

24.93 “The search for meaning”

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<https://kvf.me/fyd>

Lecture 6/11

- language is primarily face-to-face
- writing technology can help us transcend the here and now
- but it loses complexity

The Glottographic Principle

All writing systems are glottographic

Brainstorm: How to communicate at a distance

Drums & whistles etc.

Whistling

A whistled language in Northern Turkey

Current Biology

Volume 25, Issue 16, 17 August 2015, Pages R706-R708



Correspondence

Whistled Turkish alters language asymmetries

Onur Güntürkün ¹  , Monika Güntürkün ¹, Constanze Hahn ²

 [Show more](#)

About the movie that we'll see

Short scenery of two men whistling across a valley of about 700m in Kuşköy, Turkey. After exchanging greetings, the closer person asks the distant fellow if he will later on come to the café. The distant person promises to do so. Then O.G. asks the close whistler to transmit his greetings. As a response, the distant fellow greets back and asks when the “teacher” (O. G.) will leave the village. When being told (whistled) that departure is planned for the next day, he wishes a smooth journey. Finally, the person close to the camera also transmits the best wishes of Osman, a person standing close. The distant person greets back, also in the name of his wife Nazmiye, who joined him on the terrace of his house.

Click to watch whistled Turkish movie

Talking drums

TALKING
DRUMS
OF
AFRICA

JOHN F. CARRINGTON
Ph.D.



LONDON
CAREY KINGSGATE PRESS LTD.
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Click to watch talking drum movie

How do these work?

Language surrogates

But maybe even better language parasites

The glottocentric principle

- These systems represent as much as possible of the sound stream of the underlying language.
- Many (but not all) of the systems are built on top of **tone languages**

Tone

High tone	dā	'build'
Low rising tone	dá	'achieve'
Falling rising tone	dǎ	'hit'
High falling tone	dà	'big'

Falling tone	lòks	[lùoks]	‘arch, bow’
Level (high) tone	lòks	[lūoks]	‘green onion’
Rising falling (broken) tone	lòks	[lûoks]	‘window’

Redundancy

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bkm a steno

& gt a gd jb

& hi pa

A conversation in Whistled Mazateco

1,1,3,3,2,4 *hme¹ čʔa¹ šti³ ki³-čʔai²-ve⁴*

‘What did you bring there?’

1,4,1,1 *čʔa¹ na⁴ hme¹-ni¹*

‘It is a load of corn.’

1,3,3,4,3 *hnā¹ ti³-ʔmi³ koai⁴-ʔni³*

‘Well where are you going with it?’

3,2,4,2,3,4 *te³ na² nko⁴ ti²-vhi³ koa⁴*

‘I am taking it to Tenango.’

3,3,3,3,2,3,2-4,3 *ʔa³-ti³-ʔmi³ ka³ te² na³-ni²⁻⁴ʔni³*

‘Are you going to sell it then?’

2,3,3,2,2-3 *ti²-vhi³ ka³ te² na²⁻³*

‘I am going to sell it.’

The Talking Balafon of the Sambla



Figure 1. A Sambla balafon in Toronsso, Burkina Faso.

Asking for money

(11a) *á à b̂â dzö-tsì mó tè wén dán sóen*
 2SG 3SG balafon mouth-cut 1SG.EMPH GEN money 10,000 one
 ‘Be the first to give 10,000 francs to the balafon!’

(11b) ‘Be the first to give 10,000 francs to the balafon!’ (SAD: July 11, 2017)

	S [8]													
	Sk [6]													
	T [5]													
	Bg [3]													
	J [b 3]													
➤	B [1]													
	Words	<i>á</i>	<i>à</i>	<i>b̂â</i>	<i>dzö</i>	<i>tsì</i>	<i>mó</i>	<i>tè</i>	<i>wén</i>	<i>dán</i>	<i>sóen</i>			
	Duration	59	179	75	146	150	171	148	113	108	279	141	81	...

A rare ideographic phrase

(13) 'Yes (that's it)' (SAD: July 11, 2017)

	S [8]						
	Sk [6]						
	T [5]						
	Bg [3]						
	J [b3]						
➤	B [1]						
	Words	('yes', lexical ideogram)					
	Duration	299	262	272	216	238	...

How does writing relate to drum/whistle systems?

Morse code

[Click to watch morse code movie](#)

Next week

Animal communication