

## **The denotation of subject DPs with situation readings in copular sentences**

This paper focus on certain copular sentences of Brazilian Portuguese, which can be considered peculiar due to the fact that they lack gender and number agreement between the subject and its predicative adjective in contexts where regular constructions would expect to be morphologically marked. Sentences (1) and (2) are examples of such sentences:

(1) Água mineral é bom para o cabelo.  
mineral water[fem.] is good[masc.] for hair  
"Mineral water is good for your hair."

(2) Minissaia é provocativo.  
miniskirt[fem.] is provocative[masc.]  
"Miniskirt is provocative."

The unusual agreement brings along an interesting reading: the interpretation of the subject DP is something bigger than its denotation of common noun. When you use the sentence in (1), the listener understands that he should perform an specific action with mineral water, contextually defined -- in this case he is supposed to wash his hair with mineral water. Sentence (2) can help us understanding that the property of adjective applies to some kind of event or situation related to miniskirts but not the object itself. In contrast to (2), sentence (3) would more clearly predict about the quality of the skirt itself:

(3) Essa saia curta vai ser ótimo no verão.  
This[fem.] skirt[fem.] short[fem.] will be great[masc.] in the summer.  
"This skirt will be great in the summer."

The idea behind this sentence is that it will be comfortable, fresh to use this skirt specifically in the summer. Note that the speaker is refererring to a particular context, which is different from (4):

(4) Essa saia é fresca.  
This[fem.] skirt[fem.] is fresh[fem.].  
"This skirt is fresh."

In this sentence the freshness in question is related just to the skirt and nothing else, in other words, the adjective applies to the skirt itself.

What these sentences tell us is that there might be a possibility of interpreting the subject DP as related to an contextually relevant situation which it would be part of, some kind of event that take te DP as an argument. The question that arises from the phenomenon described above concerns the denotation of the subject DP. Literature is used to treat these sentences as generic ones, and it also assumes that the DP in question would denote a kind, because bare nouns are preferred to occur in this position (DUEK 2007). But as we can see from (4), it can be the case that the subject is not only occupied by bare nouns. So in this paper we inspect other possibilities of interpreting this subject DP, specially trying to understand if we can relate it to a hidden event. This idea has been considered before briefly by Martin (1975), who realized that a sentence like (5) could be used in two different contexts:

(5) Uma cerveja seria ótimo.  
A[fem.] beer[fem.] would be great[masc.]  
"A beer would be great."

According to the author, this sentence would be appropriate, for example, if we want to drink something refreshing or even if we need something to put out a fire.

Acknowledging recent analyses of this phenomenon (FOLTRAN & RODRIGUES, 2013; MEZARI, 2013), this work aims to show that the descriptive observations made by Martin (1975), along with sentences like (4), have to be taken into account to a proper treatment of the lack of agreement in these copular sentences. In order to achieve descriptive adequacy, the kind interpretation usually applied to this subject DP will have to seek an answer for the readings directed to a situation.

## References

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