**LNGS2002**

**Introduction to Syntax (and Morphology)**

*Department of Linguistics, University of Sydney*

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Tutor: Jason Johnston, Transient 247, 9351 7518; jason@astadhyayi.net

Unit worth: 8 credit points

Prerequisites: LNGS 1001 and either LNGS 1002 or LNGS 1003

Textbooks: There is no one textbook that covers the ground that we’ll be going over this semester, partly because of the diverse range of material we want to cover, and partly because of issues in analysis. We’ll work from two, and a third will be useful. You’re not expected to buy all of them. One of the first two is pretty much essential, the last one is optional but handy. The books are:

  
  We’ll use this one a lot, but it won’t be the last word on the syntax we’re teaching. It is very useful for argumentation and style.

- **ANDREWS, Avery. *Syntax textbook.* Canberra: ANU. MS.**
  
  The first six chapters of this textbook reflect very closely the way the first half of the course will be organised, though the terminology will be updated somewhat.

  
  This last book gets more play in the second half of the course, when we start to take a more cross-linguistic look at things. It’s the most reference-book like of the three, and has lots of material that isn’t so much didactic as things to ponder. A lot of what’s in this one will be covered in the lectures, it’s ‘just’ a matter of absorbing it all.

  The first and last of these are available in the bookshop (about $45 each); for those interested in copies of Andrews’ textbook, see me about photocopies, which will be considerably cheaper.

  Other readings will be suggested in lectures.

Lectures: Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 1 - 2 pm, Carslaw room 453.

Tutors: once per week, to be arranged.

### 1. Goals

Syntax and morphology are about the organisation in languages at levels above the individual sound. Morphology is the description of organisation up to the word level. Syntax is the description of the combinations of words that form phrases, clauses and sentences. The combination of these two studies allows us to determine the structure of flowing speech that allow for their interpretation.
This course will introduce the basic principles of argumentation and codification of structural and typological variation found in the syntactic structures of different languages. We will look at structures in English for a grounding, and then examine a range of typologically diverse languages to develop a feel for the kind of variation that a broad theory of syntax needs to account for.

2. **Assessment**

Syntax is a subject best learned through practice, and the assessment chosen for this course reflects that: all assessment will be by regular take-home problems, which should be completed individually. Problems for discussion and group solution will be part of the (assessed) tutorials.

If you hand in an assignment late, and still want to get a mark, you will have to firstly show good reason why you couldn’t hand it in on time, and then do a catch-up assignment in its place, since it might have been discussed in the class of the day on which it’s due. Or you can just lose the marks, though this isn’t recommended.

In addition to these assessed problems, a series of six unassessed problems will be assigned, which will be handed in and then discussed in the tutorials. Failure to demonstrate at least an attempt at these problems will result in penalties of 5% (of total final mark for the course) per problem: miss two of these, and your final course mark is out of 90, not 100, etc.

1. **4 Small Problem Sets (12.5% each for a total of 50%)**

Four topical problem sets will be assigned. They must be handed in within 9 days of being assigned. Three of these come before the mid-term break, and one after; the dates are on the course calendar.

2. **1 Large Problem Set (15%)**

This is simply a longer problem than the problems already encountered. It won’t be any harder than the rest, really, just longer (more time is given for it, 2 weeks, over the mid-term break).

3. **1 Major Problem Set (25%)**

Bigger and better, calling on the application of most of the skills and knowledge that has been learned in the course. This assignment is harder, and requires the student to provide argumentation to back up the solutions.

   If you wish, you can, instead of this problem set, write a ± 1500-word essay on something relevant to the course (provided the topic has been discussed with me by 31/10) at the latest.

   Regardless of the option chosen, it’s due on 18/11, and lateness is penalised at 20% of total possible mark for this assessment part per day late, if there’s not a demonstrable good reason. Be on time!

4. **Class Participation (10%)**

Active participation in the tutorials is required, and ten percent of the final assessed mark is based on the tutor's evaluation of the student's participation in tutorials. This involves discussion of problem sets, working through exercises, and, of course, turning up!

3. **Syllabus**

The following is a rough guide to the material that we’ll be covering, and when.
Week 1 from July 26th
Basic concepts, terminology. Parts of speech. Form and meaning.

Week 2 from August 2nd
Tutorials begin.
Phrase structure, words. Evidence for constituency, structural ambiguity.

Week 3 from August 9th
Noun phrases: genitives, adjective phrases, quantifiers, demonstratives. X-bar theory. Arguments for and against VPs.

Week 4 from August 16th
Verb phrases, prepositional phrases. Subcategorisation and the lexicon, further phrase structure. Morphology.

Week 5 from August 23rd
More X-bar theory, extending the verb phrase, ambiguities.

Week 6 from August 30th
Syntax ↔ Morphology: features, case, agreement. Variation in word order.

Week 7 from September 6th
Semantic roles, argument structure, pragmatic roles.

Week 8 from September 13th
Grammatical functions, core vs. oblique, Head vs. dependant marking.

Week 9 from September 20th

Week 10 from October 4th
Voice systems: passive, antipassive, Philippine, inverse.

Week 11 from October 11th
Grammatical function changing: causatives, applicatives, dative alternations.

Week 12 from October 18th
Control: complementation, raising, exceptional case marking.

Week 13 from October 25th
Relative clauses, accessibility.

Other reading
<explains traditional parts of speech system>
BROWN, E.K., and J.E. MILLER. 1980. Syntax: a linguistic introduction to sentence structure. London: Hutchinson University Library. <clear introduction to basic early seventies transformational syntax and morphology -- morphology less dated than the syntax>


1979b. Languages and their status. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop. <these two are fun, readable introductions to some interesting languages, aimed at beginners>


Harder reading


