

Experience, Trauma, Knowledge and the Primacy of Linguistic Consistency in All of It

In this article, my aim is to make a solid foundation from which anyone can use in the endeavor to communicate ideas, opinions and hypotheses. It should make the case for consistency in how vocabulary can be best employed so the reader of one's work, or an audience of one's presentation can not only follow the logic, but creates the foundation for them to best absorb the concepts as the author intends. Then, I'll go on to use this to present concepts relating specifically to experience, trauma and knowledge.

What is linguistic consistency?

There are [7,139 languages](#) currently being spoken around the globe today. On top of those, are thousands of regional dialects. Then when you examine smaller pockets of populations, you'll find colloquialisms and slang that have continued to evolve a language both inward and outward from those populations. We should also understand that languages grew more and more complex, from a handful of sounds and grunts and gestures a half a million years ago, to the incredible tens of thousands of words and alphabet systems each language employs today. I won't go into details but we know that [natural selection played a major role](#) in how language evolved and how it became instrumental in human evolution.

Having two people who both speak the same language is great. Those two people can cooperate. They can complete projects together, negotiate agreements on how to live with each other, set and respect boundaries, plan for the future, etc. Having two hundred people who speak the same language are capable of more. They can shape whole communities. Thousands of people can...well you can see where I'm going with this. My point is that humans are capable of understanding each other, down to the very fine detail, thanks due to the evolved larynx in humans that allows for precise control over airflow, facilitating the production of a wide range of complex sounds necessary for speech. But human language isn't perfect and that's where problems occur.

Occasionally, a traveler from one town to another encounters a population of people that speak the same language as the traveler, however, some distinct differences will be apparent. The further away the traveler gets from home, the further away his native language seems to be from the locals until at a certain point all essential communication breaks down. So the question I asked above, “What is linguistic consistency?” can be answered for the traveler as “Stay home, or near home, where the range of complex sounds you make with your larynx, have a high consistency with that of the population around you...either that or endeavor to learn a new language.” Linguistic consistency means maintaining consistency with expression, whether in writing or speaking, because it is crucial for clarity, coherence, and effective conveyance of meaning.

A final point on linguistic consistency.

As a speaker or author, when your audience responds, you should never confuse “pedantry” with “semantics”. Pedantry concerns an overly meticulous focus on minor details, that when addressed, don’t change the intended message(i.e. “*Hey, Fidel! It’s library not liberry*”). Semantics should be welcomed as responses because semantics gets to the heart of meaning and is vital to dispel ambiguity(i.e. “*Hey, Fidel! What do you mean you want ‘soda’? Do you mean like Coke or 7-Up? Or did you mean sparkling water?*”). The author/speaker should aim to minimize semantic feedback but should always welcome and be prepared to respond to it because it will lead to improved versions of future presentations and writing. The ultimate goal, with regard to your presentation, is that an audience enters the door with many questions and exits with none...except where your presentation leaves off(i.e. “*So today we talked about bread leavens. Our next presentation will be about fermentation times and methods.*” Now having understood the presented content, the audience should have no questions except those regarding the follow up presentation content.).

Maybe in short, if you’re familiar with computer languages, you know that the server’s interpreter for that language will just spit out errors when you make even one small syntax mistake. “Pedantry” *and* “semantics”. As a

speaker or author, you should treat your audience with the same trepidation as you do when writing code. Don't chance it.

Does trauma exist?

Having discussed the primacy of linguistic consistency, it should be apparent to me that when I use the word "trauma", I should consider that my English speaking audience will most likely assume the most likely definition, depending on the context in which I use it. "*The patient's head trauma lead to serious brain damage*", for example, probably will convey the message as intended. Maybe "*Richard's emotional trauma, following his survival of a shark attack years ago, is why he doesn't go to the beach anymore.*" also communicates the intended meaning without rejection from the audience.

The ancient Greeks had the word for "wound" and came up with "trauma" to serve for "serious wound". Over time we have employed the word to be used for emotional wounds that lead to psychological injury. Either way, the word trauma is an efficient term we use to describe serious physical and emotional wounds. Thus the statement "Trauma does not exist." is a testable claim. Let's test it.

If trauma does not exist, what would that look like? Giving that some thought, disastrous car accidents would result in people walking away with, in the most extreme cases, minor cuts or bruises and no hesitancy to engage in risky driving as soon as one could get their hands on a new car to replace the one destroyed in the accident. I could think of many other ways to test this hypothesis but having failed just this one, there's no need. As the word has been successfully employed to mean what we and the ancient Greeks intended, upon investigation of the existence of those conditions, there is more than enough evidence to support the claim that trauma does indeed exist.

Philosophically, if one wants to make the claim and convince their audience that "trauma does not exist", they don't get license to use the word "trauma" in any other way than the rest of us if we're using a common language with

each other. Philosophy is laden with enough logical fallacies and [deepities](#) as it is. Philosophical claims should be not unlike scientific hypotheses, in that they should be falsifiable, at the very least through thought experiment, if not by real world test. Just because it sounds profound, doesn't mean it is.

Experience and knowledge are easy to define and experts should be valued over the alternative.

Having discussed the primacy of linguistic consistency and then labored over whether or not trauma exists, I'll spare you the definitions of these two words. Suffice to say that if you've ever uttered the words "Wow! I didn't know that!", you simultaneously expressed that you, in that moment, acquired knowledge, while at the same time using the word "know" in it's common meaning. You could have announced this after reading a passage in book about cheese making, or after listening to a history teacher explaining the conditions of the Great Depression, or watching how crows mourn their dead, or after a bad decision or even just in communication with others.

Knowledge is *not* synonymous with mere information or data. While information consists of facts, data, or observations, knowledge involves the understanding, interpretation, and application of that information. Knowledge is also not static; it is dynamic and subject to revision and refinement as new information becomes available or as perspectives change.

Every once in a while, we encounter people who have demonstrated their vast knowledge in a specific field of study, as well as documented their decades experience. We call these people "experts" in their fields. Through vigorous, transparent testing of their hypotheses, we've come to trust in the reliability in certain results of their work. Which is why we build reliable technology based on the work of these experts, and not on the work of shamans and priests.

Appeal to authority is a logical fallacy. Trusting experts is not. Most often, appeal to authority can be identified by pinning a claim on a specific authority or expert. Whereas trusting experts is in the plural. The body of work, put forth and rigorously peer tested among experts in the same field,

yield findings and results that one can hang their hat on. "*Dr. Cody, a renowned physicist, says that aliens exist. Therefore, aliens must exist.*" vs. "*Based on the advice of several climate scientists who have studied the data extensively, I trust that human activity is contributing to climate change.*" The former is swinging the baseball bat blindly at a 100mph pitch and COULD end up being right, although not likely. The latter has done extensive work in eliminating the 100mph pitch altogether. The ball is sitting on a tee waiting to be smacked and is not just *probable* to be the proverbial home run...it absolutely most likely is.

I welcome your pedantry and semantics with anything I've written.

If you have questions, cool. I did my best so that you wouldn't...but nobody's perfect!

Q & A

Cody: *Are humans intelligent because we're born with language abilities? Or are those language abilities just a product of intelligence?*

Fidel's Answer: That's a false dichotomy. Animals without complex communication systems(i.e. language abilities) can still demonstrate intelligence through various behaviors such as problem-solving, tool use, social interactions, memory, and adaptability to their environment.

Cody: *No issues with the stuff about consistency. Yeah, that's a useful tool. But it doesn't really explain much about what is going on behind the scenes, and it says nothing about causality.*

Fidel's Answer: The article's intent was about the primacy of linguistic consistency and then application of that consistency as examples. Nowhere in the opening did I state an intent to discuss any other topic such as causality. If

you have no problems with the ideas I presented on the primacy of linguistic consistency, then I've succeeded. I suppose now I could write a new article about causality utilizing what we've agreed on about linguistic consistency's import.

Cody: When we speak we're trying to cause something to happen in someone's mind. There are many ways to do that that interact with more than just semantic language. All politicians, especially Trump, are good at that. So are poets. The whole point of poetry is to break with consistency, and some of the most effective examples of communication in human history are poems.

Fidel's Answer: Well, I think "we're trying to cause something to happen in someone's mind" is an oversimplification of the purpose of human speech. It's more than that. At the very core of it all is natural selection at work. Humans are doing their best to survive and propagate. They may be making something happen in someone's mind but that's not the goal. The goal is ultimately for that other mind to take some action, or refrain from some action, that improves the conditions for the speaker's survival or ability to propagate. No matter what is spoken, we can draw a line ultimately to "survival/propagation". I don't know if all the famous poets past and present would agree with the broad statement "the whole point of poetry is to break with consistency", but I'll let you take that up with them. But I agree that we can indeed find very effective examples of human communication in poems.

Cody: That's not the goal of communication, that's problem elimination, which is physically impossible—it's also what tyrants want—absolute control.

Fidel's Answer: I think you're confusing my stated goal for a successful presentation to a specific audience with humankind's overarching goal for

communication. The former is about getting an audience to get you so you are capable of talking about the latter without losing them.

Cody: *I still think you're just triggered by the word "trauma," which exactly why I used the word "ghost" in my article.*

Fidel's Answer: Not triggered at all. If you accept the idea of the primacy of linguistic consistency, and thus the existence of trauma, then we're all good.

Cody: *"Bad explanation of a bad explanation." The bad explanation: "an experience caused me to do something." The bad explanation of the bad explanation: "experiences can cause me to do something." No, it's the creative light inside you. Everyone's is different.*

Fidel's Answer: This is a bit confusing. Are you saying that experiences do not cause humans to do things, and instead there's some section of the brain operating independently from the subject's senses (we'll call it the creative light) that causes that subject to act, again, independently from the subject's senses AND everyone's is different? Hmmm. We can test this claim, just with a single thought experiment: We have 1000 very average, unremarkable human test subjects of all shapes, sizes, ethnicities, genders, etc.. One by one, we place the test subjects' hands on an extremely hot stove. In this thought experiment, we've eliminated any and all other possible factors so the results can be analyzed. And we come up with the result of all 1000 test subjects quickly reacting exactly the same way...each jerks their hand back, recoiling from the blistering heat and then running cold water over their burn wound. The experience clearly caused them to jerk their hand away and none of them were different. We did not see any evidence of a creative light orchestrating variances of any kind.

Cody: *I think you've got a problem with induction still.*

Fidel's Answer: I didn't state at the outset that I would be discussing induction. I think you're either confused or you're attempting to read between the lines where I left nothing to be read. If I said something specific that you do not agree with, let me know.