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NATURE AND USE OF LANGUAGE  
(For Both School and Private Candidates)

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**SECTION A**

1. Outline the characteristic which differentiate human language from animal communication. illustrate five points using relevant examples, where applicable.

ANSWERS:

Duality

Human language is said to be dual in that it is made up, first of all, of speech sounds (phonemes). These phonemes combine to form meaningful units (morphemes) and elements of structure. Language, therefore, has two levels: the sound level and the grammatical level. Non-human communication, e.g. animal communication, does not have this dual system.

Productivity

Normally animal communication is static and is produced in the exactly the same way. Human language is productive in that there is a possibility to combine its structural elements to produce new utterances that were not heard before, yet they are intelligible. For example: *Matinde ate some manyala at Matabala*. Although *Matinde*, *manyala* and *Matabala* do not sound English, one can simply know that *Matinde* is a name of someone, *manyala* must be a type of food, and *Matabala* must be a place.

Arbitrariness

There is no inherent relationship or similarity between a symbol in human language and the referent. Such a relationship, to a great extent, exists in other types of communication, which is thus termed *iconic* (e.g. the dancing of bees is directly related to the direction and distance of where needed materials are).

Interchangeability

Human language can be used in both sending (decoding) and receiving (encoding) messages. Human beings can exchange ideas in length using languages. Animal communication only expresses some needs and senses, e.g. pain, hunger, fear etc.

Specialization

The language of any human society tends to reflect the physical realities of the environment in which the society lives. Some societies, therefore, tend to have more words for some environmental or cultural features than other languages. For example, people living in banana producing areas will have many names for the various types of banana, names which are unknown to the people living where banana is not produced. Animals do not have special sounds for special environments, things or situations.

Displacement

Human language can be used to refer to events remote in space and time. We use language to create a

picture of events that happened far from where we are narrating, or a long time ago. Animals cannot communicate about distant events or about what happened even a second ago.

#### Semanticity

Elements of human language are assigned meaning which sometimes vary according to situation. In human language words have denotation, multi-denotation and connotation. Animal communication is not that much complicated.

#### Cultural transmission

Human language is culturally transmitted from the old generation to the young one. Human language is learnt. Animal communication is inborn.

#### QUESTION:

2. (a) Differentiate the following pairs of linguistic concepts.

- (i) Bilingualism/Diglossia
- (ii) Pidgin/Creole
- (iii) Standard language/lingua Franca
- (iv) Idiolect/Sociolect

(b) In describing the process of human communication the following key concepts are included: encoder; signals; channel; decoder; feedback. Elaborate each concept to clarify the communication process.

#### ANSWERS:

2. (a) (i) **BILINGUALISM AND DIGLOSSIA**

When more than one language exist side by side in a community, there are usually members of that community who can speak two or more languages.

The use of two at least two languages either by an individual or by a group of speakers, such as the inhabitants of a particular region or nation is called bilingualism. A person who knows and uses two languages is called a bilingual.

When two languages or language varieties exist side by side in a community and each one is used for different purposes, this is called diglossia.

In a diglossic situation, one language or language variety is called the High variety (H-variety) as it is taken to be more prestigious than the other, called the Low variety (L-variety).

(ii) **PIDGIN AND CREOLE**

When speakers of two languages find themselves in contact and neither of them understands the language of the other, usually each side makes an effort to communicate with the other party, starting by using

gestures and then by using simplified forms of language that each can understand. In this situation, a variety of language is born, and it is called pidgin.

Pidgin can be defined as a language which develops as a contact language when groups of people who speak different languages come into contact and communicate with one another.

A pidgin usually has a limited vocabulary, generalized and deformed phonological and morphological systems, and reduced grammatical structure which may expand when a pidgin is used over a long period of time or for many purposes.

A pidgin language which has become a native language of a group of speakers, being used for all or many of their daily communicative needs, is called Creole. Usually the sentence structures and vocabulary range of a Creole are far more complex than those of a pidgin language.

Creoles are usually classified according to the language from which most of their vocabulary comes, e.g. English-based, French-based, etc. Examples of English-based Creoles are Jamaican Creole, Hawaiian Creole, and Krio, (spoken in Sierra Leone).

(iii) **STANDARD LANGUAGE AND LINGUA FRANCA**

We can define the standard language as the variety of language which has the highest status in a community or nation and which is usually based on the speech and writing of the educated native speakers of the language.

A standard variety is generally:

- (a) used in the news media and literature.
- (b) described in dictionaries and grammars.
- (c) taught in schools and taught to non-native speakers when they learn the language as a foreign language.

Standard language is also called *standard dialect* or *standard variety*.

A lingua franca is a language that is used for communication between different groups of people, each speaking a different language. The lingua franca could be an internationally used language of communication, (for example English), it could be one of the native language in the community, or it could be a language which is not spoken natively by any of the groups but has a simplified sentence structure and vocabulary, and is often a mixture of two or more languages (pidgin).

(iv) **IDIOLECT AND SOCIOLECT**

Idiolect refers to the language system of an individual as expressed by the way he or she speaks or writes within the overall system of a particular

language. Idiolect includes the way one communicates, and generally those features, either in speech or writing, which distinguish one individual from others, such as voice quality, pitch and speech rhythm.

Sociolect refers to a variety of language (a dialect) used by people belonging to a particular social class. The speakers of a sociolect usually share a similar socioeconomic and/or educational background.

(b) Concepts used in describing the process of communication.

- Encoder = the one who turns a message into a set of symbols as, as part of the act of communication.
- Signals = the symbols, spoken or written, which have been assigned communicative values (or meanings).
- Channel = the way in which a message is conveyed from one person to another. The two most common channels of communication are speech and writing.
- Decoder = the one who interprets sets of symbols which carry a meaning. In the process of human communication this simply refers to the receiver of the message.
- Feedback = any reaction that shows that the message reached the encoder. This may be any action or sign which shows the result of behaviour in the act of communication, for example, verbal or facial signals which listeners give to speakers to show that they understand what the speaker is saying.

## SECTION B

### SYNTAX AND LEXIS

3. (a) From the list of grammatical categories provided in the box, identify the category that describes each of the bolded parts of sentences listed below.
- (i) It wasn't certain whose house we went in.
  - (ii) Your assumption, that things will improve, is not well founded.
  - (iii) Do you know whether the shops are open now?
  - (iv) State bluntly, he has no chance of recovery.
  - (v) All I did was hit him on the head.
  - (vi) This is the lady whose daughter met us at the airport.
  - (vii) She is a nice girl, please accept her.
  - (viii) He does not want to be consulted when busy.
  - (ix) They succeeded despite their laziness.
  - (x) Surprisingly, he won the boxing match despite the brain injury he sustained.
- List of grammatical categories.

Infinitive clause	Reduced relative clause
Comment clause	Prepositional phrase
Yes-no interrogative sub-clause	Verbless clause
Appositive noun phrase	Attributive noun phrase
Wh-interrogative sub-clause	Restrictive relative clause
Adjectival phrase	A vocative

(b) What grammatical role does each of the bolded parts fulfil in the sentences?

### ANSWERS:

- 3 (a) (i) whose house we went in = Wh-interrogative sub-clause  
 (ii) that things will improve = Appositive noun phrase (?) [appositive clause].  
 (iii) whether the shops are open now = Yes-no interrogative sub-clause  
 (iv) State bluntly = Comment clause  
 (v) hit him on the head = Infinitive clause  
 (vi) whose daughter met us at the airport = Restrictive relative clause  
 (vii) nice girl = Attributive noun phrase  
 (viii) when busy = Verbless clause  
 (ix) despite their laziness = Prepositional phrase  
 (x) he sustained = Reduced relative clause
- (b) (i) adverbial  
 (ii) post modifier  
 (iii) object  
 (iv) adverbial  
 (v) complement  
 (vi) post modifier  
 (vii) complement  
 (viii) adverbial  
 (ix) adverbial  
 (x) post modifier.

### QUESTION:

4. (a) Refer to the sentence below to answer the questions which follow.
- The new Manager found the recently employed Asian Secretary in his office the most attractive girl in all the places he had worked before.*
- (i) Assign an SVOCA analysis to the sentence.
  - (ii) Identify five (5) noun phrases from the text.
  - (iii) Copy the table below and for each column write the constituent parts of the nouns phrases you have identified.

MODIFIER					place he had worked before	worked before
----------	--	--	--	--	----------------------------	---------------

	1	2	3	4	5
PRE-DETERMINER					
DETERMINER					
PRE-MODIFIER(S)					
HEAD NOUN					
POST MODIFIER					

(b) Supply typical words (partitive) which are used before the following mass nouns:

- (i) A \_\_\_\_\_ of information
- (ii) A \_\_\_\_\_ of grass
- (iii) A \_\_\_\_\_ of flowers
- (iv) A \_\_\_\_\_ of sheep.
- (v) A \_\_\_\_\_ of land
- (vi) A \_\_\_\_\_ of rice
- (vii) A \_\_\_\_\_ of bees

(c) Mention four (4) typical characteristics of a countable noun.

ANSWERS:

2. (a)

S V O

(i) The new manager / found / the recently employed Asian Secretary in his office

C

/ the most attractive girl in all the places he had worked before.

(ii) The NPs

1. The new manager
2. The recently employed Asian secretary
3. His office
4. The most attractive girl in all the places he had worked before
5. All the places he had worked before

	1	2	3	4	5
PRE-DETERMINER		The			All
DETERMINER	The	The	His	The	The
PRE-MODIFIER	New	Recently employed Asian		Most attractive	
HEAD NOUN	Manager	Secretary	Office	Girl	Placed
POST				In all the	he had

(b) Typical words (partitives)

- (i) A piece of information. (v)  
A piece of land
- (ii) A tuft of grass. (vi)  
A grain of rice
- (iii) A bunch of flowers. (vii)  
A swarm of bees
- (iv) A flock of sheep.

(c) Four typical characteristics of a countable noun.

- Count nouns refer to countable entities.
- Count nouns cannot stand alone in the singular, (e.g. we cannot say \**Book is good*).
- Count nouns allow a plural (*book – books*).
- Count nouns occur in the singular with a (*a book*).

QUESTION

5. withy

1 to oppose without yielding: *to withstand an attack* 2 to continue in good condition in spite of: *children's furniture must withstand kicks and blows* - see also RESIST

withy /wiði/ also withe - n a stick from a WILLOW tree, which bends easily and may be used for weaving into baskets

witless /witləs/ adj [Wa5] (as if) lacking in ability to think: a witless idea ~ly adv ---ness n [u]

wit·ness¹ /wɪtnɪs/ n 1 [C(of)] also eyewitness- a person who is present when something happens: a witness of the accident 2 [C] a person who tells in a court of law what he saw happen or knows about someone 3 [C(to)] a person who is present at the making of and signs an official paper to show that he has seen the maker sign it: a witness to the WILL² (G) 4 [U] fml what is said about an event, person, etc., esp. in court (esp in the phrs. give witness, bear witness): He bore witness in the murder case 5 [C(to)] a sign or proof (of) 6 bear witness to show or prove (a quality): the success of the show bears witness to our food planning

witness² v [T!] 1 to be present at the time of and notice: We witnessed a strange change in her 2 to be present as a WITNESS (3) at the making of : to witness the WILL/the signature 3 to be a sign of: His tears witnessed the sham he felt

witness box /'.. / Am usu. witness stand /'.. / ---n the raised area, enclose at the sides, where witness stand in court when being questioned

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[Wa5] which makes one sorry, because it should not be: a *woful lack of understanding* ---ly adv

wog /wɒg|wag/ n BrE taboo a foreigner, esp. of a dark-skinned race

woke /wəʊk/ past t. of WAKE

wok·en /'wəʊkən/ past p. of WAKE

wold /wəʊld/ n [often pl. with sing meaning] (usu, cap. as part of a name) an area of hilly open country: the Yorkshire Wolds

wolf¹ /wʊlf/ n wolves. /wʊlvz/ 1 a type of wild animal of the dog family which hunts other animals in a group (PACK) - see picture at CARNIVOROUS. 2 a man who charms women so as to use them for his own pleasure 3 cry wolf to call for help unnecessarily, risking the possibility that a future real need will not be believed in 4 keep the wolf from the door to earn enough to eat and live 5 a wolf in sheep's clothing a person who seems harmless but is hiding the wish to hurt, take advantage, etc. - -ish adj

wolf² v [T] (DOWN) to eat quickly, in large amounts: wolfed his meal

wolf·hound /wʊlhʌʊnd/ n a type of dog which is very large, originally used for hunting wolves (WOLF¹ (1))

wolf·fram /wʊlf'rɑ:m/ n [U] TUNGSTEN

wolf·bane /wʊlf'beɪn/ n [U] a type of flowering plant

Draw the table below and complete it with information from the dictionary extract provided

PEACE TYPE	INFORMATION PROVIDED OR FEATURE REPRESENTED	EXAMPLES
	(i) ..... (ii) ..... (iii) ..... (iv) ..... (v) .....	Withy.....
Light type (a) Capital letters (b) Small letters	(i) ..... (ii).....	.....
Italics	(i)..... (ii).....	.....

5. ANSWERS:

PEACE TYPE	INFORMATION PROVIDED OR FEATURE REPRESENTED	EXAMPLES
Bold	(i) guide word (ii) head word (iii) numbers showing various meanings of headword (iv) derivatives of headwords (v) idioms	Withy witness 1, 2, 3, ...  ~ly, ~ness wolf in sheep's clothing
Light type (c) Capital letters (d) Small letters	(i) dummy entry reference (ii) meaning(s) of head words (iii) phonemic transcription	WAKE, TUNGSTEN to eat quickly /wɪtnɪs/
Italics	(i) Examples of usage of headword (ii) Abbreviations of word classes	<i>He bore witness...</i> <i>n, v, etc.</i>

QUESTION:

6. Re- write the sentences provided below using the bolded words in the word class provided in parenthesis, keep as close as possible to the meaning of the original sentence. e.g.

He listened to the speech with enthusiasm (adv)

Answer: He listened to the speech enthusiastically.

- (a) His foolish behaviour may put his whole future in jeopardy (verb).
- (b) Mary's courage is an example to us all (adj).
- (c) He enjoys being critical to what others say (verb)
- (d) I hate travelling on roads full of bumps (adj).
- (e) His answer to our questions were ridiculous (noun)
- (f) Your behaviour cannot be excused (adj).
- (g) The insults cannot be tolerated (adj).
- (h) She acted in a childish manner (adj).
- (i) His silly questions made his father angry (verb)
- (j) The Board Members reacted to the report contemptuously. (noun)

ANSWERS:

- (a) His foolish behaviour may jeopardise his whole future.
- (b) Mary's courage is exemplary to us all.
- (c) He enjoys criticising what others say.
- (d) I hate travelling on full bumped roads.
- (e) His answer to our questions were a ridicule.
- (f) Your behaviour cannot be excusable.
- (g) The insults cannot be tolerable.
- (h) She acted childishly.
- (i) His silly questions angered his father.
- (j) The Board Members reacted to the report in contempt.

### SECTION C PHONOLOGY

QUESTION:

7. As a Kiswahili speaker, what aspects of the English sound system have hindered you from learning English smoothly? Consider each of the aspects, specifying the problems they cause to you.

ANSWERS:

Aspects of the English sound system which normally hinder Kiswahili speakers who learn English:

- (a) Correspondence between orthography and pronunciation:

In Kiswahili there is a correspondence between orthography and pronunciation. There is no such a correspondence in the English language. Most of the English words are pronounced differently from the way they are spelt.

(b) Phonemic differences:

A Swahili learner of English comes in contact with new sounds that are not present in his/her language. The problem is more serious in the aspect of the vowel sounds. Kiswahili has got only five vowels [i, e, a, o, u], while English has got 20 vowels. Moreover, Swahili vowels have no distinction between long and short vowels or monophthongs and diphthongs. Such new aspects may hinder the learner in some ways.

(c) Syllable:

Another area that may hinder the Swahili learner of English is the syllabic structure of English. Kiswahili has a very simple syllabic structure, as most of its syllables are open (ending in vowel sounds). English on the other hand has open syllables, but in addition it has the closed syllable. What complicates things more is the fact that apart from having closed syllables, English syllables can have consonant clusters coming after the vowel sounds. For a new learner of Swahili origin, pronouncing the clusters poses some problems.

(d) Stress pattern.

Kiswahili has a predictable stress pattern. It has a penultimate stress pattern, i.e. its stress falls on the last but one syllable of a word. English stress pattern, on the other hand, is unpredictable. One can never tell in which syllable of an English word the stress normally falls, as it may fall on any syllable in words with more than one syllable. This may pose great problems to the learner.

(e) Rhythm:

The two languages also differ in rhythm. Kiswahili has a syllable-timed rhythm, as its rhythm is patterned on the syllabic structure (i.e. the penultimate pattern). English has a stress-timed rhythm, i.e. its rhythm is patterned according to stress placement in words. In spoken English, lexical items are stressed while grammatical items are pronounced in their weak forms. The Swahili learner of English may fail to follow this.

(Students may add some more points of their own).

QUESTION:

8. (a) Devise rules for the placement of stress in the following utterances.

We've de'cided to 'go to the in'dustrial exhi'bition. Can you 'tell ex'act 'time it 'opens?

(b) Compare and contrast the articulation of the following consonant phonemes.

- (i) Affricates and plosives;
- (ii) Affricates and fricatives.

(c) Use the words provided below to illustrate the fact that stress position within the English word cannot be predicted, as it may fall on any syllable forming the word

Incomprehensible; above; palatalization; managerial.

ANSWERS:

8. (a) Rules for stress placement:

In the words provide stress is placed in the lexical items (Ref. English rhythm) and the rest of the items (i.e. grammatical items). It is a rule that in the English speech lexical items (verbs, adverbs, adjective and nouns) take stress, while the rest of the word classes will remain in their weak forms. In the question, all the words which took stress are lexical items:

de'cided (verb); 'go (verb); in'dustrial (adjective)  
exhi'bition (noun) 'tell (verb) ex'act; (adjective);  
'time (noun) 'opens (verb).

(b) Comparison and contrast.

(i) Affricates and plosives:

Both are pronounced after blocking the air from the lungs. Their difference is that affricates are released slowly with a friction while plosives are released suddenly.

(ii) Affricates and fricatives

Both are released with friction. Their difference is that affricates are blocked before being released while fricatives are not blocked but only restricted and let pass through a narrow passage between the active and passive articulators which produce them.

(c) English word cannot be predicted, as it may fall on any syllable forming the word, for example:

Incomprehensible = seven syllables, the stress is in the fourth syllable  
(incompre'hensible)  
above = two syllables, the stress is in the second syllable (a'bove)  
palatalization = six syllables, the stress is in the fourth syllable (palatali'zation).  
managerial = five syllables, the syllable is in the third syllable (mana'gerial).

## SECTION D

### SEMANTICS

9. (a) Construct correct sentences using each of the words below denotatively and connotatively (4 sentences in all).
- (i) Man                      (ii)  
Flower
- (b) Interpret the bolded expressions as used in the sentences below.
- (i) Stop being a dog in the manger, will you?
  - (ii) There is no way but to bear the risk; you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.
  - (iii) He at last yielded up the ghost after being bed-ridden for almost a year.
  - (iv) Most youth nowadays see the world through rose coloured spectacles.
  - (v) Even if you don't agree with me, you mustn't rock the boat at this difficult time.
  - (vi) It's useless to burn the midnight oil at this time; the exams are so near.
  - (vii) The dog goes banana whenever you pick up its lead.
  - (viii) He went bananas when I told him what had happened.

### ANSWERS:

9. (a) (i) I saw the man we were looking for (denotative)  
Amina is a man. (connotative).
- (ii) The vase has a beautiful flower. (denotative).  
She is a flower in the garden. (connotative).
- (b) (i) a dog in the manger = a person who stops others enjoying something he cannot use or does not need.

- (ii) you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs = you need to take risks when you want good things.
- (iii) yielded up the ghost = died.
- (iv) see the world through rose coloured spectacles = have an optimistic outlook.
- (v) rock the boat = do something that upsets the balance of a situation.
- (vi) burn the midnight oil = study until late at night.
- (vii) goes banana = (becomes fierce).
- (v) went bananas = became angry.

### QUESTION:

10. (a) Listed below are some techniques of expressing emotional emphasis in speech. Compose correct sentences to illustrate each technique.
- (i) Inversion                      (ii) Repetition      (iii) use of intensifiers
  - (iv) Use of 'do' as a dummy auxiliary      (v) Use of a rhetorical question
- (b) With examples, clarify these terms.
- (i) Hyponyms      (ii) Relational antonyms      (iii) Collocation
  - (iv) Attitudinal meaning      (v) Synonyms.

### ANSWERS:

11. (a) Techniques of expressing emotional emphasis:
- (i) Inversion: Never *will* I do it again.
  - (ii) Repetition: I will *never, never* do it again.
  - (iii) Use of intensifiers: I was *absolutely* tired.
  - (iv) Use of 'do' as a dummy auxiliary: We *do* like it.
  - (v) Use of rhetorical question: Is this the way you are? / Who knows?
- (b) Clarification of terms:
- (i) Hyponyms = words whose meanings are included in one word (e.g. dog, cat, goat are included in the word *animals*, they are hyponyms).
  - (ii) Relational antonyms = the case when one word is the reverse of another and exists because of the presence of the other. This may involve the following situations:
    - the existence of one word implies the existence of another. This is the case of the verbs like *sell/buy, rent/let, give/receive*, or nouns like *husband/wife, father/child, north/south*, and prepositions like *in/out, in front/behind*, etc.

- the existence of one word implies the existence of another identical word (i.e. bearing the same status) in the opposite meaning, e.g. *father/mother, uncle/aunt, brother sister* etc.

(iii) Collocation = the way in which words are used together regularly. It refers to the restrictions on how words can be used together, for example which prepositions are used with particular verbs, or which verbs or adjectives and nouns are used together. The word *handsome* and *beautiful* have the same meaning, but the former collocates with male human beings while the latter collocates with female human beings.

(iv) Attitudinal meaning = what is communicated of the attitudes of the speaker or writer. The same word can be assigned different values depending on how the speaker’s feelings or attitudes are interpreted. For example, the statement:

*You are a woman.*

This statement could mean “admiration”, “compliment”, “contempt”, “pity” etc.

Attitudinal meaning can also be shown in the way people choose words which seem to be identical in meaning but express positive or negative attitude of the speaker. For example, the words *thin* and *slim* are synonymous, but *thin* has a negative connotation while *slim* has a more or less positive connotation. It is also just like saying: *He is economic which* is different from *He is mean*.

(v) Synonyms = Words with identical meaning. (e.g. truck/lorry; big/large).

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