Big Issues from a Small Island: Some Reflections on the What and Wheres of Variation in Language

Prof. Kleanthes K. Grohmann
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Date: October 28, 2019 (Monday)
Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.
Venue: Lecture Theatre B6, Ho Tim Building,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

This talk will focus on such and illustrate some of the issues for a comprehensive approach to language variation from the vantage point of a small island in the Mediterranean Sea with big potential impact on the nature of our investigation—Cyprus. Holding fast to a ‘small UG’ take on the human language faculty, it quickly becomes apparent that language variation needs to be tackled from many different directions (see also e.g. Yang 2016, 2018), including multi-disciplinary research teams of linguists, philologists, psychologists, and speech pathologists, to name but a few. The presentation will identify some “big issues from a small island”, which can be easily extended to other contexts, with a focus on the sociosyntax of language development. I will then make the case for what we call ‘comparative bilingualism’ (gradation of multilingualism), ‘comparative biolinguistics’ (neurobiology of language across cognitive-linguistic phenotypes), and ‘comparative linguality’ (language mastery across lects and contexts).

Speaker

Kleanthes K. Grohmann is Professor of Biolinguistics in the Department of English Studies at the University of Cyprus (UCY) and the Director of CAT, the Cyprus Acquisition Team (CAT Lab). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland (2000) and has published widely in the areas of syntactic theory, comparative syntax, language acquisition, impaired language, and multilingualism. Among the books written and (co-)edited are Understanding Minimalism (with N. Hornstein & J. Nunes, 2005, CUP), InterPhases (2009, OUP), and The Cambridge Handbook of Biolinguistics (with Cedric Boeckx, 2013, CUP). At the moment he is preparing The Cambridge Handbook of Minimalism. He is founding co-editor of the John Benjamins book series Language Faculty and Beyond and editor of the open-access journal Biolinguistics.

ALL ARE WELCOME

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