

THE UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
FINAL (MAIN) EXAMINATION 2008

TITLE OF PAPER	ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
COURSE CODE	ACS 103 (M)
TIME ALLOWED	TWO (2) HOURS
INSTRUCTIONS	WRITE THE NAME OF YOUR FACULTY ON THE ANSWER SCRIPT ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS
TOTAL MARKS	100

This examination paper contains 8 pages including the cover sheet.

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INVIGILATOR

Question 1

Comprehension

50 Marks

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

CONTINENTAL DRIFT

Binyavanga Wainaina

1 Two weeks ago, two people of “Indian origin” were beaten to death by a crowd in Kampala, Uganda. The crowd rioted because the Mehta Group, a huge multinational business organisation with significant investments in Uganda, has asked to be allocated one-third of the Mabira Forest Reserve, one of the country’s last remaining natural forests. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni supports giving away this rich source of biodiversity.

2 When I was a kid, a documentary called *Shocking Asia* made its way into our cinemas. At the time, Kenya was into censorship. *The Six Million Dollar Man* was banned because it would make young boys jump off roofs. Kenyans could not kiss on television because it would result in instant national sexual orgies. Yet, for some mysterious reason, which wasn’t so mysterious after all, *Shocking Asia* played for years on end, “due to popular demand”.

3 I went to watch it, all of 14 years old, and hoping to see a nipple. I left feeling nauseous, vowing never to visit India. That was a place of mutations and multiple arms and trunks all having twisted sex. And dirty rivers and foetuses and general horribleness. Sodom.

4 For the school-going Christianised population of Kenya, who loved *Reader’s Digest* and watched *The Sound of Music*, India was the closest thing to a future hell. In high school “crusades”, we were told that Indians brought demons to Kenya.

5 The truth was that a new generation of get-rich-quick politicians wanted Kenyans of Indian origin to leave the country. Under the banner of “Africanisation”, the new rulers of Kenya hijacked the economy and proceeded to disembowel it.

6 And, of course, their anti-Indian demagoguery was not without other results. During our abortive coup in 1982, hundreds of women from Nairobi’s “little India” suburb, Parklands, were raped.

7 Finally, it seemed the end of an old history was beginning. For our history has been intertwined with India’s for at least a millennium. When Vasco da Gama arrived in Malindi, a city-state on the coast of what is now Kenya, he hired an Indian Gujarati captain to ferry him to India.

8 This is not taught in Kenyan schools. We were going to be a kind of Black England.

9 The Kenyan upper-middle class inherited disdain for the shopkeeper. As the highly subsidised nation of white settlers came to expect things they did not earn, so did this new generation of rich black Kenyans. To send your child to India for

university was “hellish”; to send your child to England was your natural right and you were furious that you could not afford it. You came back from England determined to plant bougainvillea and chase away the grubby shopkeepers. Kenya was going to leap from independence to become a country of doctors and teachers and chrome skyscraper multinationals. But we did not want to have to make cheap goods in smelly factories.

10 A political class of people has created a certain expectation: that the angry masses will react predictably to their “monsters” because those monsters have already been created. In Kenya, as in Uganda, a class of people incapable of building wealth used crude knee-jerk nativisms to rob. They stole windowpanes and machines, turned viable cotton ginneries into scrap metal, stole even the raw cotton supplied by poor farmers. Stole until the factories stopped running. All the time pointing fingers of blame at the shocking Asians, at a shop near you.

11 The new elite nearly destroyed Kenya to send their kids to school in England. The people they shook down were almost always the small-time traders. Meanwhile, many highly skilled people were kicked out to make room for the mediocre.

12 So look behind the mob, to the whispered meetings held by small-time politicians the night before a riot over meat and beer, to find the real motivation for the violence.

13 In all this steam and frenzy, people will be quick to forget that the Indian Mehta family has built many essential industries in Uganda.

14 It is not in question that Museveni sees himself as a religious figure, fated to answer all questions for Uganda.

15 The Mehta family also has an ego problem. From the group’s website, on the late founder: “... Shri Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta -- “a humanist whose heart was filled with immense love and affection for people ... a contemporary of the Father of the Nation who practiced the doctrines of the Mahatma.”

16 These two men with oversized egos have overreached themselves. I am sure there are the usual lazy political businessmen and entrepreneurs who are playing to crowds and boardrooms to make money and make political names. Is there anybody as dangerous as those who want to profit politically and financially from the “rage” of the “people”? There are enough examples, in our recent pasts -- in South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and elsewhere -- to warn us about the danger of this sort of ethnic paranoia.

17 There are no easy “exploitation” stories that we can extract from the incoherence of the mob.

18 There is no possible benefit to this. Except more killing. Lives are at stake in these cheap jostles for power.

QUESTIONS

(50 marks)

- 1 State in one or two sentences what this passage is about. (10 marks)
- 2 What can we say about the writer of this passage? (Answer YES or NO or NOT CLEAR)'. (3 marks each)

The writer

- a. comes from Uganda.
- b. is male.
- c. dislikes Indians.
- d. has never been to India.
- e. will never go India.
- f. thinks that films which have scenes of sex should be banned.
- g. admires the present political state of Uganda and Kenya.
- 3 Who are "we" in ¶ 4 and ¶ 8? (cf. also "our" in ¶ 7) (4)
- 4 What is "this" in ¶ 8? Answer ONE. (4)
- a. That Vasco da Gama arrived in Malindi
- b. That Malindi is now in Kenya
- c. That Vasco went to India
- d. That the captain of his ship was Indian.
- 5 Who is "you" in ¶ 9? Answer ONE (4)
- a. The English
- b. The Indians
- c. The African rulers
- d. The white settlers
- 6 In ¶ 12, the writer wants the reader to see the "real motivation" for the violence in Kenya. What does this refer to? (4)
- a. the greed of Kenyan politicians
- b. the people's desire for change
- c. the President's ambitions
- d. the fears of the small traders.
- 7 How does the writer feel about the situation he is describing? (3)
- a. Hopeful
- b. amused
- c. uninterested
- d. angry
- e. forgiving

QUESTION 2**SUMMARY**

50 marks

Read the following passage and then follow the instructions that follow.

HIV – Despair and Hope

Richard Dowden

- 1 In ten years' time the number of orphans from Aids will reach 42 million, the UN conference in Barcelona heard this week. A veteran commentator recently visited southern Africa, where he met families struck by the virus. He met, too, the remarkable women who care for them. These women, who are also infected, are transforming Africa in a very different way.
- 2 The full horror of Aids is only now beginning to strike Africa. Infection rates may be levelling off but the dying has only just begun. In Africa the virus has already killed 13.7 million people. About 28 million are infected and will die by 2020. In Botswana the infection rate is nearly 40 per cent, in Zimbabwe it is about 33 per cent and in the rest of southern Africa it is more than 20 per cent and rising.
- 3 The United Nations agency UNAIDS warns that countries such as China and Indonesia and states of the former Soviet Union could soon face a similar plague. Even when the level of infections start to fall, the death rate from Aids will continue to rise for about 10 years as those infected die. UNAIDS estimates that while 20 million people have died from Aids in the past 20 years, more than three times that number will die in the next 20. This will leave millions of orphans. In some places one child in ten will be an orphan.
- 4 "Condomising" – a new African word – may help to prevent the spread of the HIV virus in richer urban areas but in the poorer countryside condoms have not even begun to be part of the culture. Aids workers in Africa have not yet found a way to persuade people to change their behaviour to curb the virus's remorseless spread. Some Africans believe that it is condoms that spread Aids. Most anti-Aids campaigns are based on the concept that talking openly about Aids and sex is the best way of getting the message across. Slogans urging people to abstain, delay the age of first sex, stick to one partner, are pumped out of television, radio, churches, schools, billboards and office posters. Children younger than ten sing anti-Aids songs. The level of awareness is high, but behaviour is not changing quickly or widely enough.
- 5 And the constant bombardment can be counter-productive. In Botswana Aids is called the "radio disease". Many people who have changed their behaviour admit that it was a death in the family or among friends that made them wake up to the danger. When most fall sick they still go to the traditional healer for a cure or to a witch doctor to discover who has bewitched them and made them sick. President Thabo Mbeki's public questioning of orthodox science on Aids has left a huge leadership gap in South Africa and the region, undermining the basic message that unprotected sex can spread the virus and that the virus leads to Aids. This week the

unprotected sex can spread the virus and that the virus leads to Aids. This week the UNAIDS conference in Barcelona heard that a vaccine for HIV could be ready within five years. But will it be affordable and available for the millions of people who are most vulnerable? Even if it is, a vaccination will be no help to the generation that is already infected and cannot afford antiretroviral drugs. Populations are normally shaped like a stepped pyramid with the young at the broad bottom and the tapering top representing the old, but Africa's pyramid is being dramatically hollowed out at the middle and bottom as the young and middle-aged die off and fewer children are born. The mature productive middle generation is dying out; without them society is unable to support itself.

6 A pattern is setting in among poor families. In the short term a family breadwinner or homemaker dies and the children become poorer, some starving to death. This year drought has struck southern Africa, making survival even more precarious. In the medium term the children, especially the girls, drop out of school. That means they will be poor, more vulnerable to relationships that expose them to Aids or marriages in which they are powerless. In the long term, such women may contract Aids themselves and die young or may give birth to HIV-positive children. Even if they and their children survive, they will not have the skills to make a living or provide money for the education of their own children. Research identifies the education levels of mothers as the crucial factor in infant mortality rates. The recent gains in helping the children of the poor survive their first five years may be lost.

7 It is hard to predict where this will lead, but one scenario is that millions of children will grow up unparented, never knowing a mother's loving cuddle or a father's guiding hand. Such a generation could become semi-feral, living like animals, deprived of socialisation or education, lacking the fundamental human attachments of family, owning nothing but the rags they stand in and unable to keep themselves alive except by theft and violence. In Africa's fragile states such a generation could easily become a pool of ruthless warriors for power-hungry politicians. Whole regions of Africa could be destabilised.

8 And the economic impact on the continent will be severe. The gap between Africa and the rest of the world is already widening alarmingly; as it strikes down skilled people, Aids will make it worse. Governments will be forced to spend more on health while education will come under severe pressure as teachers' numbers decline. Funerals are costly. In Africa the bereaved family traditionally kills a cow to feed all the relatives and neighbours at the wake and this can cost half a year's income. Some Churches in Africa are trying to persuade families to cut down on funeral expenditure and make sure that powerful but distant relatives do not take the property of widows and orphans.

9 Orphans are the most vulnerable in this bleak new social landscape. In the villages and poor urban areas of Africa there are dozens of households now headed by a 14-year-old or an even younger child. Africa's traditional extended family support system is breaking down. In southern Africa the family was already under pressure from the apartheid system, which lured men to the big cities for work but did not allow them to take their families with them. Many set up second families in the cities and abandoned their rural families or returned once a year to bring money. In the late

1980s and 1990s they started to bring back the HIV virus too, spreading it deep into poor rural communities. They fell sick and died, but not before Aids became rampant.

10 Already over-stretched, families are beginning to turn away the children of their dead brothers, sisters and cousins. They are left to fend for themselves. Words that a few years ago were rarely heard in Africa – “abandoned children”, “child abuse”, “depression” and even “child suicide” – are now heard daily. Abandoned children are abused and exploited by relatives and guardians. Orphaned boys, adopted by uncles or guardians, are kept out of school and made to work for nothing on farms. Young girls are sexually abused and raped.

11 Afflicted by a catastrophe such as Aids, which threatens the very foundations of society, some will exploit the suffering and make it worse. But others find a deep resource of determination and energy to fight back. As I travelled around the region visiting child-headed households and orphans I noticed that the most dynamic and effective organisations at local and national level were those headed by women who were themselves HIV-positive. The trauma somehow liberated and galvanised them. They have become the main activists in the battle against Aids.

12 Sipiwe Hlophe from Swaziland had just turned 40 in 1999 when she won a scholarship to study agricultural economics in Britain. She has four children: the eldest is 22, the youngest 11. One of the conditions of her scholarship was an Aids test; she took it as a matter of routine, not thinking there was a problem. When she turned out to be HIV-positive, her husband left her, she lost her scholarship and thought she was going to die. But she came through the shock and decided to do something for people living with Aids.

13 Sipiwe formed a group called SWAPOL: Swaziland for Positive Living. It now has 150 members, mostly HIV-positive women who organise meetings to discuss Aids and spread the message to children. They counsel others who discover that they are HIV-positive, visit terminally ill people in their homes, make sure they get medical care, educate people about better diets – a crucial factor for people living with Aids – and battle with headmasters who turn away Aids orphans. They also work to make sure grandmothers and orphans get government allowances. This astoundingly difficult but inspiring work is accompanied by a great deal of laughter and song. They seem to be saying: “I am going to die of an incurable disease but before I do I am going to change the world.”

14 In fighting the battle against Aids and trying to prevent others becoming infected, these women are actually fighting a bigger war, a war against the codes of modern African societies that leave people, especially women, powerless and vulnerable. Whatever Aids does to African society, these women who have lost their fear will also change it for ever.

Instructions:

Write at least one but not more than two pages on ONE of the following topics. Your answers should be in your own words, but based on the information in the passage above. Do not copy sentences from the passage.

1 What is the role of women in combating HIV in Africa?

OR

2 Read again paragraphs 4-5. Explain in your own words why the anti-AIDS campaigns can be “counter-productive”.

OR

3 What signs of hope are there to be seen amidst the AIDS catastrophe?
