

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**  
**FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER: MAY 2008**  
**B.A. DEGREE**

**TITLE OF PAPER: INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL AND  
COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS  
(WESTERN & BANTU)**

**COURSE NUMBER: AL401/IDE-AL401**

**TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS**

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1. ANSWER FOUR (4) QUESTIONS IN ALL.**
  - 2. CHOOSE ONE QUESTION FROM EACH SECTION.**
  - 3. LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND FORMALISMS SHOULD BE USED WHENEVER APPROPRIATE.**
  - 4. MARKS WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR UNTIDY WORK, WRONG SPELLING, AND UNGRAMMATICAL SENTENCES.**
  - 5. ALL EXAMPLES SHOULD BE GLOSSED.**

**THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.**

## SECTION A

### LEXICOSTATISTICS AND GLOTTOCHRONOLOGY

#### Question 1

Examine the shared cognate percentage figures for the following ten hypothetical languages:

A										
90	B									
89	87	C								
28	22	29	D							
26	34	30	88	E						
28	27	32	56	55	F					
27	29	31	57	53	63	G				
30	33	36	54	56	66	64	H			
22	28	27	53	51	65	62	88	I		
31	25	235	57	55	67	68	86	89	J	

With reference to the above data,

- (i) Find out which languages are most closely related to each other and group them accordingly. (2)
- (ii) Work out the shared cognate percentages between the different groups, to find the second level of linguistic relationship. (8)
- (iii) Estimate according to glottochronology the period of time the following languages may have separated from each other.

Language B from language H  
Language D from language G  
Language A from language D (7)

Note: Use the formula below to work out the time depth:

$$t = \frac{\log C}{2 \log r}$$

The value of  $r$  in this formula is set at 0.805

- (b) State briefly four basic assumptions of lexicostatistics according to Gudschinsky (1956). (6)
- (c) Briefly explain one of the problems comparative linguists are likely to face with the basic assumptions you stated in (b) above. (2)

[25 marks]

## SECTION B

### INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION

#### Question 2

Examine the data below from Bahasa Indonesia in which the active and passive verb forms are presented and do the tasks which follow:

Active	Passive	
məmbuka	dibuka	'open'
məndapat	didapat	'get'
məjelaskan	dijelaskan	'explain'
məngosok	digosok	'rub'
məmərlukan	dipərlukan	'need'
mənanam	ditanam	'plant'
məjaran	dikaran	'compose'
məjurus	diurus	'arrange'
məjeja	dieja	'spell'
məjambil	diambil	'take'
məjikat	diikat	'tie'
məjerikan	dijerikan	'give a fright'
məhapuskan	dihapuskan	'wipe'

- (i) Use the internal method of reconstruction to suggest what the original active and passive prefixes might have been. (2)
- (ii) Identify those words whose prefixes in the active form have undergone changes and give a step-by-step derivation of the surface forms, to show how they have changed. (14)

- (iii) Identify the words that have retained their original forms of the active prefix and give good reasons why they have retained such forms. (9)

[25 marks]

### Question 3

- a) Examine the data below from Bislama (spoken in Vanuati) and do the tasks which follow:

Root		Transitive verb	
rit	'read'	ritim	'read'
bon	'burnt'	bonem	'burn'
smok	'smoke'	smokem	'smoke'
skras	'itch'	skrasem	'scratch'
slak	'loose'	slakem	'loosen'
stil	'steal'	stilim	'steal'
rus	'barbecue'	rusum	'barbecue'
tait	'tight'	taitem	'tighten'
boil	'boil'	boilem	'boil'
ciki	'cheeky'	cikim	'give cheek to'
pe	'payment'	pem	'pay for'
rere	'ready'	rerem	'prepare'
drai	'dry'	draim	'dry'
draun	'sink'	draunem	'push under water'
melek	'milk'	melekem	'squeeze liquid out of'
level	'level'	levelem	'level out'

- i) State what you think the original form of the transitive suffix might have been. (1)
- ii) Identify the words whose suffixes have undergone changes and then give a step-by-step derivation of the surface forms to show why they have changed. (9)
- iii) Identify the words that have retained their forms of suffixes and give good reasons why they have retained such forms. (12)
- b) When might you want to use the method of Internal Reconstruction instead of the Comparative Method? (3)

[25 marks]

## SECTION C

### COMPARATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

#### Question 4

Consider the data below from six Bantu languages and then do the tasks that follow:

Language	Singular	Plural	
Gisu	ligi	gamagi	'egg(s)'
Kongo	diki	meki	'egg(s)'
Rimi	ige	mage	'egg(s)'
S. Sotho	lihi	mahi	'egg(s)'
Zambian Tonga	iji	maji	'egg(s)'
Tswana	lii	mai	'egg(s)'

- a) Divide each of the items presented above into a nominal prefix and a stem. (3)
- b) Identify and list the consonant correspondences found in the stem in the six languages. (3)
- c) Identify and list the vowel correspondences found in the stem in the six languages. (3)
- d) According to Guthrie (1970), the Proto-Bantu stem for 'egg' is /-gi/. State the phonological processes which took place during the evolution of the following forms from Proto-Bantu:
- i) the Kongo stem;
  - ii) the Rimi stem
  - iii) the Zambian Tonga stem; and (2)
  - iv) the Tswana stem.
- e) With the use of distinctive features, formalize the diachronic phonological rules which applied to the proto-Bantu stem to evolve the following:
- i) the Kongo stem;
  - ii) the Rimi stem; and (9)
  - iii) the Zambian Tonga stem.
- f) In your opinion, what strategy did Guthrie use in the reconstruction of /-gi/? Give your reasons. (5)

[25 marks]

### Question 5

Consider the data provided below and answer the questions which follow each set of data.

a) Proto-Bantu	Rundi	Pokomo	Bemba	
*-biad-	-vyar-	-vya-	-fyaal-	'bear (child)'

- i) State **three** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Rundi item /-vya-/ from Proto-Bantu /\*-biad-/. (3)
- ii) State **three** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Pokomo item /-vyar-/ from Proto-Bantu /\*-biad-/. (3)
- iii) State **four** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Bemba item /-fyaal-/ from Proto-Bantu /\*-biad-/. (4)

b)	SiSwati	IsiZulu	S.Sesotho	Bemba	
	umfati	umfazi	musadi	umukafi	'woman/wife'
	umuti	umuzi	mutsi	umufi	'village/home'
	emanti	amanzi	metsi	amefi	'water'
	imbuti	imbuzi	podu	imbufi	'goat'
	tink <sup>h</sup> uni	izinkuni	dibeso	inkuni	'firewood'

- i) Which of the four languages whose data appear above do you consider to share cognates, if any? Justify your claim. (2)
- ii) For any of the four languages which you consider to share cognate forms, divide each item into nominal prefix and stem. (3)
- iii) In the languages you consider to share cognate forms, identify and list the consonant correspondences found in the nominal stems. Do not include identical sets. (3)
- iv) For each set of consonant correspondences you identified in (iii) above, reconstruct the proto-consonant and state the strategy you use to arrive at the proto-consonant. (3)
- v) State the phonological processes which took place during the evolution of the following forms from the Proto-language:

1. The Bemba stem [umukafi] 'woman/wife'.
2. The IsiZulu stem [imbuzi] 'goat'
3. The siSwati stem [tink<sup>h</sup>uni] 'firewood' (4)

[25 marks]

## SECTION D

### COMPARATIVE BANTU MORPHOPHONOLOGY

#### Question 6

- a) With the aid of examples from relevant Bantu languages, discuss the operation of Dahl's Law. (6)
- b) With the aid of examples from relevant Bantu languages, discuss the similarities and differences between Meinhof's Law and Kwanyama Law. (5)
- c) List the Proto-Bantu nominal prefixes 19-23 and for each class show how the Proto-Bantu prefix is reflected in any one modern day Bantu language. (10)
- d) Wherever the Proto-Bantu prefix has changed in a modern Bantu language illustrated in (c) above, state the phonological process which occurred during the development of the modern Bantu language. (4)

[25 marks]

#### Question 7

- (a) Study the Shona nouns given below and answer the questions that follow:

Verb	Noun
1. tuma "send"	N-tuma → ndume "messenger"
2. βesa "carve"	N-βesa → mbeso "adze"

- i) Explain how the process of homorganic nasal assimilation operated in the derivation of nouns from verbs in Shona. (4)
  - ii) Account for the difference in the stem-initial segment in [ndume] and /N-tuma/ in (1) and between [mbeso] and /N-βesa/ in (2) above. (6)
- b) Define the term Proto-Bantu. (5)
  - c) With illustrations from Meinhof's Ur-Bantu and siSwati vowel systems, discuss the \*7 > 5 vowel shift. (8)
  - d) Define the term 'initial element' (2)

[25 marks]