

**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 : 02-MAY-06**

**TIME : 10.00**

**TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours**

**MA in English Language (Modern) 2006**

**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: Categorisation and Gradience**

1. To what extent can the boundaries between grammatical categories be argued to be fuzzy?
2. Discuss Ludwig Wittgenstein's contribution to the development of the notion 'prototype' in linguistics.
3. What is the difference between 'Subjective Gradience' and 'Intersective Gradience'? Give examples to illustrate your answer.

**SECTION B: Methodology**

1. Discuss the differences between induction and deduction.
2. What was striking about Galileo, and what was considered very offensive at that time, was that he dismissed a lot of data; he was willing to say "Look, if the data refute the theory, the data are probably wrong."  
(Noam Chomsky)  
  
Discuss.
3. Many studies of English grammar are self-avowedly eclectic in their approach to language description. What are the pitfalls of eclecticism?

**SECTION C: English Corpus Linguistics**

1. Discuss the distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches to linguistics
2. We must remind ourselves constantly that when we publish the results of our observations from a corpus the linguistic statements are merely statements about our sample and *not* about the population from which the sample was drawn. Our assessment of the hidden linguistic "facts" is based on estimates whose reliability must be kept under constant scrutiny. (Jeremy Clear)

Discuss

3. Discuss some of the considerations which must be taken into account when designing elicitation tests for linguistic research.

#### **SECTION D: English words**

1. Describe the differences between inflection and derivation.
2. Critically discuss the explanations that strata in lexical morphology can provide.
3. If English were spelt like Italian, the pronunciation could almost be inferred from the spelling. As a result, learning to read would be a piece of cake. Many a child would have a happier and less stressful life at school. Fewer people would leave school illiterate and feeling inadequate. (Francis Katamba)

In the light of Katamba's remarks, consider whether English spelling should be reformed.

4. In what ways does the mental lexicon resemble or contrast with the lexicon found in a dictionary?

#### **SECTION E: English Accents and Dialects**

1. Either: (a) What are the main ways in which the pronunciation used in the north of England differs from that of the south? Does Received Pronunciation belong phonetically and phonologically more with the north or with the south?  
Or: (b) What is meant by the term Estuary English? Compare its phonetics with that of Cockney and Received Pronunciation.
2. Show how a speaker's pronunciation may reflect aspects of their social identity (including social class, gender, and age).
3. Compare the pronunciation of English in (a) Australia or (b) the United States with the pronunciation of English in England. How can we account for the differences?