Biolinguistic Conference on Interface Asymmetries

November 10-12, 2017

New York University

According to the Strong Minimalist Thesis (Chomsky 2001 et seq.), language is an optimal solution to interface conditions, in that language is an optimal way to link sound and meaning. There is a significant asymmetry between the semantic interface, the system of thought, and the sensorimotor interface externalizing it, the first having primacy. This conference targets the asymmetry between these two interfaces, both generated by a binary syntactic combinatorial operation.

In addition to the main program, a workshop on *Unpronounced elements at the interfaces* will be held within the conference.

Recent work has shown that empty elements are pervasive in natural language syntax. In addition to well-known phenomena of movement copies, ellipsis and null pronouns, lexical and functional categories such as prepositions, articles and verbs are often unpronounced. For example, in English there are strong reasons to believe that (1a) should be analyzed in terms of a null preposition as shown in (1b):

(1) a. John went there.

     b. John went TO there.

This workshop targets the implications of these empty elements for the interfaces. What role do they play in morphology? What determines whether some word or morpheme is pronounced? What role do they play in the semantic interpretation? What do they tell us about human cognition?

The conference will also host a roundtable on V*ariation in functional categories*, targeting a deeper understanding of language variation in the structure and the pronunciation of their constitutive elements.

Invited speakers:

Gennaro Chierchia (Harvard U.)

Chris Collins (NYU)

Dany Fox (MIT)

Wolfram Hinzen (U. of Durham)

Richard Kayne (NYU)

Richard Larson (Stony Brook)

Tom Leu (UQAM)

Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini (U. of Arizona)

Friederike Moltmann (CNRS & NYU)

Hilda Koopman (UCLA)

Roberta D’Alessandro (U. of Leiden)

Ivona Kucerova (McMaster U.)

Anna Szabolcsi (NYU)

Anna Maria Di Sciullo (UQAM &NYU)

We invite abstract submissions for oral or poster presentations on these topics. Abstracts should not exceed one page, 12 pt single spaced, with an optional additional page for examples and references. Submissions should be anonymous. Contact details (name, affiliation and e-mail) along with the title of the talk or poster should be included in the body of the e-mail. Authors may submit one single-authored and one joint-authored abstract, or two joint-authored abstracts. Abstracts should be sent in PDF and Word format to biolinguistics@uqam.ca.

Deadline for submission of abstracts is June 18th 2017*.*

Notification of acceptance is July 16th 2017.