# A compositional theory of criteria of individuation for copredication

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Copredication is the phenomenon whereby two predicates are applied to a single argument, but they appear to require that their argument denote different things (Pustejovsky 1995). For instance, in (1), the predicate 'heavy' seems to require that 'the book' denote a physical object, while the predicate 'easy to understand' seems to require that it denote information.

(1) The book is heavy but easy to understand.
(2) Fred picked up three books.
(3) Fred mastered three books.
(4) Fred picked up and mastered three books.

As (2)-(4) show, the predicates applied in copredication sentences can impose distinct criteria of individuation (and hence counting) on the objects to which they apply, which can make a truth-conditional difference. For (4) to be true, it must be the case that the three books involved are both physically and informationally distinct – it will not be true if they are three copies of the same book (physically, but not informationally, distinct) or a trilogy (informationally, but not physically, distinct). The criteria of individuation and hence counting that are involved in sentences like (4) are in some sense *emergent* in that they are neither simply physical (as in (2)) nor simply informational (as in (3)). It is a weakness in existing accounts of copredication (e.g. Asher 2011) that they do not make this prediction.

I will describe a theory that predicts the truth conditions of (2)-(4), based on treating *criteria of individuation*, defined as equivalence relations on subsets of the domain of discourse, as a dimension of lexical meaning. These criteria are updated by compositional processes and are exploited in quantification in order to specify the extension of nouns (like 'book') supporting copredication. Specification amounts to asserting that there is some relation that no two members of the plurality in question bear to each other.

References

Asher, N. (2011). *Lexical Meaning in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Pustejovsky (1995). *The Generative Lexicon* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press)