

## Studies in Linguistics: Languages of the World (ENGL 5337)

### I. Basic Information

**Instructor:** Dr. Min-Joo Kim  
**Class time:** Wednesday, 2:00 – 4:50 PM, from January 13 to May 11 (April 28)  
**Location:** English/Philosophy **400**  
**Office:** English/Philosophy 480 (**East** Wing of the English/Philosophy Bldg.)  
**E-mail:** [min-joo.kim@ttu.edu](mailto:min-joo.kim@ttu.edu) (best way to get hold of me)  
**Homepage:** <http://webpages.acs.ttu.edu/minjkim>  
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**Office hours:** Tue, 3:30 -4:50 PM; Wed, 1:00-1:50 PM; or by appointment

### II. Information on the course

#### A. Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an introduction to language typology and linguistic universals. Thus it also concerns language variation. Questions to be addressed include:

- (i) How are languages of the world different from each other?
- (ii) How are they similar to each other?
- (iii) Do the different ways in which the languages package information cause speakers to pay attention to different aspects of their worlds?
- (iv) Are there hidden dimensions in English grammar that are openly expressed in other languages?
- (v) Are unrelated languages like English, Japanese, Arabic, Hindi, Quechua, and Navajo really just different ways of speaking the same language?
- (vi) How does geographic proximity influence the structure of a language and yet how do certain core linguistic properties hold regardless of geographical closeness?

#### B. Textbook:

##### Required (available at the campus bookstore):

Whaley, Lindsay, J. 1997. *Introduction to Typology: The Unity and Diversity of Language*. Sage publications.

Comrie, Bernard. 1989. *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. The University of Chicago Press.

##### Recommended:

Croft, William. 1990. *Typology and Universals*. Cambridge University Press.

Mufwene, Salikoko S. 2008. *Language Evolution: Contact, Competition and Change*. Wilshire, Great Britain: Cromwell Press.

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs & Richard B. Dasher. 2002. *Regularity in semantic change*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Additional readings may be provided as we proceed.

**C. Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- To have basic knowledge of the worlds' languages and how they are classified.
- To be able to conduct a preliminary fieldwork in linguistic documentation.
- To define different types of categories or "parts of speech"
- To be able to read and understand morpho-syntactic data from various languages
- To be familiar with linguistic terms such as linguistic universals, thematic roles, grammatical functions, case, passive vs. antipassive, tense, aspect, mood, subordination, and relativization.
- To gain an initial understanding of syntactic operations such as how questions, relative clauses, and passives are formed.
- To see connections between surface syntactic forms and information packaging and the form and meaning correspondence in general.
- To gain basic understanding of two rather different approaches to linguistic theorizing, namely, functional and formal.

You will be able to acquire the aforementioned skills and knowledge by doing the following:

- Come to every class on time, follow lectures attentively, and participate actively in class discussion.
- Do all reading assignments in a timely fashion.
- Take a proactive approach to the requirements and start working on them as soon as possible.
- Clear up any confusion as soon as possible by asking questions in class or by meeting with the professor during office hours or at any other mutually convenient time.

**D. Criteria for Assessment:**

Attendance and participation	10% of the entire grade
One exam	20%
Language journal	20%
Final project proposal	5%
Presentation on the final project	15%
Term-paper	30%
Assignments	Not graded but discussed

**Attendance and participation (10%):** Being graduate students, you are expected to come to each and every class **on time and prepared**. In addition, you must participate actively in class discussions and show keen interests in the subject matter. You should also be willing and prepared to share your own ideas with the rest of the class especially when reviewing assignments.

**Exam (20%):** The exam will be on basic concepts and terminologies of linguistic typology covered in the class. Therefore studying for it will help you with the language journal and the final term-paper.

**Language journal (20%):** You will carry out an **in-depth study of a relatively under-studied language** such as Vietnamese or Navajo by comparing it with Modern American English, on the basis of the linguistic features studied in the course. Essentially, you will be writing a short

reference grammar of that language but compiling linguistic data on the basis of published references and consultations with native speakers.

You should provide brief but self-contained information on some grammatical aspect of your language on a weekly basis. For example, in the 1<sup>st</sup> week, talk about its morphological make-up and phonology. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, talk about how it marks grammatical relations and voice. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, talk about its aspect, both grammatical and lexical.

The journal will be **9-10 pages, double-spaced** and must be submitted at class on **March 24th**. (No electronic submission will be accepted.)

On March 24<sup>th</sup>, students will also make an **informal presentation on the language journal**. The presentation will not be graded but **required**; failure to make a presentation will **lower the grade by at least one level** (e.g., an A will become a B+). Allotting time for presentations will be important because it will give a venue for everyone to learn about languages other than those mentioned in the textbooks. Second, it will help you to do a better job when presenting on your term-paper projects at the end of the semester.

Useful guide for keeping a language journal or conducting a linguistic fieldwork:

<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/lingfieldwork/>

More information on the structure of the language journal will be given later.

**Final project (50% in total):** You will work on **five to six unrelated languages** and **compare them** with respect to a **particular topic** in linguistics, such as how languages mark grammatical functions (e.g., subject and object), how they express relativization, what is responsible for word order variation, and why questions in languages like English involve movement but those in languages like Japanese and Mandarin Chinese do not.

The final project has **three** components to it:

- (i) **A written proposal (due March 31) (5% of the final grade):** a **one to two paged** short essay which clearly outlines the topic you are interested to investigate, providing the information about the languages you will be looking at, and the **initial literature** review, including the list of **references** you will build on. At this point, there should be **at least five published works** compiled for references.
- (ii) **An oral presentation of the findings (15%):** Dates will be determined later. Also, tips on how to give a good presentation will be given later.
- (iii) **Final paper (due April 28 in class) (30%): 13-15 pages and double-spaced.** Should be **typed and stapled** and must also contain **section headings and page numbers**. **No electronic submission** will be accepted. More tips on the paper will be given later.

**Evaluation criteria:** (i) organization and style; (ii) clarity of writing; (iii) thoroughness of research including literature review; and (iv) contribution potential to the field.

**Assignments:** there will be weekly assignments as a review or a preview for the course. Although they will not be graded, failure to complete them in time will negatively affect your grade in the end. Completing the assignments timely will be to your advantage since it will help you with the

language journal. For example, one week, the assignment will be about Tense and you will be expected to have thought about this topic and come to the class with concrete data drawn from your language or other languages. In addition, sometimes you may be asked to bring short hard copies of the key findings to share with the rest of the class and be ready to discuss them in class.

**E. Schedule:** Subject to Change.

- Note: Below, **W** is shorthand for **Whaley's** textbook and **C** for **Comrie**.
- Readings must be **in advance** except for the 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1/13	Orientation Intro to linguistic typology	W. Ch 1&2 C. Ch. 1	Readings to be done over the weekend
1/20	Issues surrounding typological research methodology Basic categories or parts of speech	W. Ch. 3 C. Ch. 2  W. Ch.4	
1/27	Constituent order universals Types of morphemes	W. Ch. 5&6 C. Ch. 1&2&4	
2/3	Morphological typology  Case and agreement	W. Ch. 7 & 8 C. Ch. 2.3  W. Ch. 9 C. Ch. 6	
2/10	Animacy, definiteness, and gender Valence change: passives, antipassives, and causativization	W. Ch. 10 & C. Ch. 8 W. Ch. 11 & C. Ch. 8	
2/17	Tense and aspect	W. Ch.	
2/25	Mood and negation Subordination	W. Ch. 12  W. Ch. 15	
3/3	Relativization	C. Ch. 7 & W. Ch. 16	
3/10	<b>Exam</b>		
3/17	<b>Spring break: No class</b>		
3/24	<b>Student presentations on language journal</b>		<b>Language journal due</b>
3/31	Morpho-syntax of speech acts	Ch. 14	<b>paper proposal due</b>
4/7	<b>A guest lecture</b>		
4/14	Typology and historical linguistics and prospects	C. Ch. 10 & 11	
4/21	<b>Student presentations on final project</b>		
4/28	<b>Student presentations on final project</b>		<b>Term-paper due</b>

### III. Course Policies

#### A. Basic course-related requirements:

- To earn a passing grade, a student must successfully complete **all course requirements** stated above or in other venues including e-mail correspondences.
- Students must be present in every class. In the event of missing the class, they must inform the instructor as soon as possible; otherwise, there will be serious consequences for their grades: Students with **more than 3 absences** without justification will receive **an automatic F** for the course. **Each** absence will count as **-1** point of the final grade.
- Students must be punctual to respect other students' time, let alone their own. Being late for class **more than twice** without justification will lead to **lowering the course grade by one level**, i.e., an A becomes an A-.
- **No individual make-up** exam will be administered (the only exception being hospitalization and religious activities, but both will need to be justified or proved by appropriate documentation).
- Announcements will be made both in class and via e-mail. E-mail announcements will be sent to students' TTU e-mail account. Therefore it is students' responsibility to check their TTU e-mails on a regular basis, ideally every day.
- Students are encouraged to set up appointments with the instructor to discuss issues related to the course. Constructive feedback about the course is encouraged at any time.

#### B. Civility in the Classroom

- Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning.
- Appropriate student behavior (whether online, in person, or over the telephone) creates a better environment for both teaching and learning.
- There will be no tolerance for chatting with someone in class creating disruption, text-messaging, talking on the phone, or responding rudely to someone's remarks including the instructor.
- Such inappropriate behavior will minimally result in a **request to leave class**; in extreme cases, it may even lead to lowering of the grade by **more than one level**.
- Students are encouraged to participate actively in class but no one should dominate class discussion. Such behavior will be considered inappropriate and hence will be subject to the same set of rules applied to inappropriate behavior. See above.

### C. Academic Integrity

- This course follows the University's statement on academic integrity as in p. 82 of the *Bulletin of Texas Tech*: “It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity.”
- We will also abide by the Code of Student Conduct as laid out in the Student Affairs Handbook (<http://www.studentaffairs.ttu.edu/campuslife/handbook.pdf>).
- Failure to uphold such guidelines may result in one or more of these **penalties** depending on the instructor's assessment of the seriousness of the violation: e.g.,
  - failing grade on an assignment or for the entire course;
  - reporting to the Dean of Students,
  - referral for disciplinary action to the Student Mediation Center or other relevant disciplinary action.
- This class has no tolerance for cheating or plagiarism.
- **What counts as cheating:**
  - dishonesty on examinations, quizzes, and **written assignments**,
  - illegal possession of examinations,
  - use of unauthorized notes during an examination or quiz,
  - obtaining information during an examination from the examination paper or otherwise from another student,
  - assisting others to cheat,
  - alteration of grade records,
  - illegal entry to or unauthorized presence in an office.
- **What counts as plagiarism:**
  - Plagiarism means using other people’s work as if it were his/her own without proper acknowledgments.
  - Therefore, any student will be guilty of plagiarism if he or she fails to give credit for quotations or use essentially identical expressions of material taken from other sources including books, encyclopedias, magazines, the Internet, and the writings of other people.
  - Consequence of plagiarism will result in **an automatic F, regardless of the reason**.
- In sum, students must remember that every action has a consequence and they bear full responsibility for their own actions.

### D. Student with Disabilities

- Any student with disabilities who needs special arrangements to minimize the effects of their disabilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary accommodations.
- But students must present appropriate verification from TechAccess first.