

Language Quiz 1 Practice Questions

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1 Linguistics Fundamentals

Problem 1. Definitions.

- (a) Define *linguistic productivity*.
- (b) Explain the distinction between linguistic *performance* and linguistic *competence*.
- (c) Explain the distinction between a *prescriptive* and *descriptive* grammar.
- (d) Define *linguistic sign*.
- (e) What is meant by the claim that linguistic signs are *arbitrary*.
- (f) State the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.
- (g) What is *universal grammar*?
- (h) Define *displacement*.
- (i) Define *recursion*.

Problem 2. Conceptual questions.

- (a) Why do linguists believe that spoken and signed languages are, at a fundamental level, expressions of the same underlying linguistic faculty?
- (b) What evidence supports the existence of universal grammar?
- (c) What are some examples of *non-arbitrary* linguistic signs? Provide some examples from English.
- (d) [♣] What linguistic knowledge do you possess of your own language?
- (e) [♣] What kind of evidence would falsify the claim that universal grammar exists?
- (f) [♣♣] What is at stake in the claim that humans alone possess linguistic faculty? What would be necessary to falsify this claim?

2 Morphology

Problem 1. Definitions.

- (a) Define the term *morpheme*.
- (b) Define the following six (6) types of morphological systems, and provide an example of a language or language family which falls into each category: *analytic*, *synthetic*, *fusional*, *templatic*, *agglutinative*, *polysynthetic*.
- (c) Explain the distinction between *free* and *bound* morphemes. Provide examples from English to illustrate the distinction.
- (d) Define the following terms, and provide examples of each (in English or any other language): *affix*, *prefix*, *suffix*, *infix*, *circumfix*.
- (e) What is an *allomorph*? Provide an example from English.
- (f) What is meant by *suppletive allomorphy*? Provide an example from English.
- (g) Define *lexical category* or *part of speech*.
- (h) Explain the distinction between *open* and *closed* classes of morphemes. Provide examples from English to illustrate the distinction.
- (i) Explain the differences between *derivational* and *inflectional* morphemes.
- (j) List the inflectional morphemes of English.
- (k) What is meant by the terms *stem* and *root*?
- (l) What is a *compound*? Provide an example from English.
- (m) What is a *head*?
- (n) Define *backformation* or *analogy*. Provide an example of this from English.
- (o) Define *malapropism*.

Problem 2. Conceptual questions.

- (a) What kind of morphological system(s) does English use? Provide examples to justify your argument.
- (b) Provide four (4) rules which may be used as diagnostics to decide between competing descriptions (trees) for the morphological structure of a word.
- (c) Are prefixes in English derivational or inflectional morphemes?
- (d) Consider the following terms, which all end in the segment: *bicker*, *bigger*, *builder*, *cucumber*, *greater*, *October*, *smother*, *soccer*, *splinter*, *teacher*, *wander*, *water*. For each word, decide whether the *-er* segment is a morpheme. How many distinct *-er* morphemes are present in this list?

- (e) [♣] The English prefix *un-* can combine with adjectives to produce their negation; thus, *un + happy → unhappy*. Yet we do not have **unsad*, **unbig*, etc. What explains this?
- (f) [♣] Consider the words *cacti*, *dice*, *dogs*, *fish*, *geese*, *oxen*, *people*, *seraphim*. What's happening here?

Problem 3. For the following words, consider how many senses (“definitions”) the word may have. For each sense, provide a morphological description of the structure (i.e., a tree diagram). In each case, list the morphemes present along with their positional type (prefix, stem, suffix) and, for non-stem morphemes, their functional type (inflectional or derivational).

- (a) *calcify*
- (b) *corner*
- (c) *modernizers*
- (d) [♣] *recreation*
- (e) *runner*
- (f) *runs*
- (g) *undo*
- (h) *unlockable*

Problem 4. Consider the following excerpt from Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting of the Snark*:

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

What are the parts of speech of *vorpal*, *snicker-snack*, and *galumphing*?

Problem 5. Consider the following table of sentences from Samoan.

<i>manao</i> ‘he wishes’	<i>mananao</i> ‘they wish’
<i>matua</i> ‘he is old’	<i>matutua</i> ‘they are old’
<i>malosi</i> ‘he is strong’	<i>malolosi</i> ‘they are strong’
<i>punou</i> ‘he bends’	<i>punonou</i> ‘they bend’
<i>atamaki</i> ‘he is wise’	<i>atamamaki</i> ‘they are wise’
<i>savali</i> ‘he travels’	<i>pepese</i> ‘they sing’
<i>laga</i> ‘he weaves’	

- (a) How would you translate *they weave*, *they travel*, and *he sings* into Samoan.
- (b) Provide a morphological rule which describes how the plural form of a Samoan verb relates to the singular form.

3 Segmentation

Problem 1. Consider the following table of terms from Michoacan Aztec.

<i>nokali</i> 'my house'	<i>mopelo</i> 'your dog'
<i>nokalimes</i> 'my houses'	<i>mopelomes</i> 'your dogs'
<i>mokali</i> 'your house'	<i>ikwahmili</i> 'his cornfield'
<i>ikali</i> 'his house'	<i>nokwahmili</i> 'my cornfield'
<i>nopelo</i> 'my dog'	<i>mokwahmili</i> 'your cornfield'

- (a) Identify and list all morphemes present.

Problem 2 (♣). Consider the following table of terms from Serbo-Croatian.

<i>gledati</i> 'to watch'	<i>nazivaju</i> 'they call'
<i>diram</i> 'I touch'	<i>sviranje</i> 'playing (noun)'
<i>nazivanje</i> 'calling (noun)'	<i>gladujem</i> 'I starve'
<i>dirati</i> 'to touch'	<i>kupuju</i> 'they buy'
<i>kupovanje</i> 'buying (noun)'	<i>stanovati</i> 'to live'
<i>sviraju</i> 'they play'	<i>kupujem</i> 'I buy'
<i>gledam</i> 'I watch'	<i>diranje</i> 'touching (noun)'
<i>stanovanje</i> 'living (noun)'	<i>stanujem</i> 'I live'
<i>diraju</i> 'they touch'	<i>gladovanje</i> 'starving (noun)'
<i>nazivati</i> 'to call'	<i>stanuju</i> 'they live'
<i>kupovati</i> 'to buy'	<i>gledaju</i> 'they watch'
<i>gladuju</i> 'they starve'	<i>svirati</i> 'to play'
<i>gladovati</i> 'to starve'	<i>sviram</i> 'I play'
<i>gledanje</i> 'watching (noun)'	<i>nazivam</i> 'I call'

- (a) Identify and list all morphemes present.
- (b) What is happening with the *-am* of *gledam* 'I watch' and the *-em* of *stanujem* 'I live'?
- (c) Consider *razarati* 'destroy'. What do you think the translations for *I destroy*, *they destroy*, and *destruction* are?

Problem 3 (♣♣). The following table presents phrases in Ancient Greek along with phrases in English. **The Ancient Greek and English rows do not necessarily corre-**

spond to one another; that is, (1) *the donkey of the master* is not necessarily the translation for (A) *hotōnhyiōnhippos*.

A	hotōnhyiōnhippos	1	the donkey of the master
B	hoitōnhippōnkyrioi	2	the brothers of the merchant
C	hoituemporuadelphoi	3	the merchants of the donkeys
D	hoitōnonōnemporoi	4	the sons of the masters
E	hotukyriuonos	5	the horse of the sons
F	hotuoikukyrios	6	the masters of the horses
G	hotōnadelphōnoikos	7	the house of the brothers
H	hoitōnkyriōnhyioi	8	the master of the house

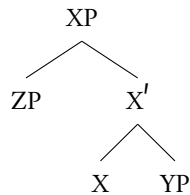
- Identify the translation of each Ancient Greek phrase.
- List each morpheme present in the list of Ancient Greek phrases along with their meaning.
- Explain how Ancient Greek uses word order to convey the possessive relationship between two nouns.
- [♣] Are *ho* and *tu* both morphemes? If so, what is their relationship to one another?
- [♣♣] Unlike English, Ancient Greek marks case. One such case is the *genitive*, which indicates possession. In light of your answers to both (c) and (d), explain how Ancient Greek uses case to convey the possessive relationship between two nouns.
- Based on this data, what kind of morphological system does Ancient Greek seem to have?

4 Syntax

Problem 1. Definitions.

- Define *syntax*.
- Define *constituent*.
- List as many constituency tests as you can, and provide minimal pairs from English to illustrate their use.
- Define *lexical* and *structural ambiguity*.
- Define *syntactic category*. List the syntactic categories discussed thus far in class.

- (f) In the following tree diagram, identify the *main phrase*, the *head*, *specifier*, and *complement*.



- (g) Explain the difference between *lexical* and *phrasal category*. Give examples of each.
 (h) Define *dominance*, *immediate dominance*, and *sibling* as they pertain to phrase structure diagrams (trees).
 (i) Define *embedded clause*.
 (j) Explain what is meant by *headedness*.

Problem 2. Conceptual questions.

- (a) Explain the relationship between phrase structure rules and phrase structure diagrams.
 (b) Explain the concept of *verb transitivity* in terms of selection.
 (c) Explain why **I believe the student the book* is ungrammatical.
 (d) Explain why *!The sun hears the boy* is semantically anomalous.

5 Semantics

Problem 1. Definitions.

- (a) Define *entailment*.
 (b) Define *ambiguity* and *temporary ambiguity*.
 (c) Define *presupposition*.
 (d) Explain what is meant by the logical form $P \Rightarrow Q$.

Problem 2. Conceptual Questions.

- (a) Does *Jane is a smart woman* presuppose that Jane is a woman?
 (b) Does *John is a smart man* entail that John is smart?
 (c) Does *Every dog is small and fluffy* entail *Every dog is small*?
 (d) Does *Every dog is small or fluffy* entail *Every dog is fluffy*?

- (e) Does *Nobody is tall and short* entail *Nobody is tall*?
- (f) Does *Nobody is tall or short* entail *Nobody is short*?
- (g) Does *Bill believes that John is tall* entail *John is tall*?
- (h) Does *John hopes that Bill is tall* entail *Bill is tall*?