# UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

## FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER: MAY 2011

## 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.

## LEXICOSTATISTICS AND GLOTTOCHRONOLOGY

*Answer Question 1*

**Question 1**

Examine the shared cognate percentage figures for the following 10 hypothetical languages:

| A | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 89 | B | | | | | | | | |
| 88 | 87 | C | | | | | | | |
| 28 | 30 | 29 | D | | | | | | |
| 26 | 34 | 30 | 86 | E | | | | | |
| 28 | 27 | 32 | 56 | 54 | F | | | | |
| 27 | 29 | 31 | 57 | 53 | 62 | G | | | |
| 30 | 33 | 36 | 54 | 56 | 63 | 64 | H | | |
| 22 | 28 | 27 | 53 | 51 | 66 | 65 | 87 | I | |
| 31 | 24 | 21 | 56 | 54 | 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.                                                    (3 marks)

(ii)  Work out the shared cognate percentages between the different groups, to find the second level of linguistic relationship.                        (8 marks)

(iii) Estimate according to glottochronology the period of time the following languages may have separated from each other.

        Language A from language J
        Language D from language E                                    (9 marks)
        Language E from language I

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)   Briefly explain what constitutes the basic or core vocabulary of a language. (5marks)

**[25 marks]**

## INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION

*Choose <u>one</u> question from this section*

**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' |
| məɲɟelaskan | diɟelaskan | 'explain' |
| məŋgosok | digosok | 'rub' |
| məmərlukan | dipərlukan | 'need' |
| mənanam | ditanam | 'plant' |
| məŋaraŋ | dikaraŋ | 'compose' |
| məŋurus | diurus | 'arrange' |
| məŋeɟa | dieɟa | 'spell' |
| məŋambil | diambil | 'take' |
| məŋikat | diikat | 'tie' |
| məɲerikan | ɟinərikan | 'give a fright' |
| məŋhapuskan | dihapuskan | 'wipe' |

(i)  Use the internal method of reconstruction to suggest what the original active and passive prefixes might have been. (2 marks)

(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 marks)

(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 marks)

**[25 marks]**

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**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 mark)

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 marks)

iii) Identify the words that have retained their forms of suffixes and give good reasons why they have retained such forms. (12 marks)

b) When might you want to use the method of Internal Reconstruction instead of the Comparative Method? (3 marks)

**[25 marks]**

## SECTION C

## LANGUAGE CHANGE

### *Choose one question from this section*

**Question 4**

a)  Study the data provided below from four languages of the Tupi-Guarani family. Then do the tasks which follow:

| GUARANI | TUPINAMBA | SIRIONO | GUARAYO | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| kitʃi | kiti | kisi | kitʃi | 'cut' |
| tʃĩ | tiŋ | sĩ | tʃĩ | 'white' |
| meʔẽ | meʔeŋ | meẽ | meẽ | 'give' |
| kwa | pwar | kwa | kwa | 'tie' |
| ki | kib | ki | ki | 'louse' |
| kiʔa | kiʔa | kia | kia | 'dirty' |

i)  Using the comparative method, reconstruct proto-words for each of the six items provided in the data. (6 marks)

ii)  Wherever a proto-word has changed, name the daughter language and state the phonological process which took place during the development of the daughter language from Proto-Tupi-Guarani. (6 marks)

iii) Giving reasons for your opinion, which of the three languages do you consider to be:
    1. the most conservative;
    2. the most innovative. (3 marks)

b)  Consider the data provided below and answer the questions which follow:

| 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 /-vyar-/ from Proto-Bantu /*-biad-/. (3 marks)

ii)  State **three** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Pokomo item /-vya-/ from Proto-Bantu /*-biad-/. (3 marks)

iii)  State **four** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Bemba item /-fyaal-/ from Proto-Bantu /*-biad-/. (4 marks)

**[25 marks]**

**Question 5**

a) Define the term Proto-Bantu. (5 marks)

b) Describe the Proto-Bantu vowel system as reconstructed by Guthrie. (10 marks)

c) With illustrations from Meinhof's Ur-Bantu and siSwati vowel systems, discuss the *7 > 5 vowel shift. (10 marks)

**[25 marks]**

## SECTION D

## MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

*Choose one question from this section*

## Question 6

a) Distinguish between the following types of sound change. Give for each argument an example from any language:

    i) apocope and syncope;
    ii) haplology and metathesis;
    iii) aphaeresis and prothesis; (20 marks)
    iv) phonetic unpacking and vowel breaking;
    v) assimilation and dissimilation.

b) What is phonetic fusion? (5 marks)

**[25 marks]**

## Question 7

(a) Does a proto-language die out and then get replaced by its daughter languages? What is, for example, the nature of the relationship between Latin and Italian?
(8 marks)

(b) "There is no precise figure for the number of languages spoken in the world today". Provide evidence to support this statement along with relevant examples.
(8 marks)

(c) Briefly distinguish the terms Genealogical and Typological classification of languages. (5 marks)

(d) What is the difference between Lexicostatistics and Glottochronology?
(4 marks)
**[25 marks]**

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