
The interpretation of Russian bare plurals in object position

Daria Seres
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

daria.seres@uab.cat

Russian is an article-less language, and so bare nominals are found in all syntactic positions, including the internal argument, and get different interpretations (cf. the English translation).

- (1) Sobaki jedjat kosti.
Dogs.NOM eat bones.ACC
'Dogs eat/ are eating (the/some) bones. / Dogs are bone-eaters.'

The definite or existential reading of bare plural (BPI) objects depends on the discursive context and anaphoricity: a BPI expression gets interpreted definitely if it has been previously mentioned, and existentially otherwise. However, in characterizing sentences (Krifka et al. 1995), which describe an “essential” property of a subject entity, the object is pseudo-incorporated into the predicate. BPIs in question are characterized by narrow scope, number neutrality, discourse opacity, bad support for pronominal anaphora, restrictions on modification, establishedness effects (cf. (pseudo)-incorporation in (Borik & Gehrke, 2015)).

Generic interpretation of BPIs in object position is only possible when they are selected by subject experiencer verbs, i.e. “love”, “hate”, “like” (cf. Glasbey 2006). In such cases they refer to a maximal sum of individuals having the property denoted by the noun (cf. “universal, inclusive interpretation” in Laca 1990). When this sum is intensionalised, it refers to a kind.

References: • Borik, O., Gehrke, B. (2015): The Syntax and Semantics of Pseudo-Incorporation. Brill, 1 – 43. • Glasbey, S. (2006): Bare plurals in object position. Which verbs fail to give existential readings, and why? In: *Linguistik Aktuell*, 95, 133 – 157. • Krifka, M. et al. (1995): Genericity. In: *The Generic Book*. Chicago University Press, 1–124. • Laca, B. (1990): Generic objects: some more pieces of the puzzle. *Lingua* 81, 25 – 46.