

University of London

**EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS**

For The Following Qualification:--

*B.A.*

**History of the English Language since Chaucer**

**COURSE CODE : ENGLN26**

**DATE : 20-MAY-05**

**TIME : 10.00**

**TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours**

Candidates must not present substantially the same material in any two answers, whether on this paper or in other parts of the examination.

Answer three questions.

1. Write an essay on any evidence of linguistic awareness that you have found in Middle English writings.
2. Discuss the concept of an English 'plain' style, as expressed by writers during any period covered by the paper.
3. Either: (a) Sans 'sans', I pray you.

(Rosaline to Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost*)

Consider the differences between linguistic borrowing and affectation.

- Or: (b) Since the tyme of Chaucer, more Latin & French, hath bin mingled with our tounge then left out of it, but of late wee haue falne to such borrowing of words, from Latin, French, and other tounes, that it hath bin beyond all stay and limit ... yf we were put to repay our borrowed speech back again, to the languages that may lay claime unto it, we should bee left little better then dumb, or scarcely able to speake any thing that should bee sencible.

(Richard Verstegan, 1605)

Write an essay on Renaissance attitudes to foreign borrowings into English.

4. Examine the effect of print on the establishment of an English literary canon.

**TURN OVER**

5. It is Your Lordship's Observation, that if it were not for the Bible and Common Prayer Book in the vulgar Tongue, we should hardly be able to understand any Thing that was written among us an hundred Years ago: Which is certainly true: For those Books being perpetually read in Churches, have proved a kind of Standard for Language, especially to the common People.

(Jonathan Swift, *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*, 1712)

To what extent did the English Bible, or the Book of Common Prayer, or both, contribute towards 'correcting, improving, and ascertaining' the English language?

6. Discuss the significance of the seventeenth-century artificial language movement in the history of English.
7. The principal design of a Grammar of any Language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that Language, and to be able to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be right or wrong. The plain way of doing this, is to lay down rules, and to illustrate them by examples.

(Robert Lowth, 1762)

Consider this passage in relation to the history of English grammars.

8. Dictionaries only succeed because of an act of faith on the part of their users, and that act of faith is dependent on those users believing their dictionaries both authoritative and beyond subjectivity.

(Rosamund Moon, 1989)

Discuss this comment in relation to the history of English dictionaries.

9. Describe and illustrate some of the ways in which cultural and social developments are reflected in the semantics of English words.
10. Either: (a) Examine the notions of 'language' and 'dialect' in relation to the standardization of English.
- Or: (b) Write an essay on the representation and evaluation of dialect during any period covered by the paper.

**CONTINUED**

11. Outline some of the major differences between standard American English and standard British English.
  
12. The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost ... I feel that English will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

(Chinua Achebe, 1964)

With this passage in mind, write an essay on contemporary English as a world language.

13. do I write intelligible I am generally understood tho I do not use that awkward squad of pointings called commas colons semicolons etc and for the very reason that although they are drilled hourly daily and weekly by every boarding school Miss who pretends to gossip in correspondence they do not know their proper exercise for they even set grammarians at loggerheads and no one can assign them the proper places for give each a sentence to point and both shall differ

(John Clare)

Write an essay on the history and problems of punctuation in the light of this quotation.

14. Write about syntactic change in English during the period of the paper, in terms of changes in the verb phrase, or in the pronoun system.

**END OF PAPER**