

Ellipsis and Reduced Registers

Day 1

Clerical issues, course objectives

Jun-Prof. Dr. James Griffiths

`james.griffiths@uni-tuebingen.de`

Clerical

- Aims, assessment, syllabus, daily readings, bibliography, etc.:

<https://jamesegriffiths.github.io/err20/index.html>

- Assessment:

10% = Attendance and contribution to classes

20% = Presentation of your final essay

70% = Final essay

Clerical

10% = Attendance and contribution to classes

- Expected to attend all classes, all week
- Contribution:
 - come to each day's classes armed with **at least three** questions about the reading for that day
 - Be prepared to contribute to Q&A sessions during student presentations

Clerical

20% = Presentation of your final essay (in a few weeks)

- You will write a final essay on any topic somehow related to the material covered during the course
- You will present an outline of your final topic beforehand
- Formal style: replicate an academic conference talk
- 15 minutes + 5 minutes for Q&A
- Slides obligatory!

Clerical

70% = Final essay

- No fewer than 15 pages, no more than 25 pages (see website)
- Submit an outline of the essay: ??
- Outline not officially graded, but will be useful for you!
- Final submission deadline: ??

Ellipsis and related topics:

Introduction

Spoken grammar

A: Hello. How are you?

B: I'm fine, thank you.
How are you?

A: I can't complain. My
wife is on holiday. I
don't know where she
has gone, however.

B: Would you like to come
for a drink later, then?

A: I would love to come
for a drink later.

A: You alright?

B: Yeah, you?

A: Can't complain. Wife's
on holiday. God knows
where.

B: Drink later, then?

A: Love to!

Why is spoken grammar important to second language pedagogy?

- We should avoid creating L2 speakers that “speak like a book”
- Learning spoken grammar variants helps to increase overall fluency
- It provides L2 speakers with a grammatical choice and flexibility, enabling a “greater degree of interpersonal and interactive language uses”
- Prepares L2 speakers for entry into target language environment (e.g. visiting or living in the UK) by raising awareness of spoken forms
- Makes “unconscious informal learning” (i.e. using social media in the target language) easier

Alm 2015, McCarthy & Carter 1995, Cullen & Kuo 2007, Goh 2009, Mumford 2009, Rogers 2008

Why is spoken grammar important to second language pedagogy?

Problem:

- The coverage of spoken grammar in mainstream ELT textbooks is inadequate or incomplete (Cullin & Kuo 2007)
- Onus on teachers to find {and/or} create suitable teaching materials
- Onus on teachers to have some knowledge of spoken grammar and its distribution

Hidden Rules?

- Spoken grammar is **systematic** and **constrained** (Rule based)
- (1) A: John shouldn't play with guns.
B: Why not?
A: Because it's dangerous to play with guns!
- (2) A: John shouldn't plays with guns.
B: Why not?
A: * Because to play with guns is dangerous!
- Rules unlikely to be listed in style guides or reference grammars
 - Linguists are still debating what these rules are (and why they hold)

Formal linguistics

Broad aim:

- To understand the cognitive mechanisms that govern the acquisition and use of human Language.
- These mechanisms determine the formal characteristics of language

Broad method:

Step 1: Uncover and accurately model the universal generative rules for creating good linguistic expressions

Step 2: Why these rules and not others? (**clue:** cognitive constraints)

- Ellipsis and other ‘spoken grammar’ phenomena are highly relevant to **step 1**

In this course:

Pedagogical perspective

- See how English ellipsis and reduced registers:
 - are constrained in their distribution in general
 - differ in their distribution across dialects
 - are acquired by L2 speakers
 - relate to other properties of English grammar

Formal linguistic perspective

- See how English ellipsis and reduced registers:
 - can be formally analysed
 - how they effect formal linguistic theories more generally

References

- Alm, A. 2015. Facebook for informal language learning: Perspectives from tertiary language students. *The EUROCall Review*, 23(2).
- Cullin, R. & I. Kuo. 2007. Spoken grammar and ELT course materials: A missing link? *TESOL Quarterly* 41(2): 361-386.
- Goh, C. 2009. Perspectives on spoken grammar. *ELT Journal* 63(4): 303-312.
- Rogers, A. 2008. Informal learning and literacy. In B. Street and N. Hornberger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, vol. 2. New York: Springer, 133-144.
- McCarthy, M. & R. Carter. 1995. Spoken grammar: What is it and how can we teach it? *ELT Journal* 49(3) 207-218.
- Mumford, S. 2009. An analysis of spoken grammar: The case for production. *ELT Journal* 63(2): 137-144.