

## Partitive specificity and kind reference in Latvian

There are significant parallels between individual and kind reference across languages, and it has been observed that kinds share properties with definite expressions (Carlson 1977; Chierchia n.d.; Krifka et al. 1995, a.m.o.). E.g., English *the* can refer to both individuals (*the lion is roaring*) and kinds (*the lion is extinct*).

Baltic languages offer further evidence. These languages employ a special suffix restricted to adjectives, often interpreted as conveying definiteness (Šereikaitė 2019; Holvoet and Sprau-nienė 2012; Kalnača and Lokmane 2021, p. 160). Additionally, this marker is obligatory with classifying adjectives (Rutkowski and Progowac 2006), i. e., those that denote a subclass within the noun’s class (McNally and Boleda n.d.). However, unlike the definite article, this marker remains obligatory even when the entire phrase doesn’t refer to a kind. (Šereikaitė 2017) proposes that it is polysemous between IOTA and DOWN operators, but compositionality questions arise.

This paper argues that the Latvian marker *-ai-* conveys not definiteness, but rather partitive specificity (Enç 1991), scoping under the adjective. In simpler terms, it requires the existence of a unique salient (plural) individual within the noun’s extension, of which the DP’s referent is a part.

- (1) {There were new shirts in a clothing store.}

*Jānis sev nopirka sarkan-o kreklu*  
Jānis himself bought red-DEF.ACC shirt  
'Jānis bought himself a red shirt.'

This aligns with the conceptualization of kinds as pluralities of subkinds proposed in (Krifka et al. 1995). Under this view, *-ai-* can be assigned a unified interpretation in terms of partitive specificity. The analysis is formalized using dynamic semantics (Heim 1982; Dekker 1996) and extends to account the use of *-ai-* with *ad-hoc* kinds (Mendia 2019; Holvoet and Sprau-nienė 2012, p. 82). Furthermore, the paper explores the previously unregarded fact that *-ai-* is used with classifying relational nouns as well, and the consequences of it for the analysis.

## References

- Carlson, G. (1977). "Reference to Kinds in English". In: URL: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Reference-to-kinds-in-English-Carlson/03076a488a0cb8aaeaf336130eb4b3108533bd75> (visited on 03/01/2024).
- Chierchia, Gennaro (n.d.). "Reference to Kinds across Languages". In: ().
- Dekker, Paul (June 1, 1996). "The Values of Variables in Dynamic Semantics". In: *Linguistics and Philosophy* 19, pp. 211–257. DOI: 10.1007/BF00628200.

- Enç, Mürvet (1991). "The Semantics of Specificity". In: *Linguistic Inquiry* 22.1, pp. 1–25. ISSN: 0024-3892. JSTOR: 4178706. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4178706> (visited on 02/06/2024).
- Heim, Irene (1982). "The Semantics of Definite and Indefinite Noun Phrases". PhD thesis. UMass Amherst.
- Holvoet, Axel and Birutė Spraunienė (Dec. 31, 2012). "Towards a Semantic Map for Definite Adjectives in Baltic". In: *Baltic Linguistics* 3, pp. 65–99. ISSN: 2081-7533. DOI: 10.32798/bl.420. URL: <https://www.journals.polon.uw.edu.pl/index.php/bl/article/view/420> (visited on 03/01/2024).
- Kalnača, Andra and Ilze Lokmane (2021). *Latvian Grammar*. University of Latvia Press. ISBN: 978-9934-18-635-6. DOI: 10.22364/latgram.2021. URL: <https://www.apgads.lu.lv/izdevumi/brivpieejas-izdevumi/latvian-grammar> (visited on 01/31/2024).
- Krifka, Manfred et al. (Jan. 1, 1995). "Genericity: An Introduction". In: *The Generic Book*, pp. 1–124.
- McNally, Louise and Gemma Boleda (n.d.). "Relational Adjectives as Properties of Kinds". In: ().
- Mendia, Jon Ander (2019). "Reference to Ad Hoc Kinds". In: *Linguistics and Philosophy* 43.6, pp. 589–631. ISSN: 0165-0157, 1573-0549. DOI: 10.1007/s10988-019-09280-9. URL: <http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s10988-019-09280-9> (visited on 01/31/2024).
- Rutkowski and Progowac (2006). *Classifying Adjectives and Noun Movement in Lithuanian*.Pdf.
- Šereikaitė, Milena (2017). *Kind Reference within DPs*.
- (2019). "Strong vs. Weak Definites: Evidence from Lithuanian Adjectives." In: *Studies in Diversity Linguistics* 25. URL: <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/23425/1/1006725.pdf#page=107> (visited on 03/01/2024).