

Ling 481/812 – Topics in Linguistics III: Corpus Linguistics

Syllabus

Department of Linguistics – Simon Fraser University – Fall 2013

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Office hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:30

Class: Wednesdays, 1:30-2:20, WMC 2503 – Fridays, 12:30-2:20, WMC 2532

Course material: Canvas

Course description

This course will provide a general overview of Corpus Linguistics, focusing on contemporary approaches, but also with a historical overview and an examination of the main theoretical issues in the discipline. Students will be introduced to different perspectives in the corpus-based analysis of language (qualitative vs. quantitative; diachronic vs. synchronic; monolingual vs. multilingual). We will examine examples and techniques for analysis at different levels: phonetic/phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic/pragmatic, discourse. Students will be able to understand and evaluate the practical issues surrounding data collection, storage, annotation and analysis. Throughout the course students will learn to use some of the most common techniques, tools and software packages in corpus analysis.

Prerequisites

12 upper-division Linguistics credits, or permission of the instructor.

Required textbook

McEnery, Tony and Andrew Hardie (2012) *Corpus Linguistics: Method, Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9780521547369.

Course objectives

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- Define and describe the main perspectives on the analysis of language from the point of view of corpus linguistics.
 - Describe the difference between quantitative and qualitative corpus linguistics.
 - Describe the difference between diachronic and synchronic corpus-based research.
 - Identify the differences in conducting corpus research on monolingual vs. multilingual corpora.
 - Identify the different levels of analysis in corpus linguistics (phonetic/phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic/pragmatic, discourse).

- Critically evaluate different theoretical perspectives in corpus linguistics.
 - Explain what it means for corpus linguistics to be a theory or a method.
 - Describe the recent history of corpus linguistics.
 - Compare Neo-Firthian corpus linguistics to corpus-based linguistics.
 - Explain the relationship of corpus linguistics to other disciplines (psychology, computational linguistics, digital humanities, functional linguistics, usage-based linguistics, emergentism, cognitive linguistics).
 - Analyze applications of corpus linguistics (dictionary/grammar creation, education, writing, language acquisition, language teaching).
 - Evaluate the limitations on the generalizations derived from data.
- Recognize and develop strategies and practices to deal with the issues surrounding corpus collection, storage, annotation and analysis.
- Manipulate the most commonly-used tools in corpus linguistics.
 - Develop skills in corpus collection, searching, annotation and analysis.
- Apply basic statistical techniques to corpus analysis.
- Achieve enhanced critical, reading, writing and speaking skills.
- For graduate students only:
 - Find, analyze and critique primary sources of research in corpus linguistics.
 - Practice applying the terms and concepts in the course to a current research project.

Course expectations

- Students are expected to **attend all classes** and to arrive on time so that classes may begin promptly. Announcements will be made at the beginning and end of classes regarding the assigned readings and the expectations for exams.
- Students are expected to **have read all assigned readings before class**. Because many students will be learning about a new field of study, some of the materials and concepts may seem fairly complex. You should probably read assigned readings and go over the lecture notes multiple times.
- It is very important for students to **participate** in class discussions. Therefore, everyone must come to class prepared. Preparation includes carefully reading of the assigned material, noting any questions that you have, and thinking of how the reading relates to your own personal experiences.
- Students will be **responsible for all materials** covered in the assigned readings and lectures.
- Assignments are **due at the beginning of class**. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Students will be **respectful** of other students and the instructor. In particular, students will not talk while the instructor or another student is talking.
- Students should familiarize themselves with the Department's **Standards on Class Management** and Student Responsibilities at: <http://www.sfu.ca/linguistics/undergraduate/student-resources/department-standards.html>

- **Cell phones:** please make sure that your cell phone (or any other noisy device, including alarms) is turned off during class.
- **Academic dishonesty** in all forms violates the basic principles of integrity and thus impedes learning. More specifically, academic dishonesty is a form of misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action and includes the following: cheating, fabrication, fraud, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. For more information on academic honesty and student conduct, please visit the following websites:

<http://students.sfu.ca/calendar/student-info/academic-honesty.html>

<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/teaching.html>

Please complete the library's plagiarism tutorials:

<http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/tutorials/plagiarism-tutorial>

A grade of "FD" may be assigned as a penalty for academic dishonesty.

Tutors, editors, or any other types of outside help are not allowed. Exceptions are the assistance provided through the Student Learning Commons (see below, under Resources).

- Please note that students requiring accommodations as a result of a **disability** must contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (778-782-3112 or csdo@sfu.ca).
- All student requests for accommodation for **religious practices** must be made in writing by the end of the first week of classes or no later than one week after a student adds a course.

E-mail policy

You are welcome to submit questions and comments via e-mail. Please keep the following in mind when sending your message.

- I cannot always respond to messages late in the evening or on weekends. If you send a message late on Friday or during the weekend, I might not reply until the following week.
- I can only respond to questions that can be answered **in a sentence or two**. Questions requiring longer replies should be asked in class or during office hours.
- Please proof-read your e-mail message to make sure that your question is clear. In addition, I would appreciate questions that are expressed in an appropriately polite manner.
- Please always **sign your name and the course number**. Make sure the Subject line contains the name of the course ("Ling 481"). Anonymous messages will not be answered. Further, if your message does not clearly address the content of the course, or the Subject line is simply "hi", there is a good chance that it will be automatically classified as spam, and discarded before I actually get to see it.
- Because of the large number of e-mail messages that I receive, it may be several days before I am able to reply to your message. It is often easier and faster to ask a question in class or during office hours. I may also provide answers in class, instead of replying to individual e-mail messages.

Course components and assignments

The course will consist of lectures, in-class writing, in-class discussion and other hands-on activities. Some group work will be required. The following are the main assessment components.

- One-minute papers. Summary of the weekly readings, to be discussed in groups in class.
- Short essay summarizing 1-2 papers representative of a particular approach to corpus linguistics.
- Group presentation of research in related disciplines.
- Assignments. Three assignments where students will collect, organize, and analyze their own corpus, drawing conclusions about the analysis.
- Take-home final exam.
- Participation. The participation grade includes attending class regularly and participating actively. Other in-class activities (written questions about the reading, reading logs, reports, group work) will also count towards your participation grade.

Grading

The final grade will be calculated according to the percentages below.

COMPONENT	WEIGHT
1-minute papers	5%
Short essay	10%
Presentation	10%
Participation	10%
Take-home final exam	20%
Assignments	45%

Percentage scores on assignments and other course components will be based on objective criteria.

Final letter course grades will be computed from percentage scores on all the course components. The following table provides a rough estimate of grade breakdowns for the final grade. Due attention will be given to the verbal descriptions listed below. There is no university-wide standard scale. An instructor adopts a grade scale appropriate to the level and content of the course.

96-100%	A+	Extraordinary performance	66-70%	C+	Satisfactory performance
91-95%	A		61-65%	C	
86-90%	A-	Excellent performance	56-60%	C-	Marginal performance
81-85%	B+		50-55%	D	
76-80%	B	Good performance	< 50%	F	Unsatisfactory performance (fail)
71-75%	B-				

Grade appeals

If a student wishes to contest the marking of an exam, assignment or paper, the instructor can agree to remark his/her entire exam at the instructor's convenience and not in front of the student. A grade reconsideration may raise the grade, lower the grade, or leave the grade unchanged, as stated in Policy T20.01, clause 2.4.4.

The only reason a grade change will be made is if there is an arithmetic error or if it has been determined that the exam, assignment or paper deserves a lower grade or a higher grade after it has been remarked.

The following **are not** reasons for reconsideration of a grade:

- The student is on probation.
- The student wants to get into Business or any other program.
- The student worked hard and thinks this should be a factor.
- The student does not like the grade scale.
- The student's score is x% below the next grade and would like the instructor to ignore the difference.

Resources

A number of resources are available to the students in the class.

The SFU Learning Commons is available to all SFU students, and provides assistance with learning, academic writing and reading strategies (<http://learningcommons.sfu.ca/>).

All the class material will be available through canvas (canvas.sfu.ca). Please check it frequently, and make sure you avail yourself of all the tools that you may need.