

Possible topics for the first essay

Just some ideas.

Chapter 1.

Language evolved from more than just blended signs – a response to Hockett
English should (or shouldn't) be the official Language of the US
Dead grammar rules – glad to see them go
Can a language really be revived from written descriptions?
Languages die because parents don't want their children to speak them

Chapter 2.

Why it doesn't (or does) matter that languages have different numbers of words
There is a limit to how complicated can a language's morphology be
Little languages have different morphology than big languages
There is no “unit of meaning” in language

Chapter 3.

Ejectives arise at higher elevations than other sounds (or not)
No two /t/ sounds are ever the same – does it matter?
The phonetic alphabet should be taught in high school (according to Anthony Burgess)
Everyone under 25 has vocal fry – but only young women get knocked for it
You can hear “the gay” because gay people talk funny

Chapter 4.

Why Kenneth Pike's features lost out to Roman Jakobson's
Phonological assimilation is going to ruin English
How to make a language with only 13 phonemes
Language is made up of 20 basic sound properties
Misheard song lyrics follow phonological rules

Chapter 5.

Recursion: what separates the apes from the humans
Any word can be a verb in English, but (your favorite language here) verbs hard too
Are common verbs more likely to be multivalent?
“Mess up” is a verb – Discontinuous verbs I have known
Unspoken words: a key to language structure