

Weak definites vs. implicit entities vs. indefinites in German

Fereshteh Modarresi, Jette Fortmann & Manfred Krifka
Leibniz-Zentrum Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft Berlin (ZAS)

modarresi@leibniz-zas.de, fortmann@leibniz-zas.de, krifka@leibniz-zas.de

Weak definites (WDs) as in *ins Kino gehen* (cf. Schwarz 2014) differ from strong definites as in *in das Kino gehen* in various respects: They have a number-neutral reading (cf. *Die Leute gehen gern ins Kino/in das Kino*), narrow scope to quantifiers (as in *Jedes Kind ist ins Kino/in das Kino gegangen*), and co-vary in conjunctions (as in *Peter ist ins/in das Kino gegangen und Maria auch*). In this, WDs are more similar to indefinites (IDs), as in *in ein Kino gehen*. However, WDs differ from IDs as they support anaphoric uptake to a reduced degree, cf. *Wir gingen in ein Kino/ins Kino. Man konnte es schon von weitem sehen* (less felicitous with *ins Kino*).

We will give a survey of approaches to model WDs, which arguably are semantically similar to pseudo-incorporated bare NPs in certain languages, and discuss their respective strengths and weaknesses (e.g. as kind-referring nouns, as nominal properties, and as predicate restrictions that do not introduce any discourse referent). We argue for an analysis in which WDs are definites that are functionally dependent on an event in the scope of an existential closure over an event variable (cf. Krifka & Modarresi 2016 for incorporated nominals). For example, *ins Kino gehen* is a predicate that applies to a person *x* if there is an event *e*, and *x* goes to the unique cinema defined for *e*. This explains the scopal properties of WDs and their apparent number-neutral interpretation, but also their reduced anaphoric potential, because picking up the discourse referent (DR) requires it to be recovered from a domain that is not directly accessible (cf. Kamp & Reyle 1993).

We will report on experiments designed to test the anaphoric potential of WDs (rating of texts, choice of pronominal or definite DP as anaphoric expression, sentence continuation tasks). We present evidence that WDs are better antecedents than non-expressed participants, ruling out theories that assume that no DR is introduced. But it is difficult to show that WDs really are worse antecedents than IDs. We expect that WDs are preferably picked up by definite DPs than by pronouns, but in test conditions, even indefinite antecedents are preferably picked up by definite DPs. We will present the results of a number of experiments and discuss the experimental bias towards a preference for definite NPs as anaphors. We will also present the result of experiments where the anaphoric expressions are associative anaphora.

References: • Schwarz, F: 2014. How weak and how definite are weak indefinites? In A. Aguilar-Guevara, B. LeBruyn & J. Zwarts (eds.), *Weak referentiality*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. • Kamp, H. & U. Reyle. 1993. *From discourse to logic*. Dordrecht: Kluwer. • Krifka, M. & F. Modarresi. 2016. Number neutrality and anaphoric uptake of pseudo-incorporated nominals in Persian (and weak definites in English). *SALT* 26. 874–891.