

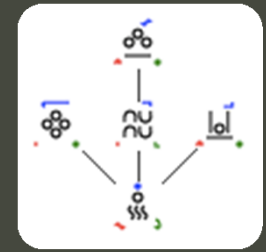
language construction from a perspective of cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics



LCC6 2015
horsham, UK

jan 'regis' havlíš
masaryk university
brno, czech republic





why do we construct languages?



hypothesis

are conlangers linguistically more creative?

people with high degree of language creativity
are among others part of language constructors group

conlangs are products of minds with a superfluous language creativity
: they tend to be innovative rather than conservative in language use



A profile of a human head facing left. The interior of the head, where the brain would be, is filled with a dense, colorful collage of various scenes, figures, and symbols. These include religious figures like Jesus and the Virgin Mary, historical or mythological figures, animals like a horse and a cow, and various landscapes and objects. The collage is framed by a circular border, suggesting a complete or self-contained world of thought and memory. The overall style is reminiscent of a tapestry or a detailed woodcut illustration.

: how does the mind works

::: psychology, religion, language...

: perception, memory, attention, decision and language

: how does mind processes language

:: human culture – a novel socio-biological system

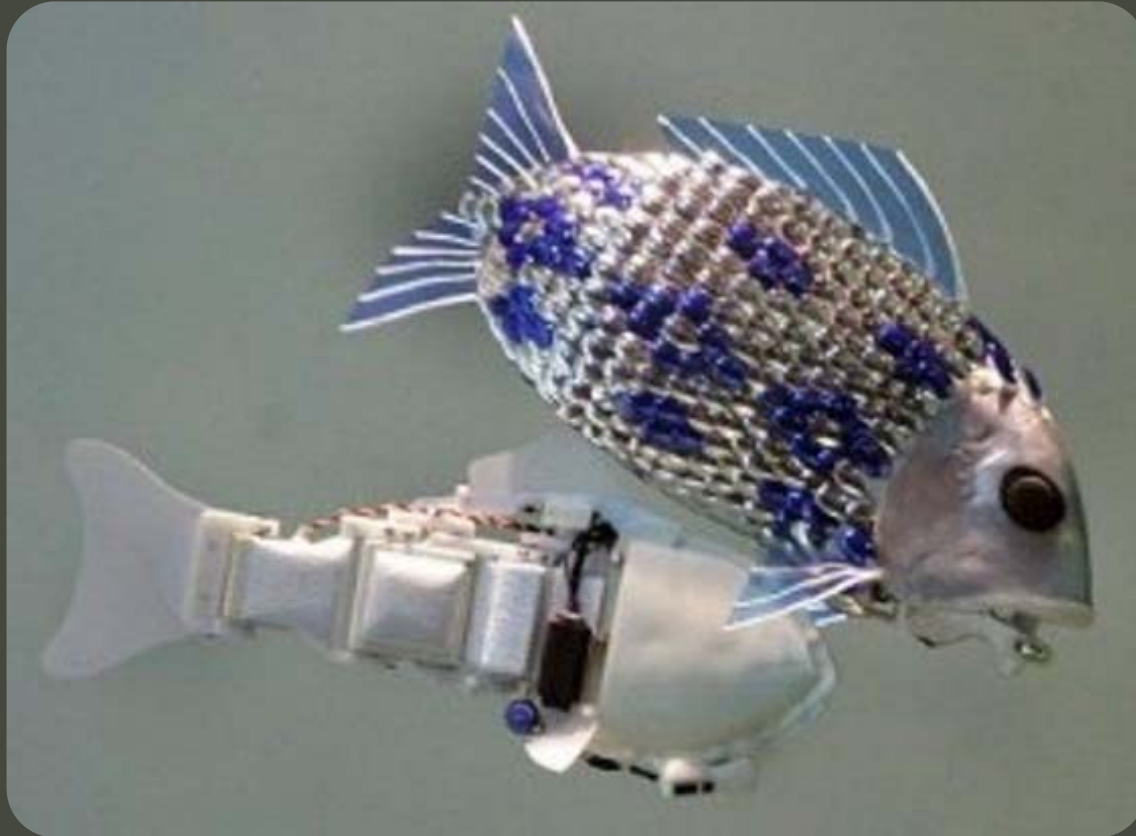




language construction

language with a known origin(ator)

- : quasi-language
- : pseudo-language



categorisation of conlangs

linguistic category	symbol	attribute representation			
realism	R	inconsistent	consistent		
		–	+		
complexity	S	imaginary	naming	sketch	complex
		–	0	+	++
origin	O	a posteriori	a priori	mixed	
		–	+	0	
development	E	synchronic	diachronic	anachronic	
		–	+	0	

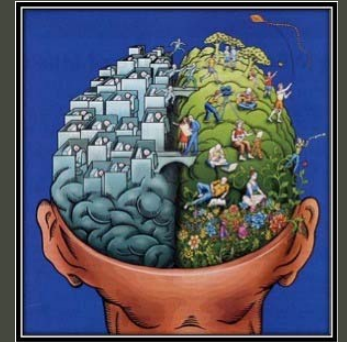
teleological category	attribute representation
philosophical	PHI
logical	LOG
experimental	EXP
auxiliary	AUX
secret	SEC
sacred	REL
authentisation	AUT
artistic	ART
ludic	LUD

language creativity

- : phenomenon which among others stands behind language evolution
- : ability to modify the actual language paradigm

general

- : ability to understand sentences never heard before
- : ability to say sentences never said before



special

- : neology
 - :: proteome
- : idioms / phrases
 - :: party pooper
- : neophasia
 - :: conlangs!



function

: *primarily*

:: (interpreted as) unusual expression

::: created by error

::: created by intention

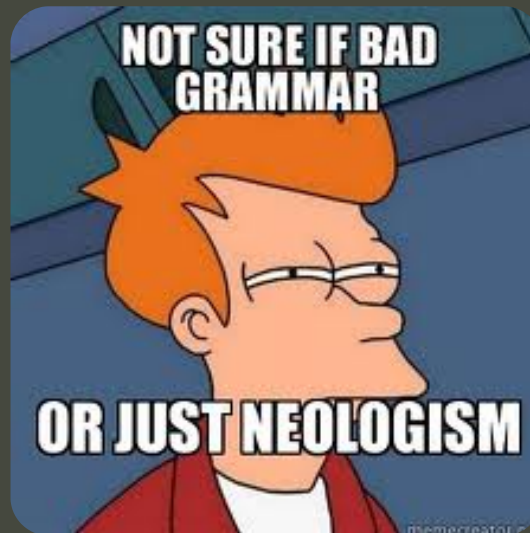
:: in fact to show wit (seeming originality and uniqueness)

::: prestige increasing through hidden communication

: *secondarily*

:: language evolution

::: powered by social prestige of the source of change



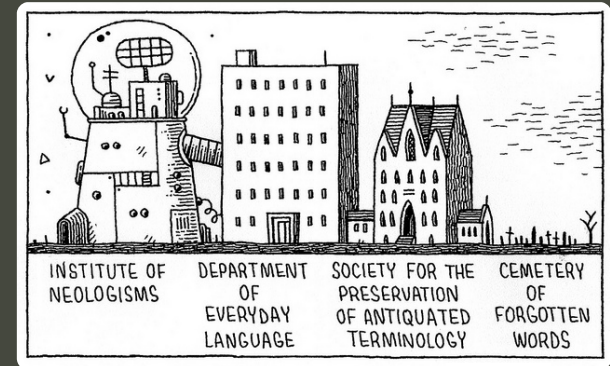
neology

new meaning

- : expression or meaning which is **not settled, customary, widespread**
- : completely new word, new meaning or new form of old word

origin of neology

- : semantic shift words (waldo, spam, google)
- : words *de novo* (ansibl, to grok, nerd)
- : calques (flea market, masterpiece, pineapple)
- : hybrid words (uber-teacher, nogoodnik, supramolecular)
- : anglicised foreign words (ketchup, castle, curry)
- : foreign words with english morphology (iglooming, jungled, encarnalised)
- : foreign words /almost/ unchanged (chav, aspirin, chromosome)
- : portmanteau words (eurocrat, emoticon, cyborg)
- : acronyms (radar, taser, laser)
- : functional shift words (to sofa, to parent, to google, betweenity)
- : sniglet (mustgo / rotten food, lerplexed / misspelling, profanitytype / @#!#)
- : nonce (anti-everything-wrong, all-this-be-happening-to-me)
- : buzzwords
- : shortening (clo / cloths, len / lens, pea / pease)



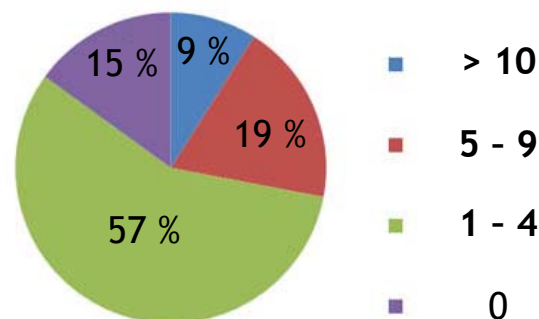
motivation for neology

- : (socially) new reality – also l. game
- : (socially) new way of seeing customary reality

spreading the neology

- : social prestige of the source
 - :: compost solution, submarine solution, lingerie solution
 - :: so called buzzwords – popular culture (be fanatical about)

number of neologisms per day
(south korea)



establishing the neology

- : recency vs. universality; frequency of use
 - :: when is the word accepted? problem with general word lifespan
 - :: expressions disappear from language with the described
 - ::: blunger, saggar, jomuk, putterup-duck (pottery)
 - :: expressions describing the more permanent stay longer
 - ::: lols, geeky, email
 - :: insufficient source prestige
 - ::: duffin (donut-muffin), earworm (hit), locavore (local food eater)

neophasia

new language

: pseudo-language

: quasi-language



: private languages (infant l., schizophrenic l., neophatic polyglottism)

: pidgins / creoles

: constructed languages (*conlangs*)

: planned languages

: codes

: relex



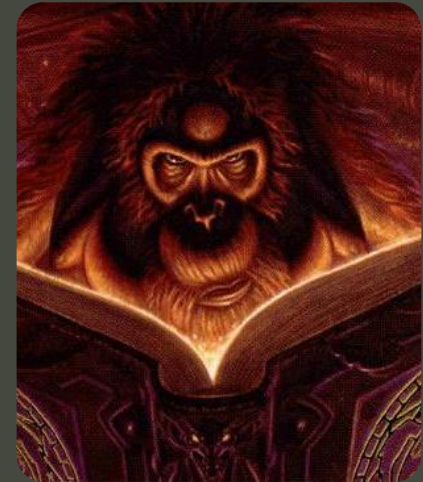
let's do some science

what is the language creativity?

- : already done, we have to choose
- : several levels of language creativity (phonetic to pragmatic)
- : slip of a tongue vs. creativeness

who is a conlanger?

- : relatively easy, we may use FB or LCC
- : several levels of conlanging (naming up to diachronic)
- : actual un-self-aware conlangers



could we go quantitative from qualitative criteria?

research tools

: questionnaire

:: respondent is not a linguist

:: respondent's first language



: statistical evaluation

:: the most complicate matter



: lot of luck 😊



proof that method works



positive control

: we have to be sure, that we see what is there

: recognition of designed language creativity

: ability to conlang on an immediate level

negative control

: we have to be sure, that we do not see what is not there

: recognition of designed linguistic errors (e.g. spelling, semantics)

: recognition of neologism / non-conlang from conlanging (e.g. relex)

data evaluation

linguistic assessment

: to interpret linguistic qualitative and quantitative parameters

prone to design misconceptions

statistic correlation

: to find if the independent and dependent variables do correlate

correlation does not necessarily mean a causality

tools

: correlation statistics

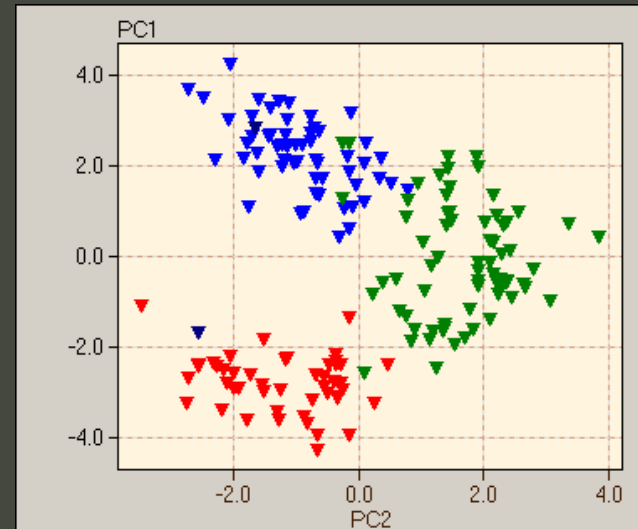
:: to test if it is any relation there

::: scatter plot

::: principal component analysis

: inferential statistics

:: to test if the independent variable is really independent



conclusions

interesting even on a level of design ☺
: methodic development in psycholinguistics



conlanging as a subject to research
: science is fun and even fun may turn science

conlanging may serve deeper understanding of language
: cognitive linguistics is still in its infancy
: reverse linguistics may not be born yet

science of language construction

litiipmeiiem rabemet

Savage Chickens



thanks for your attention