

Teaching Grammaticality with Online Tools

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This assignment has two parts: Perceived Grammaticality Part 1 and Perceived Grammaticality Part 2. The parts are listed on separate pages in the course, and each part has its own deadline. Usually Part 1 is due on a Monday and Part 2 is due on a Friday during the second week of the semester.

Perceived Grammaticality Part 1:

This is part 1 of a 2-part assignment. Only part 1 is due today. (Part 2 [\[LINK\]](#))

What Is Grammaticality?

From a scientific perspective, it makes little sense to talk about whether an utterance is "correct" or "incorrect," because scientists avoid prejudgment. For example, biologists don't label an organism as "incorrect" because its DNA shows it doesn't fit where traditional Linnaean taxonomy says it belongs.

What linguists do is seek to determine whether a sentence is "grammatical" or "ungrammatical."

A sentence is grammatical if:

- Native speakers of the language would unselfconsciously produce that sentence; AND
- Native speakers of the language would consider the sentence to be the way a native speaker might normally talk.

In other words, linguists observe how people use the language, and work to understand the rules native speakers follow (not the rules native speakers should follow, the rules native speakers do follow).

Does this mean that anything goes? YES--linguistically speaking.

Sure, linguists will be bothered, like anyone else, about someone saying "imply" when they mean "infer," or by someone using the word, "irregardless." But linguists don't confuse their personal opinions about language use with facts about language use.

Grammaticality is a linguistic concept. Other rhetorical concepts, such as appropriateness or elegance or effectiveness, are also important, but for now, just be sure you understand what it means for an utterance to be grammatical.

Complete the Survey:

Complete the Perceived Grammaticality Survey below. (That's all you have to do for this part. You don't need to submit anything else beyond answering the survey questions.)

If the form doesn't appear right away, wait awhile. Or, press shift and click “refresh” to clear your browser cache. The questions (approximately 15 questions) should appear soon.

If you can only see one question, make your browser window wider. The survey questions have their own scrollbar, inside the webcourses window. If you can't find the scrollbar, or you wait and don't see any questions at all, try this link: [LINK]

[GOOGLE FORM EMBEDDED HERE]

Perceived Grammaticality Part 2:

This is part 2 of a 2-part assignment. (Part 1 [LINK]) Do not do this part the same day that you take the survey! Give everyone in the class time to complete the survey, then review everyone's survey answers [LINK]. After you have reviewed the class survey results, answer the following questions:

- In general, what conclusions can be drawn from these results?
- Only two of the sentences were actually ungrammatical. Which two do you think are ungrammatical and why?

Hint: Use the Merriam-Webster Concise Dictionary of English Usage (MWCDEU). Also, the punctuation on the quick poll has nothing to do with grammaticality. Punctuation is a written convention; the statements on the poll are spoken.

Post your conclusions to the *Perceived Grammaticality II* discussion topic. You won't be able to see what others have posted until you post your conclusions. Your grade will reflect your work on both parts of this assignment.