
Psychology 7/8503
Seminar in Experimental Psychology:
Psychology of Language
Spring 2011

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:30-6:55
Psychology Building 208

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Office hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays 4:00-5:00, and by appointment

Objectives

This course will provide students with basic competencies in the fields of linguistics and psycholinguistics. It is also designed to foster critical thinking and presentation skills.

Readings

PDFs of the readings (beginning with the February 1st class) will be available at:

[umdrive.memphis.edu/rkreuz/public/Psych of Language](http://umdrive.memphis.edu/rkreuz/public/Psych%20of%20Language)

Evaluation

Each of you will lead a discussion of the readings for a given week during the term, and this will constitute 40% of your course grade.

You will also be expected to submit commentaries for the week's readings (starting with the February 1st class). The commentaries should be ~300 words in length, and must be submitted to the course's blog site by noon on the Monday before the class. The commentaries will constitute 40% of your course grade.

Attendance of all lectures and discussions is expected, and will count as 20% of your course grade. If you know in advance that you must miss a class (e.g., you're attending a conference), please inform the instructor beforehand. More than one unexcused absence will have a negative impact on your course grade.

Blog site

Commentaries should be uploaded to:

psychoflanguage.blogspot.com

You will need to create a Google account if you don't already have one. Your first task in this course will be to submit a test comment to the blog site.

Class dates, topics, and readings

Thursday, 13 January (lecture)	Introduction • course format • topics • resources major works • language origins • design features • typologies
Tuesday, 18 January (lecture)	Proto-Indo European • Indo-European • Isolates • Old English Middle English • Early Modern English • Great Vowel Shift Modern English
Thursday, 20 January (lecture)	Phonetics and phonemics • consonants • place of articulation manner of articulation • vowels • tongue height & position IPA • phonemic and lexical variation • Grimm's Law • dialects language change • Great Vowel Shift • pidgins and creoles
Tuesday, 25 January (lecture)	Morphemes • phonological processes • suprasegmental features prosody
Thursday, 27 January (lecture)	Models of visual word recognition • features of words frequency • age of acquisition • neighborhood effects semantic variables • priming
Tuesday, 01 February	Discussion: word recognition readings Kwantes, P. J., & Mewhort, J. K. (1999). Evidence for sequential processing in visual word recognition. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance</i> , 25, 376-381. Smith, M. C., Bentin, S., & Spalek, T. M. (2001). Attention constraints of semantic activation during visual word recognition. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition</i> , 27, 1289-1298.
Thursday, 03 February (lecture)	Mental lexicon • size estimates • idiolect • Logogen model
Tuesday, 08 February	Discussion: mental lexicon reading Marslen-Wilson, W., Komisarjevsky, L., Waksler, R., & Older, L. (1994). Morphology and meaning in the English mental lexicon. <i>Psychological Review</i> , 101, 3-33.
Thursday, 10 February (lecture)	Lecture: semantic representation • semantic primitives connotation vs. denotation • semantic differential multidimensional scaling • semantic space analogs (LSA & HAL)

Tuesday, 15 February Discussion: semantic representation readings

Buchanan, L., Westbury, C., & Burgess, C. (2001). Characterizing semantic space: Neighborhood effects in word recognition. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 8, 531-544.

Glenberg, A. M., & Kaschak, M. P. (2002). Grounding language in action. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 9, 558-565.

Thursday, 17 February Syntax • grammatical categories • Chomsky • lexical (lecture) functional grammar • garden path effects

Tuesday, 22 February Discussion: syntactic processing readings

Altmann, G. T. M., Garnham, A., & Henstra, J. A. (1994). Effects of syntax in human sentence parsing: Evidence against a structure-based proposal mechanism. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 20, 209-216.

Staub, A., & Clifton Jr., C. (2006). Syntactic prediction in language comprehension: Evidence from *Either . . . or*. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 32, 425-436.

Thursday, 24 February Speech production • coarticulation • phonological & (lecture) morphological errors • segmental errors • lexical & semantic errors • speech hesitation • role of feedback

Tuesday, 01 March Discussion: speech production readings

Damian, M. F. (2003). Articulatory duration in single-word speech production. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 29, 416-431.

Vitevitch, M. S. (2002). The influence of phonological similarity neighborhood on speech production. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 28, 735-747.

Thursday, 03 March Speech perception • segmentation problem • variability (lecture) problem • categorical perception • disambiguating cues McGurk effect

Tuesday, 15 March Discussion: speech perception readings

Berent, I., Balaban, E., Lennertz, T., & Vaknin-Nusbaum, V. (2010). Phonological universals constrain the processing of nonspeech stimuli. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 139, 418-435.

Magnuson, J. S., & Nusbaum, H. C. (2007). Acoustic differences, listener expectations, and the perceptual accommodation of talker variability. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 35, 391-409.

Tuesday, 08 March ~~Independent fieldwork~~ *Spring Break*

Thursday, 10 March ~~Deep contemplation~~ *Spring Break*

Thursday, 17 March Psychology of reading • fixations & saccades • orthographic
(lecture) issues • reader goals • theme • narratives vs. expository text

Tuesday, 22 March Discussion: psychology of reading readings

Egidi, G., & Gerrig, R. J. (2006). Readers' experiences of characters' goals and actions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 32, 1322-1329.

Long, D., Wilson, J., Hurley, R., & Prat, C. (2006). Assessing text representations with recognition: The interaction of domain knowledge and text coherence. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 32, 816-827.

Thursday, 24 March Discourse • speech act theory • implicatures • given-new
(lecture) common ground • linguistic politeness

Tuesday, 29 March Discussion: discourse readings

Brennan, S. E., & Clark, H. H. (1996). Conceptual pacts and lexical choice in conversation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 22, 1482-1493.

Holtgraves, T. (2008). Conversation, speech acts, and memory. *Memory & Cognition*, 36, 361-374.

Thursday, 31 March Nonliteral language • typology • reasons for use • theories of
(lecture) comprehension • social factors

Tuesday, 05 April Discussion: nonliteral language readings

Giora R., & Fein, O. (1999). On understanding familiar and less-familiar figurative language. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31, 1601-1618.

Hancock, J. T. (2004). Verbal irony use in face-to-face and computer mediated conversations. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 23, 447-463.

Thursday, 07 April Language and thought • Sapir-Whorf hypothesis • color terms
(lecture) time and space • counterfactuals

Tuesday, 12 April Discussion: language and thought readings

Boroditsky, L. Does language shape thought? Mandarin and English speakers' conceptions of time. *Cognitive Psychology*, 43, 1-22.

Wolff, P., & Ventura, T. (2009). When Russians learn English: How the semantics of causation may change. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 12, 153-176.

Thursday, 14 April
(lecture)

Bilingualism • typology advantages & disadvantages • switching costs • interference • being bilingual

Tuesday, 19 April

Discussion: bilingualism readings

Gollan, T. H., Montoya, R. I., Fennema-Notestine, C., & Morris, S. K. (2005). Bilingualism affects picture naming but not picture classification. *Memory & Cognition*, 33, 1220-1234.

Kousta, S., Vinson, D. P., & Vigliocco, G. (2008). Investigating linguistic relativity through bilingualism: The case of grammatical gender. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 34, 843-858.

Thursday, 21 April
(lecture)

Animal communication systems • dance of the bees • Gua Washoe • Koko • Alex • Clever Hans as a cautionary tale

Tuesday, 26 April

Discussion: language in other species readings

Lyn, H., Greenfield, P. M., Savage-Rumbaugh, S., Gillespie-Lynch, K., & Hopkins, W. D. (2010). Nonhuman primates do declare! A comparison of declarative symbol and gesture use in two children, two bonobos, and a chimpanzee. *Language & Communication*, 1-12.

Pepperberg, I. M. (2007). Grey parrots do not always 'parrot': the roles of imitation and phonological awareness in the creation of new labels from existing vocalizations. *Language Sciences*, 29, 1-13.

Some Notes on Being the Discussion Leader

You should take your responsibilities as discussion leader seriously. In particular, you should be well prepared to examine critically the issues at hand. I would advise you to read the paper(s) well in advance, and you may want to read some of articles that the authors cite. Of course, you should feel free to come and talk to me about any concerns you have. (You'll also have the incredibly insightful commentaries of your classmates to help you.)

Some Notes on the Commentaries

An important skill to learn is how to critically but fairly evaluate a research project, and then distill your thoughts into a coherent written document. To help you develop this skill, an important part of this course will be the writing of commentaries.

The commentary should *not* be a summary of the paper's methodology and results: that's why the authors wrote an abstract. Instead, the commentary should focus on questions like the following:

General

- Does the article explore an important issue?
- Do the authors employ terms and concepts without explaining them?
- Was there anything that was confusing or ambiguous?
- Is the paper well written and clearly organized?

Procedural

- Is the methodology appropriate for the questions being investigated?
- Is there a different or better methodology that could have been employed?
- Are there any issues with the stimuli?

Data and statistics

- Are the statistics appropriate for the data?
- Anything noteworthy about the participants (e.g., small sample size, skewed gender)?
- Did the authors use tables and figures appropriately? Redundantly? Haphazardly? Not at all?
- Are there limitations to generalizability?

Big picture

- Do the experiments have ecological validity?
- Do the authors' conclusions follow from the evidence presented? Are you convinced?
- Do the authors over-reach in their interpretations of the evidence?
- Are there alternative explanations for the results?
- Do the authors tell a good story?

These are just starting points – feel free to address other issues that you feel are important.

(Potentially) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I've written everything I can think of, but my commentary is only 237 words long. Am I a bad person?

A: Probably not. The 300 word length is simply a guideline; don't be too obsessed with this number. Some of your papers will be shorter, and others will be longer. However, if you're routinely writing 600 word commentaries, you should try to be more succinct. And if you're routinely writing 200 word missives, I'll probably notice (and not be impressed).

Q: Do I need to give both papers equal attention in my commentaries?

A: Nope. For whatever reason, you may have more to say about one paper than another. However, you should address at least some issues in each article.

Q: My pet dog/cat/weasel just died, and I'm pretty broken up. Is it possible to skip the assignment if I can't bring myself to write?

A: Yes, I'll allow each of you to skip one commentary assignment during the term. However, if you skip more than that, you'll need to throw yourself on the mercy of the court. Keep in mind that I take these assignments pretty seriously, so don't expect too much sympathy.

Q: I was too hung over to write, so I didn't upload my commentary until midnight (variants: my WiFi wasn't working, my hard drive died, the dog ate my paper).

A: I expect graduate students to be responsible, but sometimes life does hand you lemons. Please do everything you can to get the commentaries submitted on time. It makes the discussion leaders' job easier if they have your thoughts in a timely manner. And if any of you are consistently late, you'll be hearing from me.

Q: Will I get feedback on my commentaries from you?

A: Although I will read all the commentaries carefully, I'll only provide feedback if I spot problems (so, no news is good news).

Q: Do I need to write a commentary for the day when I'm a discussion leader?

A: No – you're off the hook for that class. That's one of the perks of being discussion leader.
