

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI

**DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
FIRST SEMESTER RESIT EXAMINATION, NOV/DEC 2018**

TITLE OF PAPER: ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

COURSE CODE: ACS 111

TIME ALLOWED: 2 (TWO) HOURS

**INSTRUCTIONS: THE QUESTION PAPER CONTAINS TWO
SECTIONS. ANSWER BOTH QUESTIONS.
START EACH SECTION ON A FRESH PAGE.**

**WRITE THE NAME OF YOUR FACULTY
AND PROGRAMME ON THE COVER OF
YOUR ANSWER BOOKLET.**

TOTAL MARKS: 100

This paper contains 9 pages, including the cover page.

This paper is not to be opened until permission has been granted by the invigilator.

SECTION A

READING COMPREHENSION

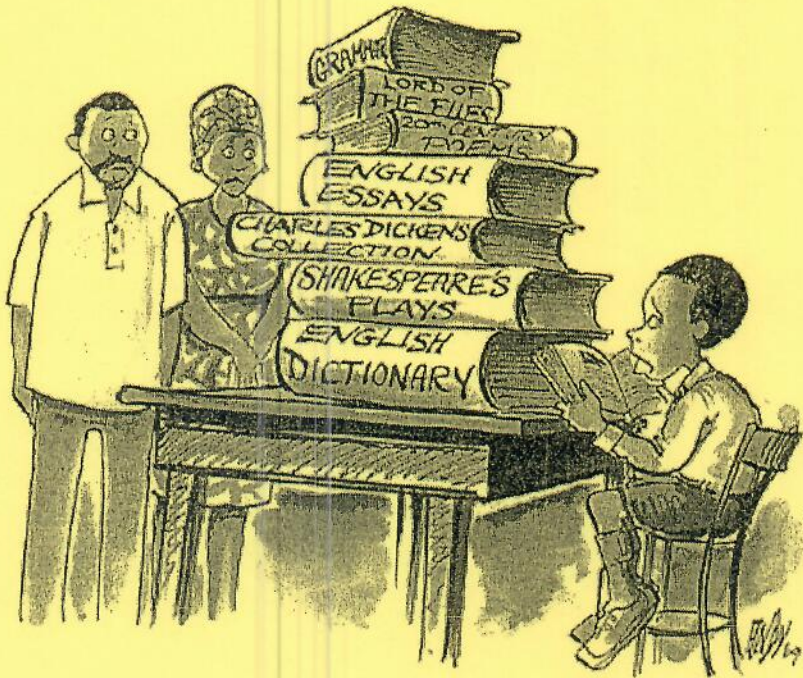
50 MARKS

Sunday Times

8 Mar 2009

Here, mother tongue clashes with her mother's tongue

Ultimately, our children pay the price for the constant erosion of African languages, says Mamphela Ramphele



1. CAN you imagine a French child arriving at pre-school and being greeted by a teacher in broken English? Or a child in grade 1 being taught in English by a teacher who is not proficient in the language because her mother tongue is French?
2. Welcome to the daily reality of indigenous African language teaching in post-apartheid South Africa. If language is not only the medium of communication, but also a means of cultural heritage transmission between generations, how are our children to know who they are and what heritage they bring to South Africa's diversity?
3. South African Airways, the national carrier, must be one of few state-owned airlines on which passengers are not greeted in a dominant indigenous language. African language use is restricted to one line or phrase, almost as an afterthought: *Hambani Kahle! Tsamayang hantle!* **Contrast** this with Egypt or Kenya Airways, where one is welcomed and taken through safety procedures in their dominant indigenous languages, Arabic and Swahili, **respectively**.
4. If it was not so tragic, it would be comical how many African journalists at our national broadcaster, the SABC, pronounce their own and their colleagues' names in an Anglicised manner. Tebogo, Tshepiso and many others become unrecognisable

utterances as our young professionals roll their tongues awkwardly around names that should come naturally.

5. There seems to be a growing **trend** to downgrade the importance of indigenous languages in all walks of life in our young democracy. English has become the language of political discourse inside and outside parliament. *Imbizos* in some of the remotest areas of our country have been, over the last decade or so, largely conducted in English. Elites, young and old, seem to equate sophistication with the use of English with as much of a non-African accent as possible. What accounts for this trend?
6. First, our constitution **fudged** the language issue by declaring all 11 languages as official. This allowed for English to be the *de facto* dominant official language even though, numerically, Zulu and Afrikaans are spoken by many more people at home than English. English has the advantage of being the international language of commerce and politics. But have we ever asked ourselves why Chinese and Japanese political leaders insist on using their indigenous languages? They talk through interpreters, although they understand and speak English very well. They are asserting their sovereignty as nations that are proud of their heritage. What about us?
7. Second, our education authorities have ignored the basic principles of learning in creating a post-apartheid framework for the choice language of instruction. There is overwhelming evidence that learning through the first language or mother tongue helps to anchor learning in the child's immediate environment: family, community and everyday interactions. Children, who are taught in the first few years in their mother tongue while other languages are introduced as subjects, tend to become more proficient in all languages. It provides the anchor for better and deeper learning by linking it to everyday life and one's own identity.
8. Few people would advocate for mother tongue instruction the way up the education tree, given the underdeveloped nature many of our indigenous languages. But recent educational practice has created a tragic situation in which most teachers and pupils in poor schools do not have adequate command of any of the 11 official languages to be able to function well in society. The performance of our primary school children in numeracy and literacy is in many ways a result of a misguided language policy implementation. The World Economic Forum's 2008 Competitiveness Report places us 132nd out of 134 countries in maths and science. Our own systematic evaluation shows that, in 2007, numeracy levels among grade 3 pupils were 36%, while only 15% passed both numeracy and literacy tests.
9. Third, there is the misuse of democracy in implementing our language of instruction policy. Why put poor, illiterate parents in the invidious position of making a decision of such paramount importance without giving them all the available educational facts about the risks and opportunities of each choice? It is not surprising that parents of children in a rural North West or Limpopo school would opt for English or Afrikaans as preferred mediums of instruction in preschool. After all, they can see that the successful people are the ones who speak those languages, so why would they not want their children to join this path to success?
10. What is missing in the choices put to parents is a discussion about the fact that the pathway to proficiency in any language is made much easier by building on the self-

confidence bestowed by pride in one's own language and cultural heritage. Our current approaches alienate children from their cultural roots and make parents' participation in the education of their children difficult. How can they participate in a process in which their primary medium of communication is rendered irrelevant? How can they help their own children learn when the language of instruction becomes a barrier to communication from the first day of school?

11. An even more profound impact of this language policy is the undermining of the parental authority so essential to shaping the values and world-view of children at this stage of their development. Why should children respect parents who only speak a devalued language?
12. South Africa is not alone in undermining indigenous African languages. Professor Pai Obanya, a retired Nigerian education strategist, suggests that education in Africa tends to alienate elites from their roots and undermine their capacity to be effective agents of change to promote sustainable development. "Education is mainly about acculturation, to be learned is to be cultured . . . Starting off an acculturation process with non-first language tends to . . . lead to a situation in which the person could become knowledgeable but not cultured, and developing a feeling of belonging nowhere."
13. Elites in Africa are contributing to this trend by educating their children in private schools, where the teaching of indigenous African languages is minimal. Many see the inability of their children to communicate in their mother tongue as a badge of honour. I never thought I would hear my fellow professionals saying without any touch of irony: "Thabo cannot hear what you are saying. He only speaks English". Or proclaiming proudly that their daughter cannot play with her cousins because she cannot understand "their language".
14. The overall impact on the misguided policy on language of instruction in our education system is leading to a slow death of African languages. Not only are our children not exposed to these languages early on in school, but the quality of language teaching has been substantially degraded. The curriculum requirements for languages set the bar so low that few would fail to get high marks - but they remain largely ignorant of the richness and nuances of the language. Publishers have long given up on African language publications because of weak demand.
15. African language departments in our higher education institutions are dying because of a lack of interest by students and academics. Parliament is hopelessly behind schedule in translation services for Hansard because of a dearth of translators, not to mention the challenge of making court proceedings substantively accessible to indigenous African language speakers, in line with our constitutional commitments. A travesty of justice is being played out in our national life.
16. This language question requires leadership to elevate it to a key public interest issue. We need the government to make an unambiguous commitment to halt the slow death of our indigenous languages. Promoting their use should start with our president and his cabinet. Education authorities should do a better job than to pass the buck to poor communities to make a Hobson's choice. Careful, progressive introduction of other languages, on a firm foundation of mother tongue in the first few years of school, will align learning to the cultural heritage of learners and promote the greater participation of parents in the learning of their children and support for schools.

- 17. Business and other leaders in civil society have a responsibility to keep this rich heritage alive, too. BEE beneficiaries should help to salvage the rich African cultural heritage that is at risk of being lost in the next few generations. Church leaders also have a role to play to ensure that the beauty of our religious idioms and hymns are not lost. I can only hope that we can all wake up before something beautiful dies on our watch. No nation can succeed in building a prosperous democracy without mobilising the heritage, talents and pride of its people.
- 18. *Ubuntu* (humanity to others) and *Batho Pele* (people first) as values of our society can only **thrive** if anchored to a firmer cultural heritage base. To leverage South Africa's rich diversity of languages is key to our success.

Ramphela is a South African academic, businesswoman and medical doctor

Questions:

- 1. According to the passage, what are the three functions of language? (3)
- 2. What does the title suggest? (2)
- 3. What is the author's profession (2)
- 4. The writer says, "If it was not so tragic, it would be comical..." (Para 4). This suggests
 - a. It is funny that the broadcasters cannot pronounce their African names, which are sadly, African.
 - b. It is bad that they anglicise the pronunciation of their names, yet the broadcasters are Africans.
 - c. That the broadcasters cannot pronounce their African names is not only funny but also sad.
 - d. It is sad that some African names are funny when spoken in an English accent. (2)
- 5. Name two instances that seem to suggest that African languages are being actively downgraded or undermined? (4)
- 6. What is the meaning of "a trend" as used in the passage? (2)
- 7. Why are the words, "**hambani kahle**" and "**Tsamayang hantle**"(Para 3), **Imbizos** (Para 5), "**Ubuntu**" and "**Batho Pele**" (Para 18) in italics? (2)
- 8. To what does "it" in, "It provides the anchor..." (Para 7) refer? (2)
- 9. Explain the meanings of the following words /phrases as used in the passage
 - a. Fudged (Para 6) (3)
 - b. *de facto* official language (Para 6) (3)
 - c. thrive (Para 18) (3)
 - d. Alienate elites (para 12) (3)
 - e. Invidious (Para 9) (3)

10. What role can the following sectors play in preserving African languages:
- a. Church Leaders (2)
 - b. BEE (2)
 - c. Education Authorities (2)
11. Paragraphs 16 & 17 are:
- a. A conclusion to an argument
 - b. The writer's argument
 - c. A condition for an argument
 - d. An illustration for an argument (2)
12. Are African languages really dying? Support your answer. (3)
13. If you were to support or oppose mother tongue instruction in schools, what would be your key arguments? Your answer should be a paragraph not exceeding five sentences. (5)

SECTION B

SUMMARY WRITING

50 MARKS

QUESTION: Read the following article on alcohol abuse. In not more than 200 words, summarise the different arguments for and against abstaining from alcohol and explain how each group justifies its stand.

NO AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL IS GOOD FOR YOUR OVERALL HEALTH, GLOBAL STUDY SAYS.

A study reveals alcohol was responsible for nearly 3 million deaths in 2016. Any benefits are offset by higher risks of cancer and other diseases. Claiming there is no 'safe' level does not seem an argument for abstention. If you're one of the third of all humankind who drink alcohol, take note that there's no amount of liquor, wine or beer that is safe for your overall health. This is according to the 2016 Global Alcohol Consumption and Disease Risk analysis.

Alcohol was the leading risk factor for disease and premature death in men and women between the ages of 15 and 49 worldwide in 2016, accounting for nearly one in 10 deaths (The Lancet journal). For all ages, alcohol was associated with 2.8 million deaths that year. Those deaths include alcohol-related cancer and cardiovascular diseases; infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, intentional injury such as violence and self-harm; traffic accidents and other unintentional injuries such as drowning and fires.

"The most surprising finding was that even small amounts of alcohol use contribute to health loss globally," said senior study author Emmanuela Gakidou, a professor at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. "We're used to hearing that a drink or two a day is fine. But the evidence is the evidence."

Not surprisingly due to their large populations, China, India and Russia led the world in the total number of alcohol-related deaths in men and women. The US ranked fifth among men and seventh among women on that list; the UK ranked 21st for men and ninth for women. "This study is a stark reminder of the real, and potentially lethal, dangers that too much alcohol can have on our health and that even the lowest levels of alcohol intake increase our risks," Helen Stokes-Lampard, chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners in the UK, said in a statement.

However, countered David Spiegelhalter, the Winton Professor for the Public Understanding of Risk at the University of Cambridge, "Given the pleasure presumably associated with moderate drinking, claiming there is no 'safe' level does not seem an argument for abstention. "There is no safe level of driving, but governments do not recommend that people avoid driving," Spiegelhalter, said in a statement. "Come to think of it, there is no safe level of living, but nobody would recommend abstention."

Alcohol in breast milk may lead to lower cognition in kids. The Lancet study, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, used data from the 2016 Global Burden of Disease

report, which captured information on premature death and disability from over 300 diseases by sex and age in 195 countries or territories between 1990 and 2016.

In independent comments published alongside the study, King's College London alcohol researcher Robyn Burton called the study "state-of-the-art". Burton wrote, "the conclusions of the study are clear and unambiguous: alcohol is a colossal global health issue," suggesting that policy makers put a priority on programs that focus on decreasing alcohol consumption.

However, the Alcohol Information Partnership, a group comprising eight of the world's biggest liquor companies, said in a statement that "nothing in this study challenges the array of studies suggesting that choosing to drink moderately is associated with a decreased risk of some health issues and a lower risk of death. We advocate sensible drinking by those who choose to drink and support consistent, evidence-based advice, which enables people to make their own informed choices about alcohol".

The Distilled Spirits Council echoed that in its own statement. "Claims in the study disputing the research on potential benefits of moderate consumption do not comport with the body of scientific evidence, including a recent study in the American Heart Association Journal Circulation that found that moderate alcohol consumption is one of 'five low-risk lifestyle-related factors' that could help people live longer.

"The researchers make clear that they are advocating for worldwide abstinence from alcohol. A more reasonable and effective approach is to address issues surrounding alcohol abuse country by country, taking into account the culture, individual alcohol consumption patterns and the marketplace."

For ages 50 and up, cancers were the leading cause of alcohol-related deaths; road injuries, self-harm and tuberculosis were the top causes of death around the world in the 15-to-49 age group. However, in terms of total numbers, Gakidou said, "most deaths from alcohol come from cardiovascular disease and cancers when you look at average consumption by age and sex within countries." Potential benefits outweighed by overall risk.

The results appear to fly in the face of research that indicates moderate drinking-in the United States, that's one drink a day for women and two a day for men-might reduce the risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. That might be true in isolation, Gakidou said, but the picture changes when all risks are considered. "We too found some protective effects for Type 2 diabetes and ischemic heart disease at low levels of alcohol consumption," she said. "But those benefits are outweighed by the overall adverse health impact of alcohol, even at moderate levels".

Jeremy Pearson, associate medical director at the British Heart Foundation, agreed, saying in a statement, "While there may be a slight benefit to heart and circulatory health from modest drinking, many studies have shown that the overall health risks of drinking alcohol outweigh any benefits." Even one drink a day could be shortening your life expectancy.

University of Cambridge epidemiologist Steven Bell co-authored a separate study published in The Lancet that found drinking is beneficial in lowering the risk for heart attack. However, that study's big takeaway was that even one drink a day could shorten life expectancy; long-

term reduction in alcohol use added one to two years to life expectancy at age 40. He points out that his study looked only at drinkers, but the new research compared drinkers to non-drinkers in assessing risk and is one of the first to look at data from low- and middle-income countries.

"Based on these findings," Bell said, "at no point ... is there a level of consumption that appears to lower the overall risk of developing any of the wide array of diseases investigated in comparison to non-drinking.

"The take-home message being that people shouldn't drink under the belief that it will lower their risk of disease," he said, "and those of us who opt to drink should minimize our intake if we wish to prolong our life and well-being."

Adapted from: Sandee LaMotte. CNN August 24, 2018