

The Department of Linguistics
is pleased to present

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speaking on

**Learning about Island Variation in L1 (and L2):
Insights from Norwegian**

Friday, December 6, 2019

1:20 PM

Location: HUM 1 - Room 210

Abstract:

Linguists have long puzzled over the origin of island effects. Why are some filler gap dependencies acceptable, but others not? How do people acquire such subtle facts about their language(s)? Many accounts attribute the existence of islands to innate abstract universal constraints, while others argue that they are the result of different inductive biases that operate during acquisition. In this talk I'll present the results of two new studies that use cross-linguistic variation in island-sensitivity to better understand what constraints are responsible for island effects and how language learners acquire those constraints by generalizing over their input data. The first part of the talk focuses on how Norwegian children learn that embedded questions and (some) relative clauses are not islands in their language. The second part of the talk investigates whether and how Norwegians learn that English is more island-sensitive than their native language.