Chapter 6

Language and Communication

Multiple-Choice

1. Human language is found in all cultures

a. that have writing.

b. that have had significant contact with Europe.

c. of the world.

d. a and b only

ANS: C

PG: 115

2. Black English Vernacular is

a. nothing more than street slang.

b. incorrect English.

c. a full fledged linguistic system with its own grammatical structure.

d. a primitive and inferior language.

ANS: C

PG: 128-29

3. Non-human primates and humans share which features of communication?

a. non-verbal forms of communication

b. an open call system

c. vocal speech

d. all of the above

ANS: A

PG: 118-119

4. Displacement, a feature of human communication, means

a. combining one or more sounds to create new meanings.

b. the capacity to convey information about a thing or event that is not present.

c. not understanding the meaning of nonverbal communication.

d. an inability to place all morphemes in their proper grammatical place.

ANS: B

PG: 116

5. The number of discrete languages that exist in the world today is approximately

a. 100.

b. 550.

c. 1400.

d. 6000.

ANS: D

PG: 116

6. Research on chimpanzee communication shows that they

a. can communicate subtle shades of meaning.

b. use a closed communication system.

c. can combine one or more sounds to create a large number of meanings.

d. can express opinions about abstract ideas.

ANS: B

PG: 118-119

7. Which of the following languages is most widely spoken?

a. Russian

b. Mandarin Chinese

c. English

d. Japanese

ANS: B

PG: 118

8. The study of the sound structure of a language is

a. phonology.

b. morphology.

c. the study of grammar.

d. the study of syntax.

ANS: A

PG: 120

9. All the languages of the world have phonemes that number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. about forty-six

b. about fifty-seven

c. from about thirty to sixty-three

d. from about fifteen to as many as one hundred

ANS: D

PG: 120

10. The smallest units of speech that convey a meaning are

a. phonemes.

b. morphemes.

c. compound words.

d. grammars.

ANS: B

PG: 120

11. The word "hats"

a. contains one morpheme.

b. contains a bound morpheme.

c. does not contain a bound morpheme.

d. contains three morphemes.

ANS: B

PG: 121

12. An example of a free morpheme is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. ly

b. co

c. tar

d. ist

ANS: C

PG: 121

13. An example of a bound morpheme is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a. art

b. sun

c. paint

d. ist

ANS: D

PG: 121

14. The highly complex set of rules that regulates the formation of morphemes into words and words into phrases and sentences is called

a. grammar.

b. dialogue.

c. phonology.

d. syntax.

ANS: A

PG: 121

15. A lingua franca refers to

a. the French language.

b. a common language.

c. a world-wide language understood by most people in the world.

d. a language with no form of nonverbal communication.

ANS: B

PG: 135

16. Which phrase best characterizes second language competence in the United States?

a. basically monolingual

b. fiercely bilingual

c. accepting of all foreign languages

d. striving toward multilingualism

ANS: A

PG: 137

17. The language(s) most efficient at expressing abstract ideas

a. is Navajo.

b. is Chinese.

c. is German.

d. does not exist, no single language is most efficient.

ANS: D

PG: 124

18. Cell phone technology now enables us to

a. send deceptive or false messages

b. pretend to be somewhere other than where we are

c. pretend that you need to leave a particular meeting.

d. all of the above

ANS: D

PG: 126

19. Cultural emphasis refers to

a. the major nonverbal forms of communication in a society.

b. the favorite forms of argument in a society.

c. the one language most members of society learn better than any other.

d. the words in a language that are considered to be adaptively important in that culture.

ANS: D

PG: 125

20. Standard American English's cultural emphasis is on words referring to

a. technology and occupations.

b. weather.

c. cows and crops.

d. religious artifacts.

ANS: A

PG: 125-126

21. Doublespeak

a. is a medieval form of language no longer used today.

b. refers to the differences in languages between the wealthy and the commoners.

c. is designed to alter our perception of what is real.

d. is the same as being bilingual.

ANS: C

PG: 127-129

22. Nuer terminology reflects the importance of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in their society

a. women

b. bracelets and necklaces

c. cattle

d. grain

ANS: C

PG: 125

23. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis argues that language

a. influences perception.

b. is genetically (biologically) based.

c. is nothing more than a means of communication.

d. helps people adjust to their environment.

ANS: A

PG: 126-127

24. Which accent carries the highest prestige in the United States?:

a. German

b. Southern U.S.

c. British

d. French

ANS: C

PG: 134-135

25. Language, according to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis,

a. is responsible for all peoples of the world to perceive the world in the same way.

b. causes all humans to construct reality in similar ways.

c. establishes in our minds categories that force us to distinguish those things we consider similar from those things we consider different.

d. a and b only

ANS: C

PG: 126-129

26. Opponents to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis argue that

a. language simply reflects, rather than determines, culture.

b. culture reflects language.

c. culture determines language.

d. language and culture are independent of each other.

ANS: A

PG: 126-29

27. Sociolinguistics concentrates on variations in language that

a. are likely to become extinct in the next fifty years.

b. do not change over time.

c. have a majority of bilingual speakers.

d. depend upon the social situations or contexts in which the speaker operates.

ANS: D

PG: 131-132

28. Diglossia refers to

a. nearsightedness found widely in China.

b. an inability to speak.

c. one person's ability to speak two varieties of one language in different social circumstances.

d. the inability of a person to learn more than one language during a lifetime.

ANS: C

PG: 132-133

29. Nonstandard English is

a. a fully efficient language with its own grammar.

b. grammatically incorrect.

c. unable to express abstract thoughts.

d. suffers from a lack of syntax.

ANS: A

PG: 128-129

30. Nonverbal communication includes

a. hand gestures and touching.

b. communication on a telephone.

c. written communication.

d. all of the above.

ANS: A

PG: 136-138

31. Which statement about language reflecting a culture’s basic values is true?

a. Individualism is reflected in English spoken in the United States.

b. A concern for the good of the larger group is reflected in the Japanese language.

c. Individualism is reflected in both U.S. English and Japanese.

d. a and b only

ANS: D

PG: 129-130

32. Sociolinguists

a. study the structures (phonology and morphology) of a language.

b. focus on how people actually speak in any given social situation.

c. study language change over time.

d. study language families.

ANS: B

PG: 131-132

33. In the United States, a single area of cultural emphasis

a. is always easy to identify.

b. is impossible to identify.

c. is higher education, an area of culture that is of great significance to people of all backgrounds.

d. is not always easy to identify; nevertheless, sports tends to be one area of culture that is shared by people from a variety of backgrounds.

ANS: D

PG: 125

34. The way that people hold their bodies often communicates information about

a. emotional states.

b. submissiveness or dominance.

c. sexual intentions.

d. all of the above

ANS: D

PG: 138

35. Which statement best describes the difference in linguistic style between speakers of Japanese and speakers of American English?

a. Japanese is direct while English is indirect.

b. Japanese is indirect while English is direct

c. Japanese tends to use exaggeration.

d. Japanese tends to be confrontational.

ANS: B

PG: 130-131

36. Which statement about communication among nonhuman primates is true?

a. Gorillas use calls and facial expressions to communicate.

b. Nonhuman primate call systems are inflexible.

c. Nonhuman primates use closed systems of communication.

d. all of the above

ANS: D

PG: 118-119

37. Which statement about text messaging is false?

a. It allows you to communicate without divulging your emotions.

b. Chinese text message more frequently than do Americans.

c. Text messaging encourages brevity and blandness

d. Text-messagers must be brief because most cell phones only accommodate 42 characters.

ANS: D

PG: 132

38. A language that is “moribund” is one that

a. no longer has any living speakers.

b. has only a handful of people that speak the language.

c. has no speakers that are bilingual.

d. had lost its capacity to communicate nonverbally.

ANS: B

PG: 117

39. The historical study of the Lord’s Prayer illustrates changes in

a. phonology.

b. morphology.

c. syntax.

d. all of the above

ANS: D

PG: 122

40. Which statement(s) about cultural emphasis is (are) true?

a. In Standard American English, many words refer to technological gadgetry.

b. The people in the Arctic have large numbers of words for snow, ice, and seals.

c. The Nuer have a large vocabulary to describe and identify their cattle.

d. all of the above

ANS: D

PG: 125-126

True-False

1. An open system of communication is only capable of sending messages which have been sent before.

ANS: F

PG: 119

2. A major limitation to the development of language among gorillas and chimps is physical because they do not possess the vocal equipment for speech.

ANS: T

PG: 119

3. Syntax is the set of principles guiding how words are arranged into phrases and sentences.

ANS: T

PG: 121

4. The English language has a total of forty phonemes.

ANS: F

PG: 120

5. In the United States approximately 60% of the adult population has a functional knowledge of a second language.

ANS: F

PG: 137

6. Small-scale societies with simple technologies have relatively simple languages.

ANS: F

PG: 124

7. “Communities of Practice” possess their own specialized vocabularies.

ANS: T

PG: 133

8. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has not been definitively proven.

ANS: T

PG: 127

9. Language has the power to change how people perceive things.

ANS: T

PG: 126-127

10. Nonverbal communication can aid in interpreting linguistic messages but cannot carry messages of its own.

ANS: F

PG: 136-138

Short Answer

1. Define a language family.

ANS: composed of all of the languages that derive from its common protolanguage

PG: 123

2. How many different (mutually unintelligible) languages exist in the world?

ANS: approximately 6,000

PG: 1116

3. What is displacement?

ANS: the capacity of human language to convey information about a thing or an event that is not present.

PG: 116

4. What are some aggravating ambiguities in the English language?

ANS: See table 2 on page 124

PG: 124

5. The introduction of new words into a language parallels what social event?

ANS: the events that shape the language community’s history and its relationship with other linguistic groups

PG: 122

6. Which anthropologist (and linguist) stated that no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality?

ANS: Edward Sapir

PG: 126-127

7. The extent to which a culture values the individual, as compared to the group, is often reflected in its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

ANS: its linguistic style

PG: 130-131

8. On what aspect of language do sociolinguists concentrate?

ANS: variations in language use depending on the social situation or context in which the speaker is operating

PG: 131-132

9. What is diglossia?

ANS: a linguistic situation where two varieties of the same language are spoken by the same person at different times and under different social situations

PG: 132-133

10. What are three forms of nonverbal communication?

ANS: hand gestures, posture, and touching

PG: 136-138

Essay

1. How is language different from non-human ways of communicating? How is language symbolic?

2. Describe how a culture’s values are reflected in its language. Be specific.

3. How does vocabulary relate to cultural adaptations? When are precise vocabularies needed?

4. What is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis? How is it supported and how is it contradicted?

5. What is sociolinguistics? Give some examples of linguistic situations from your own life that would be of interest to a sociolinguist.

6. In what ways has the development of technology over the past two decades changed the way that people in the United States communicate?

7. Looking at your own country of origin, which dialects carry high status and which carry low status?