

### COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF LINGUISTIC THEORY

(Organizers: Howard Lasnik (Connecticut), David Pesetsky (MIT))

This symposium will explore cognitive issues arising from recent research in three areas of theoretical linguistics: syntax, semantics and phonology. Though the issues examined will lie at the frontiers of current work, no formal background in linguistics will be presupposed.

In his presentation, Prof. Howard Lasnik (University of Connecticut) will discuss the boundary between syntax and pragmatics as it is revealed through current studies of pronominal anaphora. Lasnik will show how considerations arising from the communicative function of language account for only the most global constraints on pronominal reference (.e.g. the infelicity of He came in and John sat down, with he understood as John). By contrast, syntactic conditions are necessary to explain the intricacies of pronoun distribution. The study of such conditions shows that linguistic competence includes a distinct syntactic component with rich internal structure.

Prof. James Higginbotham (MIT) will address cognitive issues in semantics that stem from studies of verbal aspect. These studies have revealed a variety of scenarios that can be associated with simple sentences, e.g. the two senses of John raised his hand, one of which is like the sense of I raised John's hand. He will show how such associations are explained via a concept of logical form that recognizes sentences as classifying events. This theory can not only explain the logical links among sentences but can also account for the links between sentences and the perceptual situations that justify our classifications.

Prof. John McCarthy (University of Massachusetts) will focus on modern theories of non-linear phonology and what they reveal about the mind. Non-linear phonology differs from earlier theories in its focus on long-distance relations between phonological units that go beyond simple concatenation. Non-linear phonology posits a hierarchical arrangement of these units, whose structural properties are crucial to the explanation of phonological processes. McCarthy's presentation will examine some of its consequences of this approach to phonology.