

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

MAIN EXAMINATION 2010

TITLE OF PAPER : PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

COURSE CODE : ENG 403

TIME ALLOWED : TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS :

- 1. This paper consists of FOUR questions.**
- 2. Answer TWO questions in all, ONE from each SECTION**
- 3. Each question carries THIRTY (30) marks**
- 4. Good English will attract credit.**
- 5. This paper consists of 4 pages, cover page included.**

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

SECTION 1 – MICRO SOCIOLINGUISTICS
ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM THIS SECTION

QUESTION 1

With the aid of appropriate examples, discuss the factors that are responsible for language variation within a linguistic community

QUESTION 2

Saville-Toike (1989) in Wardhaugh (1986:85) quotes the following letter to the editor of the Trinidad Guardian. A report on a Language Arts syllabus had recognized that most Trinidadians spoke a Creole and that English was not their native language. The letter protests as follows:

If the language of the barrack yard and the market place is to be the accepted mode of expression in the classroom... there would be no need for teachers...we could save the high wages of these experts and set them free to go and plant peas... where they can give full vent of their dialect stuff...what if not broken English is this dialect?...I feel such discussions should be banned from our news media as a most damaging exercise.

What might you say in a follow up letter to the editor of the Guardian?

SECTION 2 – MACRO SOCIOLINGUISTICS

ANSWER ONE QUESTION FROM THIS SECTION

QUESTION 3

With close reference to the article below, do you think the process of language standardisation also referred to as verbal or linguistic hygiene will ever succeed in its attempts to 'eradicate speech demons' from the speech of city students. [30 marks]

Purging 'What-Cha' and 'Ain't' **New York students will be taught to avoid New Yorkese**

BY NEIL A. LEWIS
Special to the New York Times

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 – New York City's Schools Chancellor, Richard R. Green, is beginning a campaign to purge New York of New Yorkese and other offending speech patterns.

In a memorandum to Mayor Edward I. Koch released today, Dr. Green identified 20 phrases or mispronunciations, some peculiar to New York, he is determined to eliminate from the speech of city students.

Listing 'Speech Demons'

The items supposed to be corrected include the cheery 'what-cha doin?' ('what are you doing?,' students will be taught to say) to the hoary bane of English teachers, ain't. Malefactors being questioned should learn not to say: 'I don't know nuttin about it.' Instead, they should respond with a proper: 'I don't know anything about it.'

The Chancellor's list of 'speech demons' and his detailed program to eradicate them from the speech of schoolchildren are a response to Mayor Koch's repeated prodding and complaining about poor speech habits of the city's youth. Although Dr. Green has suggested that many of the Mayor's educational proposals are superficial, he has responded to the

complaints about speech patterns with apparent alacrity.

In his memorandum to the Mayor, Dr. Green said he was beginning a full-scale assault.

His list of speech demons will be distributed to each student and a poster contest will be held to 'focus on common errors in the oral use of language.'

Dr. Green said he would convene in April 'a working group of outstanding educators, including representatives of the university community, the New York Public Libraries and Central Office experts' to develop a long-term plan, Dr. Green wrote.

Plan Called 'Superb'

In realising the Chancellor's program today, Mr. Koch pronounced it 'superb.'

Included on the list are some of the speech patterns the Mayor singled out in a letter to Dr. Green as particularly offensive – saying 'axe' for 'ask,' for example, and the misuse of the verb 'to be' as in 'He be sick.'

Among the 20 problems cited by the Chancellor is the mispronunciation of the word 'library' as 'liberry,' a mistake the Mayor has acknowledged he occasionally makes himself.

Demons Possessing Student Tongues

May I *axe* a question?
Hang the *pitcher* on the wall.
He's *goin'* home
He *be* sick.
I *ain't* got none.

Can I leave the room?
I was *like* tired, *you know*?
Where is the ball *at*?
What-*cha doin'*?
I'll *meetcha* at the *cau-nuh*.
What do *youse* want?
Let's go to *da* center.
I *brang* my date along.
The *books is* in the *liberry*.
Yup, you *betcha!*
Pacifically, . . .
I don't know *nuttin* about it.
I'm not the *on'y* one.
We *was only foolin'* 'round.
So, I *says* to him . . .

May I ask a question?
Hang the picture on the wall.
He's going home.
He is sick.
I don't have any.

May I leave the room?
I was tired.
Where is the ball?
What are you doing?
I'll meet you at the corner.
What do you want?
Let's go to the center.
I brought my date along.
The books are in the library.
Yes, you're right.
Specifically, . . .
I don't know anything about it.
I'm not the only one.
We were only fooling around.
So, I said to him . . .

(source: Lewis 1989)

QUESTION 4

According to Circular No E.21/73 of the Ministry of Education and Training and the Constitution of Swaziland, “the official languages in Swaziland are siSwati and English. All pupils are to be taught in English in all subjects, and siSwati will be taught in all schools as a subject equivalent to English in importance (in terms of it being a core subject in the school curriculum)”. Against this background, discuss the direction you think has been taken by Swaziland’s ‘language policy’. [30 marks]