

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

M.A.

M.A. English Language (Modern): Topics in Modern English Linguistics

COURSE CODE : ENGLMA03

DATE : 04–MAY–04

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

MA in English Language (Modern) 2004

Topics in Modern English Linguistics

Answer three questions, two from one section and one from another section.

Begin each section in a new answer book.

Do not use substantially the same material in more than one answer, whether on this paper or in other parts of the examination.

SECTION A: English Transformational Syntax

1. Each verb or other predicate has a certain number of arguments, each of which bears a distinct semantic role; this is referred to as a verb's argument structure. (Van Valin)

Discuss.

2. Describe the essential characteristics of Wh-movement.
3. Write an essay on the differences between complements, adjuncts and specifiers.
4. Write short notes on any *two* of the following, illustrating your answers with examples.
 - a. c-command
 - b. the theta criterion
 - c. head
 - d. complementiser

SECTION B: Linguistics and Language Teaching

1. Discuss the possible role of Universal Grammar in second language acquisition.
2. Write an essay on the effect of personality factors in second language acquisition.
3. Discuss the Critical Period Hypothesis in relation to second language teaching and acquisition.
4. Give an account of Contrastive Analysis and evaluate its usefulness in language teaching.

SECTION C: Logic and meaning

1. Answer **both** (a) and (b):

Austin's speech-act theory was designed to account for the fact that language is used not only to *say* things but to *do* things.

- (a) Using your own examples, outline some of the reasons why, ultimately, Austin thought that a clear distinction could not be made between the two.
- (b) What is meant by 'locutionary act' and 'illocutionary act'? Can the same locutionary act be used to perform different illocutionary acts?

2. Answer **all** of (a)-(c):

Consider the following exchange:

Jack: *Would you like an ice-cream?*

Lily: *I've got a terrible toothache.*

- (a) What does Lily implicate?
- (b) Show how Jack might retrieve this implicature using Grice's co-operative principle and maxims.
- (c) Using an example of your own, show how the *flouting* or *exploitation* of maxims might be used to convey an implicature.

3. Either (a): Compare the way the scope of a quantifier is determined in phrase structure and in recursive syntax for predicate calculus, explaining key concepts.

Or (b): Discuss some differences between propositional logic and predicate calculus, illustrating with example sentences and their translations into logical notation.

4. Answer **both** (a) and (b):

- (a) Explain what is meant by a 'logically valid argument'. Is the conclusion of a logically valid argument necessarily true?
- (b) Give an example of a logically valid argument, expressed in English (the example should be your own). Give a translation of this argument into propositional logic, saying what each of the propositional variables stands for.

5. Translate the following sentences into predicate calculus, giving a key to the translation. If a sentence is ambiguous, give a translation of each possible reading.
- i. Some people are happy.
 - ii. All pandas are vicious and hungry.
 - iii. No amphibian is water-dwelling and not four-legged.
 - iv. No man is both a politician and honest.
 - v. Someone is looking for everyone.
 - vi. All whales aren't good swimmers.
 - vii. Tigger gives a present to himself.

SECTION D: English accents and dialects

1. Either (a): Explain the term "Estuary English". Discuss how this variety typically differs from other varieties of English you are familiar with.
- Or (b): Do recent changes in British English pronunciation invalidate the choice of RP as the target accent for EFL?
2. To what extent is the Liverpool accent (Scouse) a typical local accent of the north of England? How are its other characteristics to be explained?
3. Give an account of the phonetics of Australian English. Is Australian pronunciation to be explained solely in terms of its origins in England?
4. What is "General American"? What are the main differences between this pronunciation and British RP?

SECTION E: Methodology and Corpus Linguistics

1. Either (a): According to Chomsky, every corpus is unrepresentative of a language because it contains only a finite sample of all possible sentences. What are the implications of this for corpus linguistics?
- Or (b): Discuss some of the issues and approaches involved in designing a representative corpus of English.
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a corpus for linguistic research?
3. Write an essay on the distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches to linguistic research.