

Articles for the paper: twelve recommendations

AI disclaimer. Content guided by Tommie Juzek; drafted upon his prompting and polished by an AI assistant (Claude Opus 5.5, Anthropic); reviewed and approved by Tommie Juzek.

Twelve articles that make good papers, covering every area of the course, in course order. Eight were proposed in THA3; four were added to cover neurolinguistics and animal communication, found by Claude Opus 5.5 at the instructor’s request in reputable journals beyond the syllabus list (*Nature, Brain, Science*). You are encouraged to take one of these twelve. You can choose any of the Top-12 without checking with me first. You can also take any article approved for you in THA3. The three checks in the overview apply to every article.

#	Area	Article	Why it is on the list, and what to watch out for	Status
1	■ First language ■ Bilingualism	Messenger et al. (2026). Priming beyond syntax: Crosslinguistic evidence for shared syntactic and thematic representations in Polish–English bilingual children. <i>Journal of Memory and Language</i> 151, 104799. doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2026.104799	WHY Three careful priming experiments with bilingual children and adults: do bilinguals share sentence structure across their languages, and even who-did-what-to-whom? A model of experimental design. WATCH OUT FOR Dense and on the long side, so budget extra time, and learn the jargon first: structural priming, thematic roles, Polish word order and case (OVS). Within- and between-language priming, and children and adults, are compared across different groups, and some child effects are small, so check which comparisons are actually tested.	pitched and approved
2	■ First language ■ Psycholinguistics	Rabagliati & Robertson (2017). How do children learn to avoid referential ambiguity? Insights from eye-tracking. <i>Journal of Memory and Language</i> 94, 15–27. doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2016.09.007	WHY Eye-tracking shows what children check for while they describe a scene, and why they still produce ambiguous descriptions. Older than the usual rule, but a really nice paper. WATCH OUT FOR From 2017, older than the usual rule; the year has been waived for this one. The key child result sorts trials by what the children went on to say, which is a correlation inside an experiment, and some measures were changed after null results (the paper says so openly): a good case for discussing analytic flexibility. The adult groups are small (12).	pitched and approved
3	■ Second language ■ Psycholinguistics	Kuperman (2025). How does language distance affect reading fluency and comprehension in English as second language? <i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i> 47(3), 757–773. doi.org/10.1017/S027226312510065X	WHY An eye-movement corpus of readers from 18 first languages: does the distance between your first language and English slow your reading? A big question with big data. WATCH OUT FOR Big claims (a “mechanism”) from observational data at a single point in time: a mediation analysis on such data can fit a causal story but cannot show one. Language distance comes bundled with country, university and testing site; the effects are small; and “no effect on comprehension” rests on a non-significant result. Big claims require big evidence: check how far the design carries them. The conclusion is intuitive (the paper itself opens with “Intuitively”), which makes it easy to accept on plausibility alone: a case for belief bias.	pitched and approved

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4	■ Second language ■ Psycholinguistics	Şafak & Hopp (2025) . Learning L2 grammar from prediction errors? Verb biases in structural priming in comprehension and production. <i>Bilingualism: Language and Cognition</i> 28(5), 1249–1265. doi.org/10.1017/S1366728925000033	WHY Two eye-tracking experiments test whether second-language learners learn grammar from being surprised (prediction error). Dense, but very solid. WATCH OUT FOR Very solid but dense: learn the dative alternation, the visual-world paradigm and cluster-based permutation tests first. The claim of “longer-term learning” rests on a before/after comparison without a control group, so it is the weakest link; the verb-bias effect itself is robust.	pitched and approved
5	■ Second language ■ Neurolinguistics	Cieśla et al. (2025) . The impact of orthography versus images on foreign language learning: Evidence from behavioral and neural markers. <i>Bilingualism: Language and Cognition</i> 29(3), 563–575. doi.org/10.1017/S1366728925100242	WHY Learning new words from pictures or from written translations, with brain responses (ERPs) to see what changes. A compact, well-planned lab experiment that links word learning to the brain. WATCH OUT FOR A focused lab experiment (40 new words, tested 24 hours later, with brain responses), so much of the work is placing it in context: should new words be taught with pictures or with written translations? Read up on the picture superiority effect, dual coding and the N400 first. A strength: it reports a power analysis, which few papers here do.	pitched and approved
6	■ Bilingualism	García González, Lahdenranta & Lehtonen (2025) . Are executive functions engaged in language switching? The role of language proficiency. <i>Bilingualism: Language and Cognition</i> 29(2), 516–526. doi.org/10.1017/S1366728925100199	WHY Does switching between your languages draw on general executive control, and only until you are proficient? A neat, open-data study at the centre of the bilingualism debate. WATCH OUT FOR Correlational: executive functions and proficiency were measured, not manipulated, so “engaged” is an inference from how two tasks go together. The key result rests on one interaction ($p = .027$) and smaller subgroups, so treat it as promising rather than settled. Its review section is a good map of the bilingual-advantage debate.	pitched and approved
7	■ Psycholinguistics	Sidhu, Parajuli & Muraki (2026) . That sounds exciting! Emotional iconicity facilitates processing and recall. <i>Journal of Memory and Language</i> 150, 104769. doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2026.104769	WHY Do words that sound like what they mean (an exciting-sounding word like <i>shock</i>) get processed faster? Several experiments and a megastudy on emotional iconicity. WATCH OUT FOR Congruent words were selected, not created, so other word properties could differ: the authors match many (length, frequency, valence, concreteness) but not all (for example, age of acquisition). The effects are small (about 20–25 ms) but replicated in a second experiment with a power analysis. For memory, read past the title: the recall results are mixed across the three tests.	pitched and approved

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8	■ Neurolinguistics ■ Bilingualism	Bhaya-Grossman et al. (2025). Shared and language-specific phonological processing in the human temporal lobe. <i>Nature</i> 649(8095), 140–151. doi.org/10.1038/s41586-025-09748-8	WHY Spanish, English and Mandarin speakers listen to their own language and to an unfamiliar one: which parts of speech processing in the brain are shared across languages, and which are learnt? Linguistic questions at the heart of a major neuroscience result. WATCH OUT FOR Demanding methods (recordings from electrodes on the brain surface, encoding models): focus on the question, the figures and the conclusions. The participants are epilepsy patients, some groups are tiny (3 Mandarin speakers), and listening to a known language also means understanding it, which could add to the word-level effects.	free to choose
9	■ Neurolinguistics	Turkeltaub et al. (2025). Right hemisphere language network plasticity in aphasia. <i>Brain</i> 149(4), 1396–1409. doi.org/10.1093/brain/awaf308	WHY A large fMRI study (76 stroke survivors with aphasia, 69 controls) tests three classic claims about how the right hemisphere helps recovery, and finds them wanting. It says openly that earlier studies were too small: a field correcting itself. WATCH OUT FOR Cross-sectional: “more right-hemisphere activity with more time since the stroke” compares different people rather than following anyone over time, and the links to recovery are correlations. Get the published version (<i>Brain</i>) through the FSU library, not the earlier preprint.	free to choose
10	■ Animal communication	Arnon et al. (2025). Whale song shows language-like statistical structure. <i>Science</i> 387(6734), 649–653. doi.org/10.1126/science.adq7055	WHY Methods used to study how infants find words in speech, applied to eight years of humpback whale song, find the same statistical structure as in human language. A high-profile result linking animal communication with language learning. WATCH OUT FOR Short and dense (5 pages; the methods are in the supplementary materials, which you will need). The pattern is robust (it beats shuffled baselines and holds across several thresholds), but the explanation, cultural transmission, is inferred rather than tested, and the data come from one population. “Whales have language” is a conclusion many people would like, so watch for belief bias; the authors themselves make no claim about meaning. An erratum has been published: check what it corrects.	free to choose
11	■ Animal communication	Elie et al. (2025). Categorical and semantic perception of the meaning of call types in zebra finches. <i>Science</i> 389(6766), 1210–1215. doi.org/10.1126/science.ads8482	WHY A true experiment: do zebra finches sort their calls by what they mean rather than by how they sound? A clean design for the question of whether animals have word-like categories. WATCH OUT FOR Short (6 pages plus supplementary materials). Few birds (12 in the main task), though each does many trials. The step from “errors follow context more than sound” to <i>semantic</i> depends on how well sound similarity was measured: is “meaning” an explanation, or a label for what is left over? “Birds know what their calls mean” is an appealing conclusion, so watch for belief bias.	free to choose

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12	■ Computational	Lim et al. (2025). Format inertia: A failure mechanism of LLMs in medical pre-consultation. <i>Proceedings of EMNLP 2025: Industry Track</i> , 1437–1450. doi.org/10.18653/v1/2025.emnlp-industry.101	WHY Why do medical chatbots get stuck asking repetitive questions? A short, clear computational study that tests its explanation with an intervention. WATCH OUT FOR A strength: the causal claim is backed by an intervention (retraining on rebalanced data), across several models. Things to check: each model seems to have been trained only once, with no statistical tests; the patients were simulated; and clinical usefulness was judged by a language model. Short main text, with an appendix.	pitched and approved

Years are the year of first (online) publication. All references checked by Claude Opus 5.5 on 9 October 2026, at the instructor’s request.