"The Attention System of Language"

This talk reports on work in progress to outline the fundamental attentional system of language. This system includes some fifty basic factors, the "building blocks" of the system. Each factor involves a particular linguistic mechanism that increases or decreases attention on a certain type of linguistic entity. Although able to act alone, the basic factors also regularly combine and interact to produce further attentional effects. This attentional system shows commonalities and differences across individual languages, across modalities (spoken vs. signed language), and across cognitive systems (e.g., between language and visual perception). The methodology used in the analysis, introspection, is itself made the subject of investigation to determine its profile of better and worse function and its consequent relation to other methodologies.