

慶應言語学コロキウム

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会場: 慶應義塾大学三田キャンパス東館 8 階ホール

使用言語: 英語 共催: 日本独文学会

参加申込: 研究所ホームページもしくは右のQRコードよりお申込み下さい



Lecture 1: Positional expletives in the Germanic languages: typology, theoretical analysis, and historical development

All present-day Germanic languages (and some Romance varieties) exhibit so-called ‘positional expletives’ (Müller & Ørnesnes 2011), that is, non-referential elements that occupy a specifier position that requires overt exponence. These elements come in two basic types: subject expletives (e.g. English *there*) and CP-expletives (or ‘prefield’ expletives), which occupy the clause-initial, prefinite position in declarative V2 clauses (e.g. German *es*, Icelandic *það*). Based on a comparative review of their properties (form, distribution, compatibility with external arguments and definite subjects), I develop a structural typology of positional expletives:

- Subject expletives are generated in a low vP-internal position before undergoing movement to SpecTP (Groat 1999, Richards & Biberauer 2005). As a consequence, the expletive blocks both (i) external merge of an external argument and (ii) internal merge of the associate DP, which must remain within the nuclear scope domain, giving rise to definiteness effects (Diesing 1992).
- Icelandic *það* is merged in SpecTP and subsequently moves to SpecCP. It is therefore compatible with transitive verbs, but still triggers definiteness effects.
- German *es* enters the derivation in SpecCP and thus does not interact with argument structure and does not give rise to definiteness effects.

I then take a closer look at the theoretical analysis of the German CP-expletive *es*, which raises a number of interesting issues, including the relation between external Merge and Agree, and the labelling of XP-XP structures (cf. e.g. Blümel 2017). Time permitting, I will also address the historical development of positional expletives in the Germanic languages, focusing on lexical sources, (recurrent) developmental pathways, bridging contexts, and potential triggers for their development. I argue that expletives arose in response to emerging syntactic requirements, particularly the need to fill structurally obligatory positions as languages moved away from V1 patterns in topicless and existential constructions associated with wide focus.

Lecture 2: Hand in hand or everyone for themselves? Revisiting the diachronic implications of the Rich Agreement Hypothesis

This talk discusses diachronic implications of the idea that there is a correlation between rich verbal agreement marking and verb movement, commonly known as the Rich Agreement Hypothesis (RAH). Focusing on the proposal by Koenenman and Zeijlstra (2014), which seeks to reinstate the RAH in its strongest biconditional form, I present a set of diachronic case studies that challenge the expectation, fueled by the strong RAH, that morphological and syntactic change necessarily proceed in tandem. First, I argue that Koenenman and Zeijlstra’s attempt to accommodate problematic cases (e.g. loss of verbal agreement morphology accompanied by a delayed loss of verb movement) in terms of syntactic reanalysis faces a number of difficulties. I then present data from Lithuanian and Cimbrian, where a change from SOV to SVO gave rise to word order patterns that are incompatible with the predictions of the RAH. These facts pose a challenge to both strong and weak versions of the hypothesis. Finally, I suggest an alternative (diachronic) explanation for the apparent connection between verb movement and rich verbal agreement, drawing on ideas developed by Alexiadou & Fanselow (2002).

[お問い合わせ先]

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