CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY

Integrity, Service, Excellent

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES

PRIMARY TEACHERS' DEGREE

LITERACY AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

LLE 3100: ISSUES IN THE TEACHING OF LITERACY AND LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to LLE 3100 course.This is an extension of the teaching methods course (LLE 2103) and aims at broadening your knowledge in language and literacy skills in Zambian languages and English. You will notice that apart from being an extension course, it is also a bit challenging because it is equipping you with the skills for the teaching of grammar of the English and Zambian languages in advanced teaching methods that is offered in the fourth year. Issues of Language Policy Planning and Orthography have been discussed to help you understand the current language situation in Zambia.

Aim

The aim of this course is to equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes on how to teach literacy and language at primary school level.

 Time frame

This module should be completed in approximately five months

Assessment

Assessment	Comments	Percentage
Assignment 1	Written	20%
Assignment 2 (seminar)	Team work	10%
Test		20%
Final exam		50%
Total		**100%**

Learning outcomes

By the end the course, you are expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Language planning and the Zambian orthography
- demonstrate ability to teach grammar of English and Zambian language
- demonstrate abilities to teach writing in primary school

UNIT 1: OVERVIEW OF ORTHOGRAPHY

Introduction

Welcome to unit 1! The unit discusses language planning and issues concerning language planning in multilingual countries. The unit will further examine the two types of orthography; transparent orthography and an opaque orthography. Lastly, it will discuss the language policy in Zambia.

1.1 Unit objective

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

- explain the meaning of language planning
- examine the types of language planning
- understand that different languages have different writing systems
- understand the difference between a transparent orthography and an opaque orthography
- relate your teaching to the Zambian orthography
- demonstrate understanding of the Zambian Language Policy

1.2 Language Planning

Language planning refers to the "organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at national level".Language policy (statements of intent) and planning (implementation) (LPP) is therefore defined as planning - often at large scale and national, usually undertaken by governments - meant to influence, if not change, ways of speaking or literacy practices within a society (Ferguson, 1968; Fishman, 1974; Haarmann, 1990; Haugen, 1983). There are two main types of language planning:

1.2.1 Status language planning

Status language planning deals with giving a language the status of, for example, a regional official language, a national language or using it in education and so on. It is concerned with either raising or lowering the status of a language in relation to others in the country. In other words, Status planning deals with changing the attitude of the speakers towards a language, done at national level. Status planning is basically political and the main key players are politicians and government officials. However, you should understand that whatever the status purposes, status planning decisions should be based on community needs.

Van Els (2005) argues that there are four aspects related to the status of second languages namely; their status for their own communicative purposes, their role as second languages – as a lingua franca or as a language of instruction, their role as immigrant or ethnic minority languages and the degree to which promotion of second language impacts on linguistic or language rights. All of these aspects need to be taken into consideration when making status planning decisions.

1.2.2 Corpus language planning

Corpus planning is linguistic based because it deals with the language itself (the code), for example how it should be written if it has not been written before, spelling rules, vocabulary and the script. In other words, Corpus Planning deals with changing the shape of the language such as standardizing its pronunciation, orthography, grammar, and dictionaries.

Corpus planning, with its focus on the nature of the language to be taught and learned is the activity area most dependent on linguistic input for its methodology, but it is shaped by status planning decisions. Its output contributes in a major way to language-in-education planning and it may contribute to, or benefit from, the prestige that a language has in the community. Corpus planning is basically linguistic based and the main key players are linguists and academicians.

1.2.3 The Process of Language Planning

The process of language planning can be summarised as follows: Policy making (or the selection of a national language), codification; through spelling and grammar rules, elaboration by expanding the language and cultivation through the preparation of style manuals (Neustupny, 1970).

In addition, Hudson (1980:33), discussed the processes which a variety should go through to be accepted as a standard language:

- **Selection of a norm**: from the various dialects that are spoken in an area, one is chosen to represent all them. For example, the colonial government chose Plateau Tonga instead of Ila and Valley Tonga. The phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax of plateau Tonga came to be accepted as the norms (standards).
- **Codification**: A body or committee is given the responsibility of developing dictionaries, spelling, grammars so that the variety is 'fixed' and it is easy to tell what is correct from what is wrong. (Note that the orthographic reforms of Zambian languages by the Ministry of Education in 1977, are part of this codification. This is discussed later).
- **Elaboration of functions**: Decisions are made regarding what the variety chosen will be used for e.g., central government administration, education, literature, judiciary, scientific work, etc. This needs deliberate government policy.
- **Acceptance**: people have to accept the variety chosen as the language of the community or even national language, if this is what is desired, otherwise it cannot progress in its development.

1.2.4 Considerations when Planning Language

There are considerations that should be made when Planning Language. The question of why we should plan languages and the goals behind it are addressed by Fishman (1971). He suggests that in multilingual countries and group roots of personal identity and social community, language determines the deeper structures of social change and development.

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Gumperz and Hymes (1972) further explain that languages also, distinguish ethnic identity, social status or membership. Conversely, they also serve as measures of preservation of social differences (Eastman, 1983). This implies that policy formulation should consider the attitudes of ethnic groups towards their languages and language choices should not be justified only under languages with a literary heritage or with a great tradition.

Language planning must be associated with efforts on behalf of language rights and must be implemented in a fashion which encourages minorities to regulate their own lives and to help shape the policies that affect them, rather than merely being the 'objects of' policies coming from the outside or 'above'.

Activity
- Think of any speech community or country which requires language planning. Why do you think such a community or country requires language planning? Can you suggest the steps which that community or nation should undertake.
- Discuss whether the current seven official regional languages in Zambia meet some or all the criteria for standardizing a language

1.3 Language Planning in Multilingual Countries

Considering the multilingual situations, when one speaks of language policy or language planning, what immediately comes to mind is probably a package of strategies for solving the numerous problems related to or generated by the multilingual contexts. Therefore language planning is expected to focus on problem solving or as Rubin and Jernudd (I 971 b: XVII) put it, on "the formulation and evaluation of alternatives for solving language problems to find the best or optimal, most efficient decision".

To better comprehend the process of language planning in multilingual countries, here is an instance of language planning in the Philippines. In the Philippines, Gonzalez (2003) outlines the process of language planning. The bilingual education policy of 1974 divided the curriculum into a Filipino domain (Filipino Language and Social Studies) and an English domain (English Language, Mathematics, and Science) with the vernaculars as 'auxiliary media of instruction'. In actual implementation, the vernaculars were used only

during the first few weeks of schooling. Instruction using Filipino and English began soon thereafter.

During the incumbency of Andrew Gonzalez as Secretary of Education under the Estrada Administration, an attempt was made to revive vernacular teaching through the use of the three major local *linguae francae* of the Philippines (Ilokano, Cebuano, Tagalog) as media of instruction until Grade 3 and in English thereafter, under the bilingual scheme. The pilot programme was conceptualised with the help of specialists in literacy from the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The initial feedback from the pilot schools set up was overwhelmingly positive (the pupils were active, not passive; they asked questions spontaneously instead of answering in monosyllables and phrases in a language they hardly understood, conceptualisation especially in mathematics took place almost from the first day of school). Initially, under Undersecretary Isagani Cruz during the Macapagal-Arroyo Administration, the reports from the field were so positive that Undersecretary Cruz mandated the pilot experiment to end and to use the three local *linguae francae* as initial languages of instruction during the first two years in the entire system.

However, policy differences with his superior moved the Undersecretary to resign and the pilot programme itself has suffered from 'benign neglect'. Once more, practice was aborted in spite of a rational and well-thought-out policy.

The insights we get from the Philippine experience and other experiences are that language policy is relatively easy to draft; language planning, usually based on a policy document or even a law, is likewise easy to formulate. In the case of the Philippines, since the first attempts at forming a republic, language policy was made part of the Constitution or the fundamental law of the land.

Yet in spite of policy expressed by equally eloquent rhetoric, realisation has been slow. The key element towards realization of language policy, is political will based on a developing or, better still, a developed, cohesion within the state that leads to genuine nationhood.

The conclusion from the Philippine experience is that this may be applied to other multilingual societies and interpreted as follows. Policy may not be fully carried out in practice. Language development is multidimensional and has many facets. Like some other countries which have a similar option, the Philippines has a national language which it holds up as a symbol of unity and linguistic identity but not as a medium of instruction for scholarly discourse at the university level. Thus, symbolism takes priority over use in some domains but not in others.

It therefore follows that policy cannot be isolated from the environment in which it takes place. It does not exist in a vacuum. The understanding of the environment is necessary as needs for policy actions are generated in the environment and transmitted through a political system. Language planning works have provided a framework for understanding motivations for planning and the relationship between language planning and socio-economic planning.

Activity
In a multilingual nation like Zambia, language planning is inevitable. Does a policy on language use exist in Zambia? Explain your answer clearly.

1.4 Orthography Issues

As a teacher of language, it is important you understand that different languages have different orthographies. You should also understand that reading is the process of decoding and grasping verbal language in print or script. Therefore, in order to become literate, one has to learn spelling-to-sound mappings: the mapping of written symbols to units of sound (phonology) by a process otherwise referred to as phonological recoding. You should also understand that learning to read requires an understanding of the spelling system. This is what some scholars call orthographic knowledge. Conrad et al (2012) defined orthographic knowledge as an understanding of the print conventions used in a writing system or knowledge of how words are spelled. In other words, it is an awareness of the general attributes of a writing system, including sequential dependencies (which letters are legally allowed to follow other letters), structural redundancies (the letter

combination, for instance, ''*ast*'' occurs in many different words), and letter position frequencies.

Basically, general knowledge of the orthographic system is the implicit knowledge of the consistencies or conventions with which letter combinations occur within a language. For example, knowing that the letter combination ''*ba*'' often begins a word in Bemba, but ''*sb*'' never does. This knowledge may consist of either rules of how letters can legally be combined within a language or the statistical frequencies with which letter combinations co-occur within a language. Evidence also suggests that very young children are aware of the orthographic consistencies that exist within their language and may use this information when reading and spelling words.

Knowledge of orthographic patterns and the knowledge of mental grapheme representations are the two types of knowledge that comprise orthographic knowledge. You should understand that the knowledge of orthographic patterns is knowledge of the rules that govern how phonemes can be represented with graphemes within a particular language. This type of knowledge begins to emerge as early as kindergarten and includes knowledge of the alphabetic principle and of patterns and rules (e.g., 1:1 letter-sound relationship and ways to represent long vs short vowels) respectively.

1.4.1 Alphabetic Principle

The alphabetic principle refers to the insight that phonemes can be represented by graphemes. Children first realize that certain graphemes represent certain speech sounds. With more print experience, children gain greater understanding of grapheme–phoneme correspondences. For example, in English, children begin to understand that single phonemes can be represented by multiple graphemes (e.g., "sh" for /*S*/) and multiple phonemes can be represented by a single grapheme (e.g., "x" for / ks/).

English and Zambian languages use alphabetic writing system and specifically the Roman script, but some languages do not. For example, Chinese and Japanese use character

based scripts. In Zambian languages, children learn a very consistent system where one letter makes one sound. In other words, orthographies or spelling systems of Zambian languages are transparent in that one can tell which sound each letter represents. This means that for Zambian languages, there is 1:1 letter-sound correspondences e.g letter 'a' is sound /a/ and nothing else. This is what we call alphabetic principle. Zambian languages therefore have a transparent orthography.

English is not transparent although it is an alphabetic language. It is the best example of an opaque orthography. This means that it is not easy in many cases to tell which sounds letters represent in the language. For example, there are 26 letters in the alphabet representing 44 sounds.

It is important you should understand that even if languages have different orthographies, all these types of visual symbol share one core feature; they can be recorded into sounds. Therefore, phonics methods are not universal across languages because of the differences in orthographies.

1.4.2 Language differences

By now I believe you understand that different languages have developed different symbol systems (orthographies) for representing the spoken form. Because of this, when a different writing system is applied to another language, there is a contradiction and the two writing systems are interpreted differently.

Therefore, adaptations need to be made in order to describe the respective languages, and how these adaptations are made depends on the different hands that exhibit the same sound by different combinations. This is the reason FL writers cannot apply the same orthographic rules to both the L1 and the FL, even though they may use the same writing system as in the case of English and German which both use the Latin writing system (GmbH, 2015, P. 32).

Most Bantu languages use an alphabetic orthography, and are said to have a "shallow" orthography; meaning that the correspondences between letters and sounds (graphemes/phonemes) in the writing system are close to one-to-one.

In Zambia, for example, the seven regional local languages (Nyanja, Bemba, Tonga, Lozi, Kaonde, Lunda and Luvale) provide a good example, with a one-to-one letter-sound correspondences. They are classified as transparent languages that have a shallow orthography because of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences that are simple and straightforward. For example; letter 'e' is sound /e/ and nothing else.

For learning to read, a transparent orthography with simple letter-sound relationships facilitates the development of both reading accuracy and phonological awareness skills. Even children with low phonological awareness skills seem to be able to compensate for any deficit after exposure to any systematic literacy instruction in a simple orthography.

Consequently, in opaque orthography such as English, the achievement of phoneme level of awareness skill seems to take longer, and is sometimes never fully achieved, resulting in persistent phonological awareness deficit as well as problems with word reading accuracy. Hence, phonological awareness remains as a major limiting factor for the development of accuracy reading skills in opaque languages such as English, but not in transparent languages.

In alphabetical orthographies, children are taught letter-sound correspondences, and they gain the alphabetic knowledge. In Zambian languages, the mapping from letter to phoneme is 1:1. Examples are Bemba, Tonga and Nyanja among others. These languages are therefore agreeable to synthetic phonics instruction, being supplemented by analytical techniques when faced with non-decodable words. This is because Synthetic Phonics teaches children the sounds of the English language and then teaches them to develop the skills needed to decode and encode, read and write words.

Synthetic phonics method involves the synthesising, or blending of phonemes (sounds) to make a word, enabling children to read; hence, there is no guessing. However, Synthetic

phonics method is not recommended merely because of the 1:1 relation between letters and sounds, but also because the sound patterns of the words in these languages are easy to segment.

For instance, ciNyanja language, syllable structure is simple, CVCV (Consonant – Vowel – Consonant – Vowel) pattern, except in few cases where there is CCVCV as in bvala (dress up), CCCVCCVCCV as in mphunzitsi (teacher) and CCCCVCCCV as in nkhwangwa.

However, in other European languages, phonics instruction is not the only method agreeable because one letter can make more than one sound.

You should therefore understand that phonics methods are not universal across languages, because orthographies do not only differ in the units of sounds that they represent, but one letter can also make more than one sound. Additionally, the sound patterns of words in some languages are also more complex. For example English has many CVC, CVCC, as in words such as (cat, girl).

Another challenge is that in English, one letter can make more than one sound. For example; the letter **A** makes different sounds in words such as (cat, make, car, talk, put, cup).

Despite the fact that orthographic consistency affects the rate of reading acquisition, reading challenges are common and quite similar across all languages. Therefore, the beginning reader must become aware of these challenges in order to understand how the alphabet works, but awareness of these challenges may not always be easy for young children, hence you need to use systematic phonemic instruction in order to attain superior performance in reading.

Reflect on this:

Do you think it is easy for children to learn to read in a transparent language? Why?

1.5 Language Policy in Zambia

Language policy can be defined as "a process of decision-making concerning the teaching and use of language, and their careful formulation by those empowered to do so, for the guidance of others" (Prator cited by Markee, 1986: 81).

In Module LLE 2103, you were introduced to the current language situation in Zambia, but not in detail because there were so many issues to look at before you go for the first teaching practice. In this Module, you will be introduced to language policy trends in Zambia from pre Independence period to present. This will also benefit you for the second teaching practice.

Before independence, language policies in Zambia were characterised by the imposition of the colonial language as official language at national level and the selection of some of the local indigenous languages as official languages at regional level.

By 1950, the language-in-education policy that was there for the territory was known as three-tier, guided by the principle of complementarity. Learners were taught in the local language most commonly used in the locality for the first two years of primary education. Thereafter, they would be taught in one of the regional official languages (Silozi; Chitonga-Chiila; Chibemba or Chinyanja) for another two years and then in English from the fifth year onwards (Chanda, 1998:63; Kashoki, 1978:26).

Since independence, the Ministry of Education has constantly recognised the role of language in education when formulating and reviewing national education policies as evidenced in the 1966, the 1977 and the 1996 education policy statements and documents.

Shortly after independence the issue of language of classroom instruction or Language-in-Education was debated extensively in the Zambian parliament. The issue was with regard to the status of English and the local languages in the education system, each with a fair share of justification. Despite all the arguments in favour of using local languages as media of classroom instruction and their teaching as subjects, Zambia opted for English as sole medium of instruction from Grade One to University. Mr John Mwanakatwe, the then minister of Education declared this in 1966.

Later on, there was a realisation that the use of English as a sole medium of instruction in schools was not without shortcomings. The 1977 educational reforms document states that "the teaching of Zambian languages as subjects in schools and colleges should be made more effective and language study should have equal status with other important subjects" (GRZ, 1977:33). This shows the realisation of the importance of the role the local languages play in education.

Still, after 1977 education reforms, English remained the sole official language of communication at national level as well as the official language of classroom instruction from Grade One to the highest level of education. The decision was arrived at due to the fact that English had competed more effectively against the local languages.

To the large extent, the 1977 document re-iterates the 1966 position but only introduces a provision which is difficult to implement because it constitutes a prescription which did not reflect reality.

After about two decades, the 1996 Language in Education Policy was produced, and it is contained in the publication: *GRZ Ministry of Education (1996) Educating Our Future: National Policy on Education. Lusaka: ZEPH*. Concerning the quality of the basic education provision, the document states that "school leavers find it difficult to communicate confidently in speech or writing, be it in a Zambian language or in English" (GRZ, 1996:27). This statement suggests that the language-in-education policy formulated in 1966 and reiterated in 1977 that English be used as sole medium of instruction from Grade One to university, might not have yielded the expected results.

The policy further acknowledges research findings that support the use of local languages as media of classroom instruction. The policy shows that children learn better in their mother tongues through the language experience approach in which they learn from known to unknown. That is, first they learn in the mother tongue which would give a solid foundation for the transfer of skills to English quickly and successfully. Successful first language learning is, in fact, believed to be essential for successful literacy in a second language and for learning content subjects through the second language.

The language policy of 1996 can be said to be inclusive, as the minority languages also feel recognized and acknowledged. Despite the fact that the 1996 Language in Education Policy was more progressive and positive than the 1977 one, the recommendations were not implemented except in some very few schools in the rural areas. This means that, to a large extent, English still remained the medium of instruction from grade one to the highest level of education.

Reflect on this:

- Having discussed the trends in language policy, would you say that the 1996 policy documents has better recommendations? If so how? Explain your answer by giving concrete examples.

1n 2000, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) embarked on the school curriculum review starting with Lower and Middle Basic Education (Grades 1-7). The review was meant to redefine the desired learner, the teacher-educator / instructor and the teaching learning outcomes so as to make education relevant and responsive to individual and society (MESVTEE, 2013). This review was based on the fact that many findings supported the opinion that many Zambian children were not gaining literacy skills. It was in the light of this low achievement that MESVTEE took steps to improve the situation.

It was observed that while many factors affect education quality, the language of classroom fundamentally impacts on a child's ability to read and write. This is because learning in one's first language is essential for the initial teaching of reading. Children arrive on the first day of school with thousands of oral vocabulary words and tacit knowledge of the sound system of their mother tongue, but are unable to use and build upon these linguistic skills because they are instructed in a foreign language. Dismissing this prior knowledge, and trying to teach children to read in a language they are not accustomed to hearing or speaking, makes the teaching of reading difficult especially in under resourced schools in developing countries (MESVTEE, 2013).

As a result of the arguments given in the foregoing, the language of instruction strategy was proposed as follows: for all learning areas from pre-school to Grade 1, local

languages would be used. In Grade 2, English would be introduced as subject while instruction in all learning areas and content subjects and literacy in Zambian languages would be in the local language. This pattern would continue for grades 3 and 4. From Grade 5-7, instruction in content subjects would be done in English, and Zambian languages would be taught as subjects in the local language. This policy was implemented from 1st January, 2014 to date and the results or impact of it is yet to be realised.

Reflect on this:

> As a student who is being trained to teach in primary school, do you think the implementation of the 2013 curriculum framework would have an impact on the reading levels among the Zambian school going children? Why?

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UNIT 2: TEACHING THE GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH AND ZAMBIAN LANGUAGES

2.0 Introduction

This unit discusses the teaching of grammar at the Primary School level. It is assumed that you have acquired some grounding in the morphology and syntax of Bantu languages and English from the relevant linguistics units. You will be required to use this knowledge and also your competence todesign your lessons and activities for your pupils.

2.1 Unit objectives

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

- Explain the difference between prescriptive and descriptive grammar teaching,
- Give reasons for and against the teaching of grammar in a mother tongue,
- Explain what should be taught in a mother tongue,
- Explain challenges to the teaching of grammar and possible solutions for these,

2.2 Misconceptions about grammar

Grammar is often misunderstood in the language teaching field. The misconception lies in the view that grammar is a collection of arbitrary rules about static structures in the language. This misconception may have arisen because many people associate the term grammar with verb paradigms and rules about linguistic form. However, Larsen-Freeman (1995) argued that grammar is not unidimensional and not meaningless; it embodies the three dimensions of morphosyntax (form), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (use). These dimensions are interdependent; a change in one results in change in another. Further questionable claims are that the structures do not have to be taught, learners will acquire them on their own, or if the structures are taught, the lessons that ensue will be boring (Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

Mwansa (2016) also argued that, for many lay people, what comes into their minds when they hear the word *grammar* is that it is a collection of rules prescribing the correct way of using the language. These rules in cultures with longer written literatures are often formulated by the educated elite who believe they speak or write the best variety of their

language and the rest should emulate them. This type of grammar is what he called **prescriptive grammar** because it 'prescribes' or gives rules of how a language should be used.

For example, the teaching of grammar in English was prescriptive in the first decades of the 20th century. Pupils learnt for example, that a sentence should not begin with a coordinator like "and" or end with a preposition such as 'to' (e.g. This is the man I gave the book to). These rules were contrived in that many ordinary speakers of the language used to begin and end sentences with coordinators and prepositions, respectively. Some 'rules' of grammar were borrowed from classical languages like Latin and imposed on English.

Mwansa (2016) further stated that a similar situation occurred in Zambian languages in the early days of missionary education in some regions. Some European missionaries wanted to write Bantu languages as if they were **isolating** (words consist almost entirely of single morphemes) languages like English. For example, what is a single verb in Tonga *Balamutuma* is a sentence of three separate words in English, "They send him/her." Therefore, missionaries thought the Bantu version should correspond closely to the English one in writing: *ba la mu tuma,* which, however, is not what we hear when people utter this verb. Writing a Bantu verb as we have done in the last sentence is called writing **disjunctively**. When we combine all the morphemes in the verb into one word, we write **conjunctively**. The latter in this case is the most natural and it is the way the languages should be written.

An opposite approach to the study of grammar mentioned above is what we call **Descriptive grammars.** Descriptive grammar focused on the *synchronic* uses of language, that is, how the language was being used at that particular time by people. They revealed, as should be expected, varieties of usages in the language and each variety was considered to be legitimate. Descriptive grammars helped to weaken some of the prescriptive rules that had been imposed on the writing and speaking of English.

As for the teaching of grammar in primary and secondary schools, there is a tendency to be prescriptive. The reasons why many teachers are prescriptive are not difficult to find. One reason is that writers chose to ignore the approved orthographies and this forces some teachers to prescribe rules in terms of spelling and word division conventions (Mwansa, 2016).

2.2.1How is grammar acquired?

One question that has been asked is "how is grammar acquired in young learners?' Different scholars have expressed their thoughts about this question and some have indicated that some learners acquire second language grammar naturally without instruction. For example, there are immigrants to the United States who acquired proficiency in English on their own. This is especially true of young if we talk of spoken language. However, among there some immigrant groups are learners who may achieve a degree of proficiency, but whose English language is far from accurate. The more reason for grammar instruction.

With regard to whether instruction can help learners acquire grammar they would not have learned on their own, some research, although not unequivocal, points to the value of form-focused instruction to improve learners' accuracy over what normally transpires when there is no focus on form. Larsen-Freeman (1995) argued that it is also true that learning particular grammatical distinctions requires a great deal of time even for the most skilled learners.

2.2.2 Similarities and differences in the way we teach the grammars of our languages

Some of the important differences between the state of Bantu grammars and English for example are that:

- English has a longer history of written literature. The orthography (spellings and other rules of writing) are quite fixed in English but nebulous in some Zambian languages.

- The Bantu languages have less than a century of written literature and to date the written literature shows a variety of spelling conventions. In short, the orthography is not yet fixed and accepted in spite of the Ministry of Education approved orthographies (MOE, 1977).

- The other difference is the distinction between an oral and literate versions of the languages.Mwansa (2016) argued that it is difficult sometimes to make judgments between colloquial (i.e. informal spokeen language) and formal (standard written language) uses of our languages. For example, there are arguments as to whether we should write morphemes which in speaking tend to be attached to other words as parts of those words or separate them. A good example is of the Bemba coordinator *na* "and" in 1 below:

    1.   (a)   umuntunaimbwayakwe

                    Lit. 'a person and dog his/hers'; "A person and his dog"

        (b)   umuntuneembwayakwe

                    "A person and his dog."

The case of 1(b) is what we hear but if we write it as in this example, we are combining two words as indicated in the gloss. Should we use this colloquial spelling or the one in 1(a) that clearly shows that we have separate words? Such issues are still not settled for many people.

2.2.3 Challenges for teaching grammar in Zambian languages

- The shortage of appropriate teaching and learning materials in Zambian languages is a consequence of the low status these language have in the educational system.

- Ignorance on the part of teachers. Many teachers in Primary schools have a very poor grasp of the grammar of the languages they are supposed to teach. This is so perhaps because they never studied any Zambian language in school and their college training did not equip them to teach it.

- The language and literacy sections in Colleges of Education including universities in Zambia are staffed mainly with lecturers who specialised in English language teaching.
- The use of untrained teachers (or teachers trained to teach other subjects) to teach Zambian languages because they are native speakers of the languages, also leads to very poor teaching of grammar. Being a native speaker of a language does not qualify one to teach that language.

2.2.4How do we improve the teaching of grammar in primary?

- There is need for a strong political will
- Teachers need take pride aside and promote the teaching of Zambian languages in schools
- There is need to raise the status of our languages by making them languages compulsory in schools etc.

Reflect on this:

- Mention other reasons why many teachers are prescriptive and not descriptive.
- Would writing our languages disjunctively make spellings easier or more difficult?
- How can we improve the teaching of Zambian languages in school

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UNIT 3: TEACHING STRATEGIES

3.0 Introduction

In this section I will discuss three approaches or strategies you can use in teaching Zambian languages and English. These are the inductive, deductive and the incidental approaches or strategies.

3.1 Unit Objectives:

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

- demonstrate understanding of the grammar teaching strategies

- justify the use of the teaching strategies

- plan lessons considering the three strategies

3.2 Inductive Teaching Approach

According to Jack (2002), Inductive learning or learning by induction is an approach in which learners are not taught grammatical or other types of rules directly, but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using the language. Language teaching methods which emphasize use of the language rather than presentation of information about the language(for example the DIRECT METHOD, COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH, and COUNSELLING LEARNING) make use of the principle of inductive learning.

It is important you understand that as pupils come to school, they are not tabula rasa. They already have the language which they speak fluently as native speakers. Your task in teaching grammar, therefore, is not like that of a second language teacher who is introducing new facts about a language to pupils. It is merely drawing out the language knowledge pupils already possess: making it explicit as in the example below. I have decided to give the example in English just to make it more accessible to other students

who may not understand Zambian language, but remember that what I illustrate can also be done in any Zambian language.

When teaching the continuous tense, you may ask some pupils in class to perform different tasks while others are observing. While they are still performing the tasks, ask other pupils what their friends are doing. You will get answers like:

a. Chanda is cleaning the window
b. Mabvuto is sweeping the floor
c. James is jumping

Write the sentences on the board and ask the pupils what is common in the sentences. Pupils will certainly notice the presence of …'ing' in all the sentences.

What is happening in this task is that you are using pupils' *prior knowledge* of the language and make pupils deduce what you are teaching own their own. This exercise is recommended as it provokes thinking in children. Inductive reasoning therefore proceeds from examples or data to conclusions, generalizations or rules. You should also know that this is teaching grammar **covertly** (not openly).

3.3 Deductive Learning Approach

Deductive learning also learning by deduction is an approach to language teaching in which learners are taught rules and given specific information about a language. They then apply these rules when they use the language. Language teaching methods which emphasize the study of the grammatical rules of a language (for example the GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD) make use of the principle of deductive learning.

Example: A teacher of Lozi is teaching about the passive voice in Lozi to a grade eight class. She starts by telling pupils that the passive voice is formed by adding the passive extension 'w' to the verb before the final vowel as shown below in.

Tama "tie" becomes *tam-w-a* "to be tied"

The teacher then writes a few more active verbs on the board and asks pupils to change them to the passive form. After this, pupils are asked to think of their own verbs and to write both their active and passive forms in their exercise books.

In this lesson, the teacher starts the lesson by presenting the rules of the language on how the passive is formed. As Mwansa (2016) puts it, this is the traditional PPP lesson format: *presentation*, *practice* and *production*. In this lesson, grammar is explained **overtly** (openly).

3.4 Incidental Teaching Approach

According to Mwansa (2012), incidental teaching refers to the teaching of grammar in the process of teaching other language skills. For instance, in the process of teaching literature or reading, many opportunities for teaching grammar arise. As a teacher, you should be aware that it is not always that we plan to teach grammar but it just arises in the process of teaching other things.

Reflect on this:

- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the three teaching strategies; inductive, deductive and incidental Approaches.

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UNIT 4: WRITING

4.0 Introduction

I believe you still remember that in module LLE 2103, I discussed the meaning of writing and its importance and some basic skills of teaching writing. In this module, I will go beyond that and discuss issues concerning writing process and writing as a product and writing as a genre.

4.1Learning outcomes
After working through this unit, you should be able:

- Define writing process and writing as a product.

- discuss the differences between writing process and writing as a product

- describe the various factors involved in teaching writing process

- design effective lessons to teach various writing tasks in different genres

4.2 Writing Instruction

As discussed in module LLE 2103, Writing is a means of communication and can be referred to as the act of forming graphic symbols which relate to the sounds that we make when we speak. In other words, writing is the physical act of putting down sentences on paper that have been formulated in the mind. The ability to translate concepts into sentences that can be written down requires that the writer has knowledge of the alphabetic principle. Secondly, the writer must have the psychomotor skill of actually writing the letters of the alphabet into words and sentences.

You will notice that in the initial stages of learning to write, say in the lower Primary school, learners sometimes find it difficult to making the transition from speaking to writing probably because they lack the knowledge of the alphabetic principle. However,

when writing becomes part of a child's world, punctuation, spelling, grammar suddenly come into play.

From what I have discussed above, you can see why in the lower Basic classes, there is much emphasis on **pre-writing activities** that are designed to increase the children's ability to write letters (handwriting) and also spelling.

The mistake some teachers make is to equate the teaching of writing to the teaching grammar (teaching proper sentence construction, appropriate use of tenses, and punctuation). While it is true that grammar is an important component of teaching writing, effective writing requires much more. When a writing process is used to teach writing, students begin to understand writing as a form of communication.

4.2.1 What is involved in writing?

You should understand that the teaching of writing is an ongoing process; with so many skills that take time and practice to master. Mwansa, (2007, p. 75) states that in order to understand clearly what we are doing when we say we are teaching our pupils to write, we need to think about the writing process. Writing is a very complicated skill because it involves a simultaneous orchestration (arrangement) of different activities.

Tribble's (1996: 43) proposed a list of knowledge areas that a writer needs to command to be able to write well: **writing process knowledge, content knowledge, context knowledge** and **language system knowledge.**

4.2.2 Writing process knowledge

Kellogg (1996, in Flynn and Stainthorp, 2006:57) proposed a model of writing which has the following processes *formulation*, *execution* and *monitoring*.

Formulation refers to two sub-processes: planning and translating. For planning stage, a writer starts by thinking about what to write, the content. From here the concepts that she has thought about are translated into sentences. These sentences are then executed into

words onto a piece of paper or typed into a word processor. The written sentences can then be read and edited. Editing what has been written is part of monitoring.

This model appears to suggest that these processes occur in a linear order but this is not the case. Skilled writers for example, can move to and fro over these processes. They might be editing a sentence at the same time as they are formulating, that is planning, a new sentence.

4.2.3 Content knowledge

Content knowledge refers to knowledge of the subject matter one is writing about. This may have come from our reading, personal experiences, cultural knowledge and also general knowledge of the world. You may have noticed that when you are writing or talking about something you know very well, words just flow easily. Sometimes you find you have more problems in reducing what to say than in finding an expression to use. It is unfortunate that as teachers we tend to ignore this very important point that children should write on what they know and care about first before venturing into unknown territory.

4.2.4 Context knowledge

Context knowledge refers to the fact that authentic writing occurs in both a linguistic and social context. Context knowledge also refers to their understanding of the audience for their writing. People write letters, for example, because there are purposes for these. They may be responding to what others have written; they may be communicating their problems to others; applying for work and so on. They know whom they are writing to: whether it is a person with more or less power than them; someone hostile or friendly and so on.

Writers make guesses at what their audiences are likely to know or not know and what they like or dislike as they compose. In other words, they communicate vicariously with their audiences adjusting what they write to suit their readers. All these social-cultural and economic issues have a bearing on how one writes. Teachers, however, rarely specify the audience their pupils have to think about. This makes pupils believe the only audience

is the teacher and that the teacher is basically concerned with accuracy in language or text features; not in what they communicate, or the content.

4.2.5Language system knowledge

Language system knowledge is knowledge of the grammar of the language, the discourse and the text. Good writers understand that there are different socially acceptable ways of organising information and effectively communicating it. They have knowledge of genres (discussed below). When we teach pupils to write compositions, we should make them familiar with different features of genres. For example, they should be taught the special features of an argumentative essay, explanation, advertisements, short stories, poetry, reports, and so on.

4.3 Writing as a product

This type of writing focuses on the texts that are products of writing. For this type of writing, learners are usually assigned topics to write about. For instance, you may ask learners to compose an essay about extended families in Zambia. Pupils compose whatever they can on this broad topic and hand in their papers or books. You then go through the text meticulously looking for spelling mistakes, organisational mistakes and so on. You will notice that teaching writing as a product usually begins with what are called *skill-getting* activities. These are largely grammatical exercises done in very **controlled** writing. For instance, pupils start with completing sentences or have sentences with blank spaces to fill in.

From controlled writing of this type, pupils move to **guided** compositions. Here the range of activities increase and the tasks become more challenging. But the pupils are still not creating their own texts. You should remember that both controlled and guided writing are skill-getting stages. They are meant to prepare pupils to write full compositions on their own; or to move to free writing. Free writing comes at the end of this process but it is also decontextualised.

When you compare this type of teaching with the one we discussed earlier, you will notice that for the later, the teacher does not specify to the pupils what their audience is or the purpose of what they writing. The main concern of the teacher appears to be the accuracy of the language used by the pupils and also the organisation of the piece of writing. There is no clear emphasis on genuine communication. All the teacher is interested in is whether the pupils have learnt the rules of grammar, paragraphing and so on. In this type of writing, there is also no consideration of the *writing as a process.* This has been the traditional way of teaching writing (Mwansa, 2016)

4.3.1 Weaknesses of writing as a product

- It doesn't take into consideration the importance of context (linguistic and social) in the interpretation of a written text,
- It ignores the beliefs and knowledge that writers assume readers to have that enable them recover meaning. Writers make assumptions about what readers know as they write. This means that writers need to know who their audience is, for example.
- There is no consideration of the writing process itself: what the writer does during composition and whether she can be helped to improve her writing if better processes were followed

4.3.2 Writing as genre

Genre refers to types of texts that are meant to achieve different purposes. Examples of genres are stories, poems, letters, shopping lists, dairies, academic essays, etc.
Genres help us to do things: make shopping lists, send Christmas greetings, record daily activities, order goods, tell stories, apply for work, etc. In other words, we learn as we live in society ways of communicating in different social situations.

Teaching writing as a genre involves raising learners' awareness of how texts. In both writing as a product and as a genre, emphasis is on the outcome of the activity not the

activity of writing itself i.e. the process. The focus is still on the text. Writing is still seen to be concerned with grammatical correctness, logical construction and arrangement of forms.

4.4 Writing Styles

A writer's style is a reflection of his or her personality, unique voice, and way of approaching the audience and readers.

However, every piece writers write is for a specific purpose—for example, writers may want to explain how something works or persuade people to agree with their point of view. While there are as many writer's styles as there are writers, there are only four general purposes that lead someone to write a piece, and these are known as the four styles, or types, of writing. Knowing all four different types and their usages is important for any writer.

Here are the categories and their definitions:

There are four main types of writing: **expository, persuasive, narrative**, and **descriptive.**

4.4.1 Expository

This writing is expository because it is explaining. It is writing in which author's purpose is to inform or explain the subject to the reader. Expository writing's main purpose is to explain. It is a subject-oriented writing style, in which authors focus on telling you about a given topic or subject without voicing their personal opinions. These types of essays or articles furnish you with relevant facts and figures but do not include their opinions. This is one of the most common types of writing. You always see it in textbooks and how-to articles. The author just tells you about a given subject, such as how to do something.

4.4.2 Persuasive

This is writing which lays out a logical argument. In other words it is writing that states the opinion of the writer and attempts to influence the reader. Persuasive writing's main purpose is to convince. Unlike expository writing, persuasive writing contains the

opinions and biases of the author. To convince others to agree with the author's point of view, persuasive writing contains justifications and reasons. Examples of persuasive writing can be seen in job applications, editorials, and academic papers.

4.4.3 Narrative

This is writing which conveys a story and is the form most often read for pleasure. It is commonly used as an exercise to increase literacy skills. Writing in which the author tells a story. The story could be fact or fiction. The author will create different characters and tell you what happens to them (sometimes the author writes from the point of view of one of the characters—this is known as first person narration). Examples of narrative writing include novels, biographies, history, and newspaper articles.

4.4.4 Descriptive

A type of expository writing that uses the five senses to paint a picture for the reader. This writing incorporates imagery and specific detail. Descriptive writing's main purpose is to describe. It is a style of writing that focuses on describing a character, an event, or a place in great detail. It can be poetic when the author takes the time to be very specific in his or her descriptions. Examples of descriptive writing can be seen poetry, Journal or diary writing, nature writing and descriptive passages in fiction.

Reflect on this:

Identify the factors involved in writing process and discuss how you can apply them in writing a novel.

With examples, explain the four types of writing styles

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UNIT 5: PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

5.0 Introduction

Have you ever come across the term psycholinguistics? This is a very important area of study dealing with psychology of language. You may be familiar with the terms 'psychology' and 'language'. This component is meant to expose you to the basic and important concepts in psycholinguistics. It explains to you the important issues that have been at the base of psycholinguistics studies and reveals to you the fact that psycholinguistics is actually a part of your life as the issues discussed are things that affect you in real life.

Learning Outcomes

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

- give the definition of psycholinguistics as defined by various authors,
- explain the relevance of psycholinguistics to language teaching and learning,
- discuss how language is acquired, learnt, produced and understood
- show how psycholinguistics really gets demonstrated in everyday life
- outline how people with speech defects can be helped to overcome their challenges
- comprehend the way the brain affects the whole process of language development as well as language defects.

5.1 What is Psycholinguistics?

This is the question that has bordered the mind of scholars in the past sixty or so years since Transformational Generative Grammar movement has forced the subject of the link between language and its relationship to the human psychology to the fore front of linguistic studies. Essentially, **psycholinguistics is the study of language as it relates to the human mind**. Some scholars see psycholinguistics as **the study of how language influences and is influenced by the human mind.**

Other scholars, especially those with psychological leaning, tend to see psycholinguistics in terms of the experimental form of the **study of human mind within the laboratory and its ability to comprehend language.** This has led to the division of the area of study into the psycholinguistics and the psychology of language broad categorisations.

Aitchison (1990: 333) defines psycholinguistics as the study of language and mind, which "aims to model the way the mind" works in "relation to language". Looking at this definition, it is obvious that her view of psycholinguistics is that which maps out the strategising of language usage as well as language comprehension.

As Lang (1994) asserts, language operates in a social form even while presenting its psychological foundation. It is however this psychological foundation that psycholinguistics seek to unravel.

Halliday's (1971) ideational concept appears to lean towards this view too even though he views the sociological foundation of language as a stronger base of human language operations.

For you as a teacher, you should understand Psycholinguistics as the study of the mental processes that a person uses in producing and understanding language, and how humans learn a language. It includes the study of speech perception, the role of memory, concepts and other processes in language use and how social and psychological factors affect the use of language.

Linguistic acquisition, processing, comprehension and production are all intertwined. We may thus be able to aver that psycholinguistics is essentially about language usage of human beings and how it is affected by their psychological dispositions to its acquisition, comprehension and production.

Speech can only be comprehended if the person receiving the information can link the words in the language to concrete things, making communicative meaning within that language or communication event may be difficult.

In addition, Steinberg, Nagata and Aline (2001) also say that thought **is the foundation of language. To them, meaning is rooted in the thought of the user of the language**. The idea is that without thought, language cannot form meaning. It is this meaning contained in a thought element or the idea contained in the language that contains the meaning. As such, concepts are contained in the language and they can only be comprehended if they are explicitly passed across. The question here is that, as noted by Steinberg, Nagata and Aline (2001), those mute people that can comprehend language can essentially do so

because they have thought processes. They were thus able to establish the importance of thought to making meaning in language.

Nonetheless, one could only say that the connection of thought to language is an important aspect of what psycholinguistics is expected to study after all. Thought is naturally a part of the linguistic process; only that it is never expressed. It is also important to state that the being able to produce speech is not the only way of measuring language acquisition.

5.2 The Relevance of Psycholinguistics to Language Teaching and Learning

Psycholinguistics plays an important role in the teaching and learning of a language. You may ask or wonder in which way? Well, in so many ways of which some of them are as follows:

- Knowing how people acquire ability to learn a language places a teacher in a better position to help learners to learn a language.
- A good knowledge of mental processes that a person uses in producing and understanding language can help a language teacher to design and use teaching strategies that will recognise the learner as an intelligent, active participant with something to offer in the learning process and not an empty slate (tabularasa).
- Understanding the process of encoding and decoding as they relate states of messages to states of communicators makes the teacher strive to employ the most effective ways of communicating with the learners. The teacher strives to be as effective a communicator as the process entails.
- Knowing the stages involved in language acquisition helps the teacher predict which language items learners will have mastered by a given stage and which ones need teaching. Related to this is an understanding of what it means to know a language. This can also determine what aspects of language a teacher can teach children in order for them to know and understand that language.
- A good understanding of the link between thought and language as explained in psycholinguistics may make teachers recommend to government the appropriate language to use in schools as medium of instruction.

- The direct method, a language teaching method which is closely related to natural language learning principles was based on psycholinguistics learning theories.
- An understanding of the determinants of language acquisition as explained in psycholinguistics can make a teacher relate the experiences in language acquisition to language learning in the classroom and can create conditions which can promote language acquisition and learning. The determinants being:

    o exposure to verbal environment,
    o development of speech organs.

5.3 Language Acquisition and Learning
5.3.1 Language Acquisition

Language acquisition refers to the way a child picks up language as mother tongue. It is informal and picked from the language environment. Therefore, the child needs a rich language environment. There is no programme, no setting and assessment. Errors are attended to informally. The language is acquired as a whole (not split into components). There is usually purposeful communication and free interaction.

Language acquisition is considered a normal process in development. When it is delayed or never started in children, it is usually seen as a source of concern by the adult because there are stages of human speech development. The stage at which children actually begin to manifest their acquisition of their mother tongue is eighteen months. Before this, it appears, the children are 'soaking up' all the linguistic input from their environment. It thus makes it such a landmark when the child utters its first complete word.

However, the period before this time is actually foreshadowed by some kinds of communication. The child makes its initial sounds which are merely expressions of signs of discomfort or sudden outbursts that may seem inexplicable. The following stage from, about **two months** is that stage at which the child can now express some communication pattern in terms of the child being able to link randomly its expressions to its needs. This crying stage is thus considered the sign to the actual human speech. It thus prepares the child for the time it can effectively make use of its vocal organs among the human

species. The question is then that: did the child pick up this ability to speak from its environment or is it naturally predisposed to this skill? Chomsky (1965) has proposed that all human beings have the congenital ability to acquire language due to a naturally inbuilt mechanism called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD).

5.3.2 Stages of language acquisition

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.

Chomsky (1981) later modified this to Universal Grammar (UG). Human beings indeed possess this device as no human being actually lacks the ability to speak. Eventually if the linguistic inputs are provided except, in a situation where a congenital malformation occurred, which could result in the inability of the person to ever master the neuromuscular skills required for speech production. Nevertheless, when the required environment is made available, the human element tends to develop speech and move from the iconic stage to the symbolic communicative stage.

This turning point is usually achieved with the first words of the child (Scovel, 1998). On the other hand, the children tend to be egocentric in doing their language initiation: their focus tend to be on their world. Anything outside that world never seems to get a labelling.

Evidence that language acquisition may actually be innate to all humans, as argued by Chomsky and his co-travellers, could be seen in the example of swimming and playing of piano or drum, as noted by Scovel (1998), is very pertinent.

One other proponent for language speech development is that which was propounded by Jean Piaget. He points out that not everybody eventually learns to swim or to play any of the musical instruments mentioned above; but it is rare for anyone not to be able to acquire language except where the environmental linguistic input is available except there is a congenital hindrance. In addition, the fact that every attempt to teach the chimpanzee nicknamed Niom Chimsky (after Noam Chomsky) language proved abortive whereas the human child appeared already predisposed to complex linguistic structures through a regular patterning of its structures even at age two. Scovel insightfully observes that in comparing these two sets of data, we are led to the obvious conclusion that even at a very

young age, before they have any conscious awareness of the difference between parts of speech such as nouns and verbs, young humans very rapidly acquire the notion that words do not combine randomly but follow a systematic pattern of permissible sequences (1998: 16). This proves two things: that the language ability in the human species starts early as well as determinedly so advance that animals of the lower class are never able to attain such linguistic skill because nature did not provide for such ability in them. It also goes to show that children tend to follow the pattern of their target language in terms of the phonology and the syntax. In addition, as noted by Scovel, creativity is also a mark of the child's acquisition of language. He notes examples such as the one from Reich (1986:142):

> Daughter: *Somebody* is at the door
> Mother: There's *nobody* at the door.
> Daughter: There's *yesbody* at the door. (Scovel, 1998: 19)

There is no evidence that the child learnt this particular word from anyone. It will appear that what the child tried to do is to insist or emphasise by bringing the syntactic initial yes in a tag into play and combining the same to create the new word '*yesbody*' in contrast to the mother's 'nobody' as its own emphatic stress. Scovel also gives another example of such advanced creativity that took the father of the child a bit of time to puzzle out its ungrammaticality while seeing its acceptability. There Carlos is! said by a child is actually a replacement of the usual pronominal with a nominal in the sentence as explained by Scovel. And following his analysis of the pattern as shown below, it shows the child's ability to create not just new words but also adapt sentence structures for its utilitarian communication purposes. The patterns are:

> Pattern A: There's Carlos!
> Pattern B: There he is!
> Pattern C: *There Carlos is!
> [There's/Here's + Noun]
> [There/Here Pronoun + is]
> [There/Here + Noun + is] (Scovel, 1998:20)

The asterisk (*) is used to mark ungrammaticality in structures. Looking at the examples above, it is easy to see that the child has actually combined the structures of Patterns A

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and B to form a new one in Pattern C. As argued in Daniel (2012), communicative contingency at times determines linguistic choices more than grammatical correctness. It appears that children's ability to do this efficiently in their linguistic production may supersede that of adults greatly. And why not, if it serves their purposes.

Another important issue that needs to be dealt with here is the issue of stages in acquisition. Following Klima and Bellugi (1966), Scovel observes that there are about three stages in language acquisition. He notes that for both the child linguistic acquirer and the adult language learner, the stages appear fixed and cannot be skipped, even if individual ability seems to determine the rate of acquisition for each person.

The three stages are:

Stage 1: use of NO at the start of sentence

No the sun shining

No Mary do it.

Stage 2: use of NO inside the sentence but no auxiliary

Where will she go?

Why Doggy can't see?

Why you don't know?

Stage 3: use of WH word and auxiliary verb before subject

Where will she go?

Why can't Doggy see?

Why don't you know?

One important point made by scholars here is that none of these stages are ever skipped. The length of time an individual uses in each stage is determined by the individual cognitive level. Scovel also affirms that an adult learning a new language actually undergoes each of these stages. It is thus obvious that it is not age that determines the language acquisition process, but the progression ability of individuals.

Critical period is supposed to be that period after adolescence when a person can no

longer master the learning of a new language. The evidence of people at very mature stages of their lives getting into new communities and linguistically integrating abound. In our view, the only thing, beyond the congenital factor, that can hinder an individual from attaining proficiency in a new language learning situation is in reality more psychological than biological.

Hence, when a language's relevance to the social advancement of the learning appears invisible, the learner may lack the motivation to learn such a language. If the social prestige of such a language is suspect, the learner may have no desire to master the language. A myriad of reasons could be cited for why a learner may have low motivation for learning a new language; these reasons are however likely to be sociolinguistic rather than biological.

5.3.3 How does Psycholinguistics Relate to our Lives?

You may be wondering right now that in what ways can psycholinguistics affect your life practically. In the first place, it studies the way the human mind works as it relates to language. This shows that the human thinking process is closely connected to language. Language is not independent of the things that go on in our minds. It is quite obvious that language essentially express what is going on in our minds. This can be seen quite clearly expressed by scholars in the past.

Chomsky's view is that language is rooted in the ability of the user. It is also obvious that when we look at Halliday's argument of ideational function of language, psycholinguistics becomes more relevant to our practical life experiences. In the famous Chomsky argument, grammaticality is highly rooted in the ability of the speaker to control language usage. It is also obvious that the things we talk about are rooted in the things that we think about. This makes real the issue of the linguistic reality of the experiences of language users.

Activity

> 1. *What do you understand by the term 'Psycholiguistics'?*
> 2. *Explain what LAD means as regards language acquisition.*
> 3. *How does psycholinguistic affect our lives?*
> 4. *Discuss the six important characteristics of human language.*

Summary

This unit discusses the practical application of what psycholinguistics has to do with the human life. It reveals the fact that psycholinguistics may appear like an abstract discipline but that it actually has practical application to the human life.

UNIT 6: MEMORY AND MOTIVATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

6.0 Introduction

Second language (L2) learning has always been a complicated and controversial issue due to various factors, including biological, neurological, psychological, and sociological factors among others. In many researches, the psychological learner variables, especially students ' motivation toward second language learning, have been taken into consideration in particular.

Learning Outcomes

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

- explain the theory of language learning
- demonstrate understanding of the learner's strategies in language learning
- comprehend what makes a good language learner

6.1 Second Language (L2) Learning

In L2 learning, apart from learners' motivation, learning strategies have been claimed to be a crucial factor that influence the achievements or the proficiency level of language learners (Oxford, 1990; Ehrman, 2003). Based on the perspective of social psychology, Gardner (1985, p.8) defined L2 motivation as" the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language" because of her/his desire to do so and the satisfaction s/he obtains from the activity. Furthermore, based on Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, motivation is related to all aspects of 'activation' and 'intention', including energy, direction, persistence and equifinality. Here motivation is classified as extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation based on the degree of self-determination. Motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic is classified as five categories: external regulation, interjected regulation, identified regulation, integrated regulation, and intrinsic motivation.

Based on Oxford's (1989) findings, good language learners use the following six groups of strategies: metacognitive, affective, social, memory, cognitive, and compensatory

strategies. Learner's use of strategy may reflect their motivational orientation. Oxford and Nyikos(1989), for example, found that the most frequently used strategies were formal practice strategies, which are related to language rules whereas the least frequently used strategies were functional practice strategies related to use of authentic language. In other words, learners' choice of learning strategies might be the reflection of their motivational orientation. Many factors are argued to influence students using language learning strategies: age, sex, attitude, motivation, aptitude, learning stage, task requirements, teacher expectation, learning styles, individual differences, motivation, cultural differences, beliefs about language learning, and language proficiency(Rubin, 1975; Bialystok, 1979; Abraham& Vann, 1987,1990; Oxford,1989,-Oxford & Nyikos 1989;Chamot & Küpper 1989; Ehrman & Oxford,1995).

Recent researches in the area of individual differences in learning and memory is reviewed in many cases from a cognitive perspective (Skehan, 1989; Oxford & Ehrman, 2003). In so doing, the importance of strategy choice is stressed using the concept of cognitive flexibility. In this study, although, we cannot make conclusive statements based on our knowledge of individual differences, we will take a cognitive perspective and trying to make a link between language learning strategies and motivation as individual differences.

6.1.1 Language Learning

Language learning is a formal undertaking by an individual to learn a second language. It is a conscious language that takes place in a formal setting. The settings usually are artificial. It is programmed, has a syllabus and is sequenced. There is normally a reward in form of certification. This goes with language teaching.

Language teaching is what teachers do to facilitate learning of a second language. Teaching is formal and is performed by personnel who are systematically trained. According to Stern (1983: 21) Language teaching is "the activities which are intended to bring about language learning". The language taught is split into components.

Now you are sufficiently informed that part of the concerns of psycholinguistics is the interplay of psychology and linguistics. It also deals with cognitive processes involved in

the use of language. Do you realize then that you cannot talk of psychology without the human mind, which is centred in the brain? The brain is a biological organism responsible for cognition, memory, thinking and reasoning. The acquisition of language by children consists of the brain becoming organized in a genetically determined manner. Fernandez and Cairns (2011) argue that just as the biological based system of human vision is already well developed at birth but require visual stimuli for depth perception of the left versus right eye, so also will children's acquisition of language require environmental input to trigger or stimulate language development. Therefore, there must be an external stimuli; the environment. Learners should be exposed to the grammar of the language in a communicative and interactive manner.

Human language is genetically based in the brain and it is processed biologically and develops as the human infant interacts with the environment. The biologically based system in the human child will be triggered for language acquisition and development. This has been termed the nativist model of language acquisition. The nativist conception of language acquisition asserts that language is a natural developmental process. All children progress through similar milestones on a similar schedule. This could not be so were it not for the fact that language is rooted in human biology (Fernandez & Cairns, 2011:98).

It is this biological nature of language acquisition that accounts for the properties of Universal Grammar (UG). You will notice that children in all places and climes follow similar acquisition pattern and word order. The phonological, morphological and syntactical components follow the universal principles of language. Crain (1991) submits that child grammar never violates universal principles of language. For instance, they never contain rules that are not structure dependent.

Even children acquiring languages that do not follow the general word order of Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) for English and many world languages, still conform to the order of the languages to which they are exposed. Languages like Japanese and Turkish have Subject –Object-Verb (SOV) while some other languages operate (VSO) and (VOS) patterns. This is unlike the SOV structure which will give us * "Warren biscuits eats". However, children conform reasonably to the various grammatical patterns. Fernandez

and Cairns (2011) argue that human biology supplies knowledge of universal principles of organizing language. When children are sufficiently equipped, they take input fromthe environment to rapidly and efficiently acquire the language or languages around them. Furthermore, Kisilevsky et al (2003) observes that infants are accustomed to human language from the moment they are born. A growing body of evidence shows that a child's sensitivity to language predates its birth since the earliest exposure to linguistic input is in the uterus.

The processing of language is seen as a major work that thoughts perform. As such, language reflects thoughts. It is thus normal for children learning or acquiring a language to process it within their cognitive and environmental experiences.

It is thus within the limit of the things they have experienced that they use language to express themselves. It is therefore necessary to note that linguistic proficiency is determined by the environmental experience of the user of the language. The person that is yet to make use of a computer may not be able to describe that experience with language. It is clearly not far-fetched to imagine that this person may not be able to process the thoughts concerning this phenomenon in the mind. The ability to comprehend and produce language can thus be related to environmental factors.

Steinberg, Nagata and Aline (2001) argue that the basic mental entities used by the child acquiring the language are actually derived from the physical world. As such, the child may be able to account for the words such as 'drink milk' essentially from the experience of having been given milk to drink by the caregiver. Aitchison (1989) notes that the idea of Chomsky that children come already loaded with language in their minds is unacceptable.

The more acceptable idea seems to be that of children being able to process language to express what their environment has enabled them to experience. This second option appears more reasonable and acceptable. She uses many examples of children processing language to prove her point. As such, when children assert statements like 'Daddy car' or 'Mummy comb', it is because they can relate to these experiences in their physical environment. Children that do not have a daddy or their daddies do not have a car may not be able to make such assertions. In addition, these children are able to transfer such

experiences into similar new experiences to produce new structures that can relate those new experiences. This is an important element of language, its dynamism, which Yule (1996) identified.

Our possession of language is closely linked with the brain which is the most complex biological organ of the human body. We shall attempt to examine some criteria under which language could be said to have biological foundations. In a seminal work, Lenneberg's (1967:371-4) arguments of a biological system fit the human language classification discussed below:

1. Language is Species-Specific. This implies that only human beings possess the capacity for language. The genetic make-up of human beings makes language acquisition, comprehension and performance unique to man. Pinker (1975) asserts that the shape of the human vocal tract seems to have been modified in evolution for the demands of speech. Also, (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010) says that young children have certain characteristics that predispose them to learn language. These characteristics include the structure of the vocal tract which enables children to make the sounds used in language and the ability to understand a general grammatical principle, such as the hierarchical nature of syntax.

Moreover, a look at animal communication reveals a rigid pattern of signs. Chimpanzees used in language learning experience are taught in a contrived way by humans to acquire rudimentary abilities to request for food and to tickle. This contrasts sharply to the natural ability of human children to acquire language in a seamless unencumbered manner. No animal has been trained to learn human language creative system with the recursive mechanism for generating an infinite set of utterances. Animal vocalism remains fixed as it was ages before history.

2. Every member of the species should possess some properties to replicate language. This is the criterion on which psycholinguists based their idea of Universal Grammar (UG). You will realise that all children everywhere, regardless of colour, race or location, are born with a brain which equips them readily for language to take shape. When this language comes up, it possesses universal properties because of its striking similarities to other languages of its kind elsewhere. Just like every person's ability to walk or a fish's

ability to swim, language acquisition is natural to the human child. Universal Grammar (UG) has its phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical components and all languages have rules and patterns that conform to the rules of their speakers.

Predictably, therefore, the general organisation of all languages is the same. Fernandez and Cairns (2011) posit that if languages were not biologically based, there would be no necessity for children to behave in a similar way of acquiring language. We would even expect great variations from language to language in terms of their internal organisation.

3. The cognitive processes involved in language production will develop with maturation. Researches have shown that there is a close link between language development and maturation. There is a gradual unfolding of linguistic complexity as the child moves from one-word stage to multi-word level. This follows the biological process of crawling before walking. All normal children develop unaided in their acquisition of language. Once they are adequately exposed to the language of the environment, the genetic system programmes the language for them to be developed in an orderly fashion. You will be surprised that, contrary to your expectation, language is not taught to children.

All they need is to be encouraged to interact with the caregivers or other peers in the environment. It is the interaction input that will engender their linguistic creativity. When you try to correct children's errors it is of little use. The child will gradually learn the correct pattern. McNeil (1966) found out that a child who says 'eated' instead of 'ate' will continue saying 'eated' no matter how many times they are corrected.

4. Certain Aspects of Language Behaviours Emerge only during infancy. Studies have shown that there is a general pattern of language development common to all children the world over. Slobin (1972) carried out extensive studies showing that children around the world learn in the same way. Like all milestones in the biological development of infants – rolling over, sitting up, crawling and walking at similar ages – the milestones of language acquisition are also very similar.

While babies are generally known to chuckle when they are six months old and babble around nine months, they all tend to gravitate towards one-word stage at their first birthday. This is followed by the holophrastic two word-level after which early sentences

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of increasing length become noticeable. With the child's ability for cognitive processing of words, complex sentences begin to take shape and an infinite set of utterances could be made. By the time the child is five years old, the basic structures of the language are in place while fine-tuning continues till late childhood. Fernandez and Cairns (2011) say that children are sensitive to the same kind of language properties such as word-order and inflection.

They make remarkable errors but their errors are of similar type. You need to know here that there is individual variation in the age at which children acquire language which is conditioned by the characteristics of the acquirer and not the language or the culture in which the language is used. Lenneberg's (1967) assertion that there seems to be acritical period in the acquisition of language has been described as Critical Age Hypothesis (CAH). While this remains controversial, psycholinguists generally agree that acquirers reach their peak after a certain period. The optimal period for first language acquisition is put at the early teen years after which a fully complex linguistic system will not develop. This has been attributed to the fact that age can contribute to the smooth learning of a language early in life and that at a certain critical period, the brain cannot properly incorporate and process the cognitive properties of language in the same way it would do during childhood acquisition.

5. Spontaneous Adaptation of Acquirers to the Behaviour of other Individuals around them. The biological system in individuals requires external stimuli that will trigger them to function. This equally applies to language development which depends on the environment to nurture its growth through interaction input. It will be impossible for the child to develop a language in the absence of any language to stimulate them and nobody to interact or give them access to language. You will appreciate this fact when you realize that it is the language that surrounds the child that such a child grows up to speak.

Children acquire knowledge of language or language around them in a relatively brief period and with little apparent effort. This is possible because they are biologically pre-disposed towards acquiring the language of the environment where they interact with people around them. Children experience little difficulties in acquiring more than one language. After puberty people generally must expend greater effort to learn a second

language as they often achieve lower levels of competence in that language.

When children are exposed to two languages simultaneously, they acquire the two languages together. However, acquiring another language after the first one is often termed second language learning. In Zambia, English is a second language we acquire through formal setting in the classroom. Studies have shown that second language learning tends to follow a similar pattern with that of the first language except that adult learners pick up more slowly compared to children.

The reason is simple. In the case of first language acquisition, the child has no other language to function unlike the adult learner who already possesses the L1 but requires the L2 as a backup. However, L2 learners are also able to produce and process simple sentences before complex sentences (Pienemann et al 2005).You will also note some interference problems in L2 learners such as: "They are not at home" when someone asks for the whereabouts of the infant's mother, and the use of the same question tag, 'isn't it?' in all for all forms.

6.1.2 Learner's Strategies: The Good Language Learner

What strategies do you use to teach language to your learners? You might have not realised that learners also have strategies to learn a language. A good language learner would employ good strategies.

Child Directed Speech (CDS) is characterised by shortening or simplifying of words. Children like to imitate adults and by so doing love to do things repeatedly. Children begin to produce familiar sounds of their social environment during language acquisition. Some of you will recall that basic sounds like 'ma', 'da', 'ba', 'ta', are noticeable in the early life of the infant. Celebration and approbation will greet the child's first utterance of 'mama' or 'tata'. Spender (2006) gives an insight into the characteristics of the caregiver language.

- Lowered speech tempo. This is to create a friendly conversational tone that appeals more to the child for bonding and intimate attention.

- Clearer articulation. The guardian should pronounce her/his word to give a model

for the child to imitate.

- Higher pitch. This equally secures the child's attention as s/he can get easily distracted.

- Nouns are used instead of pronouns. Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith (2001) exemplify in their studies of a guardian who interacts with a child as follows: "Aren't you a nice baby?" "Good GIRL, drink all your Milk" "Look, look Doggie. Did you see the Doggie?" The guardian / teacher makes sure that the child understands who and what is being referred to. They therefore use proper names instead of pronouns: They also make use of basic vocabulary to encourage the child to learn easily.

- Concrete references to here and now. The guardian / teacher does this by emphasising new information through gestures and demonstrations. They call the children's attention in a way to give them special focus e.g. 'Look at daddy'. He is eating ba-na-na. The syllabic pronunciation of banana is deliberate to give a child another vocabulary.

- Use of simple sentence structure. This is a central feature of caregiver language as Child-Directed-Speech must be devoid of any complication. Instead of the caregiver to say "let's go home" we usually get expressions like "Go bye bye"

- Few incomplete sentences. This is the teacher / guardian style of following the child's pattern of behaviours. Since Child- Directed-Speech reflects developmental nature from one word to two and later to sentence level, it is desirable for the teacher to encourage the natural flow of the child's language behaviour. Fernald (1991) reports that caregiver / teacher language may skip out small words by imitating young children who can make little sense of sentence composition, such as "to" "at" "my" 'so' and 'as' and articles (the, a ,an). A sentence like 'I want you to play your ball' may become 'Daddy wants Dayo to play ball'.

- Many Repetitions. Children are gifted imitators. Their curiosity to learn is well endowed such that when a teacher /guardian does anything, the inquisitive child imitates them. This facility can best be used for language development when a teacher frequently repeat words and sentences to sharpen the child's acquisition of

language. For example, the utterance like, "that's a bag, Ann" could be repeated by a follow up, "yes, it is a bag" until the child's response is deemed positive by the teacher / guardian.

- Spenader (2006) also describes some features of a caregiver / teacher's language from one word stage to sentence level. During the one word stage, the child indulges in overextension by generalising a word inappropriately to other objects with similar characteristics as in 'daddy' used to refer to all men and 'doggy' referring to animals on four legs. The infant at the same time indulges in over-restriction by using a word only for a very specific instance of the usage as in 'muffin' for 'blackberry muffin'. During the two-word stage, words are strung together as in "all broke' all done' 'allgone', 'want food', 'want ball' 'mama take'. Shortly after this, the child graduates to telegraphic speech which is the onset of the sentence level. Expressions such as 'see ball mama' 'Push door open' 'Good bring book', etc. dominate the speech repertoire of the child. Please note that the caregiver / teacher will always attempt to guide the child to produce meaningful utterances but the development stage of the child will determine how he moves from one caregiver / teacher language stage to another.

An interesting feature of the caregiver language is the singing of lullabies and play songs to convey meaning that is emotional rather than linguistic. However, the acoustic aspects of lullabies are significant enough to assist the child language development socially and poetically. Some caregivers/ educators substitute a particular word in a sentence with a sound that gives the sense of the word being discussed. Instead of 'look at the goat' you can hear 'look at meh meh' which is the sound the animal makes or 'Mummy, give me a zhim' when they want a car.

The onomatopoeic nature of these words simplifies the language for the infants. These could also be found as 'moo moo' for cow. Pinker (1994) talks of semantic mapping whereby infants could infer the semantic meaning of syntactic categories from the context in which they are heard. For example in a sentence like "the man is patting the cat", the child should be able to conceptualise what 'man' and 'cat' mean before s/he can analyse the sentence grammatically when this is seen in action as demonstrated by the caregiver /

educator.

Please note that caregiver / educator language is perceived both visually and aurally by the infants. The essence is to assist the child to know that 'pat' means caressing a part of the animal's body. He/she would then be able to know that 'pat is a transitive verb which requires a direct object. An educator may also use language to signal approvals and prohibitions. The mother may praise the child raising her voice 'bravo' 'good boy' 'brave' to express positive feelings by rewarding and encouraging the child. She might also use a deep sound to interrupt and prohibit a bad behaviour displayed by the infant. Kayami (2001) looks at structure of the caregiver / educator's language by describing some as having short and grammatically correct sentences.

The foregoing has demonstrated the importance of caregiver, guardian or educator's language in the language behaviour of the child. We have tried to explain that basic communication and language development skills are a crucial part of the foundation for language production which should be formed in the early experiences of an infant. It is these first building blocks of language that will strengthen the child's experience as a communication partner in their cognitive, social and emotional realities.

Caregivers, guardians and educators are enjoined to create a linguistically stimulating environment to nurture the onset of language by positive interaction and reinforcement through Child Directed Speech (CDS). In this way children discover easier linguistic patterns and begin to understand word order which later manifests into a deeper understanding of sentence as a whole. There had been a lot of research in the recent years into what makes a good language learner. Here is a brief summary of the findings:

- The good language learner thinks about how he/ she is learning. S/he tries to find out what works for her and what does not. If she does not understand, the purpose of a particular exercise, she asks the teacher.

- The good language learner is   willing to experience and take risks. For example, s/he will try out different ways of learning vocabulary until s/he finds the way that suits her/him best. S/he is also not afraid of making mistakes, because s/he knows that these will help her/him.

- The good language learner is realistic. S/he knows that it will take time and effort to become proficient in English, and that there will periods where s/he does not seem to be making much progress.

- The good language learner is independent. S/he does not expect to learn English just by sitting in the classroom, and does not rely on the teacher to totally direct her/his learning.

- The good language learner is organised and active. S/he uses her/his time to learn English sensibly, and is always looking for opportunities to develop her/his language both inside and outside the classroom.

- The good language learner has a balanced concern for communication and accuracy. Some learners are experts at communicating their thoughts but do not care that they make many mistakes in doing so. The good language learner, on the other hand, is concerned with both communicating and doing so as accurately as possible.

Although these are the qualities that have been found in the most efficient language learners, there are still many other factors that influence how quickly a child will own English.

Now look at the following table:

		L 1 Learner (acquisition)	L 2 Learner (usually learned)
1	Number of teachers	Everyone around him/her	One or several
2	Time of exposure	Most of the time	Mainly during lessons
3.	Learning/ maturation	Occur together	Only overlap to a limited extent
4.	Situationalisation	In real communication environment	Very artificial
5.	Emotional–motivational factor	Strong	Much weaker
6.	Systematisation	Very little	Highly systematised

Why do we need to know the differences?

Well, there is something to learn about acquisition. There are instances when pupils learn and when they acquire language in a classroom situation.

Activity 6

When do pupils acquire language in the classroom situation?

State how this happens, explaining how you as a teacher can enhance acquisition of 'good' language to your learners.

Discuss the different stages of child language acquisition.

Summary

In this unit, you learnt that caregiver, guardian and educator's language is crucial in the child's language acquisition process. You also learnt that Child Directed Speech is used by the caregiver/educator to enable the child process word forms and remember words when asked to recall them in the future.

Caregiver language help babies pick up words faster and secure more attention so that they can learn the basic functions and structure of language. When positive interaction occurs between the caregiver and the child, it will be possible to attain high cognitive developments which enhance linguistic competence.

UNIT 7 LANGUAGE TESTING

7.0 Introduction

What do you think is involved in language testing? As a teacher of language you do test your learners from time to time. There are different types of tests and testing which you need to acquaint yourself with as a teacher. You also need to know how you are supposed to go about testing your learners. In this section, we look at how you can do this as a teacher.

Learning Outcomes

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

- demonstrate understanding of the concept of language testing
- explain the different types of tests correctly
- design tests for your learners accordingly
- interpret test scores for your learners correctly

7.1 Testing, Assessment and Evaluation

7.1.1 Testing

As you may know testing is a measuring device concerned with specific achievements of given objectives. It is usually associated with achievement relative to specific classroom objectives.

7.1.2 Assessment

According to Duncan and Dun (1988), assessment is the process of gathering information by teachers about their pupils. Assessment has three functions namely;

- To diagnose the learning process in pupils. Assessment as a diagnostic tool provides information on what a pupil has learnt so that remedial action is taken and there after further learning may take place.
- To provide information or to make inferences about the functioning of schools and their accountability.
- To certify or qualify pupils.

Assessment is a two way process:

(a) By teachers about their teaching and

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(b) Pupils about their progress.

7.1.3 Evaluation

Evaluation deals with finding out as far as possible the worth of a process, system or programme. It is concerned with the overall success or worth of a programme and involves finding out the value of something. In this case, the learners' performance. Evaluation also refers to the process of making a value judgement or decision.

7.1.4 Measurement and Evaluation

Although the term measurement is often interchanged with the term evaluation, there is a subtle distinction between the two. Evaluation in one sense is a form of measurement: either the performance of a student or a programme. In another sense, evaluation is judgemental in nature, that is, it attempts to find out the worth of an experience, a process or system.

Measurement is basically concerned with qualitative descriptions of students' performance. It does not imply judgement as to whether a process or programme is worth all the effort, time and energy being expanded on it. Thus measuring is more specific than evaluation. Testing is a good example of measuring device. Measurement is concerned with the specific achievement of a student in terms of stipulated objectives.

Measurement or testing and evaluation are intricately interwoven educational processes. Evaluation involves making judgments about the decisions made in terms of set goals. Such judgement is based on composite of different types measurement obtained from tests, projects, reports, assignments, examinations, etc.

7.1.5 Testing and Evaluation

Testing forms an integral part of student evaluation. It is usually associated with student achievement relative to specified classroom objectives. Evaluation, on the other hand, is concerned about the overall success or worth of a programme.

7.2 Why Test?

Hughes (1988) outlines the reasons for testing students as follows:

- To discover how students have achieved the objectives of a course of study
- To diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses

- To identify what students know and what they don't know
- To assist placement of students by identifying the stage or part of a programme most appropriate to their ability.
- To reinforce learning and motivate students.

7.2.1 Types of Tests

There are four commonly known kinds of tests. These are:

(a) Proficiency Tests- are tests that are devised to establish the level of proficiency which a student has reached. Proficiency is defined as having sufficient command of the language for a particular purpose, e.g. a test used to determine whether someone can function successfully as a United Nations Translator, or whether a students' French is good enough to follow a course of study in a French University.

(b) Achievement tests – are tests that are directly related to languages courses. Achievement tests measure subject mastery. Their purpose is to establish how successful individual students: groups of students or the courses themselves have been achieving objectives.

Achievement tests are categorized into two. These are:

i. Final achievement tests -are tests that are administered at the end of the course of study.

ii. Progress achievement tests -are tests intended to measure progress that learners are making.

(c) Diagnostic tests- are tests that are used to help intensify the learners' strengths and weaknesses. The results of these tests will show what sections of the work should be re-taught and whether further practice is essential, thus indicating clearly to the teacher whether the students are ready to move on to news work.

(d) Placement tests (aptitude tests)-are tests that are developed with a view to identifying students who will have difficulties in learning another language. Aptitude tests measure capacity to learn a given content.

7.2.2 Characteristics of Good Test

The following are the characteristics of a good test:

7.2.2.1Validity

The test measures what it is supposed to measure. The validity of a test shows the relationship between the data obtained and the purpose for which they were collected. In other words, it shows whether the test accomplishes what it is supposed to measure or accomplish. Without validating a test we cannot generalise our result findings.

7.2.2.2 Reliability

The test is consistent in its measurement. Reliability concerns consistency of test judgments and results. Test reliability deals with suitability or accuracy of the data collected from a test. Thus, if repeated two or more times under similar conditions, a reliable test should produce identical results. A test eliciting widely divergent results when administered to the same subject, class or group cannot be considered reliable.

7.2.2.3 Objectivity

- Two scores would give the same score to the same response.
- Has a Clearly Defined Purpose. A test should have a clearly defined purpose whether diagnostic, achievement or motivational.
- Provides test items Constant with these Purposes
- Diagnostic items reveal strengths and weaknesses. Achievement items place students in rank order: each student occupies a position in relation to other students according to their mastery of those achievements tested. Motivational items stimulate further study.
- Provides emphasis on test items according to that which is stressed in teaching.
- For instance, if ability to think critically is stressed, the items should not emphasise retention of facts.
- Uses items or more than one type in order to extend the scope of Measurement. For example, completion, multiple choice, true/false, matching, essay
- Arranges items in a progression from easy to difficulty
- Difficulty items, if used at the beginning of the test, discourage the less able from trying at all. The average student should make 50 percent of the possible score.

- Provides for ease of administration and interpretation
- The directions are clear and concise (succinct). The scoring key has been made out in advance so that students can be informed exactly how the items will be scored.

7.3 Types of Test items

Questions on a test are called items. There are basically two broad categories of tests. These are objective and subjective tests.

7.3.1 Objective Test

An objective test is a test in which all questions are devised in such a way that they can be marked without any subjectivity on the part of the marker. Examinees do not compose their own answers but select the correct answer or answers from a given list. The correct answer is predetermined so that all markers mark exactly based on the same rules and each examinee receives exactly the same score no matter who marks their script. These tests do not offer a learner an opportunity to answer from outside the meaning embedded in the stem or question itself.

Objective test items have only one specific correct response, irrespective of who scores the item. Examples of objective tests are multiple choice items, fill-in, true/false, or completion, etc.

In an objective test, however, students' responses are restricted to a number of symbols, words, phrases or simple sentences, one which is considered to be the best answer out of several plausible alternatives.

Objective test items have a precisely predetermined correct response no matter what form it takes or what educational objective it assesses. Marking and scoring are objective.

7.3.2 Types of Objectives Tests
7.3.2.1 Multiple Choice
This normally consists of a 'Stem" (question or statement), a small number of responses, only one of which is correct (the key), the others, though plausible are incorrect and are called destructors (foils). For example:

Stem:

A test, which measures accurately and consistently whatever has (or has (or has not) been learned is:

Answers:

       (a) Objective
       (b) Proficiency
       (c) Diagnostic
       (d) Achievement

7.3.2.2 Multiple Responses

The number of possible answers (options) is larger and more than one correct response. The candidate has to indicate which one is correct. The beginning of question (stem) usually states how many answers are required. This is demonstrated in the subsequent example:

Stem:

Which three of the following verbs would be acceptable for use in a list of specific objectives?

       (a) Understand
       (b) State
       (c) Draw
       (d) judge
       (e) Know
       (f) Appreciate

7.3.2.3 True-False or Alternative Response

This type of test is best to assess factual knowledge. The major weakness of the True/false test is its encouragement of guessing. This however, can be ameliorated (eliminated) by informing pupils that marks will be deducted for guesswork and then applying a simple formula in scoring the items

Example:

A noun is a naming word. True/False.

7.3.2.4 Matching Pairs

This form of objective test is appropriate when the purpose is to test pupils' ability to make correct association between two pieces of information, e.g. names and dates, structure and functions in Biology etc. Matching pair items are easy to score and to administer as the only required response to the pupil being to draw a line between correctly matched items e.g.

Draw lines to link the correct country

London	France
Lusaka	Zimbabwe
Harare	England
Paris	Zambia

Advantages (merits) of an Objective Test

- It is very easy to mark and score.
- It is applicable to a wide range of subject matter, there is a good or wide syllabus coverage.
- A wide sampling of knowledge can be tested per unit of working item.
- It is valid and reliable
- It allows for testing of factual information of more complex thought processes
- It is applicable to nearly all test items
- It can be used to measure different types of educational objectives.

Disadvantages (demerits) of an Objective Test

- It is difficult to prepare and is time consuming

- It encourages guess by learners, though the learner does not know the answer, he has a 50% chance of success if she/he guesses.
- It may lead itself to ambiguous terminologies
- Multiple choice test items may lead themselves to irrelevant clues or options.
- There is little opportunity for a learner to plan and organise her/his own answer, to demonstrate divergent thinking and to express her/his response.

7.4 Subjective Tests (Essay tests)

The essay test is quite different from an objective test. It requires learners to organise their thoughts and express them to the questions asked in writing composition of considerable length. The essay type of test has been defined by many people in different ways. The words used are:

To compare, outline, define, analyse, discuss, explain, evaluate etc.

An essay test in this case can be defined as, one or more questions administered to a group of learners under certain conditions, to elicit their response in writing at length for purpose of testing how much they have remembered of something they have learned, how fully they have understood it, or how far they can give as reasonable explanation to it. It can also give them the opportunity to express original ideas about the subject.

Essay test items allow learners a wider expanse of knowledge in relation to their own experience or competence. Essay test items have no single answer. Students may be given a variety of responses. Examples of subjective test items include the essay, composition, discussion, etc.

The distinction between objective and subjective tests lies in the manner in which they are graded. Subjective (essay) tests allow students to express themselves freely in their answers to particular questions. To a large extent, the emphasis is on students overall understanding of the subjective in question.

Advantages (merits) of the Essay test

- It provides the teacher with knowledge about the competence of the learners in written expression.
- It gives the learners practice in the choice and correct use of words to express themselves, either orally or in written expressions.
- It encourages originality and creativity in learners.
- It encourages clear thinking and logical organisation of ideas in the learners.
- It accords pupils time and space to express their own point of view about an issue, a problem, or situation requiring their contributions.
- It encourages learners to adopt different study techniques such as making summaries, outlines and listing of ideas.
- It helps learners to perceive relationships and trends between situations.
- Time for preparation is less than for objective test.
- It reduces the possibility of guess work.
- More emphasis is laid on skills than recognition or recall of knowledge.

Disadvantages (demerits) of the essay test

- The marking or grading requires expert judgement, which is difficult to obtain.
- Scoring is unreliable and time-consuming on the part of a teacher.
- Validity is low. Sampling is limited or focus is only limited to syllabus area
- Marking is subjective
- Writing is time consuming on the part of the candidates.
- At times irrelevant factors are considered, such as poor language, handwriting, spelling, grammatical errors, and arrangement of ideas rather than facts.

3 Characteristics of good questions

Whatever type of question being asked by a teacher, certain factors must be taken into consideration. These include:

- Clarity: Ambiguous questions tend to lead to different interpretations by students.

- Simplicity: Similarly, a complex question with many terms or phrases and with no specific focus tends to confuse students.
- Specificity and challenge: On the other hand, when a question is obvious and lacks challenge, students often rely on mere recall of information or the use of low level of cognition. In such cases their creativity and ingenuity are discouraged (ingenious investing, constructing, organizing, cleverly contrived and ingenuity – skill in contriving plan skill).

7.5 TESTING

7.5.1 What is testing?

- Testing is the assessment of what has been learned in a language course or some part of a course (Heaton John Ollerjr, 1979).
- Testing is an act of reinforcing learning and motivating the students, and a means of assessing the students' performance in the language.

7.5.2 Why testing?

According to Hughes A (1989), there are several reasons for testing a student:

- To discover how far students have achieved on the objectives of a course of study.
- To diagnose students strength and weaknesses
- To identify what they know and what they don't know
- To assist placement of students by identifying the stage or part of a teaching programme most appropriate to their ability.
- To measure language proficiency regardless of any language course that candidates may have followed.
- To reinforce learning and motivate students

7.5.3 Fundamental aspects of Language Testing

According to Anum P. SELEMI (1988), there are four fundamental aspects of language testing.

- Evaluate-measurement, discrimination, comparability

- Practical- administrability, economy, testing environment, acceptability

- Instructional- feedback, test-course interdependence

- Theoretical- the form a test takes is also significantly controlled by theory, or theories of language, language learning and language teaching espoused by the course of instruction.

7.5.4 The Evaluative Aspect

The evaluative aspect is divided into three components as follows:

7.5.4.1 Measurement

Quantification of learning is one of the classic functions of testing. A good test is supposed to measure accurately and consistently whatever has (or has not) been learned. This is what is meant by the term reliability. A good test is by definition reliable. Generally speaking or discrete pointing, test is likely to be more reliable than its subjective communicative counterpart. This does not imply that subjective tests are never reliable. There are techniques, like multiple scoring by means of which even subjective tests may be made to acquire a sufficient degree of reliability.

7.5.4.2 Discrimination.

Closely related to reliability are discrimination and grading. A test should provide us scores on the basis of which we can discriminate between good and bad students. Fair objectively and to place them is a reliable rank order, that is the teacher, should come to know, as a result of evaluation relative achievement levels of her/his students.

A central issue in this respect is whether the learners are to be evaluated against each other or on the basis of pre-determined performance criteria; that is, whether evaluation should be normally referenced or criterion referenced.

7.5.4.3 Comparability

Test results obtained as a consequence of administering a (presumably) reliable testing instrument should be comparable with test results obtained from any other similar test even though the test in question were taken by different tests and test groups in addition to being so on a single test with a single group.

7.5.5 The practical aspect
This aspect is more conveniently discussed under four sub-headings;

7.5.5.1 Administrability

A test that is both reliable and valid is not good if it is problematic with respect to ease of administration practicability of performance required of the learner.

7.5.5.2 Economy

A good test is expected to provide as much information is required with the minimum expenditure of item, effort and resources (Carrol, 1988).

7.5.5.3 The test environment

The test environment must be pleasant and congenial. A student taking an examination in a room with temperature scoring as high as 50 degrees centigrade (50c) is more probably not destined to do well in that examination.

7.5.5.4 Acceptability

This is rather a neglected aspect. Being a practical educational instrument, a test will succeed better if it is acceptable to learner in most respects.

Normally the test constructors (i.e. teachers in the present context) think of testing an expert domain. However, it is important to consider whether that is regarded so by the test taker.

Ironically, remarks porter (1983:177), while speaking of setting authentic tasks in test, it might be the authentic tasks which lack face validity in the eyes of person being tested, though not in the test developers because of their novelty the foregoing points (1 to 4) will affect the reliability of a test one way or the other for better or for worse.

7.6 The Instructional aspect

One most important aspect of the testing process is the instructional. This basically concerned with the relationship of the test to course of the language programme. An important feature of this relationship is how testing influences the mode of teaching by providing insights into the learning process. Feedback is the term used for kind of testing to cause flow of information.

Feedback

Assessment is the major, perhaps the only, source of objective feedback available to the teacher with regard to:

(a) The effectiveness of her/his teaching and

(b) Both individual and collective progress that has taken in the course. Testing in this sense is there primarily to promote learning, it should as far as possible, be subordinate to the latter. There is a lot to be said in favour of fully integrating assessment into the teaching process.

One way to do this is to test more frequently, but of course much less obtrusively. Testing should be built into a programme of instruction in such a way that it becomes inseparable from learning. Judging from this view point, it would appear that single end-of-term examination becomes available so late in the process that it is no longer usable with the same set of learners. Another advantage of frequent testing (though not too frequent) is that it may cause students to lose at least some intense fear of assessment, test anxiety, as it is generally called, that occasional examinations are so often known.

7.6.2 Testing-course Interdependence

The main consideration on this score is that it is the course, the syllabus, and the teaching obtrusive – unpleasantly of unduly noticeable that are supposed to dictate the content and format of a test, not the other way round. Whatever effect assessment has on the instructional process is termed as 'backwash' which may be good or bad.

Good backwash means that the test and the course of instruction influence each other reciprocally, and that testing is beneficial to the teaching / learning process. The test objectives and the course objectives, ideally speaking should be the same or at least should correspond very closely.

All testers too often tend to select items that are easy to test and convenient to score. As obvious, the former point is related to practically, the latter to reliability. While to ensure these two important conditions of effective testing are highly desirable-indeed essential-this must not be done at the cost of validity. In short, one would do well to avoid being tempted into assessing – eminently testable and scorable though one's item may be – things s/he did not intend to test in the place or ought not to be testing anyway. When in this way, assessment under determined by the nature of instruction, assumes dominant role undoubtedly negative and results in teaching for examinations. This type of backwash is characterised by a largely one sided course relationship as shown in (Fig 1B)

COURSE
TEACHING   TEST 1A

COURSE
TEACHING   TEST 1B

Fig 1: Types of backwash

In some situations, the teacher may be faced with a predetermined pattern of teaching and testing. Typically the only form of assessment considered worth serious attention is the annual/end practically free to make and give some tests (which may or not carry weight towards final assessment) during the course of study, or that s/he is willing perhaps even

eager to prepare and administer frequently quite a few well-designed classroom tests in order to be in control of the learners' progress.

As with the content, the difficult level of a test is also decided by the nature of the course. Difficulty here does not only mean the official level of course but also the actual proficiency level of the learners in the course.

7.7 Interpreting test scores

Teacher's inability to interpret test scores reflect a major weakness of our educational system. With this view in mind, we shall examine a number of simple statistical tools used to analyse test scores. The interpretation of test scores underlines very important issues in education.

7.7.1 Averages

We cannot discuss objectively such problems as standard average performance valid or reliable test, and so on, without having some norm to serve as frame of reference. Whatever, we are generalizing test results we talk in terms of reference population. It is common to hear a girl being described as slim, light-weight or of an average height. The terms 'slim and light weights are more difficult to measure than average height. The concept of average refers to the idea of the arithmetic mean.

Many adjectives are used to describe people, be they are tall, short, light-weight or even to super intelligence must thus be constructed in terms of a reference population. In the same way, we use certain terms to try to describe students' performance as precisely as possible. Below are terms that are commonly used in tests together with their corresponding explanations.

7.7.2 Population

A collection of subjects sharing common attributes. In educational terms a reference population can be defined as a specified group of people to which a subject or the characteristics of a subject are being referred, compared or generalised. It is on the basis

of this frame or reference that a subject's behaviour is considered normally or abnormal. A sample is a subgroup of a specified population.

7.7.3 Average score

Suppose Moonga scores 30 on an English test. This score, known as the raw score, tells us very little about his performance. We are likely to want to ask further questions, such 'Did Moonga score all the points possible or 30 out of 50 or 50 out of 100? Is he an average, below or above average student compared with his age mates or classmates/ the concept of average can be defined in different ways but in this study we shall be concerned with only three forms of average, these are arithmetic mean, the median and the mode

7.7.3.1 Arithmetic mean

This refers to the scores obtained by dividing the total sum of scores with total number of scores in the class or group. To answer the question about Moonga's performance, let us examine the scores in table 1 on the next page.

NAME	RAW SCORE (X)
Banda	25
Chirwa	19
Moonga	30
Pimpa	26
Sitali	45
Timothy	40
Wachila	17
Zulu	38
Total x	240

From the table 1 we learnt the following additional information:

    i.   Total x =240
   ii.   Number of subjects (N) =8
  iii.   (sigma) is a Greek letter standing for sum of (i.e. X is equal to the sum of all the scores-xs)

7.7.3.2 Median

This is the point (score) midway between the highest and the lowest scores. Another way to analyse the score in table 1 is to focus our attention on the score that rank s in the middle. To obtain the median we must first of all rank the score in an ascending order as illustrated in table 2 below since there is an even number of scores, there can be only an imaginary middle value (represented by the broken line) the median is between the fourth score (30) and fifth score (26). To obtain the median, we find an average of these two scores that are closest to the middle, splitting the difference 30 and 26 gives the median.

Arranging the scores in order gives: 45, 31, 20, 18, 15, 13, 10, 8....using our formula, the median = (18+15) /2 = 33/2 =16.5. Altogether there are eight scores i.e. N is even. The median is between the fourth and fifth scores the fourth student scores 18 the median will be 18.

When N is odd, the median is (N+1) /2 when all individual scores are arranged in order. Suppose another student, who scores 6, joins the eighteen students to become the ninth. By applying our formula, the median is 15, leaving four scores on both sides.

NAME	RAW SCORE (X)
Sitali	45
Timothy	40
Zulu	38
Moonga	
Pimpa	26
Banda	25
Chirwa	19
Wachila	17

Table 2.

The median is the average of 30 and 26, or 56/2=28. Now calculate the mean and from the above figures.

7.7.3.3 Mode

The mode is a third way by which we may consider the concept 'average'. Suppose in a language test the group of students obtain the following grade;

NAME	RAW SCORE (X)
Linda	22
Michail	28
Faustine	36
Kelvin	30
Annie	22
Jane	30
Redson	40
Vincent	22

The score 22 occurs more frequently and so it is the mode.

A distribution in which there are two of frequently occurring scores is known as bimodal there are more than two sets of such frequently occurring scores, distribulation is multimodal.

Activity

1. What is testing and what the reasons for testing?
2. Discuss the different types of tests
3. Discuss the fundamental aspects of language testing
4. Distinguish objective from subjective tests

Summary

With this knowledge on how the testing and the type of test and all the accompanying aspects discussed in this component, you can go ahead and test your learners confidently and efficiently. You will be giving feedback to your learners on time and you will be able to evaluate your methods and strategies of teaching accordingly.

References