

Aaron Walker

### **Where Syntax Ends and Discourse Begins: The Nature and Reality of Copy Alpha**

The talk will present the results of a Cross Modal Lexical Priming experiment that sought to investigate the specific nature of sentence processing in VP ellipsis environments. The experiment builds on experimental and theoretical work by Farzier and Clifton (2001) and Shapiro et. al. (2003) focusing specifically on ellipsis structures involving inherently reflexive verbs and verbs of inalienable possession. The results of the study indicate that in a one sentence context (traditionally the domain of syntax) during on-line processing, listeners compute a lexically infelicitous reading as well as the regular reading and subsequently abandon the infelicitous one; however, in a two sentence context (traditionally the domain of discourse) the listener will not compute the infelicitous reading at all. Implications for models of sentence processing are then evaluated in terms of these new results.