CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

ELE 1200 – INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

FIRST EDITION

CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY

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LUSAKA

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E 1200: INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

This course aims at introducing students of language to language and linguistics. This course will help you understand the basic concepts, terms and methods in general linguistics. You will realise that the discussions will have reference to either English or Zambian languages, being the languages in which this course will advance. The course comprises three parts; the first part introduces you to language, the second to linguistics and the third to basic concepts in linguistics. The third part will fairly go into details of the levels of linguistics. You have made a good choice to study language and linguistics. Stay on course and enjoy the beauty of language.

Method of teaching

Teaching will be done during residential at a centre determined by the Distance committee. Lecturers will have contact with the students for the period that would be stipulated by the directorate. This is the time when students will make consultations of what they would find problematic. Residential school and class attendance, tutorials, and seminars are compulsory.

Assessment

One quiz	10%
One test	20%
One assignment	20%
Examination	50%

The quiz and test will be done during residential school. You will be required to pass both Continuous Assessment (CA) and the final examination. You will be deemed to have failed if you failed any of the two.

You are also expected to submit your assignments on (or before) the due date. Assignments handed in after the deadline, without any reasonable explanation will receive a penalty.

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PART A: INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE

This part of the course tries to explore language and equip you with the various aspects of language in general and human language in particular. It discusses various definitions of language as defined by some scholars. It will also discuss the biological foundations of language. The question of the origins of language is a philosophical one. In this part of the course, you will be required to make your own assumptions on the origin of language or side with one of the earlier assumptions, justifying why you support that theory. You will also be required to examine to whether human language can be equated to animal language and whether animals can learn and understand human language. It is very important to be grounded in the kinds of animal languages:- whether they can be interchanged among various species. Language functions will help in the categorisation of language in general and forms of communication in particular. What has been considered language handicap tries to address the inadequacies by individuals to articulate or communicate in one way or another. We will also look at language and identity in various aspects.

It is very important that you pay attention from the beginning.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCING LANGUAGE

Introduction

We are all familiar with the term 'language'; we all speak a language. Although we are all users of language, whether native or not, there are various aspects of it that require close study for scholars to fully understand the forms and structure of a natural language.

Learning Outcomes

As you work through the unit, you should be able to:

- analyse various scholarly definitions of language;
- distinguish between articulated and non-articulated languages
- discuss the biological foundations of language .

1.1 Defining Language

Language is polysemous; it has more than one meaning. Here are a number of definitions of language from some scholars:

a) Language is a system of communication uniquely associated with humans and distinguished by its capacity to express complex ideas.
b) Language is purely human and non-restrictive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntary produced symbols. (Sapir)
c) Language is a system of arbitrary symbols by means of which a social group cooperates. (Bloch and Trager)
d) It is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which thought is conveyed from one human being to another. (Lyons)
e) Language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols (Hall)
f) Language is a set (of finite and infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements, (Chomsky)
g) It is "a system of communication used by the people of a particular country or profession." (CALD3).

h) Language is "a system of communication consisting of as set of small parts and a set of rules which decide the ways in which these parts can be combined to produce messages that have meaning," (Proter; 1995).
i) Language is a system of communication using speech sounds either oral or written. These sounds are related to meaning in an arbitrary manner… (Malande, 2010).
j) Language might be described as the ability to take a finite set of elements (such as words), and using a set of rules (grammar and syntax) to create infinite combinations, each of which is comprehensible.

Language is natural, species-specific and species-uniform. To say, 'language is species-specific' means each species has its own kind of language. By species-uniform means that all human beings have the ability to speak.

It is worthy however to state that human language does not necessarily need to be articulated for it can be made of signs or movements. Language can also be made by non-human beings such as animals, birds and bees.

1.2The biological foundations of language

(a) **The nature/ nurture controversy**: The argument between Chomsky and Skinner is based on the biological foundations of language. Noam Chomsky postulates that it is natural for a human being to learn a language because humans have an inborn (naturally) capacity to learn any human language. He argues that it is not possible to teach human language as a whole to any animal just as it is not possible for human beings to learn fully any animal language. Skinner postulates that humans learn a language through education or training (nurtured by environment).

(b) **The relevance of biology to language**

i. Anatomy and physiology: language is determined and limited by anatomy and physiology, e.g. Phonology (i.e. the shape of the speech organs).
ii. The developmental schedule which follows the regular patterns dependent on child's physical development.

iii. The difficulty in 'suppressing' language: the ability to learn a language is deeply rooted in human beings that children learn it even in the face of dramatic handicaps.

1.3 Theories of the origin of human language

With the advancement in technology, is it possible for scientists, anthropologists and linguists to specifically determine the origin of human language? The question of 'when', 'how' and 'where' man first developed language has remained a puzzle to scholars in various fields of research because all attempts made have been unsuccessful. All that has prevailed are assumptions. To that, scholars who debated on the issue banned the discussions, (Malande, 2010). It is, therefore, assumed that human language draws back to the period of man's existence. Then immediately man came into existence, then language came into existence as well. Do you know some of the theories about the origin of language? Let us look at the following assumptions (theories):

1. Monogenesis or Polygenesis

The prefix 'mono' means one/ single, 'poly', several and 'genesis' the beginning/ origin/ creation. The monogenetic theory of language origin holds that all human articulated languages developed from a single ancestor language while according to the polygenetic theory of language origin states that some articulated languages developed from different sources and places.

The controversy cannot be settled for lack of facts or records. Both assumptions may reflect what actually happened.

2. The Divine Gift Theory

The term is used to refer to all theories that suggest that human language was created by God or some divinity:

a) In the book of Genesis 2:18-20, God gave Adam language. Language was passed on unchanged until at Tower of Babel experience (Genesis 11:1-9). Therefore, language was a gift from a divine source of some kind.

b) In Egypt, god Thoth was a creator of language.
c) With the Babylonians, god Nabu was the creator of languages.
d) With the Hindus, god Brahma created language, together with while universe and his wife goddess Sarasvati gave language to mankind.

3. The Ding-Dong Theory or Mativistic Theory (M Muller 1860-19430)

The theory states that there is intrinsic natural link between words and what they mean or offer to and language developed from primitive man's zeal to name objects. The theory is derived from onomatopoeic relation for it believes that language developed from words that had a natural link with their meanings, hence the term 'ding-dong' which represents the sound it naturally makes.

However, we may ask ourselves of how may words in a natural language would form communicative stretches using onomatopoeia.

4. Sing-song Theory (Linguist, Otto Jespersen 1860-1943)

The theory states that language developed from inarticulate chants of primitive man. It states that language was derived from song as an expression rather than a communicative need, with love being the greatest stimulus for language development. This theory relates speech to emotional songs.

5. Bow-Wow Theory

The theory is derived from English onomatopoeia imitating the barking of dogs. This sound imitating theory holds that language developed from primitive man imitating natural sounds, such as cries or thunder. Hearing trees crash or dogs bark urged him to imitate these sounds as best as he could, eg. 'boom' and 'bow-bow.'

6. Pooh-Pooh Theory (LH Gray 1875-1955)

This theory is also known as the exclamation theory or the interjection theory. The theorist believes language was derived from interjections expressing emotions.

7.Yo-He-Ho Theory

The theory traces language back to cries uttered to co-ordinate collective work. The objection to the theory is that group work presupposes prior communication.

8. Ta-ta Theory (Johannesson and Piaget)

The theorists believe that language developed from man's use of gestures. Primitive man supposedly first communicated by gesturing with arms and hands. Then, as he began using tools, he began gesturing with his mouth, lips, tongue, and teeth - the visible parts of the body that form the speech sounds of language. Perhaps, then, man first spoke because he had his hands full.

9. The Evolution Theory

You may have met this theory of man's existence from history; the evolution theory. The linguist, Phillip Lieberman links the development of language with the evolutionary development of speech production and perception apparatus and subsequently the development of language. This development would be accompanied by changes in the brain and the nervous system toward greater complexity, (Malande, 2010).

Comments on the theories

Apart from the first and second discussed theories, the rest of the theories can be merged as the invention theory. The invention theory emanated from the theory that the earliest manifestations of language were cries of nature (such as cries of pain, fear, surprise, anger, pleasure, and so on) that man shared with the animals.

Linguistics and the question of language origin

Let us now look at what some domains attempt to review about language origins. Comparative Linguistics: comparative methods aim at establishing relationships between two or more genetically related languages by comparing cognate words. This has only yielded the history of only ten thousand years or less. The period is too brief to provide data on origins.

Archaeology and the question of language

a) Direct archaeological Evidence

Direct archaeological evidence examined the language writings. The evidence does not go further than 5,000 years since the oldest writings system were invented. This does not solve the problem of origin but instead proves the existence of human language since at least 5,000 years go.

b) Indirect Archaeological Evidence

The deals in archaeological discovery of culture which are cumulative and are traditionally shows to have been in existence since at least one million years (we can infer that language has been in existence since one million years), since there is no culture without language to transmit it. Archaeological evidence offer no evidence from which we can reconstruct its evolutionary development or does it offer any evidence regarding where language begins.

Herder's view

According to Malande (2010), Johann Herder-1769 refuted both the Divine-Gift Theory and the Invention theory of the origin of language. Herder is the one who paved way for free scientific investigation. His argument is on the notion that language was invented by man but not outside his reasoning power. Man invented language to exercise his power. Hence, apart from expressing emotions, he could name objects.

Activity 1.1

1. *Explain if anyone in any field of study would be able to debate on the origin of language?*
2. *Explain the strengths and weaknesses of:*
    a) *the monogenesis theory*
    b) *the Divine Gift theory*

c) *the Nativist theory*

d) *the Bow-Wow Theory*

Summary

In this unit, you have been given various definitions of 'language'. We have also discussed the biological foundations of language. Theories about the origin of language as advanced by different proponents have also been given. As you have seen, there are various assumptions about the origin of language and because there is no tangible evidence, all are subject to criticism.

UNIT 2: THE NATURE OF HUMAN LANGUAGE

2.0 Introduction

This unit looks at the nature of human language. It is concerned with the theories of the origin of human language. It will also look at the design features of language as well as the theories of language acquisition.

Learning Outcomes

As you work through this unit, you should be able to:

- analyse some of the theories of the origin of human language;
- explain the design features of human language;
- state and explain the theories of language acquisition.

2.1The properties of language.

Properties of language are design features of human language. The various features of human language have been termed as 'Design features' of human language by the American linguist Charles Francis Hockett, (Matthews, 1997).These properties of human language may be regarded as linguistic universals. That is, properties which are shared by all individuals' languages (Tonga, English, Kaonde, Spanish, Chinese, Lozi, Japanese etc.). It is important to note that design features apply only to spoken language, although they are presented as design features of 'human language.'

The following are the design features of language:

Human language is rule-governed: All levels of language have restrictions on what is and what is not. Phonologically, for example, individual languages place restrictions on combination of sound segments that can be combined to form words in that language. In English, for instance, we can tell that 'flour' can be a possible word but not 'wmosgev'. Morphologically, 'floured' is possible but not 'roufled'. Further, at the syntactic aspect, we cannot say, 'The has come boy'.

Arbitrariness: Language is arbitrary in the sense that there is no inherent relation between the words of a language and their meanings or ideas they convey.

Human language is creative

Man's ability to produce and understand theoretical infinite number of sentences including those he has never produced or heard before as long as such sentences belong to the language he knows.

Human language is systematic

This means that language is a whole whose components stand in particular relation to each other and perform particular functions. The sounds of particular language do not combine anyhow but combine into syllables following certain rules that define permissible sequences of sounds in that language.

Duality of patterning

This is a design feature of human spoken language recognised by the French linguist A. Martinet.

- The first articulation refers to the fact that the continuum (continuous sequence) of speech is split up into meaningful units (units which have meaning) such as words and morphemes; for instance the word 'break' and 'fast ' do have meaning.
- The second articulation is the splitting up the continuum of speech into meaningless units (units which have no meanings) e.g. individual sounds (morphemes); /s/, /p/, /ʃ/, /ʧ/, /ʒ/, /ʤ/ or syllables; bro. ther [brʌ. ðə] etc.

Human language is dynamic

Any human language changes in time and space and also according to context of use. It grows through assimilation and coinage. For instance, if we reflect back and analyse the type of English that which was used at that time we notice that it has changed over time. As Zambia came into contact with English speaking people many English words have been adopted by Zambian languages. Such forms of dynamism are known in linguistics as:

- Loaning or borrowing: This is whereby a word or phrase or an idea is taken from one language and is used in another e.g. Swahili – Ndeke; Bemba – Ndeke; Tonga – Ndeke.
- Coining – which is inventing a new word or phrase that other people use then begin to use it.
- Corruption/ adulteration – which is the form of a word or phrase that has become changed from the original form in some way e.g. (sipuni from spoon).

Displacement

Displacement also includes prevarication, which is the ability to lie or produce utterances which do not correspond with reality. Displacement refers to the idea that humans can talk about things that are not physically present or that do not even exist. Speakers can talk about the past and the future, and can express hopes and dreams. A human's speech is not limited to here and now. The ability to refer to future or past (ie, to persons, things or state of affairs which are removed in time) is termed temporal displacement. Man's ability to talk about something removed in space, that is, things that he/ she cannot see, is termed spatial displacement. The term displaced speech refers to both types of displacement. Displacement is one of the features that separate human language from other forms of primate communication.

Human language is innate but learned

All normal human beings are born with the ability to learn a particular kind of language. It is inborn or innate (something one is born with). This is according to what the linguist Noam Chomsky who emphasised the role of nature in learning a language. However, the psychologist B.F. Skinner has also argued that knowing a language is merely a matter of nurture (Education/Training) i.e. a child has to be taught a language by adequately exposing it to him or her. Therefore, the two views simply mean that while all normal human beings are born with the ability to acquire any human language s/he must learn it.

Therefore, human language is both innate or in born and learned. To say that human language is both a matter of nature and nurture is to say that human language is transmitted both genetically (ability to learn any human language) and culturally (Learning).

Semanticity

Semanticity is a design feature that refers to the existence of associated ties between elements in the linguistic system and things in situations in the environment. Specific language signals represent specific meanings; the associations are 'relatively fixed'. An example is how a single object is represented by different language signals i.e. words in different languages. In Bemba, the word ***umucele*** represents a white, crystalline substance consisting of sodium and chlorine atoms. Yet in English, this same substance is represented by the word salt.

Likewise, the crying of baby may, depending on circumstance, convey to its parent that it requires milk, rest, weather adaptability or a change of clothes.

Traditional transmission

Also called cultural transmission. While humans are born with innate language capabilities, language is learned after birth in a social setting. Children learn how to speak by interacting with experienced language users. Language and culture are woven together.

Vocal-auditory channel

Refers to the idea that speaking/hearing is the mode humans use for language. This feature did not take sign language into account, which reflects the ideology of orality. This feature has since been modified to include other channels of language, such as tactile-visual or chemical-olfactory.

Broadcast transmission and directional reception

When humans speak, sounds are transmitted in all directions; however, listeners perceive the direction from which the sounds are coming. Similarly, signers broadcast to potentially anyone within the line of sight, while those watching see who is signing. This is characteristic of most forms of human and animal communication.

Transitoriness

Also called rapid fading, transitoriness refers to the idea of temporary quality of language. Language sounds exist for only a brief period of time, after which they are no longer perceived. Sound waves quickly disappear once a speaker stops speaking. This is also true of signs. In contrast, other forms of communication such as writing and Inkakhipus (knot-tying) are more permanent.

Interchangeability

Refers to the idea that humans can give and receive identical linguistic signals; humans are not limited in the types of messages they can say/hear. One can say "I am a boy" even if one is a girl. This is not to be confused with lying (prevarication). The importance is that a speaker can physically create any and all messages regardless of their truth or relation to the speaker. In other words, anything that one can hear, one can also say.

Not all species possess this feature. For example, in order to communicate their status, queen ants produce chemical scents that no other ants can produce (see animal communication below).

Total feedback

Speakers of a language can hear their own speech and can control and modify what they are saying as they say it. Similarly, signers see, feel, and control their signing.

Specialization

The purpose of linguistic signals is communication and not some other biological function. When humans speak or sign, it is generally intentional.

An example of non-specialized communication is dog panting. When a dog pants, it often communicates to its owner that it is hot or thirsty; however, the dog pants in order to cool itself off. This is a biological function, and the communication is a secondary matter.

Discreteness

Language is made up of meaningful distinct elements. These linguistic representations can be broken down into small basic units which combine with each other in rule-governed ways. They are perceived categorically, not continuously. For example, English marks number with the plural morpheme /s/, which can be added to the end of any noun. The plural morpheme is perceived categorically, not continuously: we cannot express smaller or larger quantities by varying how loudly we pronounce the /s/, (Malande; 2010).

Productivity

Refers to the idea that language-users can create and understand novel utterances. Humans are able to produce an unlimited amount of utterances. Also related to productivity is the concept of grammatical patterning, which facilitates the use and comprehension of language. Language is not stagnant, but is constantly changing. New idioms are created all the time and the meaning of signals can vary depending on the context and situation, (Yule; 1997).

Prevarication

The ability to lie or deceive. To tell a lie is a state where language does not represent the actual state of affairs or where the user of a language does not present the real state of affairs out of ignorance or misunderstanding. Hence, when using language, humans can make false or meaningless statements.

Reflexiveness

Humans can use language to talk about language. The following terms are used in reference to this:

- Metalanguage: the language used to talk or write about language/ another language.
- Target language: language talked or written about.

Learnability

Language is teachable and learnable. In the same way as a speaker learns their first language, the speaker is able to learn other languages. It is worth noting that young children learn language with competence and ease; however, language acquisition is constrained by a critical period such that it becomes more difficult once children pass a certain age. Nevetheless, any human language is learnable by normal human beings.

Activity 2.1

1. What do you understand by the concept 'design feature' as used in the study of language?

2. State the design features of language and explain each of them.

3. With examples, explain what a metalanguage and target language are.

2.2Language Acquisition and Learning

One may ask as to how a person gets a language that he/she uses. Language starts at birth. When a child is born the new child cries and complains about the unfavourable new environment and the pain of taking in the first breath using its own lungs. There are two ways on how a person can get language either by acquisition or learning.

Language Acquisition is the unconscious process by which human beings get and develop their first language. This is usually through peers, parents and social gathering. Language Acquisition: Is the process of learning the first language during infancy. When a child is born, it has no language apart from its own. After the speech organs are slightly developed, the child starts acquiring the language found or spoken in the environment.

Language Learning is the conscious process of gaining knowledge, competence or skill in a particular language by studying or by being taught a second language. This is the learning of second language often the second language is learnt. It is also defined as the formal study of

language rules and is a conscious process. Learning of language proceeds by the learners having the teacher who gives the graded work.

Acquisition comes first in infancy then learning comes as the second language.

2.2.1Theories of Language Acquisition

There are three (commonly known theories of language acquisition. These are:

- The imitation theory
- The innateness theory
- The cognitive theory

The Imitation Theory: language acquisition is a long process of imitation whereby the child copies or imitates the utterances heard from adults.

The Innateness Theory- suggests that every child is born with a predisposition to learn a language because of an innate naturally occurring Language Acquisition Devise (LAD).

The Cognitive Theory- Suggests that a child has intellectual development, linguistic structures will emerge only if there is an already established cognitive foundation. Language acquisition in children is part and parcel of the intellectual development of a child. Cognitive strength refers to the ability of the brain to think and analyse situations to find answers to questions.

2.2.2 Factors affecting language acquisition

Language acquisition can be affected by both positive and negative factors. Can you think of factors that help in the acquisition of language? Factors that positively affect language acquisition could include the following:

- Rich linguistic environment
- The child acquires language unconsciously
- There are many models to imitate

Factors that negatively affect language acquisition could include the following:

- The child's shyness interferes with his/her conscious of learning

- Health problems such as deafness
- The models are limited. This could mean the child's contact is limited to few sources of restricted linguistic expression. For example, a child could live far from others, with a deaf and mute person.

Activity 2.2

1. Which one of the three theories of language acquisition do you think is the most appropriate? Give reasons.

2. Discuss the positive factors to language acquisition.

3. What is the difference between acquiring a language and learning a language?

2.3 Stages in language development

Adult speakers of a language do not just gain proficiency in a language overnight. Language has to be developed. Children, it is believed, begin to develop their language between the age of about three weeks (just as the child develops the sense of hearing) and three months. You may have observed your own child pass through certain developmental stages. There are various scholars that have varying stages in a child's language development. Hartmann and Stork (1972; 124) distinguish six stages in a child's language development, as follows:

Stage 1.(3-6 months)Babbling: At this stage, the child begins babbling (which is also known as word play).There is understanding of facial expressions and tones of voice, exercising of organs of speech to produce a wide variety of sounds, although there is no coherent utterances.

Stage 2. (6-9 months) Lallation: reaction to gestures and single commands; continuation of self-stimulated combination of sounds;

Stage 3. (12 months) Imitation: active response to outside influences; first words [one word sentences] and repetitive verbal play;

Stage 4. (15 months) Jargon: incorporating elements of the talk of environment into flow of uncontrolled speech; vocabulary rises to over 20 words; communication through two-word phrases.

Stage 5. (2 years) Talking: This is the beginning of verbalisation of wants using phrases. There is full understanding of instructions.

Stage 6. (4 years) Loquacity: The child has full understanding of adult speech directed at him and almost complete mastery of the language patterns.

Babbling, lallation, imitation, jargon, talking, loquacity are used here to indicate the major characteristics of the six stages. Let look at each of these characteristics:

(a)Babbling: To babble means to speak quickly in a way that is difficult to understand or sounds silly (Longman Dictionary of English (1995:77); the word is used here to emphasize the fact that at 3-9 months the child produces a lot of sounds all of which are meaningless.

(b)Lallation is the production of more or less articulated sounds by the child in such a way that the child tends to combine repeated syllable-like combinations of sounds such as lalala, tatata, giigiigi, etc;

(c) Imitation is used here to emphasize the fact that the child struggles and manages to imitate not only the individual sounds but also sounds produced by adults. The kind of speech produced by the child during this period is called holophrastic speech. A holophrastic speech is speech in which single words express complex ideas which are normally expressed by more words especially full sentences (McNeil 1970).

(d) Jargon means technical words and expressions that are used mainly by people who belong to the same professional group and are difficult to understand (e.g. documents full off legal jargon)(Longman Dictionary of English, 1995:757); here the term jargon is simply used metaphorically to emphasize that the child is able to produce (two-word) utterances but these utterances are difficult to understand. During this period, the child tends to produce two-word utterances which corresponds in the child's speech to the full sentence from which some words have been omitted. For this reason, this kind of speech is termed telegraphic speech (McNeil 1970).

(e) Talking:At the age of 2 years, the child has gone beyond telegraphic speech and that speech it produces is closer to the adult language; hence the choice of the term 'talking' used to characterize this period.

(f) While the word loquacity literally means liking to talk a lot or too much, the term is used here not only to mean that the child likes to talk a lot or too much but also to mean that the child has mastered the language almost completely.

According to Wood, language acquisition takes place in six consecutive stages as indicated below:

The pre-linguistic stage

During the first year of life the child is in a pre-speech stage. Developmental aspects related to speech would include the development of gestures, making adequate eye contact, sound repartee between infant and caregiver, cooing, babbling and crying. Examples of such pre-speech sounds would be dadadada, mamamama and waaaah.

The holo-phrase or one-word sentence

The child usually reaches this phase between the age of 10 and 13 months. Although the child tends to utter a single word at a time, its meaning is also supplemented by the context in which it takes place, as well as by non-verbal cues. An example of such a one-word sentence would be a child leaning over the edge of his cot and pointing to his bottle while laughing and saying "botty" in a commanding way. An adult in the situation could well interpret the child's holophrase as meaning, "Give me my bottle immediately (so that I can throw it over the edge of the cot again and you can pick it up)". Another example would be "Dada", which could mean "Daddy, please come to me."

The two-word sentence

By 18 months the child reaches this stage. His or her "sentences" now usually comprise a noun or a verb plus a modifier. This enables the child to formulate a sentence which may

be either declarative, negative, imperative or interrogative. Examples of such "sentences" are:

"Doggy big" (declarative)
"Where ball" (interrogative)
"Not egg" (negative)
"More sugar!" (imperative)

Once again, if the two-word sentence is supported by the situation as well as by non-verbal communication, it can have quite a complex meaning.

Multiple-word sentences

The child reaches this stage between the age of two and two and a half. Grammatical morphemes in the form of prefixes or suffices are used when changing meanings or tenses. Furthermore, the child can now form sentences with a subject and a predicate. Using the examples which were listed in the previous stage, the sentences could now be the following:

"Doggy is big"
"Where is ball?"
"That is not egg"
"I want more sugar"
"I catched it"
"I falling"

Ironically, in the last two examples the linguistic errors are clear indications that the underlying grammatical principle was understood. The child's sentences are still telegraphic although they may be quite long.

More complex grammatical structures

Children reach this stage roughly between two and half or three years of age. They use more intricate and complex grammatical structures, elements are added (conjunction),

embedded and permuted within sentences and prepositions are used. Wood gives the following examples in this regard:

"Read it, my book" (conjunction)
"Where is Daddy?" (embedding)
"I can't play" (permutation)
"Take me to the shop" (uses preposition of place)

Adult-like language structures

The five to six-year-old child reaches this developmental level. Complex structural distinctions can now be made, such as by using the concepts "ask/tell" and "promise" and changing the word order in the sentence accordingly. Examples are:

"Ask her what time it is."
"He promised to help her."
"I would like to go home now."

These language developmental levels can be reached at an earlier age or at a later age than indicated above. Some children will lag with the first three but may catch up in the fourth or fifth or even in the sixth stage. The extent and quality of the mediated language experience which the child receives are therefore of the utmost importance.

Activity2.3

1. *Compare the six stages in child language development by Hartman and Stork with that given by Wood.*

2. *Why is it significant that you should study the language development in children?*

Summary

This unit has discussed the nature of human language. It has dealt with the properties of language, theories of language acquisition and the stages in language development. In the discussion of the properties of language, we have seen that human language is distinguished from other forms of language because of these species-specific features.

UNIT 3: HUMAN AND ANIMAL LANGUAGE

3.0 Introduction

By now, you are able to realise that there is a difference between humans and animals although science at various instances has categorised man as an animal. Can you state the differences between the two? Yes. There are a number of aspects that make humans possess that no other animal possess. Do animals reason? Can they remember their history? Well! We may be straying far. Keep on track.

Learning Outcomes

As you work through this unit, you should be able to:

- have clear understanding of human and animal language.
- evaluate animal language.

3.1 Do animals have a language?

It depends on the definition of language and what properties of language are considered. If language is communication, then animals have language. Animal languages are forms of non-human animal communication that show similarities to human language. How then do animals communicate? Well, animals communicate by using a variety of signs such as sounds or movements. In contrast, for example, humans routinely produce entirely new combinations of words. Animals use fixed language forms.

3.2 Can animals learn human language?

The question is already set for us in the section heading: Is it possible to teach an animal human language? Which of the non-human creatures have you ever heard speaking human language? Have they learnt the language the way human beings learn and develop it? Some birds like a parrot can imitate human utterances although in a limited form. However, human language differs from animal languages or communication. Researchers say that animals, (non-human primates), do not have a true language like humans. However, they do communicate with each other through sounds and gestures. Animals

have a number of in-born qualities that they use to signal their feelings, but these are not like the formed words we see in the human language.

Pearce (1987: 252) cites a definition of animal communication by Slater (1983), which we will also use as a working definition here: Animal communication is "the transmission of a signal from one animal to another such that the sender benefits, on average, from the response of the recipient".

This loose definition permits the inclusion of many types of behaviour and allows "communication" to be applied to a very large range of animals, including some very simple animals and birds.

Natural animal communication can include:-

- Chemical signals (used by some very simple creatures, including protozoa)
- Smell (related to chemical signals, e.g. pheromones attract, skunk secretions repel)
- Touch
- Movement
- Posture (e.g. dogs, geese)
- Facial gestures (e.g. dogs snarling)
- Visual signals (e.g. feathers)
- Sound (e.g. very many vertebrate and invertebrate calls)

Such signals have evolved to:-

- attract (especially mates)
- repel (especially competitors or enemies)
- signal aggression or submission
- advertise species
- warn of predators
- communicate about the environment or the availability of food

Such signals may be:-

- instinctive, that is genetically programmed
- learnt from others

Some linguists (e.g Chomsky, 1957, Macphail, 1982, both cited in Pearce, 1987) have argued that language is a unique human behaviour and that animal communication falls short of human language in a number of important ways.

Chomsky (1957) claims that humans possess an innate universal grammar that is not possessed by other species. This can be readily demonstrated, he claims, by the universality of language in human society and by the similarity of their grammars. No natural non-human system of communication shares this common grammar.

Macphail (1982, cited by Pearce, 1987) made the claim that "humans acquire language (and non-humans do not) not because humans are (quantitatively) more intelligent, but because humans possess some species-specific mechanism (or mechanisms) which is a prerequisite of language-acquisition". Without the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), humans would not be able to learn any natural language.

Some researchers have provided lists of what they consider to be the criteria that animal communication must meet to be regarded as language. Let us consider the design features discussed in the foregoing unit. Are you able to recall all of them? Which ones can you explain very well? Try to do so before we proceed. Here, we will just provide a list devised by Hockett (1960). Thelist is considered particularly important in evaluating the question "can animals be taught language?"

Hockett's thirteen "design-features" for language are as follows:-

1. Vocal-auditory channel
2. Broadcast transmission and directional reception
3. Rapid fading (transitory nature)
4. Interchangeability
5. Total feedback

6. Specialisation
7. Semanticity
8. Arbitrariness
9. Discreteness
10. Displacement
11. Productivity
12. Traditional transmission
13. Duality of patterning

3.3 Teaching Language to Apes (and other animals)

It seems well established that no animal communication system fulfils all of the criteria outlined by Hockett (1960). This is certainly true for the apes. It is also true for most other species such as parrots and may also be true for animals such as dolphins, who have a complex communication system which involves a complex combination of various sounds. Researchers have tried to teach a human-like language to another species. The fact that a species does not have such a communication system in the world does not necessarily prove that they are incapable of using one. We may now ask to what kind of language should be taught to these animals. Researchers have avoided using features of human language that are physiologically difficult or impossible for the animal to manage. For example, spoken human language is extremely difficult or impossible for most animals because of the structure of their vocal organs. Apes, for instance, cannot produce a large proportion of the vowels and would have difficulty with some of the consonants. This may be due not only to the shapes of the vocal organs but also to the limitations of the motor centres in the brain that control these organs. Research might attempt, on the other hand, to teach apes language that involves them using their hands (e.g. sign language or the manipulation of symbols).

Some birds, such as certain parrots and the Indian Hill Mynah, are able to mimic human speech with great clarity. We could, therefore, attempt to teach such animals spoken human language.

Dolphins cannot be taught either type of language but may be able to understand sounds or gestures and to respond by pressing specially designed levers. Animal communication systems generally lack one or (usually) more of the following features:-

- Semanticity
- Arbitrariness
- Discreteness
- Displacement
- Productivity

Most researchers attempting to teach language to animals attempted to test for the existence of these features in the 'language' use of their subjects. Let us look at some of the projects done with some animals.

Projects with Apes

The ape species include gorilla, chimpanzee, bonobo (a distinct species of chimpanzee) and the orangutan. Apart from some very early attempts to teach spoken language to chimpanzees (generally resulting in the production of no more than 3-4 words) language production training has involved the use of the hands, either through the manipulation of symbols or through the use of sign language. Comprehension training has involved these types of language as well as training in the comprehension of spoken language.

Projects with Birds

Projects with birds usually involve parrots or the Indian Hill Mynah. These birds are selected for their ability to mimic human speech. The African Grey Parrot and the Indian Hill Mynah are generally considered to be the birds with the greatest ability to mimic human speech patterns but a number of other species (mainly parrots such as the budgerigar) can be trained to "speak".

Projects with Cetaceans

Cetaceans, such as whales and dolphins, have been shown to be readily trainable to respond to gestures and sometimes to verbal and other acoustic commands. Also, many

species have very complex acoustic communication systems. It has been hypothesised that it may be possible to train them to understand language encoded in either gestures or appropriate acoustic signals. Appropriate acoustic signals are assumed to be sounds that are similar to the natural communicative sounds that these animals produce. (http://clas.mq.edu.au/speech/animal_communication/) downloaded on 4.07.17

3.4 Kinds of animal language

You might have realised in the discussion above that animal language can be in types. The two major types are:

a) Acoustic languages – These use sounds, eg. human languages

b) Gestural languages – use gesture, eg. spiders

Activity 3.1

1. How does animal communication differ from that of human beings?

2. Justify earlier attempts to teach animals to talk.

3. Explain why the focus change later to teaching animals to use sign language.

Summary

In this unit, we have realised that although there had been attempts to teach animals human language, all attempts had inadequacies. This is because animals do not possess the physiological structure that human beings use for articulation of the various sounds used for communication of meaning. Speech, therefore, is species-specific.

UNIT 4: LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

4.0 Introduction

Using a language as a primary means of communicating our thoughts is so natural for many people that it is often difficult to realize what in fact language functions are. It must be noted that there is no agreed upon list of language functions in general. Different scholars have proposed different lists of these functions. Some of the roles of language are so mundane that they are hardly ever noticed, others are very elevated, or even

abstract. Due to their diversity the functions of language might be divided into two categories: micro functions which refer to specific individual uses, and macro functions which serve more overall aims.

4.1 Dell's (1976) Traditional functions of language

Dell's three language functions have been discussed based on the types of contents conveyed by language. The functions are as follows:

(a) **The cognitive function**: This is what is recognised as the prime function of language. This function expresses ideas, concepts and thought.

(b) **The evaluative function**: This function expresses attitudes and values.

(c) The affective function: This expresses emotions and feelings.

4.2 Halliday's Macro-functions

The following are Halliday's Macro-functions of language.

(a) **The ideational function**: This function corresponds with Dell's cognitive function of language. The concerns of this function is to express phenomena of the external world and those of consciousness. It expresses facts as well as aspects of attitudes, values, emotions and feelings.

(b) **The interpersonal function:** This function works in the same way as the interactional function of language. It aims at establishing and maintaining social relations.

(c) **The textual function:** This function is concerned with the structuring of speech, the choice of grammatically and situationally appropriate sentences and ordering the content in a cohesive and logical manner suitable for interaction as a whole.

4.3 Jakobson's functions of language

Roman Jakobson defined six functions of language (or communication functions), according to which an effective act of verbal communication can be described. Each of the functions has an associated factor. For this work, Jakobson was influenced by Karl Bühler's Organon-Model, to which he added the poetic, phatic and metalingual functions. The following are the six functions of language according to Jacobson.

(a) The Referential Function: This corresponds to the factor of Context and describes a situation, object or mental state. The descriptive statements of the referential function can consist of both definite descriptions and deictic words, e.g. "The autumn leaves have all fallen now."

(b) The Poetic Function: This function focuses on "the message for its own sake (the code itself, and how it is used) and is the operative function in poetry as well as slogans.

(c) The Emotive (alternatively called "Expressive" or "Affective") Function: This relates to the Addresser (sender) and is best exemplified by interjections and other sound changes that do not alter the denotative meaning of an utterance but do add information about the Addresser's (speaker's) internal state, e.g. "Wow, what a view!"

(d) The Conative Function: This function engages the addressee (receiver) directly and is best illustrated by vocatives and imperatives, e.g. "Tom! Come inside and eat!"

(e) The Phatic Function: This is language for the sake of interaction and is therefore associated with the Contact/Channel factor. The Phatic Function can be observed in greetings and casual discussions of the weather, particularly with strangers. It also provides the keys to open, maintain, verify or close the communication channel: "Hello?", "Ok?", "Hummm", "Bye".

Summary

This unit has discussed the various functions of language according to scholarly works. We realise that there are macro- and micro- functions. In this unit, only macro functions.

UNIT 5: LANGUAGE HANDCAP

5.0 Introduction

Language is much more than words. It involves our ability to recognise and use words and sentences. In other words to be able to speak, listen, read, write or sign. Much of this capability resides in the left hemisphere of the brain. However, these capabilities may be disrupted by damage to the areas in the brain that constitute them. This unit deals with language handicap.

Learning Outcomes

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

- define language handicap,
- describe the causes of language handicap
- classify language handicap

5.1 Defining language handicap

Crystal (1993) argues that language handicap is any systematic deficiency in the way people speak, listen, read, write or sign that interferes with their ability to communicate with their peers.

The expression language handicap may be used either in a broad sense or narrow sense. When used in a broad sense, it relates to any type of handicap/disorder (including those cases where one cannot express themselves in a foreign or second language simply because they have not mastered it or because they have not been exposed enough to that language). When applied in a narrower sense, the expression language handicap refers only to those cases where handicap is as a result of malfunctioning of the body.

5.2 Causes of language handicap

Experts do not understand the cause of developmental language disorders. Scientists continue to research and try to identify environmental and genetic factors that play a part

in the development of these problems which typically manifest in childhood, but may occur at any age.

Acquired disorders, however, are caused by brain damage sustained during a stroke, seizure, or other head injury. Aside from brain injury or head trauma, some other known causes of acquired language disorders are:

- Hearing loss at an early age
- Neurological disorders
- Intellectual disability
- Autism
- Drug abuse

5.3 Classification of language handicaps

The classification of handicap is done either under causal or descriptive classification. Under causal classification, language handicaps are classified based on their causes. Furthermore, on causal classifications, language handicaps are either **organic** or **functional**. They are said to be organic if their causes are physical and functional if the causes are not physical (implying that the causes are psychological, social, due to linguistic background, etc.).

Using the descriptive criterion of classification, language handicaps are classified based on what linguistic skill is affected. The skill in this case may be speech, reading, comprehension, writing, etc. Described in the subsequent section are some of the examples of language handicaps based on the descriptive classification.

(a) aphasia or dysphasia – this refers to the partial or complete inability to use spoken language due to maldevelopment, disease or injury to the brain (Hartmann & Stork).

(b) alalia – this is a complete inability to use spoken language due to abnormality of malfunction of external organs (e.g. lips, teeth, larynx).

(c) dyslalia - an articulation disorder resulting from impaired hearing or structural abnormalities of the articulatory organs. It is also said to be a partial inability to use spoken language due to abnormality or malfunction of external organs.

(d) alexia – this is a complete inability to comprehend the meaning of written or printed words and sentences, caused by a cerebral lesion. Also called optic alexia, sensory alexia, visual alexia, to differentiate from motor alexia (anarthria), in which there is loss of the power to read aloud even though the significance of what is written or printed is understood.

(e) dyslexia - impaired ability to understand written language**.** It isa learning disorder marked by a severe difficulty in recognizing and understanding written language, leading to spelling and writing problems. It is not caused by low intelligence or brain damage.

Deafness

Deafness refers to the total or partial loss of hearing or inability to hear. It can be caused by a variety of factors including diseases such as otosclerosis, blockage of the ear canal by wax, damage to the eardrum, damage to the bones of the middle ear, and damage to nerves that take messages from the ear to the brain.

Types of deafness

There is no single, simple occurrence of 'deafness' but a wide range of types and degree of hearing impairment. The loss of hearing may either be **unilateral** (affecting only one ear) or **bilateral** (affecting both ears). In general terms, there are two types of hearing loss, conductive and sensorineural. The classification of these is based on where the interference lies in the auditory pathway. A combination of both is also seen as a mixed hearing loss. Each is discussed below.

Conductive hearing loss

Conductive hearing loss is caused by any condition or disease that impedes the conveyance of sound in its mechanical form through the middle ear cavity to the inner ear. A conductive hearing loss can be the result of a blockage in the external ear canal or can be caused by any disorder that unfavourably affects the middle ear's ability to transmit the mechanical energy to the stapes footplate. This results in the reduction of one of the physical attributes of sound called intensity (loudness), so the energy reaching the inner ear is lower or less intense than that in the original stimulus. Therefore, more energy is needed for the individual with a conductive hearing loss to hear sound, but once it's loud enough and the mechanical impediment is overcome, that ear works in a normal way. Generally, the cause of conductive hearing loss can be identified and treated resulting in a complete or partial improvement in hearing. Following the completion of medical treatment for cause of the conductive hearing loss, hearing aids are effective in correcting the remaining hearing loss.

The audiometric profile that indicates a conductive hearing loss is the presence of air-bone gaps (better hearing by bone conduction than by air conduction), excellent word recognition at a comfortable listening level, and evidence of a middle ear dysfunction on emittance (electrical admittance). For situations where a blockage is noted in the external ear canal, hearing testing is deferred until the canal is cleared.

Sensorineural Hearing Loss

The second type of hearing loss is called sensorineural hearing loss. This word can be divided into its two components - sensory and neural - to allow us more clarity in specifying the type of hearing loss. The comprehensive audiometric assessment and supplemental tests can yield the information needed to differentiate between a sensory and a neural hearing loss, although they can co-exist in the same ear. Neural hearing loss is another name for retrocochlear hearing loss.

Sensorineural hearing loss results from inner ear or auditory nerve dysfunction. The sensory component may be from damage to the organ of Corti or an inability of the hair cells to stimulate the nerves of hearing or a metabolic problem in the fluids of the inner ear. The neural or retrocochlear component can be the result of severe damage to the organ of Corti that causes the nerves of hearing to degenerate or it can be an inability of the hearing nerves themselves to convey neurochemical information through the central auditory pathways.

The reason for sensorineural hearing loss sometimes cannot be determined, it does not typically respond favourably to medical treatment, and it is typically described as an irreversible, permanent condition. Like conductive hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss reduces the intensity of sound, but it might also introduce an element of distortion into what is heard resulting in sounds being unclear even when they are loud enough. Once any medically treatable conditions have been ruled out, the treatment for sensorineural hearing loss is amplification through hearing aids.

Mixed Hearing Loss

A mixed hearing loss can be thought of as a sensorineural hearing loss with a conductive component overlaying all or part of the audiometric range tested. So, in addition to some irreversible hearing loss caused by an inner ear or auditory nerve disorder, there is also a dysfunction of the middle ear mechanism that makes the hearing worse than the sensorineural loss alone. The conductive component may be amenable to medical treatment and reversal of the associated hearing loss, but the sensorineural component will most likely be permanent. Hearing aids can be beneficial for persons with a mixed hearing loss, but caution must be exercised by the hearing care professional and patient if the conductive component is due to an active ear infection.

Apart from the preceding types of deafness, other forms of impairment such as **tinnitus** have been identified. Tinnitus is a range of noise in the ear (singing, hissing) that occurs in acute, unbearable form.

You should however note that it is important to note that there is a difference between deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. A person is said to be deaf if the sense of hearing is non-functional at all for ordinary purposes of life. As opposed to a deaf person, a hard-of-hearing person is one in whom the sense of hearing, although defective, is functional with or without hearing aid (Riekehof, 1990).

Activity 5.1

1. *What is language handicap?*
2. *Clearly explain what is meant by the following:*

   (a) organic handicap
   (b) functional handicap

3. *Discuss the following types of handicap.*

   (a) aphasia
   (b) alalia
   (c) dyslexia
   (d) alexia

4. *Explain what is meant by:*

   (a) unilateral deafness
   (b) bilateral deafness
   (c) conductive deafness
   (d) *sensorineural deafness*

Summary

It is hoped that you enjoyed yourself as you ran through this unit on language handicap. The unit has explained what language handicap is and has also brought out aspects on different types of language handicap. Not only that, the unit has also endeavoured to bring out the causes of language handicap.

UNIT 6: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

6.0 Introduction

This unit discusses language and identity. In other words, the unit briefly discusses the connection between physical, psychological, geographical, and social aspects of identity, on the one hand, and language, on the other hand. It must be noted that people are communicators by nature. The language they speak reveals the many 'faces' of their identity- physical, psychological, geographical, ethnic and national, social, contextual, and stylistic (Crystal, 2003a: 16–78). In other words, the language spoken by somebody and his or her identity as a speaker of this language are inseparable. Language acts are acts of identity (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller, 1985).

Learning Outcomes

As you work through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe how specific linguistic forms convey information about individual speakers' background, gender, age, physical and psychological state.
- show with tangible examples that there are gender variations with regard to language usage between males and females
- state how language is used by individuals to indicate their social allegiance.

The link between language and identity is often so strong that a single feature of language use suffices to identify someone's membership in a given group. In this part of the module, we will study language as a form of social and cultural identities in the world. Note that it is the language you speak that shows your tribe, your status, your education, your affiliations, your speech communities, etc. language shows where a man is coming from. It reveals solidarity, power and unity. In business settings, language use could bring favour or discontentment. We will thoroughly look at language and identity here.

Language expresses much more than what is signified by its words. It expresses the way individuals situate themselves in relationship to others, the way they group themselves, the powers they claim for themselves and the powers they stipulate to others. People use

language to indicate social allegiances, that is, which groups they are members of and which groups they are not. In addition, they use language to create and maintain role relationships between individuals and between groups in such a manner that the linguistic varieties used by a community form a system that corresponds to the structure of the society. Language is used to express role relationships between individuals. Speakers position themselves in relation to others by using specific linguistic forms that convey social information. A single utterance can reveal much about a speaker: his/her background, place of birth or nation of origin, social class, or even social intent; that is, whether s/he wants to appear friendly or distant, familiar or deferential, superior or inferior etc.

A speaker uses language not only to express but to create a representation of himself/herself in relation to others with whom s/he is interacting. The issue of respect is an aspect of the broader relationship between power and language. *Power is the degree to which oneinterlocutor is able to control the behaviour of the other*. There are many personal attributes that are potential bases of power in interpersonal relationships: physical strength, age, wealth, sex, profession, or institutionalised role in the church, government, or family.

6.1 Physical identity

It is argued that the ability to learn and use language does not depend on the ***physical appearance*** of a person (unless we focus on pathological cases or particularphysical conditions responsible for a person's inability to communicate), but it does depend on age. It is not very clear as to whether there is a relationship between speech and a person's physical characteristics such as height, weight, head, size and shape. Even though it is generally understood that the proportions of various vocal organs are similar in all human beings, individual differences do exist. In spite of this, there is no clear-cut evidence to suggest that anatomic differences affect the ability of a person to learn or use speech.

6.2 Physical condition

The physical condition of an individual has a bearing on how language of that individual can be affected. For example, if a person has cases of physical handicap, his/her language is affected to a large extent. Different disorders such as serious illness, drunkenness and many others have a direct effect on the use of language by an individual. These may affect the person's ability to comprehend language and produce speech. Furthermore, the person may consequently fail to read and write.

Age

The age pattern is a typical sociolinguistic pattern based on the age of a speaker. It describes type of age-graded linguistic variation and describes change in speech behaviour of individual speakers as they get older. What is true is that there is a relationship between the age of a speaker and the use of a particular linguistic variety. No one for example, would fail to distinguish between a recorded speech and that of a baby, a young adult, an adolescent, or indeed a very old person.

Sex: Traditional gender roles embody the male role as agentive, where action, self-expansion, and individuality are the rule. By contrast, traditional gender roles define the female role as communal, embodying emotional expressiveness and focus on needs of others (Bakan, 1966). The work of Deborah Tannen suggests that the communication patterns of male and females often differ with males using a direct and forceful style while females use a more indirect and intimate style on interaction (Tannen, 1995). Such linguistic styles parallel the masculine principle of agency and the feminine principle of communion. Lackoff's (1975) theories on women's language suggest that females use a language style that reflects diffidence, shyness, and lower self-confidence, indicating a lack of commitment or strong opinion (Ekert&Mc Connell-Ginet, 2003).

It has further been unearthed that the two sexes adopt different strategies in cross-sex conversation. Women, it is said ask more questions, make more use of positive and encouraging noises, use a wider intonational range and more marked rhythmical stress as well as making greater use of the pronouns ***you*** and ***we***. On the contrary, men often

interrupt and even dispute what has been said. Not only that, men also tend to ignore or respond poorly to what has been said. They also introduce more new topics in an already existing conversation and make more declarations of fact or opinion.

6.3 Psychological Identity

The content of what one says, how he speaks, writes and the contexts are a clue enough to determine one's psychological condition. No one doubts therefore, that the words we write or speak are an expression of our inner thoughts and personalities. It follows that it is how an author expresses his or her thoughts that reveals character. Research has investigated how our emotional experiences get translated into language. As listeners, by paying attention to the phonetic and linguistic factors, we can easily tell if a person is guilty or innocent, intelligent or stupid. The argument is that feelings don't just get "put into words," "but that words get put into feelings" too. It is clear, therefore, that analysing patterns of word use and writing style can lead to insights that would otherwise remain hidden.

6.4 Geographical Identity

Language can also provide information about the speaker's ***geographical origin***. If you hear someone speaking Polish, you may infer that they are fromPoland. But this is an oversimplified assumption. A person speaking Tonga, therefore, is likely to be Tonga or may have grown up in Tonga land, or indeed an area which boarders with Tonga land. In other words, the language and the dialect we use reveal our ***geographical identity***.

6.5 Social Identity

Questions often arise as regards language use in relation with social classes. One would ask whether different social classes display different abilities in their use language.

When we use language, we do so as individuals with social histories. Our histories are defined in part by our membership in a range of social groups into which we are born such as gender, social class, religion and race. For example, we are born as female or male and into a distinct income level that defines us as poor, middle class or well-to-do. Likewise, we may be born as Christians, Jews, Muslims or with some other religious

affiliation, and thus take on individual identities ascribed to us by our particular religious association. Even the geographical region in which we are born provides us with a particular group membership and upon our birth we assume specific identities such as, for example, Italian, Chinese, Canadian, or South African, and so on. Within national boundaries, we are defined by membership in regional groups, and we take on identities such as, for example, northerners or southerners. In addition to the assorted group memberships we acquire by virtue of our birth, we appropriate a second layer of group memberships developed through our involvement in the various activities of the social institutions that comprise our communities, such as school, church, family and the workplace.

These institutions give shape to the kinds of groups to which we have access and to the role-relationships we can establish with others. When we approach activities associated with the family, for example, we take on roles as parents, children, siblings or cousins and through these roles fashion particular relationships with others such as mother and daughter, brother and sister, and husband and wife. Likewise, in our workplace, we assume roles as supervisors, managers, subordinates or colleagues. These roles afford us access to particular activities and to particular role-defined relationships.

As company executives, for example, we have access to and can participate in board meetings, business deals and job interviews that are closed to other company employees, and thus are able to establish role relationships that are unique to these positions. That is to say, as with the linguistic resources we use in our activities, our various **social identities** are not simply labels that we fill with our own intentions. Rather, they embody particular histories that have been developed over time by other group members enacting similar roles. In their histories of enactments, these identities become associated with particular sets of linguistic actions for realising the activities, and with attitudes and beliefs about them.

One of the chief forms of sociolinguistic identity stems from the way in which people are organised into hierarchically ordered social groups, or classes. Our various group memberships, along with the values, beliefs and attitudes associated with them, are significant to the development of our social identities in that they define in part the kinds of communicative activities and the particular linguistic resources for realising them to which we have access. Classes are aggregates of people with similar social or economic characteristics. It does not have to call for a sociolinguist to note that the way people talk has something to do with their social position or level of education. Everyone has developed a sense of values that make some accents seem ***posh*** and others ***low*** and why some features of ***vocabulary*** and ***grammar*** appear refined and others ***uneducated.*** There are examples of social stratification in various societies that exhibit diverse language use.

In India's Hindu society, for example, one can literary see four main divisions, and many divisions. Even if this situation today is not as it was in the past, clear divisions include: The **Brahmins** (priest) which are the highest class. Under this class, in a descending order, are the **Kshatriyas** (warriors), **Vaisyas** (farmers and merchants), and **Sudras** (servants). The lowest level of the Sudra caste, the untouchables are not allowed any contact with other castes. In all these castes, there are clear-cut distinctions in the phonology (sound patterns), and grammar.

There are also examples of speech and silence among the Kirundi of Burundi. Research has shown that in Burundi, age and sex combine with the caste to constrain the nature of linguistic interaction. Seniority, in this society whose caste divisions are clear, governs all kinds of behaviour. Older people precede younger; and men precede women. It also follows that men of high ranking must speak first, in spite of age. Only when spoken to do woman speak in the presence of outsiders. Research has also shown that upper-caste speakers seem never to raise voices, or indeed permit emotion to show. Silence by senior person in group discussion, is an indication of disapproval. It implies that all other discussants must stay silent and any further proceedings are negated.

To speak well is a sign of good breeding in men, for boys in the upper caste are given formal speech training from their tenth year. They are taught how to use social formulae,

to talk to superiors and inferiors. In addition, they are trained to make speeches for special occasions. On the other hand, however, girls in the upper class do not participate in public speaking. Even though this is the case, girls develop effective bargaining skills, which they use behind the scenes. In addition to bargaining skills, they are also trained to listen with great care so that they can accurately recount to the men of the family what has been said by visitors.

Devices of conveying relative respect and social distance are present in all languages. In many communities, for example, people have opted to use a complex system of linguistic levels so that they could show respect to each other. The linguistic levels used partly reflect a system of social classes even if the choice of forms may be influenced by other factors such as age, sex, kinship relationships, occupation, religious affiliation, or a number of possessions.

Activity 6.1

1. With examples, discuss language and physical identity in general.
2. With examples, comment on the following:
    (a) Language and physical condition
    (b) Language and age
    (c) Language and sexual identity
3. Write brief notes on:
    (a) Language and psychological identity
    (b) Language and geographical identity
4. With examples, prove that there is some relationship between language and social stratification.

Summary

This unit has discussed language and identity. The unit has brought to light the fact that language plays a significant role in the positioning of individuals in relation to others in the social context. It has been learnt here that specific linguistic forms are cited to convey information about individual speakers' background, their gender, age, physical and

psychological state; are they emotionally affected, are they Chinese, American, and if Zambian, are they Tonga, Lozi, Ngoni or Bemba?

APART B: LINGUISTICS

This second part of the course E 1200 deals with issues dealing with linguistic elements, beginning with the smallest segments (the phone) to larger ones (the syntactic strings – the sentence) and beyond these constituents. This part just offers the introduction of each of these before we can tackle the content in a fairly deeper manner.

UNIT 7: INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS

Learning Objectives

As you work through the unit, you should be able to:

- draw an analogy of linguistics and science;
- explain the scientific methods used in linguistics;
- distinguish the fundamental concepts used in linguistics; and
- synthesise the different levels of linguistics.

7.1 Defining Linguistics

Linguistics is a field of study of language. It is the scientific study of human language in general and of particular human languages. Linguistics can be defined as the scientific study of language, particularly human language. Human language is not produced by chance but that it is scientifically organised because human beings require the use of some biological organs of speech and manipulate them in accordance to the requirement of a particular sound utterance. By 'the scientific study of language' is meant its investigations by means of controlled and empirically verifiable observations and with reference to some general theory of language-structure, (Lyons, 1968). It deals with data i.e. observable facts and theories about language which can be verified empirically within a framework as may be appropriate to the data being studied.

Linguistics as a science

Why should many scholars of linguistics and we in this study claim that linguistics is a science? What is science? What qualifies linguistics as a science? Do you remember what has been given as the definition of linguistics in the introduction? Yes. In simpler terms, it is the scientific study of human natural language and of particular human languages.

7.2 The scientificness of linguistics

There are at least three major characteristics that any study that claims to be using a scientific method should have. We are going to look at the three as given by Malande (2010). The three characteristics include; explicitness, systematicity and objectivity.

By **explicitness**, Malande means 'being clear about assumptions on which a study is based'. Apart from being clear, a scientific study should be consistent. Consistency is very important because when we use certain terminology, we do not keep on changing. Consistency is attained by defining terms clearly.

Systematicity may be interpreted to mean avoiding haphazard studies, partial coverage of a topic and impressionistic commentary, avoiding a sporadic explicitness and an impenitent use of terms or procedures.

Objectivity implies mindedness in matters of analysis. It also implies mind especially where you are suspicious of any hypothesis until some experimental evidence is produced to support the point. One would require taking care to avoid their preconceptions that might selectively support a hypothesis. Objectivity also means that as far as possible, you will make use of standardised procedure. Standard procedures are those that have been agreed upon by authorities in a particular discipline.

7.3 Methods used in the scientific study of linguistics

Empiricism

It is widely accepted that modern scientific method is essentially an empirical method .The method is called empirical if it uses inductive reasoning (the inference of a general law from particular instances. It is also proof-seeking based). It operates publicly verifiable data obtained by means of observation or experiment. Empiricism as a theory of knowledge holds that all knowledge results from experience. Empiricism in one form or the other, is the only interpretation of the scientific method which reliable. Linguistics relies on scientific procedures in its studies, that is, it uses scientific methods.

Rationalism

Rationalism stresses the role played by the mind in acquiring knowledge and also emphasizes man s' ability to use priori principles (first things first).

Proponents: Descartes (1598-1650) the founder of rationalist school, held a view that man is naturally capable of constructing theories in science by using only his reason without appealing to experience. The term rationalism is used to denote a critical attitude which consist in questioning not only other people s' beliefs, theories, etc., but also one's own (Popper).

Empiricism and Rationalism

Although the empirical method is thought to be inductive, it is widely believed that it is the only viable method in sciences. It is also viewed as a strategy to make not only scientific discoveries but also discoveries of techniques of establishment of skills. However, history shows that important scientific discoveries were made through non-empirical methods. Many authors have argued that researchers always have some theoretical views based on beliefs, impressions, and the like, prior to collection of data.

From the above discussion, we can conclude that scientific method is essentially, but not exclusively, empirical and this holds in all sciences. All sciences, it should be noted, started with philosophical speculations or myths.

7.4 Fundamental concepts and distinctions in linguistics

Morden linguistics is based on some fundamental concepts which were expounded by linguists in the beginning of the twentieth century. The most influential of these were:

i. The representatives of the American School of structural anthropologists, chiefly Leonard Bloomfield; and after World War II, the work of Noam Chomsky.
ii. The European linguists, chiefly among them the Swiss linguists Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). Saussure is viewed as the father of modern linguistics, (Malande, 2010). The main ideas regarding language propounded by these linguists take the form of certain distinctions or dichotomies. Some of the basic distinctions, dichotomies and concepts are discussed below:

Langue and parole versus competence and performance

a) **The Langue/Parole Distinction**

Saussure made distinction between two aspects of languages: langue and parole. Langue means language. This involves all the rules and conventions regarding the combination of sounds, formation of words and sentences, pronunciation and meaning. All these conventions constitute langue and are a product of a social agreement. That is, there is a similarity of sounds, words and meaning among the native speakers of a language. This means that they have the same images and signs in their minds.

This means that:

i. Langue is social, a set of conventions shared by all the speakers of language.
ii. Langue is abstract, because these particular conventions exist in the minds of the speakers who belong to that society that has created the language.

Parole - the actual sounds and sentences produced by an individual speaker or writer. It is concrete physical manifestation of the abstract langue that exists in the mind. Parole belongs to the individual. When those convections that exist in the mind as langue used in a concrete form in actual speech or writing, they become instances of parole.

If we hear a person speaking a language we do not know, we hear the sound and sentences, that is parole, but we cannot understand them because we do not share the conventions of langue that are behind the individual sounds and sentences. So langue is the underlying system which makes the individual performance or parole meaningfully without it, parole would never be understood and could not serve as a means of communication.

Thus parole is:

1. Individual performance of language in speech or writing.
2. Concrete and physical. It makes use of the physiological mechanism such as speech organs, in uttering words and sentences.

This is why Saussure defines parole as "the 'executive' aspect of language comprising the combination of signs in the mind of a speaker and the 'psycho-physical' mechanisms by which they are externalised", (Matthews, 1997).
It can also be said that the language system is langue while the language behaviour is parole.

b) Competence and performance

This concept has been also used by the American linguist Noam Chomsky who made a similar distinction between competence and performance.

Competence: The native speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language. It is the mastery of the system of rules.

Performance: The production of actual sentences in use in real life situations.

A speakers' knowledge of the structure of the language is the speakers' linguistic competence, and the way in which he uses it is linguistic performance. While competence is a set of principles which a speaker masters, performance is what a speaker does. Competence is free from interference due to slips of memory, lapses of attention, etc. While performance reflects many such lapses. Competence is ideal, and as it gives us a coherent picture of the language, it is competence that can be studied, whereas it is difficult to get a direct, coherent record of performance.

The understanding of competence versus performance as given by Chomsky closely resembles the langue or parole dichotomy given by Saussure

While langue is the same with every language user, competence may differ from person to person. Saussure's understanding of langue emphasises its predominantly social aspect, while Chomsky's term 'competence' is based on psychology and presumes individual differences between human beings. Chomsky's view of competence is also based on the idea of an in-built language acquisition device in human that enables a person to acquire competence, i.e. internalize the system of rules of the language, enabling him to generate an infinite number of sentences.

c) Linguistic sign / symbol distinction

Language system is made up of signs. Saussure says ‘sign’ is the central fact of language, so what is a sign and what is a symbol?

A Sign is a physical marker which carries some information. The information it gives is direct, brief and precise (meaning only this, no other).

A Symbol has more than mere indication. It contains more information and stands in place of something as a means of pointing toward it directly.

Examples: Gestures of waving hands – sign interpreted variously i.e. symbol of farewell, dismissal, disapproval etc.

Way of dressing – signals some social practise or belief.

This concept when applied to all our behaviour and to our social and culture, shows us that our entire culture is made up of signals which are of special significance or meaning in our culture.

d) Syntagmatic/ paradigmatic relationships

A paradigmatic relation is a relationshipamonglinguisticelementsthatcansubstituteforeachotherinagivencontext. It refers to a set of substitutional or oppositionalrelationships a linguisticunithaswithotherunits,such as therelationshipbetween ‘d’ in *dot*andothersoundsthatcould be substitutedfor it in thesamecontext,like‘r’, ‘n’ and‘p’ orastherelationshipof*plant*in ‘Theplanthasgrown’,toothernouns,as crop, tree or animal,thatcouldsubstituteforitinthatsentence,orof has grown to other verb phrases as*has fallen, has withered*, etc.

On the other hand a syntagmatic relation is a relationship among linguistic elements that occur sequentially in the chain of speech or writing. A syntagmatic relationship is one where signs occur in sequence or parallel and operate together to create meaning, as the

relationship between *the baby* and *is crying* or *the* and *baby* in the sentence; 'The baby is crying', (See Malande, 2010: 128).

Roland Barthes (1967) outlined the paradigmatic and syntagmatic elements of the 'garment system' in similar terms. The paradigmatic elements are the items which cannot be worn at the same time on the same part of the body (such as hats, trousers, shoes). The syntagmatic dimension is the juxtaposition of different elements at the same time in a complete ensemble from hat to shoes. In short a paradigmatic relation is a vertical relation while a syntagmatic relation is a horizontal relation. We hope this analogy has helped you to understand the two concepts very well.

Substance and form

The distinction between form (structure, system) and substance (material aspects, behaviour) was much discussed in the structuralist era of linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure). Meta-theoretically, structuralism assumed that the essence of language was structure (symbol systems) and not situated actions. Language system (form) was unquestionably seen as prior to "language use", (Matthews, 1997).

According to Saussure, thought is a shapeless mass, which is only ordered by language. Saussure says no ideas pre-exist language; language itself gives shape to ideas and makes them expressible. Signs, in this view, are both material/physical like sound and intellectual (cognitive) like ideas. This is important because it is not a thing or substance, but a form, a structure, a system. This relates to the system of language which is viewed as a whole as langue (from the French word for language), and any individual unit within that system (such as a word) as a parole. Structural linguistics is more interested in the langue than in any parole. The arbitrary nature of the sign explains why language as a system (langue) can only arise in social relations. It takes a community to set up the relations between any particular sound image and any particular concept (to form specific parole). Saussure offered a two-part model of the sign. He defined a sign as being

composed of a 'signifier' - the form which the sign takes; and the 'signified' which is the concept it represents, (Malande 2010: 129).

From another point of view the structure of the logical proposition has been considered as form opposed to its content, the concepts, as matter or substance. What are we saying here? Substance is the element or raw material of language such as phonemes, morphemes, or graphemes whereas form is the associative order in which these are brought together in a meaningful way. What therefore do you think will be our sole concern in the study of language? Linguists emphasise that form is the concern of linguistic study, not substance. It is form that makes it possible to study substance.

A symbol is a sign whose relation to their object is wholly conventional, e.g. the majority of words in any language.

e) Diachronic and synchronic

Diachronic linguistics is the study of the historical development of particular languages from one stage to another. A diachronic account is the study of the changes in language over time. Diachronic analysis can be the general evolution of all languages or the evolution of a particular language or dialect. Synchronic linguistics is the study of the linguistic elements and usage of a language at a particular moment. A synchronic description of a language is therefore an account of its structure either at present or at some specific moment in the past, considered in abstraction from its history. (Matthews, 1997).

The diachronic approach is historical and the synchronic approach deals more with the system/structure of language. If you were doing a diachronic analysis of Bantu languages, for instance, you would want a length of time to make a historical analysis; for instance, from 10-100 years or more. If you were to do a synchronic analysis, you might pick one year or even less time. You should think of a synchronic analysis as a single frame in a roll of a film and the diachronic analysis would be the study of all the frames.

Synchronic linguistics studies the aspects and properties of a particular language at a particular stage of its development.

Activity 7.1

1. What do you understand by the term 'linguistics'?

2. Justify that language is a science.

3. Discuss the methods used in the scientific study of language.

7.5Basic principles of linguistic analysis

There are three basic principles that qualify linguistics as a science:

- That a given language constitutes a set of behaviour patterns common to members of a given community. Such a set of behaviour patterns can be systematically, objectively, verifiable and replicably analysed and described like anybody of facts. The patterns can be observed, recorded, classified, and compared and some general laws regarding their behaviour can be formulated as is done in the natural sciences.
- That each language or dialect has its own unique system of behaviour patterns. This is to say that different languages solve problems of expression and communication differently. This implies the impossibility of the existence of a 'Universal Grammar'. It also implies that the grammar of each language must be based on that particular language and should not be referenced to another language. The unique system of behaviour patterns for any given language can be studied systematically, objectively and verifiably and compared with the system of behaviour patterns of language.
- That the analysis and description of a given language must conform to the requirements laid down for any satisfactory scientific theory. These requirements are simplicity, consistency, completeness, and usefulness for predicting the behaviour not brought under immediate observation when the theory was formulated.

7.6 Branches of linguistics

General linguistics: Refers to the study of basic concepts, theories and methods used in language study.

Descriptive linguistics: Is concerned with the observations and analysis of a particular language aspects and properties. Descriptive linguistics places context above all.

Historical linguistics: Refers to the study of the historical development of a given language. It is concerned with both the description and explanation of language change. It examines the nature and causes of language change and surveys in some detail the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic change.

Comparatives linguistics: This is the study of language in order to show the similarities between two or more languages in order to bring about correct perceptions of their vocabulary.

Sociolinguistics: Is the study of language as used in social contexts. It examines the ways in which language is used by a speech community.

Psycholinguistics: Is the study of language in relation to the mind. It focuses mainly on how language is learnt, stored in the brain and processed in communication. The relationship between language and the mind has two aspects; acquisition and performance.

Contrastive linguistics: This branch is concerned with the similarities and differences between two or more languages or dialects with the aim of finding principles which can be applied to practical problems such as sounds, phonemes and meanings of the vocabulary of such languages. Matthews (1997: 74) says it is "Any investigation in which the structures of two languages are compared."

Dialectology: the study of dialects with the aim of showing how they differ and how they are geographically and socially distributed.

Dialinguistics: the study of how different languages spoken in a community are related with a view to determine bilingualism and multilingualism among the speakers of that community.

Prescriptive linguistics: this branch of linguistics is concerned with rules of correct usage of linguistic items. Its aim is to prescribe what is judged to be correct, eg. a rule in English by which it is incorrect to say, 'It is him that will suffer'; where the accusative is used instead of the normative as in 'It is he that will suffer', (ibid).

7.7Levels of Linguistic Analysis

There are six levels of linguistic analysis.

a. Phonetics: This is the study of speech sounds and how these sounds are made and perceived. Phonetics looks at speech sounds in general, that is, without reference to a language. Phonetics has three sub-branches:

- *Articulatory phonetics* which is the study of the physiological features of sound productions (the organs of speech and the places of articulation of these sounds),
- *Acoustic Phonetics* which is the study of how sound waves are transmitted from the articulators to the human ear.
- *Auditory Phonetics*: The study of how the human ear perceives sound.

b. Phonology: Phonology refers to the way languages are patterned and organised in terms of sounds and prosodic features. It is the study of speech sounds of a particular language. For instance, the last sound in the English word 'bags' is /z/ and not /s/.

c. Morphology: Is the study of the internal structure of words by dividing them into meaningful segments. Such meaningful segments are called morphemes. These are the smallest meaningful units in language. For instance, the word 'boys' has two morphemes; 'boy- and '-s'.

d. Syntax: This level deals with word order or internal structure of sentences. Gleason (1966:128) defines syntax as, "The principles of arrangement of the construction formed by the process of derivation and inflection (words) into larger construction of various kinds."

e. Semantics: This deals with meaning, with changes in meaning; and with notions and principles which govern the relationship between sentences and words with their meanings. It deals with literal meanings of words and sentences.

f. Pragmatics: This deals with meaning in context. It is considered as a branch of semantics concerned with the meanings that sentences have in particular contexts in which they are uttered. The utterance, "There is a car coming" may have various meanings depending on the contexts at which it is uttered. Said to a pedestrian about to cross the road would be a warning not to. Can you think of two other contexts and the meaning thereof. It is somewhat the study of implicatures as opposed to literal meanings dealt in semantics.

We will discuss some of these levels later in this course.

Activity 7.2

1. *Explain the concerns of each of the branches of linguistics discussed above.*
2. *Explore the levels of descriptive linguistics.*

Summary

In this unit, you have been introduced to linguistics by looking at the definition of the term and the provision of the analogy with science.You have been equipped with the methods used in the scientific study of language, including the principles of linguistic analysis. The branches and levels of descriptive or linguistics analysis have been discussed as well.

PART C: SOME BASIC CONCEPTS IN LINGUISTICS

You have just gone through a brief introduction of linguistics. What you are now to get to understand is the basic concepts used in linguistics. The basic levels of linguistic analysis will be discussed focusing on the basic concepts as used at each level. This is a basic foundation for the study of the programme in language study.

UNIT 8: INTRODUCING PHONETICS

8.0 Introduction

In your own words, how would you define phonetics? How does phonetics differ from phonetics? In this unit, we are going to discuss the basic concepts used in phonetics. Apart from the basic concepts used in phonetics, we will also introduce you to a number of aspects involved in phonetics.

Learning Outcomes

As you work through this unit, you should be able to:

- show understanding of the basic concepts used in phonetics,
- classify phonemes by manner and place of articulation,
- distinguish between an ingression and egression airstream,
- explain the functions of all speech organs.

8.1 Defining phonetics

Phonetics is a branch of linguistics that comprises the study of the sounds of human speech. It is concerned with the physical properties of speech sounds (phones); their physiological production, acoustic properties, auditory perception, and neurophysiological status. The field of phonetics is a multi-layered subject of linguistics that focuses on speech. In the case of oral languages there are three basic areas of study:

- Articulatory phonetics: the study of the production of speech sounds by the articulatory and vocal tract by the speaker. It looks at the position, shape, and movement of articulators or speech organs, such as the lips, tongue, and vocal folds.
- Acoustic phonetics: the study of the physical transmission of speech sounds from the speaker to the listener. The spectro-temporal properties of the sound waves produced by speech, such as their frequency, amplitude, and harmonic structure.

- Auditory phonetics: the study of the reception and perception of speech sounds by the listener. It is the perception, categorization, and recognition of speech sounds and the role of the auditory system and the brain in the same.

8.2 Articulatory Phonetics (The production of sound)

Humans produce meaningful sounds to communicate with each other. This is done through various organs of the body called **articulatory organs** or organs **of speech.** Their main purpose as the name suggests is to produce speech or sound. Where are these organs of speech located?

Let us carefully examine figure 8.1.

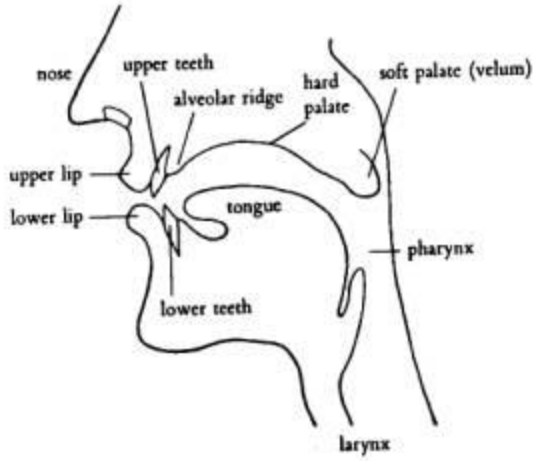

Figure 8.1

A careful study of the diagram above gives us indications about the location of these organs of speech. Let us now look at each of the organs of speech and their specific functions. There are other parts of the mouth that are important in speech production such as the teeth and the palate. They do not move but they form the place or the point of articulation. In the production of sound, the active articulators move towards the passive articulators.

8.1.2 The Organs of Speech

Lungs

- Control volume, pitch
- We use more air from the lungs when we shout

Voice box (known as larynx or Adam's apple) contains the vocal cords - two cords of skin which vibrate and add voice to sounds.

- Controls pitch and voice

A man's voice box is bigger than that of a boy or woman. This is why his voice is deeper. A whisper is speech that is not affected at all by the voice box, or affected only by a kind of friction.

In some languages and in some dialects of English, there is a brief closure of the voice box known as glottal stop, e.g. the pronunciation of 'wa'er' for 'water'

Nose

- Affects nasality. The consonants /n/, /m/, /ŋ/ and /ɲ/ are made through the nose

Mouth composed of different parts including the lips and tongue whose functions are explained below.

Tongue

- Used to create differences between vowels
- Produces many stop consonants

Lips

- Used to shape certain 'round' vowels such as /o/ and /u/
- Used to produce labial consonants: /b/, /m/, /p/, /f/, /v/

8.3. Phonetic airstream mechanisms

In phonetics, the airstream mechanism is the method by which airflow is created in the vocal tract. Along with phonation and articulation, it is one of the three main components of speech production. Around the world, there could be only four profound mechanisms. Pay attention as you talk; in which direction do you think the air you use in the respiration move? The two main airstreams are ingression (inward movement) and egression (outward movement). Let us now look at the pulmonic egrssive, glotalic egressive, glottalic ingressive and veralic ingressive airstreams.

The pulmonic airstream

Any of the three initiators − diaphragm, glottis or tongue − may act by either increasing or decreasing the pressure generating the airstream. These changes in pressure often correspond to outward and inward airflow, and are therefore termed egressive and ingressive.

Pulmonic egressive, where the air is pushed out of the lungs by the ribs and diaphragm. Most sounds in the world's languages are produced by manipulating air coming into the vocal tract as it is being exhaled by the lungs, a method referred to as the pulmonic egressive airstream mechanism. Sounds made by manipulating air as it is exhaled from the lungs are called pulmonic egressive sounds.

Glottalic egressive, where the air column is compressed as the glottis moves upward. Glottalic egressives are called ejectives. The glottis must be fully closed to form glottalic egressives, or the air column would flow backwards over it; it is therefore impossible to pronounce voiced ejectives. Ejective allophones of voiceless stops occur in many varieties of English at the ends of intonation units.

Glottalic ingressive, where the air column is rarefied as the glottis moves downward. Such consonants are called implosives. Despite the name, the airstream may not actually flow inward: While the glottis moves downward, pulmonic air passes outward through it, but the reduction in pressure makes an audible difference to the sound. For ingressive glottalic initiation, the sequence of actions performed in glottalic pressure initiation is reversed: one raises the glottis (as if to sing a high note), closes it, and then lowers it to create pressure in the upper trachea and oral cavity. Glottalic ingressives are called implosives, although they may involve zero airflow rather than actual inflow.

Velaric ingressive (Lingual ingressive), where the air in the mouth is rarefied by a downward movement of the tongue. These are the click consonants. Clicks are regular sounds in ordinary words in few of the world's languages, (all in Africa- South Africa, Botswana and Tanzania).

8.4 The classification of sounds

On the whole, we can easily distinguish two major categories of sounds; consonants and vowels, and functionally the semi-vowels are classified as consonants.

8.4.1 Consonants

There are three aspects that we will use here to classify consonant sounds; voice place of articulation and manner of articulation.

A: Voice

In classifying speech sounds, we are firstly going to categorise all sounds to whether they are voiced or voiceless. Voiced sounds are those that are produced with vibration in the vocal cords. Voiceless sounds are produced while the vocal cords are far apart and air passes through freely, hence no vibration. Both English and Zambian languages have sounds that are produced with or without voicing. Look at the following in Chinyanja:

[ʃ] as in **sh**oka 'burn', is voiceless while [g] as in **g**ona 'sleep'is voiced.

B: Place of articulation

Place of articulation refers to the area where the vocal tract is blocked or narrowed during the production of sound. The active articulator normally moves towards the passive articulator. Only consonant sounds are produced with obstruction. The following are the places of articulation for consonants:

- bilabial: the two lips are involved in blocking or narrowing the airstream passage;
- labial-dental: the lower lip comes into contact with the upper teeth;
- dental: the tongue tip and blade come into contact with the upper teeth;
- alveolar: the blade or tip and blade of the tongue touches the or is in proximity of the alveolar ridge of the upper teeth;
- retroflex: the tip of the tongue is curled back so as to touch the hard palate behind the alveolar.

- palato-alveolar: the blade of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge while the front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate;
- palatal: the front of the tongue touches or is in close proximity with the hard palate.
- velar: the back of the tongue touches or is in close proximity with the velum;
- uvular: the passage of the air-stream is blocked or narrowed by the uvula and the back of the tongue;
- glottal: an obstruction of the vocal tract is made by the glottis.

C. Manner of articulation

Manner of articulation as the term stipulates refers to the way the sounds are made (ie, how the airstream is constricted and (or) released. Basically, the manner of articulation may involve:

- narrowing of the vocal tract, causing friction;
- complete closure;
- partial closure;
- intermittent closure.

Activity 8.1

1. *Discuss the three branches of phonetics.*
2. *Which of the three sub-branches of phonetics would be the most appropriate studied by the you on this programme? Justify.*
3. *Justify the three level classification of consonant sounds.*
4. *Look at the places of articulation discussed above. Can you provide examples for each of them.*

5. *Distinguish between an ingressive and egressive airstream.*

Let us now look at the manners of articulation. As you work through this subsection, you should try to provide as many examples as may be present in the language of your choice. (If you are using a Zambian language, it should be one of the zonal approved languages. What do you understand about 'manner of articulation'?

Plosives: there is complete closure at some point in the oral cavity, air builds up behind the closure and then air is suddenly released with a pop or burst called plosion. Such sounds are also called stops. Can you state them? Try to sound them as well. Yes, /p, b, t, d, k, g /. Where are each of these produced? Which ones have vibration during their production?

Fricatives: there is partial closure in the air passage, resulting in a friction (a hissing sound or noise like that of the wind). These are also called spirants or sibilants. Sibilants are a type of fricative where the airflow is guided by a groove in the tongue toward the teeth, creating a high-pitched and very distinctive sound. Sibilants include /s/ and /z/.

Affricates: (a combination of a plosive and fricative). These begin with complete closure and air pressure building behind the closure. Air is then released slowly (with delayed release), moving to a place where friction is heard. There are only two affricates in English; /ʧ/ and /ʤ/. Do Zambian languages have affricates? How many are they in your mother tongue?

Nasals: there is complete closure at some point in the oral cavity. The velum is lowered since this is the position for breathing. Then air is released through the nose. English has three nasals; bilabial /m/, alveolar /n/ and velar /ŋ/. Zambian languages have an additional palatal nasal /ɲ/ as in nyama 'meat', inyimbo 'song', munyina 'brethren/brother' in Bemba and Tonga. All nasals are voiced (They are produced with vibration in the vocal cords).

Laterals: there is blockage at the centre in the front of the mouth, letting to air pass in the sides. In English, there are two types of lateral; a clear 'l' and a dark 'ɫ'. In the word 'little', the first 'l' is clear where as the second one is dark. We hope you understand the terms 'dark' and 'clear' in this context.

Approximants: the tongue just approaches the roof of the mouth and withdraws in a glide. English has three of these; a palatal /j/ as in yes, a bilabial (although some authors call it a labio-velar) /w/ and an alveolar /r/. Only Nyanja among the Zambian Languages claims to have an alveolar approximant in certain environments. What is your view on this?

8.4.2 Vowels

It is very easy to identify vowels and consonants but it had been difficult to define what these are. How have you defined a vowel? Well, phonetically, a vowel is a sound produced without any obstruction. There is free air flow from the lungs through the oral cavity.These are***a e i o u.*** Without vowels no word can be made. The criterion above however, would include approximants [j] and [w]. Therefore, we can consider the other. Phonologically, vowels are sounds that form the nucleus of the syllable, that is, the part of a syllable that cannot be left out. For instance, /a:/ in cart is cardinal. We can leave out /k/ and will have art or leave out /t/ and will have car but cannot leave out /a:/ to have ct [kt]. However, we should be aware of syllabic consonants such as /r, l, n/, eg. /kDt.n/ or /bɔt.l/. Zambian languages also have syllabic consonants and it is always the nasals /m/ and /n/ as in m.te.ngo 'tree', m.ka.zi 'woman' in Nyanja or n.ga 'what if' in Bemba.

Below is a list of the 12 English 'Pure vowels' and 8 'Diphthongs' (sounds that consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another).

PURE VOWELS		**DIPHTHONGS**		**TRIPTHONGS**	
I	Hit	Ai	Fight	iə	Air
i:	heat	aʊ or au	Now	əʊə	lower
Æ	Cat	Ei	make	aiə	Fire
A	again	əʊ	Note	aʊə	Hour
ɒ	Pot	ɔɪ or oi	Boy	ɔɪə	Loyal
ɔ:	port	ɪə	Here		
u or ʊ	Put	Uə	Pure		

u:	food	Eə	There		
ʌ	Cut				
ɜ:	bird				
Ə	ago				

Table 8.2 Pure vowels and Diphthongs (Sesnan 1997: 38) and (Roach 1997: 23)

We can plot the 12 pure English on the quadratic diagram representing the tongue in your mouth. The sharp edge is the tip that can protrude if you push your tongue out of your mouth.

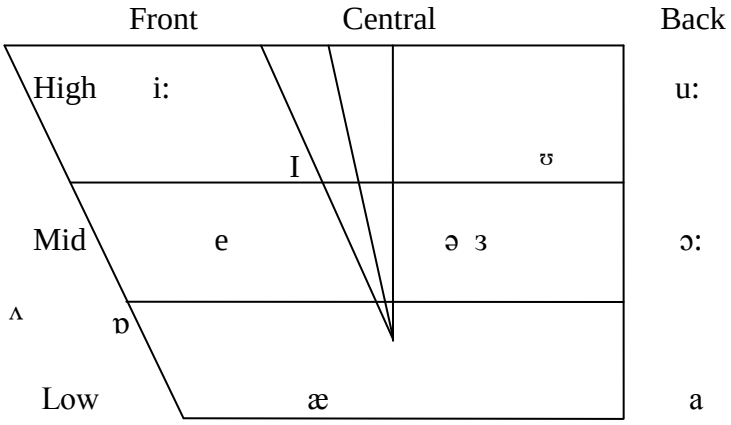

Fig. 8.3 English Monophthongs

You can realise that vowels can further be classified on:

1. the position of the tongue; whether high, mid or low,
2. the movement of tongue in front at the centre or at the back the openness or closeness of the mouth, and
3. the lip shape (spread, rounded or neutral).

In most Zambian languages there are also short and long vowels. Look at the examples below:

Short vowel **Long vowel**

Bemba: p**e**pa ‘pray’ p**ee**pa ‘smoke’

Tonga: mali ‘money’ maali ‘poligamy’

Lozi: b**i**na ‘dance’ b**ii**na ‘big men’

Try listing short and long vowels in the other approved Zambian languages and compare them with English. What are your observations? Luvale, however, has no double vowels. From the comparison, you might have noticed that both English and Zambian languages use length for distinguishing the meanings of one word from another.

Activity 8.2

1. *Try practising the activity below. Use a mirror or ask a colleague to help you with the sounds.*
2. *Use the chart below to record where the **sounds** of the letters of the English alphabet are produced.*
3. *Tick the appropriate box where the point of articulation originates.*
4. *Compare the sounds of the English alphabet with the Zambian languages sounds. What differences do you notice? (Make use of the alphabet for the seven Zambian languages as presented in the 1977 Zambian Languages Orthography)*

Point of Articulation	*a*	*b*	*c*	*d*	*e*	*f*	*g*	*h*	*i*	*j*	*k*	*l*	*m*	*n*	*o*	*p*	*q*	*r*	*s*	*t*	*u*	*v*	*w*	*x*	*y*	*z*
Two lips																										
Teeth ridge																										
Hard palate																										
Soft palate																										
Nasal cavity																										
Glottis																										

1. *Explain the function of the following in phonology:*

i. *nasal cavity*
ii. *teeth ridge (alveolum)*
iii. *hard palate*
iv. *oral cavity (mouth)*
v. *soft palate (velum)*
vi. *lips*
vii. *teeth*
viii. *the tongue*
ix. *vocal cords*
x. *glottis*

Summary

The foregoing unit has discussed the aspects of phonetics. It has indicated the areas of concerns as articulatory, acoustic and auditory. It has also brought to your attention, the airstreams possible in the world's natural languages; the main ones being the pulmonic egressive, glottalicegressive, glottalic ingressive and veralic ingressive. It has further classified sounds as comprising consonants and vowels. While consonant sounds can either be voiced or unvoiced, all vowels are voiced.

UNIT 9:INTRODUCING PHONOLOGY

9.0 Introduction

We fairly introduced you to the levels of linguistic analysis. Phonology is the second, after phonetics. As you can see the similarity of the root grapheme 'phon-', there is a direct link between phonology and phonetics which we have already discussed above.

LearningOutcomes

As you work through the unit, you should:

- establish the dichotomy between phonetics and phonology,
- distinguish 'phone', phoneme and allophone,
- establish minimal pairs,
- Show understanding of distinctive features of phonemes.

9.1 Phonetics / Phonology dichotomy

If we do not set to make a clear distinction between phonetics and phonology from the onset, it may pose a problem as we advance in our study of speech sounds. Both levels deal with the study of speech sounds. Phonetics however is about the physical aspect of sounds.It studies the production and the perception of sounds, called phones. Phonetic transcriptions are done using the square brackets, [ ].

Phonology is about the abstract aspect of sounds and it studies the phonemes of a language. Phonology is about establishing what the phonemes are in a given language, i.e. those sounds that can bring a difference in meaning between two words. Itis concerned with the abstract, grammatical characterization of systems of sounds or signs. Phonology in a sense, begins where phonetics leaves off. Phonemic transcriptions adopt the slash, / /.

9.2 Central elements in Phonology

9.1.2 Phone, phoneme and allophone

A phone is any sound segment. A phoneme is a phonic segment with a meaning value. A phoneme is a distinctive; that is, it creates meaningful differences in words. A phoneme is a sound or a group of different sounds perceived to have the same function by speakers of the language or dialect in question. An example is the English phoneme /k/, which occurs in words such as cat, kit, scatter, skirt. One way to determine whether a speech sound is distinctive is to examine minimal pairs, (See 9.1.3 below). An allophone is a predictable variation of pronunciation of a phoneme. For instance, in English, /p/ has two variations; an aspirated and a non-aspirated. It is aspirated when it occurs initially in a syllable and unaspirated elsewhere. You will realise that the aspirated and the unaspirated /p/ would not make minimal pairs – there is no way to two separate words.

9.1.3 Minimal pairs

What do you understand by the term, 'minimal pair'? Ok. When two words, phrases etc, are identical in form except for a contrast in only one sound or word (Malande, 2010). In phonology, **minimal pairs** are **pairs** of words or phrases in a particular language that differ in only one phonological element, such as a phoneme, toneme or chroneme, and have distinct meanings. They are used to demonstrate that two phones are two separate phonemes in the language, for example the minimal pairs:

bin - pin
had - hat
pot - pet

A**pair** of **words**, as pin and bin, or bet and bed, differing only by one sound in the same position in each **word**, especially when such a **pair** is taken as evidence for the existence of a phonemic contrast between the two sounds, a kind of contrastive distribution. **Contrastive distribution** in linguistics, as opposed to complementary **distribution** or free variation, is the relationship between two different elements, where both elements are found in the same environment with a change in meaning.

9.1.4 Scope of phonemic analysis

This looks at the whole inventory of phonemes in a particular language. You will realise that certain sounds present in English are absent in our Zambian languages and vice-versa. In a similar way, there are sounds that may be present in one Zambian language but absent in another. Can you think of such sounds in English as well as in Zambian languages? From your Phonology knowledge, you can tell that the voiceless bilabial fricative is absent in English and the approximant /r/ is absent in Zambian languages (although has it in certain environments).

9.1.5 How to identify phonemes

We have already stated in passive how to identify morphemes. Is it easy for you to do? You just need to see to whether a sound segment or phoneme is distinctive; whether you can form minimal pairs.

9.1.1 Segmental phonology/ suprasegmental phonology

Segmental phonology deals with speech sounds without considering any prosodic features (tone, stress, length) while suprasegmental phonology deals only with prosodic features. A phonological segment is any speech sound that is devoid of any prosodic feature. This is to say, any sound of a language without considering tone, stress or length. A segment is equivalent to a phoneme. The term 'suprasegment' on the other hand is equivalent to prosodic feature. This is a feature whose domain extends over more than one successive minimal element. Crystal (1985: 296) actually says that the term prosodic feature is, "a term used in phonetics and phonology to refer to a vocal effect which extends over more than one sound segment in an utterance, such as pitch, stress and juncture." Prosodic features are marked outside the symbol that indicates the segment. Apart from stress and intonation, prosodic features are marked on vowels and syllabic nasals. The rules of prosody of a language are followed to convey different meanings, stress and emotion.

9.2 Feature Phonology

By now you should have realised that each phoneme of a language is distinct because it has features that are different from any other phoneme. This is an extension of the features that have already been introduced to you in Unit 1. It will help you distinguish various phonemes.

Feature theory is a **phonological theory** that analyses sound units using features. Sounds of the language are each viewed as distinct from each other, that is, each sound, though shares some features with other sounds, possesses unique features that apply to that and only sound. Durand (1990: 37) says, "the basic units of phonology are features and not segmental units such as the phoneme." A segment therefore is a set of simultaneous distinctive features.

9.2.1 Distinctive Features

A distinctive feature is "the basic unit of phonological theory." Feature theory endeavours to formulate distinctive features that recognise smaller units than the segments in order to explain how sets of sounds are related. This is done by comparing two contrasting segments, thus the establishment of distinctive features, (Crystal, 1987: 162).Therefore, distinctive features are analysed by use of sound features on a matrix according to their categories. Such categories were analysed according to classes of sound segments.

Consonantal: This feature describes sounds that are produced with a constriction which blocks the flow of air through the vocal tract. These are said to be [+ cons].

Syllabic: The feature syllabic is constituted in all vowels and some syllabic consonants. Syllabic segments may function as the nucleus of the syllable. This feature therefore is synonymous to vocalic. All vowels, liquids and nasals are [+ syll].

Approximant: The feature 'approximant' describes sounds produced with some narrowing in the vocal tract but no adequate obstruction that can cause friction. These include vowels, glides and liquids.

Sonorant: The feature sonorant describes the type of oral constriction that occurs in the vocal tract in the due course of sound production. Sonorant sounds are produced with a relatively free airflow and a vocal cord positioned in such a way that spontaneous voicing is possible. Sounds with this feature include vowels, liquids, glides and nasals.

Voice: Both English and Zambian languages have this feature and is the most common is voice, where sounds seem to appear in dichotomy (-vce/+vce) and thus giving an assumption that if a

voiceless sound exists in a language, there must be its voiced counterpart. In some languages however, some phonemes do not use the feature-voice to contrast from each other and thus are realised as variants of the single phonological category.

Nasal: This feature describes sounds produced by lowering the velum such that air passes through the nasal tract. The main nasal sounds present among Zambian languages are [m, n, ɲ, ŋ]. Other segments bearing this feature may be a result of nasal assimilation, nasal harmony and nasalisation. In many languages, "all consonant clusters are of the form NC," (Bernd and Nurse; 2000: 126) where a consonant is preceded by a nasal.

Strident: The strident feature applies to obstruents only and refers to a type of friction that is quite prominent. Only fricatives and affricates are [+ strid].

Lateral: The feature lateral designates the shape and positioning of the tongue with respect to the oral tract. Segments with this feature are produced as the centre of the tongue rises to contact the roof of the mouth, thereby blocking air from flowing centrally through the oral cavity and forcing more lateral flow along the lowered side[or both] of the tongue.

Delayed Release: This feature describes sounds produced by closure in the vocal tract, and then the blocked air released slowly. Only affricates possess, the feature [+ delrel].

Labial: Labial place features are sound features articulated with the involvement of the lips. The major features under this category are bilabial and labial-dental sounds as well as the labial glide, [w].

Coronal: The feature coronal is a sound feature used to describe sounds produced with the tip or blade of the tongue as the tongue rises from its neutral position.

Anterior: This is a sub-category feature of coronal. It is a feature describing sounds articulated with the tip or blade of the tongue at or in front of the alveolar ridge. All labials, dentals and alveolars possess the feature [+ ant].

High: The feature 'high' is used for phonemes that are produced by raising the body of the tongue towards the roof of the mouth. Palato-alveolars, palatals, velars, palatalised and velarised consonants, and the high vowels and glides possess the feature [+ high].

Low: The feature 'low' describes sounds produced with the tongue contracted below its neutral position. Segments possessing this feature include low vowels and glottals.

Back: This feature refers to sounds that are produced with the body of the tongue retracted from its neutral position towards the pharynx.

Tense: this feature describes sound segments that are produced with a tongue body or root configuration involving greater degree of constriction, (Halle and Clements, 1983: 7). All vowels and aspirated consonants are [+ tense].

9.2.2 Specified Features

Using the features described above, the theory of distinctiveness can assign unique features to every existing sound segment of a language. Under feature phonology, generated features are presented in a feature matrix. Each language therefore can have its own matrix as a grid of cells that are indicated with pluses and minuses. The analysis of each segment is dependent on any of the necessary features stated above (some features are redundant in the description of specified phonemes). For any feature that is redundant, there would be no need for it to be specified.

Activity 9.1

1. *Complete the table below by filling in – (minus for absence of the specified feature) or + (for presence of the feature) in the cells.*

	a	*B*	*C*	*d*	*f*	*g*	*l*	*m*	*n*	*P*	*s*	*w*	*t*
Consonantal													
Vocalic													
Lateral													
Nasal													
Voice													
Labial													

Tense													
Back													
Low													

9.3 Phonological rules

A phonological rule is a formal way of expressing a systematic phonological or morphophonological process or diachronic sound change in language. Phonological rules are commonly used in generative phonology as a notation to capture sound-related operations and computations the human brain performs when producing or comprehending spoken language. They may use phonetic notation or distinctive features or both.

Phonological rules can be grouped into five categories: deletion, insertion, metathesis, coalescence andfeature-changing rules

Deletion rules

This is when a sound, such as a stressless syllable or a weak consonant, is not pronounced. Deletion rules drop an element; for example, most American English speakers do not pronounce the [d] in ‘handbag’. Similary, when pronouncing the word ‘police’, the word often sounds like /pli:s/. This unstressed vowel deletion is fairly common in fast speech and can be confusing to non-native listeners in English as Second Language contexts.

Insertion

When an extra sound is added between two others. When we pronounce the word ‘hamster’ at a regular speed, most of us will say and hear ‘hampster’ with a ‘p’ inserted between ‘m’and ‘s’. This can be confusing when teaching spelling, especially to non-native speakers who do not have a history of reading and hearing English words and their spellings. Insertion is common in our local languages in borrowed words where the source language and the receiving language have different combinations of consonants or the receiving language does not permit a coda in the syllables (only have open syllables), for example;

Bemba: foloko from English ‘folk’.

A sound element can be inserted anywhere. Depending on the position, insertion can be termed prosthesis if it is word-initially; epenthesis when the insertion is word-medially or paragoge when the insertion is word-finally.

Coalescence rules

Coalescence is the combination or fusion of two or more segments forming one. In many of our Zambian languages, different vowels running together will fuse to form a different vowel. In some cases, the new element may be doubled. Coalescence can occur inside a word or at word boundary.

Tonga:	ma- + -iso	=>	meso
Bemba:	icisotiicakashika	=>	icisoteecakashika

Feature-changing rules

Most phonological rules are feature changing rules. When a sound changes one of its features to be more similar to an adjacent sound, such a rule is called **assimilation.** This is the kind of rule that occurs in the English plural rule described in detail later in 10.3.3; the -s becomes voiced or voiceless depending on whether or not the preceding consonant is voiced. When a sound changes one of its features to become less similar to an adjacent sound, usually to make the two sounds more distinguishable, the rule is termed **dissimilation**. This type of rule is often seen among people speaking a language that is not their native language, where the sound contrasts may be difficult. Most diachronic phonological rules are of dissimilation. For instance, the Proto-Bantu root *-*doot*- changes to -*loot*- ‘dream’ in most present Bantu languages.

Aspiration rule is part of feature changing rule. Aspiration occurs on all voiceless stops occurring as the first sound in a stressed syllable. Although aspirated stops and un aspirated stops are physically different, we consider both to be the same sound. For English, aspiration is not employed to create a meaning difference. Therefore, there is a phonological rule that says that a voiceless stop such as /p/ is aspirated when it occurs at the beginning of a word (as in pin), but when it occurs after a voiceless alveolar fricative (i.e., after /s/), it is un aspirated (e.g., in spin).

Try to sound the following and identify the differences:

cute	acute
girl	again
Nyanja: Phiri ‘name of person’	kumapili ‘at the mountains’
nthano ‘story’	atate ‘father’
phunziro ‘lesson’	aphunzira ‘they are learning’

Examine the following Nyanja words as well: matanthauzo, amathandiza, tinthano, aphunzira. Does Nyanja agree with the aspiration rule? Is it possible to formulate a rule for aspiration in Nyanja?

Metathesis

Metathesis (pronounced as /mɨˈtæθɪsɪs/) from Greek means, “I put in a different order”. In Latin, it is the rearranging of sounds or syllables in a word or of words in a sentence. Most commonly, it refers to the reshuffle of two or more adjacent sounds. For instance, the pronunciation /ˈæks/ for ‘ask’. Here, there is a reshuffle of elements /s/ with /k/.

Can you also examine the Bemba word *fosholo* from English shovel? What have been reshuffled? What other phonological rule is involved?

In general, metathesis which also known as permutation, takes a form: AB => BA.

You will deal with more rules in the future courses.

9.4 Syllable structure

A syllable is a unit of pronunciation. It consists of three parts; an onset, nucleus and coda. Most people have an intuitive number of syllables, that is, they can tell how many syllables there are in a word in their native language. You would not find a problem in determining how many syllables there are in any word in your mother language. Discuss this with your colleague and see how easy it is.

Because many words in English have alternate pronunciations, differing pronunciations will sometimes lead to varying numbers of syllables. For instance the word ‘smile’ may be pronounced with one syllable /smail/ or two syllables /smai.yəl/. Syllable boundaries can also vary. Try to determine the syllable boundaries for the words; ketchup and extra.

9.4.1Approaches to the concept of syllable

Let us look at more ways of defining and determining a syllable:

a) The Prominence Theory

The prominence theory, instantiated in the work of Pike (1943), argues that in a string of sounds, some are intrinsically more ‘sonorous’ than others, and that each peak of sonority corresponds to the centre of a syllable. Peaks are best illustrated by more sonorous sounds like vowels, whereas less sonorous sounds such as stops mark the valleys of prominence. In a more recent formulation of the theory Ladefoged (1982) defines sonority as the loudness of a sound relative to that of other sounds with the same length, stress and pitch.

This approach, in terms of peaks and valleys of sonority, gives a useful general guideline, but it does not always indicate clearly where the boundary between adjacent syllables falls especially in languages such as English.

b) The Pulse Theory

As a phonetic unit, the syllable was first defined by the psychologist R. H. Stetson in 1928. In his **motor** or **pulse theory** of syllable production he argued that each syllable corresponds to an increase in air-pressure; air being released from the lungs as a series of chest pulses. This can often be readily felt and measured, particularly in emphatic speech. But subsequent experimental work has shown that there is no simple correlation between pulses and intuitive syllables. The problem is especially obvious in cases like ‘going’, which is two syllables, but is usually uttered in a single muscular effort. However, this theory stands to be better than the prominence theory in that chest pulses can be recorded by machines.

c) The Linguistic Approach

Some other useful proposals regarding the phonetics of syllables and related units were made by Catford (1977a). Catford suggests that speech is produced in measured bursts of initiator power, or feet, which are the basic rhythmic units of a language. In English, for example, each initiator-burst corresponds to a stressed syllable, and the intervals between stressed syllables are roughly equal. So English is said to be 'stress-timed', as opposed, for instance, to French, where there seems to be one burst per syllable regardless of accent. Thus French and Spanishare 'syllable-timed', (http://www.ciil-ebooks.net/html/mp/ch2.htm; downloaded on 28.06.17).

Now, are you able to determine to which of the two expressed categories Zambian languages belong? The linguistic approach is the more efficient and easier approach to use in determining the syllables of any given word in any language. An important fact about Zambian languages syllables is that they are open. This means that they end in a vowel.

9.4.2 Phonotactics

Phonotactics is the study of the ways in which phonemes are allowed to combine in a particular language. (A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound capable of conveying a distinct meaning.) It is the relations of sequence, among others, in which phonemes or other phonological units stand. English has a series of constraints that specify the permissible sequences of consonants in the onset and coda. For instance, in English, we can have a sequence of [spr] as in sprout, spring and not [sfl]. Further, 'sprint' is a monosyllabic (consisting of a single syllable) word with a complex onset and a complex coda → CCCVCC, with each of the complex sequences of consonants permissible in the language,(Matthews, 1997). Phonotactics has indicated that /p/ can run with /s/ in all positions rather than initial.

Activity 9.2

1. With examples from English and (or) any Zambian language of your choice, explain the following:

i. suprasegment

ii. distinctive feature

iii. minimal pairs

iv. phonotactics

2. *Justify that the linguistic approach is the most efficient in the identification of a syllable.*
3. *Explain how the prominence and pulse theories are used in determining syllable.*
4. *Distinguish between phonetics and phonemics.*
5. *Illustrate the difference between an open syllable and a closed syllable.*

Summary

This unit has discussed aspects relating to phonology. We have seen that phonology has a close link to phonetics. The phonemics of a given language feeds to the phonological aspects of the language. While phonetics deals with the articulatory, auditory and acoustic characteristics of sounds, phonology deals with how these sounds and prosodic features are used in natural languages. You have also seen that in a language, phonemes are distinguished through minimal pairs.

Further, you have been given more exposure to the phonological features that are essential in distinguishing one phoneme from another. These are used for specification on a matrix. A fully specified matrix would require all features to be indicated (whether '+' or '-') whereas an underspecified matrix focuses has only the features that are distinctive (observing the principle of economy).We have also discussed how to determine syllable structures and boundaries.

UNIT 10: INTRODUCING MORPHOLOGY

10.0 Introduction

Do you still remember that morphology is the third level of linguistic analysis, after phonetics and phonology? How did we define the term? Well! There are various definitions that one can find in the literature. In this course we will capitalise on the following: Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words in a language and of the rules by which words are formed. We will, however, begin by looking at the term 'word' and its related notions.

Learning Outcomes

As you work through this unit, you should be able to:

- gain good understanding of terms and concepts used in morphology,
- explain and exemplify the constituents of any given English word,
- define and illustrate the concepts of root, stem and base,
- segment words of the target languages into their constituent parts and describe the constituents,
- distinguish between derivation of a new word and inflection of a word form; and
- comprehend the various ways of word formation.

10. 1 Word, word form, lexeme

A word is the smallest element that can be uttered in isolation with objective or practical meaning).

This contrasts deeply with a morpheme, which is the smallest unit of meaning but will not necessarily stand on its own. A word may consist of a single morpheme (for example: oh!, rock, red, quick, run, expect), or several (rocks, redness, quickly, walking, unexpected), whereas a morpheme may not be able to stand on its own as a word (in the words just mentioned, these are -s, -ness, -ly, -ing, un-, -ed). A complex word will typically include a root and one or more affixes (book-s, red-ness, walking, quick-ly, un-expect-ed), or more than one root in a compound (black-board, sand-paper). Words can be put together to build larger elements of language, such

as phrases (a red rock, put up with), clauses (I threw a rock), and sentences (She stabbed her husband in the neck to defend herself).

The term ‘word’ may refer to a spoken word or to a written word, or sometimes to the abstract concept behind either. Spoken words are made up of units of sound called phonemes, and written words are made up of symbols called graphemes, such as the letters of the alphabet.

A single word stem (for example, walk) may have a number of different forms (for example, walks, walking, and walked). However, for some purposes these are not usually considered to be different words, but rather different forms of the same word. In English as well as Zambian languages, words may be considered to be constructed from a number of morphemes.

10.2 Classifying words

Grammar classifies a language’s lexicon into several groups of words. The basic bipartite division possible for virtually every natural language is that of nouns vs. verbs.

Traditionally, words he classification into such classes is in the tradition of Dionysius Thrax, who distinguished eight categories: noun, verb, adjective, pronoun, preposition, adverb, conjunction and interjection.

Activity 10.1

1. *Can you compare word classes in English with those of a Zambian language that you know very well?*
2. *Explain why the traditional way of classifying words is not appropriate in linguistic study.*
3. *What is the difference between a word and a lexeme*?

10.3 Some basic concepts used in morphology

It is very cardinal that you be reminded of the concepts used in morphology for you will need this knowledge to explore the other units in the course. In this unit, you will be exposed to various ways by which the term 'morphology' has been defined. Morphological concepts and the processes of allomorphy, inflection and derivation have been discussed.

There are three central units of analysis in morphology; the morpheme, morph and allomorph.

10.3.1The morpheme and types of morphemes

A morpheme is an abstract linguistic element in language. Although abstract, it is the smallest meaningful unit of grammatical analysis (the minimal unit that has meaning and serves a grammatical function in a language).

There are several different morphemes in English language. Basically these are:

Free morpheme: morphemes that can meaningfully stand alone. Free morphemes can either be **lexical** eg. 'boy', 'walk', 'good', 'slowly' (from a class of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) or **functional** eg. 'and', 'it', 'in', 'Ah!' (from a class of conjunctions, pronouns, prepositions and interjections). Most roots in English are free morphemes (but 'adept' and 'inept' are bound roots).

Bound morpheme: Bound morphemes cannot be uttered alone to give meaning. They have to be attached to free morphemes or other bound morphemes, eg. 'un-', '-ful-' and '-ness', in the word 'unfaithfulness','-s' in 'plays', 're-' in 'replay', '-ly' in 'cheaply', '-er' in 'cheaper', 'un-' in unable '-en' in 'brighten'. All of these morphemes in single inverted commas are bound morphemes. What remains after removing the bound morphemes in most cases are free morphemes, (Meyer, 2009).

Bound morphemes can further be categorised as either inflectional or derivational. **Inflectional morphemes** have to do with the grammar of a word. For instance, they change the tense, number and aspect amongst other characteristics of a word. Inflectional morphemes are always suffixes.

Inflectional affixes make different grammatical forms of the same word. English has only eight productive inflections:

3 for verbs: *-ed, -s, -ing*	work+ed, work+s, work+ing
3 for nouns: *-s, -'s -'s*	boys, boy's, boys'
2 for adjectives: *-er, -est*	smart+er, smart+est

There are several unproductive inflections too, like the plural *-en* in *oxen,* and the participial *-en* in *given,* as we have already seen.

Derivational morphemes are morphemes which can be added to a root and to a lexeme to get another word as *-er* which can be added to 'teach' to get 'teacher'. Here, we get a new word as well as a change of word class. A derivational morpheme can be a prefix or suffix. Most prefixes and suffixes are bound morphemes, (but pro and con are free prefixes). All English prefixes and most suffixes are derivational.

Note that in this course, the morpheme is indicated with a hyphen if it is a bound morpheme or a free morpheme to which a bound morpheme has been separated. This is a linguistic convention.

Activity 10.2

1. *Separate free and bound morphemes in the following words:*

a) *decolonisation*
b) *grammatically*
c) *purity*
d) *enclose*
e) *unrealistically*

2. *Which of these are functional free morphemes?*

can, have, look, remember, she, house, for, slowly, cook, the, and, after.

3. Discuss at least five differences between inflection and derivation.

10.3.2 The morph and types of morphs

A simple definition of a morph that it is **asegment of a word which represents a morpheme**. The morph and the morpheme are two levels of structure which usually correspond. For example, in the word 'untouchables' there is a one to one correspondence of morpheme to morph. Thus one has;-

un-	+-touch-+	-able-	+-s	four morphemes
not	(verb)	ability	plural	meanings
un-	+ -touch-	+ -able-+	-s	four morphs (orthographic/phonetic forms)

(i) Portmanteau morphs

Pause a while and think of the morph 'is'. How many morphemes can you deduce from the word? What notions or meanings are you able realise from it? If they are more than one, are you able to divide the morph according to the meanings that you have come up with? It was originally thought that there was a simple equivalence between a morph and a morpheme, that is, one morpheme equals to one morph as we have discussed above. This opinion, however, soon changed. For example, some morphs correspond to two or more morphemes simultaneously and there is no possibility of dividing the morph to suit these several morphemes. These are the **portmanteau morphs** and they are called *morphs* because when one says or writes the word, one is saying or writing two or three morphemes or even more.

If you consider the word form 'is', it will be seen that this word contains three morphemes; {BE}, {present} and {singular}. Here there is a word form which is not possible to divide into morphs. So there is 'is', a single morph and a word form which contains the morphemes {BE}, {present} and {singular}. Where one has one morph which realises more than one morpheme, one has a **portmanteau morph.** Can you now define what a portmanteau morph is? Well, you should be getting there. That is good. Can you further look at the following:

'Men' is a morph but this morph corresponds to two morphemes, namely; {man} + {plural} and this can be compared to 'were' or 'was' which has three morphemes. Notice that the morphs

'were', 'was' and 'men' are the physical realisation either in spoken or written language of the abstract morphemes {BE} + {past} + {plural}, {BE} + {past} + {singular} and {man} + {plural } respectively.

(ii) Empty morph

There are also those morphs which correspond to no morphemes, remembering that a morpheme is the smallest meaningful, grammatical unit of a word. These morphs are known as **empty morphs**. If one considers the word 'regional', one can identify two morphs {region-}, the root, and {-al}, a derivational suffix or morpheme which changes the word class of the noun 'region' to an adjective, 'regional'. There is no problem here for their phonetic shape, their meaning and their grammatical role.

But if one considers the word 'fraternal', one sees that there is a root, frater-', the Latin word for 'brother' but borrowed by English Language, and used primarily in formal English, although it is a little old-fashioned for today one would probably use 'brotherly'. However, what we have here is a root {frater-} and a derivational morpheme/suffix {-al} – again changing a **noun** 'frater' to an adjective 'fraternal'. But there is still the '-n-'which in the word 'fraternal' is unaccounted for. It is not part of the root {*fratern-} nor is it part of the derivational suffix {*-nal}. Therefore, {-n-} is an empty morph: it has no meaning and does not perform any grammatical function and so cannot be a morpheme in the true sense. However, the '-n-' does have a written and a pronounceable existence and so is a realization and is termed **empty morph**. For example, other lexemes with empty morphemes are 'mater**n**al', 'pater**n**al', 'fact**u**al', 'sens**u**al' and 'riv**u**let'.

(iii) Zero morph

A third type of morph you should look at now, after the portmanteau morph and empty morph, is the **zero morph.** A zero morph has also been referred to as a null morph. There is supposed to be a morph but it is not there. A zero morph in fact, represents an **invisible affix.** Most, if not all, zero morphs in English Language are invisible suffixes – that is, the absent string of a phonological or orthographic segment. In other words, the zero morph 'appears' when there is supposed to be an actual form but there is not one in place. Normally the zero morph is used to represent a few plural forms in English Language You might have realised that there is consistency in the formation of plural in English: the plural morpheme in English is normally '-s'

but with some lexemes there is no plural '-s' morpheme, for example, 'deer', 'sheep', 'eland' and 'buck'. One would not normally write or say *deers, *sheeps, *elands and *bucks and so there is no consistency here of the formation of plurals. Usually, when the plural is formed in English one has for instance:

(dog) root + (-s) plural inflectional morpheme = dogs (there are two morphemes here)

The boy is there, (singular) =>The boys are there, (plural)

But with 'sheep' one has;

sheep (root/ base) + -s (plural) = *sheeps

'The *sheeps are there', is incorrect English Language; one should have 'The sheep are there'. Now, 'sheep' is only one morpheme, but consistency demands two morphemes. To keep some consistency therefore, we need to have a second morpheme to show the plural form. The answer to the problem is to introduce the concept of the zero morph and so one gets;

sheep + zero morph = sheep (plural morpheme); the zero morph is very often shown by the 'empty set' symbol of 'ø' and so we have;

sheep + ø = sheep + plural which gives 'sheep in plural form'.

*'Sheeps' is ungrammatical, rather not acceptable, and so we a zero morph representing a plural morpheme. Words such as 'sheep' can take the singular and plurals (The sheep is here/ The sheep are here) so the word 'sheep' must have a singular and plural form and the plural form is shown by the zero morph. Similarly, 'deer', and 'buck' cannot be *deers, *bucks.

Note that words such as 'furniture' and 'equipment' do **not** take a zero morph because one can say 'the furniture is here' and 'the equipment is lost' but one cannot say *'the furniture are here' and 'the equipment are lost'. These words cannot take a plural verb and so there is no need for a zero morph.

Apart from using a zero morph to show the lack of a plural morpheme (as shown above), one can **also** use it, in what some linguists consider to be a more logical manner, that is, to show English

Language form of singular nouns and the present tense of the verbs apart from the third person singular. The following illustrate these proposed uses of the zero morph:

Girl: Girl + ø girl (stem) + ø (morpheme showing the singular)

Boy: Boy + s boy (stem) + -s (plural morpheme)

(we) walk: walk + ø

walk- (root) + ø (morpheme showing present 1st person plural)

(he) jumps: jump + s

jump- (root) + -s (present 3rd person singular morpheme)

(we) jump: jump+ ø

jump- (root) + ø (morpheme showing present 1st person plural)

Equally, some linguists argue that the zero morpheme should be used to change some adjectives into verbs amongst other patterns of conversion:

Clean + ø = VB as in 'They clean shoes'.

Clean + ø = ADJ as in 'The clean shoes are his'.

Slow + ø = ADJ as in 'The slow bus eventually came'.

Slow + ø = VB as in 'He will slow the pace'.

These word classes are formed by **conversion,** avery common phenomenon in English. So the use of the zero morph could be common in English language. Most linguists, however, (and in academic writing) do not graphically use the {ø} morpheme in these cases. It is invisible.

We can distinguish between a full morph and a free morph. A free morph includes function words while a full morph has an inherent meaning and these are content words. From what you

have already studied about free morphemes you can recall that these can be lexical (content) or functional (grammatical). It is the lexical categories that are termed full morphs.

10.3.3The concept of allomorphy

The final morph to be considered is the **allomorph**. You should be able to recognise a morpheme as the same morpheme in whichever environment it appears. If you consider the following sentences:

(a) The blue book was on the shelf.

(b) Young boys are running down the street.

There are no morphemes which are repeated in these two sentences. However, in the following sentences there is some duplication with the first sentence above.

(c) Blue cars were the most common nowadays.

Here, we have the duplication of the morphemes 'blue' and 'the' (sentences (a) and (c)). Both morphemes have;

- The same phonetic shape
- The same meaning
- The same syntactic role

So whatever the morpheme, in whatever circumstances it occurs, it should have the same phonetic shape, the same meaning and be playing the same syntactic role. This is what the morpheme 'blue' does in the two sentences above: the pronunciation is the same in both sentences, /blew/, the meaning is the same; being that of a certain colour and the grammatical role that the morpheme 'blue' plays is the same and that is that 'blue' is an ADJ in both cases.

This is normally fairly clear: morphemes do have a constant meaning, for example, 'un-' shows the negative when it is a morpheme as in words such as 'uncertain', 'unalike', 'unclear' and 'unfortunate'. Note that in a word such as 'uniform', 'un-' is not a morpheme and so does not have a negative meaning because 'un-' is part of the derivational morpheme 'uni-' as in 'uniform' and 'universe'. It is important to ensure that the morpheme correctly depicts the

meaning in that word. Remember also that in the word ‘under’ the element *‘un-’ does not have the meaning of the negative. ‘Under’ is either a simple word on its own as in ‘hiding **under** the table’ or is a derivational prefix as in ‘underground’ and ‘underuse’.

Let us return to the morpheme and the fact that in whatever circumstances the morpheme occurs, it should have the same phonetic shape, the same meaning and be playing the same grammatical role. We come across problems with regard to the pronunciation of a morpheme. If we consider the plural in English and its pronunciation we find that the plural morpheme {-s} has three **different** pronunciations:

in sticks, it is realised as /s/,
in dogs it is realised as /z/,
in houses it is realised as /iz/.

But a morpheme should have the same phonetic shape in any circumstances and yet in English, we can see that in the plural, there are three different pronunciations, namely; /s/, /z/, /iz/ as in the example shown above. All the three morphemes are interpretations of the morpheme ‘-s’;

a) have the same meaning
b) play the same syntactic role
c) the phonetic differences are there only because of the influences of the preceding sound(s)

As a teacher, you might have ever taught learners the sounds of the English language. How have you explained the differences in the pronunciations of the words above? The influence of the preceding sounds can be detailed as follows:

a) if a word ends in a sibilant (a consonant with a sharp, hissing sound for example ‘buzz’ and ‘bus’) then the /iz/ form is used,
b) if a word ends in a voiceless non-sibilant (for example, /p/, /k/, /f/) then the /s/ form is used,
c) if the word ends in the voiced non-sibilant (for example, /g/, /d/, /b/), then the form /z/ is used.

Thus the conclusion is reached that the change in the pronunciation of the morpheme has been forced upon the morpheme '-s' because of the preceding sounds and so because of this changed **phonological** representation of the morpheme '-s', the result is called an **allomorph** (not an *allomorpheme).

Another example along the line of plural morpheme is the three forms of the past participle (PP). Most PPs follow the pattern of '*play-*' + '*-ed*', although a few have the pattern of '*show-* + *-n'* or an irregular pattern as in 'sing' and 'sung'.

The '-ed' morpheme can be phonologically considered in three different ways:

a) if the preceding sound ends, for example, in /t/ or /d/ then the morpheme '-ed' is pronounced as /**-id**/ as in 'waited, painted, mended, started',
b) if the preceding morpheme ends in a voiceless consonant other than /t/, for example, in /s/ and /k/ then the '-ed' morpheme is pronounced as **/t/** as in 'kissed, missed, parked, walked',
c) if the preceding morpheme ends in a vowel or an /n/ (or after a verb ending in any voiced sound except /d/), then the '-ed' is pronounced as /**d/** as in 'booed, weighed, cleaned, caned', (Katamba, 1999:25).

Both these examples, of the plural and the past, are basically the same and have led linguistics to come to the following decisions:

Whether the phonetic shape of a morpheme is altered because of the shape of the sounds around it, it is claimed that these changes have nothing to do with the morpheme itself which does keep its essential abstract identity. These morphemes are said to be **phonologically conditioned** and the results are **considered to be variants of the same basic morpheme**. These variants are called **allomorphs of the same morpheme**. Their state of existence is what is called **allomorphy**. The influences of the phonetic realisation are called phonological conditioning rules. Analyse the following rules as well:

1. The plural, the third person singular and the possessive morphemes are realised as /s/ after a unvoiced consonant sound (except affricates and fricatives).

2. The plural, the third person singular and the possessive morphemes are realised as /z/ after voiced sound (both vowels and consonants)

3. The plural, the third person singular and the possessive morphemes are realised as /iz/ after affricates and fricatives.

4. The past tense morpheme is realised as /t/ after unvoiced consonant sounds.

5. The past tense morpheme is realised as /d/ after voiced sounds.

6. The past tense morpheme is realised as /id/ after alveolar plosives.

On the other hand, one has the plural of the lexeme 'ox' which is 'oxen'. It is argued (at present) that 'ox' is the only lexeme in English that makes its plural by adding an '-en'. This variant of the plural morpheme '-s' is '-en' and it is claimed that its variant is conditioned by the lexeme itself; in other words, it is a **lexically conditioned allomorph** because the difference in pronunciation between '-en' and '-s' is too large for '-en' to be a phonologically conditioned allomorph.

It has been seen that an allomorph may be realized, as a morph, differently in different situations and the plural morpheme '-s' and the past participle morpheme '-ed' have been given as examples. The concept of allomorph can be stretched even further, according to other linguists, by considering past participles such as 'walked', 'eaten' and 'drunk' as allomorphs and the justification for this consideration is that 'walked' has the regular '-ed' allomorphs, while 'eaten' has the less common '-en' allomorph while 'drunk' is a problem because the past participle cannot be separated from the morpheme 'drink': the two appear to be fused; an instance of ablaut. We may regard the '-ed' and '-en' as allomorphs for the past participle morpheme.

With regard to lexically conditioned allomorphs, Crystal (1987) gives the following example: 'send the boy' said by the shopkeeper about a part-time assistant. This can be contrasted with 'this is my boy' said by the parent about a son. Are these two 'boys' the same morphemes/ Are they, in other words, allomorphs? They certainly satisfy the phonological requirements to be

considered a single morpheme and they can be said to satisfy the syntactic requirements – both are nouns and; common and concrete nouns at that. However, they do not mean the same thing: boy in each of the sentences has a separate meaning. There are many words in English and other languages which operate along the same lines as 'boy' such as 'bank' and 'mouth', for instance. Such phenomenon will be dealt with later under semantics.

In circumstances where the phonological factors play no role in the selection of allomorphs may be **grammatically conditioned**. This means that the choice of an allomorph depends on the presence of a particular grammatical element, (Katamba, 1992:30). Can you give an example of a grammatically conditioned set of allomorph? Well. You may have thought of the lexemes; weep, sweep, creep and kneel. What do you think could have influenced the past forms; wept, swept, crept and knelt respectively? The other set that we can look at is the past forms of take and shake.

So an allomorph can be a phonetically, lexically or grammatically conditioned member of a set of morphs representing a particular morpheme. There are some morphemes whose allomorphs do not share any phonetic similarity, that is, they do not share a common root morpheme. This kind of allomorphy where the allomorphs of a morpheme are phonetically unrelated is called **suppletion**, (Op cit:31). Examples include forms of good/better, bad/worse, go/went. It is very important for you to pay particular attention when dealing with rules by which each of these sets of morphemes operate. As a teacher, you should avoid over-generalisation.

Activity 10.3

1. State the free and bound morphemes of the following words:

a) cooking
b) disagreement
c) beautiful
d) friendships
e) derivationally

2. State whether the morphemes identified in 1 above are derivational or inflectional.

3. Explain and exemplify the concept of allomorphy in English.

4. Explain and exemplify what a portmanteau morph is.

5. What is the difference between a morph and a morpheme?

6. Using a possessive morpheme, explain the three phonological conditioning rules of a morph.

7. Use the negative prefix to illustrate a lexically conditioned allomorph.

10.4 The Structure of a Word

In this section, we will discuss the word, focusing on the patterns of the word and the concepts of stem, base, affixes, and ablaut. This will aid you on how to analyse the word into constituent parts; the morphemes. Let us begin by looking at the patterns the words in natural languages may be. The word normally has one of the three patterns:

(a) **Simple word**: this has only one constituent element) e.g. *tree, girl* and *it*.

(b) **Compound word**: this has two or more free morphemes. These words can be used independent of each other, e.g., *blacklist, blackboard, freethinker.*

(c) Complex word: this has two or more morphemes. These may be free and bound morphemes e.g., *uncomfortably* or all bound morphemes, e.g. inept.

10.4.1 Roots, Stems, Bases and Affixes

As already discussed, a word is made up of parts. These constituent parts are elements of the word and are the ones we have already studied as morphemes in the previous unit. Do you recall the terms 'root' and 'stem'? What criteria would you use to identify a root and a stem?

Roots are verbal morphemes that cannot be analysed any further into smaller units. In the verb **walk**ing', the constituent 'walk', cannot be analysed further. This is the core of a verb where all affixes are attached. When all the inflectional and derivational morphemes have been removed; when all prefixes and suffixes have been left out, what mains is the root.

Stems are constituents that remain after all inflectional affixes have been removed. In other words; a stem is any word to which an inflectional morpheme can be added, e.g. girl, where the inflectional morpheme *-s* can be added.

Base is any form to which affixes of any kind can be attached. Most roots are bases because one can add both derivational and inflectional morphemes. A stem can also be a base because one can add inflectional morphemes to it, (Katamba, 1999: 41-45).

Affixes

Most languages, especially agglutinating and inflectional ones, differentiate between the **stem** of the word, which carries the basic meaning, and various **affixes** or attachments that carry additional, often grammatical meanings. Here are the kinds of affixes:

- **Suffixes** are attached to the end of the stem; e.g. Look**ed**
- **Prefixes** are attached to the front of the stem; e.g. **re**write.
- **Infixes** are put in the middle of the word; eg. Halle**bloody**luyah! (as used by emotionally aroused English speakers. Infixing is rare in English but there are a number of examples that we can use from Zambian languages such as the tense markers, aspectual morphemes and object markers, e.g. the -dza- future tense morpheme in the Nyanja word adzabwera 'he/ she will come' is inserted in between the subject marker *a*-and the root *bwer*-.
- **Ablaut** is a change in a vowel that carries extra meaning. Ablaut is common in English. For example, the past tense of *sing* is *sang,* and the past participle is *sung.* The plural of *tooth* is *teeth.*

Suffixes are the most commonly used in English. For example, the past tense of most verbs is a matter of adding *-ed* to the stem; the present participle is made by adding *-ing;* the plural of a noun is made by adding *-s.* Because these suffixes can be used to form a number of word forms, they are said to be productive.

Activity 10.4

1. *With examples, discuss the three patterns of a word in English and any Zambian language.*
2. *Specify the kind of each bound morpheme in the following:*
    - *i. cats*
    - *ii. unhappiness*
    - *iii. deregistered*
    - *iv. unforgetables*
    - *v. contradictoriness*

3. *State whether the following bolded elements is a stem, base, root, derivational prefix/ suffix or inflectional morpheme.*
    i. ***dis****infectant*
    ii. *backform****ation***
    iii. *pre****fix****ation*
    iv. *compound****ing***
    v. *en****courage****ment*

10.5 Word Formation

Let us now discuss major ways of forming new words affixation (derivation and inflection), conversion and compounding. The discussion advances to other (minor) ways of word formation.

10.5.1 Affixation

Let us begin by looking at the concept of affixation. You have already met the term affix from which the concept of affixation is derived. Affixation is a morphological process whereby an affix is attached to a morphological base. The base may be either a root or a stem. Affixation falls in the scope of morphology where bound morphemes are either roots or affixes. Prefixes (affixes that precede the root) and suffixes (affixes that follow the root) are the most common types of affixes cross-linguistically although suffixes are more productive as already stated. Affixation is the most common strategy that human languages employ for derivation of new words and word forms. However, languages vary in the ways they express the same semantics. In English, for instance, the noun *biolog-ist* is derived from *biology* through the addition of the suffix *-ist*to have the meaning 'one who studies biology' but we can use *-ist* to mean 'one who practises' as in racist (one who practises racism). All works on morphology are actually said to be general overviews of the topic of affixation.

10.5.1.1 Inflection and Derivation

We have already introduced the terms inflection and derivation except we were looking at morphemes. Under this subheading, we are discussing the concepts as processes.

Morphological Inflection is a process of change of form which distinguishes different grammatical forms of some lexical unit; for example, the plural 'books' is distinguished from the

singular ‘book’ by the inflectional morpheme ‘-s’; and the past tense of the English language verb is distinguished from the other tenses because of the addition to the root of the inflectional morpheme ‘-ed’. The major inflectional classes are verbs and nouns. Verbs inflect for tense. A class of verbs will share a pattern of inflection, e.g., addition of -ed in the past or internal vowel change. Nouns inflect for number (plural). Inflection in English is by suffixation (a process by which suffixes are attached to stems and roots). English language depends on the word order of a sentence to mark the object and has a very strict word order, basically, **SVO**. What word order for sentence is the language taught at your school?

Morphological derivation is the process of forming a new word on the basis of an existing word, e.g. *happiness* and *unhappy* from the root word *happy*, or *determination* from *determine*. It often involves the addition of a morpheme in the form of an affix, such as *-ness*, *un-*, and *-ation* in the preceding examples. From the above examples, it is evident that derivation involves both prefixation (a process by which prefixes are attached to roots) and suffixation (a processes of attaching suffixes to the root).

Derivation stands in contrast to the process of inflection, which means the formation of grammatical variants of the same word, as with *determine/ determines/ determining/ determined*.

However, derivational affixes do not necessarily alter the lexical category; they may merely change the meaning of the base, while leaving the category unchanged. A prefix will rarely change lexical category in English, eg, *write* → *re-write*; *load* → *over-load*. The prefix *un-* applies to adjectives, eg, *healthy* → *unhealthy* and some verbs, eg, *do* → *undo*, but rarely to nouns. A few exceptions are the derivational prefixes en- and be-. ‘En-’ (em- before labials) is usually used as a transitive marker on verbs, but can also be applied to adjectives and nouns to form transitive verbs: *circle* (verb) → *encircle* (verb); but *rich* (adj) → *enrich* (verb), *large* (adj) → *enlarge* (verb), *slave* (noun) → *enslave* (verb) ,*courage* (n) *encourage* (v).

Derivation can also occur without any change of form, for example *telephone* (noun) and *to telephone* (noun). This is known as conversion, or zero derivation.

Derivation that results in a noun may be called nominalization. This may involve the use of an affix (as with *happy* → *happiness*, *employ* → *employee*), or may occur via conversion (as with the derivation of the noun *run* from the verb 'to run').

Derivation can be contrasted with inflection, in that derivation produces a new word (a distinct lexeme), whereas inflection produces grammatical variants of the same word. Generally speaking, inflection applies in more regular patterns to all members of a part of speech (for example, nearly every English verb adds *-s* for the third person singular present tense), while derivation follows less consistent patterns (for example, the nominalising suffix *-ity* can be used with the adjectives *modern* and *dense*, but not with *open* or *strong*). However, it is important to note that derivations and inflections can share homonyms, that being, morphemes that have the same sound, but not the same meaning. For example, when the affix *-er*, is added to an adjective, as in *tall-er*, it acts as an inflection, but when added to a verb, as in *teach-er*, it acts as a derivation.

As we have seen, one of the key distinctions among morphemes is **between** derivational and inflectional morphemes. Derivational morphemes make fundamental changes to the meaning of the stem whereas inflectional morphemes are used to mark grammatical information.

10.5.1.2 Derivational Productivity

Productivity of morphemes refers to the chance of forming words by such morphemes, eg. The **-s** and **-er** morphemes are productive while the **-ive** morpheme is not. For instance, we can say 'cook, cooks, cooker' and not * 'cookive'.

Note that English, though an isolating language, is partly inflectional and to a lesser extent synthetic.

10.5.2 Conversion

The new word is not formed by affixation. The lexical item remains the same but has a different meaning, eg.

(a) 'present' (V) 'present' (N)
(b) 'release' /s/ (N) 'release' /z/ (V)

(c) ‘refuse’ (N) ‘refuse’ (V)

(d) ‘cook’ (N) ‘cook’ (N)

(e) ‘teeth’ (N) ‘teethe’ (V)

Here, the morphological form of the word does not help in telling whether the word is a noun or verb. Conversion is made possible in the following ways:

(i) By stress shift as in (a) and (c) above,

(ii) Consonant change as in (b) and

(iii)Vowel addition as in (e).

Here are some of the words formed by conversion:

‘cover, bore, coach, turn, attempt, house, prophesy, insult, rebel, love, cash, skin, humble, calm, lower, ship, telegraph, call’.

Can you try to use each of the above words in sentences to exercise the knowledge of conversion? Indicate the word class for each category.

Activity 10.5

1. *Define the term word-formation.*
2. *Explain and exemplify various ways of forming new words.*
3. *With examples, distinguish between derivation of a new word and inflection of a word form.*
4. *State the meanings of the following morphemes and give an example for each:*

i. in- ii. dis- iii. -ship iv. -ic v. re- vi. en-

vii. un- viii. -hood ix. ex- x. -ity xi. -ist xii. -ment

10.5.3 Compounding

Compounding is the process by which two root morphemes are put together to make a new word. Definitely, this is not new to you; two roots/ free morphemes/ lexemes are combined, eg.

blackbird, blacklist, courtyard. This is also a very productive source of words in English. Compounds may be written:

- as a solid word, e.g. *bedroom,*
- with a hyphen e.g. *bed-room,*
- open e.g. *bed room.*

Have you ever wondered why some compounded words are easy to interpret while others are not easy? Compounds are grouped into opaque and transparent. Opaque compounds are those whose meaning is not derivable from their constituents. We use the term **Semantic opacity** (the situation where the meaning of a compound word cannot be got from the meanings of the words it comprises, e.g., 'blacklist' and 'blackmail'). Transparent compounds are those whose meaning is derivable from the meaning of their constituents, e.g. water pipe, cell phone, wastebasket.

Phonemics

Phonemics, or phonology, is the study of the distribution of sound systems in human languages. A phoneme is a particular set of sounds produced in a particular language and distinguishable by native speakers of that language from other (sets of) sounds in that language. That is what 'distinctive' means. The English phonemes /n/ and /ŋ/ can be told apart by native speakers of English, because we use these sounds to distinguish different words e.g., sin => sing, ton => tongue, run => rung, etc. This would be impossible if these phonemes weren't distinctive in English.

Phonetics, on the other hand, is simply the physiological and acoustic study of speech sounds, covering all sounds used in all languages, and relying only on the physical and physiological characteristics of the sounds, without regard to their systemic patterns in various languages.

Phonemes, the unit of (this variety of) phonemics, encased in /slashes/, are always specific to a language. Since phonetics is a natural science, phones, the unit of phonetics, encased in [square brackets], are universal, and are not specific to any language.

Thus, we say that there is such a thing as "the phone [p]", because phones are defined universally, but that there is no such thing as "the phoneme /p/", because phonemes are relative to languages. Thus "the French phoneme /p/" and "the English phoneme /p/" both exist and are meaningful, and the phone [p] is represented in both of them; but they are not the same sets of sounds and they don't have the same distribution, and thus are not the same phonemes.

Morphophonology

Morphophonology (also morphophonemics or morphonology) is the branch of linguistics that studies the interaction between morphological and phonological or phonetic processes. Its chief focus is the sound changes that take place in morphemes (minimal meaningful units) when they combine to form words.

Morphophonological analysis often involves an attempt to give a series of formal rules that successfully predict the regular sound changes occurring in the morphemes of a given language. Such a series of rules converts a theoretical underlying representation into a surface form that is actually heard. The units of which the underlying representations of morphemes are composed are sometimes called morphophonemes. The surface form produced by the morphophonological rules may consist of phonemes (which are then subject to ordinary phonological rules to produce speech sounds or phones), or else the morphophonological analysis may bypass the phoneme stage and produce the phones itself.

Morphological processes

A **morphological process** is a means of changing a stem to adjust its meaning to fit its syntactic and communicational context. When morphemes combine, they influence each other's sound structure (whether analyzed at a phonetic or phonemic level), resulting in different variant pronunciations for the same morpheme. Morphophonology attempts to analyse these processes. A language's morphophonological structure is generally described with a series of rules which, ideally, can predict every morphophonological alternation that takes place in the language. An example of a morphophonological alternation in English is provided by the plural morpheme,

written as "-s" or "-es". Its pronunciation alternates between [s], [z], and [ɪz], as in cats, dogs, and horses respectively. A purely phonological analysis would most likely assign to these three endings the phonemic representations /s/, /z/, /ɪz/. On a morphophonological level, however, they may all be considered to be forms of the underlying object //z//, which is a morphophoneme. The different forms it takes are dependent on the segment at the end of the morpheme to which it attaches: the dependencies are described by morphophonological rules. (The behaviour of the English past tense ending "-ed" is similar: it can be pronounced /t/, /d/ or /ɪd/, as in hoped, bobbed and added.)

Summary

This chapter has walked you through the necessary aspects in the field descriptive linguistics in the area of morphology. We have discussed the word as a basic element and have seen how all morphological concepts focus on the word. It has helped you to realise that a word can be formed by combining molecular constituents into larger atomic elements, the morphemes. These constituent elements can be further joined further to form concrete forms that have definite structure.

UNIT 11: BASIC CONCEPTS IN SYNTAX

11.0 Introduction

This unit is about the property of human language known as syntax. 'Syntax' means sentence construction': how words group together to make phrases and sentences (Tallerman, 2011). Some people also use the term grammar to mean the same as syntax, although most linguists follow the more recent practice whereby the grammar of a language includes all of its organizing principles: information about the sound system, about the form of words, how we adjust language according to context, and so on; syntax is only one part of this grammar.

Learning Outcomes

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

- state what syntax is all about
- describe the constituents of a sentence
- recognise the four discourse functions of a sentence

11.1 Defining syntax

Etymologically, the word syntax is of the Greek origin – syn-taxis - which means "the putting together in order, arranging (tying together)" or 'arrangement.' Thus, syntax is defined as the study of the arrangement of words in sentences and of the means by which such relationships are shown (Hartmann & Stork 1972: 231). Syntax, therefore, concerns itself with the meaningful organization of words into larger units such as phrases, clauses, sentences and the analysis of such units based on rules.

In this section of the module, we are going to be looking at how languages organize their syntax, so the scope of our study includes the classification of words, the order of words in phrases and sentences, the structure of phrases and sentences, and the different sentence constructions that languages use.

11.2 Sentence Constituents

Sentence and Clause

A sentence has been defined differently by various scholars. In A traditional grammar, it has been said to be an expression of a 'complete thought' (Hartmann & Stork, 1972). Of course, such a notional definition is vague because it does not state when the expression a 'thought' is to be considered complete. Not only that, it also not good enough because it assumes that language is only used to express thoughts. Language, however, is used to do many other things including getting someone do something.

A sentence may also be defined as a group of words containing a **subject**, i.e. the person or thing being talked about, and a **predicate**, i.e. what is said by the subject as in:

Lungowe baked a cake.

Lungowe is the subject and baked the cake is the predicate. It must be noted that both the subject and the predicate may themselves be sentences.

11.3 Syntactic functions

Various words and individual phrases combine to form clauses and play specific functions or what are called syntactic roles. This part of the unit deals with syntactic functions. The section will deal with:

(a) Discourse functions of sentences
(b) Functions of phrases; and
(c) The concept of the 'head'

10.3.1 The discourse functions of the sentence

There are four types of sentence that have traditionally been recognised from the discourse point of view or indeed according to their purpose.

(a) Declarative: these are sentences that are primarily used to convey factual information or issuing a statement. A declarative sentence ends with a period and sometimes with an exclamation mark as in:

(i) Mweemba moved to Lusaka.

(ii) Children like playing in the park.

(b) Interrogative: these are sentences that are used to ask questions. Interrogative sentences are typically marked by inversion of the subject and predicate: that is, the first verb in a verb phrase appears before the subject as in:

i. Where do you want to go today?

ii. How did it get so late so soon?

(c) Imperative: this is a type of sentence that gives advice or instructions or expresses a request or command as in:

(i) Please John, could you send me your residential address.

(ii) Please, be quiet!

(d) **Exclamatory**: this is the kind of sentence that expresses strong feelings as in:

(i) I can't believe you moved!

(ii) What were you thinking!

(iii) Alas, she is dead!

10.3.2 Functions of phrases

From a traditional point of view, a sentence is looked upon as comprising five units called elements of sentence structure. The elements include the **subject**, **verb**, **complement**, **object** and **adverbial**. A verb is a word class that is very important and forms basis of most phrases that function as **predicates**. The term verb can be replaced with the term predicate. The subject of the sentence is that element which is being talked about (the topic or theme) while the predicate is the word or group of words which comes after the verb as in:

(i) The headteacher (subject) is extremely kind. (predicate)

(ii) Martha (subjects) killed a goat. (predicate)

You may be interested to note that the notional definitions of the terms *subject* and *predicate* like other definitions are inadequate because they cannot apply in all cases (Crystal, 1993). The subsequent example clarifies Crystal's argument:

(i) It is difficult to please everyone.

(ii) Mutinta told Mweene about her sickness.

Anyone who understands English can easily understand (i) as a grammatical sentence with the subject ***it***. ***It*** however, cannot possibly be the topic of the sentence. It is also not easy to decide which of ***Mutinta***, ***Mweene***, ***her,*** or ***sickness*** is the topic or could one say there are **four** topics in (ii).

Speakers of languages can generally identify what subjects and predicates are though their definitions are not universally adequate. The identification of subjects and predicates is seemingly based on both notional and formal features of various units. The term subject covers a number of distinct roles, such as roles of ***agent*** and ***experiencer.***

The Complement

Hartmann and Stork (1972) have defined a complement as that part of verbal phrase which is required to make it a complete predicate in a sentence. Crystal (1985) traditionally associates complement with completing the action or state expressed by the verb. In its broadest sense therefore, complement is any obligatory phrase other than the verb within the predicate such as the object in the sentence like He cooked ***nsima*** or the adverbial in the sentence He put the car ***on the table***. It must be noted however that in some circumstances, the complement is treated with more restrictively; that is to refer only to the completing function of structures following the verb to be or similar verbs. In an analysis like ***He sold the dog*** would be subject-verb-object, whereas ***He is a dog*** would refer to subject-verb-complement.

It must also be noted that distinction is also made between subject and object complement.

(a) Subject complement e.g. **(the) chairperson** in Clare is ***chairperson***, and;

(b) Object complement e.g. chairperson in They elected Clare ***chairperson***.

The Object

The term object has been understood to refer to the complement of verb other than ***to be*** (or similar verbs such as ***to become***). An object is a constituent that can be given as answer to the question beginning with what or who which is asked immediately after the verb. What and/or who in this case do not refer to the subject.

Examples:

(a) He killed the dog.

(b) What did he kill? (He killed what?) – the dog (= object).

(c) He killed his son.

(d) Who did he kill? (He killed who?)- his son (= object).

The object has further been divided into direct and indirect objects. Hartmann and Stork (1972) have argued that the direct object is the person or thing which suffers the action of one verb in the sentence and the indirect object as the person or thing for which or on whose behalf an action is carried out. The subsequent examples show both the direct and the indirect objects.

(e) Mutinta baked a *cake*. A cake (= direct object)

(f) Mutinta baked a cake for *her husband*. her husband (= indirect object)

It is important also to know the relationship between the concept of object and transitivity. Transitivity is the degree in which any one verb can take or govern objects. There are three basic degree of transitivity of any one verb: intransitive, monotransitive and ditransitive. A transitive verb is a verb that takes a direct object and an intransitive verb is one that takes no object. From this context, it can be argued that some verbs can be used either transitively (i.e. with an object) or intransitively (i.e. without an object) as in the subsequent examples.

(g) He ***drinks*** daily. (intransitive)

(h) He ***drinks*** tea daily. (transitive - tea = object).

Other verb types include the intensive and complex transitive verbs. An intensive verb is one with a subject complement while a complex transitive verb is one with an object complement.

We have already discussed the concepts of subject and object complement. Even so, (i) and (j) below show the intensive and complex transitive verbs.

(i) Ruth is ***beautiful***. (= subject complement)

(j) Ruth made ***Joshua happy***. (= direct object + object complement)

The Adverbial

Adverbials are words or groups of words which can occupy the adverb slot in a sentence and convey the same message as a single adverb. Leech et al. (1982) points out that adverbials fill out the clauses by adding extra circumstantial information of various kinds. Some examples of adverbials include the following:

Adverbial type	**Eliciting question**	**Example**
Place	Where?	In the box
Manner	How? In what manner?	Slowly, lazily,
Direction	Where to/from?	To/from church
Frequency	How often?	Daily, once a week
Time	When?	On Tuesday/last night
Reason	Why?	Because of his sickness

Activity 11.1

1. *Describe and exemplify the four types of sentences distinguished on the basis of discourse function.*
2. *Discuss the term complement in detail with tangible examples.*
3. *With tangible examples, distinguish between direct and indirect object.*
4. *Give explanations on any three types of verb you know. Clarify your explanation with examples.*
5. *With examples discuss the terms subject and predicate.*

Summary

This unit has endeavoured to look at some basic concepts in syntax. The unit has discussed sentence constituents, syntactic functions, discourse function of the sentence, functions of phrases, the complement, verb transitivity and the adverbial.

UNIT 12: SOME BASIC CONCEPTS IN SEMANTICS

12.0 Introduction

The aim of this unit is to present you with the essentials of English semantics and complex analysis of issues of communication. It must be noted that communication is impossible without meaning shared between the speaker/writer and the audience. Apart from dealing on theoretical perspectives of semantics, we shall explore in some detail the application of semantics to everyday interactions and literary communication.

Learning Outcomes

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

- define semantics
- describe and explain the ways in which linguistic expressions have meaning
- analyse theories that explain in detail the nature of meaning
    - discuss some semantic relations and properties
    - state what arguments and thematic roles are

It is a branch of linguistics studying the meaning of words. It is the study of the relationship between words and their meanings. Semantics looks at the individual meanings of words as opposed to the overall meaning of a passage. Semantics is the study of meaning expressed by elements of a language, characterisable as a symbolic system.

The term semantics simply means the study of meanings. Semantics simply implies the study of how meaning in language is produced or created. Semantics encompasses how words, phrases and sentences come together to make meaning in language. It has been the subject of discourse for many years by philosophers and other scholars but later was introduced formally in literature in the late 1800s. Hence, we have philosophical semantics, linguistic semantics among other varieties of semantics. For the purpose of the present discourse, we shall be focusing on the development and nature of semantics. Hence, we shall be learning the definition and beginnings of linguistic semantics.

Any attempt to understand the nature of language must try to describe and explain the ways in which linguistic expressions have meaning. This unit introduces some of the aspects of meaning studied in linguistic semantics, the branch of linguistics which, along with pragmatics, has

responsibility for this task. Semantics is one of the richest and most fascinating parts of linguistics. Among the kinds of questions semanticists ask are the following:

- What are meanings — definitions?
- Can all meanings be precisely defined?

12.1Some Theories of Meaning

We have learnt that semantics deals with meaning in language. Just like every other discipline, there are theories to explain in detail the nature of meaning in a principled way. It will be recalled that language as a system is organised along the structures of sound, words, sentences and meaning. Each of these levels can be studied in some details, following specified formulations or theories. For the purpose of a detailed study of semantics, there are theories used to explain the nature of word and sentence meaning, among several other things.

Semantic theories explain the nature of meaning by utilising a finite set of rules to explain a variety of semantic phenomena. Any theory of semantics should provide statements that explain meaning relationships – such as ambiguity, anomaly, contradiction, tautology, paraphrase, entailment, synonymy, hyponymy. This means that such a theory should be able to explain the inherent meaning characteristic of words and sentences. Any reliable theory of semantics should relate meaning to syntax, highlighting the relationship between them. This means that the rules of sentence construction and those of word meaning should relate to explain in full the meaning of the sentence. A viable semantic theory should also relate meaning to the contexts and situations of word and sentence usage for appropriate interpretation. There should also be a record of facts of meaning, linguistic reference and truth conditions. These requirements suggest that such a theory should be a part of the general linguistic theory. That means that semantic rules must have universal applications. Such rules must give clues to the nature of semantic features, which distinguish lexical items of different languages of the world. Since the theory should account for meaning properties on all languages, it helps to explain the structure of human languages.

These expectations have been met at different levels by different theories of meaning, including:

- the Ideational Theory

- the Referential Theory
- the Usage Theory

12.1.1 The Ideational Theory of Meaning

This theory was developed by the British empiricist philosopher, John Locke. The theory explains that the meaning attached to words can be separated from the words themselves. This means that meaning originates in the mind in the form of ideas. Words are just sensible signs for the convenience of communication. Language is therefore, a mechanism for expressing thoughts and thought is viewed as a succession of conscious ideas. The ideational theory is mentalistic. Thus, the meaning of a word is the mental image or idea of the word or the expression generated in the mind of the speaker or hearer.

There is no attempt to define words and expressions using physical associations. Rather, the range of possible meanings ascribed to a given word is that set of available feelings, images, ideas, concepts, thoughts and inferences that can be produced as soon as a word is heard. The ideational theory is perceived to be abstract or imprecise because of dependence on mental images for decoding the meaning of words. Ideas may be too vague to comprehend. There are also many words (especially the abstract ones) that do not have specific physical realities, let alone mental manifestations. It is unthinkable that the mind can create an image of what the senses cannot perceive.

The theory may not be able to account for synonymous expressions. It may also be difficult to use the theory to explain the mental image conjured by sentences. Indeed, sentences derive their meaning more from the word order.

12.1 2 The Referential Theory of Meaning

This theory is associated with Ogden and Richards (1922). According to the referential theory, the meaning of a word is the object it refers to in the external world. That actual object is the referent. The connection between the words or expressions and their referents is through the process of thought. The words or expressions are just symbols.

One major criticism of this theory is that there are many words without physical objects they refer to. Such words as intelligent, ugly, rich, poor, and so on, which do not have the concrete qualities of nouns may not have referents. Again, polysemous words (words with more than one meaning) may have the additional problem of having more than one referent. Items that belong to groups may not have physical objects that are identical. Every sub-group has specific feature. Individual members of the smallest sub-groups also have their identities. Therefore, we cannot talk about absolute identification for referents. The referential theory may not have a way to explain the meaning of words in the categories of adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions.

12.1.3 The Usage Theory of Meaning

The German scholar, Wittgenstein (1953) developed this theory. It has been elaborated upon by J. Firth and M. A. K. Halliday. The usage theory is also referred to as the contextual or operational theory of meaning. The major motivation was fear that the meaning of certain classes of words could be lost if meaning were treated as just entities. According to the theory, the meaning of a word or an expression is determined by the context of its use. It is the effect created by a linguistic unit within a given context that expresses its full meaning.

12.2Some Semantic Relations and Properties

It must be noted that viable theories of meaning should be able to explain the nature of the meaning of words as well as that of sentences. Of course, the meaning of a word may not always be realised from its referential or denotational characteristics. Indeed, there are many words whose basic characteristics may not be easily analysed. Such words are best studied by focusing on the kind of relationship they create with other words. These relationships are based on the sense of the words. Therefore, we study words from their sense relations or lexical relations. At this level, we shall study sense relations along the following lines:

- Synonymy - similarity of meaning,
- Antonymy - oppositeness of meaning,
- Hyponymy - meaning of inclusiveness,
- Polysemy – having several related meanings,

- Homophony - a situation of identical spelling or pronunciation but with different unrelated meanings.

12.3 Ambiguity

An utterance is said to be ambiguous if it has more than one meaning. There are basically two types of ambiguity: lexical ambiguity and grammatical or structural ambiguity.

(a) **Lexical ambiguity** is one that is caused by the fact that a word has more than one meaning as in the example below:

a. I found the table fascinating.
b. (table: could be piece of furniture, or a table of figures)

(b) **Grammatical (or structural) ambiguity** is one that is due to the fact that more than one constituent structure can be assigned to a construction. You can basically see that there are two deep structures in the construction e.g.

They fed her dog biscuits.

Either: They fed her / dog biscuits.

Meaning, they gave her biscuits meant for dogs. Focus is on '***they fed her'*** the object being ***'her'.*** The word ***dog*** functioning as an adjective, describing the kind of biscuits.

Or

They fed/ her dog/ biscuits.

Meaning her dog was given biscuits.

Activity 12.1

1. Discuss the theories of meaning you have been exposed to through your readings.
2. With tangible examples, explain the following terms:
a) synonymy
b) synonymy

c) antonymy

d) homonymy

3. Name and exemplify the two types of ambiguity that you know.

12.4 Arguments and Thematic Roles

(a) Arguments

It's clear that verbs expect a specific form of a noun/pronoun in a specific "position". But it's just as clear that verbs don't expect specific nouns. (It must be clearly understood that we can interchange nouns in the sentences below without disturbing its grammar).

I gave it him

I gave she to him

Me gave it to him

We will call those specific positions that the verb expects to fill **slots**, and the nouns that fill those slots will be the verb's **arguments**. In simpler terms, the term argument refers to (a) the subject of the clause, (b) the direct and the indirect object, in some theories, to some types of complement (e.g. the NP in a Pp). In the example below, 'Mulenga' and 'the snake' are the arguments of killed.

Mulenga killed the snake.

The verb *killed* is transitive and can be said to be a two-place predicate (it has one place for the subject and the other for the direct object). An intransitive verb such as *die*, is a one-place predicate (the only place it has is the one occupied by the subject) and a verb like *bake* is a three-place predicate (for it has the subject, direct object and indirect object). The verbs have been exemplified in:

The dog *died* - (x)

Mulenga*killed* the snake - (x, y)

She *baked* a cake for her husband - (x, y, z)

(b) Thematic roles

The expression thematic roles, which is often abbreviated as theta-roles or "θ-roles" refers to the various semantic functions played by arguments. According to Jackendoff (1990), Theta Roles are relational notions defined structurally over conceptual structure, with a status precisely comparable to that of the notions subject and object in many syntactic theories. A Theta Role represents the semantic relationship of arguments with the predicate they are arguments of. These roles are of many types, which I may list as follows:

(a) **Agent (or Actor**): It is the initiator, instigator or the doer of the action. Also it should be alive and able to take conscious decisions; it is mostly subject of a clause e.g. ***Sarah*** finished the work.

(b) Theme/Patient: It is an entity that undergoes actions, is moved, experienced, or perceived; it is also called "patient" e.g. John killed ***the bird.***

(c) **Experiencer:** It is the argument that feels or perceives events; it might also be experiencing some psychological state. e.g. ***John*** was happy.

(d) **Goal:**The entity towards which something moves e.g. Walusungu goes ***to the library.***

(e) **Benefactive:**An entity benefitting from some action e.g. Maambo bought some flowers ***for his wife.***

(f) **Instrument**:Means by which something comes about e.g. John killed Mary ***with a gun.***

(g) **Location:** It is the place in which the action occurs or in which a theme is located e.g. Mary hid the money ***under the pillow.***

(h) **Source:** Entity from which something moves e.g. The registrar returned ***from England.***

(i) **Percept**: *e.g.* ***John*** smelled funny.

(j) **Possessor**: An entity that has or owns something e.g. **John** has a big car.

Activity 12.2

1. *Discuss any five thematic/ semantic roles.*
2. *Compare and contrast the ideational and the referential theory of meaning.*

3. *Apply each of the semantic functions discussed in this unit in a zonal Zambian language of your choice.*

Summary

We hope you have gained insight in the unit you have just gone thorough. The unit has discussed semantics, a branch of linguistics which deals with meaning and how meaning is created. Furthermore, the unit has looked at theories of meaning, semantic relations and properties.

UNIT 13: SOME BASIC CONCEPTS IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

13.0 Introduction

This unit will deal with language use. It is concerned with Sociolinguistics which is the study between language and society.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- describe in detail what Sociolinguistics deals with
- examine various perceptions of sociolinguistics
- discuss in detail the social values of language in culture

13.1 Defining sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics has been defined differently by different scholars. In spite of this, each of these definitions does not fail to acknowledge that sociolinguistics has to do with language use and a society's response to it. Some definitions have been given in the subsequent section.

(a) The study of the relationship between language and society, of language variation, and of attitudes about language.

(b) A branch of anthropological linguistics that studies how language and culture are related, and how language is used in different social contexts.

(c) A study of the relationship between language and social factors such as class, ethnicity, age and sex.

(d) The study of language in social contexts.

(e) The study of the sociological factors involved in the use of language, including gender, race, class, etc.

(f) The study of stylistic and social variation of language (vernacular).

(g) The study of language in relation to its socio-cultural context.

(h) Sociolinguistics is the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context on the way language is used.

(i) The study of social and cultural effects on language.

In the foregoing definitions, it is clear to note that sociolinguistics as a discipline has an interface between sociology and linguistics. The definitions also acknowledge that sociolinguistics has to do with language use and a society's response to it. Every society has linguistic codes acceptable for communication and interaction. Sociolinguistics shows how groups in a given society are separated by certain social variables like ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, age, etc. and how adherence to these variables is used to categorise individuals in social class or socio-economic classes.

The unit is basically on Sociolinguistics, a branch of linguistics which is the study of inter relationships of language and social structure, linguistics variation and attitudes toward language. It is any set of linguistics form which pattern according to social factors. Crystal (1991) argues that sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics which studies all aspects of the relationship between language and society.

The unit will deal with a number of concepts used in sociolinguistics. Can you try to think of what the following terms are:

> dialect, idiolect, lect, speech community, standard language, vernacular language, bilingualism, multilingualism, code-switching, code-mixing, diglossia.

13.2 Language, dialect, idiolect and lect

We have given a number of definitions of what 'language' is. Can you remember what was said about language in unit 1? Wardhaugh defines language as what members of a particular society speak. He considers society as a group of people drawn together for a particular purpose or purposes. Language therefore, can be redefined as a set of linguistic items arranged in a way determined by (its speakers) society and governed by the norms and expectations of that particular society. All languages exhibit all languages exhibit internal variation, that is, each language exists in a number of varieties and is in one sense the sum of those varieties. But what do we mean by *variety*? Hudson (1996, p. 22) defines a variety of language as '*a set of linguistic items with similar distribution*,' a definition that allows us to say that all of the following are

varieties: Canadian English, London English, the English of football commentaries, and so on. According to Hudson, this definition also allows us 'to treat all the languages of some multilingual speaker, or community, as a single variety, since all the linguistic items concerned have a similar social distribution.' A variety can therefore be something greater than a single language as well as something less, less even than something traditionally referred to as a dialect. Ferguson (1972, p. 30) offers another definition of variety: 'anybody of human speech patterns which is sufficiently homogeneous to be analysed by available techniques of synchronic description and which has a sufficiently large repertory of elements and their arrangements or processes with broad enough semantic scope to function in all formal contexts of communication.'

Hudson and Ferguson agree in defining *variety* in terms of a specific set of 'linguistic items' or 'human speech patterns' which we can uniquely associate with some external factor (presumably, a geographical area or a social group). A geographical/regional variety of a language characteristic of a particular group of speakers or spoken in a certain area, and being different in some linguistic items from other Geographical varieties is called a dialect. A dialect is distinguished by its vocabulary, grammatical features and pronunciation. A dialect is a subordinate variety of language.

Each member of community has a unique way of speaking due to the life experience, education, age and aspiration. An individual personal variation (the way an individual speaks a language) of language use is called an *idiolect*. Owing to this, there are as many idiolects as there are speakers. Each speaker, in short, has his/her own idiolect. And any distinguishable variety of language or any distinguishable variety of speech (dialect and idiolect) is a lect.

13.3Speech Community

Speech community is a concept in sociolinguistics that describes a more or less discrete group of people who use language in a unique and mutually accepted way among themselves. Hartmann and Stork (1992) argue that a speech community is a group of people, usually in the same area, speaking the same variant of a language. According to Gumperz (1968), a 'speech community' is "any human aggregate characterised by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared

body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage".

13.4Standard language, Lingua franca and Vernacular language

A standard language, or standard dialect is the variety of language that is socially favoured for some reason in such domains as; education, culture, politics, history, etc. Standard dialects are initiated and used as auxiliary languages by speakers of other regional and social dialects for purpose of formal discourse and writing as well as for teaching the language to foreigners.

A lingua franca is a common language used for communication by people of diverse backgrounds to communicate with one another, often a basic form of speech with simplified grammar. The term lingua franca can also be used to refer to a language used for communication between people of an area in which several languages are spoken, or indeed whose first languages are different.

This is an indigenous language of people of a particular area or country as opposed to the foreign national language. In Zambia, for example, indigenous languages may be referred to as vernaculars because of English language that has been adopted as the National official language.

13.5Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Bilingualism is the use of two languages by an individual, speech community, a region or country while multilingualism is the use by an individual, speech community, a region or country of two or more languages. Clyne (1997) contends that Bilingualism is an individual's or society's ability to use more than one language variety Multilingualism is an individual's ability to use many languages. A person or speech community using only one language is monolingual.

13.6Code-switching and Code-mixing

Code-switching is a term in linguistics to refer to the use of more than one language or variety in conversation. People switch the code on purpose. There must be some reasons of changing into another language. When they unpurposedly use more than one language in one speech, it is called code mixing.

Code-mixing is the change of one language to another within the same utterance or in the same oral/ written text. It is a common phenomenon in societies in which two or more languages are used. Studies of code-mixing enhance our understanding of the nature, processes and constraints of language and of the relationship between language use and individual values, communicative strategies, language attitudes and functions within particular socio-cultural contexts.

13.7Diglossia

The term diglossia is a fundamental sociolinguistic concept that is used recurrently in the literature with, at times, varying definitions. In most cases, diglossia describes a situation where two linguistic systems co-exist in a functional distribution within the same speech community. One system is assigned the status of high variety (H), while the other receives the status of low variety (L). The H variety is used in more formal domains while the L variety is typically limited to oral informal communication (Sayahi, 2014).

Ferguson (1959) has defined diglossia as follows:

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

Taken in its original literal meaning, diglossia describes the coexistence of two words, i.e., vocabulary doublets, in a given language to refer to the same concept or entity.

So, a *diglossic*situation exists in a society when it has two distinct codes which show clear functional separation; that is, one code is employed in one set of circumstances and the other in an entirely different set.

13.8Languge and social context

The use of language is dependent on a number of social and other factors, such as social status, sex, age, culture and so on. So, as one engages in an interaction with another, the following questions become crucial in language use.

- To whom am I speaking?
- About what am I speaking?
- When am I speaking?

13.9Language and communication

Since language is primarily a social affair, we often think of communication as interpersonal. By interpersonal we mean that it has to involve at least two people, that is, the addresser/speaker/writer and an addressee/hearer or reader. However, it is important to note that it is possible to engage into what may be referred to as intrapersonal communication. This usually happens when an individual is busy thinking, either silently or loudly.

A communication event involves at least the following components:

(a) Participants – addresser and addressee
(b) Message – what is said or written
(c) Channel – the physical means used by the addresser to transmit hismessage to the addressee.
(d) Code – symbols used (language)

13.10Language and Nation

Languages are produced and used by real people in real settings and as such, are intricately interwoven with people's aspirations, identities, people's fears and so on. So, as the linguist is primarily concerned with the analysis of language, the Nation as a whole is concerned with which language (s) should be used and or how they should be used in the country.

With regard to the relationship between language and nations, below are ten terms and their definitions proposed in a document titled; The use of vernacular language in education: the report of the UNASCO Meeting of Specialists, 1951:

1. **Indigenous language**: the language of the people considered to be the original inhabitants of an area.
2. **Lingua franca**: a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different to facilitate communication between them.
3. **Mother or native tongue**: the language which a person acquires in early years and which normally becomes his natural instrument of thought and communication (1st language as preferred by sociolinguistics today).
4. **National language**: a language of a political social and cultural entity.
5. **Official language**: a language used in the business of a government – legislative, executive and judicial.
6. **Pidgin**: a restricted language which arises from the purposes of communication between two social groups of which one is in a more dominant position than the other. The less dominant one is the one which develops the pidgin.
7. **Regional language**: a language which is used as a medium of communication between people living within a certain area who have different mother tongues.
8. **Second language**: the language acquired by a person in addition to his mother tongue (1st language).
9. **Vernacular language**: a language which is the mother tongue of a group which is socially or politically dominated by another group speaking a different language.
10. **World language**: a language used over wide areas of the world (the term International language is preferred today).

Other additional terms include the following (Crystal, 1991)

(a) **Language planning or language engineering**: a systematic attempt to solve the communication problems of a community by studying the various languages or dialects it uses and developing a realistic policy concerning their selection and use.

(b) **Language loyalty or language maintenance**: the concern to preserve the use of a language or traditional form of a language.

(c) **Language shift**: the gradual or sudden move from the use of one language to another.

(d) **Language loss**: the situation which arises when a language ceases to be used by a person or community.

(e) **Language death**: a term used to refer to language loss when there is no doubt that the process is irreversible.

13.11Language and culture

In this part of the unit, we look at language in relation to culture. It is factual that language is a property of cultures and it is used to communicate every thought process and worldview of a given culture. It is a sacred property that marks identity and ancestral link. The ability to speak the same language with another person could result in favour and other positive experiences. Every language communicates experiences, attitudes and behaviours.

Language is more than just a means of communication. It influences our culture, and even our thought processes. In the early years of the 20th century, language was viewed by both sociolinguists and anthropologists as being more important than it actually is in shaping our perception of reality. This was mostly due to Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Whorf who said that language pre-determines what we see in the world around us. In other words, language acts like a polarising lens on a camera in filtering reality – we see the real world only in the categories of our language.

Cross-cultural comparisons of such things as colour terms were used by Sapir and Whorf as evidence of this hypothesis. When we perceive colour with our eyes, we are sensing that portion of electromagnetic radiation, that is, visible light. In fact, the spectrum of visible light is a continuum of light waves with frequencies that increase at a continuous rate from one end to the other. In other words, there are no distinct colours like red and green in nature. Our culture, through language, guides us in seeing the spectrum in terms of the arbitrarily established categories that we call colours. Different cultures may divide up the spectrum in different ways.

Sapir and Whorf interpreted these data as indicating that colours are not objective, naturally determined segments of reality. In other words, the colours we see are predetermined by what our culture prepares us to see.

Language and social behaviour are part of the cultural environment that people grow up in, which can have surprising effects on how they interpret the world around them. This starts from the childhood state. If the children do not learn English during early childhood, they have difficulty in orienting themselves relatively, and absolute orientation makes much more sense to them.

Anthropologists have found that learning about how people categorise things in their environment provides important insights into the interests, concerns, and values of their culture. Field workers involved in this type of research refer to it as *ethno-science*. These ethno-scientists have made a useful distinction in regard to ways of describing categories of reality. Visitors to another society can bring their own culture's categories and interpret everything in those terms. However, there will be little understanding of the minds of the people in the society being visited. In contrast, the visitors can suspend their own culture's perspective and learn the categories of reality in the new society. By doing this, they gain a much more profound understanding of the other culture. Ethnoscientists define these two different approaches as being *etic* and *emic*. *Etic* categories involve a classification according to some external system of analysis brought in by the visitor. It assumes that ultimately, there is an objective reality and that is more important than cultural perceptions of it. In contrast, *emic* categories involve a classification according to the way in which members of a society classify their own world. It may tell us little about the objective reality but it is very insightful in understanding how other people perceive that reality through the filter of their language and culture.

For the community as a whole, socialisation through language learning creates conformity to social norms and transmits the culture of the community. As s/he learns language, a child learns the social structure of the culture, learning the appropriate linguistic form for each kind of person. This is part of communicative competence. Communicative competence is not only

knowing how to speak the specific language(s) used in the community but also knowing how to use language appropriately in any given social situation in the community. This means that speakers have knowledge of all the possible linguistic forms and the rules for choosing the appropriate form. Communicative competence involves knowledge of every aspect of communication in social contexts, including: knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, whom one may speak to, how one may talk to persons of different statuses and roles, what appropriate nonverbal behaviours are in various contexts, what the routines for turn-taking are in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands, [and even] how to enforce discipline, all of which are culturally defined.

If linguistic choices must be made in accordance with the orderings of society, then every choice carries social information about the speaker. Consequently, some linguists reason that the communication of social information presupposes the existence of regular relationships between language usage and social structure. Because of this regular relationship between language and society, the linguistic varieties utilised by the community form a system that corresponds to the structure of society. Even though ways of speaking do not inherently have any social significance, communities assign social values to specific linguistic forms and codes in correlation with which groups use those forms or codes.

Part of claiming membership in a given culture is the ability to know when a speaker is a member of the same culture and when he is not. The reverse of this is also true: when a speaker violates a linguistic norm for a cultural group, its usual interpretation is the speaker is not one of 'us,' but one of 'them'. Sometimes, this interpretation is made below the level of consciousness: the listener knows that there is something about the speaker's language that marks him as 'other', but the listener cannot pinpoint the exact linguistic cues that communicate this. Other times, the listener knows which specific features mark a group's speech. These types of features that distinguish linguistic communities are called *code markers* and they are culturally based and analysed.

Activity 13.1

1. Explain the meaning of the following concepts:

(a) lingua franca

(b) diglossia

(c) code switching and code mixing

(d) multilingualism and bilingualism

2. Discuss the social values of language in your culture

3. Define the relationship between culture and language

4. Assess the interpretation of language and culture in sociolinguistics

Summary

We have learnt in this unit that sociolinguistics studies the interaction between language and society, that it investigates linguistic variation based on the influence of social factors on language use and language structure. We have basically have learnt that sociolinguistics deals with questions of language and social class (e.g. How and why does language vary from one social situation to another?) and language and geography. And we have seen how different speakers conform to cultural norms even as they choose linguistic structures to use in their utterances.

UNIT 14: BASIC CONCEPTS IN PRAGMATICS

14.0 Introduction

This unit introduces you to pragmatics. In the unit, you will deal with how linguistic units are understood from the contextual perspective or indeed how contexts in which linguistic forms are used add to the interpretation of utterances made by speakers and how hearers interpret what they hear.

Learning Outcomes

As you work through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the semantics-pragmatics interface;
- explain how language use is influenced by social context;
- describe different contexts in which language is used;
- explicate the role played by deixis in the interpretation of meaning; and
- describe Grice's theory of implicature in detail.

14.1 Scholarly definitions of pragmatics

Pragmatics has been defined differently by various scholars. These definitions highlight on the nature, principles and scope of pragmatics. Let us look at a few of them.

Leech and Short (1981)define pragmatics as "the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered." Notice the word "utterances" not necessarily **sentences**.

Leech (1983) says pragmatics is "the study of meaning in relation to speech situations". The speech situation enables the speaker use language to **achieve a particular effect** on the mind of the hearer." Thus the speech is goal-oriented (i.e. the meaning which the speaker or writer intends to communicate).

Levinson (1983) has defined Pragmatics is "the study of those aspects of the relationship between language and context that are relevant to the writing of grammars." Notice in this definition that interest is mainly in the inter-relation of language and principles of language use that are context dependent.

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker or writer and interpreted by the listener or reader. It has, consequently, more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves (Yule, 1996).

From the preceding definitions, we can safely say pragmatics is concerned with whatever information is relevant, over and above the linguistic properties of a sentence, to understanding its utterance. It is in short, **the study of language usage**. It is the study of those principles that will account for why a certain set of sentences are anomalous, or not possible utterances.

14.2 Pragmatics – Semantics interface

In practice, the problem of distinguishing 'language' (langue) and 'language use' (parole) had been centred on a boundary dispute between semantics and pragmatics but the difference between them can be traced to two different uses of the verb to mean.

Carnap (1938) says, "If we abstract from the user of the language and analyse only the expressions and their designate (objects), we are in the field of Semantics". Hence Semantics is "the formal relation of signs to the objects they refer," (Morris 1938). While Semantics is defined as meaning of words or linguistic expression in a given language, (without reference to the speaker and the situation), pragmatics is defined in relation to the speaker and the context of the communicative event, with particular interest on the functions, intentions, goals and effects of utterances.

Semantics is simply concerned with the conventional meaning of words, phrases and sentences rather than what the speaker or writer might want the words to mean in a particular context/situation. (Yule, 1996). Hence, we talk of meaning in terms of universal applications. In other words, what an English expression means in Zambia is what it should mean elsewhere. So linguistic semantics emphasises conventional meaning expressed by the use of words and sentences of a language.

Some scholars, however, have argued that pragmatics is not different from semantics because according to them semantics adequately covers all aspects of pragmatics. The contextual theory of meaning, which is a semantic theory for example, explains the relationship between language and the context. On the other hand, scholars in defence of pragmatics, argue that pragmatics covers those areas that semantics has hitherto overlooked, especially the concept of speech acts. It throws more light to what speakers/writers actually do with language and what effects they expect from their hearers/reader. In semantics you ask, "What does ***xyz*** mean? But in pragmatics the question is "what do you mean by ***xyz***?" So the focus of pragmatics is the user rather than the linguistic code. While you have seen the overlap between semantics and pragmatics, we hope you have also grasped the difference between the two concepts. In this course, we hope that you make and keep to this distinction.

14.3 Context and language use

Language "use" in this study will definitely refer to the use of linguistic codes (words) in the context of social life since pragmatics is the study of language use by individuals in specific social contexts and whose actions are in fact influenced by these contexts. It is crucial to also examine the relationship between language and society and how language use is influenced by the social context.

Let us now look at the features and components of context and how various contexts can influence meaning and language use. Why is context so crucial in the study and understanding of linguistic or discourse pragmatics?

Context refers to the situation within which language functions. It may be physical/environmental, social or institutional situation, including events, time, culture or social conventions that can influence language use. The meaning of words should not be restricted to sounds of utterances or their grammatical structure but must include the "pragmatic context" in which they are uttered. Firth (1957: 223) argues that context is the bedrock of any linguistic enterprise because "normal linguistic behaviour as a whole is meaning effort, directed towards the maintenance of appropriate patterns of life". Since every utterance occurs within a 'culturally determined context of situation', meaning is tied to that context about the speaker and the ways

he perceives himself, his roles in the society and his relationship with other members of the society. It is the contextual considerations that make the difference between structural linguistics and sociolinguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. We shall look at the features of context as we examine some of the types of contexts.

14.3.1 Linguistic Context

This refers to the set of words in the same sentence or utterance. The linguistic context forms the linguistic environment that determines the sense of the words in the context. For example if the word 'shoot' appears in a linguistic context along with other words like 'dribble,''penalty,' 'goal', or 'over the bar', 'ball', we immediately understand the **shoot** that is meant. If on the other hand, the same word appears with words like 'soldier', 'gun', 'war,' or 'bullet', the meaning is immediately known. The linguistic context (also known as **co-text**) of a word or words therefore has a strong effect on what we may think such words mean. Generally words occur together and frequently used with some particular words with which they collocate, or associate.

14.3.2Physical/Environmental Context

Once again we know that words mean on the basis of the physical or environmental context. Our understanding of words or expressions is much more tied to the physical context, particularly in terms of the time and place being referred to in the expressions. Other features of the context include: participants, who could be people involved, e.g. husband and wife; neighbours; colleagues; teachers and students and so on. Environmental context also includes the **topic** i.e. what the discourse is about, e.g. politics, religion, race, heath, etc.; **setting**, i.e. where the event takes place, e.g. at home, at work, at school etc., **channel**, e.g. medium – speech, writing, non-verbal), **code** (dialect/style) and **message** form (debate, chat etc.).

14.3.3 Interpersonal Context

The interpersonal context focuses on psychological considerations that influence speech or talk. There is no doubt that the state of the mind of the speaker or writer places some constraints on the quality or amount of interactions s/he engages in. His inputs and reactions are predictable if he is sad, happy, excited or bored. Individual speakers or writers do make linguistic choices and

decide what to say and how to say it. Therefore factors that place constraint on their ability to do this (e.g. state of the mind) is of interest in pragmatics.

14.3.4 Situational/Socio-cultural Context

Unlike the other contexts discussed above, the situational context concerns mainly with socio-cultural considerations. The context of culture includes beliefs, value system, religion, conventions that control individuals' behaviour and their relationship with others. These sociocultural rules of behaviour often guide them in order to communicate effectively with one another. Some beliefs or conventions may be considered as universal, while some are culture-specific, especially those that guide utterances, non-verbal communication and other forms of social behaviour that may be interpreted meaningfully. Knowledge of socio-cultural rules of behaviours brings up the idea of 'communicative competence' which according to Hymes (1972) is the ability of the speaker to know when to speak, when not and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, and in what manner. This competence is integral with attitudes, values and motivations concerning language, its features and uses in the most suitable and appropriate contexts. Can you think of contexts for which conventional words cannot communicate what the words literally mean?

Context is a requisite concept in pragmatics. As a matter of fact pragmatics has been defined by many scholars as the study of context based meaning. In other words, the study of pragmatics is the study of how language use is influenced by the context. Context is the central "influencer" of meaning especially considering how people interact with one another in different situations.

In your own personal interactions and relationships, you will agree, you are able to communicate effectively with people because you recognise the kind of social attitudes and conventions that guide your interactions and you respond exactly the way you are expected. You are able to apply your knowledge of the society and its cultures in your interactions and you talk when you should and keep silent at other times. All these are factors of the context which determine the way you relate with others as a member of the same society.

Activity 14.1

1. *Differentiate between semantics and pragmatics.*
2. *In your own words, define pragmatics.*
3. *What do you understand by the term 'context'as used in pragmatics?*
4. *What features of physical context do you consider very important in the analysis of any piece of discourse?*
5. *Why is context a crucial element in the study of pragmatics?*
6. *Describe any four types of contexts and explain how they affect intended meaning of the speaker or writer.*
7. *Pragmatics is not different from semantics'. Do you agree with this assertion? Discuss.*
8. *Discuss cultural contexts that are vivid in your community.*

14.4 Tact as a Pragmatic Concept

According to Adegbite (2000) tact is a means of interpreting the discourse value of information encoded in a word and its relationship with other linguistic items which precede or follow the items as well as some other non-linguistic factors of communication based on the communicative context of an utterance. 'Discourse value' is the meaning which the speaker or writer expects his hearer/reader to decode or interpret. Rhetorical questions do not generally demand any verbal answers. Tact therefore is that alternative discourse options which are available to you, that will enable you communicate more comprehensively, appropriately and most friendly. If I asked you, "Don't you think your shirt needs washing?" You are not likely to respond, "Yes, I think it does." You will know I am tactically suggesting that you wash your shirt. On the other hand, you're likely to feel embarrassed if I told you: "your shirt is dirty; go and wash it."

Thus tact enables participants in a discourse to consider not only the linguistic context of discourse but to make valid judgements with the result of matching utterances with appropriate functions which the speaker and hearer intend (Adegbite, 2000).

14.4.1 Tact as politeness

When communicators apply tact in speaking or writing, they do so in order to present some serious subject that may ordinarily appear offensive in a more polite and receptive manner. And

we must point out here that one of the principal aims of tact is to achieve politeness. In pragmatics, we always pay attention to the force of our utterance. When people speak, their words or expressions generally have some force (or illocution) on the hearer. The illocution may be positive or negative. To increase the level of politeness, it is recommended that it is better to use more indirect kind of illocution. According to Leech (1983), the indirect illocutions tend to be more polite because they increase the degree of options that people have and then the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished its force tends to be. For example, one sounds more indirect and polite if they say "Would you mind returning my book?" than if they said; "Will you return my book?"

14.4.2 Face-Saving Tact

All that we have discussed so far about tact and how it relates to politeness is to show the various ways individuals use language to achieve the desired aims and sustain social relationships. When a speaker tries not to cause offence, he is said to be protecting the hearer's face. So face-saving tact is a strategy in communication aimed at lessening someone's feeling of threat or fear. It might be in form of polite request or a statement that is actually a question, in order to reduce someone's possibility to feel threatened, embarrassed or insulted. "Could you possibly close the door please" is a more face-saving tact than an imperative "close the door!"

Activity 14.2

1. *From your reading, what do you understand by tact?*
2. *Why is tact important in language use?*
3. *Give examples of statements that are actually meant to make requests or ask questions.*
4. *Why do you think this kind of tact is effective in communication?*
5. *Give examples where questions are not intended to elicit answers.*
6. *Why do you think this kind of tact is effective in communication?*
7. *What is the importance of applying some tact when you speak or write?*

14.5 Deixis

To fully understand the speaker/writer's intended meaning, his identity, situation, time and environment should be known to the reader/hearer. If you get a short note that says: "Meet us

there this evening," it is assumed you understand 'us', 'there' or 'this evening' since meaning depends on the knowledge of who is speaking, about whom, where and when the expressions are made. In other words, the most obvious way in which the relationship between language and the context is reflected in the structure of languages themselves, is through the phenomenon of deixis. The term, deixis has its etymology in Greek which means pointing or indicating. Deixis has such features as use of demonstratives, first and second person pronouns, time, adverbs of place and other grammatical features.

The facts of deixis should act as a constant reminder that natural languages are primarily designed to be used in face to face interaction and therefore, there are limits to the extent to which they can be analysed without taking this (face to face interaction) into account (Lyons, 1977).

Deictic information is very important for the interpretation of utterances. When deictic information is lacking, it becomes difficult to interpret utterances. Consider the following examples:

Imagine you find a notice on someone's office door that reads:

(1) I will be back in an hour.

Since it is not known ***when*** the notice was written, it is difficult to determine when the writer would return.

Or, imagine that lights suddenly go out as someone in the dark, in your group begins to say:

(2) Listen, I am not opposing ***you***, but ***you***, and I am not talking about ***this*** but ***this***.

Or, supposing that we on sea and we find a plastic bag floating, and inside it, on a piece of paper, is a message that reads:

(3) Meet me here four days from now with a plate about this wide.

Obviously, in a case of this sort, we do not know ***who*** to meet, ***where*** or ***when*** to meet them or ***how wide*** the plate to bring.

14.5.1 Deictic Reference

Words such as *us, I, we, him, then, now, there, here* usually identify referents so that the addressee may be able to quickly pick out a person, place or time relevant to the understanding of the intended meaning. These words are called 'indexical' and their functions, i.e. being able to encode the context are called 'deictic' borrowing from the Greek word meaning 'pointing' or 'to point out.' The above deictic references are therefore used as pointers to persons, place or time the speaker has in mind. It is important to note that it is the context of utterance that again gives meaning to indexical like *you, here, now,* or *there.* If you hear me say:

'You, you and you, see me in my office', you will expect that I practically point specifically to certain persons using gestures or eye contact apart from just speaking. And you will also notice that each of the 'you' will refer to a different person whose identity will be known only by those present when I make the statement.

Deictic expressions used to point to persons are called *person deixis,* e.g. I, him, we, you etc. *Place deixis* is used to point to locations e.g. here, there, beside, etc., while *time deixis* is used to point to time, e.g. now, then, this evening, tomorrow etc.

14.5.2 Types of deixis

There are various categories of deixis. Here, we will look at traditional categories. Possibly the most common categories of contextual information referred to by deixis are those of person, place, and time - what Fillmore calls the "major grammaticalised types" of deixis.

Person deixis concerns itself with the grammatical persons involved in an utterance, (1) those directly involved (e.g. the speaker, the addressee), (2) those not directly involved (e.g. overhearers - those who hear the utterance but who are not being directly addressed), and (3) those mentioned in the utterance. In English, the distinctions are generally indicated by pronouns. The following examples show how this is done. (The person deictic terms are in *italics*.

I am going to the movies.

Would *you* like to have dinner?

They tried to hurt *me*, but *he* came to the rescue.

Place deixis, also known as **space deixis**, concerns itself with the spatial locations relevant to an utterance. Similarly to person deixis, the locations may be either those of the speaker and addressee or those of persons or objects being referred to. The most salient English examples are the adverbs **"here"** and **"there"** and the demonstratives **"this"** and **"that"** - although those are far from being the only deictic words. Some examples:

I enjoy living in **this** city.

Here is where we will place the statue.

She was sitting over **there.**

Unless otherwise specified, place deictic terms are generally understood to be relative to the location of the speaker, as in:

The shop is **across the street.**

Where "across the street" is understood to mean "across the street from where I am right now." It is interesting to note that while ***here*** and ***there*** are often used to refer to locations near to and far from the speaker, respectively, ***there*** can also refer to the location of the addressee, if they are not in the same location as the speaker as in:

Here is a good spot; it is too sunny over ***there***.

Languages usually show at least a two-way referential distinction in their deictic system: proximal (proximity), i.e. near or closer to the speaker; and distal (distance), i.e. far from the speaker and/or closer to the addressee. English exemplifies this with such pairs as this/these and that/those, here and there, etc.

In other languages, the distinction is a three-way referential: proximal, i.e. near the speaker; medial, i.e. near the addressee; and distal, i.e. far from both. This is the case in our Zambian languages and in Japanese, Thai, Filipino and Turkish. The archaic English forms *yon* and *yonder* (still preserved in some regional dialects) once presented a distal category which has now been subsumed by the formerly medial 'there'.

Temporal (time) deixis concerns itself with the various times involved in and referred to in an utterance. In other words, time deixis refers to deictic references that point to the time an utterance is made as well as the time the speaker intends to communicate to the hearer. The reference of the following deictic items can only be determined by the time the utterance is made, (Yule, 1985). This includes time adverbs like now, then, soon, before, later, ago; yesterday, today, tomorrow; next, last; Monday, week, month, year etc. Time adverbs can be relative to the time when an utterance is made (what Fillmore calls the "encoding time", or ET) or when the utterance is heard (Fillmore's "decoding time", or DT). While these are frequently the same time, they can differ, as in the case of prerecorded broadcasts or correspondence. For example, if one were to write:

It is raining *now*, but I hope *when* you read this it will be sunny.

The ET and DT would be different, with the former deictic term concerning ET and the latter the DT. Tenses are generally separated into absolute (deictic) and relative tenses. So, for example, simple English past tense is absolute, such as in 'He *went'*, while the past perfect is relative to some other deictically specified time, as in 'He *had gone'*.

It must be noted that there are some other types of deixis not discussed here.

14.6 Deictic centre

A deictic centre, is a set of theoretical points that a deictic expression is 'anchored' to, such that the evaluation of the meaning of the expression leads one to the relevant point. As deictic expressions are frequently egocentric, the centre often consists of the speaker at the time and place of the utterance, and additionally, the place in the discourse and relevant social factors. The

speaker's location at the time of utterance, in other words is the deictic centre, for example; if you are going to my office, and someone tells you; 'The lecturer's office is on **the** left'.

In this case we have to decide whether 'the left' is the speaker's or the hearer's. It is generally assumed that the **left** meant is the speaker's.

However, deictic expressions can also be used in such a way that the deictic centre is transferred to other participants in the exchange, or to persons / places / etc. being described in a narrative. For example, in the sentence; 'I am standing here now', the deictic centre is simply the person at the time and place of speaking. But say two people are talking on the phone long-distance, from Chalimbana to Isoka. The one at Chalimbana can say; 'We are going to Isoka next week', in which case the deictic centre is ***in Chalimbana***, or they can equally validly say; 'We are coming to Isoka next week', in which case the deictic centre is ***in Isoka***. Similarly, when telling a story about someone, the deictic centre is likely to switch to them. So then in the sentence; 'He then ran twenty feet to the left,' it is understood that the centre is with the person being spoken of, and thus, ***to the left*** refers not to the speaker's left, but to the object of the story's left, that is, the person referred to as 'he' at the time immediately before he ran twenty feet.

14.7 Usage of deixis or deictic expression

By deictic expression, we mean those linguistic units or morphemes that have a deictic usage because most linguistic expressions have non-deictic expressions. It is helpful to distinguish between two usages of deixis, gestural and symbolic, as well as non-deictic usages of frequently deictic words. Gestural deixis refers, broadly, to deictic expressions whose understanding requires some sort of audio-visual-tactile information and in general, a physical monitoring of the speech event. A simple example is when an object is pointed at and referred to as "this" or "that". However, the category can include other types of information than pointing, such as direction of gaze, tone of voice, and so on. Symbolic usage, by contrast, requires generally only basic spatial-temporal knowledge of the utterance. So, for example;

"I broke **this** finger."

"I love **this** city."

"I went to **this** city one time."

The utterance, 'I broke this finger' requires being able to see which finger is being held up, whereas, 'I love this city'requires only knowledge of the current location. However, the utterance 'I went to this city one time' has a non-deictic usage of 'this', which does not have reference to anything specific. Rather, it is used as an indefinite article, much the way 'a' could be used in its place. In short, the distinction between usage of deictic expressions as follows: gestural usages require a moment by moment physical monitoring of the speech event for their interpretation, while symbolic usages make reference only to contextual co-ordinates available to the participant's antecedent to the utterance.

14.8 Reference and Inference

A speaker or writer sometimes uses one thing to refer to another and expects his listener/reader to make the connection between the two things. Often, things are used to refer to people and personal names like John, Mulenga or Mweemba can refer to things based on some associations. A student once told a classmate: "I lost my **J. S Farrant"** and the addressee immediately understood that "J. S. Farrant" was a textbook on **Principles and Practices of Education**. Here the names of the author are used to refer to their work in a College context. Similarly, speakers/hearers do make some **inferences** or assumptions which generally enable them to interpret meaning correctly.

Ogden & Richard (1923) conceives this relationship as a triangle, thus: The **symbol** is the word or sentence; the **referent** is the object (in the external world), **thought/reference** is the concept. There is no direct link between the symbol and referent. The link is through the thought or reference (i.e. the concepts of our minds). Reference is therefore the object that the mind conceives about the entity which the word expresses or refers. Thus the referent of the word *chair* is an object with four legs for sitting. Reference can be categorised into semantic or pragmatic reference.

Activity 14.3

1. *Explain the term "deictic centre" and why it is often shifted.*

2. *Discuss how deixis operates in the real world.*
3. *With tangible examples, discuss the different types of deixis.*
4. *State the uses of deixis.*
5. *What is reference?*
6. *With examples, distinguish between semantic reference and pragmatic reference.*
7. *Compare and contrast deixis in English with that of a Zambian language of your choice.*

14.9 Grice's Theory of Implicature

Implicature is a technical term in the pragmatics sub-field of linguistics, coined by Herbert Paul Grice. Implicature refers to what is suggested in an utterance, even though neither expressed nor strictly implied (that is, entailed) by the utterance. For example, the sentence 'Mary had a baby and got married' strongly suggests that Mary had the baby before the wedding, but the sentence would still be strictly true if Mary had her baby after she got married. Grice (1975)'s work is an attempt to clarify the intuitive difference between what is expressed literally in a sentence and what is merely suggested or hinted at by an utterance of the same string of words. To distinguish the latter from the former, Grice (1975, 1989a and 1978, 1989b) uses the terms *implicate* and *implicature*, while he refers to the linguistically coded part of utterance content as '**what is said'**. The sum of what is said in a sentence and what is implicated in an utterance of the same sentence is called the ***'total signification of an utterance',*** (Grice 1978, 1989b). Implicature itself is meant to cover a number of ways in which literally unsaid information can be conveyed.

14.9.1 Types of conversational implicature

Grice identifies two types of implicatures. These being:

(i) generalized conversational implicature, which occurs irrespective of the context and
(ii) particularized conversational implicature, which is based on the context of speakers and situations.

In addition to identifying and classifying the phenomenon of implicature, Grice developed a theory designed to explain and predict conversational implicatures. He also sought to describe

how such implicatures are understood. Grice's theory is basically about how people use language. He therefore suggests a set of assumptions that guide the conduct of conversation for the efficient and effective use of language.

14.9.2 The Cooperative Principle

Grice (1975) postulates a general ***Cooperative Principle.*** Do you have an idea of the Cooperative Principle? Grice identifies as guidelines of this sort four basic **maxims of conversation**, specifying how to be cooperative. It is common knowledge, he argues, that people generally follow these rules for efficient communication. Grice observed that when people talk, they try to be "cooperative" and attempt to obey some ***cooperative principle*** which demands that they make their conversational contributions such as is required, at the stage where it occurred, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk in which they are engaged. The conversational principle operates with some "maxims" in the assumption that the speaker does not say what is false, or irrelevant, or too much or too little. The four maxims are as follows:

i. The Maxim of Quality.

Try to make your contribution true:

- Do not say what you believe to be false
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

ii. The Maxim of Quantity.

- Be as informative as required.
- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

iii. The Maxim of Relevance

- Be relevant (your contributions should be relevant to the conversation).

iv. The Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous; so,

- avoid obscurity
- avoid ambiguity
- strive for brevity
- be orderly. (Matthews, 1997: 219-220)

Activity 14.4

1. *Write detailed notes on implicature.*
2. *Discuss the co-operative principle in relation to the maxims of conversation.*
3. *Explain in detail how you can achieve each of the four maxims of conversation in a communicative event.*

Summary

Semantics and pragmatics are two sisters belonging to the same parent (semiotics). The difference between the two is that semantics is concerned with the meaning of words, phrases and sentences without reference to who uses them, why they are used and the influence of the context on the expression. Pragmatics on the other hand handles those areas which linguistic semantics could not handle, i.e. attention to the user of the language, his particular intention (depending on the situation s/he finds himself) and how s/he expects his hearer (or reader) to respond.

A good understanding of pragmatics will enable you adopt the right kind of language use in different social contexts and possibly achieve the kind of result you expect. As a matter of fact, a good understanding of the roles of language in society demands the kind of linguistic (or communicative) competence that is required to use language in specific social contexts.

We have also looked at the features and types of contexts. All the context types dictate meaning and effective communicators are able to combine the features of each in their communication. It is important to note here that virtually all of the contexts have a part to play in any particular piece of discourse or conversation. The unit has further dealt with the concepts of deixis and the theory of implicature.

UNIT 15: LINGUISTICS AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

15.0 Introduction

Mostly, linguistics studies natural languages, i.e. languages spoken or written in natural settings. Linguistics in its truest sense restricts itself to the description of the physically manifested language.

Learning Outcomes

As you work through this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the fields that interact with linguistics

The field of linguistics does not work in isolation in the study of language, but interacts with other fields. The fields that interact with linguistics include: Neurology, Anthropology, Biology, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology and Literature.

15. 1 Neurolinguistics

Neurolinguistics is one example of the many fields that work alongside with linguistics in the study of language. Neurolinguists, for example, have recently made reasonably successful efforts to discover which parts of the brain have a role to play in language processing as well as finding out the function of each of these parts.

The methods commonly used in the study of language and brain are brain imaging and through the study of brain trauma and abnormalities (study of aphasic patients).

Apart from the field of Neurolinguistics, linguistics interacts with other fields such as; anthropological, applied linguistics, biological and clinical linguistics. As earlier alluded to, Neurolinguistics is a very important field in linguistics because for a linguist to know the neurological basis of language development, especially of the brain's control over the process of speech and understanding, Neurolinguistics is indispensable. Experiments such as brain imaging and interpretation of speech disorders are the mainstay of Neurolinguistics.

15.2 Biological linguistics

Biological linguistics provides linguistics with the biological conditions necessary for language development and use in humans, with reference both to the history of language in the human race

and to child development. The human anatomy (physical structure) plays a crucial role in language development and language acquisition and/or language learning. The existence of the language acquisition device (LAD), now language faculty, shows in part, the importance of biological linguistics where linguistics (particularly psycholinguistics) draws upon.

15.3 Anthropological linguistics

Anthropological linguistics, the study of language variation and use in relation to the cultural patterns and beliefs of human race, provides linguistics with the cultural factors that help account for second language learning. It is argued that one's attitude towards the culture of the target language influences the rate at which language learning/acquisition can occur.

15.4 Clinical linguistics

Clinical linguistics is another field upon which psycholinguists fall back for evidence, especially about the existence of language centres in the brain. Clinical linguistics applies linguistic theories and methods to the analysis of disorders of spoken, written, or signed language. Thus, such disorders as aphasia, dyslexia, calculia, alexia and spoonerisms are all drawn from clinical linguistics.

15.5 Sociology

Sociology is another field that interacts with linguistics. Language variation is the main focus of this field; that is, the variation of language use, or discourse, between different socioeconomic groups. Naturally, discourse analysis is a favourite method in the field. Variation can be, well, *varied*: how do men and women speak differently (this is where gender studies come in)? Whites vs. blacks? Educated vs. uneducated? Rich vs. poor? Conservatives vs. liberals? Old people vs. young people? Religious vs. secular? Teachers vs. students? The list goes on. Furthermore, aspects such as cultural norms, expectations and context, on the way language is used and effects of language use on society are looked at.

15.6 Philosophy

Philosophy is yet another field that interacts with linguistics. It must be noted that language is the basis of philosophy. The early 20^{th} century saw the growth or realization of the role of language in philosophy. Philosophy plays a big role in the study of linguistics. The understanding and

search for meaning forms the fundamental part of linguistics. Disciplines of semantics and metaphysics (subfields of linguistics and philosophy respectively) are not completely independent of each other. It is a very common feature for the disciplines to take principles from the other to explain a particular subject matter. Semantics, or how concepts are represented in the mind is both a linguistic and philosophical problem. Mind and language, language and thought, language and society and so on, are all common fields of philosophy and linguistics.

15.7 Literature

Literature is does interact with linguistics. The interface is such that linguistics provides construction material for literature. Linguistics studies words, their morphological and semantic structure, stylistic potential, application (context) and grammar rules, etc. In other words, linguistics can analyse language and communication on various levels. Thus it is possible to describe literature in many linguistic ways – sentence structure, vocabulary, verse and rhyme patterns, and figures of speech and so on. Linguistics is essential knowledge for a writer as it exposes the whole power of language as a communication means.

Activity 15.1

1. State any five fields that interact with linguistics and describe how each of the stated field works with linguistics.

Summary

It is hoped that you have had an insight on the fields that interact with linguistics. We have in this unit learnt that linguistics as a scientific study of language does not work in isolation but in liaison with other fields.

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