MODULE 3   LANGUAGE AND STYLE IN SPEECH WRITING

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Unit 2   The Sentence
Unit 3   Tense, Aspect and Concord
Unit 4   Concision in Speech Writing
Unit 5   Fine-tuning the speech
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UNIT 1   PARAGRAPHING AND PUNCTUATION

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

There are some mechanical issues that a speechwriter must take into consideration when writing. Even if the language of the speech is good and the logic and reasoning patterns are flawless, if the speech is not well arranged into paragraphs, the overall message can be distorted. Similarly, even if the speech is well paragraphed, but it is badly punctuated, the effects can be catastrophic. Paragraphing and punctuation are two important mechanical issues that this unit considers. There are adequate illustrations to make the points raised clear.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

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

•   define paragraph;
•   discuss the features of a good paragraph;
•   list punctuation marks; and
•   explain the appropriate use of the punctuation marks.

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 to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Paragraph

A paragraph is a division of writing that expresses a single thought (Babajide, 1996:40). It is an integral unit of composition. It is a group of sentences, which are unified by their common relation to a general conception (Kane & Peters, 1966:135).

3.2   Types of Paragraphs

There are three main paragraph types.
•   Introductory paragraph
•   Transitional paragraph
•   Concluding paragraph

The introductory paragraph gives a general overview of the speech. A major component of this paragraph is thesis statement. This refers to the umbrella statement for the entire speech. It reveals the overall concerns of the speech and indicates the attitude of the writer toward the speech (Babajide, 1996:44).

The transitional paragraph(s) may be one or many. Any paragraph in between the introduction and the conclusion is called transitional paragraph. It constitutes the body of the speech.

The concluding paragraph ends the speech. The introductory and concluding paragraphs are like signature tunes. They should appeal to the audience's interests. The introductory paragraph opens the door to the speech while the concluding paragraph closes it. It must do it in such a way that the points raised in the speech are not allowed to escape the attention of the audience.

3.3   Features of a Good Paragraph

A good paragraph must possess the following features.

* Coherence
* Unity
* Inclusiveness/ Completeness
* Emphasis*:* The ideas must be pungently pursued

Coherence
Coherence requires that the ideas/sentences in a paragraph must be arranged logically. For a paragraph to be coherent, it should not put the cart before the horse. This means that the writer will supply information in the best order that will not twist the message or task the brains of the audience unnecessarily.

Unity
A good paragraph must have unity of thought and unity of form. There must not be any extraneous idea. A paragraph may be coherent but it may lack unity. Such a paragraph contains sentences that are logically arranged, but one or more of the sentences in it are not relevant to the general focus of that paragraph. Similarly, a paragraph may have unity but lack coherence. Such a paragraph contains relevant sentences but the sentences are not logically arranged.

Inclusiveness/Completeness
This feature requires that the paragraph does not leave out any essential detail. The details here are related to the specific focus of the paragraph. This is why it is necessary to have a good outline before beginning the speech. The outline will help you not to miss out any essential detail.

Emphasis
Another important feature of a good paragraph is emphasis. This has to do with the way the content of the paragraph is pursued. For a paragraph to be emphatic, it has to pungently and seriously pursue its focus.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   What is a paragraph?
ii.   List the features of a good paragraph.

3.3   Punctuation Marks

While speaking, we observe some pauses at some points and adjust the tone of our voices to achieve different ends. In writing, these processes are indicated by some marks. These are called punctuation marks. Thus,

punctuation marks are those symbols that indicate the manner in which the voice is adjusted to make communication meaningful. The appropriate, or otherwise, use of punctuation marks could affect the meaning of your speech. This is why it is important for you to master the various ways these punctuation marks should be used. They are not just marks meant to adorn your speech. There are specific rules guiding their use.

1. **Full stop (.)**

The full stop is used for the following purposes.

- To signal the end of a sentence.
a.   I don't need sycophants.
b.   See all of them.
c.   I have to go now.
d.   Take it easy.
e.   We have seen you.

- To indicate abbreviation:
a.   etc.
b.   Oct.
c.   e.g.
d.   a.m.
e.   p.m.

However, in some of the examples above, particularly c, d, e, full stop is optional.

- In Internet and email addresses.

  http://www.ui.edu.ng

2. **Question Mark** (?)

This mark is used in the following ways.

- To indicate the end of a direct question:

a.   What have you prepared?
b.   Can we meet tonight?
c.   Will you come for the service?
d.   Is it ready?
e.   Do you know what to do?

- To express doubt, particularly with a date:
  Obafemi Awolowo (1908-1987)

3. **Exclamation Mark (!)**

It is used at the end of a sentence that shows strong emotion:

a. This is it!
b. How wonderful it was!

4. **Comma (,)**
The comma is used for the following functions.

- To separate words in a list:

a. I have four friends: Tola, Hannah, Kemi and Jummy.
b. The man, his wife and their children stole the goat.
c. Maize, rice and yam are now scarce.
d. Red, blue, pink and white are my favourite colours.
e. One table, two chairs and four stools have been made.

- To separate a tag question from the other parts of the sentence.

a. She is ready, isn't she?
b. They didn't come, did they?
c. We have served them well, haven't we?
d. She can do it, can't she?
e. You are loved by her, aren't you?

- To separate phrase or clauses:

a. Having redeemed his battered image, he decided to run for the presidency.
b. If you know the truth, say it.
c. Go in, sit down, and eat your food.
d. If I meet you here again, you'll be in the soup.
e. Because of his carelessness, he lost the contract.

- To separate long main clauses linked by a conjunction such as *but, and, or, for, as.*

a. We thought all of them would come to receive us, but only their leader   came.
b. He relies only on the people that come to his house, as there is no one left with him.

c.   Do all that is in your power to help others, as there are rewards for doing so.

d.   They controlled the people and their assets kept in their care, but one day the people revolted.

e.   The man and his wife didn't wait to get the reply, but they assured us of their willingness to assist us.

• To separate an introductory expression that applies to the entire sentence.

a.   For now, we can't accept you.

b.   Disgraced, he left hurriedly.

c.   Yes, we can do it!

d.   By God's grace, I will pass this examination.

e.   As for you, however, I will not change the rule.

• To separate a non-defining phrase or clause from the rest of the sentence:

a.   The man, who nearly died because of her, has left her finally.

b.   Adewole, our faithful friend, gets married next week.

c.   The handset, which I actually did not request for, has been stolen.

d.   Chief Alaseju, our governor, has lost the ticket.

e.   The dog, which is more faithful than some humans, deserves to be honoured.

• To separate short quotation from the rest of the sentence:

a.   The pastor said, "Do your best and leave the rest".

b.   He exclaimed, "I have got her".

c.   James declared, "I am more than conqueror".

d.   The woman lamented, "He carted away everything".

e.   Joseph said, "I will not contest for that post again".

• To separate written conversation from the other parts of the sentence; it could come before or after 'said' or any reporting verb:

a.   "See me immediately," she shouted.

b.   "Help them," requested the man.

c.   "Try more," he said.

d.   He inquired, "Where is she?"

e.   They pledged, "We shall trace them."

5.   **Colon (:)**
The colon is used in the following ways.

- To introduce a list of items.

a.   The following people are performing today: Adekanmi, Adekemi, and Adeyemi.
b.   She has four children: Peju, Pelumi, Pemisire, Ponmile.
c.   I want to travel to three places: Oluponna, Ikire, and Isoko.
d.   Adeseke has these virtues: honesty, sincerity, gentleness and diligence.
e.   These are our aims: to help others and to serve God.

- To introduce indented quotation:
  According to Sunday (2011:1403-1404):

In the past, some Nigerian musicians went to any extent to express their grievances and rivalry. There were reported cases of musicians using diabolical means (particularly witchcraft) to make the engines and instruments of the rival musicians to malfunction when they met at occasions. (Some very rich Nigerians often invite two or more musicians to play simultaneously at their ceremonies.)

- To introduce a phrase or clause that gives more information about the main clause:

a.   The woman is dejected: she needs a companion.
b.   We have to go now: it is getting dark.
c.   Nobody can deceive me any longer: I am wiser now.
d.   Be careful: humans are dangerous.
e.   I will succeed: God is on my side.

6.   **Semicolon (;)**
- The semicolon is used to separate parts of a sentence that already contains comma:

a.   Listen to this: watch, pray and help others; take care of your health; eat, sleep, and play well.
b.   Believe in God; trust no one, if you want peace.
c.   I am ready; I will help you, as long as I am able.
d.   Help us, Oh Lord; we need you, even now.
e.   The man will not listen to you; even if you are a prophet, he will snub you.

7.   Apostrophe (')
This mark is used in the following manners:

- To indicate letters or figures that have been omitted:

i.   Can't (Cannot)
ii.   She's (she is/ it is)
iii.   It's (it is/ it has)
iv.   The January of '77(1977)
v.   I'm (I am)

- It is used with *s* to indicate possession:

i.   My daughter's friend.
ii.   Saint James's Church or Saint James' Church
iii.   In Jesus's name/ In Jesus' name
         (Notice that this's may not be pronounced; that is, the name may also be pronounced as if it does not indicate possession)
iv.   The boy's dress
v.   Nobody's problem

- Sometimes, with *s* to form the plural of a figure, an abbreviation, or a letter:

i.   in the 1960's/1960s
ii.   His t's are not clear.
iii.   Dot your i's
iv.   Cancel all the p's.
v.   He is in his early 40's/40s.

8.   Hyphen (-)
It is used in the following ways.

- To form a compound from a prefix and a proper name:
i.   Pro-Jonathan
ii.   Anti-Christ
iii.   Pre-Obasanjo era
iv.   Pro-Nigeria

9.   To form a compound from two or more words:

i.   half-hearted
ii.   open-ended

iii.   easy-going
iv.   hot-tempered
v.   father-in-law

- To write compound numbers between 21 and 99 words:

i.   thirty-four
ii.   forty-four
iii.   seventy-nine
iv.   one hundred and sixty-two
v.   one million, two thousand, five hundred and eight-one

- Used after the first part of a word that is divided between one line and the next:

  We should not be in a hurry to leave this place; so let us be ready to misconstrue issues.

- To separate a prefix ending in vowel from a word beginning with the same vowel:

i.   co-ordinate
ii.   co-operative
iii.   pre-eminence
iv.   de-emphasise

10.   **Dash** (–)
The dash is used for the following purposes.

- It is used to separate a comment or an afterthought from the rest of the sentence.

a.   Driving carefully – which is a necessary for safety – should not be taken lightly.
b.   I want you – if you care – to listen to this.
c.   The man – in my own estimation – is incompetent.
d.   Serving God – which I see as a privilege – should not be abused.
e.   We shall – in view of his attitude – set up a panel of enquiry.

- It is also used in informal discourses, instead of a colon or a semicolon, to show the summary of what has gone before.

a.   Nobody passed – they all failed.

b.   We have money – we can sponsor you.
c.   I got the award today – I am a victor.
d.   He doesn't respect anybody – he is arrogant.
e.   Carry out a thorough investigation – the initial report may be wrong.

11.   Quotation marks (""/ ' ')
It is used in the following ways.

- To enclose words and punctuation in direct speech:

a.   "What is your problem?" he asked.
b.   "If I don't come, what will happen?" he inquired
c.   "I won't do it," he vowed.
d.   "I know the way," he said.
e.   "I will repent later," she promised.

- To enclose the titles of articles, songs, poems, short stories, etc.

a.   J.P. Clark's "Abiku"
b.   Wole Soyinka's "Telephone Conversation"
c.   He wrote, "Now is our time."
d.   I like Ebenezer Obey's "Womanhood."
e.   I know "I believe I can fly."

- To draw attention to a word being used in a special way:

a.   We want our share of the "national cake".
b.   He is looking for "orijo."
c.   I know her "source."
d.   Seun is not ready for that "gift"
e.   Many people have "caring" leaders.

- To enclose short quotation and saying:

a.   The man said "tough times never last."
b.   He assured us that "the sky is not our limit."
c.   I now know that "when the going is good, you will have many friends."

11.   Dots/ Ellipsis (…)

It is used to indicate omission from a quotation or conversation.

a.   …no controversy.

b.   Do it if….
c.   We honoured them but….
d.   She can read it… we are ready
e.   Today history is made… our president has confessed to his offences….

12.   **Slash/Oblique**

*   This mark is used to separate alternative words or phrases:

a.   You and/or your friend
b.   He/she must be cruel.
c.   Male/Female
d.   Present/Absent
e.   Yes/No

*   To separate the different elements in Internet and email addresses:

http://www.google.com
http://www.yahoo.com

13.   **Brackets/Parentheses**
These are used in the following ways.
i. To separate extra information or a comment from the rest of a sentence:

a.   NTA Ibadan (first television station in Africa) is crying for attention.
b.   Cocoa House (the highest building in Lagos) is a masterpiece.
c.   He feels that Nigerian young politicians (those born after 1960) are incompetent.

*   To enclose numbers or letters in a text:
    The winners are (i) Ademoyewa, (ii) Adeseke and (iii) Adetoke.

*   To enclose cross-references.

The law is unambiguous on this (see Section 2.4)

14.   **Square Brackets ([ ])**
(i)This punctuation mark is used to enclose words inserted to make a quotation grammatically correct:

In [those] areas, watch what you do ….

- It is also used in referencing to insert authorial intrusion or additional information.

According to Lucas (2002:119-120),
"Printed materials [books in particular] in libraries are superior to the Internet in many ways."

15.   Italics/ Underline
i.   It is used to indicate emphasis:
a.   I will come but *you* will stay.
b.   Jude *prays* on Friday.

- It is also used to indicate title of books, magazine, newspapers, films, paintings, operas, etc.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet.*
The Guardian.
Newswatch
Opera Wonyosi

- It is also employed to indicate foreign words:
a.   He does have *skonsko.*
b.   *Ebo* are kept there every Friday.
c.   *Ahmed* and *Tinu* are best of friends.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Good paragraphing, coupled with good use of punctuation marks, facilitates easy understanding of a speech. A good paragraphing pattern can be achieved through good outlining and close monitoring of the presentation of points. Ensure that a paragraph contains only one major idea. A paragraph does not have a specific length. The purpose and content of the idea expressed are the major determinants of the length of a paragraph. Unless when they achieve particular effects, avoid constructing one-sentence paragraphs.

5.0   SUMMARY

The major features of the paragraph have been examined in this unit. Various punctuation marks have also been considered. Constant practice and reading of good materials contribute to proper use of these marks. Ability to delineate paragraphs is an art that all speechwriters should strive to possess. This should be supported with appropriate use of punctuation marks.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i.   Mention the major types of paragraph.
ii.   Discuss the features of the major types of paragraph.
iii.   Explain the qualities of a good paragraph.
iv.   With the aid of appropriate constructions, discuss how to use the following punctuation marks:

       a.   semi-colon
       b.   comma
       c.   full stop
       d.   quotation marks
       e.   exclamation marks
       f.   dash
       g.   hyphen

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2   THE SENTENCE

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

The sentence is crucial to a successful execution of the speech. A proper understanding of the types and uses of the sentence will enhance clarity and explicitness. What some take to be a sentence is actually not a sentence? Therefore, in this section, we shall examine sentence in some details. The major types of sentence shall be discussed and illustrated.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

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

- define the sentence;
- identify types of sentence; and
- give types of sentence types.

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 to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Definitions of Sentence

There are different parameters used in defining the sentence. Using the perspective of orthography, a sentence is a group of related words that begin with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. This definition is inadequate as there are some structures that follow this format but are not regarded as sentences, perhaps, due to the error of the writer.

Another perspective from which a sentence can be considered is its position in the grammatical hierarchy. A sentence is the highest grammatical unit of a language. Below it is the clause. From the angle of meaning, a sentence is the unit of grammar that expresses a complete thought/idea. It could be a word or a group of words. This definition is more appropriate than the others, as it focuses on idea and thought.

3.2   Types of Sentence

There are two major approaches to classifying a sentence: form/structure and function.

3.2.1 Classification Based on Structure/Form

Sentence classification based on form/structure considers two parameters:

1.   Number of clauses
2.   Types of clauses

There are four types of sentence based on structure or form:

a.   Simple sentence
b.   Compound sentence
c.   Complex sentence
d.   Compound-complex sentence

Simple Sentence

A simple sentence has a main clause and no subordinate clause. This means that it has only one finite verb.
Examples:

1.   Cocks crow at dawn.
2.   I am not ready for that now.
3.   The man in that room is not committed to thorough scholarship.

4.   I have experienced a lot of disappointment in life.
5.   The man and his concubines are waiting for the man of God.

Compound Sentence

A compound sentence consists of at least two main clauses and no subordinate clause. This implies that it has at least two finite verbs. The clause could be joined by coordinating conjunction, comma, or semi-colon.

Examples:

1.   We have fought and won.
2.   Deborah accepted her fault but she did not apologize.
3.   Molade peeped, saw them, and screamed.
4.   Man proposes; God disposes.
5.   The man has arrived but his wife is yet to come.

Complex Sentence

A complex sentence comprises at least two main clauses and at least a subordinate clause.

Examples:

1.   If you dare me, I will deal with you.
2.   Don't go into marriage unless you are fully prepared.
3.   Because she knew her right, she did not succumb to the man's threat even though nobody encouraged her.
4.   Appreciate people whenever you have the opportunity.
5.   Except you rely on God, your life may be miserable.

Compound-complex sentence

This sentence contains at least a main clause and at least a subordinate clause. In other words, it is a combination of a compound sentence and a complex sentence. A simple way of forming a compound-complex sentence is to add at least a subordinate clause to a compound sentence. Examples:

1.   We entered and sat down although she didn't expect us.
2.   Provided you are serious, I will come and teach you if you invite me.
3.   I can accept you into the group and groom you for the next competition if you are ready to cooperate with us.

4.   Since you have disappointed me once, I am neither willing to partner with you nor recommend you to anybody.
5.   Today I have known the truth and I am eager to change if the conditions on ground are favourable.

3.2.2 Classification Based on Function

This parameter considers the communicative role a sentence plays. There are four types based on this criterion:

a.   Declarative
b.   Imperative
c.   Interrogative
d.   Exclamatory

Declarative Sentence
A declarative sentence makes a statement of fact, which may be true or false, in the negative, or in the positive. Such a sentence may structurally conform to any of the patterns discussed above.

Examples:

1.   We are all gullible.
2.   Nobody knows tomorrow.
3.   We can't rely on people like you.
4.   All of us will soon see that you are a sellout.
5.   The teacher is not to blame for his lack-lustre performance.

Imperative sentence
This sentence gives a command, makes an entreaty or a request. It does not have a covert subject because its subject, which is usually "you," is often deleted because it is understood. Structurally, it could have any of the forms discussed above.

Examples:

1.   Get out of my sight.
2.   Don't ever tell me that again.
3.   May God save us from exploiters.
4.   Let's get out of here immediately.
5.   Never trust a man like him.

Interrogative sentence
This sentence is used for asking questions. It usually ends with a question mark (?). There are different types of interrogative sentence.

1.　　Polar (yes/no) question
2.　　"Wh" type question
3.　　Rhetorical question
4.　　Polite question/mild imperative

Polar (yes/no) question
This question requires a yes or a no response.

Examples:

1.　　Is she ready to marry a poor man?
2.　　Does she know where you are?
3.　　Are we safe here?
4.　　Can you do the work next week?
5.　　Have we seen this car before?

"Wh"-type question

This type of question begins with any of the interrogative pronouns: "what", "why", "when", "where", "whose", "how".

Examples:

1.　　What can I do for you?
2.　　How far can your strength carry you?
3.　　Where did you go yesterday?
4.　　Whose daughter is she?
5.　　Why is she not here now?

Rhetorical question
This type of question is used for only dramatic or emphatic purpose; it does not require any response. It is asked only to establish what is already known or accepted. It is a way of stating the obvious.

Examples:

1.　　Who does not want peace of mind?
2.　　How can one please humans?
3.　　Who is that person that will betray himself?
4.　　Where else can we find refuge?
5.　　What is it that God has not done for us?

Polite question (mild imperative)
This is a command that disguises like a request before disguising as a question. It is an imperative that has been redressed so that it is not bald. It could contain "please".

Examples:

1.   Could you please shut the door?
2.   Shall we pray?
3.   Shall we be on our feet?
4.   Could you post this letter for me?
5.   Shall we proceed to the Vice Chancellor's office?

Exclamatory Sentence
This sentence expresses the strong feeling of a person. It looks like a question because it often begins with interrogative pronoun, but they are different both in form and in function. An exclamatory sentence does not have subject-verb inversion. Besides, it ends with an exclamation mark.

Examples:

1.   What a beautiful lady you are!
2.   How fortunate we are!
3.   What a powerful message it was!
4.   How exceptional you were on that day!
5.   What a disappointment to this generation she is!

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   Differentiate between an exclamatory sentence and an interrogative sentence.
ii.   How is a complex sentence different from a compound-complex sentence?

4.0   CONCLUSION

The sentence is the highest grammatical unit. The various types of sentence can be employed to add flavour to your speech. Try to vary the sentence types you use to prevent the speech from being monotonous. The length of a grammatical structure is not what makes it a sentence. The essentials of a sentence discussed above should be looked out for in the sentences in your speech. The quality of the sentences used in the speech influences the meaning-decoding process. This is why it is important to properly edit the speech before it is delivered.

5.0   SUMMARY

Speech thrives on good sentence construction to have impact. The major classifications of sentence considered in this unit should guide you in

determining the status of your constructions. By now, it should be easier for you to crosscheck your speech for accuracy of constructions.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i.   Give two sentences to illustrate the following types of sentence:

      a.   compound sentence
      b.   imperative sentence
      c.   declarative sentence
      d.   compound-complex sentence
      e.   complex sentence

ii.   Discuss the features of the following sentence types

      a.   complex sentence
      b.   compound-complex sentence
      c.   simple sentence
      d.   compound sentence

iii. Identify the sentences in the conclusion of the unit (Section 4.0 above) based on structure.

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UNIT 3   TENSE, ASPECT AND CONCORD

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Tense, aspect and concord are important concepts in any language. They are pivotal to appropriate use of language. Many users of English as a second language (L_2) often encounter some problems in finding the most appropriate expressions to use in some contexts. A good number of L_2 English users construct expressions that fall far below the required standard. This is because they do not understand the principles guiding the use of concepts such as tense, aspect and concord.

In this unit, these three concepts are examined. The principles guiding the use of each are also discussed; the interconnection among them is also examined.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

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

- define aspect;
- define tense;
- identify types of tense; and
- explain concord.

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 to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Aspect

Aspect is a grammatical category of verbs that considers the quality of the action of the verb independent of the tense. Simply put, aspect means the range of meanings expressed by the verb. In English, aspect is broadly categorised into progressive and perfective aspects. The progressive aspect takes the affix 'ing', while the perfective aspect takes '*have*' (or its derivatives – *has* and *had*. These aspectual expressions combine with other verbal elements to produce different tenses.

3.2   Tense

Tense means the linguistic way of expressing time dimensions. Each language has its own peculiar way of doing this. There are three main time dimensions: **past**, **present**, and **future**. English has three tenses: past, present, and future. However, some scholars have argued that English does not have future tense. They premise their argument on the fact that English does not morphologically show the future tense. We will not go into the argument for or against this view. We will adopt the traditional view that holds that English has three tenses, because it serves well our intension in this course. Each of these tenses could be expressed in four different ways: **simple**, **progressive/continuous**, **perfect**, and **perfect progressive**. To realise these different forms, the verb often takes some inflections, auxiliary verbs, and aspectual markers, as the case may be. Before considering these tenses in some detail, let us examine "aspect."

3.2.1 Present Tense

Simple Present Tense

This tense uses the infinitive (without to) form of the verb. If the subject is third person singular, *s*, *es*, and *ies* are added, as appropriate. This tense is used to express the following:

- Present habitual action

    i.   She *comes* here weekly.
    ii.   They *pray* every night.
    iii. He *fast* weekly.
    iv.   Deborah *sings daily.*
    v.   These people *plan* evil.

- Present occurrence/state of being

    i.   I *know* Wumi.
    ii.   The boy *is* insolent.
    iii. Paul and Peter *are* diligent.
    iv.   Nike is humble.
    v.   They *seem* confused.

- Document literary works, holy books, and constitution.

    i.   In *The Road*, Soyinka *emphasizes* communication.
    ii.   The Bible *presents* God from different angles.
    iii. Our constitution *is* defective.
    iv.   This poem *has* enjambment.
    v.   The novel *makes* a good reading.

- Run commentary

    i.   Now Okocha *is* ready to fire a shot.
    ii.   Kanu *gets* the ball; *passes* it to Aghowa; Aghowa *dribbles* one, dribbles two; *aims* at the post; oh no, over the bar!
    iii. The President *goes* to the lectern to read his address.

- Future occurrence

    i.   Lawale *gets* married next month.
    ii.   The programme *begins* tomorrow.
    iii. The spies *leave* for the place tonight.
    iv.   My examination *holds* soon.
    v.   Our review end next year.

Present Progressive Tense

This tense uses a present auxiliary verb with the present participle form of the main verb. It is used to express the following.

- An ongoing action/event

  i.   We *are reading* our books.
  ii.   Osarume *is waiting* for you.
  iii. Olusayo *is writing* the memo.
  iv.   Pelumi and Yetunde *are dancing* naked.
  v.   Nobody *is cooking* your food.

- A future occurrence

  i.   They *are going* to the altar soon.
  ii.   Our boy *is coming* back next year.
  iii. My friend *is doing* the work tomorrow.
  iv.   We *are planting* the seeds next month.
  v.   Juliana *is presenting* next.

Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense uses the perfective aspectual marker *have* (or *has)* with the past participle form of the verb. This tense is used to express:

An event that has started and has been completed but has not been overtaken by another event

i.   We *have done* the work.
ii.   Ogazie *has eaten* your food.
iii. Ozioma *has written* her dissertation.
iv.   Chioma and Chuka *have* not *seen* the man.
v.   This is the first time that I *have come* here.

Present Perfect Progressive Tense

This tense is a combination of the present progressive tense and the present perfect tense. Therefore, it uses have/has + been + past participle verb to express an event/action that has started and is still in progress as at the time of speaking/writing.

i.   The men *have been praying* for you.
ii.   Jumoke *has been cooking* your food.
iii. Samson *has been reading* the wrong thing.
iv.   They *have been deceiving* you.
v.   Tolulope *has been expecting* Temitayo.

3.2.2 Past Tense

Simple Past Tense

This tense uses the past form of the verb to show:

- Past action
i. Joke *read* the address.
ii. Those boys *brought* the car.
iii. They *hit* the right mark.
Iv. Joshua *went* there.
v. She *did* the evil

- Past habitual action

i. He *used to* go there everyday.
ii. She often *played* the guitar.
iii. He often *did* it.
iv. Damilola usually *served* us.
v. Kate always *followed* that lady.

- Impossible wish

i. If I *were* you, I won't marry her.
ii. If I *were* God, I will kill all evil people.
iii. If you were that boy, you wouldn't have returned that money.
iv. If she were your daughter, she would have catered for you.
v. They will hoard the air, if they controlled life.

Past Progressive Tense

The past progressive tense combines a past auxiliary verb with the present participle form of the main verb to indicate the following.

- An event/action that was going on at a particular time in the past

    i. He *was singing* when I saw him.
    ii. They *were shouting* when we caught them.
    iii. As I *was reading*, they *were planning* how to escape.
    iv. While she *was grinding* the pepper, Yomi *was washing* the pot.
    v. Nifemi and Abiodun *were sweeping* the floor while Tunde and Bidemi *were playing*.
- Past habitual action/relationship
    i. Sayo and Gbemisola *were* always *reading* together last year.

ii.   He *was* always *taking* that lady out last month.
iii.   Kunle *was usually singing* that anthem.
iv.   The boys *were* always *waiting* for you there.
v.   I *was* always *praying* for two hours daily

- Impossible wish

  i.   If pen *were talking* yours would have protested.
  ii.   If humans *were flying*, I would have got home now.
  iii.   If doors *were crying*, that door would have cried uncontrollably

Past Perfect Tense

This tense makes use of *had* and the past progressive form of the main verb to express the following.

- Indicate a past action that took place before another past action

  i.   No sooner *had* he *gone* than I arrived.
  ii.   She *had slept* before I prayed.
  iii.   I thought you *had paid* her.
  iv.   Nobody *had attempted* this before your arrival.
  v.   When I arrived they had slept.

- Express regret

  i.   If I *had known* I would have stayed.
  ii.   *Had* he *come,* we would have protected him.
  iii.   If you *had been told,* you wouldn't have left.
  iv.   She would have not married you if she *had known* your secret.
  v.   The girls wouldn't have undressed if they *had known* you plan.

Past Perfect Progressive Tense

This tense uses had + been + past participle verb to show an action/event that had started and was in progress before another past action.

i.   They *had been singing* before they joined our choir.
ii.   We *had been praying* here before you built your church.
iii.   They *had been packing* the belongings before we stopped them.
iv.   Everybody *had been writing* the play before you met them.
v.   Similolu *had been laughing* before you came in.

3.2.3 Future Tense

Future occurrences can be expressed using either the simple present tense or the present progressive tense, as mentioned earlier. However, by a combination of will/shall and other auxiliary verbs with the main verb different future tenses can be derived.

Simple Future Tense
This tense uses will/shall with the main verb to express an incident or action that is expected to take place in the future.
i.   I *will* not *go* there.
ii.   She *will meet* us.
iii.   They *shall help* us.
iv.   Dayo *will try* that option.
v.   The boy *will run* away.

Future Progressive Tense
This tense employs will/shall and 'be' as auxiliary verbs before the main verb. The tense expresses an event or action that is expected to be taking place at a given time in the future.

i.   I *shall be going* to Lagos next week
ii.   She *will be addressing* the press tomorrow.
iii.   Tomipe *will be completing* her programme next year.
iv   All of them *shall be waiting* for you there.
v.   My sister *will be getting* married next Saturday.

Future Perfect Tense

The future perfect tense deploys shall/ will+have+been as auxiliary verb before the past participle form of the main verb. It indicates an event or action that is expected to have been completed at a particular time in the future.
i.   The guilty lawyers *will have been derobed* by this time next month.
ii.   Yemi *shall have been given* the award by 7:30 pm tomorrow.
iii.   Tofunmi *will have been crowned* the queen by this time today.
iv.   Our lecturer *shall have been appointed* by this time next week.
v.   Those ladies *will have been discovered* by this time next year.

Future Perfect Progressive Tense

The future perfect tense deploys shall/ will+have+been as auxiliary verb before the present participle form of the main verb. It indicates an action or event that is expected to have started and be in progress at a given time in the future.

i.   Tricia *will have been taking* her final examination by this time next month.
ii.   The students *shall have been clearing* your office by 9.00 am tomorrow.
iii. We *shall have been discussing* with the president by 2.00pm next Monday.
iv.   Funke *shall have been feeding* the chicken by this time tomorrow.
v.   Those boys *will have been doing* the assignment by this time on Wednesday.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   What is tense?
ii.   What is aspect?
iii. Differentiate between tense and aspect.

3.3   Concord

Concord is the grammatical notion used to denote the agreement among the components of a sentence.

3.3.1 Subject-Verb Agreement

There are two main types of concord: **grammatical concord** and **notional concord**.

Grammatical Concord

This is the concord that strictly adheres to the principle of the verb agreeing with the subject.

- A singular subject takes a singular verb.

    i.   The leader of the boys *is* around.
    ii.   She *knows* me.
    iii. Theophilus *cares*.
    iv.   The man *sings* well.
    v.   Bolu *fights* a lot.

- A plural subject takes a plural verb.

    i.   The minutes *have* been adopted.
    ii.   We *are* ready.
    iii. Our governors *are* corrupt.
    iv.   Many people *deceive* themselves.
    v.   We *need* a good leader.

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- A compound subject that is plural in meaning takes a plural verb.

  i.   The man and his wife *are* around.
  ii. Seun and Sola *follow* us.
  iii. The boy and the girl *are* unserious.
  iv. That man and his friend *control* the children.
  v.   Our teacher and his daughter *play* the keyboard.

- Indefinite pronouns used as subjects take singular verbs.

  i.   Nobody *cares* for you.
  ii. Everybody *sees* them.
  iii. Something *is* missing.
  iv. Everything *is* wrong with you.
  v.   Nothing *stops* you from going there.

Notional Concord
This is concerned with the idea being expressed; grammatical markers are set aside in this case.

- "A number --- " takes a plural verb.

  i.   A number of boys are missing.
  ii. A number of us *are* insensitive.
  iii. A number of books *were* lost last week.
  iv. A number of magazines *are* biased.
  v.   A number of ladies *want* good husbands.

  But "The number ---" takes a singular verb.

  i.   The number of my cars *is* now twenty-two.
  ii. The number of his enemies *has* increased.
  iii. The number of our departments *has* reduced.
  iv. The number of her grammatical errors *has* not decreased.
  v.   The number of their friends is three.

- "One of ---" takes a singular verb.

  i.   One of the ladies *is* beautiful.
  ii. One of the men *is* around.
  iii. One of the cars *has* been stolen.
  iv. One of the eggs *is* rotten.
  v.   One of the rogues *has* apologized.

- "One of --- who/whom/that etc. ---" takes a plural verb after the relative pronoun and a singular verb for the main clause.

  i.   One of the girls who *follow* him *is* a Ghanaian.
  ii.   One of the women who *respect* us *has* travelled.
  iii. One of the cars which *are* red *belongs* to me.
  iv.   One of our sisters who *tell* stories *is* in London.
  v.   One of your friends who *believe* in hard work *knows* you.

- "Many a/an ---" takes a singular verb.

  i.   Many a teacher *is* lazy.
  ii.   Many a politician *is* corrupt.
  iii. Many a lady *is* gullible.
  iv.   Many a pastor *is* fake.
  v.   Many a driver *is* incompetent.

- Measurements of time, weight, capacity take a singular verb, because each   measurement is seen as a unit.

  i.   Thirty minutes *is* enough for this exercise.
  ii.   Four litres of petrol *was* wasted.
  iii. Seventy kilogrammes of pork *has* been brought.
  iv.   Twelve kilogrammes of garri *is* in your cupboard.
  v.   Thirty-four litres of palm oil is missing

- A compound subject that is singular in meaning takes a singular verb.

  i.   Rice and beans *is* good for lunch.
  ii.   Bejide and Sons *is* selling shares.
  iii. Akinola and Associates *is* handling the case.
  iv.   Dambaba and Sons *helps* northerners.
  v.   Agnes and Co. *is* ready to assist us.

- When "in collaboration with", "together with" etc. are used after a subject, the verb still agrees with the subject.

  i.   The president, in company of his ministers, *comes* here today.
  ii.   Our church, in collaboration with NTA and AIT, *organizes* a two-day marriage seminar.
  iii. The man, in company of his friends, *is* going to the pastor.
  iv.   James, alongside the three of us, *is* planning the reception.
  v.   The pastor, in conjunction with the media houses in the state, *is* planning the rally.

- When a premodifier is used for a coordinated subject, a singular verb follows.

  i.   The founder and pastor of the church *is* too dubious.
  ii   The father and mentor of Kunle *is* a disciplinarian.
  iii. My friend and confidant *knows* you.
  iv.   Her teacher and sponsor *hates* her.
  v.   Your trainer and captain trusts you.

- When a correlative conjunction is used, the subject close to the main verb dictates the verb to be used.

  i.   Neither you nor I am guilty.
  ii.   Either the man or his concubines *have* contracted that disease.
  iii. Either the boys or the girl keeps the record.
  iv.   Neither the commissioners nor the governor has seen this.
  v.   Neither Thomas nor his antagonists speak the truth.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Paying closer attention to the principles guiding the use of certain linguistic concepts will help us express our views in an intelligible way. As a good speechwriter, get acquainted with how to use concepts like tense, aspect, and concord. This will enrich your speech.

There are other types of agreement in language, such as pronoun-antecedent agreement. We have focused on only subject-verb agreement in this unit because most of the principles that apply to subject-verb agreement could assist other types of agreement.

Understanding aspect, tense and concord is crucial for effective language use. When the right tense is not used, different interpretations can be given to the sentence. Pay particular attention to tense shift in the same sentence and the same paragraph. If the shift is inappropriate, avoid it.

5.0   SUMMARY

Three cardinal concepts: tense, aspect, and concord, have engaged the attention of this unit. The discussion centres on the way aspect assists tense, and how both influence concord. Some rules of concord have also been given. These rules are not to be memorised. Rather, they are to guide you in the way you construct sentences. The next unit will show you how to use language effectively.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i.   Differentiate between grammatical concord and notional concord.
ii.   Discuss the various ways future occurrences can be expressed in English.
iii.   Explain how the knowledge of concord can assist a speechwriter.
iv.   Explain the concord rules that address singular subjects.
v.   Discuss the use of the present tense.
vi.   How is the past tense used?
vii.   Discuss the concord rules that treat plural subjects.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4   CONCISION IN SPEECH WRITING

CONTENTS

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to know sentence types and construct appropriate sentences. Some activities should be performed while the speech is being written and even after it has been written. These activities are meant to make the speech suitable for the audience. A good speechwriter will say exactly what he/she want to say in the clearest and most economical manner. In this unit, we shall consider concision in speech writing, paying particular attention to things to achieve concision in speech.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

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

- define concision in speech;
- explain what deadwood is; and
- explain how to achieve emphasis in speech

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 to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Concision

According to Kane and Peters (1966:3), communication occurs when one successfully uses words (or some other set of signs) to reveal one's mind to other people, honestly and clearly. Communication must be distinguished from manipulation, which is using words in order to make people do what one wants without revealing what is really in one's mind.

Concision and brevity are closely related but they are different. Brevity is absolute, while concision is relative. Concision is therefore brevity relative to purpose. If the number of the words in a sentence could be reduced without changing the substance of its meaning, such a sentence is not concise (Kane & Peters, 1966:281).

3.1.1 Deadwood

This refers to any structure that is not essential to the meaning the writer has in mind. According to Kane and Peters (1996:284), deadwood arises through the following.

1.   The fallacy of verbal profundity: This is the notion that just because an expression looks profound it must say something. This is a false sense of what is significant.
2.   The desire to endow a mundane subject with a heightened dignity or elegance/false elegance.
3.   Confusion about what one's point really is.
4.   Ignorance or vocabulary limitation, particularly as regards registers.
5.   Excessive caution; not being certain: This reflects in expressions like 'it seems'; it 'appears'.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   What is concision in speech?
ii.   Define deadwood.

3.2   Achieving Emphasis in the Sentence

A speechwriter needs to construct his/her sentences in such a way that his/her emphasis is clear. This will help the reader not make mistakes concerning the emphasis of the speech. Emphasis in sentence could be general or special. General emphasis could be achieved in the following ways.

1.   Imperative sentence
2.   Short sentence
3.   Inverted sentence
4.   Convoluted sentence
5.   Participatory construction
6.   Period sentence
7.   Fragment
8.   Rhetorical question
9.   Syntactic repetition
10.   Negative – positive restatement
11.   Parataxis
(Kane & Peters, 1966:312-330)

Imperative sentence
Imperative sentences are inherently emphatic. However, a major problem with them is that if they are not redressed, they are impolite and may thus affect the relationship between you and your audience.

- Do not follow corrupt leaders.
- Do not accept that offer.
- Keep away from them.
- Do not defend her.

The imperative sentences above may be seen as impolite some people. However, by adding please to them, they could be made less bald.

- Please, do not follow corrupt leaders.
- Please, do not accept that offer.
- Please, keep away from them.
- Please, do not defend her.

Short sentence
Short sentences are easier to comprehend and often stay in the mind of the reader longer. They are more effective when they contain vivid imagery. However, the entire speech should not be made up of only short sentences. Vary the sentences, depending on your audience and the purpose of the speech.

Inverted sentence
This could be in form of rearranging the subject-verb-object (SVO) order, and/or moving the adverbial forward.

- In front of you lies the answer.
- Tomorrow, done is the deed.
- This I will do.

- In God, we rely.
- Faithful I will remain until my husband comes back.

Convoluted sentence

This involves inserting a subordinate construction into the middle of a main clause. The inserted element is like an afterthought.

- By helping you, even though you don't deserve it, we have proved our love for you;
- Reading their countenance, he left hurriedly.
- You, among all other things, should learn to appreciate God.
- She will, every other thing being equal, survive your schemes.

Anticipatory construction
The sentence begins with structure, which anticipates the actual subject, which is pushed to the end (Kane & Peters, 1996:318).

- It was our undoing – giving them the code
- It was your aloofness that we targeted.

Periodic sentence
This is a sentence in which the thought is not completed until the end of the sentence (Kane & Peters, 1966:318). It does not demand inversion, anticipation or interruption. It may involve delaying the action of the subject by giving full details of the subject.

- Considering your unseriousness, which has seriously affected your progress in life, we cannot help you.
- Our plan, which has jolted our enemies, will be unravelled soon.

Fragment
This construction does not satisfy the conventional definition of a sentence.

- Desperate. Bold. Unrepentantly committed to the vision. As he moved toward the hillside, he fired several shots to the air.

This kind of construction is often found in literary text. However, they can be used in speech to achieve some stylistic effects. This does not, however, mean that the speech should be full of such kind of construction.

Syntactic repetition
This is repetition of the same sentence or clausal construction. It is akin to parallelism.

- He has seen the inexplicable. He has tasted the uneatable. He has approached the unapproachable. He has done the unfathomable.

Negative-positive restatement
This involves saying that something "is not X but is Y."

- It is not that we are tired but rather that we are unwilling.
- She is not the leader but she is ready to champion the cause.

Parataxis
This is the putting together of words or constructions instead of using a conjunction to join them.

- They are hungry; they didn't ask for help
- To err is human; to forgive is divine.
- Man proposes; God disposes.
- United we stand; divided we fall.

3.2.1 Other Ways of Achieving Emphasis

Apart from these general ways of achieving emphasis, there are some special ways of achieving emphasis. Kane & Peters (1966:320-334) identifies the following forms of special emphasis.

1. Positioning
2. Isolation
3. Repetition
4. Balance and antithesis
5. Use of modifiers
6. Polysyndeton and asyndeton
7. Ellipsis

Positioning
This involves putting the item to be emphasised in the sentence-initial or sentence-final positions. This is to make it conspicuous, but they could also be in any part of the sentence

- Certainly, I will see you.
- You will get the job, definitely
- I agree with you, absolutely.
- She will not greet somebody here, Faderera.

Isolation
This involves cutting an item from the movement of the sentence. It could be at any position in the sentence. The major difference between isolation and positioning is that isolation, in most cases, results from interrupted movement.

- Nobody, *disciplined and focused,* will marry such a lady.
- We know what we they want, *a bribe*.

Repetition
This has to do with repeating the important idea in the sentence. The main intention is to make the idea last in the memory of the audience.

- Gentlemen are no longer gentle.
- Our honourables must behave as honourables.
- He is a speaker that cannot speak for himself.

Balance and Antithesis
A balanced sentence splits into two roughly equal halves. When the balanced terms form a sharp contrast, they are called *antithesis*. (Kane & Peters, 1966:328).

- We worked, but they slept.
- Honesty pays; dishonesty ruins.

Use of modifiers
Modifiers serve as intensifiers. Examples are *great*, *so*, *very*, *much*, *terribly furiously*. They assist in giving the degree of the action being described by the verb.

- We were *so* astonished that we lost concentration.
- She was *terribly* hurt by his former lover.
- Seun *furiously* left the occasion.
- Timothy likes women *too* much.

Polysyndeton and Asyndeton
Polysyndeton is a method of listing items and separating each item by **and** (with or without a comma before each **and**). The emphasis thus falls equally and heavily on each item. **Asyndeton** is a method of using no coordinating word between the items; they are separated only by a comma or semicolon. The stress is lighter here than in polysyndeton.

- He came and read and disappeared.
- He came, read, disappeared.

Ellipsis

This is omission of some word. The words removed must be recoverable from the rest of the sentence, particularly before the word omitted. This is the only way by which the audience can make meaning of the sentence.

- The man helped the girls and the woman the boys
- They were honoured and we disgraced.

Mechanical Devices

Device like capitalisation, italicisation, underlining, emboldening can be used to foreground some items in the sentences. This will make the attention of the audience to be quickly drawn to such expression.

- You have to **monitor** them.
- The boy has a **father.**
- The men and women here know **nothing**.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Concision is not easy to achieve for a verbose writer. It is not the number of words used in a speech that makes it effective. Shortness of sentences relative to purpose is a virtue in speech writing. Conscious efforts need to be made to cut out irrelevant items from the speech. This can also be achieved by enriching your vocabulary, so that you can say many things with few words. This is what most poets do. This does not, however, mean that you turn the speech to a poem. Read good materials and learn new words to make you have many alternative ways of expressing the same thing.

Effectiveness in speech writing comes in different ways, one of which is concision in language use. It is not only good points that make good speech. Appropriate language, concisely deployed, makes the ideas easy for the audience to identify. The audience must be borne in mind at every stage of the writing endeavour.

5.0   SUMMARY

This unit has discussed ways of achieving concision in speech. It emphasises the need to avoid deadwoods in speech. The major claim of this unit is that wordiness adds no value to a speech. Word economy relative to purpose is the hallmark of good speech. The next unit will address issues related to this.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i.   State the effects of deadwood on speech.
ii.   Discuss what constitute deadwood in writing.
iii.   List and explain six way of achieving emphasis in a speech.
iv.   Explain the ways of achieving special emphasis in speech.
v.   Discuss the effectiveness of fragments and periodic sentences.

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UNIT 5   FINE-TUNING THE SPEECH

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
         3.1   Techniques of Fine-Tuning the Speech
         3.2   Features of Effective Diction
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5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0   INTRODUCTION

Effectiveness in speech relies on the linguistic choices made by the writer. Language is made up of many systems. This affords the language users the opportunity of making choices out of the alternatives that the language provides. The choices made should be informed by many factors. Most prominent of these are the audience and the topic. Before the speech is written and after it has been written, some steps can be taken to fine-tune it. This is a form of packaging, which could influence the reception of the speech.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the techniques of fine-tuning the speech; and
- explain how to achieve effectiveness in diction.

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   Techniques of Fine-Tuning the Speech

The speech can be fine-tuned using the following techniques.

1.   **Use parallel structure**: These are grammatical structures that have similar structure/patterns. Examples:

   - He believes in fighting injustice and ensuring decency.
   - Boys will help you on the farm. Girls will stay at home. Both of them will assist you in life.

2.   **Use active verbs**: Except you want to deliberately obfuscate the agent, use active verbs to state your points, particularly on topic sentence. This is because "the main points should be a key source of forward motion throughout your speech" (Powers 1993:109).

3.   **Use key word labels**: To make the audience remember easily the points that are associated with the key words, use brief key word names to each of the main points.

4.   **Use mnemonic devices:** A mnemonic device is a formula or pattern meant to help aid memory. *Acronyms, alliteration, alphabetical succession* are useful mnemonic devices (Powers, 1993:111). Acronyms are the initial letters of a name that could be pronounced as a single word. Examples include the characteristics of living things shortened to NIGER D (Movement, Respiration, Nutrition, Irritability, Growth, Excretion, Reproduction, Death) and NOUN (National Open University of Nigeria). Alliteration is the repetition of the initial sounds in a line. Below are further examples:

   a. Acronyms:

   Operation PUSH

   Pray
   Until
   Something
   Happens

b. Alliteration:

These are the three F's of his life:
Fame
Favour
Faith

c. Alphabetical succession

These are the ABC of success:

ASPIRE to greatness.
BELIEVE in yourself.
CONCENTRATE on your plans.

5.   **Avoid using sexist pronouns:** Some people now see the use of masculine pronouns he/him/his as male linguistic domination and a form of male chauvinism. This has often created confusion. Although some people who use these masculine pronouns claim that they use them in the generic sense, many feminist do not agree with this. There are three main alternatives:

        1.   Using she/he, s/he, or he/she: Some female writers prefer mentioning she before he. For example, "Everyone should mind her/his business."
        2.   Use of plural third person pronoun: they, them, their
            Everyone should mind their business.
            Even *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2010) use *them*, *their*, and *they* for indefinite pronouns.
        3.   Use of *you*
            When *you* are ready, *you* can take *your* portion.
        4.   Use of one, one's, and oneself
            One should cater for one's family.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

i.   What is fine-tuning the speech?
ii.   What is the relevance of fine-tuning the speech?

3.2   Effective Diction

Words are building blocks for both spoken and written communication. The words an individual chooses constitute that persons diction. The effectiveness of verbal communication depends on the effectiveness of diction. Some people say or write what they do not mean, while some people mean what they do not say or write. Any natural and living

language has countless words from which utterances are made. These words have different meaning relations, such as synonymy, antonymy, and hyponymy, among others.

A language user faces the task of choosing the words that adequately capture his/her ideas. This task is not as simple as it appears, as language is not a perfect vehicle for conveying human thoughts; there are certain thoughts that words in the language cannot sufficiently represent (Kane & Peters, 1966:518). This being the situation, a language user has to carefully choose words that adequately convey his/her intention. This choice depends on the temperament of the writer, the context, purpose of writing, and the audience (Kane & Peters, 1966:518; Winterowd1975:396; Mills, 1996:207).

3.2.1 What Makes Effective Diction

Effective diction has certain features. Some of them are examined below.

Clarity
Kane and Peters (1967:518) claim that if a reader understands a word in the sense in which the writer has used it, such a word is clear. A language user must avoid ambiguity as much as possible. If you lack adequate knowledge of the subject you are addressing, you are likely to make the whole issue unclear. If you do not have adequate knowledge of the subject, do not write on it. If you have already commenced writing on such a subject, stop and make further research before you continue writing. As much as the subject permits, a language user should use concrete terms instead of abstract terms to express such subject. Always consider your audience. Any word that will unduly task the brain of the decoder should be avoided. There is no sense in using big words that will obscure the meaning being conveyed. A good writer will revise his/her writing many times, using the dictionary when necessary, to ensure that obscurity is virtually non-existent. Let us consider the structures below.

i.   The incongruity and inexplicability of your points jarred and astonished me.
ii.   They were flabbergasted, scandalised and inundated by her overtures.
        The sentences above could be said in clearer ways, such as:
iii.   The strangeness of your points worried me.
iv.   Her overtures shocked them.

Except when it is necessary, do not use euphemism. If plainer words will not hurt the feeling of the audience, you do not need to use euphemism. For instance, it is better to address prostitutes as **commercial sex workers**, and **disabled people** as **physically challenged people**. The most important thing is to ensure that the truth is not concealed. This requires tact and the ability to determine when a word should be used.

Suitability

It is not every word that is suitable for every context. There are no two words that are exactly the same in meaning, just as there are no two words that are exactly opposite in meaning. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the collocation of a word before using it. Some people just use the thesaurus, thinking that they can just substitute one word for another and still retain the original meaning of the text. This is not always the case. Some sets of synonyms are given below to illustrate this point.

A   entertainment
           relaxation
           pleasure
           amusement
           fun
           play
           recreation
           enjoyment

B   effect
           result
           consequence
           outcome
           repercussion

C   essential
           vital
           crucial
           critical
           decisive
           indispensable

All the words in **set A** could be used for activities or things meant for entertaining people when they are not working. However, they are used in different contexts. **Fun** is rather informal; **amusement** contains **pleasure** and **entertainment**; both **recreation** and **relaxation** have some **enjoyment**; **play** is usually used for children; while entertainment combines interest with amusement.

The five words in **set B** could be used to indicate a thing that is caused because of something else. However, **consequence** and **repercussion** have negative connotations. The others could be used to indicate both positive and negative effects.

Anybody or anything that is extremely important and completely necessary because a particular activity or situation depends on such could be described using any of the words in set C. **Essential** and **vital** have roughly the same meaning and could be used with the same nouns and structures. However, there is difference in the tone of each. "Essential" is better used when stating a fact or an opinion with authority. "Vital" is better used when there is a need to persuade somebody that an opinion or a fact is essential, or when there is anxiety about something. Besides, vital is seldom found in negative structures. **Critical** and **crucial** also have virtually the same meaning and could be found in the same structures. However, crucial is particularly tied to matters that may lead to anxiety and other emotions, while crucial is particularly tied to technical matters of science and business. **Decisive** is linked with the result of a given situation, while **indispensable** is not tied to any stage of the existence of any concept.

The foregoing explanation also holds for antonyms. It is, therefore, essential to know the denotation and connotation of a word before using such a word. The denotation of a word refers to the specific entity or concept it signifies or names, while its connotation refers to the feelings, attitudes, or associations it conveys (Hefferman & Lincoln, 1982:136-137).

Simplicity
Being simple is different from being simplistic. To be simple means to be plain and natural, while to be simplistic means to try to make something appear less complicated than it actually is. The subject, tone, purpose, and audience determine the simplicity of diction. Even a highly technical subject could be presented in a way that people outside the professional or disciplinary enclave of the subject will still be able to decode the message without having to unnecessarily strain their brains. A good writer/speaker does not have to use words because s/he does not want to be seen as a naive writer/speaker. The genius in you is shown by your ability to simplify complex ideas. Complex writing is a celebration of self. It is more sensible to use simple language to express either simple or complex ideas than to use complex language to express either simple or complex ideas. If the meaning of your message will not be watered down, use few jargons. You impress no one, except ordinary minds, by using gobbledygook. There are occasions when you just have to use some technical terms. The excerpts below from Sam Ejike Okoye's "Scientists achieve revolutionary breakthrough in remote

control of brain" illustrate the ability to simplify a technical subject and still maintain the technicalities of the profession.

Excerpt A

> You see the image in your brain; you do not directly see the sky outside the window. In practice, light from the sky must reach the eyes from outside. This light passes to the small sight centre located at the back of the brain after the cells in the eyes transform it into electrical signals. It is these electrical signals which form the picture in the brain. A nerve cell is an electrical entity. Its membrane is normally charged like a battery, to about a tenth of a volt. Nerve cells communicate using electric pulses, which arise when the voltage across the membrane briefly leaps from minus 0.07 volts to around plus 0.04 volts.

Excerpt B

> That spike of excitation races down the tendrils of the neuron until it reaches the ends, where it jumps across synapses to set up new waves of excitement in neighbouring cells.
> (*The Guardian*, Thursday, August 9, 2007)

In the first excerpt, the writer describes how light the eye perceives rays. He does this without mentioning medical jargons such as retina, iris, pupil, and cerebrum. Yet the passage retains the features of a scientific description. However, in the second excerpt, he has to use some neurological terms, such as neuron and synapses. Let us try to present these terms as they appear in the passage in other ways:

> That spike of excitation races down the tendrils of the basic unit of the brain until it reaches the ends, where it jumps across the junctions between neurons to set up new waves of excitement in neighbouring cells.

This rendition is unnecessarily wordy and does not make the two concepts explained anyway, better understood by anybody who does not already know what neurons and synapses mean. It is, thus, more sensible to retain them the way the writer has done.

Simplicity in diction enhances the understanding of a text. It also shows intelligence, ability to sieve the lexicon to pick the right word, diligence, and ultimately, consideration of the audience. A good language user knows that there is no how elusive or challenging a concept is that it "cannot be rendered reasonably clear and enjoyable for an audience. The

failure to do so means only one thing ultimately: the writer does not care about his audience being enclosed in a mere ego-trip" (Palmer, 1993:6).

Economy
Wordiness characterises the speech and writing of many people. Just as wasting resources is bad, so is wasting words. If there is the need to write a long sentence, for it to be effective, it must not contain any dead weight (a short sentence too should not contain dead weight).Verbosity comes in different ways. The major ones are examined below.

Tautology: This is a structure which contains at least a redundant word.

Examples include:
1.   most unique
2.   more faster
3.   armed bandit
4.   reverse back
5.   should in case
6.   letter-headed paper
7.   night vigil
8.   wake keep(ing)

We hear these expressions in day-to-day conversations. Let us examine each of them carefully to see the superfluous item(s).

1.   A unique entity is the only one of its kind. This implies that it is incomparable. Therefore, the use of the superlative marker 'most' is redundant.

   •   Our school is unique.

   Not

   •   Our school is the most unique.

   This explanation also applies to 'most superior'. It cannot be compared; what is superior is superior.

   •   He is superior to you.

   Not

   •   He is more superior than you/he is most superior to you.

2. The comparative form of some disyllabic and polysyllabic adjectives and adverbs is derived by adding the word more, for example, 'more faithful', 'more beautiful'. However, many adjectives and adverbs form their comparative forms by adding 'er'. One of such words is **fast**. Its comparative form is **faster**. Adding 'more' to it is saying "more more fast."

    • Kola is faster than Lola.

    Not

    • Kola is more faster than Lola.

3. Bandit means a member of an armed group of thieves who attack travellers. The use of armed to pre-modify it is unnecessary. This error arises, perhaps, from treating 'bandit' like 'robber'. A robber may not necessarily be armed. This is why it is pre-modified if it involves some violence.

    • The bandit has been arrested.

    Not

    • The armed bandit has been arrested.

4. Reverse means to move backwards; it already contains back.

    • You need to reverse

    Not

    • You need to reverse back.

5. Both **should** and **in case** are used to indicate the possibility of something happening.

    • In case I arrive late, you can start the service.

    Not

    • Should in case I arrive late, you can start the service.

6. A letterhead is the name and address of a person, a company or an organisation printed at the top of writing paper; or stationery printed with such a heading.

- I need two copies of your letterhead.
Not

- I need two of your letterhead papers.

7. Vigil is a period of time when people stay awake, especially at night, to pray or to keep watch. The use of night with it is often unnecessary.

    - My mother kept a vigil at Tolu's bedside.

    Not

    - My mother kept a night vigil at Tolu's bedside.

    - Our prayer vigil holds next week.

    Not

    - Our night vigil holds next week.

8. **Wake** means night spent keeping watch over a dead person's body before it is buried.

    - The Christian wake for the man was successful.

    Not

    - The Christian wake-keep(ing) for the man was successful.

Clichés

Clichés are expressions that have lost their potency and currency because they have been over-used. The use of clichés in speech or writing shows laziness and lack of innovativeness. Language is living and dynamic. There are new combinations of words that could better express whatever ideas we want to express with clichés. The list of clichés is inexhaustible, as new ones join the list regularly. Below are some examples.

- Overemphasized
- More often than not
- Every nook and cranny
- All hands must be on deck
- By and large
- Epoch-making occasion

- Leave no stone unturned

Try to inject liveliness into your speech/writing; do not bore your audience with clichés.

Circumlocution

This involves using more words than necessary. At times, it involves using a phrase for a single word. Consider these examples:

1. a. Chinyere did it in a careful manner.
    b. Chinyere did it carefully.

2. a. Just give me a call.
    b. Just call me.

3   a. The reason for his marrying her is his desire to satisfy his sexual urge.
    b. He married her because of sex.

4   a. To say that good road networking is essential for national development is to   say the obvious.
    b. It is obvious that good road networking is essential for national development.

5   a. The first citizen of our country advocates equality before the law.
    b. Our president advocates equality before the law.

The second structure in each example is shorter and more pungent than the first. While it is true that circumlocution has some stylistic effects, it should be used only if there is no other effective way of expressing your ideas.

Relative Clauses

Relative clauses that have better and shorter alternatives should be avoided; they make the expression in which they occur avoidably long and boring. Consider these structures:

1   a. The man who appointed himself the leader of the club has arrived.
    b. The self-appointed leader of the club has arrived.

2   a. He does not want to be the only one who will be duped.
    b. He does not want to be the only dupe.

This does not mean that using relative clauses is bad; if the relative clause is indispensable in a particular construction, you may retain it.

Dummy Subjects

Dummy subjects, like the referential **there** and the existential **it** make sentences unnecessarily long. They should be avoided as much as possible. However, they are sometimes effective as the opening of paragraphs. Some examples are given below.

1   a.   There are few students who are indolent.
         b.   Few students are indolent.

2   a.   There were many politicians who felt cheated.
         b.   Many politicians felt cheated.

3   a   It was that man who raped Titi.
         b.   That man raped Titi.

4   a.   It is this house that I want.
         b.   I want this house.

The second structure in each example above is better.

Fake Introduction

Some expressions make your language unattractive. Some of them show lack of nerve in expressing one's intention. It is better to go straight to what you intend to say. Trying to be needlessly modest achieves no meaningful effect. One should not be arrogant or too blunt in language use. However, one should not add burden to one's expressions in the name of modesty. The expressions below illustrate perambulating in language use.

1.   a.   It is note-worthy that we are suffering.
            Simply say:
         b.   We are suffering

2.   From some points of view
            This expression is indefinite; state the exact point of view.

3.   a.   What is being said is that we need your assistance.
            Simply say:
         b.   We need your assistance.

4.   a.   It can be concluded that the car is bad.
            Simply say:
        (b) The car is bad.

Some of these expressions are unspecific; they do not show that the writer is serious.

4.0   CONCLUSION

The four features of effective diction (clarity, suitability, simplicity and economy) discussed above help to make any text emphatic and pungent. Effective communication is not a mere show of your vocabulary; it involves a careful selection of words, bearing in mind their collocations, and the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships they have with one another. Any language user that has no consideration for his/her audience will not be able to communicate effectively.

Much of the misunderstanding people have arise from misconstruction, which is a product of ineffective diction. Never think that the more complex your diction is the more the respect you command from your audience. A writer that specialises in using complex diction will not enjoy wide readership. The situation is even worse for a speaker who uses such diction. Diction that lacks any of these features can be said to be deficient. It affects the subject and the audience. It can render the subject meaningless, just as it can bore the audience. Enshrouding your language in mystery is counter-productive. It defeats the primary purpose of communication: effective conveyance of ideas. No matter how lofty your ideas are you can sacrifice them on the altar of bad diction, if care is not taken.

What has been presented here is meant to guide the writer. In whatever you write, ensure that your ideas are clearly presented to your audience; you do not write for its sake. Writing is meant to be consumed; therefore, cater well for the consumer. Always bear this in mind that:

> No subject is so elusive or challenging that it cannot be rendered reasonably clear and enjoyable or an audience. The failure to do so means only one thing ultimately: the writer doesn't care about his audience, being enclosed in a mere ego-trip.
> (Palmer, 1993:6)

Proper editing is very useful in language use. Spend quality time on the editing of your work. You may also contract a professional editor to do this for you. Good ideas can be slaughtered on the altar of bad expressions. There is no excuse for using bad language. No matter how urgent it is to prepare a speech, do not present an unedited speech. If you do, you may lose your reputation and most people will not accept the excuse that the errors are due to the short time you have. It is better to present something short but well edited than to present a long but unedited speech.

5.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to the need to fine-tune your speech. You have also been presented with some practical ways of doing this. Some expressions used to illustrate the points made are targeted towards making you see the need to be a meticulous writer. In the next module, you will be exposed to some remarkable speeches in order to see how some of the points we have been discussing relate to actual speeches.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

i.   Differentiate between being simple and being simplistic in language use.
ii.   Discuss how to ensure economy in language use.
iii.   How can a writer ensure clarity of expression?
iv.   What does suitability of language mean?
v.   How can a speech be fine-tuned?

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