



English 229
History of the English Language

Second Semester 2003 - 04
Professor Kassim Shaaban

FINAL EXAMINATION
(11/2Hours)

Answer three of the following four questions.

1. Answer three of the following questions briefly and illustrate with examples.

- a. How have the attitudes of grammarians, dictionary makers, and school masters in the 18th Century affected the spelling, grammar, and semantics of the English language?
- b. What are the reasons for the use of euphemisms in English past and Present? List with examples the semantic fields where euphemistic terms seem to abound.
- c. In what respects is American English more conservative than British English, and in what respects is it less so?
- d. In what ways does semantic change remain an inevitable, on-going process in the life of any human language?

2. Define 10 of the following 16 terms, and give examples of each:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| a. His-genitive | i. Slang |
| b. Uninflected plural | j. Voguish words |
| c. Ebonics | k. Style |
| d. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis | l. Purism |
| e. Pejoration | m. Americanisms |
| f. RP | n. eye dialect |
| g. Group genitive | o. Ethnic dialect |
| h. Contractions | p. Double negatives |

3. Some linguists speak of world Englishes rather than a single standard variety of English. What, in your opinion, has led to this situation, and what are the implications for the future and nature of the English language.

4. Some of the ways and circumstances in which meaning may change are listed below. Define five of the ways, and supply an example to illustrate each way.

- a. semantic generalization
- b. semantic specialization
- c. amelioration
- d. shift in meaning from concrete to abstract
- e. shift in meaning from abstract to concrete
- f. transfer of meaning from one kind of sense perception to another
- g. euphemisms

GOOD LUCK