

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

COURSE : PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

CODE: ENG 403

INSTRUCTION: THIS QUESTION PAPER CONSISTS OF FIVE
QUESTIONS.

**ANSWER ANY TWO QUESTIONS, ONE FROM EACH
SECTION.**

EACH QUESTION IS WORTH 30 MARKS.

DURATION: TWO (2) HOURS

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

ENG 403 – PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

SECTION 1 – MICRO-SOCIOLINGUISTICS

ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM THIS SECTION

QUESTION 1

According to Wardhaugh (1986:41) speakers of Faroese are said to understand speakers of Icelandic but not vice versa. Danes seem to understand Norwegians better than Norwegians understand Danes. Monolingual speakers of Mandarin and Cantonese can not communicate with each other in speech.

What do such facts as the above have to say about using the criteria of mutual intelligibility, geographical location and nationality in deciding whether we are dealing with a single language, with two dialects of one language or with two separate languages?

QUESTION 2

Language is an essential human attribute and humans are naturally social beings. With the aid of examples, critically examine the challenges posed by an asocial approach to the study of language.

SECTION B – MACRO-SOCIOLINGUISTICS

ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM THIS SECTION

QUESTION 3

Writing of the codification of Standard English, Leith (1997:56-57) says that ‘ by analyzing “correct” usage in terms that only a tiny minority of educated people could command, the codifiers ensured that correctness remained the preserve of an elite. The usage of most people was wrong, precisely because it was the usage of the majority.’ From this claim, there appear to be both advantages and disadvantages to having a ‘standard language.’ What are your own views?

QUESTION 4

The SiSwati language in Swaziland, though an official language can be described as an endangered language. Nearly every Swazi speaks English, and, while many young Swazis are bilingual, an increasing number does not speak any siSwati at all. It has been observed that SiSwati is used mostly as an everyday language mainly in the rural areas. The medium of instruction for education is English. As a result, Swazi pupils are punished for speaking their vernacular language during school hours. English is the language of towns and cities in which the Swazi increasingly prefer to live, and siSwati itself is used more and more only by older speakers on ceremonial occasions. The attempt to teach it as a subject in many schools so far is showing few signs of success. How would you plan to preserve the siSwati language and culture?

QUESTION 5

'The spread of English in the world has not gone without critics' Wardhaugh 1986:376. Muhlhausler (1996), for example, regards languages like English as 'killer languages' because as national languages of modernization, education and development, they stifle and eventually kill local languages. What are your views?