

# The Study of Language

Fourth Edition

*With my best wishes*

*FULL MARK*

George Yule

# The Study of Language (4th edition)

## Study Guide

This guide contains suggested answers for the Study Questions (1-6) and the Tasks (A-F) following each chapter in *The Study of Language* (4th edition).

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## **1 The origins of language (Study Questions)**

- 1 First, his conclusion was based on very little evidence and, second, it seems more reasonable to assume that the children in his study were producing a goat-like sound from their immediate environment rather than a Phrygian sound from a distant language.
- 2 Primitive words could have been imitations of the natural sounds that early humans heard around them and all modern languages have words that are onomatopoeic in some way (like “bow-wow”).
- 3 Interjections contain sounds that are not otherwise used in ordinary speech production. They are usually produced with sudden intakes of breath, which is the opposite of ordinary talk, produced on exhaled breath.
- 4 The pharynx is above the larynx (or the voice box or the vocal folds). When the larynx moved lower, the pharynx became longer and acted as a resonator, resulting in increased range and clarity of sounds produced via the larynx.
- 5 If these deaf children do not develop speech first, then their language ability would not seem to depend on those physical adaptations of the teeth, larynx, etc. that are involved in speaking. If all children (including those born deaf) can acquire language at about the same time, they must be born with a special capacity to do so. The conclusion is that it must be innate and hence genetically determined.
- 6 The physical adaptation source.

## **1 The origins of language (Tasks)**

### **1A The Heimlich maneuver**

The Heimlich maneuver, named after an American doctor, Henry J. Heimlich, is a procedure used to dislodge pieces of food (or anything else) that are stuck in the throat, or more specifically, the upper respiratory passage. The procedure is also known as an abdominal thrust. The danger of getting things stuck in the respiratory passage, making it difficult or impossible to breathe, is connected to the lower position of the larynx in humans. The lower larynx is believed to be one of the keys to the development of human speech and the Heimlich maneuver is a solution to a life-threatening problem potentially caused by that development.

For more, read:

Crystal, D. (2000) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia* (512) Cambridge University Press

## 1B The Tower of Babel

According to chapter 11 of the book of Genesis in the Bible, there was a time “when the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.” The people decided to build “a tower whose top may reach unto heaven.” God’s reaction to this development was not favorable:

“And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language: and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth. (Genesis 11: 5-9)

The usual interpretation of these events is that humans were united in a single language and working together to build a tower which represented a challenge to God, and God intervened in some way so that they couldn’t understand each other and dispersed them to different places. This can be viewed as an explanation of how humans started with a single language and ended up with thousands of different, mutually unintelligible languages all over the world.

Apparently there were many large towers built in Mesopotamia (part of modern Iraq) which all had names suggesting they were perceived as stairways to heaven. Robert Dunbar (1996: 152-3) describes one of these towers from a historical point of view.

“The Tower of Babel was no myth: it really did exist. Its name was Etemenanki (meaning “the temple of the platform between heaven and earth”), and it was built some time in the sixth or seventh century BC during the second great flowering of Babylonian power. It was a seven-stage ziggurat, or stepped pyramid, topped by a brilliant blue-glazed temple dedicated to the god Marduk, by then the most powerful of the local Assyrian pantheon. A century or so later, in about 450 BC, the Greek historian Herodotus struggled up the steep stairways and ramps in the hope of seeing an idol at the top. Alas, there was nothing but an empty throne.

For more, read:

Dunbar, R. (1996) *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language* Harvard University Press

### 1C A teleological explanation

A teleological explanation is one in which events and developments are viewed as having a purpose or goal (telos in Greek) and happen in order to accomplish that purpose. A simple example would be the claim that giraffes developed long necks in order to be able to reach leaves on higher branches of trees. Arguments for teleology are present in most religions, as exemplified by God giving Adam the power of language in order to do other things. That is, language was created for a future purpose. In his *Metaphysics*, the Greek philosopher Aristotle also referred to a “Prime Mover” who sets everything in motion with a purpose and direction.

In contrast, those who study evolution typically take the view that “natural selection” is the driving force in the development of all organisms and it is not purpose-driven. In the giraffe example, they would say that those giraffes that happened to be born with longer necks were simply more successful in life and produced more long-necked offspring. So the long neck we now observe is the *result* of something rather than something that had a *purpose*. In the evolutionary view, the future use of a feature (e.g. having language) cannot be treated as an explanation for its development because this would mean that some type of “backwards causation” was at work. In this view, language develops because it confers certain advantages on those (and their offspring) who have it over those who don’t. Those advantages would have been unknown beforehand and are treated as the result of language use and hence cannot be teleological.

For more, read:

Johansson, S. (2005) *Origins of Language* (chapter 10) John Benjamins

### 1D Ontogeny and phylogeny

Ernst Haeckel was a professor of zoology who, in 1866, invented the terms “ontogeny” (= the development of an individual) and “phylogeny” (= the development of a species) and went on to claim that “ontogeny is the short and rapid recapitulation of phylogeny.” From this perspective, the development of the human infant is seen as going through exactly the same stages (relatively quickly) as the human species did (slowly) in the development of physical abilities and also language. The idea was very popular for many years, but is no longer taken as seriously, mainly because of a more detailed understanding of how human infants develop language in a context with others who use the language rather than in a context where no language exists beforehand.

For more, read:

Aitchison, J. (2000) *The Seeds of Speech* (chapter 8) Cambridge University Press

Gould, S. (1977) *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* Harvard University Press

## 1E When was language born?

If we believe that “language was born” when the first sound combinations were used for more than emotional cries, then we might argue that *homo habilis*, more than two million years ago, was the first to have some type of language, based on the following evidence.

- (i) Basic vocalizations of the type still found among primates were used, not just in isolation, but in combinations as a form of proto-language. (See Bickerton, 1990.)
- (ii) Among groups, the proto-language was probably initially used during social interaction, possibly in connection with grooming. (See Dunbar, 1996.)
- (iii) Enlargements of the areas in the left hemisphere of the brain found in the fossil record are associated with the motor skills involved in both object manipulation (creating tools) and sound manipulation (creating utterances). (See Gibson and Ingold, 1993.)

However, if we believe that “language was born” only after the vocal tract developed and had a structure comparable to that found in modern humans, then we have to wait until a time between 400,000 and 200,000 years ago. Even during this period, however, the fossil record doesn’t seem to support arguments for “speech,” as we normally think of it, especially in the case of Neanderthal remains. (See Lieberman, 1998.)

By the end of this period, the existence of composite tools suggests an ability to combine distinct physical elements to create new structures. This ability to combine forms manually can be treated as evidence that motor skills organized by the brain would also have allowed individuals to combine sounds vocally to create new structures. If these structures are treated as phrases or examples of “language,” then we might say that language was born about 200,000 years ago. (See Foley, 1997.)

If, however, we don’t accept these simple sound combinations as language and need evidence of symbolic representation and more elaborate cultural artifacts, then we would have to say that language wasn’t really born until a period about 50,000 to 30,000 years ago. (See Deacon, 1997.)

For more, read:

Bickerton, D. (1990) *Language and Species* Chicago University Press

Deacon, T. (1997) *The Symbolic Species* W.W. Norton

Dunbar, R. (1996) *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language* Harvard University Press

Foley, W. (1997) *Anthropological Linguistics* Blackwell

Gibson, K. and T. Ingold (eds.) (1993) *Tools, Language and Cognition in Human Evolution* Cambridge University Press

Lieberman, P. (1998) *Eve Spoke. Human Language and Human Evolution* W.W. Norton

### **1F Universal Grammar**

The innateness hypothesis proposes that human infants are born with a special capacity for language not shared with any other creature and that this capacity is genetically determined. It is “hard-wired” in the organism. The linguist Noam Chomsky proposed that this inborn capacity was essentially a type of basic grammar that could develop, with experience, into all the various grammars of different languages. This basic grammar must be present in every newborn child and hence is universal. So, this Universal Grammar provides the structural basis for language in the same way that other genetic information provides the structural basis for other human organs such as an arm or a liver. Chomsky (1975) presented the argument in this way:

It is a curious fact about the intellectual history of the past few centuries that physical and mental development have been approached in quite different ways. No one would take seriously the proposal that the human organism learns through experience to have arms rather than wings, or that the basic structure of particular organs results from accidental experience. Rather, it is taken for granted that the physical structure of the organism is genetically determined, though of course variation along such dimensions as size, rate of development, and so forth will depend in part on external factors.

For more, read:

Chomsky, N. (1975) *Reflections on Language* Pantheon

Pinker, S. (1994) *The Language Instinct* William Morrow



## **2 Animals and human language (Study Questions)**

- 1 Reflexivity is the property that enables humans to use language to think and talk about language itself and does not appear to be present in any other creature's communication system.
- 2 One example of the cultural transmission of language is a child with physical features inherited from its natural parents (e.g. Korean) who, if adopted at birth by English speakers, will grow up speaking English (and not Korean).
- 3 With productivity, the system can create new expressions and the potential number of expressions is infinite. With fixed reference, there is a fixed number of signals in the system and each signal only relates to a particular object or occasion.
- 4 They designed experiments in which no humans could provide cues and Washoe could still produce correct signs to identify objects in pictures.
- 5 Arbitrariness
- 6 The key element seemed to be early exposure to language in use.

## **2 Animals and human language (Tasks)**

### **2A Clever Hans**

Clever Hans, or der Kluge Hans, was a horse that belonged to a German teacher, Wilhelm von Osten. In the early 1900s, Hans became famous as the horse that could think and perform mental calculations, as evidenced by his ability to answer questions by tapping his hoof to represent numbers or letters of the alphabet. With his owner, Hans performed before large crowds throughout Germany, impressing them with his ability to add, subtract, tell the time, understand German and many other amazing feats. It was a popular show, by all accounts, though Hans would occasionally try to bite people, including a psychologist, Oskar Pfungst, who was trying to work out how Hans did it. In 1907, Herr Pfungst finally described how Hans could seem to be so clever. Hans was actually reacting to subtle visual clues provided by unsuspecting humans. As Hans tapped away and came close to the correct answer, the human questioner would produce subtle physical reactions that told the horse when he should stop, making it seem as if he had arrived at the correct answer. If the horse could not see the questioner, he couldn't get the right answer. Similarly, if the questioner didn't know the answer, the horse would get it wrong. Hans, like many other animals, was able to respond to subtle physical gestures such as change of facial expression or shift in posture that humans were making, though the humans were unaware of what they were doing. This has become known as "the Clever Hans phenomenon" and it is sometimes cited as a way of explaining how other creatures, such as chimpanzees, may appear to be learning to produce language in different ways.

For more, read:

O'Grady, W. *et al.* (2005) *Contemporary Linguistics* (chapter 17) (5th edition)  
Bedford/St. Martins Press

Pfungst, O. (1911) *Clever Hans, the Horse of Mr. Von Osten* Holt

## **2B Body language, etc.**

Most elements of body language are informative because we are typically unaware of how our body posture (e.g. slumped) or facial expression (e.g. vacant) might be signaling what we are thinking or feeling (e.g. bored). Other aspects of our physical orientation to others may also be informative, but below our level of awareness most of the time. If, for example, you are from one of those social groups (e.g. in northern Europe) that operates mostly with a “non-contact” physical orientation, you may experience some discomfort during an interaction with someone who has more of a “contact” orientation (e.g. in southern Europe or South America), but you may not be conscious of the cause (just too much touching going on). This is sometimes described in terms of preferred “distance zones” among social groups. It can result in odd interactions when someone from a close contact background keeps moving toward another person from a more distant contact background who keeps moving back, as one tries to reduce, while the other tries to increase, the distance zone between them.

Other informative signals, such as amount of eye contact during interaction, may be interpreted differently by different groups. Avoidance of eye contact, as is common in some Asian societies, may be misinterpreted by outsiders as lack of interest or connection. According to David Crystal (2005: 7), “the eyebrow flash is used unconsciously when people approach each other and wish to show that they are ready to make social contact. Each person performs a single upward movement of the eyebrows, keeping them raised for about a sixth of a second.” From this description, the eyebrow flash is clearly a type of informative signal. It may be, however, that there are cross-cultural differences in how, or how much, eyebrow flashing is used, which may lead to misinterpretation.

It is also possible to develop awareness of these types of informative signals and then try to use them intentionally. This may happen more often when we find ourselves in a new cultural environment and we are trying to fit in. Recognizing subtle aspects of body language or the effects of different distance zones is part of developing cross-cultural awareness.

For more, read:

Crystal, D. (2005) *How Language Works* (chapter 2) Penguin

## 2C Sound symbolism

Sound symbolism is usually discussed as a type of onomatopoeia and relates to the fact that certain language sounds seem to be associated with particular physical characteristics. In general, low pitch sounds are associated with large individuals and dominant behavior, while high pitch sounds are associated with small individuals and submissive behavior throughout the animal world. More specifically, the high front vowel /i/ is found in a lot of words for “smallness” in different languages. English speakers have *teeny-weeny*, Scottish English speakers have *wee* and many English dialects have a pronunciation like “leetle” for *little*. Both Portuguese (with *-inho*, as in *copinho* “small glass”) and Spanish (with *-ito*, as in *perrito* “small dog”) use the /i/ sound in endings that indicate a small version of something (from *copo* “glass” and *perro* “dog”).

As described in *Language Files* (2007), there are also consonant clusters in English that seem to have a regular sound-meaning correspondence. Words beginning with *fl-* are associated with being quick and/or light (*flee*, *flit*, *fly*) and those beginning with *gl-* suggest brightness (*gleam*, *glitter*, *glow*). Many other examples of sound symbolism of this type have been suggested in a variety of languages.

If this relationship between sound and meaning is part of our understanding of language, then it clearly goes against the concept of arbitrariness. However, the patterns observed in this type of sound symbolism represent a tendency rather than a truly dependable connection. They may be part of associative meaning, rather than inherent conceptual meaning (see Chapter 9 for a discussion). A lot of words with similar meanings don't follow the pattern. For example, *small* and *short* don't have an /i/ sound in them, whereas some words with “bigness” in their meaning do have that sound (*chief*, *increase*, *supreme*). It may be that there is a general awareness among language users that certain sounds or sound combinations have associations, but it doesn't change the fact that the relationship between the vast majority of words and their meanings is arbitrary.

For more, read:

*Language Files* (2007) (10th edition) (17-18) The Ohio State University Press

Hinton, L., J. Nichols and J. Ohala (eds.) (1995) *Sound Symbolism* Cambridge University Press

## 2D Terrace and Nim

Herbert Terrace named his chimpanzee “Nim Chimpsky” as a play on the name of the best-known American linguist of his era, Noam Chomsky. Chomsky famously claimed that “all normal humans acquire language, whereas acquisition of even its barest rudiments is quite beyond the capacities of an otherwise intelligent ape”

(1972: 66). His position was that language was such a unique human biological endowment that it didn't make any sense to claim that it could be learned by any other animal. Chomsky made his negative views of the chimpanzee studies quite clear with the following argument: to claim that an animal had an ability as advantageous as language, yet simply never used it, is as ridiculous as saying that somewhere an island exists on which birds are perfectly capable of flight, but have not yet thought to use this ability and need human instructors to teach them to fly. In establishing his training program with Nim, Terrace was essentially setting out to show that Noam was wrong. However, years later, after studying recordings of Nim Chimpsky's use of sign language, Terrace came to the conclusion that Nim had not been acquiring language at all and that perhaps Noam had been right all along.

In more recent writings, incorporating ideas from biology and psychology, Chomsky seems to be willing to recognize two distinct versions of the "faculty of language," one that is very narrow and uniquely human (what he is interested in) and another that is broad and perhaps not uniquely human. (See Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch, 2002.)

For more, read:

Chomsky, N. (1972) *Language and Mind* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Hauser, M., N. Chomsky and W. Fitch (2002) "The faculty of language: what is it, who has it, and how did it evolve?" *Science* 298 (Nov. 22): 1569-1579

Terrence, H. (1979) *Nim: A Chimpanzee Who Learned Sign Language* Knopf

## **2E Communicating with an orangutan**

As reported in Miles (1990) and summarized in Anderson (2004), an orangutan named Chantek was involved in a study using sign language. It is worth noting that Chantek was exposed to Signed English, not American Sign Language (ASL). As explained later in Chapter 15, Signed English is essentially a way of using signs instead of words in English phrases and sentences, rather than learning the distinct structure of ASL. It is generally easier to use for English speakers, especially those who are not proficient in ASL.

The study was conducted in a non-intensive manner (unlike Nim's experience), with Chantek being encouraged to use signs in his "home" environment with trainers. The development of Chantek's signing followed a pattern that was very similar to Washoe's. After learning a number of basic signs, Chantek would start combining them, not as repetitions of human signing, but as spontaneous creations. It is worth emphasizing that Chantek did not automatically produce repetitions of his trainers' signs, indicating that imitation was not the primary basis of his interactions (as has been claimed in criticisms of some chimpanzee studies). Chantek also initiated interaction without prompting and, interestingly, would

sometimes produce signs using his feet. (No, his trainers weren't showing him how to do that!)

Chantek was reported to have developed a vocabulary of 140 signs. He could use them to refer to things not in his immediate environment and extend their use in meaningful ways. For example, the sign for "dog" was used for other similar animals, something that young human children also do with the word *dog*, as described later in Chapter 13. So, Chantek's use of signs appeared to exhibit the properties of displacement, arbitrariness and productivity.

For more, read:

Anderson, S. (2004) *Doctor Dolittle's Delusion* (chapter 10) Yale University Press

Miles, H. (1990) "The cognitive foundations for reference in a signing orangutan" In S. Parker and K. Gibson (eds.) *Language and Intelligence in Monkeys and Apes* (511-539) Cambridge University Press

## **2F Chimpanzees' symbol-use**

Note that there continues to be controversy over what exactly the chimpanzees are doing with the signs and symbols we teach them, but these answers are based on the reports of those who were most familiar with the chimpanzees under study.

- 1 Correct. The use of strings of signs such as "open food drink" or "please fruit more gimme" look like the telegraphic speech of human children.
- 2 Correct. The use of "water bird" to refer to a swan seems to be an example of a novel sign combination.
- 3 Correct. A good example was "If Sarah put red on green, Mary give Sarah chocolate." There were many others.
- 4 Correct. A good example was provided by the use of the sign for "key" which was overgeneralized to several things, including a can-opener.
- 5 Not correct. See the examples offered in Discussion Topic II. Kanzi, in particular, produced a large number of spontaneous signs.
- 6 Probably not correct. Washoe did produce the sign combination "time eat," but this can't be treated as evidence of any complex concept of time (which human children acquire fairly late). It is more likely that Washoe meant something like "now eat."
- 7 Not correct. They do use signs to signal meaning in very basic interactions with humans and occasionally use them in brief interactions with each other, but three-year-old children are rapid fire interactional partners by comparison.
- 8 Not correct. Although sometimes producing longer strings of words, they typically create single signs, occasionally two together, but none of them reached an average utterance length of 2.0.

For more, read:

Hudson, G. (2000) *Essential Introductory Linguistics* (chapter 12) Blackwell

### 3 The sounds of language (Study Questions)

- 1 Acoustic phonetics is the study of the physical properties of speech as sound waves in the air and articulatory phonetics is the study of the physical production, via the vocal organs, of speech sounds.
- 2 (a) +V, (b) -V, (c) +V, (d) -V, (e) +V, (f) -V (g) -V (h) +V (i) +V
- 3 (a) velar, (b) palatal, (c) labiodental, (d) velar, (e) glottal, (f) alveolar, (g) bilabial, (h) bilabial, (i) palatal, (j) alveolar, (k) dental (or interdental), (l) alveolar
- 4 (a) affricate, (b) stop, (c) stop, (d) fricative, (e) affricate, (f) liquid, (g) nasal, (h) fricative, (i) glide
- 5 (a) bike, (b) bought, (c) enjoy, (d) face, (e) howl, (f) hoping, (g) who, (h) cloak, (i) mine, (j) queue, (k) cheap, (l) the
- 6 (a) kætʃ, (b) daʊt or dawt, (c) dʒem, (d) meɪzər, (e) nɔɪz or nɔɪz, (f) foun  
(g) ʃaɪ or ʃaj, (h) ðiz, (i) θɒt, (j) tʌf, (k) wʊd, (l) rɪŋ

### 3 The Sounds of Language (Tasks)

#### 3A Phonetic representations

*although* [əldəʊ] or [əldoʊ], *beauty* [bjuti], *bomb* [bʌm], *ceiling* [silɪŋ], *charisma* [kəˈrɪzmə], *choice* [tʃɔɪs], *cough* [kɒf] or [kʌf], *exercise* [eksə(r)saɪz], *hour* [aʊər], *light* [laɪt] or [ləɪt], *phase* [feɪz] or [feɪz], *quiche* [kiʃ], *quake* [kweɪk], *sixteen* [sɪksˈtiːn], *thigh* [θaɪ] or [θaɪ], *tongue* [tʌŋ], *whose* [huːz], *writhe* [raɪð] or [raɪð]

#### 3B Five lists

- [eɪ] air, Danish, gauge, headache, nation, pear, weight  
[i] belief, critique, keys, meat, people, queen, receipt, scene, Sikh  
[f] belief, giraffe, philosopher, tough  
[k] critique, crockery, headache, keys, queen, Sikh  
[ʃ] Danish, mission, nation, ocean, sugar

#### 3C Consonant definitions

- fan: voiceless labiodental fricative  
lunch: (voiced) alveolar liquid  
goal: voiced velar stop  
jail: voiced palatal affricate  
mist: (voiced) bilabial nasal  
shop: voiceless palatal fricative  
sun: voiceless alveolar fricative  
tall: voiceless alveolar stop  
yellow: (voiced) palatal glide  
zoo: voiced alveolar fricative

In cases where there is no voiceless sound in contrast, the (voiced) feature, shown in brackets, could be omitted.

### **3D Obstruents and sonorants**

The pronunciation of affricates, fricatives and stops involves some type of constriction or obstruction of the airflow. They are grouped together as obstruents. The pronunciation of glides, liquids and nasals is not subject to obstruction and so these sounds are produced with a relatively open airflow. They are grouped together as sonorants. Generally speaking, sonorants will be perceived as louder than obstruents, but they're not as loud as vowels, which are at the top of the sonority scale.

For more, read:

McMahon, A. (2002) *An Introduction to English Phonology* (107-108) Edinburgh University Press

### **3E Retroflex sounds**

(i) To produce a retroflex sound, curl the tip of your tongue up and back so that the underside almost touches the roof of your mouth behind the alveolar ridge and say *ta* or *da*.

(ii) The representation of retroflex sounds is done with a “right tail,” as in [ɭ] and [ɮ], that is, a continuation of the letter stroke down and then curved up to the right side.

(iii) Retroflex sounds are found in many languages spoken in India, especially southern India and Sri Lanka (e.g. Tamil), so they have become associated with the pronunciation of some varieties of Indian English.

For more, read:

Ashby, M. and J. Maidment (2005) *Introducing Phonetic Science* (37) Cambridge University Press

### **3F Forensic phonetics**

Forensic phonetics is a general term for any uses of phonetic analysis in criminal investigations and legal proceedings. Experts in phonetics have testified about accents and vocal features in criminal cases where the identification of speakers from recordings was at issue. More specifically, forensic phonetics has been associated with a procedure called acoustic spectrographic analysis or “voiceprinting” (by analogy with fingerprinting). A voiceprint is based on characteristic features of an individual speaker's pronunciation as shown in a spectrogram. A spectrogram



provides a visual representation of the length, intensity and pitch of sounds uttered by an individual and can be analyzed in order to identify particular characteristics in the pronunciation of that individual. Although they have been used in criminal cases, voiceprints are generally considered to be much less reliable than fingerprints because of people's ability to alter or disguise their normal pronunciation.

For more, read:

Nolan, F. (2003) "Speaker recognition" In W, Frawley. (ed.) *The International Encyclopedia of Linguistics* volume 4 (147-148) (2nd edition) Oxford University Press

Rose, P. (2002) *Forensic Speaker Identification* CRC Press

#### 4 The sound patterns of language (Study Questions)

- 1 Substituting one phoneme for another changes both pronunciation and meaning. Substituting one allophone for another only changes pronunciation.
- 2 An aspirated sound is one pronounced with a stronger puff of air. Words containing aspirated consonants in initial position are *kill*, *pool* and *top*.
- 3 *ban-bun*, *fat-pat*, *fat-far*, *pit-pat*, *bell-bet*, *bet-vet*, *tap-tape*, *tape-tale*, *heat-heel*, *meal-heel*, *chain-sane*, *vet-vote*, *vote-goat*
- 4 The phonotactics of a language are the permitted arrangements of sounds that obey constraints on the sequence and ordering of phonemes in that language.
- 5 An open syllable ends with a vowel (as nucleus) whereas a closed syllable ends with a consonant (as coda).
- 6 (i) /n/ (ii) /t/ (iii) /p/ (iv) /d/ (v) /ə/ [vɪktəri] – [vɪktri]

#### 4 The sound patterns of language (Tasks)

##### 4A Diacritics

According to the *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association*:

“Diacritics are small letter-shaped symbols or other marks which can be added to a vowel or consonant symbol to modify or refine its meaning in various ways. A symbol and any diacritic or diacritics attached to it are regarded as a single (complex) symbol.” (1999:15)

Diacritics in this chapter: aspiration [<sup>h</sup>]; dental articulation [ˌ]; nasalization [˜]

For more, read:

*Handbook of the International Phonetic Association* (1999) (15-17) Cambridge University Press

##### 4B Hawaiian

Me - rry - Ch - ri - s(t) - ma - s

Me - le - ka - li - ki - ma - ka

Two English consonants that are not phonemes in Hawaiian: /r/ and /s/

For more, read:

Schütz, A. (1997) *Things Hawaiian: A Pocket Guide to the Hawaiian Language* Island Heritage

##### 4C Syllable structure

This example is from Radford *et al.* (2009) who describe a general principle that, in syllable structure, “onsets have priority over codas.” So, when in doubt about placing what looks like an extra consonant, make it part of an onset rather than a

coda. With that reasoning, we would have to say that the structure *cen + tral*, with [t] as part of the second syllable onset, is more likely to be accurate than *cent + ral*, with [t] as part of the first syllable coda. The other choices are not likely because they depend on impossible syllable types (-*ntral* and *centr-*).

For more, read:

Radford, A., M. Atkinson, D. Britain, H. Clahsen and A. Spencer (2009) *Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press

#### 4D Suprasegmentals

Suprasegmentals are features of speech such as differences in pitch, stress and length, which together form the basic components of intonation. Pitch is the result of changes in vibration in the vocal folds, making voices sound lower or higher, rising or falling. In English, when we ask questions, we often end with rising pitch. Stress is most apparent when it is used contrastively, as in *I'm going to wash the **car**, not the **cat***, and generally is the feature of English utterances that determines the rhythm. Stress interacts with length, so that stressed syllables are longer than unstressed syllables.

For more, read:

Ladefoged, P. (2006) *A Course in Phonetics* (14-15) (5th edition) Thomson

#### 4E Syllabic consonants

(i) The English words *lesson* and *little* have two syllables, with the second containing a syllabic consonant. Syllabic consonants in English are typically formed with a nasal [m, n] or a liquid [l, r]. They mostly occur at the end of words where the speaker goes straight from a consonant sound to a nasal or liquid sound that represents a syllable in the structure of the word. Perhaps because of this, a nasal or a liquid used as a syllabic consonant is typically longer than in other contexts. In English, we can note a general pattern whereby /r/ is not syllabic when preceded by a vowel (in pronunciation, not writing) and is a syllabic consonant when preceded by a consonant. In transcription, we put a small vertical line under the consonant symbol to indicate that it is syllabic, as in [lɛsn̩].

(ii) all of them

For more, read:

Odden, D. (2005) *Introducing Phonology* (32-33) Cambridge University Press

#### **4F Syllable-timing and stress-timing**

Syllable-timing means that each syllable is roughly the same length whether it is stressed or unstressed, so that a language with syllable-timing sounds as if it is spoken with regular equal beats. French and Spanish are good examples. Stress-timing means that the stressed syllables are longer than unstressed syllables. A language with stress-timing has equal beats between the stressed syllables, regardless of the number of unstressed syllables between them, with the result that a typical feature is reduced vowels in unstressed syllables. English is a good example.

For more, read:

McMahon, A. (2002) *An Introduction to English Phonology* (124-128) Edinburgh University Press

## 5 Word formation (Study Questions)

- 1 Etymology is “the study of original forms” or “the study of the origins and histories of words” whereas entomology is “the study of insects.”
- 2 (c) and (d) are examples of calque; (a) and (b) are borrowings
- 3 (a) acronym (“Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome”)
  - (b) coinage
  - (c) infixing (*damn* inside *fantastic*)
  - (d) conversion (noun *party* → verb)
  - (e) compounding (*skate* + *board*) and compounding (*kick* + *ass*) and conversion (verb *kick* + noun *ass* → adjective *kickass*)
  - (f) clipping (*doctor*) and clipping (*veterinarian*)
  - (g) backformation (verb *burgle* from noun *burglar*) and backformation (verb *babysit* from noun *babysitter*, which is a compound (*baby* + *sitter*)).
  - (h) borrowing (from Arabic *suffa*) and hypocorism (from *comfortable*)
- 4 mis- + *fortune*; *terror* + -ism; *care* + -less + -ness; dis- + *agree* + -ment; in- + *effect* + -ive; un- + *faith* + -ful; pre- + *pack* + -age + -ed; bio- + de- + *grade* + -able; re- + in- + *carn* + -ation (Latin root *carn* (“flesh”)); de- + *cent(e)r* + -al + -ize + -ation
- 5 srnal
- 6 (a) **clipping** (*phone* from *telephone*) plus **compounding** (*car* + *phone*)
  - (b) **blending** (from *Federal Express*) plus **conversion** (noun → verb)
  - (c) **blending** (*car* + *hijack*) plus **conversion** (verb → noun)
  - (d) **borrowing** (from Japanese *karaoke*) plus **compounding** (*karaoke* + *night*)
  - (e) **eponym** (from William Hoover) plus **conversion** (noun → verb)
  - (f) *decaf* is (usually) a reduced version of “a cup of coffee made with *decaffeinated* coffee,” so **clipping** is the most obvious process. The longer word *decaffeinated* is a **derivation** via a prefix (*de-*) and two suffixes (*-ate* + *-ed*) from *caffeine*, which was originally a **borrowing** from French. **Conversion** from noun (*caffeine*) to adjective (*decaffeinated*) to noun (*decaf*) has also taken place.

## 5 Word-formation (Tasks)

### 5A Initialisms

An initialism is a type of acronym in which the individual letters are pronounced. Examples are BBC, UFO, MP, UK and USA (not pronounced “yoosa”). Examples in this chapter were CD, VCR, ATM.

For more, read:

Minkova D. and Stockwell R. (2009) *English Words: History and Structure* (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press

## 5B Portmanteau words

According to Geoffrey Nunberg (2001: 85), the term “portmanteau word” was invented by Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*.

“We owe it to none other than Lewis Carroll, who based the notion on a rather large leather suitcase with two compartments. The term comes up in *Through the Looking Glass*, just after Humpty Dumpty has recited “Jabberwocky”, when he’s explaining to Alice how he formed the word *slithy* out of *lithe* and *slimy*. “It’s like a portmanteau,” he says, “there are two meanings packed up into one word.”

The term blending is used more generally for this type of word-formation. Examples included in this chapter: *gasohol*, *smog*, *smaze*, *smurk*, *vog*, *bit*, *brunch*, *motel*, *telecast*, *telethon*, *infotainment*, *simulcast*, *Franglais*, *Spanglish*, *telex*, *modem*.

For more, read:

Nunberg, G. (2001) *The Way We Talk Now* (85-86) Houghton Mifflin

## 5C Etymologies

assassin: Arabic (*hashishin*)

clone: Greek (*klón*)

cockroach: Spanish (*cucaracha*)

denim: French (*serge de Nîmes*)

diesel: German (*Rudolf Diesel*)

horde: Polish (*horda*)

kayak: Inuit or Eskimo (*qayaq*)

kiosk: Turkish (*köşk*)

nickname: Old English (an *eke name*)

penguin: Welsh (*pen gwyn*)

robot: Czech (*robota*)

shampoo: Hindi (*champo*)

sherry: Spanish (*Xeres*, *Jerez*)

slogan: Gaelic (*sluaghghairm*)

snoop: Dutch (*snoepen*)

taboo: Tongan (*tabu*)

tea: Chinese (*dé*)

tomato: Nahuatl (*tomatl*)

umbrella: Italian (*ombrello*)

voodoo: Ewe (*vódũ*)

The word “nickname” is not a borrowing.

The words “denim” (from a place), “diesel” (from a person) and “sherry” (from a place) are eponyms.

For more, see:

Hoad, T. (ed.) (1996) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* Oxford University Press

## 5D Netspeak

- 1 The word *netizens* is a **blend** from *internet* and *citizen*.
- 2 *RAM* is an **acronym** for “random access memory” in computers.
- 3 The noun *keyboard* was formed through **compounding** (*key* + *board*), then became a verb through **conversion** (= to use a keyboard), as in this example.
- 4 The word *techie* (for a person who knows a lot about computer technology) is formed after *technology* becomes *tech* through **clipping**, then *-ie* (or *-y*) is added, as in **hypocorism**.
- 5 *Webcam* is a **blend** from the (*World Wide*) *Web* and *camera*.
- 6 The common noun *bookmark*, which is formed through **compounding** (*book* + *mark*), has gone through the process of **conversion** to become the verb *bookmark* (= to keep a record of the address of material on the internet), as in this example.
- 7 The word *blog* (from *web* + *log*) is a **blend**, with the *-er* suffix added through **derivation** for *blogger* (= someone who puts information and opinions on a personal website).
- 8 The verb *download* is a **derivation**, with the prefix *down* added to the verb *load*, which can be used through **conversion** as the noun *downloads*, as in this example, for material that is moved to a smaller computer from a larger system.
- 9 *Faq* (or *FAQ*) is an **acronym** for “frequently asked questions.”
- 10 The form *ruok* is an abbreviation similar to an **acronym** (“Are you okay?”), but of a type that is formed using the sounds of letters or numbers for words in a way that is similar to Rebus writing (see Chapter 16).

For more, read:

Crystal, D. (2004) *A Glossary of Netspeak and Textspeak* Edinburgh University Press

Crystal, D. (2006) *Language and the Internet* (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press

## 5E Indonesian circumfixes

1 *sehat, bebas, kebaikan, kejujuran*

2 *ke ... an*

3 Derivation of abstract nouns from adjectives through the use of a specific prefix + suffix combination (i.e. a circumfix).

4 *ketersediaan, kesulitan, kesesuaian, keseimbangan*

5 *senang, adil, puas*

For more, read:

Sneddon, J. (1996) *Indonesian: A Comprehensive Grammar* Routledge

## 5F Hmong compounds

*chaw* (“place”) *kho* (“fix”) *mob* (“sickness”) = “hospital”

*chaw* (“place”) *nres* (“stand”) *tsheb* (“vehicle”) = “parking lot”

*chaw* (“place”) *zaum* (“sit”) *tos* (“wait”) = “waiting room”

*dav* (“bird”) *hlau* (“iron”) = “airplane”

*hnab* (“bag”) *looj* (“cover”) *tes* (“hand”) = “glove”

*kev* (“way”) *cai* (“right”) = “law”

*kev* (“way”) *kho* (“fix”) *mob* (“sickness”) = “medical treatment”

*kev* (“way”) *nqaj* (“rail”) *hlau* (“iron”) = “railway”

*kws* (“expert”) *hlau* (“iron”) = “blacksmith”

*kws* (“expert”) *kho* (“fix”) *hniau* (“teeth”) = “dentist”

*kws* (“expert”) *ntaus* (“hit”) *ntawv* (“paper”) = “typist”

*kws* (“expert”) *ntoo* (“wood”) = “carpenter”

*kws* (“expert”) *kho* (“fix”) *tsheb* (“vehicle”) = “mechanic”

*kws* (“expert”) *tshuaj* (“medicine”) = “doctor”

*tsheb* (“vehicle”) *nqaj* (“rail”) *hlau* (“iron”) = “train”

*daim* (“flat”) *ntawv* (“paper”) *muas* (“buy”) *tshuaj* (“medicine”) = “prescription”



## 6 Morphology (Study Questions)

1 When, he, in, the, the, an, and, a, of

2 (a) *-less, -ly, mis-, -s, pre-, -er, -en, -ed, un-, -er*

(b) all of them (*-struct, -ceive, -duce, -peat*)

(c) none of them (*were, had, sat, waited*)

3 (a) *-en*, (b) *-en, -ing* (c) *-er, -es, -est*, (d) *-ed, -'s, -s*

4 *-a* (OR *-on* → *-a*), *-s, -en, Ø, -es, -i* (OR *-us* → *i*)

5 Reduplication means repeating all or part of a form, often a syllable, as a way of indicating, for example, that a noun is plural or a verb is referring to a future action.

6 abalongo; táwa; kəji; bibili; kumain

## 6 Morphology (Tasks)

### 6A Suppletion

Suppletion is the term used to describe the relationship between two words that are connected through inflectional morphology, but have quite different forms. The English verb *be* has very different forms for “*be* + present” (*am, is, are*) and “*be* + past” (*was, were*). These are all suppletive forms. Also, whereas most adjectives (*fast, slow*) have closely related (non-suppletive) forms in the comparative (*faster, slower*), there are a few (*bad, good*) that have suppletive forms (*worse, better*).

Examples in the chapter: *law – legal; mouth – oral ; go – went*

For more, read:

Kroeger, P. (2005) *Analyzing Grammar* (chapter 15) Cambridge University Press

### 6B Conditioning

1 *stitches*: phonological conditioning. The plural form used */-əz/* is because of the final sound of the singular form *stitch /tʃ/*.

2 *exclamation*: morphological conditioning. It is the suffix *-ation* that influences the sound change from *exclaim*.

3 *children*: lexical conditioning. The plural *-ren* and the different vowel sound only apply in this case because of the particular word (*child*) involved.

4 *conclusion*: morphological conditioning. It is the suffix *-ion* that influences the sound change from *conclude*.

5 *cliffs*: phonological conditioning. The plural form has */-s/* because of the final sound */f/* in the singular form *cliff*.

6 *teeth*: lexical conditioning. The change from the singular (*tooth*) only applies here because of the particular word involved.

For more, read:

Plag, I., M. Braun, S. Lappe and M. Schramm (2007) *Introduction to English Linguistics* (chapter 3) Mouton de Gruyter

### 6C Enclitics and proclitics

Enclitics and proclitics are unstressed forms, typically derived from functional morphemes, which attach to other words in pronunciation. Proclitics attach to the beginning of words and are not very common in English. A possible example is the use of *y-* (from *you*) in the typical pronunciation of the phrase *y'know*. Proclitics are more common in French and other Romance languages where pronouns are often attached to the following verb, as in *Je t'aime* (literally *I y'love*, or, in English word order, *I love you*). Enclitics attach to the preceding word and are more common in English, as in the unstressed forms of *will*, *have*, *is* and *are* when they attach to a preceding noun phrase, particularly if it's a pronoun (*he'll*, *we've*, *it's*, *they're*).

Enclitics and proclitics are more generally talked about as clitics (from *klitikos* = “leaning,” in Greek). Clitics attach to phrases, known as the “host,” whereas affixes attach to words, usually to form other words. A clitic is basically tied to its host through pronunciation, whereas an affix has a morphological connection to another word. In more eloquent terms, “clitics form only a prosodic constituent with their host and not a morphological one. They would thus be distinguished from affixes not only by their distribution, but also the nature of their attachment to their host” (Halpern, 1995: 99).

For more, read:

Halpern, A. (1995) *On the Placement and Morphology of Clitics*. CSLI.

Halpern, A. (1998) “Clitics” In A. Spencer and A. Zwicky (eds.) *The Handbook of Morphology* (101-122) Blackwell

### 6D Swahili

- 1 alikupenda
- 2 nitawapika
- 3 utapita
- 4 tulimlipa
- 5 atanipiga
- 6 waliondoka

## **6E Samoan**

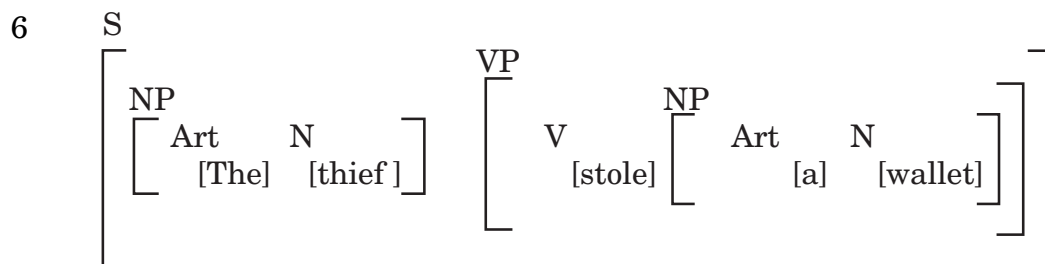
- (i) Reduplication. The syllable (CV) containing the stressed vowel (ó, á, ú) in the singular is reduplicated, without the stress, and placed before the stressed syllable in the plural.
- (ii) Plurals: *avavága*, *mamá*, *maʔalilíli*, *toʔuʔúlu*

## **6F Tagalog**

- 1 bumili
- 2 binili
- 3 binasag
- 4 hinanap
- 5 humahanap
- 6 kumakain
- 7 bumabasag
- 8 binabasag
- 9 hinahanap
- 10 kinakain

## 7 Grammar (Study Questions)

- 1 *The* (= article), *woman* (= noun), *kept* (= verb), *a* (= article), *large* (= adjective), *snake* (= noun), *in* = preposition), *a* (= article), *cage* (= noun), *but* (= conjunction), *it* (= pronoun), *escaped* (= verb), *recently* (= adverb)
- 2 Grammatical gender is based on the type of noun, such as masculine or feminine or neuter, and is not tied to sex. Natural gender is based on sex as a biological distinction between male, female or neither male nor female.
- 3 (i) “You must not split an infinitive.” (*to fully explain* → to explain fully)  
(ii) “You must not end a sentence with a preposition” (*the person I gave the book to* → the person to whom I gave the book)
- 4 In the older definition, pronouns were described as “words used in place of nouns.” If this was correct, we could use *he* instead of *man* and *it* instead of *sandwich*, and rewrite *The man ate the sandwich* as \**The he ate the it*. Because we usually say *He* (= The man) *ate it* (= the sandwich), it would be better to define pronouns as “words used in place of noun phrases.”
- 5 (i) The small boy hit the black dog.  
(ii) The dog saw the big man.



## 7 Grammar (Tasks)

### 7A Determiners

The term “determiner” describes a set of words that can be used before nouns in English. The set includes articles (*a*, *an*, *the*), demonstratives (*this*, *that*, *these*, *those*) and possessives (*my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *our*, *their*). In most descriptions, the set also includes quantifiers, that is, words used to talk about how many or how much of what the noun refers to (e.g. *all*, *both*, *each*, *every*, *(a) few*, *half*, *(a) little*, *many*, *much*, *some*, *several*), including numbers (e.g. *one*, *twenty-five*, *two million*).

Examples in this chapter: English articles (*a*, *an*, *the*), Spanish articles (*el*, *la*), German articles (*der*, *die*, *das*), a French article (*le*) and a Gaelic article (*an*).

For more, read:

Carter, R. and M. McCarthy (2006) *Cambridge Grammar of English* (353-373)  
Cambridge University Press

## 7B Hypercorrection

Hypercorrection is the use of an inappropriate form or pronunciation by someone who is trying to show that they know what is the “best” or “proper” way to use the language. Common examples are *They invited my friend and I* and *It’s between you and I*.

Some people seem to avoid *me* in phrases like *my friend and me*, possibly because they have been corrected in the past in sentences such as *My friend and I went to the party*. In this case, *I* is appropriate because it is before the verb as subject (i.e. *I went to the party* and not *\*Me went to the party*). However, we use *me* (not *I*) as object after the verb (*They invited me*) or after a preposition (*Come with me*). So, in the sentence *They invited my friend and me*, the form *me* is appropriate, whereas *\*They invited my friend and I* is actually an ungrammatical form and we wouldn’t say *\*They invited I*. Similarly, after the preposition *with*, we say *with me* and not *\*with I*. The word *between* is a preposition, so it is appropriate to say *between you and me*, with both *you* and *me* as objects of the preposition. Following this reasoning, we also say *between him and me* (not *\*between he and me* or *\*between he and I*).

Hypercorrection usually occurs when people try to correct some part of their speech, thinking that a certain word or phrase is inherently better, even when no correction is needed.

For more, read:

Andersson, L-G. and P. Trudgill (1990) *Bad Language* (118) Penguin

## 7C Aspect

In the study of grammar, “aspect” means the view or perspective taken with regard to an event, usually expressed by a verb form. This is different from “tense” in English (past or present) which is used to express distinctions between what happened before now (past) and the current situation (present). In some languages, a wide range of different types of aspect may be marked in the grammar, but English has only two basic structures in which aspect has an influence on grammatical form.

In one view of an event, we can talk about the action as incomplete at the time and still going on, as in *I’m eating lunch* or *She is writing a story*. This form of the verb (*be* + *V-ing*) is described as “progressive” (or “continuous”) aspect. In expressing a different view, we can talk about an action as complete, as in *I have eaten lunch* or *She has written a story*. This form of the verb (*have* + *V-en*) is described as perfect aspect. In addition to forms indicating progressive aspect and perfect aspect, English has the form *used to*, which can mark “habitual” aspect, as in *She used to write stories*. Combining the terms for tense and aspect, we can

describe these verb forms:

|                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (1) <i>I'm (am) eating</i>     | present (tense), progressive (aspect) |
| (2) <i>She's (is) writing</i>  | present progressive                   |
| (3) <i>I've (have) eaten</i>   | present perfect                       |
| (4) <i>She's (has) written</i> | present perfect                       |
| (5) <i>I was eating</i>        | past progressive                      |
| (6) <i>She had written</i>     | past perfect                          |
| (7) <i>She used to write</i>   | past habitual                         |

For more, read:

Brinton, L. (2000) *The Structure of Modern English* (113 - 4) John Benjamins

### 7D Transitive, intransitive, ditransitive

A transitive verb is used with an object. For example, in *I cut the cheese*, the transitive verb *cut* takes an object *the cheese* and is not used without an object (\**I cut*). An intransitive verb is one that is used without an object. For example, in *I can't sleep*, the intransitive verb *sleep* doesn't have an object and is not used with an object (\**I can't sleep the night*). A ditransitive verb is used with two objects. For example, in *Lucy handed me a note*, the ditransitive verb *hand* takes one object (*me*) and another object (*a note*) and is not used without them (\**Lucy handed me*, \**Lucy handed a note*).

Sentences (1), (3) and (8) contain transitive verbs (*find*, *discuss*, *like*) that require objects, so they should be written as *Ali found them*, *we discussed it*, *she really likes me*. Sentences (2), (5) and (8) contain intransitive verbs (*care*, *wait*, *smile*) that are used without objects, so they should be *he didn't care Ø*, *we're always waiting Ø*, *she smiled Ø*. Sentences (4), (6) and (7) contain ditransitive verbs (*lend*, *give*, *bring*) that require two objects, so they should be *I lent her mine*, *Anne gave me one*, *people bring you things/presents/cards*.

For more, read:

Thomas, L. (1993) *Beginning Syntax* (Chapter 3) Blackwell

### 7E Japanese word order

- (i) Something else: SOV
- (ii) Jakku-ga ringo-o tabemashita  
Jon-ga gakkoo-ni imasu

For more, read:

Inoue, K. (1979) “Japanese” In T. Shopen (ed.) *Languages and Their Speakers* (241-300) Winthrop Publishers

### **7F Latin and Amuzgo**

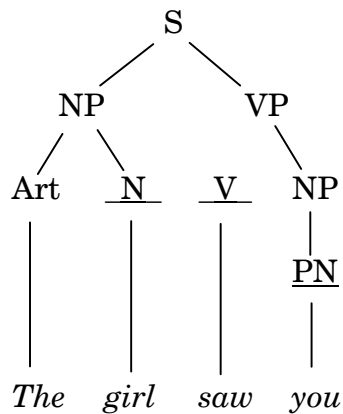
1 columbae parvam puellam amant

2 macei'na kwi yusku t'ma com we

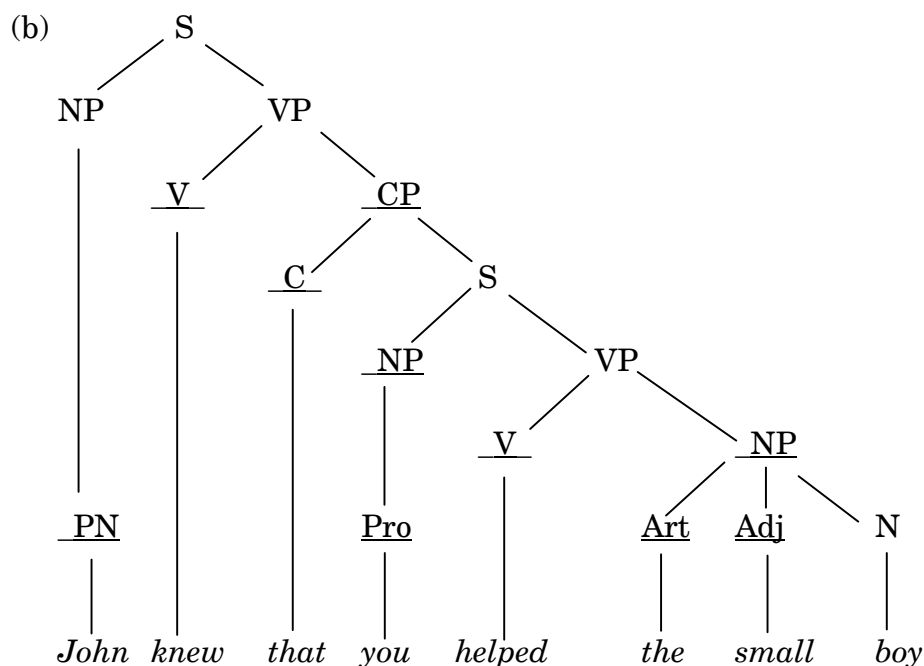
3 Gaelic

## 8 Syntax (Study Questions)

- 1 The “all and only” criterion means that the grammar must generate all the grammatical phrases and sentences and only the grammatical phrases and sentences.
- 2 Deep structure
- 3 (a) The parents of the bride and (the parents of the) groom  
OR The parents of the bride and (the) groom (without his parents)  
(b) a teacher of English history OR a person from England who teaches history  
(c) planes that are flying OR being the person who flies planes  
(d) the students complained that they couldn’t understand to everyone  
OR the students complained to everyone whom they couldn’t understand
- 4 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), but not (f) because it’s a sentence, not just a noun phrase.
- 5 (c) and (d)
- 6 (a)







## 8 Syntax (Tasks)

### 8A Competence and performance

Competence is the knowledge that all speakers have of their native language which allows them, without thinking about it at all, to produce well-formed structures. It is tacit knowledge that speakers normally have no access to and cannot describe. Performance is “the actual use of language in concrete situations” (Chomsky, 1965: 4), which may contain structures that, for various reasons, are not actually well-formed. For example, speakers may produce performance errors because they’re tired, distracted, drunk, in a hurry or just being sloppy. These occasional slips in performance simply represent a poor implementation of the underlying competence.

The distinction comes from the early work of the linguist Noam Chomsky (1965). In later work, Chomsky (1986) made a different distinction between “an internalized linguistic system” (I-language), within the mind of the speaker, and an externalized use of this system (E-language).

For more, read:

Chomsky, N. (1965) *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* MIT Press

Chomsky, N. (1986) *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use* Praeger

Radford, A. (2004) *English Syntax* Cambridge University Press

## 8B Embedded structures

An embedded structure can be analyzed as a sentence (S) that is inside another sentence (S) and forms a constituent of that sentence. In traditional grammar, it is described as a subordinate clause that is connected to a main (or matrix) clause within a sentence. Examples of embedded structures, shown in bold, are relative clauses (*The man **who lives next door** is a debt-collector*), adverbial clauses (*I'll do the dishes **after I've read the newspaper***) and noun clauses (*I told Josh **that I would help him***).

Examples in chapter 8:

Cathy knew that Mary helped George. (noun clause)

John believed that Cathy knew that Mary helped George. (two noun clauses)

I shot an elephant while I was in my pajamas. (adverbial clause)

I shot an elephant which was in my pajamas. (relative clause)

It was Charlie who broke the window. (relative clause)

For more, read:

Tallerman, M. (2005) *Understanding Syntax* (2nd edition) (chapter 3) Hodder Arnold

## 8C Underlying structures

In accordance with the phrase structure rules presented in the chapter, we can say that the tree diagram in (i) is well-formed and captures the structure of the target sentence, which we might paraphrase as “George used a telescope to see the boy.”

The alternative analysis in (ii) was not presented in the chapter and has the PP in a different part of the tree, directly under an NP. Is this possible in English? We can say *the girl with the dog* and *the professor with a Scottish accent* as well as *the boy with a telescope*, so there seems to be a general pattern in which a PP can be part of an NP in English. So the structure in (ii) also appears to be well-formed. However, the paraphrase in this case doesn't involve George using a telescope, but might be something like “George saw the boy who had a telescope.” In terms used early in the chapter, we have to say that the sentence *George saw the boy with a telescope* is structurally ambiguous and the tree diagrams in (i) and (ii) represent the two different underlying structures. They also represent the two underlying structures involved in *Annie bumped into a man with an umbrella*.

For more, read:

Thomas, L. (1993) *Beginning Syntax* (chapter 5) Blackwell

### 8D *Wanna* rules

These question forms have an underlying structure that may be closer to the basic forms represented in the following sentences. The *someone* and *some number of ...* parts in each sentence are the source of the question words (*Who*, *How many*) in the questions. We can note that whenever the *someone* and *some number of ...* parts are between *want* and *to* in the underlying structure, the two words *want* and *to* will not be contracted to *wanna*.

- 1 You **want to** visit someone.
- 2 You would **want to** go out with someone.
- 3 You **want to** invite some number of your friends to the wedding.
- 4 You **want** someone **to** win the game.
- 5 You would **want** someone **to** look after your pets.
- 6 You would **want** some number of your friends **to** stay with us.

In a number of experiments with very young children (aged two to five), Crain and Thornton (1998) found that the children consistently produced *want to* and *wanna* appropriately, yet were unlikely ever to have been made aware of the structural basis or to have been given negative evidence (i.e. been corrected) when using the structure. On the basis of these observations, Crain and Thornton concluded that the structural basis of *wanna*-contraction (but not the words) must be innate and based on Universal Grammar.

For more, read:

Crain, S. and R. Thornton (1998) *Investigations in Universal Grammar: A Guide to Experiments on the Acquisition of Syntax and Semantics* MIT Press  
Honda, M. and W. O'Neill (2008) *Thinking Linguistically* (chapter 14) Blackwell

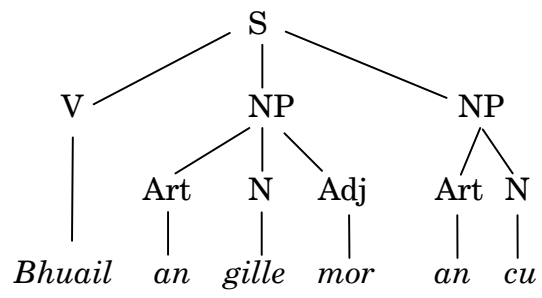
### 8E Ewe syntax

- (2) \* (Amu ye vo oge)
- (3) \* (Ika xa oge ye)
- (6) \* (Oge vo ika)
- (8) \* (Ika ye xa oge ye)
- (9) \* (Oge xa amu ye)

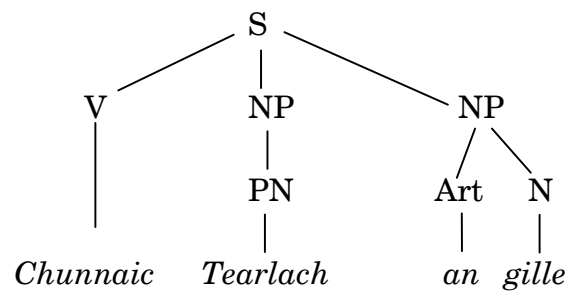
### 8F Gaelic sentences

- (1) \* (Chunnaic Calum an gille)
- (2) \* (Bhuail an cu beag Tearlach)
- (5) \* (Bhuail/Chunnaic/Fhuair an cu an duine beag)

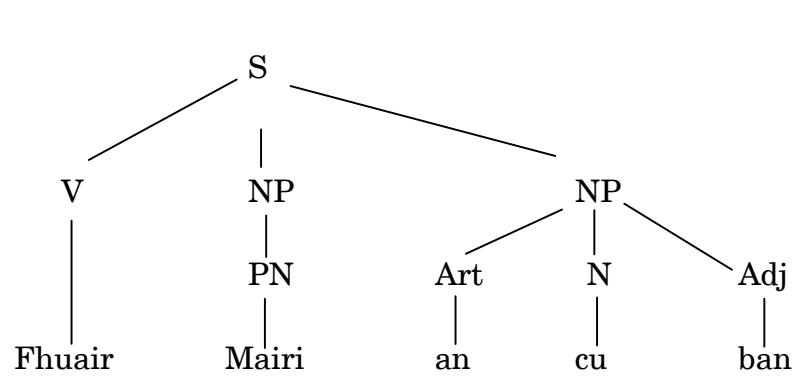
3



4



6



## 9 Semantics (Study Questions)

- 1 The prototype is the characteristic instance of a category, as in the case of “robin” being the clearest example, or prototype, of the category “bird” for many American English speakers.
- 2 (a) The verb *drink* requires a subject with the feature [+animate] and the noun *television* has the feature [-animate]. (b) The verb *write* requires a subject with the feature [+human] and the noun *dog* has the feature [-human].
- 3 Instrument (*her new golf club*), Agent (*Anne Marshall*), Theme (*the ball*), Source (*the woods*), Goal (*the grassy area*), Location (*the hole*), Experiencer (*she*)
- 4 (a) synonymy, (b) antonymy, (c) hyponymy, (d) antonymy, (e) hyponymy, (f) homophony (or homophones)
- 5 (a) non-gradable, (b) reversive, (c) non-gradable, (d) gradable, (e) reversive, (f) gradable
- 6 (a) metonymy, (b) polysemy, (c) metonymy, (d) metonymy, (e) polysemy (f) metonymy

## 9 Semantics (Tasks)

### 9A Roget

Peter Mark Roget (1779-1869) was an English doctor until his retirement at the age of sixty-one. He then worked on a catalogue in which he grouped words together according to their meanings. Unlike a dictionary, his *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases, Classified and Arranged so as to Facilitate the Expression of Ideas and Assist in Literary Composition*, first published in 1852, used the lexical relations of synonymy and antonymy to create sets of semantically similar words. The book was an immediate success, particularly among those who liked crossword puzzles, a very popular pastime of the era. More generally known as *Roget's Thesaurus*, the book has remained popular ever since.

For more, read:

Kendall, J. (2008) *The Man Who Made Lists* Putnam's

Miller, G. (1991) *The Science of Words* (162-3) Scientific American Library

### 9B Metonymy and metaphor

Metonymy, as described in the chapter, is a relationship between words or concepts based on a close connection in everyday experience, especially a contiguous connection, such as whole–part or container–contents. An example is *He drank the whole glass*, where the container *glass* is used to talk about the contents (= *water, juice, milk*, etc.).

In contrast, metaphor is a relationship based on perceived resemblance or having

similar qualities. An example is *He's made of glass*, where the phrase *made of glass* may be used to assign one quality of glass ("fragile" or "easily broken") to a person. So, generally speaking, metonymy is based on contiguity and metaphor is based on similarity.

For more, read:

Kövecses, Z. (2002) *Metaphor* (146) Oxford University Press

Murphy, M. (2003) *Semantic Relations and the Lexicon* Cambridge University Press

### 9C Markedness

The adjective antonym pairs in the list each have a marked and an unmarked member. The difference is explained in Trask (1999: 180). "A marked form may be distinguished from an unmarked member by the presence of additional linguistic material, by the presence of additional nuances of meaning, by greater rarity in a particular language or in languages generally."

The prefixes *im-*, *in-*, *un-* represent "additional linguistic material," so we can identify *possible*, *expensive* and *happy* as the unmarked members of their pairs. When we think of the criterion of "greater rarity" for marked forms, we can recognize that some members of each pair are more common than the others, or in simple terms, unmarked forms will be those that are used more frequently. In questions such as *How \_\_\_\_\_ are you?* or *How \_\_\_\_\_ is it?*, we normally use *tall* or *heavy* (and not *short* or *light*). (*How short are you?* is not what we usually say to people to find out their height.) So, on a frequency basis, we can say that *big*, *full*, *fast*, *heavy*, *old*, *tall* and *strong* are the unmarked members of their pairs.

For more, read:

Lyons, J. (1977) *Semantics 1* (305-311) Cambridge University Press

Trask, R. (1999) *Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics* (180) Routledge

### 9D Converses

Converses, also known as converse terms or reciprocal antonyms, have a distinct relationship that is not found with other opposites. We can say that not only is *above* the opposite of *below*, but in addition, if X is *above* Y, then Y is necessarily *below* X. Other pairs of prepositions with this semantic relationship are *behind/in front of* and *after/before*. In a similar way, if I'm *buying* something from you, it follows that you are *selling* something to me. So, the words *buy/sell* are converses, as are the other verb pairs *borrow/lend*, *follow/precede* and *give/receive*. Among nouns, there are some terms for social relationships that are converses in English. If Dave is Mary's *brother*, then Mary is Dave's *sister*. So the pair *brother/sister* are converses, as are *husband/wife*, *parent/child*, *doctor/patient*. Many pairs of

comparative adjectives (*bigger/smaller, older/younger*) are also understood as converses. That is, if X is *bigger* than Y, then necessarily Y is *smaller* than X. So, examples of converses are: *above/below, brother/sister/, buy/sell, doctor/patient, follow/precede, husband/wife, older/younger*.

For more, read:

Cruse, A. (2004) *Meaning in Language* (2nd edition) Oxford University Press

Jones, S. (2002) *Antonymy* (16-17) Routledge

### 9E Transferred epithet

An epithet is a word or phrase, typically an adjective, used to describe someone or something. In the case of *a quiet cup of tea*, The epithet *quiet* appears to be describing *cup*, but we know that it's not really the cup that is quiet, it is most likely the surroundings or circumstances. So, the epithet *quiet* has been transferred from something else to appear before *cup*. It's an example of a transferred epithet. In a similar way, *night* can't sleep, so it can't be *sleepless*. The epithet *sleepless* has been transferred from describing the person to a position next to *night*. Also, *nude* has been transferred from describing a person in a photo and placed before the word *photo* and *clever* has also been transferred from a person (the speaker) to the word *days*.

The term "hypallage" (= "exchange," from Greek) is sometimes used in literary studies to describe transfer relationships of this type. A well-known literary example is in line 3 of Thomas Gray's poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard": *The ploughman homeward plods his weary way*. In this case, the adjective *weary* must be describing the man, but has been transferred to *way*. Some other examples: *insane laughter, your own stupid fault, a drunken brawl*.

For more, read:

Baldick, C. (2001) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (103) Oxford University Press

Huddleston, R. and G. Pullum (2002) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (558) Cambridge University Press

### 9F Sentence alternations

(i) Sentence alternations of the type shown in examples (1) and (2) have been discussed a lot and many suggestions have been made about how they should be analyzed. One way to start is to look at what happens to the theme ("the affected object") in the (a) and (b) versions of (1).

(a) The agent X (*we*) causes the theme Y (*furniture*) to go to container Z (*the van*)

(b) The agent X (*we*) causes the theme Z (*the van*) to become the container of Y

(*furniture*)

Based on this analysis, we might say that the (a) structures are about “making the theme move” and the (b) structures are about “making the theme change.” In (1) and (2) the verbs *load* and *spray* can make themes move (1a, 2a) and also change (1b, 2b). However, in (3), the verb *pour* can only be used with a meaning “cause theme to move” as in (3a), but not with a meaning “cause theme to change,” as in the ungrammatical (3b). In contrast, the verb *fill* isn’t used for “cause theme to move”, as in the ungrammatical (4a), but can be used with the meaning “cause theme to change,” as in (4b). So, back to the first examples, when we *pour water*, we think of the theme (*water*) as going in motion, but when we *fill a glass*, we think of the theme (*a glass*) as undergoing a change to become a container (i.e. from having less or no water in it to having more water in it).

(ii) Four of these verbs can be used in both structures, following the pattern of *load* in (1a) and (1b): *cram*, *pack*, *splash*, *spread*. The other four verbs (*attach*, *glue*, *ladle*, *paste*) can only be used in one of the structures, following the pattern of *pour* in (3a).

For more, read:

Levin, B. (1993) *English Verb Classes and Alternations* University of Chicago Press  
Pinker, S. (2007) *The Stuff of Thought* (chapter 2) Viking Press



## 10 Pragmatics (Study Questions)

- 1 Person deixis (*I, you*), spatial deixis (*here, come back*), temporal deixis (*now, later*)
- 2 *he, her, his, she, him, the pills, the pain*
- 3 (a) if X is the name of a writer of a book, then X can be used to identify a copy of a book by that writer (in an educational setting)
- (b) if X is the name of a meal, then X can be used to refer to the person who orders the meal (in a restaurant setting)
- (c) if X is the name of a medical condition, then X can be used to refer to the person with that medical condition (in a medical setting)
- (d) if X is the time of an appointment, X can be used to refer to the person with that appointment (in a business office setting)
- 4 (a) You have a clock
- (b) He found the money
- (c) We bought the car
- (d) France has a king
- 5 (a) direct, (b) indirect, (c) indirect, (d) direct
- 6 (a) negative (“If you’re free”), (b) positive (“Let’s go”)

## 10 Pragmatics (Tasks)

### 10A Context

We normally think of “context” as the situation in which something happens and we tend to think of “situation” in physical terms rather than psychological terms. This may be what makes the quotation from Sperber and Wilson seem a bit strange. However, if we look at their explanation in detail, we can get a better understanding of their perspective.

A context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world. It is these assumptions, of course, rather than the actual state of the world, that affect the interpretation of an utterance. A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role. (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 15-16)

From this perspective, context is something that is created (“a construct”) in the mind (“psychological”) of hearers as they try to interpret what is said or written. The “immediate physical environment” is only part of what hearers may treat as contextually relevant for interpretation. Many other factors, particularly beliefs and assumptions in the mind of each hearer, are part of context in this analysis. As Henry Widdowson succinctly put it: “Context is not an external set of

circumstances, but a selection of them internally represented in the mind” (Widdowson, 2007: 20).

For more, read:

Sperber, D. and D. Wilson (1995) *Relevance* (15-16) Blackwell

Widdowson, H. (2007) *Discourse Analysis* (19-22) Oxford University Press

### 10B Deictic projection

The concept of deictic projection has been discussed in the following way.

Speakers seem to be able to project themselves into other locations prior to actually being in those locations, as when they say “I’ll come later” (= movement to addressee’s location). This is sometimes described as deictic projection and we make more use of its possibilities as more technology allows us to manipulate location. If “here” means the place of the speaker’s utterance (and “now” means the time of the speaker’s utterance), then an utterance such as [1] should be nonsense.

[1] *I am not here now.*

However, I can say [1] into the recorder of a telephone answering machine, projecting that the “now” will apply to any time someone tries to call me, and not to when I actually record the words. Indeed, recording [1] is a kind of dramatic performance for a future audience in which I project my presence to be in the required location. (Yule, 1996: 12-13)

So, deictic projection is a way of explaining why *here* and *now* don’t always mean “location and time of speaker when speaking,” as illustrated in example (1). In example (2), *you* are not actually in the location *here* (unless you can somehow fit yourself into the map/directory). As you read the map/directory, you have to project yourself into the map world in order to be where *here* is. In example (3), the speaker presumably means that the horse that he or she wants to win is *in last place* and not the actual speaker, and, in (4), the speaker means that his or her car (or other vehicle) must be *out of gas*. In both these cases, speakers are extending the use of *I* through deictic projection. In (5), the usual physical location of a person (*she*) is used as a deictic projection for the individual who is clearly not in that location at the time of speaking.

For more, read:

Lyons, J. (1977) *Semantics 2* (579) Cambridge University Press

Yule, G. (1996) *Pragmatics* (12-13) Oxford University Press

### 10C Performative verbs

Performative verbs are those that are used to perform a particular action when they are uttered with a first person subject (*I*) in the present tense (*apologize*). They are verbs that literally do something with words. So example (1) contains a performative verb. It is usually possible to put *hereby* before the verb (i.e. *I hereby apologize*) when it is used as a performative. Example (2) has none of these features (*He* is not first person, *said* is not present tense, and *He hereby said* sounds very strange). Example (3) has all the necessary features and contains a performative verb (*bet*). Example (4) has none of the necessary features, so does not contain a performative verb. Example (5) has two features, first person (*I*) and present tense (*drive*), but we can't normally say *I hereby drive a Mercedes* as a way of doing something. So, *drive* is not a performative verb. Here it is used in a statement (and may be called "constative"). That is, it is describing something, rather than doing something, with words. Example (6) has none of the necessary features, so doesn't contain a performative verb. Only examples (1) and (3) contain performative verbs.

For more, read:

Austin, J. (1962) *How to Do Things with Words* Oxford University Press

Thomas, J. (1995) *Meaning in Interaction* (32-33) Longman

### 10D Metapragmatics

The prefix *meta*, meaning "above" or "beyond," is used in technical expressions describing the human ability to reflect on utterances and talk about features of those utterances. It was first used in the term *metalanguage*, that is, language that is used to talk about language. The term *metapragmatics* came into use for the study of the ways in which language users reflect on, and show awareness of, pragmatic features and potential pragmatic interpretations of utterances. In the example, the speaker not only shows awareness of what Justin said (by reporting his direct speech), but also comments on the appropriate pragmatic interpretation of what was said. That is, the speaker reports on a speech act being performed and analyzes the speech as not counting as a promise. In addition, the use of *actually* seems to indicate that the speaker feels a need to establish a contrast between the speech act that might normally be associated with Justin's words (= promise) and the appropriate interpretation in this case (= not a promise).

For more, read:

Overstreet, M. (2009) "Metapragmatics" In L. Cummings (ed.) *The Pragmatics Encyclopedia* Routledge

Verschueren, J. (1999) *Understanding Pragmatics* (187-198) Arnold

## 10E Euphemisms and proverbs

According to Elizabeth Winkler, “Indirect speech acts are part of a larger set of linguistic strategies called *indirection* which native speakers employ to accomplish the delivery of difficult content to others or to obfuscate the true meaning of an utterance” (2007: 156).

One type of indirection is illustrated by the euphemisms in examples (1) to (3). For some people, the reporting of a pregnancy (1), or a recent death (2) may represent “difficult content” and, rather than state the facts directly, they use conventional expressions for indirect reference. Example (3) contains an expression used by the military to talk about the unintended deaths of civilians during a military operation. By referring to *damage* rather than *deaths*, the speaker can downplay the seriousness of the effects of what happened. In all these cases (1-3), we have to go beyond the meaning of the expressions (e.g. the expression *a better place* in (2) could easily refer to something good such as a vacation) and think about what the speakers mean.

The proverbs in examples (4) to (6) also represent examples of indirection in expressing meaning. Example (4) is sometimes used in criticism of people who are never satisfied in their present circumstances, but is presented as a form of well-established wisdom rather than as a direct criticism. By using a proverb, the speaker would simply be expressing a general truth and not actually saying anything personal. Similarly, example (5) expresses a general observation that just wishing for something doesn’t make it happen and may be used as a criticism of people who seem to think otherwise. The implicit criticism is similar to that in example (4). However, in uttering the proverb, the speaker would not be saying something directly critical. Example (6) is also typically used in situations where a negative interpretation of someone’s behavior is being communicated. In this case, people who have complained or been critical of others are vulnerable to being criticized themselves and should not be complaining. This meaning is communicated, but not directly said, and represents another example of the type of invisible meaning studied in pragmatics.

For more, read:

Allan, K. and K. Burridge (1991) *Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language Used as Shield and Weapon* Oxford University Press

Winkler, E. (2007) *Understanding Language* (156-160) Continuum

## **10F Signs of sales**

In the following lists, the expressions are organized according to different possible underlying structures, with additional words added to make each description clearer.

“X” Sale = Someone is selling “X”

Bake(d) items Sale

Big Screen (TV) Sale

Colorful White (= sheets, pillowcases, etc.) Sale

Foundation (undergarments) Sale

Furniture Sale

Plant Sale

“Y” Sale = Someone is selling items on or near time of year “Y”

Back-to-School (= items to use or wear in school) Sale

Labor Day Sale

Spring Sale

“Z” Sale = Someone is selling items in or on location “Z”

Garage (next to house) Sale

Sidewalk (outside store) Sale

Tent (outside store) Sale

Yard (outside house) Sale

“W” Sale = Someone is selling items in a way (“W”) that gets rid of them quickly

Clearance Sale

Close-out Sale

Liquidation Sale

“V” Sale = Someone is selling items at a special (“V”) price

Dollar Sale

One Cent Sale

## 11 Discourse analysis (Study Questions)

- 1 Language beyond the sentence
- 2 Cohesion is the ties and connections that exist within texts. Coherence is the sense of everything fitting together in the interpretation of texts.
- 3 Speakers can mark completion points by asking a question or by pausing at the end of a completed syntactic structure such as a phrase or sentence.
- 4 Hedges are words or phrases used to indicate that we're not really sure that what we're saying is sufficiently correct or complete.
- 5 Quality, because the speaker indicates that he or she "may be mistaken."
- 6 Scripts are like dynamic schemas (or knowledge structures) in which a series of conventional actions takes place.

## 11 Discourse analysis (Tasks)

### 11A Intertextuality

Some discourse analysts study how connections are made when material from one genre of discourse is borrowed into another or one part of a text echoes another. This is intertextuality and is perhaps more familiar in the world of art, as Deborah Cameron explains:

Most works of art are not "original" in the sense of being totally unlike and unrelated to any other works of art; rather they are full of allusions to and echoes of the works that preceded them. These allusions create "intertextual" (between texts) relationships: in alluding to other texts, an author can transfer something of those texts' qualities and their cultural significance into his or her own text. (2001: 130)

When the focus is more specifically on language, intertextuality is defined more narrowly in this way: "Within a text, the inclusion of material from, or the allusion to, other texts" (Jackson, 2007: 76). So, intertextuality is the connection that exists between a text and all the other texts that are echoed in its form and content.

For more, read:

Cameron, D. (2001) *Working with Spoken Discourse* (130) Sage

Jackson, H. (2007) *Key Terms in Linguistics* (76) Continuum

### 11B Preference structure

Preference structure is one way of describing what is structurally typical in conversation. When one person in a conversation asks a question, the other person typically provides an answer. The answer response is "preferred" (with the meaning of "expected" rather than "liked"), whereas not giving an answer is "dispreferred." When an invitation is made, the preferred response is acceptance and the dispreferred response is refusal. When an assessment (*That's a beautiful painting*)

is expressed, the preferred response is agreement and the dispreferred is disagreement. People tend to produce preferred responses with ease (*Yeah, Okay, Right*), but seem to be obliged to avoid being very direct when they produce dispreferred responses. They hesitate, they act as if they're not sure, they apologize, they talk about obligations and other factors and generally make dispreferred responses much longer than preferred responses.

In the first example (i) *He* produces an invitation and *She* produces many indications of a dispreferred response. Without actually stating a refusal to accept, *She* will be interpreted as not accepting the invitation. In (ii) *He* produces an assessment or opinion and *She* eventually produces a disagreement (*I don't think so*) with that opinion after giving many indications that her response is a dispreferred one.

For more, read:

Cutting, J. (2008) *Pragmatics and Discourse* (2nd edition) Routledge

Yule, G. (1996) *Pragmatics* (78-81) Oxford University Press

### **11C Or something**

The phrase *or something* is an example of a general extender. Other general extenders are *or anything, or whatever, and stuff, and everything, and things (like that)*. According to Maryann Overstreet, the type of general extender that begins with *or* can be used by speakers "to suggest alternative possibilities" and thereby create "a hedge on the truth of the statement" (1999: 113). By using *or something* on both occasions, Crystal would seem to be adhering to the maxim of Quality and hedging her descriptions as being potentially inaccurate. Indeed, Crystal explicitly draws attention to her inability to attest to the truth of her description (*I dunno ... I don't even know if it was true*). By using *or something*, Crystal indicates that her description may be wrong and she doesn't want to ignore the Quality maxim, thereby signaling her ongoing commitment to the Co-operative Principle.

For more, read:

Overstreet, M. (1999) *Whales, Candlelight and Stuff Like That* (112-113) Oxford University Press

### 11D Cohesive ties

- (i) the fence - the fence - the fence - the fence - the fence  
the curling flower spaces - the flower tree - the flower tree  
I - I - I - we - we - I  
them - They - They - they - they - they - he - the other - They - they  
hitting - hitting - hit - hit  
the flag - the flag - the flag  
Luster - Luster - we - we - Luster  
went along the fence - went along the fence - went along the fence  
was hunting in the grass - was hunting in the grass  
Through the fence - through the fence
- (ii) “They” were hitting golf balls.

### 11E The surgeon’s son

The initial confusion for many people arises because the boy’s father seems to have been in two different places at the same time: out for a walk and working in the hospital. One background assumption in this confusion is that the *surgeon* and the *man* must refer to the same person because they both have the *boy* as their *son*. The socio-cultural assumption involved here may derive from the fact that a surgeon (historically) has typically been a man. If the reader does not rely on this assumption and easily brings to mind a woman in the role of surgeon, then there is no confusion. The larger socio-cultural schema in which gender works is explored in Chapter 20.

For more, read:

Widdowson, H. (2007) *Discourse Analysis* (32-33) Oxford University Press

### 11F Critical discourse analysis

- (i) Critical discourse analysis has been described as “an analytic framework for studying connections between language, power and ideology” (Fairclough, 1995: 23). Another description is offered by Brian Paltridge: “Critical discourse analysis explores the connections between the use of language and the social and political contexts in which it occurs. It explores issues such as gender, ethnicity, cultural difference, ideology and identity and how these are both constructed and reflected in texts. It also investigates ways in which language constructs and is constructed by social relationships” (2006: 179).
- (ii) According to van Dijk (1996) and Cameron (2001), the *Sun* newspaper report uses two metaphors (*invading army* and *tide*) to create a negative and frightening view of these immigrants. The use of vague high numbers (*tens of thousands*) adds to this frightening perspective. Dishonest and criminal behavior is attributed to



the immigrants through the verbs *sneak*, *deceive*, *forged* and *run away*. Another negative implication is that the immigrants who *work for a pittance*, *slaving behind bars* will be a threat to the economic status of people who are reading this newspaper. Other observations can be made relating to existing power structures (no mention is made of the employers who must be benefiting from the situation) and ideology (what does the image of Britain being invaded by an army suggest?)

For more, read:

Cameron, D. (2001) *Working with Spoken Discourse* (127-128) Sage

Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical Discourse Analysis* (23) Longman

Paltridge, B. (2006) *Discourse Analysis* (179) Continuum

van Dijk, T. (1996) "Discourse, power and access" In C. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (eds.) *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* (84-104) Routledge

## **12 Language and the brain (Study Questions)**

- 1 Wernicke's area
- 2 A malapropism
- 3 Aphasia is an impairment of language function due to localized brain damage that leads to difficulty in understanding and/or producing linguistic forms.
- 4 Broca's aphasia
- 5 In a dichotic listening test, a person sits with a set of earphones on and is given two different sounds simultaneously, one through each earphone.
- 6 The critical period is when the human brain is most ready to receive input and learn a particular language. It is generally believed to last through childhood until puberty.

## **12 Language and the brain (Tasks)**

### **12A Phrenology**

The asymmetry in the two hemispheres of the brain is directly tied to an enlargement in the left hemisphere associated with language areas. This connection between a physically special area and a functionally special ability lies at the core of the localization view, as described in the chapter. Some of the earliest ideas on localization (contrasting with the general view that language ability was evenly distributed throughout the brain or based somewhere else, such as the heart) were made by the German physiologist Franz Joseph Gall, working in Vienna around 1800. Unfortunately, Gall and his followers (notably Johann Spurzheim) went on to try to identify “bumps” on the skull and other aspects of skull shape and facial features as indicators of specific mental abilities (e.g. protruding eyes indicated a powerful memory). This diagnostic procedure (known as “cranioscopy” at first) became extremely popular in the nineteenth century in England and the USA as a pseudo-science called “phrenology,” with accompanying maps of the human head used to locate specific functions. If you find an example of one of these head diagrams (see Ingram, 2007: 13), you may be surprised to see “Language” located on the cheekbone under the left eye. At least it was located on the left side. Gall's ideas were known to Broca and may have prompted a more careful search for the location of language ability, but there is relatively little in the later study of language and the brain to support any conclusions based on the analysis of “bumps” on the human skull.

For more, read:

Ingram, J. (2007) *Neurolinguistics* (chapter 1) Cambridge University Press  
Uttal, W. (2001) *The New Phrenology* (chapter 3) MIT Press

## 12B The bathtub effect

The “bathtub effect” is a pattern first described by Brown and McNeill (1966). It is based on the image of someone lying in a bathtub with head and feet sticking out and the rest submerged. The head is the most prominent, then the feet, with the middle mostly out of view. This is the pattern discovered when we investigate memory for words. The beginning of the word, like the head sticking out of the bathtub, is the most likely to be remembered correctly, followed by the end of the word (like the feet sticking out), but the middle is the most difficult to recall. Examples that illustrate this effect are certain malapropisms, such as saying *anecdote* (when trying to remember “antidote”) or *cylinders* (for “syllables”) where the beginning and end of each word is accurate, but not the middle.

Examples from this chapter: *secant*, *sextet*, *sexton* (for “sextant”); *fire distinguisher* (for “fire extinguisher”); *medication* (for “meditation”); *monogamy* (for “monotony”)

For more, read:

Aitchison, J. (2003) *Words in the Mind* (3rd edition) (134-135) Blackwell

Brown, R. and D. McNeill (1966) “The ‘tip of the tongue’ phenomenon” *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 5: 325-337

## 12C Right hemisphere

Damage to the right hemisphere affects the processing of discourse, including conversation, and may result in totally inappropriate contributions being made to an interaction. Right brain damage interferes with intonation, stress and other aspects of what is generally called the prosody of speech (or more technically, the suprasegmentals). There are deficits in the processing of emotions associated with different types of utterances, resulting in what has been described as a “flat affect”, and a failure to use appropriate vocabulary to describe or convey emotion. In addition, non-verbal communicative gestures and appropriate facial expressions are either missing or poorly recognized. All these right brain aspects of language could be collectively described as the “paralinguistic features” of language use and it is these features that are generally most affected by damage to the right hemisphere.

For more, read:

Obler, L. and K. Gjerlow (1999) *Language and the Brain* (chapter 7) Cambridge University Press

Springer, S. and G. Deutsch (2001) *Left Brain, Right Brain* (6th edition) W. H. Freeman

## 12D Paragrammatism

Agrammatism is associated with Broca's aphasia, characterized by slow effortful speech and virtually no inflections or functional morphemes. Paragrammatism (sometimes described as paraphasia) is associated with Wernicke's aphasia, mainly because speech is fluent, with normal intonation, yet there seem to be word-finding difficulties, leading to a disrupted type of speech. It is believed that the word-finding difficulties, especially with nouns, make the speaker change the sentence structure in order to get round the problem, perhaps seeking another way to express the idea. In paragrammatism, the syntax of the sentence fragments is always normal (not simplified as in agrammatism), but there often seems to be no connection between one fragment and the next, making speech sound fluent, but incomprehensible.

The extract looks more like disrupted fluent speech than slow speech minus functional morphemes, so it is more likely to be characterized as paragrammatism.

For more, read:

Radford, A., M. Atkinson, D. Britain, H. Clahsen and A. Spencer (2009) *Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press

## 12E Jargon aphasia

The distinguishing characteristic of neologistic jargon aphasia is a large number of undecipherable word forms, produced fluently and apparently without the realization that they sound like nonsense words to anyone listening. This feature identifies it as a type of Wernicke's aphasia, which is confirmed by the fact that the syntax is not disrupted. There are complex sentence structures involving complements (e.g. *I would say that X*) and complex word order (e.g. *Do you know what that is?*). The morphology also seems largely unimpaired: plural -s is used on the nonsense words appropriately, past tense -ed is found in *missed*, present tense -s is in *makes* and perfect marker -en is in *have been*. The nonsense words may represent failed attempts to articulate specific target words which are not rejected as inappropriate forms by the speaker's own self-monitoring ability because of severe comprehension difficulties, as is typical in Wernicke's aphasia.

For more, read:

Buckingham, H. and A. Kertesz (1976) *Neologistic Jargon Aphasia* (21) Swets and Zeitlinger

Obler, L. and K. Gjerlow (1999) *Language and the Brain* (chapter 5) Cambridge University Press

## **12F CAT scans to PET scans**

A number of technological developments have made it possible to look “inside” the brain. Like sophisticated X-rays, CT or CAT (computerized axial tomography) scans provide images of the brain that allow investigators to locate lesions. With this technique, the state of the brain can be represented in a series of “slices” at a single point in time, but apart from identifying possible lesion sites that are interfering with language processing, it is of limited value in discovering how language is actually being processed.

In order to represent brain activity over a period of time, two other methods are used. Both of these methods measure increased blood-flow, relying on the observation that, as brain activity increases during some task, there is an increased need for oxygen-rich blood in order to perform the task. Magnetic resonance imaging or MRI uses the fact that there are magnetic properties in blood which change along with the amount of oxygen being carried by the blood. A functional MRI or fMRI can keep track of where increases in oxygen-rich blood occur in areas of the brain, allowing researchers to see where a particular activity (e.g. reading a sentence) results in greater activity in a particular area (e.g. the visual cortex). An alternative method is called positron emission topography, or PET, which generates computer images based on the activity of radioactive material injected into the bloodstream. As specific mental operations are performed, gamma ray detectors measure the amount of radioactivity (and hence blood-flow) in different parts of the brain. Bright colors indicate where most activity is taking place. What these colors mean exactly in functional terms is still an interpretive task for neurolinguists.

For more, read:

Restak, R. (2001) *The Secret Life of the Brain* (xvii-xx) Dana Press

Springer, S. and G. Deutsch (2001) *Left Brain, Right Brain* (chapter 3) (6th edition)  
W.H. Freeman

### **13 First language acquisition (Study Questions)**

- 1 Choose any four of these features: frequent questions, exaggerated intonation, extra loudness, slower tempo, longer pauses, treating actions and vocalizations as conversational turns, baby talk, simple sentence structures, a lot of repetition
- 2 By about four months, the child starts to be able to bring the back of the tongue into contact with the back of the palate, leading to the production of velar-like consonants /k/ and /g /. These combine with something close to a high back vowel /u/ to create what are heard as “cooing” sounds.
- 3 In the later babbling stage, at around 9-10 months.
- 4 During the tenth and eleventh months.
- 5 The more advanced form is most likely (a) because the negative element is placed before the verb inside the structure and not simply added to the beginning of the utterance, as it is in (b).
- 6 Overextension

### **13 First language acquisition (Tasks)**

#### **13A High amplitude sucking**

The “sucking behavior” of infants can be measured using a specially designed pacifier (or dummy or nipple) that contains a pressure transducer connected to a computer. The electrical signals from the transducer provide an indication of the rate at which the infant is sucking the pacifier. The infant is given the pacifier and placed in a comfortable reclining seat while sounds, typically speech syllables, are played. The rate at which the infant is sucking determines the frequency of repetition of the syllable (e.g. *ba–ba–ba*). This is used as the basic level. When the infant is presented with a different syllable (e.g. *ma–ma–ma*) and sucking rate increases, then clearly some kind of noticing or attention to stimulus has occurred in the infant’s perception. Over time with the new sound, the sucking rate decreases back to the basic level, signaling familiarity with that sound. Then a different syllable type can be presented and either the rate increases or it doesn’t, signaling whether the infant is treating the stimulus as a new sound or not. This technique has also been used to measure the effect of different voices and different types of intonation. By using this technique, researchers have been able to show that “high amplitude sucking” (HAS) is an indication of the infant’s ability to discriminate between certain types of sounds at different points during the first few months, long before they can produce any of those different sounds.

For more, read:

Clark, E. (2009) *First Language Acquisition* (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press

Jusczyk, P. (1997) *The Discovery of Spoken Language* MIT Press

### 13B Typical sequence of morphemes

| Stage | Morpheme               | Examples                                       |
|-------|------------------------|--|
| 1     | -ing                   | cat <u>sitting</u> , mommy <u>reading</u> book |
| *2    | in                     | <u>in</u> bag, not <u>in</u> that              |
| *3    | on                     | <u>on</u> bed, that <u>on</u> top              |
| 4     | plural -s              | <u>boys</u> , <u>cats</u>                      |
| *5    | irregular past tense   | he <u>came</u> , it <u>went</u> away           |
| *6    | possessive -s          | <u>Karen's</u> bed, <u>mommy's</u> book        |
| 7     | verb "to be" (is, are) | this <u>is</u> no, you <u>are</u> look         |
| 8     | articles (a, the)      | <u>a</u> cat, <u>the</u> dog                   |
| 9     | past tense -ed         | it <u>opened</u> , he <u>walked</u>            |
| 10    | present tense -s       | it <u>comes</u> , she <u>knows</u>             |

\*Note that stages 2 and 3 can be reversed, similarly stages 5 and 6.

For more, read:

Brown, R. (1973) *A First Language* (table 41) Harvard University Press

O'Grady, W. (2005) *How Children Learn Language* (94) Cambridge University Press

### 13C MLU

Mean Length of Utterance (or MLU) is a method of measuring the length and grammatical complexity of an utterance, originally devised by Brown (1973), and used in many studies since. To calculate MLU, add up all the content words and the inflections used in each utterance, then divide the total by the number of utterances. For example, in *no big box*, there are three elements; in *daddy eat red apple*, there are four elements; in *daddy eat + -s apple + -s*, there are five elements; in *no eat + -ing that*, there are four elements; and in *that mommy + -'s book*, there are four elements. That's a total of twenty elements in five utterances, which gives us an MLU of 4 in this small sample.

For more, read:

Brown, R. (1973) *A First Language* (table 7) Harvard University Press

Karmiloff, K. and A. Karmiloff-Smith (2001) *Pathways to Language* (101) Harvard University Press

### 13D Developmental stages

Child Z seems to be at the earliest stage, forming negatives by simply putting *No* at the beginning and forming questions by adding *Where* to the beginning of an expression or uttering a short expression (*Have some?*) with, most likely, rising intonation. The examples seem typical of the telegraphic speech stage, with a functional morpheme (*in*), but no inflectional morphemes (i.e. not "momma's boot") in evidence yet.

Child X is using the negative form *can't* in front of the verb and beginning a question with *Why*, both typical Stage 2 features. He or she still appears to be using rising intonation to form questions (*You want eat?*) and is not yet using inversion in questions. The *-ing* form may be evidence of morphological development, and more complex sentence structures, using subject-verb-object, indicate that Child X is probably at a more advanced stage than Child Z.

Child Y is the most advanced of the three, with a negative form (*didn't*), in the appropriate position, and a question structure (inversion in *Does lions*) typical of Stage 3. This child is also using more inflectional morphemes (*dogs*, *goed*, *Does*, *lions*) than the other two.

### 13E Boys and girls

The answer to this question may vary according to the culture that those boys and girls are acquiring at the same time as they're starting to speak. In the United States, according to Apel and Masterson (2001), there is not a lot of difference in how boys and girls develop the basic elements of language through the first four years. In studies carried out in the USA, a few differences have been noted. For example, girls tend to have clearer pronunciation earlier than boys, use more nouns at an earlier stage than boys and show a preference for games in which objects are named. In play behavior, boys tend to make noises (for cars, machines) as they create action events whereas girls tend to create social events (with stuffed animals, dolls) in which words are used (rather than machine noises) and questions are created. Some of these observed behaviors may simply be a reflection of what parents and other caregivers do with girls versus boys.

Speech directed to boys and girls seems to differ in some ways. Mothers tend to talk more to girls, produce longer and more complex utterances and ask more questions where the answer isn't tied to what's happening there and then. With boys, they tend to use talk to give directions more often, to focus on the immediate context, especially in play situations, with the result that the language addressed to boys is more about what's happening there and then. However, the most general observation is that there are many more similarities than differences in the first language acquisition of boys and girls.



For more, read:

Apel, K. and J. Masterson (2001) *Beyond Baby Talk* (chapter 5) Three Rivers Press

### **13F Rational versus empirical perspectives**

#### **Rational**

Acquisition takes place along a predetermined path.

Children begin life with some knowledge of the possible units of language.

Children learn to say things unrelated to input.

Language learning is independent of other kinds of learning.

New linguistic knowledge is acquired very quickly.

Speech is perceived from the start as distinct from any other physical stimuli.

There are only a few fixed possibilities of language structures to learn.

#### **Empirical**

Acquisition proceeds in a piecemeal fashion, building on what is already acquired.

General learning mechanisms account for language learning.

It takes time to integrate new linguistic information with existing knowledge.

There are many possible language structures to be learned.

There is no initial distinction between speech and any other physical stimuli.

There is no pre-programmed knowledge of language.

What children learn to say is directly related to input.

For more, read:

Lust, B. (2006) *Child Language* (70-71) Cambridge University Press

## **14 Second language acquisition/learning (Study Questions)**

- 1 The ability of an adult L2 learner to master aspects of the written language, but to speak with a distinct L1 accent, as exemplified by the writer Joseph Conrad.
- 2 Mathematics is learned through a conscious process of accumulating knowledge, typically in an institutional setting. It is not acquired, because ability doesn't gradually develop without conscious effort, as in the development of an L1 by young children.
- 3 Choose four of these: insufficient time is devoted to the process (a few hours each week rather than the constant interaction experienced as a child); insufficient focus on the process (adults have a lot of other things to do and think about, unlike very young children); insufficient incentive (adults already know a language and can use it for their communicative needs); the "critical period" for language acquisition has passed; affective factors, such as self-consciousness, create more inhibitions for an adult than a young child.
- 4 Positive transfer is when the learner tries to use knowledge about a feature of the L1 that is similar to the L2. Negative transfer is when the learner tries to use an L1 feature that is really different from the L2.
- 5 An interlanguage fossilizes when it contains many forms that do not match the target language and no further progress is being made.
- 6 Grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence.

## **14 Second language acquisition/learning (Tasks)**

### **14A Input and intake**

The term "input" is used for language data that the learner is exposed to. However, input is only what is available, not what receives attention, and hence can only be treated as potential data that a learner might use. As pointed out in the chapter, input must first be comprehensible, so that if learners can't understand the meaning of the language they're exposed to, it remains potential, but unusable, input. Not only do learners have to understand the material in the input, they also have to pay attention to, or "notice," some specific part(s) of the utterance in order to process it actively. According to Schmidt, "noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input to intake for learning" (1994: 17). That is, there must be some active processing of part of the language data by learners in order to "take in" specific features of the data. It is this processing that changes input to intake. In an analogy made by Sharwood-Smith, "input is the goods that are presented to the customer ... intake is what is actually bought and taken away from the shop" (1994: 8).

For more, read:

Schmidt, R. (1994) "Deconstructing consciousness in search of useful definitions for applied linguistics" *AILA Review* 11: 11-26

Sharwood-Smith, M. (1994) *Second Language Learning* Routledge

### **14B The output hypothesis**

For many years, researchers focused almost exclusively on how input, or modified input of different kinds, might contribute to improved L2 learning. More recently, some attention has shifted to the role of output, that is, the language produced by the learner. Swain (2005) has argued that it is when they are producing language (output) that learners become much more likely to develop certain skills in the L2. When learners try to produce utterances in the L2, they are more likely to notice gaps in their knowledge and realize what it is they need to know, making them more active learners. In many ways, the need to produce language creates a stronger motivation to learn ways of accomplishing accurate production. It is only through output, for example, that learners can develop more fluency in using the L2.

An additional benefit of output is that learners can test hypotheses they may have formulated (consciously or unconsciously) about how the language works. By trying to create utterances, the learner has to try to choose appropriate words, arrange them in appropriate structures and articulate them with appropriate sounds. The learners are "pushed" to be more accurate, especially in syntax, which may not become very well developed if only comprehension of input is involved. As learners try to put all the utterance components together for a listener, they are also more likely to get feedback on what is working well (nodding, comprehension) and what is not working very well (puzzlement, questions) in their L2 use. Indeed, the process involved in a learner producing an utterance, having a listener ask for clarification or suggest an alternative word or phrase, prompting the learner to produce an improved version of that utterance is now considered one of the best ways to develop greater proficiency in an L2.

For more, read:

Mitchell, R. and F. Myles (2004) *Second Language Learning Theories* (chapter 6) (2nd edition) Arnold

Swain, M. (2005) "The output hypothesis: theory and research" In E. Hinkel (ed.) *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (471-484) Routledge

### 14C The stylistic continuum

The idea of a stylistic continuum in interlanguage comes from the work of Elaine Tarone. She noted that there was a lot of variability in the way learners used their L2, sometimes having more accurate pronunciation and grammar than at other times. This variability clearly represents a problem for researchers trying to analyze learner language and hence for studies in second language acquisition that depend on directly comparable samples from all learners. Tarone proposed that learners have a continuum of different styles of using the L2, from a “careful style,” with a lot of attention to individual words and being correct, through a range of other styles to a “vernacular style,” which is used in casual conversation, with less attention devoted to producing correct forms. In her research, Tarone demonstrated that learners could improve their pronunciation of certain difficult forms when reading words in isolation (i.e. using their careful style) to a greater extent than when they were using their vernacular style. These findings not only show that variability is inevitable in interlanguage use, but also have obvious implications for teaching decisions about what kinds of activities might be most beneficial for students.

For more, read:

Ellis, R. (1997) *Second Language Acquisition* (chapter 4) Oxford University Press

Tarone, E. (2005) “Speaking in a second language” In E. Hinkel (ed.) *Handbook of Research in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (485-502) Routledge

### 14D Contrastive analysis

Contrastive analysis dates back to the 1950s and is a method of comparing two languages in fine detail in order to discover those differences between them that might lead to difficulties and errors for learners. By comparing and contrasting two languages (e.g. Spanish and English), we can often see why certain errors are made.

- (a) *\*the tie black*: English typically has adjectives before nouns (*the black tie*), but in Spanish, adjectives usually follow nouns, so *\*the tie black* is a Spanish construction used with English words.
- (b) In English, only the noun has a plural inflection, not the accompanying adjective (e.g. *modern languages*), but in Spanish, adjectives also have plural inflections to match their nouns, so *\*modernes languages* is another Spanish pattern, used with English words.
- (c) In Spanish, the negative form *no* can be placed before the verb, resulting in *\*no understand*, but in English, the negative must be attached to an auxiliary verb (*He doesn't understand* or *He can't understand*). The auxiliary verb forms and uses in English are difficult for all learners.
- (d) In English, it is common to create noun phrases with two nouns together in a

compound, as in *golf ball*. Spanish expresses this relationship with a different type of structure, as illustrated by *\*ball of golf*. A similar problem has been identified in the use of the Spanish possessive structure, as illustrated by *the car of my friend*, in contrast to the preferred structure in English *my friend's car*.

(e) In many Spanish expressions, the subject is not expressed (*\*was raining*), whereas every English verb must have a subject, even a meaningless one, as in *it was raining*.

(f) The word *usually* is an adverb and, in English, adverbs are not typically used between a verb (*eat*) and its object (*eggs*). That restriction doesn't exist in Spanish, so the structure with *usually* between the verb and its object will not sound strange to Spanish ears. Adverbs can be used in several different positions in English, but just not between the verb and its object. (*Usually I eat ...*, *I usually eat ...*, *... for breakfast usually*).

For more, read:

Saville-Troike, M. (2006) *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* (chapter 3) Cambridge University Press

Swan, M. and B. Smith (2001) *Learner English* (90-112) (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press

#### **14E Interlanguage grammar**

This speaker uses plural *-s* in these examples: *the streets, the houses, villages, two horses, seven days*.

He doesn't use plural *-s* in these examples: *How many brother, a few day, a lot of animal, both my friend*.

It seems that when there is a quantifier expression (*many, a few, a lot of, both*) with the noun, the speaker doesn't use plural *-s*. Mostly that results in L2 errors, except in the phrase *many people*, in example (e), where the noun is already plural and isn't normally used with the *-s* inflection in the target L2. So, the apparent accuracy of the phrase *many people* may actually be based on an inaccurate rule for English.

The speaker seems to put plural *-s* only on nouns when there aren't any quantifier phrases or when there are simple numbers before the noun. This would seem to be a temporary rule that is partially in line with the target and will probably be adjusted to apply to noun phrases with quantifiers after more experience in using the language.

For more, read:

Gass, S. and L. Selinker (2001) *Second Language Acquisition* (chapter 2) (2nd edition) Lawrence Erlbaum

#### **14F Communication strategies**

1(b), 2(e), 3(a), 4(d), 5(f), 6(c)

Least effective is 4(d) because communication stops. The pair in 5(f) and 6(c) may also be ineffective sometimes because they make the listener guess the word or concept that the speaker has in mind. The form in 1(b) seems to be moving in the direction of better communication because it provides a more specific clue to what the speaker has in mind. It also tries to make the communication collaborative. The forms in 2(e) and 3(a) represent other ways of offering more specific information about what the speaker has in mind. In these cases, the speaker is taking more responsibility for the success of the communication.

For more, read:

Tarone, E. and G. Yule (1989) *Focus on the Language Learner* (chapter 9) Oxford University Press

## **15 Gestures and sign languages (Study Questions)**

- 1 Emblems are signals such as "thumbs up" (= things are good) that function like fixed phrases and do not depend on speech.
- 2 Iconics are gestures that in some way look like the meaning of (part of) what is said, as in tracing a square with the hands while talking about a small box. Deictics are gestures used to point to things or people while talking.
- 3 An alternate sign language is a system of hand signals for limited communication in a context where speech cannot be used.
- 4 Signed English is essentially English sentences, sometimes abbreviated, using signs as vocabulary. ASL is a separate language, with many structures that are different from English.
- 5 The parameter of shape has "flat hand" as a prime and the parameter of orientation has "palm up" as a prime.
- 6 (i) Did it happen last night?  
(ii) The boy isn't/wasn't walking with pleasure/enjoyment

## **15 Gestures and sign languages (Tasks)**

### **15A Pointing gestures**

The most common pointing gesture involves the index finger sticking straight out with the rest of the fingers curled into the down-facing palm of the hand. This is sometimes called the "canonical" form of pointing because it is used by speakers of many different languages in different parts of the world. It is also commonly observed in very young children beginning around 10-11 months of age, well before spoken language develops, as documented in Butterworth (2003). Later, those children have to learn about social constraints on the use of pointing gestures in some contexts (e.g. "Don't do that, Timmy. It's rude to point at people.") and their non-use in other contexts (considered extremely offensive among Ewe speakers in West Africa if done with the left hand).

There are other pointing gestures, such as middle finger pointing and also combined index and middle finger pointing. The whole hand, with fingers extended (called "wide hand" or "open hand" pointing) is also used. It has been suggested that open hand pointing is associated more with indicating an idea or abstract concept in contrast to the physical object or location associated with index finger pointing. The thumb, outstretched from a fist hand shape, is also used, typically to point to something to the side or behind the speaker. Kendon (2004) also describes pointing gestures involving head or eye movement which are more subtle and seem designed to be less conspicuous than hand gestures.

A quite different type of pointing is done with the mouth. In its most distinctive form, this pointing gesture is produced with a protruding lower lip and has been

documented among many groups in different parts of the world, as described in Wilkins (2003). There are other pointing gestures, involving an elbow or a foot, for example, that are used in special circumstances.

For more, read:

Butterworth, G. (2003) "Pointing is the royal road to language for babies" In S. Kita (ed.) *Pointing: Where Language, Culture and Cognition Meet* (9-33) Lawrence Erlbaum

Kendon, A. (2004) *Gesture* (chapter 10) Cambridge University Press

Wilkins, D. (2003) "Why pointing with the index finger is not a universal (in sociocultural and semiotic terms)" In S. Kita (ed.) *Pointing: Where Language, Culture and Cognition Meet* (171-215) Lawrence Erlbaum

### **15B Gesture and self-expression**

Most studies of gesture have found that speakers use more gestures when they can see their listeners than when they can't. In one study (Krauss *et al.*, 1995), when speakers were describing abstract shapes, they averaged fifteen gestures per minute when they could see the listener and 12 gestures per minute when they could not. It is clear that gestures are used at a higher rate when a communicative partner is present.

However, the interesting observation is that people produce quite a lot of gestures even when it is obvious that no one else can see those gestures. This would suggest that, when people speak, they produce gestures in an automatic way that is part of how they express themselves and not just for the benefit of a communicative partner. This is supported by a lot of anecdotal evidence from observations of people gesturing while talking on the phone and even when they are talking to themselves.

Pursuing this observation, researchers have investigated whether blind people also use gestures when speaking. According to Iverson and Goldin-Meadow (2001), individuals who have been blind from birth produce the same type and number of gestures as sighted people when performing similar tasks. This finding is quite remarkable because those individuals have never seen gestures performed by others, nor have they seen any reactions by others to their gestures. Evidence of this type leads Goldin-Meadow (2003) to propose that gesture is integral to speaking and develops as part of self-expression. Gesture seems to have a basic within-speaker function, benefiting the speaker primarily, which can be deployed at a higher rate when it is used with more of a between-speaker function.

For more, read:

Goldin-Meadow, S. (2003) *Hearing Gesture* (chapter 10) Harvard University Press

Iverson, J. and S. Goldin-Meadow (2001) "The resilience of gesture in talk: Gesture



in blind speakers and listeners” *Developmental Science* 4: 416-422

Krauss, R., R. Dushay, Y. Chen and F. Rauscher (1995) “The communicative value of conversational hand gestures” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 31: 533-553

### **15C The telephone and the deaf**

Although many others contributed to the development of what became known as the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell is now generally credited with the invention. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1847, A. G. Bell (as he called himself) studied at Edinburgh and London Universities before becoming a teacher of the deaf, using an early system of phonetic description called “Visible Speech.” This system had been invented by his father, Alexander Melville Bell, also a teacher of the deaf, in order to help deaf people (including his wife) “see” how sounds were formed.

While A. G. Bell was teaching in Boston, he was conducting research on acoustics and other ways to help deaf students recognize speech sounds. He developed a device that reduced speech to sound waves which could be replicated using an electric current of fluctuating intensity and frequency. When that electrical signal was transmitted through wire to a similar device, it carried speech and became the first telephone. That was in 1876. The next year the Bell Telephone Company was founded and the inventor became a wealthy man.

A. G. Bell, who had married one of his deaf students, remained very active in deaf education, donating money to schools and institutions for the deaf. He argued strongly against the use of sign language in those schools and was one of the most ardent supporters of oralism.

For more, read:

Shulman, S. (2008) *The Telephone Gambit: Chasing Alexander Graham Bell’s Secret*  
W. W. Norton

### **15D Oralism**

The term “oralism” was created to contrast with “manualism,” the practice of teaching deaf children using sign language. The proponents of oralism wanted deaf children to learn the English language and to use it instead of all those “gestures.” The late nineteenth century, when oralism was most aggressively promoted, was a period when the English language was viewed as inherently superior, for educational purposes, by many people in Britain and the United States. In Victorian Britain, languages such as Welsh and Scottish Gaelic were banned from schools and the Queen’s English had to be taught. In the USA, indigenous languages were also excluded from schools in favor of English. During the same period, a large-scale influx of non-English-speaking immigrants was also seen by

some as a threat to the established order. That established order was largely based on Protestant values of hard work in adversity, a stoic resilience despite afflictions and difficulties, and a strong belief in the righteousness of one's mission. A lot of gesturing was associated with others, especially foreigners, and was viewed negatively as reflecting an inability to express oneself clearly through the English language. There was little understanding of, or interest in, the existence of Sign as a natural language. As a result, the "gestures" of deaf children were banned in their schools where the English language had to be used as the medium of education. Oralism was the method used to enforce this policy, which was based on ideology rather than effectiveness.

For more, read:

Baynton, D. (1996) *Forbidden Signs: American Culture and the Campaign Against Sign* University of Chicago Press

### **15E Prelinguistic and postlinguistic hearing impairment**

The key element in the distinction between prelinguistic and postlinguistic hearing impairment is "age-at-onset." In the standard view, if the age-at-onset of hearing impairment is before the age of two, and the child has hearing parents, then there is a greater impact on the development of language skills and other later skills such as literacy. In a more restricted view, the age-at-onset is considered to be prior to twelve months for determining a prelinguistic condition. So, a prelinguistic impairment is one that exists before one to two years of age and a postlinguistic impairment is one that occurs at some point after that stage.

Other relevant factors are degree of hearing impairment, which can determine how much or how little infants are able to process the linguistic input they receive, and the presence of other disabilities. According to Paul (2009), about a third of children with hearing impairment also have other disabilities that can also have an impact on the development of language skills.

For more, read:

Paul, P. (2009) *Language and Deafness* (4th edition) Jones and Bartlett

### **15F Facial expressions**

According to Stewart *et al.* (2006), in signing all these sentences, eye contact would first have to be established, then maintained throughout the communication. In (1), which is a yes/no question, the question function is signaled by raised eyebrows and the head tilted slightly forward. Example (2) is a wh-question, expecting some specific information in the answer, and so the eyebrows aren't just raised, they are pushed together and furrowed, with the head tilted slightly forward. Example (3) is

a topic-comment structure where the topic part (“You like jazz”) is accompanied by raised eyebrows, head tilted slightly forward, followed by a slight pause before the comment part (“I’m surprised”), which may be signed with a neutral facial expression or with eyes opened wider to convey more of the emotion in “surprised.” Example (4) is a conditional sentence which in ASL can be introduced by a sign conventionally translated as “suppose.” With or without “suppose,” the first part (“If I miss the bus”) is typically accompanied by raised eyebrows, head tilted slightly to one side and the upper body bending forward. After a slight pause, the second part (“I’ll be late for work”) is signed with either a neutral facial expression or lowered eyebrows and down-turned mouth, conveying the emotion of unhappiness. In both examples (3) and (4), where there are two parts, the final sign of the first part is often held in place slightly longer before continuing.

For more, read:

Stewart, D., E. Stewart and J. Little (2006) *American Sign Language the Easy Way* (2nd edition) Barron’s Educational

## 16 Writing (Study Questions)

- 1 Writing can be defined as the symbolic representation of language through the use of graphic signs.
- 2 In a logographic system, the symbols represent words and, in a phonographic system, the symbols represent sounds.
- 3 In rebus writing, the symbol for one entity comes to be used as the symbol for the sound of the spoken word used to refer to that entity. That symbol is then used whenever that sound occurs in any words.
- 4 It's basically logographic because each symbol represents a word ("See you at nine"), though there is a phonographic element in the way *c* and *u* represent the sounds of the pronunciation of "see" and "you."
- 5 The Cyrillic alphabet
- 6 China

## 16 Writing (Tasks)

### 16A Boustrophedon writing

The term "boustrophedon" means "as the ox turns" in a reference to how a field was plowed at the time. It describes a way of writing in which each successive line goes in the opposite direction. That is, if you write the first line from right-to-left, you continue on the next line from left-to-right, then go from right-to-left on the next line, and so on. In some versions all symbols faced the same way, but in other versions, some of the symbols changed (∃, E) in accordance with the direction of writing.

This pattern of writing appears in many early scripts dated between 2,000 and 3,000 years ago, including those of the Phoenicians and the early Greeks. The stabilization of writing direction in Semitic languages settled on a fixed right-to-left direction, as in modern Arabic, whereas in those scripts derived from Greek, the direction became fixed as left-to-right, as in modern European languages.

For more, read:

Comrie, B., S. Matthews and M. Polinsky (eds.) (2003) *The Atlas of Languages* (204-206) Facts On File Inc.

### 16B Abjads and abugidas

Abjad is the Arabic word for "alphabet" and this term is used in the description of writing systems to refer to scripts that are based on a consonantal alphabet. The term is derived from the first four letters of the older Arabic abjad (alif, ba, jeem, dal). The Semitic scripts, used for Arabic, Aramaic and Hebrew, which developed

from the older Phoenician writing system all used abjads.

When the letters of the Semitic abjads were adopted for languages such as Amharic in north Africa, they were modified with small marks to indicate vowels. This type of script is known as an abugida, a term formed from the first four symbols of the Ge'ez script, used in Ethiopia. Similar modifications to the earlier Semitic scripts (additional marks for vowels on some consonant symbols) resulted in abugidas being developed as writing systems throughout south Asia, as in the Brahmic scripts of India.

For more, read:

Daniels, P. and W. Bright (eds.) (1996) *The World's Writing Systems* (chapter 1) Oxford University Press

Rogers, H. (2005) *Writing Systems: A Linguistic Approach* (chapter 7) Blackwell

## 16C Hangul

Hangul (or Han'gŭl or Hankul) is literally "Han (= Korean) writing." It is a writing system that was designed specially for the Korean language by King Sejong and introduced in the years 1443-1446 as "Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People." It retains aspects of Chinese writing, but is quite unique in its combination of alphabetic and syllabic writing. It is an alphabetic system, with distinct symbols or letters for consonants and vowels. These letters are combined to form syllables inside squarish blocks, reminiscent of how Chinese characters are written.

The symbols for consonants are based on distinctions in the place and manner of articulation. For example, the /k/ sound is depicted as ㄱ, representing the way in which the back of the tongue rises to meet the velum in producing that sound. The consonant /s/ is treated as a dental articulation, represented by the sign ㅅ, reportedly depicting a tooth. Vowels are represented by lines, some with small distinguishing marks. They are either vertical, as in ㅣ for /i/ and ㅏ for /a/, or horizontal, as in ㅡ for /u/ and ㅗ for /o/.

When a consonant and a vowel are written as a syllable, they are combined in a square-like block. Vertical vowels follow the consonant, as in ㄱㅏ /ka/, while horizontal vowels are written below the consonant, as in ㅏㅗ /so/, or ㄱㅗㅏㅣ /koki/. This highly original writing system has been described as an alphabetic syllabary.

For more, read:

Coulmas, F. (2003) *Writing Systems* (156-167) Cambridge University Press

King, R. (1996) "Korean writing" In P. Daniels and W. Bright (eds.) *The World's Writing Systems* (218-227) Oxford University Press

## 16D Texting

The most distinctive characteristic of texting (or txtng) is large-scale abbreviation, typically through the use of consonants in a word, missing out vowels, as in msg (“message”). This is a similar convention to that found in consonantal alphabets. The rdr of the msg fills in what is missing to arrive a conventional interpretation.

Another convention is the use of initialisms where only the first letter of each word is written, as in swdyt and btw. This convention has a long tradition in English, evidenced in forms such as ps (from *postscript*, literally “written after”) or UFO (“unidentified flying object”). (See Chapter 5 for more examples.) Technically, each letter in initialisms could be considered logographic because each one represents a word. Of course, this convention will result in different forms in different languages so, at the end of a German text message, bs represents *bis später* (“until later”).

The convention illustrated in forms like ne1, b42moro and cul8r is one in which letters or numbers are used to represent sounds in the pronunciation of words (c = “see”) or parts of words (8 = “ate”). As described in the chapter, this is a type of rebus writing which could also be described as phonographic writing, using a combination of syllabic and alphabetic symbols.

The symbol ;-), commonly used for “wink,” relies on a different writing convention. Forms like these are generally called “smileys” and they seem to depend on a recognition of the visual image of someone smiling or winking, so they must originally have been pictographic. In contemporary usage, some of these forms now seem to be used to communicate feelings and ideas and might best be described as ideographic. They are more common in other forms of electronic communication such as instant messaging.

For more, read:

Crystal, D. (2008) *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8* Oxford University Press

## 16E What does X mean?

In examples (1) – (4), X is used as a symbol with a function, but without meaning.

(1) *The twenty-fourth letter of the English alphabet is X.*

(2) *On the map was a large X and the words “You are here.”*

(3) *Most of the older men were illiterate at that time and put X where their signature was required.*

(4) *Indicate your choice by putting X next to only one of the following options.*

In examples (5) – (9), there are different general meanings or concepts associated with X in different contexts, but the uses are not strictly logographic. In example (5), X is used as a symbol meaning something conceptual like “unknown number or quantity,” but it is not being used as a word. In (6), the general meaning is “not

allowed” and in (7), it is “not correct.” In (8), X (or XX or XXX) is used to convey a complex culturally embedded concept that might be expressed as: “contains (a lot of) sexually explicit and/or extremely violent scenes.” In example (9), X is conventionally used in this type of reporting to refer to “a person whose name is not being provided or is not known.”

(5) *He wrote  $X - Y = 6$  on the blackboard.*

(6) *There was an image of a dog with a large X across it.*

(7) *The teacher put X beside one of my sentences and I don't know why.*

(8) *We can't take the children with us to see that film because it's rated X.*

(9) *The witness known as Ms. X testified that she had heard several gunshots.*

In (10) – (12), X has more specific meanings and seems to function logographically. That is, X has the same role as a word, with a particular meaning in the context. Example 10 is from biology where X designates one type of structure in the central part of cells that carries genetic information. In (11), X (or XXX) means “kiss(es)” and in (12), X means “ten” (in Roman numbers), so that the expression XX functions as a word (“twenty”).

(10) *Aren't there two X chromosomes in the cells of females?*

(11) *At the bottom of the letter, after her signature, she put X three times.*

(12) *In the XXth century, Britain's collapsing empire brought new immigrants.*

For more, read:

Robinson, A. (2007) *The Story of Writing* (2nd edition) (41) Thames and Hudson

## 16F Yukagir letter

In the traditional account (Jensen, 1969: 44-45), this letter is described as a type of “idea-writing.” The woman (c) is trying to communicate her concerns to her departing sweetheart (b), letting him know that her thoughts (represented by the curling lines at the top, coming from her head) are in his direction. However, the lines of connection between them (from the top of (c) to the top of (b)) are intersected by a line from the top of figure (a). Figure (a) is dressed differently, representing a Russian woman who seems to be in a developing relationship (and partial household structure) with (b), while (c) is alone in her household structure. The two smaller figures on the left of the Russian woman represent children, or possible children, of the new relationship. The figure (d) on the right is another Yukagir man whose thoughts (curling line from his head) are moving in the direction of (c). In this analysis, these details are not simply pictures (not pictographic), nor do they represent words (not logographic). They are ideographic.

An alternative analysis presents a case that this isn't writing at all. DeFrancis (1989) argues that the original material was carved on birch bark (probably by a woman) while others watched and talked about what was being carved. It wasn't

created as a letter, so it wasn't "written" to anyone. In this alternative interpretation, we have something that is more like pictorial art than writing.

For more, read:

DeFrancis, J. (1989) *Visible Speech* University of Hawai'i Press

Jensen, H. (1969) *Sign, Symbol and Script* (translated by G. Unwin) (3rd edition)

Putnam's

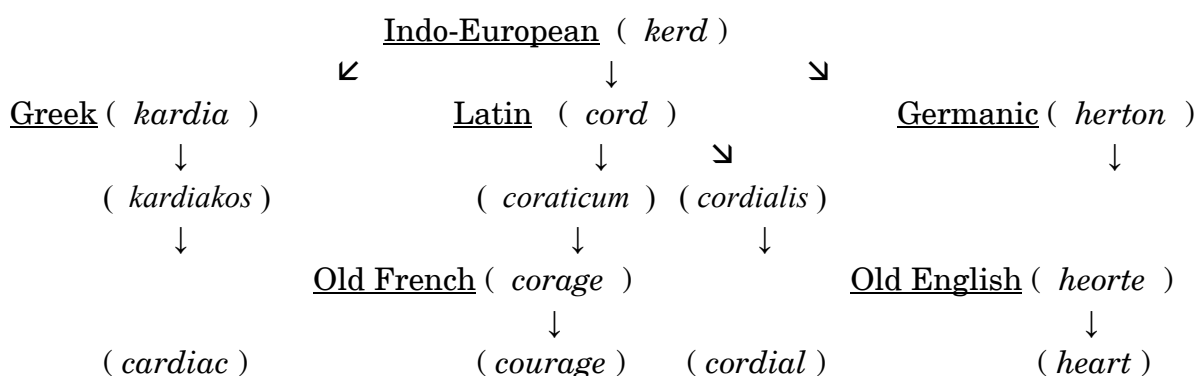


## 17 Language history and change (Study Questions)

- 1 Cognates are words in different languages that are similar in form and meaning.
- 2 Bengali and Urdu; Breton and Welsh; Czech and Ukrainian; English and Swedish; French and Portuguese; Kurdish and Pashto
- 3 Most likely proto-forms: *cosa*, *capo*, *capra* (initial [k], voiceless [p] → voiced [b])
- 4 From Old English: *calf*, *deer*, *ox*, *pig*. From French: *bacon*, *beef*, *veal*, *venison*
- 5 (a) metathesis (b) prothesis (c) epenthesis (d) sound loss (e) epenthesis (f) metathesis
- 6 Narrowing of meaning

## 17 Language history and change (Tasks)

### 17A Word histories



For more, read:

Davies, P. (1981) *Roots: Family Histories of Familiar Words* (70-71) McGraw-Hill

### 17B Language families

Four of the languages can be included in the Indo-European family tree, with their branches in brackets: Catalan (Italic), Faroese (Germanic), Marathi (Indic) and Serbian (Slavic).

The others, with their family trees in brackets are: Chamorro (Austronesian), Georgian (Caucasian), Hebrew (Semitic or Afro-Asiatic), Hungarian (Uralic or Finno-Ugric), Tamil (Dravidian) and Turkish (Altaic).

For more, read:

Crystal, D. (2005) *How Language Works* (chapters 57-58) Penguin

## 17C Grimm's Law

Indo-European consonants underwent a series of regular sound changes in the development of the Germanic branch that did not happen in the Italic branch (and other branches). As a descendant of the Germanic branch, English has a number of words that show the results of the sound changes when compared to French and Latin words (both in the Italic branch). Grimm's Law is essentially a small set of rules that show how most of those changes took place in a regular pattern.

Voiceless stops such as [p], [t] and [k] became voiceless fricatives [f], [θ] and [h] in the Germanic branch, but not in the Italic branch, as illustrated by the pairs *pater/father*, *tres/three* and *canis/hound*. Voiced stops such as [d] and [g] became voiceless stops [t] and [k], as in the pairs *duo/two* and *genus/kin*. These are examples of the regular patterns of change described by Grimm's Law and can still be found in the differences between first consonants of the French/English cognates *deux/two* and *trois/three*. The basic set of changes is presented here, with Indo-European consonants on the left and Germanic consonants on the right.

|                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| voiceless stops /p, t, k/           | → voiceless fricatives /f, θ, h/ |
| voiced stops /b, d, g/              | → voiceless stops /p, t, k/      |
| voiced aspirated stops /bh, dh, gh/ | → voiced stops /b, d, g/         |

The circular nature of these sound change rules is considered to be a good feature.

For more, read:

- Aitchison, J. (2001) *Language Change: Progress or Decay?* (chapter 13) (3rd edition)  
Cambridge University Press
- Schendl, H. (2001) *Historical Linguistics* (chapter 2) Oxford University Press

## 17D Grammaticalization

In historical studies, grammaticalization is the process by which a form with lexical meaning (a lexical morpheme) develops into one with grammatical function (a grammatical or inflectional morpheme). (See Chapter 6 for more information on these terms.) Well-documented examples in English are the auxiliary verbs. In Shakespeare's time, *will* was a verb with a lexical meaning similar to *want*, as in *What wilt thou?* (= "What do you want?"). In the development of Modern English, *will* became an auxiliary verb, generally used to mark future reference for the main verb, and mostly lost its former lexical meaning, as in *I will be at work until six*, which doesn't mean "I want to be at work until six." The existence of a contracted form, as in *I'll*, is a further common stage in the grammaticalization process.

Another example is the grammaticalization of the verb *go* from having a lexical meaning of "movement" (*I'm going to school*) to being a grammatical auxiliary in *I'm going to be late for school*. We can still use *go* as a lexical verb expressing movement, but not in the contracted form associated with the auxiliary (*I'm gonna*

*be late. \*I'm gonna school.*) The development of auxiliary verbs from lexical verbs through the process of grammaticalization, often with contracted forms (e.g. *I'll, I'm gonna*), can be found in many languages.

For more, read:

Mair, C. (2006) *Twentieth-Century English* (chapter 4.4) Cambridge University Press

Trask, R. (1996) *Historical Linguistics* (143-144) Arnold

### **17E A case of language death**

One of the most detailed accounts of language death involves the (near) demise of Gaelic in northern Scotland. Although it has undergone a revival in recent years and is taught as a second language in many Scottish schools, Gaelic became a language with fewer and fewer native speakers.

Until the eighteenth century, Scottish Gaelic was spoken throughout the northern areas and in the western islands. An unfortunate combination of failed rebellions and economic changes led to a large-scale displacement of the Gaelic-speaking population during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Two rebellions against the English resulted in two defeats and a sustained attempt by the victors to eliminate the social organizations that allowed these rebellions to grow. Among the first things to be banned from public display was the language (Gaelic), along with many other symbols of national identity. Many Gaelic speakers at the time were crofters, that is, tenant farmers on small plots of land owned by landlords who mostly lived elsewhere. These landlords wanted to use their land for larger-scale sheep farming because of the soaring demand for wool and mutton. They simply evicted their tenants in a process that became known as “the Highland Clearances.” One rationale offered for this harsh treatment was that those who spoke Gaelic were seen as lower life forms, or primitive savages, with “their obstinate adherence to the barbarous jargon of the times when Europe was possessed by savages” (quoted in Janson, 2002: 233). Many of those evicted emigrated to the USA and Canada while others settled along the coastal areas.

This dispersal of the Gaelic-speaking population was followed by an extended period when almost all commerce and education in Scotland became English-based. Religious services, and hence all schooling, were conducted in English, so that by the beginning of the twentieth century those remaining Gaelic speakers had to be bilingual to do anything outside their homes and small villages. Many Gaelic-speaking parents encouraged their children to become proficient at English for obvious economic reasons, and during the twentieth century, most of those children had children who became monolingual English speakers, seeing no value in the

dying language of their grandparents. So, within about two hundred years, a vibrant language disappeared through the encroachment of another more politically and economically dominant language. This process, in slightly different forms, is being repeated throughout the world as more and more languages are added to the endangered list.

For more, read:

Dorian, N. (1981) *Language Death* University of Pennsylvania Press

Janson, T. (2002) *Speak: A Short History of Languages* (232-234) Oxford University Press

### 17F Changes in English from 1050 to 1961

1 Among the changes in vocabulary we can first note the loss of certain letters that were used in writing Old English (O.E.) words. The letters þ (“thorn”), ð (“eth”) and æ (“ash”) are not used in the examples after the O.E. period.

2 Some O.E. words, in the left column below, have been completely replaced by other forms.

|             |   |                   |   |           |   |                |
|-------------|---|-------------------|---|-----------|---|----------------|
| genēalæton  | → | camen             | → | came      | → | came           |
| cwædon      | → | seiden            | → | saide     | → | said           |
| soðlice     | → | treuli            | → | surely    | → | surely         |
| gesweotolað | → | makith ... knowun | → | bewrayeth | → | gives ... away |

3 The O.E. verb *spræc* is similar to Modern German *Sprache* (“speech, language”), but lost the “r” element among other sound changes before it became the modern English form in *speech*.

4 Words related to second person (*you*) illustrate a series of changes.

|     |   |      |   |      |   |                   |
|-----|---|------|---|------|---|-------------------|
| þu  | → | thou | → | thou | → | you (subject)     |
| þyn | → | thi  | → | thy  | → | your (possessive) |
| þe  | → | thee | → | thee | → | you (object)      |

5 Words related to third person plural (*they*) also change.

|     |   |      |   |      |   |      |
|-----|---|------|---|------|---|------|
| þa  | → | thei | → | they |   |      |
| hym | → | hem  | → | them | → | them |

6 A number of inflections disappear. These examples show the O.E. third person plural ending (-on) as it changes then disappears.

|            |   |        |   |       |   |      |
|------------|---|--------|---|-------|---|------|
| genēalæton | → | camen  | → | came  | → | came |
| stodon     | → | stoden | → | stood |   |      |
| cwædon     | → | seiden | → | saide | → | said |

Also, the third person singular ending (-að) changes.

|             |   |        |   |           |   |       |
|-------------|---|--------|---|-----------|---|-------|
| gesweotolað | → | makith | → | bewrayeth | → | gives |
|-------------|---|--------|---|-----------|---|-------|

Also, the second person singular ending (-rt) changes.

eart → art → art → are

Also, the O.E. inflectional ending (-um) on nouns after prepositions like “æfter”, as in “æfter lytlum”, doesn’t survive into the other versions.

7 The relative pronoun form (*that, who, whom, which* in modern English) had a quite different form in O.E.: ðe → that → that

8 Word-order preferences also changed. In the O.E. version, after the initial time phrase, the subject (*þa*) is placed after the verb (*genēalæton*). This type of inversion was much more common in O.E. writing. This syntactic structure is also used in the Early Modern version (*came ... they*), but not in the Middle English or Modern English versions. It is rare, but not impossible, for a subject to be placed after a verb in Modern English (e.g. *Into the room came two large men in black uniforms. Never had I seen such a pair of huge brutes before.*)

For more, read:

Campbell, L. (2004) *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd edition) MIT Press

## 18 Language and regional variation (Study Questions)

- 1 Hawai'i Creole English or (in Hawai'i) Pidgin
- 2 The term "accent" is used to refer to pronunciation features only, whereas "dialect" covers features of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.
- 3 By using "non-mobile, older, rural, male speakers," the dialect description may be more accurate of a period well before the time of investigation, and hence not an accurate reflection of contemporary usage.
- 4 An isogloss represents the limit of an area in which a particular linguistic feature is found among the majority of speakers
- 5 The first two stages are "selection" (choosing an official language) and "codification" (creating grammars and dictionaries).
- 6 A creole has native speakers, a pidgin has none.

## 18 Language and regional variation (Tasks)

### 18A Brummie, Geordie, Scouse, etc.

A Brummie accent is associated with speakers in the city of Birmingham in the Midlands area, a Geordie accent is from Newcastle or the surrounding area in north east England and Scouse is the dialect spoken by people in Liverpool in the north west. The word *bairns* is Scottish, *boyo* is used in Wales, *fink* (for "think") is characteristic of Cockney (London) speech and *Would you be after wanting some tea?* is an Irish expression.

For more, read:

Crowther, J. (ed.) (2005) "British English" In the *Oxford Guide to British and American English* (2nd edition) Oxford University Press

Hughes, A., P. Trudgill and D. Watt (2005) *English Accents and Dialects* (4th edition) Hodder Arnold

### 18B Wenker and Gilliéron

Georg Wenker was a German schoolteacher who created the first dialect map, published in 1881 as the *Language Atlas of the German Empire*. His method of collecting data involved sending out a set of forty sentences to every school he could find and asking the local teacher to rephrase the sentences in local dialect and then send them back. The large response (over 45,000 sets were completed and returned) provided Wenker with a substantial data base for creating his atlas.

Jules Gilliéron took a different approach to collecting information about French dialects. He sent his assistant (Edmond Edmont) to rural areas of France and the French-speaking areas of Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. In each location, a single

informant (usually male) was consulted about local speech. The research took about four years (1897-1901) to complete (Edmont traveled by bicycle) and formed the basis of a series of thirteen publications on French dialects that were published between 1902 and 1910.

The method of personal interview rather than sending a questionnaire in the mail became the model used in most of the later dialect studies.

For more, read:

Mesthrie, R., J. Swann, A. Deumert and W. Leap (2000) *Introducing Sociolinguistics* (chapter 2) John Benjamins  
Petyt, K. (1980) *The Study of Dialect* André Deutsch

### **18C Standard English**

- 1 Agree. It is considered to be an “idealized variety” and, as a variety of English, it would be treated more as a dialect than as a separate language.
- 2 Disagree. Partly because Standard English is tied to a written variety more than a spoken variety, it doesn’t have a definitive pronunciation. People with different regional accents can use Standard English, so it is technically not an accent itself.
- 3 Disagree. Since Standard English doesn’t have a definitive pronunciation, it can’t represent a speech style. It can have an association with formal situations for many people, especially post-literate speakers (i.e. those adults whose spoken language is influenced by having spent a lot of time with the written language), but it isn’t restricted to one type of social situation. It might be said that Standard English is the basis of a writing style for many people.
- 4 Disagree. Because Standard English is a variety of a language that has social prestige, it may be treated as a “good” variety for social purposes. It may, as a result, represent a model that many people, especially second language learners, aspire to use, especially in their writing. But “a set of rules” sounds more like a grammar than a variety. So, we could rephrase 4 as “A grammar of Standard English is a set of rules for correct usage” and agree with that.

For more, read:

Crystal, D. (2003) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* (110) Cambridge University Press  
Trudgill, P. (2002) *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change* (chapter 15) Georgetown University Press

### 18D Substrate and superstrate

A Pidgin often develops in situations where there is contact between one group that is less powerful and another group that is more powerful. The language of the less powerful becomes the “substrate” (i.e. the one below) and that of the more powerful becomes the “superstrate” (i.e. the one above). In the development of the pidgin that later became Hawai’i Creole English, the English language was the superstrate. The substrate languages were Cantonese, Hawaiian and Portuguese. Generally speaking, the basic syntax and intonation are more likely to come from the substrate(s) whereas vocabulary is more likely to come from the superstrate (i.e. the lexifier language).

For more, read:

Holm, J. (2000) *An Introduction to Pidgins and Creoles* (chapter 1) Cambridge University Press

Siegel, J. (2008) *The Emergence of Pidgin and Creole Languages* (chapter 4) Oxford University Press

### 18E Tok Pisin

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| <i>gras antap long ai</i> | “eyebrow”        |
| <i>gras bilong hed</i>    | “hair”           |
| <i>gras bilong pisin</i>  | “bird’s feather” |
| <i>gras bilong pusi</i>   | “cat’s fur”      |
| <i>gras nogut</i>         | “weed”           |
| <i>han bilong pisin</i>   | “bird’s wing”    |

For more, read:

Holmes, J. (2008) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (chapter 4) (3rd edition) Pearson

Romaine, S. (1988) *Pidgin and Creole Languages* (34-35) Longman

### 18F Hawai’i Creole English

According to Sakoda and Siegel (2003), the words *da* (as in *da table*, *da Bag Man*, *da guy*) and *one*, or *wan*, (as in *one nudda guy*, *one tee-shirt*, *one plate lunch*) function in much the same way as the definite article *the* and indefinite article *a/an* in other English varieties.

The verb form *had*, used to introduce a statement, functions in a way that is similar to *There was ...* (as in *Had one nudda guy*, *Still had little bit everyting, even had bar-ba-que meat*), but with different syntax (“There was still ...”, “there was even ...”). This use of *had* is described as an “existential” structure. Here it is the past existential (= “There was/were ...”). The present existential (= “There is/are ...”)



is expressed by *get*, as in *Get plenny time* (= “There’s a lot of time”).

The form *stay*, or *ste*, is used for a temporary condition, typically as a result of a recent action, as in *I stay full*, where the speaker is describing his state after eating lunch (= “I’m full”). This form is believed to have come from the Portuguese verb *estar*, as in *está bom* (= “it’s okay”) rather than an English source, though it is often written as if it is the English verb *stay*.

The form *wen* is an auxiliary verb, as in *he wen take his plate*, indicating past action (= “he took his plate”). Derived from the English verb *went* (past tense of *go*), this form has been through a process of grammaticalization to become a general marker of past time reference when attached to another verb. (See Task 17D for more examples of grammaticalization.)

For more, read:

Nichols, J. (2004) “Creole languages: forging new identities” In E. Finegan and J. Rickford (eds.) *Language in the USA* (133-152) Cambridge University Press  
Sakoda, K. and J. Siegel (2003) *Pidgin Grammar* Bess Press

## 19 Language and social variation (Study Questions)

- 1 A speech community is a group of people who share a set of norms and expectations regarding the use of language.
- 2 An idiolect is the personal dialect of an individual speaker. A sociolect is the social dialect of a large group of people.
- 3 The expression *fourth floor* contains two opportunities for the pronunciation (or not) of postvocalic /r/, which Labov was investigating as a linguistic variable.
- 4 The pronunciation of *-ing* with [n] rather than [ŋ] at the end of a word such as *sitting* is a social marker associated with working-class speech.
- 5 A register is a conventional way of using language that is appropriate in a specific situation, occupation or in discussing a particular topic. An example is the legal register, with its special jargon, used among lawyers.
- 6 The use of *be* communicates “habitual action,” so *He don’t be smokin now* means that smoking is not a habitual action for him now, or that he has stopped smoking.

## 19 Language and social variation (Tasks)

### 19A Micro-sociolinguistics and macro-sociolinguistics

The term “micro-sociolinguistics” is used to describe the type of study that looks closely at features in the speech of individuals or groups. It covers the type of investigation carried out by Labov, as described in this chapter (see Labov, 2006). It also covers a large number of other studies where aspects of the sounds, words or structures of some speakers or socially defined groups are compared or contrasted, as if the investigator was using a metaphorical microscope to analyze small details.

The term “macro-sociolinguistics” is used when an investigator is looking at the bigger picture of the use of languages and varieties. This area of study is sometimes described as “the sociology of language” because it covers much larger issues in the organization of society, such as language choice in education, language loyalty (or not) among immigrant groups and language planning.

For more, read:

Labov, W. (2006) *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)  
Cambridge University Press

Spolsky, B. (1998) *Sociolinguistics* (chapter 1) Oxford University Press

### **19B The observer's paradox**

The expression “the observer's paradox” was used by Labov (1972: 209) to describe an inherent problem in using face-to-face interviews to collect representative speech samples from informants. This is how he expressed the paradox:

The aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation.

The sociolinguist usually wants to record normal casual spoken language as used by individuals in everyday situations, but the presence of the interviewer and the recorder has an effect on most speakers, making them pay more attention to how they are speaking and more concerned not to use what they might think are “incorrect” forms, for example. So, the observer, or interviewer, has an effect on the data elicited, making it potentially very difficult to get genuinely representative speech samples.

One way that Labov suggested as a partial solution was to ask informants questions that distracted them from thinking about how they were speaking because they became more involved emotionally in what they were talking about. One example was the question: “Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you were going to be killed?” Another solution is to have another individual “chat” with the informant (while being recorded) before or after the actual interview in order to allow the informant to use a more relaxed or casual speech style.

For more, read:

Chambers, J. and P. Trudgill (1998) *Dialectology* (48-49) (2nd edition) Cambridge University Press

Labov, W. (1972) *Sociolinguistic Patterns* University of Pennsylvania Press

### **19C Style-shifting and code-switching**

The term “style-shifting” describes a change from a formal (and careful) way of speaking to one that is informal (and casual), or vice versa, as discussed in this chapter. The term “code-switching” describes the use of two or more languages in the same utterance or interaction.

Code-switching may occur “inside” a sentence, as in the following example from Poplack (1980: 596), quoted in Winford (2003), where a Spanish prepositional phrase (= “with the/my fists”) is used as a constituent in an English sentence.

*But I wanted to fight her con los puños, you know.*

Code-switching also takes place “outside” a sentence, as in this example from New Zealand, where both Maori and English are spoken (Holmes, 2008).

Sarah: *I think everyone's here except Mere.*

John: *She said she might be a bit late but actually I think that's her arriving now.*

Sarah: *You're right. **Kia ora Mere. Haere mai. Kei tw pehea koe?***

Mere: ***Kia ora e hoa. Kei te pai.** Have you started yet?*

According to Holmes, Sarah switches from English to Maori to greet Mere (= *Hi Mere. Come in. How are you?*). Mere replies in Maori (= *Hello, my friend. I'm fine.*), then switches to English to continue the interaction. In this example, there is no combination of two languages inside a single sentence, but a separation, with one language being used for a social greeting exchange and another used for the rest of the interaction.

For more, read:

Holmes, J. (2008) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* Pearson

Poplack, S. (1980) "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English Y TERMINO EN ESPAÑOL: toward a typology of code-switching" *Linguistics* 18: 581-618

Winford, D. (2003) *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics* Blackwell

## 19D Ebonics

According to Green (2002), the term "Ebonics" was first introduced at a conference in 1973 and defined by Robert Williams (1975: vi) as editor of the published proceedings of that conference, in the following way:

A two-year-old term created by a group of black scholars, Ebonics may be defined as "the linguistic and paralinguistic features which on a concentric continuum represents the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean, and United States slave descendants of African origin. It included the various idioms, patois, argots, idiolects, and social dialects of black people" especially those who have been forced to adapt to colonial circumstances. Ebonics derives its form from ebony (black) and phonics (sound, the study of sound) and refers to the study of the language of black people in all its cultural uniqueness.

This definition actually covers a wide range of language varieties, but about twenty years later, the term came to be used more narrowly for only African American Vernacular English, notably in this description adopted in 1997 by the Linguistic Society of America and quoted in Baugh (2004).

The variety known as "Ebonics," "African American Vernacular English" (AAVE), and "Vernacular Black English" and by other names is systematic and rule-governed like all natural speech varieties.

For more, read:

- Baugh, J. (2004) “Ebonics and its controversy” In E. Finegan and J. Rickford (eds.) *Language in the USA* (305-318) Cambridge University Press
- Green, L. (2002) *African American English* Cambridge University Press
- Williams, R. (ed.) (1975) *Ebonics: The True Language of Black Folks* The Institute of Black Studies

### 19E Honorifics

Honorifics are special linguistic forms, often pronouns or affixes, that are used to show deference or respect when addressing someone, typically a social superior. They are most commonly found in Asian languages such as Thai, Japanese, Javanese and Korean. The examples here are from Japanese.

In the A–B dialogue, A must be in the superior social position because he is addressed by B with an honorific form. In the C–D dialogue, D must be in the superior position because C uses an honorific form when addressing him.

For more, read:

- Shibatani, M. (2001) “Honorifics” In R. Mesthrie (ed.) *Concise Encyclopedia of Sociolinguistics* (552-559) Elsevier

### 19F Chicano English

1 Agree. Just as Scottish English is a dialect of English, so too is Chicano English, which is the first language of large numbers of Americans (many of whom cannot speak Spanish), especially in the Los Angeles area.

2 Disagree. The term “Spanglish” is typically used to describe a version of English containing a lot of Spanish words and phrases which is spoken by those whose first language is Spanish. Chicano English has influences from Spanish, but it is a dialect of English, used on a daily basis by many people who cannot speak Spanish.

3 Disagree. Like any other dialect of English, Chicano English has features that are consistently different from what is considered Standard English. For example, Chicano English doesn’t have the singular–plural distinction found in auxiliary verbs in Standard English (e.g. *was–were*; *doesn’t–don’t*), relying on only one form (*was*; *don’t*) as illustrated in the example sentences. This phenomenon is common in many other English dialects, doesn’t come from Spanish, and isn’t a “broken” version of anything. It is a characteristic feature of Chicano English, rather than an “incorrect” feature in terms of another dialect.

4 Disagree. Many speakers of Chicano English simply speak English and know no other languages (including Spanish), just as most speakers of Scottish English, for example, don’t speak Scottish Gaelic. Despite frequent misidentification by

educational institutions, Chicano English speakers are not like second language learners of English from other countries.

5 Disagree. Although they may have Spanish-speaking grandparents and other family members, most younger speakers of Chicano English are native speakers of that variety. Indeed, in one research report, they are described as “monolingual English speakers who cannot order a *taco* in Spanish to save their lives” (Santa Ana, 1993: 24).

For more, read:

Fought, C. (2003) *Chicano English in Context* Palgrave Macmillan

Santa Ana, O. (1993) “Chicano English and the nature of the Chicano language setting” *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 15: 3-35

## 20 Language and culture (Study Questions)

- 1 One definition of “culture” is “socially acquired knowledge.”
- 2 Kinship terms are words used to refer to people who are members of the same family.
- 3 It is the idea that “language determines thought.”
- 4 Classifiers are grammatical markers that indicate the type or “class” of noun.
- 5 It is ungrammatical because *advice* is a non-countable noun in English, hence not used with *a/an*.
- 6 It is more likely to be spoken by a woman because it is expressing an opinion (*I think*) in a non-assertive way, using a hedge (*kind of*) and a tag question (*don't you?*).

## 20 Language and culture (Tasks)

### 20A Cross-cultural, intercultural, multicultural

According to Kramsch (1998), the term “cross-cultural” is normally used for a connection between individuals or groups from two different societies that reaches across political or national boundaries. The underlying (and simplifying) assumption is that there is typically a one country–one culture–one language situation in our world. It is in this type of situation that individuals experience “culture shock” if they go unprepared from a familiar culture to spend time in one that is unfamiliar. Cross-cultural communication is accomplished by learning the language and customs of the other society through interaction with its members.

The term “intercultural communication” is used for a connection between different groups inside the boundaries of a single country. It is typically used when members of a minority group attempt to create better understanding through dialogue with those in another minority group or with those who are identified as members of the majority or dominant group. Examples of intercultural communication are discussions between different religious groups (Christians and Muslims), different ethnic groups (African Americans and Korean Americans), different classes (the working class and the upper class) or different gendered groups (gays and heterosexuals).

The term “multicultural” is typically used to identify societies where the assumptions of a one country–one culture situation clearly do not apply. Multicultural communication is what emerges from the interaction of members of different cultural backgrounds working together within a society to create and maintain social harmony. It may be characterized by the use of words and phrases from a variety of different languages which are understood by all those participating.

For more, read:

Kramsch, C. (1998) *Language and Culture* (81-82) Oxford University Press

## 20B The basic color term hierarchy

The basic color term hierarchy, as proposed by Berlin and Kay (1969), was based on a survey of ninety-eight languages. A basic color term is one that is lexicalized as a single form such as *red*, *green* or *blue* and not *dark red*, *lime green* or *light blue*. The hierarchy is a way of organizing these basic color terms so that the most basic terms, those found in most languages, are placed above or before those found in fewer languages. The hierarchy is set-based, with sets represented here by curly brackets. Any color in the set may represent that level within a particular language, even if all color terms from that set are not found in that language. Berlin and Kay identified eleven basic color terms and six levels in their hierarchy. There have been criticisms of the hierarchy shown here, but it has generally been supported by other studies.

{black, white} > red > {green, yellow} > blue > brown > {gray, orange, pink, purple}

For more, read:

Berlin, B. and P. Kay (1969) *Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution* University of California Press

Kay, P. (2001) "Color" In A. Duranti (ed.) *Key Terms in Language and Culture* (27-30) Blackwell

## 20C Countable and uncountable

(i) Countable: *crash, lesson, mistake, mountain, party, theft*

Uncountable: *applause, cash, courage, equipment, luck, rain, research, rubbish, sand, shopping, tennis, underwear*

Both: *business, chocolate, hair, noise, paper, salmon*

(ii) The most common "unit of" phrases are *a bit of* and *a piece of*, as in:

*a bit of cash, luck, rain, research, rubbish, sand, shopping, business, chocolate, hair, paper, salmon*

*a piece of equipment, research, rubbish, business, chocolate, hair, paper, salmon, underwear*

Others: *an item of equipment, research, underwear, business*

*a load of cash, equipment, rubbish*

*a burst / ripple / roar / round of applause*

*a bunch / bundle / pile of cash*



*an act of courage*  
*a stroke of luck*  
*a drop / shower / spell / spot / trace of rain*  
*a bag / pile of rubbish*  
*a grain of sand*  
*a game of tennis*  
*a bar / chunk / square of chocolate*  
*a lock of hair*  
*a scrap / sheet / slip / strip of paper*

There are other forms (e.g. *a serving of salmon*) used in special contexts.

For more, read:

Huddleston, R. and G. Pullum (2002) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (333-338) Cambridge University Press

## 20D Watam kinship terms

| 1 English     | Kinship category        | Watam          |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| <i>mother</i> | female parent           | <i>aem</i>     |
| <i>aunt</i>   | female parent's sister  | <i>aem</i>     |
| <i>aunt</i>   | male parent's sister    | <i>namkwae</i> |
| <i>father</i> | male parent             | <i>aes</i>     |
| <i>uncle</i>  | male parent's brother   | <i>aes</i>     |
| <i>uncle</i>  | female parent's brother | <i>akwae</i>   |

2 In order to translate the English word *aunt* into Watam, we need to know which aunt (mother's or father's sister) is intended before we can choose the appropriate word. Translating the word *uncle* poses a similar problem. A further problem is being sure that the use of *aem*, for example, is understood on a particular occasion as *aunt* and not *mother*, and that *aes* is recognized as referring to *uncle* and not *father*.

3 In English, we don't seem to have different terms for these different kinship categories. To distinguish between the individuals in reference, we often use title plus first name, as in *aunt Mary* or *aunt Jemima*, or title plus last name, as in *auntie Brown*. (This last pattern is also used with grandparents, as in *granny Brown* or *grandfather Macdonald*.) Perhaps you are familiar with other forms?

For more, read:

Foley, W. (1997) *Anthropological Linguistics* (135) Blackwell

## 20E Ponapean classifiers

This exercise is based on material in Lynch (1998) and Rehg (1981). There are quite a lot of classifiers of this type in Ponapean. When there is a numeral (*pah-*), the classifier (*-sop*) comes after the numeral and both come after the noun (*sehu pahsop*). When there is no numeral, the classifier is interpreted as equivalent to *one* or the English indefinite article (*a, an*) in translation.

- (1) *sehu pahsop* (“four stalks of sugarcane”)
- (2) *dipen mei pahdip* (“four slices of breadfruit”)
- (3) *mwutin dippw pahmwut* (“four piles of grass”)
- (4) *nahi pwihk silimen* (“my three pigs”)
- (5) *tuhke pwoat* (“a tree”)

For more, read:

Lynch, J. (1998) *Pacific Languages* (118-120) University of Hawai'i Press

Rehg, K. (1981) *Ponapean Reference Grammar* University of Hawai'i Press

## 20F Genderizing

“Genderizing” is a term used to describe the use of inflections, words or phrases that identify an individual’s gender when referring to them, especially when their gender is unimportant or unknown in the context. In the preceding sentence, because we were referring to any individual (regardless of gender), the pronouns *them* and *their* were used. The use of *they, them, their* with singular nouns of indeterminate reference is described as a “nongendered” usage and represents the most common way to avoid genderizing in contemporary spoken English. This usage has existed since the Middle English period, as documented in Bodine (1975). So, in examples (1)–(3), using *in their own car, they didn’t leave their name* and *they had met Brad Pitt* would be one way to avoid genderizing. In examples such as (1), *their* is almost always used now, but it is also possible to revise some sentences to avoid using pronouns, as in *but didn’t leave a name* for (2) and *about meeting Brad Pitt* for (3). Traditional grammarians and prescriptivists (see Chapter 7) usually condemn this use of the pronouns *they* or *their* because they are plural forms and should not be used with a singular noun as antecedent. Traditionally the male forms (*he, him, his*) were used when gender was unknown, but using these forms is now considered to be a form of genderizing in contemporary English usage, especially in generalizations such as *Every child should have their own room*. So, in example (4), *their* would be preferred to *his*, but the indefinite article *a* may be another way to avoid genderizing.

Example (5) is cited in Mair (2006: 154) with the form *themselves*, which is

described as having a long history of use in casual spoken English. In this case, both genders are mentioned, it may be an appropriate place for the phrase *himself or herself*. More generally, *themselves* may be heard in such contexts or, even more likely, no pronoun at all would be used (*who gets involved in a holiday romance*). With very young children, as in example (6), we seem to have no problem when biological gender is unknown and typically say *it cries a lot at night*.

When there is more specific reference, as in *my professor* or a proper noun (*Chris*), the pronouns *they* or *it* are not typically used. Since *Chris* is a name for a woman or a man in contemporary English, it presents a special problem. To avoid genderizing in these cases, speakers may simply change the structure, so that for (7) they may say *My professor promised to write ...*, and for (8), *Chris who was looking forward ...*. These solutions assume that gender is unknown, but typically we know, or can guess, the gender of specific individual people we're talking about and so the pronouns *he* or *she* would be appropriate. If we want to emphasize the vagueness in *someone called Chris*, we can solve our problem by changing the structure to *who said they were looking forward to meeting me*.

For more, read:

- Bodine, A. (1975) "Androcentrism in prescriptive grammar: singular 'they,' sex-indefinite 'he,' and 'he or she'" *Language in Society* 4: 129-146
- Eckert, P. and S. McConnell-Ginet (2003) *Language and Gender* (256-257) Cambridge University Press
- Mair, C. (2006) *Twentieth-Century English* (152-154) Cambridge University Press

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- Crystal, D. (2008) *Txtng: The Gr8 Db8* Oxford University Press
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