24.93 "The search for meaning"

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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

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Correspondence

Whistled Turkish alters language asymmetries

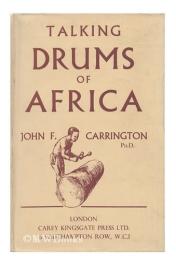
Onur Güntürkün ¹ $\stackrel{>}{\sim}$ $\stackrel{\boxtimes}{\sim}$, Monika Güntürkün ¹, Constanze Hahn ²

About the movie that we'll see

Short scenery of two men whistling across a valley of about 700m in Kusköy, 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 Nazmive, who joined him on the terrace of his house.

Click to watch whistled Turkish movie

Talking drums



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	dă	'hit'	
High falling tone	dà	'big'	

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

Redundancy



bkm a steno & gt a gd jb & hi pa

A conversation in Whistled Mazateco

 $1,1,3,3,2,4 \ hme^{1} \ c^{2}a^{1} \ si^{3} \ ki^{3} - c^{2}ai^{2} - ve^{4}$ 'What did you bring there?' 1,4,1,1 č $?a^{1}na^{4}hme^{1}-ni^{1}$ 'It is a load of corn.' 1.3.3.4.3 hnā¹ ti³-?mi³ koai⁴-?ni³ 'Well where are you going with it?' $3.2.4.2.3.4 te^3 na^2 nko^4 ti^2 - vhi^3 koa^4$ 'I am taking it to Tenango.' 3.3.3.3.2.3.2-4.3 ?a³-ti³-?mi³ ka³ te² na³-ni²⁻⁴?ni³ 'Are you going to sell it then?' 2.3.3.2.2–3 ti^2 - vhi^3 ka^3 te^2 na^{2-3} '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) \acute{a} \ddot{a} $b\hat{g}\hat{g}$ $dz\ddot{v}$ -ts \ddot{y} $m\acute{o}$ tè wɛ̃n 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!'

	S [8]													
	Sk [6]													
	T [5]													
	Bg [3]													
	J[⊧3]													
٨	B[1]													
	Words	á	à	bậạ		dzờ	ts $\hat{\imath}$	тó	ťè	и	vến	dán	sóe	en
	Duration	59	179	75	146	150	171	148	113	108	279	141	81	

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

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