

# Tutorial letter 201/2/2017

**Genres in Language and Literature:  
Theory, Style and Poetics**

**ENG2602**

**Semesters 2**

**Department of English Studies**

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Persuasive Prose or Conversational Analysis

BAR CODE

Dear Student

## PRE-EXAMINATION INFORMATION

The examination will be a two hour paper. You will be expected to write two essays. The paper will be divided into two sections: a section on language and a section on literature. You will be expected to answer one question per section.

**NB: Please manage your time carefully. You would have to write one essay per hour. Keep this in mind when preparing for the exam.**

The section on language will have a question on Persuasive Prose and a question on Conversational Analysis. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

The section on literature will have a question on Prose Fiction, a question on Poetry, and a question on Drama. You will be expected to answer one of these questions.

Even though you will have a choice in the exam, we suggest that you do at least some preparation on all the sections, and perhaps prepare at least two units per section in detail. If you only prepare one unit per section there is a risk that you could find the question on the unit that you prepared to be difficult. If, on the other hand, you are prepared to answer a question on more than one unit per section, you would be able to switch to answering on a different unit.

In each unit, you can expect the following types of questions:

Persuasive Prose: you will be given a short passage from an unseen persuasive text (such as a newspaper article, an advertisement, a political speech, etc.). You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage: this means that you will have to outline briefly **what** the passage is about, **why** it has been written, and **who** the target audience is, and then to explain in detail **how** it has been written. Your essay should focus on **how** the author **uses language** to persuade his/her target audience.

Conversation: you will be given an excerpt from a real life conversation which you will be asked to analyse according to specific aspects and features of Conversational Analysis. Refer to the 'Conversational analysis additional resource' document under the 'Additional Resources' tab on myUnisa for a survey of the key facets of this section.

Prose fiction: you will be given a short passage from an unseen prose fiction text. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the passage, discussing in detail how it uses language, for example, to portray character, shape, tone and setting, for thematic and symbolic effects, etc.

Poetry: you will be given a poem from the list of poems provided under 'Additional Resources' on myUnisa. You will have to write an essay in which you analyse the poem, discussing in detail how it uses language to present and explore its main themes and concerns.

Drama: you will be given an excerpt from an unseen play. You will be expected to write an essay in which you analyse how the passage uses language, for example, to form imagery or reveal the qualities of the characters in relation to the passage's main themes and concerns.

**Use the following additional guidelines to help you prepare for the examination:**

- Read your study guide and the prescribed book. Make notes of the important features of each genre of writing.
- Read as widely as possible, including newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, poems and dramas. Write notes on the texts that you read, outlining the way they use the strategies that are appropriate to each genre.
- Pay attention to general features of language use, such as point of view, register, diction, tone, irony and figures of speech as you analyse extracts from texts in preparation for the examination.
- Write sample essays in which you examine the way each extract in the reader uses the resources of its genre.
- Remember to time yourself as you write these sample essays since you will be expected to write two essays in two hours in the exam.

Good luck with your preparations!

**RESPONSES TO ASSIGNMENT 01**

**QUESTION 1: PERSUASIVE PROSE**

The assignment consisted of **TWO** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1 or Question 2. If you had chosen Question 1, you would have been required to answer a question on Persuasive Prose.

For this assignment you were referred to some chapters in the prescribed book to enhance your response to the question. How this was applied varied from student to student.

You were asked to respond in a well-constructed essay, which means that the traditional essay structure and academic register was expected. Although there were bullet points to guide you, no subheadings should have been used. Cohesion and correct grammatical use of language also play an important role in self-expression, therefore while content is the essence – as it reflects your understanding of the given topic, an equal mark will also be allocated for language usage. (Please refer to the Assessment Criteria in Tutorial Letter 101 for further information.)

The text you had to respond to has numerous language and stylistic effects that could have been discussed, while you were not expected to discuss them all. You were expected to discuss enough to convince the marker of your mastery in critical analysis. What follows below are guidelines on what could have been part of your response, and is therefore not an exhaustive response.

This was your question:

Before attempting the assignment below, please read Study Unit Three in your study guide carefully and complete the activities as you proceed. This should be accompanied by a study of the relevant chapters in the prescribed book by Goatly.

Study the advertisement on the link below

<http://healthblog.ncpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/flu-graphic-larger.jpg>

Using skills that you have developed in Study Unit Three, write an essay in which you critically analyse the advertisement. Your response should reveal the following:

The type of the text it is (with relevant substantiation)

What it is about.

Who the target audience is.

Purpose and Effect of the text. (Why?)

How visual and textual features have been used in a persuasive manner. (Consider syntax, diction, figures of speech and other relevant stylistic effects, e.g. font /pictures)

(NCPA. 2010. "Flu Shots on Sale." <http://healthblog.ncpa.org/flu-shots-on-sale/> Accessed: 19 April 2016.)

Below is a sample response that flows uninterrupted by subheadings as you were also expected to write.

Flu shots from Doctors Express are being advertised in the USA with families as the target audience, as shall be revealed in the discussion below. The main aim is to convince people to go and get these shots from a specific service provider. The advertiser has used different methods of persuasion, among which one finds diction, visual effects, language and stylistic features. These methods will be elaborated on in the critical analysis that follows.

The style adopted in this text alerts the reader to its genre, which is an advertisement. There are more phrases than properly constructed full sentences, which is a common feature of advertisements where information should be brief to enable the reader to absorb as much as possible in a short space. It is also placed in a manner that allows for reading to begin anywhere and still make sense of what is being advertised. The ultimate aim is to get the reader not only to get flu shots but from a specific service provider, Doctors Express, who claim that their "goal is to keep you healthy" meaning that your health is their priority. This can make the reader feel special and treasured which would make him/her not want to go to any other service provider but Doctors Express.

A conversational tone is adopted through the pronoun, "you", that has been used repeatedly to make the reader feel that s/he is being addressed directly. This holds the reader's interest as a face to face conversation would. It also makes the reader feel special as though the service is custom-designed to suit his/her needs, as they already indicate that their goal is to keep the reader healthy.

The picture of a smiling family does not only draw one's attention to the advertisement because it stands out (since it is not text), but it also clarifies the targeted audience. The smiles on the family members' faces are a sign of good health, since people hardly ever smile if something is wrong with their health. They are there to convince the reader that if they were to go for the administering of these shots they would also be healthy and cheerful like the family in the picture. For anyone who may have thought the shots are not suitable for children, this picture sets the mind at rest that the shots are safe to use on the whole family, otherwise they would have shown the adults only.

The advertisement is not aimed at any family anywhere in the world, however. It is for American families as suggested by the dollar sign next to the price of the Flu Shots. The fact that the advertisement reflects an expiry date of December while marketing Flu Shots, also alludes to a northern hemisphere setting, where they have winter during December, and thus need to fortify themselves before the time of bitterly cold weather. The dollar sign helps to specify the country since that is where that currency is used.

The product being advertised is announced in a bold font right at the top. The boldness of the font and the placing at the top ensures that the readers' attention stays on the advertisement after the attention-seeking picture. The bold font is used numerous times, shifting from drawing attention, past holding interest, to creating a desire for the product. The picture already revealed that families are targeted, however the advertisement still continues to spell out the directive to "Keep the Whole Family Healthy!" The propositional attitude in this command could make the reader feel as if s/he has no say in the matter and has to do as instructed. The desire for the product is elicited by the word, "Whole", which, as already discussed, shows that the product is meant for all family members. This means that the family can go together and have the shots administered at one place without having to drive around town to accommodate other family members. The word "Keep" also implies permanence, which can be interpreted to mean that once you have had this shot, you will not need to return for more health products.

The directive follows: “Now Available!” This prompts the reader to seek the product because of the immediacy in “Now”. Modern day people tend to want instant gratification and by using this phrase the advertiser boldly entices the reader to come and get the shot, because there will be no waiting for a shot that still has to be ordered. The initial statement and directive both end with exclamation marks to compel the reader to act, as exclamation marks are associated with urgency and a command respectively. The exclamation mark is a sign that is used to alert people to something important that has to be noted and works well in this case as in both instances the reader has to note the important information that is being communicated. By placing it on the last point along the left, declaring “No appointment Necessary!”, the writer has created a visual effect through the diagonal line that can be traced from the first exclamation mark to the last. This line connects the crucial information that creates a desire for the product. In the last example, readers would be drawn by the fact that even if they have not made appointments they can still be attended to and will not have to wait, echoing the fact that “Walk-Ins [are] Welcome”, and justifying the diagonal line that connects to “Now Available”. The illusion created by “Now” is that one can be attended to immediately on arrival (even if no appointment has been made).

“Doctors Express” and the number on which the doctors who administer these shots can be reached are also in a bold font, to ensure that the reader does not miss these important details of where the shot are administered and how to contact them to book your appointment (although it is not necessary as discussed earlier), or to make any relevant enquiries. The name of the service providers “Doctors Express” has been repeated three times to ensure that it stays in the mind of the reader and can be remembered when the need arises. This name is also unique in that it promotes their service as an answer to an urgent need. “Express” is associated with fast service, which alludes to the fact that with this service provider, that is the kind of service you should expect. It is also connected to the previously discussed “No appointment Necessary” as it gives an idea that you are immediately attended to since their service is fast. This is all supported by the slogan “Urgent Care When You Need It”; it is related to not needing to make an appointment because you receive care “when you need it” not when you have made an appointment for it. In this way, convenience is reflected positioning the reader to feel that this is a provider who understands consumer needs. “Urgent Care” complements “Express” in the service provider’s name and being part of the slogan, it will also be memorable as it is connected to the name.

The sense of urgency is heightened by the limited time of the special offer. This could make the reader rush to get the shots at this special price before the offer expires. Even the diction, “special”, alludes to a reduced rate which prompts the reader to act quickly. The specific price is also displayed to convince the reader of the reduced rate at which this service is being offered.

A need for the product is created through the application of scare tactics. By using the word, “risk”, the writer instils fear in the reader who does not wish to see the whole family being affected by one person and creates a need to avoid such a situation by taking preventative measures and getting the flu shot. The risk factor is extended beyond the family context by mentioning “school” which means children are exposed to risk during the day. Mentioning “work” means the parents are not immune to this risk and when both parents and children return home from their daily activities, they can infect other family members. By listing these places the reader is positioned to feel that there is no escaping contamination and is thus persuaded to get the flu shots to ensure that they are protected. This also clarifies why the “whole family” is reiterated through text and picture, because the whole family needs to be protected and this can be done by having the flu shots administered.

The list of services that are available reflects convenience and makes the reader feel catered for. The list offers a range that goes beyond flu shots, however since flu is quite common during winter months, it is being used to draw the reader to try their services. On realization that other services are offered there are slim chances of the consumer leaving the place to find other service providers, therefore by offering a range of services under one roof, they are saving time for the busy consumer. Although a list of services has been provided, within it, the advertiser has used “&” repeatedly which gives the impression that there are even more services being offered than would be normal.

The fact that one can receive all these services without appointment makes this service provider an ideal one, as previously discussed. What would make the reader choose this provider over others is the availability of on-site prescriptions, which is another time-saving fact because one does not have to go elsewhere to obtain a prescription for medication available at Doctors Express. The fact that “Most Insurances [are] Accepted” makes it desirable because it increases the likelihood of one’s insurance also being accepted, reducing the strife of finding a provider who does.

The Health Professions emblem has been used next to the service provider’s name as a sign of authenticity. This gives a reader a feeling that these service providers can be trusted because of the assumption that they are registered with the Health Professions Council. Contact details, including the service provider’s web address, add to the provider’s credibility. The web address also reflects accessibility, if one were to decide to go online and look up what kind of establishment they have before physically visiting their rooms. The inclusion of a landline telephone number also proves existence, since such a number can be traced to a building. The long working hours (twelve hours mid-week) are very appealing especially to the working parent who can still find the time after working hours to take his/her family in for their shots. If the time was not available during the week, the family can still go over the weekend because the service provider is open for nine hours.

Through numerous linguistic techniques, textual and visual effects the advertisement has served to convince the reader that Doctors Express has his/her best interest at heart because they offer services that seem to accommodate the reader’s busy lifestyle.

**TOTAL: 100**

Best wishes for the exam!

Lungelwa Phakathi

## **QUESTION 2: CONVERSATION**

Assignment 1 consisted of **TWO** questions. You were required to answer either Question 1 or Question 2. If you had chosen Question 2, you would have been required to answer a question on Conversational Analysis.

Consider the conversation taken from a police interrogation below. Write an essay in which you discuss the features of Conversational Analysis that you can observe in the dialogue. Remember to substantiate any claim that you make with examples from the text.

MacGillivray: When did he lend you this money?  
Wilds: Ah, prior to Hay’s being killed. Ah, probably 4 weeks before.  
MacGillivray: So about a month before he leant you a hundred dollars?  
Wilds: Yes.  
MacGillivray: Did he lend you a hundred dollars or did he give you a hundred dollars?  
Wilds: He leant me a hundred dollars because I had paid him fifty of it back.  
MacGillivray: Why would he lend you a hundred dollars because you paid him back?  
Wilds: No, I’m saying, I’m saying that’s why it was a loan.  
MacGillivray: He leant you a hundred dollars?

Wilds:	Yes.
MacGillivray:	For what?
Wilds:	To buy weed.
MacGillivray:	And you paid him fifty dollars back?
Wilds:	I had spent the money. I didn't go buy the weed, I then cause it was time period I had spent the money, um, so ended up having to pay the money back to him.
MacGillivray:	And you only paid him fifty dollars?
Wilds:	So far I only paid him fifty dollars.

(The View From LL2. 2016. A Follow-Up Post On Cellphone Borrowing, Track Practices, and Wednesdays. <http://viewfromll2.com/> Date of access: 18 March 2016.)

**Your first step in answering this question would be to first determine exactly what the question asks of you.** The question asks you to discuss the features of Conversational Analysis that you can observe in the given dialogue. This is a fairly open-ended question which means that there are various valid ways in which to approach it. As long as you identified and discussed features of Conversational Analysis in the text and presented this discussion in a well-structured essay, you will have met the requirements of the assignment.

**Therefore, your next step would be to work through the relevant sections in your study material to acquaint yourself with the features of Conversational Analysis.** Firstly, you need to work through "Study Unit Six: Conversational analysis – 'real life' dialogue." The study guide would then also refer you to certain sections in Goatly (2000)/Goatly and Hiradhar (2016) as well as Carter *et al's* *Working with texts* (2008) and Mullaney and Stockwell's *Introducing English Language* (2010). (The last title is available as an e-book in the library.)

Working through these prescribed texts, I can identify the following as features of Conversational Analysis:

- The main dimensions of social talk

According to Levey *et al* (2013:78), the three main dimensions of social talk include actions, structure and intersubjective understanding. **Actions** entail how conversations are organised and how turn-taking is managed (Levey *et al*, 2013:78). Mullaney and Stockwell (2010:79) explain that there are different ways in which a change in speaker can take place, with the current speaker selecting the next speaker as the overriding option. Mullaney and Stockwell (2010:81) also make a distinction between a single floor, where only one speaker talk at a time and a collaborative floor, where multiple speakers talk simultaneously. The **structure** of a conversation entails how the organisation of the conversation enables actions to take place. This includes paired actions called adjacency pairs where questions are, for example, paired with answers (Levey *et al*, 2013:79). **Intersubjective understanding** entails how speakers ensure that they understand each other correctly (Levey *et al*, 2013:79).

- Speech acts

According to Levey *et al* (2013:80), an utterance which performs an action is a speech act. Goatly (2000:148) cites Austin and Searle's categorisation of speech acts, which divides speech acts into assertives, directives, commissives and expressives. Carter *et al* (2008:200-201) also makes a distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. In indirect speech acts, the speaker can, for example, utter a directive in a more subtle way by phrasing it as a question.

- Maxims of co-operation

The study guide lists Grice's four maxims of co-operation as the **maxim of quality**, which requires the speaker to only speak what he or she believes to be the truth; the **maxim of quantity**, which requires the speaker to only give the amount of information which is considered to be helpful; the **maxim of relevance**, which requires the speaker to keep his or her utterance relevant to the conversation; and the **maxim of manner**, which requires the speaker to use the clearest and most orderly manner to express his or her utterance (Levey *et al*, 2013:84).

- Implicature

According to Levey *et al* (2013:84-85), speakers often do not say what they mean directly, but convey the message indirectly. In other words, an utterance may have an implicature which is not directly stated.

Once you feel confident that you are familiar with what each of the above features entails, you can proceed to **read through the given text attentively, making note of how the features function in the conversation. This would be your next step**. As I carefully read through the text, I made the following notes:

- The main dimensions of social talk
  - a. Structure  
The conversation consists of a series of question-answer adjacency pairs. MacGillivray is clearly in control of the situation, since he manages turn-taking by asking Wilds questions.
  - b. Intersubjective understanding  
MacGillivray asks various follow-up questions to ensure that he understands Wilds correctly.
- Speech acts  
MacGillivray's speech acts are exclusively directives in the form of questions asked. Wilds, on the other hand, communicates exclusively through assertive speech acts, in the form of statements.
- Maxims of co-operation  
MacGillivray strictly adheres to the maxim of relevance as his questions are consistently directly related to the previous utterance.  
When Wilds says "He lent me a hundred dollars because I had paid him fifty of it back", he flouts the maxim of manner, as it is not clear why the payment of fifty dollars constitutes the transaction as a loan. This then leads to a repair. When Wilds states "I had spent the money. I didn't go buy the weed, I then cause it was time period I had spent the money, um, so ended up having to pay the money back to him", he also flouts the maxim of manner, as it is not clear who the marijuana that he planned to buy was for. It is therefore unclear how the events that he is describing are related.
- Implicature  
Wilds therefore communicates through implicature, since it can be assumed that he was instructed by the person who lent him a hundred dollars to buy marijuana. Since he failed to make the purchase, Wilds had to return the money.

Now that you have established which features of Conversational Analysis can be observed in the excerpt, **you can start planning your essay, which will be the next step in completing this assignment**.

The main argument of your essay would be that the main dimensions of social talk, speech acts, Grice's principles of co-operation and implicature can be observed in the given excerpt. You can substantiate this argument by giving examples of each feature and explaining how each example functions in the conversation.



The essay would then look like this:

**Introduction:** briefly **state the main argument** and **map out the rest of the essay**. In this case, the introduction could look something like this:

Although conversations happen spontaneously, they are still governed by certain rules, although the speakers involved are often unaware of these rules (Carter *et al*, 2008:197). This essay discusses how the main dimensions of social talk, speech acts, Grice's co-operative principles, and implicature function in the given excerpt. Because the excerpt transcribes an interrogation, the power hierarchy becomes evident through the function of these conversational features in the excerpt.

**Paragraph 1: Structure**

- Explain what Levey *et al* (2013) and Mullany and Stockwell (2010) say about the structure of conversations.
- Give examples of how this feature functions in the given excerpt.

**Paragraph 2: Intersubjective understanding**

- Explain what Levey *et al* (2013) say about intersubjective understanding.
- Give examples of how this feature functions in the given excerpt.

**Paragraph 3: Speech acts**

- Explain what Carter *et al* (2008), Levey *et al* (2013) and Goatly (2000) say about speech acts.
- Give examples of how this feature functions in the given excerpt.

**Paragraph 4: Grice's co-operative principles**

- Explain what Levey *et al* (2013) say about Grice's co-operative principles.
- Give examples of how this feature functions in the given excerpt.

**Paragraph 5: Implicature**

- Explain what Levey *et al* (2013) say about implicature.
- Give examples of how this feature functions in the given excerpt.

**Conclusion:** briefly summarize **the features of Conversational Analysis that you have observed in the excerpt**.

For example,

In conclusion, various features of Conversational Analysis can be observed in the given excerpt. MacGillivray clearly occupies a more powerful position than Wilds, since he strictly manages the floor and negotiates meaning in the exchange. MacGillivray adheres to Grice's maxims of co-operation while Wilds flouts the maxim of manner at times. While MacGillivray tries to communicate in the clearest possible way, Wilds is sometimes vague in his response. This conversation therefore clearly conforms to what one would expect from an interrogation situation where there is a hierarchy between speakers.

Remember to give credit to your sources (see Tutorial Letter 301). For the essay planned in this tutorial letter, the bibliography would look like this:

**Bibliography:**

Carter, Ronald, Goddard, Angela, Reah, Danuta, Sanger, Keith, Swift, Nikki. Beard, Adrian (ed.). 2008. *Working with texts: A core introduction to language analysis*. 3rd Ed. London: Routledge.

Levey, David, Ndlangamandla, Clifford, Donaldson, Eileen, Makoe, Pinky, Van Niekerk, Marinus, Dambe, Sira, Kreuiter, Allyson, Zindela, Nomsa. 2013. *Genres in Literature and Language: Theory, Style, Poetics*. Pretoria: University of South Africa. (Only study guide for ENG2602.)

Mullany, Louise, Stockwell, Peter. 2010. *Introducing English language: A Resource book for students*. London: Routledge.

**TOTAL: 100**

Best Wishes for the exam!

Lida Krüger