# Learning to Talk about Language in an Online Linguistics Course

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Online course offerings in all disciplines, including language and language-related courses, are becoming more common at universities everywhere. Given the number of different course offerings available, there has been surprisingly little research on the effectiveness of teaching linguistics online nor of how students in such classes develop in their linguistic knowledge and metalinguistic abilities to express linguistic reasoning. In response to an increasing demand for remote instruction, we developed an online version of our graduate introduction to linguistics course. Using a variety of online pedagogical options, including read-only, audio and audio/video presentations, online analysis and practice activities, discussion forums, and online quizzes, we examined how 19 graduate students developed in their beliefs about language, their factual knowledge of linguistic concepts, and the sophistication of their linguistic reasoning. We report initial findings from the student feedback, student outcome measures, and designer and instructor feedback. Our study suggests that while students make gains in all areas of their knowledge, the gains were limited especially in areas that demanded they apply and extend their knowledge in novel directions.

## INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing push to use different delivery methods and instructional techniques to teach classes in the US and abroad. In particular, online classes and online degree programs are common at universities across the country. With this move to online teaching comes questions about how and why we are using particular methods of instruction, what students are learning, and how online instruction compares to traditional, face to face classes.

Although there is little research about online classes solely devoted to teaching linguistics, there is some description of online units and modules developed to supplement face to face (F2F) classes (Battenburg & Lant, 2003; Rocci, Armani, & Botturi, 2003). In addition, the University of Marburg in Germany has a virtual linguistics campus with a variety of online offerings (http://linguistics.online.uni-marburg.de/). When we (the authors) were at a conference in October 2010, colleagues in a neighboring state told us that linguistics was the weak link in their online TESL programs, and that they had not yet successfully found a way to offer introduction to linguistics courses in a non-F2F environment. This surprised us, given the push toward online instructions in so many fields.

One approach in designing online materials is to migrate an existing F2F course into an online format (Warnock, 2009). This approach has the benefit of using the existing materials and learning objectives from the F2F delivery and extending them into a different mode of

instruction. There are many online tools that can be used to migrate traditional classroom activities. PowerPoint presentations with recorded audio using Adobe Presenter can replace the classroom lecture. Forums and discussion boards can be used to generate classroom discussion. Alternatively, an online course can be created anew for the online environment without dependence on traditional F2F pedagogy to organize the course.

## Overview of the Class

To deliver the content in the class as well as interact with the students, we used Moodle, an open source course management system (CMS) supported by the English department. Moodle is similar to WebCT and Blackboard (as well as other CMS) in that it allows instructors to provide content (PowerPoints, videos, documents), interact with students (forums and chat), and assess students (through quizzes, assignment dropboxes). Moodle is widely used in our department and both of us use it regularly to supplement our F2F classes.

The online class we designed included eleven units covering basic concepts including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, conversation, registers, dialects, language acquisition and historical linguistics. The course used *Language: Its structure and use (*Finegan, 2008) as the core textbook.  The textbook was supplemented with other readings, videos, narrated and non-narrated PowerPoint lectures by the instructor and forum discussions for each unit. Students were evaluated on their homework responses (including Moodle based quizzes used as open book homework), a language observation journal, and two exams.

## Research Question

For this study, we examined how students in an online linguistics course developed their linguistic beliefs, knowledge and analytical ability. This question is of interest because there is no information that we found that examines how students learn linguistics. The kind of learning we examined goes beyond simple knowledge to examine beliefs and development of students' ability to apply their new knowledge to real life uses of language. The research question we report on in this paper is found in (1).

(1)     How do students change with regard to their linguistic knowledge, beliefs and reasoning?

## METHODOLOGY

Our research reports on an exploratory case study of an online introduction to linguistics class in the summer of 2010.  The class was taught only online and included no face-to-face contact with students. There were originally 21 students in the class, but two dropped before the end of the class.  We used a pre-test/post-test approach to determine student achievement. The course took place over an eight-week summer session at Iowa State University during 2010.  The materials and assignments for each week's units (1 or 2 units) were made available on the Friday before the unit was to be addressed.  None of the units were made available any sooner in order to make sure that students worked on approximately the same timeline. At the beginning of the course, students took the pretest before starting any of the units in the course.  To guard against temptation to work ahead, the students could not access any of the content of the course until they had taken the pretest. Although the course was evaluated partially through a midterm and

final exam which were constructed to test all the stated learning objectives for each of the 11 units in the course, the data reported in this paper does not include results from the midterm and final exams.

The instructor for the course (John) taught this course from 2001-2009 in a F2F format. He has also taught Introduction to Linguistics to undergraduate students for several years during the same time period. Kimberly (the RA for course development) has also taught Introduction to Linguistics to undergraduates both at Iowa State University and Grinnell College. Both of us were involved in making pedagogical decisions for the online course.

## Data Collection

We designed a test to measure student development during the course. We administered it at the beginning of the class (before students had access to course materials other than their textbook) and at the end of the course. The pre and posttests contained identical questions from three different categories: linguistic beliefs, knowledge, reasoning. Linguistic belief questions addressed concepts from the introductory unit. There were 20 linguistic knowledge multiple-choice questions, two from each of the 10 units following the introductory unit. The linguistics reasoning questions asked students to describe and analyze the issues in three difference scenarios. The full test is provided in Appendix A.

## Participants

The participants in this study were 19 students enrolled in the online class. The class fulfills a requirement or elective for a wide range of degrees including TESL, Rhetoric and Professional Communication, Literature, Creative Writing, and Education. In addition, it is required for a variety of teacher education licensure programs, especially teachers seeking a Reading Endorsement. A technology survey showed that students were anxious about using computer technology for learning. Although some students had taken several classes online (while the remaining had never taken an online class), there was nervousness among both groups about taking the course online, either because of the content, the technology, or both.

## Data Analysis

The three areas tested before and after the class were scored in three different ways. Twelve questions about linguistic beliefs were scored on a 4 point Likert scale (scored 0-3) from Agree Strongly (0) to Disagree Strongly (3). No middle score was available so that the respondents had to choose an opinion oriented towards the statements. We compared students' pre and posttest means and also computed the standard deviation. All statements were written so that greater disagreement correlated with beliefs that were linguistically justifiable. For example, a student who disagreed with the statement "Primitive societies sometimes have primitive languages" would be expressing a belief that agreed with linguistic facts. There were two types of beliefs examined: six statements reflected general beliefs about language and six statements reflected beliefs that had to do with prescriptive attitudes toward language. All statements reflected content in the first chapter of the course textbook.

Linguistic knowledge questions were scored either right (1) or wrong (0). The 20 questions used in this portion of the pre/posttest included two questions each from Units 2-11 of the course. Questions were chosen from a bank of questions that had been used on tests from previous semesters. Each question avoided specialized vocabulary (e.g., allophone, oblique) that students would be unlikely to know before starting a course in linguistics. The specific content of the test questions was not discussed during the course so that the posttest would not have little effect of learning due to reminders of the original questions. To answer our research questions, we found the class means and standard deviations and compared the pre and posttest results.

The final section of the pre/posttest evaluated linguistic reasoning. This section of the test included three examples of language data. For each, students were asked to describe and analyze the example relative to its use of language. The first was a comic that discussed issues related to acquisition, especially the acquisition of pronunciation. The second was a political advertisement that included prescriptive attitudes toward the use of English in society. The last was a superficially polite and positive sounding reference letter that was nevertheless negative in its message. Students were asked to explain why the letter was unlikely to be read positively. Student responses were evaluated by comparing each student's pre and posttest answers. Responses were read by both researchers and were scored qualitatively as either having improved, remained the same, or gotten worse.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our research question asked how students changed with regard to their linguistic knowledge, beliefs and reasoning. We expected that each of these areas would show positive changes reflecting the objectives of the course. Each of these areas will be examined separately because each type of learning is quite distinct. Not only did our test questions attempt to take into account different types of understanding of the course content and applying it, each area was scored differently. This made combining results impossible. We look first at the results for general beliefs about language, then prescriptive beliefs, then knowledge of linguistic concepts, and finally, the development of linguistic reasoning skills.

### General Beliefs

The beliefs section of the pre/posttests included 12 statements, six having to do with general beliefs about language and six having to do with prescriptively-oriented statements. Beliefs were scored from 0-3. In each case, a higher score signifies greater agreement with linguistic beliefs about language. The results suggest a change toward beliefs about language that are more linguistically justifiable (Table 1).

Table 1. Average general belief scores for six general statements about language

| | |
|---|---|
| Pretest | 1.56 |
| Posttest | 1.73 |

The amount of movement is quite modest. In general, the pretest says that students were in the middle, between agreeing and disagreeing with the statements. The change in posttest scores

would be greater if one statement which moved in the opposite direction were removed. In other words, the change in scores would be from 1.58 to 1.83. The single statement that moved in the opposite direction is shown in (2). This went from 1.45 --> 1.11, strongly away from a more linguistically defensible belief.

(2)     Written language is more grammatical than spoken language.

The reason for why students seemed to move toward a less linguistically defensible belief in the superiority of written language may be that although the course material talked about spoken and written language being equally grammatical, the statement may have made little impact on the students just because it was stated in the book. This statement may also be a hard sell. All the course materials were delivered through the medium of writing, and it is evident that spoken language does not feel grammatical in the same way that written language does. In addition, students lack familiarity with the grammar of spoken language and lack practice in analyzing patterns in spoken language.

**Prescriptive Beliefs**

The second set of belief statements involved prescriptive beliefs about language. For example, one statement said "Teachers and language authorities should decide whether new words in English are OK to use." Consistent with the scoring of general belief statements, greater disagreement (a score of 2 or 3) reflected a less prescriptive response. In general, students were less prescriptive than we expected in the pretest, shown in Table 2. Responses to all six statements moved in the same direction from the pretest to the posttest.

Table 2. Average prescriptive belief scores for six general statements about language

| | |
|---|---|
| Pretest | 1.75 |
| Posttest | 2.03 |

The greatest movement was seen for two statements. The first, "Swear words should be included in dictionaries," moved from 1.65 on the pretest to 2.1 on the posttest, a score that reflects firm disagreement with the statement. A second, "Southerners don't speak correctly," moved from disagree to strongly disagree, from 2.1 to 2.5.

**Linguistic Knowledge**

The linguistic knowledge section included 20 questions (two each from 10 units of the textbook) and was meant to measure the most basic kind of understanding we intend students to learn in our classes. Most of these questions involved basic understanding or the ability to analyze language data at a basic level and pick the correct answer from a limited set of alternatives. All of the questions were multiple choice and all were chosen to avoid reliance on overly technical vocabulary which we would not expect students to know at the beginning of the class. An example question is shown in (3).

(3) Which statement is truest of saying *walkin'* and *talkin'* instead of *walking* and *talking*?

        a. They reflect social class

        b. They are a matter of formality

        c. They are dependent on the situational

        d. All of the above

The scores for the pretest and posttest are shown in Table 3.  The final improvement may have been suppressed because of three students' scores which showed no improvement on the posttest (which was not graded).  Two of the students appeared to do the test without much care (taking only 7 and 12 minutes to do the entire posttest).  Removing these three scores resulted in an improvement about a point higher (9.8 to 13.3), which was still lower than we had hoped.

Table 3.  Average linguistic knowledge score (20 possible)

| | |
|---|---|
| Pretest | 9.3 |
| Posttest | 11.9 |

Students showed improvement overall, though the amount of improvement was less than we expected. The questions were taken from tests from previous semesters and were not unusually difficult.  However, pretest scores were higher than we expected, with students averaging about 46% correct on the questions.  The posttest scores almost reached 60 % correct, a result that, if extended to classroom performance in general, is not satisfactory. (A class with an average of 60% in graduate school would never be seen as representative of student ability.) As mentioned, we did not explicitly address the questions included in the pre and posttests, but as most were about basic concepts covered in the course, we expected better posttest scores.  The scores, however, suggest that mastery of this kind of basic knowledge does not simply happen for all students.

**Linguistic Reasoning**

To examine changes in linguistic reasoning ability, we used three open-ended prompts:  a comic about foreign accent, a political ad about English language policy, a constructed letter of reference meant to highlight Grice's maxims.  We evaluated these three prompts based on improvement from the pre to posttest, looking at the quality of linguistic reasoning and the depth of evaluation made by the students.  Posttest responses were classified as having shown improvement, having shown little change, or having gotten worse.  Seventeen responses were examined for the first item, and 16 for the other two because for each, one respondent did not provide an answer for either the pretest or posttest (see Table 4).

Table 4. Linguistic reasoning development for three open-ended prompts

|  | Showed Improvement | Little Change | Got Worse |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Foreign Accent | 11 | 4 | 2 |
| Speak English | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| Letter of Reference | 5 | 10 | 1 |

The first item, a Boondock's comic, asked students to explain the view of language learning suggested by the comic. Most students improved on this item, with posttest responses showing a deeper level of analysis, greater connections to course content, and a greater willingness to question the assumptions in the comic. The response in (4) represents a response that showed little improvement, while (5) is a sample of a response that showed definite improvement.
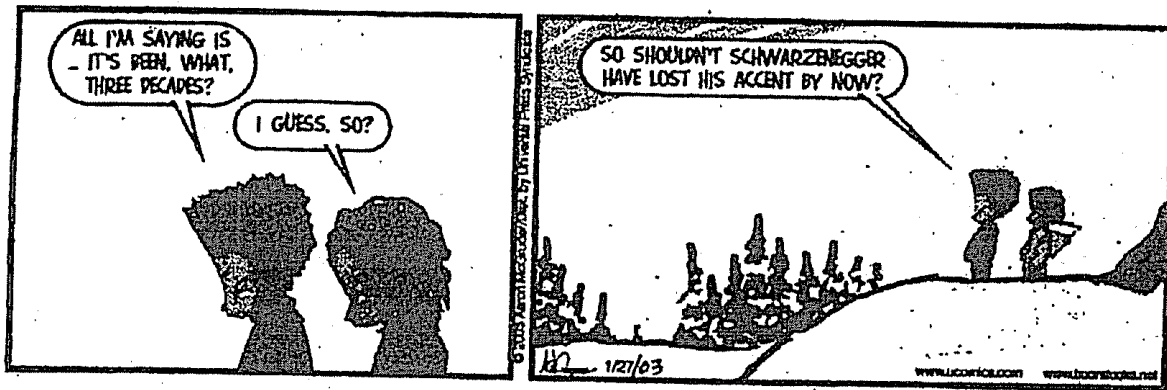


(4) A response that showed little or no improvement

      PRE They assume that anyone can lose a "foreign accent," or learn to speak with the local accent, if they are given enough time speaking the language.

      POST If you stay in a foreign country long enough, you will be able to speak the language without an accent.

(5) A response that showed improvement

      PRE    The characters seem to think that a language or a dialect can be mastered within three decades, or over a long period of time.

> POST When a person learns a language, they not only learn nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc. They also learn how to speak the language meaning its sounds or accents. However, that's not the case when a person learns a second language. A person acquires the ability to make sounds into words and sentences at a very young age and then lost the ability make certain sounds after so long, sounds that aren't incorporated in their native language. Although Schwartzenegger has lived in the US for a long time, he still has an accent and probably always will for this reason.

The "no difference" response shows minimal analysis at the pretest time and little more at the end of the course. Neither response is what we would hope for in the long run. The response that shows improvement, besides being longer, shows a greater depth of reasoning, discussing the difference between learning a first and a second language, learning a foreign language involving different elements that do not all develop equally, and the idea of a critical period being important in foreign accents.

The second question asked students to describe and analyze the issues in a political advertisement from a candidate for governor of the US state of Alabama. In the ad, the candidate talks about his intention to seek legislation for using only English for government functions in Alabama, and tells listeners that the policy makes sense because "This is Alabama. We speak English. If you want to live here, learn it." This prompt elicited more answers that were worse at the end, though again, the majority of the students' answers showed improvement. In (6) we see a response that improved. We do not provide an example of no improvement" and worse responses.

(6) A response that showed improvement

> PRE He is stating that because the majority of people speak and read English in his state, state test and papers should be in English. He is making the appeal that people from other countries who come to this country have to learn English. It appeals to people who are afraid of immigrants and the use of other languages in official acts.

> POST This candidate is appealing to the anti-immigrant, and English only feeling that some segments of our country feel. In part this ad seems to say the to truly be an American you have to be able to read and speak English. While English is the main language in this country, there is no official language. The ad also ignores the fact that there are many native born Americans from groups that have lived in and been a part of the United State from who English is not their first language

The example of an improved answer shows a willingness to question the assumptions made by the candidate and brings evidence to the argument regarding the lack of an official language in the United States, and that many people who speak English may also use other languages. The pretest answer, on the other hand, describes but does not evaluate the ad's assumptions.

In general, pretest answers recognized the basic appeal of the ad and suggested an anti-immigrant subplot. Many answers implied that the appeal suggested that true Americans speak English, and that other languages are undesirable. The answers, however, were poorly explained. Posttest answers improved especially in students' depth of the reasoning. They discussed the lack of an official language in the US, the importance of knowing other languages, the role of identity, and the connections of accent to social loyalty. In general, successful posttest answers examined the pros and cons of the reasoning in the advertisement.

In the final item, in (7), students were asked to analyze a letter of reference (from Ohio State University, 2001, p. 233).

(7)  Q: Explain briefly why the language of the following reference letter is unlikely to be read positively.

> Dear Professor Smith,
>
> Mr. John Jones has asked me to write a letter on his behalf for a teaching position. Mr. Jones is unfailingly polite, is neatly dressed at all times, and is always on time for his classes.
>
> Sincerely,
> Harry L. Homer

The majority of the students showed little or no improvement, as in the answer in (8), with only five showing improvement. Of the 10 that did not improve, most were poorly answered on both the pretest and posttest, focusing on irrelevant surface features of the text instead of the fundamental and (to us, at least) obvious issues in the letter.

(8)  A response that showed little or no difference

> PRE    The first sentence of the letter is too wordy and it should be concise. I think there could be a better word to describe how polite Mr. Jones is besides "unfailingly". The word choice in this letter is not very professional, which can be seen as negative.
>
> POST   There is no emotion in the reference letter and not much content to it either. Also, the use of one negative word in the letter changes the whole demeanor of the letter making it appear negative.

The example in (8) is typical of those we received for this item. Students' responses remained on the surface. Having been told that the letter was unlikely to be read positively, they searched for anything to justify a negative reading. Unfortunately, the surface negatives they found were largely irrelevant to the real reasons the letter was not positive.

Of the five answers that showed improvement, only one gave us the kind of language that we hoped to receive, shown in (9).

(9)  A response that showed improvement

> PRE   It contains a run-on sentence.

> POST  The letter is not relevant to the situation and violates the Maxim of Relevance.  As a letter of reference it also violates the Maxim of Quality.  It does not address the implied question that the employer has about Mr. Jones' ability as a teacher.  In fact, the only thing that might be relevant is the fact that he is always on time to classes.

The improved example is the best response we received.  It was also the only one to explicitly refer to Grice's Maxims in its analysis.  Most noticeably, it ignored the kinds of surface features that drew most students' attention. Overall, the students' answers to this question were shockingly inadequate. Students overwhelmingly focused on surface features, and they especially focused on "negative" words and morphemes (*unfailingly, fail, un*), other surface features such as sentence structure and supposed run-on sentences, and a supposed lack of enthusiasm (*I've been asked)*.

It appears that the power of surface features to obscure deeper elements of language structure and meaning cannot be underestimated.  The appeal to the letter not being read as positive seemed to evoke in the students a search for negative words and words that could be taken to be unenthusiastic.  Clearly, reasoning for this area of linguistic knowledge (which was covered in the course) did not easily extend to new contexts.

**CONCLUSION**

Our study suggests that while students can make gains in their knowledge through online learning, the gains are limited especially in areas that demand they apply and extend their knowledge in novel directions. We think that this is a possible consequence of our decision to migrate our F2F class into an online format rather than design a class specifically for online teaching. While the decision to migrate still seems like a safe way to begin to teach online, it does not take advantage of the unique strengths that teaching online offers.

Although the posttest scores did not show the improvement we had hoped, the class as a whole seemed to work well. The pre/posttests were not entirely reflective of the students' ability or learning in the eight-week class. Exams in the class were obviously open book while the pre and posttest results suggest that students took these without relying on their notes or books. Additionally, neither pre nor posttest scores were counted as part of the students' grades. Finally, it may be overly idealistic to expect them to learn, incorporate their new knowledge and then apply it in only eight weeks.

For future iterations of this class, we are developing materials and activities particularly suited for learning online. We hope that this approach will not only help students learn more, but also help us and them enjoy the process of learning and engaging online.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Linguistics Pre/Posttest**

Part 1: Linguistics Belief Items.

For each statement, choose one answer.

      a.     strongly disagree    b.    disagree    c.    agree  d.    strongly agree

1. The best and most beautiful language is found in great literature.
2. Primitive societies sometimes have primitive languages.
3. People from the Southern U.S. don't speak correctly.
4. Speakers from Iowa do not have an accent.
5. Swear words should not be included in dictionaries.
6. Some animal languages are similar in complexity to human languages.
7. Native speakers of a language (like English) usually speak grammatically.
8. Parents need to carefully correct mistakes that their young children make, or else the children will grow up with bad habits.
9. Sentences like "Who are you talking to?" and "Did you learn what the information was for?" are proper English.
10. Written language is more grammatical than spoken language.
11. Sign language is less complex than normal spoken language.
12. Teachers and language authorities should decide whether new words in English are OK to use.

Part 2: Linguistic Knowledge Questions

13. Which of the following statements is **not** true of Standard English?

    a.    Standard English is more prestigious than nonstandard varieties of English.
    b.    Standard English can be spoken with a variety of different accents.
    c.    Standard English has a number of illogical and irregular structures.
    d.    Standard English is more grammatical than nonstandard varieties of English.

14. The word that describes speakers' intuitive knowledge of their native language is

    a.    Performance
    b.    Creativity
    c.    Competence
    d.    Productivity

15. What is the word formation rule for the underlined word: _washing machine_.

    a.    borrowing
    b.    blend

      c.      abbreviation
      d.      compounding

16.     How many word parts (morphemes) are in the word *workers'* ?

      a.      2
      b.      3
      c.      4
      d.      5

17.     How many individual sounds does the word *thought* have?

      a.      2
      b.      3
      c.      4
      d.      5

18.     How many individual sounds does the word *doghouse* have?

      a.      5
      b.      6
      c.      7
      d.      8

19.     Each word has a [p] sound. Which [p] is different from the others?

      a.      split
      b.      deprive
      c.      apple
      d.      lips

20.     When you add a final -s to *judge,* the -s is pronounced [iz]. What other pair of words follows a similar process?

      a.      delete/deletes
      b.      know/known
      c.      wait/waited
      d.      follow/followed

21.     In the first sentence of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the underlined words are called a "noun phrase".

     "Fourscore and <u>seven years</u> ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Of the following four words or groups of words, which is NOT a noun phrase?
a.     our forefathers
b.     this continent
c.     new nation
d.     liberty

22.     Identify which sentence has the same structure as this sentence:

"He gave the man a bit of trouble."

a.     John told him a tall tale.
b.     Jane saw John and Mike.
c.     The friends met each other in a bar.
d.     The clerk put a hat there.

23.     Which *speech act* is likely expressed by the following sentence?

"*I'll be glad to pick up some milk on the way home.*"

a.     request
b.     interrogative
c.     complaint
d.     promise

24.     What feature of conversation is exemplified by the following conversation?

A:     Jane?
B:     What?

a.     closing sequence
b.     dispreferred response
c.     adjacency pair
d.     repair

25.     The words *wasted, intoxicated, trashed* and *inebriated* are all examples of

a.     slang
b.     jargon
c.     register
d.     denotation

26.     Which statement is truest of saying *walkin'* and *talkin'* instead of *walking* and *talking* ?

a.   They reflect social class
b.   They are a matter of formality

c.   They are dependent on the situational
d.   All of the above

27. Some dialects of English "drop their l's" in certain words such as *old, whole*, and *all* but never in words like *let* and *taller*. Which other word below is likely to also undergo l-dropping in these dialects?

a.   rely
b.   wallowed
c.   called
d.   falling

28.   Choose the kind of linguistic structure that describes the following variation.

In the Ozark mountains of Arkansas, it is ok to say "*John will eat and Mary*" when you mean "*John will eat and Mary will eat*".

a.      syntactic
b.      phonological
c       semantic
d.      lexical

29.   What <u>Middle English word</u> was pronounced with the same vowel sound as the <u>Modern English word</u> *late*?

a.      bade
b.      sweet
c.      led
d.      stone

30.   *Lewd* used to mean "ignorant". Now it means "obscene." What process describes the change in meaning?
.

a.      it became more negative
b.      it became more positive
c.      it took on a narrower meaning
d.      it took on a broader meaning

31.   Children often say words like *enemy* and *cinnamon* as *emeny* and *cimanon*. What is an example of a similar process in speech?

a.      going to said as gonna
b.      because said as 'cause
c.      walking said as walkin'
d.      asked said as axed

32.     The following sentences are from a foreign learner of English. What is the main problem shown by all three sentences?

*I want to see what can I buy?*
*Where I can buy them?*
*Where you did find it?*

a.      Agreement
b.      Missing auxiliary verbs
c.      Subject verb inversion
d.      Verb tenses

Part 3:    Linguistic Reasoning Questions

33.     Explain briefly why the language of the following reference letter is unlikely to be read positively.
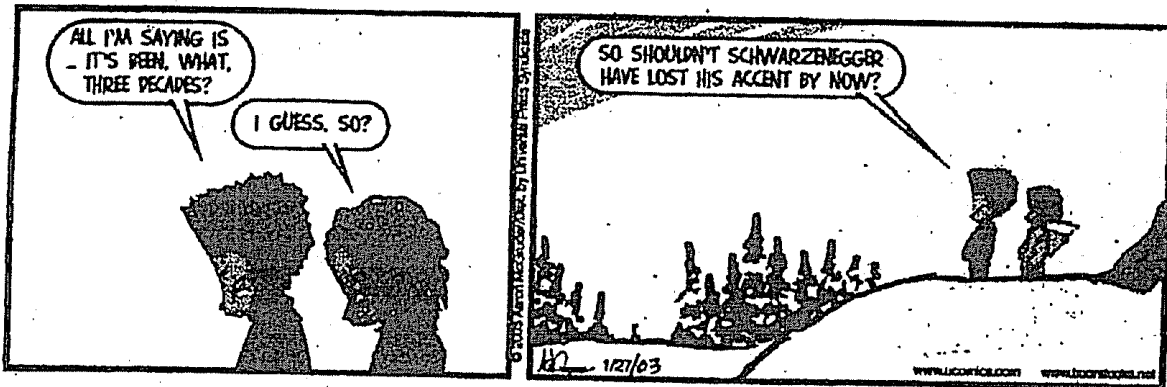
**Dear Professor Smith,**

**Mr. John Jones has asked me to write a letter on his behalf for a teaching position. Mr. Jones is unfailingly polite, is neatly dressed at all times, and is always on time for his classes.**

**Sincerely,**

**Harry L. Homer**

34.     What assumptions do the characters have about language learning?

35.    Watch the video below. Then, explain briefly what kind of appeal the candidate is making about language and its social importance to and impact on various groups.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9hZO-dQYww

 (Video Ad:  Tim James, Candidate for Governor of Alabama. Text of the ad:  "I'm Tim James. Why do our politicians make us give driver's license exams in 12 languages?  This is Alabama. We speak English.  If you want to live here, learn it.  We're only giving that test in English, if I'm governor. Maybe it's the businessman in me.  But we'll save money.  And it makes sense. Does it to you?"