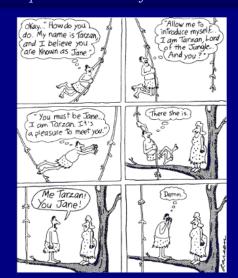# Day 2: Introduction

Ling 200: Introduction to Linguistic Thought

Jonathan North Washington

19 June 2007

1. *Review*

2. *What is language?*
   - 'Big 5' facts
   - Design Features
   - Modality

Competence and Performance

Competence and Performance

- What are linguistic competence and linguistic performance?

Competence and Performance

- What are linguistic competence and linguistic performance?
- How do linguists study linguistic competence?

Competence and Performance

- What are linguistic competence and linguistic performance?
- How do linguists study linguistic competence?
- By observing linguistic performance.

Core subfields
Interdisciplinary subfields

Interdisciplinary subfields of linguistics

Core subfields
Interdisciplinary subfields

Interdisciplinary subfields of linguistics

- Sociolinguistics

Core subfields
Interdisciplinary subfields

Interdisciplinary subfields of linguistics

- Sociolinguistics
- Historical linguistics

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- Sociolinguistics
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- Psycholinguistics / Neurolinguistics

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- Sociolinguistics
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- Psycholinguistics / Neurolinguistics
- Language and culture

What is language?
Some general properties

'Big 5' facts about language

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What is language?
Some general properties

'Big 5' facts about language
- All languages have a grammar

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What is language?
Some general properties

'Big 5' facts about language
- All languages have a grammar
  - complex and "layered", but systematic at every level

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What is language?

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What is language?
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'Big 5' facts about language
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  - complex and "layered", but systematic at every level
  - rules to create sentences/words we've never heard before

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- All grammars are equal

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  - not "the same", but equally complex and functional

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  - the same concepts and units; universal patterns

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- Grammatical knowledge is subconscious
  - we recognise im/possible sounds, words, sentences, etc
  - we can't always explain why

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What is language?

Design Features

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What is language?

Design Features
- Charles Hockett (1960)

What is language?

Design Features

- Charles Hockett (1960)
- Characterize language, distinguish it from other communication systems

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What is language?

Design Features

- Charles Hockett (1960)
- Characterize language, distinguish it from other communication systems
- If a system lacks even one feature, it is communication, not language

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Design Features

- Discreteness

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Design Features

- Discreteness
- Arbitrariness

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Design Features

- **D**iscreteness
- **A**rbitrariness
- **C**ultural transmission

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Design Features

- **D**iscreteness
- **A**rbitrariness
- **C**ultural transmission
- **D**isplacement

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Design Features

- **D**iscreteness
- **A**rbitrariness
- **C**ultural transmission
- **D**isplacement
- **I**nterchangeability

Design Features

- **D**iscreteness
- **A**rbitrariness
- **C**ultural transmission
- **D**isplacement
- **I**nterchangeability
- **P**roductivity

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Discreteness

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Discreteness

Discreteness

> *Definition (Discreteness)*
>
> Larger, complex messages can be broken down into smaller, discrete parts

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Discreteness

Discreteness

Definition (Discreteness)

Larger, complex messages can be broken down into smaller, discrete parts

Example (Discreteness)

'pat' →

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Discreteness

Discreteness

Definition (Discreteness)

Larger, complex messages can be broken down into smaller, discrete parts

Example (Discreteness)

'pat' → [p], [a], [t]

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Discreteness

Discreteness

Definition (Discreteness)

Larger, complex messages can be broken down into smaller, discrete parts

Example (Discreteness)

'pat' → [p], [a], [t] ⇒ 'tap', 'apt'

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Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness

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Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness

Definition (Arbitrariness)

There is no (necessary) connection between the *form* of signal and its *meaning*

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Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness

> **Definition (Arbitrariness)**
>
> There is no (necessary) connection between the *form* of signal and its *meaning*

> **Example (Arbitrariness)**
>
>   'whale' is small word for big animal, 'microorganism' is just the reverse

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Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness

Definition (Arbitrariness)

There is no (necessary) connection between the *form* of signal and its *meaning*

Example (Arbitrariness)

'whale' is small word for big animal, 'microorganism' is just the reverse

Example (Arbitrariness: counterexample)

iconicity; e.g., onomatopoeia

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Cultural Transmission

Cultural Transmission

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Cultural Transmission

Cultural Transmission

Definition (Cultural Transmission)

At least some aspect of the communication system is learned from other users

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Cultural Transmission

Cultural Transmission

Definition (Cultural Transmission)

At least some aspect of the communication system is learned from other users

Example (Cultural Transmission)

Any child growing up in a French-speaking environment will learn French

Design Features
Displacement

Displacement

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Displacement

Displacement

Definition (Displacement)

Ability to talk about things not present in space or time

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Displacement

Displacement

Definition (Displacement)

Ability to talk about things not present in space or time

Example (Displacement)

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. . . .

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Design Features

Interchangeability

Interchangeability

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Interchangeability

Definition (Interchangeability)

A user can both receive and broadcast the same signal

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Interchangeability

Interchangeability

Definition (Interchangeability)

A user can both receive and broadcast the same signal

Example (Interchangeability)

Any conversation (where people trade roles speaking and listening)

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Productivity

Productivity

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Productivity

Productivity

> *Definition (Productivity)*
>
> Speakers can create infinite number of novel utterances that others can understand

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Productivity

Productivity

Definition (Productivity)

Speakers can create infinite number of novel utterances that others can understand

Example (Productivity)

"Little purple gnomes living in my sock drawer said, 'Elvis lives'."

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Modality
Signed languages

- Modality

Outline
Review
What is language?
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Modality
Signed languages

- Modality
  - auditory-vocal = aural-oral = spoken languages

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Modality
Signed languages

- Modality
  - auditory-vocal = aural-oral = spoken languages
  - visual-gestural = signed languages

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Modality
Signed languages

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  - auditory-vocal = aural-oral = spoken languages
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- Signed languages

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What is language?

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Modality
Signed languages

- Modality
  - auditory-vocal = aural-oral = spoken languages
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- Signed languages
  - Not codes for spoken languages

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Modality
Signed languages

- Modality
  - auditory-vocal = aural-oral = spoken languages
  - visual-gestural = signed languages

- Signed languages
  - Not codes for spoken languages
  - Not purely iconic

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What is language?

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Modality
Signed languages

- Modality
  - auditory-vocal = aural-oral = spoken languages
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- Signed languages
  - Not codes for spoken languages
  - Not purely iconic
  - Structurally complex at all levels

Outline
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Modality
Signed languages

- Modality
  - auditory-vocal = aural-oral = spoken languages
  - visual-gestural = signed languages
- Signed languages
  - Not codes for spoken languages
  - Not purely iconic
  - Structurally complex at all levels
  - Meet all design features of language

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Modality
Written language

- Written language = secondary to spoken language

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Modality
Written language

- Written language = secondary to spoken language
  - Historical development

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Modality
Written language

- Written language = secondary to spoken language
  - Historical development
  - Everyone speaks a language; not all languages are written

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What is language?

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Modality
Written language

- Written language = secondary to spoken language
  - Historical development
  - Everyone speaks a language; not all languages are written
  - Learning to speak is automatic; learning to write is not

Modality
Written language

- Written language = secondary to spoken language
  - Historical development
  - Everyone speaks a language; not all languages are written
  - Learning to speak is automatic; learning to write is not
  - More of the brain is used when writing than speaking

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Modality
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  - Everyone speaks a language; not all languages are written
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  - Writing can be edited