Title: Workshop on Interface-based Approaches to Information Structure
Date: 13 – 15 September 2008
Location: University College London, UK
Invited Speakers:
Daniel Büring
Gisbert Fanselow
Edwin Williams

<u>Call for Papers</u>

Ever since the debate between generative semantics and interpretive semantics, one of the central questions in grammatical theory is to what extent interpretation can be tied to syntactic position. Currently, there is a trend towards an isomorphic mapping, found in work on thematic interpretation (Baker 1988, Hale & Keyser 1993, 2002, Ramchand to appear), ordering of adverbs and adjectives (Cinque 1999), the interpretation of indefinites (Diesing 1992, Meinunger 2000, Adger 1993), etc. The same idea has also been used in the area of information structure, most explicitly in Rizzi (1997) and subsequent work.

In this workshop, we are interested in recent developments in information structure, and in particular in approaches that do not necessarily tie pragmatic interpretation to specific syntactic positions. One motivation behind these approaches is the expectation that they may lead to a more constrained syntax. We believe that information structure is a fruitful area to investigate the mapping between syntax and interpretation, as the same discourse notion can be expressed by various means, such as pitch accent, word order, morphological markers and so on. The rich variety in the type of empirical data creates a good testing ground for distinct hypotheses about the mapping.

There are two broad questions that we would like to explore. The first is how the syntactic distribution of discourse-related items can be explained without relying on designated functional projections. Proposals currently on the market argue that this can be achieved by exploiting independently motivated properties of the interfaces. The idea has been implemented in a variety of ways. Zubizarretta (1998), for example, relies on prosody, Neeleman & van de Koot (to appear) and Kucerova (2007) utilise the interpretative component, while Wagner (2007) makes use of both.

The second question is whether traditional notions like topic and focus can be taken as grammatical primitives. Various researchers have attempted to reduce the number of notions that grammar can refer to in this domain. There have been proposals that derive focus from givenness (Krifka 1998, Schwarzschild 1999, Sauerland 2004) and that aim to decompose contrastive topics (Büring 2003, Wagner 2007). A better understanding of these notions opens up the possibility of discovering new empirical generalisations. These may not only affect the relation between syntactic position and interpretation, but also the correspondence between interpretation and prosodic cues such as pitch accent and stress (for relevant discussion, see Dilley 2005 and Xu 2007).

This workshop aims to provide a space to discuss and compare interface-based proposals and consider the issues that may be challenging for them. Proposals that account for the syntactic distribution in terms of semantics alone, for example, may encounter difficulties in explaining the fixed positions of focus and topic in languages like Basque, Hungarian and Turkish. Similarly, for analyses that account for the syntactic distribution of focus in terms of nuclear

stress assignment alone, it is surprising that focus assignment in Chadic languages may correspond to differing prosodic phrasing (Kenstowicz 1985).

Abstracts are invited for a 30-minute presentation followed by a 15-minute commentary by a designated commentator. Accepted authors will be asked to submit a preliminary version of their papers (up to 15 pages) for the commentators. Selected papers from the workshop will be considered for peer-reviewed book publication.

An author may submit at most one single and one joint abstract. Abstracts should be at most 2 pages in 12-point font with 1" margins, including data and references. Authors requested to submit two copies of their abstract, one with their name and one anonymous. Abstracts must be submitted as a pdf attachment to: is-workshop@ling.ucl.ac.uk. The names of the files should be surname-named.pdf and surname-anon.pdf.

The body of the e-mail should contain the following information:
1. Name(s) of author(s)
2. Title of talk
3. Affiliation(s)
4. E-mail address(es)

Important dates:
• Submission deadline for abstracts: 1 March 2008
• Notification of acceptance: early May 2008
• Deadline for draft for commentators: 15 June 2008
• Responses from commentators: mid-August 2008
• Workshop: 13 – 15 September 2008