Part I: Syntax

1. Apply the indicated constituency test to the bracketed string in each of the following sentences. Rewrite the sentence after you apply the test. Is the string a constituent? Why? Why not? (10 points)

   (a) The [light in this room] is terrible. (Substitution test)
   *The it is terrible.
   The result is an ungrammatical sentence. Thus, the string is not a constituent. Some of you thought that you could apply substitution with any word. No. We use pronouns for nominal strings, and “do so/do it” for verbal strings. Refer to lecture slides. Also, even if you replace [light in the room] with the word “light,” you will get a grammatical sentence, but only at the expense of losing the integral part of the meaning of the string expressed by “in this room”.

   (b) John should [report the incident] immediately. (Stand-alone test)
   A: What should John do immediately?
   B: Report the incident.
   The result is grammatical, hence the string is a constituent.

   (c) Tim drew an enormous map [during the afternoon]. (Movement test)
   During the afternoon Tim drew an enormous map.
   Since the result is a grammatical sentence while still preserving the meaning, the string is a constituent.

   (d) A squirrel [ran across] the room. (Movement test)
   *Ran across a squirrel the room.
   The result is an ungrammatical sentence. Thus, the string is not a constituent.

   (e) Martha found [a lovely pillow] for the couch. (Clefting test)
   It was a lovely pillow that Martha found for the couch.
   Since the result is a grammatical sentence while still preserving the meaning, the string is a constituent.
2. Syntactic trees.

(a) The house on the hill collapsed in the wind.
(b) The magician touched the child with the wand.

Since sentence (b) is ambiguous, we need to draw two trees, one corresponding to each meaning.

**Meaning 1:** The magician had a wand and touched the child with it.

![Tree diagram for Meaning 1]

**Meaning 2:** The magician touched the child who was holding the wand.

![Tree diagram for Meaning 2]
(c) Who will John invite to dinner?

Since sentence (c) is a wh-question, we need to draw a tree for the D-structure of the sentence first, then apply the relevant transformations. D-structure:

Next, we apply Aux-to-C movement and wh-movement:
Part II: Making sense of kids’ speech

3. The following transcriptions represent the pronunciations of two children ages 1 year 6 months (1;6) and 2 (2;0) years old. Compare the pronunciations of the two children to adult pronunciation, and answer the three questions that follow. (15 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child 1 (1;6)</th>
<th>Child 2 (2;0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feet [bɪt] slide [dæ]</td>
<td>sock [sæk] pig [pɛk]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A. What happens to final consonants in the language of each one of these children? State the rules in words, indicating the way in which the two children differ.

Child 1 does two things: deletes voiced stops and devoices [z]. Child 2 devoices final consonants.

B. Write the rules you have come up with in Part A in phonological rule notation. Important Note: When possible, your rules should be as general as possible, e.g., they should refer to “classes” of sounds rather than to individual sounds.

Child 1: [Voiced stop] → Ø / ____ #
/z/ → [s] / ____ #

(one is tempted to generalize that second rule to other fricatives, as several of you suggested, but the data does not include supporting examples for that)

Child 2: [voiced consonant] → voiceless / ____ #

C. Excluding the phonological processes you discussed in Part A of this question, identify at least TWO distinct phonological processes in the pronunciations of Child 1 and Child 2 (two total processes, not two each) that are characteristic of children’s speech. Make sure to provide examples from the data illustrating each process.

- There’s simplification of consonant clusters as in Child 1’s pronunciation of “slide.” And liquids become glides, as in Child 2’s pronunciation of “light.”

4. Read the section on “The acquisition of morphology” in Chapter 8 of the textbook on Language Acquisition, pp. 344-345. Follow this link to watch a ‘wug test’
experiment to test a child’s knowledge of the plural -s allomorphy in English. (Note: If for any reason the above link does not work, the direct link to the video clip is here: http://middmedia.middlebury.edu/media/usoltan/mp4/wug_test.mp4)

Now, answer the following two questions:

A. Why does a ‘wug test’ rely on the use of invented words to test children’s knowledge of their language? In other words, why wouldn’t we use actual English words in the test?

As most of you said, use of invented words allows us to make sure we are testing children’s knowledge of the morphological rule involved. If we use actual words, we won’t be able to tell if children are conjugating the words correctly because they have figured out the rule or simply because they have heard these words before and are simply repeating them.

B. Construct a “wug test” experiment to test children’s knowledge of the three allomorphs of the -ed morpheme in English. How do you expect children would do on the test? Explain your answer. (10 points)

An answer to this exercise would be to invent three novel verbs in English: one that ends with a voiceless consonant (e.g., wuk); one that ends with a voiced consonant (e.g., zog); and one that ends with an alveolar stop (e.g., nad). Create a context where the child gets to use these verbs to tell a story about events that happened yesterday, and see how they pronounce the –ed morpheme. Depending on their age, they should have no problem with the voiced-voiceless allomorphy, though they may still have not figured out the rule for epenthesis with alveolar stops yet.

Part III: Where is the speaker from?

Answers vary. But most of you said that some dialects were more difficult to identify than others. Obviously your familiarity with each dialect is a key factor here.

Part IV: The Linguists

Answers vary. Almost all of you agreed on the importance of language preservation, while also acknowledging the reasons why some languages are going extinct in the globalized world in which we live.