

# The role of grammatical form in generalizing principled and statistical properties

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**Abstract:** Asymmetric generalization patterns for definite and indefinite singular generics

In two experiments, we investigated the role of grammatical form in inferring the conceptual status of properties in generic sentences. We trained participants on novel properties in pseudoword sentences with bare plural (BP), indefinite (IS) and definite singular (DS) subjects. In the test phase, participants rated the relationship between trained properties and novel subjects: We found that, compared to BP, properties trained in the IS condition increase expectations of principled connections whereas DS-trained properties diminish expectations of statistical connections. BP subjects acted as a control since they were equally judged to be statistically or principally connected. These results support the theoretical claim that IS have quantificational force and DS directly refer to kinds. They leave open the puzzle of the nature of BP subjects which seem to be ambiguous between the two and also the only one to convey statistical connections.