

Typology I: Homework for Lecture 3, 2016/04/27

(The questions marked with (*) are research questions you can use to deepen your understanding, the others could be exam questions.)

1. Which other properties (linguistic or extra-linguistic) of a language (or its speaker community) have been found to correlate with the size of its phoneme inventory? Speculate about possible reasons that might cause these correlations.
2. What are the typical properties of vowel systems?
Discuss possible reasons why these properties are (almost) universal.
3. Which vowel inventory is typologically most common?
(*) Find ten languages with such an inventory.
Do you expect these languages to be related? Why or why not?
4. (*) What are the basic vowels of your native language? Do any of these vowels have allophones?
5. Here is a transliterated text in Tlingit (original by James Crippen on www.omniglot.com, attempt at IPA transliteration by me), a Na-Dené language from Alaska with 800 speakers remaining. Does this language have any phonological properties which you find surprising? Why?

[tʃ̥a jéi kukéŋk' áwé a ka:χ fuk^haʔ^his'úχ, ha: tʃ̥^haku: q^{hw}a:nx'i a:té s q^hunu:ku jé. ha: ʔ^hi:ʔ^hk'w hás a:dé jéi s tʃ̥meiʃi jé áwé, te á: awt^huʔxa:tʃ̥i á^h áwé, á: ha: waq^hk^hi:jaká:. á^h áwé k^hak^hawt^huwak^hé^h. t^hei k^hawt^hu:a:qú:n áwé χá, ha: tʃ̥^há: ʔ^hi:ʔ^hk'w hás, ha: tʃ̥^há: k^há:k^h hás, hastu q^husti:jí, hastu ju: χ'at^háŋki.]