

Welcome to LING 101!

- Please sign your name in the book on the front desk and take a notecard and write down the following things about yourself:
 - Name
 - Year
 - What's your major?
 - Where are you from?
 - Also potentially interesting: where are your parents from?
 - Why are you taking this class?
 - Something interesting about you linguistically. (e.g. How many languages have you studied/do you speak?)
 - Something else interesting about yourself



Introduction

LING 101 Summer Session II

Amy Reynolds

Overview

- Introduction
- Class Policies and Class Schedule
- What is Linguistics?
 - What is mental grammar?
 - Prescriptive vs. Descriptive Grammars
 - Brief History of Prescriptivism (if time)

Contact Information

- LING 101 Summer Session II, Section 001
- Amy Reynolds
 - Office: Smith 104
 - Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
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 - E-mail policy
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General Class Schedule

- When you first walk in:
 - Sign in
 - Homeworks (when applicable)
- Each class will begin with a brief review of the previous day's topics, a outline of the days topics, followed by lecture and practice questions.

Class Policies

- Laptop and Cell Phone Use
- Two Assignments per unit:
 - Homeworks
 - Collaboration
 - Writing Assignments
- Participation
- Attendance
- Honor Code
- Grade Breakdown

Class Schedule and Syllabus

- The class schedule is available online on my site: amyrey.web.unc.edu
- The schedule will be updated daily, based on what topics we have covered that day. I will also update the syllabus, which will include links to the powerpoints used for that day.

A little bit about me

- Alabama to Kansas to North Carolina.
- How I became interested in Linguistics
- Other interests



What is Linguistics?

- Some good examples of what linguistics is not:



- It is not being able to speak many languages.
- It is not focused on prescriptive grammar (more on that in a bit)

What is Linguistics?

- Linguistics is the study of language and grammar.
 - What does this mean?
 - We study **how language works**. We study how it is used in many different contexts.
 - The aim specifically is to be able to create systems and theories that accurately explain how we use language.

What is Linguistics?

- Phonetics
 - Study of production and perception of speech sounds
- Phonology
 - Structure of sounds
- Morphology
 - Structure of words and morphemes
- Syntax
 - Structure of Sentences
- Semantics
 - Language and meaning
- Language Acquisition
 - Study of how language is acquired (either first- or second-language)
- Historical Linguistics
 - Study of how language has changed over time
- Sociolinguistics
 - Study of interaction between society and language
- Psycholinguistics
 - Study of Language and the Brain

What is Linguistics?

- What do we mean when we say that we are studying a language's **grammar**?
 - When describing languages, there are traditionally three types of grammars that we talk about:
 - Prescriptive grammar: what people “**should**” say
 - Descriptive grammar: what people **do** say
 - Mental grammar: what do we know when we know a language? (i.e. **linguistic competence**)

What is Linguistics?

- What do we mean when we say that we are studying a language's **grammar**?
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 - Descriptive grammar: what people **do** say
 - Mental grammar: what do we know when we know a language? (i.e. **linguistic competence**)
 - In linguistics, we are interested in the latter two.

What is mental grammar?

- What do we know when we know a language?
 - Much of mental grammar is systematic – forming unconscious ‘rules’/ ‘principles’

Examples: (rules not taught in school!)

- *brick, blick, bnick*
 1. *Oscar admires himself*
 2. *Oscar thinks that Grover admires himself*
 3. *Oscar told Grover stories about himself*

What is mental grammar?

- What do we know when we know a language?
 - Much of mental grammar is systematic – forming unconscious ‘rules’/ ‘principles’
 - More evidence for mental grammar:
 - Children making systematic ‘mistakes’ when acquiring their language
 - Human language is creative (**productive**)
 - We can produce and understand words/phrases/sentences
 - A mental grammar is more than a memorized list.

How do we study mental grammar?

- We do this through observing **what people actually say**. (Hence, we create descriptive grammars).
 - Some things we can observe and study:
 - **Build a model** of linguistic competence based on the **grammaticality judgments** of native speakers.
 - Try to make a model that produces **grammatically accurate data**.
 - Observe child language acquisition
 - How do their mental grammars form over time?

How do we study mental grammar?

- We do this through observing **what people actually say**. (Hence, we create descriptive grammars).
 - Some things to keep in mind:
 - **Spoken language**, rather than written is most reflective of mental grammar.
 - Writing tends to be crafted.
 - Not all languages have written language, but all have spoken [signed] language.

Why descriptive rather than prescriptive grammars?

- Prescriptive grammars are arbitrary and manufactured. They do not reflect what people actually do or say, but rather try to change what people say to fit an arbitrary set of rules.
- Something to consider:
 - How do we determine what is the ‘correct’ way to speak?

How do we determine what is the 'correct' way to speak?

- What do your native-speaker intuitions tell you about the grammaticality of these examples?
(Does your mental grammar allow them?)
 - (1) *Feeding your cat is **different to** feeding your dog.*
 - (2) *I remember once, after the lads had finished their meal and I **was sat** at the table finishing my cup of tea, the farmer's wife came in and pushed the bench under the table with me still **sat** on it.*
 - (3) ***Can't nobody** beat 'em.*

How do we determine what is the 'correct' way to speak?

- These examples came from
 - (1) A blog called catsofaustralia.com
 - (2) Female British speaker, born 1921, now of Harrogate, N. Yorkshire ([original source](#))
 - (3) An example of the language variety known as African American English, from the [Language Varieties](#) web site at U. of New England
- Which of these examples is **correct** English?
Australian English or American English?

How do we determine what is the 'correct' way to speak?

- Which of these examples is **correct** English?
Australian English or American English?
- This is not a valid question for us as linguists
 - The American English speaker simply has a different mental grammar from the Australian English speaker that allows the construction *different than* or *different from*, but not *different to*.
 - The Australian English speaker has a mental grammar that allows the construction *different to*.
 - Both speakers have mental grammars – they're simply different mental grammars.

How do we determine what is the 'correct' way to speak?

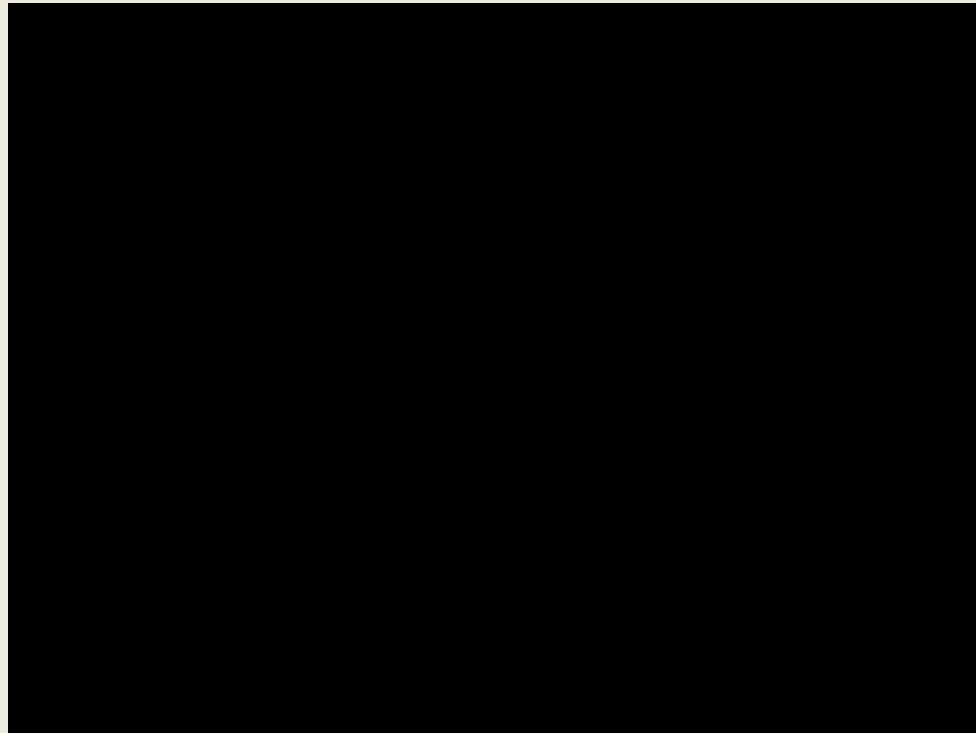
- This leads us to an important premise in linguistics:
 - No one's language variety 'has no grammar'
 - No one's language variety is any less (or more!) logical than any other.
 - Every mental grammar is systematic
 - Every mental grammar is interesting to and valued by linguists
- A 'standard' or 'prestige' language variety is simply one that got lucky (historically, socially, politically)

A History (in brief) of Prescriptivism

- Prescriptive grammars began in the eighteenth century, due to a combination of social, linguistic, and philosophical factors that arose in that time period (Elizabeth Closs Traugott, 1972: 163-8).
 - Social: Rise of the middle class in the Industrial Revolution
 - Linguistic: Period of linguistic conservatism, following the linguistic liberalism of the Renaissance
 - Philosophical: Period of Rationalist philosophy (believed language should be logical, symmetrical, and orderly).
- Prescriptivists called for changes to English's grammar, based on [their assumed] authority, the grammar of classical languages, etymology, and logic.
 - None of these factors are focused on accurately describing English as a language, but in shaping it to follow some arbitrary rule.
- This information has been taken from Laurel J. Brinton and Leslie K. Arnovick's The English Language: A Linguistic History. Oxford UP: 2006., Chapter 11. For further reading, I'd encourage reading David Crystal's The Fight for English. It's a fantastic book and really easy read.

A History (in brief) of Prescriptivism

- Over time, when we realize how prescriptivism came about, we may slowly change prescriptivist grammar rules to be more like natural language.
- Here is a [clip](#) from one of Merriam-Webster's editors made back in February 2011:



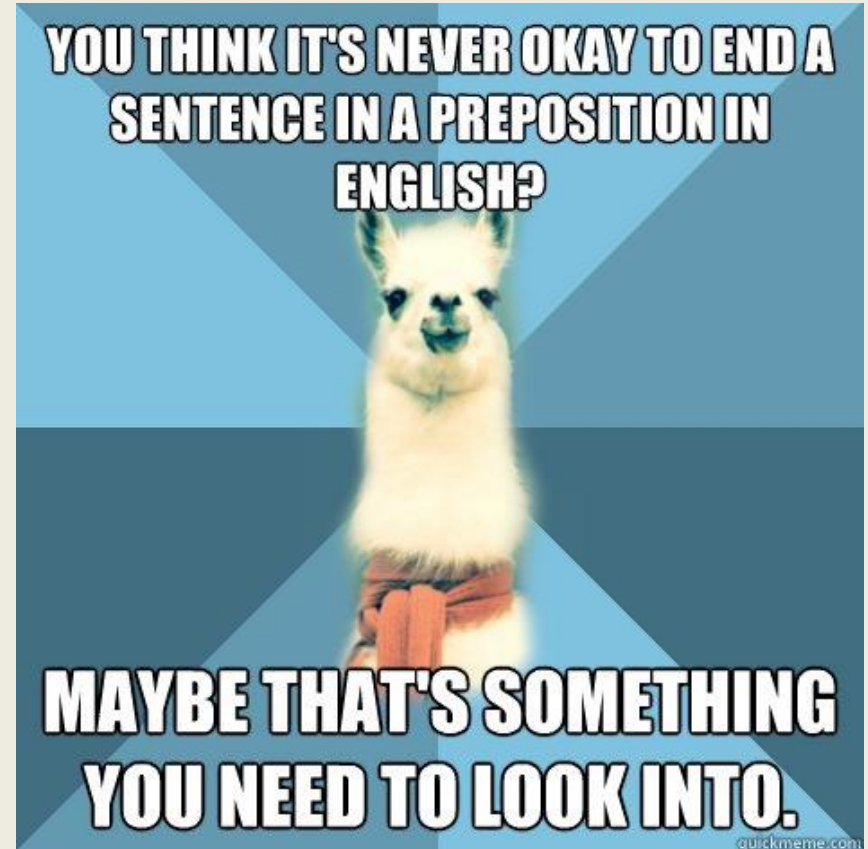
- To access original source on YouTube, click the 'clip' hyperlink above.

A History (in brief) of Prescriptivism

- What about some other grammar ‘rules’?
 - Double negatives:
 - Does Rolling Stones’ “I can’t get no satisfaction” = “I can get any satisfaction”?
 - Split infinitives:
 - “To boldly go where no one has gone before” or “To go boldly where no one has gone before”?
 - Ending sentences with prepositions:
 - Is it really easier to say “These aren’t the droids for which you are looking” rather than “These aren’t the droids you are looking for”?

Identifying Prescriptive vs. Descriptive Statements

- Prescriptive statements tell you what you **should** do in a language.
- Descriptive statements tell you what you **actually** do in a language



Practice

- Turn to page 14 in your books.
- Complete Exercise 5, questions (f) – (k)
- Complete Exercise 6, questions (f) – (l)

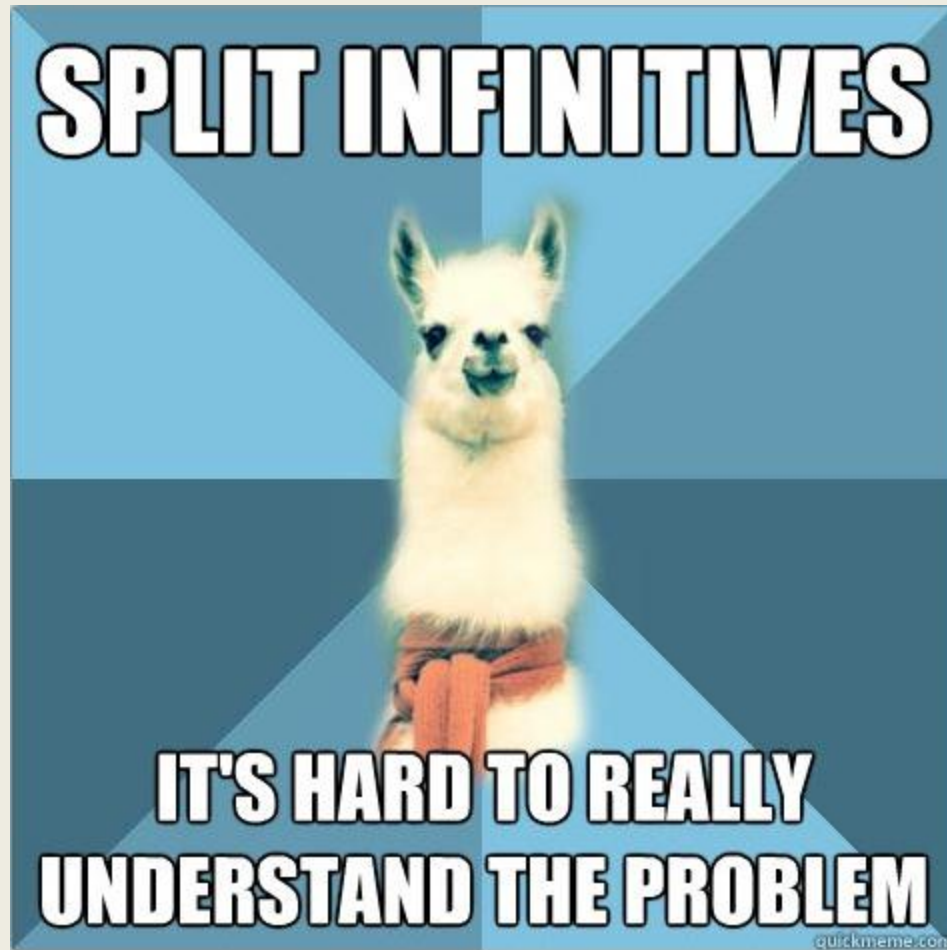
Review

- Class Schedule and Policies
- Honor Code and Plagiarism
- What is Linguistics?
 - The different types of grammars
 - The difference between prescriptive and descriptive grammars.

Homework

- You must go to the plagiarism tutorial provided by UNC's libraries at: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/index.html> complete the quiz at the end, print off the page verifying that you completed the quiz, and submit it to me by the beginning of class on Monday, the 25th.
- **Writing Assignment:** Due Tues. the 26th.
 - **Will post on sakai and my site by noon today**
- Homework (due tomorrow, Friday the 22nd):
 - Exercise 3 (include commentary on your judgement compared to a friend's), and Exercises 5 and 6 (a) – (e)
- Reading:
 - Ch. 1, especially focusing on Section 3
 - For next time, Ch. 2, Sections 1 - 4

Have a good day!



Many thanks to Professor Jen Smith for allowing me to use content from some of her slides from the LING 101, Spring 2011 course.