- **What to remember about language**
- **Linguistic research today**

1. We all have a *mental grammar*

- Whether our native language is a 'standard' variety or another variety, we all have a **mental grammar** whose rules and principles accounts for the systematic patterns in our language behavior

1. We all have a *mental grammar*

- Example of systematic behavior of native speakers of English: How is the plural pronounced?

  cat[s]
  dog[z]
  *iguana*__
  *shark*__

- Example of systematic behavior of native speakers of English: How is the plural pronounced?

  cat[s]

  dog[z]

  iguana[z] — **voiced** after **voiced** sounds

  shark[s] — **voiceless** after **voiceless** sounds

- Now that we have studied linguistic analysis, what can we say about this example?
  What does it show?

1. We all have a *mental grammar*

- What does this example show?

- Plurals of (regular) nouns in English are formed by <u>adding a suffix</u>
  - The mental grammar **builds words by rule** out of smaller elements (morphology!)

- The pronunciation of the suffix depends on the <u>sound properties</u> of the last sound in the base
  - The mental grammar refers to **sound properties** and **natural classes** (phonology!)
  - Speech sounds are not indivisible atoms

1. We all have a *mental grammar*

- Example of systematic behavior of native speakers of English: The interpretation of reflexive pronouns

  Oscar admires himself.

  Oscar thinks that Grover admires himself/*himself

  Oscar told Susan stories about himself.

  Oscar told Susan stories about herself.

- Now that we have studied linguistic analysis, what can we say about this example?
  What does it show?

- What does this example show?

- The mental grammar produces sentences as **hierarchical tree structures** that contain words grouped together into **constituents** (syntax!)
  - Rules of the mental grammar (such as where a reflexive pronoun may find its antecedent) <u>refer to constituents</u>

2. Types of linguistic research today

- This section of the slides is FYI only, and will not be on the exam

- The goal is to give you a sense of what kinds of projects linguistics researchers typically do

Typological research: What kinds of patterns are found in the world's languages?

- Example: The World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS) — You can generate maps that show the **frequency** and **geographical distribution** of various language characteristics
    - Languages that do and do not use **voicing** to distinguish stop ('plosive') or fricative phonemes [map]
    - Languages that do and do not apply the *Wh* **Movement** transformation [map]

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2. Types of linguistic research today

Experimental research:

- Field work: Go out, record language data (naturalistic or elicited), analyze patterns

- Laboratory: Have experiment participants produce or perceive language data under experimental conditions

  - Examples of perception experiments (phonetics/phonology research):

    [#1] [#2]

2. Types of linguistic research today

Computational research: Use computers to...

- Analyze very large data sets
  - Example of corpus/computational studies in historical syntax [slides]

- Build and test complex models of mental grammar

- Gather, as well as analyze, linguistic data
  - Try a mini-experiment: Google Ngrams for

    really fun   *so fun*
    very fun   *funnest*

    (Is *fun* a N, or an A, or something unexpected? Change in progress!)

2. Types of linguistic research today

Theoretical research:

- Take the results of any of the above methods and make **proposals about mental grammar** that allow us to account for those facts about language

2. Types of linguistic research today

- Some of the [courses you can take](#) in the Linguistics department at UNC-CH

  - Almost all of them have LING 101 as their only prerequisite

  - Note: Next Monday I will highlight a few courses for Spring 2021

3. Final words

- The most important things to remember:

> Observable human language behavior is caused by the operation of a **mental grammar**
>
> **All language varieties** have a mental grammar

- Keep these points in mind when thinking about…
    - Learning or teaching a foreign language
    - Children acquiring their language
    - The role of non-standard varieties in society
    - **etc., etc.**