

Matthew Mandelkern, Oxford Univ., 23.01.2019, 15:00
Projection from situations

Abstract (joint work with Daniel Rothschild): We start with two empirical claims. First, definites ('The F...') seem to carry a uniqueness presupposition. But, second, a wide range of presupposition filtering environments show that this presupposition can apparently be filtered by indefinites ('...an F...The F...'). The combination of these facts does not fit well with the two main ways of thinking about (in)definites. On e-type theories, definites encode uniqueness presuppositions, but indefinites are just classical existential quantifiers, which would not filter uniqueness. On dynamic theories, definites presuppose only familiarity, and indefinites can indeed filter familiarity; but dynamic theories struggle to explain the uniqueness presuppositions which arise without filtering indefinites. Our aim is mainly to pose this problem clearly; in concluding, we say some vague things about a potential solution.