

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

Petr Biskup (Leipzig) & Radek Šimík (Berlin)
On the dual nature of wh-clauses: A view from locality

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Wo? Dorotheenstr. 65, Raum 5.57

Abstract

We present an analysis of wh-clauses – particularly various kinds of correlatives/conditionals and free relatives (1. Whatever comes up, it will be discussed vs. 2. We'll discuss what(ever) comes up // 1. If you are tired, then you should go to bed vs. 2. You should go to bed if you're tired) – in which their syntax and semantics depends on their position in the clause. Left-adjoined wh-clauses (1) are proposition-denoting CPs which function as Kratzerian (1979) restrictors of conditional-introducing modal operators, i.e., essentially as conditional antecedents. Syntactically integrated wh-clauses (2) are free-relative-like, entity-denoting NPs (possibly embedded in a PP), playing their role in the event description of the “conditional consequent”, while donkey-anaphorically referring back to the corresponding referent in the (implicit) conditional/correlative antecedent (what – it, when – then). The analysis will be supported by novel data from Czech (and other Slavic languages) showing that left-adjoined wh-clauses are transparent for A-bar extraction, while their corresponding integrated wh-clauses are strong islands: *To je ten člověk, kterého [CP když porazíš t], budou nás chválit* vs. **To je ten člověk, kterého nás budou chválit [NP když porazíš t]* (lit. It's the man who [if you beat t], they'll praise us vs. It's the man who they'll praise us [if you beat t]).