

Title: How many *es* are there?

Roland Hinterhölzl, Università Ca' Foscari Venice

Abstract:

The talk proposes an alternative analysis of so-called expletive *es* in German. It is argued that *es* has semantic content that serves to anchor the utterance in the context. In particular, I argue that *es* constitutes a weak demonstrative element binding a situation argument. The account gets rid of the assumption that the relevant head in the clause is endowed with an EPP-feature and restores the original principle underlying it, namely the requirement that every predicate needs a contentful subject argument it can be predicated of. The account also explains in more depth the obligatory and optional occurrences of *es* and proposes that there are essentially three occurrences of *es* to distinguish in terms of their syntactic properties.