

Lecture One: An introduction to Linguistics

1. What is Linguistics?

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It seeks to understand how language functions as a system and how individual languages are structured and used. Linguists may focus on language as a general human capacity, or they may compare specific languages in order to identify similarities and differences.

When we use the term **language** (without an article), we refer to the human ability to communicate through structured systems of signs. Language enables us to express thoughts, concepts, information, emotions, and attitudes. In this sense, language is a uniquely human phenomenon and a central feature of social life.

In contrast, **a language** refers to a particular linguistic system spoken by a community, such as English, German, Spanish, Arabic, Hindi, or Mandarin Chinese. It is generally estimated that approximately 6,000 languages are currently spoken worldwide. However, the concept of “a language” is not always straightforward. One important question concerns the distinction between a language and a dialect. The boundary between the two is often unclear and may depend on social, political, or cultural factors rather than purely linguistic ones.

2. Methodological Approaches in Linguistics

Linguistics is a diverse field, and the way we study language depends on the approach we choose. Different approaches focus on different aspects of language and answer different questions. Understanding these approaches helps us select appropriate methods and interpret findings correctly. Each approach has its own assumptions, methods, and terminology, and the same linguistic phenomenon can be described and analyzed differently depending on the perspective taken.

2.1. Synchronic vs. Diachronic Linguistics

Synchronic linguistics examines a language at a specific point in time, capturing its structure, usage, and patterns as they exist in that moment, while **diachronic linguistics** investigates how language changes over time by comparing different historical stages to understand its evolution. Choosing between a synchronic or diachronic perspective influences both the type of data we collect and the conclusions we draw, as **synchronic** studies reveal the current state of a language, whereas **diachronic** studies explain the processes behind language change and development.

2.2. Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Linguistics

Descriptive linguistics focuses on how people actually use language, documenting grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation without judgment, whereas **prescriptive linguistics** sets rules for how language should be used, often based on historical norms or social standards. Being aware of this distinction is important because one approach aims to observe and record language as it exists, while the other seeks to regulate it, which can lead to very different interpretations of the same feature—for

example, descriptively, people often say “ I ain’t going” in casual speech, which reflects actual usage, while prescriptively, standard grammar rules would insist on “I am not going.”

2.3. Formal vs. Functional Linguistics

Formal linguistics emphasizes the structure of language, investigating grammar, syntax, and phonology to uncover the rules that govern language systems, while **functional linguistics** focuses on language use, exploring how it achieves communicative purposes and adapts to social contexts. These perspectives often complement each other. To illustrate, formally we can analyze the structure of a question like “Are you coming?” by its word order and auxiliary verb, while functionally we consider that it can serve to request information, invite someone, or check understanding depending on context.

2.4. Contrastive Linguistics vs. Language Typology

Contrastive linguistics compares two or more languages directly, often to identify differences and similarities for purposes such as translation, teaching, or learning, while **language typology** classifies languages according to structural or functional features, regardless of historical relationships. Both approaches recognize patterns across languages, but their focus differs: **contrastive studies** are comparative and applied, whereas typology is classificatory and theoretical, for example, a **contrastive study** might compare English and French verb tenses to help learners avoid errors, while a **typological study** would classify languages as SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) like English or SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) like Japanese, showing structural patterns across unrelated languages.

2.5. Theoretical, Applied, and General Linguistics

Theoretical linguistics develops models to explain how language works, often in an abstract and analytical way, it builds models, describes structures and develops linguistic theories (e.g., analyzing how the English present perfect is structured and what it means). **Applied linguistics**, however, uses linguistic knowledge to solve practical problems, such as teaching English, designing dictionaries, or developing speech technologies (using those theoretical models to solve practical problems such as designing ESL exercises on the present perfect or studying learner errors while using this tense). **General linguistics** provides an overview of linguistic knowledge, bridging theory and practice and connecting different approaches, it studies the general structure, principles, and universal features of human language rather than focusing on a specific language (e.g. studying how different languages express time), thus connecting theory and practice. The choice of focus shapes not only methodology but also the questions we consider meaningful and the outcomes we expect, for example, a theoretical linguist might model how English tense systems function, an **applied** linguist might use that model to create exercises for ESL learners, and a **general linguist** would integrate these perspectives to provide a broader understanding. Each approach comes with its own theories, models, and terminology, so the same linguistic phenomenon can have multiple valid descriptions depending on perspective. Being aware of these differences helps linguists critically evaluate research, select methods appropriately, and communicate findings clearly.

3. Branches of Linguistics: Levels of Analysis

One of the central goals of linguistics is to understand how language is structured. To do this systematically, linguists divide language into different **levels of analysis**, each focusing on a particular aspect of linguistic structure. The level of analysis can be broadly divided into **micro-linguistics** and **macro-linguistics**. Micro-linguistics focuses on the **internal structure of language itself** (sounds, words, sentences, and meaning) without reference to social or cognitive contexts. Macro-linguistics, in contrast, examines **language in relation to society, the mind, and culture**, exploring how language interacts with human experience, history, and social structures.

Three core branches at the **structural level (Micro level)** are **phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics**. These branches are interconnected, but each examines language from a distinct perspective.

3.1. Micro-Linguistics Level of Analysis

3.1.1. Phonology

Phonology is the branch of linguistics that studies the sound system of a language. It does not simply describe sounds physically (that is the role of phonetics), but rather examines how sounds function and pattern within a particular language.

At the core of phonology is the concept of the **phoneme**, which is the smallest unit of sound capable of distinguishing meaning. For example, in English, the words *pat* and *bat* differ by only one sound /p/ and /b/, yet this difference changes the meaning of the word. Therefore, /p/ and /b/ are separate phonemes in English.

Phonology also studies **allophones**, which are different pronunciations of the same phoneme that do not change meaning. For example, the /p/ sound in *pin* is aspirated (pronounced with a puff of air), while in *spin* it is not aspirated. English speakers recognize both as the same phoneme /p/ because the variation does not create a difference in meaning. Phonology, therefore, focuses on patterns, contrasts, and rules governing sound systems in a language.

3.1.2. Morphology

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words and the processes by which words are formed. It examines how smaller meaningful elements combine to create words. The basic unit of morphology is the **morpheme**, defined as the smallest unit of meaning or grammatical function in a language. For example, the word *unhappiness* consists of three morphemes: *un-* (a prefix meaning “not”), *happy* (a root), and *-ness* (a suffix forming a noun). Each part contributes meaning to the whole word. Morphology also investigates **word formation processes**, such as:

- **Compounding:** combining two independent words (e.g., *blackboard*, *toothpaste*).
- **Derivation:** adding prefixes or suffixes to create new words or change word class (e.g., *teach* → *teacher*).

- **Inflection:** modifying a word to express grammatical information without changing its core meaning (e.g., *walk* → *walked*, *cat* → *cats*).

Morphology helps us understand how vocabulary is structured and how grammatical information is encoded within words.

3.1.3. Syntax

Syntax is the branch of linguistics that studies how words combine to form sentences. It focuses on sentence structure and the rules that govern grammatical organization.

Syntax examines different **sentence types**, such as:

- **Declarative:** *She is reading a book.*
- **Interrogative:** *Is she reading a book?*
- **Imperative:** *Read the book.*
- **Exclamatory:** *What an interesting book!*

It also studies **grammatical rules**, including:

- **Agreement** (e.g., *She runs* vs. *They run*),
- **Tense** (past, present, future),
- **Aspect** (progressive, perfect forms such as *is running*, *has run*).

Syntax allows linguists to explain why some sentences are grammatical (e.g., *She is happy*) while others are not (e.g., *Is happy she* in standard English). It reveals the underlying patterns that make sentences meaningful and structurally acceptable.

3.1.4. Semantics

Semantics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of meaning in language. While phonology, morphology, and syntax focus on form and structure, semantics examines how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning. It seeks to explain how speakers understand linguistic expressions and how meaning is systematically encoded in language. A key distinction in semantics is between **denotation** and **connotation**.

- ✓ **Denotation** refers to the literal, dictionary meaning of a word. For example, the word *rose* denotes a type of flower.
- ✓ **Connotation**, on the other hand, refers to the emotional, cultural, or associative meanings that a word may carry. The word *rose* may connote love, romance, or beauty depending on cultural context.

Semantics, therefore, helps explain not only what words refer to, but also how meaning is structured and interpreted within the linguistic system.

3.1.5. Pragmatics

Pragmatics studies how language is used in context and how meaning is shaped by situational factors. Unlike semantics, which focuses on literal meaning, pragmatics examines how speakers convey intended meaning beyond what is explicitly stated.

One important concept in pragmatics is **speech acts**, which are actions performed through language. When someone says, “*Can you open the window?*”, the sentence is grammatically a question, but

functionally it performs a **request**. Other common speech acts include promises, apologies, commands, and invitations. Pragmatics demonstrates that meaning is not determined solely by words and grammar, but also by context, shared knowledge, and speaker intention.

3.2. Macro-Linguistic Level of Analysis

1. **Historical Linguistics:** Studies how languages change over time, tracing developments in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation across different historical stages.
2. **Sociolinguistics:** Examines the relationship between society and language, including the effects of culture, social structures, and group identity on language use.
3. **Psycholinguistics:** Focuses on the mental processes involved in language, including how language is represented, processed, and produced in the brain.
4. **Neurolinguistics:** Investigates how language is represented and stored in the brain, how it is acquired, and how the brain supports language production and comprehension.
5. **Computational Linguistics:** Applies computer science techniques to model and process natural language, including language analysis, synthesis, and rule-based systems.
6. **Stylistics:** Studies and interprets style, tone, and rhetorical features in spoken and written language, often bridging literature and linguistics.
7. **Geolinguistics / Language Geography:** Studies regional and local language variations, including dialects, and the geographic distribution of linguistic features.
8. **Cognitive Linguistics:** Explores the relationship between language, thought, and sociocultural experience, emphasizing that meaning and form are inseparable in understanding language.

Summary:

- Linguistics is the scientific study of language as both a structured system and a social phenomenon.
- Different approaches (synchronic/diachronic, descriptive/prescriptive, formal/functional, contrastive/typological, theoretical/applied) highlight different dimensions of language.
- The choice of approach influences the questions asked, the data selected, and the interpretations proposed.
- The core structural levels—phonology, morphology, and syntax—explain how sounds are organized, how words are formed, and how sentences are structured.
- Together, these approaches and levels of analysis provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexity and diversity of language.

- This framework forms the foundation for further study in areas such as semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.

Lecture Two:
Morphology: The Structure of English Words

1. Morphology: Definition

Morphology is the branch of linguistics that studies the **internal structure of words** and the processes by which words are formed. It focuses on **morphemes**, the smallest units of meaning in a language, rather than on syllables, which are units of sound. While syntax examines how words combine into phrases and sentences, morphology focuses on **how words themselves are constructed** from smaller meaning-bearing units called **morphemes**. The term literally means “the study of forms,” referring to the shapes and structures of words. Studying morphology helps understand:

- **Vocabulary structure** – how words are systematically formed.
- **Grammatical encoding** – how tense (e.g., *walk* → *walked*), (e.g., *cat* → *cats*), degree (e.g., *tall* → *taller* → *tallest*), or person (e.g., *I walk* → *he walks*).

Words may appear discrete in writing (separated by spaces), but many are **composite structures** of multiple morphemes. For example:

Reopened = re- (again) + open (root) + -ed (past tense)

2. Free Vs Bound Morpheme

A morpheme is the smallest meaning-bearing or grammatical unit. Morphemes can be **free** (independent words, e.g., "book") or **bound** (dependent elements, e.g., prefixes or suffixes like "un-" or "-ing").

Morphemes are classified as:

Morpheme Type	Free / Bound	Examples
Free	Can stand alone	happy, dog, open
Bound	Must attach	un-, -ness, -ed, -s

3. Other Morpheme Classifications :

3. 1. Lexical Vs Functional Morphemes

Lexical morphemes are morphemes that carry content meaning. They refer to objects, actions, qualities, and concepts in the real world. In other words, they provide the main semantic content of a sentence. They belong to what we traditionally call open word classes, because new lexical items can easily be added to them.

Examples of lexical morphemes include:

- ✓ **Nouns:** *house, tiger, teacher, freedom*
- ✓ **Verbs:** *open, run, speak, analyze*
- ✓ **Adjectives:** *happy, large, intelligent*
- ✓ **Adverbs:** *quickly, silently, carefully*

For example, in the sentence: *The tiger runs quickly.*

The words *tiger*, *runs*, and *quickly* are **lexical morphemes** because they express the main meaning of the sentence. They tell us *who*, *what action*, and *how*.

Lexical morphemes are typically free morphemes, that is to say, they can stand alone as independent words. However, they can also serve as bases to which derivational or inflectional morphemes are attached:

- *run* → *runner* → *running*
- *happy* → *happiness*

Thus, lexical morphemes form the **core vocabulary** of a language.

Functional morphemes, by contrast, do not carry rich lexical meaning. Instead, they serve **grammatical or structural functions** in sentences. Their role is to show relationships between words and to organize the sentence grammatically.

They belong to **closed word classes**, meaning it is rare for new items to be added.

Examples include:

- ✓ **Conjunctions:** *and, but, because*
- ✓ **Prepositions:** *in, on, at, under*
- ✓ **Articles:** *the, a, an*
- ✓ **Pronouns:** *it, she, they*
- ✓ **Auxiliaries:** *is, have, will*

For example, in the sentence: *The tiger runs quickly.*

The word **‘the’** is a functional morpheme. It does not describe anything new about the tiger, but it signals that the noun is definite. Its role is grammatical, not lexical. Unlike lexical morphemes, functional morphemes often express:

- **Grammatical relationships** (e.g., *in the house*)
- **Sentence structure** (e.g., *and, because*)
- **Reference and agreement** (e.g., *she, they*)

Although functional morphemes (such as articles, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, and inflectional endings) may seem small and less meaningful, functional morphemes are essential for sentence formation because they signal relationships between words. Thus, communication would be structurally incomplete without them.

3.2. Derivational Vs Inflectional Morphemes

Derivation creates new words by adding prefixes or suffixes to a base or root. It changes the meaning or grammatical category of a word.

Examples of derivational affixes:

- ✓ Prefixes: **un-, dis-, pre-**
- ✓ Suffixes: **-able, -ness, -ize, -ly**
- ✓ **Word formation example with “like”:**

like (verb) → **dislike** (verb, prefix)

likeable (adjective, suffix)

unlikeable (adjective, prefix)

unlikeableness (noun, suffix)

likely (adverb, suffix)

likelihood (noun, suffix)

Inflectional morphemes, however, modifies a word to **fit its grammatical context** without creating a new word. It is about tense, number, aspect, or case.

Examples:

- Verbs: **part** → **parted** (past tense), **depart** → **departed**
- Nouns: **departure** → **departures** (plural)

Inflection can be realized in **allomorphic variants**, that is to say, the same grammatical function may have different forms:

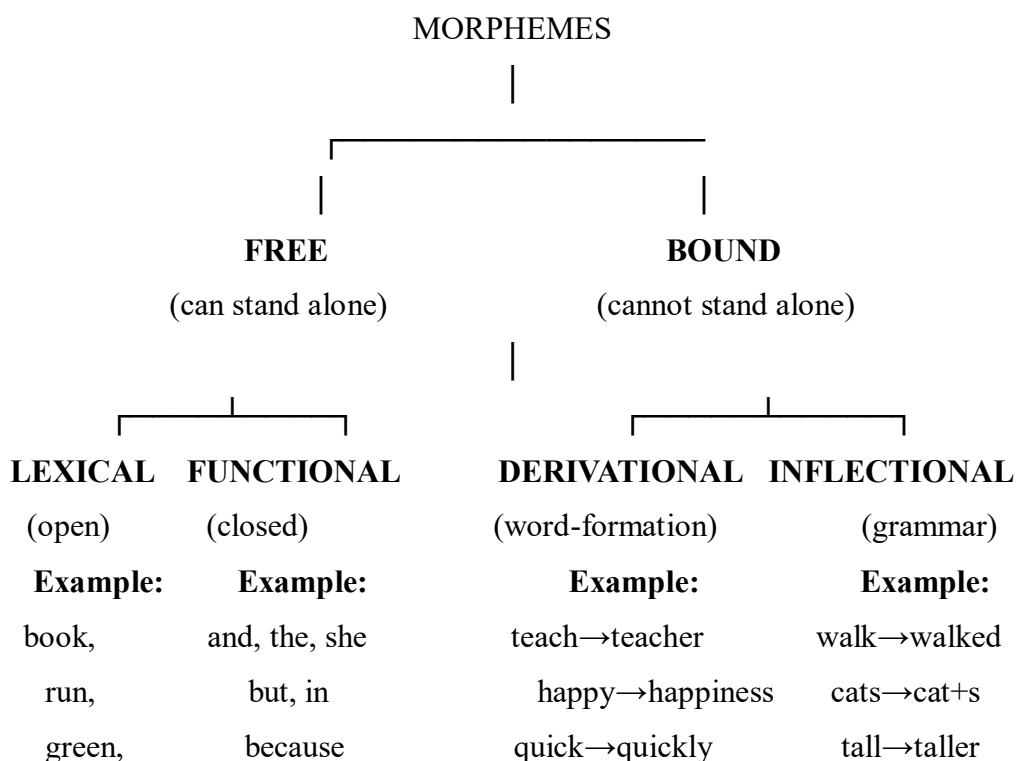
- Past tense “-ed”: /d/ (pulled), /t/ (pushed), /ɪd/ (parted)
- Irregular changes: **sleep** → **slept**, **shake** → **shook**

-Inflection shows again that **morphemes do not always match syllables**. Put simply, inflection shows that morphemes do not always match syllables, because one grammatical morpheme can have different pronunciations (e.g., past tense -ed in **pulled** /d/, **pushed** /t/, **parted** /ɪd/) or may appear as an internal vowel change rather than a separate syllable (e.g., *sleep* → *slept*, *shake* → *shook*).

There are **8** inflectional morphemes in English: **Noun**+ s (possessive) **Noun**+ s (plural) **Verb** +s (present 3rd person sing) **ing** (gerund), **ed** (past tense), **en** (verb (pp.) **Adj** + est (superlative), **er** (comparative). These are explained in the table below:

Category	Inflectional Morpheme	Grammatical Function	Example
Nouns	-s	Plural	cat → cats
	-’s	Possessive	cat → cat’s
Verbs	-s	3rd person singular (present)	work → works
	-ing	Progressive / Gerund	work → working
	-ed	Past tense	work → worked
	-en	Past participle	write → written
Adjectives	-er	Comparative	tall → taller
	-est	Superlative	tall → tallest

The following figure summarizes the different categorization of morphemes in English.



4. Word Formation Processes

Word formation processes are the methods by which new words are created in a language. They allow language users to expand vocabulary by modifying existing words or combining them in new

ways, often changing meaning, grammatical category, or both. These processes include **affixation**, **compounding**, **conversion**, **reduplication**, **stem alternation**, and **subtractive morphology**.

1. Affixation: It is the addition of a bound morpheme (affix) to a base or root to create a new word. It includes prefixes and suffixes.

- **Prefix** – added at the beginning of a word (e.g., un- in *undo*, re- in *redo*).
- **Suffix** – added at the end (e.g., -ness in *happiness*, -able in *readable*).

In English, Affixation can change meaning and/or grammatical category (e.g., clear → unclear / *happy* → *happiness*).

2. Composition (Compounding / Blending) : It is the combination of two or more free morphemes to make a new word.

1. It can be **endocentric** (the head determines category/meaning, e.g., *toothbrush* → a type of brush, *bedroom* → a type of **room**, *blackbird* → a type of **bird**)

2. Or **exocentric** (The meaning is not a subtype of either element, and there **is no internal head**. That is, the meaning not directly from parts, e.g., *pickpocket* → a person who picks pockets, *redhead* → a person characterized by having red hair, *loudmouth* → a person who talks too much)

3. **Blending:** It is the creation of a new word by merging parts of two words. (e.g., *smog* (smoke + fog), *brunch* (breakfast + lunch)).

3. Conversion (Zero Derivation): It is the process of changing a word's grammatical category without changing its form.

Examples:

- Noun → Verb: *email* → *to email*
- Verb → Noun: *run* → *a run*

In this type of word formation, no affixes added; only the syntactic category changes.

4. Reduplication: It is the repetition all or part of a word to create a new form or convey a grammatical/semantic function. is often used for emphasis, plurality, or repeated action.

Examples:

- Full: *bye-bye*
- Partial: *tick-tock*

5. Stem Alternation: It is the change of the internal structure of a word (usually vowels or consonants) to form a new word or mark grammatical changes.

- **Examples:**

- *sing* → *sang* → *sung* (tense change)
- *man* → *men* (plural formation)

6. Clipping (Subtractive Morphology (Back-formation)) : It is the creation of a new word by removing an affix or perceived morpheme.

- Examples: *editor* → *edit*, *babysitter* → *babysit*.
- Clipping: It is the shortening of an existing word without changing meaning.
- Examples: *advertisement* → *ad*, *telephone* → *phone*.

5. Morphological Analysis

It is the process of examining the internal structure of English words by breaking them down into their smallest meaningful units (**morphemes**) and identifying how these units combine according to the rules of English word formation. In English, morphological analysis typically includes:

5.1. Identifying Morphemes

- **Roots / Bases:** the core meaning of the word (*write*, *happy*, *nut*)
- **Prefixes:** added to the beginning (*un-*, *re-*, *dis-*)
- **Suffixes:** added to the end (*-s*, *-ing*, *-ness*, *-able*)

Example : **re-write-ing** → re- (prefix) + write (root) + -ing (suffix)

5.2. Distinguishing Types of Morphemes

- **Free morphemes:** can stand alone (*book*, *run*, *kind*)
- **Bound morphemes:** must attach to another morpheme (*-s*, *-ed*, *-ly*)

Example:

- **book-s** → book (free) + -s (bound)

5.3. Recognizing Morphological Processes

Morphological analysis also requires identifying whether a word shows:

- **Derivation** → creates a new word or changes word class
 - *happy* → *happiness* (adjective → noun)
- **Inflection** → marks grammatical information without creating a new word
 - *walk* → *walked* (past tense)
 - *cat* → *cats* (plural)

5.4. Understanding Word Structure Hierarchy

Morphological analysis does not only list morphemes; it also shows **how they are structured**. For example:

- **unhappiness**

First: happy+ -ness → happiness

Then: un- + happiness → unhappiness

This shows that words are built in layers, not just simple strings of parts.

6. Allomorphs Vs Morphemes

In morphology, a **morpheme** is the smallest abstract unit of meaning or grammatical function in a language. It is not the physical sound or written form itself, but the underlying meaning that speakers recognize. In this sense, morphemes in morphology are comparable to phonemes in phonology: both are abstract units that may have different surface realizations. For example, the plural morpheme **-s** is pronounced differently in *cats* /s/, *dogs* /z/, and *buses* /ɪz/, yet it represents the same grammatical meaning. Similarly, the phoneme /p/ is pronounced differently in *pin* (aspirated [p^h]) and *spin* (unaspirated [p]), but speakers recognize it as the same sound.

However, when a morpheme is actually pronounced or written in a word, it appears in a specific concrete form. This concrete realization is called a **morph**. When a single morpheme has more than one possible form, these different realizations are called **allomorphs**.

Examples:

- ✓ The **plural morpheme** in English means “more than one,” but it appears in different forms: *cats* (/s/), *dogs* (/z/), *buses* (/ɪz/). While the meaning (plural) is the same (this is the morpheme)—but the pronunciation changes — these are **allomorphs**.
- ✓ The **past tense morpheme** expresses past time, but it appears in different forms: *played* (/d/), *walked* (/t/), *wanted* (/ɪd/).

The meaning (past tense) is the same — this is the **morpheme** — but the pronunciation changes — these are the **allomorphs**.

- For each bold word:
 - a) Break it into morphemes.
 - b) Identify each morpheme as **free or bound**.
 - c) State whether the bound morpheme is **derivational or inflectional**.

Task Three: Identify whether the underlined word is **lexical (L)** or **functional (F)**.

1. The tiger runs quickly.
2. She will arrive soon.
3. They went to school.
4. Freedom is important.
5. Because he was tired, he left.

Task Four: Identify the Word Formation Process used form each word

1. toothbrush
2. unhappy
3. smog
4. email (verb)
5. editor → edit
6. sing → sang
7. advertisement → ad

Task Five: Analyze the following words:

1. unhappiness
2. departmentalized
3. unlikely
4. singers
5. replaying

- ✓ For each word:
 - a) Break it into morphemes.
 - b) Identify derivational vs inflectional morphemes.
 - c) Show the hierarchical structure (step-by-step formation).

Lecture Three: An Introduction to Syntax

1. Syntax: Definition

When we concentrate on the structure and ordering of components within a sentence, we are studying the syntax of a language. Syntax is the study and analysis of phrases, clauses, and sentences, focusing on how words are organized, ordered, and structured. The word 'syntax' comes originally from Greek and literally means 'a putting together' or 'arrangement'. In earlier approaches, syntax focused on the sequence or ordering of elements in the linear structure of the sentence, whereas in more recent approaches there is a greater focus on the underlying rule system that we use to produce or 'generate' sentences.

Syntax is then the branch of linguistics that investigates how words combine into larger meaningful units and how these units are structured to form grammatical sentences. A central concern in syntax is understanding the **constituents** (words or groups of words) that make up sentences, and how these constituents function and relate to one another.

The smaller building blocks that sentences are formed of, their so-called constituents, may vary in size and are hierarchically structured:

Sentences: contain one or several → **clause** (s) → contain one or several → **phrase**(s) contain one or several → **word** (s) contain one or several → **morpheme**(s)

2. Grammar, Morphology and Syntax

Grammar is the complete set of rules that govern a language, including **sound patterns**, **word formation**, and **sentence structure**. Syntax is a subcomponent of grammar that deals particularly with the structure and ordering of words, phrases, and sentences. Syntax represents the speaker's knowledge of how sentences are formed and organized, which allows speakers to recognize and produce well-formed sentences (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2011, p. 118). In other words, while grammar is the broader system of rules, syntax focuses on the arrangement of linguistic elements within sentences to produce meaningful and coherent utterances.

Morphology and syntax are distinct levels of linguistic analysis. While morphology studies the internal structure of words and the ways in which words are formed from morphemes, syntax examines how words combine to form phrases, clauses, and sentences. Thus, the knowledge of word formation (morphology) is necessary but not sufficient for constructing sentences; syntax provides the rules for combining words into grammatically correct and meaningful structures.

3. Key Concepts in Syntax

➤ **Sentence:** A sentence is a complete set of words that conveys meaning. A sentence can communicate a statement (I am studying.), a command (Go away), an exclamation (I'm so excited!), a question (What time is it?). A sentence is composed of one or more **clauses**.

➤ **Clause:** A clause contains a **subject** and **verb**.

Independent and Dependent Clauses

- ✓ There are two types of clauses: independent clauses and dependent clauses. A sentence contains at least one independent clause and may contain one or more dependent clauses. (e.g., **If you study hard, you will pass the exam**)
- ✓ An **independent clause** (or main clause) is a complete thought. it can stand by itself. (e.g., You will pass the exam)
- ✓ A **dependent clause** (or subordinate clause) is an incomplete thought. It cannot stand by itself. (e.g., If you study hard)

4. Sentence Structure

In traditional approaches, sentence structure is described as having two constituents: a **subject** (the person or thing that is doing an action, or the person or thing that is the focus of the sentence) and **predicate** (It is the

part of the sentence that is not the subject, and includes all the descriptions of the action and the objects that are affected by the action). In this view, every complete sentence contains:

- **A subject**, which identifies what or whom the sentence is about. This is realized by a noun phrase (e.g., *The cat*).
- **A predicate**, which expresses what is said about the subject and normally contains a **verb phrase** (e.g., *chased the mouse*)
 - Within the **predicate**, the **verb** expresses an action or a state of being.
 - An **object** receives the action of the verb (e.g., the mouse in: *The cat chased the mouse*).
 - A **complement** provides information required to complete the meaning of a verb or adjective (e.g., happy In: *She is happy*), often realized as an adjective phrase, noun phrase, or clause.

5. Sentence Type

Sentences can be categorized into different types depending on their function and structure:

a. Sentence Type Based on Function

A sentence may consist of words organized meaningfully to express a statement, question, exclamation, request, command, or suggestion. Based on their communicative function, sentences can be classified into four main types:

- **Declarative (Assertive):** These sentences make statements, provide explanations, or convey facts and end with full stop. For example: *I am meeting him next week.*
- **Imperative:** These sentences give orders or make requests, and they often lack an explicit subject. For example: *Join your place.*
- **Interrogative:** Ask questions and end with a question mark. For example: *Who was there? Any further queries?*
- **Exclamatory:** Express strong emotion or emphasis, usually ending with an exclamation mark. For example: *What a beautiful day!*

b. Sentence Type Based on Structure

Sentences in English can be classified into **four** main types: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex.

1. **Simple sentence** consists of a single independent clause, expressing a complete thought.

E.g., *Johnny rode his bike to school, Who is your best friend?, and She ate her lunch, took a walk, and went back to work.*

2. **Compound sentence** contains **two independent clauses** joined by a coordinating conjunction (such as *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*), usually preceded by a comma.

E.g., *She wanted to go on vacation, so she saved up her money. I like apples, but my sister loves bananas.*

3. **Complex sentence** contains **one independent clause and at least one dependent clause**. It typically includes a subordinating conjunction (e.g., *because, although, while, as*).

E.g., *She went to class even though she was sick. As John was arriving to work, he realized he forgot his lunch.*

4. **Compound-complex sentence** combines elements of both compound and complex sentences. It contains **two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause**.

E.g., *Although she felt guilty for missing her friend's birthday, she took her out to dinner the next day, and they had a great time.*

6. Grammaticality and Syntactic Rules

In syntactic analysis, the main goal is to develop rules that generate all and only grammatical sentences in a language. This means that rules must:

- Produce well-formed structures, and
- Avoid generating ungrammatical ones

For example, a simple rule like “*a preposition comes before a noun*” can generate correct phrases such as *near London*, but it also produces incorrect forms like **near tree* or **with dog*. These are considered ungrammatical.

To solve this, the rule must be refined. Instead of combining a preposition with just a noun, it should combine with a noun phrase (NP). Since noun phrases can include:

***Proper nouns** (*London*) ***Pronouns** (*me*) ***Determiner + noun** (*a tree, a dog*)

The improved rule correctly generates: *near London* / *with me* / *near a tree* / *with a dog*

This shows that accurate syntactic rules must be precise enough to exclude incorrect structures while generating all correct ones.

7. Generative Grammar and Transformational Rules

When we have an effective rule, such as “*a prepositional phrase in English consists of a preposition followed by a noun phrase*,” it can produce an extremely large number of English phrases-potentially unlimited. This shows a key goal of syntactic analysis: using a small, finite set of rules to generate a large or infinite number of well-formed structures. Such a system is called a generative grammar, because it can produce sentence structures, not just describe them. It also reveals how some sentences that look different are closely related, and how some that look similar are actually different.

➤ Deep and Surface Structure

Transformational-Generative Grammar, introduced by **Noam Chomsky**, and as one of the most influential theories, revolutionized the study of modern syntax by distinguishing between **deep structure**, which represents the underlying meaning of a sentence, and **surface structure**, which shows the actual arrangement of words, allowing linguists to explain how different sentences can convey the same meaning.

Some sentences may look different on the surface but are closely related at a deeper level. **For example:**

- *Charlie broke the window.* (active, focuses on Charlie)
- *The window was broken by Charlie.* (passive, focuses on the window)

In traditional grammar, these are treated as different forms. Syntactically, however, they share the same underlying components: **Noun Phrase + Verb + Noun Phrase**. This underlying level is called the deep structure. It is an abstract representation that captures all the elements determining meaning, showing who did what to whom, regardless of surface arrangement.

From the same deep structure, multiple surface structures can be generated, such as:

- *It was Charlie who broke the window.* (cleft sentence)
- *Was the window broken by Charlie?* (question)

Surface structure refers to the actual arrangement of words in a sentence, while deep structure shows the core relationships and meaning. So transformational rules convert a sentence’s deep structure into its surface structure, enabling different forms of the same sentence, such as questions, active sentences, and passive sentences.

Chomsky’s Universal Grammar elucidates that all humans are born with a natural ability to learn language. It gives children a general framework that helps them quickly figure out the rules of their own language.

In short, the grammar must be capable of showing how a single underlying abstract representation can become different surface structures.

8. Structural Ambiguity

Structural ambiguity occurs when a sentence or phrase can be interpreted in more than one way due to its **syntax** (the way words are grouped-rather than the words themselves). This means that the same string of words can have multiple meanings depending on how the structure is analyzed. For example, consider the sentence: *Annie bumped into a man with an umbrella.*

This sentence can be understood in two ways. In the first interpretation, Annie **was carrying an umbrella** and bumped into a man. In the second interpretation, Annie bumped into a man **who was carrying an umbrella**. Both interpretations share the same **surface structure** (the sentence as it appears) but differ in their **deep structures** (the underlying meaning).

Structural ambiguity can also occur in phrases. For example: “*intelligent men and women*” as an example. One interpretation is (*intelligent men*) and (*intelligent women*), that is to say, both men and women are intelligent. Another interpretation is (*intelligent men*) and (*all women*), i.e., only the men are specified as intelligent while women are included more generally.

In short, structural ambiguity demonstrates that **the same words can have multiple interpretations** depending on how they are organized syntactically.

9. Phrase Structure

A phrase is a **group of words that functions as a single grammatical unit** within a sentence, forming a constituent of a clause (*a clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb that can express a complete or incomplete idea*). It is usually named after its **main element (head)** and does not express a complete idea on its own. A phrase can consist of **two or more words**, or sometimes even a single word.

Example:

the big cat → acts as one unit (a noun phrase) and can function as the subject or object in a sentence.

Types of Phrases

1/Noun Phrase (NP): a phrase headed by a noun or pronoun that functions like a noun in a sentence. It can act as a subject, direct object, or indirect object. **E.g.,** *a small dog*

2/Verb Phrase (VP): a phrase headed by a verb that tells us what the subject does or what happens. It may include auxiliaries, objects, or modifiers. **E.g.:** *has gone out*.

3/Adjective Phrase (Adj P): a phrase headed by an adjective that modifies a noun or pronoun and may include modifiers. **E.g.,** *extremely tired*.

4/Adverb Phrase (Adv P): a phrase headed by an adverb that modifies a verb, adjective, or another adverb. **E.g.,** *very quietly*.

5/ Prepositional Phrase (PP): a phrase headed by a preposition followed by its object. It can modify a noun or verb phrase. **E.g.,** *under the old bridge*.

All parts of a phrase that are not the head are called **dependents**. Dependents can be **specifiers**, which clarify the meaning of the head (e.g., determiners or degree words like *very*), or **complements**, which complete the meaning of the head.

10. Syntactic Analysis

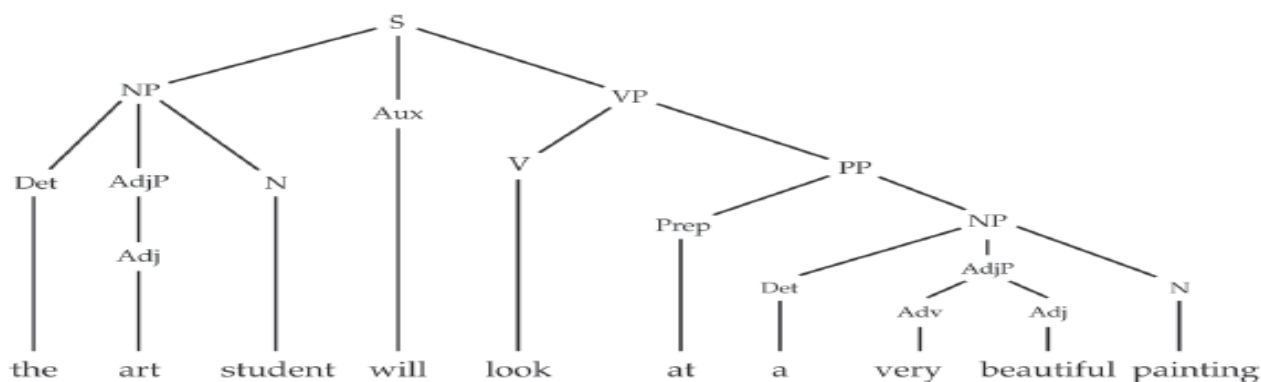
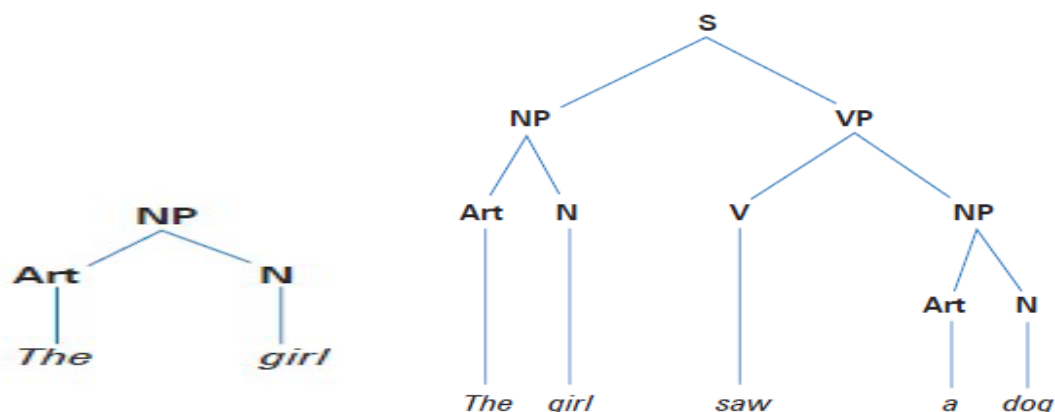
Syntactic analysis is the process of identifying the constituents of a sentence and examining how they combine to form a coherent structure. Syntactic analysis can be performed using **tree diagrams** or other formal syntactic methods. In a tree diagram, the phrase structure and the category of each word are represented visually. The diagram typically takes the shape of an *upside-down tree*, with the most general constituent at the top and more specific elements *branching* below. Each point where a branch split is called a **node**, representing a constituent.

➤ Tree Diagrams

Tree diagrams are used in syntax to visually represent the structure of sentences. In these diagrams, the tree “grows downward,” showing different levels of analysis. For example, a higher level may represent a **noun**

phrase (NP) as a constituent, while a lower level shows the **noun (N)** itself. This hierarchical representation can be applied to the structure of an entire sentence.

Examples:



➤ Syntactic typology

Each language has its own unique syntactic structure. A branch of study within syntax, called syntactic typology, categorizes all the world's languages based on their syntactic features. There are Two major branches:

A. Word Order Typology

Word order is a way to classify the world's languages. Languages have been classified by the word order used in sentences. They have three main classifications:

SVO (e.g. English, Spanish), subject-verb-object.

SOV (e.g. Japanese, Turkish), subject-object-verb.

VSO (e.g. Classical Arabic, Irish), Verb-Subject-Object.

B. Head direction

Another difference among languages is how they position **the head** (the central word of a phrase) relative to its complements. For example, there are some differences in head placement among some of these examples:

Head initial (e.g. English), the head of the phrase occurs first in the sentence (I ate an apple).

Head final (e.g. Japanese), the head of the phrase appears last in the sentence (an apple ate I)

Practice

Task One: Read the short passage and then respond to the statements below

Philip Swallow had been made and unmade by the system in precisely this way. He liked examinations, always did well in them. Finals had been, in many ways, the supreme moment of his life he frequently dreamed that he was thinking the examinations again, and these were happy dreams. Awake, he could without difficulty remember the questions he had elected to answer on every paper that hot, distant June. In the preceding months he had prepared himself with meticulous care, filling his mind with distilled knowledge, drop by drop, until on the eve of the first paper (Old English Set Texts) it was almost brimming over.” (Bessai Aoudjit, (2012).

In the above text, identify the following constructions:

- a. A passive sentence.
- b. A compound sentence where both conjuncts have the same subject.
- c. A sentence where the subject and direct object refer to the same entity.
- d. A noun phrase which contains two adjective phrases.
- e. A noun phrase which contains a single adjective phrase and a prepositional phrase.
- f. A prepositional phrase which contains an abstract noun.
- g. An example of a verb phrase which contains a progressive participle.
- h. An example of a verb phrase which contains a perfect participle.

Task Two: Read the following statements and say in what ways are these expressions structurally ambiguous?

- (a) The parents of the bride and groom were waiting outside.
- (b) We met an English history teacher.
- (c) Flying planes can be dangerous.
- (d) The students complained to everyone that they couldn't understand. (Yule, 2010)

Task Three: Which of the following expressions would be generated by this phrase structure rule: NP → {Art (Adj) N, Pro, PN}?

- (a) a lady (c) her (e) the widow
- (b) the little girl (d) Annie (f) she's an old woman

Task Four :Construct a phrase structure tree for each of the following expressions:

- a. liked the gray cat
- c. some fluffy gray dog
- d. the man with Sally
- e. sent the man an email
- f. thought Sally hated Bob
- h. fell into the pond
- j. this silly picture of Pat
- l. Pat pushed the stubborn horse into the barn
- m. A student from my class claimed the teacher disliked him

Lecture Four: An introduction to Semantics

1. Semantics : Basic Definition

Semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. In semantic analysis, there is always an attempt to focus on what the words conventionally mean, rather than on what an individual speaker might want them to mean on a particular occasion. It is concerned with objective or general meaning and avoids trying to account for subjective or local meaning. George Yule (2020, p. 129). Semantics attempts to describe explicitly the language users' knowledge and intuition about the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. It endeavours to systematically analyse and describe the language users shared knowledge. Subfields of semantics are **lexical semantics**, which is concerned with the meanings of words and the meaning relationships among words; and **phrasal** or **sentential semantics**, which is concerned with the meaning of syntactic units larger than the word. (Fromkin, Rodman Hiams, 2007)

2. Meaning:

Semantics studies meaning in language by focusing more on **conceptual meaning** (objective, factual, dictionary-defined meaning) rather than **associative meaning** (e.g., feelings or reactions to words like *needle* → pain, illness, drugs) (Yule, 2010, p. 113). Conceptual meaning exposes the key components conveyed by the literal use of words. For instance, the word "needle" may refer to 'thin', 'sharp', steel instrument'. These components are essential for explaining semantic oddness in sentences that are composed well syntactically, such as *The hamburger ate the boy* (odd) vs. *The boy ate the hamburger* (acceptable). Hence, the oddness is caused by the fact that 'ate' as a word requires a living, animate entity (like *boy*), a property that *hamburger* does not have (Yule, 2010, p. 113).

3. Semantics vs. Other Linguistic Fields

Whereas **phonetics & phonology** deal with sounds, and **morphology & syntax** deal with forms and structures, semantics seeks to **decode the meaning conveyed by language**. It helps us understand how language **reflects thought, culture, and communication**. While morphology and syntax study language form, semantics and pragmatics analyse meaning and meaning in context. To put it simply, semantics focuses on the literal sentence meaning or how form relates to meaning, ignoring speaker intentions and social context. Pragmatics, on the other hand, examines meaning in context, especially what speakers mean beyond literal sentence meaning (e.g., politeness, how "How are you?" functions as a greeting).

4. Lexical Semantics: Word Meanings)

The meaning of a phrase or sentence is partly a function of the meanings of the words it contains, and the meaning of morphologically complex words is a function of their component morphemes. However, there is a fundamental difference between word meaning (lexical semantics) and sentence meaning. The meanings of entries in the mental lexicon are conventional, meaning speakers of a language agree on them and children must learn them. In contrast, sentence meanings are constructed through semantic rules. Although word meanings may shift over time, individuals are not free to change them at will because communication would break down. All speakers share a basic vocabulary stored in the lexicon, which allows them to express and understand thoughts (Fromkin et al, 2011).

4.1. Theories of Word Meaning

Dictionaries, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), are filled with words and their meanings. Dictionaries give the meanings of words using other words, rather than in terms of some more basic vocabulary. In

this sense a dictionary really provides *paraphrases* rather than meanings. It relies on our knowledge of the language to understand the definitions. The meanings associated with words in our mental lexicon are probably not like what we find in the OED although it is very difficult to specify precisely how word meanings are represented in the mind.

4.1.1. Reference

Meaning is not just like a dictionary definition. One idea is that meaning is *reference*, which means the connection between a word and the real thing it refers to (**the referent**). Proper names like *Jack* are NPs whose meaning is this reference, and other NPs (e.g. *the happy swimmer*, *my friend*, *that guy*) or pronouns (*I*, *you*, *him*) can also refer to the same individual in context. However, some NPs (e.g. *no baby* in *No baby swims*) do not refer to any particular entity but are still meaningful, so there must be more to meaning than reference. Expressions can share a referent but differ in meaning and truth conditions: *the happy swimmer* vs. *Jack*; *Superman* vs. *Clark Kent*; *Scott Morrison* vs. *the Prime Minister*. These examples show a dimension of meaning beyond mere reference.

4.1.2. Sense

Meaning is not only **reference** (the real thing a word refers to). For example, *dog* refers to real animals. However, some words like *unicorns*, *Hobbits*, and *Harry Potter* have no real referent, but we still understand them. Also, words like *of*, *by*, *will*, and *may* do not refer to objects, yet they are meaningful. This shows that meaning also includes **sense**, which is the idea or information we have about a word. For example, *George Eliot* and *Mary Ann Evans* refer to the same person, but they are not exactly the same in meaning.

- **Reference = what a word points to in the real world**
- **Sense = the idea or information we have about that word**

5. Lexical Relations

Lexical relations refer to the ways in which words are related to each other in meaning within a language system. As noted in semantics, words are not isolated units but are connected through different relationships such as **similarity**, **opposition**, or **inclusion** in categories (e.g. **synonymy**: *Sofa*/ *coach*, **polysemy**: *letter* (written text, or alphabet letter), **antonymy**: *hot*/*cold*, and **hyponymy**: *red* as hyponymy of *colour*). These relations explain how meaning is organized in the mental lexicon and how speakers interpret words in context (Fromkin *et al*, 2011).

5.1. Synonymy:

Synonymy is when two or more words have very similar meanings and can often replace each other in a sentence. Examples include **answer / reply**, **almost / nearly**, **big / large**, **cab / taxi**, and **couch / sofa**. But their meanings are not always identical in every context: ‘**answer**’ works in ‘*Sandy had only one answer*’ correct on the test, while ‘**reply**’ sounds strange there. Synonyms can also differ in style or **formality**. Compare ‘*My father purchased a large automobile*’ with ‘*My dad bought a big car*’: both sentences express the same basic meaning, but the first is more *formal* and the second more *Informal*. Yule (2010)

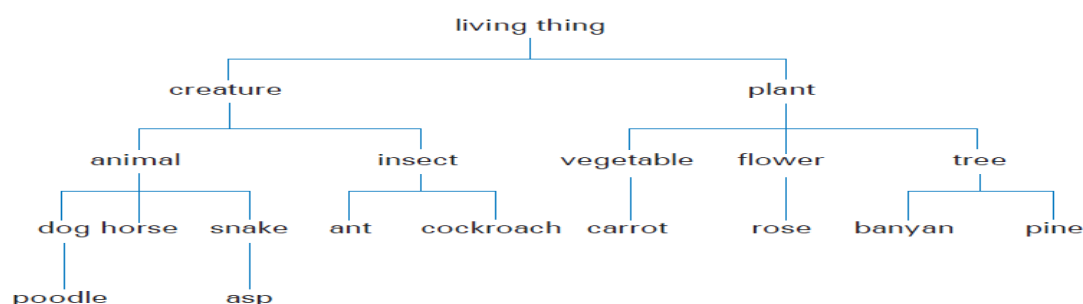
5.2. Antonymy

Antonymy is when two forms have **opposite** meanings, like **alive/dead**, **big/small**, **fast/slow**, **happy/sad**, **hot/cold**. There are two main types: “*gradable*” antonyms (opposites along a scale) and “*non-gradable*” or “complementary pairs” (direct opposites). Gradable antonyms like *big/small* allow comparatives (I’m bigger than you) and the negative of one (My car isn’t old) does not always mean the other (My car is new). Non-gradable antonyms like *alive/dead*, *male/female*, *married/single* use no comparatives (**deader*) and the negative of one implies the other (My grandparents aren’t alive → they are dead). Some opposites are reversives: *undress/dress*, *enter/exit*, *pack/unpack*, *tie/untie*, meaning “do the reverse of” rather than simply “not.” So, antonymy covers

gradable pairs, *non-gradable (complementary) pairs*, and *reversives*, each with different grammatical behaviour and implications.

5.3. Hyponymy

Hyponymy is a meaning relation where the meaning of one word is included in another, showing a “type of” relationship. For example, **rose** is a hyponym of **flower**, and **dog** is a hyponym of **animal**. This means if something is a rose, it is necessarily a flower. Hyponymy organizes words in a **hierarchy**, with general words called superordinates like *animal*, *plant*, or *insect*. Specific words under them, such as **dog** and **horse**, are called **co-hyponyms**. It also applies to actions, for example **punch**, **shoot**, and **stab** are co-hyponyms of **injure**. The figure below explains the hierarchy of words (Yule, 2010)



5.4. Homophones and Homonyms

Homophones are words that sound the *same* but have different *spellings* and *meanings*, such as *bare/bear*, *meat/meet*, *flour/flower*, and *right/write*. **Homonyms** are words that have the same form (spoken or written) but completely unrelated meanings. For example, *bank* (river) / *bank* (financial institution), *bat* (animal) / *bat* (sports tool), and *pupil* (student) / *pupil* (eye). Although they look or sound the same, their meanings are not connected. Homonyms come from different origins but accidentally share the same form.

5.5. Polysemy

Polysemy is when one word form has multiple related meanings. For example, *head* can mean the part of the body, the leader of a company, or the top of something; *foot* can mean a body part, the foot of a bed, or the foot of a mountain; and *run* can refer to a person running, water running, or colors running. Dictionaries usually show polysemy under one entry with several related meanings (e.g. *head*, *foot*, *get*, *run*). This is different from homonymy, where meanings are unrelated and appear in separate entries (e.g. *bank*, *mole*). Sometimes a word can be both homonymous and polysemous, as with *date*, which can mean a fruit, a point in time, or different kinds of social meetings.

5.6. Metonymy:

Metonymy is when a word is used to refer to something closely connected to it in everyday experience. This connection can be **container–contents** (*bottle/water*, *can/juice*), **whole–part** (*car/wheels*, *house/roof*), or **symbol–representative** (*king/crown*, *the White House/the President*). Expressions like *He drank the whole bottle* or *The White House has announced* are understood through metonymy, even if not literal. Many cases are easy to understand, but others depend on context, such as *give me a hand* or *I prefer cable*.

5.7. Collocation

Collocations refers to the tendency of words to **occur together frequently**. For example, *hammer – nail*, *table – chair*, *butter – bread*, and *salt – pepper*. This shows that word knowledge includes common word combinations.

6. Semantic roles

Semantic roles are the “roles” that noun phrases have in the situation of a sentence. In ‘*The boy kicked the ball*’, the **verb** kicked is the **action** and the **noun phrases** ‘*The boy*’ and ‘*the ball*’ have *different roles*.

- **Agent**: “the entity that performs the action” → The boy is the agent in ‘The boy kicked the ball’. The wind, A car, The dog can also be agents: ‘The wind blew the ball away’. ‘A car ran over the ball.’ ‘The dog caught the ball.’
- **Theme** (or patient): “the entity that is involved in or affected by the action” → the ball is the theme. The theme can also just be described, as in The ball was red. The theme is usually non-human, but can be human: The dog chased the boy. The same entity can have two roles: The boy cut himself (The boy = agent, himself = theme).
- **Instrument**: the entity used by an agent to do an action. ‘The boy cut the rope with an old razor.’ ‘He drew the picture with a crayon.’ An *old razor* and a *crayon* are **instruments**.

- **Experiencer**: the person who has a feeling, perception or state (not really doing an action).
The boy feels sad. (The boy = experiencer) ‘Did you hear that noise? (you = experiencer, that noise = theme)

Some roles show where something is or moves:

- **Location**: where an entity is → on the table, in the room
- **Source**: where it moves from → from Chicago
- **Goal**: where it moves to → to New Orleans

We drove from Chicago to New Orleans.

When money moves from savings to checking, savings is source and checking is goal.

In the scenario:

- ✓ Mary saw a fly on the wall.

Mary = EXPERIENCER, a fly = THEME, on the wall = LOCATION

- ✓ She borrowed a magazine from George.

She = AGENT, a magazine = THEME, from George = SOURCE

- ✓ She squashed the bug with the magazine.

She = AGENT, the bug = THEME, with the magazine = INSTRUMENT

- ✓ She handed the magazine back to George.

She = AGENT, the magazine = THEME, to George = GOAL

7. Denotation & Connotation

Denotation is the literal, basic dictionary meaning of a word.

- *dog* = a four-legged domesticated animal

Connotation: the feelings or associations a word suggests.

- *dog* → loyalty, friendship (positive) or danger, aggression (negative)

(Yule, 2010)

Practice

1/Identify the semantic roles of the seven noun phrases in this sentence.

- ✓ With her new golf club, Anne whacked the ball from the woods to the grassy area near the hole and she suddenly felt invincible.

2/ What is the basic lexical relation between each pair of words listed here?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| (a) <i>damp/moist</i> | (c) <i>furniture/table</i> | (e) <i>move/run</i> |
| (b) <i>deep/shallow</i> | (d) <i>married/single</i> | (f) <i>peace/piece</i> |

3/ Which of the following opposites are gradable, non-gradable, or reversive?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) <i>absent/present</i> | (c) <i>fail/pass</i> | (e) <i>fill it/empty it</i> |
| (b) <i>appear/disappear</i> | (d) <i>fair/unfair</i> | (f) <i>high/low</i> |

4/ Are these underlined words best described as examples of polysemy or metonymy?

- (a) *The pen is mightier than the sword.*
- (b) *I had to park on the shoulder of the road.*
- (c) *Yes, I love those. I ate a whole box on Sunday!*
- (d) *The bookstore has some new titles in linguistics.*
- (e) *Computer chips created an important new technology.*
- (f) *I'm going to sue your ass!*

5/ We can pour water into a glass and we can fill a glass with water, but we can't *fill water into a glass or *pour a glass with water. Why not?

(i) By focusing on the meaning of the verbs and their themes ("the affected objects"), try to find a semantic reason why some of the following sentences are ungrammatical.

- (1) (a) We loaded furniture into the van.
- (b) We loaded the van with furniture.
- (2) (a) They sprayed paint onto the wall.
- (b) They sprayed the wall with paint.
- (3) (a) I poured coffee into the cup.
- (b) *I poured the cup with coffee.
- (4) (a) *She filled tissues into her pocket.
- (b) She filled her pocket with tissues.

(Yule, 2010, pp. 122-123)

Lecture Five: Pragmatics

Pragmatics: Definition

Semantics is the study of meaning in language. It is concerned with what language means. However, this is not the same as the meaning speakers express when they use language and how they use it to communicate. This is the concern of pragmatics. **Pragmatics** is the study of what speakers mean, or *speaker meaning* (Yule, 2010, p.127). Communication depends not only on recognizing the meaning of words in an utterance, but recognizing what speakers mean by their utterances. Put differently, Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that studies meaning in context. It examines how we interpret what is meant based on shared knowledge and assumptions, even when it is not explicitly stated. In pragmatics, more is communicated than is actually said.

Pragmatics Vs Grammar

The distinction between pragmatics (language use) and grammar (language structure) is illustrated through several observations:

1. Sentences can imply information that is not explicitly stated.
2. Speakers can perform actions through language, not just describe things (e.g., apologizing).
3. The social roles of participants affect how utterances are interpreted (e.g., authority determines validity).
4. A grammatically correct response may still be pragmatically inappropriate.
5. Speakers do not always mean exactly what they say; meaning depends on context.

All these phenomena are pragmatic in nature because they relate to how language is used to communicate in specific contexts rather than how language is structured internally. These phenomena are systematic and governed by principles that a theory of pragmatics aims to explain.

Key Concepts in Pragmatics

1. Context:

Context plays a very important role in understanding meaning in language. There are different kinds of context. One type is **linguistic context** (co-text), which means the words around a word in a sentence. This surrounding co-text helps us understand what a word means. For example, the word **bank** has different meanings:

- in “a steep bank”, it means the side of a river
- in “go to the bank to withdraw money”, it means a financial institution

Another type is **physical context**, which is the situation around us. For example, if we see the word **BANK** on a building in a city, the place helps us understand that it is a financial institution.

In general, we understand words by using our mental picture of the world, including time and place, to interpret meaning.

2. Deixis

Some words in language cannot be understood without context, especially physical context. Words like *this*, **reference words**: *that*, *you*, *he*, *here*, and *tomorrow* depend on knowing who is speaking, when, and where. For example, the sentence “*You’ll have to bring it back tomorrow because she isn’t here today*” is unclear without context. These words are called **deictic expressions** because they point to people, places, or time.

There are three main types:

- **Person deixis** → points to people or things (*you*, *him*, *it*, *this*)

- **Spatial deixis** → points to place (*here, there*)
- **Temporal deixis** → points to time (*now, tomorrow, then*)

3. Reference

Reference is not done by words themselves, but by people who use language to help others identify something. It is defined as the act of using language to enable a listener or reader to recognize what is being talked about (Yule, 2010, p.131). We usually make reference through nouns, proper nouns, and pronouns, but when we do not know the exact name of something, we may use expressions like *“the blue thing”* or *“the icky stuff.”* The success of reference depends on whether the listener understands what the speaker intends, not just on knowing the dictionary meanings of words.

4. Inference

A successful act of reference depends on the listener's ability to recognize what we mean rather than on “dictionary” knowledge. For example, in a restaurant, *“Where's the spinach salad sitting?”* → *“He's sitting by the door,”* and in linguistics, *“Can I look at your Chomsky?”* → *“It's on the shelf.”* These examples show that we can use names associated with things to refer to people and names of people to refer to things. The key process is **inference**, which is additional information used by the listener to connect what is said with what must be meant.

5. Anaphora

Anaphora is when we refer back to something already mentioned (the antecedent). For example, in *“a boy,” “a puppy,”* and *“a small bath,”* these are antecedents, while *“the puppy,” “the boy,” “he,” “it,”* and *“the bath”* are anaphoric expressions. We use anaphora to maintain reference in a text, often through pronouns (*it*) or phrases like *“the puppy”* or related nouns like *“the little dog.”* Sometimes, understanding these connections requires inference, as in *“a house”* → *“the kitchen”* (a house has a kitchen) and *“a bus”* → *“the driver”* (a bus has a driver). While inference is made by the listener, the speaker's assumption is called **presupposition**.

6. Presupposition

Presupposition is what a speaker assumes to be true or already known by the listener. When we use expressions like *this, he,* or *Shakespeare,* we assume the listener can identify the referent. For example, *“Your brother is waiting outside”* presupposes that you have a brother, and *“Why did you arrive late?”* presupposes that you arrived late. Similarly, *“When did you stop smoking?”* presupposes that you used to smoke and that you no longer do. These assumptions remain even when the sentence is negated, as in *“My car is a wreck”* and *“My car is not a wreck,”* where the presupposition (*I have a car*) stays the same. This is called the **constancy under negation** test.

7. Speech Act

Speech Act is the action performed by a speaker through an utterance, such as requesting, commanding, questioning, or informing. Different sentence structures are typically linked to specific functions: interrogatives are used for questions (*“Did you eat the pizza?”*), imperatives for commands or requests (*“Eat the pizza (please)!”*), and declaratives for statements (*“You ate the pizza.”*). A **direct speech act** occurs when the grammatical form matches its function, such as using an interrogative to ask a real question (*“Can you ride a bicycle?”*).

An **indirect speech act** happens when a sentence is used for a different function than its literal form, such as *“Can you pass the salt?”* functioning as a request rather than a question, or *“You left the door open”* functioning as a request to close it. Misunderstandings can occur when such utterances are taken literally, as in the hotel example where a request for directions is treated as a simple question. Indirect speech acts are often used because they sound more **polite and socially appropriate**, for example *“Could you open the door for me?”* is softer than a direct command.

8. Politeness

Politeness in pragmatics refers to being tactful and considerate of others, especially in relation to the concept of “face,” which is a person's public self-image. Politeness means showing awareness of and respect for this face in communication. A

face-threatening act can occur when language risks damaging someone's self-image, such as using a direct command like "*Give me that paper!*". To reduce this threat, speakers often use indirect speech acts like "*Could you pass me that paper?*", which sound more polite and less forceful. Such expressions are face-saving acts because they protect the listener's social dignity.

Lecture Six: Discourse Analysis

1. Discourse Analysis: Basic Definition

Discourse analysis means studying language beyond the sentence. It looks at how we understand meaning in texts and conversations. Even short or incomplete messages like “Trains collide, two die” or “No shoes, no service” can still be understood. Even texts with errors like “My Town” can make sense because we focus on the meaning, not just grammar.

2. The significance of Discourse Analysis :

Discourse analysis is significant because it (1) studies how language is used beyond individual sentences to create meaning in real communication. (2) It helps us understand how speakers and writers organize ideas, maintain coherence, and achieve specific purposes in different contexts. (3) By analyzing discourse, we can see how language reflects social relationships, cultural norms, and patterns of interaction in both spoken and written forms.

3. Types of Discourse: there are usually three types of discourse

- a. **Written discourse:** It refers to essays, books, reports, and other written documents.
- b. **Spoken discourse:** It refers verbal conversations, interviews, speeches, and dialogues.
- c. **Multimodal discourse:** this combines language with images, gestures, sounds, and other modes of communication (e.g., advertisements, online content).

4. Interpreting Discourse

We understand language even when it has mistakes because we try to guess the speaker’s meaning. Instead of rejecting incorrect sentences, we try to understand them. This shows that meaning is more important than correct grammar.

5. Key Concepts in Discourse Analysis:

5.1. Cohesion

Cohesion means the links between sentences in a text. Words like he, that car, my father help connect ideas. However, a text can be connected but still not make sense, so cohesion alone is not enough.

5.2. Coherence

Coherence means the text makes sense as a whole. It depends on the reader, not just the words. We use our experience to understand meaning, even when it is not clearly said, like in short conversations.

5.3. Turn-taking

Turn-taking is how people share speaking time. Some people pause too much (shy), others talk too much (rude). Speakers often use fillers like “er” or “you know” to keep their turn while thinking.

5.4. Co-operative Principle

People usually try to co-operate in conversation. They follow rules like giving enough information, being truthful, being relevant, and being clear. Sometimes meaning is implied, not directly said.

5.5. Hedges

Hedges are words that show uncertainty or politeness, like “kind of,” “maybe,” or “I think.” They make statements less strong or direct.

5.6. Implicatures

Implicatures are hidden meanings. For example, “I have an exam tomorrow” can mean “I can’t come to the party.” We understand this using context and shared knowledge.

Conversation analysis studies how people take turns speaking. Usually, one person speaks at a time, and people avoid silence. Speakers show they are finished by pausing or asking questions, and others wait or interrupt.

6. Methods of Discourse Analysis

- ✓ **Conversation Analysis (CA):** studies spoken interaction (turn-taking, pauses, interruptions)

- ✓ **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):** studies language, power, and ideology
- ✓ **Corpus Analysis:** uses large text collections to find patterns
- ✓ **Ethnographic Analysis:** studies language in social and cultural contexts

7. Process of Discourse Analysis

1. Select text/corpus (speech, article, conversation) **2. Identify research question** **3. Transcribe & code data** (find patterns/themes) **4. Analyze data** (meanings, patterns, assumptions) **5. Interpret findings** (social and cultural context)

Lecture Seven: Schools of Linguistics:

An introduction to the Structuralist School

Schools of linguistics are major approaches that explain how language works. In the 20th century, linguistics shifted from studying language history to analyzing language as a system, a mental process, and a tool for communication. The main traditions include **structuralism**, **generative linguistics**, and **functionalism**. Each offers a different but complementary perspective on language.

I. Structuralism:

The structuralism school is chiefly represented by the outstanding Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913)- often called as the father of modern linguistics and who contributed to major innovations in the early 20th century. Traditionally, before the arrival of Saussure, language was studied from a **philological perspective** (accounting for historical development mainly), in which studies focussed principally on tracing the word origins and comparing languages over time. Put simply, in the 20th century, linguistics shifted from studying **language change** to **describing languages at a specific point in time**. This shift is largely attributed to Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), often called the father of modern linguistics.

The structural school, led by de Saussure, shifted the study of language from a **historical perspective** to viewing language as a **structural system at a specific moment in time (a synchronic approach)**. Most of these innovative ideas were published in his lectures posthumously in *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) mainly in French, and later came to be recognized as the foundation of structural linguistics (Kortmann, 2020) (Aitchison, 2003)

II. Language as a System

Saussure suggested that language is not simply a **collection of isolated words**; rather, it is a **system of interdependent elements**. He compared language to a **game of chess**, where each piece has a role and gets its value from how it relates to the other pieces. This idea laid the foundation of structuralism, which holds that meaning comes from the relationships within the system.

II.1. Key Dichotomies

Saussure's structural linguistics-as is based on a set of key dichotomies, namely *Langue* vs *Parole*, synchronic vs. **diachronic** perspectives, and syntagmatic vs. paradigmatic relations. Together, these oppositions explain how language functions and how it is perceived to be organized as a structured system.

a) Langue vs Parole: Saussure viewed that linguistics should focus on **the language system shared by a community (langue)**, not on how **each person uses it in real speech (parole)** because langue represents the underlying system. Structural linguistics studies the basic elements of language at all levels: sounds, words, and sentences and how they are organized. It also looks at the relations between these elements. So, language is seen as a structured system, not just separate words or individual usage.

b) Synchrony vs Diachrony

Before Saussure, linguistics was mainly **diachronic (historical)** and often **prescriptive**, focusing on rules of correct language use and how language *should* be used. Diachronic linguistics studies the *history* and *evolution* of language, such as the development of English from Old to Modern English, or Arabic from pre-Islamic to modern forms. In contrast, **synchronic** linguistics studies language at a **specific point in time**, how it is actually used by speakers (descriptive). Saussure emphasized that **synchronic** study is more systematic and precise, while diachronic study can sometimes be speculative due to lack of reliable data. Modern linguistics mainly focuses on synchronic analysis, describing language as a system at a given time, while still recognizing the importance of historical development.

c) Syntagmatic vs Paradigmatic Relations

In structural linguistics, language is described as a system of relations between units and it is of two dimensions paradigmatic relations and syntagmatic relations: **Syntagmatic relations**, which are **horizontal** relations, and **paradigmatic** relations, which are **vertical** relations.

Syntagmatic relations show how words combine in a sentence and focus on word order and combination within a particular sentence. For example, in *The burglar sneezed loudly*, words are arranged in a **syntagmatic** relation.

On the other hand, **paradigmatic** relations are **vertical** relations that show how words can be replaced or substituted in the same position. For example, in *the burglar sneezed loudly*, we can substitute *burglar* with *dog*, *mouse*, or *cat*, and *sneezed* with *eats* or *coughed*, as in *the dog eats the meat* or *the cat eats the meat*. These relations belong to the language system, i.e. *langue*, and they help in understanding how sentences are built and how substitutions and combinations work in language. So, Language works on two axes: **combination (horizontal)** and **selection (vertical)**.

Paradigmatic (choices)

burglar robber cat

↓ ↓ ↓

The burglar sneezed loudly → Syntagmatic (combination)

robber coughed softly

cat hissed noisily

d) The Linguistic Sign (Arbitrariness)

Saussure defined that language as a stem of **signs**, where each sign comprises two **inseparable** parts, like two sides of a sheet of paper. The **signifier** (sound or sound image) and the **signified** (concept or meaning). The signifier is the spoken or written form, while the signified is the idea it refers to (e.g., *book* / *livre* / كتاب).

The relation between signifier and signified is **reciprocal**. Put simply, the sound suggests the concept and the concept suggests the sound. The relationship is also **arbitrary** and conventional, it is generally based on social convention and agreement that changes across languages, and not on natural connection. For example, *dog* in English and *chien* in French refer to the same animal but use completely different forms.

Because of this arbitrariness, different languages use different signifiers for the same signified, and sometimes the same form can have different meanings across languages (e.g., *gift* = “present” in English but “poison” in German). This shows that **linguistic signs** are *systematic, not random*, and depend on shared conventions within a speech community.

Lecture Eight: The American School of Linguistics: Structuralism and Behaviourism

Introduction

The **American School of Linguistics** developed mainly between the **1920s and 1950s** in the United States. It is often called **American Structuralism** or the school of the **North American Descriptivists**. This movement helped make linguistics an independent scientific discipline. Its most important figures were **Leonard Bloomfield, Edward Sapir, Franz Boas, Zellig Harris, Charles Hockett, Martin Joos**, and others. The American school was influenced by two main ideas:

1. **Structuralism** → language is a system whose parts are related (sounds, words, and grammar work together as one system).
2. **Behaviourism** → language is a form of observable human behaviour (language is learned and used through speaking, imitation, repetition, and response).

1. Main Aim of the American School

The American linguists wanted linguistics to be as **scientific** as possible. They believed language should be studied objectively through **observation** and **analysis**, not through personal opinion or traditional grammar. Their goal was mainly to **describe language accurately**, especially **spoken** language.

They focused on:

- collecting real language data
- discovering patterns and rules
- studying speech scientifically
- describing languages as they are used

2. American School and Structuralism

Although the American School was influenced by Saussure's structuralism, it **differed** in important ways. Saussure focused on *language as an abstract mental and social system*, while American linguists focused on *observable speech data*. Saussure emphasized theory and meaning, focussing on understanding how language works as an abstract system of signs and meanings, whereas the American School emphasized scientific description, classification, and analysis of sounds and structures. In short, Saussure explained language as a system, while the American School focused on describing language through real evidence by collecting data, classifying forms, and analyzing sounds and patterns.

Following structuralist ideas, language was seen as a **system of related elements**. Every sound, word, or structure gains value through its relation to other elements. This means language should be studied as a whole system, not as isolated words. American linguists focused especially on:

- **Phonology** (sound systems)
- **Morphology** (word formation)
- patterns in sentences
-

3. Descriptive Approach

American linguists rejected the idea that all languages should follow Latin or Greek grammar. They believed **every language has its own structure** and should be described on its own terms. This was important because many researchers studied **Native American languages**, which were very different from European languages. So they preferred **description** rather than judging languages as correct or incorrect.

5. Distributional Analysis

A major method of this school was **distributional analysis**. This means studying where a sound or word appears and what can come before or after it. In simple words: **The position of an item helps explain its function** (for example, in words like *pit*, *kit*, *sit*, changing the initial sound changes the meaning, showing how position determines function).

6. Behaviourism and Language

The American school of linguistics includes **Leonard Bloomfield** as its central figure, while Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf are related to it through their ideas on language and thought (Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). It was also influenced by behaviourist psychology, especially the work of **Ivan Pavlov** and **B.F. Skinner**, which helped shape Bloomfield's view of language as observable behaviour learned through habit, imitation, and reinforcement. Behaviourists rejected mental concepts such as thoughts or feelings because they cannot be directly observed. They focused on:

- **Stimulus** = something that causes behaviour
- **Response** = the reaction

Language was therefore seen as a type of behaviour learned through the environment.

6.1. Pavlov and Skinner

This concept of behaviourism was developed and explained through the work of the following key figures in psychology: Pavlov, Skinner and Bloomfield.

✓ **Ivan Pavlov – Classical Conditioning**

Pavlov showed that behaviour can be learned through association. Dogs learned to react to a bell because it was connected with food.

✓ **B.F. Skinner – Operant Conditioning**

Skinner explained that behaviour is shaped by consequences:

- **Reinforcement** increases behaviour
- **Punishment** decreases behaviour

These ideas strongly influenced language learning theories.

6.2. Leonard Bloomfield

Leonard Bloomfield was the most important linguist of the American school. His book *Language* (1933) became a major work in linguistics. He applied behaviourism to language and argued that linguistics should study only **observable speech behaviour**. For Bloomfield, language learning happens through:

- imitation
- repetition
- habit formation
- reinforcement

Bloomfield believed meaning was difficult to study scientifically because it cannot be directly seen.

Therefore, American structuralists focused more on **forms, sounds, and structures** than on semantics (meaning).

6.3. Sapir and Whorf: Language and Thought

Another important idea from this school was the **Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**. It denotes that language influences the way people think and understand the world.

- Strong version: language determines thought
- Weak version: language influences thought

Today, most scholars accept only the weaker version.

7. Contributions of the American School

The American school contributed greatly by:

- making linguistics scientific
- developing descriptive methods
- studying many indigenous languages
- focusing on spoken language
- influencing language teaching methods
- preparing the way for later linguistic theories

8. Limitations

Some weaknesses of the American school were:

- neglecting meaning
- ignoring mental processes
- focusing too much on form
- describing language more than explaining it

Later theories, especially cognitive linguistics and Chomsky's ideas, criticized these limits.

Conclusion

The American School of Linguistics played a major role in modern linguistics. It combined **structural analysis** with **behaviourist psychology** to study language scientifically. It taught that every language has its own system and should be described objectively. Although later theories replaced some of its ideas, its influence remains strong in modern linguistics.

Lecture Eight: The Mentalist School

Introduction

The Mentalist School appeared as a reaction against Behaviourism, which had dominated linguistics and psychology for many years. Behaviourists explained language as a learned behaviour based on stimulus, response, imitation, repetition, and reinforcement. However, this view was later challenged by the **Mentalist School**, especially through the work of **Noam Chomsky (1957)**. Chomsky's ideas started what is known as the **cognitive revolution**, because he brought attention back to the role of the mind in language learning and language use. Mentalism stresses the importance of internal mental states, structures, and processes in understanding human behaviour, especially language. It is therefore in direct contrast with behaviourism, which focused only on observable actions. According to this approach, language is mainly a product of the human mind.

1. Chomsky's Criticism of Behaviourism

Chomsky rejected the idea that language is simply a **habit learned through imitation**. He argued that if language were only imitation, children would only repeat sentences they hear. Chomsky strongly opposed Behaviourism in explaining language acquisition. While behaviourists argued that language is learned through **external stimuli, imitation, and reinforcement**, Chomsky rejected this view because it cannot explain the creative and **complex nature of language**. Children are able to produce new sentences that they have never heard before. This creativity shows that language cannot be explained only by **external stimuli**.

For Chomsky, the human mind contains **internal mechanisms** that allow speakers to understand and **create an unlimited number of sentences**. He argued that children acquire language rapidly because they possess an innate language ability that helps them understand grammatical rules naturally. Thus, language learning depends on internal mental capacities, not only on environmental conditioning.

The main difference is that Chomsky emphasized **internal knowledge**, while behaviourists such as B. F. Skinner emphasized **external behaviour and reinforcement**.

2. Theory of Language Acquisition

One of the most important contributions of the Mentalist School is Chomsky's theory of language acquisition. He argued that children are born with (**innate**) a natural ability to acquire language. Language learning is therefore not something completely taught from outside, but something **biologically** prepared inside the child.

When children are exposed to speech in their environment, this inborn ability becomes active and helps them learn grammar naturally. This explains why children all over the world learn language quickly and in **similar stages** despite differences in culture and language.

3. Universal Grammar

Chomsky introduced the concept of **Universal Grammar (UG)**. Universal Grammar refers to a set of common grammatical principles shared by all human languages. Although languages differ in vocabulary, sounds, and sentence patterns, they all follow certain universal rules because the human brain is naturally designed for language.

This theory explains why children can learn any language if they grow up in the right environment, and why all languages show organized grammatical systems rather than random structures. Universal Grammar remains one of Chomsky's most famous contributions.

4. Transformational Generative Grammar

Another major contribution of Chomsky is **Transformational Generative Grammar**. This theory explains how speakers can produce an infinite number of sentences from a limited number of grammatical rules. The word **generative** means that grammar generates sentences. The word **transformational** means that one sentence structure can be changed into another through transformations.

Examples:

- You close the door.
- The door is closed by you.
- Close the door!

These sentences have different forms, but they are grammatically related through transformations.

5. Deep Structure and Surface Structure

To explain sentence meaning, Chomsky distinguished between two levels of structure:

A/ Deep Structure

- The **implicit** abstract structure holds the main meaning of the sentence.

B/ Surface Structure

- The **explicit spoken** or **written** form of the sentence.

Thus, to Chomsky, the two sentences may have different surface structures but share a **common deep structure**, or they may look similar on the surface while having different meanings. Transformational rules are the tools used to connect deep structure to surface structure. This distinction helped explain the relationship between grammar and meaning.

6. Importance of the Mentalist School:

The Mentalist School had a great impact not only on linguistics but also on psychology and other sciences. It changed the way scholars viewed language by emphasizing mental processes instead of simple behaviour. It also established the idea that humans possess an innate capacity for language.

Although some of Chomsky's theories were later debated and developed, his central idea remains highly influential: language is one of the clearest signs of the power of the human mind.

Conclusion

In short, the Mentalist School represented a major turning point in linguistics. It rejected behaviourist explanations and emphasized that language depends on **innate** mental structures. Through concepts such as language acquisition, Universal Grammar, transformational grammar, and deep and surface structure, Chomsky provided a new understanding of how human language works.

Lecture Nine: Functionalism

1. Definition

Functionalism (1970's) is a linguistic approach that sees language primarily as a **tool for communication and social interaction**. It explains linguistic structure through the **functions language performs in real contexts**, rather than treating grammar as an autonomous system. Language is therefore viewed as a **social semiotic system**, where meaning is created through use, interaction, and context. Functionalism focuses on *why* language is structured the way it is, not only *how* it is structured.

2. Form and Function

A key principle of Functionalism is the relationship between **form and function**. Form refers to grammatical structures, while function refers to their communicative role. For example: in *The cat caught the mouse*:

- “the cat” = subject / agent → the doer of the action
- “the mouse” = object / patient → receiving the action

Although both are noun phrases i.e., they have same **grammatical form** (they have same **form**), their **meaning role** in the sentence can be completely different (**function**) i.e., they perform different functions in meaning. This shows that grammar cannot be separated from communication.

3. Functionalism Schools

Functionalism developed mainly in Europe through two major schools:

3.1. Prague School

The **Prague School** emerged in the 1920s in Prague. It included scholars such as **Roman Jakobson**, **Vilém Mathesius**, and **Nikolai Trubetzkoy**. The Prague School combined **structuralism and functionalism**, viewing language as a structured system where each element has a communicative function. Influenced by Saussurean structuralism, they studied language synchronically as a system of contrasts. They made major contributions to **phonology**, especially in defining phonemes through oppositions (e.g., pat & bat → /p/, /b/ are two phonemes that can change the meaning). They also developed **Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP)**, which explains how information is organized in sentences through **theme (given information)** and **rheme (new information)** (e.g., *My brother bought a new car*: **Theme** = *My brother* (what we already talk about) **Rheme** = *bought a new car* (new information). This shows how sentence structure reflects communication needs.

3.2. London School

The **London School** developed in London and is associated with Bronislaw **Malinowski**, J. R. **Firth**, and later **Michael Halliday**. This school strongly emphasized **language in context of situation**.

Firth developed the idea that **meaning is use**, stressing that linguistic elements gain meaning through their relationship with context and with other elements in the system. Put simply, Firth viewed that meaning is how language is used in context, and it should be analysed across linked levels: phonology,

grammar, lexis, and situation i.e., he proposed multi-level analysis (phonology, grammar, lexis, and situation) (For example, the sentence: **Could you open the window?** Grammatically, it is a question, its meaning in use is a polite request used in a **situation** where the student addresses a teacher. The **lexis** use is the word 'could' to show politeness.)

Halliday later developed **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**, viewing language as a system of choices shaped by **social context** (language is a social semiotic system, not just a grammatical structure. He introduced the three metafunctions: **ideational, interpersonal, and textual**, linking language directly to meaning-making in society.

1. **Ideational Function:** Language represents experience and ideas about the world.
2. **Interpersonal Function:** Language builds and maintains social relationships.
3. **Textual Function:** Language organizes information into coherent discourse.

For example "*Could you close the door, please?*" → **Ideational function** is closing the door, while **Interpersonal function:** polite request, **the Textual function:** clear sentence .

To Halliday, Grammar is understood as a **resource for meaning**, not a set of fixed rules. According to Halliday, language choices depend on **context and social relations**, not just grammar.

4. Functionalism, Structuralism and Mentalism

Functionalism differs from both Structuralism and Mentalism in focus and explanation. While Structuralism studies language as an abstract system of relations between elements, focusing on **form** and **structure**, not use, **Mentalism** explains language as an **innate mental system** governed by universal principles inside the human mind. In contrast, **Functionalism** explains language through its **social, communicative, and contextual functions**, emphasizing how meaning is created in real-life interaction.

Conclusion

From a functionalist perspective, language is perceived as dynamic system of meaning in use. This system integrates grammar, meaning and context, explaining language through its role in communication. While the **Prague School** focussed on structure with function, the London School emphasized context and meaning in use. Together, they founded modern **functional linguistics**, especially in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar.

J.R. Firth

- Focused on **context of situation**.
- Believed meaning depends on the **social context**, not just words.
- Famous idea: “*You shall know a word by the company it keeps*” (collocation).
- Focused on the **idea** of context.
- Explained that meaning depends on **situation and collocation**.
- Did **not build a full linguistic system**.
 - ☞ Simple: He **introduced the foundation** (context matters).
 - ☞ Simple: Language meaning comes from **how and where it is used**.

M.A.K. Halliday

- Developed **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**.
 - Saw language as a **system of choices** used to make meaning.
 - Introduced **3 functions (metafunctions)**:
 - Ideational (express ideas)
 - Interpersonal (interact with others)
 - Textual (organize messages)
 - Took Firth’s ideas further and built a **complete theory (SFL)**.
 - Explained **how language works in detail** through functions (ideational, interpersonal, textual).
 - Provided a **clear model to analyze language**.
 - ☞ Simple: He **developed a full system** explaining how language functions.
 - ☞ Simple: Language is a **meaning-making system shaped by social needs**.
- what is the difference between them
The difference is mainly in **depth and development**:

✓ In one line:

Firth = **the starting idea (context)**

Halliday = **the full developed theory (how language works)**

Noam Chomsky developed the mentalist view of language, arguing that language is **innate rather than purely learned**. He proposed that humans are born with a **Language Acquisition Device (LAD)**, a mental mechanism that allows children to acquire language naturally and rapidly. This device works by using **Universal Grammar (UG)**, which is the set of basic linguistic principles shared by all human languages. UG represents the **underlying structure of language**, while the LAD is the **mental tool that applies these principles during learning**.

Chomsky also emphasized that children are not just imitating language; they actively **generate new sentences** using internal rules. He distinguished between **competence** (the mental knowledge of language) and **performance** (actual language use in real situations, which may include errors). Overall, the mentalist school sees language as a **biologically rooted system in the mind**, where the environment only triggers an already existing capacity for language learning.