



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION

BDP 3202: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Date: Friday 16th April, 2021

Time: 15:00 – 17:00

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This examination consists of **FIVE** questions.
2. Answer **question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO** questions.

QUESTION 1 (Total Marks = 30)

(A) From what you have learnt about Philosophy of Language, how is it beneficial to **you**? Briefly explain any **two** benefits. **(4 marks)**

(B) The following are some linguistic terms, concepts and/or attributes that we came across in our various philosophical reflections on Language. **Explain** them in their right contexts, giving a relevant example in each case.

- (i)** Arbitrariness **(3 marks)**
- (ii)** Pragmatics **(3 marks)**
- (iii)** Systematic **(3 marks)**
- (iv)** Linguistic performance **(3 marks)**

(C) Briefly distinguish between *linguistic competence* (Noam Chomsky's view) and *communicative competence* (Dell Hymes' view). **(3 marks)**

(D) **Elaborate** the correspondence theory of truth and clearly show its significance in enhancing one's understanding of the concept "meaning" in a language. **(5 marks)**

(E) Describe in general the relationship between language, mind and reality. **(6 marks)**

QUESTION 2

Jeff Speaks (2016), in his article: “*Theories of meaning*”, elaborates various facets of meaning. With specific reference to this article:

- (a) Briefly explain why the term “meaning” is problematic. **(3 marks)**
- (b) Distinguish between what Speaks terms as the “semantic theories of meaning” and “foundational theories of meaning”. Clarify each with your own example. **(6 marks)**
- (c) Explain any **one** semantic theories of meaning and any **one** foundational theory of meaning that Speaks discusses. **(6 marks)**

QUESTION 3

- (a) How does use (or abuse) of language facilitate communication? **(3 marks)**
- (b) What role do conversational implicatures play in communication? Give a clear example. **(3 marks)**
- (c) Using your own examples in each case, explain any **three illocutionary speech acts**, in the view of John Searle’s (1975) classification. **(9 marks)**

QUESTION 4

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been viewed to have two components: the **linguistic relativity** and **linguistic determinism**. **Critically evaluate** the two theories in the light of the relationship between thought and language. **(15 marks)**

QUESTION 5

Language influences culture and vice versa. **Discuss** this statement with specific reference to a particular indigenous language of your choice giving clear examples of how the interactive influence between language and culture impacts on the users of the language. **(15 marks)**

QUESTION 6

In Africa, the prevalent use of indigenous languages, and the lack of a common African language, have been blamed for retarded development in terms of scientific advancements in most African countries. **Discuss** this statement with specific focus on the extent to which development depends on language, citing examples from Kenya. **(15 marks)**