

Review

LING 200: Introduction to the Study of Language

Hadas Koteck



April 2016

Outline

1 Logistics

2 Review

Final exam!

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, April 19th
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Schedule

- **Friday, April 15:** conference review.
- **Monday, April 18:** extended office hours, **1pm-6pm**. Drop by any time!
- I will be at a conference April 15-17, so be sure to cc your TA if you email me to ensure a prompt reply.

Assignments, midterms, other grades

- You should have all of your assignment and midterm grades.
- Take a look to make sure nothing is missing and that there are no errors.
- At the beginning of the semester I promised a 1% bonus to students who frequently post on the discussion board.
 - If you think you have earned this bonus, email your TA with the evidence (i.e. point out the dates of your posts).
 - Anonymous posts will not count for this purpose.

Your grade...

• Final exam	40%
• 6 problem sets	30%
• 2 midterms	20%
• Attendance and participation	10%

Your grade...

Grade Point Averages (GPA) according to official McGill policy:

Grades	Grade Points	Numerical Scale of Grades
A	4.0	85 – 100%
A–	3.7	80 – 84%
B+	3.3	75 – 79%
B	3.0	70 – 74%
B–	2.7	65 – 69%
C+	2.3	60 – 64%
C	2.0	55 – 59%
D	1.0	50 – 54%
F (Fail)	0	0 – 49%

The final

- Material:
 - 1/3 phonology/phonetics/morphology
 - 1/3 syntax/semantics/pragmatics
 - 1/3 everything else (writing systems, the mental lexicon, dialects and variation, sociolinguistics, sign languages, acquisition, language myths,...)
- You are *not* responsible for anything that was covered in reading but was not discussed in class.
- **You are responsible for everything covered in class, in conferences, and in the lecture notes**, regardless of whether it was covered in the readings.

The final

- Structure:
 - Mostly (but not exclusively) multiple choice questions and True-False questions.
 - Expect some tasks similar to those you've encountered in your assignments and on exams: tree-drawing, phonology and morphology problems, identifying inferences (presupposition/implicature/entailment)
 - The instructions and preparation tip for the midterms hold here, too.
- The final is not short, so look through it before you get started and plan your time accordingly.

For the first two-thirds of class...

- Consult the review slides for the two midterms.
 - Posted under study guides on myCourses.
- I will not repeat the same advice again, but everything in those slides is still relevant.
- The following slides do **not** extensively cover everything you will need to know for the final.
- Questions are welcome!

What this course was about...

- Human languages are complex, rule-governed systems that embody an innate human capacity for language.

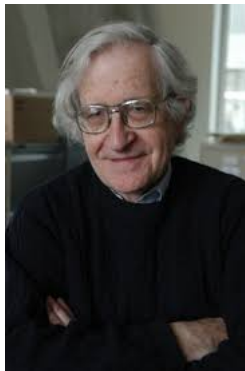
➡ Human language is:

- Innate
- Complex



Innateness

- **The Innateness Hypothesis**
 - Certain universal aspects of language are present at birth
 - **Universal Grammar** underlies all human grammatical systems



Chomsky (just for fun)

- 87 years old
- Born in Philadelphia
- His BA and MA are from the University of Pennsylvania
- His PhD is as well (but much of his PhD was written while he was at Harvard)
- He was affiliated at Harvard for four years, before moving to MIT, where he spent the rest of his career.
- He is the founder of modern linguistics, but his work has influenced a variety of scholars in fields such as
 - Artificial intelligence, cognitive science, computer science, mathematics, philosophy, political science, programming language theory and psychology.

Back to innateness

- Many supporting arguments come from topics in language acquisition...
 - Poverty of the stimulus
 - Critical period (acquisition vs. learning)
 - Stages of language acquisition
 - Sign languages

Poverty of the stimulus

- How is it possible that children acquire language?
 - The input is noisy and incomplete
- An indefinite number of alternative sets of principles are consistent with the regularities found in the linguistic data.
 - The correct set isn't necessarily simpler or more natural.
 - The data that would be necessary to test these different principles isn't necessarily available.
- If children learned language based on what they hear alone, they couldn't achieve the adult-like grammar.
 - But children *do*, in a surprisingly short amount of time.
 - Therefore, children do not rely solely on the data available to them.
 - Certain aspects of human language are biologically endowed.

Acquisition vs. learning

- Children *acquire* language within the first few years of life
- Not through instruction
 - Stages of language acquisition
 - Ignoring correction
 - Tacit knowledge

Sign languages

- Sign languages demonstrate that the human capacity for language is distinct from the ability to hear and speak
- Sign languages have phonology, morphology, and syntax
- The gestures of sign language are linguistic symbols, just like the sounds of a spoken language
 - Some symbols are *iconic*, but most are not

Linguistic relativity

- Linguistic relativity is incompatible with the innateness hypothesis
- Imagine...
 - Every human brain is endowed with the same linguistic capacity and human languages are more similar than they are different
 - Human culture differs a great deal across society, time, and space
 - If language was an important predictor of culture worldview, then human society wouldn't be as diverse as it is
 - On the other hand, culture, values, etc., definitely influence a language's lexicon.

Complex and rule-governed

- Arguments that support the position that human languages are complex rule-governed systems come from a variety of sources, including...
 - Language acquisition
 - Language change
 - Dialects and language variation
 - Regional
 - Socio-economic

Grammatical rules

- Phonological rules
- Word formation rules
- Phrase structure rules
- Psychologically real: slips of the tongue, the McGurk effect
- Change over time: Grimm's law
- Language acquisition: kids learn rules!
 - Wug tests
 - Overgeneralization
- Principles and Parameters
 - The Coordinate Structure Constraint
 - *Wh*-questions
 - *pro*-drop

Dialectal variation

- No linguistic reason to prefer or privilege one dialect (or language) over another
 - Languages and dialects are held in high or low prestige because the people who speak those languages and dialects are of high or low prestige
- All human language is rule-based

African American English

- Its phonology differs from SNAE in systematic ways
 - No “th”: /d/ and /f/ replace /ð/ and /θ/
 - Monophthongization
 - Cluster reduction
- Its morphology differs from SNAE in systematic ways
 - Does not use the possessive marker
 - Does not use the 3rd person
 - Regularization of reflexive pronouns
- Its syntax differs from SNAE in systematic ways
 - Negative concord
 - Null copula construction
 - Habitual “be”

A non-exhaustive list of other concepts...

- The blocking principle
- The *fis* phenomenon
- The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis
- The Immediacy of Experience Principle (IEP)
- Synchronic vs. diachronic change
- Cognates
- Analytic vs. synthetic languages
- Standard and non-standard dialects
- Dialect vs. language
- Parameters of ASL (hand shape, movement, location, palm orientation, facial expressions)
- William Labov's department store study
- Syllabaries, alphabets, morphemic writing system, pictograms
- Spoonerisms, slips of the tongue, priming effects, the Stroop effect, the McGurk effect,...

Wrapping up

- There is an innate, biologically endowed component to human language
- All human language varieties are complex, rule-governed systems

Course evaluations

- Course evaluations are really important
- We read them and take them very seriously
- Please take just a few minutes to give us your feedback
- https://horizon.mcgill.ca/pban1/twbkwbis.P_WWWLogin?ret_code=f