

Benedikt Heller (KU Leuven)

**Stability and Fluidity in Syntactic Variation World-Wide:  
The Genitive Alternation Across Varieties of English**

So far, not much is known about the comparatively abstract genitive alternation (my friend's book vs. the book of my friend) across varieties of English. The present talk outlines the findings of a recently completed Ph.D. project that sought to close this gap by means of a corpus-based multifactorial analysis of nine varieties. Main findings include (1) remarkable overall cross-varietal stability; (2) a qualitative split in the alternation's most important conditioning factor (i.e., possessor animacy) between ENL and ESL varieties; and (3) with regard to the effect of possessor animacy, a counter-intuitive form of L1 influence, which suggests that the main motivation of ESL users is basilect avoidance.