



LING 101, 10:10 Discussion Section: Intro + First steps toward Assignment 1

Nir Segal

February 6, 2026

Attendance:



PollEv.com/nirsegal243

Welcome!

The plan for today:

Introducing ourselves

Organizational bits

Starting to make our way to Assignment 1



Attendance:



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Hi, How Are You?

My name is:

(Optional) My pronouns are:

I study:

I'm a native speaker of:

Attendance:



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Who? Where? When? What? Why?

- TA: Nir (as in "not far") Segal
- My Email: nirsegal@umass.edu
 - I only reply to emails during working hours (9am-5pm)
 - Check the syllabus and all other available materials before emailing
- My office hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:00pm; ILC, N421C
 - Feel free to visit Magda's or other TAs' office hours!
- DS website w/ materials: segal-nir.github.io/101

Attendance:



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Who? Where? When? What? Why?

- In the section, we will:
 - Review lectures and assignments
 - Ask questions and provide answers
 - Help each other put our thoughts together in writing
- We take attendance
 - Contact us regarding any issues
- Go over the syllabus for more details re grading etc.



Questions?

The plan for today:

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Assignment 1

The assignment

≤500-word essay answering the question: Can animals learn a human language?

- Crucially, your answer must include information from:
 - Terrace, H.S. (1979) "How Nim Chimpsky changed my mind". *Psychology Today*, November.
 - Kaminski, Juliane et al. (2005) "Word learning in a domestic dog: Evidence for 'fast mapping'". *Science* June 11.
- Otherwise, use what you learned about *human language* in the Unit 1 lectures.

Assignment 1: Breakdown

- In order to properly answer the general question, your essay must:
 1. Address the two following subquestions.
 2. Draw a comparison between the answers to those questions.

The assignment

≤500-word essay answering the question: Can animals learn a human language?

Subquestion 1

What does it mean to know a human language?

Subquestion 2

What were the animals in the experiments able to do?
/ What weren't they able to do?

Subquestion 1

What does it mean to know a human language?

- Recall two components of language that children show knowledge of:



(Hint: G _____ /R ___ and W ___)

- Can you back up your answer with some evidence that we discussed in the lecture?
- What influence does direct teaching have on language acquisition in babies?

Subquestion 2

What were the animals in the experiments able to do? /
What weren't they able to do?

- Go over the reading and highlight excerpts where you can find answers to the above question.
- Paraphrase that information in a way that cites the resources rather than quoting it.
- Compare those answers to the answers for the previous subquestion.

Assignment 1: Breakdown

- Not sure how to paraphrase? Consult the instructions for the assignment on Canvas; another useful resource is the following They say, I say templates.
- In addition, you should go over the *grading form* for this assignment on Canvas. It shows you exactly how your essay will be graded.

$$S(s) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^s} = \pi \sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{s-1}\right)} \cdot S = \sigma \ln t \quad s > 1$$

~~fact~~

$$\pi^{-\frac{s}{2}} P\left(\frac{s}{2}\right) = T\left(\frac{1-s}{2}\right) \Gamma\left(\frac{1-s}{2}\right) \zeta\left(1-s\right)$$

$\boxed{S(s)}$

$$S(s) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{\ln(n)}{n^s} = \frac{1}{(s-1)^2} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \left(\ln\left(\frac{n}{s-1}\right) - \ln\left(\frac{n}{s-1}\right) \right) (0)$$

$$\begin{aligned} & \left(\frac{q_1}{1} + \frac{q_2}{2} + \frac{q_3}{3} + \dots \right) + \left(\frac{1}{1-q_1} + \frac{1}{1-q_2} + \frac{1}{1-q_3} + \dots \right) \\ & \quad \vdots \quad \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} q_k^m + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} q_k^m + \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} q_k^m \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Pf: } \Rightarrow \Psi(x) = x \cdot \left(\frac{1}{x} \cdot \ln\left(\frac{x}{s-1}\right) \right)$$

$$\Pi(x) = x \cdot \left(\frac{1}{x} \cdot \ln\left(\frac{x}{s-1}\right) \right)$$

$$\text{def: } \Psi(x) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^x} - \frac{1}{(s-1)^x}$$

$$\Pi(x) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^x} - \frac{1}{(s-1)^x}$$

$$S(s) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{\ln(n)}{n^s} = \ln\left(\frac{S(s)}{s-1}\right)$$

$$\text{Pf: } \Psi(x) = x \cdot \left(\frac{1}{x} \cdot \ln\left(\frac{x}{s-1}\right) \right)$$

$$\Pi(x) = x \cdot \left(\frac{1}{x} \cdot \ln\left(\frac{x}{s-1}\right) \right)$$

$$\text{def: } \Psi(x) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^x} - \frac{1}{(s-1)^x}$$

$$\Pi(x) = \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^x} - \frac{1}{(s-1)^x}$$

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\Psi(x)}{\Pi(x)} = \frac{1}{s-1}, \quad \lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{\Pi(x)}{\Psi(x)} = \frac{1}{s-1}$$

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See you next time for peer review!

