

Day 4

Language Differences

Questions to talk about

- How do linguists describe languages?
- How do languages differ?
- What makes a language difficult?
- Is English a complicated language?
- What would a perfect language look like?

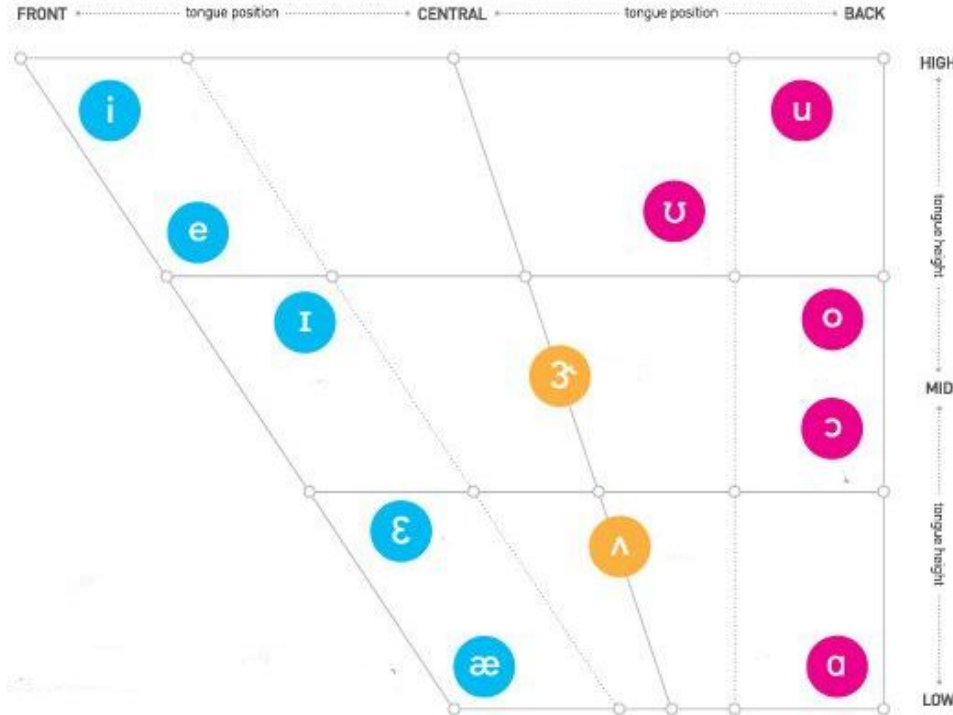
Describing languages

- Sounds and sound patterns
- Word formation
- Phrase structures
- Sentence patterns
- Vocabularies & semantics
- Cultural maps
- Dialect variation & demographics
- Communication channels
- Social registers
- Political & economic status
- History & interrelationships

“Languages differ so fundamentally from one another at every level of description (sound, grammar, lexicon, meaning) that it is very hard to find any single structural property we share.”

— Nicholas Evans and Stephen Levinson, *The Myth of Language Universals*

How many vowels does English have?



Vowels

Pool
 Pull
 Pill
 Peel
 Pail
 Pell
 Pole
 Paul
 Pol
 Pal
 Pul(se)
 Pearl

P.....L

Diphthongs

Powell (au)
 (s)Poil (oi)
 Pile (ai)

Neutral

Pol(ice) (schwa)

English shifty vowels

ME		1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	ModE
[i:]	<i>rise(n)</i>	→	[ii]	→	[ʌi]	→	[aɪ] <i>rise</i>
[u:]	<i>mouth</i>	→	[ou]	→	[ʌu]	→	[aʊ] <i>mouth</i>
[e:]	<i>feet</i>	→		→	[i:]	→	[i:] <i>feet</i>
[o:]	<i>goos</i>	→		→	[u:]	→	[u:] <i>goose</i>
[ɛ:]	<i>beeme</i>	→		→	[e:]	→	[i:] <i>beam</i>
[ɔ:]	<i>ston</i>	→		→	[o:]	→	[ou] → [əʊ] <i>stone</i>
[a:]	<i>name</i>	→	[æ:]	→	[ɛ:]	→	[e:] → [eɪ] <i>name</i>

Germanic equivalents

Rijzen (Dutch)

Mond (Dutch)

Voeten (Dutch)

Gås (Danish)

Baum (German)

Stein (German)

Namme (Frisian)

How many consonants does English have?

Classification of NAE Consonant Phonemes							
Manner of Articulation	Place of Articulation						
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop							
Voiceless	p			t		k	
Voiced	b			d		g	
Fricative							
Voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ		h
Voiced		v	ð	z	ʒ		
Affricate							
Voiceless					tʃ		
Voiced					dʒ		
Nasal							
Voiced	m			n		ŋ	
Liquid							
Voiced				l	r		
Glide							
Voiced	w				y		

Phonetics examples

Nama	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLxPtEA4K3g&list=TLPQMDMwMzlwMjCdrcRDYRICPA&index=8
Polish consonants	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfKZclMWS1U
Tlingit	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9Y_1gg5Ki8 (start at 0:45)
Frisian	https://wikitongues.org/videos/sjoukje_20180409_fry/
Cantonese (Yue)	https://wikitongues.org/videos/karen_20160717_yue/
Québécois	https://wikitongues.org/videos/maxime_20180129_fra/
Appalachian English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03iwAY4KIU
Navajo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFayFUiyv20
Inuktitut	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCA0YsIS3yY (start at 3:40)

Poems

*Un petit d'un petit
S'étonne aux Halles
Un petit d'un petit
Ah! degrés te fallent
Indolent qui ne sort cesse
Indolent qui ne se mène
Qu'importe un petit
Tout gai de Reguennes.*

*Liesel Bopp hieb es Schloss der schieb
An Dutzend Noor, wer zu Feind dem,
Lief dem Aal ohn' an Tee willkomm Ohm;
Brenken der Teil Spee ein dem.*

What's in a word? --- Morphemes!

Open classes -- provide content

- Nouns: thing, life
- Verbs: hear
- Adjectives: smart

“That might be the second smartest thing that I've ever heard in my life.”

Closed classes -- provide content structure

- Prepositions: in
- Pronouns: I, my, that
- Number terms: second
- Modals: might
- Copula: be
- Conjunctions: that
- Tense/aspect markers: -'ve, (hear)d, ever
- Degree-of markers: -est
- Knownness markers: the
- Agreement: I ... my

Word formation: Derivation & Inflection

Derivation

English French English Dutch Polish

Insist

Insist insister stand up to opstaan stać nad

Desist

Desist désister stand down neerstaan przestać

Consist

Consist consister stand with medestaan przystać

Resist

Resist résister stand against tegenstaan odstać

Persist

Persist persister stand through doorstaan stać przez

Subsist

Subsist, subsister, stand under, onderstaan, stać pod

Inflection & stem change

I stand up, He stands up, I stood up

Wstaję, wstaje, wstałem

Ik sta op, hij staat op, ik stond op

Je me lève, il se lève, je me suis levé

What does -sist mean? What do the prefixes mean?

Polish Verb Conjugation

		Imperfective Verb Stem (mówić)								Perfective Verb Stem (powiedzieć)					
		Pres	Future		Past		Conditional		Imper	Future	Past		Conditional		Imper
			M	F	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F	
Pers	Num														
1	sg	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
	pl	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	sg	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	pl	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	sg	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
	pl	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	

The rise of syntax



"GOT IDEA. TALK BETTER. COMBINE WORDS. MAKE SENTENCES."

Putting sentences together: Syntax

When I was in the store today, I saw John buying cigarettes.

Quand j'étais au magasin aujourd'hui, j'ai vu Jean entrain d'acheter des cigarettes.

Toen ik vandaag in de winkel was, zag ik Jan aan het sigaretten kopen.

Gdy byłem dzisiaj w sklepie, widziałem Jana kupującego papierosy.

The Japanese way of putting it together

Ken speaks Japanese at home with his family.

Topic

Ken-san wa
けんさんは

Place

uchi de
うちで

Verb

hanashimasu
はなします

kazoku to
かぞくと

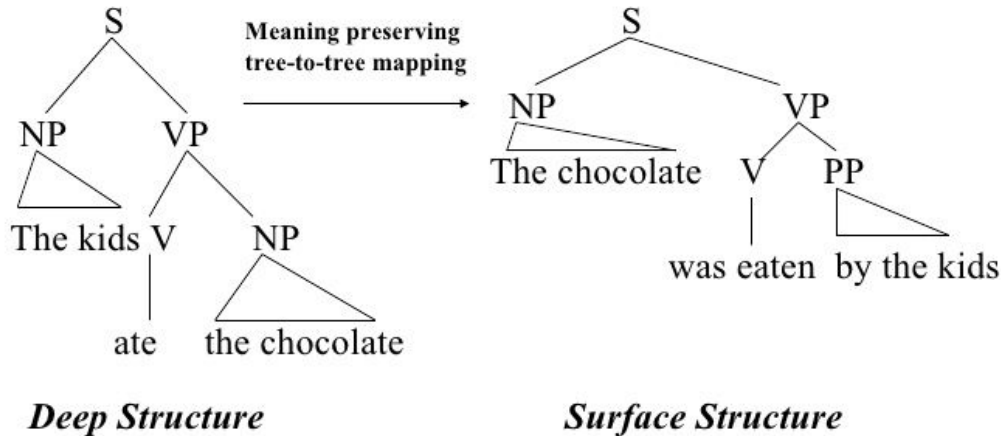
Companion

nihongo o
にほんごを

Object

Describing sentences

Transformational Grammar and Movement Rules



“Grammar is the greatest joy in life, don't you find?”
— Lemony Snicket, *The Wide Window*

“I really do not know that anything has ever been more exciting than diagramming sentences.”
— Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America*

Semantics

“Writing in English is like throwing mud at a wall.”

— Joseph Conrad aka Józef Korzeniowski

“Words are wonderfully elastic things, extending even beyond the bounds of belief, yet wars have been fought over them. The object of diplomacy should be to keep this conflict only verbal, which is why the thicker the word-fog, the better. Words become fighting words when we get specific.”

— Paul Greenberg, Peace through confusion

“Even the most precise technical term can be stretched into a verb or adjective, slang or idiom, stretched all the way around until it finds itself facing itself, a mirror image, the exact opposite of itself.” [Janus words]

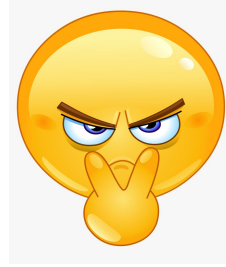
— Ron Brackin, Son of Hamas

[Cf. sanction bad behavior & sanction good behavior; cleave into & cleave onto; run fast & hold fast; clip to & clip off; give oversight to & be an oversight]

Dry Bones



Vocabulary: Synonyms & Pushing the Semantics



General seeing

- See (in, into, to, through)
- Look (at, in, into, after, down, up, by, through)
- Watch (out, for)

Special seeing

- Gaze
- Peer
- Glimpse
- Stare
- Scan
- Spot
- Glance

Emotional seeing

- Gape
- Goggle
- Ogle
- Leer
- Gawk
- Eye

Purpose seeing

- Detect
- Notice
- Observe
- Inspect
- Espy
- Descry
- Peruse
- Behold

How's it going?

I'm going

I want to go

I need to go

I wanna go

I have to go

I'd like to go

I hafta go

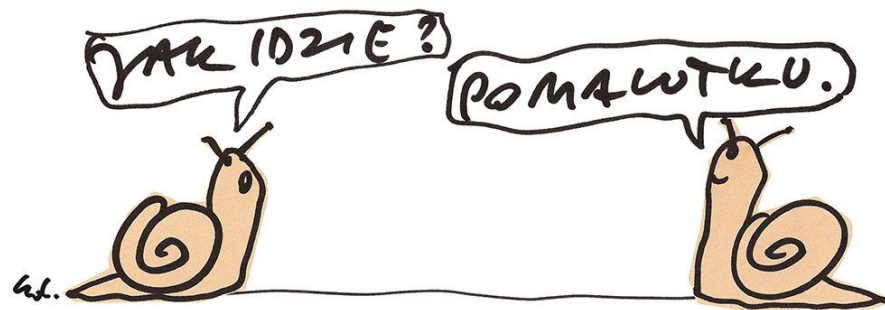
I'm ready to go

I must go

I've got to go

I'd best go

I gotta go



Jak idzie?

Pomalutku (by the inch)