

Tel Aviv University
School of Philosophy, Linguistics and Science Studies,
Department of Linguistics

THURSDAY INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM

Thursday 05/11/2026

16:15-17:45

Webb 103

Roni Katzir, Tel Aviv University

Against LF representation of focus

According to a common view, the correlation of sound and meaning in focus dependencies is mediated syntactically. In “Kim (only) spoke to [the new SECRETARY]”, for example, a syntactic feature F on [the new secretary] leads to prosodic prominence on ‘secretary’ on the one hand and to a special semantic meaning on the other hand, which accounts for the ability of the sentence to felicitously answer the question “Who did Kim speak to?” and to its exhaustive inference that Kim didn’t speak to the dean. I will argue against this view and in favor of an unmediated alternative, one with neither syntactic nor semantic representation of focus, where pragmatic reasoning applies directly to prosodic highlighting.

Click [here](#) to see the colloquium program.