



Adult Grammar from a Child's Perspective

Professor Diana Archangeli
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based on collaborative work with Douglas Pulleyblank, UBC

September 19, 2018 (Wednesday)
Room 802, Meng Wah Complex, HKU
12:45 – 14:00
(Chair: Professor Brendan Weekes)

Abstract:

A standard goal of linguistic analysis is to model the grammatical knowledge of an adult speaker-hearer. This has led to highly abstract analyses, for instance analyses that posit representations which never appear at the surface. A case in point is found with Jita (Downing 1996), where sequences of nasal-consonant are analysed with *as* resulting in a temporary moraic nasal coda followed by an onset, in order to account for length of the preceding vowel – the idea is that the nasal's mora is shifted to the preceding vowel, resulting in length, using the Jita word meaning 'to lick'. The non-moraic/moraic/non-moraic [m] is shown in red while the short-then-long vowel is shown in green.

Underlying short vowel followed by non-moraic /m/:	/okulamba/
Intermediate short vowel followed by moraic //m//:	//okul[a] _μ [m] _μ .ba//
Surface long vowel followed by non-moraic [m]:	[okul[a:] _μ .mba]

In this talk, I examine some of the evidence in favor of a learner-oriented approach to understanding adult grammars. I show how the learner-centred approach is consistent with research into first language acquisition, and how the approach avoids the need for abstract analyses such as the Jita analysis sketched above, where the created moraic nasal never surfaces as moraic.

About the speaker:

Diana Archangeli is a Professor in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Arizona, United States. Her research explores both the fundamental concepts of how phonological systems are organized and the concrete ways in which sounds are used and produced in language. In joint work with Doug Pulleyblank of University of British Columbia, Professor Archangeli has developed a parametric model for expressing relations between representations, a model which makes clear predictions made about possible and impossible relations. Her research also includes study of prosodic templates; fieldwork in Indonesia on the phonology of Sasak and Bugis; and exploration of the syntactic behavior of Sasak clitics (jointly with Dr. Husni Muadz, Universitas Mataram).

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