

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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HET 322 – Language, Power and Ideology

Masa : 3 jam

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

Answer **FOUR** questions. **TWO** from Section A and **TWO** from Section B.

Section A

1. The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to “help increase consciousness of language and power, and particularly of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others...this means helping people to see the extent to which their language does rest upon common-sense assumptions, and the ways in which these common-sense assumptions can be ideologically shaped by relations of power” (Fairclough 2001).

Discuss the above statement using examples from texts that we have analysed in class.

[100 marks]

2. Define the term “discourse” as Foucault (1972) understands it. Analyse the following extract and discuss the discourses that operate in them. Make sure you substantiate any claims that you make with sufficient linguistic evidence. The extract was taken from the travelogue *The Old Patagonia Express* written by the famous Anglo-American novelist and travel-writer, Paul Theroux, in the year 1978.

The landscape had a prehistoric look, the sort that forms a painted backdrop for a dinosaur skeleton in a museum; simple, terrible hills and gullies; thorn bushes and rocks; and everything smoothed by the wind and looking as if a great flood had denuded it, washed it of all its particular features. Still the wind worked on it, kept the trees from growing, blew the soil west, uncovered more rock, and even uprooted those ugly bushes.

The people in the train did not look out the window, except at the stations and only then to buy grapes or bread. One of the beauties of train travel is that you know where you are by looking out the window. No signboards are necessary. A hill, a river, a meadow – the landmarks tell you how far you have come. But this place had no landmarks, or rather it was all landmarks, one indistinguishable from the other – thousands of hills and dry riverbeds, and a billion bushes, all the same. I dozed and woke; hours passed; the scenery at the window *did not alter*. And the stations were interchangeable – a shed, a concrete platform, staring men, boys with baskets, the dogs, the battered pickup trucks.

I looked for guanacos. I had nothing better to do. There were no guanacos.

[100 marks]

3. What is power and how is it connected to language? Discuss how power is negotiated in the following interaction?

The following text is a medical interview between a patient (P) and a medical doctor (D). Short pauses are marked with full stops; longer pauses with dashes; square brackets show overlap; and unclear material is in round brackets. The medical doctor is a homeopath with the British National Health Service.

P: but she really has been very unfair to me . got no
D: hm
P: respect for me at all and I think . that's one of the reasons
D: hm
P: why I drank s o much you know - a nd em 5
D: hm hm hm hm are you
you back are you back on it have you started drinking
again
P: no
D: oh you haven't (uncle ar.....) 10
P: no . but em one thing that the
lady on the Tuesday said to me was thta . if my mother
did turn me out of the house which she thinks she
D: yes hm
P: may do . coz . she doesn't like the way I've been she has 15
turned me o ut befo re . and em . she said that .
D: hm hm
P: I could she thought that it might be possible to me for
Me to go to a council flat
D: right yes yeah 20
P: but she
said it's a very em she wasn't pushing it because . my
D: hm
P: mother's got to sign a whole lot of things and
D: hm hm 25
P: e: . she said it's difficult and em . there's no rush over
D: hm
P: it . I I don't know whether . I mean one thing they say in
AA is that you shouldn't change anything . for a year
D: hm 30
D: hm yes I think I think that's wise . I think that's wise
(5 second pause) well look I'd like to keep you know seeing you
keep . you know hearing how things are going from time to time
if that's possible

[100 marks]

Section B

4. "News is a representation in the sense of construction; it is not a value-free reflection of "facts"...each particular form of linguistic expression in a text – wording, syntactic option, etc – has its reason. There are always different ways of saying the same thing, and they are not made at random, accidental alternatives. Differences in expression carry ideological distinctions (and thus differences in representation" (Fowler 1994).

...4/-

With reference to Fowler's quotation, discuss with examples, the connection that he posits between language and ideology.

[100 marks]

5. Explain Fairclough's three stages or dimensions of critical discourse analysis. Analyse the following text using Fairclough's critical framework.

The following text is the opening of a story in a "true romance" magazine entitled "His kind of loving". There is a visual of Carrie and Geoff (the characters in the story) which accompanies the opening of the story. Carrie is petite, blonde, and starry-eyed. Geoff is tall, dark and handsome, and is leaning towards Carrie, and towering over her, with a protective hand clasping her arm.

His kind of loving....

Driving rain almost obscured the wooded hills as I made my way along the winding roads towards the village where I had my craft shop.

As I drove over the bridge and towards the shop I was excited about Geoff's arrival that evening. I hadn't seen him since I'd left Hampshire for Scotland three months before.

Geoff had been annoyed. "I can see there's no use my trying to change your mind, Carrie. Go ahead, move to Scotland and open your shop."

"We can be married next year, " I pleaded. "I have to take this chance of running my own business, Geoff."

"Just when I think you're going to settle down, you get this hare-brained idea."

I sighed as I remembered our conversation....

Source: *True Story*, Summer Special 1986

[100 marks]

6. What are presuppositions and how are they cued in texts? Analyse the following texts and spell out the presuppositions and inferences that are made in them. What do you think is the aim of the horoscope?

The texts are based on a horoscope taken from *Woman's World*, a magazine primarily targeted at American women aged between 30 and 50 years old.

Aries March 21 to April 19

With Mars in Libra's laid-back domain, you should consider letting your mate take the initiative in romance. Any diet you begin now will be successful, making you look and feel beautiful.

Taurus April 20 to May 20

....be sure to take care of your pet's health in this period. On the 18th and 19th, your mate will find you overwhelmingly attractive.

Gemini May 21 to June 21

...As your creativity blossoms, you'll become more self-assured and confident of your unique skills and talents.

Cancer June 22 to July 22

...You could be eager for career challenges as Mars' stimulating aspect increases your ambition.

Virgo August 23 to September 22

Your planetary rulers' positive aspects are giving you a sense of intense excitement. This energy spreads into your love life....

Libra September 23 to October 22

...Saturn's combative aspect perfects your diplomatic skills, preparing the way for career opportunities.

Scorpio October 23 to November 21

...let the tiger inside you emerge from her cage.

Sagittarius November 22 to December 21

Pluto's transforming power in your sign is stimulating you to rebuild your lifestyle to make it really comfortable for you.

Aquarius January 20 to February 18

You could feel a strong desire for novelty as Uranus in Aquarius reawakens your nature.

Pisces February 19 to March 20

Fun becomes your top priority, as your inner child seeks your full attention.

Adapted from *Womans' World*, 14 January 1997, p. 34

[100 marks]