The role of features of similarity in ad-hoc kind construction

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Demonstratives of manner, quality and degree (German so, English such / like this) express similarity between the target of demonstration and the referent of the phrase (K+U). In (1), Anna's car is characterized as being similar in certain respects to the car the speaker points at – SIM(target, Anna's car).

(1)   (speaker points at a car):
    Anna hat auch so ein Auto. 'Anna has a car like this, too.'

The relation of similarity is spelled out in Umbach & Gust (2014 using multi-dimensional attribute spaces and generalized measure functions. It is shown that in the case of quality and manner, but not in the case of degree, similarity classes constitute ad-hoc kinds. The notion of similarity would be trivial without specifying relevant features (or "respects") of similarity (Goodman 1972). However, the choice of such features seems to be severely constrained. In the example in (2) the demonstrative so is used anaphorically referring to a previously mentioned property. Being Japanese is easily picked up, leading to the interpretation that Berta has a Japanese car. In contrast, being new does not qualify as a feature of similarity – the second sentence cannot be understood such that Berta has a new car.

(2)   Anna hat ein japanisches Auto / ein neues Auto. Berta hat auch so ein
    Auto (nämlich ein japanisches Auto / *nämlich ein neues Auto).
    'Anna has a Japanese car / a new car. Berta has such a car, too (namely a
    Japanese car / a new car).'

In the talk, experimental studies will be presented investigating constraints on features of similarity. The results point to restrictions found with kind formation (Prasada & Dilingham 2006), Questions to be discussed are, on the one hand, how these features relate to intrinsic properties (Lewis 1986) and, on the other hand, whether analogous restrictions are found for other types of ad-hoc kind construction based on similarity (*Coke, Sprite and the like*)

References • Goodman, N. (1972). Seven strictures on similarity. *Problems and Projects*, Bobbs-Merrill, 437–446. • König, E. & C. Umbach (2018). Demonstratives of manner, of quality and of degree. In M. Coniglio, A. Murphy, E. Schlachter, T. Veenstra (eds), (2018), *Atypical Demonstratives*: De Gruyter, 285-327. • Lewis, D. (1986), On the Plurality of Worlds. Oxford: Blackwell. • Prasada, S. & E. Dillingham (2006), Principled and Statistical Connections in Common Sense Conception, *Cognition* 99, 73-112. • Umbach, C. & H. Gust (2014), Similarity Demonstratives, *Lingua* 149, 74-93.