

# Linguistics 001

## Mid-term Exam

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Your SSN \_\_\_\_\_

### Part one

In this first section of the exam, each answer is worth one point, for a total of 20 points.

1. In Formal Language Theory, a language is modeled as
  - (a) a list of lexical categories
  - (b) a syntactic structure
  - (c) a set of strings of symbols
  - (d) a universe of possible meanings
  - (e) a sequence of phonemes
2. An article entitled *Tense and the time argument of a predicate* primarily concerns
  - (a) phonetics
  - (b) phonology
  - (c) morphology
  - (d) syntax
  - (e) semantics
  - (f) pragmatics
3. A book entitled *Women, men and politeness* is most likely to belong in
  - (a) theoretical linguistics
  - (b) historical linguistics
  - (c) sociolinguistics
  - (d) psycholinguistics
  - (e) applied linguistics
  - (f) computational linguistics
4. Based on a biblical story about the aftermath of a battle between the Gileadites and the Ephraimites, a term for an arbitrary linguistic marker that distinguishes one group from another is:
5. In the past million years of hominid evolution, apparent specialization for spoken language is provided by:
  - (a) lengthening the lower jaw to permit a wider range of positions
  - (b) increasing the curvature of the hard palate
  - (c) making the head generally larger
  - (d) shortening the muzzle and lowering the larynx
  - (e) making the teeth smaller so as not to obstruct the sound

6. Which of the following is NOT true about the past million years of evolution of the hominid brain (select just one):
- (a) The brain becomes larger overall relative to body weight
  - (b) The relative amount of primary visual striate cortex is increased
  - (c) The amount of cerebral asymmetry increases
  - (d) The relative size of areas specialized for language skills increases
7. What is the “Machiavellian Intelligence Hypothesis”?
8. He worked to develop procedures to provide operational definitions for syntactic categories, made crucial contributions to formal language theory, and ended up by concluding that effective discovery procedures for syntax require the assumption of extensive “innate ideas.”
- (a) Ludwig Wittgenstein
  - (b) Noam Chomsky
  - (c) Gottlob Frege
  - (d) J.L Austin
  - (e) Robin Dunbar
9. As a young man, he saw language as establishing formal connections between things in the mind and objects in the world. Later in his life, he came to see meaning as arising only in the context of “interactions with other individuals in which we move around sets of linguistic counters; and like a set of games, each of these little encounters has its own set of rules.”
- (a) Ludwig Wittgenstein
  - (b) Noam Chomsky
  - (c) Gottlob Frege
  - (d) J.L Austin
  - (e) Robin Dunbar
10. He is credited with introducing the principle of compositionality in semantics.
- (a) Ludwig Wittgenstein
  - (b) Noam Chomsky
  - (c) Gottlob Frege
  - (d) J.L. Austin
  - (e) Robin Dunbar
11. Estimates of vocabulary acquisition throughout childhood suggest that on average we learn
- (a) about one word every ten days
  - (b) about one word a day
  - (c) about ten words a day
  - (d) about a hundred words a day
  - (e) about five hundred words a day

12. The number of distinct phonemes used in a given language is typically about
- (a) 50,000
  - (b) 5,000
  - (c) 500
  - (d) 50
  - (e) 5
13. The consonants in the International Phonetic Alphabet are organized according to:
- (a) the dominant frequency components in their spectrum
  - (b) the year of their discovery
  - (c) the shape of the letters used to write them
  - (d) their alphabetical order in French, the official language of the IPA
  - (e) the location of primary vocal tract stricture
14. The rules for determining the tone of compounds in Mawu and in Osaka Japanese are essentially the same. This is probably because of
- (a) the historical kinship of the two languages and cultures.
  - (b) the influence of 16th-century Portuguese traders.
  - (c) the fact that there is only one logical way to handle compound words.
  - (d) innate ideas.
  - (e) blind luck.
15. One technique used by Mark Twain to indicate the social distance between Huck Finn and his father, "Pap," is to
- (a) have Pap use "double negatives," whereas Huck never does.
  - (b) have Pap delete all his final consonants, whereas Huck seldom does.
  - (c) have Pap sometimes use *-in* for word-final *-ing*, whereas Huck never does.
  - (d) have Pap curse, while Huck does not.
  - (e) have Huck use only Standard English grammar.
16. Give an example of a morpheme that is longer than a syllable:
17. Give an example of a pair of homophones:
18. Give an example of a closed lexical category, or *function word*, in English:
19. The English word *gosh* is a member of the lexical category of
- (a) prepositions
  - (b) interjections
  - (c) cue words
  - (d) contrapositives
  - (e) adjuncts

20. Whether or not a speech sound is *nasalized* depends on the position of the
- (a) tongue.
  - (b) hyoid bone.
  - (c) velum.
  - (d) epiglottis.
  - (e) pharynx.

## Part Two

In the second part of this exam, each of the questions is worth between two and six points, as indicated, for a total of 20 points. Some questions, as indicated, have the potential for extra credit.

1. (2 points + 1 extra credit) The sentence “everyone brought their friends” is an example of the construction known as *singular their*.

What reason is usually given for viewing *singular their* as “bad grammar”?

Give one (or for extra credit two) BRIEF arguments for the acceptability of *singular their*:

2. (3 points) Name three sources of sound in the vocal tract:
3. (4 points) For each set of three words below, the stems share a certain part of speech, and the whole words share another one. What are these categories? That is, for the words in item (a), what stem category do they all have? what category for the entire word do they all have? (the answers should be the same for all three). And likewise for the three words in item (b).

(a) filtration, writer, harassment.

(b) foolish, spiteful, childlike.

4. (2 points) Draw a tree diagram for the following word, labeling the lexical category of each node:

imperceptible

5. (2 points) Consider the following words: *editor*, *tiger*, *singer*, *bigger*.
- (a) Which two have the same morphological structure?
  - (b) Which one has a different suffix from the others?
  - (c) Which one consists of only one morpheme?
  - (d) For each word, draw a tree diagram giving its morphological structure:
6. (4 points) Describe at least one ambiguity in each of the following sentences, making it clear whether the ambiguity is lexical or structural:
- (a) We were always happy to entertain friendly neighbors and relatives.
  - (b) She waved at the man with a handkerchief.
7. (3 points) In each of the following sentences, is the expression in parentheses a constituent?
- (a) Many ( people watch ) baseball.
  - (b) ( We drank too much ) coffee last night.
  - (c) Kim was nauseated by ( the delicious pizza ).
- (Extra credit of 3 points) Which test(s) did you use in each cases?