

Communication and Language Skills

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Edited by

Iyabode Omolara Akewo Daniel

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FOREWORD

This book fills an important gap in the teaching and learning of English at the undergraduate level in Nigerian universities. The emphasis is on communication and language. It makes a careful and painstaking effort to guide the reader through the basic concepts of language, communication, listening, phonetics and phonology, reading, writing, summary and mechanical skills.

The authors have adequately demonstrated the importance of knowing these various concepts in English for effective communication in general and a thorough grounding in the language in particular. Their long years of training, practice and experience in English language teaching and research are manifest in the contents of this invaluable book. They have successfully taken the reader from one stage of knowledge to another in the development of the essential skills needed for effective communication in English.

This book is particularly useful to students studying for higher degrees, who will find it an essential guide and companion as they prepare for their dissertations and theses.

While recommending this book to all research students, I wish to congratulate the authors for their resourcefulness and commitment in its preparation.

Professor Femi Otubanjo
Former Dean,
School of Arts and Social Sciences
National Open University of Nigeria,
Lagos.

PREFACE

Communication and Language Skills is targeted at university students. Nonetheless, it is also meant to serve all users of English as a second language. As such, it will be very useful to students, teachers and career (wo)men in the public and private services, at national and international levels. The book is written in such a manner that it easily guides you into developing the skills in focus. It is also different in that it is actually a new wine in a new bottle. It brings technology into the fore in teaching these communication and language skills that have been around for quite a while now in the language classes. A whole lot of practical exercises have been provided to easily guide you into the practicality of the content.

The book is divided into two broad areas in its organisation. Part One gives introductory leverage for the book by looking first at the broad concepts of **language** and **communication**. These two fields are treated in a practical sense and the concepts that are central to these fields are treated clearly to enable you have a good grounding in them. Your being new to the fields or being an old hand does not put you at a disadvantage, whatever your situation. The book is very relevant and useful in introducing you to the knowledge content as well as giving you fresh perspectives to the old knowledge you already have in the fields of language and communication.

Part Two discusses each language and communication skill to be mastered in detail. The organisation of the work is such that it starts from the most basic human communication skill of listening and graduated to that of speaking. As such, chapters three to five cover both the listening and the speaking skills. You learnt that listening is a more involving skill than the mere physiological ability to hear. It outlines practical ways of learning the speech processes in English and the communicative importance of the English prosodic features. From here, the more complex part of the communication and language skills then follow. Chapters six to eight thus cover the reading and writing skills. The ability to read and comprehend, write essays and official letters were clearly detailed out for you to easily master. As a student with loads of reading to do, you must master efficient ways of covering as much ground as possible in your academic

engagements. As a career person, it is also essential for you to master the proper way of writing letters in order not to put your job in jeopardy and your organisation in a compromising situation.

Chapter nine outlines how you can develop your summary skills while chapter ten gives painstaking explanation and examples of the mechanics of writing. In these days of information overload and PAs and SPAs, you can efficiently manage your boss's mail through good summary skills and help represent their communications through good mechanics of writing.

It is therefore easy to see that going through this book will enable you to effortlessly overcome those things that have been quite challenging to your ability to effectively communicate in the English language before now. Moreover, the systematic move from the basic skills of oracy to literacy also provides you with a systematised mastering of the skills. As such, you are not thrown at the wolves, so to speak, but led step by step into the mastery of the required skills.

In addition, the provision of practical steps and exercises should give you the needed hand on practice to help you easily master the skills without much ado; if you keep faith with the practice opportunities provided for you, of course.

We wish you the best in this course book as you read through and practise your exercises. Before you know it, you also will develop real prowess in your usage of the English language.

Iyabode Omolara Akewo Daniel, PhD
Associate Professor of English, NOUN, Lagos
and Visiting Scholar, UG, Legon
September, 2015

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First and foremost, my gratitude goes to the Almighty God that granted life, health and the strength to coordinate the writing of this book. The wisdom that He gave in having the seed of the idea and the tenacity to hold on when it appears frustration is setting in is highly appreciated.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, the God that is too faithful to fail.

My utmost gratitude goes to the group of reviewers, who are of course prominent scholars in the field, that took time out of their tight schedule to help with the blind review of the book chapters. The gratis work is appreciated as well as the promptness of their return. I am highly impressed. We cannot reward you for this kind gesture in making this book come to speed; only the Almighty God can. We can only give you credit for your contribution to this book — a whole page is thus dedicated to give you due credit in the book. Once again, thank you so much.

I want to also appreciate every one of the contributors for being a part of this book project. I want to specially appreciate those of you that always promptly respond to my call on you at any point in time to scale up your chapter, either by upgrading or proofing it. Your cooperation to making this work a reality and the success it is today will not be quickly forgotten.

I acknowledge all the diverse sources that are referred to in this book. Your contribution to this work is invaluable. I need to mention specially the permission granted to me by Cambridge Scholars Publishing to make use of some portions of my book, *Introductory Phonetics and Phonology of English* (2011), in my chapter on the English suprasegmentals. The permission is highly appreciated.

The ever helpful staff of Cambridge Scholars Publishing are hereby acknowledged for their indefatigable efforts to make the book to be of a high standard, as well as a reality. You are all appreciated for your contribution in making this work a reality and of high quality.

I want to also acknowledge the contribution of Graham Clarke of The Electric Writing Company, UK, for the proofing of the book. Your meticulous work is much appreciated.

I wish to appreciate my former Dean, Professor Olufemi Otubanjo, for always being such a father and an encourager to us in the defunct School of Arts and Social Sciences, NOUN. My special thanks goes to him for accepting to write the Foreword for this book. God bless you and all yours, sir.

I cannot but acknowledge the helpful and moral support of my family members and colleagues that have been of such encouragement. I appreciate the helpful comments that all of you have made to prod me on in order to see this book become the high standard production that it is today.

My thanks goes in a special way to my colleagues in the Department of English and the Governing Council of the University of Ghana, Legon, for accepting me as a Visiting Scholar for the year 2015/2016. The time it afforded me to hasten the completion of the book can only be attested to by God. I appreciate you all for your wonderful support.

I wish to also acknowledge my former Vice Chancellor, Professor Vincent Ado Tenebe, for approving my one year sabbatical leave and release to the University of Ghana for the 2015/2016 academic session. You may never know how giving me the breathing space from the stress of driving to and from work every day in Lagos enabled me to focus on my research efforts and fast track the completion of this book project. My heartfelt gratitude to you, sir.

Iyabode Omolara Akewo Daniel, PhD
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and Visiting Scholar, UG, Legon
September, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Communication and Language Skills introduces you to the essentials of how to master the usage of the English language for communicative purposes. To say that the English language is the most prestigious language in the world at the moment is stating the obvious, and there is no point in deceiving ourselves by saying otherwise. For this reason, the way we use the language is viewed critically, especially if our usage is not up to the expected benchmark. In the developed world, especially in places like the United States of America, mastery of the English language determines who you are in the society. In Nigeria, many people burst into laughter when they consider your usage of English to be less than standard. The defence that many people put up is: “English is not my mother tongue.” As much as one agrees with this assertion, one should also be honest enough to acknowledge that this is a lame excuse for not making an effort to overcome such deficiencies. The reality for the average Nigerian is that, for now, the language with which you do almost everything outside of your home (and even sometimes in your home) is English. It thus appears wise to learn the essentials of communicating in this language. It is not a matter of whether you like it or not—the decision about using English was taken out of your hands long ago when it was adopted as Nigeria’s second language. Falling in line has therefore become the only option left if you want to function beyond the basic communication needs in your home.

This book has been designed to help you master and conquer the English language to function effectively within Nigeria and the international community. It is especially designed to introduce you to the basics of the communication and language skills required to function at every level of using the English language.

The book comprises ten chapters written by seasoned lecturers who have been practising educators of English for years. They have brought their wealth of experience into the writing of the book and are thereby able to give you the required information and skills to master and use the English language effectively. Other experienced academics also reviewed the

chapters to further step up the quality of the work. The biographies of both the writers and the reviewers are presented above for your perusal.

Part one—the first two chapters of the book—provides an introductory direction through discussion on the basic issues of communication and language. Chapter one is a comprehensive discussion of the main features, description and forms of the linguistic enterprise, giving the levels of linguistic analysis and identifying the linguists that have made great impact in the development of the core theories of language study. Chapter two provides the extensive forms and manners in which we communicate. It is agreed that when language does not communicate it has lost its central value. Language must communicate for it to make sense and be relevant to our lives. These two chapters provide the springboard for the rest of the book.

Part two marks the beginning of the acquisition of the essential skills, and the design of the chapters follows the possible form of the manner in which human beings obtain their language skills. Thus, chapter three discusses the listening skill. The author attempts to give an in-depth description of what differentiates listening from the mere auditory perception of noise in the environment. He also breaks down the forms of listening and their value level, providing information on what should not be done in developing proper listening skills. It is pretty obvious that listening is not as important a task as it will sometimes seem, but rather a sign of being savvy. This chapter provides the essential information required to properly develop and apply this skill and avoid the behaviours that usually undermine this.

Chapters four and five discuss the phonological level of the language skill development. Chapter four focuses on the segmental sounds of English, providing detailed information on the types of sounds of English as well as their manner of production. This level of the language is usually challenging to the students of English in Nigeria, and probably those in many countries where English is learned as a second language. However, the graphic and detailed description of the sounds should make mastering them a lot easier. By dutifully following the writers' guidance, you can learn to speak without being overtly conscious of making mispronunciations. The author that wrote on this subject matter helped to provide detailed and outline perspectives. I believe these should help you see that the subject is actually wider than it sometimes appears. I sincerely hope that you found this quite helpful.

Chapter five builds on the last chapter. It covers, what are for many Nigerian students, the most unpopular aspects of the phonological description of English; and which are so challenging that some teachers even try to gloss over them in their classrooms, as if they are not part of the curriculum. Taking care to follow the way the writer breaks down the academic complexity of the phonological description should make it easier to overcome the fear of the prosodic features of English. With a little effort, you will be speaking the English language with the skill of a native speaker. It must, however, be said that this requires practice and more practice.

Chapter six provides a guide on how to develop reading skills, focusing on the development of effective reading and especially the way technology can help this. Essentially, the need to overcome the poor reading habits that normally slow us down and replacing them with skills that can speed up our reading as well as improve our comprehension levels are emphasised. Following the guidelines given by the author will greatly help you to become an effective reader, especially, by applying the technological help to improve your reading efficiency.

Chapters seven and eight focus on the writing skill. In actual fact, chapter seven outlines the types of essays we have as well as the manner in which they can be written for maximum impact. Basically, the essays written by most Nigerian students tend to be about passing certificate examinations. However, the author brings the way the skill can be effectively developed beyond the classroom and examination contexts to the fore. Giving attention to his exegesis will lead to your becoming a good essayist, no matter the type of essay needed. Chapter eight is a guide to writing formal, informal and semi-formal letters—all necessities in day-to-day life and helpful for the reader in the larger social context.

Chapter nine focuses on the summary writing skill, which has remained a challenging skill for many Nigerian students and other users of English. This chapter carefully explicates the necessary skills a good summary writer should master, spotlighting the different manners of developing a good summary. It also gives good example summaries as a guide to the students.

Chapter ten covers the mechanical skills necessary for a good writing style. It has been said that good writing can be marred by poor mechanical accuracy. In short, very poor mechanics in the writing process can distort a piece of writing. The last chapter in this book therefore provides the

necessary information to guide writers on how to write effectively by achieving the purpose for which they put pen to paper, or finger to computer keyboard. In this age of electronic messaging and shortcuts, mechanical accuracy is usually at risk. In essence, the writer's task is only done when the communication process has been completed through the reader being able to interpret what was intended as the writer's message.

The authors have tried to provide practice exercises to make the use of this book of utmost help to the reader, and we hope that these help in no small way in making you understand what the authors attempt to get across in each chapter.

In conclusion, all the chapters in this book are critical to the purpose for which the book serves. As such, we believe that a book focused on developing *Communication and Language Skills* is essential for effective communication in both the educational and social sectors of the global world. Language is a powerful political and social force, as proven by what led to the avoidable Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings of 1945. Communication not achieved through effective linguistic employment is a disaster waiting to happen, and we do not think the world can afford another war stemming from a misunderstanding of something meant on the other side of the world.

Best of luck as you develop the skills outlined in this book!

Iyabode Omolara Akewo Daniel
Lagos, Nigeria
December, 2013

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

ADESINA B. SUNDAY

Introduction

Communication takes different forms among living organisms. For instance, animals have means of telling their mates that there is danger or food, and so forth. Humans also communicate their feelings, views and desires to fellow humans and other living organisms through different means. Some means of communication are shared by both humans and non-humans. Examples are gestures and vocal symbols, such as screaming, mewing, roaring, bleating and barking, among others. But there is one mode of communication that is peculiar to humans, and that is language.

In this chapter, the focus is on what constitutes language. Since language is a broad concept, special attention is given to its basic issues. The issues addressed are definitions of language, features of language and levels of language analysis. With this introductory discussion, the foundation is laid for further exploration of this all-important concept that has shaped the universe.

Definitions of Language

Language has attracted different definitions from different scholars because of its centrality to the understanding of humans and the roles it plays in various facets of human endeavour. Some of these definitions overlap, while some do not. The major definitions are highlighted below:

- a. A language, in the strict sense, is an artificial and consciously-organised method of control by the use of symbols or conventions, which involves the notion of meaning (Wilson 1972: 1).

- b. Language is a communicative practice mediated by a linguistic system or systems (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003: 52).
- c. A language is a highly structured system of signs, or combinations of form and meaning (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003, 60).
- d. Languages are symbolic systems developed and used by human beings for communication (Brown & Miller 1999: xvi).
- e. ... vehicle for the expression or exchanging of thoughts, concepts, knowledge, and information as well as fixing and transmission of experience and knowledge (Bussmann 1996: 627).
- f. Human language is a system of communication that combines sounds with meaning to produce what people know and use as natural language (McMenamin 2002: 2).
- g. Language is the association of the combination of sounds, words and sentences to conventional meanings used and understood by a community of speakers (McMenamin 2002: 34).
- h. Language is a system of conventional signs used to serve the primary purpose of conveying meaning (Babajide 1996,:1).

Each of these definitions has viewed language from a particular angle. They all suit the purposes of their authors. It is difficult to get an all-embracing definition of language. From the definitions given above, some key terms crucial to any meaningful definition of language can be gleaned, namely: symbol, arbitrary, communication/meaning, human, system. Therefore, **language can be viewed as a system of communication among humans which entails the use of conventional and arbitrary vocal symbols for communicating ideas and experiences.**

Functions of Language

Many things about human beings depend on language, as it performs different functions in human lives. Some of these functions are discussed below:

i. Phatic Communion

When two people come into contact and there is something to share, it is odd and counter-productive for them to just begin the issue and so there is need to break the ice. Normally, they first exchange greetings and pleasantries. This is done with language. In this connection, language breaks the wall of hostility, unfamiliarity, etc. that might exist and makes

the interaction progress smoothly. This use of language is what Bronislaw Malinowski calls “phatic communion.”

ii. Consolidating Existing Relationships

Language can be used to cement an existing relationship. It is often argued that happiness in the home can be linked to communication. If members of a family do not communicate with language, there will be tension, misrepresentation and squabbling. With constant communication, however, it is likely that there will be peace because assumptions will not be made about the feelings of other people. From what they communicate, the interlocutors will be able to know what the other wants.

iii. Mending Broken Relationships

If there is a breakdown in a relationship, language serves as an instrument of peace. It is with language that each side expresses its grievances. It is also through the instrumentality of language that peacemakers go about their duties. The longer quarrelling people stay incommunicado, the more the problem will fester. It is even possible that a person will not know that they have offended another person if that offended person does not speak out.

iv. Distinguishes Humans from other Living Creatures

One major feature that distinguishes humans from animals is language. Communication happens in different ways. Other living creatures, such as dogs, cats and chimpanzees, communicate with one another and their young. They have means of warning one another of danger, for example. In fact, some have been trained to behave like humans. They also produce vocal sounds such as howls, barks, and meows. However, they lack the power to use vocal symbols to organise and convey their feelings, ideas and experiences the way humans do.

v. Dress of Thought

Humans have the capacity to think. Thinking is abstract, and there is no way a human can know what goes on in the mind of another. Conjectures could be made through previous actions, present actions and general observation, among others, but their precision is measured, to some extent, by what the person concerned says. Through language, humans make their

thoughts known to one another. In this way, ideas can be formed about what such a person is capable of, whether one can interact with them and the kind of help one can render to such a person. The ideas so formed are equally made known principally through language. In essence, language concretises thought and gives it a befitting appearance. Language, therefore, is like dress of thought.

vi. Describing/Capturing Worlds

Humans use language to capture or describe their inner worlds and the world around them. Humans encounter different experiences daily, and language is such a tool that could vividly capture these worlds to make them concrete and meaningful.

vii. Means of Identity

Language is part of culture, and different languages symbolise different cultures. Language therefore conveys various aspects of culture, such as music or literature (oral and written) and, in this way, is a vehicle for perpetuating culture.

viii. Means of Solidarity and Exclusion

Language can be used to show solidarity. In a gathering of people from different ethnic groups, people who speak the same language can decide to use it to communicate. In such a gathering, those who cannot understand the language are excluded. At times, those excluded may feel threatened because they are unsure whether there is a conspiracy against them. In the same vein, those who understand the language of a particular trader may use it to bargain. Such a trader may be joyous that they have seen somebody who understands their language. This kind of situation may be to the advantage of the buyer and may also fetch the seller some sense of belonging

Characteristics of Language

Certain qualities are common to all natural languages, some of which are explained below.

i. Language is conventional

A group of people have to agree before there can be a language. This agreement makes the structure of the language conventional. Without this quality, there will be chaos because each person could choose the name of an object or decide how to write a word. The origin of this conventionality is difficult to trace. What language A calls X may be called Y in language B. For instance, God has the following different names in different languages: Yahweh (Hebrew), Olorun (Yoruba), Chineke (Igbo), Ubangidi (Hausa), Oita (Okpe), Oshinegba (Okpameri), Osanobua (Bini), Oghene (Ijaw), Ohimohi (Ebira) and so on.

ii. Language is arbitrary

There is no one-to-one correspondence between the words in a language and the entities they refer to in the real world. The connection is arbitrary and derives from the conventional nature of language. For instance, there is nothing intrinsic in the following words and the actual entities they refer to: *goat, cow, table, urine, blade, man, fellow, house, sin, ball, church, gun*, etc.

iii. Language is human

This derives from the fact that only humans use language. There is no known natural language without a community of people using it. This implies that without humans there is no language. Language is therefore peculiarly human.

iv. Language is dynamic

Language changes in time and space. With inventions and new technologies, new words enter into language, e.g. *infotainment, cybernetics* and *cybercafé*, which, some twenty years ago, were not in dictionaries. There is always the need to name new products and inventions, and this increases the vocabulary items of a language. Some words also fall into disuse. Some items that had pejorative meanings centuries ago now have positive meanings. Slang also serves as a means of changing a language.

It is the dynamism of language that gives rise to diachronic and synchronic studies. The former deals with the study of language over time—a kind of

historical study. The latter is concerned with the study of the development of language at a particular time. Some constructions have been modified with time, and the dynamism of language in relation to time gave rise to dialect, that is, language variation in space.

v. Language has forms

Language exists in different forms: spoken, written and signed. The oral form of a language is exhibited by all languages—there is no natural language that does not exist in the spoken/oral form. This is the primary form. Some languages exist in the written form. This does not mean that languages that do not yet exist in this form are inferior. Sign language is specifically used for interaction with people that have hearing and speech challenges. People who do not have these challenges but have been trained in the language can conveniently interact using signed language.

vi. Language is adaptive

An important nature of language is that it adapts to situations, and the same language can be made to suit different purposes. For example, a language can be formal, informal, colloquial or derogatory, among other things, all dependent on context. What is a taboo in one culture may not be so in another. An appropriate adaptation of language to contexts shows good communicative competence.

vii. Language can be learnt

One fascinating feature of language is that it can be learnt. Ideally, a child picks up the languages of its environment without being taught. However, it is possible to deliberately learn a language in a formal or an informal setting. There is no limit to the number of languages a person can acquire, and there are many polyglots around.

viii. Language is pluralistic

Language is not monolithic. That is, there are many languages in the world, and nobody has yet been able to indicate the exact number. In Nigeria alone, there are about four hundred languages (Bamgbose 1971: 36). Each of these world languages has its own unique features, although it may share some with other languages.

ix. Language can be cultivated

Language exercises some flexibility. Individuals, societies or groups can bend language to reflect their identities. A person can have an idiolect (a language variety according to individuals). There can also be sociolects (language varieties according to social class). A group of professionals can have a language that they use among themselves, which is known as a register or an argot.

x. Language can die

A feature of language that derives directly from its being human is its mortality. A language can die. This happens when no known human beings are using it. While some languages are dead, others are seriously endangered, such as certain indigenous Nigerian languages, particularly among the educated elite, to which the English language is a threat. Recently, French has joined English as an official language in Nigeria. Language death poses many challenges to humanity because when a language dies, a whole people die, their culture dies and they lose their identity forever, as language is a vehicle of culture transmission.

Levels of Language Analysis/Study

Language can be studied or analysed at different levels. The basic ones are lexis, phonetics/phonology, syntax, semantics, stylistics and pragmatics. These are discussed below.

Lexis

Lexis deals with the words in a language. These words can be studied from the perspectives of their individual meanings and the company they keep (collocation).

Phonology

Phonology is the branch of linguistics that is concerned with the pattern of the sounds of a language. Its sister discipline, phonetics, deals with the study of the actual sound produced by the speaker of a language. Phonetics has three branches:

- articulatory phonetics focuses on the production of sounds

- auditory phonetics focuses on the perception of the sounds produced
- acoustic phonetics deals with the properties of the sounds produced.

Phonology can be studied at the segmental and the suprasegmental levels; the former deals with each segment while the latter deals with features above the segment. At the segmental level, the focus is on vowels and consonants. Vowels are those sounds produced without any obstruction of the airstream from the lungs. In the production of consonants, on the other hand, there is obstruction of the airstream.

Syntax

Syntax is concerned with how words and phrases are combined to form sentences. This is an area that has attracted many theories. Some of them are Traditional Grammar, Structural Grammar, Tagmemic Grammar, Transformational Generative Grammar, and Systemic Functional Grammar. Over the years, two of these grammars have enjoyed theoretical and practical attention: Systemic Functional Grammar and Transformational Generative Grammar.

Systemic Functional Grammar is also called Hallidayan Grammar, because Halliday propounded it, although many scholars have also contributed to its development. Halliday identifies four theoretical categories and four scales in the analysis of language. The categories are class, unit, system and structure. The scales are rank, delicacy, exponence and depth (Bloor & Bloor 1995).

Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) began with Chomsky's seminal work, *Syntactic Structures* (1957), and is further expounded in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). The basic assumption of the grammar is that from a finite set of rules we can generate an infinite number of structures. The grammar also argues that grammatical analysis should be based on the intuitive knowledge of an ideal native speaker. TGG distinguishes between competence and performance. Competence is described as the knowledge which an ideal native speaker has of their language. Conversely, performance is the actual use of that knowledge. Performance is not reliable in grammatical analysis because it could be affected by stage fright, memory loss and distraction of attention, among other things.

TGG equally identifies two important levels:

- (a) Deep structure (DS)
- (b) Surface structure (SS)

The DS is the level of combination. The lexicon and the Phrase Structure rules combine to form the DS, and the SS is reached after transformations to these. This is the phonetic form of what DS and the transformations have produced. TGG is highly mentalistic. It deals with the mental processes involved in the derivation of structures. It essentially idealises language.

TGG equally distinguishes between Acceptability and Grammaticality. A structure may be grammatical but not acceptable, and vice-versa. A sentence is grammatical if it conforms to the rules of the grammar of a given language, while it is acceptable if the users of the language take it to be meaningful. Chomsky gives a sentence to explain this:

Colourless green ideas sleep furiously.

This sentence is grammatical, in that it follows the rules of English grammar, but it is unacceptable, as it violates some rules, such as selectional restriction. However, figuratively, it is meaningful.

Stylistics

Stylistics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of style in spoken and written texts. It also involves other higher and lower units. Style is concerned with constituent occurrences in the texts. This means that recurring patterns in a text are important determinants of style. A stylistic analysis covers all the traditional levels of linguistics from the perspective of any descriptive linguistics.

There are two broad senses of conceiving style: the evaluative and the descriptive. The former sees style in a critical way, focusing on the features that make a person stand out with a degree of excellence. The latter sense lacks this judgmental approach. It merely describes those distinctive features of the text/author. Both senses, however, view style as comprising the conscious or unconscious choices made from alternatives available in a language.

Levels of Stylistic Analysis

Stylistic analysis can be done at the following levels:

- (a) Phonetic/Graphetic
 - (b) Phonological/Graphological
 - (c) Grammatical
 - (d) Lexical
 - (e) Semantic
- (a) **Phonetic/Graphetic level:** This relates to the actual substance, that is, the raw material of language. Phonetics deals with the spoken text while graphetics relates to the written text. Ideophones and onomatopoeia are particularly relevant here. Type-size or colours, though non-linguistic, may show the semantic structure of the text.
 - (b) **Phonological/Graphological level:** While phonetics/graphetics deals with the basic phonic/graphic substance of language, phonology/graphology deals with the organisation of the phonic/graphic substance of a given language. Graphological consideration includes capitalisation, spacing, distinctive use of punctuation, lettering size and type. Phonological considerations will include patterns of stress, rhythm, intonation and pitch.
 - (c) **Grammatical level:** This involves studying the organisation of phonology/graphology. At this level, morphological and syntactic features of the text are considered.
 - (d) **Lexical level:** This refers to the study of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions and single words. It concerns why some choices are made in relation to the subject matter.
 - (e) **Semantic level:** This studies the meaning of stretches of language longer than single lexical items.

Semantics

Semantics is the branch of linguistics that focuses on meaning. The major intention behind using language is to convey meaning. In analysing meaning in language, focus is usually on the following types.

Denotative/Conceptual Meaning

This is the plain word. It is also the general meaning, literal meaning or dictionary meaning of a word.

Connotative Meaning

This is the meaning people associate with a word. The culture and emotions of individuals reflect in this meaning. What a word means to one person may be different from what it means to another.

Collocative Meaning

The environment in which a word occurs influences its meaning. The kind of meaning a word/expression gets by virtue of its association with other words/expressions is termed the collocative meaning. There are some words that naturally go together, such as “high building,” in terms of length, but not “high man.” However, in figurative usage, there can be deliberate miscollocation to achieve certain effects. This is regarded as foregrounding.

Reflected Meaning

This is the kind of meaning achieved when one sense of a word rubs off on another sense. This may be a product of frequency or strength of association. An example is the association of the word “ejaculation” with only sexual intercourse, whereas it also means a sudden shout/remark.

Affective Meaning

This has to do with attitude regarding a word. Different meanings can be derived from an expression depending on the way it is spoken; that is, the intonation used for it.

Thematic Meaning

This relates to the organisation of the message in terms of how it is ordered to show the “theme” (the GIVEN meaning) and the “rheme” (the NEW meaning).

Sentence Meaning

This is the meaning a sentence can have on its own. This is also called propositional meaning. There are different types of sentence based on meaning.