

Assignment 1: Grammaticality and Phrase Structure Rules

1 Contact Info

1. Name:

2. Year:

3. E-mail address (please write as neatly as you can):

Can your e-mail address be on the class roster?

4. Phone number:

Can your phone number be on the class roster?

5. First language:

6. Any other languages you know or have studied:

7. When and with whom did you take Introduction to Linguistics (Ling 201)?

8. Other linguistics or language-oriented courses you have taken:

2 Grammaticality

Our goal when writing a grammar for a natural language is to account for people's intuitions about what is and what is not a part of that language. Linguists call these *grammaticality judgments*. Throughout this course, we will be trying to find grammars that come as close as possible to specifying *all and only* the grammatical forms of the language in question. Thus, it's essential to have a solid understanding of what (un)grammaticality is and how it differs from similar concepts like **informal** (prescriptively incorrect), *vague*, and *semantically incoherent*.

You can write your answers on this sheet, or you can hand in a separate document with your answers on it. If you hand in a separate document, you needn't write out examples (1)–(10) again. Provide the number and your judgment. Similarly, you needn't write out the questions in parts B and C again. Just be sure that I can tell which question you are answering.

Classify the following sentences as grammatical or ungrammatical for your dialect of English. (If you're not a native speaker of any dialect of English, find someone who is and convince him or her to act as your consultant.) Use an asterisk (*) to mark ungrammatical sentences, and place a check mark, ✓, next to grammatical sentences.¹

- (1) I am SO next!
- (2) The puppy seems sleeping.
- (3) Tami has more bikes than what Brian does.
- (4) The A train had an existential crisis.
- (5) The actor is a friend of mine.
- (6) The actor that the director favored is a friend of mine.

¹Usually, we will leave grammatical sentences unmarked. But for now I want * or ✓ on each example, so that I can be sure you didn't overlook any.

(7) The actor that the director that the students admired favored is a friend of mine.

(8) I heard that Sue the movie disliked.

(9) The butter was passed to Marsha.

(10) The actor was resembled by Phil.

3 Phrase Structure Rules

Provide Phrase Structure Rules that generate the following sentences. You should assume the existence of the following rule: $S \rightarrow NP VP$, and The Principle of Modification, according to which modifiers are always attached within the phrase they modify. Other than these principles, one other metric that you should keep in mind is that your rules should be maximally general i.e. the fewer rules you have the better. In case the category of a word is unclear to you, you can assign the word to whatever category seems most suitable or else you can invent a new category (pick your favorite Greek letter) for it.

- (11)
- a. The very young child walked from school to the store with a tall gaunt person.
 - b. Teenagers drive rather quickly.
 - c. Fortunately John often read the Tibetan book of the dead in his teens.
 - d. That annoying faucet dripped constantly every day for months.
 - e. The long adorable book about a boy from Pinsk won a prize in Minsk.

For each sentence in (11), list the rules that generate it. To make sure that your rules do indeed generate the sentence, provide a derivation starting from S and ending with the sentence.