



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS 2020/2021
FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF
EDUCATION, ARTS, SCIENCE, AND TOURISM
UCU 110: COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION SKILLS

DATE: FRIDAY 12TH MARCH 2021

TIME: 2.00 P.M. - 4.00 P.M.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. Candidates MUST write their registration number in the space provided on each answer booklet.**
- 2. There are four (4) questions in this paper. Candidates MUST answer ALL FOUR questions.**
- 3. ALL answers MUST be written in the answer booklet provided.**

Q1. READING COMPREHENSION (25 MARKS)

Read the following passage and answer the questions which follow it.

1 Deborah Tannen has done spectacular ground breaking studies that provide unprecedented insights into the differences between men and women with regard to their conversational styles. In particular, she has helped scholars in this field gain understanding as to why gender often creates oral communication barriers. The essence of Tannen's research is that men use talk to emphasize status, whereas women use it to create connection. These obviously look like polar goals of conversation between the genders. Her conclusion, of course, does not apply to every man and to every woman. There will be a few individuals within a large group of men or of women who may not ascribe to Tannen's general characteristic.

2 Tannen has suggested that communication is a continual balancing act where participants are ever juggling the conflicting needs of intimacy and independence. Intimacy calls for openness and commonalities while on the other hand independence is defined by separateness and differences. The fact however is this: women hear and speak the language of intimacy and men speak and hear the language of status, power and independence. This means that men use conversations primarily as a means to preserve independence and maintain status in a hierarchical social order. For many women, conversations are negotiations for closeness in which the gender is seeking is trying to seek and give confirmation and support. A few examples will help illustrate Tannen's thesis:

3 Men frequently complain that women talk on and on about their problems. Women criticize men for not listening. The issue is simple: when men hear a problem, they frequently assert their desire for independence and control by offering solutions. Many women, on the other hand, view telling a problem as a means to promote closeness. The women present the problem to gain support and connection, not to get the man's advice. Mutual understanding is the result of symmetrical thinking. But giving advice is asymmetrical---setting up the advice giver as the more knowledgeable, more reasonable and more in control. The end result is distancing the men and women in their efforts to communicate. The tragedy is that people who ought to be getting closer now have to contend with the aftermath of disengagement.

4 Men are often more direct than women in conversation. A man might say, "I think you are wrong on that point". A woman might say, "Have you checked what the marketing research says regarding that point?" The idea is that a woman is not going to say "you are wrong" but would rather refer the man to the source of error in the interest of intimacy. Men view a woman's indirectness as "covert" or "sneaky" but women are not as concerned with the status that comes out of directness.

5 Women tend to be less boastful than men. They often downplay their authority or accomplishments to avoid appearing as braggarts and to take the other person's feelings into account. However, men can easily misinterpret this and incorrectly conclude that a woman is less confident and competent than she really is.

6 Finally, men often criticize women for seeming to apologize all the time. Men tend to use the phrase "I am sorry" as a weakness because they interpret the phrase to mean the woman is accepting blame when he knows she is not to blame. The problem is that women tend to use "I am sorry" to express regret and to restore balance to a conversation. "I know you must feel bad about this, I do, too." For women the phrase is an expression of understanding and caring about the other person's feelings rather than an apology.

- a) In not more than three words, suggest a suitable title for this passage. (3 marks)
- b) Use your understanding from this passage, use three words that can accurately describe Deborah Tanner. (3 marks)
- c) What is the meaning of the expression "to contend with the aftermath of disengagement" (3 marks)
- d) Support using the passage the notion that men want to be accepted as more superior to women in conversations. (3 marks)
- e) State clearly Deborah Tanner's thesis. (4 marks)
- f) What other word in this passage means the same as connection? (3 marks)
- g) State three weaknesses that men associate with women's conversations. (3 marks)
- h) What does the phrase "I am sorry" mean when used by women in conversation? (3 marks)