
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

First Semester Examination
Academic Session 2007/2008

October/November 2007

HET 313 - SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Duration: 3 hours

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

Answer any FOUR questions.

1. Basil Bernstein 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 in confirming or disconfirming such a claim.

[25 marks]

2. Discuss, with examples, the extent to which electronic communication offers alternative positions for girls/women and boys/men and the extent to which it reinforces certain traditional forms of gender difference and disadvantage.

[25 marks]

3. "We enter into human consciousness and social consciousness via our learning of language. To have a subjectivity, to be human, is to have first entered via language into dialogue with others. The 'self' is therefore social since it is a collection of various roles, made up of 'languages' or 'voices' spoken by others. This 'construction' of the self via language has been neglected in sociolinguistics, despite the agreement that speaking involves making 'acts of identity.'"

(Mesthrie, 2000)

Do you agree with the above proposition? What are your reasons?

[25 marks]

4. EITHER

[a] "Pidginized varieties of a language including code switching/ code mixing are 'corrupt' and 'ungrammatical' and their speakers are either 'lazy' or 'inferior'".

What is your opinion on this matter? Provide evidence to support your answer.

[25 marks]

OR

[b] It is claimed that some languages are better than others. What opinion (s) do you have on this matter and what evidence can you use to support your answer?

[25 marks]

5. EITHER

- [a] "The best option for regional governments is to promote local varieties of English. Instead of spending large sums of money on importing native-speaking teachers and externally developed materials, funding should be set aside for the professional development of local teachers and for the development of regionally appropriate ELT curricula."

(Kirkpatrick, 2000)

To what extent is Kirkpatrick right? Give your reasons.

[25 marks]

OR

- [b] "While English is the International lingua franca, the different varieties of English that have evolved are part of the unique linguistic and cultural heritage of each country"

(Lee Su Kim, 1998)

Assess this observation in relation to the variety/varieties of English in Malaysia.

[25 marks]

6. Do you agree that methodology is problematic at all stages in a sociolinguistic study? Give your reasons.

[25 marks]