STUDY QUESTIONS FOR THE FINAL EXAM (Aug 10, 2006)

1.   **TYPOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION**

   a. Define the concept of typological plausibility. Provide an example.
   b. Comment on the recent reconstruction of PIE obstruents:

      i.   Summarize the reason for positing an obstruent system different from the one originally reconstructed.
      ii.   Which of the two reconstructed systems do you consider more plausible? Provide arguments.

   c. What is the argument against considering PIE an SOV language? Discuss by providing an example.

2.   **THE COMPARATIVE METHOD**

   a. Define and comment on the three types of comparison. Illustrate your discussion with examples.
   b. The triangulation procedure:
      i.   Reconstruct the etymon from the British English, American English and Australian English forms of *atom* by applying the triangulation procedure.
      ii. Reconstruct the PIE form of PrsSg 3 *be* from the Sanskrit, Lithuanian and Greek forms by applying the triangulation procedure.
   c. Germanic Obstruents: Refinement of the comparative method:
      i.   Discuss the solution of the first set of exceptions to Grimm's Law.
      ii. Discuss the solution of the second set of exceptions to Grimm's Law.
      iii. Discuss the solution of the third set of exceptions to Grimm's Law.
   d. In what way has Verner's Law served as a justification for the Neogrammarian hypothesis? Discuss.
   e. By describing the development of labiovelars in Greek into three sets of allophones, refer to the problem concerning the use of distinctive features in representing sound change.

3.   **THE METHOD OF INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION**

   a. What is the objective of internal reconstruction? Illustrate your discussion by referring to the sound change that voiced obstruents underwent in German.
   b. In Ancient Greek the sound change s > Ø / V____V has "exceptions" where the /s/ was not deleted between two vowels (e.g., in the word *ambrosia*).
       i. What is the explanation of this "exception"?
       ii. Comment on the chronology of sound changes relevant to the Ancient Greek example.
   c. Define the concept of "merger". Distinguish between absolute merger and partial merger. Illustrate your discussion with examples.

4. SOUND CHANGE

    a. Define the term "sound change". Provide an example to demonstrate your understanding of this concept.
    b. List the most common conditioned and unconditioned sound changes.
    c. Distinguish between phonetic and phonemic sound changes. Provides examples.
    d. Define the term "split". Distinguish between primary and secondary splits. Illustrate your discussion with examples.

5. MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGE

    a. Phonological processes may become morphologized. Discuss, and provide an example.
    b. Grammaticalization: define, and provide an example.
    c. Define the concept of "analogy". Provide an example.
    d. Define the concept of "leveling". Illustrate your discussion by explaining the leveling that took place in Latin in connection with the $s > r / V\_\_\_V$ sound change.
    e. Discuss the mechanism of proportional (or four part) analogy. Illustrate your discussion with an example.
    f. Backformation:
        i. Define, and provide an example.
        ii. What are the differences between back formation and proportional analogy? Provide examples.
    g. Folk etymology: define, and provide examples.
    h. Contamination: define, and provide examples.
    i. Can we predict analogical change? Discuss this issue by referring to the theories of J. Kurylowicz and W. Mańczak.

6. SYNTACTIC CHANGE

    a. Syntactic change is the least researched area in historical linguistics. Why is this so? Discuss.
    b. Can the comparative method be applied to syntax? Discuss. Provide examples.

7. GLOTTOCHRONOLOGY

    a. Define the term "glottochronology". What is the basic assumption behind this concept?
    b. List the three assumptions stated by Swadesh. Explain the mechanism of glottochronology by referring to the following five words from Swadesh's list (*animal, four, head, I, sun*) in order to date the time of separation of English and German.
    c. Criticism of glottochronology: Discuss and provide examples.
    d. Comment on Dolgopolsky's list.

8. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

    a. What is the basic question historical linguists should ask in connection with language change? Is there any satisfactory answer available to this question? Comment.

b. Describe the attempt by A. Martinet to explain unconditional sound changes by referring to the mechanisms of (i) push chain, and (ii) drag chain. Illustrate your discussion with examples.

9. PRACTICAL EXERCISES

    a.   Demonstrate your understanding of the comparative method by (i) reconstructing the proto-forms from the cognates of Spiiktumi, a hypothetical language and (ii) formulating the sound changes relevant to the four languages in maximally general rules.

    b.   There will be a set of related words presented to you from another language, and you will be asked to (i) reconstruct the proto-form, (ii) formulate the sound changes, and (ii) argue for your solution. You will be asked to employ either the comparative method or, the method of internal reconstruction.