

February 2, 2007

**1. Important Information**

TA: Kathryn Pruitt  
Email: [kpruitt@linguist.umass.edu](mailto:kpruitt@linguist.umass.edu)  
Office: South College 303  
Office Hours: Thursdays, Time TBA  
Mailbox: South College 226

**Course Website**

<http://courses.umass.edu/ling201/>

**Section Website**

<http://people.umass.edu/kpruitt/ling201.html>

Note: Don't forget the ".html" part

**A note about office hours:** Having an "office hour" means that I will be in my office during the specified time and that you are allowed and encouraged to come by without having to let me know in advance. If you'd like to meet with me at a different time, send me an email and I will be happy to set up an appointment with you.

**A note about dropping off assignments:** If you cannot make it to class to turn in your homework in person, it is still expected to be on time. You may leave assignments in my mailbox in South College 226. DO NOT slide them under the door of 226, and DO NOT slide them under the door of my office. When you leave an assignment, also make sure you're leaving it in my mailbox (there are two Kathryns in our department).

**2. Useful Linguistics Vocabulary**

**Native Speaker:** A person who is fluent in a language as a result of acquiring that language as a child. A person can be a native speaker of more than one language, if that person grew up speaking more than one language.

**Noam Chomsky:** A famous linguist, generally credited with being the founder of modern linguistics. He is also very outspoken politically, so you might have heard his name before in that context.

### 3. More on Prescriptivism

#### Can we end sentences with prepositions?

Sometimes adhering to this rule seems to lead to something that no one would accept as a sentence of English:

- (1) a. Ellen made light of the problem
- b. Which problem did Ellen make light of?
- c. \*Of which problem did Ellen make light?

#### Strunk and White on split infinitives

"The split infinitive is another trick of rhetoric in which the ear must be quicker than the handbook. Some infinitives seem to improve on being split, just as a stick of round stove wood does. 'I cannot bring myself to really like the fellow.' The sentence is relaxed, the meaning clear, the violation harmless and scarcely perceptible. Put the other way, the sentence becomes stiff, needlessly formal. A matter of ear."

(Strunk, William Jr. and E. B. White. 1979. *The Elements of Style*. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan. (p. 78).)

#### Scientific hypotheses vs. Proposals to dictate a standard

Prescriptive Pete: "In English, all the conjuncts in a subject noun phrase must be in the nominative case."

Descriptive Denise: "In English, all the conjuncts in a subject noun phrase must be in the nominative case."

#### Two test cases

Speakers of English judge (2) and (3) to be grammatical.

(2) [Me and Sue] went to the park. me = accusative

(3) [Him and me] are good friends. him = accusative

#### Two very different responses

Prescriptive Pete: "See, that's what I mean. No one should say things like (2) and (3). All of the conjuncts should be in the nominative case!"

Descriptive Denise: "Oh, I see that my generalization is incorrect. It is wrong that all of the conjuncts should be in the nominative case. I need to revise my proposal. It seems **that in fact ...**"