The *Speculative Grammarian* Essential Guide to Linguistics

Trey Jones
Keith W. Slater
Bill Spruiell
Tim Pulju
David J. Peterson

Speculative Grammarian is a virtual organization with offices, editors, and contributors worldwide. You can contact *SpecGram* at SpecGram@SpecGram.com or on the web at http://SpecGram.com.

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Preface

or, Why a book, why a no chicken?

SPECULATIVE GRAMMARIAN (KNOWN TO its devotees[1] as *SpecGram*), is recognized by linguists all over the world—in international powerhouses like the United States and China, in post-communist relics like North Korea and Cuba, in up-and-coming countries like Brazil and Malaysia, in strife-torn nations like Iraq and Canada, even in mundane little places like Belgium and Lesotho—in short, as we said in the first place, among linguists all over the world, *SpecGram* is now, always has been, and ever will be recognized as... as...

Sorry, we forgot what we were going to say. Give us a minute.

Okay, now we remember. *SpecGram* is the most prestigious online linguistics journal that any of us has ever edited. And anyone who disagrees is an idiot.

Wait a minute, you're saying. Are you telling me that *SpecGram* is available online? For free? Well, we didn't mention the free part, but yes, all of the articles published in this book, and many more, can be read for free online at the *Speculative Grammarian* website (http://www.SpecGram.com)—which might make you wonder why we think you'd be interested in paying for this book. So here are several good reasons.

1. The online articles are uniformly excellent, but some are even more uniformly excellent than others. We have chosen only the best of the best for inclusion in this anthology,

An Early Engraving of the Σπεκουλάτωρ Γραμματεύς ('Executioner-Scribe') at Work

thus saving you the work of trolling through the merely superb as you search for the truly superlative. (We have also included some not-quite-so-superlative articles whose authors paid us large sums of money. Just for fun, you could try to figure out which are which.)

2. We've included introductory material for each chapter, as well as introductory material for each article, which in most cases is so informative that you can dispense with reading the articles altogether. This is a great timesaver. We ourselves follow the same policy with great literature, having read the dust jackets of many famous novels.

3. When people read *SpecGram* online, we don't get any money. And we need money, ever since we invested most of the employee pension fund in Greek government bonds. We've tried selling ad space, but we can't find anyone who wants to be associated with so disreputable a journal.

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[1] Of whom there are more than a monolingual Pirahã speaker could count.

4. The cover of the book is really cool.[2]

With all of those good reasons, who could resist buying a copy of this book? Certainly not us. We've each already purchased numerous copies ourselves and have been giving them to friends and relatives, most of whom know nothing about linguistics and have been using them as doorstops. We can't actually recommend that use, since the book isn't thick and heavy enough to hold a door open in a high wind, but at least they're not using them as kindling. However, if you buy a copy (or two, or three), we won't be offended at all if you use them as kindling. Just be aware that *SpecGram* assumes no liability for damages resulting from out-of-control book fires.[3]

> "Language is properly the servant of thought, but not unfrequently becomes its master."
>
> —W.B. CLULOW

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[2] In fact, it is so cool that it could be prizeworthy. For you, not us. No one is giving us a prize for that photo. Check out the contest rules on page 327.

[3] *SpecGram* disclaims any responsibility or liability for any damages caused by memes contained within the pages of *The Speculative Grammarian Essential Guide to Linguistics.* Read at your own risk. Risks include falling levels of academic achievement in linguistics world-wide; litigation by morons against providers of satirical and parodic content; our inability to expand the field of satirical linguistics, reduce the pomposity of academic linguistics, "knock" specific linguists "down a peg or two", or complete previously documented plans for world domination; and general philological conditions beyond *SpecGram's* control. Though best efforts have been made in the preparation of this disclaimer, neither *SpecGram* nor its editors guarantee its accuracy or completeness. No warranty of any kind is made, expressed or implied, respecting this disclaimer. *SpecGram* shall not be liable with respect to liability, loss, or damages caused or alleged to have been caused directly or indirectly as a result of the usage of this disclaimer.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN CAREER IN LINGUISTICS—PART 7

YOU DOUBLE MAJOR IN LINGUISTICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE…

Much to your surprise, you discover that the analytic skills required to be a good computer scientist and the analytic skills required to be a good linguist, while not exactly the same, complement each other quite nicely. You totally blow the curve in many of your undergrad linguistics classes because 1) tree diagrams don't scare you, and 2) you wrote a LISP program to do most of your phonology homework for you—those English Lit weenies trying for an "easy" minor in linguistics never had a chance. Your comp sci honors project is just that little program you wrote to do your phonology homework, with a few "optimality theory" buzzwords thrown in. You graduate with high honors.

While applying to grad school in computational linguistics, you stumble onto one of the fundamental truths of the field. Most computer scientists don't understand linguistics at all, and most linguists don't understand computer science at all. You actually have a solid background in both—and while you enjoy serious discussions in the field, you come to realize that you can BS your way through most conversations with a practitioner in either field by dazzling them with your competence in the other field.

Maybe you don't need to go to grad school. Maybe you should just get a job.

- Look for a job with your undergrad linguistics/comp sci degree.
- Go to grad school in computational linguistics.

Introduction
Not to be confused with a prolegomenon

THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS HAVE WITNESSED MANY changes in linguistics, with major developments in linguistic theory, significant expansion in language description, and even some progress in getting a few members of the general public to realize that the term "linguist" is not defined as 'someone who works at the UN doing simultaneous translation'. *Speculative Grammarian* is proud to have been a part of these changes.[1,2] And now, in our humble yet authoritative opinion, the time is ripe for the appearance of an anthology containing the most important linguistics articles to have appeared in *SpecGram* in the past twenty-five years. (Readers seeking articles from before 1988 should consult one of the previous volumes in this series, which have appeared at intervals ranging from twenty to one hundred years ever since *SpecGram* was first published).[3] This anthology, it is hoped, will allow our readers to gain a deeper, wider, fatter understanding of linguistics as it evolved in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, without the trouble of having to take a graduate seminar in "Modern Linguistics" taught by a professor who's so old that she thinks the Beach Boys are cute.[4] Some of us took graduate seminars like that ourselves, and believe us, this book is better.

This book concentrates on those branches of linguistics which have always been considered central to the field: animal communication, third language acquisition, linguistic love poetry. That said, some of the most important recent advances have come in ancillary subdisciplines, such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and historical linguistics. Therefore, you'll also find complete chapters on those subjects in this volume, along with other major topics such as sociolinguistics, computational linguistics, typology, and fieldwork. We could go on, and in fact, we were going to, until we realized (1) that the list was getting boring, and (2) that that's what the table of contents is for. Not to mention that the table of contents includes page numbers, which the list above does not, although we suppose we could go back and add them if we wanted to.

We should mention, though, that along with chapters made up of a bunch of articles, we've also included several intercalary chapters,[5] each of which consists of a single monograph. So if you notice that it's taking you a lot longer than usual to read a particular article, don't worry, your mind's not going—it's just a monograph.

We are certain that many of the articles in this anthology will inspire controversy, as indeed they were meant to do by their authors. Others, however—in fact, the great majority—will inspire awe, as they, too, were meant to do. If some few articles induce such a sense of wonderment as to cause readers to go into ecstatic trances, that, too, is not only intended, but expected. Any readers who do not experience a sense of wonderment should go back and read the book again until they get it right.

> Those who speak much must either know a lot or lie a lot.
> —GERMAN PROVERB

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[1] An important part.

[2] In fact, probably the most important part.

[3] Previous volumes are no longer in print, and, unfortunately, not found in any major university libraries. The Folger Shakespeare Library used to have a copy of the 1592 edition, but it was eaten by rats.

[4] Not *were* cute, *are* cute, right now, in 2013.

[5] We learned the term "intercalary chapters" in high school when reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, and have been waiting ever since for a chance to use it again.

Linguistics: The Scientific Study of Language
At least, that's what they told us in Ling 101

WHAT IS LANGUAGE? You'd think that if anyone would know, it would be us, the editors of a renowned linguistics journal. But you'd be hard pressed to find an answer in most issues of *SpecGram.* This suggests either that we don't actually know the answer, or that we do know, but we're not telling.

In contrast, over the years, *SpecGram* has published numerous articles explaining what linguistics is, was, could be, should be, and isn't. What follows, then, are selected commentaries upon linguistics past and present, written by some of the finest minds in our field (plus a few that we wrote ourselves). If the field in general doesn't seem to have learned much from these articles, we blame not our contributors, and certainly not ourselves, but rather, the field in general, for being too stiff-necked to accept enlightenment, or maybe just too lazy to keep up. We hope that by putting all of these articles together in one place, we will make it possible for the lazy and the stiff-necked both to come to a better appreciation of the truth than they have managed so far, and to fi-nally have a clear sense of what they're doing when they claim to be doing linguistics.
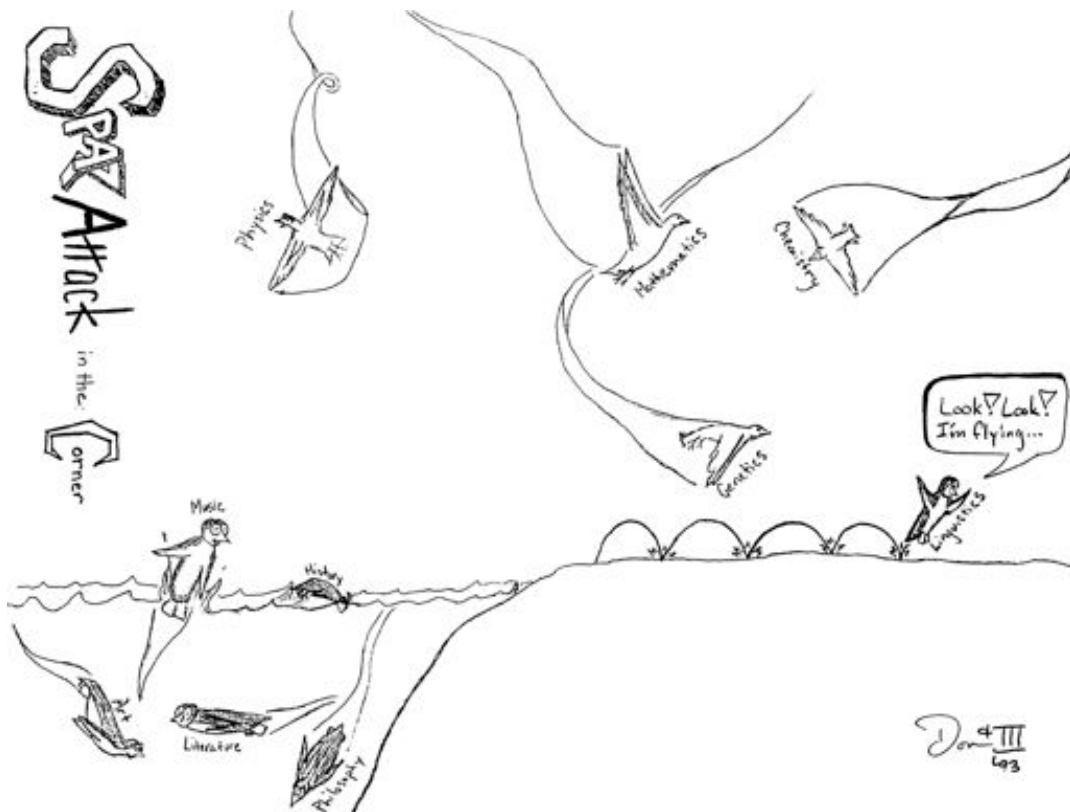
An Introduction to Linguistics in Haiku Form

linguistic theory
hidden representations
to surface structures

phonology is
sound patterns of languages
phonemes, allophones

phonetics is sounds—
articulation of them
acoustics, hearing

comp. linguistics is
theory into efficient
implementation

morphology is
if same structure, same meaning
then it's a morpheme

syntactic theory
blah blah chomsky chomsky blah
blah chomsky blah blah

—ANONYMOUS

As a side note to the student reader who may be wondering how it's possible for linguists not even to have an agreed-upon understanding of the basics of their discipline, we should point out that such a situation is not uncommon. Anesthesiologists, for example, mostly have no interest in knowing what anesthesiology actually is—and those that do express interest mostly seem, rather disturbingly, to believe that putting people to sleep involves tricking the wakeful soul into leaving the body temporarily by promising it free plane tickets. Yet anesthesiology is widely rec-

ognized as one of the most successful fields of endeavor in all of human history, and anesthesiologists are honored throughout the world with awards, statues, and commemorative matchbook covers. If they can get away with it, why not us? So even if you don't get complete enlightenment from this section of the book, don't despair. You can still become a highly successful professional linguist even if you don't know what you're doing.

Logical Fallacies for Linguists

Argumentum ad verecundiam—"Chomsky said it. I believe it. That settles it."

Choose Your Own Career in Linguistics—Part 28

You regain your senses…

When you regain your senses, you find yourself in Pennsylvania in 1945. All things considered, it could have been worse.

Suddenly, you realize that you've stumbled into the opportunity of a lifetime. You make your way to the University of Pennsylvania and befriend a young man named Avram Chomsky… Avram *Noam* Chomsky. You encourage his politics, and eventually he drops out of school to become an activist. He is eventually immortalized in a historical footnote as the only American killed in Che Guevara's ill-fated operation in Bolivia.

You, however, do a bit better. You graduate from the University of Pennsylvania in 1949, earn a Ph.D. there in 1955, and join the faculty of M.I.T. later that year. You go on to write more than 80 ground-breaking books, including *Syntactic Structuralism* (1957); *Aspects of Theories of Syntax* (1965); *Reflections on Languages* (1975); *Lectures on Government and Bonding* (1981); *Generating Grammar: Its Basis, Development, and Prospects* (1987); *The Minimalization Program* (1998); and *New Horizons in the Study of Mind and Language* (2001).

You are the Grand High Poobah of Linguistics. Congratulations!

• The End.

It is Well Known Among Linguists…

One of Da Vinci's notebooks has a partially sketched-out design for a device that combines a Stratificational representation of the Veneto tense-aspect system with a mechanical dachshund-flinger. He really did loathe dachshunds.

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

Phonetics
For people who aren't logical enough for phonology

THE IMAGES THAT OPEN THIS chapter and the next, taken from Hilário Parenchyma's article "Cartoon Theories of Linguistics—Phonetics vs. Phonology", amply demonstrate the main difference between these two closely related subjects. Phonetics is concerned with all the hairy particulars, while phonology operates at a more rarified level where all of the messy details of flapping hunks of mouth meat have been abstracted away.

There are many great joys to be had in learning phonetics. Two that go hand in hand[1] are learning the symbols of the IPA and learning to make the sounds that go with them. It can be both somewhat surprising and deeply pleasing to learn that the articulations of the tongue and vocal tract are so regular, so categorical.[2] The very idea—that consonants can even *be* homorganic, that there is a short list of airstream mechanisms, that the whole system is roughly compositional—is revelatory!

It also makes a great setup for a practical joke.

THE ITSY BITSY AIR PUFF

The itsy bitsy air puff went up
to the speaker's mouth.
Down came the velum, and a
nasal stop came out.
Pull down the diaphragm to
draw some air back in.
And an itsy bitsy air puff goes
up to the mouth again.

—YUNE O. HŪŪ, II

When learning to produce difficult sounds that are not native to the proto-linguist, this compositionality means that each element of the sound to be produced can be layered, one atop the other, to zero in on the target sound. So, confronted with a description of an unfamiliar sound, say, "a close front rounded vowel", a linguist can approximate with something nearby (say, a close front *unrounded* vowel) and then modify the relevant features of the approximation, in this case by rounding the lips. In the case of a consonant, say, "a voiced bilabial fricative", the linguist might bring the lips close together but not touching, begin to blow, adjust the lip separation to get that light fricative buzz, and then add the voicing. Voilà!

The symbols of the IPA probably look, to the uninitiated, like the victims of an alphabetic explosion, but there's a method to the orthographic

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[1] Or, sometimes, if a student is really doing it wrong, foot in mouth.

[2] Of course, that's not actually true. The fine details of pronunciation vary from language to language, and at the finest level of granularity, there have probably never been two sounds in the history of human language that were produced exactly the same. But it still feels like there is an inordinate amount of order when first learning about one's native sounds.

madness. All the nasals are modified n's and m's. Most of the labials are related to p's, b's, f's, and v's. There's the occasional import from Greek or Norse, but it is usually historically defensible. All of these similar letters need to have names, too, so that they can be discussed without the need to produce them.[3] Terms like "open o", "small capital g", "dotless i", "turned y", and "right hook v" are commonly bandied about in phonetics classes, and are sometimes even used by serious phoneticians.

Enter "double-dot wide o",[4] pictured at right.[5] The accompanying phonetic description, conveniently left on the whiteboard of the linguistics grad student lounge, for example, is "nasal-ingressive voiceless velar trill". A curious, phonetically savvy victim will see the symbol, read the description, realize the sound is unfamiliar, and then, using the awesome power of phonetic compositionality, attempt to create the sound so that it may be inspected, all without knowing what the result will be.

Typically the victim begins by exhaling deeply so as to be able to breathe in through the nose ("nasal-ingressive") for as long as possible, giving

FLOW, FLOW, FLOW YOUR AIR

Flow, flow, flow your air;
Gently start the stream.
Pulmonic egressive, pulmonic egressive.
Sounds are heard not seen.

—YUNE O. HŪŪ, II
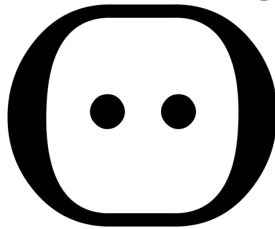
more time to experiment with the other articulators. A small thought may be given to keeping the vocal cords still ("voiceless").[6] Concentrating on the velum, the victim narrows the closure, seeking to induce a trill when—suddenly—a massive vibration rattles the brainpan, and everyone within earshot turns to see why an otherwise civilized person is loudly snorting like a pig.[8]

And this is by no means the only contribution that *Speculative Grammarian* has made to the discipline of phonetics.[9] The remainder of this chapter presents some of the most outstanding of *SpecGram's* most outstanding scholarly publications in this area.

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[3] Not only is this convenient for situations when the ability to reliably produce a particular sound is not a given, it also keeps flocks of linguists from sounding, to outsiders, as silly as they sometimes look.

[4] For reasons that will become clear, it is best to engage in a little cognitive priming and explicitly label the symbol as "double-dot wide o", so that victims will view it first and foremost as a letter-like symbol.

[5] And just to prove that there really is nothing new under the sun, it turns out that there is a rarely-used exotic variant of Cyrillic O with two dots in it—in English called "binocular O"—that has been used, for example, in the plural of the Russian word for "eye": Ꙩчи.

[6] This turns out to be crucial to keeping the prank from turning ugly. A *voiced* nasal-ingressive velar trill could be fatal. Of course, at this point you will be tempted to try it and see why that is so. Please do not.[7]

[7] At least not until you have actually paid for the book.

[8] Some of the Managing Editor's proudest moments have been discovering that previously unknown linguaphiles, from far away places, had—after reading about the nasal-ingressive voiceless velar trill on the *SpecGram* website—elicited strange looks from friends, family, and even strangers by performing it to "see what it sounds like". To reach out across the internet and vibrate someone's head like that is just magical.

[9] Though it may be the most entertaining one.

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

Cartoonist Bethany Carlson presents a relatively mournful view of the real world many newly minted phoneticians face after graduating in a down economy, in this first of her two phonetic cartoons.

Linguistics Nerd Camp

Bethany Carlson

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

Phonology
Keeping the empiricism in phonetics, where it belongs

"/tek ðæt ju skaundrl/"

PHONOLOGY IS THE REASON WHY larval linguists, often having dutifully studied phonetics the semester before, can produce sounds that they can't hear: not dog-whistles,[1] but rather a range of sounds that, to the non-native ear, all sound more or less interchangeable.[2] Phonology takes that great big chaotic mess of phonetic detail (*phones*) and buckets it into neat, discrete pigeonholes (*phonemes*) to give the rest of the brain less to cope with. It generally works, too, as long as you stay away from the edges between the buckets.[3]

An understanding of the basic simplificational principles of phonology—demonstrated visually in the differences and similarities between the cartoons at the beginning of this chapter and the previous one—explains the practical difficulties of a phonetics course. And the realization that not all languages collapse [t] and [tʰ], or that some do collapse [v] and [w], is a valuable practical lesson. Such comprehension also dispassionately explains some dialect differences, such as the fact that people who might have previously seemed defective for not being able to say *cot* and *caught* properly are in fact merely the

LETTER H AND N-G

Letter H could end no rhyme,
N-G could start no word,
And so betwixt the two of them,
The phoneme "heng" emerged.

—YUNE O. HŪŪ, II
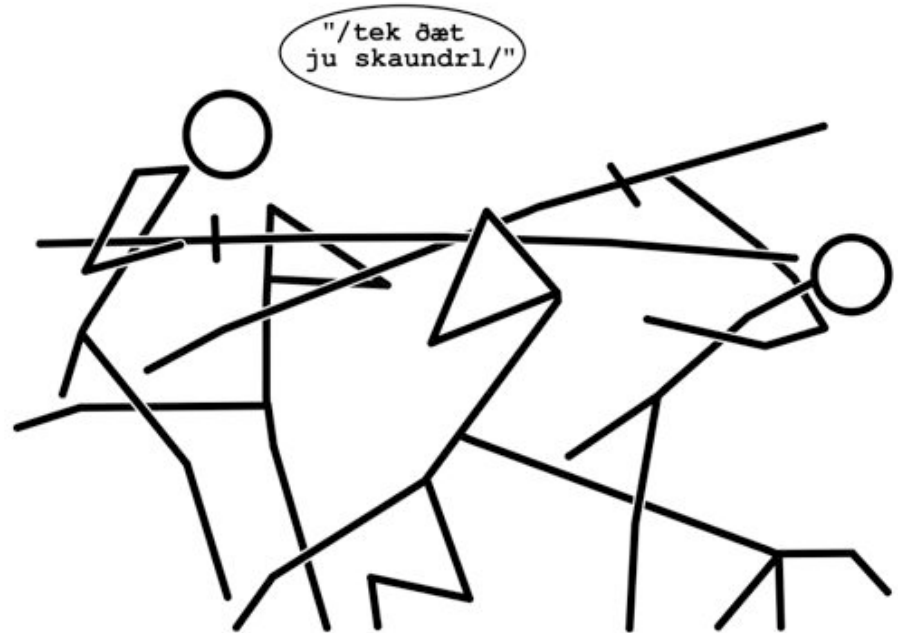
unfortunate victims of a defective dialect, and worthy of pity, not scorn.[4]

Phonology and phoneme merger also allow one to unravel one of the great mysteries of satirical linguistics: there are those who claim that double-dot wide o (see the Phonetics Chapter) describes an ingressive voiceless *uvular* trill, rather than a velar one. These speakers have undergone the *snore/snort* merger. Phonetically, double-dot wide o describes a pig snort, while a snore is more properly and traditionally symbolized by /5/, according to Metalleus (see "The Voiced Snore Debunked" for details). Phonologically, these two

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[1] Which, taken literally, are probably not possible for humans to produce, and thus outside the purview of linguistics proper. Or which, taken figuratively, lie within the realm of pragmatics.

[2] "The tongue is willing, but the ear is weak," as the proverb goes, more or less.

[3] See the works of Ba-Wa McGurk for other potential difficulties.

[4] Editors' note: Of course we suggest you actually take the moral high road and embrace descriptivism, hold your nose and publicly state that the *cot/caught* merger is "fine", as is the *pen/pin* merger.[5]

[5] Which, unlike *cot/caught,* actually is quite fine.

may have collapsed for some speakers,[6] so of course they hear them as being the same.[7]

Another important function of phonology is meta-linguistic and academic; it separates the wheat from the chaff in introductory linguistics courses. "The phonology test", as it is known in some circles, makes it clear who can and who cannot think abstractly and logically.[8] As the material is generally new to everyone, it also provides a level playing field.[9] Spending an entire weekend ordering and re-ordering phonological rules is a linguistic rite of passage.

In closing, it should be noted that the line between diachronic historical sound change[11] and synchronic phonological transformations is quite blurry.[12] In some sense, one is just a slow motion playback of the other. For that reason, depending on how you, Dear Reader, are reading, and the attendant red shift, some of the articles in this section may seem more or less historical in nature. Real linguistics, like real language, like real life, is messy.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM
STUDENTS OF LINGUISTICS

Minimal pairs are in complimentary distribution: it is unlikely that you will find one sound in the other.

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[6] Probably as the result of weakened throat musculature.

[7] Poor dears.

[8] And who can and cannot prudently stop thinking logically when it comes to the instructor's favorite theory, but that's another topic altogether.

[9] Well, except for the mathematicians, computer scientists, engineers, physicists, and other hard-science types who might be slumming[10] in the class.

[10] Their words, not ours. Just sayin'.

[11] See also the Comparative and Historical Linguistics Chapter.

[12] Except for people who were paying attention when the *synchronic-diachronic* distinction was explained to them. Unfortunately, a lot of phonologists apparently weren't paying attention.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN
CAREER IN LINGUISTICS—PART 39

YOU TRY TO GET
AN ACADEMIC JOB…

Statistics has never been your strong suit, but now you understand exactly what it means that, in many fields, universities are cranking out more Ph.D.s than there are academic jobs to hold them. You are living the statistic.

You move across the country several times, from a one-year position to a two-year position to another one-year position, always trying to befriend students and faculty, particularly any who may have influence on the committee that fills the next available tenure-track position.

You politic, you shmooze, you flatter. You recast your research interests as often as necessary to improve you chances of getting a secure position. Your personal life is a shambles—friends made and abandoned at each stop on the tenure-track express, romance stressed, strained, potentially broken by every move.

- Stick it out—academia is where you belong. Go to Part 42 on page 218.
- Give up, and get a real job. Go to Part 41 on page 110.
- Get creative and start a satirical linguistics journal. Go to Part 43 on page 320.

LOGICAL FALLACIES FOR LINGUISTS

Bulverism—"Lisi wants Sandy's analysis of Cherokee tone sandhi to be right just because it would embarrass Dorj, so surely Sandy is wrong."

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

The fortunes of linguistics programs ebb and flow at various institutions around the world. Sometimes linguistics is its own department; sometimes it is relegated to a footnote in the course listings of the English department. Coupled with its historical connection to philology, it comes as no surprise that linguistics is sometimes closely aligned with literature. When the tide rises, linguistics can take on that "new money" snobbery, mistaking it for sophistication. But in the best of all cases, linguistics and literature collide, like peanut butter and chocolate, to make something even better—as is the case with Jamin Pelkey's epic poem.

Mandarin Tone in Historical Epic Quest Perspective

Jamin Pelkey

I sing of four tonemic knights
Who in medieval Orient
With wanderlust took to the heights,
To battle the ambivalent.

Sir Píng, Sir Shàng, Sir Qù, Sir Rù
Their names emblazoned on their shields
Set forth acknowledging as true:
To polar forces nature yields.

Thus nestled in a forest glade
By moonlight as they slept unstirred
Yin's voiceless sirens potions made
And split their souls with register.

At dawn as they awoke, behold!
Four damsels with four knights were paired.
And vibrating their vocal folds,
A lower range the knights now shared.

The ladies claimed each knightly name
With voiceless onsets, pitches high;
Thus, Yin and Yang of ancient fame
Began their eight-fold patois cries.

The realms they traveled thence were dim
Beset by danger, scandal, vice;
They knew not that their path would end
In Standard Language Paradise.

Sir Shàng fell slain and was interred
But left his spirit to the Qù's.
Sirs Qù and Rù with conscience blurred
By chivalry's duplicity

Spoke sonorant initials to
The tonemes of Yin's Shàng and Qù;
Thus, soon the Rù's would meet their doom,
Imparting gifts to the bereaved.

The journey took its toll on voice,
Initially—make no mistake,
But aspiration made a choice,
And leapt contrastive in its wake.

The centuries' long march into
The present proved a worthy chore.
Now puzzling over four times two
Can lead the puzzler back to four.

The Qù's, now married, faithful, spry
With global falls, they 骂 yet 爱,[1]
The Píng's still hope for love's requite
He speaks of 麻, she speaks of 哀.
And lonely Lady Shàng still sighs
But says to all, her 马's not 矮.

From four to eight and back to four;
Like Bilbo, there and back again:
An epic quest from days of yore
Enchants the tones of Mandarin.

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[1] Glossary and Synchronic Tonal Notes:
  骂 mà 'scold, curse' (4th [falling] tone)
  爱 aì 'love' (4th [falling] tone)
  麻 má 'hemp' (2nd [rising] tone)
  哀 āi 'sorrow' (1st [high-level] tone)
  马 mǎ 'horse' (3rd [low-contour] tone)
  矮 ǎi 'short' (3rd [low-contour] tone)

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

Linguists the world over have known for quite some time that morphemes are dangerous, but rarely have the dangers of morpheme use been so luridly displayed as they have in this public service announcement published by the Council on Morpheme Abuse. Students would do well to heed its warnings!

Morphemes—A New Threat to Society

Council On Morpheme Abuse

This leaflet was produced by the Council On Morpheme Abuse (COMA) to increase public awareness of the most recent health hazards.

What is a Morpheme?

Morphemes are the elements obtained by breaking down the flower of language. They are also present in the roots and stems. It is not yet known exactly what constitutes a morpheme, but it is agreed that almost all verbiage, however innocent it may appear, contains these insidious ingredients.

What are Some Common Terms for Morphemes?

Among those acquainted with morpheme use you may hear the slang terms "morph" or "formation". Uneducated users refer to the morpheme as a "word" (possibly related to "weed"). One type of morpheme is commonly known as "affix".

How are Morphemes Used?

The most common method is to inflect them directly into the corpus. They may, however, be delivered orally or nasally. Morpheme use is generally accompanied by a ritual involving intricate movements of the mouth.

Who Uses Morphemes?

Morpheme use is not restricted to the "lower classes" of society. In fact, it is most conspicuous among university students and faculty. Those who condone this practice, called linguists, maintain that morphemes have been used for thousands of years with no ill effects, but others look on the morpheme as a relatively new invention.

What are the Effects of Morphemes?

Some of the observable short-term effects of morphemes are: slow or distorted speech, extreme apathy or fatigue, and confusion. Long-term effects include acute schizophonia, manic derivation, and delusions of grandeur (claiming to understand unfamiliar languages). These phenomena may occur upon even minimal exposure, so, anyone in contact with a morpheme user should be wary of these symptoms.

Are They Addicting?

That depends on the user. Many people, having once experimented with morphemes, are able to permanently abandon the practice. Others have been known to devote their entire lives to the acquisition of morphemes. Despite what linguists frequently claim, morphemes are not predictable.

Are They Legal?

Unfortunately, legislative officials have not been alerted to the menace of morphemes. Their use has not been outlawed—yet.

Is There a Cure for Morpheme Addiction?

There is presently no cure which has been found to be totally effective. The most promising approach would seem to be isolation, plus complete and immediate withdrawal from morpheme use.

If you need help with a morpheme-related problem or would like to join the campaign to abolish morphemes, contact:

COMA

Lindley Hall 310

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

47401

A service of the Council On Morpheme Abuse

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

The Speculative Grammarian *mailroom is constantly inundated by impassioned appeals for more articles linking linguistic research to "measurable indicators of excellence in student outcomes", most of them from the estimable Earnest Blatherskite, Ed. D., who apparently has a large grant for writing them. We are therefore including this sterling example of student writing, which, with its obvious subtextual gestures toward Lacan, Bakhtin, and the later Wittgenstein, we feel is easily of a quality sufficient to meet or exceed the standards of even advanced programs in Educational Leadership.*

Toward a Universal Typology of Noun Phrases

Cynthia Polarczik
The Ohio State University

One of the most noteworthy things about noun phrases in lots of languages is that they contain nouns. Usually at least one noun, sometimes more. Like, in the noun phrase below.

1. The cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon, the little boy blue and the man in the moon.

I think that's a noun phrase, and possible more than one. I'm not really sure, cause I was kind of zoning when my prof explained noun phrases in Ling 101. But he's such a total dork, so I figure if he can do it I can. I mean like come on, this is a guy who wears polyester pants with Adidas. And at least I know what a noun is and theres lots of them in that sentence.

Now, as far as verb phrases, which are a little bit off the topic but I pretty much covered noun phrases already and I've got like almost a whole page left to fill in. Verb phrases I don't really understand but I remember I used to date this guy in high school, and he was taking Latin cause he heard it was an easy A, and he said "verb" is just, like, the Latin word for "word". Which kind of totally blew my mind at the time almost, especially since he said the "v" was pronounced like a "w" which I totally don't get at all. But then (and this is the sort of thing I would never have gotten in high school) I figured out that a verb phrase must just really be like a word phrase, you know? I mean, so a verb phrase is what my prof called a "superordinate category" (I know I got that right, because it's in the book) and a noun phrase is a "subordinate category". If you don't know what that means, you probably didn't take the class, but its like, a noun phrase is like a *kind* of verb phrase. So a noun phrase is a subordinate category, see? And I was like so ticked off at my prof, because I put that on the test and he marked it wrong. Only I guess he doesn't grade the tests himself, he's got this really geeky grad student who does it. And this guys, like, completely 404, okay? Like long hair and doesn't take baths. He's, like so Kurt Cobain. I bet the reason he took points off was he was mad he didn't think of it first. I should complain to the prof, but he's so 404 himself theres no point. I mean, like I really care. I'm taking the class pass-fail anyway, so duh.

Okay, I guess I let my tone "drift" a little bit, which my writing TA says is a problem I have, too. But he's such a total dweeb, too. I mean, the grad students at this university are all so lame. Are they really all like that? And I don't see why he won't let me write the way I talk. Like, even my ling prof, and he says I know English perfect because I'm a native speaker. So who are they to tell me how to write? Its such a total scam.

In this paper, many important aspects about noun phrases were considered and several important conclusions concerning noun phrases were reached. This paper has dealt with many significant factors involved with noun phrases.

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

We start this chapter off with a short but pointed question of formal semantics from Strang Burton. As with much of formal semantics, if you don't have a good grasp of it going in, you aren't going to be doing much better coming out. On the other hand, if you can get a grip on it, you can use it to bludgeon your academic adversaries, right in the ego.

What Part of 'No' Don't You Understand?

<div align="right">Strang Burton</div>

$$\lambda P[\lambda Q[\sim\exists x[P(x)\wedge Q(x)]]]$$

<e,t>,<<e,t>,t>

What part of 'No' don't you understand?

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

Even if we haven't published as many articles about sociolinguistics as we have about, say, obscure languages possibly spoken on some mountain top in Nepal, we wish to reiterate that we are not opposed to sociolinguistics in principle.* *To prove it, we will close this chapter by reprinting a game advertisement that we published a few years ago, at the behest of our friends at Panini Press. This game looks like it would be very interesting to sociolinguists, or to anyone else who likes boring things.*

Carcassonorant

Panini Press EuroSprachGames

In this ingenious tile-laying game, players construct dialect regions by creating a fictionalized map of the southern French country-side. Each player, in turn, draws a tile, which may bear a vowel or consonant or an urban or rural isogloss line. He must then place the tile such that it matches those already played. Points are scored by completely encircling a contiguous region with isogloss lines, by joining multiple urban populations within a single "dialect" region, and by sabotaging an opponent's dialect region by causing its defining feature to become unpronounceable.

Expansion modules include: Carcassonorant Northern France; Carcassonorant Spain; Carcassonorant Italy; Carcassonorant Portugal; and the ultra-challenging Carcassonorant Pan-Romance.

SprachSpiel des Jahres for 2000. ❦पा

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* In fact, we would be happy to print more sociolinguistics articles if only people would submit more of them. More good ones, we mean. We actually get more sociolinguistics submissions than any other kind, but they're almost all so half-baked that we toss them out after reading the first few sentences.
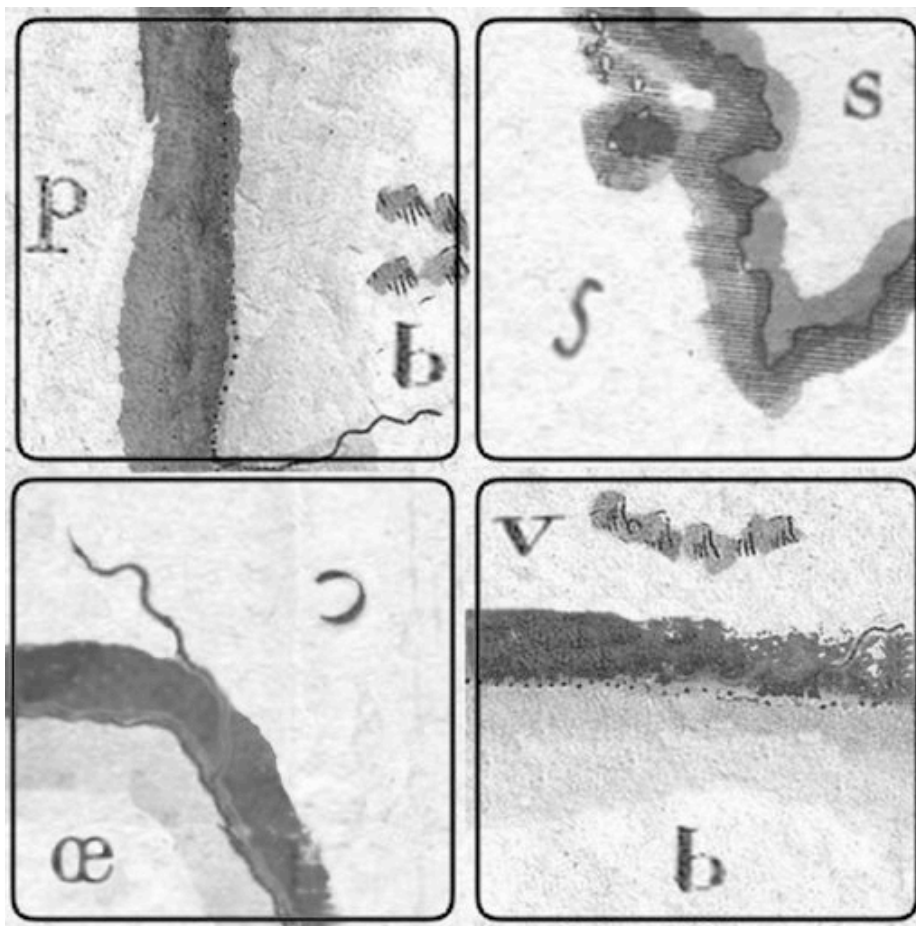
It is Well Known Among Linguists…

Latin once had an eighth declension, but it was wiped out after Cato the Elder (mistakenly) assigned a Carthaginian provenance to it and fomented a series of prosecutions against it. Ironically, it was highly toxic to elephants.

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

Comparative and Historical Linguistics
Ahh, look, philology is all grown up now!

Historical linguistics? Who cares? Not too many years ago, this point of view was more common than anyone who doesn't remember 5¼″ floppies could imagine. Indeed, for most of the 20th century, historical linguistics was widely regarded as a musty-smelling backwater, populated by a few disheveled, pipe-smoking old men tucked away in obscure little colleges in out-of-the-way places like Leipzig, Salamanca, and Madison, Wisconsin. It didn't help that its practitioners kept publishing articles on trivialities such as "Indo-European *d, *l, and *dl", which surely were no more interesting to their authors than they were to anyone else.

In the late 20th century, *SpecGram,* along with a few other courageous publications, decided to try to change things. (Don't ask us *why* we wanted to change things. That was a long time ago, and we don't remember.) Seeking out innovative ideas from around the globe, we published groundbreaking research of a sort that stodgy old journals like *Linguistic Inquiry* refused to touch. Granted, many of the articles we published turned out to be stupid—we're especially embarrassed by the amount of print space we gave to proponents of the "Uto-Aztecan" hypothesis—but some of the research has stood the test of time. More than that, thanks to the fact that these articles appeared in a journal that's read as widely as *SpecGram,* historical linguistics is once again a respectable subdiscipline of linguistics, practiced by numerous men and women young and old, very few of whom smoke pipes. Which is kind of a shame, actually, because, whatever the health effects of tobacco, we've always thought pipe-smokers look pretty distinguished.

Beowulf ond Godsylla

Meanehwæl, baccat meaddehæle,   monstær lurccen;
Fulle few too many drincce,   hie luccen for fyht.
Ðen Hreorfneorhtðhwr,   son of Hrwærowþheororthwl,
Æsccen æwful jeork   to steop outsyd.
Þhud! Bashe! Crasch! Beoom!   Ðe bigge gye
Eallum his bon brak,   byt his nose offe;
Wicced Godsylla   wæld on his asse.
Monstær moppe fleor wyþ   eallum men in hælle.
Beowulf in bacceroome   fonecall bemaccen wæs;
Hearen sond of ruccus   sæd, "Hwæt ðe helle?"
Graben sheold strang   ond swich-blæd scharp
Stond feorth to fyht   ðe grimlic foe.
"Me," Godsylla sæd,   "mac ðe minsemete."
Heoro cwyc geten heold   wiþ fæmed half-nelson
Ond flyng him lic frisbe   bac to fen.
Beowulf belly up   to meaddehæle bar,
Sæd, "Ne foe beaten   mie færsom cung-fu."
Eorderen cocca-cohla   yce-coeld, ðe reol þyng.

—Tom Weller
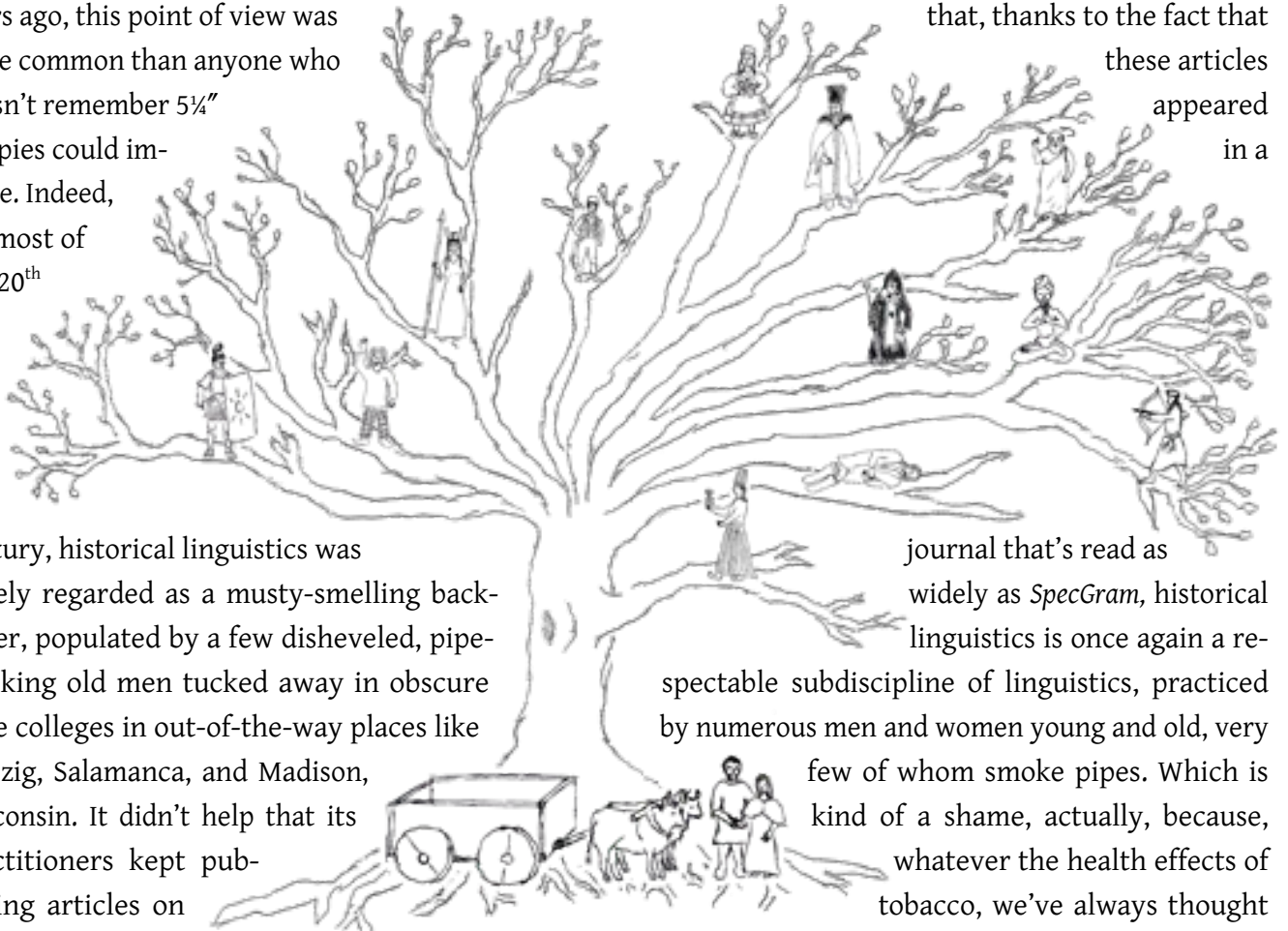
… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

Finally, we return to the question with which this chapter began, that most difficult of all to answer in the abstract: what is linguistics good for, anyway? Prolific contributor Jonathan van der Meer tackles precisely this question, in the eponymously-titled essay,* and we leave it as the last word for all those who have ever wished for a pithy and straightforward answer. May it serve you well!

What is Linguistics Good For, Anyway?

Jonathan "Crazy Ivan" van der Meer

The most commonly asked question of a linguist, when one's secret is revealed, is (all together now!): "How many languages do you speak?" I've decided that a good answer to this question is π. More than three, less than four—though if you discover that your interlocutor is singularly unsophisticated or otherwise from Kansas, you can call it three to keep things simple.

A less commonly asked, but almost certainly as frequently considered questions is, "So, what is linguistics good for, anyway?" That one is harder to answer—at least if you don't want the questioner's eyes to glaze over. Sure, you can blather on about the *yin* and *yang* of the diametrically opposed intellectual challenges presented by fieldwork and theoretical syntax, and how linguistics is "potentially the most cognitive of the cognitive sciences," or how comp ling synthesizes the best of both the humanities and the sciences while potentially rewriting the book on how the human mind works. Blah, blah. All that and $8 will get you a grande half-caff mocha latte in NYC.

Here's an answer that will make people listen, and possibly even respect you in the morning. What linguistics is good for is picking up chicks (or, I hear from a certain pair of hottie semanticists I'm friendly with, dudes) of a certain kind—particularly those with an inexplicable desire to

"A very great part of the mischiefs that vex this world arises from words."

—EDMUND BURKE

date a foreigner. For example, I personally have known (in a certain sense) one chick who only digs Russian dudes. Some people of either sex will just fall all over themselves trying to hook up with a Frenchie. And you know what? If you are at least halfway through a bachelor's degree in linguistics, passed phonology with a B+ or better, and you've been paying any attention whatsoever, you can get in on that action.

For example, Bad Russian Accent—a weird little dialect of English—is actually not that hard. Just listen, hypothesize, and over-apply any generalization you can extract. After all, real Russians are likely to be naively trying to minimize their accents, while you will be trying to maximize your conformance to an exotic and sexy stereotype. Anything beyond a veneer of basic authenticity is only holding you back. And you have another advantage over a real Russian, Parisian, or other semi-exotic European—you probably smell better and have better teeth.

So imagine Mikhail Baryshnikov in *White Knights* or *Sex and the City*—though if you find his accent too subtle, think of one of those submarine dudes from the *Red October*—and what do you hear? They trill their r's a bit, so now you must trill all of your r's. Yes, all of them. We aren't going for delicacy here. They also have darker than English-normal l's all over the place, so you make your l's darker. Aggressively devoice final consonants.

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* If "eponymous" is the word that means "having the same name as". Where the heck did we leave that dictionary?

Over-aspirate your h's and maybe your y's if you can do it without choking, and randomly palatalize any other consonant you feel the need to. Vowels should be approximated to the so-called "continental" vowel qualities—move short vowels to the nearest long vowel, and monophthongize everything as much as you dare.

Toss in some stereotypical grammar to complete the picture: Russians have a terrible time with the definite article, so just drop all articles, and any other determiners, possessives, and the like that you think you can do without. Copulas can go right out the window. Russians also seem to have trouble with English tense and aspect, so mix some of those up for good measure. Use the progressive for the present tense, immediate future, or immediate past. Use the present tense for the progressive, and the past participle for the past tense if you like. Is Russian pro-drop? Hell if I know, but it sure sounds foreign! Close enough.

> To tell the truth is dangerous, to listen to it is annoying.
> —DANISH PROVERB

A real-life example of a man approaching a woman, collected in a bar in Manhattan:

Lounge Lizard Loser: Hello Beautiful! My name is Larry and I saw you from across the room, and I have to tell you that I am smitten with you. You make my head swim and my knees weak. Can I buy you a drink so we can get to know each other better?

Result: [SLAP!!]

On the other hand, a "volunteer" approached the same woman in the same bar three weeks later, using the same basic cheap lines, but delivered in Bad Russian Accent:

Cunning Linguist: /xeło bjutifuł/! /maj njem is ajvan, ant aj em siʔiŋk xju from akros rum/. /em xaviŋk tu tjeł xju em smjiten wiθ xju/. /xju mjek xet swim ant njis wik/. /kjen aj baj driŋk so wi ar gjetiŋk tu no ič aðr byetr/?

Result: [SCORE!!]

See... that was easy. Gents, go French as the debonaire Jean-Pierre if that will get you where you want to be better than being Ivan will. Ladies, you can transform yourself into the Slavic goddess Olga or the naughty French maid Marie, if that is what it takes to pique your quarry's interest. Italian and Spanish are easy, and work well. Avoid Finnish (no one can tell who you are supposed to be) and German (everyone can tell, but no one is interested), and only try Japanese if you've passed your Ph.D. qualifying exams.

Picking up chicks (and, from what I hear out of a couple of sociolinguist cuties I know, dudes). Now *that* is what linguistics is good for.

[Editor's note: We originally took issue with Dr. van der Meer's characterizations of his consultants—the so-called "hottie semanticists" and "sociolinguistic cuties"—as potentially demeaning to women, and expect some of our readers may have felt likewise. Jon has since informed us that the hottie semanticists are both male, one straight and one gay, and that while both sociolinguist cuties are straight, one is female and the other male. All four have very active social circles full of linguists of all types, and were merely providing their thoughts on the usefulness of linguistics in picking up men. We realized that, as usual, Jon's research has been most thorough, and that he is equally demeaning to all people, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.—Eds.]

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

The Encyclopedia of Mytholingual Creatures, Places, and Things

Joseph Campbell

Linguomythologist Joseph Campbell has combed through innumerable dusty tomes, scrolls, and unfinished theses to rediscover the most astounding "creatures that never were" from the world's great linguistic and philological traditions. Ancient beasts and post-modern brutes have haunted the dreams and reveries of grad students and untenured professors alike since the beginning of time.* This brief but beautifully embellished bestiary will gnaw at your pneuma for many nights to come.

Abominable Synonym: A mytholingual creature of Nepal and Tibet that causes speakers within the radius of its effect to pathologically doubt their ability to choose the right word.

Al-Khemy: The mytholingual art and science of converting words from Arabic to English. Hence albatross, alchemy, alcohol, alcove, algebra, algorithm, alfalfa, etc.

Big Honkers: A mainstay of cryptolinguistics, this far-northern tribe of large-nosed, loose-lipped natives speak a language that includes a labio-nasal place of articulation. They supposedly can close their noses with their upper lips, and it's phonemic!

Bigfeet: A mytholingual creature of North America said to be 17 feet tall and only able to speak in rhyming heroic heptadecameter. (Hence it composes its thoughts very, very slowly, and speaks little if at all.)

Branchee: A tormented female spirit from Ireland said to inhabit the corners of the most complicated and theoretically-challenged syntax trees. Her wailing is said to haunt the dreams of syntacticians who study Old Irish.

Caron: The ferryman who carried phonemes across the River Háčeks on their way into Slavic languages.

Hermes Trismegistus,
one of the early Al-Khemists

Centensaurs: Mytholingual Greek creatures with the head and torso of men and the lower body of a syntactic parse tree.

Chupasoplos: A legendary linguocryptid said to inhabit parts of Latin America, whose name is Spanish for "breath-sucker". This horrific creature was once a normal person who has been magically altered so that they can only speak when inhaling.

Daniel Jones' Locker: The mythical place whence all unpronounceable phones come to torment first-year linguistics students. Not to be confused with Palindroma's Box.

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* Linguistic time technically dates back to the era of Pāṇini.

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

The *SpecGram* Story
Pay no attention to that editor behind the curtain

SPECULATIVE GRAMMARIAN, WHICH BILLS ITSELF, RATHER immodestly, as the premier journal of satirical linguistics,[1] has a disputed origin. Some claim that it was founded in Italy in the 13th century; others, in Iceland in the 9th century. Cynics claim that it is the lineal descendant of the journal *Psammeticus Quarterly,* founded in 1988 by Tim Pulju and Keith Slater when they were students at Michigan State University. (And yes, we misspelled the name "Psammetichus", thus proving that we were just as lazy and careless about these things then as we are now).

Published claims to the contrary notwithstanding, *Ps.Q.* seems to have started with Vol. XVI, No. 1. Unquestionably, *Ps.Q.* ended its print run with Vol. XVI, No. 4, when the editors both graduated from MSU and went their separate ways. Over the next couple of years, while Slater was observing the transition to democracy in Taiwan, Pulju (who was described by one of his graduate school professors as apparently not having enough real work to do) published occasional journals in the *Ps.Q.* tradition, such as *Babel, Linguist of Fortune,* and *Better Words and Morpemes* [sic]. After an abortive attempt at moving the editorship to Santa Barbara, where Slater was now enrolled in graduate school, *SpecGram* proper made its appearance in 1993 with Vol. CLVII, No. 1—published, like its immediate predecessors, at Rice University in Houston. If there were ever any volumes published before Vol. CLVII, no one alive has seen them.

SpecGram's managing editor in the 1990s was Tim Pulju. Contributors included Keith Slater and a number of Rice linguistics students and alumni, including Aya Katz, Don Reindl, the prolix Bill Spruiell, and the prolific Trey Jones.[2] In the entire decade, Pulju managed to produce only eight issues of the journal, which doesn't strike us as very many, but bear in mind that this is a person once characterized by his friend Slater, in writing, as "too lazy ever to get up before noon". (Notice that he avoided splitting the infinitive. No descriptivist laxity for Keith Slater!)

When Pulju wandered away from Rice in 1998, *SpecGram* ceased publication, causing the linguistic world as a whole not to notice at all, since, in that pre-modern millennium, *SpecGram* was available in print form only, and was read by, at most, a few dozen people. A few years later, however, Trey Jones, who was now working as a computational linguist, suggested reviving *SpecGram* as an online publication. Pulju agreed, provided he wouldn't have to do any work himself, and so Jones became the new editor of *Speculative Grammarian.*

In its new incarnation, *SpecGram* became a force to be reckoned with. Partly this is because, since it's

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[1] If you think that's immodest, you should know that some of us thought we should've left out the word "satirical".

[2] Someone once explained the difference between "prolix" and "prolific" to us, but we forget what it is. We hope we're using the words correctly here. We could look them up, but that sounds like a lot of trouble.

published online, more than a few dozen people can actually read it. But a great deal of the credit goes to Editor Jones, who—combining devilish computer aptitude with a level of personal energy practically unknown outside of the Oboioboioboi-wikantsitstil tribe—has overseen the production of far more than eight issues per decade. He has also been ably assisted by a rotating crew of contributing editors and staffers, some of whom are longtime associates of the journal (e.g., Slater, Spruiell, Pulju, Mikael[3] Thompson), others of whom are recruits of the internet age (e.g., David J.[4] Peterson, Madalena Cruz-Ferreira, Daniela Müller, Joey Whitford, Ken Miner, Jouni Maho, Sheri Wells-Jensen, Jonathan Downie, and Kean Kaufmann).

Thanks to the excellent work of all of our associates, today, each issue of *Speculative Grammarian* is read by as many as *several* dozen people around the world—or, at least, they look at the pictures. And thus, we state that we are not just proud, but even—dare we say it—accurate in claiming to be the premier journal of satirical linguistics. True, we're also, so far as we know, the only journal of satirical linguistics, but we're proud all the same.

Murphy's Law for Linguists

Your most well-known and most oft-cited work will have appeared in a satirical linguistics journal or anthology.

Choose Your Own Career in Linguistics—Part 43

You get creative and start a satirical linguistics journal…

No, you don't. It's been done. If you try it, a very large linguist named Vito will visit you and break your knee caps. And there isn't any money in it anyway. Try again:

- Stick it out—academia is where you belong. Go to Part 42 on page 218.
- Give up, and get a real job. Go to Part 41 on page 110.

Would You Like Spaghetti or Lasagna for Dinner?

Satirical Linguist: "Give me two strands of spaghetti in a glass of beer."

---

[3] No, that's not a misspelling. Mikael spells his name that way because his native language is Classical Mongolian.

[4] J., not A. There are two linguists named David Peterson, and they both get really mad if you confuse them. Once David J. Peterson unleashed his Dothraki hordes on an intern who congratulated him on his work on Sino-Tibetan languages. Poor intern.

Appendix A: A Self-Defining Linguistic Glossary
The only truly reliable cram sheet for your Linguistics 101 final

A

bjd

abbrev.

’a•bu•gi•da

away from the ablative case

æblæut

acúte accent

near the adessive case

adjectival

The nominal nominees nominated adnomination as ignominious nomenclature.

adverbially

They used the adversative against each other.

affricˣation

agglutinatinglanguages

ALL CAPS

to the allative case

Alliterations are always awesome.

He used anadiplosis, and anadiplosis paid off nicely.

anology

anapytyxis

Never have I found a use for anastrophe.

atticipatory assimilation

Antimetabole is the word, and the word is antimetabole.

aphas......???

pheresis

apocop

Let us not mention apophasis.

Aposiopesis makes me so mad I could just—

Mr. Aptro Nym collects names aptly suited to their owners.

axapria

aspʰiration

assibilaʃion

assililation

Attraction is the process by what a relative pronoun takes the case of its antecedent.

Auslautverhärtunk

B

back formate

B.A.C.K.R.O.N.Y.M.: Backformed Acronym Coerced Knowingly Regardless Of Not Yielding Meaning

Barddolomae’s Law

He stole a benefactive *for* me.

Semantic bleaching is literally terrible.

boustro
    uopǝɥd

$_{NP}$[$_{ADJ}$[labeled]$_{ADJ N}$[bracketing]$_N$]$_{NP}$

bre̠athy voice

brĕve

Brugmāna’s Law

C

The subject c-commands the verb and the object.

Loanword is a calque of German *Lehnwort.*

CamelCase

Capitalization

He made me use the causative voice.

çedilla

Your example is both good and chiastic; but the part that is good is not chiastic, and the part that is chiastic is not good.

circûmflex

It’s a cleft that this sentence is.

avoid clichés like the plague

ǂliǂ

clusser redushion

kpoarticulated stop

switching de código

cognate/Sp. *cognado*/Du. *Cognaat*/Ru. *когнаты*

down-home colloquialism

together with the comitative case

Fred reads more articles on comparative deletion than Susan reads.

compe:satory le:thening

I’m done using the completive aspect.

compoundnoun

This would be the conditional mood.

lekhmove

conjunction and/or disjunction

condamination

… If you want to see it all, you'll have to buy the book! …

The Speculative Grammarian Essential Guide to Linguistics

Book Description:

Speculative Grammarian is the premier scholarly journal featuring research in the oft neglected field of satirical linguistics—and it is now available in book form!

The past twenty-five years have witnessed many changes in linguistics, with major developments in linguistic theory, significant expansion in language description, and even some progress in getting a few members of the general public to realize that the term "linguist" is not defined as 'someone who works at the UN doing simultaneous translation'. *Speculative Grammarian* is proud to have been a part of these changes. And now, in our humble yet authoritative opinion, the time is ripe for the appearance of an anthology containing the most important linguistics articles to have appeared in *SpecGram* in the past twenty-five years. (Readers seeking articles from before 1988 should consult one of the previous volumes in this series, which have appeared at intervals ranging from twenty to one hundred years ever since *SpecGram* was first published). This anthology, it is hoped, will allow our readers to gain a deeper, wider, fatter understanding of linguistics as it evolved in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, without the trouble of having to take a graduate seminar in "Modern Linguistics" taught by a professor who's so old that she thinks the Beach Boys are cute. Some of us took graduate seminars like that ourselves, and believe us, this book is better.

About the Editors:

Trey Jones is a computational linguist by day and a satirical linguist by night, with expertise in natural language processing, machine learning, sarcasm, and satire. He likes to do tricky things with text and mash numbers and words together in ways nature never intended, and he's pretty damn good at it. When not trying to make an honest buck doing things none of his friends and family understand, he likes to skewer the entire field of linguistics as Managing Editor of *Speculative Grammarian.*

Keith W. Slater works for SIL International, teaches at the University of North Dakota, serves as a consultant for field linguists, and fritters away leisure hours writing for *Speculative Grammarian* and following Michigan State University athletics. He is a specialist in Mongolic languages of Northwest China, and is interested in both synchrony and diachrony. His book *A Grammar of Mangghuer* is probably a bestseller in some alternate universe.

Bill Spruiell teaches linguistics—and other courses that he confidently insists are branches of applied linguistics, such as Old English and sci-fi/fantasy literature—at Central Michigan University, which is as central as you'd expect but not nearly as frozen (*Molten water!* For *months!*). His research interests involve functional theories of language and theories of creative violation of the kinds of rules discussed in linguistics. His favorite jeremiad is "Young People Have Gotten Math All Over My Linguistics."

Tim Pulju teaches linguistics and classics at Dartmouth College. He's particularly interested in comparative/historical Indo-European linguistics, the history of linguistics, and functional approaches to language. Despite living in the 21st century, he has no home internet connection, nor is he on Facebook.

David J. Peterson is a writer and language creator. He created the Dothraki language for HBO's *Game of Thrones,* and serves as the president of the Language Creation Society. He currently works as an alien language and culture consultant on the Syfy original series *Defiance.* He's passionate about art, education and ice cream.