



Notes – Introduction

- I. Introduction
 - a. The Rules
 - i. Ask questions
 - ii. Make suggestions
 - iii. Don't whine
 - b. Two Approaches to Grammar
 - i. Descriptive Language
 - 1. Goal: Describe how people really speak.
 - 2. "Very databased."
 - 3. Tape record people speaking; decide how their grammar works.
 - 4. Sentences ending with prepositions do not violate descriptive grammar rules, since people do it so frequently and their meaning is clearly understood.
 - ii. Prescriptive Language
 - 1. Preventative or corrective approach to grammar
 - 2. Assumes that if we're not careful, language will deteriorate
 - 3. Thus, we must make an effort to preserve standards.
 - 4. Any formal use of language depends on prescriptive language.
 - 5. Problems
 - a. "Language should feel natural," say opponents.
 - b. Associated with elitism, perhaps even with racism
 - c. The line between this and politics is blurred.
 - 6. Language Planning
 - a. Hebrew was a dead language, not being taught anywhere.
 - b. Through planning, it's now been revived.
 - c. Now there are complaints from prescriptive linguists that it's changing!
 - d. Double-edged sword.
 - 7. Dialect Revival
 - a. Very similar to language planning
 - b. Consider North Carolina example
 - c. Goals
 - i. Blend descriptive and prescriptive language.
 - ii. Discuss prescriptive language in relation to formal writing.
- II. Parts of Speech
 - a. Words and Rules
 - i. As infants, we learn words, then eventually learn how to combine them.
 - ii. Words are usually taught explicitly ("here's a book... play with the book.")
 - iii. Rules are seldom taught explicitly.
 - iv. Words and rules may even be handled by different parts of the brain.
 - v. Some languages have more words and need fewer rules.
 - vi. Others depend heavily on rules to make use of fewer rules.
 - vii. Learning
 - 1. Words are memorized one at a time since they are completely arbitrary in nature.
 - 2. Stored in mental lexicon (mental dictionary)
 - viii. From Words to Speech
 - 1. Take words from storage (lexicon)
 - 2. To morphology – add endings, et cetera.
 - 3. To syntax, semantics, phonology
 - b. Traditional
 - i. Eight parts of speech, per sixth grade definitions.

- ii. The problem is that while some of these definitions are perfectly clear, some are rather abstract and thus hard to apply.
- c. New
 - i. Form
 - 1. Inflection
 - 2. Endings
 - ii. Distribution (in a sentence)
 - iii. Once you know both form and distribution, you can determine the part of speech for a particular word.