

## **Plural NPs and stative predicates: existential des-NPs in French and their competitors**

Like bare plural NPs in English, des-NPs in French are not always compatible with stative predicates on an existential reading. Several authors have emphasized the limits of accounts based on the difference between SLP and ILP or on the notion of localisation. In this paper, I adopt a neo-Saussurean view where des-NPs are characterised via their lexical competitors, namely, (i) *quelques/plusieurs/n*-NPs and (ii) *certain*-NPs in the semantic space of plural reference. Building on previous claims of Attal (1976) and Bosveld and de Smet (2004), and relying on the definition of relevance by Merin (1999), I argue that (i) when the Quantity denoted by des-NPs is relevant for the purpose of the discourse, des-NPs are blocked by *quelques/plusieurs/n*-NPs, and (ii) when an implicit Quality of the referent is relevant for the verbal predication, des-NPs are blocked by *certain*-NPs (except if they are modified by a specific modifier like *bien précis/particulier*). Finally, I show that stative predicates which are difficult to use with existential des-NPs (like evaluative or psychological predicates) are those which present as relevant the Quantity or one of the implicit Quality of the referent, and thus force des-NPs to enter the exclusive zones of other kind of plural NPs.