Semantics and Phonetics problem set

24.900 — Introduction to Linguistics

March 28, 2005

1 Entailment

Do the following pairs of sentences express entailment? [hints in square brackets]

- Herbert used to swim a mile daily

  Herbert no longer swims a mile daily

  [I wonder whether he still does (swim a mile daily)]

  No entailment: Herbert used to swim a mile daily; in fact, I asked him today, and he said he still does.

- After Herbert painted the walls, Hans installed the cabinets

  Herbert painted the walls

  [#After Herbert painted the walls, Hans installed the cabinets, but Herbert did not paint the walls]

  Yes. The hint should make this clear.

- It's sunny today

  It's warm today

  No, obviously, as anyone who lives in Boston can attest.

- Hortense ate oatmeal for breakfast this morning

  Hortense ate breakfast this morning

  Yes: # H. ate oatmeal for breakfast this morning, however he didn't have breakfast.

- If Herbert wins a fellowship, he can finish his thesis

  If Herbert does not win a fellowship, he cannot finish his thesis

  No: If Herbert wins a fellowship, he can finish his thesis, but if he doesn't, he'll start embezzling funds from the student society and finish his thesis anyway.

- Herbert and Hortense are married

  Herbert and Hortense are married to each other

  No. Herbert is married to John, and Hortense is married to Peter.

- Some student will go to the party

  Not every student will go to the party

  No. Some student will go to the party; if you're lucky, they'll all go.

2 Presupposition

What do the following sentences presuppose?

- When did Herb stop beating his wife?
  Herb used to beat his wife.

- Herb robbed a bank again.
  Herb robbed a bank before.

- Herb doesn't print money anymore.
  Herb used to print money.

- What does Herb want to print?
  There is something that Herb wants to print.

- Herb wants to cheat yet another politician.
  Herb cheated a politician before.

3 Articulatory phonetics

Give a description in terms of place and manner of articulation for the sounds listed below in IPA transcription:

q — voiceles uvular stop

ʌ — mid-low back unrounded vowel

l — voiced alveolar lateral approximant

ʃ — voiceless palato-alveolar fricative

n — voiced alveolar nasal

ŋ — voiced velar nasal

b — voiced bilabial stop

a — low central unrounded vowel

r — voiced alveolar trill

4 Transcription

Do a broad (i.e., not very detailed) phonetic transcription of the following English sentences, as they are uttered in careful pronunciation (by you or someone else you wish to listen to).

The usual caveats about phonetic transcription apply, i.e.: phonetic gestures don't neatly coincide with segment boundaries (so you might prefer to transcribe 'shorter' as [ʃɔɹɾɹ̩] instead of what I put here); dialects differ, rate of speech alters transcriptions, and so on.

- The dogs ate all my oatmeal.
  ðə dɔgz ejt ɔɫ maj owtmiɫ

- Which of these is yours?
  ʍɪt͡ʃ əv ðiz ɪz jɔɹz

- It's better if you mention it.
  ɪts bɛɾɪ̩ ɪf ju mɛnʃn̩ ɪt

- You made me be late twice this week.
  ju mejd mi bi lejt tw̥ajs ðɪs wik

- I wish this exercise had been shorter.
  aj wɪʃ ðɪs ɛksɹ̩sajz əd bɪn ʃɔˤɾɪ̩

5 Fieldwork

Identify an unfamiliar sound in your target language, and describe it in terms of the places and modes of articulation introduced in class. To keep it simple, stick to consonants. How have you been transcribing the sound so far? What is the correct IPA symbol?[1] Based on what you've learned about place and manner of articulation, can you give a rationale for the symbol(s) you were using to transcribe it? (i.e., something like "the sound is a voiceless lateral fricative, articulated in the alveolar region; I've been transcribing it as [lh], which makes sense because [l] is a voiced *alveolar lateral*, and [h] is a *voiceless* glottal fricative.")

This should be straightforward.

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[1]If you'd like to check whether a symbol really corresponds to what you're hearing, visit the interactive IPA chart at *http://www.ling.hf.ntnu.no/ipa/full* (this is linked from the class website).