ENGL 413
Theories & strategies of teaching English
Prof. Kent Lee

Notes for week 1

1. Basic linguistic terms

You will need to know the following linguistics terms. Look these up if you're not sure what they are.

- Syntax: The abstract rules governing sentence structure and word order.
- Morphology: The principles of word formation in a language. This consists of [1] grammatical morphology, such as plural endings and verb endings; and [2] derivational morphology, or the formation of new words from others by adding prefixes or suffixes, or by compounding words
- Phonology: The principles of sound in a language, such as phonemes and intonation, and how the sounds are organized. Phonology is thus the theoretical and abstract principles that govern the sounds of a language.
- Phonetics: The articulation of sounds in a language, such as sound variations, and how they are produced in the vocal tract.
- Semantics: The meaning of words.
- Pragmatics: How language is used in context. This includes: how words take on new meanings in context, the use of implied meaning (implicature), social politeness, patterns of conversational interaction, and many others.
- Historical linguistics: language history and evolution
- Psycholinguistics: How language is stored and processed in the mind, for first and second language learning.
- Applied linguistics: A very broad area of application of theoretical principles. This includes language learning and teaching.
- Lexicon: The vocabulary of a language that one knows, or the words that exist in a language. In psycholinguistics, it refers to the words (lexemes) and lexical information that one knows.
- Neurolinguistics: How the brain stores and processes language.
- Generative grammar: A set of theories inspired by Chomsky that attempt to determine the theoretical and abstract rules or principles of syntax, morphology and phonology in a language. This approach also attempts to find universal principles of language structure in the world's languages, and the abstract principles that govern language learning, either L1 acquisition of children, or L2 learning.
- Critical period: Around the age of puberty, the child's brain undergoes changes,

making it more difficult to learn a language naturally.

Pragmatics is one that is harder to define, as it covers a diverse range of topics. It basically refers to language use - i.e., language as used in real contexts. This can include: how words take on new meanings in context; how context helps us interpret utterances; turn taking and conversational structure; implicature - how we imply things and interpret things beyond the "literal" or "face-value" meaning of sentences; meaning in discourse; discourse markers; sociolinguistic aspects of conversational interaction; discourse analysis; conversation analysis; and others.

We won't talk about historical linguistics much, except at the beginning, in regard to this one burning question: Why is English so hard? It is due to the following.
- Lexical and historical factors
- Poor teaching / learning of English as a second language
- Psycholinguistic factors

The historical factors explain why English vocabulary is so large, diverse, and difficult for non-Westerners, namely, the sources of English structure and vocabulary. [Note: 'vocabulary' is usually singular, not 'vocabularies'.]
- Old German → Old English / Anglo-Saxon
- Latin
- Old French [Old Norman] & Modern French
- Greek
- Spanish

You will need to be aware of the following key terms in language teaching.
- Grammar translation method [GTM]
- Audiolingual method [ALM]
- Communicative language teaching [CLT]
- ESL [English as a second language]: if taught to learners in an L1 environment, e.g., English learners learning English in North America
- EFL [English as a foreign language]: where English is foreign to the instructional & social environment, e.g., English taught in Korea
- L1 & L2: first & second language
- TESOL, TESL: teaching English as a second language; teaching English as a second/other language; teaching English to speakers of other languages

When we speak of generative grammar, people often think of Chomskyan syntax. However, there are other generative and quasi-generative approaches, and cognitive linguistic approaches (as well as pragmatic / functional approaches).
1. Chomskay syntax: Transformational Grammar → Principles & Parameters theory → Government & Binding theory [GB] → Minimalist Program [MP]
2. Other generative approaches: Optimality Theory [OT], Optimality Syntax, Lexical Functional Grammar [LFG], and many others

3. Cognitive linguistics: cognitive grammar, cognitive semantics, Construction Grammar (all these overlap and are based on the same principles)

2. Basic psychology terms

We will learn about some psychology and educational psychology terms throughout the semester, such as...

- behaviorism
- cognitive psychology
- social psychology
- psycholinguistics
- neurolinguistics
- schema theory
- scaffolding
- motivation - intrinsic & extrinsic