Examination paper for ENG1000: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics

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Examination date: 2nd December
Examination time (from-to): 9am-1pm (4 hours)
Permitted examination support material: Dictionary

Other information:

Language: English
Number of pages: 2
Number of pages enclosed: 2

Checked by:

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Date                  Signature
The exam consists of two sections. Answers must be provided to both Section A and Section B. Each section counts for 50%.

Section A: short answers

Answer three of the five questions below (expected answer length is approximately 1 side per question)

(a) What do we mean by the phrase “Standard English”?
(b) What is the difference between a national language and an official language?
(c) Read the following extract which demonstrates Spanish-English code-switching, and answer the question below. An English translation has been provided in square brackets where necessary.

I guess you could do a lot of inter-railing. Pasa que no se lleva inter-railing en America? There [It might be there isn’t] [in]
is not that infrastructure, con que maybe what you do is you drive from state to state [so]
mientras en Europe you can inter-rail from state to state. And there’s an airport in every [while in]
country y claro, in America no tienen airports todos los states. [of course] [they don’t have] [all the]

What type(s) of code-switching do you detect in this passage?
(d) What are multiplex and uniplex social networks, and what impact are they thought to have on language change?

Turn over for question (e)
Look at the picture above. What claims does it make, and how might they be challenged from a sociolinguistic perspective?

Section B: Essay

Write an essay based on one of the following titles (expected answer length is 3-4 sides).

1. “Language variation and language change are entirely separate concepts.” Discuss.
2. “Style-shifting is a matter of carefulness of speech, and nothing more.” Discuss.
3. “The differences between how men and women speak are a matter of simple biology.” Discuss.
4. “Language ‘choice’ is a misleading term as no individual ‘choice’ is involved.” Discuss.
5. “Communities stop speaking a language when that language ceases to be useful.” Discuss.
6. “Language planning is impossible to describe in general terms as every speech community is unique.” Discuss.
7. “Forensic Linguistics is nothing more than guesswork”. Discuss.
8. Discuss the relationship between language and identity from a perspective of your choosing.

Good luck!