

Teaching statement

I come from a family of teachers. I have worked as a tutor starting in middle school, and have continuously sought out opportunities to teach, over and above the requirements of my positions. I have worked as a TA for introductory and advanced courses at MIT and Tel-Aviv University, and also designed and taught introductory linguistics to middle school and high school students. Since graduating in 2014, I have taught several high-enrollment undergraduate introductory courses, introduction to syntax and to semantics, advanced syntax and semantics, freshman seminars incorporating aspects of socio- and psycholinguistics, thesis writing for undergraduates, and advanced graduate and undergraduate syntax-semantics seminars. I have also taught workshops and tutorials on experimental approaches to linguistics.

My core goals for teaching linguistics are developing in students an appreciation for the types of questions asked in the field, the data used, and the solutions sought; guiding students to discovering their own questions and puzzles; and developing skills to tackle these questions. In my teaching, as with my research, I bring evidence from a diverse range of languages in order to better describe and explain the human capacity for language. This also naturally leads to philosophical and practical questions concerning the nature of data, objectivity, and the scientific method, which I also emphasize in my classes.

I believe that it is important to engage the students and to use data collected from them and by them, through elicitation sessions and experimentation, to formulate and test hypotheses. Although it may not be possible to conduct a full experiment every week in a large class setting, I introduce some theories through experimentation, and in other weeks, I spell out predictions of the theories we learned and seek out data to test whether such predictions are borne out. In addition, I often use my native language (Hebrew) as the object of study in in-class elicitation exercises. An important lesson in advanced courses is that all theories—old and new alike—should be viewed critically: we must continuously question their assumptions and develop tools to challenge their predictions.

At the graduate level, I would teach rigorous (and hopefully exciting!) courses that give all students a firm grounding in the field, illuminating the boundaries of what is known, and pointing out where active research is taking place. It is important that the classes teach literacy in conventional technical notation and the ability to teach oneself new techniques. This is achieved through problem sets and readings, as well as through in-class presentations by the students and through written papers. Seminars, on the other hand, will allow for more exploration of new ideas and will aim to teach less formal material, once a topic or a set of research questions have been defined.

For example, in a seminar on questions and focus at McGill University, I integrated a field-work requirement into the class in addition to more traditional homework assignments. This allowed students to develop a relationship with a speaker, in addition to obtaining data which could turn into a long-term project. Students' findings informed the topics chosen for the final portion of the class and stimulated class discussion and also led to the establishment of a reading group on *wh*-indefinites in the semester following the seminar.

In a freshman seminar at Yale University, students collected data and wrote blog posts about naturally occurring slips of the tongue and other curious language-phenomena surrounding them, and taught each other about language processing and production. Syllabi and materials for these courses and others I have taught at McGill, NYU, and Yale can be found on my website: <http://hkotek.com/teaching>.

With undergraduate and graduate students alike, mentoring is often even more important than classroom teaching, providing students with guidance in the early stages of their career and aiding them in the development of independent career goals. In recent years, I have begun the work of advising graduate and advanced undergraduate students, often continuing advising relationships even after I have left an old institution. I find advising to be an incredibly rewarding aspect of my job, and often the highlight of my day. In my advising, I aim to help students navigate their education, set short- and long-term goals, and establish work habits that will ensure their success. I am particularly passionate about encouraging minority and first generation students to make the most of their education. I see great value in involving students in my own research as well as helping them to develop their own individual projects. I feel strongly that encouraging and supporting students in early years is crucial in building their confidence and enabling them to make informed decisions about their future, whether or not it is in linguistics.

In the past year, I have been involved a Pop-Up Mentoring initiative, through the LSA Committee on the Status of Women in Linguistics. PUM is an event that travels around from conference to conference, giving anyone who is interested a chance to have a one-time, no strings attached, meeting with a mentor outside of their official support system. The event is open to all, regardless of gender or career stage, with the goal of helping more junior colleagues with a variety of potential questions that arise in a professional context, such as work/life balance, international student/faculty, publishing, and racial/ethnic minority status. To date, we have organized 8 events, with over 100 participants. These events have proved popular and helpful for everyone involved. More information on these events can be found at: <https://womeninlinguistics.com/pop-up-mentoring/>.

At XXXX, I would look forward to teaching courses in syntax at all levels. I would additionally enjoy teaching an introduction to linguistics and courses in semantics and in empirical methods. I am also interested in teaching seminars, with topics such as the syntax and semantics of questions and focus; relativization cross-linguistically; economy, locality, and the nature of movement; and top-down vs bottom-up structure building. I would also welcome the opportunity to co-teach courses or seminars with current faculty at XXXX and I would additionally be interested in teaching courses that are not confined to a specific subfield, exploring the interactions between different modules of grammar, and between language and related fields—for example, psychology, language and the mind, language acquisition, and typology and variation.