LING 100: Introduction to Linguistics

Midterm Answers

The total number of points in this exam is 60. So, if an exercise is worth 6 points, it makes up 10% of your total exam grade.

Prescriptive vs Descriptive Grammar

1. [6 pts] Consider the following list of rules for American English. For each,
   i. provide an example that violates the rule, and
   ii. indicate whether it would be part of a prescriptive grammar or a descriptive grammar (that is, is the example just dispreferred by those who write style manuals, or is it actually ungrammatical in the sense we've discussed in class)?

   If you're not a native speaker of American English, you can ask a native speaker whether the examples you made up are something they would say. A good person to ask is Amber.

   1 point each answer (prescriptive/descriptive), 1 point correct counterexample.

   a) Do not dangle modifiers - a participle-based modifier phrase occurring in the beginning of a sentence, like “Walking down Fifth Avenue, …” or “Riding a bike,…” should refer to the subject of the sentence that follows.  
      Prescriptive Walking down Fifth Ave, buildings seem tall

   b) In a double-object sentence pronounced without any pauses, like “I gave Mary the book”, do not put any adverbs in between the two objects.  
      Descriptive I gave Mary gladly the book

   c) In an answer to the question “Who is it?” (e.g. It’s John), use the nominative form of the pronouns (i.e., I, he, she).  
      Prescriptive It’s me!

Language Instinct.

2. [2 pts] Name two arguments that suggest that Behaviorism falls short of providing an explanation for the human linguistic ability.

   1 point for each of 2 distinct arguments

   Any two of the following:
   • Poverty of stimulus
   • Children’s linguistic creativity : foots, holded
   • Nicaraguan sign language – there is no stimulus to generate the response of NSL
   • No primitive languages
   • Converging on the same language despite difference in individual stimuli

3. [2 pts] Give two differences between the two sign languages called Lenguaje de Signos Nicaraguense and Idioma de Signos Nicaraguense.

   1 point for each of 2 distinct differences

   Many examples, e.g. no agreement vs. verb agreement, iconicity vs. more arbitrariness in signs, thematic roles (who did what to whom) indicated by sentence structure/grammatical stuff, etc.
Phonetics

4. [1 pt] (Multiple choice) To articulate one class of speech sounds, the tongue tip makes contact with:
   a. Uvula.  
   b. Teeth.  
   c. Larynx.  
   d. Epiglottis

5. [8 pts] i. Do the following sounds form a natural class in English?
   ii. If not, add just enough sounds to make a natural class.
   iii. In any case, state the narrowest possible natural class that the following sounds belong to:
   a [n], [m], [ŋ] , [j], [w], [l], [ ] yes, sonorant  
   b. [i], [u], [i] no, [ui] high vowels  
   c. [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [θ] yes, sibilants  
   d. [ɛ], [e], [ə] [ ] mid unrounded vowels OR mid non-back vowels

Phonology

6. [2 pts] Consider the following pairs of words. Explain using the syllable structure diagram why native speakers perceive the first pair as not rhyming and the second as rhyming:
   [stoun] [stouv]  
   [milk] [silk]

Because the rhyme portion of the syllable is the same in milk-silk, but different in stone-stove.

7. [2 pts] i. Transcribe and syllabify the following word.

   ** i. frægməntəfr  

   ** ii. [mŋ] would involve no increase in sonority between the onset and nucleus of the syllable. Since each syllable must be a single peak of sonority, [mŋ] wouldn’t be a single syllable!
8. [4pts] This is exercise 34 from *Language Files*, File 3, pp.142-143.  
**Canadian French**

In the dialect of French (an Indo-European language of the Romance family) spoken in Canada, consider the distribution of [t] and [tʰ] (a voiceless alveolar affricate) in the data below.

i. State their distribution (what environments they occur in), and
ii. Determine if they are allophones of one phoneme or of separate phonemes. [y] and [ý] are high, front, rounded vowels, tense and lax, respectively.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. [tu]</td>
<td>‘all’</td>
<td>g. [telegram]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. [abut'i]</td>
<td>‘ended’</td>
<td>h. [tre]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. [tel]</td>
<td>‘such’</td>
<td>i. [kyl'tyr]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. [têb]</td>
<td>‘stamp’</td>
<td>j. [minvt]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. [t' midterm]</td>
<td>‘timid’</td>
<td>k. [t'y]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. [t't]</td>
<td>‘title’</td>
<td>l. [t'vb]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i. **The sounds [t] and [tʰ] are in complementary distribution, since the sound [tʰ] appears only before high front vowels, while [t] occurs elsewhere.** (2 points)

ii. **They are allophones of the same phoneme, since they are in predictable, complementary distribution.** (2 points)

**Morphology**

9. [6 pts] In the following short passage, find one example of each of the following categories of morpheme. **Everything except the clitic has several possible examples in the passage:**

1 point for each example

a. bound function morpheme -ed in structured, -s in entities, -er in hearer

b. bound content morpheme co- in cooperative, any root, e.g. hear- in hearer, inform- in informational, -operate in cooperative

c. free content morpheme any, part, way…

d. free function morpheme the, a, of, …

e. a compound topic-structure, knowledge-store, information packaging

f. a clitic ’s as in hearer’s and reader’s

The management of hearer’s (reader’s) attention is an integral part of cooperative communication in any language. Discourse is thus structured in a way that allows the hearer to focus his attention on various entities evoked in the discourse (topic-structure), and to ensure that information about them is entered into his knowledge-store in a coherent way (information packaging)…

10. [2 pts] Consider the following words: “unbelievable” “undoable”. Using tree structures explain why one of them is ambiguous and the other is not. State which one is ambiguous. 5 point for stating which one is ambiguous, 1.5 points for correct diagrams

**Undoable is the ambiguous one, since it could be undo+able, or un+doable, as shown in the tree diagrams below. Unbelievable is not ambiguous, since there is no verb unbelie (meaning reverse the believing?)**

```
Adj  Adj  Adj
/ \ / \ / \  
V Af Af Adj Af Adj
\ | | / \ | / \  
Af V able un V Af un V Af
| | | | |  
un do do able believe able
```
11. [15] This is exercise 30 from Language Files, File 4, p.183.

**Turkish**

Examine the following data from Turkish and answer the questions that follows.

- **a.** [deniz] ‘an ocean’
- **b.** [denizte] ‘to an ocean’
- **c.** [denizin] ‘of an ocean’
- **d.** [eve] ‘to a house’
- **e.** [evden] ‘from a house’
- **f.** [evdökden] ‘from a little house’
- **g.** [denizdlıkde] ‘in a little ocean’
- **h.** [elde] ‘in a hand’
- **i.** [elim] ‘my hand’
- **j.** [eller] ‘hands’
- **k.** [difler] ‘teeth’
- **l.** [difimizin] ‘of our tooth’
- **m.** [diflerimizin] ‘of our teeth’
- **n.** [eldʒike] ‘to a little hand’
- **o.** [denizlerimizde] ‘in our oceans’
- **p.** [evdʒıklerimizde] ‘in our little houses’

i. Give the Turkish morpheme that corresponds to each of the following translations: 6 points (.5 point for each morpheme)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[deniz]</th>
<th>ocean</th>
<th>[de]</th>
<th>in</th>
<th>[im]</th>
<th>my</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ev]</td>
<td>house</td>
<td>[e]</td>
<td>to</td>
<td>[in]</td>
<td>of</td>
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<tr>
<td>[el]</td>
<td>hand</td>
<td>[den]</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>[imiz]</td>
<td>our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[dif]</td>
<td>tooth</td>
<td>[dʒik]</td>
<td>little</td>
<td>[ler]</td>
<td>(plural marker)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii. What is the order of morphemes in a Turkish word (in terms of **noun stem**, **plural marker**, **diminutive marker** ‘little’, **possessive pronouns**, and **preposition-like markers**)

4 points

noun + 'little' + plural marker + determiner + preposition

iii. How would one say ‘of our little hands’ in Turkish? 5 points

[eldʒiklerimizin]

12. [1 pt] (Multiple choice) Based on (11) above, what morphological type of language is Turkish?
   a. agglutinative   b. analytic   c. derivational   d. head-final

**Syntax**

13. [1 pt] (Multiple choice) Which of the following sentences does not help to test the constituency of *eat the apples* in the sentence *John could eat the apples*?
   a. What could John do? Eat the apples!
   b. *John could eat them*
   c. John could do it
   d. Eat the apples John certainly could!

14. [8 pts] Sylliespeek phrase structure
   i. Draw the syntactic tree for each of the Sylliespeek sentences in accordance with X’-schema. Several options are available for trees.
   The basic choices are: **Do you want to have a “silent” CP layer above the IP or not?**
   - Is “to school” a complement of “biked” or is it a modifier/adjunct?
   - Are adverbs attached to the VP or to the V’ level?
   - Is a proper name an NPs or an N’?
   - Is “I” going to be empty, or is it going to contain a silent tense “[past]”? Are determiners & adverbs phrases or just single words?
Below: no CP, “to school” is a complement, adverbs attach to V’, proper names are NPs, “I” contains a silent [past] morpheme, a determiner is a phrase, and so is an adverb:

a) “Ate pizza John”

\[ IP \]
\[ I' \]
\[ VP \]
\[ N_p \]
\[ [past] \]
\[ V' \]
\[ pizza \]
\[ ate \]
\[ John \]

b) “Biked to school Mary”

\[ IP \]
\[ I' \]
\[ VP \]
\[ N_p \]
\[ [past] \]
\[ V' \]
\[ Mary \]
\[ biked \]
\[ to \]
\[ school \]

\[ PP \]
\[ P \]
\[ NP \]
\[ P \]
\[ to \]
\[ school \]

\[ N \]
\[ N' \]

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ii. Then, write a set of phrase structure rules that can derive all of these Sylliespeek sentences. The main thing here is for the rules to be consistent with the trees. The rules that will give the particular trees I’ve drawn above are these:

Phrase structure rules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IP → I’ NP</td>
<td>I’ → I VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP → Npr</td>
<td>N → pizza, school, man, book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP → DP N’</td>
<td>V → ate, biked, danced, read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N’ → N</td>
<td>I → [past]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP → D’</td>
<td>Npr → John, Mary, Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D’ → D</td>
<td>D → that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V’ → V</td>
<td>P → to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V’ → V NP</td>
<td>Adv → often, yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V’ → V PP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V’ → V’ AdvP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP → P’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P’ → P NP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdvP → Adv’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adv’ → Adv</td>
<td></td>
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</table>