

ENG 102
Introduction to English Grammar and
Composition

Ibadan Distance Learning Centre Series

ENG 102
Introduction to English Grammar and
Composition

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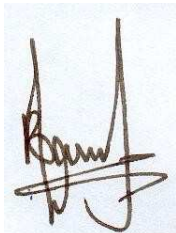
Vice-Chancellor's Message

I congratulate you on being part of the historic evolution of our Centre for External Studies into a Distance Learning Centre. The reinvigorated Centre, is building on a solid tradition of nearly twenty years of service to the Nigerian community in providing higher education to those who had hitherto been unable to benefit from it.

Distance Learning requires an environment in which learners themselves actively participate in constructing their own knowledge. They need to be able to access and interpret existing knowledge and in the process, become autonomous learners.

Consequently, our major goal is to provide full multi media mode of teaching/learning in which you will use not only print but also video, audio and electronic learning materials.

To this end, we have run two intensive workshops to produce a fresh batch of course materials in order to increase substantially the number of texts available to you. The authors made great efforts to include the latest information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly. It is our hope that you will put them to the best use.



Professor Olufemi A. Bamiro, FNSE
Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

The University of Ibadan Distance Learning Programme has a vision of providing lifelong education for Nigerian citizens who for a variety of reasons have opted for the Distance Learning mode. In this way, it aims at democratizing education by ensuring access and equity.

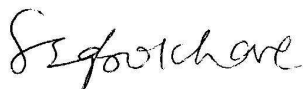
The U.I. experience in Distance Learning dates back to 1988 when the Centre for External Studies was established to cater mainly for upgrading the knowledge and skills of NCE teachers to a Bachelors degree in Education. Since then, it has gathered considerable experience in preparing and producing course materials for its programmes. The recent expansion of the programme to cover Agriculture and the need to review the existing materials have necessitated an accelerated process of course materials production. To this end, one major workshop was held in December 2006 which have resulted in a substantial increase in the number of course materials. The writing of the courses by a team of experts and rigorous peer review have ensured the maintenance of the University's high standards. The approach is not only to emphasize cognitive knowledge but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The materials have had the input of experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind, since such people can often feel isolated from the community of learners. Adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

The Distance Learning Centre also envisages that regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks will find these books very useful. We are therefore delighted to present these new titles to both our Distance Learning students and the University's regular students. We are confident that the books will be an invaluable resource to them.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.



Professor Francis O. Egbokhare

Director

General Introduction and Course Objectives

This is an introductory course in English grammar. In the university, most official and intercultural communications are done in English language. Therefore, this course is designed to sharpen candidates' competence in English grammar and usage. It will also correct their deficiencies and prepare them for the task of communication. This is done with a view to improving students' command of English language expression, writing skills and comprehension. It also lays a foundation for students' acquisition and application of theories of grammar.

LECTURE ONE

Nouns

Introduction

The 'parts of speech' is a term in grammar that refers to the categories of words in a language. There are eight parts of speech in English. These are nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. In this lecture, we shall discuss nouns. We shall describe and explain different classes of nouns and their peculiar features.

Objectives:

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify nouns in different contexts;
2. state the role each plays wherever it occurs;
3. use nouns effectively; and
4. distinguish between types of nouns.

Pre-Test

1. What is a noun?
2. What are the different classes of nouns?
3. Identify nouns in the following excerpt:

At a tender age, young, poor Chika lived with great expectations. He realized that his community could only boast of two graduates. He also discovered that most of his uncles ended their education at Grade 4, many of them not bothering to advance to the secondary school.

Years later, he was admitted to study Medicine and Surgery. As he had no one to support him financially, he had to engage himself in menial jobs. However, he did not let it disturb his studies.

(Adapted from 'The Story of Poor Chika' *Saturday Punch*, March 17, 2007)

CONTENT

The English language contains several words that make up its vocabulary. Most of These words are listed in a dictionary, and they are put under different categories. This depends, however, on the similarities in their grammatical behaviour in the language. For instance, a word can be used to name things, people or idea (nouns). Another word can be used to describe an action (verb) or used to describe a thing (adjective). A word can also describe the mode of an action (adverb). Thus, due to their different behavioural patterns, words have been classified according to a cline called **Parts of Speech**. The recognized parts of speech are nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. In this lecture, we shall discuss nouns.

Before discussing types of nouns, we shall define the term 'noun' as a naming word. It names people, animals, things, places, ideas, notions, etc.

1. Proper Nouns

Let's start by introducing ourselves. My name is Akanji and I live in Ibadan. My pet is with me here; and its name is Tiger. What about yours? I assume your name will be something like Funke, Ngozi, Alkali, Shuaib, Wakama, Nnena, Claudius, Laetitia, Mustapha and a host of others. In class, students have nicknames or aliases such as Puma, Johnny and Walata; and also call their teachers nicknames. I also assume that you come from different places, such as Lagos, Akure, Kano, Kafanchan, Zamfara, Abuja, Benin, Warri, Port-Harcourt, Onitsha, etc.

In some cases, you hear people give names to their pets, such as dogs and cats. You may call your dog Tiger while your neighbour calls hers Peace. These names, you will observe, identify each of these dogs and stand them out from the others. Thus, one who has five dogs may have five different pet names for them. Then your pet may be called Favour (if you have one) or some other names. Your house may be called a Palace

even when you are not a king or a queen. If we put all our names together, we shall arrive at the following:

Names of People: Akanji, Funke, Ngozi, Alkali, Shuaib, Wakama, Nnena, Claudius, Laetitia and Mustapha.

Nicknames: Puma, Johnny and Walata.

Names of Places: Lagos, Akure, Kano, Kafanchan, Zamfara, Abuja, Benin, Warri, Port-Harcourt and Onitsha.

Proper Names of Pets or other things: Tiger, Favour, Peace, Palace.

These names are proper nouns because they identify each person, place or thing among a group. In addition, the names in the following categories all fall under the class of proper nouns: business organizations, airports, days of the week/month, educational institutions, hotels/restaurants, religious festivals, sacred books, seaports, courses, languages, etc.

2. Common Nouns

You will note, however, that there are other words which also name people, places or things. These include man, woman, boy, girl, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece, father, mother, teacher, trader and singer (for persons); room, road, school, market, farm and workshop (for places); and table, water, oil, salt, chair, goat, cattle, scarf, computer and radio (for things). Since these words also name things and people, they are referred to as nouns. Nevertheless, they have to be distinguished from those in the first group. The nouns in the first group are called *proper nouns* because they are the names that identify individual persons, places and things. The nouns in the second group are called *common nouns* since these are names, which more than one person, place, or thing has in common.

Now what is the difference between the two? The major distinguishing factor is that proper nouns identify individuals with their names but common nouns are shared by more than one person. For instance, when a class teacher faces his/her students and says 'boys, stand up', only students that are boys will rise. When the same instruction is passed on to girls, only students that are girls will stand up. However, when he says 'Mukhtar, stand up:', only the individual addressed as Mukhtar will rise. This means that *boy* is common to all the male children and *girl* is common to the female children in that school (and anywhere else), but Mukhtar is peculiar to only one of them. Thus, Mukhtar is a proper noun, but *boys* and *girls* are common nouns. To distinguish this in

writing, proper nouns always begin with capital letters, while common nouns start with small letters.

3. Collective Nouns

Now you must be wondering whether words such as choir, panel, crew, audience, congregation, team, crowd, swarm, etc are common nouns. Yes, they are, because there are different units of each in the society. For instance, there are different football teams, congregations (in churches and mosques), audiences (at lectures and cinema houses), etc. However, these words have a unique quality that distinguishes them from other common nouns. This is in the sense that they represent a collection of people or things. Choir is a group of singers in a church; audience is a group of people watching a movie or listening to a talk, and crowd is a group of disorganized people on the street. Thus, the nouns are called *collective nouns*.

4. Concrete and Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns refer to words that name things which can be seen and touched. Such words include boy, bicycle, book, jug, cup, table, clock, etc. The opposite is the abstract noun. It refers to nouns (which may be an idea or a concept), but whose referent may not be seen physically or touched. Perhaps, such concepts occur in the mind. For instance *beauty* and *faith* are abstract nouns because we may know that a thing is beautiful but we may not be able to extract the beauty from the thing. We can also say a person has faith, but we cannot see or touch that *faith*. Thus, such words are called abstract nouns because they name entities that cannot be touched. Other examples of abstract nouns include love, fear, sadness, joy, justice, belief, sincerity, etc.

5. Countable (Count) and Uncountable (Non-Count) Nouns

We can also draw a line between nouns that can be counted (count nouns) and those that cannot be counted (non-count nouns). The following words belong to the class of countable nouns because we can take them apart and count them: house, teacher, friend, clock, book, student, box and car. However, the following cannot be so counted: water, salt, information, flour, rice, beans, soup and air. Notice, however, that uncountable nouns may become countable in some instances. We may use established

measurements to count them as in the following sentences: two pints of blood, four buckets (or sachets of pure) water, three pieces of silver, two loaves of bread, five kilos of yam powder, ten bags of rice, etc. You may wonder why we consider items such as rice and beans uncountable. The fact is that the stress one will go through in counting the grains does not justify the exercise. The grains are too many to be counted. When next you want to cook either of them, try and count the content of about two cups! Then tell your friends later how easy it was.

You might be tempted to equate concrete nouns with countable nouns and abstract nouns with uncountable nouns. Although this might be correct in some instances, it is not always so. The fact is that concrete nouns such as *water*, *oil*, *bread* and *salt* are not countable, but abstract nouns like *belief* and *fear* are countable.

6. Nouns and Numbers

Singular and plural are concepts that represent *one* and *more than one* respectively. Having identified countable nouns in the last section, let us see how nouns form their plural forms. In English, suffixes, such as *-s*, *-es*, *-ies* are attached to words to indicate plurality. In some instances, the plural marker is not indicated; a situation referred to as *zero plural*. There are also other irregular plurals, such as change of internal vowels of words or addition of other affixes as in *ox-en* and *child-ren*

Here are some examples:

-s

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|
| boy | boys |
| tool | tools |
| radio | radios |
| tale | tales |

-es

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| box | boxes |
| mango | mangoes |
| hero | heroes |
| volcano | volcanoes |

| singular | plural |
|-----------------|---------------|
|-----------------|---------------|

-ies

| | |
|-------|---------|
| lorry | lorries |
| city | cities |
| lady | ladies |
| berry | berries |

-ves

| | |
|-------|---------|
| knife | knives |
| calf | calves |
| shelf | shelves |
| hoof | hooves |

zero

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| sheep | sheep |
| cattle | cattle |
| aircraft | aircraft |
| deer | deer |
| information | information |

Names

| | |
|-----------|----------------|
| Jones | The Joneses |
| Adebowale | The Adebowales |
| Abdullahi | The Abdullahis |

Foreign Plurals

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| alga | algae |
| stadium | stadia |
| criterion | criteria |
| radius | radii |
| medium | media |
| focus | foci |

Other Irregular Plurals

| | |
|-------|----------|
| man | men |
| ox | oxen |
| child | children |
| foot | feet |
| mouse | mice |

Notice that nouns such as *news*, *ethics*, *Physics*, *billiards*, *scissors*, *measles*, *politics*, *mumps* and *shears* are singular in meaning though they are plural in form. The fact is that they have no singular form. Perhaps, we can refer to them as ‘zero singular’. Other examples include *glasses* (*spectacles*), *tongs*, *bellows*, *trousers*, *knickers*, *remains*, *annals*, and *scissors*.

Some nouns, which do not have the plural affixes, are in the plural form. These include *people*, *police*, *cattle*, *poultry*, and the other examples under collective nouns.

Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed the noun as a part of speech. In the process, we clarified the term involved. We also examined types of nouns, such as proper nouns, common nouns, collective nouns, concrete and abstract nouns as well as countable/count nouns and uncountable/non-count nouns.

Post-Test

1. Can you find more examples for each of the sections identified above?
2. What is the difference between an abstract noun and an uncountable noun?
3. Name three classes of nouns and provide five examples of each.

LECTURE TWO

Pronouns

Introduction

As we have seen, nouns occur in different parts of a sentence. They come in different shapes. But more often than not we replace them with another class of words. These words are pronouns. Pronouns are used principally to avoid monotony in our expressions. Just as there are different types of nouns, so are there different types of pronouns. In this lecture, we explore the different types of pronouns and their roles.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify pronouns in different contexts;
2. state the role each plays wherever it occurs;
3. use pronouns effectively; and
4. distinguish between pronoun types.

Pre-Test

1. What is a pronoun?
2. What are the different classes of pronouns?
3. Identify pronouns in the excerpt on page 1.

CONTENT

Have you had any cause to report a friend, discuss a person or describe an individual? If yes, you must probably have mentioned their names first and then substituted other words each time you referred to them thereafter.

Such substitute terms are called pronouns. They are used to replace nouns in situations where the use of nouns might be considered repetitive. Pronouns have a system of person (first, second and third) and number (singular and plural). (Person and number are discussed under Lecture Three). They also belong to a closed class. Thus, you may know their number. Pronouns fall under different categories. Some of these are demonstrative, reflexive, personal, interrogative, reciprocal, indefinite and relative pronouns. We shall discuss the major ones in this lecture.

1. Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns can be classified into subject and object forms depending on where they occur in sentences. The subject position of a sentence is often occupied by the entity that performs the action in the sentence, while the object position is occupied by the entity that is affected by the action of the verb. The personal pronouns that occur in the subject position are the following:

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|
| I | We |
| You | You |
| He/She/It | They |

These occur in the following sentences:

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. <i>I</i> wrote a letter. | <i>We</i> wrote a letter. |
| b. <i>You</i> played soccer. | <i>You</i> played soccer. |
| c. <i>He</i> likes food. | <i>They</i> like food. |
| d. <i>She</i> sings well. | |
| e. <i>It</i> barks. | |

Personal pronouns also occur in the object position. They are shown in the following:

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Me | us |
| You | you |
| Him/her/it | them |

Here are examples to show their occurrence in sentences:

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Nduka called <i>me</i> . | Hafsat welcomed <i>us</i> . |
| b. Shoki saw <i>you</i> . | The guests heard <i>you</i> . |
| c. Seyi loves <i>him</i> . | Kunene bought <i>them</i> . |
| d. Sanni slapped <i>her</i> . | |
| e. The hunter killed <i>it</i> . | |

As you can see, the italicized pronouns occur after the verbs as objects.

2. Possessive Pronouns

Another class of pronouns is the possessive. There are two types. The first type qualifies a noun and is therefore also referred to as an adjective. The second type stands alone; it does not qualify any word.

Consider the following sentences:

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|
| My | our |
| Your | your |
| His/her/its | their |

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|--|---|
| a. Ade is <i>my</i> friend. | This tall building is <i>our</i> house. |
| b. <i>Your</i> book is on the table. | Agnes and Thomas are <i>your</i> friends. |
| c. Bede found <i>her</i> pen in the bag. | <i>Their</i> friends went to the zoo. |
| d. Tahir crossed <i>his</i> legs. | |
| e. The cat licked <i>its</i> forelimb. | |

Notice that the pronouns occur **before** the nouns. They also occur in both the subject and the object positions of sentences. Note further that *you* has the same form for the singular and plural forms in the subject, object and qualifier positions in sentences.

The second type of possessive pronouns usually stands by itself in sentences. Consider the forms and their uses in the sentences below:

| <i>Singular</i> | <i>Plural</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Mine | ours |
| Yours | yours |
| His/hers | theirs |

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|------------------------------|
| a. | This is <i>my</i> box. | → | This is <i>mine</i> . |
| b. | That is <i>your</i> shirt. | → | That is <i>yours</i> . |
| c. | Tolu and Kike, these are <i>your</i> books. | → | The books are <i>yours</i> . |
| d. | This clock belongs to Ojeah. | → | It is <i>his</i> . |
| e. | That wristwatch is Jane's. | → | It is <i>hers</i> . |
| f. | This house belongs to <i>us</i> . | → | It is <i>ours</i> . |
| g. | These tins belong to <i>them</i> . | → | They are <i>theirs</i> . |

3. Demonstrative Pronouns

Another class of pronouns is the demonstrative. Compare the following sentences:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| a. | Blessing wants <i>this</i> book. | → | Blessing wants <i>this</i> . |
| b. | Mummy bought <i>those</i> dresses. | → | Mummy bought <i>those</i> . |
| c. | Adiza needs <i>that</i> pen. | → | Adiza needs <i>that</i> . |
| d. | Leila loves <i>those</i> trinkets. | → | Leila loves <i>those</i> . |

The words *this* and *that* are adjectives in the first set of sentences (those on the left) because they qualify the nouns they precede. However, they are pronouns in the second set because they replace certain nouns which are not in the sentences. While the first set can be called demonstrative adjectives, those in the second set are called demonstrative pronouns. Demonstrative adjectives or pronouns are so called because they seem to 'point out' the nouns they go with (in the case of adjectives) or the nouns they represent (in the case of pronouns). Demonstrative pronouns are either singular (*this* and *that*) or plural (*these* and *those*). They present materials that are either near (*this* and *these*) or far (*that* and *those*).

4. Indefinite Pronouns

Next in the roll-call of pronouns are the indefinite pronouns. They are probably so called because they do not refer to a particular person or thing. For instance, we do not know whether the person or thing they refer to is male or female. Such pronouns are *anyone*, *someone*, *somebody*, *one*, *anybody* and *nobody*. Here are some examples of their usage.

- a. *Nobody* knows where the boy lives.
- b. *Someone* is at the door.
- c. *One* is aware of happenings in this country.
- d. He does not trust *anyone*

5. Reciprocal Pronouns

As the name suggests, this type refers to pronouns used for two or more people one or more of whom do something to or for the other(s). When the activity involves two people, *each other* is used; when it involves more than two people, *one another* is preferred. Consider the following examples:

- a. Joy and Nneka love *each other*.
- b. Hauwa and Khadijah saw *each other* at the market.
- c. Titi, Joy and Nneka wear *one another's* dresses.
- d. The four students know *one another*.

The first sentence means 'Joy loves Nneka and Nneka, loves Joy'. The second means 'Hauwa saw Khadijah, and Khadijah saw Hauwa'. In the third sentence, Titi may wear dresses owned by Nneka and Joy. Joy may also wear the dresses of the other two. You need to be careful in using these pronouns, though. For instance, the following sentences are anomalous because they convey wrong and unintended information.

- a. We fought ourselves.
- b. Kunle and Bimpe beat themselves.

The first sentence means that each member of the group fought himself or herself. In the second sentence, Kunle beat himself and Bimpe beat herself! The meanings here are contrary to reason since a sane person may not fight with or beat himself or herself.

6. *Relative Pronoun*

These are pronouns that link relative clauses to their antecedents. The pronouns are *who*, *which*, *whom*, *whose* and *that*. They occur in the following sentences:

- a. The students *who* read the book passed.
- b. The girl *whom* we saw is a university graduate.
- c. The man *whose* car was stolen reported to the police.
- d. The novel *which* he wrote is interesting.
- e. The man *that* we greeted is a respectable judge.

Notice that *who* and *whom* are used for animate nouns, *which* is used for inanimate nouns, while *that* and *whose* are used for both animate and inanimate nouns. Thus the following sentences are unacceptable. Can you correct them?

- a. *The house which windows are open is mine.
- b. *The girl which we saw is pretty.
- c. *the boy who his mother came here is my friend.

7. *Reflexive Pronouns*

This type of pronoun refers back to a noun or pronoun in the same sentence. Consider the following:

- a. I love *myself*.
- b. We saw *ourselves* in the mirror.
- c. You hurt *yourself*.
- d. You prayed for *yourselves*.
- e. Thomas cannot feed *himself*.
- f. Banke booked a place for *herself* on the flight.
- g. The dog bit *itself*.

Closely related to this are emphatic pronouns. These are used to lay emphasis on their antecedents. Here are examples:

- a. John *himself* agreed that he was wrong.
- b. I *myself* was there.

Notice that the noun or pronoun that occurs before the reflexive pronoun is called its antecedent.

8. Interrogative Pronoun

Certain pronouns are used to elicit detailed information. They are called interrogative pronouns. These pronouns are *what, who, which, why, when, how*, etc as in the following examples:

- a. *What* is your name?
- b. *Where* do you live?
- c. *When* did you pass the UME?
- d. *Why* are you not in school?
- e. *Who* brought you here?
- f. *Which* do you prefer, rice or yam?
- g. *How* did you do the sums?

Notice that some of these pronouns may occur in another form as in the following sentences.

- a. *Which* book do you want?
- b. *What* man is that?
- c. *Whose* cup did they break?

The words in italics here modify nouns. They are, therefore, called interrogative adjectives.

9. Gender-Neutral Pronouns

Current thinking in language usage considers the use of certain pronouns derogatory to certain gender. For instance, the use of generic *he* to refer to both male and female is considered oppressive or non-representative of all sexes. In view of this, certain proposals have been put forward for the use of pronouns that will be neutral in application to both male and female. The pronouns are called gender-neutral pronouns. Although the debate on which pronoun to use is still going on, the proponents of the use of singular *they* seem to be gaining ground. *They* and its other forms will therefore be considered singular in some contexts and plural in others. Here are some examples of its usage as a neutral singular pronoun:

- a. If anyone comes here, send *them* away.
- b. Everyone should submit *their* assignments promptly.
- c. A person's belongings are the things *they* own.
- d. No one should regard *themselves* as superior to another.

Notice, however, that these do not replace the conventional plural forms. They are used just to solve the gender problem, and they complement the existing forms.

Summary

In this lecture, we have examined the pronouns as a part of speech. In the process of our examination, we first defined the term involved, and went on to discuss types of pronouns, such as personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, reflexive pronouns, reflective pronouns and interrogative pronouns. We also briefly considered gender neutral pronouns.

Post-Test

Use the following pronouns types in different sentences:

Personal, reflexive, reciprocal, indefinite, interrogative, relative, possessive

LECTURE THREE

Verbs

Introduction

Verbs are central to the study of sentences in a language. A verb carries the action in a sentence and shows the relationship of the subject to other parts of the sentence. In this lecture, we shall discuss different types of the verb and the sub-units of each. There are auxiliary and main verbs; and there are transitive and intransitive verbs. We shall also discuss finite and non-finite verbs as well as the regular and the irregular forms of main verbs.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. distinguish between auxiliary and main verbs;
2. state the role each verb plays wherever it occurs;
3. use all types of verbs effectively; and
4. distinguish between types of main verbs.

Pre-Test

1. What is a verb?
2. What are the differences between the following pairs:
 - a. auxiliary and main verbs,
 - b. transitive and intransitive verbs,
 - c. regular and irregular verbs,
 - d. finite and non-finite verbs?

CONTENT

Look around you and observe what activities people are engaged in. A person may be playing; another person may be eating; others may be drinking, sitting, laughing, or doing many of other things. What about you? Obviously you are reading. The class of words that is used to depict such activities is called verbs. That is why they are traditionally called *action* words. But they go beyond actions because there are words in this class which do not involve any action at all. Such words include those italicized in the following sentences:

1. The bag *weighs* 50kg.
2. The book *costs* ₦500.00.
3. Aisha *is* happy.
4. This house *belongs* to me.

What this implies is that verbs also show a state of being as shown by their meanings in the foregoing examples. Notice too that the definition of action or state of being is not shared by auxiliary verbs. Thus, the function of the verb goes beyond actions. It can be a linker (copula) between a subject and its complement. It can express mood/modality (as in auxiliaries showing a person's state of mind or attitude). And it can present a state of being.

1. Auxiliary and Main verbs

Generally, verbs fall into two main classes. These are main verbs and auxiliary verbs. Main verbs usually present the main action in a sentence. They are usually able to stand as the only verb in a sentence without any other adjoining verbs. The auxiliary verbs are different; they cannot occur without main verbs in a sentence. Rather, they assist the main verb in realizing specific nuances of meaning especially in terms of time, duration of action and politeness. That is why they are called 'helping verbs'. Examples of the auxiliary verbs include *be, have, shall, may, might, could, can, shall, ought to, used to, need*, etc.

A. The auxiliary verb

The auxiliary verb can be categorized into three. These are modals, primary auxiliaries and passive auxiliary.

B. Modals include words, such as *can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might, and must*. Modal auxiliaries deal with different actions such as

- a. possibilities as in:
 - i. James may arrive today.
 - ii. He could have gone.

- b. future as in:
 - i. Biola will come.
 - ii. Zaki shall play.

- c. obligation as in:
 - i. You must come to school tomorrow.
 - ii. You shall go, sir!
 - iii. I will be there.

- d. ability
 - i. Seyi can't climb that tree.
 - ii. Helen can drive a truck.

- e. politeness
 - i. Could you pass the salt?
 - ii. Would you attend our party?

In these examples, the past tense forms of the verbs *could* and *would* show politeness. If you are addressing a respectable person, it may be considered rude to put the requests in the following manner:

- i. Can you pass the salt?
- ii. Will you attend our party?

In fact, the person being addressed in (i) can retort as follows: *I can, but I won't*.

C. Primary Auxiliaries: *have, be, do*

Primary auxiliaries seem to have two interpretations. In the first interpretation, they are main verbs; in the second, they are auxiliary verbs.

Here are some examples of primary verbs used as main verbs..

- a. I *have* money
- b. Dangote *is* a businessman
- c. We *do* our assignments promptly.

In these examples, the verbs are considered to be lexical because they have independent meaning. *Have* in (a) means *possess*, *is* in (b) shows a state of being and *do* in (c) means engaging in an activity.

As auxiliary verbs, the primary verbs may take the following forms:

- a. We *have* paid our school fees.
- b. She *is* going to school.
- c. We *do* not know you.
- d. They *do* play golf.
- e. She sings well, doesn't she?

In the first sentence, the word *have* is used as an aspectual verb. This indicates the length of time the action took to be completed and its current relevance. Aspectual auxiliaries usually show the perfective and the progressive aspects as discussed above. We will offer more details under *tense and aspect*. In (b) the verb *is* shows that the action is in progress; it has not been completed at the time of speaking. In (c-e), the verb *do* is an auxiliary. *Do* usually occurs when there is no other auxiliary item before the main verb as in (c & d). Note, however, that it occurs before negative in (c) and before the main verb in (d). In addition, the usage in (d) is considered to be emphatic because the sentence will still be complete if we do not use *do*. Its presence therefore is to lay emphasis on the verb. In (e) does, a form of *do*, is also used when there is no other auxiliary item to form tag questions.

Compare the following pairs of expressions:

- a. I do my work diligently.
- b. I do go to school regularly.
- c. He is happy.

- d. He is going home.

What do you notice? *Do* and *is* function as main verbs in (a & c), but as auxiliaries in (b & d).

D. Passive Auxiliary, *be*.

The passive form *be* is used in passive sentences as in the following:

- a. The corrupt politicians are *being* probed.
- b. He *was* praised.
- c. We *were* applauded.
- d. The thief has *been* arrested.
- e. Our house is *being* constructed.

All the words in italics are passive forms of the verb *be*. Note that the verb has eight varieties, and each is used in accordance with concord rules. These eight variants are *be, was, am, are, is, were, being* and *been*.

In terms of occurrence in sentences, the four categories can occur independently in sentences and they can also co-occur. When they co-occur, the modal auxiliary often comes first. It is followed by aspectual auxiliary and then the passive.

2. The Main Verb

The main verb can be identified with three features. These are action, state and process.

A. Action: Most verbs denote action because they represent a particular activity that the subject or an object is involved in. Such verbs include *write, play, kick, sing, yawn, sit, slap, laugh, try, love, leave, sneeze, see, smile* etc.

- a. Okocha *kicked* the ball.
- b. The pilot *alighted* from the plane.

B. State: The verbs in this category depict the current status of the participants in a sentence.

- a. Tunde *appears* ready.

- b. Kike *likes* food.
- c. Ladies *fear* snakes.

C. Process: This verb depicts a transition of the subject from one state to the other.

- a. General Obasanjo *became* the president in 1999.
- b. The children *grew* rapidly.

The main verbs fall under different classes. Let's examine each of them.

3. *Linking Verb*

A linking verb can be identified as the verb that joins together the subject and the complement that are related in a sentence. Thus, linking verbs occur between a noun or pronoun subject and a noun, or an adjective complement. Here are some examples:

- a. Ibrahim *remained* the class captain.
- b. Abbas *became* popular.
- c. My fiancée *is* very pretty.
- d. She *turned* a prophetess.
- e. He *appears* sober.
- f. Okorodudu *felt* relieved.

Other examples of linking verbs include *get*, *prove*, *taste*, *sound*, *keep*, *look*, etc.

4. *Finite and Non-Finite Verbs*

Verbs can also be distinguished according to whether or not they are finite or non-finite. Finite verbs are inflected for person, number and tense, but non-finite verbs are not. Before we pursue the idea of finite verbs in these three categories, we should first understand the concepts person, number and tense.

- a. Person: Person refers to the participants involved in communication. When people discuss, the speaker (or writer) is considered the **first person** and the male speaker uses *I* if he's speaking for himself, or *we* if he's speaking for himself and others. The **second person** is the listener (or reader) to what the first

person says (or writes). Whether the second person is one man or many men, they are addressed as *you*. The **third person** is the person or thing that serves as the subject of discussion. When this person/thing is one, we often distinguish whether it is a male, a female or a non-human being. We use the pronoun *he* for male, the pronoun *she* for female and the pronoun *it* for non-human being. When the third person is more than one, we use *they*.

- b. Number: Number has to do with the quantity of speakers and listeners. For the three persons identified above, the speaker may be *one* (in which case it is said to be **singular**), or more than one (in which case it is **plural**).
- c. Tense: Tense has to do with the time an action in a verb occurs. This may be present, past or continuous. For each of these, the verb usually changes its form.

A. Finite Verbs

Having discussed these major influences on the main verb, we will now explain the concept of the finite verb. Consider the following examples:

- 1 a. I *like* mathematics.
 - b. We *like* mathematics.
 - c. You *like* mathematics.
 - d. He/she *likes* mathematics.
- 2 a. I *am* happy.
 - b. We *are* happy.
 - c. You *are* happy.
 - d. He/she *was* happy.
 - e. They *were* happy.
- 3 a. Bamidele *writes* poetry.
 - b. Bamidele *wrote* poetry.
 - c. Bamidele *is writing* poetry.
 - d. Bamidele *will write* poetry.

The verb *like* in 1(a) has the same form for all persons except the third person singular. It is the third person singular subject that changes the form of the verb which is in the present tense. In (2a), the subject is

singular and the verb is *am*, but when the subject is plural, the verb changes to *are* in (b). In (2d) when the subject is singular, the verb is *was*, but when the subject changes to plural in (2e), the verb changes to plural: *were*. Notice that, whether singular or plural, *you* often takes a plural form of the verb. Hence it takes *are* in (2c). The verb *writes* is in the simple present tense in (3a); past in (3b); present progressive in (3c) and future in (3d). Thus, the verbs *like*, *be* and *write* change their forms when the person, number and tense of their respective sentences change. These verbs and others that behave like them are finite verbs.

B. The Non-Finite Verb

Non-finite verbs differ from finite verbs simply because they do not change their forms whenever they occur with different persons, number or tense in a sentence. We shall consider the following types: the infinitive, the participle and the gerund.

a. The Infinitive: This is the ordinary form of a main verb. It has a general application; it is not restricted to any person. Thus it is called infinitive. Usually, this is the base form of the verb and it is often preceded by *to*; thus earning the name **infinitive with *to***. When *to* is not used, the form is called **infinitive without *to*** or **bare infinitive**. Hence we have *to go*, *to sing*, *to play*, *to eat*, *to shout*, etc as in the following examples.

- a. Umekwe tried *to cross* the bridge.
- b. They want *to pass* their exams.
- c. *To understand* this course, you must be industrious.
- d. *To play* the game, he must wear the jersey/kits.
- e. It is ordained for man *to die* only once.
- f. Ado saw him *leave* the garden.
- g. You saw the cup *fall* off the table.
- h. We suggest that he *pay* the balance.

b. The Participle: This is a form of the verb used in forming continuous and perfect tenses of main verbs. The forms are the *-ing* and *-ed* forms of the verb.

The present participle is used to form

- a. the progressive/continuous tense as in
 - i. Simbiat is *singing*.
 - ii. Farai was *writing* a book.
- b. an adjective.
 - i. Unoka is an *ageing* fellow.
 - ii. Nwoye is the *Managing* Director.
- c. adjectival phrases
 - i. *Embarrassed by the ladies*, the man could not utter a word.
 - ii. *Reading the letter*, he nodded his head.

The past participle is used to complete the tense in perfective tenses:

- i. Ha has *arrived*.
- ii. She has *gone*.
- iii. They have *won* the game.
- iv. We had *warned* them.
- v. He had *phoned* us.

Wherever participles occur in sentences, they do not change their forms.

Witness the following examples:

- i. We look forward to *seeing* you at the party.
- ii. *Seeing* the principal, the students took to their heels.
- iii. I appreciate your *coming* with us
- iv. *Wounded* by the lion, the hunter left the forest.
- v. *Terrified* at the sight, the woman screamed.

c. The Gerund

The gerund is a verb that functions as a noun. It can function as the subject or the object in a sentence. However, it may also have features of verbs.

Here are some examples:

- a. *Seeing* is *believing*.
- b. *Singing* is my hobby.
- c. Their *winning* the match does not surprise us.
- d. Toun prefers *acting* to *broadcasting*.

As you would realize, the gerund is similar to the present participle. What is the difference all the same? The gerund functions like a noun while the participle functions like an adjective. Thus, a gerund can be modified by a possessive pronoun while the participle can modify a noun as in the following sentences:

- a. He has a *winning* smile.
- b. She likes *playing* pranks.
- c. I like your *winning* the match.
- d. Her *winning* smile is infectious

In (a), *winning* is a participle that qualifies the noun *smile*. In (b), however, the word *playing* is a gerund. It can also be qualified by a possessive pronoun/ adjective as in (c) what is its function in (d)?

As the foregoing sections show, the infinitive, the participle and the gerund can occur in different environments without changing their forms. Try and use the other infinitives, gerunds and participles in other contexts.

5. Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

As you must have observed, human beings are involved in one activity or the other. Such activities are either obvious (e.g. swimming) or not obvious (e.g. thinking). However, both are referred to as actions. The action in a sentence is usually performed by the subject. This action may or may not affect the object. When it does not, the verb does not require an object and is therefore classified as an intransitive verb. Consider the following sentences:

- a. Jiya *smiled*.
- b. Tasalla *sneezed*.
- c. Hamza *laughed*.
- d. The tree *fell*.
- e. Lami *slept*.

In these sentences, the actions are limited to only the subjects. They do not affect any other person or thing. Therefore, no object is provided. The verbs are intransitive. However, when the action in the verb affects another person or thing, the verb will take one or two objects. When verbs take objects, they are called transitive verbs. Transitive verbs are mono-transitive when they take only one object and di-transitive, when they take two objects. Here are some examples:

- a. Deborah *polished* the shoes.
- b. Fatiah *read* the books.
- c. Dauda *caught* the fish.
- d. Thelma *showed* the cup to Lilian.
- e. Laraba *called* Etim a genius.
- f. We *made* Suzan our friend.
- g. Tijani *gave* Fola a necklace.

In these examples, the verbs *polished*, *read* and *caught* are transitive verbs, while the verbs *showed*, *called*, *made* and *gave* are di-transitive verbs.

Meanwhile, certain verbs can function both as transitive and intransitive verbs. Witness:

| Transitive | Intransitive |
|--|--|
| a. Mffon <i>broke</i> the cup. | The cup <i>broke</i> |
| b. We <i>rolled</i> the stone down the hill. | The stone <i>rolled</i> down the hill. |
| c. He <i>burst</i> the tyre. | The tyre <i>burst</i> . |

6. Regular and Irregular Verbs

Pick up a novel and read a few pages of it. You will probably see a verb used in different forms in different contexts. The verb can take different shapes depending on the time indication in the sentence. An average verb has five forms. These are the infinitive, the continuous, the progressive, the past and the perfective forms. The infinitive is the base form of the verb; the continuous is the present tense form; the progressive reflects ongoing activities; the past is for completed events, and the perfective is

for actions that extended over a period of time before it ended. Here is a table reflecting different forms of the same verb:

| Infinitive | continuous | progressive | past | perfective |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Call | calls | calling | called | called |
| Kick | kicks | kicking | kicked | kicked |
| Buy | buys | buying | bought | bought |
| Say | says | saying | said | said |
| Pray | prays | praying | prayed | prayed |
| Lay | lays | laying | laid | laid |
| Lie | lies | lying | lied | lied |

As the table shows, the past and the perfective forms of the verbs above are identical. In addition, we can see strictly only four forms (if we take the identical forms as one). Verbs with these traits are many and are therefore called *regular* verbs. However, some verbs have either more or less than four forms. Such verbs, because they do not have the more common regular forms, are called *irregular* verbs. Here are some examples:

| Infinitive | continuous | progressive | past | perfective |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Be | am, is, are | being | was, were, | been |
| Cut | cuts | cutting | cut | cut |
| Lie | lies | lying | lay | lain |
| Read | reads | reading | read | read |
| Bite | bites | biting | bit | bitten |
| hide | hides | hiding | hid | hidden |
| Lie | lies | lying | lay | lain |

As the second table shows, *be* has eight forms, *cut* and *read* have three each, and *bite*, *hide*, and *lie* have five. Notice too that *lie* occurs as regular and irregular forms. Why? The first *lie* means to give untrue information. This has the regular form. The second meaning is to present horizontally, say on a bed. This has irregular form. Can you think of other verbs for both regular and irregular forms?

Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed the verb as a part of speech. In the process, we examined auxiliary and main verbs, finite and non-finite verbs, transitive and intransitive verbs, and regular and irregular verbs.

Post-Test

1. Construct three sentences using each of the following verb types:
(a) transitive verb (b) intransitive verb (c) linking verb (d) finite verb (e) non finite verb
2. Use the auxiliary verbs to show different attitudes that one can present in sentences.
3. what is the difference between a main verb and an auxiliary verb?
4. provide five examples of sentences in which the main verb is preceded by two or three auxiliary items.

LECTURE FOUR

Aspect, Tense, Mood and Voice

Introduction

Time sequence is often represented with the use of certain inflections on verbs. There is time in the past, time in the present and time in the future. The duration of an action is also marked by certain elements in the grammar of English Language. While time is marked by tense, the duration is marked by aspect. However, both work hand-in-hand in the realization of time. In addition, in presenting actions or concepts, there are attitudinal ways of conveying one's ideas. You can make a statement, a command or a question. You can also express your wishes and uncertainties. All these are captured in the mood system of the language. Finally, sentences can be presented in two ways: in the active voice or in the passive. In this lecture, we shall describe and explain the different aspects of the foregoing and their peculiar features.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. distinguish between tense and aspect
2. use all types of tenses effectively
3. distinguish between active and passive voice; and
4. identify and use mood systems.

Pre-Test

1. What are the features of verbs in the present tense?
2. What are the features of verbs in the past tense?

3. How do verbs form future tense?
4. What is the difference between tense and aspect?
5. What is mood?
6. What makes a sentence active or passive?

CONTENT

The verb is central to tense systems. It reflects the present, the past and the future times of actions. Tense is described as the time an action in a verb occurs, occurred or will occur. It can be a past time, a current time or an expected action, which comes up in the future. These are respectively referred to as past, present and future tenses.

A. Aspect

Aspect refers to verbal inflections, which express continuity, repetition or completeness of an action. It reveals whether an action is ongoing in the past or in the present. It may also indicate whether the action took place over a period in the past and ended in the past/present, or it is relevant to present events.

Aspect can be divided into three parts. These are progressive, perfective and habitual.

1. Progressive aspect expresses an action that is continuous. It can be either in the past or present tense form. Notice that the progressive aspect is recognized with its *-ing* affix on the main verb. This must, however, be distinguished from the participial form that is used as adjectives as in the following sentences: The computer is a *thinking* machine; She is my *loving* wife; He wrote an *exciting* story, etc. The following are sentences in the progressive tense:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Present: | 1. Yessirah <i>is taking</i> her breakfast. |
| | 2. Bintu <i>is going</i> to school. |
| Past: | 3. Shade <i>was singing</i> at home |
| | 4. Kunle and I <i>were discussing</i> the problem. |

2. Perfective Aspect expresses an action that started at some point in the past and was completed at a particular time in the past.

- Present:
1. Angela *has eaten* the apple.
 2. Mahmud and Doyle *have stopped* quarrelling.
- Past:
3. Angela *had eaten* the apple before David entered the room.
 4. Mahmud and Doyle *had stopped* quarrelling before they embarked on that project.

3. Habitual aspect expresses an action that was continuous for some time in the past before it was stopped.

1. The naughty boy used to throw stones at my door.
2. Wale used to pluck the mangoes in our school.

B. Tense

As you must have noted, each time we mention or discuss aspect, we refer to time or tense. This means that both tense and aspect cannot be separated into neat categories in English. Therefore, both of them go together in realizing the time an event occurs, occurred or will occur. Consequently, the two will be discussed together in this section.

1. The Simple Present Tense

The simple present tense is expressed with the infinitive form of the verb. e.g. I play; She works; Titi writes novels, etc. The present tense is used for different purposes:

- a. to state habitual actions:
Pius *plays* soccer every evening.
Bayo *swims* on weekends.
- b. to present scientific facts:
Insects *have* six legs.
The earth *is* spherical.
- c. to run commentaries:
Here *comes* the president.

Okocha *has* the ball; he *passes* to Kanu, and it *is* a goal!

d. to present a state of being:

The patient *suffers* from tuberculosis

The young lady *is* very pretty.

2. The Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense is used to express an action that occurred in the past.

Examples are the following:

- a. Shehu *travelled* to Germany last year.
- b. Mr Obi *won* the governorship election in Anambra state.
- c. The accident victims *shouted* for help.
- d. The people *wanted* a change in their social condition.

3. The Simple Future Tense

The future tense states an action that is expected to occur in future. It is usually indicated by a modal auxiliary and a main verb. The auxiliary states the future time while the main verb states the event that will take place then. Such auxiliary verbs include *will*, *shall*, *must*, *ought to*, and *going to* as in the following sentences:

- a. Onome *will* bring the ball.
- b. We *shall* meet at school.
- c. You *must* pay your school fees.
- d. You *ought to* attend the orientation programme.
- e. I'm *going to* write a letter.

4. The Present Progressive Tense

This is a mixture of tense and aspect features. While the tense states the action that is involved, the aspect states whether or not the action has been completed. In the present progressive tense, the action has commenced. However, as at the time of speaking, it has not been completed. Examples include the following:

- a. Joshua *is eating* groundnuts.
- b. Fatima *is playing* games on the computer.
- c. Shade and Oghenovo *are writing* their exams.

The progressive tense may also express future actions as in these examples:

- a. The principal *is going* to punish the offenders.
- b. They *are moving* to their new house next year.

5. The Past Progressive Tense

The past progressive tense states an action that was in progress in the past and was still on course when another action occurred. The verb denoting the second action is underlined in the sentences below:

- a. Audu *was snoring* when the children sneaked out.
- b. Gebi *was looking* for a book when she found the missing document.
- c. They *were taking* their supper when Sule entered.
- d. Bebe and Dede *were writing* their assignments before light went off.

6. The Future Progressive Tense

This type of tense presents an action that is anticipated to be in progress at a future time. Take note that the future may be any minute from the time the statement is made. What matters is that the statement must precede the action and the action must be perceived to be on for a while.

- a. The prophet *will be praying* for us at the camp.
- b. Zainab *will be preparing* rice tomorrow morning.
- c. They *will be expecting* us at the meeting.
- d. We *shall be travelling* all over the world in two weeks.

7. The Present Perfect Progressive Tense

This tense type states an action that started in the past and is still in progress as at the time of speaking. Consider the following examples:

- a. Dare *has been sitting* in the lobby since he arrived.
- b. Bintu *has been cleaning* the house since noon.
- c. The members of the church choir have been waiting for the choirmaster since 5pm.

- d. They *have been living* in Ibadan since 1992.

Notice that the perfective aspect marker is in the present tense form and it is followed by *been*, another auxiliary element, and finally, the main verb which has the *-ing* participle form.

8. The Future Perfect Progressive Tense

This expresses an action that one expects to be in progress at some point in future. Here are some examples:

- a. By the end of this decade, Medinah *will have been arguing* cases in courts.
- b. In a couple of months, I *shall have been writing* my third novel.
- c. By July, next year, *we shall have been living* in our new house.
- d. He *will have been studying* English for ten years by December this year.

Notice that this tense is quite different from the past perfective tense. In past perfective tense, the modal auxiliary is in the past tense form, but in the future perfective, the modal is in the present tense form.

9. The Future Perfective Tense

This type of tense expresses an action that is expected to have been completed at a time in the future. Here are examples

- a. By October next year, I *shall have spent* three years in this university.
- b. Jane *will have travelled* to Europe by the end of this month.
- c. At the end of this course, *we will have mastered* basic English grammar and writing skills.
- d. By noon, *we will have finished* our assignments.

10. The Past Perfect Tense

This refers to an action that started in the past before another past action. Note that both actions ended in the past. The only difference is in the time of occurrence. While the past perfect action occurred earlier, the past action occurred after it. Here are some examples:

- a. She told me that she *had studied* the files
- b. When he *had had* his supper, he went to bed.
- c. They *had left* home before the rain started.
- d. Audu *had not paid* for the materials before they were delivered.

The past perfect tense can also be used to express regrets as in the following sentences:

- a. If she *had worked* hard, she *would have been promoted*.
- b. *Had* he known the dangers involved, he *would not have gone*.
- c. If John *had carried* the baby, it *would not have cried*.

11. The past Perfect Progressive Tense

This type of tense states an action that was in progress before another action started.

- a. She *had been dozing* for some time before she fell off the chair.
- b. Akeem *had been studying* Arabic before anyone knew about it.
- c. Peju *had been playing* with her pot when it fell off and broke into pieces.
- d. Yomi *had been stealing* food items from our kitchen when he was apprehended.

12. The Present Perfect Tense

This type of tense expresses an action that commenced and ended in the immediate past, but has relevance to the present situation.

Examples include

- a. Tunji and I *have passed* our examinations
- b. Claudius *has finished* the assignment.
- c. Timothy *has broken* the vase!
- d. The boxes *have been painted*.

C. Mood

Mood refers to the manner or attitude presented in a verb. It shows the speaker's feeling about the action in the sentence. Three moods are

identified in English grammar. These are the indicative mood, the imperative mood and the subjunctive mood.

1. The Indicative Mood: This mood shows that the speaker is just making a statement; possibly providing factual information. Such statement may, however, be true or false.

- a. Cockroaches live in larders.
- b. I am the President of Nigeria.
- c. The prices of foodstuffs have gone up.
- d. Workers express doubts over government's sincerity on the pension reform.

The indicative mood may also be used to ask a question.

- a. Who are you?
- b. Where is my pen?

2. The Imperative Mood: In using the imperative mood, the mood speaker/writer makes requests or gives commands; e.g.

- a. Please pass the salt to me.
- b. Lend me your pen, please.
- c. Get out of here!
- d. Close those windows.

3. The Subjunctive Mood: This presents the author's wishes, condition, doubts or imagination at the moment of speaking. In this sense, the past tense of the verb is used.

- a. If I were you, I would put the money in a bank account.
- b. I wish I were the governor's wife; I would wear the most resplendent dresses.

In some cases, however, a statement is presented to an approving authority. In this case the tense on the verb is not reflected.

- a. I suggest that he *be* punished.
- b. We plead that she *visit* us once in a while.

Notice that the embedded clause is a *that*-clause and the verb is not inflected.

D. Voice: Active and Passive

Voice is the form of a verb which shows whether the subject performs an action or is affected by an action. The sentence that contains such verb is said to be active or passive depending on which verb it contains. The active sentence has its logical subject, verb and object or complement in their original positions in sentences. Examine these sentences:

- a. Ojo washed the car.
- b. Tinu has switched on the TV set.
- c. Laraba has brought the bag.
- d. The students must have been digging up the yams.
- e. Kome is writing the report.

In these sentences, each of the subjects, *Ojo*, *Tinu*, *Laraba*, *The students* and *Kome* is said to be performing some action in the sentence in which it occurs.

In passive sentences, the logical subject swaps positions with the logical object. In addition, the preposition *by*, which shows the agent, is introduced before the logical subject and an appropriate auxiliary item is introduced before the verb. The following are the passive forms of the sentences above.

- f. The car was washed by Ojo.
- g. The TV set was switched on by Tinu.
- h. The bag could have been brought by Laraba.
- i. The yams must have been being dug up by the students.
- j. The report is being written by Kome.

This is the converse of the sentences in the active voice. The logical subjects now occur at the end of the sentences, while the objects occur in subject positions. Notice that the objects are affected by the actions in the verb.

Nevertheless, there are some sentences which do not have subjects. Possibly, this is because the subjects are not known or the person that performed the action does not want to take responsibility for the action. It

may also be because the subject is not important. In the passive voice, the subject is not mentioned as in the following:

- k. The bottle was broken.
- l. The thieves were arrested.
- m. The students were advised to be of good behaviour.
- n. The strike was suspended.

Summary

In Lecture Three, we examined the verb and some properties of the verb. Therefore, the just concluded lecture has been a continuation of the discussion in the earlier lecture. Specifically, Lecture Four examined some other properties of the verb, such as tense, aspect, mood and voice.

Post-Test

1. Write two sentences in the active voice.
2. Convert the two sentences to the passive voice.
3. Write four sentences to demonstrate the following:
 - a. past progressive tense
 - b. future perfective tense
 - c. simple past tense
 - d. present perfect progressive tense

LECTURE FIVE

Adjectives, Adverbs, Prepositions and Conjunctions

Introduction

The other parts of speech that we shall be discussing in this lecture are adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. Adjectives generally qualify nouns and pronouns; adverbs modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs; and prepositions show the relationship between items in a sentence. Furthermore, conjunctions function as connectives or joining words in a sentence. However, they have different types and forms. In this lecture, we will discuss the different types as well as the forms of each of the parts of speech. In addition, we give attention to articles as a sub-class of adjectives.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify different parts of speech in different contexts;
2. state the roles each plays wherever it occurs; and
3. use them effectively.

Pre-Test

1. What is an adjective?
2. What are the different classes of adjectives?
3. What are the uses of articles?
4. What are prepositions?

5. How do they differ from adverbs?
6. What is an adverb?
7. What are the different classes of adverbs?
8. What are the types of conjunctions in English?
9. What are interjections?

CONTENT

A. Adjectives

Adjectives refer to the class of words that qualify nouns and pronouns. That is, they provide more information on nouns and pronouns. Consequently, we can state that they provide additional meaning. In this sense, they make the meaning of a noun or a pronoun clearer and more precise. There are different types of adjectives. There are adjectives of colour, weight, size, length, height, shape, number, etc. Adjectives usually occur in two positions.

- (a) They can occur before the nouns they go with. In this position, those adjectives become attributive adjectives.
 - a. a *rich* man
 - b. an *important* question
 - c. a *bright* student
 - d. a *long* story
 - e. some *young* girls
 - f. an *exciting* movie
 - g. a *wounded* lion

- (b) When they occur after verbs, then they are predicative adjectives:
 - a. Ade is *brilliant*.
 - b. Ngozi was *proud*.
 - c. Adiza became *arrogant*.
 - d. Thomas is *influential*.
 - e. The book was *interesting*.
 - f. David felt *ashamed*.

- (c) Finally, adjectives do also qualify pronouns. Examine the following sentences:
- a. He is *good*.
 - b. She is *brilliant*.
 - c. They are *diligent*.

1. Types of Adjectives

Adjectives have different types. Let's consider some of them.

- a. Adjectives of quality: These indicate what kind of noun is being described.
 - i. This *young* man is a teacher.
 - ii. We felled a *tall* tree in the backyard.
 - iii. The company needs *raw* materials.
 - iv. People complained about the *harsh* weather.
- b. Adjectives of quantity: These indicate the amount(how many or how much) of what is being described.
 - i. They bought *some* oranges.
 - ii. She wrote *many* articles in the newspapers.
 - iii. He built *four* houses.
 - iv. This is my *fifth* year in school.
 - v. We have *few* days to the exam.

For adjectives dealing with numbers (sometimes called numerical adjectives), there are two forms. These are the cardinal numerals, such as *one, two, three, four...* and the ordinal numerals, such as *first, second, third, fourth...*

- c. Demonstrative adjectives: These point out the item(s) being referred to. Examples:
 - i. I like *that* car.
 - ii. We know *this* man.
 - iii. *These* students passed.
 - iv. *Those* boys cheated.
- d. Interrogative adjectives: These ask questions about the nouns they modify. Examples:

- i. *Which* house is yours?
- ii. *Whose* book is this?
- iii. *What* type of shoe do you prefer?
- e. Possessive adjectives: These show ownership of the nouns they qualify. Examples:
 - i. *My* books are new.
 - ii. *Your* friends are playing soccer.
 - iii. What is *their* mission?
 - iv. *Our* students are brilliant.
- f. Distributive adjectives: These are used to pick out members of a group of nouns that are being qualified. Examples:
 - i. *Each* student has the book.
 - ii. *Every* citizen must pay tax.
 - iii. *Either* of the two boys will bring the bag.
- g. Emphatic adjectives: These lay emphasis on the noun that are qualified. Examples:
 - i. Your *own* opinion is required.
 - ii. His *own* contribution is relevant.
- h. Relative adjectives: These use relative pronouns to qualify nouns. Examples:
 - i. He showed them *what* stuff he was made of.
 - ii. He told us *which* house he lived in.
 - iii. They decide *which* matter we should treat.

You must have noted that some adjectives are similar to some pronouns. The fact is that they sometimes overlap. The only difference is that adjectives co-occur with nouns, but pronouns replace them. Note, however, that this is not true of possessive pronouns/adjectives.

2. Forms of Adjectives

a. Comparative Forms

Adjectives have positive, comparative and superlative features. The positive form is the ordinary or base form. The comparative form is used when two things or people have the same quality but in different degrees.

The superlative form is used to describe the highest quality among those possessed by more than two people. Examples:

- i. Bede is tall.(positive)
- ii. Charles is taller than Bede.(comparative)
- iii. Auwwal is the tallest of the three.(superlative)
- iv. Biola is intelligent. (positive)
- v. Namsel is more intelligent than Biola. (comparative)
- vi. Tokunbo is the most intelligent of the three boys. (superlative)

These examples show that the adjectives can take the affixes *-er* and *-est* or the words *more* and *most* for comparative and superlative forms respectively. How did we arrive at this? The rule of the language is that adjectives of one or two syllables can take the *-er/est* inflection. Others take *more* or *most* as the case may be. Yet others such as *well*, *many*, *good* and *bad* take different forms as follows:

| <i>Positive</i> | <i>Comparative</i> | <i>Superlative</i> |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Many | more | most |
| Well | better | best |
| Good | better | best |
| Bad | worse | worst |

b. Gradable and Non-gradable Adjectives

Adjectives are either gradable or non-gradable. Gradable adjectives are those whose qualities can be measured and compared. Such include *tall*, *short*, *sincere*, *wide*, *narrow*, *ugly*, etc. Non-gradable adjectives have a semantic content that cannot be compared. Examples include *true*, *dead*, *live*, *lifeless*, *alive*, *still*, *wooden*, etc. A simple test is to see whether you can form the comparative and the superlative forms. As in the following:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Tall | taller | tallest |
| Short | shorter | shortest |
| sincere | more sincere | most sincere |
| serious | more serious | most serious |
| live | *liver/*more live | *livest/*most live |
| dead | *deader/*more dead | *deadest/*most dead |

An attempt to compare other examples such as *lifeless* and *wooden* may be erroneously considered acceptable. But when you look at the meanings, you would realize that there are simply no bases for comparison. For instance, a goat which is lifeless cannot be more lifeless than another dead goat. A wooden table cannot be less wooden than a wooden chair.

3. Articles

Articles form a sub-class of adjectives (possessive pronouns form another). They precede nouns and therefore qualify them. Articles are *the*, *a* and *an*. The first is referred to as a definite article because it refers to a particular/specific person or thing. The other two are, however, indefinite because they do not pinpoint a particular/specific person or thing.

Here are examples:

- a. The man came to our house.
- b. A man came to our house.

In (a), the identity of the man was not in question. In (b), however, the speaker cannot establish the identity of the man.

Although the indefinite articles *a* and *an* perform the same function, they occur in different contexts. *A* is used before words that begin with a consonant (e.g. *a box, a car, a boy, a teacher, a shirt, a brush, a lion*) whereas *an* is used before words that begin with a vowel (*an elephant, an orange, an egg, an answer, an envelop, an oyster,*). This rule is based on the pronunciation of words rather than on the written forms. That is why some words that begin with ‘u’ are preceded by *a* as in: *a union, a usurper* the idea being that ‘u’ sounds like ‘y’. But some differ: *an uncle, an ulcer patient*. Certain words that begin with consonants also violate this rule: *an hour, an honest man*, etc. The claim in the last two examples is that the ‘h’ is not pronounced in those words.

Articles are used in different environments. Here are some of them:

(a) Indefinite Articles: a and an

- a. these occur before countable nouns: a river, a lawyer, a nation, a boy, an egg, an antelope, an onion, etc.
- b. when referring to an unknown person:

- i. A (One) Mrs Isioma sent you a card.
- ii. A (One) Mr Pius came to see you.
- iii. An impatient boy interrupted him.
- iv. An ugly woman went for plastic surgery.

Notice that we can use *one* in place of *a* in examples (i and ii)

- c. before abbreviations:
 - i. He is a BSc. holder.
 - ii. He is an ECOWAS official.
 - iii. He is a university staff.

Notice that the distinction between article usage with abbreviations that begin with a consonant and those beginning with vowels is also observed here. Notice especially the last sentence where the article *a* precedes *university*. This is based purely on the fact that the first sound in *university* is /j/.

3. **Definite Article: the**

The definite article is used:

- a. when a particular person or object is being referred to: *the boy, the woman, the book, the student, the Yoruba, etc.*
- b. when referring to some institutions or countries: *the United Nations, the Netherlands; the United States of America, etc.*
- c. for geographical names: *the Alps, the Mediterranean Sea, the Pacific Ocean, the Canary Islands, the Suez Canal, the moon, the sun, etc*
- d. Used in Comparatives: *The more you look, the less you see; The higher you go, the cooler it becomes.*
- e. before uncountable nouns: *the salt, the oil, the water, the rice.*
- f. before an adjective used as a noun: *the rich, the poor, the needy,* etc. Notice that these adjective are plural in number; and they can be used as subjects or objects of verbs:
 - i. The poor are always the underdogs.
 - ii. She cares for the needy.

4. Places where articles may be omitted: Article usage may be avoided in certain situations. Here are some of them:

- a. when a plural noun represents a class: *Boys will always be boys. Students are the same all over the world.*
- b. when the noun is uncountable: *water, justice, faith, belief,*
- c. Before proper nouns: *Bode, Oghenovo, Ngozi, Hauwa, Lagos, Kaduna, Akwa Ibom*

B. Prepositions

Prepositions show the relationships among words in a sentence. These words are usually nouns, pronouns and verbs.

1. He put the book *in* the bag. (relating *put*, *book* and *bag*)
2. They sent *for* the man. (relating *sent* and *man*)
3. We spoke *to* him. (relating *spoke* and *him*)
4. They praise God *by* clapping (relating *praise* and *clapping*)

There are three classes of prepositions. These are the simple prepositions, the compound prepositions and the complex prepositions. Simple prepositions are made up of only one word e.g. *of, in, with, for, on, over, after,* etc. Compound prepositions refer to a combination of two simple prepositions. Examples include *into, unto, outside* and *within*. Complex prepositions contain more than one word as in:

on top of, in spite of, in regard to, in front of, etc.

Some prepositions are similar to adverbs. However, we should note that prepositions often take objects while adverbs hardly take them. Witness the following:

1. He is in the house (preposition)
2. He is in (adverb)
3. She passed through the window (preposition)
4. She passed through (adverb)

Two prepositions often perform similar functions but in different situations. These are *between* and *among*. *Between* is used to relate two items but *among* is used for more than two. Here are examples:

1. Share the oranges between the two students.
2. Share the oranges among the three students.

Notice that reciprocal pronouns also have such features; i.e. a distinction between two and more than two people in items.

Prepositions also perform different functions. These are stated below:

1. Adjectival function

- a. The man *in the house* wore a white garment.
- b. The lady *at the gate* wants to see the manager.

In the two sentences above, the prepositions qualify (describe) the nouns *man* and *lady*.

2. Adverbial function

- a. The ball is *inside the net*.
 - b. The books are *in the car*.
- } Adverbial/indicating place
- c. He pushed the truck *with all his strength*.
 - d. He supported the student *with his wealth*.
- } Adverbial/
indicating manner
- e. We stayed indoors *to keep ourselves warm*.
 - f. She blamed him *for the accident*.
- } Adverbial/indicating
reason
- g. He slept *for two hours*.
 - h. He wrote a book *in 2006*.
- } Adverbial/indicating time

C. Adverbs

Adverbs are words used to modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. In the process, they add some meaning to such items modified.

Modification of verbs

- a. He arrived *early*
- b. Toun will come *soon*.

The adverbs *very* and *really* modify *happy* and *impressed* respectively.

Modification of adjectives

- a. Sade is *very* happy.
- b. Gill was *really* impressed.

Modification of adverbs

- a. She works *quite* efficiently.
- b. He walks *very* briskly.

Modification of a complete clause:

- a. *Honestly*, he won my heart.
- b. *Reluctantly*, she let go of my shirt.

Adverbs may be formed from other words, such as adjectives: quick => quickly, wrong => wrongly, sincere => sincerely, sure => surely plain => plainly. This means that most adverbs can be formed with the addition of the affix *-ly*. However, there are certain words which do not take the *-ly* before they function as adverbs. Such words can behave as adjectives in a context and as adverbs in another e.g. hard, well, better, etc

- a. The man works *hard* (adverb)
- b. The work is hard (adjective)
- c. Sola plays soccer *well*. (adverb)
- d. The food is *well* prepared. (adjective)
- e. John plays monopoly *better* than Jane (adverb)
- f. John is *better* at monopoly than Jane (adjective)
- g. John runs very *fast* (adverb)
- h. John is *fast* (adjective)
- i. The old farmer works *hard* (adverb)
- j. The molten magma became hard (adjective)
- k. Biola is well
- l. Biola writes *well*.

Note that when these words function as adverbs, they qualify the verb. When they function as adjectives, they qualify the noun.

Notice too that the adverb is usually very mobile in sentence. That is, it can occur in different positions in a sentence. However, you have to be careful with some adverbs because a change in their position in some sentences will cause a change in the meaning of the sentences. Consider the following expressions:

- a. *Only* my friend called the man.
- b. My friend *only* called the man.
- c. My friend called *only* the man.

Despite the fact that these sentences contain the same words; the meaning of each differs from those of the others.

2. Forms of Adverbs

Like adjectives, adverbs also have the positive, comparative and superlative forms.

| Positive | comparative | superlative |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| badly | more badly | most badly |
| cleverly | more cleverly | most cleverly |
| sincerely | more sincerely | most sincerely |

Adverbs are of different types: manner, place, reason, result, etc. To avoid repetitions, these will be discussed under adverbial clauses.

Adverbs often follow a specific order. The following is the regular order:

- a. Adverbs come very close to the word it describes.
- b. Adverbs often occur as the last element in an ordinary sentence. This, however, excludes degree and time adverbs, which occur before the words they modify.
- c. When different adverbs occur in a sentence, they often follow the following order: degree/manner, place, time as in:
 - i. The farmers *evidently* arrived *here late*.
 - ii. The clothes were *thoroughly* washed *there* and *then*.

D. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are words usually employed to link words, phrases, clauses and sentences. There are three types of conjunctions. These are

coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions.

1. Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions join words, phrases or clauses that have equal grammatical status. Examples of these are *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, *yet*, *for* and they occur in the following expressions:

- a. Ojo *and* Aina prepared the food (nouns conjoined)
- b. We ate rice *and* beans (nouns conjoined)
- c. Suzan was lean *but* healthy (adjectives conjoined)
- d. Kike became strong *and* dependable (adjectives conjoined)
- e. They wrote things on the wall *or* on the table (prepositional phrases conjoined)
- f. She went to school early; *yet*, she arrived late (clauses conjoined)
- g. He bought a car *but* he could not drive it. (clauses conjoined)
- h. I have to go now, *or* they'll come looking for me. (clauses conjoined)
- i. He goes to school early, *for* he is the Punctuality Prefect.(clauses conjoined)

These examples show that there are differences in the use of conjunctions. The first type is the additive conjunction, which adds up units of the same status as in (1-3). The others are contrastive, which present items that contrast or those from where a choice has to be made.

2. Correlative Conjunction

These work in pairs to join words or groups of words that have the same grammatical status. Examples include *either...or*, *neither...nor*, *both...and*, *not only...also* as used in the following sentences.

- a. Either James or John attended the class.
- b. Neither Janet nor Nimyel is in the room.
- c. Both the man and his wife were honoured by the society.
- d. Not only did Kanu score many goals, he also won an award.

3. *Subordinating Conjunctions*

Subordinating conjunctions join dependent clauses to a main clause or a phrase within a main clause. In this way, the clause that is joined to the main clause is grammatically dependent on the main clause. Here are some examples of subordinating conjunctions: *who, which, that, when, where, until, while, because, though, if, as soon as*, etc. Consider their usage in the following sentences:

- a. The box which he bought was costly.
- b. He passed because he studied very hard.
- c. I saw him when he arrived.
- d. As soon as the president arrived, the band sang the national anthem.
- e. The argument that man evolved from apes is not convincing.

E. *Interjections*

Also called exclamation, interjection is an expression showing emotions of surprise, fear, pain, anger, etc. Examples include the following: *Nonsense!, Rubbish!, Whaoh!, Alas! Hurray! Hi!* Notice that interjections are always accompanied with exclamation marks and only one exclamation mark is used for one expression.

Summary

In this lecture, we have continued with our discussion of the parts of speech. Precisely, the exercise focused on the adjective, the adverb, the preposition, the conjunction and the interjection.

Post-Test

1. Write three sentences for each of the following adjective types:
(a.) adjectives of quality (b.) numerical adjectives (c.) non-gradable adjectives
2. Mention three uses of articles. Illustrate your answers with two examples of each
3. Write two pairs of sentences to distinguish between an adverb and a preposition.
4. Write four sentences showing different functions of a preposition
5. Use the three types of conjunction in six sentences.

LECTURE SIX

Phrases

Introduction

Words come together in groups for purposes of forming meaning. Some groups contain verbs, some do not have verbs. In this lecture, we discuss groups of words which do not contain a verb. An exception, however, is the verb phrase, which concentrates on verb structure. Other phrases to be discussed in this section include noun phrase, adjectival phrase, adverbial phrase, infinitive phrase, participial phrase and prepositional phrase. We shall describe and explain the different classes of these and their peculiar features.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

- 1 identify phrases in sentences;
- 2 state the role each plays wherever it occurs;
- 3 use phrases appropriately; and
- 4 distinguish between them.

Pre-Test

1. What is a phrase?
2. What are the different types of phrases?
3. How does an adjectival phrase differ from an adjective?
4. What is the relationship between the infinitive phrase and the participial phrase?

CONTENT

A phrase refers to a group of words that lacks a finite verb. It constitutes a single thought unit and is grammatically equivalent to a word. There are five major types of phrases. These are the noun phrase, the verb phrase, the adverbial phrase, the adjectival phrase and the prepositional phrase. Other phrases, which are considered secondary because they are contrived, are infinitive phrase, participial phrase and gerund phrase. We shall discuss them one after the other.

1. The Noun Phrase

The noun phrase is a group of words with a noun as its keyword. This keyword is also the head word and it is from this that the phrase derives its name. It usually contains other words such as articles and adjectives, which occur before the head noun, and prepositional phrases that occur after it. Here are examples of noun phrases:

- a. a man
- b. the tall girl
- c. some important men
- d. a history of Lagos

These examples show that the noun can be pre- or post-modified by other items. Notice that there are no finite verbs in these examples.

Functions of Nouns and Noun Phrases

Nouns and noun phrases often function in similar positions in sentences. Thus, a description of one inevitably involves the other. In this section, we present different functions of the noun phrase but we should note that these are also functions of the noun.

The noun phrase can function:

- a. as the subject of a sentence: This refers to the noun phrase that performs the action in the verb; or that the sentence discusses.
 - i. *The young girl* is brilliant.
 - ii. *Some people from our village* have arrived.
- b. as the direct object of the verb: This refers to the noun phrase that is directly affected by the action in the verb.

- i. Jimmy bought *a house* in London.
- ii. The politicians hailed *their leader*.
- c. as the indirect object of a verb: This refers to the noun phrase that is involved in the action that transpired between the subject and the direct object.
 - i. The Senate President gave *the lawmakers* some rams.
 - ii. Tunde showed *the teacher* his notebook.
- d. as the object of a preposition: This refers to the noun phrase that occurs after a preposition.
 - i. An indigene of *the state* criticized the governor.
 - ii. Biola requested for *some oranges*.
- e. as words in apposition to the subject: This refers to a phrase that refers to the same noun or noun phrase and is placed next to the noun phrase.
 - i. That boy, *the tall one*, is a student.
 - ii. Aisha, *my friend*, has returned to the US.
- f. as subject complement: This is the information that is added to broaden the meaning of the subject.
 - i. Mrs Sirleaf is *the first female president in Africa*.
 - ii. Titus is *a graduate of physics*.
- g. as object complement: This refers to the additional information provided on the object of the verb.
 - i. We call him '*My Dear Belly*'.
 - ii. He made the pub *his house*.

Can you replace each noun phrase in the sentence with an appropriate noun?

7. The Adjectival Phrase

The adjectival phrase is a group of words with an adjective as the head/keyword. The adjective in this phrase type is often qualified by an intensifying adverb, such as *very*, *so*, *quite*, *extremely*, etc. The adjectival phrase, like ordinary adjectives, can also function either as attributes to nouns or as a predicate. As an attribute it qualifies a noun:

- a. Amaka felt a *very excruciating* pain in her stomach.
- b. A *very intelligent* officer apprehended the culprit.
- c. He got some *quite disturbing* news from home.
- d. The *extremely old* man walked with the aid of a walking stick.
- e. The *highly inflammable* substance was identified as petrol.

As a predicate it serves as a subject complement:

- a. Seun is *very brave*.
- b. This behaviour is *quite strange*.
- c. Nancy is *so beautiful* that everyone admires her.
- d. The matter is *extremely important*.
- e. Mustapha appeared *rather alarmed*.
- f. Levi was *very impressive* at the games.
- g. Alloysius became *quite arrogant*.

2. The Adverbial Phrase

The adverbial phrase is a group of words with an adverb as the keyword. Incidentally, an adverb can modify another adverb. So an adverbial phrase is often a combination of an adverb and another adverb as in the following examples: *so quickly*, *very early*, *quite naturally*, *rather sluggishly*, etc.

Recall that an adverb modifies a verb, an adjective and another adverb (as explained in Lecture 5), the adverbial phrase qualifies a verb. Hence, it can precede or follow the verb in a sentence. Also since adverbs are mobile, they can occur anywhere in a sentence that is, sentence initial, medial and final positions. These are examples:

- a. *Very slowly*, the man rose to his feet.
- b. The man rose to his feet *very slowly*.
- c. The man rose, *very slowly*, to his feet.

The adverbial phrase may be confused with a prepositional phrase in some instances. The fact is that some prepositional phrases function as adverbs by modifying verbs, adverbs and adjectives as in the following:

- a. Children can *play* at any time. (verb)
- b. She cried *bitterly* when her husband had an accident. (adverb)
- c. She looks *gorgeous* in her dress. (adjective)

The modified items are italicized.

3. Prepositional Phrase

The prepositional phrase is a group of words with a preposition as its head and a pronoun or noun (phrase) as its object. Here are some examples: on the track, in the car, by the people, for the boys, from an airplane.

Many people believe *in God*.

We have confidence *in him*.

The ball went *over the bar*.

Traders displayed their goods *at the venue*.

All the expressions in italics are prepositional phrases.

The prepositional phrase can function in different ways:

- a. as an adjective, qualifying a noun:
 - i. The man *in the car* is a novelist.
 - ii. The house *near the lake* belongs to him.

Notice that we can insert *which is* before the prepositional phrase in either of the examples. This shows that the prepositional phrases qualify the antecedents.

- b. as an adverb, modifying the verb:
 - i. He croaked *like a toad*.
 - ii. She could pray *from dusk to dawn*.
- c. as an adverb, modifying another adverb:
 - i. He drove carelessly *on the highway*.
 - ii. We worked tirelessly *in the factory*.

4. The Verb Phrase

The verb phrase is a group of words with the verb as the head. The main verb is the keyword in a verb phrase. It may or may not be preceded by auxiliary verbs. Depending on whether the verb is transitive or

intransitive, it may be followed by one or more of the following: noun (phrase), adjective (phrase), prepositional phrase, adverbial (phrase) or clauses. Witness the following examples:

- a. Joke must have been washing the plates.(verb + noun phrase)
- b. Zainab could have arrived.
- c. David played the guitar. .(verb + noun phrase)
- d. Biodun fetched the water very early in the morning. .(verb + noun phrase + adverbial phrase +prepositional phrase)
- e. The man was a very prolific writer before he retired from office. .(verb + noun phrase +adverbial clause)
- f. The hungry boy yawned.

In (b & f) the verb is not followed by any item.

5. The Infinitive Phrase

The infinitive phrase contains the base, uninflected or ordinary form of a verb. It may be preceded by *to*. This kind of expression is also called infinitive with *to*. Those without *to* are called infinitives without *to*. The infinitive is called a phrase because its verb does not change its form when it occurs in different situations. Here are examples:

- a. He wants *to buy* a car.
- b. They watched him *disappear* in to the air.

subject position:

- a. *To err* is human.
- b. *To win* this match may not be easy.

object position:

- a. Sola wants *to be an engineer*.
- b. Bala plans *to travel overseas*.

as an adjective:

- a. He has an issue *to discuss with you*.
- b. We recognize the need *to promote our culture*.

as an adverb:

- a. He tried *to save his friend*.
- b. She is eager *to please her mother*.

6. Participial Phrase

The *-ing* or *-ed* forms of verbs are referred to as the participle. A group of words with a participle as the keyword is called a participial phrase. These participles often occur in sentences without any change in their forms. Thus, they are referred to as being non-finite.

Falling off the table, the jug broke into tiny pieces.

Presented with the incriminating evidence, the accused tried to escape.

7. Gerund Phrase

The gerund phrase consists of a gerund and its object or modifier. This phrase functions just like the ordinary gerund.

- a. *Singing choruses* is her favourite pastime.
- b. *Eating well* is a key to good health.
- c. He likes *acting the role of a clown*.

Summary

In this lecture, we have focused on the discussion of phrases. We defined the concept, phrase and also examined different types of phrases, such as the noun phrase, the verb phrase, the adverbial phrase, the adjectival phrase, the prepositional phrase, the infinitive phrase and the gerund phrase.

Post-Test

1. Write five pairs of sentences to show the distinction between an adverbial phrase and a prepositional phrase
2. Provide your own examples of prepositional phrases functioning as (a) an adjective, (b) an adverb modifying a verb, and (c) an adverb modifying an adverb.
3. Write five sentences to show the different functions of the adjective phrase.

4. Give five examples of sentences in which different types of words or phrases follow the main verb.
5. Write four sentences to show the different functions of the infinitive phrase.

LECTURE SEVEN

Clauses

Introduction

The English sentence is constructed using words, phrases and clauses. There are three major types of clauses. These are the noun clause, the relative clause and the adverbial clause. These come in different forms as they occur in different sentence patterns. In this lecture, we explore the different patterns of each.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify clauses in different contexts;
2. state the role each plays wherever it occurs;
3. use clauses effectively; and
4. distinguish clause types.

Pre-Test

1. What is a clause?
2. How does it differ from a phrase?
3. How does a subordinate clause differ from a main clause?
4. What are the different types of clauses?

CONTENT

A clause is described as a group of words having a subject and a predicate. This means that the clause has a finite verb. You will recall that in an

earlier lecture, we had described a phrase as a group of words which lack a finite verb. This is the major difference between a phrase and a clause: phrases have no finite verbs; clauses do.

There are two basic categories of clauses. These are the main clause and the subordinate clause.

1. The Main Clause

The main clause, also called the principal, containing, or independent clause, contains a subject and its predicate. More importantly, it can stand alone and be meaningful in a passage. Consider the following examples:

- a. Tunji thanked the pharmacist.
- b. Ahmad likes soccer.
- c. Ngozi prepared the food.
- d. Stephen washed the car.

As these sentences show, there is a subject (*Tunji, Ahmad, Ngozi* and *Stephen*) and what it did (represented by the verb). Notice that the verbs are finite.

2. The Subordinate Clause

The subordinate clause is also referred to as the embedded, contained, or dependent clause. Although it has its own subject and predicate, it must attach to a main clause to be fully meaningful. A subordinate clause is usually attached to a main verb through subordinating conjunctions such as *because, when, where, who, which, that, if, how, etc.* Examples of subordinate clauses include the following:

- a. since Joy bought the bag
- b. when the man returned from Mecca
- c. because Audu passed the exam
- d. who drives the car
- e. that the girl was rude
- f. which Philip kicked

As you would realize, the meanings of the expressions in (a-f) are incomplete. Each subordinate clause requires a main clause to become meaningful. To make them complete, we provide a main clause for each:

- a. Since Joy bought the bag, everyone has been admiring it.
- b. When the man returned from Mecca, everyone went to greet him.
- c. We were very pleased because Audu passed the exam.
- d. The man who drives the car is a soldier.
- e. The teacher said that the girl was rude
- f. The dog, which Philip kicked, growled.

Notice that the subordinate clause can be placed at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence.

3. Types of Subordinate Clauses

There are three major types of subordinate clauses. These are the relative clause, the noun clause and the adverbial clause.

The Relative Clause: The relative clause is also called the adjectival clause. The clause is so named because it behaves like an adjective. It qualifies a noun (or a noun phrase) that serves as its antecedent. In fact, it is usually very close and is therefore attached to the antecedent. It is usually attached to the main clause with the use of subordinating conjunctions, such as *which*, *who*, *whose*, *whom* and *that*. Witness the following examples:

- a. The boy *who killed Goliath* was David.
- b. The lawyers *whom he met at the court* were foreigners.
- c. James liked the house *that his father built*.
- d. The man *whose son won the prize* thanked the teachers.
- e. The novel *which won the award* was announced last night.

The relative clause has two forms: these are the restrictive or defining relative clause and the non-restrictive or non-defining relative clause. The restrictive relative clause limits the scope of reference of a relative pronoun to a particular number stated in the antecedent.

- a. The students who passed the exam were promoted.
- b. My son who lives in London is a medical doctor.

In the first sentence, not all the students passed. So the relative clause refers to only those that passed. In the second sentence, only one son out

of two or more is referred to. Now compare these sentences with the following:

- c. The students, who passed the exam, were promoted.
- d. My son, who lives in London, is a medical doctor.

In (c) all the students passed. The relative clause provides additional information which is not directly relevant to the interpretation of the antecedent (the students). The same situation obtains in (d). The speaker has only one son and the information in the relative clause is only additional. How do we know that some information is not directly relevant? The relative clause is set off from the antecedent by commas. This means that the information may be deleted without injuring the meaning of the antecedent. Thus such clauses which do not directly define the antecedent are called non-restrictive /non-defining relative clauses.

Finally, you should note that the relative pronoun may be missing from relative clauses as in the following:

- a. The books ~~which~~ we bought were costly.
- b. The man ~~that~~ John visited gave him an apple.

In these sentences, the relative pronouns are crossed out. Notice, however, that whether they are crossed out or not, the sentences remain grammatical and meaningful.

The Noun Clause

The noun clause is a group of words that performs the function of a noun or noun phrase. This means that the noun clause can occur in those positions where the noun or the noun phrase can occur. (See discussions under noun phrase). The only difference between the noun clause and the phrase is the presence of a finite verb in the clause.

Noun clauses are often introduced by words such as *what*, *that*, and *how*. Here are some examples:

- a. He said *that Sade is angry*.
- b. Ojo knows *what John bought at the supermarket*.
- c. Obi claimed *that he was a genius*.
- d. Ndidi asked Khalid *how he proved the theorems*.

The Adverbial Clause

These are clauses that modify an adverb, a verb or an adjective. Adverbial clauses are often introduced by subordinating conjunctions such as *if, when, whenever, as if, because, unless, although, even though, as soon as, so that*, etc. The adverbial clauses take different forms in sentences. This depends on the functions they perform. The following are some of the different functions they perform:

1. Time adverbial: This clause type specifies the time an action took place. The clause is usually introduced by *when*.
 - a. Tola called her friend *when she boarded the bus*.
 - b. *When the teacher entered*, all the students rose to greet him.
2. Manner adverbial: This type of clause states how an action in a sentence takes place. It is usually introduced by *as if*.
 - a. Biola walks *as if her ankle is sprained*.
 - b. Bunde preached *as if he was a prophet*.
3. Place adverbial: This clause type states the place where the action in a main clause occurs. It is usually introduced by *wherever*.
 - a. You can go *wherever you like*.
 - b. Park your car *wherever you find a space*.
4. Reason adverbial: This type provides the reason for the action in the main clause. The subordinate clause can be introduced with *because* and *so that*.
 - a. Titi passed well *because she studied very well*.
 - b. Thomas worked very hard *so that everyone praised him*.
5. Condition adverbial: This type gives the condition(s) under which the events in the main verb will occur/be executed. Sentences in which adverbial clause of condition appears are usually called conditional sentences. The clause is often introduced by *unless* and *if*.
 - a. *Unless Kunle leaves early*, he will miss the school bus.
 - b. *If Janet comes to our house*, I'll show her my new dress.

In some cases, the conditional adverbial clause is used to state a wish, a probability or a hypothetical situation. Here are examples:

- a. *If I were the President, I would establish more universities.*
 - b. *If Ezinma were a boy, her father would be happy.*
 - c. *If you went to Lagos, you would see the Bar Beach.*
 - d. *Unless you climbed a ladder, you could not take the cloth from the rack.*
6. Result adverbial: This type gives the result of the events in the main clause. The clause is usually introduced by *so*.
 - a. Ugo worked hard, *so she won a prize.*
 - b. Pat stained her dress, *so she changed it for another.*
 7. Concession adverbial: This type refers to the situation that exists before the action in the subordinate can occur. It is usually introduced by *though* and *although*.
 - a. *Although he is strong, Abubakar cannot lift the iron box.*
 - b. *Even if the politician wins in the election, the EFCC will arrest him.*

Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed the clause. Specifically, we examined the main clause and the subordinate clauses. We stated that subordinate clauses can be of three types: the noun clause, the relative clause and the adverbial clause. We also looked into the role each of them plays in a sentence.

Post-Test

1. Write five sentences containing subordinate noun clauses.
2. Separate the following sentences into their respective main and subordinate clauses:
 - a. He put the book in the bag which he bought.
 - b. As Audu drove the car home, he bought some fuel.
 - c. The woman screamed when she saw the snake.
 - d. If you study hard, you will pass this exam.
 - e. James does not understand what they were discussing.

3. Identify the type of adverbial clause in the following sentences:
- a. A farmer sold big yams to us when we visited the village.
 - b. Although the man is very old, he still goes to farm.
 - c. Farida apologized to Saidu because she had hurt him.
 - d. Bawa spoke as if he was the oldest among us.
 - e. The lion goes wherever it can catch a prey.
 - f. John arrived late at the airport, so he missed his flight.
 - g. Although the roads were bad, we managed to pass through it.

LECTURE EIGHT

Sentences

Introduction

Sentences are described as constructions that contain a complete thought. In this lecture, we explore the structural and the functional patterns of sentences. In addition, we discuss concord rules: the rules that guide the co-occurrence of the subject and the verb in a sentence.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

- 1 identify sentences in different contexts;
- 2 state the function of each wherever it occurs;
- 3 write sentences that observe concord rules; and
- 4 use different combinations of sentences appropriately.

Pre-Test

1. What is the nature of a sentence?
2. Identify the different types of sentence.
3. What are the functions of sentences?
4. What is the relationship between the subject and the object in a sentence?

CONTENT

A sentence is a group of words that conveys a complete thought. A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, a question

mark or an exclamation mark. A sentence may be long or short, but it must convey a complete thought. Sentences have different patterns. This depends on their structures, that is, the number and type of clauses. Let's take them one after the other.

Structural Patterns of Sentences

1. Simple Sentence

The simple sentence is the easiest form of all sentences. It contains only one clause: a main clause. The major means of identifying it is that it contains only one finite verb as in the following sentences.

- a. Benjamin laughed.
- b. Fawsiyyah is very stubborn.
- c. The very old man plays golf during his spare time.
- d. The leaders met at Sheraton Hotel.

2. Compound Sentence

The compound sentence contains two or more clauses. These are joined together through the use of conjunctions as in the following examples:

- a. Kemi washed her school uniform, but there was no light to iron it.
- b. Clement bought the film, Ade watched it, but someone stole it!
- c. The carpenter made the bed and his apprentices sprayed it.
- d. Bashir brought his bicycle to school and we all tried to ride it.

Each of the sentences above is a compound sentence because each is a combination of independent clauses. For instance, (ii) contains three main clauses. Again, we can break the sentence into its principal clauses as follows:

- a. Clement bought the film;
- b. Ade watched it; and
- c. Someone stole it.

The conjunction *but* is used to link the clauses together to form a compound sentence. The compound sentence is also referred to as a balanced sentence. This is because it contains clauses of equal status as the examples above show. Notice that each clause has a finite verb. And the

number of clauses in a sentence tallies with the number of finite verbs in it.

3. Complex Sentence

The complex sentence consists of a main clause and a subordinate clause. This means that all the examples under relative clauses, noun clauses and adverbial clauses are complex sentences. Here are further examples:

- a. Your view that Jane is dull is wrong.
- b. The bankers, who work for long ours, earn a lot of money.
- c. The councillors felt unhappy when they were suspended from office.
- d. Although Bisi is brilliant, he still prepares well for his exams.
- e. This man, who has just graduated, needs a good job. What this man needs is a good job.

Note that in each of these sentences, there are two finite verbs, one of which is in a subordinate clause.

4. Loose and Periodic Sentences

A complex sentence can also be loose or periodic. In a *loose* sentence, the main clause comes before a subordinate clause as in the following:

- a. He arrived late because his car broke down on the way.
- b. She travelled by road when she felt that air transport was no longer safe.

In a *periodic* sentence, the main clause comes at the end of a number of subordinate clauses. Really, the periodic sentence is usually cumbersome and sometimes hard to follow. It is meant to hold readers in suspense.

- a. When he was leaving the house, he asked them to clean the surroundings.
- b. Because Thomas was crying, Ade bought him a candy.
- c. In the thick of the night, at a time everybody was sleeping, when one could have heard the drop of a pin, the man came out of the house in a white robe.

5. Compound-Complex Sentence

This sentence type combines the attributes of both the compound sentence with that of the complex sentence. This means that it contains at least two main clauses and one subordinate clause. Thus we will have three or more clauses in each sentence. Here are examples:

- a. Kike saw the man, who had rescued her from thugs, and ran to thank him.
- b. When he had slept, the children took his car keys and drove to their friends' houses.
- c. As soon as she returned from the market, Mama Bomboy prepared lunch and her hungry children had their fill.
- d. Our teacher is dedicated to his job, but we did not know this until we left our school.

Functions of a Sentence

Sentences can perform different functions in a passage. A sentence can be a declarative statement, a question, a command or an exclamation.

1. Declarative Sentences

Declarative sentences provide information (it does not matter whether the information is right or wrong). They may also indicate desire or hope. Examples include:

- a. Insects have six legs.
- b. The sun sets in the west.
- c. He wishes to see you.
- d. I hope to arrive by noon.
- e. Nneka does not like mathematics.
- f. Okocha kicked the ball to Aghahowa.

2. Imperative sentences

These are sentences that give commands or make requests. They may or may not have subjects, but they always order somebody or people to do something. Consider the following examples:

- i. Write your name on your book.
- ii. Clean these chairs.
- iii. Gentlemen, please sit down.
- iv. Badmus, comb your hair.

Although it is not written in the sentence, 'you' is considered the logical subject in sentences such as (a) and (b). This is because the sentences can only be addressed to someone that is not far from the speaker. This idea is referred to as the 'understood you'.

3. Interrogative Sentence

This type of sentence is a question. It requests/requires information from the addressee. Examples include the following:

- a. What is your name?
- b. Where are you going?
- c. Who are they?
- d. When will they come?
- e. How are you all?
- f. Are you happy?
- g. Can you play chess?
- h. Is this your car?

Notice that each sentence must end with a question mark; otherwise, it is not a question.

4. Exclamatory Sentence

This is a sentence that shows a speaker's emotions. It normally ends with an exclamation mark.

- a. What a shame!
- b. How wonderful!
- c. What a mess!
- d. What a tumultuous crowd!
- e. Quite an age!
- f. Out with the story!

- g. Oh, you cheat!
- h. Off with his knickers!

Concord Systems in English

Introduction

Concord refers to the agreement relations that hold between components of a sentence. Such relations occur between subject and the verb, between the subject and its complement and between the tenses of verbs in main and subordinate clause. Among second language learners in Nigeria, the knowledge of subject verb relation is very important because our indigenous languages often interfere with our use of English. Let's take these items one after the other.

1. Subject –Verb Concord

This refers to the relation between the subject and the main verb. The subject is the performer of an action and the verb is the action the subject performs. The following rules apply:

- a. A singular subject must take a singular verb. Examples:
 - i. Shola *has* built a house.
 - ii. The student *was* left in the hall
 - iii. I *am* happy to see you.
 - iv. Fatima *plays* hockey.

In these sentences, each of the subjects refers to one person. So each of the verbs is singular. Note that the *s* in front of each verb denotes singularity. It is only nouns that use *s* to mark plurality.

- b. A plural object will take a plural verb.
 - i. The teachers *own* many cars.
 - ii. The houses *were* built last year.
 - iii. We *are* ready to dance.
 - iv. They *have* eaten the carrots.

In these sentences, the subjects are plural and so are the verbs. Note especially the verbs *were* and *are*. They are the respective past and present tenses plural forms of the verb *be*. Note also that *have* is used to mark the

plural subject in the sentence. However, 'have' can also be used to mark a singular subject as in *I have seen the book*.

- c. A conjoined subject which has plural meaning will take a plural verb.
Examples:
 - i. Kola and Kike are quite brilliant.
 - ii. The girl and her brother enjoy chemistry lessons.
 - iii. The students and the politician meet regularly.
 - iv. Mukhtar and Abdul ride on a horse.
- d. A conjoined subject which has singular meaning will take a singular verb. Examples:
 - i. Bread and butter is quite delicious.
 - ii. Brandy and lemon is my choice of drink.
 - iii. Ajobiewe and Sons is a registered company.
 - iv. Jide Taiwo and Co is a group of reputable lawyers.
- e. When *either...or...* or *neither ...nor...* is used with the subject of a sentence, the verb agrees in number with the second noun. Examples:
 - i. Either Juliet or the boys are at fault.
 - ii. Either the children or their father is at home.
 - iii. Neither the land nor the seeds are bad.
 - iv. Neither the politicians nor their godfather is honest.
- f. A conjoined subject that refers to an individual takes singular verb. Examples:
 - i. The proprietor and principal of the school is efficient.
 - ii. The pastor and founder of the church loves everyone.
 - iii. The head and tail of the matter is money palaver.
 - iv. The beginning and end of the world is the almighty God
- g. A subject in plural form but with singular meaning will take a singular verb. Examples:
 - i. Mathematics is a very simple subject.
 - ii. The news is heartwarming.
 - iii. Economics has been taught at the school for years.
 - iv. The premises is wearing a new look.

- h. The number of a subject is singular in the following instances and the verb must therefore be singular.
1. *When the subject is followed by as well as, together with, apart from, in conjunction with, etc.*
 - i. My brother, together with his wife, comes to my house occasionally.
 - ii. The president, accompanied by security guards, goes to Ota every month.
 - iii. The convict, in conjunction with other inmates, has perfected plans to escape.
 - iv. Jane, as well as her friends, is humble.
 2. *When the subject is an indefinite pronoun:*
 - a. *Everyone wants* a piece of the national cake.
 - b. *Someone has taken* my pen.
 - c. *Nobody enjoys* being kept waiting.
 - d. *Everybody likes* the boy.
 3. *When the subject refers to length of time, distance, amount of money, weight or capacity*
 - a. *Sixty seconds makes* one minute.
 - b. *Ten miles is* quite a long distance.
 - c. *Five million is* enough for the project.
 - d. *Ten kilogrammes of turkey was* stored in the freezer.
 - e. *Fifty litres of petrol now sells* for ₦5000.00
 4. *When one of... singles out a particular referent from a group*
 - i. *One of the boys has* arrived.
 - ii. *One of my books is* missing.
 - iii. *One of the students has* bought all the materials.
 - iv. *One of my friends has* travelled overseas.
 5. *When number of...refers to the sum total of a group*
 - a. *The number of spectators was* 1000.
 - b. *The number of casualties was* high.
 - c. *The number of books in the library is* unknown.
 - d. *The number of people in that village is* 5000.

However, when *the number of* means ‘many’ and it is preceded by *a*, it takes a plural verb. Examples:

- a. *A number of* parents *were* in the school.
- b. *A number of* students *were* enrolled in the Distance Learning Programme.
- c. *A number of* books *were* donated to the library.
- d. *A number of* issues *were* discussed at the meeting.

When *one of the...* is followed by a relative clause, the verb that follows the relative pronoun must be plural. Examples:

- a. *One of the* parents who were irritated by the girl’s attitude reported her to the school principal.
- b. *One of the* books that were missing was found with Beatrice.
- c. *One of the* houses which were distributed has collapsed.
- d. *One of the* students who live in our house is writing the exam.

The expression *more than one...* and *many a...* are plural in meaning. However, since they are preceded by the determiners *a* and *one*, which indicate singularity, a singular verb will be used. Examples:

- a. *More than one* person *has* died of AIDS.
- b. *More than one* issue *was* discussed at the meeting.
- c. *Many a* man *has* been duped by fraudsters.
- d. *Many a* student *has* graduated from the school.
6. *Collective nouns such as committee, jury, team, panel, etc, take singular or plural verbs, depending on the meaning intended.*
 - a. The jury consists of twelve elderly men.
 - b. The jury were divided in their opinion.
 - c. The congregation remembers its past leaders.
 - d. The congregation were requested to donate some money.
 - e. The Panel recommends that the VP be indicted.

Sometimes, however, the plural meaning may be emphasized by the use of ‘members of’.

- a. The *members of* the panel *were* requested to attend the meetings punctually.

- b. The *members of* the audience *were* excited at the performance.
- c. The *members of* the committee *are* people of proven integrity.
- d. The *members of* the team *have* been paid their allowances.

When a singular subject is separated from its verb by a plural noun which enlarges the subject, the singular verb is required.

- a. A box of matches is in the window.
- b. A pile of clothes was put in the boot of the car.
- c. The new Dean of Students is my friend.
- d. A group of students has marched to the gate.
- e. A set of cutlery is on the table.

When two or more singular nouns are qualified by a distributive adjective, the verb must be singular.

- a. Every Tom, Dick and Harry wants to see the Vice-Chancellor.
- b. Each of the students earns a handsome wage.
- c. Every rumour has some truth to it.
- d. Each farmer gets support from the cooperative society.

7. *Subject and complement*

For agreement between a subject and its complement, we revert to numbers. When the subject is singular its complement must also be singular; when the subject is plural, its complement is also plural.

- a. John is a bright student.
- b. Shade is our class representative.
- c. The boys are fools.
- d. These children are my angels.

Agreement also occurs between tenses. The rule is that when one tense is chosen in a complex sentence, the same tense must be maintained. Thus, when the main clause is present or past, the tense in the embedded sentence must correspond to that in the main clause.

- a. He succeeded because he worked hard.
- b. We like him because everyone speaks so glowingly about him.
- c. She can play soccer if you invite her.
- d. They sing melodious songs when they are at home.

However there are exceptions to the rule above. When the subordinate clause is a scientific or factual statement, it maintains the present tense form.

- a. Tsaaior did not know that spiders have eight legs.
- b. The philosopher said that nothing can harm a good man.
- c. We learnt that the president travels overseas every week.
- d. Our teacher taught us that the sun rises from the east and sets in the west.

When the subordinate clause is a relative clause, its verb may be in any tense in line with the intended meaning.

- a. He did not see the book which Shola has been reading.
- b. The police are perplexed about the accused that jumped bail.
- c. They do not know the person who will lead them to the Promised Land.
- d. He does not believe that the lady was part of the Olympics team.

When the subordinate clause is introduced by *than* or *as well as*, it can also be in any tense.

- a. She liked you as much as she likes me.
- b. She likes you more than she likes me.
- c. She praised you more than she praises her son.
- d. She can praise you as much as she praised her son.

Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed sentences and the rules of concord, guiding the agreement between verbs and their subjects in sentences.

Post-Test

1. Write three sentences for each of the following types:
 - a. simple sentence
 - b. compound sentence
 - c. complex sentence
 - d. compound-complex sentence
 - e. declarative sentence

- f. imperative sentence
 - g. interrogative sentence
 - h. exclamatory sentence
2. Correct the errors if any exists in the following sentences.
- a. He always play soccer.
 - b. Bade have found the book.
 - c. Neither Zainab nor the children is in the kitchen.
 - d. The woman, accompanied by her friends, refused to enter the bus.
 - e. One of the boys who writes novels have won a prize.

LECTURE NINE

Written Compositions

Introduction

Compositions may be of two major forms. These are written and spoken compositions. In the written form, you put your ideas on paper for other people to read, possibly at their own leisure. Such compositions include articles in newspapers, reports, stories, etc. The spoken form is, however, spontaneous. It usually involves active listening by an audience. It includes talks, debates and oral narratives. The procedure for writing good compositions which is discussed in this lecture applies to the two forms. However, since students are often assessed based on the written communication, we shall emphasize this form.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. generate a topic for composition;
2. write an outline on a topic;
3. write opening/thesis statements;
4. write topic sentences; and
5. write a paragraph.

Pre-Test

1. What is a thesis statement?
2. What is a topic sentence?
3. What is an outline?

4. What information should be in the introductory, the body and the concluding parts of a composition?

CONTENT

Composition is the product of putting words together to convey a message to a particular audience. Such compositions can be written or spoken. In this lecture, we shall limit ourselves to the written composition. This is because in a university setting, we often communicate most of our ideas in writing.

The Four-Way Approach

Writing compositions can be an easy and interesting exercise if you can learn the art. The art of writing on any given topic involves a four-way approach. The four-way approach refers to the *topic* or *subject*, *the purpose or reason*, *the audience* and *the form*.

Topic: If you want to write a composition, you must have in mind a particular topic that you want to write on. The topic forms the focus and establishes a common subject area for you and your reader to follow. We can divide the topic into two: These are the theme and the subject matter. The theme is the major idea you want to put across to the reader (or audience). The subject matter is the way you go about presenting the theme. The theme for instance may be 'stealing is bad', while the subject matter may be an account or an occasion of stealing, where the thieves are arrested and punished. Thus, the theme and the subject matter are interwoven. However, while the theme is implicit, the subject matter is explicit.

Topics vary from one situation to another. You might want to write on any topic that catches your fancy. Your job then is to look for a theme and construct a story that brings it out. For instance, you may want to argue that item A is better than item B. You have to present readers with reasons why your position should be adopted. In examinations, you might be asked to write a letter, a story, an article or a speech on topics such as the following:

1. A typical market day in my home town
2. How to make the *adire* cloth

3. The Poverty Alleviation Programme
4. A day I will never forget
5. The advantages and disadvantages of free education

These are different topics. Whichever one you choose will require you to provide a theme and a subject matter. Note also that the theme may also be decided by the reason for writing the composition.

Choosing a topic also entails narrowing it down. A topic such as *feminism*, *Poverty Alleviation Programme*, or a *TV show* may be too wide. You have to show readers the perspective from which you are discussing it. In essence, if you don't define your topic, you may not be able to discuss it thoroughly. For instance, the topics may be refocused as follows:

1. Feminism in Nigerian Literature,
2. The effect on feminism on Nigerian academics;
3. The Impact of Poverty Alleviation Programme in Oyo State
4. The Relevance of TV shows in Nigerian,
5. An Appraisal of the *Super Story* on NTA, etc.

Reason: If you feel so strongly about a topic, you will have reasons for writing it and possibly taking certain positions. You will also have reasons for having certain beliefs on the topic before you start writing on the topic. You must for instance have reasons for writing about lack of social amenities in your home town. Some of the reasons may be:

1. to inform and educate members of the community on the need to join hands;
2. to request necessary government attention;
3. to proffer reasons for the absence or neglect of amenities in the area;
4. to correct wrong impressions;
5. to entertain (through story-telling); and
6. to report events.

Any of these reasons may prompt you to write about the topic. The reason may also serve as your theme and as the core of the composition. The reason for writing also determines how you write the composition. If you are calling on government to do its job, you may write a letter. If you

want to educate the public, you may write an article or a speech to be delivered. You may also be conducting research on the topic. Finally, you may be at the head of a panel investigating certain issues relating to the topic. Your reasons for writing the composition will play an important role in your choice of form (medium of presentation).

Audience: The audience is the consumer or recipient of the message in your composition. The message is the information you are trying to convey through your composition. The audience can be your professional colleagues, superiors, personal friends, students, government agencies, business partners, or the general public. The particular audience you have in mind determines how you write your composition: this is with respect to the subject you treat; the mode of presentation; and the language you use. For instance, you cannot treat the same topic at the same level for school children and professors. The way you present the materials will be different. The one for children must be simpler than that for professors. You may not use words, such as *kabukabu*, *okada* and *akpu* in an international journal/magazine without providing the meanings in modern English. This is because these words are peculiar to Nigerians and therefore unknown to foreign audience. Thus, they can occur in Nigerian newspapers without much explanation. International magazines will also not entertain trivial issues. These are issues which have no international relevance (e.g. The midnight fire at Gbagi Market; A day I will never forget; etc). Therefore, the topic you choose for an international audience must have international appeal.

Your use of language should also take cognizance of the level of understanding of your audience. In other words, you must not use a language that is elevated beyond their level of understanding since this would bring about communication breakdown. Neither should you also speak below their intelligence. If you do, you might be perceived as a mediocre. In both cases, you could become a bore whose audience sleeps away as they read or listen to you. Such compositions are neither interesting nor exciting.

In addition, the audience determines the shape the composition will take. If you write for the general public, the composition may take the shape of an article. If, however, you write for the consumption of government officials or personal friends, it may take the shape of a letter (formal or informal).

Form: Form determines the peculiar features a composition has. Is it to be written as a narrative or an expository essay? Is it a report of a research? Is it a description of a place or thing? Each of these and other forms of composition has certain features with which you can identify them. We shall discuss some of these forms in another lecture. In examinations, the picture painted in the question will always be enough for you to judge the form your composition will take. Thus, the topic, the reason, the audience and the form constitute the four-way approach to understanding composition questions and answering them. Let us use the following question for exemplification:

Write an *article* for publication in one of your *national newspapers* on *the causes and effects of the commercialization of religion in Nigeria*.

When we study this question, we easily get the instructions through our four-way approach. These are underlined for easy identification, and we shall discuss them as they occur in the topic. The first important word then is *article*. This shows that the composition must be written in the form of an article. The next is *national newspapers*. What should come to your mind is the type of people who read national newspapers. This means that the audience for this topic must be people who read newspapers in your country. The third part is *the causes and effects of the commercialization of religion*. This serves as the topic, which we must write on. You will do well not only to write on the causes and effects, but also to ensure that both are treated adequately.

Now, the question is the reason for writing on the topic. This is not explicit and you have to think it out yourself. Here, the reason may be to educate the public on the topic. It may be to praise or condemn the ingenuity of religionists. It may also be for purposes of warning unsuspecting people of some money-making interests of some religious organizations. Generally, the reason is extracted from the question, but you can easily twist the sentence to suit your purpose. These four points must be put into consideration in preparing to write the composition as an informed person.

The Topic/Title

So, how do you start this business of writing? The starting point is getting a good title. All formal writings such as articles, reports, reviews and formal letters require a title. Sometimes, in an examination, you are

provided with a title; however, in some cases you have to write it yourself. Your job is to extract a topic and frame it into a title using your own words. To be relevant, the title must capture the essence of the message you want to put across. It must also be expressed as concisely as possible. You are not encouraged to use too many words. The title has to be a phrase such as any of the following:

1. A Day I will Never Forget
2. My First Day at *Tantalizers*
3. Science has Done More Harm than Good
4. Rigging Elections is a Consequence of Examination Malpractices

Notice that all content words in the title begin with capital letters. This is a convention that may not be overlooked. This means that nouns, adjectives, pronouns, adverbs and main verbs can begin with capital letters. Conjunctions, prepositions and articles often begin with small letters.

Titles bring your compositions into focus. They lead the reader to what knowledge you want to impart. Readers are prepared for what the title reveals and how you go about presenting it. The title then, is the controlling idea of a composition. We should note that no composition can treat all parts of a topic. This is why it is necessary, at the outset, to be specific about the aspect of the topic you want to explore. The title is used to limit the topic and narrow it down to a manageable extent.

The Outline

The next step is to draw an outline based on the title that you have written. The outline will serve as the foundation for your composition. The process of writing the outline requires that you think about the title. As you do so, certain ideas will come to your mind. You should write them down as they come. You can put them down in phrases or sentences, but phrases must be developed into complete sentences later. Notice that the topic must be in focus so that you do not veer off the track.

Once you are satisfied that you have enough points to discuss, the next step is to assess the points. You will realize that some of the points are strong and some points are weak. You should first select the strong points. You may then consider merging the weak points with other related which may be weak or strong. You may also leave out some points

altogether. This is okay if you have enough number of points to support your composition.

Organization

The next step is to arrange the points in a logical order. The logical order can be any of the following:

1. the chronological order of event (e.g. a report of an accident): This entails presenting actions as they occur. Item A necessarily has to precede B; and B must precede C.
2. a description of steps in a process (e.g. mending a fuse): There are steps to be taken in doing certain activities, such as mending a tyre or operating a machine. The reader has to be led through the stages one after the other.
3. Stylistic effect: for some reasons, you may want to create certain effects on the reader. So you can arrange your points to suit such purpose. For instance, you may start from the climax of your composition, follow it with causes and end with the resolution. This is to hold your readers in suspense.

Organization is very important in compositions. Imagine that you have the following outline for a letter meant for a friend who lives overseas:

1. Federal government has constructed a new road, which passes through our village.
2. A cigarette-making industry has been established in our village.
3. Our mutual friend won a scholarship to study in Japan.
4. Get me current books on medicine.
5. Two impeached governors have been reinstated.
6. Your father's mansion has collapsed.

While you can arrange these points in different ways without much problem, it would be wrong to start with the last point. The reason is that the reader would expect to hear good news from home. If the first thing he/she reads is the collapse of his/her father's house, he/she may no longer be interested in the other details of the letter. However, if this topic is discussed last in the letter, he/she will have read other points before getting to the sad one. And if he/she feels sad, at least, he/she has read all parts of the letter. You have succeeded in conveying your message.

Parts of a Composition

A composition may be broken down into three parts. These are the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. The introduction is your first word on a topic. It is the part which explains the meaning of your title or what meaning you expect the reader to adopt. It also presents your purpose in the composition: Are you presenting a story or arguing a matter? Are you describing an item or explaining a process? The first sentence lays the foundation for the essay. It often contains a thesis statement.

The introduction gives the first information on the topic of a composition. This information occurs in the introductory paragraph as the overall theme. It restricts the topic from the generalized view and directs the horizon of the composition. The introduction thus prepares the ground for the points that will be raised and discussed in succeeding paragraphs. As the first paragraph, it can take the form of a defining, an evocative, or an explanatory paragraph. Sometimes, it deviates from the well-known view.

The introduction is very important because, in conjunction with the title, it creates the first impression on the reader. Therefore, it must be arresting to the reader. It should lure the casual reader into reading not only the first paragraph, but the entire composition. This is achieved through an appropriate use of language and a logical arrangement of sentences and the ideas in the paragraph. A badly written introduction puts off the reader. It instantly creates the impression that the writer is inept or poor at writing.

The body of the composition is the totality of facts, ideas or arguments that you have on the topic of your composition. The body is expected to be presented in paragraphs. Since the points you generated have been arranged, each of them should be developed into a paragraph. First, the phrases or sentences you generated must be changed to topic sentences before each is used in a paragraph. Due to the necessity for coherence, the body of a composition usually contains, among others, transitional paragraphs.

The last part of a composition is the conclusion. This is your last word on that topic in that composition. It is expected that you'll voice out your opinion on the topic that you have discussed or that you'll bring up a resolution of the conflicts in you discussion. Generally, therefore, you are expected to tie the loose ends of your arguments together in the

conclusion. The conclusion serves as the sum-total of your views in the body of the composition.

The Opening Sentence

How should one start a composition? This has been a great challenge to many a student. The first sentence in a composition is very important since it introduces the reader to the first paragraph and the composition in general. You must, therefore, ensure that it is concise, sharp and clear. Vague and ambiguous expressions in introductory sentences create a bad impression of the composition and on the writer. So how do you start a composition? The following are the ways you could start and graciously lead your reader into your thoughts.

The commonest form is to start with a thesis statement and develop it with other supporting sentences and illustrations. The topic sentence captures the theme of the composition and is, therefore, different from the topic sentences of other paragraphs in the composition. These are discussed in the next section.

You can start with a seemingly paradoxical statement, such as *Man would always spurn what he loves best* to present a composition on the hypocritical nature of man or woman. You can also start with a quotation from a well-known scholar, leader, politician, comedian, book, etc. This should, however, have direct relevance to the theme of the composition. Here is an example:

He who steals my good name steals that inseparable part of me which neither enriches him but makes me poor indeed; so wrote Shakespeare in Othello.

Note that the quotation marks are required if you use the author's exact words but they are left out if the quotation is paraphrased as above.

It is also acceptable to open compositions with a hypothetical statement. In this sense, you will have, from the outset, set readers mind towards thinking about the depths of your own thoughts as in:

A man who has to choose between being eaten by a hungry lion and diving into a deep turbulent sea really knows what a dilemma is.

Compositions can also start with outright questions. Here, the relevance of the question should be shown. Witness:

What will you do if your best friend confesses to you that she is a witch or an armed robber?

Another form is to open with a bold assertion that can jolt the reader:

There are no honest men in this world; and if there are, I have not seen any. This creates surprise and the reader will be interested in your reasons for making such a statement.

The first sentence can also be a definition of the key word(s) in a topic. This will help readers who are possibly not versed in the topic under discussion.

A weed is defined as any plant growing where it is not deliberately planted.

Another option is to start with factual, statistical or historical information:

Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960 and today we are celebrating the 47th independence anniversary.

Moreover, you can start a composition with a recapitulation of events, situations or problems from the past.

The menace of armed robbers has reached a crisis point in Nigeria.

In addition, you can open a composition with a personal experience. This, however, must not exceed two or three lines as in the following:

Anyone crossing the Niger-Delta cannot but be gripped with the fear of falling into the dangerous hands of militia men.

Finally, you can also start with a sentence containing a descriptive scene or setting:

Freedom of the Seas, the largest cruise ship in the world, is a beautiful sight to behold.

Generally, each of these is a suitable opening for introductory paragraphs. What must be noted, however, is that certain compositions will require certain openings. In other words, all the suggested opening sentences are not suitable for all kinds of compositions. You have to choose the form that best suits the type of composition you are writing.

For instance, opening sentences with a defining function may not be appropriate for narratives, but for expository compositions. Also, that on descriptive scenes may be more suitable for descriptions of objects rather than abstract terms like neo-colonialism, justice, faith and communism. Finally, you can evolve a unique opening sentence different from those stated above. You only need to be creative.

The Paragraph

The paragraph is a unit of discourse. It presents, explains and supports one major point. The major point is presented in a topic sentence and discussed with illustrations. All the sentences in a paragraph therefore make a unified whole when examined together. The major idea presented in a topic sentence is expressed in a particular word, which serves as the keyword to that sentence.

Every paragraph contains a keyword which is the subject of the paragraph, that is, the word which all other sentences in the paragraph describe, discuss or explain. It is so important that all the sentences in the paragraph are united by the keyword. In other words it is the only word that can summarize the paragraph.

Paragraphs are often indented. However, you may use the block form and therefore leave a space between one paragraph and the other. Whichever option you choose, this technique makes it easy for the reader to recognize the beginning and the end of an idea. It also helps readers to be able to refer to some sections for particular information. Paragraphs also help readers to follow your discussion and understand your line of argument.

Thesis Statement

Having got the outline ready, the next step is to begin the composition. The best practice is to begin with a *thesis statement*. This is a sentence that expounds the title of the composition: it captures the theme of the composition. On it hangs, like appendages, the other sentences which form the outline of your composition. This means that it is a major sentence that controls other sentences. The thesis statement is largely a defining sentence since it leads the way to what the writer wants to say.

Topic Sentence

The topic statement is very much like a thesis statement. Principally, it contains the major point that is discussed in a paragraph. It may also raise questions, which are expected to be answered within the same paragraph. Finally, it facilitates easy and quick understanding of the author's ideas in the paragraph. If a thesis statement is a summary of the whole essay, the topic statement is the summary of a paragraph. The topic sentence can occur at the initial, medial or final position in a sentence. However, it is commonly used as the first sentence of a paragraph. Learners are often encouraged to introduce their paragraphs with topic sentences. In writing your composition, therefore, you should couch the points you have generated from topics in separate topic sentences. This will then be explained through supporting sentences. Consider the following paragraph:

Faith is the firm belief that is conformable to the truth and backed by proofs. The existence of the proof is a basic condition for the existence of natural faith. Should the subject be sensory, that is, felt by the senses such as the Holy Book, the proof is then rational, otherwise it is traditional such as heaven and hell.

(Road to Faith by SAZ)

The keyword in this paragraph is *faith* and the first two sentences say something about it. The first sentence introduces the keyword, which is the major idea discussed in the paragraph. So, it is the topic sentence. The second sentence expatiates on the topic sentence and the third concludes the paragraph. The last two are referred to as supporting sentences.

Supporting Sentences

For the purposes of composition, the idea in the first sentence is further explained by supporting sentences. So, what is a supporting sentence? After the thesis statement or the topic sentence are the supporting sentences. These sentences expatiate on the content of the topic sentence. Although, they may be two or more, the fact is that they must all relate to the topic sentence. Parts of the supporting sentences are the examples and illustrations. Facts and figures must be provided where necessary and analogies and comparisons can be used to elucidate the writer's ideas. The final sentence rounds off the discussion in the paragraph. Therefore, each

sentence must contain new information. Otherwise, the sentence becomes redundant.

Some people believe that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. This is partly true. Perhaps it accounts for some people writing long rambling sentences, incomplete sentences and dangling modifiers. Although a sentence must start with a capital letter, you must not pile up too much information on only one sentence. Instead, you should put related ideas in one sentence, while different ones should be expressed in other sentences.

The grammatical aspect of the sentence is also relevant here. There are four types of sentence: simple, compound, complex and compound-complex. To avoid monotony in your composition, you should use these different types of sentences to complement one another. An overuse of simple sentences makes the composition ordinary, uncoordinated, stiff, jerky and graceless. An overuse of compound and complex sentences also make the composition too complex, convoluted or wordy for accessibility.

This issue of complexity leads us to the normal length of a sentence. A sentence should be as long as necessary. You should not put many ideas in one sentence, even when they are related. These can be effectively put in two or more sentences. This brings about clarity of expression. A sentence, therefore, may not be more than three lines long for those who write eight words on a line. If you write more or less, you should adjust accordingly. This is not a rigid rule but a guide for beginners who may find it difficult to control the length of their sentences.

In conclusion, the totality of the first sentence and the supporting sentences constitutes a paragraph.

Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed how to write good and accessible compositions. In the process, we examined the four-way approach to writing a composition, we also looked into parts of a composition, such as the opening sentence, the paragraph and its basic constituents.

Post-Test

1. Draw an outline for one of the topics below and organize your points.
 - a. A Day I will Never Forget
 - b. My First Day at *Tantalizers*
 - c. Science has Done More Harm than Good
 - d. Rigging Elections is a Consequence of Examination Malpractices
2. Generate a thesis statement from your outline.
3. Convert the points in the outline to topic sentences
4. Develop one of the topic sentences into a paragraph.

LECTURE TEN

Paragraph Development

Introduction

We can describe a paragraph as a miniature composition. This is simply because the paragraph contains a proposition, contained in the main/topic sentence, which is developed throughout the paragraph. The point in the main sentence is supported by other sentences. Examples or illustrations are also presented before a concluding sentence rounds off the paragraph. Furthermore, such paragraph may be presented in a variety of ways to show how the author's mind is working. We would realize from a paragraph whether the author is making comparisons/contrasts, arguing for or against an idea, making analogies, etc. In this lecture, we shall explore the intricacies involved in writing good paragraphs and using different patterns of thought flow

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. write a good paragraph;
2. write different types of paragraphs; and
3. write paragraphs using different thought flow patterns.

Pre-Test

1. What makes a paragraph unique?
2. What are the different forms of a paragraph?
3. What is a thought flow?

CONTENT

In the last lecture, we examined briefly the components of a paragraph. These are the topic sentence and the supporting sentences. In this section, we shall look at certain features that are required for a paragraph to be considered acceptable. We also extend these to relationships between paragraphs that follow one another.

Paragraph Unity, Coherence and Cohesion

1. Unity: Unity and coherence are two major features of a good paragraph. Unity entails the discussion of only one topic in a paragraph. It follows that a paragraph which discusses more than one topic lacks unity. This is easily seen when a writer rambles about in his/her discussions.

2. Coherence: Coherence is closely related to unity in composition. The major idea in coherence is that there must be a logical presentation of ideas. This entails that the writer should discuss ideas in particular order that readers can follow.

3. Cohesion: In cohesion, sentences in a paragraph must hang together; that is, each sentence must be connected to the preceding or the following ones in the same paragraph. Usually, writers use repetitions, synonyms and pronominal reference to join sentences together in a paragraph. You can also use transitional linkers (discussed below). Thus, while unity deals with the discussion of only one idea, and coherence deals with the logical presentation of connected ideas, cohesion deals with the hooking together of the sentences.

Transitional Words

Apart from the logical arrangement of ideas in individual paragraphs, it is also important to organize the paragraphs in a composition to make the idea in one lead naturally to another in the next paragraph. To achieve this goal, we use certain words called transitional words or paragraph linkers. These show the relationship of the new idea to the one already discussed. Such new idea may be an addition to or a reinforcement of the earlier point, a contrasting view to it or a summarizing clue for the entire discussion. Each linker is used at the beginning of each new paragraph as

a signpost to direct the thought of the reader towards that of the writer. These are for convenience broken into groups.

1. Additive Linkers

These linkers present paragraphs which discuss points that are in accord with the previous one. That is, they serve as a marker of additional information to that in the preceding paragraph. Examples include *in addition, besides, also, moreover, and, furthermore, similarly* and *again*.

2. Contrasting Linkers

These introduce paragraphs which give views opposed to that presented in the earlier paragraphs. Examples include *however, even though, conversely, although, despite the fact that, nevertheless, but, even then, on the other hand, on the contrary* and *in contrast*.

3. Temporal Linkers

These indicate time relations in compositions. Examples include *after, before, then, now, meanwhile, in the mean time* and *during the period*.

4. Concluding Linkers

These linkers are used to introduce paragraphs that conclude discussions or compositions. Examples are *finally, hence, thus, therefore, in sum, to sum up, to conclude, in summary, consequently* and *as a result*.

Another way of linking paragraphs is to take the major idea, one word or a phrase from the last paragraph and paraphrase or repeat it in the new paragraph. Such words or phrase are usually picked from the last sentence of the preceding paragraph. All these ensure that the paragraphs in a composition cohere.

Types of Paragraphs

Paragraphs are of different forms and types. This depends on the function they are performing in compositions. The following are some types of paragraphs:

1. *The Introductory paragraph*

An introductory paragraph presents the main thrust of the composition. Usually, it prepares the reader for what to expect in the composition. Introductory paragraphs must be brief. They should serve as the background to other paragraphs in the composition. The thesis statements must be distinct from, but equal to, the other topic sentences in the succeeding paragraphs. Consider the following example:

We had been itching to visit the Olumirin Water Falls in Erin-Odo since our class teacher announced that we would go there on an excursion. The day was Tuesday. Every one of us had arrived in the school waiting for the bus that was to convey us. It arrived at 7.30am and off we went.

This is an introductory paragraph on the subject of excursion. The author carries the reader along by the tone of the paragraph.

It sounds really excited and the reader seems to be assured of a nice reading of the author's experiences at the Olumirin Water Falls. It prepares the reader for an account of the journey in a chronological order. Here is another example:

There are three keywords here, which we have to define: revisit, academic and tradition. We have to define them not because we are ignorant of their meanings but because it is useful for all of us to agree with what the rest of this exercise is all about. What is to revisit? It is to take a second look at something and that second look may or may not be revisory. The Webster's Third New Dictionary defines the verb 'to revisit' as to inspect or to check anew, to re-examine, to visit again, to return to'. What we want to do today is to re-examine the foundations of the academic profession with a view to returning to it.

(Adebayo, G. A. 2005. *Revisiting the Academic Tradition*, (p1)

In this paragraph the author has done two things. First, she has defined the relevant terms in the title of her discussion: *revisit*, *academic* and *tradition*. Second, she has noted what the whole discussion is about: to re-examine the foundations of the academic profession with a view to returning to it. In essence, she has set the tone of her subject. She has educated the reader on the theme of her discussion. In this way, readers will remain focused and expectant of how the author would discuss her subject.

2. The Expository Paragraph

The exposition or explanatory paragraph gives insight into what something is, what it does, how, why and when it is done. Unlike the defining paragraph, it avoids giving specific meanings but provides guides to the intended interpretations of a concept. Consider this paragraph:

It is not enough to part with your money and go to bed. The utilization and expected results should be closely monitored by you since your ultimate goal is to have a peaceful retirement. Therefore, you need to follow the progress of your investments as stock brokers are human beings who could make mistakes. Monitoring will help you to know possible declaration of dividends/bonuses dates; payment date and expected amount; amount of shares in each security invested in; possible depletion in your investment due to any unauthorized transaction; price at which stocks were purchased, possible time to sell if need be; and calculation of investment margin.

(Ologun, J. O. 2006. *Facing Retirement with a Smile*, p6)

In this paragraph the author explains in simple words how an investor should monitor stocks bought to derive the maximum benefit.

3. The Transitional Paragraph

These serve as bridges between introductory or preceding paragraphs and succeeding ones. Although transitional words are also used to link paragraphs, some paragraphs are characteristically transitional. Such paragraphs ensure that the ideas in the composition hang together. They provide smoothness and continuity in the thought flow. Here's an example:

So far, we have juxtaposed the two languages and drawn out conclusions from the exercise. What remains now is the identification of problem areas and suggestions on how to overcome such problems and achieve perfection in English usage.

(Lamidi, M. T. 1991 *A Contrastive and Error Analysis of the Written English of Hausa Speakers*, (p48).

In this paragraph, the reader is reminded of what has been discussed, and what should be expected at this stage

4. *The Concluding Paragraph*

The concluding paragraph usually occupies the final position in a composition. It rounds off what has been said in different ways. First, it can summarize the salient points in the composition, drive home the points raised in earlier paragraphs and tie them to the same theme. It can also contain your opinions on the earlier paragraphs. Concluding paragraphs also reinforce the strong impression you have created from the introduction through the body. Here's a sample:

Today, awareness in the Capital Market is on the upbeat, as it is the safest form of savings/investment. In view of the policy of government (Federal, State, Local) to privatize, the Capital Market will continue to receive the necessary attention. The market provides ample opportunity for discerning investors to expand the scope of their wealth creation ability. Therefore, your financial independence can easily be achieved through consistent and properly planned investments in shares.

(Ologun, J. O. 2006. *Facing Retirement with a Smile*, p12)

In the earlier paragraphs, the author had discussed the concept and functions of capital market. In this concluding paragraph, the author summarizes the advantages of the capital market and concludes by encouraging the audience to participate fully.

Thought –Flow Patterns

Thought flow patterns refer to the way you organize your ideas in a paragraph. Apart from using topic sentences and supporting sentences, you still need some form of organization within the paragraph. This enables the reader to follow your line of thought. There are different types of thought patterns. These include cause and effect, classification, comparison and contrast, argument and persuasion, enumeration, analogy and definition. We take them one by one:

1. Cause and Effect: The *cause and effect* thought-flow refers to a discussion of certain occurrences and the effects of such. It means that something impinges on the other and there are consequences of such contact. In using this method, you need to divide occurrences into classes to show their relatedness. Thus, when we see a cause, we should see the effect within the same paragraph. If, for stylistic reasons, you start with the effects, we must know the cause(s). This means that there should be a direct bearing between the cause(s) and its effect(s).

Sometimes, there are causal chains or chain effects. In this case, causes and effects occur in a sequence. An event causes an effect, which in turn also causes another effect. Again, events may overlap. You have to use your skill as a writer to make all events clear and show their relationships for readers to follow your discussion. To avoid confusion, you may have to identify immediate and remote causes and their effects. Finally, you may want to distinguish between major and minor causes and effects. This has to be weighed in relation to the topic of your composition.

Principally, *cause and effect* thought-patterns are often used to explain or argue in several fields. In explaining, you need to present the events in order of occurrence and show the connections between the cause and its effect. In arguments, you need to show how a proposed action will be beneficial or not beneficial. You may also show why an explanation of causes is more accurate than another.

*Poverty and malnutrition are scourges of the population which have become determinants of the quality of life of such populations where the numbers of those affected are high. The world began to know poverty, malnutrition and disease when God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden. In Genesis Chapter 3 vs 17 19(sic), God said “**cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread till thou return to the ground**”. That curse has made it impossible anywhere in the world to eradicate poverty, food insecurity and sorrow ...*

(Akinyele, Olaoluwa 2005. *Poverty, Malnutrition and the Public Health Dilemma of Disease*, p3)

In this paragraph, it is the contention of the author that the remote cause of poverty and malnutrition were (1) God drove Adam and Eve

away from the Garden of Eden, and (2) God cursed them. Consequently, poverty and nutrition determine the quality of life of people in the world. These two serve as the immediate causes of human's diseases and death.

2. Comparison and Contrast

As the names suggest, comparison shows similarities between two or more items. Contrast, on the other hand, shows differences between them. This combined thought pattern is often used when items are to be compared to see which is beneficial or better. Thus, the major purpose of the thought flow is evaluation of subject. The other function is to explain the similarities and differences between two subjects for pedagogical purposes. This will make the two similar objects distinct to the reader.

When you concentrate on comparison, you bring out the similarities; and when you focus on the contrast, you lay bare the differences. By using this method, you can establish a relationship between two objects. You may present your ideas in different ways. First, you present the differences in one paragraph and the similarities in another paragraph. Again, you may discuss the features that one has in one set and the features of the other in another set. In the alternative, the features of the two subjects may be discussed together. It is a matter of choice. Whichever option you choose, it is essential that you balance your argument. Do not emphasize the features of one to the detriment of the other. Consider the following example:

In furtherance of our thesis, we argue that there is a significant difference between the undergraduate and the professorial texts. The first difference is that, as we have earlier indicated in this lecture, emphasis is not on God and the supervisor, objectifying as the humane, the characteristics of a super vision, but on the writer and the attempt to cover his/her life course. The second difference is that the professorial acknowledgements enjoy more "name-dropping" of significant others, than the undergraduate one, and this is much to be expected since the essay reveals more of the particular person and situations, which are where morality of the discourse resides. The third difference is that unlike the undergraduate essays, which would give consideration to the contribution of their colleagues, not so much to the project/ dissertation as to the success of the "programme", the professorial essays downplay the inputs of colleagues. Of course, life course, which the professors address, does not have the same

sense of a closed, limited time of the undergraduate's programme which ends with their course of study. The professors' life courses are ongoing, and dynamic, extending beyond the inaugural lecture. It is less time- and context-bound. Importantly, colleagues are, for the professors, perceived within a hierarchical structure, which is formal and prescriptive. But no corresponding structure exists for the undergraduates. In the long run, the two styles can be expected to show a remarkable, sociological difference to serve as critique on each other.

(Lawuyi, O.B. 2006. *The Undergraduates and Professors in a Shared Discourse: Inaugural and Acknowledgements as a Cultural Critique*, p19)

When you look at this paragraph closely, you will realize that texts (acknowledgements) produced by professors and undergraduates are being compared. The author takes the points one after the other. He provides his views on the professor's vis-à-vis the undergraduate's texts in each point before going to the next point. Notice that three points are made in the paragraph. These are:

1. Unlike the undergraduate's acknowledgements essays, the emphasis of the professor's acknowledgements is not on God and the Supervisor; but on self praise.
2. The professor acknowledges more people than does the undergraduate.
3. Undergraduates acknowledge contributions of colleagues, but professors downplay colleagues' contributions.

3. Enumeration

In this thought flow pattern, you have to show how parts, incidents or concepts combine to give a whole picture. You may first introduce the topic and then list the subtopics to be discussed. You may also make a general statement and then go on to enumerate supporting details. Consider the following example:

How do we measure quality? What are the parameters for measuring quality? According to the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, measures to evaluate academic programmes and general education may include the following: standard tests; analysis of theses and recitals; completion rates; results of admission tests for students applying to graduate or professional schools, job placement

rates; results of licensing examinations; evaluations by employers; follow-up studies of alumni; and performance of student transfers at receiving institutions. All aspects of the educational programme must be clearly related to the purpose of the institution. Suggested parameters to measure quality have been divided into 5 broad groups, namely, academic content; management; physical facilities; equipment; and funding.

(Osasona, O.2005. 'Parameters for Measuring Quality' in Olayinka A.I. & V.O Adetimirin (eds.), pp15-16)

Looking at this paragraph, we see the large number of items that the author wants to discuss in his bid to measure quality in academic programmes. Towards the end of the paragraph, he narrows these down to five broad topics which are discussed in subsequent chapters.

4. Classification

This method of thought flow is characterized by sorting out the strands that make a whole. In using this method, you should present the topic sentence with the classes you want to discuss. Each of the parts mentioned in the topic sentence can then be discussed with supporting sentences. In science-related disciplines, it may be necessary for you to present diagrams, charts or pictures to make things clearer.

There are four types of child marriage. The first is promissory marriage, which is arranged before or after a girl is born. The second is a form of marriage in which a girl-child is placed in the custody of (bonding) of her in-laws from the age of 10. The girl-child continues to grow up in the family until she is mature and ready for formal betrothal. Sex between her and the prospective spouse is usually not allowed until the girl-child is mature enough. The third type takes place during early adolescence and can, therefore, be described as early adolescent marriage, involving girl-children between 10 and 14. The girl-child is formally betrothed at this age and she begins child bearing right away. Finally, there is the late adolescent marriage that takes place when a girl-child is between 15 and 19 years. Child bearing and rearing follows immediately.

(Erinosho, Layi. 2005. *The Burden of Our Women*, p6).

In this paragraph, the author started with a topic sentence, which indicates the categories of marriage to be discussed. Subsequent sentences

identify these, one after the other, providing details where necessary. Notice that this differs from enumeration thought-flow. While enumeration thought-flow lists items to be discussed, classification thought-flow explains the different categories.

5. Analogy

This pattern refers to a comparison of two very different items (for instance reproduction between rats and humans). The analogy is used as a metaphor to show the features two dissimilar things have in common. It may also be used to present unfamiliar concepts and ideas by referring to a familiar feature shared by the two. Notice that analogies differ from comparison because analogies discuss subjects from different classes while comparison-contrast discusses subjects from the same class. Analogy focuses on one subject, but comparison uses two. Analogies use the second subject only to elucidate the features of the main subject. Note also that the two subjects must have some fundamental feature in common before you can draw any analogy. Otherwise, you might be drawing a false analogy. Here are two paragraphs, the second of which uses analogy.

...Again in the spirit of the lecture, it is my belief that the three legs of the tripod, Literature, Medicine and Politics are equally important. I will therefore not attempt to elevate one above the other as it happened in an incident recorded several years ago.

According to that story, three men, a doctor, a writer and a politician got ship-wrecked during a violent storm on the sea. Unfortunately, there was only one life jacket. An argument ensued on who should use the life jacket. The doctor insisted that as the only one in the boat with the skill to keep people alive, he should have the live jacket. However, the writer who claimed to be the chronicler of memory, men and events begged to be allowed to do just that in case his other two companions perish in the storm. After a long argument, the politician suggested that in the true spirit of democracy, the matter should be put to vote. And so the three men cast their votes. The politician who had supervised the election announced the results: the doctor had one vote, the writer had one vote, while the politician had four votes!

(Okediran, Wale 2005. *Reflections on the Engaging Tripod of Literature, Medicine and Politics*, pp1-2)

The first paragraph starts at the middle. It is included for you to know what items are being discussed. The second paragraph uses *analogy* thought-flow. Notice that Literature, medicine and politics have nothing to do with three people being ship-wrecked at a sea. The only analogy the author is drawing is that there is competition among three equal concepts just as there was among three professionals in the analogy.

6. Definition

This thought flow pattern explains the ramifications of a concept, an emotion, a value or an idea. There are three kinds of definition. The first is a *formal definition*, which is equal to the ordinary meaning (or specialized meaning) of concepts offered in a dictionary. It is used to explain the basic meaning of terms or expressions which may confuse the reader. The second is a *stipulative definition*. This presents the author's special view of a particular concept. It shows the author's peculiar interpretation of the word in the context of the composition. The third type is an *extended definition*. This type is used for a full exploration of the meaning of a concept and drawing boundaries around it. It attempts a precise and complete realization of the meanings of a thing, a quality or an idea, which people may misunderstand or disagree with.

Generally, therefore, definitions involve the use of synonyms, saying what a word does not mean and tracing the history of particular concepts which are in focus. Here is an example:

Malnutrition is a state where adequate nutrients are not delivered to the cells to provide the substance for optimal functioning. It is also a state where more nutrients than the cell's needs are consumed creating excesses which become injurious to the cell. There are approximately 45 nutrients which are required by the body for its functioning, and these must be supplied in the daily diet. Many of these are micronutrients required in small amounts.

(Akinyele, Olaoluwa 2005. *Poverty, Malnutrition and the Public Health Dilemma of Disease*, p9)

This paragraph offers readers a definition of malnutrition. This is a formal definition as it provides the ordinary meaning of the term.

Argument and Persuasion

As the terms suggest, arguments have to do with advancing facts to make readers reason along with you. Persuasion on the other hand, involves using subtle means such as emotion and values. This thought-flow pattern is used when a topic is debatable. Thus, you need to express a proposition/ make an assertion presenting your own line of argument. Inherent in this pattern are appeals. These are ethical appeal and emotional appeal. You need to appeal to readers' beliefs, social ties, values, feelings, and concrete evidence to support your position. Notice that you should have the appropriate mixture of reason and emotion to achieve the desired effect. Facts are not to be proved with argument; you have to appeal to reason. Values may be subjective; you may have to apply emotion and reason.

As academicians, students and investors, knowledge of the capital market is indeed indispensable, given the fact that the first financial market is a major driver of economic development. Nigeria must give the market the needed attention and prominence. Our developmental needs are many but, as a nation, we have been greatly favoured by the Almighty God with an abundance of resources- human and natural. The capital market can play a pivotal role in developing these resources. The capital market was the engine of growth in Western economies where the market pooled in funds for the development of vital infrastructure such as roads, bridges, etc and is still very much promoting development. The potentials of the Nigerian capital market are enormous and can do for Nigeria what the market did for the United States and other countries. The support and participation of every one of us is however critical.

(Ndanusa, Suleyman 2004. *The Capital Market as an Alternative Source of funds: the role of the Securities and Exchange Commission*, pp24-25.

In this paragraph, the author gave reasons why people should participate fully in the Capital Market trading: (1) The capital market can enhance a nation's development; (2) The Capital Market assisted the Western economies to grow. He then lays the premisses for his conclusion: (1) We have abundant material and natural resources. (2) Capital Market can also make Nigeria grow. And finally he concludes: Therefore everyone must participate in the Capital Market trading.

Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed the issue of paragraph development. First, we examined the three basic characteristics of a good paragraph unity, coherence and cohesion. We later discussed various transitional words or linkers that could be employed to join related; ideas or paragraphs. Lastly, we examined different types of paragraphs.

Post-Test

1. Write introductory, transitional and concluding paragraphs on any of the following topics:
 - a. My first day at the university
 - b. Science has done more harm than good to humans
 - c. How to cook my favourite dish
 - d. An exciting story I read
2. Write a paragraph on any topic to demonstrate your understanding of each of the following paragraph types:
 - a.) Analogy, (b.) Comparison and contrast, (c.) Cause and effect, (d.) Classification (e.) Argument and persuasion, (f.) enumeration, (g.) definition

LECTURE ELEVEN

Types and Forms of Composition

Introduction

Compositions can take different shapes and forms. Essentially, they can be stories or narratives; descriptions of things or events; instructions on how to do things or an exercise in reasoning and argumentation. This section throws light on the features of these different writings and concludes that despite their differences, they still overlap in some cases.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify different features that distinguish types of compositions;
and
2. write each type of composition.

Pre-Test

1. Can you recollect any story an elderly person told you?
2. Have you seen any movie lately? What is it about?
3. What is the relationship between a narration and a description?
4. Is it true to say that lawyers are liars? Why?
5. What is the difference between an expository writing and an argumentative writing?
6. Have you ever been asked to take the minutes of a meeting? How did you do it?
7. How will you write business letters?

8. How will you rate a particular book?
9. Have you ever written term paper? How did you write it?

CONTENT

Types of Composition

Written compositions have been conventionally classified into four. These are narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative types. The four categories are identified by certain features but as we hope to show later in this discussion, they overlap. Thus, a narrative may have elements of description or exposition. Expository compositions may also have elements of description, and argumentative compositions may have features of description and exposition. It follows that in written compositions, you may not be able to identify a pure type of composition in a particular situation.

Since the different features intervene in compositions, the only way to identify the type of composition is to examine the *dominant features* of the composition. We shall therefore explore the features that are peculiar to each of the composition types identified above.

1. The Narrative

The narrative form of composition is an account of an incident. Usually, the incident happened in the presence of the writer and he or she is most times privy to the major actions in the story. So they can tell the story from the point of view of an eye-witness: the first person narrative point of view. The story can also be told from the third person narrative point of view. In this sense the person is telling the story based on the knowledge given to him by those who actually witnessed it.

A narrative composition may be fictitious (such as imagined stories and/or other legends /myths told by elders). It can also be an account of what really happened to you, a relation, a friend, a neighbour or any of your acquaintances. So the story you write may be true or imagined. However, it must be credible, and coherent.

The dominant features of a narrative are (1) the scenes or episodes, which are the different events that took place in the story; (2) the setting or location of all the events; (3) the individuals involved in the story; (4) the

actions (how the characters interacted or behaved); and chronological sequence (the order of occurrence of the events).

In narratives, and in fact, all other compositions, the reader is assumed to be ignorant of some (or most) facts. Your duty then is to reach out to the audience effectively. The story must be true to life. Your effectiveness may, however, be called to question if the reader considers the story as illogical, or picks certain episodes as inconsistent. This makes your story incredible. In this wise, you have failed to communicate effectively.

Since it is a report of past events, you should report actions in simple past, past continuous and past perfect tenses. Other tenses might be permitted when you write direct speech. In addition, you should show your skills in the use of language. The story should show force, pungency and vibrancy. You should present your accounts vividly and the audience should be able to know what the high points of the story are. Notice that the language of a narrative is usually informal. It gives room for creativity of language on your part.

As the author, you are assumed to have absolute knowledge of the story. The reader will expect from you a detailed account of what happened and the significance of each episode. It follows that you should avoid irrelevant details and emphasize the relevant points. Also, your choice of relevant points has to be considered vis-à-vis the audience. This is because what is relevant to a given audience may not be relevant to another. For instance, in giving accounts of an accident to your friend and the police, you have two different audiences. Your friend may just want to get the general view and learn from other people's mistakes. The police will appreciate the facts of the matter to back up possible prosecution.

You should also follow a logical sequence of events. The story can be told in the order of occurrence. However, in some cases, you may invert the sequence and bring the climax to the beginning. By so doing, you delay the resolution of the climax to the end. This is a technique called *suspense*. It ties the reader down till the end of the story.

Narratives can be written in the first person or the third person *narrative points of view*. If you use the first person *narrative point of view* (also called eye-“I”-witness account), it is assumed that you are a participant in the story. So readers will expect the use of pronouns such as *I*, *my*, *our*, and *we* (as in Ferdinand Oyono's novel: *Houseboy*). If,

however, you use the third person *narrative point of view*, you are perceived as a watcher of events. Introductions and conclusions are optional in narratives; except you want to achieve certain effects, they are better left out.

2. The Descriptive Composition

The descriptive composition presents detailed pictures of persons, places, things, scenery and objects. A description of a market place, for instance, should show a vivid picture of the market to the reader who is possibly in an office, home, classroom, etc. The reader may or may not have seen the market before. However, you have to bring the descriptions of the features, scenes and actions of the market (or any item you are describing) to the reader. Usually, this entails vivid descriptions through the use of figures of speech, figurative expressions and all other resources of expert use of language.

The reader is usually assumed to be relatively ignorant of certain facts about the object of description. So, you need to highlight and describe the salient features/areas of interest/concern to your audience. For instance you may ask a government official to repair a bad road. In this case, you should present him with a gory picture of possible road accidents occasioned by the bad road. This may be the major thing that will move him to act positively. An effective description will make him see the faulty road causing needless accidents where innocent people lose their lives – right in his office. He will see the jagged road of potholes; the driver's strive to survive on the road, the inevitability of an accident, the dead, the injured, and the pool of blood as well as the battered vehicles involved. This is certain to strike a chord in his veins. This means that you must select details relevant to your audience. He must be able to see the badness of the road through his mind's eye.

To present such events properly, you must be proficient in the use of language. You should be imaginative and show your perceptual ability if you are not describing an actual scene. And, if you are, you must use appropriate descriptive language. This is shown in the use of adjectives, figures of speech and figurative expressions. Descriptions which lack these usually appear vague, indistinct or imprecise to the audience. Your first task, therefore, is to visualize or imagine the situation or object of description and use appropriate words to describe it.

Descriptive writing can be factual (objective) or emotional (subjective). It is factual when you give a first hand account of experiences (felt, seen, touched or enacted). The facts of a particular object will be given as in descriptions of persons, places and things; schools, markets, persons, machinery, etc. Thus, factual descriptive writings give matter-of-fact descriptions. The language use is objective and devoid of words like good, bad, beautiful, etc which are subjective terms (what is beautiful for one may be considered ugly by another).

On the other hand, emotional descriptive writings present not only facts but your own impression of, and attitude to, what you are describing. Examples of these include presenting a candidate for elective posts; and describing scenes to jolt somebody to taking a desired action. Usually, facts are exaggerated and the writer's impression is also included to effectively convince the reader. Most often, the language is highly subjective. So, a person can be described as stupid or clever, kind or wicked, stingy or generous, trustworthy, patriotic, dynamic, friendly, deceitful, etc.

As a writer of descriptive compositions, you must show a high level of organization. You must select the most relevant details and choose the language suitable for achieving unity of purpose. Words are arranged logically showing time-space relations from top to bottom or from left to right or from large to small.

3. The Expository Composition

Expository compositions are meant to educate the audience on an idea, a process or a description. They explain the meaning, purpose, causes and effects of something which may be an abstract or a physical object. In addition, they educate readers on the functions or process of an object, such as a machine, or an idea. In essence, expository writings uncover, describe and clarify concepts and explain them to the audience.

Expository writings are also designed to provoke understanding of ideas and concepts. That is why they are usually organized. The organization is in two ways. First, it can be organized in a sequential order as in the preparation of a farmland, mending a fuse or patching a punctured tyre. A sequential order is required if the audience must reproduce perfectly what you have predicted. Expository writings can also

be organized in a classificatory manner whereby each section is taken at a time as in weaving a basket or cooking pepper soup or fried rice.

As usual, the audience learns from you, the writer. So, you have to determine what the readers already know and what they have to learn. For instance, in cooking, it is irrelevant to ask the reader to wash the pots or make a fire before cooking. However, it may be relevant to tell them to put something, say *okro* soup, on fire for five minutes. The purpose of writing and the audience will determine the details to include. Generally, the audience's age, intelligence and social class will determine the relevance of any information to be passed on to him/her.

Expository compositions are of three types. The first is the explanation of a process. In this type, you state the step-by-step process of doing things until you arrive at the end of the whole process. Examples include the operation of a machine, say a blender or a yam pounder. The reader must be able to perform this task without assistance, relying on your composition. Here, the organization of points is important. If the points are not well organized, the reader will make mistakes and will not arrive at the expected result. Thus, the sequential order is important.

The second type is the explanation of an idea or concept. Usually, concepts like communism, faith, justice, socialism, etc have wide applications. In expository writings, they have to be interpreted to enable the reader to know which shade of meaning area is being referred to. So, you have to elucidate on this topic and give an insight into the concept, its applications and its ramifications.

The final point is about giving directives or instructions. You can give directions to a hospital, the Cocoa House in Ibadan, the Union Bank Headquarters at Marina, Lagos, the general market at Onitsha, Rumfa College in Kano, etc. You can also give instructions on how to prepare a chemical (CaCO_3), gas (CO_2), or a favourite food. This is similar to the explanation of a process described above. The only difference is that imperative sentences are often used in compositions involving instructions. This is, however, not mandatory in the explanation of a process.

When describing a process or giving instructions, simple short sentences may predominate in the composition. This should be expected since most sentences will be imperative, giving only the required information. Also, since the actions are habitual, the present tense of verbs

must be used. Introductions are also necessary, especially, in the explanation of ideas. Titles and conclusions are also compulsory.

4. The Argumentative Composition

Argumentative compositions are meant to persuade and convince the audience to accept and adopt a certain point of view, an attitude or a course of action. When writing argumentative compositions, you should try to prove that your own points of argument are more superior and should therefore be accepted. Argumentative writings usually present two or more different positions. Out of these, you should choose one position and defend your choice of that option. In this process, you have to carve out an image, create a new impression and awareness in the audience and consequently change their attitude.

To convince people, you must be persuasive enough through effective use of language. You have to present your points logically and show why the reader should reason along with you and agree with your choice. This means that you must take the audience into consideration. You present a problem, provide answers and justify your choice. This needs evidence: references, illustrations, facts, examples, etc to convince the reader.

Argumentative writings are either open or close. In the former, you can argue for or against the motion or remain neutral. For the latter, you may be asked to write for or against. This means the argument position has already been chosen for you. When you write for the motion, you support the motion. When you write against the motion, you oppose it. And when you are neutral you argue for and against and leave the readers to draw their own conclusions. Alternatively, you can remain neutral and ask your audience to remain so too as in the following topic: *Male children are preferable to and better than female children*. If you feel that both male and female children are equally matched, you may argue for both positions and ask your audience to agree with you.

You must also ensure that your arguments are balanced. This is done by considering the positive and negative points for your choice. You must refute the negative points or better still prove that they have no negative effects. This shows your readers that you have considered both sides of the topic before taking your own position. If you do not do this, the audience might assume that you have rejected the opposite position of the topic because you do not know about it. Therefore, in your argumentative

writings, ensure that you understand the position you are taking. And from the outset, begin to defend your position; except when you are arguing both ways. One part should lead into the other, and your conclusion must be logical and strong enough to round off your argument.

Moreover, you can organize the points in your composition in different ways. First, you can present the argument *for* first and follow it with the argument *against* or vice versa. Second, you can also treat points affecting both options within each paragraph. Third, when there are two positions, A and B, you can treat a positive point to A in paragraph one and a negative side of the point for B in the second paragraph. Notice that a point must be argued out in each paragraph and concluded before the paragraph is linked to the next.

Argumentative writings have four main parts. The first is the preamble, which is very important in compositions such as the debate. In this, you would recognize members of the audience especially those who play leading roles in that gathering. The preamble should also contain a statement of your choice from the two options. The second part is the introduction, which presents the thesis of the argument. This usually occurs immediately after the preamble; and where the preamble is not used, the introduction occurs in the first paragraph. This paragraph must not deal with details. It must be apt, purposeful and arresting to the reader/audience. The next important part of argumentative writing is the body. This is where you advance cogent reasons to persuade and convince the audience to support your point of view. The audience requires information, proof, facts and figures, etc to be convinced of the veracity of your claim. The conclusion is the final part of an argument. It is a brief statement, which highlights the salient points already made, and reviews what others have said and which you have recognized in the position. This is rounded off by a personal summary of the subject matter of your argument. However, do not repeat all the previous points in the conclusion. Instead, you can introduce a cogent point to round off.

Forms of Composition

Introduction

We have discussed four major types of composition, especially those which are considered elementary. However, there are some which are used by professionals. You, my reader, may be a professional in one field or the

other. It is important that you know how to write such compositions. In this section, we shall discuss four advanced forms of writing.

As the saying goes; no man is an island. Each person interacts with another on different levels. These levels may be on the plane of friendship, family ties or pure profession. So, each person interacts with friends, colleagues, subordinates, superiors and professional associates. This interaction may also take different forms. It may be in form of letters (to friend and family members). It may be in form of term papers or projects (to lecturers). It can also be in form of reports or minutes (to a professional body). What are the features of these types of composition? We shall discuss them one after the other.

Reports

A report is described as a document, which presents facts and figures on a particular topic of investigation. It is usually instituted by an authority to assist it in taking appropriate decisions on the issue discussed. Reports are written by professionals that are knowledgeable in the field. And, of course, members are often selected or appointed into a particular committee set up for that purpose. A chairman and a secretary are always appointed among the members. The chairman or head of the committee has the task of coordinating the activities of the members in the pursuit of conducting the investigation. Although there are different types of report, we shall discuss the general features of those written in institutions.

Certain features are expected in reports. The first is the title of the report. You should state the subject in clear and precise terms such that everyone will clearly understand the matter under discussion. The second feature is the occasion that warrants the investigation leading to the report. It may be the case that two units in an institution are laying claim to a building, a monetary allocation, a special grant; an institution may be losing its customers; a particular product may not sell as much as expected; etc. Next, you should write the *terms of reference* of the report. This is the mission statement. It states in concrete terms the specific things the committee was asked to work on. This gives you and the reader the focus of your report.

After the *terms of reference*, you should give readers preliminary information regarding how you conducted the investigation. The reader will like to know whether you used questionnaire, interview (and how

many people are involved), documents, etc. You also need to say how often members met to deliberate on the issue(s). Next is the core of the work. Readers will want to know what your investigation has produced. What *new things* have you found out in the course of the investigation? When you write this, you need to support your claims with reasons, facts and figures. Otherwise, your report may be considered baseless and subsequently thrown out!

It is on the bases of your findings that you now write your *conclusions*. The conclusion is your opinion on what you have investigated. It must also be derivable from your findings. Really, you are entitled to your opinion. However, you must be aware that the body that set up the committee will be interested in *your* opinion. So it has to be reasonable and based on your findings.

Derivable from your findings and conclusions are your *recommendations*. It is not enough to conduct an investigation and present findings. You need to recommend ways out of the problem that you have investigated. You can look into the future and predict what would happen based on certain factors in your study. The authority that constituted the panel must be able to *see* what you *see* before it can agree with you. After these recommendations, the next is appreciation. It is polite and modest to thank the body for the opportunity given to you to contribute to the progress of the company or institution. In essence, you will be writing in the first person plural since you are representing a committee. You should put the names of the members on the last page and let each person sign it.

As should be expected, the language of a report must be formal. It should be objective and factual. Really it should be devoid of emotions and sentiments. It should also avoid ornamentation. The body that set it up has many pressing issues to consider than to be held down by verbosity and ambiguity. Since it addresses a particular question, the question must be seen to have been answered.

Sometimes, there may be need for a *minority report*. This becomes necessary when a member or a section of the committee does not agree with their colleagues. In such a situation, they may write a report. Such report should also follow the procedure above. However, it has to state clearly why the minority report is necessary.

Book Review

A review entails assessing a person's work. You may want to review a poem, a novel, an academic book or an article. In doing this, it is expected that you will have studied the subject thoroughly. The first activity for you, then is to understand what the author writes and his/her field of study.

Given your background of this field, you are assumed to be knowledgeable in the area. Therefore, you are considered competent to critically look at the work with a view to advising others who have not read it. The material under review should be described properly. Readers would like to know the title, the author, the publisher, the place and year of publication, the number of volumes as well as the number of pages.

Your major comments should be in two forms: positive and negative. First, it must bring out the good portions of the work. This might entail comparing it to other works in the same field. In essence, you are showing readers of your review where this work excels above others. It may be in explaining difficult subjects better, in discussing areas neglected by others or areas poorly treated by others due to lack of understanding. However, you should support your claims with ample evidence. This may be in form of textual reference to the work, or references to other great works you are familiar with. Sometimes in literature, for example, you may link the author's work with certain ideologies that he/she has professed.

The second part is the weaknesses of the work. You may have noticed some illogicality, you may have discovered that the language is too difficult to be penetrated, you may also have observed that the author treats certain topics well but others perfunctorily. Sometimes, you may query the position taken by the author on certain (controversial) issues. All this goes into your review, though they are negative.

A review is partly objective and partly subjective. It is objective in that your discussion is based on the evidence at your disposal. However, it is subjective in that you are also guided by your beliefs. What you consider to be a flaw in a work might be considered a great contribution to knowledge by another reviewer. This perhaps is as a result of your background knowledge as well as your ideological and political leanings. However, as much as practicable, you should review works based on generally accepted facts in the field. In this sense, your review will be relatively objective. This means that your arguments must be verifiable.

You must cite dates of works you quote and page references where necessary.

At the end of the exercise, the reader will expect your overall assessment of the work. Does it advance scholarship? If yes, in what area? Would you recommend it to laymen, students, teachers, professionals, etc? All this must follow your assessment. Finally, you should put a list of the works you cited at the end of the review.

Research/Term Paper

A term paper is the report of research in an abridged format. It is a miniature of the research paper or project. Principally, as a research work it takes the form of a project, but it is not often expansive. Consequently, we shall discuss the processes of conducting a research to cover both term paper and research /projects.

Conducting a research begins from identifying a problem in your study area or a particular field. The pertinent question is: What problem does this study set out to solve? This means that your study must be aimed at achieving certain set goals. The problem may be that pests prevent high yield of cocoa on farms; or students run away from mathematics classes. When this problem is established, then a topic can be carved out of the problem. You may want to find out why the students do not attend mathematics classes; or how cocoa pods are destroyed before they are ripe. From these, you will arrive at a tentative topic which can be fine-tuned as you go deeper into the research. It must be narrowed down to a manageable form, one that you can cope with within the time at your disposal.

After arriving at a topic, you have to provide answers to three other questions:

1. What are you going to do? You may want to study the students in primary, secondary or tertiary institutions. For the second topic, you may want to study how to check the activities of the pests/insects that destroy the cocoa pods. This fact must be clearly stated in your study.
2. What is the significance of this study? Or more appropriately: why are you going through all this trouble? You need to provide reasons for conducting the research. Readers will want to know the

significance of your research. There may be many reasons: the study may solve a particular problem in the society, in the professional field or lay a foundation for further studies, among others.

3. How are you going to do it? This section requires you to state what instruments you will use and what procedures are involved in gathering materials for analysis. How did you select the schools and the students, technically called your *subjects*? What is the size of your sample (number of your subjects)? In essence, you can mention instruments such as questionnaire, tape recorder (for recording interviews) and archival material (books, maps, scripts, etc.). All the materials that you are able to gather for purposes of analysis are called *data*.

Apart from telling readers how you obtained your data, you also need to say what method or statistical tools you used (if you used questionnaire or a number of subjects). You should also state which theory you apply in the study and why it is applicable. All this is referred to as *methodology*.

After ascertaining appropriate answers to those questions, you can then proceed to read wide around you study area, collect data, analyse it and write out your research or term paper.

The format usually follows this order:

1. Topic: By now you will have arrived at an appropriate topic. This must be written and kept in focus.
2. Introduction/background information to the study: This includes your statement of the problem, data collection, aims, objectives, significance, sampling method, sample size, etc.
3. Theoretical framework and literature review: In this section, you will discuss the appropriate theory or theories and critically examine works that have been done in your study area. In the latter, you might find loop-holes or problems which you can solve in your research.
4. Next is the analysis of data. You need to present your data accurately and discuss it. Since you are the only authority on your research topic, you have to carry readers along. Otherwise, they will not understand you. During the data presentation, you must

have found out some things. You must have got certain facts about your subjects. These are referred to as *findings*.

5. Your findings will lead you to make conclusions. In your conclusion, you should offer answers to the questions or problems that you started with. This will be your study's contribution to knowledge. Notice that your language must also be formal and you should use the register appropriate to your study. At the end of the paper, you should put references. This is a list of works that you consulted while carrying out the research.

While writing out your paper, you may have additional comments or information that cannot be accommodated within the text. Such information can be put in *footnotes*. This is written at the base of the page where the information is relevant. The appropriate line or word which the information refers to is marked with a number typed in superscript. Alternatively, you may put all the notes at the end of the paper. This is called *end notes*.

Minutes of a Meeting

The minutes of any meeting is a record and report of such meeting held among a group of people. Such groups may be the staff of a school, the executive of an association, a group of professionals, an establishment or a corporation; the governing board of an organization; the board of directors of a company; etc. The minutes of a meeting is therefore a specialized and technical form of writing.

Like articles, the minutes of a meeting must have a title. This must specify the type (regular, adjourned or emergency), venue, date and time of the meeting. After the topic, you should write the names of the members who are in attendance. Usually, this is in the form of a descending order of seniority. You should also put special marks such as 'asterisk' and 'plus' signs to mark out people who sent apologies, people who are absent without apology, people on leave, etc. In some institutions, this might not be necessary. What matters most is that you should write down the names of members who are present.

Time is usually very important in minutes. So you should note the time the meeting started and when it ended. Another important aspect of minutes is *who* said *what*. There are two ways of writing this, depending on the style of each institution. In one form each person that speaks has

his/her names written against whatever he/she says. In the second form, no name is mentioned. You should conform to the style preferred by your establishment.

In some cases too, the discussions in the minutes are broken down into sub-headings. Discussions and resolutions on each item are recorded under it. Such segments also have numbers serially attached to them. It is the practice in some institutions to continue the numbering from where the minutes of the previous meeting stopped. This is possibly to avoid fraudulent practices by the secretariat.

In addition to this, events should be presented in a chronological order at the meeting. Generally, when a meeting is declared open by the chairman or woman the Secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting and this will be adopted after corrections. This fact must be recorded in the minutes. In some institutions, it may not be read. But corrections are still effected before the minutes are adopted. You should note and write the names of the two people who moved the motion for adoption and seconded it.

The next aspect is *matters arising* from the minutes. These will be discussed before the main agenda for the meeting. After exhausting the items slated for discussion at that meeting, the floor may be declared open for AOB (Any Other Business). Here members can introduce topics which were not included in the agenda. After discussions, the meeting will be brought to a close.

Finally, you should note the person who moved the motion for adjournment and the person who seconded it. Their names must be recorded in that order. You are also expected to note the time the meeting got to a close and record it.

The language of the minutes should be formal. There should be no vulgar or slang language. One thing you must avoid is the inclusion of irrelevant details, especially when there are arguments. You can only give details that are germane to the main thrust of the discussion. In addition, you must be conscious of the use of register that is peculiar to the discussions as well as the register of minutes. Some of the latter have been used in this discussion. Also, since this is a report of past discussions and resolutions, most of the verbs you use will be in the past.

Letter Writing

Three types of letters can be identified. These are the formal, the semi-formal and the informal letters. Each of these has its peculiar characteristics and each determines the type of language to be used in writing it. It also indicates the tone of the letter as well as the way its address is written. All this, dictated by the audience, determines the type of letter to be written.

Formal/Business Letters

These are letters written to persons who hold positions in institutions or establishments. Letters can be written to corporate bodies, employers of labour, public and private office holders, etc. Formal letters have features that are distinct from other letter types. The first is the address. Your address should be on the top right-hand side of the writing paper while the addressee's address should be put on the opposite side of it just below the last line as in the following example:

Women Teachers College,
P. M. B.1234,
Kaltungo,
Gombe State,
Nigeria.
March 23, 2007.

The Personnel Manager,
Eroya Cement Company,
I4, Garki Road,
Birnin-Kebbi,
Kebbi State.

The first thing we notice in the first address is that the starting point for each piece of information is the same with the others on other lines. When an address is so arranged, the author has used the *block* style. You will note that the name of the school occupies the first line of the first address and this is followed by the location in subsequent lines. The address ends with a date. This is very important because company letters are usually filed for future references.

You will also note that the two addresses have punctuation marks, principally capitalization, comma and full stop. Although you have the option of not putting the punctuation marks, it is advisable that you put them. This is because when you write in ink, wet ink may blot your paper with a dot on the address section. And you are not allowed to punctuate a part and leave the other parts unpunctuated.

Writing your address is not necessary when your company uses a letter head. In this case, the company's name, address, phone number, reference number and other details will have been printed on it. You only need to write the addressee's address. The addressee's address begins with the official title of the expected receiver, rather than the real name. This is because any person can occupy the office if the officer is on leave or on transfer. If the officer's name is written, the letter will be kept for him. It may not be treated.

After the addresses, the next is salutation. Begin your salutation with either of the following, taking cognizance of the gender of the recipient: *Dear Sir/Ma, Sir/Ma*. In all cases, the salutation must come after the second address and followed by a comma. The next is the topic of discussion, which should be written on the next line. This serves as the title of your letter. The title must be brief, concise, direct and straight to the point. Note that all the words in the title except conjunctions, prepositions and articles must begin with capital letters.

The next is the content of the letter. The first paragraph must focus on the topic of the letter. It should state explicitly the reasons for writing the letter. This topic is further developed in later paragraphs until you reach the concluding paragraph.

At the end of the letter and to the left hand side is the farewell tag: *Yours faithfully*. This should be followed on subsequent lines by your signature and your name; that is, your initials and last name. If you are female and married, you could put Mrs in brackets after your name. Under your name, you should put your official title, say Secretary, Promotions Manager, etc.

When you write letters within a company, you may have to send copies to more than one person. In this case, therefore, you have to put *cc:* and then write the official titles of the officers concerned. If you are sending the letter with an enclosed item such as receipts, books, etc, you should type Eric at the base of the letter under your name.

Semi-formal letter

Semi-formal letters are written to people who are fairly known to us either as individuals or by name. Such people include former bosses, new acquaintances, elderly friends, etc.

As in the formal letter, your address should be in the block form. Alternatively, you can use the slanting form. Both forms are acceptable in this letter type. Note, however, that the addressee's address is not necessary.

The salutation should show your relationship to the recipient. Usually, the person's name is mentioned. The following are varieties of Salutation: Dear Mrs Shehu, Dear Brother Thomas, Dear Uncle Bens, Dear Mr Ajanlekoko, Dear Prof. Kotansibe, etc.

Topics are unnecessary in semi-formal letters and they are usually left out. Also unlike in formal letters, the language should show a modest level of familiarity with the addressee. Nevertheless, you should not use slang or slavish language- a language that puts you down.

The farewell differs from that in the formal language. You can use the following: *Yours sincerely* or *Yours truly*; always put a comma after the farewell. While your signature is optional, your full names are required. This is because the receiver of the letter may not know you well enough to identify you with your first name. Notice that for the same reason, you may not use your initials.

Informal Letters

These are letters written to relations and people with whom we are familiar. These include parents, wives, husbands, close friends, sons and daughters. The address in this form is usually in the slanting form.

The salutation starts as usual with *Dear* followed by the person's name (for friends and younger addressees). It may also be in any of the following: *My dear Father*, *Dear Alice*, etc.

Unlike in the previous forms, titles are not required. Also, you are expected to greet them and throw banter (as appropriate) at them. Your letter should show the flexibility of situation. It should not be stiff, rigid or off-hand; it should not be without any flavour. By the same token, the language should be informal. You can employ slang, and other

expressions used in everyday language. You can call your friend his/her nicknames, etc.

The farewell can come in different forms. This depends on how familiar you are with the addressee. For those that are very familiar, you can use *Your loving wife, son, daughter* or *Your affectionate nephew, son, daughter*, etc; *Yours affectionately*; for friends, use *Yours truly, Yours, Best wishes from, With love from, Yours ever*, etc.

When you use any of these farewells, you should write your first name underneath it. Your signature is not required. Notice that in all the letters, the farewell begins with a capital letter but other words are written in small letters.

Summary

In this lecture, we have examined different types and forms of composition. Specifically, we discussed types of composition, such as narration, description, exposition and argumentation. We later moved on to examine forms of composition such as reports, book review, research/term paper and minutes of meeting. In the last part of the lecture, we looked at types of letter writing, such as formal/business letters, semi-formal letters and informal letters.

Post-Test

1. Write a composition on any of the following topics; you may adapt the topic to suit your message:
 - a. The coronation of a traditional ruler in my town
 - b. An account of my adventure in a forest
 - c. The importance of libraries to national development
 - d. The broadcast media and national development
 - e. Women are more productive than men
2. Write a review of a book that you read recently.
3. There have been arguments on whether or not mercy killing should be legalized in health institutions in your country. Write a letter to the Minister of Health, giving your opinion on the issue.

4. One of your relations got married recently. Write a letter to your uncle in London who could not come to Nigeria for the wedding, describing the ceremony to him.
5. Imagine that you have just arrived from a three-week holiday in your friend's home town. Write a letter of appreciation to him/her for his/her hospitality.

LECTURE TWELVE

Language and Expression

Introduction

One way of demonstrating your competence in the use of language is through your use of language. In communication therefore, we have to choose our words to suit our purpose of communication. In this lecture, we discuss the qualities of elegant language usage and point out the deficiencies often noticed in communication.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to

1. distinguish between formal and informal writings;
2. distinguish between British and American English varieties;
3. know the figures of speech;
4. avoid pitfalls in compositions; and
5. use punctuation marks appropriately

Pre-Test

1. What is the difference between formal and informal language use?
2. What is the difference between American and British English usage?
3. How can you make your composition elegant?
4. What pitfalls should be avoided in your composition?

CONTENT

Language is a major tool in expressing one's ideas in compositions. The better one is at using the language, the easier it is for readers to understand and appreciate one's ideas. The first step in using the English language is to decide on the nature of the composition. Is it going to be simple or sophisticated, does it require a formal or an informal language and would it be better to use the British or the American variety? All this depends on the expected audience of your composition.

Language Use and the Audience

The language to be used in a composition may be formal, semi-formal or informal. However, this is determined by the topic and the audience. The audience refers to the person or people that you have in mind while writing your composition. This might be the students of your school; a group of professionals, the members of a parliament, the president of a nation, etc. Again, your composition may be a term paper, a narrative, an article for publication in a newspaper or a journal, etc. Each of these has peculiar linguistic features attached to it.

Formal Language

When the audience is not known to you, then it is not familiar to you. When you write a composition with that audience in mind, you should not show too much familiarity with it. Even, when the members are known to you and the topic is not one you are discussing at your leisure, then you should use formal language. For instance, if you are discussing the impact of HIV/AIDS virus with your friends in your hostel, you can use informal language. But when you are presenting the same topic to a group of professionals in a lecture room, then you should use formal language.

Compositions relevant to formal situations include articles for publication, term papers, letters to corporate bodies, police reports, minutes of a meeting, book review, etc. Such compositions require formal language since you do not know who will eventually read them. In situations where the audience is known, the topic and the audience's position (e.g. as Manager of an establishment) we still require the use of formal language.

One of the characteristics of formal language is complete grammaticality of sentences. So we say, 'The boy *that* you saw was a

student' rather than 'The boy you saw was a student'; 'Thank you for your letter of 16th January' rather than 'Thanks for your letter which I got in January'; and 'James has not come' rather than 'James hasn't come'. Sometimes, formal language may contain rare words. Such words are usually elevated beyond the ordinary day-to-day communication, e.g. communism, perestroika, emulable, etc. Formal language also permits a combination of simple, compound and complex sentences.

In some cases too, the language may be impersonal and passive. This is especially true of scientific reports and letters from corporate bodies e.g.

1. You are advised to look for another school for you child.
2. When Sodium is combined with Chlorine, Sodium Chloride is formed.

In these examples, the writers do not take responsibility for the content of the sentences.

You should also avoid excessive use of vocabulary items, which are peculiar to your locality. In an article meant for an international audience, words like *kabukabu*, *okada*, *adire*, *tuwo* and slangy expressions like *yuppie*, *buddie*, *chic*, *bobo*, etc may not sound intelligible to the reading public in London, Japan and Canada. So, if they must appear, their translations must be provided. Also, such terms must be put in quotation marks or italicized to distinguish them from real English words.

In addition, shortened words and contracted forms of words are usually not allowed in formal writings. Thus, words such as math (mathematics), info (information), exam (examination), café (cafeteria), etc must be written in full; and contracted forms such as can't (cannot), don't (do not), won't (will not), etc. must be avoided.

Informal Language

When the audience is well known to the writer or speaker, then the relationship is that of familiarity. Thus, informal language is required. When both discuss, they interact in an informal situation since they know each other. An informal situation involves individuals who are familiar with each other. Therefore, compositions written within this background include narratives, accounts of events, and letters to friends and loved ones.

Unlike what obtains in formal writing, sentences need not follow a strict grammatical norm. Thus, words such as *who*, *whom* and *that* are optional in relative clause constructions. Also, contracted forms may be used especially in compositions that are written to be spoken.

Moreover, the vocabulary of informal use of language contains common everyday words as opposed to the elevated language use in formal writing. In addition, there is a common occurrence of phrasal verbs, monosyllabic words, figurative expressions and idioms. Personal creativity of language is, however, encouraged in informal writing. You can create new words and expressions provided they are grammatical. Furthermore, it also permits the use of words which are peculiar to the author's locality. So also are shortened words and slangy expressions. However, these should be minimized.

Having come this far, we must note the importance of choosing the appropriate language for our compositions. If we use formal language in an informal setting, the composition will be bookish and rigid without any flavour. Also, if one uses an informal language in a formal setting, the composition will look frivolous or ordinary, and the writer, unserious or possibly, irresponsible.

British or American English

Usually, some students are at a loss as to which language variety to use. This is because they have been exposed to the British and the American varieties of English, either through the books they read or through watching American films or through socialization with American English users. Some other candidates are even unaware of the distinctions between the two forms. Consequently, they mix up the two forms in their compositions. Such candidates are usually given away by their inconsistent ways of spelling words.

In writing a composition, you should decide which variety you want to use and stick to its approved spellings throughout the composition. Here is a collection of vocabulary items which show the differences in spelling between British and American English varieties. They are tabulated to show the correspondences between the two varieties. However, note that this list is representative rather than exhaustive.

Spelling Forms –Verbs

Below are the spelling conventions of the past perfect forms of some verbs

| British English | American English |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Burnt | Burned |
| Dreamt | Dreamed |
| Dwelt | Dwelled |
| Got | Gotten |
| Knelt | Kneeled |
| Learnt | Learned |
| Leapt | Leaped |
| Leant | Leaned |
| Smelt | Smelled |
| Spat | Spit |
| Spelt | Spelled |
| Spilt | Spilled |
| Travelled | Traveled |
| Cancelled | Canceled |
| Organise/organize | Organize |
| Analyse | Analyze |

Notice that in some cases, the consonant is doubled in British English but it is single in American English. In others, where the British English uses **t** the American English uses **-ed**. Note that in some cases, such as in the word organize/organize, the British English uses both forms while the American English sticks to the *-ze* form.

Spelling Forms –Nouns

| British English | American English |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Labour | Labor |
| Flavour | Flavor |
| Honour | Honor |
| Colour | Color |

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Centre | Center |
| Humour | Humor |
| Instalment | Installment |
| Theatre | Theater |
| Metre | Meter |
| Defence | Defense |
| Offence | Offense |
| Mediaeval | Medieval |
| Aesthetic | Esthetic |
| Storey building | Story building |
| Axe | Ax |
| Programme | Program |
| Tyre | Tire |
| Rhyme | Rime |
| Night | Nite |

Notice that these are samples of the two varieties of English. You should therefore learn this and explore other vocabulary items in the varieties. Any inconsistency in the use of the varieties is a minus for your composition.

Figures of Speech

In informal writings, especially descriptive and narrative forms, writers usually have a lot of descriptions to do. In order not to waste words and, at the same time, make their writings elegant they use figures of speech to paint the exact picture they want. An appropriate use of these figures of speech makes the composition exciting. Meanwhile, you should not depend on existing figures of speech for your composition. Create your own and let others copy you. In the following paragraphs, we present some as examples. Let's look at them.

1. *Simile:*

A simile is a comparison of two dissimilar objects; e.g:

- a. His wife breeds like a rat.
- b. Mary is as sharp as a razor

In (a) rats are known for producing offspring within a short period. This trait is being compared with that of a wife who has many children. Though the objects *rat* and *wife* are different, what they have in common is the ability to produce many children in a short period. In (b), *Mary* and *razor* are compared. The point of comparison is the cutting edge sharpness of the two. People do not toy with a razor because its sharp edges can easily cut one's hand. Mary too is considered to be alert. The quality that is being compared therefore is that of alertness. We should note that *like* and *as* are often used in similes.

2. *Metaphors*

A metaphor is in use when the quality of an object is ascribed to another different object. Consider:

- a. Her stomach is a den of lions roaring day and night.
- b. John's eyes were needles, and his voice a scalpel as he stood up to fight.

In (a), just as lions roar when hungry, so does the stomach rumble when a person is hungry. The roaring of the lion and its tearing prowess is compared to the rumbling and the searing pain of the stomach when hungry. In (b), needles are sharp objects and scalpels are sharp surgical knives. Both of them can cause considerable menace to a patient on whom they are going to be used. The sharpness and pointedness of the objects are therefore used to describe the scathing effect of John's voice. Both serve as John's 'fighting instruments'. Note again that the objects compared are different: eyes/needle; voice/scalpel.

3. *Rhetorical Question*

These are questions which need no direct answers because the answers are obvious from the questions. Here are some examples:

- a. Who among you prefers hell to heaven?
- b. Who here is so strong as to challenge God to a duel?

In both questions, the answer is 'none'. Nobody will stand up and say he/she prefers hell to heaven, or that he/she is challenging God to a duel. So the answer is obvious in each case.

4. Personification

Personification is the description in which inanimate objects assume the qualities of human beings. For instance, in the following,

- a. The gun coughed twice and the dog died.
- b. Death kills the herbalist and his oracle.

In the first example, gun, a lifeless object, has been invested with the ability to cough like human beings. In (b), death, an abstract object, now has the ability, the power of taking people's life.

5. Euphemism

This is a way of conveying unpleasant information in a subtle way as in the following examples:

- a. The twin brother has gone to buy horses' horns.
- b. Sarah is looking for the fruit of the womb.

The first example is a subtle way of saying one of the twins is dead; the second example means Sarah is barren.

6. Onomatopoeia:

When the sounds of a word stand for the object being referred to, then *onomatopoeia* is in use. Thus we say: The gun *boomed*; The glasses *tinkle* and *clink*; The water *splashed* and The mouth *munched*. Each of the italicized words represents the action of the nouns in the respective sentences. *Boom* is the sound made by some guns; glasses *tinkle* and *clink* when knocked together as in toast; water is *splashed* when *dashed* against a hard surface; and mouths *munch* when food is being chewed. So, the words are sound symbols.

7. Hyperbole (Overstatement)

For purposes of emphasis, events and actions may be exaggerated or overstated. Exaggerations may also be made to achieve a particular effect

in a story, e.g. to win a reader's sympathy. This is technically referred to as hyperbole. Here are some examples:

- a. Abu works harder than a clock.
- b. Jimmy's tongue is sharper than a razor

The exaggeration in (a) is obvious when we consider that a functional clock works without stopping. So, to say a person works harder than a clock is to say the person works for more than twenty-four hours! This is impossible, it is an exaggeration. It implies that Abu is a workaholic. In the second example, we realize that tongues are generally not used for cutting things. However, when it is now considered to be sharper than a razor, the implication is that it can destroy things. Thus, it is an exaggeration.

8. Repetition

Repetition, also called reiteration, is the recurrence of a word or phrase in the same sentence or passage. When the same word is used it is called repetition. When a synonym is used it is called reiteration. The following are examples:

- a. The man argued and argued, all to no avail.
- b. We are happy and our joy knows no bounds.

In example (a) *argued* is repeated to show the length of time the argument took. In (b), the two clauses are near synonyms. The idea of happy is reiterated in 'joy knows no bounds'.

9. Irony

Irony presents ideas in an indirect manner. It affirms something when it means the exact opposite. Consider the following:

- A: Ranti, can you carry my bag?
B: Yes. Afterall, I'm your servant.

In this example, B's reply is an irony. She said *yes* when she meant *no* and we know this through the supporting statement. Since B is not A's servant, the statement is false and therefore it is an irony. Here's another example:

- A: There is no sign of invasion to warrant any preparation
B: Sure. Why not wait till the enemies point their guns at us?

B's reply in this exchange is an irony because it means exactly the opposite of what is stated. It means that even though the enemies are not at sight yet, the country should not wait until it is too late to defend its citizens. Also this reply has an element of irritation and rebuke for the first speaker. When an irony has these elements, it is called a sarcastic irony.

Polishing Your Composition

Certain elements are pertinent in language use. While some of these are still in use, some are already outdated. We shall point these out as we explore the means of polishing your composition.

Register

Register refers to vocabulary items that are peculiar to specific fields of human endeavour in the society. Such professional fields include law, banking, health, broadcasting, photography, sports, engineering, agriculture. In communication, these fields are distinguished through words which name specific things in the industry. For instance, *cheque, teller and bank draft* are related to banking; *syringe, needle, and cotton wool* are peculiar to health; while *crops, soil and tractor* are related to agriculture. In the health sector, *gynaecologist* will be preferable to 'specialist in women's reproductive system'. Use *orthopaedic specialist* rather than 'bones specialist'; and *paediatrician* rather than 'specialist in children's disease'. You are expected to know the register of the subject you are discussing and use them appropriately. Your proficiency in the use of registers shows your grasp of the language and this makes the composition more concise. Note, however, that there are overlaps in the registers of some files. For instance tractor overlaps in engineering and agriculture fields.

Figurative Expression

These are expressions that add colour and beauty to your composition. They do not have literal meanings, but they capture the imaginary or real pictures the writer wants to paint to the reader. Examples of these include 'Mba *murdered* my goat'. In this sentence, *murder* is not used in its normal sense. Rather it is used to evoke pity from listeners. What the sentence means is that 'Mba has killed my goat without any just cause'. Like registers, figurative expressions are pungent. They make

compositions less wordy, and most importantly, beautify the language. (See more details under lexis)

Creativity

This is the writer's own imaginative use of language. It brings originality into the use of language and earns you (the author) the reader's respect and approbation. For instance, when you say, 'The driver kicked the throttle' which means 'the driver revved on the accelerator', the reader will not fail to see the newness in your use of language. This is because the reader has perhaps not come across that expression anywhere else before. Notice that you do not need any sophisticated words to be creative. Simple words make it easier for you to weave your words into an effective web of communication. Here is a spontaneous speech from a school principal to his students:

If I jump into your class and ask you in particular to recite the national anthem and you are unable to recite it, I will bruise your back, I will bruise your buttocks; if I'm not with my cane, I'll rain blows on you. If you want to escape through the window, I'll cross you through the door.

Do you see the creativity here? He used *jump* to describe his unexpected arrival in the classroom and *rain* to measure the number of blows the culprit will get. And, he used simple words throughout.

Proverbs

A proverb is a witty saying that captures an idea concisely in fewer words than would have been necessary without proverbs. However, proverbs are becoming increasingly archaic or overused because many of them have been overused and have lost colour. So, you should use them sparingly, and only when it is absolutely necessary. Usually, proverbs are used to the greatest advantage to introduce a theme at the beginning of compositions. It may also be used to tie the loose ends of arguments together in a conclusion, especially in an informal writing.

Clichés

These are overused expressions. Some writers created certain expressions and popularized them. Because of the beauty in such expressions, other writers continued to use them. Therefore in some compositions, one comes across these familiar expressions because the authors want to add beauty to their compositions. However, they achieve the opposite because the expressions they used are very common. So the reader finds nothing new or exciting in them. Thus expressions such as ‘...has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric...’, ‘men of timber and caliber’, ‘...cannot be overemphasized’, etc. have ceased to excite readers. Modern writers look inward and create their own expressions which make their compositions lively and interesting.

Circumlocution

This is the practice of discussing issues around a point without discussing the point itself. Sometimes the point is enshrouded in too many words so that the reader does not understand the author’s message. Circumlocution makes your points vague, and readers may think you lack adequate knowledge of your subject matter. A fallout of circumlocution is wordiness. When compositions are wordy, then the authors have used too many words than are necessary to present their ideas. To avoid this pitfall, you should go straight to the point under discussion and limit digressions to a line or two. In addition, each word in a sentence must be accounted for.

Tautology

In some cases, writers repeat the same idea in different words. Such words are often placed side-by-side in sentences. Examples of these include: *night vigil*, *raise up your hands*, *clap your hands*, *should in case*, *return/reverse back*, *nook and corner*, etc. What we should note in these examples is that the meaning of one word is included in that of the other word written before it. When for instance one *returns/reverses*, one goes back. So the use of *back* with these words is tautological. When you clap, you use your hands. So it is unnecessary to say *clap your hands*. Or, do people clap their feet?

Summary

In this lecture, we have examined the subject of language and expression. In the process, we discussed language use and the audience; what constitutes informal language and formal language. We also did a little bit of comparison of the British English (BrE) with the American English (AmE). Before bringing the lecture to a close, we also examined figures of speech and explained features that could enhance or spoil a composition.

Post-Test

1. What variety of English is used in this book?
2. Write a paragraph, using formal language.
3. Write another paragraph, using informal language.

LECTURE THIRTEEN

Punctuation Marks

Introduction

One major problem with students' writings is the seeming neglect or the inappropriate use of punctuation marks. Punctuation marks can be compared to a manual for users of a machine. Just as a manual shows how one uses a machine, punctuation marks show how one should read an essay. It enables one to arrive at the meaning intended by the author. In this lecture, we explore the basic forms of punctuation marks.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to use the punctuation marks properly.

Pre-Test

1. Apart from the end of a complete sentence, where else can we use the full stop?
2. What punctuation marks are used to indicate a short pause, a long pause, a raised voice and intermittent pauses?
3. How do parentheses differ from brackets?
4. Where do we use colons and semi-colons?

CONTENT

Punctuation marks refer to the signs we insert into phrases and sentences in a composition. It directs the way words, phrases and sentences should be read. Punctuation marks also stand for the voice modulations in speech.

When speaking, we can have slight or long pauses, and we can raise our voices as in questions or exclamations. These voice signals are converted to signs when we put our thoughts on paper as compositions. The signals then represent the voice cues we could have used to make people understand our speech if we were to deliver a speech or narrate a story. The observation and insertion of these signals in our compositions make it clearer and easier for readers to read and understand. Let us discuss the salient ones.

Capital Letter

The capital letter is used:

1. to start new sentences
 - a. He is my friend.
 - b. Say your prayers now.
2. to start proper nouns: Billiri, Makurdi, Abu, Sanngo, etc
3. for abbreviations: K.O.Amadi, E.F.Taiwo, U.N.O., C.A.F, etc.
4. for the pronoun 'I'
6. all major words in the title of a book or a poem: *The Trials of Brother Jero; A Tale of Two Cities; I Thank You God.*
7. for names of God and pronouns referring to Him: Allah, Osanobua, Olodumare, etc.

The Comma

This sign represents a slight pause in the middle of a sentence. It occurs at many points in different sentences. Here are some of them:

1. to separate words in a sequence:
 - a. Asebe bought rice, beans, yam and guinea corn.
 - b. Hellen, Kike, Laraba, Onyi and Vivian are intimate friends.
2. to separate appositive words and parenthetical elements from their respective subjects:
 - a. Hellen, my friend, lives in Kaltungo.
 - b. General Abubakar, the former head of state, was awarded two honorary degrees in 2006.
 - c. The problem, if you ask me, is lack of capital.

In examples (a & b) the commas set off appositive words, while in (c), they set off parenthetical words.

3. to separate transitional words from the main sentence:

- a. In addition, he has decided to seize Jimoh's car.
- b. The man, however, has refused to sell it.

4. to separate main clauses joined by conjunctions:

- a. Boyi got married in 1992, and so did Khadijah.
- b. We called the man, but he refused to answer.

Note that the comma is unnecessary if both clauses have the same subject as in 'Aisha washed the plates and swept the sitting room.'

5. to separate subordinate clauses from adjoining main clauses:

- a. Although Nkem was late, she was not punished.
- b. As there was fuel scarcity in the country, many people went to their destinations on foot.

6. to separate phrases and clause when each occurs in a sequence in a sentence:

- a. Bede has some plates, several cups, many clothes and a travelling bag.
- b. Joy sowed the grains, weeded the field, harvested the crop, threshed it and stored it.

7. in question tags:

- a. Auwwal is brilliant, isn't he? Yes, he is.
- b. Nsiegbe bought the books, didn't she? No, she didn't.

8. in addresses and salutations:

- a. D. 74, Egbe-idi Street, Ilesa;
- b. P.O.Box 102,
UIPO, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
- c. Dear Sir, Madam, Dear Ms Smith, etc.

The full stop

The full stop or period is a major pause. These are its functions:

1. It marks the end of a complete sentence.
2. It is used after abbreviations as in: P.O.BOX, P.M.B., M.A. Martins, but it is optional in some cases such as Prof/Prof. Jibril, Rev/Rev. Kukha, Mr /Mr. Thomas, Mrs/ Mrs. Philips. Notice that universally accepted abbreviations need no punctuation: WHO, WAEC, NECO, OPEC, etc.
3. Three full stops are used to indicate a break or an omission in a sentence
 - a. The Norman Conquest of England in 1066 AD had a great influence on the English language. For some centuries later, English lost its role to Latin and French ... Latin was the language of scholarship, the church and international communication.
 - b. The question has been answered, but...

While the dots in (a) show omission, those in (b) indicate a break in the sentence

Question Marks

The question mark indicates a long pause. The mark is put at the end of a direct question as in:

1. What happened?
2. Who's there?
3. He's there?
4. Can you climb that tree?

In some cases, a polite request that is written in form of a question may have a question mark:

1. Will you sit down?
2. Would you please send the file to my table?

Hyphen

The hyphen is a sign for joining parts of the same word. It can occur in words that are merged with affixes, such as *co-ordinate*, *ex-president*, *neo-*

colonization or in compound words such as *take-off*, *president-elect*, *newly-admitted*, *twenty-five*, *feeble-minded*, etc. It is also used to indicate that a word has been broken into two at the end of a line (because the remaining space on the line is not sufficient for the whole word). Such words are broken along syllable boundaries and a hyphen is attached at the end of the first part as in *teach-er*, *tai-lor*, *impor-tant*, *exami-nation*, etc.

Dash

A hyphen must be distinguished from a dash. A dash does not join words, but rather serves as parenthesis.

1. His father caught him smoking - and you know what that means,
2. The old woman fell- what a pity - and broke a leg.
3. This boy – I think he’s foolish - bought a fairly-used shirt for ₦ 2,000.00.

A dash can also be used to introduce a list of items:

James bought many things – a book, two pots and a stove.

Brackets/Parenthesis

These are demarcations put before and after information that is not directly required in a sentence. It is, however, an addition to the theme. Sometimes it is an afterthought eg

- a. The big fool (or what else is he?) paid for a carton of worthless stone
- b. Harry lost his money to gamblers (served him right!) and walked the long distance home.

Apostrophe

An apostrophe is a sign that shows an omission of letters in words such as *can't* (*cannot*), *won't* (*will not*), *he's* (*he is/has*), *we'd* (*we had/would*), etc.

It also shows possession as in:

- a. *boys' quarters* (Quarters for boys)
- b. *Daddy's car* (a car belonging to daddy)
- c. *John's book* (a book belonging to John)

Note the following: *Charles' car*; *St. Lawrence's School*

It can also be used with indefinite pronouns: one's friend; everyone's business; to separate the plural s from name of a letter or of a number:

- a. There were four 60's and three 70's in the class.
- b. There were ten A's and fifty B's in the result.

The difference in both uses is that while it shows omission of letters in the first group, it shows possession in the second and no letter is lost in it.

Quotation Marks

These are marks put before and after direct quotations from speakers, books, etc. When direct quotations are transferred into your compositions, you must put them in quotation marks. This is to show that they are not your own original statements/ideas. E.g. She said, 'Shut up or I'll beat you'; 'Come up here!' said the class teacher.

You must have noted that quotation marks are either in the single or double form. Either of these can be used, but you must be consistent in using whichever you choose.

The colon

The colon is a major pause, but it is used:

1. to list items in a series as in:
Candidates must come with the following items: mosquito nets, torchlight, white PE shorts, singlet, pyjamas and pillow cases.
2. to lay emphasis on, and draw attention to a specific statement:
What the lecturer wants is simple: submit your assignment on time.
The problem is this: who will face the angry mob?
3. to explain given information:
Human rights and the death penalty: do they really conflict?

Semi-Colon

This is a higher pause than the colon. It is used

1. to separate words in a series especially when these contain commas in complex sentences. Witness:

Adukwu saw Douglas, the boxer; Carl Lewis, the sprinter; Mighty Ighor, the wrestler and George Bush, the American President.

2. to separate independent sentences which have related ideas as in:
Everyone, even her closest friend, felt disappointed; however, Jane was undaunted.

Italics, bold, underlining

These are devised used when you type on a typewriter or a computer. These can be used:

1. to point attention to important items such as topics and sub-topics;
2. to distinguish between author's text and borrowed words; and
3. to separate titles of books from ordinary text.

Mechanics

Having mastered the use of language and expression elements in the previous sections, it is pertinent to guard against certain factors that may destroy your composition. These are all put together as the mechanics of language. Mechanics refer to issues of punctuation, spelling and grammatical relations. We have discussed punctuations above; we only need to concentrate on the spelling and grammar aspects.

Spellings are very important in language use. There is for instance a great difference between *rich* and *reach*, *fit*, *feat* and *feet*, *portable* and *potable*, *seat* and *sit*, *pick* and *peak*, etc. You should not use one instead of the other. Otherwise you have committed an error of wrong word choice.

You should also take note of words with deceptive spellings. Such words may or may not feature double and single letters together as in *occasion*, *committee*, *appoint*, *dining*, *dinner*, etc. Such words must be mastered.

In addition, words which have *-ei-* or *-ie-* should be studied and mastered. The words include *achieve*, *believe*, *sieve*, *chief*, *brief*, *grief*, *reprieve*, *conceive*, *receive*, *perceive*, *deceive*, etc.

Grammatical relations are also important. Tense distinctions and concord relations take the first slot as they are relevant to the understanding of your composition. Also, they are very easy to mix up.

So, the knowledge of grammar is a necessary tool for writing compositions.

On a final note, you should endeavour to revise your composition to ensure that everything that you have put there is all right. This exercise reveals the mistakes and the slips of the pen wherever they may be. All this reduces mechanical errors in your composition.

Summary

In this lecture, we have examined the different forms of punctuation marks we use to aid the flow of thoughts in written English compositions. In the process, we examined capitalization, the comma, the full stop, the question marks, the hyphen, the dash, the brackets/parathesis, the apostrophe, the colon, the semi-colon, italicization, boldening and underlining. We also briefly discussed the mechanics of English Language.

Post-Test

Punctuate the following paragraph:

Laughter nourishes the soul and triggers joy its a natural stress reliever it stimulates the immune system and increases oxygen stamina and our breathing capacity medical literature is full of reasons to laugh for the health of it we all need a good laugh to lift our spirits every now and again laughter is food for the soul and is vital to our every day lives it creates energy and vitality laughter not only benefits many of the bodys vital system the respiratory cardiovascular hormonal and even immune system but also generates powerful alternating cycles of relaxation.

(Source: Adeboye, Seyi 'Laughter' *Saturday Punch* March17, 2007)

LECTURE FOURTEEN

Lexis

Introduction

The word is the root of all sentences that we construct today. Words merge to become phrases. Phrases merge to form clauses and all merge to become sentences. It becomes necessary then, for us to study words in general. We shall look at the different uses of words, their meaning relations, how to form new words and the importance of a dictionary.

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able:

1. to distinguish different senses of words;
2. distinguish between ordinary words and figurative usage;
3. distinguish different levels of meaning.

Pre-Test

1. What are synonyms?
2. How do they differ from antonyms?
3. What other concepts relate to the meaning of words?

CONTENT

Lexis deals with the study of words, their classification, meaning relations, as well as the formation of new words from the root forms of other words. Words are composed of sounds and meanings but there is no intrinsic relationship between a word and its referent. For instance, there is no relationship between the word *radio* and the object it refers to. Words are

in different forms and therefore, with specific meanings which may be closely related to or different from those of other words.

Words are also a conventional means of talking about objects in a society. In other societies, such objects bear different names. However, words for technical items may be borrowed from other languages. For instance, some English words are borrowed from Latin (e.g. *sine qua non*, *ceteris paribus*, *et cetera*), French (e.g. *nouveau riche*, *penchant*, *restaurant*). Many of the borrowed words have however been absorbed into the English lexicon with the English morphological pattern.

In this section, we shall explore the different meaning relations among words and point out common errors usually committed by language learners.

Denotative and Connotative Levels of Meaning

What is meaning? Meaning is the interpretation adduced to a particular expression. Expressions can be interpreted on two major planes. These are the surface level and the deeper level. The meaning derived at the surface level is denotative while that at the deeper level is connotative. Denotative meaning thus refers to the ordinary, objective interpretation of a word. It is the scientific meaning of a word, which is not coloured by implicit meanings that show individual emotions and attitudes. Such meanings are presented in most dictionaries.

The connotative level has the implied meaning of an expression in addition to its literal meaning. In other words, apart from giving the ordinary meaning of an expression, the connotative meaning gives, in addition, speakers' attitudes about their statements. In this sense, the views presented in the connotative level of meaning are subjective. Take the following examples for an instance:

- 1a. Taiwo *killed* the goat.
- b. Jega *ate* the food.
- 2a. Taiwo *murdered* the goat.
- b. Jega *devoured* the food.
- 3a. It is a *pig*.
- b. He is a *pig*.

The expressions in italics in (1a&b) have their respective ordinary meanings as written in the dictionary. There are no additional or attitudinal

angles to the meanings of the verbs. So, they have denotative meanings only. The verbs in (2a&b) are, however, different because apart from having the respective ordinary meanings of *killed* (for *murdered*), and *ate* (for *devoured*), *murdered* has the additional meaning of unjust and wicked killing. On the other hand, *devoured* implies greed at consuming food. These words, therefore, are subjective terms which show the speakers' personal opinions or attitudes. For instance, what is considered wickedness or greed by someone may not be so to others. Hence, each of *murdered* and *devoured* in (2) has the ordinary and the implied meanings. Both of these features constitute the connotative meanings of the words. We can conclude therefore that the examples in (1) have denotative meaning while those in (2) have connotative meaning. Following these discussions, we can determine the use of the word *pig* in examples (3a&b). In (3) the sentences refer to (a) an animal (denotative) and (b) a man with the character of an animal (connotative).

In different tasks such as composition and comprehension therefore, you must be conscious of the use of words along these planes. When words are used in their ordinary senses, we interpret them on the surface plane. Those which are used connotatively will, however, require deeper level of interpretation.

Collocation

Words co-occur in a sentence to give it a particular meaning. In this sense, the sentence is narrowed down to a particular interpretation out of other possible interpretations/choices. This co-occurrence of words is called collocation. Words that co-occur complement the meanings of one another to give the meaning intended by the author. Collocations are in different forms. Certain word combinations behave like single words while other word combinations behave like independent words which are united by meaning. These different patterns are discussed below.

Collocations are either **fixed** or **free**. When they are fixed, the constituent words of the collocation recur together with the same meaning. The ordinary meaning of each constituent does not count/reflect in the overall realization of the meaning of the entire collocation. Moreover, the number of words in the entire collocation cannot be increased or reduced. Moreover, their order cannot be changed. For instance, the word that precedes the other cannot be put in front of the other word. Fixed

collocations are generally idioms (because idioms have the features discussed above). Here are some examples:

1. Jane *threw in the towel*.
2. Abu *ate an humble pie*.

The italicized expressions are idioms. The first means ‘surrender’ or ‘give up trying’ while the second means ‘admit that one was wrong’. Whenever and wherever each of these expressions occur, their meanings revolve round the same ideas stated above. We can neither add more words to those in the idioms nor can we reduce the words in each without destroying the original meaning. For instance, the following expressions will not give us the intended meaning.

3. Jane *threw in that expensive towel*.
4. Jane *threw towels*.
5. Abu *ate an extremely delicious humble pie*.
6. Abu *ate pies*.

In (3 & 5), the idioms are lengthened by the addition of adjectives. But in (4 & 6), the idioms are reduced. In both cases, the meaning concerns either the towel or the pie which are quite different from the original scientific meanings in (1 & 2) above. In (3-6) the individual meanings of the words are considered while in (1 & 2) the total meanings of the italicized words are arrived at. Notice that in informal writing, you can be creative. This creativity may include twisting words to suit your purpose. In this sense, the above expressions might be acceptable. However, they would then be seen as metaphors rather than idioms.

Free collocations on the other hand do not always co-occur. Rather, an item may occur with an item in a sentence and yet another item in another sentence. However, when they occur like this, they have different meanings depending on the new words they collocate with. Examples of these are phrasal verbs and figurative expressions.

1. They *backed out* when the battle was tough.
2. Some students were *sent down* for unruly behaviour.

The italicized words are phrasal verbs. Each of them contains a verb and an adverbial particle. The first expression ‘backed out’ means ‘withdraw’, while ‘sent down’ means ‘expelled’. In each of the expressions, the two words combined to their separate meanings to arrive at the single meaning. Thus *back* has an element of turning back, while *out* has an element of

detachment. Also *sent* has the element of an order to proceed while *down* implies a fall. Moreover, such forms can be separated and used with other particles. Examples include *back pass, back up, back down, back slide, send off, send away, send for, send back*, etc.

Another form of free collocation involves words which are distanced from each other. The two or three words in question naturally belong to one another and complement the meanings of one another. Here are examples:

1. The thief's corpse is lying on the road.
2. The carcass of the goat is in the gutter.

In (i) *the thief*, a human noun, collocates with *corpse* (the term for dead bodies of human beings). In (ii) *carcass* collocates with *goat* and both refer to an animal's dead body. In essence, the words are not interchangeable in these contexts.

Figurative expressions

Recall that we attempted a brief description of this topic under language and expression above. In this section, we broaden the discussion. Figurative expressions refer to words or phrases in language use. These expressions are distinct because they are coloured by rhetorical or attitudinal rather than purely semantic values. Such expressions usually go beyond the denotative and the connotative meanings of words. The major difference in the three is that while the denotative use of language contains ordinary meaning, the connotative use gives implied meaning that is additional to the ordinary expression. Figurative meaning contains implied meaning that substitutes the literal and the additional meaning. Consider the following sentences:

1. Ngozi *devoured* the food.
2. He *devoured* the girl with his eyes.
3. The *doctor* treated the patients.
4. She *doctored* the accounts.

In (1) while *devoured* means *ate* in the ordinary sense of food consumption, *devoured* in (2) means 'gazing with deep interest at'. In (3) *doctor* is a noun with its ordinary meaning. In (4), however, *doctored* means 'adjusted the accounts to satisfy some (possibly unofficial)

interest.’ Thus in the sentences, (2 & 3) examples are figurative expressions in the sense that they each paint a picture that is different from the literal or connotative meanings of the italicized words.

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have similar though not identical meanings. To arrive at an accurate meaning of a word, we need a good dictionary, which states both the different shades of meaning and the contexts in which the words in question can be used. Notice, however that close words are to each other, they can never be absolutely the same in meaning- the meaning in a context may only be identical. So, the synonym will be the word that has the closest (or nearest) meaning to the target word in the context in which it occurs. In addition, the words which co-occur in a sentence also have overlapping meaning. They jointly contribute to the overall meaning of the sentence. Thus, the meaning of words which are adjacent to the target word can help you to arrive at the intended meaning of the target word. Examples of synonyms include *hide-conceal*, *high-tall*, *broad-wide*, *almost-nearly*, *answer-reply*, *liberty –freedom*, *mature-adult* etc.

Antonyms

Antonyms refer to the opposites of other words. Two words are said to be antonyms when they contain opposite meanings. Examples include *brother-sister*, *buy-sell*, *man-woman*, *up-down*, *wise-stupid*, *bright-dull*, *young-old*, etc. Since they are not direct opposites, it means that the two pairs of words are complementary to each other. However, two words that are considered to be antonyms may not necessarily be opposites. This relates to gradable adjectives such as *few-large*, *thin-fat*, *big-small*, and *wide-narrow*. For these pairs, there is no absolute measurement. What is considered few in an instance may be considered as large at another instance. This depends on what item is compared to it.

Polysemy

Polysemy is a situation in which the same word has different meanings. Examples are *date* which refers to ‘a point in time’ or ‘a type of fruit’ and *flight* referring to ‘running away’, ‘travelling in a plane’, or ‘series of steps as in a staircase’. Polysemy is often related to **homonymy**. Homonymy

refers to several words that have two or more unrelated meanings, e.g. *bank* ‘of a river’, ‘financial institution’; *bat* ‘flying creature’, ‘used in sports’; and *pupil* ‘student’, ‘eyeball’. However, it differs from polysemy. While polysemy is listed as an entry in a dictionary, homonymy is listed as multiple entries.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity is a meaning relation in which a word is capable of different interpretations in the context in which it occurs. There are three forms of ambiguity. These are phonetic, grammatical and lexical ambiguity.

Phonetic ambiguity results from the phonetic structure of words in a sentence. Although the words may not have the same spelling, they are pronounced alike. Examples include *see* ‘area of jurisdiction of a bishop’, ‘sense of sight’ and *race* ‘speed’, ‘ethnic group’. Phonetic ambiguity also occurs in homonyms. A look at the examples under polysemy shows that they are also ambiguous because the same word has different meanings. It follows that polysemy, homonymy and ambiguity are closely related.

Grammatical ambiguity relates to the occurrence of some affixes in certain contexts. The prefix *in-* for example means *not* in ‘insecure’, ‘invaluable’, and ‘inescapable’. However, it means *within* in ‘into’, ‘infixing’, and ‘inborn’.

In **Lexical ambiguity**, the same word may have two or more meanings in a particular structure. Examples include *the English teacher*. This expression can refer to the Nigerian teacher of English language or the teacher that came from England. Also, *board* can refer to a group of decision makers in a company, a chalk board, or food served at a hotel table.

Hyponymy

Hyponymy is a relation of meaning inclusion. This means that given two words, the meaning of one can be found in the other. For instance, *family* includes *father, mother children*. *Animal* includes *goat, dog, horse* and *sheep*. The terms *family* and *animal* are upper terms and are referred to as *super-ordinate*. The words they include are lower terms and are called *hyponyms*. Thus *father, mother* and *children* are co-hyponyms while *goat, dog, horse* and *sheep* are also co-hyponyms.

Hyponymy also involves **entailment**. This means that once an item is mentioned, it may also refer to other items. For instance, *sheep* entails *ram*, *spinster* entails *unmarried*.

Paraphrase

Paraphrase is a meaning relation in which different expressions still maintain the same meaning. Here are examples:

1. Eve gave Adam an apple.
2. Adam was given an apple by Eve.
3. An apple was given to Adam by Eve.
4. Eve gave an apple to Adam.

You would note that these four sentences mean roughly the same thing. Basically an apple came from Eve and got to Adam.

Presupposition

Presupposition refers to information that is considered known. Such information is therefore not emphasized in expressions. When new information is brought forward, this is distinguished by stress marks or focusing on the new information. In this sense, the presupposed information is suppressed. Consider the following examples:

1. The girl **SLAPPED** the king!
2. Lateef drank **KEROSENE**.

In these two examples, the girl and the king are suppressed because everyone knows they exist. But it is new that a girl would slap a king. The emphasis is on slap, a new event. The same happens to the second sentence. People know Lateef and other liquids that one can drink. But the writer shows surprise at Lateef's drinking of Kerosene. This is new information.

The Importance of a Dictionary

For an adequate knowledge about the words in a language, a good dictionary of that language is essential. A good dictionary contains information about the spelling of a word, its pronunciation, use and classification (e.g. as nouns, verbs, etc.) and its various meanings. Generally, different dictionaries emphasize different aspects of the above

information. For learners, however, a dictionary that contains much of the information is required. You must therefore make frequent use of such dictionaries.

To get the accurate spelling and literal meaning of words, you need only look up the word in a dictionary. Each word is listed under its first alphabet in a dictionary. In addition to the scientific meaning of words some dictionaries give meanings of idioms, and figurative expressions. Such dictionaries also give examples of sentences in which a word occurs. In such situations, the contextual meanings of such words are given in the dictionary. If we are able to find out the meanings of ordinary words by looking up the words under the alphabetic symbols they start with, how do we look up collocations like idioms and phrasal verbs? Basically, for idioms, we should identify the keywords in (usually content words) in the idiom. We would then look up each of the keywords as we do for ordinary words in a dictionary. Usually, the meanings of idioms are stated after the meanings of ordinary words have been stated. Also idioms will be stated in full under any of the keywords in the idiom. For instance, in the idiom *play to the gallery*, the keywords are *play* and *gallery*. These words are important because they are content words. So, to get at the meaning of the idiom, we should check under P for *play* and G for *gallery*. In either or both cases, the idiom and its interpretation will be found.

The same process applies to phrasal verbs. Since each contains a verb and an adverbial particle, the keyword is usually the verb and on very few occasions, the adverbial particle. So we should look up the meaning under the verb. So in *hand in*, the relevant word is *hand*, a verb.

For other words or collocations, the individual meanings of each word will be balanced against the meaning of the other words in the sentence. When they match, we know they collocate. When they do not, the (more) usual collocation is written in the dictionary with its meaning. Each of the words can also be treated like words which have the literal and ordinary meanings.

Having discussed the importance of a dictionary, it is necessary for us to discuss the thesaurus. The thesaurus functions like a dictionary in some ways, but it is not exactly the same as a dictionary. The words in a thesaurus are organized in groups which has a number. Each group is in a particular meaning area. Words in each of such group, therefore, provide different shades of meaning of the concept.

The groupings discussed above form the first part of the thesaurus. The second part contains alphabetical listings of the words in the thesaurus. The words are listed as in a dictionary. However, each word so listed has certain figure(s) listed after it. The figures refer to the groups under which the word and related ideas are listed. To get the related meaning of a word we first look up the word in the second part and then copy the figures in front of it. We will then go to the pages indicated and check for the words we need. Note that this is not for the meanings of the words per se, but for the words that are substitutes for it in some contexts.

Affixes/Word formation Processes

Words are composed of different components. These components can be full words or particle words. When they are full words, they serve as the base form (or roots) of words. If, however, they are particles, they are affixes. The base forms of words are usually capable of independent interpretation whereas the affixes are usually not. Thus there is a necessity for affixes to recline /depend on specific base forms of words. In the process, new words, possibly of similar or different classes from those of the base forms are formed.

Affixes are of two major types. These are prefixes and affixes. Prefixes are affixes which precede the base forms of words in the formation of new words. The following are some of the words in which prefixes occur in English:

Prefix + Base form

1. **un-**
 - a. un- + able = unable
 - b. un-+ known = unknown
 - c. un-+safe = unsafe
 - d. un-+sure = unsure
 - e. un-+belief = unbelief
 - f. un-repentant = unrepentant
2. **ir-**
 - a. ir-+regular = irregular
 - b. ir-+reverent = irrelevant
 - c. ir-+reversible = irreversible

- d. ir-+responsible = irresponsible
 - e. ir-+rational = irrational
3. **il-**
- a. il-+legal = illegal
 - b. il-+logical = illogical
 - c. il-+licit = illicit
 - d. il-+literate = illiterate
4. **in-**
- a. in-+adequate = inadequate
 - b. in-+curable = incurable
 - c. in-+decision = indecision
 - d. in-+coherent = incoherent
 - e. in-+significant = insignificant
5. **mis-**
- a. mis-+behave = misbehave
 - b. mis-+interpret = misinterpret
 - c. mis-+lead = mislead
 - d. mis-+quote = misquote
 - e. mis-+ represent = misrepresent
 - f. mis- deeds = misdeeds
6. **dis-**
- a. dis-+appear = disappear
 - b. dis-+grace = disgrace
 - c. dis-+please = displease
 - d. dis-+repute = disrepute
 - e. dis-+agree = disagree
7. **re-**
- a. re-+admit = readmit
 - b. re-+visit = revisit
 - c. re-+produce = reproduce
 - d. re-+appoint = reappoint
 - e. re-+play = replay

8. co-

- a. co-+operate =cooperate
- b. co-+occur =cooccur
- c. co-+existence = coexistence
- d. co-+opt = coopt
- e. co-+reference = corefernce

Notice that the prefixes do not change the grammatical class of any of the words above. Nevertheless, the meanings have undergone slight changes from the meaning of the base forms.

Suffixes are opposites of prefixes. They are attached to base forms at the final positions of words. Witness the following examples:

1. Plural and Past Tense Suffixes

a. Plural suffix: -s, -es, -ies

- a. boy+-s =boys
- b. girl+-s =girls
- c. bab(y)+-ies =babies
- d. lorr(y)+-ies=lorries
- e. hero+-es= heroes
- f. mango+-es =mangoes
- g. sheep
- h. aircraft

b. Past tense Suffix: -ed, -d

- a. injure+-d =injured
- b. cure+-d=cured
- c. wound+-ed =wounded
- d. land+-ed =landed
- e. cut
- f. burst

2. Adjective Formation

i. verb+suffix (-able)

- a. desire+-able= desirable
- b. believ(e)+-able= believable
- c. read+-able= readable
- d. suit+-able=suitable
- e. understand+-able =understandable

ii. noun+suffix (-ous)

- a. desir(e)+-ous = desirous
- b. religi(on)+-ous = religious
- c. courage+-ous = courageous
- d. grace+-ous = gracious
- e. fallacy+-ous =fallacious

iii. noun+-suffix (-less)

- a. pain+-less = painless
- b. use+-less =useless
- c. fear +-less =fearless
- d. brain+-less =brainless
- e. fruit+-less =fruitless

C. Noun formation

i. verb+ suffix (-ion)

- a. relate+-ion =relation
- b. invade+-ion =invasion
- c. attend+-ion =attention
- d. allude+-ion = allusion
- e. infuse+-ion = infusion

ii. verb +suffix (-ment)

- a. amuse+-ment = amusement
- b. arrange+-ment = arrangement

- c. agree-+ment =agreement
- d. endow+-ment =endowment
- e. content-+ment =contentment

iii. Adjective/noun+ suffix (-ity,)

- a. able+-ity =ability
- b. agile+-ity =agility
- c. sincere+-ity =sincerity
- d. en(e)m(y)+-ity =enmity

D. Verb Formation

Noun+suffix (-ify/-ize)

- a. type+-ify= typify
- b. identity+-ify =identify
- c. just+-ify =justify
- d. null+-ify =nullify
- e. energy+-ize =energize
- f. emphasis+-ize =emphasize

In these examples, the forms of words are changed from singular to plural in (Ai), and from present to past in (Aii).The classes of words change from nouns or verbs to adjectives in (B); from verbs, adjectives, or nouns to nouns in (C); and from nouns to verbs in (D). It follows that while prefixes change the meanings of words, suffixes change the class of words. However, both classes are used to form different words.

Note that the examples above are representative rather than exhaustive. You should therefore endeavour to form your own words using the examples as a guide. When you are in doubt as regards the spelling or part of speech of a word that you have formed, consult your dictionary.

Noun-Verb Distinctions

Certain words are very similar in structure and in meaning. In many cases, you might be confused as to which of them represents your intended meaning. These words are common among nouns and verbs. The spellings differ only in the presence or absence of certain alphabetical symbols.

Here are some examples:

Noun Form

advice
device
prophecy
belief
loss
proof

Verb form

advise
devise
prophecy
believe
lose
prove.

Other words that are frequently confused include:

Alter; altar; formally; formerly; cause, course, curse, coarse; wears, wares; quite, quiet, quit; rich, reach; dyeing, dying; who's, whose; council, counsel, cancel; utter, hotter

Thus to be an effective language user, you should not only know the fields and their peculiar vocabularies, you should also be able to use the appropriate words in both written and oral expressions.

Summary

In this lecture, we have discussed lexis as an important task in the learning of English Language. In the process, we discussed words in the general sense, different uses of words, their meaning relations and how to form new words by the addition of prefixes and suffixes.

Post-Test

1. What is the relationship between hyponymy and polysemy?
2. What are antonyms?
3. Use four words that have noun and verb forms in four pairs of sentences.
4. What is the difference between a dictionary and a thesaurus?

LECTURE FIFTEEN

Comprehension

Introduction

University undergraduates have a lot of readings to do. So they must be equipped with the skills of reading and understanding what they read. In this section, we discuss comprehension techniques and how examiners' expectations can be met. This makes it possible for you to read and comprehend well.

Objectives

At the end of this lecture, you should be able to:

1. identify the main ideas in paragraphs;
2. read and understand a variety of paragraph/text types; and
3. answer examiners' questions on comprehension with confidence.

Pre-Test

1. What is comprehension?
2. How can you identify the main point in a paragraph?
3. How can you determine the author's attitude in a passage?

CONTENT

Comprehension entails your understanding of a prose, drama or poetry passage or text. For you to understand the import of a passage, the first step is to read through the passage carefully. This gives you a feel of the passage. You will be able to know the field in which it is written as you

come across the use of registers. Generally, the best way to get the main ideas in a passage is to concentrate on each paragraph of the passage.

A good paragraph normally contains a main idea which is expressed in the key or topic sentence. This sentence is used, usually to introduce the main idea in a paragraph. The main idea is further discussed or explained with other sentences in the paragraph. In addition, the explanations may be supported with examples and illustrations, say facts and figures about a person, place, thing or idea. Finally a sentence can round off the different aspects of the paragraph by tying down the loose ends of the paragraph. It is your duty to recognize each sentence and the function it performs in a sentence. Does it contain the main idea? Does it expound an idea presented in a previous sentence? Does it offer examples or illustrations? Your ability to answer those questions correctly will greatly assist you in tackling comprehension passages. It is from these that you will be able to identify the major ideas in the passage, the supporting ideas and other details that may be relevant to your understanding of the passage.

It follows that the topic sentence is very important in penetrating the paragraph. So how can one locate the topic sentence? First, the topic sentence can occur in different positions in a paragraph. It can occur at the beginning of a paragraph (usually as the first sentence). In this case, other sentences that follow it will explain the key ideas as well as present examples to support the claim in earlier sentences. Here is an example:

The things which could be understood by the brain are man, life and universe, all of which are limited. Man is limited because his growth cannot go beyond a given limit. Life is limited because it has an individual aspect, and what is perceived through the sense is that it ends with the individual.

(The Road to Faith - SAZ)

The first sentence in the paragraph is the topic sentence which presents the items which the brain understood and their common feature. The essential feature that the items have in common is that they are limited. This is what the other supporting sentences expanded.

Although the topic sentence often occurs at the beginning of a paragraph, it can also occur at the end of a paragraph as in the following:

Originally, the earth consisted of a ball of flaming gas and the crust was formed from molten material which later cooled and solidified. Molten material trapped inside this crust is occasionally forced out in the form of volcanic eruptions. In

West Africa, volcanic eruptions occurred in the area of Cameroon Mountains during the first quarter of this century. When such molten material from volcanic eruptions cools and solidifies, it is termed rock.

V. O Akinyosoye *Senior Tropical Agriculture for West Africa*

In this paragraph, the keyword is *rock* and it occurs in the last sentence. The author's sentences are built up from the beginning. Each sentence contributes information to show the process of its (rock) formation. The first sentence starts with a description/exposition which is further expatiated in the second sentence. The third serves as an example. The fourth sentence summarizes the ideas in the previous sentences and serves as the topic sentence. In addition it is the conclusion to the paragraph. Thus we come across explanations of the rock formation before getting to the final sentence that serves as the core of the paragraph.

Sometimes, however, the topic sentence can be at the middle of a paragraph. In this sense, there will be introductory sentences before the topic sentence; while those following it give examples, explanations and conclusions to the topic sentence. Witness:

Perhaps it is because politics is like brisk business. Or maybe it is the glamour of the office. The fact is that politicians do not go into politics because of their love for the people but because of what can accrue from the exalted positions. Elected people get into office and embezzle public funds. Failed politicians get ministerial appointments or contracts to enable them to recoup their political investments. No wonder a poet called them executheives who play polytricks.

In this paragraph, the first two sentences are introductory while the third is the topic sentence. The *key word* is *politicians* and the last two sentences further discuss the politicians.

In another sense, a paragraph may contain a number of sentences which have related ideas but none of which can serve as the topic sentence. In this sense, one has a grasp of the central ides, but this is neither located within a single sentence nor explicitly stated in the paragraph. In this type of paragraph, we have an *implied topic sentence*. Consider the following paragraph for instance:

The proposed unity has never been defined, and, consequently, has not been disputed, nor achieved. Concrete outcomes of the activities of the OAU are difficult to ascertain. They can be

examined in three areas: political, conflict resolution, and technical cooperation. In sum, the OAU has been successful in about that order, from least to most.

(Fredland, Richard(1990) *A Guide to African International Organizations* p21)

As the paragraph is, none of the sentences qualifies to be a topic sentence. Each sentence has specific information about the activities of the OAU. Therefore, it will be wrong to choose any of them as the key sentence. We can then abstract the major idea from all the sentences in the paragraph. This may be put as: the OAU has not achieved much in its set goals.

It follows then that the identification and a clear understanding of the topic sentence in a paragraph is one of the clues to understanding the passage. Another clue is the use of words. Certain words may be deliberately used by the author. Some may be unique as the words *polytricks* and *executhieves* above. They may also be ordinary words used in special ways as in figurative expressions. In some cases, the author may enclose them in quotation marks. These serve as signposts to the author's intended interpretation of the passage. You need to be sensitive to such words if they occur in the passage. Usually, such words show the author's tone or attitude to the subject matter.

In some cases, however, the concept of topic sentence may not apply. These include excerpts taken from poetry or drama, where we cannot find a topic sentence as easily as we can in prose. The only thing you need do is to read the extract thoroughly and understand it. In examinations, two types of questions can be drawn on comprehension passages. We shall use these to sharpen our skills in understanding comprehension passages.

The first type is the traditional question, which elicits responses from candidates. In this question type, examiners elicit information that borders on different aspects of the passage. The question may demand the major idea in a passage. This may have been stated in the thesis statement or in one of the topic sentences. This is why it is important to look for topic sentences in your search for the interpretation of a passage. For examination purposes, if you had earlier identified the topic sentences, this would not be a problem to you. You would only check through the first, middle or last sentence of paragraphs in the passage. Sometimes, however, the question can test the knowledge of specific information, explanation or

related examples. These can be found, in most cases, in the supporting sentences.

In some cases too, the question may require information that is not explicitly stated. This aspect requires intelligence. What this means is that you have to follow the author's ideas, weighing the logicality of his ideas. You also need to read for embedded meanings such that when the ideas are not written physically in the text, you could pick them up from words, phrases or other expressions that suggest them. Really, you are expected to know what the author *thinks* about the subject (usually decided through the author's use of certain suggestive words). This is the implied meaning. If you have penetrated the message of the text, you would be able to locate the information required in the questions. In addition, you should be able to express the author's ideas concisely and pungently in your own words.

The second type of questions examiners ask is the multiple choice question. Here, the candidate is required to select an option that appropriately answers the question. These alternative answers are designed to test specific areas of knowledge in the passage.

They are to test:

1. your knowledge of explicit or implicit information;
2. your ability to distinguish between the author's ideas and those borrowed from other scholars;
3. your knowledge of the author's attitude or inclination in a passage; and
4. your understanding of the use of language and its effects in the passage.

To achieve these aims, examiners carve multiple choice questions in different forms:

1. ***Options which are correct:*** This type of answer may be a recast of the author's idea. A candidate who looks for a verbatim reproduction of an answer may not get this answer. In some cases, the answer may not have been explicitly stated. Yet, it might have been strongly implied. The examiner brings it out to test the depth of students' understanding of the passage. We can also infer from this that in answering comprehension questions, you should not appropriate the authors' words.

2. ***Options based on mere suggestions:*** This option may be a product of the author's suggestion or insinuation but which he does not really support. This type of question serves as bait for candidates who do things hurriedly. Such candidates pick answers that appear to be correct but are indeed wrong.

3. ***Options which are generalizations:*** When different situations obtain for different things and some of them have certain things in common, the examiner can use a question that ascribes features to an element which really lacks such features. Sometimes, this can take the form of exaggeration.

4. ***Options which are partly correct:*** Options of this type start with a statement of fact (just to deceive the student) and conclude with a false statement. Sometimes two parts of an answer may be required but the option will give only one part. The careful student will look for the option that contains both parts through careful scrutiny.

5. ***Options which present facts outside the passage:*** When facts are neither stated nor implied in a passage, then, they are irrelevant to the passage (even if true) for purposes of the test /examination. This is another trick of the examiners to identify overzealous candidates. You are required to be sensitive and exercise restraint in jumping to conclusions. Weigh your answers and be sure that the answers are really what the examiners require.

6. ***Options which contradict known facts:*** Some options state the opposite of the facts in the passage. Usually, such options are cast in a manner that will confuse the unwary candidate. In such situations, you should check the facts again from the passage.

So far we have been discussing different aspects of the techniques required by the examiner in testing candidates' understanding of a passage. You should as a matter of fact put each of these *tricks* at the back of your mind when you read comprehension passages. They will certainly guide you in understanding comprehension passages. I wish you the best of luck as you put in your very best in this course.

Summary

In this lecture, we have examined the subject of comprehension. In the process, we noted some basic comprehension techniques and how the requirements of examiners can be successfully met in relation to answering comprehension questions.

Post-Test

1. Where are topic sentences located in a paragraph?
2. Name four problem areas for the student in a comprehension task.

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