



## NON-PAST, BEFORE

*News about Columbia School linguistics scholarship and the  
Columbia School Linguistic Society*

*October 2017*

### • ***A new book-length Columbia School analysis***

We are happy to announce the publication of the new book by Joseph Davis, *The substance and value of Italian si*. The book is under the imprint of John Benjamins Publishing Company of Amsterdam and Philadelphia.

In the words of the publishers, the book:

offers an original treatment of the Italian clitic *si*. Sharply separating encoded grammar from inference in discourse, it proposes a unitary meaning for *si*, including impersonals, passives, and reflexives. *Si* signals third-person participancy but makes no distinctions of number, gender, or case role. The analysis advances the Columbia School framework by relying on just these straightforward oppositions, attributing variety of interpretation largely to language use rather than to grammar. The analysis places *si* within a network of oppositions involving all the other clitics. Data come primarily from twentieth-century and more recent published and on-line literature. The book will be of interest to functional linguists, students of reflexivity, and scholars of the Italian language.

A blurb by Robert Kirsner says:

Do not be fooled by the title! Davis's exquisite, well-written book deserves to be read by anyone and everyone interested in the semantic and pragmatic analysis of grammatical systems (no matter their own theoretical background).

### • ***Two new postdoctoral fellowships to do Columbia School research***

(1) For the first time in its history, the Columbia School Linguistics Society has funded one postdoctoral fellowship, in the amount of \$65,000. The Society received a large number of applications for this non-residential postdoc. The Executive Committee of the Society chose Dr. Nadav Sabar as the recipient. Nadav will work on the fellowship from Israel. He will make two trips to New York to discuss his ongoing analysis and share findings at the

Columbia University Seminar on Columbia School Linguistics. Nadav describes the project as follows:

The problem I investigate concerns the distributions of the forms *all*, *each* and *every*. These forms are all analyzed by logicians, formal semanticists and cognitive linguists as English language representations of the logical universal quantifier. Yet despite this general agreement regarding quantificational force, subtle differences among these forms have long been acknowledged, and attempts at explicating the precise semantic contribution of each in a way that would account for each form's peculiar distribution is still an ongoing task. Why, for example, do speakers use *all* with both *Entity-s* and *Entity-0* (e.g., *all times* and *all time*, respectively) while *each* and *every* are used virtually only with *Entity-0* (e.g., *every time*); or why does the sequence *all together* occur significantly more frequently than the sequence *all individually* though both sequences are found to occur many times?

Of interest also is the question regarding the identity of the signal in certain high frequency combinations. For example, is *all* in *all right* or *all of a sudden* the same linguistic unit *all* as found in, say, *we all worked on it*? Tentative hypotheses for the meanings of *all*, *each* and *every* will be tested through both qualitative analyses of attested examples as well as large scale quantitative predictions carried out in the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. Tying in to my previous meaning analysis of *some* and *any*, the goal of this project will be to provide a comprehensive sign-based account of the distributional problems posed by *all*, *each*, *every*, *any* and *some*, forms which have all been analyzed as logical quantifiers of one sort or another.

(2) Independently of the Society, another postdoctoral opportunity to carry out Columbia School linguistics has become available. The new *Otheguy-Sackler Postdoctoral Fellowship* is for a scholar who will be in residence at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York for one year. The fellowship is for \$65,000 plus benefits. This postdoctoral fellowship has been created to honor Professor Ricardo Otheguy, who recently retired from the faculty of the Graduate Center's Ph.D. Program in Linguistics after 20 years of service.

The fellowship has been made available by a generous gift from David Sackler and Jaseleen Ruggles Sackler (Joss is a member of the Society's Executive Committee).

This postdoctoral fellow will be a visiting assistant professor at the Ph.D. Program in Linguistics. A search committee has been created by the Program's Executive Officer, Professor Gita Martohardjono. The search committee is chaired by Professor Nancy Stern.

### • **Expanding the Graduate Fellowships program**

The Graduate Student Fellowships program has been expanded. For this round, the Society received a large number of applications and has awarded fellowships of \$25,000 each to two returning fellows and to two new fellows, and for the first time one of the fellows lives outside the U.S. The Fellowship recipients are:

- Kelli Hesseltine (New York, Sponsor Joseph Davis)
- Eduardo Ho-Fernández (New York, Sponsor Alan Huffman)
- Lital Belinko Sabah (Jerusalem, Sponsor Nadav Sabar)
- Andrew McCormick (New York, Sponsor Nancy Stern)

As in the past, Graduate Fellows make presentations on their work at the bi-monthly University Seminar at Columbia. Lital plans to travel to New York for her presentation, and to participate virtually at other times. The four winning projects are described by the authors as follows:

### **Kelli Hesseltine**

The problem undertaken in my fellowship is to account for the relational placement in English of words within Satellite Structure A (traditionally known as nouns and adjectives). There are two distinct orders to be examined as potential signals of discrete meaning; call them AB, as in *long hair*, and BA, as in *hair long*. I have collected data and have examined them having in mind two existing hypotheses from the Columbia School: The Kind of Differentiation hypothesis of Diver (1982) and the Alternative Characterization hypothesis of Davis (2002). In my further analysis I seek to articulate precisely the semantic substance and meanings involved and to address issues of signal identification.

### **Eduardo Ho-Fernández**

Building on previous Society-sponsored research, this project investigates a complex set of word order facts in Spanish involving event words and words inferred to be participants in those events. The hypothesis is that position before the event (**PEP**) signals HIGHER, and position after the event (**PEP**) signals LOWER, Participant Attentionworthiness.

The current project will analyze one-participant events, developing a hypothesis where **EP** and **PE**) are considered signals of HIGHER or LOWER Event Attentionworthiness.

An important feature of this project is the treatment of EPP and PPE. Preliminary analysis suggests that they are manifestations of the same signaling mechanism hypothesized for EP and PE (i.e., **EPP** and **PPE**). As such, these sequences do not represent the signals of a different grammatical system. A challenge stemming from this proposal that will be addressed in the current project is that a residual participant (P), conveying no grammatical status, would be left over in both EP(P) and (P)PE, its distribution requiring an explanation.

### **Lital Belinko Sabah**

The present project involves an analysis of what is traditionally known as the present tense in folk narrative texts written in Judeo-Spanish, also known as Ladino. The corpus from which I plan to draw my data consists of a collection of 85 stories from the Balkans that were transcribed and published between 1914-1935 by different Romanists, philologists and folklorists.

### **Andrew McCormick**

This project examines the English form *how*. My research studies the possibility that what have traditionally been analyzed as three words belonging to three discrete syntactic classes --intensifier,

pro-form and complementizer-- all in fact constitute the same sign. It is shown that even though how has been seen in some of its uses as contributing to the propositional meaning of a sentence, it often also contributes broader, discourse-level information pertinent to the speaker's vantage point. We investigate the possible unification of how, focusing first on a revised and refined understanding of the notion of manner. This will serve as a possible starting point for the eventual development of a meaning hypothesis for this form.

### • *New Scholarship program*

For the first time, the Society has offered a \$10,000 scholarship, and it has gone to an international student, Verónica Mailhes, of the Universidad de La Plata, Argentina. Veronica studies with Professor Angelita Martínez, who did her doctoral work with Erica García. (Angelita leads a contingent of faculty and graduate students pursuing Columbia School work in Argentina, and was the host of a recent Columbia School Institute at the Universidad de La Plata. ) Verónica describes her project as follows.

#### **Veronica Mailhes**

My proposal aims to investigate, following the principles of Columbia School Linguistics, the variable use of so-called future tenses in Spanish, conventionally known in the grammars as the morphological future (FM) and the periphrastic future (FP). In a project of wide scope, we start by limiting our data to political discourse in River Plate Spanish. The project offers first a critique of the meanings that have been traditionally attributed to these forms: higher vs. lower degree of facticity of the event. In this proposal, it is postulated that objective facticity is not the relevant semantic substance. Rather, we explore the possibility that the relevant substance is control by the speaker over the event. When politicians want to express control over the event, they opt for the PF form, opting for the MF form where less control is involved. Take note of the semantic substance involved. Under this hypothesis, the term 'control' refers to control by the speaker, not control by a participant or controller in the event named by the verb, as in existing analyses of Spanish clitics, Latin case endings, and English word order.

### • *Recent and upcoming publications of interest to Columbia School linguists*

Davis, Joseph. 2017. The substance and value of Italian *si*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Davis, Joseph. 2017. The semantic difference between Italian *vi* and *ci*. *Lingua*, available on line as of September 6, 2017.

Gorlach, M., J.H Taylor & L.A. Taylor. 2016. The Hebrew translations of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae*. *Vernacular Traditions of Boethius's De consolatione*

philosophiae, ed. by N.H. Kaylor, Jr. & P.E. Phillips. Research in Medieval Culture, MIP: Kalamazoo. pp. 125-143.

Sabar, Nadav. To appear 2018. Lexical meaning as a testable hypothesis: The case of English look, see, seem and appear. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

### • *Fundraising by the Columbia School Linguistic Society*

The Society has continued its fundraising drive, under the leadership of Executive Committee member Jaseleen Ruggles Sackler who, among other activities, has hosted fundraising dinners at her home in Manhattan. To date for the year 2017, the Society has raised over \$180,000.

The Society is grateful for all donations, including the many contributions received from friends and colleagues, and from Society members who have contributed dues at or above the Sponsor level. The names of contributors are listed below.

#### **\$50,000 or more**

David and Jaseleen Sackler  
Phil and Maria Yang

#### **\$20,000 or more**

David Cohen and Lauren Seeger

#### **\$10,000 or more**

Beth Sackler and Jeff Cohen  
Jacqueline and Howard Schussler  
William Zeckendorf  
One anonymous donor

#### **\$1000 or more**

Kevin and Holly Atteson  
Mary Corson and Jon Sackler  
Charlie and Allison Carnegie  
John Guerry  
Lauren and JP Gutfreund  
Brian Reinhardt  
Soonae and Jason Sakow  
Goce Zojcheski

#### **Dues at or above the Sponsor level and other contributions**

Sabrina and Scott Birnbaum  
Allison and Mike Chiamonte  
Curtis Church  
Ellen Contini-Morava  
Joseph D'Ambrosio

Joseph Davis  
Drake Darrin  
Ruth and Rick Edelson  
Lilly and Alan Frishman  
Radmila Gorup  
Alan Huffman  
Robert Kirsner  
Olivia and Ross Koller  
Robert Leonard  
Ricardo Otheguy  
Maria Palmese  
Wallis Reid  
Betsy Rodríguez-Bachiller  
Bernice Rohret  
Nina Seirafi  
Nancy Stern  
Frank Vellucci  
Seth Weissman and Joseph Altuzarra

- ***Recent professional activities***

### **Tom Eccardt**

Tom taught a course entitled *Language, Culture and Society* at New York City College of Technology (CUNY) during the 2016-17 school year.

### **Marina Gorlach**

Marina presented a paper at MLA Convention held in Auxtín, Texas in January 2016 entitled 'Lexical experimentation, word systems and code switching in Nabokov's *Pnim*' and a paper at the Conference on the Pragmatics of Negation in Stockholm in June 2017 entitled 'Pragmatic view on negative infinitive alternation from genre / register perspective.'

### **Ricardo Otheguy**

A celebration was held at the Graduate Center of CUNY on March 3, 2017 to mark Ricardo's retirement. A long roster of colleagues and former students gave testimonials. Two former students, Professor Daniel Erker of Boston University and Professor Naomi Shin of the University of New Mexico, announced that they are well into the process of editing a Festschrift volume. Columbia School contributors to the volume include Joseph Davis, Wallis Reid, and Nancy Stern.

### **Sabar, Nadav**

Nadav has been teaching English in Israel using some of the existing Columbia School analyses of English grammatical systems. Some of this work is now in the form of PowerPoint presentations that *Non-Past Before* thinks Nadav may be persuaded to share with some of its readers.

## **Stern, Nancy**

Nancy presented a paper called 'Linguistic Meaning in English Ditransitives: A Comparison of Construction Grammar and Columbia School Approaches' at the 46th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest (LASSO), held at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

- ***New volume of Columbia School papers under preparation***

There is a group of editors preparing a new volume of papers from the last two conferences. The editorial effort is being led by Nancy Stern. Working with her are Ricardo Otheguy, Wallis Reid, and Jaseleen Ruggles. The editors have been busy reviewing abstracts and drafts from 12 authors who have submitted contributions.

- ***Columbia School Conference***

Anyone interested in helping in the organization of the next conference should contact Joseph Davis.

- ***Columbia School Linguistics bibliography***

The Bibliography is a useful research tool that can be found on the Society's website at [www.csling.org](http://www.csling.org). It lists published works by Columbia School scholars. The bibliography is divided into sections on papers, single-author books, books containing collections of papers, working papers, dissertations, and master's essays.

- ***University Seminars***

Biweekly seminars continue to be held at Columbia University under the auspices of the University Seminars. Please e-mail Wallis Reid at [wallis.reid@gse.rutgers.edu](mailto:wallis.reid@gse.rutgers.edu) for dates and information about seminars, which are co-chaired by Radmila Gorup.

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