

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER: DECEMBER 2013

B.A. DEGREE

TITLE OF PAPER: HISTORY OF LINGUISTICS

COURSE NUMBER: AL 311

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. ANSWER FOUR (4) QUESTIONS IN ALL.**
- 2. CHOOSE TWO (2) QUESTIONS FROM SECTION A.**
- 3. CHOOSE TWO (2) QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B.**

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

SECTION A

Choose two (2) questions from this section.

Question 1

Describe the contribution of any five(5) of the following to the development of Western Linguistics.

- i. Phoenician alphabet
- ii. Plato
- iii. Dionysius Thrax
- iv. Language Learning
- v. Renaissance Europe
- vi. India
- vii. Sumer
- viii. Priscian
- ix. Ancient Near East
- x. William Holder

[25 marks]

Question 2

Define the concept of the *gramma*. Who invented it? Name two cultures whose linguists made use of it. Is this concept still in use in modern phonetics and phonology? Why or why not?

[25 marks]

Question 3

Who was Varro? Where and when did he live? Define Varro's concepts of natural word form variation and spontaneous word form variation. Give one example of each from a language of your choice. Explain each example using your definitions.

[25 marks]

Question 4

Compare and contrast the Greek approach to the concept of Universal Grammar with that of any two (2) other cultures. For each of the cultures, name at least one scholar or school of thought representative of its approach.

[25 marks]

SECTION B

Choose two (2) questions from this section.

Question 5

Describe the contribution of any five (5) of the following to the development of Western Linguistics.

- i. Dante Alighieri
- ii. Petrus Ramus
- iii. Wilhelm von Humboldt
- iv. Zellig Harris
- v. Roman Jakobson
- vi. Prague School
- vii. Karl Brugmann
- viii. August Schlegel
- ix. Ferdinand de Saussure
- x. Joseph Greenberg

[25 marks]

Question 6

Compare and contrast etymology, as practiced by the Greeks and Romans, and the comparative method, as practiced in 19th and 20th century historical linguistics. Specify what etymology and the comparative method have in common and how they are different. Which one is preferred by linguists today? Why?

[25 marks]

Question 7

What is Grimm's Law? Name the language family and the ancestor language family whose relationship is described by Grimm's Law. State each sound change of Grimm's Law. State three (3) generalizations that may be made about these sound changes.

[25 marks]

Question 8

Describe the theories of behaviorism and mentalism. For each theory, name one scholar in the history of Western linguistics who has advocated it. Could the Greek philosopher Plato be regarded as a behaviorist or mentalist? Justify your answer.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTION PAPER