

10 The communication skills unit and the language problem at the university of Dar es Salaam

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Introduction

The discussion of the language problem at Tanzania's post-secondary educational institutions often seems to assume that this is a recent development. The problem that students have in communicating effectively in English is attributed to the development of Swahili and as such it is regarded as having hardly any parallels beyond Tanzania.

However, misgivings about learners' level of proficiency in a medium of education other than their mother tongue have been internationally acknowledged for a long time now. In 1961, for instance, Denny (1963: 50) wrote that

the general feeling of educationists . . . is that competence in the national or educational language is inadequate and that students are handicapped . . . two university colleges (Nairobi and Addis Ababa) prescribe courses in the medium of instruction as compulsory for all students . . . at Salisbury students whose proficiency is found to be inadequate are 'advised or required' to attend English Proficiency Classes.

Today similar arrangements exist in many universities and colleges across Africa and beyond. There is, for example, a Communication Skills Centre at the University of Zimbabwe, a Language and Study Skills Unit at Nairobi University, and a Communication Skills Unit at the University of Dar es Salaam. Each of these institutions is entrusted with the task of tackling the 'language problem'. But what is the nature of this problem? This chapter

critically examines the theoretical answer as well as the practical remedy developed by the Communication Skills Unit (CSU) at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Diagnosis

The CSU was established in 1978 as a semi-autonomous section of the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics. It was the University's response to recurrent complaints from a number of lecturers and external examiners that the students were failing to express themselves effectively in English. This failure was deemed to have adverse effects on the students' academic work. The CSU was therefore charged with the task of helping the students to learn more efficiently through the medium of English.

The same year that saw the establishment of the CSU also witnessed the birth of the University Teaching and Learning Improvement Programme (UTLIP) charged with monitoring the quality of teaching and learning within the university. There had been suggestions that the CSU be established as part of UTLIP, but these had been rejected. And this was a significant decision in determining the status of the Unit: it was not going to be a 'remedial service unit' but a full-fledged academic unit teaching regular credit courses and engaged in research.

It was incumbent upon the CSU to determine the nature and extent of the language problem at the university before designing and implementing a solution. For this purpose CSU staff examined students' writing, administered questionnaires to students, interviewed teaching staff across the university faculties, and consulted external examiners' reports.¹ A major conclusion of this investigation was that students' inadequacies manifested themselves at two main levels, viz. (a) 'the level of grammatical competence (syntax and lexis at sentence level)' and (b) 'the level of communicative competence (discourse skills)' (Rea, 1980: 50). Subsequently the CSU decided to concentrate on (b) rather than (a), maintaining that the 'majority' of students did not have 'severe inadequacies at the level of grammatical competence' (Rea, 1980: 50). The discourse skills envisaged under (b) include the 'organisation of material in essay writing, presentation of facts and arguments in an orderly fashion, style in academic writing [and] appropriate reading strategies' (cf. Numi & Mcha, 1986: 8).

The above distinction between grammatical competence and communicative competence is rather tenuous. For the appropriate choice of structures and lexical items is part and parcel of the ability to communicate effectively, of what it means to know a language. As Hymes puts it, 'there

are several sectors of communicative competence, of which the grammatical is one' (Hymes, 1971: 18). Perhaps the CSU stance is partly a result of the general disenchantment with grammar and the rise of the communicative approach as the dominant fashion in language teaching during the 1970s. The focus was on 'the problem of the student who may be structurally competent, but who cannot communicate effectively' (Johnson, 1979: 192). It is against such a background that the CSU could declare that grammar was not a majority problem. But an examination of the evidence could lead to a different conclusion.

In order to identify students with serious problems in grammar the CSU administers a relatively elementary test — the University Screening Test (UST) — to all first-year students at the beginning of the academic year. Table 10.1 shows the UST results for 1985, 1986 and 1987. The total number of candidates who sat for the test in each year is shown in column 2. Columns 3 to 7 show the distribution of the candidates into different bands of scores. For instance, column 5 shows that, in 1985, 484 candidates, or 57.6% of the total, scored less than 70% on the test. Column 8 shows the number of candidates recommended for the Intensive Grammar Programme (IGP). CSU policy is that any candidate scoring 54% or less on the UST is 'at risk' and should be recommended for the IGP. In practice fewer candidates are recommended due to staff constraints. A comparison of columns 7 and 8 bears this out. This gap between the ideal and reality was widest in 1987 when 24.7% failed, but only 14.3% were recommended.

TABLE 10.1 UST results

Year	UST candidates (total)	Percentage score					IGP
		80-100	79 or less	69 or less	59 or less	54 or less	
1985: N	840	151	689	484	348	236	214
%	100	17.9	82	57.6	41.4	28	25.4
1986: N	596	103	493	363	228	166	159
%	100	17.2	82.7	60.9	38.2	27.8	26.6
1987: N	703	137	566	385	232	174	101
%	100	19.4	80.5	54.7	33	24.7	14.3

Source: UST and IGP files

Using the UST results to determine the extent of the linguistic problem can be controversial. The crucial indicator is what one takes as the

passmark.² With a passmark of 55% only about a quarter of the students fail (cf. column 7). However, considering the nature of this test, a more realistic passmark should be 70%. With this criterion grammar becomes a majority problem. Column 5 shows that more than half of the candidates fall below this point: 57.6%, 60.9% and 54.7% in 1985, 1986 and 1987 respectively. Criper & Dodd (1984) paint an equally bleak picture:

[University] students' level of English is substantially below that required for university English medium study. (p. 15)

... less than 20% of the [University] sample tested were at a level where they would find it easy to read even the simpler books required for their academic studies. (p. 43)

These findings could be dismissed as exaggerated and alarmist. It could be pointed out that after all the majority of students (perhaps more than 90%) do manage to complete their studies successfully, and that not all failures can be blamed on the language problem. Put succinctly, the question is this: if the language problem is so serious how do students manage to get their degrees?

One possible reply would maintain that the standards of education have 'fallen' with the standards of English. According to this view, the university is currently producing lower quality graduates than it did in the early years of its existence when a pass in English would have been a condition for admission. Perhaps a similar condition today might exclude all candidates failing to score 70% on the UST. But a comparison of education standards across different periods is a risky business. Moreover, such a nostalgic approach is not wholly justified in view of the fact that the language problem across the universities in Africa is as old as the universities themselves. The issue is certainly much more complex.

The CSU has expressed concern about students who fail to produce 'even a single correct sentence in communication skills courses' but 'manage to pass their other courses which include essay writing in their exams' (CSU meeting, 14.3.1986). There is indeed no clear relationship between students' performance on the UST and their performance in the university examinations. The majority of students identified as being at risk do quite well in the examinations. Probably the largest single factor for this situation is the high level of teachers' tolerance of students' errors. If some lecturers complain about the students' inability to express themselves effectively in English, there are still many others who would say that they look for the content and ignore the poor form of expression. A similar attitude among university staff at Malawi University has been reported by Dede Kamkondo (1987: 9): 'Our students did not need the Queen's English in order to

facilitate communication. (If they could communicate in "broken" English why bother?)'

The foregoing discussion would seem to call into question the strong claim that students are put 'at risk' on account of a language problem. A weaker claim might be that students attain a lower performance than they would otherwise be capable of if they did not have a language problem. A variation of that would be that learning is made a little more difficult by the language problem. An appropriate response to the problem posed by the weak claim is to offer a service course to ease learning difficulties and thereby raise performance. The strong claim, on the other hand, requires a rescue operation to save a sinking boat. The CSU was established on the basis of the strong claim, but traces of the weak claim have always been present.

This discussion has raised two questions regarding the language problem at the University of Dar es Salaam. The first is whether or not the problem is essentially one of grammar. The second question concerns the extent of the problem: what proportion of the students are affected and how seriously? The CSU maintains that only a minority of students have severe inadequacies at the level of grammar, but that the majority have problems at the higher level of discourse and study skills. I have, however, suggested that the students' problems in basic grammar are much more serious than the CSU diagnosis indicates.

The Prescription

Following upon its diagnosis of the problem the CSU prescribed two types of courses. The first type consisted of a remedial course in basic English grammar, known as the Intensive Grammar Programme (IGP). The second type consisted of a set of study skills courses designed for specific faculties.

The IGP is meant for those students identified by the UST as being 'at risk'. It is a ten-week course covering ten major topics in grammar (see Appendix A), and is largely self-instructional. The coursebook (developed by the CSU) contains explanations and exercises on each topic. The students read the explanations, do the exercises, and hand in the books for marking. They then meet the tutor in groups for one hour to discuss the week's work.

Relative to the other courses of the CSU the IGP is not considered to be a major preoccupation of the Unit. Student attendance is largely optional

even when a student has been recommended to register for the course.³ Performance on the course is of no consequence. All this is in line with the CSU decision that the language problem at the University is not primarily grammatical; consequently there is a tendency to give the IGP minimal attention. It has been characterised as 'not the most academically rewarding course to teach [even though] it definitely answers a need felt by students themselves' (CSU, 'IGP Course Report 1984', p. 7).

It is doubtful how effective the IGP is in fulfilling the 'need felt by students'. Already in 1982 it was noted that 'these students, some of whom are probably weak in their other subjects, are being asked to do extra work on top of an already heavy workload, and that therefore we cannot expect the IGP course to act as a miracle cure for their language problems' (CSU, 'IGP Course Report 1982'). Attempts to monitor improvement have not been yielding conclusive results mainly because the post-test has always been different from the pre-test (UST), thus rendering the results incomparable. The general impression, though, seems to be that of only modest improvement for some candidates and none for others (cf. IGP reports for 1985 and 1986).

Besides considerations of a heavy workload, it could be argued that the IGP underestimates the task of learning a language by assuming that in ten weeks students can acquire a mastery of the basic English structures, largely by self-instruction. This calls into question the suitability of this particular course. However, a more fundamental question is whether there can be a 'right course' for these learners. It is a question of how effective a remedial language course can be. I shall return to this question later.

CSU resources are mainly directed at the faculty-specific courses, namely the communication skills courses for the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Commerce and Management, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Science. Relative to the IGP these courses are regarded as the real business of the unit. Whereas the IGP is an optional, non-credit course for a minority of students, the other courses are largely compulsory and in some cases creditable. They are compulsory in the faculties of Engineering, Law and Medicine. In the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the communication skills course is compulsory only for education students. In the faculties of Commerce and Management and of Science the courses are compulsory for students who fail a faculty-specific proficiency test. The courses are creditable in the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Law, and Science.

Communication skills courses do not set out to teach English; rather, they assume that students have an adequate mastery of English. What they seek to do is to teach students how to study efficiently, hence they are also

known as study skills courses. The major skills include note-taking, summarising, reading strategies, reference skills and organisation of writing (see Appendix B). Although the courses are quite similar with respect to the skills they deal with, there is considerable variation in the amount of time available for each course. At one extreme is the course for engineering students with only 15 hours available; at the other end, the Arts and Social Sciences course has 60 hours at its disposal. The course for Commerce and Management stands in between, with 40 hours available. Such variations are reflected in the modes of teaching adopted by different courses and in the amount of practice allowed on individual skills. For instance, the course for engineers employs the lecture mode to transmit information to a class of about 180 students. Only a few of the hours are allocated to tutorial sessions in smaller groups of about 20. In contrast to this, in the Arts and Social Sciences course *all* work is done in tutorial groups of about 20 students. And while in this course a topic such as note-taking consists of 10 tasks spread over four to six hours, in the course for engineers the same topic is dealt with in a one-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial during which only three tasks are performed.

Another significant variation within the courses concerns the choice of resource materials. Each course seeks to teach the various skills with specific reference to the students' academic subjects. The courses draw on authentic texts from the fields of study within each faculty. The concern for authenticity is partly based on intuitive appeal — that a student of engineering will find a text about concrete structures more interesting than one about class struggle — and also on ease of skill transfer. 'By concentrating on the salient features of such authentic texts, we may expect that the course will adequately reflect the particular ordering of skills typically required for processing information within each field of study' (Rea, 1980: 81).

These variations notwithstanding, however, the courses share the basic assumption that students possess an adequate command of English. This was clearly expressed in a handout introducing the communication skills course (CL100) for Arts and Social Sciences to first-year students:

It is true that most university entrants have an adequate command of English grammar. In fact, some may have been using English in their previous job, and perhaps even teaching English. However, university work places considerable demands on a student's language ability. Grasping the conceptual content of an advanced textbook or lecture, or presenting a relevant and coherent academic essay, is not at all simple. Indeed, even students whose native language is English face problems in adjusting to academic communication. It represents a highly sophisticated level of language use, far above that of mere

grammatical accuracy. CL 100, therefore, is not directly concerned with improving English grammar, but with *developing more advanced and specialised communication skills for academic study*. (Rea, n.d.)

In view of the evidence furnished by the UST this comparison of the University of Dar es Salaam students' level of English to that of 'students whose native language is English' is, to say the least, unrealistic.⁴ Granted that 'mere grammatical accuracy' is not enough, it should be asked whether the other skills can be taught and learnt if this foundation is shaky or missing. If a student cannot produce 'a single correct sentence' how effectively can he be taught to connect sentences and paragraphs, or construct an argument?

Further Considerations on the Prescription

In order to gain a better understanding of the prescription we need to consider the nature of the task given to the CSU, *viz.*, to run a remedial language course. This is a daunting task in view of considerations of (a) what is achievable by such a course and (b) the general acceptability of the course.

Considerations of what is *achievable* are twofold. First, among the candidates admitted to the university there will be a group whose English has fossilised (Selinker, 1974) at some very early stage in the learning process and who therefore manifest an irremediable mismatch between their level of knowledge of the language and the level demanded by university studies. In this connection it is worth asking whether the group scoring below 55% on the UST can be helped at all. Second, even when a group that could benefit from remedial treatment has been identified, we need to consider the nature of the remedial treatment required. The usual practice is to re-teach what the learners have been exposed to for years. Corder's observation is pertinent: '... very often, a lot of work (of this sort) produces little improvement. After all, if the first teaching did not produce the required results, there is no obvious reason why the second teaching should do so (unless the first teaching was too hurried)' (Corder, 1981: 52).

But suppose the first teaching was indeed too hurried or was poorly done, could any remedial programme make good the damage? Fisher (1966) is very optimistic about the possibility of breaking poor linguistic habits and making correct sentence patterns automatic. Although his chief concern is to demonstrate the superiority of what he calls the 'oral pattern practice method' over the 'traditional workbook and grammatical methods'

in remedial teaching, his work raises the basic concerns with time and motivation.

As regards time, Fisher notes that although his experimental group recorded significant improvement after remedial treatment, 'it was felt that lessons could have been more than doubly effective had there been twice the number of hours devoted to them' (Fisher, 1966: 54). Fisher further suggests that for better results the remedial course should be taught in secondary school for a full year. As regards motivation and ability to sustain long periods of continuous work, Fisher seems a bit too generous in assessing his subjects. He claims that 'there was certainly no boredom, and both the teacher and the students felt that returns were sustained' (Fisher, 1966: 54). But even if this were true of Fisher's experimental group of 22 students, it is doubtful that the assessment could be generalised to other learners in different situations.

The time constraint has certainly raised questions about how much can be achieved by CSU courses. The 1982 report of the course for engineering students noted that the course had

reached the limits of its exploitability. The present mix of lectures and tutorials is perhaps the best solution available given the severe time constraints. However, it should be recognized by the Faculty that given the nature of the course and the limitations it labours under, substantial improvements in the study and language skills of the first year students are unlikely (p. 7).

And more recently the external examiner noted that although some courses were already 60 hours in length, it was obvious that students who managed a bare pass were in need of even longer and more intensive courses (cf. McGinley, 1986). It is in view of such observations that some CSU staff members have suggested that students follow a three-month intensive English course before embarking on university studies proper. There is no doubt that such a course would require a tremendous increase in CSU resources, especially manpower, besides entailing logistical problems for the University generally.

Considerations of *acceptability* become particularly relevant because a remedial course is designed to make up for deficiencies in the learner's knowledge of the language. These deficiencies may be due to the learner's failure to grasp the required matter at the relevant stage, or they may be due to lack of exposure to that matter. In such circumstances a remedial course is not likely to be popular: the learner is reminded of his failure and/or deprivation. The teacher, on the other hand, sees himself as teaching matter that ought to be/is dealt with at earlier levels. In other words, a university

lecturer would not like to see himself do the work of a secondary school teacher. This would seem to explain the CSU concern for the respectability and acceptability of its courses. The decision to offer credit courses available to all first-year students is to be seen in this context. The approach seems to have evolved like this: the CSU must be accorded appropriate status for the success of its courses (Rea, 1980: 52). A remedial programme appears to be an extension of work covered in the schools and reminds the learner of having failed to grasp the required matter (p. 54). The most acceptable solution, then, is to declare that actually 'only a few' need such a remedial course anyway, while 'all' students can benefit from a study skills course (p. 55). As Rea put it, 'the CSU was anxious not to cut the image of a "remedial" service unit' (p. 55).⁵

The CSU aimed at attracting two different categories of student: those *opting* for a course, and those *referred* by subject lecturers. The major concern here was that the courses should not be regarded as merely courses for the weak students. However, it appears that very few students opted for the CSU course in its first year of operation. So it was decided to make the Arts and Social Sciences course compulsory for all education students in the faculty from the 1979/80 academic year. In this way there was a guaranteed audience.⁶

The foregoing picture of the evolution of CSU courses needs to be complemented by a consideration of the influence exerted by the Unit's clients, *viz.* the various university faculties. Although it is possible to come across individual lecturers who regarded the work of the Unit as irrelevant and misplaced, generally the various faculties had, and still have, fantastic illusions about what the Unit can do or should be doing. The official conception of the problem is something like this: 'The students cannot speak and write proper English. So teach them the language!' In all faculties CSU courses are compulsory either for all first-year students or for a section of these. And the courses are regarded as English language courses. It is worth noting, for instance, that while CSU tutors would not expect students to speak and write better English as a result of having done the CSU course for engineering students, the First Year convenor for the Faculty of Engineering (1984/85) expected the course to improve the students' level of English, particularly grammar (Dr S. Moshia, personal communication). There is thus a mismatch between the CSU's conception of its work and the clients' conception of the Unit's work. In this regard it would be mere wishful thinking if CSU staff thought they could improve the English of 180 engineering students in the 15 hours allocated to the communication skills course.

Outcome and Prognosis

Has the CSU had any impact, then? In 1984 the external examiner for Communication Skills had this to say:

On the matter of the students' general level of performance, I feel that there is still some evidence . . . that despite the best efforts of the CSU, a number of students may not have yet achieved a sufficiently deep-seated mastery of the language and study skills they increasingly need as they progress in their academic studies.
(Waters, 1984)

Two other external examiners expressed a similar view in 1986 and 1987 (cf. reports by McGinley and Hirst). This assessment is particularly disconcerting because it is based on students' performance on examinations set by the CSU itself. It has been noted that even though almost all students doing communication skills courses for credit do pass, a substantial proportion do so on the strength of coursework assessment while failing the final examination itself. This is possible because coursework is heavily weighted in the final grading (60% coursework, 40% examination), and it is in coursework assignments that students get plenty of help from both tutors and fellow students. It has further been noted that only the very best students demonstrate mastery of the communication and study skills taught in the 'regular' communication skills courses. The majority of students, however, lack the basic sentence-level language skills assumed by these courses, and this impairs communication (cf. Hirst, 1987).

Can the CSU have any significant impact? A 1986 report had this answer:

If there is no control of students' proficiency in English and communication skills when they are admitted to the university, there is little more CSU can do to improve matters beyond what it is doing in the present restricted circumstances. As such, improvement is more a matter of policy than pedagogy. (CSU, 1986b: 9)

The report does not indicate the kind of policy envisaged. The options might include allowing more time for CSU courses (e.g. a three-month intensive course), instituting a university entrance examination in English, consolidating the teaching of English in the secondary schools, and switching to Swahili as medium of instruction. Indeed, in view of the prevailing sociolinguistic situation the latter alternative would seem to be the most realistic. It puts into focus the more fundamental question of the medium of education in Tanzania. English has ceased to be an effective medium of learning and teaching in Tanzania's educational system. If anything could

restore English to that position it is most unlikely that CSU-type organs could be that thing (cf. Rugemalira *et al.*, this volume).

A final question that needs to be asked is 'Whither CSU?'. In her foreword to the *Proceedings of CSU 'Review Week' Seminar* (CSU, 1985a) Mcha described the first six years of the CSU (1978-84) as the 'development stage'. From 1984/85 the Unit entered a 'new stage of consolidation'. The foregoing discussion seems to call for a reassessment of this view of CSU history. It would seem that instead of consolidating the *status quo*, the CSU should seek to determine the effectiveness of its prescription and perhaps try another formula. Such a formula should adopt a wider perspective on the problem by seeking to develop the means for tackling it at pre-university levels.

This shift in focus would require a transformation of the CSU and the English section in the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics into a Centre for Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The major concerns of such a centre might include training teachers of English, developing English teaching materials for various levels and researching into methods of English Language Teaching. The centre could also offer certificate courses in English, develop standard tests for certification, and mount specialist courses in writing, public speaking and translation for the very best students.

Endowed with the largest single concentration of English language experts in Tanzania, the CSU ought to investigate these wider avenues of contributing to the teaching and learning of English in the country. There is no doubt that these challenges would be more academically rewarding for staff than a course like the IGP, besides pre-empting worries about presenting the image of a remedial service unit.

Epilogue

The situation in Tanzania, and of the CSU in particular, is not unique. Experience from Malawi and Zimbabwe, where English occupies a more prestigious position than in Tanzania, indicates that remedial courses at tertiary institutions are no more effective or acceptable. This implies that efforts for tackling language proficiency problems should be focused at the early levels of learning the languages in question so that a good foundation can be established. And in many African countries it should be possible to plan for the eventual replacement of a foreign language with a local language; but for as long as English, French and Portuguese remain the languages of education in African schools and universities, then the 'language problem' will always be with us.

Notes to Chapter 10

1. Much of the information related to this needs assessment exercise is documented in volumes 1 and 2 of *Language for Education* (Communication Skills Unit, 1980/1983).
2. In order to promote the acceptability of its courses, the CSU avoids use of the terms 'passmark' and 'fail' preferring 'cut off point' and 'at risk'.
3. Only recently the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences ruled that the IGP be compulsory for students registered in that faculty and recommended by the CSU to do the IGP.
4. In this connection if Swahili were the medium of education, a communication skills course in Swahili would be justified in assuming that students have an adequate command of the language.
5. A similar uneasiness with respect to 'remedial' work was expressed in a recent paper by A. Love (1987) of the Communication Skills Centre, University of Zimbabwe. Love argues that 'our work is not primarily "remedial" but "developmental"' and that 'it is not a cost-effective use of time to concentrate on problems which may well be "fossilized" and therefore likely to be highly resistant to attention at tertiary level' (p. 1).
6. This arrangement has persisted despite the fact that by all standards education students are no more 'at risk' than the other students; cf. M. Norris, 'Selecting students for communication skills courses in the Arts Faculty' in CSU (1985a), *Proceedings of CSU 'Review Week' Seminar* pp. 107-10.

Appendix A

Intensive Grammar Programme: Contents

- Unit 1: *Basic Sentence Structure*
Subjects, verbs and objects
Noun phrase construction
Verb agreement
- Unit 2: *The Tense System*
Present and past tenses
Descriptions and reports
Instructions
- Unit 3: *Noun Classes*
Countable and uncountable nouns
General statements
- Unit 4: *Non-finite Verb Forms*
Verbs used as objects
Verbs after prepositions
Verbs used to describe nouns
- Unit 5: *The Use of Articles*
Indefinite reference: 'a'
Specific reference: 'the'

Unit 6: Verb Phrases

- Verb phrase construction
- Questions
- Negative statements

Unit 7: Sentence Connection

- Conjunctions
- Pronouns
- Relative pronouns

Unit 8: Passive Verb Forms

- Use of the passive
- Use of 'by' and 'with'

Unit 9: Perfect Verb Forms

- Present perfect
- Past perfect
- Adverbials of time

Unit 10: Modal Verbs

- Use of modal verbs
- Conditional sentence
- 'Hypothetical' past tense

Appendix B*Sample of Kinds of Skills Taught in Communication Skills Courses*1. *Note-taking*

- a. Recognising organisation in texts: titles, subtitles, numbering, spacing, indentation, sectioning.
- b. Recognising main points and details: headings, topic sentences, metacomments, (in speech) paralinguistic features, connectors.
- c. Compression of information in notes: abbreviations; symbols; (non-verbal information: charts, graphs, diagrams).
- d. (Expressing) organisation in notes (layout, numbering, spacing, indentation).

2. *Understanding Lectures*

- a. Recognising organisation in lectures: metacomments, paralinguistics, connectors, grammatical cohesion.
- b. Recognising status of the information: metacomments, paralinguistics — voice quality, tempo gestures, grammatical cohesion.

- c. Recognising function of information and meaning relationships: connectors and discourse markers — exemplification, evidence, contrasting, adding, concluding, summarising, reformulating, emphasising.

3. *Interpreting Essay Questions*

- a. Analysing essay questions: recognising key instruction words and special conditions. Instruction words: discuss, describe, analyse, argue, give an account of, why, give reasons. Special condition words: briefly, in the Third World, with the aid of a map.
- b. Distinguishing between fact and opinion:

Factual essays:

- Describe
- Give examples of
- Give an account of
- Briefly state the

Opinion essays:

- What are the arguments?
- Discuss
- Give reasons for
- Justify

4. *Organisation of Writing*

- a. Planning of written work: outlines and drafts:
 - skeletal outlines
 - detailed outlines
 - preparing drafts
- b. Indicating good organisation, headings, sectioning: introductions, body, conclusion.
- c. Writing introductions; essay structure and organisation.
- d. Expressing meaning relationships:
 - grammatical cohesion
 - connectors
- e. Expressing status of information:
 - connector
 - metacomments
 - grammatical cohesion
- f. Writing conclusions:
 - signal words

5. *Using Sources of Information*

- a. Selecting relevant information: book cover titles, table of contents, index, glossary.
- b. Using the library and reference sources: library author and index catalogues (when compiling bibliography).
- c. Assessing usefulness of a reference/book: index cards.
- d. Compiling a bibliography, bibliographic formats.
- e. Use of citations and quotations: footnotes.
- f. Acknowledging source of information: citations, quotations, footnotes, introductory verbs: argue, state, report, etc.

6. *Reading Strategies*

- a. Setting a purpose for reading.
- b. Recognising main points and details: topic sentences, titles and sub-titles, generalisations, example.
- c. Skimming for general information: topic sentences, introductions and conclusions.
- d. Scanning for specific details: tables of contents, glossary, index, titles, sub-titles.
- e. Recognising organisation in a text: sectioning, paragraphing, numbering, layout.
- f. Predicting information: signal words, metacomments.
- g. Making inferences: facts, opinions, generalisations.
- h. Recognising writer's attitude to information: stylistic features and modality.

7. *Reporting Practical Research*

- a. Collecting relevant data: questionnaires, interviews.
- b. Organising data: graphs, tables, diagrams.
- c. Describing data: talking about data:
 - Hypothesis, premise, conclusion, generalisations
 - Words of quantity, frequency and degrees
- d. Organising information: sectioning, paragraphing.
- e. Using appropriate style and register: tenses, reported speech, passive voice.
- f. Expressing attitude to information or data.
- g. Use of non-verbal information: tables, diagrams, graphs, maps, etc.

8. *Presenting an Argument*

- a. Recognising difference between facts and opinions.
- b. Recognising parts of an argument: premise, evidence, conclusion or generalisation.
- c. Expressing an argument: expression of attitude:
 - use of modality
 - use of style and register
 - use of point of view

9. *Oral Presentation*

- a. Introducing a topic.
- b. Maintaining interest of listeners: metacomments, voice quality, tempo, gestures, eye contact, hesitations, gap fillers.
- c. Using appropriate style in oral presentation.
- d. Concluding a discussion.
- e. Handling questions from listeners.
- f. Use of aids.

NB. Oral Presentation forms part of project work. In other courses, e.g. CL 105 and EG 102, Oral Presentation is not done. In CL 100 Oral Presentation is based on topics suggested by specialist tutors, in CL 104 it is based on case studies, while in CL 101 students have to do field or library research.

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