



TASK 4: WHAT IS LINGUISTICS ABOUT?

Group no.: **School:**

Participants:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

POINTS: For each correct answer, you will get 0.5 of a point. Totally for this task you can get 6 points.

Part 1:

TASK:

Fill in the gaps in the following text:

SEMANTICS, SYNTAX, PHONOLOGY, MORPHOLOGY, PRAGMATICS, PHONETICS

What is Linguistics?¹

When people ask me what I do or did before I retired, and I say I am a linguist, I usually either receive a blank look or they ask how many languages I speak. When I reply that linguistics is the study of the nature of language, the blank look turns to puzzlement. Study language? Why? Linguists do a lot of different things. At the heart of the field is the effort to describe and explain languages – to specify what sounds they employ ([1]_____), how these sounds combine to form meaningful units ([2]_____), how these units combine to form words ([3]_____), how words combine to form sentences ([4]_____), and how the meanings of sentences are formed from the meanings of the words that comprise them ([5]_____). Then there is the problem posed by the fact that we frequently use sentences to mean things that the sentences themselves don't mean. If I say *Isn't it too cold in this room?* I normally mean *Shall we close the window?* Which is definitely more than what my sentence literally means. Understanding this phenomenon - how we use language in context – is studied in ([6]_____), and it includes for instance how we use language in advertising, politics, the law, as well as ordinary conversation (...) As for why someone would want to study linguistics, the answer is pretty clear: anything we can learn about humans – especially about our higher cognitive functions – is of intrinsic interest to linguists.

Rewrite your answers:

| | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

TURN AROUND FOR PART 2

¹ This passage is a modified version of a text downloaded from: <http://thelanguageguy.blogspot.com/2006/11/language-games-in-canada.html> 2007



Part 2:

TASK:

Which of the following statements (1-6) belong to which area of linguistics (A-F):

A: morphology

C: syntax

E: pragmatics

B: semantics

D: phonetics

F: phonology

- (1) The basic characteristics of a nasal consonant e.g. *n*, *m* is that the air escapes through the nose.
- (2) In *bright colour* two words are combined. The first word ends with a consonant /t/ and the second starts with a consonant /k/. In fast speech these two consonants become assimilated and consequently one will say /braɪk kʌlə/
- (3) The word *correctness* consists of an adjectival root *correct* and an affix *ness*.
- (4) The following sentence: *A beautiful girl drank pepsi at the party* consists of a noun phrase *a beautiful girl*, a verb phrase *drank pepsi* and a prepositional phrase *at the party*.
- (5) H. P. Grice (1913-1988) was the first to systematically study cases in which what a speaker *means* differs from the *sentence* used by the speaker. Consider the following dialogue.

Alan: Are you going to Paul's party?

Barb: I have to work.

If this was a typical exchange, Barb meant that she is not going to Paul's party. But the sentence she uttered does not mean that she is not going to Paul's party. Hence Barb did not say she is not going, she *implied* it.

- (6) Synonyms are different words with identical or at least similar meanings. Examples of English synonyms are:
 - *baby* and *infant* (noun)
 - *student* and *pupil* (noun)
 - *buy* and *purchase* (verb)
 - *pretty* and *attractive* (adjective)
 - *sick* and *ill* (adjective)
 - *quickly* and *speedily* (adverb)
 - *on* and *upon* (preposition)

Rewrite your answers:

| | |
|----|----|
| A. | D. |
| B. | E. |
| C. | F. |



TASK 4: KEY

Part 1:

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. phonetics | 4. syntax |
| 2. phonology | 5. semantics |
| 3. morphology | 6. pragmatics |

Part 2:

| | |
|------|------|
| A. 3 | D. 1 |
| B. 6 | E. 5 |
| C. 4 | F. 2 |