

How Languages Work An Introduction to Language and Linguistics

Language is a sophisticated tool which we use to communicate in a multitude of ways.

Updated and expanded in its second edition, this book introduces language and linguistics – presenting language in all its amazing complexity while systematically guiding you through the basics. You will emerge with an appreciation of the diversity of the world's languages, as well as a deeper understanding of the structure of human language, the ways it is used, and its broader social and cultural context.

Part I is devoted to the nuts and bolts of language study – speech sounds, sound patterns, sentence structure and meaning – and includes chapters dedicated to the functional aspects of language: discourse, prosody, pragmatics, and language contact. The fourteen language profiles included in Part II reveal the world's linguistic variety while expanding on the similarities and differences between languages. Using knowledge gained from Part I, you will explore how language functions when speakers use it in daily interaction.

With a step-by-step approach that is reinforced with well-chosen illustrations, case studies, and study questions you will gain understanding and analytical skills that will only enrich your ongoing study of language and linguistics.

Carol Genetti is a Professor of Linguistics and the Anne and Michael Towbes Graduate Dean at University of California, Santa Barbara.





How Languages Work

An Introduction to Language and Linguistics

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CAMBRIDGEUNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108470148

DOI: 10.1017/9781108553988

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First edition published 2014 Revised edition published 2019

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd., Padstow, Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Genetti, Carol, 1961- editor.

Title: How languages work: an introduction to language and linguistics /

editor, Carol Genetti; assistant editor, Allison Adelman

Description: Revised edition. | Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University

Press, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018008142 | ISBN 9781108470148

Subjects: LCSH: Language and languages. \mid Linguistics.

Classification: LCC P121 .H725 2018 | DDC 400–dc23

 $LC\ record\ available\ at\ https://lccn.loc.gov/2018008142$

ISBN 978-1-108-47014-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-45451-3 Paperback

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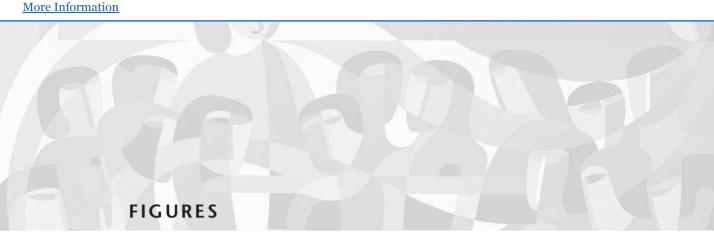
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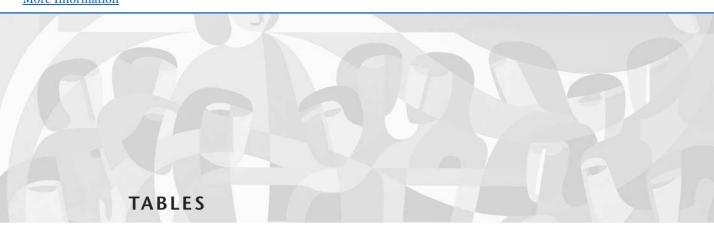
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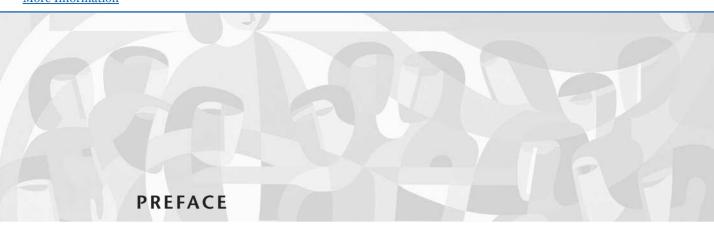
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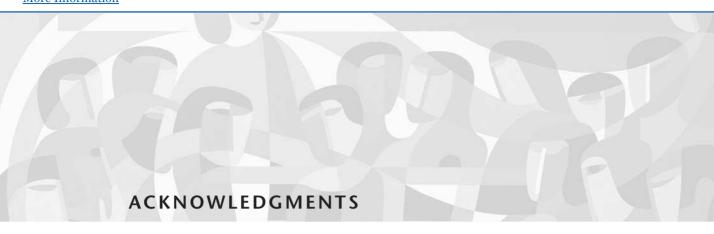


How Languages Work is designed to be the primary text for a university-level introductory course in linguistics. The audience for the book includes:

- undergraduates taking an introductory linguistics course as a general education requirement;
- beginning linguistics students with limited background in the field;
- linguistics graduate students seeking a helpful reference and introductory discussions of a wide range of sub-disciplines and a range of languages;
- students in related disciplines (such as education, anthropology, writing, or communication) that seek grounding in linguistics; and
- general readers with an avid love of languages.

In addition to courses offered within departments of linguistics, the book might be used in departments of anthropology, education, psychology, communication, applied linguistics, English, or other languages. It introduces the field of linguistics through its subfields, and prepares students for more advanced and specialized coursework.





This book has been the work of many hands over many years. My sincere thanks go out to the contributing authors, whose combined experience in linguistics can be counted in centuries and whose deep insights into language enrich every page of this book. They have been extraordinarily patient with me as I've pursued this project simultaneously with many others and have graciously accepted deeper editing than they are typically accustomed to as I've strived to bring unity and a consistent voice to these pages. I have greatly appreciated their wisdom, patience, good humor, and sheer hard work.

This book would never have come into existence without the dedicated energy of numerous graduate students – former and current – in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. First and foremost, it is my pleasure to acknowledge Allison Adelman, whose meticulous attention to detail and love of good writing have served to improve this book greatly. I strongly doubt that I would ever have brought this to completion if I hadn't had her partnership, flexibility, and cheerful persistence to rely on, and for this she will have my unending gratitude. For the website materials, especially the interactive elements, I enthusiastically thank Carlos Nash for visioning and revisioning what might be possible and bringing them to fruition. I'm also grateful for the early partnership of Kobin Kendrick, who helped to shape and creatively transform and extend my initial ideas. Other graduate students who have contributed in ways too numerous to mention include Dibella Caminsky, Onna Nelson, Nicholas Lester, Rebekka Siemens, Kira Griffitt, Veronica Muñoz LedoYañez, Jennifer Garland, and Mara Henderson. UC Santa Barbara undergraduates have also commented, corrected, and test-run these materials; I especially note the careful work of Kristin Dunkinson, Kaveh Vee, and David Prine.

The Cambridge University Press editorial team has provided constant encouragement and expert advice. Thanks especially to Andrew Winnard and Rosemary Crawley for their encouragement, helpfulness, and impressive expertise.

The first edition of this book was partly written when I was in residence as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Cairns Institute, James Cook University, in Cairns, Australia. My thanks to Sasha Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon for their contributions, friendship, and support. UC Santa Barbara has been the home of this book, both intellectually and in financial support. I am grateful to the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts and the Office



xvii Acknowledgments

of the Executive Vice Chancellor for research funds that have made this project possible. Development of the web materials was supported in part by Instructional Improvement Grants from the Office of Instructional Development.

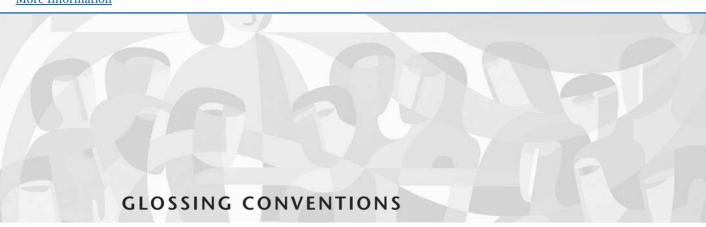
Finally, I thank Paul, Olivia, and Marcus for their love, support, uncomplaining patience, and constant inspiration.

I dedicate this book to the UC Santa Barbara Linguistics graduate students: past, present, and future.

CAROL GENETTI

Santa Barbara





Convention Meaning

- 1 first person
- 2 second person
- 3 third person
- agentive argument of transitive verb Α
- ablative ABL
- absolutive ABS
- accusative ACC
- adessive ("onward") AD
- ADJ adjective
- adverbial ADV
- adverbial, different subjects ADV.DS
- adverbial, same subjects ADV.SS
- affirmed evidential knowledge AFFIRM
 - AGT agentive
 - allative ALL
- ALREADY already
 - ANT anterior
 - APPL applicative
 - APUD next-to locative
 - ASP aspect marker
 - ASSOC associative plural

 - auxiliary AUX
 - active voice ΑV
- AWAY.FROM.RIVER directional affix
 - BRIEF brief duration
 - causative **CAUS**
 - CLF classifier
 - clitic CLT
 - COM comitative
 - COMPAR comparative
 - COMPL completive



xix List of Glossing Conventions

COND conditional CONJ conjunctive evidential CONJECTURE mutual consent **CONS** CONT continuous copula COP DAT dative declarative DECL DEF definite demonstrative DEM desiderative DESIDERATIVE determiner DET DIM diminutive distal DIST distributive DISTR dislocative DLOC DM discourse marker different subject DS DU dual DUPLICATIVE duplicative DUR durative **EMPH** emphatic ERG ergative ESS essive **EVEN** additive EVENT event **EVID** evidential feminine FACTUAL factual FOC focus FUT future FUT1>2 future tense for first-person subject with a second-person object genitive GEN HABITUAL habitual HON honorific I/II/III/IV gender classes ΙE informal ending ILL illative IMP imperative

IMPRS

INC

impersonal

inceptive



xx List of Glossing Conventions

INCL inclusive

IND indicative

INDF indefinite

INE inessive

INF infinitive

INST instrumental

INTENSIFIER intensifier

INTR intransitive

10 indirect object

IPFV imperfective

IRR irrealis

ITR iterative

JUST delimitative

LAT lative

LINKER linking morpheme

LOC locative

м masculine

MANIP manipulative

MIDDLE middle voice

MUTUAL evidential

N- non-

NEAR.FUT near future

NEG negative, negation

NF non-Feminine

NMLZ nominalizer

NOM nominative

NP noun phrase

NPST non past tense

NSG non singular

NUM.CLF numeral classifier

OBJ objective

OBL oblique

OBLIGATE obligation

P/O patientive argument of transitive verb

PASS passive

PFV perfective

PL plural

POSS possessive

POSSEE possessee

PREP preposition

PRF perfect



xxi List of Glossing Conventions

PROG progressive

PROX proximal

PRS present

PRT partitive

PST past

PST.PTCP past participle

PTC particle

PTCP participle

PURP purposive

Q question marker

QUOT quotative

REC.PST recent (past)

REDUP reduplication

REM.PST remote (past)

REP repetitive

REPORT non-personal knowledge

s intransitive subject

SBJ subject

SEMBL semblative

seq sequential

sG singular

SPEC specific-indefinite article

ss same subject marking

STAT stative

SUB below locative

SUPER above locative

TO directional affix

TOP topic

TR transitive

UNW unwitnessed

UP up(stream) directional

VERBAL.ADJ verbal adjective

WIT witnessed

YET yet





This textbook explores how languages work: the "pieces" of languages and the principles governing their nature and how they fit together; the ways in which language conveys meaning; how humans use language as the substance of everyday interaction; the role of language in society and culture; how languages adapt and change over time; and how they are learned by children and adults. It presents language as a quintessentially human activity, showing how languages are grounded in human physiology and cognition, and are both reflective and creative of human societies and cultures. It emphasizes the dynamic and constantly changing nature of language. Teaching students this broader context allows them to understand the forces that shape language, hence to gain a deeper understanding of linguistic principles and structures.

The book does not introduce any particular "formalist" theoretical paradigm (such as Generative Grammar) but describes grammatical structures from the perspective of linguistic typology. It thus follows a broad international consensus on the nature of linguistic categories and structures. It is an appropriate choice for faculty members who wish to provide their students with a rigorous orientation to language and linguistics without introducing formal models. This book is highly technical and analytical, and requires exacting attention to structural detail. Grammar is presented in significant depth and the material may at times be challenging. However, a major focus of the text is to provide students with explicit direction that will help them acquire analytical skills. In addition, the associated website includes numerous learning aids (such as interactive tutorials) that support this process. The password-protected instructor materials on the website include suggestions for sections to assign (and not assign) for classes with a less technical emphasis.

Importantly, this book is strongly cross-linguistic in its orientation; the focus is not just on *language* but also on *languages*. In exposing readers to languages from across the globe, it serves as an introduction to the world's linguistic diversity. Cross-linguistic comparisons are important not only because they allow us to classify languages but also because they reveal what a language is or might be. Understanding the similarities and differences between languages is essential to the development of empirically justifiable theories about language. In addition, linguistic variety is simply fascinating and fun; it reveals much about humankind, and the thousands of ways that particular communities of speakers have



xxiii The Book's Approach

categorized and represented the world around them. For that reason, this book contains a special feature: a set of *Language Profiles*, each written by a linguist who has conducted extensive fieldwork in the community that they write about (with the exception of Guy Deutscher, whose profile is on the long-extinct language Akkadian, which is attested on excavated clay tablets). After a brief introduction to the language and the community in which it is spoken, each language profile provides an overview of the basic structures and then goes into depth on one or more topics that tie in with the primary chapters. The profiled languages were selected to represent languages of diverse locations, families, and types. Together, these fourteen short studies serve not only to reinforce and illustrate the main points of the primary chapters but also to expose the reader to the world's linguistic diversity.

The Book's Structure

The book contains fifteen primary chapters and fourteen language profiles. These can be fit into academic programs in a number of ways. The book provides more than sufficient material for a semester-long introductory course. It can also be used in a shorter academic quarter, with instructors selecting the topics they deem the most crucial for students within their programs. It can also be used across multiple courses; for example, the language profiles can be used in subsequent courses on linguistic analysis, morphosyntax, or languages of the world. Chapters not covered in an introductory course can serve as initial readings in more specialized topic-specific courses (such as on language acquisition). The material could also be expanded to a two-quarter or year-long course, although in the latter case some supplementary readings may be desirable. Further discussion on different ways to structure courses and how to incorporate the language profiles are available on the instructor's portion of the website.

The chapters in this book follow the traditional format of tracing linguistic structure, beginning with the smallest units (sounds), building up to successively larger units, and ending with discourse. Chapters on orthogonal topics – such as semantics, language change, and language acquisition – follow the structural chapters. Several chapters are included on a variety of topics that are not typically found in introductory textbooks. These include prosody, discourse, pragmatics, and language contact.

The theoretical perspective and broad coverage of this book allow it to fill a niche in the market that is currently not covered by other texts. The contributing authors are practicing linguists and distinguished leaders in their given fields. The editor and each author, while not losing their individual voice, maintain a consistent chapter structure and level throughout, to ensure a smooth reading experience for the student. The text is contemporary and up to date. Most importantly, it presents language in the full richness of its context, as a complex dynamic tool shaped by generations of speakers through discourse interactions, adaptive to the broader social and cultural context in which it is embedded. Readers will develop a deep appreciation of the beauty, complexity, and sheer genius of language, and of humankind to whom it belongs.



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The Book's Approach

Changes to the Second Edition

The Second Edition contains a number of enrichments and improved features. Most substantively, this edition contains a new language profile on African-American English that is well integrated with Chapter 11: Language in the Social World. The latter has been restructured and updated. In addition, Chapter 2, Phonetics: the Physical Dimensions of Speech Sounds, has been expanded to include a description of British English, and both British and American English are represented in the examples, exercises, and associated sound files. This will make it easier for the text to be used in classrooms in the United Kingdom. It also allows for direct comparison between these two major English dialects.

Other changes include:

- a significant increase in the number of exercises in the primary chapters;
- increased examples from English and other major world languages in the main text and the exercises;
- clarification of the distinction between Textboxes and Sidebars, and the addition of a distinct category of "Stop and Reflect" boxes;
- greater integration of website materials and Language Profiles through increased cross-referencing;
- reduction of highlighted text to better emphasize primary points;
- · updated suggestions for further readings;
- · overall streamlining of prose.

www.cambridge.org/genetti2

The website materials are important companions to the book. The website contains a range of materials that will help instructors teach the course and help students engage with and master the skills of linguistic analysis.

Online resources for students include:

- sound files associated with particular examples in the text;
- interactive tutorials on problem solving;
- online flashcards;
- "how-to" guides that take students through steps of linguistic analysis;
- explicit instruction in writing for linguistics;
- study guides;
- self-administered online quizzes on vocabulary and key concepts;
- enriched material about the profiled languages, including interesting cultural information and profiles of speakers.



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Online resources for instructors include:

- PowerPoint slides for each chapter;
- suggested exam questions;
- sample assignments;
- answer keys;
- suggestions on how to structure courses, depending on class goals;
- guide to the Language Profiles and suggestions on how to incorporate them into classes.





Linguistics is a highly diverse and interdisciplinary field, encompassing phenomena as varied as the concrete details of physical acoustics, abstract logical argument, concise grammatical structures, and rich observations on culture and society. There are few people for whom all of it comes easily – everyone has their favorite subfields – but it is all essential; every subfield deeply interacts with all others. This book has been designed with students in mind and has many features to facilitate acquisition of the skills necessary to fully appreciate the complexity of language.

It is important in linguistics to engage with the text. Linguistics is not a field where you read quickly and lightly. It is better not to plan to cover too much at one time and not to hurry through it; take adequate time to fully work through a couple of sections, and then take a break. Throughout the primary chapters, you will find that **key points have been put in bold italics**. Of course, there are many other important points that you will want to note as well.

Be sure to really think about the discussion and make it your own; take time to reflect on your own lifelong experience of language and connect it to what you are learning, and try to become conscious of language use as you are immersed in it daily. This practice will take your understanding to an entirely new level.

Textboxes contain case studies and important related points and should always be read. "Stop and Reflect" boxes give you the opportunity to consider important questions or try your hand at linguistic analysis; taking time to work through these will facilitate your learning. Sidebars provide information on online resources as well as cross-references to related discussions in other parts of the book. Wireless icons ((***)) direct you to specific online resources that are relevant at particular points in the text.

You will find that the pages are filled with examples taken from languages throughout the world. Most of these are numbered and set off from the text. It is critical that you spend time looking at these in detail, even if you are tempted to skip over them to continue with the main text. They are as important as the text itself: each informs the other and neither can be fully understood in isolation. You will find that words from other languages are usually broken into their component parts and that translations of the meanings of each part are provided. Often these translations are abbreviated and put in small caps, for example,



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sG for singular. Each chapter has a list of the glossing conventions used within it positioned just before the exercises. A full list of all glossing conventions in the book can also be found on pages xviii–xxi.

One of the essential features of this book is its focus on linguistic analysis. This is the process by which you take a linguistic expression (a word, a sentence, a stretch of discourse) and figure out all of its parts and subparts and how they contribute to the whole. This fine-grained analysis then leads us to a broader understanding of how languages work, the underlying principles, and how the design of languages both serves and reflects their functions as tools of human communicative interaction.

There are many methods of linguistic analysis, depending on which aspects of language are being studied. For example, determining which aspects of phonetic articulation are meaningful in a language is a very different (though surprisingly not unrelated) exercise from determining whether two languages are members of the same language family, or whether a language differentiates active voice from passive voice. Learning how to apply these methods is central to learning linguistics. In order to make this as easy as possible, methodologies are presented in step-by-step fashion. "Stop and Reflect" boxes prompt you to apply the methods to further data sets. Each chapter has a set of exercises that allow you to analyze new data. In addition, there are many resources on the companion website that serve as aids for improving your analytical skills. These include interactive tutorials, step-by-step instructions, guides to writing in linguistics, and other chapter-specific resources.

Linguistics has extensive terminology that must be learned to understand the field successfully. The Glossary in the back of the book provides simple definitions and is an important reference tool. All words in the Glossary are presented in **bold** at first mention (as well as later in the book if they haven't been mentioned for a while, as a reminder that a glossary entry is available). Chapter-specific glossaries are available on the website. There are also online flashcards for each chapter to help you memorize terms.

Another important component of the website is the addition of sound files. The majority of instances of language use are spoken, and sound is an integral part of most languages (sign languages being the exception). Throughout this book (and others) you will see speech sounds represented by letters and other two-dimensional symbols, but keep in mind that these are only *representations* of sounds, not sounds themselves. In moving to the abstraction of representation, considerable richness is lost. To partially address this, especially for those chapters that focus on sound (phonetics, phonology, and prosody), many of the examples are accompanied by sound files accessible on the *How Languages Work* website; these are indicated by the wireless icon. Take the time to listen to them carefully. Most of the language profiles also have sound files, typically of recorded texts. These provide a tangible sense of the language and its speakers that cannot be otherwise replicated.

One of the most fascinating aspects of studying linguistics is learning about the tremendous variety – and ingenuity – of human languages. Linguistic diversity is both captivating and fun. In addition, understanding linguistic diversity is critical to understanding the broader principles that underlie languages, i.e., how languages work, and what languages do. The primary chapters in the book are replete with examples taken from languages across the globe. In addition, the book contains fourteen language profiles, which are case studies



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in shorter chapters that focus on particular languages. Your instructor may assign these, or you may just want to explore languages of particular regions or particular types on your own. Reading the whole set of language profiles will serve to significantly advance your understanding of linguistics. Not only do they allow the widespread application of linguistic concepts to many different languages, but they also illustrate the diversity of language types, especially as regards their grammatical structures. Textbox 0.1 provides a list of the language profiles in relation to the chapters to which they correspond; it is best to read the relevant chapter first.

TEXTBOX 0.1	WHEN TO READ WHICH LANGUAGE PROFILES
After Chapter:	Read:
3	Kabardian
6	Goemai, Manange, Nuuchahnulth, Finnish, Quechua, Bardi, Tsez
7	Lowland Chontal
11	African-American English, Indonesian
12	Seneca, Akkadian
13	Manambu

My own experience with linguistics is that the farther I climb, the greater the vistas I behold. I hope that students will find their own vistas by exploring the field far beyond this book. To encourage this, every chapter and language profile contains a list of suggested readings with a brief note about each entry; these can provide some potential next steps toward a deeper understanding of this quintessential aspect of our humanity.