

In the meeting of the Syntax-semantics colloquium of IEAS,

Caroline Féry (Frankfurt a.M.)

will give a talk on

A puzzle for verum focus

When? 6.5.2019, 16.15-17.45

Where? IG 3.201

Abstract

If verum focus is to be analyzed as a Roothian kind of focus, eliciting a set of alternatives and following the regular rules of sentence accent assignment (Höhle 1992, Goodhue 2018), a dialogue like the following one is problematic since the only new element in Sam's sentence is the negation.

Micah: Where is everyone else?

Sam: There **is** noone else

However, the negation is not accented, instead the verb is accented (see Richter 1993 for a syntactic account of the unstressed status of the negation). In my talk, I will show that verum focus has a variety of additional interpretations (see Romero & Han 2004, Gutzmann & Castroviejo 2011, Lohnstein 2016, Samko 2017 among others) and I will introduce an additional one: counter-assertive vs. counter-presuppositional (Gussenhoven 1983). This phenomenon has been ignored so far in the literature on verum as far as I can tell: The counter-presuppositional interpretation of verum focus cancels a presupposition or a QUD at the same time as it introduces a verum focus. The behaviour of the pitch accent is only found in languages that have pitch accents at all.

Everyone is cordially invited!

Manfred Sailer, Frank Richter, Gert Webelhuth

You will find an up-to-date program of our colloquium at:

<https://www.english-linguistics.de/oberseminar/oberseminar-sose19/>