



7Q1 – Anglická lingvistika – Ukázka testu

The Bachelor of Arts Final Examination comprises four parts, namely Introduction to Linguistics, Phonetics & Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax.

The objective of the exam is to allow students to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge of the subject area in question. Students will be required to create a coherent and compelling answer by applying the learning that they have gained over their three years of study.

The exam will consist of four subject areas and will last **2 hours** in total. The subject areas that will be covered include:

- Introduction to Linguistics;
- Phonetics and Phonology;
- Morphology;
- Syntax.

Each subject area will be examined through presenting the students with a piece of text and a number of questions that they will be required to answer. All answers must be completed on the exam paper. Each section will be worth a maximum of 25% of the total score.

The exam questions will follow the curriculum taught as part of the linguistic programme over the past three years. Please see the outlines for the respective courses on Stag for a list of the key study areas, core study resources and recommended reading.

The Introduction to Linguistics part typically draws on one of the following study areas: Linguistics as a study; Origins of language, historical linguistics and language change; Meaning; Written and spoken discourse; Writing; Child language acquisition; Second language acquisition; Language variation; Language and culture; and The politics of language.

The **Sample Exam Question** below has been produced in order to assist students in their exam preparation. It includes a model answer providing an indication of both the length of the answer and the quality that students will be expected to produce.

Read the text below and answer the exam question. The required minimum word limit is 200 words.

Scotland is part of the UK and the official language is English. However, much of the English used by Scottish speakers can vary dramatically from Standard English. Consider the following example of spoken discourse. The former is in a Scottish dialect and the latter in Standard English.



**Aye, it wis fair dreich'it yesterday,
ye ken**

**Yes, it was raining heavily
yesterday, you know**

Both utterances mean exactly the same. Although they are both English, their language realisations are, however, quite different.

Sample Exam Question

Consider the utterances above and discuss the following issues:

- What is a dialect and how does it differ from a language?
- Dialects are considered to be regularly patterned. What do we mean by that? Can you provide an example from the text above?
- Which level(s) of dialect variation is/are most noticeable when you compare the two utterances?
- What might be some of the social implications of speaking Scottish English?

MODEL ANSWER

A dialect is a variety of a language. Although the term is applied most often to regional speech patterns, a dialect may also be defined by other factors, such as social class. Conventionally, it is described by means of comparison with the standard variety of a language. It is, however, by no means inferior to this socially favoured variety. As does the standard variety of a language, dialects enable their speakers to communicate any idea or message they wish to convey; dialects may be equally complex, and also regularly patterned. Determining the actual boundary between a dialect and a language in its own right may not be completely straightforward. In general terms, speakers of different dialects of the same language should be able both to communicate with each other and to understand each other. In reality, nevertheless, this is not always the case as it is also possible for political intervention to define the boundaries of a particular language or dialect by basing these on the needs of a certain, typically more powerful, political group. For example, the Chinese language comprises a number of mutually unintelligible dialects (at least in their spoken form). Despite this diversity, it has been defined by the government as Chinese to in effect unify the country.

Regular patterning of dialects means, as does the standard variety, that dialects follow a set of 'grammar' rules even though these may not be formally written down. These rules are responsible for the recurrence of certain structures that are specific for the particular dialect. In the above example, the 'ye ken' (= you know) is not there to check the recipients' understanding; it has a role of a syntactic marker, in this case acting as a full stop.

The individual differences among dialects of the same language may be defined along four levels of dialect variation: lexical, phonological, morpho-syntactic, and pragmatic. In the above example, probably the lexical variation is most noticeable. In Standard English, the meaning of the word 'fair' is more commonly associated with justice or with colour. In



Scottish English, however, it can also be used as an adjective meaning ‘a lot of’, in this case ‘a lot of rain’. Another example of lexical variation is the replacement of the word ‘Yes’ with ‘Aye’.

The implication of speaking a language variety that is different from the standard is that it immediately identifies where you come from, either socially or regionally. This could create difficulties if that particular group were not perceived favourably in that society. Alternatively, it could create opportunities if that social group were valued in society. It is also possible that you can be misunderstood or not understood by using unfamiliar words, such as ‘dreich’it’ in the example, or considered to be irritating if you use specific speech patterns such as ‘ye ken’ (= you know) when the recipient is not aware that they are working as a discursive full stop rather than a question directed at them.

The Phonetics & Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax parts are based on an excerpt from a real-life text. The following is a sample of an excerpt and sample questions.

Read the following text carefully and perform the tasks below.

The following is an excerpt from *Immortality* written by Milan Kundera (translated by Peter Kussi):

1 It was a joy so intense that it awakened a sense of shame and guilt in her. She couldn't find the
2 courage to tell Paul about her decision. That's why she took that one last trip to her hotel in
the Alps. 3 (The next time she would already have her own apartment there: either in the Bern
suburbs or in the 4 nearby mountains.) In the course of those two days she wanted to think
through how to break the
5 news to Brigitte and Paul, so as to convince them that she was an ambitious, emancipated
woman,
6 absorbed by her professional career and success, even though she had never been such a
person
7 before.

Phonetics and phonology

A sample question:

Identify the weak forms in the first sentence (Line 1) and transcribe them. Explain the rules that you applied in the transcription and describe if/when the weak form could have the strong form pronunciation.

It was a joy so intense that it awakened a sense of shame and guilt in her.

Morphology

A sample question:

Provide the type of modality expressed by *couldn't* in Line 1. Provide the classification of modal verbs in English in terms of the types of modality, and illustrate the individual types



with examples. Provide the rules for the formation of the past tense within each type of modality.

Syntax

A sample question:

Provide the syntactic roles of all the infinitives in the excerpt. Provide other roles that the infinitive may have apart from the instances found in the excerpt.