

Language typology (Linguistics 124)

Spring 2015, MW 5–6:45, Physical Sciences 130

Instructor

Maziar Toosarvandani
mtoosarv@ucsc.edu
236 Stevenson
Office hours: T 3–5, F 1–2

TA: Anna Greenwood
ajgreenw@ucsc.edu
Stevenson Coffeeshop
Office hours: F 9:30–10:30

Course website: <https://ecommons.ucsc.edu/portal/site/36d9c8d7-da34-4aff-8aae-829169c33333>

Course description

Languages differ from one another, though not in unlimited ways. Typology is the study of this linguistic diversity. In this course, we will ask two main questions. First, on an empirical level, how do languages vary systematically in their structure, and what are the limits on this variation? Second, on a more theoretical level, why do languages exhibit this range of variation? To answer these questions, we will have three more concrete goals:

- to advance your abilities to analyze and discuss data from unfamiliar languages
- to familiarize you with the morphological and syntactic variation found in language
- to introduce you to different kinds of explanations for this linguistic diversity

We will examine several phenomena, including word order, case and agreement, ergativity, valence changing operations (passive and causative), relativization, and differential object marking.

Course requirements

1. Regular attendance and participation in class and section (5%)
2. Doing the assigned readings from the primary literature, available on the course website
3. Six homework assignments, due at the beginning of class on Mondays—**no more than one assignment will be accepted late** (60%)
4. A final paper on an unfamiliar language, **due at 3 pm on Thursday, June 11** (35%); a statement of paper topic (language and grammar you will be using) is due in-class on Monday, April 27; a paper outline is due in-class on Wednesday, May 27

All written work should have a continuous prose style with complete sentences and have a coherent organizational structure. In addition, it should follow the guidelines given below.

General guidelines for written work

- All assignments and the final paper should be completed carefully and must be handed in by the beginning of class on the date due.
- Working on assignments with your classmates is encouraged (even expected). But, you must write up your own answer alone and in accord with university rules concerning academic integrity. If you use an idea that clearly originated with someone else, give them credit for it.
- All written work should be typed, if possible, in a standard 12-point font with standard 1-inch margins.
- Write in complete sentences. Be as clear as possible. When in doubt, err on the side of clarity.
- Writing up an assignment does not reduce to a list of answers (example sentences, rules, etc.) It should have a meaningful structure, which organizes the material in a systematic fashion and helps the reader understand your reasoning in developing these answers.
- Be consistent in your use of terminology, abbreviations, etc. If you make up a notation, abbreviation, or term, be sure to introduce and define it first. There are some conventions that all linguists follow:
 1. Number your examples and set them apart from the text
 2. If you cite example material in the running text, put it in italics or underline it.
 3. When providing data from languages other than English, there should be three lines in each example: 1) a transcription; 2) an interlinear with morpheme-by-morpheme glosses; and, 3) a translation. For the interlinear, use the Leipzig Glossing Rules, which can be found here: <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>.
 4. When constructing minimal pairs of sentence, parentheses may be used to enclose the difference, as in *He thinks (that) pigs can fly*. If the two versions of the example differ in grammaticality, place the annotation mark accordingly: *I asked whether (*that) pigs can fly* vs. **(That) pigs can fly is news to me*.
- Your final paper should include in-text parenthetical references for any data or points that are not your own. Include a list of references at the end of your term paper that follows the stylesheet for a major linguistics journal, such as *Language*.

Collaboration and academic integrity

You are encouraged to work out the solutions to the weekly assignments with other students. But you must write up your answers **on your own**, without talking or otherwise communicating with other students. All incidents of suspected academic dishonesty (including copying someone else's work or allowing them to copy your work) will be pursued and may result in a Report of Academic Misconduct being filed with the student's provost. This can lead to disciplinary hearings with the Academic Tribunal. Read more about academic integrity at: http://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_integrity.

Accommodations

Any student who thinks they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to submit their Accommodation Authorization and discuss specific needs, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Please contact the Disability Resource Center at 831-459-2089 in 146 Hahn Student Services or by e-mail at drc@ucsc.edu to coordinate those accommodations.

Schedule

WEEK	DAY	TOPIC	READINGS	WORK DUE
1	M 3/30 W 4/2	language universals and variation	Evans and Levinson 2009	
2	M 4/6 W 4/8	word order universals	Greenberg 1963:73–91, Dryer 1989	Assignment 1
3	M 4/13 W 4/15	morphological type	Nichols 1986:56–83	Assignment 2
4	M 4/20 W 4/22	case and agreement		Assignment 3
5	M 4/27 W 4/29	ergativity and subjects	Anderson 1976	Paper topic
6	M 5/4 W 5/6	valence changing: passive	Keenan and Dryer 2007	Assignment 4
7	M 5/11 W 5/13	valence changing: causative	Cole 1983	Assignment 5
8	M 5/18 W 5/20	relativization	Keenan and Comrie 1977	Assignment 6
9	M 5/25 W 5/27	No class (Memorial Day)		Paper outline
10	M 6/1 W 6/3	differential object marking	Aissen 2003	

References

- Aissen, Judith. 2003. Differential object marking: Iconicity vs. economy. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 21:435–483.
- Anderson, Stephen R. 1976. On the notion of subject in ergative languages. In *Subject and topic*, ed. Charles N. Li, 1–23. Academic Press.
- Cole, Peter. 1983. The grammatical role of the causee in Universal Grammar. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 49:115–133.
- Dryer, Matthew S. 1989. Large linguistic areas and language sampling. *Studies in Language* 13:257–292.
- Evans, Nicholas and Stephen C. Levinson. 2009. The myth of language universals: Language diversity and its importance for cognitive science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 32:429–492.
- Greenberg, Joseph H. 1963. Some universals of grammar with particular reference to the order of meaningful elements. In *Universals of language*, ed. Joseph H. Greenberg, 61–113. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Keenan, Edward L. and Bernard Comrie. 1977. Noun phrase accessibility and Universal Grammar. *Linguistic Inquiry* 8:63–99.
- Keenan, Edward L. and Matthew S. Dryer. 2007. Passive in the world's languages. In *Language typology and syntactic description*, ed. Timothy Shopen, volume 1, 325–361. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nichols, Johanna. 1986. Head-marking and dependent-marking grammar. *Language* 62:56–119.