

# Plan for Probabilistic knowledge of grammar: empirical studies

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Note: most of the readings are available for download from my web pages:  
<http://www.stanford.edu/~bresnan/publications/index.html>

## 7 October

Topic: The plasticity of grammar and the empirical foundations of syntax.

- A. Implications of syntactic variability for syntactic representation.
- B. The empirical foundations of syntax.

Relevant readings:

Joan Bresnan and Tatiana Nikitina. 2009. The gradience of the dative alternation. In *Reality Exploration and Discovery: Pattern Interaction in Language and Life*, edited by Linda Uyechi and Lian Hee Wee, pp. 161–184. Stanford: CSLI Publications.

Joan Bresnan. 2007. A few lessons from typology. *Linguistic Typology* 11(1): 297–306.

Inbal Arnon and Neal Snider. 2010. More than words: Frequency effects for multi-word phrases. *Journal of Memory and Language* 62: 67–82.

## 14 October

Topic: Predicting syntactic alternations.

- A. A defense of corpus studies for theoretical linguistics.

B. Some findings from corpus studies of syntactic alternations.

Relevant reading:

Joan Bresnan, Anna Cueni, Tatiana Nikitina, and Harald Baayen. 2007. Predicting the dative alternation. In *Cognitive Foundations of Interpretation*, ed. by G. Boume, I. Kraemer, and J. Zwarts. Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Science, pp. 69–94.

## 21 October

Topic: Is grammatical competence probabilistic?

Using corpus model probabilities to measure human predictive capacities. The English dative and genitive alternations.

Relevant readings:

Joan Bresnan and Marilyn Ford. 2010. Predicting syntax: Processing dative constructions in American and Australian varieties of English. *Language* 86(1): 186–213.

## 28 October

Topic: Spoken syntax.

Some measurable effects of syntactic probabilities in speaking: reduction and contraction.

Relevant readings:

Victor Kuperman and Joan Bresnan. 2012. The effects of construction probability on word durations during spontaneous incremental sentence production. *Journal of Memory and Language* 66: 588–611.