

The Study of Language

This best-selling textbook provides an engaging and user-friendly introduction to the study of language. Assuming no prior knowledge of the subject, Yule presents information in bite-sized sections, clearly explaining the major concepts in linguistics – from how children learn language to why men and women speak differently, through all the key elements of language. This Fifth Edition has been revised and updated with new figures and tables, additional topics, and numerous new examples using languages from across the world. To increase student engagement, and to foster problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, the book includes thirty new tasks. An expanded and revised online study guide provides students with further resources, including answers and tutorials for all tasks, while encouraging lively and proactive learning. This is *the* most fundamental and easy-to-use introduction to the study of language.

George Yule has taught Linguistics at the universities of Edinburgh, Hawai‘i, Louisiana State and Minnesota.

“A genuinely introductory linguistics text, well suited for undergraduates who have little prior experience thinking descriptively about language. Yule’s crisp and thought-provoking presentation of key issues works well for a wide range of students.”

Elise Morse-Gagne, Tougaloo College

“*The Study of Language* is one of the most accessible and entertaining introductions to linguistics available. Newly updated with a wealth of material for practice and discussion, it will continue to inspire new generations of students.”

Stephen Matthews, University of Hong Kong

“Its strength is in providing a general survey of mainstream linguistics in palatable, easily manageable and logically organized chunks. The chapter divisions allow for considerable flexibility, which has proved particularly important after recently restructuring our courses and reorganizing the order in which to cover the topics.”

Nigel Musk, University of Linköping

“Perfect for the beginners’ level introductory linguistics course, both in style and content.”

Hugh Buckingham, Professor of Linguistics, Louisiana State University

“Very clear and easy to read for beginners; user-friendly and non-threatening. . . ; chapters are in absorbable bite-size chunks.”

Jean Aitchison, Professor of Language and Communication, University of Oxford

“An impressive breadth of coverage . . . clear presentation, lucid style and accessibility . . . a solid foundation for further study in linguistics as well as being a pleasure to read in its own right.”

Alan Smith, Web Journal of Modern Language Linguistics

“Comprehensive, concise and compelling, this updated and highly accessible textbook is the obvious choice for the beginner language student.”

Torill Hestetræet, University of Bergen

“This textbook is an excellent overview of the central topics in linguistics and how linguists study language.”

Daniel W. Hieber, Rosetta Stone, eLanguage.net

“. . . provides a clear and concise introduction to linguistics suitable for beginners.”

Dr. Jeffrey Gil, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia

The Study of Language

FIFTH EDITION

George Yule

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-04419-7 - The Study of Language: Fifth Edition
George Yule
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107658172

First and second editions © Cambridge University Press 1985, 1996

Third, fourth and fifth editions © George Yule 2006, 2010, 2014

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1985

Second edition 1996

Third edition 2006

Fourth edition 2010

Fifth edition 2014

Reprinted 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by Bell and Bain Ltd

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Yule, George, 1947–

The study of language / George Yule. – 5th ed.

pages cm

Previous ed.: 2010.

ISBN 978-1-107-04419-7 (Hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-65817-2 (Paperback)

1. Language and languages. 2. Linguistics. I. Title.

P107.Y85 2014

400–dc23 2013028557

ISBN 978-1-107-04419-7 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-65817-2 Paperback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/yule5

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Every effort has been made to secure necessary permissions to reproduce copyright material in this work, though in some cases it has proved impossible to trace copyright holders. If any omissions are brought to our notice, we will be happy to include appropriate acknowledgements on reprinting, or in any subsequent edition.

Contents

Preface

xi

1 The origins of language

The divine source	2
The natural sound source	2
The “bow-wow” theory	3
The “pooh-pooh” theory	3
The social interaction source	3
The physical adaptation source	4
Teeth and lips	4
Mouth and tongue	5
Larynx and pharynx	5
The tool-making source	5
The human brain	6
The genetic source	6
Study questions	8
Tasks	8
Discussion topics/projects	9
Further reading	9

2 Animals and human language

Communication	12
Properties of human language	12
Displacement	13
Arbitrariness	13
Productivity	14
Cultural transmission	15
Duality	16
Talking to animals	16
Chimpanzees and language	17
Washoe	17
Sarah	18
Lana	19
The controversy	19
Kanzi	20
Using language	20
Study questions	22
Tasks	22
Discussion topics/projects	23
Further reading	24

3 The sounds of language

Phonetics	27
Voiced and voiceless sounds	27
Place of articulation	27
Consonants	28
Familiar symbols	28
Unfamiliar symbols	29
Consonants: manner of articulation	30
Stops	30
Fricatives	30
Affricates	30
Nasals	31
Liquids	31
Glides	31
A consonant chart	31
Glottal stops and flaps	31
Vowels	32
Diphthongs	33
Subtle individual variation	34
Study questions	35
Tasks	35
Discussion topics/projects	37
Further reading	37

4 The sound patterns of language

Phonology	40
Phonemes	40
Natural classes	41
Phones and allophones	41
Minimal pairs and sets	42
Phonotactics	43
Syllables	43
Consonant clusters	44
Coarticulation effects	44
Assimilation	45
Nasalization	45
Elision	46
Normal speech	46

Study questions	47	Study questions	73
Tasks	47	Tasks	73
Discussion topics/projects	48	Discussion topics/projects	76
Bob Belviso translated	49	Further reading	78
Further reading	49		

5 Word formation

Neologisms	51
Etymology	51
Borrowing	52
Loan-translation	52
Compounding	53
Blending	53
Clipping	54
Hypocorisms	54
Backformation	54
Conversion	55
Coinage	56
Acronyms	56
Derivation	57
Prefixes and suffixes	57
Infixes	57
Multiple processes	58
Study questions	59
Tasks	60
Discussion topics/projects	62
Further reading	63

6 Morphology

Morphology	66
Morphemes	66
Free and bound morphemes	66
Lexical and functional morphemes	67
Derivational morphemes	67
Inflectional morphemes	68
Morphological description	68
Problems in morphological description	69
Morphs and allomorphs	69
Other languages	70
Kanuri	70
Ganda	71
Ilocano	71
Tagalog	71

7 Grammar

English grammar	80
Traditional grammar	80
The parts of speech	80
Agreement	81
Grammatical gender	82
Traditional analysis	83
The prescriptive approach	83
Captain Kirk's infinitive	84
The descriptive approach	84
Structural analysis	85
Constituent analysis	85
Labeled and bracketed sentences	86
Hierarchical organization	87
A Gaelic sentence	87
Why study grammar?	88
Study questions	89
Tasks	89
Discussion topics/projects	92
Further reading	93

8 Syntax

Syntactic rules	95
A generative grammar	95
Deep and surface structure	96
Structural ambiguity	96
Tree diagrams	97
Tree diagram of an English sentence	97
Symbols used in syntactic analysis	98
Phrase structure rules	99
Lexical rules	100
Movement rules	101
Study questions	103
Tasks	104
Discussion topics/projects	106
Further reading	108

9 Semantics

Meaning	110
Semantic features	110
Words as containers of meaning	111
Semantic roles	112
Agent and theme	112
Instrument and experiencer	112
Location, source and goal	113
Lexical relations	113
Synonymy	113
Antonymy	114
Hyponymy	115
Prototypes	116
Homophones and homonyms	116
Polysemy	117
Word play	117
Metonymy	118
Collocation	118
Study questions	120
Tasks	120
Discussion topics/projects	123
Further reading	123

10 Pragmatics

Pragmatics	126
Context	127
Deixis	128
Reference	128
Inference	129
Anaphora	129
Presupposition	130
Speech acts	131
Direct and indirect speech acts	131
Politeness	132
Negative and positive face	133
Study questions	134
Tasks	134
Discussion topics/projects	136
Further reading	138

11 Discourse analysis

Discourse	140
Interpreting discourse	140
Cohesion	141
Coherence	142
Speech events	142
Conversation analysis	143
Turn-taking	143
The co-operative principle	144
Hedges	145
Implicatures	146
Background knowledge	146
Schemas and scripts	147
Study questions	149
Tasks	149
Discussion topics/projects	151
Further reading	152

12 Language and the brain

Neurolinguistics	155
Language areas in the brain	155
Broca's area	156
Wernicke's area	156
The motor cortex and the arcuate fasciculus	157
The localization view	157
Tongue tips and slips	158
The tip of the tongue phenomenon	158
Slips of the tongue	158
Slips of the brain	159
Slips of the ear	159
Aphasia	160
Broca's aphasia	160
Wernicke's aphasia	160
Conduction aphasia	161
Dichotic listening	161
Left brain, right brain	162
The critical period	163
Genie	163
Study questions	165
Tasks	165
Discussion topics/projects	166
Further reading	167

13 First language acquisition

Acquisition	170
Input	170
Caregiver speech	171
The acquisition schedule	171
Cooing	172
Babbling	172
The one-word stage	173
The two-word stage	173
Telegraphic speech	174
The acquisition process	174
Learning through imitation?	175
Learning through correction?	175
Developing morphology	176
Developing syntax	177
Forming questions	177
Forming negatives	178
Developing semantics	178
Later developments	179
Study questions	181
Tasks	181
Discussion topics/projects	183
Further reading	184

14 Second language acquisition/learning

Second language learning	187
Acquisition and learning	187
Acquisition barriers	187
The age factor	188
Affective factors	188
Focus on teaching method	189
The grammar–translation method	189
The audiolingual method	190
Communicative approaches	190
Focus on the learner	190
Transfer	191
Interlanguage	191
Motivation	192
Input and output	192
Task-based learning	193

Communicative competence	194
Applied linguistics	194
Study questions	196
Tasks	196
Discussion topics/projects	198
Further reading	198

15 Gestures and sign languages

Gestures	201
Iconics	201
Deictics	201
Beats	202
Types of sign languages	202
Oralism	203
Signed English	203
Origins of ASL	204
The structure of signs	204
Shape and orientation	205
Location	205
Movement	205
Primes	205
Facial expressions and finger-spelling	206
The meaning of signs	206
Representing signs	207
ASL as a natural language	208
Study questions	209
Tasks	209
Discussion topics/projects	210
Further reading	210

16 Written language

Writing	213
Pictograms	213
Ideograms	213
Logograms	214
Phonographic writing	215
The rebus principle	216
Syllabic writing	216
Alphabetic writing	217
Written English	218
English orthography	219
Study questions	221
Tasks	221
Discussion topics/projects	222
Further reading	224

17 Language history and change

Family trees	227
Indo-European	227
Cognates	228
Comparative reconstruction	228
General principles	229
Sound reconstruction	229
Word reconstruction	230
The history of English	230
Old English	231
Middle English	231
Sound changes	232
Metathesis	233
Epenthesis	233
Prothesis	234
Syntactic changes	234
Loss of inflections	234
Semantic changes	235
Broadening of meaning	235
Narrowing of meaning	235
Diachronic and synchronic variation	236
Study questions	237
Tasks	237
Discussion topics/projects	239
Further reading	240

18 Regional variation in language

The standard language	243
Accent and dialect	243
Variation in grammar	244
Dialectology	244
Regional dialects	244
Isoglosses and dialect boundaries	245
The dialect continuum	246
Bilingualism	247
Diglossia	248
Language planning	249
Pidgins	250
Creoles	251
The post-creole continuum	251
Study questions	252
Tasks	252

19 Social variation in language

Discussion topics/projects	254
Further reading	254
Sociolinguistics	257
Social dialects	257
Education and occupation	257
Social markers	259
Speech style and style-shifting	259
Prestige	260
Speech accommodation	261
Convergence	261
Divergence	261
Register	261
Jargon	262
Slang	262
Taboo terms	263
African American English	263
Vernacular language	263
The sounds of a vernacular	264
The grammar of a vernacular	264
Study questions	266
Tasks	266
Discussion topics/projects	268
Further reading	268

20 Language and culture

Culture	271
Categories	271
Kinship terms	272
Time concepts	272
Linguistic relativity	273
The Sapir–Whorf hypothesis	273
Against the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis	274
Snow	274
Non-lexicalized categories	275
Cognitive categories	275
Classifiers	276
Social categories	276
Address terms	277
Gender	278
Gendered words	278

Gendered structures	279	Discussion topics/projects	284
Gendered speech	279	Further reading	284
Same-gender talk	280		
Gendered interaction	280	Glossary	286
Study questions	281	References	300
Tasks	281	Index	312

Preface

In this new edition

For all their advice and suggestions for improvements to the fifth edition of this book, I'd like to thank the reviewers, instructors, students and researchers who have commented on earlier versions. I have made a number of revisions in the internal organization of all the chapters, with a clearer division into major topics and subsections. Additional section headings have been included to make the material more accessible and a number of extra examples from everyday language use are offered to make some of the points clearer. There are also more substantial revisions in Chapters 3 (Phonetics), 4 (Phonology), 5 (Word formation) and 8 (Syntax) that should make these units more manageable. I hope these revisions will make the book more informative, easier to read, and overall more user-friendly.

In addition, there are thirty new tasks. The majority of these are data-based and designed to foster problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. New examples from languages as diverse as German, Hawaiian, Hungarian, Lakhota, Proto-Polynesian, Quechua, Spanish and Tamasheq provide an opportunity to explore further aspects of languages other than English. Additional topics explored in the study of the English language include adjective order, adverb position in sentences, American and British differences, compounds, general extenders, the presuppositions of jokes, recasts, stylistics, synecdoche and vague language. An expanded and revised Study Guide providing answers and tutorials for all the tasks can be found on the book's website: www.cambridge.org/yule5.

To the student

In *The Study of Language*, I have tried to present a comprehensive survey of what is known about language and also of the methods used by linguists in arriving at that knowledge. There have been many interesting developments in the study of language over the past two decades, but it is still a fact that any individual speaker of a language has a more comprehensive “unconscious” knowledge of how language works than any linguist has yet been able to describe. Consequently, as you read each of the following chapters, take a critical view of the effectiveness of the descriptions, the analyses, and the generalizations by measuring them against your own intuitions about how your language works. By the end of the book, you should feel that you do know quite a lot

about both the internal structure of language (its form) and the varied uses of language in human life (its function), and also that you are ready to ask more of the kinds of questions that professional linguists ask when they conduct their research.

At the end of each chapter, there is a section where you can test and apply what you have learned. This section contains:

- **Study questions** that you can use to check if you have understood some of the main points and important terms introduced during that chapter
- **Tasks** that extend the topics covered in the book, mostly through data analysis, with examples from English and a wide range of other languages
- **Discussion topics/projects** that offer opportunities to consider some of the more general, sometimes controversial, language-related topics and to develop your own opinions on issues involving language
- **Further reading** suggestions provided to help you find more detailed treatments of all the topics covered in that chapter

The origins of this book can be traced to introductory courses on language taught at the University of Edinburgh, the University of Minnesota and Louisiana State University, and to the suggestions and criticisms of hundreds of students who forced me to present what I had to say in a way they could understand. An early version of the written material was developed for Independent Study students at the University of Minnesota. Later versions have had the benefit of expert advice from a lot of teachers working with diverse groups in different situations. I am particularly indebted to Professor Hugh Buckingham, Louisiana State University, for sharing his expertise and enthusiasm over many years as a colleague and friend.

For feedback and advice in the preparation of recent editions of the book, I would like to thank Jean Aitchison (University of Oxford), Linda Blanton (University of New Orleans), Karen Currie (Federal University of Espíritu Santo), Mary Anna Dimitrakopoulos (Indiana University, South Bend), Thomas Field (University of Maryland, Baltimore), Anthony Fox (University of Leeds), Agustinus Gianto (Pontifical Biblical Institute), Gordon Gibson (University of Paisley), Katinka Hammerich (University of Hawai'i), Raymond Hickey (University of Duisburg–Essen), Daniel Hieber (Rosetta Stone), Richard Hirsch (Linköping University), Fiona Joseph (University of Wolverhampton), Eliza Kitis (Aristotle University), Terrie Mathis (California State University, Northridge), Stephen Matthews (University of Hong Kong), Robyn Najar (Flinders University), Eric Nelson (University of Minnesota), Jens Reinke (Christian Albrecht University Kiel), Philip Riley (University of Nancy 2), Rick Santos (Fresno City College), Joanne Scheibman (Old Dominion University), Royal Skousen (Brigham Young University), Michael Stubbs (University of Trier), Mary Talbot (University of Sunderland) and Sherman Wilcox (University of New Mexico).

For my own introductory course, I remain indebted to Willie and Annie Yule, and, for my continuing enlightenment, to Maryann Overstreet.