

10th International Columbia School Conference on the Interaction of Linguistic Form and Meaning with Human Behavior

Conference theme: Grammatical analysis and
the discovery of meaning

October 9-11, 2010
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

Columbia School Linguistics

The Columbia School is a group of linguists developing the theoretical framework first established by the late William Diver and his students at Columbia University. In this view, language is a symbolic tool whose structure is shaped both by its communicative function and by the characteristics of its human users. In grammatical analyses, we seek to explain the distribution of linguistic forms as an interaction between hypothesized meaningful signals and pragmatic and functional factors such as inference, ease of processing, iconicity, and the like. In phonological analyses, we seek to explain the syntagmatic and paradigmatic distributions of phonological units within signals, also drawing on both communicative function and human physiological and psychological characteristics.

The Columbia School Linguistic Society was founded in 1996 to promote and disseminate linguistic research along these theoretical lines. The Society furthers this goal by sponsoring this series of conferences as well as summer institutes, bi-monthly seminars, invitational seminars, general scholarly exchange, and through our electronic discussion list csling and our web site csling.org.

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With thanks to Michael Kaplan and Betsy Rodríguez-Bachiller

Conference Schedule

Saturday, October 9

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|-------------|---|
| 8:30-9:15 | Registration |
| 9:15-9:30 | Greetings Wallis Reid, Rutgers University Radmila Gorup, President, Columbia School Linguistic Society Joseph Davis, Conference Co-organizer Nancy Stern, Conference Co-organizer |
| 9:30-9:50 | <i>Ourself, themself, and more: The communicative function of Number in -self pronouns</i> Nancy Stern |
| 9:50-10:00 | Discussion |
| 10:00-10:20 | <i>Sign combinations in context: Imperatives and modal particles in Danish</i> Tanya Karoli Christensen |
| 10:20-10:30 | Discussion |
| 10:30-10:50 | <i>The structure of Japanese conditionals in Modern Japanese: A grammatical account from a functional linguistics perspective</i> Hidemi Riggs |
| 10:50-11:00 | Discussion |
| 11:00-11:30 | Break |
| 11:30-12:00 | <i>A report on current research on Spanish in New York</i> Ricardo Otheguy |
| 12:00-12:15 | Discussion |
| 12:15-12:35 | <i>Phonology as Human Behaviour revisited: The case of Romance languages</i> Bob de Jonge |
| 12:35-12:45 | Discussion |
| 12:45-2:00 | Lunch |
| 2:00-2:20 | <i>Dirty hands, dirty work: Usage-based noun modification</i> Carol Moder |
| 2:20-2:30 | Discussion |

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| 2:30-3:15 | <i>English verb number: Syntactic or semantic?</i> Wallis Reid |
| 3:15-3:30 | Discussion |
| 3:30-4:00 | Reception |
| 4:00-6:00 | Free |
| 6:00-7:30 | Dinner on-site |
| 7:30-8:30 | Invited speaker: Flora Klein-Andreu <i>Linguistics for non-linguists</i> |
| 8:30-9:00 | Discussion |

Sunday, October 10

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|-------------|---|
| 9:15-9:35 | <i>Phonological proclivities across languages according to the theory of Phonology as Human Behavior</i> Lavi Wolf, Yishai Tobin |
| 9:35-9:45 | Discussion |
| 9:45-10:05 | <i>Pitch and aperture: Two articulatory scalars in comparison</i> Thomas Eccardt |
| 10:05-10:15 | Discussion |
| 10:15-10:45 | <i>Minimal units, their context, and the insufficiency of conceptual metaphor: Revisiting the Dutch dismissive idiom ho maar 'fuhgeddaboudit, of course not!'</i> Robert Kirsner |
| 10:45-11:00 | Discussion |
| 11:00-11:30 | Break |
| 11:30-11:50 | <i>Rethinking of the Chinese demonstratives in the Columbia School framework</i> Lin Lin |
| 11:50-12:00 | Discussion |
| 12:00-12:30 | <i>Diver's Latin voice and case</i> Joseph Davis |
| 12:30-12:45 | Discussion |
| 12:45-2:00 | Lunch |

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| 2:00-2:20 | <i>Some discourse uses of the distal demonstrative determiner in Beowulf</i> Richard Epstein |
| 2:20-2:30 | Discussion |
| 2:30-3:15 | <i>The phonological motivation for Verner's Law and Grimm's Law</i> Alan Huffman |
| 3:15-3:30 | Discussion |
| 3:30-4:00 | Break |
| 4:00-5:00 | Invited Speaker: Andrea Tyler <i>Connecting Spatial Particles and Aspect Markers: Applying the Principled Polysemy Model to Russian za</i> |
| 5:00-5:30 | Discussion |
| 5:30-7:00 | Free |
| 7:00-9:00 | Dinner off-site |

Monday, October 11

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|-------------|---|
| 9:00-9:30 | Coffee & Cross-theoretical discussion |
| 9:30-10:00 | <i>The meaning(s?) of non-animate deictic markers in Swahili</i> Ellen Contini-Morava |
| 10:00-10:15 | Discussion |
| 10:15-10:35 | <i>Internal vowel alternation as a phonological-semantic sign system in English according to the sign-oriented theory of the Columbia School</i> Elena Even-Simkin, Yishai Tobin |
| 10:35-10:45 | Discussion |
| 10:45-11:15 | Break |
| 11:15-11:35 | <i>Linguistic meaning, pragmatics and context: Semantic analysis of evidence in a double homicide trial seeking to weigh intent</i> Robert Leonard |
| 11:35-11:45 | Discussion |
| 11:45-12:30 | Business meeting |
| 12:30-1:30 | Lunch |

Sign combinations in context: Imperatives and modal particles in Danish

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The imperative has a very large meaning potential, as is evident in recipes, advertisements, warning labels and parent-child conversations. In Danish, a range of modal particles allows for a partial disambiguation of the imperative, some combinations being more specific than others (cf. Durst-Andersen 1995; for a similar case in Dutch, though mainly concerning pragmatic particles, see Kirsner 2003).

For instance, the modal particle *så* almost invariably turns an imperative into an order (1a), while *bare* in some cases will signal a permission to do something (1b), and in others an instruction to consider the propositional content a premise in an argument (1c).

- (1) a. Spis så din mad!
Eat-IMP **så** your Food
'Now eat your dinner!'
- b. Tag bare plads!
Take-IMP **bare** seat
'Please take a seat'
- c. Tag bare landbrugssektoren.
Take-IMP **bare** agriculture-sector-DEF.
'Just consider the agricultural sector.'

This paper presents an account of the combination of imperatives with modal particles which lies within the theoretical framework of Danish Functional Linguistics (Engberg-Pedersen et al. 1996; Harder 1996), a framework that shares key features with Columbia School linguistics, among them the bipartite sign, the investigation of the meaning potential of grammatical systems and the appeal to context (cf. Contini-Morava 1995).

It should come as no surprise that context plays a major part in the interpretation of imperatives, also when they are combined with modal particles. The addressee must of course infer what the specific speech act value of the imperative is in the current circumstances, but, interestingly, it appears that also the interpretation of the modal particles is subject to such a dialectic evaluation of signals and situation. In terms of Columbia School interests (see, e.g., Reid 2004), the question is whether the addressee chooses between two different senses of *bare* in (1b) and (1c) (a polysemous account, often preferred by Danish Functional Linguistics, as well as by cognitive linguists (Janssen 1993)), or if the modal particle rather encodes a single, more abstract meaning which is enriched by the addressee with respect to the context (a monosemous account, preferred by CS analyses).

Thus, the combination of an imperative and a modal particle proves to be a good testing ground for hypotheses about the meaning potential of both forms. The foundation for these hypotheses rests on novel analyses of both the grammatical

system of verbal mood in Danish, and of the modal particles as a system (Christensen 2007; Christensen & Heltoft, to appear).

References:

- Christensen, Tanya Karoli. 2007. *Hyperparadigmer. En undersøgelse af paradigmatiske samspil i danske modussystemer*. [Hyperparadigms. An investigation of paradigmatic interplay in Danish mood systems]. PhD thesis. Roskilde: Roskilde University
- Christensen, Tanya Karoli & Lars Heltoft. To appear. Mood in Danish. In: Thierhoff & Rothstein (Eds.). *Mood in the European Languages*. 18pp.
- Contini-Morava, Ellen. 1995. Introduction: On linguistic sign theory. In: Contini-Morava & Goldberg (Eds.). *Meaning as Explanation. Advances in Linguistic Sign Theory*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 1-39.
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- Engberg-Pedersen, Elisabeth et al. (Eds.). 1996. *Content, Expression and Structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Harder, Peter. 1996. *Functional Semantics - A Theory of Meaning, Structure and Tense in English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter
- Heltoft, Lars. 1996. Paradigms, word order and grammaticalization. In: Engberg-Pedersen et al. (Eds.). *Content, Expression and Structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co. 469-494.
- Janssen, Theo A.J.M. 1993. Heterosemy or polyfunctionality? The case of Dutch *maar* 'but, only, just'. In: Shannon & Snapper (Eds.). *The Berkeley Conference on Dutch Linguistics 1993*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America. 71-85.
- Kirsner, Robert S. 2003. On the Interaction of the Dutch Pragmatic Particles *hoor* and *hè* with the Imperative and Infinitivus Pro Imperativo. In: Verhagen & Van de Weijer (Eds.). *Usage-Based Approaches to Dutch*. Utrecht: LOT. 59-96.
- Reid, Wallis. 2004. Monosemy, homonymy and polysemy. In: Contini-Morava, Kirsner & Rodríguez-Bachiller (Eds.). *Cognitive and Communicative Approaches to Linguistic Analysis*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 93-129.

The meaning(s?) of non-animate deictic markers in Swahili

Ellen Contini-Morava
University of Virginia

Swahili nouns are divided into classes based in part on noun class markers (NCMs) attached to noun stems and in part on the co-occurrence between a noun and a particular deictic marker (DM) attached to demonstratives, possessives, verbs, and other elements that relate to the noun. For example:

- (1) a. *ji-we* *li-le* *li-me-anguka*
NCM5-stone DM5-that DM5-perfective-fall
'That stone has fallen'
- b. *ki-banda* *ki-le* *ki-me-anguka*
NCM7 -shed DM7-that DM7-perf.-fall
'That shed has fallen'.

According to Contini-Morava (2002), each NCM signals that the noun it helps to form belongs to a given class. This paper will consider what meanings are signaled by the DM.

The simplest analysis (proposed for example in Contini-Morava 2008) is that the DM form a system of AID IN IDENTIFICATION OF REFERENT THAT IS RELEVANT TO ATTACHED STEM, and that each DM points to a referent that can be named by a noun of a given class. This accounts both for cases where a noun is explicitly mentioned (as in 1) and ones where a noun is implied, e.g.

- (2) *Kuta za ua wake za mbavuni zilikuwa za makuti ya kumba, na kwa mbele hivi ...kuna vi-banda vi-wili, ch-a mkono wa kushoto ki-mefungwa kipande cha gunia mlangoni kinachoning'inia katikati...*
[Abdulla (1960:11)]

'The walls of the courtyard along the side were of coconut fronds, and toward the front... there were **two sheds** (plural prefix on noun and numeral), [**the one**] **on the left** (singular DM affixed to connective particle) **had attached** [to it] (singular DM, subject prefix of verb *-fungwa* 'be attached') a piece of cloth in the doorway dangling in the middle...'

However, the DM can also be used in contexts where reference is made to unspecified "things" rather than to a particular noun, e.g.

- (3) a. *Ki-enda-ch-o* *kwa mganga* *ha-ki-rudi.*
DM7-go-DM7 -rel.pro. to healer neg.-DM7-return
'That which goes to a healer does not return' (proverb)

- b. *Asiyekuwepo* *na* *l-ake* *ha-li-po.*
he.who.is.not.there also DM5-3sg.poss. neg-DM5-be.there

'He who is not there, his [matter, concern] is not there' (proverb)

The question to be addressed is whether a separate system of homonymous DM should be posited for examples such as (3), as proposed for example in Contini-Morava (1996), or whether they can be explained by the abovementioned analysis.

References:

Contini-Morava, Ellen (1996). 'Things' in a noun class language: semantic functions of grammatical agreement in Swahili. In E. Andrews and Y. Tobin (eds.), *Toward a Calculus of Meaning: Studies in Markedness, Distinctive Features, and Deixis*.

Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

(2002). (What) do noun class markers mean? In W. Reid, R. Otheguy and N. Stern (eds.), *Signal, Meaning, and Message: Perspectives on Sign-Based Linguistics*.

Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

(2008). Human relationship terms, discourse prominence, and asymmetrical animacy in Swahili. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 29.2: 127-171.

Diver's Latin Voice and Case

Joseph Davis

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William Diver's reanalysis (1995) of the opposition in Latin between so-called active and passive voice (1a, b) is notable for several reasons: It was the last analysis he presented and so possibly represents his most mature thinking; it illustrates a radical revision of an existing analysis; it represents a coming to terms with recalcitrant data; it has implications for other analyses of the language; and it illuminates the classical text in ways that neither the tradition nor Diver's earlier analysis had done.

In Diver's classic (1982) analysis of Latin voice and case, voice had been treated as a semantically vacuous set of morphology that served to identify which of two "phases" of an interlock applied for a certain example. Though the morphology attaches to the verb, the interlock involved two grammatical systems having to do with the noun: that of Focus and that of Control. Essentially, voice indicated whether the participant IN Focus (with nominative case) had MOST (in Phase I, as in 1a) or LEAST (in Phase II, 1b) Control over the event; i.e., whether the subject was an agent or a patient. Noun cases thus had variable meanings, and verb morphology indicated which meaning applied. Ungainly though it may have been, the analysis worked well enough for the examples it covered, and it marked an improvement over the traditional labels.

In order to be considered successful, however, the old analysis had to discount as irrelevant one major and a few minor classes of verbs: chiefly the deponents, and also certain intransitives. (In traditional terms, deponents have passive morphology but active sense; certain intransitives can have either active or passive morphology with no apparent difference in sense.)

Best we can tell, a certain pair of intransitives from one episode of Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* appears to have been the catalyst for Diver's rethinking of the problem of voice. In the pair (2a, b), the same lexical item has first passive then active morphology with no apparent change in sense. But now, rather than ignore these data, Diver posits a difference in degree of Vividness for the two events: the active morphology signals a higher degree of Vividness than the passive morphology. Diver's analysis draws a connection between the two degrees of Vividness and the relative importance of the two events in the narrative.

The analysis of intransitives is insightful, and it prompts a motivated reanalysis of the familiar active-passive distinction. Gone are the "phases" of the Focus-Control interlock. Instead, an event (1a) whose MOST Controlling participant is IN Focus is more Vivid than an event (1b) whose LEAST Controlling participant is IN focus.

But even more startling is Diver's new analysis of the class of deponents. Rather than ignore the deponents as instances of unmotivated, irregular morphology, Diver now includes them in his hypothesis of Vividness. His claim is that deponents have lexical content that makes them inherently less Vivid. This he demonstrates with pairs of active and deponent verbs. Again, a particular example (3a) appears to have figured crucially in his thinking. As it happens, a nearby active-

voice example in the same passage (3b) contrasts nicely and so is incorporated into the forthcoming presentation of this analysis (Diver and Davis) in the volume of Diver's collected works.

Examples cited in the abstract:

- (1a) Traditionally, active voice: nominative subject is agent; accusative is patient
Carnutes-*nom.* cives Romanos-*acc.* interficiunt-*act.*
Carnutes-*nom.* citizens-*acc.* Romans-*acc.* slay-*act.*
The Carnutes slay Roman citizens.
- (b) Traditionally, passive voice: nominative subject is patient
Indutiomarus-*nom.* interficitur-*pass.*
Indutiomarus-*nom.* slay-*pass.*
Indutiomarus is slain.
- (2a) Traditionally, intransitive with passive morphology
si quid vellent, ad Id. April. reverterentur-*pass.*
if what they-wished on Ides April return-*pass.*
if they wished for anything, they were to return on the 13th of April.
- (b) Traditionally, intransitive with active morphology
legati ad eum reverterunt-*act.*
deputies to him returned-*act.*
the deputies returned to him
- (3a) qui-*nom.* sunt adfecti gravioribus morbis quique-*nom.* in proeliis periculisque
versantur, aut pro victimis homines immolant-*act.* aut se immolatu-*act.*
vovent-*act.* administrisque ad ea sacrificia druidibus utuntur-*dep.*

those-who-*nom.* are smitten with the more grievous maladies and who-*nom.*
are engaged in the perils of battle either sacrifice-*act.* human victims or vow-*act.*
to do so, and they employ-*dep.* the Druids as ministers for such sacrifices.
- (b) Alii-*nom.* immani magnitudine simulacra-*acc.* habent-*act.*, quorum contexta
viminibus membra vivis hominibus complent; quibus succensis circumventi
flamma exanimantur homines.

Others-*nom.* use-*act.* figures-*acc.* of immense size, whose limbs, woven out of
twigs, they fill with living men and set on fire, and the men perish in a sheet
of flame. (Loeb)

References:

- Diver, William. 1982. "The Focus-Control Interlock in Latin." *CUWPL* 7: 13-31.
- Diver, William. 1995. "Latin -T and Latin -TUR." Presentation to the Classical Association of the Atlantic States.
- Diver, William, and Joseph Davis. Forthcoming. "Latin Voice and Case." In Alan Huffman and Joseph Davis, *Language: Communication and Human Behavior: The Linguistic Essays of William Diver*. Leiden: Brill.

Phonology as Human Behaviour (PHB) Revisited: The case of Romance languages

Bob de Jonge

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In the course of the years, the explanatory force of PHB has shown to be able to explain more than distributional facts of certain types of phonemes in a great number of languages, but may also be applied to clinical situations (Tobin 1997). Recent study of various Romance languages has revealed that the basic and most valuable distributional facts that underlie PHB theory (Diver 1979) may be refined in order to enlarge its explanatory power. Different problems will be discussed, such as the relation between articulator and articulation place, the role of adroitness of the articulator related to the phonological system and the phonetic inventory of a language, etc. Examples will be given from different Romance languages.

References:

- Diver, W. (1979), "Phonology as human behavior", in: D. Aaronson & R. Rieber (eds), *Psycholinguistic research: implications and applications*, Hillsdale, Nueva York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 161-182.
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Pitch and Aperture: Two Articulatory Scalars in Comparison

Thomas Eccardt
Independent scholar

Discrete linguistic units such as morphemes and phonemes are somehow signaled by continuous articulatory movements. Two measures of this movement, pitch (tone) and degree of aperture (of vocal tract), show remarkable similarities. Both of these scalars vary through approximately six levels. Both allow for the possibility of dynamic units, such as contour tones and diphthongs, which even share the descriptions *rising* or *falling*. Both types seem to allow a maximum combination of three sequential levels into convex/concave tones or triphthongs. And many languages have a neutral tone or a schwa, consisting of a medial value of pitch or aperture, respectively. It is probably no coincidence that both tone and aperture are subject to the same linguistic analytic controversies, such as whether contour tones are really sequences of level tones and whether diphthongs are really sequences of monphthongs. This paper will investigate the similarities and the differences (e.g. nothing about aperture corresponds to “intonation”) between pitch and aperture in spoken language and its linguistic analysis.

If pitch and aperture are useful scalars, measuring real phenomena, their distributions may be skewed (i.e. non-random). In an analysis of translations of a book of the New Testament in each of three unrelated Asian tone languages plus one Central American tone language, there emerge small negative correlations ($r = -0.099, -0.056, -0.017, \text{ and } -0.1581$) between aperture and pitch, which are easily statistically significant ($p=0.000048$, for the smallest). This negative correlation may correspond to the apparent positive correlation between tone-level and vowel-height (aperture’s inverse) already observed by tone specialists.

This paper will also make the logical case that discrete scalars are in no *a priori* way inferior to binary features in describing a discrete communication system. Depending on one’s theoretical orientation, the fact that they measure and reflect ordinal phenomena may make them superior.

References:

- Abramson, Arthur S., 1962. *The vowels and tones of standard Thai: acoustical measurements and experiments*. Bloomington.
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- Chao, Yuen-Ren, 1968. *A grammar of spoken Chinese*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
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- Thompson, Lawrence C. 1987. *A Vietnamese reference grammar*. University of Hawaii Press.
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New Testament translation and romanization Internet sources:

<http://www.htmlbible.com/sacrednamebiblecom/vietnamese/B41C001.htm>

<http://www.thai-language.com/dict>

<http://www.wordpocket.com/pn/41/1.htm>

<http://www.biblica.com/bibles/thai/pdf/mark.pdf>

<http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/index.php?action=getVersionInfo&vid=90>

Some Discourse Uses of the Distal Demonstrative Determiner in *Beowulf*

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The literature on the distal demonstrative *se* in Old English has mainly concentrated on its use as a marker of definiteness (referent identifiability) and deixis. In this talk, I focus instead on uses of *se* that have received much less attention. Drawing on data from *Beowulf*, I argue that, at least when used as a determiner, the demonstrative also serves a variety of discourse-pragmatic functions, such as indicating the relative importance of referents; topic continuity; or chapter boundaries. I will also suggest that all uses of determiner *se* are manifestations of a core meaning which I call "low deixis" (following Kirsner 1993, Leonard 1995, *inter alia*).

To illustrate, nearly one-third of all occurrences of the distal demonstrative determiner in *Beowulf* (32.8%) are found in NPs representing just five participants — three are the main characters (Beowulf, the dragon, and Grendel), the fourth represents the setting where much of the action takes place (Heorot), and the fifth is the Danish King (Hrothgar), another major character. In contrast, minor characters are not generally referred to with NPs containing *se*, even when these referents are identifiable. For example, none of the first half dozen NPs referring to the watchman who guards the coast in the service of Hrothgar occurs with *se*. Naturally, the first mention of this character occurs without *se*, in line 229 (*Ðā of wealle geseah weard Scildinga* 'from the wall, Shieldings' **lookout** saw ...'), but subsequent mentions of the character also occur without *se* (e.g. lines 312-313: *Him þā hildedēor hofmōdigra torht getæhte* '**gallant escort** guided them to [that] dazzling stronghold'). Only in the very last full noun phrase referring to the watchman does *se* occur:

- (1) Hē **þām bātwearde** bunden golde
he the boat-guard bound gold
swurd gesealde, þæt hē syðþan wæs
sword gave that he since was
on meodubence mǣpme þȳ weorþra, [lines 1900-
1902]
on mead-bench treasure the worthier
'**The guard** who had watched the boat was given a sword with gold fittings,
that later on the mead-bench he was the more honored by that fine treasure'

In this context, the watchman is portrayed as a person of special prominence, having performed a noteworthy task (guarding the ship). The subsequent text confirms the fact that he is an important (minor) participant here by explicitly stating that he was 'honored' in later years.

Given the number of languages in which demonstrative meanings form a system, it is also tempting to go further and assume a semantic opposition between the meanings of the two Old English demonstratives, with the proximate demonstrative signaling "high deixis". However, I will have little to say here

regarding the possible relation between the two demonstratives since there are few examples of the proximate demonstrative occurring as a determiner in *Beowulf*.

References:

Kirsner, Robert (1993). "From Meaning to Message in Two Theories: Cognitive and Saussurean Views of the Dutch Demonstratives," in Richard A. Geiger and Brygida Rudzka-Ostyn (eds.), *Conceptualizations and Mental Processing in Language*, 81-114. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Leonard, Robert (1995). "Deixis in Swahili: Attention meanings and pragmatic function," in Ellen Contini-Morava and Barbara Sussman Goldberg (eds.), *Meaning as explanation: Advances in linguistic sign theory*, 271-287. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Internal Vowel Alternation as a Phonological-Semantic Sign System in English according to the Sign-Oriented Theory of the Columbia School

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Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

The Internal Vowel Alternation (IVA) system is considered to be "irregular" because it only appears in a limited number of noun plurals (e.g. *goose-geese*, *mouse-mice*) and Past Tense verb forms (e.g. *sing-sang*, *take-took*) that have "survived" in Modern English from a more prevalent and productive process in Old English. Following a sign-oriented analysis of language, we postulate that IVA constitutes a meta-system composed of signals (*signifiants*) that are connected to invariant meanings (*signifiés*) in a Saussurean sense.

First, the IVA forms are systematically opposed phonologically and iconically: IVA nominal forms undergo a **fronting** (originally called *umlaut*) process ("moving forward"/or increasing in the plural) while, conversely, the IVA verbal forms (originally called "strong" verbs with *ablaut*) undergo a **backing** process ("moving back in time" for the Past Tense). Even new IVA strong verbs which originally belonged to the "weak"—V + ed class of verbs in Old English follow the iconic phonological backing process in Modern English.

Secondly, the English IVA nominal and verbal forms are systematically motivated semantically and share a Common Semantic Denominator (CSD). All the nominal IVA forms have a marked distinctive semantic feature ("Semantic Integrality") (Tobin 1990, 1994/1995). All the various IVA verbal classes also share CSDs – and the more similar these IVA verbal classes are phonologically the closer their CSDs are semantically. Thus, our study connects the form-phonology and the meaning-semantics of the so-called irregular IVA forms and presents them as a full-fledged system of linguistic signs in English.

References:

Tobin, Yishai. 1990. *Semiotics and Linguistics*. London/New-York: Longman.

Tobin, Yishai. 1994/1995. *Invariance, Markedness and Distinctive Feature Analysis: A Contrastive Study of Sign Systems in English and Hebrew*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins (1994 (hardcover) / Be'er-Sheva; Ben-Gurion University Press (1995 paperback).

The Phonological Motivation for Verner's Law and Grimm's Law

Alan Huffman

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William Diver developed the outlines of an innovative analysis of the developments in Germanic historical phonology known as Verner's Law and Grimm's Law. His analysis represents a synthesis of his interest in general linguistics—specifically, an application of his phonology—and original ideas concerning the reconstruction of Indo-European and Germanic—specifically: it begins with a reconstruction of the I-E phonemic inventory that departs from the standard reconstruction and more closely resembles Greek; and it reverses the traditional chronology of the Germanic developments. Diver apparently intended to present these ideas in a paper to the Columbia School Conference that took place after his untimely death, but he left only some incomplete notes. As part of the project of publishing Diver's work, the present author has taken Diver's ideas, fleshed out the analysis by organizing them and filling in missing pieces, and written them up. This talk will present the highlights.

Grimm's discovery was brilliant, and Verner's even more so; but neither offered an explanation of the Germanic developments. In seeking to find motivations, this analysis posits a new reconstruction of the events and chronologies themselves, one which helps to make sense of the historical developments in ways not offered by the traditional reconstruction. According to this hypothesis, the driving factor behind this series of developments was the shift from the free musical accent of Indo-European, first to a free stress accent, and then to the fixed stress accent characteristic of Germanic languages today. The phonological factors appealed to in explaining individual developments are: a) voice onset delay due to following stress; b) speakers' attempting to manage the air supply when aspiration threatens to become excessive; and c) paradigmatic shifts ("push chains") to preserve distinctiveness. Apparent exceptions to these developments are due to d) conservation of air supply and e) the communicative importance of the beginning of the word. In the chronology, the development known as Verner's Law which is traditionally held to have occurred after the part called Grimm's Law (perhaps simply because it was discovered much later?), is held here to have occurred before it, as an early and partial reaction to the first beginnings of the change in type of accent. This progression of developments, the "Verner's Law Shift", the "Grimm's Law Shift", and then the "High Germanic Shift", here emerge as successive recyclings of the same series of events, responding to the same causes and reflecting the same phonological mechanisms.

The advantages of this analysis are the following:

- 1) It provides an explanation of the role of the accent in these developments, the accent having been merely an observed but unexplained correlation in Verner's discovery.
- 2) It explains these changes in terms of general, not ad hoc, principles of phonology, principles that can easily be seen operating in a wide variety of situations in many different languages.

- 3) It appeals to a very limited number of phonetic mechanisms as operative throughout the whole evolution, whereas other analyses that attempt explanation at all must view Verner's shift and Grimm's shift as distinct and unrelated phenomena.
- 4) It recognizes that paradigmatic, i.e. communicative factors are a legitimate part of the explanation, and does not limit its view to phonetics alone.
- 5) It smoothly includes all the correlations in the observations, all stages of the development, and all the apparent "exceptions". It is a comprehensive and consistent solution to the problem.

**Minimal units, their context, and the insufficiency of conceptual metaphor:
Revisiting the Dutch dismissive idiom *ho maar*
'fuhgeddaboutit, of course not!'**

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The Dutch interjection *ho* communicates 'stop' or (when reining in horse) 'whoa'; cf. the saying *Men moet geen ho roepen voor men over de brug is* 'One shouldn't call out whoa before one has gotten across the bridge,' i.e. 'There's many a slip between cup and lip.' Sometimes *ho* is reinforced with the imperative of the verb *stoppen* 'stop', as in the lines of the song *Ho stop. Sta eens even stil. Waar wil je heen gaan, of maakt dat geen verschil?* 'Whoa stop. Stand still for a minute. Where do you want to go to, or doesn't that make a difference?'¹ The expression *Zeg maar ho* 'Say "when" ' containing the modal particle *maar* to downtone or soften the imperative of *zeggen* 'to say' is conventionally used when you are pouring a drink for someone and want him or her to indicate when you should stop pouring. Of particular interest is the combination of the *ho* command to stop with this softening *maar* mentioned above, as in *Ho maar* 'Stop' uttered, e.g. by a wife to a husband to get him to stop his joke-telling or to warn the driver of a car about to hit a pole.

The focus of the present paper is a different use of the *ho maar* phrase — not to stop an ongoing action but to dismiss a possibility. It is most frequent in the conjoined structure *X, maar Y? Ho maar!*, where *X* and *Y* are being contrasted, where the first *maar* is the contrastive conjunction 'but' and the second *maar* (in *ho maar*) is the softening particle: *Een hoger loon willen ze allemaal, maar harder werken, ho maar* 'They all want higher wages, but work harder? Forget it!/Of course not!'. Dutch dictionaries characterize this second *ho maar*, in this particular structure, as an idiom with a sarcastic flavor (De Groot et al 1999:334) and paraphrase it with *Vergeet het maar* 'Forget it' and *Geen sprake van* 'That's out of the question.' In this dismissive use of *ho maar*, the particle *maar* cannot be omitted.

The questions raised by dismissive *ho maar* include:

- 1) What are the units of language here? Do we have a single *ho* and a single 'softening' particle *maar* or, in addition, one or more new entities combining the two, etc.? This question is of course inseparable from a second one:
- 2) By what semantic/pragmatic mechanisms does *ho maar* in *some* cases communicate 'Stop!' and, in *others*, dismissal of a possibility? Or are we confronted with one or more cases of lexical or constructional homonymy?

It is of course tempting to analyze dismissive *ho maar* as an instance of a conceptual metaphor mapping a command to stop motion along a *spatial trajectory*

¹ <http://webspac.webring.com/people/md/dagelijksbrood/stop.html> (Accessed 26 July 2010.)

(from one place to another) into a command to stop motion along a *discourse or mental trajectory* (from one thought/idea/concept/topic to another); cf. Lakoff (1993:243), Reid (2004:113-115). Compare as an analogy English *Don't go there*, used when you do not want to talk about a topic your interlocutor has just brought up. But conceptual metaphor cannot be the whole story, for it fails to explain the striking way in which dismissive *ho maar* is **not** used. Unlike its paraphrases (and unlike English *Don't go there*), dismissive *ho maar* denies only possibilities which the Speaker has mentioned, not those which the Hearer brings up: If Jan is refusing Anneke's request that they go away this weekend, he cannot use *ho maar*: **Ho maar/ Vergeet het maar, we hebben het geld gewoon niet* 'Forget it, We just don't have the money'. Additionally, neither the conceptual metaphor nor the paraphrases account for the sarcastic tone associated specifically with dismissive *ho maar*.

The puzzle is not complete without considering other *ho maar* structures of the form *Ho maar met X*, containing the preposition *met* 'with,' which are non-contrastive and non-sarcastic. Depending on the nature of the *X*, these communicate either the 'Stop!' command, as in *Ho maar met dat geschreeuw* 'Stop with that screaming' or the dismissive message. An example of the latter is taken from a newspaper column in which the writer, Af Brandt Corstius, is mocking the Minister of Integration and Housing's policy of officially declaring certain urban neighborhoods as "problem neighborhoods" and then spiffing them up with government money, giving them new jungle-gyms, plants, etc. so that they look less run-down. When the Minister (Ellen Vogelaar) had visited East Amsterdam, Brandt Corstius's neighborhood, speeches were given about recent improvements in relations between Muslims and native Dutch, educational initiatives, and so forth. And Brandt Corstius comments:

Maar ik maakte me zorgen . Als die mensen zo doorgingen, zou ons binnenkort de status van probleebuurt worden ontnomen! **En ho maar dan met al die fijne subsidies.** Snel rende ik van het plein af, op zoek naar een lastminute junk die ik aan Ella zou kunnen voorstellen. Maar er was er nergens een te vinden.

[Aaf Brandt Corstius 'Halloow. Ik ben Ella Vogelaar" . *nrc de week*, dinsdag 1 mei 2007, p.6]

But I was worried. If these people kept on like that, we would soon lose our status of "problem neighborhood!" **And then forget about/ goodbye to, it will be all over with** with all those fine government subsidies. I fled the neighborhood square, looking for a last-minute drug addict whom I could introduce to Ella. But none was to be found.

In our paper we argue that to explain how dismissive *ho maar* works and to decide whether or not it is an independent synchronic unit (as the label "idiom" suggests), we must consider not only *ho* 's minimal meaning and conceptual metaphor as indicated above but also (i) the linguistic context (as in the Brandt Corstius

example), (ii) degrees of inferential complexity between *ho maar* and its paraphrases, (iii) iconicity as reflected in word order (Garcia 2009:14-15), and (iv) the quotative nature of irony (Haiman (1998:45-50,166), Sperber and Wilson(1995:238-241)). We shall also have to examine new, more elaborate uses of *ho maar* (still unmentioned in dictionaries and grammars) where apparently only the dismissive reading is possible.

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Linguistic meaning, pragmatics and context: semantic analysis of evidence in a double homicide trial seeking to weigh intent

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Two cars crash. In one car both people are killed, and the 16 year driver of the other is in a coma for weeks. Just prior to the crash, the police find, the 16 year old was texting her boyfriend messages containing “crash my car” and “suicide.” She is charged with deliberate double homicide in adult court, and the prosecution asks for a sentence of two hundred years.

A linguist is asked by the defense to analyze the texts and other data. The analytic task emerges: to compare two competing hypotheses – whether the texts constitute a suicide note, or an ongoing conversation.

The analysis, presented in court and subjected to cross-examination, uses semantics, pragmatics, discourse and conversational analysis, topic analysis, theory of context, conversational turn-taking, power and control, Labovian narrative reportability vs. credibility, and other linguistic theoretical constructs.

Rethinking of the Chinese Demonstratives in the Columbia School Framework

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Demonstratives (*zhe* 'this', *na* 'that' and their associated phrases) in Chinese have received much attention from various linguistic theoretical perspectives. Traditional approaches as reflected in Wang (1959) treat demonstratives as referring to either temporal or spatial distances between the speaker and the referent. This explanation fails to account for the actual use of the two items. Since Teng's (1981) idea of freeing the referent from a spatial distant view, the referred distance has been expanded to a contextual or psychological level (Lv: 1985; Tao: 1999; Fang: 2002; Biq: 2007; Yang: 2007; Xu: 2008). However, a better view can be articulated from a Columbia School framework, where the two items will be considered to signal the meaning of high or low *deixis*, that is, with different degrees of "the force with which the hearer is instructed to find the referent" (Garcia: 1975). Thus, from this perspective, by using *zhe*, the speaker requires more attention of the hearer to the referent than *na*.

To substantiate the Columbia School framework, this paper uses written discourse data for analysis. The data come from the novel *Wei Cheng* 'fortress besieged', a well known novel by the late author Qian Zhongshu. I will attempt to explore a semantic-pragmatic model to show that the signal the speaker sends suggests the hearer the underlying message of the oral communication, as well as the environment: i.e. the relationship between people, key words of the communication, people's preference and so forth. As in an example from the novel:

1) NA Chao Hsin-mei benlai jiu shenqihuoxian, ting Su Xiaojie shuo Hung-chien que shi gent a tongchuan huiguo de, tade biaoqing jiu fangfu Hung-chien huawei xidan de kongqi, yanjing li meiyou ZHEGE ren.

'Chao Hsin-mei looked smug to begin with, and after hearing Miss Su confirm that Hung-chien indeed came home with her on the same ship, he acted as if Hung-chien had turned into thin air and ignored Hung-chien completely.'

Here *na* refers to Chao Hsin-mei and *zhege* refers to Fang Hung-chien, but both are at the same table eating. It is thus not reasonable to state that Chao Hsin-mei is farther and Fang Hung-chien is near. The reason to apply different demonstratives to them is that Chinese favor moderate people and dislike arrogant ones. Here, the author used *zhe* to show his sympathy to Hung-chien while using *na* to imply that Hsin-mei is a non-favored character. Thus the signal is not only linguistic but also culture-related.

In my quantitative part, I did a counting test of this book and run a statistical analysis of the 1671 examples of *zhe* and 691 examples of *na*. The first test took the whole sample. Although demonstratives do correlate significantly with Mood, Character and Grammatical Role, but the effects sizes, which are measured by the Phi statistic, are very small: .075 for THIS/THAT-Mood, .106 for THIS/THAT-Character, and .150 for THIS/THAT-Grammatical Role. Also, there is correlation of Grammatical Role with Character. Therefore, it is meaningful to take another text, in which 691 examples of *zhe* and 691 examples of *na* are tested, i.e. keeping the amount of both demonstratives equal, for examples of *zhe* is more than 70% of the

whole sample, which results in that *zhe* is over 50% itself in the whole sample and it is not clear in the testing analysis predicts whether *zhe* is over 50% used because of its number or its usage. Chopping out 980 examples and keeping a 50-50 split enables the true predicts of the demonstratives.

It turns out that, except THIS/THAT-Number, each of the other three sets supports my hypothesis: firstly, my claim is that *zhe* means HIGH DEIXIS and *na* means LOW DEIXIS; and secondly, each sentence analysis and correlation, if the correlation of the demonstratives with Number is accepted, shows that the author is intended to choose *zhe* to refer to people or things with the feature which commands people's attention and *na* to point to people or things that require lower attention.

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Dirty Hands, Dirty work: Usage-Based Noun Modification

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Noun modification, including ADJ-Noun (*dirty hands, healthy budget*) and Noun-Noun combinations (*dirt road, health care*), have been the subject of debate in linguistics. Formalist approaches consider the interpretation of such phrases to be fully compositional, assuming that each item has an inherent, context-free meaning, and that the meanings of the two combine in a predictable rule-governed way (Ladusaw 1988, Lappin 2001). However, empirical investigations of this claim for English noun combinations (Downing 1977, Ryder 1994) have indicated that there is no limited set of predictable rules that adequately describes the relationships speakers use in interpreting these combinations. Cognitive linguistic research (Langacker 1987, Turner & Fauconnier 1995, and Sweetser 1999) analyzes these structures as entailing analogical, categorical, metaphorical or generic blending of the two mental spaces named by the nouns but has attended little to the contribution of specific form patterns. Moder (2004) found that for metaphorical N-N combinations usage was critical and that even conventional combinations could take on new mappings within a specific discourse context. These findings suggest a discourse-based empirical approach to Noun modification would yield more productive results.

This study examines the effects of frequency (Bybee 2007) and context on the use of N-N versus ADJ-Noun combinations within similar semantic domains (*dirt road, dirty work; health care, healthy growth*) using a corpus of spoken American English taken from National Public Radio news programs (1,000,000 words) and a related written American English corpus of 2 million words of text from *The New York Times*. The study examined ADJ-N and N-N combinations, which were semantically related (*health, health; dirt, dirty; noise, noisy; sleep, sleepy*). The results indicated distinctive association patterns for N-N versus ADJ-Noun patterns. Furthermore, noun and adjective modifiers tended to evidence different type and token frequency patterns that contributed to different lexicalized and grammaticalized meanings

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Columbia School meanings and the study of sociolinguistic variation

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The Spanish forms that are usually referred to as subject personal pronouns (*yo, tú, él, 'I, you, he'* etc.) are straightforwardly observed in both speech and writing to be present with some finite verb tokens (e.g. *ella canta 'she sings'*) and to be absent with others (e.g. *canta 'she sings'*). These forms have been analyzed under Columbia School approaches as having meanings of Deixis and Focus that guide speakers in their decision to use them or leave them out (García 1975). And they have been studied under variationist approaches in terms of the contextual conditioners (called internal constraints) that probabilistically favor the occurrence or non-occurrence of the forms.

Some of these conditioning factors are types of linguistic environments (e.g. the person-number of the finite verb); others are message types (e.g. whether the referent of the subject of the verb token under study is different from, or the same as, that of the referent of the previous verb token in the discourse). In a Spanish contact setting such as New York City, where Spanish is spoken by newly arrived monolinguals as well as by New York-born bilinguals, one observes cross-generational differences in the statistical extent to which contextual constraints predict the presence or absence of these forms. But not all constraints undergo these changes; some are very different in the usage of bilinguals, some are the same among bilinguals as in monolinguals. Why is this? Why, that is, do some of the factors that, as a sociolinguist might say, condition the variation remain unchanged as apparent generational time passes in New York while others weaken or strengthen?

This paper, using data from a corpus of Spanish speech developed in New York City, shows that a consideration of the Columbia meanings of these forms provides answers to these questions that might not be available in a traditional variationist analysis. The meanings, that is, illuminate the fate of different contextual constraints as they pass from the generation of monolingual speakers who use mostly only Spanish to the generation of Latinos for whom the most frequently used language is English. Thus the descriptive device of the variationist contextual constraint enters a path where an explanatory analysis of variation becomes possible.

English Verb Number: Syntactic or Semantic?

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Verb number in sentences 1 and 2 is open to both a syntactic and a semantic account.

1. The boy plays.
2. The boys play.

The syntactic account posits a formal mechanism that makes the subject and the verb *agree* in number. A semantic account such as Reid's 1991 sign-based treatment posits semantic values for the verb morphology--ONE and MORE THAN ONE Entity in Focus-- which notionally fit the message being communicated. Normal scientific practice in such situations is to look for data that support one account but not the other. So a proponent of the semantic account would cite examples 3 and 4.

3. Three books *is* too much to read over the weekend.
4. This afternoon, our panel *are* three male singers.

These sentences are counter-evidence to the agreement hypothesis because the number of the subject and the verb do not agree, but they support the semantic account because the verb number meanings still fit the message being communicated.

Syntacticians do not, however, recognize sentences 3 and 4 as counter-evidence to formal agreement because they regard them as instances of a different phenomenon, namely *notional agreement*. Rather, they cite examples such as 5 and 6 that support formal agreement while being apparent counter-evidence to the semantic account.

5. His clothes *are*/**is* dirty but his hands are clean.
6. His clothing *is*/**are* dirty but his hands are clean.

Of 5 and 6, Stephan Wechsler says:

[S]emantic minimal pairs such as the nouns *clothes* and *clothing* in show that agreement is driven by the form, not the meaning of the subject.

In this paper I will argue that the apparent intractability of 5 and 6 to a semantic account is due to two analytical wrong turns: the equation of meaning with reference; and the use of fabricated data lacking a communicative context.

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The Structure of Japanese Conditionals in Modern Japanese: A Grammatical Account from a Functional Linguistics Perspective

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This paper addresses the inadequacies of prevailing analyses of the meaning of the four conditional conjunctions, *to* 'if/whenever,' *ba* 'if/whenever,' *tara* 'if/when,' and *nara* 'if.' To date researchers have based their explanations of the words' distinct meanings on Aspect, Cognition, Formality, Modality, and Speaker's Empathy (Subjectivity). However none of these approaches have been able to differentiate the meaning of these closely related words. Further, researchers have hitherto not been able to account for the case in which multiple conjunctions are used within a single sentence. Existing accounts also cannot explain hybrid sentences in which multiple antecedents share a single consequent. The proposed grammatical model, which is based on the notion of speaker's design (i.e. focus), allows us to explain the phenomenon in terms of the degree of focus, e.g. convergence of foci. The paper analyzes each of the hypotheses and clarifies their logical incoherence and linguistic problems by using actual instances culled from data.

The data analysis concentrates on the contextual environment in which the conjunctions occurred. The ellipsis of the antecedent/consequent is also examined. Based on the analysis of data, comprised of approximately 16,000 tokens (i.e. 7000 *to*, 4500 *ba*, 4000 *tara*, and 1200 *nara*) collected specifically for this study, we propose that speakers/writers employ *to* in order to draw a greater degree of attention to the consequent clause and simultaneously draw interlocutors' attention away from the antecedent clause. Conversely, *ba*, *tara*, *nara* are employed to focus on the antecedent more than the consequent. We postulate that the grammatical model of the system is comprised of two semantic oppositions, with *to* being the antecedent-focus conjunction, whereas *ba* 'if/whenever,' *tara* 'if/when,' and *nara* 'if' are consequent-focus conjunctions. These three forms are deployed representing three kinds of degree of focus, respectively, HIGH FOCUS, MEDIUM FOCUS, and LOW FOCUS on the condition.

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Ourself, themself, and more:
The communicative function of Number in *-self* pronouns
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Number meanings are signaled twice in English *-self* pronouns, first on the pronominal portion of the form (i.e., **my-** / **our-**), and second on the inflectional ending (**-self** / **-selves**). While the two Number meanings (ONE and MORE THAN ONE) usually co-vary (**myself** = ONE + ONE; **ourselves** = MORE THAN ONE + MORE THAN ONE), crossed number combinations also occur: **myself** = ONE + MORE THAN ONE; **herselves** = ONE + MORE THAN ONE:

- (1) “If we go on the next road trip and play like we have, we’ll be throwing dirt on our own grave,” Rockies manager Don Baylor says. “We won’t need anyone to shovel for us. We’ll be shoveling for **ourself**.”
- (2) When I first heard about the case, I said, Are they kidding? Who's going to shoot **themself** in the stomach? You know, I said, Somebody had to shoot him.
- (3) [A man discussing his identity as a drag queen, Lola Berry.] I felt incapable of living up to Lola Berry. I was now in a bizarre competition with **myself**.
- (4) This has created the suspicion among her listeners that Shirley MacLaine is readying **herselves** to become to the spirit via audio- and videocassette what Jane Fonda is to the body.

In this paper, I will demonstrate that such instances of crossed Number pairings are not anomalies, but rather, are productive and systematic uses of the linguistic system. Under typical circumstances, speakers signal matching Number meanings. However, with each *-self* pronoun speakers face two choices of Number meanings, which may be independently deployed as creative communicative resources of the linguistic system.

Phonological Proclivities across Languages According to the Theory of Phonology as Human Behavior

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The theory of Phonology as Human Behavior (PHB), developed by William Diver and his students of the Columbia school, combines and expands Saussure's concept of sign and system, as well as aspects of the "communication factor" inherent in Prague School phonology with aspects of the "human factor" inherent in Martinet's diachronic phonology. The major parameters of the theory are presented according to the functional semiotic definition of language as a sign system used by human beings to communicate. Language is thus defined in terms of its function as a system of communication that ecologically reflects the characteristics of its users -- human beings. The fundamental axiom underlying the theory is that language represents a struggle between the desire to achieve maximum communication (the communication factor) through the use of minimal effort (the human factor). The major contribution of the theory of PHB is that it provides a "motivation" for the distribution within the speech signal: i.e. it tells us why we produce the phonemes we do and why the distribution of these phonemes within a language is non-random.

In this paper we will examine the phonemic systems of the following languages: Italian, Greek, Lithuanian, Russian, English, Swahili, Guarani, Navajo, Maori, Chinese, Japanese, Biblical versus Israeli Hebrew and Arabic according to the following parameters:

- (1) The number of phonemes in the system.
- (2) The ratio of "easier" versus "more difficult" phonemes in the system.
- (3) The number and kinds of articulators we use in phonetic gestures and processes used to produce the more difficult phonemes.

Our results will show that language in general and phonology in particular can be seen as a min-max struggle: the desire for maximum communication with minimal effort. This principle is evident in the phonemic inventories that languages possess and in the non-random phonotactic distribution of phonemes in languages as well as in their diachronic development.