

## **Veridicality, polarity and question-embedding**

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In this talk I investigate the question what it takes for a predicate to be responsive – that is, to be able to embed both declarative and interrogative clauses. In particular, I ask whether it is predictable on semantic grounds alone whether a given predicate is responsive or not. Empirically, the central issue is why *know* is such a responsive predicate, whereas the closely related *believe* only embeds declarative clauses. I defend the longstanding intuition that veridicality/factivity is the crucial difference between these two types of predicates against recent suggestions to the contrary. I propose an account where the exhaustivity of embedded questions acts as a quasi polarity-licensing mechanism. Only responsive predicates do not lead to a contradictory statement when embedding a question thereby licensing them. Crucial evidence will come from predicates like *be certain* – again closely related in meaning to *know* and *believe* – whose embedding properties are seemingly affected by the polarity of the clause they appear in. Such predicates can only embed questions under negation (without help from a preposition).