

Introduction to Linguistics WS 06/07 - Homework 1

Due: At start of class on Nov. 7th

- Must not be handed in individually but **by workgroup** (join a workgroup with other members of your tutorial group by entering your name in the Stud.IP workgroup list). Each submission must contain the names of all workgroup participants.
- Identical solutions from different workgroups will not receive credit (so don't copy the solutions from other workgroups and don't allow others to copy your solution).
- Pls. leave a wide (> 5cm) margin for corrections
- If you hand in on paper, pls. use paper only on one side

1. English orthography. (20 pts)

a. The combination of letters *ough* in English can be pronounced in at least 7 different ways. Provide a minimum of 6 different examples. For each word you find, pair it with a word that has the same sound(s) represented by *ough*, but is spelled differently. Underline the parts of each pair that represent the same sound. For examples: *enough* – *fluff*;

b. The [ʃ] sound in English is associated with at least 14 different orthographic representations. Provide at least 8 different examples. Underline the parts of each word that represent the [ʃ] sound. For examples: *ocean*, *ship*;

c. The letters b and p do not stand for any sound in the following examples:

b: climb, dumber, crumb

p: psychology, pneumonia, pneumatic

Find 5 additional words containing letters that apparently do not stand for any sound. Underline the letter that is not pronounced.

2. Italian (20 pts) Consider the following data from Italian.

[tinta]	“dye”	[tingo]	“I dye”
[tɛnda]	“tent”	[tɛŋgo]	“I keep”
[dansa]	“dance”	[funɡo]	“mushroom”
[nero]	“black”	[bjanka]	“white”
[dʒɛntɛ]	“people”	[aŋkɛ]	“also”
[sapone]	“soap”	[faŋɡo]	“mud”

a. What are the minimal pairs in this set of data? List them. What features do they show to be contrastive in Italian?

b. State the phonetic environments in which the sounds [n] and [ŋ] appear. Characterize these environments in terms of natural classes (i.e. the features of the sounds in the environment).

c. Given what you know about the distribution of sounds and the environments you listed in (b), tell whether [n] and [ŋ] are in complementary or overlapping distribution.

3. **Transcription** (30 pts) Here are a few lines of a poem. Please render these lines, as pronounced in a standard British accent, in phonetic transcription (using the IPA). :

The old piano plays an air,
Sedate and slow and gay;
She bends upon the yellow keys,
Her head inclines this way.

4. **Transcription practice** (30 pts) Select the most “native English” sounding member of your group and ask them to pronounce the following sentence with their best English pronunciation:

”What are these people doing here?”

Transcribe what they say using the IPA.

Now ask a member of your group to put on their most heavy Hollywood German accent and say the same sentence and transcribe into IPA what they say.