

[fə.'nɛt.ɪks wɪð 'lɪs.(ə)n.ɪŋ 'pɪækt.ɪs 'b.ɪt.ɪf 'jʊ:n.ɪf 'θɪ:]

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[fə.'net.ɪks wɪð 'lɪs.(ə)n.ɪŋ 'pɪækt.ɪs 'b.ɪt.ɪf 'jʊ:n.ɪt 'θri:]  
Phonetics with Listening Practice (British): Unit 3:

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[ðə 'sɪl.əb.(ə)l̩(ə)n(d)l̩ts̩ m.'vaɪ(ə)l̩.(ə)n.mənts]



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some relevant contexts in which the syllable functions.

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['ɪɒb.ət 'spɛns]

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['ɪb.ət 'spɛns]  
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['ɪb.ət 'spɛns]  
Robert Spence

['fɑxvɪçtɔŋ ʔaŋ 'ɡlɪstɪk ʔɒnt ʔa mevɪka 'nɪstɪk | 'fɑxvɪçtɔŋ 'ʃpɾɑ:xvɪsɪŋʃɑft  
ʔɒnt 'ʃpɾɑ:xtʰɛçnɔ'lo'ɡi: | ʔunɪvɛɹzi'tʰɛ:t dɛs 'zɑɣləndəs]

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['ɪɒb.ət 'spɛns]  
Robert Spence

['fɑxvɪçtɔŋ ʔaŋ'ɡlɪstɪk ʔɒnt ʔa'mevɪka'nɪstɪk | 'fɑxvɪçtɔŋ 'ʃpɾɑ:xvɪsɪŋʃɑft  
ʔɒnt 'ʃpɾɑ:xth'eçno'lo'ɡi: | ʔunivɛɪzi'th'e:t dɛs 'zɑɕlandəs]

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['ɪɒb.ət 'spɛns]  
Robert Spence

['fɑxvɪçtɔŋ ʔaŋ'ɡlɪstɪk ʔɒnt ʔa'mɛvɪkɑ'nɪstɪk | 'fɑxvɪçtɔŋ 'ʃpɾɑ:xvɪsɪŋʃɑft  
ʔɒnt 'ʃpɾɑ:xth'eçnɔ'lo'ɡɪ: | ʔunɪvɛɪʒi'th'e:t dɛs 'zɑɣlɑndəs]

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Universität des Saarlandes

[lə tvi.di tɪwɑ flɔ.ʁe.al ã dø.sã.tvãt.tɪwɑ ]

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The syllable and its environments:

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['ɪɒb.ət 'spɛns]  
Robert Spence

['fɑxvɪçtɔŋ ʔaŋ'ɡlɪstɪk ʔɒnt ʔa'mɛvɪkə'nɪstɪk | 'fɑxvɪçtɔŋ 'ʃpɾɑ:xvɪsɪŋʃaft  
ʔɒnt 'ʃpɾɑ:xthʲɛçno'lo'ɡɪ | ʔunɪvɛɾzi'tʰɛ:t dɛs 'zɑɕlandəs]

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Fachrichtung Sprachwissenschaft und Sprachtechnologie,  
Universität des Saarlandes

[lə tʁi.di tʁwa flɔ.ʁe.al ɑ̃ dø.sɑ̃.tʁɑ̃t.tʁwa ]  
le tridi trois floréal an CCXXXIII

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[fə.'nɛt.ɪks wɪð 'lɪs.(ə)n.ɪŋ 'prækt.ɪs 'b.ɪt.ɪf 'juː.n.ɪt 'θriː]  
Phonetics with Listening Practice (British): Unit 3:

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['ɪɒb.ət 'spɛns]  
Robert Spence

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[lə tʁi.di tʁwa flɔ.ʁe.al ɑ̃ dø.sɑ̃.tʁɑ̃t.tʁwa ]  
le tridi trois floréal an CCXXXIII

['tjuːz.dɛɪ ðə 'twɛnt.i.'sɛk.(ə)nd̩ əv̩ 'eɪp.rəl̩ 'twɛnt.i.'twɛnt.i.'fɑɪv]

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Robert Spence

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Tuesday 22 April 2025

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# Unit 3

## The syllable and its environments

some relevant contexts in which the syllable functions.

Slides for the session of

*Phonetics with Listening Practice (British)*

held on

le tridi 3 floréal an CCXXXIII

Tuesday 22 April 2025

Robert Spence

{ English Department | LangSciTech }

Saarland University



Image: "F. Jullien Genève", maybe Frank-Henri Jullien (1882-1938) - Indogermanisches Jahrbuch / Wikipedia CC BY-SA 4.0

Ferdinand Mongin de SAUSSURE

26.11.1857--22.2.1913

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# Diachronic and synchronic perspectives

- **Diachronic** (but *not systemic*):

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## Diachronic and synchronic perspectives

- **Diachronic** (but *not systemic*):
  - Before Saussure, linguistics was mostly historical linguistics – studying the history of (*parts of*) languages, such as words, or sounds, **across time**.

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- How to **fuse** both perspectives?

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  - “The biggest mistake people make is: not to work historically!”  
— Ruqaiya Hasan

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- How to **fuse** both perspectives?
  - “The biggest mistake people make is: not to work historically!”  
— Ruqaiya Hasan
  - “Every text — that is, everything that is said or written — unfolds in some context of use; furthermore, it is the uses of language that, over tens of thousands of generations, have shaped the system. Language has evolved to satisfy human needs; and the way it is organised is functional with respect to these needs.”  
— Michael Halliday (IFG2: xiii)



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## Evolution vs. development: a terminological reminder

Evolution is “Descent with modification”.  
Languages, computers and fashions evolve.  
Solar systems, mountains and embryos don't.  
They develop

Chaucerian English EVOLVED into modern English.  
Language DEVELOPS afresh in each child.

In EVOLUTION there is a succession of entities,  
each slightly different from its predecessor.  
In DEVELOPMENT, one entity changes over time.

– Richard Dawkins  
Twitter  
9.11.2015

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# The place of language in the evolutionary order of nature:



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### The place of language in the evolutionary order of nature:

- **matter** + **life** → *function*

### The place of language in the evolutionary order of nature:

- **matter** + **life** → *function*

- **life** + **society** → *value*

*Gebrauchswert*



*Tauschwert*

### The place of language in the evolutionary order of nature:

- **matter** + **life** → *function*
- **life** + **society** → *value*  
Gebrauchswert  
↓  
Tauschwert
- **society** + **language** → *meaning*

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- **matter** + **life** → *function*
  - **life** + **society** → *value*  
Gebrauchswert  
↓  
Tauschwert
  - **society** + **language** → *meaning*
- [before there is grammar:]
  - **sounds** 'standing for' **meanings** → *words*

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↓  
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  - **sounds** ‘stand for’ **words** ...
  - ... and **words in structures** ‘stand for’ **meanings**
  - thus, adult human language has three ‘*levels*’ or ‘*strata*’:

### The place of language in the evolutionary order of nature:

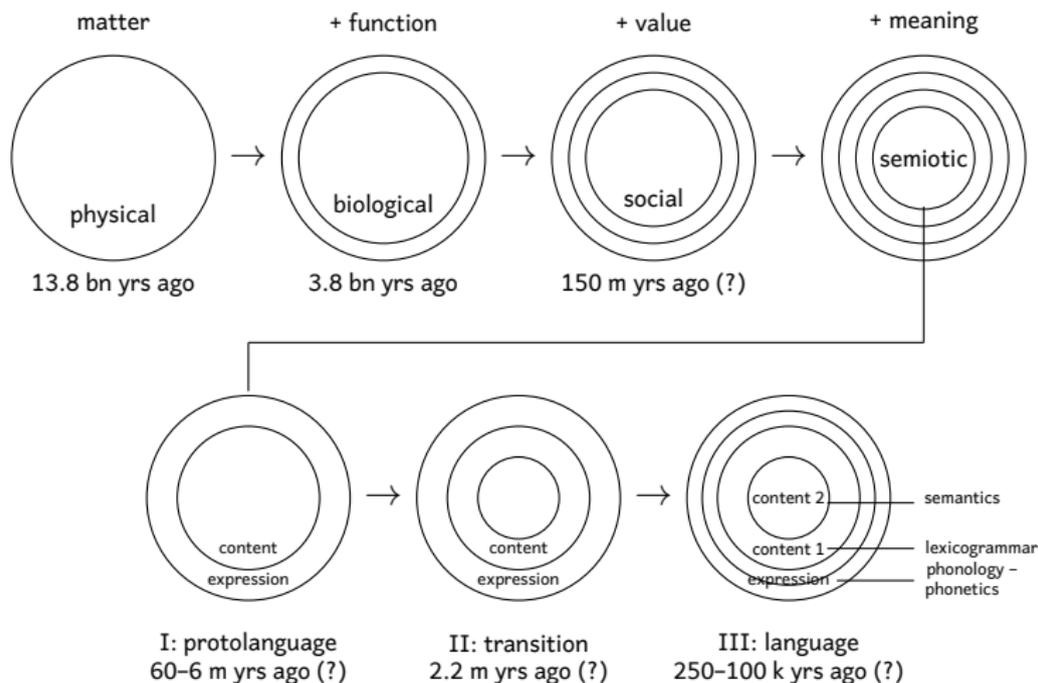
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*Tauschwert*
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  - thus, adult human language has three ‘*levels*’ or ‘*strata*’:
  - **meanings**
  - ... stood for by **wordings**
  - ... stood for by **sound(ing)s**



**Figure:** From matter to meaning (after C. M. I. M. Matthiessen)

# The importance of using a logarithmic time scale:

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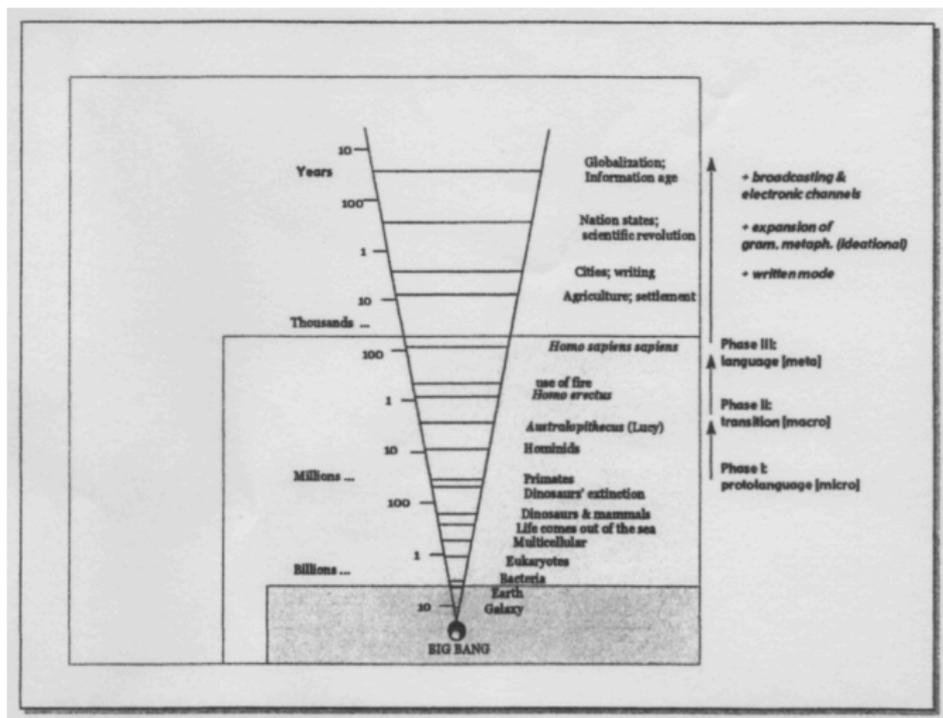
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- RANK
- METAFUNCTION
- INSTANTIATION
- AXIS
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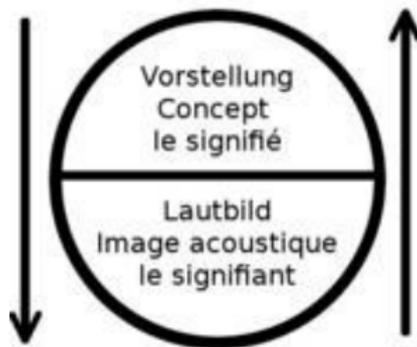
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**Figure:** Cosmogensis (logarithmic scale): acceleration

Source: Delsemme 1998, adapted by C.M.I.M. Matthiessen



**Figure:** The sign function (Saussure)

Source: Wikipedia

## Signs and semiotic systems (2)

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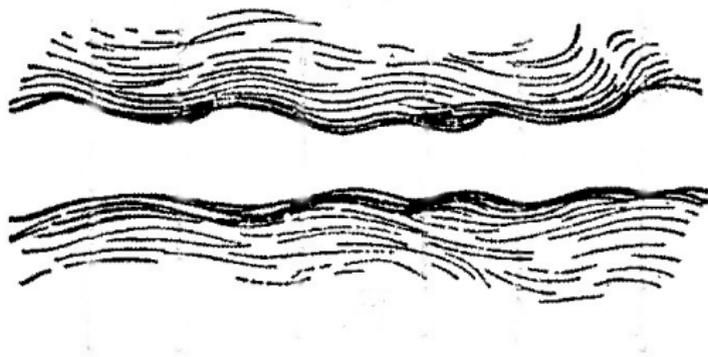
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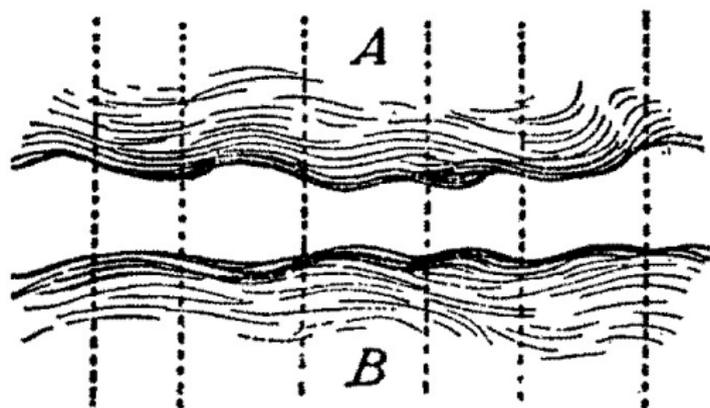
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**Figure:** Without language, thought and sound are indefinite and indistinct

Source: adapted from Saussure (1916); Wikipedia

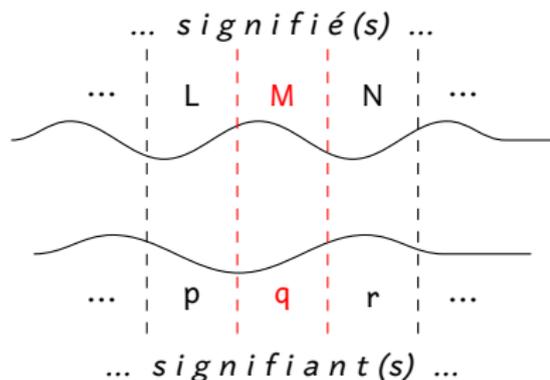


**Figure:** With language: the arbitrariness of the sign and the notion of *valeur*

Source: Saussure (1916); Wikipedia

## Signs and semiotic systems (4): *l'arbitraire du signe & valeur*

- language (... L/p, M/q, N/r, ...) is a form, not a substance



- that **q** stands for **M** is **ARBITRARY**
- M** is only defined by its **VALUE** relative to { ... L ... N ... }
- q** is only defined by its **VALUE** relative to { ... p ... r ... }

## Signs and semiotic systems (5): an extraterrestrial example

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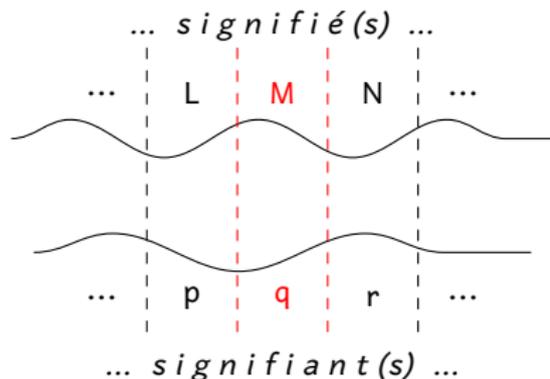
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**Figure:** Klingon has 8 different concepts where English has only ‘fight’; and don’t confuse the final sound of “qaH” [q<sup>h</sup>αx] (‘Sir!’) vs “qagh” [q<sup>h</sup>αχ] (‘worms’) ! — semantic space and phonetic space are partitioned differently from the way they are in English

## Signs and semiotic systems (6): *l'arbitraire du signe* $\longleftrightarrow$ *valeur*

- language (... L/p, M/q, N/r, ...) is a form, not a substance



- that q stands for M is **ARBITRARY**
  - M is only defined by its **VALUE** relative to { ... L ... N ... }
  - q is only defined by its **VALUE** relative to { ... p ... r ... }
- society (a speech community) is necessary to define these **SYSTEMS** of values
  - were the *signifiant* / *signifié* relation natural, not arbitrary, it would not be necessary for the speech community to so strictly police the boundaries between the signs within the system

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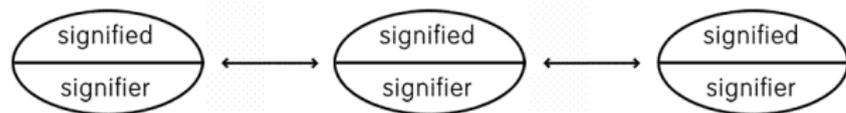
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## A semiotic system = a system of signs

- Each sign can only be defined by its place in the *system* of signs.



Source: Wikipedia

- Language is a system of signs.
- Read:  
**Ferdinand de Saussure: *Cours de linguistique générale*. 1916.**  
Available [online](#).
- These five paragraphs from Saussure (1916) are ...  
... the most important thing I will ever be able to teach you  
about language:

## Priming vocabulary for the following video

Richard Dawkins's teacher, John Maynard Smith, introduced GAME THEORY into evolutionary biology.

Here, as part of a lecture on the evolution of life seen from the point of view of information theory, he describes the difference between animal language and human language.

Key vocabulary items that unexpectedly occur in the video clip:

vervet monkey

leopard — eagle — snake — another troop of monkeys

lion — dog — sleeping — running



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## From a bistratal to a tristratal semiotic system



**Figure:** John Maynard Smith ← click for link to video extract

The full video on the origin of life is available in six parts here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viP5kBMtZ18>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzP3m\\_XlwV8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzP3m_XlwV8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRzRbohQ5Zs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1-yoFGogyA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmrje1cd90o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzGDio2ARpw>

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## Dimensions in the Systemic Functional theory of language

The theory of language adopted in this course is **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**. The theory provides a number of dimensions for describing language, the most important of which are described here:



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The theory of language adopted in this course is **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**. The theory provides a number of dimensions for describing language, the most important of which are described here:

- 1 **MANIFESTATION** (how language appears ['manifests itself'] in the world)

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- 6 **AXIS** (choice vs. chain)
- 7 **DELICACY** ('broad' vs. 'narrow' descriptions)

## 1) Three possible MANIFESTATIONS of language

At the point where language interfaces with physical reality, there are three possible ways in which it can 'manifest itself':

- **sound** (pronunciation) ... from the very beginning

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I have to change the way I write these every time I enter Australia or enter Germany.

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Changing the way your hand moves when you write is like changing the way your tongue moves when you speak.

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Are you aware of what makes you seem German?

(Remember: You’re a spy! A German accent will give you away!)



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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

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- **Phonetics** (are those human sounds? AND: are those the kinds of sounds you'd hear in English?)

## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **Phonology** (are those the kinds of sound patterns you find in English words and sentences?)
- **Phonetics** (are those human sounds? AND: are those the kinds of sounds you'd hear in English?)

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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **Lexicogrammar** (what do the words and sentences mean... regardless of context?)
- **Phonology** (are those the kinds of sound patterns you find in English words and sentences?)
- **Phonetics** (are those human sounds? AND: are those the kinds of sounds you'd hear in English?)

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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **Discourse Semantics** (what do the words and structures mean... in context?)
- **Lexicogrammar** (what do the words and sentences mean... regardless of context?)
- **Phonology** (are those the kinds of sound patterns you find in English words and sentences?)
- **Phonetics** (are those human sounds? AND: are those the kinds of sounds you'd hear in English?)

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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **Register** (what's going on? who's taking part? what role is language playing?)
- **Discourse Semantics** (what do the words and structures mean... in context?)
- **Lexicogrammar** (what do the words and sentences mean... regardless of context?)
- **Phonology** (are those the kinds of sound patterns you find in English words and sentences?)
- **Phonetics** (are those human sounds? AND: are those the kinds of sounds you'd hear in English?)



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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **Genre** (what kind of text for what social purpose?)
- **Register** (what's going on? who's taking part? what role is language playing?)
- **Discourse Semantics** (what do the words and structures mean... in context?)
- **Lexicogrammar** (what do the words and sentences mean... regardless of context?)
- **Phonology** (are those the kinds of sound patterns you find in English words and sentences?)
- **Phonetics** (are those human sounds? AND: are those the kinds of sounds you'd hear in English?)



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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **(Code)** (who's an insider? e.g. two insiders: „*Unn?*“ – „*Jo.*“)
- **Genre** (what kind of text for what social purpose?)
- **Register** (what's going on? who's taking part? what role is language playing?)
- **Discourse Semantics** (what do the words and structures mean... in context?)
- **Lexicogrammar** (what do the words and sentences mean... regardless of context?)
- **Phonology** (are those the kinds of sound patterns you find in English words and sentences?)
- **Phonetics** (are those human sounds? AND: are those the kinds of sounds you'd hear in English?)



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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **Ideology** (what is thinkable? what is doable?)
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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- (Material reality: Bipedal apes **living**)
- **Ideology** (what is thinkable? what is doable?)
- **(Code)** (who's an insider? e.g. two insiders: „Unn?“ – „Jo.“)
- **Genre** (what kind of text for what social purpose?)
- **Register** (what's going on? who's taking part? what role is language playing?)
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- (Material reality: Bipedal apes making **noises** with their **faces**)



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## 2) Higher STRATA *constraining* lower STRATA

- **Language:** the **noises** we make with our **faces** in order to **live**
- (Material reality: Bipedal apes **living**)
- **Ideology** (what is thinkable? what is doable?)
- **(Code)** (who's an insider? e.g. two insiders: „Unn?“ – „Jo.“)
- **Genre** (what kind of text for what social purpose?)
- **Register** (what's going on? who's taking part? what role is language playing?)
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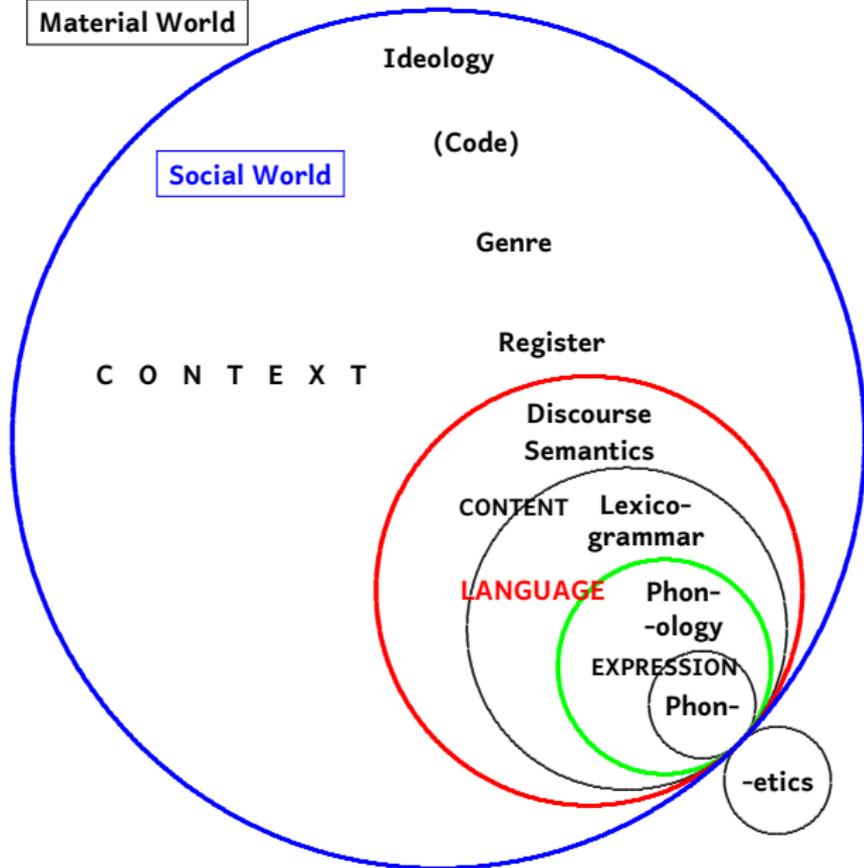
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Material World



φωv

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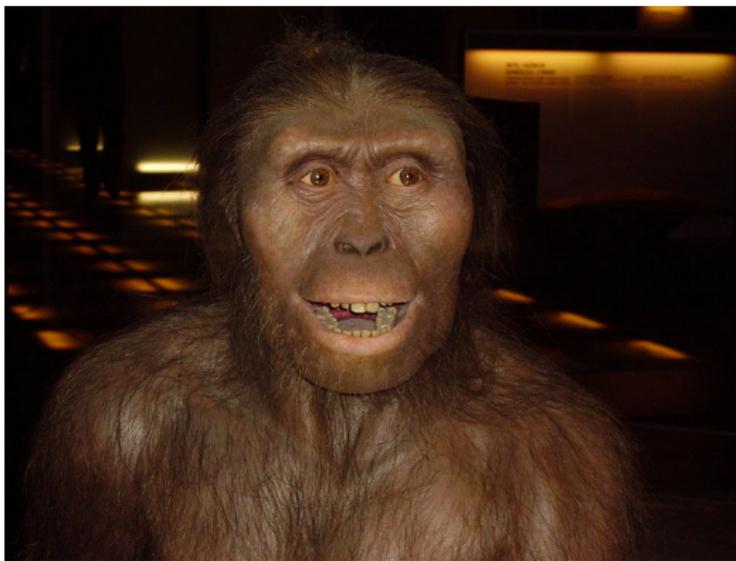
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## 2) Ideology is historically conditioned



Source: Wikipedia / Licence: CC by SA 2.0

It's 3.2 million years ago. You're an *Australopithecus afarensis*.  
What is thinkable? What is doable?

φωv

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### 3) RANK: bigger units made up of smaller ones (1)



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The rank scale in grammar:

clause	an asteroid killed the dinosaurs						
group	an asteroid		killed		the dinosaurs		
word	an	asteroid	killed		the	dinosaurs	
morpheme	an	asteroid	kill	ed	the	dinosaur	s

### 3) RANK: bigger units made up of smaller ones (2)



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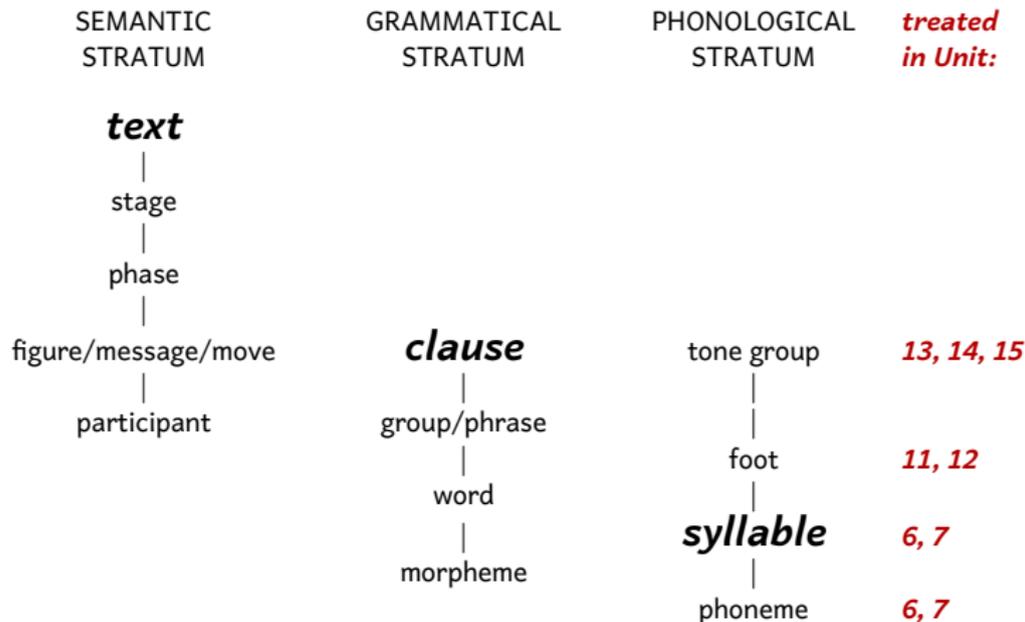
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The rank scale in phonology:

tone group	^ ən <b>æst</b> ə rɔɪd <b>kɪld</b> ðə <b>dɑɪn</b> ə sɔ:z								
foot	^ ən	<b>æst</b> ə rɔɪd			<b>kɪld</b> ðə		<b>dɑɪn</b> ə sɔ:z		
syllable	ən	æst	ə	rɔɪd	kɪld	ðə	dɑɪn	ə	sɔ:z
phoneme	ə n	æ s t	ə	r ɔ ɪ d	k i l d	ð ə	d a i n	ə	s ɔ : z

### 3) RANK: the central unit at each stratum



... **syllables** in English are either strong or weak.

... **syllables** in English make up feet, and are made up of phonemes.

... **syllables** in English realise morphemes, or words, or 'Mood Blocks'

— "I'll", "you're", "she's", "he'd" ...

φωv

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### 3) RANK: a structure is a configuration of functional roles

A unit is “made up of” smaller units... but how?

(STRUCTURE)	syllable	streŋθs sɔ:z			(bigger unit)
	phonemes	Initial	Nucleus	Final	← functional roles
		s s t r	ɔ: e	z ŋ θ s	(smaller units)

***treated in Unit:***      **7**                  **6**                  **7**

or:

(STRUCTURE)	syllable	streŋθs sɔ:z			(bigger unit)
	phonemes	Onset	Rhyme		← functional roles
			Nucleus	Coda	
		s s t r	ɔ: e	z ŋ θ s	(smaller units)

## 4) FUNCTIONAL COMPONENTS of language and structural types (1)

**METAFUNCTIONS:** Functional components of language – internal reflections, within the architecture of language as a system, of the general functions language serves in society

Function of language		Examples	Structural type
ideational	logical	–Chris said ... that Jane thought ... that Tom had claimed ... that Peter likes Mozart	linear  ("string"-like)
	experiential	–the dinosaurs died –an asteroid killed the dinosaurs –Peter likes Mozart –Sally's the cleverest girl in the class	nuclear  ("particle"-like)
interpersonal		–he likes Mozart –he's, like, sooo totally into Mozart –I suspect he's possibly rather fond of Mozart, wouldn't you say?	prosodic  ("field"-like)
textual		–an asteroid killed the dinosaurs –they were killed by an asteroid –they were killed by one –it was an asteroid that killed them	culminative  ("wave"-like)

## 4) FUNCTIONAL COMPONENTS of language and structural types (2)

Function of language		Examples	Structural type
<p>→ (natural logic)</p> <p>reflecting upon the world</p>	<p>modification, quotes/reports, subordination, coordination, apposition, ...</p>	<p>Chris said ... that Jane thought ... that Tom had claimed ... that Peter likes Mozart</p>	<p>linear</p> <p>("string"-like)</p>
<p>(experience)</p> <p>→</p>	<p>processes, participants, circumstances ...</p>		<p>nuclear</p> <p>("particle"-like)</p>
<p>acting upon the world by interacting with the other people in it: mood, modality, negation, attitude, ...</p>		<p>???????????????????????????????? ???????????????????????????????? suspect...possibly...rather...wouldn't ???????????????????????????????? ????????????????????????????????</p>	<p>prosodic</p> <p>("field"-like)</p>
<p>creating relevance: theme-rheme structure, information structure, ...</p>			<p>culminative</p> <p>("wave"-like)</p>

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## 4) FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE associated with *pitch* (dt. *Tonhöhe*) changes



in English: **intonation** (see Units 13–15)

logical	yes	e.g. ways of joining clauses together
experiential	no	
interpersonal	yes	e.g. what you feel and want
textual	yes	e.g. what is 'given' and what is 'new'?

in Chinese: **lexical tone**

experiential	yes	e.g. distinguishing between different concepts 媽 mā 'Mutter' 麻 má 'Hanf' 馬 mǎ 'Pferd' 罵 mà 'fluchen'
--------------	-----	--

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## 5) INSTANTIATION: from potential (=system) to actual (=instance) (1)

(‘Pünktlichkeit’)

**culture**

**language**

(Partikel)

POTENTIAL

climate

(‘Verabredung’)

**situation**

**text**

(*noch! schon!*)

ACTUAL

weather

φωv

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(‘Pünktlichkeit’)

**culture**

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(Partikel)

POTENTIAL

climate

(‘Verabredung’)

**situation**

**text**

(*noch! schon!*)

ACTUAL

weather

- Today’s weather is an actual instance of the climate.

φωv

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(‘Pünktlichkeit’)

**culture**

**language**

(Partikel)

POTENTIAL

climate

(‘Verabredung’)

**situation**

**text**

(*noch! schon!*)

ACTUAL

weather

- The climate is the potential for weather.
- Today’s weather is an actual instance of the climate.

φωv

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## 5) INSTANTIATION: from potential (=system) to actual (=instance) (1)

- This text is an actual instance of the German language.

(‘Pünktlichkeit’)

**culture**

**language**

(Partikel)

POTENTIAL

climate

(‘Verabredung’)

**situation**

**text**

(*noch! schon!*)

ACTUAL

weather

- The climate is the potential for weather.
- Today’s weather is an actual instance of the climate.

## 5) INSTANTIATION: from potential (=system) to actual (=instance) (1)

- The German language is the potential for German text(s).
- This text is an actual instance of the German language.

(‘Pünktlichkeit’)

**culture**

**language**

(Partikel)

POTENTIAL

climate

(‘Verabredung’)

**situation**

**text**

(*noch! schon!*)

ACTUAL

weather

- The climate is the potential for weather.
- Today’s weather is an actual instance of the climate.

## 5) INSTANTIATION: from potential (=system) to actual (=instance) (1)

- This situation is an actual instance of German culture.
- The German language is the potential for German text(s).
- This text is an actual instance of the German language.

(‘Pünktlichkeit’)

**culture**

**language**

(Partikel)

POTENTIAL

climate

(‘Verabredung’)

**situation**

**text**

(*noch! schon!*)

ACTUAL

weather

- The climate is the potential for weather.
- Today’s weather is an actual instance of the climate.

## 5) INSTANTIATION: from potential (=system) to actual (=instance) (1)

- German culture is the potential for German situations.
- This situation is an actual instance of German culture.
- The German language is the potential for German text(s).
- This text is an actual instance of the German language.

(‘Pünktlichkeit’)

**culture**

**language**

(Partikel)

POTENTIAL

climate

(‘Verabredung’)

**situation**

**text**

(*noch! schon!*)

ACTUAL

weather

- The climate is the potential for weather.
- Today’s weather is an actual instance of the climate.

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## 6) AXIS: CHOICE (paradigmatic) vs. CHAIN (syntagmatic)

must

and you should learn it

may

I

and you should learn it

she

φωv

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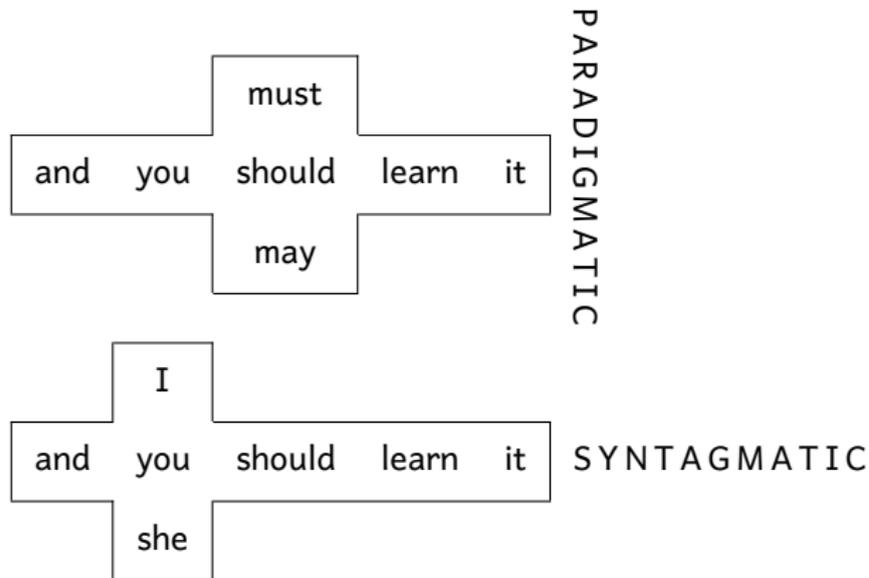
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## 6) AXIS: CHOICE (paradigmatic) vs. CHAIN (syntagmatic)



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## 6) AXIS: there is CHOICE and CHAIN in phonology, too

.	.
.	f
.	θ
.	s
.	ʃ
f	v
θ	ð
s	z
ʃ	ʒ
v	
ð	m
z	n
	ŋ
h	
m	l
n	
w	
l	

The syllable /sɔ:z/ exists in English, as do  
 /fɔ:θ fɔ:s fɔ:m fɔ:n fɔ:l θɔ:z θɔ:n sɔ:s sɔ:n sɔ:l ʃɔ:z  
 ʃɔ:n ʃɔ:l vɔ:n hɔ:s hɔ:z hɔ:n hɔ:l mɔ:f mɔ:s mɔ:z  
 mɔ:n mɔ:l nɔ:θ nɔ:s nɔ:z nɔ:m wɔ:f wɔ:z wɔ:m  
 wɔ:n wɔ:l lɔ:z lɔ:n .../

φων

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## 8) Syntagmatic boundaries – knocking edges of building blocks

When units (phonemes, syllables, ...) are put together, their edges rub against each other:

phonology:      k    ɪ    l    d      ǝ    ə      *Units 6, 7*

phonetics:      k<sup>h</sup>    ɪ    t̪    d      ǝ    ə      *Units 8, 9*

                  k̪<sup>h</sup>    ɪ    w    d̪      ǝ    ə      *Unit 10*

Or should we abandon “building blocks” (units) altogether, and just have “overlapping waves” in our theory?

## DELICACY: 'broad' vs. 'narrow' transcriptions

A 'broad' (less delicate) transcription, making only the minimum necessary number of distinctions:

[ ɹed ]

A 'narrow' (more delicate) transcription, making as many distinctions as possible:

[ ɹ̥<sup>w</sup>ed̚ ]

φων

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- The homework to be completed before week 4 is:  
Learn the adjectives corresponding to the Places of Articulation for consonants:  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Places\\_of\\_articulation.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Places_of_articulation.svg)

How can you tell that this is French just by listening to it?

Un petit d'un petit /  
S'étonne aux Halles /  
Un petit d'un petit /  
À degrés te fallent /  
Indolent qui ne sort cesse /  
Indolent qui ne se mène /  
Qu'importe un petit /  
Tout gai de Reguennes?

from the mediaeval manuscript “Mots d’heures: gousses, rames”.

## Envoi (2)

Now compare this strangely similar English poem. How can you tell it is English, just by listening to it? (What about the rhythm?)

Humpty Dumpty /  
sat on a wall /  
Humpty Dumpty /  
had a great fall /  
And all the King's horses /  
and all the King's men /  
Couldn't put Humpty /  
together again.

source: the traditional collection “Mother Goose Rhymes”



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