# LIN 432/1133: Morphosyntactic Issues

University of Toronto                                                                 Fall 2017

**Instructor**                                        **Location & Time**

Dr. Nicholas LaCara                                   Room: uc 67
Office: ss 4089                                        Days: Wednesday
Hours: Monday 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm                        Time: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
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## 1    Overview

This course is about the interface between syntax and morphology, and we will focus on issues of
forming words from underlying syntactic elements. It is frequently the case that the mapping from
syntactic terminals to the elements we call words is not one-to-one, and this observation requires
an explanation. As such, we'll be occupied predominantly with the syntax–morphology interface,
though we will also look at issues concerning the morphology–phonology interface.

The theme of this course is investigating how morphologically complex words are related to syntactic
structure.[1] While syntactic operations like head movement are widely held to play a role in the
formation of complex words, a close look at various outwardly similar phenomena reveals subtle
differences that suggest this cannot be the only way of forming words. Additionally, certain phe-
nomena (*e.g.*, root-and-pattern morphology) seem to complicate the view that affixes are heads in
the syntactic structure. At the beginning, we will look at questions of what operation is responsible
for placing inflectional morphology on material. As we advance, we will look at more complicated
phenomena, including non-concatenative morphology and reduplication.

We'll start exploring these questions from the framework of Distributed Morphology (Halle and
Marantz 1993), but we will also occasionally approach problems from the point of view of Optimality
Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993/2004) and related frameworks. One of the threads of this course
will be a question of what theoretical technology is best suited to handle various problems at the
interfaces with morphology. How much of morphology can be handled by the syntax? Are there
cases where we need to look at the phonology to understand what is happening? Where is the line
between the two?

### 1.1    Course goals

This course emphasizes engagement with primary sources in theoretical linguistics, with a broad
goal of developing familiarity with technical, scientific writing. Course assignments will not only
allow students to demonstrate comprehension of various readings but will also require students to
apply technical writing skills. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Articulate the theoretical challenges in mapping syntactic structures to morphological and
  phonological outputs.

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1    A background concern, which may occasionally come into focus, is what a word even is.

- Compare similar morphological phenomena within and across languages and syntactic domains.

- Apply a theoretical analysis of one language or phenomenon to novel data and identify potential challenges in doing so.

- Make novel proposals in modern theoretical frameworks.

- Read and comprehend technical, scientific writing in linguistics and critically assess proposals based on empirical data and identify (possibly conflicting) strategies in a body of related literature.

## 2    Course requirements

### 2.1    Reading

Readings will be drawn from primary sources. These readings have been chosen to emphasize recent work at the morphological interfaces, and represent a cluster of overlapping topics. There will be approximately one reading per class meeting (except the last two weeks). You are expected to do all the assigned readings; you will find this is necessary in order to complete the assignments, which will be based on the readings. I may also occasionally suggest additional optional readings that complement or challenge work we discuss in class.

#### 2.1.1    *Leading discussions (Graduate students only)*

Graduate students are required to lead the presentation and discussion of (at least) one course reading in class. This is required to receive a participation grade in the course; failure to present a paper will result in a 0% for participation. Undergraduate students are encouraged – but not required – to present papers.

We will make decisions about who will lead which discussions on the second day of class (see the calendar below). It is important that presentations of readings be summaries. They should not focus on every detail of the paper. In general, I will communicate with presenters about what material they should focus on.

### 2.2    Assignments

During most of the course, there will be weekly assignments that complement the reading. These assignments are due at the beginning of each class meeting and will be turned in on Blackboard. The assignments will ask you to engage with the data, concepts, and analyses that they present. Many assignments will ask you to compare analyses between separate readings, to apply analyses to novel data, or to reference answers to previous assignments. We will discuss these assignments in class on the day they are due, so you should bring your own copy of the assignment.

For the final three sets of readings, there will be no accompanying assignment. The expectation is that you will be taking this time to work on your squib, paper, and final presentation.

Questions on the assignments may be fairly open-ended; in many cases, there will be no 'right' answer. Rather, your responses to the assignments will be used to drive class discussions. Your responses will be marked based on thoroughness, attention to detail, and the degree to which they demonstrate an accurate understanding of the reading.

### 2.2.1 Writing up assignments

You should do the associated reading as early as you can manage. Make sure you read the assignment first to know which issues will matter for the assignment. Before writing up anything, you should first work through the questions, taking notes about potential answers; after this, write up a final version of the assignment based on your notes. This will help ensure that your work is clear and give you a chance to find any potential mistakes. Some assignments may be quite lengthy, so please avoid waiting until the last minute to complete them.

### 2.2.2 Working together

You are encouraged to work with others on assignments in this course. However, *you must turn in your own work, written up in your own words*. You may not simply copy your work from another student, and you should not, under any circumstances, have somebody else's work or notes in front of you while you write up yours. This counts as academic dishonesty. Additionally, you must indicate who you worked with on each assignment. (If you work alone, please say so.) It is easy to avoid difficulties here. If you work with others, take notes during your discussion, and then write up your assignment on your own later.

### 2.2.3 Late work

Since we will discuss work on the day it is due, *no late work will be accepted without prior arrangements*. I understand that that sometimes there are circumstances that are beyond your control; if an issue arises that prevents you from turning in your work on time, please come talk to me.

### 2.3 Term papers

Students in this course will write a final paper. The paper must have to do with morphology in some capacity and should ideally discuss some issue with the syntax–morphology interface. However, it need not deal strictly with the topics discussed in the course. You should come talk to me before the squib is due to talk about what you are considering for a paper topic. You *must* come talk to me if you are considering topics outside the ones discussed in this course.

There are a number of ways to come up with an interesting paper topic. Good topics include:

- Applying a previous analysis to a new language

- A problem for a previous analysis of a language (new data, *etc.*)

- A critical comparison of two different analyses

- Investigating an unanswered question about an existing analysis

The first step in this process will be a squib due on 1 November outlining the problem; at this stage, no solution need be proposed, though you are encouraged to consider possible approaches to the issue you describe. Squibs should be between 5 to 8 pages in length (and no more). I will respond to these squibs with suggestions, criticisms, and other comments (hopefully by 15 November). These comments will be designed to help you complete a full paper.

Undergraduate papers should aim to be between 10–15 single-spaced pages in length (12pt font, 1 inch/2.5 cm margins). Graduate student papers should aim for between 15 and 20 pages. No paper should be fewer than 10 pages or longer than 25. The final paper will be due on 6 December (the final day of classes). If you feel you will need an extension, please let me know at least a week ahead of the due date.

### 2.3.1 *Term paper presentation*

During the last two meetings, students will present their work to the class. Depending on the number of enrolled students, these presentations will be between ten and fifteen minutes in length. They should introduce the problem the student is working on for the term paper and the sort of solution they are pursuing. We will discuss this more as we get closer to the end of the course.

## 2.4 Participation

All students are expected to contribute to class discussions and ask questions. Doing so will require you to attend regularly. Graduate students, as noted above, are required to present at least one reading in class. If you must miss class, please consult with our fellow students about what you missed.

## 3 Marks and evaluation

Marks in this course will be assigned following the Department of Linguistics' grading policy. The Department of Linguistics follows the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy. Your overall mark for the course will be determined based on the following breakdown:

| Requirement | % | Date(s) due |
|---|---|---|
| Participation | 10% | Continuous |
| Assignments (×6) | 30% | 20 Septmember – 25 October |
| Squib | 15% | 01 November |
| Term paper presentation | 10% | 29 November or 06 December |
| Final paper | 35% | 06 December |

## 4 Communication

You should feel free to communicate with me if you have any questions or concerns about the course. My email is listed on the first page, as are my office hours. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, for whatever reason, we can schedule an appointment at a different time.

If you do email me, please include 'LIN 432' or 'LIN 1133' at the beginning of the subject line. Email is best used for administrative issues (*e.g.*, problems with the website, scheduling meetings). Questions about course content, readings, *etc.*, are better asked in class or during office hours. I will try to respond to emails within 48 hours. Do not email me your assignments.

## 5    Academic integrity

This course is governed by the University of Toronto's Code of Student Conduct and Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. Both of these can be accessed online via the site:

http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/

Suspected violations of these policies (including, but not limited to, plagiarism in submitted writing) will be reported to the Office of Student Academic Integrity.

## 6    Calendar

This is a rough outline of the course. Readings are subject to change if necessary!

|   | Date | Topics | Reading | Notes |
|---|------|--------|---------|-------|
| 1 | 13 Sept | Preliminaries | (*No reading*) | |
| 2 | 20 Sept | Distributed Morphology | Bobaljik 2015 | Last day to enroll |
| 3 | 27 Sept | Lowering & dislocation | Embick and Noyer 2001 | |
| 4 | 04 Oct | Merger | Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005 | |
| 5 | 11 Oct | Comparatives & phonology | Smith and Moore-Cantwell 2017 | |
| 6 | 11 Oct | Root-and-pattern I | Arad 2003, Ussishkin 2003 | |
| 7 | 25 Oct | Root-and-pattern II | Tucker 2011 | |
| 8 | 01 Nov | Reduplication I | Harizanov 2017 | Squib due; no assn't |
| | *Reading week: 6–10 Nov* | | | 6 Nov last day to drop |
| 9 | 15 Nov | Reduplication II | Kimper 2008, Travis 2003 | No assignment |
| 10 | 22 Nov | Agreement & clitics | Harris 2000, Woolford 2011 | No assignment |
| 11 | 29 Nov | Student presentations | (*No reading*) | No assignment |
| 12 | 06 Dec | Student presentations, TBA | (*No reading*) | Paper due; no assn't |

## References

Arad, Maya. 2003. Locality Constraints on the Interpretation of Roots. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 21:797–778.

Bobaljik, Jonathan. 2015. Distributed Morphology. Manuscript, University of Connecticut.

Embick, David, and Rolf Noyer. 2001. Movement Operations after Syntax. *Linguistic Inquiry* 32:555–595. URL https://dx.doi.org/10.1162/002438901753373005.

Halle, Morris, and Alec Marantz. 1993. Distributed Morphology and the Pieces of Inflection. In *The View from Building 20: Essays in Linguistics in Honor of Sylvain Bromberger*, ed. Samuel Jay Keyser and Kenneth Hale, 111–176. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Hankamer, Jorge, and Line Mikkelsen. 2005. When Movement Must Be Blocked: A Reply to Embick and Noyer. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36:85–125.

Harizanov, Boris. 2017. The Interaction between Infixation and Reduplication in Chamorro. In *Asking the Right Questions: Essays in Honor of Sandra Chung*, ed. Jason Ostrove, Ruth Kramer, and Joseph Sabbagh, 158–172. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Linguistics Research Center.

Harris, Alice C. 2000. Where in the Word is the Udi Clitic? *Language* 76:pp. 593–616. URL http://www.jstor.org/stable/417136.

Kimper, Wendell. 2008. Syntactic Reduplication and the spellout of movement chains. Generals paper, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Prince, Alan, and Paul Smolensky. 1993/2004. *Optimality Theory: Constraint Interaction in Generative Grammar*. Malden, Mass, and Oxford, UK: Backwell.

Smith, Brian W, and Claire Moore-Cantwell. 2017. Emergent Idiosyncrasy in English comparatives Ms. To appear in the proceedings of NELS 47.

Travis, Lisa. 2003. Reduplication feeding syntactic movement. In *Actes du congrès annuel de l'Association Canadienne de Linguistique 2003 / Proceedings of the 2003 Annual Conference of the Canadian Linguistic Association*, ed. Sophie Burelle and Stanca Somesfalean, 236–247. Université du Québec à Montréal, Département de linguistique et de didactique des langues. URL http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~cla-acl/2003/Travis.pdf.

Tucker, Matthew A. 2011. The Morphosyntax of the Arabic Verb: Toward a Unified Syntax-Prosody. In *Morphology at Santa Cruz: Papers in Honor of Jorge Hankamer*, ed. Nicholas LaCara, Anie Thompson, and Matthew A. Tucker, 177–211. Santa Cruz: SlugPubs.

Ussishkin, Adam. 2003. Templatic effects as fixed prosody: The verbal system in Semitic. In *Research in Afroasiatic Grammar II: Selected papers from the Fifth Conference on Afroasiatic Languages, Paris, 2000*, ed. Jacqueline Lecarme, 511–530. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Woolford, Ellen. 2011. PF Factors in Pronominal Clitic Selection in Tzotzil. In *Representing Language: Essays in Honor of Judith Aissen*, ed. Rodrigo Gutiérrez-Bravo, Line Mikkelsen, and Eric Potsdam, 305–320. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Linguistics Research Center.