

Reading Linguistics

A brief history of the copula

Convenor: Andrea Moro
H: 12 - part 1
Credits:
Semester: II
Reading Group (type C)

Description

Copular sentences constitute a major field of research in syntax ever since the first reflections on language from different perspectives. In particular, they allow the analysis of predicative and thematic relations as distinct from the expression of tense-aspect morphological features prototypically realized on the verb in a syncretic fashion and consequently within the Verb Phrase. A special subfield is constituted by nominal copular sentences, namely those copular sentences with a noun phrase predicate. Nominal copular sentences constitute a twofold class, involving canonical copular sentences (where the preverbal position is occupied by a subject) and inverse copular sentences (where the preverbal position is rather occupied by a predicative noun phrase). Inverse copular sentences offer further syntactic data which cannot be observed in other constructions: first, they challenge clause structure allowing the presence of a non-referential noun phrase in preverbal position which is canonically reserved to subjects; second, they offer a unique perspective on locality conditions over subjects; third, they offer crucial data on the interaction between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation.

Readings

Moro, Andrea. (1988). *Per una teoria unificata delle frasi copulari*. In «Rivista di Grammatica Generativa» 13: 81-110. Unipress.

Moro, Andrea. (1997). *The raising of predicates: Predicative noun phrases and the theory of clause structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moro, Andrea. (2017a). *A Brief History of the Verb To Be*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press.

Moro, Andrea. (2017b). *Copular sentences*. In Martin Everaert & Henk van Riemsdijk (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Syntax (Second edition)*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.

Calendar

- 16 gennaio: 11-13
- 4 febbraio: 9-11
- 27 febbraio: 11 – 13
- 3 aprile: 11 – 13
- 11 aprile: 11 – 13
- 16 aprile: 11 – 13

Classroom 1-14