Study guide – Exam 3 – Phonology

Exam: Wednesday, May 23, 8:00 AM, Bartlett 61 (in the basement)

The final exam will take place entirely during the scheduled exam time; there will be no take-home portion.

If you’re sick, or some horrible disaster befalls you such that you can’t take the exam at class time, please let me know ASAP, ideally before exam time, and we can arrange for a makeup. If you miss the exam, you’ll need to provide documentation of the reason for your absence.

You may bring a note sheet (two sides of a piece of paper) to the exam; see the syllabus for details about what can be on your note sheet.

The most important thing to put on your note sheet:

The English phoneme chart, with the features of every consonant and vowel, and example words demonstrating the pronunciation of each sound. This is really, really important. If you don’t bring it, I hope it’s because you’ve memorized them all, because I expect you to be able to work with IPA transcriptions.

I’ll provide a picture of a head with the places of articulation labelled.

Be able to…

• …list the features of a given phoneme.
  Consonant features: place of articulation, manner of articulation, voicing
  Vowel features: height, backness, rounding
• …describe what it means for a phoneme to have each feature.
  If something is a voiced velar stop, what does that mean that your tongue is doing? Your larynx? Your lips? Being able to answer these questions will help enormously in thinking about how sounds are similar.
• …talk about what various phonemes have in common.
  Sometimes this might be a simple matter of shared features; other times it might be slightly more complex – for example, labials and labio-dentals have different places of articulation, but they’re similar in that both use the lips.
• …determine whether the difference between a pair of sounds is phonemic (meaningful) or allophonic (predictable).
  And when two sounds are allophones of each other, be able to use their contexts to describe how their distribution is predictable.
…choose one of a pair of allophones to be the ‘basic phoneme’ – the phoneme that turns into the other allophone in particular contexts.

There generally isn’t a right answer to basic-phoneme questions, but make sure you can choose one for the right kinds of reasons (like, which one has the more general distribution).

…write phonological rules which turn a basic phoneme into another allophone in particular contexts.

Also be able to write phonological rules that turn a basic phoneme into another allophone in specifically morphological contexts.

…talk about parts of syllables (onset, nucleus, coda, rime), identify parts of syllables, come up with syllables with particular properties, etc.; be able to refer accurately to parts of syllables in phonological rules.

…identify or come up with minimal pairs.

**Important things to do while reviewing:**

- Go over the four phonology homework assignments, including the final optional one. Look at the answer keys on the website to clarify things you got wrong.
- Read over the phonology section of the course packet.
- Go over the phonology in-class exercises that are on the class webpage.
- Do all this a day or two ahead of time, so you have a chance to check with me or others if things aren’t clear.
- And (while this might be repetitive advice, it’s important) ask me questions! Bring questions to class, come to my office hours, and e-mail me. I’m always happy to help.