

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)]
- 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]
- It's sunny today
It's warm today
- Hortense ate oatmeal for breakfast this morning
Hortense at breakfast this morning
- If Herbert wins a fellowship, he can finish his thesis
If Herbert does not win a fellowship, he cannot finish his thesis
- Herbert and Hortense are married
Herbert and Hortense are married to each other
- Some student will go to the party
Not every student will go to the party

2 Presupposition

What do the following sentences presuppose?

- When did Herb stop beating his wife?
- Herb robbed a bank again
- Herb doesn't print money anymore
- What does Herb want to print?
- Herb wants to cheat yet another politician

3 Articulatory phonetics

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

q

ʌ

l

f

n

ŋ

b

a

r

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 dogs ate all my oatmeal.
- Which of these is yours?
- It's better if you mention it.
- You made me be late twice this week.
- I wish this exercise had been shorter.

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.”)

¹If 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).