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LING 570.01: Seminar in Linguistics - Aspectual Systems

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Aspectual Systems
LING 570
The University of Montana

Spring 2017
Instructor: Leora Bar-el

SYLLABUS

The study of aspect has been likened to a dark and savage forest full of “obstacles, pitfalls, and mazes which have trapped most of those who have ventured into this much explored but poorly mapped territory” (Macaulay 1978, as quoted in Binnick 1991:135)

Instructor information

✉ <leora.bar-el@umontana.edu>

📖 Social Science Building, Room 210

☎ To reach me by phone, you can leave a message in the Anthropology main office 406-243-2693

Office hours: Wednesdays 10am-12pm, or by appointment

Course meeting times and venue

Tuesdays and Thursdays

11:00am-12:20pm

LA 303

Course description

In this course we explore aspectual systems cross-linguistically. We will examine the types of aspectual distinctions that languages encode and how languages encode those distinctions. We will explore the ways in which predicates are classified based on their aspectual properties (sometimes called lexical aspect or Aktionsart or situation aspect), and the extent to which these classifications and their diagnostics are upheld cross-linguistically. We will also explore grammatical aspect (sometimes called viewpoint aspect, or just “aspect”), which includes categories such as perfective, imperfective, progressive, perfect, etc., and the types of grammatical aspect categories and meanings that we find across languages. We will look at a variety of languages throughout the course. We will also devote some time in the course to the investigation of some of the methodologies that are used to uncover aspectual distinctions in well-documented as well as under-documented languages.

Moodle

This course has an online supplement Moodle site: <http://umonline.umt.edu/> (click on Moodle NetID Login). Slides, readings, handouts, and other materials will be posted there for downloading. You will also be uploading your assessed work to Moodle.

Technical Support

UMOnline: 406-243-4999 or toll-free 866-225-1641

UMOnline services and support website: <http://umonline.umt.edu/services-and-support>

UMOnline technical support e-mail address: umonline-help@umontana.edu

IT Central: 406-243-4357

IT Central support website: <http://umt.edu/it/support/>

IT Central support e-mail address: italk@umontana.edu

Course Structure

Class meetings will include discussion of assigned readings (book chapters and articles), data set activities, student presentations, linguistic research training, etc.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will:

- (a) understand some of the ways in which aspectual classes have been categorized, the diagnostics used to classify them, and their documented variation cross-linguistically
 - (b) understand some of grammatical aspect distinctions across languages
 - (c) be familiar with some of the methodologies used to uncover aspectual distinctions
 - (d) be able to present and discuss claims, data, and arguments from the literature
 - (e) be familiar with the conference abstract review process
 - (f) be able to explore aspectual systems in different languages and communicate your research findings in the form of oral presentations, research papers, reports, and conference abstracts
-

Assessment

Participation	20%
Reading assignments	20%
Language report	10%
Methods report	15%
Abstract	10%
Research paper and presentation	25%

- **Participation:** This is crucial in a graduate seminar. You are required to attend every class, come to class prepared, having completed the assigned readings, assignments, etc., and actively participate in class discussions on a regular basis.
- **Reading assignments:** Throughout the semester, you will complete several small assignments based on the readings.
- **Language report:** For this assignment you will examine a/some grammars of a language that you are not familiar with and uncover as much as you can about the aspectual system of that language. You will present your findings to the class as a brief presentation on **Thursday March 2**, including any unanswered or remaining questions that arise. Further details will be distributed later in the course.
- **Methods report:** For this assignment you will use one of the methods introduced in the course in order to uncover some facts about the aspectual system in that language. You will present your findings in class on **Tuesday March 28, or Thursday March 30**, focusing on the generalizations that emerged in your data, as well as reflections on the methodology. Further details will be distributed later in the course.
- **Research paper and presentation:** For your research paper you may choose any topic related to the study of aspectual systems. You are welcome (though you are not required) to develop your language report or methods report for this paper. You are welcome to focus on area of research relating to aspectual systems that we did not cover in this course. Your paper must make an original contribution (i.e., it cannot be limited to a summary of the literature). Your paper can be based on data you collect, or data published in the literature. Papers are due **by 9am Saturday May 6**. Prior to submitting your paper, you will give an **in-class presentation** of your research in the last two weeks of class. A presentation schedule will be circulated later in the term. We will spend some time in-class discussing writing research papers and giving research presentations. You are also welcome to discuss your topics with me individually. Further details will be distributed later in the course.

- **Abstract:** You will write an abstract of your research paper (1 page single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, with an additional page of data/references permitted) and upload it to Moodle **by 9am on Monday April 17**. Prior to the abstract due date, we will discuss abstract writing in class.
- **Abstract review:** We will have an in-class abstract review session where we discuss each of your abstracts as a group and provide feedback on **Thursday April 20**. You are required to download all the abstracts from Moodle and read them before the class they are to be discussed.

Plagiarism is an offence and is not tolerated.

Grading criteria

A	93-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%	F	Below 60%
A-	90-92%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%		
		B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%		

Readings

- The required reading for this course (articles and book chapters) will be downloadable from our course Moodle site. See reading list at the end of this syllabus.

Library Reserves

- This course has a Course Reserves webpage. Go to the main page of the Mansfield Library website <http://www.lib.umt.edu> and in the Search window click on the Course Reserves tab. You can search by my name, course ID, course name, or item title. Books on reserve for this course (listed below) are available from the Information Centre on the main floor of the library (Level 3). These books are on 24-hr reserve.

- Binnick, Robert I. (ed.) 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brinton, Laurel J. 1988. *The Development of English Aspectual Systems: Aspectualizers and Post-Verbal Particles* (Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 49). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bybee, Joan, Revere Perkins and Williams Pagliuca. 1994. *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect and Modality in the Languages of the World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1985. *Tense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect: an introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, Carlota S. 1997. *The Parameter of Aspect*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

E-books available at Mansfield Library

- Hogeweg, Lotte Hoop, Helen de Hoop, and Andrej Malchukov (eds.). 2009. *Cross-linguistic Semantics of Tense, Aspect and Modality*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Paula Kempchinsky, Paula and Roumyana Slabakova (eds.). 2006. *Aspectual Inquiries*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Rothstein, Susan D. (ed.). 2008. *Theoretical and Crosslinguistic Approaches to the Semantics of Aspect*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Travis, Lisa deMena. 2010. *Inner Aspect: The Articulation of VP*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Verkuyl, Henk J., Henriette De Swart, and Angeliek Van Hout (eds.). 2005. *Perspectives on Aspect*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Some additional online resources

- Östen Dahl's book Tense and Aspect Systems is downloadable from this website: <http://www2.ling.su.se/staff/oesten/recycled/Tense&aspectsystems.pdf>

- Robert Binnick's Project on the Annotated Bibliography of Contemporary Research on Tense, Aspect, Aktionsart, and Related Areas: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~binnick/TENSE/>. This bibliography can be searched by topic or language. This bibliography was last updated in 2006, so it is a bit outdated, but still a useful resource.

Other resources

- As the resource lists above are by no means exhaustive, you will also be expected to find books, articles and other resources related to aspect throughout the course which you will use for assignments, research projects and in class discussions.
- When you come across articles, links or other resources that you think the class would benefit from, please let me know and I will post them on Moodle where appropriate.
- Other relevant materials may be introduced during the course and posted on Moodle where possible. You are always welcome to come speak to me about advice on materials to consult.
- If the library does not own a book or article that you are looking for, you can request it through Interlibrary Loan (ILL): <http://www.lib.umt.edu/research-find/ill>
- The Linguistics Program Library liaison is Julie Edwards julie.edwards@umontana.edu

UM Writing Center

The University of Montana Writing Center offers students in all disciplines free support as they write for any course. Welcoming all students, The Writing Center provides a comfortable environment where students can engage in supportive conversations about their writing and receive feedback at any point during a writing process. To make an appointment and learn more about The Writing Center's by-appointment and drop-in hours, visit www.umt.edu/writingcenter or call 243-2266. I encourage you all to take advantage of this excellent resource!

Course Policies and Procedures

- **Attendance:** You are expected to attend every class and be an active participant. If you miss a class, inform me by e-mail **as early as possible**. Unexcused absences will result in a deduction to your participation grade.
- **Respect your classmates:** Arrive to class **on time**. You are responsible for all material covered, including announcements, questions/answers, etc., that may occur at the beginning of class. If you are late, please be courteous to your fellow classmates and me – avoid being disruptive. Unexcused tardiness will result in a deduction to your participation grade. If you anticipate being late to class regularly (e.g., due to a work schedule, a class on the other side of campus, etc.), please inform me as soon as possible.
- **Student Conduct Code:** You are expected to be familiar with the *University of Montana Student Conduct Code*, which is downloadable from the Student Conduct Code webpage: http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php. You are also expected to be familiar with the University of Montana Academic Policies and Procedures, which can be found on the Academic Policies and Procedures webpage: <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/academics/academic-policy-procedure.php>.
- **E-mail:** Throughout the semester course information will be circulated by e-mail to your UM e-mail address (usually via Moodle, but in some cases, directly to your individual e-mail address). Make sure that you check that e-mail account often. **You are responsible for ensuring that you are able to receive any course information circulated by e-mail.** If you have any concerns about this, please contact me immediately.

- **Course Accommodations Statement (DSS):** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or by calling 406-243-2243 for assistance in developing a plan to address program modifications. If you are already working with Disability Services your responsibilities are to contact me to discuss reasonable and appropriate modifications that may be necessary. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide a reasonable and appropriate modification. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at <http://life.umt.edu/dss>.
- **Technical Requirements:** Using the Moodle learning environment requires your computer to be set up to view and download documents, webpages, etc. More information can be found on the UMOOnline Services and Support website: <http://umonline.umt.edu/services-and-support/>. Contact UMOOnline for assistance: 406-243-4999 or toll-free 866-225-1641; UMOOnline technical support e-mail address: umonline-help@umontana.edu.
- **Naming and Submitting Assessed Work:** Unless otherwise noted, assessed work should be uploaded to the relevant section on Moodle as either .docx or .pdf files. Files should be named with your last name and an appropriate assessment category (e.g., “Smith Methods Report” or “Jones Final Paper”). If your operating system does not allow blank spaces in file names, you may use an underscore “_” (e.g., “Smith_Methods_Report” or “Jones_Final_Paper”). Please do not use any other symbols in your file name as I may not be able to open it.

Proposed Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Day	Date	Topic/Activity	Readings* and Deadlines
1	Tues	Jan. 24	Course overview and introduction	
	Thurs	Jan. 26	Lexical aspect: a first look	Vendler 1967
2	Tues	Jan. 31	Grammatical aspect: a first look	Comrie 1976 (Ch 1)
	Thurs	Feb. 2	Universality of aspectual classes?	Van Valin 2006 (priority: §1-2)
3	Tues	Feb. 7	The relation between lexical and grammatical aspect	Wilhelm 2002
	Thurs	Feb. 9	States	Johansdottir 2011 (Ch 2: §2.2 only)
4	Tues	Feb. 14	How many classes of states?	Choi 2015
	Thurs	Feb. 16	Progressive states	Johansdottir 2011 (Ch 3: skip §3.3)
5	Tues	Feb. 21	Non-culminating accomplishments	Tsujimura 2003; Pederson 2008; Arunachalam & Kothari 2011
	Thurs	Feb. 23	Semelfactives	Kiss 2011
6	Tues	Feb. 28	TBD	
	Thurs	Mar. 2	Language Reports	
7	Tues	Mar. 7	Data collection methods	Bar-el 2015
	Thurs	Mar. 9	Another look at grammatical aspect	Mair 2012

8	Tues	Mar. 14	The perfect	Comrie 1976 (Ch 3)
	Thurs	Mar. 16	The perfect (cont'd)	Kiyota 2006; Vander Klok & Matthewson 2015
9	Tues	Mar. 21	Spring Break – No Class	
	Thurs	Mar. 23	Spring Break – No Class	
10	Tues	Mar. 28	Methods reports	
	Thurs	Mar. 30	Methods reports	
11	Tues	Apr. 4	Abstract writing	
	Thurs	Apr. 6	The role of aspect in “tenseless” and “grammatical aspectless” languages	Lin 2012 (§1-6); Bohnemeyer & Swift 2004 (§2 only)
12	Tues	Apr. 11	Acquisition of aspectual systems	Wagner 2012; van Hout 2008
	Thurs	Apr. 13	Acquisition of aspectual systems (cont'd)	Bardovi-Harlig 2012
13	Tues	Apr. 18	TBD	Abstracts due by 9am Mon Apr 17
	Thurs	Apr. 20	Abstract reviewing	Student abstracts
14	Tues	Apr. 25	TBD	
	Thurs	Apr. 27	Student Presentations (schedule TBA)	
15	Tues	May 2	Student Presentations (schedule TBA)	
	Thurs	May 4	Course wrap-up	Final papers due by 9am Sat May 6

* Additional readings may be assigned or suggested throughout the course. They will be posted on Moodle where available. You are expected to consult additional resources relating to your chosen research topics.

Readings

- Arunachalam, Sudha & Anubha Kothari. 2011. An experimental study of Hindi and English perfective interpretation. *Journal of South Asian Linguistics* 4(1):27-42.
- Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen. 2012. Second Language Acquisition (Chapter 16). In *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect*. Robert Binnick (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 481-503.
- Bar-el, Leora. 2015. Documenting and Classifying Aspectual Classes Across Languages. In Ryan Bochnak and Lisa Matthewson (eds.), *Semantic Fieldwork Methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 75-109.
- Bohnemeyer, Jürgen and Mary Swift. 2004. Event Realization and Default Aspect. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27: 263-296.
- Choi, Jiyoung. 2015. On the universality of aspectual classes: inchoative states in Korean'. In E. Labeau & Q. Zhang (eds.), *Cahiers Chronos 27: Taming the TAME Systems*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 123-135.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect: an introduction to the study of verbal aspect and related problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jóhannsdóttir, Kristín. 2011. Aspects of the Progressive in English and Icelandic. Doctoral Dissertation, University of British Columbia.
- Kiss, Katalin. 2011. Remarks on semelfactive verbs in English and Hungarian. *Argumentum* 7: 121-128.
- Kiyota, Masaru. 2006. Semantics of the particle *kʷɪ* and event representation in Səncáθəŋ. *Proceedings of the 11th Workshop on Structure and Constituency in Languages of the Americas (UBCWPL 19)*. Vancouver: UBC. Pp. 95-108.

- Lin, Jo-Wang. 2012. Tenselessless (Chapter 23). In *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect*. Robert Binnick (ed.). Oxford University Press. 669-695.
- Mair, Christain. 2012. Progressive and Continuous Aspect (Chapter 28). In *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect*. Robert Binnick (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 803-827.
- Pederson, Eric. 2008. Event realization in Tamil. In M. Bowerman & P. Brown (eds.), *Crosslinguistic perspectives on argument structure: Implications for learnability*. Routledge. 331-355.
- Tsujimura, Natsuko. 2003. Event Cancellation and Telicity. *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 12.
- Vander Klok, Jozina and Lisa Matthewson. 2015. Diagnostics for already vs. perfect aspect: a case study on Javanese *wis*. *Oceanic Linguistics* 54 (1):172-205
- van Hout, Angeliek. 2008. Acquiring Telicity Crosslinguistically: On the Acquisition of Telicity Entailments Associated with Transitivity. In M. Bowerman & P. Brown (eds.), *Crosslinguistic Perspectives on Argument Structure: Implications for Learnability*. Routledge. 255-278.
- van Valin, Robert D. 2006. Some Universals of Verb Semantics. In *Linguistic Universals*. Ricardo Mairal (ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 155-178.
- Vendler, Zeno. 1967. *Philosophy in Linguistics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Wagner, Laura. 2012. Primary Language Acquisition (Chapter 15). In *The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect*. Robert Binnick (ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 458-480.
- Wilhelm, Andrea 2002. Situation type and viewpoint aspect, or telicity and perfectivity in Dëne Sų́tíné (Chipewyan). *Proceedings of the 7th Workshop on Structure and Constituency in Languages of the Americas (UBCWPL 10)*. Vancouver: UBC. Pp. 155-168.

This syllabus is subject to change