

Copredication and Property Versatility (under contract with Oxford University Press)
David Liebesman and Ofra Magidor
short abstract

Objects of different kinds can share many properties: a chair and an apple can both be red; a bottle-opener and a house can both be metal. However, when kinds are different enough we usually think this, in and of itself, constrains property-sharing: Dave's chair and the number two cannot share the property of *being red*, or of *being prime*. This is because Dave's chair is not the kind of thing that can be prime, and the number two is not the kind of thing that can be red. In general, we tend to think that kind-membership places substantial restrictions on property instantiation.

Some such restrictions, however, seem to conflict with linguistic data. Given the right context, the following sentences all have true readings:

1. Lunch was delicious but took hours.
2. The bank lost customers after being vandalised.
3. An informative book is on the shelf.

The problem is that these sentences all *prima facie* ascribe categorially incompatible properties. *Prima facie*, only events can last hours, while only food can be delicious; only buildings can be vandalised, while only institutions can lose customers; and only physical copies can be on shelves while only abstract texts can be informative. This is the problem of copredication.

There are three main options for addressing the problem. First, we could give a sophisticated semantics for sentences such as 1-3 which allows their truth, while maintaining the categorial constraints on instantiation. Second, we could abandon the claim that such sentences are ever true. Third, we could weaken the categorial constraints on property instantiation.

Copredication and Property Versatility defends the third option. We draw on both linguistic and metaphysical considerations to establish that properties are much more versatile than most think, and are subject to fewer categorial constraints than is typically assumed. For example, physical copies can instantiate the property of *being informative*, and abstract texts can instantiate the property of *being on a shelf*. This view not only allows us to solve the problem of copredication but also yields important insights into a range of other issues in the philosophy of language and metaphysics. The first part of the book provides a critical survey of extant positions on copredication, culminating with a defence of the property versatility approach. The second part of the book discusses applications of property versatility, most prominently the semantics of generics and the metaphysics of artworks.