

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF ARTS



JUNE 2010 SESSION EXAMINATIONS

LIN3001 Synoptic Study-Unit: Topics in General Linguistics
for

B.A.(Hons)

Tuesday 1st June 2010

09.15 ~ 12:15

This paper is divided into 3 (three) sections. Choose 1 (one) question from each section.

Section 1. Semantics and Pragmatics

1. According to some theorists, it is unproductive to assume a division between a level of “linguistic semantic knowledge” on the one hand, and “encyclopaedic” or “world” knowledge on the other. Discuss the pros and cons of this view, giving linguistic examples to support your argument.
2. Would a characterisation of the lexicon as a mere list of words be a realistic stance to adopt, or is it more realistic to view the lexicon as a network of relationships among lexical items?
3. Are all linguistic uses of politeness phenomena pragmatic? Illustrate your answer with examples.
4. Explain why it might be problematic to combine some forms of discourse analysis with conversation analysis in order to conduct research into naturally occurring discourse.
5. On what grounds does Leech criticise Grice’s theory of implicature? How does he propose to supplement Grice’s theory?

Section 2. Grammar

6. Derivation, inflection and compounding are three basic word formation types. Describe and discuss each in detail with examples.
7. Syntax is the study of sentence structure. Discuss and illustrate with examples.
8. Syntax and morphology are core areas of study in language research. What phenomena do they deal with and how do they account for the empirical facts?
9. Why do linguists opt for the formal, rather than the notional, criterion when they come to establish the parts of speech in a given language? Is there any use for the notional criterion in linguistic analysis in this area?
10. In a language of your choice, justify the status of the verb, the noun and the adjective as parts of speech and discuss the grammatical categories associated with them.

Section 3. Phonetics and Phonology

11. (a) List and explain the principles of general phonetics and (b) Discuss Laver's (1994) consideration of **aspect of articulation** and how it enriches general phonetic theory.
12. Argue in favour of the use of the segment in general phonetic theory and discuss its limitations. How does general phonetic theory compensate for the limitations of the use of the segment?
13. Explain the concept of the phoneme and consider its contribution to the study of phonology. Consider its limitations and show how distinctive feature theory goes beyond the phoneme and enables us to have a more efficient way of understanding what happens in connected speech. Give examples of how data from one or more languages is dealt with in the phoneme theory and in distinctive feature theory.
14. Briefly discuss the following statement: "There is no such thing as 'a questioning intonation': an utterance can only be heard as a question if it is produced in circumstances where a question would be appropriate" (Brazil, Coulthard & Johns 1980). Illustrate by means of examples, appropriately annotated to show features of intonational form, from one or more languages or language varieties of your choice.