A Web of Linguistic Fun
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“What has a hippo in common with a feather?” “What is the longest place name in the world?” “Can green ideas sleep furiously?” “Rim ember us poke in cent tense all mow stall ways con deigns word snot in then did.” These are just a few of the topics you will find under A Web of Linguistic Fun. Phantom Linguist, Bucknell University Professor Robert Beard, provides a unique collection of “fundamental subdisciplines of linguistics”(1).

The website introduces linguistic terminology such as grammar, morphology, phonology, semantics, and syntax. If this does not sound like much fun, keep going! There are also pages and pages of wordplays, games, puzzles, dictionaries, and even a fun poem about the orthography of English. You will find essays on social, mental, historical and structural aspects of language in “Language Miniatures” and lessons to teach you how to write your name in “Egyptian hieroglyphics.”

You do not have to be a linguist to understand the contents of the page. In fact, it is specifically designed for those “Curious Georges” who want to learn more and more and more. Thirty-two pages of informative, interactive, and sometimes just downright goofy pages come together to form this Web of Linguistic Fun. Each page has at least one additional link to it and in the case of the “Morphology” page, forty-three links in all. What a vast amount of information!

So what exactly does a hippo have in common with a feather? If you click on the “Historical Linguistics” page you will soon find out. The Phantom Linguist explains the origin of each word, tracing all the way back to the Indo-European language. With careful reading you will find that the pot- of hippopotamus and the feath- of feather share a common origin.

What in the world does “Rim ember us poke in cent tense all mow stall ways con deigns word snot in ten did” mean? Click on the “Syntax” page, and find out that phrase structure plays a big part in successful communication.

“Can green ideas sleep furiously?” (1). According to the Phantom Linguist, and the rules of semantics, probably not. He proves that the structure of sentences and their meaning are two distinct things, representing two different levels of language processing.

Linguistic Fun is definitely not for someone who does not have time to waste. Once you click on to one of these links, you will be entranced for hours. Find the original meaning of your first name in “Etymology of Names.” This pages also provides links to related pages such as “Baby Names,” “Hall of Names,” and “Name Games.” Interactive games, puzzles, and word searches can trap you into spending hours and hours on the web. You can play a crossword puzzle with someone on the opposite side of the country, play the “Linguistic Olympics” to challenge your knowledge, or increase your vocabulary with the “Word of the Day Game.”

Surfing is easy: almost every page accesses the Linguistic Fun home page. The unique styles of relating educational topics to everyday life make it easy and fun to learn. There is nothing exceptional about the graphics of the website, and other than the constant glare of the lima bean green background on the home page, A Web of Linguistic Fun is great!

Work Cited