

# Structure and Meaning 1

## Introduction

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# Introduction to me

- Name: Liam Keeble
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- Field of study: Meta-science of comparative cognition and sociolinguistics
- Background: From linguistics to animal communication to comparative cognition

# Module objectives

- To give you the tools to deconstruct/construct language from its most basic building blocks
- To understand where meaning enters linguistic structures
- To find patterns in these structures

# Module structure

- Break language down into basic blocks of meaning
- Build words from their meaningful units
- Build phrases from words to create even more meaningful units
- Move phrases around to alter meaning further

# Breaking language down

- Notice that our phrases and sentences consist of multiple individual phrases with their own meaning.
- John shouted at the cat on the roof
- [[John shouted] at [[the cat] on [the roof]]]

# Breaking language down

- We can also break our words down into individual units of meaning
- The word 'shouted' can be broken down into 'shout' and '-ed'
- 'shout' has meaning on its own, '-ed' does not, but gives another word new meaning

# Finding patterns

- The ways in which words and phrases can be combined follow rules
- We want to try to identify these rules across the English language

# Why?

- Language exists in the brain
- It is unique to humans
- But differs in specific ways between speakers of different languages
- What are the similarities and differences between human languages?
- And what does this tell us about the human mind?



# Next up...

- Next we will look at what meaning is,
- How we understand it,
- Its most basic building blocks,
- And how we begin to build language from them