 2$ bills are quite rare.
(3) #A mosquito carries / Mosquitoes carries malaria.

I will argue that ISGs are acceptable whenever the generalization is grounded in individual entities. This holds for the previous proposals for essential gene–ralizations but also for cases like (2), which states that it is rare to find a 2$ bill. I will argue that BPGs are preferred under two conditions: namely (a) to avoid an otherwise plausible "essential" reading (cf. Plunkett et al. 2023 on metalinguistic negation) and (b) whenever in statistical generalizations the incidence expressed by the predication is low, as in (3). I argue that with generics based on purely statistic motivation, BPGs express a quantification over samples containing more than one entity, resulting in a much higher probability that the sample will contain positive instances when compared to quantifications over single entities.

References: • Knobe, J, et al. 2013. Dual character concepts and the normative dimension of conceptual representation. *Cognition* 127. • Krifka, M et al. 1995. Genericity: an introduction. Ed. Greg N. Carlson & F. J. Pelletier, *The generic book*. The University of Chicago Press. • Krifka, M. 2013. Definitional generics. In A Mari et al., *Genericity*. Oxford. • Lawler, J. 1973. *Studies in English generics.* U of Michigan. • Leslie, S.-J. et al. , 2009. Conceptual and linguistic distinctions between singular and plural generics. *CogSci 2009 Proceedings*. • Nickel, B. 2008. Generics and the ways of normality. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 31(6). • Plunkett, D. et al. 2023. Generics and metalinguistic negotiation. *Synthese* 201(2).• van Rooij, R, & K Schulz. 2020. A Causal Semantics of IS Generics. *Journal of Semantics* 37.

top

Facilitating Factors for Concept Formation

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In this talk I will discuss research from cognitive psychology on concept formation. I will specifically look into different factors that have been shown to facilitate concept formation and discuss the question whether and under which conditions concept formation involves abstraction processes. A particular focus will also be on the important role that linguistic labels (even redundant ones) seem to play in concept formation.

The well-defined kind restriction: experimental evidence from Greek, German and Catalan

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Background. At least since the late '70s (Carlson 1977) it has been observed that nouns must express a "well-established kind" in order to form acceptable generic sentences (contrast *The Coke bottle has a narrow neck* vs. *?The green bottle has a narrow neck*). However, it has been notoriously difficult to pin down what "well-established" is supposed to be. On top of that, different languages employ different grammatical devices to express genericity (Chierchia, 1998; Longobardi, 1994). In this paper, we present results from the same experiment conducted in Greek, German and Catalan (extending Ionin et al.'s 2011 cross-linguistic experiment). The results question the universality of the restriction (which we will call the Well-Defined Kind restriction from now on) for definite singular kind terms (in Greek) and point out to the need for further experimental work on the topic that will refine the contextual manipulations employed (see Dayal 2004; Driemel et al. 2023).

The studies. ***Participants*** 40 Greek, 40 German and 40 Catalan native speakers were recruited via prolific. ***Task*** Acceptability Judgment Task with contexts. Each item was a paragraph-long story followed by five different target sentences differing in the nominal used (animal and artefact kinds): (a) bare plural, (b) bare singular, (c) definite plural, (d) definite singular and (e) indefinite singular. The test items tested two distinct sources of genericity: (a) NP-level genericity with kind-level predicates like *be extinct* and WDK kinds and (b) sentence-level genericity with non-WDK kinds. ***Results*** We tested sensitivity to the WDK restriction on definite singulars. In German the majority of the participants showed the expected sensitivity, whereas in Greek only half of them did. ***Conclusion*** The experimental results presented here provide a potential way out of the impasse of how to address "well-establishedness", which could be related to the specific way each language expresses genericity or could be attributed to the suggested pragmatic nature of the phenomenon. Methodological considerations, data from Catalan, as well as new experimental designs in progress will be discussed.

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top

A grammatical recipe for kind construction

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Although there is no consensus about what kinds are, there is a common understanding that they are representative of collections of objects that share certain properties (e.g. Carlson 1977; Prasada & Dillingham 2006). What these properties exactly are is often left unspecified, under the general assumption that they must be in some way essential or natural. Kinds relying on such distinguished properties are typically said to be *well-established*. On this view, what counts as a kind is not set by the grammar, but amounts instead to conventional knowledge of a community of speakers: the main property of kinds is simply that "we can impute to them a sufficiently regular behavior" (Chierchia 1998). If that is so, what stops us from picking non-natural properties that nevertheless single out a sufficiently regular behavior in some population and constructing a corresponding kind-denoting term? I argue that this is not just cognitively plausible, but is in fact grammatically sanctioned: certain grammatical constructions allow us to disregard natural/essential regularities and spontaneously build kinds in real time; i.e. they allow us to construct *ad hoc* kinds:

(1) The lions that eat people are widespread.

The subject *the lions* in (1) can be only understood as making a claim about a particular *subkind* of lion (Dayal 2004), but one that does not form a natural (taxonomic) class—in fact it may comprise of individual lions in several subspecies of lion and exclude others in the same subspecies. Nevertheless, as (1) shows, we can easily refer to subkind of lions whose regular behavior relies on a particular aspect that they all share, as idiosyncratic as that property may be—like the fact that they eat people. I suggest that the sole role of the relative clause in (1) and other ad hoc subkind reference constructions is to provide information that helps determine what the relevant sufficiently regular behavior is; in this case, by collecting every individual people-eating-lion in the same cell of a lion-partition. This is because with ad hoc kind-referring terms it becomes necessary to supplement the information provided by the kind-referring NP in some way such that the listener can reconstruct the intended kind.

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Well-establishedness, deep genericity, and the naming of subkinds

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I will provide examples from Russian subject and object nominals to show that NPs (like *chief editor* or *legal layer*) or VPs (like *wear a skirt* or *shoot a boar*) producing so-called well-establishedness effects (recall *The {Coke bottle/ green bottle} has a narrow neck*, where only *Coke bottle* allows for a generic construal of the definite article) operate at a deeper level of syntax than others. This seems to support the view that lexical units project into syntax as generic expressions without referential force, to be turned into expressions with referential force only later at some higher syntactic stage (Padučeva 1985; Carlson 2003; Zamparelli 2013; Mueller-Reichau 2013; Ramchand 2018; Gehrke and McNally 2019). This view, however, is confronted with a tricky question: *How does semantic composition work at the level of deep genericity where meanings of syntactically combined expressions are non-referential?* In the talk, I want to pursue the implications that the type-token mechanism described in Prasada (2016) has on this question. According to Prasada, each noun is a name of a kind, whose meaning ("the kind concept") projects a list of k-properties that characterise and identify the kind by providing properties that an instance of the kind has because it is the kind of thing. K-properties thus correspond to "essential" properties. Now, names of kinds do not only come as one-word expressions. The complex noun *chief editor* names a kind, i.e. a subkind of the kind named by *editor*. Similarly, *Coke bottle* names a subkind of what *bottle* names. This invites the conclusion that well-establishedness means kind naming. One-word nouns and verbs are always kind naming, modified nouns and verbs are sometimes. When they are, they give rise to well-establishedness effects. If deep genericity is in fact the domain of (sub)kind names, we gain a provokingly simple answer to our question: since names do not have to observe compositionality, there perhaps is no deep generic composition at all.

Selected references: • Borik & Espinal (2020). Numberless kinds: Evidence from Russian. Catalan Journal of Linguistics 19, 231–260. • Chierchia (1998). Reference to kinds across language. Natural Language Semantics 6(4), 339–405. • Gehrke & McNally (2019). Idioms and the syntax/semantics interface of descriptive content vs. reference. Linguistics 57, 769–814. • McNally (2017). Kinds, descriptions of kinds, concepts, and distributions. In: Bridging Formal and Conceptual Semantics, 39–61. • Mueller-Reichau (2013). Sorting the World. On the Relevance of the Kind/Object-Distinction to Referential Semantics. Berlin, Boston. • Prasada (2016). Mechanisms for thinking about kinds, instances of kinds, and kinds of kinds. Core Knowledge and Conceptual Change, 209-224. • Ramchand (2018). Situations and Syntactic Structures: Rethinking Auxiliaries and Order in English. Cambridge. • Trugman (2004). Modifiers of bare nouns in Russian. In: Formal Studies in Slavic Linguistics, 245–270.

top

Generating a spectrum of kind representations

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Lexically expressible concepts such as DOG provide a perspective for thinking and talking about an abstract kind which is never encountered but is understood to contain an unlimited number of instances, as well as a perspective for thinking of the particular entities we encounter as one of an unlimited number instances of the same kind. Those instances are understood to be numerically distinct and need not differ qualitatively, except accidentally. The kind, on the other hand, cannot be understood to differ from other kinds merely numercially and accidentally. Kinds are distinguished from one another by their intrinsic character which is specified by the properties they are understood to have by virtue of being the kinds of things they are. Those properties have an explanatory, normative, and statistical connection to the kind (e.g. Dogs bark *because* they are dogs; Dogs are *supposed to* bark; Dogs, *in general*, bark) (Prasada, 2016; Haward, Carey & Prasada, 2021). This fragment of the perspectives provided by a concept like DOG receives no account in standard theories of conceptual representation.

I sketch a fragment of the theory of conceptual form according to which the perspectives provided by concepts are encoded in their formal structure which provides instructions for interpretation (Prasada, in preparation). According to the theory, kind representations are generative mechanisms that can generate an unlimted number of instance-of-kind representations that are expected to have the character that characterizes and distinguishes the kind from other kinds. Furthermore, the theory formally distinguishes different classes of kinds by whether they individuate both instances and subkinds, whether they individuate instances in more than one way, and whether they individuate other (non-subkind) kinds. This variety of classes of kind representations is generated via different combinations of the formal elements that are intrinsic to the kind repesentations that are in the class that contains DOG. The theory also allows for *ad hoc* instances, subkinds, and kinds, all of which are generated via conceptual combination. I will show how all these formal distinctions are linguistically relevant and help explain certain forms of systematic polysemy, count-mass phenomena, interpretation of generics, and constraints on the linguistic expression of generics among other differences in how we think and talk about kinds and their instances. Experimental and linguistic evidence for key components of the theory will also be presented.

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top

The role of features of similarity in ad-hoc kind construction

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Demonstratives of manner, quality and degree (German *so*, English *such / like this*) express similarity between the target of demonstration and the referent of the phrase (König & Umbach 2018). In (1), Anna's car is characterized as being similar in certain respects to the car the speaker points at.

(1) (speaker points at a car):
Anna hat auch so ein Auto. 'Anna has a car like this, too.'

The relation of similarity is spelled out in Umbach & Gust (2014) using multi-dimensional attribute spaces and generalized measure functions. It is shown that in the case of quality and manner, but not in the case of degree, similarity classes constitute ad-hoc kinds. The notion of similarity would be trivial without specifying relevant features (or "respects") of similarity (Goodman 1972). However, the choice of such features seems to be severely constrained. In the example in (2) the demonstrative *so* is used anaphorically referring to a previously mentioned property. Being Japanese is easily picked up, leading to the interpretation that Berta has a Japanese car. In contrast, being new does not qualify as a feature of similarity – the second sentence cannot be understood meaning that Berta has a new car.

(2) Anna hat ein japanisches Auto / ein neues Auto. Berta hat auch so ein Auto (nämlich ein japanisches Auto / *nämlich ein neues Auto).
'Anna has a Japanese car / a new car. Berta has such a car, too (namely a Japanese car / a new car).'

In the talk, experimental studies will be presented investigating constraints on features of similarity. The results point to restrictions found with kind formation (Prasada & Dilingham 2006), Questions to be discussed are, on the one hand, how these features relate to intrinsic properties (Lewis 1986) and, on the other hand, whether analogous restrictions are found for other types of ad-hoc kind construction based on similarity (*Coke, Sprite and the like*)

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top