**V. Language change and adaptation**

1. What makes a language fit to survive? what characteristics does a language need to have to ensure its survival?

2. From the biological perspective, what is characteristic of an „adaptive trait“? Does language adapt to the brain/mind or v. v.?

3. How do you understand that, languages adapt to the brain and cognition so that it could process them?

4. Of what does the innate cognitive predisposition for language consist and in what way does the cognitive predisposition constrain languages and the way they change? Can you imagine a language that couldn’t fit cognitively in the brain?

**5. What are the constraints of language change?**

6. What is „communicatively useful“ and efficient in a language in terms of information delivery, i.e., what are „the best communicative solutions“?

7. What would you consider mentally taxing to the mind in a language?

8. What are the maxims of communication (Grice)?

9. What is the role of cultural transmission in language change and what is the role of **new language learners?**

10. What is meant by children learners‘ filtering adults‘ language usage? Who is behind „inconsistently produced innovations“, children or adult learners, and why?

11. What does it mean that a language must be learnable to survive?

12. What role did Vikings‘ invasions and their settlement in Britain (9-10th AD) play in cultural transmission and shaping of English grammar?

13. How do you understand J. McWhorter's theory of why English dropped its endings and simplified the paradigms? Why, do you think, did such a radical restructuring of Old English grammar happen?

14. How do N. Chomsky and the nativists (S. Pinker et al.) explain the basis of language change?

15. Why is the universal grammar theory not needed to explain the young children learn a language in all its complexity, despite it being in “constant flux”?

16. In what way do duality of patterning and compositionality support cognitive efficiency (so that the mind doesn’t get overly taxed?

17. How is grammatical variation handled in modern English? Please provide its examples.

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18. Which of the features commonly found across languages are universal because they spring from our genetic code? Which of these features arise simply because they are the best solution to packaging and sharing information or to a communicative problem?!

19. How do speakers and hearers negotiate how much information needs to be put into the linguistic code, and how much can be left out to be figured out from the context?

**p. 45 Change in the prayer from OE to mod. E**

**p. 46 PIE tree**