

LAIKIPIA



UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

1ST SEMESTER 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

**FOURTH YEAR EXAMINATIONS FOR
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (ARTS)**

ENGL 312: HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

STREAM: REGULAR

TIME: 2 HRS

DAY: THURSDAY (11:30-13:30)

DATE: 29/01/2026

THIS QUESTION PAPER CONSISTS OF THREE (3 PAGES)

PLEASE DO NOT OPEN UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR SAYS SO.

INSTRUCTIONS:

ANSWER QUESTION ONE AND ANY OTHER TWO.

QUESTION ONE

- 1(a). i. Explain oral tradition as a source of historical linguistics and its 3 advantages. **(5 marks)**
 ii. Explain written records as a source of historical linguistics and its 2 advantages. **(5 marks)**
- (b). Distinguish between 'synchronic' & 'diachronic' linguistics. **(4 marks)**
- (c). Explain the notion 'Dialect Geography'. **(4 marks)**
- (d). Explain the following with examples: **(8 marks)**
- (i) Language family
 - (ii) Analytic language
 - (iii) Synthetic language
 - (iv) Inflecting language
- (e). Why is it important to study language in its historical context? **(4 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

2. i. Using Genealogical Classification, discuss 4 major Language Families. **(12 marks)**
 ii. Explain any 4 processes of sound change. **(8 marks)**

QUESTION THREE

- 3(a). Explain the Family Tree Model and the Wave Model of language relationships. **(10 marks)**
 (b). Explain two advantages of each of the above models in terms of their ability to explain historical linguistics phenomena. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

4. Discuss the following methods used in Comparative Linguistics: **(20 marks)**
- (a) Comparative method
 - (b) Lexicostatistics
 - (c) Glottochronology
 - (d) Mass comparison
 - (e) Computerized statistical hypothesis testing method

QUESTION FIVE

5. i. Discuss 4 types of language change.

(8 marks)

ii. Describe the following sound change laws/theories:

(12 marks)

(a) Dahl's Law

(b) Grimm's Law

(c) Verner's Law