

In most theories of definite plurals some notion of maximality appears, very often under the guise of universal quantification. The first problem is that a principled justification of this is not easy to find. The second problem is that when maximality comes into the picture, many examples lead to the conclusion that it is more a problem than a solution. In the talk, I will argue that the association of definite plurals to something like maximality is due to their status of referential terms. From this status two sources of maximality follows. The first source is bound to reference (the definite NP the Xs applies to any X of its relevant discourse domain). The second source is bound to predication (what does it mean to state that a plurality satisfies a predicate?). The talk argues that once properly recognized, these two sources of maximality provide what is needed for accommodating all cases of non-maximality we met.