

**Harvard Linguistics Circle GSAS Workshop**

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**Boylston Hall Room 303**

**Friday, September 20, 12:30-2pm**

**Title: Pluractionality and progressive aspect**

**Abstract:**

Semantic analyses of progressive aspect largely focus on descriptions of a single event in progress. However, progressive sentences in English may also have habitual-like interpretations. While (1) can be used to describe a single in-progress episode of John riding a horse to work, it may also describe a kind of habit of John's. In this talk, I argue that these multi-episode readings of the progressive are due to a covert pluractional morpheme. Following Lasersohn's (1995) analysis of pluractionality and Landman's (1992) analysis of the progressive, I show that habitual readings of the progressive fall out naturally as a result of the presence of a pluractional morpheme that bundles events into pluralities. This account predicts that non-habitual, participant-based pluractionality should also be possible, which is borne out by facts regarding bare plurals. Further, I compare multi-episode progressives to simple present tense sentences, where subtle differences in interpretation are predicted to arise.

(1) John is riding a horse to work.