# Language rap
## by Eŋineŋ

I'm the First of the Formants, I'm the Ace of Case:
stand back and give me semantic space!
All the phoneticians gonna lower their formants
when the Ace of Case gives his performance!
When the Proto-rapper starts to grammaticalize,
all the psycholinguists gonna track his eyes!
My aspiration comes from fortition,
my L1 comes from acquisition.
Yeah, I'm the articulatory dude:
I'm here to pitch you my amplitude.
The language rapper, that's my I.D.,
here to blab in the lab at the U. of T.
So sit and check it while I shoot my rhymes
on how to survive on… paradigms.

From the left… to the boundary tone!
From the right... to the onset phone!
From the top… to little v!
From the bottom… to Spec, TP!
All the linguists come from all the labs
To hear the language-rapper and his proto-blabs!

I'm here to rap about the pain and anguish
of making a living on the rules of language.
We linguists tend to be nerdy creatures
(just check my underspecified features!)
Though our work ain't entirely theoretical,

can't no-one call it hyper-athletical.
This leads your average deluded slob
to conclude that we have a cushy job.
Well, it ain't exactly beer and skittles
dealing with actives and passives and middles.
It ain't a life of quiet retirement,
Yo, this is a highly restricted environment.
If you think it's easy for the likes of me
to grasp what comes out of M.I.T.,
You're clearly the type who'd never guess
that this is a life of primary stress.
It's a difficult, dangerous, lonely mission
to be a syntac- or phonetician,
And you learn the meaning of pain and frustration
from morphophonological alternation.
You don't know shit about difficult times
till you try to survive on… paradigms.

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You try to tell raising from control,
try to map a case to a theta role,
track aspiration by its V.O.T.,
tell false cognates from faux amis,
tell a tonal diphthong from a monophthong,
try to make some sense of Pirahã,

try to reconstruct a proto-form,
no we ain't just keeping our office chairs warm.
Explain object agreement in modern French,
get conjunction to work with a binary branch,
show how syllable weight affects the parsing of feet,
then whine to me about life on the street!
Predictively model *Sprachbund* dispersal,
show that SO order is a universal,
explain why features cause heads to move,
then you'll know why we have something to prove!
Our tokens, responses, stimuli and primes
are how we survive on… paradigms.

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