Modern Generative Linguistics has many sub-fields, each attending to one form of regularity in language

1. Pragmatics
2. Semantics
3. Syntax
4. Morphology
5. Phonology
6. Phonetics
3. Syntax:

Sequences of words are highly structured, i.e. there are implicit rules about what can go with what.

Parts of speech
Phrase structure
Grammar
Phonology Example 1

What is the shape(s) of the plural marker(s) in English?

lip, rock, tree, latch, gum, myth, laugh, two, cove, toe, bell, wretch, rib, load, breeze, fudge, hen, law, fez, bar, bat, tea, garage

How do you know which one to use?
Aspects of Language

6. **Phonetics**: Study of speech, its production, and perception

What are the differences between ‘speech’ and ‘language’?
Don’t confuse Phonetics and Phonology

Phonology deals with idealised symbolic units that can be combined according to formal rules.

Phonetics deals with sound, meat, spit, and ears.

Both try to understand how language is made manifest in speech.
Phonetics: the gory bits ...
**Phonetics**: the production and perception of speech; speech in its physical manifestation as sound; anatomy and physiology of speaking/hearing;

**Phonology**: the systematic organization of a discrete set of linguistic units within a language; rule-based organization of sounds within syllables, phrases, etc.
What distinguishes Language from other forms of communication?

Very many features of human language are found, in some form, in animal communication. But never all together.
Arbitrary relationship: symbol and referent

- cheval
- horse
- Pferd
Displacement
Deception, Propositional Attitudes

X believed/thought/hoped/understood.... that Y

Language provides ways to express how the speaker feels about the statement being made.
Generativity, Creativeness

Finite Recursive Rules:
If $S$ is a sentence, so is “I believe that S”, or “It is not true that S” etc.....

Finite means, Infinite productivity

Nouns, verbs, adjectives....

Function words
Transcript of Koko the Gorilla, in the first live inter-species internet chat!!!

HaloMyBaby: SBM87 asks, What are the names of your kittens? (and dogs?)
LiveKOKO: foot
DrPPatrsn: Foot isn't the name of your kitty
HaloMyBaby: Koko, what's the name of your cat?
LiveKOKO: no
DrPPatrsn: She just gave some vocalizations there... some soft puffing
HaloMyBaby: I heard that soft puffing!
DrPPatrsn: Now shaking her head no.
Question: Do you like to chat with other people?
HaloMyBaby: That was from Rulucky!
LiveKOKO: fine nipple
DrPPatrsn: Nipple rhymes with people, she doesn't sign people per se, she was trying to do a "sounds like..."
Compare that with this recording, reported in 2012 in Current Biology, of a Beluga Whale imitating human speech:
While we’re at it, here is Hoover, the famous “talking seal” from Boston, who was reputed to speak with a Boston accent:

Hoover, 1971 - 1985
Language beyond message passing

Many approaches to language treat it as if it were the business of passing secret messages from one mind to another.

Recall: we do not have any agreement about what such a mind could be.

Also: this approach ignores and obscures many fascinating aspects to our language use.
Language vs Languaging

20th Century Linguistics emphasises symbolic structure and rules
Focus on form and codes

Increasingly, scholars of language are emphasising the role of gesture, gaze, joint attention, context, and other non-form, non-rule like aspects.

The term *languaging* is broader than *language*, and serves to include many of these aspects.
Joint speech: from Prayer to Protest

My own work is mainly concerned with those special occasions when many people say the same thing at the same time.

This establishes an intriguing link between practices of prayer and protest (and football)

If language is all about message passing, these practices make no sense whatsoever. So some other approaches must be found!
A remarkable convergence

New York

Dublin

Cairo

Sudan