

All the questions are to be answered in English on the answer sheets provided.

1. Examine the following two statements about language, and discuss the similarities and differences between them. Do you agree with the two statements? Explain your answer. (25 points)

1) Sapir (1921: "Language"): "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols" (p.8)

2) Bloch and Trager (1942: "Outline of Linguistic Analysis"): "A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates" (p.5)

2. What are phonemes, phones and allophones? Explain their relationship with examples from English or Chinese. (15 points)

3. Is it possible to separate semantics and pragmatics? Why or why not? What are the implications of your answer for second language teaching? (30 points)

4. It has been noticed that Chinese learners of English tend to make mistakes in the marking of past tense, even at the advanced level of proficiency. What do you think are the possible causes of this problem? How can language teachers help solve this problem and why? (30 points)

5. Look at the following real newspaper headlines and explain why they are considered ambiguous. Then revise the headlines so that they can express the intended meanings unambiguously. (20 points)

- (1) Complaints about NBA Referees Growing Ugly
- (2) Milk Drinkers Are Turning to Powder
- (3) Two Sisters Reunited After 18 Years at Checkout Counter
- (4) Enraged Cow Injures Farmer with Ax
- (5) Safety Experts Say School Bus Passengers Should Be Belted

6. In interpreting utterances such as (1) and (2), the hearer generally treats the events described in the two sentences in each group as causally related even though such relationship is not encoded in the meanings of the sentences. That is, the hearer tends to think that Helen fell on the ground BECAUSE OF Tom's pushing and that the vase broke BECAUSE it was dropped. Explain why. (30 points)

- (1) Tom pushed Helen. Helen fell on the ground.
- (2) Peter dropped the vase. It broke.