

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
MAIN EXAMINATION PAPER: MAY 2015
B. A. DEGREE

TITLE OF PAPER: INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE
LINGUISTICS: BANTU

COURSE NUMBER: AL413/IDE-AL413

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS:
1. ANSWER FOUR (4) QUESTIONS IN ALL.
 2. CHOOSE ONE QUESTION FROM SECTION A.
 3. CHOOSE THREE QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B.
 4. LINGUISTIC EXPRESSIONS AND FORMALISM SHOULD BE USED WHENEVER APPROPRIATE.
 5. ALL EXAMPLES SHOULD BE GLOSSED

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

SECTION A

LEXICOSTATISTICS AND GLOTTOCHRONOLOGY

*Answer Question 1***Question 1**

- a) Swadesh (1955) discussed guidelines for the preparation of word lists used in lexicostatistics. Discuss **six** of the guidelines, giving *one* example under each point. (19 marks)
- b) Lexicostatisticians classify and subgroup languages according to their shared cognate percentages in core vocabulary. List the six subgroups. (6 marks)

[25 marks]

SECTION B

*Answer question 2 and any other TWO questions in this section***Question 2**

Consider the data from Tshivenda a Bantu language and answer the question which follows:

Tshivenda

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| vul-a | vul ^w -a | vul-iw-a | 'be opened' |
| φaɬ-a | φaɬ ^w -a | φaɬ-iw-a | 'be built' |
| φ-a | | φ-iw-a | 'be given' |
| k-a | | k-iw-a | 'be picked' |
| tap'-a | tap ^y -a | tap'-iw-a | 'be flicked' |
| k ^h op ^h -a | k ^h op ^{hy} -a | k ^h op ^h -iw-a | 'be broken off' |

- a) Discuss, with relevant examples, the formation of the passive in siSwati and then compare and contrast it with the formation of the passive in Tshivenda as exemplified in the above data. (15 marks)
- b) The difference between partial reduplication and complete reduplication is rather unclear and relative. Using examples from siSwati and any other relevant Bantu language(s), discuss the authenticity of this statement. (10 marks)

[25 marks]

Question 3

- a) Discuss how the following Modern Bantu words were derived from Proto-Bantu (Your discussion should show a step-by-step derivation of these forms):

| Proto-Bantu | Kaonde | Lungu | Bemba | |
|-------------|--------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| *di,ud- | zul-a | zyul-a | jul-a | 'uproot' (6 marks) |
| *gubo | fuβu | vuwu | vubu | 'hippo' (6 marks) |
| *tig- | f-a | sy-a | | 'leave' (4 marks) |

- b) Discuss the following terms/concepts in relation to linguistic comparison and reconstruction:

- i) Arbitrariness;
- ii) Relatedness hypothesis; (9 marks)
- iii) Phonetic plausibility strategy.

[25 marks]

Question 4

- a) List the Proto-Bantu nominal prefixes class 19-21 and for each class show how the Proto-Bantu prefix is reflected in any **two** modern-day Bantu languages. (6 marks)
- b) Wherever the Proto-Bantu prefix has changed in a modern Bantu language illustrated in (a) above, state the phonological process which occurred during the development of the modern Bantu language. (9 marks)
- c) Briefly explain the difference between the following linguistic concepts:

- i) open vowels and close vowels. (3 marks)
- ii) Tone spreading and tone doubling (3 marks)
- iii) Downdrift and downstep (4 marks)

[25 marks]

Question 5

- a) Critically evaluate **two** criticisms that have been made against Greenberg's classification of African languages. [10 marks]

- b) With the aid of examples from Ganda and Lamba, discuss the similarities and differences in the operation of Meinhof's Law in the two languages.

(9 marks)

- c) Discuss Malcom Guthrie's theory and Joseph Greenberg's theory of Bantu origin and spread.

(6 marks)

[25 marks]

Question 6

- a) Consider the data provided below and answer the questions which follow:

| Proto-Bantu | Rundi | Pokomo | Bemba | |
|-------------|--------|--------|---------|----------------|
| *-biad- | -vyar- | -vya- | -fyaal- | 'bear (child)' |

- State **three** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Rundi item /-vyar-/ from Proto-Bantu /*-biad-/. (3 marks)
 - State **three** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Pokomo item /-vya-/ from Proto-Bantu /*-biad-/. (3 marks)
 - State **four** phonological processes which took place in the development of the Bemba item /-fyaal-/ from Proto-Bantu /*-biad-/. (4 marks)
 - Using distinctive features, formalise any of the **two** processes you mentioned in (a (iii)) above (5 marks)
- b) With the aid of examples from Gikuyu and Nyamwezi, discuss the operation of Dahl's Law. (10 marks)

[25 marks]