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RHETORIC AND GRAMMAR

by

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ABSTRACT

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by

Gary W. Bruff

Grammar can be described from a positioned rather than a universal perspective. My main point in this thesis is absolutely synthetic: the rhetorical calibrations of trope and figure unify the communication of speaker and hearer in the same way that two languages can be understood to vary. In dialogue, subtle expressions are developed (energeia) which impact on the referential and non-referential systems of a language (ergon). However, as these innovations lose their efficacy, they sediment into a grammaticalized system which appears, through translation—i.e., from an "overly-literal" glossing into English, no doubt—to be a creative and artistic product rather than an epiphenomenon of a structural template. My contention is that this appearance, stemming as it does from an aesthetic stance, is at least as real as any formal unity holding among all languages simultaneously. Finally, I gloss Mandarin in English to demonstrate how languages can be compared bi-laterally.
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Introduction

This thesis attempts to deconstruct contemporary linguistics while positing a positive alternative to any theoretical exegesis or explication of language. I am arguing against a unified theoretical perspective, since linguistic objectivism reduces phenomena as much as it expands understanding. I am arguing for a unified methodology which should lead to at least as many theories of language as there are languages to be studied. The method which I am advocating consists of two essential components. The first entails the bi-lateral comparison of languages, so as to analyze the similarities and differences of a language relative to one particular language, English. I will argue that this is in any event inevitable, but that it is best to make it explicit that a comparison is being pursued. The second component advances the use of heuristic concepts which are developed in the course of interpretation. The significance of other languages is discussed not in terms of a formal theory but in terms of informal and synthetic ideas like "habituation," "trope," "grammaticalization," "structure," "function," "Chinese," "English," "language," etc. The goal of this project is to re-figure language as something other than a natural object. I have chosen instead to approach language as an aesthetic product of discursively selected and aggregated expressions. In this way I intend to explore how language can be "viewed" as an aesthetic product.

The first chapter, "Grammar as Text," discusses the hermeneutical nature of
grammatical interpretations and descriptions. Whether or not this hermeneutical nature is made explicit, grammar proceeds from a range of fore-understandings which need to be subjected to a kind of reflexive interrogation. The linguistic concept of structure is aesthetic, relying in its totalizations on metaphors of biology and mechanics. Structuralism relies on an idealism which is akin to prescriptive desires to formalize a perfect or perfected language. The linguistic concept of function, on the other hand, is teleological. Although teleology can seem Lamarckian, people do often act teleologically. However, the telos of language is not just a function of utility, as utilitarianism would constitute a functionalist abuse of finalism in the representation of a utilitarian code, offering little improvement over the structuralists' abuse of formalism in their representations of referential codes.

As an alternative to structuralism and functionalism I am proposing a program of reflexive aesthetics, one which radicalizes the subject and his/her agency. Like Bourdieu (1977), I am interested in how generative schemes are transformable through the agency of a subject who speaks. I am not advocating a theoretical reduction of all languages to a single cipher, but rather I am advocating an aesthetic stance. For the truth of language is in its art, and its art stems from the habituated products of discourse rather than from projections of a universal human cognition.

In the second chapter, "Languages of the Other/Other Languages," I explore the possibility of basing a linguistic theory on the problem of translation rather than basing translation on a theory of language. This chapter problematizes the referential basis of language not from a position of sociolinguistics but from the hermeneutics of
intersubjective discourse.

In the "languages of the other" section of the second chapter I contrast pragmatic and intersubjective approaches to communication. I am particularly critical of pragmatic theories which play the game of hide-and-seek with propositions, salvaging formal semantics and logic from the vagaries of natural discourse. Although I agree that language is a kind of activity or practice, I argue that language is not grounded in the truth-basis of signs but rather in the ethics and aesthetics of communication. A sharing of ideas is not the basis of discourse but a product of discourse. Language as event is not a game of encoding and decoding but a fleeting moment in the creation of a common language.

In contrast to pragmatics I discuss the phenomenology of intersubjectivity in order to think about 'code' as something which comes between speaker and hearer rather than as a device of telementation. In a historicist frame, language is headed toward unity and toward disunity at the same time. Speakers and hearers negotiate a common language through a conspiracy of understanding, yet this process also pulls language away from the normative average which partially binds a language's expressive potential. This is why languages are not rigid but hopelessly alive. As speakers move together in discourse they simultaneously move language away from one habitual practice (ergon) while contributing to the aggregation of another (energeia). Moreover, these movements and aggregations are creative--relying on metaphors and marked expressions--as much as they are structured or functional in an information sense. By exploring intersubjectivity, I have attempted to take an aesthetic stance towards language, one which appreciates the flesh
of a language's embodied practice rather than the bones of a language's dead structure.

The second part of the chapter's chiasmas, the "other languages" part, is concerned with how difference is constitutive in both translation and intersubjectivity. Both source and target languages are transformed in the moment of translation. Rather than using theory to deny the warp of translation, I advocate an explicit awareness of the problematics of translation. I take as my object of study not the formal unity of language but the space between languages. As meaning can be constituted and significance can be derived at the borders between languages, I favor a bi-lateral comparison of languages.

In following the Steinerian analogy between dialogue and translation, this section spells out how metaphoricity and the interpretation of figural expressions play a role in both intersubjective dialogue and cross-linguistic translation. Both dialogue and translation can be seen as creating a new meaning space or text between two incommensurable worlds. Both dialogue and translation are fictive, re-creating worlds rather than re-presenting worlds. Both entail the change or transformation of language. In dialogue, the speaker and hearer work against an average language to achieve communication, while in translation the translator works between languages, bringing both languages into a kind of space which has existed in no language. Once again, to understand either other languages or the languages of others one needs to take an aesthetic stance, accepting the possibility that truth is present in the art or artifice of alien experiences.

The third chapter, "Rhetoric and the Flux of Grammar," I discuss how the alterability of language enables rather than impedes communication. The negotiation of
languages requires not just an averaging but also the enactment of rhetoric and the presence of will. Rhetoric must therefore be thought of as a part of everyday speech, whether this be understood in terms of a folk rhetoric or in terms of the "metaphors we live by," as discussed by Cicero and Quintillion and Lakoff and Johnson. An important part of folk rhetoric consists of syntagmatically and paradigmatically marked expressions, comprising such things as marked syntaxes and tropes. Moreover, the loss of markedness through habituation is a key element to grammaticalization.

Since rhetoric can be seen as part of all communication, Aristotle's theory of rhetoric provides a useful tool for discussing discourse. His three modes of persuasion, *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*, are useful concepts in separating the ethical positioning of a speaker, the affective moving of an addressee, and the absolute truth of a reference. Grice's pragmatics can also be interpreted as a kind of analysis of folk rhetoric, being based on the ethical mode of persuasion. The fact that languages are full of sedimented tropes also suggests that *pathos* is always at play, as speakers are always attempting to move language so as to move the hearer.

The wills of speakers and the tastes of hearers lead to language changes. For this reason I will maintain that "through the intersubjective enactment of folk rhetoric, languages are continuously pointing out a shared world by indexing a sharing of the saying." The agentive speaker's poetic use of tropes and figures, which is the natural of language, continuously directs conscious and unconscious energies toward the forging of a common language. I therefore seek to revive the notion of Heraclitan flux as a way of thinking about language, a notion much valued into the beginning of this century but
which has since been lost in formalist and finalist grammar. In the final section of this chapter on rhetoric and the flux of grammar, I argue for a departure from the two dominant Aristotelian causes in linguistics, the final and the formal, in favor of Aristotle's two Marxist causes, the material and the efficient. The linguist must consider who is doing the work of language (the energeia of speaker and hearer) as well as a surface comparison of the material of languages (the ergon, the stuff that's there).

The forth and final chapter, "Glossing Mandarin," is an attempt at a postmodern linguistics, albeit one still capable or culpable of producing some sort of decription. It is an attempt at a philological representation of a language which does not rely on a depth hermeneutic of syntactic or phonological theory. Admittedly, it lacks any insight into genre, register, or repertoire. I provide no treatment of discourse or cultural context, and I situate no texts in media or religious or political frames. I will freely admit to essentializing a historical speaking subject. Most damningly, I say nothing new about Chinese except: 1) that a bi-lateral comparison, in violation of the taboo of "working from the English," can be an acceptably stance in linguistic inquiry, and 2) that the grammatical and lexical difference evoked by translation can be constitutive of how languages coincide or vary in humanly creative ways.

Discussing, describing, explaining, or interpreting another language does not proceed out of nowhere but entails a point of view. A progressively refined theory which characterizes all languages in the discussion of an individual language is one form of viewing linguistic diversity. In theoretical approaches to grammar, whether structural or functional, language diversity is understood in terms of the structured variation which
constitutes a formal unity of linguistic phenomena.

My approach is intended as a marginal gloss to theoretical linguistics in that I explore a point of view which is not theoretical in the sense just stated. I am interested in the possibility that language can be described from a positioned rather than a universal perspective. One such positioning entails a bi-lateral comparison between two languages which seeks to interpret specific differences rather than explain all linguistic diversity at once. Both bi-lateral interpretation and universal explanation are necessary components of language interpretation, yet the first is often understood or dismissed in the rhetoric of formal, mainstream linguistics. A second positioning includes a way of talking about languages which is not necessarily analytical and universal. In this work I have sought to employ and so help to develop synthetic concepts such as "intersubjectivity," "tropes," and "figures." These concepts are not theories of language so much as heuristic complexes which can lend significance to the linguistic difference being discussed.

My main point in this thesis is absolutely synthetic: the rhetorical calibrations of trope and figure unify the communication of speaker and hearer in the same way that two languages can be understood to vary. In dialogue, subtle expressions are developed (energeia) which impact on the referential and non-referential systems of a language (ergon). However, as these innovations lose their efficacy, they sediment into a grammaticalized system which appears, through translation--i.e., from an "overly-literal" glossing into English, no doubt--to be a creative and artistic product rather than an epiphenomenon of a structural template. My contention is that this appearance, stemming as it does from an aesthetic stance, is at least as real as any formal unity holding among
all languages simultaneously.
I. Grammar as Text

In deciding what constitutes a good grammar, linguists generally have limited themselves to asking whether a grammar, given certain facts about a language, can succinctly account for the recurrent patterning of those facts. Linguists, given certain facts about a language, scientifically and empirically determine the most economical and nomothetic reduction of linguistic data into elements and formulae. Although this approach has led to some very interesting insights into the overall nature of language, it has also led to some glaring lacunae in the comparison of human languages. Such shortcomings inhibit an appreciation of the essential (not "incidental") diversity of the world's languages. This work is an attempt to point out those shortcomings of theoretical grammar and to propose a novel program for discussing some of the diverse phenomena of language which are best approached without theory.

In this chapter, I would like to point out that linguistic facts are never clearly given. On account of the profound foreignness of languages, the facts of a language do not present themselves apart from an interpretive frame which makes them intelligible. This is most obviously true when considering complex issues of semantics and pragmatics in languages historically unrelated to our own, perhaps less obviously true when talking about the phonology of English. Thus, the very act of labelling a 'fact' about another language entails not only a translation from another language into our own, but also a
translation into our own way of thinking about language. Facts do not speak for themselves, and this is particularly true of linguistic facts.

I would also like to point out that, although linguistic theories are almost universally couched in scientific rhetoric, they are nevertheless motivated by less than scientific ideologies regarding which aspects of language are most important. Moreover, theories, arising as they do out of the tastes of interpretive communities, are motivated as much by aesthetics as by reason. By helping to paint a portrait of language that conforms to tradition-bound ideas of the beautiful and the natural, a certain theory may at times be held up above others. This is a large part of the reason why there are so many divergent theories of language. In the evaluation of theories, the issue is not one of how well a theory coincides with the facts of a language, but rather how a language should look once envisioned in its entirety through theory. Thus, if one believes a mechanical universe to be most aesthetic, structural facts will be pressed to the forefront, and language will provide clockwork. If one believes a pragmatic and utilitarian universe to be most sublime, language will provide a tool chest. In this thesis, I will eventually argue that language can be viewed as something like a museum or a river; we can appreciate language as a work of art with the individuals who form cultural traditions as its artists. With the recognition that grammars are aesthetic texts more than revelations of essences, we may be able to experiment with the writing of grammars, bringing to light the creative genius of traditions even if this requires us to disregard the innate mechanics of cognitive clockwork.

Although there are numerous, diverse theories of grammar, the vast majority share
a common ideology in terms of an ontology of language and an epistemological stance toward linguistic data. Languages are thought of as abstract ideals underlying the actual but ephemeral phenomena of language. Furthermore, the absolute reality of language is thought of as an ideal whose shadow is projected on the (ideals of) individual languages. Those properties of a language which are regarded as most systematic and mechanical are the most amenable to an aesthetics of scientism and so are synechdochically thought of as the most real and most language-like properties of language.

Idealism has formed the cornerstone of structuralism, the dominant ideology of 20th century linguistics. A credo for this ideology has been presented in Saussure’s *Course*, in which Saussure characterized language as form rather than substance while also stating that *langue* (language) is as concrete as *parole* (speech) (1959.122,15). Along this line, linguistics has nurtured the structuralist belief that a language has a profound reality beyond the obvious reality of speech, and that the former reality is far more than an a posteriori abstraction. For Saussure, the idealization of language is social: "...both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty" (1959.9). For Chomsky, the idealization is far more psychological (1965.4). However, according to both forms of structuralist ideology, grammar is conceived of as "...an object apart from the speaker and separated from the uses which the speaker may make of it" (Hopper 1987.141).

In an attempt to attain the status of a science, structuralist linguistics has necessitated the fiction that the objects of linguistic inquiry (i.e. languages) are as
consistent and law-abiding as the objects of study explored by the natural sciences. But as Vossler once said, "the first and most obvious assumption of the science of language is that there is a language. But this is precisely what is uncertain" (1932.7). Linguistics has reified language in order to construct itself as the science of language, but in so doing it has quite unscientically bracketed off those facts and phenomena which do not adhere well to their ideology of absolute idealism.

While structuralist linguistics is in some respects futuristic in its optimism that a language can be understood quasi-mathematically as a body of natural phenomena, this kind of linguistics nevertheless has descended from some much older systematic treatments of language. Voloshinov has pointed out how linguistic rationalism developed out of the process of dissecting and reviving the "cadavers" of dead languages (1973.71). Hopper has claimed that generative linguistics, in its "representational view" of spoken language, has ironically developed a study of well-formed, context-independent sentences which can only be regarded as "artifacts of literacy" (1992.227). Moreover, Silverstein has also noted a definite parallel between prescriptive and descriptive linguistics, noting that the specification of langue or competence has made possible the transformation of "prescriptive grammatical doctrine into descriptive linguistic science, while at the same time preserving its characteristic methods of dealing with linguistic data" (1979.204).

In both the prescriptive rhetoric of standardized English and the descriptive science of academic linguistics there is a concern for negating difference through purity and transcendence. There is a concern for understanding the means of telementation, and there is a concern for comprehending the orderly and law-abiding constructions of
utterances according to abstract and context-free standards. Whereas prescriptive linguistics attempts to control language and thereby the faculty of speech, descriptive linguistics seeks to understand the linguistic faculty which controls or circumscribes our speech. Yet both forms of linguistics share a longing for the powerful essences and hardfast rules of an orderly and consistent universe. In his discussion of Chomsky's attempt to characterize language without recourse to the context of performance, Fabian has fittingly remarked that "[Chomsky]...can be regarded as the current prophet of an age old dream: to cut through appearances and reveal essences; to demonstrate timeless order beneath contingent confusion; above all, to attain 'deeper,' irrefutable, hence more powerful knowledge" (1990.7).

Since the 1950's, the structuralist ideology has developed as acartesian kind of super-idealism. Not only are individual languages reducible to essences, but all of language is reducible to a single essence. This follows from the developmental idea that, since humans everywhere have the same capacity to learn (perfectly) any language which they are initially (imperfectly) exposed to, then there must be some language capacity common to all humans which can blossom into whatever language comes along. According to Chomsky (1965.24ff), an adequate explanation for grammar must make reference to "the innate predisposition of the child" and how this predisposition, in effect, finds what its looking for. Since we as children are never brought in contact with the ideal of our language, we must (so the argument goes) possess a super-ideal, an innate idea regarding what constitutes "a possible human language". The generative project, in its pursuit of ideals and essences, has continuously renewed itself: complicating processes
(transformations) to simplify representations (deep structure), then complicating representations (barriers and chains) to simplify processes (move alpha). Throughout it all, however, Chomsky has maintained that all that’s really important about a language is not part of a language but belongs to the formal unity of an innate universal grammar. Thus, beyond labels for things, "... beyond PF options and lexical arbitrariness (which I henceforth ignore), variation is limited to non-substantive parts of the lexicon and general properties of lexical items" (Chomsky 1993:3).

This theory has never been refuted to the satisfaction of the structuralists largely because it is not properly a theory. It is a story or myth based on the metaphysical ideas of Cartesian rationalism which Chomsky admits to favoring. In this way, the quest for a linguistic science ends itself in fiction. The pursuit of timeless essences and absolute laws cannot succeed in the face of the cultural variation of linguistic traditions, and so the pursuit of absolute entities and orderly rules has led inevitably to the elevation of empty categories and binary locality restrictions. To make universal grammar real, to make UG visible, the structuralist ideology has been forced to rely on rhetorical guidelines for theoretically representing the grammatical representations of speech representations. Although it certainly is hard to prove that nothing isn’t there, it is possible that one day more people might seriously question whether absolute somethings are really nothings or whether trees in fact can’t count past two.

The structuralist ideology, while adhering to the Platonic ontology that the ideal is more real than the apparent, also incorporates a rhetoric of mechanicalism and scientism. Saussure provided a view of language as systematic and in a sense
mechanical. To Saussure (1959.120), signs do not have a positive value but only a value relative to other signs. Hence, as early as 1930, Voloshinov associated abstract and objectivist views of language with "the comparison of language to the system of mathematical signs" (1973.57). More recently, Lakoff has written about how linguists, operating under a "mind-as-machine paradigm" have sought to disregard differences in conceptual organization while glorifying "those kinds of reasoning that in fact are mechanical," thereby ignoring the emotional, imaginative, or social aspects of reasoning (1987.351, 183). Since long before Saussure linguists have attempted to extend the mechanical elegance of segmental phonology to all other domains ("modules") of language (Nerlich 1992), thereby ensuring the status of linguistics as a science. Most recently, Chomsky’s minimalist program, with its pursuit of language’s monads and *ars combinatoria*, has reiterated a blind faith in linguistic invariance:

A working hypothesis in generative grammar has been that languages are based on simple principles that interact to form intricate structures, and that the language faculty is non-redundant, in that particular phenomena are not "over-determined" by principles of language. These two are unexpected features of complex biological systems, more like one would expect to find (for unexplored reasons) in the study of the inorganic world. The approach has, nevertheless, proven to be a successful one, suggesting that the hypotheses are more than just an artifact reflecting a mode of inquiry (1993.2).

However, this emphasis upon the mechanical, quasi-anatomical, and formalizable properties of language stems not just from the facts of language but in many ways is an artifact of analysis. Clearly, an *ideology* is at work which selects from the universe of possible facts only those facts which best support a mechanical idealism and an aesthetics of scientism. This Chomskyan ideology has been at least as influential as the Chomskyan theory, for although most linguists do in fact disagree with the nuts and bolts of
Chomsky’s current theories, almost all linguists seem to find his rhetoric of scientism appealing.

So much for the ideology of structuralism. In contemporary linguistics, numerous anti-structuralist theories have developed. The proponents of these theories have consciously positioned themselves in opposition to the dominant ideology in linguistics. However, their anti-structuralist ideology has had little effect on the dominant paradigms of linguistics in part because they have concerned themselves with exactly those issues which structuralists have written off as irrelevant. These functionalists, as the anti-structuralists often call themselves, pursue the final cause of grammar and do not concern themselves as much with grammar’s formal causes. As a result, they are more willing to address issues of grammatical variation and change. They follow a form of idealism that is not nativist but rather is akin to skepticism and empiricism. They are more sensitive to the context and creativity of the speaking individual. Some functionalists avoid mechanistic models, although most tend to lapse into the neologistic rhetoric of scientism.

When constructing grammatical explanation, functionalists seek final causes. Whereas a formal cause indicates the a priori plan or design underlying a phenomenon, a final cause indicates a phenomenon’s motivating purpose or desired result. This formal/final distinction coincides with Lakoff’s contrasting of generative and cognitive grammar. For Lakoff, a generative grammar predicts a system while a cognitive-functional grammar makes sense of a system by determining the principles that motivate the system (1987:96). However, arguments which seek to explain phenomena in terms
of their results are often labelled teleological. Thus, in the rhetoric of functionalism, a linguist personifies languages as acting in certain ways with certain intentions or ends in mind. One work on grammaticalization claims that "...grammaticalization can be interpreted as the result of a process that has problem solving as its main goal..." (Heine et al. 1991.29). Although functionalists claim to be working less abstractly and closer to the surface data of speech, in their explanations they still rely upon an abstraction. According to the aesthetics of functionalism, language is not an absolute and eternal clockwork but rather a sentient and maximizing being.

By suggesting that means are caused by ends, teleology often indicates a fallacy. However, it is important to recognize that some forms of teleological reasoning are more excusable than others. To say that a language developed tense because it needed tense is not necessarily like saying a giraffe developed a long neck because it was hungry. Giraffes have no control over the shape of their necks, but people have far more control over the shape of their grammars than any structuralist is willing to admit. In his discussion of the use of teleological arguments in functionalist anthropology, Beattie made the point that "...teleological explanation is evidently appropriate to much human behavior, for people do act teleologically, in that they try to bring about certain ends, at least some of the time" (1964.53). As in culture, so too in language. People do not speak only as slaves to their grammar's formal parameters, nor do they speak only in accord to some universal template. People often speak creatively, and at certain times this creativity becomes incorporated socially into the tradition of a language. Functionalists are right in speaking about the telos of linguistic behavior, yet they often
go astray in relying too heavily on depersonalized abstraction.

Functionalists also differ from structuralists by conceiving of language acquisition as largely empirical. To functionalists, speakers acquire language by associating sensory impressions with categorial memories. We are born *tabula rasa*, although with an ability to identify what is like and what is different, and we learn grammar by recognizing patterns of abstract similarity. Thus, languages enable speakers to segment experience according to highly organized and metaphorically articulated "idealized cognitive models" (Lakoff 1987.416). These ICMs, although put forth as scientific and modern, differ only slightly from concepts as described by Hume and Nietzsche. The Humean concept comprises the abstract unification of the memories of experienced substances (nominal entities) or modes (adjectives/verbs) whose apperceived likeness permits a unification in the imagination and an annexation to a certain term. Although Hume’s terminology differs a great deal from Lakoff’s, it is not hard to see a philosophical similarity between the two interpretations of human cognition. Nietzsche’s work on language also anticipates more recent work of cognitive scientists, again pointing out how experience is divided into concepts through the help of language:

Every word becomes a concept as soon as it is supposed to serve not merely as a reminder of the unique, absolutely individualized original experience, to which it owes its origin, but at the same time to fit countless, more or less similar cases, which, strictly speaking, are never identical, and hence absolutely dissimilar (1989.249).

Functionalist cognition, like philosophical empiricism, adheres to the notion that language does not label *a priori* categories in the world but rather creates the world’s similarities *a posteriori*. 
Functionalists have often been perceptive in their critique of structuralism. Givon (1979), for one, has defended the teleology of functionalism against what he considers to be the tautology of formalism. To Givon, the restatement of a grammar in quasi-mathematical terms is not an explanation but only a restatement. It says nothing new. Haiman has also commented that "formalism is not an explanation," and he has quite correctly diagnosed linguists' "envy of physics" (1985.1).

Although functionalists have been better in refraining from mechanistic models and scientific rhetoric, they have limited themselves to the pragmatic (tool-like) aspects of language rather than allowing themselves to abandon the quest for the absolute and completely surrender themselves to the particular. I believe that the phenomena of language can be appreciated as beautiful without sublating phenomena to the purported universals of thought and speech. The belief in universal practical ends still drives language into interpretive frames which are absolute and which do not do enough to call attention to acts of human creativity which have truly generated the diversity of the world's languages.

My argument so far has been that different theories coexist not because some linguists are rational and truth-loving while others prefer to live in darkness, but because different ideologies of language lead both to the examination (or disregarding) of certain facts and to different aesthetic ideals regarding what would characterize a beautiful picture (imago or dia-gram) of language. The remainder of this chapter will probe the possibility of discussing language and grammar from a position other than an omniscient and transcendent objectivity. As theories determine facts as much as they are determined by
facts, the possibility of linguistics without theory will be explored. I will conclude this chapter with some alternative suggestions for entextualizing the aesthetics of grammar.

In his article, "Objectivity, Value Judgement, and Theory Choice," Thomas Kuhn outlined some of the reasons why rational and truth-loving scientists disagree. Kuhn suggests that "proponents of different theories are ... like native speakers of different languages. Communication between them goes on by translation, and it raises all translation's familiar difficulties" (1986.392). Kuhn goes on to remark how even greater difficulties arise when different meanings are attributed to single expressions of a single language, as in semantic disagreements over terminology. Moreover, different investigators might perceive the same objective reality differently due to "idiosyncratic factors dependent on individual biography and personality" (1986.388). Thus, the construction of a scientific consensus might be retarded or accelerated by subjective factors which prevent a transparently objective understanding of phenomena. Kuhn also indicates that theoretical differences arise because of different criteria used in the evaluation of theories. In other words, some might favor a theory because it is more consistent while others might favor a different theory on the grounds that it appears to be simpler or of greater scope (1986.384).

With regard to linguistic theories, however, the very process of emulating science seems to have made the scientific study of language impossible. In order for a theory of universal grammar to be consistent, it must find the same kind of elements or processes in all of the world's languages. For this to be done, one could assume that all languages are representable in the same way as one particular language, say English. To be
consistent in a comparison between English and a radically different languagem, a linguist would need to create highly elaborate representations which fail on the criteria of simplicity (since entities are multiplied to find common ground) and breadth (since certain constructions are taken a basic) and are untestable on the criterion of accuracy (since they are derived from 'foreign' intuitions). Moreover, the issue of scientific vocabulary is doubly complicated in linguistics. Not only do different linguists have different meanings for the metalinguistic words which they employ, but the same linguist might be forced to use one term in two different ways when discussing radically different languages. As languages vary far more than any consistent theory would permit, linguists must use metaphors to tie different linguistic phenomena to the same theoretical concepts. As a result, linguists must build their scientific consensus through creative inspiration rather than through controlled observation.

Derrida has aptly (and with surprising coherence) brought out the point that "whoever alleges that philosophical discourse belongs to the closure of a language must nevertheless proceed within that language and with the oppositions it provides" (1979.83). Similarly, linguistic theories cannot free themselves from the limitations and insights of English merely be claiming to be universal, absolute, totalizing, or objective. Whether a theory uses categories from traditional English (Greco-Roman) grammatical discourse or not, the terminological labels used and the sentential translations constructed form an implicit comparison between English and another language. When interpreting a language (even when interpreting our own language), we do so from the perspective of our own linguistic experiences, and all linguists must recognize that their perspective has a
positioning: "we can therefore never step outside [the language 'to which we have been granted entry'] in order to look it over circumspectly from some alternative position" (Heidegger 1993.423). Even Sapir seemed to have favored caution in the use of terminology. Warning against placing languages into "neat pigeon-holes," he sought a method whereby one can "place a language, from two or three independent standpoints, relative to another language" (1921.140). In other words, linguists must learn a few other languages before they can claim to understand something about the manner in which languages differ from one another and from our own.

Understanding a language could be rendered an aesthetic experience without resorting to the construction of an omniscient transcendence. In the process of translating and articulating some of the differences between English and another language, one can appreciate the variable nuances and economies of different cultural traditions. The person coming into familiarity with another language rationalizes that language in such a way as to make her or his own quotidian way of understanding seem fanciful or even momentarily irrational. In this way the aesthetic understanding of the other amounts to a kind of self understanding (cf. Gadamer 1992; Zhang 1992.93). Moreover, in coming to terms with the subjective factors at stake in the apperception of language, one might come upon "the royal road to an authentic, rather than a fictitious, objectivity" (Devereaux 1978.373). The coming to terms with the existential divide between languages might lead to the foundation rather than the subversion of understanding (cf. Webster 1982.96). Thus, instead of imposing a theory from above which, although emerging from a human and so limited perspective, must characterize all languages, one might reflexively
introduce a less insidious form of subjectivity in the form of a dialogical encounter with the other (cf. Webster 1982.111). Linguistic theory, in providing a framework for analyzing the differences between languages, often erases those differences through a rhetoric of absolutism and presents the illusion of a stable and determined relationship to the other language (cf. Crapanzano 1992.93).

Yet in the construction of "a" grammar, or rather in the construction of a text representing a grammar, linguists could benefit substantially from a reflexive awareness of their own positioning in the act of interpretation. A grammar which abandons the pretense of a transcendental objectivity is free to explore the beauty of languages without resorting to an aesthetics of scientism. "The break-up into words and rules is only a dead makeshift of scientific analysis" (Humboldt 1988.49). In moving beyond an ideology which regards the aping of science as the only way to truth, linguists have an opportunity to appreciate once again those phenomena which have been bracketed off from the scientific study of language. An interpretive ideology toward the question of grammatical representation abandons claims that only a totalizing super-idealism can provide an interpretive framework for making sense of the diversity of the world's linguistic phenomena. A less Faustian approach seeks only to explore without closure the possibilities of human cognition and cultural history (cf. Webster 1982.105). An interpretive science of language seeks an understanding of the meaningful worlds deposited in grammatical traditions, while avoiding "establishing parsimonious, correspondence validity claims that serve as generalizations about prediction and control" (Presnell 1994.18; cf. Geertz 1973.5).
The project of linguistic description without grammatical rules recognizes that linguistic practices are neither as precise nor as formulaic as is often believed. Malinowski, in discussing ethnography, noted that "...precision is foreign to real life, which never adheres to any rules" (1961.17). He was also of the belief that understanding the "imponderabilia of everyday life" can not be achieved through the analysis of documents but only through experiencing ideas and events "in their full actuality" (1961.19). Of course, there are important differences between language and culture, especially since language can be more directly reified, i.e. orthographically, through the presentation of written representation. Nevertheless, linguistics has benefitted from a return to a more ethnographic style in an appreciation of certain elements of language which speakers find to be natural but which proponents of UG would label unnatural in the senses of idiosyncratic, language specific, or non-innate. As with ethnography, an interpretive approach to grammar rationalizes foreign and 'exotic' languages without recourse to an absolutist rationality. As Geertz has said, "understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity.... It renders them accessible: setting them in the frame of their own banalities, it dissolves their opacity" (1973.14).

An interpretive conception of grammar also appreciates those aspects of human cognition which are not strictly algorhythmic and linearly processual but which are conditioned by the dialectical gap-closing processes of human interaction (cf. Lave 1988). Interpretive grammar conceives of the sentence not as a synthesis of rules and elements, but as "an emergent phenomenon, a synthesis arising out of the interaction between our
intentions and the conventions of syntax and semantics" (Tyler 1978.135). Thus, grammar without theory appreciates the organic and improvised processes of communication and cognition which are not constructable as rule-governed and contingent on the absolute.

Once languages are permitted to vary without being pegged to an absolute ideal of linguistic reality, one is again free to discuss the meaningful ways in which languages can differ from one another. Without an absolutist theory, the acquisition of grammar means more than simply learning the words for things already understood and then putting words into frames we somehow already know. "Learning to speak does not mean learning to use a preexistent tool for designating a world already somehow familiar to us; it means acquiring a familiarity and acquaintance with the world itself and how it confronts us" (Gadamer 1976.63). Language is acquired not by awakening to one’s own innate ideas, but by attempting to understand and be understood within the parameters of a particular society which has emerged through a historical tradition. "It is because it is learned early and piecemeal, in constant association with the color and the requirements of actual contexts, that language, despite its quasi-mathematical form, is rarely a purely referential organization" (Sapir 1933.12). A similar sentiment was expressed by Malinowski, who recognized that even those categories and ideas which seem to be the most formally universal are nevertheless filled with the nuances of a particular culture’s world view and tradition: "...the fundamental grammatical categories, universal to all human languages, can be understood only with reference to the pragmatic Weltanschauung of primitive man" (1947.328).
Voloshinov, in characterizing the Humboldtian tradition of "individualistic subjectivism," described the hermeneutical, anti-structuralist tradition of linguistics in some interesting ways. From a hermeneutical point of view, language can be thought of as "an unceasing process of creation," as "meaningful creativity, analogous to creative art". In light of dynamic and omnipresent acts of linguistic creativity, the "stable system (lexicon, grammar, phonetics), is, so to speak, the inert crust, the hardened lava of language creativity" (Voloshinov 1973.48). Such an approach requires the abandonment of natural science approach to language, for if language is (after all) changeable according to the wills of individuals acting solely or collectively, acting creatively or practically, then linguistic phenomena, being largely particularistic, are best treated within the orbit of the Geisteswissenschaft, or the historical sciences (cf. Hockett 1982).

In representing another language's idiosyncratic imponderabilia of everyday speech, a translation from context to text remains necessarily, for "any attempt to preserve the event introduces textuality into it" (Coyle 1994.167). Thus, even without theory the break from idealism can never be achieved. However, once liberated from a rhetoric of scientism, a more phenomenological, culturally sensitive, and dialogically constructed discourse, whether in ethnography or grammar, can profit greatly from experimentation in techniques of writing and representation (cf. Marcus and Fischer 1986). This historisist and hermeneutical way to grammar, once positioned in the context of the humanities, can be organized by a set of textual strategies rather than by a theoretical paradigm (Presnell 1994.33). An interpretive grammar, then, adopts an eclectic approach to the phenomena under investigation, resisting the desire to control through systematization while tolerating
a piecemeal collage of interpretation (cf. Jenks 1991. 19f). Most importantly, interpretive grammar can lead to the development of explanations which are within a recognizably human language rather than in a jargon-laden pseudo-scientific compu-centric cipher. "An explanation is a kind of social achievement. A purported explanation that cannot be grasped by a human mind cannot qualify as an explanation" (Harding 1986.45).

In constructing an interpretive text about another language, I intend to provide a text which is not final and totalizing but which nevertheless has an aesthetic value. Grammatical accounts which have been modeled on the natural sciences achieve their aesthetic effect by providing closure, by justifying an account which transcends the individuality of an investigator and his language, thereby seeming to transcend the limits of possible human intelligence. My work will be considerably more humble. I intend to rely on the metaphors which present themselves in the course of translation to develop an appreciation of the diversity of language. Crapanzano, in comparing the ethnographer to the translator, has written that both translators and ethnographers "must render the foreign familiar and preserve its very foreignness at one and the same time" (1992.44). By charting the ways in which two languages share differences as well as similarities, I hope to show the plasticity and creativity latent in all languages and accessible to all speakers. By appreciating other languages as works of art, I hope to make the point that foreign languages, in their bizarreness and rationality, are accessible and describable only through an aesthetic appreciation and apperception. "For between two absolutely different spheres such as subject and object, there can be no expression, but at most an aesthetic stance, I mean an allusive transference, a stammering translation into a completely foreign
medium" (Nietzsche 1989.252).
II. Languages of the Other/ Other Languages

To leave behind the project of totalizing a language under a single ideal (G) or under an absolute ideal in the form of a linguistic theory (UG), one must come up with an alternative way for dealing with the foreignness of languages. This chapter will look at two related problems which arise once one is cut lose from the moorings of theory. The first problem concerns intersubjectivity, especially with regard to how communication could be possible without an objectivist metaphysics of a priori shared ideas. A second problem, related to the first in some surprising ways, concerns linguistic relativity, since an awakening from the dream of a super-idealist universal grammar must lead to an increased appreciation of the constitutive and non-trivial variation displayed by those universes of discourse we call languages.

Before approaching the issue of whether variation among the world's languages is truly infinite, it might be best to consider the significant variation which occurs within a single language. Although this topic relates to important sociolinguistic and dialectological considerations, such considerations fall beyond the already distended scope of this project. Therefore, I would like to remain in a hermeneutical frame and radicalize the problem of intra-linguistic variation, limiting this discussion to the idiolect.

Since Aristotle's work on logic (particularly the De Interpretatione), Western philosophers have tended to deal with variation by agreeing not to deal with it. Thus,
Aristotle's claim that categorial perceptions, as undergoings of the soul, are the same for all men is akin to the (Saussurian or Chomskian) structuralist claim that the same entities of the world are labeled arbitrarily by different languages. This has enabled linguists to preserve the ideology and practice of logical analysis in their treatment of semantic issues. Thus, propositions are merely translated into the given facts of the world in a closed semantico-referential system of word/world mappings. Since any sentence in any language can be translated (without loss of meaning, so the argument goes) into the fact about the world which a sentence refers to, and since these facts, being of the world and not of a particular language, might just as well be in any language (but usually happen to be in English), cross-linguistic translation is always possible. Hence, this linguistic ideology achieves closure through tautology. But anyone who has had experience with a radically different language knows that translation is not easy. The facts of one language do not always correspond cogently to the facts of another. Moreover, anyone who has had difficulty coming to an understanding with another speaker of their own language also knows that translation at times seems impossible, even within what is regarded as the same language.

The project of semantics and pragmatics has been devised as a means for saving a formal, logical, and idealist reification of language even when presented with speakers who seem not to be speaking in referential propositions. Some have contended that there exists a "division of linguistic labor," whereby scientific experts, aware of the eternal and transcendental order of the universe (i.e., water is H₂O) possess the true meaning of what is said while all others use words meaningfully or meaninglessly depending on the
judgement of the scientific community (Putnam 1990.311f). Others have attempted to save objectivist semantics in the face of contextual factors by suggesting that "an interpreted sentence corresponds to a function from contexts into propositions, and a proposition is a function from possible worlds into truth values" (Stalnaker 1990.179). According to this view, a sentence can be linked to a wide range of propositions which are each true in some possible world, and the context of the utterance will enable the interpreter to narrow from the range of possible worlds the actual world described. This approach is usually used only to explain the filling in of indexical expressions with referential content. Thus, in a sentence like "I saw him yesterday," an interpreter associates 'him' with a range of candidates who were each seen yesterday by the speaker in some possible world, and then an indexing of the context denotes which world is being referred to. If the possible world being referred to is the actual world, then the sentence is true. This trekky form of reasoning is purported to preserve economy, since modal predicates (must, may) can be reinterpreted as the universal and existential quantifications over possible worlds (Cann 1993.274). Something is potentially true if it is true in some possible world, necessarily true if it is true in all possible worlds. However, despite their science fiction appeal, possible world semantics/pragmatics and the "linguistic division of labor" differ little from the objectivist idealism of Aristotle. Ultimately, much of modern semantics and pragmatics is an attempt to salvage classical logic. In order to base meaning upon truth values assigned to sentences, semantics requires the invocation of an objective, transcendental, and above all else knowable ideal independent of a given language or act of discourse.
Another school of semantics and pragmatics, although still anchored to a truth-conditional semantics, has found more to meaning than the mechanical reduction of utterances to propositions. For Grice and Searle, language as used by speakers often conveys more than what is literally said, since listeners often search for significance rather than passively absorb information. Grice has pointed out that, since natural language operators often imply more than their counterparts in pure logic, an utterance can differ from a proposition even when the two coincide with a single natural language expression. Thus, \textit{and} conveys the meaning of \& as well as an idea of temporal succession; \textit{or} conveys the meaning of \textsc{v} as well as an idea of exclusive choice (Grice 1989.22f). Thus, utterances like "I took a shower and (\&) got out of bed" and "I saw him or (\textsc{v}) his brother at the same time," although logically acceptable, are pragmatically unfelicitous if not outright wrong. Grice has also maintained that, since an uttered sentence might be propositionally true while implying what is false, "...the implicature is not carried by what is said, but by the saying of what is said, or by 'putting it that way'" (1989.39). Although Grice thinks of words as having a transcendental unity—their meaning still associated with the contribution they make to the truth values of propositions—he also recognizes that the context of linguistic performance allows words to say more than they appear to be saying. Like Grice, Searle also sees meaning as arising in the enactment of speech rather than contained exclusively in the passive uptake of the words themselves: "In speaking a language, I attempt to communicate things to my hearer by means of getting him to recognize my intention to communicate just those things" (1990b.199).

In all forms of pragmatics, the meaning of an utterance does not emerge directly
from the content of words; speakers and hearers do some of the work of language. Nevertheless, pragmatics still depends generally upon truth conditional semantics in that what is implied is still propositionally assigned either a truth value relative to an objective universe or a felicity value relative to an objectively construed context. But despite this, the project of pragmatics has been successful in pointing out to philosophers and linguists the fact that language has functions apart from reference. Thus, a greeting like "hello" does not refer semantically to anything. "Hello" merely follows a set of rules which determine the appropriate contexts for its use (Searle 1990a.125). Apart from greetings and partings, there are numerous types of expressions which are uninterpretable without an awareness of the context. Shifters, for example, have no inherent referential value but are either interpreted as indexing some aspect of the speech situation or are used as a basis for interpreting the speech situation (Silverstein 1976b.33). Thus, "here," "now," or "I," or "thus," are interpretable referentially only through reference to the instance of their use. Grammars may also provide context-sensitive and non-referential "function indicating devices" (such as word order or stress) which help to differentiate non-referential speech acts (such as questions) from their referential counterparts (Searle 1990a.118). Austin (1990) identified a class of performative utterances which, although seemingly referential, actually do something rather than say something. Certain verbs in the first person singular (present indicative active), verbs like the English "I do" or "I apologize," are used to do something like seal a wedding vow or proffer an admission of guilt rather than merely to say something about something. Performative utterances, like non-indicative speech acts or utterances containing shifters, are interpretable only
when used appropriately in the appropriate context. Moreover, performative utterances are the product of a culture's conventions. As such, their meanings are not analyzable relative to an objective standard of truth but rather to a sociocultural standard of suitable action.

To understand language as something other than objective reference means to understand the relationship language has to personal and social action. Anticipating the work of pragmatics, the pragmatist Malinowski wrote that "...the conception of meaning as contained in an utterance is false and futile. A statement, spoken in real life, is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered" (1947.307). In his experiences of representing field-work ethnographically, Malinowski was acutely aware of the limits of language as a representational medium. In light of his infamous diaries, we now know that he was also aware of the difference between lived experience and text. Although the words of a text must be more self-reliant--largely interpretable without extra-linguistic context--spoken words derive most of their meaning from extra-linguistic factors of context, such as the relationship shared by speaker and hearer. Malinowski also saw a necessary relationship between words and deeds, as words in natural language do not comprise a folk science of description but a form of social action: "a word is used when it can produce an action and not to describe one, still less to translate thoughts" (1947.322).

Although pragmatics opens a realm of philosophy to the question of context, pragmatics still assumes a sharing of semantic ideas which is antecedent to discourse rather than a consequence of discourse. Moreover, pragmatics places too much emphasis
upon the cognitive and communicative without appreciating the social aspects of cognition and without recognizing the cultural dimensions of communication. Although the project of pragmatics has improved (and so has saved) the use of formal logic in the analysis of natural language, it has failed to recognize how meaning might arise creatively and synthetically through empathy rather than through a componential analysis of elements and contexts according to rigid rules (cf. Bruner 1990). Pragmatics, when faced with a challenge to the conceptual idealism of semantics, took steps to preserve this idealism without ever seriously challenging the belief that concepts are given in the world independent of human creativity and cultural tradition. If one is to be more like Lakoff and Johnson and recognize that "meaning ... is never disembodied or objective and is always grounded in the acquisition and use of a conceptual system," (1981.197) then what is required is a turning away from the deus ex machina of pragmatics and a closer examination of the phenomenological dynamics of intersubjectivity.

Whichever language we happen to speak, we as individuals pass through our world with unique linguistic and extra-linguistic experiences. These experiences ensure that no two individuals share exactly the same language. Through living together and speaking together in the same culturally transformed world, people do in fact arrive at understandings despite the uniqueness of their feelings and perceptions. Through the intersubjectivity of discourse, which entails the negotiation of a language, solipsism and alienation are dissolved into reciprocal exchange and phatic community.

Although speakers of a language share much of the same world, their interactions with that world necessarily differ. This difference amounts to subjective factors which
not only color the language of the individual (the ideolect), but also condition what an individual attempts to do with language. Vygotsky was quite right in insisting that "direct communication between minds is impossible," (1962.150). To Vygotsky, a sharing in meaning must precede a sharing of words. Humboldt was equally skeptical with regard to idealist conceptions of language, maintaining that languages are only definable at the level of the individual. "All understanding is always at the same time a not-understanding, all concurrence in thought and feeling at the same time a divergence" (1988.63). Real languages are neither as neat nor as closed as the abstractions evoked by philosophers or linguists, and such abstractions play only a limited role in the enactment of discourse. Thus, it is important to recognize the phenomenological syntheses carried out dialectically in discourse. Once one has moved beyond normative models which negate interpersonal difference, one can better appreciate what is accomplished through the enactment of language. This is particularly true since "assuming shared knowledge hides the way that participants accomplish shared meaning" (Coyle 1994.174).

Language, rather than being contingent upon an a priori ideal such as the objective world, is in fact the primary means by which idealism and objectivity are a posteriori fabricated. Through either a willful or subconscious use of language, speakers rationalize their experiences and segment their worlds. As Searle wrote in one of his discussions of proper names: "the world does not come to us already divided up into objects; we have to divide it; and how we divide it up is up to our system of representation, and in that sense it is up to us, even though the system is biologically, culturally, and linguistically
shaped" (1990b.330). According to Seale, speakers learn to identify particular objects (in the case of proper names) through ostension, after which they associate a name with an intentional content (concept). Yet all concepts could potentially be particularized as Searle's proper names. All words would then be learned in the same way as proper names. Thus, as each individual goes about forming concepts in slightly different ways contingent upon the contexts of ostension or upon different cognitive predispositions (e.g. memories), the same world will be "divided up" differently by different speakers of the same language. Humboldt recognized that our perceptions are contingent upon linguistic and non-linguistic memory. For Humboldt, however, language is also the vehicle for the transformation of subjectivity into objectivity. Through articulating our experience in language, we might suggest to another that they think of their own subjective experiences in the same way that we do. Through speech, individuals can share experiences, create a common language, and use language to create a consensus and an objectivity (1988.56).

Plato too was concerned with how words do not comprehend to reality. Plato divided the sign into many parts: name, definition, representation, "knowledge and understanding and true belief," and reality (the form beyond the pale of perception) (1973.137f). In Plato's judgement, however, knowledge, understanding, and true belief came closest to the actual form of reality. Thus, the idealism of Humboldt and Plato, unlike that of Saussure and Chomsky, rely upon an experiential basis to explain our human understanding of the world.

In claiming that we each have distinct ideoleccts, I do not wish to claim that we are each alone in the world, solus ipse. In his criticism of romantic subjectivism,
Voloshinov made some interesting points. He noted that it would be wrong to dismiss the world outside of the self as "... a mere material remark to the monologue of the psyche" (1973.33). "... Individualistic subjectivism is wrong in ignoring and failing to understand the social nature of the utterance and in attempting to derive the utterance form the speaker's inner world as an expression of that inner world" (1973.93). If language were only a means of mentally representing the world, then the decent into solipsism would be easily justified. Obviously however, language is also employed in communication, and for this reason epistemic differences are often minimalized or seemingly erased in the course of dialogue with others. This comprises the other side, the objective side, of intersubjectivity.

Language, then, does not rely upon a formal identity prior to speech as much as it presents an enactment of mental striving toward a final, formal identity. Voloshinov saw this process as an essentially sociological one, whereby an ideology inherent in one's language stands in dialectical mediation between the isolated organism and the outside world (1973.26). "The psyche and ideology dialectically interpenetrate in the unitary and objective process of social intercourse" (1973.41). As it is used, language hinges upon a subjectivity which has been so determined by a society's ideology that an absolute distinction between subject and object no longer exists. Thus, "the immediate social situation and the broader social milieu wholly determine--and determine from within, so to speak--the structure of an utterance" (1973.86).

For many interested in language variation, however, intersubjectivity has more to do with a phenomenology of dialogue than with a dialectic of ideology. In dialogue, one
transcends the confines of one's own subjectivity by appreciating (apperceiving) the other, not as an object but as another subject "with purposes, motives, and projects which, although they may have excluded us and preceded our apprehension of them, are now accessible to our understanding" (Tyler 1978.145). Just as significantly, only an understanding that there are other selves in the world can provide an answer for what it means to be a self. Only after being recognized by another do we have an objective (outside) indication of our existence and locus in the world. "Without the other there is no self" (Tyler 1978.141). Thus, through dialogue, one does not lose oneself in the process of eliminating alienated subjectivity. Rather, the self is made stronger through dialogical understanding; for the self is no longer confined to the self but has been disseminated through others (cf. Humboldt 1988.56). Moreover, an evolution of the self comes about through our attempts to see ourselves as others see us (Sass 1994.142) and through our associating the word of the other with ". . . the same thought which I associate with it when I pronounce it" (Lazarus, quoted in Nerlich 1992.64).

In hermeneutical conceptions of intersubjectivity, language is self-forgetful, I-less, and universal (Gadamer 1992.64ff). Speakers and hearers forget the presence of a language which (in a skeptical frame) existentially separates them. Speakers and hearers willingly associate the language of the other with the language of the self, thereby understanding not through translation but through a universalizing fiction of I-lessness. Speakers and hearers, then, enact communication through what Crapanzano has called "role metaphor," whereby the indexical opposition of speaker and hearer are creatively and imaginatively reversed so as to enable comprehension (1992.115ff). An awareness
of self is made possible through the indexical contrast provided by language and enacted in dialogue. Yet in actual speech, this contrast entails a reciprocity between self and other rather than an absolute division. In dialogue, one refers to an I only when addressing a you who will in turn be an I once I have become a you (Benveniste 1986b.729). Just as dialogue itself leads to a temporalized and localized unity of self and other, shifters dissolve phenomenological distance into language's formal unifications.

Dialogue and intersubjectivity end in (or have as their telos) the fabrication of a language which transcends the individual and provides a collective (thereby objective) representation. This collective representation emerges dialectically as negotiated language. Human languages, then, are not hindered by difference but rather are enriched through their own plasticity. Unlike any other communication or information system, human language can be employed reflexively. We can recognize that the signals which we hear "...are only signals, which can be trusted, distrusted, falsified, denied, amplified, corrected, and so forth" (Bateson 1972.178). Open to creativity and reflection, human languages are never optimal, never minimal. Unlike cadavers they are not rigid. However much we would like to calque calculus and algebra onto the grammar of a language, the fact remains that languages are variable, ill-defined, flexible, hopelessly alive. However ugly it may seem, languages are vague and ambiguous as well as redundant, since "within the same language the same expression can designate different things and different expressions the same things" (Gadamer 1976.60).

For some, the messiness of language might make language a less beautiful object, at least a less elegant one. However, one must remember that language is messy on
account of the role language plays in aesthetic action. Since speakers never share exactly the same lifeworld, people communicate through an imaginative exploitation of the plasticity of language and not in spite of language’s mutability. Moreover, language is messy because people (at least people who aren’t like Noam Chomsky Bertrand Russell) often prefer novel creativity over mundane clockwork. Speech requires acts of the imagination in order for speakers to understand and be understood. Through the linguistic imagination, "...individuals integrate knowledge, perceptions, and emotions in some creative way which draws on their energies in order that they may enter into new mental states or new relations with their milieu" (Friedrich 1986.18). One understands the words of another through a poetic act, through an exploration of the hypothetical realm of alterity. Any linguistics which relies solely on the componential analysis of ideal elements misses this point entirely. By reducing speech to text and analyzing that text, linguists have failed to note how "meaning always exceeds the boundaries of the text" (Zhang 1992.126). Interpreting speech entails the synthetic negotiation of language rather than an analysis of already given elements and formulae.

Thus, the language negotiated in dialogue might depend on a socially and culturally necessary illusion that commonality has been achieved between speaker and hearer. "Together they negotiate a reality and accommodate to each other; they enter into a conspiracy of 'understanding'" (Crapanzano 1992.82). The intersubjective process simultaneously relies upon and produces a common ground, perhaps in the form of an ethos or Weltanschauung of a particular culture or context. Through language, speakers enact a reciprocity of dialogue, a non-economic give and take which underlies all forms
of cultural interaction. In speaking, we create in others an obligation to respond, thereby creating a social relationship (cf. Mauss 1990). Moreover, the transcendence of the self through language is limited to a speech community, and for this reason, an awareness of language also implies an awareness of the group itself (cf. Durkheim 1965). The use of language in sacred cultural activities such as ritual or prayer, not to mention the presence of liturgy or doctrine in literal cultures, ensures that language and culture are coterminous as well as contiguous. For these reasons, "...speech is the necessary means of communion; it is the one indispensable instrument for creating the ties of the moment without which unified social action is impossible" (Malinowski 1947:310).

Since communication depends upon variation--it cannot rely on unity alone--then it is not so hard to accept the fact that there are so many genuinely varied languages in the world. As speakers strive to understand and be understood, they make their impact on a language; they participate in a language community's creative reinvention of a language, and they use language to participate in the continuities and changes of their cultural traditions. Languages change because they are constantly re-negotiated during imaginative acts of intersubjectivity (see chapter III). Thus, idealism fails not only with respect to the single language, but also with respect to the abstraction of universal grammar. This is part of the reason why Sapir argued that:

Speech is a human activity that varies without assignable limit as we pass from social group to social group, because it is a purely historical heritage of a group, the product of long continued social usage.... Speech is a non-instinctive, acquired, 'cultural' function (1921:4).

By conceiving of language as a natural rather than a historical range of phenomena, linguists have found the natural in the cultural, mistaken the categories of European
languages for the categories of universal grammar. By denying the reality of difference, linguists have stopped far short of understanding the complexity of cross-linguistic variation. In his discussion of shape-class markings—which are prominently featured in many unrelated languages of East Asia, Africa, and Native America—Friedrich has commented that the "Trobiand particles are 'exotic' only from the point of view of Indo-European and other languages where shape is relatively peripheral or unimportant among the obligatory, overt morphosyntactic categories" (1977.391). This suggests that categories like 'preposition' or 'participle' might seem equally exotic from the perspective of another language.

To say that languages are not natural objects but rather cultural and historical products has many important implications for the ideology of structuralist linguistics. Concepts are defined and understood through both experiences with the world and through creative acts within a fundamentally historical discourse, and so it no longer makes sense to say that different languages as used by different cultures use different words for the same concepts (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980.181). Concepts are understood through discourses which rely on names to reify the concept, for concepts tag a discernibly discrete range of phenomenon in culturally specific ways. Thus, "between the signifier and the signified, the connection is not arbitrary; on the contrary it is necessary" (Benveniste 1986b.725f). Although there is a natural world, our understanding of that world has been mediated by our experiences with language, just as our language use reflects our experiences in the world. "Arbitrariness is neither the imposition of culture on nature, nor a reflection of nature within culture; it is the naturalness of the culture...."
Since the concepts we employ are not given in advance of our encounter with a linguistic tradition, there is no point in arguing that meaning lies outside the mind in some scientific community. On Putman's Twin Earth (1990), water is not water (chemically) but something which resembles water in every way. So what? If the difference in chemical composition has no bearing on anyone outside the chemistry lab, then the chemists' authority to judge issues of semantics should be seriously questioned. Equally strange, however, is the suggestion that we all share a universal language of thought called mentalese (Pinker 1994.57ff). In this view, distinct cultures share the same range of strange coincidences as we discover between Earth and Twin Earth. People coming from different worlds of cultural experience encode and decode the same thoughts. Facts and concepts are the same to all; only the actual parametric settings and phonological representations are different. According to this vision, mentalese provides the commonality of thought which super-ideally transcends not just individuals but individual languages.

For structuralist cognitive scientists like Pinker, language and thought are distinct, and both are only the shadows of UG and mentalese showing up on the cave wall. This is "proven" by reference to a variety of thought experiments: we sometimes are aware that our words do not convey our true thoughts, or that we sometimes are unable to recollect what's on the tip of our tongues, or that a text has a gist different from the text itself, etc. However, none of these objections suggest that meaning is universal and completely independent from language. Moreover, linguistic relativists do not equate language with
thought but merely insist that we appreciate that the role language plays in lived context and cultural tradition can have an effect on the way we act linguistically as we understand ourselves, our world, and one another. Furthermore, we have every reason to believe that languages are equivalent with respect to their ability to serve as a medium of thought. This does not, of course, mean that languages are underlyingly identical (cf. Spiro 1987.70).

Languages differ in non-trivial ways, and some of these differences are in fact significantly related to the interrelationship between thoughts and expressions. Languages provide a certain economy for articulating our experiences about the world, and so make a difference in how we segment experience and participate as a member of a culture. Sapir, in calling language "...a particular how of thought," (1921.218) conceived of language as both a means and a manner of thinking. Language does not comprise all of thinking, but language is not separate from thought either. Humboldt thought of the relationship between mental activity and language as reciprocal (1988.48,54). Thus, people are not beholden to their language to think according to pre-specified lines. People can change their language, applying their *energeia* of imaginative speech to the *ergon* of language tradition. However, the conservative factors of *ergon* sometimes exert an influence the other way, whereby one’s speech becomes flavored or colored by the conservatism of a speech community’s linguistic tradition. As Vygotsky was to later point out, "a word devoid of thought is a dead thing, and a thought unembodied in words remains a shadow. The connection between them, however, is not a preformed and constant one.... A word is a microcosm of human consciousness" (1962.153).
Although thought and language are not the same, languages do vary in the relative emphasis placed upon certain modes of knowledge, action, and experience. Since different cultures construe the world in different meaningful ways, "language can discover meanings for it speakers.... Language is at one and the same time helping and retarding our exploration of experience...." ( Sapir 1933.10f). Using Gadamer's terminology, languages provide fore-understandings by which we pre-judge the interpretation of our experiences. Some of these prejudices are helpful, others hinder an understanding which is rewarding to the self. However, it is important to bear in mind that although we "dissect nature along lines laid down by our languages," (Whorf 1959.213) this does not mean that our minds are completely incapable of challenging the ideas or ideologies embedded in language.

Most anthropologists and many linguists have accepted the idea that "the network of cultural patterns of a civilization is indexed in the language which expresses that civilization" (Sapir 1973.147). However, Berlin and Kay's color term research strongly suggests that color concepts have a biological basis. Although different cultures define the range of colors differently, all cultures pick out the same paragon, or best exemplar, of a color. Moreover, if one knows how many color terms a culture has, one can predict which colors are included in that terminology. Although this research seems to suggest that categorization is not up to the particular language but rather contingent on natural kinds in the world, much also seems to depend upon the anatomy of the eye (Lakoff 1987.25). Moreover, these kinds of discussions only focus on intentional properties used in denotation. Different cultures might share the same colors, but different cultures place
these same colors into very different systems of meaning and significance. Thus, China and America might have the same idea of what "white" (+) means. They differ, however, in the cultural significance attributed to white. In China, white is the color of death (pale as a ghost, etc.) while in the United States and most of Europe, white is the color of marriage (pure as snow, etc.). Thus, colors are associated not just as properties belonging to certain objects, but also as similes indicating or connoting certain beliefs and practices. Among the Ndembu of southeast Africa, the colors red, white, and black are present, as predicted by Berlin and Kay. However, Berlin and Kay do nothing to account for why white should symbolize the power and goodness of cassava meal, mother's milk, and semen; why red should symbolize the blood of birth and murder; or why black should stand for death, disease, and witchcraft (Turner 1967.69ff). Thus, even in something as "hard-wired" as color terminology one finds much cultural symbolism than natural reference.

Some of the denotations and most of the connotations furnished by languages differ cross-linguistically in non-trivial ways. Since languages emerge from distinct cultural traditions, albeit from traditions which are continuously reinvented through the enactment of languages, theories of universal grammar can only provide an emaciated schematic of the flesh of language. By claiming to transcend the differences among languages, theories negate difference, often denying that any difference exists. But only someone who has never struggled with the task of learning a foreign language could suggest that the differences between languages are trivial. Only someone who has never faced an insurmountable problem of translation could suggest that the relationship
between sound and concept is arbitrary. Theories are never exact because translations are never exact, and so the abandonment of UG's super-idealism promotes an awareness of translation. Since theory has been unable to solve the task of translation, one might instead look to translation to understand the nature of cross-linguistic variation. As Tyler has put it:

One gets the distinct impression that those who argue that translatability signifies the underlying unity of language or reason have never struggled with translation or attempted to see the world from the point of view of another language (1978.70).

Thus, an interpretive approach to cross-linguistic difference must consider the issues confronting the translator.

If Sapir was right that languages vary without limit, then how can translation ever be possible? Just as intersubjectivity shows that communication is both possible and impossible, the answer to the question of translation seems to be that translation is simultaneously possible and impossible. Translation is possible because one feels after translation that the essential idea, the gist of what is said, has been conveyed despite the act of translation. However, translation is impossible in that one cannot feel that a translation ever carries all the implications of the original. Translations convey what is said, but they lose much in not precisely reproducing the saying (Grice's "putting it that way") of the original. "The translator can never be sure of himself, he must never be. He must always be dissatisfied with what he does because ideally, platonically, there is a perfect solution, but he will never find it" (Rabassa 1989.12).

In intersubjectivity, speaker and hearer accept that an act of communication has taken place. They are willing to trust that the word of the other is close enough to their
own word to be treated as identical. Likewise, the translator accepts that translation has
been accomplished, not because a formal unity has been found, but because an idea has
been found which is simultaneously in both languages and in neither language. The
translator can only overcome the foreignness of languages by imagining a particular idea
which bridges the existential gap between languages in a particular way (cf. Benjamin
1992). As with intersubjectivity, translation constructs a highly contextualized and
specifically positioned unity, a dialogically negotiated momentary end to difference.
Thus, the dialectics of self and other and of one language and another both resemble the
hermeneutical negotiation between self and ideology as envisioned by Voloshinov:

*Any true understanding is dialogic in nature.* Understanding is to utterance as one
line of a dialogue is to the next. Understanding strives to match the speaker's
word with a *counter word*. Only in understanding a word in a foreign tongue is
an attempt made to match it with the "same" word in one's own language
(1973.102).

The phenomenological gaps of communication, translation, and understanding are all
imperfectly yet sufficiently resolved through the dialectics of dialogue. Rather than using
theory to deny and negate difference, an interpretive approach to grammar makes use of
phenomenology to appreciate the constitutive role difference plays in all understanding.

Even if two words taken from two different languages refer to the "same" class
of objects, actions, qualities, or relations, they might not function the same way in all
contexts. Thus the Ndembu word for red, while referring to the "same" red as every other
language, also has a symbolic function which is relative to a culture. For this reason, a
scientific understanding of the world can not provide any real anchor for semantics.
Defining water as H₂O might provide an unwavering datum for the pegging of meaning,
but it fails to appreciate the metaphorical and metonymic wanderings of lexical extensions. Despite Putnam's claim that H₂O provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for selecting the extensions denoted by the term "water" (1990), H₂O provides no assistance at all in the translation of expressions like:

\[
\begin{align*}
H₂O & \text{ under the bridge} \\
his eyes & H₂O'd \\
H₂O & \text{ it down} \\
an & H₂O-y grave, etc.
\end{align*}
\]

Moreover, very few ideas in language are so easily analyzed into scientifically determined components. Although we might know that water is H₂O or that salt is NaCl, "...we have no precise way of defining words like love or hate, which concern situations that have not been accurately classified--and these latter are in the great majority" (Bloomfield 1933.139; cf. Haugen 1969). People construct meanings for entities, actions and properties by experiencing and interacting, by being in and working through the worlds of culture and discourse. The translator cannot rely upon an objective ideal like chemistry nor an a priori structure like universal grammar. Rather, the translator must make use of his own experiences with or within another language in order to construct what approximates an intersubjectivity between languages.

Two languages are never just ephemeral reflections of the same underlying form, and so the translator must overcome the prejudices of his own language in order to appreciate the connotations of the other language. This is perhaps related to the differences between L1 and L2 learning. In L1 learning, a speaker confronts language objectively, not because he is attuned to an innate ideal, but because he is attuned to nothing and so is prepared for anything. With L2, however, the learner already has a
language which is closely associated with a complex conceptual system. Thus, L2 learning is as much hampered as helped by translation, as one attempts to associate the new wine of another language with the old bottles of L1 "conceptual content". If the "conceptual contents" of languages are never the same, then the L2 learner, like the translator, must learn to forget his own language. However, even when using a second language, this forgetting is never complete. One's first language comprises such an important part of one's self that one is never successful in getting the subject to conform to the object.

To learn a foreign language should... be to acquire a new standpoint in the world hitherto possessed.... But because we always carry over, more or less, our own world view, and even our own language-view, this outcome is not purely and completely experienced (Humboldt 1988.60).

And so, one is always left with the idea that something is lost in translation. Schleiermacher (1992) felt that economy is most effected by translation. Thus, an original utterance might say more than it says in translation on account of the original's unsaid propositions. An utterance in one language might be denotationally translatable, but more often than not there is much more to an utterance than its denotational reference. The art and economy of the saying is often lost in translation as are cultural strategies of shifter use. Moreover, translation hardly ever conveys enough cultural background, enough of the unsaid, to be interpretable in the same way as the original. A translation cannot economically convey the affective dimension of a text's poetry, nor can it economically provide the cognitive background necessary for the intended interpretation of a text. Translation's difficulty in providing cognitive context is not unlike the situation found in ethnography:
All words which describe the native social order, all expressions referring to native beliefs, to specific customs, ceremonies, magical rites--all such words are obviously absent from English as from any European language. Such words can only be translated into English, not by giving their imaginary equivalent--a real one obviously cannot be found--but by explaining the meaning of each of them through an exact Ethnographic account of the sociology, culture, and tradition of that native community (Malinowski 1947.299).

In the act of translation, a translator must often make a hard choice between preserving some of the expressive economy of the original or supplementing the said with the unsaid which was presupposed in the original.

And so, the difficulty of translation comes from trying to represent the meaning which flows beyond the boundaries of the text. An awareness of translation, and not its denial, can therefore help linguists to appreciate the poetic connotations as reflected in other languages. While theoretical linguistics translates (without loss?) the expressions of other languages into a universal format of representation, interpretive linguistics explores the gap between languages to appreciate the poetic and presuppositional economies of other languages. Such an approach does not rely on a reference to an objective truth which languages are supposed to label. By problematizing translation rather than assuming translation, an interpretive essay on another language can bring to light how other linguistic traditions have imaginatively and creatively manufactured their own standards of truth and manners of expression. As Nietzsche has put it, in his special way of saying, "the various languages, juxtaposed, show that words are never concerned with truth, never with adequate expression; otherwise there would not be so many languages" (1989.248). In an extramoral sense, all languages lie. They create fictive ways for talking about the world, and linguistic discourses should talk about rather than
deny the presence of such fictions.

A humanistic linguistics could foster an appreciation of the poetic and fictive artfulness of languages. For this reason, "poetic language... is the locus of the most interesting differences between languages and should be studied as such" (Friedrich 1986.17). Poetic changes within a language, such as the conventionalization of metaphor or word order change, might not seem poetic to the users of the language. This is because what was once creative and imaginative becomes reinterpreted as literal or obligatory. Thus, appreciating the poetics of another language might entail assuming an aesthetic stance toward another language in order to glean the tropical distance separating--and in a sense, unifying--languages. A poetic approach to linguistic differences entails understanding not just the poetics of another language, but an awareness of what meanings arise in imaginative and metaphorical acts of comparison:

This process of isolating a word and fixing its meaning outside any context takes on added force when comparing different languages, i.e. when trying to match a word with an equivalent word in another language. In the process of linguistic treatment, meaning is constructed, as it were, on the border of at least two languages (Voloshinov 1973.80).

While translation requires the use of one language's expression to translate an expression of another language, metaphor entails the use of one expression to denote the content of another expression. Both translation and metaphor comprise transfers of meaning from one form to another. Even the terms metaphor and translation are related. Metaphor comes from the Greek for "bearing across," while translation comes from the Latin word *translatio*, also meaning "bearing across." Thus, the study of metaphor has much relevance to the problem of translation. Much has obviously been written on
metaphor, and so I will be limiting my discussion to two approaches which deal solely with the role metaphor plays in everyday thought and conversation.

Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) account of metaphor focuses upon the role metaphors play in the structuring and restructuring of a speaker’s cognition. Metaphors can be unified in structural gestalts so that a metaphor like "time is money" provides a basis for a range of metaphors concerning the spending (or wasting or losing or saving) of time. Metaphors are grounded in experience, often in physical experience. Thus, metaphors enable one to "conceptualize the nonphysical in terms of the physical" (1980.59). While metaphors are often based upon experienced similarities, it is also true that "...the metaphor, by virtue of giving coherent structure to a range of our experiences, creates similarities of a new kind" (1980.151). Since metaphors contain an implicit comparison, metaphors also help determine the individual’s conceptual structure by leading him to "comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another, necessarily [hiding] other aspects of the concept" (1980.10). Thus, metaphors are more than something out of the repertoire of poets. They are essential to our everyday linguistic repertoires, our conceptualization of reality, and our organization of experience.

Searle’s pragmatic account of metaphor looks at natural language metaphor from the point of view of the listener. For Searle, the problem of metaphor amounts to understanding how a listener identifies a metaphor and how a metaphor is translated into a proposition. According to this pragmatic account of metaphor, utterances are treated as metaphors if they are "obviously defective if taken literally" (Searle 1990c.426). In other words, a listener faced with a non-sense (literally false) sentence gives the speaker
the benefit of the doubt and listens metaphorically. For Searle, metaphors are propositions encoded into utterances which must be decoded by listeners in order to ascertain the original proposition. The decoding is achieved not by synthesizing the literal and metaphorical idea, but by using context and the metaphor’s figurative reference as signposts leading to the literal meaning which is actually being expressed. Since Searle’s theory requires that a metaphor’s utterance meaning and propositional meaning remain absolutely distinct, he claims that:

...strictly speaking, in metaphor there is never a change in meaning; diachronically speaking, metaphors do indeed initiate semantic changes, but to the extent that there has been a genuine change in meaning, so that the word or expression no longer means what it did, to precisely that extent the locution is no longer metaphorical (1990c.413).

This approach to metaphor obviously relies on an idealist semantics which conceives of reference as well-defined. For this reason, semantic change must be catastrophic; one well-defined system of meaning must give way to another well-defined system without any fuzzy intermediary stage.

But everything discussed thus far has suggested that systems of meaning are not so rigid. There is no higher authority of chemists who must decide that on a certain date "cool" will no longer refer to temperature. The problem with Searle’s account is that his view depends upon an unrealistic picture of the abstract system of language. Meanings do change in the course of dialogue, and the effect of these small changes upon the whole of language is incremental and statistical rather than catastrophic and formal. Searle himself seems to waver on this: "...[the hearer] has to contribute more to the communication than just passive uptake.... it is often the case that we use metaphor
precisely because there is no literal expression that expresses what we mean" (1990c.428). Even in Searle’s account, the words of metaphor say more than what the utterance means. Metaphors are not just a language game of encoding and decoding, and yet metaphors are not just the creation of similarity on the part of a thinking individual. As speaker’s improvisation and hearer’s epistemological re-creation, metaphor comprises the basis for an intersubjective fabrication of a common language.

Without an idealist framing of language, communication and translation can no longer be assumed or taken for granted. Communication does not follow from rules and references but rather depends upon the creative energies and empathic desires of speakers and hearers. Speakers and hearers do not simply rely upon an already complete and well-formed language in order to understand and be understood. They must re-create that language by employing aesthetic devices like metaphor: "Logic alone is as incapable of leading a person to new ideas as grammar alone is incapable of inspiring poems and as theory of harmony alone is incapable of inspiring sonatas" (Turner 1974.52).

An aesthetic stance is required to bring together incommensurables like subject and object. An equally aesthetic stance is required if one is to overcome the difference between languages. But just as metaphor allows one to create language with the other, metaphor might also provide the key to understanding other languages. If interpretive grammar is to provide a renewed appreciation of cross-linguistic differences, a good place to start might be to gloss the metaphors found in other grammars which have emerged through creative traditions. As part of a human science operating in an interpretive frame, linguists might begin to describe "exotic" languages not as objects of nature but as works
of art.
III. Rhetoric and the Flux of Grammar

Because languages are negotiated through intersubjective dialogue, speakers and hearers often use artistic means to negotiate their language. Thus, art does not comprise a supplement to grammar. Instead, grammar might be thought of as the product of the devices of folk rhetoric, including metaphor, as they are performed by speakers in the course of a language's historical development. Language alone cannot provide a commonality of thought, and so speakers employ their folk rhetoric to provide the basis for grammatical and lexical innovations. In this way, languages are continuously reinvented and renewed, ever flowing toward (but never reaching) an ideal of perfect understanding and complete communication.

Although language may predispose speakers and hearers to think about their world in a certain way, people are not confined to live out their conceptual lives within the iron cage of their grammar. Rather, people have a freedom to alter or mark their expressions using conventional or innovative devices. This deliberate alteration of language makes clear to hearers that the saying conveys something significant about the sayer's perspective on the said. Natural language, being flexible and pliant in limited but significant ways, permits enough variation that speakers can speak creatively in more than the generative sense:

Whenever something comes between the internal speaking and its communication, one must turn to the art of speaking. So the art of speaking is due to the
speaker's anxiety that something in his language may be unfamiliar to the hearer (Gadamer 1992.?).  

Voloshinov has also argued that the plasticity of language plays a significant role in interpersonal communication, writing that "...what is important for the speaker about a linguistic form is not that it is a stable and always self-equivalent signal, but that it is an always changeable and adaptive sign" (1973.68). Not only do meanings for expressions change relative to particular contexts, but meanings can also be altered according to a speaker's desires within the art of saying. Speakers and hearers speak creatively, not just by combining lexical items and syntactic rules in novel ways, but by lending form to their imaginations through what Friedrich has called the poetic potential of language. "...The poetic potential of language--not logic or basic reference--most massively determines the imagination" (1986.43).  

The dialectics of intersubjectivity do not amount to a simple averaging of ideas. In dialogue, one is often more interested in persuading another towards one's will than in achieving cognitive communion. The use of unusual expressions might signal a departure from the I-lessness of dialogue and assert the presence and perspective of the self. Natural language includes rhetoric in part because speakers desire to show their will rather than just negotiate a representation:  

Plain style is the unspeakable; it erases the traces of speech because it seeks the thoughts objects make, the thoughts speech can only distort because it signifies the subject before the object. Rhetoric is the mark of the author's will, and all allusion, allegory, metaphor, simile, and ornaments of style are its instruments (Tyler 1987.8).  

However, there are other times in which a speaker may wish to erase any indication of style. At such times, more subtle forms of rhetoric can take hold in the enactment of
speech. Subtler forms of rhetoric are not as noticeable because they are more pervasive, and they are more pervasive because they fall within a society's reckoning of what constitutes acceptable use of language. Such ideas of acceptability are linked not to logicality or grammaticality, but appropriateness relative to an indexing of the construed context. By indicating a particular culture's way of construing contexts, natural systems of rhetoric relate language to other aspects of a culture:

The indexical plain of meaningfulness properly encompasses the folk realm of rhetoric (the system of language use), how language signals derive their socially-understood effects in various socially-constituted situations of discourse. That is, to understand how speaking (or other similar uses of language) is effective social action, accomplishing such various social ends as warning, insulting, marrying, condemning, christening, growing yams, making sores heal, creating light in the world, etc., we must systematize the description of relationships of coexistence (understood copresence) that hold between elements of speech and elements comprising the context in which speech elements are uttered (Silverstein ?.205)

Whether relatively systematic (as in the case of performatives) or relatively chaotic (as in the case of a child's pleading with his parents), folk rhetoric relates directly to how people use language to engage in cultural practice. To understand the dialectics of cultural consensus, one must appreciate how rhetoric plays a role in the construction of that pragmatic Weltanschauung discussed by Malinowski.

Two thousand years before the onset of modern linguistics, rhetoricians and orators were fully aware that rhetoric comprises a part of the everyday language of everyday folk. Neither Cicero nor Quintilian thought of rhetoric as something alien to the common language, as something snobbishly imposed upon a public in the course of oratory. Cicero wrote of metaphorical tropes as being "...of the commonest occurrence in the language of townsman and rustic alike," while Quintillion thought of metaphor as "...so
natural a turn of speech that it is often employed unconsciously or by uneducated persons" (quoted in Vickers 1988.299). In addition to tropes like metaphor, everyday speakers also make use of rhetorical figures. While tropes depend upon some sort of transfer in meaning along the paradigmatic axis, figures entail an alteration along the syntagmatic axis. While tropes substitute one expression for another (metonymically, allegorically, metaphorically, etc.), figures substitute one schema for another. Thus, figures involve "...a placing or disposition of words into a structure which is natural yet goes beyond the normal or minimal needs of communication" (Vickers 1988.315). Whereas tropes have an obvious bearing on the semantic interpretation of a sentence, the relationship between figure and meaning is much more difficult to isolate:

Tropes deal with transferences [of meaning]: words are used instead of other words, the figurative is used instead of the literal. The figures of rhetoric involve no transference. They are artistically changed forms of expression, deviations from the usual, but not transferences (Nietzsche 1988.65).

All theories of grammar deal with figures, although all seem to avoid discussing the artistic qualities which figures present. In structuralist theories of language, figures are treated as surface realizations of transformed propositions. To structuralists, figures are not due to any individual creativity but are rather due to meaningless transformations (old UG) or they stem from a lack of specific restraint against argument movement (new UG). Functionalists, however, view figures as meaningful. To functionalists, figures represent marked construction types which follow language specific schematic patterns or universal patterns of iconic expression. With limited success, functionalists have used quantification to statistically determine how marked constructions correlate with features of linguistic context (cf. Hopper and Thompson 1980; Givon 1979). However, in their
efforts to force the subtlety of figures into scientific models, functionalists have not succeeded in clearly defining their variables (such as salience or givenness), and so their statistical correlations have only led to vague generalizations about universal tendencies. Thus, in an effort to locate linguistics as a natural science, structuralists and functionalists have both failed to appreciate that metaphors and marked constructions, however much they might be "cognitive" or "pragmatic," are nevertheless no different from the tropes and figures discussed in the ancient field of rhetoric.

An interpretive approach to grammar begins with the recognition that "...all natural language is poetic in part" (Friedrich 1986.23). However, as the effects of figure on meaning are not always obvious, an analysis of the poetry of natural language requires one to entertain the possibility that figures play out into the subtler, less algorhythmic, dimensions of a language. Through subtlety, figures articulate what cannot be said in the said but only through the saying:

Aesthetic effects are achieved, whether through the choice of marked forms or through use of unmarked forms in contexts which mark them. Syntactic marking is at least as frequent as any other kind.... Markings with form and context are one way to create a subtler and deeper language, and they may delight the poet to the extent of becoming self-conscious devices (Friedrich 1986.34).

Thus, figures may function more indexically than referentially. They indicate to the hearer that the speaker has more to say than what has been said. Figures, by further indexing the interpersonal dynamics of communication, allow speakers and hearers to confront and overcome language's inability to fashion a common mind. Through the poetic arts of speaking, all users of language can moreover create a shared mythology, for "poetry... is the symbolic process by which the individual mediates between the music
of a natural language and the (nuances of) mythic meaning" (Friedrich 1986.39). In resembling the ebb and flow of music, poetic language relies as much upon the emotive ordeals of the limbic system as upon the cognitive systems of the cerebral cortex.

Jakobson, too, has remarked on how poetic language resembles consciously created music. Jakobson conceived of poetics as structured repetition, a rhythmic recurrence of sames. These sames might be the same sounds (as in alliteration or rime), the same rhythm (as in length or accent meters), or the same ideas (as in the semantic parallelism of Chinese poetry). Thus, poetic language provides speech with an aesthetic rhythm, not unlike that of music. "Only in poetry with its regular reiteration of equivalent units is the time of speech flow experienced as it is--to cite another semiotic pattern--with musical time" (Jakobson 1987.72). But in addition to being musical, poetic language also comprises a form of self-consciousness about language. Both metalanguage and poetry are reflexive uses of language. However, whereas metalanguage reflects upon the code of the language, poetic language allows speakers to "...focus on the message for its own sake..." (Jakobson 1987.69). By focussing on the message, speakers use creative language, including rhetorical figures, to refer to the act of saying as well as to the reference of what is said. In this way, the poetic potential of language is realized in the rhetorical enactment of intersubjective communication.

Aristotle implied an association between rhetoric and indexicals, between the structure of personal persuasion and the grammatical encoding of person:

Of the three modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind [ethos] depends on the character of the speaker; the second [pathos] on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third [logos] on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (Aristotle
A speaker, in suggesting that his character says something about the validity of what is said, may say something about himself even while referring to something else. This indexing of the speaker coincides with an implicature in the first person. When speakers use their words to alter the beliefs and assumptions of the hearer, they are in some way suggesting something about their expectations and interpretations of their audience. In being mindful of the audience, speakers presuppose the second person. The third form of persuasion seems to be indexing language. However, since world and word are isomorphic in the metaphysics of Aristotle (Aristotle 1963), saying that proof is in the words is not unlike saying that proof is in the world. Logical persuasion belongs to reference and so indexes the third person, the world beyond speaker and hearer. Thus, indexical oppositions of person, which form part of every grammar on earth (Benveniste 1986b.730), play an important role in the enactment of rhetoric.

The Western tradition of rhetoric has generally been associated with agonism, with argumentative persuasion. For this reason, rhetoric has been degraded in the popular imagination as either empty artifice or as an insidious attempt at mind control. However, rhetoric has always had a place in the cultures of the West, perhaps now more than ever. Even populist folk in the United States seem receptive to creative advertizing, crafty TV lawyers, and permanent presidential campaigns. Rhetoric is inescapable because it is as much a part of speaking as is reference, and people everywhere have tolerated rhetoric as long as the perceived integrity of the communicative relationship has not been violated.

Speakers and hearers enter into a dialogue by entering into a kind of covenant of
trust. This covenant comprises Grice's maxims for appropriate language use: "...make your conversational contributions such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (1989.26f). According to Grice's maxims, speakers and hearers agree to certain by-laws of the saying which make discourse possible. According to these maxims, one should say neither too little nor too much and should speak truthfully, relevantly, and in an acceptable way. All participants in a discourse follow these rules because they are willing to trust and hope to be trusted. When a speaker's words seem to belie a flouting of one or more maxims, the bond of trust motivates the listener to search for a meaning beyond the said. Thus, a falsehood might be interpreted as irony or sarcasm rather than as a lie. In this way, the bond of trust in the truthfulness of the sayer (ethos) can lead a hearer into a willingness to find significance in even an apparently false statement (pathos). Thus, the saying can—with the help of rhetoric—lead to meaning beyond the said (logos).

In formal agonistic rhetoric, a speaker might in fact wish to deceive the hearer. Instead of using a falsehood to establish a trope of irony, a speaker might use tropes and figures to conceal a lie. Thus, speakers need to know when and when not to use rhetoric, as "...one must not be reminded of the art of substitution, because the listener will be distrustful and will fear being deceived. Therefore, in rhetoric, there is also an 'imitation of nature' as a basic means to persuade" (Nietzsche 1989.37). This suggests that rhetoric can be abused and so can take on the lustre of artifice. However, this passage also makes clear that the contrast between rhetorical language and natural language is by no means absolute or formally determined. Moreover, to say that rhetoric should sound like
"natural" language further suggests that much exists in natural language which can be used rhetorically. I therefore agree with Nietzsche's contention that:

...the rhetorical is a further development... of the artistic means which are already found in language. There is obviously no unrhetorical 'naturalness' of language to which one could appeal; language itself is the result of purely rhetorical acts (Nietzsche 1989.21).

Speakers and hearers communicate intersubjectively rather than through a mediating third of objective semantics or universal grammar. As such, they must use the tropes and figures of rhetoric in order to overcome the limitations of language, thereby adding their own influence to an ever flowing, ever changing linguistic tradition. Linguistic practices have a cumulative effect on grammar, for linguistic changes are never like the structuralists' catastrophic toggling of a switch (cf. Saussure 1959.98). Enactments of discourse have a collective influence on the styles of individual grammars, and so even rigid properties of grammar must have their origin in stylistic variation (cf. Voloshinov 1973.51). Thus, seemingly ironclad and steadfast rules of a grammar may be determining the use of a construction type which was at one time novel and imaginative:

A spontaneous utterance, wrong from the point of view of grammar, may have charm and aesthetic value. Absolute correctness is achieved only beyond natural language, in mathematics. Our daily speech continually fluctuates between the ideals of mathematical and of imaginative harmony (Vygotsky 1962.127).

Languages are built from creative manipulations of a social standard, and as such they are best understood as the historical products of imaginative cultural traditions and not as the mere instantiations of a timeless and rigid form.

The rhetoric of the folk has a definite impact on what becomes the structure of a
language, for speakers are always free to experiment at the limits of their language. Humboldt was correct in suggesting that although our thoughts and expressive economies are in a real way influenced by a conservative linguistic tradition (ergon), we nevertheless have the freedom to manipulate and construe an old language in new ways (energeia) (1988.64f). Humboldt believed that although the individual mind held little power compared to the "might of language," one could nevertheless claim that:

Only through [language's] uncommon plasticity, the possibility of assimilating new forms in very different ways without damage to general understanding, and through the dominion exercised by every living mind over its dead heritage, is balance somewhat restored (1988.63).

Early proponents of grammaticalization theory, chief among them Meillet (Hopper and Traugott 1993.23), have commented on the important role expressivity often plays in the innovation of grammatical forms. Because linguistic traditions seem at times to provide only cliche and banal means for expression, speakers often make use of their freedom to alter their linguistic tradition.

...New and innovative ways of saying things are brought about by speakers seeking to enhance expressivity. This is typically done through 'deroutinizing' of constructions, in other words, through finding new ways to say old things. Expressivity serves the dual function of improving informativeness for the hearer at the same time allowing the speaker to convey attitudes toward the situation, including the speech situation (Hopper and Traugott 1993.65).

Novel expressions are effective--they bring a hearer into the right attitude about the sayer and the said--because they are novel, not in spite of being novel, and so folk rhetoric has everything to do with the creation of what is new in language. Without the transferences of tropes, without the marked schemata of figures, there can be neither lexical nor syntactic change. Sapir noted how "the too frequent use of a word... may reduce it to a
commonplace term so that it needs to be replaced by a new word" (1933.24). Humboldt also wrote that metaphors can "... become so worn out in daily use that they scarcely continue to be felt" (1988.87).

All of what is now regarded as the static system of a grammar was at one time new. When an expression is novel, it has the quality of expressiveness, acting as a figure on the ground of language. After repeated use, however, the tropes and figures of folk rhetoric become literal words and obligatory rules. Thus, even the literal, "truth-bound", expressions of a language were at one time creative and expressive:

What is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adored, and after long use seem solid, canonical, and binding to a nation. Truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they are illusions, worn out metaphors without sensory impact, coins which have lost their image and now can be used only as metal, no longer as coins (Nietzsche 1989.250).

As a social process, language unfolds through rapid and irregular leaps; but as a social product, language appears as a regular structure governed by norms which seems to change only slowly if at all (cf. Turner 1974.36). Thus, language seems like a rigid and stable instrument of truth when in fact it originates in and unfolds through creative acts of the imagination.

But not all loss of expressivity comes about through the forgetting of creative transference. Lexical elements are also rigidly structured through diachronic processes of morphological attraction (cliticization, affixation) and phonological loss (weakening, assimilation). Thus, words which were once novel collocations or compounds become reduced to single words which are no longer internally analyzable by speakers of a
language (Hopper 1990.158). Moreover, the linguistic habits characteristic of the social group tend toward a sedimentation into structure. After prolonged periods of use, the flesh of a language becomes fused to the skeleton of a structure. Expressions can become grammaticalized or lexicalized only through a forgetting of etymology, a forgetting of the original metaphor or figural collocation which gave rise to the expression’s expressivity. Without the rhetorically expressive enactment of intersubjectivity, language would cease to renew itself as an expressive medium capable of ensuring speaker and hearer that they have come upon a common language.

This is not to say that forms do not grammaticalized because they are needed. They are not responding to a telos of conceptual necessity. Instead, new forms compete side by side with older expressions which bear the same meaning (Hopper and Traugott 1993.123ff). For this reason, the line between grammar and style becomes nearly impossible to discern when competing forms exist (Voloshinov 1973.126). Intensifiers provide a case in point. When a speaker wishes to emphasize something which is said, they will use an intensifier to assert the truth of what is said. However, since intensifiers are used so frequently by so many speakers as a means of exaggerating, intensifiers often come to seem inadequate, no longer conveying the emotion they once did (Hopper and Traugott 1983.121). Expressions like "really," or "truly," or "very" all at one time meant that a statement is true. However, their banality has led them to seem inadequately suited for the task of expressing either intensity or veracity, and so one hears today "literally" used more and more in the sense of "very."

Thus, changes in a grammar take place through acts of reanalysis, which is "the
result of abduction" (Hopper and Traugott 1993.41). Abduction is the synthesis of induction (understanding through accumulated outside experience) and deduction (understanding through internal reasoning and recollection). In abduction, we project a memory onto what we perceive in order to synthesize the outside experience with our internal memories and reasoning. Abductive listening in the course of dialogue stems from our associating our own word with the word which we hear. Since the hearer might analyze what is heard differently from how the speaker himself synthesized what is said, a reanalysis takes place in which old expressions become interpreted in novel ways. However, since reanalysis amounts to fictively taking the word of the other as one’s own words through a role metaphor, reanalysis seems to emerge not only through abduction as also through intersubjectivity. Thus, as with the deliberate reanalyses frequent in folk rhetoric, unintentional reanalyses take place unwittingly across the existential gap between speaker and hearer.

A common form of reanalysis entails the reinterpretation of a phrase or grouping of words as a single unit. After hearing a group of words frequently uttered together with the same meaning, speakers generally begin to treat such word groupings as a single unit, or idiom. In time, such groupings might be reanalyzed as single words (Hopper and Traugott 1993.22). Some of these become cliches and banalities; being used so often with little or no referential content, they can come to function indexically. The use of "discourse ready-mades" such as 'or whatever,' 'y’know,' 'the thing is that,' 'basically its like,' etc., play an indexical and metacommunicative role in lubricating a discourse, ensuring that speaker and hearer are on familiar (non-formal) terms and can take certain
liberties with language in ensuring that the saying is comfortable (Tyler 1987).

It is important to recognize that linguistic changes which take place within the space spanned by intersubjectivity are neither progressions nor corruptions. The changes of language in their enactment reveal a never wholly successful striving towards the creation of a common tongue. Yet in their enactment, such changes ironically augment the flexibility and incompleteness of the linguistic system. Folk rhetoric and popular reanalysis only add to the openness of grammar. On the other hand, to say that languages only change from a pure state to a corrupt one needlessly romanticizes some original crystalline state of language. The perfect language from which we allegedly have fallen is an ideal just as mythical and just as unexperienced as universal grammar itself:

...The tendency to reconstruct the old because it is old, the conscious return to the unconscious, culminates in the recognition of the superior wisdom of the primeval age of myth. But romantic renewal... perpetuates the abstract contrast between myth and reason. Belief in the perfectibility of reason suddenly changes into the perfection of the "mythical" consciousness and finds itself reflected in a paradisic primal state before the "fall" of thought (Gadamer 1992.414)!

Derrida finds the same fault with those who would suggest that language was at one time more tightly aligned with reason. To some, language seems so chaotic at the present time, not because language is and must be chaotic, but because language has undergone a fall from pure rationality to our current age of confusion:

It is a great temptation, in fact hardly repressible, to consider the growing predominance of the formal copula function as a process of falling, abstraction, degradation, as evacuation of the semantic plentitude of the lexeme "to be" and of all other lexemes which, like "to be," have been allowed to wane or be replaced (Derrida 1979.117).

Languages are continuously evolving, which is to say they are always changing. Linguistic evolution does not mean that people are getting freakishly dumber, nor does
it mean we are almost ready to talk with angels. Rather, linguistic evolution takes place through the small mutations of substance and form which occur whenever anyone feels that their language is inadequate to the task at hand. Thus, people exploit the plasticity of speech to continuously reinvent their language in ways that somehow make sense to the tastes of listeners. Through the intersubjective enactment of folk rhetoric, languages are continuously pointing out a shared world of the said by indexing a sharing of the saying. Thus, languages evolve, not as the toggling of binary switches in a quasi-genetic code, but as "a mountainous and anonymous work of unconscious generations" (Sapir 1921.220).

"Emotion and economy intersect in language" (Friedrich 1989.844). Speakers are free to alter and add to the grammar of their language in the interest of heightening the affective bond between speaker and hearer, but they are also constrained by a language's movement toward consolidation and economy. Although language is energeia, a plastic medium which enables the negotiation of a language, it is also an ergon, a cumulative product of countless attempts at common ground. Since languages must be both expressive and coherent, they tend to develop through a dialectic of emotion and economy into artistic products which have been rationalized through repeated acts of interpretation. This is in line with Nietzsche's view that "language is created by the individual speech artist, but it is determined by the fact that the taste of the many make choices" (1989.25).

To fully appreciate another language, one must recognize that all of a language's formal and rigid properties were once uttered for the first time and were once given their first interpretation by a hearer. Even the most mechanical rules of grammar, although
they might embody part of the essence of human reason, are artistic products which have become so natural to the speakers of a language that they now go unnoticed as art. And yet the poetic never completely fades from the grammar of a language. Each linguistic tradition embodies a unique framing of social relations and a habitual way of discussing the world, and no recourse to superidealisms like mentalese or universal grammar can make a cross-cultural translation exact. Bateson has pointed out how the poetic origin of language prevents the successful completion of the project of machine translation:

Poetry is not a sort of distorted and decorated prose, but rather prose is poetry which has been stripped down and pinned to a Procrustean bed of logic. The computer men who would program the translation of languages sometimes forget this fact about the primary nature of language. To try to construct a machine to translate the art of one culture into the art of another would be equally silly (1972.136).

Once again we find the value of an aesthetic stance, for only an aesthetic stance, only an openness to the exotic reasonableness of the other, can provide a successful blending of incommensurables. Only in this way can languages be compared with constructed (rather than presupposed) objectivity.

Grammars can never be anchored to the eternal, to the timelessness of a mentalese or UG, because language is never anchored to a transcendental ideal. As continuously evolving products of folk rhetoric and poetic insight, languages flow like rivers. As speakers of a language, we prefer to think that we are always speaking a self-identical language. Yet historical phenomena like language are continuously thrown forward, changed in minute ways whenever they are used. "Those who step into the same river have different waters flowing ever upon them" (Heraclitus, quoted in Swearingen 1991.35). Those who speak their own language are ever exposed to slightly different
schemata and lexical transferences. Plato was aware that language, like a river, is continuously in flux. However, Plato thought of the ideas of the world as formal and constant, and so the flux of language change represents for Plato the sinister fall from an orderly and perfect language into a vortex of irrational confusion:

...although those who gave the names gave them in the belief that all things are in motion and flux—I myself think they did have that belief—still in reality that is not the case, and the name-givers themselves, having fallen into a kind of vortex, are whirled about, dragging us along with them (1963.187).

Nietzsche, more aware of the poetic origin and potential of language, did not hesitate to use metaphors to characterize language. In one allegory, man relies upon metaphor to escape from the prison fortress of concepts. In using the mythical and artistic transferences of metaphor, the walls which separate the cells of concepts are obliterated, and man is then free to explore the world of dreams (1989.255). In addition to this prison fortress of concepts metaphor, Nietzsche was also fond of the comparison between the flow of a river and the flux of language:

...man can probably be admired as a mighty architectural genius who succeeds in building an infinitely complicated conceptual cathedral on foundations that move like flowing water; of course, in order to anchor itself to such a foundation, the building must be light as a gossamer—delicate enough to be carried along by the wave, yet strong enough not to be blown apart by the wind (1989.251).

To say that language is both light enough to be in-fluenced and strong enough to withstand the in-flux of change is consistent with my claim that language is both ever changing through the enactment of intersubjective dialogue (energeia) and consistent as the economical product of a linguistic tradition (ergon).

Sapir, being the scientist that he was, has provided the most consistent telling of the river analogy. Although language flows along a riverbed, unfolding in time, the river
of language is also responsible for gradually carving its own course. Thus, "language moves down time in a current of its own making. It has a drift" (Sapir 1921.150). The linguist who wishes to understand the synchronic system of a grammar must take a cross-section of that river. He must control the river's flow in order to understand its structure. Thus, the linguist might dam the river, thereby revealing the riverbed and the sedimented structure which control the river's flow. However, the actual river must be in flux or else it is no longer a river. Thus, the grammatical cross-section can never reveal the dynamic fluctuations and subjective influences inherent in a language. "...All languages have an inherent tendency to economy of expression.... Unfortunately, or luckily, no language is tyrannically consistent. All grammars leak" (Sapir 1921.38). Since languages are always in a state of flux, a grammar can never contain (the way a dam contains a river) all of the facts of a language. For this reason, the linguist can never achieve closure in his analysis of a language:

...the point of view of the philologist, who deals only with remnants of dead languages, must differ from that of the ethnographer, who, deprived of the ossified fixed data of inscriptions, has to rely on the living reality of spoken language in fluxu (Malinowski 1947.307).

From a truly objective viewpoint, one that attempts to see language in a way completely apart from how it appears to any given individual at any given moment in time, language presents the picture of a ceaseless flow of becoming (Voloshinov 1973.52).

Voloshinov attempted to mediate two frames for the analysis of language. The first frame coincides with romantic hermeneutics of the Humboldtian tradition, a tradition now led by Gadamer. The second frame coincides with the structuralism of Saussure, a trend now led by Chomsky. Voloshinov contrasted these two approaches to language
description with the help of a familiar analogy:

If, for the first trend ["individualistic subjectivism"], language is an ever-flowing stream of speech acts in which nothing remains fixed and identical to itself, then, for the second trend ["abstract objectivism"], language is the stationary rainbow arched over the stream (1973.52).

In this project, I have tried to suggest that, in the construction of linguistic comparison, it might be better to go fishing than to play god. As an interpretive linguist, I prefer to develop what ideas seem to emerge through the surface comparison of languages. Instead of pursuing the end of a transcendental rainbow, instead of seeking a totalizing representation, I favor an eclectic approach to grammar, one which concentrates on the imponderabilia of language so as to allow languages to vary in other than trivial ways. Such a grammar can never be complete, but neither can any approach to language. As long as the fluent speaker continues to have a strong influence on his language, languages will continue to fluctuate beyond the limits of theory.

In interpretive grammars, there are no formal causes in the sense of timeless ideals which all languages from all eras and from all areas of the world must conform to. Interpretive grammars are not concerned with the meticulous dissection of invisible clockwork, nor do they mutilate grammatical representations in order to reduce cultural and historical difference to eternal similarities. In interpretive grammars, there are also no final causes and so no constructed myths about the ways in which languages conspire to satisfy their desires. There is no reduction of the variegated and fluctuating facts of language to systematic frameworks, for such systematizations serve only to render complex and open-ended issues in simplistically closed ways. Instead of pursuing formal and final causes, interpretive grammars search for efficient and material causes.
Grammatical explanation without theory can therefore explore how speakers play a role in the creative fabrication of linguistic traditions (efficient causation). Moreover, grammatical explanation, no longer anchored to a theoretical paradigm, can also move toward an appreciation of the substantive (and non-trivial) differences in linguistic expressions among languages, thereby understanding that the linguistic material which speakers and hearers use and construct, the material cause of a language, has a cultural significance which is not easily dismissed. Grammar without theory, by denying the aesthetic value of a scientistic reduction to system, recognizes the role textual practices must play in representing the language of the other. I therefore agree with Hopper that:

Perhaps the very rejection of totality in linguistics means that the only new paradigm will be the absence of paradigms, a kind of disciplinary anarcho-syndicalism of numerous small groups working on limited problems from a variety of perspectives, united only by a collection of practices, a set of linguistic games linked family-resemblance style to one another and to some very general assumptions. At the heart of most such assumptions would be the presupposition that language owes the way it is to its temporal unfolding through the spoken interaction of historically situated speakers (1992.236).

Languages are not the closed systems of representation envisioned by nearly all philosophers, philologists, and linguists of the West since Aristotle. Rather, languages are the products of communicative acts. Only in the enactment of discourse does language cease to be an alienating and subjective system of representation. Discourse provides an arena for subjective minds to meet, and so the intersubjective enactment of discourse enables speakers and hearers to fashion and construct an objectivity:

Grammar is hence not to be understood as a pre-requisite for discourse, a prior possession attributable in identical form to both speaker and hearer. Its forms are not fixed templates, but are negotiable in face-to-face interaction in ways that reflect the individual speaker's past experience of these forms, and their assessment of the present context, including especially their interlocutors, whose
experience and assessments may be quite different (Hopper 1987.142).

Thus, speakers and hearers construct from the material of a priori traditions a posteriori representations which become incorporated into the overall economy of a linguistic tradition. The project of interpretive grammar seeks to make sense of cross-linguistic difference, not by appealing to a totalizing framework which attempts to pin all of (a) language's facts into a single formal economy, but by appreciating that a foreign language's lexical extensions and grammatical schemata were at one time strange, new, and novel to the native speakers and hearers themselves. The existential gap between languages might be bridgeable if one appreciates that grammars never conform to a single rationality. Rather, languages flow along their own course, cutting a path into the world in steady and determined (not formally, but intentionally) ways. Even languages which lack history, in the sense of lacking literate traditions, might be appreciated as the products of the historical traditions of a culture:

There is no such thing as a natural language, a language that would be the language of a human nature at hand in itself and without its own destiny. Every language is historical, also in cases where human beings know nothing of the discipline of history in the modern European sense. Nor is language as information the sole language in itself. Rather it is historical in the sense of, and written within the limits set by, the current age. Our age begins nothing new, but only brings to utter culmination something quite old, something already prescribed in modernity (Heidegger 1993.422).
IV. Glossing Mandarin

Mandarin Chinese has a different style of reasoning than English. Mandarin differs from English in that Mandarin has a slightly different assortment of logical connectors. Moreover, Mandarin expresses quantification differently. In the case of modal logic, the logical differences between the two languages are perhaps the most pronounced. If facticity were in the world, then we would know which language does a better job at segmenting and articulating those facts. However, facts are not in the world but arise synthetically through linguistic and extra-linguistic experiences. For this reason, Mandarin is neither more rational nor less rational than English. The rational styles of the languages differ, and no invocation of an eternal extra-linguistic reason can provide an answer as to which rational style is better. (cf. Abrams 1991 on the rational style of German.)

In terms of the logical connectives "and" and "or," no exact equivalence exists between English and Mandarin. Although the English "and" implies a temporal succession between connected propositions (Grice 1989), no such implication seems to follow from the use of the Mandarin connectives. The Mandarin connectives include 他 (he) and 你 (nǐ) which are used to link arguments rather than clauses, and so do not imply a temporal succession. The connective 你 (nǐ), meaning "also" or "even," connects clauses, but acts more as a purely logical connective and never implies temporal
succession in the way that the English "and" typically does. One might also consider the sentence particle ne (¥) as a kind of "and." This sentence final particle can function in questioning the acceptibility for conjoining a new topic to given comment recently stated. As such, N ne might be translated as "and what about N?" Again, there is no notion of temporal succession. The only way one can get a temporal succession reading between two clauses is to not connect them, or connect them with an adverbial or aspeuctual expression, yet none of these expressions can be construed as having the logical properties of "and."

In the case of the disjunctive connectives, similar problems emerge in that the implications implicit in the English connective do not necessarily emerge in the Mandarin. In English, "or" often implies an exclusive choice on account of the conditions of its use. According to Grice (1989), one uses the English "or" usually when one is certain of two possibilities but uncertain as to which one is true. Since "or" is usually used to narrow the field of possibilities from two to one, the speaker of English using "or" would be surprised to find out that both possibilities referred to are true. In Mandarin, however, there are two words which share some meaning with the English "or." One term, huò zhě (á Ž), is used in statements; another term, hái shì (á Ž), marks an alternative question. In the first kind of Mandarin "or" the speaker is stating possibilities, one or both of which might be true. There is no implication of exclusion. The second form of "or" is used by speakers to present alternatives to the listener in the form of a question. In the second case, the speaker is providing a limited choice and so the implication of exclusion is far more pronounced.
Mandarin and English also differ in their methods of universal and existential quantification. In Mandarin, the adverb dōu (都) has more uses than the English "all." Mandarin uses dōu to denote that what is said is true in all cases and without exception. One could use dōu in many different ways:

1. 我們都很好。
2. 她每天都看電視。
3. 她連一口都沒吃過。
4. 所有的孩子們你都喜歡嗎?

The first sentence, "we're all fine," coincides with the English use of "all." In the second sentence, "he watches TV every day," dōu does not mean "all" but is used instead to reinforce the universality of the "every." In the third sentence, "she's never even eaten a mouthful," the dōu marks that there is no exception to the statement of "never even." The forth sentence, "do you like all of the children?" places an object at the beginning of the sentence so that it falls within the scope of the adverb dōu.

Mandarin existential quantification makes use of the verb yǒu (有), which can mean "have," "there is," or "some." All of these meanings can coincide, as in the following sentence:

5. 桌子上有書。

This sentence can be translated as "the tabletop has books," or "there are books on the table," or "some books are on the table." Thus, a verb of possession, used impersonally, can simply indicate existence. 有 can also be used adjectivally ("some") in the form of 有的, and helps form some other words.
Thus, Mandarin seems to have both universal and existential quantification. However, what does it mean to say that there is quantification in Mandarin if such quantification is so unstructured relative to English. The facts of 這 and the facts of 所 have do not share a common structure, they do not grammatically parallel one another in a consistent way. Whereas 這 functions as an adverb (or adcomment) modifying a comment while scoping the topic, 所 functions as a verb or deverbal adjective. Thus, entities can be quantified in Chinese as they can in English, but according to a different grammatical economy. Both languages are reasonable, but their rational styles differ.

In terms of modal logic, the comparison seems even harder to draw. Since modality entails a judgement on the necessity or potentiality of truth, the modal system of a language will reflect the speaker’s ways of indicating their epistemological stance. As speakers use modality to indicate certainty or flexibility toward a proposition’s truth, modality will be employed indexically, allowing speakers to assert or withhold a reason for a statement’s potentiality in culturally specific ways. Moreover, potentiality implies a reason why something is or isn’t possible, and languages can differ in how much they require speakers to state exactly why something is potential or impossible.

Mandarin, like English, provides a number of way for stating that something is logically necessary. Mandarin is again like English in providing a means for canceling the implication of a logical necessity which hearers might arrive at in the course of discourse:
Although Mandarin Chinese and English seem similar in their economical handling of logical necessity, they differ significantly in their handling of potentiality. Mandarin potentiality can be expressed with either a modal verb or a resultative complement. The modal verbs express the different ways someone may or may not be able to do something. The expression *néng* (能), "can," implies that some act is possible because the physical means for its execution are present. *Kěyì* (可以), "may," on the other hand implies that something is possible because it is permissible. The term *hùi* (会), "know how to," is used when something is possible on account of someone having sufficient knowledge or experience. Although prescriptive English forces a "may"/"can" distinction and can also use "know how to," the languages differ in that Mandarin handles these concepts within a more constrained economy. One can't use *néng* to mean *kěyì* or *hùi*, while one can use "can" in English to mean "is allowed to" or "knows how to." Thus, Mandarin speakers are capable of economically providing far more information with regard to precisely why something is or isn't possible.

These terms also differ from English in that they have other uses which cannot be predicted from the meaning of English equivalents. Thus the 可 of 可以 is found in a number of compounds where it has a meaning similar to the English "-able." 可 occurs in the compounds *kěài* (可愛), "lovable, cute;" *kěpà* (可怕), "scare-able, frightening;"
kēnéng (可能), "able-able, perhaps;" or even kěshì (是), "be-able, but, nevertheless."

It is not too surprising to find some common origin in a language for ideas as similar as "possible" and "permissible." It is more surprising, however, that the modal for "know how to" appears in words suggesting social gatherings, as in shèhuì (社会), society. This might suggest that all knowledge leading to action has a relationship to society, or it might be an etymological fluke.

Thus far it would seem that the rational styles of Chinese and English are fairly similar with respect to their uses of modal reasoning. However, Mandarin provides another range of potential verbal constructions which are far stranger from the perspective of English. These constructions link together two or three verbs to indicate that some action in the present or future has the potential to be done, or that some action in the past could not be done. Such complex verbal constructions usually consist of a main verb followed by a negator or sometimes a verb meaning "get" to express a positive. This collocation is in turn followed by a complement verb used to explain the nature or reason of the success or failure. The following are all examples of present negative potential compounds together with word by word and phrasal translations:

8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in-not-go</th>
<th>cannot go in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>send-not-out-go</td>
<td>cannot send out there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move-not-rise-come</td>
<td>cannot lift up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen-not-understand</td>
<td>cannot understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look-not-finish</td>
<td>cannot finish reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat-not-satisfied</td>
<td>cannot eat one’s fill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen-not-perceive</td>
<td>cannot hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think of-not-arrive</td>
<td>cannot expect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep-not-succeed</td>
<td>cannot fall asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write-not-good</td>
<td>cannot do a good job writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forget-not-capable</td>
<td>cannot forget about</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These expressions are interesting not only because they demonstrate the diversity of Mandarin potentiality expressions, but because they show something of the relative analyticity of Chinese relative to English. Although it is not true that modern Chinese preserves the equation of one word = one syllable = one character, it is nevertheless true that Mandarin speaker will still often use several more general verbs in the meaning space where English only uses one specific lexical item. As a result, there are certain situations in which Mandarin tends to convey more information about the articulated structure of a potential action than a simple verb does in English. Instead of saying "I can’t understand," the speaker in Mandarin is forced by grammatical tradition to say "I listen but can’t understand," or "I read but can’t understand." Instead of saying something vague like "I can’t eat," one has to be more specific and say "I can’t get food down," and one must say "cannot bring myself to face" to say "I’m sorry." Thus, the Mandarin pattern seems to an English speaker to be more expressive. However, the Mandarin pattern is not without economy. As certain verbs only sound right with certain potential complements, expressiveness seems to have limits in the case of potential verbs. One cannot, for example, say 睡不了 to mean "cannot arrive at sleep," nor could one say 睡不了 to mean "incapable of sleeping." One can only say something like 没睡好 "didn’t sleep well," or 睡不著 "cannot fall asleep."

I’ve heard it said that Chinese lacks a subjunctive and so the Chinese are therefore
incapable of reasoning abstractly. If the categories and modes of reasoning are absolute and isomorphic with those of the Western European languages, then Chinese is in fact irrational. However, nothing save an insidious prejudice and a comfortable familiarity could suggest that languages like English provide the best logical interpretations of the world. There is absolutely no evidence that one language's perspective is logically superior to another's, for how can one get beyond language to see the world "as it really is." I hope that I have shown in part that Mandarin speakers do make use of grammatically conditioned propositional, predicate, and modal reasoning, and I hope I have also shown that Mandarin grammar is neither more nor less rational than the grammar of English but is instead fully rational, but in a different way.

In addition to framing their semantico-referential system according to a different system of reason, Mandarin also provides different techniques for indexing the interpersonal context of communication. Since the indexing of interpersonal context entails a crucial interface between grammar and culture, and since languages change along with the changing of cultural traditions, then it is not surprising that the indexing of interpersonal context should comprise one area where languages differ in significant ways.

Unlike speakers of English, speakers of Mandarin must be ever mindful of the relative difference in age between speaker and hearer. Like many languages, Mandarin distinguishes two forms of the second person pronoun. However, unlike the common European distinction between formal (vous/usted) and familiar (tu/te) forms of second person pronominal address, Mandarin makes a distinction between nǐ (니), "you (same age or younger)" and nǐn (니), "you (older)." This pattern of age-marking extends
beyond pronominal usage. When addressing a friend, one can prefix their name with either 小 (xiao), "little," or 老 (lao), "old," depending again on the relative age of the addressee. The term 老 is used only to refer to older people, e.g. 老师 (lao shi), "teacher," or to things revered on account of their wisdom or age, e.g. 老虎 (lao hu), "tiger." People are never referred to using 尖 (jian), a term reserved for old and worn out objects. Even the most common title of address for men 先生 (xiansheng), "born ahead (of me), mister, sir, husband," indicates how important it is to be mindful of relative age when addressing others. Since relative age is mandatorily indexed in all second person references, the obvious importance of age to Chinese culture can be surmised. Thus, Mandarin grammar did not develop independent from the cultural structures of Chinese civilization. Rather, changes in Mandarin grammar have been clearly influenced by a Confucian esteem for clan seniority and a Taoist regard for longevity.

In addition to relative age of speaker and addressee, Mandarin indexes the speech context in ways very different from English. Unlike English, Mandarin makes use of sentence final particles. Since these particles do not refer to anything concrete, English can seldom provide an exact translation. The particles function in different ways in different contexts, and they seem to function as a part of the folk rhetoric of Mandarin grammar. The particles are used in the course of translating between speaker and hearer, referring to the emotions, expectations, requests, continuities, and disruptions of narrative, textual, and communicative context. As they are used in such subtle ways, it is not surprising that they often cannot be translated in any general way. The particles also seem to assist in vocal inflection. Since Mandarin uses tones to make lexical distinctions,
tone is not as available for intonation contours. Particles fill some of the roles of English intonation contours by signalling questions and expressions of surprise. Moreover, by occurring without inherent lexical tone and at the end of sentences, particles provide a phonetic space for the expression of sentence final intonation patterns which seem to be common to both Mandarin and English and which are perhaps universally iconic of emotional communication (Lily Chen, personal communication). In the overall economy of Mandarin, particles therefore play an essential role in conveying affect in intersubjective communication.

The particle *a* (아) is perhaps the most difficult to describe as it adds emotion to an utterance. This particle might appear at the end of a sentence to indicate surprise experienced on the part of the speaker, or it might be used to indicate a positive (e.g., admiration) or negative (e.g., admonishment) emotional response to a context, suggesting through the conveyance of emotion that speaker and hearer are speaking as one. This particle seems to coincide with a high pitched, sharp declination indicating emotions like surprise. The particle *ba* (바) has the effect of softening an expression. When it is used in a command, the command is reduced to a polite request or a suggestion. When 바 is employed in an assertion, it indicates that the speaker is not certain of the assertion’s truth. In both instances, an utterance is reduced to a suggestion, meaning that the speaker has empowered the hearer to refuse a suggested act or fact. Thus, this particle can be used intersubjectivity to augment the authority of the hearer over the words of the speaker. Another particle, *ma* (마), seems the most straightforward from the point of view of English, as it marks an assertion as a yes/no question. Again, the particle indexes
the action of interpersonal communication, turning an offering of information into a request for information.

The particles *ne* and *le* are perhaps less clearly of the same class of speech forms. Although they (typically) occur without tone at the end of a sentence, they are different from the other particles in that they have aspectual meanings which seem to make them part of the semantic system of a grammar. The particle "can at times be used to indicate continuity. It can be used in a question like "and what about them?" which asks whether a new topic holds for a previous comment. This question might follow a sentence like:

9. 我们刚搬家了。
which means "we've just moved." The "what about them?" adds continuity by integrating the words of one speaker with the words another, once again pointing to an attempted forging of a common language. But "can also functions semantically as one way of expressing progressive aspect. Thus, the meaning of continuity extends to both a contextual and a textual modality.

The particle *le* ( ) seems to indicate a disruption rather than a continuity. This particle is difficult to discuss because it seems to be used (from the perspective of English) in a vast number of ways. However, its key use (in sentence final position) seems to be to indicate a change of state. This change of state can be a description of a number of contexts and consequences, such as an imminent action "here come's trouble" or irreversible change "I forgot." Thus, is used to indicate a disruption in the perceived reality which is shared between speaker and hearer, an indication that
something has come about (or is about to happen) and now the state of affairs is irrevocably different. Since 了 can also be interpreted as meaning PAST or PERFECTIVE, particularly when used post-verbally, this particle has temporal meanings which also suggest disruption and lack of continuity in a referential space.

With particles and age references, Mandarin synthesizes grammar and culture, combining the referential functions of language with functions which index the interpersonal context of communication. The use of marked constructions, the schemata of folk rhetoric, also relates to the blending of referential and indexical functions. As discussed in chapter three, part of the meaning of an unusual construction is that the construction is unusual. Less frequently occurring figures of folk rhetoric are not yet worn out through constant use. Since the hearer may not be familiar with the particular frame in which the expression is used, the expression is interpreted with less certainty and so with greater interest. However, other expressions of folk rhetoric are quite common, almost rule-like. Such ways of saying might be labeled rhetorical only on account of their poetic form which had rendered them aesthetic to the many who make grammatical judgements on the basis of their tastes.

To an English speaker studying Mandarin, the doubling of forms has a relationship to an aesthetics of poetic repetition. Through repetition, poetry manipulates the experience of time in the musical sense discussed by Jakobson. Speakers might initially employ repetition for aesthetic effect. In time, however, such effects become part of the normal (i.e. normative) grammatical system of a language. Thus, Mandarin uses reduplication to fill a variety of referential and indexical functions, but reduplication's
aesthetic form remains constant throughout the grammar. Certain nouns might be reduplicated to convey a sense of "every"—人, person-person, "everyone;"天空, sky-sky, "everyday." However, the reduplication of a verb has the significantly less iconic effect of softening a command into a polite request. Verbs can also be doubled by schematically separating object complements and adverbial complements into two separate "phrases" with an identical verb:

10. 她游泳游得很好.
11. 他学英文学了两年多了.

Sentence 10, "she swims well," repeats the verb swim before the object (swimming is transitive in Mandarin) and before the adverbial complement. Similarly, sentence 11, "he has been studying English for over four years," repeats the verb for study before both the object and the temporal complement. Although sentences like 10 or 11 might be explainable through some formal model which evokes some sort of locality restriction binding adverbial complements to verbs, there is no reason why such a restriction should be necessary to the formal economy of Chinese grammar. It seems more likely that the doubling of verbs in Mandarin has a material and efficient cause but not a formal or final one. In other words, verbal doubling might have stemmed from a creative tradition which has provided a language with its material, and it might also have emerged from the tastes of speakers who have judged that such manners of expression should be necessary.

Languages can be surprisingly similar in the ways they encode objects and properties in the world. However, more than a universal human intelligence has led to the formation of the world's lexica. There has also been a good deal of creativity which
has been adopted into the languages of the world, and this creativity has led to some of the interesting cultural differences which emerge in the comparison of languages. In some cases, a foreign language seems to create similarities which do not exist for English speakers. Many terms in Chinese seem to congeal through metonymy and metaphor, thereby granting the impression that Chinese has synthesized properties of experience which English has analyzed. For example, a term like 

\[\text{song,送}\]

, has English meanings which range from "to send," through "to see off," to "to give as a gift." These ideas all seem to have something to do with a person or thing leaving the subject's possession or company through an action of the subject. Another term, 

\[\text{ben,笨}\]

, means both "stupid," and "clumsy." The term conveys a sense of oafishness, but occurs more frequently than the English word "oaf." 

\[\text{笨}\]

suggests a necessarily connection between intelligence and dexterity, a connection not always made by speakers of English. The term 

\[\text{yisi,意思}\]

, means meaning, but it is also used in idioms which do not seem consistent with the meaning of meaning in English. Thus, one could say:

12. 我覺得不好意思.

to mean "I feel embarrassed," by saying something like "I feel bad meaning." This suggests that in Mandarin, an association must have been made between the feeling (or "gist") of an expression and its meaning. For this reason, Mandarin’s everyday metalanguage seems to present a much greater awareness of the role emotion plays in the negotiation of interpersonal meaning.

Languages frequently differ in their determination of objective space through cognitive concepts, and Mandarin presents no exception to this tendency. Mandarin has
two terms, roughly equivalent to "up" and "down" which are used in interestingly diverse ways, only some of which will I attempt to discuss here. The term shàng (верх), can be used as a spatial postposition meaning "up" or "above" or "on," or it can be used as a verb meaning "to ascend." Thus, the expression 楼上, means "upstairs," while 上楼, means "go upstairs." The "ascend" verb use can be used in the sense of "to board" a means of transport, or it can mean "to go and attend" work or "to attend or teach" school. The expression 上街, "ascend street," means "to go shopping." The term xià (низ) can be used as a postposition indicating "down," or "under," and can also be used as a verb "to descend." In verbal compounds, 上 can be used to convey the "up" of "close up," while 下 can be used to suggest (a lack of) sufficient space or the on-going continuance of an action.

Again, there are numerous other uses of 上 and 下 which I don’t have space for here. I am interested, however, in pointing out how the characters for 上 and 下 resemble the schematic representations of functionalist cognitive science. Both characters begin with a horizontal line which could represent the landmark or ground or field of the cognitive representation. Next, both characters have a vertical line which functions as the trajector or figure or vehicle of the cognitive representation. In the concept of 上, the figure lies above the ground suggesting that something is 上 if and only if it is in some way "above" something else. The converse is true for 下. Both characters have an additional stroke in the form of a horizontal mark which suggests motility in the relative position of aboveness and belowness. The similarity between certain iconic Chinese characters--and these characters are rare, it should be noted--and Lakoffian ICM’s
(idealized cognitive models) suggests one of two things. Either the Chinese writing system has ingeniously anticipated the advent of modern functionalist cognitive science, or the ICM's are nothing more than the written representations which allegedly precede speech. I will leave this up to the tastes and preferences of the reader.

Although Chinese would appear to synthesize concepts which are analyzed in English, there are also cases where Chinese displays an effort to analyze concepts which are left unaanalyzed in English. For example, whereas English typically makes a distinction between count and mass nouns--between nouns like "apple" which can be counted and nouns like "water" which cannot--Mandarin makes no such distinction. In Mandarin, all nouns are mass nouns and so nothing can be counted without reference to a unit which is different from the noun itself.

13. 這張桌子是誰的？
14. 這本書貴不貴

Sentence 13 means "whose is that (flat surfaced object of) table?" while sentence 14 means "is this (volume of) book expensive?" The two sentences make use of measure words which have no equivalent in English. The measure words work upon a principle of metonomy in which some feature is singled out to link dissimilar nouns into a single class or category. Sometimes, shape is used to classify nouns. Long objects like rivers and streets and skirts are classed as tiao (條), while flat objects like paper and tables are classed as zhang (張). In other cases, portability or utility seem to be the most salient features, as when anything grippable by a handle is classified as ba (把). Thus, both perceptual and instrumental properties are employed in the analysis of objects into
measure classes. At times, multiple criteria might be used, presenting speakers with a choice, as when a chair can be referred to as 木 because it is grippable, or it can be referred to using 平 because it has a flat surface. Although measure words are often fixed properties of nominal lexical items, they are nevertheless still open in some sense to the creative metonymies and metaphors which are employed in the creative enactment of communication.

Since measure words have to do with the division of objects into kinds, they form a kind of gender system. Gender does not necessarily have to do with sex, but sex marking systems in a language form a common kind of gender referencing. Interestingly, Chinese does not make a gender (sex) distinction in its spoken grammar, not even in third person pronouns, and this suggests that measure words have some claim to the role of grammatical gender. Moreover, Mandarin uses measure words anaphorically at times, and so measure words seem to have a definite pronominal function which is in some sense gender-based:

15. 那把怎麼樣?

This sentence, "What do you think about that one (handle)?" uses the measure word for a single unit ("a handle of") to function like the "one" of the English translation. This sentence might be used in a conversation about tools or furniture where the handled referent can be identified by the hearer on the basis of linguistic or extra-linguistic context. Thus, measure words are not only part of the expressive repertoire of speakers, they also factor into the overall economy of Mandarin grammar.

In the course of their language’s development, speakers of Mandarin made certain
choices regarding how participants can be incorporated into the event of a sentence. In Mandarin, unlike in English there is a class of transitive verbs of fairly general meaning which can be used as prepositions governing objects. Some of these verbs are listed in 16 below:

16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zai</td>
<td>be at</td>
<td>at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gei</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>for/to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dao</td>
<td>arrive</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba</td>
<td>handle</td>
<td>(marks D.O.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gen</td>
<td>accompany</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bi</td>
<td>compare</td>
<td>than</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Mandarin, sentences can have many verbs, but after a translation into English, verbs like those in 16 are often handled as prepositions. However, it is difficult to judge why "I sent him the flowers" could not be rendered (from an "objective" point of view) "I give him sent flowers." The tastes of many generations of English speakers have determined that sentences should be structured around the main verb, but the tastes of Chinese speakers have left the line between main verb and prepositional complement more fluid.

But despite the numerous ways in which languages can differ, there are some interesting coincidences between English and Chinese and similarities which do not come down to theoretical universals. Since Mandarin words are often composed of two syllables/characters, and since each of these two syllables/characters are often semantically interpretable on their own, the etymologies of Mandarin words are often transparent. Thus, Chinese two-character expressions often seem to coincide with those colloquial expressions in English which have not yet become lexicalized and which have consequently not yet lost their expressiveness. For example, the ordinary way of saying
good-bye in Chinese is zài jiàn (再見), which is analyzable to again-see or "see ya later;”
hello in Chinese is nǐ hǎo (你好, you well, resembles the English "how ya doin'?"
Similarly, the Chinese for "it depends" is děi kàn (得看), or "have to see." The Chinese,
eexisting within their language as all people must do, do not etymologically analyze these
expressions into the idioms from which they emerged. Thus, this does not mean that
Mandarin Chinese is more chatty than English. It merely suggests that, being human
beings endowed with the same intelligence and the same capacity for caring, we will all,
despite our differences in history and culture, tend to respond to similar situations in
similar ways. This, I feel, embodies the true explanation for much of the apparent
similarities among the world's languages.

This work has not attempted to provide a complete account of something as multi-
faceted as the grammar of Mandarin Chinese. I have merely attempted to say something
about a different language which I have struggled to comprehend without the invocation
of a theory. In turning away from any a priori universal, I have been exploring how
creative particulars achieve universality within a language through the tastes which
produce linguistic traditions. Grammars are continuously being reinvented by their
speakers, and so languages can be admired (as they are inevitably constructed) not merely
as reflections of a timeless ideal but as historical and aesthetic products of communicative
reflection. People are never satisfied with language's ability to fabricate the universal,
and so they continue to creatively refashion language within the limits of their grammar's
poetic potential and expressive economy. In discussing Mandarin grammar as a creative
product, I have made explicit hermeneutical comparisons between Chinese and English.
I feel such comparisons are preferable to the implicit comparisons of theoretical approaches which conceal subjective interpretation by denying its presence. I have only given a vague and inchoate idea of what it means to speak Mandarin, but in glossing Mandarin in this way, I hope I have been successful in saying something about Mandarin which cannot be neatly expressed in any unitary and consistent theory of language.
Bibliography


