

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI  
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION  
NOVEMBER 2019

**TITLE OF PAPER:** HISTORY OF LINGUISTICS: WESTERN

**COURSE NUMBER:** IDE-AL311

**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
  4. LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND FORMALISM SHOULD BE USED WHENEVER APPROPRIATE.

**THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED**

**SECTION A**

*Choose two questions from this section*

**Question 1**

According to Robins (1990:21), amongst the ancient Greek philosophers, "...questions about language were considered within the terms of two somewhat interrelated controversies".

Discuss each of these controversies and evaluate the position of the following in either or both of the controversies:

- a) Plato;
- b) Aristotle;
- c) The Stoics; and
- d) Varro

**[25 Marks]**

**Question 2**

Compare and contrast Varro's and Priscian's contributions to linguistic science with special reference to their treatment of the following:

- i) grammatical categories and word classes
- ii) tense; and
- iii) phonetics

**[25 Marks]**

**Question 3**

- a) Historical linguistics and Comparative linguistics are somehow related but different. Explain. (5 Marks)
- b) Sir Williams Jones' February 1786 statement was a major break-through to the development of Historical and Comparative linguistics. Discuss. (10 Marks)
- c) The Indian grammarians were interested in phonetics. What triggered the interest? (4 Marks)
- d) What aspect of language study was Protagoras credited with? (2 Marks)
- e) The Alexandrian's approach to the study of language was prescriptive, state two weaknesses of their approach. (4 Marks)

**[25 Marks]**

**Question 4**

Discuss briefly the contributions made by the following scholars towards the development of Historical and Comparative linguistics:

- a) Gottfield Wilhem Von Leibniz;
- b) A. Dante
- c) J. J. Scaliger
- d) Friedrich Schlegel
- e) Franz Bopp

[25 marks]

**SECTION B**

*Choose two questions from this section*

**Question 5**

Rasmus Rask, rather than Jacob Grimm, should have been crowned as “The father of comparative linguistics”. Discuss

[25 marks]

**Question 6**

- a) Critically evaluate W. Von Humboldt’s three-fold language typology.  
(10 Marks)
- b) Briefly discuss August Schleicher’s theory of language development.  
(15 Marks)

[25 Marks]

**Question 7**

- a) What aspects of linguistic investigation did Franz Boas advocate to prove that language and culture were inseparable? (3 Marks)
- c) In the study of language, Edward Sapir differed from the behaviourists. Explain (5 Marks)
- d) Briefly explain what the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was all about. (3 Marks)
- e) Briefly discuss the major difference between Sapir’s and Bloomfield’s approaches to the study of language. (6 Marks)

- f) In Bloomfieldian linguistics, morphemes were considered to be composed of phonemes. With illustrations, explain why this form of relationship is difficult to account for. (8 Marks)

[25 Marks]

**Question 8**

- a) Trubetzkoy classified, what Hyman (1975:26) refers to as “distinctive oppositions”. Using one example under each argument, briefly describe each of the following types of oppositions:
- i) Bilateral vs multilateral oppositions (6 Marks)
  - ii) Proportional vs isolated oppositions (6 Marks)
  - iii) Privative, gradual and equipollent oppositions. (9 Marks)
- b) Briefly state the difference in the approach to phonological analysis by Trubetzkoy and Jakobson (2 Marks)
- c) SPE refers to an approach to the phonological analysis initiated by Chomsky and Halle. What is the origin of this acronym? (2 Marks)

[25 Marks]