

Intro Linguistics

HW assignment #1

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Name: _____

This assignment is due **Thursday September 28 at the beginning of lecture**. NB: the boxed numbers on the right are an indication of the level of difficulty of the question, from 1, easiest, to 3, hardest, relative to the general difficulty of the assignment. Use this as a way to decide how much time to spend on each question.

You can type up your answers or write them by hand in the space provided. You should be **concise**. There are no extra points awarded for prolixity, quite the opposite. In questions of difficulty 3 and higher, you are allowed to let go a bit more and continue your answers in a separate sheet, **but only if you really have to** / simply can't resist doing so.

1 Linguistic competence

1. In the dataset in (1), read '(X)' as indicating that *X* is optional: it can be present or absent, with no effect on grammaticality. On the other hand, '*(*X*)' indicates that *X* *must* be present.¹

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- (1)
- a. Je (ne) suis pas content.
 - b. Tu (n') es pas content.
 - c. Il (n') est pas content.
 - d. Nous *(ne) sommes pas contents.
 - e. Vous (n') êtes pas contents.
 - f. Ils (ne) sont pas contents.

Advance a hypothesis for why (1d) sounds so strange without the element *ne*. **NB: you need some native-speaker intuitions about French to figure this one out. If you're not a native speaker, do this exercise with someone who is.**

¹For completeness: '*(*X*)' says that *X* *cannot* be present.

2. Consider the dataset below, where (2) is from African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) and (3) from Standard American English. The symbol \emptyset indicates silence where we might have expected some form of the verb *to be*.

- (2) African-American Vernacular English
- a. He \emptyset fast in everything he do.
 - b. Michael Washington \emptyset out there sellin' his rocks.
 - c. Boot \emptyset always coming over my house.
 - d. He just feel like he \emptyset gettin' cripple up from arthritis.
 - e. If you \emptyset bad, your spirit \emptyset going to hell.
 - f. *He \emptyset as nice as he says he \emptyset .
 - g. * \emptyset You leaving? I \emptyset .
- (3) Standard American English
- a. He's fast in everything he does.
 - b. Boot's always coming over to my house.
 - c. He's as nice as he says he is.
 - d. If you're bad, your spirit is going to hell.
 - e. *He's as nice as he says he's.
 - f. If you are bad, your spirit's going to hell.
 - g. He is fast in everything he does.
 - h. *Are you leaving? I'm.
 - i. Boot is always coming over to my house.

Formulate a hypothesis for when the verb *to be* can be omitted in AAVE.