

Advanced Topics in Linguistics: Psycholinguistics

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COGS 4780

Psycholinguistics

- Conjunction of mind and language
 - Specifically, what are our minds doing when we *do* language?
- Doing language: reading, writing, speaking, hearing, seeing, thinking, understanding, etc.
- Doing language: sounds/letters, morphemes/words, grammatical relations, sentence structure, word meaning, phrase meaning, sentence meaning, discourse, background information, inferences
- The “cognitive psychology” part of linguistics
 - (or the “cognitive psychology” of language)

Psycholinguistics for Linguistics

- Linguistics is the study of language (...)
- All of language is the product of human minds
 - If we want to understand why language is the way it is, we need to understand the human mind
 - The study of syntax isn't arbitrary, it's the study of language structure (product of human minds)
- Language is implemented by the human mind

Psycholinguistics for Cognitive Science

- Language is a thing that the mind does (...)
- Cognitive Science studies the mind and things that minds do
- In fact, language may be one of the most complex things that our minds do
 - By studying language, we learn more about our minds and about cognition in general
 - Is language a completely different type of thing that our minds do?

Topics we'll cover

The Stuff before the Stuff

- Review of the basics of linguistics
 - Phonemes, morphemes, syntax, etc.
- Human language
 - What (if anything) makes it special?
 - Why do we have it?

Starting off

- Methods in psycholinguistics
 - What methods do we use to learn about any of the coming topics?
- Language in the brain

Language Acquisition

- Acquisition theories in general
 - How do we learn language?
 - What parts are innate?
- First language acquisition
 - How do we acquire knowledge of sounds?
 - How do we acquire knowledge of meaning?
 - How do we acquire knowledge of grammar?
- Second language acquisition
 - Same questions as above, but now it's different?
 - Bilingualism and the mind

Incoming language

- Speech perception
- Word recognition
- Lexical access
- Word meaning
- Sentence comprehension
 - Both structure and meaning
- Discourse comprehension
 - Inferences and non-linguistics information

Outgoing language

- Speech production
- Sentence production
- Discourse production

Central themes/questions

- What is innate about language?
- How independent/interrelated are language processes?
 - **Modular** vs. **Interactive**
- Are language processes specific to language or are they part of general cognitive processing?
 - **Domain-specific** vs. **Domain-general**
- What are the mental representations of language like?
 - Rules? Patterns? Probabilities?

Spoilers

“The ideas of innateness, modularity, rules, and language-specific processing are related. There is a divide in psycholinguistics between those who argue for innate language-specific modules that make extensive use of rules, and those who argue that much or all of language processing is the adaptation of more general cognitive processes.”
(Harley, 2014: 26)

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Syllabus

Intros

- Name
- Year
- Major
- Language background
- If you could magically and instantaneously learn one language right now, what language would it be?

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- When did you take Intro to Linguistics?
 - Partner or individual presentation?
 - Coding experience? (and in what?)