Well-establishedness, deep genericity, and the naming of subkinds

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I will provide examples from Russian subject and object nominals to show that NPs (like *chief editor* or *legal layer*) or VPs (like *wear a skirt* or *shoot a boar*) producing so-called well-establishedness effects (recall *The {Coke bottle/ green bottle} has a narrow neck*, where only *Coke bottle* allows for a generic construal of the definite article) operate at a deeper level of syntax than others. This seems to support the view that lexical units project into syntax as generic expressions without referential force, to be turned into expressions with referential force only later at some higher syntactic stage (Padučeva 1985; Carlson 2003; Zamparelli 2013; Mueller-Reichau 2013; Ramchand 2018; Gehrke and McNally 2019). This view, however, is confronted with a tricky question: *How does semantic composition work at the level of deep genericity where meanings of syntactically combined expressions are non-referential?* In the talk, I want to pursue the implications that the type-token mechanism described in Prasada (2016) has on this question. According to Prasada, each noun is a name of a kind, whose meaning ("the kind concept") projects a list of k-properties that characterise and identify the kind by providing properties that an instance of the kind has because it is the kind of thing. K-properties thus correspond to "essential" properties. Now, names of kinds do not only come as one-word expressions. The complex noun *chief editor* names a kind, i.e. a subkind of the kind named by *editor*. Similarly, *Coke bottle* names a subkind of what *bottle* names. This invites the conclusion that well-establishedness means kind naming. One-word nouns and verbs are always kind naming, modified nouns and verbs are sometimes. When they are, they give rise to well-establishedness effects. If deep genericity is in fact the domain of (sub)kind names, we gain a provokingly simple answer to our question: since names do not have to observe compositionality, there perhaps is no deep generic composition at all.

Selected references: • Borik & Espinal (2020). Numberless kinds: Evidence from Russian. Catalan Journal of Linguistics 19, 231–260. • Chierchia (1998). Reference to kinds across language. Natural Language Semantics 6(4), 339–405. • Gehrke & McNally (2019). Idioms and the syntax/semantics interface of descriptive content vs. reference. Linguistics 57, 769–814. • McNally (2017). Kinds, descriptions of kinds, concepts, and distributions. In: Bridging Formal and Conceptual Semantics, 39–61. • Mueller-Reichau (2013). Sorting the World. On the Relevance of the Kind/Object-Distinction to Referential Semantics. Berlin, Boston. • Prasada (2016). Mechanisms for thinking about kinds, instances of kinds, and kinds of kinds. Core Knowledge and Conceptual Change, 209-224. • Ramchand (2018). Situations and Syntactic Structures: Rethinking Auxiliaries and Order in English. Cambridge. • Trugman (2004). Modifiers of bare nouns in Russian. In: Formal Studies in Slavic Linguistics, 245–270.