

LING 100 Homework #1: Linguistic Competence and English Phonetics Fall 2008
due Monday, September 15th

Problem 1: Syntactic Competence. List which of the following sentences are grammatical and ungrammatical in modern spoken American English. Remember that we are concerned with the language as it is used normally in casual speech by the average native speaker, not as it is written or spoken in certain formal situations, by limited groups of people, or with unusual stress or intonation. For each ungrammatical sentence, briefly describe what specific aspect of the sentence makes it ungrammatical. (*Hint:* If you are a native speaker of English, go with your initial gut reaction. Most of the time, your native speaker intuition will initially override any prescriptive training you've had in your English classes! If you are not a native speaker of English, you should consult with someone who is.)

- (1) Jesse never picks up his clothes.
- (2) Jesse never picks up them.
- (3) Jesse never picks his clothes up.
- (4) Jesse never picks them up.
- (5) Michelle speaks not the truth.
- (6) Dan is easy to talk to.
- (7) Dan is willing to talk to.
- (8) Jerry failed completely to eliminate the alliance.
- (9) Jerry failed to completely eliminate the alliance.
- (10) Jerry failed to eliminate completely the alliance.

Problem 2: Phonetic Competence. List which of the following made-up one-syllable words are possible and impossible words of American English due to their pronunciation. For each impossible word, briefly describe what specific aspect of the pronunciation makes it ungrammatical. Note that these words are given in English spelling and should be pronounced according to how ordinary English spelling is typically pronounced.

vilth nripe clong thrag wleth yoonz cheld shrib quorp plakt
gzorrb sholg dwing hoimt pmote beefp pramg klate sproy swimp

Problem 3: Consonants. For each of the following pairs of consonants transcribed in the IPA, state whether they have the same or different (a) place of articulation, (b) manner of articulation, and (c) voicing.

[f θ] [b p] [z dʒ] [z v] [w j] [s θ] [m p] [tʃ t] [n ŋ] [h ?]

Problem 4: Vowels. For each of the following sets of vowels transcribed in the IPA, state which one vowel does not belong, and then briefly explain what the remaining vowels all have in common and why the outcast vowel does not match the rest. If there is more than one possible choice of outcast vowel, just choose one for your answer. Note: Do not count a diphthong as being an outcast solely for being a diphthong.

[i ə u I ū] [ɪ ʌ ū ε] [æ e j I ʌ ε i] [ū ʌ ow ɑ ɔ ū] [ej æ ow ə ε ɔ ʌ]

Problem 5: Writing Transcriptions. Transcribe the following English words using the IPA.

joy cheese ached thumb abs

Problem 6: Reading Transcriptions. Give the English spelling for the following IPA transcriptions of ordinary English words. If a given pronunciation has more than one spelling, just choose one.

[howl] [kæf] [gis] [sun] [bajt] [lɪm] [kʊd] [ðiz] [jet] [tʌŋ]