

**UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO – SRI LANKA**  
**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
**FIRST YEAR EXAMINATION IN ARTS – SEMESTER I – 2020/21**  
**ESL 2112 – The Structure of English Grammar**  
**Time: Two (02) Hours**

**Duration:** You are given **5 hours** for submission of your answer script to the LMS.

All questions carry **equal marks**.

**This paper carries 50% of the total marks.**

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**Instructions to Students:**

- The question paper starts on page 2.
- All written assessments must be **handwritten**. Handwriting must be **clear and readable**.
- Answers should be written on an **A4 size paper** (ruled/lined paper/or otherwise), using **a black ball point pen**.
- The **index number must be written on the top right-hand side of each page** of the answer script. DO NOT write your name anywhere on the answer script.
- **Number the pages** of the answer script using the following format at the **bottom of the page**: E.g., if it consists of 5 pages 1/5, 2/5...etc.
- Use the **common front page** (provided on LMS) as the first page of the answer script. You may print, or hand write the front page which must be the first page of your assessment.
- The **total number of pages** should be indicated on the front page of the answer script.
- **Scan/take photos of the answer script and convert it to a single PDF file** in the order of the page numbers.
- The full page of the answer script must be properly covered in the scanned image, and the scanned image must be clear/readable.
- **LMS does not permit** individual pages to be uploaded separately.
- **The only acceptable file format is PDF. The PDF file should be named with your index number**, e.g. A 12345 (file name)
- Uploading answer scripts as JPEG/JPG or any other form will NOT be permitted.
- Complete and upload the final version of the answer script to LMS **within the stipulated 5 hours**
- Once the answer script has been uploaded to LMS, take **a screen shot of the full page** of the LMS with the word ‘submitted’, as an acknowledgement and keep it with you.
- **If** there is an **unexpected technical issue** with the uploading of an answer script to LMS, you may send your answer script via email to [exam2@arts.cmb.ac.lk](mailto:exam2@arts.cmb.ac.lk) immediately.

Answer **any four (04)** questions.

1. Answer this question using your knowledge of **verbs, tense, aspect, and mood**.

a. Determine whether the following sentences allow a **perfective interpretation** or an **imperfective interpretation**. Give reasons for all your answers. (8 marks)

- i. *The trade union finally agrees to give up some of its demands.*
- ii. *Many people think that it is not a feasible idea.*
- iii. *The writer still wrote novels during her exile.*
- iv. *All parties will oppose the government's new bill on Monday.*

b. Study the following situations and write a sentence for each situation using **conditional constructions** (open & remote interpretations), **modal preterite** usage etc. in your own words. Pay attention to the underlined parts of the sentences.

(10 marks)

Example:

*Shehan's friend is asking him for some money. Shehan is willing to help his friend, but he doesn't have any money with him.*

Possible interpretation:

*If Shehan had money, he would help his friend.*

- i. *The government is unlikely to run for an election in the near future. It is understood it is unlikely that the government will win an election in the near future.*
- ii. *Mr Kasun Perera is ready to leave for work now. It is common knowledge that there is no traffic at this time.*
- iii. *Menaka lives in the US, and her mother lives in India. Menaka's mother has no chance of going to the US. Menaka's mother is very good at doing domestic chores, and Menaka thinks it's unfortunate her mother is not with her to help her out in her home.*
- iv. *Mr Ranjith Perera is critically ill with COVID-19. He didn't take any vaccine against COVID-19. The doctors say his present situation is due to his not taking a vaccine.*

c. Some ESL learners were asked to write all possible interpretations of a few sentences (The learners' interpretations are given within brackets.). Imagine yourself as an ESL teacher and comment (with explanations) on the learners' interpretations by saying if these learners have acquired all the relevant modalities expressed by some of the English modal verbs. (12 marks)

- i. *My father must be at work now. (My father is required/obliged to be at work now by his employer.)*
- ii. *The students may write the makeup exam next week. (Though it is not certain, it is inferred that the students will write the makeup exam next week.)*

- iii. *The company manager can't be honest in this matter.* (The company manager has no personality to be honest in this matter.)
- iv. *The police should be at the scene of the accident by now.* (The police are required/obliged to be at the scene of the accident now.)

2. Answer this question using your knowledge of **prepositions** and **preposition phrases**.

a. Identify particles and prepositions in the following sentences and give syntactic evidence by giving an example in support of the distinction you make between them. The particles and prepositions have been underlined for you. (12 marks)

- i. *This proposal has been brought up several times at this meeting.*
- ii. *There is a superstitious belief that it is not good for sons to take after their father.*
- iii. *The other day I ran into one of my old friends.*
- iv. *Students are expected to hand in their project by the end of this month.*

b. Distinguish **prepositions** from **adverbs** by contrasting their syntactic behaviour. You are required to apply two tests by giving example sentences. (4 marks)

c. Distinguish **prepositions** from **adjectives** by contrasting their syntactic behaviour. You are required to apply two tests by giving example sentences. (4 marks)

d. Imagine yourself as an ESL teacher of adult learners and say how you would correct some of your students' recurrent errors in fronting/stranding prepositions by explaining to them the syntactic constraints that operate on this linguistic phenomenon/usage. You can use the example sentences given below. (10 marks)

- i. *\* In the afternoon, the manager is attending a meeting which you could meet him after.*
- ii. *\* This is the question which the answer to is not known yet.*
- iii. *\* For what did the company fire him?*
- iv. *\* The bank manager approves of to whoever I pass the loan.*

3. Answer the following questions using your knowledge of **clause types** used for asking, exclaiming, directing etc.

a. Decide what kind of speech act the following clauses are likely to perform. Give your reasons. (8 marks)

- i. *Can you please pass me the chicken dish?*
- ii. *Take off your shoes before entering the room.*
- iii. *The floor is slippery! Take care.*
- iv. *Feel free to call me any time.*

b. Attach the proper **reverse polarity tags** to the following declaratives. (4 marks)

- i. *These people don't receive any welfare these days.*
- ii. *Nobody thought it was a possible solution.*
- iii. *The company used to export rubber to Europe.*

- iv. *There aren't any chances for rectifying the situation now.*
- c. The following clauses are written without a final punctuation mark. Classify them as (a) an **open interrogative**; (b) an **exclamative**; or (c) **ambiguous** between open interrogative and exclamative. If your answer is (a) or (b), explain what grammatical factors make the clause unambiguous. If your answer is (c), comment on the difference in meaning. (8 marks)

- i. *What problems we had*
- ii. *How my family treated me*
- iii. *What train was that*
- iv. *What fools run this show*

- d. Add **constant** or **reverse polarity tags** at the end of the following sentences considering the semantics of the sentences and the context in which they are spoken. If both types of tags can be added to a sentence, explain the difference between the two versions.

(10 marks)

- i. *So, you're letting me go into the exhibition.* (The speaker feels the ticket collector has finally changed his mind about letting him go in.)
- ii. *Let's go out to dinner.*
- iii. *Close the window.*
- iv. *You worked hard on it.* (The speaker is of the opinion that the other person has worked hard, but he is not sure, and he wants to confirm with the other person.)

4. Answer the following questions using your knowledge of **subordination** and **content clauses**.

- a. Embed the clauses given within brackets as a **subordinate clause** in the following clauses as content clauses and say which type of content clause (CLOSED INTERROGATIVE, EXCLAMATIVE, DECLARATIVE, OPEN INTERROGATIVE) they belong to and the type of function they play in the sentence. (8 marks)

- i. *Nobody told me ..... (What a disaster it would be to change the chairman of the company.)*
- ii. *Everybody wants to know ..... (Why does the company want to sell some more of its shares?)*
- iii. *All are doubtful ..... (Can any improvement in the country's economy be made?)*
- iv. *..... was rather a shock. (She should forget me so quickly.)*

- b. In each of the sentences given below, say if the subordinate clause is (a) an **interrogative**; or (b) an **exclamative**; or (c) **ambiguous** between the interrogative and exclamative. If your answer is (a) or (b), explain what grammatical factors make the clause unambiguous. If your answer is (c), comment on the differences in meaning. (10 marks)

- i. *Do you still remember how difficult the problem was?*
  - ii. *It is obvious why there is so much competition among several countries to help Sri Lanka.*
  - iii. *It is unbelievable what a dramatic loss the company has suffered.*
  - iv. *Do you know what nuisance the minister has caused to media personnel?*
- c. The following are five sentences written by an adult learner of English. All of these sentences may not be well-formed.
- (a) Identify the sentences which are ill-formed.
- (b) Using the knowledge of **subordination** and **declarative content clauses**, and the idea of **licensing/selection criterion**, explain why some of the learner's sentences are ill-formed. (12 marks)

- i. *She was good at physics despite that she found the subject boring.*
- ii. *Several years after that they had split up they met again by chance in Paris.*
- iii. *Dutch police are investigating the possibility that a bomb was planted on the jet.*
- iv. *I felt he was wrong although that I didn't say so at that time.*
- v. *It was surprising the government was re-elected given that they had raised the taxes so much.*

5. Answer this question using your knowledge of **relative clauses**.

- a. The following sentences contain a finite subordinate clause. Underline the subordinate clauses and say if they are **relative**, and in each of them, identify the **antecedent** and the **function** of the (overt or covert) **relativized element** (R element). Also say if the relative is a fused relative clause. If the subordinate clause is not relative, say which type the clause belongs to. (8 marks)

- i. *My father always asks how I am doing in my new job.*
- ii. *Nobody knew the new proposal the manager made at the meeting.*
- iii. *I will accept whichever you give me.*
- iv. *The watch you gave me keeps perfect time.*

- b. In the following sentences, identify the finite subordinate clauses by underlining and labelling them as (a) **relative clauses** (b) **declarative content clauses** and (c) **ambiguous**. Give reasons for your choice. (12 marks)

- i. *The money I needed was finally got from one of my friends.*
- ii. *Can you please return the parcel that we sent you last week?*
- iii. *The suggestion that all workers need a few days of break was welcomed by all.*
- iv. *I remember what the teacher taught us last month*

- c. The following are sentences containing relative clauses written by an adult learner of English (quite weak in her punctuation) expressing the ideas given in brackets. All her sentences may not be correct. Imagine yourself as an ESL

teacher and correct the punctuation in the sentences showing their relevance with **integrated** and **supplementary relative** clauses. (10 marks)

- i. *My friend bought a car, which his father did not like.* (The father didn't like the car's make his son bought.)
- ii. *The books, which I bought from Amazon, are very expensive.* (I bought books only from Amazon.)
- iii. *Ranjith's brother who lives in Australia is coming to Sri Lanka tomorrow.* (Ranjith has only one brother.)
- iv. *The eggs, which Geetha bought from the supermarket, are rotten.* (Geetha bought eggs from the supermarket and from other places too.)