Reception immediately following the ceremony in
The Language House Multi-Purpose Room of St. Mary’s Hall

Wednesday, December 20, 2017
3-4:30pm
Kay Theatre, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
Dear Graduates, Parents, Relatives, and Friends,

On behalf of the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, I welcome you to this milestone event. We are here today to celebrate the achievements of the young men and women who now leave us to join a global world very much in need of their energy, wisdom, and the linguistic and cultural skills they have gained. My colleagues and I look forward every semester to honoring the achievements of our graduates, and to conferring the degrees that their talents and tenacity have earned them. We have been entrusted with the intellectual care and development of these young scholars, and we feel a special bond with them — both intellectual and personal. We salute their commitment to fostering understanding of cultures other than their own and, in some cases, to deepening their understanding of their own heritage.

Graduates, we wish you all success as you move forward into the next phase of your lives. I invite you to stay in touch with your professors and mentors and especially to share with us news of your future achievements. I speak for all the faculty and staff of the School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures in offering my congratulations to you and to those who have supported you throughout the years of your study. Do come back and bring us your stories.

Fatemeh Keshavarz, Director
School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
This dissertation focuses on when and how children learn about the meanings of the propositional attitude verbs “know” and “think”. “Know” and “think” both express belief. But they differ in their veridicality: “think” is non-veridical and can report a false belief; but “know” can only report true beliefs because it is a veridical verb. Furthermore, the verbs differ in their factivity: uses of “x knows p”, but not uses of “x thinks p”, typically presuppose the truth of “p”, because “know” is factive and “think” is not. How do children figure out these subtle differences between the verbs, given that they are so similar in the grand scheme of word meaning?

This dissertation explores the relationship between the parser and the grammar in error-driven retrieval by examining the mechanism underlying the illusory licensing of subject-verb agreement violations (‘agreement attraction’). Previous work motivates a two-stage model of agreement attraction in which the parser predicts the verb’s number and engages in retrieval of the agreement controller only when it detects a mismatch between the prediction and the bottom-up input (Wagers, Lau & Phillips, 2009; Lago, Shalom, Sigman, Lau & Phillips, 2015). However, data from advanced Chinese learners of English suggests that it is not the case that all features relevant to the grammatical dependency will necessarily be used as retrieval cues. Taken together, these results suggest that the feature-checking repair mechanism follows grammatical principles but can result in a final structural representation of the sentence that is inconsistent with the grammar.