

Linguistics 30Q. 3/30/05 handout material.

1. BaalObsidian “How grammatically correct are you?” quiz
2. MSN Encarta “Are you grammatically incorrect?” quiz
3. Mediabistro.com column “Ten usage and grammar errors...”
4. Followups to this column
5. A few pages of error lists from Feierman, *Action-Grammar*
6. Pages 1-24 of Cazort, *Under the Grammar Hammer* [more error lists]
7. Sandeep Krishnamurthy, “Top writing mistakes made by my business students” (handout of 3/4/02)
8. Seattle Post-Intelligencer story, 3/28/05, “A word to the unwise – program’s grammar check isn’t so smart”

To do and to think about for 4/1/05.

Take the two quizzes (#1 and #2 above). The point is not to ace the quizzes, but to consider what it is they’re testing. Be prepared to characterize what the test items are getting at, in general terms. (Don’t just give the “right” answer, but say what the issue is.) Note any differences between the answers that your instincts lead you to and the answers you think the test-makers are looking for.

Read the rest of the stuff.

Look at Feierman’s error list and be prepared to characterize the “errors” in general terms (not just to say what the “right” answers are). Again, what’s at issue in each one?

Be prepared to talk about the things that a lot of the people in #1-7 seem to care about. How much of this has to do with grammar in the sense of “syntax”?

Item #8 is there mostly for your entertainment, but you might want to think about how you’d get a grammar-check program to actually detect the kinds of things the people in #1-7 are talking about. Bear this question in mind as we look at other phenomena during the quarter. We almost surely won’t have time to talk about this question on Friday, but it will come up later.