

Time in Psychoanalysis

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### Abstract

This essay talks about how speakers of one institution form their own language, which makes them perceive time in a similar way. It talks about the effect of differences in meaning.

*Keywords:* Psychoanalysis, subconsciousness, ecosystem, language

### Time in Psychoanalysis

It is important to question the nature of the idea before understanding the function of the concept itself. When Sigmund Freud was writing his greatest ideas, his main source of inspiration came from his dreams. In his dreams, he could surpass the symbolic structure he used to live in every day. He recorded what he saw, and made great theories from his dreams such as the death drive or the jouissance (S.Freud, 1930a). But later his theories were rewritten or maybe I should say “re-understood” by his predecessors. For example, his most controversial topic “Death Drive” was mostly disagreed with by his fellow students. At first, only Melanie Klein had agreed upon Freudian Death Drive (Zupančič, 2017), until Jacques Lacan redefined the death drive, to neglect the pulsation of the death (Lacan J. , 1938), therefore changing the nature of the concept itself, which became more acceptable.

In 1948 Simone de Beauvoir was working on her book *The Second Sex* and she came across Lacan’s paper on the family (Lacan J. , 1938) and studied it at length. She became so interested in the psychoanalytic movement’s internal quarrels about female sexuality that she telephoned Lacan to ask his advice on how she should deal with the question. He was flattered and replied that they would need to talk for five or six months to sort out the problem. Beauvoir already had plenty of material for her book and didn’t feel like spending all that time listening to Lacan, so she suggested they might make do with four interviews. He declined (Roudinesco, 1997).

The first thing that Lacan points out when he discusses unconsciousness is that “unconsciousness is structured like a language”. The main word here is “like” and I was always fascinated by the difference in languages, colors, senses, smells, sounds, tastes, etc. Lacan uses a structuralist understanding of language. Structuralism is simply made of two points, that

language is a system of differences, and meaning is the effect of this system of differences (Blackburn, 2008). To clarify, this means that there is no inherent connection between the signifier and the signified, and between the signified and the part of reality, it describes. For example, the Chinese character ‘树’<sup>1</sup> has nothing intrinsically to connect it with the image/concept itself. The concept of ‘tree’ in English, with all its complex meanings, but specifically that of biology, has no organic connection with the part of reality that it describes. The word ‘Person’ in Latin used to mean the actor that was performing in a mask, but now the word means something completely different. This is an example of a signified changing when the signifier stays the same.

The second element in Lacan’s statement is unconscious. Freud postulated that the individual mind, Descartes’ rational subject, is not a self-transparent entity. Rather it is split into a consciousness part and an unconscious part. The conscious part is what is available to itself immediately daily. The unconscious is formed by all the repressed affect structures that one individual has accumulated since birth, but for the sake of a functional personality has been “forgotten”. However, all these affect structures remain in a functional state even if in a non-actualized/conscious form.

Derrida's *Of Grammatology* is considered one of his most important publications explaining Deconstructionist theory. His scientific study of the system of writing is highly important in understanding the need (or I should say “the un-need”) of institutions. He describes

*“The idea behind deconstruction is to deconstruct the workings of strong nation-states with powerful immigration policies, to deconstruct the rhetoric of nationalism, the politics of place, the metaphysics of native land and native tongue... The idea is to disarm the bombs... of*

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<sup>1</sup> Tree

*identity that nation-states build to defend themselves against the stranger; against Jews and Arabs and immigrants... ” - Jacques Derrida*

Many types of institutions introduce double standards, egocentrism, and the need for becoming a universal standard ideology. If it's Western imperialism, fascism or Marxist Communism... state army, psychoanalytical associations or economic institutions... tech corporations, real estate, music labels and many more... what they have in common is - a strong symbolic structure, like a wall, that protects them ideologically from other “enemy” institutions.

*The political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly...But he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger...” (Schmitt, The Concept of The Political (expanded ed.), 2008a)*

Later in this paper we will talk about the concepts of democracy and the enemy, how they function through the system of differences in the new transparent world. But first let's talk about the perception of time.

## **Basic Concepts**

There are three main reasons why languages can be alike. They can have the same origin (genetical similarities), typological similarities (same pronunciation, same words order...) and geographical similarities. The three main typological similarities/differences between languages are sounding, grammar and lexicon(vocabulary). Main typological grammatical similarities are basic word order, scope of expression in grammar, and number of genitive plural (genders, grammatical times) ...

### **Word Order**

The first grammatical similarity that can occur in languages is the word order. In a sentence there is a subject (S), verb (V) and an object (O). In Kazakh languages the main

structure is SOV, where the object is placed before the verb, for example the sentence ‘*мен қойшқарды көрдім*’ the translation would be ‘I goat saw’(SOV), which means ‘I saw a goat’. In Thai language the structure is SVO, ‘kha su ahar’(SVO) or เขาชื้ออาหาร, which means ‘he bought food’. In Ireland (Keltic) language the structure is VSO, for example ‘Léann na sagairt na leabhair’, which translates to ‘Reading (article) Saints (article) books’, ‘Saints are reading books. In Samoa (Australian) language, the structure is VOS, ‘un maua le polo e le tama’, which translates to ‘Find (article) ball (article) boy’, ‘A boy found a ball’.

### **Scope of expression**

The second grammatical similarity in languages is the scope of expression. There are two main scopes of expressions, which can be divided in to “synthetic” and “analytic” languages. A “synthetic” language is any language that uses the strategy of changing its word forms (e.g., by adding word endings) to convey grammatical information, such as the tense, aspect, and voice of a verb, or the role of a noun in a sentence. Russian is an example of a “synthetic” language. For example, in Russian, the noun playing the role of the subject and the noun playing the role of the direct object in a sentence have different word forms that show these grammatical roles. These roles can be interpreted independently from the word order because of their differentiated forms--that is, we would always be able to tell which noun is the direct object, wherever it is in a sentence, because it has a distinct form.

On the other hand, an “analytic” language is any language that conveys grammatical information not by changing its word forms, but rather mainly by other means such as additional particles and markers or a stricter word order. Chinese is an example of an “analytic” language--as we all know, Chinese words cannot change forms, so grammatical information must be conveyed through other means. Chinese is an example of an “analytic” language--as we all

know, Chinese words cannot change forms, so grammatical information must be conveyed through other means.

## Number of genitive plurals

Based on WALS base of 237 languages, there are 100 languages without grammatical cases, 53 languages with 2-5 cases, 37 languages with 6-7 cases, 23 languages with 8-9 cases and 25 with more that 10 cases. Figure 2 shows how many cases are there in languages in Europe.

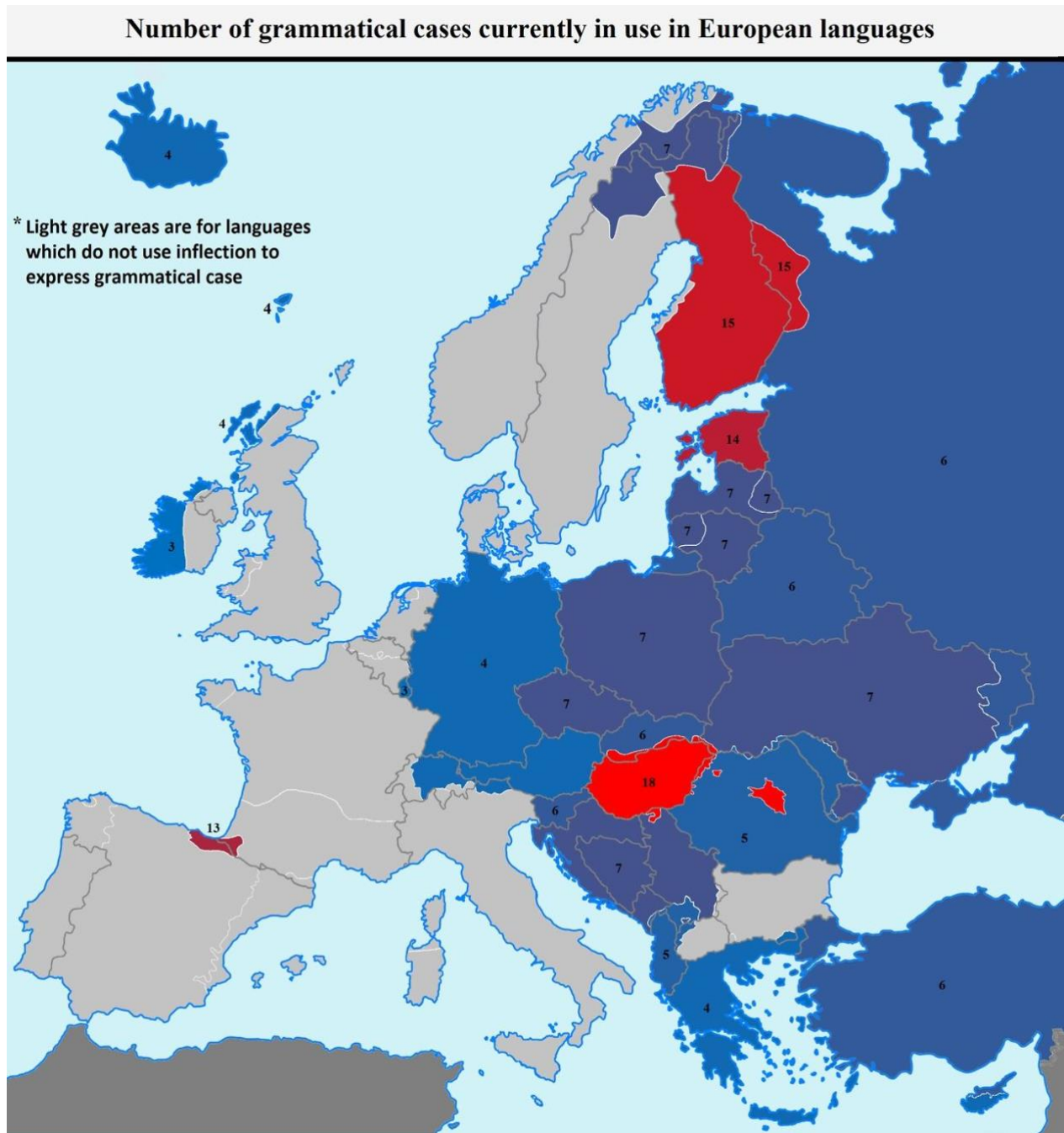
For example, in German there are 6 types of the word ‘you’, including: *du, dich, dir, sie, ihnen, ihr, euch*. Same as in Russian there are 6 types of the word ‘you’, including: ты, вы, тебя, тебе, вас, вами. (ty, vy, tebjä, tebjë, vas, vami). At first this might be complicating to understand how these pronouns work exactly in a language, but I guaranty you that this is just the beginning. There is genitive plural, verbs of motion, declension of numerals that make things even more complicated to understand and learn. Here I have to say that English kind of simplifies most of those for some reason.

Figure 1 show the conjugation of a single Polish word





Figure 2 shows the grammatical cases currently in use in European languages.



### Perception of logical time

A subject's perception of time is highly related to the mental processes that The Other impute on it, and as Lacan points out: *classical logic can never give us anything which cannot already be seen all at once* (Lacan J. , 1945). But the spatialized conception of logic lies at the base of the objection to which Lacan responds his "temporal" logic representing an aporia for the frozen and sterile forms of classical logic.

If we use the structuralist understanding of language and the theory of perception of logical time, my argument is: The effect of differences in meaning, varies throughout the system of differences, therefore creating infinite variations of the structures of the subconscious. To put it in other words, the meanings vary through the institutions, creating different variations of institutions, which also change the perception of time. Institutions create their own versions of time for comprehending, therefore changing the moment of concluding.

The perception of time in Lacanian psychoanalysis is structured in three parts: The instant of the glance, the time for comprehending, and the moment of concluding (Lacan J. , 1945). The fact that logical time is not objective doesn't mean that it's a matter of subjective feeling, but it's the falsely imputed mental process of the other that a subject can only take into account.

To make an example about logical time I highly recommend readers to read Lacan's "Three prisoner's problem" (Lacan J. , 1945).

*Three prisoners in jail are summoned by the warden. He tells them that he has the authority to release one of them and that to decide which of the three it shall be, he has concocted a little game for them to play. The winner will go free. He has three white tags (or discs, as he calls them) and two black ones. He is going to pin a disc on the back of each prisoner, but while the other two prisoners will be able to see it, the prisoner to whom it is*

*pinned will not know whether it is black or white. Each prisoner must try to logically reckon - and not simply guess - whether his disc is black or white without verbally communicating with the others. As soon as he thinks he has figured it out, he is to run for the door where he should be prepared to answer as to his color and explain how he worked it out. Having explained the rules, the warden proceeds to pin a white disc on the back of each of the three prisoners, the black discs being left aside. How can the prisoners solve the problem?*

*After having contemplated one another for a certain time, the three subjects take a few steps together and pass side by side through the doorway. Each of them then separately furnishes a similar response which can be expressed thus: "I am a white, and here is how I know it: as my companions were whites, I thought that, had I been a black, each of them would have been able to infer the following: 'If I too am a black, the other would have necessarily realized straight away that he was a white and would have left immediately; therefore, I am not a black.' And both would have left together, convinced that they were whites. As they did nothing of the kind, I must be a white like them. At that, I made for the door to make my conclusion known." All three thus exited simultaneously, armed with the same reasons for concluding.*

*The mental processes of B and C are falsely imputed to them, imagined, and placed there by A. While A can (correctly) impute (false) thought processes to others, he can nevertheless only take into account their real behavior. The "time for comprehending" engenders subjects who are undefined except by their reciprocity, each of them finding the key to his problem in the inertia of his semblable.*

To put my argument in other words, native speakers of one institution, form their own language, which makes them perceive time in a similar way. The language that they speak also plays a big role in how the time is perceived.

**In English (The West).**

*If the constitution of a state is democratic, then every exceptional negation of democratic principles, every exercise of state power independent of the approval of the majority, can be called dictatorship.* (Schmitt, Politische Theologie, 1885)

Western civilization has promoted its own democratic values to the rank of a Universal system. Western values such as secularized Christianity – individualism, egoism, competition, technical progress, consumption, and economic exploitation. The West dominates not because of superior values but because of technical progress, while other civilizations are judged by this system only in terms of rationalism and technical progress. Few months ago, before writing this, the world order could be called unipolar, with the global West at its center and the United States at its core. Geopolitically, the dominance of the world by the US in its imperialist interest, denies national self-determination. While ideologically it is based on modern and postmodern values that are openly antitraditional in nature. If we metaphysically compare a democracy to another democracy, the difference of two will be totalitarianism. Because in structuralism, meaning comes through differences, therefore a true democracy in structuralist view will only exist if there is another ‘other’ that is there to compare, sometimes even to blame and to point to.

English feels more precise when talking about a specialty of a person comparing to other languages. My best guess is that, this is because of developing capitalism. English speakers tend to reject as inadequate the ‘trait’ and ‘functionalist’ theories of the professions and instead present an alternative framework to analyze the contemporaneous occupational change in industrial societies, in other words, creating a symbolic system that proves the symbolic system. Many professions that currently exist are translated from English to other languages. But this is not only limited to English, there are many professions that only exist in some parts of the world

that no one thought of in others. For example ear cleaning ‘采耳’, called ‘Cai Er’ is highly popular in Asia but is almost never thought of in Europe or in North America.

Here, I took a piece of an interview with Mike Rowe, he explains why more workers are “quietly quitting” and later I talk about how this interview would be ‘understood’ if it was heard by a non-English speaker.

*Americans have made work the proximate cause of their collective unhappiness (Rowe, 2022). Most United States citizens believe that job satisfaction has something to do with the job while it doesn't. If jobs did determine satisfaction, all books would be equally satisfying to read, all host speakers would have the same amount of engagement. But it's far from the truth. It's because people have more to do with their jobs.*

English speakers tend to give meaning to jobs. While listening to Mike Rowe speak you can tell that he thinks that “work” is imperial, the workers and their relationship with the work matter, and it isn't just the grades of work, but it's more of the philosophical attitude to the work. I believe that this relationship to jobs and tasks is highly tied to the industrial revolution that happened the earliest in the world.

**In Mandarin (Sino-Tibetan and Yue).**

**In Russian (Slavic and Eurasian).** Also, there are no articles in Russian

**Becoming an ecosystem**

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Footnotes

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