Towards a more fine grained theory of temporal adverbials

Daniel Altshuler (Amherst, Mass.)

In this talk I propose that a core property of adverbial meaning is the ability (or the lack thereof) of an adverbial to introduce a new time discourse referent. The core data comes from that same day in narrative discourse. I argue that unlike other previously studied temporal adverbials—which introduce a new time discourse referent and relate it to the speech time or a previously mentioned time—that same retrieves two salient times from the input context, i.e. it is ‘twice-anaphoric’, without introducing one of its own. Moreover, I argue that the adverb currently is like that same day in not introducing a new time discourse referent; it constrains the temporal location of a described eventuality relative to a salient time previously introduced into the discourse context. The analysis that I propose is implemented within Compositional Discourse Representation Theory. It illustrates how adverbial meaning can be integrated within a more general theory of temporal interpretation.