

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

COURSE SYLLABUS

COMM 45957 (#11616) Language & Meaning (3)      SPRING 2000  
Meets 1:45-3:00pm T R D301 MSP

Prof. J.D. Feezel  
Office D204 MSP \*

Examines language (verbal codes) including major language theories of the 20th Cent. Focused on semantics, pragmatics, and socio-cultural usage with basic linguistics. Recent cases, research studies, language games/exercises, individual & class projects.

Objectives: By semester's end, the student should be able to:

- A. Identify and explain specific examples of language usage from everyday communication events.
- B. Explain and apply fundamental concepts, principles and theories of verbal communication.
- C. Analyze specific problem areas of language in communication offering interpretations & conclusions.
- D. Write papers or essays with better clarity and coherence using proper form.  
THIS IS A WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE.

Text: Fromkin, V. & Rodman, R. (1998). An Introduction to Language. (6th Ed.) Ft. Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Assignments: (Total Points = 300) 270=A, 240=B, 210=C, 180=D

- A. LANGUAGE PROBLEM -- Select 1-2 resources on language from the Bibliography. SUMMARIZE them and PROPOSE how to study this language area further (empirically or critically). Type as a 2-3-page paper (attach copies of resources). {Revise & resubmit in one week.}   

4th week, 30 points, A=27, B=24, C=21, D=18
- B. LANGUAGE SCAVENGER HUNT-- Find 6-7 examples of interesting or appealing uses of language and write a short (one paragraph) ANALYSIS of each Example identifying the CONCEPT/TERM(S) used. Look for cases such as a creative name, comic strip, eye-catching headline, news story on a language use problem, radio or TV commercial, print advertisement, language in a conversation, etc. Select varied Examples and apply varied Concepts for 6 pts. each. {Also revise & resubmit in one week.}   

7th week, 40 points, A=36, B=32, C=28, D=24.
- C. TWO EXAMS -- 1/2 multiple choice and 1/2 essay, **50 points each**, will be given in the   

8th and 16th weeks, A=45, B=40, C=35, D=30.
- D. PRAGMATICS TERM PAPER (RAC)-- Select a topic area of verbal communication from the list provided and (1) *Review* at least five recent studies, (2) *Apply* language analysis concepts to a specific context, and (3) *Conclude* about the interplay of language in use. See the attached page on this assignment. A typed 10-page paper (plus all notes and drafts) submitted in a folder or binder   

14th week, 100 points, A=90, B=80, C=70, D=60.
- E. Attendance and class participation (INCLUDING TEXT EXERCISES & QUIZZES). Participating (beyond just taking up a seat) for a total of **30 points** possible.

**It is the student's responsibility to ensure proper enrollment in classes.** You are advised to review your official class schedule during the first two weeks of the semester to ensure proper enrollment. Should you find an error in your class schedule, you have until Friday of the second week of classes to correct it. If registration errors are not corrected by that date and you continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester.

\* Office Hrs: D204B 3:30-5:00 TR, 6:00-7:00 pm W (-2659), in HUB (@Arabica) 1:00-2:00 M.

Skeletal Schedule of LAM Course Spring 1999 (tentative)

<u>Week &amp; Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
1 Jan.19-21	Overview, pretests, Language Intro.	handouts, Chapter 1
2 " 26-28	Brain and Language	Chapter 2
3 Feb. 2- 4	Sound Building Blocks: Phonology	Chapter 7
4 " 9-11	Morphology (words and phrases)	Chapter 3 <u>PROBLEM due</u> Thur. Feb. 12
5 " 16-18	Syntax (sentence structures)	Chapter 4
6 " 23-25	Semantics (meanings)	Chapter 5 to p.190 <u>SCAVENGER HUNT due</u> Thur. Feb. 26
7 Mar. 2- 4	Semantics, Measures of	(handouts & lecture)
8 " 9-11	Pragmatics (extension of semantics)	Chapter 5, p.190 on <u>EXAM One</u> Tues. Mar. 10
9 " 16-18	Pragmatics continued (other theories)	(Readings & lecture) <u>PRAGMATICS Plans due</u> Tues. Mar. 17
10 " 23-25	Social and Cultural Variations	Chapter 10 to p. 420
<b>SPRING BREAK (Mar. 29-Apr. 4)</b>		
11 Apr. 6- 8	Social and Cultural continued	Chapter 10, p.420 on
12 " 13-15	Language Change & World of Languages	Chapter 11
13 " 20-22	Spoken & Written Language	Chapter 12 <u>PRAGMATICS Paper due</u> Thur. April 23
14 " 27-29	Oral <u>Reports on Papers</u> & Psychology of Language	Chapters 8-9
15 May 4- 6	Exam Two Review and <u>EXAM Two</u> Thur. May 7	Chs.4,7-12
Finals Week	Final Conferences on Papers and "Exit Interviews"	

**Expectations:** Consistent attendance, text readings done by first day of each unit and assignments turned in on time. (Point reductions for late work or it may not be accepted if no prior arrangements are made.)

**Disabilities** -- In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact the instructor now or when given an assignment for which an accommodation is required. Students with disabilities must verify their eligibility through the Office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS) in the Michael Schwartz Center (Ph. -3391).

Feezel Pyramid of Coding  
 phonol., morphol., syntax  
 mimetic, iconic, conventional symbols  
 linguistic knowledge, aspects of  
 competence & performance  
 grammar

animal languages

Morphology:

lexicons and word sets  
 morphemes & the types of  
 rules of formation & word coinage

Syntax:

syntactic categories  
 generative-transformational theory  
 recursion  
 grammaticalness & meaningfulness

Phonology:

phonemes & minimal pairs  
 accidental gaps, nonsense or possible  
 distinctive features  
 tongue slips (e.g. Spoonerisms)

Semantics & Pragmatics:

semantic analysis (componential)  
 dictionary  
 semantic properties of a word  
 homonyms & ambiguity, 4 types of  
 antonyms, and types of  
 thematic roles & relations  
 anomaly, metaphor & idioms  
 semantic differential  
 redundancy in language  
 associative meanings  
 discourse/conversation analysis  
 maxims

pragmatics vs. semantics  
 ordinary (analytic) lang. philos.  
 Presuppositions and deixis

General Semantics

ladder of abstraction

Language & Society:

dialects & regionalisms  
 dialect leveling  
 SAE, HAE and BEV  
 styles, social class, & slang  
 taboos & euphemisms  
 insults & verbal aggression  
 Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Change over time:

language change (drift)  
 lexical change (three types)  
 world language classes & families  
 semantic satiation

Writing:

pictograms, ideograms, & cuneiform  
 writing  
 the rebus principle  
 writing and speech comparison

Major Developments in Language  
 pragmatics, semantics, syntactics  
 phonetic symbolism, onomatopoeia  
 language universals  
 prescriptive & descriptive

origins of language

content & function words  
 free and bound morphemes  
 grammatical morphemes

phrase structure trees (& rules)  
 transformational rules &

types of languages

homophones and ambiguity  
 free variation  
 prosody: intonation & stress  
 phonological rules

problem of meaning,

denotation & connotation  
 synonyms and paraphrases  
 names, definite meaning  
 truth, sense & reference  
 figurative and literal meaning  
 dimensions of semantic space  
 Cloze procedure  
 the Type/Token Ratio (T/tR)  
 pronouns, articles, conver.

speech acts & the use theory  
 logical qualifiers, intensity  
 Map is not the territory.  
 Meanings are in people.  
 extensional devices

communicative isolation  
 accents, lexicon, structure  
 pidgins, creoles & lingua franca  
 jargon & argot  
 social acceptability continuum  
 sexist, racist, classist, ageist  
 thought, language & culture

phonol., morphol., & syntactic  
 semantic change (three types)  
 why languages change  
 Zipf's law of least effort

word, syllabic, alphabetic

hieroglyphs to the alphabet  
 graphemes & phonemes, spelling

Chapters 8-9: Key Concepts to be noted in class

Also take note of names of theorists, principles, generalizations, or facts (e.g., meanings are in sentences only; universals & language diversity may go hand in hand; slang creates in-group identification & privacy; ETC.)

Pragmatics Research Project Assignment

- Goal: To research one specific problem area of language use and meaning in communication (a) applying course concepts and (b) offering interpretations or conclusions about the communication behavior.
1. Select a specific area of verbal research of interest from the list of topics suggested in class and below with the course concept(s) of focus.
  2. Define the purpose of your study clearly. Fully state what question you are trying to answer or what problem you are trying to solve.
  3. Read **at least five** (5-10) previous studies or scholarly resources on the topic, other than the Text (especially 1985-2000 articles, books, and special references).
  4. Apply or test the prior studies findings by personal observations, critical analysis, or some analytic or measurement technique.
  5. Turn in your PLANS for steps 1-4 on a 4x6 card by Tuesday of Week 9; **Specific plans on at least steps 1 & 2 must be approved before the Paper will be accepted.**
  6. Discuss your findings from both steps 3 and 4 to arrive at interpretations and conclusions with a proposal for research.
  7. Write the paper reporting your study, (approximately 10 double-spaced typed pages). Sections must include the purpose/questions (step 2 above), summary of the previous research (step 3), summary of application with results (step 4), and conclusions with proposal (step 6). A References list (all resources used) must be included at the end. Use the APA style manual (4th ed.) for correct form. **Attach all research notes & drafts with two copies of the paper.**
  8. The project will be evaluated for a grade on the criteria of:
    - a. clarity of the purpose, 10 points.
    - b. difficulty or scope of the studies reviewed, 10 points.
    - c. relevance and accuracy of resources synthesized, 20 points.
    - d. relevance and accuracy of application or test, 20 points.
    - e. thoroughness and specificity of research proposed, 20 points.
    - f. clarity of the reporting (writing), 20 points.

Possible Topics: Communication jargon, slang about talk, language across cultures, language on aging, generations language, language intensity or probability words, regional dialects, slang, language taboos, subcultures (American or other country), teacher language use, etc.

## Sources to Consult for Studies of Language in Communication (all in KSU Library)

These sources and strategies should be used for your Research Paper.

- A. See FIRST the journals of the SCA, ICA, and the regional & other speech communication associations during the years 1985-2000:

*Communication Monographs\**      *Quarterly Journal of Speech*  
*Communication Education*      *Critical Studies in Mass Media*  
*Jrnl of Language and Social Interaction*  
*Human Commun. Research\**    *Jrnl of Commun.*    *Commun. Research*  
*Jrnl of Broadcasting & Elec. Media*      *Philosophy & Rhetoric\**

*Central States Speech Jrnl*      *Southern Speech Commun. Jrnl*  
*Western Jrnl of Speech Commun.\**      *Communication Quarterly\**

(The Communication Abstracts and The Education Index both reference these journals and others; you may be wise to start there, or with specific journals & authors noted in the texts or other references. Asterisk [\*] indicates best sources for language studies.)

- B. **Then see journals of other associations.** Start at Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (Z 7001.L4) or most likely are these:

*Language & Speech*    *Language & Communication*    *Semiotica*  
*Language Learning*    *Language and Style*    *English Journal*  
*Language in Society*    *Applied Psycholinguistics*    *ETC.*  
*Journal of Applied Psychology*    *Word*    *Linguistic Inquiry+*  
*Jrnl of Linguistics+*    *Journal of Memory and Language (JVLVB)+*  
*Journal of Psycholinguistic Research+*    *Lingua+*    *Language+*

**NOTE: Popular magazines are not sufficiently scholarly for your use here (e.g., Psych. Today, Teacher, Readers Digest); plus [+] indicates difficult reading if you don't have a linguistics background.**

- C. **OR** see books dated since 1980 and/or specialized & technical dictionaries (any date, but the more recent the better). You don't need to read or use the entire book, only a relevant chapter or section (but note this in paper or citations).

*Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart. --Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Other Notes:

## COMM 45957 Bibliography on Language Study

### Major Theorists and Classical Works:

- Atkinson, J. M., & Heritage, J. (Eds.). (1984). Structures of social action: Studies in conversational analysis. Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Austin, J. L. (1975). How to do things with words (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). Aspects of the theory of syntax. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (1972). Language and mind, (Rev. ed.). NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Chomsky, N., & Halle, M. (1968). The sound pattern of English. NY: Harper & Row.
- Cronkhite, G. (1986). On the focus, scope and coherence of the study of human symbolic activity. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 72, 231-246.
- Flew, A. (Ed.). (1965). Logic and language (1st & 2nd series, 1951 and 1953 originally). Garden City, NY: Doubleday-Anchor.
- Giles, H., & Coupland, N. (1991). Language: Contexts and consequences. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole. [Book in social psychol. series takes contextual-pragmatic approach w/ chapters on attitudes, accommodating, ethnicity, bilingualism, aging, and health]
- Gumperz, J. & Hymes, D. H. (Eds.). (1972). Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication. NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Hayakawa, S. I. (1946). Language in action. NY: Harcourt Brace.
- Hymes, D. H. (Ed.). (1964). Language in culture & society. NY: Harper & Row.
- Labov, W. (Ed.). (1980). Locating language in time and space. NY: Academic Press. [see others by author]
- Morris, C. W. (1955). Signs, language and behavior. NY: G. Braziller.
- Newman, E. (1992). On language (Strictly speaking and A civil tongue complete in one volume). NY: Galahad Books. [Reissue of Edwin Newman's two 1974 and 1975 books on contemporary usages]
- Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. (1923). The meaning of meaning (1964 ed.). NY: A Harvest Book; Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Osgood, C. E., Suci, G. J., & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1957). The measurement of meaning. Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press.
- Peirce, C. S. (1991). Peirce on signs: Writings on semiotics (Ed. J. Hoopes). Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press.
- Quine, W. V. (1964). Word and object. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

Ryle, G. (1966). The concept of mind. London: Hutchinson & co.

Searle, J. R. (1967a). Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language. Oxford, England: Oxford Univ. Press.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1967b). Human communication theory and the philosophy of language. In Human communication theory, Frank E.X. Dance (ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, pp.116-129.

Toulmin, S. A. (1958). The uses of argument. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Univ. Press.

van Dijk, T. A. (1983). Discourse analysis: Its development and application to the structure of news. Journal of Communication, 33, 20-43.

Whorf, B. L. (1956). Language, thought and reality (Ed. J.B. Carroll). Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

Wittgenstein, L. (1953). Philosophical investigations. Oxford, England: Blackwell. [3rd ed.1967 avail.]

\_\_\_\_\_. (1969). On certainty. Oxford, England: Blackwell.

#### Selected Language Studies and Resources:

Appel, E. C. (1993). Implications and importance of the negative in Burke's dramatisic philosophy of language. Communication Quarterly, 41, 51-65.

Barbato, C. A., & Feezel, J. D. (1987). The Language of aging in different age groups. The Gerontologist, 27, 527-531.

Blankenship, J. (1970). Review of Speech Acts by John R. Searle. Speech Teacher, 19, 85.

Bolton, W. F. (1984). The language of 1984: Orwell's English and ours. Knoxville, TN: Univ. of Tennessee Press.

Buckley, M. H. (1986). When teachers decide to integrate the language arts. Language Arts, 63, 369-377.

Buttny, R. (1986). The ascription of meaning: A Wittgensteinian perspective. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 72, 261-273.

Chapman, R. L. (Ed.). (1989). Thesaurus of American slang. NY: Harper Collins.

Ellis, D.G., & Hamilton, M. (1985). Syntactic and pragmatic code usage in interpersonal communication. Communication Monographs, 52, 264-279.

Fairclough, N. (1989). Language and power. London: Longman Group UK.

Feezel, J. D. (1974). A qualified certainty: Verbal probability in arguments. Speech Monographs, 41, 348-356.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1980). Attitudes and strategies to stimulate child language discovery. Ohio Speech

Journal, 18, 30-35.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1982). Means-To-Me: A word game without winning or losing. Communication Education, 31, 159-162.

Feezel, J. D., Gorden, W. I., & Infante, D. A. (October 1991). Connotations of communication terms as related to gender and cognitive complexity. Ohio Speech Journal, 29, 21-32.

Goodenough, W. H. (1956). Componential analysis and the study of meaning. Language, 32, 195-216.

Goshgarian, G. (Ed.). (1992). Exploring language (6th ed.). New York: HarperCollins. [Collection of 70 essays on language from varied authors spanning many subjects]

Knuf, J. (1992). "Spit first and then say what you mean": Concerning the use of language and ancillary codes in ritualized communication. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 78, 466-482.

Langer, E. (1992). Interpersonal mindlessness & language. Communication Monographs, 59, 324-327.

Liska, J. (1993). Bee dances, bird songs, monkey calls, and cetacean sonar: Is speech unique? Western Journal of Communication, 57, 1-26.

Ohmann, R. (1971). Speech acts and the definition of literature. Philosophy and Rhetoric, 4, 1-19.

Rapoport, A. (1975). Semantics. New York: Crowell.

Rosteck, T. (1992). Narrative in Martin Luther King's *I've Been to the Mountaintop*. The Southern Communication Journal, 58, 22-32.

Sherblom, J., & Van Rheenen, D. D. (1984). Spoken language indices of uncertainty. Human Communication Research, 11, 221-230.

Shimanoff, S. B. (1985). Expressing emotions in words: Verbal patterns of interaction. Journal of Communication, 35, 16-31.

Stewart, J. R. (1985). Speech and human being: A complement to semiotics. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 72, 55-73.

Sullivan, P. A. (1993). Signification and African-American rhetoric: A case study of Jesse Jackson's "Common Ground and Common Sense" speech. Communication Quarterly, 41, 1-15.

Taylor, T. J. (1992). Mutual misunderstanding: Scepticism and the theorizing of language and interpretation. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.

Vesterman, W. (Ed.). (1992). Discovering language. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Why do we say it? (the stories behind the words, expressions and cliches we use) (1985). Secaucus, NJ: Castle Book Sales, Inc.

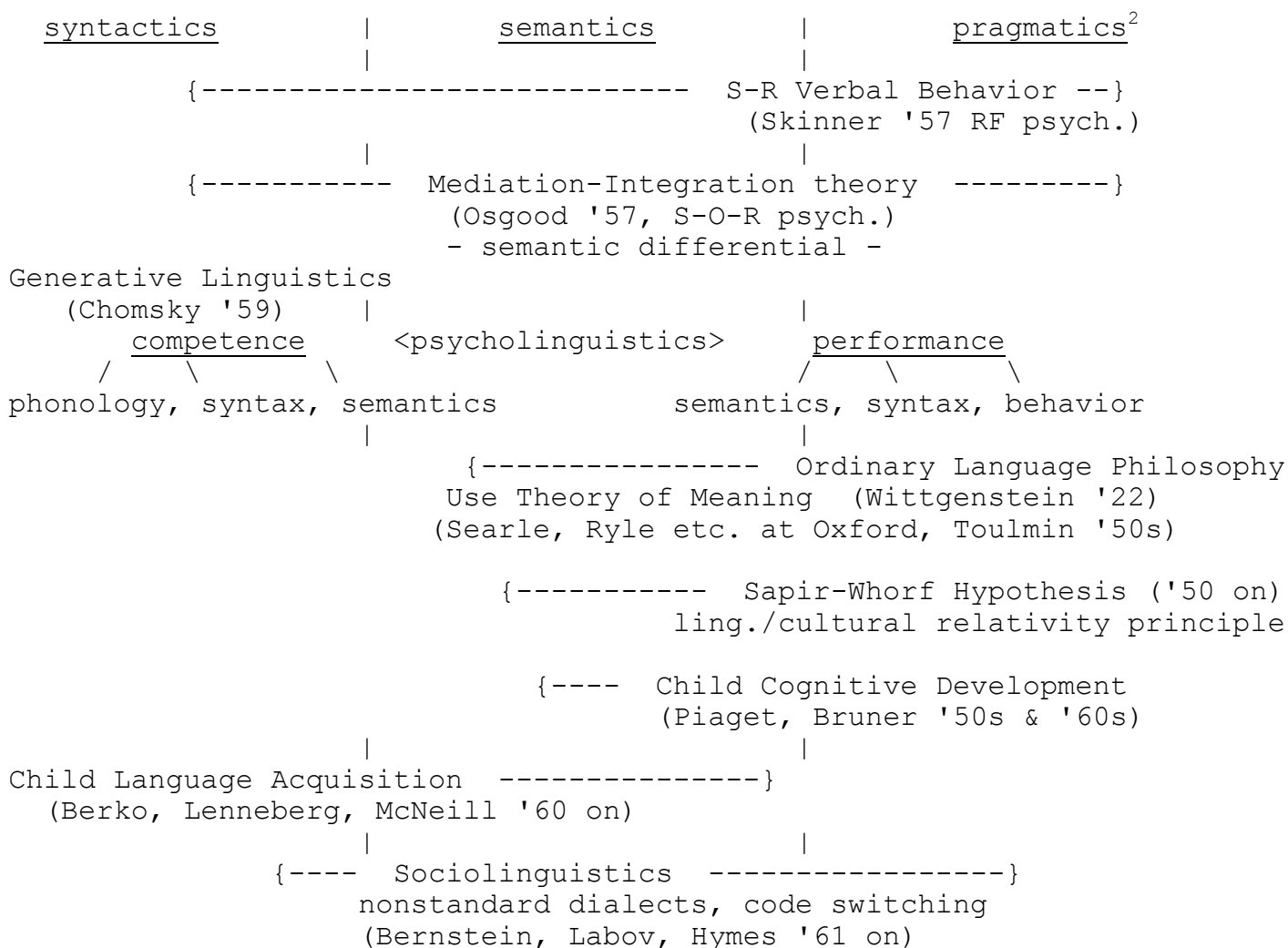
## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE<sup>1</sup>

Form/concept arbitrary & la langue/la parole differ  
(F. de Saussure, circa 1890)

Triangle of Meaning  
(Ogden & Richards, 1923)

Descriptive Linguistics -----} {----- General Semantics ----}  
(Bloomfield '33) (Korzybski, '33)  
phrase structure

<----- Semiotics (Peirce, Morris circa '46) ----->



Nonstandard dialects:

1. evolve from three interacting forces:
  - a. mainstream consensus language +
  - b. oppressed peoples +
  - c. group's condition in culture, and

<sup>1</sup> A personal selection by J. D. Feezel of major developments

<sup>2</sup> Morris' three divisions of Semiotics show the scope of each theory.

2. have two dimensions: a. linguistic & b. stylistic.