Abstract:
English has several additive particles, which differ in their distribution. One of these is also, a common choice to signal additivity in assertions and polar questions, (1a-b). It has been suggested that this particle can’t appear in a wh-question without triggering a so-called showmaster interpretation (Umbach, 2012), in which the speaker already has a certain answer in mind when asking the question, (1c).

(1) Mary danced all night.
    a. John also danced.
    b. Did John also dance?
    c. #Who also danced?

In this talk, I will challenge this generalization based on a previously unnoticed class of questions, which I call summoning questions. To account for the resulting more differentiated empirical picture, I will generalize Beaver and Clark (2008)’s QUD-based account of additive particles by lifting it to an inquisitive semantics setting (Ciardelli et al., 2018). This allows us to capture the contribution of also in declaratives and interrogatives in a unified way, while still accounting for its distributional restrictions.

Additive particles are just one example of expressions that can appear with declarative and different kinds of interrogative clauses. In the remainder of the talk, I will briefly walk through two other examples—clause-embedding verbs like know, and the German discourse particle denn—to show how the proposed account of additive particles forms part of a larger research program that aims to develop formally unified accounts of expressions in this family.