

The Penguin Dictionary of
LANGUAGE

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required for the analysis of linguistic data (e.g. NP, VP), and classified into phonological, syntactic, and other types. The **Universal Base Hypothesis** states that all languages can be generated by using the same set of basic rules. »formalization; generative grammar; grammar 1; statistical linguistics.

Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights A document drawn up at an international conference in Barcelona in 1996, proclaiming the equality of language rights, seen both collectively (in relation to whole communities) and individually (in relation to the rights of individuals within communities). The document, which takes its place in a series of political statements dating back to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was being seen as an initial step towards the establishment of a United Nations convention on language rights. It drew attention to the need for principles to be found which would guarantee the promotion of and respect for all languages and their social use, highlighted the plight of the world's endangered languages, and emphasized the need for any universal approach to be based on a conception of linguistic and cultural diversity. Its statements of inalienable personal rights included: the right to be recognized as a member of a language community; the right to the use of one's own language both in private and in public; the right to the use of one's own name; the right to interrelate and associate with other members of one's language community of origin; and the right to maintain and develop one's own culture. Its statement of collective rights included: the right for a community's own language and culture to be taught; the right of access to cultural services; the right to an equitable presence of its language and culture in the communications media; and the right to receive attention in its own language from government bodies and in socioeconomic relations. »ecolinguistics; endangered languages.

universal grammar »grammar 1.

universal language »artificial language.

universal quantifier »quantifier.

univocalic /ju:nɪvəʊ'kalɪk/ A word game in which the aim is to construct a grammatical and meaningful text in which the words contain the same vowel. Short sentences are not too difficult to compose (*We were never seen except when the rest left*), but several lengthy texts have been successfully completed. »word game.

unjustified »justified.

unmarked »markedness.

unproductive »productivity.

unrounded »rounding.

unvoiced »voicing.

vocal fry

variations in pitch, and several voice qualities. ➤glottal; larynx; phonation; voice quality; voicing.

vocal fry ➤creaky voice.

vocalization An utterance viewed solely as a sequence of sound, without reference to its internal linguistic structure, if any. For example, **infant vocalization** refers to a prelinguistic period of utterance by very young children. ➤babbling.

vocal nodule A small localized swelling on the vocal folds; also called a **vocal node**. Vocal nodules are often found as a result of people overusing their voice (continually shouting in a noisy environment, for example), and result in a hoarse or breathy voice quality which may not disappear without speech therapy or surgical intervention. ➤dysphonia; speech therapy.

vocal organs The physiological structures actively involved in the process of speaking; also called the **organs of speech**. They are usually grouped into three systems: the *respiratory system*, containing the lungs and trachea; the *larynx*, enclosing the vocal folds; and the *supralaryngeal system*, comprising the movable organs in the mouth (primarily the tongue, lips, lower jaw, soft palate), the relatively fixed structures in the mouth (primarily the teeth and hard palate), the pharynx, and the nasal cavity. ➤larynx; pharynx; tongue; vocal tract; p. 361.

vocal tract The whole of the air passage above the larynx, the shape of which is the main factor affecting the quality of speech sounds; generally divided into the *nasal* and *oral* tracts. The term is sometimes used in a more general way for the whole of the respiratory tract involved in speech sound production (including lungs and larynx). ➤cavity; larynx; vocal organs; p. 361.

vocative case One of the ways in which an inflected language makes a word change its form, in order to show its relationship to other words in the sentence. The vocative is the case used when a noun phrase (typically, a single noun or pronoun) is used in the function of direct address. In non-inflecting languages, the term refers to any noun phrase used in this function (often with a distinctive intonation), such as the last item in the sentence *The dog is in the garden, Hilary*. ➤case; inflection 1.

voice 1. A category used in grammatical description, chiefly with reference to the verb, to express the way a clause may alter the relationship between subject and object without changing the meaning of the sentence. When the grammatical subject is the actor, in relation to the verb, the clause is said to be **active**; when it is the goal or recipient of the action denoted by the verb, it is said to be **passive**. The transformation of a sentence from an active to a passive is called **passivization**. The term **middle** is sometimes used (especially in grammars of Classical Greek) for actions which seem to fall between these two possibilities, such as 'I hurt myself'. ➤clause; verb 2. ➤voicing.

voice box ➤larynx.

voice disorder

voice disorder An involuntary, abnormal voice quality which interferes with communication or draws unfavourable attention to the speaker's voice (e.g. by being inappropriate in relation to the age, sex, or physical size of the speaker). Voice disorders may result from physical or psychological factors (often, from a combination of both), and may affect all aspects of phonation (pitch, loudness, timbre) as well as the resonance characteristics of the voice. Examples include a young man with a persisting high-pitched voice, a teacher with a hoarse voice which fails to carry in class, and someone with an unpleasant nasal quality in speech. ➤dysphonia; voice quality.

voiceless ➤voicing.

voice mutation The change of voice which accompanies the development of secondary sex characteristics during puberty. There is a rapid growth of the larynx, and the child voice differentiates into male and female types. The effect is particularly noticeable in boys, where the voice is lowered by about an octave. It is common to refer to this as the voice 'breaking', but in fact the change is a gradual transition, usually taking between 3 and 6 months to complete. ➤larynx; voice quality.

voice onset time (VOT) The point in time at which vocal fold vibration starts, following the release of a closure. The notion is particularly important in relation to the contrast between voiced and voiceless plosives. A voiceless plosive has a noticeable VOT gap (an average of 0.06 sec. after [p], in one study), which is minimal or absent in the case of voiced plosives. ➤plosive; vocal folds.

voiceprint A visual representation of the acoustic features of a person's voice, as analysed by a sound spectrograph. Voiceprinting was devised in the 1960s, on analogy with fingerprinting, and the claim was made that a voiceprint is unique to an individual. Although introduced as evidence in some court cases (primarily in the USA), the technique has remained controversial, but more sophisticated approaches are now being developed following electronic and computational advances. ➤spectrograph; speech recognition; voice quality.

voice qualifier ➤paralanguage.

voice quality Those aspects of a person's speech which result from the particular mode of vibration of the vocal folds used by that speaker. More generally, all the personal attributes of a voice, regardless of whether they result from actions of the vocal folds or of other organs. ➤paralanguage; quality 1; speech recognition; timbre.

voicing The vibration of the vocal folds in response to an airstream passing between them. Sounds which use vocal fold vibration are **voiced**; those which do not are **voiceless** or **unvoiced**. Voiced sounds may be **devoiced** under certain conditions, such as the final /d/ of /dad/ in English. ➤devoiced; vocal folds.

Volapük /vɒlə'pyk/ A language invented by Johann Martin Schleyer in 1880; the