Topics for the Mid-term

The first, and most obvious is that you should have mastered the structure of the IPA, and the terms it uses. All transcription systems have three components: 1) the physical object of transcription, 2) the system itself, and 3) the shorthand conventions (orthographic symbols) used to indicate the event being transcribed within the system used to classify it. The transcription exam this week will get at the relationship between 1 and 2 & 3. The mid-term will get at your understanding of 2 and mastery of 3.

So, you should know all of the classificatory terms used in the IPA, not including ones associated with suprasegmentals (since we haven’t covered this yet). You should also understand what the terms refer to. So, this means that you should be able to label anatomical structures in a sagittal section, as well as vocal tract spaces, and talk about glottal states. Finally, you should be able to produce an appropriate symbol that is shorthand for a particular classificatory description.

In addition, we have discussed various aspects of speech along the way, so you should be able to answer reasonably probing but short questions concerning the following:

- According to the IPA, what is a consonant?
- According to the IPA, what is a vowel?
- What are cardinal vowels, and how do they work?
- What are the principles of the IPA?
- What is a diacritic, and how is it different than a symbol?
- What is the fundamental distinction between different degrees of narrowness in transcription? What are the identifiable levels of narrowness?
- What is the difference between ‘possible sounds’ for which the IPA does not provide a simple character, and ‘impossible sounds’?
- What’s the difference between a primary and a secondary articulation?
- What is palatography, and what can it tell us about particular consonants?
- What are the primary anatomical structures and muscular groups used in controlling the lungs?
- How do the lungs function with respect to speech?
- How do agonist and antagonist muscular structures get used in skilled movement?
- What are the primary anatomical structures comprising the larynx and how do they work?
- What is the basic relationship between volume, pressure and flow, and how is it involved in speech production?
- What are the general states of the glottis?
- What is the relationship between pressure difference and the various states of the glottis?
- How can the different airstream mechanisms used with stops be classified in terms of airflow and structure used to generate pressure differences?

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