

AFL1502

Summaries

STUDY UNIT 1

Definition of ubuntu

- Irrespective of race, colour or creed, ubuntu is about peace, working together, forgiveness, nation building, respect and becoming united
- The essence of being human
- Speaks about humanness and gentleness
- Embraces compassion and toughness
- Certain acts are attributes to the absence of ubuntu, e.g. violence, child and woman abuse, police brutality mob justice, etc
- Where there is ubuntu, there is life, peace, happiness, joy, education and general understanding

Language of ubuntu

- Example of ubuntu Nelson Mandela who after 27 years of imprisonment still maintained that he had no bitterness against his captors and oppressors, only against the system
- King Moshesh is another example-when a group of men who attacked and killed his father, and then consumed his father's flesh was brought before him, he gave them cattle to rear and slaughter rather than eating human flesh
- Umfaze uzalela omnye (your child is my child)
- Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person because of people)
- A dissenter is not judge by individuals but by society as a whole

Understanding ubuntu

- Ubuntu is like the English person-hood, an abstract term; it manifests itself through various visible human acts in different societies
- The quality of ubuntu is manifested in every human act which has community building as its objective orientation.
- Any act that destroys the community, any anti-social behaviour cannot, in any way be described as ubuntu
- In ubuntu, what matters most is not necessarily the acceptance of the individual's act by the community, but how the act is put to work as it should work as a link that binds people together with a view to creating an enduring, caring and sharing relationship
- Ubuntu is more than just an attribute of an individual's act. It is a basic humanistic orientation towards one's fellow men. Put differently ubuntu is some kind of humanism
- It springs within oneself or better still, within society

Ubuntu in context

It is a sign of ubuntu if:

- Someone who has many cattle to give some to those who have none, for them to keep and care for it...The principle here is to help others so that they can help themselves
- In any African household a stranger or visitor is a respected person
- You care for your neighbour's belongings
- Disciplining the youth is a collective effort (anyone's child is everyone's child)
- Old people are to be respected and cared for
- You share what you have with those who do not have
- People live together irrespective of their diverse cultures and social backgrounds
- Greed, jealousy, stealing, treachery, untrustworthiness, holding grudge, laziness, backbiting, gossiping, looking down on others and any other form of disrespect is opposed

Any person who adheres to the ubuntu code of conduct will not necessarily see any compensation from society, but may look forward to an intrinsically significant reward

STUDY UNIT 3

What is oral literature?

- May be defined by terms such as oral literature, orature, traditional literature and folklore
- This literature is 'delivered by word of mouth'
- May be defined as those utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit the artistic characteristics of accurate imagination and ingenious expression

Characteristic features of traditional literature

- Folklore is dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion
- Elements that constitute the total performance are the performer, the audience and the occasion
- Various factors can influence the creativity of the oral performer (non-verbal resources or features such as facial expressions, body movements, physical gestures and appearance, as well as musical instruments)
- The audience is the most important and most influential in the oral performance
- Since it is directly involved in the performance, it may influence the choice of subject matter, style and even the use of non-verbal resources
- The audience's behaviour resulting from boredom, such as leaving the performer in action may affect the performance, leading the performer to cut down the performance.
- The occasion is a very important aspect of the oral performance

- Without an occasion, a performance maybe considered inappropriate for the simple reason that an oral piece is not composed for, but in performance
- Occasions when oral pieces can be composed include weddings, funeral, celebrations of victory and even soothing a baby or lulling the baby to sleep

Aspects of prose narratives

Myth

- A myth is a narrative dealing with Gods, demigods or culture heroes
- It is concerned with creation of the world, the establishment of the present order, origins of people, tribe or culture trait
- Myths are sacred tales, told as truth and believed as facts
- They contain explanations of life phenomena
- As for time, mythical events are supposed to have taken place long, long ago in a different world or other than the present one
- The characters are mostly nonhuman, possibly divine, these interact with humans, animals and other natural forces

Legend

- A historical story or narrative that contains a nucleus of historical facts such as name of a particular character but whose historical existence is now shrouded in mystery, as to be mythical or semi-mythical
- it may also be said to be distorted history in that the memory of the historical fact in it has been distorted and elaborated by various elements derived from myths

Folktale

- a fable is a fictitious or untrue story that features personified animals or natural objects as characteristics
- they always end up in an explicit moral message
- they are instructive tales that contain moral messages about human social behaviour
- it is unspecific to time and space

Characters in prose narratives

- human beings and non-human beings
- differ according to various subtypes
- myths-characters are human beings and animals with super natural powers
- legends-characters are human beings, non-humans such as reptiles, inanimate objects such as rivers, ogres and monsters

Animal characters

- are portrayed as thinking and acting like human beings in a human setting
- big animals (lions-strong, powerful, king of animals, not so bright; elephant-heavy, ponderous and rather slow; hyena-brute force, stupid; leopard-untrustworthy and vicious, often tricked in spite of his cunning) are oppressive, strong but stupid
- small animals include hare, tortoise and weasel who cheat and defeat the larger more powerful beasts

Human characters

- typically kings, husbands, wives and children
- women are co-wives who clash over one man and there dishonest, jealousy, negligence, interference , mere nagging in their behaviour
- husbands are unfaithful and irresponsible
- parents have an advantage over their children and decide on the rules to be adhered to
- children can be weak, ignorant, ambitious, poor or orphaned

Stylised didactic prose

- part of the culture of a people, hence it is an aspect of folklore
- it is considered to be an art form and classified as a genre of traditional prose comprising **riddles, proverbs and idioms**
- these are conveyed in metaphorical language and didactic because they aim to teach

The riddle

- traditional verbal expression which contains one or more descriptive elements, a pair of which may be in opposition, the referent of the elements is to be guessed
- takes place in the evening, indoors around a fire
- it is a game and is expected that the audience cannot remain passive

Classification of a riddle according to form

The simple riddle

- consists of a phrase/simple sentence with only one predicate
- usually its sequent is a single word or a short phrase

The long riddle

- long, complex sentence with two or more clauses
- extended metaphor which gives a detailed hint about the sequence in order to clarify it
- not normally a single word but a sentence in which the sequent is motivated

The simple problem riddle

- one which demands an answer without elaborating on or arguing about it

The argumentative problem riddle

- a story riddle in which a set of data is presented
- from these, the audience must debate and argue until they arrive at a solution to the problem

The proverb

- expresses the truth
- its wording is compact and forceful
- it is figurative
- it enjoys general acceptance in the culture group

Use and functions of proverbs

- to comment on social situations
- may serve to warn, encourage, discourage, orient, recommend, give advice
- serves as a didactic function as well as the perpetuation of the social system
- to promote speech

Idioms

Definition

- a fixed structural form or a fixed phrasal pattern of words which go together, peculiar to the genius of a language as regards grammatical structure, accepted usage, and the meaning of which cannot be logically or literally determined from its component part

Form of the idiom

- It is a phrase and does not have a fixed and regular form to which it adheres at all times

Functions of idioms

- Used to add colour to speech
- Render linguistic expression more effective

Traditional poetry

- Rhythmical form of words which express the imaginative, emotional and intellectual experience of the writer in a way that creates a similar experience in the mind of the reader or listener
- This utterances show that the poet uses a combination of word symbols to convey his idea
- Oral poetry is transmitted orally and its distribution, composition or performance is by word of mouth
- Praises are chanted at ritual ceremonies or when a member of the tribe or a family member has done well in serving the community
- When two people meet after a long period, they greet each other by chanting a praise
- There are also praises of kings, queens, clan praises, lullabies, address names, war songs and working songs

Clan praise

- A clan is a section of a tribe, a group of families which share a common ancestor
- The founder of a clan is usually their king or chief, whose surname they share
- The surname is his personal name and can have a praise behind it
- Used to discourage members of the same lineage not to get intimate
- Used as a form of greeting
- Carry the history of the clan and also identify the heroes of the clan
- State the totem of the clan as well as their common behaviour patterns

Address name

- Most clan names have an address name

Praise poems

- Oral compositions about chiefs and warriors
- Main purpose was to praise these chiefs and heroes for deeds of bravery
- Inspired by war
- Three types of praise poetry: poetry and patronage; panegyrics and special purpose poetry.
- Panegyric (synonymous with praise poetry and eulogises the exploits of the kings, chiefs or warriors in battles against the enemy)

Classification

- For chiefs, heroes or great warriors involved in wars
- For outstanding leaders
- For animals, birds, foodstuff, divination, rainmaking and medicine
- Praises of boy-initiates

Occasions of delivery

- Chanted at gatherings
- Chanted at work parties after the people had laboured on the chief's lands
- When one chief visited another, praises were said to announce their arrival

Functions

- Depends on the context in which they are used
- Chanted during special occasions to pledge solidarity, to encourage others, to praise and to honour
- Some praises name historical figures and their places of origin and also to reflect on the philosophy of the people
- It stimulates one's mind, teach and delight

STUDY UNIT 4

What is literature?

- A term used to describe written or spoken material
- Describes anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works
- Refers to works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction

What is modern literature?

- Explains things, or shows things in a more recent light
- Writing about the world from the 16th century until now

Why do we read literature?

- It introduces us to a world of experiences
- We learn about books and literature
- We enjoy comedies and the tragedies
- We may grow and evolve through our literary journey with books

- We may discover meaning in literature by looking at what the author says and how he/she says it

Why is literature important?

- Because it speaks to us, it is universal and it affects us
- Even when it is ugly, literature is beautiful

Where do authors get their inspiration to write from?

- Experiences in their daily lives

Modern literature is divided into three categories: Prose (Is divided into: the novel, short story and essay), drama and poetry

Prose

The novel

- Falls under the category of literature known as fiction
- Considerable length involving the reader in an imagined real world
- Divided into chapters and is distinguished by the presence of the narrator of the event
- Similar to folktales: one narrator who narrates the story to the readers
- Uses characters to bring out the message of the story
- Is the only one of many possible narrative forms
- Two basic characteristics: a story and a story-teller
- Is longer than other types of prose
- Has a realistic treatment of life and manners
- Its heroes are men and women, unlike the epic (heroes are gods, goddesses, extraordinary men and women) and romance (larger than life characters)

Types of novels

Historical, sentimental, documentary, gothic, etc

Elements of a novel

1. Plot

The story or the events that make up what the novel is about

Four parts that distinguish the plot:

Exposition

- Background information to the audience about the plot's characters. Histories, settings and the theme

Rising action/complication

- Series of events that lead to the climax of the story

Climax

- Turning point in the story which in turn leads to the resolution

Denouement

- The final scene
- Protagonist ends in success or failure
- Final outcome of the main complication in a novel/story

2. Theme

- The message the author wishes to convey or the lesson the reader learns

3. Characterisation

- Characters in a novel are not real people, but made up
- Can be fictional or based on real, historical entities
- Can be human, supernatural, mythical, divine, animal, or personification of an abstraction

Character depiction/portrayal

- Characters can be depicted through the following techniques:

Name giving technique

- Name must be age appropriate
- The name must have a meaning
- Avoid loaded names

Expository technique

- Used when depicting characters
- Explains, describes, informs the audience about what is being discussed

Dramatic technique

- The author allows his characters to talk or react to various situations in the novel
- He does not describe their actions and manners
- Gives the characters a chance to reveal their nature through speech

Character revealed by other characters

- Where other characters in the text talks about the main character

Types of characters

- Protagonist-main character
- Antagonist-represents the opposition
- Foil-protagonist's counterpart
- Minor/stock character-perform limited roles to help advance the story

4. Point of view

- Determines what will be noticed and what will not (important/unimportant)
- Determines the reader's relation to the story
- Determines the tone of the story
- Determines the writer's closeness to the subject (personal/impersonal)
- Determines how much the author can interpret for the reader

5. Setting

- The place and time where the action is taking place
- Must be connected with the characters

6. Conflict

- The heart of any plot
- Can be between the protagonist and another character/ nature/society

7. Language and style

- Style refers to language conventions used to construct the story
- Style is one of the fundamental elements of a novel

8. Dialogue

- Most difficult novel element to master
- If the dialogue fails, so does the story

Short story

- A story which is short
- Work of fiction usually written in prose, often in narrative form

Types of short stories

- Ancient tales, fantasy, humour, satire

Elements of the short story

1. Plot

- How the author arranges events to develop the basic idea

Introduction

- The beginning of the story where characters and setting is revealed

Rising action

- Where the events become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed

Climax

- Turning point of the story

Falling action

- Events and complications begin to resolve themselves

Denouement

- Final outcome

2. Theme

- Central idea expressed directly/indirectly

3. Conflict

- Struggle of opposing forces in a story

4. Characters

- Person or sometimes an animal who takes part in the action of the short story

5. Setting

- The time or place the event takes place

Essay

- A piece of writing which is often written from an author's personal point of view
- Prose composition with a focused subject of discussion
- A brief composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, or persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject whatever

Type of essays

- Expository, persuasive, informal, narrative, research, descriptive

Elements of an essay

- Topic-is the author wants to talk about with his audience
- One main idea-is the key to cohesive, effective writing; the leading point that guides the readers so that they easily can decipher the point of the writing

Structure of an essay

Introduction

- Introduces the readers to the central idea expressed in the essay
- Background information leading to the analysed aspect of the theme
- Literature techniques to grab the reader's attention

Body

- Explains the essay's topic
- Each of the main ideas listed will become a paragraph in an essay
- Each body paragraph must be connected to following one with a logical link

Conclusion

- Last part of an essay
- Drives home the central idea of the essay
- Must be memorable by the readers

Theme

- Refers to the broad issue that the essay is about
- Developed through the plot, character and dialogue, as well as the mood

Language and style

- Be explicit-don't leave the reader to infer your conclusions: state them explicitly
- Use signposts-make your essay ready to read by being explicit about your essay structure
- Avoid long sentences
- Avoid long paragraphs=shouldn't be more than 10-15 lines
- Don't imagine that the reader knows what you mean
- Spelling-poor spelling gives the impression of carelessness and laziness
- Take the time to proof read

Poetry

- Is another genre of modern literature

What makes poetry poetic?

- Created in a special technique or expression
- Organised differently from non-poetic text
- Employment of various artistic devices
- Made of lines that may not be taken to be sentences as some lines do not give a complete sentence
- Each line does not go up to the end of the page
- Lines arranged in groups called stanza
- Presented in a manner that attracts the eye of the reader
- Use of words, rhythm and sound that give effect to the message presented in the poem

Poetry and its form

- Elements that fall under poetic form are" title, line, stanza, rhythmic pattern and arrangement of sounds, syllables, some parts of words and words that give parallelism

Sound devices

- Alliteration-Repetition of consonants
- Assonance- repetition of vowels
- Onomatopoeia-sounds identical to the word

Types of poems

- Lyric-poet uses to give expression of his/her thoughts
- Epic-ling narrative poem telling the story of an historical event
- Ballad-tells a sad story or sad incidence/may tell of a violent or exciting event in the form of a story
- Eulogy-poem about death
- Ode-praises an individual for good performances
- Sonnet-based on structure; made up of 14 lines (one stanza)

Poetic language

- Simile-uses 'like' or 'as' when comparing
- Metaphor-compares two object by identifying one object by calling it with the other object's name
- Personification-abstract object given human qualities
- Symbolism-one thing represents another thing
- Hyperbole-exaggeration
- Apostrophe-abstract idea or person who is no longer living is addressed or spoken to as if it were human

Drama

- Is written to be performed

Stage drama

- Delivered to its audience through performing on stage
- Not possible to see racing cars, burning of forests

Television drama or film

- Has more flexibility
- Writer can have events taking place concurrently in different contexts

Radio drama

- Perceived through the sense of hearing
- Limitations on the this type of drama are those events that cannot be performed or seen

One act play

- Limited characters
- Confined on one incidence and cannot take a long time as it is completed in one act

Plot

- Exposition-the first act where the main problem and characters are introduced
- Rising action-conflict is initiated and intensifies as the drama develop
- Climax-the complication reaches its highest point
- Resolution-pulling together the strings, instead of leaving the drama at climax, it makes sense to create a neat conclusion which gives information on how the problem has been resolved

Conflict

- The plot is expected to have events and actions that are in constant conflict
- Drama basically exists because there is conflict

Characters

- Responsible for carrying out the drama (protagonist, antagonist tritagonist)

Dialogue

- Development of the action, the setting and all other contextual information are revealed in the dialogue

Study unit 5

 **Refer to study guide**