
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

First Semester Examination
Academic Session 2005/2006

November 2005

HXE 306 – Sociology and Psychology of Language

Duration : 3 hours

Please check that this examination paper consists of **THREE** pages of printed material before you begin the examination.

This paper contains **SIX** questions. Answer **TWO** questions from **Section A** and **TWO** questions from **Section B**. All questions carry the same marks.

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Section A

1. Discuss the main characteristics of language. Is language species-specific? You may discuss your answer by referring to various experiments which have been conducted in order to teach human language to non-human primates.
[25 marks]
2. Define the term 'lateralization'. Discuss any four studies that have been used to provide evidence for the lateralization of language in the brain.
[25 marks]
3. Discuss briefly any FIVE of the following terms:
 - [a] Critical Period Hypothesis
 - [b] Phonemic Paraphasia
 - [c] Garden Path Model
 - [d] Categorical Perception of Voicing Contrast
 - [e] Brain Imaging Techniques
 - [f] Dyslexia[25 marks]

Section B

4. 'First of all, a particular variety must be *selected* from a pool of competing varieties. If the process is to be successful, the variety chosen must be one that will gain *acceptance* by a group of users who are capable of influencing other groups. The variety must then be *diffused* socially and geographically... .' (Milroy and Milroy, 1985). Discuss the concepts of selection, acceptance and diffusion with respect to the emergence of standard languages.
[25 marks]
5. Describe the various types of diglossia. Discuss the attitudes of Malaysians towards the H and L varieties of English in the present day.
[25 marks]

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6. Every two weeks a language dies. Of the estimated 5,000 languages spoken worldwide, from Cherokee to Cornish, only half are likely to survive to the end of this century (Dalby, 2003). Discuss the factors that contribute to the loss or extinction of endangered languages and the measures that can be taken to revive these languages.

[25 marks]

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