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Department of Linguistics

## THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 2.12.2021

16:15-17:45

Brian Dillon, University of Massachusetts

### Grammatical constraints on reference: The view from comprehension

Experimental research has consistently shown that the grammatical knowledge reflected in (e.g.) the Binding Theory guides real-time pronoun interpretation. Evidence for this conclusion comes from a range of experimental evidence that comprehenders selectively activate grammatically-licit antecedents when processing pronouns and anaphors. But what are the mechanisms by which comprehenders arrive at these grammatically constrained interpretations? And what is the relationship that these mechanisms bear to offline grammatical knowledge and/or language production?

Psycholinguistic studies of pronoun interpretation emphasize the fact that pronoun interpretation is a mixture of bottom-up and top-down processes (e.g. Rohde & Kehler, 2019). In this talk I aim to show that this perspective offers a useful framework for thinking about how structural constraints on coreference enter into the real-time comprehension of pronouns and anaphors. Using Principle B effects as a test case in a range of languages, I will survey a number of experimental studies done with our research group here at UMass and collaborators at the University of Toronto that illustrate how top-down and bottom-up pronoun resolution processes jointly contribute to disjoint reference phenomena in pronoun interpretation.

Click [here](#) to see the colloquium program.

