

DENA 2417
DENB 2417

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

**HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2004
COURSE I AND COURSE II**

8 (h) (i) and B4 Linguistic Theory

Wednesday, 26 May 2004, 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm

Time allowed — Three hours

Answer *three* questions. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

Do not turn over until told to do so.

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1. A grammar of a language constructed by a theoretical linguist often looks quite unlike the sort of everyday grammar used as a reference work or for teaching purposes. In what ways might it differ, and why?
2. 'One reason for studying language – and for me personally the most compelling – is that it is tempting to regard language, in the traditional phrase, as a mirror of the mind' (CHOMSKY). Discuss.
3. What are Saussure's reasons for drawing a distinction between *langue* (language system) and *parole* (language behaviour)? How does this compare with Chomsky's distinction between *competence* and *performance*?
4. Discuss the use of notional criteria for characterising the parts of speech.
5. 'The languages that actually exist are the ones that children are predisposed to learn' (SMITH & WILSON). Discuss.
6. Compare and contrast any two views on the nature of metaphor with which you are familiar.
7. What is meant by the term 'empty category' in recent syntactic theory? What is the motivation for positing such categories?
8. What do you understand by the X-bar Analysis of sentence structures?
9. Give a critical account of the approach to the classification of vowels employed in the International Phonetic Alphabet.
10. EITHER (a) Discuss the role of the syllable in recent phonological theory.

OR (b) 'Discrete and well-ordered segments overlap and intermix in the sound stream' (LIBERMAN). Discuss.
11. Discuss and illustrate the distinction between derivational and inflectional morphology.
12. Give a brief account of EITHER speech acts OR conversational implicature.
13. What are some of the difficulties in characterising a 'standard language'?
14. What kinds of evidence can be adduced for and against the Sapir/Whorf hypothesis?

TURN OVER

15. 'There is good evidence to suggest that synchronic variation in the speech of a community is the vehicle by means of which language change progresses' (BYNON). Discuss.
16. Assess the importance of EITHER grammaticalisation OR analogical levelling in the processes of language change.
17. Discuss the criteria for the classification of languages EITHER morphologically OR syntactically.
18. 'In order to describe a language one needs no historical knowledge whatsoever; in fact, the observer who allows such knowledge to affect his description is bound to distort his data' (BLOOMFIELD). On what grounds might one agree or disagree with this statement?
19. Discuss the contribution to modern linguistic theory of any scholar *other than* Chomsky or Saussure.
20. What empirical and theoretical problems arise in identifying the boundaries between dialects?