Kinds, existentials, and NP meaning

Two-dominion theories of bare plurals and mass terms—Carlson (1977a; 1978b) and Chierchia (1990)—regard them as either uniformly kind-denoting or kind-property-denoting (subject to cross-linguistic variation).

Carlson
Bare mass nouns and plural denotations kind-type 5, while existential interpretations come from the predicates containing them.

• Obligatory narrow scope:
  (1) A dog is in this room, and a dog is not in this room

• Non-referential anaphora:
  (2) # Dogs are in this room, and dogs are not in this room

In Germanic, bare nouns can denote kinds:

(Barring noun phrases)

• Non-referential anaphora:
  (3) Bill is seeking a unicorn, and Susan is seeking it too

Apparent type-shifting under anaphora:

(4) John likes apples, which is why he bought them yesterday

Somewhat above, we mentioned that existential interpretations were needed in classifier languages via DKP:

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Chierchia
The Nominal Mapping Parameter: Bare mass nouns and plural denotations kind-type 5, properties, in e.g., Romance, and other one in, e.g., German or Slavic. Kind-denoting expressions may undergo a type-shift—Described Kind Projection (DKP)—to access existential interpretations.

• Bare nouns occur with existential interpretations in classifier languages via DKP.

(1) see kwajai using le

(2) see kwajai using le

kind-denoting expressions require determiners in Romance, as bare nouns must denote properties.

(3) A Juan le garañ '6' person to Juan le koñi 'as the dog' Juan le diñ 'as dog'

(4) Juan le gibi 'as the dog'

In Germanic, bare nouns can denote kinds.

(5) Juan le gibi 'as the dog'

On both views, existential interpretations arise from factors other than noun-phrase structure. For Carlson, they are due to the predicate containing the noun, and for Chierchia, to a type-shift that applies to kind-denoting terms.

Dying
A third approach, represented in Diesing (1990), regards bare nouns as property-denoting, while kind versus existential interpretations come from the predicates containing them:

• Obligatory narrow scope:
  (1) A dog is in this room, and a dog is not in this room

(2) # Dogs are in this room, and dogs are not in this room

Carlson as either uniformly kind-denoting or kind- or property-denoting (subject to crosslinguistic variation).

Chierchia
Mapping Hypothesis

• Bare mass nouns denote properties.

• To receive kind-denoting properties, they cease to [Spec,IP] be bound by a genitive operator. [Spec,IP] also is the position provided for NPs by individual-level predicates.

• To receive existential interpretations, they stay in [Spec,VP] and are subject to existential closure.

Restrictions on extensive modifiers

There is a restriction on pronominal modifiers noted in Schwarzschild (2002; 2006), that they denote properties, involving ‘non-stanceful’ constructions. While Schwarzschild’s proposal stipulates the restriction, it is nuanced by the current proposal.

Intensive modifiers only

• Schwarzschild no restrictions like the following, where only the intensive modifier may occur ambiguously:

(10) ?three-ounce water/cherries

(11) ?thirty-degree water/cherries

• In (11), the intensive modifier is acceptable only if each cherry, not the entire collection, is taken to be three ounces.

Kinds as maximal individuals

Since the current analysis follows Chierchia (1990) in assuming that kinds are functions from worlds to maximal individuals, but proposes IPVs have the structure in (16), the restriction is explained. In particular:

• To allow pronominal modification of kind-denoting nouns, assume they actually denote properties of kinds, as in, e.g., Andersen and Moroñski (To appear).

• So that pronominal modifiers can compose with NPs denoting properties of kinds via Predication Modification, assume they undergo a type-shift from (k, t)-type meanings to (k, t)-type meanings.

(12) [Thirty degree] [wax] [wax] (x) e 4 ! [Thirty degree] [wax] [wax] (x) e 4

However, such a type-shift yields an empty property for three ounces (or any intensive modifier), since three-ounce portions are not perfectly ordered by kind (1990’s) part-of relation.

Alternatively, an intensive modifier like three ounces might attach above FP, after the kind denoted by same-fruits has been construed into a property. In that case, F is spelled out as of.

(13) three ounces of water/cherries

Overt realizations of F

The current proposal predicts the existence of languages that realize F overtly in all contexts. I argue that this is precisely what happens in French, in which F is spelled out an allomorph of de.

• French realizes preposition-determiner sequences involving de ‘of’ as contractions in certain contexts, as in the following:

(14) Jean aime les photos des – pommes

Jean likes the photos of the apples

Jean likes photos of apples

• Kind-denoting nouns are realized with determiners, in other Romance languages:

(15) Les pommes sont des délicieuses

The apples are delicious

Les pommes sont des délicieuses

The apples are delicious

• But property-denoting nouns (i.e., with existential interpretations) overtly project F above above the expression:

(16) Les pommes sont délicieuses

The apples are delicious

Les pommes sont délicieuses

The apples are delicious

• French has an object clitic pronoun which constitutes an overt realization of FP, so that sentences may introduce properties on anaphoric objects:

(17) Jean en a des pommes

Jean has some apples

Jean has apples

• French has an object clitic pronoun which constitutes an overt realization of FP, so that sentences may introduce properties on anaphoric objects:

(18) Les pommes sont les fraises préférées de Jean, et on a acheté ici à cause de ça les autres

The apples are Jean’s favorite fruit, and because of this we bought these...