

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA
Peperiksaan Semester Pertama
Sidang 1990/91

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HET 405 - Sociolinguistik

Masa: [3 jam]

This Examination paper contains EIGHT (8) questions in TWO (2) pages.

Answer FIVE (5) questions in all. ONE (1) from each of the four Sections A, B, C and D.

Equal marks are allocated to All questions.

SECTION A

1. Ferdinand de Saussure claimed that speech was totally individual, in that it depended only on the 'will of the speaker' and conversely that language was entirely social, being identical from one member of a speech community to another. To what extent was de Saussure right? Discuss with examples.
2. If men and women speak differently, is it because the common language they share has a sexual bias, because boys and girls are brought up differently or because part of sex marking is the linguistic choices one can indeed, must-make?

SECTION B

3. Basil Bernstein, a British Sociologist, has claimed that some children acquire only a rather limited exposure to language as a result of their upbringing and are consequently penalized in school. What kind of evidence would you consider to be relevant to confirming or disconfirming such a claim?

4. 'English is a better language than French.' 'Italian is a more musical language than German.'

Sociolinguistics has nothing to offer in a discussion of statements of this kind, they are really quite meaningless. Do you agree or disagree? Give your reasons.

SECTION C

5. Bickerton claims that there is now an impressive body of evidence to support the following claims: 'between the ages of two and four the child born into a community of linguistically competent adults speaks a variety of language whose structure bears a deep resemblance to the structure of creole languages.' Assess his claim.
6. To what extent might the relationship between Black English and standard English be characterized as a diglossic one? Discuss with examples.

SECTION D

7. The fact that standard English can be spoken with a variety of accents often poses certain difficulties for the teaching of English in non-English-speaking countries. What are some of the problems you might encounter and how might you try to solve them?
8. The size of a nation seems to be quite unrelated to the problems in language planning it may face, because small nations as well as large ones can have problems and large nations as well as small ones can be without problems. What seems to you to be the most important factors in creating problems and in resolving them? Discuss in the context of Bahasa Malaysia in Malaysia.

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