



Language Science Colloquium 2017-18

Monday, March 12, 2018

Time: 11:00-12:30 pm

Location: Social Sciences Tower, Rm 442

Lunch will be served.

**Caroline Féry, University of Frankfurt**

### **The grammatical and prosodic reflexes of information structure in a typological comparison**

Languages differ a great deal in their grammatical reflexes of information structure, especially focus and givenness. After an introduction to the notions of information structure, I will show that the research has concentrated a long time on languages that realize focus with pitch accents and givenness with deaccentuation, like Germanic and Romance languages. In the last decades, however, many languages have been described that do not use pitch accents for the expression of prominence usually related to focus. Different types of languages from the point of view of their intonational properties all use different syntactic, morphological and prosodic reflexes of information structure. I propose to extend the terminology of how information structure is realized with the notion of focus (and topic) alignment. Focus and topic are aligned with edges of prosodic domains defined in relation with syntax and information structure. In this way, information structure acts not only on syntactic structure, but also on tonal contours. The result is that changes due to information structure often arise in the phrasal intonation rather than in the pitch accents. I will illustrate the theoretical issues with data from different languages.

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