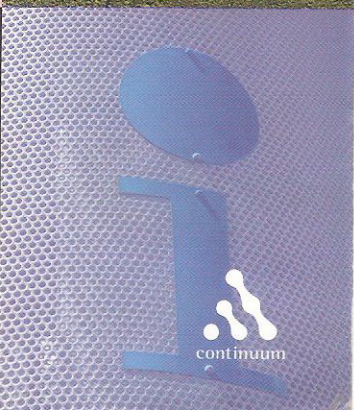
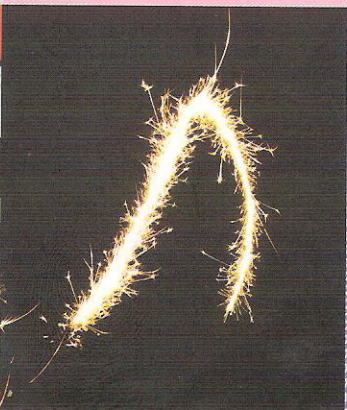
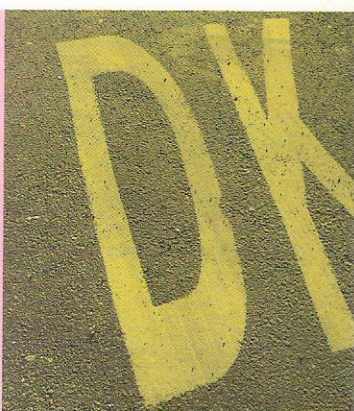
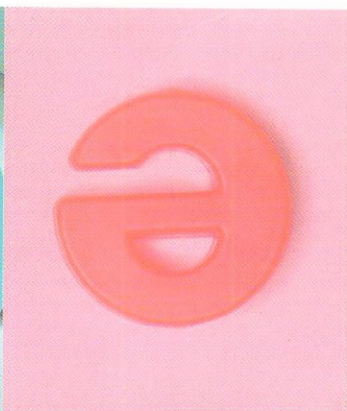
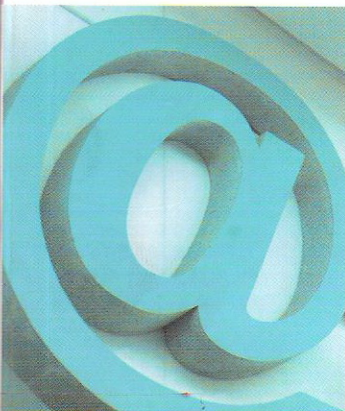


Understanding Language

Elizabeth Grace Winkler



Contents

	Preface	xi
	List of Figures	xiii
	Acknowledgements	xv
1	What every native speaker of a language secretly understands	1
	1.1 The sound system	2
	1.2 The lexicon: the human dictionary	4
	1.3 Morphology	7
	1.4 Grammar	8
	1.5 How the world's languages differ	9
	1.6 The boundaries of a language: language versus dialect	12
	1.6.1 How does a standard develop or get chosen?	14
	1.6.2 Standard and written language versus normal or non-standard speech	17
	1.7 A linguistic approach to language diversity	19
2	Human Language versus Animal Communication Systems	22
	2.1 Naturally occurring animal communication systems	24
	2.1.1 Black Austrian honeybee communication	24
	2.1.2 Bird calls and songs	26
	2.1.3 Dolphins and whales	28
	2.1.4 More complex animal communication systems	29
	2.1.5 Primate communication	29
	2.2 Artificially taught animal communication systems	30
	2.2.1 Chimpanzees and great apes	30
	2.2.2 African grey parrots	32
3	Language Acquisition	36
	3.1 Early theories of first language acquisition	37
	3.1.1 Challenges to behaviourism and structuralism	38
	3.1.2 The innateness hypothesis	38
	3.1.3 Support for the innateness hypothesis	39
	3.1.4 Problems with reinforcement and imitation	40
	3.1.5 What children's 'errors' tell us	41
	3.1.6 Studies supporting the innateness hypothesis	43
	3.1.7 Studies on the living brain	44
	3.1.8 Critical age hypothesis for first language acquisition	45
	3.2 Stages of language acquisition	46
	3.2.1 Learning the sound system	46
	3.2.2 Sound and meaning	48
	3.2.3 From single words to grammar	48

3.3	Second language acquisition	49
3.3.1	SLA and behaviourism	50
3.3.2	First language interference in SLA	52
3.3.3	SLA and feedback or correction	53
3.3.4	Individual differences	55
3.3.5	Critical age hypothesis for second language acquisition	57
3.3.6	Recent developments in second language acquisition	58
4	Phonetics	62
4.1	How is speech produced?	63
4.2	The consonants	64
4.2.1	Voicing	65
4.2.2	Place of articulation	65
4.2.3	Manner of articulation	66
4.3	The International Phonetic Alphabet	72
4.4	The vowels	73
4.4.1	Classification of vowels	73
4.4.2	The vowel chart	73
4.4.3	Diphthongs	74
4.4.4	Vowel length	75
4.5	Advantages of a phonetic system	76
4.6	Other features of sound: suprasegmentals	78
5	Morphology: The Makeup of Words in a Language	82
5.1	Categorizing the words of a language	84
5.2	Morphemes	85
5.2.1	Inflectional and derivational morphemes	86
5.3	Morphology and phonetics	89
5.3.1	A final word about morpheme structure	91
5.4	Our ever-expanding and changing vocabulary	91
5.4.1	Word formation processes	92
5.4.2	Linguistic borrowing	98
5.5	The dictionary	100
5.5.1	New dictionary words	101
6	Grammar	105
6.1	Traditional grammar	108
6.2	Language word orders	110
6.3	Phrase structure grammars	111
6.3.1	Advantages of a phrase structure grammar	113
6.3.2	Determining phrase structure grammar rules	113
6.3.3	Other aspects of syntax	128
7	Semantics: Language and Meaning	132
7.1	How is meaning developed?	133

7.2	How is meaning encoded?	134
7.3	Word meaning: sense and reference	135
7.3.1	Proper nouns: the problem of names	136
7.4	What native speakers understand about meaning	138
7.4.1	Ambiguity	138
7.4.2	Synonymy	139
7.4.3	Antonymy	140
7.4.4	Levels of specificity	140
7.4.5	Meaning inclusion	141
7.4.6	Compositional versus non-compositional utterances	142
7.4.7	Phrasal verbs	146
7.4.8	Figures of speech	147
7.4.9	Irony and sarcasm	148
8	Pragmatics: Language in Use	152
8.1	Speech acts	153
8.1.1	Direct versus indirect speech acts	155
8.2	Speaking the unspeakable: indirection as a linguistic strategy	156
8.2.1	Euphemisms	156
8.2.2	Euphemisms for pregnancy	157
8.2.3	Proverbs as indirect speech	158
8.3	Language and advertising	160
8.3.1	Weasel words	161
8.3.2	Open-ended comparisons	162
8.3.3	Ambiguous language and modal auxiliaries	163
8.3.4	Politics as advertising	164
8.4	Meaning and humour	167
8.4.1	Humour and the sound system of a language	167
8.4.2	Humour and morphology	167
8.4.3	Humour and semantics	168
8.4.4	Humour and syntax	169
9	The History of English	172
9.1	Periods of English	174
9.1.1	Effects of the Norman invasion	176
9.1.2	The return of English	177
9.1.3	The influence of Geoffrey Chaucer	178
9.1.4	The printing press	179
9.1.5	The influence of James I	181
9.2	Lexical change	182
9.2.1	English expands through military and economic expansion	184
9.3	Sound change	186
9.3.1	The Great Vowel Shift	187
9.3.2	Evidence for sound change from Old English	188

X Understanding Language

9.4	Changes in grammar	189
9.5	The spelling 'system' of English	190
9.5.1	Fixing the spelling problem	194

10	Language Variation and Change	197
10.1	Why languages change	197
10.1.1	Lexical and semantic change	198
10.1.2	Changes in the sound system	199
10.1.3	Changes to grammar and morphology	201
10.2	Language variation	202
10.2.1	Causes of dialectal diversity	203
10.2.2	Social attitudes about language varieties	206
10.2.3	Measuring attitudes about language varieties	207
10.3	Dialects of language contact	208
10.3.1	Chicano English and codeswitching	208
10.3.2	Codeswitching	211
10.3.3	Pidgins and creoles	215
10.4	Varieties of English	225
10.4.1	Appalachian English	225
10.4.2	African American Vernacular English	229
10.4.3	Cockney English	232
10.5	Language and gender	234
10.5.1	Use of titles	235
10.5.2	Asymmetries in language	236
10.5.3	Generic 'he' for unspecified reference	237
10.5.4	Effects of gender on language	238
10.5.5	Common beliefs about gendered language	239
10.5.6	Language and the workplace	242
10.5.7	Early socialization by gender	243
10.6	The future of English and its dialects	244
	References	249
	Index	253