

# L200: Foundations of Linguistic Theory

TuTh 10:30 – 11:50  
380-380C

Instructor:	P. Kiparsky	TA: Uriel Cohen-Priva
Office:	420-24	460-040B
Phone:	5-1566	5-2323
e-mail:	kiparsky@turing	urielc@stanford.edu

## 1 Assignments

Your grade will be based on class participation, an in-class presentation, short weekly squibs, and a final squib. Grading is Letter (default) or Credit/No Credit. No incompletes (barring emergencies).

### 1.1 Reading and class participation

You should come to class prepared to discuss the reading listed for the day on the syllabus.

Readings marked with \* are required, the others are recommended for background and further study. The URL or a .pdf of the readings will be put on Coursework where available; the rest will be put in the box above the student mailboxes. One copy will be left unstapled for your copying convenience; do not remove it from the room.

### 1.2 Presentation

In addition to reading and discussing the literature on the schedule, you will be required to present a set of readings listed under “student presentations” and lead a discussion of it. Your presentation including discussion should take no more than an hour, preferably less. Since there are more class participants than presentation slots, joint presentations by teams of two or three are encouraged. Sign up for presentations on Coursework.

### 1.3 Weekly squibs

1-2 page squibs will be due every Thursday, starting October 9th, ending on the Thursday before Thanksgiving (Nov. 20), skipping one week of your choice. You should turn in a squib on SIX of the following SEVEN Thursdays:

9.10, 16.10, 23.10, 30.10, 6.11, 13.11, 20.11

The squibs should respond to a reading (or two) from the syllabus, normally from the preceding week, with an observation about it or criticism of it. Pointing out relations between the readings would also be appropriate.

### 1.4 Final squib

A final squib (5-10 pages) is due at the end of the quarter. It should concern some reading that goes beyond the syllabus, either finishing a book we’ve read a chapter of, or reading related articles. Working together on this, especially with someone in a different area from yours, is encouraged.

## 2 Course Outline

### I. Language as a combinatorial system: the projection problem

Recommended background readings for this segment

- John Goldsmith, 2004. From algorithms to generative grammar and back again.  
<http://humanities.uchicago.edu/faculty/goldsmith/Papers/CLS2004Algorithms.pdf>.
- Cedrix Boeckx and Norbert Hornstein, The varying aims of linguistic theory.  
[http://kybele.psych.cornell.edu/LU/Hornstein-Paris-final\\_1.pdf](http://kybele.psych.cornell.edu/LU/Hornstein-Paris-final_1.pdf)
- Nick Chater, Paul Vitányi, Simplicity: a unifying principle in cognitive science? (2003). *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7: 19-22. (Available from Science Direct via Stanford Library).

**Tu. 23.9** Goals of linguistic theory. The problem of grammar induction. Universals and preferences.

**Th. 25.9** Pāṇini's grammar. Grammar as a maximally compact representation of language. Phonological features. Thematic roles. Rule ordering, Blocking.

- \*P. Kiparsky (1995), Pāṇinian Linguistics. In R.E. Asher, ed., *Concise history of linguistics*. Oxford, New York: Pergamon Press.
- P. Kiparsky (2002), *On the architecture of Pāṇini's grammar*. CIE, Hyderabad.  
<http://www.stanford.edu/~kiparsky/Papers/hyderabad.pdf>
- L. Bloomfield (1939). Menomini Morphophonemics. *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* 8, pp. 105-115

**Tu. 30.9** Early generative grammar.

- \*Noam Chomsky (1967). *Syntactic structures*, Ch. 1-6. Mouton, The Hague.
- Morris Halle (1962). Phonology in Generative Grammar. *Word* 18:54-72.

**Th. 2.10** Generative syntax. Derivational and non-derivational theories.

- \*Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic structures*, Ch. 7-10.
- Carl Pollard and Ivan Sag (1994), *Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar*, Ch. 1.

**Tu. 7.10** The cognitive turn in generative grammar: explaining language acquisition and language universals.

- \*Noam Chomsky (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*, Ch. 1.

**Th. 9.10** The “poverty of the stimulus” argument.

!!! Plus a special celebration — 🇰🇷 Korean alphabet day 🇰🇷 !!!

- \*G. Pullum & B. Scholz (2002). Empirical assessment of stimulus poverty arguments. *TLR* 19.9-50.  
<http://www.reference-global.com/doi/pdf/10.1515/tlir.19.1-2.9>
- \*J. Fodor & C. Crowther (2002). Understanding stimulus poverty arguments. *TLR* 19.105-145.  
<http://www.reference-global.com/doi/pdf/10.1515/tlir.19.1-2.105>

Student presentation

1. Lidz, J., S. Waxman, and J. Freedman. What Infants Know about Syntax but Couldn't have Learned: Experimental Evidence for Syntactic Structure at 18-months. *Cognition* 89:B65-B73.  
<http://ling.umd.edu/labs/acquisition/papers/LWOffprint.pdf>

2. Foraker, Stephani et al. Indirect Evidence and the Poverty of the Stimulus: The Case of Anaphoric One. <http://ccp.uchicago.edu/~tpregier/papers/foraker-et-al07.pdf>

**Tu. 14.10** Probabilistic grammar induction with learning bias.

Student presentation

- \*Shalom Lappin and Stuart M. Shieber (2007). Machine Learning as a source of insight into Universal Grammar. *Journal of Linguistics*, 43:393-427.  
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?jid=LIN&volumeId=43&issueId=02>
- Saffran, J. R. (2003). Statistical language learning: Mechanisms and constraints. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12, 110-114, <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/infantlearning/publications/saffrancurrentdir.pdf>.
- Takahashi, Eri and Jeffrey Lidz. 2007. Beyond statistical learning in syntax.  
[http://www.ling.umd.edu/labs/acquisition/papers/Takahashi\\_Lidz.pdf](http://www.ling.umd.edu/labs/acquisition/papers/Takahashi_Lidz.pdf)
- Lisa Pearl & Jeffrey Lidz. 2006 When domain general learning fails and when it succeeds: Identifying the contribution of domain specificity.  
[http://www.ling.umd.edu/labs/acquisition/papers/PearlLidz11\\_06.pdf](http://www.ling.umd.edu/labs/acquisition/papers/PearlLidz11_06.pdf)

**Th. 16.10** Grammaticality, acceptability, frequency. Presented by Uriel Cohen Priva.

- Joan Bresnan, Anna Cueni, Tatiana Nikitina, and Harald Baayen. 2007. "Predicting the Dative Alternation. *Cognitive Foundations of Interpretation*, ed. by G. Boume, I. Kraemer, and J. Zwarts. Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Science, pp. 69-94.  
<http://www.stanford.edu/%7Ebresnan/qs-submit.pdf>
- Schütze, Carson. 2005. Thinking about what we are asking speakers to do. In Stephan Kepser & Marga Reis (eds.), *Linguistic evidence: Empirical, theoretical, and computational perspectives*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 457-485.

## II. Semiotics and structuralism

Background reading for this segment:

Manfred Bierwisch, 1971. *Modern linguistics: its development, methods and problems*. The Hague: Mouton. (German original: *Strukturalismus. Geschichte, Probleme und Methoden*, 1966).

**Tu. 21.10** Wilhelm von Humboldt: language as the organ of thought.

- \*W. von Humboldt. 1988[1836]. *On Language: The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind*. (Tr. Peter Heath). Cambridge: CUP. [Selections]

**Th. 23.10** Ferdinand de Saussure. Arbitrariness of the sign as the fundamental property of language. Langue/parole, synchrony/diachrony, syntagmatic/paradigmatic relations. Linguistics as a branch of semiotics.

- \*F. de Saussure. 1916. *Course in General Linguistics*. Introduction and parts 1-3.

**Tu. 28.10** Roman Jakobson. Distinctive features, contrast, markedness and the feature hierarchy, implicational universals.

- \*R. Jakobson. 1968. *Child Language, Aphasia and Phonological Universals*. Mouton. (Translation of Jakobson 1941, *Kindersprache, Aphasie, und Allgemeine Lautgesetze*.) Also in *Selected Writings*, Vol. 1, 1962.

- R. Jakobson, Retrospect. *Selected Writings*, Vol. 2, 711-722.
- Student presentation [rescheduled for Thursday 23.10]
  1. Bermúdez-Otero, Ricardo, and Kersti Börjars. 2006. “Markedness in phonology and in syntax: the problem of grounding”. *Lingua* 116: 710-756. (Science Direct).
  2. Haspelmath, Martin. Against iconicity and markedness.  
<http://email.eva.mpg.de/~haspelmt/IconicityMarkedness.pdf>

**Th. 30.10** Phonetics and phonemics. The role of contrast.

- Leonard Bloomfield (1926). A set of postulates for linguistic analysis. *Language*.
- \*Noam Chomsky. 1964. *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 1964. [Selection].

Student presentation

1. Edward Flemming. 2002. Contrast and perceptual distinctiveness. In B.Hayes, R.Kirchner, and D.Sterade (eds.) *The Phonetic Bases of Markedness*. CUP.

**Tu. 4.11 – Th. 6.11** Language and thought.

- \*Levinson, Stephen C. (2003). *Space in language and cognition*. Cambridge: CUP. [Selection].
- \*Li, Peggy, Linda Abarbaneli, and Anna Papafragou (2005), Spatial reasoning skills in Tenejapan Mayans. *Proceedings of the 27th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society (2005), Chicago*.  
[papafragou.psych.udel.edu/papers/lietal.pdf](http://papafragou.psych.udel.edu/papers/lietal.pdf)

Student presentation 1:

1. Eve Sweetser, Rafael Nuñez, “With the Future Behind Them: Convergent Evidence From Aymara Language and Gesture in the Crosslinguistic Comparison of Spatial Construals of Time”. *Cognitive Science* 2006. (From Informaworld Journals via Stanford Library). <http://www.informaworld.com/smpg/title~content=g784395403~db=all>
2. Erik Levin, A reanalysis of the Aymara Verb using prototypes.  
<http://coyotepapers.sbs.arizona.edu/CPXIII/levin.pdf>

Student presentation 2:

1. Everett, Daniel L. 2005. “Cultural constraints on grammar and cognition in Pirah”. *Current Anthropology*. 46:621-646
2. Pica, Pierre, et al. 2004. “Exact and Approximate Arithmetic in an Amazonian Indigene Group”.  
<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/306/5695/499>
3. Nevins, Andrew Ira, David Pesetsky, Cilene Rodrigues. 2007. Piraha Exceptionality: a Reassessment. <http://ling.auf.net/lingBuzz/000411>.

### III. Functional perspectives

**Tu. 9.11** Pragmatics. Language as social interaction.

Student presentation

- \*Paul Grice, Language and conversation (1975). In P. Cole & J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and semantics*, Vol. 3. (Also in Grice’s *Studies in the way of words*, pp. 22-40. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.)
- Wilson, Deirdre & Dan Sperber. 2002. Relevance Theory.  
[http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/PUB/WPL/02papers/wilson\\_sperber.pdf](http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/PUB/WPL/02papers/wilson_sperber.pdf)

**Th. 13.11** Hawkins: processing explanations for syntactic structure.

Student presentation

- Hawkins, J.A. 1989. Competence and performance in the explanation of language universals. In Arnold, D. et al. (eds.) *Essays on Grammmatical Theory and Universal Grammar*, 119-152. OUP.

**Tu. 18.11** The functionalism vs. formalism debate.

Student presentation

- F. Newmeyer (2005) *Possible and probable languages*. Ch. 5: The locus of functional explanations. OUP.
- \*Haspelmath, Martin (2006), Parametric versus functional explanations of syntactic universals. To appear in: Theresa Biberauer and Anders Holmberg (eds.) *The limits of syntactic variation*. Amsterdam: Benjamins. <http://email.eva.mpg.de/~%7Ehaspelmt/Parametric.pdf>

**Th. 20.11** The Minimalist Program: Language as an optimal computational system. Guest lecture by Asya Pereltvaig.

- \*Chomsky, New Horizons in the Study of Language, in his *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind* (p. 3-18), 2000.
- Chomsky, Beyond Explanatory Adequacy, MIT WPL Number 20, 2000.
- Shalom Lappin, Robert Levine, and David Johnson. The Structure of Unscientific Revolutions. *NLLT* 18: 665-671 (2000). [Replies by Holmberg, Reuland, Roberts, Piattelli-Palmarini, Uriagereka *NLLT* 18: 837-890, Rejoinder by LLJ: *NLLT* 18: 873-890.]

**Tu. 24.11** Thanksgiving recess.

**Th. 28.11** Thanksgiving recess.

## IV. Evolutionary perspectives on language

Recommended background reading for this segment

Ray Jackendoff. 2007. Linguistics in Cognitive Science: The State of the Art. *The Linguistic Review* 24: 347-401. (Esp. p. 390 ff.) <http://ase.tufts.edu/cogstud/incbios/RayJackendoff/lingcogsci.pdf>

**Tu. 2.12** Evolution of the language faculty.

- \*Pinker, Steven and Paul Bloom. 1990. Natural language and natural selection. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 13:707-727.

**Th. 4.12** Evolutionary phonology: historical explanation.

- \*Blevins, Juliette (2006), A theoretical synopsis of Evolutionary Phonology. *Theoretical Linguistics*. <http://www.reference-global.com/toc/thli/32/2>
- Kiparsky (2006), The Amphichronic Program vs. Evolutionary Phonology. *Theoretical Linguistics*. <http://www.reference-global.com/toc/thli/32/2>