

Kolloquium Slawistische Linguistik
Institut für Slawistik der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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Null subjects and topicality in Finnish

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Wo? Dorotheenstr. 65, Raum 5.57

Abstract

Central to understanding the architecture of the human language faculty is the relation between core syntactic processes and the interfaces. One particular reincarnation of this larger question comes in the form of licensing null subjects and its relation to discourse-related factors. Traditional approaches to null subjects formulated in purely syntactic terms have failed to capture the distribution of null elements in a cross-linguistically satisfactory way. At the same time, pragmatic considerations seem to play a key role in licensing null arguments. Finnish, a partial null-subject language, casts new light on the interaction of these different components of grammar: a satisfactory analysis of null-subject licensing will require the incorporation of both morphosyntactic and discourse-related factors.