Thomas E. Payne

Exploring Language Structure

A Student's Guide

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Exploring Language Structure

Designed for those beginning to study linguistics, this is a lively introduction to two key aspects of the structure of language: syntax (the structure of sentences) and morphology (the structure of words). It shows students in a step-by-step fashion how to analyze the syntax and morphology of any language, by clearly describing the basic methods and techniques, and providing almost 100 practical exercises based on data from a rich variety of the world's languages. Written in an engaging style and complete with a comprehensive glossary, *Exploring language structure* explains linguistic concepts by using clear analogies from everyday life. It introduces a range of essential topics in syntax and morphology such as rules, categories, word classes, grammatical relations, multi-clause constructions, and typology. Providing a solid foundation in morphology and syntax, this is the perfect introductory text for beginning students, and will fully prepare them for more advanced courses in linguistic analysis.

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To all beginning students of linguistics who have ever felt they were drowning in a sea of strange terminology and mysterious concepts.

Preface

> Alice thought to herself, "There's no use in speaking." The voices didn't join in this time, as she hadn't spoken, but, to her great surprise, they all thought in chorus (I hope you understand what thinking in chorus means – for I must confess that I don't), "Better say nothing at all. Language is worth a thousand pounds a word!" Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* (1872)

If we could "think in chorus," we would not need language. Language is one very important tool whereby individuals share and negotiate representations of situations, ideas, and feelings. Through language, individual minds are constantly influencing one another in sometimes subtle, and sometimes obvious, ways. The result is a culture, a society, a "common mind" that has many characteristics of a single organism. For example, it may "change," "grow," "stagnate," "thrive," "become sick," "heal," or "die." Language is a physical, outward representation of individual mind-internal states. Communication, via language and other similar tools, is an essential component of all human collective activity. Perhaps this is why "Language is worth a thousand pounds a word!"

At present (2005), there is a body of terms and concepts that is an implicit part of the "common mind" that constitutes the culture of linguistic science. This book is, in part, an attempt to explicate a portion of that implicit common mind for beginning students. In other words, the book attempts to reify an array of ideas that exist tacitly in the minds of many autonomous individuals, as though there were one, unitary whole. Of course, such a task is inherently impossible on several counts. First, linguists are notorious for generating new terminology and co-opting familiar terminology in new and intriguing ways. Thus the common mind that this book attempts to explicate resembles Wittgenstein's "enclosure with holes" (1958:45) more than a bounded container with fixed and invariant content. Second, linguists are legendary "hair splitters" – linguistic texts and theoretical works are filled with endless modification and qualification of terms and concepts. What seems to be very clear and unambiguous to one linguist encompasses a whole range of possibilities to the next. Finally, language itself is constantly breaking free of the terminological cubby holes that linguists are so fond of making for it. Even as the range of ideas people care to communicate is infinite, so the means languages provide to express those ideas vary in vast and often mysterious ways.

In spite of this inherent elusiveness of the subject matter, this introductory text is respectfully submitted as a first attempt to spell out in simple terms the common mind of one small corner of early twenty-first century linguistic science. Just as any communicative act is an approximation, a partial representation of internal mental states of communicators, so this book is a partial representation of its subject matter, namely analytical methods in morphology and syntax. While no particular linguistic theory is promoted, terms, methods, and formalisms that have stood the test of time, and have become part of the implicit common mind of most linguists, are employed and explained. I am thinking in particular of such diagnostic displays as position-class diagrams and process rules (chapter 2), "classic" generative phonological rule notation (chapter 3), phrase structure rules and tree diagrams (chapter 6). These are methods that many linguists use in the ordinary work of describing and understanding linguistic structures, even if they do not use them very much in their published work. Understanding these methods is essential for basic linguistic analysis and as background for more advanced courses in linguistic theory.

This book has been written for, and in consultation with, undergraduate linguistics students, primarily in the system of higher education in the United States of America. A previous or concurrent course in phonetics would be helpful, but even this is not necessary, if the instructor will take one or more class hours to explain the phonetic transcription used, beginning in chapter 3. Charts of the International Phonetic Alphabet for pulmonic consonants and vowels are found immediately before the text proper. These may be used for reference, as needed.

Another reference that students have requested is a comprehensive glossary. In this book, specialized linguistic terms are highlighted when they are first introduced and/or when they are discussed. All of these terms are given concise definitions in the glossary at the end of the book.

As this preface is being written, many universities in North America are changing calendars from a "quarter system" (three major 12-week sessions per year, plus a summer session), to a "semester system" (two major 18-week sessions per year, plus a summer session). The ideal use of this book would be for a 16- to 18-week semester course in morphology and syntax. Since there is more material than can be assimilated comfortably in a 12-week quarter course, I would recommend treating one or more of chapters 3, 6, 7, 9, and 10 lightly (or eliminating some altogether) if the course must be taught in 12 weeks or fewer.

If anyone finds a piece of data that needs correction, or an inaccurate acknowledgment of a source, please notify me at tpayne@uoregon.edu.

Finally, I am still actively seeking additional data and problem sets that illustrate points made in the text. If you have such material, and would like to submit it for the internet collection of data sets (http://www.uoregon.edu/~tpayne/problem_sets/), please send it to me. In this way, I hope this work will become an ongoing resource for those who study and teach introductory and advanced-level linguistics courses.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank all of the students, linguists, and others who have submitted problem sets, data, and interesting observations that have been incorporated into this work. I have tried to acknowledge all sources and be true to the original data as much as possible, but there are undoubtedly still corrections to be made.

For guidance and many suggestions on earlier drafts of portions of this work, I wish to thank the many students of Analytical Methods in Morphology and Syntax courses at the University of Oregon, Northwest Christian College, Indian Institute for Cross-Cultural Communication, Novosibirsk State University, and Universidad Ricardo Palma, Lima, Perú. In addition, I would like to personally acknowledge the following colleagues: Colleen Ahland, Andy Black, Beth Bryson, Bob Carlson, Joyce Carlson, Wally Chafe, Bernard Comrie, Scott DeLancey, Bob Dixon, Matthew Dryer, Sylvia Earnest, Bob Eaton, Rhonda Fraser, Danielle Gordon, Nelleke Goudswaard, Colette Grinevald, John Haiman, Bernd Heine, Kendall Isaac, Eric Jackson, Christian Lehmann, Steve Marlett, Marianne Mithun, Arlyne Moi, Johanna Nichols, Ken Olson, Doris Payne, Stephanie Payne, Eric Pedersen, Maggie Romani, Omana Sounderaraj, Naoaki Tai, Masahiro Takata, Prang Thiengburanathum, Sandy Thompson, Cynthia Vakareliyska, and David Weber.

A note on transcriptions

This book contains examples and exercises from dozens of languages around the world. Whenever possible, examples are presented in the official writing systems of the languages represented. In these cases, standard capitalization and punctuation are used for the language data. Sometimes, however, it is necessary or advisable to use a romanized transcription, instead of or in addition to the official writing system. In such cases, no capitalization or punctuation is used.

For Russian examples, I use standard roman transliteration as recommended by the American Library Association and the Library of Congress (Barry 1997:138–55).

For Korean examples, I use the "Yale system" (Martin 1992) for transliterating Hangul characters.

For other languages, I use the International Phonetic Alphabet (see end of preliminary matter).

Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in grammatical glosses

1	First person (I, me, we, us, etc.)
2	Second person (you, y'all, etc.)
3	Third person (he, him, she, her, they, them, it, etc.)
ABL	Ablative case
ABS	Absolutive case
ACC	Accusative case
ACT	Actor
AN	Animate
ANT	Anterior
APL	Applicative
ARR	On arrival (directional marker)
ART	Article
ASP	Aspect
ASSOC	Associative
AUG	Augmentative
AUX	Auxiliary
BEN	Benefactive
CAUSE	Causative
CL	Classifier
COM	Comitative
COMP	Complementizer
COMPL	Completive aspect
CONJ	Conjunction
CONT	Continuative aspect
COP	Copula
DAT, D	Dative
DEF	Definite
DEM	Demonstrative
DEP	Dependent
DIM	Diminutive
DIR	Directional
DISJUNCT	Disjunctive mode
DIST	Distal deixis

DISTR	Distributive
DL	Dual (two things)
DR	Downriver
DS	*Different subject*
DTRNS	Detransitive
E	Epenthetic form
ERG	Ergative case
EXCL	Exclusive
F, FEM	Feminine
FOC	Focus
FUT	Future tense
GEN	Genitive case
GNO	Gnomic aspect
I, INTRNS	Intransitive
IMP	Imperative mode
IMPERF	Imperfective aspect
INAN	Inanimate
INC	Inclusive
INCEP	Inceptive
INCHO	Inchoative
INCLD	Included
INCOMPL	Incompletive aspect
IND	Indicative
INF	Infinitive
INST	Instrumental
INTS	Intensive
IRR	Irrealis mode
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
MALF	Malefactive mode
MAN	Manner
MID	Middle voice
NEG	Negative
NEU	Neutral
NF	Non-future
NOM	Nominative
NOMLZ	Nominalization
NONSPEC	Nonspecific aspect
NPAST	Non-past
NS	Non-subject
OBJ	Object
OBL	Oblique
PART	Participle

PASS	Passive voice
PAST, PT	Past tense
PAT	Patient
PERF	Perfective aspect
PL	Plural (several things)
PN	Pronoun
POS	Possessed
POT	Potential mode
PPART	Past Participle
PR	Present tense
PROG	Progressive aspect
PROX	Proximal deixis
PURP	Purpose
REAS	Reason
RECIP	Reciprocal
REFL	Reflexive
REL	Relativizer
REX	Response to expectation
SEQ	Sequential
SG	Singular (1 thing)
SIM	Simultaneous
SS	Same subject
STAT	Stative
SUBJ	Subject
TOP	Topic
TRNS	Transitive

Abbreviations used in syntactic structure diagrams

ADJ	Adjective
ADV	Adverb
AUX	Auxiliary
COMP	Complementizer
CONJ	Conjunction
D	Determiner
DP	Determiner Phrase (or "determined noun phrase")
I	Inflection (or "inflectional particle")
IP	Inflectional Phrase (or "inflected verb phrase")
N	Noun
NP	Noun Phrase
P	Preposition or Postposition
PP	Prepositional or Postpositional Phrase

S	Clause (or "Sentence")
V	Verb
VP	Verb Phrase

Other abbreviations

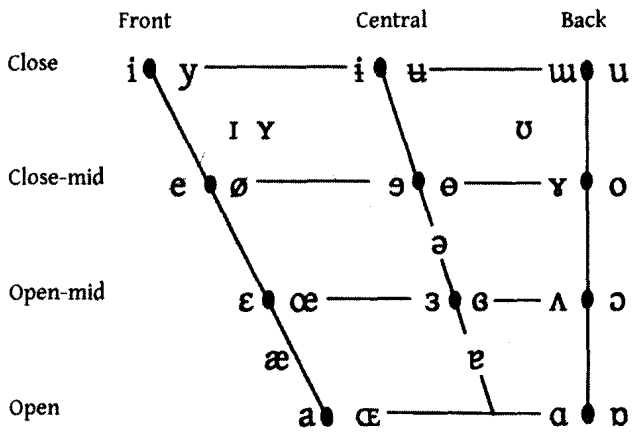
A	Most AGENT-like argument of a multi-argument clause
C	Any consonant
Chô	Chômeur
D	Dative or indirect object of a multi-argument clause
N	Any nasal consonant
O	"Other," less AGENT-like argument of a multi-argument clause
OBL	Oblique clausal element (non-argument)
S	Single argument of a one-argument clause
V	Any vowel

Table A *The International Phonetic Alphabet (revised to 1993): Consonants (pulmonic) Used with permission of the IPA (see http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/ipa/pulmonic.html)*

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or flap				ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

Table B *International Phonetic Alphabet: Vowels (Used with permission of the IPA [see http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/ipa/pulmonic.html])*



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

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