

**MODULE 2**

Unit 1	Performance in Language Learning
Unit 2	Error Analysis I
Unit 3	Error Analysis II
Unit 4	Contrastive Analysis
Unit 5	Discourse Analysis
Unit 6	Corpora Linguistics
Unit 7	Forensic Linguistics

**UNIT 1 PERFORMANCE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING****CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Productive and Receptive Performance
3.2	Process of Language Learning
3.2.1	Recognition
3.2.2	Identification
3.3	Theories of Language Learning
3.3.1	Language Learning
3.3.2	Inductive Learning
3.3.3	Deductive Learning
3.4	Language Learning and Language Teaching
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is a continuation of what you learnt in module 1, unit 7 where you were introduced to psycholinguistics and language learning. You were told that psycholinguistics is one of the subfields of applied linguistics and that it is not only important for Applied Linguistics (AL) but also for other areas of language work. You also learnt that the principal concern of psychology of language is to give an account of the psychological processes that go on when people produce or understand utterances- that is, the investigation of language performance. You were also taught the differences and similarities between language acquisition and language learning and that the issue of performance in language learning will be discussed in this unit. I think you now remember some

of the things we talked about in the last unit. Try to jot down some of the major points you learnt in these units.

This unit, as mentioned above, is a continuation of module 1, unit 7, which is on psycholinguistics. Corder (1973:115) states two problems that psycholinguistics concerns itself with. These are language acquisition and language performance. Language performance has to do with the psychological processes that go on when people use sentences. The language skills that scholars commonly refer to are listening, speaking, reading and writing. As labelled categories, they do not take care of what goes on in the head. We still have to rely on psycholinguists to tell us what goes on when people actually use language. There are two types of performance-productive (the ones we say or do) and receptive performance (the ones we listen to or are exposed to). Before we go on, let us look at what you are expected to be able to do after you have completed reading through this unit. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- describe productive and receptive types of performance; and
- discuss briefly what is meant by language learning and language teaching strategies.

## **HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT**

Have your pen and paper with you. Jot down your important points as you go through the unit.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

As you read this unit, think of your performance in English and how you can use the points raised in the unit to improve your performance of English.

### **3.1 Productive and Receptive Performance**

Production and performance are two basic activities that human beings engage in during language learning. You as a language teacher should not approach your work based on the teaching of speaking, hearing, writing and reading alone because the pupils are already familiar with these in their mother tongue. Learning to read and write presupposes the ability to speak and hear- that is the possession of some verbal behaviour. The language teacher does not start from the scratch because

the learner already has a base on which the teacher can build the new language activities. You only need to extend this skill in the pupils relatively to a particular level (Corder (1973). For example, one can read and make meaning of writing in a language that has some Roman alphabets because one knows the alphabets.

Reading involves different levels of activity or different kinds of skills. When you read to yourself, you are processing the written material in a number of highly complex ways. You recognise the sentences and understand the message. You internalise the message. You can be said to be doing some form of receptive performance. Listening implies giving attention and it involves your awareness of the language activity going on around you. You should be able to detect the differences in pitch and duration. You must be able to detect differences in the quality of sound. It is a receptive performance.

In speaking, we need the skill to make use of our organs in such a way that we are able to control all the sounds that we produce. We should be able to monitor our own production. This is a productive performance and the ability to monitor our own production is what Corder refers to as auditory feedback. He notes that deaf speakers often take on certain peculiarities of sound because of the lack of the monitoring process.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Explain what you understand by productive and receptive performance in language learning.

## **3.2 Process of Language Learning**

Language learning is in stages. It is like a child learning to walk. He/she starts by crawling. The child then tries to stand, takes one step, then two, three until he/she is able to have a balanced movement. Language learning starts with recognition of different features of the language and this leads to identification and use of grammatically and semantically well-formed sentences in the language.

### **3.2.1 Recognition**

Recognition is important in the psychology of perception. It is an active process which extends beyond the level of sounds, intonation patterns and rhythms of language to groups of sounds or lexical words. Corder (1973:118-122) claims that the process is also called sentence identification-analysis by synthesis. He notes that the criticism of this procedure is that it suggests that in order to identify a sentence, we must first analyse it completely and see if the structure of the sentence can be generated by the rules of the grammar we have internalised. Sutherland

(1966) suggests that we do not have to go through that cumbersome process but sample or predict the structure of the utterance and act accordingly. That is, we should go into the next phase of the performance. This accounts for why we often have to go over what we have read before or listened to when we make mistakes in our receptive processing of utterances.

### 3.2.2 Identification

Identification is the process of recognising utterances as grammatically and semantically well formed. It is not enough to identify utterances as grammatical but linguistic terms. We have to internalise not only the grammatical but also the lexical rules. These are rules that have to do with the semantic structure of the language with its internal sense relations. There are five chief functions in speech production, which can be described as neuro-linguistic. These are **ideational** (initiates the appropriate semantic content of any verbal message, **planning** process (constructs an appropriate linguistic programme for the expression of the idea. The remaining processes are the **permanent storage** of linguistic information, the **execution** of the programme which is the actual set of articulatory actions; and the **monitoring** function which is simultaneous with the execution.

### 3.3 Theories of Language Learning

Some theories of language learning were discussed in module 1, unit 2. You will get to know a few more in this section as they relate to performance in language learning. Researchers ask questions on how the child and the learner acquire language skills. The answers to their questions border on the theories of language acquisition and learning. Below are some of them.

#### 3.3.1 Language Learning

Language learning is a process whereby certain combinations of words and intonation of voice are strengthened and are gradually made to occur in appropriate situations. A speaker of any language can produce new sentences and utterances all the time, which shows that the learner interacts with his/her environment. This interaction helps him/her to have new language experiences that make demands on him/her to either describe them or relate with other people concerning them. In learning a new language, a learner also makes new utterances depending on the situation. The learner, however, builds on the repertoire of his/her previous knowledge of the first language. The learning of language must be related to the learning and knowledge of the world. Language

learning can be seen from two perspectives- inductive learning and deductive learning.

### **3.3.2 Inductive Learning**

Inductive learning is ‘the creation and storage of abstract internal representations (linguistic information) through a process of generalisation, classification and association’. The inductive theory of language learning is based on the assumption that verbal behaviour is not different in kind from other behaviour and is acquired in fundamentally the same way. By processes of conditioning, imitation, practice, generalisation and reinforcement, the learner is able to process information and learn (Corder, 1973 and Skinner, 1957).

### **3.3.3 Deductive Learning**

Deductive learning is the discovery of the linguistic information to be stored by a process of applying to the data some inborn theory about language. Corder refers to some set of ready-made inherited categories or concepts common to all human language (linguistic universals). He refers to this latter theory as the nativist hypothesis which is based on three considerations: first, all human language in spite of their obvious superficial differences, show remarkable superficial similarities; second, the process of constructing a theory from the data, i.e. the inductive theory would take too long, third, that the data on which it works is too distorted and partial for the purpose.

The deductive theory assumes that language is peculiar to human beings- that they are born with a specific programme for acquiring it. To Skinner (1957), it is learnt by some sort of data-processing by heuristic (aiding or guiding) processes of hypothesis formation and testing; that language is a matter of rule-governed behaviour, not responses but rules for making responses.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Explain what you understand by the process of language learning.

### **3.4 Language Learning and Language Teaching**

Many scholars have researched on language learning but according to Corder the development of language teaching methods have been a little bit controversial. Scholars have noted that most teachers in classrooms try to adopt some methods of teaching, which are not consistent with the language learning theories that have earlier on been discussed. Corder noted that teachers have continued to use teaching procedures such as

imitation, drill, formal practice and over-learning of sentence patterns. He further notes that this method has been accompanied by what is considered the traditional techniques of exemplification, rule giving, description and translation, which are more appropriate to a deductive than an inductive theory of learning.

Teachers have probably noticed some deficiencies in the theories and have, therefore, decided to stick to the techniques which seem to be working for them and their students. To the teachers, the techniques they use are as good as the newer techniques which emphasise audiovisual. In short, teachers seem to be using an eclectic approach to get the best from their pupils. Recently, however, with the advent of computer facilities, there has been a lot of research on how to use the computer to aid learning. This is fast gaining grounds in many advanced countries and this has led to a shift in emphasis from the traditional method to some other modern methods of teaching. You will be introduced to this in one of the units latter on in this course.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have talked about performance in language learning and that performance has to do with the psychological processes that go on when people use sentences. The process of language learning involves recognition and identification and that the speech production functions involved in identification are ideational, planning, execution, monitoring and storage. Inductive and deductive learning are some of the learning theories that we have. You have learnt about some other learning theories in module 1, unit 2.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit has exposed you to the points summarized in this section.

- Two problems that psycholinguistics concerns itself with are language acquisition and language performance.
- There are two types of performance-productive (the ones we say or do) and receptive performance (the ones we listen to or are exposed to).
- In speaking, we need the skill to make use of our organs in such a way that we are able to control all the sounds that we produce.
- Language learning is a process whereby certain combinations of words and intonation of voice are strengthened and are gradually made to occur in appropriate situations by the process of discrimination learning.
- Recognition is important in the psychology of perception; it is an active process which extends beyond the level of sounds,

intonation patterns and rhythms of language to groups of sounds or lexical words.

- Identification is the process of recognising utterances as grammatically and semantically well formed.
- Scholars have noted that most teachers in classrooms try to adopt some methods of teaching which were not consistent with the language learning theories that have earlier on been discussed.
- Recently, however, with the advent of computer facilities, there has been a lot of research on how to use the computer to aid learning.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. You happened to be invited as a student who has studied applied linguistics to give instructions on how to use inductive method of learning to teach a class of primary two pupils the prepositions – ‘in’ and ‘on’. What will you do and how will you do it?
2. Describe how you will use the deductive type of teaching to teach your younger sister who is in primary five a topic on common nouns.

## ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

**Productive performance** is the language we say or do and **receptive performance** is the one we listen to or are exposed to.

## ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Language learning is a process whereby certain combinations of words and intonation of voice are strengthened and gradually made to occur in appropriate situations by discriminating learning.

## 7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Corder, P.S. (1973). *Introducing Applied Linguistics*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd.

Ervin, S. (1964). “Imitation and Structural Change in Children’s Language”. In: E.H. Lenneberg”. (Ed.). *New Directions in the Study of Language*. MIT. pp.163-89.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1969). “Relevant Models of Language Education”.

Laver, J. (1970). “The Production of Speech”. In: J. Lyons, (Ed.). *New Horizons in Linguistics*. Penguin.

Lenneberg, E.H. (1967). *The Biological Foundations of Language*. Wiley.

Skinner, B.F. (1957). *Verbal Behaviour*. Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Sutherland, N.S. (1966). "Competence and Performance". In: J. Lyons. & R.A. Wales. (Eds.). *Psycholinguistic Papers*, p.161. Edinburgh University Press.

**UNIT 2      ERROR ANALYSIS 1****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Lapses, Mistakes, and Errors
  - 3.2 Expressive and Receptive Errors
  - 3.3 The Errors of Groups and Individuals
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 6.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last two units, you were introduced to psycholinguistics and performance in language learning. You were told that language performance and language acquisition are two principal concerns of psychology of language or psycholinguistics. In this unit, you will be introduced to ‘error analysis’. Many people think that when you talk about language learning, all you do is analyse learners’ errors. There is more to it than that. P.S Corder (1973) and a few others will be discussed in this unit because of the relevance of errors in Applied Linguistics (AL).

A distant learner like you cannot do without committing errors and mistakes. Read this unit to learn more about why you commit errors. Suggest what you can do to avoid making errors that spoil your language use in an embarrassing manner.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- explain and distinguish between lapses, mistakes and errors; and
- discuss the importance of error analysis in second language teaching.

**HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT**

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.

- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Lapses, Mistakes and Errors**

A learner's errors are 'systematic' and it is precisely regular and shows that the learner is following a set of rules which are not those of the target language but a transitional form of language which is also similar to his mother tongue. The description of the transitional language is based on the errors made.

Through the study of learner's utterances, we attempt to describe this transitional language or 'interlanguage'. This description can then be compared with the description of the target language. The differences then become the residual learning tasks of the learner. Contrastive comparison discovers the differences between the first and second languages and predicts that there will be learning problems. Error analysis 'studies the nature of those errors and confirms or refutes the predictions of contrastive analyses (Selinker, 1969 and Corder 1973).

It is important to note that all learners make mistakes. We all make mistakes when we speak but the ability to correct ourselves is another thing. You as a learner may recognise your mistakes and when your attention is drawn to them, you may not be able to correct yourself or may even commit another error in trying to do so. Corder notes that majority of learner's errors are linguistically different from those made by a native speaker. Foreign and second language learners make mistakes and this differentiates them from native speakers. A foreigner tries to restrict himself to only those linguistic items that he knows so that he will not make too many mistakes. A native speaker may take this for competence in the language behaviour of the foreigner. A speaker cannot be judged on the basis of fluency because it is a quality which varies both in foreigners and native speakers within the speech situation and the topic of conversation.

Corder notes that the quality of mistakes you as a learner make cannot be used to measure your knowledge of the language. It is the most important source of information about the nature of your knowledge. The errors reveal your areas of need as they give a full picture of the problem areas in your language learning. The mistakes made by native

speakers and learners of a language are different. A native speaker can have several omissions within a sentence. Below is an example:

*It's a bit ... it hasn't...I mean, I wouldn't really come to have one like that (Corder 1973:257).*

Slips of the tongue or slips of pen are common in the speech of native speakers. These kinds of mistakes could involve substitution, transposition or omission of some segment of an utterance, such as speech sound, a morpheme, a word or a phrase, e.g. '*It didn't bother me in the least-slightest*'. Native speakers frequently make slips or false starts or confusion of structure which can be called lapses. Real errors that involve breaking codes are not always committed by native speakers.

In summary of the arguments of Corder (1973) on lapses, mistakes and errors, the following can be deduced:

1. Ordinarily, speech and writing is liable to breakdown or failure.
2. That the breakdowns are not just random but systematic and that they arise from psychological and physiological causes or from imperfect knowledge of the linguistic norms of some group.
3. The great majority of learners' errors are of different kinds.
4. These result in unacceptable utterances and appear as breaches of the code.
5. Errors are a sign of an imperfect knowledge of the code, meaning that learners have not yet internalised the formation rules of the second language.
6. Native speakers are able to correct their own errors but learners may not be able to do so. It is not proper to refer to learners' errors as breaches of the code; you cannot break a rule you do not know.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Distinguish between lapses, mistakes and errors.

### **3.2 Expressive and Receptive Errors**

Every speaker needs to be guided by the rules that guide the formation of sentences. It is easy to detect expressive errors because when the learner speaks, it will be glaring. Corder (1973: 261) notes that it is much easier to detect imperfect knowledge or errors in the case of expressive behaviour. The errors are observable and can be recorded and analysed. Receptive behaviour does not show easily. At times, the hearer does not have to respond. At times, their smiles, grunts or other

paralinguistic behaviour, responding to orders or following instructions do not reveal their inadequacies when utterances are misinterpreted, it may show in their responses. It may be the response that will show that the utterance has been misinterpreted.

There are errors in comprehension, even in the classroom, and these may show in their written work. That is why teachers in examinations and tests, give sections that will test the pupils understanding of concepts, passage, text in item of lexis. It may however be difficult to identify the linguistic causes of such errors. Many people believe that a person's receptive abilities supersede his expressive abilities. Many studies conducted in error analysis have been on the productive abilities of participants, that is: written tests, speech etc. Corder (1973) avers that more attention is paid to the replies of the learner than his language.

### **3.3 The Errors of Groups and Individuals**

Pupils come to school and attend classes as individuals and not as groups. The mistakes they make are, therefore, as individuals and not as groups. When tests are given, the analysis is based on the work of the group. Occasionally, teachers (in SL situations) themselves make grammatical mistakes and pronunciation or spelling errors and learners repeat the teacher's mistakes. These mistakes will still be taken to be from the learners.

Even though pupils are different, programmes are designed based on what is common to the group. Corder notes that the information that is got from the study of errors is in part used for constructing appropriate syllabuses and teaching materials. The applied linguist takes care of those errors that are common to the group and uses this for the planning of the language curriculum. The factors responsible for the errors are examined so that they can be taken care of in planning the syllabus in order that the applied linguist can know the source of the problem. The errors may show a variety of different deviations, which could be noted for planning purposes.

A point to note in the study of errors is that it is possible to find out that it is actually a part of the language that is difficult for learners to understand and use well. Difficulty can arise as a result of the interaction between the languages and not because of anything inherent in the language. For example, the native speakers of a language may find it difficult because of a lot of structural elements which may be difficult for him to comprehend. It may however be a different stage for a child learning two languages together as mother tongue. Corder (1973: 264) reports certain normal processes of language learning such as generalisations which are independent errors when applied to the data of

a language. The use of some teaching materials may cause learners to have some errors or a particular set of errors.

Syllabuses are usually designed to cater for the number of homogenous groups with the assumption that their background knowledge of the formation of rules of that language is the same. This, I think, is not so because some of them may actually come from different geopolitical zones. Their maturity is also taken for granted because of their age, intelligence, etc and this also may not be so but there is hardly anything that language planners can do about this. This may also happen where there is especially a minimum age when pupils are supposed to start formal education.

However, with a multilingual nation like Nigeria, where people of different languages attend the same classes in some areas, the linguistic divergence may be much and pupils may be producing different kinds of errors based on their mother tongues. Nevertheless, it will still be difficult to create different syllabi for the different pupils from different languages, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds based on the knowledge of their errors.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Differentiate between the two types of errors that Corder (1973) identified.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We have been able to go through lapses, mistakes and errors in this unit. You were also taught the types of error and how to respond to them.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt the points raised in this section.

- Corder sees the term ‘error analysis’ as a misleading one because to him, ‘errors’ made by the learner may be an important part of the data on which this sort of comparison is made.
- A learner’s errors are ‘systematic’ and it is precisely this regularity which shows that the learner is following a set of rules which are not those of the target language.
- A learner may recognise his mistakes and when his attention is drawn to them, he may not be able to correct himself or may even commit another error in trying to do so.
- It is easy to detect expressive errors because when the learner speaks, it will be glaring.

- Pupils come to school and attend classes as individuals and not as groups; the mistakes they make are, therefore, as individuals and not as groups.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Your aunty teaches a multilingual class and she complains about the inability of the students to pronounce some words correctly and also about their grammatical mistakes. Based on your knowledge of errors, how will you help to solve the problem?

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Lapses or mistakes can be recognised by a learner. Errors are systematic and cannot be corrected unless learnt.

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Expressive errors are glaring and receptive errors do not show easily but hidden.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Boomer, D.S. & Laver, J. (1968). 'Slips of the Tongue'.
- Corder, P.S (1973). *Introducing Applied Linguistics*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Ervin, S. (1964). "Imitation and Structural Change in Children's Language". In: E.H. Lenneberg. (Ed.). *New Directions in the Study of Language*. MIT., pp,163-89.
- Halliday, M.A.K.(1969). "Relevant Models of Language Education".
- Laver, J. (1970). "The Production of Speech". In: J. Lyons. (Ed.). *New Horizons in Linguistics*. Penguin.
- Lenneberg, E.H. (1967). *The Biological Foundations of Language*. Wiley.
- Miller, (Ed.) (n.d.). *The Genesis of Language*. MIT.
- Selinker, L. (1969). "Language Transfer". *Gen. Ling.*, Vol. IX, No. 2, pp.671-92.
- Slobin, D.I. (1966). "Imitation and the acquisition of syntax".
- Snow, C.E. (1972). "Mother's Speech to Children Learning Language". *Child Development*, No 43, pp. 549-65.

## UNIT 3      ERROR ANALYSIS II

### CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	The Data for Analysis
3.2	Preliminaries to the Description of Errors
3.3	The Linguistic Description of Errors
3.4	Miscue Analysis
3.4.1	Grapho/Phonic System
3.4.2	Semantic System
3.4.3	Syntactic System
3.5	The Practical Uses/Relevance of Errors
3.6	The Theoretical Uses of Error Analysis
3.7	Mistakes of Performance
3.8	The Correction of Errors
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-marked assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

### 1.0      INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you were introduced to ‘error analysis’. You were told that many scholars have worked on error analysis and that Corder (1973) is one of the earliest scholars who worked on error analysis. You were also told that, Corder sees the term ‘error analysis’ as a misleading one because to him, ‘errors’ made by the learner may be an important part of the data on which a comparison is made. What is being compared is the language of the learner at some particular point in his course with the target language. In this unit, we shall still be talking about error analysis but we shall be looking at some other ways by which some other scholars have perceived learners’ errors.

### 2.0      OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the various levels of descriptions of errors and how to analyse them; and
- explain the practical uses of errors in language teaching and learning.

## HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

In this unit, you will be introduced to linguistic description of errors, miscue analysis and its application to learners' use of language, practical uses of errors etc. There is a way that learners' errors can be used to assist learners instead of perceiving them in a negative light. Errors can be very useful in taking decisions for language teaching and learning. We shall, however, start with the data for analysis and the description of errors. As you go through the unit, get your pen and paper ready to put down the major points. Do the self-assessment exercises as honestly as you can.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Data for Analysis

It has been highlighted early on that the purpose of error analysis is to describe the nature of the learner's interlanguage and to compare it with the target language and this explains why error analysis is a branch of comparative linguistic study. This was buttressed by Brown (1994) cited in Darus and Subramaniam (2009) that error analysis emphasizes "the significance of errors in learners' interlanguage. It is the systematic knowledge of an L2 as independent of both the learners' L2 and L1.

The data for error analysis could come from different sources. Spoken English collected from the learners of English could be regarded as the oral data or oral corpus. Written English from essays, summaries, letters, memos, etc are written data. Error provoking data may come from written exercises that deliberately ask students to respond to the English item for which errors are been collected so as to provoke them unto committing errors. While writing essays, they may avoid errors that pose great difficulty.

#### 3.2 Preliminaries to the Description of Errors

Error analysis is performed on learners' spontaneous language e.g. essays, compositions, speech, stories, etc. Scholars have noted that the key to error analysis is the systematic nature of language and, consequently, of errors are of two types: those that can be predicted and those that cannot be predicted. A learner is in different stages of learning and errors can occur at these stages of learning which can be analysed. In a learner's pre-systematic stage, the learner cannot correct the errors or explain what is wrong. At the systematic stage, the correction of the learner may be an attempt to find out, or be able to explain what is

happening. At this stage, the learner must have been familiar with the internal structure of the language. Corder notes that at the pre-systematic stage, the learner can correct the errors and explain why they are committed.

### 3.3 The Linguistic Description of Errors

In error analysis, we compare similar sentences in the learner's dialect and the target language. It is like expressing the same thing in two languages. One of the objectives of error analysis is the linguistic part of the descriptive process. Below is an example of a sentence with the omission of an article from Corder (1973: 277).

I was told: there is bus stop/ I was told: there is a bus stop.

In the sentence, there is an error in terms of the omission but the explanation is not full. A full description will explain the error in terms of the linguistic process or rules which are being followed by the speaker.

Another is:

I have a great difficulty in...

I have great difficulty in....

The difference in the sentences above can be classified into two: one, omission of a required element and addition of an unnecessary or incorrect element. Other differences in other utterances could be selection of an incorrect element and mis-ordering of elements depending on the kind of errors found. We can also determine the different linguistic, orthographic/phonological, syntactic and lexico-semantic features in learners' contributions. By doing this, we are applying some theoretical frame work to our analysis. Some sentences may be ambiguous in the following:

If you don't know the meaning, ask a dictionary

The intended meaning might be

If you don't know the meaning, ask for a dictionary.

Or

If you don't know the meaning, consult a dictionary.

It is difficult to know whether the error is an incorrect lexical selection. (i.e. ask for, consult or an incorrect categorisation of ask (i.e. that 'ask' is a member of the class of verbs which require a prepositional complement) Corder (1973: 279).

Apart from this error of omission of article cited in Corder (1973), in a recent study in Malaysia by Darus and Subramaniam (2009), various learners' errors were identified. These errors are categorised as follows: mistake with number (singular and plural), mistake with verb tense (e.g. inappropriate verb construction), word choice, preposition, subject-verb agreement (wrong combination of subject and verb), word order (e.g. disordering/inversion of subject and verb).

- The food to cater to the students during recess are not enough (inappropriate preposition)
- We need to be careful because it dealing with health
- Not washing and sweeping the flour everyday makes the floor dirty (wrong word choice)
- So many dirty plates and glasses are serves (inappropriate verb tense)
- We don't know why we are facing the problems. (Wrong word order)

It should be noted that this situation is not far-fetched in Nigeria, looking at the result of various researchers on error analysis, such as, Tomori (1963; 1967) Afolayan (1968), Banjo (1969), Olagoke (1975), and etc. It was noted that Yoruba learners of English had a number of technical weaknesses such as: wrong use of concord, prepositions, definite articles and tenses. You will notice that these results are not so different from the results of some other scholars on the same issue around the globe. In the next section, we shall look at how some other scholars perceive errors, and this takes us to miscue analysis.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

What do you understand by the linguistic description of errors?

#### **3.4 Miscue Analysis**

The term 'miscue analysis' was coined by Goodman (1969). This approach is based on three cueing systems he believed underlay the reading process: Grapho/phonic (the relationship of letters to sound system), syntactic (the syntax/grammar system) and semantic (the meaning system). Miscue analysis refers to a process of diagnosing a child's reading. It is based on the premise of analysing the errors a reader makes during oral reading. It is a tool for closely looking at the types of reading strategies a reader uses. When a reader reads orally, the teacher learns a great deal about whether the reader is making sense of what is being read. This also gives the listener clues about how familiar or unfamiliar the reader finds the subject matter. Using the miscue analysis method, a teacher/parent will be much more capable of assisting those children/learners who experience difficulty.

### 3.4.1 Grapho/phonic system

Each of the errors made by a learner is coded for all three cueing systems, (Goodman, 1969). For example, miscue with effective grapho/phonic similarity is:

waist	wrist	
	straightened	strengthened
	owing	owning
	detriment	determent

Examples of miscues with partial grapho/phonic similarity

present	patient
fortitude	fortunate
sedately	sadly
acclimatisation	accumulation

Examples of miscues with little or no similarities:

present	perched
almost	awfully
usual	surface

You should be able to add more examples to all these.

A teacher should take note of the kinds of words that can easily be mistaken for other words and specifically teach them so that right from the beginning, the students will know the difference between the words at the grapho/phonic level. All of these should be thought in meaningful context, not in mere isolated bits.

### 3.4.2 Semantic System

The acceptability of meaning of the text is considered here. Semantic strength of the text is high when the original meaning of sentence is relatively unchanged. Most miscues may modify the meaning to some extent when they are close to the author's meaning. There is partial miscue when the miscue is appropriate within a single sentence or part of sentence but not within the overall context. The meanings of words should be specifically taught so that learners will make very few mistakes. Words that have similar pronunciation, but with different meanings should be given special attention.

Some miscues with high semantic acceptability:

violent	volcanic
disruptive	destructive
afford	offer

Examples of partial semantic acceptability:

pigeons	penguins
rewarded	regarded
species	special

Example of poor semantic acceptability:

pigeons	pigments
owner	over
present	parent

### 3.4.3 Syntactic System

The grammatical appropriateness of miscue in the context of the sentence is considered here. It is either appropriate or not.

Examples of miscues that are syntactically appropriate:

(send him as a) present or patient  
 (he had huge) arms or hands  
 fully (mature) finally

Examples of miscues that is not syntactically appropriate:

(was quite) devoid (of hair)  
 (both) sides (of his face) besides  
 (a) giggle (of ironic laughter) greater (All examples from)

### 3.5 The Practical Uses/Relevance of Errors

You as a teacher can benefit from the knowledge of the pupils' errors in that you are able to structure your teaching to meet those needs. Errors provide feedback to learning instructions. The effectiveness of the teacher's teaching technique and instructional materials are seen through the errors. Errors reveal parts of the learning tasks that have not been fully comprehended by the pupils. This information on errors will help you as a teacher to direct the areas that need to be re-taught before going on to the next topic. It also helps in designing syllabuses for remedial work on the areas not understood. The making of errors is a device

learners use in order to learn. Thus, error analysis is a valuable tool to identify and explain difficulties learners face. It can also be used as a guide or reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method.

### **3.6 The Theoretical Uses of Error Analysis**

For the applied linguist, the provision of a scientific approach to the practical problem provides a feedback to the theory. The psychologist will predict that the problem of errors could be the nature of the mother tongue of the learner as a second language. The applied linguist makes a comparative study of both languages and identifies certain features of the second language which are different from the first. The study of errors is part of an experiment to confirm or disprove the psycholinguistic theory of transfer.

The psychologist may start with the initial hypothesis that there must be something in common in the development of all children acquiring the same mother tongue and something common to all children and infants learning human languages. This will lead to the discovery of universals in child language. This means the study of errors is part of the psycholinguistic search for the universal process of second language learning. Other factors that can influence learning a second language are motivation, intelligence, social background, knowledge of the world and an externally imposed syllabus for teaching language skills.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Discuss the practical and theoretical uses of errors?

### **3.7 Mistakes of Performance**

The learner can also make mistakes by breaking speaking rules, i.e. using inappropriate language. Corder notes that this can be referential or stylistic. To him, reference is that relation that holds between linguistic forms and objects or events (or classes of these) in the world outside. For example, when a learner makes inappropriate choice- e.g., using 'hills' for 'mountains', this is referential. Stylistic mistakes are also made by native speakers. These have to do with familiarity with the language. Learning the appropriate use of features of the mother tongue has to be in relation to social, technical and emotional differences in situations. The use of some stylistic features of language at times shows one's membership of some group, family, profession, caste class, etc. For details and more explanations on errors, see Corder (1973).

### **3.8 The Correction of Errors**

Corder's position on language learning is that it is a process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and system of choice in the language through some sort of processing by the learner. The technique of correction of errors requires that you as the teacher understands the source of the errors so that you can provide appropriate data and other information which will help resolve the learner's problems. Corder concludes this section by saying – 'skill in correction of errors lies in the direction of exploiting the incorrect forms produced by the learner in a controlled fashion (Corder1973:267).

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, you have been able to go through the second unit on error analysis which focuses on the linguistic description of errors, miscue analysis, mistakes and correction of errors.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit you have learnt all the points summarized in this section.

- In error analysis, we compare similar sentences in the learner's language and the target language.
- One of the objectives of error analysis is the linguistic part of the descriptive process.
- Semantic strength of the text is high when the original meaning of sentence is relatively unchanged.
- Miscue analysis refers to a process of diagnosing a child's reading. It is based on the premise of analysing the errors a reader makes during oral reading.
- For the applied linguist, the provision of a scientific approach to the practical problem provides a feedback to the theory.
- The technique of correction of errors requires that you as a teacher understands the source of the errors so that you can provide appropriate data and other information which will help resolve the learner's problems.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Explain the linguistic description of errors and miscue analysis.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT      EXERCISE 1**

Linguistic description of errors means explaining the errors in terms of the linguistic processes or rules followed by the speaker or writer of the errors.

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Afolayan, A. (1968). *The Linguistic Problems of Yoruba Learners and Users of English*. An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of London.

Ancker (2000), Brown (1994), Weireessh(1991), Darus, (2009), Darus and Subramaniam (2009) Goodman (1969).

Banjo, A. (1969). *A Contrastive Study of Aspects of The Syntactic and Lexical Rules of English and Yoruba*. An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of Ibadan.

Corder, P. S. (1973). *Introducing Applied Linguistics*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd.

Laver, J. (1970). 'The Production of Speech'. In: J. Lyons. (Ed.). *New Horizons in Linguistics*. Penguin. of London.

Olagoke, D. O. (1975). *An Error Analysis of the English of Lagos University Students*. An Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of London.

Tomori, S. H. O. (1963). *An Investigation into the Standard of Written English of Final Year Pupils in Some Western Nigerian Primary Schools*. An Unpublished M.A. Thesis. University of London.

Tomori, S. H. O. (1967). *A Study of the Syntactic Structures of British and Nigerian Grammar School Pupils*. An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University

Tucker, M. (2003). *First and Second Language Acquisition*.

## UNIT 4      CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
  - 3.2 Some Major Issues on Contrastive Analysis
    - 3.2.1 Interference and Transfer
    - 3.2.2 Child Studies
    - 3.2.3 Adult Studies
    - 3.2.4 Sources of Interlingual Errors
  - 3.3 Conditions that Result in the Premature Use of the L2
    - 3.3.1 Pressure to Perform
    - 3.3.2 Limited L2 Environments
    - 3.3.3 The Elicitation Task
    - 3.3.4 Borrowing
    - 3.3.5 Code Switching
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last two units, you were introduced to error analysis and some assumptions about pupils' errors. This unit is a very important unit because it talks about what happens when languages come in contact with each other. You will also learn a few things about the L2 environment, what happens in adult studies and some other areas of language learning. In module 2, unit 2, you were introduced to Corder (1973) who notes that one of the ways of comparing languages is interlingual comparison which is commonly called contrastive comparison. It is a process of comparing two languages. The references at the end of the unit are important, but you need to still source for more materials on the internet to augment what you have, as this is the mark of a good student.

The first language has always been seen as the learner's major problem in learning a new language but in recent years, the emphasis on the L1 being the problem has shifted to its being an enrichment of the learner's communicative repertoire. There have also been a lot discussions and controversies over the role of the first language in second language acquisition and recently research shows that the major impact the first

language has on second language acquisition may have to do with accent and not only with grammar or syntax.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- describe the contrastive analysis approach, and
- discuss the conditions that account for the premature use of L2.

Before you study the unit, think about the way your language (mother tongue) has influence your spoken and written English. Show how this unit can assess you in overcoming the interlingual errors emanating from this interference.

## HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

You need to go through the unit carefully. Use your dictionary to find the meaning of words you do not understand. Put down major points on a piece of paper or jotter.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

Contrastive analysis is the study of two languages with the aim of pointing out their structural differences and similarities for academic use or societal benefit etc. It was formulated in Lado's (1957) *Linguistics across Cultures* in which he noted that structures that are similar to the learner's first language structures will be easy to learn while those that are different will be difficult to learn. The Contrastive analysis hypothesis, which was a major topic in AL for about two decades, has finally given way to more current and more positive views on first language and second language acquisition. Even though it has given way to some other theories, it is good to know what it entails as some of the recent theories still have it as part of their underlying language teaching methodologies (Dulay *et al.*, 1982).

Contrastive Analysis (CA) states that 'where structures in the L1 differed from those in L2, errors that reflected the structures of L1, would be produced'. Dulay *et al.* (1982), note that such errors were said to be due to the influence of the learners L1 linguistic habits on L2 production. For example, a Yoruba speaker would say '*omo pupa*' - a fair complexioned person. An inadequate transfer of the structures, 'person fair' (light complexioned person) since the adjective comes after the noun. In Yoruba language, there is need for learners of Yoruba

to know that in that construction, the reverse is the case in English. Even the lexical item '*pupa*' which means 'red' in Yoruba is not translated 'red' when it relates to complexion. There are even some direct transfers of structural forms from the L1 to L2 that are still common among young people these days e.g.:

Is your mummy at home?  
'Won sinile' (No, they are not at home).

'Won' (Yoruba) – 'they' in English is a plural pronoun which has been used for a singular person. This example is not just an instance of transfer of accent but that of structure. That is why it is important to learn the structure of L2 so that there will be minimal interference from the L1.

This is probably why linguists claim that a comparison of a learner's L1 and L2 contrastive analysis- should reveal areas of difficulty for L2 students. This, they (researchers) noted, would help teachers and developers of L2 materials to provide specific guidelines for lesson planning. For many years, Dulay *et al.* affirm, that this theory appealed to researchers and teachers so much that all other body of data and research challenging it was ignored. Dulay *et al.* (1982), however, observe the following on examination of the available empirical data that addresses CA hypothesis:

- In neither child nor adult L2 performance do the majority of the grammatical errors reflect the learners L1.
- L2 learners make many errors in areas of grammar that are comparable in both L1 and L2 errors that should not be made if 'positive transfer' were operating.
- L2 learners' judgements of the grammatical correctness of L2 sentences are more related to L2 sentence types than to their own L1 structure.
- phonological errors exhibit more L1 influence than do grammatical errors, although a substantial number of the L2 phonological errors children make are similar to those made by monolingual first language learners, and only a small proportion of phonological errors in reading are traceable to the learners L1 (Dulay *et al.* 1982:97-98).

Dulay *et al.* claim that at the level of (product) findings show that at the level of performance, the CA hypothesis has emerged as a weak theory on learner performance data. At the level of process, they noted that the issue of negative and positive transfer should be questioned. Dulay *et al.* (1982) also note that the work of Charles Fries (1945) created enthusiasm for CA in foreign materials (p.9). These scholars also note

that part of the rationale for the hypothesis was drawn from principles of behaviourist (stimulus- response) psychology which were the accepted learning principles at that time but which have since been shown inadequate to explain language learning [Chomsky (1959), R. Brown (1973), Fodor, Beverly, and Garrett, (1974) etc.]. The data used, which was linguistic borrowing and switching, have also been found to be inappropriate for L1 interference and L2 acquisition. So many other theories on language learning have evolved, some of which will be discussed in some other units in this course.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

- i. Contrastive analysis is a systematic study of two languages. Yes/No.
- ii. Contrastive analysis is only interested in the differences between two languages. Yes/No.
- iii. The term contrastive analysis came to being as a result of the work of Fodor (1953) Yes/No.
- iv. Charles Fries (1945), Dulay *et al.* (1982) are some of the scholars who have worked in the area of contrastive analysis. Yes/No.

### **3.2 Some Major Issues on Contrastive Analysis(CA)**

#### **3.2.1 Interference and Transfer**

Interference refers to two very distinct linguistic phenomena; psychological and sociolinguistic. Dulay *et al.*(1982) state that the psychological use of the term interference refers to the influence of old habits on the new ones being learnt while the sociolinguistic use, i.e. interference, refers to language interactions, such as linguistic borrowing and language switching that occur when two language communities are in contact. There was however confusion in the definitions of interference by Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1953).

The CA hypothesis states that ‘interference is due to unfamiliarity with L2. That is the learner not having learnt the patterns of the target language very well’.

Weinreich and Haugen’s discussion on when and why interference occurs is different from that of CA. According to Weinreich, when speakers are bilinguals, interference in the bilingual’s speech is uninhibited. He notes further that when the other interlocutor is also bilingual, the requirements of intelligibility and status assertion are drastically reduced and this removes any hindrances to interference (Dulay *et al.* (1982:100). Haugen (1953) also observes that ‘linguistic borrowing...is a thing that has happened whenever there have been bilinguals’.

### 3.2.2 Child Studies

Dulay and Burt (1974) worked on the natural speech of children and analysed over 500 grammatical errors made by 175 children learning English in US schools. The results showed that less than five percent (5%) of the errors observed reflected the children's first language-Spanish. Some other empirical studies have shown that children place limited reliance on the structure of the mother tongue when learning second language in a host environment (Dulay *et al.* 1982:102). Some other researchers who have worked on child studies are Ervin-Tripp 1974, Boyd (1975) Wode (1976) etc. All the researchers mentioned above commented on low incidence of inter-lingual errors. To them, most of the errors appeared to be developmental. They are the type of errors that could be made by children learning those languages as their first language.

In Nigeria, several scholars have carried out research on the structure of the Yoruba language and the English language. Among the earliest writers is Banjo (1969) who carried out a contrastive study of some of the syntactic and lexical rules of English and Yoruba within the framework of transformational generative grammar, particularly as proposed by Chomsky. His aim was to show the likely areas of difficulty for Yoruba learners of English. He found that in the phrase structure rules of English and Yoruba, the differences are the presence of the element tense and other affixes in English and the absence of these in Yoruba and thus showed that the use of inflections for marking various word forms and syntactic relations in the language may be problematic for its Yoruba learners. Some others who have worked on the problems of teaching and learning English in Nigeria are Tomori (1963, 1967); Afolayan (1968); Banjo (1969), Adeyanju (1971), Olaofe (1982), etc.

### 3.2.3 Adult Studies

Dulay *et al.* (1982:103) assert that studies conducted on the speech and writings of adults, learning English as a second language, revealed that the majority of non-phonological errors observed for adults do not reflect the first language. The proportion of errors found in similar situations for children is somewhat less than that of adults.

Olagoke (1975) found that many Lagos university students transfer the patterns and the features of their mother tongue to English with this leading to phonological, syntactic and lexical deviations from Standard English.

### 3.2.4 Sources of Interlingual Errors

Dulay *et al.* (1982:108) claim that interlingual errors of syntax and morphology occur in relatively small numbers in verbal performance of L2 learners and that a comprehensive account of L2 acquisition should be able to accommodate them. It is clear from the observation of Dulay *et al.* that their observations are not conclusive. They, however, made the following guesses that:

There are indications that interlingual errors are occasioned by at least two environmental factors: 1) conditions

*that result in premature use of the L2 and 2) certain elicitation tasks.*

### 3.3 Conditions that Result in the Premature Use of the L2

Premature use of L2 is where you as a learner uses the structures of L2 or uses the language when you have not been adequately exposed to the language. There are many situations that can lead to the premature use of L2 and some of these situations can be unavoidable ones. Below are some of them.

#### 3.3.1 Pressure to Perform

The need to communicate in the target language before you have been exposed enough to it may pressurise you as a speaker of an L2 to use some of the structures in the L1. Living in the country of the target language also makes demands on the learner to quickly get exposed to the target language because a lot of the major language communication for jobs and social activities will require sophisticated verbal interaction in the new language. There could also be pressures from peers or colleagues in the target language environment that can make the learner speed up his/her attempts at learning the target language. For example an 8 year old Nigerian girl child who finds herself in a British school will definitely be under pressure to use the language because her peers may be making jest of her Nigerian accent even if her use of the target language's grammatical structures are correct.

Dulay *et al.* (1982: 108) note that adults produce the new language long before they have been exposed to a sufficient amount of it to internalise the rudiments of its basic structure. They observe that children who have been observed to make fewer interlingual errors than adults are usually not subjected to such pressures to perform in a second language. Children in target language situations have been observed to go through a silent period of two or three months during which they go through a few routines. It is believed that children build some competence during

the silent period through listening. Pressure on the learner to communicate quickly in the target language may force them to use the L1 along with L2 in communication. Newmark (1966) notes that learners fall back on the first language when they have not acquired enough of the second language.

### **3.3.2 Limited L2 Environments**

Environmental factors that limit the scope and quality of second language learning include: 1) the absence of peers who speak the language natively and; 2) severely limited and often artificial conditions under which the language may be learned (Dulay *et al.*, 1982:109). For example, finding a few hours weekly to memorise vocabulary or dialogues and doing audio-lingual drills. These activities do not help much. Researchers have noted that they cannot be helped.

There are all kinds of foreign language immersion programmes meant to rectify some of the shortcomings of the foreign language context, as noted by Dulay *et al.*, which are meant to offer students real and extended communicative experiences in the second language by presenting the subject matter in a new language. For example, if an L2 speaker of English does not have enough exposure to the L2 and he/she wants to speak the language at all cost, may lead to premature use of the L2 because he/she would not have been exposed enough to the language.

### **3.3.3 The Elicitation Task**

Elicitation task refers to the manner in which spoken or written performance is obtained from the second language learner. The learner could be asked to translate a sentence or paragraph in his or her native language, or describe a scene or picture, or attempt a fill-in the blanks test. Dulay *et al.* notes that the proportion of interlingual errors changes with the elicitation task, especially translation, and they note that translation tasks tend to increase the L2 learner's reliance on first language structures. It also has the tendency of masking the processes that the learner uses for natural communication. A learner may engage in premature use of the L2 if he/she is given language tasks he/she has not learnt well.

### **3.3.4 Borrowing**

Cultural and linguistic contacts in societal bilingualism give rise to two major phenomena and these are borrowing and code-switching. Borrowing, to Dulay *et al.* (1982), is the incorporation of linguistic material from one language to another. Borrowing is a normal consequence of languages in contact in multilingual societies (Weinrich

1953, Hagen (1953). Individual lexical items can be borrowed. English borrowed thousands of French words and other Latin based words were also borrowed. They are incorporated into the grammatical structure of the borrowing language. They are regarded as new words in the language. Dulay *et al.* refer to the words ‘maize’ and ‘tomato’ which were borrowed from the American languages. When borrowed words get learned by speakers within the community, it is referred to as integrated borrowings. An L2 learner may borrow prematurely and miss some concepts or spellings of words in the target language. For example, an L2 learner has been heard to say ‘come and listen to me. I want to tell you a useless thing’. The learner obviously wanted to say ‘a useful thing’.

### 3.3.5 Code Switching

This is an active process of incorporating material from both bilingual languages into communicative acts. It involves a speaker shifting from one language to the other. Indiscriminate mixing gives the impression that the speaker lacks control of the structure of both languages. However, Dulay *et al.* (1982:115) have a contrary opinion, claiming that code switching is most engaged in by those bilingual speakers who are the most proficient in both languages they speak. They note some specific sociolinguistic functions such as symbolising ethnic identification. In the absence of the right words to use, L2 learners sometimes code switch from their L2 to L1 to express themselves when it seems they are taking too much time. For example, a speaker can say:

‘I’ll stop by *kinbale* find out *ibitebasede*. *Soo* understand?  
I’ll stop by to find out how far you have gone with the work. Do you understand?’

The items in italics are from the Yoruba language. This is definitely a Yoruba speaker of English code switching from English to Yoruba in between sentences.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What are some of the major features/outcomes of child and adult studies in CA?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

We have been able to discuss the contrastive analysis hypothesis, child and adult studies, conditions that result in premature use of L2 and the environmental factors that limit the scope and quality of second language learning.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt all the points presented below.

- The Contrastive Analysis(CA) hypothesis which was a major topic in AL for about two decades has finally given way to more current and more positive views on first language and second language acquisition.
- Contrastive analysis states that ‘where structures in the L1 differed from those in L2, errors that reflected the structures of L1 would be produced’.
- In neither child nor adult L2 performance do the majority of the grammatical errors reflect the learners L1.
- Phonological errors exhibit more L1 influence than do grammatical errors, although a substantial number of the L2 phonological errors children make are similar to those made by monolingual first language learners, and only a small proportion of phonological errors in reading are traceable to the learners L1.
- The CA hypothesis states that ‘interference is due to unfamiliarity with L2, that is, the learner not having learned the patterns of the target language very well’.
- Environmental factors that limit the scope and quality of second language learning include-the absence of peers who speak the language natively; and, severely limited and often artificial conditions under which the language may be learnt.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are some of the conditions that result in the premature use of the L2?
2. Imagine that you want to learn French as a second language and you are thirty-five years old; what are some of the factors unique to adult language learning that you have to take into consideration as you make your plans?

### ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1)Yes      2) No      3) No      4) Yes

### ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Major outcomes of child and adult studies are interference errors, intra lingual errors (that do not reflect influence of the first language), children make less errors that reflect their first languages.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Adeyanju (1971) Sector – Analysis Based Contrastive Analysis of English and Hausa Sentence Patterns with Teaching Implications, Teachers' Columbia University, New York.
- Afolayan, A. (1968). *The Linguistic Problems of Yoruba Learners and Users of English*. An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of London.
- Banjo, A. (1969). *A Contrastive Study of Aspects of The Syntactic and Lexical Rules of English and Yoruba*. An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of Ibadan.
- Biljana, B (2009) *The Language of the Stock Exchange. A contrastive Analysis of the Lexis*. Slovene Linguistic Studies Vol.7.
- Boyd, P.A. (1975). "The Development of Grammar Categories in Spanish by Anglo Children Learning a Second Language". *Language Learning*. 25, pp.125-36.
- Brown, H.D. (1973). "Affective Variables in Second Language Acquisition *Language Learning*". 23, pp.231-44.
- Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic Structures*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Connor, Ulla (1996) *Contrastive Rhetoric. A Cross-Cultural Aspects of Second Language Writing*. Cambridge, UK.
- Cowley, W.A. (1972). *Identifying and Developing The English Language Skills of Nigerian Secondary School Students*. An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Michigan State University.
- Dulay, H. et al (1974). "You Can't Learn Without Goofing: An Analysis of Children's Second Language Errors". In: J. Richards. (Ed.). *1974 Error Analysis*. London: Longman, pp.95-123.
- Dulay, H., Hernandez-Chavez, E. & Burt, M. (1978). "The Process of Becoming Bilingual". In: S. Singh & J. Lynch. (Eds.). *Diagnostic Procedures in Hearing, Speech and Language*. Baltimore: University Park Press, pp.251-303.
- Dulay, H., Burt, M. & Krashen, S. (1982). *Language Two*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fodor, J., Beverly, T. & Garrett, M. (1974). *The Psychology of Language*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Fries, C. (1945). *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. University of Michigan Press.
- Haugen, E. (1953). *The Norwegian Language in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Horgan, J. (1969). "English in the First Year of Post Primary Schools". *JNESA*, 3(1), pp.7-16.
- Kerr, J. Y. K. & Ekundayo, S. A. (1969). "The Role of English in Nigerian Primary Schools". *JNESA*, 3(1), pp. 101-106.
- Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across Cultures*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lococo, V. (1975). *An Analysis of Spanish and German Learners' Errors. Working Papers on Bilingualism 7*, pp. 96-124. of London.
- Nordquist, R (2015) *Contrastive Rhetoric on About.com*.
- Olagoke, D. O. (1975). *An Error Analysis of the English of Lagos University Students. An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of London*.
- Olaofe I.A (1982) *Sector Analysis Based Contrastive Analysis of English and Yoruba Verbal Systems with Teaching Implications. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria*.
- Tomori, S. H. O. (1963). *An Investigation into the Standard of Written English of Final Year Pupils in Some Western Nigerian Primary Schools. An Unpublished M.A. Thesis. University of London*.
- Tomori, S. H. O. (1967). *A Study of the Syntactic Structures of British and Nigerian Grammar School Pupils. An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University*
- Weinreich, U. (1953). *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems. The Hauge: Mouton*.
- White, L. (1977). "Error Analysis and Error Correction in Adult Learners of English as a Second Language". *Working Papers on Bilingualism*. 13, pp.42-58.

## **UNIT 5 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 What is Discourse Analysis?
  - 3.2 Approaches to Discourse Analysis
  - 3.3 Sociology -Conversational Analysis (CA)
    - 3.3.1 Turn Taking
    - 3.3.2 Adjacency Pairs
  - 3.4 Sociolinguistic Approaches: Ethnography and Variation Theory
    - 3.4.1 Ethnography
    - 3.4.2 Variation Theory
  - 3.5 Linguistic Approaches
  - 3.6 Critical Discourse Analysis
  - 3.7 Discourse and First Language Education
  - 3.8 Discourse and Second Language Education
  - 3.9 Importance of Discourse in Applied Linguistics
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

Discourse Analysis has its own place in the study of Language use by a distance learner. This is because classroom discourse is real and should be studied by any language teacher. Be conversant with the way you can use the points raised in this unit to enhance your classroom teaching procedures.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, you were taken through contrastive analysis which is a process of comparing two languages. In this unit, you will be taken through discourse analysis. Discourse analysts try to take note of patterning in language use and the circumstances surrounding such patterns (in terms of participants, situations, purposes, outcomes) of events associated with the language use. A discourse analyst does a deliberate and systematic study of language use by describing, interpreting and explaining what has been observed (Trappes-Lomax 2006:133). The principal concern of Applied Linguistics(AL) is the study of language in use as a goal of education, a means of education

and an instrument of social change. It then becomes clear why discourse analysis is one of the topics to be studied in AL.

Life is all of discourse- from greetings, news items, television, newspapers, magazines, internet, CNN, classroom talk, to casual conversations, lectures, markets, even football and other games. There is a whole range of contexts in which people engage in communication every day. In fact, life will be very boring if we all go about our daily business without talking much to one another. As a result of this, discourse is studied in a number of disciplines and in different ways. McCarthy *et al.* (2002:55) notes that in AL, the most relevant body of work is discourse analysis (or text linguistics). They claim that a discourse analyst studies text- whether written or spoken, long or short- and relate this to the context and situations that produce them. Discourse analysts examine real texts –naturally occurring conversations or text materials. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- discuss who does discourse analysis and why Discourse Analysis in AL; and
- describe the ways and means of doing discourse analysis.

## **HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT**

Read the unit diligently. Use your dictionary to find out meaning of unknown words. Jot down major points as you read. Do the self-assessment exercise diligently.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 What is Discourse Analysis?**

Discourse analysis is part of AL. It is a multidisciplinary field and has diversity of interests. Many scholars have worked in this area of study and as we move ahead, you will get to know some of them in this unit. Jaworski and Coupland (1999:3) assert that, for many linguists, ‘the interest in discourse is beyond language in use. It extends to language use relative to social, political and cultural formations, language reflecting and shaping social order and also shaping individual’s interaction with society’. The knowledge of the way we build language has become very important and there is a growth of linguistic interest in analysis of conversation, stories and written texts. We live in a changed political, social and technological environment in which we have post-

modern world of service industry, advertising and communications media. In this kind of situation, discourse becomes work and the analysis of discourse becomes correspondingly more important.

Discourse can also be seen as the study of language viewed communicatively and/or of communication viewed linguistically. Discourse analysis is:

1. The linguistic, cognitive and social processes whereby meanings are expressed and intentions interpreted in human interaction.
2. The historically and culturally embedded sets of conventions which constitute and regulate such processes.
3. A particular event in which such processes are instantiated.
4. The product of such an event especially in the form of visible text, whether originally spoken and subsequently transcribed or originally written, Trappes-lomax (2006:136).

These are views of different linguists on the description of discourse. Each of them described discourse based on their own particular fashion on theories and techniques of a number of disciplines for the study in language use-e.g. linguistics, psychology, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, sociology and anthropology.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

What is discourse analysis?

#### **3.2 Approaches to Discourse Analysis**

Approaches to discourse analysts come from a number of different academic disciplines and the field is a wide one. Below are the approaches that are directly related to applied linguistics and language education.

1. Sociology--- -----Conversational analysis
2. Sociolinguistics--- Ethnography  
Interactional sociolinguistics  
Variation theory
3. Philosophy -----Speech act theory  
Pragmatics
4. Linguistics--- Structural/ functional---Birmingham school  
--- Systemic Functional Linguistics(SFL)  
----Social semiotics ----SFL  
----Critical discourse analysis
5. Artificial intelligence

Some of these will be discussed below. The approaches discussed are the ones currently playing a major role in the various contexts of AL and language education.

### 3.3 Sociology ---Conversational Analysis (CA)

This is concerned with the detailed organisation of everyday interaction. It focuses on class, gender, age, groups, culture, etc. It deals mainly with informal discourse. CA was started by Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology and Goffman's (1974, 1981) frame analysis which grew into a significant field of enquiry by Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson etc. Conversation analysis deals with turn taking, openings, and closings in conversations, progression in conversations.

#### 3.3.1 Turn Taking

This is the basic unit of speech in an individual's contribution. A 'turn' is each occasion someone speaks and ends when another person takes over. The rules that people follow in turn-taking is important because this determines when another person starts speaking. It is important that speakers avoid overlap so that speakers can hear and understand one another. Scholars in conversation analysis also note what is called 'speaker selection' in that speakers are permitted to take their turns or they are chosen or nominated. There can be what is called 'self selection'. This is where a speaker cuts in and starts speaking when he has not been nominated to speak. Context always determines ways by which speakers can get the next turn. You can have sentences such as 'by the way---', 'if I may come in---' 'Can I speak--' etc. Back channel communications are also important because it is a way of telling the listener that you are listening; examples are - 'huh', 'ehh' etc. There are also ways of predicting completion in conversations. All these features help to facilitate communication.

#### 3.3.2 Adjacency Pairs

These are pairs of turns that are dependent on one another as in:

*E.g. A: Good morning Bola  
B: Good morning Tinu  
A: How are you?  
B: I'm fine. Thank you.*

The A parts are the first pair-parts while the B parts are the second pair-parts. These parts are governed by cultural or socio-cultural contexts e.g. a greeting gets a greeting back. If something else happens negatively,

then communication breaks down and just as McCarthy *et al.* observe, it can be referred to as ‘dis-preferred sequence’ e.g.:

A: Good morning  
B: Drop dead

They also mention solitary routines such as:

A: I have a terrible headache  
B: Oh I’m so sorry can I do anything?

And converging pairs such as:

A: I just love that green sweater  
B: Oh! So do I. Isn’t it great? Pomerantz (1984)

Topic management is also important to discourse analysts. The strength of this approach is that it is always based on actual recorded data i.e. naturally occurring interactions that are well transcribed. This approach has always rejected experimental methods of collecting conversational data such as simulating dialogues or setting up artificial interactive contexts (McCarthy *et al.* 2002:62). It has always challenged discourse analysts to access the data offered by everyday life. The implication of this for language teachers is that language teachers should be given access to authentic spoken extracts (McCarthy *et al.*) because most examples in textbooks do not resemble real conversation at all; but they could get actual data, for example from the classroom.

#### **4.4 Sociolinguistic Approaches: Ethnography and Variation Theory**

Anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistics are concerned with studying not the isolated sentences but how language creates effective communication in the context of everyday life (McCarthy, 2002).

##### **3.4.1 Ethnography**

This approach was led by Hymes (1972), Saville-Troike (1989) and they are concerned with situation and uses of patterns and functions of speaking as an activity in its own right [(Hymes 1974:3) in McCarthy *et al.* (2002:63)]. Speech events include interactions such as a conversation at a party or ordering a meal. Hymes (1972) developed a speaking ‘grid’ which comprise several components. Below is Hymes (1972) speaking grid:

S     Setting temporal and physical /circumstances  
P     Participant speaker/sender/addressor

hearer/receiver/audience/addressee

- E Endpurposes and goals Outcomes
- A Act sequence message form and content
- K Key tone /manner
- I Instrumentalities channel (verbal and non verbal;  
physical forms of speech drawn from community  
repertoires
- N Norms of interaction and interpretation specific properties  
attached to speaking interpretation of norms within  
cultural belief system
- G Genretextual categories

This framework helped in the recognition of the close relationship between speech events and their social or cultural contexts. McCarthy et al. also aver that it broadens the notions of communicative competence.

### 3.4.2 Variation Theory

This theory was developed by Labov (1972) and has contributed, a lot, to discourse analysis. He describes the structure of spoken narratives which has been very influential in language teaching. Labov and Waletzky (1967) state the following as the overall structure of a fully formed narrative of personal experience.

- Abstract (summary of story with its points)
- Orientation (place /time and situation)
- Compilation ( temporal sequence of events, culminating in a crisis)
- Evaluation (narrator's attitude towards narrative)
- Resolution (protagonist's approach to crisis)
- Coda (point about narrative as a whole)

Labov and Waletzky (1967:363) in McCarthy *et al.* 2002:64

### 3.5 Linguistic Approaches

Let us consider the following.

#### a. Classroom Discourse

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) worked on the tape recordings of mother tongue, traditional, teacher fronted classes in the early 1970s. In this type of class, knowledge was typically transmitted by pupils answering the teacher's questions. The analysis of the data led to the building of a typical classroom exchange structure known as IRF- Initiation - Response- Feedback. e.g.:

I T: Good morning pupils

What is the colour of the black board?

R P: Black

F T: Very good

- a) Teacher begins with 'good morning pupils' (discourse marker indicating a boundary).
- b) The teacher nominates who speaks.
- c) The teacher can reinforce an answer by repeating it.
- d) The teacher gives a feed back or follow-up.

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) also proposed the organisation of a lesson in levels- A rank scale.

Transaction  
Exchanges  
Moves  
Acts

Their approach provided a boost towards communicative language teaching. Many researchers have used it in analysing language outside the classroom.

### **b. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**

SFL are essentially concerned with describing the relationship between language, text and social life. The functional descriptions of language try to explain the nature and organisation of language according to what it has to do (McCarthy 2002:66). For example, (Excuse me, do you know the way to---?). This serves the function of asking for direction. The central concern of SFL is on the analysis of texts considered in relationship to the social context in which they occur, especially spoken discourse. The orientation is similar to that of conversation analysis in that they both describe the relationship between language and its social context. SFL believes that language is organised to enable conversations to work.

### **3.6 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

This is concerned with the relationship between language, ideology and power (Fairclough (1992). This approach is influenced by Halliday's Systemic Linguistics. McCarthy notes that genres in critical discourse analysis are seen as social actions occurring within particular social and historical context. Age, class, gender, ethnic bias are important in CDA along with the social practices they reflect.

### 3.7 Discourse and First Language Education

Discourse analysis features in AL in areas related to language and education. That is – language as a means of education and language as a goal of education in both first and second language education. Scholars note that one of the goals of education is to acculturate children to new registers and genres- both spoken and written. This will help them to develop their grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences as they grow. Verhoeven (1997) claims that children bring to school experiences of standard and non-standard dialects; the school, on the other hand, brings to the children's learning experience an organised process of classroom talk which may promote personal involvement, interaction and shared meaning (Verhoeven, 1997).

### 3.8 Discourse and Second Language Education

Nowadays, people are aware of the significance of discourse in language teaching, reading and writing, intonation and spoken language and for evaluation of students' communicative competence. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for specific purposes, second language teaching and learning has been understood in terms of discourse. Trappes-lomax (2006:152) avers that defining the goals of language teaching in terms of communicative competence leads naturally to an integrative view wherein the perspective of language as discourse will affect part of the syllabus. He notes further that within this perspective, learner needs, syllabus aims and content and task goals and procedures will all be specified primarily in discourse terms. He also observes that materials will be selected and presented to meet criteria of communicative authenticity. The language will be constructed to reflect language use in real communication.

Tsui (1998) and Platt and Brookes (2002) claim that learners experience communication breakdown while interacting with their peers or teachers. This prompts negotiation of meaning which can be accomplished through clarification, requests, confirmation checks, and requests for repetition. This means that opportunity for interactional involvement is important for success in the language class. The important thing at this stage is how, and who controls turn taking (Platt & Brookes, 2002) and how feedback is achieved- based on learner output. These are discourse issues that cannot be pushed aside.

Trappes-lomax (2006:153) also claim that preparation for language teaching in terms of teacher training courses, methodology, textbooks is commonly organised around the main language areas- phonology, grammar, and lexis and the four skills (i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing). He notes that this approach is effective in meeting the

needs and expectations of learners. He also observes the following as potential disadvantages:( p.154).

- Grammar and lexis are presented as more separate than they are and this obstructs their interconnectedness in lexico-grammar.
- The four skills are presented as more separate than they really are whereas all are necessary in actual speech.
- Spoken and written media are conceptualised as discrete types rather than points on a continuum.
- Failure to attend to general features of interpretation and production.
- Text making features are divided arbitrarily between the spoken and the written modes (for example, it is so sometimes implied that cohesion is mainly a property of written text, which makes readers to pay less attention to text making features that are common to discourse of all kinds.

Trappes-lomax notes further that a discourse based pedagogical description of phonology will focus on prosodic aspects including rhythm (i.e. differences between L1 and L2). Hughes and McCarthy (1998) note that discourse grammar will treat grammar functionally. A discourse description of lexis will cover the ways in which lexis contribute to textual cohesion through relationships of synonymy, hyponymy, collocation etc., [for details on the aforementioned see Carter and McCarthy (1988)]. Interaction is central to skills teaching and in teaching written language skills. Recognition of the interactional and socially situated nature of the task is important.

### **3.9 Importance of Discourse in AL**

Discourse analysis enables the applied linguist to analyse and understand real language data i.e. texts written by first /second language learners or recordings of language produced by L1 and L2 speakers, interaction between the teachers and learners or among learners themselves McCarthy *et al.* (2002:56). Language learners are exposed to all kinds of language outside the classroom- these include, language of service encounters at the post office, market, shops, banks, restaurants, church, newspapers etc. The analyses of such interactions can help language teachers and material writers to evaluate language course books in terms of how close they are to authentic language. The analyses can also reveal what needs to be modified. McCarthy *et al.* also note that language testing can gain much from discourse analysis that looks at language use as a source of criteria for the evaluation of test performances.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, you have been introduced to discourse analysis as a multidisciplinary field that has many interests. We have also discussed ways of doing discourse analysis and its position in first and second language learning.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt all the points summarized in this section.

- Discourse analysts try to take note of patterning in language use and the circumstances surrounding such patterns (in terms of participants, situations, purposes, outcomes) of events associated with the language use.
- Discourse analysis is a multidisciplinary field and has diversity of interests.
- McCarthy *et al.* (2002:59) note that discourse analysts come from a number of different academic disciplines and the field is a wide one.
- Conversation analysis is concerned with the detailed organisation of everyday interaction.
- McCarthy *et al.* assert that anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistics are concerned with studying not the isolated sentences, but how language creates effective communication in the context of everyday life.
- Nowadays, people are aware of the significance of discourse in language teaching, reading and writing, intonation and spoken language and for evaluation of students' communicative competence.
- The analyses of interactions can help language teachers and material writers to evaluate language course books in terms of how close they are to authentic language.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the major things to be considered in discourse analysis and second language education.

#### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Discourse Analysis is language use beyond the sentence layer to the patterning of language as used in social, political, and cultural formations and the circumstances surrounding such use.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Discourse Analysis has the following branches: conversational analysis, ethnography, speech acts, pragmatics, linguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, etc.

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

(Eds.). *Structures of Social Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 57-101.

Carter, R. & McCarthy, M. (1988). "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing". *Applied Linguistics*, 16 (2), pp.141-58.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethno methodology*. Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience*. New York, N.Y: Harper & Row. [reprinted by Northeastern University Press, Boston, M.A, 1986].

Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of Talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hodder Arnold, pp. 55-73.

Hughes, R. & McCarthy, M. (1998). "From Sentence of Discourse: Discourse Grammar and English Language Teaching". *TESOL Quarterly*, 32 (2), pp.263-87.

Hymes, D. (1972). "Towards Ethnographies of Communication: The Analysis Of Communicative Events". In Giglioli, P. (Ed.). *Language and Social Context*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, pp. 21-33.

Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Jaworski, A. & Coupland, N. (Eds.) (1999). *The Discourse Reader*. London.

- Labov, W. & Waletzky, J. (1967). "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experiences". In: Helm, J. (Ed.). *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*. American Ethnological Society, Proceedings of Spring Meeting 1966. Washington DC: University of Washington Press.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- McCarthy, M., Matthiessen, C. & Slade, D. (2002). "Discourse Analysis". In Schmitt, N. (Ed.). *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. London:
- Platt, E. & Brookes, F. (2002). "Task Engagement: A Turning Point in Foreign Language Development". *Language Learning*, 52(2), pp.365-400.
- Pomerantz, A. (1984). Agreeing and Disagreeing with Assessment: Some Features of Preferred/Dispreferred Turn Shapes. In: Atkinson, J. & Heritage, J.
- Saville-Troike, M. (1989). *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction*. (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sinclair, J., et al. (1975). *Towards the Analysis of Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trappes-Lomax, H. (2006). "Language in Language Teacher Education: A Discourse Perspective". In H., Trappes-Lomax & G. Ferguson. (Eds.). *Language in Language Teacher Education*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 1-21.
- Tsui, A. (1998). "Awareness-Raising about Classroom Interaction". In: Van Lier, L. & Corson, D. (Eds.). *Encyclopaedia of Language and Education*. (vol. 6): Knowledge about Language. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Verhoeven, L. (1997). "Sociolinguistics and Education". In: Coulmas, F. (Ed.). *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

## UNIT 6      CORPORA LINGUISTICS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Types of Corpora
  - 3.2 Uses of Corpora
  - 3.3 Processing of Data from a Corpus
    - 3.3.1 Frequency
    - 3.3.2 Phraseology
    - 3.3.3 Collocation
  - 3.4 Characteristics of Corpus-Based Analysis of Language
  - 3.5 Corpora and Language Teaching
  - 3.6 Teachers and the Use of Corpora
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is on corpus linguistics. It is an interesting area in language study. It is very useful in applied linguistics and a good knowledge of it will enrich your work as a language specialist. The Collins English Dictionary defines corpora as ‘a collection of writings especially by a single author’. This is a very simple definition of corpora. In this unit, however, we shall be talking about collections of words, phrases and writings of different kinds, as the case may be not necessarily by the same author. Hunston (2002) gives you a better description under the introduction.

Widdowson (1979; 2000) in Hunston (2002) notes that the difference between linguistics and applied linguistics is not just that linguistics deals with theory while AL deals with applications. AL tries to develop language themes of its own which are more relevant to the questions AL seeks to answer than those developed by theoretical linguistics. Corpora add to the development of those applied views of language.

Corpus Linguistics is the study of language as expressed in simple or real world. Corpora analysis was originally done by hand but is now largely derived by an automated process. Hunston (2002:1) asserts that the improved accessibility of computers has changed corpus study from

a subject for specialists only to something that is open to all. She notes further that:

Corpora allow researchers not only to count categories in traditional approaches to language but also to observe categories and phenomena that have not been noticed before.

Corpora study introduces students of AL to how language can be applied in certain real life contexts. Hunston (2002:02) sees corpus as a collection of ‘naturally occurring examples of language consisting of anything from a few sentences to a set of written texts or tape recordings which have been collected for linguistic study’. Corpus is also seen as a collection of texts (or parts of texts) that are stored and accessed electronically.

Hunston asserts that the field of applied linguistics itself has undergone something of a revolution over the last few decades. She claims that it was once synonymous to language teaching but now it covers any application of language that offers solution to real life problems.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the usefulness of corpora in AL; and
- illustrate how corpora can be used in language learning.

## HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Types of Corpora

- 1) Specialised Corpora- this is a corpus of texts of different types e.g. newspaper editorials, history books, academic articles on a particular subject, conversations, essay writing, etc. A corpus may have time frame- depending on the purpose, a social setting. It is often used to investigate a particular type of language.

- 2) **General corpus-** a corpus of texts of many types. This may include both spoken or written texts, it include texts produced in one country or many but it may not be an adequate representative of any particular 'whole'. This type of corpus is always larger than a specialised one. Hunston notes that it could be useful for producing reference material for language learning of translation and often used as a baseline in comparison with more specialised corpora. It is, thus, sometimes called a reference corpus. An example is the British National Corpus.
- 3) **Comparable corpora**  
This has to do with two or more corpora in different languages, which have been designed along the same lines. The same proportions of the different corpora will be presented- e.g. same proportion of newspaper texts, novels, casual conversations etc. Comparisons of the various corpora can be done, and this can be useful for translators and learners to identify the differences and equivalences in each language, e.g. ICE corpora (International Corpus of English).
- 4) **Parallel corpora-**This involves two or more corpora in different languages containing texts that have been translated from one language into the other.
- 5) **Learner corpus**  
This is a collection of texts or essays produced by learners of a language. This is always used to identify, the difference between learners and the language of native speakers. One of the best learner corpora in the world is International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE).
- 6) **Pedagogic corpus (used by D. Willis, 1993)**  
Hunston notes that this kind of corpus consists of all the languages a learner has been exposed to. This type of corpus can be used to collect words or phrases that they have come across in different contexts for naturally occurring language.
- 7) **Historical or diachronic**  
This is corpus texts from different periods of time and used to trace the development of aspects of a language over time. An example is the Helsinki corpus which is said to consist of texts from 700-1700 and has about 1.5 million words.
- 8) **Monitor corpus**

This is meant to track current changes in language. This always experience annually, monthly or daily increment. It increases rapidly in size. The proportion of text types is kept constant so that the monthly daily or yearly comparisons of the texts can be done (Hunston, 2002).

### 3.2 Uses of Corpora

Corpora are useful in many ways and below is a summary of some of the uses (Hunston, 2002:13).

- 1) Corpora are used in language teaching, for giving information about how a language works. This kind of information may not be accessible to native speaker intuition. An example is the detailed phraseology mentioned above; the relative frequency of the different features of the language can then be calculated. Hunston refers to Mindt (2000), who claims that nearly all the future time reference in conversational English is indicated by 'will' or other modals. She cites example of the phrase 'be going to', which accounts for about 10 percent of future time reference.
- 2) Classroom teacher can encourage students to explore corpora and observe the various types of collocations and phraseologies which will be used in the descriptions of languages or make comparisons between languages.
- 3) Corpora is equally useful for translators in that they can use it to compare the use of apparent translation equivalents in two languages to see how words and phrases have been translated in the past.
- 4) General corpora can be used to establish norms of frequency and usage against which individual texts can be measured. (Hunston notes that this is particularly useful in stylistics and forensic linguistics).
- 5) Hunston refers to Stubbs (1996), Teubert (2000) who worked on how corpora can be used to investigate cultural attitudes expressed through language. It can also be used as a resource for critical discourse studies (Krishnamurt, 1996; Caldas-Coulthard & Moon, 1999; Fairclough, 2000).

### 3.3 Processing of Data from a Corpus

Corpus is a store of used language. It cannot do anything by itself but can be arranged in such a way that observations of various kinds can be made. There are software packages now that can process data from corpus in three ways: showing frequency, phrases and collocation (Hunston, 2002).

### 3.3.1 Frequency

The words in a corpus can be arranged according to their frequency in the list. Frequency lists from corpora can be useful for identifying possible differences between the corpus of different subjects or area of study. It is possible to look at the frequency of given words compared across corpora. A frequency table can show for example, the number of occurrences of 'must', 'have to', 'incredibly' and 'surprisingly' in books corpus, the times corpus and spoken corpus from where the words are taken. This table can also be used to compare, for example, 'must' with 'have to' and 'incredibly' with 'surprisingly'. The table may show that the books corpus and the times corpus use 'must' in preference to 'have to'. The spoken corpus may show the reverse trend, suggesting that 'have to' is less formal than 'must'.

The word 'surprisingly' has some of this same behaviour: good, little, large, few, well. 'Surprisingly' can be seen to mean 'contrary to expectation' whereas 'incredibly' can be used as a strong version of 'very'. The frequency of 'incredibly' in spoken English than in written can be explained thus. According to Hunston, the adverb 'surprisingly' has a use which 'incredibly' does not have apart from its being followed by an adjective or adverb. It is also often followed by an adjective or beginning of a clause e.g. he, she, or it and it is also often preceded by 'not', 'perhaps' or 'hardly' and this shows that surprisingly is used to modify a clause as well as to modify an adjective or adverb.

For more details on frequency see Hunston (2002:6) who offers more explanation on the three corpora; Hunston notes that even though the use of an adverb to modify a clause does occur in some registers of spoken English, it is not a feature associated with colloquial speech. Some other scholars who have worked on frequencies between registers are Biber (1988), Biber *et al.* (1998), (1999), Mindt (2000), and Leech *et al.* (2001). These scholars use software which counts words and categories of linguistic items. Some of these scholars calculated the distribution of present and past tenses across four registers- 'conversation', 'fiction', 'news' and 'academic' and note that in conversation and academic corpora, present tense occurs more frequently than past tense. Hunston (2002:08) asserts that, in the fiction corpus, the past tense was preferred to the present tense, whereas in the news corpus, they are roughly equal.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What is corpus linguistics?

### 3.3.2 Phraseology

What is referred to as concordance lines bring together many instances of the use of a word or phrase. This allows the user to observe regularities in use that tend to remain unobserved in normal user. It is through concordances that phraseology is observed. These phenomena can be very useful in explaining confusing meanings of words or uses of words. Huston 2002 notes that learners often confuse adjectives such as *interested* and *interesting* and find that explanations of different meanings do not readily give a clear picture of the usage of both of them. Hunston (2002:09) noticed that ‘interested’ is used in phrase or the pattern ‘interested in’ and this is revealed in either someone being ‘interested in something’ whereas, ‘interesting’ is commonly used before a noun as in ‘an interesting thing’. There are only a few exceptions such as ‘what is interesting is.....’ and ‘it is interesting to see....’ (Hunston 2002:10).

### 3.3.3 Collocation

There can be the calculation of collocation in corpora. Hunston(2002:12) says collocation is the statistical tendency of words to co-occur. A lot of collocates can equally give information on data. Statistical operations of the computer in doing the calculations will however be better and more accurate than when done manually. Hunston (2002:10) gives the example of the collocate of the word ‘shed’ to be: light, pearls, garden, jobs, blood, cents, image, pounds, staff, skin and clothes. In all these cases, shed is a verb, except when it collocates with garden is it a noun. In all the cases, the meaning is close to ‘lose’ or ‘give’ but the precise meaning depends on what it collocates with. The following are examples:

- Shed light (on) means illuminate (metaphorical)
- Shed tears (means) ‘cry’ or ‘be sorrowful’
- Shed blood means ‘suffer’ or kill (literal or metaphorical)
- Shed jobs and shed staff means get rid of people
- Shed pounds (lose weight)
- Shed cents (‘shares’ or a currency become reduced in value)
- Shed image (means a deliberate changing of how one is perceived. (Huston 2002:12)

Apart from lexical collocates, there are also grammatical collocates. For example, possessives such as: his, her, my, and your, collocate with some other words to mean specific things.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Describe the varieties of language use that constitute corpora.

### 3.4 Characteristics of Corpus-Based Analysis of Language

- 1) It is empirical, analysing the actual patterns of use in natural texts.
- 2) It utilises a large and principled collection of use in natural text.
- 3) It utilises a large and principles collection of natural texts known as corpus, as the basis for analysis, using both automatic and interactive techniques.
- 4) It depends on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998:4) in Reppen and Simpson (2002:93).

### 3.5 Corpora and Language Teaching

- 1) Corpus findings and the availability of tools for exploring corpora will be of benefit to the language classroom.
- 2) Corpus based studies of particular language features and comprehensive works such as *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* will help language teachers by providing a basis for deciding which language features and structures are important and also how various features and structures are used.
- 3) Teachers and materials writers can have a basis for selecting language materials for their students based on the needed linguistic features.
- 4) Pedagogical decisions may no longer be based on intuitions or sequences that have appeared in textbooks over the years but on actual patterns of language use in various situations (spoken, written, conversations, and formal etc.).
- 5) The current challenge is how to translate frequency information and knowledge about patterns of language use into classroom materials (Schmitt, 2002:106).

For example, a teacher can run concordance lines for the learners and then draw out questions on the texts for the pupils to answer. Look at the following citations:

-----*They proposed that Harvard create such a super-track tuned to him----* *will somebody propose that this paper be rejected irrespective of its co—An HSE document proposes that GMAG be turned into ACGM---The said----- we recommend that the dose of benoxapofen----* *The Committee also recommended that the government clarify the rules- - -----breaks down. It recommends that France take a second look at--*

--coordinating committee suggests that the appeal panel ask why this  
--of the university of Bristol suggests that a group of babies be trained--

Can you think of the most interesting completions for the sentences below?

1. *If I were the Dean of my faculty I would recommend that all examinations -----*  
-----
2. *When Kunle told me that he had had an argument with his girlfriend, I suggested that he-----*  
-----
3. *As a postgraduate student at Oba Awon University, I propose that-----*

This type of exercises can be given occasionally to pupils to teach them clause and phrase patterns in English.

### **3.6 Teachers and the Use of Corpora**

- 1) Teachers can shape instructions based on corpus-based information
- 2) They can consult corpus studies to gain information about the features they are teaching.
- 3) Learners can also interact with corpora. With availability of computers, learners can be actively involved in exploring corpora.
- 4) If computers are not available, teachers can bring in print-outs or results from corpus searches for use in the classroom.
- 5) Even though some scholars argue against the use of corpora in the classroom saying that it is difficult to guide students appropriately and efficiently in the analysis of vast number of linguistic samples (Cook 1998), there is need for classroom based-research and experimentation on the effectiveness of exposing language students to corpora and concordance tools (Schmitt, 2002:107).

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We have been able to discuss what corpora are, the types of corpora, uses of corpora, and processing of data from a corpus in this unit. Please, try to go through the references at the end of this unit and other units for more details on each of the units because the contents of these units have been taken from them.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt the points stated in this section.

- Corpus linguistics is the study of language as expressed in sample or real world.
- Corpus was originally done by hand but is now largely derived by an automated process.
- Hunston (2002:1) notes that the improved accessibility of computers has changed corpus study from a subject for specialists only to something that is open to all.
- Corpora study introduces students of AL to know how language can be applied in certain real life contexts.
- Corpus is also reserved for collections of texts (or parts of texts) that are stored and accessed electronically.
- There are different kinds of corpora-general, specialised comparable, parallel, learner, pedagogic, historical and monitor.
- Corpora are used in language teaching for giving information about how a language works.
- There are software packages now that can process data from corpus in three ways: showing frequency, phrases and collocation.(Huston 2002).

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

How can you apply what you have been taught in corpora to a language text?

What are the uses of corpora in language teaching?

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Corpus linguistics is a study of language as is expressed in a sample or real world.

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Varieties of language that constitute corpora are specialised corpora, spoken and written corpora, comparable corpora, parallel corpora, learner corpora, learner corpus, etc.

You should be able to describe each of these varieties.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Biber, D. (1988). *Variation in Speech and Writing*. Cambridge: CUP.

Biber, D., Conrad, S. & Reppen, R. (1998). *Corpus Linguistics: investigating language structure and use*. Cambridge: CUP

- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S. & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.
- Caldas-Coulthard, C. & Moon, R. (1999). “‘Curvy’, ‘Hunky’, ‘Kinky’: Using Corpora as Tools in Critical Analysis”. Papers Read at the Critical Discourse Analysis Meeting. University of Birmingham.
- Cook, G. (1998). “The Uses of Reality: A Reply to Ronald Carter”. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 52, pp.57-63.
- Fairclough, N. (2000). *New Labour, New Language?* London: Routledge.
- Hunston, S. (2002). *Corpora in Applied Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krishnamurthy, R. (1996). “Ethnic, Racial and Tribal: The Language of Racism?”
- Leech, G., Rayson, P. & Wilson, A. (2001). *Word Frequency in Written and Spoken English: Based on the British National Corpus*. London: Longman.
- Mindt, D. (2000). *An Empirical Grammar of the English Verb System*. Berlin: Cornelsen.
- Reppen, R. & Simpson, R. (2002). “Corpus Linguistics”. In: Schmitt, N. (Ed.). *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. London: Hodder Arnold, pp. 92-111.
- Schmitt, N. (2002). *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Teubert, W. (2000). “A Province of a Federal Super-State, Ruled by an Unelected Bureaucracy: Keywords of the Euro-Sceptic Discourse in Britain”. In: A. Musolff, A., Good, C., Points, P. & Wittlinger, R. (Eds.). *Attitudes Towards Europe: Language in the Unification Process*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp.45-86.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1979). *Explorations in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, H.G. (2000). “On the Limitations of Linguistics Applied”. *Applied Linguistics*, 21, pp.3-25.
- Wills, D. (1993). “Syllabus, Corpus and Data-Driven Learning”. *IATEFL Conference Report*.

**UNIT 7 FORENSIC LINGUISTICS****CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 History of Forensic Linguistics
  - 3.2 Language and the Law
  - 3.3 The Nature of Legal Language and Linguistic Evidence
    - 3.3.1 Child Witness in AL
  - 3.4 Applied Linguistics and Forensic Linguistics
    - 3.4.1 Communication
    - 3.4.2 Identification
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is on ‘language and the law’ known as forensic linguistics. Have you ever wondered why the legal register is so difficult to understand? Have you been to the law courts before? And have you listened to lawyers speak while defending a case and you wonder why they speak the way they do? These are questions that have also burdened the minds of linguists in the past which they have been trying to find answers to. So, it will not be out of place to think the way you do about the law register. The interesting thing about ‘the law’ and ‘language’ is that they are inseparable. This unit is a very interesting unit but a little bit dense, so, you have to concentrate and go through carefully so that you can understand what the unit is out to teach.

Gibbons (2006:285) says the legal institution is very important because it is such an influential institution, which is packed with language problems. Almost everything we do is carried out within a legal frame- i.e. ownership of piece of land, building contracts, employment, marriage etc. Farinde (2008) notes that the laws of the land are coded in language, legal processes, police interrogations, and prosecutions are all done through language. In the western world such as Britain, United States, Canada, Australia, etc., linguists are being called upon to offer expert opinions and advice on difficult language problems in legal settings.

Due to improvements in electronic communication and the passage of new laws related to electronic surveillance, since the 1970s, there has

been increase in the use of taped evidence in matters of the law. Incidentally, this same period witnessed the expansion of linguistics beyond the sentence and areas such as discourse analysis, pragmatics, speech acts, intentionality and inference expanded in scope. Discourse analysis was first used to analyse the tape recorded evidences against suspects by the law enforcement agencies.

Discourse analysis was also used in the stylistic identification of authors of written documents, in the patterned language use of voice identification, identification of crucial passages in civil cases such as disputes over contracts, product naming labels and other forms of identification (Farinde, 2008:02). Now, forensic linguistics has become a developed genre and forensic linguists are frequently called upon to analyse and testify in court to cases that involve interpretation of language in terms of written evidences or voice identification, as the case may be. Before we proceed, let us look at some of the objectives for this unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- describe what forensic linguistics is and how it started; and
- describe focus of AL in forensic linguistics.

## **HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT**

Read the unit carefully. Find out difficult words from your dictionary. Put down major points as you read.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 History of Forensic Linguistics**

Every discipline has its own register. The study of the language of the law is Forensic linguistics. Farinde (2008:02) asserts that in the editorial introduction of the birth of the journal titled Forensic linguistics, French and Coulthard (1994) report that many linguists and phoneticians became involved in undertaking forensic work and this has resulted in the formation of two professional organisations.

The International Association of forensic linguistics (IAFL) was founded at a seminar held in the school of English at the University of Birmingham in 1992. It was created to provide a forum for the interchange of ideas and information about forensic applications of linguistic analysis generally. Among its functions are organising annual conferences, printing of newsletters, compilation of international register of qualified linguists who are prepared to act as witnesses.

Another organisation which is the International Association of Forensic Phonetics (IAFP) was founded in 1991 at the third International conference on Forensic Applications of Phonetics at St John's College IAFP. In addition to these organisations, Farinde notes that, conferences and seminars are constantly being organised and that through its professional conduct committee, IAFP has formulated a code of practice which is binding on the activities of its members. There have also been a lot of publications and articles on forensic linguistics; for example, Forensic Linguistics- *The International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law*.

### 3.2 Language and the Law

It was noted above that the law intrudes into every aspect of our lives as human beings and the vehicle it uses is language. Bhatia's (1994) work on the discussion of structuring of legislative provisions focused the syntactic properties of legislative provisions which he/she claims includes long/nominal sentences and expression, complex prepositional phrases, initial case description, qualification and syntactic discontinuities. The law language is full of constructions like these and they can be very difficult to understand.

Bhatia notes two crucial aspects of the law which are- case description (which is the specification of circumstances to which the main clause applies and the main provisionary clause which contains the legal subject and the legal action. Gibbons (2003) in Farinde (2008) asserts that linguistic evidence can be found in domains such as phonology, lexis, grammar discourse register genre/style and sociolinguistics. To Gibbon, expertise, validity and reliability are important issues in linguistic evidence. She/he notes further that a linguist can offer evidence in two major areas, and these are communication issues (miscommunication found in graphology), transcription, lexis, grammar, discourse, register, genre/style and sociolinguistics and authorship in areas such as speech sound, identification, ear witness and machine analysis).

Gibbon also reports that the language of lawyers is full of technical jargons, archaic, deictic, common law, complex functional expressions, abbreviated technical terms, ordinary words used with specialist meanings. Gibbons (2003) also reports that the police and lawyers also use similar jargons and that slang is used within the police to refer to police life and culture. The language in the prison is said to include- 1) use of official specialist terms; 2) short forms and acronyms; and 3) Slang (Farinde, 2008). The law is a specialised discipline and has its own specialised language in terms of grammar, lexicon, speech acts and discourse, all in an attempt to pursue precision of the Legal register.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Why is forensic linguistics important in human affairs?
- ii. What are some of the essential characteristics of the legal language?

### 3.3 The Nature of Legal Language and Linguistic Evidence

Cotterill (2000), in her work on the language of ‘caution’, notes that in both the delivery and the presentation of the ‘caution’, police officers find the task of measuring linguistic and comprehension level problematic. Police officers can confuse the intended meaning of ‘advice’ with ‘warning’ and that there is a conflict between ‘rights’ and ‘responsibilities’ in describing the ‘caution’. For a solution to the problem, Cotterill suggests that linguists, psycholinguists and other professionals must collaborate with the legal profession to maintain the delicate balance between comprehensibility and jeopardising the legal status of the text. Below is an example of the ‘caution’:

You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do or say may be given in evidence.  
(Farinde, 2008:06)

Dale *et al.* (1997) worked on discourse strategies used by offenders in cases of rape. Farinde notes that the analytical focus of Dale is on the discourse patterns of the offender with the ultimate goal of providing a profile of the offender’s character and to reconstruct the offence itself. For example, Dale *et al.* investigated the types of rape and discussed the theoretical and practical issues in developing an analytical framework of rapists’ speech. For example, below is Dale *et al.* (1997) classification of different types of rape.

- a) **primarily sexual:** Here, the offender is seeking sexual gratification and force is used to achieve the goal
- b) **anger rape:** the motivation for rape here is anger and hatred displayed for another person;
- c) **primarily sadistic:** here, although the motivation is sexual, gratification is achieved by inflicting pain and fear on the victim;
- d) **impulsive or opportunity rape:** here the offence is traceable to the offender’s history of anti-social behaviour;

- e) **rape to compensate for feelings of inadequacy;** here, the offender is aware of his inadequacy and rape by force is used to compensate for this.

The study identified the different stages of rape as ‘the approach’, ‘maintenance’, and ‘disclosure’. The above is the linguistic description of the discourse strategies used by rapists. Below is a sensitive area in forensic linguistics and it has been discussed in this unit as it applies to AL.

### 3.3.1 Child Witness in AL

This area is a growing and sensitive one in forensic linguistics. Linguists believe that the questioning format in child witness can lead to either the success or failure of the interview process. A child’s answers have important consequences. For example, Walker (1973) worked on questions addressed to child witnesses and criticised their forms and structures. Walker insists that if questions are asked the wrong way, it may affect the jury’s opinion. Walker frowns at leading questions and wants them abandoned and also wants tag questions to be avoided and that *wh*-questions should be used with care. Brennan (1995) also worked on children cross examination and notes that children between 6-15 years do not really understand the questions they are asked. Some other scholars who have worked on the language of attorney when questioning children in court are Perry (1995), Petterson *et al.* (1999) and they worked (on questioning preschoolers); some others worked on authorship and statements, robbery suspects, the deaf etc. The art of questioning is very important and has a lot of implications for applied linguistics.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What are some of the questioning strategies that linguists disagreed with on prosecution and why?

### 3.4 Applied linguistics and Forensic Linguistics

For AL purposes, we need to understand the nature of the legal language and possible sources of communication problem or difficulty and find ways of overcoming them. According to Gibbons (2006), areas that AL can focus on are stated in this section.

- 1) It can focus on the genre issue, (that is, the legal register has highly specialised text structures and procedures. It is sometimes a ritualised discourse, which follows regular patterns and organised sequences of elements (p.286)

- 2) the extreme writtenness of many legal documents (some are almost impossible to read aloud in a meaningful way)
- 3) the technicality of much legal discourse (the law and its practicalness have developed a range of unique legal concepts and these can only be expressed by using legal jargons)
- 4) the interpersonal (this is where power disparity and hyper-formality are produced by the essential controlling nature of the legal system).

Language intersects the law, and Bowe and Storey (1995:188-9) point out the following about the expertise of forensic linguists:

When many people are quite capable of identifying and eliminating unknown speakers in an eyewitness line up, they are generally unable to say why... Linguistically trained analysts on the other hand are in a position to give a detailed description of differences and similarities noted in two voice samples, together with an explanation of how these differences or similarities occur.

Can you now see one of the ways by which applied linguistics can come to the aid of difficult legal register? Evidence may range across many linguistic levels including phonology, grammar, discourse and conversational phenomena and sociolinguistics variation. Linguistic evidence falls into two main areas– communication and identification and these will be discussed below.

### **3.4.1 Communication**

A linguist may be called upon to uncover what someone said. Gibbons reported the case of a linguist who was asked to decode pig Latin that was used by an accused person. The linguist was able to do this by studying the handwriting and noting the arrangement of the vowels used. Linguists may also be called upon to say whether an accent or a poor quality recording causes intelligibility problems. He/she may be able to say what is meant by a particular word or whether particular complex lexical and/or grammatical forms make a text difficult to understand. Solan (1995) says linguists could be involved in decisions concerning the meaning and application of legislation in particular cases (legal interpretation) on the basis of grammatical and lexical analysis.

There could be communication problems in indigenous societies, depending on what is allowed as knowledge economy. This is the case of the Australian Aborigines and the law as reported by Eades (1994, 1995; Walsh 1994) where direct questioning is regarded as rude and

intrusive. In that community, answering is not obligatory. The questioner can raise a topic and allow the interlocutor (person answering) to contribute whatever knowledge he/she is willing to share. Clash with police questioning and courtroom examination were frequently reported and linguists testified a number of times concerning the resulting lack of communication.

### **3.4.2 Identification**

Identification may involve comparing two or more language samples to know whether they were produced by the same speaker or not. It may mean getting information about the person who produced the language, using indicators such as: age, class, occupation, gender, mother tongue etc. (Gibbons, 2006:298).

Speech sounds are important in identification and the most controversial in this area is whether machine analysis is superior to the expert ear. Special use of certain vowels may be an indicator or a strong indication for voice identification, provided the recording is of adequate quality. A combination of two techniques is reported to be better or more effective in that it will strengthen the identification process. Courts seem to prefer the machine based analysis since it is more scientific.

The untrained ear is seen as unreliable in voice identification and ear witness is even less reliable than eyewitness identification. Gibbons note that the identificatory elements of written language can also be done in that handwritings can be distinguished and the peculiarities of spelling and the punctuation can be strong identifiers.

In the areas of trade names, a linguist can be asked about the likely confusion of two trade names i.e. whether two drugs e.g. Archlan and Alkeran might be confused in Australian English particularly if Alkeran was produced beginning with a long 'a' (Gibbons 2006:298). The linguist involved was said to have submitted based on the evidence of process of exchanges of /r/ and /l/ that it was unlikely but possible. Gibbons notes that in areas of vocabulary and grammar, there are two main approaches used in identification and profiling- the first is probabilistic analysis (performed by computer programs); the belief is that there are certain grammar features and vocabulary choices used by one person rather than the other. Gibbons notes that supporters of this method caution against excessive use of it.

The second type of analysis that was reported by Gibbons is the peculiarities in grammatical structure or vocabulary as in non-standard usages, which may be as a result of limited proficiency in the language or register of a person. For example, when a police fabricate evidence,

they themselves sometimes slip into police jargons and hyper elaboration and this can be detected by the linguists. Eagleson (1994) shows how a range of linguistic features- including spelling, syntax, morphology and punctuation provided evidence, concerning the authorship of a suicide note.

Eagleson compared the samples of the man's and the woman's handwriting and was able to show that the writing was the man's - considering the wrong spellings, intrusive apostrophe, omission of past tense, long and poorly structured stretch of language with no punctuation . The man changed his plea to guilty when confronted with these. Coulthard (1994) gave important evidence of cohesion phenomena in a case involving 6 in Birmingham. The accused were discharged on the basis of the hyper elaboration, which is typical of legal language and, in that instance, which showed that it was a fabrication by the police. Gibbons avers that in identificatory elements of the written language, handwriting can be distinctive and peculiarities of spelling and punctuation can be strong identifiers.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We have been able to go through the history of forensic linguistics, the language and the law. We are also able to discuss the relationship between the legal language and forensic linguistics.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt all the points summarized in this section.

- Forensic linguistics has become a developed genre and forensic linguists are frequently called upon to analyse and testify in court to cases that involve interpretation of language.
- Almost everything we do is carried out within a legal frame.
- Linguists are being called upon to offer expert opinions and advice on knotty language problems in legal settings.
- Identification may involve comparing two or more language samples to know whether they were produced by the same speaker or not.
- Courts seem to prefer the machine based analysis since it is more scientific.
- Gibbons noted that in areas of vocabulary and grammar, there are two main approaches used in identification and profiling-the first is probabilistic analysis.
- The second type of analysis that was noted by Gibbons is the peculiarities in grammatical structure or vocabulary as in non-

standard usages which may be as a result of limited proficiency in the language or register of a person.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Imagine that the police presented a written statement of an accused person; describe the FL characteristics a forensic linguist would be looking for in the written statement.

### ANSWER TO SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Forensic linguistics is useful for analysing and interpreting language in the court of law.

Features of language of law: Long sentences, complex prepositional phrases, description, qualification, and syntactic discontinuity.

### ANSWER TO SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Questioning strategies that linguists disagree with on prosecution:

- a) Questions asked in a wrong way.
- b) Leading questions.
- c) Wh questions not used with care.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Bhatia, V. K. (1994). "Cognitive Structuring in Legislative Provisions". In: Gibbons, J. (Ed.). *Language and the Law*. Harlow: Longman, pp.136- 55.
- Bowe, H. & Storey, K. (1995). "Linguistic Analysis as Evidence of Speaker Identification: Demand and Response". In: Eades, D. (Ed.). *Language in Evidence Issues Confronting Aboriginal and Multicultural Australia*. pp. 187-200.
- Brennan, M. (1994). "Cross-Examining Children in Criminal Courts: Child Welfare Under Attack". In: Gibbons, J. (Ed.). *Language and the Law*. Harlow: Longman, pp. 199-216.
- Coulthard, M. (1994). "Powerful Evidence for the Defence: An Exercise in Forensic Discourse Analysis". In: Gibbons, J. (Ed.) *Language and the Law*. Harlow: Longman, pp.414-27.
- Cotterill, J. (2002). "Reading the Rights: A Cautionary Tale of Comprehension and Comprehensibility". *Forensic Linguistics*, 7(1).

- Eades, D. (1994). "A Case of Communicative Clash: Aboriginal English and the Legal System". In: Gibbons, J. (Ed.). *Language and the Law*. Harlow: Longman, pp. 234-64.
- Eagleson, R. (1994). "Forensic Analysis of Personal Written Texts: A Case Study". In: Gibbons, J. (Ed.). *Language and the Law*. pp. 363-73.
- Farinde, R. O. (2008). *Forensic Linguistics*. Ago Iwoye, Nigeria: Olabisi Onabanjo University Press.
- French, P. & Coulthard, M. (1994). "Editorial Introduction". *Forensic linguistics*, 1(1).
- Gibbons, J. (2003). *Forensic Linguistics: An Introduction to Language in the Judicial System*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Gibbons, J. (2006). "Language and the Law". In: Davis, A. & Elder, C. (Ed.). *The Handbook of Applied Linguistics*. USA & UK: Blackwell Publishing, pp.285-303.
- Shuy, R. (2001). "Discourse Analysis in the Legal Context". In: Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D. & Hamilton, H. E. (Eds.). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Peterson, C., Dowden, C. & Tobin, J. (1999). "Interviewing Preschoolers: Comparison of Yes/No and WH-Questions". *Law and Human Behaviour*. Vol.23, No.5.
- Solan, L. M. (1995). "Judicial Decisions and Linguistic Analysis: Is there a Linguist in the Court?" *Washington University Law Journal*, 73(3).
- Walker, A. G. (1993). "Questioning Young Children in Court: A Linguistic Case Study". *Law and Human Behaviour*, Vol. 17(1).