BASIC θ-THEORY
AND SOME FINAL PAPER ADVICE

Matthew A. Tucker

Linguistics 105: Morphology
Fall 2012

October 31, 2012

Happy Halloween!

Homework Thoughts

- HW #5 should be do-able later today.
- You need to start on this after today.
- HW #4 was discussed in section yesterday.

Other

- Mohanan (1995) is easy to read but not short.
- Arguments for incorporation when it doesn't look like a noun is appearing inside a verb.

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FINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

1 FINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

2 FINAL PROJECT RESEARCH ADVICE

3 BASIC θ-THEORY

FINAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, I

THE FINAL PROJECT

Write a paper about a morphological problem in a language of your choosing and solve it.

- The language:
  - Can't be one you know natively or fluently.
  - *Must* be one you can get data for.
- The morphological problem:
  - Must be *moprhological*, not {syntax, semantics, phonology}.
  - Should be analyzable from more than one point of view.
- The solution to the problem:
  - Must be *formal*.
  - Must account for all the data you present, unless you tell us otherwise (and then you have to tell us why).

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FINAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS, II

THE WRITEUP

The writeup must be a mature research paper on the problem you identify and present a coherent, descriptively adequate analysis.

- Formatting, *etc.*:
  - Font: between 10–12pt, reasonable glyph size & kerning.
  - 10–15pp. in length, but content is more important than length.
  - Margins ≤ 1 in. on all sides.
  - Any spacing ≤ double is fine.
- Some writing tips:
  - Linguistics papers are not mystery novels (have a THESIS).
  - Linguistics papers are not blogs/diaries.
  - Clear prose and supporting data are of equal importance.
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THE GRADES

Grades will be assessed based on the clarity of exposition and originality of analysis/data.

- The exact criteria are as follows:
  1. Formatting, *etc.* — 5%
  2. Project Conforms to Guidelines — 5%
  3. Clarity of Writing — 30%
  4. Supporting Data — 30%
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ANALYSIS IS ARGUMENTATION

Your paper *must* explicitly contrast (at least) two formal analyses and argue for one.

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Final Project Research Advice

IT'S ALL ABOUT DATA

WE *are* DOING SCIENCE

Scientific progress results from the falsification of previous hypotheses using *empirical* argumentation.

- Your paper should:
    - Identify the predictions the two analyses makes wrt. data.
    - Show which are confirmed by the data and which are falsified.
- Your paper can optionally:
    - Include *supporting* conceptual argumentation.
    - Discuss the role of other languages/constructions.
- Your paper should not:
    - Include needless data.
    - Include only conceptual argumentation.
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WHERE NOT TO GET DATA

THE TAKE-HOME MORAL
Every grammar has a hidden agenda.

- Fine places to *start*:
  - World Atlas of Language Structures
  - Ethnologue
  - Glottapedia
  - Theoretical papers
- Places to avoid:
  - Wikipedia
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  - Language books which are not actually about grammar
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The Take-Home Moral

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Well-written grammars are an excellent tool for linguistic research.

- How to tell a good grammar from a bad one:
  - *It is organized in a way you understand and contains lots of data.*
  - Good grammars are *comprehensive* on your topic.
  - Good grammars are written by linguists.
- Limits of working with a grammar:
  - There are hardly ever ungrammatical examples.
  - Some topics are not treated (*e.g.*, compounding).
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BASIC θ-THEORY

1. FINAL PROJECT GUIDELINES

2. FINAL PROJECT RESEARCH ADVICE

3. BASIC θ-THEORY

Preliminaries

Central Question

What are the possible *semantic* relationships that an argument can possess with respect to its predicate?

(1) a. *Poirot* solved the murder case.

b. *Hastings* worried about his appearance.

c. *Miss Lemon* was informed about the details of the case.

Thematic (θ−) Roles

A (in)formal way of classifying of the relation the argument bears with respect to its predicate.

- Predicates assigns θ−roles to arguments.
- Predicates have thematic structure.
- Arguments are θ−marked by their predicates.

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<center>(these definitions from Haegeman, 1991)</center>

- Agent/Actor: the one who intentionally initiates the action expressed by the prediate.

  (2)   *Cleveland* knocked on the door.

- Patient: the person or thing undergoing the action expressed by the prediate.

  (3)   Peter hit *the man-sized chicken.*

- Theme: the person or thing moved/affected by the action expressed by the predicate.

  (4)   Lois rolled *the ball* to Brian.

- Experiencer: the entity that experiences some (psychological) state expressed by the predicate.

  (5)   *Joe* was warm despite the weather.

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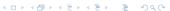
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  (6) LaDonna baked a cake *for Delmon*.

  (7) Toni brought suit *against the Sheriff's Department*.

- Goal: the entity towards which the activity expressed by the predicate is directed.

  (8) Sonny sent a letter *to Cher*.

- Source: the entity from which something is moved as a result of the activity expressed by the predicate.

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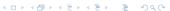
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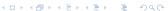- {BENE, MALE-}{FACTIVE, FICIARY}: the entity that {benefits, suffers} from the event expressed by the predicate.

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