UiT Norgga árktalaš universitehta

Engaging, retaining, and graduating linguists: Some thoughts about how to bring up the next generation

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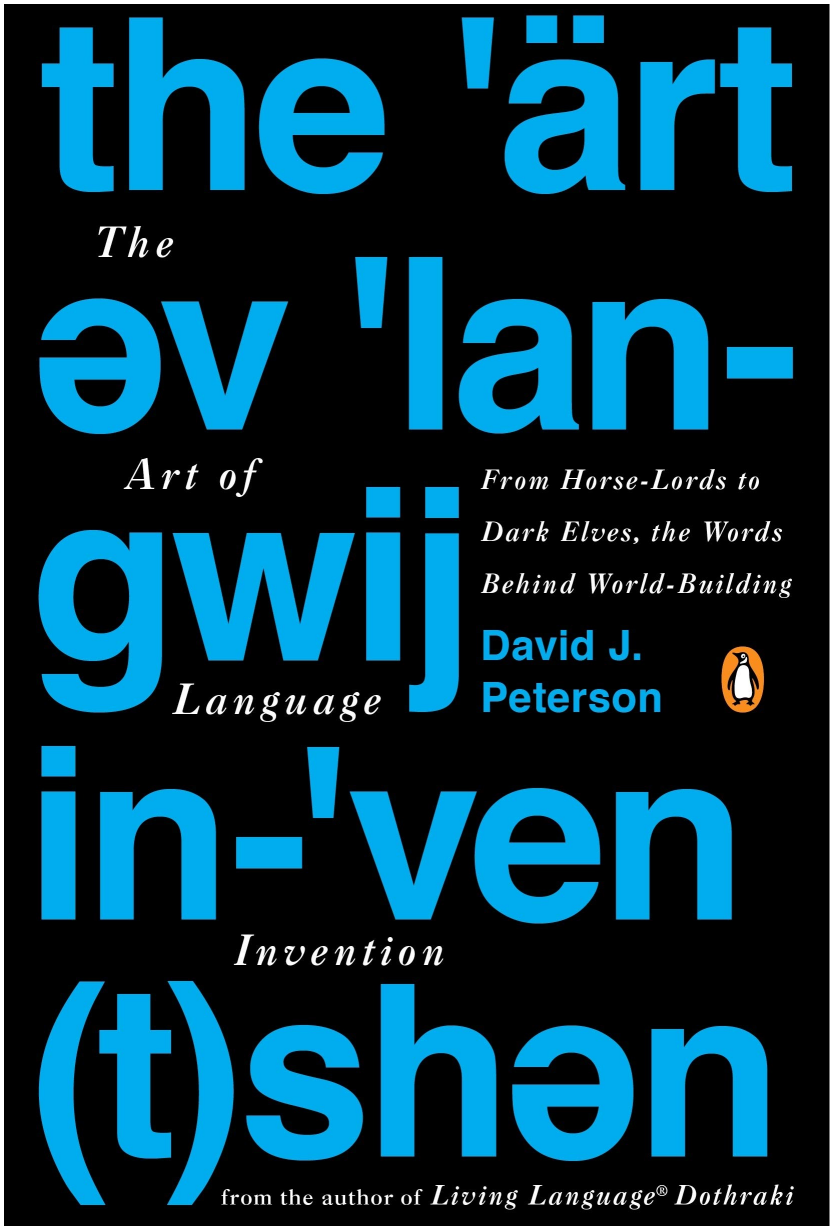
Overview

Overall ideas

- Up to date
- Technology
- Engaging
- Applicable

Specific examples

- Conlangs
- Social media
- Statistics
- Language technology
- Language teaching
- Other ideas



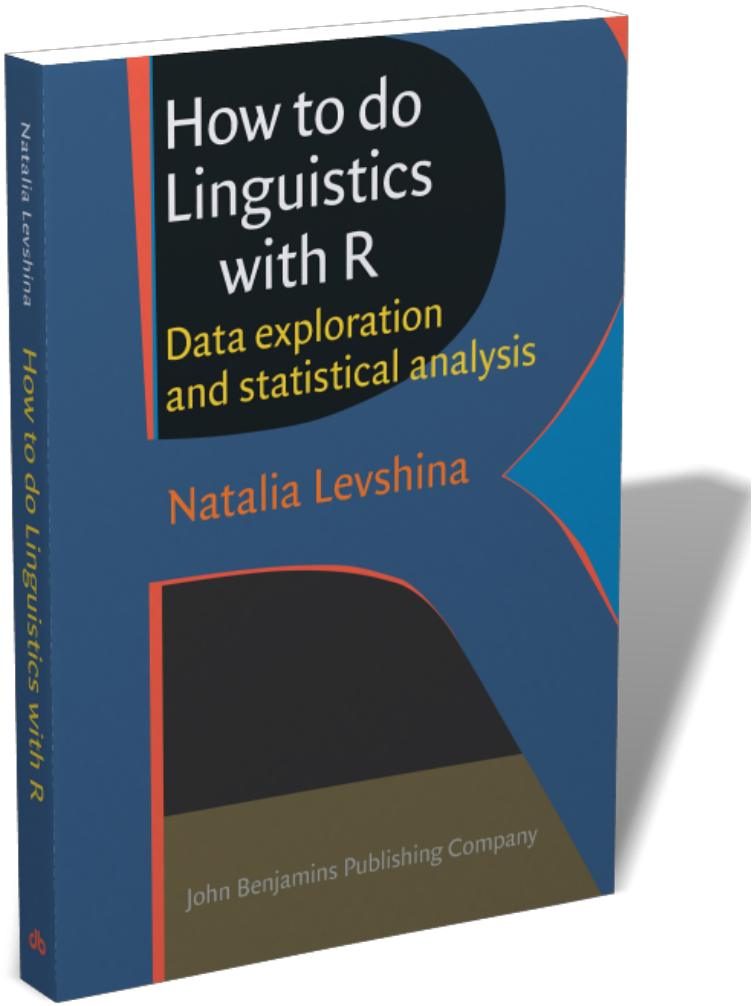
Conlangs

- One has to learn a lot of linguistics in order to create or learn a constructed language
- Interest in conlangs has blossommed, thanks in part to series like *Game of Thrones*
- The conlangs subreddit “Constructed Languages for Language Geeks” has over 57,000 followers and a very professional resource page (WALS, Leipzig Glossing Rules, IPA, Index Diachronica, SIL software)
- I will be teaching a new BA course on conlangs Spring 2021, HIF-1022 (no prerequisites)

Social media

THREAT
DEFUSER

- Cyber attacks and influence campaigns are considered to be the greatest modern threat to societies
- Linguistic analysis of social media in uncovering, understanding, and making citizens more resilient to mis- and disinformation
- Reference corpora can reveal language that deviates from “neutral”
- “Market basket” analysis can identify trends in problematic information
- See our Threat Defuser project

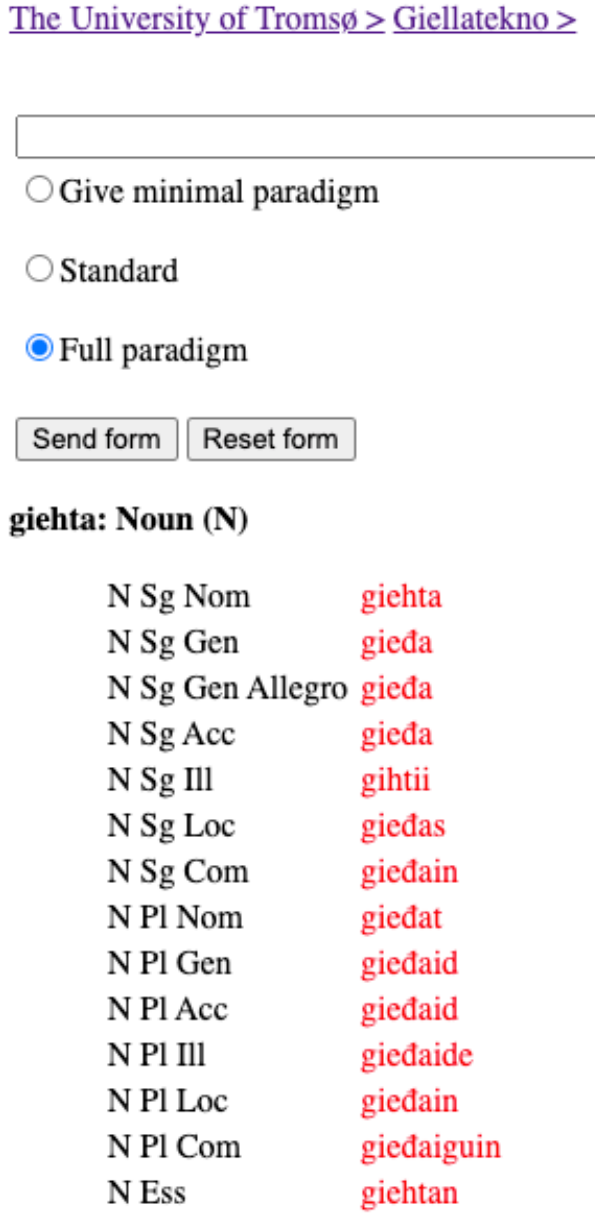


Statistics

- I have been teaching an MA-level introductory statistics course since 2015, HIF-3082
- Aim is for basic literacy/numeracy and ability to apply and interpret core statistical models
- Currently preparing an update to include Winter's *Statistics for Linguists* and R markdown
- Statistics is more meaningful when you collect and analyze your own data, but this makes for a very labor-intensive course

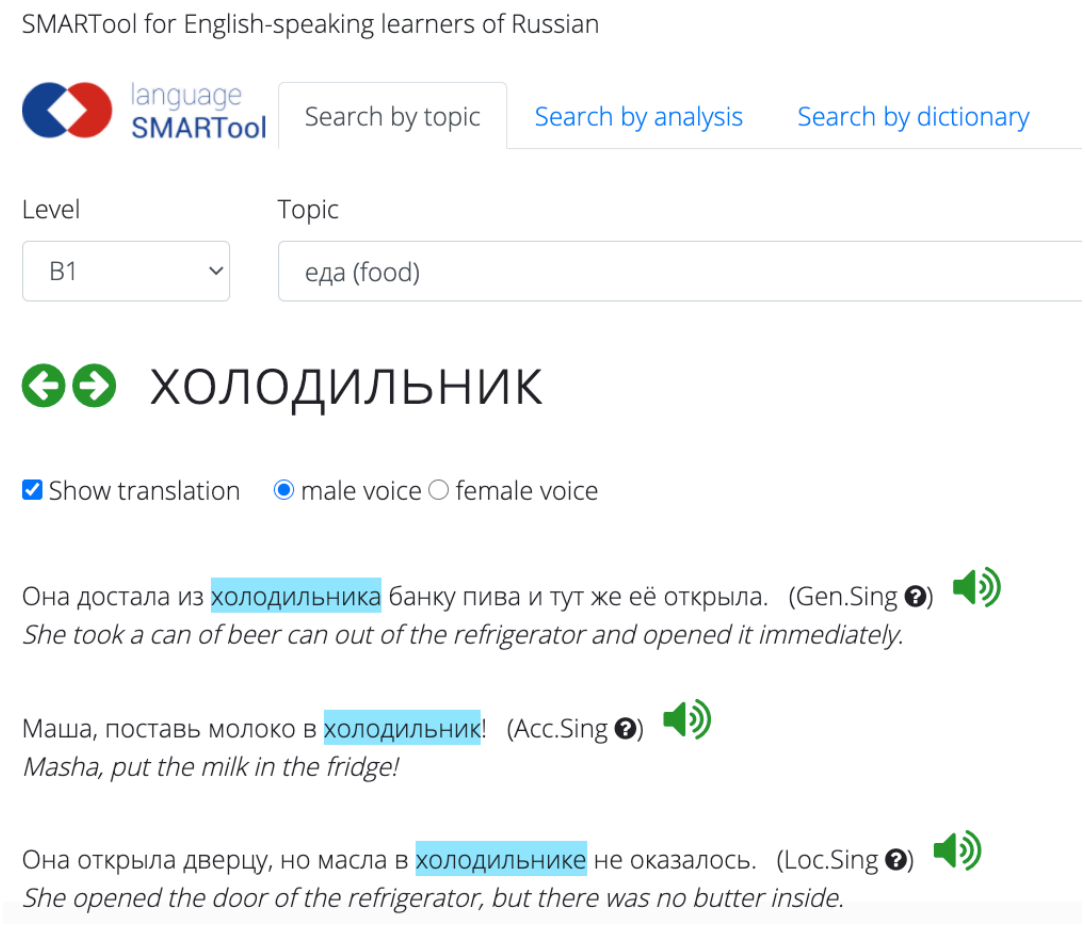
Language Technology

- Creation of NLP applications, corpus resources, etc. for languages
- Especially for “small” languages, minority languages, indigenous languages
- Young people are digital natives and many can dive right in
- Cf. Giellatekno



Language teaching

- Creation and gamification of electronic learning resources
- These can combine skills from statistics and language technology
- For example, SMARTool: Strategic Mastery of Russian Tool
  - full version
  - lessons for Min russiske reisen



Other ideas

Courses

- Typology
- Psycholinguistics
- Metaphor
- …

Activities

- Research assistantship/internship
- Co-authorship
- Community based awareness