

# MINOR I - HUL 350 SPECIAL TOPICS IN LINGUISTICS

TIME: 1 HOUR

MARKS: 15

QUESTIONS: 4

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

## Q 1. KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE: How we understand language (Marks: 2)

Find the alternative that seems to you most correct in the following multiple choice questions and then write the number down in your answer-scripts, e.g. 10c

- Maintaining that language is arbitrary in nature commits us to the view that:
  - the connection between words in a language depend on grammar
  - the signs that make up a language can be combined randomly
  - the ability to combine symbols in language is uniquely human
  - the sounds, gestures or written symbols that represent a word need not have any intrinsic connection with its meaning
- A linguistic sign is intra-relational in the sense that:
  - it has meaning only in relation to other signs in a system
  - it is related to things in the world in a systematic way
  - it depends on the way a user relates the sign to its context
  - it is not related to signs from some other linguistic system
- Language ability is technically described as 'creative' by Chomsky because:
  - we can make up the rules of language as we go along
  - we can apply a few rules to words to make infinite sentences
  - we can make up all sorts of new words in a language
  - we can write poetry and tell stories in every language
- In the word 'language' there are:
  - seven phonemes and three syllables
  - eight phonemes and three syllables
  - eight phonemes and two syllables
  - six phonemes and two syllables
- When we say that 'recursion' is a basic feature of any language, we mean that:
  - languages have to be analyzed in terms of sentential structures
  - languages have similar structures whatever their historical roots
  - languages have many levels of phonemes, words & sentences
  - languages have the capacity to embed sentence units within sentence units so as to create potentially infinite strings of words
- Chomsky's notion that language is 'innate' means that:
  - language is a grammatical system of infinite variety
  - language is a capacity that only some humans possess
  - language is a 'hard-wired' pre-programmed genetic ability
  - language is not to be confused with a sign system
- Combining the definitions of language by Sapir and Saussure, language is:
  - purely human, communicative, symbolic, individual & voluntary
  - purely human, communicative, instinctive & individual
  - purely human, communicative, non-symbolic & involuntary
  - purely human, non-communicative, symbolic & individual
- Human brains differ from other mammal brains in that:
  - they have lots of unused association cortex areas
  - they have very little communicative apparatus
  - they have a brain especially designed for language processing
  - they have a different design for the sensory processing areas

## Q 2. LEXICON: How we interpret words (Marks: 4)

The data below occur in a language which you do not know. As a new learner, can you look at this data and try and figure out at least two basic rules that are followed to make new words in this language? (For example, in English such rules say that when the inflectional morpheme /s/ is added to a noun, the word becomes plural, e.g. 'dog'/'dogs', 'flower'/'flowers' etc.; or, when the derivational morpheme /ly/ is added to an adjective, it becomes an adverb, e.g. 'slow'/'slowly', 'hungry'/'hungrily')

kola 'earth'  
paku 'wood'  
safo 'stone'  
mup 'water'  
kopa 'tree'  
lap 'paper'  
mup 'water'  
kami 'leaf'  
mali 'goes'  
kamo 'runs'  
zepu 'eats'

kokola 'dirty'  
papaku 'wooden'  
sasafu 'hard'  
mumup 'wet'  
kopakopa 'forest'  
laplap 'book'  
mupmup 'rain'  
kamikami 'hay'  
malilif 'went'  
kamomof 'ran'  
zepupuf 'ate'

kolala 'floor'  
pakuku 'firewood'  
safofu 'pebble'  
mupupu 'lake'  
kopapa 'trees'  
lappa 'papers'  
muppa 'rivers'  
kamipa 'leaves'  
makali 'goes rapidly'  
kakamo 'races'  
zekepu 'eats rapidly'

plurid → word + p  
brosent → pas +  
word + 1st two aff  
+ p  
collection of countable things  
word + word



**Q 3. ARBITRATIVENESS, AMBIGUITY, ABSTRACTNESS: How we interpret signs (Marks: 4)**  
In this question, we will concentrate on the feature of **ambiguity**, so you must paraphrase each of the following sentences in two different ways to show the ambiguity involved.

- |   |          |           |
|---|----------|-----------|
| a. Ram finally decided on the boat.                     | i. _____ | ii. _____ |
| b. Ram touched the child with a golden wand.            | i. _____ | ii. _____ |
| c. I cannot recommend Ram too highly.                   | i. _____ | ii. _____ |
| d. Ram's appointment was shocking.                      | i. _____ | ii. _____ |
| e. Ram said Sita would go yesterday.                    | i. _____ | ii. _____ |
| f. Ram loves his wife and so do I.                      | i. _____ | ii. _____ |
| g. Ram's shirt had a design of big circles and squares. | i. _____ | ii. _____ |
| h. Ram held a ball.                                     | i. _____ | ii. _____ |

**4. NOVELTY How we understand linguistic creativity (Marks: 5)**

Given that we've had 'Valentine's day' over the weekend, please read the following (very slightly edited) poem by Babbu [[http://www.funtoosh.com/jokes/indian\\_jokes/447](http://www.funtoosh.com/jokes/indian_jokes/447)] which is in Hindi but uses the Roman script as well as English words. Then, write a brief essay (not more than 1 or 2 pages long) suggesting five ways in which the poem is novel and culturally creative. Is there anything about the poem that you'd like to criticize?

*Aisi apni wife ho*

5'5" jiski height ho,  
Chehra jiska bright ho,  
Weight mein thori light ho,  
Umer mein difference slight ho,  
Thori see woh quiet ho,  
To memorable her ek night ho -  
*Aisi apni Wife ho...*

Saas ki khidmat jiski khwahish ho  
Beauty multiply by Twice ho,  
Mom dad ki choice ho -  
*Aisi apni Wife ho...*

Padosi jab baat kare to,  
Haath me uskay knife ho,  
Dinner candle light ho,  
To delicious har ek bite ho,  
Dono mein na kabhi fight ho,  
Milne ke baad dil delight ho -  
*Aisi apni Wife ho...*

Ankhain uski jaisay...sunny twilight ho,  
Honton ko dekh ker lagay...jaisay diet coke ho,  
Jab saari pehn k niklay tu kya sight ho,  
Aisa lagay jaisay switzerland ki flight ho,  
Favourite colour white ho,  
Make-up thora light ho,  
Zulfain dynamite ho,  
Basant mein jaisay ur rahi koi kite ho!  
*Aisi apni Wife ho...*

Kaash yeh concept 100% right ho,  
Agar aisi apni wife ho,  
To kya hasen life ho,  
Batoon mein garmaish ho,  
Har kisi ki yahi farmaish ho,  
Kudrat ki bhi aazmaish ho,  
Defense ki rehaish ho,  
Kisi ki bhi na look-alike ho!  
*Aisi apni Wife ho...*

- mixture of different languages in a novel way
- metaphors use - sunny twilight  $\leftrightarrow$  eyes
- lips  $\leftrightarrow$  diet coke
- switzerland ki flight  $\leftrightarrow$
- dynamite  $\leftrightarrow$  zulfien
- each sentence ending with ho except a rhyming nature
- multiply by twice?
- sunny twilight?