



Invitation to all faculty, staff and students

This event is sponsored by School of Linguistics and Language Studies

Dr. Kumiko Murasugi
Carleton University

Friday, March 27, 2009

4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Room 115 Paterson Hall

Grammaticality

Sentence grammaticality and the acceptability judgments used to access our knowledge of grammaticality are key components of linguistic research. The traditional view of a binary grammar consisting of grammatical and ungrammatical sentences is challenged by the existence of structures that elicit gradient judgments of acceptability. It has been suggested, for example, that grammaticality is gradient, and that sentences are acceptable or unacceptable only relative to each other (Featherston 2005). In this talk I discuss two experiments that were designed to investigate the grammatical status of wh-island structures, which are known to elicit gradient judgments. Experiment 1 elicited acceptability judgments on a controlled set of sentences that included grammatical, ungrammatical and wh-island structures. Experiment 2 investigated the effect of informativity, which has been shown to affect acceptability in wh-island structures, on clearly grammatical and ungrammatical structures. The preliminary results of both experiments suggest that wh-island sentences pattern like ungrammatical structures, thus maintaining the notion of a binary grammar.

Dr. Kumiko Murasugi is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Carleton University. Her research interests are theoretical and experimental syntax, language processing, and Inuktitut.