Overview

1. How Story-builder came about (~10 min.)

2. Intro to the deck and how story-building works (~10 min.)

3. Hands-on experience in small groups (~20 min.)

4. Group discussion (~10 min.)
How Story-builder came about...

• Two personal experiences:
  • Trying to converse in Russian class
  • Trying to elicit argument structure data in Kwak’wala

• What do field linguists and language teachers have in common?

The task of motivating speakers to produce natural, fluid speech on a wide variety of topics.
Available field methods

1. Direct elicitation
2. Texts

3. Visual methods: Story-boards
   (http://totemfieldstoryboards.org/)

   Pictures

   Animations

…but these have two significant limitations.
The Story-builder Deck

7 “Character Cards” with matching character tokens

55 “Action Cards”
How it works...
Predicates depicted in ‘action cards’...

1. to put, place
2. to bring, carry, take, move, transport
3. to push
4. to pull
5. to give; to pass
6. to trade, exchange
7. to buy; to sell; to pay
8. to hide
9. to throw (at)
10. to hit, punch; to be hit, be punched
11. to touch
12. to stir, mix
13. to read
14. to build, stack, pile
15. to sing
16. to dance
17. to imagine, daydream, fantasize
18. to think, ponder, consider
19. to show, reveal
20. to see, watch
21. to hear, listen
22. to smell
23. to be angry
24. to be scared, frightened, startled
25. to scold, yell at; be scolded, be yelled at
26. to search (for)
27. to argue, fight
28. to help, assist; to reach
29. to hug, embrace; to love
30. to ask, request
31. to tell (a story), teach
32. to converse, talk
33. to drink
34. to eat
35. to cough
36. to cry
37. to bleed
38. to spit
39. to smile; to become happy
40. to laugh
41. to sleep
42. to be injured, be hurt
43. to die, be killed, be stabbed
44. to break, shatter
45. to cook
46. to live, dwell, be at home
47. to appear
48. to disappear, vanish
49. to arrive, come, approach
50. to leave, depart
51. to go, walk (around)
52. to jump, leap
53. to guide, lead; to accompany, go with
54. to be sunny
55. to rain
Example uses...
Pick-1:

Rita was thinking about something. She thought about going to visit her grandchildren and she became very happy. And she had such joy that she was going to go see her grandchildren.
“This woman was making a cake, stirring it. All of a sudden a guy came along and touched her. So she gave him a big punch in the face.”
Group Story-building
Competitive Multi-Player Game

Rules:
1 = pick a blue card
2 = pick a green card
3 = pick a red card
4 = trade any card with the player to your left
5 = steal a card from any player
6 = draw a random card
( Restart when stories are 6 cards long )
(1) What is Story-builder useful for?

(2) What are its limitations?

(3) What would it be like to use Story-builder from the perspective of:
  • A linguist
  • A language consultant
  • A language learner
  • A language teacher
Acknowledgments

Story-builder was initiated as a Cognitive Systems 402 project in Spring 2011 at the University of British Columbia. Special thanks to Henry Davis for supervising the project, and to Erik Vatikiotis-Bateson and the Cogs 402 class for providing helpful feedback on the work; also thanks to the many volunteers who tested and translated the cards and inspired many important revisions, especially my Kwak’wala consultants, RDC, VB, JN, and MN. Kwak’wala fieldwork was supported by a Jacobs Grant.