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Generics, Conservativity, and Kind-Subordination

Abstract
Generic sentences, such as “ravens are black” or “tigers have stripes” seem to express a generalization of some sort. This suggests the hypothesis that generics contain an unpronounced quantificational element at LF, gen. However, this hypothesis faces several problems, too, including the apparent failure of conservativity. For example, “ravens are black” does not seem to be equivalent to “ravens are ravens that are black”. I argue that the apparent failure of conservativity is merely apparent, and that sentences like “ravens are ravens that are black” or “ravens are black ravens” are unacceptable for reasons that are orthogonal to conservativity: semantic interpretation breaks down. This analysis can be extended to deal with some famously troublesome examples for normality-analyses of generics, including “books are paperbacks” and “bees are workers”.