Squat, zero and no/nothing : syntactic vs. semantic negation

In this talk I will propose a distinction between syntactic and semantic sentential negation. I will motivate the distinction by discussing some core properties of three downward entailing quantifiers: *no/nothing*, squat, and the numeral *zero*. The syntactic tests I apply to these quantifiers demonstrate that *no/nothing* can give rise to both syntactic and semantic sentential negation, whereas squat and *zero* can only give rise to semantic sentential negation. Beghelli’s (1995) clause structure for quantifier scope will be used to capture the available scope positions for these quantifiers based on their syntactic properties.