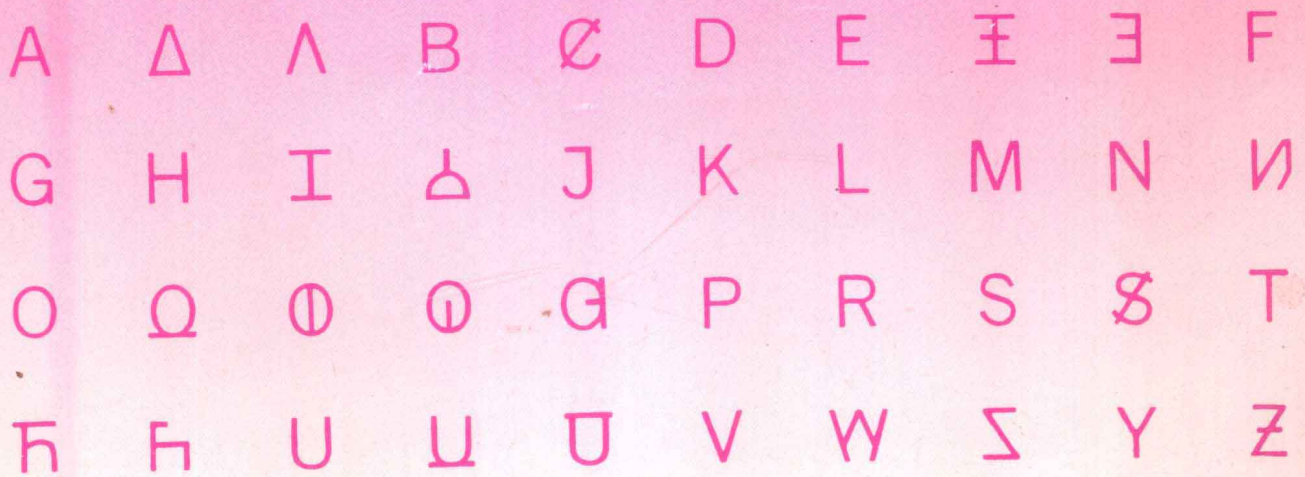
A Linguistics Workbook

Richard A. Demers
Ann K. Farmer



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A Linguistics Workbook

Preface

This workbook contains exercises from a wide variety of languages and is thus designed to overcome a (deliberate) limitation in the textbook *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*. The textbook was restricted to illustrating points with examples from English. As stated there, the main reason for this was "that it is essential that students be able to evaluate critically our factual claims at each step, for this encourages a healthy skepticism and an active approach toward the subject matter" (p. xiv). Given that the students have at least some command of English, we can assume that they are able to draw upon this knowledge to formulate, test, and revise linguistic hypotheses. Thus, they are introduced to the basic methodology of linguistics as a science.

Nevertheless, it is extremely important that students become familiar with the structural properties of languages other than English. In *A Linguistics Workbook*, therefore, we have included exercises from a wide variety of languages and language families. In several cases we have selected material from particular languages because they illustrate a desired range of possible structural configurations. One of the central themes of linguistics is the search for common principles underlying this vast, but perhaps superficial, diversity of the world's languages.

In some ways the organization of the workbook is novel. The chapters follow the order of presentation in *Linguistics;* thus, the chapter on morphology precedes the chapters on phonology and syntax. We prefer this order for two reasons. First, students have little difficulty relating to words, as opposed to perhaps less intuitively obvious units such as phonological features. Putting morphology first, then, introduces students to linguistic methodology by way of a unit that is familiar to them. Second, words encode not only morphological information but also phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic information; thus, the word can serve as an intelligible and unintimidating introduction to some of the basic concepts of linguistics.

Another novel aspect of this workbook is that several of the exercises in the chapter on pragmatics (7.7–7.10) would traditionally be placed in a syntax section. Even though these exercises require the student to recognize certain syntactic properties and regularities, we have placed them in the chapter on pragmatics in order to illustrate the numerous ways in which the major moods can be marked in the world's languages. In our exercises on moods we have also included examples of sentence negation, since negation frequently patterns with mood marking in the world's languages.

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The workbook contains both a large number and a wide variety of exercises. We have included a wide variety because introductory linguistics courses differ so much in topic selection and emphasis. Some courses stress phonetics and phonemics, for example, whereas others might stress cross-language comparisons or language history.

The exercises also vary in difficulty, from quite simple ones, which deal with particular notions and concepts introduced in *Linguistics*, to rather advanced ones. This range of difficulty makes the workbook appropriate for use in intermediate linguistics courses as well. In our first course in linguistics at the University of Arizona, for example, we mainly explore the properties of English, whereas in our second course we introduce the student to the linguistic properties of a wide variety of languages. We therefore use this workbook in both courses. The advanced exercises also serve another purpose. There are frequently students who become extremely interested in linguistics and wish to do extra work. We have found that many of these exercises are both challenging and stimulating for such students.

Finally, linguists are fond of saying that the best way to learn about linguistics is to *do* linguistics. This workbook is intended to make doing linguistics possible at an introductory level. We hope that students will find the exercises both interesting and instructive.

Acknowledgments

Many people have been involved in the preparation of this workbook. First, we would like to thank those who contributed the basic ideas for our preliminary versions of exercises: Kathy Budway (Spanish, 2.10), Ken Hale (Irish, 3.19), who also helped us with the Dyirbal (3.16) and Navajo (7.11) problems, Barbara Hollenbach (Copala Trique, 7.9), Tom Hukari, who sent us the limericks written by linguists at the University of British Columbia in Victoria (2.4), Adrienne Lehrer, who suggested the idea behind the Indo-European exercises (6.1–6.3), Susan Steele (Luiseño, 1.10), and Carrie Anne Tam, who supplied the Chingenglish data (2.21).

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1 Morphology

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Section _____

1.1 A Clockwork Orange: *Meaning and Form in Context*

The passage below is taken from Anthony Burgess's novel *A Clockwork Orange*. Many of the vocabulary items are borrowed (loosely) from Russian. First read the passage, trying to match the "new" words (underlined) with the definitions given in question A. Both structural (syntactic and morphological) clues and context will be helpful in figuring out what the words mean. Then answer questions A and B.

There was me, that is Alex, and my three droogs, that is Pete, Georgie, and Dim, Dim being really dim, and we sat in the Korova Milkbar making up our rassoodocks what to do with the evening, ... The Korova Milkbar was a milk-plus mesto, and you may, O my brothers, have forgotten what these mestos were like, things changing so skorry these days and everybody very quick to forget, newspapers not being read much neither. Well, what they sold there was milk plus something else. They had no licence for selling liquor, but there was no law yet against prodding some of the new veshches which they used to put into the old moloko, so you could peet it with vellocet or synthemesc or drencrom or one or two other veshches which would give you a nice quiet horrorshow fifteen minutes admiring Bog And All His Holy Angels And Saints in your left shoe with lights bursting all over your mozg. Or you could peet milk with knives in it, as we used to say, and this would sharpen you up . . . and that was what we were peeting this evening I'm starting off the story with.

Questions

A. Match each underlined word in the text with one of the definitions on the right, as shown in the first example.

	Word	Definition
1.	droog	friend (N)
2.	_____	God (N)
3.	_____	a drug* (N)
	_____	
	_____	

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4. _____ thing (N)

5. _____ quickly (Adv)

6. _____ mind (N)

7. _____ place (N)

8. _____ milk (N)

9. _____ to produce (V)

10. _____ to drink (V)

11. _____ brain (N)

*These three words are probably *not* borrowed from Russian.

B. What syntactic and/or morphological evidence can you provide to support your decisions? The first space is filled in as an example.

1. *droog*. Evidence that *droog* is a noun: (Syntactic) *Droog* occurs in the phrase *my three droogs*. Nouns combine with possessive pronouns (*my, his*) and adjectives (*three, red, happy*) to form noun phrases. (Morphological) The plural *-s* is attached to *droog*. Context suggests that *droog* refers to Alex's companions. The definition most compatible with *droog,* then, is "friend."

2.

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Section

1.2 Content and Function Words

Read the following passage. For each underlined word, answer questions A–F. (A review of pages 55–69 and 80–83 of *Linguistics* will be helpful.) The answers to the questions for the word *meaning* are given as an example.

. . . almost self-evidently, a style is specific: its meaning is part and parcel of its period, and cannot be transposed innocently. To see other *periods* as mirrors of our own is to turn history into narcissism; to see other *styles* as open to our own style is to turn history into a dream. But such, really, is the dream of the pluralist: he seems to sleepwalk in the museum. (Foster 1982)

Questions

A. Is the word a *content* or *function* word?

B. Is the word *simple* or *complex?*

C. For each complex word, identify its pieces. That is, does it have a prefix or a suffix? If it has a suffix, is the suffix inflectional or derivational?

D. What category (part of speech) does the word belong to?

E. What morphological evidence can you provide to support your answer to question D?

F. What syntactic evidence can you provide to support your answer to question D?

1. *meaning*. (A) content word; (B) complex; (C) *mean+ing* (stem+suffix), *-ing* is derivational; (D) *meaning* is a noun; (E) *-ing* attaches to verbs to create nouns; the plural morpheme, *-s,* can be attached to create a plural noun: *meaning+s;* (F) *meaning* is preceded by a possessive pronoun (*its*); since possessive pronouns combine with nouns to form noun phrases, this is evidence that *meaning* is a noun.

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