

Review for Exam 1

This is not necessarily a comprehensive list, but here are some ideas to get you started.

Units

- Fundamental questions
 - mental grammar
 - innateness
 - prescription vs. description
- Phonetics
- Phonology

Readings

- Jackendoff Chapters 1-5
- Language Files Phonetics
- Language Files Phonology (you can skip the phonotactics section)
- Werker 1995 (categorical perception and acquisition of phonological categories)

You are responsible for material from the reading, class lectures, as well as homeworks and practice exercises.

You will be asked to do the same types of problems that you have seen on homeworks and practice exercises, the quiz, etc. Expect to analyze data from a foreign language.

In addition to problems involving data analysis, there will be multiple choice, possibly definition matching and/or applying definitions to examples, short answer, and possibly a short essay.

You will not be asked to write out definitions for technical terms, but you will be expected to know and understand the terms, be able to recognize an accurate definition and be able to apply the term to relevant cases. For example, you should know what it means to be a consonant vs. a vowel, etc.

Stuff you should understand (Terminology and concepts)

Make sure that you understand the relevant concept and can do all of the skills associated with the concept.

- (mental) grammar; evidence for rules in mental grammar (e.g., recursion)
- innateness; Universal Grammar
- prescriptive vs. descriptive grammar/rules
- grammatical/ungrammatical: when we, as linguists, say that X is ungrammatical in language Y, we mean that a native speaker of language Y would not say X
- lexicon, lexical entry
- IPA, phonetic alphabets (what they are and motivation for, memorize symbols)
- terminology for parts of the vocal tract: glottis, larynx, oral cavity, nasal cavity, alveolar ridge, palate, velum, uvula

- Places of articulation: bilabial, labiodental, interdental, alveolar, palatal, velar, uvular, glottal
- Manners of articulation: stop (oral and nasal), fricative, affricate, glide, liquid
- Voiced, Voiceless
- aspiration, Voice Onset Time (VOT)
- phonetic features, natural classes
- description of vowels: high, low, mid, front, central, back, (un)rounded, tense, lax
- consonant, vowel (definition in terms of how the sounds are produced)
- diphthongs
- (diacritics)
- phoneme, allophone (and use of // vs. [])
- contrastive features
- minimal pairs
- complementary distribution
- properties that condition the allophones
- phonological rules (the idea that generally sounds change minimally, usually by one feature)
- types of phonological rules: assimilation, dissimilation, deletion, insertion
- categorical perception
- kids as “universal listeners”
- High-amplitude sucking
- Conditioned Head-turn paradigm

Skills you should have

- phonetic transcription: given an English word, you should be able to give the phonetic transcription, and vice versa. (that is, know the symbol-sound correspondence for all of the English sounds in the IPA)
- label a diagram of the vocal tract (sagittal section)
- reproduce the vowel chart (know which vowels are high, low, front, back, etc); be able to describe a vowel in terms of relevant features (tongue height, tongue advancement, lip rounding, tense vs. lax)
- be able to describe a consonant in terms of place and manner of articulation and presence or absence of voicing
- say what feature a group of sounds has in common different from another group
- analyze data (from English and other languages) and give a phonemic analysis: determine whether two phones (sounds) are allophones of a single phoneme or of two different phonemes. If the sounds are in complementary distribution, you should be able to state the environments (the complementary environments) that the two sounds occur in, state what the phoneme is, give a rule for deriving the allophones from the phonemes. If the sounds constitute separate phonemes, you should be able to provide evidence for this (minimal pairs).
- be able to make and use generalizations (rather than making lists, come up with a rule or characterization); for example, generalizing over the environments that an allophone occurs in (e.g., “all of these sounds are voiceless” or “all of these are fricatives”)

- be able to make and test hypotheses (when you propose an analysis, test it against available data to make sure that it can account for the data – and that it accounts for the data in the most general way)
- Discuss and evaluate arguments for mental grammar & rules (creativity, production & comprehension of novel forms), arguments for innateness (species specificity, universality, poverty of the stimulus).
- Discuss what linguists mean when they talk about innateness & Universal Grammar. What is the balance between nature and nurture with respect to language?
- Provide & discuss examples of how the mind creates abstract categories and structures that don't exist in the input (the physical world). E.g., phonemes (categorical perception).
- Discuss and explain experimental methods for testing categorical perception in various age-groups.
- Be able to discuss the results of Werker-type experiments. What abilities are human babies born with? Are these abilities species-specific? Specific to the linguistic system? Discuss the role of experience with a particular language in terms of how it affects perception of speech sounds.

Suggestions & resources

- make use of the Phonetics page with animation (linked from the course webpage).
- do the practice and homework problems again, look for other problems in the Exercise handouts I gave out in class
- review the lecture slides on the web and make sure that you understand the points that were made
- reread the relevant chapters and articles