

## Nominal Reference Beyond Individuals

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MEANING IN LANGUAGE COLLOQUIUM @ HHU DÜSSELDORF

# A “polysemy”

Rett (2014)

## (1) Numeral DPs in Subject position

- a. [Four pizzas] **are** vegetarian.
- b. [Four pizzas] **is** enough.

*individual*  
*degree*

(2) **Numeral DPs in Object position**

a. Jane bought [three pizzas]. **They were** delicious.

b. Jane bought [three pizzas]. **It was** more than we needed.

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- b. [Many/Three guests] **is** more than Bill had anticipated.

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## (4) Bare plurals

- a. [French fries] **were** eaten by the senators.
- b. [French fries] **is** not enough. The senators will need protein.

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(5) **Pseudo-partitives**

- a. [Four feet of (the) plywood] **are** warped.
- b. [Four feet of (the) plywood] **is** more than Betty asked for.

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## (6) Definite DPs

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- b. [The paintings he salvaged] **was** enough.

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## (7) **Wh-questions with *how many***

- a. [How many books] **are** on the table?
- b. [How many books] **is** too many?



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## (7) Wh-questions with *how many*

- a. [How many books] **are** on the table?
- b. [How many books] **is** too many?

## (8) Existential quantifier

- a. [Some (of the) cookies] **are** delicious.
- b. [Some (of the) cookies] **is** more than they deserve.

## Properties?

- The degree reading corresponds to a salient measure (often quantity) of the denoted individual.
- It conditions agreement, licensing the singular, inanimate pronoun *it*.
- It is distinct from the specific/non-specific ambiguity.
- Preliminary research suggests it's *very* common (Romance, Greek, Hebrew, at least some Germanic languages).

## Questions

- ① How general are these alternations?
- ② Is this indicative of some polysemy or systematic denotational ambiguity in nominals?
- ③ What syntactic/semantic principles underlie these alternations?

## Basic contrast

- (9) a. *Tres libros son.PL suficientes.PL*  
 ‘Three books are enough’
- b. *Tres libros es.SG suficiente.SG*  
 ‘Three books is enough’

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- Enough of what?
  - (9a) ↪ of *books*
  - (9b) ↪ of some property that can be sensibly predicated of *three books*

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  - (9a)  $\rightsquigarrow$  of *books*
  - (9b)  $\rightsquigarrow$  of some property that can be sensibly predicated of *three books*

(10) *Tres libros es suficiente { peso / material / ... }*

‘Three books is enough { weight / material / ... }’

- ➔ Call (9b) and co. Non-Agreeing Degree Predicate constructions (NADPs).

# Predicates

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b. **Superlatives**

*Tres juguetes es lo mejor (que le puedes regalar)*

'Three toys is the best that you can gift him'

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'In chess two towers is better than a queen'

b. **Superlatives**

*Tres juguetes es lo mejor (que le puedes regalar)*

'Three toys is the best that you can gift him'

c. **Equatives**

*Cuatro pizzas pequeñas es lo mismo (que dos grandes)*

'Four small pizzas is the same as two big ones'

# Predicates

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*Tres libros es demasiada (lectura)*

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b. **Assetives**

*Cuatro pizzas es suficiente (comida)*

‘Four pizzas is enough food’

# Predicates

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*Tres libros es demasiada (lectura)*

‘Three books is too much reading’

b. **Assetives**

*Cuatro pizzas es suficiente (comida)*

‘Four pizzas is enough food’

- ➔ Predicates expressing some form *measurement* or *comparison*, i.e. indicating different degrees of difference or similarity are good in NA contexts.

## Limitation I

- ➔ Predicates expressing no measurement/comparison do not form good NADPs.

(13) a. *Cinco defensas { \*puede.SG / pueden.PL } frenar al contrario*

'Five defenders can stop the adversary'

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‘Three poorly parked cars may block the exit’

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‘Three poorly parked cars may block the exit’

c. *Dos litros de producto { \*puede.SG / pueden.PL } desatascar el desagüe*

‘Two liters of product can unclogged the drainpipe’

d. *Cinco artículos { \*es.SG / son.PL } necesarios para obtener la acreditación*

‘Five papers are required in order to obtain the accreditation’



## Limitation II

➔ Predicates lexicalizing measurement/comparison do not form good NADPs.

### (14) Comparatives

- a. *Dos sofás ocupan.PL más espacio del que disponemos*  
‘Two couches take more space than we have
- b. *Dos sofás es.SG más espacio del que disponemos*  
‘Two couches is more space than we have available
- c. \**Dos sofás ocupa.SG más espacio del que disponemos*

### (15) Excessives

- a. *Tres libros pesan.PL demasiado*  
‘Three books weight too much
- b. *Tres libros es.SG demasiado peso*  
‘Three books is too much weight
- c. \**Tres libros pesa.SG demasiado*

## Limitation II

- ➔ Predicates lexicalizing measurement/comparison do not form good NADPs.

### (16) **Assetives**

- a. *Tres libros bastaron.PL para entretenerlos*  
'Three books sufficed to entertain them'
- b. *Tres libros fue.SG suficiente para entretenerlos*  
'Three books was enough to entertain them'
- c. \**Tres libros bastó.SG para entretenerlos*

## Limitation III

➔ Adjectives do not form good NADPs.

(17) a. *Tres libros son.PL muy pesados*

'Three books are very heavy

b. *Tres libros es.SG mucho peso*

'Three books is a lot of weight

c. \**Tres libros es.SG muy pesado(s)*

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(17) a. *Tres libros son.PL muy pesados*

'Three books are very heavy

b. *Tres libros es.SG mucho peso*

'Three books is a lot of weight

c. \**Tres libros es.SG muy pesado(s)*

(18) a. *Tres árboles son.PL demasiado altos*

'Three trees are too high'

b. *Tres árboles es.SG demasiada altura*

'Three trees is too much height'

c. \**Tres árboles es.SG demasiado altos(s)*

## Limitation IV

- ➔ There is no variant of a “positive” form in NADPs, they *require* an overt degree predicate.

(19) a. *Tres libros son pesados*

‘Three books are heavy’

b. \**Tres libros { es.SG / son.PL } peso*

‘Three books is weight’

## Limitation IV

- ➔ There is no variant of a “positive” form in NADPs, they *require* an overt degree predicate.

(19) a. *Tres libros son pesados*

‘Three books are heavy’

b. \**Tres libros { es.SG / son.PL } peso*

‘Three books is weight’

(20) a. *Tres árboles son altos*

‘Three trees are tall’

b. \**Tres árboles { es.SG / son.PL } peso*

‘Three trees is weight’

## Limitations

- ➔ The best results are obtained with copular (predicative) constructions; lexicaled variants of comparative/superlative constructions do not allow the alternation.
- ➔ Not any type of predicate/relation between degrees and individuals allows this alternation either: adjectives are not NADPs.
- ➔ There is no “positive” version of NADPs.

# Subjects

➔ Quantifiers do not typically make good subjects of NADPs.

- (21) a.\* {*Varios / Pocos / Algunos / Muchos / Unos / Demasiados*}  
*libros es PRED*  
{A variety / Few / Some / Many / sm / too many} books is PRED



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{A variety / Few / Some / Many / sm / too many} books is PRED

b.\* {*La mayoría de / Ambos / Los / Cada (uno de)*} *libros*  
*es PRED*

{Most / Both / The / Each (one of the)} books is PRED

# Subjects

- ➔ The best results are obtained with *counting* quantifiers involving (possibly modified) numerals:

(22) { *Más de / Menos de / Unos* } *cuatro libros es PRED*  
 { More than / Less than / Some } four books is PRED

# Subjects

➔ Nonfinite clauses also work in similar contexts:

(23) a. *Leer y resumir un libro { \*es.SG / son.PL } dos cosas diferentes*

‘Reading and summarizing a book are two different things’

b. *Leer y resumir un libro { es.SG / \*son.PL } mucho trabajo*

‘Reading and summarizing a book is a lot of work’

# Subjects

## ➔ Trope-like DPs too:

(24) a. *La lectura y la presentación del libro* { \*es.SG / son.PL }  
*dos cosas diferentes*

Lit.: 'The reading and the commenting of a book are two different things'

b. *La lectura y la presentación del libro* { es.SG / \*son.PL }  
*mucho trabajo*

Lit.: 'The reading and the commenting of a book is a lot of work'

## So far

- Predicates:
  - The best NADPs are formed by *predicative copular* clauses with some form of degree predicate (i.e. *too, enough, more, -est, as...as*, etc.).
  - However, adjectives (also predicative copular) do count as NADPs (i.e. there is no positive form).
  - The degree predicate may optionally come overtly restricted by a noun, typically an abstract mass noun like *weight, work, effort, distance, amount, entertainment...*

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- Subjects:

- Numerals, modified or not, form the best subjects of NADPs.
- Definite descriptions referring to abstract nouns work well.
- Nonfinite clauses may also appear as subjects of NADPs. However:
  - ▶ Nonfinite clauses are OK with adjective (e.g. (23a) with *difficult*).
  - ▶ Agreement patterns of nonfinite clauses in subject position have their own quirks.

## Semantics

➔ What is the meaning of (9b) and how is it different from (9a)?

(9) a. *Tres libros son demasiados*

‘Three books are too many’

b. *Tres libros es demasiado*

‘Three books is too much’

- Intuitively, (9a) is about books, (9b) is about something else:
  - For a writer who signed a contract, it could be work, commitment, effort...
  - For pre-schooler who has to carry them it could be too much weight.
  - For B&N executive it could be too many to give away.
  - For a struggling worker it could be too expensive.
  - ...

# Semantics

- The ingredients of a NADP seem to include:
  1. A (possibly covert) noun providing a **dimension**.
  2. A degree predicate expressing a comparison to some degree on that dimension.
    - ▶ In comparatives, one term of the comparison is provided by the standard.
    - ▶ In assetives, excessives, by a conventionalized threshold.
    - ▶ In equatives by the complement of *as*.
  3. A subject that acts as a **measuring unit**; i.e. it provides the measure that must interpreted on the scale built upon the dimension.



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    - ▶ In equatives by the complement of *as*.
  3. A subject that acts as a **measuring unit**; i.e. it provides the measure that must interpreted on the scale built upon the dimension.
- Consider:
  - *Three kilos is too much weight*  
Three kilo-units exceed some threshold of weight.
  - *Three books is too much weight*  
Three book-units exceed some threshold of weight.

# Semantics

- This is not to say that such constructions are allowed syntactically:

- (25) a. *Tres kilos de peso*  
Lit.: 'three kilos of weight'  
b. \**Tres libros de peso*  
Lit.: 'Three books of weight'

- (26) a. a weight of three kilos  
b. \*a weight of three books

## Semantics

- It (perhaps) provides a way to think about why there is no “positive” form:

- (27) a.  $\llbracket \text{three kilos is weight} \rrbracket^c \approx \text{the weight determined by three kilos is weight}$
- b.  $\llbracket \text{three books is weight} \rrbracket^c \approx \text{the weight determined by three books is weight}$

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  - b.  $\llbracket \text{three books is weight} \rrbracket^c \approx \text{the weight determined by three books is weight}$
- Since these measuring units are by definition contextual (non-conventional) there can't be a standard of comparison for a positive form to supply. (I.e. perhaps we don't have standards of weight *measured in books*, only measured in conventional units.)

## Foundations

- Degrees are primitives, atomic types in the model (of type  $d$ ).
- A scale is a tuple  $\langle \mathcal{D}_{\Delta_i}, \geq_{\Delta_i} \rangle$  including a set of degrees  $\mathcal{D}_{\Delta_i}$  along some dimension  $\Delta$  and an ordering relation  $\geq_{\Delta_i}$ .
- The task of the ordering relation is to impose some restrictions on the types of sets of degrees that may constitute a scale:

(28) **Definition of scale:** A set of degrees  $\mathcal{D}$  with the ordering relation  $\geq$  is a scale iff  $\forall d, d' \in \mathcal{D}$ :

a.  $d \geq d' \vee d' \geq d$  linearity

b.  $d \geq d' \rightarrow \exists d'' \in \mathcal{D} [d \geq d'' \wedge d'' \geq d']$  density

## Foundations

- The ordering relation must “make sense” given the set of degrees it orders. Each scale must be matched to a dimension  $\Delta$  of measurement. This comes with two important consequences:

- COMMENSURABILITY

Degrees cannot be compared across-scales, because no degrees on different scales are ordered with respect to each other (Kennedy and McNally 2005).

(29) They call him “The Bus” because he’s kind of...

- a. as wide as he is tall.
- b. #as wide as he is punctual.

- CONGRUENCE

Units of measurements can only refer to degrees (i.e. points on a scale) that match the underlying dimension they are *conventionally* determined to measure.

# Gradability

(30) Sam is tall.

- Gradable adjectives like “tall” denote relations between individuals and degrees (Seuren 1973, Cresswell 1976, Klein 1980, 1991, von Stechow 1984, Heim 1985, Bierwisch 1989...).

(31)  $\llbracket \text{tall} \rrbracket = \lambda d . \lambda x . \mu_{\text{HEIGHT}}(x) = d$

- Degree morphology (e.g. POS, comparatives, degree modifiers) saturate and impose restrictions on the degree argument.

(32)  $\llbracket \text{POS} \rrbracket^c = \lambda G_{\langle d, et \rangle} . \lambda x_e . \exists d [G(x) = d \wedge d > ST_C(G)]$

(33)  $\llbracket (30) \rrbracket^c = \exists d [\mu_{\text{HEIGHT}}(\text{sam}) = d \wedge d > ST_C(\text{tall})]$

## Thresholds

- Excessives and assetives establish a comparison to a conventionally determined **threshold**, not a standard:

(34) a.  $\llbracket \text{too} \rrbracket^c = \lambda G_{\langle d, et \rangle} . \lambda x_e . \exists d [G(x) = d \wedge d > TH_C^{max}(G)]$

b.  $\llbracket \text{enough} \rrbracket^c = \lambda G_{\langle d, et \rangle} . \lambda x_e . \exists d [G(x) = d \wedge d \geq TH_C^{min}(G)]$



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(35) a. # Sam is tall<sub>ST</sub> {but not tall<sub>ST</sub> / she's tall<sub>ST</sub> in fact}.

b. Sam is tall<sub>ST</sub> {but not too tall<sub>TH</sub> / too tall<sub>TH</sub> in fact}.

c. Sam is tall<sub>ST</sub> {but not tall<sub>TH</sub> enough / tall<sub>TH</sub> enough in fact}.

## Thresholds

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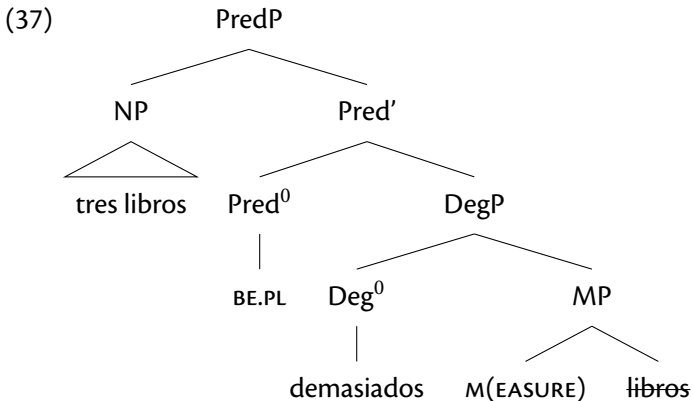
    b. Sam is tall<sub>ST</sub> {but not too tall<sub>TH</sub> / too tall<sub>TH</sub> in fact}.

    c. Sam is tall<sub>ST</sub> {but not tall<sub>TH</sub> enough / tall<sub>TH</sub> enough in fact}.

- If Sam is 40 but discounts are only available for kids under 12 and seniors above 70, then *Sam is too old and too young* to get a discount:

$$(36) \exists d [\mu_{AGE}(\text{sam}) = d \wedge d > TH_C^{max}(\text{old}) \wedge d > TH_C^{max}(\text{young})]$$

## Base case



- PL agreement only allows an interpretation were *three books* are too many *books*. We use an individual measurement operator *M* and assume an elided nominal.

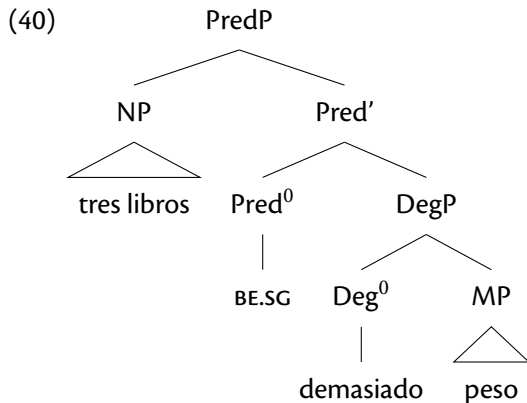
## Base case

$$(38) \llbracket \mathbf{M} \rrbracket = \lambda P_{\langle et \rangle} . \lambda n_d . \lambda x_e . P(x) \wedge |x| = n$$

$$(39) \llbracket (37) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow \exists x[\text{libros}(x) \wedge |x| = 3 \wedge 3 > TH_c^{max}(|x|)]$$

- Numerals are modifiers:  $\llbracket \mathbf{NP} \rrbracket^c = \lambda x_e . \text{libros}(x) \wedge |x| = 3$ .
- The NP is lifted to a GQ type *via*  $A$  (Partee 1987; CFs work too).
- The semantics of *too* is possibly not accurately represented (see Zhang 2018 and Grano 2022 for discussion).

## NADP case: Take I



## NADP case: Take I

$$(41) \llbracket \text{DegP} \rrbracket^c = \lambda x_e . \exists d [\mu_{\text{WEIGHT}}(x) = d \wedge d > TH_c^{\text{max}}(\text{WEIGHT})]$$

- If we proceed as before...

$$(42) \llbracket (40) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow \exists x [\text{libros}(x) \wedge |x| = 3 \wedge \exists d [\mu_{\text{WEIGHT}}(x) = d \wedge d > TH_c^{\text{max}}(\text{WEIGHT})]]$$

- This is not quite right:
  - we don't want to commit ourselves to existential quantification over books.
  - more generally, this is a statement about *books*. But *three books is too much weight* is not a statement about books, it's a statement about *weight* (using books as weight units).
  - it doesn't account for why adjectives are not good NADPs.

## NADP case: Take I

(43) a. Three books is too much work.

b.  $\llbracket (43a) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow$

$\exists x[\text{books}(x) \wedge |x| = 3 \wedge$

$\exists d[\mu_{\text{WORK}}(x) = d \wedge d > TH_c^{\text{max}}(\text{WORK})]]$

## NADP case: Take I

(43) a. Three books is too much work.

b.  $\llbracket (43a) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow$

$$\exists x[\text{books}(x) \wedge |x| = 3 \wedge$$

$$\exists d[\mu_{\text{WORK}}(x) = d \wedge d > TH_c^{\text{max}}(\text{WORK})]]$$

(44) a. Three books is more work than I did ~~d-much work~~

b.  $\llbracket (44a) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow$

$$\exists x[\text{books}(x) \wedge |x| = 3 \wedge$$

$$\text{MAX}(\lambda n'. \text{work}(x) \wedge \mu_{\text{WORK}}(x) = n') >$$

$$\text{MAX}(\lambda d. \exists y[\text{work}(y) \wedge \text{I did } d\text{-much } y])]]$$



## NADP case: Take I

- How can we rule out (45a) but not (46a)? Why isn't whatever sanctions (46a) available to (45a)?

(45) a. \*Three books is heavy.

b.  $\llbracket (43a) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow$   
 $\exists x[\text{books}(x) \wedge |x| = 3 \wedge$   
 $\exists d[\mu_{\text{WEIGHT}}(x) = d \wedge d > ST_c(\text{WEIGHT})]]$

(46) a. Three books is a lot of weight.

b.  $\llbracket (43a) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow$   
 $\exists x[\text{books}(x) \wedge |x| = 3 \wedge$   
 $\exists d[\mu_{\text{WEIGHT}}(x) = d \wedge d > TH_c^{\text{max}}(\text{WEIGHT})]]$

## NADP case: Take II

- A simple idea: subjects of NADPs cannot simply denote fully extensional objects. Instead they denote nominalized functions (*à la* Chierchia 1985):

(47) If  $\beta$  is a  $n$ -place predicative expression,  $\ulcorner\beta$  is a singular term.

- This is the nominalization operator in its most general form: unlike in Chierchia (1998),  $\ulcorner f$  is defined for all  $f \in D_{\langle\sigma\tau\rangle}$ , so they can but need not be kinds:

*As is clear from the previous discussion, not any old property will have a corresponding kind. The property of being a broken old shoe that Leo left behind is unlikely to have a corresponding kind.*

## NADP case: Take II

- A simple idea: subjects of NADPs do not denote ordinary extensional objects. Instead they denote nominalized functions (*à la* Chierchia 1985):

$$(48) \quad \cap \llbracket \text{three books} \rrbracket^c = \cap \lambda x_e . \text{book}(x) \wedge |x| = 3$$

the individual correlate of the property of being three books

- A nominalization of *three books* is the entity correlate of the property *something* holds when it is three books.
- Since that *something* is three books, that *something* shares all qualities of three-book individuals (and has none of non-three-book individuals).
- Whether entity correlate have or not property *P* depends however on the fate and composition of its extensional instances.

## NADP case: Take II

$$(49) \quad \llbracket (40) \rrbracket^c \Leftrightarrow \exists d [\mu_{\text{WEIGHT}}(\bigwedge \lambda x_e . \text{book}(x) \wedge |x| = 3) = d \wedge d > TH_c^{\text{max}}(\text{WEIGHT})]$$

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- ❓ Does it make sense to say that an entity correlate may be an argument of a measure function?
- We no longer have a statement about *books* but about *weight*.
  - We are no longer committed to the existence of books.

## NADP case: Take II

- ❓ Does it makes sense to say that an entity correlate may be an argument of a measure function? (I.e.:  $\mu_{\text{WEIGHT}}(\cap \lambda x_e . \text{book}(x) \wedge |x| = 3)$ ?)

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- Two different tasks:
  - Adjectives *place* individuals on a scale by attributing them a degree along a dimension.
  - NADPs *use* individuals to exemplify a degree on a scale along the required dimension.

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  - Two different tasks:
    - Adjectives *place* individuals on a scale by attributing them a degree along a dimension.
    - NADPs *use* individuals to exemplify a degree on a scale along the required dimension.
- ➔ This is better represented in (49) vis-à-vis (40).

## NADP case: Take II

- Some other advantages: cases with non-finite subjects are straightforward:

(50) a. *Leer el Quijote es demasiado.*

'To read El Quijote is too much'

b.  $\mu_{\text{DIM}}(\bigcap \lambda e_v . \text{read}(e) \wedge \text{Th}(e) = \text{EQ}) = d \wedge d > \text{TH}_c^{\text{max}}(\text{DIM})$

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- The semantic equivalence between (50) and (51) follows easily:

(51) *La lectura del Quijote es demasiado.*

‘The reading of El Quijote is too much’

## NADP case: Take II

- SG agreement in NADPs is also less mysterious:
  - $\varphi$ -morphology on the subject is “encapsulated” inside it’s own phrase due to nominalization.
  - This renders its  $\varphi$ -features opaque for other predicates in the clause, triggering neuter/default agreement.
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- ➔ SG is not indicative of polysemy or coercion, but of nominalization.
- Finally, we also gain some insight on why strong quantifiers do not form good NADP subjects: they can’t nominalize easily.

## Pancake constructions

- In Scandinavian (Swedish, Norwegian, Danish), predicative adjectives normally agree with the subject in terms of gender and number (data from Haugen and Enger 2019; their glosses).

(52) *Pannekaker*      *er*      *gode*  
 pancake.F.DEF.PL be.PRS good.F.PL  
 'The pancakes are good'

- This agreement pattern is sometimes disrupted, with interesting *semantic* consequences:

(53) *Pannekakene*      *er*      *godt*  
 pancake.F.INDEF.PL be.PRS good.N.SG  
 'Pancakes are good'

## Pancake constructions

*we argue that a crucial semantic feature of pancake subjects is absence of boundedness in space, and... we widen the semantic analysis to include constructions where the subject is a de-verbal noun... [we] hypothesize that pancake agreement originated in the semantics of infinitive subjects*

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[from Haugen and Enger 2019]

*an example from Swedish is the sentence “Pannkakor är nyttigt”, literally translating to “Pancakes is healthy” and meaning “Eating pancakes is healthy.”*

[from wikipedia]

## Modern Hebrew *ze*

- Modern Hebrew has two major types of copula: PronH (homophonous to nominative 3rd person pronouns) and PronZ (homophonous to demonstratives/impersonal pronouns).
- Unlike PronH, which always agrees, PronZ may surface with default agreement (see Greenberg 2008).

(54) *yeladim*      *ktanim*      *ze*                      *avoda*      *kaša*  
 children.M.PL   small.M.PL   PronZ.M.SG   work.F.SG   hard.F.SG  
 “Little children is hard work”

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 children.M.PL small.M.PL PronZ.M.SG work.F.SG hard.F.SG  
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- The choice of copula has a semantic impact:

*for instance, sentence [(54)] means that something related to little children, such as raising them or dealing with them, is hard work—not that children themselves are hard work*

[from Danon 2012, 86]

## Modern Hebrew *ze*

- (55) a. *me'a kariyot ze kaved*  
 100 pillows.F.PL PronZ.M.SG annoying.M.SG  
 '100 pillows is heavy'
- b. *šney orxim ze me'acben*  
 two guests.M.PL PronZ.M.SG annoying.M.SG  
 'Two guests is annoying'

*thus (55a) cannot mean that there are two specific guests that are annoying and (55b) cannot mean that there are 100 heavy pillows; such readings are only possible with the agreeing copula PronH.*

[from Danon 2012, 91]

## Modern Hebrew ze

(56) \*rov ha-kariyot ze kaved  
most the-pillows.F.PL PronZ.M.SG heavy.M.SG  
Lit.: most pillows is heavy'

*this is explained by the fact that... the subjects... cannot receive an interpretation at the type of predicates.*

[from Danon 2012, 104]

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It does not look like it. If so, why do other types of measuring predicates (e.g. *exceed*, *suffice*, *measure*, etc.) form good NADPs?
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- ❓ What syntactic/semantic principles underlie these alternations?

These are constructions where a non-conventional unit of measurement is used on a scale formed by a dimension that is directly supplied by either context or an abstract nominal.

## Making units of measurements

- The ingredients of NADPs include:
  - an overt Degree Predicate, such as a comparative/superlative/...in a predicative copular construction;
  - an often abstract mass noun, complement to the Degree Predicate that denotes a dimension along which the Degree Predicate establishes the relevant comparison;
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  - a nominalized property in subject position that acts as a unit of measurement along said dimension.
- This sheds light on:
  - SG agreement:  $\varphi$ -feature encapsulation.
  - The class of subjects: must be able to nominalize.
  - The ban on adjectives: different semantic tasks.
  - The obligatory degree predicate: avoids triviality.

## No polysemy?

- Brasoveanu (2009) says we still can get *bona fide* individual/degree polysemy; but the examples are actually not as clear as desired:

- (57) a. The lump of cheese was two kilograms and Linus ate both of them in one sitting.
- b. The cable's length was two meters, one of which Megan used to fix the car.
- c. The milk in the bucket was worth ten dollars, which Gabby tucked away safely in the inner pocket of her jacket.
- d. The milk cost Gabby the ten dollars Megan had given her.

## No polysemy?

- There seems to be better candidates for polysemy:<sup>1</sup>

(58) a. The 200 dollars that I've got in my pocket are/is all yours

b. The 20M dollars that I've got invested in funds are/is all yours

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<sup>1</sup>Thanks for Peter Sutton for discussion.

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- However, co-predication and agreement don't go hand in hand:

- (59) a. The tenner in my pocket is enough for lunch.  
b. The fiver in my pocket is enough for two coffees.  
c. The tenners/fivers I have in my pocket are/#is all yours.

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- This goes against the sentiment often found in the literature that *singular agreement in such constructions might be due to coercion of a plural entity into a singular group / amount / kind*

[from Brasoveanu 2009]

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## No polysemy?

- Moreover, Spanish does not pattern alike, which would be unexpected if being a good subject on NADPs would be indicative of good polysemous status:

(60) *Los 20M\$ que invertí en fondos se { \*evaporó.SG / evaporaron.PL } cuando colapsaron los mercados*

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- ➔ It seems that we must dissociate NADP from polysemy; these look like two different phenomena.

Motivation  
○○○○○

Distribution  
○○○○○○○○○○○○

Semantics  
○○○

NADPs  
○○○○○○○○○○○○○○

Cross-linguistic connections  
○○○○

Conclusion  
○○○○●

# Thanks!

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