DEFINITE PRONOUNS IN CATALAN

M. Carme Picallo
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The talk is devoted to discussing the syntactic configuration and the structure of the so-called *l*-pronouns in Catalan, derived from the Latin demonstrative *ille-illa-illud*. Based on Déchaine and Witlschko's (2002) proposal, it will be claimed that the pronominal *l*-system does not constitute a unified class of syntactic objects but consists of two different grammatical entities abstractly represented as (1 a) and (1 b):

(1) a. $[_{DP} \text{ D } [_{\varphi P} \varphi]]$
    b. $[_{\varphi P} \varphi]$

The structure (1 a) corresponds to strong *l*-pronoun forms such as *ell/-a* 's/he'. The structure (1 b) is a sub-component of (1 a) and corresponds to clitic forms (*el/la/li* 'it-him-her') and possessives. These two types of pronominal elements differ in syntactic distribution and anaphoric properties, as is well known. Our discussion will mainly be centered on the properties of the syntactic object labeled as φ in (1 a, b). It will be claimed that φ is an abstract syntactic category and the linguistic exponent of the notion <CLASS> in *l*-pronouns. This abstract category *morphologically* surfaces as formal Gender in Catalan and in Spanish. The syntactic properties of φ, and the value assigned to the binary feature(s) that compose it, can account for the fact that neuter pronouns in Catalan and in Spanish lack Number features. Our proposal advocates for a rather abstract conception of the functional categories provided by UG by claiming that their syntactic features are universal, but grammatical systems may resort to different morphological manifestations to linguistically encode them. Data form other language families provide support for this proposal. Our point of view also concurs with Benveniste's (1966) insight that 'third person' is actually the absence of any Person specification.

References

Benveniste, E. *Problèmes de linguistique générale,* Gallimard, Paris.
Déchaine, R.M. & M. Wiltschko (2002) 'Decomposing pronouns'. *Linguistic Inquiry* 33: 409-442.