



**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND PHILOSOPHY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION**

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION

BDP 3202: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

DATE: 16th March, 2026

TIME: 08:30-10:30

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This examination consists of **FIVE** questions.
2. Answer **question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO** questions.
3. For Question 3 and Question 4 choose either **A** or **B**, not both.

QUESTION ONE

- A.** Examine the following cluster of linguistic aspects and attributes, then answer the questions which follow:

Language and reality, semantics, coherence, ideational theory, nature of meaning, symbolic, language use, arbitrariness, syntax, referential theory, pragmatic, productive, phonetics, use theory, language and cognition, correspondence, morphemes, systematic, consensus, speech-act theory.

- (i) Using some elements from the cluster, define *language* in your own words. **(2 marks)**
 - (ii) Classify related aspects into any **three** categories with clear headings (from your own view) which reflect various aspects relevant to *Philosophy of Language*. **(6 marks)**
 - (iii) Select any **two** of categories from your answer in (ii) above; and clearly explain any **three** out of the four components in that category. Clarify with relevant examples where applicable. **(9 marks)**
- B.** Language, mind and reality are closely related concepts. Discuss this statement in the light of the significance of these concepts to *Philosophy of Language*, giving clear examples **(9 marks)**

- C. Have you benefited in any way from studying Philosophy of Language? Explain any two benefits with reference to your area of study. **(4 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

- (a) Clearly distinguish *linguistic competence* (Noam Chomsky's view) from *communicative competence* (Dell Hymes' view). **(4 marks)**
- (b) Explain the role of implicatures in communication, and give a clear example. **(3 marks)**
- (c) With reference to John Searle's (1975) classification of speech acts, name and briefly describe the **illocutionary speech act(s)** contained in each of the following utterances:
- (i) Would you mind having a cup of tea? **(2 marks)**
 - (ii) You may count on my support; I'll give you a gift on your birthday **(2 marks)**
 - (iii) I have confidence in you that you will choose the best option **(2 marks)**
 - (iv) The magistrate said: "The accused is sentenced to serve seven years' imprisonment..." **(2 marks)**

QUESTION THREE

Choose either A or B, NOT both.

- A. In the article: "*Theories of meaning*" Jeff Speaks (2016) discusses various aspects of meaning. With specific reference to this article:
- (i) Briefly explain the problem of "meaning" **(3 marks)**
 - (ii) Distinguish between what Speaks terms as the "semantic theories of meaning" and "foundational theories of meaning". Clarify each with an example other than the one Speaks uses. **(6 marks)**
 - (iii) Explain any one semantic theories of meaning and any one foundational theory of meaning that Speaks discusses. **(6 marks)**
- B. With specific focus on any **four** theories of truth, discuss the relationship between *meaning* and *truth*. **(15 marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

Choose either A or B, NOT both.

- A. Language and Culture are intertwined. Substantiate this statement with specific focus on any **four** elements of culture (African, Asian, European, or any other particular culture) which unveil the relationship. **(15 marks)**

- B.** Critique the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, and **discuss** the implications of linguistic relativity in a nation that has ethno-linguistic diversity. **(15 marks)**

QUESTION FIVE

Using examples from specific African indigenous languages, especially from Kenya, discuss the extent to which development of a nation is influenced by language, and how lack of a clear language policy impacts on development. **(15 marks)**