

### A Third Kind of Weak Indefinite

Veneeta Dayal

Rutgers University

Incorporated singulars (and plurals) are weak indefinites that cannot scope over sentential operators. They are generally taken to be semantically neutral, denoting in the atomic as well as the non-atomic domain. This is based on the fact that they pattern with bare plurals in their ability to function as arguments of predicates like “collect” or “gather”:

1a. John collects \*a stamp/ <sup>OK</sup>stamps.

b. mari <sup>OK</sup>belyeget / <sup>OK</sup>belyegeket gyujt  
Mari stamp stamps collect  
“Mari is collecting stamps.”

*Hungarian*

In this talk, I present data that argue against this view of incorporated singulars. In Hungarian, for example, there are predicates such as “compare”, “unite” and “reconcile” that only accept incorporated plurals. This contrasts with cases of compounding which do not show the same restriction:

2a. Donka es en ??peldat/ <sup>OK</sup>peldakat hasonlitunk össze. *Hungarian*

Donka and I example.Acc/ examples.ACC compare together  
“Donka and I are comparing examples.”

b. Donka and I did example-comparisons.

I take these facts to establish incorporated singulars as bona fide singular terms, denoting strictly in the atomic domain. This is in contrast to nominals inside compounds which may appear to be singular but are not atomic, either because they are unspecified for number or because they do not denote in the individual domain at all.

I argue that the compatibility of predicates to be defined on atomic entities at the sub-event level is crucial to their ability to accept incorporated singulars. For example, “collect” and “gather”, but not “compare” and “unite”, have this property: cf. <sup>OK</sup>“collect stamps one by one” vs. ?“compare examples one by one”. I also consider cases like “to twin expect” and “to car transport” that allow incorporated singulars even though we know that more than one entity may be involved.

The view of incorporated singulars as denoting in the atomic domain calls for more attention to the role of aspect in delivering the effect of non-atomicity than has been paid in semantic accounts of the phenomenon so far. I note in this connection some interesting differences between Hindi and Hungarian and speculate on the reasons for differences between them. More generally, on the basis of these facts, I will comment on the possibility of giving a unified account of weak indefinites such as indefinite singulars, bare plurals and incorporated nominals.