

## Language Patterns: Types and Universals

**Instructor** Jack B. Martin, TUR B374, [jackmartin@ufl.edu](mailto:jackmartin@ufl.edu)

**Office hours** W 1:50-2:45 or by appointment

**Class time and place** M 6-7 (12:50-2:45), W 6 (12:50-1:40); ROG 0129

Many people learn grammatical terms in elementary school or when studying another language. Few people understand how the grammars of languages vary, how linguists arrive at particular analyses, and why they use certain terminology. This course provides an introduction to variation in grammar. We pursue various topics in the course the way a grammar might be organized, from parts of speech to complex sentences. At each point we try to establish what is common and what is unusual. We also try to explain why some patterns are more common than others.

As part of the course, each student will find a reference grammar of an “exotic” language. You will report periodically on features of your chosen language, and prepare a sketch and presentations at the end.

At the end of this course you will feel more like a linguist: you’ll have a better idea of how languages are classified, how they differ, and how linguists describe them. You’ll have better insight into the workings of a particular language (based on the grammar you choose). You will understand the history and problems of linguistic terminology, and begin to appreciate some of the issues that distinguish linguists in explaining similarities and differences among languages. This course will also prepare you for Field Methods, in which students discover and describe the grammar of a language.

### Schedule at a glance (major assignments in *italics*, readings underlined)

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	<i>Week and topic</i>
Jan.	...	9	10	11	12	13	14	1 Introduction ; Fundamentals
	15	<del>16</del>	17	18	19	20	21	2 MLK DAY; Fundamentals, <u>Parts of speech</u>
	22	23	24	<del>25</del>	26	27	28	3 Fundamentals; Europe: <u>Czech</u> ; <i>Find grammar</i> ;
	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	4 Noun-related phenomena; <u>Possession</u>
Feb.	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5 Noun-related phenomena; Asia: <u>Chinese</u>
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	6 Verb-related phenomena, <u>Tense</u> ; <i>Exam 1</i>
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	7 Verb-related phenomena; Africa: <u>Luganda</u>
	26	27	28	29	1	2	3	8 Verb-related phenomena, <u>Voice</u>
Mar.	4	<del>5</del>	<del>6</del>	<del>7</del>	<del>8</del>	<del>9</del>	10	9 SPRING BREAK
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	10 Verb-related phenomena; Australia/Pacific: <u>Kapampangan</u>
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	11 Verb-related phenomena, <u>Serial verbs</u> ; <i>Exam 2</i>
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	12 The Americas: <u>Guaraní</u> ; <i>Posters, part 1</i>
Apr.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	13 Verb-related phenomena, <u>Grammatical relations</u> ; <i>Posters, part 2</i>
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14 <i>Sketch due</i> ; Verb-related phenomena, Grammatical relations
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15 Re-examining the fundamentals, <u>Comparative concepts</u>
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	16 Re-examining the fundamentals; Summary
	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	Final exam: Thursday, May 3, 12:30-2:30

### Readings (in order)

Schachter, Paul. 2003. Parts of Speech. *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, ed. by William Frawley, 250-251. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mocnay, Eugenia. 2004. *Czech*. Carlsbad, CA: Penton Overseas.

Taylor, J. R. 2003. Possession. *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, ed. by William Frawley, 300-303. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Li, Charles N., and Sandra A. Thompson. 1987. Chinese. *The World's Major Languages*, ed. by Bernard Comrie, 811-833. New York: Oxford University Press.

Comrie, Bernard. 2003. Tense. *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, ed. by William Frawley, 363-368. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Katamba, Francis. 2001. Luganda. *Facts about the World's Languages: An Encyclopedia of the World's Major Languages, Past and Present*, ed. by Jane Garry and Carl Rubino, 429-434. New York / Dublin: H. W. Wilson.

Kitano, Hiroaki. 2001. Kapampangan. *Facts about the World's Languages: An Encyclopedia of the World's Major Languages, Past and Present*, ed. by Jane Garry and Carl Rubino, 371-375. New York / Dublin: H. W. Wilson.

Sebba, Mark. 1999. Serial Verbs. *Concise Encyclopedia of Grammatical Categories*, ed. by Keith Brown and Jim Miller, 344-347. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Velázquez-Castillo, Maura. 2001. Guaraní. *Facts about the World's Languages: An Encyclopedia of the World's Major Languages, Past and Present*, ed. by Jane Garry and Carl Rubino, 271-273. New York / Dublin: H. W. Wilson.

Whaley, Lindsay. 1999. Marking of Grammatical Relations. *Introduction to Typology: The Unity and Diversity of Language*, 152-169. Sage Publications.

Haspelmath, Martin. 2010. Comparative concepts and descriptive categories in crosslinguistic studies. *Language* 86.663-683.

### Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of phonetics, phonology, and morphology are extremely helpful.

**Detailed schedule** (major assignments in *italics*, readings underlined)

Week 1 (1/9). Introduction. Goals and structure of the course.

#### PART 1. THE FUNDAMENTALS

Week 2 (1/16-1/18). MLK Day; Describing and understanding language; Basic concepts (the word, Parts of speech and phrase categories).

Week 3 (1/23-1/25). Language types in broad strokes (morphological types, ways of tracking arguments, constituent order types), Europe: Czech; *Find a grammar* (no class 1/25).

#### PART 2. NOUNS AND TYPICALLY NOUN-RELATED PHENOMENA

Week 4 (1/30-2/1). Nominalization, Noun compounds, Number; Size, Possession, Pronouns, Demonstratives, Definiteness.

Week 5 (2/6-2/8). Counting, Quantifiers, Noun classes, Case, Discourse markers, Relative clauses; Asia: Chinese.

#### PART 3. TYPICALLY VERB- AND SENTENCE-RELATED PHENOMENA

Week 6 (2/13-2/15). Tense, Aspect; *Exam 1*.

Week 7 (2/20-2/22). Verb compounds (noun incorporation), Number, Size, Person; Africa: Luganda.

Week 8 (2/27-2/29). Negation, Mood, Commands, Questions, Grammatical Voice (on Wikipedia).

Week 9 (3/5-3/7). SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (3/12-3/14). Location and direction, Transitive/intransitive alternations, Indirect causatives, Applicatives, Existence; Australia/Pacific: Kapampangan.

Week 11 (3/19-3/21). Adverbial clauses, Complement clauses, Combining phrases, Serial verbs; *Exam 2*.

Week 12 (3/26-3/28). The Americas: Guaraní; *Posters, part 1* (students who have signed up for this day will give poster presentations on their languages).

#### PART 4. RE-EXAMINING THE FUNDAMENTALS

Week 13 (4/2-4/4). Grammatical relations, ergative-absolutive systems, nominative-accusative systems, agent-patient systems; *Posters, part 2* (students who have signed up for this day will give poster presentations on their languages).

Week 14 (4/9-4/11). *Sketch due*; Grammatical relations (continued), basic concepts (the word, parts of speech and phrase categories).

Week 15 (4/16-4/18). Constituency and constituent order, "Comparative concepts..." (Haspelmath).

Week 16 (4/23-4/25). Describing and understanding language; Summary.

Final exam: Thursday, May 3, 12:30-2:30

#### Requirements

Homework	15%	The cumulative grade may be lowered with noticeably poor attendance.
Midterm exams	35%	
Sketch	15%	
Final exam	35%	

**Homework** is designed to make sure you are doing the reading, attending, and understanding concepts. Assignments are due at the beginning of class and often include problem sets or short grammatical descriptions that will form part of the sketch. Late assignments may be accepted at the beginning of the next class, but the grade will be lowered.

The two **exams** test terminology and ability to do problems. Make-up exams require a valid excuse and must be arranged prior to the exam. There is no extra credit.

The **presentation and sketch** are both on the language you have chosen to study. During the first few weeks of the course, you should look for a suitable reference grammar of an 'exotic' language (outside of Germanic and Italic). Look for one that's comprehensive, easy to read, and makes clear what each word means in the examples. Bring your source to class and get it approved. The sketch (10-15 pages, double spaced) is based on your reference grammar, describing various topics considered in class. The point is to summarize the main features of the language (genetic classification, sounds in a chart, constituent order, negation, tense, etc.) and what aspects are expected or unexpected from a crosslinguistic perspective. You should also evaluate your source. The presentation is very brief (3-5 minutes) and is a chance to share interesting features of your language with others.

The **final** will be cumulative and will concentrate on problem sets and terminology.

**Class materials:** Aside from the textbook, class materials will be posted on the e-Learning site. These will include supplemental readings, handouts, maps, and links. You will find it helpful to have copies of the handouts in class.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. Questions on exams will come from material presented in class. Your grade may be lowered if you have noticeably poor attendance.

**Etiquette:** Please try not to distract others by surfing the web, texting, letting your phone ring, arriving late, reading a paper, etc. Try not to dominate question sessions. Try to ask questions that are useful to others.

**Academic integrity:** As members of the UF community, you pledge to hold yourselves and your peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>). These actions are dishonest: citing ideas from others without acknowledging your sources; submitting someone else's work as your own; submitting the same assignment for two courses without permission; taking an online exam in a group and discussing answers; looking at someone else's answers; working together on an assignment without permission; completing an assignment in class while the answer is being given; maintaining or consulting banks of exams without the instructor's permission; lying to explain an absence or late assignment.

**ADA Statement:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

#### **Useful references**

Asher, R. E., ed. in chief. 1994. *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Crystal, David. 1992. *An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Malmkjaer, Kirsten, ed. 1991. *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*. London: Routledge.

Payne, Thomas E. 1997. *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Keeping track of your grade**

HOMEWORK	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
a. Total/total possible:	

QUIZZES	
1	
2	
b. Quiz average:	

c. SKETCH	
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d. FINAL EXAM	
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**Weighting:**

a x .15=	
b x .35=	
c x .15=	
d x .35=	
Sum of above:	

**Final grade:**

.95-1.00	A
.90-.94	A-
.87-.89	B+
.83-.86	B
.80-.82	B-
.77-.79	C+
.73-.76	C
.70-.72	C-
.67-.69	D+
.63-.67	D
.60-.63	D-
0-.59	E

