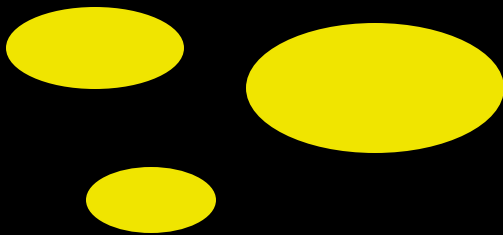


INFLECTIONAL ISLANDS

Sally Rice & John Newman

University of Alberta

CANADA



STRUCTURE OF THE TALK

- I. describe what we mean by “inflectional islands”
- II. survey examples from published literature and our own queries of the BNC
- III. suggest implications for linguistic theory, lexicography, typology, and psycholinguistic research

STRUCTURE OF THE TALK

- I. describe what we mean by “inflectional islands”
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THE VERB ISLAND HYPOTHESIS

Tomasello 1992, 2004

V <<< **inflection**

- children tend to use uninflected verb roots before inflected forms
- verb inflections are mastered on a verb-by-verb basis
- generalization is gradual
- initially, particular verbs “strand” inflections

THE INFLECTIONAL ISLAND HYPOTHESIS

Rice & Newman 2005

V >>> **inflection**

- adults use particular inflected forms of individual verbs on a register-specific basis
- verb inflections adhere to verbs on a verb-by-verb basis
- particularization is gradual
- eventually, inflections “strand” particular verbs

An English Verb Paradigm: SUBJ x TAM

GO

	INF	PRES	PAST	PROG	PERF
1.SG	I need to go	I go	I went	I am/was going	I have/had gone
2	you need to go	you go	you went	you are/were going	you have/had gone
3.SG	s/he/it need to go	s/he/it goes	s/he/it went	s/he/it is/was going	s/he/it has/had gone
1.PL	we need to go	we go	we went	we are/were going	we have/had gone
3.PL	they need to go	they go	they went	they are/were going	they have/had gone



Frequency Distribution in BNC

GO

	INF	PRES	PAST	PROG	PERF
1.SG					
2					
3.SG					
1.PL					
3.PL					



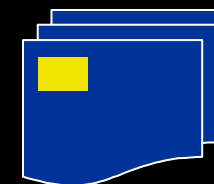
Frequency Distribution in BNC

GO

	INF	PRES	PAST	PROG	PERF
1.SG	6 %	3 %	2 %	4 %	0 %
2	2 %	10 %	0 %	3 %	0 %
3.SG	13 %	4 %	10 %	15 %	2 %
1.PL	6 %	0 %	1 %	2 %	0 %
3.PL	2 %	6 %	1 %	2 %	3 %



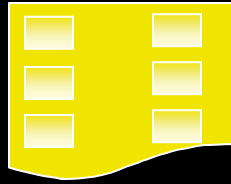
Frequency Distribution in BNC



GO

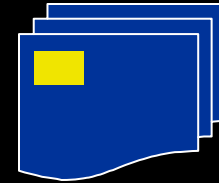
	INF	PRES	PAST	PROG	PERF
1.SG	6 %	3 %	2 %	4 %	0 %
2	2 %	10 %	0 %	3 %	0 %
3.SG	13 %	4 %	10 %	15 %	2 %
1.PL	6 %	0 %	1 %	2 %	0 %
3.PL	2 %	6 %	1 %	2 %	3 %

lemmas



- argument structure(s)
- syntactic constructions
- lexical meaning

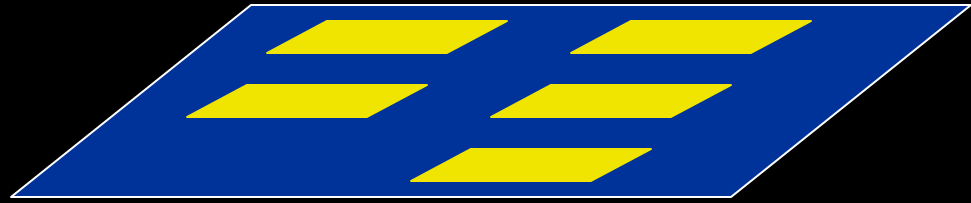
words in context (WICs)



- distribution patterns of inflected forms
- collocations & N-grams
- susceptibility to grammaticalization
- pragmatic associations

VVB - present, imperative

go



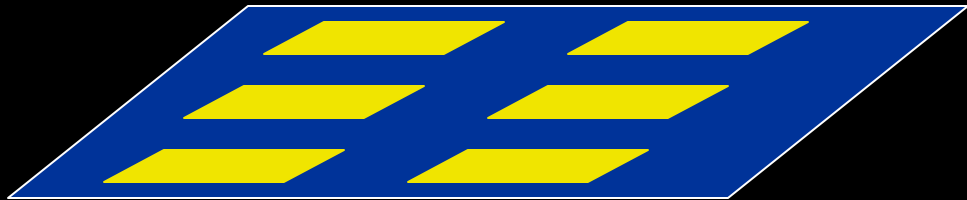
VVZ - 3SG.present

goes



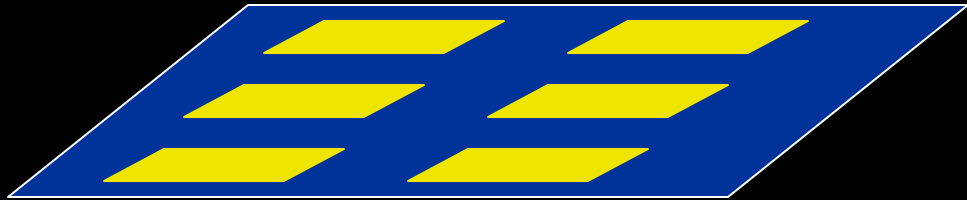
VVI - infinitive

go



VVD - past

went



VVG - progressive

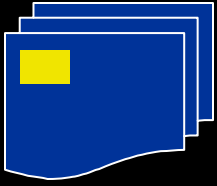
going



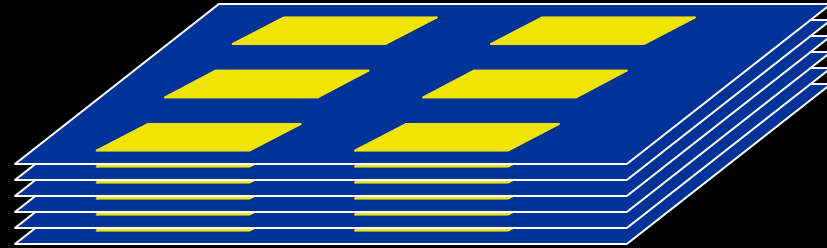
VVN - perfect

gone

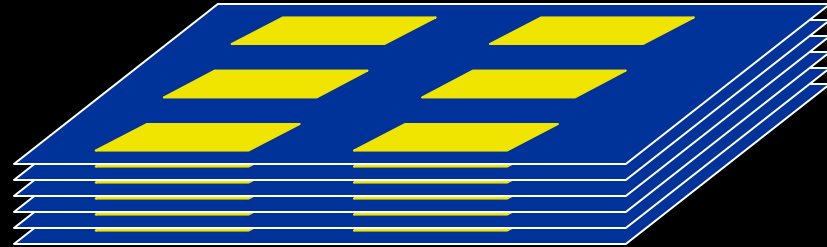




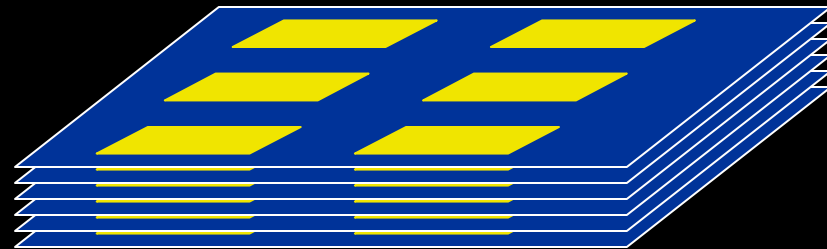
conversation



fiction



news



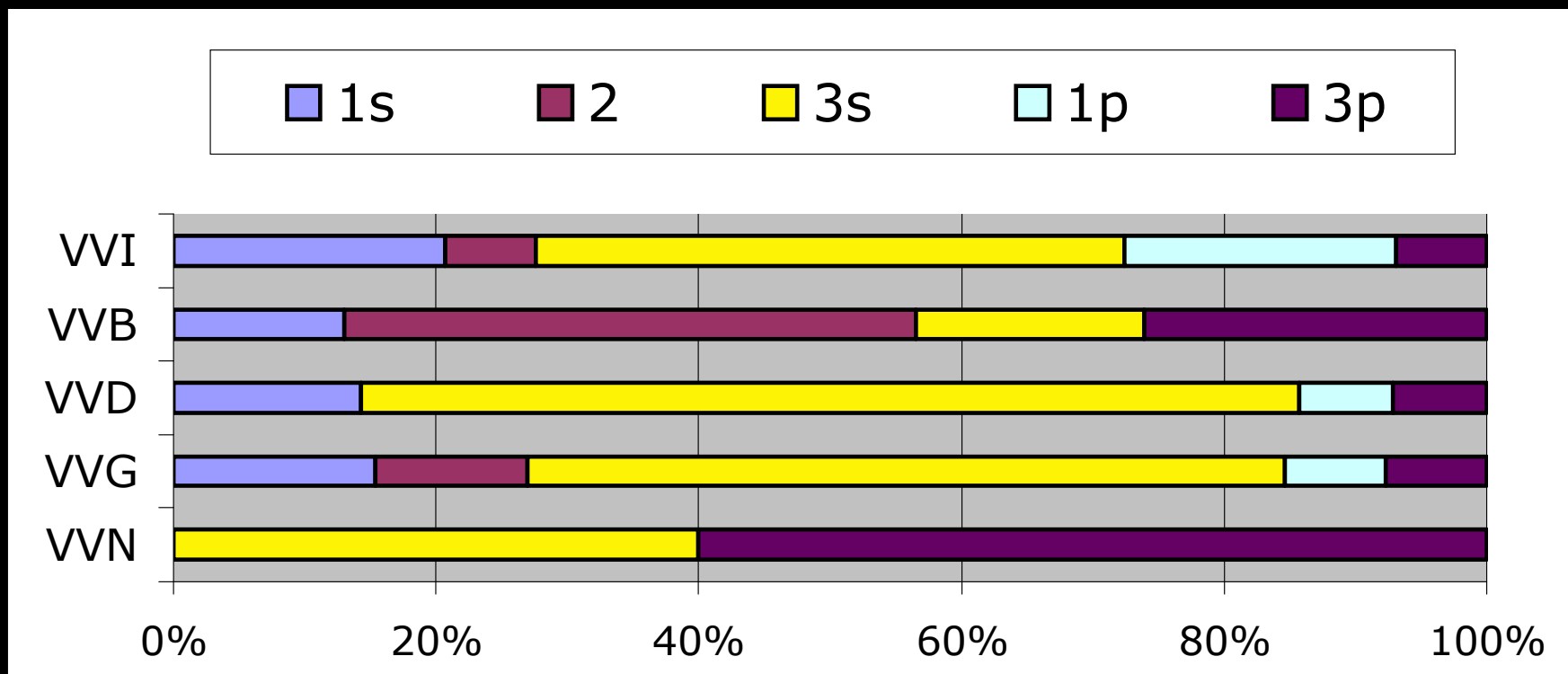
academic
discourse

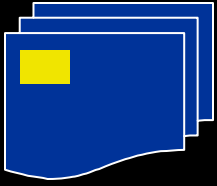




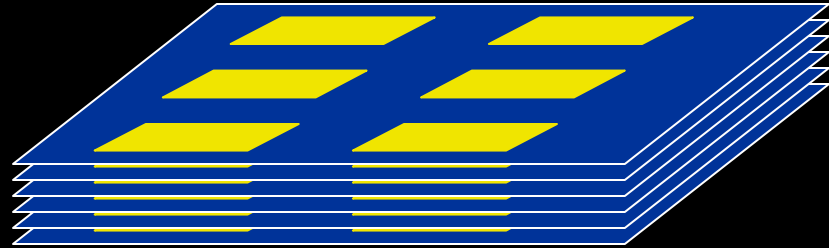
Frequency Distribution in BNC

GO





conversation



Another English Verb Paradigm

THINK

	INF	PRES	PAST	PROG	PERF
1.SG	I need to think	I think	I thought	I am/was thinking	I have/had thought
2	you need to think	you think	you thought	you are/were thinking	you have/had thought
3.SG	s/he/it needs to think	s/he/it thinks	s/he/it thought	s/he/it is/was thinking	s/he/it has/had thought
1.PL	we need to think	we think	we thought	we are/were thinking	we have/had thought
3.PL	they need to think	they think	they thought	they are/were thinking	they have/had thought

Frequency Distribution in BNC_{cc}

THINK

	INF	PRES	PAST	PROG	PERF
1.SG	80 %	93 %	82 %	65 %	75 %
2	10 %	2 %	2 %	8 %	11 %
3.SG	7 %	0 %	5 %	9 %	10 %
1.PL	2 %	2 %	7 %	12 %	0 %
3.PL	1 %	3 %	4 %	6 %	4 %

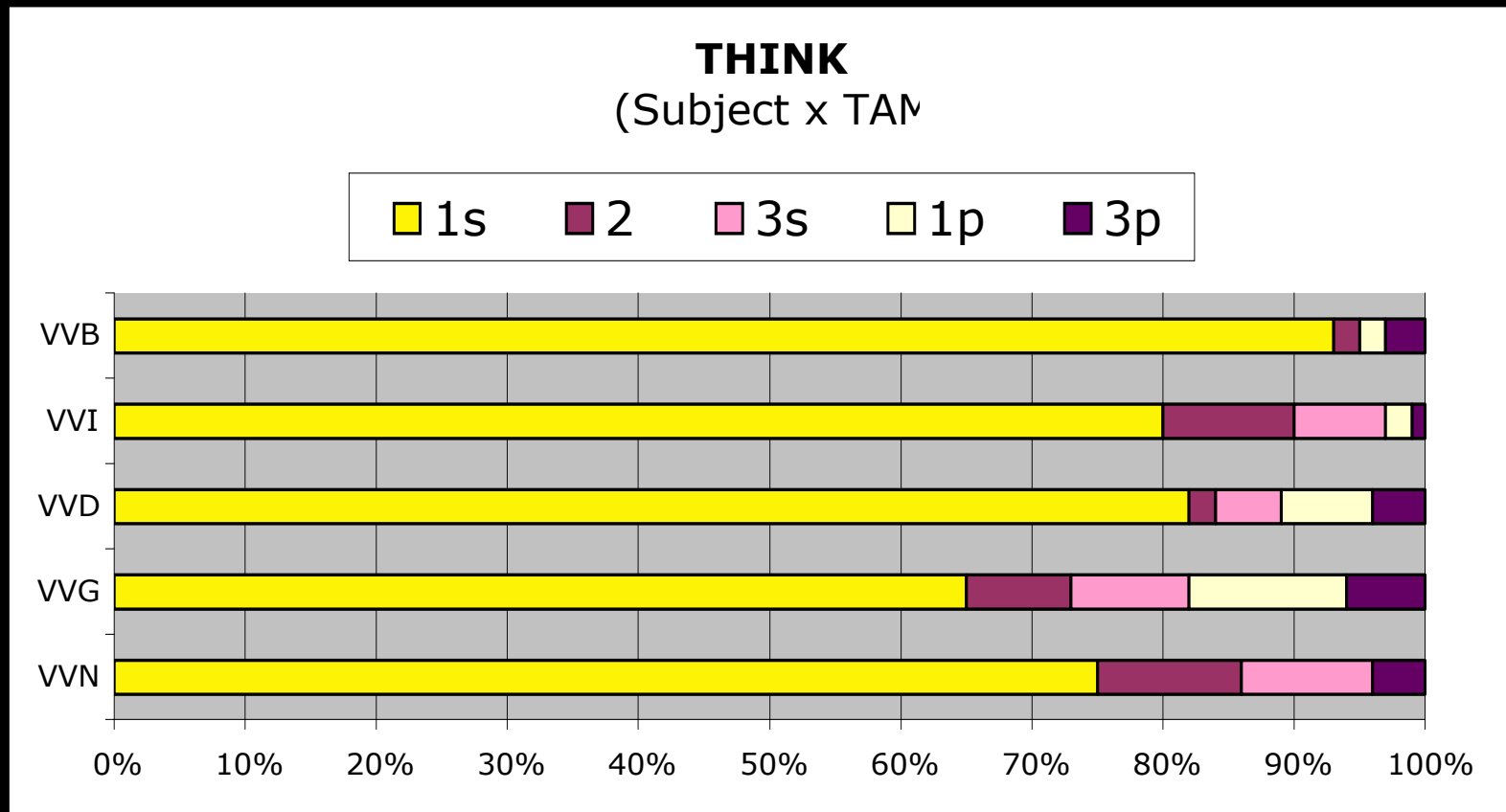
Frequency Distribution in BNC_{cc}

THINK

	INF	PRES	PAST	PROG	PERF
1.SG	80 %	93 %	82 %	65 %	75 %
2	10 %	2 %	2 %	8 %	11 %
3.SG	7 %	0 %	5 %	9 %	10 %
1.PL	2 %	2 %	7 %	12 %	0 %
3.PL	1 %	3 %	4 %	6 %	4 %

Frequency Distribution in BNC_{cc}

THINK



Frequency Distribution in BNC_{cc}

THINK

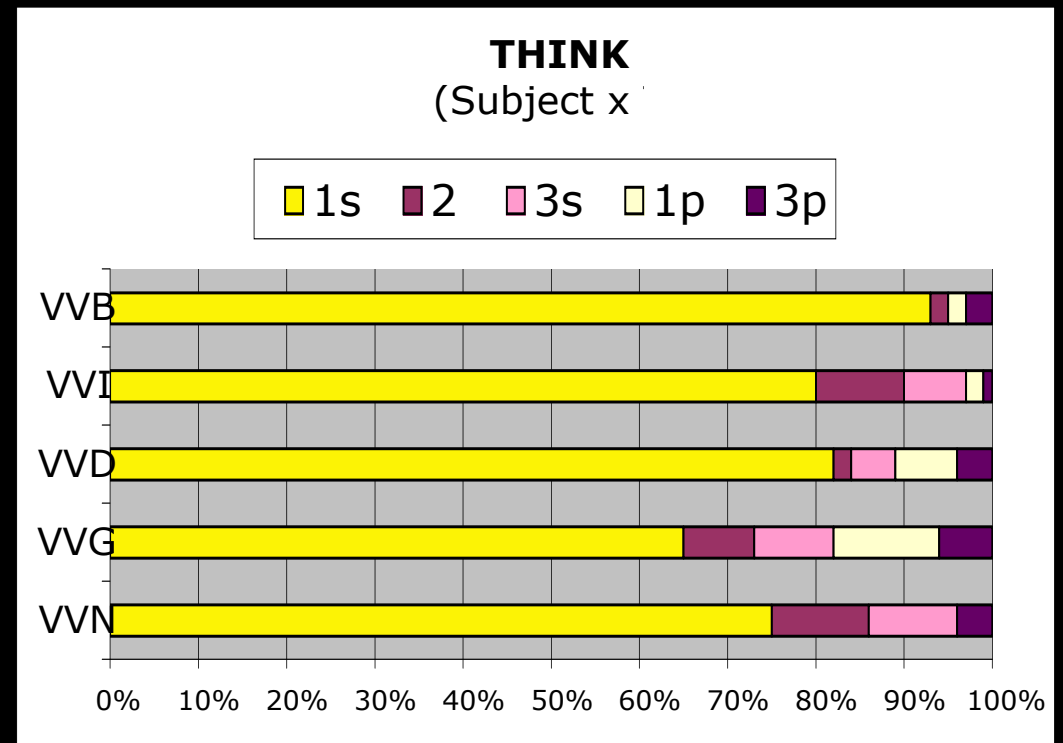
I think... (93%)

I don't think... (70%)

I thought... (82%)

I was thinking... (28%)

I would have thought... (39%)



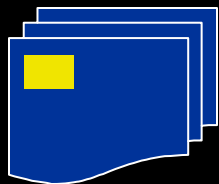
Say something about Tao's findings here

THE INFLECTIONAL ISLAND HYPOTHESIS

Rice & Newman 2005

V >>> **inflection**

- uneven distribution of inflection
- verbs (and verb classes) have “weighted” inflectional profiles
- weightings may be universal (experientially motivated)
- inflectional categories are lexically & pragmatically meaningful
(and not just part of grammatical house-keeping or concord relationships)
- especially “weighty” inflected verbs (WICs) may grammaticalize



Looking for **Islands** (Stranded Verbs)

searched BNC with Mark Davies' corpus tool:

Variation in English Words and Phrases: <http://view.byu.edu>

de-lemmatized the verb (re-inflectionalized it)

downloaded 100 hits each for every verb matching a BNC tag

factored in genre/register

Casual Conversation (4.2M sub-corpus)

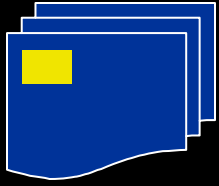
tracked subject & TAM distribution

coded each hit for subject, tense, complement type, etc.

examined inflectional "skew"

STRUCTURE OF THE TALK

- I. describe what we mean by “inflectional islands
- II. survey examples from published literature and our own queries of the BNC
- III. suggest implications for linguistic theory, lexicography, typology, and psycholinguistic research



some classic stranded verbs
(inflectional islands)

rumour

rid

allow

rain

rumour

BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS

VVB-base

VVZ-3sg.pres

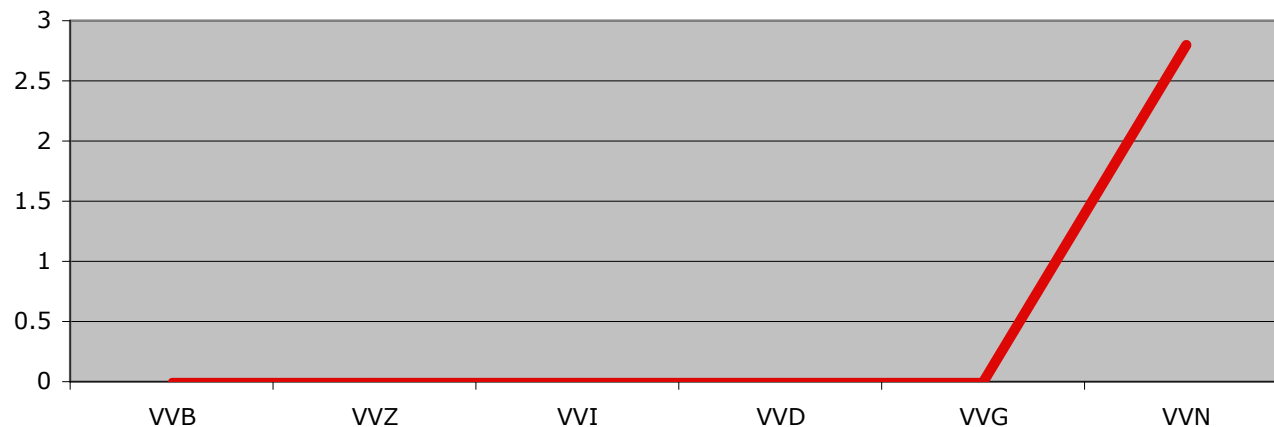
VVI-inf

VVD-past

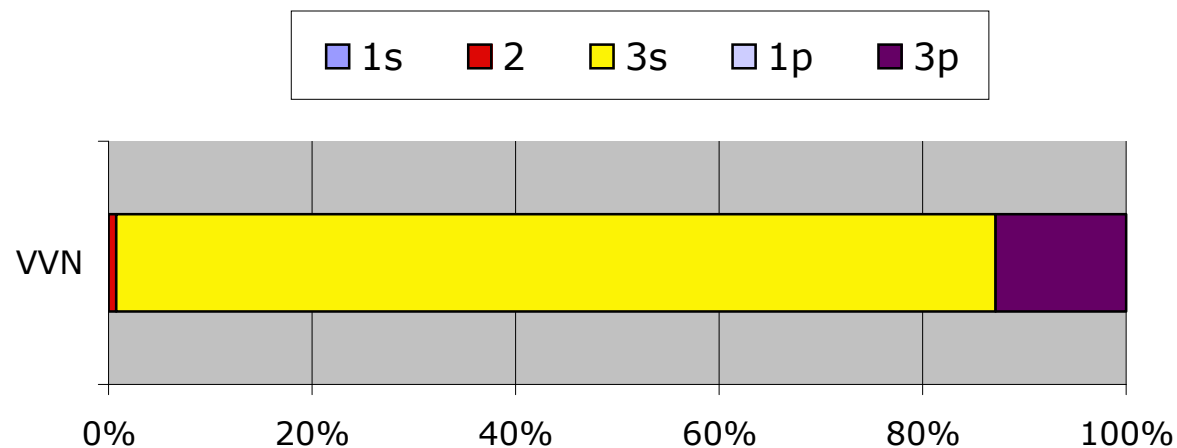
VVG-prog

VVN-perf part

RUMOUR
frequency per million



RUMOUR (SUBJ x TAM)

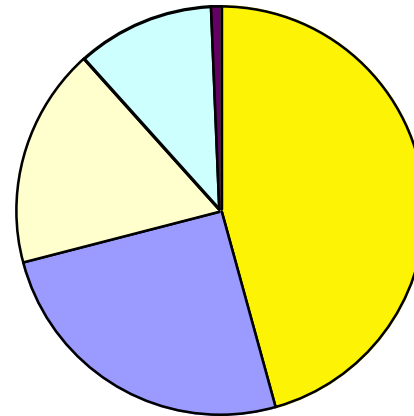


rumour

it BE rumoured to V...

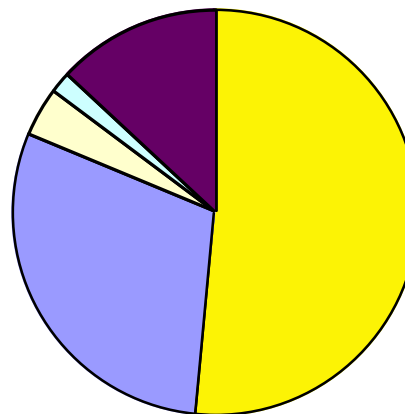
- 100M BNC
- 273 hits
- 2.8 (freq per M)
- not in casual conversation

Subjects of (BE) RUMOURED
[VVN]



- dummy it/there
- personal
- inanimate
- corporations
- animate

Complements of (BE) RUMOURED
[VVN]



- inf
- that S
- S
- other (as, for)
- none

rid allow

BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS

VVB-base

VVZ-3sg.pres

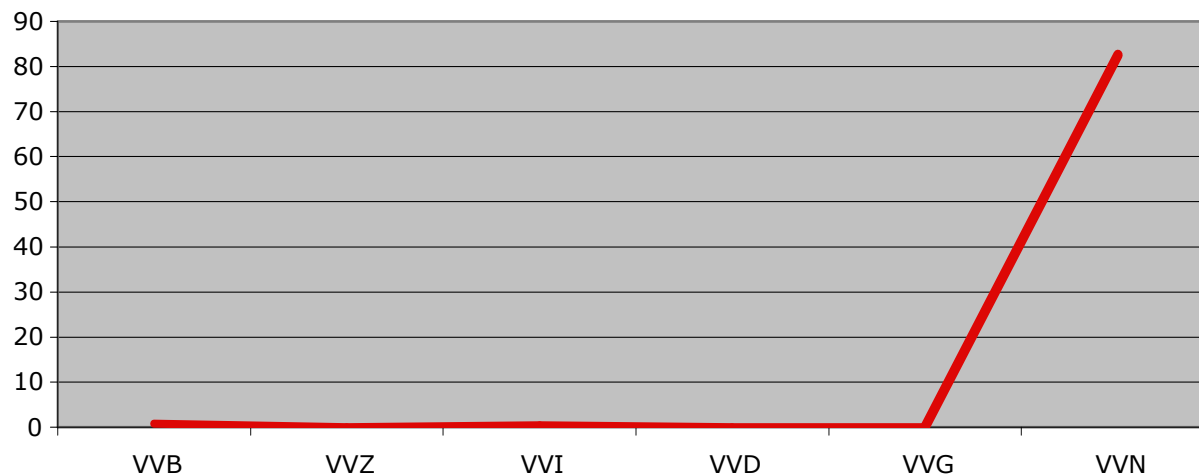
VVI-inf

VVD-past

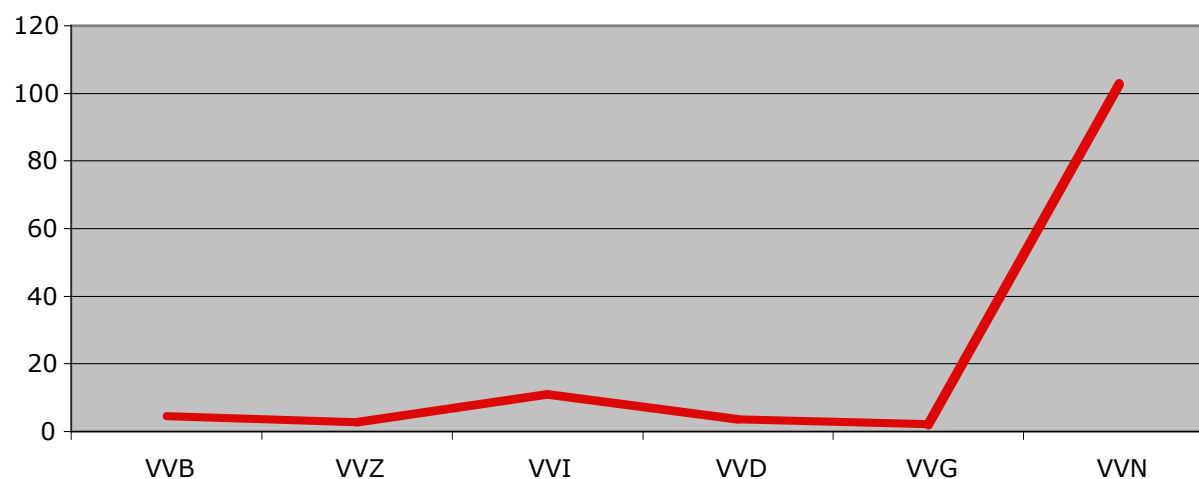
VVG-prog

VVN-perf part

RID
frequency per millio



ALLOW
frequency per millio



rid allow

BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS

VVB-base

VVZ-3sg.pres

VVI-inf

VVD-past

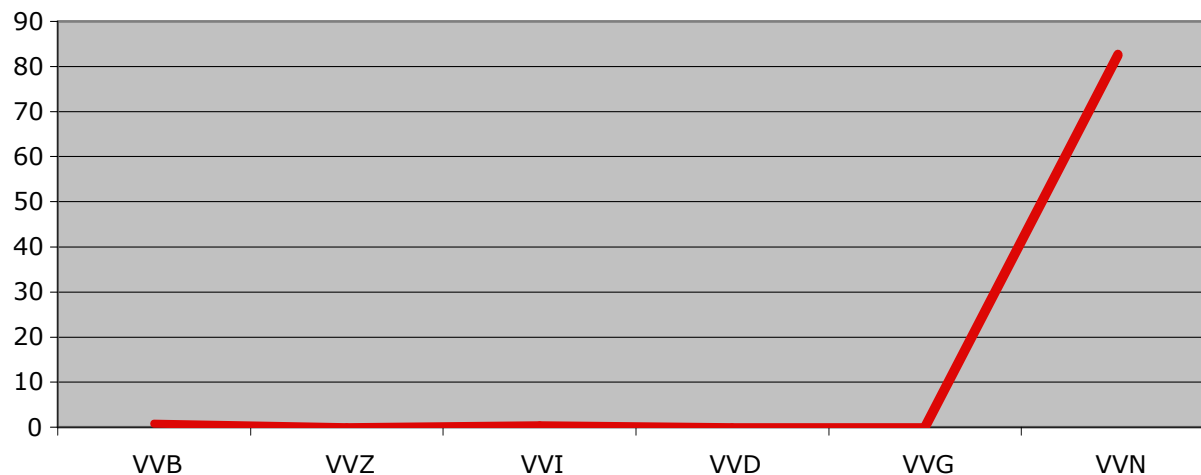
VVG-prog

VVN-perf part

RID

frequency per millio

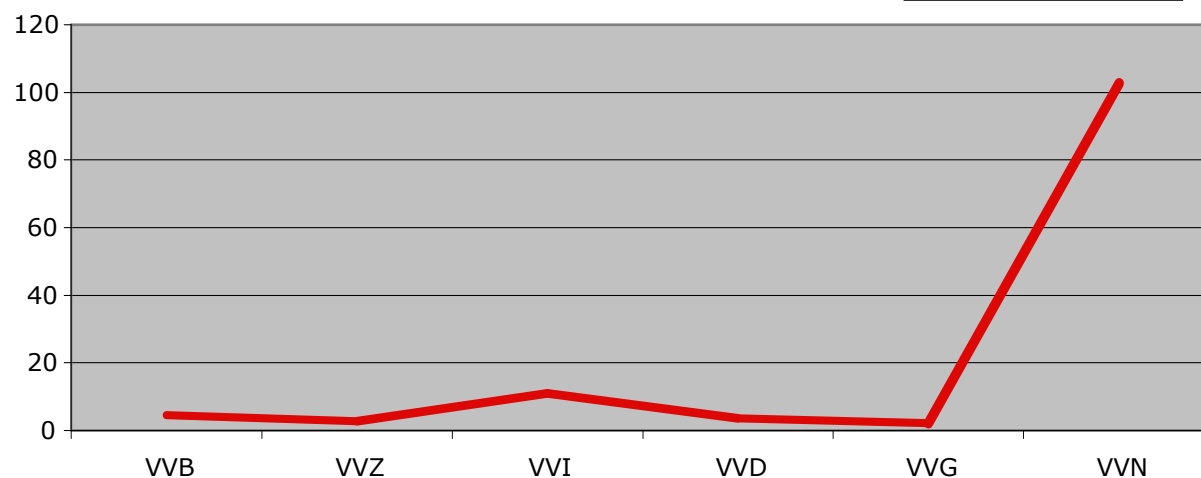
get rid of



ALLOW

frequency per millio

(not) be allowe



rain

BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS

VVB-base

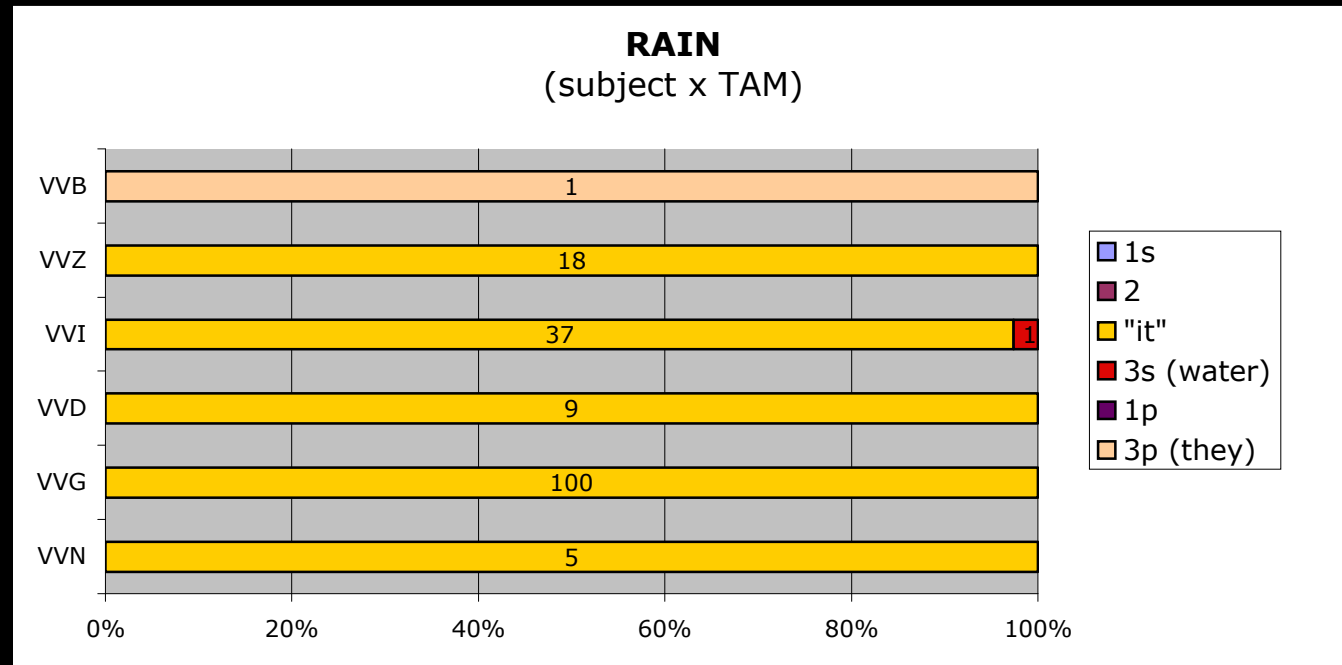
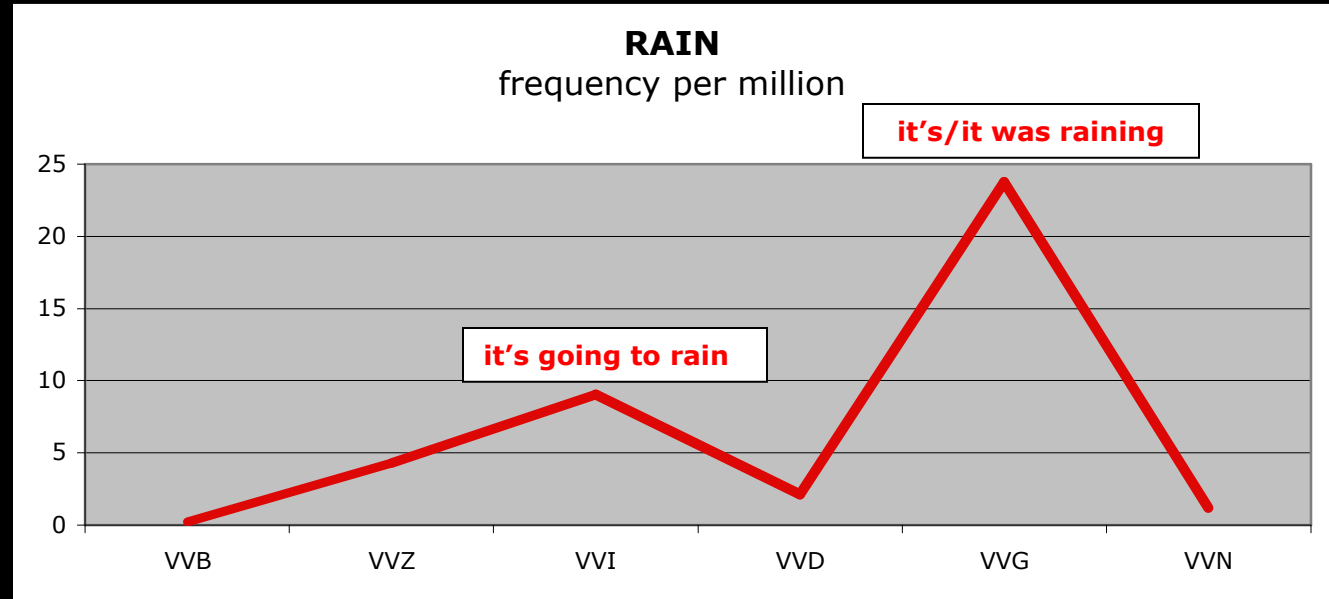
VVZ-3sg.pres

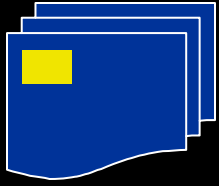
VVI-inf

VVD-past

VVG-prog

VVN-perf part





some emerging stranded verbs (inflectional islands)

think

know

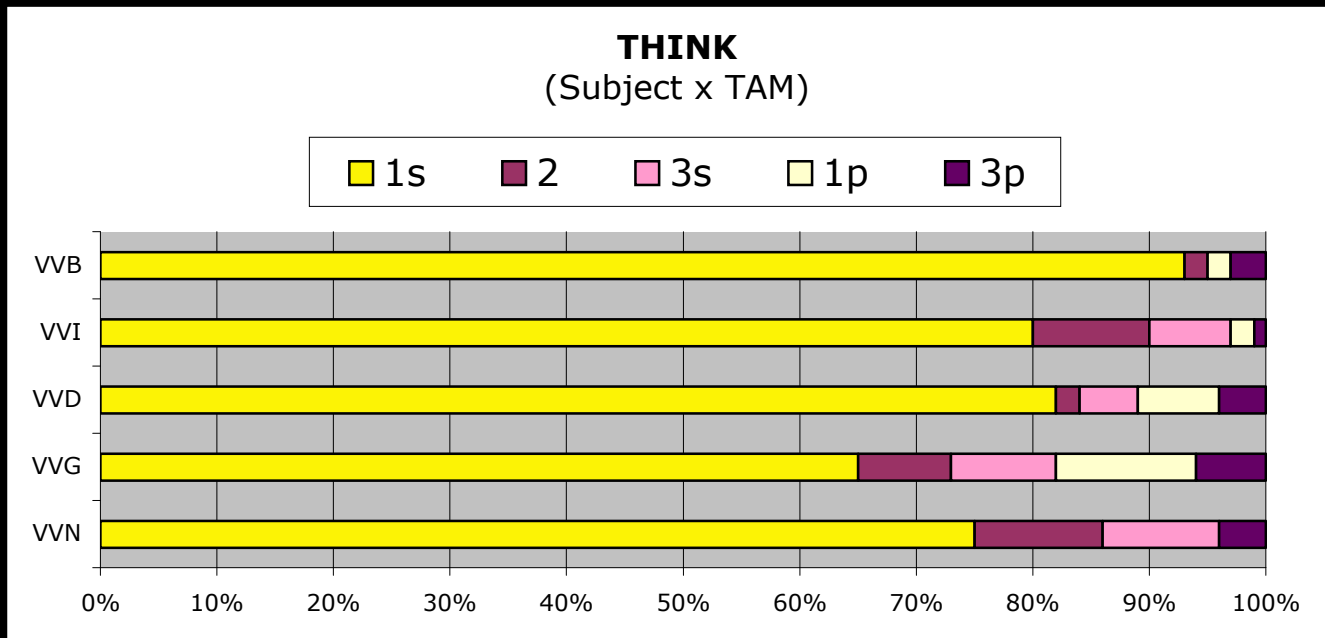
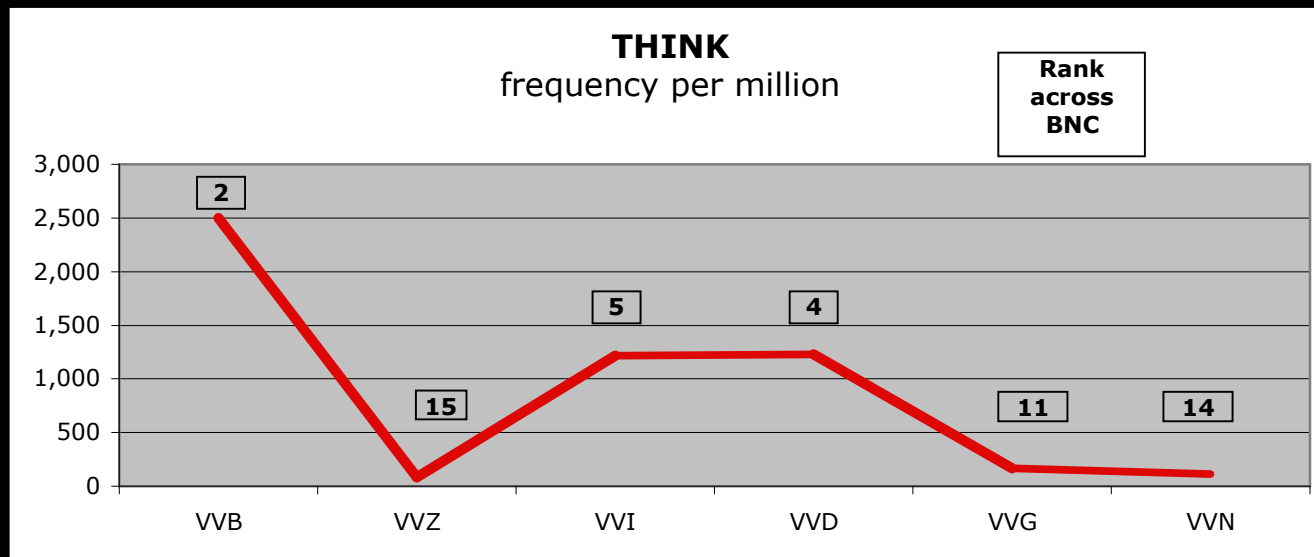
want

mean

think



- VVB-base
- VVZ-3sg.pres
- VVI-inf
- VVD-past
- VVG-prog
- VVN-perf part



know

BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS

VVB-base

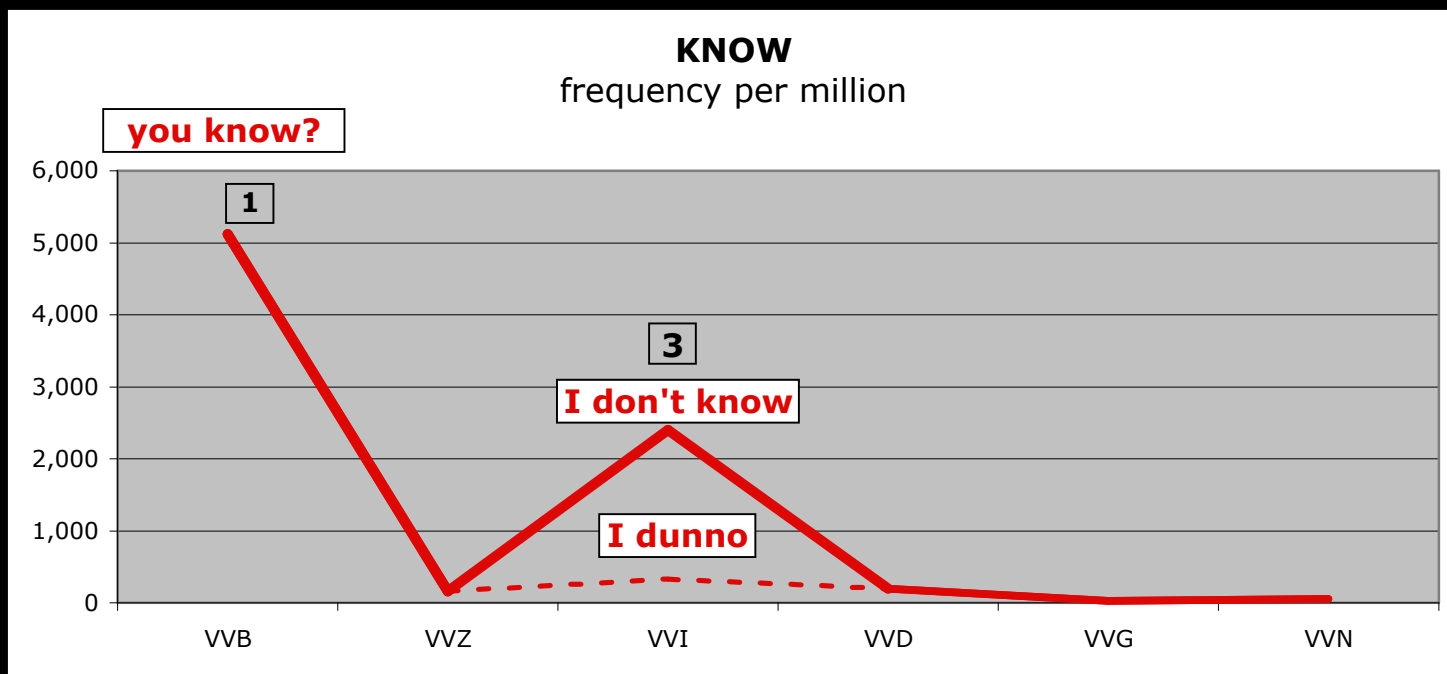
VVZ-3sg.pres

VVI-inf

VVD-past

VVG-prog

VVN-perf part

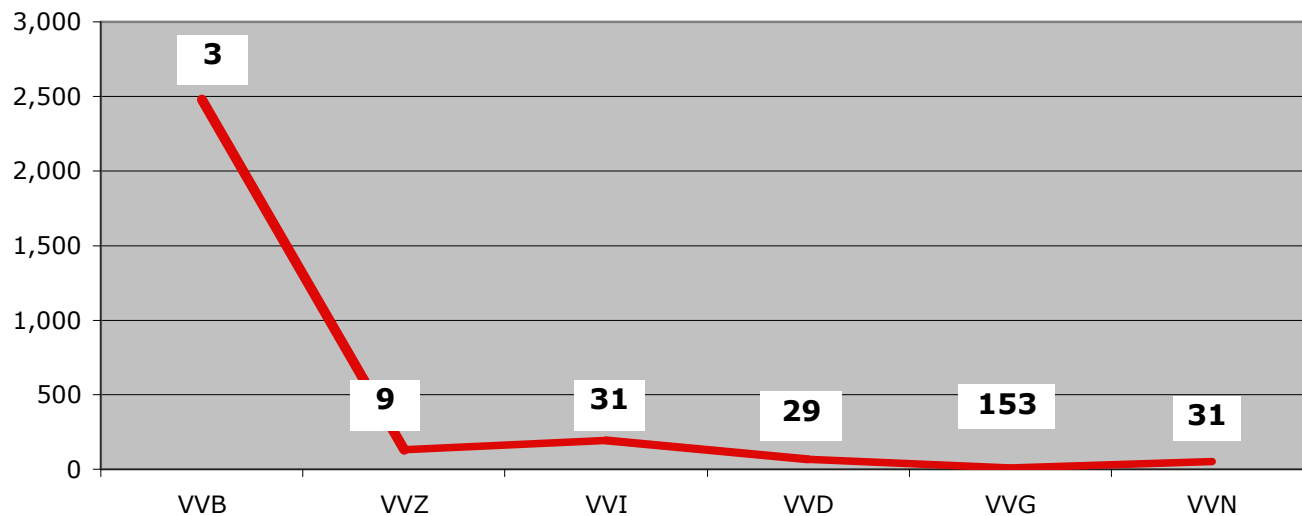


mean

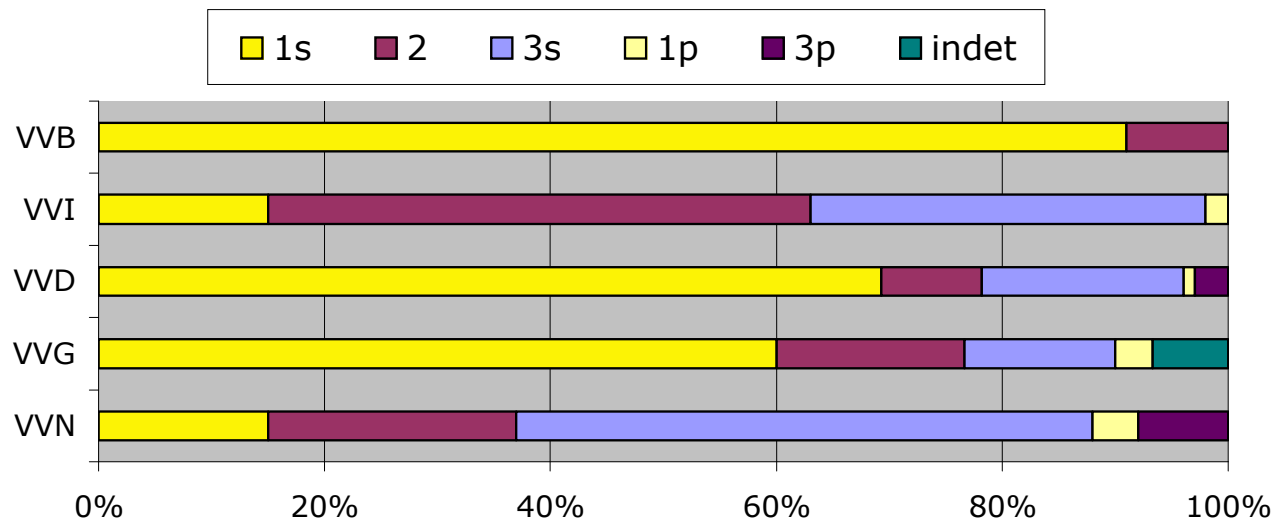
BRITISH NATIONAL CORPUS

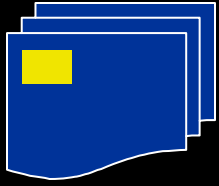
- VVB-base
- VVZ-3sg.pres
- VVI-inf
- VVD-past
- VVG-prog
- VVN-perf part

MEAN
frequency per million



MEAN (Subject x TAM)





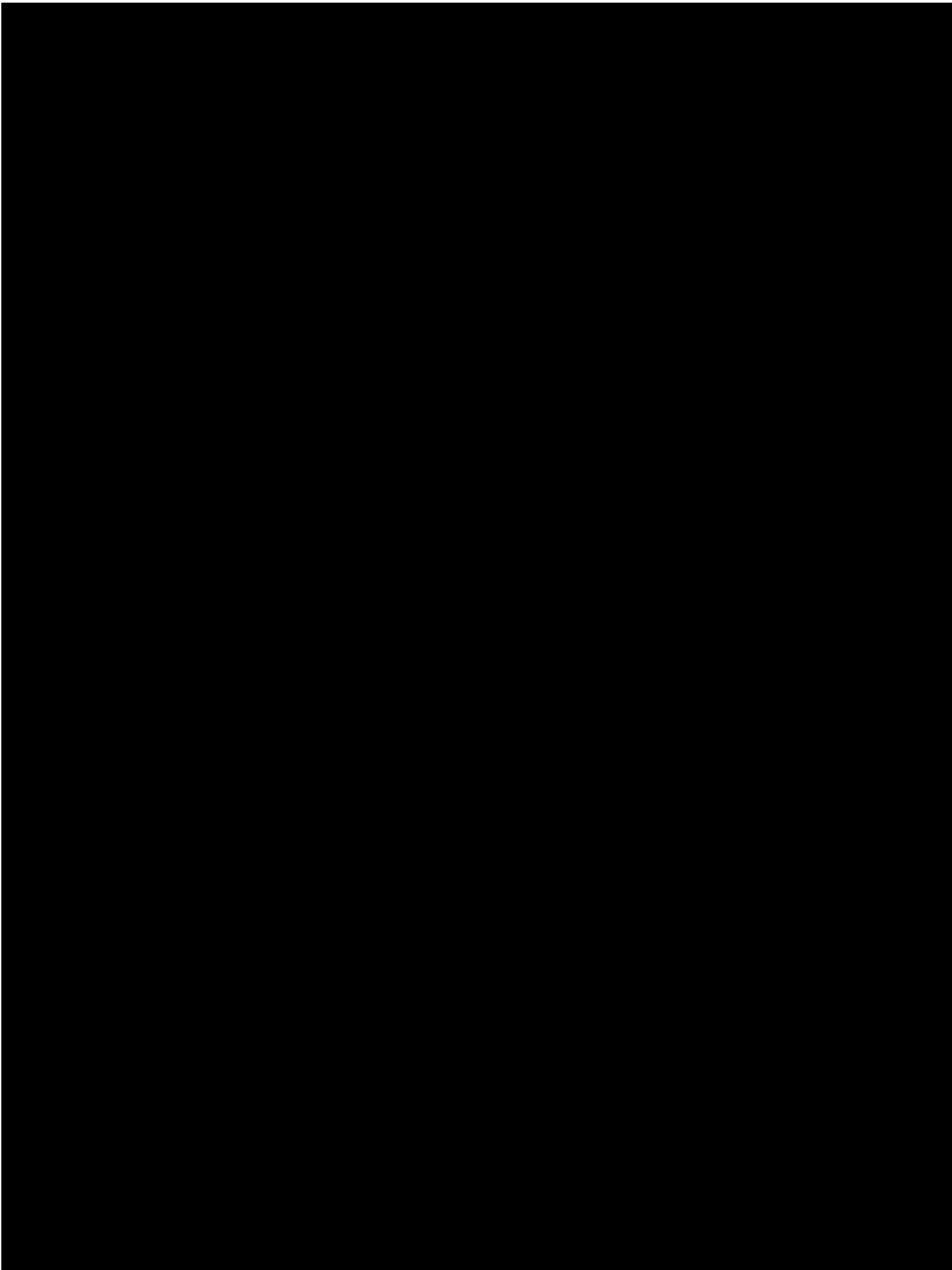
some unexpected stranded verbs (inflectional islands)

eat

drink

say

tell



STRUCTURE OF THE TALK

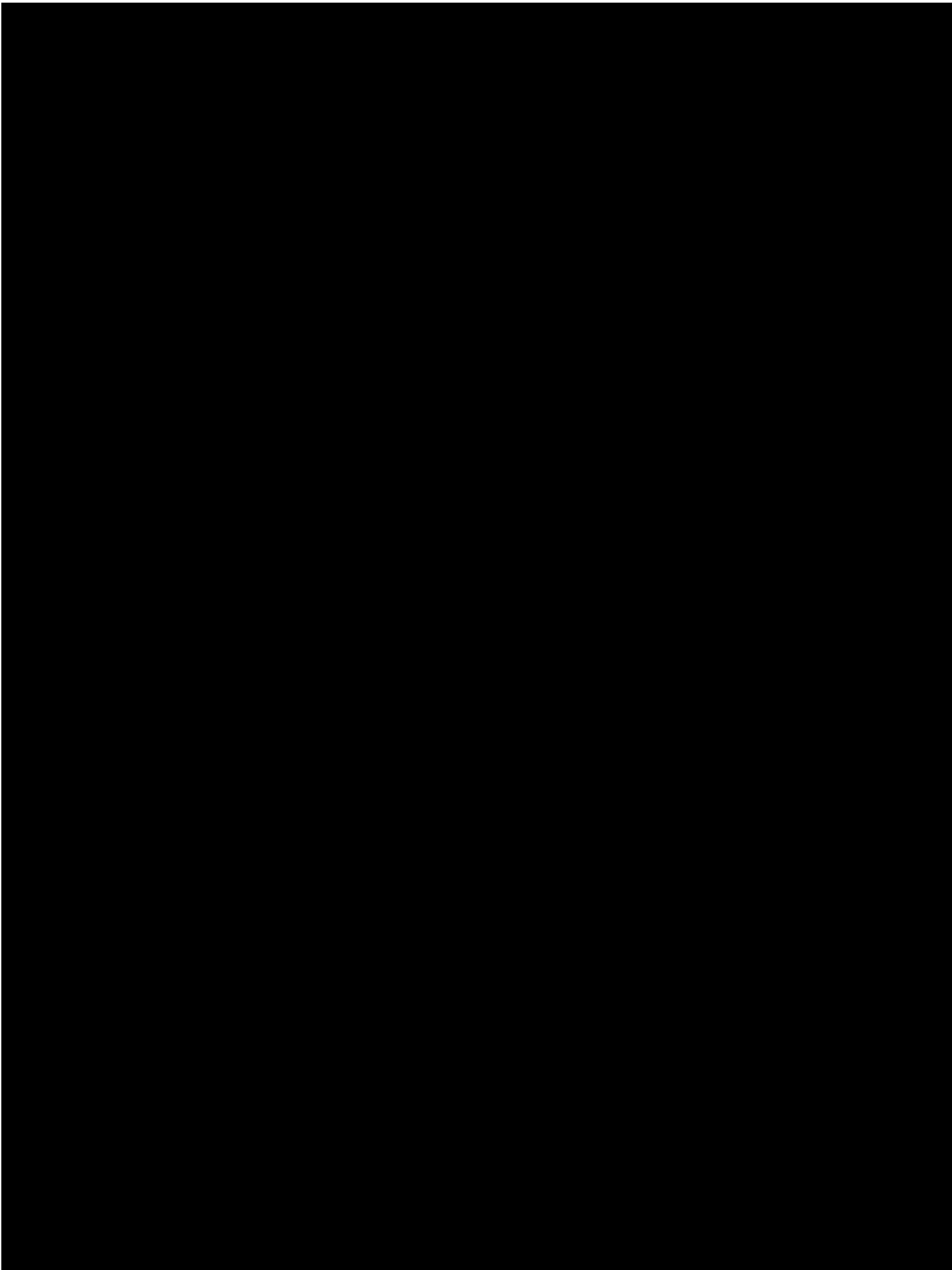
- I. describe what we mean by “inflectional islands”
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- III. suggest implications for linguistic theory, lexicography, typology, and psycholinguistic research

LEMMAS vs. WICs

implications of usage-based grammars

leaving lemmas behind

substituting words-in-context (WICs) as the starting point
of linguistic analysis



A Dene Verb Paradigm

sit.IMPF	SG	DU	PL
1	thida	th7ke	deth7ltth'i
2	th8da	thuhke	dumtth'i
3	theda	heheke	d4mtth'i