

## ORIGINS OF LANGUAGE

**T**here are several theories and interpretations concerning the origins of human language and its beginnings. The most famous of those theories are grouped by the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen:

### I. THE DIVINE SOURCE:

In most religions, there appears to be a divine source that provides humans with language. Following a Hindu tradition, language came from the goddess Sarasvati, wife of Brahma, creator of the universe.

In an attempt to rediscover this original, divine language, a few experiments have been carried out, with rather conflicting results. The basic hypothesis seems to have been that, if infants were allowed to grow up without hearing any language, then they would spontaneously begin using the original God-given language.

An Egyptian pharaoh named Psammetichus tried the experiment with two newborn infants around 600 BC. After two years in the company of goats and a mute shepherd, the children were reported to have spontaneously uttered, not an Egyptian word, but something reported to be the Phrygian word *Bekos*, meaning 'bread'. The pharaoh concluded that Phrygian must be the original language. That seems unlikely. The children may not have picked up this word from any human source, but, as several commentators have pointed out, they must have heard what goats were saying. (Remove the *-Kos* ending; can you hear the goats?)

James IV of Scotland carried out a similar experiment around AD 1500 and the children were reported to have started speaking Hebrew. It is unfortunate that all other cases of children who have been discovered living in isolation, without coming

into contact with human speech, tend not to confirm the results of either of these 'divine-source' experiments. Children living without access to human speech in their early years grow up with no language at all.

## II. THE NATURAL-SOUND SOURCE:

A quite different view of the beginnings of human speech is based on the concept of 'natural sounds'. The suggestion is that primitive words could have been imitations of the natural sounds which early men and women heard around them.

1. **THE POOH-POOH THEORY:** this theory is delivered from Darwin's view and suggests that speech appeared first by a way through which people were making instinctive cries to express feelings such as oh! for surprise and ouch! for pain...
2. **THE DING-DONG THEORY:** this view suggests the idea that the first form of language arose as people made responses to external stimuli, and thus building up a system – like which assured to meet communicating needs.
3. **THE YO-HEAVE-HO THEORY:** it suggests that first sort of language was a serial or rhythmic sounds produced by people working together and doing a physical effort. Those sounds were later on developed into codes.
4. **THE BOW-WOW THEORY:** this theory suggests that early attempts to produce language began as imitations of natural sounds like: moo, chow-chow, crash, clang, buzz, bang, meow...

### III. THE ORAL-GESTURE SOURCE:

This theory goes further back in time when people used physical gestures to communicate their ideas. It is thought that over time they started to use not only their hands, but also movement of the mouth, lips and tongue which subsequently developed into speech as we know it.

### IV. RECENT THEORIES:

Most modern theories concerning human language origins converge towards a central point stating that the interest of linguistics today as it was once, finding the first language but rather the co-existence of language and other disciplines with the same society. Linguistics now devotes much more time to investigate the intrinsic inter-relations between language and mind to understand the function and the nature of this latter.

#### NB:

*Onomatopoeia* (onomatopoeic)(Bow-wow theory)

The naming of a thing or action by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it; or the echoing natural sounds (such as *buzz* or *hiss*). Onomatopoeia may also refer to the use of words whose sound suggests the sense. This occurs frequently in poetry, where a line of verse can express a characteristic of the thing being portrayed. In the following lines from Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy," the rhythm of the words suggests the movement of a locomotive:

An engine, an engine

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

## WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

**T**hrough the answer of the question: what is language ? we are going to know whether all languages have something in common not shared by other systems of communication, human or none human, or not ? To know this requires from us an investigation on the different characteristics specific to language.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN LANGUAGE:

The characteristics are best highlighted (mentioned) in the definitions of language made by well-known linguists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

#### **I. EDWARD SAPIR 1921 (Language P.5):**

*“Language is a purely human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols.”*

The main characteristics of human language according to this quotation are:

1. language is unique to humans (no animal language)
2. language is produced voluntarily (non instinctively).
3. language is made of symbols.
4. there is the notion of sender, receiver, and a code.

#### **II. BLOCK AND TRAGER 1942 (Outline of linguistic analysis):**

*“A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates.”*

We may say, according to this statement that:

1. language is structured i.e. it is made up of rules which concern its pronunciation, grammar, and meaning.
2. language is limited only to its spoken form.

3. there is here a clear notion to the fact that language is used as social product not only to fulfil the function of communication but also the notion of co-operation.
4. this definition brings in the property of arbitrariness.

### III. HALL 1968 ( Essay on language):

*“Language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each others by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols.”*

Through this statement we may say that:

1. language use requires more than one user.
2. language involves the sender and the receiver of spoken form of language.
3. language is a social arbitrary product.
4. language enables interaction (not only communication of ideas, emotions, and desires...).

### IV. ROBINS 1979:

He did not define language, he rightly pointed out that such definitions "*tend to be trivial and uninformative, unless they presuppose ... some general theory of language and of linguistic analysis*". But he only listed and discussed certain salient characteristics of the language that "*must be taken into account in any seriously intended theory of language*". Most important of them are:

1. **Extensibility:** it is a property of language which enables language users to add other words to their linguistic resources. The language is extensible in a way that we may call for new expressions to fit our communicative needs.

The new words introduced in the language may come from other languages or from simple invention.

2. **Modifiability:** language has an impact on its users, sometimes we feel the need to adapt ourselves as the language requires; for example, when hearing a bad news makes us showing a state of neglect, sorry, ...

In other cases, it is the language we use and the way we use it which are modified and adapted because of our state and the message we want to transmit.

**V. CHOMSKY 1957 (syntactic structures p 13):**

*“From now on, I will consider a language to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.”*

According to Chomsky, all natural languages, in either their spoken or their written form, are languages in the sense of his definition since:

- a) Each natural language has a finite number of sounds in it (and a finite number of letters in its alphabet – on the assumption that it has an alphabetic writing system).
- b) Although there may be infinitely many distinct sentences in the language, each sentence can be represented as a finite sequence of these sounds (or letters).

We know also that Chomsky did not mention whether language is used for communication or for other reasons. His purpose is to focus attention upon the purely structural properties of languages.

The term “infinite” implies, according to Chomsky, the existence of a capacity which he believes is innate to generate sentences from other sentences, differing in the surface structure (word order) and keeping the same deep structure (meaning), a view which opposes the one held by the behaviourists concerning language learning and development.

## PROPERTIES OF HUMAN LANGUAGE:

**H**uman language differentiated from all other forms of signalling by a set of properties which make it a unique type of communication system. Those properties are:

1. **DISPLACEMENT:** It is the ability to use language to talk about things and events not present in the immediate environment (such as past and future time reference). It enables us to describe things and places which we are not even so sure of their existence. The meaning of animal signals, by contrast, is restricted to the setting in which they are used; a hunger cry, for example, means that hunger is present 'now', not yesterday or tomorrow.
2. **ARBITRARINESS:** There is no natural or iconic relation between a linguistic form and its meaning. There is nothing in the way the word '*table*' is pronounced or written which physically resembles the thing '*table*'. In language, only few words have sounds which echo with the sounds made by the object or the activity to which those words refer (onomatopoeic). These words are rare and the vast majority of linguistic expressions are in fact arbitrary.
3. **PRODUCTIVITY:** The capacity of language users to produce and understand an indefinitely large number of sentences; also referred to as *creativity*. New utterances are continually being created, and the language users manipulate their linguistic resources to produce novel expressions and sentences. A child, for instance, learning a language is active in forming and producing utterances which she or he has never heard before.

4. **CULTURAL TRANSMISSION:** Language is passed from one generation to another not genetically or biologically but through a process of teaching and learning, for example, a Chinese child born in England is likely to inherit some physical characteristics from his parents genetically but develops not necessarily the Chinese language. This child will learn and use the English language which he acquires part of his culture.
5. **DISCRETENESS:** The sounds used in language are meaningfully distinct. Each sound is treated as a discrete unit, and the occurrence of one sound instead of the other leads to a misuse of language. For example, /p/ and /b/ sounds in a sentence like: “*can I park here*” the use of the sound /b/ instead of /p/ is a wrong use of language.
6. **DUALITY OF STRUCTURE (DOUBLE ARTICULATION):** Language is structurally organized into two abstract levels. The discrete forms combined in different ways give different meaningful units. That is, at one level, we have distinct sounds and at the other level we have distinct meanings. For example, the sounds /a/, /e/, /t/ none of these discrete forms has any intrinsic meaning. When we produce those sounds in different combinations, as in *ate, eat, tea* we have different meaningful units.

These six properties may be taken as the core features of human language. Human language does of course have many other properties, but these are not uniquely human characteristics.



- **VOCAL-AUDITORY CHANNEL:** is certainly a feature of human speech. Human linguistic communication is typically generated via the vocal organs and perceived via the ears. Linguistic communication, however, can also be transmitted without sound, via writing or via the sign languages of the deaf. Moreover, many other species (e.g. dolphins) use the vocal-auditory channel. Thus, this property is not a defining feature of human language.
- **RECIPROCITY:** any speaker/sender of a linguistic signal can also be a listener/receiver.
- **SPECIALIZATION:** linguistic signals do not normally serve any other type of purpose, such as breathing or feeding.
- **NON-DIRECTIONALITY:** linguistic signals can be picked up by anyone within hearing, even unseen.
- **RAPID FADE:** linguistic signals are produced and disappear quickly.

## SOME FUNCTIONS OF HUMAN LANGUAGE:

In order to communicate any idea or transmit any message we make use of either one form of language. One function of language is communication which consists of sending and receiving pieces of language to make others know about ourselves or know about other selves. However, there are cases in which language is not used to fulfil that specific function but used for other reasons. Those reasons may be:

1. **EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION (EMOTIVE LANGUAGE):** Sometimes we use language to get rid of our nervous when we are under stress or frustrated state; the clearest case is the use of swearing or obscenity as a means of getting rid of nervous energy when people are under stress. Other emotive utterances include involuntary responses to beautiful art or scenery, expressions of fear or affection, and the outpourings found in a great deal of poetry. We may also use positive kinds of emotive language in cases when we react automatically to beautiful sight.
2. **SOCIAL INTERACTION (RELATIONSHIP):** when more than one person are engaged in using language, the function of language is not necessarily communicating ideas. One other function of language (in a social gathering) is the intention to maintain good relationships among persons. For example in English when someone sneezes we use the expression “bless you” and the common reply is “thank you”. In this case, no ideas are communicated rather it is a purpose of maintaining a good rapport between people. Silence instead of the expression “bless you” would mean a sense of distance (alienation) or

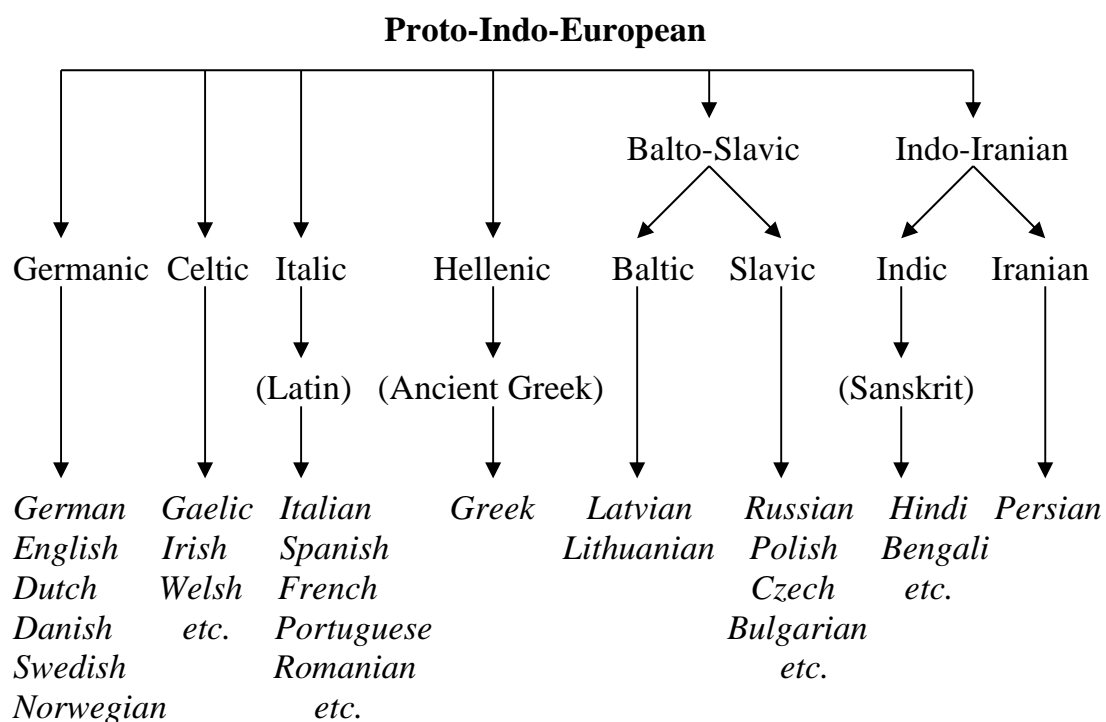
even dislike (hate). These kinds of expressions are automatically produced, stereotyped in most of the cases and they differ from one language to another as cultures vary.

3. **THE POWER OF SOUNDS:** meaningless expressions are often uttered in different situations. For instance, those repetitive rhythmical sounds produced by children to control a game, or those voices of individuals singing at kitchen, bathroom ... Phrases like these can be explained only by the desire to exploit the sonic potential of language.
4. **THE INSTRUMENT OF THOUGHT:** people, specially when writing, feel the need to speak out their thoughts aloud saying that this helps them concentrating more. This can be the example of an author who reads to check whether what has been written corresponds to what he has in mind. An example of students performing mathematical calculation where the mental act (thinking) is accompanied with a verbal commentary. Here also no idea is communicated.

## LANGUAGE FAMILIES:

To say that two or more languages belong to the same family is to say that they are variants of the same common ancestral grandfather language, or the original form (*proto*) of a language. The first attempt to discover the history of the languages of the world began at the end of the eighteenth century, scholars (linguists) at that time began to compare groups of languages in a systematic and detailed way to see whether there were correspondences between them especially in terms of sound systems and grammatical structure.

If this could be demonstrated (finding similarities) it would be assumed that these groups of languages belong to the same original language or proto language; however, there is no direct and complete knowledge of the proto language from which the members of a particular family are descendants. In Europe for example, there were groups of languages like French, Spanish, and Italian which are descendants of a common origin (Latin). Another hypothesis supports the idea that there was once a language form which many languages of EURASIA have been descendants, this language is called the *Proto-Indo-European language*.



**WHO WERE THE INDO-EUROPEANS ?**

History showed that there existed a *semi-nomadic* population living in southern Russia around 4000 BC. They began to spread into the Danube area of Europe from around 3500 BC, those people were known as the Kurgans.

The Kurgan culture and language seem to have arrived in the Adriatic region before 2000 BC. The ancestors of the Kurgans are not known although there are similarities between their language and the Uralic family of languages spoken in the East.

**THE DISCOVERY OF PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE:**

It was not possible to deduce the existence of this family of languages until scholars become aware of the systematic resemblance which can be found between European languages and Sanskrit which is the oldest language of the Indian continent. When these similarities were first found, many people thought that Sanskrit was a part of the European languages, but towards the end of the eighteenth century, systematic studies showed that this was not the case and many studies proved that Sanskrit was a system to European languages.

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<b>Sanskrit</b>	<b>Latin</b>	<b>Greek</b>
<i>pitar</i>	<i>pater</i>	<i>pater</i> (father)
<i>bhratar</i>	<i>frater</i>	<i>phrater</i> (brother)

**NB:****THE COGNATES:**

A cognate of a word in one language is a word in another language which has a similar form and is, or was, used with a similar meaning.

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<b>English</b>	<i>mother</i>	<i>father</i>	<i>friend</i>
<b>German</b>	<i>mutter</i>	<i>vater</i>	<i>freund</i>
<b>Spanish</b>	<i>madre</i>	<i>padre</i>	<i>amigo</i>
<b>Italian</b>	<i>madre</i>	<i>padre</i>	<i>amico</i>

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## WHAT IS LINGUISTICS:

**L**inguistics is the scientific study of language, it aims at providing explanations about the complexities which are often found in language and its different aspects. Different types of linguistics can be distinguished according to the aim set in each investigation:

1. **GENERAL (THEORETICAL) LINGUISTICS:** it studies language in general and builds up theories and categorisations about language, in order to establish the universal characteristics of human language. (it is concerned with frameworks for describing individual languages and theories about universal aspects of language).
2. **APPLIED LINGUISTICS:** is using linguistic theory to address real-world problems, (applies those theories to other fields).
3. **MACRO (CONTEXTUAL) LINGUISTICS:** is concerned with all what affects language. It deals with:
  - How languages are acquired and stored in the mind.
  - The psychological and neurological mechanisms involved in language behaviour.
  - Language and society, language and culture, language and biology.

The linguist is interested in such fields so as to enable himself understand other fields of knowledge such as:

- a) Language acquisition:* how do human develop language, which hemisphere is concerned with the task of perceiving and developing language.
- b) Aphasia:* the loss of control over language caused by brain damage.

4. **MICRO (AUTONOMOUS) LINGUISTICS:** is a narrow study of linguistics which deals with the language itself and for itself. It is concerned with mainly the structure of language with no reference to the way languages are acquired and stored in the mind, without regard to the interdependence of language and culture, without regard to the physiological and psychological mechanisms that are involved in language behaviour; in short, without regard to anything other than the language system. It looks into different aspects of language in order to understand language (its function and structure).
5. **DIACHRONIC (HISTORICAL) LINGUISTICS:** is concerned with the development of language through time and gives historical explanation of language changes through history.
6. **SYNCHRONIC LINGUISTICS:** studies a particular language in a given period in time of its history. For example, English language can be studied synchronically in case we deal with that language during the Shakespearian period.
7. **COMPARATIVE (TYPOLOGICAL) LINGUISTICS:** is concerned with comparing a language at different phases (steps, periods) of its development.
8. **CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS:** its purpose is to focus on the differences between languages, especially in a language-teaching context.
9. **DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS:** is the work of analysing and describing how language is actually spoken now (or how it was actually spoken in the past) by any group of people. (it deals with a particular language and studies its different aspects: phonology, syntax, semantics)

## SCIENTIFICNESS OF LANGUAGE STUDY:

**W**hen sitting for language study, the linguist has to follow some rules:

1. **SYSTEMATICNESS:** the linguist has to set and organize a framework on the material to be studied. He has to choose between micro and macro linguistics, then he has to define the area of his study regardless of other fields.  
If the choice; for example, had been on one particular language (English); using descriptive linguistics, the aspect of the study should be identified: if the aspect is phonology, the linguist will define clearly the subject (phonetics or phonemics).
2. **OBJECTIVITY:** the linguist has to carry out the study away from personal feeling intervention. The data should be presented in the way they are, not in the way they should be in the linguist point of view.
3. **EXPLICITNESS:** the results obtained from the study, and the theories built up should be presented in such a way that they can be discussed and publicly checked. In addition, those findings are not to be kept in linguistics domain only; they should be useful for other fields of knowledge like psychology, sociology...



In linguistics, different branches may be distinguished according to the linguist focus and interest. A major distinction introduced by F. De Saussure was that one between diachronic and synchronic linguistics; the first refers to the study of language changes and language in general, the second refers to the study of a state of language at any given point in time.

- a. When the attempt is to establish general principles for the study of all languages and to determine the characteristics of human language as a phenomenon, it is called general linguistics.
- b. When the study concentrates on establishing the facts of a particular language system, it is called descriptive linguistics.
- c. When its purpose is to focus on the differences between languages, it is called contrastive linguistics.
- d. When the intention is to emphasize certain characteristics of a particular language through its different phases of development, the study is called comparative linguistics.

## THE DOMAINS OF LINGUISTICS:

**M**ost recent linguistic theories divided language into three aspects: phonology, grammar, and semantics. The scientific study of language requires describing language phonologically, grammatically, and semantically.

### I. PHONOLOGY:

It studies the sound system of human language; it includes both phonetics and phonemics.

**A. PHONETICS:** it is the study of vocal sounds, describing them as they are made. Phonetics as the study of sounds stems from a religious stimulus; the old Indians were the first who thought of a framework which describes correct pronunciation. According to them the written aspect of the language remains unaffected; whereas the spoken one can be subject to mispronunciation, and this would affect the pronunciation of their holy texts. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Melville Bell invented a writing system that he called "Visible Speech", he was a teacher of the deaf, and he intended his writing system to be a teaching and learning tool for helping deaf students learn spoken language. He contributed a lot to the establishment and development of a unified international pronunciation system, known today as the I.P.A (International Phonetic Alphabet) in 1886 in Paris. Phonetics is concerned with the production of sounds with no reference to any language in particular. It includes:

1. **ARTICULATORY PHONETICS:** it investigates the different organs of speech which are involved in the production of sounds (place of articulation). It also describes how the organs of speech contribute in the production of sounds (manner of articulation).
2. **ACOUSTIC PHONETICS:** it studies the medium through which the sound goes from the mouth to the ear.
3. **AUDITORY PHONETICS:** it investigates how sounds are received by the ear and analysed by the brain, it describes the mechanisms involved in transmitting the sound from the outer ear to the appropriate part in the brain to be decoded (to be understood).
4. **FORENSIC PHONETICS:** has applications in legal cases involving speaker identification and the analysis of recorded utterances.

**B. PHONEMICS:** the study or description of the distinctive sound units

(Phonemes) of a language and their relationship to one another.

**1. PHONEME:** the smallest unit of sound in a language which can distinguish two words.

Eg: pan & ban differ only in their initial sound:

a. pan begins with /p/ and ban with /b/

b. ban and bin differ only in their vowels: /æ/ and /i/.

Therefore, /p/, /b/, /æ/, and /i/ are phonemes of English.

The number of phonemes varies from one language to another.

English is often considered to have 44 phonemes:

24 consonants, and 20 vowels.

### 2. ALLOPHONES "other sounds":

when a phoneme has two different pronunciations in different phonetic environments, we say it has different allophones, for example: the phoneme /L/ has two different pronunciations in different words; it is sometimes dark like in (milk) [ɫ] and sometimes clear like in (sleep) [l].

3. **PHONE**: the smallest sound as it is produced (individual sounds as they occur in speech).

Eg: the different ways of pronouncing the vowel in the word *can*, Long [æ:], shorter [æ], with nasalization [æ̃], are all phones of the phoneme /æ/.

\* When we speak, the vocal tract works without stop giving a stream for a flow of sounds, one sound merges into the other and we get words, phrases, sentences, or language sequences. When we produce these segments, we make use of the wide range of changes (voice high or low, quick or slow ) which may change the meaning of what we say, this is what provides the data of supra-segmental analysis which is derived into four parts:

**1. Assimilation:** it is the change of a speech sound because of the influence of an other sound following or preceding it; we have three types of assimilation:

**a. Progressive assimilation:** a sound is pronounced differently because of the influence of the preceding sound, eg: dogs, horses.

**b. Regressive assimilation:** a sound is pronounced differently because of the influence of the following sound, eg: the old man.

**c. Reciprocal assimilation:** two sounds influence each other and result in a new one, eg: this year, could you.

**2. Pitch:** it is the rapidity of vibration of the vocal cords, which results in different tones of voices, the faster the vocal cords vibrate, the higher the pitch.

**3. Juncture:** a short pause between words, or between sentences in longer discourses, it is easy to see it in written because it is a spaces, but in speech it is not easy to make this separation (a nice house/an ice house), (I scream/ice cream).

**4. Stress:** it is a term used to refer the degree of force used in producing a syllable.

## II. GRAMMAR:

### ANCIENT BEGINNINGS:

One early example is the grammatical tradition of ancient India, with its most famous figure, Panini (520 BC - 460 BC). The Indian Grammarians were concerned with preserving Sanskrit, the sacred language of Hinduism, in its Classical form, in order to ensure that it would be used properly in ritual. To do this they described every side of the language in small detail. Panini's Grammar was a huge work detailing the step-by-step derivation of Sanskrit sentences, all the more impressive because it was not written down, but memorized in verse.

### DEFINITION:

A sentence may be defined as the target structure unit in terms of which the grammar of the language is organized.

Grammar is the study of words formation and words arrangement in the language, so grammar includes Syntax; that is the different rules which govern

the order and arrangement of words in a sentence, and morphology; that is the study of words formation or morphemes formation.

**A. SYNTAX:** is concerned with the different rules that govern the sentence, it is based on:

- ✓ The patterns that underline the structure of the sentence and its constituents.
- ✓ And the syntactic devices which are concerned with the linking of those constituents together. Each sentence is constructed out of a set of constituents which may be reduced to a basic sentence type (S+V+O) or (S+V), to reduce the complex sentence into its basic type we may proceed until the resulting sentence can not be reduced.

- eg:
- Mad dogs savagely bite innocent strangers.
  - Dogs bite innocent strangers.
  - Dogs bite strangers.
  - Dogs bite. ( it can't be reduced)

The sentence is the upper unit which expresses the complete meaning through a given way of arranging elements. The same meaning can be expressed by the same elements arranged in different ways, the language user knows the different rules which govern the sentence structure and this knowledge of rules helps him decide whether the sentence is meaningful or not. This knowledge concerns all the information about language structure and language function and this is called *Competence*.

To be competent in language means to possess enough information about the rules of phonology, grammar, and syntax.

- Eg:
- He eats an apple (correct)
  - An apple is eaten by him (correct)
  - Is an eaten apple him by (wrong)

It is our competence which makes us understand that sentence 3 is wrong, though it is made of the same elements which make sentence 1 & 2 meaningful. So, sentence 3 is meaningless.

Our competence can be seen as whether or not we are able to judge sentences correctness, or also as the act of producing correct sentences. To produce a correct sentence is to make in practice our theoretical knowledge, so we manifest our competence.

Our competence also makes us interpret that a sentence may have two different meanings.

- Eg:
1. John and Valery are married.
  2. They called him Doctor Smith.

In sentence 1: one meaning is that both John and Valery are married to other persons, or another meaning which is John is the husband of Valery or John and Valery are a couple.

In sentence 2: one meaning is that they call him Dr Smith and it is not his name, and the other meaning is that he is ill and they called him a doctor whom name is Smith.

Note: the act of putting competence into practice is called *performance*. Performance presupposes (needs) competence. We can not perform in a language unless we are competent.

**B. MORPHOLOGY:** it studies the structure of words or morphemes.

**Morpheme:** the smallest meaningful unit in a language. There are two types of morphemes:

1. **Free morphemes (base root):** are those words which carry meaning in themselves. E.g.: open, book, car, ...
2. **Bound morphemes:** are those words which carry no lexical meaning, but only a grammatical function. These words are to be attached to the base to express a meaning.

Bound morphemes are called “affixes” and are divided into three types:

- a. **Infixes:** they are bound morphemes inserted inside another word.  
e.g.: Tagalog (language of the Philippines): -um- shows that a verb is in the past tense: sulat (to write) – sumulat (wrote). In English, the word (absolutely).
- b. **Prefixes:** they are bound morphemes attached to the beginning of the base. E.g.: unemployment.
- c. **Suffixes:** are divided into two categories:
  1. derivational suffixes: modify the word lexically according to its dictionary meaning.  
E.g.: child (noun) childsh (adjective)childshly (adverb)
  2. inflectional suffixes: they modify the word grammatically. Eg: book books, walk walked

Note:

- \* inflectional suffixes are always final and do not allow further affixation.
- \* the allomorphs are variants of the same inflectional morpheme; just like allophones, which are variants of the same phoneme.





3. synthetic language (inflecting language): a language in which the form of a word changes to show a change in meaning or grammatical function.

Eg: mouse      mice

Come      came

### III. SEMANTICS:

Is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. Meaning is divided into two kinds:

- a. Conceptual meaning (denotative):** covers those basic, essential components of meaning which are conveyed by the literal use of the word.

eg: the word *needle*, some of the basic components of this word might include: *thin, sharp, steel instrument*. These components would be part of the conceptual meaning of *needle*.

- b. Associative meaning (stylistic):** it is the meaning of the speaker's intention, this kind of meaning can not be studied in micro-linguistics; because here the linguist has to do with other elements than the language itself.

Eg: you may have associations attached to a word like *needle* which lead you to think of *painful* whenever you encounter the word.

### Semantic relationships (lexical relations):

Words exist in language not in isolation, but in relation with each other. Through this relation we may know the meaning of a word, and sometimes a word can be defined through its related word. The types of relationships the words have are:

1. **Synonymy:** two words are synonyms when they express sameness in meaning; however, total sameness is never conveyed between words, so there are no complete synonyms.

eg: *to listen* expresses to a high extent the same concept idea that *to hear* does.

But *to hear* can't replace *to listen*.

2. **Antonymy:** certain words express oppositeness in their meanings, these are antonyms. We have:

- a. **Non gradable antonyms (complementary pairs):** comparative constructions are not normally used (the expression *deader* or *more dead* sound strange) and the negative of one member does imply the other. For example, *that person is not dead* (does indeed mean that he is *alive*).

- b. **Gradable antonyms:** such as the pair *big-small*, can be used in comparative constructions like *bigger than*, *smaller than*. Also the negative of one member of the gradable pair does not necessarily imply the other. For example, if you say *that dog is not old* you do not have to mean *that dog is young*.

3. **Hyponymy:** when the meaning of one form is included in the meaning of another, the relationship is described as hyponymy, and some typical example pairs are: *daffodil-flower*, *dog-animal*, *poodle-dog*, *carrot-vegetable*, *banyan-tree*. The concept of inclusion involved here is the idea that if any object is a

*daffodil*, then it is necessarily a *flower*, so the meaning of *flower*, is included in the meaning of *daffodil*. Or *daffodil* is a hyponym of *flower*. The relation here is considered as a kind of hierarchical relationship.

4. **Homophony:** when two or more different written forms have the same pronunciation, they are described as homophones. For example, *meat-meet*, *did-deed*, *flour-flower*, *right-write*.
5. **Homonymy:** when the same form (written & spoken) has two or more unrelated meanings. For example, *bank* (of the river) – *bank* (for money)  
*Bat* (animal) – *bat* (used in sport), *Race* (sport) – *race* (ethnic group)  
*Pupil* (at school) – *pupil* (in the eye).
6. **Polysemy:** is one form (written & spoken) having multiple meanings which are related by extension. For example, the word *head* used to refer to the object on top of your body, on top of the company, or on top of a department. The word *foot* of a person, of bed, of mountain. Or *run*: person does, water does, colours do.

The distinction between homonymy and Polysemy is not always clear in cut; however, one indication of the distinction can be found in the typical dictionary entry for words, homonyms have got separated entries and treated as independent lexical units. Whereas polesymes have one single entry, with a numbered list of meanings.

## STRUCTURALISM: (INTRODUCTION)

The most important contribution to the understanding of language as an abstract phenomenon came in 1916 with the publication of *Ferdinand De Saussure* lecture notes. De Saussure gave lectures at the university of Geneva in which he exposed new theoretical concepts to evaluate the old school (traditional grammar) and developed a new movement of language analysis. De Saussure did not leave a book behind, his students gathered his observations from the lectures notes they took, and published them as « Cours De Linguistique Générale ». Thirty years after this publication his views were largely explored.

De Saussure was the first to distinguish the synchronic study of the language from the diachronic one, and to provide insights into the nature of the language that we use. According to him the essence of the language is not in its external aspects but in its internal system.

He believes that the language study has to concentrate on the abstract linguistic system which he called “*La langue*” rather than the actual speech which he called “*La parole*”.

Saussure's conception of language as an abstract system underlying the various speech forms of its users, was developed by his followers from the Geneva school, the Copenhagen school, the Prague school, and also the London school.