

Encoding properties in categories: on verbs and adjectives

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Property Concepts (PCs), like *(be) yellow* or *(be) beautiful*, etc. show uneven categorial expression crosslinguistically (Dixon 1977, Wetzer 1996) and are subject to interesting restrictions. I first argue for a constraint, active in languages like Latin and Catalan, against the verbal expression of PCs. PCs in these languages can be encoded verbally, but only if they are Stage-Level, not if they are Individual-Level (Property Verbalization Constraint, PVC). By contrast, the adjectival (copular) expression of PCs in the same languages is not constrained by the IL/SL difference.

A second, related issue is that of languages in which the PVC is *prima facie* not operative, all PCs being encoded as verbs. I present the results of ongoing work on Wolof, in collaboration with Isabelle Roy (Roy 2013), and building on Baker's (2003) work on Choctaw and other languages: Wolof, traditionally held to encode all its PCs as verbs, must make use of adjectives at some level of analysis.

I propose a formal analysis based on the spell-out of the predicational head Pred (Bowers 1993) to account for the parametric variation between Latin/Catalan-type languages and Wolof-type languages.

References

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