LING279: Research seminar in psycholinguistics
Matt Wagers
Meets Wednesday 2pm – 5:45pm in the Cave

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Conceptions of human memory have always played a role in theorizing about language structure. Theorists have appealed to notions of ‘memory’ in attempting both to explain why certain linguistic concepts exist -- e.g., formal constraints on structure like island domains (Givon, 1979, Kluender & Kutas, 1993, Hofmeister & Sag, 2010, Sprouse, Wagers & Phillips, 2012), c-command restrictions (Chomsky, 2008) etc. -- or to account for the difficulty in comprehension and production -- e.g., center self-embedding, speech errors. Claims about the interrelation of linguistic form and memory have varied in their specificity and in how closely they correspond to non-linguistic theories of memory. The goal of this seminar is to survey some of the more prominent claims and try to understand them in light of contemporary memory theory.

EVALUATION
Students are responsible for completing a final research paper, which incorporates a pilot psycholinguistic study or an extensive literature review. Students should be actively prepared for each course meeting, and each participant will make two presentations.

WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

Week 1: What is a working memory? how is it (in)distinct from long-term memory
Oberauer (2009), Baddeley (2007)
Week 2: Capacity
Cowan (2005), McElree (2006), McElree & Dosher (1989),
Week 3: Retrieval interference
Anderson & Neely (1996), Nairne (2006),
Van Dyke & Lewis (2003), Van Dyke & McElree (2011)
Week 4: Capacity, interference and the binding problem
Treisman & Gelade (1980), Gronlund & Ratcliff (1989),
Week 5: Linguistic representations in the short and long-term, I
Lewis & Vasishth (2005), Wagers (2008), Potter & Lombardi (1990)
Week 6: Explaining grammatical phenomena
Week 7: Strategic encoding, the concept of “context” in language processing
Fletcher (1986), Ericsson & Kintsch (1995),
Kahana et al. (2008), Unsworth (2008)
Week 8: Domain-specificity, domain-genericity
Caplan & Waters (1999), Just & Carpenter (1992),
MacDonald & Christiansen (2002)
Week 9: Psychometrics and Psycholinguistics
Week 10: Wrap-up

READING LIST


LING279 Reading Schedule
25 April 2012

Week 1  Introduction (abbreviated)

Week 2  Verbatim memory, as a model system


Week 3  Forgetting: time-based decay and the articulatory loop


Week 4  Forgetting: interference and its varieties

Background papers


**Language processing**


**Week 5  Interference: encoding subjects**

* keep reading Anderson & Neely (1996)

No student presenters this week.


--> Bring your laptops.

**Week 6  Encoding subjects, continued**

*Nate Arnett presents his QP research on subject encodings.*


Week 7 **Matt at UMass: no class**

Supplemental reading:


Week 8 **Long-distance dependencies**


Week 9 **LDD Spillover: capacity limits and language structure**


**Week 10** Psychometrics


**Week “11”** Research briefs

Try to consolidate your understanding in prep for a final discussion by reading:
