

66

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
**MAIN EXAMINATION** **MAY 2012**

**COURSE TITLE:** LANGUAGE MEANING AND USE  
**COURSE CODE:** ENG 203 / IDE 203  
**DURATION :** TWO HOURS  
**INSTRUCTION:** ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS,  
QUESTION 1 AND ANY OTHER.

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## QUESTION 1

67

- a) What do you understand by a semantic field? Give an example in support of your answer. [2marks]
- b) What are the challenges faced by linguists in trying to assign lexemes into semantic fields? [4marks]
- c) With the aid of examples, discuss compositional as opposed to non-compositional meaning. [4marks]
- d) With the aid of examples, discuss at least five of the factors responsible for near synonymy in English. [10marks]
- TOTAL [20 marks]**

## QUESTION 2

A polyseme is a word or phrase with different but related senses.

- a) What are the three elements that are entailed in the definition given above? [3marks]
- b) With the aid of examples, give four words/sentences that are polysemous to the infinitive / to get/. [4marks]
- c) Which sentence relation is exemplified in each of the following pairs of sentences? Give a reason for your answer
- i) This piano is easy to play sonatas on.  
Sonatas are easy to play on this piano.
- ii) The bricks are red.  
The bricks are not white.
- iii) My brother is an only child.  
My brother is the first born in my family.
- iv) I managed to kiss my sheepdog.  
I kissed my sheepdog.
- v) The stones ran all over the hill.  
The spinster gave birth to a bouncing baby. [6marks]
- d) Examine the following sets of sentences, each of which includes words or phrases used metaphorically.

- i) He drags up old conflicts.
- ii) The committee picked up on the issue.
- iii) Our doubts are traitors.
- iv) Lizzy is a snake in the grass.
- v) Never will you ever hear me talk of Dr Jack. He is a butcher.
- vi) Walls have ears.
- vii) The night has a thousand eyes and the day but one.

Identify the words / phrases that are used metaphorically in each of the sentences above and explain their meanings. [7marks]

**TOTAL [20 marks]**

### QUESTION 3

- a) Explain the semantic ambiguity of the following sentences by providing two or more sentences that paraphrase the multiple meanings.
  - i) For sale: Several old dresses from grandmother in beautiful condition.
  - ii) He was knocked over by the punch.
  - iii) I cannot recommend visiting professors too highly.
  - iv) The police were urged to stop drinking by the fifth.
  - v) Wanted: Man to take care of cow that does not smoke or drink. [5 marks]

b) Read the discourse below and answer the questions that follow:

1. Polonius: What do you read my lord?
2. Hamlet : Words, words, words.
3. Polonius: What's the matter my lord?
4. Hamlet : Between who?
5. Polonius: I mean, the matter that you read my lord?
6. Hamlet : Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all of which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not

honestly to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir should grow  
old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

(Fromkin, V. & Rodman, R. (1998:195)

In the discourse above, Hamlet has violated a number of Maxims.

- a) Briefly discuss the Cooperative principle. [2 marks]
- b) Discuss each of these maxims and show how each has been violated. [10 marks]
- c) Discuss very briefly a situation where you were compelled to violate at least two maxims. [3marks]

**TOTAL [ 20 marks]**