

DENA 2417
DENB 2417

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2009

COURSE I AND COURSE II

PAPER 8 (h) (i) AND B4 LINGUISTIC THEORY

TRINITY TERM 2009

Wednesday 27 May 2009, 9.30am to 12.30pm

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. What principles seem to you to be most useful in the classification of languages ?
2. 'Morphology cannot be studied in isolation'. Do you agree?
3. 'Vowels should be treated differently from consonants for the purposes of classification. However, from a purely theoretical point of view, we could fit vowels into the normal taxonomic parameters of both location and stricture, should we so wish'. Discuss the classification of consonants and vowels from this perspective.
4. Discuss the theoretical problems which might be encountered in the reconstruction of sound change.
5. Does the syllable have a phonetic as well as a phonological definition?
6. With reference to the work of any one or two linguists, provide a critical assessment of the import and/ or legacies of structuralism.
7. EITHER (a) With reference to EITHER (a) prototype theory OR (b) cognitive grammar, discuss the ways in which the study of meaning can productively be explored.

OR

- (b) How productive is it to see semantics as an autonomous area of linguistic study?
8. Assess the validity of either (a) X-bar analysis of sentence structures OR (b) the 'empty category' in syntactic theory.
9. Provide a systematic account of the utility of either (a) implicature or (b) gender in understanding how language works.
10. What seem to you to be the advantages or disadvantages of equating meaning within a sentence with its truth conditions?
11. EITHER (a) How important is it to consider the social embedding of variation and change?

OR

- (b) 'Social network is better treated as a means of capturing the dynamics underlying speakers' underlying behaviours than as a fixed social category' (LESLEY MILROY). Discuss.

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12. What impact does the study of language contact between EITHER different languages OR different varieties of the same language have upon our understanding of linguistic change?
13. 'A regimented account of language use facilitates a simpler and more elegant description of language structure' (LAWRENCE HORN). Discuss.
14. To what extent is 'face' important in accounting for politeness?
15. 'The shift in focus from an emphasis on child language as an imperfect but emerging adult system to a valid system in its own right has been of fundamental importance in the study of child language acquisition'. Discuss.
16. Discuss one of the following: analogy; creolisation; Verner's law; the Saussurean paradox; co-variation; inflectional or derivational morphology; grammaticalization.