



AFRICA
UNIVERSITY

(A United Methodist-Related Institution)

Investing in Africa's Future

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES.

2016 1ST SEMESTER NOVEMBER FINAL EXAMINATION

COURSE CODE : HEN 303

COURSE TITLE : SEMANTICS

DATE OF EXAMINATION : NOVEMBER, 2016

TIME : 3 HOURS.

EXAMINER : MR. P.R SVONGORO

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

1. Answer any THREE questions.
2. All questions carry EQUAL marks.
3. Begin each answer on a fresh page.
4. Marks will be awarded for clarity of expression and language use.

Question 1

"Any attempt to understand the nature of language must try to describe and explain the ways in which linguistic expressions have meaning" (Reimer, 2010:20). Using this assertion as a starting point, explore denotation and connotation as notions of meaning studied in semantics.

[20 marks]

Question 2

Study the following conversation and answer the question after it.

- a. Alastair: I've got some more cutlery for the party.
- b. Judy: Cutlery?! We've got lots of cutlery! You mean you got more crockery!
- c. Alastair: Oh yeah, crockery.
- d. Judy: Cutlery?! Why did you say cutlery instead of crockery?
- e. Alastair: Oh yeah, crockery.
- f. Judy: Cutlery?! You did not! You got more crockery!
- g. Alastair: Oh yeah, crockery.

(Adopted from Reimer, 2010:28)

Drawing your examples from the above conversation and others of your own, show that words can be understood in terms of the relationships they have with other words. [20 marks]

Question 3

Using appropriate examples explain how the English speakers and speakers of any other African language avoid taboo words and phrases because they are seen as offensive or obscene and state the euphemistic words or phrases used to replace the taboo words and phrases. Show how some of the euphemistic words or phrases may result in different types of ambiguity. [20 marks]

Question 4

'Like words, sentences have meanings that can be analysed in terms of their relation to other meanings. Three such relations can be considered as paraphrase, entailment and presupposition'. Citing two examples for each relation, discuss this assertion.

[20 marks]

Question 5

The term thematic role or semantic role is used to describe the role played by a particular entity in an event. Study the following sentences and use them to explain with illustrations, the following thematic/semantic roles: **agent, theme, goal, experience and instrument.**

- i. Mathew gave the chocolate to Agnes.
- ii. The magician changed the teacher into a rabbit.
- iii. Adonis saw the stars with a new telescope at the observatory. [20 marks]

END OF EXAMINATION