

The spectrum of kinds

Workshop at the Annual Meeting of German Society for Linguistics – DGfS 2024

28. Feb – 1. March 2024, Bochum

A famous pair of examples in the discussion around kinds are the **bottle** examples originally from Barbara Partee, which differ in acceptability: **The Coke bottle has a narrow neck.** vs. **?The green bottle has a narrow neck.** The well-known explanation is that **Coke-bottle** expresses a well-established kind whereas **green bottle** does not. The problem is, however, that it is notoriously difficult to pin down what well-establishedness is supposed to be. Does it relate to familiarity or uniqueness, or to the presence of a prototype in real world or to actual frequency of occurrences of objects? What is less considered is the question why **green bottle** should be *not* well-established. And the explanation points to a whole spectrum of kinds.

The opposite pole to well-established kinds in the spectrum of kinds discussed in linguistics is the notion of *ad-hoc kinds*. It has been used in recent years to interpret NPs that are kind-like but at the same time require on-line construction, for example similarity demonstratives (**so ein Tisch, such a table**), NP coordination with partial lists (**water, herbal teas, and the like**), simulative plurals (as in Turkish reduplication **havlú-mavlú** ‘towels and the like’) and even amount relatives (**the champagne they spilled last night**). As in the case of well-establishedness, it seems notoriously difficult to pin down what distinguishes ad-hoc kind referring expressions from those referring to non-ad-hoc kinds (**bottles**), on the one hand, and from those not referring to kinds at all (**people in the next room**).

The idea of ad-hoc kinds goes back to research in cognitive psychology investigating the formation of categories/concepts. There seem to be categories that are not well-established in memory cutting across the correlational structure of the environment and nevertheless exhibit many properties observed for common categories. For example, **things to take from one's home during a fire** may include children, dogs, stereos, blankets etc (Barsalou). From a linguistic point of view, there is the question of how such categories relate to ad-hoc kinds and what they can tell us about the formation of ad-hoc kinds.

Our workshop aims at bringing together research in linguistics on genericity, and in particular on kinds, and research in cognitive psychology on concepts. We invite submissions for 45 min talks (+ 15 min discussion) addressing issues within the spectrum of kinds described above. In favor of a coherent program and focused discussion preference will be given to submissions maximally close to the topic of the workshop.

Submission before **15. Aug 2023**, max. 1 page (regular a4 size / regular font size), pdf file to dgfs2024@carla-umbach.de (subject [DGfS 2024])

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Please note that according to DGfS guidelines, you are not allowed to present in more than one workshop at the conference.

Workshop organizers:

Cécile Meier, Universität Frankfurt, c.meier@lingua.uni-frankfurt.de,

Carla Umbach, Universität Köln, carla.umbach@uni-koeln.de

www.carla-umbach.de/spectrumOfKinds

Selected references

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