

Advanced Linguistics: Scientific Foundations

Linguistics · Answer Key · 8 Questions

1. Which phonetic feature characterizes the primary distinction between plosives and fricatives, referencing the manner of articulation?

- A) The degree of vocal cord vibration.
- B) The presence or absence of nasal resonance.
- C) The extent of airflow obstruction and turbulence.**
- D) The location of the tongue relative to the hard palate.

2. According to Chomsky's Universal Grammar hypothesis, what is a fundamental, innate property of the human language faculty that guides language acquisition?

- A) A specific lexicon for all languages.
- B) An awareness of grammatical rules for written prose.
- C) A set of abstract principles and parameters governing sentence structure.**
- D) A learned sensitivity to prosodic features of a mother tongue.

3. In generative syntax, the concept of 'trace' is used to account for what phenomenon?

- A) The phonetic reduction of unstressed syllables.
- B) The semantic ambiguity of polysemous words.
- C) The grammatical relationship between a moved element and its original position.**
- D) The historical sound changes that lead to language divergence.

4. What is the primary function of the Wernicke's area of the brain in relation to language processing?

- A) The motor control of speech articulation.
- B) The comprehension of spoken and written language.**
- C) The retrieval of lexical items from long-term memory.
- D) The grammatical structuring of novel sentences.

5. The phenomenon of 'linguistic relativity,' famously associated with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, posits what relationship between language and thought?

- A) Thought is entirely independent of language.
- B) Language actively shapes and influences cognitive processes.**
- C) Cognitive processes determine the structure of all languages.
- D) Language and thought are unrelated empirical phenomena.

6. In phonology, the concept of 'minimal pairs' is crucial for identifying what?

- A) The phonetic inventory of a dialect.
- B) The semantic range of a word.
- C) The distinctive sound units (phonemes) of a language.**
- D) The morphological complexity of a language.

7. What is the core tenet of the 'Principle of Compositionality' in semantics?

- A) The meaning of a sentence is determined by the sum of the meanings of its individual words.**
- B) The meaning of a sentence is determined by the speaker's intent.
- C) The meaning of a sentence is influenced by its cultural context.
- D) The meaning of a sentence is always literal and unambiguous.

8. The 'critical period hypothesis' in language acquisition suggests that there is a window of opportunity during which language learning is most efficient. What is the approximate age range generally considered for this period?

- A) From birth to 5 years old.
- B) From early childhood to puberty.**
- C) From adolescence to early adulthood.
- D) From birth to early childhood.