

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:–

B.A.

History of the English Language since Chaucer

COURSE CODE : ENGLN26

DATE : 15–MAY–06

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

Answer three questions.

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

1. Write about the standardization of English during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
2. Evaluate the role played by language contact in the history of English.
3. Some farre jorneid jentlemen at their returne home, like as they loue to go in forrein apparell, so thei will powder their talke with oversea language. He that commeth lately out of France will talke Frenche English and neuer blushe at the matter.

(Thomas Wilson, 1553)

Write an essay on reactions to foreign borrowings into English during the Renaissance.

4. It makes one weep to think what English might have been; for in spite of all that Shakespeare and Milton have done with the compound I cannot doubt that no beauty in a language can make up for want of purity. In fact, I am learning Anglo Saxon, and it is a vastly superior thing to what we have now.

(Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1882)

Examine the notions of 'beauty' and 'purity' in English, as expressed by writers during any period covered by the paper.

5. Latine is now of equal use become
To Englishmen, as was the Greek to Rome:
It guides our language, nothing is exprest
Gracefull or true but by the Roman test.

(John Dryden)

With this extract in mind, write an essay on attitudes to Latin as expressed by writers during any period covered by the paper.

TURN OVER

6. Write about the use of archaic language in the work of two or more writers you are familiar with.

7. In his *History of the Royal Society* (1667), Thomas Sprat wrote that the Society's members had made

a constant Resolution to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style: to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many things, almost in an equal number of words.

Consider this passage in relation to seventeenth-century views of English.

8. In his *Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712), Swift deplures

a foolish Opinion, advanced of late Years, that we ought to spell exactly as we speak; which beside the obvious Inconvenience of utterly destroying our Etymology, would be a thing we should never see an End of.

Discuss some of the pros and cons of spelling 'exactly as we speak'.

9. Every other authour may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been granted to very few.

(Samuel Johnson, 1755)

Consider Johnson's view in relation to the history of English lexicography.

10. The Book of Common Prayer was the first real attempt to develop a formal liturgical style for English, one capable of meeting the needs of speech as well as of writing. Along with the Bible it added a fresh stylistic dimension - a new variety - to the language's resources in the sixteenth century.

(David Crystal)

Write about the stylistic influence of the Book of Common Prayer, or of the English Bible, or of both.

CONTINUED

11. In his *Outline of English Speech-Craft* (1878), William Barnes wrote:

In towns the poor commonly speak a mixed jargon, violating the canons of pure dialect, as well as those of English.

Comment on Barnes's categorisations.

12. Most linguists are adamant that they should only describe how languages work rather than lay down the law - yet they are happy to come up with their own recommendations when the mood takes them.

(John Humphrys, 2004)

Write about the tension between descriptivism and prescriptivism in comments on the English language during any period covered by the paper.

13. Either: (a) Evaluate Noah Webster's contribution to the history of English.
Or: (b) Give an account of some of the distinctive features of standard American English.

14. For myself, English has offered, above all, the challenge of a new medium: a challenge to myself, to try to convey to a public remote from Africa something of my African experience; but also a test of and a challenge to the language.

(André Brink, 1983)

Consider this passage in relation to the emergence of 'new Englishes'.

15. Write about some of the major changes that have taken place in English syntax since the early modern period.

END OF PAPER