

THE UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MAIN EXAMINATION
MAY 2007

COURSE TITLE: PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

COURSE CODE: ENG 403

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- i) This question paper consists of two sections and four questions.
- ii) Answer any two questions, one from each section
- iii) Each question is worth 20 marks
- iv) Claims made should be well substantiated by means of examples.

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR HAS GRANTED PERMISSION TO DO SO.

SECTION A - ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM THIS SECTION

QUESTION 1 – LANGUAGE PLANNING AND POLICY

a) “The use and promotion of ALL eleven official languages will provide an opportunity for ordinary South Africans to make choices on ways in which they want to be educated, according to arts, culture, science and technology,” said the South African minister of education in a conference on the South African Government National Language policy Framework. (<http://www.gcis.gov.za/buanews>).

To what extent have language attitudes impeded most Africans to realize the dream of choosing their indigenous languages for their own education?

Or

b) To what extent would you support the claim that the mindset of apartheid in South Africa and colonization in Swaziland still rules in the way the indigenous languages of these countries are viewed? [20]

QUESTION 2

According to James Tollefson (1991) planning language is planning linguistic genocide. Language policies of most African countries have continued to maintain unequal social structures in linguistic communities. To what extent do you agree with Tollefson that planning language in any society is planning unequal social scales? [20]

SECTION B – ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM THIS SECTION

QUESTION 3 – BILINGUALISM/MULTILINGUALISM

Some communities regard bilingualism/multilingualism as serious threat; it has even been referred to as a ‘Trojan horse,’ initially attractive but ultimately fatal. Why might this be so? Critically examine the truth of this statement drawing your examples from any bi/multilingual society of your choice. [20]

QUESTION 4 – STANDARDISATION/STANDARD LANGUAGES

‘People often say one thing but do another’ is an observation that is not infrequently made about human behaviour. With such behaviours, Language practitioners sometimes appear as ‘expert witnesses’ in cases that involve language before the ‘courts.’ With close reference to ‘standard English’ try to find examples of their testimony to the claim by Milroy (1992) that standard English is an idealization that exists only in the mind of its ‘users.’ [20]

QUESTION 5 - PIDGINS AND CREOLES

The ‘stripped-down’ nature of pidgins has led them to being called ‘reduced’ or ‘minimal’ languages. A different view is that they are ‘optimal’ communication systems perfectly appropriate to the circumstances of their use. What are your own views? [20]