IDE-AL311 (MAIN EXAM)

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION
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TITLE OF PAPER: HISTORY OF LINGUISTICS: WESTERN

COURSE NUMBER: IDE AL311

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1.   ANSWER FOUR (4) QUESTIONS IN ALL.

                    2.   CHOOSE TWO (2) QUESTIONS FROM SECTION A.

                    3.   CHOOSE TWO (2) QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B

                    4.   LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND FORMALISM SHOULD BE USED WHENEVER APPROPRIATE.

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED

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SECTION A
Choose two questions from this section

Question 1

a)   There are four morphological systems found in human languages. These are:

      i)   Isolating or analytic
      ii)   Agglutinating/Agglutinative
      iii)   Synthetic or Inflectional
      iv)   Polysynthetic

Using relevant examples, explain how the following languages may be placed in more than one of the above morphological systems.

      1.   The English language
      2.   Bantu languages   (15)

b)   The Indian grammarians were interested in phonetics. What triggered the interest?
                                       (4)

c)   What aspect of language study was Protagoras credited with?   (2)

d)   The Alexandrian's approach to the study of language was prescriptive, state two weaknesses of their approach.   (4)

[25 marks]

Question 2

    a)   Dante attributed the development of different languages to "the passage of time and the geographical dispersion of speakers of a given language". Discuss.
                                          (10)
    b) Compare and contrast Varro's and Priscian's contributions to linguistic science with special reference to their treatment of the following:

      i)   grammatical categories and word classes
      ii)   tense; and
      iii)   phonetics   (15)

[25 marks]

Question 3

a) Critically evaluate Grimm's Law and evaluate how Verner's Law complemented it.
(15)

b) Name **five** theories that have been suggested based on the assumption that language was invented by man. (5)

c) Briefly distinguish the monogenesis theory and the polygenesis theory of language origin.
(5)

[25marks]

Question 4

a) Critically evaluate the contributions made by Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics to the Nature-Convention debate. (15)

b) Briefly distinguish the terms GENEALOGICAL and TYPOLOGICAL classification of languages. (5)

c) Panini exercised both consistency and economy in his generative morphology of Sanskrit. With illustrations from English briefly discuss **two** examples of economy as used in contemporary linguistics. (5)

SECTION B
Choose two questions from this section

Question 5

a)   Critically evaluate the Finite-State grammar as proposed by Chomsky (1957) in his *Syntactic Structures* (10)

b)   What is a kernel sentence? (3)

c)   Chomsky introduced the third model of grammatical analysis as an improvement of the Phrase Structure Grammar.

    i)   What is the name of this model? (2)

    ii)   Discussing **two** examples, show how the model you mentioned in (i) was a step forward. (10)

[25 Marks]

Question 6

Different scholars contributed to the development of American structuralism. Discuss the contributions made by the following scholars to this type of linguistics:

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     i)   Franz Boas
     ii)   Edward Sapir
     iii)   Leonard Bloomfield

[25 Marks]

Question 7

a)   Trubetzskoy classified, what Hyman (1975:26) refers to as "distinctive oppositions". Using one example under each argument, briefly describe each of the following types of oppositions:

     i)   Bilateral vs multilateral oppositions   (6)
     ii)   Proportional vs isolated oppositions   (6)
     iii)   Privative, gradual and equipollent oppositions.   (9)

b)   Briefly state the difference in the approach to phonological analysis by Trubetzskoy and Jakobson   (2)

c)   SPE refers to an approach to the phonological analysis initiated by Chomsky and Halle. What is the origin of this acronym?   (2)

[25 Marks]

Question 8

a)   Critically evaluate W. Von Humboldt's three-fold language typology.
     (10)
b)   Briefly discuss August Schleicher's theory of language development.
     (15)

[25 Marks]