UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS

FIRST SEMESTER MAIN EXAMINATION

DECEMBER, 2017

TOTAL MARKS: 100

TITLE OF PAPER: ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS
ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES (EAP)

COURSE CODE: ACS 111 /102

TIME ALLOWED: 2 (TWO) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

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

This examination paper contains 9 pages including the cover sheet.

DO NOT OPEN UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR

SECTION A : Reading Comprehension **50 marks**

Answer ALL questions.

Read through the following passage and then answer the questions that follow.

WHEN 'BLACK TAX' BECOMES A GUILT TRIP

23 December 2016- By Karabo Disetlhe-Mtshayelo

1. Most of us are familiar with the concept of "black tax", but for those who are not, it is basically the notion of family or community members who feel entitled to being paid back by monetary means for all the years they invested in their children. Be it education, clothing, or even the R5 coin one carried as pocket money to school, the reality is that some families who were instrumental in one's upbringing may feel the need to be "paid back" — especially if the recepient of their **"investments"** is working and earning what is perceived to be a decent salary.

2. Although this practice has been happening for centuries, the truth is that it has been pretty much a hush-hush affair and swept under the carpet — a sort of tacit agreement between an individual and their family's bank accounts. That is, until Togolese football player Emmanuel Adebayor finally decided to break his silence in 2015, and went public with how he had been suffering from black tax for years, becoming one of the only celebrities who have ever spoken up about the black tax phenomenon. Adebayor accused his family of milking him dry, and spoke up about how keeping up with their demands had depleted him.

3. While many people could relate to Adebayor's tale of exploitation, there were a few who were **on the fence** about the matter of paying your family back: many felt that it was simply the right thing to do, if only as a sign of gratitude. But is it really? While anyone would be irked by the notion of family members blatantly demanding money or seeing one as a cash cow, could there be sneakier ways that our families use to exploit us?

4. Comedian Celeste Ntuli, who has a stand-up show appropriately called *Black Tax*, seems to think so, and says that the concept of black tax is twofold. "Look, there is nothing wrong with helping your family out, especially if you come from a disadvantaged background," she says. "But some family members, or even the community at large, can take it a bit too far." Ntuli says that the festive season can be particularly tough. "You would find that people would automatically feel that because you came home for the holidays from Johannesburg, that you have to give them some sort of payment because you are 'making it big' in Johannesburg. My question is always, 'Why don't YOU come to Johannesburg to make it big yourself?' It just doesn't make sense," she says.

5. Ntuli emphasises that some situations warrant taking a closer look and evaluating if you are actually helping family members or enabling them. "You would find that your sister expects you to fork out money because she needs help with her three children; that she is

unemployed and that the children's father is not around. Well, how did she get to the third child without realising that her formula was not a winning one? Why does she go around having children, only to expect other people to pay for her **baggage**? "

6. Ntuli says this type of situation is one where instead of helping one is, in fact, enabling the person. "Some people sit back and think that it is okay. What they need to do is get up and start making means to live, and to get themselves out of their current situations. I feel that black tax allows some people to be lazy."

7. Ntuli says that some black tax can be **inconspicuous**, and that one may not even see it. "You would find everyone is seemingly so happy to see you when you go home for the holidays, that is, until that dreaded 'Can I have R20 for cool drink?' plea comes up. My answer is always no. Instead, what I can give you is advice on how to get yourself out of the situation you are currently in, so you can afford your own cool drink. Throwing money… is simply **exacerbating the situation**," she says. One really has to take a step back and evaluate if you are being manipulated, or if there is a genuine need that warrants you helping out.

8. Thirty-two-year-old single mother Tshepiso Shongwe, who is a Customer Relations Consultant at one of the major banks, says she can relate to the inconspicuous black tax phenomena, and that whenever she goes home to the Free State, she must always ensure that she has money on her. "My home is down the street from the main road where I usually get off the taxi from Johannesburg, and I promise you, I can easily spend R100 on my way to my house. It's almost like people have a certain sense of **entitlement** about being given money or gifts if you do not stay in the same area as them, because they tend to have the misconception that wherever you are, you are striking it rich!" she says.

9. Shongwe says black tax can be based on how you look and what you seemingly can afford, which can make you the victim of a feeding frenzy. She says she even dreads going home for the holidays this year. "Things really got crazy when I managed to buy myself a modest car last year. People start automatically assuming that you have money, and start checking out what clothes you are wearing and how well kept your weave is," she says. "Even the mere fact that you have a weave automatically makes you Oprah Winfrey in their eyes. It almost makes me not want to go home **this December**."

10. Shongwe says family members are no better, and tend to have expectations about being bought certain things. "I mean I have no problem with buying groceries when I'm home, and helping my parents out where I can, but it really does get irritating when even my grown cousins' kids come up to me and ask me to buy them a certain brand of shoes, or the latest play station game. "Where am I meant to get the money? It's just not fair! Worse, if you tell them that you don't have money, you will always get that sceptical look of disapproval." Shongwe says people forget she has her own responsibilities in Johannesburg. "I have bills to pay, I have rent, accounts, and a life to lead over there," she notes.

11. Social worker Khumoetsile Tsimane says that when it comes to black tax, it can be a **double-edged sword**. "One really has to take a step back and evaluate if you are being manipulated, or if there is a genuine need that warrants you helping out," she says. Tsimane says it is important to differentiate between needs and wants. "You should never really feel an obligation to pay for certain things if there is no genuine need for it.

Helping one's elderly parents who do not have capacity to fend for themselves speaks to one's humanity, but it should never be looked at as an obligation, or worse, a debt," she says. "When you help your parents out financially, do so because firstly you can afford to, and because it feels right. Do not ever allow yourself to be manipulated into it."

12. When it comes to extended family members, Tsimane says this is where one should tread carefully. "It goes back to the needs and wants thing we spoke about earlier. Are there dire situations that warrant you stepping in to offer help? Absolutely. But make sure that it is help you are offering, and not spoon feeding," she says.

13. "Do not allow yourself to be the victim. Instead, offer them practical solutions to their problems, like offering to help them draft a professional CV to start job hunting, for example. But do not ever buy into the manipulation that can be black tax. Remember, you can buy them fish to eat for today, but teaching them to fish will see them being able to feed themselves for a lifetime."

https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/lifestyle/2016-12-23-when-black-tax-becomes-a-guilt-trip/

QUESTIONS

1. Choose either **True** or **False** for questions (a) - (e) below: [10]

   a. Karabo Disetlhe-Mtshayelo is a victim of black tax.
   b. Karabo Disetlhe-Mtshayelo is a journalist.
   c. Emmanuel Adebayor paid' black tax' for a year.
   d. As a result of 'paying back the money', Emmanuel has become very poor.
   e. Tshepiso Shongwe has been a Customer Relations Consultant for thirty two years.

2. What does 'black tax' mean? [3]

3. **'This December'** (Par. 9) refers to which December? [2]

4. Why is **'investments'** (Par. 1) in quotation marks? [3]

5. Do you think the title of the passage is suitable? Justify your answer. [3]

5

6. Give the meaning of the following words/phrases as used in the passage:

   a. On the fence (Par. 3)
   b. Baggage (Par. 5)
   c. Inconspicuous (Par. 7)
   d. Exacerbating the situation (Par. 7)
   e. Entitlement (Par. 8) [15]

7. Why does the writer feel black tax is a "double-edged sword" (Par. 11? [4]

8. In about two (2) sentences, explain the one sentiment that the speakers in the passage seem to agree on with regards to black tax? [5]

9. Briefly explain your feelings about 'black tax". [5]

SECTION B: Summary **50 marks**

In the following passage Piri and Alison represent different views about lobola in present day society. In about two hundred (200) words, summarise their views, bringing about the author's argument regarding this practice.

LOBOLA AND THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

November 6, 2013 by Nzenza Sekai

In the old days, long before the white man came, lobola or brideprice was paid by use of a hoe. Smelted iron was used to make hoes, axes and spears. When a man failed to present a hoe as lobola in marriage, he asked to stay and work for his bride until the father-in-law was satisfied with his labour. They had a similar system in Biblical days. Jacob worked seven years for Rachel. Then Laban, his father in-law, cheated and gave him Leah instead because it was not proper for a younger sister to get married before the older sister did. Because Jacob loved Rachel so much, he worked for another seven years. In the end, it was not so much the years that Jacob worked as lobola for his wives; it was the relationship developed and sustained between Jacob and Laban that sealed the families together forever.

Back in the village, my grandmother said one day, we would all get married and bring many cattle to fill the whole kraal. Since there were more than 15 young girls in the compound, several cattle pens were going to be built to accommodate all the cattle. There was no marriage without cattle. The same cattle would serve as lobola for our brothers and cousins. It was an exchange of cows in marriage from one family to the other, back and forth, depending on the number of daughters and sons. That way, wealth was nicely redistributed in the community.

Our grandmother could see each one of us virgins being picked one by one by the local boys whose parents and grandparents she already knew. In those days, we married among ourselves, as long as the totems were different and we were not related.

Sometimes my grandmother and my aunts compared the fatness of our bodies down at the river after a swim and during play. The fatter and lighter skinned you were, the more cattle you would fetch. Among us, the village virgins, there were a few of my cousins including

Piri, my beautiful cousin Elizabeth born in South Africa and the very light skinned Martha with freckles.

Being a very dark and skinny girl, they said I was not likely to fetch a man with good cows. Besides, my skills in the fields, around the kitchen, brewing beer, grinding or pounding, were nothing remarkable. In comparison to my sisters Charity, Constance and the others, I was weak. I was therefore aware, from a very young age, that I would be the last to be picked by any prospective husband looking for beauty and skill as attributes to a good wife.

Meanwhile my mother was not so concerned about lobola that would be generated from her eight daughters. She cared for one thing only: skills from education. Once education was achieved, marriage would look after itself. So the daughters of my mother left the village for boarding school while Piri, Elizabeth, Martha and all the cousins stayed and married the village boys from across the river or behind the mountains. Plenty of cows were paid for Piri's first marriage. It failed. Then she met Misheki. It was real love with no money. Misheki paid one cow and a few dollars for lobola. That marriage failed too, when they moved to Harare and could not make ends meet.

Because quite a bit of lobola was paid for her, Piri expects all our young nieces to bring in plenty of cattle. I support her in this regard. Why should a man simply take a daughter and live with her, make her cook for him like a wife when nothing has been paid to acknowledge that she comes from people? Like the way this young man called Philemon has done to our niece Shamiso, our brother Lovemore's daughter. She left the village nine months ago having been promised work in Glen Norah B. Her mother did not hear from her at all. After a couple of trips to Glen Norah B and asking relatives and friends, we managed to track Shamiso down and found her living in a one-room rented house in Glen View with Philemon. In this one room everything was so well packed and organised.

You wonder how a double bed, fridge, stove, wardrobe, chest of drawers with pots, pans, plates, television with DVD, music system, primus stove, a hot plate, dishes, shoes, and even a bicycle can fit so nicely in one room. Everything is incredibly tidy. At the entrance, sitting on a plastic stool, is Shamiso's boyfriend, Philemon. We call him boyfriend because Philemon and his people have not come to our family to tell us that he is living as man and wife with our daughter.

Shamiso sits there, twiddling her fingers. Her hair is short and nicely combed. There is no hiding that she is at least six months pregnant. So, it took her only a couple of months or a bit to find a man, move in, and get pregnant? We look at Philemon and wonder: Why make such a young girl pregnant? Shamiso is 19, with only two subjects passed at Form Five. Piri says she will take Shamiso back to the village until Philemon is ready to pay lobola for her. Philemon begs that Shamiso stays and he would bring her to the village when he is ready to pay lobola. He only needs a month or a bit more to get all his lobola money ready. Philemon sells airtime cards and anything else like fruit, windscreen wipers, phone chargers and other gadgets.

"You have already used her without paying a cent. This girl was a flower. But look at her now; she is big. And if today you say, go away, what will she do except return home? If you really want her, you will follow us back to the village and pay the lobola." Piri said. Piri ordered Shamiso to pack her clothes in the suitcase on top of the wardrobe. Shamiso did as she was told, without saying a word. We left with Shamiso, leaving Philemon almost in tears. In his sad eyes, I saw something passionate, a certain longing and fear of loss. Maybe love still exists.

Three weeks ago, when we were driving to the village, I repeated Shamiso's story to my friend Alison, the one visiting from Australia. And I was laughing at how Piri challenged Philemon to do what is right by our family. Alison then asked what was so funny about advocating for a backward system like lobola. "Why treat women like commodities?" I explained that the function of lobola was an age old tradition still operating in at least seven Southern African countries and also in East Africa. It was part of our identity and tradition. But Alison argued that Piri and I were simply perpetuating the exploitation of women using the guise of tradition.

"Why do you want to make your niece the property of her husband? She is not a child-bearing machine with little control over her reproductive organs. Your niece should have the right to say no to lobola." Then Alison gave me this look that seemed to say that I should know better. Or perhaps the look was asking why I was letting down the women's cause like this. Did I not march with her, many years ago when I was a student on International Women's day back in Australia demanding the rights of women to make choices about their lives and their bodies?

There was no resolution to the argument with Alison. And I knew that there were many of my sisters out there who share her views. But, because we went to school, differences in opinion did not mean that we stopped being African.

Surprisingly, Philemon sent a message through a go between, that he wanted to pay lobola for Shamiso. In my mother's days, every woman was expected to bring a skill to her husband's family. I looked at Shamiso, sitting against the wall, playing with her phone and I whispered to Piri, "What skills do you think our niece is bringing to Philemon's family?" Piri laughed quietly and said, "ability to text on the phone and send rude jokes to people as quickly as possible?"

"Now that you have married her, do not beat her up because you have paid something for her. This girl is not a drum to be beaten. Shamiso, if he beats you, report the matter to the police and he will be arrested," Piri said laughing but clearly stating that domestic violence was not acceptable in any marriage, lobola or no lobola.

In the end, there is nothing wrong with the concept of lobola. The practice only becomes bad when it is abused for commercial purposes or when men treat women badly because lobola was paid for them. If the guy has no money, as in the case of Philemon, he should still respect the family enough and pay something. Our elders used to say, the son in law is like a fig tree, you keep harvesting.

http://www.herald.co.zw/lobola-and-the-meaning-of-marriage/