

Grammatical Form

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The problem

Form-meaning mapping

The same meaning may be expressed by quite different forms in different languages. Are these differences only superficial? Are there categories and concepts that are relevant across all languages realized with relatively superficial formal differences? Alternatively, are there a few basic architectural **types** that can help explain all the diversity?

- a. lǐ chya? pa boy?
 you eat full not.yet
- b. avez vous déjà mang-é?
 Have you yet eat-part
- c. *Have you already eaten?*

Function v. Meaning

Greeting

Language	Form	Meaning
English	Hello	Greeting
Teochew	lì chya? pa boy?	Have you eaten yet?

Our focus on literal meaning: What comes from the meanings of the words combined according to the rules of the language

Formal “correctness” not a necessity

Understandable utterances

- a. Me Tarzan, you Jane.
- b. Those guys was trying to kill me.
- c. When he came here?

Comprehensibility not a necessity

Jabberwocky

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

'Twas brillig and the slithey toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogroves,
and the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaw that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious bandersnatch!”

Guessable

Word	Part of speech	Jabberwocky
slithy		'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
toves		Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
gyre, gimble		All mimsy were the borogroves,
wabe		and the mome raths outgrabe.
frumious		

Guessable

Word	Part of speech	Jabberwocky
slithy toves gyre, gimble wabe frumious	Adj	'Twas brillig and the slithey toves Did gyre and gimble in the wabe; All mimsy were the borogroves, and the mome raths outgrabe.

Guessable

Word	Part of speech	Jabberwocky
slithy	Adj	'Twas brillig and the slithey toves
toves	Noun Plural	Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
gyre, gimble		All mimsy were the borogroves,
wabe		and the mome raths outgrabe.
frumious		

Guessable

Word	Part of speech	Jabberwocky
slithy	Adj	'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
toves	Noun Plural	Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
gyre, gimble	Verb	All mimsy were the borogroves,
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gyre, gimble	Verb	All mimsy were the borogroves,
wabe	Noun Singular	and the mome raths outgrabe.
frumious	Adj	

Guessable

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaw that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious bandersnatch!”

Jabberwock
Jubjub
Bandersnatch
frumious

Guessable

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaw that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious bandersnatch!”

Jabberwock biting jaws, catching claws

Jubjub

Bandersnatch

frumious

Guessable

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
 The jaw that bite, the claws that catch!
 Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
 The frumious bandersnatch!”

Jabberwock	biting jaws, catching claws
Jubjub	---- bird
Bandersnatch	
frumious	

Guessable

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
 The jaw that bite, the claws that catch!
 Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
 The frumious bandersnatch!”

Jabberwock	biting jaws, catching claws
Jubjub	---- bird
Bandersnatch	to be shunned (animate?)
frumious	

Guessable

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
 The jaw that bite, the claws that catch!
 Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
 The frumious bandersnatch!”

Jabberwock	biting jaws, catching claws
Jubjub	---- bird
Bandersnatch	to be shunned (animate?)
frumious	some negative attribute

Grammar

- 1 We call the formal patterns that help us recognize formal classes like Subject, Noun, Verb, Adjective **grammar**:
 - 1 Adjectives come before Nouns
 - 2 Verbs come after Subjects
 - 3 Plural Nouns end in /s/
- 2 Meaning can be conveyed without obeying the rules of grammar.
- 3 But the rules of grammar and semantic patterns involving prepositions and sound sequences help us construct meaning representations even when our grasp of word meaning is tenuous or non-existent:

Translation

'Twas [some special time] and the things with [some negative slippery or slimey-like attribute]. did [some motion action] and [some other motion action] in [some kind of place]. The [place filled with tree- or plant-like things] was [covered] with [some physical trait], and [other things] were in some [spatially extended configuration].

Grammar: Formal patterns of the language at multiple levels

Components

SYNTACTIC	<i>The</i> _____, imperatives (verse 2), relative clauses (verse 2), poetic inversion (verse 1)
MORPHOLOGICAL	<i>-ous, -ish, -s</i>
PHONOLOGICAL	<i>brillig, gimble</i> vs. <i>bgillir, gmible</i>
PHONESTHEMIC	<i>sl-</i> → <i>slithey</i> , <i>br-</i> → <i>brillig</i>
POETIC	A-B, A-B rhyming pattern
DISCOURSE	story telling sequence: description of place, warning of peril, hunt, succesful return