

## LING 203 English Language: Past and Present

### *Term 1: English grammar*

#### Term 1 course convenor

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#### Teaching

Every lecture will be followed by a workshop in the week *following* the lecture, so that everyone will have a workshop related to the week 1 lecture in week 2, and so on. There *is* a workshop in week 1 as well, though, in which you'll get to sort out the groups you'll be working in for the rest of the term. There are no workshops in reading week (the workshop for the lecture in week 5 taking place in week 7), and there is no workshop following the last lecture. If you haven't done so already, please sign up for a workshop group on the Part 2 notice board.

#### Course description, term 1

In this term, as in term 2, we explore the structure of the English language, but where term 2 will focus on the phonetics and phonology, the emphasis is now on the grammar.

Our starting point will be the view of English grammar (and indeed the grammar of any language) as a tool that allows speakers to *communicate* effectively. At the same time, then, as looking at grammatical structures in terms of what smaller elements they consist of and/or what larger structures they are part of, we will continually be asking ourselves in what ways these formal properties may help to convey meaning in actual language use.

Compared with term 2, there is another difference: while there your attention will be drawn to certain respects in which English is less than fully homogeneous *geographically* (accent variation), we will now examine some of the

ways in which it has evolved *historically* (grammatical change). This is an important issue, since it will be seen that various aspects of present-day English grammar can be understood more clearly in the light of historical processes. (For more detailed coverage of the history of English, however, you are referred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year module LING 213.) This does not mean that present-day variation is ignored altogether, witness e.g. the lecture on the grammar of spoken English (which is quite different from written English!).

#### Aims and objectives

Students will:

- have a good knowledge of the grammatical structure of English sentences, clauses and phrases, and the ability to understand and carry out syntactic analysis (using bracket and especially tree structure representations)
- be familiar with the historical background of some grammatical patterns in Present-day English, and understand how studying diachronic change (in English and in general) may shed more light on the synchronic state of (English) grammar
- have a thorough appreciation of the distinction between linguistic form and function, and of the sense in which the latter may motivate the former, synchronically and diachronically

#### Readings

The main book for this part of the course will be Börjars, Kersti & Kate Burridge (2001) *Introducing English grammar*, London: Arnold (abbreviated B&B in the outline above). The week-by-week outline also includes several references to chapters from Givón, T. (1993) *English grammar: a function-based introduction*, Vols. I and II, Amsterdam: John Benjamins and Dixon, R.M.W. (1991) *A new approach to English grammar, on semantic principles*, Oxford: Clarendon. These are recommended rather than compulsory, although the chapter from Dixon is the only set reading for week 9.

Additional (non-compulsory) references will be supplied in the individual lectures, and several chapters and articles will be available for photocopying from the 203 folder next to my door.

### Web page

A LING 203 www page will be set up (with downloadable handouts, seminar exercises, etc.). You'll be able to access it through a link on my personal www page: <http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/willem/willem.htm>

### Week-by-week outline

- Week 1: *The purpose of (studying) grammar*  
B&B Ch.1, Givón Ch.1
- Week 2: *Simple sentences*  
B&B Ch.2
- Week 3: *Word classes, from lexical to minor*  
B&B Ch.3, Givón Ch.2
- Week 4: *Grammatical functions*  
B&B Ch.4
- Week 5: *Sentence types: declaratives, interrogatives and beyond*  
B&B Ch. Ch.5
- Week 6: *Reading week (no seminars!)*
- Week 7: *Types and structure of phrases*  
B&B Chs.6-7
- Week 8: *Complex sentences 1: basic patterns*  
B&B Ch.8
- Week 9: *The passive: form(s) and function(s)*  
Dixon Ch.9
- Week 10: *The grammar of spoken English*  
B&B Ch.10

### Assessment

Assessment for term 1 will be by assessed groupwork (10%) and by essay (1,500-2,000 words, 10%) on an aspect of English grammar (list of topics to be supplied in due course). The deadline is tba soon. If you should need to apply for an extension please refer to the relevant section in your Part 2 Handbook concerning the regulations, and note that the person to contact is Sebastian Hoffmann. The same model of assessment applies in term 2, after which there will be an exam for the course as a whole (60%). There's also the option of doing a dissertation (100%).

In addition to this essay (and the essay you wrote for term 1), there will be an exam on 203 as a whole.

### General readings (Present-day English and history of the language)

- Aitchison, Jean. 1991. *Language change: Progress or decay?* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Cambridge: CUP. [3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (2001) also available in the library]
- Barber, C. 1993. *The English language: a historical introduction*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Baugh, A. & T. Cable. 1993. *A history of the English language*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. London: Routledge. [5<sup>th</sup> edn. (2002) also available in the library]
- Biber, D., S. Johannson, G. Leech, S. Conrad & E. Finegan. 1999. *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. New York: Longman.
- Blake, Norman F. 1996. *A history of the English language*. London: Macmillan.
- Collins, Peter & Carmella Hollo. 2000. *English grammar: an introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Macmillan.
- Crystal, David. 2003. *Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Cambridge: CUP.
- Culpeper, Jonathan. 1997. *History of English*. London: Routledge.
- Denison, David. 1993. *English historical syntax*. Harlow: Longman.
- Freeborn, Dennis. 1992. *From Old English to standard English*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. [a substantially revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (1998) is available from Waterstone's though not yet in the library]
- Freeborn, Dennis. 1995. *A course book in English grammar*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Macmillan.
- Görlach, M. 1994. *The linguistic history of English*. Macmillan.
- Greenbaum, S. & R. Quirk. 1990. *A student's grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.
- Hogg, R.M. (general ed.) 1992. *The Cambridge history of the English language*. 6 vols. Cambridge: CUP.
- Huddleston, Rodney R. & Geoffrey K. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Pyles, T. & J. Algeo. 1993. *The origins and development of the English language*. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech & J. Svartvik. 1985. *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.
- Strang, Barbara. 1970. *A history of English*. London: Methuen.
- Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 1972. *A history of English syntax*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.