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Introduction to Language and Linguistics

SEMESTER VI

ENGLISH

BLOCK- 2

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

The second block takes up Unit 9 on Vowels and Consonants which is a study of the small units of sound that make up an utterance also known as phonemes. In the unit, you will find a detailed explanation of the 24 consonant sounds divided into vowels and diphthongs along with a discussion on various aspects of articulation. Units 10 and 11 introduces the learner to the three features of 'Stress, Rhythm and Intonation' which are the three important elements of English speech. This is an important part of oral communication for the reason that without the correct use of these three elements, your spoken English may remain unintelligible to most of your listeners.

Unit 12 takes up a unit on 'Rhetoric' with reference to the figures of speech that define the art of persuasive speaking or even writing. This is followed by Unit 13 which takes up the topic of 'Prosody' that refers to the laws regulating the structure of verses or lines of poetry. It discusses the systematic study of versification including metrical structures, rhyme and stanza. Towards the end of the second block, Units 14 and 15 takes up the topic of 'Stylistics' which is more commonly known as the study of 'style' referring to the components and features of literary compositions. The learner will receive a detailed idea on Stylistics which is the study of emotive overtones, rhythms, symmetry, euphony and the different associative elements which help in describing style as literary, colloquial etc.. This will further enable the learner to attempt stylistic analysis of poems, fiction and plays and develop a critical understanding of language, linguistics and literature.

After going through the units, the learner will be able to discuss the various aspects of language and linguistics in a detailed manner. While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in "LET US KNOW" along with the text. We have kept "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" questions in each unit which have been designed to self-check your progress of study. It is important to note that the Self Learning Material (SLM) is not an end in itself and the learners are strongly advised to consult the references and other resources recommended for reading.

UNIT 9 : VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 The Term 'Vowel'

- 9.3.1 Criteria for Describing Vowels
- 9.3.2 The Pure Vowels
- 9.3.3 Diphthongs

9.4 The Term 'Consonant'

- 9.4.1 Criteria for Describing Consonants
- 9.4.2 Plosives
- 9.4.3 Affricates
- 9.4.4 Fricatives
- 9.4.5 Nasals
- 9.4.6 Laterals
- 9.4.7 Frictionless Continuant
- 9.4.8 Semi-vowels

9.5 Let us Sum up

9.6 Further Reading

9.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.8 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concepts of vowel and consonant
- identify the different vowel and consonant sounds in speech
- grasp the appropriate speech sounds of English

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall look at the small units of sound that make up an utterance. When we speak, we make use of a series of sounds that

combine to form words which are meaningful to us. We can also say that our speech can be broken up into very small units of sounds. These units of sound that make up our speech are called **phonemes**. Each language has its own exclusive number of phonemes. The phonemes of English can broadly be grouped into (a) Vowels and (b) Consonants. You are familiar with these two terms along with the term 'semi-vowel' used to classify the letters of the alphabet. But here we are not talking about the 5 vowel letters or 21 consonant letters. We are talking about 44 phonemes or units of sound in the sound system of English.

These 44 sounds in the sound system are classified in terms of vowels and consonants. There are 20 vowel sounds divided into (a) pure vowels (12) and (b) diphthongs (8). There are 24 consonant sounds described in terms of their place and manner of articulation. This unit will introduce you to these sounds of English. They are the sounds used in the standard variety of English.

There are 26 letters in the alphabet but 44 sounds in English. These figures indicate that there is no one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds in English. A particular sound can be expressed by making use of different letters in the alphabet. Take for example, the sound /f/. This is the initial sound unit in the word *fan*.

/ f / is realised as ff in *office*

/ f / is realised as ph in *phone*

/ f / is realised as gh in *tough*

/ f / is realised as lf in *half*

This is just one example to show that the sound and spelling system of English have little correlation. This unit will make an attempt to show you how the units of sounds are pronounced which in turn will help in improving your speech.

9.3 THE TERM 'VOWEL'

The term 'vowel' refers to a unit of speech sound which is distinguished from the speech sounds known as 'consonant'. We can describe a vowel by doing a small activity. Try this: Sounds that are

produced while the air escapes though the mouth freely and continuously are vowel sounds. We shall now look at the criteria for describing the 20 vowel sounds of English.



ACTIVITY 9.1

Take a deep breath to fill your lungs with air. Slowly release the air in the process of producing the sound /i:/ which is a long sound. You will find that the air escapes freely and continuously without any friction. You can continue articulating this sound as long as your stock of breath lasts. Try this activity with /e/ or a: .

9.3.1 Criteria for Describing Vowels

Vowels in English can be described with reference to the following three criteria known as three-term labels :

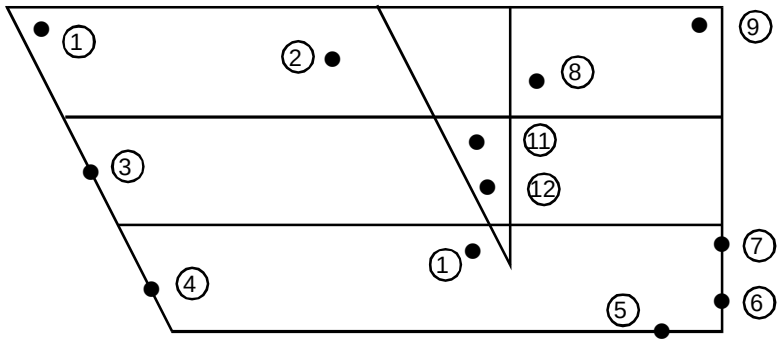
i) Position of the tongue

ii) Height of the tongue

iii) Position of the lips

In order to describe the position and height of the tongue during the articulation of vowel sounds, the vowel diagram with the different labels given here will be helpful.

Diagram No. 1



(The dots show the points of articulation of the vowels and the circled numbers is the vowel number as shown in subsection 9.3.2)

- **Position of the tongue:** Three tongue positions have been shown in the diagram : **front**, **central** and **back** which give us the terms (i) front vowels, (ii) back vowels and (iii) central vowels.
  - **Front vowels** refer to those vowels during the production of which the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate. These vowels are /i:/ as in feel, /e/ as in bed and /æ/ as in bad.
  - **Back vowels** are those vowels that are produced when the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate. Examples include /u:/ as in fool, // as in hot, /:/ as in 'court' and /a:/ as in 'heart'.
  - **Central vowels** are produced with the centre of the tongue raised to the part of the roof of the mouth lying at the meeting point of the hard palate and the soft palate. Examples include /:/ as in bird; /^/ as in hut ; and // as in again.
- **Height of the tongue :** Depending on the height of the tongue, vowels can be close, half-close, half open and open.
  - **Close vowels** are produced with the central part of the tongue raised close to the roof of the mouth leaving enough gap to pass without friction eg /i:/ as in feat and /u:/ as in fool.
  - **Open vowels** are produced with the tongue far away from the roof of the mouth eg /a:/ as in heart.
  - **Half-close and half open** vowels refer to the height of the tongue between the extreme positions, thus giving us half-close and half open position. eg. // as in put; /u:/ as in pull, /e/ as in bed, /æ/ as in bat.
- **Position of the lips :** Depending upon the position of the lips during the production of a sound, vowel sounds can be classified as rounded and unrounded.
  - **Rounded vowels** are those vowels during the

production of which, the lips are brought forward. Examples include /u:/ as in fool.

- **Unrounded vowels** are those vowels during the production of which the lips are pulled back. Examples include /i:/ as in lead.

However, the lips can assume other positions during the production of certain sounds. They can be neutral or loosely spread as well. For descriptive purposes rounded and unrounded are the more common terms.

9.3.2 The Pure Vowels

Pure vowels refer to the vowels that show no noticeable change of quality during their articulation. These sounds will be described here by using the following three - term labels : (i) part of the tongue raised, (ii) the height of that part of the tongue and (iii) the position of the lips.

In order to help you to pronounce the sounds of English now and then some Assamese words or letters are given only for your guidance. The Sounds are available on a CD which can help you to practice the English sound much better.

The following are the 12 pure vowels described in terms of their manner of articulation. The terms used have been introduced to you in Unit-1. Besides, the distribution features are also shown. It refers to the position that a sound can occupy in a word. For example, there are certain sounds that can occur initially, medially and finally. But there are others where they may not occur in all the three positions.

- / i: /

  Before our explaining the sound, note the following:

  - /i:/ is not the small letter 'i' of the alphabet. It is a symbol representing a sound. So, do not confuse the phonemic symbols with letters of the alphabet.

- To differentiate them from letters, the symbols are given between two slant lines / /
- The two dots in a symbol represent length. We will understand that it is a long vowel.

Now come back to the description.

The sound has some similarity with Assamese or its ***diacritic*** . In order to produce this sound, you raise the front of the tongue in the direction of the hard palate to an almost close position. The lips are spread and the tongue is tense when the sound is produced. It is a long vowel produced with the lips in an unrounded position. Thus, it is a front, close, unrounded vowel. The vowel occurs at the initial, medial and final positions in words. For example:

- initial : eat, ease
- medial : meat, leaf
- final : tea, sea

➢ / I /

The sound has some similarity with Assamese or its diacritic . In order to produce this sound, you raise the centre of the tongue in the direction of the hard palate to a position between close and half close with the lips loosely spread. It is a front, unrounded vowel between close and half close. It occures initially, medially and finally in a word. For example:

- initial : inn, inch
- medial : bit, rich
- final : city, lady

➢ / e /

The sound has similarity with the first unit of sound in the word Assamese word though it has to be very short. While articulariting this sound. you raise the front of the tongue between half-close and half open positions with the lips loosely spread. It is a front unrounded vowel between

half-close and half open positions. The vowel occurs only initially and medially in a word. For example:

- ❍ initial : any, end
- ❍ medial : many, head

➢ / æ /

The sound has similarity with the in the Assamese word . while articulating the sound, the mouth is slightly more open than for /e/; the front of the tongue is raised just below the half open position with the lips neutral. It is a front, unrounded vowel just below the half open position.

- ❍ initial : apple, and
- ❍ medial : hand, fan

➢ / ^ /

While articulating this vowel, you raise the centre of the tongue to a position between open and half-open with the lips neutral. The sound is between Assamese and . It is a central, unrounded vowel between open and half open position occuring only initially and medially in a word. For example:

- ❍ initial : up, utter
- ❍ medial : cup, hut

➢ /a: /

The sound has similarity with the initial sound of the Assamese . While articulating the sound, the back of the tongue is in the fully open position while the lips are neutral. It is a back, open, unrounded vowel occuring initially, medially and finally in a word. For example :

- ❍ initially : ask, aunt
- ❍ medially : car, pass
- ❍ finally : far, bar (final ‘r’ is not pronounced)

➢ /Ò/

The sound has similarity with the initial sound of the Assamese word . while articulating this vowel, the back

of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate and it is in a fully open position. The lips are rounded. Hence, it is a back, open, rounded vowel occuring initially and medially in a word. For example :

- initial : odd, off
- medial : cot, rock

➢ / ɔ : /

The sound is longer than the initial sound of the Assamese word with the back of the tongue raised towards the soft palate to a height between half close and half open position. With lips rounded, itis a back, rounded vowel between half close and half open positions occuring in all three position. For example :

- initial : all, ought
- medial : court, board
- final : door, bone

➢ /ʊ/

Somewhat similar to Assamese , while articulating the sound the tongue moves to a position between close and half-close with the lips loosely spread. It is a centralised, back vowel between close and half-close position occuring only medially and finally in a word. For example :

- medial : book, look
- final : to, you

➢ / u: /

Somewhat similar to Assamese , while articulating this vowel, you raise the back of the tongue in the direction of the soft palate almost to a close position with the lips closely rounded. It is a back, close, rounded vowel occuring in all three positions. For example :

- initial : ooze
- medial : fool, soon
- final : two, shoe

- / 3: /

  While articulating this vowel, you raise the centre of the tongue in the direction of the roof of the mouth where the hard and soft palates meet to a position between half-close and half-open. The lips are neutral. This is a central, unrounded vowel between half close and half open position and occurs in all positions.

  - initial : earn, earth
  - medial : learn, curl
  - final : fur, sir

  This sound is rather difficult for many Assamese speakers.

- /ə/

  This is another problem sound for Assamese speakers requiring a great deal of practice. In word non-final position, the centre of the tongue is raised to a position between half-close and half-open positions. The lips are neutral. Non-final / / is a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open positions whereas in word final position, it is a central, half-open, unrounded vowel. it occurs in all positions. For example :

  - initial : about, above
  - medial : Purpose, circus
  - final : father, mother

9.3.3 Diphthongs

Diphthongs are vowel sounds where there is a single noticeable change in the quality during articulation. Because of this change in quality, diphthongs are often referred to as gliding vowels. The following are the diphthongs in English.

- / eI /

  Somewhat similar to the first part of the word or simply , while articulating this vowel, the glide begins just below the front, half-close unrounded position and moves

in the direction of a centralised, front, unrounded vowel sound. A slight closing movement of the lower jaw is noticed during articulation. The lips are spread while articulating the sound. It occurs in all positions. For example :

- initial : eight, aim
- medial : game, late
- final : say, grey

➢ / aI /

Somewhat similar to the Assamese word , the glide of this diphthong begins in the front, open, position and moves in the direction associated with / I /, the closing movement of the lower jaw being obvious.

The vowel occurs in all the three positions. For example :

- initial : ice, island
- medial : bite, fight
- final : try, cry

➢ / ɔI /

Somewhat similar to the second part of the Assamese word [ýûþ], the glide begins at a point between the back open and half open position and moves in the direction of the position associated with /I/. The lips are slightly rounded for the first element changing to neutral for the second. As the glide takes place, the closing movement becomes obvious. The diphthong occurs in all the three positions of a word. For example :

- initial : oil
- medial : boil, coil
- final : toy, employ

➢ / əU /

Close to the Assamese vowel , the glide of this diphthong begins at a central position between half-close and half-open position and moves in the direction of / / which is a centralised

back vowel between close and half close positions. This diphthong occurs in all the three positions in a word. For example :

- Initial : own, old
- Medial : road, home
- Final : foe, hoe

➢ / əʊ /

Close to the Assamese interjection , the glide in this diphthong begins at an advanced, back-open unrounded position and moves in the direction of / / which is a centralised back rounded vowel just above the half-close position. The diphthong occurs in all the three positions in a word. For example :

- Initial : owl, hour
- Medial : crowd, house
- Final : cow, how

➢ / ɪə /

During the articulation of the diphthong, the glide begins from a centralized, front, unrounded position just above the half-close position which moves in the direction of the position associated with //, a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half open positions. The diphthong occurs in all the three positions of a word. For example :

- Initial : ear
- Medial : fierce, nearby
- Final : here, dear

➢ /ɛə/

During the articulation of the diphthong, the glide begins at the front, half open unrounded position and moves in the direction of // as in 6 above. The diphthong occurs in all the three positions of a word. For example :

- Initial : airy, airport
- Medial : fairy, dairy

- Final : chair, fair

➢ /ʊə/

During the articulation of this diphthong, the glide begins at a back, rounded position, just above the half-close position and moves in the direction of /ə/ The diphthong occurs only medially and finally in a word. Eg.

- Medial : poorly, surely
- Final : poor, sure

The tongue position during the articulation of the diphthongs can be represented diagrammatically by using an arrow. The arrow can show the direction that the glide takes in the course of articulation of a diphthong. See diagram no. 2 in this unit.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Give two words containing the vowel sound listed below :

eg. /l/ =ill, bid

a)	/ e /	:	b)	/ æ /	:	c)	/ə/	:
d)	/ɜ/	:	e)	/ɪə/	:	f)	/eɪ/	:
g)	/ɔɪ/	:	h)	/əʊ/	:	i)	/ʊə/	:

Q 2: State whether the following statements are True or False by ticking the appropriate answer:

a) There are 20 consonant sounds in English. T/F

b) There is no one-to-one correlation between letters and sounds in English. T/F

c) Vowels can be described by using three term labels. T/F

d) / e / is a front vowel. T/F

e) /ə/ is not a central vowel. T/F

f) / i: / is a rounded vowel sound. T/F

g) /ɒ/ is a back, open rounded vowel. T/F

h) The words book and fool contain the same vowel sound. T/F

i) Diphthongs are also called glides or vowel glides. T/F

j) /ɔɪ/ is a pure vowel. T/F

9.4 THE TERM 'CONSONANT'

In the previous section we described a vowel as a sound during the production of which the air escapes freely and continuously through the mouth without any audible friction. We can describe a consonant in term of its manner of articulation also. Consonants are /k/ which corresponds to , /b/ which corresponds to and so on. Try to pronounce /k/.



ACTIVITY 9.2

Take a deep breath to fill your lungs with air. Now try to say . You will find that the back of your tongue is raised and the air stream coming from the lungs is blocked. After sufficient pressure of the air, you lower the back of your tongue. The air comes out with a force. That is how you produced /k/.

So, now we can say that sounds are produced with the air stream at one stage being (i) completely blocked, (ii) partially blocked or (iii) where the opening is so narrow that the air escapes with audible friction. The following is an attempt at explaining the various consonant sounds.

9.4.1 Criteria for Describing Consonants

We can describe a consonant by using the following three term criteria.

i) **The state of the *glottis***. (This will indicate whether the sound is voiced or voiceless).

ii) **Position of the soft palate**. (This will indicate whether the sound is oral or nasal).

iii) **The place and manner of articulation**. (This will indicate what articulators are used and what happens to the air stream.)

Depending upon the place and manner of articulation, the 24 consonants are grouped as (a) **plosives**, (b) **affricates**,

(c) **fricatives,** (d) **nasals,** (e) **laterals**, (f) **frictionless** continuants and (g) **semi vowels**. Each of these categories is discussed below.

9.4.2 Plosives

The term **plosives** refers to a group of consonant sounds that are produced when

i) at the first stage there is a complete closure of the air stream coming from the lungs at certain points in the month

ii) the air stream is compressed. i.e. pressure builds up because of the blockade.

iii) the air stream is suddenly released with force thereby creating the consonant sound.

There are altogether *three categories* of plosive sounds.

- Bi-labial plosive (blockade caused by two lips)
  - i) / p / : (voiceless, bi-labial, plosive) The sound is similar to . Eg: pen, spot, cup
  - ii) / b / : (voiced, bi-labial, plosive) The sound is similar to . Eg: bag, rubber, rub
- Alveolar plosive : (blockade caused by the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge i.e. back of your front teeth)
  - i) / t / : (voiceless, alveolar, plosive). The sound is similar to . Eg: tall, button, cat.
  - ii) / d / : (voiced alveolar plosive). The sound is similar to Eg: dog, pardon, mad.
- Velar plosive : (blockade caused by the back of your tongue raised to touch soft palate)
  - i) / k / : (voiceless velar plosive) The sound is similar to . Eg: cut, income, look
  - ii) / g / : (voiced velar plosive) The sound is similar to . Eg: girl, begin, bag.

9.4.3 Affricates

Affricate is a consonant sound that is produced when

- the tip and blade of the tongue touch the teeth ridge to block the air stream.
- the air stream is slowly released with friction.

There are two affricates–

- /tʃ/ (voiceless, palato-alveolar, affricate). The sound is close to Hindi (as in 'chai garam'). Eg: chair, butcher, catch.
- / dz/ (voice palato-alvealor affricate) The sound is close to as in Eg: jam, suggest, badge.

9.4.4 Fricative

Fricative is a consonant sound that is produced when

- two speech organs are brought close together leaving just enough gap for the air to move, and
- the air moving out through the gap causes friction.

The following are fricative sounds :

- **Labio-dental fricative :** upper teeth coming into contact with lower lip and the air passing between them causes friction.
  - / f / (voiceless) please do not confuse it with Eg: fan, office, calf.
  - / v / (voiced) The sound is not like . Eg: van, ever, love.
- **Dental fricative :** tip of the tongue brought close to the edge of the front teeth allowing the air to move out through the narrow gap with friction.
  - /θ/ (Voiceless) The sound is not like Eg: think, author, birth
  - / / (voiced) The sound is not like Eg: them, weather, lather
- **Alveolar fricative :** The tip of the tongue comes very close

to the alveolar ridge.

- / s / (voiceless) Eg: sing, post, pass
- / z / (voiced) Eg: zoo, puzzle, buzz.

➢ **Palato-alveolar fricative :** Palato alveolar sounds are produced by two simultaneous articulations :

- / ɪ / (voiceless) Eg: shoe, assume, fish
- / ʒ / (voiced) Eg: pleasure.

➢ **Glottalic fricative :** The sound is similar to / h/ (voiceless) Eg: hand, ahead.

9.4.5 Nasals

There are three nasal sounds in English:

➢ /m/ is a voiced bilabial nasal sound similar to Assamese Eg. man, among, sum.

➢ /n/ is a voiced alveolar nasal sound similar to Assamese Eg. name, many and then

➢ /ŋ/ is a voiced velar nasal sound similar to Assamese Eg. singer, ring.
It does not occur in word initial position.

9.4.6 Lateral

The lateral consonant /l/ which is a voiced alveolar lateral sound corresponds to the Assamese as in ‘lake’, ‘told’ and ‘dull’. But you must note that there are two varities of /l/: (a) clear /l/ and (b) dark /l/.

➢ clear /l/ is used only when /l/ is followed by a vowel or the semi vowel /j/.

➢ dark /l/ is used only when /l/ is followed by a vowel and is in word final position and before consonants.

9.4.7 Frictionless Continuant

The term frictionless continuant is used to refer to the

consonant sound /r/ which corresponds to Assamese [1]. The sound is described as a voiced post-alveolar frictionless continuant /r/ : Eg: run, worry.

In word final position the /r/ is silent. But if the word is followed by a word beginning with a vowel sound, the /r/ in the final position is pronounced.

Eg: Take the sentence 'My car is new'. Here 'car' is followed by 'is' (a word beginning with a vowel sound). So in this sentence the /r/ in the word 'car' is pronounced.

9.4.8 Semi-vowels

In English there are two semi-vowel sounds. The first is /w/ corresponding to Assamese . This is a voiced labio-velar semi-vowel. Eg: /w/ : west, awake. (no final position)

The second is /j/ corresponding to Assamese . This is a voiced palatal semi-vowel. Eg: /j/ : yet, beauty (no final position)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: State whether the following statements are true or false.

a) The position of the soft palate indicates whether a sound is voiced or voiceless. T/F

b) /k/ is a plosive sound. T/F

c) /m/ is a lateral sound. T/F

d) /b/ and /d/ are alveolar plosives. T/F

e) The initial consonant sound of the word shoe is /l/. T/F

f) The initial consonant sound of the word van is /?/ T/F

g) /dz/ is an affricate sound. T/F

h) /ŋ/ does not occur in word initial position. T/F



9.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you were introduced to the vowel and consonant phonemas of English. It is expected that you have familiarised yourself with these symbols. This is very impotant to improve your own pronunciation. Supposing you are not sure how a word is pronounced, the most sensible thing for you is to consult a Dictionary. In the dictionary, you will find that the pronunciation is given in phonetic script where the symbols introduced to you are used. You are advised to keep with you a copy of the *English Pronounciation Dictionary* by Daniel Jones revised by A.C. Gimson or any other good resourceful dictionary.



9.6 FURTHER READING

1) Balasubramaniam, T. (1981). *A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students*. Macmillan.

2) Jones, D. (Revised by Gimson) (1982). *English Pronouncing Dictionary*. ELBS.



9.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a) egg, fall; b) ant, ran; c) bought, for; d) heard, girl; e) fear, near; f) gate, eight; g) oil; h) home, own; i) poor, sure

Ans to Q No 2: a) False, b) True, c) True, d) True, e) False, f) False, g) True, h) False, i) True, j) False

Ans to Q No 3: a) False, b) True, c) False, d) False, e) True, f) False, g) True, h) True



9.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: How is a vowel sound described?

Q 2: Draw a vowel diagram and spot the different vowel sounds.

Q 3: How is a consonant sound described?

Q 4: What is a phoneme? Discuss with appropriate examples.

Q 5: What is a diphthong? Discuss in detail.

Q 6: What the are the three term labels used to describe a vowel sound ? Discuss.

Q 7: What is a dark / l /?

Q 8: How is a fricative produced?

Q 9: How is a nasal sound produced?

Q 10: Give two examples of sounds that are difficult for the Assamese speakers. Why are they difficult?

Q 11: How is a plosive sound produced? Discuss the three categories of plosives.

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UNIT 10 : STRESS, RHYTHM AND INTONATION I

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Word Stress

- 10.3.1 Various Stress Patterns
- 10.3.2 Stress in Compound Words
- 10.3.3 Grammatical Function of Stress

10.4 Let us Sum up

10.5 Further Reading

10.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.7 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concepts of stress, rhythm and intonation
- make use proper stress and intonation
- interpret meaning underlying different stress and intonation patterns.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall introduce you to three features of Phonology namely- stress, rhythm and intonation. These are the three most important elements of English speech. Without correct use of these three elements, your spoken English may remain unintelligble to most of your listeners at a national level and more especially at an international level. This is because stress, rhythm and intonation largely contribute to the meaning of words and sentences. The word 'object' may be referred to as an example. (1) When the word is stressed in the first syllable it becomes a noun and it would mean a thing. (2) aim or purpose. (3) an element in the clause structure in grammar etc. But when the word is stressed in the second syllable, the listener will understand that you are using the

word as a verb which would mean to be against something or someone.

Now here's an example from intonation. Utter the following sentence twice, first as a statement and next as a yes-no question.

./?

[tekhet ratipuwa a aahil]

He came this morning ./?

While writing, you have a choice of two punctuation marks – the full stop and the question mark-depending on whether your sentence is a statement or a question. But while uttering the sentence, you do not use the punctuation mark. Instead, you use falling tone for a statement and a rising tone for a yes-no type question. When you consciously utter the sentence: *He came this morning* in your mother tongue in two ways, you will have some idea of what is meant by a falling tone and a rising tone. In the utterance, the last content word is uttered with a fall for statement [↗] and rise for intonation question [↘] and yes no question. Use the same pattern for the English utterance too. The basic rise and fall tones are used in most of the Indian languages too. This unit thus deals with various issues related to stress, rhythm and Intonation.

10.3 WORD STRESS

When we talk about word stress, it is useful to note that it is a syllable in a word that receives a stress. Therefore, it becomes necessary to introduce the concept of the syllable when we talk about word stress. We know that the phoneme is the smallest unit in the hierarchical structure of speech. The unit longer than the phoneme in this hierarchical structure is the syllable. We can define a syllable as a unit in speech which is often longer than one sound and smaller than a whole word. For example, the word table has two syllables /tei/bl/ and the word photograph has three syllables /fa/, /ta/ and /gra:f/. We usually make syllable divisions with hyphen :tei-bl, fau-ta-gra:f etc.

In Phonology, the syllable is defined by the way in which vowels and consonants combine to form various sequences. Vowels can form a syllable on their own or they may be the 'centre' of a syllable Eg: /e/ in

pen. Consonants appear at the beginning or at the end of a syllable. They may occur both at the front and back of a vowel sound. Using the V (Vowel) and C (Consonant) terms, we can identify the following types of syllables : (the following have been done for you)

- V : I, ear, eye
- VC : eat, ache
- CV : tea, saw
- CVC : pen, miss
- CCV : stay, play
- CCCV : stray, screw
- CCCVC : stream, spread
- CCCVCC : strained

Now try and attempt the following activity



ACTIVITY 10.1

Read the syllable structure of the following words:

a) Strands : CCCVCCC

b) apt : VCC

c) tax : CVCC

d) next : CVCCC

e) stamp : CCVCC

f) stunts : CCVCCC

g) twelfths : CCVCCCC

h) texts : CVCCCC

You perhaps know that a simple word like ‘pen’ is made up of one syllable while a word like ‘table’ is made up of two syllables. When a word is made up of more than one syllable, one of the syllables is uttered with a louder force than the other. The distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables is that the former is more prominent than the other. The prominence is usually due to an increase in loudness of the stressed syllable. However, increase in pitch (scale of sound) and length may also contribute to the overall impression of prominence.

As a general rule, if a word has more than one syllable, one of the syllables stand out from the rest. For example, in the word teacher, the first syllable /ti:/ stands out by being more prominent than the second syllable /ʧə/. The word committee is made up of three syllables : /ka-mI-tI/. In this word the second syllable is more prominent than the other. The syllable that is more prominent than the other is said to receive the stress.

The syllable that is more prominent than the other is said to have received the primary stress. This is indicated by marking the syllable with a vertical stroke above and in front of the syllable. A longer word may contain a secondary stress. This is indicated by marking the syllable with a vertical stroke below and in front of the syllable. Thus, teacher will be transcribed as /ˈtiːʧə/. The vertical bar in front of the first syllable indicates that the first syllable is stressed. The word examination is made up of five syllables. /Ig-ˌzæ-mI-ˈneI-ʃn/. The second syllable takes the secondary stress and the fourth syllable takes the primary stress.

10.3.1 Various Stress Patterns

The stress patterns of English words are fixed. You will find that the primary stress is always on a particular syllable for a given word. A few examples of the patterns of word stress are given:

- **Stress patterns of disyllabic words**
  - Stress on the first syllabus

ˈable	ˈdoctor	ˈriver
ˈafter	ˈcommon	ˈstrong
ˈbetter	ˈEnglish	ˈticket
ˈcolour	ˈfigure	ˈvalue

  - Stress on the second syllable

aˈbout	deˈcay	inˈclude
aˈdopt	diˈvide	misˈtake
beˈcome	emˈploy	oˈbey
comˈplete	enˈjoy	reˈduce

- **Stress pattern of tri-syllabic words**
  - Stress on the first syllable

    ˈadvertise ˈcompany ˈinnocent
    ˈanything ˈquantity ˈcharacter
    ˈcitizen ˈyesterday ˈhappily
  - Stress on the second syllable

    aˈgreement deˈvelop imˈportant
    aˈnother diˈrector conˈtribute
    coˈnnection seˈlection comˈpanion
  - Stress on the third syllable

    cigaˈrette underˈstand overˈwork
    employˈee enterˈtain underˈpaid
    sevenˈteen disbeˈlief engiˈneer
- **Stress pattern of four syllable words**
  - Stress on the first syllable

    ˈabsolutely ˈcomfortable ˈpopularly
    ˈinnocently ˈcriticism ˈpositively
  - Stress on the second syllable

    aˈbility comˈparison phoˈtography
    simˈplicity aˈffirmative deˈmocracy
  - Stress on the third syllable

    acciˈdental circuˈlation diploˈmatic
    photoˈgraphic demoˈcratic sentiˈmental
    misrepreˈsent misunderˈstand
    aquamaˈrine investiˈgation

From these four patterns you have noticed how the stress patterns operate. Words of five syllables take the stress on the second, third or fourth syllables only.

- In catholicism, administrative, unfortunately etc. the primary stress is on the second syllable.
- In rehabilitate, satisfactory, aristocracy etc. the primary stress is on the third syllable.
- In affiliation, consideration, recommendation etc. the primary

stress is on the fourth syllable and the second syllable takes a secondary stress.

In a complete unit on stress, it would be possible to be more exhaustive with longer words that you might come across. It is suggested that a knowledge of the above patterns will develop in speakers a feel of stress.

10.3.2 Stress in Compound Words

Compound words refer to words that are made up of two (or more) words. Normally, these two words are written as one word with or without a hyphen. In compound words any or both the elements may be stressed.

- In words like dining room, school master, thunderstorm, the first element is stressed.
- In words like whenever, however, himself, the second element is stressed.
- In words like afternoon, absent-minded, old-fashioned etc. both the elements are stressed.

10.3.3 Grammatical Function of Stress

You will find a large number of words in English in which the stress-pattern depends on whether the word is used as a noun or an adjective or a verb. If the word is a noun or an adjective, the accent will be on the first syllable of the word. If the word is a verb the accent will fall on the second syllable of the word eg.

Noun/Adj.	Verb
conduct	con^{l}duct
contrast	con^{l}trast
perfect	per^{l}fect
present	pre^{l}sent



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Put appropriate stress marks in the following words. One is done for you

a) because : be'cause

b) beside : .....

c) combine : .....

d) contain : .....

e) employ : .....

f) enclose : .....

g) expect : .....

h) perhaps : .....

i) protect : .....

j) refer : .....

k) figure : .....

l) golden : .....

m) useful : .....

n) taste : .....

o) welcome : .....

p) beautiful : .....

q) advantage : .....

r) disappear : .....

s) engineer : .....

t) understand : .....

u) mechanical : .....

v) philosophy : .....

w) thermometer : .....

x) controversy : .....

y) infection : .....



10.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have looked at the various stress patterns of English and noted how stress contributes towards the meaning of an utterrance. We learnt how English speech is rhythmic with its regular variations of stressed syllables in an utterance. Most importantly, we learnt the basic intonation patterns of English. A native speaker will definitely go much beyond what is discussed here. However, the unit attempts to introduce you to these basic patterns only with the hope that it would help you in self-improvement with the passage of time.



10.5 FURTHER READING

1) Allen, W. S. (1984). *Living English Speech*. Orient Language.

2) Balasubramaniam. T. (1981). *A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students*. Macmillan.

3) Sethi, J. & Dhamija P. D. (1999). *A Course in Phonetics and Spoken English*. Prentice Hall of India.



10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

b)	beˈside	c)	comˈbine	d)	conˈtain
e)	emˈploy	f)	enˈclose	g)	exˈpect
h)	perˈhaps	i)	proˈtect	j)	reˈfer
k)	ˈfigure	l)	ˈgolden	m)	ˈuseful
n)	ˈtable	o)	ˈwelcome	p)	ˈbeautiful

q) ad|vantage r) disap|pear s) engi|neer
t) under|stand u) me|chanical v) phi|losophy
w) ther|mometer x) |controversy y) in|fection



10.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Make the primary accent in the following words :

i) blackboard ii) schoolmaster iii) economy
iv) exposure v) civilise vi) reliable
vii) laziness viii) graceful ix) city bus
x) police

Q 2: Fill in the blank with the appropriate word from the following options :

a) Words in an utterance which are stressed are generally _____ words.

A. function B. grammatical
C. content D. compound

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UNIT 11 : STRESS, RHYTHM AND INTONATION II

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Sentence Stress and Rhythm

- 11.3.1 Contractions
- 11.3.2 Weak Forms

11.4 Intonation

- 11.4.1 Tone Group
- 11.4.2 Falling Tone
- 11.4.3 Rising Tone
- 11.4.4 Fall-rise

11.5 Let us Sum up

11.6 Further Reading

11.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.8 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define the terms stress, rhythm and intonation
- discuss various types of these three elements of language
- interpret meaning underlying different stress and intonation patterns.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

The present unit shall take up the aspects of language namely sentence, stress and rhythm which are three main elements of spoken English. In our discussion on word-stress we have noted that not all the syllables in a word are stressed. A word is seen as a combination of stressed and unstressed syllables. Just as in isolated words, not all the syllables are stressed, so also in sentences not all the words are stressed.

Here also we have a combination of stressed and unstressed words.

Now, which are the words in a sentence that take the stress? Undoubtedly, words that are important for meaning – content words like nouns, adjectives, principal verbs and adverbs – are generally accented. Grammatical words like articles, personal and relative pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions and conjunctions are generally not accented. For example in the sentence–

We ˈwent to the ‘station.

The words went and station are accented, but we, to and the are not accented. When a word of more than one syllable is accented in connected speech, the stress falls on the syllable that is normally accented. The word station is made up of two syllables and the stress falls on the first syllable.

11.3 SENTENCE STRESS AND RHYTHM

In English, stressed or accented syllables, which are pronounced with greater force than the other syllable, form a succession of beats coming at regular intervals of time. The other syllables which are unaccented are fitted into the intervals of time available between the accented syllables. If there are several unaccented syllables in succession, they must be said quickly to fit into the time available. This regular beat of the stressed syllables in an utterance constitutes the rhythm of English speech. Read these sentences aloud :

i) ˈJohn neˈglected his ‘studies.

ii) ˈJohn has neˈglected his ‘studies.

iii) ˈJohn has been neˈglecting his ‘studies.

In sentence 1 there is one unstressed syllable ne-between John and glect. In example 2, there are two unaccented syllables : has and ne. They must be said in the same interval of time as that taken for the single unaccepted syllable in example 1. Likewise, in example 3, there are three unaccented syllables in succession : has, been, ne-.They too must be said in the same interval of time as that taken for the single unaccented syllable in example 1.

11.3.1 Contractions

Contractions also known as short forms refer to a form of words wherein part of a word is left out and an apostrophe is placed instead. Here are the main short forms :

- **Pronoun + auxiliaries :**

  I'm, you're, we're, they're, he's, she's, I've, you've, we've, I'd, you'd, he'd, she'd, we'd, they'd, I'll, you'll he'll, it'll, we'll, they've, they'll.

- **Here/There/That+auxiliaries :**

  here's, there's, there'll, there'd, that'd.

- **Auxiliaries + not :**

  aren't, isn't, wasn't, weren't, haven't, hasn't, hadn't, don't, doesn't, won't, wouldn't, shan't, shouldn't, can't, couldn't, mightn't, mustn't, needn't, oughtn't, doesn't.

We can use contractions with nouns as well.

- The tea's cold.
- The floor's slippery.
- The doctor'll arrive.

It is notable that :

- The short form 's can mean <u>is</u> or <u>has</u>
  - It's a new house.
  - It's got three bedrooms.
- Sometimes we can use <u>not</u> in two different ways
  - It is not new = It isn't new/It's not new.
  - He will not come = He won't come/ He'll not come.

11.3.2 Weak Forms

'Weak forms' refers to one of the two possible pronunciations for a word in connected speech, the other being the strong form. The weak form of a word is the result of the word being unstressed. As a general rule, we stress those words in connected speech that carry meaning. Since stressed syllables recur at regular intervals,

unstressed syllables which occur between the stressed syllables tend to become weakened and reduced. The following are some of the weak forms shown against their corresponding strong forms.

➢ Articles	Strong form	Weak form	Examples
a	/eI/	/ə/	/ə'gɜ:l/
an	/æn/	/ən/	/an'æpl/
the	/ði:/	/ðI/	/ðI'eg/
		/ðə/	/ðə'pen/
➢ Conjunctions	Strong form	Weak form	Examples
and	/ænd/	/ənd/,/an/,/n/	/'hi:ən'aI/
as	/æz/	/əz/	/az aI kan'si:/
but	/b^t/	/bət/	/bət aIm'bIzI/
➢ Prepositions	Strong form	Weak form	Examples
at	/æt/	/ət/	/'Ik ət ðem/
for	/f:/	/fə/	/fə'ju:/
from	/frɒm/	/frəm/	/aI k^m frɒm'dell/
of	/ɒv/	/əv/,/a/	/a'k^p əv'ti:/
to	/tU/	/tə/	/tə'ju:/

The primary auxiliaries and the modals also have their weak forms. We see that most of them like am, is, are, have, had, shall, will etc. take their weakened forms largely due to contractions. as shown in 11.3.1.

11.4 INTONATION

Listen carefully to someone speaking. You will find that the person does not speak in the same tone. Also you will hear constant variations in the pitch of the voice. Sometimes, you will hear the pitch rising, sometimes falling and at other times remaining low, high, or low. This pattern of variation of the pitch of the voice is known as intonation.

11.4.1 Tone Group

When you make a short utterance, that utterance can be a syllable/word or a short simple sentence. You make this small

utterance at one stretch. A short utterance often forms a single tone group.

However, when you speak a long utterance, you divide the utterance into small manageable groups of words between which we pause. That is, a long utterance can have more than one tone groups. So, a tone group may be defined as a stretch of speech between any two pauses

How do you determine where an utterance has to be broken down? Very often punctuation helps in determining tone groups in a particular utterance. But sometimes a shift in thought process can also break up an utterance into tone groups. A tone group boundary is indicated by a vertical bar. A double vertical bar || is used to indicate the final boundary of an utterance (corresponding to full stop).



ACTIVITY 11.1

Read the following sentences. Whenever you find the tone boundary mark, take a pause and continue the remaining tone group (s).

a) He ˡcan't 'drive.
b) You'll be ˡtried before the 'day's out.
c) You'll be 'tired|before the d.ay's out. ||
d) You'll be 'late if you don't hurry 'up
e) You'll be ˡlate|if you ˡdon't hurry u.p. ||
f) It's ˡno use ˡgoing until the 'library opens.
g) It's no use 'going|until the library opens. ||
h) I'll do it 'now|if there's t.ime. ||

Note the first utterance above. You say the words at one stretch because it is one tone group. Within a tone group comprising more than one syllable, there is one syllable that stands out from amongst the rest because it starts a major change in pitch direction. This kind of syllable is called nucleus of the tone

group or tonic syllable. In sentence (a) of above Activity-5, drive is the nucleus, in (b) days is the nucleus in sentence (c) has two tone groups; in the first tone group tired is the nucleus and in the second tone group day's is the nucleus.

Now read this sentence :

It may rain tomorrow.

The sentence does not show the stress marks. But you now know that rain will be stressed and in tomorrow, the second syllable will be stressed. Tomorrow is the most important word in this utterance. The stressed syllable mo in tomorrow will therefore be the nuclear syllable or nucleus.

The nuclear tone shows a change in pitch. Depending upon the movement of the pitch, the tone that is produced can be either static or kinetic. In (b) above

You'll be 'tired before the day's out.

tired takes a static tone while 'day's takes a kinetic tone. In (c) above.

You'll be 'tired|before the day's out.

In the first tone group tired and in the second tone group day's are both uttered in a kinetic tone.

The nuclear tone can be uttered in a high falling tone which is indicated by the mark \as in \tired. It can be a rise, indicated by \tired. It can even be uttered in a falling rising tone indicated by ᵛtired.

11.4.2 Falling Tone

A falling tone is one in which there is a fall in the pitch of the voice in a nuclear syllable of a tone group. The following types of sentences are generally said with a falling tone :

- Statements that are complete
  - I 'think he ˡwants to go.
  - She's ˡgone for a 'walk.

- wh- questions which are matter of fact.
  - ˈWhen are you going aʻway?
  - ˈWhere have you ˈkept the ʻkey?
- Commands
  - You ˈmust have it ˈready by ʻSunday.
  - ʻDo it ˈall aʻgain
- Invitation
  - Come ˈover for a ˈcup of ʻtea
  - Why don't you ˈcome ˈover this ʻevening?
- Exclamations
  - ˈHow ʻbeautiful!
  - ʻWonderful!
- Tag questions forcing the listener to agree with the speaker
  - I'm ˈrather ʻlate/ʻaren't I?
  - He ˈteaches ʻEnglish/ʻdoesn't he?

11.4.3 Rising Tone

A rising tone is one in which there is a rise in the pitch of the voice in the nuclear syllable of a tone group. The following types of sentences are generally said with a rising tone :

- Yes/No type questions
  - ˈAre you ready?
  - ˈDo you like it?
- Intonation questions
  - You ˈaren't /going?
  - He was ˈpresent /yesterday?
- Non-terminal tone group
  - ˈWhen you're ˈquite, /ready... (ˈwe can go)
  - AlˈIthough she was ʻvery /poor... (she was ʻhonest)
- Requests
  - ˈPass me the ˈsalt /please.
  - ˈListen to me for a /minute.

- Commands intended to sound like a request
  - ˥Bring me a ˎchair.
  - ˥Shut the ˎdoor.
- Wh-questions showing politeness, friendliness etc.
  - ˥What's your ˎname?
  - ˥Where do you ˎlive?

11.4.4 Fall-Rise

Fall rise or falling rising tone refers to the pitch of the voice falling from about mid level to low and then rising to more or less the same level. The tone is used with the following types of sentences.

- Incomplete statement leading to a following tone group
  - You 'ought to ˅try...
    (even if you are not likely to succeed.)
  - She 'can't come to ˅day...
    (it's a pity)
- Statement intended to be warning
  - I 'don't want you to be ˅late —
    (You better come early)
  - You 'mustn't drive so ˅fast.
    (be careful)
- Imperative meant to be a request
  - 'Come as soon as you can
  - 'Do come tomorrow.
- Statement which shows a kind of reservation on the part of the speaker
  - She's ˅clever.
    (but unreliable)
  - It may be ˅true.
    (but I'm least bothered)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Mark the accents and intonation in the following sentences:

a) Where did you put my bag?

b) Did you see me leave the house?

c) Were you out all day?

d) That's right.

e) I'm so sorry.

f) She's never sure.

g) He came yesterday, didn't he?

h) Shut the door.

i) Don't go away.

j) You won't mind, will you?

Q 2: Divide the following sentences into tone groups, and mark the stress and intonation patterns.

a) This one isn't yours, is it?

b) It is not to of late, is it?

c) You'll bring it back, won't you?

d) My grandmother, like everybody's grandmother, was an old woman.



11.5 LET US SUM UP

The learner will now have a better idea on the elements of stress, rhythm and intonation. These aspects are very important with regard to language for the reason that without a proper idea on how they are significant in our articulation of speech, we may find ourselves struggling with the issues of barriers to proper communication and spoken language. The unit will provide a better idea on these areas so that the leaner may find it applicable in improving or bettering their language skills.



11.6 FURTHER READING

1) Allen, W. S. (1984). *Living English Speech*. Orient Language.

2) Balasubramaniam. T. (1981). *A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students*. Macmillan.

3) Sethi, J. & Dhamija P. D. (1999). *A Course in Phonetics and Spoken English*. Prentice Hall of India.



11.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

a) ˈWhere did you ˈput my ‘bag?

b) ˈDid you ˈsee me ˈleave the ‘house?

c) ˈWere you out all day?

d) ˈThat’s right.

e) I’m so sorry.

f) She’s ˈnever sure.

g) He ˈcame ‘yesterday|‘didn’t he?

h) ˈShut the door.

i) ˈDon’t ˈgo away.

Ans to Q No 2:

a) This one isn’t yours,| is it?

b) It is not too, late,| is it?

c) You’ll bring it back,| won’t you?

d) My grandmother | like everybody’s grandmother | was an old woman ||



11.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word from the options given below:

a) The rhythm of English speech is described as _____.

A. stress-timed B. syllable timed

C. musical D. non-musical

b) Intonation refers to rise and fall of the _____ of the voice.

A. vocal cords B. tone

C. pitch D. soft palate

c) A long utterance is broken up into _____ in speech.

A. phrases B. clauses

C. tonic syllables D. tone groups

Q 2: State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Intonation has a grammatical function.

b) A statement is uttered with a rising tone.

c) A yes-no question is uttered with a rising tone.

d) The syllable that stands out in a tone group is called the nucleus.

e) A stretch of speech over which one tone extends is called a clause.

Q 3: What do you mean by word stress? Discuss the stress patterns of English words.

Q 4: What is the meaning of intonation? Discuss falling tone, rising tone, and fall-rise tone with examples.

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UNIT 12 : RHETORIC

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 What is Rhetoric?

12.4 Figures of Speech

- 12.4.1 Figures Based on Similarity
- 12.4.2 Figures Based on Association
- 12.4.3 Figures Based on Difference
- 12.4.4 Figures Based on Imagination
- 12.4.5 Figures Based on Indirectness
- 12.4.6 Figures Based on Sound
- 12.4.7 Figures Based on Construction

12.5 Let us Sum up

12.6 Further Reading

12.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.8 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of Rhetoric
- identify the six different categories of figures of speech
- enlist the figures under each main category

12.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit aims at introducing you to Rhetoric and Prosody—the branch of study which mostly deals with the language of poetry and the different other aspects of versification. The field called Rhetoric, as you will read in the following sections, deals mostly with the art of speaking and writing with the help of different figures of speech to embellish the effect of the use of language.

12.3 WHAT IS RHETORIC?

Rhetoric means the art of an orator who has a unique ability of persuasive public speaking. Hence, the object of rhetoric is to teach the composition and delivery of speeches that can move or sway others. Knowingly or unknowingly, every person uses rhetoric when he/she tries to express himself/herself beautifully and effectively.

Rhetoric has an interesting history. In the fifth century BC, the Greek settlers of Sicily began to study, document and teach Rhetoric as a practical discipline. The best-known names are Corax and Tisias, who found that, in an island beset with political and judicial disagreements over land and civil rights, the art of persuasion was a useful and profitable profession. However, it is with Plato that the early history of Rhetoric is supposed to have started. In *Phaedrus* Plato/Socrates states that unless a man pays due attention to philosophy 'he will never be able to speak properly about anything…A real art of speaking…which does not seize hold of truth, does not exist and never will'. Plato was mostly concerned with the fact that rhetoric was a device without moral or ethical subject matter. In the *Gorgias,* Plato records an exchange between Socrates and Gorgias in which the former claims that persuasion is comparable with flattery, cooking and medicine: it meets bodily needs and satisfies physical and emotional desires. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (*c.* 330 BC) stated that rhetoric is an art, a necessary condition of philosophical debate. In subsequent times, the study of Rhetoric had taken many new turns.

In this unit, we have tried to illustrate the workings of the most important rules by which all good literary and rhetorical compositions are governed. However, Grammar is also the first step to good composition. But, there is a difference between Grammar and Rhetoric. Grammar aims at the accuracy of the language, while Rhetoric aims at the beauty and force of 'style', which is a particular mode of writing employed by a writer, as explained by Bose and Sterling. Thus, the scope of Rhetoric mostly includes the art of composition, the grouping of words into sentences, and the combination of sentences into paragraphs. You will

note that the rhetorical ornaments are commonly known as the Figures of Speech which are the basis of all effective composition.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What do mean by the term Rhetoric? What is the main purpose of Rhetoric?

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Q 2: What is difference between Grammar and Rhetoric?

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Q 3: What is a figure of speech?

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12.4 FIGURES OF SPEECH

The word 'figure' is derived from the Latin word 'figura' meaning form or shape of a thing. When we refer to the term 'Figure of Speech' we mean that words used in it have a meaning different from its ordinary meaning, and that it has been used in order to produce a striking effect. Human beings can use ordinary languages in day to day life. But, there are moments when they need to use figurative language—which is completely different from ordinary ways of speaking. For example, in the sentence "There are two pillars at the entrance of the building", the word 'pillar' ordinarily means an upright column of stone or brick. But when we say "He is a pillar of the state", we mean that he is a person on whom the future of the state rests. In such a sentence, we use the term 'pillar' in the figurative sense.

Figures of Speech thus consist of the different rhetorical devices used in both prose and poetry. Poets, writers and speakers often use various figures of speech to make their language charming, lucid, beautiful and exciting. These figures are being used since classical times to achieve special effects of spoken or written words. Figures of speech are often

grouped into various categories or classes according to some characteristics. The following subsections will help you to discuss the different categories of figures of speech.

12.4.1 Figures Based on Similarity

- **Simile:** Simile is a prominent figure based on similarity or resemblance. It is a figure of speech in which a comparison between two distinctively different things is clearly made. This means:
  - A comparison must be made between two things different in kind.
  - The two things, though different, must carry some similarity.
  - The point of similarity must be brought out clearly.
  - The comparison is indicated by words such as—like, as, as if etc.

  Examples:

  The child shows the man, *as* morning shows the day. (Milton)

  Glory is *like* a circle in the water,

  Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself,… (Shakespeare)

  I wandered lonely *as* a cloud. (Wordsworth)
- **Metaphor:** Metaphor is another prominent figure based on similarity or resemblance. It is a figure of speech in which the comparison is only implied, though not formally expressed. Hence, high suggestiveness is a special feature of a good metaphor. A sentence like "The camel is the ship of the desert" is an example of a metaphoric sentence. Here, the similarity between two things is not clearly stated. As a ship carries men and goods across the sea, the camel too carries men and goods across the desert.

  Examples:

  He is the *pillar of the state.*

  Variety is *the spice of life.*

Life is but *an empty dream*

- **Analogy:** This figure of speech suggests partial likeness or similarity between things otherwise unlike or dissimilar. Thus, the main function of Analogy as a figure of speech is to explain something by comparing it with something else which it resembles in some proportion or degree.

  Examples:

  The heart is to a man what a *water-pump is to a village.*

  A child is similar to people *yet in childhood.*

- **Allegory:** Allegory is a figure of speech by which a lengthy and detailed comparison is intended between two unallied subjects. The purpose is to convey some moral instruction. In allegory, usually a narrative or story is told to convey a meaning which is different from its surface or literal meaning. Look at the following **example** of religious or moral allegory adopted from John Milton's epic *Paradise Lost* in which Sin speaks to Satan in the following way:

  "Out of the head I sprung. Amazement seized
  All the host of heaven; back they recoiled afraid
  At first and called me Sin, and for a sign
  Portentous held me; but familiar grown
  I pleased, and with attractive graces won
  The most averse."

  In this example, the birth and nature of Sin is allegorically described.

- **Parable:** A Parable is an allegorical story intended to enforce some high moral or religious lesson. The only difference between a parable and an allegory is that while in an Allegory the inner meaning lies hidden, in a Parable the story and the meaning lie side by side. You should note that the Parable was one of Christ's influential devices as a teacher. Some well-known **examples** of Parables are the story of the **Good Samaritan** and the **Prodigal Son**.

- **Fable:** A Fable is a fictitious story with a moral. The moral in a fable is drawn from either by the narrator or by one of the characters at the end. The most common types of fables include beast and birds which think, act and speak like men. *Aesop's Fables* contains the largest numbers of well-known fables in world literature. Perhaps, you can remember the story "The Fox and the Grapes" in which the fox said "Grapes are sour" after vainly trying every means to get at the grapes hanging beyond his reach. This story is an excellent example of a Fable.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What are Simile and Metaphor?

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Q 5: What is an Allegory?

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12.4.2 Figures Based on Association

Sometimes, objects or ideas become connected together in such a way that whenever we think of one of them, we are at once reminded of the other. This mental process is known as association and the following figures may be grouped under this category.

- **Metonymy:** This figure is used to substitute the name of one thing for that of another to which it has a certain relation. Some of the substitutions used under Metonymy are:
  - The symbol or sigh for the thing symbolised.

    Examples:

    He ascended the *throne*. (Throne is a symbol of sovereignty)

    He was raised to the *bench*. (the office of a judge)

- The instrument or organ for the agent.

  Examples:

  The *pen* (writer) is mightier than the *sword* (fighter).

  The *press* (journalist) has enormous power.

- The effect for the cause or the cause for the effect.

  Examples:

  Swiftly flies the *flying wound*. (arrow).

  He writes a *good hand*. (handwriting).

- The container for the thing contained.

  Examples:

  The whole *city* rose in arms. (citizens).

  He drank the *fatal cup*. (poison contained in the cup)

- The name of a passion for the object inspiring it.

  Examples:

  He is the *pride* of our country. (object of pride)

  My *love* is coming today. (The girl I love)

- Act for the object of the act.

  Examples:

  He is now the *joke* of the town. (laughing stock)

  She looked a perfect dream. (A pleasant object of dream)

➢ **Synecdoche:** In this figure the thing said and the thing meant are so intimately connected with each other that one cannot be separated from the other. That is the relation between the two is internal and absolutely inseparable. The varieties of Synecdoche may be illustrated as below.

- A part for the whole

  Examples:

  I have many *mouths* (persons) to feed.

  All *hands* (men) are at work.

- The whole for the part.

  Examples:

  The British *world* (empire) was influential everywhere.

  The moisture of the *melting year*. (Rainy season)

- A species for the genus.

  Examples:

  Silver and gold (riches), have I none.

  Men cannot live by *bread* (food) alone.

- The genius for the species.

  Examples:

  He is a poor *creature*. (man)

- An individual for the class

  Examples:

  Every man is not a *Solomon*. (as wise as King Solomon)

  He is the *Newton* (the greatest scientist) of this country.

- The abstract for the concrete.

  Examples:

  I am out of *humanity's* (man's) reach.

- The concrete for the abstract.

  Examples:

  There is a good deal of *fox* (cunning) in his character.

- **Hypallage or Transferred Epithet:** By this figure an epithet (adjective) is transferred or shifted from the object to which it properly belongs, to another with which it is associated in the mind of the speaker or the writer. If you say that "the prisoner is placed in the *condemned cell*", you transfer the epithet 'condemned' from the 'prisoner' who is condemned to the 'cell' where he is placed.
- **Allusion:** This figure consists in using words or expression which calls to one's mind some well known past incident, the sayings of some great men or some species of writing. Look at the following example from the poem "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold.

  "Sophocles long ago
  Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
  Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
  Of human misery."



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: Briefly discuss Metonymy with two examples.

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Q 7: What is a Synecdoche? Give two examples.

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.....

12.4.3 Figures Based on Difference

The following are the figures based on difference.

- **Antithesis:** In this figure contrasted words or ideas are set against each other in a balanced form for the sake of emphasis.

  Examples:

  To err is human to forgive divine.

  Youth is full of pleasure, age is full of care.

- **Oxymoron:** In this figure of speech two opposite or contradictory words, terms, ideas are combined to enhance the effect of the statement or expression.

  Examples:

  You should *hasten slowly.*

  It is an example of *bitter truth.*

- **Epigram:** The figure is used to mean a short, witty, and pointed saying which is often antithetical.

  Examples:

  The child is the father of man.

  Failures are the pillars of success.

- **Paradox:** It is a statement which seems to be contradictory, unbelievable or absurd and yet it turns out to have a valid meaning.

  Examples:

  A favourite has no friend.

  One who tries to please all pleases none.

- **Climax:** By this figure, a series of words or sentiments is presented in such a way that the least impressive of them comes first, and there is a regular gradation from it to the most impressive.

  Examples:

  That consolation, that joy, that triumph was afforded by him. (Robert Southey)

  A perfect woman, nobly planned,
  To warn, to comfort and command. (Wordsworth)

- **Anti Climax or Bathos**

  Bathos consists in a sudden fall from lofty to mean thoughts, and serves to excite a sense of the ludicrous.

  Examples:

  He lost his wife, his home and his pet dog.

  Poets and pigs are not appreciated until they die. (Italian Proverb)

- **The Condensed Sentence**

  It is a figure of speech that brings together ideas so different that each one of them should ordinarily receive a separate statement.

  Examples:

  She dropped a tear and her pocket handkerchief. (Dickens)

  The musician blew his pipe and his nose.

12.4.4 Figures Based on Imagination

Under emotional stress, men sometimes imagine an inanimate object or an abstract idea to be a living being or attributes some emotion or feeling to an inanimate object or even makes an impassioned address an idea or object as if it is a living being present before him. The expressions that might come out become part of the figures of speech based on Imagination. The following are the important figures under this category.

- **Personification:** In this figure of speech, an inanimate object or an abstract idea is represented as a person.

  Examples:

  India is concerned about its neighbours.

  "Let nature be your teacher.": –(Wordsworth)

- **Personal Metaphor:** This figure is akin to personification. Here also, as in case of personification, some human feelings like sorrow, anger, are attributed to some inanimate objects of nature.

  Examples:

  "I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
  I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
  In their noon day dreams." (Shelley: "The Cloud")

- **Pathetic Fallacy:** *Pathetic Fallacy* is a figure of speech for the attribution of human emotion and conduct to all aspects within nature. It is a kind of personification that is found in poetic writing when, for *example*, clouds seem sullen, when leaves dance, when dogs laugh, or when rocks seem indifferent.

- **Apostrophe:** As a figure, it is a direct impassioned address either to an inanimate object or to an abstract idea as if it were a living person or to a person dead or absent, as if he or she were present before the speaker.

  Examples:

  "O solitude! Where are the charms
  That sages have seen in thy face?" –(Cowper)

- **Hyperbole:** It is a deliberate over statement or extravagant exaggeration of fact used for producing a serious or comic effect.

  Examples:

  Thank you a thousand times.

  I nearly died of laughing.

12.4.5 Figures Based on Indirectness

- **Innuendo:** An innuendo is an intimation about a person or thing, especially of a disparaging or a derogatory nature.

  Examples:

  My *friend came and the pen was missing.*

  My friends are *poor but honest.*

- **Irony:** Irony is a figure of speech in which there is a contradiction of expectation between what is said what is really meant.

  Examples:

  His argument was *as clear as mud.*

  The thieves *robbed the police station.*

- **Sarcasm:** It is an ironic or satirical remark that seems to be praising someone or something but is really taunting or cutting. Sarcasm can be used to hurt or offend or can be used for comic effect.

  Examples:

  I'm trying to imagine *you with a personality.*

  I *work 40 hours a week to be this poor.*

- **Periphrasis or Circumlocution:** The term 'periphrasis' refers to the use of excessive language and surplus words to convey a meaning that could otherwise be conveyed with fewer words and in more direct a manner. The use of this literary device can be to embellish a sentence, to create a grander effect, to beat around the bush and to draw attention away from the crux of the message being conveyed.

  Examples:

  Instead of simply saying "I am displeased with your behaviour", one can say, "the manner in which you have conducted yourself in my presence of late has caused me to feel uncomfortable and has resulted in my feeling disgruntled and disappointed with you".

- **Euphemism:** A euphemism is a generally innocuous word or expression used in place of one that may be found offensive, disagreeable, distressing, or suggest something unpleasant.

  Examples:

  His mind *is not working normally*. (He is mad)

  You have *told me a fairy tale*. (Lie)

- **Meiosis or Understatement:** It is a figure of speech which consists in deliberately representing something as much less in magnitude or importance than it really is.

  Examples:

  It requires some faith to believe in such a matter.

- **Litotes:** This is a special form of understatement. By this figure, the writer or speaker suggests a strong affirmative by denying its contrary.

  Examples:

  He is no fool. (He is intelligent)

  It is no easy task. (It is a very difficult task)

12.4.6 Figures Based on Sound

There are a number of figures of speech in English which depend on sound effects. The following are those figures.

- **Onomatopoeia:** As a figure of speech it refers to the formation of a name or word by imitating the natural sound associated with the object or action involved.

  Examples:

  "The moan of doves in immemorial elms,

  And Murmuring of innumerable bees." –(Tennyson)

- **Pun:** A Pun, also called Paronomasia, involves a word play which suggests two or more meanings, by exploiting multiple meanings of words, or of similar-sounding words, for an intended humorous or rhetorical effect. Puns are constructions used in jokes and idioms whose usage and meaning are entirely local to a particular language and its culture.

Examples:

"Atheism is a *non-prophet* institution". The word "*prophet*" is put in place of its homophone "*profit*", altering the common phrase "non-profit institution".

- **Alliteration:** It consists in the repetition of the same letter or syllable at the beginning or about the middle or at the end of two or more words, near to each other for the sake of musical effects. The term is usually applied to consonants.

Examples:

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free." – (Coleridge)

- **Assonance: Assonance** is a figure of speech that is found more often in verse than in prose. It refers to the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences.

Examples:

"the silken sad unc**er**tain rustling of each p**ur**ple c**ur**tain" –(Edgar Allan Poe) "The cr**u**mbling th**u**nder of seas." (Robert Louis Stevenson)

"That solit**u**de which s**ui**ts abstr**u**ser m**u**sings" –(Alfred Lord Tennyson.)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: What is the difference between Irony and Sarcasm?

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.....

Q 9: Give two examples of Litotes.

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.....

12.4.7 Figures Based on Construction

Construction refers to the arrangement and relation of words in a phrase, clause or sentence. To this category of figures of speech belong the following:

- **Interrogation:** It is a rhetorical device to ask a question that suggests its own answer. This is a very effective method of cruel sarcastic bullying of weak people.

  Examples:

  "Who is here so vile that will not love his country?"
  –(Shakespeare- *Julius Caesar*)

- **Exclamation:** It is a sudden and abrupt expression of emotion, feeling, the language of wish, or of contemplation. It is often introduced by words like what, how etc. or by an interjection.

  Examples:

  "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
  How beautiful the moon is tonight!"

- **Chiasmus:** This figure consists in an inversion of the order of words or phrases, when repeated or subsequently referred to in a sentence.

  Examples:

  "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." –(John Keats)
  "We that *live to please* must *please to live*." –(Johnson)

- **Hendiadys:** In this figure of speech two nouns or a noun or a pronoun joined by 'and' are used instead of a noun or pronoun and a modifier to express a complex idea.

  Example:

  That life is lost to *love* and *me.* –(Scott)

- **Zeugma:** When one verb is connected with two nouns, we have an instance of Zeugma.

  Examples:

  The feast and noon grew high.– (Milton)
  Obliged by hunger and requests of friends. –(Pope)

- **Anaphora:** This figure consists in the repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of several successive clauses or sentences.

  Examples:

  The ice was here, *the ice was* there

  The ice was all around. –(Coleridge)

- **Hyperbaton or Inversion:** It is a figure in which the grammatical order of words is inverted for the sake of emphasis.

  Examples:

  A *slumber* did my spirit seal. (Wordsworth)

  Sweet are the uses of adversity. –(Shakespeare: *–As You Like It*)

- **Asyndeton:** This figure consists in leaving out the usual conjunctions connecting the different words or parts of a sentence.

  Examples:

  He *smiled, shook hand, parted*.

  I *came, I saw, I conquered*. –(Shakespeare: *–Julius Caesar*)

  I slip, I slide, I gleam, I glance. (Tennyson)

- **Polysyndeton:** This figure consists in the use of repetition of too many conjunctions in a sentence.

  Examples:

  "It cracked and growled and roared and howled.

  Like noises in a swound!" –(Coleridge)

  "That hoard and sheep and fed and know me not." (Tennyson)



12.5 LET US SUM UP

By now, you must be aware of the different important aspects of Rhetoric. You have learnt that there are total 6 different figures of speech based on similarity, association, difference, imagination, indirectness and sound. You have gained adequate knowledge and

information regarding the rhetorical use of language in this unit.



12.6 FURTHER READING

1) Bose, Rai Radhika Nath & T. S. Sterling. (2008). *Elements of English Rhetoric and Prosody.* Kolkata: Chuckervertty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd.

2) Chakraborty, M. (2013). *Principles of English Rhetoric and Prosody.* Kolkata: Word Press Private Limited.



12.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Rhetoric means the art of an orator who has a unique ability of persuasive public speaking. Hence, the object of rhetoric is to teach the composition and delivery of speeches that can move or sway others.

Ans to Q No 2: Grammar aims at the accuracy of the language, while Rhetoric aims at the beauty and force of 'style', which is a particular mode of writing employed by a writer.

Ans to Q No 3: Figures of speech consist of the different rhetorical devices used in both prose and poetry. Poets, writers and speakers often use various figures of speech to make their language charming, lucid, beautiful and exciting.

Ans to Q No 4: Simile is a prominent figure based on similarity or resemblance. It is a figure of speech in which a comparison between two distinctively different things is clearly made. Metaphor, on the other hand, is another prominent figure based on similarity or resemblance. It is a figure of speech in which the comparison is only implied, though not formally expressed.

Ans to Q No 5: Allegory is a figure of speech by which a lengthy and

detailed comparison is intended between two unallied subjects. The purpose is to convey some moral instruction. In allegory, usually a narrative or story is told to convey a meaning which is different from its surface or literal meaning.

Ans to Q No 6: Metonymy is a figure used to substitute the name of one thing for that of another to which it has a certain relation. Sentences like: The *press* has enormous power or He ascended the *throne* are examples of the use Metonymy.

Ans to Q No 7: Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which the thing said and the thing meant are so intimately connected with each other that one cannot be separated from the other. Sentences like–Men cannot live by *bread* alone, or There is a good deal of *fox* in his character examples of Synecdoche.

Ans to Q No 8: Irony should not be confused with Sarcasm. Irony is used in a statement in which the meaning intended by the speaker or writer differs from that which apparently asserts. Sarcasm on the other hand consists in making damaging remarks about some persons or things directly or in a way to excite contempt or ridicule.

Ans to Q No 9: He is no fool. / It is no easy task.



12.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What do you mean by the term “rhetoric”? Discuss the history of rhetoric.

Q 2: What are the major figures of speech? Discuss each one of them with examples.

Q 3: Identify the figures used in the following expressions.

Q 4: Define and illustrate each of the following figures: Simile, Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Transferred Epithet, Epigram, Anti Climax or Bathos, Interrogation, Chiasmus, Zeugma, Innuendo, Periphrasis, Euphemism, Pun, Onomatopoeia, Hyperbole and Litotes

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UNIT 13 : PROSODY

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 What is Prosody?

- 13.3.1 Syllable and Accent
- 13.3.2 Foot or Measure
- 13.3.3 Rhythm and Metre

13.4 Let us Sum up

13.5 Further Reading

13.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.7 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the concept of prosody
- discuss terms like syllables, accent, foot, rhythm, and metre

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Prosody refers to the laws regulating the structure of verses or lines of poetry. Prosody mostly includes the study of Syllables, Foot, Measures, Accents and Rhythms. One of the basic purposes of studying Prosody is to gain adequate ideas regarding Scansion which means the dividing of verse into Measures of which it is composed. But you will not be asked to 'scan' a poem after reading this unit as scanning requires sufficient practice. However, we do advise you that you make yourself familiar with the different ways of doing scansion by carefully studying the prescribed books in the Further Reading List on Rhetoric and Prosody from which most of the examples and illustrations in this unit have been taken. Please note that the purpose of this unit is just to provide you somewhat adequate knowledge about the different ways to write and speak good English.

13.3 WHAT IS PROSODY?

Prosody refers to the laws regulating the structure of verses or lines of poetry. Prosody basically means the systematic study of versification including that of metrical structure, rhyme and stanza. However, the main purpose of prosody is to treat the laws or principles governing the structure of verses or lines of poetry. Hence, it may be called the 'grammar of verse'.

While discussing the various aspects of prosody, you must pay attention to the fact that poetry is different from prose. While poetry has a basic metrical pattern and various patterns of rhyme, prose may not have rhyme scheme. Moreover, unlike in the case of prose, words in poetry are used evocatively or equivocally for the sake of rhythm rather than for meaning. Besides, the language of poetry is more figurative than that of prose. All such differences, however do not suggest that prose is inferior to poetry.

The components in a line of poetry are Syllables and Accent, Foot or Measure, Rhythm and Metre. The following subjections will help you to discuss the various components in a poetic line in greater detail.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is Prosody? Which are the important elements of Prosody?

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.....

13.3.1 Syllable and Accent

A syllable, which is a part of a word, consists of letters representing a separately pronounced part of a word. Hence, a syllable is the unit of pronunciation within a word which consists of a vowel or vowels combined with one or more consonants. In these words: ex-pert, ab-sent, re-fuse, ex-a-mi-na-tion—each component part is a syllable. You will note that a vowel is the

nucleus and a consonant is the marginal element in a syllable.

Syllables may be mono-syllabic, disyllabic, tri-syllabic, tetra-syllabic and so on. When a word consists of only one syllable, it is called mono-syllabic as in words like – I, we, it, play, work, he, she etc. When a word is composed of two syllables, it is called di-syllabic as in words like ab-sent, com-pact, sam-ple etc. When a word contains three syllables, it is called tri-syllabic as in words like de-light-ful, pres-i-dent, foun-da-tion etc. Similarly, a word composed of four syllables is called tetra-syllabic as in words like cen-te-na-ry, ab-so-lute-ly etc. There may also be penta-syllabic word (penta means five) as one may find in words like: a-bo-mi-na-tion, chro-no-lo-gi-cal.

Accent on the other hand, is a blow of the tongue or a particular effort of the voice on certain syllables of a word. Accent which is also called stress distinguishes the syllable or syllables on which it falls, from the rest of the syllables by greater emphasis on pronunciation. Accent or stress is usually marked by means of a slanting stroke like (/) on the vowel of the accented syllable. For example, in the word béau-ti-ful, the first syllable is accented as we pronounce it with a special force or stress on it while, the other two syllables remain unaccented.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: What is a syllable? Give examples.

.....

.....

13.3.2 Foot or Measure

A Foot or Measure is the regular combination of unaccented and accented syllable. Every line in poetry is often divided into a number of feet and each foot is subdivided into syllables based on vowel sounds. Hence, you will note that a foot consists of only one accented syllable and one or two unaccented syllables. To

understand the term Measure more closely look at the following poetic lines:

"I am m´on- |arch of ´all | sur-v´ey."

"The w´ay | was l´ong | the w´ind | was c´old."

In these lines, each of the combinations of unaccented and accented syllables is called a Foot or Measure which have been marked off by vertical line (|).



LET US KNOW

The fundamental rule of English prosody is that there can be only one accented syllable in a Measure, and one or at the most two unaccented syllables between two accented ones. Thus, the total number of syllables in an English measure can be of two or three, but not more than three.

- **Disyllabic Measures:** You will note that there are generally two important varieties of disyllabic measures—(i) **Trochaic**, (ii) **Iambic**.
  - Trochaic refers to an accented syllable which is followed by an unaccented one, for example,
    R´ich the | tr´easure,
    Sw´eet the | pleasure.
  - Iambic, on the other hand refers to an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one, for example Thomas Gray's famous "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" has this line consisting of iambic measure—
    The c´ur | few t´olls | the kn´ell | of p´ar | ting d´ay

It is important to note that the Iambic is the most popular form of versification in English poetry. There are other two kinds of di-syllabic measure, known as **Spondee** and **Pyrrhics.** Spondee consists of two accented syllables, while Pyrrhic consists of two unaccented syllables as in case of the following poetic line.

In that | sw´eet m´ood | when pl´ea | sant th´oughts.

– (Wordsworth)

However, these measures are not regularly used in English verse as they are exceptions to general rules. Because, they often introduce an element of variety in the line or verse.

- **Tri-syllabic Measures:** Tri-syllabic Measures have three important varieties which are– (i) **Dactylic,** (ii) **Anapaestic** and (iii) **Amphibrachic.**

  Dactylic Measure refers to one in which one accented syllable is followed by two unaccented ones. For example:
  Ca´n-non to | ri´ght of them
  Ca´n-non to | le´ft of them.
  – Tennyson

  - **Anapaestic** refers to a case in which one accented syllable is preceded by two unaccented ones, as in the example,
    I am ou´t | of huma´n-| ity´s rea´ch
    I must fi´n- | ish my jou´r- | ney a-lo´ne.
    – (Cowper)
  - **Amphibrachic** is one in which the middle syllable is accented and the other two are unaccented, as in case of the following example:
    Most fri´endship | is fei´gn-ing
    Most lo´ving | mere fo´ll-y.
    – (Shakespeare)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What is Foot or Measure? Discuss.

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13.3.3 Rhythm and Metre

Rhythm, which is one of the most essential characteristics of poetry, means the measured movement or musical flow of language. Usually rhythm consists of regular patterns of accents and pauses that produce a musical and melodious effect. This means that rhythm depends on regular occurrence of grouped, stressed and unstressed syllables in alternation, in the form of metrical units or feet or measures.

Metre, on the other hand, means the measured, patterned arrangement of syllables according to accent and length. It consists in the succession of regularly accented groups of syllables called feet or measures according to some standard in a line of poetry. Thus, foot is as much important to metre as stress or accent is to rhythm.

A metrical line is named according to the number of feet composing it:

One foot: Monometre
Two feet: Dimetre
Three feet: Trimetre
Four feet: Tetrametre
Five feet: Pentametre
Six feet: Hexametre
Seven feet: Heptametre
Eight feet: Octametre

Among all these, pentameter is found to be the most used form of versification in English poetry. A line of verse may consist of any number of feet but not beyond seven. You have already learnt that the iambic is the most popular form of versification in English poetry. The following are some examples of some of the different kinds of verses composed of iambic measures.

- **Iambic Dimetre:**

  The li´ght | that lie´s

In wo´- | man's e´yes, – (Moore)

- **Iambic Trimetre:** Such metre is commonly used in descriptive and narrative poems. For example,

  A thou´- | sand cu´ps | of go´ld
  In Ju´ - dah de´em'd | di-vi´ne—
  Je-ho´- | vah's |ve´s- | sel ho´ld
  The go´d- | less hea´-| then's wi´ne. – (Byron)

- **Iambic Tetrametre**

  And the´n | my hea´rt | with plea´sures fi´lls
  And da´n- | ces wi´th | the da´f- | fo´-di´ls. – (Wordsworth).

- **Iambic Pentametre**

  The c´ur | few t´olls |the kn´ell |of p´ar | ting d´ay
  The l´ow´|ing h´erd |wind sl´ow |ly, ´o'er |the l´ea,
  – (Thomas Gray)

- **Iambic Hexametre**

  The de´w |was fal´ling |fa´st,|the sta´rs |bega´n |to bli´nk.
  – (Wordsworth).

- **Iambic Heptametre**

  And swee´t- |er fa´r |is dea´th |than li´fe |to me´|that lo´ng | to go´. –(Tennyson)



13.4 LET US SUM UP

By now, you must be aware of the different aspects of Prosody. You have learnt that Prosody is an important branch of language the knowledge of which may help you in using the English language to generate an impact on the minds of the readers as well as the listeners. You have learnt that in the field of Prosody, Syllable and Accent, Foot or Measure, Rhythm and Metre are the most important aspects for discussion. It is hoped that you have gained adequate knowledge and information regarding the rhetorical use

of language in this unit. This will help you to study the next unit on Stylistics which deals with the study of style a writer uses to generate interest in the minds of the readers.



13.5 FURTHER READING

1) Bose, Rai Radhika Nath & T. S. Sterling. (2008). *Elements of English Rhetoric and Prosody.* Kolkata: Chuckervertty, Chatterjee & Co. Ltd.

2) Chakraborty, M. (2013). *Principles of English Rhetoric and Prosody.* Kolkata: Word Press Private Limited.



13.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Prosody refers to the laws regulating the structure of verses or lines of poetry. Prosody basically means the systematic study of versification including that of metrical structure, rhyme and stanza. However, the main purpose of prosody is to treat the laws or principles governing the structure of verses or lines of poetry. Hence, it may be called the 'grammar of verse'.

While discussing the various aspects of prosody, you must pay attention to the fact that poetry is different from prose. While poetry has a basic metrical pattern and various patterns of rhyme, prose may not have rhyme scheme. Moreover, unlike in the case of prose, words in poetry are used evocatively or equivocally for the sake of rhythm rather than for meaning. Besides, the language of poetry is more figurative than that of prose. All such differences, however do not suggest that prose is inferior to poetry.

The components in a line of poetry are Syllables and Accent, Foot or Measure, Rhythm and Metre. The following subjections

will help you to discuss the various components in a poetic line in greater detail.

Ans to Q No 2: A syllable is the unit of pronunciation within a word which consists of a vowel or vowels combined with one or more consonants. In these words: ex-pert, ab-sent, re-fuse, ex-a-mi-na-tion-each component part is a syllable.

Ans to Q No 3: A Foot or Measure is the regular combination of unaccented and accented syllable. Every line in poetry is often divided into a number of feet and each foot is subdivided into syllables based on vowel sounds. The total number of syllables in an English Foot or Measure can be of two or three, but not more than three. Disyllabic Measures has two important varieties Trochaic and Iambic. Tri-syllabic Measures have three important varieties—Dactylic, Anapaestic and Amphibrachic.



13.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What do you understand by the term Prosody? What are the different important elements of English Prosody?

Q 2: What are the Measures in poetry? Name, define and exemplify the different kinds of Measures used in English poetry.

Q 3: Write a brief note on accent.

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UNIT 14 : STYLISTICS I

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Meaning of Stylistics

14.4 History of Stylistics

14.5 Stylistics of Poetry

- 14.5.1 Syllable and Metre
- 14.5.2 Rhyme and Stanza

14.6 Let us Sum up

14.7 Further Reading

14.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.9 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of Stylistics
- trace the history of Stylistics
- discuss briefly the stylistics of poetry

14.2 INTRODUCTION

You perhaps know that when you read a book by an author, his or her style of writing becomes very important as it helps to mark the work of that author. Stylistics then, is to be more specifically seen as the study of the linguistic features of a particular literary text which directly affect the meaning of an utterance or a written sentence. Thus, the most preferred object of study in Stylistics is literature. By the time you finish reading this unit, besides learning about the definition and history of Stylistics, you will also be able to identify the various issues and aspects of Stylistics which will help you to analyse a poem. The purpose behind this unit is just to give you some fundamental ideas on Stylistics.

14.3 MEANING OF STYLISTICS

Stylistics is more commonly known to be the scientific study of 'style' which generally refers to the components and features of a literary composition. Stylistics enables the readers to identify the distinguishing features of literary texts, as well as to specify the generic and structural subdivisions of literature. Richard Bradford provides one of the best interpretations of the term 'Stylistics' in the following way:

"Stylistics can tell us how to name the constituent parts of a literary text and enable us to document their operations, but in doing so it must draw upon the terminology and methodology of disciplines which focus upon language in the real world. The study of metre, narrative and dramatic dialogue is founded upon the fundamental units and principles of all linguistic usage: phonemes, rhythmic sequences, grammatical classes, forms of syntactic organisation and so on. But the same fundamentals of communication also underpin the methodology of pure linguistics, structuralism and semiotics, discourse theory, sociolinguistics, gender studies, linguistic philosophy and a whole network of disciplines which involves the context and pragmatic purpose of communication. Consequently, modern stylistics is caught between two disciplinary imperatives. On the one hand, it raises questions regarding the relation between the way that language is used and its apparent context and objective—language as an active element of the real world. On the other, it seeks to define the particular use of linguistic structures to create facsimiles, models or distortions of the real world—literary language."

Thus, practising Stylistics enriches our ways of thinking about language as well as exploring language in terms of our understanding of (literary) texts.



LET US KNOW

"The term style is usually used with reference to the poet's manner of choosing, ordering, and arranging his words. But, of course, when one asks on what

grounds certain words are chosen and ordered one is raising the whole problem of form. Style in its larger sense, is essentially the same thing as form." (*Understanding Poetry*, New York, 1950).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What do you mean by the term Stylistics? Discuss briefly.

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14.4 HISTORY OF STYLISTICS

The study of Stylistics is a twentieth-century invention. However, its history can be traced in the Greek idea of Rhetoric—the art of speech concerned mostly with the use of public speaking as a means of persuasion. In the fifth century BC, the Greek settlers of Sicily began to study, document and teach rhetoric as a practical discipline. Reference can be made of Corax and Tisias, who found that the art of persuasion was a useful and profitable profession in a place like Sicily beset with political and judicial disagreements over land and civil rights,



LET US KNOW

Tisias and Corax : Tisias (5th century BC), along with Corax was one of the founders of ancient Greek Rhetoric. Tisias was reputed to have been the pupil of the lawyer Corax, who agreed to teach Tisias under the condition that he would give him payment for schooling if he won his first case.

However, it is with Plato that the early history of Rhetoric is supposed to have started. In Phaedrus Plato/Socrates states that unless a man pays due attention to philosophy "he will never be able to speak

properly about anything…A real art of speaking…which does not seize hold of truth, does not exist and never will." Plato was mostly concerned with the fact that rhetoric was a device without moral or ethical subject matter. In the *Gorgias,* he records an exchange between Socrates and Gorgias in which the former claims that persuasion is comparable with flattery, cooking and medicine: it meets bodily requirements and satisfies physical and emotional desires. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* (c. 330 BC) stated that 'rhetoric' is an art, a necessary condition of philosophical debate. Although Plato and Aristotle did not disagree on what rhetoric is; the relationship between language and truth was still a problem. Rhetoric, in post-Renaissance Rome was based on the practical explanations of the rhetorical devices through which language became a medium or means of persuasion, convincing, and argument.

The twentieth-century alternative to born Aristotle and Plato's distinction between language and truth has been provided by Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist whose influence upon modern ideas on language and reality has become unchallengeable. Saussure's most quoted and influential propositions concern the arbitrary nature of language and his distinction between 'the signified' and 'the signifier'. Two other groups of critics in the 20th century had had a major influence on the twentieth-century English studies: the Russian Formalists and the New Critics. The objectives of the members in each group were the same: to define literature as a discourse and art form and to establish its function as something that can be properly studied. Subsequently, with the emergence of interdisciplinary practices like structuralism and post-structuralism, the study of language became even more serious a practice.



LET US KNOW

The different approaches to Stylistics in the 20th century, can be divided into two basic categories: textualist and contextualist. The Formalists and New Critics are mainly textualists in that they regard the stylistic features of a particular literary text as productive of an

empirical unity and completeness. They do not perceive literary style as entirely exclusive to literature. Contextualism involves a far more loose and disparate collection of methods. Its unifying characteristic is its concentration on the relation between text and context. Thus, the history of twentieth century criticism provides a framework for an understanding of how rhetoric has been variously transformed into modern Stylistics.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Discuss the history of Stylistics in brief.

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Q 3: What were the views that Plato and Socrates had with regard to Rhetoric?

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14.5 STYLISTICS OF POETRY

A poem, unlike any other groups of words, supplements the use of grammar and syntax in the poetic line. It is important for you to note that in most traditional poems written before the twentieth-century, the poetic line was constructed from a combination of two or more of the following elements:

- A specified and predictable number of syllables. The most commonly used example of this is the ten-syllable line, the pentameter.
- A metrical pattern consisting of the relation between the stress or emphasis of adjacent syllables. The most frequently used metrical pattern in English involves the use of the iambic foot, where a stressed syllable follows an unstressed one, with occasional variations.

- The repetition of the phonemic sound of a single syllable at the end of a line often known as rhyme.
- The repetition of clusters of similar vowel or consonant sounds within individual lines and across sequences of lines known as Assonance or Alliteration.

Now let us discuss these elements in some detail under the following subsections:

14.5.1 Syllable and Metre

In the previous unit, you have learnt about the idea of a syllable and accent. You have also learnt that iambic pentameter, consisting of ten syllables, is the most frequently used line in English poetry. It is the governing principle of Shakespeare's blank verse; of blank verse poems like John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667); William Wordsworth's autobiographical poem *Prelude,* and of the heroic couplet; and was the structural principle in most of the poems written by John Dryden and Alexander Pope.

The iambic pentameter consists of five iambic feet. The following are some examples of these.

- IAMBIC PENTAMETER : Sucah pl,!eas | urae to!ok | thAe Se!rp | enat to! | beahol!d (from Milton's *Paradise* Lost)
- IAMBIC TETRAMETER : Twuo co!ll | eage So!phs | oaf Cam!b | riadge gr!owth (from Swift's 'Cassinus and Peter')

You should note that the internal structure of the poetic line is one of the important elements in the organising principle of poetry.

14.5.2 Rhyme and Stanza

Rhyme binds the poetic lines together into larger structural units. Rhyme schemes enable the poet to create stanzas, the simplest of these being the quatrain, rhyming ab ab. The stanza can play a number of roles in the broader structure of the poem.

Narrative poems, which usually tell a story, often use the stanza as a way of emphasising a particular event or observation while tying this into the broader narrative (as you can find in Edmund Spenser's long *The Faerie Queene,* John Keats's *The Eve of St Agnes* and Lord Byron's *Don Juan*). Tennyson's *In Memoriam* uses the so called 'envelope stanza' (a b b a). This provides a formal counterpoint to the tragic or emotional focus of each stanza. Shorter, lyric poems which focus on a specific sensation, feeling or single event often use the stanza as a counterpoint to improvisation and spontaneity.

Let us now try to understand the idea of a 'stanza' in terms of John Donne's poem 'The Relic' which consists of three very complicated stanzas.

- 8 syllables : When my grave is broke up again
- 8 syllables : Some second guest to entertain,
- 8 syllables : (For graves have learned that woman-head
- 8 syllables : To be to more than one a bed)
- 6 syllables : And he that digs it spies
- 10 syllables : A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,
- 7 syllables : Will he not let us alone
- 10 syllables : And think that there a loving couple lies,
- 10 syllables : Who thought that this device might be some way
- 10 syllables : To make their souls, at the last busy day
- 10 syllables : Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?

Let us now try to understand Rhyme and Stanza in terms of some other poetical forms.

- **The Sonnet**

  The sonnet resembles the stanza in that it consists of an integrated unit of metre and rhyme. The Shakespearian sonnet consists of three iambic pentameter quatrains followed by an iambic pentameter couplet, its Petrarchan counterpart

or sonnet rhyming abba abba cdc dcd. It differs from the stanza in that the sonnet is a complete poem. Most sonnets emphasise a particular event or theme and tie this into the symmetries, repetitions and parallel forms of its metrical and rhyming structure.

- **The Ode**

  The most flexible and variable stanzaic form is found in the ode. Wordsworth's ''Ode on Intimations of Immortality'' consists of eleven sections. Each of these has a pattern of metre and rhyme. The open, flexible structure of the ode is well-suited to its use, especially by the Romantic poets, as a medium for personal reflection; it rarely tells a particular story, and it eschews logical and systematic argument in favour of an apparently random sequence of questions, hypotheses and comparisons.

- **Blank Verse**

  Blank Verse offers a freedom from formal regularity. It consists of unrhymed iambic pentameters. Prior to Milton's *Paradise Lost,* blank verse was considered a mixture of poetry and prose. It was thought appropriate only for drama, in which language could be recognisably poetic (i.e. metrical) while maintaining realistic elements of dialogue and ordinary speech (without rhyme). *Paradise Lost* offered blank verse as an alternative to the use of the stanza or the couplet in longer narrative or descriptive poems. The eighteenth-century tradition of landscape poems such as James Thomson's *The Seasons,* William Cowper's *The Task*, William Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* and *The Prelude* are examples of Blank Verse.

- **Free Verse**

  Before the twentieth-century, poems which involved neither rhyme nor the metrical pattern of blank verse were rare. It was not until this century that free verse became an established part of the formal repertoire of English poetry.

Free verse (from the French *vers libre)* is only free in the sense that it does not conform to traditional patterns of metre and rhyme. The poetic line is maintained as a structural counterpoint to syntax, but is not definable in abstract metrical terms. In Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro", the following two lines function as an alternative to the continuities of grammar :

"The apparition of those faces in the crowd
Petals on a wet black bough."

Thus, when you intend to analyse a poem stylistically, you are supposed to consider how a poetic line is constructed with the help of syllables, accent, metre, rhyme and stanza.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What are the elements to be found in a traditional poetic line?

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14.6 LET US SUM UP

After reading the sections above, you have learnt that Stylistics is the scientific study of 'style' generally referring to the components and features of a literary composition. Stylistics is to be more specifically seen as the study of the linguistic features of a particular literary text which directly affect the meaning of an utterance or a written sentence. You have learnt that the history of Stylistics can be traced to the Greek idea of Rhetoric—the art of speech concerned mostly with the use of public speaking as a means of persuasion. You have also learnt to discuss the stylistics of poetry in the unit. You have noted that while stylistically analysing

a poem, you are required to consider poetic elements like syllable, accent, rhyme and rhythm.



14.7 FURTHER READING

1) Simpson, Paul. (2004). *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students.* London: Routledge.

2) Bradford, Richard. (1997). *Stylistics: The New Critical Idiom.* London: Routledge.



14.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Stylistics is more commonly known to be the scientific study of 'style' which generally refers to the components and features of a literary composition. Stylistics enables the readers to identify the distinguishing features of literary texts as well as to specify the generic and structural subdivisions of literature.

Ans to Q No 2: The history of Stylistics can be traced in the Greek idea of Rhetoric—the art of public speaking as a means of persuasion. In the fifth century BC, the Greek settlers of Sicily began to study, document and teach rhetoric as a practical discipline. Reference can be made of Corax and Tisias, who found that the art of persuasion was a useful and profitable profession in a place like Sicily beset with political and judicial disagreements.

Ans to Q No 3: In the *Gorgias,* Plato records an exchange between Socrates and Gorgias in which Socrates claims that persuasion is comparable with flattery, cooking and medicine: it meets bodily needs and satisfies physical and emotional desires. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* stated that rhetoric is an art, a necessary condition

of philosophical debate.

Ans to Q No 4: A traditional poetic line is constructed from a combination of elements like a specified and predictable number of syllables, a metrical pattern, the repetition of the phonemic sound of a single syllable at the end of a line often known as rhyme, Assonance or alliteration and so on.



14.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What is 'style'? What are some of the problems of studying style?

Q 2: What is 'Stylistics'? Discuss the history of Stylistics.

Q 3: How is traditional literary interpretation different from contemporary stylistic approaches to literary texts?

Q 4: Discuss the relation between linguistics and literature? Do you think that the knowledge of linguistics is a way to analyse a text?

Q 5: What are the issues that you would like to refer to while analysing a poem stylistically?

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UNIT 15 : STYLISTICS II

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives

15.2 Introduction

15.3 Stylistics of Prose Fiction

15.4 Stylistics of a Play

15.5 Let us Sum up

15.6 Further Reading

15.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

15.8 Model Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss briefly the stylistics of prose fiction
- discuss briefly the stylistics of a play

15.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have already dealt with the definition and history of Stylistics and identified various issues and aspects of stylistics. We have also discussed the stylistics of poetry. In this unit, we shall lay emphasis on analysing a prose work or a dramatic piece on the basis of the different stylistic rules to deal with them. This will be beneficial in grounding your basic knowledge on this area of study although you are not required to stylistically analyse a prose piece, or a dramatic piece at present.

15.3 STYLISTICS OF PROSE FICTION

You will note that the general theories of fictional narrative, starts with the European Formalists and Structuralists—Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, Vladimir Propp, A.J. Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov. The stylistics of Prosefictions mostly deals with the narrative patterns in a prose piece.

The Russian critic Roman Jakobson once claimed that 'for poetry metaphor, and for prose metonymy is the line of least resistance'. In poetry, he argues, metaphoric language is constantly distorting and refracting familiar relations between words and things. Prose is more closely allied to metonymy, in that its linguistic selections maintain a parallel relationship between what is said or written and what is represented. Novels are made of different types and classes of prose—formal description, meditative reflection, speech, dialogue, letters—but at a local level, each different stylistic register is likely to have more in common with the functional, metonymic dimension of style than with the perversities of poetry. Consequently, the stylistics of prose fiction, is particularly concerned with the ways in which the different registers and forms of prose can be assembled as a single text which tells a story and which establishes a certain mode of formal coherence.

The Russian Formalist critic Shklovsky reduced fictional structures to two opposing and interactive dimensions: *sjuzet* and *fabula. Fabula* refers to the chronological sequence of the events that make up the narrative; and *sjuzet* to the order, manner and style in which they are presented in the novel in question. For example, the *fabula* of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861) concerns the experiences, in and around London, from the early childhood to the adulthood of the protagonist Pip. Its *sjuzet* involves the presentation of these events in Pip's first-person account of their temporal, spatial and emotional registers. Throughout this novel the eponymous narrator maintains an interplay between his story *(the fabula),* and the activity and conditions of telling it *(sjuzet).*

Vladimir Propp in *The Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) shifts our attention towards the ways in which social and behavioural structures influence and determine fictional narrative. Propp devised a grammar of the folktale based on two concepts: the roles filled by the characters (for example the kidnapper as villain, the princess as the kidnapped person, the king as provider, etc.) and the functions they perform in the plot. In a fairy tale, several characters might be involved in a single function (the king and kidnapper might be involved in villainous activities) or one

character might perform a number of functions (the king might be both hero and villain). But Propp demonstrates that there is a predictable and finite number of permutations of the role-function relation. This model is constrained by the agreed relation between language/ narrative and perceptions of the real world. For example, the sentence 'the tree ate its dinner and then walked home' is grammatically correct, but its paraphrasable message is implausible and absurd. Similarly, a folktale in which the princess kidnaps her father, the king, in the hope of eliciting a ransom from the villain would be dismissed as absurd because it distorts the usual realm of possibilities within the social-familial network of roles and functions in the ordinary world.

A. J. Greimas (1966, 1970), on the other hand, regards narrative patterns as involving systems of consecutive ordering while arguing that fictional narratives reflect the deep-rooted 'grammars' of human society like—formal contracts, family bonds, close relationships, institutional ties; trials, arguments, the performance of tasks; physical movements, departures, arrivals and so on. Just as in a sentence, each word and phrase is tied into an accumulative sequence which generates larger units of meaning, so in a novel, single incidents such as marriages, commitments to specific professions and journeys are combined to produce extended narrative structures. Similarly, Tzvetan Todorov in his analysis of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1969) extends this parallel between syntax and narrative by reducing the latter (narrative) to parts of speech (for example : characters are usually nouns, their attributes adjectives, and their actions verbs), propositions involving one or more of the characters (A has sex with B; D divorces Y) and sequences in which a string of propositions makes up the complete narrative structure.

Thus, the European Formalists and Structuralists have put forward several tools to discuss the narrative patterns of a fictional work, which are also the basic areas to be kept in mind while analysing a prose piece stylistically.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How does Roman Jacobson distinguish between poetry and prose?

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Q 2: What are the two opposing and interactive dimensions in the fictional structure according to Victor Shklovsky?

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Q 3: Name the theorists who discussed the important aspects relating to prose fiction. Also briefly enumerate their contribution.

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15.4 STYLISTICS OF A PLAY

(adapted from Richard Bradford's book)

Let us now try to begin our discussions on the Stylistics of Drama with reference to Shakespearean plays of the 16th century. Almost all of Shakespeare's plays are comprised of two very different stylistic patterns: verse and unversified speech. We can make a number of observations about the reason for using blank verse and prosaic speech in the same text by Shakespeare.

You will note that often the distinction between blank verse and prose in Shakespeare's plays mirrors the distinction between the social status and behavioural patterns of the characters. Those characters which play an executive role both in the narrative, as well as, the representatives of their counterparts in the real world, tend to communicate more in blank verse than in prose. We might thus conclude that Shakespeare maintains the status of poetry as part of a complex series of sign systems—including dress, behaviour, characteristcis, names, occupations—that allow us to recognise a particular strata within a particular social hierarchy. Poetry is

culture: it is a linguistic form which disposes a collective identity on its users. In sharing a certain code, they can be seen as sharing a particular set of privileges, responsibilities, intellectual and moral concerns. Spoken, prose discourse does not even demand literacy. It is a means of exchange, dependent upon circumstances, and in the plays, it occurs frequently in the exchanges between the low-life characters of the sub-plot.

Let us now try to illustrate these points with reference to Act I, scene ii of Shakespeares *Measure for Measure* in which Claudio, the young gentleman tells Lucio, the resourceful opportunist, of his arrest for having had pre-marital physical relation with his fiancée.

Lucio: Why, how now, Claudio! Whence comes this restraint?

Claudio: From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:
As surfeit is the father of much fast
So every scope by the immoderate use
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue—
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane—
A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.

Lucio: If I could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors. And yet, to say the truth, I had as lief have the foppery of freedom as the morality of imprisonment.
What's thy offence, Claudio?

Claudio's answer to Lucio's first enquiry 'Whence comes this restraint?' is prompted by the actual and observable circumstances of Claudio being in the custody of the Provost and his officers. Instead of answering directly, Claudio uses the question as the basis for an elaborate and rhetorical deliberations— Restraint is the consequence of too much liberty: surfeit is the father of fast; immoderate scope causes restraint. Natural (unrestrained) thirst is, like rats who eat their young, a dangerous evil: when we drink we die.

Measure for Measure like any other Shakespearean play is an

important play because it deliberately foregrounds the relationship between literary style and the broader functional purposes of language in society, politics and the law. It was first performed in 1604 for the new monarch, James I. You should note that James was the author of a political tract called *Basilikon Down* (1599) in which he argued that a monarch should tread cautiously between his status as the executive embodiment of law and governance and his function as a moderator, an arbiter between the often divergent interests and perceptions of his people. The Duke in *Measure for Measure* plays out this double role. For most of the play he operates in disguise as a mysterious friar, suggesting strategies and deceptions through which the imbalance between the letter of the law and its just and practical implementation might be resolved. Along with his skills in physical role-play he is able to move comfortably between the two stylistic and cultural registers of blank verse and prose. In order to understand these points throughly, please make an attempt to read the text of the play yourself.

You will also find that most of the stylistic researches on dialogues in drama since the 16th century to the 20th have focussed on explaining how characterisation is created through patterns of language and on highlighting the points of departure and/or intersection between the discourse world of the play and the discourse situation of the world outside the play. Thus, stylistic analysis of a play often involves cross-references between the level of the character and the interactive level of the playwright and audience/reader. Many interesting insights have come from other studies of the 'Theatre of the Absurd' where rich comparisons can be drawn between the discourse worlds inside and outside the play. The tradition of absurd writing is characterised by a preoccupation with the apparent futility of human existence, and this often manifests in the talk within the play. When that is compared to the sociolinguistic routines of everyday verbal interaction, it stands out as deviant, anti-realist or just plain daft.

Thus when you consider analysing a play stylistically, you must try to examine the role played by language in upholding the world symbolic meanning or the action of the play.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What are the stylistic patterns of Shakespearean drama?

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.....

Q 5: Briefly discuss the course of research on the stylistics of drama in recent times.

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15.5 LET US SUM UP

After a thorough reading of the unit, you have learnt that while stylistically analysing a prose fiction you are supposed to look at the role played by *sjuzet* and *fabula*; while studying the Stylistics of a play, you will examine the way a playwright makes a connection between the worlds inside and outside the text with a particular use of language. Stylistical Analysis, as you have understood by now, is not an easy task, but with sufficient practice, you can very well grasp the issues and elements required for stylistical analysis.



15.6 FURTHER READING

1) Simpson, Paul. (2004). *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students.* London: Routledge.

2) Bradford, Richard. (1997). *Stylistics: The New Critical Idiom.* London: Routledge.

15.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Jacobson argues that in poetry metaphoric language is constantly distorting familiar relations between words and things. Prose is more closely allied to metonymy, in that its linguistic selections maintain a parallel relationship between what is said or written and what is represented.

Ans to Q No 2: *Fabula* refers to the chronological sequence of the events that make up the narrative; and *Sjuzet* to the order, manner and style in which they are presented in the novel in question.

Ans to Q No 3: Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, Vladimir Propp, A.J. Greimas, and Tzvetan Todorov. Roman Jakobson equated poetry with metaphor and prose with metonymy; Shklovsky reduced fictional structures to *sjuzet* and *fabula*; Vladimir Propp shifts our attention towards the ways in which social and behavioural structures influence and determine fictional narrative; A. J. Greimas argued that fictional narratives reflect the deep-rooted 'grammars' of human society; Tzvetan Todorov reduced narrative to parts of speech

Ans to Q No 4: Nearly all of Shakespeare's plays comprise of two very different stylistic patterns: verse and unversified speech. the distinction between blank verse and prose in Shakespeare's plays mirrors the distinction between the social status and behavioural patterns of the characters

Ans to Q No 5: The stylistic researches on dialogues in drama since the 16th century to the 20th have focussed on explaining how characterisation is created through patterns of language and highlights the points of departure and/or intersection between the discourse world of the play and the discourse situation of the world outside the play.



15.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Discuss the contributions of the theorists to the Stylistics of Prose narratives.

Q 2: Do you think that both the world of the play and the world outside the play are equally important in the stylistics of Drama? Discuss with reference to a Shakespearean play.

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