



Engl 230  
Fall 2001  
Prof. Lina Choueiri

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### Final Exam

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*Good luck!*

**Part I** Provide a definition for 5 of the following 7 terms. Illustrate your definition with an example whenever possible. (15 pts)

1. Honorifics
2. Negative politeness
3. Face
4. Age grading
5. Sex-biased language
6. Ideological nature of the sign
7. Performative utterance

**Part II** Analyzing discourse (20 pts)

1. In a review of Andrei Amalrik's *Notes of a Revolutionary* in *The New Yorker* (March 26, 1984, p. 130), William Maxwell reports the following bit of behavior by Amalrik in a Soviet prison:

*To the prison officials who addressed him by the familiar—and, in the circumstances, insulting—second-person singular, he replied by calling them 'ty' also; whereupon they instantly switched to the polite form.*

Explain what the officials and the prisoner were attempting to do through their choices of T/V forms on such occasions.

2. How does the following excerpt from Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand* (1990, pp. 212-213) (1) illustrate the *cross-cultural* differences between men and women in conversation and (2) reflect the relative power of men and women in society?

*Zoe is talking to a recently divorced man named Earl whom her sister has fixed her up with. Earl asks, "What's your favorite joke?" This is what happens next:*

*"Uh, my favorite joke is probably— O.K., all right. This guy goes into a doctor's office, and—"*

*"I think I know this one," interrupted Earl, eagerly. He wanted to tell it himself. "A guy goes into a doctor's office, and the doctor tells him he's got some good news and some bad news—that one, right?"*

*"I'm not sure," said Zoe. "This might be a different version."*

*"So, the guy says, 'Give me the bad news first,' and the doctor says, 'O.K. You've got three*



*weeks to live.' And the guy cries, 'Three weeks to live! Doctor, what is the good news?' And the doctor says, 'Did you see that secretary out front? I finally fucked her.'"*

*Zoe frowned.*

*"That's not the one you were thinking of?"*

*"No." There was accusation in her voice. "Mine was different."*

*"Oh," said Earl. He looked away and then back again.*

*"What kind of history do you teach?"*

**Part III** Long answer questions. Answer *two* of the following *four* questions. (40 pts)

1. Discuss two major social factors in language change. Illustrate your discussion with examples.
2. Studies on the use of address terms have led researchers to conclude that solidarity is more important than power. What arguments can you provide *for* and *against* such a conclusion?
3. Language can be used to shape public opinion. Illustrate the preceding statement by discussing examples from your readings? What arguments can you provide against the idea that language can shape public opinion?
4. In a typical experiment on the use of color terms and the relationship between language and perception, subjects have to say which two out of three color chips go together; they often put the ones together that have the same name in their language. What is the conclusion that was drawn from this experiment with respect to the Whorfian Hypothesis? What arguments can be adduced to weaken this conclusion?

