Introduction to linguistics

Textbook

The textbook is Barry J. Blake, *All about Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; ISBN 978-0-19-923840-8), which you must buy. (You can buy it wherever you wish; within amazon.co.jp it’s at http://snipurl.com/amj-blake. Of course you are welcome to buy a used copy, but beware of scribbling by the previous owner, delays, or expensive postage.)

Because Blake’s book is new, I don’t think it has yet been reprinted. It has some faults. I’ll point out those that I notice. If you look hard you might notice one or two more; if so, please tell me. (If your copy has been corrected, please tell me that too.)

Supplementary texts: why and where

If there’s something you can’t understand in the book (or in what I say or write), read it again slowly or ask me, and also check that you’ve understood what preceded it. If you’re still in trouble, try looking in an additional book – sometimes a different perspective makes everything clear.

I’m going to name a lot of books. You won’t have to look in *any* of them, but it’s more helpful to let you choose than to specify just one or two books that might have already been borrowed by somebody else.

For each of the books below, you see the location:

- [CR], [RR] in the GIS Common Room; in the GIS Reference Room: note that a book can move between the two
- [L1] on the 1st floor of Ichigaya library
- [LB1], [LB2], [LB3], [LB4] on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th basement of Ichigaya library
- [TL] in Tama library (can easily be ordered from/for Ichigaya)

What’s between “{” and “}” is the “call number”: the number on the label on the spine that says where the book should be. And “<*>” means that it’s in the series “Oxford Introductions to Language Study”; these books are particularly compact and are written for beginners.

General books on language and linguistics


Reference books about language


General-interest books about language


Barry J. Blake, *All about Language*

**Introduction**

p. 3  *all languages have a vowel sound like the one in words like “cut”* . . . . For the kind of English that I happen to speak, this particular sound is either [ʌ] (*open-mid back unrounded*) or [ɐ] (*near-open central*), probably the former. Only a minority of languages have exactly [ʌ], though all languages have one much like it.

2. Word Classes

Blake has a rather traditional idea of which English words are which “parts of speech”. This doesn’t agree with much recent theoretical work or even recent descriptive work, such as Huddleston and Pullum’s *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, a book that he recommends (pp. 100, 310) and that I’ll call *CGEL*.

pp. 11–12  Nouns can modify nouns: e.g. the *brick* in *brick wall*. Some writers distinguish between *verbs*, which have clear meaning (*cut, throw, complete, live, hear, etc*), and *auxiliaries*, which do not (*be, do, may, shall*); others (such as Blake himself later in the book) call the former *lexical verbs* (or *thematic verbs*) and the latter *auxiliary verbs* (or *auxiliaries*).

pp. 12–13  *CGEL* calls these *determinatives* rather than *determiners*.

p. 14  Some writers put *who, anybody*, etc among *quantifiers* (a group that includes *any, all, every, etc*) rather than pronouns, put *my*, etc among pronouns, and/or put all pronouns among determiners.

p. 15  *CGEL* puts what Blake calls “subordinating conjunctions” among adverbs.

pp. 17–18  *CGEL* classes Blake’s “verbal particles” (e.g. *out* in *took the rubbish out*) as intransitive prepositions: just as *cough* is a verb without an object, so *out* is a preposition without an object.

Below and for the later chapters, “Reference” means books that you might use for additional reference purposes (in addition to the books listed above); “Sources and further reading” tells you where Blake’s recommended books and other materials can be found (if I’ve located them anywhere at Hosei or on the web), and adds materials I have mentioned and a very few of my own recommendations.

**Reference**


3. Forming New Words

p. 29 Various dictionaries say that *metrosexual* and *retrosexual* come from *metro- and heterosexual*. Actually neologisms (new words) tend to trigger more neologisms (so the new word *maer*, a term that’s now of only historic interest, led to *laser*), and *retrosexual* is likely to have come primarily from *metrosexual*.

p. 33 *Nigger* is definitely not the Latin word for “black”, although it is derived from the Latin word for “black”.

4. Meaning of Words

p. 46 Huddleston and Pullum reject the notion of “phrasal verbs”, and instead regard them as verbs with particles (most of which are intransitive prepositions). See A Student’s Introduction to English Grammar, pp. 144–46.

p. 47 The word *crayfish* came from an Old French word *escrevisse*, and the -visse part of that sounded similar to the way that *fish* was pronounced at the time.
**Dictionaries**

Here are some of the dictionaries that Blake briefly describes. (In order to save space, I’ll skip most of the publication details) The library is particularly well stocked with English–English (and English–Japanese) dictionaries, and a little investigation will show you which other ones are notable and where they are in the library.


**Sources and further reading**


**5–6. The Simple Sentence, Compound and Complex Sentences**

p. 61 a truly descriptive grammar would be comprehensive: For English, the best examples are *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* and *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (for details see above, in “Reference” for Chapter 2); for Japanese, it’s Samuel E. Martin’s *A Reference Grammar of Japanese* (for details see “Reference” below).

p. 62 as far as I know, nobody deviates from standard usage on this point: Although in many lects (dialects, sociolects) *them* is used instead of, or as well as, *those*.

p. 71 The way that English genitive *-s* attaches itself to the end of a phrase shows that it’s what’s called a clitic.

p. 82 *This book reads well* is an example of what’s called the middle intransitive (where middle means something like “halfway between active and passive”).

p. 83 You may wonder how this example of what’s claimed to be a long word from Southern Tiwa is different from a sentence whose short words are separated by
hyphens instead of spaces. The answer is that this passes various tests for a single word. If you’re interested, see Chapter 4, “Defining the Word-Form”, of Laurie Bauer’s *Introducing Linguistic Morphology*.

p. 89 *She said that she wanted a red sports car* – a “complement clause” introduced by a “subordinator”; other writers (such as Andrew Radford, in *English Syntax*) call the latter a *complementiser*.

p. 91 The first two thirds of this page – all the stuff about stones and drugs – is confused. The resemblance between “stones” (small rocks) and “Stones” (Rolling Stones) is distracting when we remember the Stones’ earlier use of drugs, and there are some typos, and so forth. Instead, let’s consider *My students seem to enjoy syntax*. What this sentence means is that *My students enjoy syntax* seems to be true. We can say *It seems that my students enjoy syntax*. What’s the meaning of *it* in this sentence? Nothing at all. But English (unlike Japanese, Spanish, etc.) demands an overt subject, so here English provides the meaningless (“dummy” or “expletive”) word *it*. The process by which *My students enjoy syntax* is transformed into *It seems that my students enjoy syntax* is called *raising*. The verb *seem* is a *raising predicate*, as it raises the subject (*My students*) of a lower clause to become the subject of the larger (“matrix”) clause.

p. 91 *The rest of the sentences just provides context*: Change provides to provide.

p. 91 For the green pair at the foot of the page, substitute: “Bruce is eager to [Bruce] see” and “is easy [not-Bruce] to see [Bruce]”. Or for the former, *Bruce is eager for himself to see “Cats”*, and for the latter, *is easy for people other than Bruce to see Bruce*.

p. 92 *He left after the meeting concluded*, etc: CGEL regards the word after here as a preposition.

pp. 92–93 In the example here, *driving across the plains* is conventionally called a *dangling participle*, which is something that is often criticized by prescriptivists.

p. 94 The division of relative clauses into *restrictive* and *non-restrictive* is a conventional one but Huddleston and Pullum call them *integrated* and *supplementary* respectively (for their reason for rejecting *restrictive*, see *A Student’s Introduction to English Grammar*, p. 188).

p. 94 *In fact the grammar check in Word has just put a green line*. . . . Silly old Word; there’s nothing wrong with using the word *that* with a restrictive/integrated relative clause (see *A Student’s Introduction to English Grammar*, p. 191).

p. 95 *Possessor* is a useful term, but remember that it doesn’t necessarily imply possession in any normal sense. *I saw that student whose cold developed into flu last month* – but if you have a cold you don’t “possess” it.

p. 96 At the very foot of the page: the *furlong* is a measure of length (about 201 metres). Even in the English-speaking world (“anglosphere”) it’s obsolete, other than in horse racing. Lester Piggott (b. 1935) was a jockey.
When Winston Churchill was rebuked for this supposed solecism, he replied "That is the sort of English up with which I will not put." Forget about this. Keep reading only if you wonder why I’d tell you to forget it. Churchill was a British prime minister, rebuked means “told off”, and solecism means “mistake” (especially of language or logic). Churchill’s point here, and Blake’s, is that this is a very strange way to say “This is the sort of English I won’t put up with”, which has a preposition at the end and is idiomatic. The former sentence is just one of many versions that appear in this legend; their general form is: “This/That is the sort/ kind/type of [noun phrase] up with which I will not put.” Whatever words are in it, the strangeness of this sentence does not show that avoidance of stranding a preposition at the end of a sentence leads to strange results. Briefly, this is because here it’s not a matter of a single word but instead of two (up with). For details, see Geoffrey K. Pullum, “A Churchill story up with which I will no longer put”, Language Log, 8 December 2004, http://snipurl.com/not-put-cheating. (Incidentally, although Churchill is widely reported to have written this, or something like it, it’s very unlikely that he did so. See Benjamin G. Zimmer, “A misattribution no longer to be put up with”, Language Log, 12 December 2004, http://snipurl.com/not-put-strand.)

In Q2: Red Rum is running at Aintree: Red Rum was a horse that was famous in the mid 1970s; Aintree is the name of a famous racetrack near Liverpool.

In Q8: earn a pedant’s censure: this means “be criticized by a language prescriptivist” (a “language maven”)

Reference

Sources and further reading
7. Using Language

p. 106  *sonuvabitch*: i.e. *son of a bitch*. This is what’s called *eye dialect*, deliberately incorrect spelling to suggest that what’s said is nonstandard without actually demonstrating *how* it’s nonstandard. (In this example, *son* and *a bitch* are preserved, but *of* becomes “*uv*”. Yet in standard English, *of* would here be pronounced /əv/, and “*uv*” is a straightforward way to represent this in the normal alphabet.

p. 108  *It was Viduka who won the game for us* and *The one who won the game for us was Viduka* are examples of what are called *cleft* and *pseudo-cleft* sentences respectively.

p. 114  Second line: *As an example of including too much information, take the following*. . . . This example is confusing, and I suggest that you skip it, which means that you can skip this explanation as well. Keep reading only if you’re interested. Blake says that *I would have thought most people are familiar with the fact that [“Porgy and Bess”] is for an entirely black cast*. . . . Not exactly. Just as many of Shakespeare’s historical plays are for white characters, *Porgy and Bess* is for black characters. But just as these plays by Shakespeare can be, and are, played by casts (groups of actors) of all colors (even within Britain, where there’s no shortage of white people), *Porgy and Bess* can be, and is, played by casts (groups of actor/singers) of all colors. Still, it’s likely that Glyndebourne (an opera company) was particularly keen to employ black people. Moreover, the singer might have thought that her friend (more used to less popular works) might benefit from a subtle reminder of what *Porgy and Bess* is. Anyway, I don’t think that it violates the principle/maxim of quantity for the singer to say this.

p. 119  Third line: *to ‘bags’ the next turn*: Schoolboy English; *bags* (or *bag* in my English): is informal for “say [you] want [something] before anybody else does”.

Sources and further reading


8. Phonetics

**Tips for typing IPA characters:** You don’t need any special “phonetic” font. Instead, just use a large font that includes IPA characters in addition to others. Here, I am using Bitstream Vera Sans, which can legally be downloaded free (http://www.gnome.org/fonts/). DejaVu, which is based on Vera, is much bigger and can also legally be downloaded free (http://dejavu.sourceforge.net/). Lucida Sans Unicode and Lucida Grande (which come with Windows and Mac OS X respectively) also include IPA characters, and other fonts that may already be in your computer may do as well. Fonts can expand over time: when I started typing this, I found that phonetic characters I typed into it using one computer would not appear on another computer: this was because the version of Bitstream Vera Sans installed in the second computer was older than the one installed in the first and didn’t include as many characters.

p. 126 rhyme: Other writers spell this “rime”.

p. 129 There is an American version of IPA. No there is not. Take this to mean There is a de facto American alternative to IPA. This alternative has various names. Wikipedia calls it “Americanist phonetic notation” and the article on this is good (at least when not vandalized, e.g. http://snipurl.com/american-phonetic). In their *Phonetic Symbol Guide*, Pullum and Ladusaw refer to it as “American usage”. Briefly, it’s a phonetic alphabet that was designed by Americans, and primarily for “Americanists” (people studying native American languages, as briefly listed on p. 210); it had some advantages over IPA until computers, Unicode and large fonts made it easy for us to type such IPA characters as ɖɗɠɧɮʑ. Now it seems rather pointless, although many American linguists remain attached to it and you may have to read some paper or book that uses it.

p. 129 (foot of the page) As you’ll read on p. 139, there are languages with rounded front vowels.

p. 130 Received Pronunciation: Here, received means “generally accepted”. This use of the word is rather unusual, and is associated with RP and *The Dictionary of Received Ideas*, the standard English title for Flaubert’s satirical work *Le Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (紋切型事典).

p. 130 This distinction between kinds of English in which the “r” of hard (a) is and (b) isn’t pronounced is the distinction between (a) rhotic and (b) non-rhotic kinds of English: see p. 136.

p. 130 In General American [ə] is also used] for words like “cot” and “hog”, which have [ɔ:] in RP. I think these should be [a] and not [ə] respectively.

p. 134 There are two “th”-sounds in English made by putting the tip of the tongue between the upper and the lower teeth. For most speakers of RP, the tongue does not go between the teeth (see Gimson’s *Pronunciation of English*, 6th ed., pp. 183–84).

p. 135 In IPA the symbol . . . upside down-“r” is used] for the sound found in the mainstream pronunciation of words like “Garry”: This is written [ɹ] and it’s
better called “turned r”.

p. 139 The clicks [ʘ | ] together with much else, are described in Peter Ladefoged’s *Vowels and Consonants* (see “Sources and further reading” below) and are demonstrated on the CD-ROM that comes with that book.

**Reference**


**Sources and further reading**


Phonetiks: *The Sounds of Spoken Language*. (Alternative title Phonetics Flash Animation Project; previous title Phonetics: The Sounds of English and Spanish.) University of Iowa. The sounds of US English, Spanish, and German. (“You must have Flash 7 or higher plug-in to use this web site.”) http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/ or http://snipurl.com/iowa-ph


**9. Phonology**

p. 144 For a Japanese analogy, consider the sounds of ん in 新橋, 審議 and 進退 – to me, they sound like [m], [n], and [ŋ] respectively.

p. 147 (in the box) an “intervocalic” /t/ pronounced by flicking the tongue up to the alveolar ridge, with continuous voicing: such a flap is written [ɾ]. This is close to the sound of Japanese ラリルレロ, although the latter is more correctly [J].
p. 151 Table 9.1: Blake writes “**” for several initial consonant clusters that do occur very occasionally in English, and even in the following notes (pp. 151–52) doesn’t mention all of these. Try thinking of some!

p. 152 End of note (v): They presumably aim at [s] and don’t notice when it comes out as [ʃ]. If it’s a majority, it seems likely that the pronunciation is regarded as correct. Barry Blake says in email that he has talked with people who believe they are saying [s] but are actually saying [ʃ].

p. 153 near the foot: since we are all persons of the highest probity: “since we are all very decent people”, which rules out an alternative interpretation of /letʃərəz/. (I shan’t tell you what that alternative is; have fun working it out for yourselves!)

p. 155 alpha, bravo, Charlie: This is the international radiotelephony spelling alphabet.

p. 155 Clearly something is missing: For missing, read different.

p. 159 Note that [c] in [laca] represents a voiceless palatal stop: which means that it’s something between [t] and [k].

Reference

Sources and further reading

10. Writing
p. 164 the rebus principle: Think of 英國, such as the way that 英國 was first thought of (or 米國 in Japan and 美國 in China and Korea).

p. 164 mainly by adding a determinative: Think of the commonest kind (形声字, xíngshēngzì) of compound Chinese characters; Blake discusses these on p. 171.

p. 169 syllabic script: Something like Japanese kana or Korean hangul.

p. 172 syllables in which the coda is the same as the onset of the succeeding syllable: If you’re wondering what to call this thing written with little ハ, it’s a geminate.

p. 175 “Slough” (the place and the Slough of Despond in “Pilgrim’s Progress”): In case your command of IPA is rusty, Slough rhymes with “cow”. The word slough may be archaic and perhaps obsolete, but it’s an old word meaning “bog”. Slough is also a town west of London. The Slough of Despond is a fictional bog in the 17th-century religious work The Pilgrim’s Progress (usual Japanese title 天
Despond is now obsolete; it used to mean “misery”. (The related word despondency is still used.)

Sources and further reading


11. Varieties

p. 183  Scottish English is a dialect within Britain: Perhaps. What Blake calls Scottish English is more often called Scots (while Scottish English is more often used to mean a fairly standardized, Scotland-wide form of English). To give you a taste, I quote the top page of lallans.co.uk:

This wabsteid rowes swackest wi Realplayer dounladit an set as defaut for pleyin MP3 file types. Gin ye need this swftware the link til the corrie o this jot will tak ye til thair wabsteid. See an howk for the free pleyer – that dis aa ye’ll need.

[This] website runs most smoothly with Realplayer downloaded and set as default for MP3 file types. If you need this software the link at the left of this note will take you to their website. Remember to search for the free player – that does every-thing you'll need.

Of course the division between dialect and language is rather arbitrary, but you’ll probably agree that Scots is very different from standard English. And since 2002 it has been a “protected language” under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

p. 187  In Britain and the Commonwealth the Oxford English Dictionary is the ac-cepted standard [for spelling]: No it isn’t. In English, many verbs can be written either -ise or -ize (and nouns, either -isation or -ization). In the US, -ize (-ization) is normal. In Britain, both are used, but -ise (-isation) is much commoner. The Oxford English Dictionary uses -ize (-ization). My impression is that there’s no single authority for spelling in Britain.

p. 191  a professional linguist might point out that AAVE has its own system: They can and do. For a short and simple piece, see Pullum, “Why Ebonics is no joke.” There are several good books; Green’s *African American English* is particularly
The following could have been written by Bridget Jones:

Bridget Jones is the fictional author of a regular column in the British newspaper The Independent; the material has been turned into books and films.

Dutch treat: I find this explanation hard to believe, partly because “treat” doesn’t rhyme with any relevant noun (“meal”, “dinner”, “feast”, etc), and partly because of the long history within English of non-rhyming, pejorative uses of “Dutch” (“Dutch courage”, “Dutch wife”, etc). The Oxford English Dictionary partly agrees with me, and finds the earliest use of “Dutch treat” to be American, not British.

In Switzerland, for instance, High German is the high form and Swiss German the low form. Change the first two words to In much of Switzerland. (In some parts of Switzerland, a form of French that’s close to the standard is used for almost all purposes.) If you’re interested, there are further complexities in Switzerland. For example, somebody living in the east may routinely switch among High German (i.e. standard German), the local form of Swiss German, and also the local form of Romansh (a language that’s only spoken by a small minority of Swiss people). And for business this person may on occasion have to use French or Italian or both.

Sources and further reading


12. Language Change

p.205 I think that Blake understates the difficulty that most present-day native speakers of English face in understanding Shakespeare and Chaucer.

p. 206 It’s true that Anglosaxon languages replaced languages that are commonly called Celtic. However it seems that this replacement happened in a way that was very different from the story that’s commonly told and that Blake summarizes. If you’re interested, see Oppenheimer’s writing, listed below.

pp. 208, 211 In his third list item (The Turkic family . . .), Blake mentions an Altaic family; at the end of his list he mentions the isolates Japanese, Korean and Basque. Some linguists believe that Japanese and Korean are linked in the Altaic family. Although the distinction between dialect and language is vague, many linguists regard Ryukyuan (琉球語) as languages rather than dialects, and if they are then together with Japanese they’re in the “Japonic” family.

p. 208 When writing about the languages in the Caucasus, Blake says that three families have typological similarities. (He mentions typology again on p. 278.) Typological similarities are similarities of form, regardless of origin. Consider Chinese and English: they are different in many ways and they are not members of the same family, but typologically they are similar in that they both have “SVO” (subject–verb–object) as the standard order.

p. 213 in actual osculation: “in actual kissing”

p. 215 Perhaps phenomena and criteria are starting to become used as singular – which would not be surprising, in view of agenda, data, and opera – but they haven’t arrived there yet. Use phenomenon and criterion for the singular if you don’t want people to laugh at you.

p. 218 There goes the neighborhood: For Here/There + come/go see CGEL p. 1390. (For There stood the killer, etc, see CGEL pp. 1402–1403 on the “presentational construction”.)

p. 218 we still put an auxiliary in second position after certain adverbs: These adverbs are what CGEL calls absolute negators (such as never) and approximate negators (such as scarcely and rarely) – but this only works for clausal negation; see CGEL pp. 788–89.

p. 219 “on the face of”, “at the bottom of”, and “at the back of”, which can be considered compound prepositions: It’s true that they are often called compound

p. 220  
AC/DC: Originally, AC meant “alternating current” and DC meant “direct current”. AC/DC means “bisexual”, but strangely neither AC nor DC is used by itself to mean heterosexual or homosexual. (Moreover, the “bisexual” usage is now uncommon: the word seems to have been usurped by the name of a rock group.)

p. 220  
“Spam”, for example, formerly referred to canned meat. . . . Even now, Spam is the registered trademark of Hormel Foods Corporation for its brand of “luncheon meat”; spam (small “s”) is indeed used for junk mail, and unusually we know how this extension of meaning came to happen (but I’ll let you find this out for yourselves).

p. 221  
“Common” itself has “gone downhill” as in “They’re quite common”. To me, the use of common in the dismissive Her manners are very common seems old-fashioned. There’s nothing pejorative about iPods are common among students, and I suspect that common has experienced amelioration.

p. 221  
“Urbane” [. . .] came to mean “sophisticated”: Yes, but only in the present-day meaning of sophisticated, which itself has undergone considerable amelioration since its roots in sophistry.

pp. 221–22  
Although awful, terrible and the others do indeed mean “very bad”, the adverbs from some of them can be used as simple intensifiers.

p. 224  
You might have trouble with the Shakespeare quotation. First, the planet Neptune hadn’t been discovered in Shakespeare’s day, and here Neptune is instead the Roman god of the sea. Here’s my attempt at a translation into modern English: Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No, this hand of mine will instead turn the many seas pink, making the green seas red. (The word incarnadine is hardly ever used now, but when it is used it means “red” rather than “pink”.)

p. 225  
To spare you the embarrassment that might arise if you asked a Spanish-speaking friend, I’ll point out that cojones are “balls” (i) in the male, anatomical sense (e.g. “He was kicked in the balls”; a use that itself is metaphorical), and (ii) also in the metaphorical sense that arises from that (e.g. “He’s really got balls”). And now cojones (not always spelled correctly) is used in the metaphorical sense within English too: “Anyone who thinks Bill Clinton doesn’t have the cojones [sic] to speak up needs corrective lenses” (Jayne Lyn Stahl, “Cojones and ‘Conservative Hit Jobs!’”, The Huffington Post, 25 September 2006, http://snipurl.com/c-jones .)

p. 227  
This has lead to the notion that. . . . A simple typo. Not lead (which would be present tense) but led.

p. 228  
see the “Prodigal Son” example above: This is on p. 214.
Reference


Sources and further reading


13. Language Acquisition

p. 234 *is exposed to repeated tokens of [pa]: “is played a recording of [pa pa pa pa pa pa pa pa]*”

p. 245 *Followers of Chomsky have posited that there are innate principles of “Universal Grammar” (UG) that constrain and guide the child.* The idea that there are innate principles, or an innate instinct to learn language, is called innatism or nativism.

p. 246 *the first twelve years constitutes a critical or sensitive period:* This is usually called the Critical Period (CP). Evidence suggests that there is no simple cut-off point for a single CP, and that instead the CP ends earlier for phonology than it does for syntax.

p. 247 *The ice-cream cost three dollars* There has long been discussion among linguists about the reason why sentences with verbs of measure (cost, measure, etc.) can’t be put in the passive. Blake says “one needs to consider discourse
principles." Another reason is given by Frederick Newmeyer, who says (Language Form and Language Function, pp. 186–87) that three dollars here is not an object but instead a predicate nominative, like a young lady in Your daughter has become a young lady. You can’t say *A young lady has been become by your daughter, and in the same way you can’t say *Three dollars is cost by the ice cream.

p. 249 La plume de ma tante: a phrase that is commonly given as an example when people make fun of unrealistic language exercises. (The stereotype of an absurd English sentence is My postilion has been struck by lightning; this is confidently stated to have appeared in this or that kind of textbook or phrasebook, but nobody has yet actually found it, so it’s almost certainly apocryphal.)

Sources and further reading


CHILDES. http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/


Below is the sequence of papers with “arguments for and against Chomsky’s position”. It’s a learned dispute between on the one hand Noam Chomsky and the biologists Marc Hauser and Tecumseh Fitch, and on the other the psychologist Steven Pinker and the linguist Ray Jackendoff. (Although these people shouldn’t be compartmentalized so quickly: Pinker, for example, has written books about language.) You’ll probably find the papers difficult to understand (and if you don’t find them difficult to understand, I fear that you will have found this course shallow and boring). Still, Blake does recom-
mend this exchange of views and the material is worthwhile.


### 14. Language Processing: Brains and Computers


p. 258  *on your internal video*: “in your imagination”

p. 259  “So you’re getting calls from the other side, eh?” Here, the other side means “the world of the dead”.

p. 259  *when the goats are lambing*: The verb to lamb is usually used in just this way (but for sheep). Likewise, foal and calve are used for horses and cows respectively. Lambs are to sheep what kids are to goats, so you might think that when the goats are kidding would do the job. Sure enough, kid does have this meaning. However, the other meaning of the verb to kid – *The mayor of some suburb of Anchorage for veep? You must be kidding!* – is so strong that it seems to have blocked this out.

p. 260  The stories about Spooner’s spoonerisms are hard to believe. What might the context be for weary benches? Most of these stories are apocryphal (although they are enjoyable).

p. 261  If mondegreens look interesting, you should enjoy http://www.kissthisguy.com

p. 265  *cepstrum*: Even if the mathematics doesn’t interest you, you can see examples of “quefrequency analysis” via cepstrum in Gessl, “Cepstrum analysis”.

**Sources and further reading**

15. The Origin of Language

communicating with their conspecifics: Communicating with other animals of the same species (dogs communicating with dogs, rats communicating with rats, etc)

Sources and further reading


Burling, R. The Talking Ape: How Language Evolved. ロビンズ・バーリング著『言葉を使うサル：言葉の起源と進化』東京: 青土社, 2007. {L1} {801/BU}


Introduction to Linguistics. Fig. 6: English vowel phonemes. cf. Scherer/Wollmann (31986: 130). 4. iÉ挤压. Introduction to Linguistics. 5.
2.2 Phonetic Alphabet developed by the International Phonetic Association (IPA). relevant symbols for English with examples. Susanne
Handl. 2.3 Important notions in phonology. - phone vs. phoneme - allophone - complementary distribution - free variants vs. contextual
variants - minimalpair. Introduction to English Language & Linguistics. 0. Introduction to language and linguistics. 0.1. grammar =
linguistics from school 0.2. linguistics = thinking about language 0.3. features of human language. 1. Phonetics & phonology 2.
5.2. The seminar called Introduction to English Linguistics is offered in English to first year students in weekly sessions. Since for most
students this seminar is the only place where Thus the students will have an opportunity to get acquainted with the main ideas and the
special English vocabulary of each topic before coming to the seminar, and this frees their tutors from having to lecture during the
seminar, enabling them to concentrate on discussion and practical problem-solving activities.