

LIN 111:

INTRODUCTION TO

LINGUISTICS I

MODULE 1 LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE

- Unit 1 What is Linguistics?
- Unit 2 History of Linguistics
- Unit 3 The Nature of Human Language
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UNIT 1 WHAT IS LINGUISTICS?

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

To the layperson, the concept of linguistics is the ability to speak a number of languages. If you tell someone you are studying linguistics in the university, you will be asked, “How many languages do you speak? However, linguistics has nothing to do with the number of languages a person can speak. As a linguist, you may be competent in only one language. But you are familiar with the rules that govern language in general, and have linguistic knowledge about aspects that are common (linguistic universal) to most languages. On the other hand, your ability to speak more than one language means that you are a ‘polyglot’ or ‘a multilingual’, and not a ‘linguist’.

In this unit, you will learn more about linguistics and language, and the relationship between both so that unlike a layman, you can differentiate between linguistics and language.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the basic concepts of linguistics,
- differentiate between the study of linguistics and language,
- explain the relationship between linguistics and language,
- highlight the different areas of linguistics,
- identify the different aspects of linguistic study of a language.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is Linguistics?

Who is a linguist? What is linguistics? What is its relationship with language?

We shall begin by defining linguistics. It is the scientific study of human language. Linguistics is scientific in the sense that the study of language must be subjected to the scientific processes of observation, data collection, formulation of hypothesis, analysis of data and formulation of theory based on the structure of the language. When we talk about language, we mean the human language, in contrast to other forms of communication such as animal communication.

An individual who engages in such a rigorous and tasking procedure of language study is called a 'linguist'. Linguists are professional language specialists who are equipped to analyze any language, regardless of whether they speak the language or not. They can collect data on languages that do not have written forms and propose letters of the alphabet (orthography) for such languages. This exercise forms the foundation for writing in languages.

Through this process, linguists help to develop languages and to ensure their continuous use. They also help to revive languages through language documentation and other forms of development. What a medical doctor does to human body is similar to what a linguist does to human language. For example, if a speaker says (æks) instead of (æsk) 'ask', a linguist will first observe the instances or situations in which the speaker uses either form, note, and classify the problem. H/she identifies and elaborates the kind of relationships between the two forms. Thereafter, he or she develops a hypothesis, and tests the hypothesis. The hypothesis has to be confirmed by subjecting the data to further tests. Then, the conclusions are integrated with the previous concepts. This is what we mean by the scientific nature of linguistics. Linguistics as a discipline seeks to study language as scientifically as possible (c.f. 3.2. below). Linguists are also involved in other aspects of language development such as language planning, standardization, and language policies.

3.2. The Object of the Study and the Scientific Nature of Linguistics

The object of the study of linguistics is language in all its ramifications. Linguistics studies language through some kinds of scientific investigation by means of controlled and empirically verifiable observations, and with reference to some general theories of language structure. To say that linguistics is scientific, it means that linguistic study is characterized by three principles. These are explicitness; systematicity and objectivity (see Omachonu 2011: 10-11 for detailed discussion on the principles).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Who is a linguist?

2. Who is a polyglot?
3. Why would you say that Linguistics is a science?

3.3. Language

There are many definitions of language based on different schools of thought. It has been defined as 'a system of vocal auditory communication using conventional signs composed of arbitrary patterned sound units and assembled according to a set of rules, interacting with the experience of its users' (Bolinger 1968:12). Sapir (1921:8) defines language as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires means of voluntarily produced sounds. Both definitions refer to the arbitrary nature of the symbols representing sounds in language. The reference is arbitrary and conventional because each language expresses ideas using different words; for example 'house' is house in English, *ile* in Yoruba, *ufok* in *Ibibio/Efik*, *ulo* in *Igbo*, and *gída* in *Hausa*. Language is the use of a shared set of signs or symbols within a society to interact and express their feelings, ideas and emotions. Every society has a way of communicating through words, writing or through making signs as in sign language or even through iconic ways of communication such as the colours of a traffic light which each convey a message or the blast of a siren when there is fire outbreak or danger.

Language is also a system by which sounds, signs and gestures are used to communicate meaning. For humans, a system of speech sounds or signs which constitute linguistic knowledge of both speaker and addressee convey and receive information. For animals like bees, chimpanzees, parrots, dolphins which are known to 'communicate' through sounds and signals, it is stimulus-based and is quite limited in comparison with human system of communication. Human communication is innate-based and is what we use to generate an infinite number of messages. That humans have the capacity to generate new sentences according to certain rules in a language is evidence that human language is biologically endowed faculty specifically for humans. Every human society has a language, a shared set of symbols, which they use in communication.

3.3.1. Characteristics of Language

Linguists have found by experience that language has certain characteristics which provide the basis for accurate description. These are as follows: language is sound, language is systematic, language is innate, language is conventional, language is meaningful, language changes, arbitrariness of language, language is symbolic, language is social, etc (see Omachonu 2011: 4-5).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Define language in your own words.
2. Look for a list of Nigerian languages and see if your language is listed.
3. What do you call the following words in your language:

(i) hand, (ii) water, (iii) man, (iv) woman, (v) fire, (vi) air, (vii) food, (viii) sun, (ix) moon, (x) God, (xi) school, (xii) child, (xiii) boy, (xiv) girl, (xv) wife, (xvi) pot, (xvii) tree, (xviii) house, (xix) salt, (xx) soup.

3.3.2. Functions of Language

Language performs many functions among which are:

i) expressive purpose, ii) informational role, iii) instrument of thought, iv) instrument of socialization, v) cooperation, vi) performative role, vii) ideation role, etc (see Anyanwu 2007 and Omachonu 2001).

3.4. Language and Linguistics

Language is the object of study for linguistics, and linguists study the structure of language empirically at all levels namely, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The linguistic study of language in relation to other disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, communication, sociology etc. has expanded its scope. In addition, researchers in the fields of language development, teaching, and publishing have developed a field of applied linguistics through linguistic study.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Is language unique to humans? Why?

Branches of Linguistics

Linguistics as a science covers various areas of human language which are usually discussed under two broad areas namely, micro-linguistics and macro-linguistics.

We shall introduce the branches of linguistic study under these two broad labels briefly. More detailed discussions of the various branches will follow in later sections of this course.

3.4.1 Micro-Linguistics

Micro-linguistics covers the basic components or constituents of a language. This is also referred to as theoretical linguistics. Theoretical linguists study the structural aspects of language under the broad label of grammar. Grammar is further divided into form and meaning. Under form are phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax while meaning is dealt with in semantics. These are introduced briefly here but will be discussed in more detail in subsequent units of this course.

Phonetics

This is a branch of linguistics that is concerned with the study of speech sounds-how they are produced (articulated), sent across (transmitted) and perceived (reception). In other words, phonetics accounts for how human beings generate speech sounds, the physical properties of the sounds and how they are received by the hearers. There are three areas of study in phonetics, and they are: articulatory, acoustic and auditory phonetics. Articulatory phonetics deals with the production of speech sounds. Acoustic phonetics deals with instrumental production of sounds, while auditory phonetics has to do with how sounds are perceived by the organs used for hearing, the ear and the brain.

Phonology

Phonology is the study of how speech sounds combined to form patterns and systems. It helps us to know the combination of sounds that are permissible in a language. It is related to Phonetics in that phonetics supplies the data for phonology. A phonological account will show which sounds can make a difference in meaning of words. For example, /p/ and /b/ make a difference in the meaning of the following words in English:

- Park /pa:k/
- Bark /ba:k/

In phonology, sounds that make a difference in the meaning of words are the significant sounds

in a language and are known as phonemes. It is not only the sounds that can make a difference in the meaning of words; other features like stress, intonation and tone perform similar functions. For example, in Nigerian languages, tones can make a difference in meaning:

Igbo	Ibibio	Yoruba
àkwà bed	étim millipede	Ígbá calabash
àkwá egg	ètim pound (plural)	Ìgbā two hundred
ákwà cloths	Etim (someone's name)	Igbá garden egg

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

1. What three areas is phonetics concerned with?
2. Can you identify differences in meaning in words in your language similar to English or the examples above from Nigerian languages?

Morphology

This is the branch of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and how words are formed in a language. Morphology accounts for word formation in languages in two broad ways as found in derivational and inflectional morphology. Derivations are class changing word formation processes such as compounding, affixation, conversion, and so on whereas inflections such as plural formation, past tense marking on the verbs, etc do not change the lexical class of the words. The basic unit of analysis in morphology is called the 'morpheme'. A morpheme is defined as the minimal meaningful unit of grammatical analysis. For example, the word 'unfaithfulness' can be broken into different units or morphemes as in: un + faith + ful + ness. The main word or the root morpheme is *faith*. This word is called a *free morpheme* because it can stand on its own and have meaning. The other parts of the word (unfaithfulness) that are attached to the left (prefix) or right (suffix) of the root word that cannot stand on their own and have meaning are called *bound morphemes*. They have meaning only when they are affixed to the main word.

Syntax

Syntax is the study of how words are arranged to form sentences. Just as minimal units of speech form the data for phonetics and phonology, and morphemes are the minimal units in morphology, the sentence, made up of phrases and words are the minimal units of study in syntax. Words in a language have to be arranged according to the rules of that language to make meaning. These rules are innate and internalized rules and constitute the knowledge that a native speaker has of his or her language. Consider the languages below:

- a. English: A fair girl is coming
- b. Yoruba: Ọmọ obinrin pupa mbo`
 girl fair coming

In the sentences above, the English syntactic rule in "a" places the adjective (fair) before the noun (girl), whereas in the Yoruba syntactic rule in "b" places the adjective (pupa) after the noun (obinrin).

Semantics

Semantics is the branch of linguistics that is concerned with meaning in language. The main

reason for communicating is to make meaning. The goal of semantics is to develop theoretical framework of statements of fact and definitions on the basis of which meaning can be described. There are two components of meaning namely, lexical meaning and phrasal meaning. Lexical meaning refers to meaning of words in terms of their properties e.g. gender, animate, quantity etc. Phrasal meaning refers to meanings of word combinations.

3.4.2 Macro-Linguistics

Macro-linguistics refers to aspects of linguistic study which involve the application of the findings of theoretical linguistics to the analysis of language in use. It is also called Applied Linguistics, because it involves the application of linguistics in relation to other disciplines. The sub-fields that come under this label include: sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, mathematical linguistics, ethno-linguistics, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, and clinical linguistics. They are introduced briefly here, but will be discussed in more detail in subsequent units of this course.

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to the society. The main aim of sociolinguistics therefore is to study language in its social and cultural context. This includes the study of language in a society or speech community; language varieties; and language functions. Sociolinguistics relates the differences observed in language use to the problems that rise from those societal aspects. Examples include the study of how individual's pronunciations differ between groups that are separated by certain social variables such as ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, and how these variables are used to categorize individuals in social class or socio-economic classes. The variation of a language from one region to another is called dialect while variation of language among social classes is referred to as sociolects.

Historical Linguistics

Historical linguistics was developed in the nineteenth century. During this time, linguists were concerned with the historical development of languages. The aim of such investigations was to arrive at general hypotheses about how languages change over time, and therefore is also known as diachronic linguistics as opposed to synchronic linguistics which is on-historical linguistics. Historical linguistics did not originally develop as a branch of linguistic study as it is today. It began as the core of linguistic research with its investigation into the historical development of English from Anglo-Saxon which is currently referred to as the Romance languages-French, Spanish, and Italian, which in turn originated from Latin. The two primary methods of research are the "comparative method" and "internal reconstruction". In comparative method, the linguist examines data from languages for which it is possible to establish a historical relationship. In internal reconstruction, the linguist relies on diachronic data from within the particular language being investigated. The internal reconstruction is mostly used in those rare instances when a language appears to have no 'relations' with other languages. Through historical linguistics, languages are classified into families based on relationships with other languages.

Mathematical Linguistics

Mathematics is the science of patterns; it is by finding such patterns that knowledge is compressed. Thus, mathematics compresses knowledge or information. A few decades ago, courses in calculus were the purview of students of mathematics, physics and engineering. Mathematical linguistics is the study of linguistics using mathematical methods of analysis. It

covers broad areas of linguistics, probability theory, speech synthesis, and speech recognition, computational linguistics (formal languages and machines). It focuses on the statistical and mathematical representation of information in texts; statistical and algebraic linguistics constitute two different areas of mathematical linguistics.

Ethnolinguistics

Ethnolinguistics is a field of linguistic anthropology which studies the language of a particular ethnic group. Ethnolinguistics is often associated with regions where ethnicity plays a major role in language description and status. Ethnolinguists study the way perception and conceptualization influences language, and show how this is linked to different cultures and societies. An example is the way space is perceived and expressed in various cultures. In many societies, words for the cardinal directions East and West are derived from terms for sunrise/sunset.

Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is the study of the psychological and neurobiological factors that enable humans to acquire, use, and understand language. Psycholinguistics is concerned with the psychological mechanism underlying speech production and reception. It also studies how children acquire their first language, speech perception, and loss of the ability to use and understand language. Initial forays into psycholinguistics were largely philosophical ventures, due mainly to a lack of cohesive data on how the human brain functioned. Modern research makes use of biology, neuroscience, cognitive science, and information theory to study how the brain processes language. There are a number of sub-disciplines; for example, as non-invasive techniques for studying the neurological workings of the brain become more and more widespread, neurolinguistics has become a field in its own right. Psycholinguistics covers the cognitive processes that make it possible to generate a grammatical and meaningful sentence out of vocabulary and grammatical structures, as well as the processes that make it possible to understand utterances, words, ~~text~~, etc. Developmental psycholinguistics studies infants' and children's ability to learn language, usually with experimental or at least quantitative methods.

Computational Linguistics

Computational linguistics is an interdisciplinary field dealing with the statistical and/or rule-based modeling of natural language from a computational perspective. This modeling is not limited to any particular field of linguistics. Traditionally, computational linguistics was usually performed by computer scientists who had specialized in the application of computers to the processing of a natural language. Recent research has shown that human language is much more complex than previously thought, so computational linguists often work as members of interdisciplinary teams, including linguists (specifically trained in linguistics), language experts (persons with some level of ability in the languages relevant to a given project), and computer scientists. Computational linguistics draws upon the knowledge of linguists, computer scientists, and experts in artificial intelligence, cognitive psychologists, mathematicians, and logicians, amongst others.

Computational linguistics can be divided into major areas depending upon the medium of the language being processed, whether spoken or textual; and upon the task being performed, whether analyzing language (parsing) or creating language (generation).

Speech recognition and speech synthesis deal with how spoken language can be understood or created using computers. Parsing and generation are sub-divisions of computational linguistics dealing respectively with taking language apart and putting it together. Machine translation remains the sub-division of computational linguistics dealing with having computers translate

between languages. Some of the areas of research that are studied by computational linguistics include aided corpus linguistics.

Clinical Linguistics

Clinical Linguistics is a sub-discipline of linguistics and involves the application of linguistic theory to the field of Speech-Language Pathology. The central focus of Clinical Linguistics is the application of the principles and methods of linguistics and phonetics to communication impairment in children and adults. Clinical linguistics plays a key role in the description, analysis and remediation of communication impairment. The study of linguistic aspects of communication development and disorders is also of relevance to linguistic theory and our understanding of language more generally.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been introduced to linguistics, language and their relationship. The various fields of linguistic study were also introduced. From the discussion, the grammar of language is the main focus of linguistics study. It can also be examined from the perspective of other disciplines such as history, mathematics, anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit linguistics has been defined as the scientific study of language(s) which involves scientific processes of observation, data collection, formulation of hypothesis, analysis of data and formulation of theory based on the structure of the language. Language on the other hand was defined as a shared set of symbols used by a society to express their feeling, ideas and emotions. The relationship between both is that language is the object of study for linguistics.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1 a. What are the objectives of linguistic study?
- b. List the linguistic levels at which language(s) can be studied.
- 2 a. What is language?
- b. List 20 languages spoken in your country.
3. Can the terms language and linguistics be used interchangeably?
Explain your answer and provide illustrations.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 HISTORY OF LINGUISTICS**CONTENTS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 1, you were introduced to language, linguistics, and their relationship. In this unit, we will discuss the history of linguistics to provide you with an understanding of the development of the discipline and its relevance for today. Linguistics has its origins dating back to as far as the 5th century B.C. However, the use of the term, ‘linguistics’ did not evolve until the 19th century. The origins of linguistics emerged from philosophical studies of language beginning with the Greeks, Romans before moving through Europe, India, and then the United States of America. The science has passed through at least three phases before its final arrival at its main object of study. We will examine the growth of linguistics from the early times to its current state.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the highlights of the history of linguistics
- identify the major periods, phases, and individuals that played significant roles in shaping the field of linguistics
- describe the aims and relevance of linguistics.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 Linguistics in Greece (5th B.C. – 13th Century A.D.)**

We begin tracing of the history of linguistics in Greece and Rome which were countries both known for modern civilization. The first phase in the growth of linguistics as a science had its focus on grammar based on logic as a discipline instituted by the Greeks and carried on by the French. There was no specific objective approach to language, grammar as put forth by the Greeks was aimed at prescribing rules for correct grammatical forms. Greece was popular for their philosophers two of whom were known for their study of the Greek grammar, Thrax and Protagoras. They are credited as the first to attempt word classification which we refer to today as

the parts of speech. In the first millennium BC, the Greeks were said to have developed the alphabetic system for writing the Greek language. By the second millennium the Myceneans are reported to have made use of a syllabic writing system that included the use of logograms, symbols representing words.

It was in 300 B.C that linguistics was said to have a defined role from the perspective of philosophy when the Stoic and Alexandrian Schools of thought were born. This also marked the beginning of the second phase in the growth of linguistics as a science. The philological school in Alexandria, though not having linguistic structure as its central object of study studied language using its method of philological criticism. The Stoics are credited with formalization of the dichotomy between form and meaning. According to them, form refers to the signifier while meaning refers to the signified. These terms were to be later used in the work of Saussure to refer to sound and thought in his book, *Cours de linguistique*. The Greeks made a distinction between *phonetics*, etymology, and syntax. Between the Stoics and Alexandrians, there were opposing views about nature and convention as the frameworks within which language related issues such as the relation between words and their meaning were examined. The Alexandrians who held the view that language was by nature systematic and regular were called analogists while the Stoics who held the view that language was by convention irregular were called anomalists. For example, in answering the question whether words and their meaning were related, the Alexandrians argued that the natural iconic resemblance of meaning of words to their sounds was evidence for a relationship. But the Stoics were of the view that because words could change in meaning, there is no one to one relationship between words and their meaning, hence the irregularities observed like pluralisation in English: book: books, but *ox: oxen*. The most notable contribution of the Greek scholars to the growth of linguistics was in syntax. Their works served as a foundation on which modern grammarians built their syntactic theories. Focus was on the written forms of language and not the verbal form. They studied the written forms in terms of its occurrence in isolation as a part of speech, and in terms of its syntactic relationship with other words in a sentence construction. The Greek grammarians' contributions to linguistic study included the distinction between inflected and uninflected words; difference between proper and common nouns; case as an inflectional category; three categories of verbs, active, passive, and neutral; and 'aspect' as a separate class describing incomplete and complete action. They also introduced the concept of 'time' for verbs which later became known as 'tense'.

Various Greek scholars who contributed to the growth of linguistics include Protagoras, Plato, Thrax, and Zeno (leader of the Stoics).

Below is a summary of their various contributions:

S/NO	Philosopher	Contributions
1	Protagoras	Word classification based on gender i.e. masculine, feminine, and neuter.
2	Plato	Functional distinctions of parts of speech e.g. nouns function as subjects of a predicate. -Distinction between verbs.

3	Thrax	Spellings of Greek words Eight parts of speech: nouns, verbs, particle, article, pronoun, preposition, adverb, and conjunction. • First comprehensive and systematic description of Greek language.
4	Zeno and the Stoics	• Distinction between form and meaning. • Classification of Greek words into word classes: nouns, verbs, conjunctions and articles. • Discovered 'case' in Greek nouns. • Distinguished between active and passive, transitive and intransitive verbs.

Source: Ajiboye (1999: 220-221)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. What characterized the first phase of the growth of linguistics as a discipline?
2. What was the most notable contribution of the Greeks to the growth of linguistics?

3.2 Linguistics in Rome

The growth of linguistics in Rome was similar to that of Greece, Roman philosophers studied Latin grammar. However, the Greek philosophers were said to have been a great influence on their Roman counterparts. The Roman philosophers used the Greek model in their analysis of Latin. The similar structures of Greek and Latin also made this possible.

The study of Latin was conducted on its etymology, morphology, and syntax. Similar varying points of view along the lines of anomalists like with the Greeks were observed among the Romans. However, a Latin scholar by the name Marcus Varro argued for the recognition and use of both parameters in analyzing formed the foundation and their associated meanings. The study of Latin grammar was in terms of 1) the art of correct speech, letters and syllables 2) parts of speech 3) grammatical correctness, and 4) style. The contributions of two Roman scholars to the study of Latin are worthy of note:

S/NO	Philosopher	Contributions
1	Marcus Varro	• Worked on Latin grammar: etymology, morphology, and syntax. • Observed differences between Latin and Greek. • Argued for the use of both principles of analogy and anomaly in analysing language.
2	Priscan	• Worked on regular inflections. • Produced texts used for teaching grammar. • Defined syllable as the smallest part of articulate speech of which the properties are the name of the letters, its written shape, and phonetic value'. • Defined the word as the minimum unit of the sentence.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote a book on medieval grammar which formed foundation of medieval linguistic philosophy.
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Source: Ajiboye (1999: 222-223)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What aspect of language formed the focus of study for the Romans?

3.3 Linguistics in India

The growth of linguistics also had its root in India within the same period as of Greece and Rome. The grammarian was Panni and the language was Sanskrit and the period was 4th century B.C. Unlike the Greek and Latin traditions, the grammar that developed in India was styled after the Hindu/Indian tradition. It is reported that there were at least 12 schools of grammatical theory in India at the time. However, similarities between the Greco-Roman and Indian traditions include the arguments about the natural versus conventional status of language; sacred Hindu texts were compiled the same way glossaries and commentaries were compiled for Greek and Latin; and Indian grammarians were able to make a distinction between nouns and verbs like Plato did between the subject and predicate for Greek. Indian linguistic study did more work in phonetics and word structure, their classification of speech sounds was more comprehensive than any other work achieved before late 19th century. Panni's work on the structure of words in Sanskrit made him well known and ranked among the best. Western scholars discovered his work on Sanskrit by the middle of the 19th century and this led to the developed of philology.

3.4 Linguistics in the Renaissance Period

The medieval period or middle ages from the 13th century AD witnessed a time of Renaissance in the Roman Empire. It was a period during which Latin played a significant role in the educational system and in Christianity as the language of the church, scholarship, and culture. The materials prepared for the teaching of Latin is what developed into traditional or classical grammar. Grammar and meaning formed the focus of study during this period with the underlying assumption that all languages were same in terms of their grammar and parts of speech. Greek and Latin were no longer the only languages to be studied, other languages that underwent linguistic description include Irish and Welsh. The various linguistic studies of the period brought about growth in literacy, literature and education.

Between the 14th and 17th centuries AD, the first grammars of several European languages were produced-Italian, Spanish, French, Polish etc. The elite helped to promote the study of languages through printing. The focus became to provide rules of usage. During the same period, missionary work in China led to the study of the phonology and syntax of Chinese and the production of linguistic materials such as the Chinese dictionary. Comparative studies like that of Trigault between Chinese and languages of Western Europe were undertaken. The study of Hebrew and Arabic gained prominence during the Renaissance period. Arabic scholars were noted for presenting a description of the organs of speech and the mechanism for sound production.

Scholars whose contributions promoted the growth of linguistics during the Renaissance period include Pierre, Ramec, Trigaukt, Galileo, Copernicus and Kelper. Two schools of thought in the field of philosophy that influenced linguistic studies significantly were Empiricism and Rationalism. The first held the view that all human knowledge had its source in sense impression

and operation of the mind upon those impressions in the form of generalizations while the second held the view that human knowledge had its source in the truths of human reason. Towards the end of the 18th century a statement was made on the historical relationship between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin. The discovery that languages could be compared with one another marked the third phase in the growth of linguistics as a science, and gave rise to comparative philology or comparative grammar which formed the focus of linguistic study in the 19th century.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

What was the most significant contribution of the study of language in India to the growth of linguistics?

3.5 Linguistics in the Late 18th and Early 19th Century

Linguistic studies blossomed during this period with research into the other aspects of language study but particularly in the area of historical and comparative linguistics. Further research was conducted on relationship between Sanskrit and European languages; Indian scholars debated general linguistic theory with focus on the nature of the word and meaning. Phonetic description comprised a) processes of speech production b) phonetic segments, and c) combination of speech sounds in phonological structures. Indian linguists identified four parts of speech-noun, verb, preposition and article. German linguists also featured prominently during this period. Below is a list of linguists from around the world and their contributions:

	Linguists	Contributions
1	Raymond Rask (1787-1832) Jacob Grim (1785- 1863)	Developed the comparative and historical study of Indo-European language family.
	Schlegel, F Author of	‘On the language and learning of the Indians’
	Franz Bopp (1791-1867)	Author of ‘The Sanskrit Conjugation System’ a comparative work on Sanskrit, Germanic Greek, Latin, and Persian.
	Benfey Author of	‘The history of linguistics and Oriental Philology in Germany’
	Jacob Grimm Founder of	Germanic studies published a book on German grammar, and author of the famous Grimm’s law on sound shift.
	Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767 – 1835)	Authored a book on an introduction to general linguistics. His view that a language makes infinite use of finite means and that the grammar should be a description of the processes that make that possible came to form the basis of Chomsky’s famous modern generative grammar.
	Schleicher A. 1821- 1868	Author of several books on historical linguistics and linguistic theory e.g. Compendium of the comparative grammar of the Indo-Germanic language (1861)
	Max Muller	Made popular comparative studies through his lectures on the science of language(1861)

	G. Curtis	He was a philologist known for his work on principles of Greek Etymology (1879) which was one of the first works to reconcile comparative grammar with classical philology.
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Sources: Ajiboye (1999: 231), Saussure (1991: 1-5)

3.6 Linguistics in the 20th Century

This period can be said to have witnessed the emergence of the era of modern linguistics. Linguistic theories formed the focus in Europe and America, and were tested on language around the world. Among the several notable linguists of this period, two of them featured prominently, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Noam Chomsky (1957).

Ferdinand de Saussure was a Swiss scholar often referred to as the father of modern linguistics. He is famous for his book which is a collection of his lectures on linguistic theory titled *Cours de linguistique generale* (A course in General Linguistics). In particular, Saussure is credited with his distinction between language as *langue* and *parole*. For Saussure, *langue* is 'a storehouse' of grammatical forms collectively owned by speakers of a language, residing in the brain of each speaker. *Parole* on the other hand, is the part of language that reflects its variant nature, and is not accounted for in linguistic description. Saussure's theory formed the basis for traditional or classical grammar. Thereafter, notable linguists who emerged with their versions of linguistic theory include Henry Sweet and Firth in Britain, Bloomfield, Bloch, Fries, Hockett, Nida and Boas, Pike in the United States of America. Their theories replaced traditional grammar and established structuralism. He is also known for developing the linguistic theory of structuralism. By 1957, Noam Chomsky emerged with his linguistic theory which he defined as being concerned with the grammatical system of an ideal speaker-listener in a homogenous speech community. For him, the object of study is the speaker's knowledge of his/her language which he refers to as competence. Like Saussure, he makes a distinction between language as knowledge that resides in the brain and its actual use which he refers to as performance. Chomsky's work established generativism as a theoretical approach. Theories based on this approach include the standard theory, extended standard theory, generative grammar, government and binding (1981), minimalist theory (1995), x-bar theory; others are autosegmental phonology by Goldsmith 1976, and lexical phonology by Kiparsky 1982.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

What formed the object of study for modern linguistics?

3.7 Linguistics in Nigeria

The growth of linguistics in places like Europe, India, and the United States of America as briefly described in the preceding sections far outweighs linguistic efforts in Nigeria. Indeed, there is no record of linguistic research in Nigeria before the late 18th century. The earliest recorded linguistic efforts are in the late 19th and early 20th centuries led mostly by missionaries. With about 510 languages spoken, most of the languages do not have written forms. As a result, the concentration of early linguistic efforts was on developing orthographies. It is reported that the first Nigerian language samples were collected by the Portuguese around 1600, but more detailed study of some African languages was published in 1812. The work included vocabularies for six

Nigerian languages-Hausa, Kanuri, Fulani, Igbo, Ijaw, and Ibibio. Apart from Yoruba which had a Nigerian, Samuel Ajayi Crowther work on the language, other linguistic works were conducted by non- Nigerians in the early period of linguistics in Nigeria. In the 1840s, the Scottish Presbyterian mission at Calabar worked on Efik; the Methodist and Roman Catholic mission worked on Yoruba and Igbo. Notable among individuals who carried out linguistic work on Nigerian languages are Clapperton between 1824-1844, Bowdich in 1819, Hannah Kilham, Raban, Baudin in 1884, Westermann, Reverend Wood on Yoruba; Mignod in 1914 and Schon in 1844 on Hausa; and Abraham between 1934 -1949 on Hausa and Idoma. Linguistic studies in Nigeria blossomed with the establishment of the first University at Ibadan in 1948. The first generation of academic linguists who researched on Nigerian languages were non-Nigerians, they included William Welmers, Robert Armstrong and Kay Williamson. They in turn trained the first group of Nigerian linguists who have also trained others. They include Ayo Bamgbose, Oladele Awobuluyi who worked on Yoruba; and Ben Elugbe who worked on Edoid languages. The main focus among other linguistic research interests has remained the description of Nigerian languages. Currently, less than one-third of 510 Nigerian languages have their orthographies.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

What aspect of language formed the focus of study for linguists in Nigeria?

3.8 Aim and Relevance of Linguistics

Linguistics takes as data all human languages. According to Saussure (1991: 6-7), the aims of linguistics are as follows:

- To describe all known languages and record their history. This involves tracing the history of language families and, as far as possible, reconstructing the parent language of each family;
- To determine the forces operating permanently and universally in all languages, and to formulate general laws which account for particular linguistic phenomena historically attested;
- To delimit and define linguistics itself.

As noted earlier, linguistics itself has close relations with several other disciplines through provision of data vice versa. Sometimes, the line of demarcation is not so clear. For example, anthropology is a discipline which studies humans, and it utilizes linguistic facts as part of its data on humans, hence anthropological linguistics. Language is a social phenomenon, and sociology as the study of social behavior societal linguistic facts, hence sociolinguistics. The relevance of linguistics lies in the fact that language, its object of study, is a very important factor in the lives of individuals and societies. As a result, linguistic enquiries are of interest to several disciplines that study humans and their societies.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Linguistics is unique as a discipline because it attempts to study a social phenomenon like human language from a scientific perspective. It is also unique because it has forged close relationships with several other disciplines to the extent that the line of demarcation is often not so clear.

5.0 SUMMARY

The term, 'linguistics' came into use in the 19th century.

Linguistics has its origins in the philosophical studies of language beginning with the Greeks, Romans, on to European languages, Indian before reaching the United States of America. Linguistics evolved as a science in phases. In the first phase of its growth, focus was on

prescriptive grammar based on logic. The second phase of its growth was characterized by the study of language from a philological perspective. In the third phase, focus was on historical and comparative grammar. The focus for modern linguistics as the discipline grew in Europe and America was on the development of linguistic theories.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. 'Linguistics passed through at least three phases before arriving at its main object of study' Discuss by identifying the phases and significant events that characterized each phase.
2. What was the role of the Alexandrian and Stoic schools of thought on the growth of linguistics?
3. Linguistics has relationships with several other disciplines. List five of such disciplines and describe the relationship of linguistics with each of the disciplines.
4. Compare and contrast the focus of linguistics in Europe with that of Nigeria.

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UNIT 3 THE NATURE OF HUMAN LANGUAGE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Basic Characteristics of Human Language
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Human language is specie-specific because it is unique to human beings. While it is true that some animals have the ability to convey messages, they are, however, limited and not as creative as human speech.

The nature of human language is so complex, yet certain characteristics are noted to be common to all human languages. If you were to listen first to English being spoken, then Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Swahili, Loka, French and Bekwarra, it will appear to you that the stream of sounds used in word and sentence formation were a bit different from one another. However, linguists have observed that despite their apparent differences, these languages have several features in common. These common characteristics constitute the nature of human language and they are called linguistic universals or the basic characteristics of human language. Language universals are the outcome of the discovery that languages have certain aspects in common while other aspects are unique to specific languages.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- describe the nature of human language,
- explain language universals.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Basic Characteristics of Human Language

We know that language is unique to humans, therefore, wherever human beings exist, you will find language. Although languages differ in terms of sounds, grammar there a number of characteristics that are common to all languages:

- All languages are equal. There are no inferior languages, all languages have the capacity to express from simple to complex ideas. Their vocabulary can be extended to include new words for new concepts.
- All languages change over time. No language is static, all languages are dynamic unless they are not being used in daily social interaction. Languages change because new ideas emerge, and language is the vehicle used to express such ideas. However, certain aspects of language change more frequently than others such as vocabulary versus grammar.
- All languages have an arbitrary relationship between sounds and meanings. There is no one to one correspondence between sounds and meaning in any language. Even for sign language, the

relationship between the sign and its meaning is mostly arbitrary.

- All languages have a finite set of sounds. Languages use between 10 and 70 meaningful sounds. Although human beings are capable of making thousands of noises, only very few of them constitute meaningful sounds used in speech. These speech sounds are shared by several languages. For example, almost every language has sounds produced by the lower lip touching the upper teeth as in /f/ and /v/, but no language uses any sound produced by the upper lip touching the lower teeth. These meaningful sound segments are combined to form words which are combined to form sentences. The sound segments that create distinctiveness in the meaning of words are technically referred to as “phonemes”. For example, in English /p, b, t, d, k, g, i, a, e, u/ etc are meaningful sounds.

Pan vs. ban

Ten vs. den

Kate vs. gate

In (i), /p/ and /b/ are the sounds that make a difference in the meaning of the two words. In (ii) it is /t/ and /d/, while it is /k/ and /g/ in (iii).

- All languages have consonant and vowel sounds. The human language comprises discreet sound segments called consonants (C) and vowels (V). It is the combination of these consonants and vowels that form words. Consonants are the sounds that we produce with a disturbance of the air tract in our mouth like /p, b, t, d, k, m, n, s, z, f, v/ etc. In the production of these sounds you will feel that there is no free flow of the air from your mouth. Whereas, in the production of vowel sounds there is no obstruction of air. The air flows out freely as in /a, e, i, o, u/.
- All languages have grammars. They contain rules for the same purpose: to produce grammatically correct sentences in that language. The grammatical categories are also similar in that nouns and verbs are found in all languages. However, they may be expressed more differently from one language to another. An element could be a noun in one language, and a verb in another. In addition many languages have verbs that would be considered as adjectives in other languages.
- All languages make gender distinctions. Languages reflect universal semantic features of male or female, human or animate distinctions.
- All languages have a way of making statements, questions, commands, negation, and time. Every language has the traditional functions of making declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory sentences, and contrary of statements, by negating such statements. Languages have different ways of forming negations.
- Human languages have ways of indicating the case relationship between the nouns and verbs. The relationship that a noun has to a verb in a sentence, based on this different languages use different methods in showing case like word order, special morphemes attached to the nouns, prepositions and postposition (come after the nouns). English has prepositions just like *Ibibio*, while a language like *Novajo* has position.

English	Ibibio	Novajo
Gate	úsúng	porta
To the gate	ké úsúng	portae
By the gate	k úsúng	porta

- Human languages have a means of indicating the tense and aspect of the verb. Tense refers to the time or a state of an event. Tense is the reference of action to the time it took place, while aspect refers to its frequency, duration and whether or not it has been completed. Some languages prefer one to the other, and the ways chosen to indicate them in speech or writing will reflect this preference. The perception of time and duration also vary from one language to another. Many languages add morphemes to the verb to indicate tense or aspect like French.

Although, English has a past tense verb (usually –ed), it has no future conjugation and conveys the same information either by placing the auxiliary verb “will” before the main verb, or by using the present tense and a time word as in ‘My mother comes *tomorrow*’.

- Human languages have ways of combining simple sentences into complex ones. Human languages have different structures. These different structures are achieved by combining different main clauses and subordinate clauses into complex structures like compound sentence, complex sentence, multiple sentence and compound-complex sentence. The characteristics may be more than these, but these are the common features of human language.

- All languages can be learned. Any child, regardless of geographical location, ethnic background, has the capacity to learn any language to which he or she is exposed.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Can you identify these characteristics in your language? Illustrate with examples.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed about the nature and basic characteristics of human language. These features are common to all languages while the specifics of how they work may differ from language to language.

5.0 SUMMARY

Human language is complex, but despite this complexity they still share some features in common. All human languages have sounds, although these sounds may be structured differently based on the phonological rule of a specific language. Features of commonness is not only limited to sounds alone, they are applicable to all linguistic levels like morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. These common features in human language are referred to as “linguistic universals”.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

List and explain the basic features in your language that are common to all other languages in the world. Support your answers with examples.

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UNIT 4 SIGN LANGUAGE**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Definitions of Sign Language
 - 3.2 Alternate and Primary Sign Language
 - 3.3 Simultaneity in Sign Language, Speed, Motion and Force of Sign
 - 3.4 History of Sign Language
 - 3.5 Varieties of Sign Language
 - 3.6 Misconceptions about Sign Language
 - 3.7 Uses of Sign in Hearing Communities: Gestures and Home Signs
 - 3.8 Sign Language and Writing
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learned about the nature of language and features that are common to all languages. In this unit, you will learn about sign language as a means of communication and how it is different from natural human language (i.e. spoken or oral language). Like human language, there is no one to one relationship between the sign and its meaning. You will also learn about the elements of a sign; the history and varieties of sign language; the relationship between sign and spoken language; and the people who communicate through this medium. Misconceptions about sign languages will also be discussed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define sign language,
- enumerate the elements of a sign,
- explain how sign language is different from oral or spoken language,
- distinguish between alternate and primary sign language,
- trace the history of sign language and identify its varieties,
- review the misconceptions about sign language.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 Definitions of Sign Language**

Riekehof (1987:9) defines a sign language as “A language that uses manual symbols to represent ideas and concepts. The term is generally used to describe the language used by deaf people in which both manual signs and finger spelling are employed”.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defines a sign language as a “language which uses manual communication, body language and lip patterns instead of sound to convey meaning by simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body, and facial expressions to express a speaker's thoughts fluidly”. In other words, sign language makes

use of different hand shapes (i.e. shapes of the hand), hands and arms movements, body gestures as well as facial expressions to convey the users' feelings, thoughts, desires, intentions, aspirations, etc. People who make use of sign language to communicate are called Signers.

From the foregoing, the elements of a sign are Hand shape (or Hand form), Orientation (or Palm Orientation), Location (or Place of Articulation), Movement, and Non-manual markers (or Facial Expression). These elements are summarized in the acronym HOLME:

- H – Handshapes or Handforms
- O – Orientation or Palm orientation
- L – Location or place of articulation
- M – Movement
- E – Expressions of the facial (facial expressions) or non-manual markers on their own, the HOLME elements or signs are meaningless units. These meaningless units were formerly called cheremes (similar to phonemes – the smallest units of speech used to distinguish one word or morpheme from another in spoken language). Sign languages organize these cheremes into meaningful semantic units, just like spoken languages organize phonemes into words. Also, the manual alphabet or finger spelling, (i.e. the use of the hand or [hand positions] to represent or indicate the letters of the alphabet and numbers) is a vital component of sign language. In linguistic terms, sign languages are as rich and complex as spoken language, despite the common misconception that they are not “real languages”. Linguists have studied many sign languages and found them to have every linguistic component required to be considered as true languages. Proof of the mature status of sign languages can be found in the growing body of sign language poetry, and other performances. Indeed, the poetic mechanisms available to signing poets are not all available to a speaking poet. This sign language mechanisms offer new, exciting and more rewarding ways for poems to reach and move audiences. Sign languages commonly develop in deaf communities and are used primarily by the deaf, dumb, or partially deaf, people who have speech impairments or Aphasia (i.e. loss of the ability to speak or understand spoken language), by friends and family members of these set of people, and by interpreters.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. What are the elements of a sign language?
2. What is the full meaning of the acronym HOLME?
3. What is a chereme and how is it similar to a phoneme?
4. Who is a signer?
5. Is sign language a simplified form of an oral language?
6. What explanation can you give to support your answer above?

3.2 Alternate and Primary Sign Language

The earlier view of a sign language as a limited set of gestures used in place of a ‘real’ language is close to what is now technically known as an alternate sign language. Yule (1996:202) defines an alternate sign language as “a system of gestures developed by speakers for limited communication in a specific context where speech cannot be used”. Consider the mode of communication between the choir master and the choristers during a choral performance, or the mode of communication inside a radio or television studio during a recording session. These are examples of alternate sign language, and except the users are deaf/dumb, they usually have a spoken language as their first language. In contrast, a primary sign language is the first language

of a group that does not have access to a spoken language.

3.3 Simultaneity in Sign Language, Speed, Motion and Force of Sign

Sign languages exploit the unique features of the visual-gestural medium. Oral language is linear—only one sound can be made or received at a time. Sign language, on the other hand, is visual; hence a whole scene can be taken in at once. Information can be loaded onto several channels and expressed simultaneously. As an illustration, in spoken English one could utter the phrase, “I drove here”. To add information about the drive, one would have to make a longer phrase or even add a second phrase, such as, “I drove here along a winding road,” or “I drove here. It was a nice drive.” However, in sign language, information about the shape of the road or the pleasing nature of the drive can be conveyed simultaneously with the verb ‘drive’ by inflecting the motion of the hand, or by taking advantage of non-manual signals such as body posture and facial expression, at the same time that the verb ‘drive’ is being signed. Therefore, whereas in spoken English the phrase “I drove here and it was very pleasant” is longer than “I drove here”, in sign language the two may be the same length (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2007). This unique feature of simultaneity in sign language is not available in oral language, where the sounds other than surprise words are mostly sequential, with the exception of *suprasegmental (or autosegmental) features such as tone, stress, vowel harmony*, etc. A sign can be made slowly or with speed; it can be static or in motion. It can be made gently or with force. All these elements are crucial in signing as they help to portray the full meaning of a message. In terms of speed, the sign “hurry” is moved more rapidly when one is saying “Hurry, we’re leaving now”, than when one is saying “Don’t hurry, we have plenty of time”. With regards to force and motion, for instance, you may indicate your love for a person by gently crossing your hands over your chest or you may indicate a stronger feeling by clasp the hands more tightly to the chest and even adding a rocking motion. The sign for “require” becomes “demand” when made forcible. The faster and more forcible the sign or the stronger the facial expression, the stronger the feeling(s) intended (Riekehof 1987).

3.4 History of Sign Language

The recorded history of sign language in Western society extends from the 16th century. In 1755, Abbé de l'Épée founded the first public school for deaf children in Paris with Laurent Clerc as its most famous graduate. After his graduation, Laurent Clerc went to the United States with Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet to found the American School for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. Gallaudet's son, Edward Miner Gallaudet founded the first college for the deaf in 1857 and in 1864 this school became Gallaudet University, located in Washington, D.C. This was the first Liberal Arts school for the advanced education of the deaf and hard-of-hearing, and is still the world's only university in which the programmes and services are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The university is named after Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, a notable figure in the advancement of education for the deaf.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. When and where did signing start?
2. Who founded the American School for the deaf?
3. Where is Gallaudet University and who founded it?
4. Distinguish between an alternate and primary sign language.

3.5 Varieties of Sign Language

There is an International Sign Language (sometimes called Gestuno) that transcends national borders and which is often used during international deaf events such as the Deaflympics (Olympic Games for the Deaf) and meetings of the World Federation of the Deaf. But, there is nothing like a universal sign language. Wherever communities of deaf people exist, sign languages develop. Consequently, various signed "modes" of spoken languages have been developed, such as Signed English, Adamorobe Sign Language (Ghana), Warlpiri Sign Language (Australia), just as there are varieties of spoken and written language. As a matter of fact, hundreds of sign languages are used around the world and are at the core of local deaf communities/cultures. Although sign language is used in many countries, each has developed its own system, which has been standardized to some extent in those countries. It also appears that most sign languages are named after the locality, country or geographic region where they are used. Some of these sign languages have obtained some form of legal or official recognition, while others have no official status at all.

Sign language differs from one geographic region to another. However, when people who use different sign languages meet, communication is significantly easier than when people of different spoken languages meet. Sign language, in this respect, gives access to an international deaf community. But, many different sign languages exist that are mostly mutually unintelligible. For example, British Sign Language and American Sign Language are quite different and mutually unintelligible, even though British and American spoken English are mutually intelligible.

The two most popular and highly developed sign languages are American Sign Language (ASL) (also known as Ameslan) and British Sign Language (BSL). ASL is considered to be the most refined and complete sign system in the world and it is used mostly in the United States of America and Canada. Nigeria too adopts American Sign Language as its official sign language. British Sign Language, on the other hand, is used mainly in the United Kingdom. Other sign language varieties include Australian Aboriginal sign languages, Kata Kolok sign language in Bali (Indonesia), Adamorobe sign language in Ghana and Yucatec Maya sign language in Mexico. Just as every oral language has regional varieties or dialects, each of the sign languages mentioned above also has its regional varieties.

Generally, each spoken language has a sign language counterpart inasmuch as each linguistic population will contain deaf members who will generate a sign language, though this sign language does not depend on the spoken language. Just as geographical or cultural forces isolate populations and lead to the generation of different and distinct spoken languages or language varieties, the same forces operate on sign languages to produce geographic/regional varieties, which may or may not be coterminous with local varieties of oral or spoken languages. This occurs even though sign languages have no direct relation to the spoken languages of the lands in which they arise. However, some geographic regions sharing a spoken language may have multiple unrelated sign languages.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

1. Mention two varieties of Sign language that you know.
2. What is Gestuno?
3. Which Sign Language variety has official recognition in Nigeria?

3.6 Misconceptions about Sign Language

There are several misconceptions about sign language which need to be clarified.

One common misconception is that sign language is pantomime method of performing using only actions and not words). Sign languages are definitely not pantomime. Rather, signs are largely arbitrary, with no necessary or direct visual relationship to their referents, much as most of spoken language is not onomatopoeic. Sign languages have complex grammars of their own, and can be used to discuss any topic, from the simple and concrete to the lofty and abstract. This would not be possible if it were pantomime. Another misconception is that sign languages are somehow dependent on spoken languages. That is, that they are spoken languages spelled out in gesture. Sign language is independent of spoken language; it is not a visual/gestural rendition or simplified version of a spoken language. The use of finger spelling was once taken as evidence that sign languages are simplified versions of spoken languages, but this is not the case. Finger spelling is merely one tool among many other tools used for signing. People tend to believe that speakers of the same oral language will use the same sign language. Or that deaf and/or hard-of-hearing people from the same community (where the same language is spoken) will use the same sign language. But, this is often not the case. Countries which use the same or similar oral language throughout may have two or more sign languages; whereas an area that contains more than one spoken language might use only one sign language. For example, British Sign Language. Yet another misconception is that sign languages were invented by hearing people. Hearing teachers of deaf schools, such as Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, are often incorrectly referred to as inventors of sign language. However, this claim has not been substantiated. Sign languages are normally generated by the deaf, dumb, and hard-of-hearing people.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

1. Is sign language the same as pantomime?
2. Does sign language depend on oral language?
3. Who invented sign language?

3.7 Uses of Sign in Hearing Communities: Gestures and Home Signs

Gesture is a typical component of spoken languages. More elaborate systems of manual communication have developed in situations where speech is not practical or permitted, such as during choral performances, television/radio recording studios, football games, group/game hunting, etc. In Football for instance, the referees use a limited but defined set of signs (and the whistle) to communicate their decisions to the players.

Recently, especially in the United States, there has been a movement to teach and encourage the use of sign language with toddlers and non-deaf but hard-of-hearing children before they learn to talk. This is typically referred to as Baby Sign systems are sometimes developed within a single family. For instance, when hearing parents with no sign language skills have a deaf child, an informal system of signs will naturally develop, unless repressed by the parents. The term for these mini-languages is home sign (sometimes home-sign or kitchen sign). Home sign arises due to the absence of any other way to communicate. Within the span of a single lifetime and without the support or feedback of a community, the child is forced to invent signals to facilitate the meeting of his or her communication needs. Although this kind of system is grossly inadequate for the intellectual development of a child and comes nowhere near meeting the standards linguists use to describe a complete language, it is undoubtedly a common practice.

3.8 Sign Language and Writing

Sign language differs from oral language in its relation to writing. The phonemic systems of

oral languages are primarily sequential kind or that is, the majority of phonemes are produced in a sequence one after another, although many languages also have non-sequential aspects (example stress, tone, etc). As a consequence, traditional phonemic writing systems are also sequential, with at best diacritics (i.e. the symbols placed above and/or below the letters of the alphabet) for non- sequential aspects such as stress and tone and vowel harmony.

Sign languages have a higher non-sequential component, with many “cheremes” produced simultaneously. For example, signs may involve fingers, hands, and face moving simultaneously, or both hands moving in different directions at the same time. Traditional writing systems are not designed to deal with this level of complexity.

Partially because of this, sign languages are not often written. Most deaf signers read and write the oral language of their country. However, there have been several attempts at developing scripts for sign language have included both “phonetic” systems, which can be used for any sign language, and “phonemic” systems, which are designed Sign writing systems like Sign Writing and HamNoSys are pictographic, being conventionalized pictures of the hands.

Sign writing, being pictographic, is able to represent simultaneous elements in a single sign. The Stokoe notation, on the other hand, is sequential, with a conventionalized order of a symbol for the location of specific sign languages. Examples of phonetic writing system for sign languages are Sign Writing and the Hamburg Notational System, popularly referred to as HamNoSys. An example of a phonemic writing system for sign language was used by William Stokoe in his 1966 *Dictionary of American Sign Language*. This was specifically designed for ASL; the sign, then one for the hand shape, and finally one (or more) for the movement. The orientation of the hand is indicated with an optional diacritic before the hand shape. When two movements occur simultaneously, they are written one atop the other; when sequential, they are written one after the other. Neither the Stokoe nor HamNoSys scripts are designed to represent facial expressions or non-manual movements, both of which Sign Writing accommodates easily, although this is being gradually corrected in HamNoSys.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

1. What types of writing systems have been developed for writing sign languages?
2. Distinguish between a phonetic and a phonemic sign writing system.
3. Provide the full meaning of HamNoSys.
4. Which sign language writing systems are phonetic and which are phonemic?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Sign language users or signers employ manual (hand and arm), body and facial movements or gestures (and not sounds) to express themselves. Sign languages are not simplified forms of oral or spoken languages and do not depend on spoken languages for their existence. They are fully developed and complex languages in their own right and are used by deaf, hard-of-hearing and even normal hearing people to discuss both mundane and abstract concepts effectively, as well as in poetry. There are different varieties of sign languages which are mutually unintelligible; speakers of the same oral language can utilize or “speak” different sign languages and some geographic regions sharing a spoken language may have multiple unrelated sign languages. It is possible to write down sign languages using special writing systems or scripts. Sign language was not invented by people with hearing abilities; rather it developed as a natural consequence of the communication needs of the dumb, deaf, and partially deaf.

Officially, Nigeria has adopted the American Sign Language. Interested parties (e.g. the dumb, deaf, partially deaf as well as sign language teachers) are formally taught using ASL.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have provided the meaning of sign language and enumerated the elements of a sign. We have also seen the categories of people who can make use of sign languages. The relationship between oral and sign language has also been explored, the history of language has been sketched and the major varieties of sign language have been identified.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you understand by Sign Language?
2. Mention and explain the elements of sign language.
3. What is the relationship between sign language and oral language?
4. Mention the common misconceptions about language.
5. Mention at least four varieties of sign language.

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UNIT 5 HUMAN LANGUAGE VS ANIMAL COMMUNICATION**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Human Language versus Animal Communication
 - 3.1.1 Chimpanzee Experiment on Language Usage
 - 3.2 Horse Experiment on Language Use
 - 3.3 Fish Experiment on Language Ability
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit (unit 4) we took a look at the nature of (human) language. We discussed on the features that are common to all (human) languages regardless of their geographical location. In this unit, we will examine what we already know about human language from the last unit in contrast with animal talk.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the differences in the linguistic performance of humans and animals
- discuss using results of various findings the capacity of animals to communicate through spoken or sign language
- analyse the behavioural pattern of animals to speech.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 Human Language versus Animal Communication**

Language is one of the most important possessions of humans; as such humans have been referred to as “the talking animal” that is *homo loquens*. The label *Homo sapiens* was first used to refer to humans by Linnaeus in his classification of the animal kingdom. The criteria on which Linnaeus’ system was built were naturally physical in character, but in the area of intelligence, humans were superior to animals. This puts humans in a superior class of *homo sapiens* called *homo loquens*. Humans spend a great deal of their time in communication. They start to do this during the first few years of life. Without being conscious of it, the entire activity of speech communication has evolved to the extent that neither the speaker nor the listener pays attention to the mechanics of the activity. The communication mechanism of human speech is so complex and sophisticated, its speech forms, structure, organization and meaning make it different from that of animals.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

We all have children in our environments, and some of us have pets in our homes or neighbourhoods. In your environment, compare the communication patterns of children with that of any pet of your choice.

In your observation:

- Was there any relationship in the way the two species communicate?
- If there was, what was it?
- What do you think is the reason for the differences?

It is true that animals, like humans communicate. Dogs bark, birds sing and so on. The barking of the dog may indicate danger in terms of an intruder into the compound which could be a man or another dog, or that it is hungry. It achieves this through vocal noise which carries meaning. However, humans do not communicate in the same way as animals (like a dog). Humans would normally communicate danger or hunger through speech:

- “There’s a thief in the compound” or “Say, I am hungry”.

There is evidence that some animals like the chimpanzee, parrot and dolphin can convey stimulated responses similar to humans. However, one must note that their speech forms are stereotyped of human speech which is spoken to them repeatedly. Without human language input, no animal can produce forms similar to that of human language. Several experiments have been carried out by scientists to test whether animals can perform competitively in language use like humans. Some of such experiments cover chimpanzee and other animals.

3.1.1 Chimpanzee Experiment on Language Usage

In the early 19th century, Luella and Winthrop Kellogg, raised an infant chimpanzee called ‘Gua’ and a child so that Gua could be taught how to use human language. The chimpanzee was reported to have understood about a hundred words, but could not produce any of these words. In the same period Catherine and Keith Hayes brought up the chimpanzee called Viki. They reared Viki in their home for five years. They treated it as if it was a human child. Its mouth was shaped so that it could produce some words correctly. With these efforts Viki was able to produce some words with very bad articulation. This poor articulation can be attributed to the fact that animals vocal structures are not as sophisticated as that of human beings. They can make a wide range of vocal sounds, but it is not the same thing as speaking.

The two experiments on ‘Gua’ and ‘Viki’ are proofs that chimpanzees cannot match human speech behaviour. Beatrice and Allen Gardner introduced another chimpanzee named ‘Washoe’ to the use of a version of American Sign Language often used by several congenitally deaf children as their natural first language. Washoe was raised like a human child in a comfortable domestic environment. The Gardners were assisted by research assistants. In a period of three and a half years, Washoe was able to use more than a hundred words that represent signs. The most interesting part of the experiment was that, Washoe was able to combine some forms to produce sentences. It even invented some forms to show creativeness. Washoe recognized a larger number of signs that it actually produced. It also was able to handle ordinary conversations in the form of question and answer formats.

Another chimpanzee named Sarah was brought up by Ann and David Premack to use plastic shapes for the purposes of communicating with humans. These plastic shapes represented words which could be used to form sentences. ‘Sarah’s’ approach in sentence formation was different from that of ‘Washoe’. Sarah was trained to link these shapes with objects and actions. At the end, Sarah was able to select certain plastic shapes to stand for objects like ‘apple’. It was also able to produce some sentences as well as understand complex sentence structure.

Herbert Terrace, a psychologist strongly opposed the linguistic achievement of Washoe, Sarah and Lana through his experiment on ‘Nim Chimsky’ another chimpanzee. ‘Nim Chimsky’ is a

coinage from a popular linguist's name "Noam Chomsky", who believed that language is an innate ability and is specie-specific. Nim's experiment was to disprove Noam Chomsky's theory of innate language ability. 'Nim' was taught American Sign Language under observed classroom conditions with painstaking records and video coverage. Within two years Nim was reported to have produced a large number of single-word signs, developed two-word combinations and used them in the right context. Nim's experiment showed that its longer utterances were simply a stereotype production or repetition of simpler structures, and not an expansion into more complex forms as are done by the children. Also, Nim only seldomly used sign language to start interaction with its teachers. The signs produced by Nim were only in response to the signs its instructors used.

Terrace, another scientist reinvestigated Washoe's activities and argued that both Nim and Washoe's use of sign language were simply reproductions of their teachers' signs, which were misinterpreted as partaking in conversations. He concluded that chimpanzees' language ability is not linguistic after all. Although they are clever creatures, they can only perform sophisticated 'tricks' of learning to produce certain behaviour in order to get some rewards.

3.2 Horse Experiment on Language Use

A German horse named "Clever Hans" was taught how to use hoofbeats to solve arithmetical questions. This it achieved by tapping its foot to the letters of the alphabet. Though this surprised many, it was concluded that Hans was only responding to subtle visual cues provided by those asking it questions.

3.3 Fish Experiment on Language Ability

Two Dolphins named "Buzz and Doris" were reported to have a means of sending signals to each other through opaque barriers on how they could catch fish snacks. They both used a flashing light signal by pressing a hand paddle to signal to each other about the presence of fish. On several attempts, they caught fish. This experiment showed that their behaviour consisted of conditioned responses to the different light signals.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Language is one of the unique features of humans that make them different from other animals. It is perhaps also one of the reasons humans are viewed as superior to animals. It is true that speech habit is not only peculiar to human beings. Animals also talk, but the speech performance of animals is not as sophisticated as that of humans. When animals use human speech forms, it is a mere imitation and stereotype of what they hear from the humans. This superiority in speech forms is why humans are referred to as "talking animal" or "homo loquens".

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the various experiments carried out by different scholars on different animals in their quest to find out whether animals have the same linguistic abilities as humans.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Considering the experiments thus far conducted on the attempt of different animals in using human language, to what extent can animals match humans in speech ability?
2. Explain the concept of superiority between humans and animals with regard to speech forms.

3. If you taught your dog to respond to some words of command like sit, run, catch, jump etc, is that the same as teaching language to humans? If yes, why, and if no, why not?

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MODULE 2 LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE

Unit 1 Competence and Performance

Unit 2 Language, Brain and the Mind

Unit 3 The Evolution of Language

UNIT 1 COMPETENCE AND PERFORMANCE CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Linguistic Knowledge (Competence)
 - 3.1.1 Phonetic and Phonological Knowledge
 - 3.1.2 Morphological Knowledge
 - 3.1.3 Syntactic Knowledge
 - 3.1.4 Semantic Knowledge
 - 3.1.5 Pragmatic Knowledge
 - 3.2 Linguistic Performance
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Module 1, we examined the nature of language, linguistics and their relationship. We also learned about the differences between human and animal communication. In this Module, we shall discuss linguistic knowledge as a unique characteristic of humans. Linguistic knowledge describes how humans create and use language.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain linguistic knowledge
- define linguistic competence and performance
- explain the relationship between competence and performance.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.2 Linguistic Knowledge (Competence)**

In language study, competence refers to your knowledge of a language(s). Many people have an adequate knowledge of the sounds of English, but find it difficult to correctly produce the sounds. The lack of one to one correspondence between what we know and what we produce is the reason you have pronunciations like “champion” as /jampin/, /sampi]n/ or / amfi n/. The speaker may have the knowledge of the sounds involved in the correct pronunciation of these words, but is not able to pronounce them correctly.

Linguistic knowledge is the ability to recognize/know the elements that constitute a language in terms of its sounds (phonetics) combination (phonology), words (morphology), word order (syntax), meaning (semantic), and its use (pragmatics). It is this knowledge that makes you a

native speaker of a language. Chomsky (1965:3) defines linguistic theory as follows:

- Concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.

According to Chomsky, there is a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations). It is in this sense that the concept of 'native speaker' comes into play. A native speaker is one who possesses both competence and performance capabilities in his/her language.

We will now examine the various aspects of the speaker-hearer's knowledge. Please note that although this is discussed under several labels, it does not imply that linguistic knowledge is segmented under those labels in a speaker's brain. The labels are meant to help us understand the various components that constitute language.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Who is a native speaker?

3.1.1 Phonetic and Phonological Knowledge

Native speakers are expected to know the sound system of the language. For example, a native speaker of English language should know that /l/ and /r/ are sounds in English, and that they can make a difference in the meaning of words, e.g.

- light vs right
- fly vs fry

The native speaker should also know all nuances of English morphology e.g. plural of "dog" is "dogs", "foot" is "feet" and "child" is "children".

In the same way, a native speaker of a Nigerian tonal language should know that tone can make for a difference in meaning of words e.g in Ibibio obong can have four different meanings depending on tone:

- óbòng - cane
- ób ng: - chief
- óbòng: - mosquito
- òbòng: - name of a town

A native speaker of Ibibio language will be able to identify the different meanings.

3.1.2 Morphological Knowledge

Morphological knowledge refers to native speaker knowledge of words and word formation processes of the speaker's language. For example, a native speaker of English will know that 'un-' and '-able' are bound and free morphemes respectively and can be combined to form the word 'unable'. He/she will also know the word building structures or processes of English, and how sounds change in a morpheme when it combines with another morpheme. For example, in English "-S" is a sound with three variants or different forms (allomorphs): /s/, /z/ and /iz/. It remains as "-S", if the last segment of the main word (morpheme) is a voiceless consonant (bat + s) /bæts/, as /z/ if the last segment of the word ends with a voiced consonant (bag + s) /bægz/, and as /iz/ if the last segment of a word ends with have a kind of friction (rose+s) /ruzilz/.

3.1.3 Syntactic Knowledge

Syntactic knowledge refers to native speaker's knowledge of sentence order and structure of a language. For example, a native speaker of English knows that English sentence structure is as follows:

- Determiner + Adjective + Noun (Det. + Adj. + N).

For example,

The fair-complexioned lady

Det. + Adj. + N

Whereas in Yoruba language, the reverse is the case. In Yoruba language, the structure is:

- Noun + Adjective (N + Adj) For example:

Obinrin pupa

N Adj

(Lady + fair-complexioned)

Syntactic knowledge also involves knowing order of parts of a sentence to achieve various types of meaning; roles the constituents of a sentence play in the state or event referred to by the sentence; and where to expect gaps in a particular pattern. A native speaker's knowledge of syntax albeit not formal includes knowledge of word classes or parts of speech like noun, adjective, verb, adverb, pronoun, etc of a language.

3.1.4 Semantic Knowledge

A native speaker's knowledge of his or her language includes semantic knowledge that is, meaning of statements that are true based on rules and definitions. For example, '*The tree ate my food*' is semantically false because the verb 'eat' requires an animate subject to be true. Semantic knowledge includes connotation and denotation in a language. For example, 'She is a pig'. This sentence could refer to (denotative) or it could refer to a female who shares certain characteristics with a pig e.g. dirt (connotation). Semantic knowledge also involves the knowing of other sense relations as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, homophony, homonym, polysemy, metonymy and collocation.

3.1.5 Pragmatic Knowledge

Pragmatics is a continuum of semantics. While semantics refers to statements that are true by virtue of agreed to rules and definitions, pragmatics refers to 'statements that are true by virtue of the real world'. For example, 'I could eat a cow' is semantically correct but pragmatically, it has to be understood differently because no human can eat a whole cow. The inference here is to the magnitude of this person's hunger. The knowledge required to correctly understand this statement involves the ability to know the meaning of 'cow' and its relationship with all the other components of the sentence (human, eat) within the worldview of the native language speakers. The same statement, translated into another language with a different worldview may not make pragmatic sense.

3.2 Linguistic Performance

According to Chomsky, performance refers to 'the actual use of language in concrete situations'. In contrast to linguistic competence, natural speech reflects many false starts, deviation

from grammatical rules and other variations. While a native speaker may be competent in his/her language, the speaker's performance is not the yardstick to measure his/her competence due to the reasons earlier mentioned. In other words, there is not necessarily a one- to one correspondence with competence and performance. According to Chomsky this can be as a result of memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic). For example, a native speaker of English who knows that double negatives are not permissible in English grammar, but uses them in his performance, 'You don't know nothing' performs a grammatical error.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Illustrate Chomsky's definition of performance in contrast to competence with two examples from your language.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have been introduced to linguistic knowledge and performance. You have also learnt that there is no one to one correspondence between competence and performance in a person.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed linguistic competence as a speaker's knowledge of his/her language, and performance as the actual use of that language. We examined the various components that make up linguistic knowledge: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of a language. You also learned that performance does not always match competence in a language for various reasons.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the characteristics of a native speaker?
2. What do you understand by linguistic competence?
3. Describe the various aspects of linguistic knowledge of a native speaker.
4. Does competence always match with performance? If yes, why and if no why not?

7.0. REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Competence and Performance:

http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/ASC/Compet_perfo.html

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UNIT 2: LANGUAGE, THE BRAIN AND THE MIND**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Language and Brain
 - 3.2 The Brain
 - 3.2.1 Parts of the Brain
 - 3.3 Localisation of Language
 - 3.4 Types of Speech Difficulties
 - 3.4.1 Malapropisms
 - 3.4.2 Aphasia
 - 3.5 The Brain and the Mind
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we discussed the definition of knowledge of a language vis a viz performance. Also in Module 1, unit 1 we examined some definitions of language given by various scholars, and in Module 1, unit 3 we explored the nature of human language. Two of the issues for scientific study have been focused on the nature of language, the nature of the brain and the relationship between the two (Fromkin et. Al 2003:33). For more than 2000 years, it has been the view that the source of language is the brain, and that the knowledge of language we have resides in the brain. This view led to the development of the approach that seeks to understand the nature of the brain (and mind) through the study of language. Thus, the study of the biological and neural aspects of language is known as neurolinguistics.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the relationship between language and brain (and mind)
- mention the different functions of the brain
- discuss the importance of the brain to language competence and performance.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 Language and Brain**

In Module 1, we examined language in some detail. We looked at some definitions of language which describe language as a means of communication using symbols and sounds. When examining the nature of language, we saw that these sounds were unique to the human race vis a viz the communication systems of other animal species. Also, the ability of humans to generate an unlimited number of sentences based on certain rules is another unique feature that suggests the active involvement of the brain (and mind) in the production of the language.

The brain plays a major role in the regulation of all our body functions and in the control of every kind of voluntary movement that we make. What makes speech a very special kind of activity is the fact that it depends on the continuous use of a large inventory of information in our brain about our language. All speech is dependent on knowledge of some given language; a fact which is accepted by the common use of the word tongue to refer to language, as in your 'mother tongue'. Everyone who speaks or listens to speech carries around in his cortex incredibly large chunks of information on his/her mother tongue from which he extracts for use to speak and to comprehend speech.

According to Fry (1978:5) 'the brain dictionary of an ordinary educated and literate person is likely to contain entries numbered in tens of thousands... forty thousand and maybe more'. This large dictionary which exists in the brain is made up of the words we are to recognize when we hear them, and of which we know their meanings and usage.

3.2 The Brain

The brain is the most complex organ of the human body. The ability to use language is located in the brain. The study of the brain mechanisms and anatomy that supports linguistic competence and performance and how it develops over time is called neurolinguistics.

The brain controls several body functions which include movement, mental process-thoughts, comprehension, and learning. It is a greatly modified and enlarged anterior portion of the central nervous system. It is located under the skull and its surface is covered by the cortex, also known as 'gray matter' which is made up of approximately 10 billion neurons (or nerve cells), glial cells and billions of nerve fibres that connect them. The neurons in the cortex control movement, sensation, consciousness, memory and other functions. They integrate sensory information and direct motor responses, while the glial cells support and maintain the neuron active. Our knowledge of language resides in this part of the brain.

Lateralisation of the Brain

Several experiments performed on the brain show that there are two hemispheres, the right and the left hemispheres. The experiments show that the right brain functions in pattern matching tasks, recognition, and spatial orientation. The left brain on the other hand recognizes language, rhythm, mathematical and logical analyses. This lateralization of functions is genetically and neurologically conditioned. Lateralisation refers to any cognitive functions that are primarily localised to one side of the brain or the other (From kin et al 2003: 61). If the brain is split, written language passing through the right hemisphere cannot be deciphered by the left hemisphere where the ability to language speech lies.

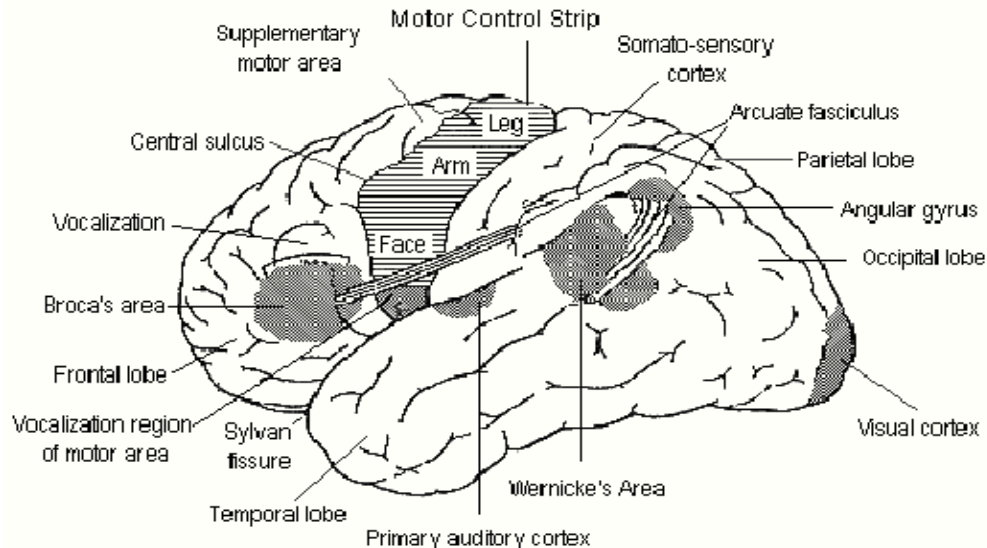
Another experiment that was conducted to test the functions of the two hemispheres of the brain was Dichotic listening. It is a technique that uses the auditory signals to observe the responses from the two sides of the brain. When subjects are asked to state what they heard in each ear, they more often report linguistic forms (words) in the right ear, and non-verbal forms (music, sounds) in the left ear. It was concluded that both hemispheres receive signals from both ears but from the evidence, the left hemisphere is superior in receiving and processing linguistic information while the right hemisphere is superior in receiving and accessing nonverbal information.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- 1 What is lateralisation?
- 2 What is dichotic listening?

3.2.1 Parts of the Brain

Human brain is divided into different parts based on the functions they perform. Basically, the brain consists of two parts; the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. Take a look at the diagram of brain below, the shaded 5 areas are the locations for language functions: Broca's area, Wernicke's area, somato motor control strip and arcuate fasciculus.



Adopted from: <http://library.thquest.org/C01207ink60/themind/brain.html>

The Broca's Area is the anterior part of the brain or speech cortex. Its name is coined after a French surgeon "Paul Broca" whose research findings showed that damage to this part of the brain can result to difficulty in speech production. It was found that damage to the corresponding area on the right hemisphere will not affect speech production. It is accepted that language ability is located in the left hemisphere of the brain; as such the Broca's area is involved in the production of speech.

Wernicke's Area is located at the posterior part of the brain. Wernicke, a German doctor researched and found that damage to this part of the brain will cause speech comprehension difficulties. As such this part of the brain is named after Carl Wernicke.

Motor Control Strip (cortex) generally controls muscles movements of the legs, arms, feet and face. The vocalization part of it which is close to the Broca's area controls the articulation of speech. This finding was by two neurosurgeons: Penfield and Roberts. They argue that by applying little electrical current to specific areas of the brain, the areas where electrical stimulation would interfere with normal speech production could be identified.

Arcuate Fasciculus provides the link between Wernicke's area and Broca's area for adequate functioning of the brain. It comprises a bundle of nerve fibres. It is one of Wernicke's findings.

3.3 Localisation of Language

With these four vital components of the brain, it is certain to say the specific functions of language ability are linked to specific locations in the brain, and this is called localisation view (Yule 2002:165). So, damage to any part of the brain has repercussions for various parts of the speech errors related to language ability are: malapropisms, spoonerism aphasia.

3.4 Types of Speech Difficulties

3.4.1 Malapropisms

Researchers have observed that language users sometimes find it difficult to get the brain and speech production to work in consonance. Articulation difficulties like this have been traced to the way our linguistic knowledge is organised within the brain. There are also moments when a speaker is at want to express a particular situation. The speaker may faintly get the picture of what he/she wants to say, but the words simply refuse to surface. Whilst in other situations, words easily come to the mind of the speaker. As with a book shelf, some words in the mind are more easily retrieved than others. Yule (2002:166) argues that when we make mistakes with these words, there are often strong phonological similarities between the target word and the wrongly produced word. For example, a man was meant to say, "I will consult you" but rather say "I will insult you". You can see that 'consult' and 'insult' have phonological similarities in terms of syllable structure and rhythm. These types of mistakes are often referred to as malapropisms. It is named after a character called 'Mrs. Malaprop' in a 'Sheridan' who consistently produced 'near-misses' for words, with interesting comic effect.

Spoonerism is a similar type of error as malapropism. This often results from mixed expressions or word reversals, for example: certificate for 'certificate' and asks for 'ask'. This is otherwise called the "slip of tongue or spoonerism"; named after Rev. William A. Spooner, an Anglican Clergyman at Oxford University, who was known for tongue slips. Other examples are

- "Sons of the soil" for "tons of the soil"
- "You have hissed all my mystery lectures" for "You have missed all my mystery lectures"
- "Tup of tea" for "cup of tea"
- "The most highly played payer" for "The most highly paid player"
- "Loop before you leak" for "Look before you leap" (Yule 2002: 167).

These errors are attributed to the "slips of the brain" as it transmits linguistic messages.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

List examples of slips of the tongue by someone you know alongside with their correct pronunciation.

3.4.2 Aphasia

Aphasia is a problem with language production and comprehension from severe brain disorder. It is defined as an impairment of language function due to damage to localised cerebral cortex. This damage causes difficulty in understanding and in producing speech. The most common causes of aphasia are serious injuries on the head either by violence or accidents, stroke, brain disease (like dementia). Yule (2002: 168) mentions three types of aphasia:

- Broca's Aphasia involves speech problems such as reduced amount of speech, articulation that is slow, distorted and with some effort, and impaired syntax. The comprehension of Broca's

aphasia patients is usually better than their production. The sentences are characterized by omission of functional morphemes like prepositions, articles, and inflections. For example, Mary clothes *wear and have breakfast*.

- Wernicke's Aphasia describes a language disorder that shows difficulty in auditory comprehension. Patients suffering from Wernicke's aphasia produce fluent speech, but which makes little meaning. They find it difficult to find the correct words, for example, 'I can't talk of all the things I do, and part of the oart I can *alright, but I can't tell from other people.*' (Yule 2002: 168).
- Conduction Aphasia is not as common as the two above; it is known to be the result of damage to the arcuate fasciculus. Although patients with this disorder do not have problems with articulation, their rhythm is distorted. It is important to note that the language disorders discussed above are all effects of damage to the left hemisphere of the brain.

3.5 The Brain and the Mind

The brain and the mind are often used interchangeably in literature. We have examined the brain in terms of its parts, functions and malfunctions. Is the mind a separate identifiable component of the brain?

Mind

It is interesting to note that the concept of mind still remains obscure, controversial and impossible to define within the limit of language despite several centuries of philosophical pondering, hard dedication to brain research and remarkable advances in the field of neuroscience. Cardoso refers to the definition of the mind as one which tries to rescue the essence of man. The essence of a person arises from the existence of mental functions which permit him or her to think and to perceive, to love and to hate, to learn and to remember, to solve problems communicate through speech and writing, to create and to destroy civilization. These expressions are closely related with brain functioning. Therefore, without the brain, the mind cannot exist, without the behavioural manifestation, the mind cannot be expressed. Mind results from the organised connections of neurons within the brain. It is true to say that the brain and the mind are two inseparable objects. All that is necessary to understand the mind is in the fact that without the brain there is no mind. In fact the cortex, where the mind resides, is referred to as "the seat of all which is exclusively human in the mind" (Fromkin et al 2003: 34), and language plays a major role in filling the storehouse of the mind for future retrieval and use.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the relationship between language, the brain and the mind. We have seen the major role that language plays in shaping our minds. We have also discussed the brain and how it functions in the articulation of speech. It is true that mind is an integral part of the brain, and they are inseparable.

5.0 SUMMARY

Language is a thought process used in the communication of the feelings, emotions and ideas. As a thought process, this function is carried out in our brain. Any malfunctioning of any parts of our brain results in speech malfunction in relation to the part of the brain that is damaged. Mind is a product of the brain. There is no mind without brain, as our thought process is shaped in the mind and this is achieved through language. Thus, language, brain and mind are in an interrelation

where none exists without the other.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List the major parts of the brain and discuss their functions in relation to language.
2. What is aphasia? Discuss the causes of aphasia to illustrate the relationship between language and the brain.
3. An aphasia patient was asked to read the words on the left, but produced the words on the right. Identify the type of error and the kind of aphasia the patient is suffering from.

Commerce – Business Apricot –peach Saddle – stirrup Binocular – telescope Victory – triumph
Anecdote - narrator Applause – audience

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UNIT 3: THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Origin of Human Language
 - 3.2 The Divine Theory
 - 3.3 Bow-Wow Theory
 - 3.4 Natural Cries of Emotion Theory
 - 3.5 Yo-Heave-Ho Theory
 - 3.6 The Oral – Gesture Theory
 - 3.7 Glossogenetic Theory
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we examined the brain and its role in language use. If the human brain is designed for language as we have learned, it is important to know how and when it happened. Research about the origin of language is as old as that of the origin of the human race. In this unit, we shall examine the evolution of human language in terms of its origin and its development unto the present state of sophistication in its usage and creativity. Every human language first exists in a spoken form before it is later developed into a written form. All religions and societies have stories in their oral literature about the origin of their language. There are also theories of divine origin, evolution, and human invention of language. However, there is little scientific evidence in providing an answer to the question. We shall examine the different notions on the origin of language.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the different notions of the origin of human language
- describe the different ideas supporting the notion of evolution of human language.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 The Origin of Human Language**

It has been easier to trace the origin of other things, (like the origin of man) because there are traces to their remnants like bones, faunas etc. However, tracing the origin of language has not been easy because it has no tangible structure like that of fossils, which in event of the language the structure could be taken and its past or origin traced to one ancestral or parental language in one interior part of the world.

- 1 Because of dearth of documented evidence for the origin of spoken language, various concepts and theories pertaining to the evolution of human spoken language have been proposed: the divine theory, natural sound theory, oral-gesture theory, glossogenetic theory and interactional function theory.

3.2 The Divine Theory

According to the Bible, God created Adam and Eve, earth and everything therein. Genesis 2:19 says, “from the ground God formed every wild animal and every bird in the sky, and he brought them to man so man could name them. Whatever, the man called each living thing that became its name”. In other words, language can be traced to the first man, Adam” or God himself. The biblical version also provides an explanation for the origin of several, Genesis 11:1-9, the whole world spoke different languages. According to one language and of one speech (dialect). In an attempt to build a tower called ‘Babel’ to reach heaven, God confounded the people’s effort by causing them to begin to speak different languages, thus causing the people to be scattered to different locations of the world. It is also argued that the evidence from closely related languages which share common features supports the divine origin theory.

The Hindu tradition has it that language came from the goddess Sarasvati, wife of Brahma, and creator of the universe. In every religion or traditional society, there is always a story to link language with divine source. In a quest to find out the actual source for divine language, various experiments have been carried out. The common thread across these experiments has been that if human infants are allowed to grow without language input from anybody in their environment, they will grow up and naturally start using the original divine God-given language. To prove this hypothesis, an Egyptian Pharaoh named Psalmmetichus carried out an experiment with two new born babes around 600 BC to test this divine hypothesis on the original God- bestowed language. These babies were isolated to an area they would never have contact with any human. The children were with only a shepherd who remained quiet throughout the period and some company of goats. In the end, it was found that the first word that these children spoke out was ‘bekos’ a Phrygian word meaning ‘bread’. Critics have argued that even though these children may not have had this input from human adult, they might have heard this sound from the bleating of the goats that the quiet assistant shepherd took care of. They argue that if the ending syllable ‘-kos’ is deleted from ‘bekos, the starting syllable ‘be-‘ sounds like the bleating of a goat ‘be...’ In 1500 AD, James IV of Scotland carried out a similar experiment to that of Psalmmetichus. The children were said to have uttered Hebrew words as their first language.

3.3 Bow-Wow Theory

Bow-wow theory is based on the assumption that human language comes from ‘natural sounds’. The assumption is that primitive words could have been imitation of the natural sounds which early men and women heard around them. The proponents of this theory believed that language evolved by imitating the sounds objects make in the environment. For example when a goat ‘bleats’, ‘me-e’ or ‘be-e’ as in ‘bekos’ experiment, the primitive humans imitated these sounds and used it to refer to the object associated with the sound. Arbitrariness, as one of the identified features of human language based on the premise that there is no direct relation between an object and what it is called (see to 1.5). However, every natural language has some words with pronunciation that sounds like the natural sound that the object makes. Consider the following examples of “motorcycle” in Nigerian languages:

- Motorcycle: English
- Ogbatumtum: Igbo
- Alupupu: Yoruba
- Akpukpuk: Ibibio
- Akpokpok: Anaang
- Okpukpue: Yakurr

- Ikpukpu: Igala

A motorcycle to a Yoruba speaker sounds ‘pupu’, to an Igbo ‘tum tum’, to an Anaang ‘kpok-kpok’, to an Ibibio ‘akpukpuk, and to Yakurr ‘kpu- kpue’, as such they named the object based on the perceived sound it makes. It is common to hear children call cow as ‘muu’. In English we have the screeching of a car tyre, the booming sound of the splashing of water. These sounds are linguistically referred to ‘onomatopoeic’ words.

Critics counter this assumption with an argument that if all objects in the world get their names from the sounds associated to them, how do we obtain names for soundless or some abstract entities like love, hatred, anger, beauty, electrical, technical etc.

3.4 Natural Cries of Emotion Theory

To counter the critics’ position on the bow-wow concept, another group proposed that the original sounds of language came from natural cries of emotion such as anger, joy and pain. By this, some exclamatory marks or interjection like Eh!, Ah!, Oh!, Wao!, Hey! are associated with some connotations. The theory on natural cries of emotion is criticized in that the expressive noise people utter in emotional reactions contains sounds that are not normally used in the language, and this assumption seems not to comply with source-sounds as the basis for language evolution.

3.5 Yo-Heave-Ho Theory

This is part of ‘natural sound’ theory that says the source of human language emanates from the sounds made during the exertion of physical effort in doing things. As such a group of early humans might have through co-coordinated efforts evolve language through grunts, groans and swear words which they used when lifting and carrying heavy trees, stones and irons. The most interesting thing about this assumption is that it places the evolution of human language within the society in which language is used (see 1.4.1). the critics to this concept argue that this does not answer the question to the origin of language, because apes and other primates have grunts and social calls, yet they do not seem to have developed the capacity for speech (Yule 2002:3).

3.6 The Oral – Gesture Theory

This theory says language evolved through physical gesture and orally produced sounds. This suggests an extremely specific relationship between physical and oral gestures.

This is actually a means of non-verbal communication which is supportive of oral communication. The theory claims that originally a set of physical gestures was developed as a means of communication. Then a set of oral gestures involving the mouth specifically, actually developed, in which other organs of speech were co-coordinated and recognised in relation to the type of movement to match with the physical gestures. You might consider the shaking of the hand in negation (physical gesture) to represent the movement of the tongue (oral gesture) in a ‘no’ response. This is a kind of specialized pantomime. However, there are some messages that cannot be adequately sent across through physical gesture.

3.7 Glossogenetic Theory

This theory focuses on the biological basis in the formation and development of human language. It is largely connected with some of the physical features of humans that other creatures lack. It emphasizes the premise that at the early stage, our human ancestors made themselves different from other primates by taking an upright posture with the use of two legs for walking and the

hands for other things. This theory claims that the effect of this postural change is evident in the physical differences between human skull and that of other primates like gorilla and chimpanzee. In the evolutionary transformation, these physical structures are instrumental for speech production particularly for creatures with the most sophistication in their speech capacity. There are different physiological adaptations that can be attributed to the sophistication of man's speech capacity when compared to other animals (see unit 6). The human brain is lateralised with localisation of functions. The human teeth are upright located while those of apes are slanting outwards. Other sound production apparatuses that are structured in humans for adaptation for sound production are the interlacing lip structure, the shape and chamber of the mouth for resonating sounds, flexible and mobile tongue for modulation of sounds, the larynx for vibration or non-vibration of the vocal cord.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Highlight the main premise upon which each theory of language is based.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed enough about the evolution of human language and the different assumptions postulated by different scholars on how human language came to be. We have also talked about interactional and transactional functions of human language.

5.0 SUMMARY

In foregrounding our discussion on the evolution of human language, we have discussed on the divine origin of human language that its origin can be traced to God as documented in Genesis 2:19 and John 1:1. We have also seen in Genesis 11:1-9, how the entire world spoke one dialect which God diversified this dialect into many languages. The Bow-wow theory assumes that language evolves from imitation sounds of objects from our immediate environment. While the physiological assumption bases its assumption of language evolution on the sophisticated nature of human organs of speech productions. We, however, ended by saying that no matter how human language evolved they are meant to serve two basic functions which are interactional and transactional functions.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Considering all the hypotheses on the evolution of human language. Which of them do you consider acceptable in explaining the origin of human language; and why?
2. Narrate a story on the evolution of human language from your local oral history.
3. Discuss some of the specialised organs in humans that aid in the sophistication of their speech form.
4. What are the two basic functions of human language and how do they differ?
5. What is the basic idea behind the bow-wow theory?

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MODULE 3 LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR

Unit 1 Grammar and Types of Grammars I

Unit 2 Formal Descriptions of Language II

UNIT 1 GRAMMAR AND TYPES OF GRAMMARS I**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is Grammar?
 - 3.2 Types of Grammar
 - 3.2.1 Traditional Grammar
 - 3.2.2 Descriptive Grammars
 - 3.2.3 Prescriptive Grammars
 - 3.2.4 Teaching Grammars
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learned about the beginnings and growth of linguistics as a field of study. This unit is a continuation of the previous unit with focus on the study of grammar. The study of grammar dates back to the 4th and 5th centuries B.C. when formal descriptions of languages like classical Latin and Greek were undertaken. Known as classical or traditional grammar, the description of these two languages of scholarship at the time became the reference point for subsequent descriptions for other languages including English. In 1916 AD, the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of modern linguistics was published, *Cours de Linguistique Generale*. It was later translated into English with the title, *A Course in General Linguistics*. The methods in the classical grammar became the starting point for grammars even up to the modern period. These initial formal descriptions of grammar are referred to as classical because they have become a reference point for most grammars and have acquired proponents or followers over the long period since its emergence. In this unit, we shall attempt to define grammar, and discuss the types of grammars based on various approaches to its study.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- give a brief history of the study of grammar,
- define grammar,
- explain the various types of grammars.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.3 What is Grammar?**

Grammar refers to the system or mechanism with which a speaker form sentences from words. Noam Chomsky is credited with the definition of grammar as ‘native speakers’ competence

(knowledge) of a language'. To know a language therefore means to understand the nature of the grammar of the language. The part of grammar which represents a speaker's knowledge of sentences is known as syntax. Every language has a syntactic structure; that is the rules that determine word order. When words are strung together in line with the syntactic rules of a language, such strings of words are said to be well formed grammatically correct. The opposite is that they are ill formed, ungrammatical, or grammatically incorrect. For example, the second sentence in the following is ungrammatical because it does not conform to the syntactic rules in English:

- The teacher allowed the student into the class
- *The student into allowed the teacher the class
- (A conventional way of indicating ill-formed sentences is by the use of an asterisk (*)).

3.2 Types of Grammar

Grammar as defined above is internal linguistic knowledge. However, another concept of grammar is that which prescribes the 'correct' structures to be used in a language. Yet another view of grammar is that in which the structures of the grammar of a language are analysed and described in contrast to that of other languages. This narrow sense of the study of grammar stems from a tradition of language study focused on the classification of words according to categories. It began with classification according to gender (masculine, feminine, and neuter), then on to classification of patterns of inflection, active and passive voices, transitive and intransitive verbs, nominative and oblique words, and then on to classification of words according to case, gender, number, tense, voice, and mood. The classification that you are more familiar with, that is the traditional parts of speech was introduced in late 2 B.C. They are the noun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, pronoun, and conjunction. They are used in the grammatical description of sentences in languages such as in English:

- The beautiful maidens danced gracefully in the town square
(Article) (adjective) (noun) (verb) (adverb) (prep) (article) (adjective) (noun)

However, these parts of speech were noted to be inadequate for description in many languages essentially because the specific features of the languages used to develop them, Greek and Latin are not universal, that is are not found in all languages. Other deficiencies of the parts of speech are discussed in the next section.

3.2.1 Traditional Grammar

Traditional grammar is characterised by the use of the terms of parts of speech to identify words in sentences. The widespread adoption of these terms came from the fact that they were used in the grammatical description of Greek and Latin, the languages of scholarship of the time.

Other terms used in traditional grammar include number, person, tense, voice and gender. These terms become important when sentence agreement is discussed. For example, the subject must agree with the verb form in terms of number e.g.

- The female nurse is conducting her ward rounds.
- The female nurses are conducting their ward rounds.

The subject must also agree in gender with any pronoun form used in referring to it- female nurse and her. Such agreement may not apply in languages where there is no overt grammatical distinction between male and female gender. For other languages such as French, however, three grammatical genders are used namely, feminine, masculine, and neuter. Where in a sentence the

subject is masculine, the adjective must agree in gender with the subject e.g.

- Le bon (garçon, livre)
- The good (boy, book)
- Le bonne (fille, tableau)
- The good (girl, table)

Such distinctions of gender are however redundant in describing English because English does not have such distinctions. The adequacy of traditional description is further questioned in terms of appropriateness of the grammatical categories of person. For example, while the categories of person, number, tense, active and voice adequately describe Latin verb forms, they are redundant in English, and insufficient for Yoruba:

	Yoruba	Latin	English
First person singular	Mo fe	amo	I love
Second person singular	O fe	amas	You love
Third person singular	O fe	amat	He loves
First person plural	A fe	Amamus	We love
Second person plural	E fe	Amatis	You love
Third person plural	Won fe	amant	They love

The Latin verb forms are distinct in terms of person and number, while those in English differ only in one instance- loves; but in the case of Yoruba, there is no provision for categorizing honorific pronouns.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Examine the table in 3.2.1 carefully and see if you can identify the root word for ‘love’ in Latin and the various markers for person.

3.2.2 Descriptive Grammars

Descriptive approaches to the study of grammar sought to describe the use of structures in languages as it is used, rather than as it should be used. Such an approach came about as a result of the inadequacy of the use of the grammatical description of Latin as a guide to describe non-European languages. The descriptive approach involves the collection of samples of the language as it reflects speakers’ basic linguistic knowledge. It is a departure from traditional grammar in an attempt to describe the structure of different languages on their own merit rather than using the description of another language as a guide. A descriptive grammar provides information and examples of the sounds, words, phrases and sentences of a language. “It is the statement of the speakers’ grammar” (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2003:14).

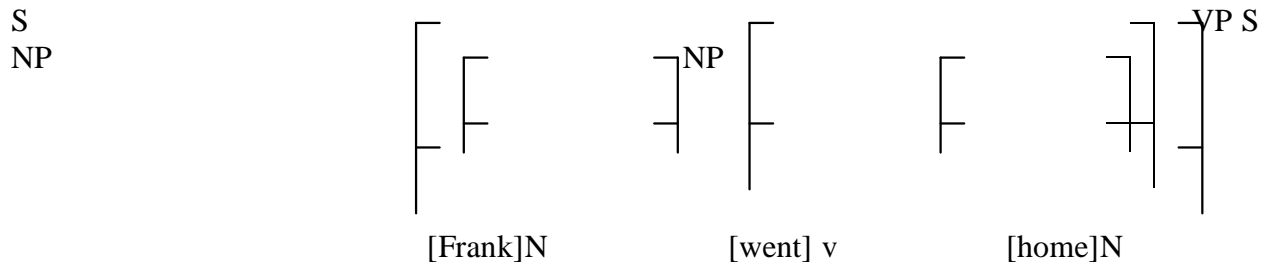
Examples of descriptive approaches include structural analysis whose main aim is to examine the distribution of various forms using ‘test- frames’. The test frames have empty slots into which various forms of words can be inserted to test its function. In other words, this approach identifies grammatical categories only through the slot the word fits into to produce a grammatical sentence. By running these tests, a linguist is able to present a description of certain sentence structures of a

language.

Immediate constituent analysis is another descriptive approach. The method used in this approach is to identify the components that constitute larger structures. This approach would seek to know how many words make up a sentence, how these words constitute phrases which in turn make up a sentence. Such analysis is presented in such a way that it shows the distribution of the components at word and sentence levels; and it illustrates the combination of phrases that obtain to constitute English sentences.

The Cat almost ran over the cat
 Her Mother cried throughout the wedding
 Frank went

Another way of illustrating the various sentence constituents by hierarchy, that is from largest to smallest is by using labeled square brackets:



From the representation above, we understand that the sentence is the largest constituent, followed by the noun phrase which contains the noun and other optional components. The second component within the sentence is the verb phrase which like the noun phrase contains the compulsory component, the verb.

It was intended that the constituent analysis descriptive approach can be used to describe any language. In doing this, you are bound to observe a number of differences in the sequence of the forms. For example, where the article ‘the’ comes before the noun in English, it can come after the noun or is a part of the noun word in other languages.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Write down a simple sentence in your language and describe the structure using the constituent analysis approach.

3.2.3 Prescriptive Grammars

Around the 18th century a group of grammarians took up another approach that was the opposite of that of descriptive linguists. They were responding to the demands of those who wanted their children to speak upper class dialects of English. This group was of the view that rules of grammar should be prescribed rather than described and this gave rise to prescriptive grammars. The rules were prescribed to guide the ‘proper and correct’ use of grammatical forms in a language. For example, a prescriptive rule in English says you cannot use the negatives in a sentence:

- I don't know nothing about what you are saying,
- You should not begin a sentence with 'and' or end a sentence with a preposition:
 - And *she cried like a baby*.
 - That's where she's from

One of the problems with the prescriptive approach is the tendency to generalize by using forms which are acceptable in one language prescribe for another language. For example, many of the rules of speaking the English language were based on Latin grammar. Languages using double negatives were seen as inferior. However, language as a dynamic and non static entity cannot be used based on prescriptive rules. All languages are rule-governed by which grammaticality is assessed. Moreover, what is grammatical in one language may be ungrammatical in another. What is accepted as standard variety of a language perhaps for prestige purposes should not be used to confer inferior status on other varieties of the same language in a speech community?

3.2.4 Teaching Grammars

Teaching grammars are designed to teach those who wish to learn another language. "Teaching grammars state explicitly the rules of the language, list the words and their pronunciations, and aid in learning a new language or dialect" (Fromkin et al 2003: 17).

Teaching grammars usually begin from the known, that is the learner's native language or language of instruction, to the unknown that is the language to be learned, the target language. For example, to teach vocabulary, words are listed in the learner's native language and its equivalent in the target language. The meaning is provided and is known as 'gloss'.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

List five words in your native language, and provide a gloss for each word. If there are any sounds in the target language that do not exist in the learner's native language, such sounds are focused upon and the learner is taught how to produce them. Similarly, the rules of grammar that guide formulation of grammatically correct sentences in the target language are taught from perspective of the learner's native language. For example, a Yoruba speaker who is learning English would be told that pluralisation in Yoruba is marked by a separate word while it is an affix in English. Although it was not the goal of proponents of teaching grammars to prescribe a particular variety of a language or dialect as the standard variety like the prescriptive grammarians, they would have had to make a choice as to what variety to teach.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The various types of grammar examined in this unit illustrate the fact that there is more than one approach to grammar; that the best approach is that which best analyses the structures of the language, and as such is not one grammatical approach for all languages; and that the purpose for a grammar has a role to play in the choice of the type of grammar.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have examined different types of grammar. The list is certainly not exhaustive; but sufficient to illustrate the evolving different approaches from the 18th century, and the various purposes for such approaches. The source or data for the various grammars remains the native speaker's innate knowledge of his or her language. The descriptive grammar seeks to describe the

rules of the language as is used by the speakers. The goal of prescriptive grammar is to ensure that a speaker adheres to certain rules of grammar by prescription. Teaching grammars facilitate the learning of a language other than the speaker's own.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify the grammatical categories of the words in the sentence below using the traditional parts of speech: Anastasia screamed and the charming prince came to rescue her from the wicked witch.
2. Based on the rules of English grammar that you know, what is wrong with the sentences?
 - i. I saw the both of them.
 - ii. Who used the toilet? Ugo and me.
 - iii. My sister taught me what I know.
3. Using the immediate constituent analysis method, present a labeled and bracketed diagram of this sentence: The armed robbers pursued the girl into the bush.

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UNIT 2 FORMAL DESCRIPTIONS OF LANGUAGE II**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Sounds
 - 3.1.1 Sound Production
 - 3.1.2 Articulatory Phonetics
 - 3.1.3 The Phonetic Alphabet and Orthography
 - 3.1.4 Transcription
 - 3.2 Sound Systems and Sound Patterns
 - 3.3 Words
 - 3.3.1 Content and Function Words
 - 3.3.2 Morphemes
 - 3.4 Sentence
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As is the case in many fields of study, linguists do not prescribe for people how to speak their languages; rather they study and describe how people speak languages. Speakers utilise their knowledge of a language in their speaking. Knowledge of a language includes the sounds, morphemes, words, phrases and sentences. As a result, description of language is made up of descriptions of these elements. The work of the linguist therefore is to describe what people are doing when they are speaking- what sounds do they use, how do they string sounds together, how do they combine morphemes to form words, and words to form sentences? Language can be described at several levels: they include the level of speech sounds (Phonetics), the level of sound systems, their structure and function in language (Phonology), at the level of the word (Morphology), and at the level of the sentence (Grammar). Note that the levels of description are from the smallest unit of language to the largest unit. However, there are other levels such as the level of meaning (semantics), and at the level of conversation (discourse analysis). In this unit, you will be introduced to formal descriptions of each of the basic units of language. The unit that follows will build on this introduction by examining formal approaches to linguistics.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the basic units of description in language,
- explain the description of these units,
- apply the descriptions to your knowledge of a language.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Even though similar processes can be applied in the description of all languages, there are differences among languages. Languages differ in the basic elements that make them up and in the rules of combination, say to make a grammatically correct sentence for instance. For

example, one of the rules for the English language accounts of its word order which is Subject-(verb-object) Predicate structure. On the other hand, Japanese reflects a subject -object -verb structure:

- English: Taro found a dog
- Japanese: Taro-ga inu-o mituketa
- Taro dog found

The elements and the rules that combine them can differ from language to language for all levels of language-sounds, words, sentences. However, all languages are equally complex, and all languages have these elements and rules. Languages also change their elements and rules in the same way (Language Change), and children learn the elements and rules of languages in the same way. Any child in any part of the world can learn any human language if exposed to it (Language Acquisition). In the sections that follow, you will be introduced to the formal descriptions of the various levels of language.

3.1 Sounds

Sounds in human language represent the smallest unit of description. They are a part of speakers' knowledge of their language. Speakers' knowledge includes sounds of the language, and how they can be combined to form meaningful units called morphemes. It is important to note that not all languages have the same set of sounds; there may be some sounds in one language which are not in another language. However, the sounds of all the languages in the world make up the set of sounds that humans can produce. The description of these speech sounds, how they are produced, their characteristics, how they are perceived and transmitted, and how they change in different environments of other sounds is what Phonetics is all about. Phonetics is the study of speech sounds. In describing speech sounds, it is important to be able to identify each sound and how it differs from other sounds. During speech, sounds are strung together, so you have to know the language to be able to separate individual sounds that make up a word. For example, an English speaker knows that there are three sounds in dog- d-o-g. Yet, it is produced as one continuous sound. This is why when you listen to a language you do not know, it sounds like there are no breaks, and all the words run together. The ability to break a word up into its individual sounds or a phrase into its individual words is not dependent on your knowledge of spelling but on your innate knowledge of the language.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Listen to two sets of speech: the first in a language you know, and the second in a language you do not know. Write down what you notice, for example, which of the two can you identify words you know? Write the words down. What does the speech in the unknown language sound like to you? Can you identify segments of words even though you may not know what they mean? Or does it sound like one long string of sounds?
2. Based on the activity you have just conducted, what is the role of knowledge in identifying speech sounds?

3.1.1 Sound Production

Production of sounds begins in the speaker's brain through signals being sent to the part that controls language. Messages are formed and transmitted through nerve signals to the organs of speech which produce the speech sounds. The study of how speech sounds are made is called articulatory phonetics; the study of the physical properties of sounds such as sound waves is

called acoustic phonetics; and the study of how sounds are perceived through the ear is called auditory phonetics. However, for a basic description of sounds of a language, articulatory phonetics will be the focus.

3.1.2 Articulatory Phonetics

Articulatory Phonetics is the study of how the organs of speech produce sounds of language. Human speech can be classified into two classes based on their phonetic properties. For most speech sounds in languages, the airstream is modified in some way and moves from the lungs through the vocal tract, and out of the mouth or nose. Different languages may make use of different airstream mechanisms. English for example makes use of the regressive airstream mechanism which simply refers to air moving out of the lungs. All speech sounds are either consonants or vowels. In articulatory phonetics they are classified according to the speech organs that produce them and the manner in which they are produced. For example, /b/ and /p/ are consonants; they are produced with an obstruction of the two lips (bi-labial) in the airflow from the lungs into the vocal tract. The manner of their production is that of a stop or plosive because they are produced with a burst of air from the lips. The details of how sounds are produced, the organ of speech involved in the production of sounds, and the feature characterize sounds will be discussed in the unit on phonetics.

3.1.3 The Phonetic Alphabet and Orthography

Languages have sets of alphabet symbols for spelling words often referred to as orthography, the alphabets represent the pronunciations of words. However, for languages with older writing traditions like English language, there is no one to one correspondence between pronunciation and spelling of sounds using orthography as there is no consistency in the representation of different sounds of words in a language. For example, several words are not spelled the way they are pronounced: *know, noise, laugh, see, sea, sight, cite, silly etc.* An *English language* learner will have to learn the silent sounds in words as well as sounds that are spelled differently but pronounced the same way. But for many African languages there is a more regular one to one correspondence; that is sounds are closer to their orthographic representations than you have in English.

3.1.4 Transcription

In the study of sounds and in order to be able to describe each sound as accurately as possible, it became necessary for each sound to be represented by a distinct symbol. This need gave birth to the phonetic alphabet which by 1888 was developed by the International Phonetic Association (IPA). Many Roman letters were modified and used together with diacritics because they are used by more languages. The IPA chart is universal and comprehensive in that it has symbols for sounds of all languages. Transcription is the act of writing down the sounds of a language using the phonetic symbols of the IPA chart. Using these symbols, pronunciation of words can be written unambiguously. Square brackets are used to distinguish phonetic transcription of words from orthographic spelling: type - /taip/ through - /θru/ show - /ʃəu/.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Get a dictionary and look for the entries of various words and the phonetic symbols used to transcribe them which are next to their orthographic spellings. What differences can you note between the two representations?

3.2 Sound Systems and Sound Patterns

Sounds of a language that have been identified and their phonetic characteristics described are called phones; linguists go on to observe the kinds of patterns speakers form as they use these sounds in speech. Phonology is the study of sounds and the patterns they form is the speaker's grammar. The sounds which occur in the same environment and make a difference in the meaning of words are called phonemes. For example,

- Cat [kæt]
- Pat [pæt]
- Bat [bæt]

The first sound in each of these words is a phoneme of English because they make a difference in the meaning of those words. On the whole, when similar phones occur in different environments they are called allophones of the same phoneme. For example, in English [p] and [ph] in pot [p t] and spot [spht] are allophones of /p/ because they are variants of the same phoneme. But in Korean language, /p/ and /ph/ are two distinct sounds because they occur in the same environment and create a difference in meaning: [pal] leg [ph al] door (Yusuf ed.1999:40).

Square brackets [] are used for phonetic segments while slashes are used for phonemes //.

It is a speaker's phonological knowledge that informs the choice of sounds strung together to produce words, phrases, and sentences. Such knowledge also includes what sounds can occur at the beginning, end of a word, next to each other. For example, first language English speakers know that the sound /ŋ/ as in wrong [wrʌŋ] occurs only at the end of words; and certain sound combinations cannot occur at the beginning of a word like knik [knIk]. Although /ŋ/ does not occur at the beginning of words in English, it does in other languages like the Lardhil. While in English, there are no words with the sound /kp/ and /gb/, these sounds exist in other languages like Yoruba. More information that can be obtained through phonological knowledge of speakers include constraints on sounds that can follow each in a sequence, be deleted, added or even changed into another. For example, in bug + s = [bugz], the plural marker is pronounced as /z/ instead of /s/.

The phonological features of phones and phonemes, the processes that linguists employ in determining sounds that make a difference in meaning that determine the structure of a larger phonological unit, the syllable; and the phonological processes that affect phonemes in speech such as assimilation and elision will be examined in detail in the unit on Phonology.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Select three phonemes in your language and write down three words in which these phonemes are the only sounds that are different. Are they different in meaning?

3.3 Words

Words constitute a large portion of speakers' knowledge of a language. They are so important that one of the first tasks a linguist performs in describing a language is to record as many words as possible. This is usually referred to as the word list. The word list is made up of word entries, each entry is accompanied with information such as its meaning in different contexts, how it is pronounced, how it functions in the sentence, and so on. A sufficient corpus of these descriptions constitutes a dictionary. What is a word? What do you know when you say you know a word? Words are made up of sounds and their meaning. When you know the sounds that make

up a word and what it refers to, that word becomes a part of your linguistic knowledge of a language. For example, a speaker of English who does not know Yoruba language will not be able to separate the following string of sounds into individual words to make meaning: ojuniroowa; but will be able perform that task with no difficulty on the following: sheisasmartalec. It therefore means that each word is a sound-meaning unit with a unique pattern and is stored up as part of our linguistic knowledge. Also stored up in our knowledge is the position(s) in which the word can function in a sentence.

3.3.1 Content and Function Words

One important distinction which languages make is between content words and function words. Content words are words that have semantic content as contrasted against function words which play a grammatical role by connecting content words together. In English for example, content words will include words that function as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, while function words will include words that function as conjunctions, prepositions, articles, and pronouns. Content words constitute an open class of words because new words can be added from time to time. Function words on the other hand are a closed class of words because they are a fixed class of words, new pronouns do not get added so often, if ever. It is important to note that although most languages reflect the same word classes, different languages use them for different functions. For example, English has a large corpus of adjectives to express quality, quantity and so on of the noun, but in other languages like (Ghana), the verb is used to function like adjectives. So also in Nigerian pidgin:

- English: The sun is bright today.
- Akan: The sun brightens today.
- Nigerian Pidgin: The sun shines today.

3.3.2 Morphemes

Words are made up of morphemes, which have been defined as the ‘smallest unit of meaning or grammatical function’ in a language. As the smallest unit, the morpheme cannot be further analysed. For example, *re- in reopen cannot be broken into any smaller unit; it must have meaning or serve a grammatical function; re- represents the meaning of ‘doing again’*. The study of the various forms that exist in languages is called morphology. Words can be made up of more than one morpheme as in this example from English:

- One morpheme Stand
- Two morphemes Stand+off
- Three morphemes Stand+off+ish

The ability for words to be analysed into morphemes reflects one of the basic properties of human language- discreteness. Discrete linguistic units such as morphemes can be combined to form words and words to form larger units, phrases and sentences. This property is unique to human language, and it reflects speakers’ linguistic knowledge of discrete units and rules for combining them. Such creativity means that we can understand and create new words. In a more detailed discussion on morphology, we shall examine types and functions of morphemes-bound and free, derivational and inflectional, rules of word formation, and word formation processes.

3.4 Sentence

So far, we have examined three levels of description used in the study of language. You have been introduced to linguistic forms as sounds which can be described and represented phonetically as

well as phonologically when these sounds occur in sequences; a third level of description is the morphological constitution of words of a language.

A fourth level is how words can be combined to form what speakers will recognise as 'grammatically' correct phrases and sentences. For example, how do you know that the phrase, the cheerful girls is grammatically correct, and *girls the cheerful or *cheerful girls they are grammatically incorrect? All languages have a structure of phrases and sentences which accounts for all grammatically correct sequences, and the study of these structures is called grammar. Earlier in the previous unit, the term 'grammar' has been used to refer to speakers' knowledge of their language. This includes sounds, sound patterns, basic units of meaning and the rules used in combining all of these to form meaningful sentences. This is the broader sense of the term, grammar. However, in the narrow sense of the word, grammar refers to the aspect of the study of language called syntax.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Formal descriptions of language describe in as much detail as possible, speakers' knowledge of their language using elements that are common to all languages. However, the rules that guide the combination of these elements differ from language to language.

5.0 SUMMARY

The description of a language is made up of a description a speaker's knowledge of his or her language. Such knowledge comprises levels of description and the elements described at each level. Speech sounds are described at the level of Phonetics; structure of sound systems are described at the level of Phonology; morphemes and words are described at the level of Morphology; phrases and sentences, and the rules that guide their combination are described at the level of Grammar. Other levels of description include semantics (meaning) and discourse analysis (conversation).

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the parameters for identifying speech sounds?
2. What are the differences between phone, phoneme and allophone?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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MODULE 4 LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Unit 1 Language in Society

Unit 2 Language and Culture

Unit 3 Varieties of Language

UNIT 1 LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Language
 - 3.1.1 Functions of Language
 - 3.2 Variation in Language
 - 3.2.1 Traditional Grammar
 - 3.3 Standard Versus Non-Standard
 - 3.4 Lingua Franca
 - 3.5 Pidgins and Creoles
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This module discusses the interplay between language and society and the effect of one on the other. The module begins with an introduction to the role of language in society. The unit that follows examines the effect of culture on language, which in turn gives rise to language varieties. All the various issues discussed in these units constitute the subject matter for field of sociolinguistics. According to Yule (2002:139), sociolinguistics has ‘strong connections to anthropology through the investigation of language and culture, and to sociology, through the crucial role that language plays in the organisation of social groups and institutions. It is also tied to social psychology, particularly with regard to how attitudes and perceptions are expressed and how in-group and out-group behaviour are identified’.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- give a broad overview of the field of study
- explain the study of language in relation to society
- discuss the role of language in society
- highlight the various factors that affect language.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

The philosophy behind the study of language and society differs from that of formal linguistics in that while the latter investigates the internal structures of languages, the former views language as a product of society and therefore investigates the influences of society on language and vice versa (cf. Module 1 unit 1). Known as macrolinguistics, this field of linguistics has several branches which include sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, all of which involve the use of techniques and theoretical concepts of two disciplines and share the study of

language in common as affected by society or culture. Oftentimes, however, the study of language in relation to structure of societies and in relation to beliefs and practices overlap with no clear cut distinction. The sections that follow will examine the various factors to consider when investigating language in relation to society.

3.4 Language

Hall (1968:158) cited in Lyons (2002:4) defines language as “the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols”. The emphasis in this definition is on communication and interaction. These issues presuppose the fact that people in any society use language. Secondly, language performs important functions in the society. Language comprises two types – spoken and written and within these are subsumed other types. Of these two, spoken is seen as primary whereas the written form is secondary. This is based on the idea that writing is merely a visual representation of spoken language. Also, communication can be classified into the following categories: human, animal, scientific, legal etc. Each of these serves different functions as they are applicable in different environments.

3.1.1 Functions of Language

Language performs many functions but this section will briefly discuss the functions under the following sub-headings: the expressive, the poetic and the transactional functions. These different functions are in tandem with the different definitions of language already presented above.

- The Expressive Function

It serves the purpose of the speaker where his/her thoughts are freely expressed or verbalized. The speaker presents his/her views of things, or comments on events and the world. The basis of the expressive function is to get to know one another, show one’s identity, therefore, offer and accept what is common and appreciate what differentiates human beings from animals. In addition, it involves analysis of experience, events as well as express opinions, attitudes and beliefs.

- The Poetic Function

It illustrates the formal features of language. It shows the pattern of events in a narrative, how ideas are related as well as the patterns of feelings evoked, such as love, hate, anger, fear, relief and pity. The works of literature viz.: drama, prose, poetry, folktales, among others, take on poetic function since they illustrate degrees of formal organization and formal unity.

- Transactional Function

It emphasizes two main areas: the informative and the connotative. Whereas the informative requires giving and seeking information; the connotative deals with the speaker’s intention to change the listener’s behaviour, opinion and attitude.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Mention the different categories of language.
2. Which of the functions of language is most important? Give reasons for your choice.

3.2 Variation in Language

Language use constitutes a form of social identity for its users. Language often communicates membership of different social groups, cultural groups or speech communities. These groups or communities share a set of rules and expectations as to how language should be used. In contrast

to Chomsky's homogenous speech community, the interaction between language and society introduces language variation.

Variation refers to differences at various levels of language. No two speakers speak alike because there will be differences as a result of social class, education, age, gender, ethnicity, and in the case of English, whether the speaker is a native or second language speaker. Other differences include differences in speakers' pronunciation, vocabulary, and use of grammar. These differences result in dialects, sociolects, accents, and idiolects.

Social dialects: These are varieties of language used by groups defined according to class, education, age, sex, and other social parameters. One of the outcomes of the interaction between social values and language use is the notion of 'prestige', which refers to the value associated with varieties of language in different societies. Certain varieties earn high prestige in certain social groups. Generally, a standard language variety attracts high prestige because it is usually the variety of the ruling class. *Language, social class and education: The ordering of groups based on social variables is known as social stratification.* For example, you can have dialects identified various social classes such as with the working class and middle class of Great Britain. In such groupings, certain differences in language will be unique to them. For example, in a study conducted by Labov (1972) using social class as a variable in studying the pronunciation differences of American English speakers, he observed that respondents of higher social class produced more [r] sounds than those of lower social class. A similar study by Trudgill in Reading, England (1974) found the opposite to be the case. In Nigeria, however, social class groupings are not as stratified, it is based on another variable, education- giving rise to the elite/non-elite class. These may be further sub-divided into the elite as middle class and high class; while the non-elite are the working class or blue collar group. Studies in Nigerian English suggest that the more highly educated an individual is, the more likely he or she is to produce standard English forms that are closer to standard English (Udofot 2004). Education therefore seems to play a vital role in social groupings within the Nigerian context.

Language and age: There are differences that correlate with the age of speakers. According to Yule (2003: 241), 'variation according to age is most noticeable across the grandparent-grandchild time span. For example, younger educated speakers of Yoruba tend to make more use of both Yoruba and English forms when conversing in Yoruba; they also tend use more informal language which includes the use of slangs in comparison to older speakers:

- I'm tired (Younger person to older person)
- I'm pooped (Peer group)

Language and gender: Many languages are often marked for gender differences. The male form is usually unmarked while the female form is marked by a morpheme. For example, English has lexical forms for masculine and feminine:

Male	Female
• Prince	Princess
• Actor	Actress
• Host	hostess
• Hero	heroine

However, several forms which are not semantically marked for gender still display a gender bias e.g. mankind, chairman e.t.c. Some researches have observed that there are differences in the way

men and women use language. For example, that women use more expressive forms (adjectives) than men; women are more indirect and polite than men; women's style is more collaborative than men which is more competitive; women use more non-verbal (gestures, intonation) communicator than men e.t.c. Such differences in language are stereotypes or prejudices.

Language and ethnicity: Although language is not the only criterion for ethnic groupings, it plays an important role. In fact, many ethnic groups are named after the language they speak. For example, the Yoruba is an ethnic group, and the Yoruba language is one of the parameters to identify the group as distinct from other ethnic groups. Differences in speech can also occur because of different ethnic backgrounds. For example, the speech of many African American known as African American English (AAE) is a sociolect or social dialect based on ethnicity. The variety developed as a response to the isolation and racial discrimination the speakers and their ancestors experienced as African slaves. Some of the differences include the use of double negative constructions: I aint scared of no one.

Dialects: A dialect is a variety of language that is spoken by a group of speakers and differs in grammar and vocabulary. There can be several dialects of a language but which are mutually intelligible. They are also not to be regarded as inferior to one another. For example, Yoruba language has several dialects namely: Yagba, Ijebu, Oyo, Ijesha, Ondo dialects. They are all mutually intelligible while having certain vocabulary and grammatical differences:

Yagba dialect	Yoruba (Oyo dialect)
Okun (greeting)	Pele'
ku rati jo' (it's been a while)	Ku ati jo'

Regional dialects: These are dialects that develop enough differences to be identified as being spoken in a specific region. For example, we now have several Englishes around the world such as British English, American English, Australian English, Indian English, Nigerian English etc. These labels refer to Englishes that have assimilated the features of the particular region, and are the standard variety within the region of use. Dialects differ from languages in that they are mutually intelligible, that is the speakers can understand one another e.g. speakers of British English can understand speakers of Indian English, but speakers of different languages cannot understand one another.

Accents: When the language variety of speakers differs only in pronunciation or phonetic distinctions, they are called accents. They refer to speakers' characteristics of speech that reveal information about the speaker's sociolinguistic background. For example, it is easy to distinguish between an English speaker with a British accent from one with an American or Australian accent. Accents differ from dialects in that dialects include the differences in grammar and vocabulary. However, accentual differences do not hinder mutual intelligibility.

It is important to note that the concept of accents is not exclusive, rather it overlaps with the concept of dialects in that one can have a dialect that is characterized not only grammatical and lexical differences, but also by pronunciation differences. Examples below are drawn from Standard Nigerian English:

Linguistic Form	Nigerian Pidgin English	British (RP)	Gloss
Lexical Differences (Adegbija 2004, Jowitt 2000)	Go-slow	Traffic jam	Heavy traffic flow
	Senior brother	Older brother	Older sibling
Grammatical differences	<u>They</u> have stolen my Phone	My phone has <u>been</u> stolen	Passive construction
Pronunciation Differences (Udofot 2004, Awonusi 2004)	/tumb/	/tum/	tomb
	/hea/	/ea/	heir
	/pul/	/p l/	pull
	/awe/	/weI/	away

Idiolects: *Apart from social and regional dialects, individual* speakers use forms that are unique to them; such varieties are referred to as idiolect. Individuals can modify or change their idiolects in their lifetime. For example, a speaker can speak in one way with friends and in another way with adults. In other words, a speaker may switch from one idiolect to another depending on the event. *situational varieties* are called styles or registers. One example of register is formal and informal styles. A formal style obeys all the rules of grammar, use full forms, and polite forms of speech in the language. Informal style on the other hand is more flexible in adhering to the rules of grammar, allows for abbreviations, and colloquial words. Take a look at the forms of greeting in English below and identify the differences:

- Formal style: Good morning, how are you today?
- Informal style: Hi, how're you doing/ whaz up?

The speaker's choice of style will depend on the situation and who is being addressed. In other languages, rules of polite behavior are reflected in the choice of style. Many Nigerian languages for example have two forms of pronouns- regular and honorific/polite. The regular pronoun is used for peers and informal style, while the irregular pronoun is used for older persons and formal style:

O fe jade (H/she wants to go out) E fe jade (He/she wants to go out)

Now that you understand the meaning of style in language, we shall examine two other types of style, slangs and jargon. Slang is another form of informal style. According to

Fromkin (et al 2003: 473), slangs are ‘one of those things everybody can recognize and nobody can define’. Slangs are part of colloquial speech, usually different from standard forms that evolve by combining old words to make new meanings. They are dynamic in that they change over time and usually mark the speech of the younger generation. One of the main purposes of slangs is to mark group membership. Here are some examples:

• Slang	Gloss
• LBD	little black dress
• Bom	the best
• Cool	doing okay
• Dude	Male

Apart from slangs, another feature of a style or register is the use of jargon. Jargon can be defined as vocabulary that is unique vocabulary. Almost every profession has vocabulary that is unique to the profession. For example, linguists have their own jargon, some of which you have been introduced to in this course- phoneme, morpheme, *lexicon etc.* Can you think of another profession and identify at least five words that would qualify as jargon? Jargon, like slang tends to become part of standard language over a period of time when its use is no longer restricted to the professional group alone.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What are the differences between dialects, sociolects, idiolects, and accents?

3.2.1 Traditional Grammar

Traditional grammar is characterised by the use of the terms of parts of speech to identify words in sentences. The widespread adoption of these terms came from the fact that they were used in the grammatical description of Greek and Latin, the languages of scholarship of the time. Other terms used in traditional grammar include number, person, tense, Voice and gender. These terms become important when sentence agreement is discussed. For example, the subject must agree with the verb form in terms of number e.g.

- The female nurse is conducting her ward rounds.
- The female nurses are conducting their ward rounds.

The subject must also agree in gender with any pronoun form used in referring to it- female nurse and her. Such agreement may not apply in languages where there is no overt grammatical distinction between male and female gender. For other languages such as French, however, three grammatical genders are used namely, feminine, masculine, and neuter. Where in a sentence the subject is masculine, the adjective must agree in gender with the subject e.g.

- Le bon (garçon, livre)
- The good (boy, book)
- Le bonne (fille, tableau)
- The good (girl, table)

Such distinctions of gender are however redundant in describing English because English does not have such distinctions. The adequacy of traditional description is further questioned in terms of appropriateness of the grammatical categories of person. For example, while the categories of person, number, tense, active and voice adequately describe Latin verb forms, they are redundant in English, and insufficient for Yoruba:

	Latin	English	Yoruba
First person singular	Amo	I love	Mo fe
Second person singular	Amas	You love	O fe
Third person singular	Amat	He loves	ó fe
First person plural	Amamus	We love	A fe
Second person plural	Amatis	You love	E fe
Third person plural	Amant	They love	Won fe

The Latin verb forms are distinct in terms of person and number, while those in English differ only in one instance- loves; but in the case of Yoruba, there is no provision for categorizing honorific pronouns.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Examine the table in 3.2.1 carefully and see if you can identify the root word for ‘love’ in Latin and the various markers for person.

3.3 Standard Versus Non-Standard

The interaction between language and society creates differences in language by virtue of social variables such as education, age, gender, ethnicity, and so on. The variation that exists in language and the need to have a variety that is used uniformly is what has given rise to standard varieties. A standard variety is one out of several varieties of a language that is accepted by its native speakers; has been codified in terms of its grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation; and is accepted for use in the publishing world, mass media, education. It is the variety that second language learners learn. In Britain for example, the standard variety is the Received Pronunciation (RP) also called Standard British English. In Yoruba, as mentioned earlier, the standard variety is the Oyo dialect.

A variety of a language becomes standard when it performs roles in society that other varieties do not perform. For non-standard varieties, they do not carry as much prestige. For example, the Cockney variety of English spoken in Britain does not have as much prestige as the RP variety. So also, other dialects of Yoruba do not carry as much prestige as the standard variety, the Oyo dialect.

3.4 Lingua Franca

When language groups that speak different languages come in contact and need to communicate, they often select a language all groups can understand, such a language is called a lingua franca. This term was originally used to refer to trade languages that is, languages that came about in contact situations. Today, however, any language can qualify to be a lingua franca. For example, English is the lingua franca of the world because it is the language of communication among diverse language groups. Lingua Francas can be regionally based- for example, Swahili is the lingua franca for East Africa because it is spoken in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. In Nigeria, there are regional lingua francas that are spoken by diverse ethnic groups within particular regions- Hausa is the lingua franca of the North, Igbo is for the South East, Yoruba is for the West, and Nigerian Pidgin can be said to be Nigeria’s lingua franca.

3.5 Pidgins and Creoles

While lingua francas tend to be languages that are native to the region, pidgins and creoles have a

different origin. Pidgins and Creoles originate as contact languages between two widely different cultures and peoples and as such, it is not possible for the languages of either group to be used.

The following is a definition of a pidgin:

- A pidgin is a reduced language that results from extended contact between groups of people with no language in common; it evolves when they need some means of communication, perhaps for trade, but no group learns the native language of any other group... Holms (1988: 4) Contact situations are often as a result of trade, hence the reference to Pidgins as trade languages. According to Yule (2002:234), pidgin is a variety of a language, which developed for some practical purpose among groups of people who had a lot of contact but did not know each other's language. The origin of the word 'pidgin' is thought to be from a Chinese Pidgin version of the English word 'business'. Pidgins differ from jargons which have no fixed form in that pidgin have rules of grammar, pronunciation, and meaning, although some variation persists because they are still evolving languages. There are a number of Pidgins around the world; some are Portuguese-based, Dutch-based French-based, Spanish-based, English-based and even African based. Tok Pisin is an English-based pidgin widely used in Papua, New Guinea. In Nigeria for example, Nigerian Pidgin originated from the contact between Europeans who came to the coast of West Africa for trade and Nigerians.

Creoles are Pidgins that have acquired native speakers. The word hereby referred to as pidgin transforms into a Creole is called 'Creolisation' (Hudson 2001:63). As Crystal (1993:89-90) argues, a Creole is a pidgin language, which has become the mother tongue of a speech community. In addition, the process of creolisation expands the structure and stylistic range of the pidginised language. This language becomes "comparable in formal and functional complexity of the languages". An example of a Creole is Krio of Sierra Leone. In Nigeria, Nigerian Pidgin is a Creole for a growing number of its speakers who have learned it as a first language, alongside their native languages. *Creole is a term used to refer to the customs and speech of Africans and Europeans born in the new World* (Holm 1988:9).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Why is English called "the lingua franca of the world"?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this unit has examined various factors and outcomes of the influence of society on language. The relationship between language and society can be described as interactive because of the variation created through social variables such as education, age, gender, ethnicity etc. The presence of variation attests to the creative innate ability of speakers who use language to achieve their goals.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we discussed the dynamic relationship between language and society. We also examined functions of language, social factors that influence the use of language, the varieties that arise thereof, and the need for standard varieties. The next unit will discuss the relationship between language and culture.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1 Discuss the relationship between language and society drawing your examples from the Nigerian society.

2. List five slangs and five jargons and provide the meaning for each.
3. Below are some words from British, American and Nigerian Englishes. Identify the equivalents for the three varieties:
(a) clothes peg b. police c. clothes clip d. bobby e. undershirt f. clothes pin g. vest h. singlet i. cop
4. Briefly discuss the difference between a pidgin and a creole.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit you learned about the relationship between language and society, and the kinds of variation that social variables introduce into language at different levels. This unit is a continuation of the previous unit with focus on the relationship between language and culture. Just as every society is characterized by language, so also every society has its own culture, its own set of beliefs, its own world view; and as such, culture is an integral feature of society. In fact, it is not so easy to delineate language from culture; did culture exist before language or language before culture? We will discuss examples of variation in language due to cultural differences, examine some early theories about the relationship between language and culture namely, linguistic determinism, and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. We shall also briefly highlight the role of culture in the study of language today (anthropological linguistics, ethnolinguistics).

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define language in relation to culture
- explain the role of language in culture
- discuss the theories of language and culture.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 Language and Culture**

What is culture? There are as many definitions depending on the discipline. Historians for example, view culture as forms of civilisation. However, anthropology which is the discipline that studies peoples and their culture defines culture as “socially acquired knowledge” (Yule 2002: 246). From this point of view, one of the major ways in which language is related to culture is that language is an aspect of culture. Other aspects include belief system, values, customs and traditions and so on. Second, language is an instrument used to express thought. The belief system of a society or their world view which is part of their culture is often reflected in their language. Third, language is used to express culture that is the medium by which social experiences and values of a society are perceived and understood. Culture, as an expression of social reality influences the content of language. Also, since language reflects

culture and the world view of different societies, it follows that the various cultural distinctions and differences of different societies will also be reflected through language. This is why many of the factors responsible for variation in language are referred to as cultural differences.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. What is culture?
2. What are three ways in which language relates to culture?

3.1.1 Taboo and Euphemism

In the sections that follow, we will examine some examples of socio-cultural structures reflected in language. The phenomenon of taboo words and euphemism is socio-cultural in the sense that they reflect the particular customs and world view of the society. Have you ever heard someone use words that sounded offensive to you? Have you ever thought why one word sounds offensive and another word does not? The word taboo is a word taken from a Polynesian language called Tongan, and it is used to refer to acts that are forbidden or avoided (Fromkin et al 2003: 476). All societies have examples of acts or words that are considered to be taboo- words that are considered inappropriate for certain contexts or totally forbidden in any context. For example, the boy just fucked up, the word fuck is a taboo or inappropriate word to use in many contexts, but may be accepted in drinking bars etc.; using Jesus as a swear word is a taboo particularly for Christians; saying the name of prophet Mohammed without a reference are examples of disrespect and therefore taboos. Note also what is perceived as taboo varies from one society to another even though the same language is being spoken. For example, words that are acceptable in the United Kingdom may not be acceptable in America. The acceptability of taboo words also change over time. In many cultures, words that describe sexual organs and the sexual act form a significant portion of taboo words. In English, there are two or more sets of words to describe sexual organs, the acceptable words and the taboo words:

Acceptable words	Taboo words
• Vagina	cunt
• Penis	cock, prick
• Breasts	tits, boobs
• Faeces	shit

In some contexts, even the accepted words are replaced by other words. For example, a mother will say to a male child wee wee instead of penis. In some cultures, the word for sex is offensive and only used in restricted contexts. The sexual act is referred to using a phrase or word that is not offensive. For example, Yoruba has a taboo word for sex- do which is rarely heard or used in polite interaction. Sex in Yoruba is more commonly referred to as ba ra won sun 'slept together'. There is no linguistic explanation for why one word is more acceptable than another except the choices of what is acceptable is socially and culturally determined.

One of the ways in which society attempts to resolve the use of taboo words is through the use of euphemisms. A euphemism is a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid offensive subjects.

A common example is the way different societies refer to death. In English, people pass on or kick the bucket. In Yoruba, a king does not die, he goes to be with his ancestors *oba waja*.

Other English examples include to urinate is to ease one's self or to go use the bathroom; to have sex is to make love or sleep with someone. These examples show that euphemisms have connotative meanings that often reflect the attitudes, values, beliefs of people, and through language they are passed on from one generation to the next generation.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

1. What is a taboo? Give an example from your language
2. What is euphemism? Give an example from your language.

3.1.2 Kinship Terms

Another example of culture reflecting on language is terms of address. Terms of address refers to the language for kinship structure in a given society. In English-speaking societies, kinship terms are based on a nuclear family structure- son, daughter, mother, father, grandfather, *grandmother*, *grandson*, *granddaughter*, *brother*, *sister*, *niece*, *nephew*, *cousin*, *uncle*, *aunt*. In Yoruba-speaking societies, however, it based on an extended family structure where there are no single words or distinctions for cousin, aunt, uncle, nephew or niece. These relationships are described with phrases, for example cousin is child of my *father/mother's brother/sister*. The different distinctions made between the English-speaking and Yoruba-speaking societies show that the family structures are organised and perceived differently.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Mention the major kinship distinctions in your culture as reflected in your language.

3.2 Theories of Language and Culture

3.2.1 Linguistic Determinism

Two theories have been influential in attempting to explain the relationship between culture social reality. According to and language Lyons (2003), as a means of interpreting one's knowledge of one's native language is culturally transmitted or culturally acquired by virtue of one's membership of a particular society. Linguistic determinism holds that "language determines thought". This view posits that there is an interdependence of language and thought. In other words, languages have different ways of describing the world, there is a relationship between the language you have learned and the way you perceive the world. In its extreme sense, the language you have learned will determine the way you view the world, your social reality. One of the examples provided to support this view is the reflection of the type of physical environment a society lives on the lexicon. For example, the number of words the Eskimos have to describe the term snow is significantly more than that of the British or other geographical contexts that experience snow. In English, there is just one word for it, but for the Eskimos there are several, and the view is that because it is winter for them all year round, their world view is organised around the experiences and this is reflected in the way their language is organised. Similarly, the Bedouin Arabic has a significantly large lexicon for the word camel compared to other similar societies.

3.2.2 Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

The Sapir –Whorf hypothesis is generally regarded as an amalgamation of linguistic determinism, and a second proposition commonly referred to as linguistic relativity. Linguistic relativity posits

that “there is no limit to structural diversity of languages”. It was under this hypothesis that both propositions were brought together. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis surmises that 1) we can only experience our world in terms of the categories and distinctions provided by our language, and 2) the categories and distinctions in each language are unique to it and cannot be measured with those of other systems. As linguists and anthropologists, Edward Sapir, and his student Benjamin Whorf developed the hypothesis based on their study of American Indians in the 1930s. Sapir was of the view that the real world (a group’s social reality) is based on the language habits of the group. In other words, the language of a group predisposes the group to interpret the world in certain ways. Whorf further claimed that language conditions the way we view our world and different language groups view the world differently as dictated by their different languages. The significance of this observation is that language differences bring about cultural differences. In the study of the American Indians Whorf observed that there was a distinction between animate and inanimate categories in the grammar of the Hopi language. Clouds and stones were categorized as animate, and so Whorf concluded that the Hopi viewed clouds and stones as living things by virtue of the way their language was organised.

You will recall that at the beginning of this unit, I asked the question, which one existed first- the culture of a people or their language? The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis begs the same question: does language determine the way we view or organise our world (culture) or does our world view determine the way our language is organized?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

1. What are the differences between linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity?
2. Highlight the main premise of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.
3. Give an example of an item in your language for which there are several words to describe it.

4.0 CONCLUSION

From the examples we have examined, the universal components of language may not be culturally conditioned. However, the content of language such as naming of objects may be culturally conditioned to reflect the social reality of the group. As such, the relationship between language and culture is a dynamic one, rather than one determining the other. Current language studies examine the role of culture within the theoretical framework of ethnolinguistics, a branch of linguistic anthropology (see Module 1, unit 1).

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have learned about the relationship between language and culture. Since the focus of this course is on language, we examined the role of language in culture as is exemplified in examples of variation in language due to cultural differences. We also discussed some theories of language and culture namely, linguistic determinism, linguistic relativity, and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1 In what ways do taboo words and euphemism reflect culture?
- 2 Discuss the major differences between linguistic determinism, linguistic relativity, and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.
- 3 In Igbo, there are several more words for vegetables than there are in Yoruba. Explain why this is so based on Linguistic determinism

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UNIT 3 VARIETIES OF LANGUAGE**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Diglossia
 - 3.2 Bilingualism and Multilingualism
 - 3.2.1 Types of Bilingualism
 - 3.3 Language Interference
 - 3.4 Borrowing
 - 3.5 Code-Switching and Code-Mixing
 - 3.5.1 Types of Code-Switching
 - 3.6 Language Attitudes
 - 3.7 Functional Varieties of Language
 - 3.8 Language Planning
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Module 4 Unit 1, we examined the definitions and functions of language, we will now discuss the core issues as they relate to sociolinguistics and varieties of language. We will now recall these issues here: bilingualism, multilingualism, diglossia, code-switching, code-mixing, language attitudes and language planning.

In examining varieties of language, you know already that languages vary and this variation is related to the place, time and context in which they are used. Hartmann and Stork (1972) assert that there are three (3) basic criteria to note when we discuss variation in language. These are:

- the geographical and social background of the speaker and the actual situation in which the speech act takes place
- the medium or mode of expression i.e. oral/spoken, written or extra-linguistic features
- the subject-matter for discussion.

In a similar vein, Hudson (2001:1) defines language variety as “a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution”. The various terms of idiolect, sociolect, dialect, and register which were discussed in Module 4, unit 1 all describe different varieties of language within a speech community. In Sociolinguistics, the speech community constitutes the focus of study for varieties of language. One of the early definitions of a speech community is that of Hockett (1958:8) which states.

- Each language defines a speech community: the whole set of people who communicate with each other, either directly or indirectly, via the common language. A later definition like that of Labov’s definition (1972a:120) lays emphasis on shared attitudes and knowledge instead of on shared linguistic behaviour.
- The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements,

so much as by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behaviour, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are in variant in respect to particular levels of usage. The existence of different varieties of language in any society has resulted in other phenomena that have been the focus of sociolinguistic researchers, and which constitute the focus of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- distinguish between varieties of language and language variation
- explain the outcomes of varieties of language viz.: diglossia, code-switching and code-mixing, borrowing, bilingualism and multilingualism
- discuss the role of language attitudes
- explain language planning.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Diglossia

Diglossia is a phenomenon of language variation, which assumes that no language is a uniform entity and that a language varies according to the place, time and context in which it is used. Diglossia is the presence in a language of two varieties used for distinct functions – a ‘high’ (H) and low (L). It is a situation where two varieties of a language or distinct codes are used for different functions. Ferguson (1972) defines diglossia as a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language of the community, there is a divergent, highly codified superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature which is learnt largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purpose but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. This definition implies the presence in a speech community of two varieties of a language – “a high variety” (H) and “a low variety” (L). The definition equally assumes that no language is a uniform entity and that the language varies according to the place, time and context in which it is used.

Diglossia therefore describes a situation where two varieties of a language or different languages are used for different functions. According to Crystal (1993:104) is diglossia “a situation where two different VARIETIES of a language co-occur throughout a speech community, each with a distinct range of social function. Both varieties... are felt to be alternatives”.

The ‘high’ is used for formal occasions and in written texts whereas the ‘low’ is used in colloquial conversation. In diglossia, the emphasis is placed on the special functions for ‘H’ and ‘L’. Sometimes only the ‘H’ is appropriate for some situations and in some cases only the ‘L’. Sometimes however, the two sets overlap. A diglossic situation can be described through the use of a matrix. Often, the functions assigned to languages within a society will determine which language is H or L.

In Nigeria for example, English by virtue of its being the nation’s official language, performs the special functions of H in formal contexts, while the local languages perform functions of L in informal contexts. Below is the matrix for a Nigerian speech community, say between standard English (H) and Nigerian Pidgin (L):

	HL
• Sermon in church or mosque	x x
• Instructions to servants, waiters, workmen	x
• Personal letter	x
• Speech in Parliament	x
• University lecture	x
• Conversation with family, friends, colleagues	x x
• News broadcast	x x
• Radio 'soap opera'	x x
• Newspaper editorial, news story	x
• Caption on political cartoon	x x
• Poetry	x x
• Folk literature	x x

Some of the parameters used in categorising language varieties that perform functions of 'H' and 'L' include function in terms of formal/informal; prestige in terms of superior/inferior; literary heritage in terms of written/oral; standardization in terms of codified/non codified; and lexicon in terms of technical/lack of technical terminology (Akindele & Adegbite 1999).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Construct a matrix for the use of English and the local language(s) in your community. Which one is the high or low language?

3.2 Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Bilingualism refers to the coexistence of two languages within a speech community. A bilingual person is someone who has linguistic competence in two or more languages. Multilingualism is the coexistence of more than two languages within a speech community or society. A person who speaks more than two languages is said to be 'multilingual'(although the term 'bilingualism' can be used for both situations), and a society in which more than two languages are spoken is called a multilingual society.

Sources of bilingualism and multilingualism: Bilingualism and multilingualism are very common occurrences in many societies. It is possible for person to speak three, four, or even more languages fluently, people may become bilingual (or multilingual) either by acquiring two (or more) languages at the same time in childhood or by learning a second (or third or fourth, etc) language sometime after acquiring their first language. Nigeria is an example of a multilingual situation with about 510 languages spoken by 140 million people. Almost every Nigerian is bilingual by virtue of the nation's multilingual status and the need for communication across ethnic groups. Another source of bilingualism and multilingualism is colonialism. Most African countries have come to have the language of their colonial masters as the official language. As a result, educated Africans are mostly bilingual in the language of the colonialist in the local language. Other sources of bilingualism and multilingualism are through migration, trade, and conquests.

3.2.1 Types of Bilingualism

Two major types of bilinguals are identified:

a. Co-ordinate Bilinguals: A co-ordinate bilingual is one who acquires his mother tongue (local language) before acquiring a second language. That individual learns the second language through the first language and thus has knowledge of two linguistic systems. Many rural children in Nigeria learn the language first before they learn English through education.

b. Compound Bilinguals: A compound bilingual is one who acquires both first and second languages at the same time. Urban children in Nigeria are a good example of this phenomenon hence acquires their local language at home and at the same time, learn the language of the community if it is different from theirs. A third dimension is their learning English through formal education. Thus, they are exposed to three languages almost simultaneously.

Furthermore, the parameters of language choice and culture bring about other types of bilinguals such as the monocultural co-ordinate bilingual, who learns a second language for a purpose e.g. to acquire education or conduct business in another country; the bicultural co-ordinate bilingual, who acculturises by not only learning the second language but adopts the culture and way of life; and the bicultural individual who acquires two languages and their cultures at the same time (Yusuf (ed.) 1999).

The acquisition of a first language has both positive and negative effects on the learning of a second language. Some of those effects include language interference, borrowing, and code-switching.

3.3 Language Interference

Language interference refers to the negative influence of an acquired language over another language being learned. Such interference can occur at the various linguistic levels, phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic.

Phonological interference: This is when sounds of the language being learned (L2) which do not occur in the acquired language (L1) are being substituted with its own sounds. For example, some Yoruba learners of English tend to replace the English consonants /f / with /t/ as in 'faith' pronounced as 'fate', and 'teach' pronounced as 'teash'. In the same way, English learners of Yoruba tend to replace /kp, gb/ with /p, b/ as in 'apapa' instead of 'akpakpa', and 'alabado' instead of 'alagbado'.

Morphological interference: This refers to the incorrect use of word formation rules of L1 for L2. For example, in English some nouns are prefixed by a descriptive phrase such as 'a piece of information', 'a sheet of paper, a pair of trousers' etc. However, Nigerian languages do not have such prefixes. So, many learners of English would say *'I have an information', 'Give me paper', and 'He's wearing nice trousers'. **Semantic interference:** This involves the substitution of meaning of words and utterances. For example, it is common for most Nigerians to say 'I am coming' in English when they mean 'I will be back'. This is because in many Nigerian languages, 'I will be back' is translated as 'I am coming' e.g

Yoruba: Mo nbo; Hausa: I na zuwa; Igbo: A na ma bia.

Syntactic interference: Interference at the syntactic level refers to use of L1 structures in L2. For example, Nigerian languages do not inflect for passive constructions as in English. For this reason, many Nigerian learners of English would translate the construction 'My computer was

stolen' where the reference is unknown as *'they stole my computer'.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Give one example each of phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic interference of your local language on the learning of English in your local community.

3.4 Borrowing

In a situation where different languages and speakers come into contact, it is possible to introduce into a language or dialect an element from other languages it has come in contact with. This pattern is possible through imitation. For example: most Nigerian languages have borrowed words from the English language. A few examples are given below:

English	Ibibio
• lawyer	loya/doya
• radio	udedio
• tin	tian
• glass	akrasi
• basin	abesin
• police	bolisi
• mouse	amaus

The most common type of borrowing is that of vocabulary items. Other types of borrowing are loan translation and loan shift. Note that borrowing is found in all languages of the world. Even the English language which is highly developed also borrowed from other languages like French and Latin, etc. For example, the words restaurant, salon, *fillet*, *foyer* etc are French words that have become part of the English lexicon.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

List five words that have been borrowed from another language into your local language. Are there changes in pronunciation, and spelling?

3.5 Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

Code-switching is the term that is used to identify the alternating use of language varieties in speech. Some researchers make a distinction between code-switching and code-mixing (e.g. Kachru 1983). For them, the former refers to alternations which occur intersententially, that is between sentences, while the latter refers to alternations that intersententially, that are within a sentence. Whichever the case is, both phenomena require competence in more than one language. For example, a Nigerian who is proficient in two or more languages like the English language, the Nigerian pidgin (NP), Yoruba, Igbo, Ibibio, Edo, Tiv, Kanuri or Hausa can choose any of these languages for communication. Note that the choice must be dependent on the fact that the listener is also proficient in the language of your choice (cf. Okon 2002). Below are some examples of intrasentential code-switching between Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Ibibio and English respectively:

- *Wo' n ti examine gbogbo papers yen* (Banjo 2007:3)
They have examined all those papers
- Gaskiya, gidan belongs to a friend

In truth, the house belongs to a friend (Daura & Olaofe 2007)

- Amam onye iwu very well

I know you very well (Essien 1995: 272)

- Nkpo odo aya affect anye permanently

The thing will affect him/her permanently (Essien 1995: 272)

- Den wi kom enta the role of Federal and State Policy

Then we discussed the topic, the role of Federal and State Policy
(Olorunfoba 1992: 128)

3.5.1 Types of Code-Switching

There are two types of code-switching—The situational and the metaphorical.

Situational Code-Switching: It occurs where one language is used in a particular situation and another language is used in another situation. In Nigeria for example, some families use the indigenous languages or the Nigerian Pidgin at home, market, whereas the English language is used in schools, offices or in other formal situations.

Metaphorical Code-Switching: In this case, the situation does not determine the choice of language, rather the choice of language determines the situation (Bloms & Gumperz, 1971, in Hudson 2001). The outcomes of bilingualism and multilingualism are diglossia, language interference, code-switching and borrowing.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

What is the difference between code-switching and code-mixing? Give one example of each between your local language and another language that people in your community usually code-switch in.

3.6 Language Attitudes

So far, we have discussed sociolinguistics, language varieties and their attendant issues. The attitudes of persons towards different language varieties and the people who speak them are important in sociolinguistics. The study of language attitudes involves the study of people's reactions, responses and perceptions of the use of different language varieties. The study of sociolinguistics is not complete without reference to language attitudes. Language attitude is the overt or covert reaction of language users to the languages which exist in the community, and the users of such languages (Ansa 2002: 46).

Language attitudes thrive more in dense multilingual contexts such as Nigeria. Some of the sociohistorical forces that have shaped language attitudes in sub-Saharan Africa include i) the role of European languages

ii) language policies in education iii) role of language in social mobility, and iv) language codification (Adegbija 1994). With the presence of over 500 languages in Nigeria, the attitudes of the users are bound to be varied. This kind of variation is dependent on whether the language variety meets the following criteria:

- a considerable national and/or international coverage of users;
- a metropolitan or cosmopolitan status;
- a considerable numerical strength and some measure of economic and political power, and

- a sufficiently reliable codified form.

Babajide 2001:2 With the determinant factors of language attitude towards certain language varieties enumerated above, several studies have noted that the general attitude of Nigerians towards the English language is mostly positive (Adegbija 1994, Ansa 2002, Babajide 2001, Okon 1990, 2001, Akindele and Adegbite 2005, Igboanusi and Peter 2005). The positive attitude is informed by the role and status of English in Nigeria as the language of education and therefore the language for upward mobility. Nigerian languages are a dismal second in terms of attitude of users towards them.

3.7 Functional Varieties of Language

This section examines language varieties that characterize bilingual and multilingual speech communities according to their functions.

• Mother Tongue

The term 'mother tongue' refers to a speaker's indigenous, local or native language. It is usually a speaker's first language and is acquired not learned. The term, like first language should not be understood to mean a speaker's first language or mother tongue. Mother tongue refers to the language acquired within the speaker's local environment and identifies the speaker's native culture. In this regard, it is the language in which the speaker best expresses his/her world view. For some, it is the only language they speak (monolingual), while for bilinguals, it is the first language. For example, an individual of Yoruba origin who grows up in Yorubaland will have Yoruba as his/her mother tongue, while another individual also of Yoruba origin but who grows up in the United Kingdom will have English as his/her mother tongue.

In terms of function, the mother tongue is a variety that expresses one's ethnic and national identity. Thus, it is often used as the language of ethnic interaction. In language learning it is referred to as the L1. It is also assumed that a speaker is required to have mastery in speaking and listening skills in the mother tongue, and reading and writing where it is a codified language.

• Second Language

A second language refers to the language that is learned after acquisition of the first language or mother tongue. It presumes a bilingual or multilingual context. In Nigeria for example, learning of English is usually referred to as the learning of a second language. English is a second language for Nigeria in the sense that every Nigerian is assumed to speak at least one native language or mother tongue. However, it may not literally mean that it is the speaker's second language in order of sequence. The second language is a variety that shares a speaker's linguistic repertoire with the mother tongue but performs functions often different from those of the mother tongue. English functions as the nation's official language and as the medium of educational instruction.

In Nigeria, English is learned as a second language which is different from learning English as a foreign language. As a result of English's socio history in Nigeria, it has become nativised such that the variety taught and spoken is significantly different from British English which viewed as the standard for learning purposes.

• Foreign Language

A foreign language can be the second language a bilingual or multilingual speaker's linguistic repertoire. However, it can also be the third or fourth language. It is defined as the language in which the speaker performs specialized activities such as translation, interpretation etc. For example, French is a foreign language in Nigeria and although it has been accorded the status of an official language, its major function is for international communication with Nigeria's French speaking neighbours. It is a foreign language also by virtue of the approach to teaching and learning a foreign language which is different from how English is taught. In schools, French is taught as one of the subjects and is not a medium of instruction. It is however restricted to being used in interactions with the native speakers. Other examples of foreign language within the Nigerian context include German, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese languages.

• National Language

A national language is one that has been accorded the status of the language to foster a nation's unity. In the United Kingdom, it is English, in Nigeria there are three national languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba representing three geopolitical zones, North, East and West respectively. National languages are used in communicating government issues and in promoting national cohesion. The implication of this choice is further the establishment of multilingualism in the linguistic repertoire of a Nigerian- there is the mother tongue, English if educated, and at least one of the national languages if it is not the same as the mother tongue.

• Lingua Franca

A lingua franca is a language that is used for interaction among people with different mother tongues. It is the language of wider communication beyond a speaker's immediate native context into inter-ethnic situations. It is also used by all sections of the society. So for example, Nigerian Pidgin is a lingua franca because it facilitates wider communication and is used by all sections of the society, unlike English that is restricted to the educated. At the same time, while English is a global lingua franca because it facilitates international communication, it does not function fully as a lingua franca at the national level in Nigeria.

• Official Language

Official languages are languages prescribed for use by governments of countries to conduct official business, commerce and education. In most African countries, a non-native language like English, French, Portuguese and Arabic are official languages. In a few countries like Tanzania, a native language, Swahili is one of the official languages. In Nigeria, English and more recently, French are accorded the status of official languages.

• Regional Language

Regional languages are languages that are used for communication within a defined regional context. They are languages of wider communication within that region. Often regional languages are borne out of the need to interact for trading purposes. In East Africa, Kiswahili is a regional language because it is spoken across East- African countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. A language like Hausa also enjoys a regional status because it is spoken across some countries, Nigeria, Niger, and Chad. Within Nigeria, there are several regional languages which are spoken within regions. They include Edo, Efik, Annang, Ibibio, Kanuri, and Tiv.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Using the definitions above, list all the languages that you speak and identify the status of each one.

3.8 Language Planning

What is language planning? Why do we need language planning? What is the role of sociolinguistics in language planning? This section will provide the answers to these questions.

Language planning has been described as “a set of deliberate activities systematically designed to select from, organise and develop the language resources of a community in order to enhance the utilization of such resources for development” (Akindele & Adegbite 1999: 73). A good African example of language planning is the adoption of Kiswahili as the national language for Tanzania, East Africa. The process starts with selecting a language to fulfill specific roles; the language is codified by developing grammar, dictionaries, written materials required to establish it as a standard variety; this variety is elaborated by developing it for use in all spheres- literary, scientific, arts etc; The language is implemented mainly by government who encourages its use; the language is accepted by a majority of the population as the national language for social and national identity.

Why do we need language planning? Language planning is a direct outcome of multilingual situations. Where there are many languages, there is the need to plan for their development and use for the benefit of the society. Nigeria serves as a good example of a country that needs language planning because of its highly dense multilingual status.

Nigeria has the highest number of languages, over 500 over a population size of 140 million. It portrays linguistic diversity which is the use of several languages as a means of communication across diverse groups of people within a defined context. Language planning enables countries to maximise the benefits of multilingualism over and above the problems it posits.

In response to the need for language planning, Bamgbose (1991: 62-63) provides a language typology for sub-Saharan Africa that can serve as criteria for assigning status and functions to languages:

- The mother tongue (medium of informal education in the home and for socialization among peers)
- Language of the immediate community (particularly for minority language speakers which serves as a local or regional lingua franca)
- Language of wider communication (can serve also as a language of immediate community but with a wider reach as for a lingua franca or national language)
- Language of wider communication which is also the official language (usually was the official language during the colonial period and is a second language for most but first language for a growing number of speakers)
- Language of religion (as is the case with Arabic in countries with Muslim populations)
- Language of wider communication which is learnt as a foreign language.

Although there is no separate language policy for Nigeria, it is incorporated into the nation’s policy statement on education. Nigeria’s language policy in education reflects aspects of the above categorisation.

The policy states as follows:

- Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and natural cohesion; and preserving cultures. This every child shall learn the language

of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity is expedient that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

For smooth interaction with our neighbours, it is desirable for every Nigerian to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria and it shall be compulsory in primary and Junior Secondary Schools but Non-Vocational Elective at the Senior Secondary School. (National Policy on Education 2004: 4 -5)

The policy prescribes languages to be used as medium of instruction, those to be learned at different educational levels. For example, it prescribes the mother tongue or language of the immediate community to be the medium of instruction at the pre-primary level as well as for the first three years of primary education, while English is to be learned as a subject beginning from the first three years of primary school. The policy prescribes English to become the medium of instruction from the fourth year of primary education. For the native languages, the policy prescribes the teaching and learning of a minimum of two Nigerian languages at the secondary education level.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Language varieties are very important in the study of language in any society. It involves looking at how concepts like borrowing; bilingualism, pidgin and Creole evolved as a result language contact. Sociolinguistics is one of the branches of linguistics. It is the study of language in relation to the society. This relationship explains why people speak differently within the same speech community.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has examined language varieties. Speakers of any language vary their speeches depending on the age, topic, situation and function. The speaker is also capable of mixing or switching from one language to another. We have also stated that other types of languages like Pidgin and Creole can arise as a result of different languages that come in contact. It is also possible to borrow words or phrases from different languages in order to coin new words.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is borrowing? Give examples of words that have been borrowed into your mother tongue or indigenous language.
2. Write on the functions of the Nigerian Pidgin in our society.
3. What is your understanding of the term Diglossia? Is there diglossia in Nigeria? If yes, explain.
4. Explain code-switching and give examples or illustrations using English and your native language.
5. What do you understand by language variety? Identify the varieties that exist in your speech community.
6. What is the attitude of Nigerians to the different languages existing in the country?
7. What is the status of English at the international level and at the continental level in Africa? Contrast its status to that of the native languages.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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