Introduction to Linguistics (Fall 2011)

Mid-term Study Guide

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Introduction

1. Explain in what way language is systematic, rule-governed, symbolic, arbitrary.
2. What is finite and what is infinite in language?
3. Descriptive versus prescriptive approaches in linguistics.
4. What is the subject of study of phonetics (acoustic phonetics, articulatory phonetics), phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, diachronic linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics.

Phonetics

1. What is the relationship between letters and sounds? Give examples.
2. Why can't we use spelling to reflect pronunciation in studying languages?
3. Phonetic symbols for English sounds. Be able to provide a symbol to the description using phonetic terms. (e.g. Question: what is the symbol for the voiceless interdental fricative? Answer: θ)
4. Describe the place and manner of articulation for a given English consonant.
5. Be able to determine if a given sound is voiced or voiceless, be able to give a voiced or voiceless counterpart.
6. Say if a given vowel is high/mid/ low, front or back (central are also back), rounded or unrounded, lax or tense, reduced or unreduced.
7. Be able to transcribe monosyllabic words.
8. Give examples of words containing a sound represented by a given phonetic symbol.

Phonology

1. Indicate minimal pairs.
2. On the basis of the data, say if a pair of sounds are 2 separate phonemes or 2 allophones of one phoneme.
3. Be able to list the environments in which a sound appears in the set of given data.
4. On the basis of given data, be able to say if two sounds are in complementary, parallel (overlapping) distribution, or in free variation.
5. Mark aspirated p, t, k in the transcription of an English text.

6. ~~Mark pre-glottalized t.~~
7. ~~Mark in transcription where /t/ is realized as glottal stop.~~
8. ~~Mark flapping in the transcription.~~
9. ~~Mark retracted t in the transcription of English.~~
10. What are the three forms of English plural suffix and what is their distribution?
11. What segments trigger Canadian Raising? Mark Canadian Raising in the transcription.
12. What is the environment for the nasal place assimilation in English? Give examples.
13. What is the environment for palatalization in English? Give examples, mark in the transcription. What is the reason for palatalization?
14. What is the distribution of the velarized and non-velarized /l/ in RP?

Morphology

1. What is morphology?
2. Divide words into morphemes, determine whether a given morpheme in a given word is a stem or an affix (if an affix: whether a prefix or a suffix), bound or free.
3. Determine what lexical category (part of speech) a given word belongs to, if it is simple or complex.
4. Give an example of a bound base.
5. Say if a given category is open or closed.
6. Give at least one example of each (be able to explain details if you give some original examples): coined word (coinage), acronym, alphabetic abbreviation, clipping, blend, generified word, proper name used to refer to a category, direct borrowing, indirect borrowing (loan translation, calque).
7. Give an example of a word formation rule.