

Tutorial letter 203/2/2014

APPLIED ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES: FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

ENG2601

Semester 2

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

This Tutorial Letter contains important information
pre-examination information and feedback on
Assignment 01.

BAR CODE

FEEDBACK OF ASSIGNMENT 01

SEMESTER 2

DUE DATE: 3 SEPTEMBER 2014

UNIQUE NUMBER: 730078

Dear students

Congratulations to those who passed Assignment 01 on language features! Regrettably, a common weakness in the essays/assignments that we failed is the tendency to paraphrase. Often, it became evident that you were not developing and using the provided guidelines to write your essays.

Some of you seem to have missed our instruction: to orient yourselves with the persuasive and rhetorical devices, language register and genre as introduced in Units 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the Study Guide. In these Units, emphasis falls on how to cite and lead evidence in order to substantiate assertions. This is why we handsomely rewarded only those essays which have coherent or systematic structures and those with discernible introduction, body and conclusion.

Let us recall what you were instructed to do. You were asked to write an essay of no more than 2 ½ pages (approximately 1000 words) in which you compare and contrast the two extracts in text 3.4 on page 82 of the prescribed textbook, **Working with Texts**, by Carter et al. You should have begun with an overview of the given topic, and then gone on to compare and contrast specific language and stylistic features in both texts. Your explanation of how meaning and purpose are created by writers would have qualitatively benefitted from providing textual evidence.

PLEASE NOTE: Citations from and references to any resources used to compile your essay should have been appropriately acknowledged, in order to avoid plagiarism.

Some of the possible aspects that could have been explored in your essay are indicated in the discussion that follows.

DISCUSSION:

Both extracts are based on descriptions of the executions that took place during the Nazi occupation in 1941. In extract 1, the reader's curiosity is aroused through the use of the article 'the' and the pronoun, 'they'. Collectively, these words also create the impression that 'the hangings' and 'the victims' were common place occurrences at the time. On the other hand, in extract 2, the use of the article 'a' in the first paragraph, is a generalization. However, the introductory paragraphs in both extracts are intended to create anonymity: in extract 1, only 'the victims' are mentioned; in extract 2, the reader is introduced to 'a group of uniformed' men' and 'three prisoners'. In extract 1, the focus is on the conveying the brutalities that the victims were confronted with, for example, 'not hooded or blindfolded', 'the gallows were crude', 'no drop', 'thin twine' and 'Death was slow'. These adjectives play a significant role in conveying the excruciating pain the victims experienced, with a slight hint of the writer's sympathy leaning toward the victims. In extract 2, there seems to be a distance between the writer and both parties mentioned. It may be argued that 'uniformed men' and 'prisoners' are implied contrasts to suggest the disciplined and responsible actions of the soldiers, as opposed to the irresponsible behaviour of the prisoners that warranted punishment. The word 'crudely' in extract 2 is suggestive of something poorly written, while 'crude' in extract 1 has connotations of the execution being merciless.

The second paragraph in extract 1 is more of a factual description that provides details that appease the curiosity of the reader created in the introduction. The reader is informed of the when, who, where and the why, without any emotional appeal. The word 'sign' is unbiased. But the reference to the actual words written on the 'sign' emphasise the victims' loyalty towards a cause and, once again, restore the reader's initial sympathy. This is further reinforced in the concluding lines, 'They hanged them one at a time', a repetition of 'The victims were hanged separately' (paragraph one).

In contrast to the first extract, only the translation of the words in English on the 'placard' is written. This is in keeping with the writer's seemingly objective description. In the second paragraph, the reader's attention is diverted to the 'men in uniform' as 'interested spectators'. The word 'uniform' is suggestive of their united stance as spectators as well as executioners, while the 'calm and intent' feelings of the executing officer also have connotations of being unaffected by what they were doing.

The concluding paragraph, which mentions Jake, highlights his insider and credible heartrending knowledge about the executions. This insight is confirmed in paragraph three in extract 2. This paragraph graphically describes the 'brutal' hangings of the 'victims' mentioned in extract 1. The implication seems to be that we, the readers, understand the horror also through the framing view provided implicitly by Jake. As it were, the reader takes cover behind Jake who according to the passage, experiences helplessly and first-hand the 'mute plea' and 'mask of terror' and 'distorted...agony' of the victims.

As you can see, there is a lot you can write about and draw on from these extracts. You need to carefully read the text and make sense of what it is all about, then identify and explain language strategies, narrative techniques and rhetorical devices that are used as well as the purposes thereof. It is important for you to remember that the above discussion, by no means exhausts every aspect of the expected analysis. However, the main aim of this tutorial is to improve your ability and enhance your confidence in analyzing texts in a logical and well substantiated essay.

EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

The examination is two hours long. It consists of **THREE** sections, and you must answer all questions from each section. You will have to answer questions on each of the following sections of the module:

- Cohesion
- English language use and variation
- Genre and register
- Language use and context
- Academic English

The examination for ENG 2601 counts for 75% of your final mark. Your assignments count for the remaining 25%. It is therefore in your interest to be well prepared for the examination. All assignments carry equal weight.

In Section A and Section B you will be required to read extracts from different sources and answer questions demonstrating your ability to read closely and with attention to the details of the texts. Section C is an essay-type question.

Use the following 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.
- Understand the specific terminology used in this module.
- Analyse and interpret texts provided in your study material. Write notes on each of the texts, outlining the different language features and strategies that are used in the texts.
- Pay attention to the way language usage creates different meanings and purposes.
- Practise the writing of sample essays in order to develop your ability to write in a style appropriate for academic purposes.

Good luck with your studies!

Dr P Makoe (Primary Lecturer)