



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES & PHILOSOPHY
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION**

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION

BDP 3202: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

DATE: 21st March, 2025

TIME: 11:00-13:00

INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Total Marks = 30)

QUESTION ONE

- (A)** Explain the following concepts in the context of their relevance to Philosophy of Language and give a clear example **(10 marks)**
- (i) Arbitrariness **(2 marks)**
 - (ii) Linguistic competence **(2 marks)**
 - (iii) Reference **(2 marks)**
 - (iv) Truth conditions **(2 marks)**
 - (v) Pragmatics **(2 marks)**
- (B)** Examine the relationship between language, the mind, and reality. How do linguistic structures shape our perception of the world, and in what ways does the mind influence the way language is used to represent reality? Discuss this interconnection with reference to relevant theories and examples. **(10 marks)**
- (C)** Name and describe the four key themes that the Analytic Philosophers focused on from their view of Philosophy of Language and give a clear example in each. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

Choose either A or B, NOT both.

- A.** With specific reference to Correspondence, Coherence, Pragmatic and Constructivist Theories, discuss the significance of theories of truth in understanding the relationship between truth and meaning. How do these theories contribute to or challenge our understanding of how meaning is constructed in language and thought? **(15 marks)**

- B.** With specific reference to Jeff Speaks (2016) article: “*Theories of meaning*”;
- (i) Distinguish between what Speaks terms as the “semantic theories of meaning” and “foundational theories of meaning”. Clarify each with your own example, not the one Speaks uses. **(6 marks)**
 - (ii) Explain any **two** semantic theories of meaning and any **one** foundational theory of meaning that Speaks discusses. **(9 marks)**

QUESTION THREE

- (a) What is an implicature and how does it enhance communication? Give a clear example. **(3 marks)**
- (b) Explain the role of social context in communication, and give an example. **(3 marks)**
- (c) By use of a clear example in each case, explain any **three** specific **illocutionary speech acts**, in the view of John Searle’s (1975) classification. **(9 marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

Choose either A or B, NOT both.

- A.** Linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism are two key concepts derived from the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Discuss their implications for understanding the relationship between language and thought, and assess their relevance in contemporary linguistic and cognitive research. **(15 marks)**
- B.** Discuss the relationship between language and culture, drawing examples from the daily experiences of speakers of your chosen language. Consider how language reflects cultural values, traditions, and social norms in everyday interactions. **(15 marks)**

QUESTION FIVE

African nations and especially Kenya, in the recent past, have experienced a prevalent use of native languages and also mushrooming of many vernacular radio and television stations. But some critics have blamed this wave for retarded development in most of the African countries while others have expressed a contrary opinion. In the view of this, to what extent does development of a nation depend on language? Use examples from specific African languages, especially from Kenya, to defend your argument. **(15 marks)**