

## THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 16.12.2021  
16:15-17:45  
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### Bare NPs and the kind-instance ambiguity

In (1), the bare plural *cows* is interpretable as either referring to the cow species or as existentially quantifying over cow specimens. Thus, (1) is ambiguous.

- (1) On the 28th of June, God created cows. (Carlson 1980:§7.4, ex.48)
- a. 'God created the cow species.'
  - b. 'God created a number of cow specimens.'

To the extent that *create* is not lexically ambiguous, the ambiguity in (1) is predicted to not exist by the theories of bare NPs of Carlson (1980) and Chierchia (1998). This ambiguity is accommodated by the two ingredients in (2).

- (2)
- a. The episodic reference to specimens by *cows* in (1b) is not derived from the kind-reference of *cows* as in (1a). (Krifka 2003)
  - b. The two covert type-shifts that are responsible for reference to kinds and episodic instances are unranked ( $\wedge$  and  $\exists$  respectively).

I will discuss the implications of (2b) on the theories of bare NPs of Chierchia (1998) and Dayal (2004), and I will discuss a prediction derived from Chierchia (1998) and Cohen (2007) that there should not be sentential ambiguity where a bare NP is interpretable as either kind-referring or as quantifying generically over instances.

Carlson, Gregory N. 1980. *Reference to kinds in English*. New York & London: Garland.

Chierchia, Gennaro. 1998. Reference to kinds across languages. *Natural language semantics* 6(4). 339-405.

Cohen, Ariel. 2007. Between kinds and properties: Bare plurals across languages. In Tova Friedman & Masayuki Gibson (eds.), *Proceedings of the 17th Semantics and Linguistic Theory conference*, 53-70. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

Dayal, Veneeta. 2004. Number marking and (in)definiteness in kind terms. *Linguistics and philosophy* 27(4). 393-450.

Krifka, Manfred. 2003. Bare NPs: Kind-referring, indefinites, both, or neither? In Robert B. Young & Yuping Zhou (eds.), *Proceedings of the 13th Semantics and Linguistic Theory conference*, 180-203. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

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