

University Hassan II Mohammedia Casablanca
Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences Ben M’sik

**Introduction**

**to**

**Linguistics**

**Portfolio**

Semester4

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Table of contents :

[Introduction: 3](#_Toc419863991)

[Auto-evaluation 4](#_Toc419863992)

[Session 1: February 27, 2015 5](#_Toc419863993)

[Class Notes: 5](#_Toc419863994)

[Concepts: 5](#_Toc419863995)

[Additional Documents: 6](#_Toc419863996)

[Difference between hypotheses and theories: 6](#_Toc419863997)

[Session 2: March 6, 2015 8](#_Toc419863998)

[Class Notes: 8](#_Toc419863999)

[In any scientific research 8](#_Toc419864000)

[Hockett Charles- The features of human language: 8](#_Toc419864001)

[Additional Documents: 9](#_Toc419864002)

[Session 3: March 13, 2015 12](#_Toc419864003)

[Class Notes 12](#_Toc419864004)

[Historical notes about linguistics: 13](#_Toc419864005)

[Additional Documents: 14](#_Toc419864006)

[GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITY 14](#_Toc419864007)

[The Greek influence on Arabic grammar: 15](#_Toc419864008)

[A Concise Outline of Linguistic History 15](#_Toc419864009)

[Session 4: March 20, 2015 22](#_Toc419864021)

[Class Notes 22](#_Toc419864022)

[Medieval Europe 22](#_Toc419864023)

[Additional Documents: 24](#_Toc419864024)

[THE EUROPEAN MIDDLE AGES 24](#_Toc419864025)

[Session 5: March 27, 2015 25](#_Toc419864026)

[Class Notes 25](#_Toc419864027)

[Linguistics between the 15th and 17th century: Renaissance 26](#_Toc419864028)

[*Standardization* 27](#_Toc419864029)

[Additional Documents: 28](#_Toc419864030)

[Vernacular Languages and Dialects 28](#_Toc419864031)

[Session 6: April 3, 2015 29](#_Toc419864032)

[Class Notes 29](#_Toc419864033)

[The 19th century philology 29](#_Toc419864034)

[Additional Documents: 32](#_Toc419864035)

[Linguistics as an academic discipline 32](#_Toc419864036)

[Session 7: April 17, 2015 35](#_Toc419864037)

[Class Notes 35](#_Toc419864038)

[Linguistics in the 19th century: 35](#_Toc419864039)

[Dichotomies 35](#_Toc419864040)

[Additional Documents: 41](#_Toc419864041)

[Session 8: May 8, 2015 46](#_Toc419864042)

[Class Notes 46](#_Toc419864043)

[Structuralism 46](#_Toc419864044)

[Additional documents: 49](#_Toc419864045)

[Structural linguistics in America 49](#_Toc419864046)

[Session 9: May 15, 2015 50](#_Toc419864047)

[Class Notes 50](#_Toc419864048)

[Theories: 50](#_Toc419864049)

[Additional Documents 56](#_Toc419864050)

[Chomsky: Generative & Universal Grammar 56](#_Toc419864051)

# Auto-evaluation

 Overall, I would have to say that when I first started this course, I was so excited, owing to the fact that I am eager to know everything about this language and, besides, a specialized student of language must know every detail of history of this language. This course, eventually, encouraged me to search for more information

 The making of the portfolio was kind of hard for me; especially that it is my very first time doing such a thing. It took me days and even nights. However, thanks to the many videos I watched and the many master students I asked, I could finally have a clear idea about how the portfolio should look like. I believe that this skill will enable me to distinguish myself from other people applying for a certain job.

# Introduction:

 This portfolio is divided into two main sections dealing with linguistics. In the first one, class notes, is the notes we could acquire from attending lectures. It is devoted of the portfolio is about the exact meaning of some concepts which seems to be clear and easy to understand, but in reality it is not. Also, this portfolio covers mainly the different stages, schools and civilizations that linguistics has gone through; From India, passing by The Greek, Arabs, Romans, Middle Ages, renaissance and neogrammarians, and ending by the modern linguistics.

 In the second part, which is the additional documents, is meant to support and back up the points we did not fully understand and to give a clear idea about them. Also, Additional documents give more data and information. And t is a way to see the same information but from different view, so we can have an even clearer idea about everything.

# Session 1: February 27, 2015

## Class Notes:

### Concepts:

Concept vs. term:

A concept is a field of science whereas a term is usually a word or words that describe a concept.

The four principles of science*:*

*1.* **Exhaustiveness**: A method in which all aspects of a phenomenon are described.

2. **Consistency**: Using the same tool for all posts the phenomenon in order to compare.

3. **Economy**: Using a method which requires less efforts and energy

4. **Empiricism**: Based on experiment; In other words, based on senses, tangible.

Before doing anyresearch, one mustfollow those methods:

1. **Observation**: Form and function. The example of a chair (form: It has 4 legs. Function:
 used to sit on)

2. **Identification**: Focusing on elements

3. **Classification**: classifying and separating

4. **Analysis**: in order to find results

We describe in order to reach universal ***generalization***, so we can predict or assume.

Theory vs. hypothesis:

1. A theory is a set of:

* Concepts
* Tools
* Hypothesis
* Conditions
* Rules

2. Hypothesis (S), hypotheses (P): Used to describe a phenomenon. It can be true or not.

All Scientific descriptions are all ***falsifiable (***open to change***)***

**Approach**: studying a phenomenon for a particular perspective.

A systemhas to have:

* Element.
* Structure: relations among the elements.
* Rules.
* Unity.
* Integrity: Element is meaningful within a context.

## Additional Documents:

Difference between hypotheses and theories:

**Hypotheses**
Hypotheses are proposed explanations for a fairly narrow set of phenomena. These reasoned explanations are not guesses — of the wild or educated variety. When scientists formulate new hypotheses, they are usually based on prior experience, scientific background knowledge, preliminary [observations](http://undsci.berkeley.edu/glossary/glossary_popup.php?word=observe), and logic. For example, scientists observed that alpine butterflies exhibit characteristics intermediate between two species that live at lower elevations. Based on these observations and their understanding of speciation, the scientists hypothesized that this species of alpine butterfly evolved as the result of hybridization between the two other species living at lower elevations.



**Theories**
[Theories](http://undsci.berkeley.edu/glossary/glossary_popup.php?word=theory), on the other hand, are broad explanations for a wide range of phenomena. They are concise (i.e., generally don't have a long list of exceptions and special rules), coherent, systematic, predictive, and broadly applicable. In fact, theories often integrate and generalize many hypotheses. For example, the theory of natural selection broadly applies to all populations with some form of inheritance, variation, and differential reproductive success — whether that population is composed of alpine butterflies, fruit flies on a tropical island, a new form of life discovered on Mars, or even bits in a computer's memory. This theory helps us understand a wide range of observations (from the rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria to the physical match between pollinators and their preferred flowers), makes predictions in new situations (e.g., that treating AIDS patients with a cocktail of medications should slow the evolution of the virus), and has proven itself time and time again in thousands of experiments and observational studies.



http://undsci.berkeley.edu/article/0\_0\_0/howscienceworks\_19

# Session 2: March 6, 2015

## Class Notes:

### In any scientific research

We begin with questions, set hypotheses, classify them, analyze them and then reach result.

**Value judgment**:An opinion given in a subjective way.

**Factual judgment**: An opinion which is a fact; given in an objective way.

If you are to tell your judgment, you should start with the factual judgment.

Scientific, Unscientific and Non-scientific studies:

**Scientific**: The one which satisfies all and every principles and methodologies steps written above.

**Unscientific**: is a study which does not satisfy at least one principle or methodology steps written above.

**Non-Scientific**: The one which is based on valuable judgments and subjective observation. It does not satisfy any principle or methodology.

**What is a language**: Language has no specific definition.
According to Ibn Jenni language is a group of sounds and voices which people use in order to satisfy their means.

"أما حدها فأصوات يعبر بها قوم عن أغراضهم الخصائص لابن جيني. "

### Hockett Charles- The features of human language:

1. Vocal-Auditory Channel.

2. Broad Transmission and Directional Reception.

3. Rapid Fading.

4. Interchanging Ability.

5. Total Feedback.

6. Specialization.

7. Semanticity

8. Arbitrariness.

9. Discreteness.

10. Displacement.

11. Productivity

12. Traditional Transmission?

13. Duality of patterning.

## Additional Documents:

***What is Language?***

Many animal and even plant species communicate with each other.  Humans are not unique in this capability.  However, human language is unique in being a symbolic communication system that is learned instead of biologically inherited.  **Symbols** are sounds or things which have meaning given to them by the users.  Originally, the meaning is arbitrarily assigned.  For instance, the English word "dog" does not in any way physically resemble the animal it stands for.  All symbols have a material form but the meaning cannot be discovered by mere sensory examination of their forms.  They are abstractions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Do the following words sound or looklike the animal shown here: canis chien, hund, perro?****(They all are words for dog inEuropean languages.)** |  | photo of a dog |

A word is one or more sounds that in combination have a specific meaning assigned by a language.  The symbolic meaning of words can be so powerful that people are willing to risk their lives for them or take the lives of others.  For instance, words such as "queer" and "nigger" have symbolic meaning that is highly charged emotionally in America today for many people.  They are much more than just a sequence of sounds to us.

A major advantage of human language being a learned symbolic communication system is that it is infinitely flexible.  Meanings can be changed and new symbols created.  This is evidenced by the fact that new words are invented daily and the meaning of old ones change.  For example, the English word "nice" now generally means pleasing, agreeable, polite, and kind.  In the15th century it meant foolish, wanton, lascivious, and even wicked.   Languages evolve in response to changing historical and social conditions.  Some language transformations typically occur in a generation or less.  For instance, the slang words used by your parents were very likely different from those that you use today.  You also probably are familiar with many technical terms, such as "text messaging" and "high definition TV", that were not in general use even a decade ago.

Language and speech are not the same thing.  Speech is a broad term simply referring to patterned verbal behavior.  In contrast, a**language** is a set of rules for generating speech.  A **dialect** is a variant of a language.  If it is associated with a geographically isolated speech community, it is referred to as a **regional dialect**.  However, if it is spoken by a speech community that is merely socially isolated, it is called a **social dialect**.  These latter dialects are mostly based on class, ethnicity, gender, age, and particular social situations.  Black English (or Ebonics) in the United States is an example of a social dialect.  Dialects may be both regional and social.  An example is the Chinese spoken dialect and written form called *nushu*.  It apparently was known and used only by women in the village of Jiang-yong in Hunan Province of South China.  Women taught *nushu* only to their daughters and used it to write memoirs, create songs, and share their thoughts with each other.  While women also knew and used the conventional Chinese dialect of their region, they used *nushu* to maintain female support networks in their male dominated society.  *Nushu* is essentially gone now due to its suppression during the 1950's and 1960's by the communist government of China.  The last speaker and writer of *nushu* was a woman named Yang Huanyi.  She died in 2004.  Not all societies have distinct dialects.  They are far more common in large-scale diverse societies than in small-scale homogenous ones.

Over the last few centuries, deaf people have developed sign languages that are complex visual-gestural forms of communicating with each other.  Since they are effective communication systems with standardized rules, they also must be considered languages in their own right even though they are not spoken.

|  |
| --- |
|   [Birth of a Language](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/07/2/l_072_04.html)--the emergence of a new sign language among deaf children in Nicaragua**.**This link takes you to a video at an external website.  To return here, you must click the "back"        button on your browser program.               (length = 4 mins, 57 secs)  |

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A **pidgin** is a simplified, makeshift language that develops to fulfill the communication needs of people who have no language in common but who need to occasionally interact for commercial and other reasons.  Pidgins combine a limited amount of the vocabulary and grammar of the different languages.  People who use pidgin languages also speak their own native language.  Over the last several centuries, dozens of pidgin languages developed as Europeans expanded out into the rest of the world for colonization and trade.  The most well known one is Pidgin English in New Guinea.  However, several forms of Pidgin English and Pidgin French also developed in West Africa and the Caribbean.  There have been pidgins developed by non-European cultures as well, including the Zulus in South Africa, the Malays in Southeast Asia, the Arabs in North Africa, and several American Indian societies.  The most well known pidgin developed by American Indians is *Chinook*, which was used on the Northwest Coast of North America.

Women in Papua New Guinea
conversing in Pidgin English

At times, a pidgin language becomes the mother tongue of a population.  When that happens, it is called a **creole** language.  As pidgins change into creoles over several generations, their vocabularies enlarge.  In the small island nation of Haiti, a French-African pidgin became the creole language.  It is still spoken thereby the majority of the population as their principle or only language.  The same thing happened among some of the peoples of Papua New Guinea, the Pacific Islands of Vanuatu, and Sierra Leone in West Africa, where different versions of Pidgin English became creoles.  Similarly, on the outer banks of Georgia and South Carolina in the United States, isolated former African slaves made another version of Pidgin English into a creole known as *Gullah* or *Geechee*. Creoles also developed in Louisiana, Jamaica, and the Netherlands Antilles.

It is common for creole speakers to also speak another "standard" language as well.  In Haiti, for instance, the more educated and affluent people also speak French among themselves.  Their creole language is used on the street in dealing with poor Haitians.  The *Gullah* speakers of Georgia and South Carolina speak English when dealing with outsiders.  Which language is spoken depends on the social situation.  This same phenomenon is often found in societies with different dialects of the same language.  People may quickly switch back and forth between dialects, depending on the person they are talking to at the time. This pattern is referred to as **diglossia** or "code switching."  The African American situational use of standard and Black English is a prime example.  Black English is usually reserved for talking with other African Americans.  North American reporters and announcers on national television programs are often diglossic.  They must learn to speak with a Midwestern, European American dialect regardless of the region or social class they came from originally.  We become so accustomed to this that it is usually a shocking surprise to hear them speak in their own dialects.

Typically, the dialects of a society are ranked relative to each other in terms of social status.  In the London area of England, the upper class speak "public school" English, while the lower class often use a Cockney dialect.  Because of the stigma against the latter, upwardly mobile Cockneys in the business world may take language lessons to acquire the "public school" speech patterns.

http://anthro.palomar.edu/language/language\_2.htm

# Session 3: March 13, 2015

Class Notes:

How to check if a theory is scientific: Epistemology

1. What are the goals and assumptions of this theory?

2. What are the methodologies used in order to reach these goals?

3. What are the results of this theory?

Criticizing:

4. From within: Comparing the goals and result.

5. Outside: Compare this theory with others that deal with the same subject.

**Criticism of Hockett**

1. Cognitive System: Humans’ ability to understand.

2. Metalanguage:-using language to talk about language-.

Productivity

Duality: Only for human

Displacement

Traditional transmission

### Historical notes about linguistics:

**Sumerians**: They were from the first to start the study of language. They used to write their works on rocks in 4000 B.C.

**Hindu**(India) 400 B.C. They were interested in: Semantic, grammar, sound system of Hindu, phonetics and phonology.

**Greeks**: They raised two big questions: Is language natural or conventional; Is language an analogic (rule-governed) or anomaly (arbitrary). This period knew four categories of scholars:

**Sophists:** who were interested in rhetorics (act of convincing)

 **Philosophers**: There were three main names Socrates, his student Plato, who wrote a book based on Socrates’ work named Cratytus, and the third one was Aristotle.

 **Stoics**: They most known by being the first to describe the part of speech.

**Alexandrians**: As they invaded Egypt, They were interested to teach Greek grammar to non-Greek speakers. ⮚ They were the first to invent dictionaries.

**Romans**: Varro wrote twelve books describing Latin (100B.C.). Donates wrote a short version of Varro’s books. Romans’ scholars found out that there are lots of similarities between Latin and Greek.

**Arabic**: They were two major schools back to that time Alkoufa and Albasra.

They were interested in three main things:

Grammar: Sibawayh was the first to give a complete description of sounds in his book The Book-Al Kitab.

**Phonology**: In which they studied the origin of Arabic. The first dictionary was named “*The Eye*”.

**Semantics**: In which they dealt with the figure of speech.

There were three reasons behind the birth of Arabic linguistics:

**Cultural reason**: Provide the substitute for non-Arabic speakers.

**Political reason**: So they could open new nations.

**Religious reason**: In order not to misunderstand the Koran.

## **Additional Documents:**

### GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITY

The emergence of grammatical learning in Greece is less clearly known than is sometimes implied, and the subject is more complex than is often supposed; here only the main strands can be sampled. The term hē grammatikē technē (“the art of letters”) had two senses. It meant the study of the values of the letters and of accentuation and [prosody](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/479409/prosody) and, in this sense, was an abstract intellectual discipline; and it also meant the skill of literacy and thus embraced applied [pedagogy](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/448410/pedagogy). This side of what was to become “grammatical” learning was distinctly applied, particular, and less exalted by comparison with other pursuits. Most of the developments associated with theoretical grammar grew out of [philosophy](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/456811/philosophy) and criticism; and in these developments a repeated duality of themes crosses and intertwines.

Much of Greek [philosophy](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/456811/philosophy) was occupied with the distinction between that which exists “by nature” and that which exists “by convention.” So in language it was natural to account for words and forms as ordained by nature (by [onomatopoeia](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/429308/onomatopoeia)—i.e., by imitation of natural sounds) or as arrived at arbitrarily by a social convention. This dispute regarding the origin of language and meanings paved the way for the development of divergences between the views of the “analogists,” who looked on language as possessing an essential regularity as a result of the symmetries that convention can provide, and the views of the “anomalists,” who pointed to language’s lack of regularity as one facet of the inescapable irregularities of nature. The situation was more complex, however, than this statement would suggest. For example, it seems that the anomalists among the [Stoics](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/566892/Stoicism) credited the irrational quality of language precisely to the claim that language did not exactly mirror nature. In any event, the [anomalist](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/26557/anomalist) tradition in the hands of the Stoics brought grammar the benefit of their work in logic and [rhetoric](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/501179/rhetoric). This led to the distinction that, in modern theory, is made with the terms signifiant (“what signifies”) and signifié(“what is signified”) or, somewhat differently and more elaborately, with “expression” and “content”; and it laid the groundwork of modern theories of inflection, though by no means with the exhaustiveness and fine-grained analysis reached by the Sanskrit grammarians.

The [Alexandrians](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/14417/Library-of-Alexandria), who were analogists working largely on literary criticism and text philology, completed the development of the classical Greek grammatical tradition.[Dionysius Thrax](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/164277/Dionysius-Thrax), in the 2nd century bce, produced the first systematic grammar of Western tradition; it dealt only with word [morphology](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/392807/morphology). The study of sentence [syntax](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/578599/syntax)was to wait for [Apollonius Dyscolus](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/30055/Apollonius-Dyscolus), of the 2nd century ce. Dionysius called grammar “the acquaintance with [or observation of] what is uttered by poets and writers,” using a word [meaning](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/371586/meaning) a less general form of knowledge than what might be called “science.” His typically Alexandrian literary goal is suggested by the headings in his work: pronunciation, poetic figurative language, difficult words, true and inner meanings of words, exposition of form-classes, literary criticism. Dionysius defined a sentence as a unit of sense or thought, but it is difficult to be sure of his precise meaning.

The Romans, who largely took over, with mild adaptations to their highly similar language, the total work of the Greeks, are important not as originators but as transmitters. [Aelius Donatus](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/169021/Aelius-Donatus), of the 4th century ce, and [Priscian](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/477161/Priscian), an African of the 6th century, and their colleagues were slightly more systematic than their Greek models but were essentially retrospective rather than original. Up to this point a field that was at times called ars grammatica was a congeries of investigations, both theoretical and practical, drawn from the work and interests of literacy, scribeship, logic, epistemology, rhetoric, textual philosophy, poetics, and literary criticism. Yet modern specialists in the field still share their concerns and interests. The anomalists, who concentrated on surface irregularity and who looked then for regularities deeper down (as the Stoics sought them in logic) bear a resemblance to contemporary scholars of the transformationalist school. And the philological analogists with their regularizing surface segmentation show striking kinship of spirit with the modern school of structural (or taxonomic or glossematic) grammatical theorists.

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/342418/linguistics/35072/Greek-and-Roman-antiquity

### The Greek influence on Arabic grammar:

 It is a very interesting page. It talks about the history of Greek linguistics and the Arab, and then The how the Arabic grammar was affected by the Greek.

https://www.academia.edu/6195070/The\_Greek\_influence\_on\_Arabic\_grammar

### A Concise Outline of Linguistic History

**A History of Linguistic Thought**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|   | ...It would hardly be a waste of time if sometimes even the most advanced students in the cognitive sciences were to pay a visit to their ancestors. It is frequently claimed in American philosophy departments that, in order to be a philosopher, it is not necessary to revisit the history of philosophy. It is like the claim that one can become a painter without having ever seen a single work by Raphael, or a writer without having ever read the classics. Such things are theoretically possible; but the 'primitive' artist, condemned to an ignorance of the past, is always recognizable as such and rightly labeled as *naïf*. It is only when we consider past projects revealed as utopian or as failures that we are apprised of the dangers and possibilities for failure for our allegedly new projects. The study of the deeds of our ancestors is thus more than an atiquarian pastime, it is an immunological precaution.-Umberto Eco, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, page 316 |   |

Any thorough understanding of linguistics [requires](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html#60512760) an understanding of not only modern linguistic theory, but also a history of linguistic theory and of events that have shaped language and our understanding of language and linguistics.

Unfortunately we are not able to include information on non-European linguistic traditions, some of which enjoy an even longer continuous and coherent history than does the present European tradition.

### A Concise Outline of Linguistic History

The following is a general outline of the history of linguistics as described in R.H. Robins's book *A Short History of Linguistics* (4th Edition, 1997, Longman: New York), Pieter A.M. Seuren's *Western Linguistics: An Historical Introduction* (1998, Blackwell Publishers: Malden, Mass.), and Theodora Bynon and F.R. Palmer's *Studies in the History of Western Linguistics* (1986, Cambridge Press: New York).

**India**

"Indian linguistics was not itself historical in orientation, though its roots lay in the changes languages undergo in the course of time. But the topics covered by modern descriptive linguistics: semantics, grammar, phonology, and phonetics, were all treated at length in the Indian tradition; and in phonetics and in certain aspects of grammar, Indian theory and practice was definitely in advance of anything achieved in Europe or elsewhere before contact had been made with Indian work. The stimulation afforded by Sanskritic linguistic scholarship carried by Buddhist monks into China has already been noticed. European scholars realized immediately that they had encountered in India a mass of linguistic literature of the greatest importance and stemming from an independent source, even though their interpretation and full appreciation of it was in part halting and delayed" (Robins 1997:170).

"General linguistic theory was debated by Indian scholars as it was by scholars in the west, though before the end of the eighteenth century there was no contact between them. Language was considered against the background both of literary studies and of philosophical enquiry; and a number of the topics familiar to western scholarship, and almost inevitable in a serious examination of language, were also familiar to Indian linguists from early times" (Robins 1997:171-2).

* [Pānini](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): wrote a grammar of Sanskrit (between 600 B.C. and 300 B.C.) called *Astadhyāyī*(literally 'eight books').
* [*Tolkāppiyam*](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): early grammar of Tamil written around the second century B.C.
* [Bhartrhari](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): wrote *Vākyapadīya* (5th-7th Century A.D.), which states that the sentence should be interpreted as a single unit - which "conveys its meaning 'in a flash', just as a picture is first perceived as a unity, notwithstanding subsequent analysis into its component coloured shapes" (Robins 1997:173). In other words, the sentence is not understood as a sequence of words put together, but the full meaning of each word is only understood in the context of the other words around it.

Indian linguistic theory set out three requirements for a string of words to be considered a sentence: (1) (*ākānksā*) the words are members of suitable grammatical categories with appropriate morphology (inflection), (2) (*yogyatā*) the words must be 'semantically appropriate' to one another, (3) (*samnidhi*) and the words must be uttered as a concatenation.

**The Greeks**

* [Herodotus](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html)
* [Plato's *Cratylus*](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html)
* [Aristotle](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html)

"Language is by convention, since no names arise naturally" (*De interpretatione* 16a 27).

"Speech is the representation of the experiences of the mind, and writing is the representation of speech" (*De interpretatione* 16a 4-5).

* [The Stoics](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): Words/naming are/is intrinsic.
* [Epicurus](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): Word forms are intrinsic, but are modified through use (i.e. through convention).
* [Sextus Empiricus](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): Distinguished between the gender (masculine, feminine, and neuter) of nouns. Such classification was a remarkable insight for the time, however, it should be noted that distinguishing animacy markers by human gender is not the best way of looking at noun classification. In other words, the nouns that fall into the feminine gender don't necessarily have female characteristics (ex. the Greek word for battle helmet is feminine).
* [Apollonius](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): made a "tentative development of the formal concept of syntactic government between transitive verbs and nouns" (Robins 1997:47).

**The Romans**

"Roman linguistics was largely the application of Greek thought, Greek controversies, and Greek categories to the Latin language" (Robins 1997:60).

**The Medieval Period**

Most of the linguistic work from the Middle Ages was focused on grammar, emphasizing Latin and Greek analyses.

"Latin remained the language of learning, and its authority was increased by its use as the language of patristic literature and of the services and the administration of the western (Roman) Church. This alone ensured the language a high place, and linguistic studies in the early years of the Middle Ages were largely represented by studies in Latin grammar" (Robins 1997:82).

* [Isidore of Seville](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): did etymology and lexicography during the Seventh Century
* [Donatus & Priscian](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): were the principle grammarians of the Middle Ages. All of their work was based on Latin grammatical structure.
* [St. Jerome](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): translated the Bible into Latin; dealt with the theory of translation (he suggested a sense for sense translation instead of word for word.
* [Aelfric](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): Englishman; wrote an introduction to Old English grammar. He noticed marked differences between Latin and Old English grammar properties.

"In the history of linguistic science, the second part of the Middle Ages, from around 1100 to the close of the period, is the more significant. This was the period of scholastic philosophy, in which linguistic studies had an important place and in which a very considerable amount of linguistic work was carried on. This same era is also marked by the flowering of mediaeval architecture (the so-called 'Gothic') and literature, and the founding of several of the earliest universities of Europe. The movements of whole populations had now ceased, and the ascendancy of the Roman Church, strengthened by the foundation of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders, provided a central authority which, despite controversies and antagonisms, united all men's cultural activities as part of the service of God, and subordinated all intellectual pursuits to the study of the faith" (Robins 1997:85).

* [*First grammatical treatise*](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): written by an unknown Icelandic scholar known as the 'First Grammarian.' His work mostly deals with phonology, and it makes a distinction in speech sounds very similar to the modern concept of the phoneme.
* [Peter Helias](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): was a noted medieval grammarian.
* [Thomas of Erfurt](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): described the difference in nominative case marking for nouns versus adjectives.
* [William of Ockham](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): made famous nominalism, which asserts "that universals are words or names only, with no real existence outside language" (Robins 1997:101).

**The Renaissance**

During this period, grammatical descriptions were written for several European languages. The Bible was also translated into many different languages during the Renaissance.

* [Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz](http://www.maths.tcd.ie/pub/HistMath/People/Leibniz/RouseBall/RB_Leibnitz.html)
* [Manuel Chrysoloras](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): produced the first grammar book of Greek in Western Europe.
* [School of Basra](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): was heavily influenced by the writings of Aristotle. They believed that language is strongly regular and systematic (similar ideas to modern Formalism).
* [Sībawaih](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): wrote a grammar of classical Arabic. He also wrote a phonetic description of the Arabic writing system.
* [Dante](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): wrote *De vulgari eloquentia*, which experimented with combining certain aspects of several Italian dialects into a new, highly regularized philosophical language.
* [Pierre Ramée](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): grammarian whose thought precludes modern concepts of European and American Structuralism. He made pokes at Aristotelian (from which Formalism would sprout) approaches to language, and argued that all languages should be appreciated in their own right.
* Grammars for American-Indian languages were published during this period.

Tarascan (1558)

Quechua (1560)

Nahuatl (1571)

Guarani (1640)

* [Cardinal Ricci](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): his journal outlines the difference between Chinese and Western European languages (ex. lack of morphology, tones, Chinese writing system, etc.).
* [Académie française](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): (established 1635); body of scholars who determine French language standards
* [British Royal Society](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): (established 1660); did a lot of work with linguistics during the early life of the society.
* [George Dalgarno](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): worked on philosophical languages.
* [John Wilkins](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): worked on philosophical languages.
* [Port Royal Grammarians](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): took a Rationalist approach to language; They believed in language universals as evidenced by a common thought structure in people throughout the civilized world.

**18th Century Europe**

* [J.G. Herder](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): believed that language and thought are inseparable. His teachings serve as a strong precedent to the teachings of Benjamin Whorf and Noam Chomsky (generative grammar).
* [James Harris](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): held an Aristotelian view of grammar (i.e. he believed in language universals); he was also aware of the differences between the world's languages.
* [James Burnett (Monboddo)](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): looked for evidence of a proto-language by studying the languages of 'primitive' peoples.
* [Sir William Jones](http://www.kamat.com/kalranga/people/pioneers/w-jones.htm): a judge in the British Royal Court in India; in 1786, he wrote a paper to the Royal Asiatic Society in Calcutta about the historical[CONNECTION](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html#28019809) between Sanskrit and Western European languages such as Greek, the Romance Languages, and the Germanic Languages.

**The 19th Century - Philology**

* [Wilhelm von Humboldt](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): wrote *The variety of human language structure*, which was later hailed by Leonard Bloomfield as 'the first great book on general linguistics.' The book promotes the idea that language is the product of the creativity of the human mind, and so language shouldn't be evaluated according to antiquated ideas about grammatical structure. "One may also see how Kantian theory was itself influential in Humboldt's thinking. Kant's theory of perception involved sensations produced by the external world being ordered by categories or 'intuitions' (*Anschauungen*) imposed by the mind, notably those of space, time, and causality. This was a universal philosophical theory; Humboldt adapted it relativistically and linguistically by making the *innere Sprachform* of each language responsible for the ordering and categorizing of the data of experience, so that speakers of different languages live partly in different worlds and have different systems of thinking. One notes the use by Humboldt of the three verbal nouns *Anschauen, Denken,* and *Fühlen*(perception, thinking, and feeling) in[CONNECTION](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html#9215089) with the operation of language" (Robins 1997:166).
* [Friedrich von Schlegel](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html) (1772-1829): coined the phrase 'comparative grammar,' which originially referred to comparing morphology in Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages to determine genetic relationships.
* [Dane R. Rask](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html) (1787-1832): pioneer in historical/comparative linguistics. He worked out a methodology for historical/comparative linguistics.
* [Jakob Grimm](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html) (1785-1863): devised Grimm's law which states that, "If there is found between two languages agreement in the forms of indispensable words to such an extent that rules of letter changes can be discovered for passing from one to the other, then there is a basic relationship between these languages."
* [Franz Bopp](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html) (1791-1867): worked further on classification of genetic relations among the Germanic languages.
* [August F. Pott](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html) (1802-1887): pioneered Indo-European historical linguistics and etymological studies. He was a professor of linguistics at the University of Halle.
* [August Schleicher](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html) (1821-1868): Schleicher[INDICATED](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html#50241604) that contemporary languages had gone through a process in which simpler Ursprachen had given rise to descendent languages that obeyed natural laws of development. He argued that Darwin=s theory was thus perfectly applicable to languages and, indeed, that evolutionary theory itself was confirmed by the facts of language descent. "He regarded the three current language types, isolating, agglutinating, and infexional, as representing historical stages in the growth of languages to their highest point of organization. This conviction was expressed more than once in his statements that coexisting linguistic structural types represented the products of successive historical developments in the same way that successively evolved fishes, reptiles, birds, and mammals are represented today by coexistent species in our biological world" (Robins 1997:205).
* [The Neogrammarians](http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html): A theory of linguistics that sought to explain language change in terms of sound laws without exception and postulated that modern irregularities in language were the result of past regular sound changes.
* [Ferdinand de Saussure](http://cognet.mit.edu/MITECS/Entry/lepschy)
* [Charles Sanders Peirce](http://www.iupui.edu/~peirce/web/index.htm)

**The 20th Century - American Structuralism**

* [Roman Jakobson](http://cognet.mit.edu/MITECS/Entry/halle2)
* [Leonard Bloomfield](http://cognet.mit.edu/MITECS/Entry/langendoen)
* [Franz Boas](http://cognet.mit.edu/MITECS/Entry/hatch)
* [Edward Sapir](http://cognet.mit.edu/MITECS/Entry/irvine)

**The 20th Century - Formalism**

* [Noam Chomsky](http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/chomsky/)
* [George Lakoff](http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/bios/lakoff.html)
* [John Searle](http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~jsearle/)

http://www.ttt.org/linglinks/events.html

#  Session 4: March 20, 2015

Class Notes:

Medieval Europe:

Speculative grammar was based on Greek philosophy and Christianity.

* Greek philosophy; logic [Aristotle]
* Christianity
* Grammar written by Priscian.

They tried to prove that there is harmony among all of those three things and what is new about those schools is going back to linking the study of language and religion. (They used to study language for the study of language)

**How did the speculative grammar serve the study of language?**

* Redefine the study of language.
* Research universal grammar.
* Create philosophical discussions.

Epistemological approach = the five questions.

* They wanted to prove that God created us the same and there is one language, but due to space and time our languages differ now a bit.
* They said that studying language for the sake of language is uninteresting (there was no need to teach didactic grammar in the middle ages.
* They rejected literacy grammar and this is why literature has nothing to do with grammar.
* The major goal of Greek tradition is to understand literature.
* Teaching those literary works to non-speakers of Greek and to teach, they needed grammar.
* They tried to redefine the goals of linguistics.
* Not literary.
* Not didactic. (Language teaching).
* Understanding the world. Being able to communicate and understand the world.
* Universal grammar.
* Arab left Spain in 1492.
* The great discoveries.
* The first map of the world was made by Charif Al Idrissi in C12th which was later proved wrong.
* Discovery of printing.
* Democratization of knowledge.
* Protestantism is based on reason /Catholicism is based on faith. (Direct connection with God).
* Translation of Greek tradition: A lot of translation from Greek to Arabic by Jewish Scholars.
* In the 16th and 17th century, there was two big events that took place in Europe:
* The industrialism revolution.
* Feudalism.
* The five aspects of epistemological approach on the assumptions in linguistics:
1. Context.
2. Assumptions.
3. Methodologies
4. Major findings.
5. Evolution.

**The period of the rise of the speculative and universal grammar**

* The fall of the Arabs Empire.
* The great discoveries (Columbus, Marocpolo, Vasco De Gama).
* Discovery of the printing machine.
* Industry revolution.
* The end of the feudalism.
* Scientific revolution (Newton).

## Additional Documents:

### THE EUROPEAN [MIDDLE AGES](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/380873/Middle-Ages)

It is possible that developments in grammar during the Middle Ages constitute one of the most misunderstood areas of the field of linguistics. It is difficult to relate this[period](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/527973/Scholasticism) coherently to other periods and to modern concerns because surprisingly little is accessible and certain, let alone analyzed with sophistication. By the mid-20th century the majority of the known grammatical treatises had not yet been made available in full to modern scholarship, so not even their true extent could be classified with confidence. These works must be analyzed and studied in the light of medieval learning, especially the learning of the schools of philosophy then current, in order to understand their true value and place.

The field of linguistics has almost completely neglected the achievements of this period. Students of grammar have tended to see as high points in their field the achievements of the Greeks, the Renaissance growth and “rediscovery” of learning (which led directly to modern school traditions), the contemporary flowering of theoretical study (people usually find their own age important and fascinating), and, since the mid-20th century, the astonishing monument of Panini. Many linguists have found uncongenial the combination of medieval [Latin](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/331848/Latin-language) [learning](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/331905/Latin-literature) and premodern philosophy. Yet medieval scholars might reasonably be expected to have bequeathed to modern scholarship the fruits of more than ordinarily refined perceptions of a certain order. These scholars used, wrote in, and studied Latin, a language that, though not their native tongue, was one in which they were very much at home; such scholars in groups must often have represented a highly varied linguistic background.

Some of the medieval treatises continue the tradition of grammars of late antiquity; so there are versions based on Donatus and Priscian, often with less incorporation of the classical poets and writers. Another genre of writing involves simultaneous consideration of grammatical distinctions and scholastic logic; modern linguists are probably inadequately trained to deal with these writings.

Certainly the most obviously interesting theorizing to be found in this period is contained in the “speculative grammar” of the *[modistae](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/387377/modistae)*, who were so called because the titles of their works were often phrased De modis significandi tractatus (“Treatise Concerning the Modes of Signifying”). For the development of the Western grammatical tradition, work of this genre was the second great milestone after the crystallization of Greek thought with the Stoics and Alexandrians. The scholastic philosophers were occupied with relating words and things—i.e., the structure of sentences with the nature of the real world—hence their preoccupation with signification. The aim of the grammarians was to explore how a word (an element of language) matched things apprehended by the mind and how it signified reality. Since a word cannot signify the nature of reality directly, it must stand for the thing signified in one of its modes or properties; it is this discrimination of modes that the study of categories and [parts of speech](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/444765/part-of-speech) is all about. Thus the study of sentences should lead one to the nature of reality by way of the modes of signifying.

The modistae did not innovate in discriminating categories and parts of speech; they accepted those that had come down from the Greeks through Donatus and Priscian. The great contribution of these grammarians, who flourished between the mid-13th and mid-14th century, was their insistence on a grammar to explicate the distinctions found by their forerunners in the languages known to them. Whether they made the best choice in selecting logic, metaphysics, and epistemology (as they knew them) as the fields to be included with grammar as a basis for the grand account of universal knowledge is less important than the breadth of their conception of the place of grammar. Before the modistae, grammar had not been viewed as a separate discipline but had been considered in conjunction with other studies or skills (such as criticism, preservation of valued texts, foreign-language learning). The Greek view of grammar was rather narrow and fragmented; the Roman view was largely technical. The speculative medieval grammarians (who dealt with language as a speculum, “mirror” of reality) inquired into the fundamentals underlying language and grammar. They wondered whether grammarians or philosophers discovered grammar, whether grammar was the same for all languages, what the fundamental topic of grammar was, and what the basic and irreducible grammatical primes are. Signification was reached by imposition of words on things; i.e., the sign was arbitrary. Those questions sound remarkably like current issues of linguistics, which serves to illustrate how slow and repetitious progress in the field is. While themodistae accepted, by modern standards, a restrictive set of categories, the acumen and sweep they brought to their task resulted in numerous subtle and fresh syntactic observations. A thorough study of the medieval period would greatly enrich the discussion of current questions.

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/342418/linguistics/35073/The-European-Middle-Ages

# Session 5: March 27, 2015

Class Notes:

**Nation/Country/State/Government.**

Nation: A large group of people with a conscious thinking in both subjective (emotions) and objective (tradition, place, language, religion...) criteria.

Country: A territory with a flag, in which its people are free to do whatever they want to a certain extent. We can have more than one government and state in one country.

State: A number of institutions (Police officers, Banks…) that run a country.

Government: A number of ministers who run the government (The example of the three branches in the US.

Linguistics between the 15th and 17th century: Renaissance
**Context**:
**a- Intellectual**: Revival of the Greek and Roman heritage.
**b- Religious**: Conflict inside the church.
**c- Economic/Industrial**: the sciences and the movement of a new world and style of production. -more people started to be educated.

* No more people were deceived by the church because people started thinking and they not believing anything they are told.

**Assumption**: We need to study language not for religious purposes.

**Methodology used**: Partly empirical partly rational; Experiment, which is concrete and based on experiment versus reason, which is abstract and based on logic.

**Major Findings**

The bible was translated to many languages.

Grammar was developed.

They wanted to introduce their language to the non-speakers, as Arabs and Greek did.

With the renaissance, people study language for the sake of language.

**Famous names**:

**Manuel Chrysoloras**: He produced the first grammar book of Greek in Western Europe. The remarkable thing is that he is neither non-Greek nor non-Latin.

**Dante**: In order to unify the nation, he created a new language out of several dialects. He wrote *De vulgari eloquentia*, which experimented with combining certain aspects of several Italian dialects into a new, highly regularized philosophical language.
**Pierre Ramee**: argued that all languages are equal. He was the first not to judge a language by saying it is scientific, religious romantic…

**Port Royal Grammarians** took a rationalist approach to language. They believed in a universal language as evidenced by a common thought structure in people throughout civilized world.

**Standardization/ Vernacular/ Standard Languages/ Official Language:**

*Standardization*: a process by which we make a non-written language to become written.

**Vernacular**: a language which does not have a written form.

**Standard Language**: is a language which has a written form.

**Official Language**: a language which is written in the constitution.

**Linguistics in 18th Century:**

**J. G. Herder**, as Port Royal, believed that language and thought are inseparable.

**James Harris** held an Aristotelian view of grammar; He believed “Universal Language.”He was also aware of the differences between the word’s languages.

**Sir William Jones**, a judge in the British Royal in 1786,he wrote a paper to the Royal Asiatic Society in Calcutta about the historical connection between Sanskrit (the old Indian language) and Western European languages, such as Greek The romance languages and the Germanic languages. He believed that there is a big affinity between Indian and British languages.

**Linguistics in the 19th century**:

**Paradigm**: a successful field of science which is a model for other fields of science which know crisis and difficulties.

Wilhelm von Humboldt: He wrote about a variety of human language structure. He was among the first linguists to indentify language as a rule-governed system rather than just a collection of words and phrases.

Friedrich Von Schlegel: he coined the phrase “comparative grammar” which was meant to compare morphology in Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages to determine the similarities. If we assume that sound-change is regular and exceptionless, in this way we can use systematic comparison of languages to see the relationships of languages.

Clear and False Cognates: Clear Cognates are a word from two languages or more that are similar and have the same meaning while False Cognates are similar but do not have the same meaning.

Dane Ri Rask (1787-1832): He worked out a methodology for historical/comparative linguistics.

Grimm: He was the first to talk about law in linguistics.

Grimm’s Law: Consonant changes between Proto-European and Proto-Germanic

Proto-language: a language which do not have a sample, so we compare it with other languages to have an idea about how it might have worked.

## Additional Documents:

### Vernacular Languages and Dialects

Written vernaculars increased enormously in use during the Renaissance. They also became objects of scholarship and debate. While modern linguistics looks back to the 19th century for its professional origins, Renaissance humanists began to develop systematic approaches to language study much earlier. Accordingly, some modern scholars have focused upon the languages, others on the era’s writings about language. One approach to the subject is diachronic, dealing with change over time. Synchronic change across region or social rank has attracted new attention with recent interest in questions of power, rank, and social control. The rapid development of computers has improved the ability to use large bodies of surviving sources, producing historical grammars, lexicons, dialect mappings, and other results. Most such projects are centered on a single European language. For many European languages, the Renaissance saw the rise of the modern literary language. Each developed a canon of writers; thus the study of languages overlaps with that of the literature, including the impact these writers had on their language. Renaissance writers also wrote about language, comparing vernaculars with Latin, and composed and written language with spoken and spontaneous. They debated how to set normative and aesthetic standards. The Italian term for these disputes, *questione della lingua*, often appears in the scholarship on other languages as well. Interests in colonial expansion; in the history of the book; in power and its exercise; and in gender distinctions have all led to a series of new approaches. Earlier portrayals of the development of vernaculars as progressive and egalitarian, parts of nationalist or romanticized narratives of modernization, is giving way to an appreciation of the losses and more complex issues at stake in the gradual move away from Latin. Some research focuses on medieval continuities: preaching and sermon-writing, popular drama, religious devotion, and many genres [connected](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0010.xml#96591945) with lived religion. The rise of political states led to more records and more vernacular record-keeping, as well as matters of linguistic standardization and its ties to political and social power.

**General Overviews:** Efforts to examine linguistic scholarship in a global context have had the effect of putting studies of European languages into a comparative framework with one another as well. The modern growth of the European Union and the resulting linguistic issues, have spurred interest in the historical era in which these linguistic distinctions in record-keeping, diplomacy, and national identity expanded so quickly. Continental scholars interested in the history of concepts, while often more focused on political and social thought from the 18th century onwards, also turned their attention at times to earlier linguistic developments in the Renaissance. Both [*The Fairest Flower* 1985](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0010.xml#obo-9780195399301-0010-bibItem-0003) and [Scaglione 1984](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0010.xml#obo-9780195399301-0010-bibItem-0004) are collections of articles on the rise of vernaculars and the links to political and cultural identities. The pieces in [Chartier and Corsi 1996](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0010.xml#obo-9780195399301-0010-bibItem-0002) take a particular interest in some of the era’s own linguistic questions, such as the nature of the earliest human language. [Apel 1963](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0010.xml#obo-9780195399301-0010-bibItem-0001) focuses on sources that might be understood as philosophical in an effort to understand the history of philosophy of language.

http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0010.xml

# Session 6: April 3, 2015

Class Notes

### The 19th century philology

August Schleicher (1821-1868) Schleicher indicated that contemporary languages had gone through a process in which simpler Ursprachen had given rise to descendent languages that obeyed natural laws of development.

**The family tree model**

**Franz Bopp** (1791-1867) Worked further on classification of genetic relations among the Germanic language

**August F. Pott** (1802-1887) Pioneered in the European historical linguistics and etymological studies.

**Historical linguistics is that branch of linguistics which**:

1-Focuses on the interconnections between different languages in the world

2-Studies their historical developments

3-Investigate how languages evolve and changes through time

4-How multiple offspring languages can arise from one past parent language

5-How cultural contact between speakers of different languages can influence language development and evolution.

**Language** **Typology; isolating, agglutinating, and inflecting**

1. **Isolating**: A language in which words generally consist of single and clearly distinguishable morpheme. Like Chinese.
2. **Agglutinating**: A language in which words consist of morphemes which are formally neatly separable and each has a single meaning, such as Turkish and Japanese.
3. **Inflecting**: Language in which grammatical relationships like number, tense etc. are predominantly expressed by grammatical affixes. Like Latin and Greek.

The neogrammarians hypothesis of the regularity of sounds change.

According to this hypothesis, a diachronic sound change affects simultaneously all words in which its environment is met, without exception.

If we want to trace something, we should have a sample of it in every period. (Especially in biology)

* **Phylogenesis** approach

Now, what if we do not have a sample? Then we should use the **ontogenesis** approach. What is lost in time can be recapitulated in space.

This ontogenesis that was adopted by the neogrammarians was considered to ba a turning point in the history of the study of language.

They developed field work methodology (They interviewed people in the countryside, because they are the most likely people to keep their language without a big change.

However, they faced a big problem, which is recording people’s talks. E.g. Taxi is pronounced /ta:ksi/

In 1880, the neogrammarians invented the IPA.

**The outcome**:

1. They started a new field of science called dialectology.
2. They invented the IPA
3. For the first time the focus was on the spoken form not the written form.

**The object of linguistic investigation**: is not the language system, but rather the [idiolect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiolect), that is, language as it is localized in the individual, and therefore is directly observable.

**Autonomy of the sound level**: being the most observable aspect of language, the sound level is seen as the most important level of description, and absolute autonomy of the sound level from syntax and semantics is assumed.

**Historicism**: the chief goal of linguistic investigation is the description of the [historical change](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_change) of a language.

**Analogy**: if the premise of the inviolability of sound laws fails, [analogy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Analogy) can be applied as an explanation if plausible. Thus, exceptions are understood to be a (regular) adaptation to a related form.

## Additional Documents:

Linguistics as an academic discipline
Linguistics is the scientific study of language. While the roots of modern linguistics lie in the
grammatical traditions of ancient India, classical antiquity, and Arabic civilizations, modern
linguistics as an academic discipline is typically traced to early 19th century Germany with the
rise of the German university system. Linguistics is characteristically divided into the study of
language from a diachronic perspective and the study of language from a synchronic perspective.
Diachronic linguistics focuses on the historical processes that affect languages over time and on
the classification of languages into families. Synchronic linguistics concentrates on the
description and analysis of (mainly) spoken language as it is used by its speakers. In the 19th
century, linguistics was centered on diachronic study. The major achievements of 19th century
linguistics included the development of a methodology for establishing genetic relations among
languages, the discovery of historical sound laws, and the reconstructing earlier stages of
languages, the so-called proto-languages. Under the methodology that was developed (and still
generally accepted), a genetic relationship among languages can be established if systematic
sound correspondences are attested amongst them. While certain language families and their
internal relationships have become well established such as that of the Indo-European language
family, the relationship of other language families are less well established. One present day
controversy concerns the relationship among the Indian languages of the Americas, that is, the
issue of to what extent the Native American languages are related to one another. Whereas some
scholars have posited over a hundred separate unrelated language families for the Americas,
Joseph Greenberg (1987) has proposed that these families can be reduced to three super-families.
Other controversial classifications include various attempts to relate the Indo-European language
family to other large language families (such as the Altaic or Afro-Asiatic), but these attempts are
far from being accepted and have been the subject of a fair degree of criticism.
An important early contributor to the development of synchronic language study was
Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) who emphasized the importance of describing languages
and doing typological comparison among languages. Humboldt is probably best known for
popularizing the division of languages into isolating, agglutinative and inflectional, which
describes languages by the degree and type of affixation. An isolating language has little, if any,
affixation (e.g., prefixation and suffixation). An agglutinating language exhibits a great deal of
affixation and may even incorporate a sentence into a single word. (Such languages are called
polysynthetic or incorporating.) Inflectional languages indicate certain meanings and
relationships by affixation (e.g., case endings on nouns that indicate whether the noun is the
subject or object of the sentence) or by internal changes in the form of words (e.g., English
sing/sang/sung). This classification should not be viewed as absolute since one language may
exhibit more than one type. For example, the English possessive may be expressed inflectionally
by the suffix "s" as in "Janet's hat", or in a more isolating manner as in "the hat of Janet" where
no affix appears. Humboldt's focus on synchronic language study did not have widespread
influence in his own day. The rise of synchronic linguistics in the 20th century can be traced to
the work on non-Western languages undertaken by Franz Boas (1858-1942) and his students and
colleagues at Columbia University. The key to the Boasian approach to linguistics was the
insistence that each language be described in its own terms and not according to a preset Latin or
Germanic model.
Synchronic linguistics as now conceived has a considerable number of subfields. A large
body of work has been dedicated to the analysis of language structure. This includes the three
primary areas of syntax (sentence structure), morphology (word structure) and phonology (sound
structure). Since Noam Chomsky's Syntactic Structures (1957) initiated a new school of
transformational generative grammar, a primary goal of syntactic research has been to account for
the fact that all languages allow for an infinite number of sentences and to account for the
similarities and differences found among languages with respect to the variety of sentence types.
As an example, there has been much research on the properties of reflexive sentences. In the
sentence "John wanted the doctor to examine himself", the reflexive word "himself" can only
refer to the doctor. However, in the Japanese rendition of the same sentence, the corresponding
reflexive word is ambiguous as to whether it refers to the doctor or John. The identity of the
referent of the English reflexive is thus bounded by the clause in which it is located while that of
the Japanese reflexive is not. Research in morphology has revolved around issues of wordformation, specifically concerning the properties manifested by affixes when they attach to words
to form new words (e.g., read/readable). Typically, a specific affix may only go on words of a
certain part of speech and then there may be other restrictions on its combination. For example,
the English superlative suffix -est only attaches to adjectives that are two syllables or less, as is
evidenced by the comparison of smart-smartest with intelligent - most intelligent (not
intelligentest). Phonology, which deals with the description and distribution of sounds (i.e.,
consonants and vowels), and, in some cases, tone and accent, has been a focus of synchronic
linguistics for the past century. A large body of recent work on phonology centers on the role of
the syllable in sound patterning and how this has an effect on the location of word stress. One
finding is that in many languages a heavy syllable (i.e., a syllable ending in a consonant or
possessing a long vowel) is more likely to be stressed than a light one (i.e., a syllable ending in a
short vowel), as can be seen by the difference in the location of stress in the English words
Canada and veranda where, in the latter word, stress is on the syllable that ends in a consonant.
Other areas of research with respect to language structure include semantics (the study of
meaning) and phonetics (the study of how sounds are made physiologically and their acoustic
properties).
Within the different subfields of synchronic linguistics, research tends to either examine
the details of specific languages or it tends to be typological. Typological work investigates a
specific phenomenon in many languages with the aim of finding the attested variation with
respect to that phenomenon and to find correlations between that phenomenon and other
properties. In doing this, possible universal properties of languages can be postulated. As an
example of syntactic typology, a major division among languages concerns whether the basic
word order is Subject-Verb-Object [SVO] (as in English), Verb-Subject-Object [VSO] (as in
Standard Arabic), or Subject-Object-Verb [SOV] (as in Japanese). Researchers have discovered
that this distinction is correlated with other syntactic properties such as whether the preposition
occurs before the noun phrase (as in English or Arabic), or after the noun phrase (as in Japanese).
Synchronic linguistics focuses heavily on issues of theoretical concern (e.g., developing
theories that account for observations such as the relation between word stress and syllable
weight or why there is a difference in reflexives as to whether they are clause-bound). However,
many linguists continue to devote their energy to describing languages by writing grammars and
dictionaries. Currently, there is a particular attention to languages that are endangered. Scholars
have observed that a large number of the world's languages (approximately 6000) do not have
many speakers and many of those languages are not being learned by younger people because of
the influence of dominant languages with more speakers. An example of this would be the
influence that English has had in North America and that Spanish and Portuguese have had in
Latin America on the declining number of Native American languages that are still in daily use.
A major area of linguistic research that bridges diachronic and synchronic linguistics is
the immense area of sociolinguistics that examines variation in language and language use
according to such factors as gender, social class, age, ethnicity, level of formality, and
geographical region. These factors may influence various aspects of language structure or
language use. As an example, whether or not the sound "r" is pronounced at the end of syllables
in the English of the northeast coast of the United States may be largely dependent on the social
class of the individual and on the level of formality of the social interaction. The study of
sociolinguistics is often important for diachronic studies because certain styles may preserve
older forms of the language that are no longer in common use, or because they may be reflective
of a language change in progress.
Finally, because of the centrality of language for many disciplines, one finds that
linguistics is constantly expanding to encompass other subfields. Examples include
psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, forsenic linguistics, (first) language acquisition, and
second language learning.

www.indiana.edu/~lingdept/.../LinguisticsENC.pdf

# Session 7: April 17, 2015

Class Notes

### Linguistics in the 19th century:

The 19th century is considered to be a turning point in linguistics history

The neogrammarians’ approach was synchronic.

The focus was for the first time on dialects/ they were studied scientifically for the first time.

Ferdinand De Saussure is believed to be the father of the modern linguistics. He died in 1916. Three years after, his book was published by his student named ‘Course in General Linguistics’.

**Course in General Linguistics**

**Ferdinand De Saussure**

Basic Concepts

Dichotomies: What is language?

  **Aspects of Language**: Language is divided into two: Langue and parole. The former is considered as language and the former as language Performance.

**Langue**:

 The following rules and conventions constitute langue:

* The combination of sounds and pronunciation (Phonetic, phonology)
* Formation of words (Morphology)
* Construction of sentences (Syntax)
* Contextual meanings (Pragmatics)
* Words relationship (Semantics)

**Grammatical System:** According to Saussure:

* Language is a grammatical system
* That exists in the brains of a group of individuals.
* In the form of word-image & knowledge of conventions.
* Language exists perfectly:
* Within a society/ collectivity.
* Not in any individual speaker.

**Product of Social Agreement:**

* There is a similarity of:
* Sound.
* Words.
* Meaning.
* Among the native speakers of a language.
* They have the same images and signs in their minds
* The social bond constitutes language.

**Parole**

* •Parole belongs to the individual
* It is the concrete physical manifestation
* Of the abstract langue
* That exists in mind
* An individual makes use of this knowledge
* To produce actual sentence i.e. parole.

**I. Langue vs. Parole**

**Langue**
Langue is **social**. This means that, it is a set of conventions and rules, shared by all the speakers of a language.

Langue is **abstract**. These conventions exist in the minds of the speakers– Who belong to that society that has created the language.

**Underlying system**: makes the individual performance (parole) meaningful.

**Language System** Consist of stable: Conventions, rules and codes.

**Legislative side** of language:

Langue **can be studied.**

**Parole**
Parole is **Individual**, to put it simply, individual performance of language in speech or writing.

Parole is **Concrete**. It is physical, makes use of the physiological mechanism:– Speech organs– In uttering words and sentences.

**Performance:** Sound and sentence.

**Language Behavior:**  Production of sentences is unpredictable, heterogeneous, whimsical (which means capricious) and variable.

**Executive** **side** of language

Parole **cannot be studied**.

Langue and Parole are interrelated not separate

* Speech has both an individual & social side
* We cannot conceive of one without the other

 Parole is not possible or effective without Langue. Langue also changes gradually under the effect of parole.

**II. Signifier vs. Signified**

**Linguistic Sign**: It is a physical marker

**Parts of Sign**: It consists of two parts: The signifier and the signified. The former is the word which signifies and the latter is the concept.

**Word Represents Concept**

* + Word does not represents the actual object in real life:
* But the concept/image of the object we have in our minds
* If the word tree represents the real object (tree)
* The word for this object in all languages would have been the same
	+ We see an object and form a concept of it in our minds

The relationship between words and concepts:

* + We invent a word consisting of some sound-images
	+ That represents the concept exists in mind

The relationship between the sounds/words and the concept they signify

* An arbitrary
* No logical reason why we choose a certain word• To represent the concept

**III. Substance vs. Form**:

Language quality is divided into two:

1. substance 🡪 Raw Material 🡪 Meaningless
2. Form 🡪 Particular Order 🡪 Meaningful

**Form:**

* All distinct sounds &written scripts are the substance of a language
* It is meaningless (only noisy)
* Required some form to become meaningful
* When sounds, letters, words are arranged in a certain way i.e.:
* We can see some meaning in them
* It becomes form of a language
* It is just like a shapeless log of wood
* The carpenter makes a chair / table out of it.
* He changes substance into form.

 **Saussure’s Term**

**Language Quality**

Substance 🡪 Signifier 🡪 Mere sound/words.

Form 🡪 Signified 🡪 Meaningful concept.

**To sum up**:

* Substance is element/ raw material of language.
* Form is the associative order, in which elements are brought together in a meaningful way.
* So, form is the concern of linguistic study, not substance.
* Language is structured and a system of systems.

**Structure:**

* An ordered composition of many elements/part
* Each part being related to the whole
* Also related to other elements within it
* Inter-relationship of elements that constitute a system. Within each system, elements are selected and combined to build up structure.

**The Phonological System: Word Structure**

To build up a word such as “take”

1. We will select some sounds out of several possible sounds
2. We combine them in a particular order and decide which one is to occur 1st, which later

**Structure: Process of Selection:**

Certain rules operate:

* We can select only one element from a class of similar elements
1. A particular consonant from same class
2. A noun from a class of nouns
* /k/ /b/ /t/ all are consonants

**Structure: Process of Combination**

Certain rules operate:

* We combine the chosen elements in a particular order
* We can combine:
* /t/ + /eI/ + /k/ but not /eI/ + /t/
* These elements are combined in a particular sequence

**Elements’ Relationships:**

**IV. Paradigmatic vs. Syntagmatic**:

1. **Paradigmatic Relationship:**
* The relationship between those elements which are similar as belong to same class/category is PR
* Which holds between several elements of same class within a system
* Elements can be replaced by another elements within the same system and class
* The phonological system 🡪The relationship between Plosive Consonants
* The syntactic system🡪 The relationship between nouns
1. **Syntagmatic Relationship**
* The particular sequence between elements is syntagmatic relationship
* In syntagmatic relationship, the elements have to be combined in the proper sequence
* We cannot violate the sequential order

**Significance of these Relationships:**

* These relationships are like two intersecting threads
* That build up the “fabric of language”
* On the basis of these relationships, the rules of selection & combination operate and constitutes “the structure of a language”
* Language has duality of structure
* Selection of elements at one level
* Combination of these elements at another level
* To form a structure unit
* Limited number of elements can construct large number of combinations

## Additional Documents:

The Saussurean dichotomies

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is sometimes thought of as the father of modern linguistics. Although Saussure was well known in his lifetime for his work in the history of Indo-European, his most influential work was not published until after his death, when some of his students got together and, on the basis of their lecture notes, reconstructed the course in linguistics that he had taught in Geneva. The Cours de linguistique générale (Saussure 1969 [1916]) became one of the key texts in linguistics, and ushered in the era of structuralism which we might argue continues today.

In the *Cours*, among a number of important statements and illuminating comparisons, Saussure made a number of fundamental distinctions which are still basic to linguistic thinking. These are outlined below.

**Langue versus parole**

**

*The Parole VS Langue dichotomy*

Saussure says there are two sides to language: langue and parole. While the French terms are generally used in English, they are sometimes translated as ‘language’ and ‘speech’ respectively, though not without some danger of ambiguity. LANGUE is that part of Language which ‘is not complete in any individual, but exists only in the collectivity’ (Saussure 1969 [1916]: 30, my translation, see the footnote for the original French\*). PAROLE, on the other hand, is observable in the behaviour of the individual. According to Saussure, it is not homogeneous.

Saussure believes that linguistics is fundamentally the study of langue, although some later scholars have suggested that there might also be linguistics of *parole*. Had corpus linguistics been a concept with which Saussure was familiar, he would no doubt have dismissed it as dealing with*parole* rather than with *langue*. In one of his celebrated images (Saussure 1969 [1916]: 36), he suggests that when an orchestra plays a symphony, the symphony exists externally to the way in which it is performed: that existence is comparable to langue in language study. The actual performance, which may contain idiosyncrasies or errors, is to be compared to *parole*.

The distinction between langue and parole has suffered two major changes in subsequent scholarship. First, a third level has been added, that of the NORM (see especially Coseriu 1962 [1952]). Our langue would allow us to say what the time is by saying It is ten minutes before four o’clock, or It wants ten minutes to be four o’clock, or In ten minutes it will be four o’clock, or It is five minutes after a quarter to four.We do not find such utterances attested in parole. Rather, we find multiple utterances of It is ten (minutes) to four. This cannot be related to vagaries of parole, because it is extremely homogeneous within relevant speech communities. Neither can it be a matter of langue, because langue allows us to say the same thing in many different ways. It is a matter of norm that we say It is ten to four rather than one of the alternatives. Note that different dialects may have different norms. There are also varieties of English in which the expression is It is ten of four.

The second thing that has happened to the langue/parole distinction is that it has been overtaken by other, similar distinctions. Chomsky (1965: 4) introduces the distinction between competence and performance. PERFORMANCE is very like Saussure’s parole. It is prone to error, to memory lapse and the like. COMPETENCE, however, is unlike Saussure’s langue in that it has no social side to it; it is a mental construct in the individual. Although Saussure concedes that ‘It [langue] is something which exists in each individual’, he also adds ‘yet is common to all of them\*\* (Saussure 1969 [1916]: 38).

Chomsky (1965: 4) also points out that for Saussure langue is ‘a system of signs’ (Saussure 1969 [1916]: 32), while for Chomsky competence is a generative system. This is an accurate description of langue, but does not seem to be fundamental to the notion of it in the way that its social aspect is.

In more recent work (Chomsky 1986), competence and performance have given way to a third distinction, that between I-language and E-language (where I and E are to be interpreted as ‘internalized’ and ‘externalized’. For Saussure, linguistics deals with langue; for Chomsky linguistics deals with I-language. Thus, for Saussure, linguistics involves studying the language of the community, while for Chomsky it involves studying the language potential of the individual. Yet both agree that if we use an analogy with a game of chess, the particular moves made in any given game are not what is to be
studied; rather it is the rules of the game which allow for an infinite number of different actual games. For Saussure the rules correspond to langue; for Chomsky they correspond to I-language (Saussure 1969 [1916]: 43; Chomsky 1986: 31).

\* ‘n’est complète dans aucun, elle n’existe parfaitement que dans la masse’.
\*\*‘C’est donc quelque chose qui est dans chacun d’eux [les individus], tout en étant commun à tous’.

**Synchrony versus diachrony**

**

*the Synchrony Vs. Dichrony dichotomy*

We can study a given language in two ways, Saussure maintains. The first is that we can look at the language as it is (or was) at any particular point in time. Thus we might study the syntax of American English in the early twenty-first century, or the phonology of seventeenth-century French or the patterns of compounding in Classical Chinese. These are all SYNCHRONIC studies (syn- ‘alike’, chronos ‘time’).

The alternative is to look at the way in which a language develops or changes over time. In this way we might consider the development of the English verb system, or changes in Arabic phonology from the classical period until today. These are DIACHRONIC studies (dia- ‘through’, chronos ‘time’).

Saussure was reacting to an environment in which the only linguistic study that was seen as being scientific was the study of the development of languages. By putting the synchronic side of language studies back on the linguistic map, he expanded the scope of linguistics. Yet by the late twentieth century, there were some linguists complaining that this strict distinction between synchronic
and diachronic linguistics had become a major problem in dealing with language.

All living languages are in a continuous state of change. Much of the complaint tradition, which is a social factor affecting many languages including English, is a reaction to recent changes. For example, people who complain that some speakers do not distinguish between imply and infer are caught up in a change whereby the two used to mean different things and now are less likely to be semantically distinct, especially in less formal contexts. This is evidence that aspects of language change are reflected in the synchronic structure of any given language or variety. This is the subject matter of variationist linguistics, as developed by William Labov. Any linguistic change progresses gradually through a speech community. Some speakers adopt the change more quickly than others, and some speakers use both the conservative and the innovative form for some period during the change. Thus any synchronic description of a variety, if it is detailed enough, can make sense only if aspects of diachrony are taken into account. Furthermore, language change leaves relics behind whose structure can be understood only with reference to their history. Why is blackmail called blackmail, for example? Why is it black and why is it mail? The synchronic structure of twenty-first-century English does not provide an answer for this. Blackmail has become an unmotivated word, even though we can see the elements black and mail within it.

Despite such problems, the distinction between synchronic and diachronic studies is generally maintained today.

**Paradigmatic versus syntagmatic**

**

*syntagmatic Vs Paradigmatic axis*

When we speak, language is produced in time, so that some bits of our utterance precede or follow other bits. When we write, this temporal aspect of language is replaced by a spatial aspect: the words are set out on the page in a conventional way such that linear order corresponds to the temporal order in speech. Thus English is written from left to right, with elements further to the left corresponding to elements produced earlier than elements further to the right. So in (1) *cat* precedes *mat* in linear order, corresponding to temporal structure in speech: we would say *cat*before we would say *mat*.

(1) The cat sat on the mat

The elements in (1) are said to be related to each other syntagmatically. Together they form a SYNTAGM or construction. We can say that the verb sit (or sat in this particular sentence) determines what it will be related to syntagmatically in that it demands something in the position of the cat in (1) and allows, but does not demand, an equivalent phrase after it (as in *They sat the dog on the mat*).

However, language is also structured in terms of the words (or other elements) which are not there but which could have been. Each of the words in (1) could have been replaced by a number of other possible words. Some examples are given in (2).

(2) The cat sat on the mat
This girl sits across your bed
That student walked over her car
My frog ran by their lap

The words in each of the columns in (2) are related to each other paradigmatically. They are related by being alternative possible choices at a position in the syntagm. While elements which are related syntagmatically are all present, elements which are related paradigmatically are mostly absent: they are relationships of potential.

Each of the columns in (2) can be called a PARADIGM, although that name is more usually reserved for a particular type of paradigmatic relationships, those holding between different forms of the same word (or, more technically, lexeme).

Note that elements in paradigmatic relationships share common features. All the words in the first column in (2) are determiners, all those in the second column are nouns and so on. Word classes can be thought of as being derived from sets of paradigmatic relationships. Very specific syntagms can also show semantically related words in relevant paradigms. Thus, consider (4), where the verb – except in figurative uses – demands the word cat or a closely related word.

(4) The cat miawed.
      the kitten
      Tom
     Oggy

**Signifier (signifiant) and signified (signifié)**

**

*Signifier Vs Signified dichotomy.*

Saussure insisted that the linguistic sign has two aspects to it: a sound side and a meaning side. The two are tightly linked within a speech community, and can be seen as being the two sides of the same playing card, but we must nevertheless keep these two aspects of the sign separate from each other in our technical understanding of the way in which language functions. The concept of a pig may be carried by the sounds /pig/, but that concept is not to be equated with that series of sounds. The sign unites the physical set of sounds (the signifier, or signifiant) with a particular mental image (the signified or signifié). Note that real-world pigs do not feature here. The sign links our mental image of a pig with a particular set of sounds, not a real pig. The real pig has a very indirect relationship with the sound sequence /pig/. The same argument could be repeated for the series of hand-shapes and gestures in sign-languages and their link to a particular meaning.

Saussure makes a number of other points about linguistic signs which have become accepted, although they had not always been seen as obvious prior to Saussure. Perhaps the most important of these is the fact that the linguistic sign is arbitrary. There is no natural link between the sound sequence /pig/ and particular animals. If there were, how could the same or very similar animals be easily associated with the word pig in English, cochon in French, gris in Danish, Schwein in German, and so on? Even onomatopoeic signs are to a large extent conventional.We only have to think about the words we use to represent animal noises in a number of languages to see that.Without knowing, it is hard to guess what animal says gav-gav in Russian, or what animal says chu-chu in Japanese. While the signs of sign-languages are often said to be iconic and resemble some feature of what is denoted, it can be difficult there to guess what a particular sign means if it has not been explained.

https://lmdresources.wordpress.com/2013/04/

# Session 8: May 8, 2015

Class Notes

Structuralism:

Linguists in this period were interested not in the definition of language, but in how it should be studied.

**Geneva school (de Saussure)**

* Language is an extremely complex and heterogeneous phenomenon. Among the various aspects and different perspectives, linguists need to ask what they are trying to describe.
* Saussure believes language is a system of signs: Sound (signifier) + ideas (signified) = sign ( system of convention)

**Saussure's contribution**

* Saussure provided a general orientation, a sense of the task of linguistics which had seldom been questioned.
* He influenced modern linguistics in the specific concepts.
* Many of the developments of modern linguistics can be described as his concepts: his ideas of the arbitrary nature of the sign, langue-parole; synchronic-diachronic; syntagmatic-paradigmatic relations.

**The Prague school:**

Prague Linguistic Circle: Started by V. Mathesius (1882-1946) in 1946 with such activists as T.Jacobson, N. Trubetzkoy and later later J. Firbas. The Circle stood at the heart of important development in structural linguistics and semiotics in the 1930's.

N. Trubetzkoy: Principle of Phonology (1939).

* Phonetics & phonology: different for parole & langue.
* Phoneme: an abstract unit of the sound system.
* Distinctive features: phonological oppositions

**Three things to remember**:

* Stressed synchronic linguistics, but not rigidly separated from diachronic studies.
* Language is systemic in that no element of L can be satisfactorily analyzed or evaluated in isolation and assessment can only be made if its relationship is established with the coexisting elements in the same language system.
* Language is functional in that it is a tool for performing a number of essential functions or tasks for the community using it

**The London School**

* B. Malinowski (1884-1942), professor of anthropology (1927).
* J. R. Firth (1890-1960), the first professor of linguistics in the UK (1944).
* M. A. K. Halliday (1925- ), student of Firth.
* All three stressed the importance of context of situation and the system aspect of language.

**Malinowski’s theories:**

* Language “is to be regarded as a mode of action, rather than as a counterpart of thought”.
* The meaning of an utterance comes from its relation to the situational context in which it occurs

**Firth's Theories:**

He regarded language as a social process, a means of social life**.**

* In order to live; Human beings have to learn language; and learning language is a means of participation in social activities.
* L is a means of doing things and of making others do things, a means of acting and living.

Linguistics in Europe before de Saussure was considered as a sub-field study of sociology

**American Structuralism:**

* They very impressed by Behaviourism/Empiricism

They did that for two reasons:

1. Academic reason: America would lose its history
2. To control American-Indians better

**North American Structuralism**

**Main tenets**

* Linguistics is a descriptive science.
* The primary form of language is the spoken one.
* Every language is a system on its own right.
* Language is a system in which smaller units arrange systematically to form larger ones.
* Meaning should not be part of linguistic analysis.
* The procedures to determine the units in language should be objective and rigorous.
* Language is observable speech, not knowledge**.**

**Structuralists and Native Americans**

* They were not many native Americans left bt 1900 and their languages were disappearing fast
* There was therefore an urgent need to record their grammars
* American languages were very different from Indo-European languages and it was thought that classical linguistic concepts did not apply

## Additional documents:

Structural linguistics in America:
American and European structuralism shared a number of features. In insisting upon the necessity of treating each language as a more or less coherent and integrated system, both European and American linguists of this period tended to emphasize, if not to exaggerate, the structural uniqueness of individual languages. There was especially good reason to take this point of view given the conditions in which American linguistics developed from the end of the 19th century. There were hundreds of indigenous American Indian languages that had never been previously described. Many of these were spoken by only a handful of speakers and, if they were not recorded before they became extinct, would be permanently inaccessible. Under these circumstances, such linguists as Franz Boas (died 1942) were less concerned with the construction of a general theory of the structure of human language than they were with prescribing sound methodological principles for the analysis of unfamiliar languages. They were also fearful that the description of these languages would be distorted by analyzing them in terms of categories derived from the analysis of the more familiar Indo-European languages.
After Boas, the two most influential American linguists were Edward Sapir (died 1939) and Leonard Bloomfield (died 1949). Like his teacher Boas, Sapir was equally at home in anthropology and linguistics, the alliance of which disciplines has endured to the present day in many American universities. Boas and Sapir were both attracted by the Humboldtian view of the relationship between language and thought, but it was left to one of Sapir's pupils, Benjamin Lee Whorf, to present it in a sufficiently challenging form to attract widespread scholarly attention. Since the republication of Whorf's more important papers in 1956, the thesis that language determines perception and thought has come to be known as the Whorfian hypothesis.

Sapir's work has always held an attraction for the more anthropologically inclined American linguists. But it was Bloomfield who prepared the way for the later phase of what is now thought of as the most distinctive manifestation of American "structuralism." When he published his first book in 1914, Bloomfield was strongly influenced by Wundt's psychology of language. In 1933, however, he published a drastically revised and expanded version with the new title Language; this book dominated the field for the next 30 years. In it Bloomfield explicitly adopted a behaviouristic approach to the study of language, eschewing in the name of scientific objectivity all reference to mental or conceptual categories. Of particular consequence was his adoption of the behaviouristic theory of semantics according to which meaning is simply the relationship between a stimulus and a verbal response. Because science was still a long way from being able to give a comprehensive account of most stimuli, no significant or interesting results could be expected from the study of meaning for some considerable time, and it was preferable, as far as possible, to avoid basing the grammatical analysis of a language on semantic considerations. Bloomfield's followers pushed even further the attempt to develop methods of linguistic analysis that were not based on meaning. One of the most characteristic features of "post-Bloomfieldian" American structuralism, then, was its almost complete neglect of semantics. (See also Index: stimulus-response theory)

Another characteristic feature, one that was to be much criticized by Chomsky, was its attempt to formulate a set of "discovery procedures"--procedures that could be applied more or less mechanically to texts and could be guaranteed to yield an appropriate phonological and grammatical description of the language of the texts. Structuralism, in this narrower sense of the term, is represented, with differences of emphasis or detail, in the major American textbooks published during the 1950s.

http://www.soc.hyogo-u.ac.jp/tani/amstructuralsim.htm

# Session 9: May 15, 2015

Class Notes

### Theories:

**American Structuralism:** A branch of synchronic linguistics that emerged independently in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century.

**Early period: Boas and Sapir:**

**BOAS**: *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (1911): an important introduction which is a good summery of the descriptive approach to language:

1. There is no ideal type or forms of language, for human languages were endlessly diverse.
2. Opposed to the view that language is the soul of a race.
* There were only differences in language structure, while there is no difference between languages in terms of being more or less reasonable or advanced.

**Ed. SAPIR**: *Language: An introduction to the Study of Speech* (1921)

* Focus on typology
* Language is the means and thought is the end product; without language, thought is impossible.
* The universal feature of language: distinct phonetic systems, concrete combinations of sound and meaning, various means of representing all kinds of relations.

**Bloomfield’s theory**

* The principal representative of American descriptive linguistics.
* 1933-1950 the Bloomfieldian Era, in which the American descriptive linguistics formally came into being and reached its prime development.
* *Language* (1933) the model of scientific methodology and the greatest work in linguistics.
* Linguistics is a branch of psychology, esp. Behaviourism.
* Behaviourism holds that human beings cannot know anything that they have not experienced.

Bloomfield discovered the procedures and tools that can help the linguists to describe. Also he was the one to invent minimal pairs. Skinner, Bloomfield’s student, said that we are born **tabula rasa**.

Behaviourism holds that children learn language through a chain of Stimulus-Response reinforcement, and adult use of language is also a process of stimulus-response. It is believed that a linguistic description was reliable when based on observation of unstudied utterance by speakers. Therefore, the popular practice in linguistic study was to accept what a native speaker says in his language and to discard what he says about his language.

**Structuralists and Empiricism**

We can only study what we can observe. For instance, we can observe sound, so we can study phonetics. If we assume that phonology is based on phonetics, we can study phonology too. If we assume that morphology is based on phonology, we can study morphology. If we assume that syntax is based on morphology, we can study syntax.

* We can’t study semantics – leave that to philosophers

**Therefore**:

* So what was needed was a set of ‘field tools’ that could be applied to any language which would accurately yield grammars
* As all linguistic units were identified by distribution patterns, distribution was the most important ‘discovery procedures’ to produce a grammar

Structural grammar describes everything that is found in a language instead of laying down rules. --The aim is confined to the description of language s, without explaining why language operates the way it does.

Structural grammar is empirical; aiming at objectivity in the sense that all definition and statements should be verifiable or refutable.—no completes grammar.

Structural grammar examines all language s, recognizing and doing justice to uniqueness of each language.—no adequate treatment of meaning.

Structural grammar describes even the smallest contrast that underlies any construction or use of a language, not only discoverable in some particular use.

* Inductive approach is starting from a small unit and reaching a rule.

**Post-Bloomfieldian Linguistics:** It is characterized by a strict empiricism. The appropriate goal for general linguistics was to devise explicit discovery procedures to enable the computer to process linguistic raw data about any language and form a complete grammar without the intervention by the human linguists. They also focused on direct observation. Moreover, they took an interest in the discourse level in order to develop discovery procedures for structure above the sentence level.

**Noam Chomsky** wrote a book in 1957, which no one cared about it, because the paradigm was behaviourism.

**The innateness Hypothesis:**

According to Noam Chomsky

* Children are born with Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which is a unique kind of knowledge that fits them for language learning.
* Children are born with knowledge of the basic grammatical relations and categories, and this knowledge is universal.
* The study of language can throw some light on the nature of the human mind.
* A reaction against behaviourism in psychology and empiricism in philosophy.
* What Children learn seems to be a set of rules rather than individuals sentences although children are not born knowing language, they are born with a predisposition to develop a language in much the same way as they are born with the predisposition to learn to walk.

**LAD: three elements:**

 1. A hypothesis maker (look for regularity, make hypothesis)

 2. Linguistic universals

 3. An evaluation procedure (more than one version of grammar)

**What is generative grammar?**

It is a system of rules that in some explicit and well-defined way assigns structural descriptions to sentences. Every speaker of a language has mastered and internalized a generative grammar that expresses his knowledge of his language.

It is not limited to particular languages, but the reveal the unity of particular grammars and universal grammars.

**Phrase Structure rules (PS rules):**

S 🡪 NP + VP

VP🡪 V + NP

NP🡪 Det. + N

**Transformation rules:**

NP1 + Aux + V + NP2 🡪 John will write a story

NP2 + Aux + be + en + V + by + NP1
 a story + will + be + en + write + by + John

**The classical theory**

**Its features:**

1. Emphasis on generative ability of language
2. Introduction of transformational rules
3. Grammatical description regardless of meaning

Therefore it is necessary to work out a grammar that, with a finite set of rules, can generate all the grammatical sentences in a language without generating a single non-grammatical sentence. Then a grammar is seen as a system of finite rules generating an infinite number of sentences.

The rules should meet certain requirements.

* 1. Generative
* 2. Simple
* 3. Explicit
* 4. Exhaustive
* 5. Recursive

**The Standard Theory:**

* Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (1965)

Problems with the Classical Theory

1. The transformational rules are too powerful.

--John has a book.

--A book was had by John.

1. Rules may generate ill-formed sentences as well as well-formed sentences.

--John hit the tree.

--The tree hit John.

1. Transformational rules for the passive voice cannot be used at will.This shows that transformational rules are not universally applicable

Therefore, Chomsky included a semantic component in his grammatical model, (Aspects of the Theory of Syntax). The generative grammar consists of three components: syntax, phonological and semantic.

* Colorless green ideas sleep furiously.

- 🡪Sub-categorization

- N 🡪[+N +/-Common]

- [+Common]🡪[+/- Count]

- [+Count]🡪[+/- Animate]

- [- Common]🡪[+/- Animate]

- [+Animate]🡪 [+/- Human]

- [-Count]🡪 [+/- Abstract]

**Main features of TG grammar**

* Rationalism
* Innateness
* Deductive methodology
* Emphasis on interpretation
* Formalism
* Emphasis on linguistic competence
* Strong generative powers
* Emphasis on linguistic universals

Additional Documents:

### Chomsky: Generative & Universal Grammar

[Noam Chomsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chomsky) is perhaps better known for his [political views](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noam_Chomsky%27s_political_views)than his revolutionary contribution to linguistics, but it that contribution which I intend to explore here.

Beginning with [Syntactic Structures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syntactic_Structures) in 1957, the book which lay the groundwork for his theory of [transformational grammar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transformational_grammar).

Chomsky’s  [”Three Models for the Description of Language”](http://www.chomsky.info/articles/195609--.pdf) (1955) outlined three possible candidates for the construction of sentences, finite state grammar, [phase structure grammar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrase_structure_grammar), and [transformational grammar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transformational_grammar).

**Finite state grammar**

The simplest model for generating sentences is the finite state grammar, or [Markov model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Markov_model), which [Steven Pinker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Pinker)illustrates with this example of a word-chain device in [The Language Instinct](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Language_Instinct) (1994):



From this scheme we can construct a potentially infinite set of sentences:

A girl eats ice cream

The happy dog eats hot dogs

The happy happy boy eats candy

Finite state grammars are those which consist of a finite number of states (Si) with transition symbols, aij, and a set C ={(Si; Sj)} of[CONNECTED](https://speakertoanimals.wordpress.com/language-linguistics/chomsky/#27660717) states. Transition symbols may be [phonemes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoneme) (the smallest unit of sound[EMPLOYED](https://speakertoanimals.wordpress.com/language-linguistics/chomsky/#11088564) to form meaningful contrasts between utterances, e.g. b–a–t or b–ea–t), [morphemes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morpheme) (the smallest conceptual meaningful component of a word, or other linguistic unit, that has [semantic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantics) [meaning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meaning_%28linguistics%29), e.g.un–micro–wave–abil–ity), or words. These elements are, of course, the focus of [Saussurian linguistics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Course_in_General_Linguistics).

 As this grammar evolves from state to state it produces strings of ‘[concatenated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concatenation)‘ symbols aij that form all the sentences of a finite-state language LG.

This is, in fact, how automated messages work: the automated announcer telling you that  your train is running late draws from a pre-recorded list of train times, destinations, and excuses, to construct meaningful sentences:

The / ten / twenty / six / train / to / Manchester Airport / has been delayed by /approximately / twenty / minutes / due to / staffing shortages

The lists from which the system can draw its words and phrases can, of course, be enormous, and could encompass the entire dictionary if one wished: in order the create realistic sounding sentences one could weigh the choices of words according to the probability of word combinations occuring in real speech, so ‘liquid’ or ‘gas’ would be much more likely to follow the word ‘colourless’ than would the word ‘green’.

A first-order process is where the probability affecting the choice of a word is based on the proceding word, a second order process is where the probabilities depend on the two proceding words, etc, this series being designated the nth order approximation. This grammar decides the probability of a given word occurring conditioned on the n –1 previous words that were observed: as n increases the sentences formed begin to resemble proper English sentences.

There are three basic problems with finite state devices though. Consider the following examples from Chomsky’s article:

Colorless green ideas sleep furiously

Furiously sleep ideas green colorless

The probability of these words following each other is virtually nil – what would it mean for something to be both colourless and green? How could anything sleep ‘furiously’? The nth order approximation cannot distinguish between grammatically correct – if meaningless – sentences like the first, and grammatically incorrect – and equally meaningless – sentences like the second.

Secondly, finite state systems theories with a problem: in English, ‘either’ must always, eventually, be followed in a sentence by ‘or’, and ‘if’ must always be followed by ‘then’:

Either the happy girl eats ice cream or the girl eats candy

If the girl eats ice cream, then the boy eats hot dogs

We would never say:

Either the happy girl eats ice cream, then the happy boy eats hot dogs

If the happy girl eats ice cream, or the happy boy eats hot dogs

You might try illustrating the generative schema like this (again taken from Pinker’s book):



The problem is that finite state grammars are  [memoryless](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorylessness); that is, that each state depends only on the current state and not on the sequence of states that preceded it. The system has no way of remembering if the sentence started with ‘either’ or ‘if’ when it comes to choosing from ‘or’ or ‘then’.

And when we reach more complex embedded sentences like

If either the girl eats ice cream or the girl eats candy, then the boy eats hot dogs

Either if the girl eats ice cream then the boy eats ice cream, or ifthe girl eats ice cream then the boy eats candy

You could try creating a Markov model

 

Another finite-state grammar that could be used for the English language is the nth order approximation.

Saussurian linguistics cannot distinguish between sentences which share almost identical grammatical structure, for example the sentences:

John is easy to please

John is eager to please

These sentences share the same sequence of [noun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun)–[copula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copula_%28linguistics%29)–[adjective](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adjective)–[infinitive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinitive)–[verb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verb) but in the first John functions as the direct [object](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object_%28grammar%29) of the verb to please; i.e. it is easy for someone to please John. In the second sentence John functions as the [subject](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject_%28grammar%29) of the verb to please; i.e. John is eager that he please someone else. That this is a difference in syntax is demonstrated by the ease with which the second sentence allows us to form the [noun-phrase](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun_phrase) John’s eagerness to please, but not John’s easiness to please out of the first.

Another example is I like her cooking contains no ambiguous words and has a very simple superficial grammatical structure ([noun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun)–[verb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verb)–[possessive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Possessive_case) [pronoun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pronoun)–[noun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun)) but is ambiguous: It can mean I like what she cooks, I like the way she cooks, or even, if you are a nutcase, I like the fact that she is being cooked.

https://speakertoanimals.wordpress.com/language-linguistics/chomsky/