Assignment #1

due: February 2, in class

Homework assignments should be handed in at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Late assignments will not be graded for credit, however I will give comments and feedback on them.

In order to answer questions #1 and #2, you will have to be familiar with some notation used in linguistics. An asterisk (*) is used to mark sentences which are ungrammatical. Grammatical sentences are unmarked. Recall that ‘ungrammatical’ is used in the descriptive sense of interest to linguists, not in the prescriptive sense. Pinker, whose use of the term we will follow, defines ‘grammatical’ as “well formed according to consistent rules in the dialect of [a] speaker...” (p. 31). Although this linguistic definition of grammatical sometimes coincides with prescriptive grammaticality, it sometimes does not.

1. **Grammaticality Judgments**

   (A) Decide whether the phrases in (1) - (15) are grammatical in your spoken dialect. Mark ungrammatical sentences with an asterisk and say briefly what’s wrong with them. Keep in mind the definition of grammaticality discussed above.

   1. To the bank.
   2. The cat the dog chased escaped.
   3. The building the guy John hired built collapsed.
   4. Being so flat, the Dutch bicycle everywhere.
   5. Who do you wonder whether they will come.
   6. Ivan a tin of caviar ate quickly.
   7. Beat until lemon yellow before folding into batter.
   8. If you go to school, there’s an elephant on the corner.
   9. Someone isn’t disposing of their trash properly.
  10. The candy ate the boy.
  11. Immediately he opened the door he saw the murderer standing there.
  12. The professor met with Sam and I yesterday.
  13. Earlobe seven by hexed fruitless.
  14. Go take dog for a walk!
  15. Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.

   (B) Often it is possible to make sense of an ungrammatical sentence. Likewise, sometimes grammatical sentences do not make sense. Mark the sentences in (1) - (15) that are **grammatical but semantically anomalous (i.e. the meaning is strange)** with a pound sign (#). So, all of the ungrammatical sentences will be marked only with *, and grammatical sentences that have a strange, or anomalous meaning will be marked with #, and grammatical sentences which have a straightforward meaning will be left unmarked.
2.Grammatical Categories (Parts of Speech)

Recall the notion of dividing the words of a language into classes based on the “intersubstitutivity”, i.e. the ability of words in a class to substitute into the same place in a sentence. We call these classes grammatical categories because the words in each class behave alike with respect to the grammar of the language. Here is a list of grammatical categories in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proper Nouns</td>
<td>Joan, Bill, Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>he, she, it, they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td>dog, cat, candy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive Verbs</td>
<td>walk, sleep, snore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitive Verbs</td>
<td>see, find, hug</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ditransitive Verbs</td>
<td>give, put, send</td>
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<tr>
<td>Propositional Verbs</td>
<td>know, claim, believe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Determiners</td>
<td>the, a, some, every</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>with, in, on, to, before</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>tall, short, green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>quickly, carefully, very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementizers</td>
<td>that, if, whether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctions</td>
<td>and, or, but</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Give the most plausible part of speech for the nonsense words (shown in bold) in the following sentences, and briefly state the reasons for your choice.

1. I want **glork** live in a peaceful world.
2. That was a terribly **unbrikkled** thing to do!
3. Sarah ran **plant** down the path to the little brook.
4. Why didn’t you tell me **ar** I needed to bring the map?
5. There she **skelded**, basking in the warm June sunshine.
6. **Zon** the evidence goes against everything you’ve just said!
7. I’m talking about the man **soten** the big red hat.
8. The giraffe was **prando** startled by the loud noise.
9. Bill considered himself to be **trindon**.
10. I can’t believe Fred went **dран** without telling me!

3. Grammar of Non-Standard English

Study the following three groups of sentences of Appalachian English. **The sentences of each group SHARE a grammatical feature not found in Standard English. Describe these three features.**

(1) **Boy**, I started to runnin’.
A vein in his nose bursted and he went to hemorragin’.
She practically raised ‘im ‘til he got to walkin’.
Just recently, I had an aunt to come from Texas.
Usually, I hafta have somebody else to do it.
(note: ‘went’ and ‘got’ are roughly the equivalent of Standard English’s ‘started’)

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(2) I’d go out and cut me a limb off a tree, get me a good straight one. We had us a cabin, built us a log cabin back over there. And then you’d get you a bowl of ice water. He wanted some straw to build him a house out of. I’m gonna write me a letter to the President.

(3) I got some kin people lived up there. He’s the funny lookin’ character plays baseball. ’Cause there was this vampire that killed people come in the house. My grandma’s got this thing tells me about when to plant.

4. Prescriptive & Descriptive Grammar

Answer the following questions about the grammaticality judgments that are given.

(A) Look at the sentences in (1a) and (1b). Why is (1b) ungrammatical?

(1) a. Two paintings are on the wall.
   b. *Two paintings is on the wall

(B) Now consider the sentences in (2). Do the grammaticality judgments indicated correspond to your own?

(2) a. There are two paintings on the wall.
   b. *There is two paintings on the wall
   c. There’s two paintings on the wall.

(C) Assuming the correctness of the judgments which are given (even if they disagree with your own), what rule or rules could a speaker use to generate the grammatical sentences (2a) and (2c) but not generate the ungrammatical sentence in (2b). Your rules should resemble a set of instructions describing how the relevant phenomenon works. Keep in mind that your rule(s) should also be able to account for the sentences in (1).

(D) How does your description of the sentences in (1) and (2) differ from prescriptions that govern standard usage?

(E) The sentences in (3) show a similar pattern to the pattern seen in (1). However, the pattern in (4) is different from the one in (2). Write a description of the rules needed to generate the grammatical sentences in (3) and (4). Your rules should not generate the ungrammatical sentences.

(3) a. A painting by Picasso and a painting by Klee are hanging on the wall.
   b. *A painting by Picasso and a painting by Klee is hanging on the wall.

(4) a. *There are a painting by Picasso and a painting by Klee hanging on the wall
   b. There is a painting by Picasso and a painting by Klee hanging on the wall.
   c. There’s a painting by Picasso and a painting by Klee hanging on the wall.