Linguistics Essentials Cheatsheet

A comprehensive guide covering fundamental concepts in linguistics, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. This cheat sheet provides concise explanations and examples for students and professionals alike.

Phonetics and Phonology

Phonetic Transcription

/p, b, t, d, k, g/	Plosives (stops) - voiceless and voiced **Example:** `pat [pæt], bat [bæt]`
/f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/	Fricatives - varying voicing and place of articulation **Example:** `fan [fæn], van [væn], thin [θɪn], then [ðɛn]`
/m, n, ŋ/	Nasals - articulated through the nose **Example:** `man [mæn], no [noʊ], sing [sɪŋ]`
/l, r/	Approximants - liquids **Example:** `lap [læp], rap [ræp]`
/w, j/	Approximants - glides (semi-vowels) **Example:** `we [wi], yes [jɛs]`
/tʃ, dʒ/	Affricates - combination of stop and fricative **Example:** `chin [tʃɪn], gin [dʒɪn]`

Phonological Processes

Assimilation: A sound becomes more like a nearby sound.
Example: *inpossible* becomes *impossible* due to the nasal assimilating to the bilabial stop.

Deletion: A sound is omitted.
Example: *handbag* is often pronounced *hæmbæg*.

Insertion (Epenthesis): A sound is added.
Example: Athlete is sometimes pronounced as *æθəliːt*.

Metathesis: Sounds are reordered.
Example: *ask* is sometimes pronounced *æks*.

Morphology

Morpheme Types

Free Morphemes	Can stand alone as a word. *Example:* cat, run, tree
Bound Morphemes	Cannot stand alone; must be attached to another morpheme. *Example:* -ing, -ed, un-
Derivational Morphemes	Change the meaning or part of speech of a word. *Example:* -ness (happy → happiness), un- (happy → unhappy)
Inflectional Morphemes	Indicate grammatical function; do not change meaning or part of speech. *Example:* -s (cats), -ed (walked)

Morphological Processes

Affixation: Adding prefixes or suffixes to a base form.
Example: *un- + happy = unhappy , happy + -ness = happiness*

Compounding: Combining two or more free morphemes.
Example: *sun + flower = sunflower*

Reduplication: Repeating all or part of a word.
Example: *mama, papa*

Alternation: Changing a sound within a morpheme.
Example: *sing → sang → sung*

Suppletion: Replacing one morpheme with an unrelated form.
Example: *go → went*

Syntax

Phrase Structure Rules

S → NP VP (Sentence consists of a Noun Phrase and a Verb Phrase)

NP → (Det) (AdjP) N (PP) (Noun Phrase consists of an optional Determiner, optional Adjective Phrase, Noun, and optional Prepositional Phrase)

VP → V (NP) (PP) (AdvP) (Verb Phrase consists of a Verb, optional Noun Phrase, optional Prepositional Phrase, and optional Adverb Phrase)

PP → P NP (Prepositional Phrase consists of a Preposition and a Noun Phrase)

AdjP → (AdvP) Adj (Adjective Phrase consists of an optional Adverb Phrase and an Adjective)

AdvP → (AdvP) Adv (Adverb Phrase consists of an optional Adverb Phrase and an Adverb)

Syntactic Concepts

Constituency	Groups of words that function as a unit. *Example:* 'the big dog' is a noun phrase and a constituent.
Ambiguity	When a sentence has multiple possible interpretations. *Example:* 'I saw the man on the hill with a telescope.'
Recursion	The ability of a phrase to contain another phrase of the same type. *Example:* 'The cat that the dog chased meowed.'

Semantics and Pragmatics

Semantic Relations

Synonymy	Words with similar meanings. *Example:* happy and joyful
Antonymy	Words with opposite meanings. *Example:* hot and cold
Hyponymy	A word whose meaning is included in another word. *Example:* dog is a hyponym of animal
Meronymy	A word that is a part of another word. *Example:* wheel is a meronym of car
Homonymy	Words that sound alike but have different meanings. *Example:* bank (financial institution) and bank (riverbank)

Pragmatic Principles

Grice's Maxims: Principles guiding cooperative conversation.

Maxim of Quantity: Be as informative as required, but not more.

Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.

Maxim of Manner: Be clear, brief, and orderly.

Speech Acts: Actions performed via utterances (e.g., promises, requests).