Linguistics 349  
Words and Word Systems

MW 10-11:30, Lorch 173

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Requirements:
mid-term 25%  
weekly homeworks 35%  
final paper (15 pp.) 40%

I. We 9.8 The words of a language [BF]
  how many words are there?  
  what counts as a word?  
  idioms (collocations) and compounds  
  analytic vs. (poly-)synthetic languages

II. Mo 9.13 Word systems: colors and emotions [JH]
  words and their opposites (antonyms)  
  lexical hierarchies (plant, tree, maple, sugar maple)  
  color, cross-culturally and cross-linguistically  
  emotions, cross-culturally and cross-linguistically  
  everyday versus academic language  
  is cross-cultural translation possible?

III. We 9.15 Word systems: natural species
  cross-cutting taxonomies (form, habitat, edibility)  
  prototypes and outliers  
  “kinship” and other relations among species  
  crops and livestock  
  dugong and maize: the personification of culturally important species  
  scientific taxonomy from Linnaeus to the present

IV. Mo 9.20 Primary, extended, and figurative [JH]
  adjectives as a window into a culture  
  hot and cold  
  fast/quick and slow  
  rough, coarse, smooth, and sleek  
  light and dark  
  sweet, salty, sour, bitter, bittersweet, sweet-’n’ sour  
  why are knife blades “sweet” in Songhay?
V. We 9.22 Cognitive linguistics [JH]
formal, functional, evolutionary, typological, and cognitive models of language
Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar
Lakoff’s metaphors (metonyms?) of bodily experience
Talmy’s modeling of motion and causality
cognitive scenarios and truth-conditional logic

VI. Mo 9.27 Parts of speech [BF]
do all languages have nouns, verbs, adjectives, and pre- or post-positions?
what would a language with no noun-verb distinction be like?
history of, and problems with, traditional systems of part-of-speech classification

VII. We 9.29 Grammatical classification of the lexicon [BF]
numeral and possessive classifiers
grammatical genders and noun-classes
productivity of classifiers (experiments)
(d)evolution of grammatical gender in English

VIII. Mo 10.4 Linguistic relativity and the lexicon [JH]
does your native language constrain your thinking?
B. L. Whorf and Edward Sapir as arch-relativists
psychologists as universalists (anti-relativists)
current areas of dispute

IX. We 10.6 Action verbs [JH]
breaking, cutting, and shooting
Levin’s classification of English verbs
effects of verb serialization on lexicon
bipartite verbs (verb plus inflectable auxiliary)
English vs. Dogon: focus on manner/process, or on function/result?

X. Mo 10.11 The power of the word [BF]
vulgar and fighting words
taboo avoidance, euphemisms, deformation, and semantic reversal
how (not) to reconstruct the Indo-European word for ‘bear’

XI. We 10.13 MIDTERM EXAM

Mo 10.18 No class (Fall Study Break)

XII. We 10.20 Major modern English dictionaries [BF]
function of a dictionary—prescriptive or descriptive?
how to organize lexical information in a dictionary entry
convergence of originally distinct words (e.g. case)
broad vs. fine-grained meanings
usage labels (slang, informal, vulgar, etc.)
distinctive styles of different modern English dictionaries
transition to the digital age
the (miserable) life of a dictionary editor
XIII. Mo 10.25 Dictionaries in the ancient and Medieval worlds [BF]
Greco-Roman antiquity
Medieval Europe
Ancient China

XIV. We 10.27 Dictionaries from the Renaissance to the recent past [BF]
Renaissance dictionaries
the strange history of the Oxford English Dictionary
Webster and the American dictionary tradition

XV. Mo 11.1 Numerals and other quantifiers [JH]
counting systems around the world
universal (‘all’) and distributive (‘each’) quantifiers

XVI. We 11.3 Space, time, and motion [JH]
egocentric, relational, and absolute (Cartesian) orientations
cardinal directions
interactions between space and time
motion verbs and the expression of co-events

XVII. Mo 11.8 Kinship and other relationships [JH]
American kinship categories
generation, sex, and siblinghood
are in-laws kin?
kin-like relationships (slave, master, friend, age-/classmate)
fictive kinship: the Holy Father, the mother of invention
why all Australian Aboriginals are relatives (classificatory kinship)
kinship verbs and pronouns

XVIII. We 11.10 Sociolinguistic registers
honoring and humbling (Japanese)
mother-in-law language (Australian Aboriginals)
secret registers
get your paws off me! register choices for body-parts

XIX Mo 11.15 Etymology and word history 1 [BF]
how words change
how words are morphologically renewed
reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European lexicon based on attested languages
how we (attempt to) reconstruct the meaning of proto-words

XX. We 11.17 Etymology and word history, continued [BF]

XXI. Mo 11.22 From word to morpheme [BF]
grammaticalization processes (bleaching, compression)
recurrent paths of change

XXII. We 11.24 Reconstructing words vs. reconstruction grammar [BF]
what is the best evidence for genetic relationships?
can relationships be established without reconstructing words?
Thanksgiving holiday

XXIII. Mo 11.29 Words and politics [JH]
framing political positions and ideologies
revolutionary language
Orwell’s *1984*

XXIV. We 12.1 Politics of language (and lexicon) [JH]
purism: eradicating those damn foreignisms
neologism by committee: the Turkish language reform and the Sun Language theory
nationalism: one language splits into two (Hindustani, Serbo-Croatian)

XXV. Mo 12.6 Lexical borrowing (loanwords) [JH]
lexical borrowing (theft?)
borrowing versus code-switching versus calques
stratigraphy of borrowing (Spanish, French, and English in Moroccan Arabic)
what kinds of word can (or cannot) be borrowed?
old borrowings as evidence for historical linguistics (Basque *bake* ‘peace’)

XXVI. We 12.8 Lexicostatistics and deep reconstruction [BF]
Proto-World Now! how far back in time can we reconstruct?
Swadesh lists and their descendents

XXVII. Mo 12.13 Reconstructing proto-culture and proto-homeland [BF]
what we can reconstruct about Indo-European culture using linguistic methods
using reconstructed words to pinpoint the original homeland of a proto-language
old borrowings as evidence for culture contact

Sat Dec 19 at noon  FINAL PAPER DUE on CTools