The Department of Linguistics
is pleased to present

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speaking on

Harmonic Bounding in (Noisy) Harmonic Grammar

Saturday, February 29, 2020
4:00 PM
Location: Stevenson Fireside Lounge

Abstract:

In Eastern Andalusian's ATR harmony, stressed vowels obligatorily harmonize with the word-final vowel, but unstressed vowels only optionally do so: [kómetelo] ∼ [kómɛtɛlɔ] 'eat them (for you)!' Like many optional processes, this harmony seems to yield surface forms that are harmonically bounded. Certain implementations of Noisy Harmonic Grammar, which adds a stochastic element to Harmonic Grammar's evaluations, can in fact generate these attested harmonically bounded outputs, but they cannot do so while excluding other unattested harmonically bounded candidates (such as *[kómetelɔ]). A better analysis emerges under a version of Noisy Harmonic Grammar that cannot produce harmonically bounded outputs ("Classical NHG"); this naturally requires that no attested candidate be harmonically bounded, a result achieved in this case with a positive harmony driving constraint—one that rewards harmony instead of penalizing its absence. The successful pairing of Classical NHG and positive constraints has implications beyond optionality by reinforcing the more general organizational role that harmonic bounding plays in grammars and demonstrating the advantages of broadening the constraint inventory to include positive constraints.