EL5101 Grammatical Analysis

National University of Singapore

2019–2020 Semester 1, Wednesdays 18:00–21:00, AS1 room 02-07

Instructor

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Office: AS5 06-09

Office hours: Thursdays 10:30–noon

> Also join us for the **syntax/semantics reading group** (completely optional) Thursdays 4pm, AS5 fifth floor graduate reading room
> `https://mitcho.com/nus/synsem/`

Description

> "A logical theory may be tested by its capacity for dealing with puzzles, and it is a wholesome plan, in thinking about logic, to stock the mind with as many puzzles as possible, since these serve much the same purpose as is served by experiments in physical science."   Russell (1905: 484–485)

This course is a graduate-level introduction to modern syntactic theory. Emphasis will be placed on the the process of analysis and argumentation. Empirically, the course will cover a range of grammatical phenomena in English and other languages, to "stock the mind with as many puzzles as possible," and to motivate and evaluate hypotheses under discussion. Students will complete the class with both the technical expertise and theoretical foundation to comfortably approach a range of work in contemporary syntactic literature.

Website

- Lecture notes will be posted on the public website, `https://mitcho.com/nus/gram2019/`
- LumiNUS will be used for submitting assignments and posting additional readings. Please make sure you are in the **EL5101** or **EL5101R** module on LumiNUS.

Textbook

Adger, David. 2003. *Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach*. Oxford. We will use almost all of this book, so you should buy a copy.[1] Additional readings will be on LumiNUS.

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[1]If you search online, I know you can easily find a PDF for this book, but *that PDF is not of the final, published version of the book* so there may be important differences. I haven't checked. You have been warned.

Requirements

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the following:

1. **Attendance and participation (10%):** Active attendance, participation in class, and preparation (doing the readings) are crucial for success in the class.

2. **Questions and problem sets (7 × 6% = 42%):** Problem sets are an opportunity to apply the techniques developed in class and in the readings to original data.

    Please submit problem sets (and the report, below) <u>as PDFs</u> and make sure your name is in the file.

3. **Quizzes (2 × 10% = 20%):** Two quizzes will test knowledge of the empirical phenomena covered in the class and application of technical concepts to new data and puzzles.

4. **Language report (25%):** Students will study one aspect of an unfamiliar language though elicitation with a native speaker. Guidelines on possible topics will be given later. The language must be a language that (a) you are not a native speaker of and (b) cannot be English, Singlish, Mandarin Chinese, or Singapore Malay. Should be approximately ten pages. Due **Saturday, November 16th**.

5. **Consultation (1%):** Come meet me during my office hours, or by appointment, to receive one point.

6. **Evaluation (1%):** You receive one point for submitting your module evaluation.

7. **Find a speaker (1%):** Find a person who resides in Singapore, who is a native speaker of a language that is not common in Singapore,[2] and who would be open to meeting with linguists who want to study their language. Submit name, email, phone, and language(s) spoken, to `singlanglab@gmail.com` and cc me. (This does not have to be the speaker you work with for the language report.)

    <u>Bonus point:</u> The person who finds the speaker whose language has the fewest speakers in the world — according to Ethnologue `https://www.ethnologue.com/` — will get a bonus point.

If you are registered for EL5101R: There will be an additional problem on problem sets and quizzes.

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[2]Roughly: "reside" = not leaving anytime soon; "native speaker" = grew up speaking from a young age; "not common in Singapore" = anything that's not English, Singlish, Malay, Indonesian, Tamil, Hindi, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Hainanese, Hakka, Vietnamese, Thai, Tagalog/Filipino, Burmese, Japanese, Korean. They do not need to have received formal education or training in the language, or be literate in the language.

Schedule

The schedule is subject to change. Consult the website. CS refers to *Core Syntax*.

Date	Topic
Aug 14	Grammatical knowledge; constituency
	Submit: Survey on LumiNUS by Friday
Aug 21	Building structure
	Reading: Chomsky 1986 chapters 1–2; CS2, 3, 4.2
	Submit: Knowledge of Language questions
Aug 28	Argument asymmetries, *v*P
	Reading: CS4; optional: Barss and Lasnik 1986
	Submit: Problem Set 1
Sep 4	Subjects
	Reading: CS6.1–6.2; optional: McCloskey 1997
Sep 11	More subjects
	Reading: CS4.5, 6.4
	Submit: Problem Set 2
Sep 18	Case and agreement
	Reading: Pesetsky and Torrego 2011, CS6.3
Sep 25	**Recess Week: No class**
	Submit: Problem Set 3
Oct 2	Ergativity (+ **Quiz 1**)
Oct 9	Auxiliaries and head movement
	Reading: CS5
	Submit: Problem Set 4
Oct 16	Embedded clauses
	Reading: CS8
Oct 23	**No class**
	Submit: Problem Set 5
Oct 30	V2 and *wh*-movement
	Reading: CS9
Nov 6	More movement; review
	Reading: CS10
	Submit: Problem Set 6

Nov 13	TBA (+ **Quiz 2**)
	Reading: TBA
Saturday, November 16: **language report due**	

Rules of note

- **Cooperation:** You are encouraged to discuss the problem sets with other students. However, you must always submit your own write-up, and you should list the students who you worked with on your assignment.
- **Integrity:** The use of others' ideas or expressions without citation is plagiarism. You must declare all sources in submitted work. Citations don't need to be in any particular format, but they have to be there.
- **Talk to me:** I want you to succeed in this class. If any material or requirement is unclear, let me know. In extreme cases, alternative arrangements can be made for some of the course requirements, but only by talking to me first.

References

Adger, David. 2003. *Core syntax: A minimalist approach*. Oxford University Press.

Barss, Andrew, and Howard Lasnik. 1986. A note on anaphora and double objects. *Linguistic Inquiry* 17:347–354.

Chomsky, Noam. 1986. *Knowledge of language: Its nature, origin, and use*. Praeger.

McCloskey, James. 1997. Subjecthood and subject positions. In *Elements of grammar*, ed. Liliane Haegeman, 197–235. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Pesetsky, David, and Esther Torrego. 2011. Case. In *Oxford handbook of linguistic minimalism*, ed. Cedric Boeckx. Oxford University Press.

Ritter, Elizabeth, and Martina Wiltschko. 2014. The composition of INFL: An exploration of *tense*, *tenseless* languages, and *tenseless* constructions. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 32:1331–1386.

Russell, Bertrand. 1905. On denoting. *Mind* 14:479–493.