Plenary Talk

Conceptions of disfluencies

*Herbert H. Clark*

Stanford University, USA

For most of us, a disfluency is any feature of an utterance that deviates from the ideal delivery of that utterance. It is a scientific ragbag of a category that includes pauses, prolonged words, self-repairs, repeats, *uh* and *um*, restarts, slips of the tongue, stutters, and various other phenomena. What holds the category together is that we take its members to be evidence of the “intrinsic troubles” people have in speaking. Still, there have been two approaches to the study of these troubles. One has focused on failures in communication. The idea is that people in conversation monitor for such failures and, when they find them, repair them. The second tradition has focused, instead, on success and failure together. The idea here is that not only do people repair things that have gone wrong, but they display and acknowledge things that have gone right. I will argue that these two views lead to distinct accounts of what disfluencies are and how people deal with them.