Dear Student

I have just finished marking your assignments. It is my pleasure to write you this letter aimed at updating and giving you feedback with regards to the general comments I have about Assignment 1 and especially pointing out where you need to improve so that you can excel.

What was evident in the assignments was a sense of unpreparedness especially with the essay responses. There was no sense of originality in most assignments and sadly, this was not indicative of wide research and reading as most of the ideas, including the examples were either picked from the study guide or copied from the internet. Some of the answers were sketchy and not fully developed. The grammar was not satisfactory. However, there were quite a number of mistakes that could have been easily avoided.

Also, not that linguistics is a course where you have to choose and use words with extreme care. For example, a “word” is not the same as a “sound,” a “phone” is different from a
“phoneme” etc. Also, if you are supposed to give an example of a sound and instead you give a word; note that a word and a sound are not the same.

The majority of the assignments did not follow any specific layout or acceptable format, that is, there was no introduction and no conclusion. This is an indication that the layout of the essays also needs to improve for some. You are reminded that the introduction which you write has to directly address the question and also show how you understand each question, as well as give an indication as to how you will present your answer. Do not write an introduction that covers all the questions because each question has a different focus.

In addition, in cases where people merely copied from the internet, American English examples and classifications were used. Note that this course focuses on the linguistics aspects of the English language and not the American language. As a result of the internet copy-pasting, there were a number of similar responses, hence marks were lost for plagiarising.

Let me point out that with regards to scientific subjects like Introduction to Linguistics, it is not enough to rely on the Study Guide only. The Study Guide is there to just give you directions – to guide you so that you can research more as guided by what is in the Study Guide. Hence, when you make reference to other relevant books and also to the internet sources – I always reward broadly read students. For instance, with regards to question 1, the Study Guide was not adequate at all for what you were expected to come up with. I am sure you realised this from the revision that we did and the lectures we covered during the Vacation School.

I encourage you to write introductions for all assignments since introductions help you map the way forward and are also a clear indication of how you will approach the questions. Thus, the
introduction which you write has to directly address the demands of the question and also show how you understand it (the question), as well as give an indication as to how you will present your answer. In addition, when you write your assignments you must use COMPLETE SENTENCES and GOOD ENGLISH. Remember that you are a student studying language; its production and usage. You are expected to communicate effectively in writing, and in speech of course! You will be required to present your answers in essay form where necessary. In other words, you will write essays of varying lengths depending on the requirements of each question. You will lose marks if you present your answers to assignment questions in the wrong form. You will also lose marks for mistakes in grammar, spelling and punctuation. These instructions also apply to the examination which you will write at the end of the semester.

Once again I will call upon you to read much more around the subject area and not restrict yourself to the Study Guide. When it comes to Assignment 2, this concept applies as well; you are expected to have a thorough understanding of the five basic branches of linguistics studied in this course, namely, Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Stylistics and Semantics; and for this, you do not have to rely on the Study Guide alone. You will need to give adequate examples and arrange your ideas logically.

1. Referencing

Some students were able to reference their work correctly using the APA referencing style; however, quite a number had no clue how this should be done. Refer to the study guide and note examples of references at the end of the chapter and within the chapter. Try to cultivate a reading culture in yourself; it is the only way you can note some of these issues that I have pointed out in this letter. Because your second assignment requires you to research and have a
reference list, I have given referencing examples below. Note that these are not exhaustive; hence I encourage you to buy the APA reference guide from the library.

In-text citation:

- According to Hughes (1962:5), language is “..any means of expressing thought.”
- In addition, language may be defined as “…a conventional system of habitual vocal behaviour by which members of a community communicate with one another.” (Chao, 1968:1)

Reference List:

Book with one Author:


Book with two Authors:


N.B. Please do not include Wikipedia in your reference list. You can use it but it is not acceptable as an academic reference.

Before I conclude, may I draw your attention to the fact that your study guide is not a complete course on its own. Introduction to Linguistics requires you to be practical in your approach and to be research oriented. This tutorial letter serves only as a guideline and an outline for reproducing the theoretical knowledge gained from the study guide.

Degree level requires that you use other publications/sources to complement your study guide in order to get a broader picture of the course.
The APA Referencing guide is also available at the Main Library for N$30.00. I advise that you get a copy to get used to the APA referencing style before embarking on the next assignment.

2. Question analysis

Below are general comments on Assignment 1, followed by specific comments on individual questions. The comments are based on the overall performance of all the students and you need to use them so that you can learn from other people’s mistakes and achievements as well.

Again, I encourage you is to look at the question many times and underline the key words which you think that your answer needs to address. These are words which will guide you in interpreting the question as well as when you are making the necessary researches like on Google.

**Question 1**

Nearly all students had problems with this question, mainly because they copied either from the internet or from the Study Guide.

Define the following linguistics terms illustrating each concept with at least one example.

a. Language displacement

   • Human language is displaced in terms of time and location.
   • All humans can refer to present, past and future in any real or fictitious location.
   • All languages allow speakers to refer to various locations.
   • On the other hand animal communication describes the ‘here & now,’ the immediate moment, has limited displacement. E.g. Bee language: dance routine to communicate the location of nectar
b. Voiced sounds.
Voiced sounds are produced when the vocal cords are narrow; the air-passes with friction; and the vocal cords are in vibration. Two examples of voiced sounds are /b/ and /v/.

(5)

c. Voiceless sounds.
Voiceless sounds are produced when the vocal cords are open; the air-passes freely; and there is no vibration of the vocal cords. Two examples of voiceless sounds are /s/ and /t/.

(5)

d. The syntagmatic level of language

**Syntagmatic:**

The relationship of the units of language on a horizontal plane or syntactically is called e.g. “That tall man lives in this village”.

- Language is a set of signs which are:
  a) members of a system; and b) defined by their relationships to each other.
- Words in this sentence arranged in a particular order; combination of words from different paradigms (word classes); these include adjectives, conjunctions, pronouns etc., results in syntagms (grammatical sentences)


(5)

e. The paradigmatic level of language

**Paradigmatic:**

- relationship of units of a language on a vertical plane
- units in two or more sentences
- paradigms are different parts of speech grouped together
- words belonging to the same part of speech
- smaller components (or paradigms) which make up a whole, e.g. letters, words and phrases are paradigms for the larger concept. Letters, for example, are the paradigms which form words. Words are the paradigms which form phrases.

Is the function of language which engages the Addressee (receiver) directly and is best illustrated by vocatives and imperatives, e.g. "Tom! Come inside and eat!" It includes the following:

a) **Imperatives:**
Imperatives are statements which give direct orders:
- Give me your name.
- Dial 911 for assistance.
- Clean the floors today.

b) **Requests/Informative statements:**
- Speaker to a taxi driver: “I’m going to Soweto Market.”
- Parent to child: “Can you please clean your room today?”
- Customer: “My house is located in Luxury Hill.”
- **Driver:** “Can you please sms those directions to me?”

*The directive function, therefore, gives orders, commands or directions.*

**QUESTION 2**  
15 marks
In a paragraph, describe the phatic function of language. Substantiate your answer with at least **FIVE** examples.

1. Phatic communion is the device to establish, prolong, or discontinue communication. The words that speakers use are polite, courteous and well-meaning, yet they do not mean anything in the context. The —polite meaningless words are —How do you do? —Nice meeting; how is the weather? etc.

   Another example in question form: —Are you listening?

   The question asked to attract the attention of the listeners to reinforce their continued attention.

2. It is the use of language for the sake of interaction and is therefore associated with the contact factor. The phatic function can be observed in greetings and casual discussions of the weather, particularly with strangers. It also provides the keys to open, maintain, verify or close the communication channel: "Hello?", "Ok?", "Hummm", "Bye"... It is described as:
   - **Language for making/sustaining contact, e.g. “Good weather today”**
• Uses ritualistic formulae which are meaningless, e.g. “Happy birthday”

• Ensures that contact is working properly e.g. “nice morning today”

• Includes idle chatter, comments on weather; greetings

• Niceties and polite discussion pieces which make up social conversation. Thus,

• A phatic expression exists only as a social task; they socially acceptable ways of interacting with others.

Does not convey any particular information.

Does not share emotions or give directions.

Phatic statements serve as measures of politeness; “small talk”; party talk; discuss light topics, like the weather or day-to-day experiences = phatic communication

Do not separate the examples from your discussion. Use them to support your ideas or views. Some of you just listed the examples, this was incorrect.

QUESTION 3

Write an essay in which you clearly explain phonetics as a branch of linguistics. In your discussion include the properties of sounds and the three branches of phonetics. Support your discussion with relevant examples.

Your answer should have an introduction, body and conclusion.

The following may be considered:

Introduction (3 marks)

State how you will answer the question. Give your answering plan

Definition: Phonetics and Phone (5)

Phonetics is the study of the production and perception of speech sounds. It is concerned with the sounds of language, how these sounds are articulated and how the hearer perceives them. Phonetics is related to the science of acoustics in that it uses much the same techniques in the analysis of sound that acoustics does.

It studies sounds using phones. A phone is a speech sound; the smallest unit of distinguishable human sound found in any language. A phone is the smallest identifiable unit found in a stream
of speech. A phone is one of many possible linguistic sounds found across the languages in the world, E.g. [p], [d]

There are three sub-disciplines of phonetics:

The properties of sounds include: Place of articulation, Manner of articulation and voicing.

- **place of articulation** → places of our bodies we use to produce sounds.
- **manner of articulation** → indicates the way we breathe in order to produce specific sounds.
- **Voicing** → the position of the vocal cords during speech. (Sounds = voiced (vibrating vocal cords) or voiceless = (still or narrow vocal cords).

The three branches of phonetics are:

a. **Articulatory phonetics** researches where and how sounds are originated and thus carries out physiological studies of the respiratory tract, trying to locate precisely at which location and in which manner a sound is produced.

b. **Acoustic phonetics** examines the length, frequency and pitch of sounds. Special instruments are required to measure and analyze the sounds while they travel via the channel.

c. **Auditory phonetics** studies what happens inside the ear and brain when sounds are finally received. It also interested in our ability to identify and differentiate sounds.

**Conclusion**

As your Tutor Marker I would like to encourage you to work harder in your next assignment and keep aiming higher. Bear in mind that marks are not given but awarded and where there is evidence of hard work it is rewarded handsomely.

I wish you all the best in Assignment 2. Read the Study Guide thoroughly; make use of it exhaustively, as well as any other reading materials you can find. You are also welcome to write your comments at the back of the assignment booklet so that I can hear from you with regards to the assignment, either what you enjoyed or the challenges you met. Some of you are doing
that and it is appreciated. I hope that these comments will be put into effect. I thank you very much for conscientiously working through your assignments.

I wish you all the best in your studies and I am looking forward to well researched work in the next assignment.

Please do not hesitate to call or email us if you have any query concerning assignments.

Your Tutor

Dr Juliet Pasi