Tracking the Normative/Descriptive Distinction via

Markers of Case and Genericity

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• <u>Point of Departure</u>:

- Leslie (2015): A subclass of normative generic sentences involves dualcharacter kind terms, and specifically social kind terms (as their special or only case). The source of their duality is their lexical meaning: namely, they are taken to be polysemous between the normative and descriptive sense.
- Hesni (2021) showed that a wide variety of kind terms, which are not inherently dual-character, may acquire the normative reading in the appropriate context, which makes the polysemy account implausible.
- <u>Goal</u>: Provide additional arguments against the polysemy account of Leslie (2015).
- Theoretical background: This talk investigates these claims mainly from the point of view of semantic theories of genericity.

General Strategy: Tracking the normative/descriptive distinction

- In English, the selection of the normative or descriptive interpretation of kind terms involves no change in the form of the nouns involved. The relevant reading is a property of (the structure of) the whole generic sentence, the combined meanings of its subject (e.g., indefinite singular versus bare plural) and predicate (e.g., ought to/should versus is), typically also interacting with context, and pragmatic principles of interpretation, SCRIPTS, FRAMES, and similar coherent knowledge structures.
- In other languages, overt formal means (morphological processes and relations) are available or even obligatory to signal the (availability of) normative or descriptive interpretation.
- Generally, one of the most reliable strategies in trying to evaluate the claims about the semantics of a given domain is to examine the properties of formal means, and specifically the properties of grammatical markers, that are associated with that domain.

General Strategy: Tracking the normative/descriptive distinction

<u>Claim:</u>

- In Slavic languages, the normative/descriptive distinction is (indirectly) reflected in the speaker's choices between grammatical markers of the **case system** and in the use of the **generic marker** in generic sentences, as opposed to its contrastive absence.
- The normative/descriptive distinction is not restricted to certain social kind terms, and generally its source is not the normative/descriptive polysemy of nouns taken as lexical items.

Genericity Landscape: Descriptive & Normative Generics

Kind Reference

Alligators are widespread in Florida.

widespread selects a kind-denoting term

generalizations over properties that particular members realizing that kind cannot have

Generic (Characterizing) Sentences

Dogs bark.

This supermarket sells gator meat. / Meg drinks beer.

Bishops move diagonally.

Fred is a bachelor/a philosopher/ an artist.

A madrigal is polyphonic.

Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

'Non-accidental' generalizations over individuals and/or situations; properties of kinds distribute to their members; inductively inferred from observations, and/or possibly also backed up by some underlying causes, or motivated by rules and agreements of various types that construct our social reality.

Generic sentences are (i) aspectually stative (all) (ii) intensional (all)

(iii) exception-tolerating (many)

Carlson (1995): Two Main Models



Key Common Properties of Generic Sentences

- **aspectually stative:** In contrast to all episodic sentences, they never refer to particular occurrences, episodic situations in the world
- (1) ? Mary right now knows French/smokes on the porch.
- **intensional**: All have a predictive power, transcend our immediate experiences of the world (specific isolated instances, facts), as they concern not only what actually obtains at given worlds and times, as a matter of some regularity, but also what is (realistically) possible.
- many admit exceptions: different types of generic sentences admit different types and number of exceptions while still remaining true (akin to defeasible inferences treated in non-monotonic logics).
- (2) *Ravens are black* (though a few are white).
- (3) *Mosquitoes carry* the West Nile virus (though 99% do not).
- (4) *Tim has a beer after work* (though when he works late, he does not; I saw him drinking beer at least once, so he is not averse to drinking beer.).
- (5) *Philosophers are rational* (though some, like Slavoj, are opinionated and temperamental).

- Paradigm examples: descriptive generalizations
- (1) Tim has a beer after work.
- (2) The Sun rises in the East.
- (3) Dogs bark.
- Generic sentences express inductive generalizations which are true based on some observed (or unobserved) set of episodic conditions in the world.
- Episodic truth conditions are basic and generic truth conditions derived from them.
- The semantic representation of generic sentences includes a substructure encoding the episodic base for the generalization. (Supporting evidence: adverbial modification, as in *In cooking, Sam tastes the soup just once*.)
- Different kinds of characterizing generics call for different types of episodic instances or particulars, or 'cases', to be relevant as their base for the generalization. Three main types are distinguished (Krifka et al 1995, Pelletier & Schubert 1997, Carlson 2008):
 - generalizations over situations: Tim has a beer after work.
 - generalizations over a class of individuals: A potato contains vitamin C.
 - situations and individuals ('double generalizations'): Dogs bark.

Carlson (1995) Rules and regulations Model

- Paradigm examples: normative generalizations, e.g., constitutive rules of games, regulative rules of legally-regulated activity (like rules of the road), which we can learn directly
- (1) Bishops move diagonally.
- (2) The Speaker of the House succeeds the Vice-President.

Generic sentences are true by virtue of some causal structures or forces in the world that are behind the corresponding episodic structures in the world.

- The instances that count as evidence for the truth of a generalization are not statable as episodic sentences: e.g., a particular episodic situation denoted by *Max moved his king's bishop from K2 to Q1* has almost nothing to do with whether (1) is true, except as evidence that some underlying causal structure or force is in force, i.e., the rule of chess given in (1).
- Characterizing generic sentences are judged true or false with respect to a set of rules (or a finite list of propositions), viewed as irreducible entities.
- In addition to such 'rules and regulations', the requisite ontology includes the ontology needed by the inductive model (the extensional entities necessary to construct the grounding of episodic sentences, such as individuals and situations, times and places).

Dual-Character Kind Terms in Generic Sentences

- two dimensions of meaning: descriptive and normative (e.g., Knobe & Prasada 2011)
- Example: Artist
 - normative sense: exemplifying the ideals of what an artist should aspire to (e.g., committed to producing works of aesthetic value, ...)
 - descriptive sense: what it is to be an artist (e.g., engaged in creating what is intended to be artistic artifacts, painting, sculpture, music, writing, ...)

Context: Robbie Williams has an art exhibition in London, so satisfies some descriptive criteria of an artist.

A critic of *The Guardian*:

"He's a pop star, not an artist, and maybe it's unfair to view his work in the wider context of modern and contemporary art."¹

I.e., RW fails to satisfy the normative ideal of an artist.



• Independence of the normative/descriptive criteria: An individual can satisfy the descriptive criteria without satisfying the normative ones, and vice versa.

¹ The Guardian, May 6, 2025 https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/may/06/robbie-williams-radical-honesty-moco-london-art-exhibition-take-that?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Leslie (2015): Lexical Approach to Dual-Character Kind Terms

Polysemy

- Nouns denoting dual-character concepts, taken as lexical items, are polysemous between a normative and a descriptive sense.
- The best, perhaps only, examples of dual-character concepts are social kinds, e.g., *artist, philosopher, scientist, friend, (wo)man, teacher* (following Knobe & Prasada 2011).
- (1) The only **man** in the room was that woman.

McConnell-Ginet (2002)

(2) Hillary Clinton is the only **man** in the Obama administration. Leslie (2015)



HAVE NOT LIVED AS A WOMAN. I HAVE LIVED AS A MAN. I'VE JUST DONE WHAT I DAMN WELL WANTED TO, AND I'VE MADE ENOUGH MONEY TO SUPPORT MYSELF, AND AIN'T AFRAID OF BEING ALONE"

OMEN IN ART

BURN

Leslie (2015):

- *man* in (2) is used in its normative sense: "one who exemplifies the ideals of manhood"
- Characteristic properties of the ideal are either full or partial specifications of the primary (social) role/function in question, or properties that are important or necessary for adequately fulfilling that (social) role/function.

Hesni (2021): Pragmatic Approach to Dual-Character Kind Terms

Hesni (2021): Argument against Leslie's polysemy account of dual-character terms

A wide variety of nouns used as kind terms can be used in normative generic sentences, in the right context, and these nouns inherently, taken as lexical items,

- (i) do not denote dual-character concepts; and
- (ii) are not polysemous,

Examples: *bus driver, bartender* (*pace* Knobe & Prasada 2011 who exclude them from the class of dual-kind social terms), and even *rock*.

Context: A child puts pebbles in her mouth at breakfast time.

Mother: *Rocks aren't breakfast.* normative generic sentence

- Deliberate flouting of the Maxim of Quantity and Manner (Grice 1975)
- Implicatures: Rocks should not be (eaten) for breakfast. Do not eat these rocks. Rocks are not for eating.

(Not: `Ideal rocks are not breakfast' in parallel to 'Ideal boys should not cry' triggered by the factually false *Boys don't cry*.)

• This context-sensitivity of normative generic readings can be well-motivated by means of Grice's (1975) implicature account. Related pragmatic proposals in Haslanger 2011, 2014, McConnell-Ginet 2012, and Nguyen 2020.

Reflexes of the Normative/Descriptive Duality

Slavic Languages:

- Nominative / Instrumental Case
- Generic Marker

Slavic Nominative/Instrumental Case: Czech

- (1) Hillary Clinton is the only **man** in the Obama administration. Leslie (2015)
- (2) Hillary Clintonová je jediným **mužem** v Obamově administrativě. Czech Hillary Clinton is only man.**SG.INST** in Obama administration
 - 'man' + INST (Instrumental) case in (2) selects the normative sense of 'man'
 - INST: the most natural choice of the case marking, perhaps the only choice in this type of normative sentence
- (3) An attested example:

Skoro bychom mohli zmínit oblíbený výrok někdejší britské premiérky Margaret Thatcherové, která o sobě tvrdila, že je jediným mužem (INST) ve svém kabinetu.¹

'We could almost mention the favorite saying of the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who claimed to be the only man (INST) in her cabinet.'

¹ <u>https://plus.rozhlas.cz/jan-fingerland-proc-se-ted-hillary-bude-lepe-spat-6562625</u> Accessed January 6, 2025

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- (4) Hillary Clintonová je jediný muž v Obamově administrativě.
 Hillary Clinton is only man.SG.NOM in Obama administration
 'Hillary Clinton is the only male member in the Obama administration.'
 - 'man'+ NOM (Nominative) case: descriptive sense of 'man' (strong preference)
 - NOM: grammatical, but it implies that Clinton (also) possesses the descriptive (biological) characteristics of manhood, which makes (4) false.

¹ <u>https://plus.rozhlas.cz/jan-fingerland-proc-se-ted-hillary-bude-lepe-spat-6562625</u> Accessed January 6, 2025

• All Slavic languages have a case system, but they differ in the number of cases, and their uses. Example: The declension of the noun *muž* 'man' in Czech (West Slavic)

	Singular	Plural
1. nominative	muž	muži
2. genitive	muž e	muž ů
3. dative	muži	muž ům
4. accusative	muž e	muž e
5. vocative	muži	muži
6. locative	muži	muž ích
7. instrumental	muž em	muži

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INST

	Singular	Plural
1. nominative	muž	muž i
2. genitive	muž e	muž ů
3. dative	muži	muž ům
4. accusative	muž e	muž e
5. vocative	muži	muž i
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NOM

• Generic copula sentences: F(s) is/are G(s)

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• Generic copula sentences: *F(s) is/are G(s)*

NOM INST

- Different Slavic languages differ in the constraints they impose on the use of the NOM and INST case in generic copula sentences.
- In Czech, the NOM and INST alternation in this context is associated with meaning differences that are robust (enough) to be taken as indicative of the two distinct interpretation patterns which separate NORMATIVE and DESCRIPTIVE generics, respectively.

Slavic Nominative/Instrumental Case

Common intuitions about the meaning contributions of the NOM and INST case to nominal and adjectival predicate in copula sentences (as primary predicates) and in secondary predicates:

-- A predicate in the **NOM** case describes properties that are (viewed as) **permanent, inherent, essential, stable**;

-- A predicate in the **INST** case describes properties that are (viewed as)

(i) **temporary, transient**, or **changeable**, and also **locatable in time and space** (temporal component)

(ii) **unexpected**, **salient**, given "prior circumstances (previous experience, general principles)" (Timberlake 1986:46) (<u>modal component</u>), in contrast to the NOM case (or other agreeing case in secondary predicate)

Jakobson 1936, Wierzbicka 1980, Bailyn and Rubin 1991, Fowler 1997, Filip 2001, Timberlake 1982, 1986, 2004, Pereltsvaig 2007, Markman 2008, i.a.

Some supporting evidence:

- <u>Lexically determined Instrumental case</u>: Verbs that entail an inchoative change of state assign the INST-case to the nominal argument denoting the entity undergoing the change of state:
- (1) a. Zvolili ho předsedou (INST) / *předsedu (ACC). ACC: accusative Czech 'He was elected a chairman (INST).'
 - b. Stal se dobrodruhem (INST) / */?dobrodruh (NOM). NOM: nominative 'He became an adventurer (INST).'

Some supporting evidence:

- <u>X is (= fulfills the function/role of)</u> <u>Y-INST</u>
- (2) Byt mu splnil všechny sny.
 apartment he.DAT fulfilled all dreams
 'The apartment fulfilled all his dreams.
 Chytré pódium je stolem, postelí i pohovkou.¹
 smart podium is desk.INST bed.INST and sofa.INST
 The smart podium serves as a desk, bed and sofa.'



Some supporting evidence:

- <u>X fulfills the function/role of <u>Y-INST</u></u>
- (3) Dva se však mohou neshodnout, zda daný objekt je stolem (INST) či ne. 'However, two different people cannot agree whether a given object is a table or not.' <u>https://stoky.urza.cz/texty/naucene-definice-aneb-stolovitost-stolu-2789</u>

(4) Představuje si, že je tu stromem (NST), má určitě silné kořeny, statný kmen a bohatou korunu.
 'She imagines that she is here a tree, she surely has strong roots, mighty trunk and an abundant crown.'
 https://theses.cz/id/z66l3j/STAG94410.pdf

INST case & normativity link

(1) Hillary Clintonová je jediným mužem v Obamově administrativě.
 Hillary Clinton is only man.SG.INST in Obama administration
 'Hillary Clinton is the only man in the Obama administration.'

<u>Thesis</u>:

- *muž* 'man' (nominative citation form) has as a part of its lexical meaning the **descriptive** sense of 'an adult male human' (typically the top meaning in standard dictionaries).
- *muž 'man'* is not lexically polysemous between the descriptive and normative meaning
- the descriptive meaning of *muž* 'man' is basic and the normative meaning is derived.

Derivation steps (a very rough sketch):

- 1. Clinton fails the descriptive criteria of *muž* 'man': 'an adult male human'.
- 2. The INST case requires that the predicate to which it is attached be construed as describing a **temporary property, i.e., a property that can hold of an individual with interruptions**, on and off at different intervals of evaluation.
- 3. As most nouns do, *muž* 'man' denotes an individual-level property, ILP (Carlson 1977), i.e., a stable property holding of an individual over large chunks of that individual's existence or all of it.
- 4. INST when added to *muž* 'man' (ILP) triggers its shift from a stable, descriptive meaning into a **temporary property** interpretation:

Hillary Clintonová je jediným mužem (INST) v Obamově administrativě.

 \rightarrow 'When/if Hillary Clinton is in the appropriate situation in her function as a member of the Obama administration, Hillary Clinton is the only individual *manifesting characteristics that satisfy the norm/ideals of a MAN*'.

This shifted interpretation of *muž* 'man' (ILP) is similar to the "interruption" interpretation of **ILP**s in the scope of Q-Adverbs: *Mary is sometimes a California resident*. (See e.g., Fernald 2000, deSwart 1991.)

Slavic Nominative/Instrumental Case: Czech

5. What it means 'manifesting characteristics that *that satisfy the norm/ideals of a MAN*' is determined by the context of the utterance, also in interaction with the relevant coherent cognitive structures like SCRIPTS, FRAMES (Filmore 1982, and elsewhere), PERSPECTIVES.

In (1), these 5 steps amount to the descriptive-to-normative meaning shift of *muž* 'man' roughly, to

'manifesting characteristics that fulfill the relevant social norms and ideals of manhood in the context of a governmental official', e.g., by taking charge and being assertive, and the like.

(1) Hillary Clintonová je jediným mužem v Obamově administrativě.
 Hillary Clinton is only man.SG.INST in Obama administration
 'Hillary Clinton is the only man in the Obama administration.'

INST case & normativity link (cont.)

- <u>Additional supporting evidence</u>: **Overt restrictors** seem necessary to ensure a fully felicitous use of this type of normative generic sentence with the INST-case marked kind term
- (1) a. Hillary Clintonová je # mužem / #jediným mužem / # pravým mužem.
 Hillary Clinton is man.SG.INST / only man.SG.INST / right man.SG.INST
 'Hillary Clinton is a/the man / the only man / the real man.'
 - b. Hillary Cl. je ted' tady mužem / jediným mužem / pravým mužem.
 Hillary Cl. is now here man.SG.INST / only man.SG.INST / right man.SG.INST / Hillary Clinton is a/the man / the only man / the real man around here now.
- To the extent that the shift of an inherently **descriptive** ILP like *muž* (Czech) 'man' to its corresponding temporary "interruption" interpretation -- holding on and off in suitable situations -- can be thought of as a prerequisite for the use of *muž* (Czech) 'man' in **normative** generics, it becomes understandable why there should be this preference for overt restrictors specifying the appropriate situations/conditions under which the relevant social norms or standards of the ideal are fulfilled.

Summary

- A generic statement 'An F is G-NOM' or 'Fs are G-NOMs' asserts that F(s) necessarily satisfies the descriptive criteria for what it means to be a member/members of G.
- A generic statement 'An F is G-INST' or 'Fs are G-INSTs'

asserts that F(s) manifests properties in appropriate situations that partly or fully fulfill the (social) role/function that characterizes the normative ideal of G;

F(s) may, but need not, satisfy the descriptive criteria for what it means to be a member/members of G.

Satisfying the normative and descriptive criteria: Man

- (1) Jsem muž, který je mužem a cítí se mužem.²
 am.1SG man.SG.NOM who is man.SG.INST and feels REFL man.SG.INST
 'I am a man who is a true/real man and feels like a true/real man.'
 - NOM case descriptive sense: what it is to be an adult male human, in the biological sense
 - INST case normative sense: exemplifying the ideals of 'manhood', in social and physical terms

Failing the descriptive criterion, but satisfying the normative criterion: Man

Hillary Clintonová je jediným mužem v Obamově administrativě.
 Hillary Clinton is only man.SG.INST in Obama administration
 'Hillary Clinton is the only man in the Obama administration.'

- Satisfying the descriptive but not the normative criteria: *Philosopher*
- (3) Známá mediální celebrita Bernard-Henri Lévy je typickým francouzským filosofem (INST). O co méně je filosofem (INST) v čistém slova smyslu, tedy někým (INST), kdo se vznáší nad naším lidským hemžením a s dostatečným klidem a nadhledem ho pozoruje, o to více je politickým aktivistou (INST), skrývajícím své aktivistické já za vznešené filosofické floskule.¹

'The well-known media celebrity Bernard-Henri Lévy is a typical French philosopher (INST). The less of a philosopher (INST) he is in the pure sense of the word, that is, <u>someone (INST) who rises above our human bustle</u> <u>and observes it with sufficient calm and detachment</u>, the more of a political activist he is, hiding his activist self behind lofty philosophical platitudes.'

- Lévy fails the normative ideal of the kind PHILOSOPHER 'in the pure sense of the word' (a standard-raising modifier), which is explicitly specified by the underlined text.
- Lévy satisfies the descriptive criterion of a PHILOSOPHER and also the normative criteria of 'a typical French philosopher' (INST)'.

¹ <u>https://neviditelnypes.lidovky.cz/zahranici/evropa-absurdni-vyroky-profesora-levyho.A190502_205114_p_zahranici_wag/diskuse/6?razeni=time</u> Accessed December 5, 2024

Genericity and the Slavic Generic Marker

Genericity Landscape: Descriptive & Normative Generics

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Alligators are widespread in Florida.

widespread selects a kind-denoting term

generalizations over properties that particular members realizing that kind cannot have

Generic (Characterizing) Sentence

Dogs bark. This supermarket sells gator meat. / Meg drinks beer. Bishops move diagonally. Fred is a bachelor/a philosopher/ an artist. A madrigal is polyphonic. Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

'Non-accidental' generalizations over individuals and/or situations; properties of kinds distribute to their members; inductively inferred from observations, and/or possibly also backed up by some underlying causes, or motivated by rules and agreements of various types that construct our social reality.

Generic sentences are (i) aspectually stative (all)

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Carlson (1995): Two Main Models



Two Main Perspectives on the Semantics of Generic Sentences

Carlson (1995)

- two opposed models of how generic sentences can be true or false, which reflect two different theoretical attitudes towards the grounds or "base" for the truth of generic sentences:
 - Inductive model
 - Rules and regulations model
- Carlson's starting point:
 - The fundamental problem of the meaning of generic sentences lies in understanding the relation between the generalization and what counts as evidence for its truth, the **base** for the generalization: namely, the relevant 'cases', instances or particulars, isolated facts, situations, and in general our various experiences of the world (Carlson 1982, 1995, i.a.).
 - Different kinds of characterizing generics call for different types of bases for their generalization to be relevant, and therefore determine different perspectives on the meaning of generic sentences (or different models to ground their truth).

- true even if they only have a purely hypothetical, dispositional reading, and as yet no verifying instances in the actual world, and may never have any.
- (1) The Speaker of the House succeeds the Vice-President.
- independent of contingent, 'accidental' facts of the world
 <u>Context</u>: A world in which all the remaining pandas happen to have only three legs
- (2) All pandas have three legs. $\forall x [panda(x) \rightarrow have_3 [legs(x)]$ TRUE as a not generic claim, by virtue of accidental actual world facts about a closed class of pandas Pandas have three leas. (3) FALSE as a generic claim about the kind PANDA Pandas have four legs. (4) **TRUE** as a generic claim about the kind PANDA, an open-ended class of not only existing pandas, but also any (realistically) possible panda, with the requisite genetic make-up); the actual extension of the subject pandas (including their quantity) does not make the sentence true or false, but may serve as evidence for some pattern or causal factor that underlies the generalization.

Generic Sentences: Exception-Tolerance

- There are characterizing generic sentences that hold without exceptions
 E.g., universal laws of science, rules-and-regulations that permit no exceptions, definitional statements
- (1) The Sun rises in the East.
- (2) No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice.
- (3) Bishops move diagonally.
- (4) A triangle has three sides.

Many generic sentences allow for exceptions

- (4) Ravens are black (though a few are white).
- (5) Mosquitoes carry the West Nile virus (though 99% do not).
- (6) Tim has a beer after work (though when he works late, he does not).

How Do We Judge Generic Sentences as True or False?

- Much of our everyday, commonsense knowledge of the world is encoded in characterizing generic sentences.
- We make quick and confident judgements about their truth or falsity. However, it is not entirely clear
 - *how exactly* we go about making such judgements,
 - on what grounds exactly, and
 - how we infer that there is a regularity there based on our experiences in/with the world that 'transcends' such experiences.
- A theory of the meaning (the truth conditions) of generic sentences has been the subject of long-standing debates in semantics, philosophy, psychology, AI, and other related fields.

Exception Tolerance: A Key Feature of Generic Setences

• **EXCEPTION-TOLERANCE** is perhaps the most puzzling feature of characterizing generic sentences

"Perhaps it is a feature of having finite, fallible minds that makes us often notice regularities that have exceptions, or perhaps it is more a matter of needing to be able to choose regularities quickly in order to get on with other aspects of our survival (...) regularities commonly have exceptions; either ones that are noticed later or ones that we think we can safely ignore (for whatever reason)" (Pelletier & Asher 1997, p. 1129).

... there are also exceptions and counterexamples that we think we **cannot** safely ignore and to draw out attention to them is one the key functions of the Slavic generic morpheme *-va*- used as functional morpheme on verbs
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Slavic generic marker **-va-:** A modal generic quantifier whose use involves reasoning with exceptions and counterexamples that (are known to) exist or are possible (as yet unknown) and are such that (the speaker thinks) cannot be ignored.

Generic (Characterizing) Sentence

Dogs bark. This supermarket sells gator meat. / Meg drinks beer. Bishops move diagonally. Fred is a bachelor/a philosopher/ an artist. A madrigal is polyphonic. Friends don't let friends drive drunk.

'Non-accidental' generalizations over individuals and/or situations; properties of kinds distribute to their members; inductively inferred from observations, and/or possibly also backed up by some underlying causes, or motivated by rules and agreements of various types that construct our social reality.

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paradigm examples that best fit the inductive model of genericity (Carlson 1995)

- (1) Psi štěkávají na povel / když mají ^{IPF} hlad.
 dogs bark.GEN.3PL.PRES on command / when have hunger
 'Dogs tend to bark on command / when they are hungry.'
- (2) Tento stroj drtívá pomeranče.
 this machine bark.GEN.3SG.PRES oranges
 'This machine crushes oranges.' (with some regularity, that's how we use it)
- (3) Ted' všude platívám kartou.
 now everywhere bark.GEN.1SG.PRES card
 'Nowadays, I pay with the card everywhere. '

(1) Ženy dávávají přednost rodině před kariérou. GEN verb women give.IPF.GEN.3PL.PRES priority family before career
 'Women (tend to) put family before career

(though there are exceptions, some put family first, some don't).'

Context-sensitivity: the normative reading is one of the possible readings, apart from a descriptive one (statistical regularity, characterization relation)

Basic properties of the Slavic generic marker –va-

-va- the standard citation form for all Slavic languages (see e.g., Genis et al 2021, Dahl 1995 for Czech) only attaches to imperfective (IPF) base forms, typically inherently episodic, and derives verbs that only have a generic interpretation. (Czech verbs below.)

		generic		episodic	
			progressive use	time-point ADV	iterative ADV
IMPERFECTIVE VERB with the IPF suffix	dávat ^{IPF} give. IPF .INF 'to (be) play(ing)' ↓	±	+	+	+
GENERIC VERB	dávávat give.IPF.GEN.INF '(to tend) to give' [i.e., regularly, often, rarely,]	+	X	X	X

Generic –va-marked verbs

- do not neatly fit the semantics of imperfective operators, because they exclude any episodic interpretation like the progressive, and evaluations at particular reference times (at 4 o'clock);
- are incompatible with iterative adverbials, and so are not 'iterative', 'frequentative', or 'multiplicative', contrary to common assumptions;

-va- formally and semantically independent of and cannot be confounded with the Slavic imperfectivizing suffix, even if some of their allomorphic variants seem alike.

Generic Markers: A Cross-Linguistic View

 In Dahl (1995), the Czech marker –va- serves as a paradigm example of a type of marker that is attested in a number of languages that constitutes a sufficient (but not a necessary) condition for enforcing a generic (and habitual) interpretation of a sentence:

Arabic (Classical), Akan, Catalan, **Czech**, Didinga, German, Guarani, Hungarian, Kammu, Limouzi, Montagnais, Sotho, Spanish, Swedish, Swedish Sign Language, Yucatec Maya, Zulu (Dahl 1995, p.421, fn. 8)

- Other languages with this type of marker: Tlingit (Cable 2022), Modern Hebrew (Doron & Boneh 2008)
- Previous studies almost exclusively focus on sentences that describe habits in the strict sense, i.e., regularities of action of ordinary animate individuals, mostly human agents: e.g., *Fred smokes*.

As in Dahl (1995), such markers are often treated as 'habitual' markers, not generic markers per se, and subsumed under tense or aspect.

• Markers of this type remain largely unexplored, both theoretically and empirically speaking.

The whole range of generic sentences they cover is unclear, they may go well beyond habituals like *Fred smokes*.

Slavic Generic –va-: Differences in Productivity and Usage

- West Slavic languages (esp. Czech, Slovak): the generic morpheme is productive, generic forms marked with this morpheme are used in all registers.
 - In Czech, the marker -*va* is used productively in all styles of speech (Kučera 1981, p.177, Petr 1986, i.a.).
 - However, not all verbs may allow the attachment of *-va* with the same ease, which is due to lexical idiosyncracies of different lexical classes of verbs, and individual verbs.
 - Kopečný (1948) (among other Czech linguists) observes that generic -va-verbs 'have a relatively low frequency of occurrence' ("poměrně řídká frekvence pravých iterativ").
 Yet, attested examples are not difficult to find.
- **East and South Slavic** languages: the generic marker is significantly less productive or not productive at all, generic forms with this morpheme are treated as lexicalized combinations, taken to belong to a colloquial register (see e.g., Široková 1963, p.62; Comrie 1976, p.27; Kučera 1981; Petr et al 1986, among others); the generic morpheme is still productive in some Northern Russian dialects (Barnetová 1956).
- **Polish** may represent an intermediate stage between Czech and Russian; the generic morpheme in Polish might be in the process of disappearing (e.g., Bílý 1986).



-va-marked generic verbs ('generic verbs' in my terms)

- a subclass of IPF aspect, most traditional Czech reference grammars

'atemporal aspect' or third aspect, Kopečný (1948, 1962, 1965, 1966), a related proposal in Filip & Carlson (1997), Filip (to appear)

independent of IPF aspect



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independent of IPF aspect

All three forms can be used in generic sentences.

PF, IPF and Generic verbs in normative generics

	Correlated with different degrees of hortative force and exception tolerance Czech				Czech
(1)	Ženy women 'Women	dají ^{PF} give.3PL.PRES (WILL/SHALL/MUST	přednost priority Г/OUGHT TO) put fa	rodině před kariérou. family before career amily before career.'	PF verb
(2)	Ženy women 'Women ((THOUGH	dávají ^{IPF} give.IPF.3PL.PRI typically, normal EXCEPTIONS MAY	přednost ES priority ly) put family befo BE ALLOWED).'	rodině před kariérou. family before career pre career	IPF verb
(3)	Ženy women 'Women p (THOUGH • attenu • low de	dávávají give.IPF.GEN.3P out family before THERE ARE EXCEPTI lates the force of egree of commitr	předno PL.PRES priority career ONS, SOME DO, BU the normative ge nent to the norm	st rodině před kariérou. family before career T SOME/MANY DON'T).' eneric	GEN verb
Nor	mative gen	erics: Preference	e for PF, IPF form	s that are formally unmarked for	genericity

(1) - (3) generics are context-sensitive: the same generic sentence can express a statistical regularity, a principled charaterizing relation, or a norm.

Different degrees of hortative force and exception tolerance C			Czech		
(1)) Kameny nejsou ^{IPF} snídaně / jídlo k snídani. rocks NEG.are breakfast / food to breakfast 'Rocks aren't breakfast.'			IPF verb	
	Implicatı Do not e	ures: Rocks should not be at these rocks. Rocks are	e (eaten) for breakfast. not for eating.		
(2)	Kameny rocks 'Rocks ar	# nebývají NEG.be.GEN.3PL.PRES en't breakfast (though th	snídaně. breakfast. ere are exceptions).'	GEN verb	
	 Certainty inference about the existence of exceptions or counterexamples: Sometimes rocks can be eaten for breakfast, or can be eaten on some other occasions. 				

Ignorance inference about the existence of exceptions or counterexamples:
 I don't know whether rocks aren't for breakfast.

How do we motivate these judgments? How does the presence of the generic marker -va-, and its contrastive absence, motivate them?

Theses (Filip & Carlson 1997, Filip to appear, and elsewhere)

- Sentential (characterizing) genericity is a category in its own right, rather than just a member of some other category system in the domain of TAM.
- The Slavic generic marker –*va* is a generic operator sui generis, rather than a 'habitual' marker that is to be subsumed under imperfective aspect or tense (*pace* Dahl 1995, and others).

This claim is taken to be

- a formal claim (Filip & Carlson 1997) and also
- a semantic claim, based on its properties as a marker that enforces only a generic (and habitual) interpretation of sentences and is expressed as a function morpheme on verbs (Filip *to appear*, and elsewhere).

-va- A modal generic quantifier

- Similarities to the modal null generic (GEN):
 - quantifier variable binding properties
 - its meaning is not reducible to any single quantifier (like 'usually', 'most') or any single expression of quantity (no matter how probabilistic, or modalized)
- *Sui generis* properties: contributes the uncancellable inference (as part of its truthconditional content) that there are actual or possible exceptions or counterexamples to the generalization (<u>'non-homogeneity requirement</u>), based on (un/observed) real world facts, which may be also grounded in underlying causal factors, or rules.

COROLLARIES:

1. Incompatible with universal generalizations (e.g., universal laws of nature), any generalizations that are commonly known to permit no exceptions, possibly in all the known conditions.

2. The uncancellable inference (as part of its truth-conditional content) that there are verifying instances in the actual world that count as evidence for the truth of generic sentences ('realization requirement').

Note: Exceptions are compatible with the truth of the generalization (e.g., *Dogs bark* is true despite non-barking dogs), while counterexamples are incompatible (e.g., hardbacks are counterexamples that falsify *Books are paperback*). See e.g., Nickel (2010).

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Irreducibility to a particular Q-Adverb or a Quantity Expression

- For instance, the meaning of the generic morpheme –*va* is not reducible to 'usually' or 'most' (*pace* Dahl 1995, i.a.)
- The addition of *obyčejně* 'usually' or *většina* 'the majority' does not preserve the truth value of the original sentence, and yields a factually false sentence:
- (1) a. Za Stalina ruští generálové umírávali v mladém věku.
 during Stalin Russian generals died.GEN in young age
 'In Stalin's times, Russian generals tended to die young.'¹ Kučera 1981, 1999
 - b. Za Stalina většina ruských generálů umírávalo v mladém věku.
 FALSE during Stalin majority Russian generals died.GEN in young age
 'In Stalin's times, Russian generals tended to die young.'
 - c. Za Stalina ruští generálové obyčejně umírávali v mladém věku. FALSE during Stalin Russian generals usually died.GEN in young age 'In Stalin's times, Russian generals usually died young.'

¹ The example is taken from Kučera (1981, 1999) who translates it as 'Most generals died young in Stalin's times.' However, this does not seem to be correct, given that factually it is false, and the sentence can be used in a situation in which less than half of the Russian generals died young in Stalin's times.

Irreducibility to a particular Q-Adverb or a Quantity Expression

- -va- freely occurs with any adverbial of quantification (apart from universal ones), which clearly indicates that it on its own does not contribute any requirement on the prevalence of the generically predicated property:
- (2) Po večeři Tomáš [ADVERB] kouříval doutník.
 after dinner Thomas [ADVERB] smoke.GEN cigar
 'After dinner Thomas [ADVERB] smoked a cigar.'

The [ADVERB] slot can be filled by e.g., *občas* 'from time to time', *často* 'often', *někdy* 'sometimes', *málokdy* 'rarely', *obvykle* 'usually', *pravidelně* 'regularly', *téměř vždy* 'almost always', *tolikrát* 'so many times', *tu a tam* 'here and there', *většinou* 'for the most part', *vzácně* 'rarely', *zpravidla* 'as a rule', ... (see corpus studies of Široková 1963:62, 81 and 1965; Danaher 2003).

- Danaher's (2003) corpus study shows that the suffix -va-
 - occurs with the adverb of quantification *obvykle* 'usually' much less often than with other adverbs of quantification.
 - In fact, it is more often used with adverbs like *občas* 'from time to time', *někdy* 'sometimes', *málokdy* 'rarely', *tu a tam* 'here and there', *vzácně* 'rarely'.

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- *Sui generis* properties: contributes the uncancellable inference (as part of its truthconditional content) that **there are actual or possible exceptions or counterexamples** to the generalization (<u>'non-homogeneity requirement'</u>), based on (un/observed) real world facts, which may be also grounded in underlying causal factors, or rules.

COROLLARIES:

1. Incompatible with universal generalizations (e.g., universal laws of nature), any generalizations that are commonly known to permit no exceptions, possibly in all the known conditions.

2. The uncancellable inference (as part of its truth-conditional content) that there are verifying instances in the actual world that count as evidence for the truth of generic sentences ('realization requirement').

Note: Exceptions are compatible with the truth of the generalization (e.g., *Dogs bark* is true despite non-barking dogs), while counterexamples are incompatible (e.g., hardbacks are counterexamples that falsify *Books are paperback*). See e.g., Nickel (2010).

-va-: Descriptive Generics with Counterexamples

Counterexamples to the generalization that are incompatible with its truth *(=* 'positive counterinstances' in the sense of Leslie 2007, 2008) and the addition of the generic –va- reverses its truth value.

FALSE

- (1) a. Books are paperback.
 - b. Knihy jsou ^{IPF} brožované. (Czech) FALSE
 books are paperback
 'Books are paperback.'
- <u>Fact</u>: The majority of books are paperback, some are hardcover books, or e-books and these are counterexample that are incompatible with the truth of (1a)&(1b), which we cannot safely ignore
- Adding adverbs like typically, normally reverses the truth value, because they imply that members of the kind are not homogeneous with respect to the characterizing property of being paperback, which allows for counterexamples.
- (2) a. Typically/normally, books are paperback. TRUE
 - b. Knihy jsou ^{IPF} normálně brožované. (Czech) TRUE books are normally paperback
 'Normally, books are paperback.'
- Adding the generic -va- does the same job of reversing the truth value!
- (3) Knihy bývají brožované. (Czech) TRUE
 books are.GEN paperback
 'Typically/normally, books are paperback.'

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pol.

Generalizations permitting no exceptions in all the known conditions. Non-evaluative claims.

definitional statements •

- (1) Madrigal je^{IPF} / ?bývá polyfonní. Madrigaly isou^{IPF} / ?bývají madrigal is ^{IPF} / ?be.GEN.3SG.PRES pol. madrigals are^{IPF} / ?be.GEN.3SG.PRES pol. 'A madrigal is polyphonic.' 'Madrigals are polyphonic.'
- **regulative rules** (like traffic rules, legal statutes, etc.), normative rules
- V Anglii se jezdí ^{IPF} / ?jezdívá po levé straně. (3) regulative rule in England REFL drives / ? drive.GEN.3SG.PRES on left side 'In England, one drives on the left.'
- **constitutive rules** (rules of chess like *A/the bishop never changes color*) ٠
- (2) Střelec nikdy nemění ^{IPF} / ?neměnívá rule of chess barvu pole. bishop never changes / ?change.GEN.3SG.PRES color field 'A bishop never changes color.'

Generalizations permitting no exceptions in all the known conditions. Non-evaluative claims.

• analytic statements

- (1) a. Trojuhelník **má^{IPF}** tři strany. triangle has three sides 'A triangle has three sides.'
 - b. Trojuhelník ?mívá tři strany.
 triangle have.GEN.3SG.PRES three sides
 'A triangle ?tends to have three sides.'
- universal laws of nature (e.g., chemistry law)
- (2) a. Voda se skládá IPF kyslíku a vodíku.
 water REFL consists oxygen and hydrogen
 'Water consists of oxygen and hydrogen.'
 - b. Voda se ?skládává kyslíku a vodíku.
 water REFL consist.GEN.3SG.PRES oxygen and hydrogen
 'Water ?tends to consist of oxygen and hydrogen.'
- classification into natural kinds
- (4) Kočka je^{IPF} / ?bývá masožravec.
 cat is / ?be.GEN.3SG.PRES carnivore.
 'A cat is a carnivore.'

natural kind property

chemistry law

analytic statement

- Generalizations permitting no exceptions in all the known conditions. Non-evaluative claims. universal laws of nature, inductive generalizations
- (3) a. Slunce vychází IPF na východě.
 Sun rises on East
 'The Sun rises in the East.'
 b. Slunce ? vycházívá na východě.
 Sunce ? vycházívá na východě.
 ? rise.GEN.3SG.PRES on East
 'The Sun rises in the East.'

Premise: Every day the Sun has risen in the East. (observations, description of what exists) **Conclusion:** The Sun rises will probably continue to rise in the East. (law-like prediction) The conclusion is backed up by underlying causal forces or laws (Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion and Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation) -va- A modal generic quantifier

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Realization requirement (aka 'actuality entailment')

- Generic sentences with an imperfective verb formally unmarked for genericity have either a 'habitual' or a dispositional interpretation:
- (1) Tento stroj drtí ^{IPF} pomeranče.

this machine crushes oranges

'This machine crushes oranges

(i) ... $\sqrt{}$ and we have used it often since we bought it a year ago.' **'habitual'**

(ii) ... $\sqrt{}$ but it hasn't been used yet, it is still in its shipping box.' **dispositional**

- The generic –*va* eliminates a purely dispositional interpretation, i.e., requires the existence of verifying instances in the actual world (in non-conditional clauses):
- (2) Tento stroj drtívá pomeranče.
 this machine crushes.GEN oranges
 'This machine crushes oranges
 (i) ... √ and we have used it often since we bought it a year ago.' 'habitual'
 (ii) ... X but it hasn't been used yet, it is still in its shipping box.' dispositional
- The realization requirement holds for the 'habitual' *be* in AAVE (Green 2000, Collins 2006)., in Tlinget (Cable 2022) and perhaps other languages with similar markers.

Purely Hypothetical Generalizations: X -va-

- The generic –*va* introduces the realization requirement (aka 'actuality entailment'): it requires the existence of verifying instances in the actual world.
- Normative, hypothetical generalization (no actualized instances so far or ever): X -va-
- (1) The Speaker of the House succeeds the Vice-President.

Two possible verb forms—perfective (PF) and imperfective (IPF) -- available in Czech for the translation of (1), but not the generic form marked with –va-:

- (2) a. Předseda sněmovny vystřídá ^{PF} viceprezidenta / přejme ^{PF} pravomoc po viceprezidentovi.
 - b. Předseda sněmovny přejímá IPF pravomoc po viceprezidentovi.
 - c. ? Předseda sněmovny přejímává pravomoc po viceprezidentovi.
- Nota bene: in conditional counterfactual clauses the generic –va- is acceptable: *Kdyby tam sedávával, tak by se leccos mohl naučit.* 'If he had he used to sit there, he could have learned something useful'.

Kdyby tam byl býval nechodil, nebyli by ho popravili. 'If he hadn't gone there, they wouldn't have executed him.'

Three different types of verb form available Czec				Czech	
(1)	Ženy women 'Women (dají ^{PF} give.3PL.PRES (WILL/SHALL/MUST,	přednost priority /OUGHT TO) put	rodině před kariérou. family before career family before career.'	PF verb
(2)	Ženy women 'Women ((THOUGH	dávají ^{IPF} give. <mark>IPF</mark> .3PL.PRE typically, normall EXCEPTIONS MAY E	přednos S priority y) put family bo BE ALLOWED).'	t rodině před kariérou. family before career efore career	IPF verb
(3)	Ženy women 'Women p (THOUGH T • attenu • low de	dávávají give.IPF.GEN.3P ut family before o HERE ARE EXCEPTIO ates the force of gree of commitm	předr L.PRES priori career ONS, SOME DO, E the normative nent to the nor	ost rodině před kariérou. ty family before career UT SOME/MANY DON'T).' generic m	GEN verb

- Correlated with different degrees of hortative force and exception tolerance
- Normative generics: Preference for PF, IPF forms that are formally unmarked for genericity

• The use of the generic form, when the corresponding non-generic form might have also been used, gives rise to a RANK ORDER (see e.g., Lehrer 1974; Hirschberg 1985; Geurts 2010; Horn & Abbott 2012, Horn 1989, 2000, 2010, 2017, and references therein).

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RANK ORDER (preliminary version): (< [GEN]P | [VA]P ))
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where,

[GEN]P: Strong Alternative, compatible with no exceptions, PF/IPF forms

[VA]P: Weak Alternative, incompatible with no exceptions, forms marked with *-va*-[GEN]P unilaterally entails ¬([VA]P), all else being equal.

- The non-generic PF/IPF form is the strong alternative, because it allows no exceptions when used in generic sentences.
- The generic form is the weak one, because it requires that there be actual or possible exceptions).

$\langle \langle \ [GEN]P \ | \ [VA]P \ \rangle \rangle$

- The two ranked alternatives, Strong and Weak, differ in the strength of the generalization (that is calibrated in terms of the speaker's commitment to exceptions), but they are equally informative, and do not stand in an entailment relation to each other (unlike elements of a scale order): namely, the Strong element does not a fortiori imply the truth of the Weak one, but rather from the Strong element we can infer the negation of the Weak element.
- These two alternatives give rise to (defeasible) pragmatic quantity-based inferences concerning the speaker's certainty or ignorance about the existence or possibility of exceptions.
- The speaker may use the alternative with the generic morpheme, which requires that there be actual or possible exceptions, because they cannot commit to a generalization expressed by means of its non-generic alternative, given that the latter is compatible with, and can be pragmatically strengthened to, an exceptionless generalization. This generates either
 - the certainty or
 - ignorance inference concerning exceptions to the generalization (e.g., to To ensure plausible deniability)
 - (= two kinds of quantity-based implicatures)

Slavic generic sentences formally marked with *-va-* are effectively endowed with two layers of modality (intensionality):

- one that is tied to their generic, law-like, (g)nomic force, similar to GEN, and
- the other to reasoning with exceptions, which may be characterized in terms of the speaker-oriented epistemic and doxastic modality.

APPENDIX

-va-: Exceptions that Cannot Be Ignored - Hedging

<u>Context</u>: I registered for a course at a language school where classes are scheduled every day, and I ask the school administrator: "What time do the classes start?"

- the truth of the generalization is compatible with tolerable exceptions and also with (pragmatic strengthening to) the corresponding universal generalization
- (2) Výuka začíná^{IPF} / začne ^{PF} od 8.00 a končí v poledne. IPF/PF teaching start.IPF.3SG.PRES / start.3SG.PRES from 8:00 and ends in noon 'Classes (always) start at 8 a.m. and end at noon.'
- backing away from a full-fledged claim to epistemic certainty
 Reason: *either* certainty *or* ignorance about the existence of exceptions
- (3)Výuka začínáváod 8.00 a končí v poledne.genericteaching start.GEN.3SG.PRESfrom 8:00 and ends in noonfrom 8:00 and ends in noon'Classes tend to start at 8 a.m. and end at noon.' [as a rule, usually]

ensures plausible deniability on days when the classes don't start at 8 a.m.

a paraphrase with 'should'/'ought to' does not seem to be appropriate, not used as a normative generalization

(1) Classes start at 8 a.m. and end at noon.

Salient contextually determined meanings/uses:

- (i) descriptive generalization: based on having observed the begin and end of classes on a number of occasions (statistical regularity), we infer that it is the case that classes start at 8 a.m. and end at noon.
- descriptive generalization: the begin and end of classes is one of the characterizing features of classes, along with their duration, breaks between them, class sizes, teachers' qualifications, possibly with (directly) observable manifestations
- (iii) normative generalization: classes must/should start at 8 a.m. and end at noon, as stipulated by the rules and regulations set by the relevant institution

Czech

- (i) (iii): IPF/PF forms unmarked for genericity
- (2) Výuka začíná IPF / začne PF od 8.00 a končí v poledne. teaching start.IPF.3SG.PRES / start.3SG.PRES from 8:00 and ends in noon 'Classes start at 8 a.m. and end at noon.'
- (i) (ii): generic verb forms marked for genericity with –va-
- (3) Výuka začínává od 8.00 a končí v poledne.
 teaching start.GEN.3SG.PRES from 8:00 and ends in noon
 'Classes tend to start at 8 a.m. and end at noon.' [as a rule, usually]

dispreferred or excluded in normative generics Context: 'What is Mark's profession?'

- felicitous answer
- (1) Učí ^{IPF} na střední škole.

teaches on middle school

'He teaches at high school.'

Strong implication: Mark is a high-school teacher.

I.e, it is his 'tendentially stable' (Chierchia 1995) property holding without interruptions over a long interval of Mark's life, including those times when he is off work, on vacation or sick.

• odd or misleading answer

(2) Učívá na střední škole.
teach.GEN.3SG.PRES on middle school
'He teaches at high school on and off.'
Strong implication: Mark is NOT a high-school teacher,
he occasionally / often / sporadically teaches at high school.

The speaker conveys that the property of teaching does not homogeneously 'spread' to all the situations of his employment, he holds other jobs besides teaching

- the truth of the generalization (in principle) compatible
 - with exceptions, but also
 - with the corresponding universal generalization, a hortative force: *should/must/ought to*
- (1) Členové tohoto klubu zaplatí ^{PF} včas členské příspěvky. PF verb members this club PREF.pay.3PL.PRES on.time membership dues
 'Members of this club (will/shall/must/ought to) pay their membership dues on time.'
- (2) Členové tohoto klubu platí ^{IPF} včas členské příspěvky. IPF verb members this club pay.3PL.PRES on.time membership dues 'Members of this club pay their membership dues on time.'
- either certainty about exceptions or ignorance about the payment regularity of membership dues (a hedge to safeguard a generalization against refutation by states of affairs of which the speaker is ignorant, and so to ensure its plausible deniability)
- (3) Členové tohoto klubu platívají včas členské příspěvky. GEN verb members this club pay.GEN.3PL.PRES on.time membership dues 'Members of this club tend to pay their membership dues on time.' 'Members of this club usually / often / typically pay their membership dues on time.'

Different types of generic sentences admit different types and number of exceptions.

• Majority satisfaction

- (1) a. Dogs bark (though not all do, Basenjis do not bark).
 - b. $\forall x[(dogs(x) \rightarrow bark(x)] \text{ falsified by Basenjis}]$



- **Majority satisfaction** is **not sufficient** for the truth of all generics, because some are **FALSE** despite the majority of the kind having the characterizing property.
- (2) Books are paperback. FALSE <u>Fact</u>: The majority of books are paperback, but some are hardcover, e-books.
- **Majority satisfaction** is **not necessary** for the truth of all generics, because what is characteristic need not be prevalent among the members of a kind
- (3) a. Lions have a mane (though most do not, only adult male do).
 - b. Mosquitoes carry the West Nile virus (though 99% do not).

Context: "What sound do dogs make?"

- (1) a. **Dogs bark** (though not all do, Basenjis do not bark). TRUE
 - non-barking dogs like Basenjis count as exceptions compatible with the truth of (1), aka 'negative counterinstances' (Leslie 2007, 2008)
 - b. $\forall x[(dogs(x) \rightarrow bark(x)] \text{ falsified by Basenjis}$ FALSE

Czech: In this context, (2) and (3) both true and can be used:

(2)	Psi štěkají ^{IPF} .	(3) (?)/? Psi <mark>štěkávají</mark> .
	dogs bark	dogs bark.GEN.3PL.PRES
	'Dogs bark.'	'Dogs tend to bark.' I.e.,when/if /
		other things being equal /unless prevented

unmarked alternative

marked alternative

- (2) is preferred/expected, because the question calls for the basic information about one particular characterizing property that can be truly predicated of the DOG kind, and ignoring known exceptions ('negative counterinstances', Leslie 2007, 2008) as well as various known interfering/enabling factors compatible with its truth.
- (3) is not expected, because of the 'non-homogeneity requirement' imposed by the generic –va-; it shifts focus to exceptions to the generalization, implying that
 - (i) members of the kind DOG are not homogeneous wrt the property of barking, or
 - (ii) do not bark in all the appropriate situations in which dogs are expected to bark.


• Odd, dispreferred: no overt restrictor

(3) (?) Psi **štěkávají**.

Czech

dogs bark.GEN.3PL.PRES 'Dogs tend to bark.' I.e., ...when/if... / ... other things being equal / ...unless prevented ...

• Felicitous: overt restrictor

- (4) Psi štěkávají <u>s výjimkou některých druhů psů jako chrti</u>.
 dogs bark.GEN.3PL.PRES with exception some breeds dogs like greyhounds
 'Dogs normally bark, except for some dog breeds like greyhounds.'
 - Restrictor specifies a subkind, greyhounds, explicitly exempt from the generalization
- (5) Psi štěkávají <u>na povel</u> / když mají <u>PF</u> hlad. dogs bark.GEN.3PL.PRES on command / when have hunger 'Dogs tend to bark on command / when they are hungry.'

• Restrictor constrains a subset of situations in which stages of dogs are barking

- (6) Psi štěkají IPF, přesně řečeno, psi štěkávají, tedy ne všichni štěkají IPF. dogs bark strictly speaking dogs bark.GEN.3PL.PRES that.is not all bark 'Dogs bark, strictly speaking, dogs typically bark, that is, not all bark.'
 - Restrictor specifies that members of the kind DOG are not homogenous wrt to the kind characterizing property of barking, the generalization retricted to just those unexceptional dogs that bark.

1.-4.: Syntactic criteria for Slavic imperfectivity

Criterion		IMPF form ¹	generic – <i>va-</i> form
1.	complement of the future AUX	+	+
2.	complement of phasal Vs	+	+
3.	can form present participles	+	Х
4.	may occur with time point ADVs and refer to a single ongoing situation ('progressive' use)	+	X
			'non-actuality'
			'atemporality'

¹ primary imperfective or secondary imperfective marked with the imperfectivizing suffix

The Slavic generic morpheme –va-

- is **not a kind of quantifier over situations only** (*pace* Dahl 1995)
- patterns with overt Q-adverbs, such as *usually, seldom, often,* with respect to its variablebinding properties
- binds
 - situation variables,
 - variables provided by singular indefinites and bare plurals,
 - variables provided by kind-denoting definites,
 - more than one variable.
 - see Chierchia (1995, p. 188-192) for binding properties of Q-Adverbs
 - see Filip (1993, 1994, 2009) for binding properties of the generic –va-

A Tripartite Structure with GEN

- On one dominant view, characterizing generic sentences form a single class of sentence types constituting a unified phenomenon, for which a unified semantic analysis should be possible (Krifka et al 1995, Carlson 1995, 2007, i.a.).
- Analysis in terms of the generic operator GEN

GEN [x₁...x_i; y₁...y_j](Restrictor[x₁...x_i]; Matrix[{x₁}...{x_i}, y₁...y_j])¹

- $x_1...x_i$ variables bound by GEN $y_1...y_j$ variables bound existentially, with scope just in matrix $\{x_1\}...\{x_i\}$ means $x_1...x_i$ may or may not occur in matrix
- GEN on early proposals, an unselective quantifier à la Lewis (1975)
 - a phonologically null Q-Adverb, which
 - quantifies over situations, occasions or cases (Lawler 1972)
 - is distinguished from overt Q-adverbs like *always, usually* by its modal (intensional) dimension (Krifka et al 1995, Chierchia 1995)
 - relates a restrictor and a matrix whose variables are respectively bound by GEN and by existential closure, if left free by GEN (e.g. Kratzer, 1995; Rooth, 1995)
 - The Restrictor specifies the domain over which the variables range, and the Matrix (or Scope) specifies the property that is attributed to the relevant members of the domain.

¹ Pelletier, "Generic Sentences and Predication", handout

What it is not:

- a phonological spell-out of GEN (Krifka et al 1995), the null generic operator, although it shares some of its properties (predictive ('nomic', law-like) force, variable binding properties)
- the realization of the habitual feature *Hab* licensed by the null Q-Adverb **GEN** (*pace* Chierchia 1995)
- amenable to a semantic analysis based on **either** the inductive **or** the rules and regulations (R&R) approach to genericity (Carlson 1995),

but rather it can be used to encode generalizations that fit not only the inductive, but also the R&R model as witnessed by its marking of generics that may have a normative interpretation, modulo context.

Slavic generic -va- as a generic quantifier: Big picture

 The distribution of the Slavic generic morpheme –va- over different types of characterizing generic sentences seems to confirm the view that the particular linguistic form in which characterizing generic statements are expressed determines meaning differences that are perhaps hard to reconcile with a uniform analysis of all characterizing generic sentences (see e.g., Pelletier 2009, Boneh & Doron 2013, i.a). Modifiers like true, truly, real(ly) normative reading

highlight the normative dimension of terms denoting dual character concepts, by raising or tightening the standards for counting as a member of the kind (e.g., Almeida et al., 2023; Del Pinal, 2018; Del Pinal & Reuter, 2017; Guo et al., 2021; Knobe et al., 2013; Leslie, 2015 Liao et al., 2020; Reuter et al., 2020; Tobia et al., 2020)

When someone is called a "true philosopher" or a "real man", the modifiers "true" and "real" select the normative social role sense of the kind term. But even without these modifiers, Leslie argues, "philosopher" and "man" can have a distinct and normatively laden social role sense.

"but is she a *real* woman?" "she's not a *real* scientist!"

their extensions can only be subsets of the ordinary extension of the kind term.

Problems with this test: Reuter 2018

Verbs and the Normative/Descriptive Distinction

Context: A store manager sets the price of bananas to \$2/lb, but careless cashiers only charge the customers \$1/lb.

(1) Bananas sell for \$2/lb. (Bananas should sell for \$2/lb.)
(2) Bananas sell for \$1/lb. (By mistake, cashiers actually charge customers \$1/lb.)

This would seem to have a similar character to the cases like *Boys don't cry* and *Boys cry*, yet "bananas" does not have a dual character in the Knobe/Prasada sense

(3) Bananas/these bananas are priced at \$2/lb.

(4) Bananas/these bananas are priced at \$1/lb.

not an accurate description of the situation, because "priced at" seems to select only the manager's official price, and so the bananas can only be said to be priced at \$2/lb.)

Leslie (2015) "the duality is not due to the generic noun phrase, but rather should be located elsewhere, and a natural thought is that the verbs "sells for" may itself be polysemous."

Epistemic turn and ignorance inferences

- The distribution of the Slavic generic –va- over different types of generic sentences, in contrast to its contrastive absence, indicates that it encodes differences in the speaker's stance regarding the grounds for the truth of different types of generic sentences, and the speaker's commitment to exceptions and counterexamples to the generalization.
- This 'epistemic' turn for the analysis of formally marked generic sentences would bring the semantic analysis of generic sentences in relation to similar relationships between other marked and unmarked forms in cases when they **signal uncertainty/ignorance.** E.g., the semantics (and pragmatics) of determiners and numerals:

unmarked	marked
three	at least three
twenty	twenty-some
ein/un	irgendein/algún
some	some or all

In all the above pairs, the marked form comes with epistemic commitments to uncertainty/ignorance that is nevertheless compatible with the unmarked forms.

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