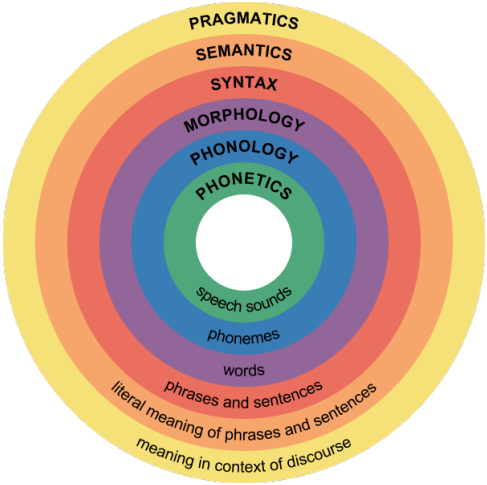
Intro to General Linguistics

Fachschaft General & Computational Linguistics
University of Tübingen

WS 2025/26
Pre-course

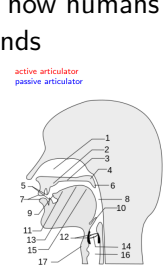
Subdisciplines

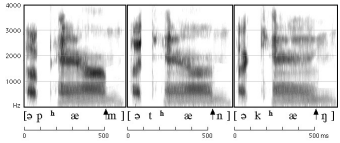


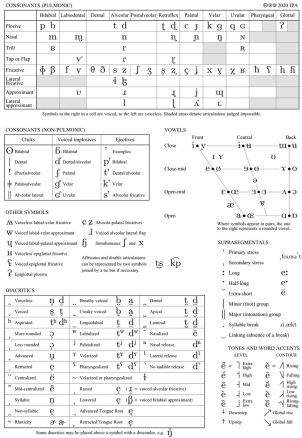
Phonetics

the study of how humans produce and perceive sounds

1. Nasal Cavity
2. Alveolum
3. Hard Palate (Palatum)
4. Soft Palate (Velum)
5. Teeth (Dentes)
6. Uvula
7. Lips (Labia)
8. Pharynx
9. Tip of the Tongue
10. Epiglottis
11. Blade of Tongue
12. Vocal Cords
13. Tongue Blade
14. Glottis
15. Tongue Root
16. Wind Pipe (Trachea)







Phonology

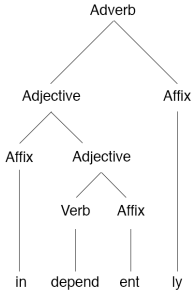
the study of how languages systematically organise their sounds / sound systems of languages,
the patterns of how sounds work together within a system

		Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal		m[a]		n[a]			ŋ	
Plosive	fortis	p		t	tʃ		k	
	lenis	b		d	dʒ		g	
Fricative	fortis	f	θ[b]	s	ʃ		(x)[c]	h[d]
	lenis	v	ð[b]	z	ʒ			
Approximant				ɹ[a]	ɾ[e]	j[f]	w[g]	

e.g. the consonants found in most dialects of English

Morphology

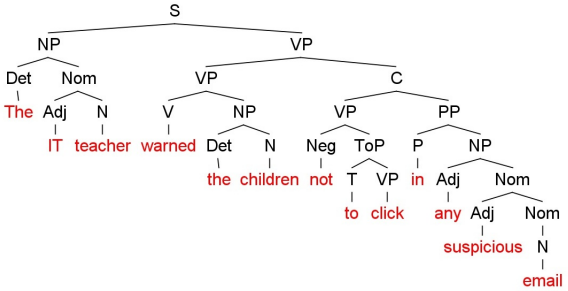
the study of words, how they are formed, and how they relate to one another within a language



e.g. morphology tree of a word

Syntax

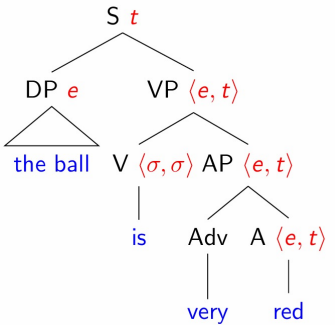
the study of how words combine to form larger units such as phrases and sentences



e.g. syntax tree of a sentence

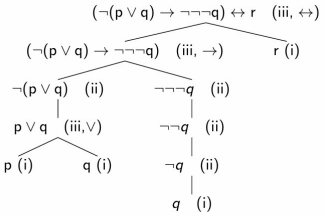
Semantics

the study of the meaning of natural language



'I shot an elephant in my pyjamas.'

Premise 1	**Either** Joe is crazy **or** Joe is lying.
Premise 2	**It is not the case that** Joe is crazy.
Conclusion	**Therefore**, Joe is lying.
Premise 1	**Either** x **or** y.
Premise 2	**It is not the case that** x.
Conclusion	**Therefore**, y.



logic!

Pragmatics

the study of the meaning of natural language in use

The Maxim of Quality
Do not say what you believe to be false
Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence

The Maxim of Relation
Be relevant

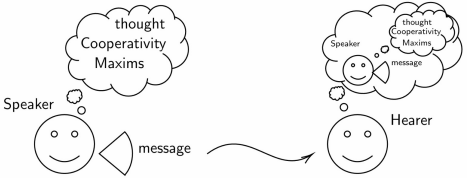
The Maxim of Quantity
Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)
Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

The Maxim of Manner
Avoid obscurity of expression
Avoid ambiguity
Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
Be orderly

'This traffic jam is really making my day!'

- *Jane no longer writes fiction.*
  - Presupposition: Jane once wrote fiction.
- *Have you stopped eating meat?*
  - Presupposition: you had once eaten meat.
- *Have you talked to Hans?*
  - Presupposition: Hans exists.

Grice's inferential model



Other fields

- Psycholinguistics
- Sociolinguistics
- Dialectometry
- Lexicography
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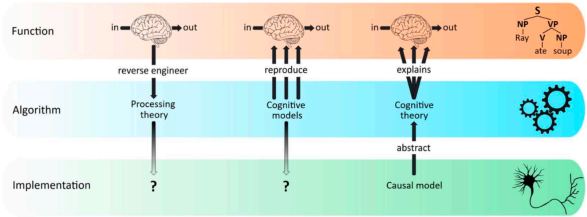

Non-standard dialect (associated with lower classes)	Standard dialect (associated with higher classes)
It looks like it ain't gonna rain today.	It looks as if it isn't going to rain today.[20]
You give it to me yesterday.	You gave it to me yesterday.[21]
Y'gotta do it the right way.	You have to do it the right way.[22]