

Reference to kinds and to event kinds

M.Teresa Espinal (UAB)

The Generic Notebook: Current Approaches to Genericity. Humboldt University, Berlin
June 2, 2017

In this talk I will focus on definite kinds in Romance and I will argue that at the syntax-semantics interface definite kinds are numberless DPs composed by applying a *iota operator* (the meaning encoded by the definite article) to the meaning of nouns, thus constraining a generic interpretation for the sentence in which they appear. I will provide empirical support for the definiteness of apparent bare nominals in argument position of kind-level predicates, not only in a language that can omit the article (such as Brazilian Portuguese), but also in a language without articles (such as Russian).

Second, I will focus on short weak definites, and I will present a new analysis of the contribution of nominal expressions that allow a weak reading to ‘familiar’ event kinds, with a special reference to Romance languages. According to this analysis, the weak reading of a regular DP is dependent on the stereotypical information encoded on certain object nouns that is activated at the time of utterance interpretation. From the point of view of syntax, we have regular DPs, whose D may be null or not. From the point of view of semantics, I will argue that these DPs do not refer to kinds and do not correspond to incorporated objects either.

- Borik, O. & M.T. Espinal. 2015. Reference to kinds and to other generic expressions in Spanish: definiteness and number. *The Linguistic Review*, 32.2, 167-225.
- Borik, O. & M.T. Espinal. 2017. Definiteness in Russian bare nominal kinds. Ms. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Submitted.
- Cyrino, S. & M.T. Espinal. 2015. Bare nominals in Brazilian Portuguese: more on the DP/NP analysis. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 33:471-521.
- Espinal, M.T. 2010. Bare nominals in Catalan and Spanish. Their structure and meaning. *Lingua*, 120, 984-1009.
- Espinal, M.T. & S. Cyrino. 2017. On weak definites and their contribution to event kinds. In E. Castroviejo, O. Fernández-Soriano & I. Pérez (eds.), *Boundaries, Phases, and Interfaces*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.