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Communication in English Language I GST 111

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HEADQUARTERS

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Study Session 1: Communication and Language Skills

Introduction

Welcome to this unit where we are going to examine definitions of communication. In this unit, you shall learn different definitions of communication as given by scholars. You shall also learn what is common to all definitions of communication. There are different types of communication and all these shall be discussed in this unit.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students should be able to

- 1.1. Know the common ideas in the definitions of communication
- 1.2. Understand the types of communication
- 1.3. Know what constitutes formal and informal communication
- 1.4. Understand the elements of communication
- 1.5. Understand the communication skills

1.1 Defining Communication

We do not need to stress ourselves looking for the definition of communication. This is what we do every day either consciously or unconsciously. As you are reading this course material, the writer of the text and you (the readers of the text) are engaging in communication. This kind of communication is called written or non-verbal communication. Another

important thing is that communication sustains our society because without it there would have been chaos and disorderliness. We know the feelings and emotions of one another through communication. When you are happy, you communicate your feelings and also when you are angry, you express your emotions through communication. Thus, our lives depend on the ability for effective communication.

There are different definitions of communication. For instance, Ojomo (2004:78) is of the view that communication is the “sharing of ideas, feelings, thoughts, information and messages with others”. Ojomo’s definition of communication is close to Rothwell’s (2001) view that sees communication as a “transactional process of sharing meaning with others”. Different forms of definitions of communication culled from Macbride Commission Report by Aina (2003) are reproduced below:

- i. It is the process of sharing symbolic meanings with others;
- ii. It is a process which increases commonality or what is shared between participants;
- iii. It is constantly changing, dynamic function involving exchange of meaning and interaction;
- iv. It is a behavioural situation in which a source transmits a message to a receiver with conscious intention to affect the latter’s behaviour;

- v. It is a process which enables us to become an affecting agent; to affect others, our physical environment and ourselves to become a determining agent.

Reading through the definitions, there are two common words – “sharing” and “exchanging”. In communication, we share or exchange ideas, feelings and thoughts in oral mode or written mode. In the light of this, it is important to note the seven (7) C’s of communication – (i) clarity (ii) correctness (iii) courtesy (iv) concreteness (v) conciseness (vi) completeness and (vii) consideration. The understanding of the 7 C’s will foster effective communication.

1.1 Types of Communication

There are different types of communication and few of these are highlighted and described briefly below.

1. **Verbal Communication:** This type of communication sees humans as speaking creatures. It involves the use of words and discourses in a speech community most especially with the use of mouth. It can also be called oral communication because it makes use of spoken expressions.
2. **Non-verbal Communication:** This type of communication does not make use of speeches and oral communication. It involves the use of gestures and body signs. Most African cultures and European cultures make use of non-verbal communication to pass across

messages to their audience or listeners. Written texts are also examples of non-verbal communication because they do not make use of speeches.

3. **Intra-personal Communication:** This is the type of communication that takes place within someone. In this case, there is no transfer of messages or information from one person to another. It often takes the form of thought formation or monologue.
4. **Inter-personal Communication:** This is the type of communication that involves exchanges or transfer of information from one person to another. This form of communication can make use of verbal mode or non-verbal mode.
5. **Formal Communication:** This is a form of communication which occurs in a formal setting and it often shows hierarchy between the speaker and the audience. It has its own linguistic features such as avoidance of abbreviations and colloquialism in both spoken and written texts.
6. **Informal Communication:** This type of communication takes place in an informal setting. It is casual and encourages the use of colloquialism, slang and abbreviations in spoken and written texts.

Apart from the above forms/types of communication, there are also business communication, organisational communication and cultural communication,

etc. Each of these forms of communication has its own unique features, styles and discourse.

1.2 Elements of Communication

Remember that we say that communication involves transferring messages/information from one person to another. This means that the message has moved from who we know as sender and get to who is known as receiver. This means that sender and receiver are elements of communication. Other processes are also involved while describing the elements of communication. Something is transferred (message) from the sender to the receiver through a particular medium (channel) which can be oral or written with an expected response (feedback). This means that there are five basic elements of communication: sender, message, channel, receiver/recipient, and feedback.

1.3 Communication Skills

There are four communication skills and these are:

1. Listening skills
2. Speaking skills
3. Reading skills
4. Writing skills

The above is the sequential arrangement of communication skills. We acquire listening skills before we start imitating speeches in our homes and immediate

environments. This is therefore, to say that listening comes before speaking. Similarly, we imitate the content and style of what we have read in our writing. Since we acquire or receive information through speaking and reading, they are both receptive skills. Speaking and writing are used to give information and for this reason, they are also known as expressive skills. We should also note that since language is the vehicle of thought in communication, communication skills are also known as language skills.

Conclusion

Now that we have concluded our discussion on communication skills, I hope that you have understood what constitutes communication and how our thoughts can be expressed. The expectation, therefore, is that we are more sensitive to how we express our thoughts in day-to-day interactions in formal and informal contexts. We should also be conscious of how to make ourselves clear in the course of conversation.

Summary

In this unit, we have studied the meaning of communication, types of communication, communication skills as well as elements of communication. As discussed in the unit, this course material is a form of communication between the course writer/instructor (sender) and some sets of students (receiver). We can, therefore, understand that communication is what we engage in every time either consciously or unconsciously.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ)

- SAQ1.1. What is the importance of communication in our society?
(Tests learning outcome 1.1)
- SAQ1.2. How do we define communication? (Tests learning outcome 1.1)
- SAQ1.3. What are the different definitions of communication provided in the text? (Tests learning outcomes 1.1 and 1.2)
- SAQ1.4. What are the common words associated with communication in the definitions provided? (Tests learning outcome 1.1)
- SAQ1.5. What are the seven C's of communication? (Tests learning outcome 1.1)
- SAQ1.6. What are the different types of communication mentioned in the text? (Tests learning outcome 1.2)
- SAQ1.7. How does verbal communication differ from non-verbal communication? (Tests learning outcome 1.2)

Self-Assessment Answers (SAA)

- SAA1.1. The importance of communication in our society is significant as it plays a crucial role in maintaining order, understanding one another, and fostering effective relationships. Communication allows us to share ideas, feelings, thoughts, information, and messages with others. It enables us to express our emotions, convey our needs, collaborate with others, and build connections. Without communication, there would be

chaos and disorderliness, as we heavily rely on effective communication to function as individuals and as a society.

SAA1.2. Communication can be defined as the process of sharing or exchanging information, ideas, feelings, thoughts, and messages between individuals. It involves the transmission and reception of messages through various channels, both verbal and non-verbal, with the intention of creating shared meaning and understanding.

SAA1.3. The text provides two different definitions of communication. Ojomo (2004:78) defines communication as the "sharing of ideas, feelings, thoughts, information, and messages with others." Rothwell (2001) views communication as a "transactional process of sharing meaning with others." Additionally, the text mentions several definitions of communication from the Macbride Commission Report, which include concepts such as sharing symbolic meanings, increasing commonality between participants, dynamic interaction, intentional behavior impact, and becoming an affecting agent.

SAA1.4. The common words associated with communication in the provided definitions include sharing, exchanging, ideas, feelings, thoughts, information, messages, meaning, and interaction.

SAA1.5. The seven C's of communication, as mentioned in the text, are as follows:

- Clarity: Ensuring that the message is clear and easily understood by the receiver.

- Correctness: Using accurate and appropriate language, grammar, and facts.
- Courtesy: Showing politeness, respect, and consideration towards the receiver.
- Concreteness: Using specific and precise language to convey the message effectively.
- Conciseness: Communicating the message in a concise and brief manner, avoiding unnecessary repetition or wordiness.
- Completeness: Providing all the necessary information and details required for understanding.
- Consideration: Taking into account the needs, interests, and perspectives of the receiver in the communication process.

SAA1.6. The text mentions several types of communication, including:

- Verbal Communication: This type involves the use of spoken words and discourses to convey messages, thoughts, and ideas.
- Non-verbal Communication: This type relies on gestures, body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal cues to communicate meaning without the use of spoken words.
- Intra-personal Communication: This refers to the internal communication that occurs within an individual, often in the form of thoughts or self-reflection.

- Inter-personal Communication: This involves the exchange of information, ideas, and messages between two or more individuals.

SAA1.7. Verbal communication and non-verbal communication differ in the following ways:

- Verbal communication involves the use of spoken words and language to convey messages, thoughts, and ideas. It relies on the auditory channel, where the words are heard and understood by the receiver.
- Non-verbal communication, on the other hand, does not involve spoken words. It encompasses gestures, body language, facial expressions, postures, and other non-verbal cues to communicate meaning. Non-verbal communication can be observed through visual and physical channels.
- Verbal communication is primarily based on the use of language, while non-verbal communication is based on visual and physical cues.
- Verbal communication allows for the precise and explicit expression of ideas, while non-verbal communication often conveys emotions, attitudes, and contextual information that may complement or contradict verbal messages.

Tutor-Marked Assignment

Answer the following questions:

1. Define communication with illustration.
2. Identify and discuss elements of communication.
3. What are the communication skills and explain each of them?
4. Identify and discuss types of communication.

References/Further reading

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Study Session 2: Understanding Writing; Meaning and Types

Introduction

In the previous unit, we discussed the meaning of communication as well as communication and language skills. I think you can still recollect that writing is one of the communication and language skills that we discussed. It was said that it was an expressive skill because we use it to pass across information or messages from one person to another. In this unit, therefore, we shall learn what writing is as well as types of writing.

Learning Outcomes

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

- 2.1. Understand what writing is.
- 2.2. Differentiate between different types of writing
- 2.3. Acquire skills for effective writing for different purposes.

2.1 The Meaning of Writing

We learn how to write by writing. Imagine when you were in nursery and primary schools, your parents and teachers would teach you how to trace and write letters or alphabets. As you were advancing in your studies, your teachers would ask you to write a composition about yourself, your favourite

food, your best foods and the last holiday you had. You will now agree with me that we learn how to write by writing.

Writing is an expressive language and communication skill which is used to express our thoughts and feelings for different purposes. It is also a form of non-verbal communication which is aimed at achieving specific purposes. Alfaki (2015: 40) offers the meaning and purposes of writing as provided below.

Writing is one of the main language skills. It plays a major role in expressing one's ideas, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes. Through writing, people are capable of sharing ideas, feelings, persuading and convincing others. People may write for personal enjoyment or for some other purpose. They may address an audience of one person or more persons. The audience may be known or unknown. Taking notes for study purposes is an example of writing for one's self. Blogging publicly is an example of writing for an unknown audience.

The above quote reveals the meaning and different purposes of writing. Different people have different purposes or reasons for writing at a particular time.

When we are engaging in writing, we need to consider two important things: the audience of our writing and the purpose of writing. These two factors are very important because they will guide us to use appropriate language and style in our writing.

2.2 Types of Writing

Classifying types of writing is not very easy because different purposes of writing can make up types of writing. Different professions also have their writing patterns that could also make up types of writing. The nature of language and style used in our writing could make up types of writing as we have: formal writing and informal writing. For our purpose in this unit, two basic yardsticks will be used to classify types of writing : functions and purpose.

2.2.1 Functional Types of Writing

Writing is not done without having something to achieve in mind. Our writing, at times, is done to clarify or explain something. We also write to narrate events or situations and at the same time, we write to persuade our audience. To this end, we have: narrative writing, descriptive writing, persuasive/argumentative writing, and expository writing.

Narrative Writing: A narrative writing is the type that tells a story or recounts a past incident. When you were in secondary school, you had been given a task to write about an excursion you took to at least a place of interest. This is an example of narrative writing. When you are narrating an event in writing, you

need to consistently use past tense and you also need to have a good ability to recollect events. Coherence of ideas and proper structure of the events are also essential in narrative writing.

Descriptive Writing: Descriptive writing gives a mental and vivid image of a person, process or event that is under description. In most cases of descriptive writing, writers are often advised to use present tense because the process and features of the object under description may not change over a period of time. While you are describing, five human senses – (i) hearing (ii) sight (iii) taste (iv) smelling and (v) touch are expected to be put into use.

Persuasive Writing: Persuasive writing involves logical presentation of ideas with a view to making the audience believe the writer. In persuasive writing, you follow the structure of an argument – statement, premise and conclusion in order to make the audience have conviction about what you have written about. You may take a position or leave the whole idea open for the audience to make their decision.

Expository Writing: This is subject-centred or opinion-based writing. It is usually on topical issues such as examination malpractice, road accidents, human capital development as well as state of education in a country. The issues raised in this type of writing are not final as it can generate further writing.

2.2.2 Types of Writing According to Purposes

The purpose of writing differs from context to context and from one person to another. Considering the purpose of writing, some written texts have been categorised as (i) professional writing and (ii) technical writing. For our purpose in this unit, the following types of writing according to purpose are discussed.

Creative Writing: This is the type of writing that is involved in the making of a story in any of the genres of poetry, drama and prose. This type of writing makes use of interplay of inspiration and perspiration. We can be inspired to create a story in any context – in our dream, while we eat, in the course of lectures, while we are discussing with our friends or relatives or while we are travelling. As we all have the innate/inborn ability to create a story, there is a need to learn the style of writing.

Academic Writing: This is a type of writing which is done in the course of pursuing education or training. Have you been asked to produce a term paper or seminal paper? If yes, what you have done is the writing of an academic paper. In academic papers, there is a need to follow the given formats of writing and to avoid plagiarism (the use of another person's thoughts or ideas without acknowledging the source). Also note that plagiarism is called academic theft with a very serious punishment. We can also publish academic writing in journals, books and magazines. The use of references is very compulsory in academic writing.

Journalistic Writing: This is a form of writing which is common to journalists as well as press men or women. Journalists write according to the in-house style of their organisations. Some of the journalistic writings are expository in nature. The use of references is not compulsory.

2.3 Writing Skills

Writing skills are the specific abilities that help writers put their ideas and thoughts together. There are three basic elements of writing skills and these are (i) linguistic skills (ii) compositional skills and (iii) presentational skills.

Linguistic Skills: There is a belief that good writing might be spoiled by poor language of expression in composition. Most promising letters and essays have been spoiled by many avoidable grammatical mistakes, punctuation errors, capitalization errors, wrong lexical choices, and poor collocation. The language skills require appropriateness in the use of language while writing. To this end, linguistic skills involve appropriate use of a dictionary while writing. Let us illustrate with the following sentences how linguistic skills can contribute to effective writing.

- i. Slow, men are working on the road.
- ii. Slow men are working on the road.

If you analyse the two sentences critically, you will observe that they have different meanings. The first sentence is an imperative sentence which gives order to road users to reduce their pace or speed because some men are

working on the road. The second sentence, on the other hand, is a declarative sentence telling us that some men who are slow are working on the road.

Compositional Skills: Writing starts with formation of thoughts. You are aware that even before you say anything, you first think about it. The same situation is peculiar to writing. To this end, we shall adopt the submission of Hedge (1989:9) about the compositional skills of writing and this is given below:

- a. The writers start with an overall plan in their head.
- b. They think about what they want to say and who they are writing for.
- c. They then draft out sections of the writing and as they work on them, they constantly review, revise and edit their work.

From the submission of Hedge, we can deduce that there is a link between compositional skills and presentational skills of writing as found in the third point presented above.

2.4 Presentational Skills

These are the skills that are required to make our ideas accessible to the audience. The presentational skills involve proper paragraphing which includes (i) coherence (ii) unity and (iii) completeness. There is also the need for clarity and avoidance of lexical and semantic ambiguity in the course of writing. This is to say that language plays a significant role in the presentational skills. To this end, the view of Ur (1996:163) is apt that:

much higher standards of language are (sic) normally demanded in writing than in speech: more careful construction, more precise and varied vocabulary, and more correctness of expressions in general. Ur further states that writing is a messy business which requires passing through a number of untidy drafts before reaching a final version.

Conclusion

This unit has carefully discussed the meaning of writing, types of writing as well as writing skills. All these are carefully discussed with a view to demonstrating the need for clarity and logical presentation of ideas. Students are, therefore, expected to adopt the style of writing which focuses more on clarity and coherence of ideas in any type of writing they are making. Since language plays a significant role in writing, there is a need for students to improve on their linguistic skills.

Summary

This unit has exposed you to the understanding of the meaning of writing, types of writing and writing skills with some examples and illustrations. The expectation is that you adopt your learning in the future writing tasks.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ)

- SAQ2.1. How does descriptive writing create a mental image of the object being described? (Tests learning outcome 2.2)
- SAQ2.2. What is the goal of persuasive writing, and what structure does it typically follow? (Tests learning outcome 2.2)
- SAQ2.3. How does expository writing differ from other types of writing? (Tests learning outcome 2.2)
- SAQ2.4. What are compositional skills, and what is the process involved in writing according to Hedge? (Tests learning outcome 2.3)
- SAQ2.5. What are presentational skills in writing, and what aspects do they involve? (Tests learning outcome 2.3)

Self-Assessment Answers (SAA)

- SAA2.1. Descriptive writing creates a mental image of the object being described by using vivid language and sensory details. By appealing to the reader's senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch, descriptive writing paints a picture in the reader's mind. It provides specific details about the object's appearance, characteristics, and qualities, allowing the reader to visualize and engage with the description on a sensory level. The use of descriptive language and sensory imagery helps to evoke emotions and create a more immersive reading experience.

SAA2.2. The goal of persuasive writing is to convince the audience to adopt or support a particular viewpoint or take a specific course of action. The aim is to persuade readers to agree with the writer's perspective or to influence their beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours.

Persuasive writing typically follows a structured format known as the argumentative structure. This structure includes:

- Introduction: The introduction captures the reader's attention, presents the issue or topic, and establishes the writer's stance or thesis statement.
- Body paragraphs: The body paragraphs provide supporting evidence, logical reasoning, and persuasive arguments to support the writer's viewpoint. Each paragraph focuses on a specific point and presents evidence, examples, and explanations to strengthen the argument.
- Counterarguments and refutation: In persuasive writing, it is important to address counterarguments or opposing viewpoints. The writer acknowledges and refutes opposing arguments, demonstrating why their position is stronger or more valid.
- Conclusion: The conclusion restates the main arguments, reinforces the writer's viewpoint, and leaves a lasting impression on the reader.

SAA2.3. Expository writing differs from other types of writing in its purpose and approach. The primary goal of expository writing is to inform, explain, or describe a particular subject or topic. It focuses on presenting facts, providing a clear understanding of the subject matter, and offering explanations or analysis. Unlike persuasive writing, which aims to persuade or convince the audience, expository writing aims to impart knowledge, increase understanding, or clarify complex ideas. It is more objective and relies on evidence, examples, and logical reasoning to support the information presented.

SAA2.4. Compositional skills in writing refer to the abilities and techniques involved in organising and structuring written content effectively. These skills encompass the process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing written work to ensure coherence, clarity, and logical flow of ideas. According to Hedge, the process of writing involves the following steps:

- Overall Plan: Writers start by formulating an overall plan or framework in their mind. They consider what they want to communicate and who their intended audience is.
- Thinking and Pre-writing: Writers engage in thinking about the content, gathering information, brainstorming ideas, and organising their thoughts before they start writing. This stage involves considering the purpose, main points, and supporting details of the piece.

- Drafting: Writers begin to put their ideas into written form, creating a rough draft. They focus on expressing their thoughts and ideas without being overly concerned with perfection. This stage allows for exploration and experimentation.
- Reviewing, Revising, and Editing: Writers review their initial draft, revise and refine their writing. This involves evaluating the content, structure, and clarity of ideas. They make revisions to improve coherence, logical progression, and overall effectiveness.
- Editing focuses on correcting grammatical errors, improving sentence structure, punctuation, and word choice.

SAA2.5. Presentational skills in writing refer to the techniques used to effectively present and communicate ideas to the audience. These skills involve elements such as paragraphing, coherence, unity, completeness, clarity, and language usage. The aspects involved in presentational skills include:

- Paragraphing: Presentational skills require appropriate paragraphing, where related ideas are grouped together in paragraphs. Each paragraph focuses on a specific topic or aspect of the overall writing, and there is a logical flow between paragraphs.
- Coherence: Presentational skills involve maintaining coherence throughout the writing. This means that ideas are connected logically, and there is a smooth transition between sentences and

paragraphs. Coherent writing helps readers follow the writer's thoughts and understand the message more effectively.

- **Unity:** Presentational skills aim for unity within paragraphs and the entire piece. Unity means that all sentences within a paragraph contribute to a central idea or topic, supporting the main theme or argument of the writing.
- **Completeness:** Presentational skills involve providing complete and comprehensive information. Writers should ensure that they cover all relevant aspects of the topic or issue, avoiding gaps or missing information that could lead to confusion or incomplete understanding.
- **Clarity:** Presentational skills emphasise clear and concise expression. Writers should strive for clarity in their language, sentence structure, and organisation of ideas. Clear writing facilitates understanding and prevents ambiguity or misinterpretation.
- **Language Usage:** Presentational skills require appropriate and effective use of language. This includes using precise vocabulary, varied sentence structures, correct grammar, and appropriate punctuation. The use of language should be tailored to the target audience and purpose of the writing.

Tutor-Marked Assignment

The following questions are meant for your practice and they shall be graded.

1. Define writing with example and illustrations
2. Discuss the linguistic and structural features of functional types of writing.
3. Identify and discuss three writing skills.

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Study Session 3: Essay Writing Skills

Introduction

In the previous unit, we have discussed functional types of writing as narrative writing, argumentative writing, descriptive writing and expository writing. All these types are also taken as types of essays. Each of these types have their unique styles of writing. In this unit, we shall discuss the specific features of these types of essays and the general stages that are involved while attempting to write any type of essay.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, you shall be able to

- 3.1. Understand different stages involved in the writing of a good essay
- 3.2. Know the different types of essays
- 3.3. Write a good essay with few or no errors.

3.1 Types of Essays

There are four basic types of essays – (i) narrative essay (ii) argumentative essay (iii) descriptive essay and (iv) expository essay. All these types of essays can be written effectively with the good knowledge of language and vocabulary development.

Narrative Essay: This is the type of essay that tells a story or that recounts past experience (s) of the writer. This type of essay requires the writer to be creative and imaginative in the formation of thoughts and presentation of ideas. Past tense should be used in narrative essays because the writer is bringing the past event to the knowledge of the audience/reader.

Argumentative Essay: This is the type of essay which focuses on the logical presentation of ideas/facts with the aim of convincing the reader/audience. This type of essay is also known as persuasive writing. Any type of tense can be used depending on the point that the writer is discussing at a particular time. For instance, the writer needs to use a future tense if a future projection is made while supporting a point.

Descriptive Essay: It gives a mental and vivid image of a person, process or thing in a very convincing manner. If the description is meant for a person or thing or process, a simple present tense should be used through the text. This is because the subject of description has the possibility of permanent attributes. You can describe how to prepare your favourite dish and how a friend can locate your house. To this end, Nash and Stacey (1997) are of the view that a universal value of writing is the descriptive ability of a writer.

Expository Essay: This is an essay type which is often used to discuss topical issues. It is common in sciences and humanities as it is used to give more insights into particular phenomena. The essay type requires proper research into the subject under discussion in order to get more facts to corroborate

whatever it is written. In some other instances, an expository essay is opinion-based thereby subjective.

3.2 Stages of Writing an Essay

There are three basic stages of writing an essay – (i) pre-writing stage (ii) writing stage and (iii) post-writing stage. All these stages have some issues and steps to be considered.

Pre-writing Stage: A writer of an essay needs to take some steps before embarking on the writing of an essay and this is known as the pre-writing stage. The very first pre-writing step is looking for a topic. Similarly, a writer needs to consider the purpose and the audience of writing. In this consideration, the writer will be guided by the type of essay to be written. After considering the purpose and the audience, the writer needs to gather the points to be discussed in the writing. Finally, there is a need for an outline of the whole essay structure.

Writing Stage: At this stage, the writer begins the proper writing of the essay. This may be similar to the structure of the essay given in the outline. Paragraph and paragraphing should be considered at this stage of writing. In case the writer is quoting from another source in the course of writing, all forms of plagiarism should be avoided. The writer should also avoid repeating the same word in the essay.

Post-Writing Stage: At this stage, the writer reads over the essay to ensure that all forms of errors are corrected. This is a stage where the writer needs to cross the “t” and dot the “i”. At this stage, the writer may assume the status of a reader/critic of the essay.

3.3 Structure of an Essay

All types of essays have the same structures. There are three structures of essays – introduction, body and conclusion. A writer of an essay needs to know how to handle the introduction of all categories of an essay. The introduction of a narrative essay should be captivating to arrest and sustain the interest of the audience. The introduction of an essay should be in a single paragraph and this is why it is called an introductory paragraph. No special point should be raised and discussed in the introduction of an essay.

The body of an essay contains the points to be discussed in the whole of the essay. You write the body of your essay in line with the points that you have identified in the outline. The number of paragraphs of the body of your essay depends on the number of points that you identify in the outline. For example, the body of an essay can have two, three or more paragraphs based on the number of points in the outline.

The conclusion of an essay is the final paragraph and this is why it is also called a concluding paragraph. This is usually one and there is no discussion of

a new or fresh point. The writer offers an overview of all that has been discussed in the whole of the essay.

3.4 Common Errors in an Essay

There are some errors that are found in the essays of some students. There are three basic types of errors in an essay – (i) grammatical errors (ii) mechanical errors and (iii) structural errors.

Grammatical Errors: These are the errors that are common to the wrong use of grammar of a language. Among these grammatical errors are highlighted below:

- i. Poor capitalisation
- ii. Improper use of tenses
- iii. Spelling errors
- iv. Errors in the use of concord

Mechanical Errors

The basic mechanical error in an essay is the improper or wrong use of punctuation marks. Some students do not understand how to use some of the punctuation marks in their writing. You should note that a wrong use of punctuation marks can affect the flow and meaning of an essay.

Structural Errors

These are the errors in the construction of a sentence and arrangement of the paragraphs in an essay. As a writer of an essay, you need to vary your sentence type from simple sentence to complex sentence. This is to say that you should not use one type of sentence through your essay. Besides, your paragraph should be written with a paragraph containing a topic sentence. Another aspect of structural error is the repetition of the same word when a substitute is available. There is also an error in the way words are used together (collocational errors).

Conclusion

This unit has identified and discussed types of essays with their peculiar features. The unit is very important because, as individuals, we all engage in the writing of one type of an essay or the other without us being o=conscious of it. The understanding of this unit will assist us to avoid some errors in the writing of an essay.

Summary

Writing an essay requires understanding of the process of writing from the pre-writing stage to the post-writing stage. All these stages play significant roles while planning an essay. Similarly, we need to strive to increase the stock of our vocabulary in order to avoid repeating the same word in the body of our essay. There are some avoidable problems and for this reason, writers need to proofread their essays.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ)

- SAQ3.1. What is the purpose of an argumentative essay? (Tests learning outcome 3.2)
- SAQ3.2. What tense can be used in an argumentative essay and why? (Tests learning outcome 3.2)
- SAQ3.3. How would you describe a descriptive essay? (Tests learning outcome 3.2)
- SAQ3.4. What steps are involved in the pre-writing stage of essay writing? (Tests learning outcome 3.1)
- SAQ3.5. How should a writer handle paragraphing during the writing stage? (Tests learning outcome 3.1)
- SAQ3.6. What are mechanical errors in essay writing? (Tests learning outcome 3.3)
- SAQ3.7. How can structural errors affect the quality of an essay? (Tests learning outcome 3.3)

Self-Assessment Answers (SAA)

- SAA3.1. The purpose of an argumentative essay is to present a well-reasoned argument or point of view on a specific topic. The essay aims to persuade the reader to agree with the writer's perspective by providing evidence, logical reasoning, and supporting facts.

SAA3.2. Any tense can be used in an argumentative essay depending on the point being discussed at a particular time. For example, the writer may use the present tense when stating general facts or discussing current issues. They might use the past tense when referring to historical events or studies conducted in the past. Additionally, the future tense can be employed if the writer is making projections or discussing potential outcomes. The choice of tense in an argumentative essay depends on the context and the specific arguments being presented.

SAA3.3. A descriptive essay is a type of essay that aims to create a vivid and detailed portrayal or description of a person, place, object, event, or concept. The primary goal is to engage the reader's senses and provide a clear and vivid mental image through the use of sensory details, figurative language, and carefully chosen words. A descriptive essay often appeals to the reader's emotions and attempts to evoke a specific mood or atmosphere. It focuses on creating a sensory experience for the reader, enabling them to visualise and connect with the subject being described.

SAA3.4. The pre-writing stage of essay writing involves several steps. Here are some common steps that writers take during this stage:

- Topic Selection: Choosing a suitable and relevant topic for the essay.

- Understanding the Purpose and Audience: Considering the purpose of writing the essay and identifying the target audience.
- Gathering Information: Conducting research and collecting relevant information, data, or examples related to the chosen topic.
- Organising Ideas: Creating an outline or a mind map to organise the main points and supporting details that will be included in the essay.
- Developing a Thesis Statement: Formulating a clear and concise statement that expresses the main argument or focus of the essay.
- Creating a Draft: Writing a rough draft of the essay, without worrying too much about grammar, punctuation, or sentence structure.
- Reviewing and Revising: Reviewing the draft, making necessary revisions, and refining the content, structure, and clarity of the essay.

SAA3.5. Paragraphing is an important aspect of the writing stage in essay writing. Here are some guidelines on how writers should handle paragraphing:

- Unity and Coherence: Each paragraph should focus on a single main idea or topic, and all sentences within the paragraph should

be related to that idea. This ensures unity and coherence within the paragraph.

- **Topic Sentences:** Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that clearly states the main idea or argument of the paragraph. The topic sentence acts as a guide for the reader, providing a clear direction for the content of the paragraph.
- **Supporting Details:** Within each paragraph, writers should provide supporting details, examples, evidence, or explanations to support and develop the main idea stated in the topic sentence.
- **Transition Words and Phrases:** To ensure smooth flow and logical progression between paragraphs, writers should use appropriate transition words and phrases. These help to connect ideas and create coherence throughout the essay.
- **Paragraph Length:** Generally, paragraphs should be of moderate length, containing a sufficient number of sentences to adequately develop the main idea. However, excessively long paragraphs can be overwhelming for the reader, so it is advisable to break them into smaller, more manageable paragraphs when necessary.
- **Consistency:** Writers should maintain consistency in paragraphing throughout the essay. This means following a similar structure and approach for each paragraph unless there is a specific reason to deviate from it.

SAA3.6. Mechanical errors in essay writing refer to mistakes related to punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and other technical aspects of writing. Some common examples of mechanical errors include:

- Incorrect or inconsistent use of punctuation marks, such as commas, periods, semicolons, or quotation marks.
- Misspelt words or typographical errors.
- Inconsistent or incorrect capitalization of words.
- Errors in the use of apostrophes, hyphens, or other symbols.
- Inconsistent or incorrect formatting, such as improper indentation or line spacing.
- Lack of proper paragraph breaks or excessive paragraph breaks, disrupting the flow of the text.

SAA3.7. Structural errors in an essay pertain to problems with the overall organisation, coherence, and flow of the content. These errors can negatively impact the quality of an essay in several ways:

- Lack of Logical Progression: Structural errors can result in an essay that lacks a clear and logical progression of ideas. This can make it difficult for the reader to follow the writer's arguments or understand the main points being presented.
- Incoherence and Disorganization: Structural errors can lead to a lack of coherence and organisation within an essay. If the paragraphs or sections of the essay are not well-structured or if

there is no clear connection between ideas, it becomes challenging for the reader to make sense of the content.

- **Weak or Missing Transitions:** Structural errors may result in weak or missing transitions between paragraphs or sections. Transitions help to guide the reader smoothly from one idea to the next and ensure a cohesive flow. Without proper transitions, the essay can feel disjointed or fragmented.
- **Repetition or Redundancy:** Structural errors can also involve repetition or redundancy in the content. If ideas or information are unnecessarily repeated or if the same point is made multiple times in different parts of the essay, it can diminish the effectiveness of the writing and bore the reader.
- **Lack of Paragraph Unity:** Structural errors may manifest in paragraphs lacking unity. Each paragraph should have a clear main idea and focus, and structural errors can lead to paragraphs that are confusing or contain unrelated or irrelevant information.

Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. You took part in a tourism event recently. Write about your experiences.
2. A friend of yours shows interest in preparing your local meal. Describe to him or her how to make this meal.

3. The ban on social media is necessary for sustenance of security in Nigeria.

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Study Session 4: Paragraphs

Introduction

In the previous unit, we discussed types of essay and some of the errors that are peculiar to essay writing. Among the errors discussed are structural errors which include poor paragraphing. In this unit, therefore, we shall discuss paragraphs and some of the essential features of a good paragraph. This will prepare us to understand how to structure our essays for clarity of expressions and better understanding of the contents.

Learning Outcomes

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

- 4.1. Students will be able to identify and establish a clear central theme in a paragraph, ensuring that all sentences within the paragraph relate to and support that theme.
- 4.2. Students will demonstrate the ability to create coherence in their paragraphs by organising ideas in a logical and orderly manner, using cohesive links such as conjunctions and pronouns to connect and clarify relationships between sentences.
- 4.3. Students will learn how to use techniques such as paraphrasing and contrasting sentences to emphasise key ideas within a paragraph, effectively highlighting their significance.

- 4.4. Students will understand the concept of completeness in a paragraph, ensuring that each idea or point is thoroughly discussed within the paragraph without spilling over into other paragraphs, maintaining a coherent and organised structure in their writing.

4.1 Paragraphs

Paragraphs are units of thought. They are units of discourse in an essay and each paragraph is expected to be independent of itself but relate with other paragraphs for the overall meaning of an essay. Remember that in the previous module, we discussed the essence of paragraphs to maintain a proper structure of our essays. This is why a good paragraph should have a topic sentence (a sentence in a paragraph which underlines the significant message of the paragraph). We therefore need to understand some of the important features of a paragraph and this shall be discussed in the following segment of this module.

4.2 Features of Paragraphs

In our attempt to discuss the features of paragraphs, we shall consider four important aspects of a paragraph and these are (i) unity (ii) coherence (iii) emphasis and (iv) completeness. These features guide us on how to write any type of paragraph in our essay.

- i. **Unity:** This means that a paragraph must deal with one single central theme. In this regard, all the sentences in the paragraph must relate with this central theme in order to achieve the purpose of the

- paragraph. Similarly, you must avoid digression in order to make your essay very coordinated.
- ii. **Coherence:** This requires that you make all parts of the paragraph meaningful as shown in the lexical and syntactic structures. The ideas in the paragraph must be orderly and understandable. The ideas in the paragraph should be logically put together through cohesive links such as conjunctions. Coherence can also be used through the use of pronouns to avoid repetition of the same noun in the sentences. This is because repetition of the same noun brings about monotony in the whole essay. Coherence is also important to remove ambiguity in the whole of the essay.
 - iii. **Emphasis:** This is a situation of giving prominence to a particular idea in a paragraph. The significance of the idea under discussion determines how much emphasis will be placed on such an idea. This can be achieved through a careful and logical repetition of the idea in the way of paraphrasing. It can also be achieved through contrasting sentences.
 - iv. **Completeness:** A paragraph must discuss a single idea at a time. Any point raised and discussed in a paragraph should be done in its totality. This means that the point in one paragraph should not proceed into another paragraph in the course of writing. For instance, if you are writing on the advantages and disadvantages of a situation, all the points on the advantages should be completely discussed in

one paragraph while all the points on disadvantages should also be discussed in another paragraph.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed a paragraph that is taken as the unit of thought in an essay. We need to understand the structure of paragraphs in order to achieve meaning in our essay. The message of a paragraph can be properly delivered through the understanding of some of the features as discussed in this unit.

Summary

This unit has carefully analysed the features of a paragraph as unity, coherence, emphasis and completeness. All these features are very important and few of them are related. What is important is that we should learn how to adopt each of these features in our essay writing.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ)

- SAQ4.1. What are the important features of a paragraph? (Tests learning outcome 4.1)
- SAQ4.2. What is the purpose of a topic sentence in a paragraph? (Tests from learning outcome 4.1)
- SAQ4.3. How does unity contribute to the overall meaning of an essay? (Tests from learning outcomes 4.2 and 4.3)
- SAQ4.4. How can contrasting sentences be used to create emphasis in a paragraph? (Tests from learning outcomes 4.2 and 4.3)

SAQ4.5. What does completeness mean in the context of a paragraph?
(Tests from learning outcomes 4.2 and 4.3)

Self-Assessment Answers (SAA)

SAA4.1. The important features of a paragraph are:

- Unity: A paragraph should focus on one central theme or idea. All sentences within the paragraph should relate to this central theme in order to achieve the purpose of the paragraph.
- Coherence: The ideas in a paragraph should be logically connected and presented in an orderly manner. The use of cohesive links, such as conjunctions and pronouns, helps create coherence and avoid repetition or ambiguity.
- Emphasis: Certain ideas within a paragraph can be given prominence through careful repetition, paraphrasing, or the use of contrasting sentences.
- Completeness: Each paragraph should discuss a single idea or point in its entirety without spilling over into another paragraph. This helps maintain clarity and organisation in the overall essay.

SAA4.2. The purpose of a topic sentence in a paragraph is to convey the main idea or central theme of the paragraph. It acts as a guidepost for the reader, informing them of what to expect and providing a clear focus for the rest of the sentences within the paragraph. A well-crafted topic

sentence helps maintain coherence and unity within the paragraph, as well as throughout the entire essay.

SAA4.3. Unity contributes to the overall meaning of an essay by ensuring that each paragraph is focused and relevant to the essay's main topic or argument. When all paragraphs maintain unity, they work together to develop and support the central idea or thesis of the essay. This cohesive structure helps the reader understand the intended message and prevents the essay from becoming disjointed or confusing. Unity also enhances the logical flow of ideas, making the essay more persuasive and coherent.

SAA4.4. Contrasting sentences can be used to create emphasis in a paragraph by presenting contrasting ideas or perspectives. This technique highlights the differences between two concepts or viewpoints, drawing attention to the significance of the contrast. By juxtaposing contrasting sentences within a paragraph, the writer can effectively emphasise key points, create tension or intrigue, and engage the reader's interest. The contrast can be achieved through the use of contrasting words, phrases, or ideas, allowing the reader to see the distinction and the importance of the emphasised idea.

SAA4.5. Completeness in the context of a paragraph means that the paragraph thoroughly addresses and discusses a single idea or point. It implies that all aspects and components of the idea are explored and presented in a comprehensive manner. When a paragraph is complete, it

does not leave any important aspect of the idea unaddressed or unfinished. The writer ensures that all relevant information, explanations, examples, or supporting evidence related to the idea are included within the paragraph, allowing the reader to gain a thorough understanding of the concept being discussed. This helps maintain clarity and coherence within the paragraph and ensures that the point is fully conveyed.

Tutor-Marked Assignment

Answer the following questions.

1. Write an introductory paragraph on the topic “Examination Malpractice in Nigeria”.
2. With examples and illustrations, discuss completeness and unity as features of a paragraph.

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Study Session 5: Sentence Construction

Introduction

We discussed what constitutes a paragraph in the previous section. What we can deduct from the discussion is that the construction of a paragraph is only possible with the construction of a sentence. We can only talk of unity and coherence as structures of good paragraphs with the way our sentences are linked together. It is based on this understanding that this module with this unit shall focus on the sentence types and functions. We shall also discuss the basic elements of a sentence.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module, you should be able to

- 5.1. Write a good sentence with the possibility of coherence;
- 5.2. Understand better the elements of a sentence and how to use them while writing an essay;
- 5.3. Understand the functions of each of the sentences in your essay.

5.1 Structural Types of Sentences

There are four types of sentences according to their structure and these are (i) simple sentence (ii) complex sentence (iii) compound sentence (iv) compound- complex sentence.

- i. **Simple Sentence:** A simple sentence has the structure of a subject and a predicate. You should note that a predicate is the remaining part of a sentence after the subject. A predicate must have a predicator and this is usually the verb in the whole sentence. Let us analyse the following sentence.

Olu bought a new car.

In the above sentence, Olu is the subject while “bought a new car” is the predicate. In the predicate, there is a verb, “bought” and this is also known as the predicator.

- ii. **Complex Sentence:** This is a sentence with the structure of a main clause and a subordinate clause. These clauses are usually joined together by a subordinating conjunction. The example is given below:

She travelled to Lagos because she wanted to see her father.

In the above example, “she travelled to Lagos” is the main clause while “because she wanted to see her father” is the subordinate clause. This sentence structure may also be written from another perspective as follows: “Because she wanted to see her father, she travelled to Lagos”.

- iii. **Compound Sentence:** This is the type of sentence that has the structure of at least two main clauses that are joined together with coordinating conjunction. Examples of commonly used coordinating

conjunction in the formation of the sentence are “and” as well as “but”. We shall illustrate with the following example.

I came for the lecture but the speaker did not come.

In the above sentence, there are two main clauses: “I came for the lecture” and “the speaker did not come”. These two main clauses are joined together with the conjunction, “but”.

- iv. **Compound - Complex Sentence:** This sentence type is the combination of the features of complex sentence and compound sentence. This is to say that it makes use of both subordinating and coordinating conjunctions. It has at least two main clauses and one subordinate clause. An example is given below.

She travelled to Lagos because she wanted to see her father but she did not meet him at home.

The above sentence has the structure of two main clauses which are “she travelled to Lagos” and “she did not meet him at home”. The only subordinate clause in the sentence is “because she wanted to see her father”.

5.2 Functional Types of Sentence

There are four types of sentences according to the functions they perform. These are declarative sentences (i) interrogative sentences (ii) imperative sentences and (iii) exclamatory sentences.

Declarative Sentence

A declarative sentence gives a statement. We are not particular about the truth of the sentence while we are analysing it. What we are concerned with, is the grammatical and semantic correctness of the sentence. The sentence can be in the affirmative or in the negative. A declarative sentence is in the affirmative when it does not have “no” or “not” while it is negative when it has “no” or “not”. Examples are given below:

- i. Abuja is the capital of Nigeria. (Affirmative)
- ii. Lagos is not the capital of Nigeria. (Negative)

Interrogative Sentence: There are some sentences that when we write them, they end with a question mark? Some of these questions are examples of interrogative sentences while few of them are not. An interrogative sentence is the type that we use to ask a question and it usually ends with a question mark. Interrogative sentences can be (i) polar question and (ii) non-polar question. A polar question usually takes yes or no as the answer while a non-polar question takes a word, a phrase or a sentence as a response. Let us examine the following examples:

- i. Are you coming to class tomorrow? (Yes/No) – Polar Question
- ii. What is your name? (Benjamin/ My name is Benjamin) – Non –polar Question.

Imperative Sentence: This is the type of sentence that is used to give an order to make a polite request. Examples are given below:

- i. Keep quiet.
- ii. Would you please close the door?

Exclamatory Sentence: This is the sentence type which is used to express emotion or to show the emotional state of mind of a person. It usually ends with an exclamation mark (!). Examples are shown below:

- i. This is very pathetic!
- ii. It is a wonderful experience!

5.3 Elements of a Sentence

There are five basic elements of a sentence and these are (i) subject (ii) verb (iii) object (iv) complement and (v) Adjunct. Of all these elements, the whole compulsory element is the verb which is also known as predicator. The subject of the sentence is the actor which performs the action. It usually comes before the verb. The verb, on the other hand, is the nucleus of a sentence which usually shows actions or links the subject and the predicate of the sentence.

The object receives the action and it is part of the predicate. It comes immediately after the verb but that does not mean that the complement or adjunct cannot come after the verb. The adjunct performs the functions of an

adverb and it shows time, place and reasons for an action. We shall illustrate this as follows:

- i. Olu bought a book.

Olu is the subject

Bought is the verb

A book is the object

- ii. He slept soundly.

He is the subject

Slept is the verb

Soundly is the adjunct.

- iii. The man is a teacher.

The man is the subject

“Is” is the verb

A teacher is the complement.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified different types of sentences based on their structures and functions. The knowledge of these types are very important while writing our essays because varying sentence types contribute to the effective meaning of whatever we might have written.

Summary

The chapter's discourse on the sentence types and functions are necessary because they will contribute to our attempt at writing a good essay. The elements of sentences are to be considered while writing an essay. Similarly, we need to understand how to vary the forms and patterns of our sentences to avoid ambiguity and monotony. The chapter has been helpful in understanding how to structure our paragraphs.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ)

- SAQ5.1. How are main clauses and subordinate clauses joined in a complex sentence? (Tests learning outcome 5.1)
- SAQ5.2. Give an example of a complex sentence and identify the main clause and the subordinate clause. (Tests learning outcome 5.1)
- SAQ5.3. What is a compound sentence? (Tests learning outcome 5.2)
- SAQ5.4. What is a declarative sentence? (Tests learning outcome 5.2)
- SAQ5.5. What is the difference between an affirmative declarative sentence and a negative declarative sentence? (Tests learning outcome 5.3)

Self-Assessment Answers (SAA)

- SAA5.1. In a complex sentence, main clauses and subordinate clauses are joined together to form a cohesive sentence. The main clause can

stand alone as a complete sentence, while the subordinate clause depends on the main clause to convey its full meaning. Subordinate clauses are often introduced by subordinating conjunctions such as "because," "although," "if," "when," etc.

SAA5.2. Example of a complex sentence:

"Although it was raining, they decided to go for a walk."

Main clause: "They decided to go for a walk."

Subordinate clause: "Although it was raining."

SAA5.3. A compound sentence is a type of sentence that consists of two or more main clauses, also known as independent clauses, which are joined together by coordinating conjunctions such as "and," "but," "or," etc. Each main clause in a compound sentence can stand independently as a separate sentence.

SAA5.4. A declarative sentence is a type of sentence that makes a statement or expresses a fact. It is the most common type of sentence used in everyday communication. Declarative sentences provide information or convey a message without posing a question, giving a command, or expressing strong emotions.

SAA5.5. The difference between an affirmative declarative sentence and a negative declarative sentence lies in their affirmation or negation of a statement.

An affirmative declarative sentence simply states something as true or existing without any negation. It affirms the truth or validity of a statement.

Example of an affirmative declarative sentence: "Abuja is the capital of Nigeria."

In this sentence, the statement "Abuja is the capital of Nigeria" is presented as a fact without any negation.

On the other hand, a negative declarative sentence negates or denies the truth or existence of a statement. It includes words such as "not" or "no" to indicate the negation.

Example of a negative declarative sentence: "Lagos is not the capital of Nigeria."

In this sentence, the statement "Lagos is the capital of Nigeria" is negated by the word "not," indicating that Lagos is not the capital.

So, the distinction between affirmative and negative declarative sentences lies in their affirmation or negation of a statement.

Tutor-Marked Assignments

1. Discuss the sentence types according to functions.
2. Identify and discuss the elements of a sentence.

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Study Session 6: Comprehension

Introduction

This chapter's focus on comprehension is important because of its centrality to our daily activities and interactions with written and spoken texts. The reading strategies that we adopt contribute significantly to how we understand the text.

Learning Outcomes

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

- 6.1. Acquire different strategies that would help in the understanding of any text.
- 6.2. Understand the factors that affect comprehension of any text.

6.1 The Meaning of Comprehension

The simple meaning of comprehension is understanding. When you listen to news or a piece of information, the goal of such activity is to understand what is said. Similarly, the goal of reading a text is to understand all that is discussed in the text. Our success as students depends on our ability to understand whatever text we are encountering.

6.2 Factors Affecting Comprehension

There are some factors that affect comprehension. These factors are categorised as follows (i) linguistic factors and (ii) psychological factors.

Linguistic Factors: The linguistic factors that affect comprehension are connected to the limited range of vocabulary. The language of the text greatly affects the rate at which we understand a text. If the language of the text is very complex, it will not be easy to understand the text. Similarly, the range of vocabulary of the reader determines the extent to which a text can be understood.

Psychological Factors: Our state of mind often affects our comprehension. When we are not emotionally stable owing to anxiety and joy, it will not be helpful for our better understanding of whatever we read. This is to say that our emotional state of mind is very helpful to the understanding of whatever text that we are reading.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the meaning of comprehension and some factors that affect our understanding of any text that we read. As much as the language of the text is very important to our understanding of the reading text, the psychological state of mind also plays a significant role.

Summary

Comprehension is central to reading and this explains why this (comprehension) is very important to the learning activities of every student. We should always strive to understand whatever we read for better recollection.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ)

- SAQ6.1. What are the two categories of factors that affect comprehension?
- SAQ6.2. What are some examples of linguistic factors that affect comprehension?
- SAQ6.3. How does the language of a text impact comprehension?
- SAQ6.4. How does the range of vocabulary of the reader affect comprehension?
- SAQ6.5. What are some examples of psychological factors that affect comprehension?

Self-Assessment Answers (SAA)

- SAA6.1. The two categories of factors that affect comprehension are linguistic factors and psychological factors.
- SAA6.2. Examples of linguistic factors that affect comprehension include the complexity of the language used in the text and the reader's vocabulary range. If the language is too complex or unfamiliar, it becomes more difficult to understand the text. Similarly, readers with a limited vocabulary may struggle to comprehend texts with advanced or specialised terms.
- SAA6.3. The language of a text directly impacts comprehension. If the language used is clear, concise, and appropriate for the target audience,

it enhances understanding. On the other hand, if the language is convoluted, ambiguous, or uses jargon, it can hinder comprehension.

SAA6.4. The range of vocabulary of the reader affects comprehension.

A broader vocabulary allows for a better understanding of words and their meanings within a text. Readers with a limited vocabulary may struggle with unfamiliar terms, leading to difficulties in comprehension.

SAA6.5. Examples of psychological factors that affect comprehension include emotional stability, anxiety, and joy. When individuals are emotionally unstable, it can impede their ability to focus and understand the text. Anxiety or excessive excitement can also distract from comprehension and hinder the absorption of information.

Tutor-Marked Assignment

1. Identify and discuss factors affecting comprehension.
2. Read chapter one of *Things Fall Apart* and demonstrate your comprehension by writing a page summary of the chapter.

References/Further Readings

Olaofe, I.A. (1991). *English and Communication Skills for Academic Purposes*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Co.

Olateju, M.A. (2007). *Reading Kiosks: Literacy Empowerment for the Girl-child. Language, Culture and Curriculum*. Clevedon England: Multilingual Matters. Short Run Press Vol. 20(2): 155-163.

Scollon, R. & Scollon, S.W. (2003). *Discourse and Intercultural Communication* in (Eds.) Schiffrin; Tannen D. and Hamilton, H.E. Malden USA: Blackwell pp 538-547.