

Course Outline: **Language Science** (ComD 230), Winter Semester 2008

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Office Hours: T,Th 8:15-9:15 or by appointment or drop by

Scope of the Course

This class has as its central question: How can the language abilities of an individual be measured and described? Because this is an introductory class which has no prerequisites, our answers to this question will be limited somewhat in both breadth and depth; we will focus on measuring and describing one part of language ability, commonly referred to as *syntax* or *grammar*, the study of assembling word components (*morphemes*) and words themselves into conventional and meaningful sequences. We will also limit our focus to the syntax typically used in minimally structured, naturalistic language samples.

In Speech-Language Pathology, we generally use published, norm-referenced tests to compare a child's language performance with that of other, similar children to help decide if the child needs language intervention. To decide on valid treatment goals and to validly measure progress, we need to collect a naturalistic sample of a person's spoken language, transcribe it, and, among other things, describe the grammatical categories ("parts of speech") and sentence structures in that sample. We can then compare the sentence structures from a child's language sample to developmental information to see which items the child has mastered, is currently working on, and will next work on. With both children and adults, language sample analysis allows us to monitor progress and evaluate treatment goals.

The class also discusses the strengths, limitations, and possibilities of automated clinical language sample analysis to assist in making descriptions of an individual's language ability.

What will you be able to do after successfully completing this course?

You will be able to describe English sentence structure in children and adults using common descriptive terms like "noun" or "relative clause;" this is sort of like describing the anatomy of sentences. By the end of the class, you should be able to look at a transcript of a person's language sample and answer questions about whether there is evidence to support inferences that the person can use various syntactic constructions. This is toward the ASHA KASA ("Knowledge And Skills Acquisition") standard III-B-Linguistic.

Texts

Crystal, D. (2004). *Rediscover grammar* (3rd ed.). Essex, England: Pearson. ISBN: 0-582-848628

The text is most useful during the first half of the semester.

Course Requirements

1. Complete any assigned reading or exercises before class meetings.
2. Come to class meetings. Borrowing notes is a nuisance to other students and is a poor substitute for your own encoding of class material.
3. Take all examinations on time, and do well.

Honor Code

I expect you to adhere to the Honor Code. Too many qualified people are not admitted to BYU because of enrollment ceilings to allow a space to be wasted on someone who isn't keeping their commitment to obey the code. Remember that the code applies to your behavior both on- and off-campus. Contents of exams are confidential and you must not share them. This prohibition includes giving other students hints as to which areas to study or not study as well as sharing specific questions from the exam. Students caught cheating on an exam by Testing Center personnel receive a failing grade for the course and the incident is reported to the Honor Code Office.

Exams

We will have two midterm exams and a final exam. Exams are cumulative and cover class lectures, discussion, and exercises. Exams will consist of computer-scored multiple choice questions. I'll give all exams in the testing center. Each midterm exam will be worth a possible 100 points; the final is worth 200 points. You may take an exam late without penalty only when you provide written proof of serious illness, death, or extenuating circumstance to me. Otherwise, late exams will be penalized 20 points per school day late. I record exam scores as a percentage of the high score in the class. Thus if the high raw score on an exam were 95, I would record the person scoring 95 as 100%; I would record a raw score of 92 as 92/95 or 97%.

Semester Grading

I will base semester grades on the exams and the exercises. The grading scale I use at the end of the semester is 95-100% of the possible points for an A, 90-94% A-, 87-89% B+, 83-86% B, 80-82% B-, 77-79% C+, 73-76% C, 70-72% C-, 67-69% D+, 63-66% D, 60-62% D-, and below 60%, an E. Extra credit is not possible. At the end of the semester the whole-class GPA is typically between 2.9 and 3.1.

Lab & Help Sessions

About four hours of outside assistance per week will be offered in Lab & Help Sessions. These sessions are optional but encouraged. The sessions will be run by a graduate student teaching assistant. The schedule for these sessions will be worked out in class and sessions will start after the second week of class.

Pace of the Term

In class I'll try to help as many people understand as I can, but if it still isn't clear, e-mail me, call, or drop by. I'd much rather answer questions before the exam than after it.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity receiving federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Students With Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability, which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, or in D-382 ASB.

Some Dates to Remember

January 18 (Friday): Last day to drop classes without receiving a "W"
February 7 (Thursday) and February 8 (Friday): * **Exam 1** in Testing Center
February 11 (Monday): Last day to drop classes for academic reasons
March 13 (Thursday) and March 14 (Friday): * **Exam 2** in Testing Center
April 15 (Tuesday): Last day of Winter semester classes
April 18-23 (Friday-Wednesday): * **Final Exam** in Testing Center