

Linguistic Anthropology

Week 2

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Linguistic Anthropology

The study of

language as a *cultural resource* and
speaking as a *cultural practice*

ことばで切る kotoba de kiru

ことばを着る kotoba wo kiru

From last week's slide..

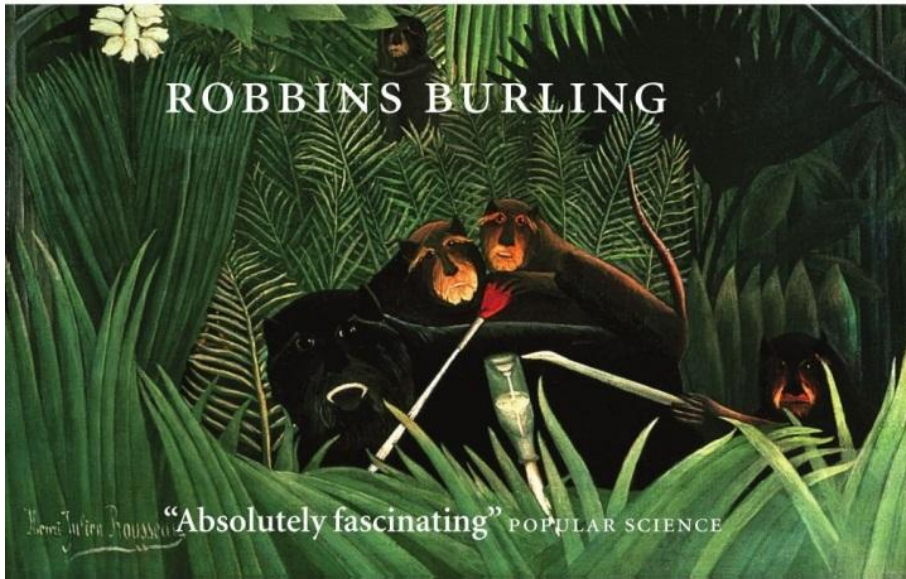
Human Language Traits

- 1) Double articulation (二重音節性)
- 2) Arbitrariness (恣意性)
- 3) Productivity (生産性)
- 4) Displacement (轉移性)
- 5) Cultural transmission (文化伝達性)



The Talking Ape

How Language Evolved



ROBBINS BURLING

"Absolutely fascinating" POPULAR SCIENCE

Burling Article
"Smiles, Winks, and
Words"
(2005)

Few words on the readings...

- Look at *manaba*, on “How to read English articles”

- “Language could not have evolved from any animal-like form of communication simply because it is so different from all other animal behavior.” (p. 6)
- Humans use both **digital** and **analogue** ways of communication. Phonemes (p, b); giggles/laughs

- **Gesture-calls:** signals such as faces, vices, hands and arms, posture and movements of our entire bodies. Laughs, screams, smiles, frowns and shrugs. Gestures and vocalizations that all humans share (p.6)
- **Language is digital and gesture-calls are analog.** (p.7)
- Our phonological and syntactic core of language is digital while large parts of the rest is analog.

- Nothing could develop if the genes did not make it possible, and nothing could develop without a suitable environment. Both **heredity** and **environment** have a role in everything. (“gene-culture coevolution” Levinson 2003)
- Gesture-calls such as laughter are highly **heritable**. (p.8)

facebook

July 17th

World Em🇸🇰ji Day

As of [Emoji 11.0](#) there are 2,823 emojis approved by Unicode.

The Unicode Standard provides a unique number for every character, no matter what platform, device, application or language. Unicode is “an international encoding standard for use with different languages and scripts, by which each letter, digit, or symbol is assigned a unique numeric value that applies across different platforms and programs”

- <https://blog.emojipedia.org/facebook-reveals-most-and-least-used-emojis/>
- <http://unicode.org/standard/WhatIsUnicode.html>



SIGN LANGUAGE

Sign language 手話 and beyond

- **Digital system** as in spoken language.
- Use of **three dimensional** space.
- Sign language shows us that it is the brain, rather than the vocal organs that has made the most important adaptation in the human language. (p.12)
- **Quotable gestures** are signs that needs to be learned. (ex. Okay circle, bye-bye wave)
- **Quotable Vocalizations** are sounds like words than gesture-calls (ex. *Oh-oh*, *tsk-tsk*, *m-hm*, *uh-uh*, meaning 'oh dear', 'shame on you', 'yes' and 'no')



Four



Walk-to



Down



Grow



Break



Umbrella



Autumn



Kitchen



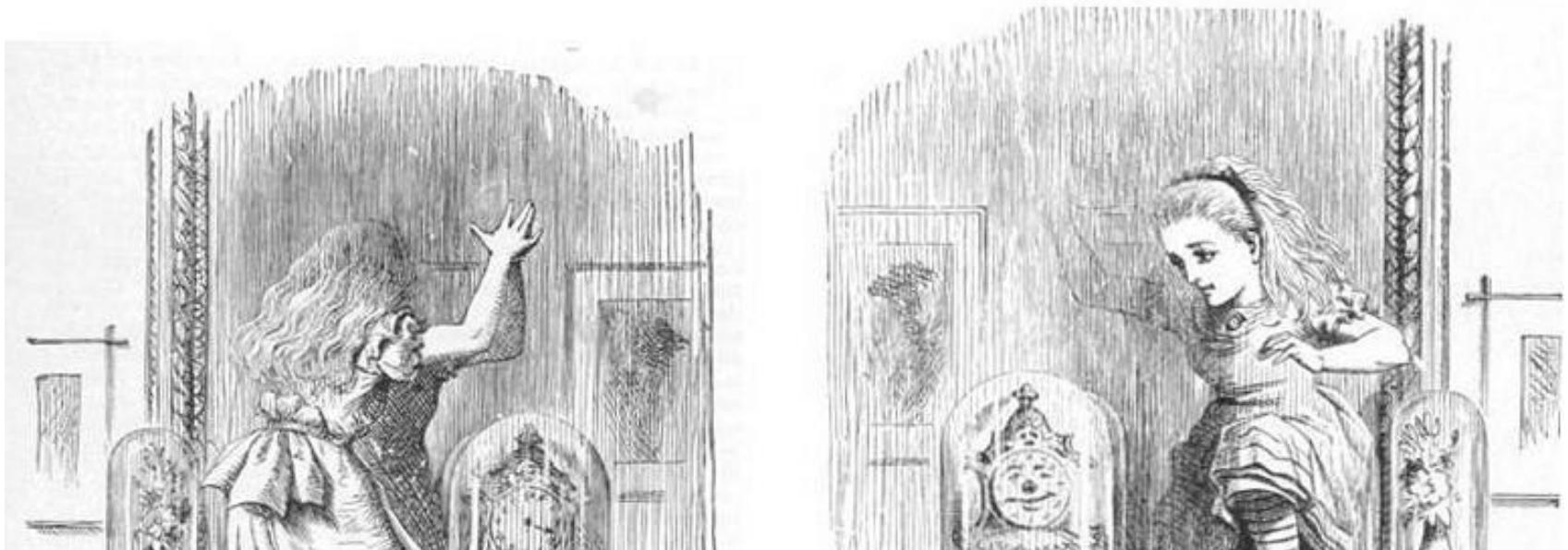
Furniture

Figure 1.1 Signs of American Sign Language. Top row: Highly iconic. Middle row: Semi-iconic. Bottom row: Arbitrary. (Reprinted with permission from T. Humphries, C. Padden, and T. J. O'Rourke, A Basic Course in American Sign Language, Second Edition © 1994, T. J. Publishers Inc., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, USA.)

		Visible	Audible
Emotional- Analog	Mammalian	Gesture-call System	
	Paralinguistic	Gesticulation	Intonation, Tone of voice
Referential- Digital	Quotable	Quotable Gestures	Quotable Vocalizations
	Linguistic	Sign Language	Spoken Language

Figure 1.2 *Varieties of Human Communication.*

Through the language lens



Lecture 1: Linguistic relativity theory

Lecture 2: Metaphors and we live by



Let's do a small experiment

1. HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Linguistics in Europe

Linguistics in Europe was occupied by historical linguistics: in search of a proto-language

Grimm's brothers グリム兄弟



Jacob Grimm (1785-1863)
& Wilhelm Grimm
(1786-1859)

Philologists and folklorists

Hansel and Gretel; Sleeping
Beauty

Discovery of the “Grimm’s
Law” or the “Great Consonant
Shift” (1822)

Grimm's Law グリムの法則 (Great Consonant Shift)

- Systematic study of the categorization of consonant shifts that occurred between Proto-Indo-European and Proto-Germanic.

- /p, t, k/(non-Germanic)→

/f, θ, h or x/(Germanic)

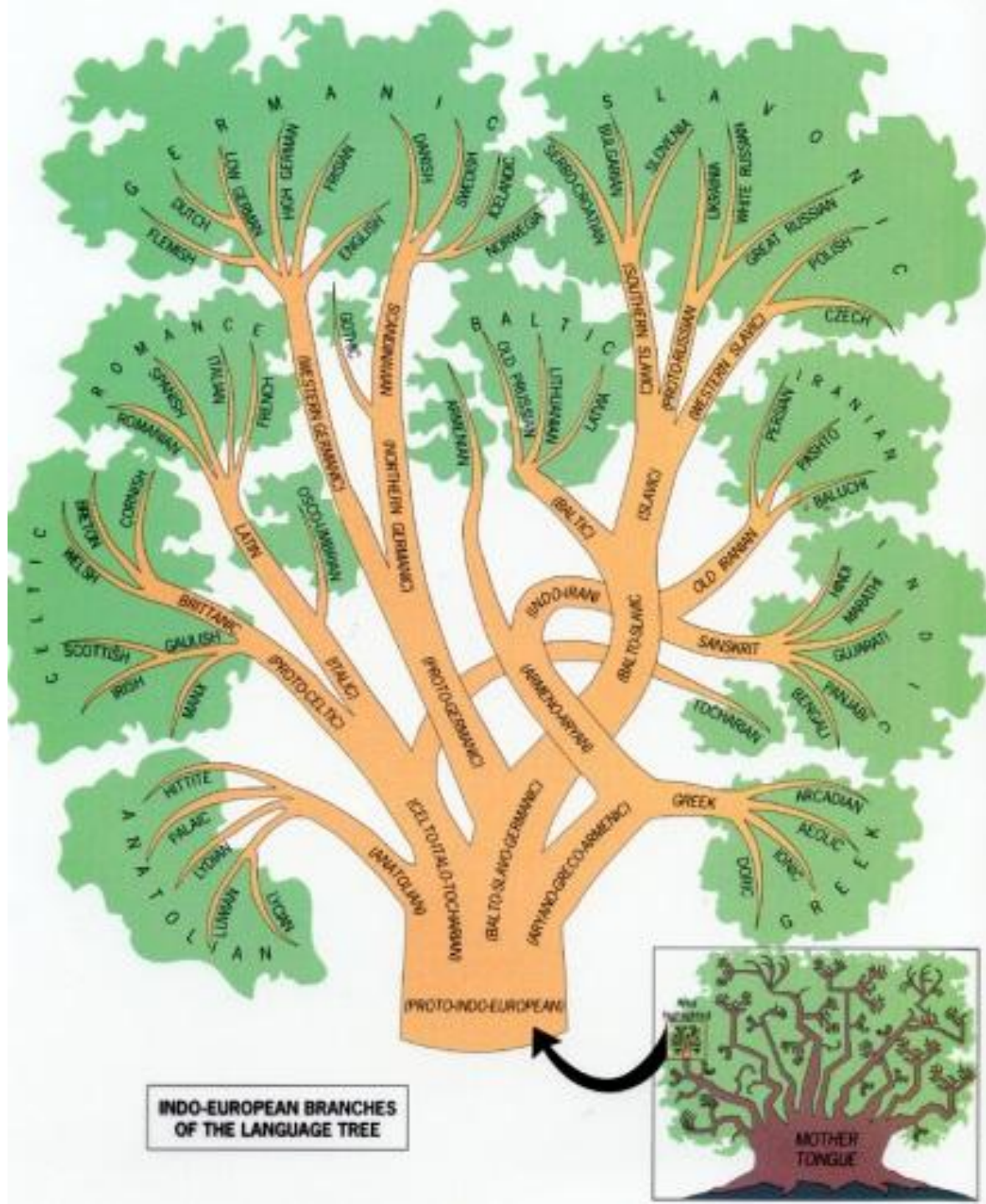
pedem (Latin)→ *foot* (Eng.), *Fuss* (Ger)

Romance languages poisson, pez / père, padre

Germanic languages fish, fisch / father, vater

Map of Europe 1800



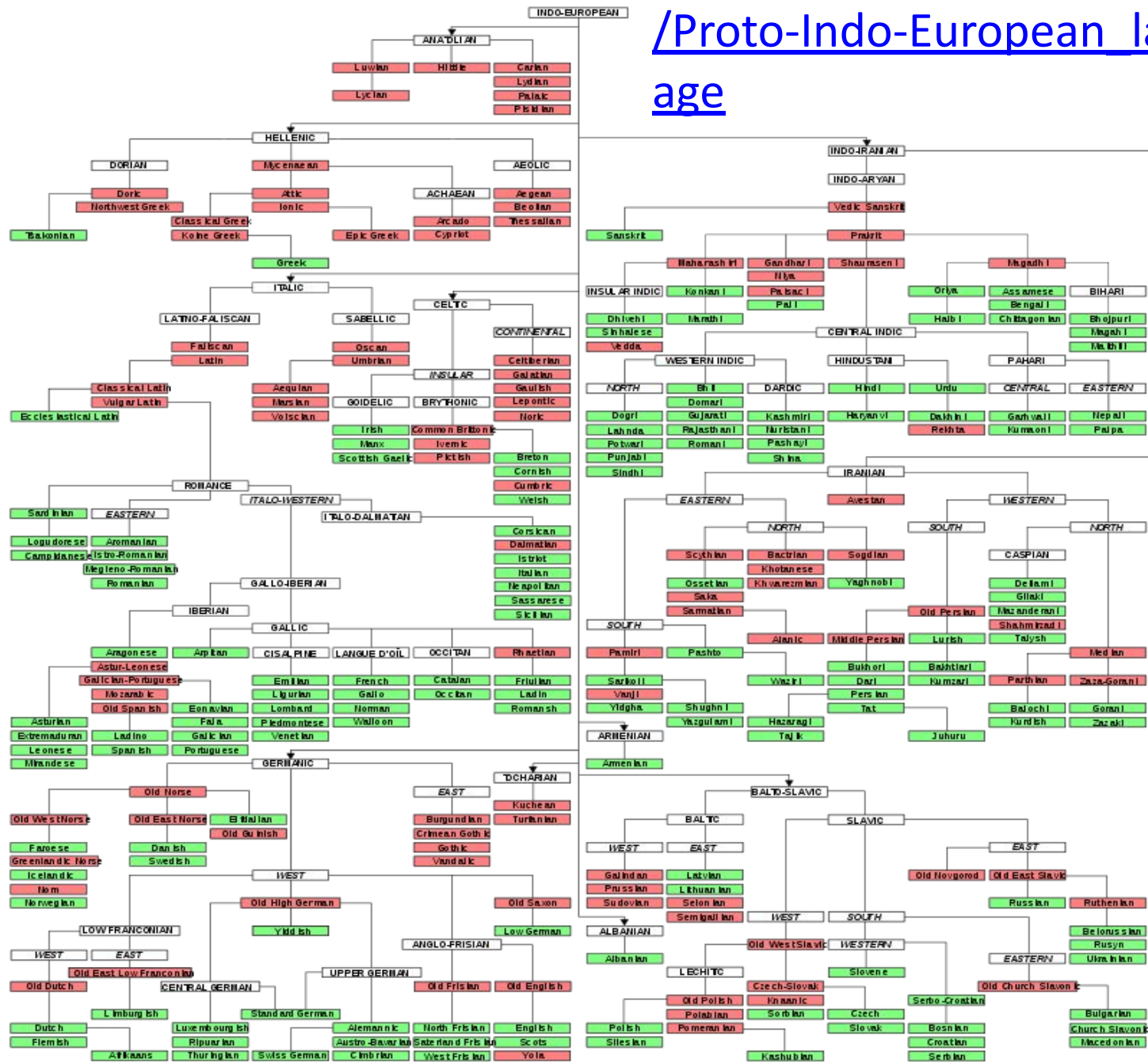


INDO-EUROPEAN BRANCHES OF THE LANGUAGE TREE

Indo-European language tree

<https://anthropology.net/2008/02/05/the-indo-european-language-tree/>

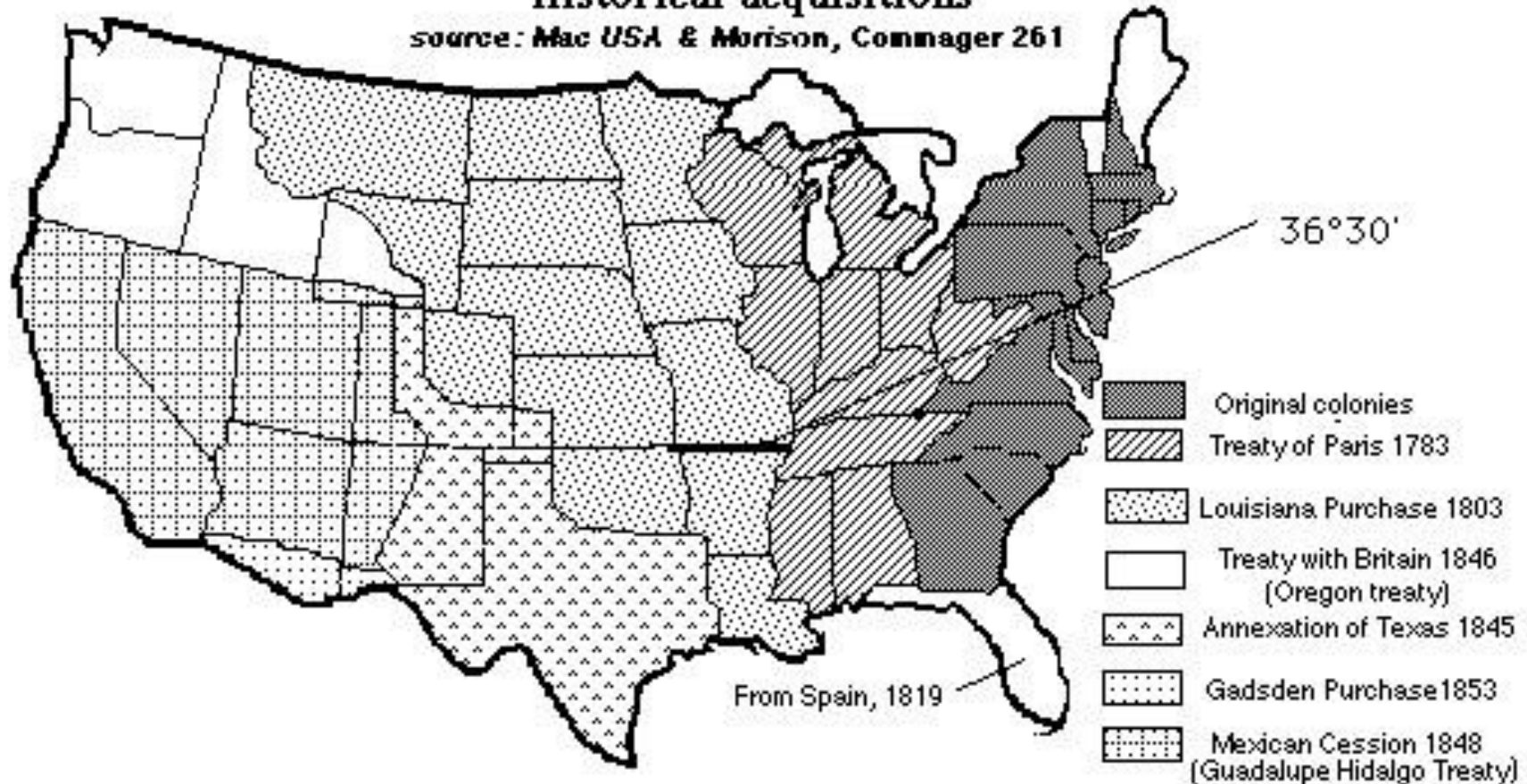
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_language



What was going on in the US?

The United States Historical acquisitions

source: *Mac USA & Morrison, Commager 261*



<http://www.thomaslegion.net/mapofunitedstatesanditsacquisitions.html>

Approximately 562 tribal territories during Pre-Columbian 15 century



Anthropology in the United States

- Smithsonian Institution (1846)
- Bureau of American Ethnology (1879)

Franz Boas (1858-1942)

German-American anthropologist,
Editor of *Handbook of American
Indian languages* (1911)

“One could not really understand another culture without having direct access to its language.”





2. LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY THEORY

- Linguistic relativity is the claim that language stands between us and the world and works like a lens or a filter to influence our experience of the world.
(Wilce 2017: 132)

言語相對論 Linguistic Relativity Theory (The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis)

Edward Sapir (1884-1939)

**Benjamin Lee Whorf
(1897-1941)**



Linguistic relativity is the proposal that “the particular language one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality.” Thus, “People who speak different languages perceive and think about the world quite differently.”

“There is no evolutionary scale of the human language with English on the top. Instead, there is an underlying unity of the human mind.”

Edward Sapir

- Objects or forces in the physical environment become labeled in language only if they have cultural significance—that is, if they “take up the attention of the community”.
- Once a language provides a word for an object or activity, that object or event becomes culturally significant.
- Eg. Filipino or Japanese terms for “rice”

- “Brother” in Japanese /ani/ (older brother)
- /otouto/ (younger brother)

- 「牛」 “cow” (雄牛、雌牛、仔牛) in English, ‘ox’, ‘cattle’, ‘calf’, ‘bull’ (non-neutered 去勢していない雄牛), ‘heifer’ (a female cow who has not given birth yet, 仔を産んでいない雌牛), ‘bullock’ (neutered 去勢した雄牛)

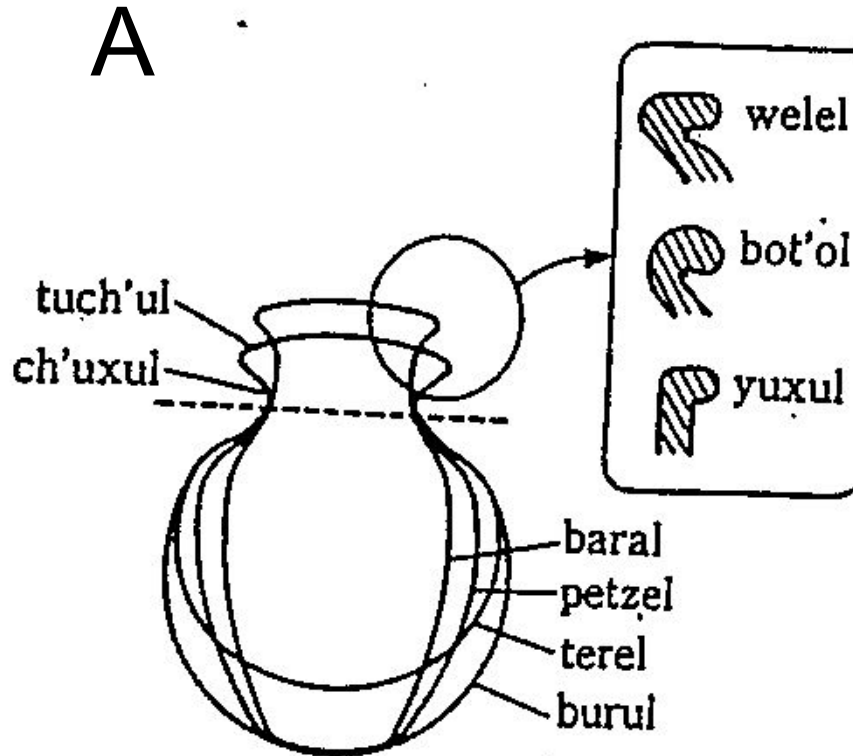


Figure 10. Languages classify items of experience differently. The class corresponding to one word and one thought in language A may be regarded by language B as two or more classes corresponding to two or more words and thoughts.

Folk Taxonomy

Ethnolinguistics

Classification based on shape (A) and body-parts (B)



ツェルタル語の形による分類 (Levinson 1994)
Tzeltal classification

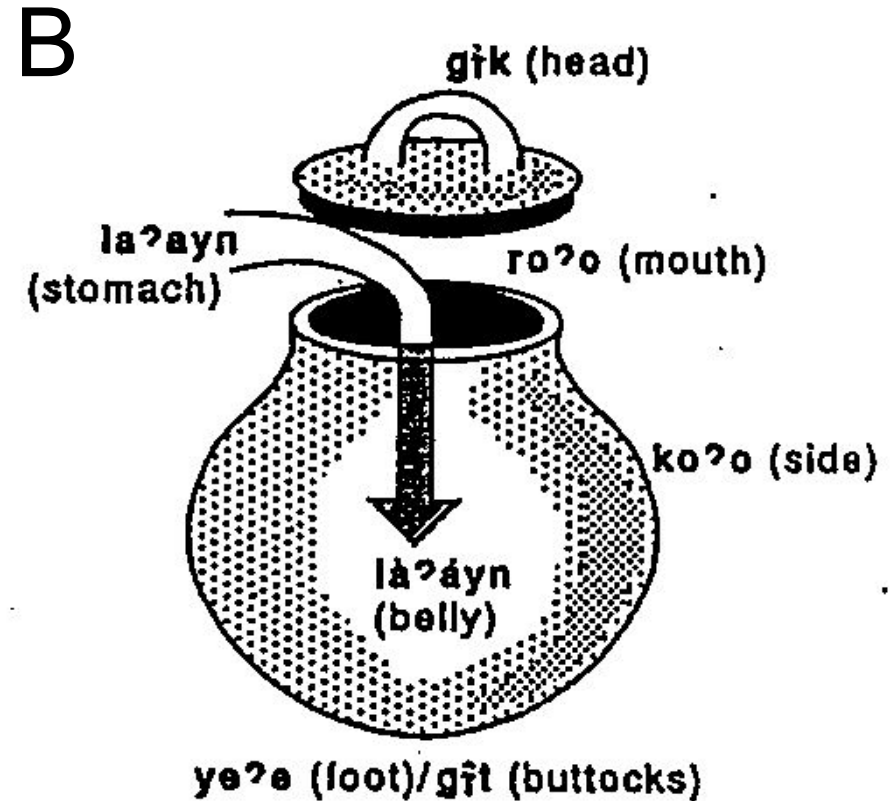


FIGURE 3.5 Zapotec body-part terms applied to jars. (From MacL 1969:125.)

Words for “Carrying/holding”

(持つ) in Mandarin Chinese

① bào ② jiǎ ③ dǐng ④ tuō ⑤ bēi

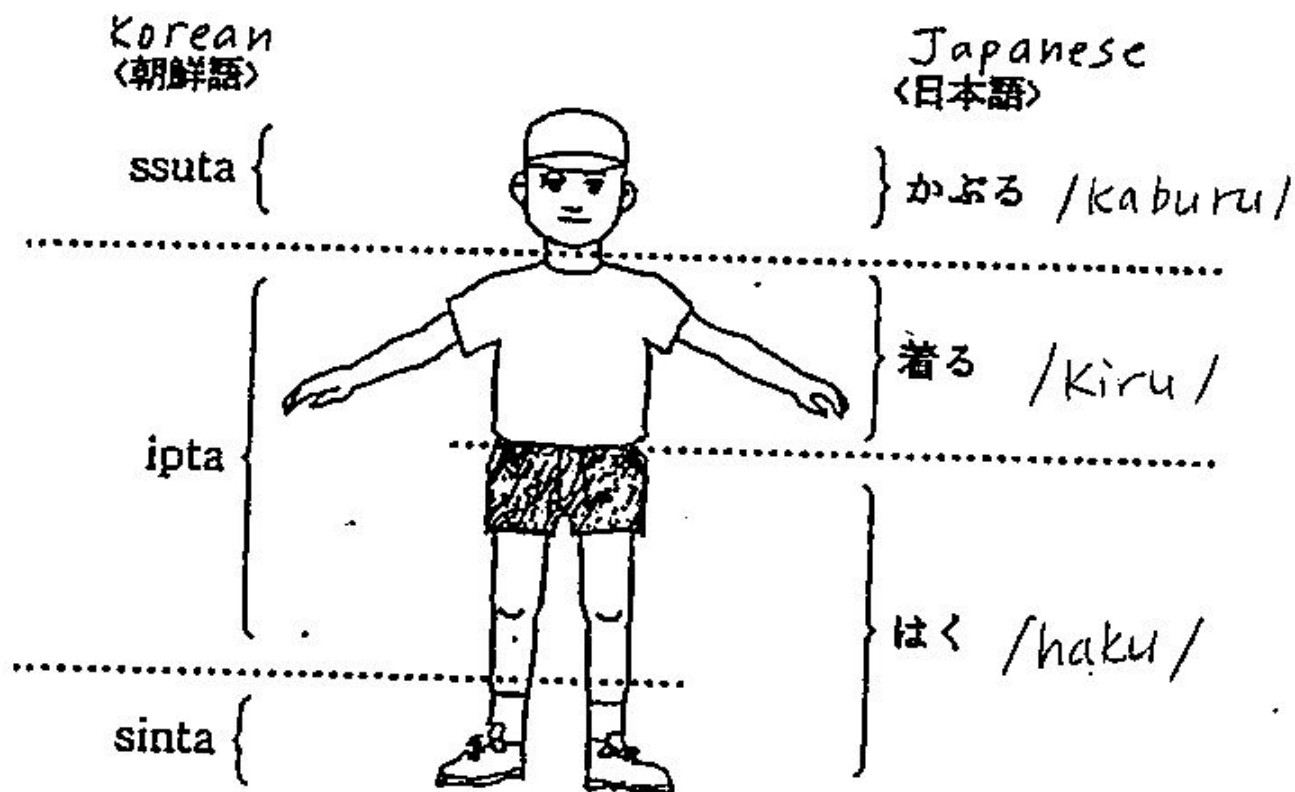
⑥ kuà ⑦ kāng ⑧ jiǔ ⑨ lín ⑩ nǎ ⑪ duān

⑫ tí ⑬ pēng



図2-a 「持つ」動作を表す語——中国語

Korean and Japanese verbs for “wear”



“Korean & Japanese ‘wearing’ verbs”
朝鮮語と日本語の着衣動詞がカバーする身体部位
(Choi & Bowerman 1991)

Benjamin L. Whorf

Investigated whether **grammatical structures** provide frameworks for orienting speaker's thoughts and behaviors. ..

Influence of language can be seen both through vocabulary and through more complex grammatical relations.

Navajo vs English

English: many verbs showing the concept of
“compulsion” (強制)

*force, oblige, make, compel, order, command,
constrain, must, have to, ought to, got to,*

“*I must go there*”: “*I have to go there*”, “*I should go*” ...



Navajo: no specific “verb” showing compulsion

“It’s only good that I shall go there”

English: I make the horse run. (Causative: 使役動詞)

Navajo: The horse is running for me.

Hopi vs. SAE (Standard Average European)

Hopi microcosm: events happening “subjectively”
vs. “objectively”

‘He ran’

(1) ‘wari’ (factual, objective description)

(2) ‘warikni’ (reflective, talking from memory)

SAE: use TENSE to mark the time at which an action takes place. (Habitual ways of thinking about TIME as past → present → future)

→ “I have eaten”

“Habitual Thoughts” (Whorf)

Grammatical categories are to some extent obligatory and habitual. It is relatively inaccessible to the average speaker’s consciousness and it will form a privileged location for transmitting and reproducing cultural and social categories.

What do you see here?



Two interpretations

Sapir : **Relativism/Weak version** (言語相對論)

Differences among languages can influence the differences in the thought of their speakers.

Whorf: **Determinism/Strong version** (言語決定論)

People's thoughts are determined by the categories made available by their language.

Spatial Categorization

Relative vs Absolute

- Right, Left,
- In Front of, in the Back of..

Space is perceived with a certain reference point.

- North, South, East, West
東西南北

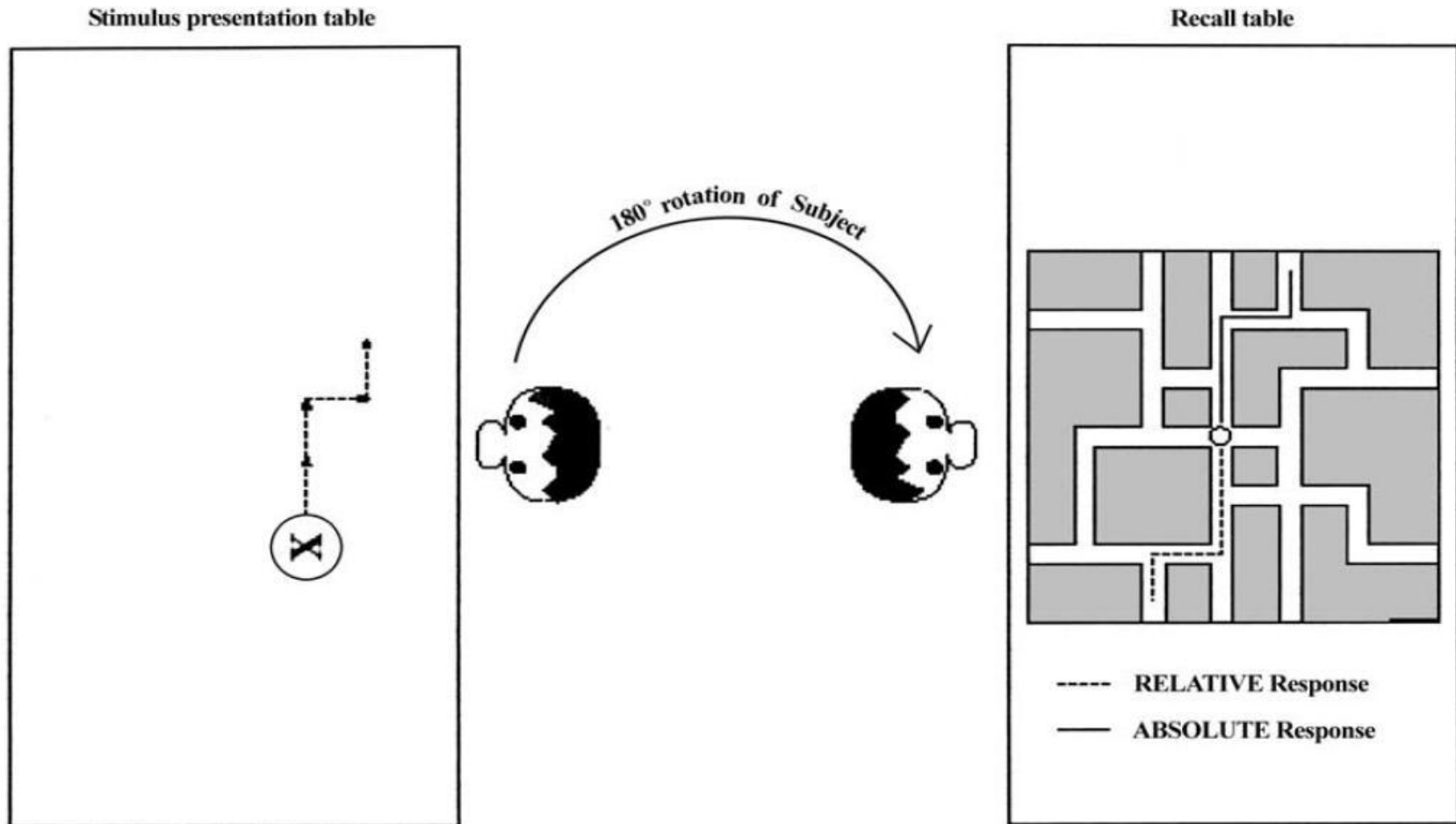
Eg. Guugu Yimithirr (Australian aboriginal language)

“I am at the north of the tree.”

“Can you move a bit to the east?”

“The book was on the south corner of the table”

Spatial recognition between “relative” and “absolute” (S. Levinson 1992)



- Lera Boroditsky on “How language shapes the way we think”
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKK7wGAYP6k>

Categorization and Habitual
Thought:
A Case in Japanese

What's in common?

- Cigarette
- Homerun
- Movie/film
- Carrot
- Telephone call
- Tie

- Pencil
- Green onion
- Daikon radish

- たばこ
- ホームラン
- 映画
- にんじん
- 電話
- ネクタイ
- えんぴつ
- ねぎ
- 大根

Categorizing through verbs

□ Break a bone

□ Break a window

□ Break a barricade

□ Break a sand hill

□ Break a toy

□ 骨をおる(oru)

□ 窓ガラスをわる(waru)

□ バリケードをやぶる

(yaburu)

□ 砂山をくずす(kuzusu)

□ おもちゃをこわす(kowasu)

Dimension and material flexibility

(Y. Fujii 2008)

Dimension/form		Things	Counter	Verb
1D	– flexibility	Pencil, bat, umbrella, stick, etc.	Hon (本)	おる
	+ flexibility	String, rope, ribbon, etc.	Hon (本)	(切る)
2D	– flexibility	Glass, dish, cup, tile, vase,	Mai (枚)	わる
	+ flexibility	Paper, book, cloth, net, etc.	Mai (枚)	やぶる
3D	Piled shape	Mountain, sand hill, etc.	Yama (山)	くずす
	Focus on function	Radio, TV, box, chair, watch, toy, building, car, etc.	台、個、つ、 Etc.	こわす

Linguistic Comparison

Languages with counters

- Chinese 7 verbs*
- Korean 6 verbs
- Indonesian 6 verbs
- Japanese 6 verbs

*Chinese:

- 2D but something unbreakable by human hand

Languages w/o counters

- English 2 verbs
- Hindi 2 verbs
- Tibetan 4 verbs
- Portuguese 4 verbs
- Persian 3 verbs

Contributions of the Linguistic Relativity Theory

1. Anthropologist moving from the “armchair” into the “field”.
2. Renewed understanding of the concept of “culture” in early 20th century.
 - “culture” vs. “nature” as savage, uncontrolled
 - “culture” as socially distributed knowledge and patterns of thoughts

A renewed concept for race or culture at the time of Darwinism & Eugenics (優生主義)



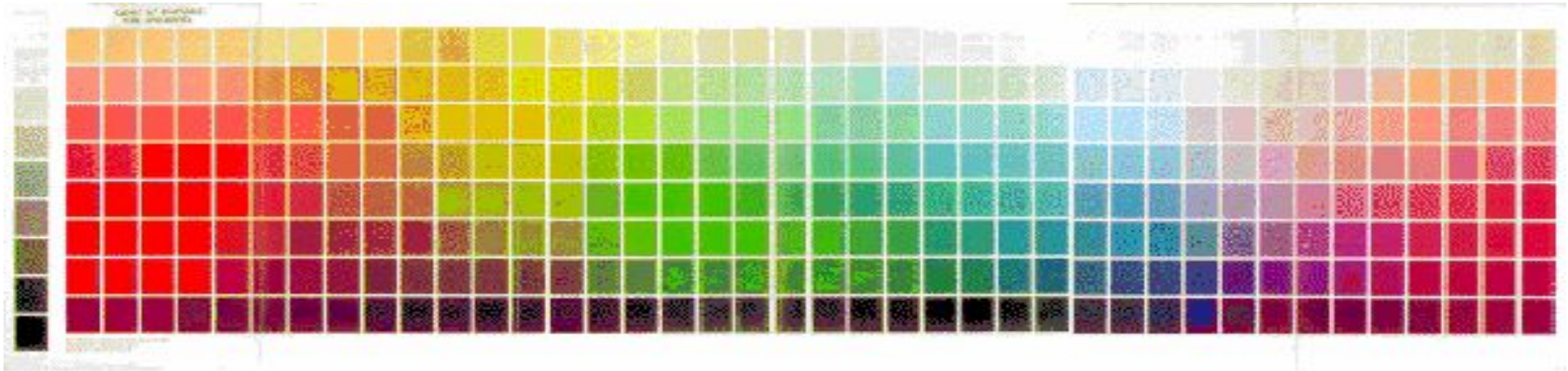
Limitation of the Hypothesis

- There are universal aspects in human worldview regardless of the language.
Linguistic Universalism (言語の普遍性)
- The study of “Basic color terms” (Berlin & Kay 1969)

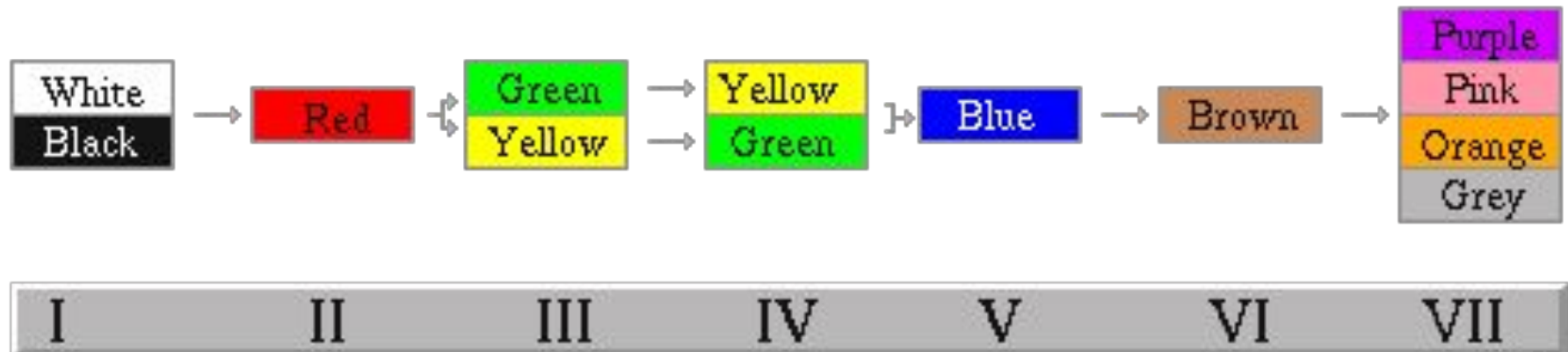
Remember the figure?

3. UNIVERSAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE - COLOR TERMS -

Basic color terms study (Berlin and Kay 1969)



[Reproduction of the color stimuli used by Berlin and Kay] Reproduction of the color stimuli used by Berlin and Kay. In the actual experiments, the color chips were mounted on a grey background.

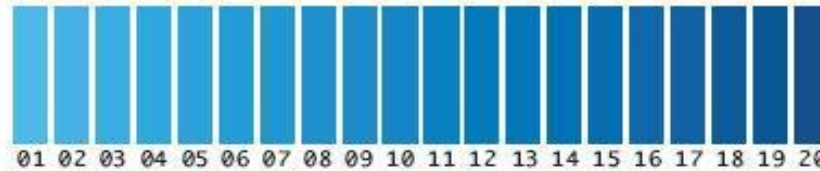


Sequences of color terms based on number

No. of Terms	Color Terms	Language
2	white, black	Jale, Dani (New Guinea) Ngombe (Africa)
3	white, black, red	Arawak (Caribbean) Swahili (South Africa)
4	white, black, red, yellow	Ibo (Nigeria) Tongan (Polinesia)
5	white, black, red, yellow, green	Tarascan (Mexic) !Kung (South Africa)
6	white, black, red, yellow, green, blue	Tamil (India) Mandarin (China)
7	white, black, red, yellow, green, blue brown	Nez Perce (Montana, US) Javanese
8-11	white, black, red, yellow, green, blue Brown, purple and/or pink, and/or orange and/or gray	English, Tagalog Zuni (New Mexico, US) Dinka (Sudan), etc.

Russian terms for 'blue'

light blue, pronounced "goluboy", and dark blue, pronounced "siniy".



4. METAPHORS AND METONYMY

Metaphor (隠喩・暗喩)

A word or phrase used in imaginative way to describe somebody or something else, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful.

- She has a *heart of stone*.
- A sudden *flood of joy* came over me.
- お人形のようにかわいい子
- 目玉焼き / sunny-side up

Metonymy (換喩)

The act of referring to sth/sb. by the name of something else that is closely connected with it.

- The *White House* announced today....
- The *kettle* is boiling. 今夜は鍋にするか。
- Please erase the blackboard after class. 授業が終わったら黒板を消してください。
- 財布の中の諭吉

Metaphors

The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. Metaphors imply certain folk theories about the world or our experience of it.

Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities.

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980)

Lakoff and Johnson (1980)

Metaphors We Live By 『レトリックと人生』

“Theory” = *Building* metaphor

foundation, framework, support, stand, shaky, fall
, collapse, grounded, etc.

“Understanding” = *Seeing* metaphor

‘I see what you mean’, ‘I got the picture’,
‘that’s insightful/brilliant’, ‘it’s clear’ etc.

“Argument” = war

- Your claims are *indefensible*.
- He *attacked* every weak point in my argument.
- His criticisms were *right on target*.
- I *demolished* his argument.
- I’ve never *won an argument* with him.
- You disagree? Okay, *shoot!*

Physical space metaphor

- ↑ up = more, good, positive, conscious
- ↓ down = less, bad, negative
- Universal; non-arbitrary

- Right vs. Left
- Culturally relative; arbitrary

Recommended readings

Lakoff, George (1991) “Metaphor and war”

Lakoff, George (2003) “Metaphor and war, again”

Lakoff, G. and Nunez, R. (2001) *Where mathematics come from: How the embodied mind brings mathematics into being.*

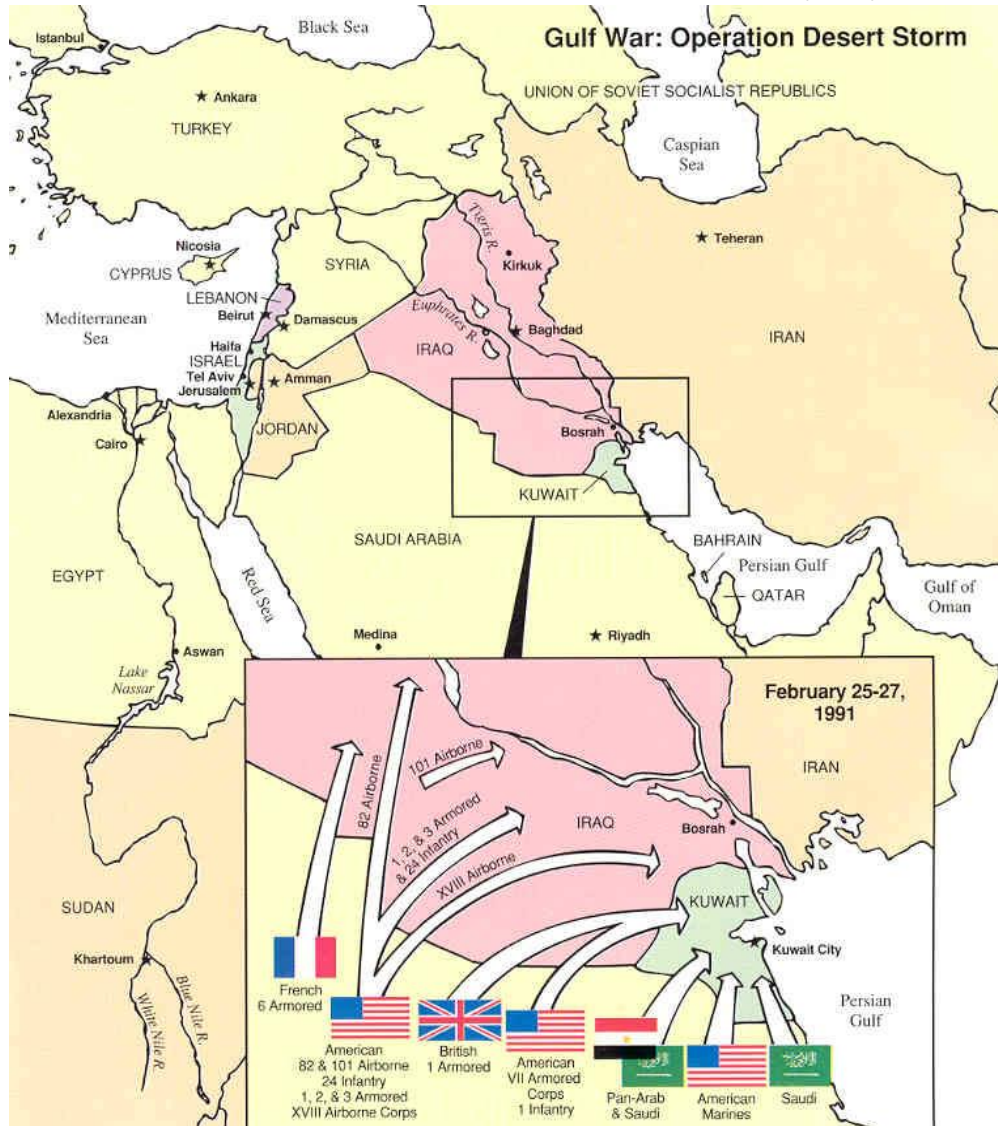
井上京子(1998)『もし右や左がなかったら』

ガイチャー・ドイ『言語が違えば世界が違って見えるわけ』

Deutscher, Guy (2011) *Through the looking glass: Why the world looks different in other languages.*

The Gulf War (湾岸戦争)

1991-1992



President Bush
“Operation Desert Storm”
(砂漠の嵐作戦)



Metaphors were used to justify the cause of war 湾岸戦争を正当化するための のメタファー

1. The state-as-person
2. The “fairy-tale of the just war”
(Villain=Iraq, victim=Kuwait, and the
hero=US)
3. “Self-defense” vs. “Rescue” scenario
4. War as violent crime, medicine, and
competitive game



V. N. Volosinov (1895-1936)

There are two elements in expression: that inner something which is *expressible*, and its *outward objectification* for others. By becoming external by expressing itself outwardly, the inner element does go under alternation. ... There is no such thing as experience outside of embodiment in signs. It is not experience that organizes expression, but the other way around—*expression organizes experience*.

To sum up...

- Language **expresses** cultural reality.
- Language **embodies** cultural reality.
- Language **symbolizes** cultural reality.

Or, as an elegantly dressed woman said in a New York bakery... “Thank goodness for the word ‘muffin’. Otherwise, I’d be eating cake for breakfast every morning.”

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- Whorf, L. B. (1956) *Language, Thought, and Reality*. The MIT Press. [ウォーフ・L・ベンジャミン著、池上嘉彦訳(1993)『言語・思考・現実』講談社]
- Volosinov, N. Valentin (1986) *Marxism and Philosophy of Language*. Harvard University Press.