

Harvard University
Linguistics Colloquium Talk Series

Speaker: Alec Marantz (NYU)

Title: Syntax Beyond Merge: Objects

Time: Friday, September 26th, 12-1:30pm

Location: Fong Auditorium (Boylston 110)

Abstract:

A question arises for contemporary Minimalist Theory accounts of syntax: How much of syntactic well-formedness should be computed at the point of Merge in a derivation and how much should be determined from constraints computed over the resulting Merged tree structures? I am investigating an approach to syntax in which the vast majority of syntactic well-formedness involves strictly local conditions on linear projections of Merged trees, following the lead of T. Graf's work within Tier-based Strictly Local grammars. This talk will concentrate on the application of this "Syntax Beyond Merge" system to dissolving Pesetsky's *Zero Syntax Cascade* vs. Layering paradox for c-command relations while supporting a clear syntactic distinction between specifier positions, as for subjects and some indirect objects, and object positions (sister to verbs and adpositions). In addition to providing a better account of c-command within the VP, the analysis of c-command relations will be shown to improve our understanding of raising to object/ECM constructions and the low vs. high applicative distinction. Although this talk centers around the treatment of objects, I will also quickly preview the advantages of the system for the analysis of English participles, auxiliaries and passives, for the (dis-)unification of A-movement and local binding, and for a unified treatment of Greenberg's Principle 20, the Final over Final Condition, Holmberg's Generalization and Brody's "Mirror" principle.