FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND DOCUMENTATION

BISONG M. TABANG

FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGLISH
COMPOSITION AND DOCUMENTATION

BY

BISONG M. TABANG

Fundamentals of English Composition and Documentation

First Published in 2010

Copyright © Bisong M. Tabang

CONTENTS

SECTION 1:   STRUCTURE

CHAPTER ONE

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This elementary clarification is valid: that the vocabulary of a language is the words available for the user of the language, and that the individual user of a language such as English, has his own store of the vocabulary. In addition, an obvious fact needs to be recalled that no two people have an identical store of the vocabulary of a language. Even two native speakers heavily versed in the use of their language, cannot claim with empirical justification, that they have an identical store of the vocabulary of the language. And of course, an undergraduate of English who is also a native speaker of English, is very likely indeed to have a higher command of English words than a Nigerian graduate of English, for whom English is a second language. Therefore, vocabulary development is the means or guide for the user of a language such as English, to improve his word power, and ultimately, the depth or efficiency of his communication, whether in speech or writing. And since nobody, even the native speaker of a growing language like English, can say he has all the words of the language at his command, every user needs to continue to develop his or her vocabulary.

English Cosmopolitan Vocabulary

The English language has undergone a lot of transformation in its history. If we look at an expression like this taken from Early Middle English: "And lete him knawe of his hand-dede... (37), we easily appreciate the blessings that accrue to us in embracing the English Language in its present-day form. The Modern English or present-day equivalent of the above expression is "And let him know his own handwork". One sees clearly the

difference in the look of the vocabulary of the two periods in English linguistic history. Old English would appear a completely different language from today's English. Readers interested in exploring the immensity of the differences that make Old English almost untranslatable in modern terms, can look for a copy of *Beowulf* and see what is contained therein.

Time was when English was closer to Latin than it is today. The inflexions were similar to those of Latin; "Waeter unlytel" (83) is the Anglo-Saxon English equivalent of "much water". If "lytel" is equivalent to "little", then "unlytel" is that which is not little, which is much. In other words, the prefix -un converts the word to its negative.

Definitely, what is of greater relevance to us is the influence of history on the vocabulary of Present-day English. In this connection, the Roman occupation and colonisation of England by Claudius in 43 AD; the Anglo-Saxon invasion of 449 AD; and the French invasion culminating in the Norman Conquest by William the Conqueror in 1066 among others, readily come to mind. Two of the numerous influences which are readily available in the English Language Vocabulary are those of Latin and French. These are the two examples chosen for discussion.

A celebrated writer on the History of the English Language, C.L. Wrenn, states quite appropriately that "of all languages, English probably has the vocabulary which is most copious, heterogenous and varied". (33) People come into contact with England and leave some permanent marks especially on the vocabulary.

Many words came into the English Language following English contact with the Roman Empire. One could mention just a few words of Latin origin: Filial as in filial obligation has its roots in filia-ae, filius - ii, meaning respectively, daughter and son. Filial obligation would then mean the obligation imposed on children. Others include:

English	Latin
Spectacle	Spectaculum - i

Speech, oratory	:	Oratio –nis
Solitude	:	Solitudo – inis
Sparkling, candid	:	Candidus – a - um
Size, magnitude	:	Magnitudo – inis
Skill, art	:	ars artis
Road	:	via
Sailor, from which we have nautical	:	nauta – ae
Public	:	Publicus – a -um
Temple	:	Templum – i
Miserable, wretched	:	Miser – is – e
Father	:	Pater, patris
Mother	:	Mater, matris
Fortitude	:	Fortitudo – inis
Conjectural	:	Conjecturalis
Consult	:	Consultare/consultatum
Exclude	:	Excludo
Exclusion	:	Exclusionis
Exotic	:	Exoticus

What English has done with most of the words borrowed is to adapt and integrate them into the vocabulary by cutting off the endings. Other phases of adaptation involve changing the –us Latin ending to – ous, such as in "conspicuus" changed into English and appearing as "conspicuous". At times – al replaces the – us as in Latin "externus" and English "external".

Some Latin words retain their forms in English. Examples are, climax, appendix, epitome, exterior, delirium, and axis. It is hereby recommended that to appreciate the immense influence of Latin on English, readers should

apply their knowledge of Latin vocabulary while they read English. Their journey into understanding of passages in English is eased by application of such knowledge.

French Borrowings

Borrowings from French are also extensive. A few of these include furneis (furnace), werre (war, i.e. guerre in modern French), merci (mercy), religiun (religion), garage, limousine, and camouflage. It can be seen that some of the above words have retained their French forms and meanings in English.

Some other French words which are in common use in their original forms, in English are:

Literature	:	resumé, cliché, Renaissance
Military :		barrage, communiqué
Dress	:	rosette, profile, berret
Food	:	restaurant, menu
Social	:	chauffeur, élite, fiancéé
Diplomatic	:	Attaché, prestige, charge d'

affaires, rapprochement, debacle, raison d' être.

French influence on English vocabulary presented above is far from exhaustive. These examples suffice to give an idea of French linguistic influence during its occupation of England.

Nigeria

It is necessary to recall that there is nothing intrinsic in a word. The word "book" is associated with an object which is read because the linguistic community considers it to be so. In other words, acceptability is very important in our association of certain meanings with certain words as vehicles of communication. In this regard, how far can Nigeria, as a former colonial

territory of Britain and still using English as her official language, influence the English Language vocabulary?

At times the meaning of a word is inferred from the context. When Achebe talks of beating the "ogene" one infers from the context that "ogene" must be either a drum or a gong. Igbo students in class informed the present writer that "ogene" is a gong. In Soyinka's poetry, one finds non-English lexical items. These include "ogboni" in "Idanre"; "impi, panga", and "mfekane" including the rendering of Shaka's war songs and refrains in Yoruba, in "Ogun Abibiman". On his part, Soyinka creates his own lexical items, such as "windscrew, wombfruit", and "washpish" in "Ogun Abibiman", and "drumskin" in "Your Logic Frightens Me, Mandela". No doubt these idiosyncratic lexical items create problems not only of understanding in isolation, but in the context in which they find themselves.

What happens to the words being introduced into the English Language by some Nigerian writers or communicators can be left to the future of linguistic history. What we can say confidently now is that the English Language has borrowings or adaptations or direct acceptance of original foreign words, into its vocabulary. The user of the English Language can engage in a fruitful study of the extent to which users in various parts of the world, be they in Denmark, France, Rome, Greece, Sweden, Germany and so forth, are influencing the direction of English vocabulary. English Language users need to widen the scope of their word power, to ease efficiency in communication.

Developing the Vocabulary
(a)   Morphological Devices and Word-building

In morphology one studies the structure of words. From such a study, one obtains insights into the nature of words in terms of roots and affixes. Just as it is possible to break a sentence into its component parts, it is also possible to break into their component parts, words that are composed of roots, prefixes and suffixes (affixes). The least components of words that

are meaningful or that advance the meanings of root words are known as morphemes. That is, morphemes appear at the beginnings of root words as prefixes, or at the ends as suffixes, while the process of developing a word through the use of prefixes and suffixes and in the process acquiring new words, is known as affixation.

Emphasis is here placed on meaningfulness of words or their component parts, since words are central to language as a medium of communication, only because they convey meaning. There is no justification therefore in classifying a sequence of letters, no matter how frequently they occur, as morphemes, if they do not add to the meaning of a root word. These and more issues are explored below, but first, it is necessary for us to obtain an insight into the nature of the word "Word".

(b)   The Word

Let us attempt the definition by first naming a few sequences of the letters of the alphabet, each sequence separated from the other by a comma: New Zealand, Nigeria, isn't, show up, show down, round up, round off, bow, and blackboard.

New Zealand or Nigeria is the name of a country. But the former is made up of "New" and "Zealand". If we consider "New" as the modifier of the noun "Zealand", can we talk of "Old Zealand" and still have an acceptable meaning? "Nigeria" is made up of seven uninterrupted letters of the English alphabet. If we should, in this country decide to adopt the name "Niger Ria", would the articulation of the latter be different from that of the former? Scarcely!

These are some of the problems that one encounters in his efforts to effect an incontrovertible definition of "word". The separation of "New" from "Zealand" is not obvious to a listener when the name of the country is pronounced. Part of the solution to this problem is that in the determination of "word" there has to be co-operation between the written and spoken

forms, and meaning. So, New Zealand and Nigeria are single words naming countries. But a contraction like "isn't" representing "is not" can be classed as a word, and the full version as two words. We go further and encounter words like blackboard and cupboard. When pronounced, each of them appears as a combination of two sequences, but orthography says otherwise. These issues are further examined later on compounding. It needs to be pointed out however that problems involving cupboard, blackboard and so forth result from absence of a conclusive, consistent and incontrovertible system of word separation in English.

English words in use are expected to have meanings. One of the problems often encountered by students of vocabulary is that some English words have the same spellings but different pronunciations and meanings in different contexts. An example is the word "bow". Somebody can bow down, but he can also shoot an object with a bow and arrow. Some words have different spellings and meanings but the same pronunciations: lead (led) as one carrying a heavy load of lead; led (Lεd), the past tense of lead (li:d), as when one reports that the commander led his troops to the enemy's territory at night yesterday.

Some units of meaning could be the outcome of more than one sequence of letters. Take cases of phrasal verbs like, round off; round up, and so forth. Each set has a definite meaning which is the result of a combination in each, of two sequences. Take one of the components out, and the meaning is lost.

The vocabulary development highlighted in this chapter concentrates on words that are easily available in dictionaries, to the exclusion of the narrowly idiosyncratic and onomatopoeic.

Elaborations on the implications of meaning have been played down as this would take us to the realm of semantics which is not the real focus of this chapter. Our concern now is to reiterate that a word or combinations of words should be capable of passing a message from the speaker or writer to the listener or reader. A student of vocabulary development should

not disregard the importance of context and articulation of sequences of letters (words) in the determination of meaning. This elementary examination of the concept of word should be useful to the reader in examining the word, its structure and semantic implications.

(c)   Manipulating the English Word

We start by recalling that a morpheme is a word or part of a word that has meaning. It cannot be divided into smaller meaningful units without violating its meaning or without leaving meaningless remainders. It occurs in differing verbal environments with a relatively stable meaning. Norman C. Stageberg (97) illustrates this principle with the word "gentlemanly" and states:

> ...if we remember that
> "gentle has the meaning of
> "distinguished, "belong to
> a high social station", we
> see that the meaning of
> "gentleman" is the
> composite of those of the
> two constituents (gentle +
> man). Now we add –ly,
> meaning "like" and get
> "gentlemanly'.

So, we have "gentlemanly" and according to Stageberg

> We continue this way,
> cutting every part into two
> until we have reduced the

word into its ultimate
constituents, that is, to the
morphemes of which it is
composed (97).

It is not enough to be able to analyse words into their various constituents as illustrated above. A more active exercise is to be able to create more words from various roots through the use of prefixes and suffixes, for enhancing word power and communication in English. This exercise needs to be carried out with caution so that analogy is not stretched so far as to result in words that are strange to the English Language. Below, greater emphasis on the development of the vocabulary of English is placed on the verb, adverb, noun and adjective.

The Verb and Past Tense Indicator

Here, we start from the obvious to the less obvious inflexions of the English verb. The list below does not represent all the verbs of English, but as examples to warn us against assuming universality of the past tense suffix for the verb.

Root	Suffix	Past tense
Faint	-ed	fainted
Load	-ed	loaded
Cook	-ed	cooked
Pant	-ed	panted
Book	-ed	booked
Account	-ed	accounted
Amount	-ed	amounted
Mount	-ed	mounted

Correct	-ed	corrected
Comment	-ed	commented
Script	-ed	scripted
Obey	-ed	obeyed
Tidy	-ed	tidied
Increase	-ed	increased
Pity	-ed	pitied
Use	-ed	used
Bank	-ed	banked
Abound	-ed	abounded
Converse	-ed	conversed
Talk	-ed	talked
Copy	-ed	copied
Imitate	-ed	imitated
Overpower	-ed	overpowered
Greet	-ed	greeted
Lean	-ed	leaned
Score	-ed	scored
Test	-ed	tested
Mature	-ed	matured
Kick	-ed	kicked.

We could go on enumerating the regular verbs that require the suffix –ed to convert them from the present to the past tense.

Others chosen for illustration below are not as obvious in their past tense forms as those above. It is easy to assume that what is being done

here is too easy for an average literate man or woman. However, mistakes in communication on these matters do come even from educated people, one of whom chose the word "digged" as the past tense of dig in a formal discourse.

Root	Suffix ·	Past Tense
Fight	-	fought
Sit	-	sat
Find	-	found
Run	-	ran
See	-	saw
Do	-	did
Write	-	wrote
Cut	-	cut
Hit	-	hit
Drink	-	drank
Read	-	read
Say	-	said
Throw	-	threw
Feel	-	felt
Forgive	-	forgave
Know	-	knew
Think	-	thought
Cost	-	cost
Cost	-	costed.

In the case of the last two, one can say "my journey to London last month cost me a lost of money". It is frequently heard in printing establishments that the officer responsible for costing, costed the job yesterday without difficulty.

The above list of verbs does not exhaust the irregular verbs in English. They serve as examples to enable us to comment on the issue of verb paradigm irregularity. Language is not in a state of chaos. At the same time, not every item of language, including English, is predictable.

What happens to the above irregular verbs (except cut, hit, read and cost) is that in their change from the present to the past tense, they undergo internal phonetic modifications, with the latter replacing the former, like the /ɔ:/ of fought replacing the /ai/ of fight. That is, while the suffix –ed is regularly used with regular verbs, there is no similar equivalent with the irregular ones.

The case of irregular verbs that retain their present tense forms in the past tense can be similarly explained. Verbs like cut, hit, read, and cost (involving monetary value), have neither prefixes nor suffixes to transform them from present to past. As stated by Gleason (75), these forms contain "a root /kaet/ and a zero suffix".

In the process of analysing a word into its component morphemes, care should be taken not to assume prefixes and suffixes, but to ensure that meaning is not destroyed in the resultant exercise. For instance, we can have con/join; con/federate; com/press; where "con" or "com" means putting together. But what does "con" mean in "confess"? we cannot isolate "con" from "fess" and achieve meaningfulness even though "con" or "com" has a characteristic distribution. In other words, characteristic distribution or occurrence is valid for the purpose of vocabulary development if it advances the root word's meaning. So "confess" is just one word, one root. The past tense would then be "confess" + "-ed", to give the past tense regular form "confessed".

We continue the exercise below with various prefixes and suffixes attached to root words. In the process they are converted to other parts of speech and either change or add to their meanings. Let us take the root word "faith" (noun). We have "faithful" (adjective); the addition of the negative prefix '–un' converts it to "unfaithful", as we can talk of an unfaithful wife. We then add –ly, and the word becomes the adverb "unfaithfully", meaning, in a manner that is not consistent with a show of faith. The addition of a further suffix – ness gives us the word "unfaithfulness". The words: faith, faithful, unfaithful, unfaithfully, unfaithfulness, all evolve from the process of affixation.

Other examples

- Standard, standards, standardize, standardization;
- Rely, reliable, unreliable, reliability, unreliability;
- Derive, derivable, derivation;
- Respond, response, responsive, responsible, irresponsible, responsibility, irresponsibility. In this last example, the addition of the negative prefix – ir converts the word from positive to negative.
- Succeed, success, successful, successfully, unsuccessful, unsuccessfully;
- Moral, morality, morally, immoral, immorality, amoral, amorality, amorist;
- Agree, agreement, agreeable, agreeably, agreeableness, disagree, disagreement;
- Accept, acceptable, acceptability, acceptance, acceptation, unacceptable, unacceptability.
- Rational, rationale, rationalism, rationalist, rationalistic, rationality, rationalization, rationalize, irrational, irrationality.

The above examples are far from exhaustive. One could go on exemplifying on the way minute, though meaningful verbal sequences are added to root words for greater meanings of the resultant words. That is,

by adding certain particles before (prefixes), and/or after the base word (suffixes) one changes or adds more meanings to the words. In other words, as English Language users accurately manipulate existing words, they are able to express a wealth of ideas with limited vocabulary. Students, especially need to take note of this important resource of the English Language, especially when they are called upon to summarize passages tersely and almost exclusively in their own words.

Exercise 1

1.   Discuss briefly the influence of at least two foreign languages on the vocabulary of English.
2.   Discuss the influences of prefixes and suffixes on the following sets of words:
    (a)   Dispensable, indispensability
    (b)   Moral, amoral, amorist
    (c)   Rationality, irrationality, rationalization
    (d)   Acceptation, acceptability, unacceptability.
3.   Construct four sentences using one word each, chosen from a – d.
4.   How valid is the assertion that the morphological devices of English are rich and a knowledge of how words are built up in the language enables the user to express a wide range of ideas with limited vocabulary?
5.   On ten words of your choice, build prefixes and suffixes. Ensure that the words that emerge from your exercise are not strange to the accepted English Language Vocabulary.

(d)   Other Areas of Word-formation

The areas chosen for brief discussions are Clipping, Acronymy, Blending and Antonomasia. They are chosen because of the relative frequency with which they are encountered in the vocabulary of English.

(i)   Clipping

This is a process whereby words are abbreviated to take the place of longer ones. These abbreviations qualify as words in their own right. The words in brackets represent the longer versions: bus (omnibus); wig (periwig); bra (brassiere); auto (automobile); zoo (zoological garden); phone (telephone); car (motor-car); fridge (refrigerator); advert (advertisement); pub (public house); prefab (prefabricated structure); mic (microphone); hanky (handkerchief); plane (aeroplane); flu (influenza); pram (preambulator); movie (moving picture); specs (spectacles); and mob (mobile vulgus – fickle common people).

(ii)   Acronymy

These are words derived from initials of phrases. Many have been formed as short forms of government agencies, while some, such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation), are pronounced as words. Examples in this class are: NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation); ANCOPSS (All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools); UN (United Nations); FRCN (federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria); VD (Veneral Disease); BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation); VP (Vice President; at times Vice Principal); ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) and SSANU (Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities).

(iii) Blending

In this, two existing words are restructured to form new words. Examples are flush (flash plus gush); twirl (twist plus whirl); dumbfound (dumb plus confound); flurry (flutter plus hurry); urinalysis (urine + analysis); and extrality (from extra-territoriality).

(iv) Antonomasia

The English Language gets some of its words from proper names. Examples are:

- Lynch: from Captain William Lynch who meted out punishment equivalent to today's lynching on the common people of Pennsylvania until the punishment was considered to be adequate.
- Sandwich: a kind of food, is taken from Earl of Sandwich, a celebrated eater of such food.
- Chauvinism: exaggerated and aggressive patriotism. After Nicolas Chauvin, a devoted adherent of Napoleon Bonaparte. We can today talk of someone being a chauvinist, of being chauvinistic, or behaving chauvinistically.
- Boycot: This can be traced to Charles Boycott who was ostracized in Ireland in 1880. It means joining hands with others in refusing to have anything to do with someone or group.
- Sadism: The deriving of pleasure from inflicting pain on another, especially as a form of sexual perversion. Sadist, Sadistic, Sadistically (after de Marquis de Sade).

(e) Compounding

Words are also created in English through the process in which two words are brought together to form a new word. Harold Whitehall

(1960:140) says that free morphemes combine to form compounds: dogday (from dog and day); blackbird (from black and bird); sweetbread (from sweet and bread). Other examples are as follows:

Airspace (air + space) as in Nigeria's airspace;

Grassroot (grass + root) as in support at the grassroot;

Blacksmith (black + smith) as in a busy blacksmith's shop;

Roadworthy (road + worthy) as in a roadworthy car;

Playmate (play + mate) as in my son's playmate;

Talkback (talk + back) as in the radio programme, talkback;

Underdeveloped (under + developed) as in an undeveloped proposal;

Deepfreezer (deep + freezer) a cooling device.

A few more examples include:headon as in headon collision; handpicked as in handpicked sycophants, and breakthrough (break + through) as when one feels that the time for a breakthrough in the cure of aids is overdue.

Exercise 2

Construct five sentences with compound words of your choice. Do not repeat the ones already listed above.

(f)   **Words that may confuse you**

Certain words, by the way they are written and pronounced, can confuse the user of English. Below are some examples of some of these words.

(i) Homonymy: Same spellings, same sound, but different meanings in certain contexts. For instance, we can draw a line with a ruler, and can also respect the ruler of the country. The child's bag is light; he delights to carry it at moon light.

While John is busy writing with a new costly pen, his brother is concerned with leading the sheep to the pen. It can be said metaphorically that a journalist should have a prolific pen, to pen with ease issues of current interest.

I chewed the <u>date</u> with fascination on a <u>date</u> I have long forgotten. Other examples include mood, voice, and subject. Readers can search more for their use in communication.

(ii) Homophones: Same sound but different spellings; meanings also different. He read /red/ a red /red/ book yesterday. When we <u>meet</u> young people we should offer them <u>meat</u> because it is their favourite food. The <u>knight</u> of that church goes out late every <u>night</u>.

The widow demonstrated her <u>might</u> by offering the only <u>mite</u> that she had. Believe as you touch the <u>heels</u> of the LORD and He <u>heals</u> you that moment. The <u>root</u> of the matter generating the debate is that the clerks decided to <u>route</u> their petitions to the General Manager instead of the Managing Director. A condemned prisoner, carrying a heavy load of <u>lead</u> was <u>led</u> to his place of death. His <u>father</u> was led <u>farther</u> and <u>farther</u> from the abode of safety. Students and readers can easily find more examples to supplement the ones listed above. When listing homophones, be sure that the words in question have the same sounds. Nigerians should not adopt their own varieties of pronunciations and intonation in this matter. For instance, there is a difference in pronunciation between "taught" and "thought". The difference lies in the fact that the /t/ of the former is a voiceless dental plosive, while the /th/ of the latter is a voiceless dental fricative /Θ/ which is not familiar to the ordinary Nigerian user of English. Matters of this type are formally handled in training schools for broadcasters in the country in order to ensure a high degree of international intelligibility for radio and television stations.

The next items of discussion – hyponyms, synonyms and antonyms – are very relevant in the quest for accurate words for use in the composing process and speech.

(iii) Hyponymy

This involves the inclusion of a more specific term in a more general term. Unawareness of the existence of such specific words results in generalizations and vagueness of expression. It is not in all circumstances

that specificity is demanded. The general or specific word can be employed according to communication demands.

The general word is usually referred to as the superordinate term, while the specific words are referred to as cohyponyms. In examples below, the superordinate term appears at the top. Below it are the cohyponyms.

(i)	Red	(ii)	Flower	(iii)	Insect
	Scarlet		rose		ant
	Crimson		hibiscus		cricket
	Vermilion, etc.		tulips, etc.		fly
					wasp
					mosquito
					cockroach, etc.

(iv)	Car	(v)	Grain	(vi)	Bird
	Volkswagen		corn		vulture
	Toyota		millet		crow
	Volvo		wheat		eagle
	Mercedes-Benz		maize, etc.		pigeon, etc.
	Peugeot, 504, 505, etc.				

(vii)	Tool	(viii)	Vehicle	(ix)	Weapon
	cutlass		lorry		sword
	knife		car		spear
	hoe		bus		gun
	axe, etc.		van, etc.		club, etc.

(x) Sin	(xi) Reptile	(xii) Furniture
adultery	Frog	Chair
fornication	snake	table
murder	crocodile	book-case
hatred	lizard, etc.	wardrobe
unbelief		stool, etc.
lies		
theft, etc.		

The more we get at the specific word, the more exact is our message. It should be noted that rose is a kind of flower. We can say that he bought a rose, that is a flower. But to say that he bought a flower does not imply that he bought a rose. The flower could be a hibiscus or a tulip. Similarly we can say that John committed murder. The implication is that he committed a sin. But to say that he committed a sin does not imply that he committed murder, since the sin could be any of the acts that offend against the commandments of God. This observation is to direct our minds on the use of specific or general words in communication.

(v) Synonymy

It presupposes that two or more forms are associated with the same thing. Examples: hide/conceal; big/large/mighty; nice/good; exact/ honourable; bad/disreputable/objectionable. When words have the same meaning, they are said to be synonymous.

Readers and writers need to exercise care in assuming interchangeability in all contexts, of words listed as synonyms. The word "mighty" above may not always refer to size. If we exclaim: "How are the

mighty fallen!" We are not referring to the physical sizes of the fallen people, but to their importance in the societies in which they find themselves. In the same vein, a good man, is not interchageable with an exact man. The context is important with regard to the option – honourable – which in certain political contexts could have a derogatory connotation. If legislators, alias honourable men, are discovered to be stealing from the nation, members of the society could frown at being referred to as honourable. Since an indefinite number of sentences can be generated in a language, the options in preferring one synonym rather than the other cannot be determined exactly.

John Lyons, discussing context-dependent synonymy, states that "all sense relations are in principle context dependent, but contextually determined synonymy is of particular importance" (452). He demonstrates this assertion with the words: fly, drive, and go. "I am going to New York by air", is another way of saying "I am flying to New York". Also, "I am driving to New York' is another way of saying "I am going to New York by car". But it is not only a car that one drives; one could drive a bus, a lorry or any other type of vehicle. We see the relationship between this and hyponymy earlier discussed. What has been done here is a syntagmatic modification of the general word "go". We deduce in this regard that one can say that he is going to Onitsha by car. It implies that he is going by vehicle. But to say that he is going by vehicle does not imply that he is going by car, since he could go by any other type of vehicle, which is a general term, while the cohyponyms are specific. In a sense "car" is general while Peugeot, 504, Volvo, Mercedes-Benz and so forth, are particular instances of car. If I say that my wife is starving, I am not specific. But a specific meaning is conveyed if I say that my wife is starving herself of food.

(vi) Antonymy

In earlier classrooms on English with a traditional grammar orientation, students were frequently asked to give the opposites certain words. A student could, for instance, answer a question that the opposite of good is bad. However, today's advances in linguistics have some revelations which advance knowledge on these matters.

In the case of complementarily, the assertion of one implies a rejection of the other. That John is not single implies a rejection of the notion that John is not married, meaning that John is married. That John is a man implies that John is not a woman. John is good implies a denial of any assertion that John is bad. But saying that John is not good does not imply that John is bad. That an answer to a question is not good could mean that the presentation is fair, or even fairly good. Not being married does not always imply that the person is single; he may be involved with a lady with whom he lives a life similar to that between husband and wife, in a cohabitation that may not be frowned at by the culture of the area. Some people could be more married than others.

Attributes need to be stated in the context of explicit norms, and not determined in the absolute. Take the following pairs: tall/short; big/small; high/low; wide/narrow. A Nigerian of average height will be a very tall person in the society of pigmies, and certainly short in comparison to Goliath. If we talk of a bad man, we need to answer the question; what attributes have made him so? A man may be wise, but he should never regard the other as useless. If the other is able to even carry food to his mouth, he cannot be validly regarded as useless.

That is, for intelligent communication we need not be too general. Tall/short; big/small and so forth, should be reduced to the communicator's exact interpretation. Debatable attributes or generalisations such as: He knows nothing; he is a useless man; he is the best man, are some of the attributes of communication that is not sufficiently specific and intelligent.

Exercise 3 (a)

(i)   List seven superordinate terms and their co-hyponyms. Do not repeat those listed above.

(ii)   Compile ten sets each synonyms and antonyms. Discuss three sets each of these with regard to contexts in which they can be used plausibly.

(g) Words According to Context and Field of Discourse

It is not a very useful exercise to attempt to list words believed to be in use in certain fields of learning, and which may not be found in others. As pointed out later, in the chapter on comprehension, certain words vary their meanings according to context or field. We can say, for instance, that the active voice in grammar is easier to study than the passive one; and that the broadcaster has a plausible microphone voice. However, it is possible to find words and expressions that are more consistently identified with certain fields of discourse than with others. In this area of the course, we shall study certain passages, and assess the extent of their likeness or difference in word usage and expression. Let us examine this passage from the Bible, the Word of God in use in Christendom:

> Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward

thy holy temple. Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

(The Holy Bible: Psalm 5: King James Version)

Comment

Admittedly, there are various translations of the Bible. Some are written in more modern English than others. The fact, however, is that they reflect similar lexical choices, syntactic structures and graphological practices. So, despite its very little claim to modernity in language, the above passage; taken from King James Version of the Bible, is a plausible representation of the Christian religious register.

Archaic words abound, showing that the passage belongs to modern English, but of the early type. Examples are: shalt, thou, thee, hatest, leasing (for falsehood), thy, mine, very wickedness (a deviant expression in more modern usage), destroy thou (an inversion of word order), and wilt. What the reader can do is to supply the present-day English equivalents and easily arrive at the appropriate meanings.

Another characteristic of the passage is the frequency of the use of emotional expressions. The passage is a prayer to God, the ruler of the universe. The little creatures in it, especially human beings, approach him in respect or supplication. Expressions portraying this emotion include: O LORD; my King, and my God; thou... not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; and a God in whose sight the foolish shall not stand. Others are: multitude of thy mercy; thy holy temple.

But when the supplicant talks about sinful and unrepentant mortals and calls on God to punish them, the lexical choice is not of leniency but of harshness. We find words like: the foolish, workers of iniquity, speakers of leasing (falsehood), bloody and deceitful man, no faithfulness in their mouth, wickedness, open sepulchre, multitude of their transgressions, and rebels.

Finally he calls on god to bless those who trust in Him. The choice of words also reflects the new position: shout for joy, rejoice, be joyful in thee, the LORD will bless the righteous, ... with favour... as with a shield.

Another characteristic of the passage is the constant repetition of ideas. For instance, "give ear unto my words" equals "consider my meditation", equals "hearken unto the voice of my cry". Again "lead me O LORD in thy righteousness" equals "make thy way straight before my face"; "let them fall by their own counsels" equals "cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions". The Word of God enjoins worshippers to pray without ceasing and with perseverance. The repetitions intensify the earnestness in the appeal of the supplicant.

A glaring characteristic of the passage is its idiosyncratic graphology. Apart from opening the spelling of the name of the creator with a capital

letter even in the middle of sentences, the supplicant capitalizes all the letters of the word "Lord", preceded with the exclamation "O". This is to point to the greatness of mighty Jehovah, of whom we have need, and to whom we must bow.

The choices of words and expressions, the emotionalism including unusual capitalization and punctuation – all point to the intended message. The appropriateness of the choices to the field of discourse is not in doubt. We cannot transfer such practices to another field, say of science, and achieve plausible communication results. The link between nature of language and field of learning or discourse is therefore not in doubt.

Passage II

This passage, reproduced below, is on an aspect of study in Economics – Infrastructure.

Health is another area of investment in human capital. A healthy population creates a healthy labour force which is one of the greatest assets of an economy. To quote Authur Lewis: "Expenditure on health is productive in three ways: first it increases the number of man-hours of work that can be performed; secondly, it improves the quality of work: and thirdly, by clearing otherwise uninhabitable areas it makes possible the use of natural resources which would not otherwise be utilized".[12] The economic returns on medical expenditure is based on an increase in the productivity of a healthy labour force. A healthy labour force

reduces lethargy and inattentiveness, thus increasing productivity. Some areas are uninhabitable because of diseases. A good health programme eliminates such diseases, thus making more physical resources and man-hours available for the development of the economy. Arthur Lewis describes this type of health expenditure as the most productive.[13]

From the foregoing analysis, it can be concluded that infrastructure lays the foundation of economic development. The common characteristics of most infrastructure investments such as railways and their terminals, seaports, highways, airports and power stations are long periods of gestation, the 'lumpiness' of capital, indivisibility, an irreducible minimum social overhead capital/industry mix and the indirect routes of pay-off. It is these peculiar characteristics that have made investments in infrastructure generally unattractive to the private investor. This was known to Smith, hence the reason he assigned the development and maintenance of infrastructure facilities to the state or the public.[14] For example, port authorities, which develop, operate and maintain ports, are generally publicly owned and have a remarkable diversity of powers, practices and forms.[15] However, the argument of size

and the long period of gestation and pay-off as a deterrent to private investment in infrastructure is valid only under the assumption of private risk aversion. In the United States for example, gas pipelines, radio and television broadcasting stations, airlines, railroads, telecommunications, and even telegraph services are private enterprises.[16]   However,   the underdeveloped countries are generally deficient in capital and the type of entrepreneurs and management required for the development of economic or social infrastructure as a private enterprise.
(Structure of the Nigerian Economy, 69-70)

Comment

Infrastructure includes factors such as water supply, power, communication, education, transport, housing, law and order, markets, access to credit facilities, and agricultural overhead capital such as irrigation and drainage systems. In economic development planning, infrastructural facilities exist as a means, not as an end in themselves, by enticing entrepreneurs and other participants in the economic development enterprise for improvement in the quality and quantity of goods and services for the consuming public. The above passage is lifted from a detailed treatment of this subject by Professor Ignatius Ukpong.

One observes that in the passage, there is no appeal to the emotion. The information is conveyed in terse language in the register of Economics. Since the words found there relate to this field of study, readers need to be familiar with them to be able to follow Professor Ukpong's writing. These

words include investment, human capital, labour force, man-hours, natural resources, economic returns, expenditure, productivity, physical resources, economy, economic development, periods of gestation, the lumpiness of capital, indirect routes of pay-off, diversity of powers, private risk aversion, and so forth. Terms also reflected later in the paper include Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Direct Production Activities (DPA), Indirectly Productive Activities (IPA), rate of discount, market rate of interest, aggregate returns, social rate of discount, and private rate of discount.

One would go on exemplifying. The point must be reiterated here that to be able to communicate in any field of human endeavour, the communicator should be familiar with its peculiarities in language use. The more the number of registers of language we are versed in, the greater our ability to communicate.

Exercise 3 (b)

Get two passages from different fields of discourse and point out their similarities and differences in the choices and uses of words. Discuss the extent of appropriateness or inappropriateness of such uses in the contexts involved.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the need has been discussed for the student or reader to develop and continue to develop his vocabulary. With a good command of words, including their origins in some cases, the user of the language is at the advantage to communicate more effectively than would otherwise be the case. It may be added that students and readers should form the habit of using dictionaries effectively for words and their pronunciations; of listening

to the spoken word critically, intelligently and intelligibly; reading extensively to see how words are used in certain contexts or fields of learning; and practising the use of words through writing time and time again. For terseness of expression with high semantic content, the processes in affixation should be considered as important.

It is hoped that the views highlighted in this chapter will encourage students and readers to improve their communication power through expanded vocabulary stock, from where the right word can be easily made available for use in the appropriate context or occasion.

CHAPTER TWO
BASIC STRUCTURAL E.LEMENTS

(a) Parts of Speech

As rightly stated by Quirk and Greenbaum (1980:18), "the structures realising sentence elements are composed of units which can be referred to as parts of speech." We need to know about these units, as a preliminary step towards the discussion of the sentence which forms the next topic. In this connection, we come into contact with the verb, noun, adjective, adverb, article - the, a(n), pronouns, and prepositions, and so forth.

(i) The Verb

The verb belongs to the verb phrase in Transformational Syntax, or the verbal group in Systemic Linguistics. A sentence, according to Systemic Linguistics, is made up of Subject (nominal group), Predicator (verbal group), Complement (nominal group) and Adjunct (made up of adverbials and preposition-headed constructions, such as, at home, in school).
An example:

Joseph	beat	the mad boy	yesterday
Subject	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct.

If we take out the verb (beat) the sentence will be open to many suggestions. The specific meaning will not be evident.

A verb is therefore generally a very important instrument for conveying meaning in a sentence. The verb and the inflections that take place in it can reveal the message the communicator intends to pass, very largely, unequivocally.

The Verbal Group consists of the individual lexical verb and the auxiliary. In his Syntax Lectures II (1996/97), Orisawayi, referring to Quirk et al (1972), classifies lexical verbs into Dynamic and Stative Verbs. Dynamic Verbs, the authors appropriately say, are sub-classified into five types namely: activity verbs such as ask, beg; process verb such as change, deteriorate; verbs of bodily sensation, such as ache, feel; transitional event verbs such as arrive, die, fall; and momentary verbs such as hit and jump. <u>Stative Verbs</u> are divided into two sub-classes: Verbs of inert perception and cognition such as abhor, detest, adore; and relational verbs, such as, apply (to anyone), be, belong to.

Auxiliaries are divided into primary auxiliaries – do, have, be; and modal auxiliaries such as can, may, might.

This list which is not exhaustive, is for the purpose of briefly introducing the English verb. More important for the present purpose is how the verb manifests itself in English structure, for communication.

Verb and Tense

The English changes its form depending on the times indicated by it. These times are: present, past, present perfect, past perfect, future perfect, present continuous, past continuous and future. We shall use the following sentences to illustrate them:

* Everyday he <u>comes</u> (present).
* Now he <u>is coming</u> (present continuous).
* Yesterday he <u>came</u> (past).
* Tomorrow he <u>will come</u> (future).
* The dog has <u>bitten</u> him again (perfect)
* It <u>had bitten</u> him twice before people noticed his agony (past perfect).
* Unless he desists from teasing it, the dog <u>shall have bitten</u> him before noon tomorrow (future perfect).
* This terrible dog <u>was eagerly biting</u> the bread which its master offered to it *(past continuous)*.

We need to note that the present tense is also used to describe, not only a habitual action, such as "I eat two times a day", but what is generally accepted as true. I can say for instance, The earth is round" or "General Abubakar is the President of Nigeria".

Students should be sure of their tenses in order not to run into difficulty in their communication in English, both written and spoken.

This chart can be useful:

Verb	Present	Present Continuous	Past	Past participle
Write	Write	Writing	Wrote	Written
Go	go	going	went	gone
Sing	sing	singing	sang	sung
Eat	eat	eating	ate	eaten
Catch	Catch	catching	caught	caught
See	see	seeing	saw	seen
Build	build	building	built	built
Freeze	freeze	freezing	froze	frozen

Note sentences like these as correct:

* Seeing his friend, he ran away with the food which he had.
* Caught cheating at the examination, he apologised to the examiner.

The first (seeing) is the present participle, and it is the person who ran that saw his friend. The second one (caught) is the past participle. It is the person caught that apologised to the examiner.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

When we speak or write, somebody or something may or may not be affected by the action of the verb. **A transitive** verb takes an object, whereas an intransitive verb doesn't. It must be emphasised that it is possible to use a verb both transitively and intransitively.

Let us examine the following examples:

* He sees clearly (Intransitive).
* He saw the man (Transitive).

The first sentence means that he has no problem with his sight, while the second sentence has the man as the direct object of the action of seeing.

Other examples of verbs taking the direct object are:

* The soldier shot the goat.
* The brute beats his wife twice a week.
* The people elected him President

Double object. Examples are as follows

He gave me a book. (This is another way of saying "He gave a book to me). "Book is a direct object and "me" is an indirect object.

At times the double object could have a noun as indirect object, and a finite clause as direct object. Examples are:

* He told me that he was honest.

He didn't tell me that he was resigning.

Irregular Verbs

It is not all forms of verbs that are predictable. We hinted at this when discussing vocabulary development. There are regular verbs whose forms, especially past tense forms, are predictable. Examples are: book, booked; try, tried; walk, walked; match, matched; dance, danced; show,

showed. In these examples the suffix -ed is added to the base word to convert it from present to past tense. But we cannot do the same thing with irregular verbs such as : bring, hit, throw, come, drive, etc. Sentences to demonstrate the past tenses of the above verbs are:

* He brought (not bringed) his bag to my office.
* The soldier hit him on the head.
* He threw the rubbish in the gutter.
* The thief came in with stolen shoes.

The Verb and Voice

The voice of the English verb is either active or passive. Examples are as follows:

* The soldier shot the cow (active).
* The cow was shot by the soldier (passive).

Sentence one is active because the subject, the soldier, performs the action of shooting which affects the cow, the direct object. This is quite straightforward. But in the second sentence, the subject "cow" is not performing any action; passive transformation has taken place. "Cow" is rather the recipient of the action carried out by the soldier, even though the former occupies the subject position in the sentence.

Exercise 4

1. Under present, present continuous, past tenses, and the past participle, give the forms of the following verbs: lose, lead, cut, bring, try, walk, find, lie, rise, ride, set, catch, burst, let, hit, write, draw, show, become, fall, drive, do, tear, come, slide, drink, fell, dance, boil, carry, bury, transfer, wring, fight, borrow, lay and lend.

2. In the space provided, write the voice against the sentence.
    * The police aided the suspects. (   )
    * The thieves were accompanied by the police (   )
    * A new social order will be ensured (   )

Conclusion

Apart from the above verbs, students should assemble as many others as possible and practise the various transformations that they undergo from one tense to the other. This exercise will help them to minimize the common errors usually committed by speakers and writers in English.

(iii)   The Noun

The English noun is no longer defined solely as the name a person, place, or thing, because there are some nouns that do not fall into any of the categories above, but are still recognized as nouns. If we say, "Adversity stimulates activity", neither of the underlined words would qualify as a noun under the old definition, since none is the name of a person (Joseph), place (Lagos) or thing (table). But it is still a noun. Why?

A noun is recognized by the position it occupies in a sentence. In the above sentence, adversity is the subject, while activity is the object linked to the subject by the transitive verb "stimulates." Adversity as a quality, is the abstract that stimulates the activity which, again, is not the name of a person, place or thing.

Let us further our discussion with the following examples:
* Joseph carried his bag, boarded the plane which took him to his town Lagos. The underlined single words are nouns. Joseph is the name of a person, bag is the name of a thing, while Lagos is the name of a place.
* The information that Mary had killed her husband, astonished me. The word information describes what cannot be seen or felt. It is an abstract noun. The underlined words from "the - husband" occupy the position of the subject. "Me" is the object pronoun after the transitive verb "astonished", What we learn here is that when the position of the subject, object, or subject complement is occupied by more than one word, we describe such words as noun phrases or nominal groups.

Other examples are:

* I know <u>what he is doing</u>. The underlined words occupy the slot for the object after the verb "know".
* I know <u>which book he read</u>
* <u>The poor</u> will always be angry.
* <u>To fight at the right time</u> is a <u>mark of wisdom.</u>

Students should be sufficiently aware of these structural intricacies so that they may not be confused when they find them in passages set for comprehension and summary writing.

Classes of Nouns
Proper Nouns

(Names of persons and places; Richard, Okon (persons); Calabar, Enugu, (places). We do not talk of the Enugus or the Calabars, nor are the nouns preceded by the article, definite or indefinite. A sentence like "I saw the Godwin running to the school" is unacceptable. But we can say: "The good Godwin is here". This is because of the modifier, good, used after the definite article. We can also say: "The Awubis must survive", meaning the members of Awubi's family. This is in common use and students should take note of it. As shown above, proper names begin with capital letters whether they appear at the beginning of a sentence or not.

Common Nouns

As the name implies, common nouns stand for a whole group. Unlike proper nouns, they are generally pluralised; boy, boys, girl, girls; market, markets; priest, priests; pastor, pastors; bottle, bottles; banana, bananas; coin, coins; night, nights; city, cities; dog, dogs; book, books, etc. Common nouns begin with capital letters only when they appear at the beginnings of a sentences: <u>Dogs</u> are a menace these days.

Uncountable nouns

While common nouns are generally countable as shown above, uncountable nouns are not. Examples are: earth, dishonesty, integrity, milk, warmth, honesty, darkness, anger, applause, chaos, courage, leisure, dancing, education, homework, geography, shopping, moonlight, safety, weather, violence, publicity etc. Quirk & Greenbaum (1980:61) point out some nouns which are both count and non-count with considerable difference in meaning:

Count	Non count
I've many difficulties.	He's not had much difficulty.
He's had many odd experiences.	His job requires experience.
Buy an evening paper.	Wrap the parcel in brown paper.
The talks will take place in Paris.	He likes idle talk.
There are bright lights and harsh sounds.	Light travels faster than sound.
The lambs are eating quietly.	There is lamb on the menu

Exercise 5

1. Give the plurals of the following nouns: cab, cattle, sheep, dozen, swine, chief, life, roof, self, proof, belief, safe, dwarf, and deer. You lose one mark if you attach a plural suffix to a noun that should have the same form for both singular and plural.

(iv)   The Adjective

In our use of the English Language, we must have time and time again, come into contact with grammatical devices that help in making the meaning of an utterance specific. Take for example, the following sentences:
* The man arrived yesterday.
* The <u>good</u> man arrived yesterday.
* The <u>good honest</u> man arrived yesterday
* The <u>good, honest old limping</u> man arrived yesterday.

No doubt, the addition of the underlined words means a clearer picture of the man than is the case without them. The information about the man is made progressively specific, and a clearer and clearer picture of the man is painted for us by the use of modifiers, also referred to as adjectives.

For convenience, the article is here treated along with the adjective. The article a(n) points to something not already identified: a good man. We do not know who he is. But when we say "the good man", we imply that he has been previously identified; he is a specific, identified or identifiable good man.

In the above examples, the adjectives and determiner or article appear before the nouns they modify.

Adjective as complement

But at other times, it is found at the end of a sentence, as the complement of the verb.

Examples are:
* John is <u>handsome</u>
* The argument appears <u>interminable</u>.

The adjectives post modify the nouns in the subject position, since it is possible to have acceptable structures like "the handsome man, the apparently interminable argument."
* When he was tried, our Lord Jesus Christ remained mute (speechless,

calm, angelic, prayerful, peaceful etc). We can, in the same vein, talk of speechless, mute, angelic, prayerful Jesus.

The three sentences above exemplify predicative adjectives as subject complements. Another example of the predicative adjective is when it is an object complement, such as "He habitually makes his wife miserable." "Wife" is the object, with the adjective "miserable" as the complement.

Some nouns function in the position of the adjective and in the process, modify other nouns. They, in consequence, perform an adjectival function. Examples are the underlined words in the following sentences:

* He was caught at an <u>identification</u> parade.

* The broadcaster has <u>communication</u> problems.

* The industry has undertaken <u>feasibility</u> studies on impregnable <u>security</u> strategies.

Comparison of Adjectives

Let us examine this chart:

Positive (No Comparison)	Comparative (between two things)	Superlative (Compares more than two things)
Good	Better	Best
Mild	Milder	Mildest
Heavy	Heavier	Heaviest
Effective	More effective	Most effective
Beautiful	More beautiful	Most beautiful
Bad	Worse	Worst

It can be seen from the few examples above that not all adjectives have the same suffixes (or endings) attached to them in the comparative and superlative degrees. There are some irregular forms of adjectives and such irregularity manifests itself in their comparative and superlative degrees.

(v)   Adverbs

When we were studying the behaviour of adjectives, we discovered their modifying role.

He hit the <u>stupid</u> boy. "Stupid" modifies "boy". Whereas adjectives never modify verbs, adverbs do. Let us now recall what we studied under vocabulary development: that when we add the suffix <u>ly</u> to many adjectives, these objectives are converted into adverbs; slow, slowly; quiet, quietly; bold, boldly; right, rightly; calm, calmly; beautiful, beautifully; intelligent, intelligently; and fortunate, fortunately.

But not all adverbs have the same ending. We shall use the following sentences for discussion.

* He moves <u>quickly</u> (carelessly, quietly)

The adverbs tell us how the man moves.

* That was a <u>very</u> interesting film.

* That was <u>extremely</u> considerate of you.

* His wife has an <u>actually</u> pleasant appearance.

In these three examples, the adverbs (underlined) modify adjectives and add intensity to the quality of the adjectives. They discuss the degree or extent of interest, consideration and pleasantness.

* The footballer fell <u>heavily yesterday.</u> "heavily" answers the question "how"?, whereas "yesterday" answers the question "when?"

* The ball went <u>right</u> into the net.

In this case 'right' modifies the prepositional phrase "into the net," telling us the extent to which the ball went; "into the net" answers the question "where?"

* <u>Surprisingly</u> enough, the beloved wife left her husband.

In this case the adverb "surprisingly" is post modified by another adverb "enough".

* The way <u>ahead</u> to Heaven is rugged.
* My neighbour <u>upstairs</u> is too noisy

In the two sentences above, "ahead' and "upstairs" postmodify "way" and "neighbour" respectively and answer the question "where?"

* <u>Where</u> have you been?
* <u>When</u> do you think the plane will land?
* <u>How</u> has he been taking care of himself?

In the above three examples, each sentence begins with a question or interrogative adverb. The first inquiry is locational, the second is of time, while the third is an inquiry about the manner of doing something.

Exercise 6

1.	Discuss the functions of the underlined adverbs in the following sentences.
* <u>When</u> do you want the <u>extremely</u> poor man to die?
* The restless boy fell <u>heavily</u> from the second floor <u>yesterday.</u>
* The armed robber went <u>right</u> into the millionaire's bank.
* The academic journey <u>ahead</u> is for intelligent and hardworking students.

2.	Convert the following adjectives into adverbs and use them in sentences: indignant, fortunate, angry, wrong, and definite.

(vi) PRONOUNS

In English, pronouns function as noun substitutes. In other words, the position occupied by a noun or noun phrase or nominal group, can be occupied by a pronoun.

Types of Pronouns

<u>Personal:</u> e.g. I. you, he, she, it, we, and they.
I saw the lady yesterday.
I saw her yesterday.
She was very splendid to look at.

<u>Relative:</u>   e.g. who, whom, whose, which, that, where.
                    The boy does not know who stole his book.
                    He drove away the children whom he saw.

<u>Demonstrative:</u> this, that, these, those
                    These are mine. Those are yours. But in "These books
                    are yours." "these" is a demonstrative adjective.

<u>Interrogative:</u> who, which, what.
                    What was he talking about yesterday?
                    Who are the owners of Nigeria?

<u>Reflexive:</u> myself, yourself, himself, ourselves, themselves. They replace a
co-referential noun phrase in the sense that we can say: "Bassey annoyed
himself", instead of "Bassey annoyed Bassey."
                    No reasonable man will consider himself a God.

<u>Reciprocal:</u> each other. one another.
                    Okon and Mary admire each other/one another.

<u>Possessive:</u> her, his, your, their, my, yours, mine.
                    They gave <u>their</u> books (adjectival function).
                    They are <u>theirs</u> (possessive pronoun). I like <u>his new</u> shirt
                    (both premodify shirt). It is <u>his</u> (possessive pronoun).

This book is <u>mine</u> (possessive pronoun)
<u>That</u> is <u>yours</u> ("that" is a demonstrative, and "yours" is a possessive, pronoun).
Mary's
      } book
Her

The book is) Mary's
) Hers.

That book is <u>his</u> (possessive pronoun).

But my, your, his, their, are syntactically determiners as in the sentence:

My/your/his/their books are on the tables - Quirk and Greebaum

(1980:104).

<u>Universal:</u> e.g. each, all, every, everybody, everyone, everywhere.

           He quarrels with everybody/everyone he sees.

           <u>All</u> will be well.

Nouns can be modified by each, all, every as "<u>Every</u> man to himself" is the new policy. <u>All</u> fingers are not equal. <u>Each</u> woman kept her hand bag securely. The underlined pronouns perform the roles of adjectives: they modify nouns.

<u>Enumerative:</u> eg. one, two, three, etc; several, some. I had two guests, <u>one</u> ate bread, the <u>other</u>, cheese.

           Is this the <u>one</u>? with one referring back to something previously mentioned. The indefinite use of one means "people in general" as in the example: One cannot be sure of what will happen to Nigeria during the third Republic.

    Just as we have nouns in the subject and object positions in a structure, so also do we have pronouns in the subject and object positions. Take these examples:

* He shot <u>him</u> dead

* She loves <u>them</u>.

"He and She" are subjects, while "him" and them" are objects, after "shot" and "loves" respectively.

Exercise 7

1.   Identify the types of pronouns in the following passage. Give reasons for your answer:

I came to the school where his wife teaches Mathematics. I saw her and looked at her. She said she did not know me, but after introducing myself, she recollected that we had once met. There were two pens in her hand: one black, the other blue. When she bought them, she had mistaken them to be all black. Then I looked at mine, offered it to her and asked for hers. But she rejected the offer because mine was red, and she did not want to have a red pen.

(vii)   Conjunctions

The impact of this study will be really felt in the next topic: the sentence and types of sentences. Therefore, this discussion should be considered as preparing the grounds for a greater event. As will be discovered there, certain words link other words and/or sentences. These are conjunctions which are co-ordinating (or, and, but); subordinating (linking dependent to independent clauses, eg. if, when, before, while, unless, in order that, after, as much as and so forth); and those (usually referred to as conjunctive adverbs e.g. also, furthermore, therefore etc) that operate as introductory tags for coherence or unity within a text. This last type is treated in fair detail under chapter five which is on writing.

Co-ordinating conjunctions

We proceed now to examine the semantic implications of co-ordination. The intention is to help eliminate possible difficulty from minds of some of us who may not be sufficiently aware of the real implications of and, or and but in the structure of English. Greater details can be obtained from Quirk and Greenbaum.

AND

(a)   The event in the second clause is a consequence or result of the event in the first.

He saw the armed robbers and he ran to the police. It is the same thing as saying: He saw the armed robbers and he (therefore, as a result, so) ran to the police.

(b)   The event in the second clause closely follows the event in the first

- The nurse brought the syringe and (then) she administered an injection.

(c)   Contrast

- Okon is hardworking and (in contrast) Ekpenyong is lazy.

(d)   Comment

■ He hates his good parents and that is surprising

- He loves his enemies and that is in accordance with the Word of God.

(e)   Element of surprise in the second clause. In this case there is an overlap: "but" could replace "and"

- He read many relevant books and he failed the examinations.

- he left for his lectures in time and he was late.

(f)   First clause, a condition of the second.

- Give her a chance and she will cheat at the examination.

- Ignore the instructions and you will answer questions wrongly.

(g)   A second clause makes a point similar to the first.

- Every nation should have a defined territory and (similarly) other

nations should respect that nation's territorial integrity.

(h)   The second clause is a pure addition to the first.

- he has short legs and (also) he wears pair of shorts.

OR

(a) Usually "or" is exclusive expressing the idea that only one of the possibilities can be realised.

- "You can rest in your house, or you can go to the zoo, or you can rush to the beach".

Either...or

You can either rest in your house or go to the zoo or rush to the beach.

(b)   Sometimes "or" is understood as inclusive, allowing the realisation of a combination of alternatives, and we can explicitly include the third possibility by a third clause.

- "You can boil an egg, or you can make some cheese, or you can do both.

- You can study Mass communication, or you can study English, or you can study both for a combined honours degree. The writer can modify the number of words he uses by saying: "You can study English or Mass communication or both for a combined honours degree.

(c)   The alternative expressed by "or" may be a restatement or correction of what is said in the first conjoin (co-ordinated units are termed conjoins).

- "They are serious students, or at least they give the impression of being so.

-They are honest students, or at least they bear themselves as such.

(d) "Or" may imply a negative condition.

- "Give me that pen or I will shoot you."

BUT - implying contrast

(a)   The contrast may be because what is said in the second conjoin is unexpected in view of what is said in the first conjoin:

- He is poor but he considers himself blessed.
- He did not like examinations but he had to take them.
- He did not want their help but he had to accept it.

(b) The contrast may be a statement in affirmative terms of what has been said or implied negatively in the first conjoin.

- Good student do not patronize graveyards at night but concentrate seriously on their studies.

vii)   Prepositions

This is the final item in our introductory survey of parts of speech in English. All the items, in unison co-operate to give us a sentence acceptable to native speakers of the language, and meaning. On definition of prepositions. Whitehall (1960:56) tells us rightly that they are "words used to hook nouns, pronouns and word-groups onto preceding words, word-groups and sentences." It does not appear fruitful for us to wrestle with definitions. but rather to demonstrate how these items of grammar work in practice. Let us consider the following sentences:

.   I have lived in Lagos for eight years.

.   I went home during the dry season.

.   The cat sat on the chair.

.   My son goes to school twice a day.

. .   There is bad news waiting for you at home.

.   Tunde separated from his wife eight years ago.

.   We are expected to assemble for Men's Fellowship at 5.30 pm on Tuesday.

.   Debtors are expected to vacate their quarters by next Tuesday morning.

.   My shop is by thieves' den.

In the first sentence. for as a preposition denotes time, that is, the time he has been in Lagos. Time is also expressed by "during." "On", just

like "at, by, in," is an indicator of location. The preposition "to" in the fourth sentence, is of motion or direction and takes the accusative case or an object; <u>for</u> in the fifth sentence tells the listener that he is to benefit from bad news. "Ago, at" and "by" on the sixth, seventh and eighth sentences point to time. But the "by" of the last sentence has no relationship with time. It means the speaker's shop is near thieves' den.

What has come out of this is that the same preposition can denote more than one relationship, depending on the context in which it appears. So, the categorisation below is for convenience; the user of either of them needs to watch the context in which it is used as an aid to its interpretation of such a structure.

<u>Prepositions of Time</u>

at, by, from, of, through, after, around, before, during, towards, since, until, between, past, after.

<u>Of Location</u>

at, by, in, on, down, from, off, round, through, abroad, above, across, inside, throughout, underneath, near, past, without, in front of, on top of.

<u>Of Direction</u>

down, from, to (e.g. to school) in, across, into, near to, next to, in front of, up.

<u>Of Association, including Compound Prepositions</u>

for, with, of; according to, by way of, in accordance with, in addition to, in connection with, instead of, with respect to.

This list is hardly exhaustive. Students should read wide, and as they do so, they should ponder on the contribution to meaning, of the various prepositions they come across.

Exercise 8

1.   Construct sentences to demonstrate the various uses of the following prepositions: in, at, down, from, after, outside, and under. Give full explanations of the prepositional relationships and meanings of your sentences.

(b) THE SENTENCE

If a reader encounters an expression like "man dog", he finds that he cannot give the expression a precise interpretation. A lot of meanings are involved: Did the man bite, eat, or bark at, the dog? Or is it the man who is bitten by the dog? But when the expression or structure is altered to read "the man has bitten the dog", definite information is conveyed. What happens in this last case is that lexical items, what can be seen or perceived, come into contact with grammatical items, and the two in collaboration, limit free suggestion. In other words sentences come into being when lexical items/ nouns come into contact with appropriate grammatical items such as verbs, adjectives, auxiliaries and so forth, to limit free suggestion, and convey definite information or meaning.

Professor Harold Whitehall (1960:29-30) says that a "written sentence can be defined as a word-group or word with end punctuation intended to symbolise a final tone-pause pattern."

Osisanwo (1914:4) states that the concept of sentence is associated with a lot of controversy. He appears to be in line with what Whitehall has just said, when he states that the approach of defining the sentence in terms of punctuation marks and the size of the initial letter of the initial word whether capital or small, sees the sentence as "beginning with a capital letter and ending with a fullstop, an interrogative mark or a mark of exclamation". It is not the present writer's intention to further this debate. Whitehall's posture and the compromise reported by Osisanwo appear to be capable of being

adopted without loss of meaning to the concept. So, for our purpose here, a sentence is defined as a word or group of words involving both lexical and grammatical items in appropriate combination(s), beginning with a capital letter and ending with a fullstop, an interrogative mark or a mark of exclamation.

Sentence according to Structure

Certain structures constitute a sentence which we shall consider for our present purpose as the highest unit in grammar. A sentence can function within a text, but we shall not delve into this argument or discussion which lies outside our present course.

Let us consider a sentence as made up of clauses as its immediate constituents. The clauses are subdivided into main, or independent or alpha clauses. The terms are used interchangeably, and are represented in Systemic Linguistics as **á** ; while the subordinate clause or dependent clause or beta clause is represented by **ß.**

Since sentences in use in a language vary in terms of length and the wealth of information they çonvey, it is reasonable for us to categorise sentences according to their structures. For instance what we refer to as a simple sentence has its information conveyed in one independent clause. It is simple because no complexities are associated with it. Examples are : "This lecturer is too strict. Keep the books away from the children. The girl has good shoes". The verb is very important in our discussion of sentence/ clause structure generally.

In our communication, we may decide to convey more than one thought or information in one sentence which is made longer to accommodate the wealth of information. When sentences are linked together by a co-ordinator or co-ordinators, we refer to them as Compound Sentences. Take this example: "The girl ran after the boy //and// we watched her with

amusement". The sentence can be broken down as follows: "The girl ran after the boy". "We watched her with amusement". The two sentences are linked together by "and" to make the single sentence a compound one. Students are advised to note that a compound sentence can have more than two independent clauses linked together by more than one co-ordinator. Example: "The girl came to her father, knelt down before him and wept, but he ignored her and walked away". From the above compound sentence it is obvious that co-ordinators can be present in the sentence. This is a case of syndetic co-ordination, e.g, Speedily and ruthlessly he defeated his opponent. Asyndetic co-ordination is when the co-ordinators are absent, but could be supplied, e.g. Speedily, ruthlessly, he defeated his opponent.

Complex Sentence

At other times, one finds in just one sentence, a wealth of information contained in that sentence which involves one independent, plus one or more dependent, clauses. For instance, "If the Lecturer's questions are difficult/we shall abuse him". "We shall abuse him" is the main clause, which is itself a simple sentence. The condition for intending to abuse him is dependent on the main clause, that is, difficulty of his questions. Another example involving more than one subordinate clause is : "If the lecturer's questions are difficult// we shall stone him// because none of us wants to fail an examination". The two examples typify the complex sentence in English.

Compound-Complex Sentence

We have in this type of sentence, a wealth of information conveyed in a combination in one sentence, of at least two co-ordinated independent clauses and one, two or more dependent clauses. Examples:
(a) The lecturer came// opened his books// shut them again// and went away// because he was angry// since the students were dozing in class.

(b) The man saw the dog// smiled at it// offered meat to it// and carried it easily away// because of the dog's fascination for the food// which the man had.

Minor Sentences do not fall into any of the four types listed above. According to Osisanwo, they are answers to conversational questions such as:

> Who broke the glass?
>
> Ikechukwu! (Minor sentence)

He adds that "minor sentences are also exclamations as in; whao, yah, ooh".

Harold Whitehall (1960:36) recognises other classes of sentences which he says seldom appear in non-conversational writing:

> (a) Question Sentences:
>
> > Did they say that?
> > She said that?
> > Did you go to the theater?
>
> (b)   Equational Sentences:
>
> > The more, the merrier.
> > Like father, like son.
> > Fine young girl, that!
>
> (c)   Completive Sentences:
>
> > (Are you coming along?) Whenever you're ready.
> > (When shall we leave?) This afternoon.
>
> (d)   Exclamatory Sentences:
>
> > Go away!
>
> (e)   Reportage Sentences:
>
> "Tact. By the Police Force". Such were the words of the accused.

He adds that the subject-predicate sentence is however the sentence of written English as it is grammatical and its structure accounts for almost all the English grammar that is practically useful to a writer of the language. "Understand this structure, this grammar and you will have the grammatical dynamics of the language well within your grasp."

Sentence Types According to Function

(a)   A declarative sentence makes an ordinary statement or assertion, or denies a statement, e.g. Today's youths are lazy. They are not diligent.

(b)   An interrogative sentence asks a question e.g. What are your plans in life?

(c)   An imperative sentence gives a command, e.g. keep drugs out of the reach of children.

(d)   Exclamatory sentence means a sentence with great emphasis, such as "What a nuisance! Horrible experience!"

(c) CONCORD

There are conventions associated with the use of any language, such as the English language. In English, the structures of the various elements of a sentence are expected to agree; in other words, concord should be established between them. Concord is a problem that must be tackled by users of English. Many students, even after the course on concord write sentences in their assignments that do not reflect appreciable grasp of the items that are expected to agree.

A sentence is made up of various parts. These include the subject, the verb, complement and adjunct. The subject of a sentence determines concord. It should be in agreement with the verb. A singular subject should agree with a singular verb, while a plural subject should establish concord with a plural verb. The woman is; the women are; certainly not the women is! We intend to discuss in reasonable detail various agreements that are permitted in the structure of English.

Subject-Verb Concord

This involves the concord of number between subject and verb. Examples are as follows: Jesus is coming again. People without sin will be raptured at the Lord's next coming. Sinners are to remain on earth to be tortured by the Anti-Christ. Sentence one involves a singular subject in concord with a singular verb, while the rest are plural subjects in concord with plural verbs.

A plural subject, or two or more subjects in singular co-ordinated by "and", take a plural verb. Examples are: The man and his wife are lecturers in our Department. We shall read from verses one and two of the first chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. I hope to complete the writing of the first and second chapters of my project next week.

Students should note the above examples carefully. They are some of the most violated aspects of concord in English. Listen to speakers, even highly educated people, including preachers at pulpits, and the violations will stare at your face.

A clause in the position of subject counts as singular for the purpose of concord. Let's examine these two sentences: (a) How the girl spends her time after lectures is of no interest to me. (b) Her idleness is of no interest to me. The lengthy clause in(a) occupies the place of the subject, in the same way as the subject "her idleness" in sentence (b). Other examples : How University students successfully cheat at examinations is a miracle to me.

Some Singular Nouns with the -s of the plural Inflection

Even though such nouns end in -s, they are followed by singular verbs for the purposes of concord and so, of correct usages.

Examples of such words are Measles, billiards, Mathematics, Physics, e.g. Mathematics is a scare to most students in many Nigerian Universities today. Measles is a dangerous disease. Billiards is not popular in Nigeria.

<u>Some Plural Nouns</u> lack the inflection but are followed by plural verbs to establish concord. This is a case of irregular nouns which lack the plural suffixes that one finds in regular nouns like book, books, pen, pens, etc.

<u>Examples</u>
Cattle constitute a nuisance to the University of Calabar community.
Cattle are a nuisance to the University of Calabar community. The clergy are important in Nigeria. The good shepherd knows his sheep and his sheep know him.

As stated by Quirk and Greenbaum (1980:176)

"Plural words and phrases (including co-ordinate phrases...) count as singular if they are used as names, titles, quotations etc".

<u>Examples</u>: <u>Violence and its Deterrence</u> is among my most recent books (title).

<u>The Interpreters</u> is the most difficult novel that I have ever read (title).

<u>The Canterbury Tales</u> is important in the study of the development of the English Language (title).
Examples taken from Quirk and Greenbaum:
"The Cedars" has a huge garden (place)
"Senior citizens" means, in common parlance, people over sixty (quotation).

<u>Some Strains on Strict Application of Subject-Verb Concord</u>
We shall examine certain words which are followed by a singular or plural verb according to number. In other words, if we want our reader or listener to understand that a singular number is intended, the singular verb will follow such a noun, and if a plural number is involved, the same noun is followed by a plural verb for the purpose of concord. Examples are the words police and government. "The police are honest", that is the members and various sections that make up the police force. Again, when the

government is understood to be a single legal personality, it is treated as singular, establishing concord with a singular verb. We can say, for instance, that the Nigerian government is taking good care of its citizens. But when we understand government in the plural sense to mean the various agencies and the functionaries that make it up, we can say "The Nigerian government are taking good care of their citizens. The government have shown their insincerity to the idea of human rights". Quirk and Greenbaum use the example: "The government have broken all their promises".

Other examples of other collective nouns include committee, public, audience, council. The verb that goes with the words is singular if each of the words points to the group as an undivided or single entity. My committee is.... My committee are..... the latter pointing to the individual members that make up the group.

Agreement with the Nearest Noun or Pronoun

Let's examine the sentence: "A number of people take drugs these days". "A number" has "a" as the modifier of the head word "number". We can say "A number takes drugs these days", with "takes" agreeing with "number". But when we say "A number of people", agreement is sometimes established with the word which precedes the verb, in preference to the head word of the subject. One can on this basis, justifiably say "A number of people take drugs these days. A number of people are helplessly ill in the hospital".

Co-ordination with "And" and Concord

One of the functions of "and" is to add. It is said on this basis, to be playing the role of an additioning co-ordinator. If we say "Richard and Mary are good students", what we are saying is: Richard is a good student, Mary is a good student. The subjects Richard and Mary are co-ordinated. They

are more than one person. The sentence is a reduction of the two independent clauses. The verb in this case is in the plural as a case of non-oppositional co-ordination.

In this connection, as stated by Quirk and Greenbaum (p.177); "Conjoinings expressing a mutual relationship, even though they can indirectly be treated as reductions of clauses in this way, also take a plural verb". They cite examples to include "Your problem and mine are similar (your problem is similar to mine and mine is similar to yours). We can also have "What I accept and reject are no business of yours" in the sense of "What I accept is.... what I reject is....)

Good and bad taste are inculcated by example.

Where we may use a singular verb

At times, even though there is an additioning co-ordinator, a singular verb is used. This is when the parts thus co-ordinated represent a single entity. E.g. Garri and soup is good for me. That is, a combination of the two constitutes a good dish for me. Example of either..or; neither nor, are as follows: Either fish or meat is good for me. Neither hatred nor jealousy is a virtue.

In the following examples, the co-ordinated structures refer to the same thing:

(a)   The Ministry for the care of women and for the eradication of vices in the society was established at the instance of the President.

(b)   This statue which signifies the former greatness of Nigeria, and especially the wealth of the country was erected during the First Republic.

(c)   This temple of ugliness and memorial of victorian bad taste was erected at the Queen's express wish.

The meaning of the structure has a good role to play in the determination of concord. What impression is conveyed in the following sentence?: Akpan and the Chief Executive of the Magazine was/were at the

meeting. If Akpan was also the Chief Executive, then a singular verb is used. But if Akpan is a different person from the Chief Executive of the Magazine, then a plural verb is appropriate. So, whether a singular or plural verb is acceptable depends on the context.

(a) and (c) are glaring examples of the post-modification of the head words "ministry" and "temple" respectively, while (b) is a case of a relative clause.

More Than

More than	One person	has done	it
Modifier	H	Verb singular	Complement

"One person" operates as the head of a single noun phrase, and although more than one person is notionally plural, a singular verb is preferred. Under the same grammatical concord principle, a structure such as "More than a thousand inhabitants have done it" is acceptable.

Collective Pronouns such as everybody, everyone, somebody, each, nobody.

These take a singular verb at least in formal communication.

Examples: He called but nobody was willing to answer.

Everyone is tired of hearing him rant

Everyone is aware of the menace of armed robbers.

These sentences obey the rules of grammatical concord.

But the principle of proximity applies with singular nouns of kind and quantity, e.g A large group of people have expressed a wish to embrace civil rule in Nigeria in 1998.

Concord of Person

Students should be aware of interactions between lexical and grammatical items in any piece of writing especially in texts. Take this piece, for instance:

"Mary and Joseph came panting into my house early yesterday.

They were unable to explain the cause of their anxiety. But

a young man who came a little later told me to look closely at the pair, especially at their feet. I saw mud on their feet and guessed that they were pursued and had escaped through a muddy area." In the first sentence the verb "came" accords with the two nouns joined together by the additioning co-ordinator "and". "They" is a plural pronoun referring anaphorically to Mary and Joseph. Their is a possessive pronoun, meaning the feet of Mary and Joseph. In a passage that has texture, that is, that is structurally united, there are linguistic features present in it that bring about this unity.

Students should ensure that concord exists between the various linguistic features. There should, for instance, be concord of person as "they are here" i.e, third person; "I am here" - first person and so forth. "They" is a pronoun in the third person. An awareness of these relationships eases comprehension when reading.

Students should also be aware of introductory tags such as however, in any case, etc, which give coherence to a text. They should take note of such tags even though they do not form part of this lesson on Concord. More of this is mentioned under Reading, Comprehension and Summary(Chapter Three).

Further Examples of Either ..or; Neither...nor

Quirk and Greenbaum (1980:180) have this to say: "Following the principle of proximity, the last noun phrase of a co-ordinate subject (where the co-ordinator is or; either...or; or neither...nor) determines the person of the verb". They give examples as: Neither you, nor I, nor anyone else knows the answer. Either my wife or I am going. They observe that because many people find such sentences unacceptable, they often prefer to use the modal auxiliary which is invariable for person, such as, Either my wife or I will be going.   There appears to be nothing wrong at all with Either my wife or I

am going. But students have a choice between the two stylistic variants. In this regard it should be noted that it is quite grammatical to say:

"I Emmaunel Agbo, <u>am</u> warning you of the danger ahead". Do not say

"I Emmaunel Agbo, <u>is</u> warning you....." The first sentence, which is acceptable, has two components: I am Emmaunel Agbo, I am warning you of..." Concord is established with the pronoun "I", and not with Emmaunel Agbo, which is a noun phrase in apposition to the first person singular pronoun.

Exceptions in Subject-Verb Concord

Concord of subject and verb is quite straightforward. Random examples include: The girl is intelligent; Old men are not generally disposed to youthful frolic, etc.

We can say: What we need is positive results. They turned traitor (They became traitors). The answer to our problems is well-trained economists. Good manners are a rarity these days.

Note this structure: They were opened the book of life and the book of death.

This sentence demonstrates concord in a case where the subject "they" follows the predicator "were". The book of life and the book of death are joined together by "and" thereby establishing plurality, in concord with the verb "were". Another example is : Behind the tree area are two cats.

Modified or Separated Subjects

Writing under this topic, Wale Osisanwo (1994:47), notes that when a subject is modified, a writer may carelessly mistake the modifier for the part of a compound subject or may make the verb agree with the modifier rather than the subject. Hence a writer may carelessly write:

(a)   Funke, with his little sister, were cooking in the kitchen.

The more acceptable form should be:

(b)   Funke, with his little sister, was cooking in the kitchen. He states other examples of correct structures to include:-

(c)   Jane, as well as his brother, has promised to visit us.

(d)   The employer of all sorts of people, labourers, artisans, clerks, typists, executive officers, unhealthy staffers, pregnant women and restless youths, has to have a wide understanding of human nature.

If we should decide to say "have to have a wide understanding of human nature", we would succeed in making the verb to agree with the modifier(s) rather than the compound subject "employer".

A little more light is possible on this area. The basic structure of the English sentence, especially of written English is topic comment or subject and predicator; complement and adjunct are not obligatory. We can however talk of the subject, predicator; complement (SPC) or the 1,2,3 word order, and stress that if we can identify these basic structural elements, we can easily know which verb follows which noun, and so forth, and thereby find out whether concord between the various units of the sentence has been established. Let us go back to Osisanwo's last example. The topic - comment or the subject-predicate sentence is "The employer has to have". The complement is "a wide understanding". When we take out the key structure or sentence, other units then come in which are not essential to the determination of concord. "The employer" and "understanding" are post modified by "of all sorts of people....", and "of human nature" respectively.

It is hoped that the entire discussion under "Concord" will help students or readers to a reasonable degree, to be able to discover when basic or essential grammatical norms are adhered to or violated, and to guard against faulty presentations whether in speech or writing, in the English language.

(d) THE NEGATIVE EXPRESSION

Negation, at word/lexical and sentence levels, involves a rejection of something. At word/lexical level we note the use of negative prefixes.

- Un, as in "Unacceptable"
- il, as in "illogicality"
- im, as in "immoral, immaterial"
- ir, as in "irrationality"
- in, as in "indecision", and so forth.

At sentence level, we come into contact with the use of the negative particle "not", or the affixal contraction "n't" between the operator and predication. The positive sentence "The man searched the room" can be negated to read "The man did not search the room". In the negative version, "the man" is the subject, "did" is the operator, while "search" is the predication which is negated by "not". What is more important than the above linguistic terms is the fact that certain transformations take place in negation and reveal how the language works. Another example is the negative tag question. "He is unpleasant, isn't he?" "Unpleasant" is another way of saying "not pleasant"; this is followed by a negative tag question. The negative tag question is a fertile ground for faulty presentations in both spoken and written English, and so students should be sure of the way it works. To say, for instance: "He is unpleasant, isn't it?" is unacceptable. This is because the two pronouns "he" and "it" do not agree in the negative tag question.

Negative Expression for Emphasis

Negative determiners and pronouns are given emphasis, as by "at all: whatever": e.g. I have found nothing at all the matter with him. You have no excuse whatever". "Never" is repeated or combined with an intensifying phrase, such as "in (all) his/her life". Examples: "I will never, never, go there again. I have never in all my life seen such a crowd".

Seldom, Rarely

Certain words are negative in meaning but not in appearance. They include "rarely, seldom, scarcely, hardly, little" and few, in contrast to "a little, a few".

Example are: He seldom receives any help. I have spoken to hardly anyone today. Little did he know that his mother would collapse.

The negative expression is by far more involved than the elementary picture presented here. But students need, for the purposes of comprehension or understanding, to be aware that complications exist in this expression, especially at sentence level. Take this sentence, for instance: "He did not present five illogical arguments", meaning:-

(i)   He did present illogical arguments but they were not five.

(ii)   There were five illogical arguments but he did not present them.

(iii)   He presented five arguments, some of which were logical while others weren't.

In other words, the negative sentence is ambiguous. The context may help to reveal which of the meanings applies.

Exercise 9

A.   Classify the following sentences according to structure and also give detailed reasons for your classification.

1.   Ashely Montago, a famous English anthropologist, contends that women are superior to men.

2.   The lecturer rushed out of his residence at dawn. peered through the window, went to bed again, and his wife was amused by the behaviour, since she had never seen her husband behave in such a manner.

3.   Dull students are generally interested in violence.

4.   The more the merrier. Like father like son.

B.   Fill the blank spaces with the appropriate word(s) chosen from the pair of words in   parentheses.

1.   When I confronted the suspect, he denied that he _____ the money. (stole; did not steal)

2.   He comes frequently to this garden.
                (doesn't he; isn't it?)

3. We saw one man or ____ (another; the other)
4. Nobody ____ a tyrant (love; loves)

5. _____ realize the value of education today in our intellectually bankrupt
    nation. (few; a few)
6. ____ did he know that cult activities would cost him his life. (Little; a little).
    Give reasons for your choices in 5 and 6.
7. _____ one and two of the Book of Numbers will be cited in text Sunday's sermon. (chapter, chapters).
8. How the girl applies herself to her studies or roams about the streets at night ____ no concern of mine. (is; are)
9. Mathematics ____ ____ to most Nigerian students these days. (is; are/a scare; scares).
10. Cattle _____ a nuisance to the University of Calabar community. (is; are).
11. Linguistic stylistics and its use in criticism ____ my most interesting ____ so far. (is; are/critical production; critical productions).
12. Garri and soup ____ good for me. (is; are).
13. A number of infuriated Nigerians _____ (was; were) astonished by the desire of some soldiers to contest democratic elections while still in military service.
14. A Ministry for the sharing of money and for proving that theft is a virtue ____ to be established during the Third Republic. (is; are)
15. The Minister of Nigerian Agony and the Chairman of Illegal Wealth promotion ____ to preside at the next special Funds Meeting (is; are). He is expected to disclose the most recent strategy for massive fraud and flamboyant lifestyle in the country.

16. A number of people who attended the rally _____ not convinced of the leadership qualities of the politicians. (was; were).
17. Nigeria expects every man to do ____ duty (his; their).
18. Nobody really understands the power of the atomic fission bomb until _____ seen ____ exploded. (he; you/has; have/ it; them).
19. The coach was irritated that all the players did not yesterday. (practice; practise).
20. The President with his wife ____ here yesterday. (was; were).

CHAPTER THREE

MECHANICAL ACCURACY

The English language is not expected to be written or spoken arbitrarily. That is why users are expected to ensure the use of correct spellings, and the acceptable construction of sentences. A section - Concord - has been devoted to this latter aspect in Chapter Two.

Also, we need to keep to the convention of using capital letters at appropriate occasions in written communication. These occasions include:
- The beginning of every sentence.
- Acronyms such as BBC, FRCN, NATO, etc. Refer to Vocabulary Development in Chapter One...
- Names of places (Lagos, Enugu, London, etc.), and of persons (Charles, Christopher, etc); and
- Adjectives derived from proper nouns. Whether we choose to refer to them as proper or derived adjectives, the fact is that we begin writing them with capital letters. Examples are: Nigerian citizen; American athletes; British universities, etc.
- It is also commonly used for topics such as "Mechanical Accuracy" above.

We shall now devote reasonable space to the discussion of the punctuation mark.

The Use of the Punctuation
Introduction

I am highly indebted in this write-up to an English Language expert, Professor Harold Whitehall's presentation of this subject in his book: Structural Essentials of English (see details on works cited at the end of this paper). What is presented here is a simplified summary of the various issues

discussed by Professor Whitehall. It is however, capable of being a good companion to writers of research papers, such as term papers, theses or dissertations.

A writer, by punctuating a passage, tries to "symbolise by means of visual signs the patterns heard in speech" (Whitehall 1960:119). And because no two individuals have an identical system of pauses during speech, it is convenient to say that punctuation is an approximation to what takes place in oral presentation. Despite this slight shortcoming, it is obvious that punctuation has become so much a convention of the written medium that to ignore it is to reflect chaos in one's writing. Punctuation works in close collaboration with other features of grammar, which both the writer and reader need to understand. The various marks described below enhance both the readability and meaning of one's writing.

The Semi-colon (;)

It is the symbolic conjunction used to link subject-predicate groups that could otherwise occur in separate sentences, particularly if they are parallel in structure and in emphasis, e.g The girl ran after her brother; she was no doubt worried. My adversary carried a knife, a gun, and an axe; but I was convinced he would not be able to hurt me.

In conjunction with quotation marks, the semicolon is placed outside them, eg. I saw your mother's "Optimistic Musicians"; but I do not want to see them a second time.

The colon (:)

A symbolic conjunction used when emphasis is to be thrown forward upon the word group or word that follows it. Its function is that of anticipation.

Examples are:

(a)   It happened as I told you: the lad is mad.

(b)   Among his children are these: a promiscuous daughter and an irresponsible son.

(c)   Deuteronomy 19:16. That is, after mentioning the Book of Deuteronomy, one next expects the verse that may be referred to. Like the semi-colon it is always placed outside a final quotation mark: I found one characteristic in the "Optimistic Musicians" : pride.

The Dash (-)

It is used when the word group or word following it is considered to be subsidiary to, a reinforcement or an example of , or an unexpected addition to what precedes it and directing the reader's attention backward: Silly, irresponsible and unproductive - these are the qualities of his son he loves dearly. It is also conventionally used before the name of the author of a quotation:

- Thomas Hardy.

The Hyphen (-)

It is used to indicate that contiguous words form compounds:

a well -dressed paramount ruler.

a horrible-looking idiot.

It is used to indicate that the beginning of a word on one printed line is linked to the rest of the word on the text; to link the elements of compound numbers from twenty-one to thirty-nine; and to link the elements of fractions, such as three-quarters.

Separating Punctuation

(a) Period (.) or end of declarative utterance (including mild commands). It is often referred to as a fullstop and could signal the end of an equational sentence: The holier the better.

(b) The Question mark

The question mark makes the listener or reader to understand that an answer is needed: Where were you when I called yesterday? Why do some sinners, especially fraudulent people, live long?

A rising high tone, usual when a question does not contain an interrogative word or word order:

You came yesterday? It is always inserted before end quotation marks: He said; "Was this why he abandoned me?"

(c) The exclamation point (!) separates exclamatory sentences or exclamatory words from a following text. It symbolises various final tone-pause patterns based upon sharply rising or falling tone or a combination of these, or unexpectedly level tone used in speech when an utterance is surcharged with emotion: Death! Death at dawn! What a tragedy!

It is always inserted before end quotation marks that occur within a sentence, but it is placed outside quotation marks at the end of a sentence when the whole sentence is exclamatory:

"I am finished!" he yelled.

How horrible was their shout, "We are coming to kill you"!

The separating comma (,)

(a)   After each word or word groups in a series terminated by and, or; here it may symbolise the high rising tone pattern (h): I admire writers, broadcasters, doctors, and all humanitarian organisations.

(b)   Between subject-predicate word groups linked by the coupling conjunctions and, but, or, not, yet:

The man and his wife were well-dressed, yet nobody admired them.

(c)   After any movable modifier... thought of as displaced from a normal end-of-sentence position: In view of the hard times, only an insignificant minority contributed to the charity fund.

But: only an insignificant minority contributed to the charity fund in view of the hard times.

(d)   Before any other modifier or modifying word group thought of as out of its normal sentence position: We considered our pastor, poor but respectable.

Another example: Wealth, that officer has; probity, he lacks absolutely.

(e)   After an introductory word, word group, transitional adverb or vocative expression:

The task accomplished, we all departed peacefully.

She did not like the boy; nevertheless, she promised to marry him.

My son, I am convinced that you will be great in this world.

(f)   After a subject-predicate word group introducing a direct quotation.

He exclaimed, "I never knew that there were armed robbers in our midst"!

(g)   Between elements in sentences and word groups which might cause confusion if thought of as combined: a bright, blue hat, contrasted with, a bright blue hat.

(h)   Between items in dates, addresses, books and author references, etc: The present writer was born on November 5, 1940.

Mary Johnson, Cleveland, Ohio

Oliver Twist, by Charles Dickens

The comma is always inserted before end quotation marks: "I am tired of your incompetence," he roared.

The Enclosing Punctuation

Used to enclose elements outside the main structure of the sentence. They are listed below

Paired commas (,....,)

To enclose modifying word groups of the subject-predicate type which are not regarded as essential to the identification of the word which they modify. Such groups are normally called non-restrictive.

Non-restrictive:

The thief, who was shot in the stadium today, recently bought an aeroplane.

Restrictive:

This thief who was shot in the stadium today, recently bought an aeroplane. In the first example, the identification is supplied by "the";

the modifying group "who was shot in the stadium today" is thus properly enclosed in paired commas. In the second example, the modifying group is needed to identify "thief".

Paired dashes (-...-) enclose elements less closely related to the main thought of a sentence than those enclosed by paired commas but more closely related than those enclosed by parentheses: My friends- at that time mostly workers- took me to task for my social attitudes. They replace paired commas when the enclosed word group has heavy comma punctuations of its own: The artillery- devastating in its sound, fury, and effect-suddenly opened up on us.

Parentheses enclose material which is obviously outside the main scope of the sentence: These words (we might call them determiners) are important in English but of little importance in many other languages (I cannot trace their use in Mbembe in my Local Government Area).

They are used conventionally to enclose the figures numbering parts of a series, and, in legal contexts, to enclose figures expressing monetary value: The aims of this course are: (1) to inculcate communicative competence in students: (2) to enable the learners to see the difference between English grammar and the grammars of their local languages. The total cost of this building is one million naira (1,000,000).

Brackets

(a)   To insert interpolations in quotations:

As Eliot said, "The more tardy must sweat for it [poetry]."

(b)   To insert pronunciations written in the symbols of the International Phonetic Association [IPA];

The usual pronunciation of bite is [bait].

Quotation marks ("...") enclose direct quotations from speech: "You may fail," said our lecturer, "but do not hold me responsible for the failure." They may be used with caution to enclose references to specific words,

slang expressions, hackneyed expressions, familiar and well-known phrases: My life was one "if" after another.

They are used to enclose titles of poems: He was much impressed by the story "clay" in Joyce's <u>Dubliners</u>.

<u>Omission Punctuation</u>

Originally, the apostrophe (') indicated the omission of a letter no longer pronounced or deliberately suppressed in pronunciation . This is what it still indicates when used with the possessive singular forms of nouns, contracted forms of verb helpers (auxiliaries) and words with an omitted initial letter:

The Lord's Prayer (earlier the Lordes Prayer)

He's not coming, and he won't come.

Its conventional uses are as follows:

(a) It precedes S in the plurals of figures, signs, symbols, and letters:

My 8's are difficult to decipher

There were three x's in this quotation

I have difficulty in writing r's.

(b) It precedes s in plurals of words which have no normal plural forms: There are too many if's and but's about the matter.

(c) In a purely symbolic function corresponding to nothing actual in speech, it indicates possessive plurals of nouns: The directors' orders had to be carried out. The young girl's reactions were bewildering.

(d) It indicates the possessive singular forms of nouns already ending in s: Dr Caius' (or Caius's) words; Moses' directive for the children of Israel.

(e) It indicates the possessive singular forms of group names: Thomas, Manchester and Scott's <u>Rhetoric</u>; Chase and Sanborn's coffee.

(f) It indicates the omission of initial centuries in dates: the class of '38

The Omission Period or dot (.)

Indicates the omission of several letters, particularly when words are abbreviated: Ph.D. Mr. T. S. Eliot.

It is not used after contractions indicated by the apostrophe, after Roman numerals, after numbered ordinals, after nicknames, or after percent (for per centum); it is now often omitted after the abbreviated names of government apencies, labour organisations and the like:

> He'll go
> XXIV
> 5th, 6th, 7th
> Dick, Mick, and Ned
> a five percent bonus
> CIC
> FTC

When a sentence ends with an abbreviated word, one period punctuates both the abbreviation and the sentence: I was arguing with Dele Orisaway, Ph.D.

Triple periods or dots(...) indicate a more or less extensive omission of material at the beginning of, or within, a quoted passage; followed by a period (....) they indicate omission at the end: ...language is ... the thought itself, its confused cross currents as well as its clear-cut issues ... Triple periods are often used to indicate omissions deliberately left to the reader's imagination: He took her slowly in his arms ... from that moment she was his. In recent advertising practice, this use is greatly extended in order to create appropriate atmosphere: Fly to Britain ... Europe ... and beyond. Industries are discovering ... with a rush ... that the Genie of "opportunity" is at their beck and call.

The dash (-) as used in omission punctuation indicates the deliberate suppression of letters in a person's name in order to avoid positive statement of identification: My informant, a certain professor M-, vouches for the truth of this report.

EXERCISE 10

Punctuation

Punctuate the following passage meaningfully by rewriting it and inserting punctuation marks and capitals as appropriate.

The committees report did not surprise me the rascal has stolen the money he needs our punishment he needs the governments official disapproval of his action he needs the prison yard it is good for him when I first confronted him on the allegation he reacted almost violently I was personally threatened and afraid when he bellowed go away you people are fond of accusing me falsely god will reward you what would you expect from a thief he displays a lot of self confidence to protect his evil deeds he tries to discourage honest inquiry into his conduct by portraying himself as responsible with a sense of probity he even tries to use the word of God to protect his evil deeds i am happy that a good job has been done thank you mr chairman and members of your committee your job is a right step in the right direction what will obviously happen to this thief will teach every undesirable person in our midst that crime does not pay my friend kneel down and await police escort to your new home the detention room this action will be followed closely by police validation of this honourable committees report criminal proceeding will come next leading to inevitable imprisonment the final stage it is expected that your term will not be less than five years

SECTION II: COMPOSITION

CHAPTER FOUR

READING, COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY WRITING

1.1   Introduction

These three items in our study have been deliberately brought together because they are related. Nobody can successfully summarize a passage which he does not fully understand. And so, as a necessary prelude to our study of summary writing, we discuss in fair detail the various facilities in aid of comprehension, and ultimately, in aid of fruitful summary writing.

1.2   Comprehension

Under this heading, we discuss certain approaches and linguistic facilities that, when acquired, can aid the reader's comprehension. A reader for a serious purpose, say, research in a university setting, needs to read painstakingly with attention to details. Casual reading of a passage can hardly equip the student with the understanding he needs for his research project or for tackling a searching comprehension question at an examination. No student or candidate should adopt the attitude of a casual reader who glances through the pages of a newspaper, and at times feels satisfied with the information provided in the readlines or in the introductory sentences. This is not enough. He should read like a serious student with the approach of a serious researcher.

Candidates or students should realise that certain modes of expression are generally associated, in language use, with certain fields of learning, and that words could vary their meanings depending on the context or contexts. It is therefore not very useful to look up a word, study its dictionary meaning and assume that to be the meaning the word must have in all contexts. If a given passage is on law, for instance, the student or

candidate has to anticipate legal terms with their specialized meanings. In law, for instance, "you may not go" conveys the directive that you are not allowed to go, but in the layman's mode of communication, it means that the option is open for you to go or not to go.

In connection with variation of meaning according to context, let us examine the following words as examples: "voice, mood, subject" and "force". We can talk of active and passive voice in grammatical description. Voice has a different meaning in speech, as when we consider a broadcaster as not having a microphone voice, or when a presenter is advised to raise or lower his voice. A visitor may be advised not to visit a certain Chief Executive at the time that the latter's mood is bad, as distinguished from the use of this word in grammar where the mood is imperative, declarative or interrogative. We can talk of the subject of a discussion, and also say in a political context that the government of Nigeria has supplied its subjects with all their basic needs. We can also talk of the Nigeria Police Force, and also say that the thief took the girl's bag from her forcibly or by the application of force. We could go on exemplifying. The important thing to note is that readers should apply when reading, the meaning that the word has in a specific context, and assess its contribution to the development of the ideas in the passage before them.

The thesis statement

Readers need to be guided by the fact that a writer usually sets out to say or prove something. A statement related to what he has in mind to communicate is usually located in the introduction, and should be taken note of as a guide for intelligent reading and easy understanding of the writing. Readers should also observe how each paragraph is built up and how it supports the thesis statement. Any wild writing that ignores the thesis statement can be rightly considered as deviant, if not outright irrelevant, as a tool of communication.

Let us discuss this introductory paragraph to Mazi Ibuwa's unpublished research paper on "Lingua Franca and the future of English as a second Language in Nigeria:"

Introduction

Nigeria is a multilingual society, and a lingua franca is a common language used by such a society for the purpose of communication in both speech and writing. In this connection, Nigerians in search of a distinct linguistic identity, avidly express their views in favour of the development of one of the nation's numerous languages as the lingua franca in place of English. That is, many concerned Nigerians would want a Nigerian language to perform for this nation, all the functions expected of a native language, such as English does in England. If the problem of choice and recognition of any of our indigenous languages were an easy one, English would have long ceased to be a serious or plausible medium of communication in Nigeria. The problem that faces Nigerians, Linguists and non-Linguists, is how to reverse the present trend in which English is Nigeria's de facto lingua franca, in favour of an indigenous Nigerian language.

Discussion

Obviously, the major issue which occupies the writer is located in the introductory paragraph. The writing is on views towards making one of our many indigenous languages to perform for Nigeria, the role which English, our nation's de facto lingua franca, performs for England. A reader needs to be guided by the thesis statement which in this case is located towards the end of the introductory paragraph, that he may not be lost in the argument that follows.

Some writers make the first sentence of the introduction to contain the thesis statement. What the writer does depends on his style in written

communication. The important thing is that he should guide his reader early to realise what he has in mind to prove or communicate.

In the introductory paragraph the writer has defined lingua franca to further guide his reader. Definitions of concepts can be part of an introduction, but writers are advised to resort to them only where they are considered to be relevant to an understanding of the text.

The Body of the Essay

It is here that the writer discusses in detail what he has merely hinted at in the introduction. The body usually contains many paragraphs, each having a main idea that furthers the argument or discussion. As he does this, the writer should focus his mind on the thesis statement. The reader's mind can be alerted if he reads intelligently having in mind at all times, the writer's thesis statement which represents the task the latter has set for himself.

Writers usually have a topic sentence or the sentence that conveys the main idea, in each paragraph. It could appear at the beginning of the paragraph, followed by the development of this idea within the paragraph. On the other hand, the topic sentence could appear at the end of the paragraph as a summary of the ideas earlier stated. These issues are further discussed in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

The writer is at this point saying "I am done". But before he places his pen on the shelf he reminds his reader briefly of what he has done. In Journalistic writing, say news talks, news commentaries, news analysis etc, the writer states the implications of the speech or writing, as a kind of opinion guidance. He is saying that in view of the foregoing, this and that are the reasonable courses of action at our disposal. Other writers, depending on their subjects, may remind the reader of the main points discussed or pose

a question for the reader to think about in the context of the presentation. The conclusion, in whatever form, whether in one or more than one paragraph, is not expected to conflict with the thesis statement and its implications in the body of the writing.

In writing a composition, coherence should be maintained from the introduction to the conclusion. Tags such as, however, in any case, therefore, furthermore, besides, in other words, for this reason, that is, also, conversely, on the contrary, in conclusion, and so forth, are for the purpose of coherence, which, when properly manipulated in writing, do not only generate interest in a reader but enhance an understanding of the text or essay.

Punctuation

A serious reader of a passage should not lose sight of the semantic implications of punctuation marks. Their inappropriate use or lack of understanding of them can complicate the work of the reader and constitute an affront to his comprehension which can give rise to a summary based on some misunderstanding of aspects of the message. Punctuation has a lot of functions as discussed earlier under mechanical accuracy. Readers should examine carefully the various functions of various punctuation marks as aids to their understanding of written texts or essays.

Sentence Structure

As one of the aids to comprehension which is the instrument for effective summary writing, the candidate, or student or reader needs to arm himself with the nature of the English sentence. He should, with ease, be able to analyse a sentence into its component parts. Some of the difficulty often encountered in an effort to understand a written passage arises from the reader's inability to locate the independent clause within a complex or a

compound-complex sentence. The result is that he could mistake the dependent for the independent clause, and is at times confused about the subject that should agree with this or that verb. A common mistake is that writers or speakers at times struggle to make the verb associated with an independent clause to agree with the head word of a dependent clause. Let us examine the following sentence: The soldier who arrived here yesterday with his subordinates, such as cooks, guards, war front maidens, frightened sycophants and story-tellers is going to continue staying in the village despite the reluctance of the villagers to accommodate wartime military personnel. A reader may spend time wondering why "are" is not used in place of "is". The fact is that "The soldier is going to sleep in the village" is the main or independent clause. The noun phrase "the soldier" is singular, and the verb "is" agrees with it. The rest of the structure is an amplification, also bearing information of relevance to the understanding of the passage. Students or readers should also be familiar with the references of pronouns, especially those that function as cohesive devices for textual unity.

Summary Writing (Precis)

Admittedly, practical exposure through appropriate exercises is more useful than protracted theoretical lectures, in inculcating the skills of writing a summary or precis. That is why more attention is given to practice than theory below.

The fact needs to be stressed that nobody can successfully precise a passage or discourse that he or she does not clearly understand. So, the guides to comprehension released above should be considered as strikingly relevant to both understanding and summary. In fact, any facilities that a reader can assemble in aid of understanding should be considered as capable of contributing to his writing of a good summary.

Summary writing is a good testing ground for a student's or reader's ability to ensure economy in the use of words accurately in a terse

presentation of the information contained in a passage. Reproducing sentences in a given passage and planting them here and there are not healthy indications of one's ability to write a good summary. The student's summary should be in his/her own words as much as possible, as a pointer to his/her extent of understanding of the given passage. Fortunately for students, the summary question is usually one out of many questions based on the passage set to test their comprehension.

Practical Hints

Some writers find it difficult to use words economically and concentrate fully on the subject under discussion. Let us examine this my short passage:

My son's teacher is convinced that he is brilliant in class, but he cannot tell why the brilliance is never reflected in his performance at any examination. I decided to do something about it to try to save my darling son, my very dear son, indeed to my disturbed heart, from academic collapse and possible frustration in life. Every day, for one week, I called him and advised on the need to study hard and excel in school. As soon as I finished speaking, he would apologize and promise to work hard at his lessons. But each time, instead of embarking on the study of the day's work right away, he would go to sleep and wake up only when he knew that I had left the house. His mother, my beloved wife, reported at least twice to me that the boy used to escape to some amusement spots or roam the streets and creep back to the house at sleep time, when it would be too late for him to be expected to study. My concern for his future compelled me not to give up my research on why he invariably performed poorly at examinations. One day, when he was still out enjoying himself somewhere, I decided to examine his note-book. I discovered to my dismay and utter embarrassment that he very scarcely indeed took notes in class. Wrote he on one of his note-books:" My head has taken all in. I don't need

any more notes. So, I will write nothing on paper; all is brilliantly written in my head". I quietly returned the note-book. When he came in later in the night, I asked him whether he had been taking notes during lectures in class. He affirmed, but when I brought his note books to him and showed him what he wrote, he burst into tears. Not long ago, he abandoned school altogether, and is now found daily in public places such as cinema houses, amusement parks, prestigious hotels, and the like. My dear readers, my son whom I love very dearly, indeed, appears to be operating very dangerously. I am afraid that he will join an armed robbery group soon. I am now afraid whenever he returns late at night and knocks on the door. What do I do now? I need your advice to help me to continue in my efforts to help my son to live as an educated and responsible citizen, at least in my lifetime. I would not like him to follow the foot steps of his late sister who departed this sorry world under very unfortunate circumstances. Tears following her unfortunate death still linger in our eyes. (445 words)

Comments (words)

The passage contains by far more words than are necessary for it to be meaningful. In other words, it is possible to reduce it to few words without any significant loss of meaning. A reader may feel weary of emotion-charged expressions coming up time and time again: darling son, dear son, my beloved wife, and so forth. One notes repetitions such as the son's brilliance not reflected in his performance at examinations: and the son's invariable poor performance at examinations. The reader ponders on this story and decides to say in a headline, what it is all about. He soon discovers that it is about a disturbed father's concern for the unfortunate truancy of his dear son. One also discovers from the story that the father was not idle, but struggled to lead his son along the path to success. The concerned father acted; it is on the action that our attention is now focused.

Note that the above comments are mere preliminaries. The summary itself has not started. Before this is done, we need to state the main points of the story as our guide, since it will not be fruitful to copy sentences and expressions from the passage set for summary.

The following main points on the story are suggested:

(a)   Poor performance of the narrator, father's son at school.

(b)   Father did something about it. Advice: study hard. Yes.

But son would rather go and sleep. Later disappeared to public places till another sleep-time.

(c)   Examination of son's note-books. There found a written determination never to take notes. His brain could store everything. Lied that he took notes; was ashamed and disappeared to public resorts.

(d)   Father's fear for his son: could he be warming up for armed robbery? Wanted: advice to help him to lead his son to a responsible future as an educated man.

The Summary

The passage is about a good father's concern for the progress of his truant son. He was worried that despite his brilliance, the latter invariably performed below expectation at school, specifically at examinations. His father discovered that his darling son had taken to patronising public places at his studies' expense; also he was discovered not to take notes in class for no good reasons. The shame of the latter discovery drove him back to public resorts. The father's fear for his son's possible loss to the ignoble world propelled him to call on the public for advice towards leading his son to the desired future of a responsible, educated man. (110 words)

I have reduced the passage to less than one-quarter of the original length without reproducing sentences or expressions from the original text. No meaning has been lost.

Conclusion

It has to be stressed again that summary writing should not be treated as an academic matter that begins and ends with lectures on it. In the lecture room itself, in every discipline, you need a clear understanding of what the lecturer says. You also need ability to take down salient points at the lecture for amplification at your private study time. In your oral performance, you need the ability even to summarise your own utterances if you are not to waste your listener's time. In your answers to questions at examinations, your examiner expects you to write simply and meaningfully just what the questions demand.

That is why all the guidelines suggested need to be constantly nurtured. You also need sustained efforts to develop your word power as pointed out in the first chapter on Vocabulary Development.

Exercise 11

Assuming yourself to be the father of the son, you are to summarize the passage to at most one-third of its original length.

Exercise 12

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

Beauty

The creation of beauty is so central to poetry that some definitions of poetry equate it with beauty. For example, the American poet, Edgar Allan Poe, has said that poetry is "the rhythmical creation of beauty". And S. T. Coleridge has also said that "poetry has for its immediate object, pleasure, not truth; it is the antithesis of science." The full implication of this

statement is not that poetry sets out to give false information: what is meant is that it is not so much the truth about what poetry says as much as the beautiful expression and presentation of it which is the primary object of poetry. Indeed, many a time, the truth contained in what a poem says is neither significant nor pleasant in itself, yet the poem is successful because of the beauty of expression, movement and sound which it creates, which in turn may give the idea or experience an unexpected significance. For instance, what John Mbiti says about New York skyscrapers, or what J. P. Clark says about Ibadan may be truth, and it is not pleasant. But as we have seen, the images employed by these poets in the poem are very pleasing. And to create such images is part of the object of poetry.

Beauty in poetry can be classified into expressional beauty and musical beauty. The first is realised by means of the special use of language, particularly imagery, and the second is effected through sound and rhythm ... These three major means of suggestion or expression in poetry contribute directly to the realisation of the most important function of poetry, that is, the creation of beauty.

The immediate result of this beauty is of course pleasure or mental and sensual satisfaction. The mind and the senses are satisfied by beautiful images and revitalized language, beautiful sounds, and beautiful rhythm. In respect of rhythm, for example, Desmond Graham says that "the poet selects and arranges his words so that they can produce a pleasing flow of stressed and unstressed syllables. As we read we are aware of this beat and it gives us pleasure ...." It is the skillful use of these means of achieving the objects of poetry which make good poetry what it is, apart from the merit of what is being said.

We may illustrate this further by a simple analogy .... What is it that makes a person enjoy looking at a photograph of himself or his friend more than looking at his own real person or at his friend? Why, in other words, do we admire the photograph of somebody who is physically present with us more than we do the body of that person? We fully realised that the aim

of the photographer is not to tell us that this is the person; rather his aim is to create for us a beautiful image of that person - to give us an artistic version of the person. It is the beauty of this artistic version and not the real body of the person which gives us pleasure and makes us admire the photograph more than the person's body or the clothes he is wearing.

In the same way, the poet, though he is dealing with a real life experience or situation, is creating an artistic version of the experience or situation. And his ultimate purpose is to make the version as pleasing as possible. This is true of a painter who paints a beautiful picture of a house, or scenery we have always seen. The combination of colours in the picture gives the house or scenery a new life of beauty which may be unrecognised in actual life. Furthermore, the musician who creates a new tune and harmony with a familiar story has wrapped that old story with beauty. This beauty is the musician's objective, and it is the unique combination of music and story which gives the listener pleasure. Thus for all arts, and poetry is one of them, the creation of beauty, which gives pleasure, is the primary objective. (672 words)

By R. N. Egudu.

Questions
(1)   Summarise each paragraph in one sentence. You are greatly encouraged to use your own words as much as possible as evidence of your understanding of the passage.
(2)   Summarise the entire passage in one paragraph of not more than 200 words.
(3)   Comment on the writer's development of each paragraph.
(4)   In the passage there are some link words or expressions which bring coherence to it. Point them out, and the author's uses of them in ensuring a successful organization of thought and expression.
(5)   What can you say about the structure of the following sentence? "It is the skillful use of these means of achieving the object of poetry which

make good poetry what it is, apart from the merit of what is being said". If you consider anything wrong with it, give us the acceptable version.

Writing an Abstract

This is a kind of summary involving a research project. I have decided to mention it especially to help ambitious students who may decide any moment from now to present research papers at conferences. Abstracts are very often associated, not only with conference papers, but with theses or dissertations for higher degrees. Instead of protracted lectures on this matter, I have decided to reproduce below for discussion, the abstract attached to my Ph.D. thesis on "A Stylistic Analysis of Wole Soyinka's Poetry":

> In this thesis, eleven of Soyinka's poems were analyzed for their stylistic characteristics. These characteristics were isolated and considered in relation to plausible meanings and interpretations of the poems. The selections are from the poems published in 1959; Idanre and Other Poems (1967); and A Shuttle in the Crypt (1972). Other selections are "Ogun Abibiman" (1976), and three of the poems that make up "Mandela's Earth" (1988).
>
> The analytical framework embodies certain features of stylistic significance already identified by scholars, such as graphology, poetic types, lexical choices and syntax, exoteric/exophoric references, neologisms, and context of situation including the fictional situation.
>
> From the analysis, a number of stylistic characteristics have been elicited. Soyinka exhibits certain characteristics of language use which make most of his poems not to be easily understood and appropriately interpreted. Some of the problems of understanding are not invariably due to his

choices of lexical items, since some of these items appear simple, but are rather due to their modes of combination in poetic sentences. These sentences at times violate syntactic and collocational expectations and exhibit grammatical deviations. Such deviations however, do not impede understanding.

What make Soyinka's poetry rather distant from the ordinary or casual reader are the poet's frequent use of elliptical expressions, recourse to syntactic dislocations with the concomitant splashing of images here and there without adequate aid from syntax, neologisms, graphological deviations, in addition to references to various fields of learning. The poet appears to address his poetry to the audience with appreciable linguistic and intellectual sophistication.

Brief Remarks on The Abstract

The above abstract is a remume of a thesis that runs into a hundreds of pages. There is no conflict between the abstract and the rest of the thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE
WRITING

Introduction

Writing and the art of writing are very important especially for the student, and need to be treated with caution. Writing is a very familiar pre-occupation especially among students in institutions of learning. Its skills are demanded of students in almost all their courses, whether History, Science, the Social Sciences, Literature, and so forth. At examinations, a candidate with more facts may perform less effectively and score a lower mark than the other with less facts but who is by far more competent in the written development of the few ideas or facts that he has. The competence manifests itself in his knowledge of the working of English. A written presentation characterised by clumsy sentence formation, disagreements within the structures of sentences, unjustified display of high-sounding words, is likely to be less attractive to the reader than the one characterised by a simple, clear and coherent statement of ideas.

Spending too much time theorising on writing with little attention to practice exercises is likely to have limited effect on improving the writing skills of students. The saying is true that we learn to write by writing. As we write time and time again, we continually improve and start progressively to write with ease.

It should be realised that for effective writing, the writer should have the working of English appreciably at his disposal; he needs to have as his working instruments, various angles in his language study such as Vocabulary Development, Parts of Speech and System of Tenses, the acceptable structure of the English sentence including punctuation and other technical devices. There is need therefore for the constant revision of what has been done so far to make the job of the actual essay-writing easy. This explains in part, why writing, with special emphasis on the English essay, has been brought towards the end, after other related areas had been discussed.

(a) The Paragraph and its Development

An essay, as a house, has various parts that make up the structure. In a house are rooms, floors, toilets, the ceiling, the roof and so on. Similarly in an essay, there are certain unavoidable components such as the introduction, the body, the conclusion, including structural essentials as acceptable sentences, and adequate paragraphing. So, in discussing the paragraph, we are involved in explaining the process involved in a significant component of the writing architecture. Well-developed paragraphs are so central to the production of a good essay that no meaningful discussion of an essay can take place effectively without a working knowledge of paragraph development.

Before examining the topic further, let us examine the following paragraphs:

A

It is easy for a traveller to the Canaan City of Calabar to picture in recent times, long lines of vehicles queued in search of petroleum products. Petrol is an important commodity which is fast helping to create of Nigeria, a country of want and of inhabitants no longer interested in honesty and probity in the handling of public affairs. Some station owners and officials charged with petroleum distribution receive bribes without fear any more. Any car owner not able or unwilling to play the "fast game" is considered to be out of date. Such wait and wait and pray and pray that God should change the priorities of the functionaries connected with this essential duty. In civil or public service offices, the malaise of corruption also abounds. Many messagers, clerks and even people at the top expect "something" for a service which is their official duty. For a file to come out from its hiding place, the messenger very often needs a "coke" from the victim of his service. One commonly hears people complaining that they are inadequate to change the present deteriorating morals and immorality, not only in Calabar but in

all comers of Nigeria. Our educational institutions are not spared, as students can boast of money and other inducements to pass examinations without hardwork or any work at all. Panalties prescribed by law against examination offenders are hardly dreaded as wealthy parents of some examination cheats and their collaborators in the institutions are ever ready to frustrate honest inquiry into some cases of examination malpractices. One finds the struggle for the sharing of public money even in some churches which should be the average Nigerian's hope for ensuring godly living in the country. One would go on exemplifying. From one state capital to another, from one urban town to another, from village to village, pub to pub, the dismal picture of Nigeria stares at your face. Nigeria is increasingly becoming a country characterised not only by avoidable scarcity, but by various regrettable forms of indiscipline.

B

Journalism is regrettably no longer what it used to be in the pre-independent and post-independent Nigeria to at most part of the '70's. Praise-singing journalists now abound in Nigeria; they are easily discarded by their masters when their praise songs are considered to be no longer relevant. This is not to say that there are no fearless journalists in Nigeria, but they are in the minority, swallowed up by the host of sycophantic ones. The result is that we find silence or fragile euphemism on matters that would otherwise call for outright condemnation. Nigerian journalists need to recall the history of their profession in Nigeria and take up the challenge of being true watch-dogs of the society. Only then can they justify their existence as guards against the excesses of the judiciary, legislature and the executive. May such journalism return to Nigeria in the interest of all of us.

Comments

In a paragraph that is composed of many sentences, as in A and B above, the first sentence is indented. In journalistic writing, especially in

straightforward news reporting uninfluenced by comments, very often the journalist uses one-sentence paragraphs. This system of paragraphing is for readability.

There is a fundamental difference in the development of paragraphs A and B. In A, the topic sentence comes last to sum up the preceding discussion. But in B, the topic sentence comes first. In the two examples, the topic sentences are underlined. They are the controlling sentences in the paragraph; they control the discussion; they sum up the discussion. It can be discovered that their controlling power is justified by the discussions or statements that precede or follow them.

Another characteristic of the paragraph is in the differences in expository methods or patterns of developing ideas. Paragraph A uses the method of enumeration or exemplification until at the end, a final pronouncement is made. Note also the analogy involving the structure of a house and the structure of an essay with special reference to the paragraph. In paragraph B, the major emphasis is on cause and effects. The cause of inability of many Nigerian journalists to perform their expected role as watch-dogs of our society is fear for their jobs, followed by sycophantic output in the media. This is not in the interest of the wider society.

It has to be stressed here that development of paragraphs according to categories like cause and effects, enumeration, exemplification, classification and so on, needs to be cautiously treated. Students are encouraged not to be ignorant of such concepts, but they should not allow their writing to be fettered by them. It is possible to operate a combination of some of the methods and still develop a commendable paragraph.

Exercise 13

1. Discuss the qualities of a good paragraph in at most 10 sentences.
2. Develop a paragraph of not more than 150 words on any of the following topics:

(a)   Importance of University Education.

(b)   A Memorable Journey

(c)   A Description of your village.

(a) Food Scarcity in Urban areas in Nigeria.

(b) Writing the Full Essay

Introduction and the Thesis Statement

A reader expects to be told early, the writer's intention as a guide to an understanding of the rest of the essay or composition. This is the role of the introduction or the hook of the essay. Let us, for the present, confine an introduction to one paragraph. Located in this paragraph is a thesis statement, the major guiding statement on which the rest of the exposition depends. As has been pointed out time and time again, this controlling (thesis) statement could appear as the opening sentence or as the concluding sentence of the introduction. The essay writer should endeavour in the body of his writing not to conflict with his introduction, especially with the thesis statement. Like any other paragraph, the introductory paragraph should be well developed to function as an effective reading guide.

The Body

In the body of the essay, the issues raised in the introduction are systematically developed in detail. The body consists of a series of developed paragraphs which emphasise or develop the ideas merely hinted at, at the introduction.

Conclusion

In this aspect, the writer rounds off his written discussion. Journalists, especially writing on issues calling for argument and persuasion, invariably resolve the debate in the conclusion. They invariably ask themselves: "And so what?" They advocate at the conclusion, a line of action or approach in the background of the discussion right from the introduction. Other methods of conclusion include a summary of issues discussed, or even a rhetorical question, the answer to which could be deduced from the essay. The type of conclusion depends on what we are writing about and our method of writing it.

Some Hints:

Good writing is characterised, not only by the faultless arrangement of the paragraphs, but by the use of various types of structures acceptable to the native speaker of the language.

It should also be characterised by unity and coherence in the development of thought and expression, and by the absence of clumsy sentence structures, inappropriate choice of words and unjustified verbosity. There are link words or introductory tags for coherence such as, first, furthermore, first and foremost, also, in addition to, with reference (regard) to, that is, consequently, in other words, in conclusion, and so on. Students are advised to be conversant with as many of these facilities as possible and to be able to use them easily as appropriate.

Letter Writing

It has its convention or layout involving addresses, dates and methods of identifying the writer at the end. However, the requirements of

a good essay also apply to letter writing. In fact, letters treat aspects of writing common to other types of composition, such as Narration, Argumentation, Description, with supporting methods such as cause and effect, enumeration, exemplification, explanation and so forth, mentioned earlier. Letter writing is familiar to student who, with practice, will realise that the exercise is not expected to be carried out arbitrarily, but according to good writing standards.

(c) Major Types of Essays
Introduction

This is an aspect of the course that should be treated with caution because of its possible temptation of students to feel that what they only need is an accurate definition of every concept on the art of writing. In effect, what they need is a good idea of what Narration, Description, Argumentation and so forth, are all about, as a means to the end of writing essays properly. It is the practical skill that really counts. As students continue practising to write, they will discover that in an argumentative piece for instance, it is possible and indeed rewarding to bring in as appropriate, elements of narration, dialogue, quotation and even description. It is the artful handling of the subject and the effectiveness with which a message is delivered that count more than anything else. We shall now proceed to discuss Narration, Description and Argumentation.

(a)   Narration (Reporting)

It involves the telling of a story, real or imagined. It could be reflected in areas such as an incident in Malabo, a family crisis, a social gathering, etc. The narrator strives at a chronological development of events. However, to highten interest or suspense the narrator or writer describes events out of sequence; we shall not emphasize this aspect. Rather we shall be trying to

tell our stories in a chronological order, ensuring economy in the use of words, simplicity, unity and coherence.

The narrator should ensure that he is interested in what he is writing about; that the event has some influence on his life. He/She is strongly advised to narrow down his topic, because of the difficulty he/she is bound to encounter when writing on a very general topic. Even when minor events feature as part of the narrative, the narrator should endeavour to demonstrate that these events are relevant to the story. The opening should arrest the reader's interest while dialogue and some comments should feature here and there to erase monotony. In a narrative, there may be some description, dialogue and comments.

In Journalism, we recognize straightforward reporting and interpretative reporting; the latter which performs an opinion function explains or interprets issues not easily accessible on surface scrutiny of straightforward reported events. Let us examine this straightforward report:

The new chairmen of Local Government Councils in the State have been sworn in.

They were sworn in yesterday morning by the Military Administrator, Col Ahmed.

Speaking on the occasion, the State's Chief Executive advised the chairmen to be dedicated to their duties, in the interest of the grassroot development of the state.

The Administrator explained that balanced development carried to the grassroots would ensure contentment among the people and curb the drift of energetic young men and women from villages to towns in search of non-existent white-collar jobs.

Replying on behalf of the new chairmen, the chairman of XYZ Local Government Council told the Administrator that he and his colleagues would face the challenges of improving living conditions in their areas.

He called for improved funding to enable the Local Government Councils in the State to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

The occasion was watched by the Secretary to the Military Government, Mr. Y, traditional rulers, members of the State's Executive Council and the public.

(b) Description

If I look at a fast-moving car, I am not likely to be able to produce a very vivid written or verbal picture of it. This is because of the distance between the car and me which makes me incapable of figuring out its details effectively. For a good description or vivid picture of an object, say the result of a scientific experiment, the writer must be close to the object; must observe its details closely and be able to reproduce them verbally for the reader.

In an essay some description may be incidental; it may not form the main part of the writing. There could be an interplay of narration, including dialogue, description and argumentation, carefully blended to convey the message intended by the writer.

At times, description is the main or principal mode which is technical or affective. In technical description, the writer suppresses his personal feelings. The object, place or condition is very largely indeed, presented as it is. In the affective description, the writer is not merely painting a verbal picture of an object; he also reflects his personal feelings in the description. In this latter case, the writer widens his area of choice of what to present to the reader. At this point, he strives by his personal feeling to influence the feelings of his reader.

Whether technical or affective description, the writer's success depends very much on his accurate use of his senses. For affective or subjective description to succeed, the writer needs to combine accuracy of observation with plausible critical judgement.

(c)   **Argumentation**

Tune to a radio station and in Nigeria especially Radio Nigeria, and you will be treated to an argumentative piece christened news analysis or commentary. Harold Janis (1977:135) tells us that in an argumentative presentation, "the writer is no longer concerned only with sharing ideas with the reader - expository writing - he wants to control his reader's thoughts and actions." Janis is also of the view that although the distinction between argument and persuasion is not "uniformly observed", we will use argument to mean a rational means to reach a valid and convincing conclusion and persuasion to define writing that influences the reader through appeals to the emotions." The validity of the latter view is clearly obvious when we observe a vulnerable or irrational argument that is loaded with emotion directed at the voting public, very often the illiterate or semi-illiterate type, easily influenced by emotive language. For our purpose and due to the serious nature of our academic pre-occupation, we shall confine ourselves to arguing matters with heavy appeals to rationality that our conclusions may be justified anywhere within and outside university circles. How to realize this objective will be the subject of practical work.

To write fully on the characteristics of various essays can fill a voluminous text-book, and can detract from our main objective of exploring by practice how good essays or compositions are written. Students can use reference materials available and make short notes for themselves on, comparing and contrasting, defining, classifying, explaining, interpreting, etc. which feature at times imperceptibly in our essays. We shall continue to identify them as they appear in our essays involving narration, argument and persuasion, description and exposition. During the last examination, examiners in this course did not tie students to any particular mode of writing but gave them topics and watched how they handled them in organized writing.

(d) THREE SAMPLE ESSAYS FOR DISCUSSION

As part of our search for techniques for writing a good essay, the present writer has produced three essays for discussion on the lines stated at the conclusion of each essay.

ESSAY I
SOME PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction:

It is not always that academic qualifications of Nigerians in various fields of learning reflect comparable competence in their use of the English Language. This assertion can be validated by what one can discover in higher education in Nigeria which includes, not only Universities, but Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. There is the temptation to over-justify any inadequate linguistic competence in our educational institutions, including those of higher learning, on the fact that English is a second language in Nigeria. However, there are Nigerians like Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ayo Bamgbose, Olu Tomori and others too numerous to recall fully who display the competence that emanates from their commitments through serious language studies, to use the language effectively. Many Nigerians have proved by their performances that problems of the use of the language, involving writing, reading and speech mainly, are there, but that they can be greatly minimized by exposure to appropriate linguistic environments and commitment to use the language properly.

The Problems:

In most of our higher educational institutions today, the most easily available way of testing academic participants' linguistic competence involving

English is the written medium, in which very little research is indeed necessary for one to discover students' inadequate possession of skills. The composing process constitutes a staggering problem of students' communication irrespective of academic discipline. This problem can be traced to inadequate language teaching in many Senior Secondary Schools. Even after spending a semester in the University, during which they are exposed to concentrated levels of language study, many present-day undergraduates, even in Departments of English, are generally not significantly beyond their Senior Secondary School standards. Reproduced unedited below is an exercise on the qualities of a good paragraph presented to the present writer by an average first-year student of English after a little over a month of study in the first semester:

> A good paragraph is made up by a group of words that make up the major idea. That major idea are then developed by related ideas to help develop it. A good paragraph should also be able to create a mental picture especially so they are to constitute a descriptive essays. A paragraph must equally be able to express clear and independent ideas, and must also be condusive and coherent with its components.

The substandard nature of the above writing is obvious and points to the need for the laying of a good foundation for our sons and daughters heading for universities. As stated by Orisawayi, Senior Secondary Students and those of higher levels of education can improve their communicative competence by undertaking "vigorous training in writing skills" (31). It is a fact that high performances in the final post-primary examinations are not generally justified by the level of language skills the students bring to higher educational institutions, especially the universities. Most of these students enter the Composition or Use of English classrooms in tertiary institutions with exaggerated views of their abilities, and it may be too late before they

discover that their convictions about their linguistic abilities have been inaccurate. Examinations, especially involving the English Language at the Senior Secondary School level, need to be handled more carefully with a view to a high level of accurate assessment of students than appears to be the case at present, to modify their problems both in English and other fields of study in higher educational institutions, especially the universities.

Inadequate commitment to studies in English Language by some lecturers in tertiary institutions creates problems in that such instructors become progressively linguistically stale, with the grim possibility of such staleness being passed on to their students. Those Nigerians who still rely greatly on intuition as a major weapon in their English language use need to realise that to Nigerians English is a second language; and that even among first English Language speakers(L1) with a very high degree of competence in both lexis and structure and automatic production from the beginning of their lives, intuition is not relied upon unduly heavily. If Englishmen see the need to constantly study the grammar and other features of their language, Nigerians would be very willing to constantly refresh their thinking on how the English language works before confronting their students with the ingredients of effective communication. To do otherwise would amount to efforts to impart knowledge one does not possess and in the process complicate the English Language problems that are daily weighing down students. Undoubtedly, there is the need for more and more studies in language by both lecturers and students in our institutions of higher learning.

Not only the writer, but also the reader, needs awareness of the composing process as this creates expectation in him, and in fact, speeds up his understanding as he reads. Elsewhere (Awubi, 1998) I have stated: "readers need to be guided by the fact that a writer usually sets out to say or prove something" (60); and most writers do not significantly depart from the basic writing formalities: introduction and the thesis statement, body with well-developed paragraphs and their topic sentences; and the conclusion. The reader also needs to expect the writer's conversance with

the structures of English sentences and how the paragraphs, along with the conclusion, integratively bring about meaning or interpretation. The present writer has discovered that students' problems in reading texts speedily with understanding arise from their inadequate awareness of the nature and working of the English language. Protracted academic lectures on methods of reading need to be reinforced with students' deliberate exposure to areas like vocabulary development, parts of speech, concord features and mechanical accuracy. Adequate knowledge of elements such as these and related linguistic features can create confidence in the reader and enable him to read speedily and with appreciable understanding.

Another problem in the use of English in Nigeria in all sectors including higher educational institutions is phonological arising from the fact that for Nigerians the phonological features of their first languages precede those of the English language. This is why interferences from Nigerian languages are legion in their use of English whether in the primary or secondary school or in institutions of higher learning. In this connection, Nigerians freely say /dis/ instead of /ðis/ (this); /tiŋ/ instead of / iŋ/ (thing) and so forth, because of the absence of certain linguistic features such as the voiced and voiceless dental fricatives in Nigerian Languages. It is very possible indeed for a listener to know through language interference, whether a user of English is from the Northern, Eastern or Western parts of the country. It is this inevitable phonological problem that militates against Nigeria's efforts to evolve a spoken standard of English for the country. What Nigerians, in and outside educational institutions can do is to make conscious efforts to be close in their utterances to plausibly established standards, as those of Britain and America without making themselves foreigners. The aim should be to make their utterances to command a high degree of international intelligibility. Efforts in this direction are yielding fruitful results in electronic broadcasting in the country.

In the midst of problems confronting English language use in Nigeria, one regrettably encounters discouraging remarks from some high academics

in our higher education tending to dull enthusiasm in English studies in the country. Essien in his "Case Against English", calls on Nigerian nationalists to fight for the replacement of English "just as English itself replaced Latin in the interest of the English people" (75). The fact is that the tribal linguistic tussles which have surrounded efforts to choose a Nigerian language to replace English were unknown to Richard Mulcaster's England which organised a successful linguistic battle against the continued dominance of Latin in that country. None of the large number of Nigerian Languages will be allowed by Nigerians in unison to replace English. Another academic, Fafunwa, feels that English is the cause of Nigeria's underdevelopment since we teach agriculture in English "while our farmers farm in Yoruba, Hausa... etc" (5). One wonders how teaching agriculture in our local languages can create greater agricultural awareness in Nigerian farmers and increase agricultural productivity. Our farmers do not need intellectual theorising on agriculture, no matter the type of language chosen for instruction. Space is inadequate for us to fully examine the assertions of these learned influential men of higher education. One only hopes that utterances such as these will not continue to emerge to distract our attention in our pursuit of studies of a language which has come to stay as the official language of our country, the problems associated with its use notwithstanding.

Conclusion:

English is a second language which is a permanent heritage in Nigeria. Nigerians in the nation's institutions of higher learning should realise that our people look up to them for models in the use of this language fortunately inherited from colonialism. No living person is above learning; nobody in our higher educational institutions in whatever discipline should consider himself to be above further development of his English language skills in both writing, reading and speech. Instructors in English in our institutions of higher learning should escape staleness by constantly refreshing their minds

on how the language works in various fields of discourse, and passing the appropriate messages to their students. The plausible degree of accuracy concomitant on the sense of commitment with which the language is treated in our higher educational institutions can encourage a very wide circle of Nigerians to face the challenge of how to communicate in English with greater and greater confidence and accuracy.

Topics For Discussion.

1. The thesis statement is located somewhere in the introduction. Write out this thesis statement.

2. Does this statement have any controlling power over the succeeding paragraphs? Give detailed reasons for your answer.

3. How coherent and cohesive is the essay? Point out and discuss the various devices used to give unity to the text.

4. Assess the contribution of each paragraph towards achieving the writer's objective.

5. Comment on choice of words and sentence structure, and how these have contributed to the achievement of the writer's objective.

ESSAY II

Reproduced (unedited) below is an article published in 1985 in The Dawn, a magazine of the Cross River State wing of the Nigeria Union of Journalists. Read it carefully for a discussion that follows.

NIGERIA'S SYMBOLS OF PATRIOTISM

The 26th of July this year witnessed two memorable events especially of relevance to Nigerian Journalists. These were the opening of the National Executive Council meeting of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, and the launching of the Union's Magazine called THE DAWN.

The meeting which was opened by Colonel Dan P. Archibong was an occasion which brought me face to face with interesting thinking from a member of the Nigerian public concerning the outward or ceremonial manifestations of patriotism in the ongoing WAI crusade.

Colonel Archibong came in quite in time. This was an honour for the occasion. The national anthem was played. But to my surprise, a gentleman at a corner a little away from me did not stand at attention as is the usual practice, as everybody else did. I did not want to raise the matter with him immediately in order that I might not make a noise while the various speeches of the opening ceremony were being delivered.

At the close of the occasion which, of course, excluded the launching of THE DAWN by the Colonel, the national anthem was played again. The same gentleman stood at ease and apparently did not express any delight at what was happening.

I called him out for a little dialogue. When asked why he treated the national anthem with so much unconcern, he said he did not know what it was all about. I was later to discover that this was not the whole truth.

However, I thought I would be performing a patriotic duty by explaining to him the message of the nation's symbols of patriotism. I started with the coat of arms. He was told that it is our national identity and that it has been so since we gained independence from Britain in 1960.

The black shield represents the good earth of Nigeria; there is the grooved cactus beneath which is the mineral wealth of the nation. The white sheet wavy band represents Rivers Niger and Benue, while the two white chargers are symbols of dignity.

Embodied in the shield are the national colours of green, white and green. These are the colours of the national flag which can be seen throughout the federation.

I continued by telling him that the flag shows that we are standing on a common ground. It connotes peace and agricultural productivity. The eagle is a symbol of strength while the motto of Unity, Faith, Peace and Progress points to the aspirations of the nation. At this point he reminded me that the Rivers Benue and Niger form a confluence at the heart of the nation as the natural symbol of unity.

I was slightly shocked. Therefore, before I waded into the national anthem, I was sure that this gentleman, who preferred to be referred to as Mr. X, might not after all be ignorant of the need for patriotism in our country today, and what the symbols to this end mean.

A sudden relief came to me when he decided to lecture me on the national anthem which generated the entire discussion. According to him, there is nothing wrong with a well-worded national anthem which he understood very well but would never give himself the trouble of reciting. He stressed that the anthem is a call to loyalty to the nation, a call on God to guide our leaders correctly and help our youths to build a nation where peace and justice reign.

At the close of this brilliant performance, I asked Mr. X to tell me why with all his wealth of knowledge of the ingredients of patriotism he did not consider it fit to be attentive when the national anthem was being played.

"Why should I"?, he snapped. I thought I should not interrupt him and so he continued: "We have been singing the national anthem and hoisting our flag since independence in 1960. You are aware that despite the brilliance of our national symbols, this country is still struggling for a sense of direction.

Politics is still primitve. A regime is good when it is still in power, but becomes dirty as soon as it is overthrown. Some praise-singing journalists in sycophatic media houses turn adversaries over-night as soon as their masters are overthrown and their unpatriotic acts are brought to light.

We talk of a reflection of the strength of the nation in the coat of arms, unity for prosperity and peace in the flag; and a promise of faithfulness, loyalty and honesty in the national pledge. But bare knowledge of these or their rehearsal does not, per se, make a patriotic Nigerian. Outward patriotism? For goodness' sake, count me out", Mr. X concluded.

The gentleman's oratory was so thrilling and his knowledge so profound that I considered myself his intellectual inferior when it came to theorising on patriotism. Mr X further explained that even though he avoided these outward shows, he was not an unpatriotic Nigerian. He believed that the outward show should be subordinate to the inward patriotism which should be translated into action daily to the good of the nation.

I reminded him that not everybody who stood at attention during the national anthem or saluted the flag is a hypocrite. Few of them are undoubtedly patriotic.

He saw my point of view. Promising to join henceforth the ceremony of being attentive whenever the national anthem is played, Mr X advised Nigerians to examine their consciences and give the inner patriotism or conviction to lead the nation to greatness and pride greater emphasis. Mr. X regretted almost to a point of tears that too many Nigerians are academic or hypocritical patriots. I could not help agreeing with him. I gave him a hearty handshake and we parted in peace. "This is the person Nigeria needs", I said to myself.

Points for Discussion

1. Comment on the narrative technique of the essay.
2. Where is the thesis statement located?
   With what device has the writer brought it into being?
3. What is the dominant form of the essay? Give reasons for your answer.
4. The writer combines forms - narrative, description, dialogue,

argument and persuasion, and so forth. Assess how they in unison help the writer to deliver the message.

5.   Do you consider the essay as a successful presentation? Give reasons for your answer.

If you have anything to say against the composing technique, be free to say it, for further discussion.

ESSAY III

The essay that appears below is drawn from a commentary written on October 22, 1982. It was broadcast on Radio Nigeria, Enugu - short wave - after the 3.45pm zonal news broadcast.

The presentation of the commentary here as Essay III is not intended to cast aspersion in retrospect on the administrative style of Chief Jim Nwobodo, in his relationship with a high officer of the Bench in the then Anambra State. This writer has great respect for that former Governor with those political party - NPP - he was openly associated as an aspirant for the House of Representatives. The real relevance of the essay now is to demonstrate the composing process to the benefit of students especially in higher educational institutions.

THE JUDICIARY AND GOVERNOR NWOBODO

It is not the details of the case against the government at that time that were and are of serious interest, but the then Governor's reference to the trial judge as stupid. Of great concern for the profession of journalism, especially print journalism, was the nature of the report that featured in the state government's newspaper, the Daily Star, on the abuse with the then Editor's apparent insensitivity to the possibility of valid contempt proceedings against him.

It may be noted that the Judiciary is a very important arm of government, especially under a presidential system such as is currently in practice in the Second Republic. No citizen of Nigeria, both the ruler and the ruled, can validly challenge the validity of this observation. The reason which is no doubt obvious is robed in the prosaic expression that the Judiciary is the last hope of the common man. The Judiciary stands as an umpire to ensure that the excesses of a powerful Executive and Legislature are not allowed to cripple the fundamental rights of citizens. It was precisely for this reason that the authors of the Nigerian Constitution guaranteed the right of every citizen to seek legal redress. Any contract that calls on parties never to resort to the legal process for whatever reason, is null and void.

But the courts cannot function effectively and enjoy public confidence if law officers are allowed to be vilified by members of either the Executive or the Legislature. It was for this reason that the Nigerian public watched breathlessly for the outcome of Governor Nwobodo's reference to a judge as stupid. By no stretch of the imagination can a stupid judge consider himself in a position to interpret fundamental human rights and ensure justice in the society. Governor Nwobodo's thinking cannot be considered to be capable of enhancing the status of the judge as a representative of the Bench, and the cause of legality in Nigeria. Of greater surprise is the fact that the Editor of the Daily Star did not see the need to exercise editorial discretion through diplomatic presentation and render the Governor's statement less offensive.

And so while passing judgement on the contempt charge against the Editor last Wednesday, the Anambra State Chief Judge and victim of the abuse, Mr. Justice Emmanuel Araka, advised that the respect for the integrity of the courts must be upheld. This, according to the learned judge, was not for the personal aggrandisement of the judge, but for the benefit of the masses, in that such a state of affairs would ensure the peace and stability of the nation.

He called into question, the professionalism that went into the editing of the abusive story, but cautioned and discharged the Editor on the grounds

that he did not intend to disrespect the court. The inescapable implication in this statement is that either the Editor edited in professional ignorance or was under duress to satisfy his pay masters. Either should not be the case.

However, more important for the enhancement of the image of the Judiciary is the need for those in positions of authority to show the lead. According to Justice Araka, it was unfortunate that because of the immunity conferred on the Governor by his position, he could not be brought to the court, but warned that any future occurrence of this sort by the newspaper would be severely dealt with.

Fortunately for Nigeria, there is no consensus among all top executives to reduce the image of the Judiciary and its personnel. It may be recalled, for instance, that the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Shehu Shagari himself has often stressed the need for his countrymen to respect the role of judges and the cause of justice. In this regard, when the nation was tearing itself apart over the nullified Revenue Allocation Act, President Shagari stated that the nullification was a victory for the nation. This, according to him, was because the Judiciary was justifying its existence for the smooth operation of the democratic system.

All Nigerians should support President Shagari in his efforts to promote the image of judicial officers. Such support is very much expected from his state counterparts - the Governors. In this regard, Chief Executives of all the states of the Federation need, in future, to be guarded in their utterances concerning those responsible for promoting the cause of justice. Even when such executives are not satisfied with a court's judgement, they should resort to the plausible option: to appeal against it rather than rant against and abuse such officers, with the possibility of support from some sycophantic mass media organizations.

Topics for Discussion
1. What major form dominates this essay?
2. What role does narration play in the essay?

3.   How cohesive and coherent is the text? Discuss fully drawing attention to the relevance of introductory tags or link words.

4.   How effective is the presentation? If you are persuaded, say how and why.

5.   Go back to the location of the thesis statement. How far has it helped to give unity to the essay, that is, how far have the various paragraphs been guided by it?

Exercise 14

1.   What do you consider to be the qualities of a Good Essay? Discuss in at most 200 words.

2.   Write a complete Essay on any of the following topics:
      (a)   Problems of Present-day Students
      (b)   Why I want a University Degree
      (c)   A Memorable Traditional Marriage

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION: TERM PAPER AND GRADUATING ESSAY

Introduction

In Universities, Research Institutes and, in fact, the society at large, quest for knowledge involving the need to break new grounds in various areas of human endeavour, increase intellectual challenges or provide more and more efficient services, propel human beings to find out about things. Finding out and research are very closely synonymous since both give practical expression to curiosity about various issues and circumstances, and as both involve setting the appropriate tools in motion for the attention of the public towards improving the existing state of affairs, including contribution to learning.

That is to say that research is not effective when the findings end up only on the shelves of the researcher. The researcher knows what he has discovered, but the general public would like to share that knowledge with him. His research findings may be harnessed by the consuming public in, say industrial and mercantile establishments for the improvement of services, including the widening of knowledge in a given field. It is because of the importance of research that in institutions of learning, especially of higher learning, research grants are easily made available to the appropriate persons to investigate various areas of human interest for the attention of man.

(A) The Term Paper

Research is at the centre of the writing of term papers, theses and dissertations in Universities. The term paper is a first-year undergraduate research paper; conversance with research for it and presentation techniques

are expected from students by academic departments. In the Use of English course for first-year students in the University of Calabar, for instance, the production of term papers is the responsibility of students, with the close guidance of the lecturer. The students are expected not only to carry out their research along stated guidelines, but present good reports or written projects that demonstrate a good degree of originality in thought or evaluation of available research data. This work is compulsory for all; any student who ignores it takes an unjustified risk.

Approach
(a)   The Topic

Some students in my Use of English class recently wanted to know what topics they were to choose for their term papers. The answer which I gave, and which I here consider to be still valid, is that every subject or topic that engages the attention of the student as a researcher can be considered valid. All that he or she is expected to do is to discover new facts upon which to reflect to arrive at new ideas for the benefit of man; to advance the frontiers of learning (as stated earlier) and give constructive directions to the society. A student of Economics should therefore not assume that his choice of topic must be concerned with that discipline alone. Topics chosen can range from local issues to state, national and international affairs. Nothing should restrain a student of Economics from researching on a legal matter, and vice versa, for instance. Even issues of public interest reported in the mass media can form topics of research. However, students in focusing their research on mass media reports, should be sure of the accuracy of the reports before deciding to base their research on them.

(b)   Advice on Choice

Students are advised to choose topics that interest them; that they will also be able to work on and complete within the given period, such as

the second semester of an academic calendar. A topic like: "Public Reactions to Federal Government's Acquisition of 60 percent shares in the Daily Times: A Case Study of Lagos," is not likely to be completed in one semester or an academic year, even by fulltime students of Mass Communication in a University. According to Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook (1980:2): "Don't make it general. Let it be specific." That is, they should narrow their topics. A group in the 1997/98 academic year presented to this writer the topic: "Managing the Nigerian Economy in the Fourth Republic." This topic was considered too wide and capable of creating a comfortable climate for wide speculation: what I referred to as possible armchair writing without perceptible research justification. After some dialogue with the students, we accepted the topic: "The Effects of Industrialisation in the Economic Development of Nigeria." This topic can be further pruned down to focus on the development of the researcher's state of origin or even a local government area.

Students are also advised to assess the depth of research required on the topic with a view to modifying their ambition if necessary, to avoid plunging themselves in an academic bottomless pit due to unavailability of essential facts. They should revise the types of essays discussed earlier, involving Describing, Defining, Reporting, Contrasting, Classifying, Explaining, Arguing a point of view, and Interpreting. These and more task areas may influence choice of topic.

The researcher should realise that some work has been done by others in his chosen area. He should demonstrate an awareness of the existence of such works and decide whether he has anything to add to it, to convince his reader that his present opinions are based on hitherto unknown facts now available to him.

From the foregoing, one sees clearly why plagiarism is a dreaded disease that must be avoided by the scholar; and in institutions of higher learning, lecturers should downgrade drastically, students who are caught

engaged in this practice. The academic theft - plagiarism - is a great discomfort for the original possessor and publisher of the facts and opinions, and a waste of time for the academic or consumer who has read the same facts and opinions from an earlier source. A good researcher should opt for his vocation as a lone traveller along the narrow path to the scholarship heaven. His research tools, sources, and findings should constitute his nourishment so that he moves aright and does not totter on his way to that academic heavenly bliss.

(c)   Research Focus – Hypothesis

It is good even for researchers at the elementary level of the term paper to realise that their work needs a sense of direction or focus. Their minds should be directed at some finding. Such focus has the type of controlling power that a thesis statement has over an entire essay or composition. This research controller needs to come early so that the researcher does not engage in a wild gathering of facts to no end. In this regard, Sheridan Baker makes the following valid observation:

> If you have a thesis, you will learn - and then overcome - the temptation of collecting only the supporting evidence and ignoring the adverse facts and whispers of conscience. If further facts and good arguments persuade you to the other side, so much the better. You will be the stronger for it (115).

In this connection, the present writer recalls that he was in 1976, a member of a research team involved in a research project as part of the requirements for the Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism. It was carried out under the topic: "Public Reactions to Federal Government's Acquisition of 60 per cent shares in the <u>Daily Times</u>: A Case Study of Lagos." The hypothesis adopted was: "That the majority of the people of Lagos are favourably disposed to the acquisition, by the Federal Government, of 60

per cent shares in the <u>Daily Times</u>, Nigeria Limited, Lagos, cannot be gainsaid." This proposition was rejected by research evidence, which was that the people of Lagos were not favourably disposed to the acquisition of the shares. We stated thus regarding the newspaper's policy:

> The Daily Times' stated policy is that of independence -
> and it had lived true to it when it was in private hands. So,
> that policy is a vital factor of its life. It has conferred prestige
> and honour to the paper and has brought other benefits.
> And since investigation has shown that the policy has been
> curbed, or stands in danger of being whittled, the Federal
> Government's action has posed grave doubts to the life of
> the paper. If, therefore, the <u>Daily Times</u> has maintained or
> increased its sales during this time, it is not certain if it is
> succeeding to do so in Lagos (48).

The rejection of the acquisition was so strong among the people of Lagos that some respondents even pointed out specific days when the Editorial was unequivocally euphemistic on issues requiring outright condemnation. For the benefit of researchers for the purpose of the term paper or for the purpose of producing other investigative reports, it has to be reiterated here that they should be free not only to accept the hypothesis, but to reject it if research evidence so dictates.

(d)   Research Tools

The next stage is for the researchers to go to work to gather the facts on which to base their arguments to convince their reader(s) that they are right. Argument and persuasion are very much at the centre of research. Students are required to gather a lot of research materials, much of which is expected to be in the library. They should know how to locate materials relevant to their topics. Fortunately, for those in the Use of English

programme, the introduction to Use of the Library goes on simultaneously with the term paper project. The library use lectures should ease their efforts to locate materials relevant to their topics.

Such materials could include, depending on the topic, reference books for quick relevant information: encyclopaedias; biographical dictionaries for notable specialists in the field; dictionaries, year books, manuals, atlases, diaries, gazettes, serials, abstracts, directories. Year books and almanacs are important tools for historical research. Abstracts fill gaps, within limits for information on literature review where the original texts are not within reach. As far as possible, complete research findings should be resorted to in order to have detailed information on work already done on which to base one's literature review and discover areas that have been left out and which can be further probed for more findings.

The above list is very far from exhaustive. Researchers are never limited as to the range of materials required to be gathered to pursue their work to a dependable conclusion. So they are free to look for materials from every possible, relevant source, including oral interviews and questionnaire, for analysis and interpretation. The more detailed the research on a specific or clearly identified topic, the greater the likelihood that conclusions from such research evidence will be dependable and capable of advancing knowledge or perception in that area.

(e)   **The Researcher's Attitude**

A researcher's attitude to the source and nature of the material at his disposal is no doubt capable of dictating his approach to the gathering of the information. The researcher is a questioning man who should distrust every source and to a certain extent, himself until he is persuaded otherwise. This is because he can investigate his own earlier views on the topic and is free to discard those he considers to be no longer relevant or dependable in view of further findings. The researcher should be vigilant over facts, insist

on accuracy, and respect truth and evidence. He should never assume that any mistake he finds in a source is typographical and so not intended by the author. He needs to assume as he uses the material, that whatever he himself may consider to be inaccurate has been intended by the possessor of the work under scrutiny. He should therefore embark on reflecting the correct picture in his research and publication, in the interest of the public.

A good researcher should discard credulity and put on the garb of the sceptic. To this end, he should utilize the best editions of works, distrust autobiographical evidences and even what authors write about themselves. He should not be enslaved by one source of data and evidence. He should be a critical reader or listener and be willing to read other people's findings and views, and do more work on the same issues before arriving at conclusions. In other words, he should be curious not only to teach but also to learn.

He needs a lot of diplomacy in dealing with the public, which is one of the sources of his investigation. Journalists are generally heavily identified with this aspect as a method of social research. A journalist who goes into a public house to investigate the causes of prostitution among teenage girls, needs to be highly diplomatic if he is not to be greeted with biased antagonistic, rather than dependable replies. While a researcher should be difficult to convince, he should have the communicative competence to hypnotise people to give him requisite information or opinion. In journalistic interviews, greater emphasis is on opinions rather than facts; the latter should be available to the journalist as part of his preparation for the interview. But his respondent may dodge giving him the requisite, dependable opinions, and rather opt for equivocation if the journalist is not careful with his choice of words and tone of voice in the inquiry process.

In sum, the research man, right from the pursuit of the elementary term paper, needs to cultivate the mental alertness and respect for convincing evidence that journalists and lawyers are supposed to be versed in. A lawyer cites judicial precedents to nail home his submission; the public needs

a journalist versed in investigative reporting, ability to recognise and follow up leads, and tenacity in the pursuit of facts and opinions for public guidance. Other disciplines do cultivate such faculties in varying degrees. Like a good lawyer or journalist, every researcher should be a light, a guide of the consuming public of his findings.

(f)   Gathering the Information

(i)   Working Bibliography:

As stated earlier, much of the information for most research is in the library. After narrowing down the topic and determining the hypothesis and sub-hypotheses, the researcher should next prepare a working bibliography. The aim is to locate information and opinions on the chosen topic. It can, according to 1980 MLA Handbook, change with new perceptions of the topic; or as more plausible implications of the topic reveal themselves; and as the discovery of new sources of information justifies the discarding of those found to be irrelevant. This is why it is regarded as a working, rather than a permanent bibliography.

(ii)   Reading for the Required Information

With the technique for effective reading, the student researcher is bound to gather easily, the relevant and requisite information on which he can base his discussions and conclusions. Reading speedily with understanding is a virtue in research. However, one's reading speed should depend on the nature of the reading material and the researcher's intentions. After skimming and scanning the various reading materials, he decides not only what to read but how to read it. Obviously, a complicated text requiring careful study for analysis should not be read as speedily as one does a newspaper or other casual material for relaxation. It is still possible for a

complicated research document to be read fairly speedily and understood, but this depends on the knowledge the researcher brings into the text. A researcher who is versed in the field of discourse in focus is very likely to read a document in it by far more speedily than one who is educated in other fields but not comfortable with the material before him. His speed will also depend on his avoidance of regression or word for word reading or taking in meaningless chunks while reading. Generally, it will depend on the reader's conversance with English language structure and various cohesive devices for textual unity and coherence. Research students are advised to revise the work on reading, comprehension and summary writing discussed in chapter four, for a fairer grasp of the expectations before a reader for comprehension.

(g)   **Notes**

Take down, by whatever convenient method, all the information needed for documentation and final bibliography (Works Cited under MLA 1995). The MLA Handbook (1980:5) advises that we should transcribe exactly, word for word, all the information that we might want to quote directly, in whole or in part, in the research paper. Also is the need to cite page numbers accurately for both. When a quotation continues to another page, one should note where the page break occurs, since only a portion of what is transcribed may ultimately find its way into the paper. Apart from quoting directly, a researcher could summarise the part of the source most relevant to his research area. Summarizing involves close involvement of the researcher in the text, whereas indiscriminate or excessive quotation could be evidence of mental laziness as some writers may quote without carefully assessing the meaning and relevance of the quotation to the work at hand. The researcher should be careful not to quote or summarise only passages or sources that support his hypothesis and sub-hypotheses. He should also examine without bias sources that challenge the validity of his

hypothesis, since, as was said earlier, research evidence could reject the hypothesis.

(h) Outlining

The aim in outlining an approach before writing the paper is to organise ideas and accumulated research into a logical, coherent whole. The outline is so important that in the Use of English term paper, it is to be submitted along with the completely-written term paper. Below is a sample outline on the topic earlier mentioned: Public Reactions to Federal Government's Acquisition of 60 percent shares in the Daily Times... A Case Study of Lagos". In this research, findings reject the hypothesis, and so what the writers report is that the people of Lagos are not favourably disposed to Federal Government's acquisition of the shares.

The Outline
1.0 **Introduction**:

This should contain, among other things, a thesis statement directly on the main or major research finding such as "research findings have aptly revealed that the people of Lagos are uneasy for various reasons, with Federal Government's acquisition of controlling shares (60 per cent) in the Daily Times."

1.1 Dwindling circulation in Lagos. Here, the research findings with regard to dwindling readership and effect on advertisements are highlighted.

1.2 Affront to the paper's earlier independence. Here the people's reactions to the opinion function of the paper are reported: sycophantic editorials, dodging letters and features that are critical of the Government, and so forth.

1.3 Job security. This follows the new civil service orientation of the paper. A veiled affront to productivity and the paper's profitability.

1.4 Conclusion. Suggested plausible option for the Government: to establish a newspaper of its own rather than exert its influence on the Daily Times and whittle its independence. It is not in conflict but a validation of the position taken in the entire paper.

1.5 Suggestions For Further Research.

Research is in a state of flux. Nobody can boast of having said the last word on any given area. The researcher needs to realise this and give constructive guidance towards further research in the area.

It should be noted that the six items listed as outlines above do not represent single paragraphs. They are topics which give the researcher the opportunity to report and comment on his findings in full.

(I) **Drafting**

This will be based on the outline. Correct, add or subtract at a subsequent draft and ensure that you are fully satisfied with the entire production before typing for submission. It is recommended that the Use of English term paper should be typed on quarto-size paper, filed with notes taken and outline; and all handed in for final assessment.

Term paper writers should study very carefully, issues that have been, and are continually being, discussed during the course - correct spellings, acceptable sentences, accurate paragraphing, link words or introductory tags for coherence, appropriate choice of words, mechanical accuracy, and so forth. They should, in a word, accomplish this task with the composing process and the various supporting facilities at their command.

(j) **Documentation**

It is an integral part of the final copy. In documentation, students acknowledge sources of information outside their personal contributions - Chukwuma and Otagburuagu (239). There is no one generally-accepted style of documentation. Departments could adopt styles acceptable to them.

As part of the work on the term paper, this lecturer intends to acquaint student researchers fairly closely with the 1995 MLA system of documentation. It appears to be the latest today. He will also informally acquaint them with the less serious formalities or entries on the cover page.

Using The MLA System

The Modern Languages Association (MLA) format is very important and is especially used in the Humanities. It is not compulsory for use in other fields of study. The MLA, Fourth Edition, 1995, is the current one in use and constitutes a simplification of notes and bibliography systems of the earlier format, notably that of 1980. Students and researchers are strongly advised to get their copies of this document and study them closely since what is presented below represents only the most salient information on the MLA format: certainly not all the information on the subject. However what is presented can answer the documentation questions of researchers quite appreciably.

Before delving into the format, it is necessary to remind researchers in whatever discipline that they do not or should not cite from secondary sources for the mere fun of doing so. Quotations and summaries of existing facts and opinions in a research area should be able to advance, emphasise an argument or arguments; or refute the argument(s). Those that do not perform any of these functions lack a focus and constitute a waste of the reader's time. Citations are justified in research. As rightly stated in the current MLA Handbook: "all research builds on previous research," and researchers derive "relevant information and ideas from their predecessors" (104).

The Format

Keeping brief parenthetical citations in the text to an alphabetical list of works that appear at the end of paper.

Examples

C. L. Wrenn believes that English "is spoken or read by the greatest number of people in the world, for historical, political and economic reasons," and feels that it may also be true "that it owes something of its wide appeal to qualities and characteristics inherent in itself" (6).

"The English Language is spoken or read by the largest number of people in the world, for historical, political and economic reasons," writes C. L. Wrenn in The English Language, "but it may also be true that it owes something of its wide appeal to qualities and characteristics inherent in itself" (6).

The above styles of quoting from the same source point to the fact that a quotation can appear at the beginning, middle or end of the sentence. It could be divided by the researcher's own words. The quotations need not be reproductions of whole sentences. In the above two examples, the researchers may be interested in the purpose for using the English language, and state thus: the dominance of the English language as a world communication organ is for "political and economic reasons," and possibly due to "qualities and characteristics inherent in itself" (6).

The above quotations are not more than four lines. According to the Handbook, if the quotation runs to more than four typed lines, it should be set off from one inch from the left margin and typed double-spaced without adding quotation marks. If the researcher quotes only from a single paragraph or part of one, he should not indent the first line more than the rest. For example, the researcher could quote from Wrenn thus:

C. L. Wrenn introduces his discussion of general character of English thus:

> The English Language is spoken or read by the greatest number of people in the world, for historical, political and economic reasons; but it may also be true that it owes

> something of its wide appeal to qualities and
> characteristics inherent in itself (6).

Note that the parenthetical reference to the above quotation is set off from the text and follows the last line of the quotation.

MLA style advises researches who want to quote two or more paragraphs to indent the first line of each paragraph "an additional quarter inch (or three spaces on a typewriter)" (73).

The conventions for omitting lines within the quotation and at the end, should be no problem to students or researchers who are familiar with earlier MLA formats both for prose and poetry. Reminders are available on pages 79 and 80 of the Handbook. Student researchers should revise the chapter in this book dealing with mechanical accuracy, involving punctuation and capitalisation. They should note the colon, semi-colon and the comma especially. The colon is used when the quotation is formally introduced and the rest, especially the comma when the quotation is an integral part of the sentence structure. Earlier quotations from C.L. Wrenn are enlightening on this point.

But at times one constructs a sentence in his research document, the information in which is derived from a work by an author known to him. An example taken from page 104 of the MLA Handbook is as follows: 'Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras who lived in the sixth century BC (Marcuse 197)' (single quotation signs mine). This is taken from page 197 of a book by a man named Marcuse.

If the author has more than one work from which the researcher cites, a shortened version of the title is given. The Handbook gives example as "(Marcuse, Survey 197)".

Works Cited List

The parenthetical citations give us very basic information to enable us to find details in the alphabetical list of works cited at the end of the paper.

These two examples, one from the Handbook and the other from Wrenn should surfice:

Works Cited:

Marcuse, Sibyl. <u>A Survey of Musical Instruments</u>. New York: Harper. 1975.

Wrenn, C. L. <u>The English Language</u>. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd. 1964.

Researchers can understand "Works Cited" presentations easier if they revise what happens in the compilation of a bibliography using the earlier, (such as 1980) editions. The present approach is highly simplified and yet can supply all the documentation information the reader of a research work requires to follow what the researcher has done.

An Advance

The information or research guidelines so far released are applicable to research generally, although at some point, the writing of a term paper has been emphasized. As we continue to other academic writing areas, we should do so in the background of information already released. The next item is the presentation of a research report for publication beyond the first-year undergraduate term paper. The way an undergraduate's graduating essay is presented can depend very largely on the supervisor who does not ignore what he did at the Masters and Doctoral theses levels. One can say safely that the graduating essay is a thesis in miniature. What follows now is the writing of a graduating essay in the Department of English. It is on an interpretative stylistic study of poetic composition. The student can apply

these guidelines to any poems or poet of his choice. That is why no effort is made to tie him down to a specific literary artist. It is hoped that in future it will be easier for students in this academic area to carry on their research for, and publication of, their graduating essays with greater ease than is the case at present.

B.   HINTS ON THE GRADUATING ESSAY
Introduction

The preliminary information associated with the term paper which formed the 'A' part of this chapter is also relevant in the writing of a Graduating Essay, also usually referred to as a Long Essay. The Graduating Essay, unlike the first-year Term Paper, is a final-year project designed to assess each student's competence in organised writing in his chosen area of emphasis. It is usually longer than the term paper.

What follows is a synopsis of an approach (not the approach) to its writing in the Department of English. The bias here is on the stylistic analysis and interpretation of literary works, especially poetry. Other lecturers in the Department supervising other areas of research could have their own approaches to the subject. What appears below is the present writer's contribution to any discussion of the subject.

(a)   **Topic Selection**

As far as poetry and stylistics are concerned, choice of subject is fairly easy. The student could decide to write on the topic: A Stylistic Analysis of ... Poetry. Variants of this topic include: A Stylistic Study of .... Poetry..., or Stylistic Criticism of... Poetry. Some students who may not be very confident in writing from the stylistic perspective, could decide on, and in fact do opt for, over-beaten tracks, such as: Symbolism and the Poetry of ... or Form and Meaning in the Poetry of ... Various Graduating Essay

topics are as a rule vetted by the Co-ordinators in the Department charged with this responsibility and the students concerned referred to the appropriate lecturers for supervision.

It is hoped that the Co-ordinators will continue to assess the levels of adequacy of the various students' academic or linguistic exposure or both in their various areas of emphasis before referring them to the lecturers concerned for supervision. For instance, a student with appreciable exposure to linguistics and who has done fairly significant studies in stylistics is likely to find it easier to write his graduating essay from this perspective than one who lacks appreciable grasps of such areas of study.

Relevance

Generally speaking, one could say that students' choice of graduating essay topics should be guided by their conviction of the relevance of their research areas to contemporary issues and the needs of the subject and the nation. The topics suggested above satisfy these criteria for obvious reasons: they demonstrate that features of language are relevant in the interpretation of works of art; when appropriately explored in the analysis, they are bound to demonstrate the extent to which linguistic competence is relevant in the analysis and interpretation of literary works; and the fact that literature is an aspect in the use of language, while literary terms, plausible as they may be, are explicable by the application of linguistic notions. This writer is not opening a debate on the superiority of linguistic exactitude over literary scholarship or vice versa, but is rather stressing the need for co-operation between the two, for a very fruitful attitude to, and use of, this language, the linguistic saviour of Nigeria fortunately inherited from colonialism.

(b)   **Methodology for Execution**
(I)   **Methodology**

The graduating essay could feature the Introduction, Review of Literature, Critical Framework and Research Methodology and finally, the Execution or the application of the critical procedure outlined ,to the analysis. This approach is strongly suggested in graduating essays involving a stylistic study, or analysis or criticism of poetic composition.

Under the Introduction, we have background to the study which should, among other things, state the motivating factor in the investigation being undertaken. In the statement of problem, the writer states the issues that have engaged public thinking on the works. They constitute critical problems which ignite critical investigation. Others include research questions, the purpose of the study, significance and scope of the study, and the clarification of certain key concepts in the context of the research at hand. And especially where the researcher decides to embark on interpretative stylistic analysis, an examination of the concept of meaning in general, and in literary works especially poetry in particular, becomes relevant. This will help the reader to understand the semantic direction employed by the researcher. The extent to which these preliminaries are treated depends on the competence of the student, the way the supervisor views the work, and the approximate length the Department has approved for the graduating essay.

As has been stated earlier in the chapter, most research builds on earlier research which makes it imperative for researchers to demonstrate awareness of the works of their predecessors. This is done in the Review of Literature which forms the second chapter of the essay. Students may not be able to exhaust all the existing literature. But they should ensure that they do not conceal some of the existing opinions and later reflect them as their original contributions to learning in the area. Plagiarism is never a virtue in research.

One of the problems most students run into is how to review existing literature in their topics. It is not right to merely summarise existing criticism

and stop there. The literature reviewer should briefly state what his predecessors have done in line with their chosen critical approaches. He goes further and states his own approach and demonstrates how his method is bound to improve on the criticism of the work for better public understanding and possible enjoyment.

On the other hand, if after review, the researcher fully endorses everything done by his predecessors, the honourable step before him is to change his research topic because he has demonstrated that he has no contribution to make for the advancement of learning in the chosen research area. Review of literature reveals the currency of the researcher in his chosen area, and as far as possible, he should review fully so that he does not presume originality in ideas which have existed but are unknown to him.

The literature review demand on the graduating essay writer is less rigorous than what is expected from a writer of either a Masters or a Ph.D. thesis. The student's supervisor should step in, guide him aright not to be over-ambitious to the extent of being incapable of presenting an essay at all.

After the review of existing literature, he is now close to the actual analysis. But before he does this, he guides his reader into the procedure he has adopted for his analysis. He has to discuss what stylistic analysis is; does he want to demonstrate how the linguistic system is exemplified or how the various features when applied to the work, aid interpretation? He shall have also discussed the definitions of style and stylistics that he wants to adopt for the guidance of the reader of his analysis. He can then delve into the analysis as appropriate. Is he applying each linguistic feature at a time or is he, depending on the poem or poems before him, applying the linguistic features chosen, in various combinations and permutations? This is a very important aspect of the research (the analytical procedure) since the reader or examiner will expect the subsequent analysis or analyses not to depart to any reasonable degree from it.

(ii)   **Execution**

This could form subsequent chapters. The number of chapters could depend on the volume of analysis the student wants to undertake. Some students have successfully devoted one chapter only to this without running into any significant problem. The advice of the supervisor is important in this regard. It can vary depending on the competence of the student and the scope of the study.

(b)   **Conclusion**

The summary of findings should not be arbitrarily drawn up. It is not expected to consist of wild generalisations without earlier support from analysis. Rather, it should be a reflection in brief of the discoveries from a stylistic analysis of the works involving the various linguistic features used in the poetry in such a way that they amount to the poet's idiosyncracy. Also, the writer or critic may state the extent to which other factors, such as extra-linguistic features of stylistic significance, the poet's involvement in the universe of the poems and possible use of idiosyncratic lexicon, affect the interpretation of the works. Since the various features are expected in once accord to add up to interpretation, an integrated approach to the writing of the summary is likely to be more useful or understood than a fragmentary method of reflecting answers to the various research questions revealed by analysis.

No research can be considered to be the final word on a topic. The researcher should be humble to realise and report the limitations of his research: possibly he has not been able to analyse all the poet's poems, as such an ambition would be too much for a graduating essay given the resources and time available. This practice is acceptable in research generally. For instance, the present writer, in his recommendation following his stylistic analysis of Wole Soyinka's poetry, states that he has "been able to analyse

a total of eleven poems." He continues:

> It means that very many of his poems have not been penetrated by our interpretative stylistic analysis. It is hoped therefore that this work will motivate other researchers to continue to summon various linguistic devices for indepth interpretations of all his poems. This way, it is possible that some day, obscurity will cease to be associated with any aspect of Soyinka's poetry (264-265).

Recommendations are a useful guide for future researchers.

Works Cited

Awubi, R.A., English for Pre-degree Students, (Mimeographed). University of Calabar. 1998.

Awubi, Amadife & Co. "Public Reaction to Federal Government's Acquisition of 60 percent shares in the Daily Times: A Case Study of Lagos". P.G.D. (Journalism). Daily Times. 1976.

Awubi, R.A. "A Stylistic Analysis of Wole Soyinka's Poetry." Ph.D Thesis. University of Calabar. 1994.

Baker, Sheridan. The Practical Stylist. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 1962.

Chukwuma, Otagburuagu, eds. English for Academic Purposes. Onitsha: African-Fep Publishers Ltd. 1997.

Dickens, Bruce, eds. Early Middle English Texts. London: Bowes & Bowes. 1965.

Essien, Okon. "A Case Against English". Calabar Studies in Languages. Vol. II, No.iv. May, 1981.

Fafunwa, Aliu B. "Local Languages: Only Way to Promised Land". Sunday Times. 2nd November, 1986

Gibald, Joseph. MLA Handbook. New York: 4th Edition. 1995.

Gleason H. A. Jr. An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1973.

Holy Bible: King James Version. Nashville, Tennessee: Crusade Publishers Inc. 1977.

Janis, Harold J. College Writing: A Rhetoric and Handbook. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc. 1977.

Lyons, John. Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1969

Onions C. T. Sweet's Anglo-Saxon. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1954.

Orisawayi, Dele. "Weak Links in the Chain of Some Basic Composition Skills of Freshmen in a Nigerian University". Developing English Language Skills in Secondary and Higher Education. Enugu: Harris Publishers Ltd. 1990.

Osisanwo, Wale. Aspects of English Structure. Ijebu-Ode: Fetop Publishers. 1994.

Quirk R, and S. Greenbaum. A University Grammar of English. Essex: Longman Group UK Limited. 1976.

Stageberg, Norman C. An Introduction to English Grammar. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 1975.

Ukpong I. I. "Social and Economic Infrastructure". Structure of the Nigerian Economy. Lagos: University of Lagos Press. 1979.

Whitehall, Harold. Structural Essentials of English. London: Harcourt, Brace and Company Inc. 1960.

Wrenn, C.L. The English Language. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1964.