



LIN 001: Introduction to Linguistics (Spring 2024)

Weeks 8 + 9 Discussion - Sections A05 and A06

Instructor: Dr. Luna Filipović-Hawkins, TA: Nick Aoki

Agenda

- 1. Housekeeping**
2. Final Exam Prep: Sociolinguistics
3. Final Exam Prep: Language Acquisition
4. Final Exam Prep: Psycholinguistics
5. Open Floor

The Plan for the Rest of the Quarter

- As I mentioned in my previous e-mail, I will not be participating in the strike!
- Week 9 (May 26th - June 1st):
 - Finishing sociolinguistics + psycholinguistics (Week 8 + 9 Lecture)
- Week 10 (June 2nd - June 8th):
 - No new material covered
 - Mock final exam during discussion (**please attend this session!**)
- Finals Week (June 9th - June 15th):
 - **Final Exam: Monday, June 10th from 8am-10am in Rock Hall 194!**

Office Hours + Extra Materials

- Week 9 (May 26th - June 1st):
 - Regular OH: Tuesday (10am-1pm), Thursday (12-3pm); Kerr 261
- Week 10 (June 2nd - June 8th):
 - Regular OH: Tuesday (10am-1pm), Thursday (12-3pm); Kerr 261
 - **Final Exam Study Guide Posted Online (Wednesday night)**
- Finals Week (June 9th - June 15th):
 - **Extra OH: Sunday (10am-6pm); Kerr 261**
 - Final Exam: Monday, June 10th from 8am-10am in Rock Hall 194!

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1. Housekeeping
- 2. Final Exam Prep: Sociolinguistics**
3. Final Exam Prep: Language Acquisition
4. Final Exam Prep: Psycholinguistics
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Final Exam Prep: Sociolinguistics

- 1. Language vs. Dialect**
- 2. Social Class and Speech Perception**
- 3. Indirectness**

The Linguistic Definition: Language vs. Dialect

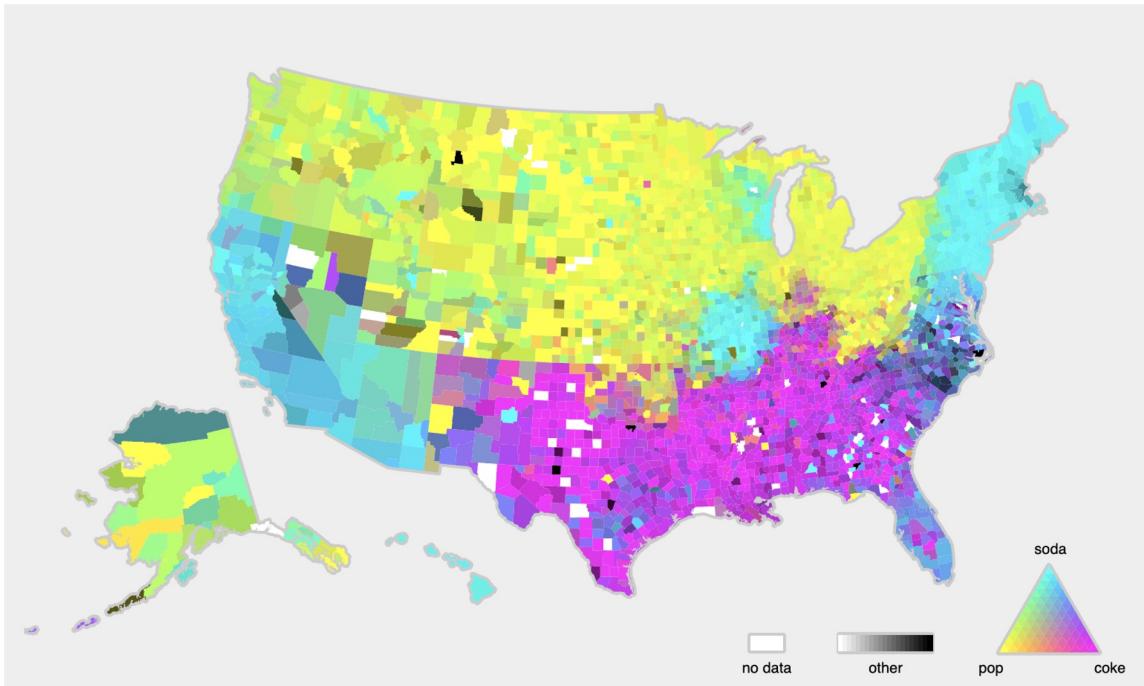
- Languages are distinct when they lack mutual intelligibility (i.e., when speakers of one language cannot understand speakers of another language)
 - ex. Japanese and English
- Dialects are mutually intelligible versions of the same language
 - dialect differences are mainly lexical (the words used) and phonetic (consonant and vowel pronunciation), but could be syntactic, morphological, or semantic
 - could be based on geographic differences (ex. California English vs. Canadian English) or social/ethnic differences (ex. African-American English)
- Note that mutual intelligibility is a continuum...where a dialect ends and a language begins can be difficult to determine.

English Dialect Example: Lexical Differences



What word would you use to describe the drinks above?

English Dialect Example: Lexical Differences



Some Americans say “soda”, others say “pop” or “coke”!

English Dialect Example: Phonetic Differences

BAG



How would you pronounce the three-letter word above?

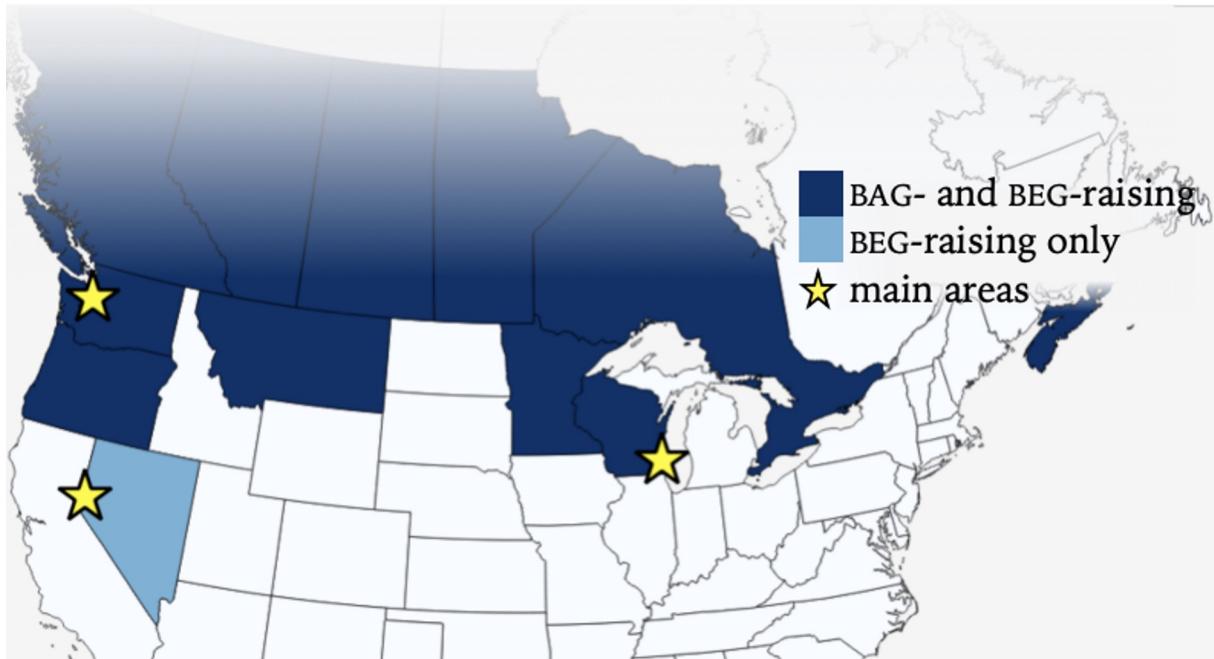
English Dialect Example: Phonetic Differences



BAG

Click the picture or click [here](#) for the video!

English Dialect Example: Phonetic Differences



BAG

The way many Minnesotans and Canadians
pronounce “bag” is called “BAG-raising”.

The Political Definition: Language vs. Dialect

- The linguistic and political definitions of “language” and “dialect” often overlap.
 - Two groups that are not mutually intelligible are often politically and culturally distinct (ex. English and Japanese are clearly not dialects of the same language)
 - Two groups that are mutually intelligible often have many political and cultural similarities (ex. Minnesota and California English are not different languages)
- ...But linguistics and politics do not always align.

When Linguistics and Politics Don't Align: The Case of “Chinese”



- China is highly diverse both ethnically and linguistically
- 302 different languages (many not mutually intelligible)
- ex. Mandarin and Cantonese speakers cannot really understand each other

When Linguistics and Politics Don't Align: The Case of “Chinese”

Chinese, Bachelor of Arts

College of Letters & Science

Welcome • Departments, Programs, & Degrees • East Asian Languages & Cultures • Chinese, Bachelor of Arts

The screenshot shows the UC Davis Chinese Bachelor of Arts program page. At the top, there are two tabs: "Information" (white background) and "Requirements" (blue background). Below the tabs, the section title "Preparatory Subject Matter" is displayed. Under this title, there is a sub-section titled "Choose a series:" followed by a list of course combinations and their descriptions. The first combination is CHN 001, CHN 002, and CHN 003, which are described as "Elementary Chinese and Elementary Chinese and Elementary Chinese". The second combination is CHN 004, CHN 005, and CHN 006, which are described as "and Intermediate Chinese and Intermediate Chinese and Intermediate Chinese". Below this, there is an "OR" section containing another list of course combinations: CHN 001BL, CHN 002BL, and CHN 003BL, described as "Accelerated Written Chinese I and Accelerated Written Chinese II and Accelerated Written Chinese III".

Choose a series:	Description
CHN 001 & CHN 002 & CHN 003	Elementary Chinese and Elementary Chinese and Elementary Chinese
CHN 004 & CHN 005 & CHN 006	and Intermediate Chinese and Intermediate Chinese and Intermediate Chinese

OR	Description
CHN 001BL & CHN 002BL & CHN 003BL	Accelerated Written Chinese I and Accelerated Written Chinese II and Accelerated Written Chinese III

- Despite lack of mutual intelligibility, all languages spoken in China are often subsumed under the label of “Chinese”.

- Due to the *political* unification of China
- ex. UC Davis Course Catalog

When Linguistics and Politics Don't Align: The Case of “Serbian” and “Croatian”



- Serbs and Croats = culturally similar, can understand each other
- Serbia and Croatia were once part of the same nation-state (Yugoslavia)

When Linguistics and Politics Don't Align: The Case of “Serbian” and “Croatian”



- The official language of Serbia is “Serbian” and the official language of Croatia is “Croatian”.
- But “Serbian” and “Croatian” are actually mutually intelligible - linguistically, they are dialects of “Serbo-Croatian”.
- Due to political conflict and separation of Serbia + Croatia

Summary: Language vs. Dialect

- Linguistic Definition:
 - Distinct languages lack mutual intelligibility (ex. Japanese and English)
 - Dialects are mutually intelligible versions of the same language that differ slightly in lexical and phonetic ways (ex. California English vs. Canadian English)
- But politics can affect how we define “language” and “dialect” in practice:
 - Different languages can be classified as “dialects” when their speakers are politically unified (ex. “Chinese”)
 - Dialects can be classified as different “languages” when their speakers are politically separated (ex. “Serbian” vs. “Croatian”)

Final Exam Prep: Sociolinguistics

1. Language vs. Dialect
2. Social Class and Speech Perception
3. Indirectness

Dialect Differences Are Socially Meaningful!



- Let's listen to "Bri" (3:19-3:55)...what adjectives would you use to describe her?
- In this parody of "Valley Girls" and "Surfer Dudes", the actors exaggerate phonetic aspects of Californian English, which are often associated with being shallow, vain, and materialistic.

Click the picture or click [here](#) for the video!

Differences in Prestige: H-Dropping vs. R-Dropping

- H-dropping = low prestige
(ex. “heart” and “art” sound the same)
- Spoken in English dialects of working-class England and Wales



Let's listen to 1:25-2:26.
Click the picture or click [here](#) for the video!

- R-dropping = high prestige
(ex. “saw” and “sore” sound the same)
- Associated with wealthy British individuals, politicians, etc.



Listen to 1:48-2:01. Click [here](#) for the link!
(...was **there** one specific moment **or**...)

Key Takeaways: Dialect and Social Meaning

- Sound dropping does not carry prestige in itself...whether dropped sounds are perceived as “prestigious” depends on who is speaking!
- R-dropping is only “prestigious” because it is used by “upper class” individuals like Emma Watson
- H-dropping “lacks prestige” because of biases against the working class

Key Takeaways: Language and Society

- More broadly, language use and social meaning are inextricably linked!
 - As speakers, our language choices are a reflection of ourselves and of the social context (how we pronounce “bag”, whether we say “hello” or “hey”, etc.).
 - As perceivers, we make judgments about others based on their language (ex. H-dropping vs. R-dropping, Californian English perceived as “shallow”, etc.)

Final Exam Prep: Sociolinguistics

1. Language vs. Dialect
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Direct and Indirect Language

Read the two requests for recommendation letters.
Which one do you prefer? Why?

Hey,

Write me a recommendation letter.

John Smith

Dear Dr. Filipović-Hawkins,

I was wondering if you would be willing
to write a recommendation letter for me.

John Smith

Two Benefits of Indirectness

- Lakoff theorized that there are two primary benefits of indirectness:
 1. Defensiveness
 2. Rapport



**Dr. Robin Lakoff,
Emeritus Professor at UC Berkeley**

Benefit #1 of Indirectness: Defensiveness

- Defensiveness: “a speaker’s preference not to go on record with an idea in order to be able to disclaim, rescind, or modify it if it does not meet with a positive response”
- In plain English: When a speaker says something potentially offensive in an indirect way in order to avoid criticism.
 - ex. Political dog whistles (coded messages commonly understood by some people, but not others)

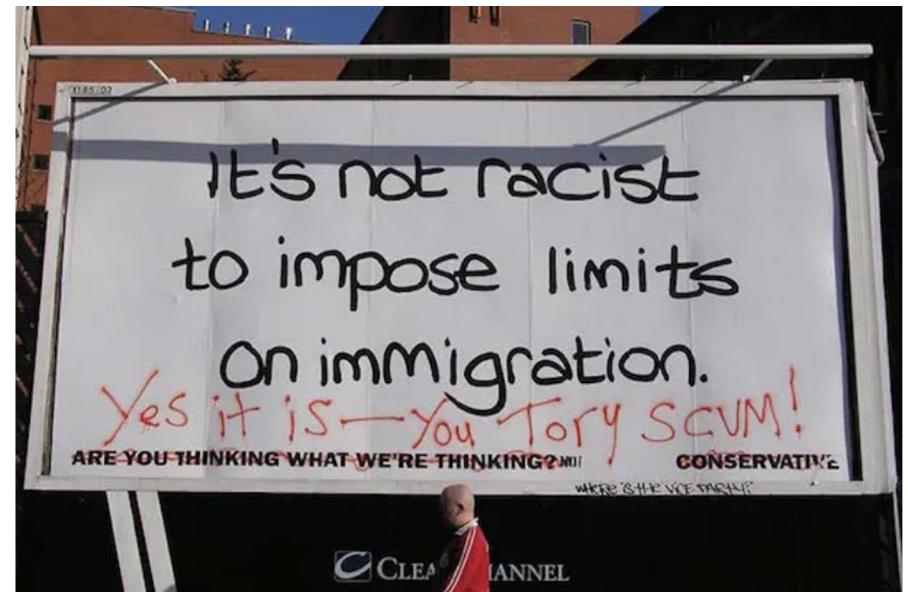
Political Dog Whistles

- Example: 2005 ads from the Tories, a conservative political party in England
- Direct Message: Limit immigration (seemingly innocent to non-Tory supporters)
- Indirect Message: Prevent people of color from entering (meaning is clear to Tory supporters)
- Shows the defensiveness “benefit” of indirectness (from the Tory politicians’ perspective) - they can make underlyingly racist statements without actually being accused of being racist.



Political Dog Whistles

- When we discuss the “benefits” of indirectness...we generally refer to the speaker’s perspective!
- Many non-Tory and Tory constituents would not support the limitation of diversity, and many can see through the politicians’ dog whistles (ex. whoever wrote the orange paint in the picture on the right).



Benefit #2 of Indirectness: Rapport

- Rapport: “the pleasant experience of getting one’s way not because one demanded it (power) but because the other person wanted the same thing (solidarity)”
- Imagine that you’re in a room with your friend. The window is open, and it’s snowing outside. Your friend is sitting on the couch, and you’re standing up and dusting near the window. Your friend says: “It’s really cold outside, right?” **What does your friend want? Most likely, they want you to close the window.**
- Your friend has “gotten their way” (having you close the window) not because they “demanded” or directly asked for it, but by appealing to solidarity (verifying with “right” that you are also cold and that you probably want the window closed too).
- **IMPORTANT:** In pragmatics, “It’s really cold outside” is both a *declarative* speech act and an *indirect* speech act.



Potential Drawbacks of Indirectness

- Indirect messages may be misunderstood (ex. political dog whistles fail if constituents do not understand the hidden meaning)
- Perception as evasive or non-committal, possibly leads to irritation (ex. If you wanted me to close the window, why didn't you just say so?)
- **However, more often than not, indirectness is beneficial for speakers! If indirectness wasn't useful, then we would always talk in a direct manner.**

Effects of Language/Culture on Indirectness

- Some cultures (especially with a highly *hierarchical* structure) prefer indirectness more than others
 - ex. In Japanese culture, outright rejection is considered highly rude (possibly even more so than in American culture).
 - To reject someone, you should say “chotto” (literally: “a little”).
 - Let’s watch 0:20-0:34.



Click the picture or click [here](#) for the video!

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Final Exam Prep: Language Acquisition

- 1. Overextension and Child Language Acquisition**
- 2. First and Second Language Acquisition**
- 3. Transfer in Second Language Acquisition**
- 4. Bilingualism**

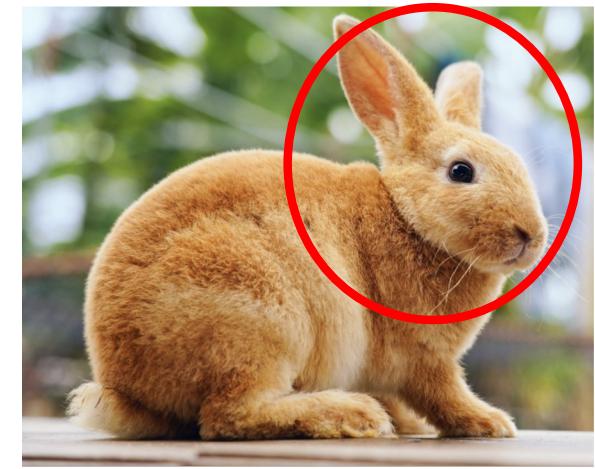
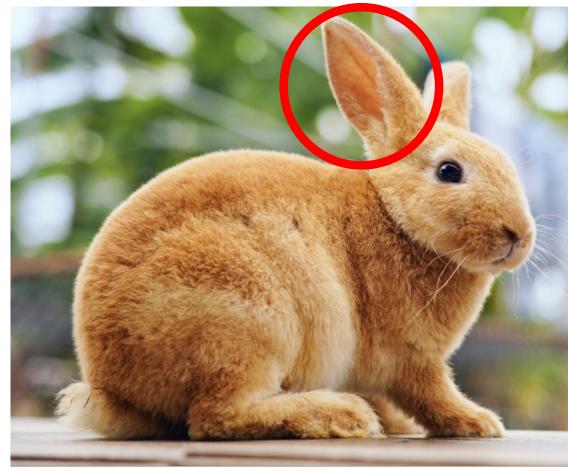
The Gavagai Problem

- Imagine that you are an alien. A human points to the picture below and says, “This is a gavagai”. How do you know what a gavagai is?



The Gavagai Problem

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- To know a language, infants must learn the appropriate word to meaning mappings...a more difficult task than it might appear!

Lexical Overextensions

- overextension: “the use of a word for a broader range of referents than is conventional in adult usage” (Rescorla, 1980)
 - ex. In the picture below, only the object on the far left would be considered a “ball” in adult usage...but infants might *extend* the meaning to any object with a round shape.



Final Exam Prep: Language Acquisition

1. Overextension and Child Language Acquisition
- 2. First and Second Language Acquisition**
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You should know one similarity and one difference between first and second language acquisition!

Second Language Acquisition

- What is similar to first language acquisition?
 - a) certain aspects of grammar mastered in the same order (e.g. *No have dog)
 - b) U-shaped learning: go-went-*goed
 - c) same areas involved in the left hemisphere (though right hemisphere may be more involved in L2 than L1 and more so for learners between 9-12 years of age)
- What is different to first language acquisition?
 - a) Interlanguage (between L1 & L2) and fossilization
 - b) Goal-dependent level achievement
 - c) Monitoring, affective filtering and role of individual differences

NB: Multiple linguistic systems are only as independent as necessary and reliance on a single system is the rule whenever possible

Final Exam Prep: Language Acquisition

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Languages have rules!

- phonotactics (phonological rules)
 - English: Certain consonant clusters can occur at the beginning of words (“st” as in “stop”), but others cannot (no English words start with “mb”).
 - Spanish: Unlike English, consonant clusters beginning with /s/ cannot occur word-initially (i.e., “st” cannot come at the beginning of words)
 - “to study” = “estudiar”, not “studiar”

Languages have rules!

- syntactic rules

- Recall the VP rule in English: $VP \rightarrow (\text{Qual}) \text{ V } (\text{CP}) (\text{NP}) (\text{PP})$.
- English: Adverbs (Qual) must come *before* the verb.
 - Correct: I **frequently drink** coffee.
 - Incorrect: I **drink frequently** coffee.
- French: Unlike English, adverbs come *after* the verb.
 - Correct: Je **bois fréquemment** du café.
 - Incorrect: Je **fréquemment bois** du café.

Transfer in Second Language Acquisition

- When we acquire a second language, we are affected by the rules of our first language. (This is why language learning can be challenging!)
- Transfer: A type of error where second language learners incorrectly *transfer* the rules from their first language to their second language.

L1	Intended	Actual	Error Type	Explanation
Spanish	I speak Spanish.	I espeak Espanish.	phonological	Spanish does not allow s + consonant sequences word-initially.
French	He frequently drinks coffee.	He drinks frequently coffee.	syntactic	French places the verb before the adverb.

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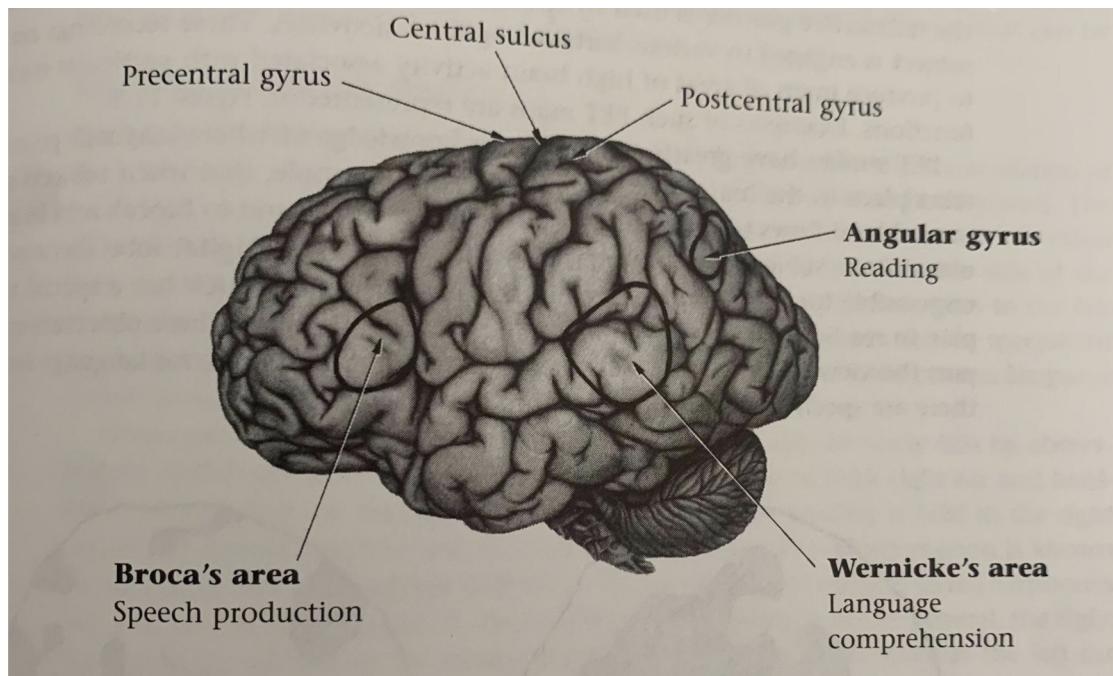
Early and Late Bilingualism

- Early Bilingualism: Simultaneously speaking two (or more) languages fluently from an early age.
- Late Bilingualism: Becoming fluent in a second language later in life.
- **The key distinction between the two types is the critical period (estimated to be between 2 and 18 years old).**
 - Our brains are highly *malleable* (easily influenced) initially => Learning multiple languages with different rules is easy during the critical period!
 - But as we accumulate experiences, our brains become fine-tuned to our environment => More difficult to learn new languages after the critical period.

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Locations and Functions of Broca's and Wernicke's Areas



- **Broca's Area: Frontal Lobe**
- **Wernicke's Area: Temporal Lobe**

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Any questions, comments, or concerns?

**Office Hours: Tuesday (10am-1pm), Thursday (12-3pm)
in Kerr 261**

**Please attend our final discussion next week to take
the mock exam!**