

Reference to Subkinds

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In this talk, I motivate and develop an explicit account for the construction of subkinds in natural language. The primary data come from the manifestations of Bolinger's Contrast across languages. After establishing that adjectival modification structures are instances of kind modification, I contend that what lies beneath the (cross-linguistically robust and stable) contrast is the demarcation between well-established subkinds (WEKs) and *ad hoc* subkinds (AHKs). Though both WEKs and AHKs are grammatically relevant means to constructing subkinds from kinds, the former name institutionalized, pre-established subkinds with distinguishing properties, while the latter are used to impute to the kinds under discussion some contextually imposed-upon properties and to construct subkinds in an *ad hoc* way. I demonstrate how this line of thinking illuminates on the aged puzzle concerning *de/less* modification in Mandarin Chinese and other phenomena related to Bolinger's Contrast.

About the speaker: Qiongpeng Luo is professor of linguistics at the School of Liberal Arts, Nanjing University. His research areas include formal semantics and syntax-semantics interface. He is currently visiting the Department of Linguistic and Nordic Studies of the University of Oslo under the Norwegian-Chinese Government Exchange Fellowship Scheme.