



**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION
END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION
BAC 1209: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

DATE: 11th March 2026

TIME: 16:00 – 18:00

Instructions

1. This examination consists of **FOUR** questions.
2. Answer **Question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO** questions.

Question 1 (Compulsory)

(30 marks)

Read the article below and answer the questions that follow.

Why we need to mind our language by John Kageche, May 21, 2016

English is not the first language for most Africans. There are those who dismiss it as foreign and thus a justification for not seeking competence in it. Yet, competence in English as a necessity to progress in the workplace, locally and globally, cannot be dismissed.

Communication is one of the most complex, yet indispensable tool we work with daily. It is made even more complex when the language of, er, communication is English. The depth of deterioration in the English language was evident at the just concluded two day conference at Strathmore University dubbed ,‘Exploring Communication Competence in Industry and Academy’ where I was invited to mediate.

To declare competence in communication means that you have the ability to do something successfully- and because perfection doesn’t exist, competence therefore implies a perpetual work in progress.

In his 'Mark My Word' column in the Saturday Nation, Philip Ochieng, a former editor with the Daily Nation (the newspaper with the highest circulation in Kenya) keeps watch over grammar as used (abused?) in newspapers. Yet, he freely admits that English must be the most “difficult” language in the world. In his column, he revealed that “English prepositions give reporters and

sub-editors a great deal of grief -even in countries where English is the mother tongue". Such is the complexity of the language. Yet, despite this challenge, we cannot escape the fact that English is the language of business communication, locally and internationally. We must, therefore, continually (not continuously as I learnt from Mr. Ochieng) strive to come to grips with it. The difference? The heart beats continuously (unending) but the eyes blink continually (intermittently); now you know. Makes you wonder exactly what continuous assessment tests are.

Anyway, the more common instances where we murder English is when we say, "me, I", "like, for example", "repeat again", "severally" (to mean several times, *which it does not mean*), and, "my names are". Why do these occur? Largely because English is not the first language for most Kenyans. The mother tongue and/or Kiswahili usually are. And these influence written and spoken English. Borrowing from *Chinglish* (Chinese English) then, I contrive *Kenglish* to refer to spoken English that is influenced by Kiswahili and the many other languages spoken in Kenya. For instance, "Help me with your ID card," is a direct translation from "*Nisaide na kitambulisho chako.*" The latter, is grammatically correct, but not so the former. See #OnlyKenyansunderstand for more examples. It does not help matters when one's English teacher pronounces alert as a rat, choose, juice or, art, hat.

Then there's pronunciation which is not taught in school as I understand it used to. It is assumed that the student will somehow know. Small wonder then that hat, hart, heart, hurt and hut are all pronounced as hat by most of us. Pronunciation is a factor of contorting the organs of articulation (lips, jaw, tongue etc) to the rhythm of a language. Yes, every language has a rhythm. And two decades of working specific muscles of articulation in a specific way, it is unrealistic to expect the learner to flex them differently overnight. One might as well hope his pot belly will become a six-pack after lifting weights for an hour. One's pronunciation can, however, change to a 'six-pack' through practice-as evidenced by the average Kenyan who has returned from the US after a year of being exposed to the North American accent. Or, one who learns his mother tongue as an adult.

And then there is punctuation. The semi-colon separates two independent sentences and is not interchangeable with the full colon . British English has the full stop inside the speech marks and American English, outside. .

The digital disruption has not spared communication. It is because of social media that hahaha became Lol!, you, u, and, one can insert a smile(y) at the end of a sentence as if it's part of punctuation. Which is perhaps why an infuriated Sunny Bindra tweeted, "Why cant tweep's understand that if you dont use apostrophe's properly you're sentence look's as dumb's this?" Mercifully, there is spell check and predictive texting. This is a double-edged sword though-on the one had it allows users to type faster and spell correctly. On the other hand, it is quickly becoming the remote control of written communication.

What to do then, now that we must learn a challenging language in challenging circumstances? Joining an organization like Toastmasters, that is deliberate in improving members' use of English is one way; another, is to learn from Philip Ochieng's Mark My Word column; a third is to

grammatically write your texts, chats and social media conversations, and a fourth, be consciously aware to deliberately reduce the influence of mother tongue in your communication.

What do you think?

Questions

1. From the article, explain 3 reasons why we need to mind our language. (6 marks)
2. Describe three ways that demonstrate how language relates to employability and professionalism. (6 marks)
3. With 3 examples from the article, explain 3 common language problems encountered in everyday communication. (9 marks)
4. As a student of communication, identify and explain three lessons you have learnt from the article regarding improving your written communication. (6 marks)
5. Identify and correct three language issues in the statement from Sunny Bindra's tweet, "Why cant tweep's understand that if you dont use apostrophe's properly you're sentence look's as dumb's this?" (3marks)

Question 2

(15 marks)

Identify a genre of media writing and write an article of 200 words for an item to be published in an online platform within that genre. After writing, underline at least five words or phrases that are characteristic of journalese within that genre.

Question 3

(15 marks)

Identify five social media platforms and analyse how each digital platform influences language choice, style and tone in communication.

Question 4

(15 marks)

- (i) Explain the process of speech production. (3 marks)
- (ii) Describe four phonological processes that occur in connected speech. (12 marks)