

# Tutorial Letter 201/1/2018

## Applied English Language Studies: Further Explorations

### ENG2601

#### Semester 1

#### Department of English Studies

##### CONTENTS

1. Feedback on Assignment 01.
2. Examination guidelines.

BAR CODE

Dear Student

Thank you for submitting your first assignment. While a number of you dealt competently with the question and provided well- substantiated essays, others found it quite challenging to compare the two texts and treated the core aspects of each text separately.

This assignment was based on Study Units 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 of your Study Guide. In these study units, you were introduced to the different genres and how the context, identity, feelings and purpose are conveyed through variations in structure, style of narration and linguistic features. The main purpose of this assignment task was to assess your competence in applying the conventions of academic essay writing and comparative text analysis.

This assignment feedback should not be considered as an academic essay or a model answer. Instead, it covers points which could have been considered, some of which will, hopefully, inspire you to want to know more. Think of this as a conversation around the subject.

## **Question 1**

### **Structure of the essay**

Credit was given to students who wrote effective introductions and conclusions, who maintained topical unity within the paragraphs and who ensured logical development throughout the essay. Another key feature that was considered was the use of appropriate discourse markers such as “unlike”, “however”, “in contrast”, “both writers” or “similarly”, to demonstrate your understanding of the significance of such linking devices in enhancing the cohesion and coherence of your comparative essay. Signposting your transition from one particular aspect such as ‘style’ as it applied to a particular text and then comparing and contrasting the same aspect (style) in the next text, guides your reader in following your sequential development of ideas.

In your introduction, you were expected to:

- clearly indicate that you were aware of the purpose of the essay, i.e. to analyse the given texts, comparing and contrasting the aspects specified;
- present an overview of the main ideas and structure of your essay;
- use key sentences that help achieve the above e.g. “The purpose of this essay is to compare and contrast ...”; “The essay will focus on the following aspects ...”; “Further, the essay will provide evidence from the text in order to support the analysis ...”.

In the main body you were expected to:

- ensure that all key aspects of the question were covered;
- identify clearly defined points comparison/contrast within each paragraph
- provide and analyse relevant citations from both texts as supporting evidence.

In the conclusion you were expected to:

- indicate that you were making a transition from analysing the texts to concluding your argument/statement;
- highlight the key points of your essay.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The discussion provided below is an example of how you could have approached your essay. Thus, it is by no means exhaustive. Only some of the possible aspects that could have been explored in your essay are included in the discussion that follows.

In this essay you are asked to compare and contrast the two excerpts: 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 explain in detail **how** it has been written. Your essay should focus on **how** the author **uses language** to convey his/her message or to persuade his/her target audience.

Firstly, I recommend starting any assignment or examination question by identifying the key words in the question to ensure that you do not overlook essential elements. The rubric in this case required you to focus on the subject of bias which affects the common thread of fracking in both texts.

Narrative style is influenced by word choice, sentence fluency and the voice of the writer or speaker and within this frame one can infer the context and purpose as well. The choices made by the writer or speaker therefore influence the desired purpose and effect. Journalists, reporters and hosts of talk shows have their own style which is adjusted to fit their audience. They vary their diction in order to spark controversy, to discredit or to unsettle their “victims”. Words chosen may be sensationalist or emotive in order to serve a particular purpose.

One appropriate point of departure would have been to start with the similarities that the texts share. For example, both speak about fracking in the Karoo in South Africa. This in itself has been a hotly debated subject over the past two years both nationally and internationally. This is the comparison part of the essay in that they are both about the same subject of fracking; both talk about it taking place in South Africa; both articles explain what fracking is and both talk about the benefits or downsides of fracking to people and the environment

Clearly text A is against fracking and Text B supports the process. It is in the choice of words and the presentation of the subject that emotion is used to promote or restrict the process. This is the contrast portion of the argument.

**Text A** speaks about the negative effects, how the environment will suffer and makes a direct appeal on behalf of ‘local communities’, thus making it personal for the reader. It begins by mentioning large international oil companies such as Royal Dutch Shell, thus creating a divide between the large international conglomerate greedy for money with the small ‘local community’. Text A gives figures but these are extremely large, something almost impossible to visualise for the individual reader. They might as well have said the ‘whole of Africa’: as it is, they use a country, Lesotho, as their yardstick of measurement.

The article goes on in ‘What is Fracking?’ to explain the process of fracking, but again in a negative way: they speak about ‘high pressures’, the rock fracturing, chemical agents that are ‘carcinogenic’ and hence ‘dangerous to humans’. ‘Carcinogenic’ means cancer-causing. They further speak about using ‘huge volumes of water’ and ‘contamination to water aquifers’.

The process is indicated as having only a short life cycle; in other words, it will not solve problems for ever, only stave them off.

In 'What are the main concerns?' the previous concerns are repeated just in case the reader did not get the message the first time — pollution to drinking water, contamination of all water resources, the volume of water used. Water is a valuable resource these days, almost as valuable as precious minerals and oil itself. The article reinforces this by pointing out that the Karoo is a particularly water-short area.

In 'What do we want?' the article stops just short of saying that fracking should be banned. The authors adopt a 'reasonable' approach and say 'let's look at the impact environmentally, don't waste money until we know what will happen'. Here they come across as reasonable and not as some fanatical, outraged group that cannot be reasoned with. They hint at alternatives — 'truly clean, renewable energy solutions. In reality this does not exist: all energy sources cause some damage somewhere in varying degrees.

In 'What can you do?' there is an appeal to become personally involved, for people not to turn their backs on the inhabitants of the Karoo. The action that can be taken is also reasonable. they do not ask you to chain yourself to a light post or blow up offices; rather, people are advised to write an e-mail, samples of which are even provided to make life easy. The entire appeal is made personal and inclusive through use of the word 'we', thus indicating that you would not be alone in your outrage and complaint. The title is emphatic in that it says 'Say No' — not a maybe or a possible yes, but 'No!'

Text B, on the other hand, is written in a very impersonal manner and is almost clinical in its approach as it outlines the necessity and benefits for the people of South Africa. It presents fracking as a 'scientific breakthrough', perhaps hoping that the use of such words will associate it with those 'breakthroughs' which are of benefit, vaccines for Aids, anaesthetic, etc. At the same time, a very short group of words 'country like South Africa where energy resources are running low' indicate to the reader that perhaps South Africa is tottering on the precipice of running out of energy resources altogether, and that this is the only solution.

The actual process is simplified into layman's terms; no long scientific names or methods are used. No emotive words such as 'dangerous', 'toxins' or 'carcinogens' are used, just pumping water down a well which enables the release of shale gas. In some fashion the writers of this piece are almost insulting towards the reader. They assume that the reader will be ignorant and accept the simplistic version they have offered of the process, not seeking to question further.

In direct contrast to text A, the writers put forward the concept that this is a solution which will benefit South Africa for centuries (they actually mention 400 years) and talk about one of the alternatives, coal-powered plants, as providing only a short-term solution. One of the key words here is 'estimated'. Such a report cannot blatantly lie, and therefore, by slipping in one small word such as 'estimated', they have covered themselves if the 400 years amounts to only 40 years in real terms. They further hedge the issue by using modal verbs such as 'should' and 'could' rather than will which is a definite modal.

The title itself is emotive. The subject of the economy in South Africa and the need for improvement is used by many as a starting point (think of political parties, etc.). The economy, loss of jobs, rising prices are dear to all people's hearts. No one these days seems to be able to keep up with the rising cost of living but this is touted as a solution, something that will 'boost' the economy. Note, however, that they do not say how many jobs this will create. In fact, no mention is made of possible livelihood losses, as fracking could have a detrimental effect on the farmers of the Karoo, leading indirectly to employment loss and the loss of those services that support farming.

The sub-heading, 'cross the globe', is an attempt to make the reader feel part of an international movement and implies that this is not an uncommon process and is rather one that is being used world-wide. Actually, what they are saying is that there is gas exploration globally, but in the context of the passage this is not how it is implied; it is suggested that fracking is the only form of gas exploration.

Both texts have an agenda to promote. Text A aims to convince the reader that fracking is bad and will poison the environment, and text B maintains that it is a good thing that will cause little or no harm and solve South Africa's energy problems for centuries to come.

Both articles carry authority, in that they explain the process and put forward what they consider to be the end outcome of the process. In both cases, the intended audience is the general public, where Text A wants the public to become involved in stopping this process, and Text B rather paternalistically simply informs the public of this process that they have discovered.

## Question 2

Only two paragraphs were required here

In the first paragraph you should have identified the structure of the article. The article is broken down into several small paragraphs which contain sub-headings which act as navigational markers, clearly delineating the various parts of the subject and explaining the issue at hand. They create prompts along the way which deal with various concerns that may or may not have occurred to the reader. The sub-headings also allow the reader to perhaps skip ahead to the part in which they are particularly interested.

Paragraphs give structure and clarity to writing, particularly when presenting an argument. Each of these paragraphs gives a lead sentence which signposts what each point is going to be about. Although some are very short and, technically, should perhaps be built into the previous or subsequent paragraph, in this case they create impact.

Focusing on these aspects enhances meaning, as different points are explained in layman's terms without appearing patronizing. There is limited scientific 'jargon' which makes for simpler reading. By spacing things out the article is easier for the average person to read and does not confuse the issues as it scaffolds the argument. Because there is not a continuous block of writing, the reader is less likely to lose interest in what they are reading. Each paragraph therefore explains different points and, through this, the argument remains clear. The impact of the article is built up as the reader goes along and finally culminates in a proposed solution for the reader – write in and make your voice heard.

## Question 3

Paragraphs must follow in a sequential and logical order. In other words, the information must be presented coherently. In good writing, the ideas in different paragraphs are also usually linked linguistically using cohesive devices. These include: use of synonyms, pronouns, verb tenses, time and grammatical references. In the previous unit, we saw how these devices operated between sentences.

**The bold words and phrases in the following texts show how cohesion is achieved, both within paragraphs and between paragraphs.**

Normally one is not tempted to stare at the Sun; the eye-blink reflex normally prevents this. **However**, during the **partial phase of an eclipse**, people's interest has been called to the Sun, and during the crescent phases the total intensity of sunlight may be inadequate to activate the eye-blink reflex even though the specific intensity of regions of the solar photosphere that is still visible remains high. **Thus**, people should observe the Sun only through **special filters**. **These** filters reduce the photosphere to a **safe level for observation**.

Solar **filters** made of aluminized Mylar, which is a coated plastic, are very popular and are available inexpensively. As long as **these** Mylar filters are undamaged, without creases or pinholes, they are safe to look through. Unfortunately, **they** are now often distributed in the form of eyeglasses, which may tempt people to stare at the Sun through them, rather than as simple rectangles to hold up and look through.

A **very safe way** to view the **partial phases** is with a pinhole camera. **Such** a device is no more than a small hole, perhaps 2 mm - 5 mm across, in a piece of cardboard or aluminium foil. **This** small hole ...

These paragraphs are cohesive because:

The first paragraph helps guide the reader by ending with information about observing the Sun through special filters. Conjunctions such as 'however' and 'thus' aid cohesion, either by creating a juxtaposition in 'however', or a consequence in 'thus'. Modal verbs such as 'should' are used. The pronoun 'these' refers to the 'special filters' and serves as reference cohesion.

The second paragraph is connected to the first by describing one particular type of filter. Cohesion is achieved through the use of pronouns such as 'they' (in the phrase 'they are safe to look through'), 'they are not often distributed', 'them' (as in 'stare at the sun through them'), the conjunction 'unfortunately' and modals such as 'may'.

The third paragraph connects the ideas in the second paragraph by considering a safer method of looking at the Sun. The pronoun 'such' refers back to the device and 'this' refers back to the safety measure of the pinhole.

#### **Question 4**

A rhetorical device uses words in a certain way to convey meaning or to persuade. It can also be a technique to evoke an emotion on the part of the reader or audience, but that is not necessarily its primary purpose.

Adolf Hitler was considered one of the masters of rhetoric and it was his use of this in his speeches which allowed him to rise to such power in Germany immediately prior to WWII. In more than 5,000 persuasive speeches, Nazi leader Adolf Hitler bewitched his audiences and promised them that his empire would reign for a thousand years.

## Rhetorical devices

The word *German* is repeated – this is an **allusion** to togetherness, of patriotic pride and creates emphasis that everybody listening is – German. It creates a sense of identity.

*German* and *workers* are also examples of **amplification**, where the word is repeated for emphasis as is *one man, man for man, woman for woman*. German is amplified for a sense of patriotic pride and duty.

“*I am speaking to you and to millions of other German workers*” is **adynation** a particular form of **hyperbole** in which an exaggeration is taken to a ridiculous and literally impossible extreme.

*I have a greater right / I stood amongst you / I was in your midst / I always remained* is **parallelism**, the use of words or phrases with a similar structure.

*I have a greater right / I have to say* is **anaphoric** — repeats a word or phrase in successive phrases. *I have a greater right / I have to say* this can also be known as **mesodiplosis**, the repetition of the same words in the middle of successive sentences

*Four and a half years of war* is **allusion**, a reference to an event.

*And through diligence, learning – and, I have to say, hunger – I slowly worked my way up* is **enumeration**, a point made with details.

*Greater right* is **hyperbole**, an exaggeration.

*diligence, learning – and, I have to say, hunger* is **appositive**. It places a noun or phrase next to another noun for descriptive purposes, as also in *as one man, man for man, woman for woman*.

*Deep inside* is **pleonasm**: more words are used than are in actual fact strictly necessary in order to communicate and make the point effectively and efficiently.

*through diligence, learning – and, I have to say, hunger – I slowly worked my way up* is **imagery** of how he, like them, has struggled and suffered.

*And through diligence, learning – and, I have to say, hunger – I slowly worked my way up* shows the use of an **expletive** a word or short phrase that interrupts normal speech in order to lend emphasis to the words immediately next to it.

He uses **exhortation** in his appeal for all to hear him and stand behind him — *whole people stands behind it as one man, man for man, woman for woman*. This can also be considered a **rhetorical maxim**, where he groups his audience with unanimity, to make them one. Here, **parallelism**, **inclusion** and **repetition** are also used.

He uses long and short sentences combined within the paragraph. The short sentence places emphasis on what has already been said, as well as increasing the tension of the writing. The longer sentences elaborate the point he is making.

*German compatriots, my German workers* is Hitler positioning himself in relation to the crowd. Through this speech, he is appealing to the masses and identifying himself as one of the people through the virtuosic use of **ethos**. Although he appealed to a cross section of German voters — poor, middle-class and wealthy — here he has chosen to identify specifically with his audience, the workers. He addresses them in both a paternal and fraternal manner, stating that he has fought and suffered alongside them and now presents himself as their leader and protector. He asserts his right to speak to them and states that their interests are identical to his and that he is not above them; he speaks in good faith. Furthermore, he actually denies that he is speaking as the Chancellor of Germany, but rather as one of the people.

In 1924, Sigmund Freud wrote: 'the orator who wishes to sway a crowd must exaggerate, and he must repeat the same thing again and again'. The device that comes across strongly in this piece is repetition: Hitler emphasizes Germany, the workers and himself, thus creating a united group. He believed that propaganda must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over again which is, of course, repetition.

Emotion is very present in this speech in the personal appeal and identification of sameness, Hitler is treating the German workers as a collective group rather than as individuals. The reasoning behind this was because individuals were rational, thought for themselves, and were concerned about their own well-being, whereas groups were unintelligent and easily persuaded. Here Hitler is using **pathos**.

**Logos** is there in that he justifies his right to be standing in front of the German workers and speaking to them as if he was once one of them.

'German' or 'Germany' is used as a trigger word to maintain the attention and support of the audience; there is also an association being made between 'German' and 'worker', implying that they are hard-working and diligent and possibly indispensable to the state. He foregrounds the word or concept of a united Germany.

By saying *I have a greater right*, he justifies his position to be there speaking to the people.

There is a lyricism in the speech, Hitler told his audiences exactly what they wanted to hear, down in their souls, but instead of speaking in a gentle voice, he *slammed it out*, which indicates a certain violence or force in his utterance.

There were many other devices employed by Hitler to ensure the efficacy of his speeches which cannot be reflected on the written page, such as tone and volume, gestures, his dress and even the time of day he chose to speak, but that is something which will have to be researched independently by those who are interested in this area.



**Pre-Exam Information**

The examination will consist of a two-hour paper. The paper will be divided into two sections as follows:

Section A:	Short questions that count for 50 marks.
Section B:	An essay for 50 marks.
Total:	100
Time:	2 hours

You will be expected to answer **ALL** the questions.

**NB: Please manage your time carefully.**

*We wish you all the best in your studies.*

*The ENG2601 Team*