

Ideas for ((Un)Real) Speech

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INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON
SITS ON THE ANCESTRAL
HOMELANDS OF THE
MIAMI, DELAWARE,
POTAWATOMI & SHAWNEE PEOPLE



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Notes on content and some housekeeping

- ▶ I want to keep this a safe space of mutual respect.
- ▶ There may be discussion of topics such as colonization, oppression, pejoratives, etc. in this workshop, but if you want them or any other topics kept out, we will do our best to do so.
- ▶ Touching on 'political' topics will be inevitable though.
- ▶ Slides are available at
<https://github.com/giuthas-talks/TPK2024>

Who's this guy?



- ▶ Pertti Palo
- ▶ I've got a couple of degrees (loosely speaking) in engineering.
- ▶ I've also got a PhD in Phonetics.
- ▶ I have no formal qualifications in Borrowing a Language, but I do know a lot about speech production, and...

I do have some background

- ▶ I am not a text linguist but rather a phonetician and a speech researcher.
- ▶ When I say 'language' I mainly mean spoken language today.
- ▶ Besides a speech researcher with 20+ years of experience, I've been an RPG enthusiast for 30+ years.
- ▶ Recently I've also started training as an oral storyteller which has some interesting connections with RPGs and science.

What we'll do

- ▶ I'll talk about dragon speech if you want me to.
- ▶ If there's not too many of us, we'll go round the table and talk about the projects each of you is working on, concentrating on questions about speech and how it interacts with world and story.
- ▶ I've got some ideas to play around with on the next slides, but we don't need to look at those.

Dragon speech

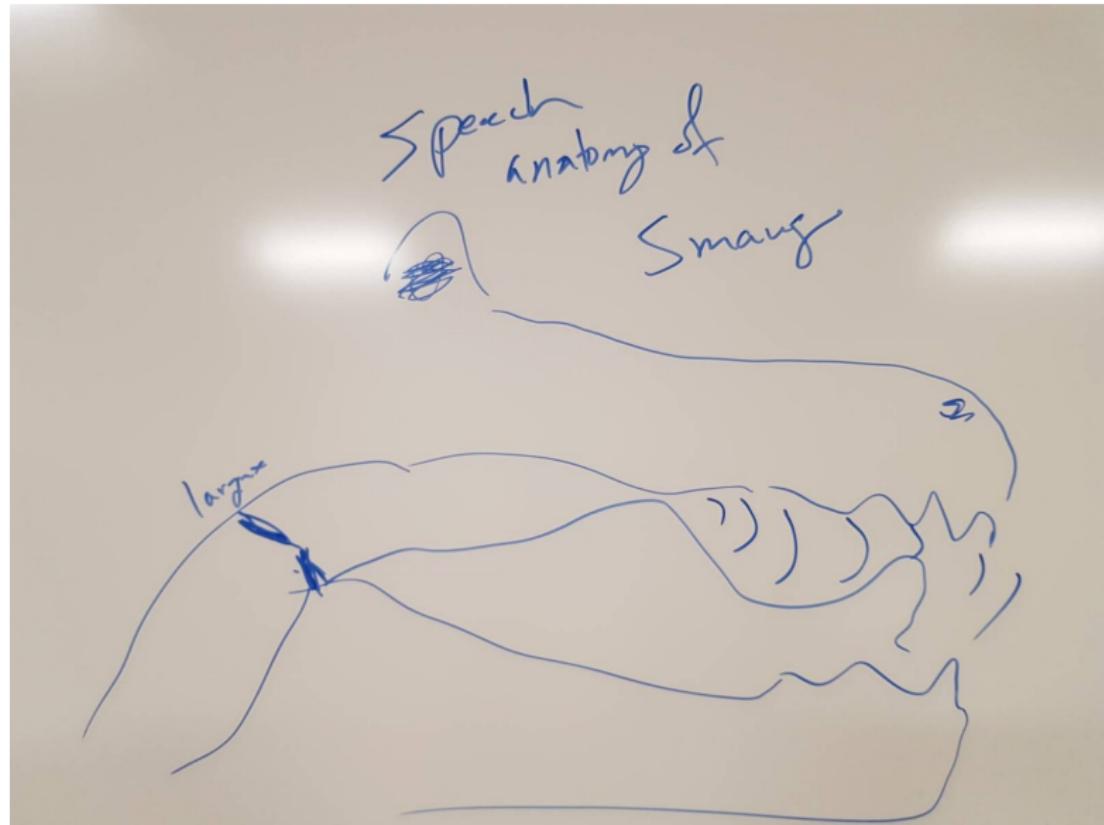


Image courtesy of Prof Steven Lulich.

Ideas to play around with

- ▶ Dragon speech and physics (such as they are) and the consequences to the world or story.
- ▶ Humanoids who do not use sound as a means of communication (and possibly can not perceive it).
- ▶ The base code of reality being a spoken (/speakable) programming language.
- ▶ Social and/or physical environment of speech and language in a world or story.

Some more ideas to play around with

- ▶ If the world is magical, language can be too:
 - ▶ Unholy, vowel rich language (cf. Moorcock): hääyöäie (i.e. you can do this with Finnish)
 - ▶ "Guttural, evil language" was not a great idea to start with.
- ▶ Homophone words (think 'for' and 'four') and homonyms (see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homonym> for details) and other plays on words can be part of a story ("Pedo mellon a minno.")
 - ▶ Mix this with dialects and you can produce a pretty solidly confusing situation.
 - ▶ Working these into game play may not be the easiest though.
- ▶ Whistled and drummed languages (they are a real thing in the real world)
- ▶ Singing

Acknowledgements

- ▶ Again, the people who's ancestral land I have worked on.
- ▶ Wikipedia is a lovely thing.
- ▶ All the good folk mentioned in passing and some that I've forgotten.
- ▶ Copyrighted work remains the property of the legal copyright holders.
- ▶ Excellent participants of the previous versions of this workshop (Indiana ComicCon 2022, Ropecons 2022 & 2023).
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