

INTRODUCTION TO APPLIED LINGUISTICS
Adapted from David DeGraaf

HUMAN LANGUAGE = a system of signs used to communicate about things and ideas in a common context, often reflecting a common world-view. (Neither animals nor computers have a language.)

Main **factors** in language learning:

Motivation, organizational requirements, learning style and social involvement.

All languages perform the same **tasks**:

- Indicate how the content is to be understood.
- Identify actors, qualities, and action, as well as the relations between these.
- Formulate propositions and logical relations between these.
- Introduce actors, keep track of them, and assign their roles.
- Distinguish background information from main actions.
- Show contrasts and mark the unexpected and the important.

Languages **tools** = lexicon (vocabulary), morphology, syntax (word order in the stream of speech), stress, and tone or intonation. Each language has its own **strategy**, using these tools with different functions.

Three **dimensions** of language:

- Meaning.
- Grammar: morphology + syntax + discourse.
- Sounds (phonology: meaningful sounds and combinations of sounds).

Language **media**: speech, texts, sounds, signing.

- Phonetics = how meaningful sounds are made.
- Phonology = the sounds of a particular language.

Note: In UK and US, women pronounce their consonants farther forward in their mouth than do men.

ENGLISH SPEECH SOUNDS

CONSONANTS (obstruants) May be aspirate or not with no change of meaning.

Stops

- voiced b d g
- unvoiced p t k

Nasal m n ŋg (velic passage open)

Fricatives may be aspirate or not with no change of meaning.

- voiced y th z h
- unvoiced f th s

affricative tsh dj

Voiced & unvoiced can occur aspirate (k^h), non-aspirate (k) and unreleased (k')

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VOWELS (continuants)

Mouth and tongue falling

Unrounded Rounded (UK rounds more than US. God, Gawd; dot com, dawd kawm)

Front of mouth

i beet	û boot
I bit	u book
é bait	
è bet	

Back of mouth

ae bat	ô boat
a pot	o taught

LANGUAGE LEARNERS must firstly become aware of another language's sounds, then learn to make those sounds. Mouth architecture differs between regions and ethnies. Adopt the system and work at sounding pleasant. However, locals expect less cultural knowledge of those who have an accent.

Glide = moving between two vowels; treat as two vowels if there is a meaning difference.

Phoneme = meaningfully distinct sounds. Groups of phones heard with the same meaning.

allophones = different sounds having no meaningful difference. English released (lip^h) and unreleased (lip) has no meaningful difference. Mandarin has no b, only p and p^h.

English cannot pronounce a released consonant following a voiceless sound. Hence Kill (k^h), skip (k) and sick (k⁰), till T^h), still (t) and silt (t⁰).

American English flapped r (ɾ) appears as an allophone of "r". bottle, boʀl.

Metal (substance), medal (decoration) and meddle (verb), formerly distinguished by sound, are now pronounced alike, distinguished by grammatical function.

At around puberty, the brain stops leaning sounds quickly.

MEANING derives from (linguistic) **utterance** + (non-linguistic) **context** (background: worldview, culture, history, topic, surroundings, experience).

"Galen likes bikes." Galen = the one in this class. Bikes = bicycles. Likes = Galen is singular subject, not bikes.

Meaning never passes perfectly; continuing conversation allows speakers pass more meaning. Since texts exclude communication, one must seek more clues in the context.

GRAMMAR("linguistic context") = set of restrictions.

- Syntax: word and phrase order, assigning roles, functions("Man bites dog.")
- Morphology: joining of phonemes into words.
- Discourse: recipes for what to include.

MORPHEME = smallest unit of meaning. E.g., English "s" often = plural.

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ALLOMORPH = different sounds having a same meaning E.g., /s/ = /z/ after voiced consonants. These may occur bound or free: Il-legitimate, im-partial, in-comprehensible, dis-inclined.

All languages can, and usually do, communicate the same information, although they do so through different grammatical parts.

WORDS may consist of a single morpheme (bird), several free morphemes (blackbird), free morphemes plus affixes (non-bird), reduplication (ibu-ibu), root or stem change (man-men), morpheme + obligatory tone.

Intonation = non-obligatory sound imposed on several words together. E.g., English pitch change in the asking of questions. The same may be accomplished with a morpheme, like Mandarin “..ma’?” In Mandarin, each written character = one morpheme. They have some 60,000 such. Three morphemes together = “bicycle”; since removing any one of them changes the meaning, the three together constitute one word.

Chinese = isolating; German = agglutinating; English = more so than glu, depending on word order.

GRAMMAR

Language grammars may require (1) distance of objects, (2) completeness of actions, (3) how sure the speakers is about the truth of statements*, or (4) honorific Non-obligatory information never appears as part of the grammar. English grammar requires one to indicate complete or incomplete action* via verb suffixes = I saw..., they say....

Grammar, by lumping or splitting, assigns roles to words while orienting in time and space.

TONE & INTONATION both use pitch. The presence of either tends to exclude the other.

LEXICON Each language has its habitual use of lexical terms within contexts, which only native speakers can sense well.

HEIRARCHY of meaningful units:

Discourse

1. text
2. episodes
3. paragraphs
4. Syntax
5. Sentences
6. clauses
7. Phrases

Morphology

1. words
2. morphemes
3. phonemes

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SCRIPTS = Sets of ideas and actions that a culture deems normal at given times and places. Outsiders do not know the scripts and can easily say and do things offensively. Listen for understanding, early in language learning, without trying to generate speech. The human brain sorts out the phonology unconsciously.

LEXICON

No two languages group and label many things alike. Find how a language's set of terms overlaps with your own set. Ask, What are the kinds of...? It is a kind of what? What is it about ... that distinguishes it from ...? There is a prototype of most sets of objects. Objects that have most of its attributes fit the type, even if called something else in a different context.

METAPHORE = using a prototype for an object by "extension." Metaphors become enshrined by usage. These can seldom be translated as such. Over time, a society forgets the prototype and shifts to another one. The Bar B Q ranch style of cooking carne to be called barbecue: In the southern USA, it is to cook over an open flame and apply a sauce. Other places drop the requirement of the flame or of the sauce. Bible: "Tell that fox...." Lion = metaphor of a courageous king; fox of a pretender.

MEANING

Denotation = referent in the real world. Ask: What is the set of possible referents? Its prototype? and its extensions?

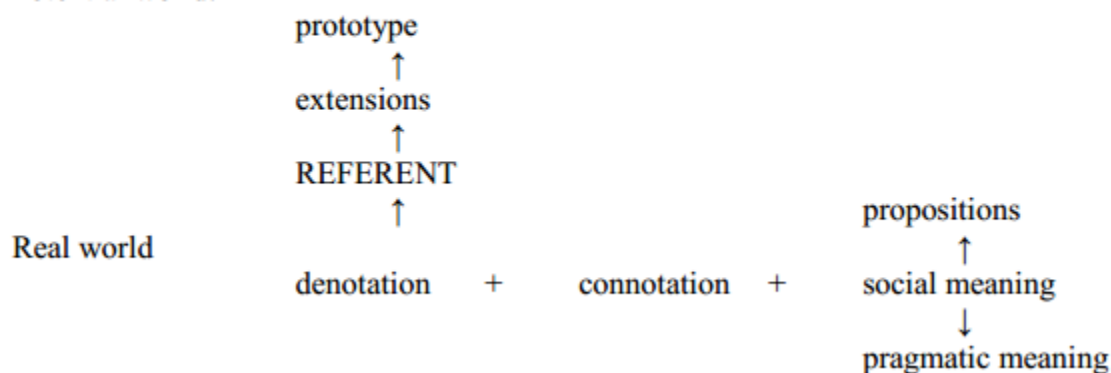
Connotation = evaluations and propositions about the referent.

Pragmatic = purpose of the referent.

Social = one's relationship to the referent.

LEXICAL MORPHEMES

Potential world:



GRAMMATICAL MORPHEMES

"This" has no denotation, only a contextual referent

"Of" has a function but no referent

Function = relationship between things, indicated by lexemes, word order or intonation.