OASIS UPF Workshop
Nov. 26-27, 2018
U. Paris 8

Monday, Nov. 26:
14:30-15:00 Opening: Louise McNally
15:00-16:00 Roberto Zamparelli (U. Trento), “Exemplar-based Genericity”
16:00-16:30 Coffee
17:15-18:15 Ora Matushansky (CNRS), “The ideal husband: on relational generics”
20:00 Dinner

Tuesday, Nov. 27:
9:30-10:30 Luisa Martí (QMUL), “Zero, number features, and the semantics of nouns”
10:30-11:00 Coffee
11:00-12:00 Andrew Koontz-Garboden (U. Manchester), “On the ontology of adjectival and nominal gradability and comparison”
12:50-14:30 Lunch
14:30-15:30 Gillian Ramchand (UiT/Artic University of Norway), “The Verbal Symbol and Natural Language Ontology: Rethinking Event Kinds”
15:35-16:35 Fabienne Martin (HU-Berlin), “Aspectual differences between agentive and non-agentive uses of causative predicates”
16:35- Closing discussion with coffee
On the ontology of adjectival and nominal gradability and comparison
Andrew Koontz-Garboden (based on joint work with Ryan Bochnak, Itamar Francez, Peter Jenks, and Emmanuel-Moselly Makasso)

As documented in the philosophical and linguistic literature (see e.g., Kennedy 2012 for an overview), there are classes of properties that hold of an individual not in an absolute fashion, but to some degree:

(1) a. Kim is wiser than Sandy.
    b. Sandy is taller than Kim.
    c. Jo is happier than Jack.

The canonical lexicalization of such properties in English and many familiar languages is with adjectives. There are many lesser studied languages, however, in which the descriptive content expressed by English adjectives is more often lexicalized by nouns or verbs, as discussed extensively in the typological literature (Dixon 1982; Thompson 1989; Hengeveld 1992; Bhat 1994; Wetzer 1996; Stassen 1997; Beck 2002; Baker 2003). Even in familiar languages, sentences with an adjectival predicate sometimes have a truth-conditionally equivalent minimal pair counterpart where the descriptive content is introduced with a noun instead:

(2) a. Kim is wise.
    b. Kim has wisdom.

While the compositional semantics of sentences like (1,2a) have been well studied, with a variety of proposals following as a consequence for the lexical semantics of gradable adjectives, much less is known about sentences like (2b) or the lexical semantics of the nouns, e.g. wisdom, that underpin them. Orthodox proposals that treat adjectives as having a degree semantics and nouns like wisdom as having a semantics of mass nouns as in Link (1983) lead to the sentences in (2) restricting truth conditions in different ways, so that although they intuitively have the same truth conditions, model-theoretically their meanings are different. In this talk I argue that this conclusion is incorrect. Drawing on data from comparatives and other constructions in English and Basaá (Bantu; Cameroon), I suggest that the truth-conditional identity of sentences like (2a,b) should be captured model-theoretically, with the lexical semantics of adjectives like wise and nouns like wisdom built on a common ontology (whatever that ontology is, a question I leave outstanding).

The ideal husband: on relational generics
Ora Matushansky

The hypothesis that weak definites denote kinds or concepts (Carlson and Sussman 2005, Carlson 2010, Aguilar Guevara and Zwarts 2010, 2013, Aguilar Guevara 2014, etc.) explains a number of their properties: the definite article without referentiality, semantic enrichment in a number of environments, the impossibility of intersective modification, etc. However, the hypothesis that a weak noun denotes a kind, i.e., necessarily an entity, cannot deal with an understudied class of weak definites, viz.,
axial parts, a.k.a. spatial grams or location nouns, such as top, foot or north. I will
discuss the evidence for assimilating axial parts to weak definites, the problems arising
as a result and the possible solution treating weak definites as concepts or ideals.

**The roots of syntax: An analysis of semi-lexicality**
Cristina Real-Puigdollers

I this talk I explore a prediction of the theoretical framework first presented in Acedo-
Matellán and Real-Puigdollers (2014), built on the Distributed Morphology framework
(Halle & Marantz, 1993, 1994; Harley & Noyer, 1999; Embick 2010), whereby roots
correspond to (lately inserted) Vocabulary Items that phonologically and semantically
interpret functional nodes. Specifically, we propose that categorizers (a, n, v) are a
prominent locus for the insertion of roots, since roots are Vocabulary Items that have
no specific context of insertion. Our approach makes an interesting prediction on
linguistic variation that involves the insertion of roots into functional heads distinct
from categorizers. That is, if roots are inserted by competition when no other
functional vocabulary item is available, we predict the existence of linguistic types that
emerge from the morphological properties of exponents of functional categories, like
number, gender, tense, aspect and mood. This hypothesis allows us to derive
Sanches’s generalization, which states that classifiers and optional number
morphology are in complementary distribution. In the talk, I further develop this
prediction to capture the phenomenon of semi-lexicality.

**Concepts, kinds and types**
Carla Umbach and Helmar Gust

There is a widespread view in linguistics that concepts, kinds and types are roughly the
same. It will be argued in this talk that this view is misleading. The three notions stem
from different fields – mainly from psychology, linguistics and mathematics – and
serve different purposes: Concepts are mental entities guiding human agents through
their environment; kinds started out as a means to establish biological classification
systems and are basic in the interpretation of generic NPs; types were introduced in
mathematics to safeguard systems against the disastrous consequences of the
Russellian antinomy in naïve set theory. Carlson (2010) shows in which way concepts
and kinds can be seen to interact while carefully keeping the two notions apart. In the
talk, we will explore ways in which types can be seen to interact with concepts and
kinds while exploiting their safeguarding capacity.

Oxford, Oxford University Press, 16-36.

**Exemplar-based Genericity**
Roberto Zamparelli

In this talk I will explore a novel semantics for generic sentences which uses no
unselective binding and possibly no GEN operator. The key idea is that individuals can
be seen either as “regular objects”, or as “minimal subkinds”, i.e. individuals which
have properties only qua representatives of a certain kind. In this role, individuals
become "exemplars" of a kind. Properties can be attributed to exemplars only when they tend to also apply to other exemplars of the same kind. Habituals like “John smokes” can be analyzed in a parallel fashion, i.e. as the statement that John is the participant of an event which is an exemplar of the “smoking events” kind. “Dogs bark” becomes a statement that an exemplar of the dog kind is taking part in an exemplar of barking event.