

Squib topics

Here are some topics to explore for the squib. Do not feel limited by these topics, but if you'd like to pursue a different one, make sure that you talk to Suzanne or your TA. Also ask them if you're interested in more background material on the topic you'd like to pursue. Don't hesitate to contact them if you have any questions either. The page numbers in square brackets refer to the textbook.

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Morphology

- Describe the case system of the language. Is case uniformly marked on all NPs? How many cases does the language have? How can you distinguish PPs and case-marked NPs? [*Case*: pp103, 576.]
 - Describe the verbal paradigm in the past. Is information about person, number and gender encoded? If yes, how? How many types of past tense markings are there? Are they compatible with all verb classes? What are their meaning differences? [*Paradigm*: pp105, 589]
 - Where does morphological agreement show up (e.g. subject - verb agreement, noun - adjective agreement, noun - postposition agreement). Are the agreement paradigms the same or different? What determines agreement and what shows agreement? [*Agreement*: pp 114, 134-135, 574]
 - Find as many productive derivational morphemes as you can. Are there derivational morphemes for all word class combinations? Do they appear in ambiguous structures? Do they show any phonological or morphological peculiarity? [*Derivational morphemes*:. pp83-87, 104, 107, 580]
 - Are there noun classes in the language? Why? If yes, what are they? [*Noun classes*: p111]
 - Does the language have articles (determiners) or classifiers? If yes, do they freely occur with any noun? If no, how can you show that articles are absent? [*Articles*: pp 211-212, 575]
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Syntax and semantics

- Describe the ordering of different adverbs or adverbial suffixes in the language [Adverbs: pp127, 573]
- Identify the setting for (any of) the following parameters: pro-drop parameter; wh-parameter; head parameter. What is the basic word order of the language? [Parameters: pp159-162, 371-372, 589]
- Is there overt (wh-)movement in the language? How is (wh-)movement restricted? Are the restrictions the same as in English? [Wh-movement: pp161-162. Haegeman 1991, ch 7.]
- Identify negative polarity items and describe their behavior. Can you find positive polarity items as well? [[Barbara Partee's handout](#)]
- Identify control and/or raising environments. What predicates subcategorize for such environments?
- Does the language have expletive elements? Does it have transitive expletive constructions? Can you observe definiteness effects? If yes, in what environments?
- What do relative clauses look like? Do they form a single class, or are there various types? What is their position? Are they head-internal or head-external? Does the relative clause have a gap or a resumptive pronoun corresponding to the head? What is the relative clause introduced by? Do they show any unexpected behavior? Also see some discussion in the section on islands.
- Identify pronouns and anaphors and describe their behavior. Do any of them show special behavior? [*Pronouns and anaphors* pp199-201.]
- Is scope marking overt or covert in the language? Does it vary along with the position of the quantifier or the construction? [Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 1990, ch 3, section 2]
- How is epistemic and deontic modality expressed? Are they expressed the same way?
- How is evidentiality expressed?

Phonetics and phonology

- What are the differences in the basic intonation patterns between English and the language you describe? (Declaratives, questions, exclamations, etc.) [*Intonation*: pp 321-322, 585]
- Is there a distinction between voiced and voiceless or aspirated and unaspirated stops? Is the distinction phonemic? [*Aspiration*: pp 244-245, 267, 293-296, 575. *voiced*: pp244-245, 247, 267, 327, 598. *voiceless* : pp244-245, 247, 303, 598]

- Find minimal pairs where the words differ only in a vowel. Describe the differences of the formants, and identify the vowels with the appropriate IPA symbols [*Minimal pairs*: p277, 286-287, 292, 294-296, 588]
 - Compare short phrases in fast speech vs. careful speech. Show and describe the differences between the two styles. Are the differences consistent across contexts?
 - Consider focus constructions. Describe the preferential placement of foci as well as their phonetic and phonological effects [**Focus**]
 - Find minimal pairs in the language, and determine its phoneme inventory. Use minimal pairs to argue for the phonemes [*Minimal pairs*: p277, 286-287, 292, 294-296, 588.]
 - Determine the syllable inventory of the language. Is there a phonemic difference between long and short vowels? If not, is their distribution predictable? Does the language have complex onsets or (complex) codas? How do phonotactic restrictions affect consonant clusters? Can consonants be syllable nuclei?
 - Find alternating sounds in the language (for example, in free-standing vs. affixed forms). Is it a free alternation, or phonologically conditioned?
 - Describe and illustrate assimilation patterns in affixation and/or compounding structures. Determine the underlying form of the alternating segment [*Assimilation* pp301-306, 328, 535,536, 575]
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Historical linguistics

- Find 3 or 4 genetically related languages (not Indo-European ones). Find cognates among the languages. Describe regular patterns in sound correspondences, and reconstruct a proto-form. How can you tell that these languages are related, and not just related by vocabulary borrowing? [*Cognates* pp518, 577; *reconstruction* pp520-522]
- Find words that have only recently appeared in the vocabulary of the language you're investigating (e.g. for recent scientific, technological, or cultural concepts). Are they loanwords? What phonological changes happen to the borrowed words? Can you find language-internal reasons for these changes? If they are not loanwords, how are they formed? [*Loanwords* pp102, 512-514, 536, 587]