

## Semantics & Pragmatics Exam Study Questions 2013

### Short Answer Qs

1. What is Dialectics, and how is this method of reasoning different from Metaphysical/purely analytical method? Give an example.
2. What are the advantages of **Dialectical Analysis** in the study of complex wholes? Why? Explain how this method of examining linguistic meanings is different from the descriptive approach.
3. What are the major types of lexical relations we distinguish? Why? Give examples for each type of relation.
4. What are 'denotative' word-meanings, and why do they change over time?
5. State the 4 types of semantic shift, with examples.
6. How do we create MEANING? Describe the mechanism of GENERALIZATION.
7. Contrast social meanings with individually created meanings – how are they different?
8. Why is it that we cannot 'fix' word *meanings* for all time? Explain the causes of semantic change.
9. What is GRAMMATICALIZATION, and why does it happen?
10. What are DEIXES? What are the different types of deixes, and how have they come about?
11. Describe MEANING AS USE. What are the various factors that account for the ultimate indeterminacy of meaning in use?
12. How do we build complex meanings of sentence-mosaics? State the 2 principles of sentence structure.
13. What is the essence and purpose of language? Explain.
14. Why did Vygotsky define Language as a social means of thought?
15. For what purpose and how do we use this tool of language, given to us by our society?
16. Why is every word already a generalization and, therefore, an act of thought?
17. Where do the words of language come from?
18. Words and their meanings are relatively independent of each other in use. Explain.
19. How do we build complex meanings of sentence-mosaics? State the 2 principles of sentence structure.
20. Differentiate hierarchical lexical relationships from part-whole relationships with clear demonstrations.
21. Differentiate polar (relational) opposition from inverse (complementary) opposition with examples
22. Discuss the tern deixis with clear examples. Why do we have deixes in all languages?
23. State the principle of compositionality and its three separate claims. Discuss the limitations of this approach.
24. 'Words acquire their meanings only in the nexus of the proposition.' Comment; give an example.
25. 'Meaning as Use.' Discuss.
26. 'Mind Is the Measure.' Discuss.
27. How do we make sense of things? Describe the mechanism of thought/ language.
28. 'Fluidity' and ultimate 'indeterminacy' of meaning. Discuss the various factors that influence meaning (interpretation, understanding).
29. Thematic Roles – what kind of relations between things do they express? Give examples.

Practical 1: Implicature; Ambiguity; Vagueness of Meaning.

State the possible meanings of the following ambiguous signs:

"Let us remove your shorts" [on an electrician's truck]

"Push. Push. Push." [on a maternity room door]

"Don't stand there and be hungry. Come on in, and get fed up!" [in a restaurant window]

"Eat here and Get Gas!" [at a gas station]

"Drive carefully – we'll wait" [in the front yard of a funeral home]

"Take care of burglars." [Copenhagen, Denmark]

"Do not wear slippers to prevent falling in bath." [Taiwan]

"Use repeatedly for severe damage." [on a Taiwanese shampoo]

"Best place in town to take a leak" [at a radiator shop]

Lost in Translation: How would you correct the error on translation?

1. Instructions on a Korean flight: Upon arrival at Kimpo & Kimahie airport, pls. wear your clothes.

2. Job recruitment ad for Nok Air, Thailand: If you are energetic, living, friendly...

3. On an airsickness bag on a Spanish airplane: Bags to be use in case of sickness or to gather remains.

4. Amalfi, Italy: Suggestive views from every window.
5. Japan: City Hotel & Nut Club.
6. India: Welcom to Hotel Cosy: where no one's stranger
7. Hotel cloakroom, Berlin, Germany: Pls. hang yourself here.
8. Italian hotel, signs by the bell: If service is required, give 2 strokes to the maid and 3 to the waiter. Hot and cold water running up and down the stairs
9. On a hotel TV set, Belgrade, Serbia: If set breaks, inform Manager. Do not interfere with yourself.
10. Las Palmas, Canary Islands: If you telephone for room service, you'll get the answer you deserve.
11. Notice on a phone, Amsterdam: Telephone instructions can be found on the backside
12. Budapest, Hungary: All rooms not denounced by 12 o'clock will be paid for twicely
13. Hamburg, Germany: It is our intention to pleasure you every day.
14. Tokyo: Guests are requested not to smoke or do other disgusting behaviours in bed.
15. Taipei, Taiwan: If there is anything we can do to assist and help you, please do not contact us.
16. Seoul: Measles not included in room charge.
17. Leipzig, Germany: Ladies, pls. rinse out your teapots standing upside down in sink. In no event should hot bottoms be placed on counter.
18. Ankara, Turkey: Pls. hang your order before retiring on your doorknob.
19. Copenhagen, Denmark: Take care of burglars.
20. Zurich: Do you wish to change in Zurich? Do so at the hotel bank!
21. Japan: Depositing the key into another person is prohibited.
22. Taiwan: Do not wear slippers to prevent falling in bath.
23. France: Wondering what to wear? A sports jacket may be worn to dinner, but no trousers.
24. Tokyo: 'In case of earthquake, use the torch to pass yourself out'
25. On a Taiwanese shampoo: Use repeatedly for severe damage.

Practical 2: G-nalysis. Identify the SVC patterns, determine how they relate to each other, and diagram each sentence, stating its type (simple, compound, complex, or compound complex)

1. A clause is a group of words that has sentence structure S/V/C.
2. An animal's ability to express himself vocally is no indication of his mental development.
3. From primitive generalisations, verbal thought rises to the most abstract concepts.
4. The meaning of a word is its use in the language (Wittgenstein).
5. Man wants the stick; the ape wants the fruit.
6. Telephone instructions can be found on the backside [notice on a phone in Amsterdam]
7. Depositing the key into another person is prohibited. [Japan]
8. Visitors are allowed 2 to a bed, and for half an hour only [in a hospital, Barcelona]
9. Our motto is "EVER SERVE YOU RIGHT"
10. Good judgment comes from bad experience and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
11. Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help. (Church Bulletin)
12. Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.(Church Bulletin)
13. For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs. (Church Bulletin)
14. "I'm the decider, and I decide what is best." (George W. Bush)
15. Generalization is the process of formulating general concepts by abstracting common properties of instances [synonym: abstraction]

### **Tok Pisin G-nalysis:**

16. Sapos mi tasol bin save, em olgeta taim bai las.
17. Na wanpla wom i ken koros tu.
18. Pikini we ino save harim toktok blo mama blo em, ba rot lukautim em.
19. Nogat bagarap bus lo tromai bagarap pikinini.
20. Olsem yu mekim bet bilong yu, so yu ken slip antap long em.

