

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION PAPER: JULY 2016
B. A. DEGREE

TITLE OF PAPER: SPECIAL EXAMINATION PAPER

TOPIC: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN OPTIMALITY THEORY

COURSE NUMBER: AL418/IDE-AL418

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
1. ANSWER FOUR (4) QUESTIONS IN ALL.
 2. ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS FROM SECTION A.
 3. ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B.
 4. LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND FORMALISM SHOULD BE USED WHENEVER APPROPRIATE.
 5. ALL EXAMPLES SHOULD BE GLOSSED

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

SECTION A**FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

Answer Question one (1) and any other question in this section

Question 1

Discuss the construct of 'stages' in language acquisition. Describe several good examples of potential stages. How do these stages differ from Piaget's notion of stages?

[25 Marks]

Question 2

The Imitation and Reinforcement Theories contribute to child language acquisition. Discuss and critically evaluate these two theories.

[25 Marks]

Question 3

Dyslexia and Cerebral palsy are some of the conditions found in developmentally disabled children. Discuss these two conditions and show how they may delay the process of child language acquisition.

[25 Marks]

SECTION B**OPTIMALITY THEORY IN LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION**

Answer Question 4 and any other question from this section

Question 4

- a) Discuss **three** common developmental error patterns in child language acquisition
- b) Using Optimality Theory, account for the error patterns you mentioned in (a)

[25 Marks]

Question 5

- a) Using the constraints *COMPLEX, *S, MAX, and ONSET (a syllable must begin with an onset) account for the production of the word "blow" by the following children:

Child A

blo

Child B

bo

Child C

o

- b) Account for the production of the words [blo] and [bo] in intrachild variation.

[25 Marks]**Question 6**

- a) Using Optimality Theory, account for the error patterns of reduction, and coalescence in language acquisition. (15 marks)
- b) Using illustrations from Optimality Theory, compare and contrast Linguistic typology and language universals (10 marks)

[25 marks]**Question 7**

The initial ranking of constraints in child language acquisition is Markedness constraints above Faithfulness constraints, and overtime the ranking is reversed. Use Optimality Theory to account for the authenticity of this statement.

[25 Marks]