

Dr. Anne Pycha (postdoctoral fellow at the U. of Pennsylvania)

Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley

Candidate for a tenure-track position in Linguistics in the
Department of Romance Studies at Boston University

will be presenting a talk entitled:

**“Word structures that look the same but behave differently:
Evidence from French adjectives”**

Abstract:

The fields of morphology and phonology both examine components inside of words, but morphology focuses on those components that contribute to meaning, such as roots and suffixes, while phonology focuses on those that make a word sound right, such as consonants and vowels. However, these distinct components can sound alike when, for example, a suffix takes the form of a single consonant.

In this talk, I examine such cases from gender marking in French adjectives, where speakers use an individual consonant to mark both feminine gender (morphological) and liaison (phonological), suggesting that gender marking can be reduced to the presence or absence of a single consonant, as claimed by previous analyses. With evidence from both a large database study and a psycholinguistic experiment, I argue that this is not so. Many sub-patterns in the database contradict this finding, and subjects' behavior when listening to gender marking versus liaison differs significantly. The implication is that complex language behaviors do not always reduce to simpler ones, even when they look very much alike.

FACULTY AND STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

Time: **Wednesday, January 20, 1:00 – 1:50 PM**

Place: **Geddes video studio (CAS 533B)**

You are also invited to participate in information conversation with the candidate from 2:00 to 2:30 pm in the same room (CAS 533B)