

The University of Papua New Guinea

First Semester Supplementary Examination ~ 2010

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: Essay Questions

[20 marks]

Write an essay (approx. 3 pages long) on any one of the following questions:

1. **‘Synthesis and analysis presuppose each other, as inhalation presupposes exhalation’** (Vygotsky).
 - a. Define dialectics and its 3 basic laws.
 - b. Contrast **dialectics** vs. the **metaphysical** way of reasoning. State the 3 basic laws of dialectics.
 - c. Discuss the general evolution of our knowledge of the world in terms of the ‘opposition’ between the dialectical and metaphysical ways of reasoning.
 - d. Describe the development of linguistic thought from antiquity to the present, with reference to predominating theoretical approaches during the 3 major stages of its evolution.
 - e. Explain the need for a new theoretical approach (dialectical linguistics).

2. **Non-Western Linguistic Traditions**
 - a. Explain why linguistic thought developed independently in different societies
 - b. Comment on the significance of the invention of the Alphabet, as well as other systems of writing, in the evolution of knowledge
 - c. Describe the achievements of linguistic thought in
 - i. Ancient China
 - ii. Ancient India (Panini, Bhartrhari)
 - iii. Mesopotamia
 - d. Comment on the ‘intellectual interdependencies’ between Europe and North Africa/ Mesopotamia, and the role of Islamic scholars in ‘transmitting’ the works of Classical Greek philosophers to medieval Europe.

3. **‘Ancient Greeks invented both grammar and logic’** (Saussure). Describe the achievements of this era, focusing on
 - a. How the pre-Socratic philosophers viewed Language
 - b. The greatest debate of antiquity, **nomos-physis**, and the conflicting views of Plato and Aristotle on the issue
 - c. The role of the **Stoics** in the development of linguistic thought
 - d. **Analogy vs. Anomaly**, the 2nd great debate of Antiquity, stating Aristotle’s position on the issue, vs. that of the Stoics
 - e. The crystallization of later Greek thought with the Stoics and Alexandrians

4. **‘Ancient Rome and the Middle Ages in the history of linguistics.’** Describe the major failings and achievements of this period, focusing on
 - a. Why the Romans are generally ascribed the role of ‘transmitters’ of Greek knowledge
 - b. The achievements of Roman scholars (Donatus, Priscian, and Varro)
 - c. The intellectual climate of the Middle Ages, stating the reasons for it
 - d. The ‘highlight’ of the later Middle Ages – Speculative Grammar
 - e. Reasons for why Latin was the language of instruction / literacy in Europe for over a thousand years

5. ‘Linguistic Thought during the Renaissance’

- a. Explain why, in the field of grammar, the Renaissance did not produce much innovation
- b. The **underlying causes** of re-awakened interest in Classical Knowledge and Art
- c. The role of **Classicism** in the promotion/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**, etc.)
- d. Detail the achievements of The *Solitaires* (a group of hermits who lived in the deserted abbey of *Port-Royal* in France)
- e. **Sir William Jones**

6. ‘Philology in the 19th century: main focus and achievements’

- a. What was the influence of the rapid development of science (and Darwin’s Theory of Evolution, in particular) on linguistic thought?
- b. Describe the contributions of:
 - i. Jakob Grimm (1785-1863)
 - ii. Karl Verner (1846-1896)
 - iii. The Neogrammarians (last quarter of the 19th century)
 - iv. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835).
- c. What was the general appeal of linguistics to the general population by the end of the 19th century? Why?

7. ‘Structuralism – a new era in the history of linguistics’

- a. Why do we call Saussure the ‘Father’ of modern linguistics? What was the qualitative change in his approach to language study?
- b. American Structuralism: Achievements and Weaknesses
- c. Neo-Structuralism: Chomsky’s Generative Grammar
- d. Where did the structuralism ‘lose’ the essence of Language?

8. ‘Dialectical Linguistics – the New Synthesis’

- a. Basic principles of
 - i. Vygotsky’s Analysis into Units
 - ii. Human Understanding, according to David Hume
- b. Explain the difference of the dialectical approach to language.

Section B: Practical

[20 marks]

Draw the timeline of the three main stages in the development of linguistics, labeling their main features and events.

Bonus Question

[5 marks]

Briefly outline the stated goals, objectives and significance of the Survey of Linguistic Theories course. Evaluate the extent to which you think you have succeeded in achieving those objectives, and suggest ways in which the content and delivery of this course could be improved.