Course: LIN 207 Language, Society, and the Individual
Semester: Fall 2005
Instructor: Bohnemeyer
Text: Bonvillain [4]2003

Overview: Language is the most important "interface" between any one human being's mind and the minds of other people. A number of subdisciplines of linguistics, psychology, sociology, and anthropology are dedicated to the study of how language is used to convey messages from mind to mind; in particular: neurolinguistics – the study of how language is supported by the brain; psycholinguistics – the study of how utterances are processed in the mind/brain; language acquisition research – the study of how languages are learned; sociolinguistics – the study of the social determinants of language variation and change; and linguistic anthropology – the study of the cultural embedding of linguistic practice. This course is designed to provide a first acquaintance with these various fields of study. The main emphasis will be on the social and cultural aspects of language use.

Lecture: MWF 11:00-11:50 322 Clemens
Instructor: Dr. Jürgen Bohnemeyer – Office 627 Baldy Phone 645-2177 ext. 727
                 E-mail jb77@buffalo.edu Office hours MF 10:00-10:30 W 13:00-14:00
TA: Kirsta Mahonen – Office 604 Baldy Phone 645-2177 ext. 704
                 E-mail kmahonen@buffalo.edu Office hours MW 12:00-01:00

Reading: Bonvillain [4]2003 (required); six chapters from other books are on reserve and can be downloaded from the UB Libraries website (see below) – readings *must* be completed prior to the lecture for which they are assigned!

Assessment: There will be six **homework assignments**, seven **in-class exercises** to be completed in group work, and a three-hour open-book, open-notes **final exam**. HW assignments consist of problem sets and will be graded according to the number of points you score on the solution to each problem. In-class exercises consist of similar problem sets, but will not be graded – only your participation will be recorded. The final exam consists again of the same kind of problem sets and will be graded in the same way as the hw assignments. Overall grades compute as follows:

  • Best five hw assignments – 50%
  • Participation during in-class exercises – 20%
  • Final exam – 30%

Syllabus
(Readings marked with an asterisk can be downloaded from the Course Reserve website of the UB Libraries. For example, if you start from http://myub.buffalo.edu/, click on the *UB Libraries* or *My Library* link, then on the *Course Reserve* link under *Library Services* (lower right), and follow the instructions. Materials are downloadable only in Internet Explorer. Note that the pages designated for preparatory reading below may be less than the entire chapter!)

Week 1: Introduction; Properties of language

Mo Aug 29	*Introduction and overview*	**Reading:** Bonvillain ch. 1
We Aug 31	*Properties of language*	**Reading:** *Hockett 1958: 569-580
Fr Sep 02	*Language as a mental phenomenon*	**Reading:** *Jackendoff 1994: 8-20

Week 2: The form of the message

Mo Sep 05   *** Labor Day ***
We Sep 07   *Phonetics*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 7-13
Fr Sep 09   *Phonemic analysis; prosodic features*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 13-16

Week 3: The form of the message (cont.)

Mo Sep 12   **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #1!**   **HW #1 out!**
We Sep 14   *Morphology: The structure of words*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 17-24
Fr Sep 16   *Syntax: The structure of sentences*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 24-28

Week 4: Meaning in language

Mo Sep 19   *Semantics*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 28-30   **HW #1 due!**
We Sep 21   *Extended and transferred meaning*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 63-73
Fr Sep 23   **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #2!**   **HW #2 out!**

Week 5: Language and cognition

Mo Sep 26   *The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 46-51
We Sep 28   *Cognitive Anthropology: color terms*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 51-63
Fr Sep 30   *Cognitive Anthropology: space*   **Reading:** *Levinson pp. 109-123   **HW #2 due!**

Week 6: Language acquisition

Mo Oct 03   *The puzzles of language acquisition*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 241-243
We Oct 05   *First utterances*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 245-251; 262-266
Fr Oct 07   **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #3!**   **HW #3 out!**

Week 7: Language acquisition (cont.); Language processing

Mo Oct 10   *Learning word meanings*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 243-244; 251-252
We Oct 12   *Speech perception*   **Reading:** *[RABCS] pp. 120-125
Fr Oct 14   *Speech production*   **Reading:** *[RABCS] pp. 125-133   **HW #3 due!**

Week 8: Language and brain

Mo Oct 17   *Language and the brain*   **Reading:** *[ADFH] pp. 501-520
We Oct 19   *Language and the brain* (cont.)   **Reading:** *[ADFH] pp. 521-530
Fr Oct 21   **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #4!**   **HW #4 out!**

Week 9: Using language

Mo Oct 24   *Speech acts and speech events*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 76-81; 92-94
We Oct 26   *Conversation analysis*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 112-116
Fr Oct 28   *Implicatures*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 116-119   **HW #4 due!**

Week 10: Using language (cont.)

Mo Oct 31   *Politeness: Terms of address*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 83-87; 126-129
We Nov 02   *Politeness: Face and redress*   **Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 129-134
Fr Nov 04   **IN-CLASS EXERCISE #5!**   **HW #5 out!**

Week 11: Sociolinguistics

Mo Nov 07	*Social stratification and language use*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 140-150; 157-159
We Nov 09	*Pidgin and Creole languages*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 325-332
Fr Nov 11	*African American Vernacular English*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 159-164; **HW #5 due!**
		171-173

Week 12: Language and gender

Mo Nov 14	*The sociolinguistic approach*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 181-189
We Nov 16	*The ethnographic approach*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 221-234
Fr Nov 17	*The conversation-analytical approach*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 196-205

Week 13: Language and gender (cont.)

Mo Nov 21	**IN-CLASS EXERCISE #6!**	**HW #6 out!**

*** FALL RECESS We Nov 23 till Fr Nov 25 ***

Week 14: Multilingualism

Mo Nov 28	*Multilingual nations: India*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 298-306
We Now 30	*Multilingual nations: USA*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 316-325
Fr Dec 02	*Bilingual communities*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 336-347 **HW #6 due!**

Week 15: Multilingualism (cont.)

Mo Dec 05	*Code switching*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 355-366
We Dec 07	**IN-CLASS EXERCISE #7!**	
Fr Dec 09	*Endangered languages*	**Reading:** Bonvillain pp. 347-354

FINAL EXAM – TBA!

The final exam is open-book, open-notes, and consists entirely of problem sets of a kind that have already occurred in hw assignments and in-class exercises. Essentially, you get questions you've seen before, but wrt. to new data sets. So your preparation should focus on reviewing the assignments and exercises and making sure you know (a) the solution to each of the problems and (b) *why* the solution to a particular problem is the solution to that problem.

Bibliography

(The books marked with a ^ are on reserve in the Undergrad Library, *in addition* to the designated chapters downloadable online, for voluntary follow-up reading. You can check them out for two hours max, or overnight.)

^[ADFH] Akmajian, A., Demers, R. A., Farmer, A. K., and R. M. Harnish (1995). *Linguistics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

^Bonvillain, N. (^{4}2003 [1997]). *Language, culture, and communication*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

^Hockett, C. F. (1958). *A course in modern linguistics*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

^Jackendoff, R. (1994). *Patterns in the mind*. New York, NY: BasicBooks.

Levinson, Stephen C. 1996. Frames of reference and Molyneux's question: Crosslinguistic evidence. In: Bloom, Paul, Mary A. Peterson, Lynn Nadel, and Merril F. Garrett (Eds.), *Language and space*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 109-169.

^[RABCS] Radford, A., Atkinson, M., Britain, D., Clahsen, H., and A. Spencer (1999). *Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.