LING 641 - Psycholinguistics II, Spring 2012
Colin Phillips, Jeff Lidz: {colinjlidz}@umd.edu
Monday/Wednesday, 12:00-1:30, 1108B Marie Mount Hall

OBJECTIVES

This course is concerned with classic and contemporary challenges in the study of language learning and language processing, and with possible ways of combining these areas.

Traditional rationalist approaches to grammar learning (e.g., in the Principles and Parameters approach) have reached a crisis point, because (i) learning models are not as straightforward as anticipated, (ii) cross-language variation is more acute than was assumed previously, and (iii) developmental evidence for parameter setting is less than overwhelming. However, the underlying learning problem (e.g., need for abstract generalizations) has not changed significantly, and the recent wave of research on distributional learning has tended to avoid the hard problems that motivated parameter-setting models. Nevertheless, this line of research has uncovered important insights that may turn out to be invaluable in resolving the ‘hard’ problems.

Meanwhile, research on real-time language processing has seen important developments in recent years. More refined questions are being asked about how grammatical information is encoded, how information is accessed and retrieved from memory, how speakers compare expectations with input, and how they process ungrammatical input. Many of these findings are potentially relevant to understanding existing findings about grammatical development and to framing the language learning problem.

In both of these areas, more precise understanding of how typical language learning succeeds, and of how fluent adult language use proceeds, is clearly relevant to understanding other conditions of language use, such as atypical or second language learning, or language processing breakdown.

Continuing the goals of Psycholinguistics I (LING 640) the course covers the issues and results of psycholinguistics and also the nuts and bolts of psycholinguistic methods. However, the course has a greater focus on exploring directions for new research. The course also presupposes more background in linguistic theory than was the case for LING 640.

REQUIREMENTS

(i) Be prepared and be engaged in the course (15%)
(ii) Lab and writing assignments ((ii) + (iii) together 85%)
(iii) Main class project: development and write-up of a novel group research project
The class project will be on a topic that we will develop together. In the past this has sometimes led to conference presentations or to publications (e.g., Conroy et al., 2009, Linguistic Inquiry; Omaki et al. 2007, CUNY Conference; Kush et al. 2009, CUNY Conference).

READINGS

Readings will be available electronically, either through the university libraries or from a class readings page. Location to be announced in class. Please save trees!

GRADES

In order to give you more opportunity to receive credit for ‘going the extra mile’, the course will use a grading scale that allows for a greater spread. Don’t compare your scores on your assignments to other classes and conclude “the grading is really tough in this course”; compare it against this scale – it shows that there’s a lot of room within the A-range for recognizing really good work.

A = 80%+       A- = 75-80%
B+ = 70-75%    B = 65-70%  B- = 60-65%  etc.

(Note that Graduate School rules require a cumulative GPA of B or higher for continued enrollment.)
**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE** [sure to evolve]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Jan 25</td>
<td>Introduction – Overview &amp; Defining the problem</td>
<td>Homework 1 (due Feb 3); Chomsky 1975 (ch 1); Gallistel 2007;</td>
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<td>2. Jan 30</td>
<td>Introduction (cont.)</td>
<td>Pinker 1989 (ch 1); Goro 2007 (ch 1, ch3)</td>
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<td>3. Feb 1</td>
<td>What children know (… and how we find out)</td>
<td>Lidz 2007; Crain &amp; Nakayama 1987; Ambridge et al. 2008; de Villiers &amp; Roeper 1995</td>
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<td>4. Feb 6</td>
<td>What children know (… and how we find out)</td>
<td>Lab 4: Experimental design (due Feb 16); Conroy et al. 2009; Vial &amp; Lidz 2009</td>
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<td>5. Feb 8</td>
<td>What children know (… and how we find out)</td>
<td>Goro 2007 (ch 2); Zukowski &amp; Larsen 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Feb 13</td>
<td>What children know (… and how we find out)</td>
<td>Infant studies: Lukyanenko et al. 2010; Gagliardi et al. 2010</td>
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<td>8. Feb 20</td>
<td>Learning models: Principles &amp; Parameters</td>
<td></td>
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<td>9. Feb 22</td>
<td>Challenge: variability</td>
<td>Homework 2 (due Mar 2); Bresnan &amp; Nikitina 2007; Dabrowska 2012; Han et al. 2007</td>
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<td>10. Feb 27</td>
<td>Distributional learning with rich hypotheses (= UG)</td>
<td>Scholz &amp; Pullum 2006; Perfors et al. 2011; Berwick et al. 2011; Regier &amp; Gahl 2004; Pearl &amp; Lidz 2009</td>
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<td>11. Feb 29</td>
<td>Distributional learning w/o UG</td>
<td>Solan et al. 2005; Reali &amp; Christiansen 2005; Mintz 2006</td>
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<td>12. Mar 5</td>
<td>Distributional learning w/o UG</td>
<td>Pearl &amp; Sprouse 2011; Phillips 2012</td>
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<td>14. Mar 12</td>
<td>Parsers &amp; Grammars</td>
<td>CP to discuss his CUNY conf. talk</td>
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<td>15. Mar 14</td>
<td>NO CLASS – CP/IL AWAY</td>
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<td>16. Mar 26</td>
<td>Parsing: Generation &amp; Selection</td>
<td>Lab 5 (due date Apr 6); Frazier &amp; Fodor 1978; Altmann 1997 (chapter)</td>
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<td>19. Apr 4</td>
<td>Memory encoding and retrieval</td>
<td>Jonides et al. 2007; McElree 2006</td>
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<td>20. Apr 9</td>
<td>Memory encoding and retrieval</td>
<td>Lab 6 (multi-step); McElree et al. 2003; Lewis &amp; Vasishth 2005; Xiang et al. 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Apr 16</td>
<td>Constraints and Illusions</td>
<td>Sturt 2003; Badecker &amp; Straub 2002; Kazanina et al. 2007</td>
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<td>24. Apr 23</td>
<td>Child language processing</td>
<td>Trueswell et al. 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Apr 25</td>
<td>Child language processing</td>
<td>Snedeker et al. 2004; Omaki et al., 2011</td>
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<td>26. Apr 30</td>
<td>Child language processing</td>
<td>Child sentence structure at age 2</td>
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<td>27. May 2</td>
<td>Production: Grammatical Encoding</td>
<td>Ferreira &amp; Slevc 2007; Bock et al. 1992;</td>
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<td>28. May 7</td>
<td>Production: Grammatical Encoding</td>
<td>Branigan 2006; Pickering &amp; Branigan 1998; Pickering &amp; Garrod 2007; Schriefers et al. 1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. May 9</td>
<td>Production: Grammatical Encoding</td>
<td>Savage et al. 2006; Thothatiri &amp; Snedeker 2006; Chang et al. 2006.</td>
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CITATIONS (selected)


3