

Look man,

MILC

Happens

Madison Informal Linguistics.Com

Saturday, Feb. 16, 2002, 8:00 p.m.

The Program*

* Note: Due to the number of outstanding submissions received, MILC will this year include parallel sessions. We regret any conflicts in scheduling that mean you might miss a paper you want to see.

Plenary: 8:00 pm, Grand Ballroom

**The Linguistic Consequences of Being a (Serious)
Lame: How the Mind Creates Language (Really)**

Invited Distinguished Exalted Plenary Speaker:

Dr. Mark "Bin" Louden, *Supreme Leader*
Max Qaeda Institute

Response: Daddy, they're being mean to me

George W. Bush, *President & Daddy's Boy*
In Ken Lay's Pocket

**Response: You'll go to jail for talking about our boy that
way**

Dick Cheney, *Shadow President, Undisclosed Location*

**Response: You'll go to hell for talking about our boy that
way**

John Ashcroft, *Attorney General/Pinhead*

Session 1: 8:00 pm, Theoretical matters, Backyard II

Remarks on Nominalization

Stephen Ambrose, *QuickBooks, Inc./MIT*

Against Abstraction:

The Importance of Self-Evidence

By <http://www.ecopsych.com/selfevidence.html>

University of the Obvious

For Abstraction:

Why evidence of any kind is sooo boring

John E. Cash

Certainly No Public University

Session 2: 8:00 pm, Historical Linguistics, Kitchen II

Genesis

Stephen Ambrose, *Qumran Scribes, Inc.*

Response: So, I don't get it: Why would you bother to steal WORDS?

Ken Lay, *Lincoln Bedroom*

MILC, Beer and Law: Wisconsin's [Old] Frisian substrate

Rednath Kawing

Kinig Kerls Hegeskoalle

Session 3: 8:00 pm, Language and Media, TV Room

LTR and Truth: why personal ads are so personal

Sally W. Field, *NS* & Sarah W. Fergusson, *LD*

SCREAMING on the Internet: an Empirical STUDY

CHARLES J. JAMES @ YAHOOVERSIY.COM

The Importance of Being Martha: An Examination of Discourse surrounding Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Inc.

Mrs. Roman Kyweluk

The Office, UW/The Home Front, Inc.

The Application of Constituency Tests to Advertising Slogans

Mark Etting

UW School of Bigness

Session 4: 8:00 pm, The Magic of Language / The Language of Magic, Basement-Attic Auditorium A-C

On Spell-Binding

Bilbo Baggins, *Lothlorien Retirement Residence*

Harry Potter, *Hogwart School for Wizards*

Diachronic Field Methods

Cleo Warwick & Friends

California Institute of Linguistics and Psychicology

Mineral Water with a Kick, or,

How to Order Trouble at any Wisconsin Party

Dr. Canny Bustead, Th.C.

Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Mold-Cultures

Session 5: 8:00 pm, Stuff that just didn't fit anywhere else; no, not there either

Song and Lexicon in the Upper Midwest

James P. Leary, *Out There*

Gettysburg Address

Stephen Ambrose, *Honest Abe Productions*

Culinary Linguistics Team Takes Olympic Gold With MILC Menu

DiaCritic Cora Lee, *Was around here somewhere just a minute ago*

Beloit, Shmeloit

The Honorable Scott McCallum, *No, OF COURSE the Guv is not giving a talk or anything, but he really doesn't fit anywhere.*

MILC Happens

Deal with it.

The abstracts

In random order, nontechnically speaking.

On Spell-Binding

Bilbo Baggins
Lothlorien Retirement Residence

Harry Potter
Hogwart School for Wizards

In our paper we will focus on an aspect of Binding Theory that is often overlooked by muggle linguists: spell-binding. In contrast to ordinary binding, spell-binding includes the notion of the universal binder, called "the one ring". The one ring can create its own binding domain by a process that is called "snitching". Snitching is the arbitrary assignment of an index to a subject, making it accessible for infiltration by co-indexation. To use an example from Middle Earth: By snitching, Saruman became an accessible subject, which made Isengard the domain for spell-binding by the one ring. In contrast, Frodo turned out to be unsnitchable. We will explore the snitchability

of subjects and will give a step-by-step explanation of the universal principle for spell-binding, which is:

One ring to rule them all
One ring to find them
One ring to bring them all
And in the darkness bind them.

Note: Gollums, bludger, trolls, and dragons not admitted.

SCREAMING on the Internet: an Empirical STUDY

CHARLES J. JAMES

@

YAHOOVERSIY.COM

IMHO

I strongly STRONGLY favor abandoning most of our conventions

BTW

wondering about the VERB WALL?

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!

the ability to MANIULATE

NOT ON MY WATCH!

words should be written AS IF THEY WERE GOING TO BE READ

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

conjugating won't stick, HELP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SHOULD

Send FREE Cards

I WOULD APPRECIATE ONLY HONEST RESPONSES

she says she absolutely LOVES it

ANYTHING

Why did you put me next to HIM?

IT IS WRONG!

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON ON_LINE INSTRUCTION OF
GERMAN:

OKAY!!

FLTEACH@LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU

It's VERY REALISTIC

We've been doing this FOREVER!!!

7 MILC 5

IT REALLY HELPS!

REMINDERS about SENDING EMAIL TO THE LIST

I know that it would NEVER work

DE_NEWS@LISTSERV.DFN.DE

MfG

SUB GERMNEWS Egon Mustermann | UNSUB GERMNEWS

SUB DE_NEWS Jesse James | UNSUB DE_NEWS

HOW DARE YOU?

I'd LOVE to see it!

FREE

YAHOO!

LTR and Truth: Why personal ads are so personal

Sally W. Field
NS

Sarah W. Fergusson
LD

0. INTRODUCTION. Many people have perused the personal ad pages over coffee, but very few actually take the time to mull over the meanings or the inherent implications in them. We wish to work through some simple samples selected from the infamous *Isthmus* personals¹, in an attempt to accentuate aspects of actual ads which provide perspective on pragmatic conventions, concentrating on linguistic limitations when looking for love.

I. REAL RISKY ROMANTIC. The use of alliteration is very prevalent in the world of personals. Apparently, people seem to think that alliteration makes their ad sound like poetry – poetry in very awkward motion, perhaps, but is it really worth the effort? Take, for example, our sibilant-obsessed author of the following ad:

¹ The majority of our data for this special Valentine's day submission come from the conventional personals. *Diversions* ads are uninteresting as they fall into a binary set defined by the criteria: DOMINANT-SUBMISSIVE.

SWEET, SINGLE, SVELTE, scatter-brained, scientist, sporting, scanty, silk, shorts, shrouding, super-sized, secrets, seeks, sentiment, seldom serious, sophisticated seductress. Subject: stringless, sessions, subsuming, shoulder soothing, silly shenanigans, seminating suggestions, soapy showers, sheet scrunching, subsequently securing sleepy satisfaction.

The author could have saved valuable time and money by eliminating redundant synonyms and paraphrases for one, three-letter s-word: sex. It is surprising to note how inarticulate and inconcise people can be, especially when they have to pay by the line. People often seem reluctant to just come out and say what they mean, even if the alternative is more costly. For example, there are various alternates to the form 'fat': full-figured, buxom, stout, and the somewhat ambiguous 'wpth' (cf. discussion on acronyms), all of which are longer, and therefore, more expensive than the basic word, which seems unnecessary, as the reader knows what the author really means. Sometimes, in an effort to be verbose, people misuse words, a topic we explore in the next section.

II. ULTIMATE IMPECCABLE WARRIOR. This is an a-normal collocation (Firth, 1957).² Individually, the meanings of the words are clear. 'Ultimate warrior' is a good collocation, as in: *Ghenghis Khan was the ultimate warrior*. 'Impeccable', however, presents a problem. Although the strict definition of 'impeccable' is workable here, its colloquial connotations are unclear. What is an 'impeccable warrior'? Only Martha Stewart can tell. Another a-normal collocation can be found in this ad by a self-reported "artist":

LONG RED HAIR, green eyes, 5'6", *slim Rubenesque*, artist, parent, N/S, N/D, spiritual, craves outdoors, seeks honest, monogamous SWM, 39-45.

The phrase "slim Rubenesque" would appear to be contradictory, as *slim* implies a slender, sleek appearance, whereas *Rubenesque* implies Anna Nicole Smith.

² A limitation of our study is the potential that some examples of a-normal collocations may be the result of scribal error, as in the example of "collage boy": **ALL-AMERICAN BOY**. A very handsome, athletic, collage boy, 5'10", 175lbs, blond/blu, seeks attr, mature woman, 28-45, for winter fun." We are unable to determine if this young man is enrolled in a university, or a collection of seemingly unrelated bits arranged in artistic fashion.

Another fascinating phenomenon is the overgeneralization of the word *lady*, perhaps originally used in the alliterating “looking for a lovely lady”, then extended by analogy to other environments. *Webster’s New World Dictionary* defines *lady* as: “any woman: a polite term.” In this sense, then, *lady* would be appropriate. An alternate definition given is: “in Great Britain, the title of respect given to a marchioness, countess, viscountess, or baroness; to the daughter of a duke, marquis, or earl; or to the wife of a baronet, knight, or holder of the courtesy title *Lord*.” How many white-gloved, Aqua Net™-haired heirs to the throne do you expect find their Prince Charming via the personal ads?

Lastly, we have the oft-used terms *self-employed* and *professional* (*prof.*). Is this a good thing? Drug dealers are self-employed, Bill Gates is self-employed – is this the impression people want to give? Even if one’s “job” is slowly selling off his/her worldly possessions on eBay, perhaps it would be better to refer to oneself as an “auctioneer”, rather than draw the nasty parallels implied by “self-employed” referred to above. As for *professional*, see Heidi Fleiss’ *The Professional’s Guide to Relationships*³.

III. ATTR PROF SWM, 32, NS, LD. Interestingly, while people do not seem worried about price per word (ppw) when disguising reality, they don’t mind swimming in the alphabet soup of arbitrary acronyms. The standard ones have become familiar to many: SWM/F, NS, LD, PROF, ATTR, B, H, A, D, LTR, G, BI, BLND, BLU, GR, BR. Some people, however do not find these adequate, and make up their own, which they apparently feel will be transparent to all. For example, the aforementioned “wpth”, which, after interviewing the *Isthmus* Personal Ad Coordinator (IPAC), we determined to mean “weight proportional to height”. (Earlier hypotheses included: “whale poacher to hug” and “wooing probability tremendously high”.)

IV. EMOTIONALLY LITERATE SWM: Accommodation Theory embodied. A common phenomenon in the ads is the act of accommodation between the sexes. Stereotypically feminine desires re: a relationship (references to warmth, softness, emotion, cuddling, affection,

³ Fleiss, Heidi. 1998. *The Professional’s Guide to Relationships*. LA: Sheen Publications.

romance, sincerity, sensitivity) are often found in men's ads, whereas women's ads frequently make reference to what would be considered stereotypical male desires (sports, risk, adventure, sass & class, aggressiveness). However, there are also certain accepted gender roles; e.g. men love the outdoors, women love dancing.⁴

V. PAG: THE MODEL. Not to toot our own Horn, but after extensive research, we have developed, in close cooperation with the Maastricht Instituut Linguistique Cømputationál (MILC), a Personal Ad Generator (PAG), designed to produce the Optimal Personal Ad (OPA!). The PAG works by taking the inefficient, inarticulate input and producing a cost-effective, concise translation. Using the principles of Universal Grammar (UG) and the revolutionary cleaning power of Oxi-Clean™ (OC™ - as seen on TV!), we have produced the following optimal ad for a single white male (SWM):

INPUT ⇨ **YOUNG-LOOKING, BAYWATCH FAN, SELF-EMPLOYED, WPTH, SWM**
who enjoys sports, seeks lovely lady for sharing cuddles in the woods by a romantic fire, LTR desired.

PAG OUTPUT ⇨

<p>OLD, LONELY, UNEMPLOYED, FAT, SWM, lives in tent not serviced by MG&E, seeks any woman for watching football and routine sex.</p>

VI. CONCLUSION. As per usual, Linguistics has an answer. Although the data set is not exhaustive, the powers of the PAG are evident. With the success of the PAG model, we offer a method for streamlining the personals page to allow for greater representation of lonely singles in papers worldwide.⁵ We hope to expand PAG to one day include the major languages of the world, except French, as they already speak the language of love. Happy Valentine's Day.

⁴ Another counterexample can be found in the following: "**ATTR, PROGRESSIVE, SLENDER SWF, 5'6"**, artist/wildlife advocate, seeks capable, attr, creative man, 50+, who care's about bears, the living wild." One who "care's about bears" presumably doesn't care about accommodating her male audience, or proper punctuation, for that matter.

⁵ Leuk, Toon. 2000. Het pag-model: het stomste idee sinds cheez-whiz™. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Vanalles.

SONG AND LEXICON IN THE UPPER MIDWEST

James P. Leary⁶

Distinctly regional speech, both contemporary and archaic — and especially that which is vulgar, obscene, and exemplary of the subgenius — is frequently embedded in the lyrics of musicians who perform in dark places where bottles are thrown. This paper will draw upon Ed Sanders' classic study of southernisms present in the base repertoire of Red Dworkas and the Okra City Poker Chips to cull exceptionally crude regionalisms from such songs as the North Country Band's "Honyock Kit," Da Yoopers' "Smart Pills," the Rubenzer Hotshots' "One Taste of Her Biscuits Would Make an Ox Fart," and the Happy Schnapps Combo's "Da Bears Still Suck." Consultation of Allen Walker Read's *Lexical Evidence from Folk Epigraphy in Western North America: A Glossarial Study of the Low Element in the English Vocabulary* (especially those excerpts gathered during the 1920s and '30s from the walls of men's toilets in Iowa) will lend zesty comparative data.

For Abstraction: Why evidence of any kind is sooo boring

John E. Cash
Certainly No Public University

Actually, it's not just boring, it's wrong, just plain wrong.

Oh, never mind. You people don't care about aesthetics and you're really not nearly intellectually sophisticated enough to understand me. You're all dirty empiricists dealing with stuff that isn't even art. Go away, you little people with your little minds.

Shoo. Go away.

⁶ Dr. Jim Leary, a retired veterinarian, artificial inseminator, and bull exerciser from Vernon County, Wisconsin, undertook his research with the aid of a wired recorder and several cases of Walter's Beer.

Diachronic Field Methods⁷

Cleo Warwick and Friends (ahem, et al.)
California Institute of Linguistics and Psychicology

One of the tools from which synchronic linguists have benefited for more than a century is field research and consequently the ability to verify data with informants. Improvements in recording technology as well as in field methods themselves have led to better data from which linguists can draw their conclusions. Due to these improvements, significant advances have been made to our understanding of language. The same has not been the case for diachronic linguistics, however, where historical linguists have blamed their failure to perform field research on a supposedly glaring lack of informants opting instead to try to ‘decipher’ what minimal records have been left from old very dead languages. Trying to solve these puzzles has led to conflicts, dead-ends, armchair linguists thinking they have two cents to add to the discussion and slow progress in diachrony. This paper argues for the implementation of new sceantological techniques outlined in Edward (2001) to communicate with informants from the next life, thereby permitting diachronic field research. Three critical factors for successful field research are also outlined as per Grimm (p.c.) and Jones (p.c.). First, due to the tenuous nature of spiritual visitations, the researcher must be well-versed in the language to maximise the potentially short time the informant can provide during a session. Secondly, just as in synchronic research, it is crucial to call back more than one informant. The larger the informant base, the increased reliability of data acquired. Thirdly, it is crucial to control the selection of

⁷ The authors would like to thank Shirley Maclain who first suggested the idea of using other-earthly communications to obtain informants. Her suggestions have played a large part in our work. We would also like to thank John Edward, Prof. Grimm, Sir William Jones, Dr. Saussure, Bishop Wulfila and Karl Verner for their comments on this paper and to Panini for both linguistic insights and yummy sandwiches he provided while authoring this paper. Any errors are our own, although it is tempting to blame it on the dead guy. We are also indebted to the Psychic Friends Institute for their generous funding and support of this project. Again, the usual disclaimers apply. This is for entertainment purposes only, and readers accept all risks involved in participating in such activities. It is also advisable to check with your institution’s human subject regulations to see how they apply to deceased subjects. They might be dead and incapable of filing a complaint against shady researchers, but they *can* haunt you.

informants for both dialect and time period. Since informants from different times and areas will demonstrate differences in their language, it is critical to ensure that a homogenous informant base is achieved. Suggestions are given for utilising genealogical records as one source for summoning members from one family or community. Saussure (p.c.) notes that this provides a more consistent group of informants, as well as the chance to increase the pool by word of mouth with their friends when the informants return to the land of the non-living. Furthermore, informants can also provide information about parents, grandparents, etc. who might also be willing to participate, thereby providing the researcher with a larger time span over which to trace language change. Concomitantly, the use of birth or death records becomes crucial since, as Edward (2002) observes, the dead are more likely to be willing to help if they are called upon directly rather than asked to participate as volunteers thereby interrupting their paradisaical activities. As such, the more details the researcher can provide to the sceantologist to call upon specific individuals, the greater the chance of success in obtaining informants. Having access to reliable informants will facilitate phonological research as no guesswork will be required to determine the sound system of the languages from records or reconstructions, thus augmenting professional satisfaction. Moreover, it will allow syntacticians to properly assess the syntactic structure of the language without the risk of attributing structures to languages from which translations were made (Wulfila, p.c.). These advances should not be seen as death to potential PhD dissertations. Instead, since most topics have already been done to death, this is a fun and culturally educational way of breathing new life into some old questions and may lead to a renaissance in the field. Moreover, it will mean not having to wait until you're dead to know if your hypotheses were correct! Finally, the paper will close with suggestions for obtaining funding for conducting diachronic field research in the face of skepticism many still hold towards sceantological research as well as in finding reputable sceantologists.

Against Abstraction: The Importance of Self-Evidence

By <http://www.ecopsych.com/selfevidence.html>
University of the Obvious

For the purposes of this paper, I will assume without question a certain framework of principles (UG), and will explore some of the problems that arise when they are applied in the study of a central area in the syntax of English, and, presumably, any human language. Nature builds its perfection non-verbally. It and Earth have been sustained in balance by wordless relationships throughout the eons. In our conquest of nature we learn to think and communicate in nature disconnected, verbal stories and labels 99.9% of the time. We lose the ability to think with the profound self-evidence that produces things like Chomsky's (1971) "We hold these truths to be self-evident."

In this paper, I provide a simple activity that will help you experience self-evidence and its value. If you find the activity presents conflicts or discomfort, you should carefully evaluate whether UG will be of good service to your education and goals. (Please sign my Human Subjects form.)

Consider (1), a question that validates the importance of self-evidence. I ask it of people anywhere and even conflicting parties, like in bar room fights or Congress and the Supreme Court agree on the answer.

1. If you count a dog's tail as one of its legs, how many legs does a dog have?

"Five," of course, is the answer. Any other answer displays an ignorance of logic and math accompanied by self-depreciation that probably started in kindergarten. "Five," however, is only correct until you apply it to a real dog. Collect self-evidence. Let genuine contact with a real dog register. Through senses of sight, touch, motion, mathematics, UG, and community, direct sensory contact with the dog and its four legs helps you discover nature's non-abstract, authentic reality. A normal dog has four legs. This self-evidence draws its knowledge from the highest authority, from nature itself, not our nature conquering story about reality.

Self-evidence also helps us become more passionate about Earth and thereby be motivated to contribute to the wellness of global life. It helps us overcome our consciousness being distorted by hurtful stories and thereby becoming ecozombies. Our challenge is to differentiate our world of 5 leg stories that we become attached to, with the sensory, non-verbal, self-evidence, 4-leg world of nature that we register.

Because people are part of nature, touching the natural world can, in time, be experienced similarly to touching our ankle. For this reason, UG offers an important contribution to producing and sustaining peace within yourself and internationally. After all, our finger rarely conflicts, exploits or is at war with our ankle.

MILC, Beer and Law: Wisconsin's Old Frisian substrate

Rednath Kawing
Kinig Kerls Hegeskoalle

Ya sure, everybody thinks Wisconsin is the “dairy state” and that Wisconsin, like, invented beer or something. Well, ever heard of Friesland? Not only were people there successful cattlepeople before Wisconsin had any ‘dairy air’ to smell, and not only were they out-drinking what you call “Cheeseheads” from dawn till way past dusk, Frisians had built beer into legal codes already in the Middle Ages. Consider the following passages:

Fivelgoer Laws, XI, 34:

Hwasā orne swense⁸
mith biare jef mith wetere,
sa istio⁹ bote fif scillingan
iefta thre ethan.

Whosoever pours on another [person]
beer or water
then the fine is five schillings
or [they must swear] three oaths.

Hunsingoer Laws, XII, 90:

Hwasā otherem pissinge¹⁰ scenzie, Whosoever pours another

⁸ Cf. *swenga*, here with typical Frisian palatalization of velar stop.

⁹ Note enclisis of definite article, handbook form *thiu*, onto copula *is*, with typical cluster assimilation of the fricative and reduction of the vowel.

	[a mug of] urine,
hwas a otherem inane pinth ¹¹ pissie,	whosoever pisses in another's mug,
hwas a otherem ene sullenge due,	whosoever causes another to sully themselves,
thet hine bi tha halse gripe	by grabbing him by the throat
thettem sin spise up	so that his food
eta muthe hlape	runs out of [his] mouth
tuiar xv enza ieftha tian ethar	[so must he pay] twice 15 ounces or 10 oaths

One of the few acceptable gifts to officials was measured in the currency of “the breakfast of champions”, cf. Hunsingoer XXI, 18; Fivelgoer XIX, 18. So, these guys were (1) way into beer, (2) wanted to be civilized about it.

What then is the point, beyond the fact that Old Frisians obviously behaved better than most Bears fans? I think that should be pretty obvious: Wisconsin's culture was shaped at every crucial turn by Old Frisian influence.

The Importance of Being Martha: An Examination of Discourse surrounding Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Inc.

Mrs. Roman Kyweluk

Since the syndication of her first television show and publication of her first book in the early 1980s, Martha Stewart has established herself as the ultimate American authority on domesticity and at the same time has created a multimillion dollar, multimedia empire. Martha appears to have managed to enthrall conservatives who appreciate her focus on hearth and home as well as liberals who love her independent spirit and the fact that she has the chutzpah to name stuff after herself. The question for this paper is: How the hell does

¹⁰ Note the deverbative form here, from the old class ii weak verb *pissia*, cf. Modern North Frisian *pessa*, etc. Presumably, like its German and English cognates, this represents a loanword from medieval Latin. The Romance term itself is speculated to be of ‘echoic’ origin.

¹¹ Context makes clear that this is *pint(h)* in the meaning ‘container for beverage, esp. beer’ and not *pint* ~ *pinthe* ‘penis’.

she do that? Or, to put it in a larger conceptual framework: How do her patterns of discourse create the persona that manages to respond to the conflicting demands of her fans? How does she represent the crest of the rising wave of domesticity and at the same time help feminists escape into fantasies of controlling the world by matching the plates and napkins? Unable to come even close to answering these questions, we turn to what we do best: To wit, analyzing the dialogue. The paper ends with an unpacking of Martha's signature phrase: **It's a good thing**. Following that seminal analysis of William Jefferson Clinton, we spend some time unpacking the meaning of "is" but the major contribution of the paper centers on a discussion of the multiple interpretations and layers of meaning surrounding Martha's use of the word "thing".

The meaning of **good** must await the next paper.

The Application of Constituency Tests to Advertising Slogans

Mark Etting
UW School of Business

Dear Prof. Salmons,
I'm planning on submitting a paper to the upcoming MILC™ and I wanted to pass my intended submission by you to make sure that the topic is suitable for such a conference as yours.

In my Linguistics 101 course we learned all about the benefits of constituency tests. The paper is a later development of my honors paper for the class, and deals with the application of constituency tests to advertising slogans, such as "Make Seven-Up yours" (i.e., where pro is the subject of the sentence). In this example the group of words [up yours] is evaluated by the tests as being or not being a proper phrase. The following are the results of the tests, and the contexts are fairly transparent, especially in (3) where I'm sure this is what one would hear if they were approached by a stranger and asked to make a linguistic judgment on WH-Question formation.

1. anaphoric substitution: Make seven there.
2. question formation: Where do you make seven?
3. answer to question:
A: Where do you make seven?

B: Up yours.

4. conjunction: Make seven up yours and down the block.
5. movement: It was up yours that (you) made seven.
6. particle movement: Make seven yours up.

Please let me know if this is suitable. If not I could always use one of the following:

Cutty Sark Whisky: "Don't give [up the ship]."

Folger's Coffee: "The best part of waking up is Folger's [in your cup]."

Hellman's Mayonnaise: "Bring [out the Hellman's] and bring out the best."

Volkswagen: "While in Europe, pick [up an ugly European]."

or I could write a softer piece on the nexus of lexical ambiguity and sociolinguistics, using,

Buick: "Today the discriminating family finds it absolutely necessary to own two or more motor cars."

Sincerely,
Mark Etting

Salmons' Culinary Linguistics Team Takes Olympic Gold With MILC Menu

(Salt Lake City, February 15, 2002. Rpt. by DiaCritic Cora Lee, who knew no better). Thought up in a lightning bolt of gastronomic inspiration, the following MILC menu was prepared in world record time of just under 9.7 seconds by Joe Salmons' Culinary Linguistics team, who narrowly edged out the Agricultural Linguists for the gold medal in the interdisciplinary event. It is believed that the Anesthesiological Linguists will receive the bronze, but, as they seem to be in a perpetual fog, they have yet to finish the race. The results of the Salmons team's efforts will be served at the annual MILC event on Saturday evening, February 16th. It remains to be seen how long those in attendance will take to finish eating the spread.

Appetizers: interface sandwiches; mini bandwidths

Main course: velar roast; fricative chicken; advanced tongue root; agglutinating homonymy; liquid lexemes; roots; cranberry-

morphemes

Desserts: baked isogloss; plosive pie; final lengthening

Drinks: floating quantifier punch; feature percolation (Columbian decaf)

Mineral Water with a Kick, or, How to Order Trouble at any Wisconsin Party

Dr. Canny Bustead, Th.C.

Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Mold-Cultures

Cunning linguists will surely be tongue-tied by the quasi-monophthongization, haphazard haplogy, and asinine assimilation developing among people requesting mineral water in the upper Midwestern “melting pot.” Dissimilating diphthongs and “high” vowels have already resulted in the impending imprisonment of nearly all of the staff of the Mascara Institoot for Germinal Stoodles, although most are too busy giggling at the phonetic transcriptions and nibbling on stroopwaffels to be overly concerned. The pejoration of mineral water made national headlines when it became known that Former President Bill Clinton became nasal when ordering this healthy liquid refreshment, although he has yet to be observed engaging in any fricative activity.

This paper will report the observations gleaned upon the release of several thirsty Midwesterners in various inner-city locales around the nation, as soon as the investigator is released on his own cognizance.

The Linguistic Consequences of Being a (Serious) Lame: How the Mind Creates Language (Really)

Mark bin Louden

Max Qaeda Institute

BACKGROUND

the “myth” of verbal deprivation

(1) “The notion of verbal deprivation is a part of the modern mythology of educational psychology, typical of the unfounded

notions which tend to expand rapidly in our educational system.”
 (Labov, 1972, “The Logic of Nonstandard English,” *Language in the Inner City*, pp. 201–202)

the degenerate nature of much verbal production

(2) “A consideration of the character of the grammar that is acquired, the degenerate quality and narrowly limited extent of the available data, the striking uniformity of the resulting grammars, and their independence of intelligence, motivation, and emotional state, over wide ranges of variation, leave little hope that much of the structure of the language can be learned.” (Chomsky, 1965, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, p. 58)

the role of parents/caregivers in linguistic development

(3) “[L]et us do away with the folklore that parents teach their children language.” (Pinker, 1994, *The Language Instinct*, p. 39); but cf. also Quayle (un-p.c.): “Republicans understand the importance of bondage between a mother and child.”

IMPORTANT POINTS RAISED IN THIS TALK

- there is evidence for the reality of **verbal deprivation**;
- this deprivation is due to **degenerate** and **narrowly limited** data produced by speakers under natural circumstances;
- the independence of these data from **general intelligence** must be questioned;
- in the particular situation of parent-child verbal interaction, it appears true that there is **little hope that much of the structure of the language can be learned** (monkey see, monkey do-principle);
- the degeneracy of the parental input may be reinforced by the **peer group**.

DEFINITION

who is a “lame”?

(4) “To be *lame* means to be outside of the central group and its culture; it is a negative characterization and does not imply any single set of social characteristics. Some lames can’t or won’t fight—they are cowards or weaklings; some are “good” in that they do not steal, smoke, shoot up dope, or make out; but others may be tough or just as “bad” as peer-group members; they may be merely distant, going their own way with their own concerns. What all lames have in common is that they lack the knowledge which is necessary to run

any kind of game in the vernacular culture.” (Labov, 1972, “The Linguistic Consequences of Being Lame,” *Language in the Inner City*, pp. 258–259)

DEGENERATE DATA: PARENT-CHILD TRANSFER (“GARBAGE IN–GARBAGE OUT”)

phonological degeneracy

(5) “For seven and a half years I’ve worked alongside President Reagan. We’ve had triumphs. Made some mistakes. We’ve had some sex ... uh ... setbacks.” George H. W. Bush (father; also lame)

(6) “This is Preservation Month. I appreciate preservation. It’s what you do when you run for president. You gotta preserve.” George W. Bush (son; somewhat lamer), speaking during “Perseverance Month” at Fairgrounds Elem. School in Nashua, NH

(7) “My pan plays down an unprecedented amount of our national debt.” George W. Bush, in his budget address to Congress, Feb. 27, 2001

negation = really hard to keep straight

(8) “I hope I stand for anti-bigotry, anti-Semitism, anti-racism. This is what drives me.” George H. W. Bush (father)

(9) “Can’t living with the bill means it won’t become law.” George W. Bush (son), referring to the McCain-Kennedy patients’ bill of rights, June 13, 2001

(10) “I believe we are on an irreversible trend toward more freedom and democracy. But that could change.” Dan Quayle (peer; a good deal lamer yet, believe it or not)

(11) “What a waste it is to lose one’s mind—or not to have a mind. How true that is.” Dan Quayle addressing the United Negro College Fund

but cf. also

(12) “I’ve always thought that underpopulated countries in Africa are vastly underpolluted.” Lawrence Summers, former chief economist of the World Bank, explaining why we should export toxic wastes to Third World countries; now president of Harvard University (whoa, hard to determine lame status here)

DEGENERATE DATA: CHILD(REN) ONLY (JUST GARBAGE OUT)

overall verbal/cognitive parsimony

(13) “It is white.” George W. Bush, asked by a child in Britain what the White House was like, July 19, 2001

(14) “Verbosity leads to unclear, inarticulate things.” Dan Quayle

a new kind of garden-path (Wonderland?) phenomena

(15) “I am here to make an announcement that this Thursday, ticket counters and airplanes will fly out of Ronald Reagan Airport.” George W. Bush, Oct. 3, 2001

(16) “Families is where our nation finds hope, where wings take dream.” G. W. Bush

(17) “I know how hard it is for you to put food on your family.” George W. Bush

impaired pronoun-antecedent relations (cf. also 21)

(18) “When I was coming up, it was a dangerous world, and you knew exactly who they were. It was us versus them, and it was clear who them was. Today we are not so sure who the they are, but we know they’re there.” George W. Bush, Jan. 2000

(19) “Actually, I—this may sound a little West Texas to you, but I like it. When I’m talking about—when I’m talking about myself, and when he’s talking about myself, all of us are talking about me.” George W. Bush

number(s) disagreement

(20) “Rarely is the questioned asked: Is our children learning?” George W. Bush; (but note creative subject-verb-predicate adjective agreement pattern)

(21) “I am mindful of the difference between the executive branch and the legislative branch. I assured all four of these leaders that I know the difference, and that difference is they pass the laws and I execute them.” G. W. Bush, Dec. 20, 2000

impaired metalinguistic awareness

(22) “I’ve coined new words, like, misunderstanding and Hispanically.” George W. Bush, speaking at the Radio and Television Correspondents’ dinner, March 29, 2001

(23) “Neither in French nor in English nor in Mexican.” George W. Bush, declining to take reporters’ questions during a photo op with Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, April 21, 2001

(24) “I was recently on a tour of Latin America, and the only regret I have was that I didn’t study Latin harder in school so I could converse with those people.” Dan Quayle

(25) “One word sums up probably the responsibility of any vice president, and that one word is ‘to be prepared’.” Dan Quayle, Dec. 6, 1989.

(26) “I stand by all the misstatements that I’ve made.” Dan Quayle to Sam Donaldson, Aug. 17, 1989

(27) “Public speaking is very easy.” Dan Quayle to reporters in Oct. 1988

limited ability to handle embeddings (structural hallmark of human language)

(28) “The California crunch really is the result of not enough power-generating plants and then not enough power to power the power of generating plants.” George W. Bush, Jan. 2001

(29) “One of my dreams is to make sure that schools understand and have the resources available for schools within schools.” George W. Bush, at Justina Elementary School in Jacksonville, FL, Sept. 9, 2001

relationship between language and world-view

(30) “Somewhere between real and real real.” Dan Quayle, pinpointing their location to reporters aboard the Quayle campaign plane, reported in Wall Street Journal, Oct. 21, 1988

(31) “The US has a vital interest in that area of the country.” Dan Quayle, referring to Latin America.

(32) “It’s wonderful to be here in the great state of Chicago.” Dan Quayle, April 30, 1991

(33) “We spent a lot of time talking about Africa, as we should. Africa is a nation that suffers from incredible disease.” George W. Bush, at a news conference in Europe, June 14, 2001

Whorf weighs in ...

(34) “All this is typical of the way the lower personal mind, caught in a vaster world inscrutable to its methods, uses its strange gift of language to weave the web of Maya or illusion, to make a provisional analysis of reality and then regard it as final.” (Whorf, 1956 [1942], “Language, Mind, Reality,” *Language, Thought, and Reality*, p. 263)

evidence of linguistic creativity? (cf. also 22)

(35) “They underestimated me.” George W. Bush, Nov. 2000

Bloomfield weighs in ...

(36) “There is some intensity also in the connotation of *nonsense-forms*. Some of these, though conventional, have no denotation at all, as *tra-la-la*, *hey-diddle-diddle*, *tarara-boom-de-ay*; others have an explicitly vague denotation, as *fol-de-rol*, *gadget*, *conniption fits*. Any speaker is free to invent nonsense-forms; in fact, any form he invents is a nonsense-form, unless he succeeds in the almost hopeless task of getting his fellow-speakers to accept it as a signal for some meaning.” (Bloomfield, 1933, “Meaning,” *Language*, p. 157)

from description to explanation ...

(37) “I think if you know what you believe, it makes it a lot easier to answer questions. I can’t answer your question.” George W. Bush, in response to a question about whether he wished he could take back any of his answers in the first debate, Reynoldsburg, OH, Oct. 4, 2000

Bromberger weighs in ...

(38) “Where does that leave Rational Ignoramus? *In the very non-plussing position of knowing that he does not know the answer to some why-questions, yet not knowing what he must find out in order to know whether there is anything to know at all!*” (Bromberger, 1992, “What We Don’t Know When We Don’t Know Why,” *On What We Know We Don’t Know*, p. 168)

Prepare to submit ...

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