## Linguistic Perspectives on

 English Grammar
## The Linguistic Approach

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## The Linguistic Approach

- Assignment \#1: Send an email to tpayne@uoregon.edu with the following information (due tomorrow):
- Your name
- Languages you speak
- Mother tongue
- Others which you: can speak fluently, can speak a little, can read/write, have studied, etc.
- Previous linguistics courses
- Plans for the future
- What do you expect to get out of this class?


## The Linguistic Approach

- What comes to mind when you think of "grammar"?


## The Linguistic Approach

- Grammar (with a capital "G") as the object of linguistic investigation:


## The Linguistic Approach

o Grammar is a bridge between mental states of individuals and the social reality of their community.

## The Linguistic Approach

o Fact or Fiction? Casual everyday speech is grammatically poorer than careful, formal speech.

## The Linguistic Approach

o Descriptive rather than prescriptive
Like, OH MY GOSH!
Like - TOTALLY.
Encino is like SO COOL.
There's like the Galleria.
And like all these like really great shoe stores.
I love going into like clothes stores ' $n$ ' stuff.
I like buy the neatest mini-skirts ' $n$ ' stuff.
It's like SO COOL cuz like everybody's like
Super-super nice...
It's like WAY COOL ...

## The Linguistic Approach

- Like-insertion
- Encino is like so COOL.
-     * Encino like is so COOL.
-     * Encino is so COOL like.
-     * Like Encino is so COOL.
- This is a totally regular and consistent pattern.


## The Linguistic Approach

o Fact or Fiction? Non-standard varieties of English are grammatically deficient, sloppy, or illogical.

## The Linguistic Approach

- Fact: Double negation is not "illogical" at all:

First, the only interpretation of I didn't do nothing wrong is negative, not affirmative. No one is confused by this construction. Second, many other "standard" languages use two negative morphemes (e.g., French, Russian, Hausa . . .).

## The Linguistic Approach

- Two non-standard constructions:
a. Double negation.

I didn't do nothing wrong.
You ain't going to no heaven.
b. Omission of "be".

He doing something.
She in the hospital.

## The Linguistic Approach

- Fact: be omission occurs in certain "nonstandard" varieties exactly where contraction is allowed in "standard" English:
He doing something. non-standard
He's doing something. standard
Yes he is.
standard and nonstandard
*Yes he. non-standard
*Yes he's.


## The Linguistic Approach

| - Who is it? | standard and non- <br> standard |
| :--- | :--- |
| *Who it? | non-standard |
| *Who's it? | standard |
| I know who you are. | standard |
| I know who you be. | non-standard |
| *I know who you're. | standard |
| *I know who you. | non-standard |

## The Linguistic Approach

## - Summary

- All languages and language varieties are approximately equal in grammatical complexity.
- If you are a native speaker of a language, regardless of the variety, you have a perfect internalized, unconscious grammar of that language.
- Linguists are interested in explaining what kinds of rules people unconsciously follow, regardless of the social status of their speech.


## The Linguistic Approach

- Methods
-data collection
-data analysis
- hypothesis generation
- hypothesis testing and revision
- principled explanation


## The Linguistic Approach

- be omission, like double negation and like insertion follows regular grammatical patterns.
- These are the same kinds of patterns with about the same degree of complexity as are found in the "standard" language.
- They are useful patterns, because they allow people to communicate.

The Linguistic Approach

- Pedagogical reasons:
- Scientific reasons:

|  |
| :--- |
| The Linguistic Approach |
| - Methods |
| - data collection |
| - data analysis |
| - hypothesis generation |
| - hypothesis testing and revision |
| - principled explanation |

## The Linguistic Approach

- Theory of symbolic systems The form-function composite:



## The Linguistic Approach

- Terms associated with the two main parts of the form-function composite:



## The Linguistic Approach

Characteristics of Heart and Head Knowledge
Heart knowledge
Head knowledge

## The Linguistic Approach

- How does the mind actually work?

| The Linguistic Approach |
| :--- |
| Characteristics of Heart and Head <br> Knowledge <br> Heart knowledge <br>  <br>  <br>  |
|  |

## The Linguistic Approach

- The process of becoming "fluent" in an L2 is the process of moving from head knowledge to heart knowledge of the form-function composites of the L2.



## Components of Grammar

- Grammar is traditionally divided into two main components:
-Morphology
-Syntax


## Concepts in Morphology

o A morpheme is an idealized mental construct. It represents the smallest piece of form that expresses meaning in a language, e.g. \{cat\}, $\{$-s\}, \{-ed\}, \{leftward stress shift\}.
o An allomorph is a variant, or alternate pronunciation of a morpheme, e.g. $|-s|,|-z|$ and $|-\mathrm{iz}|$ are all allomorphs of the plural $\{-\mathrm{s}\}$ in English.
o A bound morpheme is a morpheme that cannot occur by itself - it must be attached to at least one other morpheme, e.g. the \{un-\} in "unkind," the $\{-\mathrm{ly}\}$ in "happily," or the \{huckle\} in "huckleberry."

