

ESPRESSIONE DELLE RELAZIONI GRAMMATICALI NELLE FRASI SENZA VERBO: EVIDENZE DAL FRANCESE

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Studi Italiani di Linguistica Teorica e Applicata, anno LIII, 2024, numero 1

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the expression of grammatical relations in the verbless sentences of spoken French. The analysis assumes that the expression of subject and object makes use of multiple coding marks other than agreement with verbal morphology, and is conditioned by the semantic prototypicality of the arguments and the discursive salience of their referents. Verbless sentences, both predicative and non-predicative, can express subject and/or object through nominal category, i.e., through person marks (free, clitic, or zero) and lexical noun semantics, such as denotation of human and definite referents. The manifestation of grammatical relations in verbless sentences is confirmed by the occurrence of certain behavioral properties, i.e., syntactic and coreference phenomena that are also given in verbal sentences. The analysis showed that the grammatical relations in verbless sentences are encoded in a non-canonical way, as observed in certain verbal sentences that have the non-prototypical nuclear arguments and show non-canonical encoding marks. Similarly to these sentences, verbless sentences encode the arguments through different marks. The absence of verbal morphology is therefore indicative of the non-prototypicality of the arguments, especially of the low agentivity of S.