

## There is no problem for Predicativism to be solved by Predicativism

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According to Predicativism, proper names as such are predicates that are semantically on a par with common nouns, referring to no particular individuals. An occurrence of a proper name within a sentence, however, constitutes a rigidified incomplete definite description together with an overt determiner that is analogous to the definite article *the*. In her 2015 *Analysis* article, “A problem for predicativism solved by predicativism,” Fara attempts to answer an objection to Predicativism raised by Hawthorne and Manley (2012), in which they compare the following pair of sentences:

- (1) In every race, John won.
- (2) In every race, the John won.

Imagine that, in all the contextually salient races, exactly one competitor is named “John,” and each John wins each race. (2) seems acceptable in this scenario: it can mean that, for each race, the unique person named “John” in that race won. On the other hand, Hawthorne and Manley claim, an analogous bound-into reading of (1) “is (at best) much harder to access” (p. 236). On the standard Predicativist semantic analysis, *John* in (1) is preceded by a silent determiner, the function of which is presumably identical to the definite article *the*. If Predicativism is correct, then a bound-into reading must be available to (1). Fara acknowledges the observed contrast between (1) and (2), and she presents a syntactic account that prevents (1) from having a bound-into reading. Schoubye (2016) criticizes Fara’s account as an empirically false claim.

In this paper, we present experimental data that show that a bound-into reading is indeed available to (1). We conducted a truth-value judgment task on native English speakers, asking them whether a given sentence is true, false, or neither against a vignette similar to the scenario above. For both (1) and (2), over 90% of the participants judged them true (N=60 for each condition). It is plainly false that a bound-into reading of (1) is harder to access. Based on these results, we argue that the debate between Fara and Schoubye is wrongheaded, and that a possible contrast between (1) and (2) must be accounted for in a different way.

## References

- Fara, D. G. (2015). A problem for predicativism solved by predicativism. *Analysis*, 75(3):362-371.
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- Schoubye, A. J. (2016). A problem for Predicativism not solved by Predicativism. *Semantics and Pragmatics*, 9:1-11.