

Language and  
Communication Skills

Volume 1

Edited by

Oyeyemi S. O & Yusuf J. C

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## PREFACE

The writing of this text was borne out of the desire to promote the communication ability of learners of English as a second language, through the acquisition of the relevant language skills. *Language and Communication Skills* is based on the requirements of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) syllabus designed to develop in students a reasonable efficiency in the use of English language skills.

The text, volume one comprises twelve chapters and cover all the areas prescribed by NCCE for (NCE 1) the course "Language and Communication Skills". The writers of the text are drawn from seasoned teachers involved in teaching these language skills to students in tertiary institution.

The language of the authors is straight forward and easy to understand. The text opens with how learners can develop effective study skills because many students face defeat due to ignorance on how to cope with academic challenges. Different aspects of grammar, ranging from word classes, structural patterns to clauses are treated to correct sentence construction and usage of the English Language.

Oral skills (Listening and Speaking) are basic to language learning and these are inclusively treated in the text. Writing has been known to pose great problems to students, therefore tasks and relevant ingredients for improving writing are also packaged in the book.

A lot of errors are committed by users of English in a second language situation. To this end, the text has treated some common errors and their correct versions.

Skills that aid reading comprehension also presented and strategies for effective use of the library are all presented in the book. There are also self-testing exercise to enable users evaluated their language performance.

*Language and Communication Skills* will benefit students in post primary institutions, especially in tertiary institutions where English is needed for effective performance. The text would prove an asset to teachers, journalist, and all those who desire to improve their English Language usage.

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## Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Copyright Page	ii
Preface	iii
Table of Contents	v
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
Guides to Developing Effective Study Skills <i>Olanrewaju, R. F. (Mrs)</i>	
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>6</b>
The Form Classes <i>Dr. (Mrs.) F. F. Akande</i>	
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>32</b>
Vocabulary: Affixation <i>Mrs. Bola Koledade</i>	
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>40</b>
Listening <i>Mrs. R. B. Saleeman</i>	
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b>50</b>
Oral drills: Mechanical, Meaningful and Communicative Drills <i>Ige, S. O</i>	
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	<b>58</b>
Reading <i>Isa Asabe R. (Mrs.)</i>	
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN</b>	<b>73</b>
Elements of Writing <i>Oyeyemi, S.O</i>	

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

Verb Tense, Modal Auxillary, Questions, Exclamation and  
Commands

*Mrs. D. T. Olaoye*

**84**

**CHAPTER NINE**

Concord

*Mrs. Oluwole, Y. G.*

**99**

**CHAPTER TEN**

Collocations – Synonyms – Antonyms - Homophones – Homonyms

*Ajadi, Babatunde Mustafa*

**112**

**CHAPTER ELEVEN**

Speech: Oral Drills

(Phonemes, Syllable Word and Sentence)

*J. C. Yusuf*

**122**

**CHAPTER TWELVE**

Writing (Logical Sequencing of Ideas and Linking of Paragraphs)

*Ahmed, K. S*

**140**

## CHAPTER TEN

### COLLOCATIONS – SYNONYMS – ANTONYMS - HOMOPHONES – HOMONYMS

*Ajadi, Babatunde Mustafa*

#### Vocabulary

There are many ways through which vocabularies can be understood and increased by language users. In the processing of meaning, a language user may engage several of the different techniques for meaning discovery. One of such ways is to be familiar with the word formation techniques. Among the many types of word-formation techniques include the use collocations synonyms, antonyms, homophones and homonyms.

#### Collocations

Words are said to collocate when the items co-occur or are used together most frequently. Collocation is an expression consisting of two or more words that correspond to some conventional way of saying things. Thus, *false* is often found together with *passport*, *teeth* or *promise*. These pairs are known as collocations. They are very helpful in establishing the meanings of the words in the pair. Collocations include noun phrases like *strong tea* and *weapons of mass destruction*, phrasal verbs like *to make up*, and other stock phrases like *the rich and powerful*. These combinations may sound right to the native English speakers. On the other hand, other combination may be unnatural and sound wrong. Example:

#### Natural English

The fast train

Fast food

#### Unnatural English

the quick train

quick food

## Types of Collocation

There several different types of collocation made from combinations of verbs, nouns, adjectives etc. Some of the most common types include:

- Adverb + Adjective: completely satisfied *NOT* downright satisfied
- Adjective + Noun: causing pain *NOT* causing joy
- Noun + Noun: a surge of anger *NOT* a rush of anger
- Noun + Verb: lions roar *NOT* lions shout
- Verbs + Noun: commit suicide *NOT* undertake suicide
- Verb + Expression with preposition: burst into tears *NOT* blow up in tears
- Verb + Adverb: wave frantically *NOT* wave feverishly

## Synonyms

Synonymy means sameness of meaning. It simply means similar or nearest in meaning. (pavement is a synonym of sidewalk). Note that no two words in English language can be said to have exactly identical meanings but there are certainly word substitutes known as Synonyms. Below are some words and their synonyms:

### Word

Beautiful  
zenith  
cry  
heavy  
fair  
happy  
trial  
Path  
Creed  
nauseous  
hardworking  
catal  
relish

### Synonyms

attractive, pretty, lovely, stunning  
acne, apex, apogee, crest, pinnacle  
bellow, screech, shriek, vociferate  
cumbersome, unwieldy, spiritless  
just, objective, impartial, unbiased  
content, joyful, mirthful, upbeat  
woe, agony, anguish, adversity  
guidebook, route, map, , plan  
doctrine, dogma, conviction, perception  
despicable, loathsome, nasty, sickening  
diligent, determined, industrious, enterprising  
chicanery, trickery, craft, wire-pulling  
spice, seasoning, appetizer, appreciation

brown  
domain  
benevolent

dark, tawny, dusky, sable  
area, territory, vicinity, sphere  
altruistic, unselfish, literal, princely

### Sample Sentences

- a. I had tears of *joy*, whoops of *delight* when I stood behind him in the lunch line.
- b. The man was viewed as *wicked* and just a plain *evil* when he killed his wife.
- c. Although, he had been committed to an *asylum*, Tafa felt he had been *confined* to a loony-bin.
- d. Without hurry or effort the fat cow *sauntered* down the road, *meandering* here-and-there.

### Application Exercises

Match the words in A with their synonyms in B.

- |    |           |             |
|----|-----------|-------------|
| 1. | <b>A</b>  | <b>B</b>    |
|    | accede    | noxious     |
|    | inhibit   | gastronomic |
|    | contrive  | distort     |
|    | obtuse    | caricature  |
|    | sinister  | guess       |
|    | baleful   | evil        |
|    | chagrin   | dismay      |
|    | burlesque | block       |
|    | epicurean | blunk       |
|    | garble    | devise      |

2. Give words similar in meaning to the followings:

Comprehend  
Modern  
Purchase  
Moisture  
Odour  
Prohibit  
Reveal

Insolent  
Fatigue  
Conceal

Choose the word below the sentence which is a synonym for the highlighted word.

3. Mice are really TINY animals.

- a. small
- b. nice

I HATE spiders, they are horrible.

- a. kill
- b. loathe

This lesson isn't very HARD.

- a. difficult
- b. exhausting

Please find a CHAIR

- a. bed
- b. seat

I CHOSE the fish, it looked delicious.

- a. ate
- b. picked

### Antonyms

Antonyms are words that are opposite in meaning to another. The opposite could be realized when the alternative word employed bears contextual relevance to the word in question. Logically, the other side of white is not white, while the antonym is the extreme black. Since language is complex, people may at times disagree on what words are truly opposite in meaning. However, there are three categories of antonyms – the graded, complementary and rational antonyms.

The graded antonyms deal with level of meaning of words. Complementary antonyms have relationship where there is no middle ground, i.e. there are only two possibilities, either one or the other. While, the rational antonyms are sometimes considered as a

subcategory of complementary antonyms, that is, for there to be a relationship, both word must exist.

### Formation of Opposite

a. Sometimes, an antonym can be formed by adding a prefix  
Adding the prefix *un, non, de, dis, in, ir, anti, il, im, mis* and *mal*

Likely	unlikely	entity	nonentity
justice	Injustice	Able	unable
payment	nonpayment	just	unjust
Fortunate	unfortunate	combatant	noncombatant
Sense	Nonsense,	Stop	Nonstop
Violence	Nonviolence.	happy	unhappy
Tolerance	intolerance	legal	illegal
Rational	irrational	Decent	indecent
advantage	disadvantage	clock	anti-clockwise
Discreet	indiscreet	like	dislike
social	anti-social	Appoint	disappoint
direct	indirect	Merit	Demerit
Control	Decontrol	Entrain	Detrain
possible	impossible	Responsible	Irresponsible
Active	Inactive	Valid	Invalid,
Accurate	Inaccurate	Balance	Imbalance
Possible	Impossible	Personal	Impersonal
Partial	Impartial	Fortune	Misfortune,
Use	Misuse	Understand	Misunderstand
Conduct	Misconduct	Practice	Malpractice
Nutrition	Malnutrition	Legal	illegal
Literate	Illiterate	Logical	Illogical
Legible	Illegible.		

b. By changing the prefix

Ascend	descend	enthroned	dethroned
Fair-play	foul-play	include	exclude
Inhale	exhale	encourage	discourage
Export	import	enthroned	dethrone

c. By changing the suffix

Careful	careless	merciful	merciless
---------	----------	----------	-----------

Faithful  
useful  
hopeful

Faithless  
useless  
hopeless

Within  
Helpful

without  
helpless

In addition to A, B, and C above, below are samples of a general formation of opposites:

Monarchy

democracy

above

below

big

small

Committee

individual

accept

reject

bold

timid

Antonym

synonym

producer

consumer

cold

hot

Nomad

settled

route

detour

cool

warm

Different

similar

drowsy

wakeful

dead

alive

Early

late

entirely

partially

hard

soft

Exposed

concealed

forget

remember

hope

despair

Optimism

pessimism

quick

slow

lend

borrow

Long

short

motion

stillness

old

young

General

specific

kind

cruel

minor

major

### Sample Sentences

Let us consider the use of *IMPROMPTU* in the following sentences:

a. I do not like attending *impromptu* meetings

b. The university gave the student an *impromptu* admission.

In the two sentences above, the word *impromptu* has two possible antonyms. The first sentence requires **PREPARED** as its antonym while the second sentence requires **UNPLANNED** as its antonym.

### Application Exercises

Give the exact opposite of the given words:

a. Flagitious

b.

busy

c.

Startled

Innocent

occupied

amused

Vapid

engrossed

relaxed

Ignorant

relaxed

endless

Frivolous

engaged

astonished

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| d. Belittle | e. fresh    |
| Criticize   | faulty      |
| Flatter     | sluggish    |
| Exaggerate  | disgraceful |
| Adore       | stale       |

Give the opposite in meaning to the following by changing the prefix:

- Exterior
- Increase
- Inside
- Encourage
- Export

Give the opposite in meaning to the following by changing the suffix:

- Careful
- Cheerful
- Joyful
- Merciful
- Useful

### Homophones

Simply put, homophones are words with similar sounds but different spellings and meanings. They are words pronounced alike but varied in spellings and meanings regardless of the contents in which such words are used. Homonyms are often taken for homophones by a layman. For emphasis sake, homophones have the same sound and phonetic transcription.

Let us consider the following words:

Son	/s·n/	Sun	/s·n/
Weak	/wi:k/	week	/wi:k/
Bail	/beil/	bale	/beil/

From the illustrations above, let us consider examples of words and homophones as follows:

fool full

blew blue

ate eight  
buoy boy  
sale sail  
great grate  
gait gate  
cheep cheap  
site sight  
steel steal

won one  
yoke yolk  
tail tale  
weigh way  
hour our  
scene seen  
nose knows  
vain vein

### Application Exercises

The following are examples of homophones. Select the correct alternative:

- a. Babtunde promised to ring/wring the dog's neck.
- b. Aeroplanes are kept in hangers/hangars.
- c. We sang a well-known him/hymn.
- d. Tafa sometimes suffers from saw/sore throat.
- e. Everybody enjoys favourable compliments/complement.

### Homonyms

Homonyms are "two or more words having the same spelling and pronunciation but different meaning and origins". Compact Oxford Dictionary - Catherine Soanes. A more restrictive definition sees homonyms as words that share the same spelling, regardless of their pronunciation.

Examples:

Can (pot or container) and Can (ability)

Bat (equipment for playing cricket) and Bat (a kind of flying mammal)

Cricket (a kind of game) and Cricket (a kind of insect that make a shrill sound)

Kite (a bird of prey of the hawk family) and Kite (a toy-framework made by fly)

Right (correct) and Right (opposite of left).

Let's consider the following examples:

- a. All my books are in my *box*.  
If you disturb me again I will *box* you.
- b. He will appear in *court* tomorrow.  
He has never *courted* popularity.
- c. My salary is paid directly into my *bank*.  
I will *bank* on you for your support.
- d. The new *table* is mine.  
We will *table* the case before the committee.
- e. He gives her a *present*.  
The criminals *present* themselves to the police.

### Application Exercises

Choose the word that best fits in the blank

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the story is to always be kind to others.

- a. Moral
- b. Morale

The dentists' \_\_\_\_\_ liked him because he gave them lollipops.

- a. Patience
- b. Patients

Tafa ordered a \_\_\_\_\_ pizza for lunch.

- a. Personal
- b. Personnel

Can I go to the party \_\_\_\_\_?

- a. Too
- b. Two

It has been said that \_\_\_\_\_ is a virtue.

- a. Patience
- b. Patients

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