

Floating phi

Roberta D'Alessandro, LUCL

Southern Italo-Romance languages present an over-representation of person and deixis, as well as number, on some syntactic objects: person is expressed, for instance, twice on auxiliaries (both on the root and on the ending), in prepositional accusatives, on 3rd person pronouns, even on adverbs, and so is number.

In this talk, I first wish to show that person and deixis are two different features. Then, I propose that phi-features can also be merged as singletons in the clause (contra Chomsky 1995 ff), but need to incorporate on a host before Transfer for interpretability at the interface.

These extra features are thus “floating”, and can incorporate to the root (of auxiliary), yielding person-oriented auxiliary selection; to the root of pronouns, yielding person-marked 3rd person pronouns, or even on adverbs. The presence of these extra features also creates unusual agreement patterns, sometimes extending the verbal agreement domain, sometimes creating weird agreement configurations, involving adverbs but even DP complements.