

Lecture series by Alec Marantz

Monday, May 9th
1-4, Laurel 201

The placement of the verbal root in syntactic structure

Clearly, differences in syntactic behavior among verbs such as “open,” “dance,” “murder,” and “place” connect to information associated with the roots of such verbs. However, it’s a matter of debate how information about syntax and argument structure should be represented/coded with roots, where roots should appear in syntactic structures, and what the mental representations of roots should look like in general, particularly with respect to their phonological expressions. I’ll develop the argument that verbal roots do not take syntactic arguments, but begin their syntactic lives adjoined the verbalizing *v* head, not within the complement domain of *v* (and thus not with the phase of the direct object). Participants in this seminar should bring arguments to the contrary for discussion. Of particular interest will be the implications of root suppletion for the syntax of roots, as well as the implications of selectional relations between roots, features on voice, and the syntax of *vP*.

Tuesday, May 10th
1-4, Laurel 201

Using linguistic theory to drive research in Cognitive Neuroscience: Results from the MorphLab wing of the NeLLab

I will review some of the experimental results from the Neuroscience of Language Lab (at New York and Abu Dhabi) that illuminate in particular morphological decomposition in visual word recognition and phoneme prediction in auditory word recognition. The experiments show form-based decomposition of morphologically complex words in reading and no evidence for whole word recognition of such words (so, evidence against any sort of dual-route approach to complex words). In auditory word recognition, cohort-based predictions for upcoming phonemes are modulated by morphological structure. The general approach exploits the theory of Distributed Morphology to generate hypotheses for magnetoencephalographic experiments.

Wednesday, May 11th
1-4, Laurel 201

The introduction of arguments (Wood & Marantz, to appear, and beyond)

Marantz & Wood (to appear, available on LingBuzz) argue that all argument introducing heads are variants on the same functional head, *i*^{*}, that may optionally have a root adjoined to it (creating prepositions and high applicative heads) and may optionally have a [+D] or [-D] feature ([+D] for obligatory syntactic argument, [-D] for obligatory absence of a syntactic argument). I will review and expand on this paper, with an eye to reviewing the options of implementing the proposal within a theory in which the complement domain of *v* is a phase. In particular, such a view requires that computations concerning the licensing of direct objects and the realization of accusative case take place without knowledge of the existence of an external argument, or even the features on voice,

making it difficult to adopt standard definitions of Dependent Case or standard instantiations of Burzio's Generalization. The consequences of the Marantz/Wood theory for the expression of the causee in causative constructions will be explored, in particular against recent observations of Heidi Harley.

*Thursday, May 12th
1-4, Laurel 201*

*Beyond Decomposition: Using cognitive neuroscience research
to develop morphological theory*

Over the last decade, neuro and psycholinguistic experimentation has accumulated supporting the hypothesis that words are decomposed down to their roots in comprehension, during both visual and auditory presentation, lending credence to linguistic theories such as Distributed Morphology, which insist on such decomposition in the analysis of word structure. However, this work has also dissolved the putative distinction central to Pinker's Words and Rules framework between the "memorized" and the "constructed" – usage frequencies are relevant to the processing of all words and phrases, no matter how transparent or regular. So, for example, the transition probability between a stem and a suffix of a morphologically complex word modulates (obligatory) decomposition independent of regularity. The lack of correlation between memorization and regularity allows us to recast Pinker's Words and Rules approach to integrating linguistics with cognitive neuroscience as an "Atoms and Rules" approach, emphasizing the distinction between the ontology of linguistic pieces (morphemes) and the generalizations about their order and arrangement. I will discuss how some recent finding from NYU's Neuroscience of Language Lab might feed back into the development of morphological theory, given the Atoms and Rules approach and the observation that there is no escape from frequencies even for the most regular of rules.