

東吳大學 104 學年度轉學生（含進修學士班轉學生）招生考試試題

第 1 頁，共 3 頁

系級	英文系(含進修學士班)二、三年級	考試時間	100 分鐘
科目	英文	本科總分	100 分

DO NOT COPY THE QUESTIONS AND MARK YOUR ANSWERS IN ORDER AND CLEARLY.

Part I (20%): Many Chinese titles of English movies, though finely translated, do not carry their denotations in the original. Please explain, in English, what the following phrases mean respectively. Each accounts for 4%.

1. Dead Presidents 《絕命戰場》 (1995)
2. Red Eye 《赤眼玄機》 (2005)
3. Plain Clothes 《校園先鋒》 (1987)
4. Cry Wolf 《惡狼 ID》 (2005)
5. Nick of Time 《絕命時刻》 (1995)

Part II (30%): Ebonics, a blend of “ebony” and “phonics” that simply means “black speech,” is a form of English that is spoken by a large proportion of African Americans. The famous comedian Steve Harvey in a highly acclaimed skit jokingly declares that Ebonics is “the leading cause of white folks taking accidental ass-whoppings during hold-ups.” However hilariously exaggerated his comments are, it could be true that without some decent knowledge of Ebonics miscommunication might easily arise. In addition, many words of Ebonics are adopted into the lexicon of Standard English and are frequently used by non-African Americans. To do justice to Ebonics and to properly understand it seems natural and necessary.

Since the mid-1990s, Ebonics has been repeatedly and heatedly discussed. Please read a recent article entitled “Ebonics Debunked,” written by Shahrukh H. Khan and featured in the *Harvard Crimson* on February 3, 2015, and answer the following questions. Each accounts for 6%.

America’s unreflective dismissal of Ebonics is rather fascinating, not because many see it as a “lesser” form of English, but rather because society fails, for the most part, to dip its feet into the deeper end of the issue and actually understand what Ebonics really is.

During the slave trade, members of many different tribes were put together on the same vessel. They were of vastly different cultures, so in order to communicate with each other (and also with their English-speaking slave masters of the American South), they created their own Creole. Eventually their children adapted this Creole such that it developed its own grammar, turning into a quasi-language.

Obviously, the story above is simplified. But it’s the version that most of us hear and come to believe.

But let’s look at it through a more intellectual lens.

Language, both as a method of communication and a cultural symbol, influences and contributes to how people understand the world around them. More specifically, it shapes the way people come across information and knowledge, affecting how they interpret it.

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Psycholinguist Frantz Fanon once asserted that to speak a language is to assume its culture. In order to understand a language, its speakers, and its character, one needs to understand its cultural codes. And it is precisely the understanding of this idea, or lack thereof, which contributes to the misperception of Ebonics and Ebonics speakers. Fanon's idea is one of the reasons why tonal languages such as Mandarin or Punjabi are difficult for non-native speakers to master: Different tones convey different meanings, are used in different societal contexts, and often are attached to cultural values. It's also why the Inuit tribe of Northern Canada has around 50 words for the word "snow."

One of Ebonics' most distinguishing features is its oral expression, as its parent languages belong to the Niger-Congo language family of West Africa. With that in mind, one begins to understand why rap, hip-hop, and other forms of black expression are so rich with clever wordplay, imaginative language, metaphors, and linguistic aestheticisms.

When Ebonics-speaking students are discouraged and told that their language, which they usually have spoken their entire lives, is inferior or wrong, the blame somehow falls on the child for speaking it. It creates resentment and inferiority complexes. The trend that arises from this is a wide achievement gap between Ebonics-speaking students and Standard English-speaking students. But on the other hand, Ebonics-speaking students who don't perform well on written tests actually do very well on more verbal assessments. The reason goes back to the highly oral nature of Ebonics.

In the United States, standardized writing is the formal method of communication. So, society's power structure may prevent more oral-natured languages to be held in the same light. In other words, Ebonics is devalued because American society values written skills more so than oral ones. Of course, this is not always the case, but if a person wants to make a reasonable living in this society, knowing how to write is a must. This preference given to writing pokes at the Foucaultian notion of "regimes of truth," or the idea that power legitimizes a set of beliefs. Because those in power deem Standard English the formal language of discourse, others are considered inferior, or simply wrong.

In the end, the Ebonics stereotype persists: "You are probably ignorant if you speak it." But again, the de-legitimization and ridicule of Ebonics, if one looks deeply enough, lacks any reasonable foundation. It is the general ignorance of people and the preference of those in power that keeps a more positive outlook of Ebonics at bay. Ridiculing Ebonics is ridiculing the culture that it represents. America talks about moving away from racial gaps, but as long as cultural disparities and imbalances—like those of language—exist, progress will be slow.

Learning Standard English is nearly essential to success in American business. And having a common language form definitely helps unify and standardize discourse in a country so diverse as the United States. But it wouldn't hurt to let Ebonics-speaking students know that Ebonics isn't bad and that Standard English isn't better, and rather that they should simply be used in different contexts. Like members of an immigrant

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family who must learn English to secure jobs but who enjoy speaking Spanish at home, Ebonics-speakers can see prudential reasons for learning Standard English without appreciating their own dialect. Using Ebonics through linguistic code-switching (or using language based on cultural context) may just be the next step to give Ebonics more weight as a legitimate dialect of American English, and not an inferior form of speaking.

1. How do people usually stereotype Ebonics? What does Khan think of such a stereotype?
2. What, according to Khan, is the feature that diminishes the significance of Ebonics?
3. How does Khan imply racial gaps can be bridged in terms of Ebonics?
4. What, according to Khan, must those who speak Ebonics learn in order to make a reasonable living in American society?
5. What is the “common language form” that Khan refers to? What does it do?

Part III (50%): Please read the following lyrics from “Time” of Pink Floyd.

*Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day,
Fritter and waste the hours in an off-hand way.
Kicking around on a piece of ground in your home town,
Waiting for someone or something to show you the way.*

*Tired of lying in the sunshine, staying home to watch the rain.
You are young and life is long, and there is time to kill today.
And then one day you find ten years have got behind you.
No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun.*

Dr. Meg Jay, a clinical psychologist, states in her widely celebrated TED talk, “Why 30 Is Not the New 20,” that “claiming your 20s is one of the simplest, yet most transformative, things you can do for work, for love, for your happiness, maybe even for the world.” “So,” she continues, “your 20s are the time to educate yourself about your body and your options.”

How do you relate these remarks? It is wondered what you, as a twenty-something, think of time and this “defining decade of adulthood” in particular. Please write a response essay and share your ideas (250 words minimum).

【考生不可於文中書寫個人姓名或任何足以識別身分之文字或符號】