

Linguistic Principles of English Grammar, ENG 595G, 2007

Study Questions #1

*Due in your first class session of week 2
(9 October for morning students and 12 October for weekend students)*

Please answer the following questions, do the exercises, and turn them in *by the time of your first class section* during the second week of the term. The mid-term exam will consist of a subset of these study questions. Your answers may be submitted by e-mail, but if you choose to submit your answers by e-mail, it is your responsibility to see to it that they arrive before your class meets.

1. Go to www.uoregon.edu/~tpayne/Chapter01-Introduction/EnglishMorphemes.pdf. Do the English exercise you find there, and attach your solution to this sheet.

2. What does the term "grammar" mean to a linguist?

3. Briefly define the following terms, as they relate to grammar:

Prescriptive

Descriptive

Synchronic

Diachronic

4. What are the three "dimensions" of grammar?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

5. Individuals, according to Hatch (1974), are either "rule formers" or "data gatherers" when it comes to learning grammar. What are the characteristics of these two types of individuals?

6. The use of the definite article in English is governed by:

- a. Sub-sentence level principles
- b. Sentence level principles
- c. Discourse level principles
- d. The Queen of England.

7. Many prescriptive grammars of English would tell us that the following expressions are "ungrammatical," though each one may be heard in normal conversations. Read these carefully, then follow the instructions below:

- a. There's ants in the honey! **The verb *is* is singular, but the subject, *ants*, is plural. The correct form should be "There are ants in the honey."**
- b. I'm wanting a new car.
- c. You do everything you can to not die.
- d. It's me.
- c. Just between you and I . . .
- d. Cars are too expensive anymore.
- e. That's the guy who I can never remember his name.

For each expression, describe what is "wrong" with it, and rephrase it in the "correct" way (the first one is done for you). Finally, explain below what these examples show about the relation between prescriptive grammar and actual usage: