**European Structural Linguistics**

**1- Ferdinand de Saussure’s Dichotomies**

F.de Saussure was a Genera-born Swiss linguist (1857\_1913).He is widely considered the ‘’father’ of 20th c linguistic. He died without having written any major work on general linguistics, but his students collected together his lecture notes and published then under the title “cours de linguistique Générale” , translated as” course in General Linguistics”(1916) which exerted a major in fluence on the course of linguistics particularly in Europe .

De Saussure’s crucial contribution was his explicit statement that all language items are essentially interlinked .This was an aspect of language which had not been stressed before, nobody has examined the relationship of each element to all the others .It was de Saussure who introduced “chess analogy”, he suggested that language is like a game of chess , a system in which each item is defined by its relationship to all the others .He went further explaining that a person can be a good player of chess without knowing the rules, and concentrating on the game not around it . His insistence on the fact that language is a carefully built structure of interwoven elements initiated the era of Structural linguistics. All linguistics since de Saussure is structural, structural in this new brought sense merely means the recognition that language is a pattern of system composed of interdependent elements rather than a collection of unrelated individual elements.

***A- Langue/parole***

De Saussure was the first who drew distinction between the language system and the use of language

\*Langue: is the language system (gr, vocab, pronunciation …) of a community: it is something that the individual speaker can make use bat cannot affect by himself: it is a social phenomenon (social fact). Langue is the abstract linguistic system that is shared by all the members of the speech community and no one possesses it, it exists perfectly only within a collectivity. Langue, which is similar to our knowledge of language , is the repertoire or sum of rules and lexis which is stored in the brain of each member of a speech community .

\* Parole: is idiosyncratic, the product and the realization of langue by individuals when putting it into practice. De Saussure pointed out that parole, as being the speech of individuals, is not perfect and may contain mistakes like: slips of tongue, hesitations, false starts, sentences broken off halfway and other familiar characteristics of informal speech, thus, if ever there is a mistake, it is considered as a mistake of parole.

In this view, linguists should ignore these features and seek for the system behind them, this system is the proper object of a linguistic study, it can be regarded as an object which is relatively stable, free from idiosyncrasy and that exists outside the individual who can neither create it for himself nor modify it arbitrarily .Parole means individual speech in society, or the individual way of applying the rules in actual speech. Langue may be partially equated with Chomsky’s competence, and parole with performance.

***B-Synchrony/Diachrony***

Before de Saussure, linguistics was diachronic (historical) or philology. This kind of study was prescriptive. i.e. It is used to set up rules to the speakers (gr rules), how language should be used and not how it is used .

*Diachronic linguistics* is the study of *language through history*. While *synchronic linguistics* means the study of *language as it is used by its speakers at a given point in time*. The first type of study can be called historical (historical ling) and the second type descriptive (descriptive ling ).Diachronic ling is historical in the sense that it deals with the historical evolution of particular languages , for example, a diachronic study of English would examine the development of old English into Middle English and then into Modern English. A diachronic study of Arabic would be concerned with its evolution from pre-Islamic period to the present day, and a diachronic study of French would deal with its historical development from Latin.

Synchronic ling looks at a specific state of a language at a given time. It can examine a language that is spoken today as well as an old language. A linguist can investigate a language that is no longer spoken/used if he has sufficient recorded data on which to rely.

It was de Saussure (1916), who first stressed the importance of synchronic ling, which is more complete and precise than diachronic ling, since with the latter, it is very hard to have enough reliable recorded materials, and it is not possible to check hypotheses against the intuition of native speakers. That is why there is a danger for diachronic studies to be speculative.

Nevertheless, many ‘dead’ languages such as Latin can be studied reasonably systematically from a synchronic point of view, as they have left behind enough recorded materials such as written texts, official pronouncements and literary works. Through these materials, the Latin used at a certain period of history can be synchronically described in detail. The synchronic study of language was undertaken in the first half of the 20th c as reaction against the 19th c ‘comparative philology’. Modern ling is characterized by the primacy of the synchronic description of lge. Most 20th c linguistic studies are concerned with language synchronically in the sense that they overlook diachronic features and historical ling phenomena which are considered as irrelevant to the description of particular states of languages.

***C-Syntagmatic/Paradigmatic Relations***

De Saussure declared that language is a two dimensional system: one horizontal representing the syntagmatic relations, the other vertical representing paradigmatic relations .

Syntagmatic relations are essentially relations of combination, inclusion and co-occurrence i.e. the relations between an item in a particular position in the sentence and other items that occur in other positions in the same sentence (how items combine together to make well-formed sentences).

Paradigmatic relations are essentially relations of selection substitution and exclusion i.e. the relation between an item in a particular syntactic position and other items that might have been chosen but are not.

The burglar sneezed loudly paradigmatic relations

The robber coughed softly

The cat hissed noisily

Syntagmatic relations

When we look at syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations we can notice that words belonging to the same classes can combine with one another to build large constructions, and words belonging to the same class substitute for one another in the same slot. Rules controlling the combination and the substitution of items are found in ‘langue’. If one element is affected, the whole system will be affected. Thus, all words have a relation with those words which are not present but are part of the language.

***D-The Arbitrary Nature of the sign***

De Saussure defined language as being a symbolic system(it is a system of signs and symbols) based on pure or arbitrary conventions infinitely extendible and modifiable according to the changing needs and the conditions of the speakers. For him, the linguistic sign is the basic unit of communication, a unit within the langue of the community. Langue in this sense can be seen as‘s system of sings’. It unites a concept with a sound-image. The concept is referred to as ‘the signified’ and the sound-image as the ‘signifier.

Signifier is the word given arbitrary to the object or idea it defines (as perceived by the ear), whereas the signified is the thing, object or idea being referred to. The signifier changes from one language to another while the signified remains always the same. E.g: book, livre,كتاب.

*Arbitrariness:* the forms of linguistic signs bear no natural resemblance to their meaning. The link between them is a matter of convention, and convention differ radically across languages. Thus , the English word “dog” happens to denote a particular four-footed domesticated creature, the same creature which is denoted in French by the completely different form “chien” .

Although the link between form and meaning is arbitrary in this respect that is not to say that there is no relationship between them at all. Words are arbitrary in form, but they are not random in their use. On the contrary, it is precisely because linguistic forms do not resemble what they signify that they can be used to encode what is significant by convention in different communities.

**The Prague Linguistic Circle**

***1-Hitory***

The Prague Linguistic circle came into being and properly started its activity in 1926, the official year of its member’s first meeting and the “so-called” classical period in the activity of the circle. However, its members’ earlier preoccupations and research in the field of language and their first irregular meeting should not be left aside. These supplied materials for the papers and works which were later written and published by the members of the Prague School and represented the foundations on which further research was built.

The circle’s roots can be dated back as far as 1911 when Vilém Mathésius who was to become an important member of the circle, independently of and without having any connection with De Saussure, predicted the synchronic study of lge. The preoccupations and the research of its members did not emerge out of nothing, they set out with a solid foundation behind them. The forerunners of the Prague Linguistic Circle had been De Saussure’s “Course in General Linguistics” and the Moscow Linguistic Circle founded in 1915. The members of the Moscow Linguistic circle were interested in and also dealt with problems regarding language and linguistics. The sources on which its members’ studies were based were De Saurssure’s and Baudouin de courtenay’s works. Due to historical background and events which occurred there, the member of the Moscow linguistic circle were forced to leave Russia and to continue their activity elsewhere.

Roman Jakobson and Nicholay Serghey Trubetzkoy fled to Czechoslovakia, where they joined the Prague Linguistic Circle. Besides the scholars of Russian origin, the circle also counted among its founding members personalities such as Mathésius, Serghey Karcévsky and Jan Mukarovsky. In 1930, younger members joined the circle: René Wellek and Felix Vodicka and many visitors among whom Emile Benveniste had the opportunity of presenting papers in the circle .

The circle united scholar who wrote and published their papers in German, French, Russian and Czech. They had the same preoccupations and interests without creating and without using the same lge. Up to that point mention should be made upon an important aspect in the activity of the circle, namely its multilingualism. Moreover, not only did the circle benefit from the former activity of the Moscow Ling Circle but it also inherited the legacy left in the field of language by De Saussure. All these turned the Prague Ling Circle into one of the most influential, multilingual and important schools of linguistics.

In 1928, at the first International Congress of Linguistics organized in the Hague, the Prague participants presented the Prague circle program drafted by Roman Jakobson and co-signed by Nicholay Trubetzkoy and Sghey Karcévsky . A year later, in 1929 at the first International Congress of Slavicists held in Prague, the Prague scholars launched “ Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague” where they recorded and published the results of their efforts . The first volume of « Travaux du Cercle du Prague », volume entitled « Thèses du Cercle Linguistique de Prague » sets out the principles of the new linguistics, a Structural linguistics

***2- Combination of Structuralism and Functionalism***

As regards linguistics, the members of the circle laid down as the basis for further research, important concepts and theories such as the approach to the study of language as a synchronic system, the functionality of elements of language and the importance of the social function of lge. In the field of ling, they were influenced by De Saussure and by his incipient structuralism. Structuralism is unanimously believed to have appeared in 1916 when De Saussure’s “Course in General Linguistics” was published. He left a legacy which greatly influenced ling in general and members of the Prague Circle in particular.

The Prague members approached language systematically and structurally and they defined language as a system of signs. In studying language, the Prague scholars took into account and attached a great importance to external factors( political, social and geographical factors). A strong emphasis was laid on the functions of language in the act of communication and the role of language in society. Linguists of the Prague Circle stressed the functionality of element within language, the contrast of language elements to one another and the total pattern or system formed by these contrasts , and they had distinguished themselves in the study of sound system.

Prague structuralism is functionalistic. Functionalism represents approaching language from the perspective of the functions performed by it (language). The Prague school becomes famous for its interest in the application of functionalism, the study of how elements of a language accomplish cognition, expression and conation. This combination of structuralism with functionalism is yet another contribution to modern linguistics.

***3- Synchrony/Diachrony***

Another distinction mode by De Saussure and adopted by the members of the circle is synchrony-diachrony. Saussure maintained that whereas synchronic ling should deal with the structure of a language at a given point in time, diachronic ling should be concerned with the development of isolated elements . To support this distinction, he argued that in the language system there are only differences without positive terms and every element derives its identity from its distinction to other elements in the same system.

What the members of the circle did was that they tried to reconcile De Saussure’s opposition of synchrony and diachrony. In supporting this, Mathésuis pointed out the positive and negative aspects of descriptive and historical research, and Jakobson taking into account De Saussure’s theory stated that he tried to suppress the tie between the system of a language and its modifications by considering the system as exclusively belonging to synchrony and assigning modifications to the sphere of diachrony alone. However, Jakobson showed that the concepts of a system and its change are not only compatible but also indissolubly tied.

***4- Phonological Contributions***

The Prague school is basically associated with its phonology, with its phonologically relevant functions: expressive and demarcative and with its theory of oppositions which its members provided ling with. In fact, the distinction between phonetics and phonology is associated with the Prague school. The Circle changed the development of the European ling and marked the beginning of a new science-phonology. This new science operate with concepts, which are to become important for analytical grammar: opposition, synchrony, diachrony, marked, unmarked.

As it is conceived by the circle, phonology has the following tasks: to identify the characteristics of particular phonological systems in terms of the language, particular range of significant differences among “acoustic-motor images”, to specify the types of differences that can be found in general, to formulate laws governing the relations of those correlations to one another with in particular phonological systems: to found phonetic studies on acoustic rather than articulatory basis.

Trubetzkoy chiefly contributed to phonology and phonological theory. He signed the birth certificate of functional phonology, he made the distinction between phonetics by considering the criterion of function and he also formulated the principles of phonology. It is also Trubetzkoy who provided the school’s most encompassing and thorough work on phonology “Principles of Phonology”. In separating phonetics from phonology and phoneme from sound, Trubetzkoy adopted De saussure’s distinction between langue and parole. Trubetzkoy defined the phoneme as a Set of distinctive features and he linked the concepts of neutralization with the distinction marked /unmarked. According to his theory, when two phonemes are distinguished by the presence /absence of a single distinctive feature, one of them is marked and the other unmarked. He also laid stress on the concept of phonological opposition and founded a new theory, the theory of opposition.

***5/ Mathèsius contribution***

The most important and valuation contribution of the Prague Linguistic circle was brought by Vilèm Mathèsius in the field of syntax, namely the distinction which he made between theme and rheme \_ He tried to surpass phonology and to study grammar, especially syntax. Mathèsius approached and analyzed the sentence from a functional perspective, he stated that the sentence has two parts: the theme and the rheme. By the theme of a sentence is meant the part that refers to what is already known or given in the context while the rheme is the part that conveys new information. Although this contribution represents the school’s last efforts to take and conquer another area of linguistics, syntax, Mathésius’ work and terminology remained unknown and without echo in the world of linguistics.

1948 respresents the year when Prague scholars went public for the last time. This is the year when the last lecture of the circle took place. The Prague school’s linguistics theory and activity influenced and changed the character of the European linguistics. Trubetzkoy’s contribution were inherited and further elaborated by André Martinet who found the functionalist school and develops functionalist linguistics. The new concept and theories, launched by the Prague linguistic circle became key concepts in linguistics so happened the concept of neutralization and the theory of markedness which were inherited by Generative Grammar.

Without the Prague school, the image of the 20th c structuralism and linguistics is incomplete both historically and theoretically. They brought innovation and contributions not only to the development of linguistics, but also to the development of phonetics, phonology, and syntax.

**The London School**

**Introduction**

The London school refers to the kind of linguistic scholarship in England, a country that has both an unusually long history in linguistics and peculiar features in modern linguistics. The man who turned linguistics proper into a recognized distinct academic subject in Britain was J.R.Firth (1890\_1960), the first Professor of general linguistics in Great Britain (1944). Firth was influenced by the anthropologist B.Malinowski (1884\_1942). In turn, he influenced his student, the well-known linguist M.A.K. Halliday. The three men all stressed the importance of context of situation and the system aspect of language. Thus, the London school is also known as Systemic linguistic.

***1\_ Malinowski’s theory***

Malinowski was a professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics from 1927 onwards. The most important aspect of his theorizing, as distinct from his purely ethnographic work, concerned the functioning of language. For Malinowski, to think of language as a means of transfusing ideas from the head of the speaker to that of the listener was a misleading myth. He said that language is to be regarded as a mode of action, rather than a counterpart of thought. According to him, the meaning of on utterance does not come from the ideas of the words comprising it but from its relation to the situation al context in which the utterance occurs.

Malinowski believed that utterances and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of the words. The meaning of spoken utterances could always be determined by the context of situation. He distinguished three types of context of situation.

*1. Situations in which speech interrelates with bodily activity:*  The meaning of a word is not given by the physical properties of its referent, but by its function. In learning the meaning of a word, the process is not accompanied by explanation but by learning to handle it. Likewise, a verb, a word for action, receives its meaning through an active participation in the action.

*2. Narrative situation*s: Malinowski further distinguished “the situation of the moment of narration” and “the situation referred to by the narrative.” The first case is made up of the respective social, intellectual and emotional attitudes of those present, and the second case derive its meaning from the context referred to (as in fairy tale).

*3. Situation in which speech is wed to fill a speech vacuum phatic communion:* Cases of language used in free, aimless, social intercourse, such use of language is not the least related to human activities, and its meaning cannot possibly come from sociability and The fact of personal communion of these people. For example, the function of a polite utterance has nothing to do with the meaning of the words in it. Malinowski called such utterances “phatic communion”.

***2\_ Firth’s theory***

Influenced by Malinowski, Firth regarded language as a social process, as a means of social life, rather than simply as a set of agreed-upon, semiotics and signals. He insisted that the object of linguistic study is language in actual use and the goal of linguistic inquiry is to analyze meaningful elements of language in order to establish corresponding relations between linguistic and non-linguistic elements the methods of linguistic study is to decide on the composite elements of language, explain their relations on various levels and ultimately explicate the internal relations between these elements and human activities in the environment of language.

Firth held that meaning is use, thus defining meaning as the relationship between an element at any level and its context on that level. According to his theorizing, the meaning of any sentence consists of five pats:

1\_the relationship of each phoneme to its phonetic context.

2\_the relationship of each lexical item to the others in the sentence.

3\_the morphological relations of each word.

4\_the sentence type of which the given sentence is an example.

5\_the relationship of the sentence to its context of situation.

Firth’s own study focused on the context of situation as Malinowski did. He defined the context of situation as including the entire cultural setting of speech and the personal history of the participants rather than as simply the context of human activity going on at the moment.

Long before the distinction between semantics and pragmatics had been established, Firth argued for the context of situation in the communication of meaning. Social status, setting, level of formality, and cultural tradition to the context in which language is used, and crucially, they affect the linguistic forms we choose when speaking. The linguistic context is also significant, since certain words habitually co-occur, or collocate.

Firth tried to set up a model for illustrating the close relationship between language use and the context of situation which contains the following components:

1. The relevant features of the participants: persons, personalities.

A: the verbal action of the participants.

B: the nonverbal action of the participants.

2. The relevant objects.

3: the effects of the verbal action.

Firth made more specific and more detailed contextual analyses. He put forward the idea that in analyzing a typical context of situation, one has to carry ant the analysis on the following levels:

1. The internal relation of the text

A. the syntagmatic relation between the elements in the structure.

B. the paradigmatic relation between units of the system.

2. The internal relation of the context of situation

A. the relation between text and nonlinguistic elements.

B. the analytical relation between “bits” and “pieces” of the text (words, parts of words, phrases) And the special elements within the context (items, objects, persons, personalities, events).

***3\_Halliday and the systemic-Functional Grammar***

M.A.K.Halliday has developed the idea stemming from Firth’s theories in the London School. His systemic-Functional Grammar is a sociologically oriented functional linguistic approach. Systemic-Functional Grammar has two components; systemic Grammar and Functional Grammar.

***1. Systemic Grammar:***

The system is a list of choices that are available in the grammar of a language the number system in English, for example, contains two choices: singular and plural. The person system offers three choices, first person, second person, and third person. There are also systems of gender, tense and mood, etc .

A system is a list of things between which it is possible to choose. So they are meanings, which the grammar can distinguish. The items in a system are called options. And the items of a particular system have something in common, belonging to the same area of meaning. For instance, singular and plural are distinct, but they both have to do with number. All systems have 3 essential characteristics:

Firstly, the terms in a system are mutually exclusive.

Secondly, a system is finite. It is possible to fix a limit for a system and to say that it consists of a certain countable number of items, no more, and no less.

Thirdly, the meaning of each item in a system depends on the meaning of the other items in the system. If the meaning of one term is changed, the meaning of the other items will change.

***2. Functional Grammar:***

Functional aspect is also termed as sociosemantics. According to Halliday, the context of situation or the social context contains three components:

Field of discourse: the subject matter being discussed.

Tenor of discourse: the social relations between the participants.

Mode of discourse: the channel of communication.

These three situational components are related to three important functions of language identified by Halliday: ideational, interpersonal and textual. Language serves for the expression of content (ideational): language serves to established and maintain social relations (interpersonal): language enables people to construct texts (textual). These three functions are related to three grammatical systems: transitivity, mood and theme.

*2.1. Interpersonal function:*

It is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee the grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general and speech roles in particular i.e. for establishing, changing, and maintaining interpersonal relations.

*2.2. Ideational function:*

It is concerned with “ideation”, grammatical resources for constructing our experience of the world around and inside us. This function is analyzed in terms of transitivity system i.e. a choice between the six processes and the participants and circumstances associated with those processes. A clause” in its ideational function is a means of representing patterns of experience i.e.to build a mental picture of reality. This is what people employ to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them; these going-on (processes) are sorted out in the semantic system of the language and expressed through the grammar of the clause. The system that works out the types of process and hence participants in the process and circumstances as associated with the process is known as the Transitivity system. In English, the processes are the following:

1- Material process: or the process of doing, construes doings and happenings including actions, activities and events. A material clause is characterized by particular structural configurations, such as: Actor + Process + Goal .

Eg: The lion caught the tourist.

2- Mental process: construes sensing, perception, cognition, intention, and emotion; configurations of a process of consciousness involves a participant endowed with consciousness and typically a participant entering into or created by that consciousness, configurated as: Senser + Process + Phenomenon.

Eg: The saw the morning star.

She liked the gift.

3- Relational Processes: serve to characterize and to identify. If material process is concerned with doing and mental process have to do with being or having. They are concerned with the relationship set up between two things or concepts, for instance, “Edward is clever”; “Mary is the doctor”. Relational processes are expressed in two modes: “attributive” and “identifying”.

In the attributive mode, an Attribute is ascribed to some entity (carrier) while in in the identifying mode, one entity (identifier) is used to identify another (identified). In the example, “Edward is clever”, “Edward” is the carrier; the verb “is” signifies an Attribute Relational Process and “clever” is the Attribute. But, in the second example, “Mary” is the identified element, the verb “is” represents the process, and “the teacher” is the identifier.

4- Behavioral Processes: are processes of physiological and psychological behavior, like smiling, coughing, laughing, breathing… they usually have one participant only-the behaver. They are intermediate between material and mental processes, in that the behaver is typically a conscious being, like the senser, but the process functions more like one of “doing”.

Eg: John smiled.

5- Verbal Processes: are processes of “saying” of any kind. It covers “any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning”. In Halliday’s terms “like the notice tells you to keep quiet or my watch says it’s half past ten”. The verbalization (the message) itself is termed “verbiage” and the participants associated with it are “Sayer”, the one who gives out the message, and “Receiver”, the one to whom the message is addressed.

Eg: She told me a story.

“She” is the Sayer, the verb “told” represents the “Verbal Process”, “me” is the Receiver of the message, and finally “a story” is the Verbiage.

6- Existential Processes: show that something exist or happens the word “there” is frequently used in such clauses, but it has no identified function or meaning, and is merely a subject filler.

The typical verbs used in these clauses are “be”, “exist”, “arise” and other verbs expressing existence. The nominal group that follows these verbs, is called “Existent”.

Eg: there was no choice.

‘No choice’ is the Existent, and ‘was’ is the Existential process.

***2.3. Textual Function:***

It is concerned with the creation of text with the presentation of ideational and interpersonal meaning as information that can be shared by speaker and listener in text unfolding in context. This function consists of two sub-functions Theme and Rheme.

2.3.1. Theme and Rheme

Theme : the element which serves as the point of departure : it is that with which the clause is concerned.

As a general guide, the theme can be identified as the element which come in first position in the clause.

Rheme: the part in which the theme is developed, the remainder of the message, is called the Rheme.

Eg: the shoe was lost.