

## **ENG 121: STRUCTURE OF MODERN ENGLISH**

### **MODULE 1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND PHONOLOGICAL STRUCTURE**

- Unit 1 Historical Antecedents to Modern English
- Unit 2 Language and Structure
- Unit 3 The Structure of the Sound System of English
- Unit 4 Syllable Structure in English
- Unit 5 Non-Segmental Features of English

### **UNIT 1 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO MODERN ENGLISH**

#### **CONTENTS**

This unit will give you a brief history of the English language. You will learn who the English ancestors were and where they came from. The unit is arranged as follows:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 The Angles, Saxons and Jutes
  - 3.2 Old English
  - 3.3 Middle English
  - 3.4 Early Modern English
  - 3.5 Modern English
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Readings



#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Every language has a history. The history of the English language is long and complicated. We shall make do with just a notion selecting only the important milestones. For a fuller discussion of the history of the English Language read *A History of the English Language* by Baugh and Cable 1978. The account of the history of English given in this chapter is adapted from this source.

The history of English begins around 600 A.D; before then is pre-history. Our linguistic ancestors were savages wandering through the forests of Northern Europe. Their language was a part of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. The English ancestors spoke a dialect of Low German.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

-  Say who the English ancestors were and where they came from;
-  Identify the features of Old English, Middle English and Modern English;

- ✚ Bring out any differences between Modern English and Middle or Old English; and
- ✚ Identify the main events that are responsible for the changes.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

#### 3.1 The Angles, Saxons and Jutes

From the beginning of the Christian era, at the time of the Roman Empire about 400 A.D., the speakers of what was to become 'English Language' were scattered along the northern coast of Europe. Their language was a dialect of Low German. Specifically, they spoke many dialects since they were different tribes. Some of the tribes migrated to England and the names of these tribes were Angles, Saxons and Jutes who for convenience were referred to as Anglo-Saxons. The first contacts of the Anglo Saxons with civilization were some occasional contacts with merchants and traders from the Roman Empire on whose borders they lived. This period of brief contacts started the first of the many borrowings from Latin. Words like kettle, wine, cheese, butter, **cheap, plum, gem, bishop, church were borrowed into English.**

In the 4th century, the Roman power began to fall on evil days following attacks from the Goths in the Mediterranean countries. The Anglo-Saxons began to attack Britain which had been ruled by the Romans since 43 AD. The Roman influence did not however, extend to other parts of the British Isles. In Scotland, Wales and Ireland for instance, the Celts, the original inhabitants of the British Isles including England remained free and wild and made incessant attacks against the Romans in England. The Roman power, even in England, was not strong enough to make Latin the national language as was the case in Gaul and Spain. The people continued to speak Celtic with Latin only as an official language.

The 4th century saw more and more troubles for the Romans in Britain. The wild tribes of Scotland and Wales grew more restive; the Anglo-Saxons began to attack the eastern coast; there were growing tensions everywhere in the empire and the Roman soldiers in Britain were taken away to fight in other places. In 410 A.D., the last Roman ruler in England left and took the last of the legions with him. The Celts were now in possession of Britain but defenseless against the imminent Anglo-Saxon attack. According to the eighth century historian, Bede, the Jutes came in 449 to England in response to an appeal by the Celtic King Vortigen who wanted help against the Picts. They (the Jutes) later fought with Vortigen and settled permanently in Kent. Later, the Angles established themselves in Eastern England and the Saxons in the West and South. Fighting went on for as long as one hundred years before the Celts in England were all killed, reduced to slavery or driven into Wales. By 550 A.D., the Anglo Saxons were firmly established and English was now the language of England.

### 3.2 Old English

The history of English actually starts about 600 AD when the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity and learnt the Latin alphabet. The conversion was a great advance for the Anglo-Saxons not only spiritually but also because it established again for them contact with the Roman civilization. The history of the English Language is often divided into Old English (from the earliest records about the 7th century to about 1100; Middle English from 1100 to 1450 or 1500. Modern English is divided into Early Modern, 1500 – 1700 and late Modern, 1700 to the present.

England was divided into several kingdoms which were more or less autonomous. One of the kingdoms, Northumberland, the area between the Humber River and the Scottish border became more advanced, and developed a respectable civilisation. But in the eighth century the Northumbrian power declined and the centre of influence shifted first south to Mercia, the kingdom of the Midlands and a century later to Wessex, the country of the West Saxons. The most famous king of the West Saxons, Alfred the Great who was not only a military man but also a champion of learning founded and supported schools and caused many books to be translated from Latin to English in the West Saxon dialect.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the Norsemen came from Denmark and the Scandinavian Peninsula to attack England. Alfred the Great rebuffed their sporadic attacks on England for some years until the year 866 when the Norsemen landed on the east coast of England. In 877, the struggle ended with a treaty by which a line was drawn from the North-West of England to the South-East. The Norse were to rule the Eastern side and the Western side was to be governed by England.

The effect of this on the English language was a considerable influx of Norse into the English Language. Norse at that time was not so different from English as to make the two languages mutually unintelligible. There was however a considerable degree of word borrowing. Examples of Norse words in the English language are: sky, give, law, egg, outlaw, **leg, ugly, scant, sly, crawl, scowl, take, thrust. It is supposed also that** the Norsemen influenced the sound structure and the grammar of English but this is difficult to demonstrate in detail (Udofot, 1999:107-108).

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1

1. Who were the Anglo-Saxons?
2. Where did they come from?
3. How did they come to settle in England?

#### A Specimen of Old English

A favourite illustration of a sample of old English is often the Lord's Prayer probably because it needs no translation. One of the versions is given here:

**Feder ure bu de eart on heofonum sai pin nama tðgbgodhe pin rice. Gewurde pin villa on codan swa swa on heofonum, Urne ge daeghwamlican hlaf syle us to daeg. An forgyf us ure gyltas swa swa we forgyfap urum gyltendum. And ne gllel pu us on costnunge ac alys us of ytele. Sodlice.**

Besides the differences in grammar and orthography between the specimen of Old English shown above and Modern English, there are observable differences in vocabulary. For one, Old English was more highly inflected than Modern English. Most of the Old English words are native English words in the sense that they have not been borrowed from other languages but have been a part of English ever since English was a part of the Indo-European languages. Old English however had some borrowed words. We have seen above some of the ones that came from Norse. A large number too was borrowed while the Anglo-Saxons were still on the continent. These include cheese, butter, bishop, and kettle. A large number came into English after the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity. These include: angel, candle, priest, martyr, purple, school, spend, oyster etc. But the majority of old English words were native English.

### **3.3 Middle English**

Between 1000 and 1200 AD important changes took place in the structure of English so that Old English became Middle English. The single event which led to this was the Norman Conquest. The Normans came from Scandinavia in the early years of the tenth Century, established themselves in the north of France and established a powerful kingdom. In 1060 AD, under the leadership of Duke William, they crossed the English Channel and installed themselves the rulers of England. For many hundred years after this event, England was ruled by kings whose mother tongue was French. French did not however become the national language in England because unlike the earlier Anglo-Saxon invasion, the Norman Conquest was not a national migration. Although a large number of Normans came to England, they came as rulers. Consequently, French became the language of polite society, the nobility, the language of literature and education but it did not replace English as the language of the people. English was therefore spoken as a vernacular.

However, English, though it survived as a vernacular and the national language, was deeply affected and therefore changed after the Norman Conquest. Because it was a language of the common people it became simplified; the case system of nouns and adjectives became simplified. People came to rely more on word order and prepositions than on inflectional endings. The change was also aided by changes in sound. Today English is less inflected than German, another member of the Germanic group of Indo-European languages, perhaps because Germany did not experience a Norman Conquest.

The effects of the Norman Conquest are more pronounced in vocabulary. Although after about a hundred years French ceased to be the language of many people in England, it continued to be a second language. Till today, it is a second language in England and regarded as the epitome of elegance and sophistication. It was a sign of

good breeding in England to spice one's conversation with French words and French ideas. In fact, it was considered that one was *au courant*. The last expression shows that this practice is still with us as one often hears expressions like *a la mode*, *bourgeois* and *proletariat*.

Thus, all sorts of French words came into English. There were words that have to do with government: parliament, majesty, treaty, tax, **alliance**; words about the church: **parson, sermon, baptism, incense, crucifix, religion**, words for food: **beef, mutton, bacon, jelly, peach, lemon, cream, biscuit**. There were also colour words: **blue, scarlet, vermilion**; household words: **chair, curtain, lamp, towel, blanket, parlour**, play words: **dance, chess, music, leisure, conversation**; literary words: story, romance, poet, literary; learned words: study, **logic, grammar, noun, surgeon, anatomy, stomach**. There were also ordinary words of all kinds like nice, second, very, age, bucket, gentle, **final, fault, flower, cry, count, sure, move surprise, plain**.

All these and many more words poured into the English Language between 1100 and 1500. This did not however turn English into French.

English remained English in sound structure and grammar although the grammar also felt some influence of the contact. Also, the very heart of the vocabulary remained English as most of the high frequency words: pronouns, preposition, conjunctions and the auxiliaries as well as many ordinary nouns, verbs and adjectives were not replaced by the borrowings. Thus, Middle English was still a Germanic language but it differed from old English in some ways: the sound system and the grammar changed; speakers relied less on inflectional devices and more on word order and structure to express their meaning.

### A Specimen of Middle English

It appears that Middle English is simpler to us than Old English because it is closer to Modern English. It is however doubtful if it is not a case of exchanging one set of complexities for others. The following passage is taken from Chaucer's General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales written in the fourteenth century:

*There was also a nonne, a Prioress,  
That of hir smyling was ful symple and coy, Hir  
gretteste oath was but by Seinte Loy, And she was  
cleped Madam Eglentyne, Fullwell she song the  
service dyvyne, Entuned in hir nose ful semely,  
And Frenshe she spak ful faire and fetishly  
After the scole of Strafard-atte-Bowe,  
For Frenshe of Parys was to hir unknowne.*

### 3.4 Early Modern English

The English of Shakespeare's time is different from the time of Chaucer shown above because of a couple of changes that English underwent between 1400 and 1600AD. One change was the elimination of a vowel sound in some unstressed

positions at the end of words so that words like wine, stone, name and dance which were pronounced as two syllables in Chaucer's time were pronounced as one in Shakespeare's time. This change is one of the causes of the discrepancy between the spelling and the pronunciation of Modern English words because it affected a lot of words other than those, which end with vowel sounds.

The following words: laughed, seemed and stored which were pronounced as two syllables in Middle English also became monosyllabic.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

1. Examine the Old English version of the Lord's Prayer. What differences do you notice between the Old English Version and the modern version?

The Great Vowel Shift was the other big event, which made Middle English different from Modern English. This involved the shifting of half a dozen vowels and diphthongs in stressed syllables as can be seen from the examples below:

Middle English    Modern English

name	/a:/	→	name	/e/
wine	/i:/	→	wine	/ai/
he	/e/	→	he	/i:/
mouse	/u:/	→	mouse	/au:/
moon	/u/	→	moon	/u:/

This change affected all the words which contained these sounds but the Middle English spelling was retained thus creating another source of discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation of Modern English words. These two changes which constitute the main differences between Middle and Modern English can also be said to account for the differences between English and other Germanic languages like French, Italian and Spanish where no vowel shift occurred. The last development which can be said to be responsible for standardizing the spelling of English, and unifying the various dialects of English is the invention of the printing press in 1475 by William Caxton. Books and reading materials were produced and the printed word became the standard.

### 3.5 Modern English

In England the dialect of the East Midland became accepted as the literary standard. This does not mean that there were no other dialects. In the plays and novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there are often country gentlemen that speak their local dialects. But the English of the upper class and the upper middle class tended to adopt a uniform standard which was nurtured in the public schools. The public school English has been identified as a variant of the South Eastern English and it became the

language of the upper class whatever part of the country they came from. Education therefore had a standardizing effect and became the agency for the transmission of a non-localized form of English as the prestigious form.

By 1770 movement between groups became accelerated with the invention of the steamship, the railway, the motorcar and the aero-plane. Man became more mobile and this extended his linguistic exposure. Other developments like the telephone, the radio, the sound film and the television all helped to standardize and spread Modern English.

The effect of all the above listed developments on the vocabulary was unprecedented. New objects, new ways of seeing the world, new things to do and new thoughts brought new words into the language so that nowadays there are words like *psychedelic*, *spacelas*, *floppy discs*, **computerese**, **esperanto etc.** **Many native forms combined prefixes** and suffixes which have come into the language to form new forms. Technical terms from scientific developments have also entered the language. Loan words have also entered the language and with the spread of English to other parts of the world Modern English is full of borrowings from other languages. As was the case with Norse, French and Latin borrowings the process of borrowing and the words borrowed throw some light on the nature of the relationship between England and these countries. Also, in the last two hundred years, loan words do not seem to have the cultural meaning they had. For example the following words borrowed from French do not have exactly the same cultural meaning and usage they had: *guillotine*, *regime*, and *epaulette*.

It is interesting to note that English has resisted Celtic loan words despite the fact that they live close to the Celtic communities and have intermarried throughout the period when English has been spoken in Britain. Yet the spread of English to other parts of the world has produced other varieties of English, some of which are spoken as mother tongues.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 3**

1. Can you guess the meanings of the italicised words?
2. From the recognition of the italicised words what differences do you notice between these words and their Modern English equivalents?

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 4**

1. What two events have been responsible for the differences between Middle English and Modern English?

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

You have learnt from this unit that:

The linguistic ancestors of English were the Angles, Saxons and Jutes and they were savages who migrated from northern Europe and settled in England about 400 A.D.

The history of English actually started about 600AD when the Anglo Saxons, having killed and driven out the original inhabitants of England, the Celts, and settled in England became converted to Christianity. Old English as seen in the Lord's Prayer differs from Modern English both in grammar, orthography and vocabulary. Between 1000 and 1200 A.D., the Norman Conquest brought the French language to England. English was used as the vernacular while French was the official language; consequently English became simplified-the sound system and the grammar changed; speakers relied less on inflectional devices and more on word order and structure to express their meaning. The elimination of the vowel sounds in unstressed positions so that words like wine and name which were pronounced as two syllables [w -ne] and [na-me] were pronounced as one syllable, helped to make Early Modern English different from Middle English. Between 1400 AD and 1600 AD the Great Vowel Shift occurred, which also helped to change Middle English. This involved the change of the quality of vowels in many two syllable words so that words like wine and name which were pronounced as two syllables [w -ne] and [na-me], were now pronounced as one syllable (e.g. wine[wɑ n] and name [ne m]) but the spellings were retained. The invention of printing by William Caxton in 1475 standardised English spelling and with the production of books and reading materials the printed word became the standard.

In England, the dialect of the East Midlands became the literary standard used by the upper and middle class and taught in schools although other dialects existed.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. What contributions did the Norman Conquest and the Great Vowel Shift make to the development of the English Language?

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

- Baugh, A. & Cable, T. 1978. *A History of the English Language*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Omachonu, G. S. 2010. *Fundamentals of English Phonetics and Phonology*. Enugu- Nigeria: Rossen Production and Services Ltd.
- Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) 2013. *Effective Use of English and the Use of Library for Higher Education*. Jos- Nigeria: Eiwa Press Ltd.
- Udofot, I. M. 1999. *An Introduction to the Morphology of English*. Uyo: Scholars Press.



## UNIT 2 LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Nature of language
  - 3.2 The Structural Approach
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most useful and most brilliant of human inventions. By means of language, people who live together are able to interact and express their thoughts and feelings to one another. Language is first perceived as a string of noises organised into a meaningful pattern for the purpose of communication. It can as well be seen as graphic symbols also organised into meaningful patterns. The particular patterns of noises or graphic symbols are meaningful particularly to people of the speech community where the language is used. These patterns can however be learnt by people outside the speech community.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- ✚ Describe the nature of language;
- ✚ Identify the levels of structure of language;
- ✚ List the levels of structure of all units of English grammar ; and
- ✚ Give a brief description of the units of structure of English grammar.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Nature of Language

There have been several explanations of language. One which is given above is that language is the means by which people from the same and related communities interact and express their thoughts and feelings to one another. This is one way of explaining the term language. There are other ways of explaining this phenomenon. A classic explication is that of Sapir (1921, p. 18) which explains language as ‘a purely human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols’. Another famous definition of language was given by Hall in his *Essay on Language*, where language is defined as ‘the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols’ (Hall, 1968, pp. 158).

An examination of these explanations reveals that language is primarily spoken (i.e. oral - auditory). Writing is a recent development. There are many languages that exist only in the spoken form. Another aspect of language evident in the explications above is that language has structure and is normally organized into patterns – phonic (for spoken language) and graphic (for written language). The specific characteristics of language may be summarized thus:

... it is difficult to give a comprehensive definition of language. Any attempt that captures its essential characteristics: namely that it is a system made up of phonic or graphic symbols which are arbitrarily chosen or agreed upon by convention and are usually learned and used by a speech community for the purpose of communication can serve as a reasonable explication (Eka and Udofot 1996:5)

A necessary implication of the use of language for the purpose of communication is that information expressed by language has to be meaningful to the hearer otherwise communication or interaction does not take place. This idea is stressed by Gimson's (1980: 4-5) description of language as

A system of conventional signals used for communication by a whole community. This pattern of conventions covers a system of significant sound units, the inflection and arrangement of words and the association of meaning with words.

All the explanations of language given above agree on certain issues. First, that language is arbitrary and conventional in the sense that there is often no link between a word and what it means. There exists some form of unwritten agreement or convention about the way language is used. This is like saying that flat-topped wooden or iron furniture with four supports is called a table not because of any reason other than that the English people by agreement and later by convention call it that. Secondly, that language is non instinctive. This means that it is a learned behaviour. Next, that language is human and is used by a group of people (a speech community) whose ancestors agreed on how certain symbols were to be used. Also, that although there are animal signs and computer language, for example, it is the speech of human beings that is elaborate and systematic enough to be studied. This shows that language is a peculiarly human behaviour. If conventional symbols have to be associated with meaning, it follows that the words we use in language and the sentences we make by putting words together have to mean something. This underscores the need for words and sentences to have structure. Knowledge of the elements or parts and patterns of words and sentences equips you with the means of forming them in the acceptable manner using the acceptable patterns of a given language. This course is designed to arm you with the acceptable means of forming words and sentences in English, using the appropriate structures.

### 3.2 The Structural Approach

The Structural Approach to the study of language can be traced to Bloomfield of the American school of Linguistics who in his book *Language published in 1933 laid the foundation which was continued by* Fries in his book *The Structure of English* published in 1952. Fries analysed living English speech using a sentence grammar approach instead of the word grammar approach of traditional grammar. Later grammars of English followed this approach until a different approach became available with the publication of Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures in 1957 and later Aspects of the Theory of Syntax in 1965*.

The structural approach to the study of grammar came as a reaction to traditional grammar which divided all the words in the language into parts of speech according to the functions they perform, and prescribed rather than described their behaviour based on the rules of Latin grammar, paying very little attention to the forms of words and sounds of the language. In other words, traditional grammar looked at the functions of words and not at their structure.

The term structure is generally used to analyse all the units of grammar except the smallest unit-the morpheme. In English we have sentence structure, clause structure, group structure and word structure (Eka, 1994, p.24). The sentence is made up of one or more clauses; the clause is made up of one or more groups; the group is made up of one or more words and every word consists of one or more morphemes.

The sentence:

**She was dancing gracefully because the music was melodious**

can be broken down into two clauses:

- 1a. She was dancing gracefully (main clause)
- 1b. because the music was melodious (subordinate clause)

Each clause: 1a and 1b is made up of groups such as:

- 1c. she, gracefully (pronoun/ adverbial group)
- 1d. was dancing (verbal group)
- 1e. because (prepositional group)
- 1f. the music (nominal group)
- 1g. was (verbal group)
- 1h. melodious (adjectival group)

Each group consists of words. Some of the words such as dancing and **gracefully** have **more than one morphemes**. **Dancing is made up of** {dance} and the progressive marker {ing} while gracefully also contains two morphemes: {grace} and the derivational morphemes {-ful} and {-ly}.

The structural approach to the study of Language also spread to Europe. It was the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure who started people thinking along the lines of modern linguistics in Europe when he drew the distinction between diachronic and synchronic study of language. A diachronic study studies the historical development

of language while a synchronic describes language as it is used at a particular point in time. His lectures, published posthumously by his students in *A course in general linguistics (Cours de linguistique générale)* inspired other linguists in Europe namely: Henry Sweet whose ideas were elaborated upon by J. R. Firth of the London School of Linguistics.

From the London School of Linguistics also came Halliday who suggested a model of grammar often referred to as Neo-Firthian or Systemic Grammar. His model has structure as the surface grammar and meaning as the deep grammar. Within the model, morphology studies the structure of words while syntax studies the structure of sentences which are built up of words, yet they are 'not separated as levels but accounted for within the units of the grammatical rank scale' (Eka, 1994, p.24). The model discusses four fundamental categories of grammar one of which is structure and the others are unit, class and system.

The Unit category identifies levels: the morpheme, the word, the **group, the clause and the sentence which are hierarchically related in** the sense that the upper unit is made up of one or more items of the lower unit next to it (as for instance the word which is made up of one or more morphemes etc.) The morpheme occupies the lowest rank while the sentence occupies the highest rank. Structure is used to analyse all the units except the morpheme. The elements of the clause in English are: Subject (S), Predicator (P), Complement (C), Adjunct (A). All clause structures combine some or all of the elements. The nominal group structure is Modifier (m), Head (h), and Qualifier (q). A modifier is any structure before the head while a qualifier refers to any structure after the head as in the following example:

**The/ new/ students/ of the National Open University of Nigeria**

m m h q

**Class refers to a set of items with similar characteristics.** Items of the same class belong to the same unit since they usually have the same structural possibilities. One can therefore refer to classes of verbs, nouns, adjectives etc and also to their behaviour as a group. For example verbs act as predicators while the nouns often operate as head of the nominal group in the structure of a clause. Every class also has sub-classes as for instance in the cases of nouns being countable and uncountable (count and non-count nouns), proper and abstract while verbs can be transitive, intransitive or linking. **System refers to a set of features from which only one has to be selected** as for instance the system of number which allows for choice between singular and plural; the system of voice of verbs where a choice is made between active and passive and the system of polarity where the choice is between positive and negative.

An attempt is made in this course to describe the structure of the English Language in terms of the sound structure, the sentence structure, the group structure as well as the word and meaning structure. The emphasis is to show the constituents; that is what each of these is made up of: the sound system, the sentence, clause, group and the word.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

1. From the definitions of language given above, make a list of the characteristics of language.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

1. Distinguish between diachronic and synchronic study of language.
2. Which are the units of grammar discussed in this section?
3. Explain the term structure and its use.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit introduced you to the nature of language and the levels of language study. You also learned that language can be studied from the phonological, syntactic, semantic and lexical or what is more technically referred to as the morphological levels and each level has a structure

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt the following:

- ✚ Language is a purely human behaviour and that is made up of sounds and symbols.
- ✚ Language is a learned behaviour; it is conventional and arbitrary.
- ✚ Language is mainly for communication among a speech community
- ✚ Language is a system and has four main levels of structure: phonological, syntactic, lexical and semantic
- ✚ The structural approach to the analysis of language is traceable to Bloomfield of the American School of Linguistics.
- ✚ The approach spread to Europe and was developed into the Systemic Model by the linguists of the London School of Linguistics mainly J.R Firth and M.A.K. Halliday
- ✚ The Structural Approach analyses language at our categories: unit, class, structure and system.
- ✚ Structure is used to analyse all the units of grammar except the morpheme.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Discuss the origin and methods of the Structural Approach to the study of English grammar.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Bloomfield, L. 1933. *Language*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Eka, D. (1996) *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo: Samuf Educational.

Eka, D. and Udofot, I. (1996) *Aspects of Spoken Language*. Calabar: Bon Universal.

Fromkin, V. and Rodman, R. (1983) *Introduction to Language*. New York: Holt, Rineheart and Winston.

Omachonu, G. S. (2003). *Effective Writing Skills*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Limited (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published in 2011 by Rossen Productions Ltd).

Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2011). *NSUK Texts in General Linguistics (Vol. 1)*. Enugu, Nigeria: Rossen Production and Services Ltd.

Tomori, S,H.O.(1977). *The Morphology And Syntax Of Present-Day English: An Introduction*. London: Heinemann

Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (1980). *A University Grammar of English*, London: Longman.

## UNIT 3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOUND SYSTEM OF ENGLISH

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Sound Production
  - 3.2 The Sounds of English
  - 3.3 English Consonant Sounds
  - 3.4 Organs of Production
  - 3.5 Manner of Production
  - 3.6 Description of Consonants
  - 3.7 English Vowel Sounds
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0. INTRODUCTION

Speech sounds are vibrations in the atmosphere. They are produced by the organs of the body associated with speech. The study of the physical features of speech sounds is called Phonetics while the study of the sounds of a particular language in combination is referred to as the **Phonology of that language**. In the third year of your degree course you will study Elements of Phonetics and The Phonology of English. In this course you will only learn about the Segmental and Non segmental **phonemes of English and how they function in patterns in the language**.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Distinguish between phonetics and phonology;
- Identify the broad groups of speech sounds and the sounds of English;
- List the segmental phonemes of English; and
- Describe the phonetic properties of English sounds and non segmental phonemes and how the sounds are combined into patterns in speech.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Sound Production

When we speak we make a string of noises which is perceived as a continuous flow of sound. This continuous flow is meaningful to anyone who understands the language. Every speech sound is produced as a result of exhaled air from the lungs passing through the passage between the vocal cords known as the glottis through the pharynx and out through the mouth or nose. This exhaled air is called the pulmonic **airstream**. **When the air from the lungs gets to the larynx (the Adams Apple) and the space between the vocal cords (the glottis) is closed a lot of pressure builds up and forces the glottis to open and close very rapidly. This results in the vibration known as voice. Any sound produced with the glottis in this state is referred to as voiced. Examples of voiced sounds are /b, d, g, e, u:/. English vowels are produced with the glottis in this state and they are all voiced. If the pulmonic airstream (air from the lungs) gets to the larynx and the glottis is open, the air passes on to the pharynx without any vibration. Sounds that are produced with the glottis open are said to be voiceless. Examples of voiceless sounds are /p, s, t, k/.**

When the air leaves the larynx, it gets to the pharynx and mouth. If the back part of the roof of mouth called the soft palate or velum is lowered, the passage to the mouth is blocked and the air escapes through the nose. These types of sounds are called nasal sounds. Examples of nasal sounds in English are /m, n, ŋ/. If the soft palate is raised when the air from the larynx gets to the pharynx, the air passes through the mouth and the sounds produced with the soft palate raised are called oral sounds. All English sounds except the nasals i.e. /m, n, ŋ/ are oral e.g. /p, k, s, r/.

#### 3.2 The Sounds of English

The sounds of all human language are classified as either vowels or consonants. They are called vowels if there is no audible obstruction to the air as it passes from the lungs to the outside through the mouth or the nose. Examples of vowel sounds in English are /a: / as in father; /i: / as in people and /e/ as in bed. Consonant sounds on the other hand are sounds which are produced with some form of obstruction of air along the speech tract by one or more organs of speech. The numbers of vowels and consonants vary from language to language.

In English, there are twenty vowel sounds and twenty-four consonant sounds. These sounds do not necessarily correspond with the letters of the alphabet. Though there are phonetic languages like Ibibio, Igbo or Yoruba where sounds and letters correspond so that a word is pronounced the way it is written, English is a classic example of a language which is not necessarily spoken the way it is written. In the following words the sounds and letters do not correspond:

/f/ (sounds and letters)	(letters and sounds)
<i>physics</i>	father /a:/
effect	man /æ/





### 3.5 Manner of Production

Consonant sounds are also classified according to the way the organs of speech behave during their production. Six groups are often distinguished. According to Eka and Udofot (1996:71-72) the twenty-four consonants of English can be classified as follows:

- (i) **Plosives or Stops** are those sounds produced through the coming together of the organs of production to block the air passage coming from the lungs followed by a sudden release of the sounds through a sudden parting of the organs. English plosive sounds are /p, b, t, d, k, g/
- (ii) **Fricatives:** These are consonant sounds produced by the narrowing of the space between the organs of production due to the movement of the organs towards each other. The sounds produced filter through the narrowed space with a hissing sound. English has nine fricative sounds which are /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, h/.
- (iii) **Affricates:** Affricates are produced like plosives with the coming together of the organs of production to obstruct the air from the lungs followed by a gradual release of the sound. English has two affricates which are /tʃ/ and /dʒ/
- (iv) **Nasals:** These are sounds produced with the soft palate lowered and the sound released through the nose. English nasals are three in number. These are /m, n, ŋ/.
- (v) **Liquids:** These are sounds produced with the tongue raised and air escaping through the sides of the tongue. English has two liquids: the lateral liquid /l/ produced with the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge (teeth ridge) and air escaping through the two sides of the tongue and the rolled liquid /r/ which is produced with the tip of the tongue repeatedly touching the teeth ridge.
- (vi) **Semi-vowels (approximants).** These are sounds produced with the organs of production coming together but not completely as in the case of the other consonants. They are described as gliding consonants because they are “distinguished by the absence of friction and a quick smooth glide to the sound that follows” (Udofot and Eshiett 1996:13). English has two semi vowels. These are /j/ and /w/.

### 3.6 Description of Consonants

Any consonant sound can be described using three criteria namely: voice or voicelessness, organ of production and manner of production. The twenty-four English consonant sounds can be described as follows:

- /p/ Voiceless bilabial plosive as in pat, reap, leper
- /b/ Voiced, bilabial plosive as in bed, labour, babe
- /t/ Voiceless alveolar plosive as in table, cat, rat
- /d/ Voiced alveolar plosive as in dance, lad, ladder
- /k/ Voiceless velar plosive as in king, market, cook
- /g/ Voiced velar plosive as in gold, big, bigger
- /f/ Voiceless labio – dental fricative as in fish, infant, leaf
- /v/ Voiced labio-dental fricative as in very, alveolar, leave
- /θ/ Voiceless dental fricative as in thin, bath
- /ð/ Voiced dental fricative as in though, other, bathe
- /s/ Voiceless alveolar fricative as in city, sister, rice
- /z/ Voiced alveolar fricative as in zebra, business, prize
- /ʃ/ Voiceless post-alveolar fricative as in shoe, mission, push
- /ʒ/ Voiced post-alveolar fricative as in vision, garage
- /h/ Voiceless glottal fricative as in house, inhale
- /tʃ/ Voiceless post-alveolar affricate as in church, teacher, catch
- /dʒ/ Voiced post-alveolar affricate as in joke, enjoy, judge
- /m/\* Bilabial nasal as in moon, lamp, calm
- /n/\* Alveolar nasal as in navy, nanny, none
- /ŋ/\* Velar nasal as in bank, longing
- /l/\* Alveolar liquid (lateral) as in look, valley, pull
- /r/\* Alveolar liquid (rolled) as in wrong, marry, mirror
- /w/\* Bilabial semivowel as in woman, reward
- /j/\* Palatal semivowel as in yellow, student/stju---/

\*Note that all nasals, liquids and semi-vowels are voiced.

### 3.7 English Vowel Sounds

English has twenty vowels. Twelve of them are single sounds or monophthongs. Monophthongs are also referred to as pure vowels. Eight of the English vowels are double sounds or diphthongs. Vowels are produced without any audible obstruction of the speech tract by the organs of production. They are characterized by vocal cord vibration or voice.

The tongue and the lips are the most important organs of production of vowels. Vowels are therefore described according to the part of the tongue used in its production and the height to which the tongue is raised towards the hard palate. The other criterion of description is the posture of the lips. In vowel production, the lips can be rounded or spread or neutral.

### Description of Vowels

A vowel can be described as

- (i) Front: If produced using the front of the tongue e.g. /i:/
- (ii) Back: If produced using the back of the tongue e.g. /a:/
- (iii) Central: If produced using the middle of the tongue e.g. /ə/

Considering the height to which the tongue is raised towards (but not touching the roof of the mouth), a vowel can be described as:

- (i) Close: If the tongue is raised very high towards the palate e.g. /i:/
- (ii) Open: If the tongue is lowered and lying flat in the mouth e.g. /a:/
- (iii) Open-mid or Close-mid: If the tongue lies halfway between the two extremes.

When considering the posture of the lips a vowel can be described as

- (i) Rounded: if the vowel is produced with rounded lips e.g. /u:/
- (ii) Unrounded: if the vowel is produced with spread or neutral lip posture e.g. /e/ and /a/

It is important to know the part of the tongue and the tongue height as well as the lip posture of a particular vowel in order to be able to produce the vowel properly.

### English Monophthongs

English monophthongs are conventionally numbered 1 – 12 as follows:

1. /i:/ as in leap, people, seed
2. /i/ as in lip, sit, village
3. /e/ as in fed, friend, bed
4. /æ/ as in fan, anniversary
5. /a:/ as in father, heart, arm
6. /ɒ/ as in hot, watt, wander
7. /ɔ:./ as in wash, cord, war
8. /u/ as in could, cook, pull
9. /u:/ as in two, stool, through
10. /ʌ/ as in much, love, blood
11. /ɜ:./ as in girl, early, bird
12. /ə/ as in again, water, director

## English Diphthongs

/ai/ as in fight, rhyme, eye

/au/ as in house, now, couch

/ei/ as in late, tail, day

/əu/ as in so, home, know

/ɔi/ as in oil, joy, destroy

/iə/ as in here, ear, atmosphere

/eə/ as in air, tear, affair

/uə/ as in poor, tour, sure

## English Triphthongs

English also has triphthongs but these occur in careful and slow pronunciations. A triphthong can be described as a combination of three vowel sounds pronounced together one after the other. For example a careful pronunciation of the vowel in the word 'tower' begins with the sound /a/ and a quick smooth movement to the vowel /u/ and ends with the vowel /ə /; thus /auə/. In English, there are five triphthongs. These are:

/aiə/ as in fire, tyre

/auə/ as in tower, flower

/eiə/ as in layer, player

/əuə/ as in sower, lower

/ɔiə/ as in loyal, royal

As already noted, it is only the slow and careful English speaker whose speech can feature these complex vowels. In rapid or normal speech triphthongs are often reduced to long vowels and diphthongs with the middle vowel heard slightly or not at all.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1

1. Describe how human speech sounds are produced

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

1. Differentiate between vowels and consonants.
2. How many vowels and consonants are there in the English Language?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you studied the structure of the sound system of English.

You also learnt some interesting facts about the nature of English speech sounds, and how they are produced. This therefore validates the fact that the sounds (vowels and consonants) of English form an indispensable aspect of the structure of the Language.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit the following main points have been made:

- ✚ Speech sounds are vibrations produced by the human organs of speech; The study of speech sounds and their properties is called phonetics while the study of the sounds of a particular language is known as phonology
- ✚ Speech sounds are produced when exhaled air passes through the various speech organs and are modified by them on their journey outside through the mouth and sometimes the nose.
- ✚ All human speech sounds can be classified into two broad groups: vowel and consonants. Vowels are produced without obstruction to the air in the vocal tract while consonants are produced with obstruction at some point in the vocal tract. English has 44 sounds: 20 vowels and 24 consonants.
- ✚ Consonants are described according to organ of production; manner of production and whether they are voiced or voiceless Vowels are described according to the part of the tongue used in its production i.e whether front, central or back; the height to which the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth; that is whether raised high up or pressed down low and the posture of the lips during production i.e. whether rounded or neutral or spread.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Discuss the criteria used for the description of English vowels and consonants.

## 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

Eka, D. & Udofot, I. (1996). *Aspects of Spoken Language*. Calabar: Bon Universal.

Udofot, I. & Eshiett B. B. (1996). *An Oral English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Calabar: Bon Universals.

Gimson, A.C. 1980. *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. London: Edward Arnold

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Phonetic\\_Alphabet\\_for\\_English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet_for_English)

Jones, D 1969. *The pronunciation of English* (9th edition) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Connor. J. D.1970. *Better English Pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press .

Omachonu, G. S. (2010). *Fundamentals of English Phonetics and Phonology*. Enugu-Nigeria: Rossen Production and Services Ltd.

Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2011). *NSUK Texts in General Linguistics (Vol. 1)*. Enugu, Nigeria: Rossen Production and Services Ltd.

## UNIT 4 SYLLABLE STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Nature of the Syllable
  - 3.2 The Structure of the English Syllable
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

When you speak you produce a string of noises which is perceived as a continuous flow of sound. This continuous flow is meaningful to anyone who understands. For instance, the English word pen is made up of three sound segments; /p, e, n/. If the middle sound is replaced with other sounds e.g. /ei, i , æ / we can have words like pain, pin and pan. Human speech can be broken down into units called sounds. Each unit of sound is a segment. When segments are put together, they form words and utterances.

A sound segment which causes a change in meaning when replaced by another segment is said to be significant, contrastive or distinctive. Such a speech sound may be referred to as a phoneme. Hyman (1975, p.59) defines the phoneme as ‘a minimal unit of sound capable of distinguishing words of different meanings’. For instance, the following English words: beat, bat and bet are made up of three sounds: beat /bi:t/, bat /bæt/, bet /bet/ but they are different words because of the difference in the middle sound. Similarly in the words road /rɔ:ud/ and load /ləud/ the difference in meaning of the two words lies in the difference between the two initial sounds /r/ and /l/. The sounds /i:, æ, e, r, l, / are therefore phonemes in English.

The phoneme is also the smallest unit of speech in all languages. In French for instance, the difference between the two words: fille (girl) and ville (town) lies in the replacement of /f/ with /v/. Similarly, in Ibibio, the two words iwa (cassava) and ita (three) are different in meaning because of the difference in the middle sound. A way to determine whether a particular sound is a phoneme or not is to substitute that sound for another in two words which have the same spelling like the words load and road. The words which are identical in this way are referred to as minimal pairs. Thus the words **road and load; coat and goat; tin and sin; are minimal pairs.**

Each language in the world has its own number of phonemes and uses them differently from other languages. But within the same language, a particular speech sound (phoneme) can be realized differently due to, among other factors, its position in a word or utterance. Experience shows that it is not possible for the same sound to



be pronounced in the same way many times even by the same person. In the following words: **peak, speak, and reap the pronunciations of the sound /p/ are not the same.** In **peak**, the /p/ is pronounced with a puff of air (aspirated); in **speak** the /p/ is **unaspirated while in reap the final /p/ is not released.** The different phonetic realizations of a phoneme are referred to as allophones. In the above examples the phoneme /p/ has three different realizations or allophones: the initial or aspirated /p/, the medial or unaspirated /p/ and the final or unreleased /p/. To an English speaker, the phoneme he hears is /p/. The difference in quality is due to the position where the sound occurs in the word. When sounds combine to form syllable, words and sentences, it is the phonemes that take part in such combinations.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- Explain the terms phonemes and allophones;
- Illustrate how speech sounds combine to form syllables and words;
- Define the syllable; and
- Describe the structure of the syllable in English.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 The Nature of the Syllable

The syllable has been explained as the smallest unit of language which can be pronounced with one breath. It is made up of a vowel with or without one or more consonant sounds. When we looked at the sounds of English, it was shown that it was possible to say whether a particular sound was a vowel or consonant on phonetic grounds; that is, in relation to whether the passage of air from the lungs to the outside was obstructed or not; or phonologically in terms of their different distributions and descriptions. Similarly, a syllable may be defined phonetically or phonologically. Phonetically, a syllable may be defined (in relation to how it is produced or how it sounds) as consisting of a centre which has little or no obstruction to the air flow and therefore Sounds louder than the end of the syllable where there are greater obstruction to the airflow and consequently less loud sounds.(See Roach,1991:67); much of the explanation of the syllable is from this source ). The centre of the syllable is called the nucleus the beginning is called the onset while the end is called the coda.

What might be called a minimum syllable would be a single vowel in isolation as for example in the words are /a:/; or /ɔ:/ and which are preceded and followed by silence. Some syllables have onset; that is the nucleus is not preceded by silence but by a consonant sound as in so /s u/ and tea /ti: /. Some syllables have no onset but a coda as in arm /a:m/; ought /:t/ and more /m:/. Some syllables have the onset, nucleus and code as in sat /sæt/ , run /r n/ and fan /fæn/ .

The main problem about this phonetic description of the syllable is deciding where to

divide the syllable. Syllable boundary has been an issue where there is no agreement. An example is the word *extra* /ekstr / where the following suggestions have been given: e+kstr ek+str , eks+tr , ekst+r and ekstr + (See Roach, 1991: 68). Normally the second or third option is the usual choice but it is not possible to say which one is correct. Looking at the syllable from the phonological point of view proves more useful. This involves looking at the possible ways the English phonemes combine. It is useful to begin with trying to understand what the constructions are in the initial position of English syllables. Usually, we find that the syllable can begin with a vowel or with one or two or three consonants. No syllable begins with more than three consonants. Similarly we can look at how a syllable ends. Usually, it can end with a vowel or one or two or three (and in rare cases) four consonants. No syllable ends with more than four consonants.

Let us recapitulate. A syllable can be described as a unit of speech made up of a vowel with or without one or more consonant sounds. Sounds combine to form syllables. For instance, in English the word, /gut/, three sounds: /g/, /u/ and /t/ combine to form a syllable, *goat*, which is also a word. This is a monosyllabic word. Syllables also combine to form words. Some are disyllabic (two syllables); trisyllabic (three syllables) and polysyllabic (four or more syllables). Note that every syllable must contain a vowel sound. There are syllables which are made up of just one vowel sound but a consonant sound alone cannot make a syllable. In cases where a syllable has no vowel sound to function as a nucleus some special consonants, because of their sonorous nature, can function as the nucleus of a syllable. They are called syllabic consonants. The common syllabic consonants of English are /l/ and /n/ which are sonorous like vowel sounds as in the following: *mutton* /mʌtn/. In other words, the second syllable of this word has no vowel nucleus. The letter 'o' is omitted in pronunciation.

### 3.2 The Structure of the English Syllable

As already mentioned, the syllable has a structure; it is made up of the onset (or beginning), the nucleus (or middle) and the coda (or end). The consonants occupy the onset and coda parts while the nucleus is occupied by vowels and syllabic consonants.

The nucleus is the obligatory part of the syllable, thus there are as many syllables as there are vowels in an utterance. The onset and the coda are optional parts. Four possibilities of syllabic structure may occur in a language. One may have ONC (onset, nucleus, coda); NC (nucleus, coda); ON (onset, nucleus) and N (nucleus). All four possibilities occur in English. A syllable that has a coda is called a closed syllable whereas one that lacks it is called an open syllable (see also Egbokhare, 1992: 49-50).

Apart from the above structure which is done in terms of the phonetic analysis of the syllable, the structure of an English syllable can be described phonologically in terms of the distribution of vowels and consonants. Thus a syllable may be made up of a vowel alone e.g *oh* /u/. This may be represented thus V. We may also have a consonant and a vowel as in *tea* /ti:/. The structure here is CV where "C" stands for consonant and "V" for vowel.

Taking the consonants at the initial positions first, we may have one consonant initially as in fee /fi:/. We can also have two consonants in initial position. These are of two main kinds: first “s” followed by one of /p, t, k, f, n, l, w, j/ as in **speak, stay, sky, sphere, small, snail, sleep, swear, suit**. Second, we can have one of /p, t, k, b, d, g, f, v, m, n/ followed by one of /l, r, w, j/. Thus we may have: **play, try, cry, bread, dress, music, new, among others**. Finally, we can have three consonants initially. Here we have /s/ followed by /p, t, k/ followed by one of /r, j, l, w/ which may be explained as vowel-like sounds. Examples of words with three initial consonants are: **spring, string, screw, spurious, stupid, skewer, split, squash**. Of these, the sequence /spj/ is not very common.

In the final positions we may have one consonant finally as in, **face bed, tape**. We may also have two consonants finally as in **cats, sweets and hens**. **Three consonants may also occur in the final position in words** like: facts, bounds, plunged. Lastly, in the final positions we can have more than three consonants mainly because /s/ or /z/ has to be added to most nouns to form plurals; and /t/ or /d/ to form past time as in prompts /prɪmpts/ and asked /æskt/.

The above information on the structure of the syllable in English may be summarized thus;

	1	2	3
Are	0	V	O
Car	C	V	O
At	0	V	C
Cat	C	V	C
Star	CC	V	O
Start	CC	V	C
Stray	CCC	V	O
Stretched	CCC	V	CC
Strengths	CCC	V	CCC
Prompts	CC	V	CCCC

We therefore have (C)(C)(C)V(C)(C)(C)(C)  
C0-3 V C0-4 showing the vowel as the compulsory element.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1

1. What is a phoneme?
2. What do you understand by the term syllable?

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

1. Explain the terms, onset, nucleus and coda and how they combine to form the syllable in English.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit introduced you to the structure of the English syllable. More importantly, you learnt about significant English speech sounds and how they combine to form syllables and words as well as the structure of the syllable itself. Basically, you need to really understand the role of the English syllable in intelligent and intelligible spoken communication in the Language.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the main points raised in this unit:

- Human speech can be broken down into units called sounds which can be put together to form syllables, words and utterances.
- When sounds combine to form syllables and words it is the phonemes that take part in such combinations. A phoneme is the smallest sound segment that is significant and can cause a change in meaning if replaced by another sound. Variations of a phoneme are called allophones; allophones do not cause a change in meaning if replaced by another allophone. A syllable consists of the onset, nucleus and coda if explained phonetically
- Phonologically, an English syllable is made up of vowels and consonants.
- A maximum of three consonants can occur in initial position in the syllable in English while a maximum of four consonants can occur at the final position.
- Every syllable contains a nucleus which occupies the centre of the syllable; where there is no vowel, a syllabic consonant functions like the nucleus of the syllable.
- The structure of the syllable in English can be represented with the formula: C0-3 V C0-4

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Using the formula C0-3 V C0-4, describe the structure of the syllable in English.

#### 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

- Eka, D. & Udofot, I. (1996). *Aspects of Spoken Language*. Calabar: Bon Universal.
- Gimson, A.C. (1980). *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. London: Edward Arnold
- Jones, D. (1969). *The Pronunciation of English* (9th edition) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Phonetic\\_Alphabet\\_for\\_English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Phonetic_Alphabet_for_English)
- O'Connor, J. D. (1970). *Better English Pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Roach, P. (1991). *English Phonetics and Phonology*. (Second edition) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Udofot, I. & Eshiett B. B. 1996 *An Oral English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Calabar: Bon Universals.

## UNIT 5 NON-SEGMENTAL FEATURES OF ENGLISH

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Accentuation
  - 3.2 Word Stress
  - 3.3 Sentence Stress
  - 3.4 Contrastive Stress
  - 3.5 Rhythm
  - 3.6 Intonation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

English phonology, like the phonology of any language, is made up of both segmental and non segmental phonemes. English non segmentals include accentuation, rhythm and intonation. These, like segmentals, affect shades of meaning and at times cause a breakdown of understanding when not properly used.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the time you complete this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ Describe the components of accentuation and how they operate in English;
- ✚ Identify the components of rhythm and explain how they operate in English.
- ✚ Describe English intonation tunes and how they function in English.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Accentuation

Accentuation comprises stress, duration and prominence. Simply put, ‘stress is the prominence or emphasis given to certain syllables in words when they are uttered’ (Udofot & Eshiett 1993:34). Syllables given such prominence or emphasis are said to be stressed or accented. Duration, on the other hand, is the timing utilized in the articulation of a syllable as a result of the nature of the vowel length and syllable structure. For instance, long vowels appear longer in open syllables and shorter in closed syllables. The vowel sounds in the three words: fee, and feel are the same but because of the nature of the syllable the vowel /i:/ sounds longer in fee than in feel because fee has an open syllable structure while feel has a closed syllable structure. In pronouncing words, some syllables are given more attention and said with more force. These are called stressed or accented syllables. The sign [ˈ] is conventionally used to show such syllables. The sign is placed immediately before the syllables e.g.

'nation, e'leven, 'family, re'lation. Any English word of more than one syllable has at least one stress. In English, the stress pattern is fixed and should be learnt with the word.

### 3.2 Word Stress

In speech, words of one syllable e.g. 'come' are normally stressed when spoken in isolation. When they appear in a sentence, they may or may not be stressed. Words of two syllables have one primary stress which may occur at either the first or second syllable as for example in:

'blackboard	a'way
'teacher	im'prove
'English	be'long
'easy	suc'cess
'very	re'move

Note that in the examples above, the words in the first column have their primary stress on the first syllable. In the second column the words have their primary stress on the second syllable. There are no hard and fast rules as to where stress occurs in words. The stress disposition of a word is learnt with the word. There are, however, some English words of two syllables with the primary stress on both syllables. Here are some examples:

'out'side	'down'stairs
'in'doors	'four'teen

Some English words of two syllables have stress on the first syllable when they are nouns or adjectives and on the second syllable when they function as verbs as in the following examples:

'present	pre'sent
'record	re'cord
'progress	pro'gress
'convert	con'vert
'suspect	sus'pect
'protest	pro'test
'increase	in'crease
'conduct	con'duct
'insult	in'sult
'reject	re'ject

You need to take note of the fact that not every word of two syllables behave in this way. Only a couple of them exhibit this pattern of stress shift. Some Nigerian speakers of English over-generalize this rule and extend it to words like address, mistake which are pronounced with the stress on the second syllable for both nouns and verbs. Since stress in English cannot be shifted at will it is important to learn the stress pattern of a new word each time a new word is encountered.

In words of more than two syllables (polysyllabic words) only one primary stress is given. Some polysyllabic words can have one or more secondary stress in addition. It is important to note that prefixes and suffixes are hardly ever stressed. Your dictionary should help you to determine where the stress should occur. Examine the following:

'calculate al'ready edu'cation  
 'hospital em'barrass elec'tricity  
 'photograph in'evitable eco'nomie  
 'injury de'terminie advan'tageous  
 'absolute con'gratulate indivi'duality

Note that the secondary stress is marked with a stroke below the syllable on which it occurs.

### 3.3 Sentence Stress

When words are in company not all categories of words are stressed. The types of words often stressed in a sentence are the content words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and the demonstratives and negative markers. Pronouns, articles, auxiliary verbs, prepositions and conjunctions are not normally stressed except for emphasis. In the following examples only the categories of words specified above are given prominence:

She 'got him 'out of it.  
 I 'want a 'pen 'not a 'pencil. Do you 'like 'rice?

Note that in the first example the verb and the adverb are stressed. In the second example, the verb, the nouns and the negative marker only are stressed while in the last sentence the main verb and the noun are stressed. The other structural words in the sentence are not stressed.

### 3.4 Contrastive Stress

It has already been stated in the above section that only certain categories of words are given prominence in a sentence. It is however possible to stress any word (including those that normally should not be stressed) if a meaning is intended or when the speaker wants to call attention to a particular word. In this case the word that is stressed becomes the focus of attention. Examine the following:

'Unwana is my daughter (Not Ekaette).  
 Unwana is 'my daughter (Not yours).  
 Unwana is my 'daughter (Not a friend)  
 John lives in a 'white house (Not a blue one)  
 'John lives in a white house (Not Henry)  
 John 'lives in a white house (Not just staying there)

Note that only one word is given prominence in the above sentence because of the intended meaning of the speaker.

### 3.5 Rhythm

Stress and duration produce rhythm in English. According to Abercrombie (1967, p.6) the rhythm of language is produced by the manner in which stressed and unstressed syllables succeed each other. Languages can have stress-timed or syllable-timed rhythm. Languages with stress-timed rhythm are those whose utterances can be divided into feet which are isochronous (i.e. of equal length). The stressed syllables together with any number of unstressed syllables between the stressed ones form a rhythm group. English and German are examples of languages with stress-timed rhythm. The utterances of a syllable timed language, on the other hand, can be segmented into parts but the unit of segmentation is the syllable which can be stressed or unstressed. It is therefore the number of syllables that determine the duration of an utterance in a syllable timed language. Ibibio, Yoruba and French are examples of languages with a syllable timed rhythm. In the following illustration:

**I 'want a 'pen (English – stress timed).**  
**'A 'yin 'e 'ka 'm 'mi (Ibibio – syllable timed).**

In the first (English) utterance, there are two feet each with a stressed syllable. It takes the same time to say I want as it takes to say a pen. In the second utterance (Ibibio) all the syllables are stressed and it takes the same time to say each one of them. The syllables are thus of equal length just as the feet in a stress timed language are of equal duration. That is the main difference between a stress timed and a syllable timed rhythm.

Rhythm in English is created by the tendency of stressed syllables to occur at roughly equal intervals of time. A stressed syllable together with any unstressed syllables that follow it, form a rhythm unit. In the utterance / 'bʌt v ð m 'left '3: li/ (both of them left early) each rhythm unit is pronounced with the same amount of time. Also, the stressed syllables take longer to say than the unstressed ones. Examine also the following utterance:

He 'works / in a 'shop/ in the 'market/ with his 'wife.

To achieve a proper rhythm, about the same time has to be spent in saying all the rhythm units. This implies hurrying over the unstressed syllables and spending more time in saying the stressed ones. Note that the stressed syllables are signalled to the hearer by means of pitch prominence. An utterance containing many content words— nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs has more accentuation than one having more structural words— pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions. It is the alternation between the prominence given to stressed syllables and lack of prominence of the unstressed syllables which leads to hurrying over unaccented syllables that gives English its rhythm.



Also stressed syllables tend to have the same intervals of time between them even though the number of unstressed syllables may be different. If there are several unstressed syllables, the rhythm will be fast. If there are no unstressed syllables, the rhythm is slow because the stressed syllables are often spoken more slowly. Compare the rhythm of the following utterances:

I. The 'boy/ 'jumped.  
The 'lion/es'caped.  
The 'buffaloes/ 'stampeded.

II. I 'read /the 'book  
He 'looked/ at the 'newspaper  
I 'took/ 'out the/ 'dictionary

III. The 'man/ 'drove a/ 'car.  
The 'headmaster/ was 'riding/ a 'bicycle.  
The 'schoolchildren/ were 'listening/ to the 'radio.

Also, to maintain the natural rhythm, it is important not to speak the weak forms as if they were strong forms. The weak forms are hurried over while the strong forms are spoken with more energy and with longer duration.

### 3.6 Intonation

In natural languages, utterances are spoken with changes in the voice level or pitch. This tendency of the voice to rise and fall is called tone when it relates to a word and intonation when it relates to sentences or utterances of sentence status. A language that uses pitch on words is called a tone language while a language with pitch variation on sentences is called an intonational language.

These variations in pitch are usually significant. Variations in tone result in changes in the meaning of words while variations in intonation results in changes in the shades of meaning of the sentences concerned. The Ibibio word, obo, for instance if said with different tones could mean a cane, a chief or a mosquito. This phenomenon also occurs in many Nigerian languages.

Similarly, in English, the expression 'thank you' if said with falling tune shows gratitude but if said with a rising tune shows a casual acknowledgement of something not very important or someone whose duty it was to do a job for which he was thanked. If used in the wrong situation it could show impoliteness or ingratitude (O'Connor, 1977:108)

### Intonation Tunes

Intonation describes variations of pitch—the way the voice rises and falls when we speak (cf. Udofot and Eshiett: 1996:44). English Language has its own melody which results from these characteristic rises and falls at appropriate places. If this melody is lacking, the utterance sounds monotonous. Most Nigerian languages (except Fulfulde) are tonal. That means that the voice rises and falls on words (not sentences or words of sentence status).

When English is spoken with tones of Nigerian languages it sounds funny to the native speaker. Also, much attitudinal meaning conveyed by intonation in English is lost. Apart from this, intonation has grammatical meaning too in English. A certain tune is used to speak a statement and another one used to speak a question and a request. Thus if one uses the tune used for a statement to speak a request he may sound rude. According to O'Connor (1977:108) the expression 'Thank you' spoken with a falling tune suggests genuine gratitude but when spoken with a rising tune only shows politeness or a routine. If one were to receive a favour and use the rising tune, one would be considered rude.

English has two basic tunes: Tune One, which is the falling tune and Tune Two, which is the rising tune. Tune one starts on a high note and falls on the last primary stressed syllable. It is used for statements (without implication) commands, questions which begin with question words and exclamations as in the following:

1. My brother bought a new car. (statement)
2. Sit down. (command)
3. What is your name? (Wh-question)
4. What a pretty girl you are (Exclamation)

The rising tune is used for Yes/No questions, lists, mixed clauses and additional remarks, pitch contrast, keywords as in the following examples:

5. Will you go to church next Sunday?

She sweeps the floor, dusts the chairs cleans the louvres and washes clothes on Saturday

6. When he gets his salary, he goes to his village to see his family
7. Can I come in please, she asked politely.
8. My car is grey, not blue
9. You gave him your consent, didn't you?

Note also that the falling tune starts on a high note and falls at the last stressed syllable and continues to fall while the rising tune starts on a low note and rises at the last stressed syllable and continues to rise.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

Pronounce the following words, noting which of the syllables are stressed:

enter	madam
belong	condone
given	success
calendar	mistake
salary	embarrass
communicate	university
participate	contribute

Now read the following sentences giving the correct stress:

Did you see the aeroplane?  
 It must have rained all night  
 I congratulate you on your recent promotion.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

Place stress marks at the appropriate places in the following: What are you staring at?  
 I am looking at the car. Can you swim?  
 Yes I can.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 3

Read the following passage with the appropriate stress and intonation:

“Great-grandmother” the girl called. “You have been sitting here for hours. Everybody is in the courtyard performing the marriage rites”.

“Is that so, child?” Li asked weakly.

“It is even so, great-grandmother? Have you forgotten I am getting married today?”

“No, child, it is fresh in my mind”. Li replied, sleepily.

“Then come ancient one. Our husband swears you are the best wife,” the girl said mischievously. “Come let me show you off to my guests.”

She raised Li’s hand to her cheeks. With a shock Li observed how withered her hands were. She removed her hands from the girl’s grip. “No child”. She shook her head sadly. “This time it is your dream. Go and make the best of it. Don’t be like me. I spent my entire life dreaming, I forgot to live”.

(Adapted from Zaynab Alkali’s *The Stillborn*. pp. 103-104).

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you studied the non-segmental features of English, and focused on accentuation, rhythm and intonation. It is therefore, very clear that these non-segmental features of English play a significant role in accurate and intelligible communication in the Language. Their importance in spoken English can therefore, not be overemphasized

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit the following points have been made:

- ✚ Every English word of more than one syllable carries a primary stress on one of the syllables.
- ✚ Stress is the emphasis on a syllable which makes the syllable prominent and louder than the other syllables in the word or utterance.
- ✚ Content words are often stressed in a sentence while structural words are often not stressed except for emphasis.
- ✚ Rhythm is produced by the manner in which the stressed and unstressed syllables succeed each other.
- ✚ Rhythm in English is created by the tendency of stressed

- ✚ syllables to occur at roughly equal intervals of time.
- ✚ A stressed syllable together with any unstressed syllables that follow it form a rhythm unit.
- ✚ The stressed syllables take longer to say than the unstressed ones.
- ✚ To achieve a proper rhythm, about the same time has to be spent in saying all the rhythm units. This implies hurrying over the unstressed syllables.
- ✚ Intonation refers to the rise and fall of the voice during speech.
- ✚ English has two basic intonation tunes: Tune One which is the falling tune and Tune Two which is the rising tune. Tune One-the falling tune starts on a high note and falls on the last primary stressed syllable and is used for statements (without implication) commands, questions which begin with question words and exclamations. Tune Two-the rising tune is used for Yes/No questions, lists, mixed clauses, additional remarks and for pitch contrast. The falling tune starts on a high note and falls at the last stressed syllable and continues to fall while the rising tune starts on a low note and rises at the last stressed syllable and continues to rise.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Discuss and illustrate any two non segmental features and how they function in English.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Gimson, A.C. (1980). *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*. London: Edward Arnold
- Jones, D (1969). *The Pronunciation of English* (9th edition) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Connor, J. D. (1977). *Better English Pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Omachonu, G. S. (2010). *Fundamentals of English Phonetics and Phonology*. Enugu- Nigeria: Rossen Production and Services Ltd.
- Roach, P. (1991). *English Phonetics and Phonology* (second edition) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Udofot, I. & Eshiett B. B. (1996). *An Oral English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Calabar: Bon Universals.
- Udofot, I. & Ekpenyong, B. 2004. *A Comprehensive English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Lagos:Quantum Co.Ltd.

## MODULE 2: Syntactic Structure

- Unit 1 Word Classes / Open Class Items
- Unit 2 Open Class Items (Part 2)
- Unit 3 Closed Class Items
- Unit 4 Sentence Structure
- Unit 5 Sentence Types
- Unit 6 Clauses in Sentence Structure
- Unit 7 Elements of Group Structure

### UNIT 1 WORD CLASSES / OPEN CLASS ITEMS

#### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Word Classes
  - 3.2 Open Class Items
  - 3.3 Closed Class Items
  - 3.4 Features and Functions of Word Class
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Class refers to a set of items with similar characteristics. Items of the same class belong to the same unit since they usually have the same structural possibilities. One can therefore refer to classes of verbs, nouns, adjectives etc and also to their behaviour as a group. For example verbs act as predicators while the nouns often operate as head of the nominal group in the structure of a clause. Every class also has sub-classes as for instance in the cases of nouns being countable and uncountable (count and non-count nouns), proper and abstract while verbs can be transitive, intransitive or linking. According to Ndimele (1993, p. 25)

In defining word classes, three major criteria are taken into account. They are the form of the word, the meaning of the word and most importantly the function the word performs in a larger construction.

In this unit the categorization of English words into classes and subclasses is done to prepare you for studying their behaviour in larger constructions later.

#### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ List the word classes in English;

- ✚ Identify the characteristics of the different classes; Describe the functions of the classes of words;
- ✚ identify words when used in different word classes;
- ✚ Explain the features of nouns and
- ✚ Describe the functions of nouns

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Word Classes

Words are grouped into two broad classes; namely content words which constitute the open class elements and structural words which make the closed class elements. These two can be contrasted thus:

#### 3.2 Open Class Items

Open class items are so named because new items or creations are easily added to them by inflection or derivation. They are defined in the dictionary as lexical items with identifiable meaning. They occur in a succession in a given structure.

##### Open Class consists of:

- **Nouns:** name a person, place, thing, state, action or quality e.g. *Akpan, Lagos, pen, laughter*
- **Verbs:** act as predicators; express action, state of being e.g. *think, be, run, feel*
- **Adjective:** describe, modify, limit the noun, pronoun or another adjective e.g. *strong man, few hours, limited quantity*
- **Adverbs:** modify a verb, adjective or another adverb e.g. *think quickly, unusually ugly, very slowly*

#### 3.3 Closed Class Items

Closed class items are also referred to as closed system items

- ✚ They are fixed in number in a given language and do not admit new members as you find in the open class items
- ✚ They are defined in terms of structural characteristics
- ✚ They are mutually exclusive in the sense that two of them of the same kind cannot function together. For example you cannot say:  
The book is in under the table as you can do with closed system items as in: He is a tall dark man.

Closed Class consists of

Pronouns: substitute or take the place of nouns: e.g. *he, she, it, they, ours, himself*  
Prepositions, show the relationship between a noun or pronoun and some other word e.g.

- *Jump over the fence*
- *Place it on the table*

- Stand beside the table.

**Conjunctions:** Join two words or two groups of words e.g. Esther and James, small but mighty

**Interjections:** show emotion or strong feeling e.g. alas, hurrah, oh!

In addition to the eight word classes above the following are often added to the closed system items:

**Articles:** used with nouns to show whether the thing or person is a particular one or just anyone e.g. the book, a pen, an orange.

**Demonstratives:** Used to show the person or thing referred to e.g. this, that, those.

Each word class exhibits a set of features or characteristics by which it can be easily recognized. These different notions include number (singular/plural), voice (active/passive), degree (positive, comparative and superlative), gender (masculine/feminine), person (first, second and third), case (nominative, possessive and objective), order of occurrence, connection (subordinating and coordinating), tense (past and non-past).

Open classes, like closed classes, are structures that are used to realize sentence elements. Together, they form what is generally referred to as parts of speech. They are also referred to in English as form classes or word classes. Some writers use the term open class items. The terms refer to the same thing.

Traditionally, there are eight word classes known as parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, interjections, prepositions and conjunctions. But a word cannot be said to belong to a particular part of speech unless it is used in a context. This is because one word may perform different functions. For instance in the following passage, the word round is used in five different senses:

As I round the building, I think about the fact that our round world spins round on its axis, at the same time making a circle round the sun that result in the round of the seasons.

The word round in the above sentence functions first as a verb, next as an adjective, then as adverb in the next two occurrences and finally as a noun.

### 3.4 Features and Function of Word Classes

#### Nouns

One of the most important functions of language is to give names to persons, things, places, groups, qualities, ideas, and concepts, that we come across daily. Nouns perform this function in different dimensions. We have John, Akpan, goat, stone, Lagos, America, goodness, progress, civilization, democracy, Olympics, etc. The different types of nouns can be discussed in pairs:

### Proper versus Common Nouns

A proper noun names particular persons (Uche, John), places (Uyo, California), days of the week (Monday, Tuesday), months of the year (January, February), institution (National Open University, World Bank), geographical features (River Niger, Cameroon Mountain), and languages (Hausa, Ibibio, Ijaw). All proper nouns begin with capital letters when they are written. *Common Nouns* on the other hand name persons or things that share class features or essential general characteristics. These include dog, stone, table, boy, teacher, farmer, etc.

Common nouns can form a unit or a class that needs to be referred to as a complete whole. They refer to a group of people, things etc. This class is called *Collective Nouns*. Examples are: a crowd of people, a fleet of ships, a battalion of soldiers, a bevy of ladies, a troupe of dancers, a *crew of sailors*, a *congregation of worshippers*, a *team of players*, a *host of angels*, a clutch of eggs.

### Abstract Versus Concrete Nouns

Abstract Nouns name qualities, states, actions, conditions, emotions which can neither be touched nor seen. Concrete Nouns name objects and substances that exist in the physical world of things.

Abstract	Concrete
faith	lock
joy	table
goodness	stone
confidence	bottle
truth	key
favour	book
sweetness	fan

### Count versus Non-Count Nouns

Count or Countable nouns refer to items that are separable into identifiable or numerable units while Non-Count or Uncountable nouns are mass nouns which cannot be expressed in terms of singular and plural. Quirk and Greenbaum (1980, p.60) state that there is a considerable degree of overlap between count and non-count words as seen in difficulty/difficulties, experience/experiences, talk/talks, etc. This overlap is explainable in terms of particularization in the count usage and generalization in the non-count usage.

As a guide, count nouns take the articles 'a' and 'an' in their singular forms and are generally classified into singular and plural forms. Examples of count and non-count nouns:

Count	Non-Count
(Singular Plural)	--
box boxes	oil



boy	boys	Water
ox	oxen	air
child	children	sand
passer-by	passers-by	Livestock
datum	data	Light
city	cities	Luggage
man	men	imagery
table	tables	Equipment
house	houses	accommodation

### Features of Nouns

Nouns are generally identified in terms of their morphological structures, number, gender and case or position in the sentence. We shall now look at these briefly.

#### I. Number

Nouns express number (singular and plural). Singular nouns are usually converted or changed to plural forms by the following rules:

i) Addition of 's' to the singular:

pen - pens    girl - girls  
 boy - boys    house - houses  
 chair - chairs    book - books  
 thing - things    clock - clocks  
 train - trains    table - tables

ii) Addition of 'es' to forms that end with 's', 'z', 'ch', 'sh' and x

box - boxes    mattress - mattresses  
 church - churches    branch - branches  
 fox - foxes    buzz - buzzes

iii) Replacement of '-y' with '-ies'

city - cities  
 baby - babies  
 party - parties  
 lady - ladies

iv) Substitution of '-f' and '-fe' with '-ves'

loaf - loaves  
 wife - wives  
 knife - knives  
 leaf - leaves

v) Change of media vowels

man - men

foot - feet  
 mouse - mice  
 louse - lice

## vi) Addition of '-en' and '-ren'

child - children  
 ox - oxen

## vii) Addition of '-es' to nouns that end in 'o'

hero - heroes  
 potato - potatoes

## viii) Change of '-um' to '-a'

datum - data  
 memorandum - memoranda  
 stratum - strata  
 agendum - agenda  
 curriculum - curricula

## ix) Retention of original singular form sheep - sheep

deer - deer  
 swine - swine

## x) Change of internal 'i' to 'e'

thesis - theses  
 analysis - analyses  
 basis - bases  
 crisis - crises

## xi) Change of one component of the compound words on-looker - on-lookers

passer-by - passers-by  
 bye-law - bye-laws  
 step-daughter - step-daughters  
 maid-servant - maid-servants  
 going-on - goings-on

## xii) Changes in all components of the compound words

man-servant - men-servants  
 woman-journalist - women-journalists  
 lord-justice - lords-justices

**II. Gender**

Nouns occur in different groupings according to sex. Four genders are often identified in English namely Masculine, Feminine, Common and Neuter.

Masculine denotes male, while feminine denotes female

man	-	woman
uncle	-	aunt
stallion	-	mare
wizard	-	witch
fox	-	fixen
widower	-	widow
hero	-	heroine
bull	-	cow
nephew	-	niece
cock	-	hen
bachelor	-	spinster
peacock	-	peahen
monk	-	nun
son	-	daughter

Common gender refers to nouns that denote both male and female. They include: *reader, teacher, pilot, officer, cook, writer, thinker, dancer, scholar, singer, buyer, baby.*

Neuter gender refers to lifeless things or things that are not capable of reproduction. Examples: paper, chalk, stone, table, book, house, sun, moon, death, earth, love, sleep. Some of these items can be poetically expressed in either the feminine or masculine depending on how strongly the user feels about them or the prevalent convention in the area.

### III Case

This refers to the grammatical slots that nouns can fill in expressions. They include:

- ✚ Nominative Case (subject) e.g. Tom is here
- ✚ Accusative Case (object or complement) e.g. This is Tom. Give me the book.
- ✚ Possessive Case (ownership or possession) Akpan's dress, Olu's car.

### Problems related to Nouns

There are some inherent problems related to the use of nouns in English.

We shall highlight some of them and proffer solutions.

- i) Exceptions to the rules of pluralization (non-pluralization).

They are some nouns that only function in mass interpretation. They do not take determiners that indicate number except another unit of expression is applied.

Examples:

Information	-	some information
advice	-	a piece of advice
equipment	-	some equipment
stationery	-	items of stationery
staff	-	a member of staff
furniture	-	pieces of furniture
soap	-	tablets of soap

**ii)** Summation Pluralisation occurs in nouns which denote entities comprising parts which sometimes are equal or disproportionate. Those that come in pairs are usually expressed thus: a pair of trousers, a pair of scissors, a pair of pliers, a pair of spectacles.

Other nouns which go with 's' include annals, surroundings, remains, credentials, earnings, means, dregs, thanks, senses, measles, siblings, metrics, economics, statistics, antics, damages (in law), etc.

**iii)** Problem Plurals:

There are some idiomatic patterns that defy the grammatical rules relating to nouns. Their plural forms are not expressed with the addition of '-s' but by the use of the definite article or determiner 'the'. These should be noted:

- ✓ The poor are not recognized. The young shall grow.
- ✓ The dumb need some help.
- ✓ The aged are kept in welfare homes
- ✓ The elite are to blame.

**iv)** Choice of articles also constitutes a problem in English.

Articles are classified into definite (the) and indefinite (a and an). They provide different information about the nouns they modify. The general principles are as follows:

- a) Use 'a'; with countable nouns that begin with a consonant: a book, a goat, a table, a knife, a man, a woman, etc.
- b) Use 'an' with count-nouns that begin with a vowel: an egg, an hour, an axe, an angel, an afterthought.

c) Use the definite article with items that indicate previous knowledge of the person, or entity e.g.

(i) The man on the street is good.

(ii) The book on the shelf is mine.

d) Use the definite article also to refer to a specific person, thing, event or group e.g. The University of Uyo, The man whose daughter won the scholarship, The National Association of Women Academics.

v) Changes in usage also affect patterning of nouns.

Some usages are treated as archaic and are being replaced by some dynamic alternatives that are adjudged right by convention. Examples are:

- data (now used in the singular form)
- agenda (now used in the singular form)
- stadiums / stadia (used interchangeably)
- medium / media (used interchangeably)
- forums / fora (used interchangeably)

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

Which of the following words belong to the open class and which of them belong to the closed class: happiness, always, go, she, across, ah, nobody, slowly, Thomas, beautiful.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2**

State the characteristics of nouns discussed in this unit

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit you studied the grammatical elements of English. You learnt about the categorization of English words and utterances into what is often referred to as grammatical elements, word classes or parts of speech and the function of each element in relation to others. This unit has therefore exposed you to the various categorizations of English words in the grammar of the Language; content words and grammatical words.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit the following points have been made:

- The words of a language are often categorized into classes known as word classes or parts of speech.
- Traditionally, words in English are often categorized into eight classes: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections.
- Some classifications include articles and demonstratives among the word

classes.

- Words are grouped into two broad classes' namely content words which constitute the open class elements and structural words which make the closed class elements.
- Open class items are nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives, they admit new members into the group; they are defined as lexical items in a dictionary and can occur in succession.
- Closed class items are fixed in number; they do not admit new members; they are mutually exclusive. The noun in English is a member of the Open class; it occurs as singular or plural; masculine, feminine or neuter gender and in the subjective, objective or possessive case.
- Nouns also perform certain functions in the sentence: they function as subjects, objects, complements, object of prepositions and as appositives.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

Describe and illustrate the functions of nouns in sentences of your own.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

- Eka, D. (1996). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo: Samuf Educational.
- Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2013). *Effective Use of English and the Use of Library for Higher Education*. Jos- Nigeria: Eiwa Press Ltd.
- Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (1980). *A University Grammar of English*, Longman, London.
- Semmelmeier, M. & Bolander, D. (1984) *Instant English Handbook*. Illinois: Career Publishing Inc
- Udofot, I. & Ekpenyong , B. 2004. *A Comprehensive English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Lagos: Quantum Co. Ltd .

**UNIT 2 OPEN CLASS ITEMS (Part 2)****CONTENTS**

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 Features and Functions of Verbs
- 3.2 Features and Functions of Adverbs
- 3.3 Features and Functions of Adjectives
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The verb is a very important word class in any language. It is the word which says what is happening in the sentence. It can express the action performed by the subject (e.g. eat, say), the state that the subject is in (is, are be,) and possession (e.g. has, have). It can stand alone and still form a sentence that makes sense as in 'Sing'. It can also combine with the subject alone as in They Sing and Birds fly. Verbs are best understood in terms of formations and forms, tense and aspect, voice and mood.

Whereas verbs are predicators or words which express action, adverbs and adjectives are modifiers. Adverbs modify verbs and other adverbs while adjectives modify nouns and other adjectives.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ Describe features of verbs , adverbs and adjectives;
- ✚ Explain functions of verbs, adverbs and adjectives;
- ✚ Identify verbs, adverbs and adjectives when used in a sentence

**3.0 MAIN CONTENT****3.1 Features and Functions of Verbs****i) Formation of Verbs**

By the morphological rule of derivation through affixation, verbs as members of the open class system can be created from other words with the following morphemes –ize, -ate, -ish, -fy, en-, em-, dis- .

- E.g. -ize : moral - moralize, real – realize  
 -ate : vaccine- vaccinate, terminal- terminate  
 -ish : brand- brandish, embellishment- embellish  
 -fy : electricity- electrify, magnitude- magnify

- en : danger- endanger, courage- encourage
- em - : power- empower, body- embody
- dis- : grace-disgrace, guise- disguise

## ii) Main Verbs and the Auxiliaries

Whenever a verb functions alone, it can be said to be the main Verb. On the other hand, the auxiliary verb is a helping verb which indicates tense or mood of the main verb. The main verb is always a finite verb and it belongs to the open class.

Examples of the main verb are:

- Okon sings well.
- Ekaette dances gracefully.

The auxiliary verbs comprise the primary auxiliary verbs (do, have, and be) and the modal auxiliary verbs (can/could, shall/should, may/might, must, ought to, used to, need, dare).

The auxiliary verbs belong to the closed class since they are fixed in number and also are not subject to any form of derivation or inflection.

They are however used informally in contracted forms:

It is	-	it's
could no	-	couldn't
I am	-	I'm
ought not	-	oughtn't
I will	-	I'll
need not	-	needn't
will not	-	won't
is not	-	isn't
shall not	-	shan't
are not	-	aren't
would not	-	wouldn't
am not	-	ain't

The auxiliary verb also has the following functions:

1. It is used in Yes-No questions e.g.
  - Will you come tomorrow?
  - Can you see him?
2. It is used in negative constructions.
  - She does not misbehave.
  - They were not speaking at the meeting.
3. It is used to avoid unnecessary repetition
  - You spoke to him, did you?
  - You haven't seen him, have you?
4. It is used for emphasis or determination
  - She does behave well.
  - You must read today



### iii) Tense

One of the most important functions of the verb is the expression of tense or time reference. Tense is the correspondence between the form of the verb and our concept of time. Tense indicates the time of occurrence or completion of an action. Since time is expressed in terms of 'before the moment of speaking' (past), the moment of speaking (present) and after the moment of speaking (future); and considering that there are two forms of words to express this time as, for instance, eat and ate, talk and talked, some linguists identify only two tenses in English: past and non-past. According to Eka (1994:97) two types of tenses are often identified from the viewpoint of English morphology (i.e. changes that occur in the shapes of English words). From the viewpoint of time reference three types are usually recognized - present, past and future. Examine the following:

	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>PAST</b>	<b>FUTURE</b>
<b>Simple</b>	I write He writes They write	I wrote he wrote they wrote	I shall write he shall write they shall write
<b>Continuous</b>	I am writing He is writing They are writing I have been writing He has been writing They have been writing	I was writing he was writing they were writing I have writing he had been writing they had been writing	I shall be writing he will write they will be writing I shall be writing He will have been writing they will have been writing
<b>Perfective</b>	I have writing He has writing They have written	I had writing he had written they had written	I shall have written he will have written they will have written

### (iv) Finite and Non-finite Forms

The finite forms of the verb exist in the simple present tense form and the past form. These are the verb forms that can occur as verb forms in clauses and sentences; can show tense distinction; can take subjects and indicate the subject - verb agreement e.g.

- They enjoy themselves daily.
- They enjoyed themselves yesterday.
- He enjoys himself daily.

The non-finite verb does not have the subject concord notion because it neither indicates number nor person. Three types of the non-finite verb can be isolated. These are: the infinitive which primarily begins with 'to' e.g. to sing, to laugh, to work; the participle and the gerund. Examples of non finite forms in sentences are:

- A - He likes to sing.
- B - They like singing
- C - This is a deserted house

Recall that finite forms of verbs are the forms that show tense distinction. This means that they occur in one tense or the other. They are also the forms that occur as verb elements in sentences, take subjects and agree with the subjects in person and number. The non finite forms on the other hand do not show tense distinction neither do they take subjects nor show agreement.

Examine the verb forms in the following pair of sentences

- She hopes to travel next week  
(finite verb, has a subject which is she and occurs in the present tense)
- Hoping to travel next week  
(Verb in the present participle, non finite form which cannot take a subject.)

Note: that any attempt to introduce a subject in the second sentence will produce a sentence like:

She hoping to travel next week\*

This is an unacceptable sentence. Non finite forms have other uses. In the examples A-C above they function as other parts of speech. In Example A, to sing is a noun phrase acting as the direct object of the verb “likes”. In Example B, singing is a gerund also functioning as a direct object of the verb “likes” while the past participle form deserted functions as an adjective modifying the noun “house” in Example C.

#### v) Active and Passive Voice

When a verb is in the active voice, the subject is the actor of the verb. The subject performs the action of the verb directly. E.g.

- Okon kicked the ball.
- The congregation praised God.
- The girl killed the rat.

For some reasons, the position of the subject and the object or complement in the sentence may be reversed with the emphasis removed from the one who performs the action to the action itself with the object taking the place of the subject and appearing to be the doer of the action (i.e. passive voice). E.g.

- The ball was kicked by Okon. (Okon still the performer)
- God was praised by. (someone/people who performed the action)

The passive voice is used when the speaker or writer wants to direct more attention to the action performed than on who performed the action as in

- In March, the land is cultivated
- In April, yams are planted

The passive is therefore a useful aspect of literary or expository style. When the active voice is used in everyday speech or writing, the description or narration is more lively and real.

### vi) Transitive and Intransitive Verb

Transitive verbs require objects or complements to make full meaning in a sentence. Consider the following verbs, buy, kill, sing, give. They cannot convey full meaning unless there are completer elements added to them:

- They buy clothes monthly.
- Hunters kill animals for sale.
- Choristers sing songs of praise.
- We give alms to the poor.

Intransitive verbs denote actions that stop with the doer or subject. There is no need for a receiver of the action. E.g.

- Men laugh.
- Children sleep often.
- The bell rang.

Some verbs may be transitive and intransitive. E.g.

- Jesus saves.
- Jesus saves souls.
- The bell rang loudly
- The prefect rang the bell.

A fuller discussion of transitive and intransitive verbs is made in Unit 4, Section 5.

### vii) Singular and Plural Forms

Verbs change forms according to the singular or plural forms of the subject (subject-verb concord or agreement). Only finite verbs respond to singular and plural subjects e.g.

The boy goes to school (singular subject). The boys go to school (plural subject).

It should be noted that whereas the 'noun' boy takes 's' to agree with the singular form the plural form, the verb 'goes' sheds 'es' to agree with the plural subject.

### viii) Participles and Gerunds

Participles are verb forms which combine with other verbs to indicate tense and adjectival functions. Participles are used with the auxiliaries have, has or had to form the perfect tense as in the following:

- I have given her the book.
- He has gone to Uyo.

Gerunds are verbal nouns. They are the present participle forms of verbs. They always end in '-ing' e.g.

- I like reading.

- Dancing is my hobby.
- This is a standing committee

Gerunds perform the functions of other parts of speech. In the above examples, 'reading' performs the function of a noun (object of the verb 'like') while 'dancing' in the second example functions as the subject of the second sentence. In the third sentence, the gerund, 'standing' functions as an adjective modifying the noun 'committee'.

### ix) Regular and Irregular Forms

The classification of verbs into regular and irregular forms is based on past tense and the constituent participle. The regular verbs are also called weak verbs while the irregular ones are called strong verbs.

The regular verb forms the past tense and past participle by the addition of the morphemes 'ed' or 'd' to the present tense form.

E.g. call called walk walked bake baked.

The irregular verb does not take 'd' or 'ed' in forming the past tense or past participle. One way this is done is the change in the vowel. E.g.

sing	sang	sung
drive	drove	driven
break	broke	broken
wind	wound	wound
forget	forgot	forgotten
lend	lent	lent
begin	began	begun

Some irregular verbs take completely new words in the formation of the past e.g.

go	went	gone
do	did	done
bid	bade	bidden
lie	lay	lain
be	was	been

Other irregular verbs do not change their forms when functioning in the past; that is, the present and the past forms are the same e.g.

put	put	put
let	let	let
burst	burst	burst
cut	cut	cut

### x) Stative and Dynamic Forms

Dynamic verbs show action, event or process (Eka, 1996, p. 123). These verbs take the progressive aspect which indicates that an action is continuing through time e.g.

- He is eating, drinking and talking.
- They are watching the film.

Stative verbs do not pattern with the –ing progressive marker. They only indicate the state of affairs of the entity without showing any continuity. E.g.

- He is resembling his father. (wrong)
- He resembles his father (right)
- They are hating him (wrong)
- They hate him (right)
- I am feeling cold (wrong)
- I feel cold (right)

Other stative verbs are: possess, understand, belong, smell, seem, hear, wish, taste, agree, flash, faint, collapse, die, contain, have.

### 3.2 Features and Functions of Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs, just as adjectives modify nouns and nominals. Adverbs answer the questions: Where? When? How? and Why? They indicate place, time, manner and degree.

The fact that adverbs modify adjectives and other adverbs sometimes sound difficult to learners of English, who are made to believe that adverbs only specify the mode of action of verbs. The difficulty is strengthened by the obvious reality that adverbs always cluster around verbs. In these examples, the issues are better appreciated:

- Bassey dances well.
- Inyang dances extremely well.
- Archibong is really tall.

In the first example, the adverb of manner “well” modifies the verb ‘dances’. In the second illustration, ‘extremely’, an adverb of degree modifies “well” while in the third example, the adjective ‘tall’ is modified by the adverb “really”. There are many other potential formations like these in English.

#### i) Formation of Adverbs

These affixes are used in forming adverbs

- ly : exactly, quietly, extremely
- wise : clockwise, moneywise
- ward : forward, backward
- a - : away, aside, afloat, afield

Many adverbs do not have any affixes and should be distinguished from adjectives. Though they may look alike on the surface, syntactically, they perform different functions e.g. fast, near

- He runs fast
- His wedding day is drawing near.

## ii) Degrees of Adverbs

Adverbs are compared in degrees: positive degree, comparative degree and superlative degree. Examine the following:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
Soon	sooner	soonest
Fast	faster	fastest
Far	farther	farthest
Aloud	more loud	most loud

## iii) The Position of Adverbs

Adverbs can occur in a sentence initially, medially and finally. According to Ndimele (1993:117), one quality of adverbials of manner is that they can be shifted from one position to another without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence. This can be illustrated thus:

- Certainly, I know him.
- I certainly know him.
- I know him certainly.

Eka, (1996:149) also observes that even though all the above positions (of the adverb) are known to occur in English utterances it would appear that the one that seems particularly true to the nature of adverbs is the medial position.

## iv) Classes of Adverbs

Adverbs are classified according to functions.

(a) Interrogative Adverbs are often used at the beginning of a sentence to ask a question e.g.

- When did you return?
- *How do I put the items together?*
- *Where did you keep my book?*

(b) **Adverbs of Degree answer the question:** ‘to what extent’? They mostly modify adjectives and other adverbs, rarely verbs.

- The man is too slow.
- He walks very fast.
- She reads till late.

(c) **Adverbs of Place indicate the location of actions.** Some of these adverbs resemble nouns by nature but their functions are essentially adverbial. They are sometimes called nouns used as adverbs. Examples:

- I am coming home.
- He is going there.

(d) **Adverbs of Time denote the interval of occurrence of actions.**

E.g.

- We trekked all day.
- Let us meet tomorrow.

### 3.3 Features and Functions of Adjectives

Things, persons, entities need to be distinguished, differentiated, limited, specified or described so as to aid our understanding. We ask the questions: What kind? Which one? How many? For example, we can say a tall man, this orange or four goats. The words that precede the nouns and also modify or amplify their meaning are called adjectives.

Generally, adjectives state the attributes or characteristics of nominals (nouns, pronouns, and noun phrases). Adjectives as modifiers make language lively as they help us to give precise pictures of what we are referring to.

#### i) Formation of Adjectives

Adjectives take the following affixes

- ish : boyish, childish, mannish
- ous : virtuous, riotous, dangerous
- ary : salutary, rotary, consolatory
- an : Elizabethan, Spartan
- ful : hopeful, thankful, faithful
- y : healthy, filthy
- some : loathsome, troublesome,
- less : faithless, motionless, stainless
- ory : sensory, provisory
- able : punishable, workable, movable
- ive : interactive, elective, inventive
- esque: picturesque, grotesque
- ate : affectionate, temperate, desperate
- al : national, natural, international
- ic : ironic, economic, electronic
- like : childlike, manlike
- ly : likely, stately, scholarly
- ible : sensible, accessible
- able : movable, readable

#### ii) Attributive and Predicative Adjectives

Syntactically, adjectives can occur before the nominal they describe or modify. E.g.

- The beautiful girl is here.
- The clean clothes were ironed.

Some adjectives occur in the predicate part of the sentence following a linking verb

to describe a nominal in the subject part of the sentence. These are predicative adjectives e.g.

- The woman is beautiful
- The boy is courageous.

According to Ndimele (1993:102-103), some adjectives can function both attributively and predicatively e.g.

- The hungry man is here.
- This man is hungry.
- The genuine reason is offered.
- The reason is genuine.

### iii) Regular and Irregular Adjectives (Comparisons)

Things and persons that may attract the same adjective or modifier are not necessarily always the same. They may differ in their degree of quality. Adjectives exhibit the positive level where no comparison is made as well as the comparative and superlative degrees of description. The comparative degree is used when two entities are involved while the superlative degree is applied when more than two entities are compared. E.g.

- Okon is tall.
- Etim is taller than Okon.
- Akpan is the tallest of them.

As a guide, many monosyllabic adjectives (adjectives with one sound units) take the 'er' and 'est' morphemes to form the comparative and superlative forms. These are called Regular or Variable Adjectives. Examples:

<b>Positive</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
large	larger	larges
tall	taller	tallest
short	shorter	shortest
quick	quicker	quickest.

Some disyllabic and almost all adjectives of three or more syllables are compared by the use of 'more' or 'most'. Degrees of inferiority may be indicated by the use of 'less' and 'least'. These are called invariables Examine the following:

handsome	more handsome	most handsome
useful	more useful	most useful
dangerous	more dangerous	most dangerous

A group of adjectives described as irregular adjectives also occur. They include:

good	better	best
little	less	least
bad	worse	worst



Some adjectives cannot be logically compared since the qualities they denote operate in the highest possible level or in absoluteness; their meaning indicates totality e.g. perfect, empty, mortal, blind, wrong, childless, motherless, supreme, omnipotent, fatal, hopeless. One cannot say for instance that Sarah is more childless than Esther or that the pot is emptier than the basin.

#### iv) Domains of Adjectives

These include:

1. Colour : red, blue, yellowish, forest green, sky-blue
2. Shape : oval, triangular, spherical, awkward, round
3. Age : new, old, young, aged, archaic, weary
4. Height : tall, short, high, low, sky-high
5. Weight : light, heavy, in units (kilograms)
6. Interrogation : which book? whose hand?
7. Number : first, second, one, three
8. Demonstration : this, that, these, those
9. Composition : sandy, wooden, earthen, watery

#### v) Nouns Used as Adjectives

Some nouns in their original or possessive forms can express syntactic adjectival functions e.g. Christmas party, John's book, College students, summer clothes, etc.

#### vi) Order of Adjectives

Adjectives can occur in a stretch indicating

- (a) quality,
- (b) temperature,
- (c) size,
- (d) shape,
- (e) colour,
- (f) participants,
- (g) nationality,
- (h) nominal adjective and the headword.

This order a-h is only necessary if all the items are present otherwise only those which occur are indicated in constructions as in:

- A very beautiful rich tall black Nigerian woman
- A rich intelligent bare-footed Asian traveler

Eka (1994:137) suggests that the order of occurrence of adjectives can easily be determined through a consideration of aspects which strike the observer immediately, followed by those which are comparatively less easy to notice. This position is acceptable from the semantic perspective where meaning is uppermost in the mind of the user.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

Review the main features and functions of verbs

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2**

Review the main features and functions of adverbs. Which of the functions are not mentioned here? See Unit 6, Section 4.2.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 3**

Review the main features and functions of adjectives.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit has introduced you to the features and functions of Verbs, Adverbs and Adjectives in English. English verbs express a state of being. While adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, on their own, modify nouns and pronouns by telling you more about such nouns and pronouns in a sentence.

**5.0 SUMMARY**

- The verb is the predicator element in the sentence; it expresses the action performed or the state of the subject.
- Verbs can be derived through affixation; they can occur as main or auxiliary finite or non-finite, transitive or intransitive forms.
- Verbs also exhibit features like tense, aspect and voice. Some verb forms (participles and gerunds) perform the functions of other parts of speech.
- Verbs are classified as regular if they form the past tense with the addition of -d or -ed morpheme or irregular if they change a sound or the whole form of the word; as dynamic if they occur in the progressive form or stative if they do not.
- Adverbs modify verbs, other adverbs or adjectives; they can be derived from other words by the addition of the morphemes -ly, -ward, -wise.
- Adverbs occur initially, finally or medially in clauses/ sentences. Adverbs are compared in degree: positive, comparative and superlative.
- Adverbs are classified according to functions; thus we can have adverbs of time, adverb of place, degree e.t.c
- Adjectives precede nouns and also modify or amplify their meaning. Like adverbs, adjectives can be derived from other words, and they can also be compared. Adjectives can occur in a stretch indicating (a) quality, (b) temperature, (c) size, (d) shape (e), colour (f) participials, (g) nationality, (h) nominal adjective before the headword.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

Give the word class and the functions of the underlined words in the following passage.

A few years past, an errant lunatic was knocked down by an unknown motorist. He was spotted half- dead after a torrential rain that had lasted a whole day. The discovery was instantly reported to the police. When the police came, it was not to help the injured man who was still groaning from his pains, but to arrest suspects and put them in a waiting van.

## 7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

- Eka, D. (1996). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo:Samuf Educational.
- Omachonu, G. S. (2003). *Effective Writing Skills*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Limited (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published in 2011 by Rossen Productions Ltd).
- Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2013). *Effective Use of English and the Use of Library for Higher Education*. Jos- Nigeria: Eiwa Press Ltd.
- Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. (1980). *A University Grammar of English*: London: Longman Press.
- Semmelmeier, M. & Bolander, D. (1984). *Instant English Handbook*. Illinois.
- Udofot, I. & Ekpenyong, B. (2004). *A Comprehensive English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Lagos: Quantum Co.Ltd

## UNIT 3 CLOSED CLASS ITEMS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Features and Functions of Prepositions
  - 3.2 Features and Functions of Pronouns
  - 3.3 Features and Functions of Interjections
  - 3.4 Features and Functions of Conjunctions
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

So far, we have discussed the elements in the open class namely: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. We shall now consider the items in the closed class namely: prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and interjections. Generally these elements have a fixed form in English, they are neither inflectionally nor derivationally changeable.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ Define the features of prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and interjections;
- ✚ Identify prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and interjections in sentences.
- ✚ Use them in sentences.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Features and Functions of Preposition

The root of this word ‘position’ strongly indicates the meaning and primary function of the preposition. It is used to indicate the positional relationship between words in a construction. Prepositions are ‘hooks’ for making modifiers of nouns and pronouns. A preposition is always accompanied by its object or complement (a noun or a pronoun) which it ‘hooks’ to some other parts of a sentence.

Examine these sentences:

- They live in a bungalow near the village.
- They live in a bungalow in the village.
- They live in a bungalow beyond the village.

The underlined words connect the nouns 'bungalow' and 'village' to other parts of the sentence and also express different relationships between them. The sentences are essentially the same in all other respects except in the difference in meaning attributable to the different prepositions in use. Therefore, as against the common consideration that prepositions merely link words in a sentence; they actually in addition influence the meaning of the sentence.

### i) Simple and Complex Prepositions

Though most prepositions are simple, consisting of single words, there are other prepositions which are complex, consisting of many words. Simple prepositions include the following:

above	before	for	since
about	behind	into	toward
across	below	inside	through
after	beneath	into	under
against	between	near	up
among	by	of	with
around	down	off	within

### ii) Prepositional Idioms

The complex prepositions are also called phrasal verbs, prepositional idioms or prepositional patterns because they are collocative and most times a change in the preposition completely alters the meaning of the construction. e.g.

- Round off - to end
- Round on - to attack verbally
- Round about - encircle
- Round up - put together

Complex prepositions occur in:

- a) Preposition + Nominal + Preposition e.g. in the company of, by means of, in comparison with, in addition to, in place of, in love with.
- b) Adverbial (Adverb) + Preposition e.g. along with, instead of, apart from.
- c) Verb, Adjective, Conjunction + Preposition e.g. but for, owing to, far from, due to.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1979:145) notes generally that:

- i) the monosyllabic simple prepositions are normally unstressed in constructions while the polysyllabic prepositions, both simple and complex, are normally stressed. In complex prepositions, the stress falls on the word preceding the final preposition. Such words are adverbs or nouns.
- ii) the preposition + nominal + preposition constitutes by far the most numerous category, the noun in some complex prepositions being preceded by a definite or indefinite article.

### iii) Postponed Prepositions

These are patterns which tend to defy the notion that prepositions come

before their objects. E.g.

- What a problem he got into?
- He is a difficult person to talk to or compliment. In some wh-constructions, *exclamations*, passive forms and infinitive patterns, prepositions may come after the object/complement.

Some scholars, especially traditional grammarians tend to oppose constructions that end with prepositions like those ones, but this argument is unnecessary since prepositions, like adverbs, can occur at different positions in a construction. Of course, the principles of formal and informal usages may come in handy here.

### iv) Functions of Prepositions

Prepositions indicate:

- i) relationship in space
  - The cat is near the ball.
  - This is home away from home.
- ii) location
  - The house is beside the hill.
  - The knife is in the kitchen.
- iii) direction
  - He walked along the street.
  - The water is flowing downward.
- iv) duration of a motion
  - The programme is on.
  - I will sleep at dawn.
- v) sequence
  - A comes before B.
  - Call gentlemen after ladies.
- vi) position (support or opposition)
  - I will stand by you.
  - I am against him.

- vii) purpose or intention
- This money is for food.
  - Everyone needs someone to lean on.

#### v) Special Usages of Prepositions

1. We travel by sea, land or air.
2.
  - a. I will see you at 8 o'clock (point of time)
  - b. I will see you at night.
  - c. I will see you on June 12 (specific day)
  - d. I will see you in December (not specific)
  - e. The meeting will commence at 2'Oclock (Exactly)
  - f. The meeting will commence by 2'Oclock (at or before)
3. I have known him for two years (length of time)
4. Divide this orange between Okon and Etim (two)  
Divide this orange among Okon, Etim and Udoh (three)
5. Stay beside me (near)  
*Besides, I need him (also, in addition to your plan)*
6. We met on the train, bus, boat or plane.
7. I will see you with regard to the journey.
8. I agree with you on the plan.  
I agree to for traveling tomorrow.
9. Let's see about 3.00 p.m. (approximately)

### 3.2 Features and Functions of Pronouns

Pronouns belong to the closed class or system of words because like the prepositions, they are fixed in number. The major function of the pronoun is to substitute nominals (nouns and noun phrases) in order to avoid monotonous repetition such as this:

- Akpan told Udo's guest that Udo was away and that Udo would return soon.

This is better written as:

- Akpan told Udo's guest that he was away and that he would return soon.

Note that the pronoun can only substitute or replace a noun that has already been mentioned in a construction. This noun is called an *antecedent of the pronoun*. Examine the following:

The girls are happy; they are dancing.

Many students do not read; they play around.

#### i) Types of Pronouns

- a) **Personal Pronouns** have persons, number, gender and case which constitute the grammatical categories of pronouns. In terms of persons, there are the first, second and third persons which occur in singular and plural forms function as subjects and objects distinctively and indicate possession in different forms.

This table illustrates the grammatical categories of pronouns:

	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Object Possessive</b>	<b>Form</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> person (singular)	I	me	mine
1 <sup>st</sup> person (plural)	we	us	ours
2 <sup>nd</sup> person (sing./plu.)	you	You, him	Yours,
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular	he, she, it	her, it	His, hers, its
3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural	they	them	theirs

Of these, the most troublesome is the second person which is the same in the singular and plural forms as well as the subject and object cases. It does not also show gender. This should be particularly noted.

**b) Relative Pronouns** feature in (relative or adjectival clauses). They include who, what, which, whom, whose, that, whoever, whichever. Relative pronouns show contrasts. Usually, 'who' and 'whom' refer to persons while 'which', 'what' and that refer to things.

**c) Interrogative Pronouns** are used in asking questions in the subjective, objective or genitive cases. E.g.

*who are you?*

*which is this?*

*whose is that?*

**d) Reflexive Pronouns** refer to self or selves. They exist in compound forms and occur in first, second and third persons with appropriate number as follows:

<b>Person</b>	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
1st person	myself	ourselves
2nd person	yourself	yourselves
3rd person	himself herself	themselves. itself

Reflexive pronouns sometimes perform emphatic function. E.g.

- He himself knows the truth
- I myself cannot imagine that.

**e) Indefinite Pronouns refer to persons / things in general.** They do not really specify a person or a thing. They include: each, both, all, everyone, everything, anybody, somebody, someone, somewhere, anything, any, nothing, nobody, nowhere, none, little, few, one, etc.

**f) Reciprocal Pronouns** express relationship between two or more persons or entities. They are each other - (for two) one another - (for more than two) e.g.



- Atim and Alice love each other
  - Atim, Alice and Janet love one another.
- g) Demonstrative Pronouns point at entities. They should not be mistaken for adjectives:
- This/that is mine. (pronoun, singular)
  - This/that book is mine. (adjective qualifying book)
  - These/those are mine. (pronoun, plural)
  - These/those books are mine. (adjective qualifying books)

### 3.3 Features and Functions of Interjections

This constitutes the smallest group of words in any language. Quirk and Greenbaum (1979:18) provide some examples in English. These are *oh! ah! ugh! phew!*

Interjections usually take exclamatory marks and they merely serve to express emotions such as fear, surprise, admiration, joy and anger. Common examples are:

- How wonderful!
- Look at!
- Watch out!
- Alas!

They can also be found in some thoughtful expressions and expressions of wish or regrets. E.g.

- Good morning!
- Fare well!
- Hello! Hi! Goodbye!
- Had I known!
- Long live our country!

### 3.4 Features and Functions of Conjunctions

Conjunctions specifically connect or join grammatical patterns (words, groups, clauses and sentences). Three types of conjunctions are operational within the closed class. These are **subordinators, coordinators and the correlatives**.

i) **Subordinators** join elements of unequal weight. This means that one pattern which is joined to the other is subordinate to it. They include: after, if, since, that, though, until, till, yet, while, etc.

ii) **Coordinators** join elements of equal rank. There are three in English, namely: and, but, or.

- Grace sings and dances well
- Atim sings well but dances awkwardly.
- Buy the dress or keep back the money.

iii) **Correlatives** occur in pairs. They usually have intervening words or phrases between them. They include: either ... or, neither nor, *only ... but also, both ... and, etc.*

#### iv) **Functions of Conjunctions**

The multiplicity of the functions of conjunctions can easily lead to confusion between them and prepositions or adverbs. The principle is to find out the function of each word before attributing it to any part of speech.

Davidson (1959:573) indicates the following groups of subordinating conjunctions according to their functions:

- Cause : because, in as much as, since;
- Purpose : that, so that, in order that, lest;
- Comparison : than, as, as if, as well as;
- Condition : if, unless, whether, in case;
- Result : that, so that;
- Time : after, before, since, when, while;
- Concession : although, though;
- Place : where;
- Manner : how, as though;
- Degree : as far as, as much as;

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

Review the types and functions of prepositions

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2**

What are the main functions of pronouns?

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 3**

What is the main function of interjections?

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 4**

Review the different kinds of conjunctions and their functions

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit you have studied the features and functions of prepositions, pronouns and interjections in English. The detailed analysis of these concepts, as presented in this unit, has further clarified the relationship between 'content' words and grammatical words in English.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The main points raised in this unit are:

- ✚ Prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and interjections being members of the closed class are fixed in number; they cannot change by inflection or derivation.
- ✚ Prepositions indicate various relationships between constructions; they are simple, complex, prepositional idioms and postponed prepositions.
- ✚ Pronouns substitute nouns and nominals to avoid repetition. The types of pronouns include: personal, interrogative, demonstrative, reflexive, reciprocal

and indefinite pronouns.

- ✚ Interjections constitute the smallest class of words in any language.
- ✚ The main function of interjections is to express emotion.
- ✚ Conjunctions join grammatical units.
- ✚ Three main types of conjunctions often identified are: subordinators, coordinators and relatives.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

Assess the importance of closed class items in English language structure

## 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

- Davidson, D. (1959). *American Composition and Rhetoric*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons
- Eka, D. (1996). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo:Samuf Educational.
- Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2013). *Effective Use of English and the Use of Library for Higher Education*. Jos- Nigeria: Eiwa Press Ltd.
- Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (1980). *A University Grammar of English*, London: Longman.
- Semmelmeier, M & Bolander, D. (1984). *Instant English Handbook*. Illinois: Career Publishing Inc.
- Udofot, I. & Ekpenyong, B. 2004. *A Comprehensive English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Lagos: Quantum Co.Ltd.

## UNIT 4 SENTENCE STRUCTURE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Objectives
- 3.0. Main Content
  - 3.1 Parts of a Sentence
  - 3.2 Compound Subject and Predicate
  - 3.3 Sentence Fragments
  - 3.4 Sentence Elements
  - 3.5 Complementation
  - 3.6 Sentence Patterns
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The sentence is often used to refer to a group of words of different word classes or parts of speech which are put together in such a way that they make “a complete sense”. A full stop is conventionally used to end a sentence. The following groups of words are not sentences:

1. the students of the National Open University
2. visit the study centre
3. nearest to their place of residence

The above groups of words are not sentences because they do not express a complete thought. The first group tells us what the writer is talking about but the writer did not complete the sentence by saying what the students did. The second group of words tells us that some persons visit the study centre but the person is not mentioned. The third group of words says very little. It does not say who was or what happened nearest to their place of residence. Numbers 1-3 are therefore not sentences because some important parts are missing.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the time you complete this unit you should be able to: Identify the important parts of a sentence

- ✚ Describe the elements of a sentence
- ✚ Present acceptable and possible sentence patterns in English
- ✚ Distinguish between the structural and functional types of sentences.
- ✚ Construct complete sentences in English

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Parts of a Sentence

In order to make a complete sense, a sentence must have a subject, that is, the person or thing about whom the writer/speaker is talking; and a *predicate which is what the writer/speaker has to say about the subject*. These are two important terms used to describe the essential parts of a sentence. The subject is the word or group of words that tells us what or *whom the speaker or writer is talking about*. *The predicate makes a statement about the subject*. It usually tells what the subject is doing, or what is happening to the subject.

In the following sentences, the subjects are put on italics and the predicates are not.

4 *My sister* lives at Abuja.

5 *The bag* contains a lot of money.

6 *The staff of the English Department* are very dedicated workers.

7 *The bell* rang repeatedly.

8 *Birds* fly.

Note that the predicate can be one or more words. The verbs together with other words that follow it form the predicate. In No.8 Sentence the predicate is made up of only the verb 'fly'. When the subject is more than one word, there is often a particular word about which something is said. That word is the simple subject. It is usually a noun or a pronoun. Also in the predicate (when it is more than one word) there is often a word that serves as a key to the predicate. That word is usually a verb which states the action performed or the state or condition of the subject. If the verb consists of more than one word, it is called a verb phrase. The verb by itself is called the simple predicate. In the following examples, the subject is underlined while the simple predicate is italicized.

9 The Nigerian president *attended* a conference in Accra.

10 The woman *had* many disappointments.

11 My father *has* bought a new house.

12 The house *collapsed*.

Note that as in No. 8 above, example No.12 has the simple predicate "collapsed" which is also a complete predicate since it is the only word in the predicate.

#### 3.2 Compound Subject and Predicate

A sentence may have two or more simple subjects and two or more simple predicates. In the following sentences, two simple subjects, "Etim" and "Okon" are joined by a coordinating conjunction. In the next sentence, two simple predicates 'went' and 'helped' are also joined. They are therefore compound predicates.

13 Etim and Okon are brothers.

14 Ekaette went home and helped her mother.

Some sentences have both compound subjects and predicates as in the following:

15 My brother and sister washed the clothes and ironed them.

16 The students and their teachers went to the auditorium and listened to the inaugural lecture.

### 3.3 Sentence Fragments

Any group of words that lacks any of the two essential parts of a sentence is a sentence fragment or a fragmentary sentence. A fragment is a piece of something. It is therefore incomplete. When either the subject or a predicate or both are missing, the groups of words do not express a complete thought and is therefore not a sentence. In the following groups of words some are sentences and others are fragments.

17 Hoping to see you again. (Fragment)

18 The registrar interviewed the candidate. (Sentence)

19 Received your message this morning. (Fragment)

20 With kind personal regards. (Fragment)

**Note:** The use of fragmentary or incomplete sentences is an unsatisfactory way of expressing ones ideas. It must be avoided.

### 3.4 Sentence Elements

Every sentence must have a basic structure in order to express a complete thought. This basic structure may consist of a subject (noun or pronoun) and a predicate (verb or verb phrase) (Simmelmeyer and Bolander 1984: 85) as in the following sentence: Birds fly.

Many sentences require a third part or an additional word or group of words in order to express a complete thought. This additional part is needed to complete the idea expressed by the verb. See the following group of words:

The teacher flogged

It contains a subject and a verb but another word or group of words is needed to give more information as regards whom or what the teacher flogged thus:

The teacher flogged the pupil.

This is a complete sentence. The noun phrase “the pupil” completes the predicate. For this reason, it is called a complement.

A complement completes the meaning expressed by a verb. So every sentence has the basic structure containing a subject and a verb (S.V.) or a subject, a verb and a complement (S.V.C.). The type of complement required by a particular verb depends on the type of verb, that is, the class of verb used.

### 3.5 Complementation

Complementation is tied up with classes of verbs. This is because verbs are classified depending on the type of complements they take as transitive, intransitive or linking verbs.

### Complements of Transitive Verbs

Verb which express action that passes from the performer to the person or thing affected take direct object complements as in the following examples:

The mechanic repaired the car.

She sang *a song*.

He refused *my invitation*.

I saw *Grace*.

In each of the above sentences, the italicized words are affected by the action of the verb. They are the direct objects. This is to say that the verbs in the above sentences are transitive verbs and they take direct objects as a complement.

There are verbs which take two objects: the direct object and the indirect object. The indirect object tells to whom or for whom the action is performed. The indirect object is often used after certain verbs: get, give, lend, offer, read, tell, buy, send, show, make, pay etc. In the sentences below, the indirect objects are italicized.

The teacher read his pupils a story. She made me a fine dress.

My father gave his driver a Christmas bonus.

### Complements of Intransitive Verbs

Verbs that do not express actions that pass from the doer to the receiver are intransitive verbs. This means that intransitive verbs do not take direct objects because even though they express action the effect of the action is not felt by someone or something. In the following example the intransitive verbs take no objects.

Alice is singing.

In the above example nobody is suffering the effect of the singing. If the sentence were

Alice is singing a song;

then the action of singing would affect the song so to say. Similarly, in the sentence;

She dances gracefully;

there is no direct object and the action does not pass from the doer to the receiver. The verb 'is singing' and 'dances' are therefore intransitive. Intransitive verbs take adverbial complements where necessary.

Alice is singing melodiously. (Adverb of manner)

She arrived before nightfall (Adverbial of time)

Some verbs can be used both transitively and intransitively. It is necessary to watch out for when there is a direct object in which case the verb will be transitive and intransitive when the complement is an adverbial. Study the following:

The time-keeper rang the bell.

The bell rang repeatedly.

We met the visitors. We met last week.

### Complements of Linking Verbs

Linking Verbs do not express action. They express conditions and states. They have very little meaning of their own but express various ideas in relation to the subject. Their main purpose is to link the subject with some word in the predicate that gives the sentence a meaning. It is for this reason that they are referred to as linking verbs.

A linking verb is always followed by a subject complement. A subject complement is simply a noun, pronoun or adjective which refers to the same person or thing as the subject. A linking verb therefore links the subject to the noun or adjective often referred to as predicate noun or *adjective or pronoun*. *Some common linking verbs are: be, feel, look, smell, appear, keep, stay, remain turn, sound, prove.*

In the following sentences, the predicate noun, adjective or pronoun is not direct objects but subject complements.

*My sister is intelligent.* (Predicate adjective).

She became a medical doctor (Predicate noun). This is she. (Predicate pronoun).

A linking verb cannot make a complete predicate. It always requires a subject complement. That means that *My Sister is\** or *she became\** or *This is\* cannot stand on their own as 'she cried' can. They require something to complete the predicate; and as earlier stated linking verbs take subject complements.*

### 3.6 Sentence Patterns

Depending on the type of verb, the complement of a verb can be an object, adverbial, a subject complement or a group of words functioning as any of the above. There are therefore five basic sentence elements in the traditional classification. Note that these five basic elements are classified as four elements in some models. In the Systemic Grammar Model for instance, four basic grammatical units SPCA are identified. We have identified the three types of complements depending on the classes of verb here, which in addition to the subject and the verb (predicator) add up to our five elements.

Subject - S

Verb - V

Object) Direct Object - Od

Indirect Object - Oi

Adverbial - A

Complement) Subject Complement - Cs

Object Complement - Co

Note: \* The starred opinions are incorrect usages.



Of the five sentence elements: SVOAC, the subject and verb are constant; they are always present while the object, adverbials or complements are variable. Their presence depends on the pattern of sentence and the type of verb. Also, the elements

O can be direct Od, or Indirect Oi

C can be Cs or Co that is subject or object complement

A can be adverbial of time, place, manner, condition, reason etc.

Using the five elements SVOAC the following sentence structures or patterns are possible:

V - Sing

SV - She is singing.

Birds fly.

The aeroplane has landed.

SVA - She is singing beautifully.

Funke dances gracefully. Femi came immediately.

SVC - My brother is a doctor.

He is very successful.

He has become a commissioner for Health.

SVO - I ate the meat.

The students played basketball. My father paid my fees.

SVOO - They gave their friends presents.

She lent me her book.

My father bought my mother a new pair of shoes.

SVO - His father named him his heir.

I made her my successor.

The company nominated my brother the managing director.

SVAC- She was formerly a beauty queen.

I will remain forever grateful

SVOCA-They elected him chairman each year.

SVOA - My father put the money in the bank.

She hid her handbag somewhere.

The students spent their public holiday at the beach.

Thus there can be the following sentence patterns.

One Element - V

Two Elements - SV

Three Elements - SVO

- SVC

Four Element - SVOO

- SVAC

- SVOC

- SVOA

Five Elements - SVOCA

**NOTE:** It should be noted that a sentence may be a word as shown above. In this case either the subject or predicate is implied. With transitive verbs the following types of sentence patterns are possible:

- SVO - I drank the beer  
 SVOO - She gave me the beer  
 SVOA - He poured the beer into my glass;

On the other hand, the following patterns are possible with intransitive verbs:

- SV - You are joking  
 SVC - You are humorous  
 SVA - Your friend is in the car

With linking verbs only the following patterns are possible:

- SVC - She is beautiful.  
 SVAC - She was formerly a beauty queen.

It is important to note that any of the sentence elements can be a word, a phrase or a clause as the following sentences show:

- SVO - Ekaette ate yams (words)  
 SVA - The pen was seen in the bag (SVA= phrases).  
 SVA - The biro pen was seen where it was kept (A= Clause).

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

Which of the following groups of words are complete sentences and which are fragments?

1. The sound of the car.
2. The sound of the car alerted us
3. A desirable habit.
4. Singing in the hall.
5. The dress you gave me.
6. Under the table.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2**

In the following sentences, which of the verbs have direct object complements and which of them do not.

1. The bus leaves at noon.
2. The bus leaves the passengers who are late.
- 3 She cooked rice and stew.
4. She cooks very well.
- 5 The taxi has arrived.
- 6 The taxi has arrived Lagos City
- 7 Did you meet?
- 8 Did you meet at the airport?
- 9 The boys are playing.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit has explained clearly how a typical English sentence is structured. You have also learned about the parts that make up a complete sentence in English, as well as the elements and acceptable sentence patterns that can be observed in the language. This has further made it clear that the English language has rules that guide the correct

formation of a given sentence structure.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the important points made in this unit:

- ✚ A sentence is a group of words of different word classes which are put together in such a way that it expresses complete thought.
- ✚ A complete sentence must have a subject and a predicate which can be simple or complex.
- ✚ A group of words which lacks any of the essential parts is called a fragment.
- ✚ A complement completes the meaning expressed by the verb. The nature of the verb determines the type of complement. Transitive verbs take direct and/or indirect objects; intransitive verbs take adverbial complements when necessary while linking verbs take subject complements.
- ✚ There are five basic sentence elements in the traditional classification; these are: Subject(S), Verb (V), Object (O), Adverbial (A) and Complement (C) often represented as SVOAC.
- ✚ Of the five elements, the verb is the compulsory element while the other elements are optional. Sentences can be formed using the five elements as follows: V, SV, SVO, SVA, SVOO, SVAC, and SVOAC (See Section 6.0 above)

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA) 9

With suitable examples, discuss verb classes and complementation in English.

## 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

- Eka, D. (1996). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo: Samuf Educational.
- Omachonu, G. S. (2003). *Effective Writing Skills*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Limited (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published in 2011 by Rossen Productions Ltd).
- Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2013). *Effective Use of English and the Use of Library for Higher Education*. Jos- Nigeria: Eiwa Press Ltd.
- Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. (1980). *A University Grammar of English*. London: Longman Press.
- Semmelmeier, M. & Bolander, D. (1984). *Instant English Handbook*. Illinois: Career Publishing Inc.
- Udofot, I. & Ekpenyong, B. (2004). *A Comprehensive English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Lagos: Quantum Co. Ltd .

## UNIT 5 SENTENCE TYPES

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0. Main Content
  - 3.1 Simple and Compound Sentences
  - 3.2 Complex and Compound Complex Sentences
  - 3.3 Multiple Sentences
  - 3.4 Declarative and Interrogative Sentences
  - 3.5 Imperative and Exclamatory Sentences
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sentences can be classified according to the internal structure of the sentence, that is, the way they are made up. This classification depends largely on the number and kinds of clauses which the sentence contains (Semmelmeyer & Bolander, 1984: 199) every sentence has at least one independent clause which carries the idea of the sentence. Some have more than one.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- ✚ Identify the different types of English sentences; and
- ✚ Construct the different types of sentences.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Simple and Compound Sentences

A sentence that contains one independent clause is called a simple *sentence*. For example, the following sentence has only one subject and one predicate and is therefore a simple sentence.

*Edem joined the army last year.*

A simple sentence can also have a compound subject or predicate as in the following examples:

*Ekaette and Arit became fashion models* (Compound subject)

*They sang and danced at the concert.* (Compound predicate)

*Rose and Anna sang and danced at the concert.*  
(Compound subject compound predicate)

A compound subject does not suggest that there are two subjects but rather that one subject is made up of two nouns or pronouns. Similarly a compound predicate does not mean two predicates but one predicate which is made up of two or more verbs or verb phrases.

*A compound sentence, on the other hand, is made up of two or more independent clauses joined by a co-ordinating conjunction to form one sentence. In the following sentence, each of the clauses joined by 'and' can stand by itself:*

Peter joined the army and his friend went to a university.

When not joined by a conjunction, two independent clauses can be linked together by a semi-colon. A comma can also be used with a conjunction to link a compound sentence but not a comma alone. Examine the following:

The author wrote many stories for children, and he also wrote a number of poems.

I went to the bank; I later rushed back for my lectures (semi colon).

### 3.2 Complex and Compound Complex Sentences

Another type of sentence is the complex sentence. This is made up of one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses. A dependent or subordinate clause depends for its meaning on the main clause. It cannot stand by itself. A subordinate clause is usually introduced by a subordinate conjunction or a relative pronoun. These connecting words make it clear that the clause depends on another part of the sentence for its full meaning. Examine the following complex sentences:

I shall be at home when you come.

She wore the blouse and the perfume which her son gave her for Christmas  
*If it rains, I shall stay at home.*

Note that the italicised sections of the above sentences are dependent on the main/independent clauses which are not italicised. They cannot stand on their own. In the first sentence the dependent clause is introduced by the subordinate conjunction 'when', while in the second sentence it is introduced by the relative pronoun 'which'. In the third sentence, the dependent clause is introduced by the subordinate conjunction 'if'. Meanwhile, the following sentence which is also a complete sentence contains more than one subordinate clause.

*When he spoke to me, I refused to answer him because he was very impolite.*

The italicized sections are subordinate clauses introduced by the subordinate conjunctions 'when' and 'because'. Occasionally some sentences are constructed which have two or more independent clauses and two or more subordinate clauses. They are the Compound Complex Sentences. The next examples illustrate this sentence structure.

*As soon as it starts raining, farmers begin to plant and they always hope that the rains will come regularly.*

*Before he gained admission into a university, his mother was always worried and she never stopped planning what he would do when he finished his university education.*

### 3.3 Multiple Sentences

A fifth structural sub type of sentence - the multiple sentence is often identified. A multiple sentence has at least three main clauses and no subordinate clause. The following are examples multiple sentences;

➤ *I came, I saw, I conquered.*

*Mary cooked breakfast; Augusta washed the dishes and Tom swept the compound.*

➤ *My mother was excited at the news; she sang and danced and cried simultaneously.*

The first two sentences are made up of three sentences each, while the third one has four verbs (excited, sang, danced, cried) and therefore has four sentences with the last three sharing the same subject (she). Whereas commas are used to separate the first example because they are very short and are made up of only SV structure, a semicolon is used to separate the first part in the other two examples while the coordinating conjunction and is used to join the others. According to Eka (1994:45) 'these variations are largely stylistic but they can also be seen as attempts to avoid monotony'. Multiple sentences are often long and involved. Students are expected to recognize them when they are used but are advised to avoid them or use them with care.

### 3.4 Declarative and Interrogative Sentences

A sentence that makes a statement is called a declarative sentence. A declarative sentence ends with a full stop. The normal order is for the subject to appear at the beginning. However, for variety or emphasis, the subject may appear at other places in the sentence. Here are some examples of declarative sentences.

- a) The athletes ran down the street.
- b) Down the street, the athletes ran.
- c) My sister is a teacher.

A sentence that asks a question is called an interrogative sentence. The interrogative sentence is generally written in an inverted order; sometimes it starts with a verb and sometimes it begins with an adverb:

- d) Did you bring your camera?
- e) Where did you buy your watch?

To determine the subject and predicate, the interrogative sentence should be placed in a normal order. The interrogative sentence ends with a question mark. For example, Sentences (d) and (e) can be rewritten in the normal order as follows:

You did bring the camera or You brought your camera.

You did buy your watch where? or you bought your watch where?

### 3.5 Imperative and Exclamatory Sentences

A sentence that gives a command or makes a request is called an *imperative sentence*. *It usually ends with a full stop and sometimes with* an exclamation mark. The subject of an imperative sentence is seldom expressed. If the subject is not expressed it is the word, 'you'. Sometimes an imperative sentence begins with a noun that indicates the name of the person to whom the command or request is given:

Go out of the class (Command)

Atim, (please) give me your pen (Request) Eka (1994: 47-48) identifies four types of imperative:

#### (a) Mild Imperative

These are commands which have been rendered mild by the addition of 'please' to show politeness as in the following examples:

Please sit down.  
Give me your pen, please.

The above examples are different from polite requests which involve changing the structure of the imperatives to questions or statements e.g.

Will you sit down, please?  
I wonder whether you would mind giving me your pen.

#### (b) Forceful Imperatives

Forceful imperatives are harsh and tend to suggest that the speaker is irritated. In the written form, forceful imperatives end with the exclamation mark instead of the full stop used to end mild imperatives.

The following exemplify this subtype:

Go out before I shut the door!  
Remove your shoes from the rug!

Some forceful imperatives can be coated with pleasantness with the addition of do and let as in:

Do bring the car before noon  
 Let us meet today at 4.00pm prompt

### (c) Negative Imperatives

Negative imperatives emphasize what should not be done. They usually begin with the word 'Don't'. See the following examples:

Don't enter the room without knocking  
 Don't cross the field

### (d) Single Word Imperatives

Single word imperatives are usually verbs which always have the implied subject 'You'. Examine the following

(You) Shut the door  
 (You) Stand up

The sentence that expresses strong feeling is called an exclamatory *sentence*. *It is often written in an inverted order. To determine the subject and predicate, the sentence should be transposed, that is, written in the normal order. Exclamatory sentences usually end with exclamation marks.*

What a mess this is! (Inverted Order)  
 This is what a mess! (Normal Order) \*Not in common use.

Alas, she is dead!

Sometimes, the word 'there' is used as an expletive to introduce a sentence.

When 'there' is used in this way, it is NOT an adverb. It is used merely to fill up the place occupied by the subject. The subject appears later in the sentence. Examine the following:

There are many books in my library.  
 Many books are (there) in my library.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1

Separate the following sentences into dependent and independent clauses;

1. As soon as it starts raining, farmers begin to plant and they always hope that the rains will come regularly.
2. Before he gained admission into a university, his mother was always worried and she never stopped planning what he would do when he finished his university education.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

Discuss the various uses of sentences in communication?



## 4.0 CONCLUSION

English sentences can be categorised according to their structure or function. When sentences are classified according to their structure, emphasis is laid on the types of clauses that make up the sentence. But when English sentences are categorised according to their functions, we study the particular communicative functions that they perform and how thoughts are expressed.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following main points have been made in this unit:

- ✚ Sentences can be classified according to their structure and uses. According to structure five main types of sentences can be identified; these are simple, compound, complex, compound complex and multiple sentences.
- ✚ According to function, four main types of sentences can also be identified: the declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory.
- ✚ The word 'there' often used to start a sentence is not an adverb but merely used to fill up the space occupied by the subject.
- ✚ a simple sentence has one main clause and no subordinate clause.
- ✚ a compound sentence has two main clauses and no subordinate clause.
- ✚ a complex sentence has one main clause and at least one subordinate clause, while a compound complex sentence has two main clauses and at least one subordinate clause.
- ✚ A multiple sentence has at least three main clauses and no subordinate clause.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

Write out your own examples of the structural types of sentences in English.

## 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

- Eka, D. (1996). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo:Samuf Educational.
- Omachonu, G. S. (2003). *Effective Writing Skills*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Limited (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published in 2011 by Rossen Productions Ltd).
- Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2013). *Effective Use of English and the Use of Library for Higher Education*. Jos- Nigeria: Eiwa Press Ltd.
- Semmelmeier, M. & Bolander, D. (1984). *Instant English Handbook*. Illinois: Career Publishing Inc.
- Udofot, I. & Ekpenyong, B. (2004). *A Comprehensive English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Lagos: Quantum Co. Ltd.

## UNIT 6 CLAUSES IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 Clause Types
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Clauses are groups of words which can modify other structures. They contain finite verbs and they also have subjects and predicates. They can function like nouns, adjectives, adverbs and sentence elements. A clause is named according to its function. In the following examples clauses and their functions are identified.

The bag which you gave me is very lovely.  
(Adjectival Clause), modifying the noun 'bag'

They hurried home because it started raining  
(Adverbial clause of reason).

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ Identify clauses and their structure;
- ✚ Identify the different types of clauses; Analyse sentences into constituent clauses.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Clause Types

A clause, as already explained, is a group of words which has a subject and a predicate. When the group can stand by itself and express a complete thought it is called an independent or main clause. On the other hand, when the group of words has a subject and a predicate but cannot stand on its own it is called a dependent or subordinate or bound *clause*

An independent clause is a simple sentence when it stands alone. For instance the following sentence is made up of two independent clauses joined by ‘and’:

- The referee blew the whistle and the football match began.

Each clause can be written as a sentence and it will express a complete thought as in the examples below:

- a. *The referee blew the whistle.* b. *The football match began.*

### Subordinate Clauses

Three types of subordinate clauses are often identified in English. These are Adjectival Clauses, Adverbial Clauses and Noun Clauses. Each of these clauses can be used as a part of speech and it performs the functions of an adjective, an adverb or a noun as the case may be. Note that phrases can also perform the functions of nouns, adverbs and adjectives. In the following examples, the italicised groups of words function as parts of speech and are named after the word class or part of speech whose function they perform.

The man whose daughter won the essay competition is my uncle.

(Adjectival clause modifying the noun man)

I believe that the girl is honest.

(Noun clause – subject complement)

Before the doctor arrived, the man had died.

(Adverbial clause (of time) modifying the verb ‘had died’)

### Adjectival Clauses

An adjectival clause is a subordinate clause that functions as an adjective. That means that it is used to describe a noun or pronoun. An adjectival clause is usually introduced by a relative pronoun. A relative pronoun is a pronoun that joins an adjectival clause to some word in the independent or main clause. The word to which it joins the clause is the ‘antecedent’ of the relative clause. The pronouns often used in this way are who, whom, which and that. Who and whom are often used to refer to people while which refers to things. The pronoun “that” is however sometimes used to refer to both people and things although it should refer to things. The following sentences contain relative clauses introduced by relative pronouns.

- a) Inemesit has brought the fruits that you ordered.  
(Adjectival clause introduced by that).
- b) I like the food which my mother gave me  
(Adjectival clause introduced by which)
- c) Children who talk early are usually intelligent  
(Adjectival clause introduced by who)
- d) This is the man whom you spoke to me about

(Adjectival clause introduced by whom)

In the first example, the subordinate clause is italicised. It is an adjectival clause which modifies the noun *fruits*. This clause is introduced by the relative pronoun *that*. The antecedent of the relative pronoun “*that*” is *fruits*.

In formal constructions, *whom* is used after prepositions.

- a. To whom did you give the book?
- b. The man to whom I gave the book is in the car.

Sometimes an adjectival clause is introduced by the word *whose* the possessive form of the pronoun *who*. In such cases, *whose* modifies the noun which follows it. When used in this way in an adjectival clause, *whose* is referred to as a relative adjective. The word *relative* suggests that *whose* refers to its antecedent in the main clause. In the following example the word *whose* is a relative adjective modifying the noun *woman* in the main clause.

This is the woman whose baby was stolen.

The relative adjective also connects the subordinate clause to *woman*. Adjectival clauses are sometimes introduced by the relative adverbs, *where*, and *why* as in the following examples:

I found the house where my sister lives.

(Adjectival clause modifying ‘house’)

The test was fixed at a time when we were all free

(Adjectival Clause modifying the noun, ‘time’).

He gave the reason why he resigned his appointment

(Adjectival clause modifying the noun, ‘reason’).

Note that adverbs modify verbs and other adverbs. The difference between a relative adverb and a simple adverb is that the relative adverb is found in an adjective clause and it refers to its antecedent in the main clause.

## Adverbial Clauses

An adverbial clause is a group of words with a subject and a predicate which functions as an adverb. Adverbs tell how, when, where, to what *extent*, *for what reason* etc an action is performed. An adverbial clause answers the same questions and also expresses several other ideas which the simple adverb does not express. An adverbial clause is usually introduced by a subordinate conjunction. The connecting word is called a subordinate conjunction because the idea expressed by the clause is subordinate to the main idea in the sentence. The subordinate clause also shows the relation between the subordinate clause and the word in the main clause which the subordinate clause modifies.

Adverbial clauses express a number of different ideas. The following are ten of the important ideas, often, expressed by adverbial clauses: *time, manner, place, degree, purpose, result, condition, comparison, concession, and reason*. The following subordinate conjunctions are commonly used in adverbial clause of various types:

(a) **Time:** after, before, when, whenever, until, since, while, as soon as:

Before the doctor arrived, the patient had died.

(b) **Place: where, wherever;**

I parked the car where it could be seen by the security men.

(c) **Manner: as, as if, as though:**

The girl cried as if her heart would break.

(d) **Degree: that, as ... as, not so ... as, than;**

Ekaette is not as beautiful as her sister (is beautiful).

(e) **Comparison: as, than, so ... as, as ... as**

The bus arrived earlier than it usually does.

(f) **Purpose: that, so that, in order that.**

Etim worked very hard so that he might meet the deadline.

(g) **Condition: If, provided, provided that, unless;**

I shall go home early if I finish my assignment.

(h) **Result: that, so that**

The food was so delicious that I asked for another plate.

(i) **Concession: although, though, even if**

Although she was ill, she travelled to Abuja last week.

(j) **Reason: as, because, since;**

The students bought the school journal because they were compelled to do so.

The adverbial clause is often preceded by the main clause. Sometimes, an adverbial clause is placed at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis. When that happens, it is usually separated from the main clause with a comma.

## Noun Clauses

Unlike adjectival and adverbial clauses, noun clauses are not modifiers. They perform the same function as nouns. Like nouns, the noun clause performs any of the following functions:

### Subject of the Sentence

A noun clause like a noun often functions as the subject of a sentence as in the following examples.

- *What the Chairman proposed was not feasible* (Noun Clause –subject)
- *Where we could rest for the night was our problem* (Noun Clause – subject)
- *That you are my sister is not debatable.* (Noun Clause – subject)

Notice that the noun clauses in the above sentences are introduced by *what, where, how and that*. These same words also introduce adjectival or adverbial clauses. The way to determine that the clause one is dealing with is a noun clause is to ensure that it

performs the functions of a noun.

### **Direct Object of the Sentence**

A noun clause frequently serves as the direct object of the verb. A noun clause used as the object completes the verb and in most cases answers the question what? asked after the verb, as in the following examples:

I believe (what) that you will be promoted.  
(Noun Clause – Direct object).

We knew (what) what to do in an emergency.  
(Noun phrase – Direct object).

### **Predicate Noun/Subject Complement**

After a linking verb, a noun clause may be used as a predicate noun or subject complement NOT as an object as in the following:

The rumour was that he had died.  
(Noun Clause – means the same as rumour)

This is what you vowed to do.  
(Noun Clause – means the same as this)

### **Object of a preposition**

A noun clause is sometimes used as the object of a preposition as in the following examples:

Give the message to whoever is available. (Noun clause; object of the preposition ‘to’)

I did not agree with what the doctor said. (Object of the preposition ‘with’)

### **An Appositive**

A noun clause is also often used in apposition with another noun, that is, it is placed near another noun to explain or identify it in some way. We often speak of a person and then add something to explain who he is or identify him in some way:

Etim, who is our driver, is very careful. We called on Dr. Ini Uko, the one who is a feminist critic. Abuja, which is the Capital of Nigeria, is located in the North.

A noun clause is often used in apposition to a word or group of words. It usually explains an idea, fact, belief, report, rumour etc. Noun Clauses in apposition are not set off by commas as in the following examples.

*The rumour that she had an accident spread rapidly.*  
(Noun Clause in apposition with ‘rumour’).

*The fact that she passed her examination made her parents proud of her.*  
(Noun Clause, in apposition with (‘fact’)).

Additionally, an appositive noun clause with *that* differs from a relative clause because *that* is not an element in the clause structure (subject, object etc) as it must be in a relative clause (Quirk and Greenbaum 1980: 383).

### **Noun Clauses and the introductory ‘it’**

Sometimes a sentence begins with an introductory word (for instance ‘it’). It should be noted that in such sentences, the introductory word is not the real subject of the sentence. The real subject usually appears later. In such sentences, the real subject is usually a noun clause as in the following examples:

It is evident that you are not the owner  
(Noun clause – subject)

The sentence can be rewritten as follows:

That you are not the owner is evident.

In such a sentence as the above, the word ‘it’ simply fills the place normally occupied by the subject. It is an expletive. Sentences that begin with an expletive or ‘filling in’ word are usually easy to recognise because they follow the same pattern.

*It is important that you leave at once*  
(Expletive) (Noun clause – subject)  
(It) That you go home at once is important. (transposed order)

### **Words that introduce Noun Clauses**

A noun clause is often introduced by a subordinate conjunction. The following conjunctions are the ones normally used to introduce noun clauses: *that*, *whether* and sometimes *whether ... or*. The main function of the subordinate conjunction is to join the noun clause to the main clause as in the following examples:

I wonder whether he will recognise me.  
Okon knew that he would be punished.

Other words often used to introduce noun clauses include the relative pronouns; *who*, *what*, *whatever*, *whoever* as well as the adverbs *how*, *when*, *why* and *where*.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE)**

Identify the italicized clauses as well as their functions in the sentences below:

- (i) The candidates *who are successful in the examination* will be admitted.
- (ii) *Nobody could understand why the results were late.*
- (iii) *Whoever wants to succeed must work hard.*

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this you studied the structure and types of clauses in English. You also learnt that the independent and dependent clauses are also referred to as main and subordinate clauses. It is particularly stressed that an English clause must always contain a subject and verb.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, the following points have been made:

- A clause is a group of words with a subject and a predicate which can modify other structures and also function as a part of speech.
- When a clause can stand by itself, it is called a main or independent clause.
- When a clause depends on another part of the sentence, it is called a dependent or subordinate clause.
- Three types of subordinate clauses are often identified: the adjectival, the adverbial and the noun clause.
- The adjectival clause functions as an adjective: it modifies a noun.
- The adverbial clause functions as an adverb: it modifies a verb or another adverb.
- An adverbial clause gives information as to the place, time manner, reason etc. that the action expressed by the verb occurred.
- The noun clause performs the functions of a noun such as serving as the subject, object, subject complement, object of a preposition and an appositive.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA) 11

Identify the ten grammatical structures underlined in the following passage and state their grammatical functions.

With the discovery of the abandoned<sup>1</sup> baby boy by the side of the shrub near Hassan Street, the social welfare officers swung into action. The baby was taken to the Motherless Babies Home<sup>2</sup> and the officials immediately started to investigate how the baby was abandoned<sup>3</sup>. Residents were approached and interrogated. But the officials got very little co-operation from the people who refused to say what they knew<sup>4</sup>. How could they if talking too much could get them into trouble<sup>5</sup>. A few years past<sup>6</sup>, an errant lunatic instantly<sup>7</sup> was knocked down by an unknown motorist. He was spotted half dead after a torrential rain that had lasted a whole day<sup>8</sup>. The discovery was reported to the police. When the police came<sup>9</sup> it was not to help the injured man who was still groaning from his pains<sup>10</sup> but to arrest suspects and put them into a waiting Van.

(Adapted from Udofot and Ekpenyong, 2001, p.113).



**7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS**

- Eka, D. (1996). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo:Samuf Educational.
- Omachonu, G. S. (2003). *Effective Writing Skills*. Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Limited (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published in 2011 by Rossen Productions Ltd).
- Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2013). *Effective Use of English and the Use of Library for Higher Education*. Jos- Nigeria: Eiwa Press Ltd.
- Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. (1980). *A University Grammar of English*. London: Longman Press.

**UNIT 7 ELEMENTS OF GROUP STRUCTURE****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Kinds of Groups/Phrases
    - 3.1.1 Prepositional Phrase
    - 3.1.2 Adjectival Phrase
    - 3.1.3 Adverbial Phrase
    - 3.1.4 Noun Phrase
  - 3.2 Group Structure
    - 3.2.1 The Nominal group
    - 3.2.2 The Verbal Group
    - 3.2.3 The Adverbial Group
    - 3.2.4 The Adjectival group
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A group refers to a set of more than one word. It can function as any part of speech or sentence element. The group is also called a phrase. For example, the verb ‘dance’ is a single word verb but the groups “is dancing, has danced, would have danced” are verb phrases. Similarly there are noun phrases, prepositional phrases, adjectival phrases when more than one word is involved. But except for a verb phrase, any group of words that has no subject and no finite (main) verb is called a phrase. Phrases are called by the classes of words to which they belong. They are also called by the word class to which the most important word in the phrase belongs as shown in the following examples:

- (a) The good woman – noun phrase
- (b) Beautiful and healthy – adjectival phrase
- (c) On the table – prepositional phrase
- (d) Last week – adverbial phrase
- (e) Has been called – verb phrase.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- ✚ Identify phrases and their structure;
- ✚ Identify the different types of phrases;
- ✚ Analyse sentences into constituent phrases; and
- ✚ Describe the structure of the nominal, verbal, adverbial and adjectival groups

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Kinds of Phrases

#### 3.1.1 Prepositional Phrase

A prepositional phrase consists of the preposition and its object. Sometimes a noun which serves as the object of the preposition has modifiers but the important words are the preposition and the object. Study the following examples:

1. She strolled round the building.  
(Preposition) (Object)
2. The girl in the black lace is a law student.  
(Preposition) (Object)

In sentence No.1 for instance the preposition is *round*; the object is the *building* while the prepositional phrase is *round the building*.

A prepositional phrase usually functions as an adjective or an adverb. Since adjectives and adverbs modify, the prepositional phrase is also a modifier.

#### 3.1.2 Adjectival Phrase

An adjectival phrase is a prepositional phrase that modifies a noun or pronoun. It often functions as an adjective. The following examples contain adjectival phrases.

3. The man *at the gate* opened the door for me.
4. They took the road *near the market*.

In No.3, the prepositional phrase *at the gate* modifies the noun *gate* while the prepositional phrase *near the market* modifies the noun *road* in No.4. An adjectival phrase, also called adjective phrase, may follow the noun it describes or it may be used as a predicate adjective after a linking verb as in the following examples:

- 5 She wore a wrapper with blue beads.
- 6 The injured girl was in a coma.
- 7 He drove in a cream coloured car.
- 8 The woman was in a terrible rage.

Notice that in the above examples the prepositional phrases in Nos.5 and 7 follow linking verbs and therefore function as predicate adjectives while the ones in Nos. 4 and 6 follow the nouns which they describe.

### 3.1.3 Adverbial Phrases:

An adverbial phrase is also a prepositional phrase which performs the functions of an adverb: modifying a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Like the adverb, the adverbial phrase answers the questions when? Where, how? and to what extent? Adverbial phrases express additional ideas about the verb such as time, place, manner and degree as in the following examples:

- 9 I shall come *in the evening* (time).
- 10 The children played *in the field* (place).
- 11 Write your name *in capital letters* (manner)
- 12 He withdrew from school because of financial problems (reason).

In No. 9, the adverbial phrase modifies the verb shall come. It gives information about the time that I will come. In No. 10, the adverbial phrase modifies the verb played saying where the children played while the adverbial phrases in Nos 11 and 12 modify the verbs write and *withdraw* respectively. In No. 11, the adverbial phrase gives information about how or in what manner the name is to be written and in No. 12, the adverbial phrase gives the reason why he withdrew from school. Adverbial phrases which modify adjectives and adverbs are not always so easy to identify. As a guide, the adverbial phrase that modifies an adjective often follows that adjective as in the following examples.

The woman looked frightened of the man.  
She was therefore ready at any time.

Note also that a preposition is not always a single word as in the following.

I packed the car in front of our house.

The professor resigned on account of his political appointment.

### 3.1.4 Noun Phrase

The noun Phrase contains a noun a modifier and sometimes a qualifier. These together constitute the nominal group. At other times, a noun phrase contains nouns joined by a conjunction. The following are examples of noun phrases:

Esther and Naomi;  
The students of the Department of English;  
My elder sister and her friends;

From the three examples above it can be seen that some noun phrases have modifiers while some do not have modifiers. The noun phrase can serve as a substitute for a noun and perform the functions often performed by nouns (See Module 2: Unit 6).

## 3.2 Group Structure

### 3.2.1 The Nominal Group

The nominal group has a minimum of one and a maximum of three elements: modifier, head and qualifier usually represented by the letters *m h q* alternatively referred to as *premodifier, head, and postmodifier*. The head is usually the noun in the group. The head may have a modifier alone as in; that woman, the tree, a table, some water. It may have a head and a qualifier: women of our church, trees in the garden. It may have all three as in the following (m h q):

The women of our church;  
m h q

The trees in the garden;  
m h q

A table in the centre of the room  
m h q

Of the three elements, the head is the compulsory one. The modifier and the qualifier are optional elements. This information can be summarized as follows: (m) h (q). Each nominal group has a structure. In a nominal group there may be many modifiers and qualifiers but usually, there is one head which may be single or compound.

#### *The m Element*

We can have a zero modifier element in a construction that begins with the head e.g

*Women of our church.*

Where there are modifier elements we can have a maximum of eleven modifier elements though in real life it is never necessary to use more than three or four e.g.

The tall beautiful young woman  
m m m m h

beautiful young woman  
m m h

young woman  
m h

Note that the reduction of the number of pre-head modifiers does not create structural or meaning problems because each modifier modifies the head.

How is this example different from the others?

Note that in the last example all the elements together modify the head whereas in the previous examples each of the elements individually modifies the head. A structure in which all the elements together modify the head is called a univariate structure as opposed to a multivariate structure where each element modifies the h element. The

difference is that in a univariate structure each entry of the m element describes the one in front of it.

### **Patterning of m Element DOEN**

There can be many elements within the m element. These include:

- Deictic elements which locate the speaker in space and time e.g this, that, those;
- Ordinals e.g One, two, second, fourth etc.
- Epithet which indicates attributes e.g. young, old, beautiful,
- Nominals e.g cane, wooden etc.

Usually, the deitic elements come first followed by ordinals, epithets and nominals as in the following (DOEN):

m m m m h  
My first fine leather bag

Deictic ordinal epithetnominal noun

Occasionally we can have up to two determiners within the deitic system and as many as five adjectives and two nominals in addition to the usual possibilities within the m element as in the following example:

All the first three beautiful long woven African cane chairs.  
m m m m m m m m m h

### **The h Element**

The h element is usually a noun. It must be present before we can claim to have a nominal group. The h element also determines the nature of the qualifier in terms of concord and meaning as in the following:

The beds are  
John talked

\*The book talked (unacceptable except 'book' is used in a special way)

We can have single and compound elements e.g

Uyo,  
The city of Uyo

In the above example, Uyo and city form a compound because they are coreferential i.e. they function as appositives

Other compound elements include:

Bread and butter  
Rice and stew

It is important to note that compound h elements take singular verbs like single h elements.

### The q Element

The q element usually comes after the h element. The term qualifier is said to have emanated from *scale and category grammar* (Eka, 1994, p 94). The q element can be a single word (often an adjective, a pronoun or an adverb for example):

Someone special

h q (adjective)

Helen herself

h q (reflexive pronoun)

The house across the road (adverb)

The q element can sometimes be a phrase or a group as in the following:

The girl in the blue dress (is my niece).

m h q

A house to live in (is what I need).

m h q

Sometimes qualifiers co-occur to function as double or multiple qualifiers as in:

Thomas/my eldest brother/ the livewire of the family (came home).

h q q

All/ the/houses/ that my father built/ which we never lived in

m m h q q (were rented as government offices).

Constructions in which many qualifiers co-occur are said to be recursive: showing repetitions of patterns (sometimes in a layered manner) as in the above examples. At other times they are said to co-occur in a linear manner as in the example below:

Okon, driver, businessman, politician etc. (is very clever)

### 3.2.2 The Verbal Group

The verbal group is the predicator element in a clause whether it operates in a dependent or independent clause. The primary structure of the verbal group consists of one or more than one possible elements: the auxiliary often represented as x and the head often represented as h.

The size of the verbal group depends on the nature of the utterance. There may be only one auxiliary verb, in which case it will serve as the head which is normally a compulsory element, as for instance, in the following:

‘He may’

Which may be interpreted to mean ‘he may come/ do it / go’ etc.

At other times, there may be just be main verb. e.g.

He /plays /football

In this case the main verb serves as the head.

Two factors determine the structure of the verbal group – the size of the verbal group and the nature of the composition. Thus the verbal group in English may be simple, compound, complex and compound complex. A simple verbal group has just one item usually the head the main verb (h)

She wrote the letter (h)

Note that the single item may also be an auxiliary as in:

I can

I could

A complex verbal group has the structure (x h i.e. auxiliary + head) e.g

She has taken the examination.

There can be an extension of the verbal group through the increase of the number of x elements as in the following:

She must have taken the examination.

She might have been helped by her sister.

A compound verbal group has two or more heads joined or not by a conjunction or not as in:

I came, saw and conquered

The child was frightened, screamed, ran to safety.

A compound complex verbal group has a minimum of an auxiliary and two heads as in the following:

The lecturer should teach and examine.

x h h

The actor had appeared, disappeared and reappeared.

X h h h

### 3.2.3 The Adverbial Group

The structure of the adverbial group may be summarized as follows: It can consist of only the head as in

Jane danced gracefully (head)

It can be made of an intensifier and head as for example in

Her brother runs very fast (intensifier plus head)

It can comprise of a head and an intensifier as in:



She writes legibly enough (head + intensifier)

It can consist of an intensifier, a head and an intensifier as in

He did very well indeed (intensifier + head + intensifier).

Sometimes there can be multiple intensifiers as in the following:

The dancers performed very very beautifully indeed  
(intensifier + intensifier + head + intensifier).

At times there can be a head within the structure as in

She should come as soon as possible (head-underlined within the structure)

He spoke more brilliantly than I expected (head underlined within the structure)

### 3.2.4 The Adjectival Group

The structure of the adjectival group can be summarized as follows:

The adjectival group can consist of an intensifier and a head as in:

*Very good, quite satisfactory (Intensifier + Head)*

It can also be made up of a head and an intensifier as in :

*good enough, happy indeed (Head + Intensifier)*

Sometimes there may be more than one intensifier as in

*very good indeed, certainly good enough*  
(intensifier + head + intensifier)

The adjectival group can also have a determiner and a head as in:

*an amiable (person); the best (solution) (Determiner + Head).*

Sometimes there can be a head and a qualifier as in:

*difficult to understand, easy to get on with (Head + qualifier)*

When adjectives occur in a row all the adjectives precede the noun head as in the following:

*a very beautiful young woman*  
*a fashionable old looking green Senegalese gown*

Usually the adjectives follow the following order:

Determiner/other adjectives/size/age/participle/colour/place of origin/material/head as shown below:

Det/other size/Age/participle/colour/place of origin/material/Head/Adj.

a very long old looking blue Senegalese Silk boubou

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

What is common between a prepositional phrase and an adverbial or adjectival phrase?

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2**

What are the functions of nouns which the noun phrase can also perform?

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 3**

What do the following elements of the nominal and verbal groups stand for: m h q; x h

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

This unit introduced you to the structure and types of groups in English.

It was clearly explained that the types and structure of the English groups consist of the nominal group, the verbal group, the adverbial and the adjectival groups as well as their functions.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

The following points have been made in this unit

- ✓ Groups are also referred to as phrases.
- ✓ A group or phrase refers to a set of more than one word which can function as a part of speech or word class.
- ✓ Phrases are called by the classes of words to which they belong. They are also called by the word class to which the most important word in the phrase belongs.
- ✓ Adjectival, Adverbial and Noun Phrases perform the functions of adjectives, adverbs and noun respectively.
- ✓ Most adjectival and adverbial phrases are prepositional phrases.
- ✓ Groups also have structures: the nominal group usually has the following elements: m h q; the elements of the verbal group are: x h; the adjectival and adverbial group has the elements intensifier + head.
- ✓ The elements in each case can come before or after the head and sometimes both before and after.
- ✓ When many adjectives occur in a row, they all come before the head.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

Discuss and illustrate both the functions and the structure of the nominal group in English.

**7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS**

Eka, D. (1996). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo: Samuf Educational.

Eyisi, J. 2006. *A Grammar of English*. Nimo: Rex Charles Patrick Ltd.

Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. (1980). *A University Grammar of English*, London: Longman Press.

Semmelmeyer, M. & Bolander, D. (1984). *Instant English Handbook*. Illinois: Career Publishing Inc.

Udofot, I. & Ekpenyong, B. 2004. *A Comprehensive English Course for Schools and Colleges*. Lagos: Quantum Co.Ltd.

## **MODULE 3 MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE**

- Unit 1 Basic Units of Word Structure
- Unit 2 The Nature of the Morpheme
- Unit 3 Affixation
- Unit 4 Inflection and Derivation
- Unit 5 Other Word Formation Processes

### **UNIT 1 BASIC UNITS OF WORD STRUCTURE**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Morphemes and Allomorphs
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The study of the internal structure of words and the rules governing the formation of words in a language is the preoccupation of the branch of language study referred to as morphology. Although interest in the study of words, their meaning, structure and function has been a part of grammar from the classical to the medieval times, the study of word structure did not become a distinct level of grammatical analysis until the nineteenth century.

Early studies of word structure were more diachronic in nature, having more to do with the origins and evolution of languages from a study of word formation patterns of different languages. For instance in the nineteenth century Franz Bopp produced evidence based on the comparison of sound systems and word formation patterns of Sanskrit, Latin, Persian and Germanic languages to prove that these languages evolved from the same ancestor. This supported a claim earlier made by William Jones in 1786 (cf Katamba 1993:1). Also, between 1819 and 1837, Jacob Grimm published his *Deutsche Grammatik* tracing the common ancestry of the Germanic and other Indo-European languages through comparing their word formation patterns and sound systems.

Morphology in this century is synchronic in approach. This means that it focuses on studying the word structure of a language at some stage of its life rather than how the words of the language have changed in form and meaning over a period of time. In spite of the general acknowledgement in linguistic circles of the place of the study of words and its structure, the discipline of morphology has not received the attention given to other branches of language like phonology, phonetics and grammar. It was

the works of the American structuralists which brought the study of morphology to the limelight. Nida's 1949 course book titled *Morphology streamlined the structuralist theory and practice and laid the criteria for the descriptive study of words*.

Traditional grammar looked at the word as the basic unit of grammatical analysis but the structuralists show that words can be analysed in terms of the morpheme which is the smallest unit of speech that has semantic and grammatical meanings. While traditional grammar treated word structure as part of sentence structure under grammar, the structuralists' approach saw morphology as a distinct branch of language study preoccupied with 'the study of morphemes and their arrangements in forming words' (Nida 1949:1).

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- ✚ Explain and give examples of morphemes and allomorphs.
- ✚ Identify the different allomorphic variations
- ✚ Analyse words into constituent morphemes.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Morphemes and Allomorphs

The analysis of words into morphemes starts with the identification of morphs. 'A morph is a physical form representing some morpheme in a language' (Katamba 1993:24). It is a distinctive recurrent sound segment or a sequence of sound segments. In the following sentences:

- a. I ate the food.
- b. You ate the food.
- c. She eats the food.
- d. I eat the food.
- e. We eat the food.
- f. You eat the food.

the morphs are:

the past tense morpheme in English. The past tense morpheme is realized as

(a) /d/ if the verb ends in /d/ or /t/ as for instance in:

- mend /mend/;
- mended /mended/
- want /want/;
- wanted /wanted/.

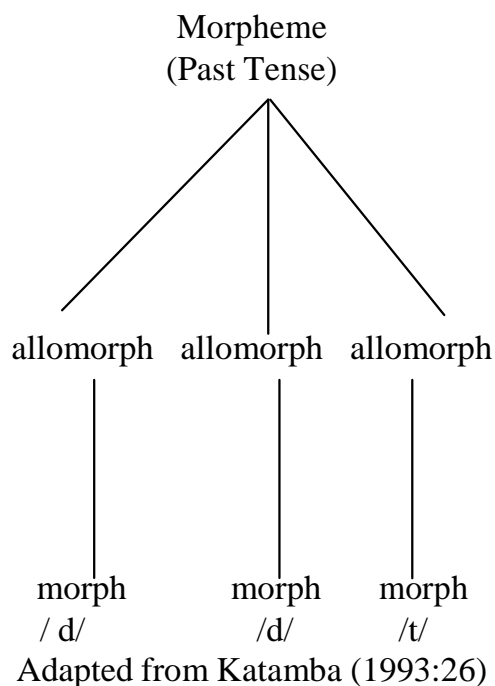
(b) /d/ if the verb ends in a voiced sound except /d/ as in:

- clean /kli: n/
- cleaned /kli: nd/
- beg /beg/
- begged /begd/.

(c) /t/ after verbs ending in any voiceless consonant other than /t/ as in:

- park /pa:k/
- parked /pa:kt/
- miss /miss/
- missed /mist/.

The relationship between morphemes and allomorphs can be diagrammatically represented as shown below using the past tense morpheme in English:



It can be said that /d/, /d/ and /t/ can be grouped together as allomorphs of the past tense morpheme. The notion of distribution is central to the identification of morphemes in any language. By distribution we mean *the context in which a particular linguistic element occurs*. A set of morphs are classified as allomorphs of the same morpheme if

- (i) they represent the same meaning or serve the same grammatical function;
- (ii) they occur in the same contexts.

When the above criteria are satisfied, the morphs are said to be in *complementary distribution*. Thus the three morphs /d, d, t/ which are realizations of the regular past tense morpheme are in complementary distribution because each morph only occurs in the context described above and are therefore allomorphs of the same morpheme. Similarly, the negative morpheme which means not can be realized as /n/, /m/ and /ŋ/ as in the following examples:

inactive/inækti:v/  
 indecent/indi:snt/  
 impenitent /impeni:tent/  
 impossible /impɔ:sibl/  
 incomplete /imkʌmpli:t/  
 incorrigible /ikɔ:rigibl/

It can be noted that the nasal consonant in the various allomorphs of the morpheme {in} is pronounced the way it is depending on the nature of the sound that follows it:

/im/ is used before labial constants like /p,b,m/ as in ‘impossible’;

/in/ is used before vilar constants like /k/ and /g/ as in ‘incorrigible’;

/ɪn/ is used elsewhere as for example before alveolar consonants like / t, d, s, z, n / as in ‘indecent’;

The three allomorphs /m, n, ɪ/ of the morpheme {in} are therefore in *complementary distribution in that the use of one in one slot excludes the other.*

### Allomorphic Variations

An allomorph as already explained is a member of a family of a morpheme – a variant of a morpheme depending on the environment where it occurs. The plural morpheme {s} for example changes its nature depending on the phonological environment where it occurs. The addition of the {s} morpheme to a word obtains not only in the formation of plurals in English but also in the formation of possessives as, for instance, in goat, goat’s, John, John’s as well as in changes in verb patterns as a result of changes in person as in I dance, she dances.

The three sets of {s} morphemes are generally referred to with the umbrella term the Z Morpheme. When the Z Morpheme relates to plural formation, it is called Z1 Morpheme; when it is concerned with the formation of possessives, it is referred to as Z2 Morpheme; when it has to do with changes in verb forms, it is referred to as Z3 or *Concord Morpheme. The different kinds of Z Morpheme therefore are:*

Z1 Plural

Z2 Possessive

Z3 Changes in verb forms

### Z1 or Plural Morpheme

In English, the Z1 Morpheme has four allomorphs: /s/, /z/, /ɪz/ and /ɪz / .

The allomorph /s/ occurs with words ending in voiceless sounds except /s/, /ks/ and / t / as in the following examples:

cats /kæts/  
 books /buks/  
 cups /kʌps/

The /z/ allomorph occurs with words ending in voiced sounds including all vowels and voiced consonants as in the following examples:

mangoes /mæŋgəʊz/

boys /bɔɪz/

bags /bægz/

The allomorph /z/ is selected by words which end in alveolar or alveo-palatal sibilants (that is consonants with sharp hissing sounds)

fishes /fɪʃz/

bushes /bʊʃz/

churches /tʃɜːtʃɪz/

The zero allomorph / / occurs with words which normally do not have plurals reflected in their morphological shapes as for instance in 'sheep' and 'deer'.

### The Z<sub>2</sub> or Possessive Morpheme

This morpheme is similar in distribution to the Z<sub>1</sub> Morpheme. The only difference is in the orthographic convention. The possessives have the apostrophe in specific places in words whereas plurals are not written with apostrophes. The distribution of the Z<sub>2</sub> morpheme is as follows:

/s/ occurs with words ending in voiceless sounds except the sibilant consonants as in Jack's /dæks/.

/z/ occurs after voiced sounds other than sibilants as in Jane's /dʒenz/.

/z/ occurs after the sibilants as in nurse's /nɜːsɪz/.

/Z/ occurs with words which end with the sibilants which may be plurals or words that naturally end with the letter 's' as in Jones' /dʒəʊns/ and students/stjuːdnts/.

The possessive morpheme, unlike the plural morpheme, does not occur frequently because in real life people own things so the possessive morpheme tends to go more regularly with proper names. Also, the possessive is often replaced with of + noun phrase constructions as in: the custom of the country instead of the country's customs. This type of construction is often preferable to possessives in some clumsy sounding cases as in the following:

The eve of St. Agnes instead of St. Agnes' Eve;

The history of Nigeria instead of Nigeria's history;

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Uyo instead of University of Uyo's Vice Chancellor.

### The Z<sub>3</sub> or Concord Morpheme

This is the morpheme that shows changes in verb patterns occasioned by changes in



person or number, as for instance, in:

I go, she goes.

Like the other Z morphemes, it is phonologically conditioned as follows:

/s/ after voiceless consonants except sibilants as in walks /wɔks/.

/z/ after voiced sounds other than sibilants as in goes /gəuz/.

/ɪz/ after sibilant sounds as in washes /wɒʃɪz/.

The Z<sub>3</sub> morpheme is also often referred to as the third person singular present tense morpheme.

### **The D or Past Time Morpheme**

The allomorphs /t, d, ɪd/ are phonologically conditioned. In addition to the allomorphs /t/, /d/ and /ɪd/ there is a / zero / allomorph which occurs where there is no change in the morphological shape of the verb, as for instance, in the verbs 'hit' and 'put' which have the same morphological shapes for both present and the past.

The phonological conditioning noted in the behaviour of Z<sub>1</sub>, Z<sub>2</sub>, Z<sub>3</sub> morphemes. We have noted behaviour with this the D morphemes too and earlier the various allomorphs of the morpheme {-in} the allomorphic variations so far discussed can be summarized as follows:

For the Z Morpheme

/s/ becomes [s] in voiceless environments except sibilants.

/s/ becomes [z] in voiced environments except sibilants.

/s/ becomes [z] after sibilants.

For the D morpheme

/d/ becomes [t] in voiceless environments except after /t/

/d/ becomes [d] in voiced environments except after /d/

/d/ becomes [ɪd] after /t/ and /d/

For any sibilant suffix in English the different phonetic representations are as follows;

/s/ after voiceless consonants other than the sibilants.

/z/ after vowels and voiced consonants like / b, n, d /.

/ ɪz / after the alveolar and post -alveolar sibilants: / s, z, tʃ, dʒ, t, d /.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

Explain the terms morphology and morpheme

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

What is an allomorph?

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The basic concept of the word structure in English is viewed differently by different Linguists. While traditional grammarians see the word as the basic unit of grammatical analysis, the structuralists see the morpheme as the basic unit of grammatical analysis. This is really what underscores the study of the morphology of English.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

- ✚ Traditional grammar saw the word as the basic unit of grammatical analysis but the structuralists saw the morpheme as the smallest unit of grammatical analysis.
- ✚ A morph is the physical representation of a morpheme in a language.
- ✚ A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of grammatical analysis.
- ✚ Allomorph is a variant of a morpheme which occurs in a specific environment.
- ✚ Allomorphs of a morpheme occur in complementary distribution
- ✚ The Z morphemes and the D Morphemes have at least three allomorphs.
- ✚ The Z<sub>1</sub> or plural morpheme has four allomorphs - /s/, /z/ and /i z / .
- ✚ The Z<sub>2</sub> or possessive morpheme also has the following allomorphs: /s/, /z/, and /iz /.
- ✚ The Z<sub>3</sub> or Concord morpheme has the following allomorphs: /s/, /z/, / z/.
- ✚ The D or past time morpheme has the following allomorphs: /t/, /d/ and / d/ there is a /id/ allomorph which occurs where the past and present tense forms are the same.
- ✚ All allomorphs are phonologically conditioned.

### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Explain and give examples of the following: complementary distribution, Phonological conditioning.
2. Explain the term morpheme and discuss its usefulness in word formation.

**7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS**

Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan:Lagos: Longman

Nida, E. (1949). *Morphology: The Descriptive Analysis of Words*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Omachonu, G.S. (ed.) (2011). *NSUK Texts in General Linguistics (Vol. 1)*. Enugu, Nigeria: Rossen Production and Services Ltd.

Tomori, S. H.O. (1977). *The Morphology and Syntax of Present-Day English:an Introduction*. Ibadan: Heinemann .

Udofot, I. (1999). *An Introduction to the Morphology of English*. Uyo: Scholar's Press.

Anagbogu, P.N. 2011. *Introduction to Morphology*. In G.S. Omachonu (ed.) *NSUK Texts in General Linguistics Vol. 1*. Enugu: Rossen Publishers.

## UNIT 2 THE NATURE OF THE MORPHEME

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Types of Morphemes
  - 3.2 Roots, Stems and Bases
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The morpheme is sometimes confused with the syllable but it is different. Syllables are made up of sounds which are grouped together for pronunciation purposes. For instance, the word ‘star’ is made up of the sounds /s/, /t/ and /a:/ which add up to /sta:/. The division of words into the component sound (phonemes) makes it possible for languages to be written using letters. Words can also be broken down into syllables. Some words are composed of one syllable as the word ‘pens’ /penz/. Others are made up of two or more syllables as the words ‘today’/t de/, ‘saliva’ /sæ-lai-və /, ‘embarrass’ /im-bæ-rəs/ and ‘companion’ /kə m-pæ- njən/.

While the syllable is the unit of pronunciation, being the smallest stretch of sound that can be uttered with one breath (Abercrombie, 1975, p.350), the morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning and of grammatical analysis. For instance, the words ‘today’ and ‘embarrass’ are made up of two and three syllables respectively but they are composed of only one morpheme each. On the other hand the word ‘pens’ is a monosyllabic word (made up of one syllable) but has two morphemes namely: the morpheme {pen} and the plural morpheme {s}. Therefore, when we divide words into morphemes, we isolate groups of sounds that have semantic and grammatical meanings, the fact that they do not constitute syllables notwithstanding.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- ✚ Differentiate between morphemes and syllables
- ✚ Differentiate between bound and free morphemes
- ✚ Differentiate between roots, stems and bases
- ✚ Identify some Greek and Latin root and how to use them in word formation.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Types of Morphemes

##### Free and Bound Morphemes

Morphemes are free when they can stand on their own and constitute independent words as the following words: “black, board, tea, pot, sweet, heart”. Single words as the ones listed above are the smallest free morphemes which are capable of independent existence. When joined together to form compound words like

“blackboard, teapot, sweetheart”,

each of the two morpheme words still retain meanings of their own which add up to the meaning of the words of which they are part.

In contrast, bound morphemes are those morphemes which are not capable of independent existence. They occur usually with some other word-building element attached to them. Examples of bound morphemes are given below:

- (a) -ceive as in receive, perceive
- (b) -mit as in permit, commit
- (c) -intro as introspect, introduce

Some words are made up of two bound morphemes as is the case in

‘Introduce’ while many other words are made up of free and bound morphemes as in the words ‘pillows’ and ‘cleaner’. The bound morphemes also often occur as prefixes and suffixes but never in isolation as words.

#### 3.2 Roots, Stems, and Bases

Some morphemes are the core of words while some are additions and appendages (cf Tomori 1977:32). The morpheme which carries the core meaning is referred to as the root of the word. In the word ‘faithfulness’ for instance, the core of the word or root morpheme is faith. Similarly, in the word ‘naturalisation’ the root morpheme is nature. The root of the word is that part that is always present.

The stem of the word is that part to which the last morpheme is added. It is thus the part in existence before any inflectional affixes (those additions required by the grammar of a language such as indicators of number in nouns, tense in verbs etc.). In the words ‘cats’ and ‘learners’, the {s} morpheme is added to the root ‘cat’ while the agentive morpheme {er} is added to the root ‘learner’ to mean one who learns. In ‘learners’ the root is learn while learner is the stem to which the inflectional morpheme {s} is added to give the additional meaning of ‘more - than - one’. A base on the other hand is a unit to which any affix can be added. The affix may be inflectional (selected for grammatical reasons) or derivational in which case it alters the meaning or grammatical category of the base.

A root to which no affix has been added like ‘girl’ can be a base since it can take an inflectional affix like {-s} to form the plural ‘girls’ or a derivational like {-ish} to turn the noun into an adjective ‘girlish’. In effect, all roots are bases but roots are stems when they take inflectional suffixes. Thus although all roots are bases, not all roots are stems. In the word ‘faithfulness’, faith is the root of the whole word; it is also the stem of ‘faiths’ and the base of ‘faithful’ while faithful becomes the base for ‘faithfulness’. This explanation of roots, stems and bases is contrary to Tomori’s (1977:32) analysis which equates stems with bases rather than with roots. Katamba (1993:45) however sees all roots as bases but stems as bases only in the context of inflectional morphology. This is the sense in which we use roots, bases and stems although we are also aware of Eka’s (1994) use of root and base in the sense in which Tomori uses root and stem while Francis (1967) employs the terms root, stem and base as largely synonymous. All the usages referred to above tend to overlap in the sense in which root is used. The slight differences in the senses of base and stem appear idiosyncratic. Knowledge of the root of words can be used to explain the origin and core meaning of words from Latin or Greek.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1**

Some common Latin and Greek roots are given below. Find the missing explanation.

<i>Latin Root</i>	<i>Words</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
ann-enn -year	annual	yearly
_____	Perennial	through the years
Carn-Flesh	Carnivorous	_____
_____	Incarnation	Presence in the flesh
Culp-Guilt	Guilty	_____
_____	Exculpate	To be free
_____	Culprit	_____
Doc-teach	Doctor	one who Teaches
_____	Docile	easily taught
Gress-march	progress	a marching toward
_____	congress	a coming together
_____	regressive	_____
Laps-fall	relapse	fall back into habit)

_____	elapse	to glide away (as time)
_____	Collapse	_____
Loqu-talk	eloquent	talking well
_____	Colloquial	chatty
_____	Ventriloquist	_____
Magn-great	magnify	_____
_____	Magnitude	size
_____	Magnificent	_____
Metre-measure	chronometer	measures time
_____	barometre	measures pressure
_____	thermometer	_____
Pose-put	compose	put together
_____	impose	put up
_____	depose	_____
Greek root	words	meaning
Bibl-book	bibliography	list of books
_____	‘bibliophile	_____
Path-feel	sympathy	feeling for or with
_____	pathology	study of diseases
_____	psychopath	_____
Phil-friend	philosopher	friend of wisdom
_____	philanthropist	friend of man
_____	anglophile	_____
Pyre-fire	pyre	pile for burning the dead
_____	pyrothenics	fireworks
_____	pyromaniac	_____
Thermo-heat	thermometer	measures heat
_____	thermostat	_____

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The English Language accommodates several varieties of morphemes, and these are carefully structured into roots, bases and stems. Much more important is the fact that many English words are of the Latin or Greek origin.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following points have been raised in this unit:

- The syllable is the unit of pronunciation while the morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning and of grammatical analysis.
- Free morphemes can stand by themselves as words but bound morphemes are incapable of independent existence.
- The morpheme which carries the core meaning of a word is the root.
- The stem of the word is that part to which the last morpheme is added.
- A base on the other hand is a unit to which any affix can be added.
- Although all roots are bases, not all roots are stems.
- Knowledge of the root of words can be used to explain the origin and core meaning of words from Latin or Greek.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

Here are more Greek and Latin roots. Find out at least two words formed from them.

- |                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. psch – mind  | 6. auto – self    |
| 2. hydr – water | 7 bio – life      |
| 3. man – hand   | 8 graph – writing |
| 4. urb – city   | 9. phon – sound   |
| 5. audi – hear  | 10. bi – two      |



**7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

- Eka, D. (1996) . *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of English*. Uyo: Samuf Educational.
- Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan: Lagos: Longman
- Nida, E. (1949). *Morphology: The Descriptive Analysis of Words*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Tomori, S. H.O. (1977). *The Morphology and Syntax of Present-Day English: an Introduction*. Ibadan: Heinemann .
- Udofot, I. (1999). *An Introduction to the Morphology of English*. Uyo: Scholar's Press.
- Anagbogu, P.N. 2011. *Introduction to Morphology*. In G.S. Omachonu (ed.) *NSUK Texts in General Linguistics Vol. 1*. Enugu: Rossen Publishers.

## UNIT 3 AFFIXATION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Prefixation
  - 3.2 Suffixation
  - 3.3 Multiple Affixations
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

New words can be formed in many languages by the addition of morphemes to bases. Such morphemes can be added before or after the base. The morphological process in which morphemes are added to existing words to form new words is called affixation. The morphemes so added are called affixes. An affix is not capable of independent existence except as an attachment to another morpheme such as a root, stem or base. Affixes are therefore bound morphemes. For example, no English word is made up of an affix like ‘-al, -er, -ed’ or ‘im’. Similarly, affixes cannot be joined together in a recognizable structural bond to form words as the following examples show: \*im -al, \*al - ed, \*im -ed.

There are two types of affixes which generally operate in English: *prefixes which are added before the bases to form new words and suffixes usually added after the base.* A word like ‘*unreasonableness*’, for instance, is made up of the root morpheme {reason} after which the prefix ‘-un’ and the suffixes ‘-able’ and ‘-ness’ have been added. Prefixation and suffixation are the major forms of affixation and therefore major morphological processes in English.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ Identify common affixes in English;
- ✚ Describe prefixation and how it operates in English;
- ✚ Describe suffixation and how it operates in English; and
- ✚ Explain the meaning of some Greek and Latin affixes and how to use them in word formation.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Prefixation

As already explained, a prefix is a morpheme that is attached at the beginning of a root. Many English words derived from Latin and Greek consist of a familiar root and a prefix. The prefix is usually a syllable or two. The Latin prefix –sub means ‘below’ or ‘under’. When added to ‘soil’ for instance, it modifies the meaning of the root. ‘Subsoil’ is therefore a layer of soil that is below the surface soil. If the prefix – malis added to ‘treat’ it becomes ‘maltreat’ which means ‘treat badly’. Occasionally the prefix alters the word class of the base as in the following example:

en + danger (noun) becomes endanger (verb).

Many prefixes in English are from Latin or Greek.

The common ones are:

Prefix	Meaning	Prefixed Words
un }		unkind, unfortunate
in }	not	inclement, insanitary
im }	not	impossible, imperfect
anti	against	antidote, anticraft
ante	before	antenatal
intra	between	intravenous
inter	among	international
mis }		mismanage
mal }	badly	maltreat
non	not	nonfat, nonnative
re	again	revise, rearrange
tele	distance	telephone, transfusion
co	together	co-operation, co-announcer
trans	across	transfer, transfusion
pre	before	prefix, prehistoric
per	through	pervade, percolator
neo	new	neocolonialism, neologism
bene	good	benefactor, benediction
bi	two	bilateral, bicycle
mono	one	monotheism, mono-transitive

#### 3.2 Suffixation

Suffixation is a morphological process involving the addition of a morpheme to a root or base. Many English words derived from Greek or Latin are made up of familiar roots and common suffixes. Like prefixes, suffixes, can be made up of one or more syllables attached at the end of a word to modify its meaning. Suffixes are of two types namely inflectional and derivational suffixes which reflect two major word formation processes: inflection and derivation. Knowledge of Greek and Latin suffixes helps to explain words we encounter and use everyday though many of them



- |    |         |        |  |
|----|---------|--------|--|
| 3. | -ennial | yearly | A centennial is a one  |
| 4  | -fly    | make   | A magnifying glass makes things larger.<br>An ----- makes sound stronger   |
| 5. | -logue  | speech | A monologue is a speech addressed to oneself.<br>In a ----- two people speaks to each other.<br>A prologue is a short speech introducing a play. |

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

One of the basic principles of word formation in English is through the process of affixation. This includes the techniques of attaching prefixes and suffixes as well as multiple affixations to words. This principle underscores the dynamism of English as an international language.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following main points have been raised in this unit:

- ✚ The morphological process in which morphemes are added to existing words to form new words is called affixation. Prefixation and suffixation are the major forms of affixation and therefore major morphological processes in English.
- ✚ A prefix is a morpheme that is attached at the beginning of a root. Suffixation is a morphological process involving the addition of a morpheme at the end of a root or base.
- ✚ The process of forming complex words by the addition of several affixes is called multiple affixation.
- ✚ Knowledge of Greek and Latin suffixes helps to explain words we encounter and use every day.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

Add as many prefixes and suffixes as you can to the following free morphemes: **nation, grace, comprehend, happy, mean, faith, kind.**

#### 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

- Tomori, S. H. O. 1977. *The Morphology and Syntax of Present-Day English: an introduction*. Ibadan: Heinemann
- Udofot, I. (1999). *An Introduction to the Morphology of English*. Uyo: Scholar's Press.
- Anagbogu, P.N. 2011. Introduction to Morphology. In G.S. Omachonu (ed.) *NSUK Texts in General Linguistics Vol. 1*. Enugu: Rossen Publishers.

## UNIT 4 INFLECTION AND DERIVATION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 Inflectional morphemes
- 3.2 Derivational morphemes
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Affixes can be divided into two categories depending on their functions in word formation. These are derivational morphemes and inflectional morphemes. This division recognizes two major processes of word building: inflection and derivation. Inflectional and derivational morphemes behave differently in word formation.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ Describe inflectional morphemes and their behaviour in word formation in English;
- ✚ Describe derivational morphemes and how they operate in English; and
- ✚ Explain the differences between inflection and derivation as word formation processes in English

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Inflectional Morphemes

Inflectional morphemes always come at the end of words in English. They are therefore suffixes. By the rules of word formation in English no other morpheme can be added after an inflectional morpheme. It is also not possible to have more than one inflectional morpheme at a time. In the word ‘contemplations’ for instance, the root of the word is {contemplate}. The derivational morpheme is {-ation} while the inflectional morpheme is /z/ which is spelt ‘s’ and it comes at the end of the word. No other morpheme can be added to ‘contemplations’ after the addition of the inflectional morpheme {s}. In the following examples none of the words can further be inflected for plural, possession, comparison or concord:

Word    Inflectional suffix    Inflected Word

Girl	-s	girls
John	-s	John's
Go	-es	goes
Take	-en	taken
Old	-er	older

An inflectional morpheme does not alter the word class of the root to which it is added. Inflectional morphemes only modify the form of the word to enable it fit into a particular grammatical category. For instance, the {s} morpheme of nouns as in 'tables' merely carries the information regarding the number of tables in question. The word itself remains a noun. It is for that reason that Katamba (1993:51) describes inflectional morphemes as those which 'do not change referential or cognitive meaning'. The frequently used inflectional suffixes (English has no inflectional prefix) are shown below:

Suffix	Stem	Function	Example
-s	Noun	plural	cats
-s	Noun	possessive	Mary's
-s	Verb	3rd person singular present tense	sings
-ed	Verb	past tense	danced
-ing	Verb	present progressive	dancing
-er	Adjective	comparative degree	bigger
-est	Adjective	superlative degree	biggest

### 3.2 Derivational Morphemes

Derivational morphemes form new words by:

- (i) changing the meaning of the base to which they are added as for instance in the examples clean/unclean which are both adjectives; one has a meaning which is opposite to the other.
- (ii) changing the grammatical class of the base as for instance the addition of -ly to 'slow' forms another word 'slowly' therefore changing the word 'slow' from an adjective to an adverb. In English, it is, as a rule, possible to form adverbs by adding the suffix -ly to an adjectival base. Examine the following :

1. quick (adjective) - quickly (adverb)
2. beautiful (adjective) - beautifully (adverb)
3. break (verb) - breakage (noun)
4. joy (noun) - joyful (adjective)
5. beauty (noun) - beautify (verb)
6. electric (noun) - electrify (verb)

7. fat (noun) - fatten (verb)
8. slave (noun) - enslave (verb)
9. father - fatherly (adverb)
10. nation (noun) - national (adjective)

Sometimes a derivational suffix is added to an already derived base as

In:

natural naturalise naturalization  
 power powerless powerlessness  
 beauty beautiful beautifully

As can be seen in the two groups of examples above, a derivational affix can cause a major grammatical change from one word class to another as in slave/enslave, power/powerless where a noun becomes a verb in the first case and an adjective in the second. At times the addition of a derivational affix may cause just a minor change as when the base changes to a minor subclass within the same word class as in pig/piglet both are nouns but one is the diminutive form of the other.

This brings us to the addition of some suffixes (bound morphemes) which carry emotive undertones as for instance:

- nette - kitchenette - smallness
- ish - girlish - bad qualities of
- like - womanlike - good qualities of
- let - piglet - small of
- ling - duckling - small of
- ock - bullock - small of

The following tables show common derivational prefixes and suffixes, the types of bases to which they can be attached and the words that can be formed together with the word classes of the derived words:



**Table 1 – Derivational Suffixes**

<b>Suffix</b>	<b>Word Class Of Base</b>	<b>Meaning Word</b>	<b>class of Derived word</b>	<b>Examples</b>
- ment	verb- govern	result or product of doing the action of the verb	noun	government
- ness	adjective– happy	quality, state or condition	abstract noun	happiness
- ity	adjective–depraved	state or condition	abstract noun	depravity
- ship	noun – friend	tate or condition	abstract noun	friendship
- hood	noun – mother	status manner	adverb	motherhood
- ly	adjective– graceful	pertaining to or act of	abstract noun adjective	gracefully
- al	verb – refuse	pertaining to/of the kind	noun	refusal
- al	noun –medicine	agent who does what the verb indicates	adjective	medicinal
- er}	verb - read			reader
- or}	sail			sailor
- ar}	lie			liar
- ful	noun –beauty	having		beautiful

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

What modifications does an inflectional morpheme make to the base to which it is added?

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- (i) Give the meaning of the derivational prefix *en* and the suffix *-able* in the following words:
- e.g. *enrobe* = put in a robe.
- enlarge  
enable  
enrich  
presentable  
manageable  
gradable

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The techniques of inflection and derivation are often used systematically to build English words. They perform grammatical functions that further explain the interesting uniqueness of the principles of word formation in English. Although the process of inflection may create a new word, it may not change the word class of the word. This is not the case with derivations where the class of the new word is completely different from the previous word.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit the following important points have been made:

- ✚ Inflection and derivation are two major word building processes in English.
- ✚ Inflectional morphemes always come at the end of words in English. They are therefore suffixes.
- ✚ No other morpheme can be added to a word after an inflectional morpheme.
- ✚ An inflectional morpheme does not alter the word class of the root but only modifies it to enable it fit into a particular grammatical category.
- ✚ A derivational affix can change the word class and the meaning of the base to which it is added.

### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

Distinguish between inflexion and derivation

### 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

- Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan; Lagos: Longman
- Nida, E. 1949. *Morphology: The Descriptive Analysis of Words*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Anagbogu, P.N. 2011. Introduction to Morphology. In G.S. Omachonu (ed.) *NSUK Texts in General Linguistics Vol. 1*. Enugu: Rossen Publishers.

## UNIT 5 OTHER WORD FORMATION PROCESSES

### CONTENTS

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
- 3.1 Compounding
- 3.2 Creativity
- 3.3 Neologisms
- 3.4 Clipping
- 3.5 Blending
- 3.6 Acronymy
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, linguists have extended the domains of morphology to include not only an analysis of the structure of existing words but also rules that guide the creation of new words. In the last three units, we noted an open ended tendency of English words in the sense that there appears to be no upper limit to the number of affixes or the length of forms that may function as bases for the formation of new words. We shall observe in this unit a tendency of existing words to combine to form compounds. It is this productive nature of morphology that this unit will examine.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- ✚ Explain what a compound word is and how compounds are formed
- ✚ List other minor word formation processes in English. Explain and illustrate these processes.
- ✚ Create new words in English following English morphological rules.
- ✚ Analyse compound and newly formed words into their constituent morphemes.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Compounding

Apart from the derivation of new words by the addition of affixes many English words can be formed from two or more bases. This is the process of compounding and the resulting words are called compounds. In other words, a compound word contains at least two morphemes which can stand on their own as words. In the following example: words are formed from roots and bases.

- |    |           |   |       |       |             |
|----|-----------|---|-------|-------|-------------|
| a. | Flash     | + | light | →     | flashlight  |
|    | Verb      |   | Noun  |       | Noun        |
| b. | Play      | + | mate  | →     | playmate    |
|    | Verb      |   | noun  |       | noun        |
| c. | King      | + | heart | +ed → | kindhearted |
|    | Adjective |   | noun  |       | adjective   |
| d. | Wind      | + | break | +er → | windbreaker |
|    | Noun      |   | verb  |       | noun        |

**Note:** Compounding is a very important way of creating new words in English.

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1975:444) ‘there is no one formal criterion that can be used for a general definition of compounds in English’ but some observations about them can be made. For instance, the elements that make up English compounds have some syntactic relations. Quirk and Greenbaum (1975:444) analyses the compounds ‘playboy’ and ‘call-girl’ as follows:

- playboy* - *the boy plays i.e. subject + verb*  
*call girl* - *someone calls the girls i.e. verb +object*

Thus although the two compound words ‘playboy’ and ‘call-girl’ ‘are superficially similar yet the relations of their elements are different.’

### 3.2 Creativity

Creativity has sometimes been used in the same sense as productivity to refer to the capability of human language users to produce an infinite number of words and utterances using the word formation rules of languages which are themselves finite. In morphology, creativity can be *rule-governed when the formation of new words follow the rules and principles learnt and internalized by the user of the language as, for instance, when abstract nouns are formed from verbs in English by the addition of the suffix – ion/ition as in ‘addition’ and ‘information’.*

Creativity can also be rule-bending when users bend the rules and at times do violence to the everyday meaning of words in an attempt to create new words. Creativity of this kind does not follow dutifully the word formation rules of the language. It is this kind of creativity that allows writers to coin new words to express their peculiar situations and communicate in a more memorable way, at times idiomatically. Many compound words and neologisms are formed in this way. Examples are the Nigerian creations ‘go-slow’, ‘for-one-nine’ and ‘ecomoging’ a word inflected from ECOMOG which means ‘conveying’ of votes from place to place’ (Newswatch, March 16, 1992:6).

Our preoccupation so far has been with rule-governed word formation. In this unit, we treat as creativity any word formation process that is rule-bending on the one hand or resulting from the contact of English with another language. We will also treat the minor word formation processes in English: clipping, blending and acronymy as creative rather than productive processes because there are inherent in them some elements of rule-bending which are not consistent in all the cases but require for different words different treatments as we will see later.

### 3.3 Neologisms

These are words that are coined to express some new phenomena or the attitude of the speaker or writer. A typical example is snail-mail referring to the postal service as opposed to the modern electronic mail. Extension of meaning could be said to be a characteristic feature of neologisms. In the case of snail-mail above, the characteristic slow speed of the snail is extended to the speed of postal services. After the last elections in Nigeria, the Nigerian kind of democracy was described as *nairacracy* suggesting a kind of government by those who have a lot of 'naira'. This is certainly bending the rule by attaching the noun-forming suffix *-cracy* to a word for the Nigerian currency - *naira* to form a neologism.

Neologisms constitute a very fertile way of expanding the vocabulary. Many neologisms, also often referred to as, *nonce words* however take time to catch on but are usually understood in the environment where they were first coined. In Nigeria, for instance, the word *Ramatism* has come to mean a very dynamic and progressive way of dealing with a situation. This word coined from *Muritala Ramat Mohammed's* middle name like many neologisms has a history. The word *deadline*, for instance, during the American civil war was the 'line round the perimeter fence beyond which soldiers were not allowed to go'. A soldier who wandered beyond that line risked being shot for desertion' (Katamba 1993:73).

Many neologisms are compounds which are semantically opaque. In present-day English the words *walk-man* and *tallboy* are ready examples. A *tallboy* is not a kind of boy but a piece of furniture, while a *walk-man* is not a kind of man but a type of stereo equipment. The print media in Nigeria constitute a very fertile spot for neologisms. The following neologisms are from *Newswatch Magazine* and the *Sunday Punch*:

- (i) the *pepper soup coup* – the tragic uprising of April 22, 1992 led by young officers in the Nigerian army (*Newswatch*, June 4, 1992:10)
- (ii) *Buharigate* – the Buhari kind of scandal recalling the Water gate scandal and referring to scandal in high political circles (*The Sunday Punch*, August 15 1999:1).
- (iii) *Afghanistanism* is used to depict a situation in which a writer takes a mental flight from home, ignoring the burning issues at his backyard (*Newswatch*, October 24, 1998:4)
- (iv) ... *Mandelamania*, the celebration of Nelson Mandela (*Newswatch*, June 4, 1990:8)

(v) Buharimomics – Buhari’s kind of economy (Newswatch March 4, 1985:10)

### 3.4 Clipping

In informal style, English words are formed by the deletion of one or more syllables from a word. This process, referred to as clipping can occur at the beginning as in the example phone created from telephone. It also occurs and more commonly so at the end as in the case of photo created by the deletion of – graph from photograph. At other times clipping occurs at both ends. This process is somehow rare but is attested in a word like flu created from influenza where the initial syllable - in and the final ones–enza are deleted to create the word flu. Other clipped words include Mum and Dad, from Mummy and Daddy; *lab* from *laboratory*, *pub* from *public house*, *exam* from *examination*, *cable* from *cablegram*, *bus* from *omnibus* and *zoo* from *zoological garden*.

### 3.5 Blending

Blending involves clipping of a special kind. Letters, not syllables, of words are extracted and used to form new words. Blends are also informal and have only short life spans. Some of them have however, been fully assimilated as in the following examples:

Breakfast + Lunch = brunch  
 Motor + Hotel = motel  
 Smoke + Fog = smog  
 Transfer + Resistor = transistor

An examination of the examples above shows that the selection of elements to form blends tends to be idiosyncratic as it does not appear to follow set down rules as regards the number of segments or letters selected from the input words. Perhaps the selection obeys (apparently unconsciously) the phonotactic rules of English because the example smog for instance could not have been \*smfog since the sequence /sf / and /smf/ are not acceptable clusters in English. Similarly, brunch could not have been \*brlunch.

### 3.6 Acronymy

*Acronymy is the process of creating new words from the initial letters of existing words.* Sometimes acronyms are created from parts of words larger than letters. This is quite a productive process as new acronyms are freely and daily produced particularly for the names of organizations.

Acronyms can be pronounced as sequences of letter as in O.A.U for organization of African Unity, C.O.D. for chash on delivery and U.N. for the United Nations, and the letters represent full words. Sometimes the letters of an acronym represent elements of a compound or are just parts of a word as in T.V, or Tee vee for television and GHQ for General Headquarters.

Some acronyms are pronounced as words such as radar for radio detecting and

ranging, UNICEF for United Nations Children's Fund; *VAT for Value Added Tax*, *UNESCO for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* and FIFA for Federation of International Football Association.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 1

Find three examples of compound words for each of a, b, c, and d. In a & b for instance root morphemes are combined into compounds. In c & d the bases are combined to form new words containing affixes.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (SAE) 2

Underline the words and expressions which you consider creative in the following passages and give your reasons for saying so. [Extracts from Zaynab Alkalis' *The Stillborn*]

- (i) ...This well is common property, dug by one but to be used by all' (p.84).
- (ii) .. You are not the only one who knows how to use other people's things, so you must learn to share as we do'.
- (iii) Li snatched at her jar and her scarf, which was thrown at her and ran towards the old man. As she was running away, insults followed her: 'unsaddled horse!' 'The vulture that isn't anybody's chicken'! 'Rich man's plaything!' (p.85)
- (iv) ... Only then would she assume the role of the 'man of the house' in her father's compound (p.85).
- (v) 'You need not worry, daughter-of-my-mother. Shuwa, like the rest of the children in this house, asks no questions. For them there is only one father, Kaka. The HM is just some drunken fool who comes home from time to time to harass their mother for drink-money (p.86).

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

English has other interesting word formation processes namely: compounding, blending, clipping and acronymy. All of these show how to create new words in English by bending the morphological rules of English in a language contact situation.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

- ✚ A compound word contains at least two morphemes which can stand on their own as words Creativity refers to the capability of human language users to produce an infinite number of words and utterances using the word formation rules of languages.
- ✚ Neologisms are words that are coined to express some new phenomena or the attitude of the speaker or writer e.g *money laundering* and *enweremgate* coined for use in Nigeria.
- ✚ English words can be formed by the deletion of one or more syllables from a word. This process, referred to as clipping can occur at the beginning or end

of a word and sometimes at both ends as in flu from influenza and photo from photograph.

- ✚ Blending involves the extraction of letters, not syllables, of words which are used to form new words as in motel from motor and hotel.
- ✚ Acronymy is the process of creating new words from the initial letters of existing words as in UNICEF or RADAR

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. What are neologisms?
2. Find ten new words currently coined in the Nigerian print media.
3. Explain the terms clipping, blending and acronymy. Which of them do you consider the most productive in English word formation and why?

## 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan: Lagos: Longman

Nida, E. (1949). *Morphology: The Descriptive Analysis of Words*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Tomori, S. H. O. (1977). *The Morphology and Syntax of Present-Day English: An Introduction*. Ibadan: Heinemann .

Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. (1976). *A University Grammar of English*. London: Longman Press

Udofot, I. (1999). *An Introduction to the Morphology of English*. Uyo: Scholar's Press.