

24.900: Introduction to Linguistics

Monday, 2/7/05

1. Problem set #1: Posted on the MIT server for the class.
2. Syllabus for the class is also posted on the MIT server.
3. I will sign ADD forms at the end of class.
4. Recitation assignments for new students will be made before the end of the week. We will contact you by email.
5. Make sure that you have filled out a *student information sheet*. Extras are available at the back of the room today.

I. What is the object of study for Linguistics?

II. Some Puzzles linguists are interested in.

a. Possible meanings of sentences

Who do you want to visit?

I want Elmer to visit.

I want to visit Elmer.

Who do you wanna visit?

??I want Elmer to visit.

I want to visit Elmer.

John is too stubborn to talk to.

John is too stubborn to talk to Mary.

b. Possible sounds for words

Voiced **Voiceless**

Zoo *Sue*

Volley *folly*

Thy *thigh*

This *thistle*

That *thunder*

The *thousand*

Those *thanks*

**bmap* *glap*

- III. Traditional Major areas of linguistic study
 - Phonology (phonetics)
 - Morphology
 - Syntax
 - Semantics
 - Pragmatics
 - Psycholinguistics

- IV. Universal Grammar/Logical Problem of Language Acquisition
 - Plato's Problem
 - Poverty of Stimulus
 - Competence v Performance
 - Prescriptive v Descriptive
 - ?Just between you and I, Jim won.
 - Who are you talking to?
 - I was like, oh my gawd.
 - He gon' try to get up.
 - They not caught?
 - You ain't seen nothing' yet.
 - I want to go with.

- V. How do Linguists go about solving these puzzles?

MORPHOLOGY

- I. Basic questions we ask in our study of Morphology
 - a. What are words?
 - Strings of sounds with particular meanings
 - *Jeet yet?*
 - *D'ja wanna leave?*
 - *Amena go.*
 - *Was he supposedda hafta leave?*
 - *Eimahmerken*
 - b. What are the basic building blocks of words?
 - c. How are more complex items built up from its parts?
 - d. How is the meaning of a word related to its parts?
 - e. How are individual words related to other words?

- II. Mental Lexicon (Mental dictionary)
 - Parts of speech** (if you are not totally familiar with these concepts and/or are unable to identify different parts of speech in a sentence, please check the webpage for resources for practice in identifying the different parts of speech.)
 - Homonyms, synonyms, antonyms**
 - **Content and function words**

III. The MORPHEME

- a. Words are formed by putting together *morphemes*.
- b. Does each morpheme have an identifiable meaning?

- 1. *He look-s mean.*
- 2. *He look-ed mean.*

- c. Practice:

Fly	reuse	spiteful	preplan
Desks	triumphed	suite	optionality
Untie	unkempt	fastest	prettier
Tree	justly	deform	mistreat
Dislike	payment	disobey	premature
Receive	permit	submit	

- d. Languages with fairly simple morphological structure
- e. Languages with a very rich morphological structure: **Polysynthetic languages**

1. *Turkish: Namixaridand* ‘they were not buying’

2. *Mohawk: Ni-mic-tomi-mak*
1st person- 2nd person-money-give
“I’ll give you the money.”

- f. Free morphemes
- g. bound morphemes
- h. No, let us reconsider the definition of what a *word* is.