

GSAS Workshops
Harvard Linguistics Circle

Speaker: [Deniz Satik](#) (Harvard)

Location: Boylston Hall Room 335

Date & Time: Friday, October 22, 2021 12:00-1:30 PM (EST)

Reception from 1:30-2:00 PM

Title: Size Matters

Abstract: This talk argues for the following novel finiteness universal: an infinitive cannot co-occur with a high complementizer (such as "that" in English). Although such an observation may seem trivial, assuming Rizzi (1997)'s articulated CP allows one to redefine "that." In a vein similar to Wurmbrand and Lohninger (2019), I propose that infinitives can come in different sizes. This talk provides novel evidence for the idea that finiteness is a matter of clause size, following Muller (2020) and Pesetsky (2021). I combine the idea that finiteness is a matter of clause size together with truncation theories of infinitives such as Shlonsky and Soare (2011)'s to argue for a novel understanding of finiteness, proposing precise and falsifiable definitions for finite and nonfinite clauses. Based on a crosslinguistic survey of 23 different languages belonging to several different language families, I present a theory of finiteness under which a clause is defined as nonfinite iff its ForceP/CP₂ layer has been truncated, and finite iff it is untruncated. I discuss further generalizations that could potentially be drawn from the survey, as well. For example, languages which have topicalization within infinitives also allow wh-infinitives, and languages with tough-constructions also have infinitival complementizers. These observations match up with Rizzi's cartographic structure.