

Commentary on Giada Palmieri: ‘Vagueness or ambiguity?’

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Workshop on Cross-Linguistic Semantics of Reciprocals

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Mixed readings

- (1) Ka'ěškóne-ho é-axeen-ahtse-o'o
Child-pl.animate 3-scratch.animate-ahte-3pl.animate
'Some children scratched themselves, some scratched each
other.' (Cheyenne)
- (2) Děti se škrába-ly.
Children se scratch-pst.pl
'Some children scratched themselves, some scratched each
other.' (Czech)

Mixed readings and non-mixed readings in Italian

- Lexical reflexive verbs (*shave, wash*)
mixed readings 👍
- Non-lexical reflexive verbs (*criticize*)
mixed readings 👎

Mixed readings and non-mixed readings in Italian

- Lexical reflexive verbs (*shave, wash*) (causative test, P-Co)
mixed readings 👍
- Non-lexical reflexive verbs (*criticize*) (causative test, P-Co)
mixed readings 👎

Mixed readings and non-mixed readings beyond Italian

- umýt, oholit – P-Co 👍


(3) Žáci se oholili.
pupils se shave-past.3pl
‘Some children shaved themselves, some shaved each other.’
(Czech, my judgement)

Testing P-Co:

Bob is very vain: she always cares about being taken care of, well dressed and without a hair out of place. On Thursday he was by the beautician for manicure and he was shaved very nicely.

(4) Ve čtvrtek se Bob oholil. 👍


Mixed readings and non-mixed readings beyond Italian

- kritizovat – P-Co 

- (5) Žáci se kritizovali.
pupils se criticize-past.3pl
'Some children criticized themselves, some criticized each other.'
(Czech, my judgement)

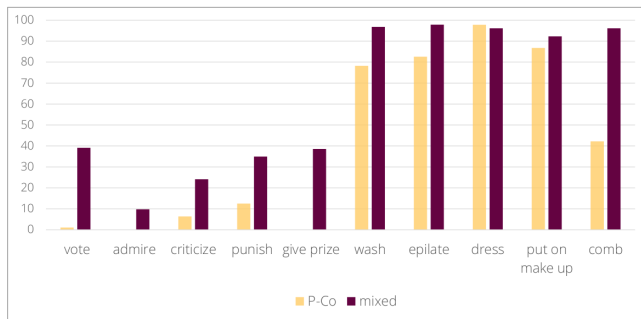
Testing P-Co:

Gianni is a hairdresser. He wants his customers to always be satisfied and he willingly accepts criticism and comments on his work so he can improve. Roberto, a customer, after getting a different cut than he wanted, began to criticize Gianni openly, attacking his way of working. Gianni was not offended at all! He accepted the criticisms, which he has considered constructive, and thanked Roberto.

- (6) Gianni se kritizoval. 

Mixed readings and non-mixed readings in Italian

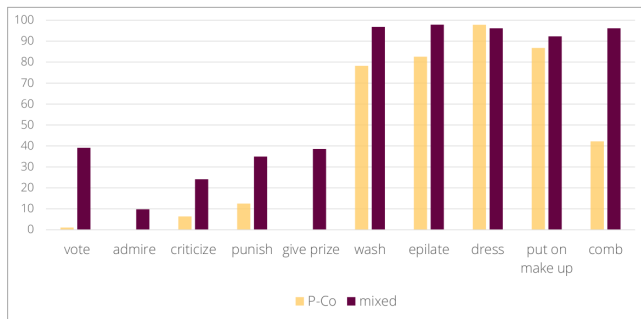
Findings reported in Giada's talk



- Up to 40% accept mixed construals with non-lexical reflexive verbs
- Little to no correlation between P-Co and mixed readings *within verb groups*

Mixed readings and non-mixed readings in Italian

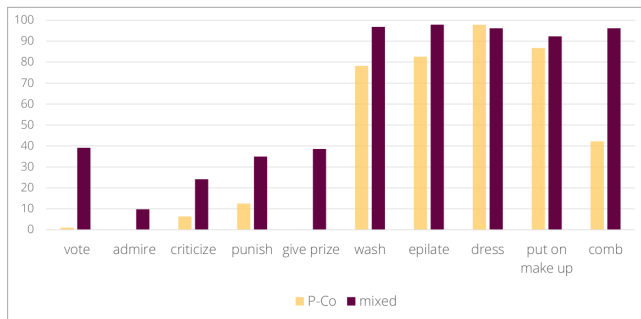
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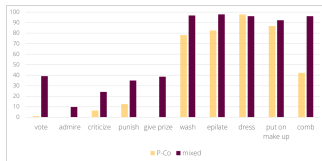
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- Little to no correlation between P-Co and mixed readings *within verb groups*
- P-Co → mixed reading
- P-Co ↔ mixed reading, + noise

P-Co → mixed reading

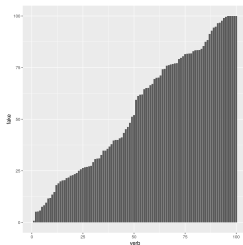
- If mixed reading fully available even with non-lexical reflexive verbs, why does it appear less with *vote*, *admire* etc. than with *wash*, *dress* etc.?
 - *vote*, *admire* – social interaction verbs
 - *wash*, *dress* – end-result crucial
- (7) My kids: We washed **se!**
- (8) My kids: We admire **se!**
- cf. the work in the Rational Speech Act Theory
Scontras & Goodman, Resolving uncertainty in plural predication.
Cognition 2017

P-Co \leftrightarrow mixed reading, + noise

Giada's findings



Hypothetical findings



P-Co \leftrightarrow mixed reading, + noise

- Other tests to be used that would deliver more clear-cut results (zeugma test, causatives...)
- Studying within-subject correlations
- Adding baselines
 - only each-other readings
 - only reflexive readings
- Other ideas?