Noun phrases as relatives: the view from below

Hilda Koopman (UCLA)

In previous work Maasai (Koopman, 2005, 2006), I showed a simple noun phrase headed by a common noun (a dog) had the structure of a relative clause, a "D" CP (not D NP) structure. CP containing a non-verbal nominal predicate small clause (x dog), dominated by functional material, and both x and N remerging: Maasai provides a particular window as both x and N are visible and discontinuous, with D (basically operators) silent. Though compared to standard tensed relative clauses these structures are very tiny, even the simplest noun phrases can be shown to be large structures. This raises the question how these relatives relate to other types of relatives. Starting from several types of relatives within Maasai, the talk will 1. examine what can be expected to vary language internally, and what cannot; 2. make a proposal about what can vary crosslinguistically, given what is known about the functional sequences and 3. use that to investigate what relatives we find, leading to the emergence of a very rich typology of relative clauses.