Minimalist Explorations of the Clausal Periphery

Lecture 1 (13:00-14:30)
Root-phenomena and the syntax-to-discourse relation
This lecture will give an introduction to the relation between syntactic structure and the discourse functionality of utterances. In the center will be the relation between syntactically defined clause types and illocutionary types as definable by speech act theory. Finite verb fronting (V1, V2) as seen in the majority of the Germanic languages, seems to be an important ingredient in turning propositions into utterances. The discussion will draw comparisons with head-final languages, which normally lack verb movement.

Lecture 2 (14:45-16:15)
Discourse particles
German is known for its rather large number of discourse particles (DiPs). These have traditionally been considered to be highly idiosyncratic and therefore peripheral phenomena. In the face of their syntactic properties, this view is untenable. DiPs play a central role as heads in the functional clause structure above vP. Although they appear rather low in the clause, they contribute to illocutionary force. In the present account, this is achieved by probe/goal agreement with Force and DiP. The focus of the presentation will be on DiPs in questions.

Lecture 3 (16:30-18:30)
Discourse particles in long-distance dependencies
DiPs are frozen in a scope position lower than the Force projection. Nevertheless, Q-sensitive DiPs can alternatively undergo merger with a wh-phrase and then move along with it. The [wh+DiP] construction gives rise to an emphatic reading with a distinctive phonetic correlate. How can this exceptional constituency be mapped onto the regular one? The answer will reveal a strong similarity with cyclic wh-movement. The analysis extends almost automatically to constructions with focus particles. Given the idiosyncratic appearance of DiPs, the lecture will close with speculations about the relation between language specificity and principles of universal grammar.