

Spoken English



Obligatory assignment 2 instructions

Introduction: This obligatory assignment is a single project consisting of two parts: A written paper (part A) and an oral presentation (part B). The purpose of the assignment is to further your understanding of the course content and develop your skills in analysing and discussing samples of authentic English discourse. The written part will help you develop your skills in writing an academic paper. The oral presentation will also serve as practice for the final oral examination. At the oral exam in December, you will present as short version of your OA assignment. Both part A and part B must be approved in order to sit the exam.

OA2, part A – written paper (deadline: 09.10)

Instructions: Choose **one** of the following topics. For topics with an * preceding them, you will find all associated texts and resources in Canvas:

<https://inn.instructure.com/courses/8680/pages/obligatory-assignment-texts-and-resources>

1. Investigate the use of one or more **pragmatic markers** in the *Spoken BNC2014* (see pp. 154-159 of *IPU*). Examples of possible pragmatic markers are *well, you know, yeah, like*, and *I don't know*. Discuss and give some possible explanations for the use of these items in spoken English.
2. *Identify **pragmatic markers** (see pp. 154-159, *IPU*) in "The best of the Irish on *The Graham Norton Show*" (YouTube), and discuss how the use of pragmatic markers might be difficult to learn for non-native speakers of English. For this topic, you will need to transcribe some of the discourse in the video, in order to present your discussion in writing.
3. Investigate the frequency of one or more of the potential **hedging forms** (see pp. 110-113, *IPU*) *just, really, actually, probably, I think, a bit, kind of, sort of, you know*, and *I suppose* in the *Spoken BNC2014*, and compare your findings to the frequency of these items in the different context types of the *LCIE* corpus (task 5.5., *IPU*). Use your results to discuss the use of hedging forms in spoken English.
4. **Reference** (see ch. 4, *IPU*): Investigate the use of first person reference in the spoken and academic sections of the *COCA*. Discuss and give some possible explanations for the use of *I, me, we, us, our(s)* and *my/mine* across the two registers.
5. **Reference** (see ch. 4, *IPU*): Make a frequency list of the top 20 words (disregard punctuation) in the fiction section of the *BNC1994* and the (entire) *Spoken BNC2014* (you need to use *CQPweb* for this task). Discuss the words whose main use is **deictic**, and give some explanations for the use of these words across the two registers, focusing on any differences you find between the two lists.
6. *Investigate how **politeness** is expressed in the group discussion from the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE) (see ch. 5, *IPU*). Discuss how the speakers in the group discussion use language to give people space, and to co-construct a sense of closeness and togetherness. The participants in this conversation have different language backgrounds, how might that play a role in the construction and recognition of politeness?
7. *Find examples of strategies used to avoid threatening (negative/positive) **face** (see ch. 5, *IPU*) in the panel discussion from the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE), and use the examples to discuss the construct of face.
8. *Identify features typically associated with **spoken communication** in text SVLZ from the *Spoken BNC2014* (discussion about politics on a car journey) and in two

Twitter discussion threads (one started by writer Caitlin Moran, one started by Tim Aker, member of the Brexit Party). Discuss linguistic differences between the types of discourse represented in the texts, and how contextual factors may affect the speakers' linguistic choices (see ch. 7-8, *IPU* and Wilson (2009)).

9. *Identify features typically associated with **spoken or written communication** in text 1 (prepared speech by Kamala Harris) and text 2 (radio interview with Kamala Harris). For text 2, you should focus on the speech of Kamala Harris. Discuss differences between the two types of discourse represented in the two texts, and how contextual factors may affect the speaker's linguistic choices. For this topic, you will need to transcribe some of the discourse in text 2, in order to present your discussion in writing. For text 1, a written transcript of the speech is provided in addition to the video.
10. *Identify features typically associated with **spoken or written communication** in online conversations between the characters of *SKAM Austin* (Text 1), and compare these conversations with the spoken conversations between the same characters in episode 1 of the series (Text 2). Discuss differences between the two types of discourse represented in the two texts, and how contextual factors may affect the speakers' linguistic choices. For this topic, you will need to transcribe some of the discourse in text 2, in order to present your discussion in writing.
11. *Discuss the concept of **communicative competence** based on the group discussion from the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE). In your discussion, you must refer to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) chart designed to assess spoken performances, as well as the descriptors for communicative competences. Focus on two to three speakers in the text, (e.g. speakers S1, S7 and S12). To what extent can these speakers be considered "proficient users" (C1/C2 level) of spoken English, as described by the CEFR chart for assessing spoken performances?
12. *Identify **communication strategies** used in the group discussion from the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE), and discuss them with reference to the categories presented in Nacey & Graedler (2013).
13. *Identify **fluency**-related features in the group discussion from the *Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English* (VOICE), focusing primarily on one or two speakers in the text (e.g. speakers S1, S7 and S12). Discuss the extent to which the features you identified seem to disrupt the conversation, or whether or not they may affect listeners' perceptions of the fluency level of the speaker. You may also draw on the descriptors for spoken fluency in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.
14. Generate concordance lines for *could you* and *can you* from the *Spoken BNC2014*, and use them to discuss how **the speech act of requests** may be expressed in spoken English (see ch. 6, *IPU*).
15. Explore the use and functions of the word **sorry** in the *Spoken BNC2014*, and relate your findings to **speech act theory** and/or **theories of politeness** (see chapters 5 and 6, *IPU*).
16. ***Speech Acts gone wrong**: Misinterpretations of indirect speech acts is often used for comic effect. Discuss the concepts of locution, illocution, perlocution and felicity conditions and use them to explain possible understandings of Penny's utterance and where Sheldon gets it wrong the video clip from *The Big Bang Theory*.
17. A topic of your choice (must be approved before you start).

Further instructions:

- Your paper must include an empirical and a theoretical component.
- You must refer to relevant references from the reading list, as well as two or more additional sources (see e.g. the “further reading” sections after each chapter in *Introducing Pragmatics in Use*).
- In the introduction to your paper, you must briefly present the material your analysis/discussion is based on (corpus or other type of material), and discuss how the material is suitable to explore the topic (strengths and limitations).
- In your main discussion, you must refer to the materials listed in your chosen task, but you may also include examples from other sources that you find relevant to shed light on your topic.
- Remember to explain any theoretical concepts or terminology you use in your paper. It may help you to imagine your reader to be someone at your own academic level: A student who is interested in your topic, but who does not know as much about it as you now do!

Formal requirements: Minimum 1500, maximum 2500 words; Times New Roman 12 pt.; 1.5 line spacing; APA standard referencing.

Assessment: The paper will be assessed on a scale of “approved / not approved”, according to the criteria outlined below. You will receive written feedback from one of your teachers. If your paper is not approved, you will have **one** opportunity to revise it for approval.

Assessment criteria:

- **Content:**
 - Whether central theoretical concepts are properly defined, and used correctly.
 - To what extent the student makes use of relevant documents, research findings and theory.
 - To what extent the text systematically addresses the chosen topic and follows the task instructions.
- **Coherence, cohesion & structure:** The extent to which ideas and arguments are clear, relevant, and fluently connected.
- **Independent thinking:** The extent to which the student has engaged with the source material in an original way, showing critical reflection.
- **Language:** The extent to which the student uses grammatically correct and idiomatic language, and maintains an academic register throughout.
- **Use of sources:**
 - The extent to which the student shows a good balance between supportive sources and independent thought, as well as the ability to properly acknowledge sources.
 - That all the sources are listed in the reference list, and all the listed sources are referred to in the text.

OA2, part B – oral presentation (11.11)

For part B, you will give an oral presentation of your paper to the class, improved according to the feedback you received from your teacher.

Formal requirements: Each student will give a 15 minute presentation of their assignment, and 5 minutes will be set aside after each presentation for questions and feedback from teachers and fellow students. Your presentation must incorporate some kind of visual aid, such as PowerPoint, Prezi, handouts, etc.

Assessment: As with part A, the presentation will be assessed by one of the teachers on a scale of “approved / not approved.” You will receive a set of questions for self- and peer assessment.