

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

- What comes to mind when you think of “grammar”?

To a linguist, Grammar is everything you need to know in order to speak a language.

The Linguistic Approach

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

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

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- 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 ...

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- **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.

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

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- 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.*

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- 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 . . .).

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- Fact: *be* omission occurs in certain “non-standard” varieties exactly where contraction is allowed in “standard”

English:

He doing something.	<i>non-standard</i>
He's doing something.	<i>standard</i>
Yes he is.	<i>standard and non-standard</i>
*Yes he.	<i>non-standard</i>
*Yes he's.	<i>standard</i>

The Linguistic Approach

- Fact: *be* omission occurs in certain “non-standard” varieties exactly where contraction is allowed in “standard”

English:

Who is it?	<i>standard and non-standard</i>
*Who it?	<i>non-standard</i>
*Who's it?	<i>standard</i>

The Linguistic Approach

- Fact: *be* omission occurs in certain “non-standard” varieties exactly where contraction is allowed in “standard”

English:

I know who you are.	<i>standard</i>
I know who you be.	<i>non-standard</i>
*I know who you're.	<i>standard</i>
*I know who you.	<i>non-standard</i>

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- *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.

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• 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.

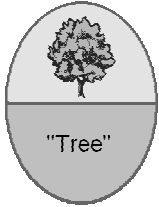
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- Pedagogical reasons:

- Scientific reasons:

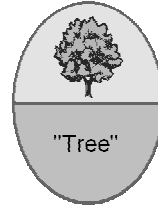
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- Theory of symbolic systems
The form-function composite:



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



The Linguistic Approach

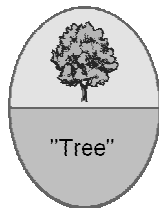
- How *does* the mind actually work?

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- Characteristics of Heart and Head Knowledge:
- Heart knowledge** **Head knowledge**

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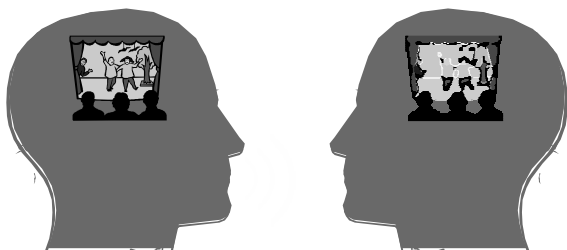
- The process of becoming “fluent” in an L2 is the process of moving from head knowledge to heart knowledge of the form-function composites of the L2.



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- Theory
 - A Recurring Metaphor
 - Discourse is like a play (scene semantics)

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The Linguistic Approach

- Theory
 - Another Recurring Metaphor
 - Building a message is like building a building
 - Pile of rocks:

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- Theory
 - What do you do when a rock doesn't fit?

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Lexical expression:

Type 1: die → kill, go → went
(also called “(strong) suppletion”)

Type 2: deer (sg.) → deer (pl.)
(also called “isomorphism”)

Type 3: rise → raise
(also called “weak suppletion.”)

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- Morphological expression
(change the shape of a rock)

- What's a morpheme?

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- Syntactic constructions (combine rocks):
rise → cause to rise

speak → will speak

I like beans. → Beans I like.

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- How many morphemes are in the following words?

dogs

cattle

indistinguishable

altruistic

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 |-iz| are all allomorphs of the plural {-s} in English.
- o A **bound morpheme** is a morpheme that can not occur by itself – it must be attached to at least one other morpheme, e.g. the {un-} in “unkind,” the {-ly} in “happily,” or the {huckle} in “huckleberry.”

Concepts in Morphology

- o A **free morpheme** is a morpheme that can stand on its own as a meaningful unit, e.g. {cat} or {tree}.
- o An **affix** is a bound morpheme that expresses grammatical meaning, e.g. {-ed}, {un-}
 - o A **prefix** is an affix that is attached to the left of a root, e.g. {un-}
 - o A **suffix** is an affix that is attached to the right of a root, e.g. {-ed}.
 - o A **suprafix** is a morpheme that consists of stress change only (in English), e.g., convert > cónvert.

Concepts in Morphology

- o The **root** of a word expresses the main semantic content of the word, e.g. {cat} in “cats” or {happy} in “happily.” Roots cannot be further analyzed into morphemes. Some roots are bound morphemes (e.g., {huckle} in “huckleberry” or {duce} in “reduce.”). But most are free, e.g., {cat} and {tree}.
- o A **stem** is a root plus one or more derivational affixes (see below), e.g., “reduce,” “enable,” or “intuition.”

Concepts in Morphology

- o A **derivational morpheme** is an affix that, when added to a stem, creates a new stem, e.g. the {-ize} in “hospitalize,” the {un-} in “unhappy.”
- o An **inflectional morpheme** is an affix that, when added to a word, “grounds” the word in terms of time, space, or the other aspects of the environment, e.g. the {-s} in “desks,” the {-ed} in “walked.” There are exactly four inflectional morphemes that can be added to each English verb, two for each noun and two for each adjective.

Concepts in Morphology

- o Derivational categories/affixes
 - Often change word class.
 - Significantly affect the meaning of a stem.
 - Relatively “non-productive” in that . . .
 - they tend to not apply to all roots of a class.
 - they tend to not have the same effect every time they apply.