Plural pronominal anaphora in context
Dynamic aspects of quantification

This dissertation presents a formal model of plural pronominal discourse anaphora. It focuses on the question of how to model the contextual interpretation of plural pronouns. Specifically, it develops a non-representational dynamic semantics of quantification.

A quantificational sentence has several sets associated with it, each of which is a potential antecedent for a subsequent plural pronoun. It is argued that one of these sets, the so-called complement set, is only accessible through inference, while other sets are contextually introduced by quantificational structures as salient antecedents. The formal model of context and context change presented in this work deals with these sets made salient by quantification. A complicating factor, however, is that quantificational structures also introduce dependencies. That is, pronouns have access to correspondences between salient sets. Accordingly, the notion of context has to be structured. Furthermore, it turns out that a more complex account of the accessibility of (dependent) antecedents is also called for. Consideration of these and other issues ultimately leads to the development of an incremental dynamic semantics of quantification.

This study is of interest to researchers concerned with the formal semantics of quantification, plurality and anaphora, and to scholars interested in more general issues concerning the semantics and pragmatics of discourse anaphora.

ISBN 90-76864-45-4