

STUDY GUIDE FOR TESTS & THE M. A. EXAM

You should be able to write a short essay or solve a typical problem for each of the following topics.

Chapter 1 & lecture

- a) The state of language policy in the USA; comparison of USA state-level language policies to those of other nations, such as Australia and South Africa
- b) Definition of language; the three faces of language.
- c) Language as both a mental and a social tool. How is language used to manage social relationships? How important is language as a social tool?
- d) Sign theory: Nonarbitrary, arbitrary, and representational signs. The degree to which language is arbitrary is somewhat overstated. Examples of important iconic elements of language.
- e) What is the definition of language given on p. 9?
- f) Design features of human language: discreteness, duality, displacement, productivity. Which of the above design features do I consider the most important? What are my reasons?
- a) Definitions of grammatical and communicative competence.
- b) How does the linguist's position on language origins and language change differ from that held by large numbers of the linguistically uninformed?
- b) Standard varieties and notions of correctness: again, differences between the linguist and the typical layperson
- b) The primacy of speech over writing; why speech is considered primary.
- c) The definition of linguistics.
- d) The levels or subsystems of language (text, syntax, morphology, etc.) and the names of the fields which study them (given in class, not in the textbook) and some of the applied fields mentioned in the textbook.

Chapter 2 & lecture

- a) What we know when we know a word: Gather together the following aspects of information we store about morphemes, including both words and affixes (build this up as you work through the chapters):
 - i) Definition of the mental lexicon. How does it differ from a desk dictionary?
 - ii) Lexical category (part of speech) – USE ONLY MY TESTS, NOT THE TEXTBOOK'S TESTS (see the note at the end of this document for a discussion of this point).
 - iii) Meanings (most words have several meanings; look in a dictionary to see examples)
 - iv) For verbs, subcategorization facts: transitive or intransitive? If it is transitive, can it be used intransitively? Does it *require* any of its complements (e.g., direct objects; location phrases) to be named when it is used in a sentence? (Recall the examples *put*, *eat*, etc.)
 - v) The difference between *tense* and *aspect*.
 - vi) How it fits into lexical-semantic patterns of relation to other words (Ch. 6, "Lexical Semantics" & lecture on categorization and association)
 - vii) Whether the word has irregular inflection (e.g., singular *foot* but plural *feet*) (see my web document "An Overview of the English Morphological System"); whether it selects for particular derivational affixes (e.g., *refusal* vs. *payment*; *refusement* and *payal* are not options. In this respect, derivational morphology is much, much less regular than inflectional morphology).
 - viii) For affixes: Is the affix derivational or inflectional? Is it regular or irregular? If inflectional, which inflectional meaning does it supply? If derivational, does it change the part of speech of the base? Does it contribute any special meaning apart from changing word category? (E.g., derivational *-er* not only changes a verb to a noun, it also changes the verb to a particular *kind* of noun: a person or object that performs the action of the verb (*teacher*, *cleanser*, *mower*, *painter*).
 - ix) For derived words: which word-formation process was used to create the word (e.g., zero derivation, affixation, blending, acronym formation, etc.) – refer to my web document "An Overview of the English Morphological System" as well as the textbook.
- b) Be able to classify words into the categories given in Ch. 2, including pronouns, determiners, etc.
- c) Kinds of morphemes: free, bound, inflectional, derivational and kinds of words: simple, compound, complex.
- d) Know the eight inflectional morphemes of English and the meanings they signal (e.g., plural, comparative).
- e) Be able to demonstrate whether or not a word is analyzable into component morphemes: propose a division

of the word into morphemes, then prove that each one is found in other English words with the same meaning or function (e.g., making a word plural, changing an adjective to a noun, adding a role [“doer of action” for –*er*] or connotation [e.g., the difference between *childish* and *childlike*]). For roots, state that the root retains the meaning it has in the complex word when it stands alone or (for bound roots) appears in other complex words. For example, *childlike* means ‘similar to a child;’ its root, *child* means ‘a pre-adolescent human being,’ which is the same meaning it has in *childlike*. For bound roots: *gyn-* ‘woman,’ as in *gynecology* (specialism in female reproductive medicine), *misogyny* ‘hatred of women,’ *androgynous* ‘having both male (*andro-*) and female traits’ and *gynoid* ‘female robot’ (I wouldn’t expect you to know the last one! Found it online).

~~f) What is allomorphy? Examples of motivated vs. unmotivated allomorphs.~~

Syntax: Kolln & lecture

- a) Syntax/grammar as providing *choices* for arranging words so that they correctly express our meaning. We make these choices subconsciously whenever we speak or write.
- b) The three forces that guide those choices: (i) creating syntactic “bonds” to reflect the semantic “bonds” between the words we are using; (ii) optimal organization of information so that our listener/reader understands easily; (iii) creating language appropriate to the social situation.
- c) Syntax is not about words, but *roles* – functions that reflect relations among the concepts being expressed and that also serve text-level needs, such as naming a topic and giving information about the topic.
- d) Sentences are made of *constituents*. Constituents are the expressions that are “plugged in” to the roles in actual language use.
- e) Division of words into form/content/open class and structure/function/closed class. Which kinds of words, with examples, go in each? Why?
- f) Basics of phrase structure: a phrase comprises at minimum a **head word**; this head may be accompanied by **modifiers** that add detail to the head.
- g) Modifiers/complements that typically appear with each head category (noun, verb, adjective, preposition) (see http://cla.calpoly.edu/~jrubba/syn/Syntax_phrases.htm; scroll down to “Phrase Structure”)
- h) The difference between modifiers and complements
- i) The seven sentence patterns (their names: *Be* pattern 1, *Be* pattern 2, Linking, Basic Transitive, etc.) and the grammatical roles characteristic of each (that is, direct object, subject complement, etc.). Given a sentence, you should be able to identify its pattern and the constituents that fill each role. You should also be able to provide a sentence when given a pattern.
- j) Verb subcategorization and its relation to the sentence patterns (it is the verb that provides the template for each sentence pattern). Explain, with examples, the three possible subcategorization profiles. A verb may
 - a. absolutely require a complement – *put, give*
 - b. appear with or without a complement – *eat, read*
 - c. not accept any complement – *die, sleep*
- k) Recall the difference in terminology regarding verbs in category b. above: when they appear without a complement (as in *I haven’t eaten yet today*), some people refer to them as intransitive. Others term them transitive verbs used intransitively. I prefer to avoid any characterization of these verbs as intransitive; what is happening in examples like this is simply that the complement is not being named. We still know that there *is/was/will be/would be* a complement (something eaten).

MORE TO COME!