

Answers Unit 1

1. Consider the meaning of the word language in the following expressions and paraphrase it in such a way as to bring out the contrasting usages clearly:

Language is what distinguishes human beings from apes.

Language here refers to the uniquely human ability to communicate by means of speech, or in some cases, writing or signing (on "sign languages" used by deaf people, see the following example). In its structural complexity and its expressive potential, this human language faculty far exceeds all animal communication systems. In other words, while many animal species communicate, only human beings speak.

She teaches sign language in a school for the deaf.

Instead of sounds, gestures and body movements are used as a means of conveying the communicative message. The fact that a linguistic utterance can be transferred from the acoustic to the visual medium shows that it has a structural reality independent from its material substrate.

Sally can conduct fluent conversations in at least four languages.

The term *language* here denotes the specific linguistic systems of particular communities. The language faculty is shared by all human beings; the way it manifests itself differs from community to community.

Watch your language, kid!

Language is used to denote an impolite or vulgar way of expressing oneself in a particular language.

As a teacher I sometimes feel that the children speak a completely different language from me.

In this example, the term *language* is used in a transferred sense, to refer to a particular style or way of using a given language which identifies a particular group of people.

Lëtzebuergesch used to be a dialect of German but has been one of the three official languages of Luxemburg since 1984.

This use of the word *language* highlights the fact that people are sensitive to the social status of particular ways of speaking. A type of speech which enjoys official recognition or provides the model for writing tends to be designated as "language", whereas speech forms without such recognition and prestigious functions tend to be classified as "dialects". Formal linguistic criteria are insufficient to justify such a distinction in many instances, because it is essentially a result of historical and social circumstance (as our example makes clear). In other words, linguistic criteria **alone** are not sufficient to justify the distinction.

Who was the guy who got the Nobel Prize for decoding the language of the bees?

Language is here used metaphorically, or in a loose sense, to refer to any system of communication. The frequency of such uses should not blind us to the fact that there are profound differences between natural human languages and "animal languages" or, for that matter, computer "programming languages."

If you know how to read the language of graffiti, they tell you a lot about life in the city.

Here, *language* is used as a synonym for *code*, any conventionalised system for conveying information.

2. a) You will probably remember that *woman* is the general term for female adult human beings while *lady* refers to women of noble rank. However, it will also be clear to you that "the lady over there" need not necessarily refer to a noblewoman ...

b) The "solution" will emerge as part of your enquiries ...

c) These are the first 15 instances of *lady* found in the F-LOB corpus of British English:

Lady in F-LOB

1 100 counted", Wilkie told Harriet at the end of November. The G09 101 play, No Thoroughfare, was adapted from the Christmas G09 102 number All the Year Round as a vehicle for Charles G09 103 Fechter and his leading **lady** Carlotta Leclercq. Wilkie and

Dickens G09 104 had first seen Fechter when he was a successful romantic actor in G09 105 Paris. He created the part of Armand Duval in La Dame aux G09 106 Cam<*_>e-acute<*/>lias, a play then conside

2 "additional caprices C16 8 or embellishments." As she says of this brilliant 'Twenties C16 9 work, all the entertaining is done by Edith Sitwell's poetry in C16 10 tandem with the music. C16 11 C16 12 **Lady** Walton had opened the three-part evening with thirty C16 13 minutes of reminiscences - her first meeting with William, his C16 14 instant proposal of marriage, and her initiation into his circle of C16 15 talented friends and patrons.

3 uis behind A10 108 him, Connors met the Duchess in a private room beneath the A10 109 grandstand. "Yes, we're friends," he said A10 110 afterwards. "We've known each other for a few years and A10 111 she's a very nice **lady**." A10 112 Vitas Gerulaitis, a former tennis rival of Connors and his best A10 113 friend, said: "The Duchess is friends with Jimmy and Patti A10 114 (his wife) and she invites them for dinner when they are in London.

4 le to having something quite splendid. A37 119 I hope now it will be well used by people, they have as much right A37 120 as anyone else to use our pools and access is very A37 121 important." A37 122 She mentioned one elderly **lady** who had never used the pool A37 123 before but who had been in every day since the hoist was installed A37 124 last week and has now bought a season ticket. A37 125 A37 126 Magistrate refuses club owner's licence

5 llectively it showcases a singer with a lasting C15 122 relevance. C15 123 If you've got a note in your pocket, and are unsure which **lady** C15 124 to pick, Diana or Paula Abdul, stick with a tried and tested C15 125 formula and make it **Lady** Di. (7/10) C15 126 Pete Wylie and Wah! - Infamy (Siren): He's been away C15 127 a long time and many thought he had finally talked himself to C15 128 death. Liaisons with the Farm and an appalling new haircut rightly C15

6 125 said that those who take decisions should be made accountable. That H18 126 is exactly what new clause 1 seeks to do. It seeks to make the H18 127 Government accountable for what they are forcing upon local H18 128 authorities. If the hon. **Lady** and her colleagues are so keen on H18 129 this mechanism, it is odd that they are resisting this new clause, H18 130 which specifically addresses the fact that the Bill provides the H18 131 Secretary of State with strengthened powers by gi

7 ould praise his concern for the B05 134 arts and the Daily Mail

would see it as further proof of his B05 135 dedication to Europe.
B05 136 But there is more to his current success than sycophancy.
B05 137 The voters still blame **Lady** Thatcher for the sorry state of
the B05 138 economy and excuse Major his leading part in it. They
still blame B05 139 her for the Poll Tax and forget that he defended
it. B05 140 They forget his uncaring dismissal of the plight of t

8 problems. We do in our way have G22 136 revolutions. G22
137 Prejudice was not perhaps all on one side: "I wasn't G22 138
having the Marquess at any price whatever his ability," G22 139
remarks one fiercely democratic **lady**, active in the Association. G22
140 The appeal of Mr Major on that occasion lay for his experience
in G22 141 the non-armigerous world of local government. "We G22
142 were," says one official of the time, "very G

9 11 very well, in fact! I exchanged a few words with her the
following P10 12 afternoon: Edmund had disappeared, and I was
looking for him, so I P10 13 was in a hurry. I am afraid I teased
her." P10 14 A little frown wrinkled **Lady** Waverton's forehead. "She
P10 15 is very innocent. More so than most girls of her age, from
the P10 16 circumstance of our having lived so very retired. She
would have no P10 17 idea of the risk she ran." P10 18

10 ible to believe that they never discussed it. Minnie was G18 143
no stranger to these delicate matters. Two of her closest friends G18
144 were sisters - Adeline, Duchess of Bedford and **Lady** Henry
Somerset, G18 145 daughters of the redoubtable **Lady** Somers who
was one of the G18 146 fabulously beautiful Pattle sisters. Lord
Henry Somerset, a son of G18 147 the Duke of Beaufort, had been
driven out of the country in 1879 G18 148 when his interfering
mother-in-law broadcast his love for

11 M01 154 Lord Rule, black periwig somewhat wetly draggled,
swept the M01 155 plumed hat from his head and made an exquisite
bow. M01 156 "Servant, ma'am." M01 157 "Likewise, madam,
likewise." Bess, **Lady** M01 158 Winslow, flashed paste rings,
whirling a lace kerchief in a M01 159 flourish. She stretched one
silk-breeched leg to the fire, hand M01 160 casually resting over the
larger of its patches. M01 161 "I don't like gen

12 olyn continues: "Fergie was very tidy, immaculate in G26 160
fact. She wasn't a great Hooverer or ironer but everything in her
G26 161 room was always very tidy. She can't stand a mess." They
G26 162 employed an Indian cleaning **lady** to do the dusting and
polishing G26 163 and the sitting room was always full of fresh
flowers - freesias G26 164 and roses were Sarah's favourites - and
the walls were hung with G26 165 oil paintings. G26 166 "We didn't
en

13 ures. Perhaps a simple solution to this problem would be to B24
173 remedy some of the minor sticking points like ensuring that the
B24 174 main pedestrian access to the Queen's Hotel is kept
puddle-free. B24 175 I witnessed two wealthy **lady** visitors
attempting to negotiate B24 176 large puddles on the pavement in
order gain <&|>sic! access to the hotel B24 177 entrance. B24
178 Unless the councillors of our town address the basic errors of
B24 179 judgement demonstra

14 would give him a L23 186 message as soon as he returned. She
said that she would; then a L23 187 doubt came to him about her
reliability, and he said, "May L23 188 I ask who you are?" L23
189 "I am the cleaning **lady** here," she said. L23 190 He didn't
guess that she used the words 'cleaning **lady**' merely L23 191
because she knew that this was what he and her employer would
call L23 192 her (though not to her face), but the confidence and

15 As keeper of the Realm, he has come to P09 23 meet the King on
his return from Ireland, no doubt. How did he P09 24 greet
Henry?" P09 25 "Amicably, I gather. They are in conference now.
Room P09 26 can be found for **Lady** Philippa and her woman in one
of the domestic P09 27 dorters in the eastern bailey, but we shall
have to camp here P09 28 overnight. Sir Malcolm already has your
pavilion P09 29 erected." P09 30 "'Twill be no h

You can see that, as would be expected, *Lady* (with capital L) is
used in its literal sense, as a title in names. In addition, however,
there are several uses which are motivated by a desire to be polite,
using *lady* in cases in which *woman* would be factually appropriate
(see exx. 3, 4, 8, 13).

Individually, each of these uses is intended as a nice gesture. In
sum, however, they add up to trivialising the meaning of the word.
A term originally denoting a woman of high social rank becomes a
possibly patronising general term – a type of language change which
feminists have observed and deplored in this instance as in many
others. Examples 12 and 14 illustrate the compound *cleaning lady*, a
term for which alternatives are also in use.

The more examples of actual language use from corpora you will
look at, the more detailed your insights into such issues of usage
will become ...

Now, to continue this data-driven analysis of linguistic meaning,
look at the first 15 instances of the word *woman* from the same
corpus and see what happens if you try to replace *woman* by *lady*:

Woman in F-LOB

1 her novels to the handsomeness of her heroes and the G29 111 beauty of her heroines (not only from the neck up) is an indication G29 112 of the pleasure she took in good appearance. She was not without G29 113 vanity. "A pleasing young **woman**" was how a friend G29 114 described her to Cassandra, who repeated the compliment. G29 115 "Well", commented Jane, who was then thirty-five, G29 116 "that must do: one cannot pretend to anything better now, G29 1

2 lienated from his partner and baby. Some men may feel jealous that E33 113 what was once 'their' domain is now shared. Couples must try to E33 114 communicate their needs and try and find ways of remaining close to E33 115 each other while the **woman** is breastfeeding even if, during that E33 116 time, there is no intercourse. E33 117 Scott describes the other side of breastfeeding. While her E33 118 husband loved to watch her breastfeed and found her increased bust E33 119 si

3 G08 126 pregnancy with first-born Susanna, intimations of all the future G08 127 black ink of shame and stress - as well as some relief at G08 128 authorizing his trespass. But he had also felt resentment at being G08 129 'hooked' by an older **woman**. With her second pregnancy the strong G08 130 emotions he had felt were doubled; the creative ventricles of his G08 131 brain had been stretched to bursting point. Yet as the belly of his G08 132 spouse swelled abnormally large with visib

4 131 Judge Charles Mahon sentenced him to 18 months jail in addition A43 132 to a five year term for robbery that Riley has just started. A43 133 He told Riley: "You intimidated this couple and A43 134 imprisoned them in this **woman's** home for two or three hours. A43 135 "The very nature of the second attack was much nastier than the A43 136 first one and left the woman cowering against a wall saying 'keep A43 137 him from me'." A43 138 The co

5 06 135 wandered about Santiago, I had my ears pricked as it were, to D06 136 discover such a person. There were various art tours, with erudite D06 137 guides. There were several, worn, solitary men, but few women. Paul D06 138 had said that a **woman** was on her way, travelling with two children, D06 139 but my flight was booked before she was due. D06 140 Then suddenly I saw this smiling, open face, fair hair flying, D06 141 blue jeans, pink shirt. Without thinking I said in En

6 ting up of appointment panels staffed by G72 149 lawyers, judges and lay people and the use of established selection G72 150

methods. G72 151 Researcher Sally Hughes, who produced one of the reports, G72 152 The circuit judge – a **woman's** place, actually found that G72 153 the chance of women sitting on the bench had declined since the G72 154 1970s. G72 155 The publication of the Law Society reports and an article by G72 156 barrister Geoffrey Bindman, whi

7 ME FOR EVER K09 150 He shouldn't have talked so much. K09 151 The lights turned red and Jed was so angry, he stamped on the K09 152 brake much harder than he needed to. His bald tyres screeched on K09 153 the hot asphalt. A **woman** almost toppled off her gold high-heeled K09 154 sandals. She was wearing a T-shirt that said I CAME TO MOON BEACH K09 155 AND LIVED. K09 156 BUT ONLY JUST, Jed thought, through gritted teeth. BUT ONLY K09 157 JUST. K09 158 <

8 s not travelling, much of his time was spent on paperwork. G05 158 As a bachelor, he braved twenty years of this life without G05 159 complaint, and then one day in 1896 - when he was thirty-nine - he G05 160 married an attractive young **woman** who was nearly half his age. Her G05 161 name was Ida Mabel Limouzin. She had been a governess in India, and G05 162 had been engaged to marry another man, but was jilted, and accepted G05 163 Blair on the rebound. A slender woman with la

9 ight even C05 164 be dead, is less ironic than perfunctory. C05 165 Much of the action is seen through the eyes of the neighbours. C05 166 Bridget Turner, a matchless comic actress, is wasted in the part of C05 167 the thin-lipped old **woman**, respectable, inquisitive, unforgiving, C05 168 but defensively demanding her right to interfere. Predictable she C05 169 may be, but the character hangs together, unlike her male C05 170 counterpart (Paul Slack): a slob deserted by his w

10 5 "I'll bring it through as soon as it's sorted." P15 16 "Did you want me for anything else?" Frances P15 17 asked as she replaced the top on her pen and handed the forms back P15 18 to June. The older **woman** shook her head, and Frances stood up. P15 19 "In that case, I'll go and get my X-ray request P15 20 form." Leaving Dr Ryan in the office, she went out to the P15 21 desk where Lynne, another of the receptionists, gave h

11 f her with one N14 179 of his laden arms and steered her along to their seats. She had N14 180 never been more pleased to see anyone. N14 181 "Boy, that was close," he said to a N14 182 stewardess. N14 183 The **woman** smiled tightly and glanced quickly away from N14 184 Grace. N14 185 13 N14 186 ANTICIPATING EVERY DETAIL ON A deal this far ahead, when any N14 187 error

could cost him everything, was part of the excitement of N14 1

12 me!" P20 193 "No, I'm not!" P20 194 Charles looked down into Harriet's wide eyes. He was very fond P20 195 of her and they got on well. He knew he must marry one day, and if P20 196 he couldn't have the **woman** he loved, perhaps... P20 197 "What about marriage - and children?" P20 198 Harriet's heart gave a wild leap, but she paused gravely to P20 199 consider the question. P20 200 "I think it would

13 2 207 similar problem in terms of seeing 'gestalt' figures (duck/rabbit; J62 208 old/young woman), states: "I cannot 'choose' or 'decide' to J62 209 see the figure in a certain way. If I am able to see it as a J62 210 picture of an old **woman**, this is because that way of seeing forces J62 211 itself upon me. We can speak of the dawning of an aspect." J62 212 Proffered 'proof' about the 'gestalt' figure ('here is the nose, J62 213 here the chin', etc.) is proof only to

14 the power to vote. We could change the world! There would be P20 216 women in Parliament keeping an eye on the men. A woman Prime P20 217 Minister even!" Harriet's eyes glowed with fervour. P20 218 "The Prime Minister a **woman**? Och, Harriet, what P20 219 nonsense!" Chrissie giggled. P20 220 "Well, maybe that's going a wee bit far," her P20 221 friend agreed with a grin. "But you must come, Chrissie, to P20 222 help hold

15 he qualitative data already collected has produced a wealth of J29 24 information on the often subtle and complex negotiations between J29 25 household members concerning the allocation of money and resources. J29 26 As one **woman** describes: J29 27 I allot myself approximately about 250 (pounds per J29 28 month) for food, which might sound a lot for three of us but we've J29 29 got two big dogs that eat a lot and the two men eat like they've

3. According to the OED, the word *woman* is an Old English compound consisting of the Old English word for "woman" *wif* and the Old English word for "human being" *man*. The meaning "female human being" has persisted to the present day, but formally the word is no longer recognisable as a compound. The particular advantage of the OED for this kind of historical study is that it traces the meanings of a word from the earliest attestations to the present and gives authentic examples as citations.

The earliest meanings of *woman* are:

- An adult female human being (earliest attestation from the year 893)

- The female human being; the female part of the human race, the female sex (usage documented by attestations from 950)
- A female servant, esp. a lady's maid or personal attendant (from 766)

Lady goes back to an Old English compound consisting of *hlaf* (= loaf, bread) and *dig* (= to knead).

The earliest meanings of *lady* are:

- A mistress in relation to servants or slaves; the female head of a household (earliest attestation 825)
- A woman who rules over subjects, or to whom obedience or feudal homage is due; the feminine designation corresponding to *lord* (from 1000)
- A woman of superior position in society, or to whom such a position is conventionally or by courtesy attributed (from 1205)
- A woman whose manners, habits, and sentiments have the refinement characteristic of the higher ranks of society. (1861)

The first traces of the polite (or condescending) use of *lady* thus go back to the Middle Ages, and the usage emerges fully formed in 1861.

4. *We don't need no education.*

Informants responding to this example are very likely to point out that double negation of this type is considered a grammatical sign of uneducated or non-standard usage.

Hopefully, the war will soon be ended.

Unlike the first example, this use of *hopefully* as a sentence adverb is not considered a sign of uneducated usage but still disliked as an innovation by many speakers. Such speakers will point out that the supposedly correct use of *hopefully* is as a manner adverb, as in *they were all looking ahead hopefully*.

Let me assure you that I am not actuated by mercenary considerations.

On hearing this sentence people are likely to comment on its formal "Latinate" vocabulary (*actuate*, *mercenary*, *consideration*), which would be most unlikely to occur in this degree of concentration in present-day English. Responders well versed in 19th-century British fiction will additionally recognise an allusion to Mr. Micawber, a character from Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1849), who is famous for his pompous diction.

Had I in the least surmised that it was her husband's rash purchase of an expensive automobile that she was going on about I would have told her to shut up and get her act together.

This sentence is funny because it mixes very formal style in its first part (*surmise, purchase, inversion of subject and auxiliary in the subordinate conditional clause*) with informal and slangy expressions in its second half (e.g. *to go on about something*).

5. These onomatopoetic expressions are commonly used to make the point that the connection between sound and meaning is not arbitrary at least in some words. Note, however, that any acoustic similarity between the sound of a sneeze, or a cock crowing, and the words used to denote it is overlaid by arbitrary language-specific conventions, for example with regard to the number of syllables used. With regard to one verbal realisation of the sneeze in British English, there is even a dialect difference in comparison to American English.
6. quantum physics, quantity, quantitative, quantitatively
I go uto school every day
If he goes, I go too

All examples follow the same rule: /t/ is flapped between vowels, both within a word and across words, but only if the second vowel is not stressed. This environment is provided in the ending of **quantity** and in **go to**. The conditions do not apply, however, to the second /t/ in **quantitative** and the /t/ in **go too**, as here the vowels following the /t/ bear stress. Reduction of /t/ regularly occurs after nasals if the following vowel is not stressed. This explains the cases of *quantum*, *quantity* and *quantitative*.

7. Both texts are difficult to understand, but for contrasting reasons. The extract from the conversation is embedded in a communicative context which needs to be known to get the message. Furthermore, parts of it are not in standard English but in a North-of-England dialect. Foreign learners of English and even some native speakers from the language from outside Britain may thus find it difficult to understand a sentence such as "But he's one of them lads where she'll never have owt, cos he don't do, he won't bloody work will he?" = "But he is one of those young men from whom she will never have anything, because he doesn't do [any work]/ won't really work ..."

The second example, from a scholarly article in the natural sciences, shows a simple and common clause pattern (SVO), but has extremely complicated modification structures in the object noun phrase.

8. Work out an answer to this question by yourself!