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Line Mikkelsen**Specificational clauses and clefts**Mi/Do/Fr: 00.00 – 00.00

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The sentence in (1) is an example of a specificational copular clause, whereas (2) is known as a truncated cleft (Hedberg 2000), due to a perceived similarity with (3), a regular *it*-cleft.

(1) The one who broke the glass was Robert(, wasn't it?)

(2) It was Robert.

(3) It was Robert who broke the glass.

In this talk I argue that (1) – (3) are all specificational clauses, in the sense that they involve an unusual alignment of a predicative element with subject position (Mikkelsen 2004). What distinguishes (2) and (3) from (1) is that their subject is pronominal. Contra Büring 1998, I argue that *it* is not a meaningless expletive in any of these examples, but rather that it is a predicative pronoun, i.e. an element of the (extensional) semantic type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ . Like other pronouns the referent of predicative *it* may be determined (A) linguistically, as in (1), where *it* is anaphoric to the predicative subject DP and (3), where *it* is cataphoric to the *wh*-clause, or (B) by the non-linguistic context, as when (2) is uttered in response to seeing a broken glass on the floor.

The anaphoric relations involved in (1) and (2) are familiar from entity-denoting pronouns, as (5) and (6) indicate:

(5) Your sister lives in France, doesn't she?

(6) She is new here. [whispered to friend after female enters]

In contrast, the relationship between *it* and the *wh*-clause in (3) deserves further scrutiny and part of the talk is devoted to exploring this issue, and to providing a compositional semantics for (3), building on Percus (1997).

In the final part of the talk, I turn to information structure, and argue that the proposed unified analysis of (1)-(3) allows us to understand why *Robert* is focused in all three.

Büring, D. 1998. „Identity, modality and the candidate behind the wall”. In D. Strolovitch and A. Lawson (eds.) *Proceedings of SALT VIII* Ithaca: Cornell University, 36-54.

Hedberg, N. 2000. „The referential status of clefts”. *Language* 76:4, 891-920.

Mikkelsen, L. 2004. *Specifying who: On the Structure, Meaning, and Use of Specificational Copular Clauses*. Dissertation, UC Santa Cruz.

Percus, O. 1997. „Prying open the cleft”. In K. Kusumoto (ed.) *Proceedings of NELS 27* Amherst: GLSA, 337—351.