Covenant University, Canaanland, Ota
College of Development Studies

GST 121: COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH 2

Program:	**General Studies**
Course Code:	**GST 121**
Course Title:	**Communication in English 2**
Units:	**2**
Session:	**2014/2015**
Semester:	**Omega**
Time:	**4-6pm Monday**
Venue:	**Lecture Theatre 1**
Coordinator:	**Dr E. C. Onwuka**
Contact:	**Office:A402B**
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Course Description

GST121 is a continuation of GST111. However, while GST111 concentrated on study skills, with emphasis on reading and summary skills, GST121 will deal with Elements of English Grammar together with the processes of written communication. It will also emphasize skills for eliciting information from simple literary text, as well as a survey of the Nigerian and African literary tradition.

Course Objectives
At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- (i)   demonstrate skill for effective communication in English in different social contexts
- (ii)   develop adequate writing skills for academic purpose
- (iii)   attain a reasonable level of competence for the appreciation of literary texts

Method of Teaching/Teaching Aids

Teaching methods will include guided instructions, interactive sessions, group work/projects etc.   Multi-media/overhead projector/slides and learning support software will be used for lectures.
Problem based learning will be the main pedagogic mode of interaction in class.

Course Outline

Module A: ELEMENTS OF GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Week 1: A review of GST111 and an introduction to GST121
Week 2: Elements of the English Simple Sentence
Week 3: Problems related to components of the sentence (parts of speech)
Week 4: Types and functions of sentences
Week 5: The paragraph: its structure and development

Module B: PROCESS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Week 6: Essays

Week 7: Mid-semester test
Week 8: Letters
Week 9: The Mechanics of Writing

Module C: INTRODUCTION TO TECHNICAL WRITING

Week 10: Proposals
Week 11: Reports

Module D: ASPECTS OF LITERATURE

Week 12: An overview of African and Nigerian Literature
Week 13: (i) Aspects of Literary Appreciation (ii) A study of selected literary texts

Method of Grading

Continuous Assessment   30%
Examination   70%

Recommended Reading

Adegbija, E. (2004) *Language, Communication and Study Skills*. Ota: Covenant
    University Press
Adetugbo, A. (1997) *Communicative English and Study Skills*. Lagos: University of
    Lagos Press
Akere, F. (1990) *English Across Disciplines: A Use of English Course Text*. Lagos:
    Pumark Nig. Ltd.
Banjo, L. & J. Bisong (1985) *Developmental English*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
Eko, E. (1981) *Effective Writing*. Uyo: Scholars Press
Ogbulogo, C. (2003) *Problem Areas in English Grammar and Usage*. Lagos:
    Estorise Nig. Ltd.
Ogbulogo, C. (2004) *Business Communication in Practice*. Lagos: Sam Iroanusi

GST121: Communication in English 2

Module A: ELEMENTS OF GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Elements of the English Sentence

A simple sentence is often defined in terms of the clause structure or elements that make up the sentence. Sentence elements or parts are made up of group of words or phrases. These groups are possible due to grammatical and meaning relationships that words have with each other. A *phrase* is a meaningful group of words without a *finite verb*. It usually has a headword and its modifiers. Phrases combine to form *clauses*. If a noun for example occurs with another word which describes it or adds to its meaning, it is called a *noun phrase*, e.g.

- A library
- The standard library
- Many libraries

- A few libraries

Notice that a noun phrase has 'a head' (a noun) and a modifier (an article, or a determiner – *many, a few* etc.). Notice also that a noun may be modified by more than one modifier, e.g. *the standard library*.

Elements (parts) of the Sentence

A sentence has *two* basic parts: (i) *the noun* or *noun phrase*, i.e. something being talked about, also known as the *subject*, because it *performs the action* of the verb. (ii) *The predicate*, i.e. the part of the sentence that gives information about the subject, or tells us what the noun *does*. The predicate is made up of the *verb* (the action word) often followed by *an object* (a noun phrase) or *a complement*. Examples: (i) *The standard library provides excellent services* (ii) *A few libraries provide excellent learning resources.* Notice the positions occupied by the word classes.

(i) The *standard library* (a noun phrase/NP) provides (verb) excellent services (object/complement).
(ii) *A few libraries* (a noun phrase) *provide* (verb) *excellent learning resources* (noun phrase).

Note: In sentences (i) & (ii) the NP performs the action and is therefore *the Subject*; *the verb* is the action performed by the subject; *the object* is the receiver of the action performed by the subject. So the two sentences can be analysed as SVO (or SPC), i.e. *the standard library (S) offers (V) excellent services (O)*. A noun phrase can have a modifier in front of the headword, e.g. *a few libraries* (pre-modifier) or at the back of the headword, e.g. libraries *nowadays* … (post-modifier). From the examples above you can see that a noun phrase can occur in the predicative position either as an object, or complement of a preposition (e.g., *at the library* etc.)

The Verb Phrase (VP)

The verb phrase comprises *all verb forms* that can occur between the NP and the Complement (or object). *The main/lexical verb* (the action word) is obligatory in the verb phrase. The other forms which are optional are called *auxiliary verbs* (is, has, does etc) because each of them performs a 'helping' function, i.e. helps the main verb convey some certain conditions which the main verb alone may not express. Auxiliary verbs are of two types: (i) *Primary Auxiliaries* (HAVE - have, has, had; BE – am, is, are, was, were, being, been; DO – do, does, did). (ii) *Modal Auxiliaries* (may, can, will, must, will, might etc.) Auxiliary verbs usually occur in front of the main verbs. Examples

(i) The library *will provide* excellent learning resources (*will provide*/VP)
(ii) A few libraries *are offering* standard services (*are offering*/VP)
(iii) The standard library *has been given* the right to provide electronic services (*has been given*/VP

Note that any of the primary auxiliary verbs can perform the function of the main verb, e.g. *the university is great* (is); A few universities <u>have</u> a highly qualified faculty.

The Complement

The complement of the verb may be *an NP* or *an adjective* (eg. The university is *great*). In a simple sentence, the predicate or the verb phrase may be followed by an adverb or *an*

'adverbial phrase. Hence, the structure of a simple sentence may be SPA or SVA, where 'A' stands for Adverbial or Adverbial phrase. E.g. *the university (S) performs (P) excellently (A); many universities prefer to be noticed from a distance* (a prepositional phrase (PP)/Adverbial).

Conclusion

The elements of the simple sentence are therefore the various parts of the sentence occupied by the word classes. The word classes often function in groups or phrases. The noun class forms the nominal group; the verb class– verbal group; adjective class- adjectival group; Adverb class – adverbial group.

Problems related to the components of Sentences (parts of speech)

(i) Number restrictions in nouns

(a) Some nouns do not have the plural forms but suggest plural ideas and take plural verbs e.g. the blind, the poor, the needy; the youth etc. e.g. (i) the youth are hopeful (ii) the poor need help. Other nouns in this category include police, clergy, cattle etc. However 'youth' may be used with an –s. i.e. youths.
(b) Some nouns appear in the plural and used in the plural sense, e.g. glasses, scissors, trousers, shorts etc. Some nouns however appear in the plural but used in the singular sense, e.g. news, measles etc. *Note*: When plural nouns are used as measure of weight, time and distance singular verbs go with them. E.g. (i) Five kilometres is a long distance (ii) Four litres of fuel moves my car (iii) Ten hours is too much to sleep.
Reading exercise: consider (i) case in plural nouns (e.g. the boys' balls) (ii) case in nouns (e.g. the boy's ball)

(ii) Pronouns
  (a) Pronouns used as subjects must be in the subjective case .e.g. Ore and I are cousins (not me)
  (b) Pronouns used as objects must be in the objective case. e.g. The car almost ran Tunde and me over (not I)
  (c) Pronouns used after prepositions appear in the objective case e.g. To us Nigerians, suffering is normal (not we)
  (d) After a comparisons marked by 'than' it is better to use a pronoun in the subjective case, e.g. he is older than *I* or my mother appears to love my younger sister more than *me.*
  (e) Relative pronouns (i.e. they introduce relative clauses) e.g. who, whom, which, that etc, also follow the same rules. E.g. who (subjective), whom (objective). Thus (i) the man who (or that) drove the car is not an expert (ii) the man whom we spoke to, drove the car.
  (f) Possessive pronouns are used to indicate ownership. E.g. (i) yours faithfully or the money is yours (not your's). (ii) The car lost its tyres (not it's).
  (g) Indefinite pronouns such as *everybody, everything, someone, nobody, nothing* etc suggests one in a group and therefore takes verbs in the singular sense e.g. (i) everyone is aware (ii) somebody has done the job (iii) everything happens as planned.
  (h) *Each other* and *one another* are both used interchangeably nowadays depending on whether the speaker is speaking the British or American English

(iii) Determiners

(i) *Some/any* e.g. (i) I will make some decisions soon (ii) I bought some fuel. *Any* appears to be used more in the negative sense e.g. (i) I have not taken any decision yet (iii) I did not by any fuel. It also occurs often with adverbs such as seldom, barely, hardly etc. e.g. we hardly read any books nowadays; we rather watch movies.

(j) *Many/much*; *Many* is used for plural count nouns e.g. my father built many houses at Abuja. *Much* is used for non-count nouns or mass. E.g. my mother bought much Garri during the weekend.

(k) *Few/a few* are used for plural count nouns e.g. *Few* suggests 'not enough' e.g. they have few men; they are not likely to finish the work. *A few* suggests 'nearly enough' e.g. we have a few cars; my father doesn't have to buy any more.

(l) Little/a little used to modify mass nouns. *Little* suggests 'not enough'. *A little* suggest 'nearly enough.'

(iv) Problems associated with comparison of Adjectives

(i) In comparing adjectives, there are three levels *absolute, comparative, superlative*. There are comparisons with the use of *–er* and *–est* and *more* and *most* constructions. Adjectives that have one syllable e.g. *fine* are compared with the use of *er* and *est*. i.e. *fine, finer, finest*. Adjectives of two syllables ending in y, ow, or le e.g. merry, narrow, subtle also take the *er* and *est* constructions. However, other adjectives such as honest, sincere etc form their comparative and superlative degrees with *more* and *most*.

(ii) Note: the *more* beautiful of the two girls; the *most* beautiful of all the girls

(v) Problems associated with Auxilliary Verbs

(i) Recall that the primary auxiliaries BE, DO and HAVE have their different forms.

(ii) *Been* and *Being*. *Been* is used to indicate a past action and usually occurs with *have, has, had*. E.g. (i) we have been told (ii) the job has been done perfectly (iii) The robbers had been arrested by the youth before the policemen arrived. *Being* is used to indicate a progressive action and occurs with *am, is, are, was*, and *were*. E.g. She was being harassed; they were being victimized but they suddenly stood for their right.

Reading exercises: consider (i) problems associated with modal auxiliaries (ii) verbs – tense (iii) adverbs (See *Problem Areas in English Grammar and Usage*. Ogbulogo (1990)

Types and Functions of Sentences

A. Types (in terms of function)

(i) **Declarative Sentence** – makes a simple statement, e.g. (i) I didn't pass my first semester examination. (ii) We love children. (ii) **Imperative Sentence** – gives a command/an order e.g. (i) Leave my office immediately! (ii) Declare your assets now! (iii **Interrogative Sentence** – asks a question, e.g. (i) How did you know my name? (ii) What happened to you? (iv) **Exclamatory Sentence** – exclaims – e.g. (i) what a day! (ii) Congratulations on your success!

B. Types (in terms of Structure)

(i) **A simple sentence** – one clause (a main/independent cl.) e.g. (i) *My bother studied Engineering* (ii) *Our family runs a drug store*. (ii) **A compound sentence** – one main cl. + 1 main cl. (a combination of two simple sentences, i.e. two clauses of equal grammatical status), e.g. *my brother studied Engineering and hopes to make a career in Civil Engineering*. (ii) *Our family runs a drug store but does not intent to set up a clinic*. (iii) **A complex sentence** – one main cl. + 1 subordinate cl. (i) *Our family runs a drug store because of our love for those with health challenges* (ii) *My brother studied Engineering in order to pursue a career in Civil Engineering*, (iii) *My brother that/who studied Engineering hopes to make a career in Civil Engineering*. (iv) **A multiple sentence** – one main cl./two main cls. + one or more subordinate clauses, e.g. *Our family runs a drug store but does not intend to set up a clinic because of the cost of setting up one*. (2 main cls. + 1 sub. cl) (ii) *My brother studied Engineering in order to pursue a career in Civil Engineering which offers him ample opportunities in the Building sector*.

THE PARAGRAPH: Its Structure and Development

A paragraph is usually made up of a group of sentences that form a unit. It may have a topic sentence and combine with other paragraphs through linking processes. The series of sentences in a paragraph form a unit and deals with only one aspect of the topic. The sentence that summarises the main concern of a particular paragraph is called the **topic sentence**. The topic sentence may come anywhere in the paragraph – beginning – middle or end. A paragraph may not have a topic sentence but may simply develop the theme of the entire writing.

An illustration:
Essay topic: **The Grasshopper**

An outline:
- The body structure of a grasshopper
- Habitat and general characteristics
- Reproduction
- Economic Importance

PARAGRAPH 1 **(Introduction)**
Grasshoppers general belong to the group of winged orthopteran insects that live on vegetation. They include the longhorned grasshoppers, pigmy grasshoppers …etc

PARAGRAPH 2 (**Body Structure)**
The body of a grasshopper has three segments namely the head, the thorax and the abdomen (t*opic Sentence*). The head is joined to the head by …etc.

PARAGRAPH 3 **(Habitat &Characteristics)**
Grasshoppers produce their young by laying eggs which later hatch into wingless nymphs (topic sentence). They develop by gradual stages of metamorphosis…etc.

PARAGRAPH 4 **(Economic Importance)**
Grasshoppers are a very good source of protein and are eaten in many parts of the world (topic sentence)…etc. Because a paragraph treats a particular segment of the essay, it is often called *a text within a text* and they are linked with each other by means of linking devices such as:

- First, second (or secondly), third (or thirdly), finally or in conclusion
- In contrast with…, compared to the above… in addition etc.
- Furthermore, however, similarly, nevertheless etc.

Module B: PROCESS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Essays

Essays that are generally written by university undergraduates include narrative, descriptive argumentative, and expository. A **narrative** writing enables you share your experience or thought with others. This might be in form of creative writing, or a narration of a factual event, a report or an article. A **descriptive** essay gives you an opportunity to describe a particular procedure or process, about how things work or are done. Good descriptions give vivid account of what you feel, see, or perceive, so that the reader may "see" the objects you describe with his mind's eyes. An **argumentative** essay presents a balanced and consistent argument about a topic often considered as controversial. So your essay will be required to present an objective judgement in support or rejection of the proposition in question based on some facts or evidence. Your argument must be logical and unbiased and should be able to persuade or convince the reader. In an **expository** essay, you present facts as they are, offering explanation about a system, or a process. Your essay should be able to answer some basic questions about some social or scientific phenomenon. Here, you analyse and evaluate, compare and contrast facts, opinions or ideas on the subject you are dealing with. In either of these writings you are either writing to educate, persuade, inform or to give pleasure.

Writing an Essay

For either of the above essay types, you will need some planning. This will involve:

- Determining your sources of information,
- Your work presentation.
- The length of your writing
- Your time span

All writings – technical, creative or academic seek to answer some basic questions. Therefore think up questions, which your writing must answer. Such questions will guide your reading and initial research. In a nutshell:

- Discuss your topic with someone who can give you useful information
- Consult relevant materials and reference books
- Consult the Internet
- Read with research questions and read to gather information to answer those questions. Make note of information that is relevant to your subject matter.

The actual process of writing an essay involves the following:

- Understanding the subject
- Choosing a topic area; then narrow the topic to a specific focus
- Asking Questions
- Gathering materials/initial research
- Determining the length of composition

- Drawing out the outline. The outline gives you a sense of direction. Remember that each point in your outline is to be discussed in a paragraph.

The Structure of an Essay

A composition usually comprises three broad parts: *the introduction, the body* and *the conclusion.*
The Introduction highlights what your composition or essay is about. It gives a general background to your subject and what your reader should expect. Some begin with definition of key terms in the topic, what the paper is about and the approach to be adopted in order to view a particular proposition. *The Body* of your composition is the content of your argument. You present your points in details with supporting facts or evidences. Points here are presented in paragraphs and coherently weaved together. The body is usually the longest part of the essay because of all you have to say with illustrations, examples or diagrams. The body of your composition should be elaborate and persuasive enough to convince or inform your reader. *The Conclusion* summarizes the body of the essay depending on the nature of the essay. The conclusion can summarize points of the essay or end with the most important point without a formal conclusion. Argumentative essays usually conclude with a position that re-iterates the thesis statement, after giving the points or evidences that support the position. It can also end with your recommendations or suggestions to solving a problem. The general nature of conclusions is that they repeat briefly what has been said in the body, reminding the reader what you told him at the beginning.

Essential Features of Good Writing

For an effective writing, we recommend the following features:

- Clarity - the quality of being clear, precise and unambiguous
- Simplicity - information is expressed in simple words and therefore easy to read
- Coherence - the way all the units of sentences and paragraphs are effectively weaved together, to produce a coherent text. This is achieved by cohesive devices, e.g. and, but, which, when, who , however, nevertheless,
- Good grammar

Conclusion

Writing is one expressive skill that could be developed for pleasure as well as for academic purpose. Effective writing is such in which the writer presents his information in a clear and interesting manner to the reader. It is very important that you develop your writing skills to ensure growth and standard in writing – making your writing stronger, better and interesting.

LETTER WRITING

Letters are a very important type of written communication that is used for personal or business transactions. Generally, letter writing enables the writer to share information, make a request or enquiry etc in both private and business contexts. There are two basic types of letters: (i) *informal/personal letter* (ii) *Formal/business letters.*

Informal Letter

An informal letter is a letter written by an individual usually addressed to a relative, friend or an acquaintance on a subject that is private and targeted at meeting specific individual needs. It may be offering a piece of advice, or expressing emotions towards someone, asking for someone's opinion, or expressing concern about family or health issues etc.

The layout of an informal letter is flexible and usually not complicated. Most informal letters simply begin with a date and the writer's address. The latter is often omitted depending on the relationship that exists between the writer and the sender. Most informal letters begin with a complimentary opening comprising a salutation e.g. (*Hi, hello, or dear xx*); some may simply begin with the addressee's first name (*e.g. Mark, Biodun*) or a combination of salutation and the first name (e.g. *Hi Biodun, or Hello Mark*). The opening or closing of an informal letter may reveal the kind of relation that exists between the writer and the addressee, for instance parent-child relationship (e.g. *Hi Dad/Mum, or dear son/daughter*). Some salutations reflect respect, solidarity or social distance, (e.g. *Hi sir, dear prof, Hello Chief or dear bro/sis xx*).

The content of informal letters is often brief and concise on the any subject matter. To achieve the purpose of the intended, communication letters are supposed to be informative, clear, simple and courteous. Most informal letters end with a subscription (or complimentary close/sign off) such as the writer's first name. Letters written by youths to youths sometimes do not include any form of closing.

Business Letters

Business letters are written in a purely business environment that may be conveying either of the following: Fresh information or a decision; requesting information on a decision; expressing or responding to a request or criticism; making or replying to an application; seeking to change the receiver's attitude; trying to persuade the receiver to act or acknowledge the receipt of a (written or spoken) message. Thus, a business letter must have a defined purpose, planning and preparation.

Types and Purpose of Business Letters

A. General

(i)   Information seeking (to make an enquiry - seek information or confirmation)
(ii)   Acknowledgement (to provide information/confirmation)
(ii)   Complaints (to seek redress of a deficiency)
(iii)   Adjustment (to rectify a complaint)
(iv)   Introduction (to introduce a business organization)

B. Financial
(i)   A letter of credit to authorize an advance of credit; also to confirm the financial standing of the recipient or check credit worthiness.

C. Sales, Advertising - to sell goods & services (i) Sales letters (ii) Follow-up sales letters (to remind of sales offers) (iii) Unsolicited sales letters (to advertise goods & services)

D. Orders
   (i) Estimates - confirmation of order (to place an order/confirm a subscribed letter)
   (ii) Estimate (to submit a projected price)
   (iii) Tender (to submit a contractual price)

E. Appointment
   (i) Application (to apply for a post)
   (ii) Resignation (to confirm resignation from a post)
   (iii) Reference Enquiry (to seek confidential particulars)
   (iv) Reference reply (provide confidential particulars)

F. Circulars (to personnel or circular to customers)

G. Legal
    (i) Solicitor's letters (to recover outstanding debts)
   (ii) to warn of impending court action
   (iv) to seek out - of court settlement

G. Personal

   (i) Disciplinary (warning – discipline)
   (ii) Recruitment (letters confirming application receipt/letter of appointment)
   (iii) Invitation to interview
   (iv) Rejection (letter rejecting a job application)

Layout of a Business Letter

Unlike the informal letter, the structure, layout or format of the letter is very important to a business letter writer. Most business letters contain the following items:

   (i)   Address (the writers and addresses in block style, appearing on the left hand side)
   (ii)   Letter reference (many print the 'our ref' and 'your ref' items appearing in their standard positions on their letter head papers)
   (iii)   The date
   (iv)   The addressee's address
   (v)   Salutations (usually 'Dear sir,' 'Dear Madam,' Dear Mr…)
   (vi)   Heading
   (vii)   Content
   (viii)   Complimentary close (yours faithfully, yours sincerely)
   (ix)   Name and signature of writer.

THE MECHANICS OF WRITING

Punctuation Marks

Punctuation in English is a carrier of meaning. It is a way of signalling an intention or attitude. It may also indicate that something has been completed or is to follow. A poor handling of punctuation marks in sentences is likely to render expressions vague or ruin the intended meaning completely. Look at the following examples:

(i) I hate fanatics: like you, I find them irritating
(ii) I hate fanatics like you; I find them irritating.

There are many punctuation marks in English. We shall consider some of them with their uses.

Punctuation Mark	Functions
The full stop (.)	End a sentence; mark of initials; end an abbreviation. *E.g. A.I. Eka; B.A.; Feb. etc.,*
The Comma (,)	Itemise; mark off appositives; mark of co-ordinate adjectives; mark of incomplete sense groups (e.g. subordinate clauses); separate quotations and generally indicate pauses. (Examples?).
The Question Mark (?)	End a question; indicate uncertain information
The Exclamation Mark (!)	Show emotion, surprise, emphasis or command end an exclamatory sentence.
The Semi-colon (;)	Separate independent clauses (though not often used nowadays).
The Colon (:)	Introduce a list; sometimes to separate main clauses instead of the conjoin 'and'.
Quotation Marks ("…")	Indicate a quotation, titles or borrowed items
The Apostrophe (')	Indicate possession; contracted forms e.g. *Mike's car; doesn't (for does not)*; '88; indicate plurals of letters/numbers (A's; 7's)
The Hyphen (-)	Divide words not regarded as units e.g. *anti-war*; join compound adjectives e.g. *self-contained man*

Note the following specialised punctuation marks:

- Asteriks (*) – for special attention
- Caret (^)   - to show that something is mistakenly omitted
- Ellipsis (…) – indicate that something is deliberately left
- Parenthesis (or bracket) (---) for additional information
- Dash (-) – for additional information; for appositives, lists and explanation e.g. *He came with only three items – a ruler, pen and a writing paper. Here introducing the winner – Umaru Shehu Yar'Adua*
- Brace – to show that information enclosed in them should be taken together

Capitalisation

Capital letters are important conventional writing mechanic. *Note*: Every sentence begins with a capital letter; hence a capital letter begins at *the end of a full-stop; a question mark and an exclamation mark*. The pronoun 'I' occurring in an isolated position is usually written in capital. The following often begin with capital letters:

(i) **Proper nouns** i.e. names of:

- Persons – *Adeleye, Nwachukwu, Ibrahim, James*

- Organisations – *National Universities Commission; Covenant University*
- Racial, political and religious groups – *the Afenifere; the Ohaneze*
- Countries, states, cities and streets – *Nigeria, Ghana, Abuja, Martins Street*
- Companies and buildings – *Leventis Motors; Mobil Petroleum*
- Geographical locations and features (mountains, rives etc) - *Suez Canal*
- Days, months, and holidays – *Friday, April; Christmas*
- Trademarks – *Wrangler, Prentice-Hall*
- Languages – *English, Igbo, Efik*
- Ships and aircrafts – *Boeing 747; Olokun 5*
- Abbreviations for academic degrees – *PhD; B.A.*
- Sacred writings and pronouns standing for God and Jesus – *the Bible*
- Titles in place of names – the *Oba of Lagos; the Emir of Kano*

(ii)   **Proper Adjectives** (*adjectives created from proper names*)
- E.g. He is a *Nigerian*; She is of *Brazilian* ancestry; They are *Irish*

(iii)   **Abbreviations** (*especially if the words they stand for are capitalized*)
- E.g. NEC (National Executive Council); IRS (*Internal Revenue Service*).

(iv)   **Personal Titles** e.g. the *Doctor* confirms the result; the *President* is here; the *Dean* has cancelled his admission.

(v)   **Titles of Literary and Artistic Works**, e.g. Achebe's *Arrow of God*; Okotie's *I Need Someone*; I watch *The Gardner's Daughter* every evening.

Capitalisation is a very important writing convention which you should learn to use.

Module C: INTRODUCTION TO TECHNICAL WRITING

Writing a PROPOSAL

A proposal is a written document which presents facts and information about how to execute a particular project. There are types of proposals e.g. a *business proposal* or an *academic proposal*. Generally proposals provide answers to questions such as:

(i)   What is there to be done? What new fact/information is discoverable?
(ii)   What is there to be learnt from the project?
(iii)   Why is the new information worth acquiring?
(iv)   How can the validity of the results be test?

Features and Components of a Proposal

(a)   A clear title, e.g. *Reducing the Risk of Obesity among Undergraduate Girls*
(b)   An Introduction; usually a background
(c)   State, define and explain the problem you plan to investigate and possibly solve. Where there are problems enumerate, e.g. *problems associated with obesity in girls*
(d)   Objectives of the research i.e. what you aim at achieving.
(e)   Proposed Approach/Methodology. This will include instruments to use, e.g. questionnaires, interviews or tests; data analysis procedures etc.
(f)   Action Standard/Hypothesis, i.e. what you envisage the result of the study will achieve
(g)   Time frame. How long will the study last? Proposals usually have clearly defined duration

(h)   Costing or budgeting. This is the breakdown of all expenses to be incurred. A business proposal will include a fee to be paid to the researcher

(i)   Appendices. A good proposal should attach copies of questionnaires, interview guide or other documents that will be of interest to the commissioning agent (in case of business proposals).

A proposal must:

- identify the problem of the client (if it's a business proposal); if it's academic it must have a defined focus
- contain convincing information about the need of the research
- provide detail explanation of issues raised
- be thorough and clear
- be consistent in form, techniques and standards
- good grammar and proper punctuations.
- be plain and simple enough for anyone to read

A good proposal leaves no one in doubt of its purpose and goal. Most academic proposals are written before a major research project, the writer briefly explains the focus and scope of study and research objectives.

Writing a Report

A report - information or feed back on activities such as meetings, interviews, investigation research, transactions etc. A report is believed to be authentic/reliable account of activities or experiences. An effective business report aids management decisions.

Classification and Context of Reports

- Regular/Routine Reports
- Occasional Reports
- Especially Commissioned Reports

Note: business reports are classified based on their:
(a) Regularity
(b) Function
(c) Subject matter
(d) Formality/informality
(e) Outlook. E.g. regular routine report; occasional report; specially commissioned report.

(a) Regular Routine reports include (i) equipment maintenance report (ii) sales report (iii) Progress report (iv) production report etc. (**b**) **Occasional** reports include (i) *a*ccident report (ii) disciplinary report etc. **(c) Specially Commissioned** reports include (i) investigatory report (ii) market-research report (iii) staff (personnel) report

Types of Report

(i) Extended Formal report
(ii) Short Formal report
(iii) Market research, Investigatory research etc).

Format/features

i. Title page
ii. Background/problem of the study
iii. Objective of
iv. Methodology
v. Data Analysis
vii. Findings
viii. Summary/ conclusion
ix. Recommendations

Short Formal Report
Short Formal report is used for reporting situations (monthly/quarterly) internally. e.g. production report, progress report etc.

Components
(i) Heading
(ii) Terms of reference (objectives/motivation of report)
(iii) Procedure/ identification of report
(iv) Findings
(v) Conclusions
(vi) Recommendations
(vii) Appendices

Short Informal Report
Sometimes related orally- this is when information of lower status/less complex is required e.g. secretary and head of Dept.

Terms of Reference
Terms of reference is about why the report is written i.e, motivation, scope or background; (e.g. *this report examines the general causes of the fall on performance of Hebron water during the 4th quarter of 2005).*

Objectives
What the report/research aims at achieving.

Procedure (Methodology)
(i) How the research is to be conducted e.g.
(ii) Scrutinizing documents (staff report)
(iii) Interviewing staff
(iv) Visiting boards
(v) Personal observation
(vi) Examinations
(vi) Personal observation (Market-research report)
(vii) Interviews
(viii) Questionnaires
(viii) Visiting markets
(ix) Interviewing retailers etc.

Findings (results of research)
 (Detailed information is arranged in descending order of importance) e.g.

(i) Effects of competition / more bottled water in the market

(ii) Inadequate adverts
(iii) Influence of middlemen
(iv) High price

Conclusion
Make a summary of your experience

Recommendation
What action should your report generate?

Methods of presentation
Reports are (i) written as letters, memos, short report or (ii) presented in tabular form or statistics. This includes graphics, charts (bar/pie) etc.

Module D: ASPECTS OF LITERATURE

- Written works, e.g. fiction, poetry, drama, and criticism that are recognized as having important or permanent artistic value.
- the body of written works of a culture, language, people, or period of time (Encarta)
- Imitation or representation of reality ('mimesis' – poor imitation)(Plato)
- A mirror of life (approximates the ideal life – about universal truths) *(Aristotle)*

Genres of Literature

- Poetry (verse, poem) – a writer of poems – *poet*
- Drama (play) – a writer/former of plays – *playwright*
- Prose (novel, fiction) – a writer of novels - *novelist.*

POETRY

- Written in lines or verses (some are written in 'blank verse')
- May have a regular rhythmic pattern
- Written in words that express emotions and aesthetics of language
- Often full of symbols, imagery and figures of speech
- Often divided in stanzas
- Best appreciated by recitation

FORMS OF POETRY

Epic – a long narrative poem that tells about adventures and exploits of a hero(s), often expresses the ideals of a culture or race, e.g. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
Lyric – a song poem, often accompanied by a musical instrument. It expresses the poet's feelings or thoughts.
Elegy – a poem that mourns the dead; often expresses sorrow or the poet's meditation on death.
Dirge – Funeral song expressing grief or mourning
Ode – a poem that celebrates nature, person(s) or object, e.g. Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*
Pastoral – a poem about hinterland, shepherd and rustic life.
Ballad – a poem that expresses the heroic past of a community, about the culture and events of a rural community. It is sometimes sung.

Sonnet – a fourteen-line poem, divided into 8 (octave) and 6 (sestet)
Epigram – a short crispy poem that displays a lot of wits.

DRAMA
- Performed on stage
- Involves dialogue and actions
- May involve mime (acting without speaking)
- May be an operatic (in song form)
- Usually divided in Acts and Scenes
- May involve soliloquy (voicing a character's thoughts)

Forms of Drama
- **Tragedy** – a play that ends in tragedy, especially with the death of tragic hero. It may begin well but usually marred by some destined ill-lucks and mishaps.
- **Comedy** – a play with a happy ending, usually with marriages, fortunes and comical events. Some forms of comedy are (a) **Satire** – ridicules the society or people and often pokes fun with the way the society and its people are run (b) **Farce** – a comedy that provokes laughter and humour on situations rather than characters (c) **Burlesque** – a comedy that treats serious subject in a trivial manner in order to render certain values ludicrous.
- **Tragi-comedy** – combines the elements of tragedy and comedy, involving serious and happy and mood; often ends happily.

PROSE
- Usually written in straightforward everyday language
- Usually divided into chapters
- Best appreciated by reading it
- Often written as fiction with fictional characters performing roles in well-ordered story line.

Types of Prose
- **Non – fiction** – based on real life story, not fictional. Non-fictions include (a) **Biography** – a story of someone's life, written by another person (b) **Autobiography** – a story of a person's life written by himself/herself. (c) **Articles** about real events; news reports; research papers, travel guides; diaries, memoirs etc.
- **Fiction** – novel/novella/short story – story that is credible, based on the creative imagination of the writer; often showing possible events of real life and how society functions. Story is often weaved round a protagonist and how he/she unravels the mystery of existence having to contend with a hurdle. It may end tragically or happily. The difference between the types of fiction is basically the length.
- **Fable** – a short narrative conveying moral instructions often conveyed by animal or non-human characters e.g. Orwell's *Animal Farm*.
- **Epistolary Novel** – a novel written in the form of a letter e.g. Maria ma Baa's S*o long a letter*

Elements of Poetry
- **Diction** – choice of words in a poem or any work of art.
- **Tone** – the poet's attitude expressed in the words of the poem showing seriousness, optimism, sarcasm, humour or pessimism.
- **Symbolism** – the use of symbols to represent an idea, experience event or a value.

- **Mood** – a poet's emotion or state of mind as expressed by the words of the poem, showing sadness, joy, nostalgia etc.
- **Rhyme** – correspondence of sound in the words or syllables in a piece of verse achieved by consonant sounds, usually occurring in 2 lines (couplet); 3 lines (sestet), 4 lines (quatrain).
- **Imagery** – the use of images or descriptions that create a mental picture.
- **Rhythm** – the sound system of a poem, i.e. the beat, tempo or time.
- **Figurative language** – use of metaphors, Euphemism, hyperboles, similes, personification etc.

Elements of Fiction/Drama
- **Theme** – the central idea or subject matter of the work of art.
- **Setting** – the location of the story, reflecting time, space or period
- **Characterization** – the way the writer reveals the qualities of his characters; the characters are the actors in the story. The main character or the hero/heroine is the *protagonist*, usually in conflict with the *antagonist*.
- **Plot** – the storyline – the organisation of the event often following the principle of cause and effect.
- **Allegory** - the symbolic expression of a deeper meaning through a story or scene acted out by human, animal, or mythical characters. The characters and events are to be understood as representing other things and symbolically expressing a deeper, often spiritual, moral, or political meaning. The Animal Farm is a political allegory
- **Conflict** – the struggle that results in the interplay of two opposing forces or parties in a plot, providing the elements of interest and suspense.
- **Comic relief** – comic elements in a tragic work to relieve tension
- **Flashback** – a scene in a play or novel that depicts events that had happened earlier.
- **Catharsis** - is the emotional/spiritual purge which the audience derives at the point of the resolution of the conflict in a tragic play.
- **Prologue** – an introductory speech preceding a play
- **Epilogue** – a final remark by an actor at the end of a play
- **Dramatic Irony** – the words or acts of a character which is in contrast to his supposed character or the meaning which his character represents. It is often unperceived by the character but the audience understands.

AFRICAN LITERATURE

"African Literature" refers to oral and written literatures produced on the African continent. Africa has a long literary tradition, although very little of this literature was written down until the 20th century. In the absence of widespread literacy, African literature was primarily oral and passed from one generation to another through memorization and recitation. Most of Africa's written literature is in European languages due to European colonization of the continent from the 16th century to the mid-20th century. English is the most widely used language of African literature, followed by French and Portuguese. Works written in African languages and traditional oral texts were not usually acknowledged until the late 20th century, but today they are receiving increased attention.

Predominant themes of African Literature

(a) Pre-colonial African Literature explores mainly the issues of cultural revival – most writers reacted against Africa's cultural alienation. This is mostly captured in negritude literature spearheaded by Aime Cesaire, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Ferdinand Oyono, Mongo Beti etc. Negritude extols African values and calls on Africans to return to their cultural roots. It stood for black expression, anit-colonial consciousness and black identity. In Nigeria these themes are captured in the works of Achebe and Soyinka.

(b) Post-colonial African Literature explores contemporary social issues such as gender, economic exploitations, ethnic violence and wars, religious intolerance, corruption, and development issues. The works of Ngugi, Iyayi, Ayi kwei Arma among others highlight these themes. *Songs in a Time of War* (1985) by Ken Saro-Wiwa; *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems* (1990) by Tanure Ojaide (also a Nigerian) and *The Graveyard also has Teeth* (1980) by Sierra Leonean Syl Cheney-Coker all explore socio-political concerns. Somali's Nuruddin Farah for instance wrote of a family's struggles before and during the civil war that broke out in Somalia in the 1990s in the trilogy Blood in the Sun, which comprised the novels *Maps* (1986), *Gifts* (1992), and *Secrets* (1998).

An Overview of African/Nigerian Literature

Poetry

The first collection of African poetry in English translation is *An Anthology of West African Verse* (1957), edited and compiled by the Nigerian Olumbe Bassir. It includes a large number of Francophone poems in English translation; Anglophone literature developed much later. And whereas French-speaking writers in Africa celebrate African culture and blackness in the negritude movement, English-speaking writers and intellectuals in Africa were not all optimistic about it. However early Anglophone poems resembled négritude verse in their examination of the effects of European colonialism on Africa.

One of the first African poets to publish in English is Lenrie Peters of The Gambia, whose poems examine discontinuities between past and present in Africa. His book *Poems* came out in 1964 and *Selected Poetry,* his third anthology, in 1981. Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka has published several volumes of poetry, including *Idanre and Other Poems* (1967). Christopher Okigbo another Nigerian had already established himself as one of the most important Anglophone poets in Africa before his death in 1967 during the Biafran war. His collected poems were published as *Labyrinths, with Path of Thunder* (1971). Ghana's Kofi Anyidoho emerged in the 1980s as one of the most impressive African poets writing in English, earning critical praise for his treatment of both personal and political subjects. *A Harvest of Our Dreams* (1984) is regarded as his best work so far.

Francophone African poetry became known internationally with the publication of *Anthology of the New Black and Malagasy Poetry in the French Language*, (1948) in Paris edited Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal. Among the best-known African négritude poets, along with Senghor, is his compatriot David Diop. Diop's poetry is much more combative in tone than Senghor's conciliatory verse, which tends to favour a mixture of European and African cultures that assimilates the best of each. The title of Diop's anthology, *Hammer Blows,* (1973), indicates the bitterness of his attitude toward colonialism.

East Africa writers began producing significant poetry in the 1960s. Okot p'Bitek of Uganda published, among other volumes, *Song of Lawino* (1966), in which a woman

derides her husband's European airs. The poetry of Okello Oculi of Kenya is included in the anthology *Words of My Groaning* (1976).

In South Africa *apartheid* stimulated important protest verse, much of it written in exile. Prominent among the black South African poets are Dennis Brutus, who published *Letters to Martha* in 1968; Mazisi Kunene, author of *Zulu Poems* (1970); and Oswald Mtshali, author of *Sounds of a Cowhide Drum* (1971). Later works include Brutus's *Stubborn Hope* (1978), Sipho Sepamla's *The Soweto I Love* (1977), and Frank Chipasula's *Whispers in the Wings* (1991).

Fiction

Anglophone fiction is the richest genre of African literatures in English. Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford of Ghana set the pace and revealed the preoccupation of prose in English in his novel *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation* (1911). Several years later his compatriot, R. E. Obeng, in *Eighteenpence* (1943), depicted the procedures of the different judicial systems in use in the then Gold Coast.

 The Palm-Wine Drinkard and His Dead Palm-Wine Tapster in the Dead's Town (1952), by Nigerian writer Amos Tutuola, the first written literature in Nigeria was significant in Anglophone fiction. The book achieved tremendous success in Europe and the United States, in largely because of its idiosyncratic English which critics take for a sample of African English. The book's success inspired African writers who were better educated than Tutuola to produce fiction. Soon after Tutuola's work appeared, Chinua Achebe published *Things Fall Apart* (1958), the first of five novels in which he chronicled the consequences of British colonialism in his country. Other Nigerian writers of mid-century include Cyprian Ekwensi, whose most popular work is *Jagua Nana* (1961), the life story of a charming Lagos prostitute, and Flora Nwapa, who writes of the social problems women in her culture face in *Efuru* (1966).

The Gambian William Conton published an improbable solution to South Africa's racial problems through a new political party in *The African* (1960), while Ghanaian Ayi Kwei Armah criticized political corruption in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968). Armah's *compatriot* and Kofi Awoonor lamented the political woes of Ghana and their impact on individuals in *This Earth, My Brother* (1971).The Biafran War, a civil war that raged in Nigeria from 1966 to 1969, produced several works. They include Soyinka's *Season of Anomy* (1973), Eddie Iroh's *Forty-Eight Guns for the General* (1976), Destination *Biafra* (1982) by Buchi Emecheta and Festus Iyayi's Heroes (1982)

African fiction in French emerged in the 1920s, with the publication in Senegal of Ahmadou Mapaté Diagne's Malik's Three Wishes, 1920). This book, like Ousmane Socé's *Mirages of Paris*, (1937), is typical of early Francophone fiction in its admiration of the French. These works were superseded in the years leading to independence by fiction with a markedly different attitude toward France. *Houseboy,* (1966) by Ferdinand Oyono of Cameroon and *the Poor Christ of Bomba (*1971) by another Cameroonian writer, Mongo Beti criticised French colonialism.

In fiction as in poetry, writers turned their attention to social problems soon after independence. A good example of this shift is *Xala* by Senegalese writer Ousmane Sembène, which denounces corrupt government officials. Other works attest to the increasing visibility of women on the Francophone literary scene. They include *So Long a Letter,* (1981) by Senegalese writer Mariama Bâ and *The Beggars' Strike*, (1981) by Aminata Sow Fall, also of Senegal. Fiction developed later in the eastern and southern sections of English-speaking Africa than in the western part. Kenya's Ngugi Wa Thiong'o

lamented the loss of land to colonizers in *Weep Not, Child* (1964). With her novel *The Promised Land* (1966), Grace Ogot, also from Kenya, became the first woman from English-speaking East Africa to be published. Two other Kenyan female writers are Rebeka Njau, whose *Ripples in the Pool* (1975) discusses a woman's marital problems, and Lydia Nguya, who writes of the conflict in her country between rural and urban cultures and values in *The First Seed* (1975). The Tanzanian Ismael Mbise's *Blood on Our Land* (1974) dramatizes the importance of the land to Africans who lost their ancestral lands to colonizers. J. N. Mwaura's *Sky is the Limit* (1974) explores a troubled father-son relationship.

Discussions of racial conflict predictably dominate English-language fiction by black South Africans. Among the earliest works are *Tell Freedom* (1954) by Peter Abrahams, *Down Second Avenue* (1959) by Es'kia Mphahlele, and *A Walk in the Night* (1962) by Alex La Guma. Later works—including Miriam Tlali's *Muriel at Metropolitan* (1975), Mongane Serote's *To Every Birth Its Blood* (1981), Mphalele's *The Unbroken Song* (1981), and Sipho Sepamla's *A Ride on the Whirlwind* (1981) dwelled on the race problem.

Drama

The first African play published in English was *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongquase the Liberator* (1935) by Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo of South Africa. Its subject of resistance to white oppressors reflected in Lewis Nkosi's *The Rhythm of Violence* (1964) and other later works from South Africa. Early drama from West Africa portrays conflicts between parents and children in such works as *Sons and Daughters* (1963) by Joe de Graft of Ghana and *Dear Parent and Ogre* (1965) by Sarif Easmon of Sierra Leone. Ama Ata Aidoo of Ghana focuses on intercultural marriage in her *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1964). Her compatriot Efua Sutherland also discusses marriage in *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975), a play based on traditional lore. Nigeria's Wole Soyinka, who later dominated drama from the continent, also wrote on social themes in such plays as *The Swamp-Dwellers* (1963).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The Black Hermit* (1968) marked East Africa's debut in drama. The play is concerned with stamping out tribalism among African ethnic groups. A later work, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (1976), written in collaboration with Micere Mugo, deals with the Mau Mau rebellion. The Tanzanian Ebrahim Hussein's *Kinjeketile* (1970) received wide acclaim as a masterpiece meant to motivate responsible social action

The souring political atmosphere on the African continent had a profound impact on drama, as on other genres. Nigerian Femi Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers* (1980) bases its political commentary on the government's practice of publicly executing armed robbers. Soyinka's *A Play of Giants* (1984) ridicules Africa's flamboyant dictators. In South Africa, apartheid continued to generate powerful drama with such plays as Percy Mtwa's *Bopha!* (1986) and *Woza Albert!* (1986), written jointly by Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, and Barney Simon.

One of the most celebrated Francophone playwrights is the Cameroonian Guillaume Oyono-Mbia; his best works include *Three Suitors, One Husband (*1968). *La mort de Chaka* The Death of Chaka, (1961) by Saydou Badian of Mali and The Zulu (1977) by Tchicaya U Tam'si of the Republic of the Congo are also noteworthy plays in French.

Conclusion

Whether in poetry, drama or fiction, African literature bears the burdens of the African identity, exploring themes that seek the place of Africa after a chequered history of colonial exploitation. Contemporary literature explores themes of social and political concern, about how to make Africa a better place to live.

Ref. Oyekan Owomoyela (*Encarta 2006*)

TEXTS TO STUDY:

POETRY

1. "Piano and Drums" by Gabriel Okara
2. "The Earth is Ours to Plough, not to Plunder"

DRAMA

The Trials of Brother Jero by Wole Soyinka

PROSE

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe