Singular existentials and three different kinds of negation

Dolf Rami

In this paper, I will argue for a traditional semantic analysis of three possible kinds of negation of (i) singular existential sentence and (ii) ordinary atomic sentences. Firstly, I will show that all three negations of sentences of kind (i) are equivalent if we make use of referring or non-referring names, while on the other hand the three negations of sentences of kind (ii) have several non-equivalent readings if non-referring names are used. Secondly, I will review the partial solutions to our problem given by Russell, Quine and Sainsbury and show in how far they fail. Thirdly, I will propose an alternative solution based on a semantics outlined in Rami (2020). This will, finally, lead to the possibility of interpreting negation in formal languages in general in a different way than it is usually done.