

What is this Class?

- ▶ Linguistics 1 (linguist1)
- ▶ Introduction to Linguistics
- ▶ **URL:** <http://linguist1.stanford.edu/>

Who are we?

- ▶ Professors of Linguistics:
 - ▶ **Penny Eckert:** Sociolinguistics, language variation and change, language and social practice, dialects, Romance linguistics, Professor (by Courtesy) in Anthropology.
 - ▶ **Ivan Sag:** Grammatical theory, syntax, semantics, cognitive science, grammar and processing, computational linguistics, former Director of Symbolic Systems Program.
- ▶ Graduate students in Linguistics: **Jess Spencer, Roey Gafter.**

What is Linguistics?

- ▶ Linguistics is the study of human language, broadly construed.
- ▶ Linguistics is a scientific discipline with established theories, analytic methods, and real-world applications.
- ▶ Linguists often study individual languages, but...
- ▶ When linguists study individual languages, they have larger issues in mind.

- ▶ Are there linguistic universals?
- ▶ If so, why?
- ▶ Are there universal tendencies in language?
- ▶ What is the range of language diversity?
- ▶ 'Possible human language' ?
- ▶ How to characterize the complex linguistic knowledge?
- ▶ What kind of 'grammars' do human languages have?
- ▶ What do people do with linguistic distinctions?
- ▶ Communicate information: 'facts', status, attitude,...
- ▶ Perform acts: ask questions, issue commands, marry people, insult people,...
- ▶ Create humor, mislead witnesses, deceive the American people,...

The Linguist's Motto:

Linguistics is **descriptive**, not **prescriptive**.

Prescriptive Grammar:

- ▶ Rules against certain usages.
- ▶ Few if any rules for what is allowed.
- ▶ Condemns forms generally in use.
- ▶ Explicitly normative enterprise.

Descriptive Grammar:

- ▶ Rules characterizing what people do say.
- ▶ Tries to do so in a way that reflects internalized generalizations that people have made.
- ▶ Linguists are fundamentally concerned with linguistic knowledge.

Dear Abby, April 9, 2002

It has been nearly 10 years since these rules of basic grammar appeared in my column – and we can all use this refresher course. My pet peeve – double negatives: *I don't know nothing* and *We don't go nowhere* are the worst offenders.

Prescriptivist Propaganda

- ▶ Using two negatives in a sentence to convey a negative is supposed to be illogical.
- ▶ So you're not supposed to say *You don't owe me nothing* to mean 'you are free of debts to me'.
- ▶ But many languages employ just this syntax, using multiple negative words to convey negation.
- ▶ These include even the most literate forms of some languages, e.g. French:

Personne n'a rien dit
Nobody not-has nothing said
'Nobody said anything.'

Anyway, language isn't logical:

- ▶ parkway vs. driveway
- ▶ maternity dress vs. paternity suit
- ▶ bathing trunks (pl) vs. bikini (sing)
- ▶ you are vs. *you is
- ▶ Aren't I clever? vs. *I aren't clever.

The Verdict on Dear Abby

- ▶ Pauleen Phillips (the original Abigail Van Buren) was not a linguist! She didn't know much about language.
- ▶ Jeanne Phillips (the current Abigail Van Buren) isn't a linguist either, but she seems to listen to people who know something, at least when she talks about 'baby talk'. See:

http://www.uexpress.com/dearabby/?uc_full_date=20060411

Where did you Learn English Grammar?

- ▶ From your parents? In school?
- ▶ Grammatical or ungrammatical?

Screw yourself!

Go screw yourself!

Where did you Learn English Grammar?

- ▶ Grammatical or ungrammatical?

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Where did you Learn English Grammar?

- ▶ It wasn't in school.
- ▶ It wasn't (all) from your parents.
- ▶ From exposure to the language around you, interacting with adults and other kids, you learned a system.
- ▶ That system of knowledge is **grammar** in the linguist's sense.

Descriptive Linguistics

- ▶ All of Language is rule-governed.
- ▶ Linguists try to characterize those rules precisely.
- ▶ A set of those rules is what linguists call a **grammar**.
- ▶ Linguists theorize about grammars and their properties.
- ▶ Try to model language use, language processing, language variation, language learning, language evolution, ...

Some Linguistic Methods

- ▶ Fieldwork
- ▶ Formal analysis of patterns in data sets
- ▶ Psycholinguistic experiments
- ▶ Computational modelling
- ▶ Corpus analysis

Goals of the Course

- ▶ Broad overview of the field of Linguistics.
- ▶ Both the cognitive and the social sides of the field.
- ▶ Both the science and its applications.
- ▶ Experience with the diversity of human languages.
- ▶ 'Hands on' experience with linguistic analysis.

Phonetics: The Study of Speech Sounds

- ▶ Aspiration: [t] versus [t^h]
- ▶ Off-glides: [u] versus [u^w]

- ▶ Why care?
- ▶ English [t^hu^w] (two)
vs. French or Spanish
French [tu] (tout, 'all')

Phonology: The Study of Sound Systems

- ▶ Aspiration: [t] versus [t^h]
two: [t^hu^w]
stew: [stu^w]
- ▶ Different consonants in different environments.

Morphology: The Study Of Word Structure

- ▶ missile: 'ICBM'
- ▶ anti-tank-missile: 'missile targetting tanks'
- ▶ anti-aircraft-missile: 'missile targetting aircraft'
- ▶ anti-missile-missile: 'missile targetting ICBMs'

Morphological Rules

- ▶ Rule: Anti-X-missile is a missile targetting Xs.
- ▶ What kind of missile targets anti-missile-missiles?
- ▶ anti-anti-missile-missile-missile
- ▶ anti-anti-anti-missile-missile-missile-missile:
'missile targetting anti-anti-missile-missile-missiles'

Syntax: The Study of Sentence Structure

- ▶ I saw the woman with the telescope.

I [saw [the woman] [with the telescope]].

I [saw [[the woman] [with the telescope]]].

- ▶ Put the block in the box on the table in the bedroom.
- ▶ Put the block in the box on the table in the bedroom near the kitchen.

Semantics: The Study of Linguistic Meaning

- ▶ **Structural Ambiguity** produces semantic ambiguity.
- ▶ Both in morphology and syntax.
- ▶ One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got into my pajamas I'll never know. [-Groucho Marx]
- ▶ **Lexical Ambiguity:** We screened the candidates.
- ▶ **Both Together:** I saw her duck.

Pragmatics: The Study of Language Use

Q: Is Palin a Republican?

A: Is the Pope Catholic?

- ▶ Why don't you move up to the City?
- ▶ Why should I stand here and listen to this?
- ▶ Do you think I'm saying this just to hear the sound of my own voice?

Grammatical Theory

- ▶ **Phonetics:** The study of speech sounds
- ▶ **Phonology:** The study of sound systems
- ▶ **Morphology:** The study of word structure
- ▶ **Syntax:** The study of sentence structure
- ▶ **Semantics:** The study of linguistic meaning
- ▶ **Pragmatics:** The study of language use

Linguistics Beyond Grammar

- ▶ **Historical Linguistics:** How languages change over time.
- ▶ **Sociolinguistics:** How languages vary socially. How language is used as a social resource.
- ▶ **Psycholinguistics:** What goes on in people's heads as they use language.
- ▶ **Language Acquisition:** How people learn language. (first language acquisition; second language acquisition)
- ▶ **Computational Linguistics:** Making computers process (generate/'understand'/translate...) human languages.

Course Requirements

- ▶ Assessment and Policies
- ▶ Section Times?