

Day 1: Introduction

Ling 200: Introduction to Linguistic Thought

Jonathan North Washington

18 June 2007

1 *Course Goals*

2 *Syllabus*

3 *What is linguistics?*

- Definition
- Objectivity
- Linguistic Competence
- Subfields

What you should get out of this class

This class should help you

- Broaden your understanding of human language:

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- See how linguistics can be used in related fields
- Gain an appreciation of the relevance of linguistics to everyday life

Syllabus

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- Textbook

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- Policies

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- Grading and Assignments

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- Website, calendar

What is linguistics?

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- What does this mean?
- What’s this course about?

Objectivity

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 - consciously: **prescriptive rules**
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But do we think about language objectively?

Descriptive vs. Prescriptive grammar

Linguistics is

Descriptive vs. Prescriptive grammar

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Descriptive vs. Prescriptive grammar

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- **not** the study of how to speak properly

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- Prescriptive grammar
 - **prescribes** rules governing what people should/shouldn't say
 - not natural, must be learned by rote (in school)

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 - Don't end sentences with a preposition

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 - The sequence of sounds [rt] can come at the end of a word in English, but not at the beginning (e.g., art, *rta).

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- Prescriptive:
 - Don't end sentences with a preposition
 - Don't split infinitives
 - Don't use double negatives
- Descriptive:
 - The sequence of sounds [rt] can come at the end of a word in English, but not at the beginning (e.g., art, *rta).
 - In English, adjectives precede the nouns they modify. e.g.:
 - 1 That is a big, red balloon.
 - 2 * That is a balloon big, red.

Linguistic Competence

Knowing a language

Linguistic Competence

Knowing a language

- Linguistic competence

Linguistic Competence

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 - What a speaker of a language knows about the language

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 - What linguists want to learn about each language

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 - How to speak so as to be understood by another speaker of the language
 - Understand rules that govern sounds, words, sentences in your language (what is possible vs. impossible)
- How do we know out what this constitutes? Not that easy...

Linguistic Competence

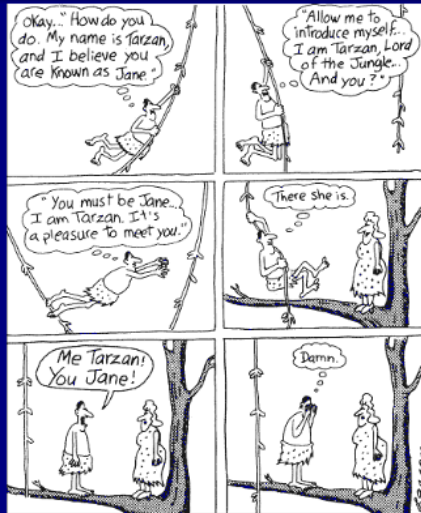
How do we study linguistic competence?



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Linguistic Competence

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Linguistic Competence

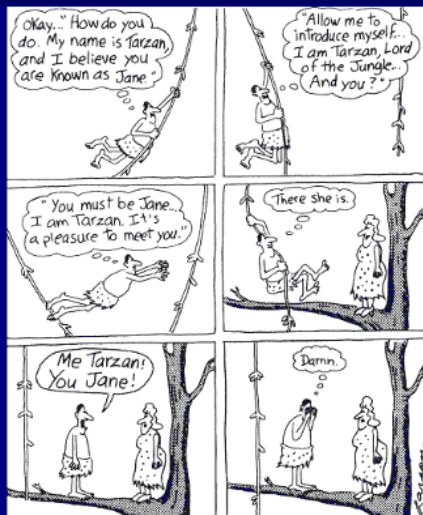
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Linguistic Competence

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- How do linguists study linguistic competence?
 - observe our **linguistic performance**
 - make and test hypotheses
 - draw conclusions about what our linguistic competence must be like

Linguistic Subfields

Primary subfields of linguistics

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- Pragmatics

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 - the study of how linguistic meaning depends on **context**