

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

FIRST SEMESTER MAIN EXAMINATION, DECEMBER 2015

TITLE OF PAPER: ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP)

COURSE CODE: ACS 111 / ACS 102

TIME ALLOWED: 3 (THREE HOURS)

- INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Write the name of your Faculty and Programme on the cover of your answer booklet.
 2. Answer ALL questions.

TOTAL MARKS: 100

This paper consists of 8 pages, the cover page included

THIS EXAMINATION PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE INVIGILATOR.

Question 1: Reading Comprehension: City People Now**50 marks**

The following article from the *The Internationalist* describes the lives of two immigrants to the city of Nairobi. Read through the article and answer the questions that follow.

Fred Ogada

1. "My people, the people of Kakamega, those have a small *shamba**, but it is not sufficient to hold life there. So if I can be a man in Kakamega, what I do, I am leaving the woman there and come seeking a job in town. Sometimes, if you get a good job, then you will be calling her to come and visit you in Nairobi, or if you have a holiday, you can go home yourself, wouldn't you? You see, we have two seasons there in Kakamega, where my mother is. She is practising cultivation and crop rotation. But the soil is somehow exhausted out. The *shamba* can still grow food, but not money to buy clothes and school fees and all those other things that are necessary. So for those ones, the men must go to towns to get jobs."
2. Fred Ogada is 19. He comes from a district in Western Kenya which is among the most densely-populated rural areas anywhere in Africa. **There is nothing to say to Fred** about urban drift, about urban unemployment, about the homespun values of life on the *shamba*. Like most Maragoli people, he knows it already. It is an everyday fact of life that all the able-bodied Maragoli men go to town. "If I lose my work, if that certain Mzungu† who jobs me goes away, I am finished. In fact, I am completely stranded."
3. Officially, Fred is not a servant or houseboy in the inimitable colonial phrase. He is still at school. His father, then a domestic servant himself, summoned him to Nairobi to finish his secondary education *on the strength of* the \$50 a month he earned, but *took off* and left him one day alone and penniless in their cubbyhole of a room.
4. Fred manages now because 'that certain Mzungu' kept him on, pays his school fees and gives him enough money for the week's bus fares to school, paraffin for his stove, ugali (maize meal), tea, milk, and sometimes a few eggs. In return, he does as much cleaning and gardening in his evenings and weekends as he can fit in around his studies. The arrangement is certainly paternalistic, and even exploitative. But for Fred it is everything. It keeps alive his dream of doing his Form V, of going to college, of

becoming a teacher, of having a future. His constant anxiety is that it will all evaporate.

5. If for his father Ismaili, the lure of Nairobi was employment, for Fred it was the chance of education. Fred is a 'repeater'. "In 1975 my father bought a second *shamba* for that other mama he married, that one he took in 1967 who is a young one. So in 1975 there was no money for my school fees. So I stayed at home and helped my mother with the digging, and made some slight study because I might yet go to school again."
6. In 1977, Fred's chance came. His father had his Nairobi job and there was money for school fees, but in Kakamega government school, he was not allowed to 'repeat' Form III, only enter Form IV where he was sure he would fail. "Here in Nairobi there are many schools and you can get a chance in any class you want." At the private school where Fred is now, the fees are just about the same as the government one: \$120 a year. It may not be much, but without support from somewhere, Fred could not hope to raise it. However, whether it will buy him that **magic step up the educational ladder** is another matter. "You see, there are those cheaters, those ones who are bribing. How shall I pass them, at any rate?"
7. Now that Fred's father has abandoned his first wife and family, Fred is the senior male, a responsibility that will *weigh heavily* in future. His mother, his older sister and three younger brothers and another girl are all still back at home. "That *shamba* where my mother practises cultivation is quite big; in fact, it is four hectares, which is one of the largest in that district. My grandfather was a big man, and he worked hard. He even had a machine for grinding maize."
8. But the family's attempts to build a rural business have lapsed into rusty, *broken-down* failure. Fred's father has spent his life as a servant in town, going back and forth from city to countryside, from one wife and family to the other. Fred's own inks with his rural background are likely to be even weaker, for his mother encourages him by letter not to come home in the holidays but to stay and "see best how I may succeed in examinations". He already feels out of touch.
9. "When I go home I find that I appear to be forgetting the traditional activities. My friends like to do things that I don't remember. And if they have a headache or some pain, they take some roots of a certain tree and crush it in a cup and drink it. Myself I do oppose such roots, I can only be cured if I have some tablets." Fred is now an

urbanite. "I like being here in Nairobi better than at home, it is somehow nice. I like the city for the time being."

Questions

1. When the writer says "there is nothing to say to Fred", (Par. 2) she means.....
 - A. Fred will not listen to others.
 - B. Fred realizes the problems.
 - C. Fred just follows other men.
 - D. she finds it difficult to talk to Fred.

[3 marks]

2. Fred's attitude towards the Mzungu is one of....
 - A. dislike because the Mzungu is exploiting him.
 - B. gratitude because he is helping him.
 - C. resentment because he looks down on him
 - D. a mixture of the above.

[3 marks]

3. Fred is anxious mainly because...
 - A. he does not have enough money.
 - B. his job interferes with his studies.
 - C. he is afraid he will lose his job.
 - D. he fears his father will marry again.

[3 marks]

4. The phrase "magic step up the educational ladder" (Par. 6) suggests
 - A. that Fred thinks that any progress he makes is wonderful.
 - B. that Fred believes only magic can help him to succeed.
 - C. that Fred regards education as a form of magic.
 - D. none of the above.

[3 marks]

5. The main reason why Fred likes the city is that....
 - A. he has access to modern living.
 - B. he has a job there.
 - C. he can go to school there.
 - D. he feels out of touch with rural life.

[3 marks]

6. From what Fred says, his attitude to life can be best described as.....
- A. generally pessimistic.
 - B. bitter and resentful.
 - C. happy and carefree.
 - D. none of the above.
- [3 marks]
7. The writer of this magazine article uses a number of informal or colloquial expressions. What do the following expressions in italics mean?
- a) He was going to finish his secondary education *on the strength of* the \$50 a month his father earned. (Par. 3)
 - b) His father *took off*. (Par. 3)
 - c) This responsibility will *weigh heavily* in future. (Par. 7)
 - d) The family's effort to build a business ended in *broken-down* failure. (Par. 8)
- [12 marks]
8. What attracted different people to the city? [4 marks]
9. In about 3 sentences, explain why and how the absence of Fred's father has affected the family. [9 marks]
10. Do you think Ismaili still loves his senior wife? Justify your answer. [3 marks]
11. What is the writer's attitude towards Fred's father's actions? [4 marks]

Question 2: Summary

50 marks

Read the following passage on plagiarism and in two paragraphs (about 200 words), summarise the reasons why individuals plagiarise, and state how this practice can be curbed.

Plagiarism is just like stealing

If words don't come easy, some simply filch them.

At the age of 14, Milkota was too old to be in Std. 2. But in the mid to late 1970s, it wasn't uncommon to have teenagers in the first grade.

Apart from his age, another remarkable thing about Milkota was that his fists were as big as sledgehammers, and his arms as thick as pillars – at least in the minds of the younger classmates. And he used his fists quite liberally. It was therefore advisable to be in his good books. But to be in his good books also meant that in class, you had to allow him to copy with impunity. Nothing could be more galling.

My friend Cosmas Gumbi, who sat next to Milkota, told me that he was going to tell our class teacher that he was tired of Milkota copying from him by force. Having been on the receiving end of Milkota's ferocious punches on more than one occasion, I advised Cosmas against it.

Cosmas respected my counsel. But he had another card up his sleeve: when we

wrote a test one day, he made a point of writing all the wrong answers in his book, which the ignorant and lazy Milkota copied with alacrity. When the teacher announced the test results a few days later, Milkota and Cosmas were the laughing stock, as they had each scored zero out of 10. After school, Cosmas got a few claps from Milkota, who wanted to know how he had managed to get all the answers wrong.

In case you were wondering, in those days it wasn't kosher to tell parents about the school bully. Some fathers would eat you for breakfast for allowing yourself to be humiliated by another boy.

The story of Milkota came back to me with blinding clarity this week when I found myself participating in a debate held at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) about plagiarism at our universities. I was shocked to learn that plagiarism was so prevalent at universities that the DUT had decided to draw up its own policy on

plagiarism, which is compulsory reading for both lecturers and students.

Bookmarks, which feature key points of the university's plagiarism policy, have also been developed. They are circulated freely on campus, as a reminder to students.

During the debate, it emerged that plagiarism is not a straightforward phenomenon – there are shades of grey in the minds of many students and teachers as to what constitutes plagiarism. One of the teachers said that when some students were confronted with this charge, they did acknowledge that they had culled material from various sources. The students claim that their dilemma is that the authors of original, recognised texts “put it so well and so authoritatively” that it would be futile to change it – and undermine the original texts!

It's an infantile argument, I know. But what comes across, in this instance, is that plagiarism is accidental, a result of ignorance and innocence. Therefore, the challenge lies with lecturers to empower their students with the necessary skills to take chunks of information and synthesise them – in their own style and voice.

Acknowledging the original sources is only the beginning. The point of writing something is to add your unique voice, your authoritative deduction or conclusion from what you have read from the original sources. When we enter a learning academy we are there not only to learn, but also to try to challenge and debunk some accepted theories.

There is another level of plagiarism, which I can call plagiarism by arrogance. It's when writers consciously and deliberately steal huge chunks from a text and put their own name on it, in the hope that they will never be caught out. Some of the culprits are, sadly, professional writers and journalists. Darrel Bristow-Bovey, once a columnist for a number of newspapers, including *The Sunday Independent*, and Cynthia Vongai, one-time editor of South Africa's *Elle Magazine*, are just two of many literary miscreants who were caught out after stealing chunks of others people's work. They both had the audacity to claim these literary nuggets as their own creation.

The problem is that many perceive plagiarism as an abstract academic construct, something far removed from their daily lives. In fact, plagiarism is stealing. If a person who works for this newspaper were to take a story, word for word, paragraph for paragraph, from an

opposition newspaper, that would be sheer theft. If the misdemeanour were discovered, he or she would not only lose credibility as a journalist, but this paper and the entire print media, by implication, would be tarred with the same brush.

If you steal, as Kader Asmal pointed out at the same conference that I attended, you go to prison. Students who resort to plagiarism lose marks or they get disqualified from writing exams. At the DUT one student, after receiving a series of warnings for instances of plagiarism, received a zero mark for his dissertation, and is prohibited from registering at the university for any qualification for a period of five years. His academic record contains details of these infractions.

Another more famous case of plagiarism relates one Chippy Shaik, who was stripped of his doctorate from the University of KwaZulu Natal in 2008. Earlier newspaper reports had pointed out that “more than two-thirds” of his PhD in Mechanical Engineering had been plagiarised. Shaik has repeatedly denied any allegations of plagiarism – but there you have it, he has been stripped of the degree. Shaik is on record as saying he will challenge the university’s decision.

The reality is that plagiarism does not stop at university level – it takes a more

sophisticated form and permeates an individual’s professional conduct because dishonor, like a bad virus, has the tendency to replicate itself.

Plagiarists are merely sophisticated thieves who should be outed at every turn. Instead of expending their energy creating new knowledge and coming up with new solutions to problems that present themselves at every turn, they use their guile to plunder and rape other people’s creations.

I don’t know where Milkota is now, but it wouldn’t surprise me if he turned out to be a thief or, better still, a car hijacker, because he stole our words and ideas without batting an eyelid and threatened us with violence if we told.

Adapted from www.timeslive.co.za

With acknowledgements to Fred Khumalo and *Sunday Times* Sept 12, 2009.