

## **MODULE 1      THE ENGLISH SENTENCE**

Unit 1	Structural Problems
Unit 2	Sentence Connection
Unit 3	Subject-Verb Agreement
Unit 4	Agreement of Pronoun with Antecedent
Unit 5	Coordination
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### **UNIT 1      STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS**

This unit will present the structural problems of an English sentence. You will learn the possible things that can go wrong with an English sentences and how to avoid them in sentence construction. The unit is arranged as follows:

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#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

In this unit, we shall examine possible structural problems of an English sentence. This is to say that we shall identify what can go wrong in a sentence, resulting in a sentence that does not convey the intended sense. The most common of such problems include wrong use of parallel structures, construction of sentences that lack one of the essential parts, wrong use or placement of modifiers and situations where sentences have more than one interpretation.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the structural problems of an English sentence;
- correct the problems identified; and
- construct correct sentences.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Parallelism

‘When words or word groups perform the same function in the sentence, we say that they are in parallel form’ (Oluikpe, Iwundu and Ngwagba, 1981, p.103) Parallel forms are used for writing words or word groups of identical grammatical forms when they appear in a series. Parallel structures help to emphasise the grammatical and logical relationships of the ideas that are expressed. Also, parallel grammatical structures reinforce one’s thought by stressing the importance of the various sentence elements. Many of the famous phrases in English exemplify effective use of parallel structures as in the following examples:

1. Democracy is a government *of the people, by the people and for the people* (three prepositional phrases)
2. What people value most are: life, liberty and happiness (three nouns)
3. Give me a helping hand or go away (two imperatives)
4. Early *to bed* and early *to rise* makes a man *healthy, wealthy and wise*. (two infinitives, three adjectives)
5. I came, I saw, I conquered (three sentences).
6. To be or not to be, that is the question (two infinitives)
7. Friends, brothers, sisters let us reason together (three nouns).

To produce effective sentences containing parallel forms one must make verbs, nouns, pronouns, phrases and clauses appear in the same grammatical form and perform the same function in the sentence. This means that if the first noun is singular all the others must be singular; if the first verb is in present tense all the others must be in the present tense and if the first group is a phrase the other groups in the sentence must be phrases not clauses or infinitives. As shown in Examples 1 – 7 the nouns, phrases and sentences are so arranged that they function in a similar way in each sentence. Thus, both the grammatical and logical ideas are neatly tied up to make the sentence more effective.

Parallel structures help to emphasise the grammatical and logical relationships of the ideas that are expressed. Also, parallel grammatical structures reinforce ones thought by stressing the importance of the various sentence elements.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Correct the following sentences by putting the parallel structures in the same grammatical forms.

1. He likes singing, dancing and to drum.
2. One can travel to Kaduna by bus, by car or fly.
3. During the last S.S.C.E. examination the invigilator told us to write fast and that we should write on both sides of the paper.
4. Lamenting the loss of her father Ekaette said: Papa was a good father, a loving husband and worked hard.
5. Reading is a more rewarding hobby than to watch films.

**3.2 Fragmentation**

Fragmentation describes a situation where one of the essential parts of a sentence is absent. Often, the incomplete sentence is punctuated as if it were a complete sentence. It is easy to recognise a fragment since either the subject or the predicate is often missing (see section 4.2.2.). To ensure that one is not writing sentence fragments instead of sentences, it is important to read over every sentence or passage written and to ensure that each sentence has a subject and a predicate.

Another cause of fragmentation is the confusion between finite and non- finite verbs. Non-finite verbs are those which cannot occur alone as verb elements in clauses because they cannot take subjects and are invariable in the sense that they do not show tense distinction. They are infinitives (to go, to be) and participles (going, being, gone, been). Finite verbs on the other hand are full verbs which can occur as verb elements in clauses, take subjects and show tense distinctions (e.g. go, goes, went; am, is, was). Many times fragmentation results from a wrong choice of verb.

Examine the following:

8. Hoping to hear from you soon.
9. *To control* my temper always. This is my resolution.
10. In reply to your advertisement in the *Pioneer* of last week, *requesting* applications for the post of clerical assistants.
11. My brother sent me a present. Because I passed my examinations well last year.

The first example (No.8) is a fragment because it has no finite verb. The verb form in the group of words is a participle. It cannot take a subject since the form: *I hoping to see you soon* would not be an acceptable form unless 'am' is added to 'I'. Similarly Nos. 9 and 10 are fragments, the verb form in 9 is *to control*, an infinitive; and the verb in No.10 *requesting* is also a non-finite form (participle).

Wrong punctuation can also result in fragmentation. This can be seen in Nos. 9 and 10 where the use of the semi – colon or colon after the word ‘always’ rather than the full stop in No.9 and the comma after the word ‘assistants’ in No.10 could be the acceptable options. Alternatively, each of the two sentence fragments

could have been written as one complex sentence.

In learned and mannered style, fragments are sometimes used for sudden dramatic effect. They also occur in colloquial style which characterises everyday conversation as in the following:

12. So far, so good;
13. The sooner, the better;
14. I shall not go back. Never.
15. A fool does not only fail to understand but also fails to know that he does not know. And there is astonishment on his face whentold that he is ignorant!

Ordinarily, it is better to avoid sentence fragments when writing. Rather than use fragments a variety of sentence types including exclamatory sentences could be used for dramatic effect. Sentence fragment is a common parlance among poets, playwrights and novelists.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Make the fragments full sentences in the following:

1. Be seeing you later.
2. Who has seen the car? Neither you nor I.
3. I refused to vote for that political party. The leader being very corrupt.
4. To err is human. To forgive divine.
5. With kind personal regards
6. How are you? Hope fine.
7. What about your brothers and sisters?
8. During the symposium there were many activities. Presentation of papers, a cocktail party and a gala night.
9. I do not go out these days because I am busy. Cooking, cleaning sewing and reading.
10. Although Nigeria is one nation. There is need for resource control.

Note, however, that some of the fragments are acceptable in the context of speech or conversation.

### 3.3 Dangling Modifiers

Modifiers are said to dangle when they are not consistent with the subject – predicate relationship in the sentence. This means that the action attributed to the subject of the sentence cannot normally be performed by the subject as in the following sentence:

16. *Sitting in the Convocation Park*, a motor cycle flew past. Knowledge of sentence structure would make one regard the motor cycle as the subject of the sentence and the performer of the action of sitting but common sense tells us that a motor cycle cannot sit. The phrase *sitting in the Convocation Park* therefore dangles because it does not logically relate to the subject of the sentence ‘motor cycle’. Examine the following:

- 17. *Running to the notice board*, my scores and grades were seen.
- 18. *Feeling completely exhausted*, a bed was needed.
- 19. *Meeting Akon for the first time*, her mode of dressing repelled me.

Note that there is no logical relationship between the italicised words and the subjects in each case. The sentences can be re-written thus:

- 17a. Running to the notice board, I saw my scores and grades.
- 18a. Feeling completely exhausted, I decided I needed a bed rest.
- 19a. Meeting Akon for the first time, I was repelled by her mode of dressing.

#### 3.3.1 Causes of Dangling Modifiers

Dangling modifiers result from a number of factors. One factor is the wrong use of the passive voice as can be seen in Nos. 16, 17 and 18 above. Where one is in doubt, it is better to use the passive voice as in Nos. 17a, 18a, and 19a. Also participles which begin a sentence may dangle if not used carefully as the examples above show. There are however some participles that are often used impersonally. These include *supposing*, *considering*, *assuming*, and *admitting*. Since these words are used to mean that one

supposes	}
considers	
assumes	
admits	

they do not become dangling modifiers.

- 20. Assuming that you finish your work in time, there is no reason why we would fail to catch the plane.
- 21. Admitting that she disobeyed her father, it is understandable why he beat her up.

The two sentences above do not contain dangling modifiers as they are taken to mean:

if one            (assumes)    ...  
                       (admits )    ...

Another structure that often dangles is the past participle verb phrases. In the following examples, there are no logical relationships between the past participle verb and the subject.

22. Identified by the witnesses, his shame was boundless.  
 23. Denounced and deserted by her children, her life became unbearable.

The sentences can be rewritten thus:

- 22a. *Identified by the witness*, the criminal's shame was boundless.  
 23a. *Denounced and deserted by her children*, the woman's life became unbearable.

It must be noted that for a modifier not to dangle, a subject of the sentence which is also modified by the modifier has to be named. In Nos. 22a and 23a, *the criminal* and *the woman* are the subjects which are modified by the italicized parts of the sentence.

Occasionally, infinitive phrases also dangle, as in the following examples:

24. To do well in an examination, studying is necessary.  
 25. To have a successful get-together many guests are required.  
 26. To do well in science courses, mathematics is necessary.

For the same reasons given above the above sentences should be revised and the subjects which are modified by the infinitive phrases above should be introduced as shown below:

- 24a. To do well in an examination *the candidate* must study.  
 25a. To have a successful get-together *one* should invite many guests.  
 26a. To do well in science courses *one* should be good in mathematics.

The revised versions: Examples. 24a–26a have subjects which relate with the infinitive phrases. The subjects in these examples are italicised. Note that in each case writing the sentence in the active voice helps to correct the sentence with the dangling modifier.

Also, adjectival phrases dangle if not properly utilised in sentence construction. The following sentences exemplify this situation:

27. Disappointed with her daughter's behaviour, a privilege was withdrawn.
28. Angry with the students, a suspension order was given
29. Content with the students' performance, prizes were given.

Again for the same reasons earlier given the above sentences can be revised thus:

- 27a. Disappointed with her daughter's behaviour, Mrs. Okon withdrew the privilege of allowing her go out alone.
- 28a. Angry with the students, the school principal gave a suspension order.
- 29a. Content with the students' performance, the Vice-Chancellor gave them prizes.

The main issue in all the cases so far discussed is that the modifying phrases must relate logically to the subject in the main clause which must be named. The understanding is that the subject must be the one who performs the action in the modifying phrase or clause or about whom the information in the modifying clause is given. When there is any indication that the information in the modifying clause cannot relate to the subject, then the modifier dangles.

In some passive sentences, the subject can be situated at the end of the sentence to make for complete meaning and logical connection. E.g. Number 28 can be written as:

Angry with the students, a suspension order was given by the principal.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Correct the following sentences by ensuring that the modifiers have subjects and do not therefore dangle.

1. Caught with the stolen vehicle, the policeman arrested Etim (who was caught?).
2. Having entered the house, the robbery was carried out (who entered the house?)
3. To live well in the rural area, money is necessary (who will live well?)
4. After seeing the doctor, the fever went down (who saw the doctor?)
5. Angry at not being recognised, revenge was planned (who was angry?).
6. After condemning his lateness, he was suspended (who condemned lateness?).
7. Entering the bus, his briefcase was snatched from him (who entered the bus?)
8. Having rested for some time, the headache was gone (who rested?)
9. Arriving home at last, my dinner was nowhere to be found (who arrived?)
10. Surprised at seeing his name among the successful candidates, a party was immediately thrown (who was surprised?).

### 3.4 Ambiguity

A sentence is ambiguous if it is capable of more than one interpretation and therefore has more than one meaning. Although one can be deliberately ambiguous especially in creative writing for a particular effect, ambiguity is a feature of poor sentence construction. It should therefore be avoided. Ambiguity occurs as a result of wrong placement of words, phrases and clauses in a sentence. To avoid ambiguity it is important to take the following steps when constructing sentences.

(a) Adverbs should be placed near the words they modify:

In this regard, the following adverbs are likely to present problems: early, only, almost, hardly, scarcely, just, even and quite. Examine the following sentences which are ambiguous:

30. She only described what happened.

31. Those who watched the television programme scarcely criticised it.

The first example No.30 could mean that she was the only one who described what happened or that she described only what happened and nothing else. If the first meaning is intended the sentence should read:

30a. Only she described what happened. If, on the other hand, the second meaning is intended the sentence should read as in No.30 above. The ambiguity in: She only described what happened can also be solved with the aid of punctuation

mark as in : She only, described what happened.

Similarly, in No.31 the adverb scarcely could modify 'watched' to mean those who did not watch it often enough or it could modify 'criticised' to mean 'hardly ever. If the first meaning is intended the adverb should be placed before the verb watch as follows:

31a. Those who scarcely watched the television programme criticised it.

Modifying phrases and clauses should be placed immediately after the words they modify. The following is ambiguous because of the wrong placement of the modifying clause:

32. The girl in the bus that had an accident ... arrived finally.

Note that usually, ambiguity occurs when a modifying prepositional phrase and a relative clause have a common antecedent. In the example above, *that* accepts both human and non-human nouns and can refer to both 'girl' and 'bus'. If *that* is replaced by *who* it will refer to the girl. If on the other hand it is replaced with *which* it will refer to the bus as in the following:



32a. The girl in the bus, who had an accident, arrived finally.

32b. The girl in the bus which had an accident arrived finally.

It is also important to watch the number of the antecedents, that is, whether they are singular or plural. Examine the following:

32c. The girls in the bus have just had an accident ... (girl)

32d. The girl in the bus that has just had an accident ... (bus)

A single pronoun should not refer to two males, two females, two things or two groups as in the following:

33. Mrs. Okon told her sister that she was not going to the market anymore.

In the above example, 'she' refers to both *Mrs. Okon* and her sister. Some writers try to resolve such problems by using rather awkward structures such as:

33a. Mrs. Okon told her sister that she (Mrs. Okon) was not going to the market anymore.

The sentence can be restructured to resolve the ambiguity thus: Either

33b. When Mrs. Okon realised that she was not going to the market anymore, she told her sister.

33c. Mrs. Okon told her sister not to go to the market anymore.

#### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Resolve the following ambiguities by reconstructing the sentence to have one meaning at a time:

1. Esther told her mother that she was going mental.
2. If the baby does not like the milk, boil it.
3. He removed the plate from the table and washed it.
4. Mercy only listens to the best in classical music.
5. Before the nurses start treating chicken pox patients they are often inoculated.
6. I found out the problem with my radio set in the office.
7. Visiting grandmothers can be boring.
8. The stern face of the lady sitting on the veranda which was cold and uninviting repelled me.
9. The passenger in the bus that has just moved is going to Abuja.
10. Can I have the glasses, please?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

When structural problems occur in an English sentence, such as those discussed in this unit, the result is a sentence that conveys the wrong meaning. The relationships between words performing various functions constitute the major source of structural errors. It is therefore essential to pay utmost attention to such relationships to ensure correct sentence constructions.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

You have learnt the following about some English sentences from this unit:

- i. One thing or the other can go wrong in a sentence resulting in a sentence that does not convey the intended sense.
- ii. The most common of such problems include wrong use of parallel structures; construction of sentences that lack one of the essential parts, wrong use or placement of modifiers which can lead to dangling modifiers and situations where sentences have more than one interpretation.
- iii. Modifiers are said to dangle when they are not consistent with the subject – predicate relationship in the sentence. This means that the action attributed to the subject of the sentence cannot normally be performed by the subject.
- iv. Parallel forms are used for writing words or word groups of identical grammatical forms when they appear in a series.
- v. Parallel structures help to emphasise the grammatical and logical relationships of the ideas that are expressed.
- vi. Also, parallel grammatical structures reinforce one's thought by stressing the importance of the various sentence elements.
- vii. Fragmentation describes a situation where one of the essential parts of a sentence is absent.
- viii. It is easy to recognise a fragment since either the subject or the predicate is often missing.
- ix. Dangling modifiers result from the wrong use of the passive voice, participles and infinitives.
- x. A sentence is ambiguous if it is capable of more than one interpretation and therefore has more than one meaning.
- xi. Ambiguity occurs as a result of wrong placement of words, phrases and clauses in a sentence.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

1. He likes singing, dancing and drumming.
2. One can travel to Kaduna by bus, by car or by air.
3. During the last S.S.C.E. examination the invigilator told us to write fast and to write on both sides of the paper.
4. Lamenting the loss of her father Ekaette said: Papa was a good father, a loving husband and a hard worker.
5. Reading is a more rewarding hobby than watching films.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

1. I'll see you later.
2. Who has seen the car? Neither you nor I have seen it.
3. I refused to vote for that political party. The leader is very corrupt.
4. To err is human. To forgive is divine.
5. Please accept this gift with kind personal regards.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

1. Having been caught with the stolen vehicle, the policeman arrested Etim.
2. The robbers having entered the house, the robbery was carried out.
3. For anyone to live well in the rural area, money is necessary.
4. After seeing the doctor, s/he went down with the fever (who saw the doctor?).
5. His mother, angry at not being recognised, planned a revenge.
6. After condemning his lateness, the principal suspended him.
7. On entering the bus, Peter's briefcase was snatched from him.
8. Having rested for some time, the patient's headache was gone.
9. On arriving home at last, I found that dinner was nowhere to be found.
10. Surprised at seeing his name among the successful candidates, John immediately threw a party.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4****Resolving Ambiguities**

1. As soon as Esther discovered she was going mental, she told her mother.
2. If the baby does not like the milk, boil the milk.
3. He removed the plate from the table and washed the table/the plate.
4. Mercy only listens to the best in classical music. (Mercy

- alone/classical music alone).
5. Before the nurses start treating chicken pox patients they (the nurses) are often inoculated.
  6. I found out the problem with my radio set while I was in the office.
  7. Paying visits to grandmothers can be boring.
  8. The stern face of the lady sitting on the veranda repelled me/The veranda which was cold and uninviting repelled me.
  9. The passenger in the bus which has just moved is going to Abuja.
  10. Can I have the drinking glasses, please?

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Identify parallel structures in the following extract and comment on their effect on the text.

Perhaps, it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say “Wait”. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policeman curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in the air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she cannot go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that *Funtown* is closed to coloured children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year-old son who is asking: “Daddy, why do white people treat coloured people so mean?” When you take a cross country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading “white” and “coloured”; when your first name becomes “nigger” your middle name “boy” (however old you are) and your last name becomes “John” and your wife and mother are never given the respected title “Mrs.”; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a negro ... then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.

(Adapted from: Martin Luther King, Jr. Letter from Birmingham Jail)

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 2 SENTENCE CONNECTION

This unit will present the different ways of linking sentences to one another in English. The factors which interact to indicate links between sentences are also identified. The unit is arranged as follows:

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- 2.0 Objectives
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  - 3.3 Place Relationships
  - 3.4 Enumerations
  - 3.5 Addition
  - 3.6 Summation
  - 3.7 Consequence
  - 3.8 Inference
  - 3.9 Concession
  - 3.10 Contrast
  - 3.11 Structural Parallelism
  - 3.12 Conjuncts and Disjuncts
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    - 3.14.1 Style Disjuncts
    - 3.14.2 Attitudinal Disjuncts
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Apart from links within sentences, linking occurs between sentences in English. Certain factors interact in pointing to links between sentences. These are:

- implied semantic relationships; that is, links that sentences of a certain paragraph have to the main idea and to one another;
- lexical equivalence: a relationship shown in successive sentences through the equivalence in the vocabulary (lexical items) used. For instance, in repetition of words or phrases;
- syntactic devices: alternative grammatical ways of referring to the same thing. For instance reference to man as he; and

- by the use of transitional words (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1975, p.287). In the following passage from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, there are semantic as well as syntactic links between sentences:

Okonkwo was well known in the six villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen, he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was a great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. (Achebe, 1975, p.5).

The central idea of the passage is Okonkwo's fame. The sentences are each linked to this central idea. Lexical equivalents are seen in the words and phrases repeated at times in other words: 'well known' and 'fame' are near equivalents; 'the Cat' suggests Amalinze's expertise in wrestling. The second and third sentences are further explanations of the first while the fourth and fifth further explain the third.

Syntactic devices used in the passage also include the pronoun 'his' and 'he' used instead of Amalinze and Okonkwo, while the clause, 'his back would never touch the earth' explains why Amalinze was unbeaten. Such relatedness in meaning creates links between sentences dealing with a particular point (Udofot, 1993, p.140).

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- write well connected sentences;
- use both semantic and syntactic links; and
- use transitional words and recognize them when used.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Transitional Words

Other syntactic devices used in connecting sentences are commonly referred to as transitional words. These (transitional words) connect sentences and independent clauses of a compound sentence. Examples of transitional words are: 'first, next, then, finally, formerly, earlier, here, there furthermore, similarly, nevertheless, consequently'. Sometimes the connection is effected with a group of words like 'in fact, on the other hand, on the contrary, above all'. The following sentences are linked using transitional words:

1. *First*, he made his excuses himself. *Next*, he sent explanatory notes.  
*Finally*, he did not bother to explain.

Where the transitional words form part of the independent clause that they introduce, they are always preceded by a semi-colon and apart from time and place, they indicate ideas like additions, enumerations, summations, consequences, concessions, contrasts. We will now examine the above cases individually.

### 3.2 Time Relationships

Time relationships between sentences can be signaled by temporal adjectives, adverbials or by tense, aspect and modality in verbs. There are three major divisions of time relationships:

#### (a) Previous to a given time reference

**Adjectives:** *earlier, former, previous* and *preceding* can be used to signal this.

2. He submitted a good assignment. His previous assignments were all poor (previous to the good one).

**Adverbials:** *already, as yet, before, earlier, first, formerly, previously, so far, yet*  
...

3. *I will tell you what happened, but first*, sit down (*before I tell you what happened*).

#### (b) Simultaneous with given time reference

**Adjectives:** *contemporary, simultaneous*.

4. The news was heard on Akwa Ibom Radio. *A simultaneous* announcement was made on the Network news (simultaneous with the AKBC News).

**Adverbials:** *at present, at this point, meanwhile, in the meantime, now, presently, then*.

5. Many of the cult members have been arrested. *Meanwhile*, the police are continuing their investigations in the recent killings on Campus (*at the same time as the arrests are being made*).



**(c) Subsequent to given time reference**

**Adjectives:** *following, later, next:*

6. I saw him on Friday and he appeared to be in perfect health. The following day, he died (following the Friday just mentioned).

**Adverbials:** *afterwards, again, immediately, later, next, since, then, after that.*

7. The Vice-Chancellor attended Senate Meeting. He *later* went to the state function. (after Senate meeting).

**3.3 Place Relationships**

Words denoting place relationships also play a part in sentence connection. Some place adverbs include *here, there, where* as for instance in:

8. All my friends have been to Lagos at least once. I am going *there* next long vacation.

**3.4 Enumerations**

Enumerations conjuncts indicate a listing of what is being said. Some of the common ones are: *first, furthermore, finally, far more importantly, above all, on top of it all, last but not the least*. These can be so arranged to mark particular positions as in *first(ly), second(ly), third(ly)* and *finally*. At other times ascending and descending order of importance can be shown as in *first ... , secondly and more importantly ... above all*.

The enumerations may be expressed in a more integrated way as in:

9. *Let me begin by saying ... I would like to conclude by saying ....*

**3.5 Addition**

The addition relationship is often affected by the use of additive conjuncts such as: *also, equally* as in the following

10. *This food tastes good. Also it looks attraction.*  
 11. The striking workers and the government have made no progress in the negotiations. The workers are bent on getting all that they wanted. Equally the government is sticking to her guns.  
 Additive conjuncts specify that part of the sentence is an addition to what has been previously said.

12. The children read the play. They acted it *too*  
 13. He didn't travel any more. *Neither* did she.

Either, neither and nor require that the two sentences they link be negative. Too, on the other hand requires both sentences that are linked to be positive.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

In the following sentences A and B use *either*, *neither*, *nor* and *too* where necessary.

- |    |                                   |    |                                  |
|----|-----------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| A. | The children didn't eat the food. | B. | They didn't drink the water.     |
| A. | The children didn't eat the food. | B. | They also didn't drink the wine. |
| A. | The children didn't eat the food. | B. | They didn't drink the tea.       |
| A. | The children ate the food.        | B. | They drank the water.            |

### 3.6 Summation

The final part of a unit may generalise or sum up what preceded. This is often effected by the use of such words as in brief, in summary, in all (summative conjuncts and style disjuncts) as in:

14. The ideas discussed are useful. Attention is given to oral drill.  
 Each chapter contains a lot of exercises for practice. *In brief*, the book is well written and very useful to English teachers. Summation can also be achieved with integrated expressions like: *I will like to conclude by ... I will sum up by ....*

### 3.7 Consequence

Several result conjuncts indicate that a sentence expresses the consequence or result of what was said before:

15. *I don't use the book on weekends; so you can borrow it.*  
 16. *My car broke down; as a result, I missed the lecture.*

Integrated indications include the result is that ... the consequence (of that) was ...

### 3.8 Inference

An inferential conjunct can indicate a deduction from what is implicit in the preceding sentence or sentences. In the two examples that follow, the second sentence is an inference from the first:

17. A I'm afraid I cannot help you.  
 18. B *In other words* you do not care.  
 19. A She is going to marry my brother.

20. B *In that case*, she should relate well with his *relations*

### 3.9 Concession

Concessive conjuncts signal the surprising nature of what is being said in view of what was said before. These include: *however*, *still*, *besides* as in:

21. He was in his study for a *few* hours. He has *however* done a lot of work.  
 22. The holiday was very short; *still* it afforded me enough rest.  
 23. I did not send my friend an invitation. *Besides* she wouldn't have come.

Most of the conjuncts that signal concession can be paraphrased by a subordinate clause of concession introduced by *though* or *although*. The first pair of examples above can be rephrased as follows:

- 21a. *Though* he was in his study for a few hours, he did a lot of work.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

1. Rephrase Nos. 22 and 23 by introducing a subordinate clause of concession as in 21a
2. Write three sentences of your own using the pattern of No. 21a above.

### 3.10 Contrast

A contrast is often indicated by antithetic conjuncts. *On the contrary*, indicates that the opposite is true.

24. I did not send her away; *on the contrary* I persuaded her to stay.  
 The other conjuncts which signal contrast introduce a comparison or contrast without denying what went before:  
 25. He's rather foolish. *By comparison*, his sister is very brilliant.

*On the other hand* often suggests contrast especially when it is the second of a correlative pair as in:

26. You should be firm. *On the other hand* you shouldn't be too difficult.

*Instead* also involves a contrast though it often also suggests a replacement, as in:

27. She doesn't study at all; *instead* she spends her time in beauty salons.  
 28. He wanted a radio for his birthday; his father bought him a clock *instead*.

### 3.11 Structural Parallelisms

Links between sentences can also be realized through similarity in sentence structure as in the following examples:

29. *She admired my mother. My father irritated her.*
30. *My hobby is reading; hers is writing.*

Such structural parallelisms are common in mannered and literary styles. They are however often reinforced by lexical equivalence and implications of semantic relationships, usually those of contrast.

### 3.12 Conjuncts and Disjuncts

#### 3.13 Conjuncts

Conjuncts are adverb phrases or prepositional phrases (not conjunctions) which are used in sentence connection. Examples of the use of conjuncts are given below together with a list of common conjuncts grouped according to their sub classes:

31. I would like you to do two things for me. *First* phone my house and tell them I'll be late. *Secondly*, order a taxi to be here in about one hour.
32. It was a difficult test. *Nevertheless* he passed it with a credit.
33. He doesn't need any help from you. *On the contrary*, he can give us a loan.

Conjuncts are used for special effects (see the section on transitional words).

The normal position for most conjuncts is initial. They are usually separated from what follows by a pause in speech or a comma in writing. In other positions they may be enclosed in commas. Medial and final positions are rare for conjuncts. Those that readily appear finally include *anyhow*, *anyway*, *otherwise*. The last two frequently appear medially.

#### 3.14 Disjuncts

Disjuncts are structures mostly prepositional phrases or clauses which convey the speaker's comment. Disjuncts are of two main types: *style disjuncts* comment on what is said stating in some way the conditions under which one is talking. *Attitudinal disjuncts* on the other hand comment on the content of the communication.

##### 3.14.1 Style Disjuncts

34. *Very frankly*, I don't like this food.
35. *Seriously*, do you intend to go?

36. *Strictly speaking*, nobody is allowed to enter this room.

Other examples are: *personally, if I may say so, to be precise.*

Some adverbs can also be used as style disjuncts. These include: *bluntly, briefly, candidly, confidentially, frankly, honesty, generally.*

Style disjuncts usually appear initially. For some adverbs phrases which function as style disjuncts there are equivalent structures. For example *frankly* can also be expressed as: *Frankly speaking*, they have no chance.

We can have the following equivalent structures:

prepositional phrase - in all frankness

frankly, to put it frankly;

-ing participle phrase – frankly speaking

-ed participle phrase – putting it frankly

– put frankly

finite verb clause – if I may be frank, if I can put it frankly.

The adverbs listed above as style disjuncts can also have equivalent structures with participle constructions e.g.

bluntly – bluntly speaking –

honestly – honestly speaking –

### 3.14.2 Attitudinal Disjuncts

Attitudinal disjuncts convey the speaker's comment on the content of what he is saying. They generally feature in declarative sentences:

37. *Obviously*, nobody expected me today.

38. *Of course*, you will have to pay your debt.

39. She *wisely* stayed at home today.

Common attitudinal disjuncts include:

*Understandably, to our surprise/surprisingly, to be sure, more importantly/even more important, unfortunately, rightly ...*

Many of the adverb phrases can be paraphrased by constructions in which the adjective is subject complement expressing an attribute of the subject as in the following:

40. *Unfortunately*, Mary missed the lecture

= That Mary missed the lecture was *unfortunate*

= *It was unfortunate* that Mary missed the lecture.

Other forms of paraphrases like the ones below are also possible:

41. *Rightly*, he rejected the appointment.  
= *It was right* for him to reject the appointment.

42. *To our regret*, Okon rejected the offer.  
= We regretted that Okon rejected the offer.

Common adverbs often used as attitudinal disjuncts are given below together with the meanings they convey:

**Group I:** The disjuncts in this group express the speaker's comment on the extent to which he believes that what he is saying is true:

*Certainly*, he has no right to be there (I am certain)

He has *probably* left by now (I consider it probable ...)

*Definitely*, I will pass my examinations (I cannot fail).

*Obviously*, they were not invited (It is obvious to me and to everybody else).

*Apparently*, he is the new principal (It seems so).

**Group II:** The disjuncts in this group make comments other than on the truth-value of what is said. Some convey the attitude of the speaker without reference to the subject of the sentence as in:

*Fortunately*, Mary has returned my pen.

Other similar disjuncts include: *curiously*, *annoyingly*, *happily*, *hopefully*, *luckily*, *preferably*.

Other disjuncts in this category convey the speaker's attitude with an implication that the judgment applies to the subject of the sentence as in:

43. *Wisely*, Mary did not attend the meeting.

This implies that the speaker considers Mary's action wise. Other such disjuncts include: *rightly*, *wrongly*, *foolishly*.

Adverbs with an -ing participle base such as *surprisingly* are also very useful as attitudinal disjuncts. Attitudinal disjuncts can appear in almost any position but most of them appear initially.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Replace the disjuncts in the Sentences 41- 43 with other disjuncts.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Well connected sentence constructions are realisable through a correct understanding and appropriate use of linking devices in English as discussed in this unit.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt the following:

- Apart from links within sentences linking occurs between sentences in English. These can be effected through implied semantic relationships, lexical equivalence, syntactic devices and transitional words.
- Some syntactic devices used in connecting sentences are commonly referred to as transitional words. These (transitional words) connect sentences and independent clauses of a compound sentence.
- Transitional words express ideas such as: time and place relationships, additions, enumerations, concession, summation, contrasts, inference and consequence.
- Many transitional words are referred to as conjuncts and disjuncts.
- Disjuncts are mostly prepositional phrases or clauses which convey the speaker's comment.
- Disjuncts are of two main types: *style disjuncts* which comment on what is said stating in some way the conditions under which one is talking.
- *Attitudinal disjuncts* on the other hand comment on the content of the communication.
  
- Conjuncts are adverb phrases or prepositional phrases (not conjunctions) which are used in sentence connection.
- Conjuncts are used for special effects.

## ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

In the following sentences use *either*, *neither*, *nor* and *too* where necessary.

- A. The children didn't eat the food. B. They didn't drink the water either
- A. The children didn't eat the food. B. They also didn't drink the wine.
- A. The children didn't eat the food. B. Neither did they drink the tea.
- A. The children ate the food. B. They drank the water too.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

1. Rephrase Nos. 22 and 23 by introducing a subordinate clause of concession as in 21a
  - 22a Though the holiday was very short; *still* it afforded me enough rest.
  - 23a Unfortunately I did not send my friend an invitation. *Even then*, she wouldn't have come.
2. Write three sentences of your own using the pattern of No. 21a above.

Any three sentences with a concessive adjunct following the pattern of No. 21a are acceptable

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Replace the conjuncts in the Sentences 41- 43 with other conjuncts

41. I would like you to do two things for me. *First* phone my house and tell them I'll be late. *Next*, order a taxi to be here in about one hour.
42. It was a difficult test. *All the same* he passed it with a credit.
43. He doesn't need any help from you. On the other hand, he can give us a loan

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What are transitional words? What roles do they play in sentence connection?
2. Write a paragraph of five compound or compound complex sentences appropriately connected with sentence connectors.

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT 3     SUBJECT - VERB AGREEMENT**

This unit deals with agreement of the subject of the sentence with the verb as well as the agreement of pronouns with antecedents. The unit is arranged as follows:

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Subject – Verb Agreement
    - 3.1.1 Compound Subjects
    - 3.1.2 Collective Nouns
    - 3.1.3 Intervening Phrases
    - 3.1.4 Contractions
    - 3.1.5 Indefinite Pronouns
    - 3.1.6 Special Cases of Agreements
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

One of the most common errors in sentence construction is the failure of the subject (noun or pronoun) to agree with the predicate verb. In order to have good grammatical relations between the parts of a sentence, the subject must agree with the verb in number and person. This means that if the subject of the sentence is singular, the verb must take a form that agrees with it and if the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural. With regard to pronouns, if the subject is a pronoun in the first person, the verb must also be in the first person and if the subject is in the second or third person the verb too must be in the second or third person. Also, the pronoun which refers to a noun must agree in number and person with its antecedent (the noun to which it refers).

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- write sentences with the correct subject/verb agreement;
- write sentences with correct agreement of pronoun with antecedent;
- identify sentences with faulty subject verb; agreement; and identify problematic and special cases of agreement.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Subject and Verb Agreement

The discussion in this section is based on Udofot and Ekpenyong, (2006, pp.119-120).

Examine the following sentences

1. She does not like beans. (subject and verb and in the third person).
2. She don't like beans. (No agreement)
3. You were invited to the party. (subject and verb are in the second person)
4. You was invited to the party (No agreement).

In Sentence No.1 above, both the subject *she* and the verb *does* are in the third person singular whereas in No.2, the subject is in the third person singular but the verb *do* (*do not*) is in the second person. In No. 3 both the subject and the verb are in the second person (singular or plural) but in No. 4 the subject 'You' is in the second person but the verb, *was*, is in the third person and there is therefore no agreement.

The rule about subject-verb agreement as explained above appears very simple but there are some problems involved. These problems are responsible for the errors that are often made. Sometimes, the writer or speaker fails to know whether the subject should be regarded as singular or plural. At other times, the writer or speaker is not sure what form of the verb is for singular or plural. The real subject of the sentence is not obvious in some sentences and if the writer fails to identify the real subject there is often a problem. In the remaining part of this section, we will consider some of the problems that are responsible for errors of subject-verb agreement.

##### 3.1.1 Compound Subjects

Some sentences have more than one subject. When two or more subjects are connected by *and*, the subject is plural and requires a plural verb but if the compound subject is joined by *or*, *nor*, *either ... or*, *neither ... nor*, the subject is singular and requires a singular verb. Examine the following:

5. *Amaete* and *Mfon* are preparing for G.C.E. examinations.
6. The *president* and the *secretary* attend all diocesan meetings.

Note that the two parts of the compound subject are connected by *and* in the above examples and the compound subjects take plural verbs. There are however some exceptions to this rule. If the two subjects connected by *and* form a unit, the subject is regarded as singular and takes a singular verb as in the following example:

7. *Bread and tea* is a popular breakfast (one unit – verb is singular).  
Also, when the two subjects connected by *and* refer to the same person or thing, the subject is singular:
8. *Her companion and friend* is her cousin (one person).  
9. The *secretary and typist* was present at the meeting (one person).

Note, however, that if the compound subjects in Nos 8 and 9 above referred to two individuals, the verbs would be plural and the sentences would read thus:

8a. *Her companions and friends* are her cousins.

9a. The *secretary and the typist* were present at the meeting

When two subjects are connected by *or* the subject is singular. This means either the first or the second subject not both. The same rule applies in the case of *nor* being used to join two subjects. Either ... or and neither ... nor follow the same rule.

10. Idongesit or Uko starts the generator (one of them = Singular)  
11. Neither the lecturer nor the typist *was* responsible for the leakage (neither the one nor the other; singular)

When one of the subjects joined by *or*, *nor*, *neither ... nor*, *either ... or* is singular and the other one is plural, the verb agrees with the subject that is nearer to it. If, however, both subjects are plural, the verb is plural. Examine the following sentences.

12. Neither the teacher nor the *students* were here when I arrived (verb = plural).  
13. Neither the *students* nor the *teacher* was here when I arrived (verb = singular).  
14. Neither the teachers nor the students were here when I arrived (verb = plural).

In No 12, the plural subject is nearer to the verb and the verb is therefore plural. In No. 13 the singular subject is nearer to the verb and the verb is singular. In No. 14, both subjects are plural. When one of the subjects is singular and the other is plural it is advisable to put the plural subject nearer to the verb as this makes the verb plural and sounds better. Occasionally, there are sentences where the compound subjects differ in person. According to the rule the verb should agree with the subject nearer to it although such sentences look and sound awkward. This is also called concord by proximity.

Examine the following sentences:

15. Either I or they are responsible for what happened  
(I = 1st person; they = 3rd person).
16. Either they or I am responsible for what happened.

It is sometimes better to restructure such sentences as No 17 below to make them sound better.

17. Either they are responsible for what happened or I am.

### 3.1.2 Collective Nouns

A collective noun is a noun that names a group or a collection of people or objects usually seen as a unit. The following are examples of collective nouns:  
*people: audience, crowd, jury; animals: flock, herd, troop, pride;*  
*objects: band, package, luggage.*

A collective noun which is singular in meaning requires a singular verb and the one that is plural in meaning requires a plural verb.

18. The jury has given the verdict.
19. That family is very united.
20. The audience is very attentive.

Occasionally, the sentence may indicate that the members of a collective noun are acting as individuals, not as a unit. In such cases the collective noun requires a plural verb. Examine the following examples:

21. The jury have returned to their houses.
22. The family have made their contributions.
23. The audience were clapping for him.

It is sometimes clearer to introduce expressions like ‘the members of’, ‘the people in’, to indicate that the members were behaving as individuals, for clarity. For example No.23 can be rewritten as follows for clarity:

- 23a. The people in the audience were clapping for him.

### 3.1.3 Intervening Phrases

When the subject of a sentence is followed by prepositional phrases or expressions like *as well as*, *together with*, *accompanied by*, *including*, etc the subject of the sentence is not affected by the addition of such phrases. This is because the subject of a sentence can never be found in a prepositional phrase or any of such expressions listed above. Examine the following:

24. The lecturer as well as his students has not paid the conference fee.  
 25. Important papers together with his will were found in his brief case.

In No. 24, the subject (lecturer) is singular and takes a singular verb irrespective of the intervening phrase *as well as his students*. Similarly in No. 25 the subject is plural and takes a plural verb irrespective of the intervening phrase *together with his will*. Note that in both cases the subject is not located in the prepositional phrase nor is it affected by the number of the noun in the intervening phrase.

### 3.1.4 Contractions

Contractions are contracted forms of verbs, that is verbal forms that have been shortened by the omission of one or more letters indicated by the use of the apostrophe. Many mistakes in agreement occur with the use of contracted forms such as *don't*, *aren't* and *isn't*. Note that the contracted form for *am not* is not *am't*. Another common error is the use of *don't* (do not) for *doesn't* (does not). *Don't* should not be used with subjects in the third person singular. Thus the expressions, *she don't*, *he don't* and *it don't* are wrong. Note the following usages:

24. It don't matter (incorrect).  
 24a. It doesn't matter (correct).  
 25. He don't belong to our club (incorrect).  
 25a. He doesn't belong to our club (correct).  
 26. They doesn't play well (incorrect).  
 26a. They don't play well (correct).  
 27. We aint going to the market (unacceptable).  
 27a. We aren't going to the market (acceptable).

### 3.1.5 Indefinite Pronouns

The following indefinite pronouns are singular and require singular verb forms: *anyone*, *everyone*, *no one*, *one*, *someone*, *anybody*, *somebody*, *nobody*, *everybody*, *each*, *either* and *neither*. As a rule, we can state that some indefinite pronouns take a singular verb, and some plural verbs.

28. *Either* of them has the book.  
 29. *Neither* of them is qualified.( pronouns)  
 30. Only *one* of the candidates is qualified.  
 31. *Everybody* is invited to the function.  
 32. *Anyone* has the right to make a suggestion.  
 33. *Somebody* was responsible for closing that door.  
 34. *Each* of these bags has been checked.

When *many*, *each*, and *every* are used to begin a sentence, and function as adjectives, the subject is singular.

35. *Many* a woman wishes she had a child.
36. *Each* student was asked to show his fee receipt.
37. *Every* man, woman and child is expected at the football field.

The indefinite pronouns *several*, *few*, *both* and *many* are always plural because they mean more than one.

38. Several were called to the high table.
39. A few have received their number.
40. Both were eager to win.
41. Many in the group are against the motion.

The indefinite pronouns *some*, *none*, *any* and *all* can be singular or plural depending on the meaning of the sentence. When any of these words refer to mass or quantity they are regarded as singular and take singular verbs. When they refer to number they are regarded as plural and take plural verbs. Examine the following examples:

42. Some are going by bus (number = more than one = plural).
- 42a. Some of the rice is left in the bag (quantity = singular)
43. All of the petrol has been sold (mass or quantity = singular).
- 43a. All of the members bring gifts to the church at harvest. (number – plural).

### 3.1.6 Special Cases of Agreement

Some nouns are plural in form but singular in meaning. Such nouns, when they are the subject of sentences, take singular verbs as in the following examples:

44. Mathematics is an interesting subject (singular verb).
45. Measles is a childhood disease (verb singular).
46. The news was terrible (singular verb).

Certain words are plural in form and meaning and take plural verbs. These include, scissors, pants, trousers, pliers, tongs. When the word *pair* is used with them they are singular.

47. The trousers are very costly. (plural).
- 47a. A pair of trousers is hanging in his wardrobe.(singular).
48. The scissors are not sharp. (plural).

A plural noun which refers to quantity, weight or distance is singular and requires a singular verb.

49. Twenty kilometres is a long distance to walk (Distance = singular).
50. Fifty kilograms of meat is quite heavy to carry (Mass = singular).

The words *half* and *part* can be singular or plural depending on the meaning of the sentence. As a guide, when these words refer to number, they are plural but when they refer to mass or section, they are singular as in the following examples.

51. Half of the girls are in the hostel (Number = plural).
- 51a. Half of the meat pie is left (Mass = singular).
52. Part of the house was destroyed (Section = singular).
- 52a. Part of occupants were saved (Number = plural).

When the word *number* is preceded by the article *a* it requires a plural verb but when it is preceded by *the* it takes a singular verb.

53. A number of women were cooking for the occasion (plural).
- 53a. The number of women present was small (singular).

The name of a firm is often regarded as singular even if the name is plural in form. If however, the name suggests a plural idea it is regarded as plural and takes a plural verb.

54. Ugo Parker Motors Company has made substantial sales this year.
54. Marks and Spencers has retrenched a lot of workers.
55. Evans Brothers have declared dividends.

Sometimes a sentence begins with *there*, *here*. It should be noted that neither of these words is the subject of the sentence. *Here* is an adverb and *there* is an adverb which is often used as an expletive. To get the real subject the sentence should be transposed so that the true subject begins the sentence as in the following:

56. There are six children in the room.
- 56a. Six children are (there) in the room.
57. Here comes the Vice Chancellor together with his principal staff.
- 57a. The Vice Chancellor comes here together with his principal staff (singular) sentence 56 becomes a possibility in a special sense: poetic or exclamatory writing.

The real problem occurs when a sentence which begins with an introductory *there* or *here* has a compound subject which requires a plural verb. The speaker or writer may fail to realise that the subject is a compound one. It is easy to determine whether the subject is single or compound after the sentence has been transposed. The following examples have compound subjects.



58. There goes the boy and his mother (incorrect).  
 58a. The boy and his mother go there (compound subject – plural).  
 58b. There go the boy and his mother.  
 59. Here comes Idongesit and Uko (incorrect).  
 59a. Idongesit and Uko come here (compound subject = plural verb).  
 59b. Here come Idongesit and Uko.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Select the correct answer from the alternatives given in each sentence.

1. One can no longer take for granted what \_\_\_\_\_ enjoyed in the university.  
 (a) you (b) he (c) they (d) one.
2. Atim and Dan met on the ship and greeted \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) himself (b) themselves (c) each other (d) theirselves.
3. I am not surprised that he failed the election; everybody \_\_\_\_\_ that he is unreliable.  
 (a) know (b) knows (c) will know (d) do know.
4. Knowledge of Mathematics as well as Physics \_\_\_\_\_ in the Aptitude Test.  
 (a) is tested (b) have been tested (c) are tested (d) were tested.
5. Evidence before the court \_\_\_\_\_ that you are guilty Mr. Jones.  
 (a) proves, (b) prove (c) proved, (d) proofed.
6. Alice, together with her sisters \_\_\_\_\_ happy with the End-of-Year Result.  
 (a) was (b) were (c) was being (d) weren't.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ do you think will carry your cross?  
 (a) whom (b) who (c) which (d) that
8. Either our housemistress or you \_\_\_\_\_ to act as referee but none \_\_\_\_\_ arrived.  
 (a) is/have (b) is/has (c) are/have (d) are/has.
9. His knowledge of materials, sources of supply and prices \_\_\_\_\_ unparalleled.  
 (a) was (b) were (c) being (d) is being
10. Thirty years \_\_\_\_\_ too long to be away from home  
 (a) are (b) is (c) being (d) has been.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Subject-verb agreement is a common structural problem found in the writings of learners of English as a second language. Since the subject determines the agreement it is important to learn to identify the type of subject in terms of type and number.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt the following:

- i. In order to have good grammatical relations between the parts of a sentence, the subject must agree with the verb in number and person.
- ii. When two or more subjects are connected by *and*, the subject is plural and requires a plural verb.
- iii. If the compound subject is joined by *or*, *nor*, *either ... or*, *neither ... nor*, the subject is singular and requires a singular verb.
- iv. Subjects separated by intervening phrases, collective nouns as well as nouns which end with 's' but are singular take singular verbs.
- v. Nouns that are plural in form and meaning take plural subjects.

## ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

The correct answers are highlighted.

1. One can no longer take for granted what\_\_\_enjoyed in the university.  
(a) you (b) he (c) they **(d) one.**
2. Atim and Dan met on the ship and greeted\_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) one another (b) themselves **(c) each other** (d) theirselves.
3. I am not surprised that he failed the election; everybody\_\_\_\_\_that he is unreliable.  
(a) know (b) **knows** (c) will know (d) do know.
4. Knowledge of Mathematics as well as Physics\_\_\_\_\_ in the Aptitude Test.  
(a) **is tested** (b) have been tested (c) are tested (d) were tested.
5. Evidence before the court\_\_\_\_\_ that you are guilty Mr. Jones.  
(a) **proves,** (b) prove (c) proved, (d) proofed.
6. Alice, together with her sisters\_\_\_\_\_ happy with the End-of-Year Result.  
(a) **was** (b) were (c) was being (d) weren't.
7. \_\_\_\_\_do you think will carry your cross?

- (a) whom (b) **who** (c) which (d) that
8. Either our housemistress or you\_\_\_\_\_ to act as referee but none\_\_\_\_\_ arrived.  
(a) is/have (b) is/has (c) are/have (d) **are/has.**
9. His knowledge of materials, sources of supply and prices – unparalleled.  
(a) was (b) **were** (c) being (d) is being
10. Thirty years\_\_\_\_\_too long to be away from home  
(a) are (b) **is** (c) being (d) has been.

Note that *each other* and *one another* are synonymous, and therefore used interchangeably.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss and illustrate five special cases of subject-verb agreement.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 4 AGREEMENT OF PRONOUN WITH ANTECEDENT

This unit deals with the agreement of pronouns with antecedents. The unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement
    - 3.1.1 Indefinite Pronouns
    - 3.1.2 Compound Antecedents
    - 3.1.3 Collective Nouns
    - 3.1.4 Agreement in Person
    - 3.1.5 Vague Antecedents
  - 3.2 Gender
  - 3.3 Number
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A pronoun is a word used to refer to a noun or another pronoun which precedes it in a sentence. The word to which a pronoun refers is called its *antecedent*. In the sentence *Mary lost her handbag*, the pronoun *her* refers to Mary. The word *Mary* precedes the pronoun *her* or *goes before* it. It is therefore the antecedent of the pronoun 'her'. Examine the following sentences and note the antecedents of the pronouns.

1. Unwana says that *she* respects *herself*.  
(Unwana = antecedent of *she* and *herself*)
2. Every *day* brings *its* problems (day = antecedent of *its*)
3. The lecturer himself did not know the answer  
(lecturer = antecedent of *himself*)

Since a pronoun refers to or replaces a noun, it must agree with the noun in number, gender and person. We have already dealt with the issue of number and person in Unit 3 in connection with subject-verb agreement. We shall therefore take up the issue of gender and show its relationship with the agreement of pronouns and their antecedents while assuming a background knowledge of number and person.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify pronouns and their antecedents;
- use pronouns with appropriate antecedents; and
- construct sentences with pronouns which agree with the nouns they replace in gender and in case.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Pronoun and Antecedent Agreement

#### 3.1.1 Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns refer to both sexes; male and female. In the following example, *everyone* includes male and female:

1. Everyone is invited to the party.  
The problem arises where the indefinite pronoun is the antecedent of another pronoun. In such a situation the convention is to use the masculine gender for the pronoun which is used in place of the indefinite pronoun. In the following example, *everybody* is the antecedent of the pronoun, *his* instead of *his or her*.
2. *Everybody* received *his* declaration of assets form.  
It must however be noted that the more cumbersome form 'his or her' is sometimes preferred by women who assert their individuality as a sex. This is also the reason behind modern usages like *chairperson* instead of *chairman*.

In example 5 above, the pronoun *his* refers to *everyone* which includes people of both male and female genders. If it is clear from the sentence that the indefinite pronoun refers to only male or female, the pronoun that refers to that sex is used. However, some grammarians think that 'everyone' can be used in a generic sense without prejudice to sex.

3. *Everyone* who attended the meeting of the Catholic Women Organisation wore *her* uniform.
4. *Everyone* in the Boys Scout Movement had *his* height measured.  
When it is not clear whether the antecedent indefinite pronoun is masculine or feminine the pronoun *he* is used.
5. Somebody left his pen on my table.

The practice of using the pronoun *their* instead of his or her is also gaining grounds as in:

6. 'God send everyone their hearts desire'. (Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*).

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Examine the following.

1. All were waiting for their children (plural)
2. There is no salad left; all of it has been eaten (singular)
3. Some gave their contributions yesterday (plural)
4. Some of the beer has lost its flavour; it is now stale (singular)
5. Did any of the girls collect their membership cards from the office? (Plural)
6. Any of the lecturers is willing to help (singular)
7. None have sent their abstract (plural)
8. None of these is a typical case (singular)

#### 3.1.2 Compound Antecedent

At times a pronoun refers to two antecedents joined by a conjunction; if both antecedents are singular and refer to different persons or things, the pronoun used to refer to them has to be plural:

7. The president and the secretary have given their manifestoes.  
However if the compound antecedents refer to one person who occupies two positions or performs two functions the pronoun which takes the place of the antecedent has to be singular.

8. The secretary and typist has complained about *her* workload (singular).  
If in the above example, the typist were another individual, the article 'the' would be placed before the word typist and the pronoun which refers to the compound antecedents would be plural.

- 8a. The secretary and the typist have complained about *their* workload.  
When the connectives either ... or and neither ... nor connect singular nouns, the antecedent is regarded as singular. When they join plural nouns, the antecedent is plural. When, however, they join nouns that are different in number (one singular and the other plural) the pronoun agrees with the antecedent that is nearer to it.

9. Either Etim or his brother left his briefcase in the office (Both nouns are singular – pronoun singular)

10. Either ladies or the gentlemen came into the hall without their tickets.  
(Both nouns are plural – pronoun plural)
11. Neither Mary nor her cousins brought their levies (Pronoun is plural – agrees with cousins).

Remember that *either* means one of two; *neither* means zero of two and *none* zero of three and above.

### 3.1.3 Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are singular when they express singular ideas or refer to groups acting as units, they are plural when they express plural ideas or when they refer to members in a group who are acting independently.

Examine the following:

12. The band played *its* first number (as a unit).
13. The band were tuning up *their* instruments when we arrived (as individuals).

### 3.1.4 Agreement in Person

As we earlier stated (Section 1.0) a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person. If the antecedent of the pronoun is in the first person, the pronoun which refers to it must also be in the first person. If the antecedent is in the second or third person, the pronoun that refers to it must also be in the appropriate person. One of the most common errors of agreement in English is to start a sentence in the third person and put the pronoun that refers to it in the second person. Examine the following:

14. If anyone wants some water *you* can get it from the tap  
(wrong-person).
- 14a. If anyone wants some water, *he* can get it from the tap.

### 3.1.5 Vague Antecedents

Sometimes a pronoun has two possible antecedents in the same sentence to which it refers. This can create misinterpretations of the sentence.

Note the two possible interpretations of the following sentence:

15. Ekaette told her friend that she had been appointed a commissioner.

In the above sentence it is possible for the antecedent to be *Ekaette* or *her friend*. This is a case of ambiguity. To disambiguate the sentence, it can be re-written in either of the following ways.

- 15a. Ekaette told her friend: ‘I have been appointed a commissioner’.  
 15b. Ekaette told her friend: ‘you have been appointed a commissioner’.  
 15c. Ekaette told her friend that she (Ekaette) had been appointed commissioner.  
 15d. Ekaette told her friend that she (her friend) had been appointed a commissioner.  
 15e. Ekaette announced her friend’s appointment as a commissioner.

There are many errors of agreement which can be traced to vague antecedents. It is important in sentence construction to make a pronoun refer directly to the noun which it represents. Examine the following sentence.

16. Your application and your electronic mail arrived in time but we cannot treat *it* at the moment.

Notice that the pronoun *it* has no antecedent in the sentence. The antecedent to the nouns: *application* and *electronic mail* would be *them* as this is a case of a compound antecedent joined by *and*.

### 3.2 Gender

In grammar, gender refers to the classification of nouns and pronouns according to sex. Four genders are often identified: masculine, feminine, common and neuter. Masculine gender denotes the male sex while feminine gender denotes the female sex. Neuter gender indicates absence of sex and common gender denotes either male or female sex. Examples of nouns and pronouns in the four genders are given below:

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
<i>gender</i>	<i>gender</i>
man	woman
boy	girl
he	she
him	her
Neuter gender	
bag	
television	
bottle	
it	



Some nouns and a few pronouns have special forms which show gender. These include

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
host	hostess
king	queen
uncle	aunt
nephew	niece
waiter	waitress
hero	heroine
alumnus	alumna
monk	nun
actor	actress
he	she
him	her
bridegroom	bride
peacock	peahen
ram	ewe
son	daughter
count	countess
Czar	Czarina
duke	duchess
emperor	empress
god	goddess
heir	heiress
boar	sow
witch	wizard
stallion	mare
roaster	duck
fox	vixen

The above list is by no means exhaustive but there are some forms used to show gender which are hardly ever used. These include author – authoress, poet – poetess, administrator-administratrix

### **3.3 Number**

Indefinite pronouns also present a problem of number; some may *be* either singular or plural while some are always plural. The following list shows the pronouns that are always singular and those that are plural.

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
anybody	many
everybody	both
anyone	few
everyone	several
each	others

either  
 no one  
 nobody  
 neither one  
 someone  
 somebody

There should therefore be proper agreement between the above pronouns when they are antecedents and the pronouns that refer to them. Study the following examples:

17. *Neither* of the men had his entitlements (Not their).
18. If anyone wants a drink *he* can buy it at the bar (Not they).
19. One should concentrate on what *one* can do well (not they).
20. Only a few would give up *their* comfort for others (plural).
21. *Several* found *their* cars opened (plural).
22. Others could not locate their cars (plural).

The pronouns *all*, *any*, *some* and *none* may be singular or plural depending on the meaning of the sentence. When these pronouns refer to quantity or mass, they are singular but when they refer to number, they are generally regarded as plural.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Select the correct answer from the alternatives given in each sentence.

1. Either you or Peter \_\_\_\_\_ invited  
 (a) are (b) was (c) have been (d) were
2. The scissors \_\_\_\_\_ used for cutting  
 (a) is (b) are (c) being (d) been.
3. The committee has submitted \_\_\_\_\_ report  
 (a) her (b) his (c) its (d) their
4. The manager together with his visitor \_\_\_\_\_ left for Abuja.  
 (a) have (b) has (c) were (d) was
5. Neither Alice nor you \_\_\_\_\_ invited  
 (a) is (b) are (c) has been (d) was
6. A group of four women and a child \_\_\_\_\_ the first to be released.  
 (a) were (b) was (c) being (d) been.
7. I want everybody to eat \_\_\_\_\_ food.  
 (a) their (b) his (c) her (d) his/her.
8. I hate examinations because it makes \_\_\_\_\_ nervous.  
 (a) us (b) me (c) you (d) them
9. For one to succeed in any endeavour \_\_\_\_\_ must work hard.  
 (a) he (b) she (c) they (d) one
10. We are shocked at \_\_\_\_\_ being so irresponsible.  
 (a) them (b) their (c) they (d) us

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The problem of agreement between pronouns and their antecedents is a common problem among second language speakers of English. Agreement between these two elements must be in number, gender, and person.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following important points have been raised in this unit:

- i. A pronoun is a word used to refer to a noun or another pronoun which precedes it in a sentence. The word to which a pronoun refers is called its *antecedent*.
- ii. Since a pronoun refers to or replaces a noun, it must agree with the noun in number, gender and person
- iii. At times a pronoun refers to two antecedents joined by a conjunction, if both antecedents are singular and refer to different persons or things, the pronoun used to refer to them has to be plural.
- iv. If the antecedent is in the second or third person, the pronoun that refers to it must also be in the appropriate person.
- v. Sometimes a pronoun has two possible antecedents in the same sentence to which it refers. This can create misinterpretations of the sentence.

## ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Examine the following.

1. All were waiting for their children (plural, refers to number)
2. There is no salad left; all of it has been eaten (singular, refers to quantity).
3. Some gave their contributions yesterday (plural, refers to number)
4. Some of the beer has lost its flavour; it is now stale (singular, refers to quantity)

5. Did any of the girls collect their membership cards (plural, refers to number)
6. Any of the lecturers is willing to help (singular, refers to number but to one lecturer)
7. None have sent their abstract (plural refers to number)
8. None of these is a typical case (singular, refers to quantity).

## ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Select the correct answer from the alternatives given in each sentence.

The correct answers have been highlighted.

1. Either you or Peter\_\_\_\_\_invited  
(a) are (b) was (c) **is** (d) are
2. The scissors\_\_\_\_\_used for cutting  
(a) **is** (b) are (c) being (d) been.
3. The committee has submitted\_\_\_\_\_report  
(a) her (b) his (c) **its** (d) their
4. The manager together with his visitor\_\_\_\_\_left for Abuja.  
(a) have (b) **has** (c) were (d) was
5. Neither Alice nor you\_\_\_\_\_invited  
(a) is (b) **are** (c) has been (d) was
6. A group of four women and a child\_\_\_\_\_the first to be released.  
(a) **were** (b) was (c) being (d) been.
7. I want everybody to eat\_\_\_\_\_food.  
(a) their (b) his (c) her (d) **his/her**.
8. I hate examinations because it makes\_\_\_\_\_nervous.  
(a) us (b) **me** (c) you (d) them
9. For one to succeed in any endeavour\_\_\_\_\_must work hard.  
(a) he (b) she (c) they (d) **one**
10. We are shocked at\_\_\_\_\_being so irresponsible.  
(a) them (b) **their** (c) they (d) us.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss and illustrate five cases of agreement of the pronoun with the antecedent

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## UNIT 5 COORDINATION

This unit deals with coordination. This term involves the linking of sentence parts which are related. The unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Coordination
    - 3.1.1 Clausal Coordination
    - 3.1.2 Phrasal Coordination
    - 3.1.3 Semantic Implications of Coordination
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Coordination involves the linking of units of equal status through the use of coordinating conjunctions. Therefore the notion of linking parts of a sentence is central to a discussion of coordination.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- construct well coordinated sentences;
- differentiate between coordination and subordination; and
- identify the semantic restrictions of coordination by *and*, *or* and *but*.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Coordination

Coordination is often realised in English through the use of coordinators. Coordinators, according to Strang (1970), are link words between equivalent structures like members of the same form classes, phrases, clauses or even sentences. The term coordination is used in cases where coordinating conjunctions are present or absent. These are the two cases described by Quirk and Greenbaum (1975) as syndetic and asyndetic coordination. The following sentences exemplify cases of syndetic (when there is a coordinating conjunction) and asyndetic coordination (where there is no coordinating conjunction)

Slowly but steadily she got to the top of her career. Slowly, steadily, she got to the top of her career.

The common coordinators are: *and, or, but, for, while* (when it means the same as *but*). The others are: *rather, sooner than, nor* (after a negative construction) as well as the correlatives *both.. and, either..or, not only...but also, neither... nor*. The following are examples of coordination of phrases and clauses with and without ellipsis of Subject or Predicate:

David likes teaching *but* his brother prefers business. I wonder whether he has ever tried anything else. You can either write or type your assignment  
Janet ate a loaf of bread and drank many cups of tea. She works in an office and her husband in a school.  
Ekaete is intelligent but playful.

Coordination is often contrasted with subordination. Subordination involves the linking of units like coordination but with subordination one of the units is subordinated to the other. Indicators of subordination are referred to as subordinating conjunctions. When two adjectives modify a noun, for instance, they can be coordinated or not as in the example

1. This is her first and major outing,  
The adjectives are coordinated in the above example, but if the same sentence is written as follows:
  - 1a. This is her first major outing  
the two parts are not coordinated. *First* modifies *major* which in turn modifies *outing*. There are similar such relationships in both coordination and subordination. In the two examples which follow, two clauses are coordinated in the first case and subordinated in the second:
    2. They woke up early, but they were late.
    3. Although they woke up early, they were late.

It is clear that the parts of the first sentence are independent and are linked by *but* whereas the parts of the second sentence are not of equal rank. The first clause is dependent on the second but the point of interest is that the two clauses have been linked.

The same semantic relationship can be suggested by a conjunct such as *yet* as in the following:

4. They woke up early *yet* they arrived late.

Sentence No 4 is an *asyndetic coordination* which can become *syndetic* with the addition of a coordinating conjunction like *but* as in:

- 4a. They woke up early *but yet*, they failed

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Distinguish between coordination and subordination.

#### 3.1.1 Clausal Coordination

There are three main coordinators. These are: *and*, *or*, *but*. *And*, *or* are the central coordinators. *But* differs from them in some respects. This will be discussed later. The clause coordinators often occur in initial positions in the clause. Examine the following:

5. Mercy sings very well *and* her brother plays the guitar.  
This is generally the case with conjunctions and some conjuncts (particularly *yet* and *so*). However most conjuncts come later in the clause as in:
6. Mercy sings very well; her brother, however, plays the piano  
Note that the conjunctions *though*, *as*, and *that* are exceptions to this rule. They appear non-initially in some contexts as in the following:
7. Though she is jobless, she is very generous  
7a. Jobless though she is, she is very generous.  
*Although* unlike *though* is an exception. It does not change its position. Thus the second alternative-17a is not allowed (except in a literary work).
8. Although she is jobless, she is very generous.  
8a. \*Jobless although she is, she is very generous

Coordinated clauses which begin with a coordinator are fixed and cannot be in front of the preceding clause without producing unacceptable sentences. For example, the coordinated clause in the following sentence cannot come in front of the preceding clause:

They are living in Lagos *or* they are spending their holidays there.

- 9a\* Or they are spending their holidays there, they are living in Lagos.



To avoid repetition, coordinators allow ellipsis of the clauses they introduce if the subject is the same as that of the linked clause as in:

10. I shall visit you tomorrow or (I) may phone you in the evening.  
This does not however apply to other conjunctions (those that are not coordinating conjunctions) including *for* and *or* to conjuncts except *yet, so, or then*.
- 11.\* He did not approve of the plan *for* was uncooperative.
12. They did not approve of the plan *yet* (they) said nothing.

It is important to note that a subordinator does not allow ellipsis even when the clause is linked by a coordinator. Examine the following:

- 13.\* I did not give him the money because he looked suspicious and *because* had no bag with him.  
Note: The use of asterisk denotes that the sentence is unacceptable.

If the second subordinator is removed the ellipsis is normal as in:

- 13a. I did not give him the money because he looked suspicious and had no bag with him.

Conjuncts which normally do not allow ellipsis do so if they are preceded by a coordinator. Examine the following:

14. She slept late *nevertheless* had a lot of work to do  
14a. She slept late, *but nevertheless*, (she) had work to do

The coordinators *and, or* can also link subordinate clauses as in the following cases:

15. I wonder *whether* we should send him a congratulatory message on his recent appointment or *whether* we should pay him a visit.

Such linking is not possible with conjuncts or for other conjunctions except *but* which is only restricted to linking a maximum of two clauses and even so can link only certain types of subordinate clauses

16. She said that she would attend the function but that she would be late.

Unlike *but*, and the subordinators and conjuncts *and* and *or* can link more than two clauses and all except the last instance of these conjunctions is mandatory. Examine the following:

17. All staff were invited, they were expected to accept the invitation and find their way to the venue of the function.
- 17a All staff were invited and they were expected to accept the invitation and find their way to the venue of the function.

### 3.1.2 Phrasal Coordination

This is the coordination of phrases that cannot be seen as reduced from coordination of sentence. For example:

Muazu and Yusuf met at last.

The coordination of Muazu and Yusuf cannot be reduced to a coordination of:

- Muazu met at last and Yusuf met at last.

*And* and *or* are also the main coordinators for phrasal coordination. *But* is used only to link adjectival clauses and adverbial phrases.

18. ... an extremely long *but* very interesting letter.
- 18a. ... She spoke to him politely *but* firmly.

It must be noted that when phrases are joined by *and* and *or* there is no ellipsis of the rest of the clause as is the case when the verb phrases or parts of them are directly linked. For instance in:

19. Felicia *and* her friend sang in the school choir.

Sentence No.19 is not regarded as elliptical because what it means is that Felicia sang in the school choir and her friend also sang in the school choir. The two sentences can be regarded as synonymous. Felicia and her friend are regarded as a coordinated noun phrase functioning as the subject of the sentence. The two nouns can be replaced by *the girls* or *they*. This type of coordination is phrasal coordination.

Phrases that can be coordinated include:

Noun phrases: Mary and Agnes, novels and plays,;  
There may be ellipsis of the head within the noun phrase

20. New and old were asked to pay their fees.  
(the ellipsis for old students and new students)

Coordination also occurs with units other than noun phrase. These include

**Prepositional Phrases:**

21. The thief ran down the street and into the bush.

**Adverbials and Dependent Clauses:**

22. You can lift the load gradually or by using a truck.  
23. She can come this evening or early in the morning.

Adjectives can be coordinated when they are predicative:

24. He is young and handsome

Adjectives be coordinated when they are attributive:

25. His *fluent and intelligent* speech impressed listeners.

It must be noted that ellipsis can occur in all three cases where the first or second of the phrases is omitted: examine the following;

26. I shall see him when (he wishes) and where he wishes.  
27. She will come before it gets dark or after (it gets dark).  
28. I am willing (to tell her the truth) but afraid to tell the truth.

There are also some stereotyped and institutionalized coordinated expressions such as: *If and when, as and when, and unless and until*.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Use the above coordinated phrases in your own sentences.

**3.1.3 Semantic Implications of Coordination**

There are certain semantic implications of coordination by *and, or, but*. *And* suggests relationships between the clauses which suggest chronology through comment to consequence and contrast. Let us illustrate this with some examples:

29. He heard gunshots and (therefore) he called for help (consequence)  
30. She washed the clothes and (then) she ironed them (chronology)  
31. Tony is cowardly and his brother is a courageous man (contrast)

Note that *and* can be replaced by *but* in the last example.

32. Nobody likes Susan – and that is not surprising (Comment)  
33.a She studied very hard and yet she failed. (element of surprise).

Note that *and* can also be replaced by *but* in the last example.

34. Tell me the truth and I will give you protection (condition).  
 35. She wears short hair and (also) she wears a mild perfume. (addition)

*Or* usually expresses the idea that only one of the possibilities obtain. Examine the following:

36. You can sleep on the bed or on the couch, or you can go to a hotel.  
 Sometimes *or* is regarded as inclusive, allowing the combination of alternatives, and the third alternative can be included as a third clause:

37. They are free to interview individuals or ask for memoranda or do both.

At other times, the alternative expressed by *or* may be a restatement or correction of what is said as in the following examples:

38. They entertained visitors all day *or* at least they appeared to be doing so.  
 39. Okon has just become a jambite, *or*, in other words, he is in his first year in a university.

Also, *or* may suggest a negative condition as in the following:

40. Pay your rent regularly *or* you quit.

No 40 can be paraphrased as: Pay your rent regularly. If you do not, you quit.

*But* normally suggests a contrast. The contrast may be because what is said in the second part is unexpected judging from what is said in the first part, or the contrast may be a restatement in positive terms of what was said or implied negatively in the first part. Examine the following:

41. She did not need a servant *but* accepted the orphan.  
 42. Peter did not waste his money on trivialities *but* saved every bit of it.

Note also that *yet* can replace *but* in No.41 while *on the contrary* can be used instead of *but* in No.42

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Summarise the semantic implications of *and*, *but*, and *or*.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Coordination differs from subordination in that the former describes the linking of

two equivalent structures. Well coordinated sentence constructions are achieved by distinguishing between equivalent and subordinating structures to be linked and using appropriate coordinators.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit the main points that have been made are:

- Coordination involves the linking of units of equal status through the use of coordinating conjunctions.
- Coordinating conjunctions are link words between equivalent structures.
- Coordination is often contrasted with subordination.
- Subordination also involves the linking of units but with subordination one of the units is subordinated to the other.
- Words, clauses and phrases can be coordinated.
- There are three main coordinators; these are: *and*, *or*, and *but*.
- There are semantic implications of coordination by *and*, *but* and *or*.
- *And* suggests relationships which range from chronology through consequence to addition.
- *Or* suggests that only one of the possibilities obtain.
- *But* suggests contrast.

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Distinguish between coordination and subordination.

1. Coordination involves the linking of units of equal status through the use of coordinating conjunctions. Coordination is often realised in English through the use of coordinators as well as the correlatives *both...and*, *either...or*, *not only...but also*, *neither...*
2. Coordination is often contrasted with subordination. Subordination involves the linking of units like coordination but with subordination one of the units is subordinated to the other.

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Use the above coordinated phrases: *If and when*, *as and when*, and *unless and until* in sentences:

Candidates should make their own sentences using the coordinated phrases in italics.

**ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Summarise the semantic implications of *and*, *but*, and *or*.

There are semantic implications of coordination by *and*, *but* and *or*.

*And* suggests relationships which range from chronology through consequence to addition.

*Or* suggests that only one of the possibilities obtain.

*But* suggests contrast.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Explain the term coordination and discuss its types.

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT 6 PUNCTUATION**

This unit deals with punctuation. In this unit, we shall review the major types of punctuation marks commonly used in sentence construction. The unit is arranged as follows:

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 End Punctuations
    - 3.1.1 The Full Stop or Period
    - 3.1.2 The Question Mark
    - 3.1.3 The Exclamation Mark
  - 3.2 Internal Punctuation
    - 3.2.1 The Comma
    - 3.2.2 The Semi Colon
    - 3.2.3 The Colon
  - 3.3 Other Punctuations
    - 3.3.1 Capital Letters
    - 3.3.2 Parenthesis
    - 3.3.3 The Apostrophe
    - 3.3.4 Quotation Marks
    - 3.3.5 Brackets
    - 3.3.6 The Dash
    - 3.3.7 The Hyphen
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In sentence construction, it is important to indicate that one sentence has ended and another is about to start or that it is time to break either for a short time or because a certain quotation, list or another part of the sentence is about to follow. At other times punctuations signal abbreviations, proper nouns or omissions of certain letters. Some sentences require one type of punctuation only while others require more than one.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- identify the end punctuations;
- use end punctuations appropriately in sentence constructions;
- identify the internal punctuations; and
- use internal punctuations appropriately in sentence constructions.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 End Punctuations**

These are punctuation marks which come at the end of sentences. They include the full stop or period, the question mark and the exclamation mark. The use of one of these excludes the use of the others.

##### **3.1.1 The Full Stop or Period (.)**

The full stop is used to mark the end of a declarative sentence or an imperative sentence that issues its commands mildly as in the following:

1. In 1960, Nigeria became independent.
2. Give us this day our daily bread.

To give a declarative or imperative sentence the force of an exclamatory sentence an exclamation mark can be used. Examine the following sentences:

3. I was so shocked that I stood motionless!
4. Bring the ladder quickly!

After a request, it is preferable to use a full-stop rather than a question mark:

5. May I have your pen, please. (request)
6. Will you send me any additional information you may have. (request)

The full stop is also used after abbreviations and initials:

7. Dr., Mr., Mrs., A.M., P.M, Ph.D, U.S.A.

When however the abbreviation includes the last letter of the word the full stop is usually omitted. Therefore, it is appropriate to use PhD and USA without any periods.

Note, however, that when a sentence ends with an abbreviation, one full- stop is sufficient for both the sentence and the abbreviation:

8. Cash the cheque at All States Trust Bank Plc.



The full-stop is also used to signal the omission of words in a quoted passage. When used in this way the three dots used together are referred to as *ellipsis* as in the following

9. ‘Intonation is used to describe ... the way the voice rises and falls in speech’ (Udofot and Eshiett, 1996).

If the omission (ellipsis) occurs at the end of a quoted passage, it is more conventional to use four dots.

10. To translate is to change into another language ....

### 3.1.2 The Question Mark (?)

The question mark is used at the end of an interrogative sentence which asks direct questions as in the following:

11. Why did you beat that child?
12. How are you?
13. Do you like rice?

If a sentence contains more than one question, the question mark may be used after each separate part of a sentence. Also, more than one question mark may be used in a single sentence to show the close-linked nature of the questions or to emphasise each of the separate questions.

14. Will Amate marry George? Or will Uduak?
15. Are we sure of his honesty? His commitment? His willingness?

Note however that if the question is not complete until the end of the sentence the question mark should be placed at the end only.

16. Will the examination take place today, tomorrow or the next? When only part of the sentence is a question, the question is usually introduced by a comma or colon; a semicolon or dash may also be used.

17. May I ask, what is your problem?
- 17a. This is my problem: what can I do to prevent the rain from falling?
- 17b. We would like to know, what date will you arrive? Will you like a room to be reserved for you? And, how long do you intend to stay?

A question mark can also be used to show uncertainty or to suggest humorous intentions. Examine the following.

18. Professor Ekpedeme was born in 1950 (?)
19. His requests (?) are too many.

Note that the question mark should not be used

- (a) at the end of an indirect question.

Examine the following example:

20. I demand to know why children should be made to be bread winners through hawking.  
 (b) to mark the end of a polite or formal question.
21. Could you send your reply at your earliest convenience.

### 3.1.3 The Exclamation Mark (!)

The exclamation mark is used at the end of an exclamatory sentence, phrase or clause. Examine the following:

22. How have the mighty fallen!  
 23. God forbid!  
 24. What a surprise!

Note that like the question mark, the exclamation mark can be used within the sentence to show strong feeling; that is after an interjection as in the following examples:

25. Good God! She is dead!  
 26. Father! Father!  
 27. Oh! I haven't heard that before!

The exclamation mark should not be used after mild exclamations as in

28. Well, I have survived it.

The exclamation mark is also used after statements which are commands or those that imply immediate action.

29. Return the form today! Do not delay!  
 30. Hurry! Pay your subscription today!

The exclamatory mark can also be used after an interrogative sentence that is intended to be exclamatory.

31. Oh! Why should she say that!  
 32. But can a human being be trusted!

Sometimes, an exclamation mark is used for emphasis as in the following:

33. Remember the deadline of May 2nd!
34. Your admission lapses irrevocably after February 28th, 2008!

Some writers use the exclamation mark to indicate an afterthought or ironical statements e.g.

- 34a. I like toads!
- 34b. Let's go to hell!

It is sometimes appropriate to end a rhetorical question- one for which no answer is expected in an exclamation point; instead of a question mark, as in: What on earth is happening to me!

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Insert the proper end punctuation at the end of each of the following:

1. Never I would rather resign
2. Resign you will
3. Unwana asked why her brothers had gone out.
4. Well done
5. May I suggest that you give us the money
6. Oh Nigeria my dear native land
7. He screamed angrily that he did not welcome opposition
8. Where are the children
9. Prof I Udofot
10. NEPA

## 3.2 Internal Punctuation

Internal punctuation refers to punctuation marks used within the sentence to point out that the flow of thought in the sentence is interrupted. They warn the reader to slow down because something is about to be added to or subtracted from the sentence.

### 3.2.1 The Comma (,)

The comma separates sentence elements. It is the most frequently used, the least emphatic and the most abused of the internal punctuation marks. The comma is used to separate words, phrases or clauses in a series when there are more than three items:

35. He went to the market to buy clothes, food, books and some fruits.
36. On weekends, I do my shopping, wash my clothes, iron them and then cook a big pot of soup.

It is conventional to omit the comma before *and*, or connecting the last two items of the series. The comma also separates two independent clauses joined by a co-ordinating conjunction such as *and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet, either ... or, neither ... nor*.

37. I had thought that snails were tasty, but I found that they were not.

If the independent clauses are short and closely related, the comma should be omitted.

38. John likes Mary and Mary likes him.

The comma is also used after an adverbial subordinate when the subordinate clause begins the sentence.

39. When I finish my education, I will work in Abuja.

Note that when the dependent clause does not begin the sentence, the comma is unnecessary.

40. I will work in Abuja when I finish my education.

When a phrase also begins the sentence, a comma is used to separate it from the rest of the sentence.

41. The strike having been called off, we went back to work.

If however the subject of the sentence is an infinitive, the subject is not separated from the rest of the sentence.

42. *To pass the examination* was her target

When two adjectives modify a noun, a comma is used to separate them;

43. She is a clever, well-behaved girl.

Note that if the comma cannot be replaced by 'and' in the sentence it is not in order. Examine the following:

44. She is a clever and well behaved girl. But not:

45. He is a brave military man.

In the above sentence, a comma cannot be used between *brave* and *military* because that comma cannot be replaced by 'and' as in

46. He is a brave and military man (unacceptable)

In writing the date, the comma separates the year from other items as in 31st December, 1950.

A comma is also used to separate the parts of geographical names, addresses, districts etc.

47. 27 Idak Okpo Street, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

A comma is often used after the salutation and complimentary close of a letter.

48. Dear Madam, Yours sincerely, Dear Sir, Yours faithfully.

The comma is also used to separate elements which break the continuity of a sentence from the rest of the sentence. These include transitional words, interjections, sentence modifiers, words, phrases and clauses in apposition.

49. Usually, she comes to work early.

50. Somebody, I guess, has to do it.

51. Mr. Okon, the English teacher, is very dutiful.

52. His position, nevertheless, looks shaky.

A comma *should not be used to* separate the subject or complement from the verb unless there are other elements which break the continuity of the sentence.

53. Life, is the art of learning from one's mistakes (wrong)

53a. Life is the art of learning from one's mistakes.

The comma should also not be used between two independent clauses unless a co-ordinating conjunction is also used. The use of the comma between two independent clauses without a co-ordinating conjunction is called the '*comma fault*' (Bolander and Semmelmeier, 1984)

The following examples illustrate the comma fault.

54. The student does not take corrections, he continues to make mistakes (comma fault).

55. The student does not take corrections so he continues to make mistakes (correct)

A comma should also not be used when a full stop or any other punctuation mark should be used. Many students make the mistake of overworking the comma and they commit an error known as the '*comma splice*'. The following passage shows a wrong use of the comma where other punctuation marks should be used.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Replace the comma with the proper punctuation marks.

In our house scolding was the order of the day, my father scolded everyone, and my mother scolded the children all except the eldest, and there was a good reason for the exception, the boy was hardly ever at home, when he did turn up, there was no question of being cross with him, one harsh word and he will vanish again.

(Adapted from Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala*, p. 165)

### 3.2.2 The Semicolon (;)

The semicolon is used to indicate a stronger break than the comma. It shows a stronger separation between the parts of a sentence but not as strong as the full-stop. It is not advisable to use many semicolons in sentence construction because it is generally too formal and suggests that one is writing sentences that are too long. Frequent use of the semicolon results in very involved sentences that may break down if not well controlled.

The semicolon is often used to separate two independent clauses which are closely connected in meaning or two independent clauses which are joined by transitional words or phrases, NOT a coordinating conjunction. Observe the following examples:

56. The Vice Chancellor did not accept the committee's report as presented; he suggested some amendment (sentence closely connected in meaning).
57. Mr. Essien's car broke down; consequently, he was late for work.

Note that the use of the semicolon in this way remedies the comma fault mentioned above. Note also the use of the comma after the transitional word in Sentence No. 58. The following are some of the common transitional words and phrases:

however	thus	on the other hand
furthermore	meanwhile	that is
nevertheless	moreover	at least
consequently	namely	in addition
again	finally	above all
hence	as a result	even so
therefore	in fact	
possibly	in short	

In clauses or phrases already containing commas, the semicolon is used as a stronger break between such clauses.

58. At the End-of-term Assembly, Eme Okon, the school sports captain, was elected the school prefect; Ofonmbuk Enoidem, my niece, was elected labour prefect and Glory Akpan, an S.S.2 student, was elected timekeeper.

The semicolon is also often used after words introducing explanations, enumerations or a list in a sentence (that is words like *for example*, *that is*, *for instance*, and *namely*).

This usage is shown in the following examples:

59. He is a surgeon; that is a doctor who performs operations.

60. The school vest is available in four colours; namely, blue, red, green and white.

Note that the semicolon should not be used in the following cases:

- (a) after the salutation or complimentary close of a letter (particularly an informal letter)

Dear Rose, NOT Dear Rose; Yours sincerely, NOT Yours sincerely;

- (b) after subordinate clauses where a comma should be used:

Having seen that the man was dying, the thieves stopped beating him NOT Having seen that the man was dying; the thieves stopped beating him.

### 3.2.3 The Colon (:)

The colon signals the strongest possible break within the sentence. It indicates that a statement, an explanation or a list is about to follow. It is used in the following situation:

- (a) To introduce a list as in the following example:

61. There are three kinds of skirts: the mini, the midi and the maxi.

62. His duties are as follows: receiving mails, filing papers and duplicating examinations.

Note that when the list is in a column form, the first letter of each item should be capitalised as in the following.

63. Learn how to use the following machines:

- i. Typewriter
- ii. Duplicating machine
- iii. Calculator

When, however, the items in a list are included in a sentence the first letter of each item is not capitalised as in the example below:

64. Learn how to use the following machines: typewriter, duplicating machine and calculator.

(b) If a sentence explains, restates, amplifies or contrasts the sentence that precedes it, a colon is used after the first sentence, as in the following example:

65. Uko is very happy: he has just gained admission into a university.

(c) A colon is often used to stress a word, a phrase or clause that follows:

66. Educated though he is, he is unduly influenced by a single factor: superstition.

(d) A colon is also used to introduce a long or formal quotation as in the following.

67. The school principal said: “.....”

(e) The colon also divides parts of references, titles, formulae and numerals as in the following:

68. I was assigned to read chapter 12: Section 19.

69. The time is 10:45 am.

Note: Colons are also used to mark off chapters and verses of the Bible: He reads job 42: 12 everyday.

A colon is also used in Internet sources that contain HTTP ( Hypertext Transfer Sources) : <http://agolghu>

### 3.3 Other Punctuations

#### 3.3.1 Capital Letters

Capital letters are used at the beginning of a sentence unless the sentence



follows a semicolon or a colon.

70. This is the car that my father gave me.

But

71. I love this car; it was my father's last gift to me.

Capital letters are also used for proper names as in the following.

72. Inyang, Basse, University of Uyo, Lake Chad, Nigeria, Africa.

Capital letters are used at the beginning of titles as in

73. The Okuku of Afaha UdoEyop

The Obong of Calabar

The Emir of Fika

The Oba of Benin

The Obi of Onitsha

Capital letters are also used for the pronoun I and the interjection O as in:

74a. I work with her always.

74b. Save us O Lord!

Some writers choose to capitalize pronouns of deities especially God e.g.

74c. God knows our hearts and He provides our needs.

Capital letters are also used in writing titles e.g. Ph.D., B.A., M.A., OFR. Some important words in headings start with capitals e.g. *Application for Employment as a Clerk*.

In writing a long title, capital letters begin each word other than the structural words as in

75. *The Beautiful Ones Are not yet Born* is written by Ayi Kwei Armah.

### 3.3.2 Parentheses ( )

Parentheses are used in pairs to set off words, phrases, clauses which are explanatory or which are translations or comments. Usually, materials in parentheses are independent constructions; the sentence can do without them but they give added explanation when included in the sentence. Observe the use of parentheses in the following:

76. A sentence consists of a subject (a nominal group), a predicate (a verbal group) and in most cases one or more complements (which may be nominal, adjectival or adverbial).

Parenthetic expressions are usually appositives.

77. Ekpedeme (my daughter's roommate) is coming to spend the night in

our house.

Note that when you open a bracket (used for parenthesis) you have to close it. When a symbol, letter or number is used in apposition it is placed within parentheses as in:

78. He paid twenty thousand naira (N20,000.00) for the hall.  
 79. The businessman decorated his letterhead with the naira (N) symbol.

When parentheses are used with other punctuation marks, the main part of the sentence should be punctuated as if the portion in parentheses is not there. If a punctuation mark applies to the whole sentence and not just to the portion in parentheses it should come after the second parenthesis. Examine the following:

80. He presented guidelines for evaluation of the seminar (undergraduate and postgraduate), but the guidelines were ignored by the examiners.

If the punctuation mark applies only to the material in parentheses it is placed inside the second parenthesis as in

81. A knowledge of sentence construction will help you in writing good sentences. (See module 1 of this course book.)

### 3.3.3 The Apostrophe (')

**The apostrophe is used with nouns to show possession, as in:**

82. This is Mary's dress. (singular)  
 83. These are the boys' books (plural)

Note that the apostrophe comes before 's' in singular nouns and after 's' in plural nouns as in examples 82 and 83 above.

Note that the apostrophe is not used in possessive pronouns as in:

84. Ours, yours, hers, its, theirs  
       NOT  
       Our's, your's, her's, it's, their's

The apostrophe is also used to show contracted forms indicating the omission of one or more letters as in the following contracted forms:

85.	I'm ( I am)	I've	I'll
	You're	You've	You'd
	He's	He'd	He'll

Note that contracted forms are not acceptable in formal writing except in informal letters and in quoting direct speech.

### 3.3.4. Quotation Marks “ ”

Quotation marks are used singly or doubly to enclose direct quotations. It is important to be consistent when using quotation marks; if you start with a single quotation mark finish with that, and if you begin with double quotation marks, also end with those. As a matter of convention, quotation marks are used for

(a) direct speech as in

86. The teacher said: “Sit down, pupils.”  
 87. “Where”, she asked, “are you taking me?”

Note that the first word of a direct quotation begins with a capital letter as in No. 86 above. The first word in the second part of an interrupted quotation is however not capitalised as in No. 87.

(b) Titles of magazines, articles, chapters of books, names of songs, titles of poems and other titles are enclosed within quotation marks:

88. The poem “Piano and Drums” was written by Gabriel Okara.  
 89. The musician sang “Gone with the wind” at the funeral.

Note that titles of books are underlined not enclosed within quotation marks and when printed or typeset on computer a title is italicised rather than underlined.

(c) Quotation marks are also used to enclose words used as examples in a sentence as in.

90. “Patricia” is a proper noun but “sister” is not.

(d) Quotation marks enclose words, phrases or sentences referred to in a sentence, as in the following:

91. The word “junction” is often mispronounced by Ibibio learners of English.  
 92. The saying “a stitch in time saves nine” is a good warning to act fast.

A quotation which occurs within a quotation is enclosed within single quotation marks. Note that this is for consistency. If however single quotation marks were

used by the writer the double quotation marks are advisable for quotation within quotations. Examine the following.

93. "Is 'Patricia' a proper noun?" asked the teacher.
94. The angry mother said, "You must get all these 'hand-me-downs' out of the bedroom immediately".

### Points to Note

- (a) If several paragraphs are quoted, quotation marks should be placed at the beginning of the first paragraph and at the end of the last paragraph only.
- (b) Quotations of more than three lines are usually indented and quotation marks are not used with indentation.
- (c) The full stop and the comma are always placed before ending quotation marks but if a complete sentence is quoted, the closing quotation marks are placed after the final stop as in the following:

95. She shouted, "they do not live here."
96. Prof. Eka said, "You will go on leave next month".

- (d) The question mark and the exclamation mark are placed after the ending quotation marks when they refer to the whole sentence as in

97. Did he say "You will go on leave next month"?

When the question mark or the exclamation mark refers only to the quoted material, it is placed before the ending quotation marks.

98. She asked, "When will I go on leave?"
99. I heard her scream, "Alas, she is dead!"

- (e) The semicolon and colon follow the ending quotation marks if they are not part of the quoted material as in the following:
100. He said, "You will go on leave next week": consequently, I started saving for a holiday.

### 3.3.5 Brackets [ ]

Brackets are normally used in pairs to enclose material added by someone other than the writer of the passage. These include editorial additions and comments.

101. The activities of the cultural week [singing, dancing, drama and lectures] went on the whole week.

102. The playwright [Dr. Chris Egharevba] was present at the first public presentation of his play.

Brackets are also used within parentheses to enclose parenthetical matter within parentheses.

103. The drugs you ordered (including maloxine, ampicillin, omega H3 [Norvasc ]) were delivered at your office.

Note that many writers use brackets when they mean to be using parentheses or use them interchangeably. They are, however, not the same. Brackets are seldom used in business or social writing. They are generally found in printed material of a technical or scholarly nature. For your everyday writing you need to use the parenthesis more often.

### 3.3.6 The Dash ( – )

The dash is used to signal an abrupt change of ideas. It should be used sparingly in business and social writing such as letters, reports, minutes as it sometimes suggests that the writer is vacillating and is not sure of what to say or what punctuation mark to use.

The dash signals a sudden change of thought or an after thought added to the end of a sentence. Examine the following:

104. I was sure that the dean – indeed all the members of the faculty Appointments and Promotions Committee wanted him to be appointed.
105. I shall do the shopping, take care of decoration – give you every help I can. Sometimes the dash is used to signal a word or phrase which is repeated for emphasis as in the following:
106. She was invited for the Opening Ceremony – the Opening Ceremony only – not for the cocktail as well.

Note that commas, dashes and parentheses – anyone of them – may be used to signal additional material. There are no hard and fast rules that restrict the use of the one or the other. In general, when punctuating materials that are additional in a sentence it is conventional to use dashes for visual effect, the commas if the material is short and parentheses if the material is long.

### 3.3.7 The Hyphen (-)

This applies mostly in spelling of some compound words (hair-dresser, peace-loving, know-it-all) and setting off some prefixes (ex-officio, anti-crime, non-Biblical).

Hyphens are also used in syllabifying polysyllabic words (organisation, re-gain, letter, granary). This should be particularly observed in breaking up words at the end of lines. Monosyllabic words must not be syllabified.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Punctuate the following and make appropriate changes in form.

1. Slow men at work
2. mobil producing nigeria limited
3. mr udo said i am travelling by akwa ibom transport to Lagos
4. 27 idak okpo street uyo akwa ibom state dear ekaette i am happy to tell you that i have improved my english tremendously these last months you see our group lecturer made it compulsory for us to read one novel a month and in the last one month i have read six novels i cannot tell you how much i have learnt from this exercise a trial will convince you yours sincerely esther.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Incorrect punctuation of English sentences often results in conveying wrong meaning or no meaning at all. To achieve structurally correct English sentences, you must learn to use punctuation marks appropriately.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit the following points have been made:

- Punctuations indicate that one sentence has ended and another is about to start or that it is time to break either for a short time or because a certain quotation, list or another part of the sentence is about to follow.
- Punctuations also signal abbreviations, proper nouns or omissions of certain letters.
- End punctuation marks come at the end of sentences.
- They include the full stop or period, the question mark and the exclamation mark.
- The use of one of these excludes the use of the others.
- Internal punctuation refers to punctuation marks used within the sentence to point out that the flow of thought in the sentence is interrupted.
- Internal punctuations include: the comma, the semi-colon, the colon.
  - Other punctuations include quotation marks, the apostrophe, the

brackets, the dash, parentheses and the hyphen: these can occur within or at the end of sentences.

### ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Insert the proper punctuation in of each of the following sentences:

1. Never! I would rather resign!
2. Resign you will.
3. Unwana asked why her brothers had gone out.
4. Well done!
5. May I suggest that you give us the money.
6. Oh Nigeria my dear native land!
7. He screamed angrily that he did not welcome opposition.
8. Where are the children?
9. Prof. I. Udofot
10. N.E.P.A

### ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Replace the comma with the proper punctuation marks.

In our house, scolding was the order of the day. My father scolded everyone and my mother scolded the children; all except the eldest, and there was a good reason for the exception. The boy was hardly ever at home. When he did turn up, there was no question of being cross with him. One harsh word and he will vanish again.

(Adapted from Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala*, p. 165)

### ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Punctuate the following

1. Slow, men at work.
2. Mobil Producing Nigeria Limited
3. Mr. Udo said: "I am Travelling by Akwa Ibom Transport to Lagos".
4. 27 Idak Okpo Street,  
Uyo,  
Akwa Ibom State.

Dear Ekaette,

I am happy to tell you that I have improved my English tremendously these last months. You see, our group lecturer made it compulsory for us to read one novel a month; and in the last one month, I have read six novels. I cannot tell you how much I have learnt from this exercise. A trial will convince you.

Yours sincerely,

Esther.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Punctuate the following passage

etim sipped his cup of tea it was the type he liked strong without milk or sugar with an effort of will jumped up and walked to the door and standing on the veranda he took seven deep breaths this done daily he believed would clear stale air from his lungs and enable him to take in fresh air which would keep him healthy and prevent any lung infection was this true he believed firmly he walked round his backyard and came into his neat modern bathroom and took a cool shower which he believed was also necessary for good health.

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## MODULE 2 THE ENGLISH VERB

Unit 1	Tense and Aspect
Unit 2	Voice and Mood
Unit 3	Modal Auxiliaries
Unit 4	Non - Finite and Emphatic Forms

### UNIT1 TENSE AND ASPECT

This unit deals with tense and aspect of verbs. The verb is the most important word in the sentence because more constructions depend upon the verb than any other part of speech. Verbs have properties which other parts of speech do not have. One of such properties which belong exclusively to verbs is tense. Aspect is related to tense because the verb form also changes to show aspect. This explains why we choose to look at tense and aspect together since they both have to do with changes in verb forms to show time in the case of tense and manner of perception in the case of aspect. The unit is arranged as follows:

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Time is a universal non linguistic concept with three divisions: present, past and future. Time is not language specific. Whatever the language you speak, you must relate an event to the time of occurrence to be understood. *Tense* is used to relate an event or happening expressed by the verb to a time scale in the present or past. According to Eka (1996) tense refers to changes in the form of the verb to correspond with our own concept of time. *Aspect* on the other hand, refers to the way the action of the verb is perceived; whether it is in progress or is completed at the moment of speaking. Tense and aspect are therefore related and the expression of time, present or past, cannot be considered separately from aspect. The expression of future time is also connected to tense, aspect and mood. *Mood* relates

the action of the verb to such conditions as certainty, obligation, necessity, possibility and futurity. (See NCE/DLS Course Book on English Language. The rest of the discussion in this unit shall be based on Module 2, Unit 4. See also Semmelmeier and Bolander, 1984, Chapter 13).

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- state the relationship between tense and time;
- identify the relationship between tense and aspect;
- express yourself appropriately using the present/past tenses and the progressive/perfective aspect;
- use the various future time expressions; and
- express the future with the present tense, the past with the present tense and the present with the past tense.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Tense

Tense is a property of the verb. In grammar tense refers to the *time an action took place or the time of the state or condition*. Every verb has certain forms which show the time the action occurred. Aspect, as already explained, refers to how the action of the verb is perceived or regarded; for instance whether the action is *in progress* at the moment of speaking or *completed*. Tense and aspect often interrelate to communicate meaning. In this unit, the three basic forms of the verb: the present tense, past tense and the past participle with which other tenses can be built are examined. The expression of other tenses and aspect, for instance, the future in the present, the present in the past and the progressive and perfective aspects in the present and past are also dealt with in this unit.

#### 3.1.1 The Simple Tenses

Verbs have *six tenses* which show differences in the time of action or the time of the state of being:

1. I see a car in the garage.
2. I saw a car in the garage yesterday.
3. I shall see a number of cars on the road when I go to work.

The above three sentences do not mean the same. The difference in meaning depends largely on the verb form that is used to show the time of the action. The first sentence means that the action expressed by the verb *see* is going on at the moment of speaking. The second sentence shows that the action expressed by the verb *saw* took place at some time in the past (yesterday). The third sentence means that the action expressed by the verb *shall see* will take place at some time in the future.

The verbs used in Sentences 1-3 are forms of the verb *see*. The form of the verb *see* used in the first sentence is the form used in the present tense. It expresses or refers to *present time*. The verb *saw* in the second sentence is the form used to express *past time*. The verb *shall see* is the form used to express *future time*.

Recall that there are six tenses in English (although some grammarians talk about two or three and assign the perfect tenses to aspect): present and past with future time. The three tenses which we have just used are called the *simple tenses*. The other three are called the *perfect tenses*. The only difference between the simple tenses and the perfect tenses is that the perfect tenses include the idea of completion. The word perfect refers to an action or state of being that is completed at the moment of writing or speaking.

Simple Tenses	Perfect Tenses
Present tense	Present perfect tense
Past tense	Past perfect tense
Future tense	Future perfect tense

The present tense denotes present time. It is also used to express *habitual actions or an idea that is a universal truth* (generally accepted as true).

4. I *spea*k Ibibio. (present tense)
5. Aisha *walks* to school every day (habitual action)
6. The sun *rises* in the east. (universal truth)

The present tense is often used to express future time. Examine the following:

7. The plane leaves in half an hour.
8. If it rains, the football match will be postponed.

The past tense denotes past time. The past tense of regular verbs is formed by the addition of *d* or *ed* to the present tense form as in dance, danced; want, wanted.

We *danced* at the birthday party. (addition of *d*)

9. I wanted to collect my transcript.(addition of *ed*)

Sometimes the *d* in the present tense form changes to *t* as in:

10. The parents *built* a fence round the school. (*d* changes to *t*)

The past tense of irregular verbs is formed in various ways. Sometimes, the middle vowel changes as in run – ran; begin – began; drive – drove.

At other times the same form is used in both the present and the past tense as in: cut – cut, put - put; hurt – hurt.

In some cases the past tense can be used to refer to the present as in:

11. *Did you want* to see me? (Do you want...)
12. I *wondered* whether you would help me. (= I wonder)

The past can also be expressed in the future. This is expressed by “will”+ perfect infinitive as in the following:

13. Next January I *will have taught* in the university for seventeen years.
14. By midnight today, *she will have been missing* for three days

The future tense denotes *future time*. Note that there is no verb form in English corresponding to the future time as we have the present or past tense form. Other ways of expressing the future are discussed later. The future tense is formed by combining the auxiliary- *shall* and *will*- with the present tense form of the verb. It is conventional to use *shall* with the pronoun *I and we* and *will* with the other pronouns: *you, he/she/it and they*.

15. We shall visit you tomorrow. (*shall*, first person)
16. He will certainly succeed in his plans. (*will*, third person)
17. You will travel with me to Lagos next week. (*will*, second person)

Note that to express future time, ***will*** is used for ***first person*** - singular and plural; and ***shall*** for ***second and third*** persons - singular and plural.

Sometimes future time can be seen from a view point in the past. This is expressed with “was going to” and “was about to”. Such a meaning often implies that the expected happening did not take place:

18. The car was about to hit the tree but the driver saved it.
19. She was going to receive a prize but her name was omitted from the list.

### 3.1.2 The Perfect Tenses

The three perfect tenses are the *present perfect tense*, the *past perfect tense* and the *future perfect tense*. You can easily identify the perfect tenses if you recall that the word perfect is always used in identifying them.

The present perfect tense describes an *action that is completed at the moment of speaking or writing*. It may also indicate *an action that is continuing into the present*. The present perfect tense is formed by combining the auxiliary *have or has* with past participle of the principal verb. The auxiliary *has* is always used in the *third person* singular. Examine the following:

20. I *have spoken* with the vice chancellor. (*have spoken*, first person)
21. You *have worked* for your promotion. (*have worked*, second person)

22. The driver *has washed* the car. (has worked, third person).

The past perfect tense describes an *action that was completed before some definite time in the past*. The past perfect tense is formed by *combining the auxiliary had with the past participle* of the principal verb as in: had gone, had washed, had spoken, had been, had fainted as in the following examples;

23. Before the doctor *arrived*, the accident victim *had fainted*.  
 24. *I understood* the lecture better after I *had read* over it.  
 25. All copies of the book *had been* sold before I *got* to the bookshop.

Note that the past perfect describes an action in the *remote past*; two actions occurred in the past, *the one that happened first is put in the past perfect tense* while the one that happened last is put in the simple past tense.

The future perfect tense describes actions *that will be completed at some definite time in the future*. The future perfect tense is seldom used in informal speech or writing. *Shall have* is used in *the first person* and *will have* is used in the *second and third persons*.

26. The plane *will have left* by two o'clock .  
 27. Your committee *will have completed* its work by the next senate meeting.  
 28. I *shall have crossed* the River Niger by noon.

*Has* and *have* and/or *had* are compulsory elements in perfect tenses.

Many errors occur because the writer or speaker is not familiar with the correct forms of the past tense or past participle. Whenever you are not sure of any of these forms, consult a reliable dictionary. You will find these forms listed after the verb. You can also avoid errors if you know the auxiliaries that indicate the tense:

Note that:

*shall* and *will* are used for the *future* tense,  
*have* and *has* are used for the *present perfect* tense

*had* for the past perfect tense,  
*shall have* or *will have* for the future perfect tense.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Explain the following terms: tense and aspect. Which are the (a) simple and (b) perfect tenses? How are the tenses formed?

## 3.2 Aspect

In addition to the forms which show tense English verbs have special verbs to show aspect. There is the progressive form which shows that the action is in progress at the time indicated by a particular tense. There is also the perfective aspect which shows that the action indicated by the verb is completed at the time indicated by a particular tense.

### 3.2.1 Progressive Aspect

The progressive aspect refers to activity or event in progress and therefore suggests that the activity is temporary or of limited duration but that it need not be complete; it is not necessary. It usually goes with –ing form of verbs.

He *was building* a house some years ago.  
(I do not know whether he finished it)

29. I have been writing the minutes this morning. (but this may not be finished)

Also consider the following:

The boy *was drowning*. (But he was quickly rescued)

30. When I visited them they *were* (already) *having* dinner.

The meaning in the last sentence is that dinner had started before I visited them and that it continued after that time.

When combined with *always* or any other adverb of high frequency to convey the idea of *continuity or repetition*:

31. He *is always drinking* with a silver cup. (continuity)

32. She *is always coming* late to work. (continuity)

The students *are reading* their books whenever I see them (repetition) The verbs that take the progressive aspect are verbs that express *activity* – walk, read, write, run etc, or processes – grow, change, improve etc.

Verbs that suggest momentary events e.g. jump, knock, kick, nod - if used with the progressive suggest repetition:

33. He was knocking/jumping/nodding (suggest repeated movement).  
Verbs that do not normally appear in the progressive include  
Verbs of perception: hear, see, smell, taste, feel. We often use these verbs with can or could e.g.

34. I can see you NOT I am seeing you; I can hear the teacher NOT I am hearing the teacher.

Verbs referring to a state of mind or feeling such as believe, adore, desire, dislike, forget, love, hate, hope, imagine, know, suppose, want, remember, mean wish do not take the –ing form. Examples:

35. I forget/remember his name NOT I am forgetting or remembering his name.

Verbs referring to a relationship or a state of being: belong to, be, concern, cost, depend on, remain, resemble, equal, fit, involve etc. We say I remain grateful to you NOT I am remaining grateful to you.

The **present progressive** is used for future happening resulting from a present plan, arrangement or programme:

36. We *are having* rice and stew for lunch.

37. She *is travelling* by air to Abuja this evening.

The present progressive is common with verbs which refer to transition between two states or positions such as: arrive, come, go, travel, fly, land, start, stop, etc.

38. The examination *is starting* at 3.0 'clock.

39. The governor *is arriving* in a few minutes.

The present progressive also indicates temporary habit;

40. This year we *are cooking* our meals with cooking gas.

41. The Vice Chancellor is visiting all departments this year.

The present progressive is also often used to express the immediate future:

42. The bus is leaving in the next five minutes.

43. He is leaving for London tomorrow.

### 3.2.2 Perfective Aspect

Four uses of the *present perfect aspect* can be identified:

- State leading up to the present time:
44. The post *has been* declared vacant for some time now.
- Indefinite events in a period leading up to the present.
45. All the children *have had* measles in the last one year.
- Habit in a period leading up to the present time.
46. She *has visited* her mother more regularly this year.
- Past event with results in the present time.
47. The plane has landed (it is here now).
48. My car has broken down (it is not yet repaired).

### The Perfect Progressive Aspect

Has a similar meaning to the present perfect aspect except that the period leading up to the present is of limited duration and does not continue up till the present. Examine the following:

- 49. I have done my homework (already- present perfect)
- 50. I *have been doing* my homework (all evening - I have just finished)
- 51. You *have been fighting* (you have a swollen face and torn clothes)

In Nos. 49 and 50 above the activity has continued up to the recent past, not up till the present as with the present perfect progressive aspect which, unlike the perfect, usually suggests that the activity continued up till the present. Compare:

- 52. I *have read* **Twelfth Night**. (I have finished it)
- 53. I *have been reading* **Twelfth Night**. (I am still reading it)

### 3.5 The Past Perfect Aspect

The past perfect aspect (simple and progressive) indicates *past- in- the past*, a time further in the past as seen from a specific point in the past.

- 54. The room *had been* vacant for several months (when I got it)
- 55. The doctor *had fallen* ill and could not perform the operation.
- 56. The rain *had been falling* and the streets were still wet.

When describing two events in the past, one following the other, their relationship can be shown by using the past perfect for the earlier event.

Alternatively, we can use the past tense for both and rely on the conjunction (e.g. when, after) to show which one happened first.

Examine the following:

- 57. The lecture ended before I arrived (the past tense + conjunction, before)
- 58. The lecture had ended when I came in (first action in the past perfect).
- 59. The patient *had died* for three hours (when the doctor arrived).



## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Supply the correct tense/aspect of the verbs in parenthesis

- 1 When I arrived they (to go) to school.
- 2 I (never to see) this woman before.
- 3 My friend (to travel) to Kaduna next week.
- 4 The prisoner (to escape) a month ago.
- 5 My parents (to arrive) in a few minutes

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The importance of the functions performed by the verb in the English sentence makes it compulsory to master all aspects of the English verb. Tense and aspect as discussed in this unit account for many of the errors committed by second language learners of English.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

The following main points have been made in this unit:

- i. In grammar, tense refers to changes in the form of the verb to correspond with our own concept of time. Tense indicates the time of occurrence of an action, state or condition.
- ii. *Aspect* on the other hand, refers to the way the action of the verb is perceived; whether it is in progress or is completed at the moment of speaking.
- iii. Tense and aspect are related and the expression of time, present or past, cannot be considered separately from aspect.
- iv. There are six tenses in English: present, past, future, present perfect, past perfect and future perfect.
- v. In addition to the forms which show tense English verbs have special verbs to show aspect.
- vi. There is the progressive form which shows that the action is in progress at the time indicated by a particular tense.
- vii. There is also the perfective aspect which shows that the action indicated by the verb is completed at the time indicated by a particular tense.
- viii. Present time can be expressed by past tense and future time can also be expressed by the present tense, past tense and progressive aspect.

**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Explain the following terms: **tense** and **aspect**

1. *Tense* is used to relate an event or happening expressed by the verb to a time scale in the present or past. *Aspect* on the other hand, refers to the way the action of the verb is perceived; whether it is in progress or is completed at the moment of speaking. Tense and aspect are therefore related and the expression of time present or past, cannot be considered separately from aspect.

2. Which are the (a) simple and (b) perfect tenses?

(a) The simple tenses are: present, past and future tenses.

(b) The perfect tenses are present perfect, past perfect and future perfect.

**How the Tenses are Formed**

- Perfect Tenses are formed by combining the auxiliary *have* or *has*/had/will or shall have with past participle of the principal verb.
- Simple Tenses
- The present tense is formed by using the base form of the verb with the appropriate pronoun. The morpheme {s} is added to the base form to form the third person singular
- The past tense denotes past time. The past tense of regular verbs is formed by the addition of *d* or *ed* to the present tense form as in dance, danced; want, wanted
- The future tense is formed by combining the auxiliary- *shall* and *will*- with the present tense form of the verb. It is conventional to use *shall* with the pronoun *I* and *we* and *will* with the other pronouns: *you, he/she/it and they*.

**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Supply the correct tense/aspect of the verbs in parenthesis

- 1 When I arrived they(to go) to school.( had gone)
- 2 I (never to see) this woman before.(have never seen)
- 3 My friend (to travel) to Kaduna next week.(will travel/travels)
- 4 The prisoner (to escape) a month ago.(escaped)
- 5 My parents (to arrive) in a few minutes (will arrive/are arriving))

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Supply the correct tense/aspect of the verb in brackets

1. The woman said she (to be) in a hurry.
2. He promised he (to go).
3. If it (to rain), the match will be postponed.
4. The sick man groaned so much that I thought he (to die).
5. I left early because I did not think you (to come).
6. It was clear that they (not to want) me.
7. The nurse said she (to call) again the next day.
8. He asked the teacher why the lecture (to be) so long.
9. He once said he (never, to drink) beer.
10. Before the ambulance (to arrive) the accident victim (to collapse).

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## UNIT 2 VOICE AND MOOD

This unit deals with voice and mood. A verb does not only undergo changes to show tense but it also changes in form to show voice. The unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Active and Passive
    - 3.1.1 Formation of Passive Voice
    - 3.1.2 Use of the Passive
  - 3.2 Mood of Verbs
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*Voice* is a grammatical term which is used to tell whether the subject is the one performing or receiving the action of the verb. When the subject is performing the action of the verb, we say that the verb is in the *active voice*; when the verb suffers the effect of the action performed by the verb, we say that the verb is in the *passive voice*. If you keep the terms: *performer and sufferer* which some writers refer to as *doer and receiver* (Semmelmeyer and Bolander) in mind, you will find it easy to understand what voice means.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- be able to form the passive forms of verbs
- differentiate between active and passive forms of verbs explain the uses of the passive voice
- identify the different moods of English verbs
- identify the subjunctive forms of English verbs
- describe the different uses of the subjunctive.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Active and Passive Voice

We have already seen that when the subject is performing the action of the verb, we say that the verb is in the *active voice*; when the verb suffers the effect of the action performed by the verb, we say that the verb is in the *passive voice*. Examine the following sentences carefully and note the changes in the form of the verb.

1. The mechanic repaired the car  
(The mechanic performs the action; the doer)
2. The car was repaired by the mechanic  
(The car suffers the effect of repairing – the receiver)

In the first sentence the subject is the mechanic. He performs the action of repairing while car is the object and suffers or receives the action. In grammar, we say that the verb in this sentence is in the *active voice* because the subject is the doer; that is, performing the action of repairing, and the car is the sufferer or receiver. The second sentence is written in the reverse order; the subject now becomes the receiver of the action instead of the doer. To express this idea, another verb form *was repaired* was used. What happened to the mechanic, the performer? The mechanic is still in the sentence but is now in a phrase introduced by the preposition *by*. The verb, was repaired is in the passive voice because it presents the subject of the sentence as the receiver of the action. In other words, the subject is not active, but passive. The doer or actor now appears in a phrase but is introduced by the preposition *by*.

Note that a verb in the passive voice is usually a verb phrase NOT a simple verb. In the sentence:

3. Our car was repaired yesterday.

The verb *was repaired* is in the passive voice. The subject is the sufferer of the action. When a verb is in the passive voice, the performer is sometimes omitted. Sometimes the performer of the action is unknown and since the performer is unknown the prepositional phrase is omitted. Sometimes the performer is so obvious that it is not necessary to include the prepositional phrase.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Examine the following sentences. Which of them are in the passive voice?

1. The strangers stole our car.
2. Our car was stolen by the strangers.
3. The thieves were arrested by the police.
4. The police charged the thieves to court.
5. They were sentenced to three years imprisonment by the magistrate.

#### 3.1.1 Formation of Passive Voice

An idea cannot be expressed in the passive voice without using an auxiliary or helping verb. The verb *to be* is the auxiliary verb that is used to help form

the six tenses of the passive voice. If you are familiar with the forms of the verb *to be*, you will have no difficulty in forming the passive of any verb that takes an object.

The passive voice is formed by combining the verb *to be* with the past participle of the principal *verb*. The principal verb is the verb that names the action. The verb was repaired in the sentence: The car *was repaired* by the mechanic is made up of the auxiliary verb, was, which is a form of the verb *to be* and the past participle of the principal verb *repair* which is *repaired*. The verb phrase is *was repaired*. It is a verb phrase in the passive voice. The verb phrases in the following sentences are in the passive voice:

1. The decision *will be taken* by the governor.
2. Coloured bulbs have been fixed in the recreation park.

The verb in the first sentence is *will be taken*. It is made up of the auxiliary *will be* which is a form of the verb *to be* and the past participle of the verb *take* which is *taken*. The verb in the second sentence is *have been fixed*. It is made up of the auxiliary verb *have been* which is a form of the verb *to be* and the past participle of the verb *fix* which is *fixed*.

In the following table, the present, past and future tenses of the regular verb ‘call’ and the irregular verb ‘go’ are shown in the active and passive voices:

### Three Tenses of the Verb ‘Call’

ACTIVE		PASSIVE	
PRESENT TENSE			
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
I call	We call	I am called	We are called
You call	You call	You are called	You are called
He/she/it calls	They call	He/she/it is called	They are called
PAST TENSE			
I called	We called	I was called	We were called
You called	You called	You were called	You were called
He/she/ it called	They called	He was called	They were called
FUTURE TENSE			
I shall call	We shall call	I shall be called	We shall be called
You will call	You will call	You will be called	You will be called
He/she/ it will call	They will call	He will be called	They will be called

**Three Tenses of the Verb ‘Go’**

ACTIVE		PASSIVE	
PRESENT TENSE			
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
I go	We go	I am gone	We are gone
You go	You go	You are gone	We are gone
He/she/it goes	They go	He/she/it is gone	They are gone
PAST TENSE			
I went	We went	I was gone	We were gone
You went	You went	You were gone	You were gone
He/she/ it went	They went	He was gone	They were gone
FUTURE TENSE			
I shall go	We shall go	I shall be gone	We shall be gone
You will go	You will go	You will be gone	You will be gone
He/she/ it will go	They will go	He/she/it will be gone	They will be gone

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Following the example above give the active and passive forms in three tenses of any verb of your choice.

**3.1.2 Use of the Passive**

The question that naturally arises is which form is better? Is it the active voice where the subject is the performer or the passive voice where the subject is the sufferer of the action? The answer is that the active is the better form in most cases. Wherever the active voice is possible both in speech and writing, the passive should not be used because the active voice is direct and more natural. Examine the following examples:

3. We enjoyed the party (active voice)
4. The party was enjoyed by us (passive voice)
5. I sent the letter by courier (active voice)
6. The letter was sent by me by courier (passive voice)

Clearly, the active form is more natural and direct and therefore preferable.

Generally, the active voice is preferable for business writing and for any other form of writing that requires the direct approach. The use of the active renders your speech and writing more vivid. Verbs in the active voice are often used in newspaper headlines because they are more vivid and economical in space. The following headlines are in the active voice:

7. Nigeria controls the flood of refugees.
8. Green Eagles captured the gold medal in the African Cup of Nations.
9. Government sends aid to disaster victims.

The above sentences would lose their vividness if written in the passive voice.

The passive voice is generally used when the subject is *indefinite, general or unimportant*. In the sentence:

10. They refine oil in Port Harcourt.

The subject in the above sentence is so general that it is not clear what

‘They’ refers to whether to the oil workers, or the government or the companies. If the sentence is put in the passive voice, it becomes clearer.

The passive voice is also used when the action that was performed is more important than the performer of the action. Examine the following:

14. *The Tempest* was written by William Shakespeare (passive) Here, the important thing is the writing of the play not on the writer.

But if you want to emphasise the writer rather than the play, put the verb in the active voice thus.

15. William Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*.

The passive voice is generally used to emphasise the sufferer rather than the performer of the action but in the majority of cases the active voice is more effective than the passive voice.

### 3.2 Mood of Verbs

In addition to tense and voice, verbs also have a third property called *mood*. The word mood comes from a Latin word which means manner. When applied to verbs mood refers to *the manner in which the verb expresses the action or state of being*.

There are three moods in English: *the indicative mood; the imperative mood and the subjunctive mood*. The indicative mood is used *to make statements and to ask questions*. Most of the verbs that you use everyday are in the indicative mood.

13. The secretary wrote the minutes of the meeting. (statement)
14. Have you received the e-mail I sent yesterday? (Question)

The imperative mood is used *to make a request or give a command*. Note that the imperative mood occurs only in the second person and present tense. The subject is always the pronoun ‘you’ which is hardly ever expressed.



15. Keep quiet at once. (command)
16. Give me your pen, please (request)

The subjunctive mood is used *to express a wish or an unreal condition (a condition which is contrary to fact)*. By an unreal or contrary to fact condition, we mean a condition that is not true or possible in the real world. An unreal or contrary to fact condition is usually introduced by *if* or *as if*.

17. If I were a millionaire I would pay fees for intelligent but poor students.
18. I wish my father were alive.

The indicative and imperative moods do not present much problems in English. The same form of the verb is used to ask a question or make a statement. The imperative mood can be easily identified because the subject is *you*, which is usually understood. The imperative mood always expresses a command or a request.

Although most of the forms of the subjunctive have disappeared from modern English, there are a few forms that you can still recognize. The verb *to be* has retained more forms of the subjunctive than any other verb. Compare the following indicative and subjunctive forms of the verb *to be*:

#### Indicative and Subjunctive Forms of the Verb ‘to be’

INDICATIVE MOOD		SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD	
PRESENT TENSE			
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
I am	We are	(If) I be	(If) we be
You are	You are	(If) you be	(If) you be
He/she/it is	They are	(If) he/she/it be	(If) they be
PAST TENSE – SINGULAR			
I was		<i>(If) I were</i>	
You were		(If) You were	
He/she/it was		<i>(If) He were</i>	
PRESENT PERFECT TENSE – SINGULAR			
I have been		(If) I have been	
You have been		(If) You have been	
He/she it/ has been		(If) He/she/it <i>have</i> been	

Adapted from Semmelmeier and Bolander, (1984, p 172)

The subjunctive with ‘be’ (present) is seldom ever used in informal speech or writing. The subjunctive form, *have been* instead of *has been* is also passing out of use. In the above table, the forms of the subjunctive that are different

from the indicative are italicised; that is, *be* in the present tense; *were* in the past tense, first person singular; and third person singular; *have* in the present perfect tense, third person, singular. There is only one change that occurs in the subjunctive in the case of other verbs. In the present tense third person, singular the *s* is dropped in the subjunctive.

The verb *have* has only one form in the subjunctive which is different from the indicative. In the present tense, third person, singular, *have* is used instead of *has*. Examine the following:

19. If she *have* the time, she will come. (subjunctive)
20. She *has* the time and she will come. (indicative) Note also, the following
21. If he run --- (not runs)
22. If she win --- (not wins)
23. If it rain --- (not rains)
24. If it find --- (not finds)
25. If she pass--- (not passes)

Note also that the word *if* is not part of the subjunctive. The group of words in which the subjunctive is used is very frequently introduced by *if*, that is why the forms for the subjunctive are usually given with the word *if*.

Although the subjunctive mood is passing out of use in informal speech and writing, certain uses are still maintained by careful speakers and writers. The subjunctive *expressing a wish* and the subjunctive in *an unreal or contrary to fact condition* are two of these uses.

### **Use of the Subjunctive**

As already suggested above, careful speakers and writers use the subjunctive to *express a wish, an unreal or contrary to fact condition (not true)* and a condition of uncertainty (which may be true or not). Sometimes, the subjunctive is also used *for making a suggestion, in making a demand, or in expressing a need*.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Identify the use of the subjunctive in the following:

1. I wish I were a butterfly.
2. If I were you I would give up my place for my sister.
3. If the strike fails, we shall all resign.
4. I suggest that you study full time next session.
5. The judge insists that the plaintiff prove his case convincingly.
6. It is imperative that we start the meeting now.

The subjunctive is also used in certain parliamentary expressions such as:

- I move that the nomination be closed.
- He moved that the minutes be adopted.
- I move that the meeting be adjourned.
- She moved that the report of the committee be adopted.

The two most important uses of the subjunctive however are: the subjunctive expressing a wish and the subjunctive expressing an unreal or contrary to fact condition after *as*, *as if* and *as though*.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Voice and mood, like tense and aspect are important properties of the English verb which you need to learn and use appropriately so as to produce structurally correct English sentences. Note that your understanding of voice and mood depends on a prior understanding of tense and aspect.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the following:

- Voice is the property of a verb which indicates whether the subject is performing or suffering the effect (receiving) the action expressed by the verb.
- There are two voices in English: active voice and passive voice.
- A verb is in the active voice when it presents the subject as performing the action.
- A verb is in the passive voice when it presents the subject as receiving or suffering the effect of the action.
- The passive voice is formed by combining some form of the verb to be with the past participle of the verb that expresses the action.
- Mood indicates the manner in which the action or state of being is expressed.
- There are three moods in English; the indicative, the imperative and the subjunctive.
- The indicative mood is used to make a statement or ask a question.
- The imperative mood is used to give a command or make a request.
- The subjunctive mood is used to make a wish, express doubt, uncertainty or unreal condition.
- Though the subjunctive is passing out of use in informal speech or writing, certain uses of the subjunctive are still observed by careful speakers or writers.

**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Examine the following sentences. Which of them are in the passive voice?

1. The strangers stole our car.
2. Our car was stolen by the strangers.
3. The thieves were arrested by the police.
4. The police charged the thieves to court.
5. They were sentenced to three years imprisonment by the magistrate.

The italicized sentences (b, c, and e) are in the passive voice

**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Following the example above give the active and passive forms in three tenses of any verb of your choice

Candidates are to choose any verb and give the passive forms in three tenses as in the following:

ACTIVE		PASSIVE	
PRESENT TENSE			
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
I call	We call	I am called	We are called
You call	You call	You are called	You are called
He/she/it calls	They call	He/she/it is called	They are called
PAST TENSE			
I called	We called	I was called	We were called
You called	You called	You were called	You were called
He/she/ it called	They called	He was called	They were called
FUTURE TENSE			
I shall call	We shall call	I shall be called	We shall be called
You will call	You will call	You will be called	You will be called
He/she/ it will call	They will call	He will be called	They will be called

**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Determine the use of the subjunctive in the following:

1. I wish I were a butterfly. (expresses a wish)  
If I were you I would give up my place for my sister. (Unreal situation)
2. If the strike fail, we shall all resign.(condition of uncertainty)
3. I suggest that you study full time next session. (making a suggestion)
4. The judge insists that the plaintiff prove his case convincingly.  
(making a demand)

5. It is imperative that we start the meeting now. (expressing a need)

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss and illustrate the uses of the passive voice and the subjunctive mood.
2. Use ten complex sentences each to show the active and passive voice forms.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Eka, D. (1994). *Elements of Grammar and Mechanics of the English Language*. Uyo: Samuf Educational.
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## UNIT 3 MODAL AUXILIARIES

An auxiliary verb, unlike a lexical verb which carries the main information expressed by the verb, is a replacing verb. There are three kinds of auxiliary verbs: (i) Central or Main Auxiliaries: These include *do*, *be* and *have*; (ii) Modal Auxiliaries: These are: *can/could*, *may/might*, *shall/should*, *will/would*, *must* and *ought to*. (iii) Marginal Auxiliaries which are *used to*, *dare* and *need*. In this unit we are going to study Modal auxiliaries. The unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Modality in Modal Auxiliaries
  - 3.2 Tense of Modals
  - 3.3 Modals and Aspect
  - 3.4 Negation in Modal Auxiliaries
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Modal auxiliaries are sometimes called modal operators. The term *modal* refers to the specific way the speaker would like his hearer to understand what he says. For instance:

1. Can I have your pen please?  
(suggests politeness in making a request as opposed to)
2. Give me your pen.  
(which though a request sounds more like an order)

Modal auxiliaries can be used with verbs in verb phrases. For instance in: *can dance*, *must go*, *ought to come*, *should pray*. Modal auxiliaries are also used with other auxiliary verbs such as *have*, *do* or *be* as in: *must have*, *will be*, *should do*. When modal auxiliaries occur with *have* and/or *be* they are usually the first elements of the group followed by *have* and the main verb as in the following examples:

3. My father *should have been invited*  
(modal + have + main verb)
4. She *must be offended*  
(modal + be + main verb)

5. Her grades *can be improved*  
(modal + be + main verb)
6. The assignment should be done today.  
(modal + be + main verb)

It is suggested that you read Quirk and Greenbaum (1975) for the different modalities and (Eka 1994) for the types of modal auxiliaries. The discussions in this unit are adapted from these two sources.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify modal auxiliaries
- describe the different modalities that they express
- identify the tense of modal auxiliaries
- explain the aspect of modal auxiliaries
- use the modal auxiliaries in the negative.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Modality in Modal Auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries express the following ideas: *politeness, permission, ability, possibility, willingness, obligation necessity, insistence, negation, authority, logical inference and time reference*. These modalities are however expressed by specific modal auxiliaries as follows:

#### Can/Could

Can express the following modalities

- **Ability = be able to, be capable of, know how to**

7. He can speak French but cannot write it well  
(He is able to speak, capable of speaking).

- **Politeness**

8. Can I have your pen?  
Could you sign my form?

**Permission = be allowed to, be permitted to**

9. Can I come in} Am I allowed to

10. May I come in}

Note that *may* is more formal

### **Possibility**

11. Anybody can make mistakes.  
12. The car can break down. (It is possible that it can)

### **Could**

Could expresses past ability, permission and possibility.

Past Ability

13. I could not drive when I was 18

### **Permission**

14. Could I borrow books from your library? (present or future)

### **Possibility**

15. We could go to the dance  
16. The light could go off.

### **Contingent Possibility or ability (in hypothetical/unreal situations)**

17. If I had more money I would buy many books.

Note that *can*, *could* suggest ability (past, present), possibility and permission.

Ability can include the implication of willingness (especially in spoken English)

18. Can/could you do me a favour?

### **May/Might**

May, like can, expresses:

**Permission (be allowed to) but as earlier noted, *may* is more formal than *can***

19. You may use my library if you like.

Note that in the negative, *mustn't* is used instead of *may not*:



20. You mustn't use my library NOT You may not use my library

### **Possibility**

The lights may/might go off. (It is possible ....)

### **Permission (rare)**

21. Might I use your car?

### **Possibility**

22. What you say might be true.

Note the use of *may* as an auxiliary with the subjunctive as in

23. May I never see her again.

### **Shall/Should**

Shall usually expresses

#### **willingness on the part of the speaker in the second and third persons:**

24. You shall do exactly as you wish.

25. He shall keep his promise.

#### **Intention on the part of the speaker only on the first person:**

26. I shall see you tomorrow.

27. We shall succeed in our endeavours.

#### **Insistence (in restricted and legal usages.)**

28. You shall do as I say (restricted)

29. The tenant shall keep the house in good order (legal)

Of these three modalities it is the one of intention that is most common in modern English. Shall is not frequently used outside British English. Will is generally preferred.

30. *Shall/Will* I see you tomorrow?

Will has also become common in expressing the future as well as helplessness and perplexity:

- 31. How will he get there?
- 32. What will I do?

### **Should**

Should expresses the following modalities:

#### **Obligation and logical necessity**

- 33. You should take care of your children (necessity = ought to)
- 34. They should be back by now

‘Putative’ be after certain expressions e.g. It is a pity/odd.

- 35. It is odd that you should stay away from my house.
- 36. I am sorry that this should have happened.

Contingent use. This occurs in the 1st person only (especially – in British English (in the main clause))

- 37. If we had the money we should like to go abroad.
- 38. If I saw her, I should have given her the good news.

In rather formal real conditions

- 39. If you change your plans, you should learn me know.

### **Will/Would**

*Will* often expresses the following modalities

#### Willingness

- 40. She will help you if you ask her.
- 41. Will you (please, kindly) shut the door? (used in polite requests)
- 42. Will you have another bottle of coke?

#### Intention (futuraity)

- 43. I’ll write as soon as I get your letter. (mainly in the 1st person)
- 44. We won’t stay longer than 3 hours. (insistence)
- 45. She will do it whatever you say.

This means that she insists on doing it or that I insist on her doing it. Note that *will* is never contracted in this usage because it is stressed in speech.

### **Prediction (specific)**

46. The lecture will be finished by now (= must by now)

### **Timeless**

47. Water will boil when heated (= boils)

### **Habitual**

48. He'll talk (always) for hours if you give him the chance.

### **Would**

*Would expresses the following:*

#### **Willingness, politeness, insistence**

49. Would you lend me your pen, please.

#### **Habitual event/activity in the past:**

50. Every morning he would go for a walk (customary behaviour)

#### **Contingent use in main clause of a conditional sentence**

51. She would drink too much if I didn't stop her.

### **Probability**

52. That would be his brother

### **Must**

#### **Expresses obligation and (logical) Necessity/Inference:**

53. You must submit the assignment today (you are obliged to).

54. There must be a reason for his behaviour  
= (but there cannot be a reason)

### **Ought to**

Ought expresses obligation/logical necessity

54. You ought to do it.

55. She ought to be here by now.

Note that *ought* and *should* both denote *obligation* and *logical necessity* but are less categorical than *must* and *have to*. *Ought to* is often awkward in questions inviting inversion e.g. Ought you to do it?

Do not use *must* and *have to* together since both denote obligation.

*Should* is often preferred in such situations

e.g. Should you do it?

*Had better* is also often used in place of *must/ought to*. The effect is milder (less categorical)

56. Must you travel today?  
57. Well, I don't have to, but I think I had better (travel)

### 3.2 Tense of Modals

Only some of the modals have corresponding present and past forms.

Examine the following:

can	could
may	might
shall	should
will	would
must	(had to)
ought to	used to
need	-
dare	-

58. He can speak Ibibio now.  
59. He couldn't even understand it last year

The usual past tense of *may* is *could* when it denotes permission

60. Today we may/can go home early.  
61. Yesterday we could only leave in the evening.

### 3.3 Modals and Aspect

When modals express ability or permission, the progressive and perfective aspect are normally excluded and also when *shall* and *will* express *volition* (willingness). These aspects are freely used with other modal meanings.

#### Possibility

62. He can't be studying all day.  
63. He may have missed the bus.  
64. She may have been visiting her uncle

**Necessity**

65. You must be joking.  
 66. He must have stayed up late

**Prediction**

67. The lecture will still be holding tomorrow.

**Futurity**

68. The guests would have arrived by now.

**3.4 Negation in Modal Auxiliaries**

Almost all auxiliaries can be used negatively. Modal auxiliaries also undergo negation.

can	cannot	can't
may	may not	mayn't
must	must not	mustn't
ought to	{ ought not to	oughtn't
	{ need not	needn't

Note that needn't expresses the absence of obligation:

69. You must see him today.  
 70. You need not see him today

Note also that there is usually a difference in meaning between *must* and *have to*. *Must* expresses obligation or compulsion from the *speaker's viewpoint*:

71. I must finish this work today. Have to expresses external obligation.  
 72. You have to finish this work today.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Compare the following

1. You must go now (I want to read)
2. It's a pity you have to go now (It's time for you to catch the plane)
3. We must begin before two o'clock (or we shan't finish before close of work)

4. We have to begin before 2 o'clock (That's the scheduled time).

Note also

Note that *am/is to* is used for definite commands and prohibitions. This form or *must* is used for instructions. On notices or orders (*have to* is never used here). Examine the following:

Pedestrians *must* use the overhead bridge.

(the traffic wardens instruct them to)

Motorcyclists often *have to* use the side roads (the nature of their work compels them to).

All junior staff are to report to the secretary (Departmental Order).

Police constables have to salute their officers (that is the custom/convention).

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Like the main verb, auxiliary verbs play a significant role in English sentences. They make it possible to express different nuances of meaning that describe various modalities. You will need to learn to use them appropriately to avoid conveying wrong meaning.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

The main points discussed in this unit are:

- Modal auxiliaries are auxiliaries which suggest modality; that is, the specific way the speaker would like his hearer to understand what he/she says.
- Modal auxiliaries express the following ideas: *politeness, permission, ability, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity, insistence, negation, authority logical inference and time reference.*
- Modals have corresponding present and past tense forms except *need* and *dare*
- Modals express progressive and perfective aspects except when they express ability or permission.
- Also when shall and will express *volition* (willingness), the progressive and perfective aspect are normally excluded.
- Modal auxiliaries also undergo negation.

## ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Compare the following

1. You must go now (I want to read) - external obligation
2. It's a pity you have to go now (It's time for you to catch the plane) - external obligation
3. We must begin before two o'clock (or we shan't finish before close of work) - internal obligation
4. We have to begin before 2 o'clock (That's the scheduled time)- internal obligation.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Examine the following passage and identify which forms of *should/would* can differentiate between volition, obligation or pure future:

I *would* injure no man, and *should* provoke no resentment; I *would* relieve every distress and *should* enjoy the benedictions of gratitude. I *would* choose my friends among the wise, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore *should* be in no danger from treachery or unkindness. My children *should* by my care be learned and pious, and *would* repay to my age what their childhood had received.

From Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*

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## UNIT 4 NON- FINITE AND EMPHATIC FORMS

We have already seen in Units 1 and 2 of this module how the English verb changes its form to show tense, aspect, voice and mood. In this unit we shall see the changes that indicate finiteness /non- finiteness as well as the form used to show emphasis. The unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Finite and Non- Finite Forms
  - 3.2 Uses of Non- finite Forms
  - 3.3 Emphatic Forms
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The finite forms of the verb exist in the simple present tense form and the past form. They indicate the subject of verb agreement e.g.

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

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

1. He likes *to sing*.
2. They like *singing*.
3. This is a *deserted house*.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- distinguish between finite and non-finite forms of verbs explain the uses of the non- finite forms of verbs;
- use the non- finite forms of verbs identify the emphatic forms of verbs; and
- use emphatic forms of verbs.



### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Finite and Non- Finite Forms

The verb phrase occurs in finite and non- finite phrases which are distinguished as follows:

Finite forms of verbs are the forms that show tense distinction. This means that they occur in one tense or the other.

4. She *studies* Home economics.
5. She *studied* Chemistry in her first year.

They are also the forms that occur as verb elements in sentences, take subjects, and agree with the subjects in person and number. The non- finite forms on the other hand do not show tense distinction neither do they take subjects nor show agreement. Examine the verb forms in the following pair of sentences

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

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

*She hoping to travel next week\**  
 This is an unacceptable sentence.

Agreement is particularly shown with the verb *be* as in:  
*I am, You/We/They/ are, He/ She/ It is.*

With most lexical verbs, agreement is restricted to the third person singular present as in

6. They walk to the office every morning.
7. He walks to the office every morning.

There is, however no concord with the modal auxiliaries:

8. I, you, we/ he/ they may use the library whenever you want.

Finite verbs have mood. In contrast to the indicative mood which is unmarked, the imperative and subjunctive moods are marked (See Module 2, Unit 2, section 4)

The non- finite forms are the infinitive (to dance); the present -ing participle (dancing) and the past –ed participle (danced). Non-finite forms have other uses. In the examples 1-3 above, they function as other parts of speech. In Example 1, *to sing* is a noun phrase acting as the direct object of the verb “likes”. In Example 2, *singing* is a gerund also functioning as a direct object of the verb “likes” while the past participle form *deserted* functions as an adjective modifying the noun “house” in Example 3.

### 3.2 Uses of Non-finite Forms

The essential facts about the three types of non- finite verbs and their uses are summarized below:

#### (a) The Infinitive

The infinitive is usually the base form of the verb preceded by to: to dance, to sing, to go. It does not change its form to reflect tense, hence a non- finite form. It cannot occur as a verb element in a sentence or clause. The infinitive as indicated above can perform other functions:

##### 1. Subject of a sentence

9. *To err* is human.
10. *To get to the top* is not a one day’s business.

##### 2. Direct object

11. My sister likes to cook.
12. On Saturdays I like to clean my surroundings.

##### 3. Adjective

13. The thing to do is rest
14. On Christmas Day, the place *to go* is Calabar.

##### 4. An adverbial of purpose

15. Okon travelled to Ghana *to watch* the football match.
16. He went *to see* his mother.

##### 5. Predicate noun

17. It is healthy *to quarrel*
18. To dance is *to exercise*.

**(b) Present Participle/Gerund**

This verb form is formed by the addition of *-ing* to the base form. When it performs the function of a noun it is called a *gerund* or verbal noun e.g. running, dancing, reading, writing. The functions of the present participle include .Every gerund, without exception, ends in *-ing*.

**6. Gerund/ Verbal Noun**

19. Swimming is a good exercise (gerund used as subject)
20. I like cooking (gerund used as object)
21. In driving be careful (gerund used as object of a preposition)

**7. Adjective**

22. The returning students registered last week.
23. The crying baby was given milk to drink

**(c) Past Participle**

The past participle of regular verbs are formed with *d* or *ed* added to the base form e.g. the base form, dance/danced; paint/painted; clean/ cleaned. The past participle of irregular verbs are formed by the addition of *t*, *d*, or *ed* added to an altered base form; sometimes *n* or *en* is added to the base e.g. jumped, wanted, kicked, written, hidden. Some past participle forms are identical to the base form e.g. cost, cut, put. The past participle forms of *be*, *go*, and *do* are special forms. They are: *been*, *gone* and *done*.

Past Participle forms perform the following functions:

**8. Adjective**

24. He is a *wanted* man.
25. The wall, *painted* white looked new.
26. *Abused and deserted*, the woman ran mad.

**9. As part of verb phrases**

27. The chairman *has written* his address.
28. The car *has been repaired*.
29. The child has gone home to its mother.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Identify and state the functions of the non- finite verbs in the following sentences:

1. Repairing radios is Femi’s work.
2. To forgive is divine.
3. Mercy enjoys cooking African dishes
4. The deserted house became a shelter for mad men
5. Finishing his assignment early, Jumai decided to travel
6. She packed out of the haunted house
7. The relations came to take away the corpse.
8. Washing dishes and keeping things neat can be tedious.
9. Visiting is an interesting pastime
10. The forbidden fruit was the most appetizing.

**3.3 Emphatic Forms**

The emphatic forms of a verb are used to give emphasis to the idea expressed by the verb. The auxiliaries *do*, *does*, and *did* are seen to give this additional emphasis. The emphatic forms occur in only two tenses: the present tense and the past tense.

I *do* agree with you (present tense)

He *did* send the message (past tense)

EMPHATIC FORMS	PRESENT TENSE	
	SINGULAR SUBJECT	PLURAL SUBJECT
First person	I do eat	We do eat
Second Person	You do eat	You do eat
Third Person	He/she/it does eat	They do eat
EMPHATIC FORMS	PAST TENSE	
First Person	I did eat	We did eat
Second Person	You did eat	You did eat
Third Person	He/she/it did eat	They did eat

When *does*, *do* and *did* are used for emphasis as shown above, the verb that follows must remain in present plural form; the subject notwithstanding

Note that when *do*, *does* and *did* are used in questions, the form is not used for emphasis. The use of *do*, *does* and *did* in questions is an idiomatic way of asking questions in English. In the following sentences note that *do*, *does* and *did* are not the emphatic forms of the verb.

Also when do, does and did are used to mean carry out or accomplish the form is not used for emphasis. Examine the following:

We *did* our shopping in the city. (*did* not emphatic form)

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Identify the emphatic forms in the following sentences:

1. She **did** commit the crime.
2. **Did** you go to the party?
3. You **do** like rice, don't you?
4. They **do** their assignment promptly.
5. My mother **does** attend the prayer meeting every Friday.
6. They **did** win the match.
7. **Did** they attend the party?
8. She **did** attend but he **didn't**.
9. I **do** love African food.
10. Does she visit her mother very often?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The English verb has several forms that perform different functions and the finite/non-finite and emphatic forms illustrate this fact further. Learning to recognise these forms and to use them appropriately will ensure the production of structurally correct sentences.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following main points have been discussed in this unit:

- The verb phrase occurs in finite and non- finite phrases.
- Finite forms of verbs are the forms that show tense distinction. This means that they occur in one tense or the other.
- They are also the forms that occur as verb elements in sentences, take subjects and agree with the subjects in person and number.
- The non- finite forms on the other hand do not show tense distinction neither do they take subjects nor show agreement.
- The non- finite forms are: the infinitive, the present participle and the past participle.
- The infinitive can function as the subject, direct object, adjective, predicate noun and as an adverbial.
- The present participle can function as an adjective.
- When the present participle performs the function of a noun it is called a gerund.

- The past participle also functions as adjectives and as part of verb phrases.
- The emphatic forms of a verb are used to give emphasis to the idea expressed by the verb; they occur in only two tenses: present and past.

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Functions of the non- finite verbs in the following sentences:

1. *Repairing* radios is Femi's work- subject
2. *To forgive* is divine.- subject
3. Mercy enjoys *cooking* African dishes. Object
4. The *deserted* house became a shelter for mad men - (adjective)
5. *Finishing* her assignment early, Jumai decided to travel (adjective, modifies Jumai)
6. She packed out of the *haunted* house (adjective)
7. The relations came *to take* away the corpse.(adverbial)
8. *Washing* dishes and *keeping* things neat can be tedious. (*subject of the verb can*)
9. *Visiting* is an interesting pastime. (subject)
10. The *forbidden* fruit was the most appetizing. (adjective)

### ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Emphatic forms are italicized in the following sentences:

1. She *did* commit the crime.
2. Did you go to the party?
3. You *do like* rice, don't you?
4. They do their assignment promptly.
5. My mother *does* attend the prayer meeting every Friday.
6. The *did* win the match.
7. Did they attend the party?
8. She *did* attend but he didn't.
9. I *do* love African food.
10. Does she visit her mother very often?

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. With appropriate illustrations discuss the non-finite forms of verbs and state their functions.
2. With illustrations, discuss the difference between gerund phrase and participial phrase.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## **MODULE 3      GRAMMATICAL MODELS**

Unit 1	Traditional Grammar
Unit 2	Structural Grammar
Unit 3	Transformational Generative Grammar
Unit 4	Systemic Grammar
Unit 5	Government and Binding Grammar

### **UNIT 1      TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR**

This Module introduces you to some of the approaches that may be used in analyzing the structure of sentences in language. Specifically, in this unit, you will learn about the Traditional Grammar Model. When you have gone through it, you should be able to have some understanding of Traditional grammar and how it works. The unit is organized as follows:

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	The Concept of Grammar
3.2	Traditional Grammar
3.3	Strengths and Weaknesses of Traditional Grammar
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

There are various ways in which we can study the combinations of words and groups of words into meaningful sentences in languages. These various ways of looking at word and group combinations are generally referred to as “models”, and the different combinations of words and groups of words as “grammars”. This is why we talk about “models of grammatical analysis”. A model may therefore be said to be a way in which something is done, a design of structure of which many copies or reproductions are (to be) made. In the context of this course, we use the term “model” to mean a way of doing something, or a way of studying word combinations in English.

With regard to the term “grammar”, we can say that it is a body of rules which spells out how words and groups of words or sounds in particular languages



combine to form grammatical and meaningful words and sentences of that language. It is important for words and groups of words in sentences to be related one to another: Eka stated that they must “hang together for the sentence to be meaningful”. That is why Koutsoudas (p.4) says that “a grammar is a finite set of rules which enumerates (i.e. generates) an infinite number of grammatical sentences of a language”. Thus, it is grammar which states the rules of word and sentence formation in languages of the world.

Sometimes we talk about grammar in relation to how the words and sentences in individual languages are formed. Different languages of the world organize the speech sounds, which occur in them into words in different ways. Also, different languages have different ways of arranging the words which occur in them in ways different from the arrangements which occur in other languages. These are referred to as particular grammars of the languages concerned.

Since classical times, various models have evolved at different periods during the development of grammar and language studies. These models represent the proponents’ view of the forms and the structure of language. This module will examine some grammatical models as well as their individual features, strengths and weaknesses. We begin with the Traditional grammar model.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this unit, you should be able to

- explain what “grammar” means;
- describe the origins of the concept “grammar”;
- explain Traditional grammar and how it works; and
- describe the advantages and the disadvantages of Traditional grammar.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 The Concept of Grammar**

Traditional grammar as we know it today may be said to have its origins in the work of Greek philosophers – the Conventionalists and the Naturalists – of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC. These philosophers used to include language (grammar) as a part of their philosophical studies. The Naturalists held the view that there is a one-to-one link between the words in language and the things that those words stand for. For instance, the Naturalists believed that there is a correspondence between the word *pen* and the object in the natural world that the word represents. The Conventionalists on the other hand were of the view that words do not have any relationship with the objects the words refer to. They rather believed that users of a language agree on what name(s) to give to objects.

Other groups of philosophers emerged from these earlier two. They were called the Analogists and the Anomalists. These philosophers also developed their ideas about grammar and language. However, as time went on it no longer mattered whether the ideas put forward by the Naturalists/Analogists were true or those proposed by the conventionalists/Anomalists. These different groups of philosophers later based their studies of language on both the ideas advanced by the two groups of philosophers, since as they came to realize, they were all

studying language. Grammar as we now know and study, developed from the initial efforts of philosophers during the Classical period. Traditional (or Classical grammar as it is sometimes also called) became the immediate initial outcome of studying language by Greek philosophers.

### 3.2 Traditional (Classical) Grammar

From the presentation of the concept of grammar in 3.0 above, it would be clear that it has its roots in the work of early Greek philosophers. Following from this, Traditional grammar may be said to refer “to the rules of a language written and influenced by Classical Greek scholars.” (Baugh and Cable: 1951). It derived largely from Greek scholars and includes the prescriptive approach of the eighteenth century grammarians.

Traditional grammar was initially designed to teach Latin language to foreigners; however, at the same time as the Latin language flourished in Europe, the English language was also developing. Since there was an already developed grammar of Latin in existence and in use, this grammar was used in teaching the English language. This resulted in the fact that English grammar was written and studied based on the rules, forms and structure of Latin grammar. Consequently, some concepts that are peculiar to Latin language were borrowed into and imposed on English. An example of one such borrowings is the case system, which is a feature of Latin language, but carried over into English. Latin language has six categories in its case system. They are the Nominative case, the Dative case, the Vocative case, the Accusative case, the Ablative case and the Oblique case.

Traditional grammar emphasized correctness and strict rule adherence. This led to the demarcation of the words in language into eight parts of speech: Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction and Interjection. The parts of speech have the following definitions:

- *Noun:*            *A noun is the name of a person, place or thing.*
- *Pronoun:*       *A pronoun replaces a noun in a sentence*
- *Verb:*            *It serves as an action word*
- *Adverb:*         *It modifies a verb*
- *Adjective:*      *It modifies a noun*
- *Conjunction:*   *It links two constituents*
- *Preposition:*    *It shows the relationship between two entities referred*

*to in a sentence*

- *Interjection:* It carries emotion

Baugh and Cable (1951) note that these parts of speech, which were evolved by traditional grammarians were modelled after Priscian's adaptation of Greek grammar to Latin.

Traditional grammarians tended to prescribe usage rules for English; that is, this model of grammar used to state how the English language should be used. The following are some of the usage rules prescribed by Traditional grammar for English:

The modal auxiliary was to be used only with the first person pronouns. I/We, not with pronouns in other persons, e.g. *You* or *They* as in 'You shall represent the Governor at that meeting'.

Prepositions must not end sentences. This rule was a carry-over from classical grammar. E.g. 'she was the one they came to'.

Do not begin a sentence with "because" e.g. 'Because you were not there, the election did not take place'

Do not use split infinitives e.g. 'My wife does not like to have other people cook for her'

Do not use double negatives e.g. 'You are going nowhere'

Adherence to the above rules was considered "correct" and "proper" usage, and non-compliance was considered "bad grammar". Owing to this tendency for Traditional grammarians to spell out how English should be spoken and written, it is known as *Prescriptive grammar*.

Within the framework of Traditional grammar sentence analysis involved mainly clause analysis and parsing (Rulka: 1962). This process involved the breaking down of sentences into the subject part and the Predicate part, and the identification of the relations between a noun in subject position and the Verb. This relation they describe as the Subject – Verb relation. Another relation which traditional grammarians identified among words which occur in sentences is the Verb-Object relation.

### **3.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Traditional Grammar**

- Traditional grammar established the eight parts of speech. These parts of speech were established in English and other languages and are still in use in linguistic discourse till date. Moreover, the Subject-Verb, Verb-Object relations as well as Case, Mood and other categories apply in most languages of the world.

- Another strength of Traditional grammar is that it is the most widely used model for teaching the English language especially in Africa (Wallwork 1969, Lamidi 2000). It is also considered to be the easiest form of understanding the grammar of English.
- Traditional grammarians were the first to identify the structural relations which hold among sentence constituents. Also, the concept of the sentence was defined as a complete thought and classified into statements. Questions and Commands are original to traditional grammar. These classifications have remained till today.

Despite the advantages of the Traditional grammar model, there are many criticisms leveled against it. The following are some of them:

- Its prescriptive nature. The tendency to *prescribe* rules for languages was a major weakness of this model of grammar. Modern scholars of language studies observe the behaviour of languages and *describe* them.
- Traditional grammar is also criticized for not adopting scientific methods in studying language. Their studies were not empirical such that the claims they that were made about languages forms, structure and behaviour were based on intuitions.
- Traditional grammar did not view individual languages as unique linguistic systems, but was more concerned with legislating on how people should speak and write that language. (Ndimele: 1992).
- Another weakness of traditional grammar relates to its definition of parts of speech. For example, the definition of verbs as action words is inconsistent with similar terms in English. If verbs are action words, what actions do words like “seem”, “appear” “is”, “been”, etc express? Moreover, it would be difficult to classify the English words “dare”, “need”, “fire” as nouns or verbs since they are capable of being used as either nouns or verbs. Also, their definition of nouns was not comprehensive; it only covers concrete nouns.
- Traditional grammar is not explicit enough to account for the numerous ways in which natural languages function. For example, Traditional grammar cannot explain what is involved in passivisation or relativisation. The grammatical categories of traditional grammar are based on European languages and are found inadequate in describing other languages.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Mention **two** ways that you think Traditional grammar is relevant to the grammars we study today.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Traditional grammar can be viewed as the foundation for subsequent grammatical theories. The concept of grammar has since developed from studying relationships between words and the objects they represent, and prescribing rules of use to describing relationships between the words or group of words themselves, rules that produce various sentence types, and how grammar relates to meaning.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt

- that philosophers, not linguists first studied language and evolved grammar .
- the first approach to the study of language- Traditional grammar
- the ways that Traditional grammar works; about its advantages and disadvantages.

### **ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

The two ways that Traditional grammar may be said to be relevant to the grammar we study today are:

1. It provided the basis of studying human language; it provided the framework known today as grammar.
2. It evolved the system of classifying words into parts of speech, a system which is still in use today, although there have been some modifications in the definition and usage of words in each classification.

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

To what extent would you say that Traditional grammar has contributed to how language can be studied today?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 2     **STRUCTURAL GRAMMAR**

In this unit, you will learn about another grammatical model, structural grammar. When you are through with reading it you should be able to tell the differences between this model and the one you studied in the previous unit. The unit is arranged as follows:

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Structural Grammar
    - 3.1.1 European Structural Grammar
    - 3.1.2 American Structural Grammar
  - 3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Structural Grammar
    - 3.2.1 Strengths of Structural Grammar
    - 3.2.2 Weaknesses of Structural Grammar
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Structural grammar is generally believed to have evolved at about the same time in two places - Europe and America. Owing to this fact, each group of structuralists developed the grammar with somewhat different concerns and focus about language. But modern structural grammar is traceable to an American linguist, Leonard Bloomfield whose contributions to the study of language have helped in shaping modern linguistics. His ideas have provided a basis for the building and the development of other linguistic theories and grammatical models.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

After going through this unit, you should be able to

- describe another view of how language works, beside the Traditional view which you studied in the earlier unit
- explain key aspects of Structuralism as a grammatical model such as langue/parole, synchronic/diachronic linguistics; Immediate Constituent (IC) Analysis and a technique of representing the structure of sentences.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Structural Grammar**

You would recall that one major weakness of Traditional grammar was its prescriptive nature. This might have led to the development of structural grammar. Two major groups are generally associated with the evolution of structural grammar. The first group began in Europe after the publication of Ferdinand de Saussure's book entitled *Cours de Linguistique Generale*. This group came to be known as European structuralists. The second group started in America and was generally referred to as American structuralists.

##### **3.1.1 European Structural Grammar**

The major ideas of European structural grammar are that language consists of two aspects, *langue* and *parole*. Within this grammar is the same as the form or the expression elements in a language. For example, the speech sounds, the words, phrases and clauses in a language constitute the form of that language. *Parole* on the other hand, according to European structural grammarians, refers to language behaviour, that is, the manner and the use(s) to which the expression elements are put. According to Lamidi, "Langue ... can be equated with form while parole is equated with substance."

Another feature of European structural grammar is that it emphasized the inter-relationships between *langue* and *parole*, stressing that they were not autonomous aspects of language, but, that they were interrelated.

European structural grammar developed the twin notions of synchronic and diachronic linguistics. According to de Saussure in his book earlier referred to above, synchronic linguistics studies the structure of a language or languages at a particular point in time, while diachronic linguistics deals principally with the historical development or isolated elements of language(s) over a period of time.

European structural grammar specifies that language has two associated levels – an abstract relational level, and the actual utterances of language. Within this grammar it is claimed that the abstract level is "a system of underlying actual behaviour of a language" (Lyons:1981), and that the two levels must be distinguished one from the other. Moreover, within the view of language presented by European structuralists, linguists and those interested in the study of language should focus on the abstract underlying level.



### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

State three major ideas about language as advanced by European structural grammar.

#### 3.1.2 American Structural Grammar

The second group of structuralists started in America. This group was made up of scholars who had background in disciplines like anthropology, psychology and linguistics. These different backgrounds influenced their view of language and how language should be studied.

American structuralists outrightly rejected the traditional grammar approach to the study of language. Their rejection and eventual discarding of traditional grammar was as a result of the influence of the period in which they lived and worked. That period was known as the Scientific Age, and everything had to be subjected to the use of scientific methods just as would be done in the sciences. Thus, they used and recommended the use of scientific approach in studying language. This approach involved an objective and an observable analysis of linguistic data.

Structural grammarians of the American school claimed that every language is a “unique, coherent and (an) integrated system” (Lamidi). Their methods of categorizing parts of speech and sentence function were different from those adopted by traditional grammarians. They observed from studying American-Indian languages that words in all languages could not be classified in the same way(s). For instance, they observed that the distinction between nouns and verbs in some languages does not exist in other languages.

Following these observations, American structural grammarians did not support the practice found among Traditional grammarians of describing one language by analyzing it in terms of the categories derived from the analysis of other languages. Also, they found that the traditional categories of preposition, article and adverbs could not always be applied consistently.

American structuralism was greatly influenced by the American Linguist, Leonard Bloomfield who claimed that language is human behaviour and that meaning is the relationship between a stimulus and a verbal response. However, since issues about meaning in language could not be subjected to the scientific methods adopted within structural grammar, Bloomfield’s followers completely neglected meaning-related issues claiming they were vague.

Since they saw each language as a unique system, they designed structural forms by which each language may identify words and their classes. For instance English nouns possess certain characteristics which distinguish them from other word classes. Thus nouns are capable of occurring after determiners

and they can take plural indicators. The following frames 1(a-d) were devised for identifying nouns in English and any word that fits into the gaps provided were to be classified as nouns.

- (1) (a) John bought a \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) The students met the \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) His mother needs some \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) Dipo brought these \_\_\_\_\_

The words which fit into the gaps in (2a-c) above are to be classified as verbs; moreover, they are capable of taking an appropriate past tense marker, viz: - d, - ed or zero morpheme.

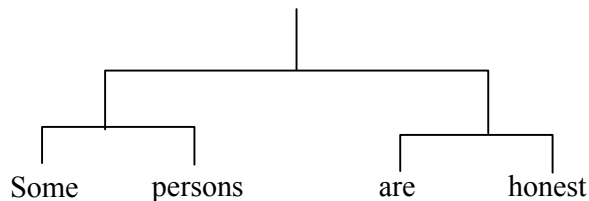
- (2) (a) Kufre \_\_\_\_\_ the ball  
 (b) Ngozi \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Yemi \_\_\_\_\_ some rice.

From the data presented here it would appear that in structural grammar words are classified according to the frames in which they occur.

Another branch of structural grammar was developed by Bloomfield (1933). This was referred to as the Immediate Constituent Analysis. This approach to sentence analysis adopts a “top-to-bottom” procedure. It involves breaking down sentences into their immediate constituents until the smallest units of grammar known as ultimate constituents are reached. The Bloomfieldian structuralism evolved the tree structure technique as a way of representing the way that words in sentences are grouped together into a structure. This technique was initially referred to as “cutting”. In Fig.1 below, the diagram shows the relationship and the arrangement of the words which make up the sentence: “Some persons are honest”.

The central idea of the Immediate Constituent analysis is to show that sentences in natural languages do not consist simply of an unordered sequence of words; but, that the words which are (structured) into successively larger structural units known as constituents. A constituent may therefore be thought of as a structural unit or segment of a sentence which may comprise a word or more than one word. Let us look at the diagram in Fig 1. The sentence: ‘Some persons are honest’ would be seen to be made up of four words but the words can be grouped into two large units referred to as phrases : a noun phrase ‘some persons’; and another phrase ‘are honest’ which serves as the predicate. Each of the two smaller groups of words which make the sentence ‘Some persons are honest’ are said to be immediate constituents of the sentence. Also, each of the phrases can be broken down into its immediate constituents which are the individual words which make them up.

In Unit 1, it was emphasized that words and groups of words in sentences must be related one to another, that is, they must ‘hang together’ sentences to be meaningful. As Fig.1 indicates the words ‘some’ and ‘persons’ ‘go together’ that is why they can form a constituent within the same sentence. These facts show that sentences have a hierarchical structure. These facts show that sentences have a hierarchical structure. These facts show that sentences have a hierarchical structure. This is represented by the branching.



## 3.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Structural Grammar

### 3.2.1 Strengths of Structural Grammar

Unlike Traditional grammar, Structural grammar considers the spoken language to be superior and therefore primary to the written form of language. Also, its concern for explicitness, precision and generality were welcome alternatives to the arbitrary traditional ways of studying language.

One of the strengths of Structural grammar consists in its contribution to the development of Generative grammar. It laid the foundation for the latter grammatical model to build on, particularly in such aspects as the concept of the Immediate Constituent Analysis and the Tree structure technique of phrase structure representation.

### 3.2.2 Weaknesses of Structural Grammar

Despite the strong points which structural grammar has been shown to possess, it has been faulted for the following characteristics: First its inability to explain the underlying meaning of sentences as well as its inability to explain other phenomena like synonymy, paraphrase and recursion. Second, structural grammar cannot handle ambiguity in larger sentences e.g. “They called him lawyer”, which could mean:

- (1) Some persons engaged the services of a lawyer on behalf of another.  
OR
- (2) Somebody is often referred to as “lawyer” (probably on account of his eloquent defence of other persons when they get into trouble).

This is considered to be a significant weakness because the problem of ambiguity is a serious problem in language use and cannot be neglected in language studies. Third, structuralists emphasised that a certain order be followed when analysing language. For example, they insisted on beginning analysis with the sounds and sound system of a language before going on to see how the sounds combine into words, words into phrases, and so on. This procedure is generally described as *separation of levels*. Other linguists said this insistence on a strict order is unnecessary since a scholar may decide to begin the analysis of a language at any level.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The structural approach characterised a second phase in the development of grammatical models in general. Its descriptive and objective approach distinguished it from traditional grammar which was prescriptive.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The following are the main points made in this unit:

- There are two groups of scholars who started structural grammar. Language has a behaviour that is different from the way it is used even though both are related.
- Structuralists did not consider meaning to be a part of the study of language.
- Structuralists used purely objective and scientific procedures in studying language.
- Structuralists first identified an abstract level as a basis for sentences in language.
- They evolved some of the key techniques of linguistic analysis used by later linguists and language scholars up to date.

#### **ANSWER SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

The three major ideas about language advanced by European structural grammar include the following:

1. The interrelationships of language form and language behaviour
2. There is an underlying system of actual behaviour to every actual utterance.
3. Language can be studied at a particular point in time and can also be studied in terms of the historical development of its elements.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Compare and contrast Traditional grammar with Structural grammar and show how one is an improvement upon the other.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 3 TRANSFORMATIONAL GENERATIVE GRAMMAR

In this unit, you will learn about another grammatical model, transformational generative grammar. When you are through with reading it you should be able to tell the differences between this model, and the other two that you studied in the previous units. The unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Transformational Generative Grammar
  - 3.2 Phrase Structure Rules
  - 3.3 Transformational Structure Rules
  - 3.4 Morphophonemic Rules
  - 3.5 Deep and Surface Structure
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the 1950's, particularly as an offshoot of the work done by the American linguist, Noam Chomsky, there have been attempts at producing a type of grammar which will have a 'very explicit system of rules specifying what combinations of basic elements will result in well formed sentences' (Yule:1996). Such a grammar should have a number of properties which will include generating all the well formed sentences of the language and fail to generate any ill-formed ones. The grammar would have a finite number of rules but will be capable of generating an infinite number of well formed sentences. In this way, the ability of language users to create totally new sentences in every situation will be possible within the grammar. The rules of this grammar should be recursive; that is, should be capable of being applied more than once in generating the structure. These were some of the ideas that led to *transformational generative grammar*.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the origin of transformational grammar
- explain and illustrate what is meant by transformational , phrase structure and morphophonemic rules
- describe and illustrate the concept of deep and surface structure

- identify the differences between transformational grammar and the other two models that you have studied.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Transformational Generative Grammar

Transformational Grammar (TG) was first formulated by Zellig Harris in 1951. It was expanded by Noam Chomsky in 1957 with the publication of his *Syntactic Structures* and revised in 1965 with Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. The main characteristic of TG is the use of *formulas*, a practice which is not new in the field of grammatical theory but TG uses formulas with a high degree of accuracy and complexity. Compared with Traditional grammar TG is said to be a more powerful model combining phrase structure and grammatical transformations (Chomsky: 1957)

In its early stage the concept of 'kernel' sentences was central to TG.

The kernel consists of simple, declarative active sentences ... all other sentences can be described as transforms (Chomsky: 1957).

Transforms are 'these sentences derivable by the largely nonrecursive phrase-structure level of the grammar (Lees: 1957).

From the two definitions of 'kernel sentences and transforms the following deductions can be made:

- all compound and complex sentences are transforms;
- all question sentences are transforms;
- all passive sentences are transforms;

This means, according to Chomsky (1957), that: every sentence of the language will either belong to the kernel or will be derived from the strings underlying one or more kernel sentences by a sequence of one or more transformations.

This notion of the kernel sentence as the basis of generating other sentences was abandoned in the revised TG theory of 1965. A linguistic transformation is a process that involves the change of one linguistic structure to another for instance, the change of the active to the passive ( Tomori, 1977). This type of change is recognized in traditional grammar too. The sentences:

1. Etim washed the car.
2. The car was washed by Etim.

demonstrate this structural change. Transformational grammar then is a type of grammar that tries to explain the rules which govern structural changes and the formation of utterances. According to Allen and Buren (1971) 'a grammatical transformation T operates on a given string with a given constituent structure and converts it to a new string with a new derived constituent structure.

A given string means a grammatically acceptable morpheme e.g. Okon killed the snake SVO. Converted to the passive voice it becomes *The snake was killed by Okon*. A string may be a sentence or a part of a sentence as in Etim's wife; the wife of Etim. TG tries to explain how a native speaker forms and understands sentences in his native language. The ability of a native speaker is referred to as *Competence*. What the native speaker does when he uses language on specific occasions is referred to as *Performance*. Performance therefore reflects a native speaker's competence. T.G. attempts to explain the knowledge found in a native speaker of a language which enables him to form sentences without being taught from his knowledge of the language. TG Rules suggest the principles that can aid sentence formation.

The term *generate* is often used in TG which is also often referred to as Transformational Generative Grammar. When a rule is said to generate a sentence it means that the rule describes how the particular string or linguistic element is formed and also how potential sentences can be formed. This makes transformational grammar a grammar of competence rather than a grammar of Performance like Traditional Grammar. TG relies on three levels of rules: Phrase Structure, Transformational Structure and Morphophonemics. Each has its own set of writing rules.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Explain the terms: transformational grammar, competence and performance.
2. What does it mean to say that a rule *generates* a sentence in transformational grammar?

### 3.2 Phrase Structure Rules (P.S. Rules)

A phrase structure grammar is one that analyses utterances in terms of its syntactic constituents (Tomori, 1977) which are S (Subject) V (verb) O (Object) A (Adjunct) C (Complement). For instance the sentence *Etim killed the snake* has the syntactic components or constituents: subject + verb + object. This phrase structure grammar which is often considered an improvement on Traditional Grammar only analyses the constituents of a sentence without saying anything about how it is derived. For instance it does not say how the sentence is derived neither does it explain the rules that allow the use of killed rather than kill and why Etim is



placed before *the* and why *snake* comes after *the*. What it does is simply describe the structure of the sentence.

In Phrase Structure Grammar the instruction formulas are known as *Rewrite Rules*. These rules are given by Chomsky in *Syntactic Structures* (1957) as:

$$(1) \quad \text{Sentence} \quad - \quad \text{NP} + \text{VP}.$$

This means rewrite a sentence as NP (Noun Phrase) + VP (Verb Phrase) or simply the constituents of a sentence are a Noun Phrase and a Verb Phrase.

$$(2) \quad \text{NP} = \text{T} + \text{N}$$

This means rewrite NP as T and N where T means a determiner such as *a* or *the* and N means a noun.

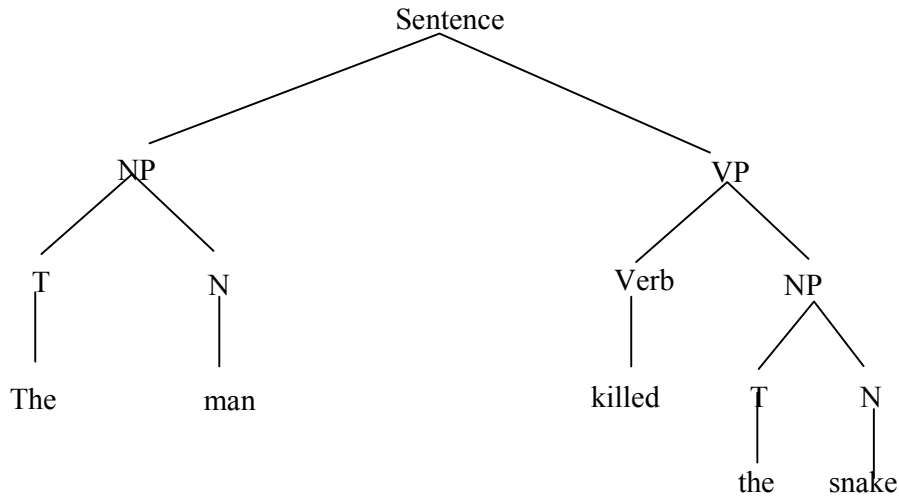
$$(3) \quad \text{VP} = \text{Verb} + \text{NP}$$

In a sentence such as: The man killed the snake: T = the, N = Man, Snake and Verb = killed.

According to the rules of phrase structure grammar as given by Chomsky the full derivation of the sentence: The man killed the snake is as follows:

S ► NP + VP  
 T ► N + VP  
 T + N + Verb + NP  
 The + N + Verb + NP  
 The man + Verb + NP  
 The man + killed + T + N  
 The man + killed + the + N  
 The + man + killed + the + snake

The constituent structure of the sentence can also be shown in what is known as a tree diagram or a phrase marker thus:



### Key

Node	=	Every point where there is a branch
A branch	=	A line that leads from the node. There can be as many branches as there are constituents.
A terminal node	=	A node that has nothing below it except a word.
A terminal string	=	The last line or the sequence of beneath a PS diagram
Sisters	=	Constituents at the same node

In a phrase structure grammar, the phrase structure markers (or phrase markers) include:

S	-	Sentence
NP	-	Noun Phrase
V	-	Verb Phrase
PP	-	Prepositional Phrase
T (ART)	-	Article
N	-	Noun
P	-	Preposition
ADJ	-	Adjective
PART	-	Particle

Constituent structure organisations or word order are described by Phrase Structure (PS) rules or in the words of Chomsky rewrite rules:

A. S - NP VP

The constituents of sentences are a Noun Phrase and a verb phrase

B. NP - (ART) (ADJ) N means

A noun phrase must contain a noun and may contain an article, an adjective or both

C. VP - V (NP) (PP) means

A verb phrase contains a verb V, a compulsory element and a noun phrase or prepositional phrase as optional element

D. PP - P+NP

A prepositional phrase contains a preposition and a noun phrase as compulsory elements.

The main limitations of phrase structure grammar are:

- The rules directing the formation of utterances only describes the syntactic structures of most utterances.
- It does not stipulate the proper order of application of the rules to produce well formed sentences.
- The taxonomic view of syntax is also found in phrase structure grammar. This is the tendency to classify linguistic elements into groups to explain them as seen in traditional grammar where words were classified into parts of speech.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

What are the limitations of Phrase Structure Grammar?

### 3.3 Transformational Structure Rules

The second level in transformational grammar is that of transformational structure. Five transformational rules operate at this level. These are:

1. T and. This is the rule for conjoining sentences e.g. the scene – of the play – was in Lagos  
the scene – of the accident – was in Lagos become

The scene of the play and of the accident was in Lagos

2. T Af – This is the rule for deriving the correct form of the verb in a sentence e.g. -ed added to kill as in:

The man *killed* the snake – where the correct form of the verb is killed

or

She *likes* rice where the correct form of the verb is *likes*

3. Tp is the transformational rule for deriving the passive form from the active form e.g.  
Okon washed the car  
The car was washed by Okon
4. Tnot is the rule for forming the negative versions from positive sentences e.g. positive  
She can draw (Positive)  
She cannot draw. (Negative)
5. Tq is the rule for forming questions from positive sentences e.g.  
She can draw.  
Can she draw?

### 3.4 Morphophonemic Rules

The third level in transformational grammar is morphophonemic structure. This is the level where the string of morphemes comprising a terminal string is converted into the sounds of a language. For instance the morpheme

{stand} + {past} becomes stood

Rules that govern the phonetic realization of morphemes are called *morphophonemic rules*.

Transformational grammar was revised in 1965 in Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* to cater for certain loopholes found in syntactic structures. For instance the rewriting rules did not specify context e.g.

S → NP + VP

does not specify what type of NP can go with *what* V.P. In traditional grammar for instance we know that not every verb can take an object; not every English verb is transitive e.g. In:

The dog frightened the boy

S → NP + VP + NP

The verb *frightened* takes a direct object.

but in the sentence:

Two weeks have elapsed

S → NP + VP.

The VP have elapsed does not take a direct object.

Chomsky's modification introduces *sub-categorisation rules* and *selectional rules* to show, for instance, what verbs can be used in what sentence patterns. For instance in the sentences which may fit into the same type of frame: NP+VP+NP

The darkness may frighten the girl  
and  
John loves Mary

Although the two sentences can fit into the same frame, it is not specified what type of NP can go with what type of VP. This is because it is not every VP in the English language that can go with every NP. In the terms of traditional grammar, this means that not every verb in English can take a direct object; not every English verb is transitive (Tomori: 1977).

The rules which Chomsky introduced to restrict certain classes of words to certain syntactic frames are known as *subcategorisation* rules while the rules introduced to describe the restrictions on the co-occurrence of certain linguistic items are known as *selectional* rules. Tomori (1977) illustrates this point with the following sentence:

The fierce dog may frighten the boy.

According to the context free rewriting rules of the grammar this sentence can be rewritten thus:

S → NP+VP +NP

may frighten is an example of a verb phrase which takes an object in the English language. But another sentence:

Two weeks elapsed

has the rewriting rule: S NP+ →VP. This shows that the verb elapsed is one of the English verbs that do not take an object. Subcategorisation rules are therefore meant to show what verbs can go together in what sentence patterns (p. 77)

### 3.5 Deep and Surface Structure

The concept of deep and surface structure was also developed in 1965 by Chomsky. The deep structure of a sentence refers to the basic (underlying) meaning of a sentence derived from its syntactic and semantic components, while the surface structure is the form in which the sentence appears phonologically or orthographically; that is, according to Eka (1994) those aspects of the sentence which can be determined through an examination of the ways the sentence is spoken or written. For instance the sentences

- a. Your clothes need washing.
- b. Your friends keep coming.

appear to have the same surface structure but their deep structures are different. Sentence (a) is derived from two basic sentences:

Your clothes are dirty; someone must wash them

- (b) has only one sentence as its basis – In the language of traditional grammar, (a) is active in form but passive in meaning while (b) is active in both form and meaning.

Also in Chomsky (1965), the concept of the kernel sentence was abandoned in favour of the concept of the ‘basis of a sentence’ which is explained as ‘the sequence of base phrase-markers that underlies it’ (Chomsky:1965). Thus a sentence is (a) basic string’ if the phrase-marker underlying it is only one as in *your friends keep coming*. The sentence:

Your clothes need washing has as its basis, the sequence of two phrase markers: your clothes are dirty; someone must wash them.

Transformations that operate on single phrase markers are known as *singularly transformations* as seen in the following:

Okon embraced Ekaette → Ekaette was embraced by Okon Tp

We shall succeed → Shall we succeed Tq

The food was delicious → The food wasn’t delicious Tnot

In the first sentence the singularly transformation operates on an active sentence making it passive; in the second sentence transformation changes a declarative sentence to a question while in the third sentence the transformation changes a positive to a negative sentence.

When transformations operate on two or more phrase-markers to produce a new phrase marker either by embedding or by conjoining the transformation is known as *generalised transformation* as in the following:

She was leaving.  
 She said so.  
 → She said that she was leaving.

The woman had no child.  
 The woman bought the house.  
 → The woman who bought the house has no child.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Illustrate the following transformation rules with your own examples  
 T and, T Af, Tnot, Tq and Tp.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Transformational grammar and transformational generative grammar constitute what could be considered the third phase in the development of grammatical models. Their most significant contribution is the processes and rules evolved to address structural transformations in language.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit the following points have been made:

- Transformational grammar (TG) is a type of grammar that tries to explain the rules which govern structural changes and the formation of utterances.
- It tries to explain how a native speaker forms and understands sentences in his native language.
- The ability of a native speaker is referred to as *Competence*.
- What the native speaker does when he/she uses language on specific occasions is referred to as *Performance*.
- TG relies on three levels of rules: Phrase Structure, Transformational
- Structure and Morphophonemics. Each has its own set of writing rules.
- A phrase structure grammar analyzes utterances in terms of its syntactic constituents which are SVOAC
- The second level in transformational grammar is that of transformational structure.

- Five transformational rules operate at this level. These are: T<sub>and</sub>, T<sub>p</sub>, T<sub>Af</sub>, T<sub>q</sub> and T<sub>not</sub>.
- The third level in transformational grammar is morphophonemic structure.
- This is the level where the string of morphemes comprising a terminal string is converted into the sounds of a language.
- The deep structure of a sentence refers to the basic (underlying) meaning of a sentence derived from its syntactic and semantic components
- The surface structure is the form in which the sentence appears phonologically or orthographically.

### ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. Explain the terms: transformational grammar, competence and performance.
  - i. Transformational grammar (TG) is a type of grammar that tries to explain the rules which govern structural changes and the formation of utterances.
  - ii. It tries to explain how a native speaker forms and understands sentences in his native language.
  - iii. The ability of a native speaker is referred to as *Competence*.
  - iv. What the native speaker does when he uses language on specific occasions is referred to as *Performance*.
2. What does it mean to say that a rule *generates* a sentence in transformational grammar?

When a rule is said to generate a sentence it means that the rule describes how the particular string or linguistic element is formed and also how potential sentences can be formed.

### ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

The limitations of Phrase Structure Grammar

The main limitations of phrase structure grammar are:

1. The rules directing the formation of utterances only describe the syntactic structures of most utterances.
2. It does not stipulate the proper order of application of the rules to produce well formed sentences.
3. The taxonomic view of syntax is also found in phrase structure grammar. This is the tendency to classify linguistic elements into groups to explain them as seen in traditional grammar where words were classified into parts of speech.



**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Illustrate the following transformation rules with your own examples

*T* and, *T Af*, *Tnot*, *Tq* and *Tp*

Candidates are to give their own examples to illustrate the transformational rules as shown below:

1. *T and*. This is the rule for conjoining sentences e.g. the scene – of the play – was in Lagos  
the scene – of the accident – was in Lagos become  
The scene of the play and of the accident was in Lagos
2. *T Af* – This is the rule for deriving the correct form of the verb in a sentence e.g. The man killed the snake – where the correct form of the verb is *killed* or she *likes* rice where the correct form of the verb is *likes*

The rule *T Af* also states how affixes are attached to base words to produce the correct forms of the words in question. It applies to verbs as well as nouns.

3. *Tp* is the transformational rule for deriving the passive form from the active form e.g. Okon washed the car

The car was washed by Okon

4. *Tnot* is the rule for forming the negative versions from positive sentences e.g. She can draw (Positive)

She cannot draw. (Negative)

5. *Tq* is the rule for forming questions from positive sentences e.g.  
She can draw.  
Can she draw?

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. To what extent is transformational grammar an improvement on earlier grammars?
2. Trace the transformational history of the following sentences:
  - (i) The man who came here is a medical doctor
  - (ii) The play was not entertaining.
  - (iii) Should I come with you
  - (iv) The food was cooked by my mother.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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## UNIT 4 SYSTEMIC GRAMMAR

Systemic grammar is generally considered to have evolved to offer some improvement on the inadequacies of structural and early transformational generative grammars. In this unit you will learn about the systemic grammar model and assess whether it was really an improvement on other grammars. This unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Systemic Grammar
  - 3.2 Components of the Systemic Model of Grammar
    - 3.2.1 Unit
    - 3.2.2 Structure
    - 3.2.3 Class
    - 3.2.4 System
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Even though systemic grammar is one of the models of grammatical analysis which exist for use in the study of language, it possesses certain peculiarities both in its conception and applications which set it apart from the other grammatical models. Perhaps, because it arose in reaction to the claims made by structural and early transformational generative grammar that meaning could not be studied within a theory of grammar, systemic grammar considers meaning and context-related issues as key concerns in the study of any language.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe systemic grammar as a more elaborate and a more functional approach to the study of language;
- explain the categories which serve as the units of analysis within the systemic grammar framework; and
- explain the categories of Unit, Class, Structure and System, and how they work in language analysis.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Systemic Grammar

This model of grammar grew out of work done by J. R. Firth. Firth's initial work was known by the term *context of situation*. Later, Michael A. K. Halliday developed the Systemic Model of grammar based on Firth's initial theory of Context of Situation. This is why the Systemic Model of grammar is also sometimes known as Neo-Firthian Grammar.

Systemic grammar is organized into two planes – structure at the surface plane and a system of semantic features at the deep plane (Eka: 1994). This model does not consider grammar as a separate level since it claims that the syntax and the morphology of a language are interrelated and are explicable in terms of units on the grammatical rank scale. These principles of the grammar have earned it a third name – Halliday's *Scale and Category Grammar*.

The claim within systemic grammar is that all languages are capable of being analyzed into Units, Structures, Classes and Systems. These constitute the categories with which analysis within a systemic model of grammar may be done. According to this model, sentence and clause are instances of the category called unit; verbs and nouns exemplify the category referred to within this model as class; subject and complement instantiate the category, structure. The three categories Unit, Class and Structure make up a system of the theory of this grammar. Let us look at each of these categories in more detail in order to understand their nature.

#### 3.2 Components of the Systemic Model of Grammar

##### 3.2.1 Unit

A unit may be explicable in terms of the item, which carries grammatical patterns. (Eka:1994) observes that "whenever a grammatical choice is made, there must be a unit that carries the choice." As far as systemic grammar is concerned, five units have been identified on the grammatical rank scale of English. These include sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. Each unit is further capable of being broken down into smaller units. For example, the sentence is capable of further analysis into one or more clauses, and more than one word, etc.

The units as conceived within the systemic model are not autonomous, they have links one with another following a hierarchy. This hierarchical relationship among the units of a language is referred to by the term "Rank Scale." The most basic unit is the morpheme and it occurs at the bottom of the scale.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

State two cardinal concerns of the systemic model of grammar.

**3.2.2 Structure**

The term “structure” within a systemic model of grammar accounts for the nature of the patterns which may occur or are capable of occurring in a unit. The Nominal Word Group (NWG) for instance is an example of a structure, and certain patterns make up the structure. The patterns which are capable of occurring in the NWG structure are: modifier, head and qualifier (mhq). The pattern labeled modifier refers to words which regularly occur before the head word in a structure or group or phrase. The head (h) of a phrase is the keyword in the group or phrase. The keyword in a Nominal group or noun phrase is a noun, for an Adjectival group or phrase; the key word is an adjective, etc.

The pattern qualifier describes a word or group of words which occurs after the head word in a group or phrase. Consider the sentence in which the patterns of structure have been identified:

1. The tall young man who called yesterday is a student

In the above sentence the Nominal Word Group (NWG) is *The tall young man who called yesterday ...* This can be analyzed as follows:

m	=	“the,” “tall” and “young”
h	=	“man”
q	=	“who called yesterday”.

The sentence is also analyzed as a structure in systemic grammar. It is regularly composed of the elements subject, predicator, complement and Adjunct (SPCA). Thus a sentence is a type of structure in the systemic model of grammar and has its own patterns which occur within it.

**3.2.3 Class**

A class in systemic grammar refers to members of the same unit. Items in a language take certain patterns in the structures in which they occur, and they are often arranged according to the patterns that they take in such structures. Words patterned in the same way are said to constitute a class. There may then be separate classes of nouns, for example abstract nouns, concrete nouns, mass and count nouns, etc.

Verbs may be divided into classes according to whether they are transitive or intransitive; regular or irregular, etc. Members of a class behave in similar ways in the structures in which they occur and have similar privileges of occurrence.

### 3.2.4 System

What defines a system, according to systemic grammar, involves the choice of one item over another item from among a number of similar events in a given structure. When speaking an utterance or writing a sentence, the choices available in the predicate, for instance fall within the following systems:

aspect: this is either perfective or progressive aspect  
 tense: the tense can be present or past  
 voice: the sentence can be said to be either in the active or the passive voice

Thus each of aspect, tense and voice constitutes a system, since each provides choices that have to be made by a language user. These systems are not autonomous, they are interrelated and are often regarded as points on a network of relationships.

**Number:** this may be singular or plural

**Person:** this refers to participant roles which language users play in a given language situation. There are usually three such roles: 1<sup>st</sup> person, 2<sup>nd</sup> person and 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

**Gender:** the subject, object or pronoun in a sentence can be said to be either masculine in gender or neuter in gender.

**Polarity:** this may be positive or negative

**Article:** this system comprises the term 'definite' and 'indefinite'.

**Demonstrative adjectives:** may be those with near reference to those with distant reference.

Two additional points need to be mentioned here in discussing systemic grammar. These relate to the notions of *rank scale* and *delicacy*. Rank scale is used to refer to the phenomenon whereby a unit operates in the structure of a unit which is immediately higher than it in the rank scale. Thus, clauses can operate in sentences, groups in structure of clauses and so on. Sometimes (owing perhaps to stylistic reasons) a certain higher level unit is moved down the rank scale to function in a unit of equal rank or of a lower rank. This phenomenon is referred to as rank shift. The affected unit is then said to be rank shifted or down-graded. For instance, a clause can be made to function within the structure of other clauses, or even in the structure of groups. Consider the sentence:

2 The letter which you wrote has been returned.

in which the clause: *which you wrote* functions within the structure of the sentence: *The letter ... has been returned*. This shows that the dependent clause *which you wrote* has been rank shifted (downgraded) to function in the structure of the main or independent clause serving the function of qualifier to the nominal group *the letter* in the *m h q* structure.

Also, within the Systemic Model of grammar the term delicacy is used to describe the ‘level of differentiation or depth of detail in an analysis’ (Eka:1994). When descriptions of linguistic phenomena or analyses employ the least number of items necessary for the understanding of the said phenomenon, such a description or analysis is said to be generalized and least delicate, that is not detailed. But when a description or analysis employs more number of items it is said to be detailed and so delicate. In describing or analyzing the nominal group in English for example, a more generalized form (less delicate) of analysis would be to say that it is usually made up of the *m h q* elements. However, a more detailed (more delicate) form of analysis would specify the various classes of the *m*-element- *deictic element, ordinals, epithet, nominal*. It is instructive to note that items within classes in English are capable of analysis into very delicate levels of description.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

What are the components of systemic grammar?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Systemic grammar which evolved to account for meaning within grammar could be viewed as a fourth phase in the development of grammatical models. However, unlike the first three phases which are interrelated, this model stands on its own.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit you have learnt that

- the initial concept of systemic grammar was context of situation. systemic grammar considers meaning an important aspect of the study of languages.
- Systemic grammarians feel that language is a means of communication and the effectiveness of a stretch of language depends on whether those involved in the communication situation understand each other.
- systemic grammar emphasized acceptability in addition grammaticality.
- like the structuralist and the early transformational grammar the systemic model recognized two planes of language – the surface plane and the deep plane where meaning resides.
- the components of systemic grammar are: unit, structure, class and system and each constitutes a category for grammatical description in the Systemic Model.

**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

State two cardinal concerns of the systemic model of grammar.

Perhaps, because it arose in reaction to the claims made by structural and early transformational generative grammar that meaning could not be studied within a theory of grammar, systemic grammar considers *meaning* and *context related issues* as key concerns in the study of any language.

**ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

What are the components of systemic grammar?

The components of Systemic Grammar are: unit, structure, class and system and each constitutes a category for grammatical description in the Systemic Model.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Distinguish between class and system in systemic grammar.
2. Discuss the basic tenets of systemic functional grammar by Halliday.

**7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## UNIT 5 GOVERNMENT AND BINDING GRAMMAR

This unit introduces you to the Government and Binding model of grammar, its major aspects and sub-systems. You learnt in Unit 1 that there are many ways of looking at and studying language, which are generally referred to as grammatical models. You have learnt about models of grammar like the Traditional (or Classical) model, the Structural model, the Systemic model and the Transformational Generative model. In this unit you will be exposed to a model of grammar which is considered by many linguists to have offered new ideas about the nature of human languages in general and which is held to be a better apparatus for describing natural languages. The unit is organized as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Major aspects of Government and Binding Model
  - 3.2 Interactive Sub-systems of GB
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Government and Binding model of grammar is one of the versions of the Transformational Generative grammar (TGG) which was expounded by Avram Noam Chomsky in his book *Syntactic Structures* published in 1957. It is generally considered to have developed to serve as an improvement on the inadequacies of the earlier versions of Chomskyan grammar; namely, the Standard theory, the Extended Standard theory and the Revised Extended Standard theory. GB is an advanced form of Universal Grammar, that is why it emphasizes the universality of grammar. It incorporates the principles and features of the earlier versions of Chomskyan grammar; for example the Tree structure representation of the Phrase Structure and Transformational Generative grammar models, the interpretative component responsible for meaning and the phonetic component responsible for how words and sentences are pronounced. Generally, GB offers an improved analysis of the structure of sentences in natural languages.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the Government-Binding model of grammar;
- identify its unique characteristics; and
- explain key features of GB such as its universality, modular nature, principles and parameters.

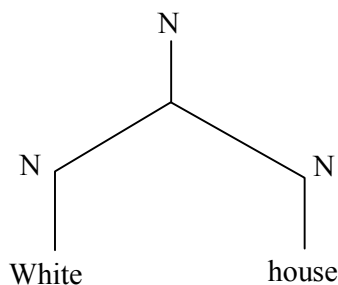
## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Major Aspects of Government and Binding Model

The central notion of the Government-Binding model of grammar may best be understood through an explanation of the two major aspects of which it consists. These aspects are *Principles* and *Parameters*. This is why the GB model of grammar is sometimes also referred to as the Principles and Parameters Theory (PPT).

The aspect of GB known as the Principles has to do with those features or aspects of languages (in general) which are common to all languages and which do not vary from one language to another. Such common features are described within Universal grammar as *core features*. They are features which all human languages possess. For instance, all languages have structural units known as words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Within GB all phrases in all languages have the same structure: in every phrase there is a word that is more important than the other words in that phrase. That word is described as the head of that phrase. Thus, in a noun phrase the noun is the head; in a verb phrase, the verb is the head ... and so on. Everything about a phrase – the way it functions, its structure and so on is determined by the nature of the head of the phrase in question. All phrases are said to have the same structure which may be represented using a Tree structure schema like the one in Fig 1:

**Fig 1: Structure of a Phrase**



Examples of noun phrases in English are the following:

- (i) female hostel
- (ii) government policy
- (iii) the head of Department
- (iv) All teachers of Mathematics
- (v) one of the richest Nigerians in the United Arab Emirate

We can represent the VP “carries a basket” on a tree diagram such as the one in Fig 1 above thus:

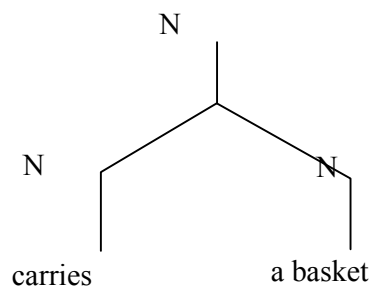


Fig 2: Tree Structure representation of the phrase “carries a basket”  
Examples of verb phrases in English are indicated below:

- (i) carries a basket
- (ii) depicts a market scene
- (iii) wrote on slabs
- (iv) are selling in the market.

Following the principles of GB which assign the same structure to all phrases in all languages we could identify the heads of the verb phrases as “carries” in (i), “depicts” in (ii), “wrote” in (iii) and “selling” in (iv).

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- 1) Identify the heads in the following phrases:
  - (a) village market
  - (b) bicycle repairer
  - (c) writes novels
  - (d) are acting on stage
- 2) Represent 1(a) and (c) on tree diagrams

Parameters on the other hand refer to those aspects of GB which study the variable features which human languages possess. That is, the differences which exist among languages within the principles which they may share. For instance, one important difference observed to exist among languages with regard to the structure of their phrases is the position which heads occupy. In some languages, the heads of phrases are uniformly positioned before the other words whereas in others they occur last in the phrase. Languages in which the heads of phrases occur in phrase – initial position are described as *Head-First* languages. English is cited as an example of a Head-First language. However, it should be pointed out that it is not all phrases that heads occur first e.g. female hostel where hostel is the head and comes after the modifier (= complement ‘female’). According to Haegeman (1994), Japanese is an example of a Head-Last Language. Thus, it would be clear that even though parameters recognize that all languages have certain features in

common, it also recognizes that languages differ in certain specific respects. These differences account for why they are distinct separate languages anyway.

### 3.2 Interactive Sub-Systems of GB

GB has been shown to present a wider scope for the study of languages. Within this model of grammar language operates on inter-connecting levels, with each level making inputs to enable other levels to function. According to Chomsky (p.5) language grammar comprises **interacting sub-systems**.

GB is organized into sub-systems more technically known as modules. Each module has a function but contributes inputs to other modules for the overall functioning of the grammatical system of language. As a result of this organization into modules, GB is said to have a modular character.

There are seven interactive sub-systems or modules of GB. They include: *the Bounding sub-system*, *the Government sub-system*, *the Theta sub-system*, *the Binding sub-system*, *the Case sub-system*, *the Control sub-system* and the X-bar sub-system. The Bounding sub-system imposes restrictions on how phrases may be moved from one sentence position to another; the Government sub-system ensures that the head of a phrase occurs in close proximity to the other elements that co-occur with it; and the function of the Theta sub-system is to assign meaning roles to relevant noun phrases, e.g. this sub-system ensures that a noun which occurs after a verb, for example, is assigned the appropriate meaning (thematic) role of object. The Binding sub-system is concerned with the relationships which must hold between nouns, noun phrases or pronouns and their antecedents; the X-bar sub-system deals with the relationship between the head of a phrase and the elements that are dependent on it ... and so on for the other sub-systems. Thus it would be clear that the sub-system interacts one with another such that “two or more of them can account for the grammaticality or ungrammaticality of structures” (Lamidi, 2000).

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has introduced to the GB model of grammar which is a further development of earlier models of grammar like the Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG). It is important to note that unlike earlier models which were developed with specific languages in mind, GB is based on the universal characteristics of languages.

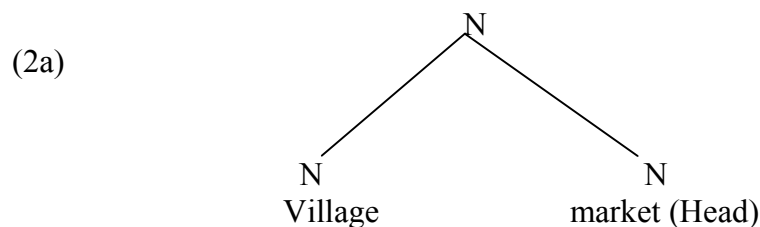
## 5.0 SUMMARY

The following points have been made in this unit:

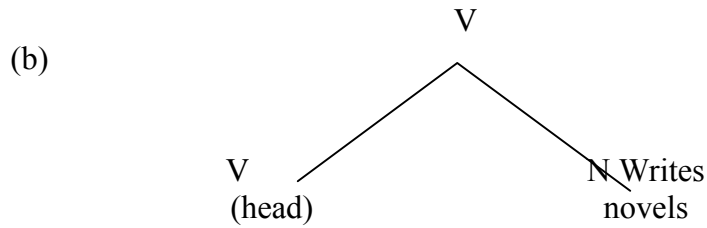
- Avram Noam Chomsky is the proponent of the Government-Binding model of grammar along with others like Phrase Structure Grammar, Transformational-Generative Grammar, etc.
- GB is a more generalized model of grammar: it studies the grammar of languages in general, not individual language grammars.
- It is enriched and has a wider scope because it incorporates in its models the major principles and features of the other versions of grammar both within and outside Chomskyan linguistics.
- It is concerned with what human languages have in common rather than with what differentiates them.
- It emphasizes universality.
- However, GB recognizes that there exist differences among languages.
- A major characteristic of GB is its flexibility and variety usage.

## ANSWER TO SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- (1) The heads in the phrases
- |       |                     |   |          |
|-------|---------------------|---|----------|
| (i)   | village market      | = | market   |
| (ii)  | bicycle repairer    | = | repairer |
| (iii) | writes novels       | = | writes   |
| (iv)  | are acting on stage | = | acting   |



Tree representation of the phrase “village market”



Tree representation of the phrase “writes novels”

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain GB’s concept of Principles and Parameters. Use appropriate illustrations.
2. What is meant by Head-First and Head-Last languages? Give some examples from English and your mother tongue or any other language.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Chomsky, N. (1981). *Lectures on Government and Binding: The Pisa Lectures*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.

Lamidi, M. T. (2000). *Aspects of Chomsonian Grammar*. Ibadan: Emman Publications.

Liliane, H. (1994). *Introduction to Government and Binding Theory (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. London: Blackwell.