

Tel-Aviv University
The School of Philosophy, Linguistics and Science Studies
Department of Linguistics

THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 22.4.2021
16:15-17:45

Aviv Schoenfeld
Tel Aviv University

Inclusion in the subkind relation

Why is it true that dogs are a kind of pet? In prominent analyses, a necessary truth-condition of the subkind relation is that the superordinate kind includes the subkind (Carlson 1980, Cruse 1986, Krifka et al. 1995). However, these are at odds with the observation that such inclusion need not hold. For example, *Oaks are kind of tree* is true despite some oaks being bushes (Kay 1975, Randall 1976), and *Dogs are a kind of pet* is true despite some dogs being strays (Hampton 1982). To these two familiar sorts of non-inclusion I add a novel one, where *Grass is a kind of plant* is true despite not every bit of grass being a plant organism. To accommodate this non-inclusion, I offer a novel denotation of binominal *kind*, which serves as an alternative to that of Carlson (1980) and accounts for novel data pertaining to the instance-level use of *kind of N* (e.g. *That sapling is a kind of tree*).

I propose that the truth of *Oaks are a kind of tree* relies on restricting the oak kind to only be instantiated by oaks that are normal in a certain respect (Nickel 2016). Next, I argue that data pertaining to *Grass is a kind of plant* indicates that a necessary truth-condition is that every instance of the subkind is a sum of parts of instances of the superkind, e.g. every bit of grass is a sum of parts of plants. Third, I argue that an extension of *kind of pet* can include kinds that are instantiated by non-pets that are pets in an accessible world, e.g. dogs that are up for sale or adoption. These three sorts of non-inclusion are accounted for by three components of a novel denotation of binominal *kind*, namely existential quantification over ways of being normal (Nickel 2016), the part-set of a sum and potential instantiation.

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Kay, Paul. 1975. A model-theoretic approach to folk taxonomy. *Information (international social science council)* 14(5). 151-166.

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