



YCCSA Seminar Series Spring 2019

An interdisciplinary seminar series hosted by the York Cross-disciplinary Centre for Systems Analysis aimed at researchers from all disciplines

Information flow and assumptions in linguistic models of natural language

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York

**Friday, 18 January 2019
Ron Cooke Hub, RCH/204 at 13:30**

Abstract:

This talk is about some standard & widely used models of natural language -- the 'pregroups' of J. Lambek. It is not an in-depth study of the theory or applications of these models. Rather, our interest is in why linguists choose to use them: the implicit assumptions made, where they come from, and whether they are justified. By analysing these assumptions and their consequences in depth, we note a concrete claim about the structure of natural language grammars that has previously been implicit. We compare and contrast natural language grammars (where this claim appears to be correct) with artificial examples in the same formal system (where it does not necessarily hold). This leads to a conjecture about the forms of grammar that natural languages may or may not have. We consider the status of this conjecture -- whether it is verifiable / disprovable, its consequences, and potential applications

The seminar includes a refreshment break to fuel interdisciplinary discussion

***Ron Cooke Hub is on Heslington East Campus – accessible by free bus services
Nos. 66 and UB1 running at frequent intervals from Heslington West.
The YCCSA Seminar room is on the second floor***