

# The University of Papua New Guinea

## First Semester Examinations ~ 2008

Course Number:	4.41478
Title of Paper:	Survey of Linguistic Theories
Sequence of Papers:	One of One
Time Allowed:	3 Hours plus 10 Minutes Reading Time
Instructions to Candidates:	Answer All Questions in the Exam Paper as per Instructions
Marking Scheme:	The Value of Each Question Is Indicated
Aids To Be Provided:	
By Students Administration:	Wall Clock
By Communication & Modern Languages Strand:	Nil
Aids Candidates May Take into Examination Room:	Pens, Rulers, Erasers, Correction Fluid

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ID No.** \_\_\_\_\_

## Section A: Short Essay Questions

[32 marks]

**Instructions.** Write a ONE page long essay on **any 4 (FOUR)** of the following topics (8 marks each):

**Q 1 Describe the known origins of Non-Western Linguistic thought, focusing on**

1. **India:**
  - a. Panini (with reference to his Eight Books) and
  - b. Bharthari
2. **China,** and
3. **Mesopotamia;**
4. **Explain why linguistic knowledge developed independently** in different societies.

**Q 2 Describe the origins of European linguistic thought in Ancient Greece:**

1. What was the main ‘**invention of the Greeks,**’ according to Ferdinand de Saussure?
2. The **Sophists:** what were their doctrines and main achievements?
3. **Socrates** on Arbitrariness of Language (with reference to Plato’s Cratylus)
4. **Plato:**
  - a. his significance in recording the knowledge of the Sophists/ Socrates
  - b. his Theory of Forms and its implications for semantics
5. **Aristotle** on the difference between nouns and verbs in *De Interpretatione*

**Q 3 The Romans: explain their role in the history linguistics and describe the teachings of**

1. **Donatus** (4<sup>th</sup> century AD)
2. **Priscian** (6<sup>th</sup> century AD, and
3. **Varro** (3<sup>rd</sup> century AD)

**Q 4 Describe the state of linguistic thought in Medieval Europe, focusing on**

1. **The reasons for the general decline** in intellectual activities (socio-economic realities of the time), and
2. **The role of the Vatican** in medieval Europe;
3. **Contrast** these general trends with the **Speculative Grammar** of Thomas von Erfurt and other *modistae* in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Q 5 The Renaissance (15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries AD): describe linguistic knowledge of the period, with special reference to**

1. **The underlying causes** of re-awakened interest in Classical Knowledge and Art
2. How **Classicism** promoted the dominance of **Prescriptive Grammar** and widespread concerns about the ‘degradation’ of vernacular languages, such as English (elaborate on the role of **Samuel Johnson**, **Robert Lowth**, the Bishop of London, **Jonathan Swift**, the author of ‘Gulliver’s Travels,’ etc.)
3. Detail the achievements of
  - a. The *Solitaires* (a group of hermits who lived in the deserted abbey of *Port-Royal* in France)
  - b. **Leibniz** (1646 –1716)
  - c. **Descartes's** skepticism
  - d. **Johann Gottfried von Herder** (1744 – 1803): “Feeling and thought ... interpenetrate each other; and the word, being at once sound and significance, is the cause of this union” (*Essay on the Origin of Language*, 1772)
  - e. **Sir William Jones** (1746 – 1794) and his observations in 1785.

- Q 6** What direction did linguistics take in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe? How, if at all, did Darwin's Theory of Evolution influence linguists of the time? (Distinguish between historical & comparative studies).
- Q 7** Who was Ferdinand de Saussure, and how was his approach to the study of Language different from the previous approaches? Distinguish between the diachronic/ synchronic approach, and between the 'bits-and-pieces'/ 'holistic' (or 'living structure') approach.
- Q 8** Explain De Saussure's statement: "It is the combination of the idea with a vocal sign which suffices to constitute the whole language" (De Saussure, The Third Course of Lectures on General Linguistics, 1910).

### Section B: Short Answer Questions

[4 marks]

**Instructions.** Give a short outline answer to any 4 (FOUR) of the following questions (1mark each):

1. Explain the concept of intelligence.
2. What are symbols? Explain the difference between iconic & arbitrary symbols.
3. What Is Thinking? How do we *learn* to think symbolically?
4. David Hume observed that "*simple ideas, comprehended in the compound ones*" are "*bound together by some **universal principle**, which has an equal influence on all mankind.*" Explain.
5. What are the three principles of Human Understanding, and why are they important in the study of language?
6. Give reasons why Linguistics has become such an important field of knowledge in recent times
7. What are the properties of a living structure? Give 3 relevant examples of a living structure
8. Explain the concept of **ambiguity** (lexical & structural)
9. How is Science different from Art?

### Section B: Definitions

[4 marks]

**Instructions.** Define ANY 4 (FOUR) of the following concepts (1 mark each):

1. **Language**
2. **Linguistics**
3. **Prescriptive Grammar**
4. **Diachronic** vs. **Synchronic** approaches to the study of Language
5. The *Socratic Method*
6. De Saussure's **Linguistic Sign**
7. The nature of the Linguistic Sign: **Arbitrariness**
8. **Syntagmatic** vs. **Associative** relations between the Linguistic Signs
9. The **Value** of the Linguistic Sign: Give examples