

Ergativity Research Seminar *Call for Papers*

The Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at MIT is pleased to announce its ergativity research seminar, which will take place weekly in Fall 2007. Approximately twenty five percent of the world's languages exhibit ergative patterning in their grammars (cf. Dixon 1994). It has been claimed that languages may be syntactically ergative (e.g. Dyirbal) or morphologically ergative (e.g. Hindi) in nature. In spite of a growing amount of research on ergativity, no consensus has yet been reached on the very nature of ergativity, and on how to implement it in a formal linguistic theory.

This research seminar explores a range of different approaches to the phenomenon, as well as to a large diversity of languages that exhibit ergative patterning in their grammar. Furthermore, we hope that the research seminar will provide a survey beyond the well-known cases, of understudied and rare ergative patterning, in order to determine the empirical scope of ergativity. Theoretically, we will consider issues such as the following: typological correlations and connections between (ergative) case and agreement, and between tense/aspect/mood and ergativity. The proposals and data under discussion will review current approaches within generative linguistics, attempting to understand the syntactic and semantic properties of ergativity.

The research seminar will consist of six invited speakers, plus a number of student presentations. Presentation slots for students will be limited to one and a half hours. If you are a graduate student and would be interested in presenting your research or a recent paper on ergativity, please submit an abstract (max. 500 words) to pritty@mit.edu, including your affiliation and specifying any dates between September 3rd and December 14th, 2007, where you might be unable to present. The deadline for abstract submission is July 15th, 2007. If you have any questions, please contact Pritty Patel (pritty@mit.edu).

Invited speakers

Rajesh Bhatt (UMass)
Jonathan Bobaljik (UConn)
Alana Johns (Toronto)
Julie Legate (Cornell)
Masha Polinsky (Harvard)
Milan Rezac (Nantes)

Organisers

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