

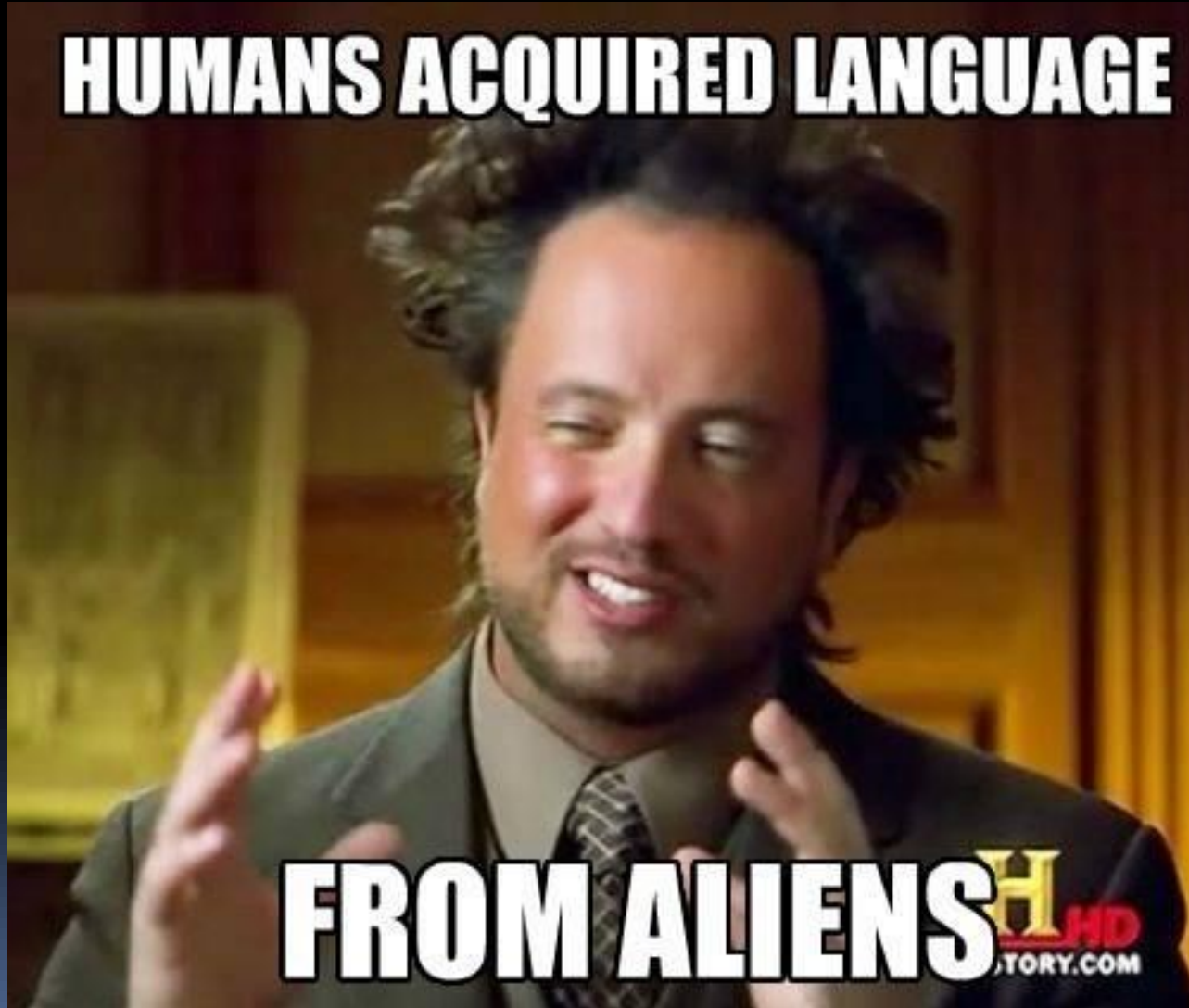
Chapter 11: New Words from Old



New Word Creation

- Mostly by repurposing or recycling existing derivational morphemes—different process than leveling
- Spread by literature, marketing, memetics (mass media, the Internet, and word of mouth)
- Often tied to particular cultural and historical circumstances (*feminazi, glitterati, celebutante*)

At Cruz's request...



How do we know a word has entered the language?

- *OED* standard: minimum of five uses in five different sources over five years
- *AHD* and other Merriam Webster dictionaries:

*To be included in a Merriam-Webster dictionary, a word must be used in a substantial number of citations that come from a wide range of publications over a considerable period of time. Specifically, the word must have enough citations to allow accurate judgments about its establishment, currency, and meaning. The number and range of citations needed to add a word to the dictionary varies. In rare cases, a word jumps onto the scene and is both instantly prevalent and likely to last, as was the case in the 1980s with **AIDS**. In such a situation, the editors determine that the word has become firmly established in a relatively short time and should be entered in the dictionary, even though its citations may not span the wide range of years exhibited by other words.*

Morpheme Creation

- Root creations—very rare--*boondoggle*
- Echoic words (based on sounds), a/k/a *onomatopoeia* : *murmur, swish, click*
- Symbolic words (based on analogy): *flipflop*
- Ejaculations: *D'oh!*
- Often indicated in writing by signal verbs (*verba dicendi*) such as *utter, say, pronounce, exclaim*



Vocabulary Size

- Most adults may recognize as many as 35,000 words, but may use as few as 8,000; college-educated person probably knows 50,000-75,000 but probably uses less
- One way to estimate your vocabulary:
 - Take a sample of about 20 non-contiguous pages from a medium-sized dictionary (about 100K words or 1500 pages, roughly).
 - Count the # of words you know and multiply by 75 to see how many you'd probably know in all 1500 pages
 - Most people underestimate # of words they know
 - Even people with low education levels may recognize a high number of spoken words
- Concerns about “word poverty” are probably overstated

Look who's back...

Let's say I decide to say a word only once in my ENTIRE life. That's a hapax legomenon!

HAPAX LEGOMENON
"just as cool as it sounds"

Hapax legomenons are words that are only said once by someone! They're also words that only appear once a book, or even once in the ENTIRE RECORD OF A LANGUAGE. Like "gopherwood"! It only shows up ONCE in both the Bible AND in the entire written record of Classical Hebrew. That's one heck of a hapax!

what does it mean?
Nobody knows!
It's a kind of wood?
Probably?

It's there because God's all "NOAH BUILD AN ARK OUT OF GOPHERWOOD OKAY" but now we're all, "what? Um, maybe he meant cypress wood? Did somebody transcribe this friggin' poorly?"
It's cool how unlikely we are to ever discover anything new about a hapax!
Its precise meaning will forever remain a mystery!

T-REX GOPHERWOOD 'IS JUST WOOD THAT WAS PEED ON BY A GOPHER
I CONFESS I FIND THE SCENT
INTOXICATING
YES ITS PRECISE MEANING WILL FOREVER REMAIN A MYSTERY

Tracking new words: evolving dictionaries

- Urban Dictionary: www.urbandictionary.com
- NinjaWords: <http://ninjawords.com/>
- Double Tongued:
<http://www.waywordradio.org/dictionary-listing/>
- *Washington Post Style Invitational*:
http://www.washingtonpost.com/style-invitational-weekly-contest-archives/2010/07/06/AB15r7D_linkset.html.

Compounding

- Probably a Germanic characteristic
- Most productive way of adding new words to English—accounts for approx. 40% of new words
- *Eye candy, earworms, fast-forward*



Affixation

- Estimates are that it accounts for 25-30% of new words
- Many of the most productive affixes are still from OE and ME, e.g. –hood, -kind, -able, -ish (from –iċ)
- Morpheme power: <http://www.affixes.org/>
 - Prefixes
 - Suffixes
 - Infixes (very rare): absofreakinlutely
- May be from foreign languages or be trendy (e.g., -wise, as in “What are you doing lunchwise?”)

Functional Shifts

- Probably responsible for 15-20% of new words
- Carries similar semantic information into different part of speech or syntactic function
- Good example is *impact* (noun)—has become a verb (“The injury *impacts* the team’s chances”), a participle (“The *impacted* players include Jordan and Bonds”), etc.
- Recent shifts: *dialogue, network, friend, text*

Shortening: Clipping

- Characteristic of English to shorten & simplify
- Shortening estimated to create just under 10% of new words
- *Web log > blog; laboratory > lab*
- Good example is provided by the OED with “e-tailer” (electronic retailer)
- <http://www.askoxford.com/worldofwords/newwords/newworddict/?view=uk>

Other Forms of Shortening

- Blending (*brunch, webisode, bromance*)
- Initialisms (*URL, L-word, BFF, TTYL*)
- Borrowing (*sushi, quesadilla, peloton, perestroika, yin-yang*)
- Back formations (*babysit, emote*)
- New creations (*blurb, google, googol*)
- Folk etymologies (*chaise longue/lounge, penthouse, posh, Bombay*)

This part of the presentation is based on a talk given by

Teresa Reed
Jacksonville State University
SEMA 2008

**“Internet and Other
Electronic Languages as a
Topic for History of the
English Language”**

**Thanks for sharing the idea
and some of your slides,
Teresa!**

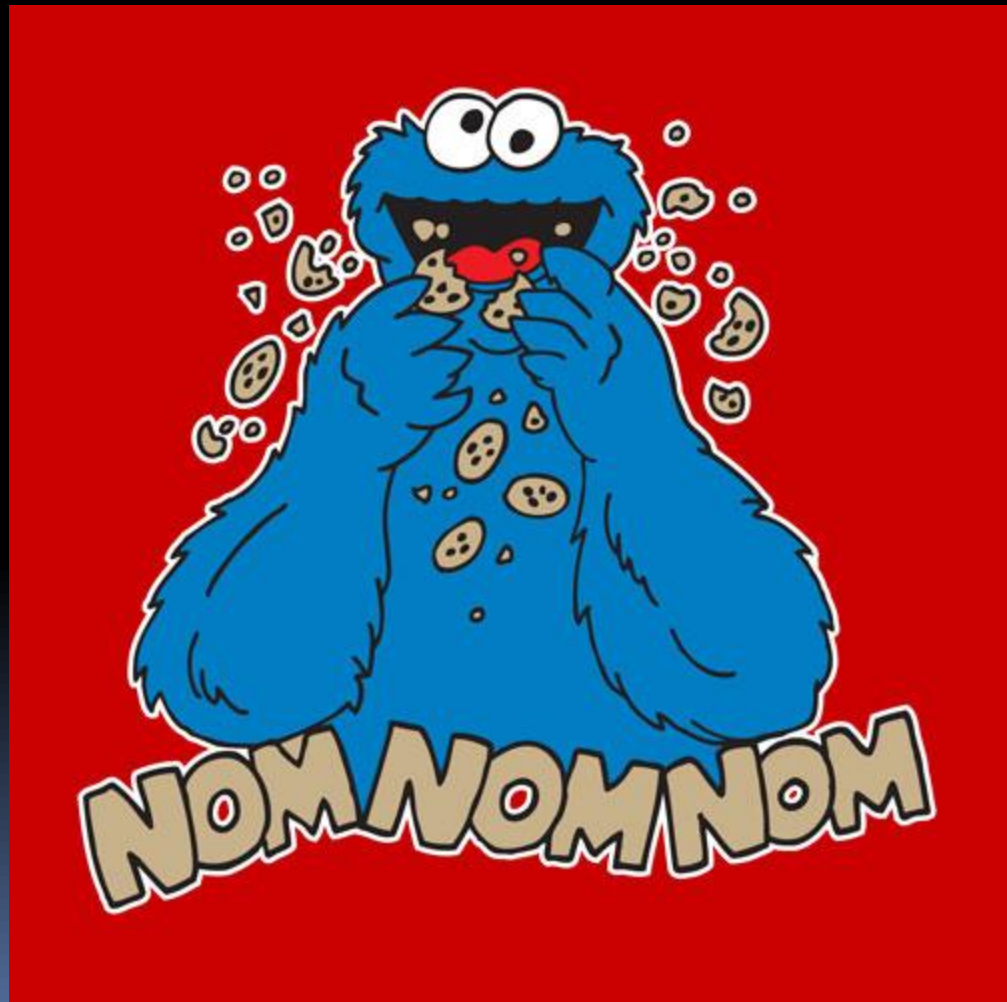


N O M M I N G

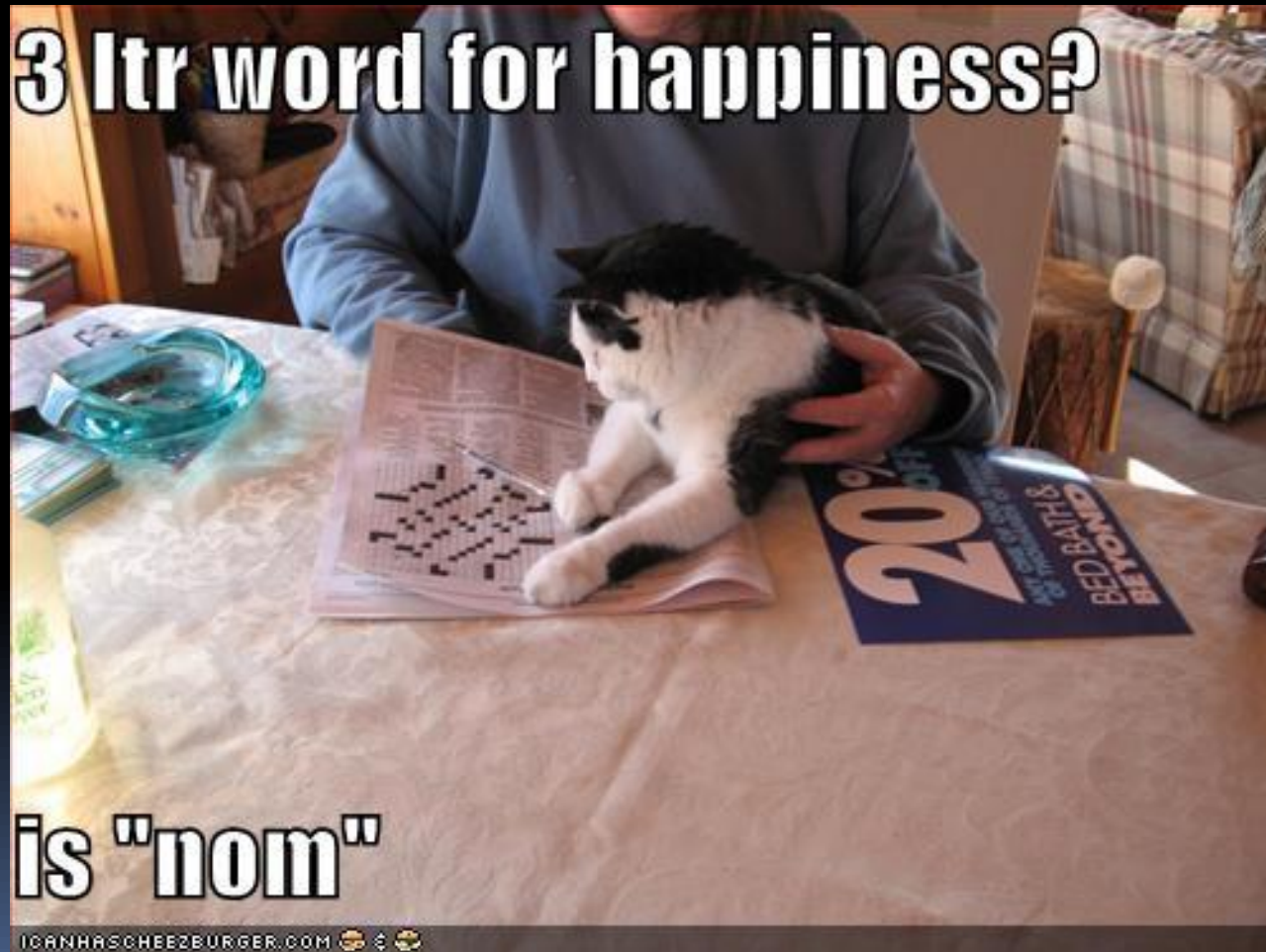
Nom nom nom nom.

Think about how a morpheme enters the language

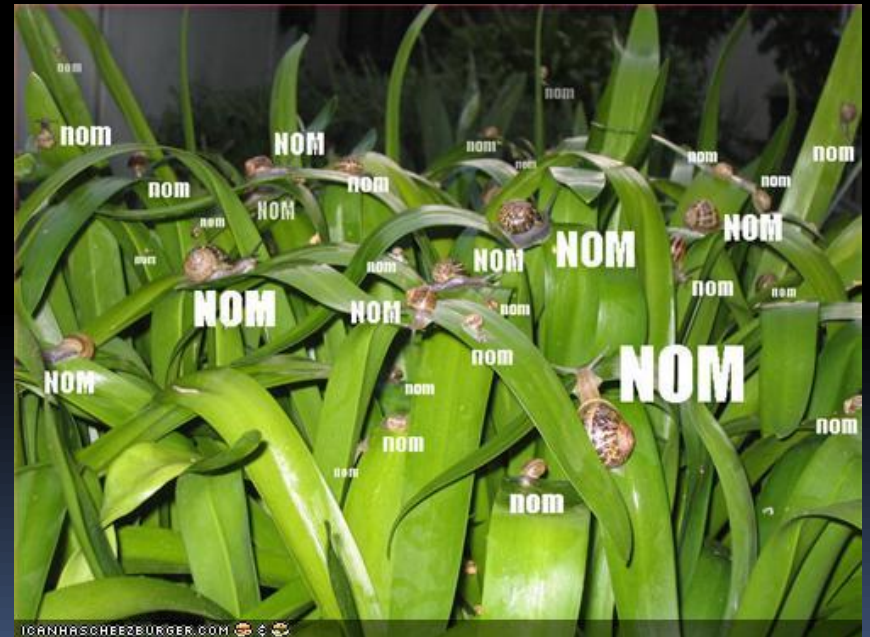
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cqz9ZXUoUcE>



“Nom”: basic content morpheme



Original “Nom” semantic values have to do with eating or chewing something tasty. Part of speech could be noun or verb:

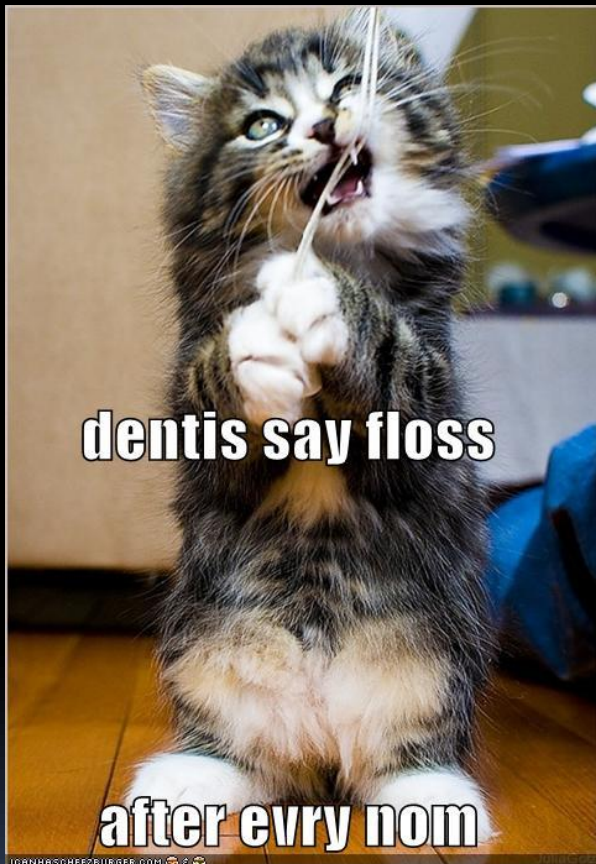


“Nom” becomes a noun with a regular plural /-z/





The noun
develops
abstract
and
concrete
senses



dentis say floss

after evry nom

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Experience cat gives advice:



Lited candils iz not for nom

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I can haz nom rations?

Ma'am?

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Functional shift: “Nom” becomes a verb

baybeh, yo daddy musta been a

cheeszburger

cause i cud nom you all night.

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I nommed sum big burdz befor

but thet egg freekz me out

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“Nom” develops an imperative sense:



“Nom” develops a figurative semantic element:



Other finite forms of the verb develop, and extend through functional shift:



I'M IN UR BACKPACK

Nomming Yur Showldur
Nom Nom Nom

Free kitteh wif every box*



* Some
nomming
mai occur
during
shipment

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HALP!!!1!!!!



teh nom blankie iz nomming!!

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..and are used in participial phrases:



More functional shift: “Nom”
becomes a modifier with
affixation:



thoes treats were soooooo nomalicious



...so gud

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Affixed forms, compounds, and even new echoic formations are produced.

Nom nom nom nom...nom
nom nom...NOMMMMM!

Frisky's 5th
didn't quite have
the same ring to it.

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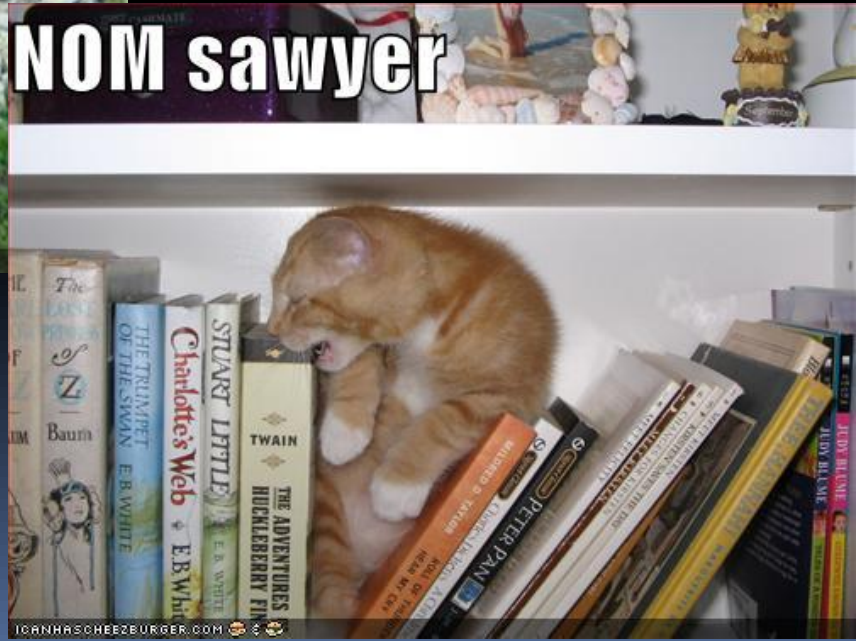
nom force field

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“Nom” goes oNOMatopoeic & beyond



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Now it gets figurative applications and is compounded



And eventually complete syntactic structures evolve.



And eventually new art forms emerge from old noms.



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**I'z got teh nom nom nomming blooz
jist az bloo az i can nom ...**

**I'z got teh nom nom nomming blooz
jist az bloo az i can nom ...**

**o yesh
i'z got
teh blooz,
but i jist keep
nomming yooz**

**coz datz all
i noe z to do
jist az bloo
as i can nom ...**

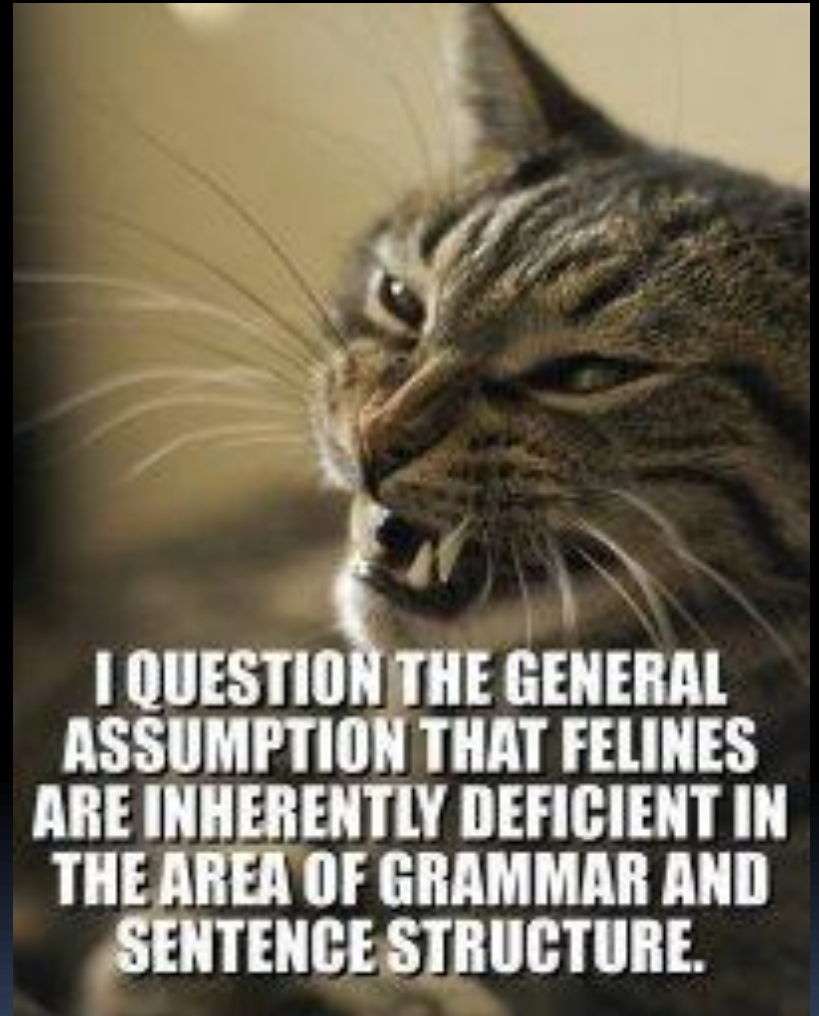
k ... i can has gitar solo nao?

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LOLCATS

An english teacher's worst nightmare



**I QUESTION THE GENERAL
ASSUMPTION THAT FELINES
ARE INHERENTLY DEFICIENT IN
THE AREA OF GRAMMAR AND
SENTENCE STRUCTURE.**



This is Neville. He just wanted to be in one of the PowerPoints.



Sigh. Everybody's a critic. Even Max.