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JEF VERSCHUEREN

Language on Language: Toward Metapragmatic Universals

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IN LIEU OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This text is a preliminary research report. The scope and complexity of the comparative lexical project it bears on is such that a more definitive statement of results is not to be expected within the next couple of years. Though I regard the data referred to as about 75% accurate, further details have to be sorted out for the majority of the 81 languages in this survey. Dozens of scholars have helped me with vital information during the past five years. All of them will be duly acknowledged in the final version of this report. Meanwhile, I do not want them to share the blame for remaining inadequacies. Explicit thanks, however, may already go to an anonymous (i.e. implicit) referee for voicing the healthy skepticism of which even I can understand that it is necessary.

If this sounds like an apology for publishing this text in its present form, it is. But there is also an excuse. The implications of the research, which -- for now -- we can only hint at, are such that withholding the text from circulation might not have been the more responsible alternative.

J.V.
Antwerp, November 1989
1. RESEARCH GOAL

This study is to be situated within an empirical-conceptual approach to linguistic action (LA),\(^1\) interpretable as a form of the ethnography of communication. The approach in question is an attempt to come to grips with the varying ways in which linguistic behavior is conceptualized by those engaged in it, by way of scrutinizing empirically observable linguistic reflections of those conceptualizations (such as linguistic action verbials -- LAVs for short -- i.e. the verbs and verb-like expressions used, in natural language, to talk about the conceptualized behavior). This form of metapragmatics is motivated by the assumption that the meaning of social practices can only be fully understood by gaining insight into the worlds of ideas with which the participants associate them, and in terms of which they interpret them. Its ultimate goal, which can only be achieved after further scrutiny of the complex interactions between concepts and actual practices, is to shed light on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication problems which may result, in part, from differences in the mental frames in terms of which interacting members of different linguistic, cultural, or subcultural backgrounds, operate communica
tively.

Inseparable from the search for those differences, is a desire to locate similarities. Not only is there a logical connection between the two enterprises,\(^2\) but especially in an imponderable area such as

\(^1\) The approach was originally defined in those terms in J. Verschueren (1979, 1985) and further exemplified in J. Verschueren (ed.) (1987). However, it is related to a much older and wider tradition; references are to be found in the publications mentioned.

\(^2\) This dialectic patterning of linguistic research is the theme of the following quotation from B. Comrie's (1981) book on language universals and linguistic typology:

"At first sight, the study of language universals and the study of language typology might seem to be opposites, even in conflict with one another: language universals research is concerned with finding those properties that are common to all human languages, whereas in order to typologize languages, i.e. to assign them to different types, it is necessary that there should be differences among languages. The contrast can thus be summed up as one between the study of similarities across languages and the study of differences among languages. Yet, in practice, the two studies proceed in parallel: typically, linguists who are interested in language universals from the viewpoint of work on a wide range of languages are also interested in language typology, and it is very often difficult to classify a given piece of work in this
the lexicalization of concepts of linguistic action, there is a strong temptation to regard the identification of similarities as a logically first step -- though this step itself requires careful attention to mostly divergent data from a wide range of languages. In addition, an interest in the problem we have defined, detached from the potential quest for its solution, would be merely frivolous if not irresponsible. The belief that solutions to cross-cultural communication problems may exist, is tenable only on the assumption that people can learn foreign languages and can acquire the skills needed to function 'properly' in a foreign culture's communicative style. This assumption, for which human experience provides ample evidence, can presumably be explained only on the basis of a universal core inherent in all languages and cultures. The discovery of aspects of this universal core would be an invaluable step towards understanding the differences and, therefore, towards solving the problems resulting from them.

Especially -- but by no means only -- in the domain of linguistic (inter)action or verbal behavior, the only safe starting point in this quest is an assumption of minimal universality: nothing should be considered a universal until conclusive evidence stemming from wide-ranging comparative research has been obtained. Given the large number

area as being specifically on language universals as opposed to language typology or vice versa: book and article titles including typology or universals often seem arbitrary, though the arbitrariness is sometimes removed, as in the title of the present book, by including both."

This attitude is related to the tradition in (phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic) universals research established by J. Greenberg (1966) and represented by B. Comrie (1981), which holds that research on language universals has to be based on data from a wide range of languages, whereas Chomsky (1965) maintained that the detailed study of an individual language could provide sufficient evidence and is, in fact, the best basis for the formulation of universals. (For a detailed discussion of these opposing views, see B. Comrie 1981: 1-29; note, however, that today's research practice no longer fits the dichotomy fully.) Whatever disagreements J.R. Searle may have with Chomsky's linguistic theory in general (see J.R. Searle 1972, 1976b), 'orthodox' speech act theory (as represented by J. R. Searle 1969, 1976a) operates on a remarkably similar assumption of maximal universality which takes the researcher's or the philosopher's own experience of verbal behavior as a maximally relevant representative of the corresponding universal experience. This attitude is most clearly present in the claim that his analyses bear on abstract and universal illocutionary act types rather than language-specific and culture-specific notions such as 'promise,' 'request,' etc. and, likewise, that his classification of illocutionary act types has universal validity in spite of its constant reference to English verbs. The attitude remains unchanged even in J.R. Searle & D. Vanderveken's (1985) semantical analysis of English illocutionary verbs which they feel obliged to introduce with a remark on the essential distinction between illocutionary verbs and illocutionary forces:

"Illocutionary forces are, so to speak, natural kinds of uses of language, but we can no more expect the vernacular expressions to correspond exactly to the natural illocutionary kinds than we can expect vernacular names of plants and animals to correspond exactly to
of languages to be investigated in order to avoid genetic, areal, typological, and cultural biases (see Appendix A), and given the large number of LAVs in most languages, the search for metapragmatic universals within a lexical version of the empirical-conceptual approach to linguistic action (focusing on lexicalizations of linguistic action as reflections of underlying conceptual patterns) may run into serious problems on account of this attitude.

For this reason, an attempt should be made to identify more restricted, conceptually basic, sets of LAVs which are small enough to make the topic of investigation manageable across a wide range of languages. This search for basic linguistic action verbs (BLAVs) cannot be carried out successfully unless the LAV lexicons of natural languages show a hierarchical structure of some sort. As A. Wierzbicka (1988) points out in her comments on the project, the existence of such a hierarchy cannot be taken for granted:

"The idea [...] is attractive, but I believe that it is based on a dubious assumption. There is no reason to suppose, a priori, that the lexicon of speech act verbs will have a kind of hierarchical structure similar to the folk-taxonomies of animals or plants, or to the sets of color terms. The problem is empirical and has to be solved on the basis of a detailed semantic analysis of a large number of speech act verbs." (pp. 111-112)

The issue is indeed empirical. But since the aim is to identify those sets of LAVs which occupy a basic level in language-specific lexicalizations of linguistic action concepts (in view of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences in conceptualization), the issue can only be approached in terms of the relationships which speakers themselves can observe between the LAVs of their own individual languages, and not in terms of relationships which emerge from a uniform application of anything comparable to the 'semantic primitives' analysis proposed in A. Wierzbicka (1972, 1980, 1985a) -- though the latter has already been applied with great skill and

the natural biological kinds." (p. 179)

This stance ignores the fundamentally social and hence fundamentally conceptual nature of verbal behavior (which could be called a non-natural kind on the analogy of H.P. Grice's restriction of semantic analysis to non-natural meaning). (For further criticism, see J. Verschueren 1983a, 1983c.)

The investigation was originally advocated in J. Verschueren (1981b) [reprinted with modifications in (1985: chapter 8)] and further elaborated in (1983b), which in turn led to the formulation in (1984) of an extensive questionnaire which served as the starting point of the study reported in this text. The relationship between the questionnaire and this provisional end product will be commented upon at the end of chapter 2.

Similarly, Herb Clark (personal communication) has remarked, quite correctly, that the existence of a strict parallelism between the hierarchical structure of biological folk taxonomies and the conceptual relationships between verbs cannot be simply postulated.
patience to speech act verbs (see A. Wierzbicka 1987). A language-
internal identification of a set of BLAVs can be carried out only on
the basis of a number of operational criteria which can be reasonably
assumed to reflect, with a sufficient degree of accuracy, language-
specific conceptual basicness within the LAV lexicon.

Our research goal, then, is to discover sets of LAVs which are
conceptually 'basic' in a representative sample of the world's
languages, by applying a number of operational criteria to define sets
of BLAVs in a uniform, and hence cross-linguistically and cross-
culturally comparable way. Further, a comparison of the operationally
defined sets of BLAVs (if the investigation shows that they can indeed
be isolated) is intended to lead to the discovery and formulation of
universal tendencies in the lexicalization of linguistic action, or,
in language on language. The original idea was to look for synchronic
implicational universals comparable to those found for color terms (see
B. Berlin & P. Kay 1969) and plant and animal names (see C.H. Brown
1977, 1979, 1984). The results of this search are discussed in chapter
3. But first we shall present the operational criteria handled (chapter
2). The language sample is discussed in Appendix A, and the complete
set of data resulting from an application of the operational criteria
to 81 languages is offered in Appendix B.

Clearly, when evaluating the present research, an extensive
discussion of theories of the lexicon and lexical semantics (beyond the
casual reference to B. Berlin & P. Kay 1969 -- as one of the original
sources of inspiration -- and to A. Wierzbicka -- as the abortionist
critic trying to show the impossibility of the project before any
demonstration was given of how it could be carried out) will be
necessary.

In particular, one will have to consider how this project relates
or does not relate to cognitive notions of and tests for basicness, or
even to the idea of 'basic vocabulary' as handled in lexicostatistics.

Further, questions have to be asked as to what types of criticism
of basic color term studies and the like (as voiced, e.g. by N.P.
Hickerson 1971) can also be applied to BLAV research, and a thorough
explanation has to be offered in terms of differences in topic and
methodology for why particular forms of criticism could be dismissed --
if any.

Finally, even if the results of the following comparative lexical
investigation are deemed relevant, they can be regarded only as a
stepping stone to more sophisticated metapragmatic studies more akin

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6 Note that the disagreement concerns only the very first step: the
identification of sets of BLAVs in a number of different languages. Once
these sets have been identified, all their members require further analysis.
At that stage A. Wierzbicka's approach will no doubt be useful, just as it
has proved its usefulness in directly addressing issues of crosscultural
comparison (see A. Wierzbicka 1985b, 1985c). The question as to whether
analyses in terms of semantic primitives will ultimately yield better results
than analyses (as advocated in J. Verschueren 1985, 1987b) in terms of
semantic dimensions attached to the 'ingredients' of communicative events
(defined on the basis of a general theory of pragmatics; see J. Verschueren
1987a) is again an empirical issue.
to the tradition established by M. Silverstein (see, e.g., M. Silverstein 1985, J.J. Gumperz n.d.) which concentrates on actual usage patterns -- rather than a survey of decontextualized lexical items -- of a much wider range of indicators of metapragmatic awareness. Such issues, however, go far beyond the scope of this preliminary research report.
2. METHODOLOGY

The operational criteria used to decide on the 'basicness' of LAVs are presented in section 2.1. A brief discussion of the research procedure follows in section 2.2.

2.1. OPERATIONAL CRITERIA

There are two categories of operational criteria. A number of preliminary screening criteria (listed and explained in 2.1.1) are used to exclude certain types of LAVs from the set of BLAVs. They basically serve to reduce the amount of data as much as possible, as efficiently as possible, as soon as possible, without betraying the research goal, i.e. without being obliged to take unwarranted shortcuts by simply ignoring LAVs which one would not intuitively (that is, on the basis of the researcher's intuition) be inclined to regard as conceptually basic in the domain of linguistic action. Passing all the preliminary screening criteria does not automatically qualify a LAV as a member of the set of BLAVs. A positive assessment of membership has to follow from data obtained through elicitation procedures based on the basic conceptual criterion (see 2.1.2.).

2.1.1. Preliminary screening criteria (PSCs)

The following preliminary screening criteria are formulated in terms of questions a negative answer to which will normally exclude a verb from the set of BLAVs for the language concerned. Note the adverb 'normally,' which points at the necessity to apply the criteria in a flexible manner -- not to be confused with arbitrariness. Flexibility is needed, first, because due attention has to be paid to some typological characteristics or idiosyncrasies of individual languages. Second, most of the criteria bear on gradable notions so that a mechanical form of decision-making is in principle out. Third, not all of the criteria are equally important in view of the research goal; hence decisions in terms of one criterion may sometimes overrule decisions based on another criterion. Examples of all these cases will be presented in what follows.

PSC 1: Is the LAV monolexemic?

This criterion should, with caution, be interpreted in purely structural terms. A word is monolexemic if it consists of only one word stem with a lexical meaning. Or, a monolexemic item is a lexemic morpheme, to be defined universally as morphologically uninterrupted and without separately inflectable parts. This general interpretation
of the criterion, however, has to be supplemented with language-
specific considerations.

For a language such as English, not much flexibility is required
in the application of PSC1. Examples would be to forbid as opposed to
to put one's veto upon, or to question as opposed to to shoot questions
at. A LAV could, however, still qualify as monolexemic if it contains
additional elements with a grammatical meaning (or elements which have
no life of their own), such as particles, prepositions, reflexive
pronouns, and the like (as in English to speak to, to ask for, etc.).

However, monolexemicity is not the simple matter it may seem at
first sight. For one thing, there is the much-discussed case of the
status of words in so-called polysynthetic languages which allow for
extremely complex words -- often equivalent to sentences in English
-- incorporating a large number of lexical and grammatical morphemes.
For those languages (e.g. Ojibwa, Yimas or Yup'ik, to name just three
from our language sample), the focus of attention is the class of verb
roots, some of which may rarely if ever occur in isolation.

Another complicating factor is that the mere fact of a lexical
item's being composed of two independently meaningful ones does not in
all cases make it plurilexemic. Compare, for instance, Tuvaluan faipati
'to speak' (composed of fai 'to do, make' but also 'to say, tell', and
pati 'word, speech') and fai fesili 'to ask (many) questions'
(constisting of fai and fesili 'question'). The former has to be
interpreted as a re-lexified 'verb + incorporated object' compound. Its
relexification has to be concluded from the following facts:

- When the subject is non-singular (i.e. dual or plural), it
pluralizes by geminating the consonant of the stressed syllable
(forming faippati) like any other monomorphemic (and hence
monolexemic) verb. Virtually no other 'verb + incorporated
object' compound undergoes this agreement process as a single
unit.
- In contrast to the unincorporated string fai te pati, which
has the very specific meaning of 'to say a word, to produce a
particular speech string', it has acquired the much more general
meaning of 'to speak, to say something, to use language'.

Fai fesili, on the other hand, does not show a comparable gemination
process, and from a semantic point of view it can be seen as directly
derived by object incorporation from the unincorporated verb-article-
noun string fai te fesili. Such language-specific aspects of morpho-
syntactic behavior have to be taken into account when applying PSC1.
They can justify treating faipati as monolexemic while regarding fai
fesili as plurilexemic. It is of course precisely this judgment that
motivates the difference in orthography.¹

One could ask whether it is at all justified to use a formal
criterion such as PSC1 to exclude verbials from further consideration
in the search for conceptually basic items. The use of such a
criterion, however, is commonly accepted among linguistic
anthropologists on the basis of decades of experience in

¹ The examples were provided by Niko Besnier (personal communication).
ethnolinguistic description. It is, for instance, identical in its basic formulation to the first operational criterion used by B. Berlin & P. Kay (1969) for the identification of basic color terms. Further, its rationale may not be unrelated to G.K. Zipf's (1949) least effort principle and S.C. Levinson's (1987) concept of minimization: "'shorter' expressions (with less units of speech production) preferred to 'longer' expressions" (p. 72).

Though one may reasonably assume that, in general, an average language user's most basic verbalized concepts will be habitually expressed in terms of monolexemic units, PSC1 can be a reliable first indicator in the process of eliminating conceptually less basic items from the set of available LAVs only for those languages with relatively large sets of monolexemic verbs. In order not to betray the research goal, the criterion should be considerably relaxed to deal with languages which have few monolexemic verbs. An example from our sample is Persian, with its habit of combining borrowed Arabic forms with autochthonous simple verb elements (such as kardan 'to do, make', qadan 'to strike, beat', and others); sometimes autochthonous monolexemic equivalents have been retained alongside the more recent compound, as in the case of porsidan vs. so'qal kardan, both meaning 'to ask (question)'. Another case in point could be Turkish, with its abundance of verb-like expressions as equivalents for monolexemic verbs in average West European languages (such as something similar to 'asking he said' for 'he asked').

Most languages have extensive sets of non-monolexemic LAVs, so that PSC1, handled with the above remarks in mind, has proved extremely useful as an initial step towards singling out BLAVs. Some LAV compound types are illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amharic</th>
<th>sālamba sātṭā 'to greet'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[greetings] [give]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qal sātṭā 'to promise'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[word. sound. term. text. statement] [give. grant. provide]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 It is not identical in its interpretation. B. Berlin & P. Kay (1969) mix the formal criterion with a semantic one (which we shall put forward as PSC2):

"(i) It is monolexemic; that is, its meaning is not predictable from the meaning of its parts [...]" (p. 6)

In our opinion -- at least with respect to LAVs -- mixing the criteria is risky. First, it is not because the meaning of to dish the dirt is not predictable from the meaning of its component parts that it would be justified to regard it as monolexemic. Second, in the realm of non-monolexemic LAVs, the semantically transparent ones (such as to address a warning to or to pronounce x and y husband and wife) are often conceptually more basic than many of the idiomatic non-transparent ones (such as to pop the question or to dish the dirt).

3 The examples were originally pointed out to me by Bernard Comrie (personal communication). The facts have since been confirmed fully for Persian (as will be clear from the data in Appendix B) by extensive work with informants.
Numerous additional examples are to be found in the data presented in Appendix B.

**PSC 2: Is the LAV monomorphemic? And if not, is its meaning semantically non-transparent?**

Whereas it is reasonably safe to assume -- with some necessary modifications -- that non-monolexemic LAVs will in general be conceptually less basic for speakers of the language to which they belong, irrespective of their semantic transparence or non-transparency, the same assumption cannot automatically be made for non-monomorphemic verbs. Semantically transparent non-monomorphemic LAV compounds or derivations can be expected to be recognized as such and therefore to be experienced as conceptually not-so-basic by native speakers. Hence they can be excluded from the set of BLAVs during a preliminary screening phase. Semantically non-transparent compounds and derivations, however, should be subject to further scrutiny. Rejecting them off-hand would be comparable to the claim that English understand, German ver-stehen, or Dutch ver-staan could not possibly occupy a cognitively basic position in the lexical domain of mental states because they consist of an independently meaningful root combined with a productive prefix.

*Semantic transparence* should be interpreted, for purposes of operationality, as a matter of predictability: if the meaning of a non-monomorphemic verb cannot be predicted from the meaning of its components, it is regarded as semantically non-transparent, even if the relationship between its form and its meaning is relatively easy to see once one knows that meaning.

Examples of derived (non-monomorphemic) but semantically non-transparent (or unpredictable) forms which, therefore, cannot be excluded on the basis of PSC2, are the following:

**Blackfoot**
- *-inap-ani-* 'to confess'
  - [down] [to tell]

**Dutch**
- *be-vestigen* 'to affirm'
  - [verb + prefix] [place, establish]

**English**
- *to affirm*
Hungarian  kér-dez 'to ask (question)'
[to ask for, request] ?

Kapingamarangi  baga-bo' 'to converse'
[cause: re] [night, feeling of boredom]

Maidu  beté-j 'to recount, tell a story'
[ancient, old times] [verb suffix]

Note that this formation is perfectly understandable, but not transparent in the same way as similar formations such as čaváj 'to chew' < čavá 'chin, jaw', or jéj 'to fly' < jé 'feather, wing (of insect)'.

Nisenan  hy-wej 'to speak ill of; to command'
[?] [to speak]

Niue  faka-tonu 'to advise' (literally: 'to make proper, right')
[causative] [proper, right]

(Cuzco) Quechua  kuti-pa-ku- 'to answer back'
[to return] [repetition] [personal involvement]

Yana  gi-čab? 'to tell'
[?] [to emerge]

The set of derived, semantically transparent LAVs -- to be excluded from the set of BLAVs -- includes, for instance, a number of verbs combining a causative element with the root for 'to know' or 'known', to derive 'to inform':

Dutch  bekend-maken 'to inform'
[known] [to make]

Tahitian  fa'a-ite 'to inform, make known, tell, show'
[causative] [to know, see, find, witness]

Some other types of examples:

Abuan  káaph-án 'to converse (with)'
[to speak, talk] [joint action]

Dutch  her-bevestigen 'to reaffirm'
[again] [affirm]

Hungarian  beszél-get 'to talk, converse, chat'
[to talk, speak] [iterative]

(Cuzco) Quechua  rima-ri 'to begin to speak, start speaking'
[to speak, talk] [incipient]

If in doubt, semantic transparence or predictability can be experimentally tested by presenting a form to people who do not know the language under investigation, and to ask them to deduce its meaning from the meaning of its component morphemes. If most of the test persons can do so correctly, the form in question is transparent. Though such experiments may be performed in an ad hoc fashion while applying PSC2, one should keep in mind that it is not foolproof: nothing can be concluded from a negative result. Many languages have complex systems of derivation and compounding which may make certain morphologically complex forms transparent for speakers of such a language though they would not be transparent for speakers of Standard Average European. The problem is further complicated by the fact that most of the languages in question can be expected to have two types of morphologically complex forms: those whose meaning is transparent (i.e. a relatively clear combination of the meanings of their parts), and those whose meaning is arrived at by means of unpredictable semantic
extensions. As R. Rhodes (1986) points out, many LAVs in Ojibwa happen to fall in the second category:

"Although Algonquian verbs are generally complex morphologically, most appear to have meanings which are obvious from the meanings of their component morphemes. What is most striking about the verbs of speaking is that they cannot be assigned meanings simply on the basis of the semantics of the component parts. Rather they participate in systems of metaphor and metonymy, and show a significant degree of idiomaticity." (p. 1)

Distinguishing between lexical semantics and lexical pragmatics, R. Rhodes further clarifies the problem as follows:

"The basic problem in the study of exotic languages is to understand in the meaning of morphologically complex forms the balance between the contribution of the semantics of component morphemes and the contribution of pragmatics and extension. On the one hand, if we pay too much attention to the pragmatic glosses our native speakers provide, we can miss both the range of reference of a form and the close semantic relationships it participates in. If, on the other hand, we follow the morphology too slavishly, we will miss a form's range(s) of focus. And worse, the fact that we have accounted for all the parts of the structure of a form will lead us to think that we have accounted for its meaning." (p. 8)

Not only the semantic implications of PSC2 require special attention. Even its scope of application deserves a couple of remarks. First, since people's natural awareness of etymology is rather limited, and since we are searching for conceptually rather than 'purely linguistically' basic items, PSC2 should bear only on plurimorphemic verbs which can be experienced as plurimorphemic by most native speakers. This will mainly be the case if the derivational morphemes in question can be used productively in the language under investigation and if the verb in question contains one or more root forms which can also occur independently. Thus English re-formulate would be clearly within the scope of PSC2. But congratulate would not, in spite of the etymologically clear structure (Latin con- 'together' + gratulari 'to manifest or express one's joy').

Second, PSC2 should not be applied to derivations which simply turn a root (which may correspond to an independently existing noun) into a verb. In most of those cases it is impossible to decide, synchronically, whether the noun or the verb should be regarded as conceptually primary, just as it is impossible to decide which member of a homophonic noun-verb pair (such is English name - to name) contributes more centrally to the conceptual space it helps to lexicalize. Examples would be Dutch (be)-groet-en 'to greet' (cf. groet 'greeting'), be-dank-en 'to thank' (cf. dank 'thanks', which does not lead a fully independent life but which occurs mainly in other derivations and fixed expressions), or Hungarian nevez 'to name' (consisting of név 'name' + -z which is a quite productive verb-building suffix). A similar argument holds for not rejecting the French delocutives saluer 'to greet' (cf. the greeting "Salut!") and remercier 'to thank' (cf. "Merci!").
PSC 3: Is the LAV formally unmarked?

A derived, semantically non-transparent, term can be excluded from the set of BLAVs if it occurs in direct contrast with another, semantically similar, verb which can be characterized as the formally unmarked form of the opposition. The formal markedness of a LAV may be of a purely morphological kind, or it may be a matter of morphosyntactic or syntactic behavior.

Clear cases of morphological markedness are to be found, for instance, in languages (such as the Polynesian languages), in which reduplication is a common derivational device. Maori wharo 'to abuse, scold', for instance, alternates with whawhario and wharowhario. Except for an intensifying effect produced by the reduplication, there seems to be no difference in meaning. But the morphological markedness of the latter two forms makes them less 'basic' than wharo and allows us to exclude them from the set of BLAVs in a preliminary screening phase. On the other hand, forms such as Yimas kankantakal 'to ask (question/request)', Tuvaluan fakamolemole 'to ask (request)', or Limba tohtohon 'to ask (question/request)', all of which probably involve a reduplication process, cannot be excluded on the basis of PSC3 because they do not form contrast sets with non-reduplicated forms with similar meanings.

Similarly, if two or more LAVs have comparable meanings, the one(s) with the most restricted range of morpho-syntactic or syntactic behavior types can be excluded from the set of BLAVs. A systematic application of this principle is rarely easy. On the syntactic side, one phenomenon to look at is the range of argument structures in which a LAV can appear. Thus, Dutch begroeten 'to greet' is more restricted in its syntactic behavior than its equivalent groeten in that it absolutely requires the explicit presence of the addressee as an argument; hence it can be eliminated on the basis of PSC3. One relatively clear morpho-syntactic behavior type involves performativity: if one of two semantically similar verbs cannot be used performatively, whereas the other one can be used both descriptively and performatively (consider, e.g., English to command as opposed to to enjoin), the morphosyntactic possibilities of the former are more restricted, so that it can be excluded on the basis of PSC3.

There are good reasons to stress, once again, the major precondition for the applicability of the formal markedness criterion: LAVs cannot be excluded on this basis unless they belong to a contrast set of verbs with equivalent meanings. Without this caveat, the criterion would lead to the exclusion of some of the most basic and most frequently used items. In many natural languages, the most frequently used verbs show various forms of morphological, morphosyntactic, or syntactic markedness, irregularity, or even

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4 For the notion of markedness, see N.S. Trubetskoy (1939), R. Jakobson (1932, 1939), and P.M. Tiersma (1982).

5 It should be kept in mind, especially -- but not only -- when dealing with non-Indo-European languages, that the performative use of LAVs is not limited to the formula "I (hereby) V (...)", as identified by J.L. Austin (1962). For a further discussion of the issue of performativity, see J. Verschueren (1980: 7-17; 1989).
Mon  
 kwoh  'to utter formally, address to an assembly, preach'
 rēatānēa  (learned form) 'to express desire in a religious context, pray'

Mong Njua  pē (pī)  'to speak to one person though the message is really directed to another person who overhears'

(Eastern) Ojibwa  gwaadmawaad  'mention someone in connection with someone else'
 zesesmaad  'to say something that hurts someone so much that he/she cries'

Sebei  cic  'to command someone not to reveal something'
 lyolyi  'to shout at in order to frighten, surprise'

Shuswap  x̣o'ye'-n-s  'to ask somebody to go (hunting)'
 Tiruray  buyu'  'to ask a specific brideprice'
 faŋita'  'to speak of doing harm'
 fendo  'to speak to an infant'
 Yurok  pahsoy  'to confess to having had malicious thoughts'

More often than not, semantic specificity or restricted applicability emerge from a direct contrast with more general, and hence more 'basic', terms. Sometimes even extended sets of semantically related LAVs can be contrasted with each other. In Rennellese-Bellonese, for instance, requests can be described by means of at least seven verbs: ene, nonoo, noo, pogo, pupugu, taku, and unga. Of these, only ene 'to ask for, request', pupugu 'to order, ask for, request, invoke, claim, demand', and unga 'to order, tell, request, suggest' seem to have a more or less general meaning. In contrast to those, the other four are semantically marked: nonoo 'to request (formerly of the gods), usually food or other gifts'; noo 'to request of the gods'; pogo 'to ask, invite' but also 'to sue for peace, taking gifts'; and taku 'to request in prayer'.

It should be stressed that, unlike for phonology and grammar (see J. Greenberg 1966), markedness in the domain of lexical meaning cannot be assumed to correspond unambiguously to the frequency of the terms in actual usage.

We should further emphasize that PSC4, even more so than the foregoing criteria, makes BLAV-ness into a gradable notion. Whereas the flexibility with which PSC1 and PSC2 have to be applied was argued to be dependent on structural properties of individual languages, the formal markedness criterion proposed in PSC3 was said not to be applicable to some verbs which would fail to pass precisely because of their centrality to the lexicon. Also PSC4 runs up against some special cases for which its strict application may not be warranted. We are thinking of a category of verbal activities the lexicalization of which is virtually universal. This category (with 'naming' and 'counting' as its members) will not be automatically excluded in spite of the degree of specificity it involves, for reasons to be mentioned in chapter 5; but because of its dubious status vis-à-vis PSC4 it will be labeled 'peripheral'.

PSC 5: Is the LAV pragmatically unmarked? Can its meaning be adequately described in terms of A-conditions?

In order to explain this criterion, we have to refer to a model for the description of LAVs developed elsewhere (see J. Verschueren 1985: 58-63, 1987b, 1989). According to this model, a non-circular description of LAVs should specify the conditions under which a verb V can be appropriately used in a description D (which is itself also a linguistic action) of a linguistic action A. Those conditions can be formulated as conditions on or properties of the act to be described (A-conditions) and sometimes in terms of conditions on or properties of the describing act (D-conditions). Though the descriptions of all LAVs require D-conditions, most of these bear on beliefs or assumptions held by the utterer of D which simply reflect conditions on or properties of A. For instance, if the appropriateness of to lie in a description of A requires that the propositional content of A represents some distortion of the truth as known to the utterer of A, then the use of to lie is also governed by the D-condition stating that the utterer of D must believe that the propositional content of A represents a distortion of the truth as known to the utterer of A. Such 'reflections' of A-conditions do not reduce the 'basicness' of the LAVs in question.

Some LAVs, however, clearly require D-conditions for their adequate description. Consider LAVs which can only be used in highly formal or informal contexts. For instance, to request the pleasure of someone's company or to bid come can only be used instead of to invite if D is formal (unless e.g. processes of irony are involved), whereas an informal D is required for to roast or to grill to be used appropriately as equivalents of to interrogate. (This is not to say that D-conditions and A-conditions do not interact in these instances as well: D-conditions of the kind illustrated certainly influence or follow from perceptions of A; but the point is that an analysis of the above examples cannot be complete without explicit reference to properties of D.)

Other LAVs imply value judgments concerning A on the part of the utterer of D. Thus, the choice of to lie to describe A will not only depend on an assessment of whether or not the utterance deviates from the truth, but also on a judgment of the graveness of the consequences of the deviation. To give another example, in the area of directives there are verbs which imply value judgments about the act towards which the hearer is directed: a positive judgment is associated with Dutch aanvuren, a negative one with aanstoken, while their English equivalent to incite is neutral with respect to this dimension. Also the directing activity itself is subject to the value judgments of the utterer of D, as appears from a comparison between to exhort, to encourage (both positive), and to extort, to wheedle something out of someone (both negative).

Other examples of D-conditions which make a LAV pragmatically marked and thus unfit for inclusion in the set of BLAVs, are the aspect-specifications required in certain languages such as Russian. The Russian verb govorit' 'to say, talk, speak, tell', for instance, is imperfective and has to be used if its user views A as incomplete (in progress), as a repeatedly performed act, or as a general activity without reference to a given actual performance. Its perfective counterparts pogovorit' 'to talk' and skazat' 'to say, tell', imply
their user's view of A as completed (in the past or in the future). It is generally assumed that Russian imperfectives are semantically-pragmatically (and often, as in the case of govorit' -- as opposed to pogovorit' -- also morphologically) unmarked in contrast to the marked perfectives. Thus PSC5 (sometimes in combination with PSC3) would allow us to disregard the perfectives in our search for basic LAVs.6

In most cases informant-based research has to be relied on to decide on the necessity of D-conditions. Sometimes, however, good candidates for exclusion on the basis of PSC5 can already be identified on the basis of information provided by dictionaries. Consider, for instance, Futunan gone (and its reduplicated variants gogone and gonegone) 'to ask in a low voice, beg humbly, flatter in order to obtain'. Our Futunan dictionary (I. Grézel 1878) gives the further specification "Faire la belle bouche par devant, beau semblant, et parler mal par derrière," which may indicate that the verb is associated with negative value judgments. A similar implication is carried by the description "parler beaucoup et sans discrétion" for Futunan tatoti 'to chatter, babble, prattle'. In the latter case, even the choice of some of the equivalents (French babiller, blaguer, bavarder) might have been a sufficient indication, as it appears to be for Tuvaluan faki 'to report on, denounce, inform on, snitch on, tattle on, confess'. Consider also both examples given for Mon under PSC4.

PSC 6: Is the only meaning of the LAV a linguistic action meaning? If not, is its linguistic action meaning the primary meaning?

During the preliminary screening of LAVs, all verbs can be excluded which have a linguistic action meaning which is clearly derivative of a different meaning.7 Consider, for instance, to tell and to reveal. Since to tell has only or primarily linguistic action meanings, it is more basic than to reveal which, in addition to its linguistic action meaning, also signifies 'to open up to view'. In applying the criterion the directional relationship between the different meanings of a word are crucial. For instance, to tell also has a 'revealing' or 'manifesting' sense as in "Fossils tell much about the past," but this sense is clearly derived from or subordinated to the linguistic action meaning; thus, it remains true that to tell is primarily a LAV. The directional relationship in to reveal is probably reversed; moreover, both meanings seem to be more or less of equal importance. In the case of to reveal, the 'different meanings' referred

6 Aspect is not the simple matter it might seem at first sight. First, the markedness relationship between perfectives and imperfectives is not to be regarded as a fixed value; for momentary actions or events, for instance, the imperfective may be more marked than the perfective (e.g. Hungarian imperfective hal vs. the much more common perfective meghal for 'to die'). Second, in spite of the imperfective citation form of LAVs, some languages may prefer to add a marker of perfectivity (such as the verbal prefix meg- in Hungarian) when actually using those LAVs to describe linguistic actions. (I owe these remarks to F. Kiefer, personal communication.)

7 As the anonymous referee of this text remarked, PSC6 assumes salience of literality (as opposed to metaphoricity). Therefore, one should in fact have a workable theory of metaphor in order to make this criterion fully operational.
to are higher degrees of generality rather than distinct senses. Really distinct senses are to be found in other examples to be excluded on the basis of PSC6, such as to put forward (already excluded for other reasons as well; see PSC1), the linguistic action meaning of which is metaphorical.

For an appropriate application of PSC6 it has to be kept in mind that the existence of an etymological connection with an earlier meaning is not sufficient for excluding a LAV, during the preliminary screening phase, from the set of BLAVs. The non-linguistic action meaning has to be part of the average native speaker's synchronic semantic awareness.

When confronted with a language which is not one's own, the application of PSC6 is never simple. But usually it is not hard to find good candidates for exclusion. Consider the following examples: Futunan ula 'flame, in flames, to flame, set fire to', and ulafi 'to blow, in order to stimulate a fire', both of which have a figurative meaning 'to reprimand, scold'; Mangaian 'amo 'to smear paint over' also means 'to tell a lie' (compare with to color in the sense of 'distorting the truth'); Maori wharo 'to scrape, clear the throat, cough, expectorate' has a derived sense 'to scold, abuse': the reduplicated form tohutohu of Maori tohu 'to point at, point out, show' still means 'to mark, show, point out, direct, guide' but acquires as a second meaning 'to advise, instruct, recommend'; similarly Rapanui tūhi 'to mark, indicate, point out, signal' (the reduplicated form of which, tūhitūhi, means 'to gesticulate') also means 'to accuse, blame'.

Any final decision as to whether PSC6 should be allowed to rule out the cognitive basicness of a LAV, has to be based on informants' intuitions. Since it is quite likely that informants whose help is used systemically in this kind of investigation, will soon acquire a strong bias in favor of the linguistic action meaning of many verbs, all doubtful cases should be presented to additional informants. Their task should simply be to tell the researcher what a given verb means: if they systematically give the linguistic action meaning first (or only), it can be regarded as conceptually basic; if not, PSC6 can be allowed to exclude it from the set of BLAVs.

The applicability of PSC6 benefits from occasional simplifying factors, while also suffering from extra complications. As to the simplifying factors, some universal tendencies in the extension of non-linguistic action meanings to linguistic action meanings render elaborate fieldwork superfluous for a restricted number of LAVs in a reasonable proportion of the world's languages. The clearest case is the strong tendency to derive the meaning of 'to answer' from a more general verb meaning approximately 'to return' (in which case PSC6 may be used to exclude the verb in question), or to form an equivalent of to answer on the basis of a verb or noun with a general linguistic action meaning in combination with a verb meaning 'to return' (in which case the semantic transparency principle of PSC2 can be applied). A few random examples:

Amharic mállásá 'to return, bring back, hand back, give back, restore, repay', but also 'to reply, answer, respond'

Guaraní (a)-ñe'e-mbojevy 'to answer, reply' (word) (to cause to pour/turn back; also: to defeat)
Note that not all similar formations necessarily mean 'to answer'; consider, for instance, Lenakel vhin nakaraan (consisting of vhin 'to turn something over' and nakaraan 'talk, speech; word, sentence; language') which means 'to ask a question' and also 'to talk in riddles or proverbs'.

One complicating factor is the occurrence of (polysemous) LAVs about which native speakers lack clear intuitions as to whether their linguistic action meaning is primary or not. Verbs describing the category of social routines called 'greeting' usually belong to this type; they can generally bear on either verbal or non-verbal greetings. Similarly, the most general LAVs in a wide range of languages are at the same time very general non-linguistic action verbs. A few examples:

(Dongolese) Nubian  
widégir-dún 'to give back, return, give in exchange', but also 'to answer' [<widégir 'to cause or allow to turn, turn, cause or allow to turn back, turn back, put back, return']

(Ayacucho) Quechua  
kuti-chi- 'to return (a thing)' and 'to retort, answer'
[to return to a place; change in color, fade] [causative]

Sebei  
kótu 'to give back' and 'to answer'
wal 'to exchange money' and 'to answer'
wec 'to return' and 'to answer'

Grebo  
tu 'to put; to say'
Hawaiian  
mea 'to do, say, act; meddle with; touch; cause; speak, utter'
Kalam  
ag- the meaning of this verb includes all sound-making
Nisenan  
ha 'to say; be; do; carry on the back' [haha 'to do repeatedly']
Shuswap  
cut 'to say; to want, intend, be going to, think'

PSC6 does not apply to such cases unless they contrast with equivalent LAVs which carry exclusively linguistic action meanings. Thus the above examples cannot be excluded while English to go can (in spite of its occurrence as a LAV in sentences such as "He went: "Wow!"").

PSC 7: Is the LAV psychologically salient for native speakers?

LAVs which pass PSC1 through PSC6 may still be excluded during a preliminary screening phase if they do not figure prominently in the native speaker's (i.e. the informant's) conceptualization (as reflected in his or her lexicalization) of linguistic action. The major indices of psychological salience to be used in this investigation are (i) occurrence in the idiolects of all informants, and (ii) the ease with which informants can define and illustrate the LAVs.8
Though the lack of psychological salience can be adduced to exclude a LAV from the set of BLAVs, its presence is not a sufficient reason for inclusion.9

On the other hand, this criterion may sometimes overrule the form-based criteria. Thus PSC3, applied literally, might lead to a rejection of English to re\-commend as opposed to to c\-ommend. PSC6 would prevent this from happening.

2.1.2. The basic conceptual criterion (BCC)

Positive assessment of membership in the set of BLAVs for any given language is a judgment about the conceptual basicness of a LAV. Using definitional relationships as indicators for conceptual basicness (just as we used the parameters presented in 2.1.1 as indicators of conceptual non-basicness) enables us to formulate a semantic operational criterion which is similar to one used by B. Berlin & P. Kay (1969: 6) for basic color terms (viz. "Its signification is not included in that of any other color term"), and which is also related to R.M.W. Dixon's (1971) notion of 'nuclear verbs'.10 The most elementary form of the basic conceptual criterion is as follows:

of verbs used to describe types of linguistic action, however, would require much clarification and too many examples to get a spontaneous and unbiased response.

9 This means that the search for basic linguistic action verbs should not be confused with a search for what cognitive psychologists (e.g. E. Rosch 1977) would call 'basic level terms'. In other words, not all the verbs that would be regarded -- on the basis of their psychological salience -- as 'basic level terms' (at least inside the area of linguistic action) by cognitive psychologists, have to be BLAVs. Many of them may be situated on a lower level in the lexical hierarchy (in much the same way as in biological folk taxonomies where generic terms tend to be more salient than life form terms, and where the psychologically most salient terms may be scattered over different levels of the hierarchy since salience depends on knowledge, cultural importance, etc.). Formulated in yet another way, though all BLAVs have to be psychologically salient, there is no a priori requirement that they should be (though often they will be) the most salient terms available.

10 In his article on the distinction between the everyday variety and the mother-in-law variety (only spoken in the presence of certain taboo relatives) of Dyirbal, and its relevance for methods of semantic description, R.M.W. Dixon (1971) observes that the everyday variety has a much more extensive vocabulary than the mother-in-law variety which seems to be restricted to a kind of core vocabulary containing, as far as verbs are concerned, only 'nuclear verbs', i.e. verbs which can only be decomposed in terms of semantic features and which, unlike the non-nuclear ones, cannot be defined in terms of other verbs.

In contrast to the present investigation, Dixon's research proceeded from an assumption of constant grammar across lexical registers. Hence there is certainly not a complete parallelism. (See also footnote 13.)
**BCC: A BLAV cannot be defined in terms of another LAV**

This criterion, however, requires various modifications.

First, if it were to be applied literally, there would be, for English, only two BLAVs. Most, if not all, linguistic action verbs (IALs) can be given a definition which includes the words *to say* or *to speak*, which are linguistic action verbs themselves. The criterion cannot be kept completely analogous to the one for basic color terms since there are no color terms which can be applied to any color whatsoever, whereas there are LAVs which can be used to describe any type of linguistic action. Nor can BLAVs, without qualification, be regarded as nuclear verbs. Again, only *to say* and *to speak* could probably be regarded as nuclear in the wider domain of action in general (which, in English, is united by the master-notation *to do*). What we are looking for is a similarly 'nuclear' level inside the area of linguistic action. These remarks lead us to a provisional rephrasing of the BCC in the following sense: A BLAV cannot be defined in terms of a different LAV, except for the most general one(s) meaning 'to use language' (as in English *to say something* or *to speak*).

However, a second modification is already implicit in this rephrasing. Studies of folk taxonomies have shown that a word can recur on different levels of a single taxonomy. Thus the word *plant* functions as the 'unique beginner' in folk botanical classifications; but at the same time it can mean 'small plant' in contrast to the 'life form term' *tree*. Similarly, *to say* and *to speak* (which are at the 'unique beginner' level for linguistic action -- though there are two in English and even more in some other languages) also have more specialized meanings on a lower level of the hierarchy. At the 'unique beginner' level they both mean 'to use language'. But at a lower level *to speak* also means 'to utter linguistic sounds' (and thus *to whisper* can be defined as 'to speak in a low voice') and, more clearly even, *to say* (something) also means 'to make a statement' (and thus *to admit* can be defined, in one of its senses, as 'to say that X is right'). If, in a definition produced while applying the BCC, the verbs *to say* or *to speak* are used in such a more specialized sense rather than in their most general sense of 'using language', the defined verb cannot be

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11 American linguistic anthropologists have been studying natural language taxonomies (which they call 'folk taxonomies' and which are viewed as reflecting 'folk theories') for many years. Biological folk taxonomies generally consist of at least five hierarchical levels (see B. Berlin, D.E. Breedlove & P.H. Raven 1973): (a) a 'unique beginner' (e.g. plant or animal); (b) a small number of 'life form terms' (e.g. tree, grass, bird, snake, fish, mammal); (c) a large number of 'generic terms' (e.g. oak, pine, perch, robin, cat, dog); (d) a lower number of 'specific terms' (e.g. white fir, post oak); and (e) an even lower number of 'varietal terms' (e.g. baby lima bean, butter lima bean). Since we are looking for a taxonomical level which would make our subject matter manageable across a wide range of languages, our BLAVs will have to be situated on a level similar to that of the life form terms. (Remember, however, that the simple assumption that biological folk taxonomies would be directly parallel to the structure of the LAV lexicon remains unwarranted; but the analogy is useful to clarify our target.)
regarded as a BLAV; hence, to whisper and to admit are excluded.¹²

Third, the 'definition' referred to in the criterion has to be a definition in natural language, not to be confused with some linguistic or philosophical metalanguage. Consider the relationship between to ask and to request in English. It is not unusual for linguists or philosophers to define the asking of a question as a 'request for information'. From a theoretical point of view, this may be valid. But natural language -- or at least English -- reverses this relationship: to request is more naturally defined as 'to ask someone to do something', so that 'to request information' can be described as 'to ask someone to give information'. The possible difference in forcefulness which would have to be referred to in a complete definition of to ask and to request does not change the direction of the definitional relationship. The conclusion for English is that to ask is more basic than to request. Since 'requesting' can be defined quite naturally, in English, as a type of 'asking', to request cannot be regarded as a BLAV. On the other hand, to ask is a BLAV unless a further natural language definition in terms of an English LAV can be provided. It is of the utmost importance to be aware of the language-specific applicability of our BCC. Positing definitional relationships for other languages on the basis of those found for English would be a complete betrayal of our research goals.

Fourth, the definition referred to in our BCC does not have to be semantically exhaustive. As with Dixon's non-nuclear verbs, which may be equally distant from the focus of and hence definable by more than one nuclear verb, there may be non-basic LAVs for which different definitions are equally plausible, either because the verb to be defined is polysemous (such as to admit which means 'to say [in a statement sense] that someone is right' or 'to allow someone to enter') or because its signification is a mixture between two or more acts on a higher level of the hierarchy (such as to notify which may be a mixture between 'informing' and 'warning'). Even when only one definition is plausible, it does not have to be semantically exhaustive. Consider to promise, which can be described as 'to say [in

¹² Though the principle seems clear enough, its practical application is not always simple. The problem is to decide whether, for instance, to say or its equivalent in another language, when occurring in an elicited definition, is used in the general sense of 'using language' or 'expressing linguistically', or in a more specific 'statement' sense. Often there may be linguistic indicators for the distinction. In English, the formula to say that ... may indicate a statement sense, as in "to promise is 'to say that one will do something'", whereas to say something ... as in "to apologize is 'to say something to show regret for something one has done'" may indicate that to say is used in its 'unique beginner' sense. When such indicators are absent, or when their value as semantic indicators is in doubt, ad hoc elicitation will be required. Where an equivalent of to say, occurring in an elicited definition, is thought to be used in its statement sense, for instance, informants can be asked to judge the acceptability of the same definition with an equivalent of to state, if one is available, as a substitute for to say. Or one can ask informants to judge the acceptability of the LAV defined, in a description of a sentence with a clear statement character and with a propositional content of the type specified in the definition. In both cases, a positive acceptability judgment confirms the hypothesis.
its statement sense] that one will do something'; promising is
certainly more than just stating that one will do something; yet, the
definition was found to be plausible (even without explicit reference
to the obligation that the speaker takes upon him/herself) for most
speakers of English, and therefore we have to exclude to promise from
the set of English BLAVs.

Verbs which have not been excluded from further consideration by
one or more of the preliminary screening criteria, and which pass the
test of the basic conceptual criterion (taking into account the above
caveats), belong to the set of BLAVs for the language under
investigation. It should be clear that the BCC makes the verbs
satisfying it by excluding each other in paraphrases conceptually basic
because speakers of the language in question do not (habitually) regard
the acts they refer to as subtypes of other types of linguistic
action.13

2.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURE

An elaborate questionnaire (J. Verschueren 1984) was developed
for the research reported in this text. It did not only contain
guidelines for applying the operational criteria, but also a
standardized set of speech events. This set of speech events was
intended to serve two purposes. First, it was meant to be used for
eliciting LAVs for languages for which no reliable lexicographical
sources were available. Only in a few cases was the questionnaire
actually used for that purpose. Second, it was designed to allow us to
study the distribution of the meaning of the BLAVs singled out on the
basis of the operational criteria, across the spectrum of speech
events, in a sufficiently uniform manner to make decent cross-
linguistic comparisons of such distribution possible. So far, this task
was performed for only about a dozen languages -- not enough to draw
serious conclusions at this time.

Except for those languages for which the entire procedure
outlined in the questionnaire was followed, some shortcuts were taken
towards achieving the goal of identifying the sets of BLAVs. The first
step was lexicographical consultation. On the basis of the information
found in the available lexicographical sources, language-specific
ordered sets of questions were constructed, aimed at an efficient
application of the operational criteria to all LAVs remaining after
excluding those which could already be unambiguously rejected because
of the lexicographical information. Those questions were used to elicit
the missing information either by directly working with informants, or
by presenting them to experts with access to informants. In most of
the cases where mediating experts were involved, further follow-up
questions were required. For a fair proportion of the languages on
which data are presented in Appendix B, this chain of questions and
answers has not yet been fully concluded; but in all cases the

13 The main weakness of the approach remains the fact that hardly any
attention could be paid (because of the need to cover too many languages for
the sake of the comparative validity of the research) to the grammatical
behavior of the lexical items under investigation. The future detailed study
of selected languages will have to compensate for this agrammatical type of
comparative lexical semantics.
information-gathering has advanced far enough to be sure that further changes necessitated by additional information cannot upset the overall results of the investigation as outlined in chapter 3.
3. DATA ANALYSIS & CONCLUSIONS

3.1. OBSERVATIONS

3.1.1. The structure of the sets of BLAVs

The BLAVs discovered for the 81 languages of our sample on the basis of the operational criteria do not form undifferentiated sets. At least six clearly distinguishable types can be observed.\(^1\)

(i) Base

There are BLAVs such as to say and to speak which can be used to describe any type of linguistic action. In their most general sense they mean 'to use language', 'to express linguistically'. This does not preclude their having more specific senses as well, as is the case with to say in the sense of 'to state'. However, any other LAVe can be defined in terms of at least one of them. Because of this property, and because of the semantic generality of which it is a consequence, we regard them as base items.

All languages in our sample have at least one base item. Most languages (43 from our sample, or 53 %) have two base items; there are 16 with one (Fore, Gbeya, Grebo, Hausa, Kalam, Kera, Kewa, Kiowa, Lingala, Ngizim, Nukuoro, Polish, Russian, Sranan Tongo, Wolof), 13 with three (Blackfoot, Bobo Fing, Ch'ol, Hanunóo, Kamchadal, Khmer, Kwanyama, Maidu, Sotho, Yimas, Yoruba, Yup'ik, Zulu), and 9 with four (Emai, Hawaiian, Kilivila, Maori, Nisenan, Nubian, Ojibwa, Xhosa, Yurok).

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\(^1\) Remember that also B. Berlin & P. Kay's (1969) sets of basic color terms do not form fully continuous sets of contrasts. The only contrast lexicalized in all languages (black vs. white) is mainly a contrast in terms of brightness (dark vs. light), whereas most additional basic color terms (red, green, yellow, etc.) are differentiated along the parameter of hue.

\(^2\) Note that these types were by no means postulated in advance; actually the hypotheses we started out with were quite different. This does not mean, though, that what 'emerged' from the data is unrelated to our own habits of thinking about verbal communication. Thus there may be culture- and language-specific forms of bias which can only be revealed by further research of a more detailed kind, and in particular metapragmatic investigations of the type referred to at the end of chapter 1.
(ii) Core

The base items are not the only members of what could be called the conceptual core of the LAV lexicon. The label is motivated by the fact that these so-called 'core items' have a disproportionately wider range of linguistic action tokens within their scope than any of the other BLAVs.

The distinction between base and non-base core items is a gradual one. Closest to the base, for English, is to talk. It differs from to speak in that, though it can sometimes be used in the general sense of 'using language', it is generally restricted to contexts in which there is a clear implication of reciprocity; its basic meaning seems to be something like 'to converse'.

Similarly, to tell is very close to to say. It is further removed from the base, however, since it cannot be used in the general sense of 'using language' and always carries the more specific meanings of 'informing' (i.e. 'stating' with a clearly present addressee), 'narrating', or -- derivatively -- 'ordering'.

It is not always easy to decide whether equivalents of to talk and to tell should be treated as base items or as non-base core items. Especially in cases where more than two items were placed in the base (see the lists under (i)) it is quite possible that further research will show that one or more of them belong to the core outside of the base. Given the difference in distance from the base, this possibility is stronger for items which might have to take up the 'talk' slot (which is filled in only 13 cases now); the risk of misjudgment in the case of 'tell' BLAVs (49 cases listed now) is lower because of the larger distance from the core.

A further core item is to ask. Of the 81 sample languages, only 8 do not have an 'asking' term with BLAV status. Of those who do, 24 have a BLAV equivalent to English to ask in that it incorporates both 'question' and 'request' senses (one of these, Dongolese Nubian, has two BLAVs with both meanings: ídd(i) and síkk(i); three of them, Tunica, Ngizim, and Shuswap, have an additional 'asking' term: Ngizim jáasyu 'to ask [question]', Tunica wíra 'to ask [question]', and Shuswap q'ex-m 'to ask for [object]'). Kabyle Berber, Hopi, Nukuoro, Persian, Cuzco Quechua, and Wolof only have 'asking' terms with a 'question' meaning (Persian has two, as a result of some special properties of the Persian lexicon pointed out before; the others only one). Languages with only a 'requesting' BLAV do not occur in our sample at all. 41 languages have two terms distinguishing 'to ask (question)' (e.g. German fragen) from 'to ask (request)' (e.g. German bitten); but in many of these, the 'question' BLAV seems to be extendable to the description of 'requesting' acts, whereas we have not been able to observe the reverse. Exceptionally, languages make a three-fold 'asking' distinction:

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3 Of course this account does not go very deeply into the distribution of to say, to speak, to talk, to tell across the spectrum of speech events. What counts at this stage is the intuitively most striking differences. For a detailed study, see R. Dirven, L. Goossens, Y. Putseys & E. Vorlat (1982).
1. asking a question
2. asking for some object
3. asking someone to do something

In our sample, only Kamchadal fully fits this paradigm: linl₁ (1), anst (2), nest (3). A few other languages, however, make use of the possibilities of this three-fold distinction. We have already noted Shuswap qex-m (2), occurring in addition to a verb with both 'question' and 'request' senses. One other case is Mong Njua: nú (1), tháó (probably both 2 and 3), yú (3).

The following table presents a picture of the occurrence of non-base core items in our sample (where ask 1-2-3 stands for a general 'asking' verb incorporating 'question' and 'request' senses, ask 1 for 'asking a question', ask 2-3 for a general 'requesting' verb, ask 2 for 'asking for an object', and ask 3 for 'asking to do something').

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>talk</th>
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<th>ask 1-2-3</th>
<th>ask 1</th>
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*Note that the Lingala and Zulu 'talking (conversing)' and 'telling (narrating)' meanings are incorporated in one verb, Lingala -solala and Zulu xoxa.
There is a special category of BLAVs which we call peripheral because their acceptance as BLAVs seemingly violates PSC4: its English members are to name and to count. These verbs, indeed, refer to rather restricted kinds of activities. This fact is counterbalanced, however, by the following observations:

- They occur very frequently.
- The constraints are not of an institutional kind.

The second observation does not count for to name in the sense of 'giving a name', an activity which is usually surrounded by a more or less strong institutional context. Hence 'naming' verbs which exclusively mean 'to give a name' were eliminated. As soon as they allow additional modes of usage related to 'mentioning by name' or 'referring to' (as in "Name the capital of the United States" or "Name something, and I'll get it for you"), 'enumerating' (as in "Name the fifty states"), or even 'calling by name', they are accepted as BLAVs unless one or more of the other criteria blocks this possibility. It should be clear from this that there are different shades of BLAV-ness among 'naming' verbs; thus French nommer may be a more dubious case than English to name. The case for including 'naming' verbs is strengthened, however, not only by their intuitive importance and their irreducibility to other LAVs, but also by their occasional identity with base items (interpretable as a specialized meaning of the 'unique beginner' on a lower level of the lexical hierarchy), as in Blackfoot, Maidu, Nisenan, and Dongolese Nubian.

For the BLAV status of irreducible 'counting' verbs, there are even stronger indications, in spite of the fact that counting may arguably also be a mental activity (an assumption supported by the fact that the verbs in question often also mean 'to reckon, estimate, etc.'; consider, for instance, also Wintu Na-mah to count, figure, reckon' which is related to Jam 'to think'). First, their occurrence is nearly universal (67 cases from our sample, or 83%). Second, from a diachronic point of view, they are often the basis for other LAVs, some of which are even BLAVs. Thus a diversity of languages seems to testify to a conceptual link between 'counting' and 'telling/narrating': Spanish contar realizes both meanings fully; English to tell itself used to have a 'counting' meaning which still surfaces in some contexts; English to count vs. to recount; French compter vs. raconter; Dutch tellen vs. vertellen; German zählen vs. erzählen; Yana dau 'to count' vs. daumai 'to recount, retell'. Similarly, the meaning of Limba kondi 'to count' is extendable to 'to relate, narrate; notify, say, tell; acknowledge'. Tunica wiła means both 'to count' and 'to ask (question)'. And Greek légō used to mean, in Homeric times, 'to pick out, select; collect, enumerate, recount'; it then became the usual word for 'to speak' and 'to say', and it further specialized its meaning to the Modern Greek 'to say'. A third observation underscores both its conceptual importance and its peripheral position: in a very wide range of languages, 'counting' verbs are the basis for or extend their meaning to 'reading' (e.g. Emai, Fore, Gbeya, German, Hungarian, Lenakel, Miwok, Nukuoro, Ojibwa, Venda, Yup'ik, and many more).

Both 'naming' and 'counting' BLAVs were found in 32 languages; a 'naming' verb only in 5 languages; a 'counting' verb only in 34 languages; and one language, Lingala, has one verb, -táNGA, for both
(iv) Interaction

Most types of linguistic action involve interaction. The BLAV types considered so far, however, do not explicitly focus on the interactive aspects of verbal behavior. These aspects remain implicit, except in the case of to talk and its equivalents, which tend to require reciprocity ('conversing') in most instances of use. About 50% of our sample languages (41 out of 81) also have a BLAV which focuses explicitly on interaction by describing a conversational move which necessarily follows speech by someone else: to answer and its equivalents.

The reason why an 'answering' BLAV is to be found in only 50% of the sample, is that the concept lends itself to semantically transparent compounding and derivation (forming items to be excluded on the basis of PSC2) and to semantic extensions of 'returning' verbs (to be excluded on the basis of PSC6); for examples, see section 2.1.1 under PSC6.

'Answering' BLAVs never coincide with any other BLAVs, except for one case where (not surprisingly, since both involve interaction though one more explicitly than the other) it is the same verb as the 'talking (conversing)' BLAV: Osage u-ki'-e. The same relationship emerges from quite a number of non-basic LAVs in the investigated languages. Just two examples:

Hanunóo magasaragán 'to talk, answer back and forth to each other, as of a group of people on the trail' (cf. the noun sagút 'answer')

Hausa tanka/tamka 'to converse, to talk much' but also 'to reply'

(v) Social routine

A fifth category of BLAVs covers a domain of verbal behavior which can be labeled social routines. Its only members are to greet and to thank and their equivalents. Though the behavior in question usually manifests itself in formulaic expressions (which restricts the scope of applicability) and though at least 'greeting' can usually be non-verbal as well as verbal, there are good reasons to accept the BLAV status of the corresponding LAVs.

The potential counterarguments tentatively adduced in the foregoing sentence are not based on properties which could give us something to go by in an attempt to exclude the verbs on the basis of our operational criteria. The restricted scope (reminding us of PSC4) has nothing to do with a high degree of specialization or institutional constraints, only with the forms of expression. In this respect, to greet and to thank contrast sharply with the much more specialized to apologize and to congratulate (for which direct equivalents are to be found in only a small minority of the world's languages); acts of 'greeting' and 'thanking' -- in that order -- are extremely pervasive
in human interaction. As to the non-verbal nature of many acts of 'greeting', this does not help us to apply PSC6 since in most cases native speakers cannot decide whether the verbal or the non-verbal action meaning is primary. There are, of course, some noteworthy exceptions, such as the following:

Ojibwa namkawaad 'to greet someone'
   anam + ik + aw + aa + d
   [greet] [see the body] [abstract final] [3-object] [3-subject]

Similarly, one other quite common type of specificity rules out the BLAV-ness of a number of 'greeting' verbs. An example:

Luiseño namoka- 'to greet visitors, receive guests'

(Many 'greeting' verbs acceptable as BLAVs incorporate this 'welcoming' meaning.)

Social routine BLAVs occur in 44 languages (i.e. 54% of our sample). Of these, 20 languages have two terms corresponding more or less to English to greet and to thank; 19 have only a 'greeting' term, 3 only a 'thanking' term, and 2 have a term covering both meanings.

The conceptual unity of the social routine category (justifying its setting apart as a category) does not only appear from the polyvalent BLAVs in two languages from the sample:

Hausa gaida: 'to greet, salute, bid farewell' and 'to thank'
   (Consider also the noun barka 'thanking, blessing, congratulation')

Hungarian kőszőn 'to greet' and 'to thank'

It also emerges from large numbers of LAVs in this domain which had to be excluded from the set of BLAVs for a variety of reasons. The unifying meaning seems to be the expression of positive feelings towards the addressee, the expression of goodwill, the acknowledgment of the existence of a social relationship worth maintaining. This is why 'greeting' verbs are more crucial members of the set than 'thanking' verbs, a fact supported by the figures (of the 22 languages with only one social routine BLAV, there are 19 with a 'greeting' verb and only 3 with a 'thanking' verb) and by the close relationship between 'greeting' and 'talking to, addressing' (a relationship surfacing, for instance, in the Yurok verb tarjwxm-/trgum). Some examples from which the conceptual unity of social routines, as lexicalized in the world's languages (though not always in the form of verbs), and as defined above, may appear:

Kabyle Berber ehmed 'to praise, celebrate, thank'
Blackfoot ksimmatsim- 'to greet' (cf. ksimmatsitaki- 'to be happy' and ksimmatsin- 'to be happy to see a person')

Gbeya mbá-á 'to greet' but also 'to congratulate' (n.) 'greeting' or 'feeling, emotion'

Hanunoo báti'
Hawaiian   aloha  'to love, regard with affection; have pity, compassion upon; show mercy; salute at meeting or parting; give thanks (as an act of worship)'

Krio     eku  a greeting word, used especially by the Muslim Krios of Freetown
< Yoruba kí 'to greet'
> ekubó 'welcome home'
eku fó 'I compliment you on'

Sebei   ngerekyi  'to greet visitors, welcome' and 'to please'

(vi) Non-action

A relatively low number of languages (13 from our sample) have specialized verbs describing linguistic non-action. The majority of languages, however, fills this slot in the pattern by negating a base item.

In the presentation of our data (Appendix B), all BLAVs are presented schematically in the following pattern:

```
non-action

[ [ base

action  [ [ core

[ [ periphery

interaction

social routine
```

This pattern is 'broken' only by a few lexical items which occur with more than one BLAV meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kabyle Berber</td>
<td>ini</td>
<td>both 'to say' and 'to ask (question)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackfoot</td>
<td>ani-</td>
<td>both 'to say, tell' and 'to name'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maidu</td>
<td>'a.'</td>
<td>both 'to say' and 'to name'</td>
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<td>Nisenan</td>
<td>ha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dongolese Nubian</td>
<td>jep</td>
<td>both 'to say, tell' and 'to name'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osage</td>
<td>u-ki'-e</td>
<td>both 'to talk (converse)' and 'to answer'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>contar</td>
<td>both 'to tell (story)' and 'to count'</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Since the total number of distinct BLAV forms presented for our sample languages is 572, the stability of the pattern cannot be doubted on the basis of 11 items which occupy slots in more than one BLAV category (i.e. a 1.5% exception rate). Some of them (as in the case of Yurok) are easy to explain. Others are surface expressions of more commonly observed relationships (as in the case of Spanish), and some recurrent ambiguities (as in the case of the five forms meaning both 'saying' and 'naming') may point at other common relationships; the recurrent identity with a base item certainly lends further support to the decision to treat 'naming' verbs, if the criteria are satisfied, as BLAVs in spite of their seemingly restricted scope.

The overall distribution of BLAVs across the six categories is presented in the following table.

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<td>Yurok</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number: 81 77 72 41 43 13
Percent: 100 95 89 50 53 16
3.1.2. The number of BLAVs

The number of BLAVs varies from 1 to 12, with languages having 4 to 11 BLAVs representing 92.5% of the sample (75 cases). Overview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLAVs</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 Kalam, Kewa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Kera, Kiowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 Amharic, Fore, Wappo, Warlpiri, Yana, Yimas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10 Cuicatec, Gbeya, Hanunóo, Hausa, Hindi, Luiseño, Lake Miwok, Nukuoro, Eastern Ojibwa, Sranan Tongo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 Blackfoot, Ch'ol, Diegueño, Grebo, Hopi, Krio, Ayacucho Quechua, Cuzco Quechua, Tarma Quechua, Shuswap, Wintu, Wolof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16 Achumawi, Mzab Berber, Guaraní, Khmer, Kilivila, Lenakel, Limba, Lingala, Maidu, Bodega Miwok, Mon, Mong Njua, Ngizim, Tunica, Venda, Central Yup'ik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8 Kabyle Berber, Hungarian, Indonesian, Kamchadal, Nisenan, Persian, Sebei, Zulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>7 Abuan, Bobo Fing, Emai, Hawaiian, Maori, Tiruray, Yoruba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10 English, French, North Frisian, Dongolese Nubian, Osage, Northern Sotho, Spanish, Swahili, Southern Tuvaluan, Welsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6 Dutch, Greek, Kwanyama, Polish, Russian, Yurok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 German, Xhosa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.3. The order of development

The data make the formulation of synchronic implicational universals (potentially revealing an order of development, as discovered for color terms and plant and animal taxonomies), completely impossible. The only BLAV category which is always represented is the base. From there onwards, any direction of development seems possible (see the table at the end of section 3.1.1.), though statistically there is a higher likelihood that the core and the periphery will be developed than the interaction and social routine components, and though the development of a non-action BLAV is exceptional.
3.1.4. Universality

The form of universality emerging from the data is much stronger than if a neat developmental pattern had been discovered. A highly stable core of lexicalized conceptualizations of linguistic action can be observed.

First of all, there is never a correlation between the differences in the sets of BLAVs and geographical or cultural parameters. Thus higher numbers of BLAVs are not reserved for languages spoken in highly industrialized western societies: Xhosa shares the privilege of having 12 BLAVs with German; Kwanyama and Yurok both have 11, just like Dutch or Polish; Osage and Northern Sotho share the number 10 with English and French; on the other hand, the Hungarian BLAV set is restricted to 8 items. Similarly, none of the BLAV categories is restricted to areas or culture types; even the slightly marginal non-action BLAVs occur in Berber, Kwanyama, Mon, and Northern Sotho alongside Dutch, French, Greek, Russian, etc.

Second, the mechanisms by which the BLAV status of verbials in certain categories (in particular non-action, but also interaction and social routine) are 'blocked' are well-understood. It is predictable that such blocking will occur for a significant number of languages, which means that the lexicalization processes are quite universal.

Third, further differences between languages are usually to be explained on the basis of additional properties of those languages. Thus the extreme cases of Kalam and Kewa (with only one BLAV) derive their status unambiguously from the special characteristics of their restricted verb root sets.

The findings clearly lend support to the view that all human languages represent the same overall level of evolution. The lexicalized reflection of conceptualizations of linguistic action points at a truly universal linguistic action core. Any assumptions about verbal behavior which go beyond what is directly derivable from the existence of this universal core should be subject to careful scrutiny, from an explicitly intercultural perspective, before generalizing them.

3.2. UNIVERSAL TENDENCIES

On the basis of the foregoing observations, we can formulate a number of universal tendencies (UT) in relation to the LAV lexicon of natural languages.

**UT 1**: For all human languages it is possible to identify a set of conceptually basic LAVs
(Note that the validity of this generalization implies the hierarchical structuring of at least a significant part of the LAV lexicon of human languages.)

**UT 2**: The number of BLAVs varies from 1 to 12, but almost all languages have from 4 to 11 BLAVs
UT 3: All BLAVs can be placed in a pattern of six categories (base, core, periphery, interaction, social routine, non-action) which is highly stable across the languages of the world.

UT 4: If a language has only one BLAV, it is always a base item.

UT 5: Almost all languages have, in addition to a base item or base items, core and periphery BLAVs.

UT 6: Almost all languages have one or more 'asking' verbs in their non-base core; of the threefold distinction 'ask (question)', 'ask for (an object)' and 'ask to do something', only the first one is always realized in languages with 'asking' BLAVs.

UT 7: Almost all languages with periphery items have a 'counting' BLAV.

UT 8: Almost all languages with social routine items have a 'greeting' BLAV.

3.3. IMPLICATIONS

The data, the observations, and the generalizations carry numerous implications, all of which require extensive treatment. While awaiting more definitive research results, we can only give a few hints, which I will restrict to three domains: speech act theory, the study of sentence types, the semantic analysis of LAVs, and the study of problems of crosscultural communication.

The results of this investigation fully confirm the dubiousness of the universal validity of the 'orthodox' theoretical classification of speech acts (cf. J.R. Searle 1976a). We shall restrict our observations to commissives and directives, two of the five main classes proposed.

The most striking fact is that commissives (an instance of which, the act of promising, was for a long time treated as a prototypical example to illustrate the tenets of speech act theory) are not represented in the set of BLAVs of any language. 'Promising' verbs, if they occur at all, are definable in terms of 'saying that one will do something' in a clear statement sense. This relationship is underscored by 'promising' verbal verbs and nouns which do occur in a variety of languages. Some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Verb(s)</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>qal sàttá</td>
<td>'to promise'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[word, statement (in court)]</td>
<td>[give, grant, provide]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>kii taurangi</td>
<td>'to promise' (literally 'to say something that has not yet been fulfilled')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[to say, tell, speak]</td>
<td>[unsettled, changeable, incomplete, unsatisfied, unfulfilled]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Miwok</td>
<td>lìlìaw-</td>
<td>'to say, tell'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; lìlìawpo</td>
<td>(semeifactive, reflexive, transitive) 1. 'to say something about oneself', 2. 'to claim to be', 3. 'to promise'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(See also the remarks on Warlpiri in Appendix B.) The obligation involved in 'committing oneself to do something' seems to derive exclusively from general (and culture-specific) norms of interaction and verbal behavior, operating in this case on statements about certain types of future activities.

Similarly, the obligation resulting from acts of 'ordering' derives completely from an institutional context of authority. There are no 'ordering' BLAVs in any language. If the meaning is present more or less prominently in the usage of any BLAV, such a BLAV will always have a basically assertive meaning, as in the case of English to tell. Some other basic and non-basic LAVs showing the same relationship:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>LAV</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limba</td>
<td>cepi</td>
<td>'to acquaint, tell, affirm, allege, assert, bid, command, declare, fix (price), inform, invite, mention, narrate, notify, proclaim, profess, quote, relate, say, show, speak'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nubian</td>
<td>án</td>
<td>1. 'to say', 2. 'to say to, tell, bid', 3. 'to let, allow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>-laya</td>
<td>'to advise, admonish, impart wisdom, teach' but also 'to order, command'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Again, see also the remarks on Warlpiri in Appendix B.) Another typical case is where 'ordering' verbs basically mean 'to rule, govern' (e.g. Diegueno uuchutt 'to rule, send, order', Mong Njua cáj 'to rule, govern, manage, order'). The only 'directing' BLAVs are 'requesting' verbs.

Not only are the only 'directing' BLAVs 'requesting' verbs, but (as appears from the observations in 3.1.1.), 'requesting' is strongly associated with 'asking questions'. In many languages both meanings are incorporated in the same verb (as in English to ask). Moreover, the asking of questions seems to take priority in the lexicalization of linguistic action concepts (cf. UT6). Adding to this that the canonical form for expressing a request is an interrogative sentence (a direct question about a future action, such as "Will you do this for me?", or an example of an indirect speech act or 'pre-request') and that -- as observed above -- other directives do not occupy a central position in
the conceptualization of linguistic action as reflected in its lexicalization, it may be justified to call the supposed correspondence of the three basic sentence types (declarative, interrogative, imperative) with three basic illocutionary force types into question.

As to implications concerning the semantic analysis of LAVs, the data obviously challenge the conclusions A. Wierzbicka's (1988) draws from her own investigation of speech act verbs:

"[...] there is only one 'basic speech act verb' in English: say; and that as 'say' is probably a lexical universal, and a universal semantic primitive, the word for 'say' may well be the only basic speech act verb in any language. Above the level of say there are no hyponyms and hyperonyms. Detailed semantic analysis shows that apart from say, there are no speech act verbs in English which would be related to one another in the way sparrow is related to bird [...]."

Something must be wrong with a semantic analysis which shows that only to say is hierarchically related to other English speech act verbs if

- at least 8 English verbs (all base, core, interaction, and social routine BLAVs) are actually used by speakers of English to define other linguistic action concepts felt to be 'subtypes';
- more than one English verb (to speak as well as to say) occupies a top position in the hierarchy.

The data confirm that the occurrence of at least one base item (such as English to say) is universal. But accepting 'say' as a semantic primitive disregards the fact that

- many languages (not just English) have more than one base item;
- in many languages the 'saying' verb is not strictly separable from more general action meanings.

Once a semantic primitive approach is adopted, however, it is hard to avoid this kind of problem. Since the approach may also tend to make wrong predictions and could thus prevent the discovery of the type of universality found in this study, it should always be seen as just one of a variety of collectively necessary approaches.

The universal tendencies observed in this investigation provide us with a solid empirical basis to start from in the search for intercultural differences in the conceptualization of linguistic action which may be partly responsible for intercultural and international communication problems.

Needless to say that all the work still has to be done. Though the search for the relevant differences can start as soon as a reliable research strategy has been developed, the empirically identified universal basis itself needs to be further investigated. One necessary way of doing this will be by mapping the comparative distribution of BLAVs across the spectrum of speech events. Also, as hinted at before, grammatical considerations have to be reintroduced in the lexical semantic methodology, and data from other types of metapragmatic research have to be adduced.
APPENDIX A:
THE LANGUAGE SAMPLE

The complete language sample on which the analysis and conclusions (in chapter 3) are based, contains over one hundred languages. The data presented in Appendix B cover 81 of those. The remaining data have been withheld from presentation, in most cases because they were judged to be too partial or inconclusive at this point. In other cases, languages have been left out because they would not have improved the representativeness of the sample. For instance, the five Polynesian languages in the sample (Hawaiian, Lenakel, Maori, Nukuoro, and Southern Tuvaluan) still constitute an overrepresentation of this group of languages in comparison with most of the others. The complete set of data would have worsened the bias, since it contains nineteen Polynesian languages (out of a total of twenty-eight): Futunan, Hawaiian, Kapingamarangi, Lenakel, Mae, Mangaian, Maori, Marquesan, Niue, Nukuoro, Rapanui, Rennel-Bellonese, Rarotongan, Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan, Tuamotuan, Tuvaluan, Uvean. Most of these were used in an early stage of the reported investigation as test cases for the operational criteria (see J. Verschueren 1983b). In addition to the five remaining Polynesian languages, a few other sets of closely related languages (e.g. three varieties of Quechua and two varieties of Miwok) were kept in the sample in order to provide a basis for an assessment of potential differences in the degree of variability between vs. within genetic groups.

As pointed out by B. Comrie (1981: 5-12), any data base for universals research should avoid genetic, areal, or typological bias. If pragmatic universals are searched for, there is a further danger of cultural and functional bias. We certainly cannot claim full representativeness for our sample (especially along the cultural and functional parameters where the criteria which could be relevant in relation to our topic of investigation are not even clear). But a few remarks should help the reader to evaluate it.

In the following overview, language names printed in bold face capitals indicate the 81 languages of the present sample. All other names refer to language groups and serve to identify the genetic affiliations of the investigated languages. Genetic relationships have been determined on the basis of the sources for the individual languages and on the basis of M. Ruhlen (1975, 1987) and B.F. Grimes (ed.) (1988a, 1988b). The most up-to-date and detailed information is to be found in M. Ruhlen (1987) and B.F. Grimes (ed.) (1988a, 1988b). Though their authority was relied on to settle difficult issues, their subdivisions have not been followed to the last detail. Their purpose was to classify all of the world’s 6,000-odd languages, whereas we have
adopted whatever was felt to be needed to provide a sufficient identification of each of our 81 languages. Hence the degree of specificity is closer to M. Ruhlen (1975). Similarly, instead of accepting M. Ruhlen's (1987) super-phyla such as Amerind and Austric, we have kept our largest groupings (more in keeping with B.F. Grimes's practice) at the more conservative level of traditional phyla such as Andean-Equatorial, Aztec-Tanoan, Hokan, Macro-Algonkian, etc. (for Amerindian languages), and Austro-Asiatic and Austro-Tai (for Austric languages--a super-phylum from which we have also sent Miao-Yao back to its more traditional, though certainly not uncontroversial, position as a subgroup of the Sino-Tibetan phylum.

Adopting the above practice, our language sample is spread out across 20 different phyla. Of the 17 phyla proposed by M. Ruhlen (1987), 12 are represented; not represented are: Altaic, Caucasian, Elamo-Dravidian, Khoisan, and Na-Dene.

Though we do not even come close to having representatives of each of the 478 language groups identified by A. Bell (1978) as sets of languages separated from a common ancestor by a time-depth of 3,500 years, we may assume that the genetic diversity of the sample precludes any serious bias on this count.

Afro-Asiatic:
Berber:
   Ṣanhājah:
   (KABYLE) BERBER
   Zanātah:
   (MZAB) BERBER
Chadic:
   East:
   KERA
   West:
   Bade-Warji:
   NGIZIM
   Hausa-Gwandara:
   HAUSA
Semitic:
   South:
   Ethiopic:
   AMHARIC
Andean-Equatorial:
   Andean:
   Quechumaran:
   (AYACUCHO) QUECHUA
   (CUZCO) QUECHUA
   (TARMA) QUECHUA
Equatorial:
   Tupi:
   Tupi-Guaraní:
   GUARANÍ
Australian:
   Pama-Nyungan:
   Southwest:
   WARLPIRI
### Austro-Asiatic:
- **Mon-Khmer:**
  - **East:**
    - Khmer:
      - (CENTRAL) KHMER
  - South:
    - Monic:
      - MON

### Austro-Tai:
- Austronesian:
  - Oceanic:
    - Eastern:
      - Polynesian:
        - HAWAIIAN
        - LENAKEL
        - MAORI
        - NUKUORO
        - (SOUTHERN) TUVALUAN
  - Milne Bay:
    - KILIVILA
  - Western (=Indonesian):
    - Hesperonesian:
      - North Indonesian:
      - Philippine:
        - HANUNÓO
        - TIRURAY
  - West Indonesian:
    - INDONESIAN

### Aztec-Tanoan:
- Kiowa-Tanoan:
  - KIOWA
- Uto-Aztecan:
  - Aztecan:
    - HOPI
  - Takic:
    - LUISEÑO

### Eskimo-Aleut:
- Eskimo:
  - (CENTRAL) YUP'IK

### Hokan:
- Palaihnihan:
  - ACHUMAWI
- Yanan:
  - YANA
- Yuman:
  - Delta-Californian:
    - (MESA GRANDE) DIEGUEÑO

### Indo-European:
- Celtic:
  - Brythonic:
    - WELSH
Germanic:
  Western:
    DUTCH
    ENGLISH
    (NORTH) FRISIAN
    GERMAN

Greek:
  GREEK

Indo-Iranian:
  Indic:
    HINDI
  Iranian:
    Western:
      PERSIAN

Italic:
  Romance:
    Western:
      FRENCH
      SPANISH

Slavic:
  Western:
    POLISH
  Eastern:
    RUSSIAN

Indo-Pacific:
  Central New Guinea:
    East New Guinea Highlands:
      East-Central:
        FORE
      Kalam-Kobon:
        KALAM
      West-Central:
        KEWA
  Sepik-Ramu:
    Nor-Pondo:
      YIMAS

Macro-Algonkian:
  Algonkian:
    Central:
      BLACKFOOT
      (EASTERN) OJIBWA
    [----- ?]
      TUNICA
    [----- ?]
      YUROK

Macro-Siouan:
  Siouan:
    Dhegiha:
      OSAGE
Niger-Kordofanian:
Niger-Congo:
  Adamawa-Eastern:
  Eastern:
    GBEYA
Benue Congo:
  Cross River:
    ABUAN
Bantu:
  Central:
    KWANYAMA
    (NORTHERN) SOTHO
    SWAHILI
    VENDA
    XHOSA
    ZULU
  Northwest:
    LINGALA

Kru:
  Western:
    GREBO
Kwa:
  Edo:
    EMAI
  Yoruba-Northern Akoko
    YORUBA
Mande:
  BOBO FING
West Atlantic:
  Northern:
    WOLOF
  Southern:
    LIMBA

Nilo-Saharan:
  East Sudanic:
  Eastern:
    (DONGOLESE) NUBIAN
  Nilotic:
    SEBEI

Oto-Manguean:
  Mixtecan:
    CUICATEC

[Paleo-Siberian]:
  Chukchi-Kamchatkan:
    KAMCHADAL

Penutian:
  Maiduan:
    MAIDU
    NISENAN
Mayan:
  Cholan:
    CR'OL
Miwok-Costanoan:
   Miwok:
      Western:
         (BODEGA) MIWOK
         (LAKE) MIWOK

Wintun:
   WINTU

Salish:
   Interior:
      North:
         SHUSWAP

Sino-Tibetan:
   Miao-Yao:
      Miao:
         MONG NJUA

Uralic:
   Finno-Ugric:
      Ugric:
         HUNGARIAN

[Language Isolates]:
    Yukian:
       WAPPO

[Pidgins and Creoles]:
   English-based:
      Krio
      SRANAN TONGO

The geographic distribution of the sample languages can be seen on the following map, where the abbreviated names are placed approximately at the center of the area of traditional use.

ABBREVIATIONS USED:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ab</th>
<th>Abuan</th>
<th>Ach</th>
<th>Achumawi</th>
<th>Am</th>
<th>Amharic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B(K)</td>
<td>Kabyle Berber</td>
<td>B(M)</td>
<td>Mzab Berber</td>
<td>Bl</td>
<td>Blackfoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BoF</td>
<td>Bobo Fing</td>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>Ch'ol</td>
<td>Cu</td>
<td>Cuicatec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di</td>
<td>Diegueño</td>
<td>Du</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Em</td>
<td>Emai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Fo</td>
<td>Fore</td>
<td>Fre</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Frisian</td>
<td>Gb</td>
<td>Gbeya</td>
<td>Ger</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Grebo</td>
<td>Grk</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Gu</td>
<td>Guarani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han</td>
<td>Hanunóó</td>
<td>Hau</td>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>Haw</td>
<td>Hawaiian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>Ho</td>
<td>Hopi</td>
<td>Hu</td>
<td>Hungarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>Kal</td>
<td>Kalam</td>
<td>Kam</td>
<td>Kamchadal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ker</td>
<td>Kera</td>
<td>Kew</td>
<td>Kewa</td>
<td>Kh</td>
<td>Khmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kil</td>
<td>Kilivila</td>
<td>Kio</td>
<td>Kiowa</td>
<td>Kr</td>
<td>Krio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kw</td>
<td>Kwanyama</td>
<td>Le</td>
<td>Lenakel</td>
<td>Lim</td>
<td>Limba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on p. 54)
Using B.F. Grimes's (ed.) (1988a:740) presentation of the geographical distribution of living languages as a guideline, we see that all major geographical areas are represented, but that there is a bias in favor of Europe (almost five times the world percentage) and the Americas (double the world percentage), and at the expense of the Asian continent (only one third of the world percentage). The figures are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number in sample</th>
<th>Percentage/sample</th>
<th>Percentage/world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFRICA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30 %</td>
<td>31 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMERICAS</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROPE</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE EAST</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIFIC</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The languages in the sample differ widely along a range of typological parameters. To illustrate this with the word order parameter (and without going very deeply into it), at least the following patterns occur: SVO/AN (Dutch, English, German, Hausa, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, etc.); SVO/NA (French, Greek, Guarani, Indonesian, Khmer, Spanish, Swahili, Wolof, Yup'ik, etc.); SOV/AN (Amharic, Fore, Hindi, Hopi, Kamchadal, Maidu, Quechua, etc.); SOV/NA (Kewa, Nubian, Persian); VOS/AN (Ch'ol); VSO/NA (Hawaiian, Maori, Nukuoro, Welsh, etc.); etc. Or, to use the traditional morphology-based typology, the sample ranges from polysynthetic languages (such as Yup'ik) to isolating ones (such as the Polynesian languages -- though these are not extreme cases).

Given the conceptual-pragmatic nature of the object of investigation, a culturally and/or functionally biased language sample could be particularly harmful. However, the languages listed above are spoken in extremely divergent types of cultural environment, ranging from the technologically most advanced societies in densely populated areas, to relatively small and isolated communities of hunters and gatherers.

Furthermore, the languages are of different functional types, ranging from those whose use is restricted to its native speakers...
within narrow regional boundaries, to hybrid languages often restricted in use to informal contexts (such as the English-based creoles Krio and Sranan Tongo), lingua francas (such as Hausa, with about ten million native speakers but twenty-five million regular users), and other 'languages of wider communication' (such as English, French, Russian, or Spanish).

The remarks on typological, cultural, and functional differences are noncommittal at this stage, since their relevance to the specific topic of investigation still has to be clarified by further research.
APPENDIX B: THE DATA

This chapter presents the data, i.e. the sets of BLAVs discovered for all the languages in our sample (as presented in the foregoing chapter) by applying the operational criteria (discussed in chapter 2). For each language considered we provide the following information:

- **The language name.** Usually we have adopted the name used in the source(s) cited. In only a few cases have we decided to replace it, adopting the name used in M. Ruhlen (1987) and/or B.F. Grimes (ed.) (1988a, 1988b), either because it may identify the language more accurately, or because it reflects current usage, or because it is more common in English (where the source language is different).
- **Linguistic class.** (See comments in Appendix A.)
- **Geographical area:** Wider geographical area (using the labels in the geographical distribution table in Appendix A), country/countries or (as in the case of many of the languages of the Pacific) island, and (wherever necessary) regional location.
- **Number of speakers.** The indicated number of speakers is an estimate based on the (often hardly compatible) information available in the cited source(s) for the language in question, in M. Ruhlen (1975, 1987), B.F. Grimes (ed.) (1988a), and in the "Comparative National Statistics" section of the 1988 Britannica Book of the Year (pp. 758-761).
- **Source(s).** Only the written sources (further specified in the list of references) are mentioned here. At this stage in the project, where follow-up questions for a sizeable portion of the data still need to be answered, the author wants to be held personally responsible. Informants and advisers will be fully acknowledged in a more definitive version of this text.

The language-specific sets of BLAVs are presented schematically. The rationale behind the pattern will be explained in chapter 5. In fact, the emergence of this pattern is itself a major research result and will be discussed in view of the universal tendency it represents. The reader may find it useful to get acquainted with the findings as formulated in the final chapter, before going through the data in detail.

For most languages there will be a number of further remarks, adducing additional data for consideration or commenting upon some of the verbs listed as BLAVs. Acquaintance with the generalized research results may also facilitate an understanding of some of these remarks.
Note that the verbs in the following presentation of the data are cited in the grammatical form used as entries in the major sources. In many cases this is not the infinitive. E.g., Amharic verbs are cited in the perfect, 3rd masculine, singular; Fore verbs in first person singular indicative; Kwanyama verbs in the imperative singular; etc. In numerous cases, depending on the properties of the languages in question, the citation form is simply a verb root.
ABUAN

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: CROSS RIVER
Area: Africa, Nigeria, Rivers State
Speakers: 24,000

BLAVs: 9

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{bém} \quad \text{(to say, tell)} \\
\text{káaph/gháaph} \quad \text{(to speak, talk)} \\
\text{béní} \quad \text{(to tell, say to, speak to)} \\
\text{púrú} \quad \text{(to ask [question/request])} \\
\text{kól/ghól} \quad \text{(to name, call, mention)} \\
\text{bál} \quad \text{(to count)} \\
\text{mágh} \quad \text{(to greet)} \\
\text{ękph} \quad \text{(to thank)} \\
\end{array}
\]

REMARKS:
- Abuan shows two minor deviations from the 'standard' pattern which emerges from the overall set of data. First, the core item púrú 'to ask' extends its meaning into the domain of social routine: it also means 'to greet'. Second, mágh 'to greet', also means 'to call, summon', a meaning which, if at all associated with any of the BLAVs of a language, usually links up with the peripheral 'to name, call'. In neither case is the deviation significant: the 'greet' meaning of púrú is clearly secondary (and is fully represented in the set of BLAVs as mágh); the 'call, summon' meaning of mágh 'to greet' is not unrelated to another LAV-meaning which is very commonly associated with 'greeting' BLAVs, viz. 'to receive as guests, welcome'.
- Séph 'to thank' also means 'to praise, bless'.
- A number of non-basic LAVs are directly derived from káaph:
  \[
  \begin{array}{l}
  \text{káaphán} \quad \text{[joint action]} \\
  \text{káapháan} \quad \text{'to speak for or against'} \\
  \text{bál} \quad \text{[joint action]} \\
  \text{bálán} \quad \text{'to get married to one another'} \\
  \end{array}
  \]
- Some very closely related languages distinguish between 'to ask (question)' and 'to ask (request)'.
  | Eastern Ogbia | Odual |
  | question | puru | puruan |
  | request | bαn  | gbeel  |
ACHUMAWI

Linguistic class: HOKAN: PALAIHNIHAN
Area: North America, USA, Northeast California
Speakers: 40
Source: D.L. Olmsted (1966)

BLAVs: 7

-iss- (to say, speak, talk)
-atama- (to say, speak, talk)
-īntama·k- (to tell)
-ati'1- (to ask)
-ilī·qa·tak- (to name)
-īntiliqatw- (to count)

-istú- (to answer)
AMHARIC

Linguistic class: AFRO-ASIATIC: SEMITIC: SOUTH: ETHIOPIC
Area: Africa, Ethiopia
Speakers: 8 million
Source: W. Leslau (1976)

BLAVs: 4

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alā</td>
<td>(to say)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāggārā</td>
<td>(to say, tell, speak)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāyyāqā</td>
<td>(to ask [question/request])</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q'āṭṭārā</td>
<td>(to count)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- Note that alā 'to say' also means 'to call, name' (hence tābalā 'be said, called, named, termed'). Yet (in contrast to the decision taken for Blackfoot, Maidu, Nisenan) we did not enter it into the 'name' slot of the set of BLAVs because:
  - it is not clear whether it can be used in the sense of 'to mention, refer to by name';
  - there are other 'naming' verbials (none of them monolexemic) meaning both 'to give a name' and 'to mention';
  - a phrase such a 'name a price' would be translated by means of tānaggārā (see comments on nāggārā below).
- Numerous LAVs are directly derived from nāggārā 'to say, speak, tell, inform':
  tānaggārā 'to speak, tell, speak to, talk, converse, discuss, address, make a remark'
  annaggārā 'to talk to someone, make someone speak'
  tānaggārā 'to talk, speak to one another, be on speaking terms, have a word with, discuss, converse'
  annaggāgārā 'to talk to, converse'
(Note that nāgār means 'word, thing, affair, matter, subject, fact'.)
- Tāyyāqā 'to ask' also means 'to pay a visit, call on someone' (compare with remarks on Abuan).
(KABYLE) BERBER

Linguistic class: AFRO-ASIATIC: BERBER: SANHAJAH
Area: Africa, Algeria, Eastern coastal mountains
Speakers: 2 million

BLAVs: 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROOT</th>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>ṭṭer</td>
<td>'to say a prayer, ask'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ṭsuter</td>
<td>(s- + root) 'to ask, entreat'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emmter</td>
<td>(m- + root) 'to beg, borrow'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLB</td>
<td>edgleb</td>
<td>'to ask, claim, want'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ḏaleb</td>
<td>'to ask, entreat, pray'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- In addition to ezken there are various other terms indicating verbal silence, but in most cases with specific extra connotations:
  - ggugem 'to be mute'
  - ggussen 'to be surprised'
  - luomet 'to act as if one were surprised'
- Note the occurrence of ini both as base term and as 'asking (question)' BLAV. There are other 'questioning' verbs which, however, do not seem to qualify for BLAV status:
  - steqsi 'to ask, question': its root, QS, serves as a root for words with many other meanings between which relationships are hard to determine
  - sal 'to ask, interrogate' also means 'to put to the test' which suggests a more restricted range of applicability.
- There are several 'requesting' verbs, but for each of them there are reasons to doubt their potential BLAV status:
(MZAB) BERBER

Linguistic class: AFRO-ASIATIC: BERBER: ZANATAH
Area: Africa, Algeria, Mzab district (seven oases)
Speakers: 80,000
Source: J. Delheure (1984)

BLAVs: 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ssus m</th>
<th>(to be silent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ini</td>
<td>(to say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ssiwäl</td>
<td>(to speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanna</td>
<td>(to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aḥsab</td>
<td>(to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sallam</td>
<td>(to greet)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- Ssiwäl also has the more general meaning of 'producing sound'; however, this seems to be secondary.
- Note the absence of 'questioning' and 'requesting' verbs at the BLAV level. Some non-basic LAVs:
  - ssastan 'to interrogate, question, ask'
  - sawwäl 'to interrogate, question'
  - amtar 'to beg, ask for'
  - ətlab 'to beg, ask for, entreat'
BLAVS: 6

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ani-} &: \text{ (to say, tell)} \\
\text{aipuyi/-ipui/-epuyi-} &: \text{ (to speak, talk)} \\
\text{sitsips-} &: \text{ (to speak, talk)} \\
\text{atsinik-/itsinik-} &: \text{ (to tell)} \\
\text{auks-/-oks-} &: \text{ (to count)}
\end{align*}
\]

REMARKS:
- Note the occurrence of \text{ani-} both as base term ('to say') and as 'naming' BLAV ('to name, call by name'). Compare with Maidu and Nisenan.
- In addition to 'telling a story', \text{atsinik-/itsinik-} also means 'to tell the news' (which the source indicates as its most common meaning). Note the relationship of the verb with:
  \text{itsini-} 'tongue'
  \text{itsiniksini} 'story'
- The only 'asking (question)' verb, \text{sopoaxtsis-} 'to inquire', seems to be highly marked because of:
  - its form: both \text{sopo-} 'to blow (of wind)' and a tsi- 'to extinguish, blow out (a light)' occur independently;
  - its apparent restriction to contexts warranting the translation 'to inquire about'.
- Similar remarks can be made about the only 'requesting' verbs:
  \text{ninixkat-} 'to call by name, call on, appeal to'
  \text{ninixkatsimat-} 'to call on, appeal to'
BOBO FING

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: MANDE
Area: Africa, Burkina Faso, Northwest Bobo Dioulasso area
Speakers: 160,000
Source: P. Le Bris & A. Prost (1981)

BLAVs: 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( b) (to be silent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dā (to say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yirâ (to speak, tell, say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bîrê (to speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiê (to tell [story])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tögä (to ask [question])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mî (to ask [request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zîô (to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bîrê (to greet)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CH'OL

Linguistic class: PENUTIAN: MAYAN: CHOLAN
Area: Central America, Mexico, Southeast (Chiapas)
Speakers: 35,000

BLAVs: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al (to say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub (to say, tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pejcan (to speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c'ajtin (to ask [question/request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsic (to count)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REM A R K:
- Though the 'speaking, talking (with)' meaning of pejcan is clearly primary, this verb extends its meaning to 'to read aloud' but also 'to court, make love to'.
CUICATEC

Linguistic class: OTO-MANGUEAN: MIXTECAN
Area: Central America, Mexico, Central (Northeast Oaxaca)
Speakers: 16,000

BLAVs: 5

∅

∅

∅

∅

∅

REMARKS:
- The following non-monolexemic form means both 'to thank' and 'to greet':
  nca^4'a^3 niu^3 si^4
  [to return/restore] [?]
For 'to thank' there is also a separate non-monolexemic form:
  cu^3 vi^2 yye^2 no^1
  [to happen, occur, have, be able to] [1. glad. 1. emotion]
- Cuicatec verbs do not have tenses but only aspects, labeled in the source as anticipation, continuation, termination, experimentation. Depending on these aspects, all verbs have four different forms (marked by 'prefixes'). The continuous aspect seems to be the least marked pragmatically (as appears, for instance, from its more frequent occurrence in dictionary examples). The anticipatory aspect, however, is morphologically less marked; hence this form is adopted in the above list (it is also the first form in the source's Spanish-Cuicatec lemma, and the only form used as a Cuicatec-Spanish entry). E.g.:
  ncu^3 vi^3, yi^3 ncu^3 vi^3, ncu^3 vi^3, ncu^2 vi^3 'to tell, narrate, explain'
**MESA GRANDE DIEGUEÑO**

Linguistic class: HOKAN: YUMAN: DELTA-CALIFORNIAN  
Area: North America, USA, Southern California  
Speakers: 150  
Source: T. Couro & C. Hutcheson (1973)

**BLAVs:**  
- wii (to say)  
- vaayp (to speak, talk)  
- kenaap (to tell)  
- akekwi (to ask [question])  
- tiikay (to ask [request])  
- chuuhii (to name)

**REMARK:**  
- Note the apparent relationship (though not semantically transparent) between wii 'to say' and akekwi 'to ask (question)'.

**DUTCH**

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: GERMANIC: WESTERN  
Area: Europe, The Netherlands and (Northern) Belgium  
Speakers: 20 million

**BLAVs:**  
- zwijgen (to be silent)  
- zeggen (to say)  
- spreken (to speak)  
- praten (to talk)  
- vertellen (to tell)  
- vragen (to ask [question/request])  
- noemen (to name)  
- tellen (to count)  
- groeten (to greet)  
- danken (to thank)

**antwoorden**  
(to answer)
ENGLISH

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: GERMANIC: WESTERN
Area: Europe, UK; North America
Speakers: 400 million (first language speakers)

BLAVs: 10

[to say]
[to speak]
[to talk]
[to tell]
[to ask] (question/request)
[to name]
[to count]
[to greet]
[to thank]
[to answer]
FORE

Linguistic class: INDO-PACIFIC: CENTRAL NEW GUINEA: EAST NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS
Area: Pacific, Territory of New Guinea, Eastern Highlands
Speakers: 18,000
Source: G. Scott (1980)

BLAVs: 4

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{suwe/yuwe(N)/kauwe(N)/karuwe(S)} \\
\text{ (to say, speak, talk)}
\end{array}
\quad
\begin{array}{l}
\text{abigáuwe(N)/amakigáuwe(S)} \\
\text{ (to ask [question/request])}
\end{array}
\quad
\begin{array}{l}
\text{aisúwe(N)/enasúwe(S) } \\
\text{ (to count)}
\end{array}
\quad
\begin{array}{l}
\text{agigáuwe (to greet)}
\end{array}
\]

REMARKS:
- Northern and Southern variants are marked as (N) and (S); unmarked forms are regionally neutral.
- Verbs are cited in the first person singular indicative; this is why they all end in -uwe:
  - u- + e
  \[ [ \text{indicative} ] \]
- Extra information is needed to decide on the following issues:
  - the functional distribution between suwe/yuwe(N) on the one hand and kauwe(N)/karuwe(S) on the other;
  - seeming relationships (not yet confirmed or disconfirmed so far) between:
    - suwe - aisúwe
    - abigáuwe - agigáuwe
Especially evidence on the second issue may lead to an assessment of whether a single or a couple of very basic LAV-roots are involved (comparable to the one for Kalam).
- Note the relationship between
  - abigáuwe(N) 'to ask [question/request]'
  - abigagáuwe(S) 'to understand, comprehend, perceive, know, hear, experience'
Here we may find an instance of the relationship between 'hearing' and 'asking' which is not uncommon in the world's languages.
FRENCH

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: ITALIC: ROMANCE: WESTERN
Area: Europe, France/(Southern) Belgium/Switzerland; Canada
Speakers: 100 million (first language speakers)

BLAVs: 10

se taire (to be silent)

dire (to say)
parler (to speak, talk)
raconter (to tell)
demander (to ask [question/request])
nommer (to name)
compter (to count)

saluer (to greet)
remercier (to thank)

répondre (to answer)

(NORTH) FRISIAN

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: GERMANIC: WESTERN
Area: Europe, West Germany, the islands of Föhr and Amrum
Speakers: 3,000

BLAVs: 10

stalswiigi (to be silent)

saai (to say)
snaaki (to speak, talk)
fertel (to tell)
fraagi (to ask [question/request])
nóóm (to name)
teel (to count)

grööti (to greet)
thoonki (to thank)

swaari (to answer)
GBEYA

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: ADAMAWA-EASTERN: EASTERN
Area: Africa, Central African Republic, Northwest (Bossangoa)
Speakers: 600,000
Source: W.J. Samarin (1966)

BLAVs:5

| tɔ-á | (to say, speak) |
| ak-á | (to ask [question]) |
| kɔ-y-á | (to ask [request]) |
| tɔr-á/tɔɔ | (to count) |
| mba-á | (to greet) |

REMARKS:
- The (non-monolexemic) equivalent for 'to talk' is:
  tɔ  wɛn
  [to say, speak] [word, affair, matter, subject]
- Mba-á 'to greet' also means 'to shake someone's hand in greeting or congratulations'.
- Tɔɔ 'to count' is the basis for the (non-monolexemic) verbal for 'to read':
  mβɛtɪ  'to read'
  [paper, book, letter; borrowing from Sango, the lingua franca of the area]
- Gbeya verbs are subject to drastic morphophonemic changes. For instance, ak-á 'to ask' becomes aŋ before a nasal consonant.
- In addition to its regular LAVs, Gbeya has a frequently used polymorphemic quotative verb which can take different shapes depending on the context:
  gende  gá  ye  ge
  gá  ye  ge
  gende  gá  ye
  gende  gáy
  ye  ge
  ye
  gende  gá
  gá

The lexical meaning of the component parts is minimal.
GERMAN

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: GERMANIC: WESTERN
Area: Europe, Germany/Austria/Switzerland
Speakers: 110 million

BLAVs: 12

schweigen (to be silent)

sagen (to say)
sprechen (to speak)

reden (to talk)
erzählen (to tell)
fragen (to ask [question])
bitten (to ask [request])

antworten (to answer)

nennen (to name)
zählen (to count)

grüßen (to greet)
danken (to thank)
**GREBO**

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: KRU: WESTERN  
Area: Africa, Liberia, Southeast  
Source: G. Innes (1969)

**BLAVs:** 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tu [4]</th>
<th>(to say)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lede [23]</td>
<td>(to tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dade [23]</td>
<td>(to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedɛ [32]</td>
<td>(to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yɛ [2]</td>
<td>(to greet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bise [23]</td>
<td>(to thank)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REMARKS:**
- Tu 'to say' also means 'to put' and is used mostly in combination with nouns. Non-monolexemic LAVs in general are by far the most frequent; they take the following forms:
  - noun + one from a restricted set of very general verbs
  - a more specific verb + the noun ɛmi [4] 'voice, language, sound'
- In addition to the base term tu, with its very general meaning and its apparently rare occurrence without further specifications, there are a few other general LAVs which, however, do not qualify for BLAV status:
  - ɛl [2] used in the general sense of 'to speak', but associated with negative value judgments because of its meaning 'to talk about someone behind his back'
  - hmɔ [3-2] 'you say, you said' (a 'defective' verb only occurring in this form)
  - yɛ [2] 'say, says, said' (also 'defective'; note the homophony with yɛ 'to greet')
- Dade 'to call, name' is related (but not transparently) to da [2] 'to call, summon'.
- Hedɛ 'to count' also means 'to read'.
- Bise 'to thank' also means 'to congratulate, salute, or bow as an expression of thanks'
  > bisɛda [233] 'thanksgiving, gratitude, appreciation'
GREEK

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: GREEK
Area: Europe, Greece
Speakers: 11 million

BLAVs: 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sigo (to be silent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lé(g)ō (to say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miō (to speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>āfēgoumai (to tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ē)rōtō (to ask [question])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zētō (to ask [request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ēnōmāzō (to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ārithmō (to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chairetizō (to greet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eucharistō (to thank)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARK:
Many of the above verbs have non-LAV meanings as well:
- āpantō 'to answer' also means 'to meet'
- zētō 'to ask (request)' also means 'to want, desire'
- chairetizō 'to greet' clearly includes non-linguistic greeting
- eucharistō 'to thank' also means 'to please someone' (an alternative 'thank'ing verb, doxāzō, primarily means 'to praise')
GUARANÍ

Linguistic class: ANDEAN-EQUATORIAL: EQUATORIAL: TUPI: TUPI-GUARANI
Area: South America, Paraguay, South
Speakers: 3 million
Source: A. Guasch (1977)

BLAVs: 7

- ha'e (to say, speak)
- (a)ne'ê (to speak, talk)
- (a)mombe'u (to tell)
- (a)porandu (to ask [question])
- (a)jerure (to ask [request])
- (ai)papa (to count)
- (a)momaitei (to greet)
HANUNÓO

Linguistic class: AUTRO-TAI: AUSTRO-NEAN: WESTERN (=INDONESIAN):
HESPERONESIAN: NORTH INDONESIAN: PHILIPPINE
Area: Asia, Philippines, Southeastern Mindoro
Speakers: 6,000
Source: H. C. Conklin (1953)

BLAVs: 5

magkùn (to say, tell)
magbágaw (to speak, talk)
maghámpan (to speak, talk)
mapalíjana (to ask [question])
hunagad (to ask [request])

REMARK:
90% of all Hanunóo words are either dissyllabic or derived from
dissyllabic word bases which are not subject to further analysis.
Moreover, the lexicon is very heavily noun-based, adjectives and verbs
belonging mostly to the derived forms. Examples from the above set of
BLAVs (most of which are denominal verbs derived by means of the verb-
forming prefix mag-):

magkùn 'to say, tell'
< kùn 'saying, telling' (a root which does not occur in isolation)
> kùntay (literary)/kúnu 'it is said, they say'
(quotative particle)

magbágaw 'to speak, talk'
< bágaw 'word, utterance'
> bagawun/bagaw 'to be said, uttered'

maghámpan 'to speak, talk'
< hámpan 'language, speech'
> harampan 'conversation'

Etc. This property of the language leads us to suggest that the absence
of at least the 'naming', 'counting', and 'answering' slots from the
LAV (and in particular BLAV) lexicon is accidental and does not have
any conceptual/cognitive basis, since the corresponding nouns do occur:

járan 'name'
biláŋ 'number, numeral; counting, enumeration'
sagút 'answer'
HAUSA

Linguistic class: AFRO-ASIATIC: CHADIC: WEST: HAUSA-GWANDARA
Area: Africa, (Northern) Nigeria/Niger/Cameroon
Speakers: 10 million (including second language users: 25 million)

BLAVs: 5

| [fadá: (to say, tell, speak) | ø |
| tambáya: (to ask [question]) | ø |
| ro:ká: (to ask [request]) | |
| kírga: (to count) | |
| gaida: (to greet, thank) | |

REMARKS:
- Fadá: 'to say, tell, speak' clearly includes the meanings of 'to tell (narrate)' and 'to tell (command)'.
- Gaida: means 'to greet, salute, thank' but also 'to bid farewell'.
- Hausa uses many LA-circumlocutions with yi 'to do, make'. E.g.:
  - yi báti 'to converse'
    [conversation]
  - yi lisafi 'to count, number'
    [number, account]
  - yi magána 'to talk, speak'
    [word, speech, language]
  - yi suna 'to give a name, perform the naming ceremony'
    [name]
  - yi tambáya: 'to ask (question)'
    [question, inquiry]
  - yi zanche 'to speak, converse'
    [word, conversation]
HAWAIIAN

Linguistic class: AUSTRO-TAI: AUSTRONESIAN: OCEANIC: EASTERN: POLYNESIAN
Area: Pacific, Hawaiian Islands
Speakers: 2,000

BLAVs: 9

\[ \emptyset \]

\['i' (to say, speak)
\[ mea 'to say, speak)\]
\[ hahi 'to speak, say, tell)\]
\[ 'oelo 'to speak, talk, say, tell)\]
\[ ninau 'to ask [question])\]
\[ noi 'to ask [request])\]
\[ pane 'to answer)\]
\[ kapa 'to name)\]
\[ helu 'to count)\]

\[ \emptyset \]

REMARKS:
- The three base items 'i, mea and hahi are very general action verbs, going (or starting) well beyond the realm of linguistic action:
  'i 'to say, speak' also means: 'to say within oneself, think'
  mea 'to say, speak' means 'to do, say, act; meddle with; touch; cause; speak, utter, ask questions'
  hahi 'to speak, say, tell' also means: 'to break, as a stick; to break open, as the lips that are about to speak; break off, stop doing something'
- In addition to ninau and noi, there is a less basic verb (representing a root which occurs in many different Polynesian languages) which seems to combine aspects of 'question' and 'request':
  ui 'to ask, question, appeal, turn to for help or advice, query', but also 'to stir up, activate'
- In addition to kapa 'to call, name, give a name, designate', there is an alternative 'naming' verb hea which means 'to give a name, call, name' but also 'to sing or recite a name; to chant'
- Helu 'to count' also means: 'to number, compute, take a census, figure, enumerate, list, include, impute' (and at an earlier stage -- according to L. Andrews -- 'to tell, relate')
- Note the occurrence in Hawaiian (as in many other Polynesian languages) of an extremely general social routine/social attitude verb:
  aloha 'to love, regard with affection; have pity, compassion upon; show mercy; salute at meeting or parting; give thanks (as an act of worship)'
  as a noun it describes different feelings: 'love, affection, gratitude, pity, grief'
  used as a salutation at meeting or parting
HINDI

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: INDO-IRANIAN: HINDIC
Area: Asia, India
 Speakers: 180 million (first language users)

BLAVs: 5

- kahnā (to say, tell)
- bolnā (to speak, talk, say, tell)
- pūchnā (to ask [question])
- māgnā (to ask [request])
- ginnā (to count)

REMARKS:
- Both kahnā and bolnā have a number of more specific meanings in addition to their base meaning:
  - kahnā 'to say, tell' also means: 'to relate, remark, observe, give out, utter, address, repeat, quote'
  - bolnā 'to speak, talk, say, tell' also means: 'to utter, settle, order, ask, bid'
- Most of the gaps in the above pattern are easily filled with non-monolexemic verbials combining a noun with one of several very general action verbs.
HOPI

Linguistic class: AZTEC-TANOAN: UTO-AZTECAN: AZTECAN
Area: North America, USA, Northwestern Arizona
Speakers: 4,800

BLAVs: 6

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ki-ta} & \quad (\text{to say}) \\
\text{lavayta/lavay-ti} & \quad (\text{to speak, talk}) \\
\text{aa'awna} & \quad (\text{to tell}) \\
\text{tuuving-ta} & \quad (\text{to ask \[question\]}) \\
\text{pootoyla} & \quad (\text{to count})
\end{align*}
\]

REMARKS:
- Neither lavayta nor lavay-ti would have qualified for BLAV status separately, since there are serious restrictions on their use:
  lavayta always needs a plural subject (ans is glossed most adequately as 'be speaking')
  lavay-ti means specifically 'to speak to'
Together, however, they more or less fill the slot that would have been occupied by a single verb form in many other languages. Moreover, the forms are so obviously related that they can be viewed as different realizations of the same basic root. Note that lavayi means 'word, language, news'.
- In addition to the above BLAVs, Hopi has a root which seems quite basic in the LA domain, but which can never occur independently:
  -qawu 'to speak, say in a particular language', as in:
    pang-qawu 'to speak, state' (expandable into 'order, command') or 'speak that way'
    yang-qawu 'to speak like this; this is what was said'
- Hu'wa 'to answer' has a strong overtone of 'to assent, agree'.
- Note the absence of a general 'requesting' term. The closest candidate, aya-ta, means 'to hire' or 'to ask as a favor'.

Linguistic class: URALIC: FINNO-UGRIC: UGRIC
Area: Europe, Hungary (and parts of the surrounding countries)
Speakers: 12 million
Sources: L. Orszagh (1975, 1976, 1977)

BLAVs: 8

| mond (to say, tell) |
| beszél (to talk, speak) |
| kérdez (to ask [question]) |
| kér (to ask [request]) |
| nevez (to name) |
| számol (to count) |
| kőszön (to greet, thank) |

felel (to answer)

REMARKS:
- There is a rather transparent morphological variant to beszél, viz. beszélget 'to talk, converse' but also 'to chat'.
- There is a near-synonym to felel, viz. válaszol. Its use seems to be slightly more restricted: 'reply to', where the 'object' or person replied to needs to be specified.
- There is a non-action LAV, hallgat 'to be silent'. But its primary meaning is 'to listen to' (< hall 'to hear, perceive').
- There is an additional, very general LAV, szól. It means 'to speak, say, talk' etc., but was excluded because
  - it focuses primarily on the production of sound
  - its meaning includes non-linguistic sound as well (e.g. doorbell, musical instrument, radio, telephone)
  - it is difficult to determine which meaning is primary, LAV or non-LAV
  - its use seems restricted to certain (mainly written) registers of Hungarian.

The verb is obviously related to szó 'word; sound, chime, voice, etc.' (Its meaning 'word' may indicate that at least historically it is basic to the Hungarian LAV vocabulary.)
INDONESIAN

Linguistic class: AUSTRO-TAI: AUSTRONESIAN: WESTERN (= INDONESIAN): HESPERONESIAN: WEST INDONESIAN
Area: Asia, Indonesia, Java
Speakers: 110 million (including second language users)
Source: J.M. Echols & H. Shadily (1975)

BLAVs: 8

- mengatakan (to say, tell, speak)
- berbicara (to speak, talk)
- menceritakan (to tell)
- menanya (to ask [question])
- meminta (to ask [request])
- menyebut (to name)
- menghitung (to count)
- menjawab (to answer)

REMARK:
Menanya 'to ask (question)' is transitive; its intransitive counterpart is bertanya.
**KALAM**

Linguistic class: INDO-PACIFIC: CENTRAL NEW GUINEA: EAST NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS: KALAM-KOBON

Area: Pacific, Papua New Guinea, central highlands

Speakers: 15,000

Sources: A. Pawley (n.d. a,b,c,d)

**BLAVs:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ag- (to say, speak, talk, tell)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REMARKS:**

- Kalam contains only about 95 verb stems, only 25 of which are 'generic verbs' which speakers of the language rely on heavily. Specific verbs are virtually absent. This fact determines many of the grammatical peculiarities of the language. It also makes the very restricted set of BLAVs predictable.

- Ag- is not only the only basic LAV, on which practically all more specific ones are based, it is even more 'generic' in that its meaning includes all sound-making: 'to sound, utter, emit, speak, say, sing, shout, laugh, roar, rattle, thud, etc.' The language defies PSC 5, which is hardly applicable to ag-, given the absence of any alternatives.

- The language also defies the semantic transparency rule. Since the verbalization of events is based on intricate compounding, (non-) transparency is hardly testable. Yet many formations based on ag- seem to have relatively predictable meanings. E.g.:

  - *ag tk-* 'to interrupt (talk)'  
    - [sound/speak] [say]
  - *ag n-* 'to tell, inform, confide to'  
    - [sound/speak] [transfer]

  Somewhat less transparent:

  - *ag mp-* 'to ask, request, inquire'  
    - [sound/speak] [perceive]

(Compare this with the languages in which 'asking [question]' verbs primarily mean 'to hear'.)

- A case combining more than two items (which is very common in Kalam):

  - *ag ask ay-* 'to leave, stop talking about something'  
    - [sound/speak] [avoid] [stabilize]

- There is a restricted, ritual variety of Kalam, called the Pandanus language (used only when harvesting and cooking nuts of the Mountain Pandanus taxon in the mountain forest at altitudes above about 7,500 feet). This variety contains an even more restricted set of verb roots.

  The following ordinary language items:

  - *ad-* 'to heat stones for earth-oven'
  - *ag-* 'to sound, speak, etc.'
  - *agy-* 'to ignite, heat'
ask- 'to avoid, be free from constraint, be in an avoidance relationship with'
may- 'to warm oneself by fire'
pbok- 'to cook food on separate fires, reheat food'
sbk- 'to scorch, burn surface of something'
taw- 'to make fire by friction'
yn- 'to burn, cook'
all correspond to or are united in one Pandanus concept, tgom-, which Pawley glosses as 'to communicate heat or sound'.

KAMCHADAL

Linguistic class: [PALEOSIBERIAN]: CHUKCHI-KAMCHATKAN
Area: Asia, USSR, Northeast, Koryak district, Kamchatkan peninsula
Speakers: 400
Source: D.S. Worth (1969)

BLAVs: 8

[ xeine/xîne (to say) ]
  la (to say, tell)
  kirwilx (to say, speak, talk)

  influences (to ask [question])
  nest (to ask [request: ask to do])
  anst (to ask [request: ask for ⟨object⟩])

[ ilat (to name) ]
  5ne (to count)

REMARKS:
- ('Paleosiberian' is not a homogeneous genetically related group; it consists of language isolates in a given geographical area + a small family of related languages, Chukchi-Kamchatkan.)
- Note the three-fold 'asking' distinction; there are two more 'asking' verbs, gapan and inqzi, but there is too little information about them to be clear about their status.
**KERA**

Linguistic class: AFRO-ASIATIC: CHADIC: EAST
Area: Africa, Southwestern Chad
Speakers: 15,000
Source: K.H. Ebert (1976)

**Remarks:**
- There are verbs for 
  'to ask': gòldé
  'to answer': hàrè
  'to be silent': sèné
But their primary meanings are 'to search', 'to return', and 'to stop', respectively.
- A verbal for 'to speak, talk':
  wáaté  *kel*
  [word, story, matter]
KEWA

Linguistic class: INDO-PACIFIC: CENTRAL NEW GUINEA: EAST NEW GUINEA
HIGHLANDS: WEST-CENTRAL
Area: Pacific, Papua New Guinea, southern highlands
Speakers: 47,000
Sources: K. Franklin (1971, 1978)

BLAVs: 1

\[
\begin{array}{c}
[\text{la} \ (\text{to say, speak, talk})] \\
\phi \\
\phi \\
\phi
\end{array}
\]

REMARKS:
- The language contains only a couple of hundred verb stems, which are used in more or less complex combinations.
- Combinations with la:
  - lagia 'to tell, talk, etc. to a 1st or 2nd person'
    - [give to 1st/2nd person]
  - lakala 'to tell, talk, etc. to a 3rd person'
    - [give to 3rd person]

Both lagia and lakala are often used in the sense of 'to tell (narrate)'; lagia also in the sense of 'to tell (directive)'.
- An example of a more complex combination:
  - agaa yago la 'to answer'
    - [talk to 1st] [reply] [say]
(CENTRAL) KHMER

Linguistic class: AUSTRO-ASIATIC; MON-KHMER; EAST: KHMER
Area: Asia, Kampuchea
Speakers: 6 million
Source: J.M. Jacob (1968)

BLAVs: 7

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{tha:} & \quad \text{(to say)} \\
\text{prap} & \quad \text{(to say, tell)} \\
\text{niyl:} & \quad \text{(to speak, talk)} \\
\text{nitian} & \quad \text{(to tell [story])} \\
\text{su:a(r)} & \quad \text{(to ask [question])} \\
\text{so:m} & \quad \text{(to ask [request])} \\
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{chlaey} & \quad \text{(to answer)} \\
\text{\_} & \quad \text{\_} \\
\text{\_} & \quad \text{\_} \\
\text{\_} & \quad \text{\_} \\
\end{align*} \]

REMARKS:
- \text{Su:a(r)} 'to ask (question)' also means 'to visit (a person)'.
  Further, it also figures in the following complex verbal:
  \[ \text{cumri:ap-su:a(r)} \]
  'to greet' (which can itself also be used as a greeting, more formal than 'hello',
  but applicable to any time of the day).
- \text{So:m} 'to ask (request)' also figures in the following complex verbal:
  \[ \text{so:m li:p} \]
  'to say goodbye' (goodbye (= I depart)
KILIVILA (= KIRIWINA)

Linguistic class: AUSTRO-TAI: AUSTRONESIAN: OCEANIC: MILNE BAY
Area: Pacific, Papua New Guinea, Milne Bay Province, Trobriand Islands
Speakers: 21,000
Source: G. Senft (1986)

BLAVs: 7

\[
\emptyset
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bigatona} & \text{ (to say, speak, tell, talk)} \\
\text{livala} & \text{ (to speak, say, tell, talk)} \\
\text{kebiga} & \text{ (to tell, talk, say, speak)} \\
\text{luki} & \text{ (to talk, say, tell, speak)} \\
\text{katupoi} & \text{ (to ask [question])} \\
\text{nigada} & \text{ (to ask [request])} \\
\text{kalava} & \text{ (to count)}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\emptyset
\]

REMARKS:
- Both bigatona and kebiga contain biga 'language'. But there is not enough information on derivational morphology to draw any further conclusions from that.
- kalava 'to count' also means 'to read'.
KIOWA

Linguistic class: AZTEC-TANOAN: KIOWA-TANOAN
Area: North America, USA, west central Oklahoma
Speakers: 1,000
Source: J.P. Harrington (1928)

BLAVs: 3

- **tou-e** (to say, talk, speak, tell)
- **tei-t** (to tell)
- **tsh-e** (to ask)

**REMARK:**

It is not clear from the present data whether **tsh-e** 'to ask', which clearly means 'asking questions, inquire', can also mean 'to request', though it occurs in some compounds with a requesting sense:

- **dā'-tsme** 'to pray'

[^sign]
Krio

Linguistic class: ENGLISH-BASED CREOLE
Area: Africa, Sierra Leone, Freetown and vicinity
Speakers: 120,000
Source: C.N. Fyle & E.D. Jones (1980)

BLAVs: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>se [H] (to say)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tok [F] (to speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tel [F] (to tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aks [F] (to ask)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kont [F] (to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>təŋk [F] /təŋki [HL] (to thank)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- Letters in square brackets indicate tones: L for low, H for high, F for fall.
- The Krio LAV lexicon supports C.A. Ferguson & C.E. DeBose's (1977: 121) characterization of Krio (in contrast to Sranan) as a creole with a model source language (i.e. 'covered' by -- in this case -- Standard English). All BLAVs are clearly English-based. Other English BLAVs can often also be traced, but
  - they may have narrowed their meanings very strongly, as in the case of spik (< speak) 'to speak English, especially with a British accent'
  - or they may have become restricted in use, as in the case of gritings (<greetings), a noun referring to (anglicized) formal greetings, without a corresponding verb; ansa (<answer), which only occurs as a noun; and maybe also nem (<name) 'to give a name to' which, as a noun, means 'name' but also more specifically 'a bad name, an evil reputation'.

Some have formally diversified:
kont 'to count', but also: kawnt (used mainly in certain expressions from English)
təŋk/təŋki 'to thank', but also: tanks
KWANYAMA

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: BENUE-CONGO: BANTU: CENTRAL
Area: Africa, Northern Southwest Africa and Southern Angola
Speakers: 150,000

BLAVs: 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>muena (to be silent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tia (to say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tonga (to speak, say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>popia (to speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lombuela (to tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pula (to ask [question])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indila (to ask [request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>njamukula (to answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vala (to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kunda (to greet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pandula (to thank)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- A number of additional LAVs are directly derived from popia 'to speak, talk':
  - popila 'to speak on behalf of, intercede for'
  - popifa 'to speak with, converse with' (literally: 'cause to speak')
  - popiafana 'to speak to each other'
  - popiana 'to chatter'
- Derived from tonga 'to speak, say':
  - tongela 'to speak of, mention'
- A term related to pandula 'to thank' is panda 'to praise' which also means 'to thank' and 'to congratulate' (another verb for 'to congratulate', hafela, means literally 'to rejoice over'). A question remains as to the relationship with pendula 'to condole'.
- Lombuela 'to tell' has a variety of more specific meanings such as 'narrate, order, promise, etc.'
LENAKEL

Linguistic class: AUSTRO-TAI: AUTRONESIAN: OCEANIC: EASTERN: POLYNESIAN
Area: Pacific, Tanna (Vanuatu)
Speakers: 4,000
Source: J. Lynch (1977)

BLAVs:7

| akar (to say, speak, talk) |
| ini (to say, tell, speak) |
| ausito (to tell [story]) |
| arhapik (to ask [question/request]) |
| aunín (to name) |
| avhín (to count) |

REMARK:
In addition to the base verbs akar and ini, there is a quotative verb imwa.
LIMBA

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: WEST ATLANTIC: SOUTHERN
Area: Africa, northern Sierra Leone
Speakers: 300,000

BLAVs: 7

| don/domí (to say) |
| boŋgoli (to speak, talk) |
| cepi (to tell) |
| thoŋtoŋu (to ask [question/request]) |
| kondi (to count) |
| maŋ (to greet) |
| kalaŋaŋ (to thank) |

REMARKS:
- Comparable to English tell, Limba cepi has the meanings of 'to state, assert; narrate; command'. In addition it also means 'to fix (price); invite; mention; quote; show'.
- The meaning of kondi extends far beyond 'counting' (and 'reckoning') to: 'relate, narrate; notify, say, tell; acknowledge'.

LINGALA

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: BENUE-CONGO: BANTU: NORTHWEST
Area: Africa, along the middle flow of the Zaire river
Speakers: 8 million
Source: R. van Everbroeck (1956)

BLAVs: 7

∅

-loba (to say, speak, talk, tell)
-solala (to talk [converse], tell [story])
-túna (to ask [question])
-límbo (to ask [request])
-yanola (to answer)
-tánga (to name; to count)
-tóna (to thank)

REMARK:
Note the coinciding of 'counting' and 'naming'; -tánga also means 'to enumerate' and (as is the case with its equivalents in many other languages) 'to read'; it does not mean 'to give a name'.
LUISEÑO

Linguistic class: AZTEC-TANOAN: UTO-AZTECAN: TAKIC
Area: North America, USA, Southern California
Speakers: 150
Source: W. Bright (1968)

BLAVs: 5

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{yá-}/\text{yáx-} & \quad \text{(to say, tell)} \\
\text{té-}-(\text{i})\text{la-} & \quad \text{(to speak)} \\
\text{tuvúý(i)} & \quad \text{(to ask [question])} \\
\text{só-vini} & \quad \text{(to ask [request])} \\
\text{húri} & \quad \text{(to answer)}
\end{align*}
\]

REMARKS:
- Note the relationship of \text{té-}-(\text{i})\text{la-} to \text{té-la-t} 'voice, word, language'. An alternative form is \text{tilá-}a 'to speak'.
- There are verbs of 'naming' and 'counting'. The former (\text{tuŋá-}ni-, derived from the noun \text{tuŋ-}la 'name'), however, may be restricted to 'giving a name'. The latter (\text{wóy'ali-}) also means 'to think': hence it may be more centrally non-linguistic than other 'counting' verbs.
MAIDU

Linguistic class: PENUTIAN: MAIDUAN
Area: North America, USA, North Central California
Speakers: 20
Source: W.F. Shipley (1963)

BLAVs: 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(to say)</th>
<th>(to say, to speak)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maj</td>
<td>wéj/wéje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'epín</td>
<td>hápe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to name)</td>
<td>(to count)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- The relationship between 'a.: 'to say' and 'a.: 'to name' may be explained by the former's apparent restriction to direct quotation. (Compare with Nisenan.)
- Maidu shows a very clear conceptual link between 'ordering' and assertives:
  - mák (to find out, learn)
    - mákpâj 'to find out by investigating'
    - mákkit 'to know'
    - símmák 'to gossip, chat'
  - mákpâjti (1) 'to instruct'
    (2) 'to direct, order'

Source: W.F. Shipley (1963)
MAORI

Linguistic class: AUSTRO-TAI: AUSTRONESIAN: OCEANIC: EASTERN: POLYNESIAN
Area: Pacific, New Zealand, northeast
Speakers: 100,000

BLAVs: 9

- kii (to say, tell, speak)
- mea (to say)
- kupu (to speak)
- koorero (to speak, talk, say, tell)
- paatai (to ask [question])
- inoi (to ask [request])
- tapa (to name)
- tatau (to count)
- oha (to greet)

REMARKS:
- The above set of BLAVs contains a number of very general verbs:
  - kii is a very general LAV: 'to say, tell, tell of, mention, call, designate, declare, speak utter'; but it also goes beyond the realm of linguistic action: 'to consider (to be), think, imagine'.
    - kiinga/kiianga 'act of speaking, saying'
    - kii'aki 'to speak'
  - mea 'to say' also means: 'to do, deal with; cause, make; intend, wish; think'
    - meamea 'to say, give orders'
  - paatai 'to ask (question)' extends its meaning to 'to interrogate, ask questions, irritate, provoke, induce, mock, jeer'.
- A second 'asking (request)' verb is more restricted in applicability and (institutional) context: tono 'to bid to go, send; bid, command, order; demand, ask for; drive away (by means of a charm)'.
- In addition to tapa 'to name' there is a second 'naming' verb, hua 'to name, call by name' which also means 'to think, think of, determine, decide, know, be sure of'.
  - whakahua 'to pronounce, recite'
    [causative]
- An alternative for oha 'to greet' is mihi 'to greet, salute' which also means 'to acknowledge (an obligation); to express discomfort; to sigh, lament'. (Compare with the note on general social routine/social attitude verbs in Hawaiian.) Note the occurrence of mihi in:
  - whakamahi 'to thank'
    [causative]
(BODEGA) MIWOK

Linguistic class: PENUTIAN; MIWOK-COSTANOAN: MIWOK: WESTERN
Area: North America, USA, California, Bodega Bay
Speakers: a few
Source: C.A. Callaghan (197C)

BLAVs: 7

| ʔōna     (to say, tell)               | tōl- (to answer) |
| máccaw   (to speak, talk)            |
| ʔāakal   (to tell)                   |
| tūul-    (to ask [question])         |
| háwuh    (to ask [request])          |
| métu      (to count)                 |

∅
(LAKE) MIWOK

Linguistic class: PENUTIAN: MIWOK-COSTANOAN: MIWOK: WESTERN
Area: North America, USA, California, Clear Lake
Speakers: a few
Source: C.A. Callaghan (1965)

BLAVs: 5

∅

[ ] lílaw (to say, tell)
[ ] 'áataw (to speak, talk)
[ ] hénuh (to ask [question/request])
[ ] lákat (to name)
[ ] mittu/méttu (to count)

∅

REMARK:
Note the occurrence of a couple of LAVs which are also more general activity verbs:

hínte
  (1) 'to do (in the most general sense)'
  (2) 'to be a certain way'
  (3) 'to gather'
  (4) 'to fix up'
  (5) 'to say'
  (6) 'to think'

húuni(h)
  (1) 'to think something is so, guess'
  (2) 'to mean what one has said'
  (3) 'to say, tell'
  (4) 'to show'

The latter also occurs as a noun, meaning 'story; doctor's song; prophet, dreamer'.
Linguistic class: AUSTRO-ASIATIC: MON-KHMER: SOUTH: MONIC
Area: Asia, eastern delta region of Burma/west central Thailand
Speakers: 500,000
Source: H.L. Shorto (1962)

**BLAVs:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hêm</td>
<td>(to say, speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kêh</td>
<td>(to say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lêa</td>
<td>(to tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hman</td>
<td>(to ask [question])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>(to ask [request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rêh</td>
<td>(to count)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Remarks:**

The class of verbs in Mon includes the translation equivalents of English adjectives. Moreover, there is a subclass of 'AUXILIARY VERBS', comprising words marked as verbs by their occurrence with verb particles (verb particles occur in combination with verbs, forming verbal phrases; e.g. nêm 'yet, still, further'), and capable of combining with most members of the class of verbs to form verbal phrases. The majority of the members of this subclass also occur in one-word verbal phrases, i.e. as full verbs. In combinations they exhibit a high degree of generality of reference and might be described as 'modal' or 'aspectual'. Examples:

- têh 'to hit, meet with, reach, be correct/apposite, fit'
- hêm hânop 'to like, prefer'
- cîm têh 'to crash into'
- hopèi têh 'to encounter'

The verb hêm 'to say, speak, talk' seems to be of this type: it occurs in numerous combinations with other verbs denoting acts of communication, many of which can also be used independently:

- hêm pêtem 'to communicate to persons in authority'
- hêm hatîm 'to speak privately'
- hêm kêh 'to say'
- hêm khle 'to reply'
- hêm lêa 'to tell a story'

It also combines with the noun ârê 'word, words, utterance, speech':

hêm ârê 'to speak, talk'

The status of hêm as a base term seems clear. The combinability,
however, cannot be used as an argument to exclude other items from the set of BLAVs.

- Note the explicit status of 'to promise' as an assertive:
  \[\text{hamon} \ 'to be untruthful, tell falsehoods'\]
  \[\text{hamot \ are} \ \text{hamon} \ 'to speak falsehoods'\]
  \text{vs.}\n  \[\text{hamot} \ 'to be true, to assert as truth, to promise'\]
  \[\text{hamot \ sexte} \ 'to promise'\]
  \[\text{to be faithful, true \text{[learned form]}}\]

- Also note the direct step from 'informing' to 'instructing':
  \[\text{hak} \ (n.) \ 'message'\]
  \[(v.) \ 'send a message, instruct, direct'\]
  \[\text{hakon} \ \text{hamon} \ 'to instruct, direct, send a message'\]
  \[\text{to instruct, issue instructions, send a message requiring action}\]
  \[\text{hamon \ phyon} \ 'to issue an order'\]
  \[\text{to issue an order, give instructions}\]

**MONG NJUA**

Linguistic class: SINO-TIBETAN: MIAO-YAO: MIAO
Area: Asia, Northern Thailand
Speakers: 20,000
Source: T.A. Lyman (1974)

BLAVs: 7

\[\phi\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tä} \ & \ (\text{to say, tell}) \\
\text{hà} \ & \ (\text{to say, speak, talk, tell}) \\
\text{nû} \ & \ (\text{to ask \ [question]}]) \\
\text{thô} \ & \ (\text{to ask \ [request]}]) \\
\text{yû} \ & \ (\text{to ask \ [request: ask to do sth.]}]) \\
\text{šû} \ & \ (\text{to count})
\end{align*}
\]

\[\phi\]

**REMARKS:**
- Tä is not only used as a primary verb meaning 'to say, state, make a statement, tell, inform', but also as a secondary verb in combination with other verbs (including even hà).
- Note the occurrence of three 'asking' verbs. The division of labor seems to be as follows:
  - nû only for questions
  - thô for 'asking for (an object)' or 'asking someone to do something'
  - yû only for 'asking someone to do something'
NGIZIM

Linguistic class: AFRO-ASIATIC: CHADIC: WEST: BADE-WARJI
Area: Africa, Northeastern Nigeria
Speakers: 25,000

BLAVs: 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>rámú (to speak, say, tell)</th>
<th>ngùmú (to answer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jàayu (to ask [question])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tábťú (to ask [question/request])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>náu (to count)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ndámú (to greet)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goódóotú (to thank)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- With the use of rámú 'to speak, say, tell', the thing said or told is always introduced by máá (a particle introducing a direct or indirect quotation, required after any verb which may take a speech act or thought as a complement).
- Of the two 'asking' verbs, only tábťú is extendable into the realm of 'requesting'. The only straight 'requesting' verb, wìîú really means 'to beg for, beseech'.
- Ndámú 'to greet' also has the meaning of 'to pay a visit to show one's respects', e.g. in condolence for a death, in congratulations for a betrothal, to pay homage to a chief, etc.
- Goódóotú 'to thank' borrows its stem (goodoo-) either from Kanuri or Hausa, but this stem is further unanalyzable in the three languages; (-t- is a suffix added to all borrowed verbs and to verbs derived from nouns).
NISENAN

Linguistic class: PENUTIAN: MAIDUAN
Area: North America, USA, North Central California
Speakers: a few

BLAVs: 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ha</th>
<th>(to say)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mo</td>
<td>(to say, tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>he</td>
<td>(to speak, talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wej</td>
<td>(to speak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peba</td>
<td>(to ask [question])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu</td>
<td>(to ask [request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha</td>
<td>(to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ho</td>
<td>(to greet)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- The Nisenan base terms show a strong conceptual link between linguistic action and action in general:
  - ha 'to say' with also the more specific meaning 'to call, name'
    - also occurs with the meanings 'to be; carry on the back; do'
      - haha 'to do repeatedly'
  - mo 'to say, tell'
    - also occurs as (1) 'action with mouth' and (2) 'to bite', and is indicated in the source as related to
      - mo- 'to drink, taste'
      - ma 'to bite'
  - he 'to speak, talk'
    - also occurs as 'to go, walk'
  - wej 'to speak'
    - also occurs as 'to weave, knit'
  - Note, however, that there are many other 'doing' verbs as well.
- Many additional LAVs (and other linguistic action terms) are directly derived from ha, mo or he:
  - ham 'to give a name to'
  - hatomatoj 'it is said' (quotative)
  - hamadi 'the so-called'
  - hena 'to shout'
  - henawohis 'to shout around'
  - henym 'to talk, speak'
  - henymtoweje 'to talk going along, talk while walking'
  - henymweje·če 'talking along'
  - mokyspapaj 'to tell a lie'
  - mosip 'to prove by testimony'
  - mosip 'to talk out loud'
  - mosusu 'to cry along, cry while walking'
- The relationship between ha 'to say' and ba 'to name' may be explained by the former's being restricted to direct quotation. (Compare with Maidu.)

(DONGOLES) NUBIAN

Linguistic class: NILO-SAHARAN: EAST SUDANIC: EASTERN
Area: Africa, Northern Sudan
Speakers: 1 million
Source: C. H. Armbruster (1960, 1965)

BLAVs: 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An</th>
<th>(to say, tell)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wÈ</td>
<td>(to say, tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Íg</td>
<td>(to say, tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ídd(i)</td>
<td>(to ask [question/request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Síkk(i)</td>
<td>(to ask [question/request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ín</td>
<td>(to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WÈ</td>
<td>(to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ír</td>
<td>(to count)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- Some incompatible basic data in the sources on (Dongolese) Nubian still need to be sorted out. What is meant by (Dongolese) Nubian in Armbruster is probably the same as Kenuzi-Dongola (in B.F. Grimes (ed.) 1988a) with a total of 1 million speakers, most of them in Egypt, or Nobin Nubian (in M. Ruhlen 1975) -- though Grimes separates Nobin clearly from Kenuzi-Dongola.
- An, wÈ, and wÈ 'to say, tell' seem equally general, but with different distributional properties.
- The verbs An and wÈ, like English to tell, have a directive sense as well as an assertive one; in the case of An this is activated whenever the verb is combined with another action verb.
- Note the occurrence of two 'asking' verbs, Ídd(i) and Síkk(i), both with the same double 'question/request' meaning. Synchronically there seems to be no reason to regard the one as less basic than the other, though diachronically the second one may have emerged as a more specific term, as appears from the etymologies:
  - Ídd(i) < *Ígd(i) 'to cause to tell' < íg 'to tell' + -d [causative]
  - Síkk(i) < *(i)sígk(i) 'to cause to tell where' < (i)s- 'where?' + íg 'to tell' + -k [causative]
- In addition to the above BLAVs, there are some analyzable borrowings
from Arabic (Arabic verbal stem + -č 'to say [be, act]') which might otherwise have qualified:

hāsibč 'to calculate, reckon, count' (where 'calculate' and 'reckon' seem primary)
raddč 'to answer'
šēkkiršēkrč 'to thank'
sellimč 'to greet, salute' (apparently with a dominant non-LAV meaning)
talabč 'to demand, ask for'

NUKUORO

Linguistic class: AUSTRO-TAI: AUSTRONESIAN: OCEANIC: EASTERN: POLYNESIAN
Area: Pacific, Nukuoro Island
Speakers: 400
Source: V. Carroll & T. Soulik (1973)

BLAVs: 5

[ basa (to speak, talk, say) ]
[ dala (to tell) ]
[ ssili (to ask [question]) ]
[ dau (to count) ]

hagaboo (to greet)

REMARKS:
- Unlike in some other Polynesian languages, the general action verb hai 'to do, make, use; have sexual intercourse' does not by itself have an LAV meaning, but only in combinations such as
  hai anqe 'to say to'
  [away from both speaker and hearer: more, farther; again]
- hagaboo 'to greet' also means 'to take leave of'.
Linguistic class: MACRO-ALGONKIAN: ALGONKIAN: CENTRAL
Area: North America, Canada, Ontario
Speakers: 40,000

BLAVs: 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kidod (to say)</th>
<th>naad (to say, tell)</th>
<th>giigdod (to speak, talk)</th>
<th>gnoonaad (to speak, talk to)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wiindmaaged/wiindmawaad (to tell)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
In addition to some (by Algonkian standards) morphologically simple basic verbs, there are some basic morphemes ('finals' and 'initials') which are used to form LAVs but do not occur in isolation. This is the reason why a few common slots are absent from the above set of BLAVs:

- `ggwedwed` 'to ask' (intransitive)
  - `ggwe + d + w + e + d`
  - [to try to] + [?] + [to speak, produce speech sounds] + [abstract final] + [3-subj.]

- `ndodang` 'to ask' (transitive)
  - `ndo + d + am + g`
  - [seek (to do sth.)] + [abstract final] + [associate obj.] + [3-subj.]

- `ndomaad` 'to ask [transitive], call someone'
  - `ndo + im + ø + aa + d`
  - [seek (to do sth.)] + [speak, use verbs] + [abstract final] + [3-obj.] + [3-subj.]

- `namkawaad` 'to greet someone'
  - `anam + ik + aw + aa + d`
  - [greet] + [use the body] + [abstract final] + [3-obj.] + [3-subj.]

etc.
OSAGE

Linguistic class: MACRO-SIOUAN: SIOUAN: DHEGIHA
Area: North America, USA, north central Oklahoma
Speakers: 25
Source: F. La Flesche (1932)

BLAVs: 10

\[
\begin{align*}
e & \quad \text{(to say)} \\
i'-e & \quad \text{(to speak, talk)} \\
(u-k'i'-e) & \quad \text{(to talk [converse])} \\
u-tha'-ge & \quad \text{(to tell [story])} \\
i'-tho^n-xe & \quad \text{(to ask [question])} \\
da & \quad \text{(to ask [request])} \\
tha-wa & \quad \text{(to count)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

REMARKS:
- I'-e 'to speak, talk' is clearly related to e 'to say', but it is not transparently derived, though the presence of i' is not surprising:
  - i (noun) means 'mouth'
  - i' a-zhi means 'speak not' (though i', by itself, does not occur in the sense of 'to speak')
  - i'-e (n.) also means 'a language'
- There is an alternative 'asking (question)' verb, i'-mo^n-xe, which the source translates specifically as 'to inquire' and which contains a bunch of independently occurring component parts:
  - mo^n 'arrow'
  - mo^n-xe 'sky'
  - xe 'to bury'
  - i'-mo^n 'the other one'
It is not clear how to derive the meaning from any combination of these. But anything of this sort is lacking for the BLAV i'-tho^n-xe, which also seems to be more general in meaning.
- U-tha'-ge '(1) to tell a tale or story, (2) to make a statement' has a somewhat wider meaning than its near-synonym o-tha'-ge 'to tell, recite, relate, narrate'.
- U-ki'-e 'to tell, speak to one another; to answer, reply' occurs in two slots of the BLAV pattern; hence, interaction is very clearly focused on. The verb is not clearly transparent, though there are possibly recognizable parts:
  - e 'to say'
  - ki 'to reach home'
  - u-ki' 'a home'
- The difference between the two alternative forms of the verb of 'greeting': ha-we' (male speech) vs. ha-ve' (women's speech).
PERSIAN

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: INDO-IRANIAN: IRANIAN: WESTERN
Area: Middle East, Iran
Speakers: 25 million
Sources: A.K.S. Lambton (1966, 1969)

BLAVs: 8

[ goftan (to say, tell, speak) ]
[ harf ḵadan (to speak, talk) ]
[ soḥbat kardan (to talk [converse]) ]
[ tarif kardan (to tell) ]
[ porṣidan (to ask [question]) ]
[ soḵal kardan (to ask [question]) ]

REMARKS:
- Monolexemic verbs are rare in Persian. Most verbials are compounds consisting of a borrowed Arabic root combined with an 'auxiliary' of Persian origin. Hence PSC1 has to be applied flexibly. Hence also the two 'asking' terms, both of which seem equally basic.
- None of the available Persian verbs for 'asking for (request)' qualify as BLAVs:
  xastan primary meaning: 'to wish, want'
  derived meaning: 'to request'
  xahes kardan the primary meaning is 'to request', but the formation is transparent (< xahes 'to desire')
- The Persian 'naming' verb namidan only means 'to give a name', not e.g. 'refer to by name'.
### POLISH

**Linguistic class:** INDO-EUROPEAN: SLAVIC: WEST  
**Area:** Europe, Poland  
**Speakers:** 35 million

**BLAVs:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mówić (to say, speak, talk, tell)</td>
<td>speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rozmawiać (to talk)</td>
<td>talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opowiadać (to tell)</td>
<td>tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pytać (to ask [question])</td>
<td>ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prosić (to ask [request])</td>
<td>request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nazywać (to name)</td>
<td>name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liczyć (to count)</td>
<td>count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pozdrawiać (to greet)</td>
<td>greet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dziękować (to thank)</td>
<td>thank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>odpowiadać (to answer)</td>
<td>answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**milszeć** (to be silent)
(AYACUCHO) QUECHUA

Linguistic class: ANDEAN-EQUATORIAL: ANDEAN: QUECHUMARAN
Area: South America, south central Peru
Speakers: 1 million

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLAVs:6</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ni- (to say, tell, speak to)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rima- (to speak, talk)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wiia- (to tell)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tapu- (to ask [question])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mana- (to ask [request])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yupa- (to count)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMARKS:
- There are a number of clear borrowings from Spanish which might otherwise have qualified:
  - agradesi- 'to thank'
  - parla- 'to talk, speak, converse'
- Rima- serves as a basis for many other, more complex, LAVs:
  - rimapayanaku 'to converse a lot, confide in one another, fall in love'
    - [pa: repetition; ya: intensive: paya indicates action repeated often or with special care]
  - rimayku 'to greet'
    - [ya: augmentative: indicates action performed in some way different from the usual: may indicate cordiality, severity, fear, etc.]
- Wiia- 'to tell' means, in addition to 'to inform', also more specifically 'to advise, warn'.
(CUZCO) QUECHUA

Linguistic class: ANDEAN-EQUATORIAL: ANDean: QUEchumaran
Area: South America, south central Peru (Cuzco area, to the east of the Ayacucho area)
Speakers: 1,250,000

BLAVs:6

| ni-  (to say)     |
| rima- (to speak, talk) |
| wiña- (to tell)   |
| tapu- (to ask [question]) |
| yupa- (to count)  |
| napayku- (to greet) |

REMARKS:
- Note the near-identity with Ayacucho Quechua. The 'request' slot at the BLAV level is not filled though also Cuzco Quechua has the form maña-. However, maña- means 'to lend', and only by adding a suffix of personal involvement, -ku, do we get the form manaku- which, in addition to meaning 'to borrow', extends its meaning to 'to ask for, request, beg'. (Maybe Ayacucho Quechua represents a further step in a common development?)
- A second difference involves napayku-/napayuku-/naypayku- 'to greet' (as a noun: 'greeting'), for which Ayacucho Quechua uses a derivative of rima-, viz. rimayku- (which also occurs in Cuzco Quechua, but simply in the sense of 'to talk'). Napayku- may have been formed in the same way as rimayku-, but an independent occurrence of the root seems to be missing.
Linguistic class: ANDEAN-EQUATORIAL: ANDEAN: QUECHUMARAN
Area: South America, central Peru (northeast of Lima)
Speakers: 40,000
Source: W.F.H. Adelaar (1977)

BLAVs: 6

- ni- (to say)
- rima- (to speak, talk)
- wila- (to tell)
- tabu-/tapu- (to ask [question])
- mana- (to ask [request])
- yuba-/yupa- (to count)

Remarks:
- Tarma Quechua mana- 'to ask for' also means 'to borrow, lend' (the derived forms mana.ku- and mana.yu- meaning only 'to borrow' and 'to lend', respectively). Thus it seems to occupy a position in between Ayacucho Quechua mana- (clearly a BLAV) and Cuzco Quechua mana- (clearly not a BLAV).
- In addition to some minor formal differences, Tarma Quechua BLAVs show an apparent difference (vis-à-vis Ayacucho and Cuzco Quechua) which may deserve further scrutiny: the two base terms have a tendency towards non-LAV meanings:
  - ni- 'to say' not only means also 'to call, invite', but in addition 'to have in mind' (and one of its derivatives is a non-LAV altogether: ni.ra 'to resemble, be like')
  - rima- 'to speak, talk' also means 'to agree'
RUSSIAN

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: SLAVIC: EASTERN
Area: Europe, USSR
Speakers: 150 million

BLAVs:11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>molčat' (to be silent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>govorit' (to say, speak, talk, tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>razgovarivat' (to talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rasskazyvat' (to tell [story])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sprašivat' (to ask [question])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prosit' (to ask [request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nazyvat' (to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scitati' (to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otvečat' (to answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>privetstvovat' (to greet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blagodarit' (to thank)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEBEI (Kupsabiny, Sapiny)

Linguistic class: NILO-SAHARAN: EAST SUDANIC: NILOTIC
Area: Africa, eastern Uganda
Speakers: 88,000
Sources: W.A.M. Cuypers (1975), R.J. O'Brien & W.A.M. Cuypers (1975)

BLAVs:8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sebei verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kel (to say)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngalal (to speak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngir (to tell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tep (to ask [question])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>som (to ask [request])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toci (to name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yit (to count)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supay (to greet)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sebei verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SHUSWAP

Linguistic class: SALISH: INTERIOR: NORTH
Area: North America, Canada, eastern British Columbia
Speakers: 1,000

BLAVs: 6

- cut (to say)
- q®el (to speak, talk)
- sew-n-s/c-sew-st-s (to ask [question/request])
- q®ex-m (to ask [request: ask for <object>])
- ?operators (to name)
- put-n-s (to greet)

REMARKS:
- (Salish is one of several small language families; about sixteen languages with phonetic-typological similarities to Proto-Indo-European.)
- In addition to 'to say', cut also means 'to want, intend, be going to, think'; hence it seems to be a rather general mental activity verb. Yet we included it as a BLAV because
  - the LA meaning is not directly derivable from the general meaning (in contrast to cun-s/s-cun-st-s which means 'to tell, order, invite' but also 'to want, expect, think': except in the more specific 'inviting' sense [related to 'to expect'], the verb can usually be translated as either 'wanting' or 'telling' depending on whether or not the 'wanting' is verbalized);
  - comparative data lead to the reconstructed Salish form *cu meaning 'to say, tell' (also related to a variety of Salish forms meaning 'to point at').
- Q®el 'to speak, talk' is a root which occurs in numerous combinations.
- Note the functional distribution of the two 'asking' verbs.
- Shuswap morphology makes extensive use of suffixation in word formation. Thus the suffix cin (or cn in un-stressed position), with a general meaning of 'mouth, opening, lip, edge, shore; voice, word, language' is used frequently to form LAVs (hence it may perform some of the functions of the most general BLAVs in other languages):
  - tex®e-cin 'to speak a different language'
  - séme-cn-m 'to talk in English'
  - sx® p-mx-cin 'Shuswap words, language'
  - lx®-cin-s 'to translate, interpret for someone'
  - lx®-cin-m 'to talk behind someone's back'
**Kas-cin-mn-s 'to abuse, scold'**
\[hist: bid\]

**'Ey-cn-s 'to answer, talk back'**
\[exchange, give in return, meet\]

---

### (Northern) Sotho

**Linguistic class:** NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: BENUE-CONGO: BANTU: CENTRAL

**Area:** Africa, northern South Africa (Transvaal)

**Speakers:** 2,348,000

**Source:** D. Ziervogel & P.C. Mokgokong (1974)

**BLAVs:** 10

---

**homola (to be silent)**

- re (to say)
- bōtša (to say, tell)
- bōléla (to speak, talk, say)
- anega (to tell [story])
- bōtšiša (to ask [question])
- kgōpēla (to ask [request])
- árába (to answer)
- bala (to count)
- dumediša (to greet)

---

**Remarks:**
- Bala 'to count' also means 'to read'.
- Northern Sotho has a verb which is typically one of the 'forgotten routines' (see J. Verschueren 1981a, 1985: chapter 6) in western languages: dumela 'to answer a greeting' (also: 'be willing, accede; believe in').
SPANISH

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: ITALIC: ROMANCE: WESTERN
Area: Europe, Spain; all of Latin America (except for Brazil)
Speakers: 400 million
Source: S. Ramondino (1968)

BLAVs: 10

callar (to be silent)

decir (to say, speak, tell)
hablard (to speak, talk)

(contar (to tell [story])

(preguntar (to ask [question])
pedir (to ask [request])

nombrar (to name)

(contar (to count)

saludar (to greet)

REMARKS:
- Note that Spanish still fully realizes the link between 'counting' and 'narrating' which, from an etymological point of view, is not at all uncommon in European languages.
- Agradecer 'to show gratitude, thank, be thankful for' was not included because its usage is restricted by
  - requiring a specification of the 'object' for which one is grateful
  - being mostly used in the first person
  - suggesting a more emotional context
in contrast to the periphrastic dar gracias a.
**SRANAN TONGO**

Linguistic class: ENGLISH-BASED CREOLE
Area: South America, (coastal) Surinam
Speakers: 350,000 (first language users, including those in The Netherlands)
Sources: Bureau Volkslectuur (1961), J. Voorhoeve (1957)

**BLAVs:5**

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{taki:} & \text{(to say, speak, talk)} \\
\text{taigi:} & \text{(to tell)} \\
\text{aksi:} & \text{(to ask)} \\
\text{teeri:} & \text{(to count)} \\
\end{array}
\]

**REMARK:**
The Sranan 'naming' verb kaari: is restricted in use to formal name-giving or renaming and to telling someone to come. As in many other languages, the 'mentioning by name' meaning is incorporated into the base term taki:.

**SWAHILI**

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: BENUE-CONGO: BANTU: CENTRAL
Area: East Africa
Speakers: 30 million (first and second language users)
Sources: E.N. Myachina (1981), D.V. Perrott (1965)

**BLAVs:10**

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{sena} & \text{(to say, speak)} \\
\text{nena} & \text{(to speak)} \\
\text{ongea} & \text{(to talk [converse])} \\
\text{ambia} & \text{(to tell)} \\
\text{uliza} & \text{(to ask [question])} \\
\text{omba} & \text{(to ask [request])} \\
\text{taja} & \text{(to name)} \\
\text{salimu} & \text{(to greet)} \\
\text{shukuru} & \text{(to thank)} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{jibu} & \text{(to answer)} \\
\end{array}
\]
TIRURAY

Area: Asia, Philippines, southwestern Mindanao
Speakers: 26,000
Source: S.A. Schlegel (1971)

BLAVs: 9

φ

[ l'ale (to say, speak) ]
[ bereh (to speak, tell) ]
[ geno (to talk 'converse') ]
[ 'omina (to ask 'question') ]
[ ?omot (to ask 'request') ]

[ bila (to count) ]

[ segita (to greet) ]

REMARKS:
- 'omina also means (as do many of its equivalents in other languages) more specifically 'to inquire about something, to investigate something. Cf. kefe'omina' 'an investigation (used of Tiruray family or legal leaders)'. The language has a clear question marker 'aw, appearing first in questions and formally marking the following as a query.

TUNICA

Linguistic class: MACRO-ALGONKIAN: ---- ?$ Area: North America, USA, northern Lusiana
Speakers: extinct since 1950's.
Source: M.R. Haas (1953)

BLAVs: 7

φ

[ ni (to say, tell) ]
[ yana (to speak, talk) ]
[ wira (to ask 'question') ]
[ ma (to ask 'question/request') ]
[ wali (to name) ]
[ wira (to count) ]

pak (to answer)
(SOUTHERN) TUVALUAN

Linguistic class: AUSTRONIAN
AUSTRO-TAI: AUSTRONESIAN: OCEANIC: EASTERN:
POLYNESIAN
Area: Pacific, Ellice Islands, Nukulaelae
Speakers: 350

[BLAVs:10]

| fai (to say, tell) |
| faipati (to speak) |
| sauttala (to talk [converse]) |
| tala (to tell [story]) |
| fesili/ssili (to ask [question]) |
| fakamolemole (to ask [request]) |
| tali (to answer) |
| taku (to name) |
| lau (to count) |
| fakafetai (to thank) |

REMARK:
Fai is a highly polysemous verb with about twenty possible distinct translations in English. Its most basic meaning is 'to do, to make'; as an LAV it means 'to say, tell' and may be followed by a direct or indirect quote or a description of the communicated meaning. There is an obvious relation with faipati which is a reflexified 'verb + incorporated object' compound (fai te pati 'to say a word') behaving grammatically like a monolexemic item. Fai and faipati have to be regarded as equally basic since they cannot be reduced to each other (in spite of the historical derivational relationship); they are in complementary distribution to fill the conceptual space of the base items.
VENDA

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: BENUE-CONGO: BANTU: CENTRAL
Area: Africa, South Africa, northern Transvaal
Speakers: 300,000

BLAVs: 7

\[ \emptyset \]

- ri (to say)
- amba (to speak, talk)
- vhudza (to tell)
- vhudzisa (to ask [question])
- humbela (to ask [request])
- ira/-rina (to name)
- vhala (to count)

\[ \emptyset \]

REMARK:
The empty slots in the Venda BLAV pattern are relatively easy to account for:
'thanking':
- livhuha 'to thank' primarily means 'to be thankful, grateful'
'greeting':
a number of verbs with very specific meanings:
- losha 'to greet humby by clapping hands'
- resha idem
- lumelisa 'send greetings, regards'
- vusa 'to rouse, wake; greet'
'answering':
- aravha 'to answer with a call'
WAPPO

Linguistic class: [LANGUAGE ISOLATE] (or, more accurately, member of a small isolated group, YUKIAN, with three members: Yuki, Huchnom, Wappo)
Area: North America, USA, central coastal California (just north of San Francisco, and Napa Valley)
Speakers: 1
Source: J.O. Sawyer (1965)

BLAVs: 4

∅

[ [ cáu·siʔ (to say)
  'okáliʔ (to speak, talk)
  mehwílšiʔ (to tell [story])
  me·háyiʔ (to count)

∅

REMARK:
The absence of a verb for 'asking' contrasts markedly with the presence of three affixes indicating 'question':
- -haʔ
- -hiʔ
- -yoh
WARLPIRI

Linguistic class: AUSTRALIAN: PAMA-NYUNGAN: SOUTHWEST
Area: Pacific, Australia, Northern Territory
Speakers: 2,800

BLAVs: 4

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{wangka-mi} \quad \text{(to speak, talk, say, tell)} \\
\text{ngarri-rni} \quad \text{(to tell [story])} \\
\text{payi-rni/japi-rni} \quad \text{(to ask [question/request])} \\
\text{ngarri-rni} \quad \text{(to name)}
\end{array}
\]

REMARKS:
- Depending on the case frame, ngarri-rni means
  1. to tell (about/of), relate, describe, recount, indicate
  2. to tell to, describe to, inform
  3. to tell, announce, order
  4. to tell off, scold, reprimand, growl at
  5. to call, name, refer to as

Note especially the emergence of the fifth meaning which seems important enough to warrant placing the verb in the appropriate BLAV slot.

- When wangka-mi is followed by a purposive complement, it assumes more specific meanings:
  - when the purposive complement is a nominal expression: 'to ask for (object)' 
  - when the purposive complement is an infinitival expression: 'to tell (to do sth.); to promise'

The verb is also the basis for numerous derivations.
WELSH (CYMRAEG)

Linguistic class: INDO-EUROPEAN: CELTIC: BRYTHONIC
Area: Europe, UK, northern and western Wales
Speakers: 580,000
Source: H.M. Evans (1983)

BLAVS: 10

[ dywedyd/dweud (to say, tell) ]
[ siarad (to speak, talk) ]

[ ymddiddan (to talk [converse]) ]
[ holi (to ask [question]) ]
[ gofyn (to ask [request]) ]

[ enwi (to name) ]
[ rhifo (to count) ]

[ annerch (to greet) ]
[ diolch (to thank) ]

REMARKS:
- An additional 'greeting' verb, cyfarch, also means 'to request'
- An additional 'counting' verb, cyfrif, also means 'to reckon, deem'
- Annerch 'to greet' also means, quite generally, 'to address'.
Linguistic class: PENUTIAN: WINTUN
Area: North America, USA, north central California
Speakers: 20
Source: H. Pitkin (1985)

BLAVs: 6

[lewewa (to say, tell, talk)
  tin (to talk, speak)
  tihi-ta (to ask [question/request])
  yica(·) (to name)
  xamah (to count)]

REMARC:
Tin is a basic LA morpheme which is extremely productive but which may
not occur much in its pure form. None of the more specific (derived)
forms, however, suits the BLAV definition, in contrast to the BLAVs
listed above which are themselves specific (derived) variants of more
general morphemes: lewewq 'limb, branch'; xam; qom 'answer, fill,
believe, agree, understand, conclude'; tihi-t (or maybe *tih)
'question'; yet 'dream, name, ideal, original, real'.
WOLOF

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: WEST ATLANTIC: NORTHERN
Area: Africa, Senegal
Speakers: 2 million

BLAVs: 6

[ ]

wax (to say, talk)
nettali (to tell [story])
laady (to ask [question])

[ ]

wannyi/woony (to count)
nulrya (to greet)
tontu (to answer)

REMARKS:
- For a number of LAVs, Wolof has an alternative form borrowed from French:
  - 'to explain': tekki, but also: esplike
  - 'to count': wannyi/woony, but also: konte (< French compter)
    and sééfèr (< French chiffre)
- Wax 'to say, talk' is the basis for a number of other LAVs:
  waxaat 'to repeat'
  waxal 'to talk with'
  waxtaan 'to converse, chat'
- Some additional relatively general LAVs are worth noting:
  dégg 'to speak', which also means (maybe primarily) 'to hear, understand'
  làkk 'to speak', which means very specifically 'to speak a language'
    > làkk-kat 'foreigner'
    [agent suffix]
  ne/nee 'say as follows' (quotative)
**XHOSA**

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: BENUE-CONGO: BANTU: CENTRAL

Area: Africa, South Africa, southeast Cape Province

Speakers: 6 million

Source: A. Fischer et al. (1985)

BLAVs:12

| -thi (to say) | -phendula (to answer) |
| -tsho (to say) | |
| -thetha (to say, speak, talk, tell) | |
| -xelela (to tell, say) | |
| -balisa (to tell [story]) | |
| -buza (to ask [question]) | |
| -cela (to ask [request]) | |

| -xela (to name) |
| -bala (to count) |

| -bulisa (to greet) |
| -bulela (to thank) |

**REMARKS:**

Note the relationships between -xelela and -xela, and between -balisa and -bala.
YANA

Linguistic class: HOKAN: YANAN
Area: North America, USA, north central California
Speakers: extinct
Source: E. Sapir & M. Swadesh (1960)

BLAVs: 4

[ tii- (to say, tell) ]
[ ga- (to speak) ]
[ yaagai (to ask) ]
[ dau (to count) ]

REMARC:
Ga- 'to speak, utter' serves as a basis for numerous derived LAVs. E.g.
gai?gai- 'to talk loudly'
gai?laa- 'to cry, weep'
gai?3apa(i)- 'to answer'
   [pai: first person object]
gai?wi- 'to shout to'
gaa?can- 'to make a speech, shout as a leader'
gabaari- 'to stop someone from talking'
gabuisdi- 'to speak for someone's happiness'
garii- 'to speak Northern Yana'
gataa- 'to speak a non-northern Yana dialect, i.e.
   Central Yana, Southern Yana, or Yahi'

etc.
YIMAS

Linguistic class: INDO-PACIFIC: SEPIK-RAMU: NOR-PONDO
Area: Pacific, Papua New Guinea, northern lowlands
Speakers: 200

BLAVs: 4

\[
\begin{array}{l}
timi \quad \text{(to say, tell)} \\
i \quad \text{(to say, tell)} \\
malak \quad \text{(to speak, talk)} \\
kankantakal \quad \text{(to ask [question/request]}) \\
\end{array}
\]

REMARKS:
- Yimas has fewer than 100 main verb stems which do 90% of the communicative work.
- While malak 'to speak, talk' is intransitive, timi is transitive ('to say that') and i ditransitive ('to say to someone that').
YORUBA

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: KWA: YORUBA-NORTHERN
AKOKO
Area: Africa, Nigeria (most of Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Lagos States)
Speakers: 1.6 million
Source: Anonymous (1979)

BLAVs: 9

ni (to say)
wi (to speak, say, tell)
sọ (to speak, talk)

bẹrẹ/bẹbi (to ask [question])
tọrọ (to ask [request])

kà (to count)

kí (to greet)
dúpé (to thank)

fèsi (to answer)

REMARKS:
- Ni 'to say' also occurs in the sense of 'to be'.
- Kà 'to count, reckon, number' also means 'to read'.
- As is the case with its equivalents in many other languages, kí 'to greet' also means 'to visit'.
CENTRAL) YUP'IK

Linguistic class: ESKIMO-ALEUT: ESKIMO
Area: North America, USA, southwestern Alaska
Speakers: 20,000

BLAVs: 7

aper- (to say)
qaner- (to say, tell, speak)
qanaa- (to speak, talk)
apete- (to ask [question])
kaiga- (to ask [request])
naaqe- (to count)

REMARKS:
- Yup'ik makes a clear three-fold distinction in its 'asking' verbs:
  apete- 'to ask', only in its question sense
  kaiga- 'to ask (request)', only in the sense of 'to ask for (an object)'
  -sqe- 'to ask (request)', only in the sense of 'to ask someone to do something'

  The latter, however, has a more basic non-LAV meaning from which the LAV meaning is directly derived: 'to want someone to do something'; hence it also means 'to command, order' in the right contexts.
- In addition to the above BLAVs, there is another general 'saying' verb which is at the same time the most general action verb:
  pi- 'to do, to say'
  cf. the noun pi 'thing'
YUROK

Linguistic class: MACRO-ALGONKIAN: [---- ?]
Area: North America, USA, northwestern California (near the mouth of the Klamath River)
Speakers: 10
Source: R.H. Robins (1958)

BLAVs: 11

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{cwin(kep-)} \quad \text{(to say, speak)} \\
\text{hegol-} \quad \text{(to say, tell)} \\
\text{soc(peyew-)} \quad \text{(to say, speak)} \\
\text{tigwim-/tigum} \quad \text{(to speak; talk to)} \\
\text{'ip-} \quad \text{(to tell [story])} \\
\text{ko'oyew-/ko'oyum} \quad \text{(to ask [question/request])} \\
\text{neke'ly} \quad \text{(to name)} \\
\text{ckem} \quad \text{(to count)} \\
\text{(tigwim-/tigum) (to greet)} \\
\text{kowišco?} \quad \text{(to thank)} \\
\end{array}
\]

REMARKS:
- There is a second 'asking' verb, meš'en, which is restricted to a 'requesting' sense: 'to ask, beg' (with an intensive form mi·geš'en 'to go around begging')
- Note the occurrence of toh/tohkw (a noninflected plural verb) for a group plural: 'to talk in a group'.

\[
\text{no-lo-(c-)} \quad \text{(to answer)}
\]
ZULU

Linguistic class: NIGER-KORDOFANIAN: NIGER-CONGO: BENUE-CONGO: BANTU: CENTRAL
Area: Africa, South Africa, Natal Province
Speakers: 6 million

BLAVs: 8

- thi (to say, tell)
- sho (to say, tell)
  khuluma (to speak, talk)
  xoxa (to talk 'converse'; tell 'story')
  buza (to ask 'question')
  cela (to ask 'request')
  bala (to count)

REMARKS:
- The 'answering' verb phendula primarily means 'to turn round, turn over, alter'. (Compare with Xhosa, where this may also be true historically but not synchronically.)
- -thi 'to say, tell' and -sho 'to say, tell' also mean 'to mean, intend, think, mention' (and -sho also 'to understand'). Both are 'defective' verbs.
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