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Title: **Accessibility and Definite NPs**

Date: Monday, March 20, 2006
Time: 4:00pm
Place: Rosenfeld Lecture Hall, Temple & Grove Streets

Abstract:

The interpretation of texts and discourses must link the reference of expressions to each other in order to reconstruct the coherence. Dynamic semantics provide a mechanism to do so, which consists of the interaction of the context change potential and the context dependent interpretation. This interaction is determined by the accessibility structure of the text, which reflects the properties of certain expressions such as negation, conditionals and other semantic operators or constructions. Theories of dynamic semantics assume a context change potential of indefinite NPs and a context dependent interpretation of anaphoric pronouns. Definite NPs, however, are treated as static expression in both aspects.

In contrast to this commonly held view, the paper will show that definite NPs are dynamic in both aspects of dynamic semantics: They do change the context and they do depend on the updated context. The paper will also discuss the difference between anaphoric pronouns and anaphoric definite NPs with respect to the accessibility structure.