



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

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

END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION

BDP 3201: PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

Date: 7th March, 2024

TIME: 15:30-17:30

INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Total Marks = 30)

QUESTION ONE

(A) What is Philosophy of Language? Briefly **explain** any **two** benefits **you** have gained from studying the course. **(5 marks)**

(B) *Philosophy of Language* explores various concepts and set of themes including the ones listed below. From the list, **select ANY THREE** and clearly **explain each** one of them **in detail** in its right context. Give a **clear example** (where applicable) and show the significance of the concept particularly in relation to **your** area of study (philosophy, communication studies and/or development studies). **(Total = 15 marks)**

- (i) Nature of meaning **(5 marks)**
- (ii) Arbitrariness **(5 marks)**
- (iii) Linguistic competence **(5 marks)**
- (iv) Language use **(5 marks)**
- (v) Pragmatics **(5 marks)**
- (vi) Correspondence theory of truth **(5 marks)**
- (vii) Conversational implicatures **(5 marks)**
- (viii) Linguistic determinism **(5 marks)**

(C) Discuss the relationship between language, mind and reality. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

In his article: “*Theories of meaning*” Jeff Speaks elaborates various facets of meaning. With specific reference to this article:

- (a) Briefly explain the problem of “meaning” (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**, not the one Speaks uses. (6 marks)
- (c) Explain any **one** semantic theories of meaning and any **one** foundational theory of meaning that Speaks discusses. (6 marks)

QUESTION THREE

- (a) How is language related to communication? (3 marks)
- (b) Explain the role of social context in communication, and give a clear example. (3 marks)
- (c) Using 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. **Critique** the view that “language encompasses a people’s socio-cultural worldview” with specific reference to any **two** indigenous languages compared with each other against worldviews of their speakers. (15 marks)
- B. With specific reference to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, **discuss** the implications of linguistic relativity in a community that has ethno-linguistic diversity. (15 marks)

QUESTION FIVE

In the past decade, African nations, including Kenya, have experienced a prevalent use of native languages and mushrooming of many vernacular radio and television stations. While some people view this as an aspect of development, some critics have blamed the prevalent use of native languages for retardation of development in most African countries. To what extent does development depend on language? **Defend** your position citing clear examples from specific indigenous African languages. (15 marks)