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Exercise 23

The common belief of some linguists that each language is a perfect vehicle for the thoughts of the nation speaking it is in some ways the exact counterpart of the conviction of the Manchester school of economics that supply and demand will regulate everything for the best. Just as economists were blind to the numerous cases in which the law of supply and demand left actual wants unsatisfied, so also many linguists are deaf to those instances in which the very nature of a language calls forth misunderstandings in everyday conversation, and in which, consequently, a word has to be modified or defined in order to present the idea intended by the speaker: "He took his stick-no, not John's, but his own." No language is perfect, and if we admit this truth, we must also admit that it is not unreasonable to investigate the relative merits of different languages or of different details in languages. (155 words)

1.The primary purpose of the passage is to

(A) analyze an interesting feature of the English language

(B) refute a belief held by some linguists

(C) show that economic theory is relevant to linguistic study

(D) illustrate the confusion that can result from the improper use of language

(E) suggest a way in which languages can be made more nearly perfect

For the following question, consider each of the choices separately and select all that apply

2. The misunderstanding presented by the author in the passage is similar to which of the following?

A X uses the word "you" to refer to a group, but Y thinks that X is referring to one person only.

B X mistakenly uses the word "anomaly" to refer to a typical example, but Y knows that "anomaly" means "exception."

C X uses the word "bachelor" to mean "unmarried man," but Y mistakenly thinks that bachelor means "unmarried woman."

3.In presenting the argument, the author does all of the following EXCEPT

(A) give an example

(B) draw a conclusion

(C) make a generalization

(D) make a comparison

(E) present a paradox

Currently, there are two models of solar activity. The first supposes that the Sun's internal motions (caused by rotation and convection) interact with its large-scale magnetic field to produce a dynamo, a device in which mechanical energy is converted into the energy of a magnetic field. In short, the Sun's large-scale magnetic field is taken to be self-sustaining, so that the solar-activity cycle it drives would be maintained with little overall change for perhaps billions of years. The alternative explanation supposes that the Sun's large-scale magnetic field is a remnant of the field the Sun acquired when it formed, and is not sustained against decay. In this model, the solar mechanism dependent on the Sun's magnetic field runs down more quickly. Thus, the characteristics of the solar-activity cycle could be expected to change over a long period of time.

(140 words)

4.Which of the following statements about the two models of solar activity, as they are described in the passage, is accurate?

(A) In both models cyclical solar activity is regarded as a long-lived feature of the Sun, persisting with little change over billions of years.

(B) In both models the solar-activity cycle is hypothesized as being dependent on the large-scale solar magnetic field.

(C) In one model the Sun's magnetic field is thought to play a role in causing solar activity, whereas in the other model it is not.

(D) In one model solar activity is presumed to be unrelated to terrestrial phenomena, whereas in the other model solar activity is thought to have observable effects on the Earth.

(E) In one model cycles of solar activity with periodicities longer than a few decades arc considered to be impossible, whereas in the other model such cycles are predicted.

Like most other coastal towns in Norway, the town of Stavanger was quiet and peaceful until the early 1960's, when it became Norway's center for offshore oil exploration. Between then and now, violent crime and vandalism in Stavanger have greatly increased. Stavanager's social problems probably resulted from the oil boom, since violent crime and vandalism have remained low in coastal towns in Norway that have had no oil boom.

5. Which of the following most accurately describes the method of reasoning employed in the argument?

(A) Arguing that a circumstance is not a precondition for a phenomenon on the grounds that the phenomenon sometimes occurs where the circumstance is not present

(B) Arguing that a circumstance is a cause of a phenomenon on the grounds that the phenomenon has not occurred where the circumstance is not present

(C) Arguing that a particular thing cannot have caused a phenomenon because that thing was not present before the phenomenon occurred

(D) Attempting to establish a claim by arguing that the denial of the claim is inconsistent with the observed facts

(E) Attempting to establish that certain circumstances that would have had to occur for a particular explanation to be correct could not have occurred

Modern archaeological finds can still contribute much to the study of ancient literature. For example, forty years ago a survey of the early Greek dramatist Aeschylus' plays would have started with *The Suppliant Women.* Many factors internal to the play, but perhaps most especially the prominence of the chorus, led scholars to consider it one of Aeschylus' earlier works. The consensus was that here was a drama truly reflecting an early stage in the evolution of tragedy out of choral lyric. The play was dated as early as the 490's B.C., in any event, well before Aeschylus' play *The Persians* of 472 B.C. Then, in 1952, a fragment of papyrus found at Oxyrhynchus was published. The fragment announced that Aeschylus won first prize with his Danaid tetralogy, of which *The Suppliant Women* is the opening play, and defeated Sophocles in the process. Sophocles did not compete in any dramatic contest before 468 B.C., when he won his first victory. Hence, the Danaid tetralogy must be put after 468 B.C. (169 words)

6. According to the passage, in the absence of definite knowledge concerning the dates of composition of ancient literary works, literary historians do which of the following when trying to establish the chronology of an author's work?

(A) Make assumptions about a single work's date of composition if such assumptions would not seriously affect interpretations of other works by the same author.
(B) Draw inferences concerning the date of a work's composition based on evidence internal to that work and on the author's other works.
(C) Ignore the date of a work's composition which is supplied by archaeological research when literary factors internal to the work contradict that date.
(D) Refrain from speculation concerning a work's date of composition unless archaeological finds produce information concerning it.
(E) Estimate the date of a work's composition without attempting to relate it to the author's development as an artist.

As Gilbert White, Darwin, and others observed long ago, all species appear to have the innate capacity to increase their numbers from generation to generation. The task for ecologists is to untangle the environmental and biological factors that hold this intrinsic capacity for population growth in check over the long run. The great variety of dynamic behaviors exhibited by different populations makes this task more difficult: some populations remain roughly constant from year to year; others exhibit regular cycles of abundance and scarcity; still others vary wildly, with outbreaks and crashes that are in some cases plainly correlated with the weather, and in other cases not.

To impose some order on this kaleidoscope of patterns, one school of thought proposes dividing populations into two groups. These ecologists posit that the relatively steady populations have "density- dependent" growth parameters; that is, rates of birth, death, and migration which depend strongly on population density. The highly varying populations have "density-independent" growth parameters, with vital, rates buffeted by environmental events; these rates fluctuate in a way that is wholly independent of population density.

This dichotomy has its uses, but it can cause problems if taken too literally. For one thing, no population can be driven entirely by density-independent factors all the time. No matter how severely or unpredictably birth, death and migration rates may be fluctuating around their long-term averages, if there were no density-dependent effects, the population would, in the long run, either increase or decrease without bound (barring a miracle by which gains and losses canceled exactly). Put another way, it may be that on average 99 percent of all deaths in a population arise from density-independent causes, and only one percent from factors varying with density. The factors making up the one percent may seem unimportant, and their cause may be correspondingly hard to determine. Yet, whether recognized or not, they will usually determine the long-term average population density.

In order to understand the nature of the ecologist's investigation, we may think of the density-dependent effects on growth parameters as the "signal" ecologists are trying to isolate and interpret, one that tends to make the population increase from relatively low values or decrease from relatively high ones, while the density-independent effects act to produce "noise" in the population dynamics. For populations that remain relatively constant, or that oscillate around repeated cycles, the signal can be fairly easily characterized and its effects described, even though the causative biological mechanism may remain unknown. For irregularly fluctuating populations, we are likely to have too few observations to have any hope of extracting the signal from the overwhelming noise. But it now seems clear that all populations are regulated by a mixture of density- dependent and density-independent effects in varying proportions.

7.The author of the passage is primarily concerned with

(A) discussing two categories of factors that control population growth and assessing their relative importance

(B) describing how growth rates in natural populations fluctuate over time and explaining why these changes occur

(C) proposing a hypothesis concerning population sizes and suggesting ways to test it

(D) posing a fundamental question about environmental factors in population growth and presenting some currently accepted answers

(E) refuting a commonly accepted theory about population density and offering a new alternative

8. It can be inferred from the passage that the author considers the dichotomy discussed in the second paragraph to be

(A) applicable only to erratically fluctuating populations

(B) useful, but only if its limitations are recognized

(C) dangerously misleading in most circumstances

(D) a complete and sufficient way to account for observed phenomena

(E) conceptually valid, but too confusing to apply on a practical basis

9.Which of the following statements can be inferred from the last paragraph?

(A) For irregularly fluctuating populations, doubling the number of observations made will probably result in the isolation of density-dependent effects.

(B) Density-dependent effects on population dynamics do not occur as frequently as do density-independent effects.

(C) At present, ecologists do not understand any of the underlying causes of the density-dependent effects they observe in population dynamics..

(D) Density-dependent effects on growth parameters are thought to be caused by some sort of biochemical "signaling" that ecologists hope eventually to understand.

(E) It is sometimes possible to infer the existence of a density-dependent factor controlling population growth without understanding its causative mechanism.

For the following question, consider each of the choices separately and select all that apply

10. .According to the passage, all of the following behaviors have been exhibited by different populations

A roughly constant population levels from year to year

B regular cycles of increases and decreases in numbers

C erratic increases in numbers correlated with the weather


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