

*Topic* Sentences that contain generic expressions such as ‘tigers’, ‘trees’ or ‘houses’ are used to communicate what is typically the case. For instance, the sentences ‘Tigers have stripes’, ‘Trees have leaves’ or ‘Houses have doors’ are used to communicate that typically, tigers have stripes, that typically, trees have leaves, or that typically, houses have doors. However, sentences that contain generic expressions such as ‘friends’, ‘boys’, or ‘men’ cannot only be used to communicate what is typically the case but also to communicate what should be the case. Take, for instance, the sentences ‘Friends don’t let friends drive drunk’, ‘Boys don’t cry’, or ‘A man provides for his family’. These sentences can be used to make the descriptive claim that typically, friends don’t let friends drive drunk, that typically, boys don’t cry, or that typically, a man provides for his family. But they can also be used to make the normative claim that friends, who exemplify the ideals of friendship, do not let friends drive drunk, or that a man, who exemplifies the ideals of manhood, provides for his family.

*Thesis and Structure* In my talk I am concerned with the question of what mechanism brings it about that sentences that contain generic expressions such as ‘friends’, ‘boys’, ‘men’ etc. can be used in two different ways. I will argue that this is due to the fact that such sentences correspond to two different logical forms (henceforth: *structural divergence explanation*). In order to establish this result I will first present the *ambiguity explanation*, which plays a prominent role in recent literature, and argue that we should give this explanation only as a last resort. Subsequently, I will consider two alternative explanation—the *implicature explanation* and the *structure divergence explanation*—and argue that the structure divergence explanation is the most convincing one.