Department of LINGUISTICS & TESOL

SPEAKER

Marcel den Dikken

"The attractions of agreement"

Agreement in specificational copular sentences is a complex matter, empirically as well as theoretically. Patterns that are attested are often not easy to make fall out from a restrictive theory of Agree relations; patterns that are *not* attested would sometimes seem hard to exclude. In this paper, I will try my hand at com- ing to terms with a number of *prima facie* problematic ö-feature agreement patterns in specificational copular sentences, with particular emphasis on pseudoclefts and their close relatives. In section 2, the spotlight will be on specificational pseudoclefts and semi-clefts whose syntax arguably features a full clause in the complement of the copular pivot, and on the question of how to allow this copula to agree in ö-features with the focus of the construction (which is contained inside the copula's clausal complement), under specific circumstances that   will be made more precise. We will see that the structural configuration in which the copula of such pseudo - clefts and semi-clefts can ö-agree with the focus closely resemble the circumstances under which 'out of the ordinary' agreement phenomena are found elsewhere in Universal Grammar: circumstances which I will unify under the rubric of 'agreement attraction'. In section 3, the empirical scope of the investigation will be broadened to include ö-agreement in copular inversion constructions — constructions in which the predicate of the copular sentence raises into the structural subject position, and strands its subject in its base position. The special status of person will   be seen to be very much in evidence in this domain as well. But in addition we will see (based on a detailed investigation of the facts of ö-feature agreement in Dutch copular inversion constructions, including clefts)   that it is impossible for the inverted nominal predicate to control ö-agreement with the copula. This is made to fall out from a particular analysis of the fronted predicate of copular inversion constructions, as a pro- predicate unspecified for ö-features.

Date

FRIDAY, APRIL 18TH

Time

3:00 PM

Location

PLANETARIUM CONFERENCE ROOM (CPB 303)

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