

Language and the Mind: Experiments and Talks

Understanding how researchers investigate different aspects of language processing is an important part of this class. One of the best ways to understand this research is to actually participate in an experiment or to hear researchers speak about their work.

- By the last day of regularly scheduled classes, you must either participate in a Linguistics experiment or attend a Linguistics Department talk.
 - ❖ If your schedule makes it impossible to attend a talk or participate in an experiment, ask your instructor **within the first week of class** about an alternative written assignment.
- You must also turn in a completed questionnaire to your instructor no later than two classes after attending an event.
- Example talk and experiment questionnaires are attached to this document. The actual forms will be available at the events themselves. Be sure to get a copy at the beginning or the end.
- **YOU SHOULD ONLY ATTEND A TALK IF YOU CAN STAY FOR THE ENTIRE LECTURE.** If you arrive late, you **must** wait until the end to find the person with the forms.
- This assignment is worth 5% of your total grade and is required in every section of 371.

To participate in an experiment:

- Visit <http://www.ling.ohio-state.edu/research/experiments/> and click on the name of an experiment. To sign up, find the word SIGNUP that lines up with an available time and click on it. Enter your name and contact information and click the SIGNUP box.
- Remember to write down the time and place for yourself, and be sure to arrive on time. If you arrive even five minutes late, you may have to reschedule.
- If you can't make any of the available times, use the posted contact information to ask for an appointment. Experimenters are happy to arrange even evening and weekend times this way.
- If you choose the experiment option, it is wise to participate early on. Although at least one experiment is always running, it is impossible for everyone to participate in the last week.

To find out what talks are being offered:

- Listen for announcements. Your instructor can advise you on whether a particular talk is about language processing and whether a particular talk counts toward the requirement.
- Frequently check the lists posted at <http://ling.ohio-state.edu/courses/201/talks.html> and posted at the bulletin board across from room 18 in the basement of Oxley Hall.

- Although there may be other linguistics-related talks during the quarter, only the talks that are posted in these areas can be attended for credit.

Extra Credit Option

This assignment can be repeated for 2% in extra credit (i.e., attendance at a second event – either a talk or an experiment – and completion of the relevant questionnaire).

Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board

An entity called the Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (SBSIRB) has established guidelines for the ethical treatment of human participants in social and behavioral science research. Here at OSU, the SBSIRB is part of the Office of Responsible Research Practices. All of the experiments that you will be invited to participate in will have been reviewed by the SBSIRB before the sign-up sheets are posted.

Included among the guidelines that ensure the proper treatment of human participants are the following:

- (a) The experience should provide an educational benefit to the participant, and it must be applied equally to a “population.” This second part means that if it is required in one 371 section, it must be required in all.
- (b) There must be an equally palatable alternative assignment. For this assignment, students have the option of attending a talk instead of participating in an experiment.
- (c) Students must understand what their rights are as participants in experiments. This means that when you arrive at an experiment, you will be told that you have the right to stop participating in an experiment at any time, without penalty.
- (d) Participants must be given a full explanation of the purpose of the research following their participation. This means that after each experiment, you will be “debriefed.” As soon as you’ve completed an experiment, someone will talk to you and provide you with a written explanation about the experiment. Experimenters are willing to answer any questions that you have about the experiment. Please feel free to ask.

If you have any questions about this requirement, you may contact the following people:

Prof. Shari Speer, Department of Linguistics
speer@ling.ohio-state.edu, 292-5389

Office of Responsible Research Practices
292-6950

EXAMPLE OF THE EXPERIMENT PARTICIPATION QUESTIONNAIRE THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE AT AN EXPERIMENT. ONLY FORMS THAT ARE OBTAINED AT THE EXPERIMENTS ARE VALID.

Name _____ 371 Instructor _____

Date of participation _____

Researcher's name _____ Experiment name _____

Researcher's signature _____

Please answer the following questions in a few sentences:

What hypothesis was the experimenter testing?

What were the independent and dependent variables?

What improvements would you suggest the experimenter make?

EXAMPLE OF THE TALK ATTENDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE AT A TALK. ONLY FORMS THAT ARE RECEIVED AT TALKS ARE VALID.

Name _____ Instructor _____

Date of Talk: _____

Title of Talk: _____

Speaker's Name: _____

Please answer the following questions in a few sentences:

Explain one point from the talk that you thought was interesting:

Explain one way this talk relates to what you have been learning in class.

How would you suggest the speaker improve their talk?