

## Topics and study guide

### Readings

For the most part, the readings are intended to deepen and extend the material included in the lectures, rather than to introduce completely new topics. However, if you don't recognize a topic in the study guide from the lectures, you can find it in the readings.

### Lecture notes

Don't assume that you can get everything you need to know from the online lecture notes! Not only is some material that you will be responsible for possibly **not included** in the online notes, but reading similar material in the various sources will make it **much** easier for you to master the concepts and terminology.

### Introductory stuff

- Notions of "language", "dialect", "idiolect"
  - Equal linguistic complexity and logic
- Prescriptive vs. descriptive grammar
  - Valid differences of opinion vs. plain falsehoods
- Prestige dialect as a socially determined, linguistically arbitrary choice
  - AAVE
  - My Fair Lady
- "Correctness" in perspective
  - language as fashion: arbitrary nature of linguistic judgments at various time periods
  - example of singular *they*
  - verb agreement, double negatives

### Language as instinct

- Basic forms of evidence of language as an "instinct"
  - Child creativity
  - Creolization
  - Independence of language from spoken modality
- Independence of language and other cognitive abilities
  - Williams Syndrome
  - Specific Language Impairment
- Nicaraguan Sign Language

### Animal communication & language evolution

- Animal communication
  - range of functions and types of displays
  - instinct vs. learning
- Limitations of systems
  - small repertoire of displays
  - lack of new displays, or combinations
  - "grammar" of nonlinguistic behaviors
- Basic properties of human language absent from animal communication
  - Phonological principle, open lexicon, recursive syntactic structure, compositional semantics
  - more generally, combining smaller elements to make larger ones in a hierarchy
  - Theory of mind
    - not strictly linguistic, but crucial to many uses of language
- Theories of language origin
  - for communication of practical information
  - for improved thinking
  - for social interaction
- Physical adaptations of hominids
  - descent of larynx
  - sexual dimorphism of larynx

- brain size and organization
- Two social theories
  - gossip as grooming (Dunbar)
  - symbolic representation of interrelationships (Deacon)
- A non-adaptive alternative
  - language as a spandrel

### Phonetics and Phonology

- Basic parts of the vocal tract
  - anatomy in the diagram in Language Files
- The larynx and voicing
- Phonetic terms and symbols for English sounds
  - place and manner of articulation
- Natural classes
- Phoneme and allophone
- Contextual determination of sound alternation
  - English aspiration, flapping, diphthong raising
- Syllables and their parts
  - Role of sonority in syllable structure

### Morphology

- Morpheme, allomorph
- Phonological vs. syntactic word
- Stem, root
  - Bound vs. free
- Content vs. function
- Open- vs. closed-class
- Affix, prefix, suffix
  - Non-affixal morphology (internal changes)
- Hierarchical constituent structure
  - Affixation and compounding
- Inflection vs. derivation
  - word-form of "same" word (lexeme) vs. "new" word
  - paradigms of inflected forms vs. networks of related words
- Relation of (inflectional) morphology and syntax

### Syntax

- Language requires basic elements and means for arranging them
- Linear order
  - basic word order such as SVO
- Constituency
  - hierarchical and recursive
  - tests
    - movement
    - standing alone
    - pro-form substitution
    - cleft sentence
- Ambiguity
  - lexical vs. structural
- Phrase structure rules
  - lexical categories (noun, adjective, verb, determiner, etc.)
  - rules for combining them in phrases
    - complement
    - adjunction
- Auxiliary verbs
  - special structure

- do-support
- Movement
  - gap and trace (Pinker)
  - Verb-raising; Inversion
- Don't worry about Pinker's discussion of "word-chain devices"

### Semantics and Pragmatics

- Discourse functions of syntax
  - constructions
- Speech acts
  - felicity conditions
  - direct and indirect speech acts
- Pragmatics vs. truth-conditional semantics
  - felicity vs. grammaticality
  - Entailment vs implicature
- Grice: explaining implicature by Cooperative Principle
  - Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relation, Manner
- Word meanings
  - set, element, subset, superset, complement
- Sentence semantics
  - truth conditions: diagnostic of synonymy
  - sense vs reference
- Scalar implicatures

### Historical Linguistics

- Linguistic diversity in the world
  - problem (again) of defining "language"
- political and cultural aspects
- Relatedness of languages
  - possible explanations for similarities among languages
- notion of cognate
- Systematic correspondences in cognates
  - Proto-Indo-European stop consonants (Grimm's Law)
  - Polynesian
- The comparative method (Ringe, "In Search of the First Language")
  - power to show relationship even for words that "look" dissimilar
  - also to disprove relationship of superficially similar words
  - limits of long-range comparison
- Sources of change
  - language acquisition, language use, language and identity
- not equivalent to "degeneration"
- Sound change
  - conditioned
  - unconditioned

### Sociolinguistics

- Variation according to class, region, ethnicity
- Regional variation in American English
  - pronunciation, vocabulary, syntax
- vowel shifts
  - pin-pen merger
- happening despite national media
- Social judgments of dialect differences
  - prestige vs. vernacular (My Fair Lady & AAVE again)
  - upper vs. lower class perceptions
  - "shibboleth"

- Forces driving change:
  - Overt vs covert prestige
- Case studies
  - g-dropping in Norwich, New York, etc.
    - history and persistence across centuries
  - r-fulness in New York
    - role of class and age
  - vowel centralization on Martha's Vineyard
    - covert vs. overt prestige

### **Language Acquisition**

- Untutored learning by children
  - critical period
  - evidence from isolated children
- Stages of acquisition
  - babbling, one-word, two-word /multi-word
  - content words before grammatical morphemes
- Phonological development
  - typical changes and simplifications
- Comprehension and perception in advance of production
- Development of grammatical complexity
  - adult word order usually obeyed
- overregularization of morphology
- simple versus complex phrases, and their combination
- Biases in learning word meanings
  - whole object
  - taxonomy
  - contrast
  - Over- and under-extension of meanings
    - found even for adults

### **Psycholinguistics & Neurolinguistics**

- Speech errors and what they reveal about language representations and processing
  - units and types of errors
    - malapropism (=word substitution)
    - spoonerism (=onset/phoneme exchange)
  - Limited role of "repressed thoughts"
- Sentence processing
  - garden-path sentences
  - modularity vs interactivity; parallel vs sequential
  - biases in processing
    - frequency-based
    - context-based
    - preference for simpler structures
- Brain basics
  - lateralization
  - basic functions of each hemisphere (esp. for language)
- Aphasias (three major types): characteristics, locations, associated areas
  - Broca's
  - Wernicke's
  - conduction
- Use of brain imaging