

LINGUISTICS

BA SANSKRIT

IV SEMESTER

COMPLEMENTARY COURSE

(2011 Admission)



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

CALICUT UNIVERSITY P.O., MALAPPURAM, KERALA, INDIA - 673 635

UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

STUDY MATERIAL

B.A SANSKRIT (2011 Admission onwards)

IV SEMESTER

COMPLEMENTARY COURSE

LINGUISTICS

Prepared by

DR.E.JAYAN
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT
VTB COLLEGE
MANNAMPATTA
PALAKKAD

Scrutinised by

Sri. K. JAYANARAYANAN
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT
SREE KERALA VARMA COLLEGE
THRISSUR

Layout & Settings

COMPUTER SECTION, SDE

©

Reserved

<u>CONTENT</u>	<u>PAGE NO.</u>
1. MODULE I	5 – 15
2. MODULE II	16 – 16
3. MODULE III	17 – 36
4. MODULE IV	37 - 40

MODULE-I

LANGUAGE

What is Language?

Linguistic is the scientific study of language. At first sight this definition – which is one that will be found in most textbooks and general treatments of the subject – is straightforward enough. But what exactly is meant by ‘language’ and ‘scientific’? And can linguistic as it is currently practiced, be rightly described as a science?

The question “what is language?” is comparable with – and, some would say, hardly less profound than – “What is life?”, the presuppositions of which circumscribe and unify the biological sciences. Of course, “What is life?” is not the kind of question that the biologist has constantly before his mind in his everyday work. It has more of a philosophical ring to it. And the biologist, like other scientists, is usually too deeply immersed in the details of some specific problem to be pondering the implications of such general questions. Nevertheless, the presumed meaningfulness of the question “What is life?” – the presupposition that all living things share some property or set of properties which distinguishes them from non – living things – establishes the limits of the biologist’s concerns and justifies the autonomy, or partial autonomy of his discipline. Although the question “What is life?” can be said, in this sense, to provide biology with its very reason for existence, it is not so much the question itself as the particular interpretation that the biologist puts upon it and the unraveling of its more detailed implications within some currently accepted theoretical framework that nourish the biologist’s day – do – day speculations and research. So it is for the linguist in relation to the question “ what is language?”

The first thing to notice about the question “what is language?” is that it uses the word ‘language’ in the singular without the indefinite article. Formulated as it is in English, it thus differs grammatically, if not in meaning, from the superficially similar question “What is language?” Several European languages

have two words, not one, to translate the English word 'language'; of French 'langage'; 'langue', Italian 'linguaggio'; 'lingua'; Spanish 'lenguaje'; 'lengua'. In each case, the difference in the two senses of the English word 'language'. For example, in French the word 'langage' is used to refer to language in general and the word 'langue' is used to refer to language in general and the word 'langue' is applied to particular languages. It so happens that English allows its speakers to say, of some person, not only that he possess a language (English, Chinese, Malay, Swahili etc.), but that he possess language. Philosophers, psychologists and linguists commonly make the point that it is the possession of language which most clearly distinguishes man from other animals. We shall be looking into the substance of this claim in the present chapter. Here I wish to emphasize the obvious, but important, fact that one cannot possess (or use) natural language without possessing (or using) some particular natural language. I have just used the term 'natural language'; and this brings us to another point. the word 'language' is applied, not only to English, Chinese, Malay, Swahili, etc. -i.e to what everyone will agree are languages properly so called - but to variety of other systems of communication, notation or calculation, about which there is room for dispute. For example, mathematicians, logicians and computer systems, which, whether they are rightly called languages or not are artificial, rather than natural. So too, though it is based on pre-existing natural languages and is incontrovertibly a language is Esperanto, which was invented in the late nineteenth century for the purpose of international communication. There are others systems of communication, both human and non - human, which are quite definitely natural rather than artificial, but which do not seem to be languages in the strict sense of term, even though the word 'language; is commonly used with reference to them. Consider such phrases as 'sign language' 'body language' or the language of the bees' in this connection. Most people would probably say that the word 'language is here being used metaphorically or figuratively. Interestingly enough it is 'langage, rather than 'langue', that would normally be used in translating such phrases into French. The French word 'langage' (like he Italian 'linguaggio' and the Spanish 'lenguaje') is more general than the other member of the pair, not only in that it is used to refer to language in general but also in that it is applied to systems of communication, whether they are natural or artificial, human or non - human, for which the English word 'language' is employed in what appears to be at extended sense.

The linguist is concerned primarily with natural languages. The question “what is language?” carries with it the presupposition that each of the several thousand recognizably distinct natural language spoken throughout the world is a specific instance of something more general. What the linguist wants to know is whether a natural languages have something in common not shared by other systems of communication, human or non – human, such that it is right apply to each of them the word ‘ language’ and to deny the application of the term to others systems of communication – exercise so far as they are based, like Esperanto , on pre-existing nature languages. This is the question with which we shall be dealing in the present chapter.

Some definitions of ‘language’

Definitions of languages are not difficult to find. Let us look at some. Each of the following statements about language, whether it was intended as a definition or not, makes one or more point that was will take up later. The statements all come from classic works at well known linguists. Taken together, they will serve to give some preliminary indication of the properties that linguists at least tend think as being essential to language.

- (i) According to Sapit (1921:8): “Language is purely human and – instinctive method of communicating ideas emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols. “This definition suffers from several defects. However broadly we construe that terms idea, ‘emotion’ and ‘desire’ it seems clear that there is mutual that is communicated by languages which is not covered by any them; and ‘idea’ in particular is inherently imprecise. On the other hand, there are many systems of voluntarily produced symbols the we only count as languages in what we feel to be an extended metaphorical sense of the word ‘language. For example, what is now popularly referred to by means of the expression body language – which makes used of gestures, postures, eye – gaze, etc. would seem to satisfy this part of Sapir’s definition. Whether it is purely human and non – instinctive is admittedly, open to doubt. But so too, as we shall see, is the question whether languages properly so called are both purely human and non – instinctive. This is the main point to be noted in Sapir’s definition.

- (ii) In their Outline of Linguistic Analysis Bloch & Trager wrote (1942 : 5): “ A language is system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co – operates . “what is striking about this definition, in contract with Sapir’s, is that it makes no appeal, except indirectly and by implication, to the communicative function of language. Instead, it puts all the emphasis upon its social function; and in doing so, as we shall see later, it takes a rather narrow view of the role that language paly in society. The bloch & Trager definition differs from Sapir’s in that it brings in the property of arbitrariness and explicitly restricts language ‘ contradictory). The term arbitrariness’ is here being used in a rather special sense. We will come back to this presently. We will also come back to the question of the relation that holds between language and speech. All that needs to be said at this point is that, as far as natural languages are concerned, there is a close connection between language and speech. Logically, the latter presupposes the former: one cannot speak without using language (i.e without speaking in a particular language), but one can use language without speaking. However, granted that language is logically independent of speech, there are good grounds for saying that, in all natural languages as we know them, speech is historically, and perhaps biologically, prior to writing. And this is the view that most linguists take.

In his Essay on Language, Hall (1968 : 158) tells us that language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of liabitually used oral – auditory arbitrary symbols” . Among the points to notice here are, first of all, the fact that both communication and interaction are

- (iii) introduced into the definition (‘interaction’ being broader than and in this respect, better than ‘co-operation’) and second that the term ‘oral – auditory’ can be taken to be roughly equivalent to ‘vocal’, differing from it only in that ‘oral – auditory’ makes reference to the hearer as well as to the speaker (i.e. to the receiver as well as the sender of the vocal signals that we identify as language – utterances). Hall like Sapir, treats language as a purely human institution; and the term ‘institution’ make explicit the view that the language that is used by a particular society is part of that society’s culture. The property of arbitrariness is, once again, singled out for mention.

What is most noteworthy in Hall's definition, however, is his employment of the term 'habitually used'; and there are historical reasons for this. Linguistics and the psychology of language were strongly influenced, for about thirty years or so, especially in America, by the stimulus - response theories of the behaviourists; and with in the theoretical framework of behaviourism the term 'habit' acquired a rather special sense. It was used with reference to bits of behavior that were identifiable as statistically predictable responses to particular stimuli. Much that we would not normally think of as being done as a matter of habit was brought within the scope of the behaviourists' term; and many textbooks of linguistics reflect this more or less technical use of the term and, with its adoption, commit themselves, by implication at least, to some version or other of the behaviourists' stimulus - response theory of language - use and language - acquisition. It is now generally accepted that this theory is if not wholly inapplicable, of very restricted applicability both in linguistics and in the psychology of language.

Hall presumably means by language 'symbols' the vocal signals that are actually transmitted from sender to receiver in the process of communication and interaction. But it is now clear that there is no sense of the term 'habit' technical or non - technical in which the utterances of a language are either themselves habits or constructed by means of habits. If 'symbol' is being used to refer, not to language - utterances, but to the words or phrases of which they are composed, it would still be wrong to imply that a speaker uses such and such a word, as a matter of habit, on such and such an occasion. One of the most important facts about language is that there is, in general, no connection between words and the situations in which they are used such that occurrence of particular words is predictable as habitual behavior is predictable, from the situations themselves. For example, we do not habitually produce an utterance containing the word 'bird' whenever we happen to find ourselves in a situation in which we see a bird; indeed, we are no more likely to use the word 'bird, in such situations than we are in all sorts of other situations. Language, as well shall see later, is stimulus free.

- iv) Robins (1979a: 9-14) does not give a formal definition of language ; he rightly points out that such definitions "tend to be trivial and uninformative, unless they presuppose Some general theory of language and of linguistic analysis". But he does list and discuss a

number of salient facts that “must be taken into account in any seriously intended theory of language”. Throughout successive editions of this standard textbook, he notes that languages are ‘symbol systems almost wholly based on pure or arbitrary convention’, but lays special emphasis on their flexibility and adaptability. There is perhaps no logical incompatibility between the view that languages are systems to habit (‘habit’ being construed in a particular sense) and the view expressed by Robins. It is after all conceivable that a habit system should itself change over time, in response to the changing needs of its users. But the term ‘habit’ is not one that we usually associate with adaptable behavior. We shall need to look a little more closely at the notion of infinite extensibility later. And we shall then see that a distinction must be drawn between the extensibility and modifiability of a system and the extensibility or modifiability of the products of that system. It is also important to recognize that as far as the system is concerned. Some kinds a extension and modification are theoretically more interesting than others. For example, the fact that new words can enter the vocabulary of a language at any time is of far less theoretical interest than is the course of time. One of the central issues in linguistic is whether there are any limits to this latter kind of modifiability and, if so, what the limits are.

- v) The last definition to be quoted here strikes a very different note: “From now on I will consider a language to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. “This definition is taken from Chomsky’s Syntactic structures (1957 : 13), whose publication inaugurated the movement known as transformational grammar. Unlike the other definitions, it is intended to cover much else besides natural languages. But, according to Chomsky all natural languages, in either their spoken or their written form, are languages in the sense of his definition : since (a) each natural language has a finite number of sounds in it (and a finite number of letters in its alphabet – on the assumption that it has an alphabetic writing system); and (b), although there may be infinitely many distinct sentences in the language, each sentence can be represented as a finite sequence of these sounds (or letters). It is the task of the linguist describing some particular natural language to determine which of the

finite sequences of elements in that language are sentences and which are non – sentences. And it is the task of the theoretical linguist who interprets the question “what is language?” as meaning “What is natural language?” to discover if he can the structural properties, natural language? to discover if he can the structural properties, if there are any, whereby natural languages differ from what, in contrast with them, may be called non – natural languages.

It is Chomsky’s belief – and he has stressed this increasingly in his more recent work – not only that there are indeed such structural properties, but that they are so abstract, so complex and so highly specific to their purpose that they could not possibly be learned from scratch by an infant grappling with the problem of acquiring his native language. They must be known to the child, in some sense, prior to and independently, of his experience of any natural language, and used by him in the process of language acquisition. It is because, Chomsky holds this view that he describes himself as a rationalist, rather than an empiricist. We will come back to this point.

Chomsky’s definition of ‘language’ has been quoted here largely for the contrast that it provides with the others, both in style and in content. It says nothing about the communicative function of either natural or non – natural languages; it says nothing about the symbolic nature of the elements or sequences of them. Its purpose is to focus attention upon the purely structural properties of languages and to suggest that these properties can be investigated from a mathematically precise point of view. It is Chomsky’s major contribution to linguistics to have given particular emphasis to what he calls the structure – dependence of the processes where by sentences are constructed in natural languages and to have formulated a general theory of grammar which is based upon a particular definition of this property.

The five definitions of ‘language’ quoted and briefly discussed above have served to introduce some of the properties which some linguists have taken to be essential features of languages as we know them. Most of them have taken the view that languages are systems of symbols designed, as it were, for the purpose of communication. And this is how we will look at languages below, in the section entitled. ‘The semiotic point of view’; semiotics, as we shall, see, is the discipline or branch of study that is devoted to the investigation of symbolic and

communicative behavior. The question that will concern us at that point will be whether there is any simple property or set of properties that distinguishes natural languages from other semiotic systems. Some of the properties that have been mentioned here are arbitrariness, flexibility and modifiability, freedom from stimulus control, and structure – dependence. Others will be added to this list in due course. The relation between language and speech will be dealt with in 1.4.

Language – behavior and language – systems.

It is now time, however, to draw some necessary distinctions of sense within the term ‘language’. I have already referred to the distinction between language in general (‘langage’ to use the French term and a particular language (‘langue’). The adjective ‘linguistic’ is similarly ambiguous (even when it is relatable to ‘language’ rather than ‘ linguistics’). For example the phrase ‘linguistic competence’, which has been employed by Chomsky and following him, others to refer to a person’s mastery of a particular language is no less naturally construed in everyday English as having reference to the ability of facility that someone might have for the acquisition or use, not of a language, but of language. (And whenever the word ‘language’ is used adjectivally in compound nouns it is subject to the same kind of ambiguity; cf. ‘language – competence’, ‘language – acquisition’.) Very often the ambi-guilty is of no consequence or is resolved by the context. When it is important to keep the two sense of ‘language’ apart, I shall do so.

To use one particular language rather than another is to behave in one way rather than another . Both language in general and particular languages may be looked at as behavior, or activity, some of which at least is observable, and recognizable as language – behavior, not only by participant – observers (i.e. speakers and hearers in so far as we are restricting our attention to spoken language), but also by observers who are not themselves involved at the time in this characteristically interactive and communicative behavior. Furthermore, although it is of the essence of language behavior that it should be in general if not on each and every occasion, communicative, it is usually possible for external observers to recognize language – behavior for what it is, even when they do not know the particular language that is being used and cannot interpret the utterances that are the product of the behavior that is being observed.

Language, then, can be considered, legitimately enough, from a behavioural (though not necessarily a behaviouristic) point of view. But language in general and particular languages can be considered from at least two other point of view. One of these is associated with the terminological distinction that Chomsky has drawn between 'competence' and 'performance'; the other with some what different distinction that Ferdinand de Saussure drew in French, at the beginning of the century, between 'langue' and 'parole'.

When we say of some one that he speaks English, we can mean one of two things ; either (a) that he habitually or occasionally, engages in a particular kind of behavior or (b) that he has the ability (whether he exercises it or not) to engage in this particular kind of behaviour. Referring to the former as performance and the latter competence , we can say that performance presupposes competence, whereas competence does not presuppose performance. Put like this the distinction between competence and performance is relatively uncontroversial. So too is Chomsky's further point that, however broadly we construe the term 'linguistic competence' we must recognize that the language - behavior of particular person on particular occasions is determined by many other factors over and above their linguistic competence. There is much in Chomsky's more detailed formulation of the notion of linguistic competence that is highly controversial. But this need not concern us at present. Here it is sufficient to note that for Chomsky, what linguists are describing when they are describing a particular language is, not the performance as such (i.e. behavior), but the competence of its speakers, is so far as it is purely linguistic, which underlies and makes possible their performance. One's linguistic competence is one's knowledge of a particular language. Since linguistics is concerned with identifying and giving a satisfactory theoretical account of the determinants of linguistic competence it is to be classified, according to Chomsky, as a branch of cognitive psychology.

The distinction between 'langue' and 'parole' as it was originally drawn by Saussure, subsumed a number of logically independent distinctions. Most important of these were the distinction between what is potential and what is actual, on the one hand, and the distinction between what is social and what is individual, on the other. What Saussure called a 'langue' is any particular language that is the common possession of all the members of a given language - community (i.e. of all those who are acknowledged to speak the same language).

The French term 'langue' which, as we have seen, is simply one of the ordinary words meaning "language", is usually left untranslated in English when it is being employed technically in its Saussurean sense. We will introduce the term 'language – system' in place of it; and we will contrast this with 'language – behaviour', initially at least, in the way that Saussure contrasted 'langue' and 'parole'. A language – system is a social phenomenon, or institution, which of itself is purely abstract, in that it has no physical existence, but which is actualized on particular occasions in the language – behavior of individual members of the language – community. Up to a point, what Chomsky call linguistic competence can be identified, readily enough, not with the language – system, but with the typical speaker's knowledge of the language – system. But Saussure gave special emphasis to the social or institutional character of language – systems. Therefore, he thought of linguistics as being closer to sociology and social psychology than it is to cognitive psychology. Many other linguists have taken the same view. Others however, have held that language systems can, and should be, studied independently of their psychological or sociological correlates. We return to this point in Chapter 2. Let us for the present simply note that, when we say that the linguist is interested in language, we imply that he is interested, primarily, in the structure of language – systems.

Language and Speech

It is one of the cardinal principles of modern linguistics that spoken language is more basic than written language. This does not mean, however, that language is to be identified with speech. A distinction must be drawn between language – signals and the medium in which the signals are realized. Thus it is possible to read aloud what is written and conversely, to write down what is spoken. Literate native speakers of a language can tell, in general, whether this process of transferring a language – signal from one medium to the other has been correctly carried out or not. In so far as language is independent, in this sense, of the medium in which language – signals are realized, we will say that language has the property of medium transferability. This is a most important property – one to which far too little attention has been paid in general discussions of the nature of language. It is property which, as we shall see, depends upon other and which, with them, contributes to the flexibility and adaptability of language – systems.

In what sense, then, is spoken language more basic than written language? And why is it that many linguists are inclined to make it a defining feature of natural languages that they should be systems of vocal signals?

First of all, linguists see it as their duty to correct the bias of traditional grammar and traditional language – teaching. Until recently, grammarians have been concerned almost exclusively with the language of literature and have taken little account of everyday colloquial speech. All too often they have treated the norms of literary usage as the norms of correctness for the language itself and have condemned colloquial usage, in so far as it differs from literate usage, as ungrammatical, slovenly or even illogical. In the course of the nineteenth century, great progress was made in the investigation.

MODULE-II

BRANCHES OF LINGUISTICS

As we have seen, both language in general and particular languages can be studied from different point of view. Therefore the field of linguistics as whole can be divided into several subfields according to the point of view that is adopted or the special emphasis that is given to one set of phenomena, or assumptions, rather than another.

The first distinction to be drawn is between **general** and **descriptive** linguistics. This is in itself straightforward enough. It correspond to the distinction between studying language in general and describing particular languages. The question “ what is language “ which in above topics was said to be the central defining question of whole discipline is more properly seen as the central question in general linguistics. General linguistics and descriptive linguistics are by no means unrelated. Each depends, explicitly or implicitly upon the other: general linguistics supplies the concepts and categories in terms of which particular languages are to be analyzed;

Descriptive linguistics ,in its turn provides the data which confirm or refute the propositions and theories put forward in general linguistics. For example the general linguist might formulate the hypothesis that all languages have nouns and verbs .The descriptive linguist might refute this with empirical evidence that there is at least one language in the description of which the distinction between nouns and verbs cannot be established . but in order to refute ,or confirm ,the hypothesis the descriptive linguist must operate with some concept of noun and verb which have been supplied to him by the general linguist.

There are of course all sorts of reason why one which to describe a particular language, many of those working in descriptive linguistics will be doing so, not because they are interested in providing data for general linguistics or in testing conflicting theories and hypothesis , but because they wish to produce reference grammar or dictionary for practical purposes. But this fact does not affect the independence of the two complimentary subfields of general and descriptive linguistics.

MODULE-III

SOME MODERN SCHOOLS AND MOVEMENTS

HISTORICISM

In this chapter, I will discuss a number of twentieth-century movements in linguistics which have shaped current attitudes and assumptions. The first of these, to which I will give the label historicism, is usually thought of as being characteristic of an earlier period of linguistic thought. It is of importance in the present connection in that it prepared the way for structuralism.

Writing in 1922, the great Danish Linguist, Otto Jespersen, began one of the most interesting and controversial of his general books on language with the following sentence: "The distinctive feature of the science of language as conceived nowadays is its historical character." Jespersen was here expressing the same point of view as Hermann Paul had done in his *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (Principle of Language History), first published in 1880 and commonly described as the bible of Neogrammarial orthodoxy: the view that (to quote from the fifth edition of Paul's book, which appeared in 1920) "as soon as one goes beyond the mere statement of individual facts, as soon as one tried to grasp their interconnection {den Zusammenhang}, to understand the phenomena {die Erscheinungen}, one enters upon the domain of history, albeit perhaps unconsciously". Both Jespersen's book and the fifth edition of Paul's *Prinzipien*, it will be noted, were published several years after Saussure's posthumous *Cours de linguistique générale*, which inaugurated the movement now known as structuralism, and only a few years before the foundation of the Prague Linguistic Circle, in which structuralism was combined with functionalism and some of the ideas of present-day generativism had their origin. Structuralism, functionalism and generativism are the principal movements, or attitudes with which we shall be concerned in this chapter.

It is interesting to observe, in passing, that Bloomfield, in *Language* (1935), whilst recognizing the great merits of Paul's *Prinzipien*, criticized it, not only for its historicism, but also for its mentalism and its substitution of what Bloomfield regarded as "philosophical and psychological pseudo-explanations" for inductive generalization on the basis of "descriptive language study". The wheel has now

come full circle. For, as we shall see later, Bloomfieldian descriptivism (which may be regarded as a peculiarly American version of structuralism) provided the environment in which Chomskyan generativism was born and against which it reacted. It is impossible, in a book of this nature, to do justice to the complexity of the relations that hold among twentieth-century schools of linguistics and of the influence that one school has exerted upon another. What follows, in this chapter, is highly selective and, of necessity, involves a certain amount of personal interpretation. It is of course, a truism that one cannot achieve a genuinely historical perspective in relation to contemporary ideas and attitudes. Even to try to do so may be itself a kind of historicism!

But what, precisely, is historicism-in the sense in which the term is being employed here? It is the view, expressed most forcefully by Paul in the passage from which just one sentence was quoted above, that linguistics, in so far as it is, or aspires to be, scientific, is necessarily historical in character. More particularly, the historicist takes the view that the only kind of explanation valid in linguistics is the kind of explanation which a historian might give: languages are as they are because, in the course of time, they have been subject to a variety of internal and external causal forces- such forces as were mentioned in the final section (6.5) of the chapter on historical linguistics. In taking this view, the great nineteenth-century linguists were reaching against the ideas of the philosophers of the French Enlightenment and their predecessors in a long tradition, which goes back, ultimately, to Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, whose aim it was to deduce the universal properties of language from what were known, or assumed, to be universal properties of the human mind.

Historicism, in the sense in which the term is being used here, does not necessarily imply evolutionism: the view that there is directionality in the historical development of languages. Evolutionism was, in fact, quite influential in linguistics in the late nineteenth century; and Jespersen, in the book referred to above, defends a particular version of it. Other versions have been put forward by idealists of various schools; and also, of course, within the framework of dialectical materialism, by Marxists. It is probably true to say, however, that, with a few notable exceptions, most linguists in the twentieth century have rejected evolutionism (cf.1.4). Historicism, as we shall see in the following section, is one of the movements against which structuralism reacted and in relation to which it may be defined.

STRUCTURALISM

What is commonly referred to as structuralism, especially in Europe, is of multiple origin. It is both conventional and convenient to date its birth as an identifiable movement in linguistics from the publication of Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* in 1916. Many of the ideas that Saussure brought together in the lectures that he delivered at the University of Geneva between 1907 and 1911 (upon which the *Cours* is based) can be traced back into the nineteenth century and beyond.

Several of the constitutive distinctions of Saussurean structuralism have been introduced already (though not always in Saussurean terminology). It suffices to remind the reader of them and to show how they fit together. Since we have just been discussing historicism, it is natural to begin with the distinction between the synchronic and diachronic point of view in the study of languages.

As we have seen, the neogrammarians took the view that linguistics, in so far as it is scientific and explanatory, must necessarily be historical. Against this view, Saussure argued that the synchronic description of particular languages could be equally scientific; and also that it could be explanatory. Synchronic explanation differs from diachronic, or historical, explanation in being structural, rather than causal; it gives a different kind of answer to the question, "Why are things as they are?" Instead of tracing the historical development of particular forms or meaning, it demonstrates how all the forms and meaning are interrelated at a particular point in time in a particular language-system. It is important to realize that, in opposing the Neogrammarian view, Saussure was not denying

The validity of historical explanation. He had made his reputation, as a very young man, with a brilliant reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European vowel-system; and he never abandoned his interest in historical linguistics. What he was saying in his Geneva lectures on general linguistics was that the synchronic and the diachronic modes of explanation were complementary; and that the latter was logically dependent upon the former.

It is as if we were asked to explain why, let us say, a Rolls Royce car-engine of such-and-such a model and such-and-such a year was as it is. We could give a

diachronic explanation in terms of the changes that had taken place, over the years, in the design of the carburetor, the crankshaft, etc.; and this would be a perfectly appropriate answer to the question. Alternatively, we could describe the role that each component plays in the synchronic system; and in doing so we should be explaining how the engine fits together and how it works. This would be a non-historical, structural (and functional) explanation of the facts. Since languages are not designed and, in Saussure's own analogy of the game of chess: of.2.5). Due allowance being made for the absence of a controlling designer and the difference between a machine and a social institution, we can say, quite legitimately, though metaphorically, that a structural description of a language tells us how all the components fit together.

There are certain aspects of Saussure's distinction between the diachronic and the synchronic point of view that are controversial, not to say paradoxical; in particular, his assertion that structuralism has no place in historical linguistics. This is paradoxical in view of the fact that Saussure's own early work on the Proto-Indo-European vowel-system in 1879 can be seen as foreshadowing what would be later described as internal reconstruction; and as we have seen, this method of reconstruction was subsequently refined and adopted by scholars who called themselves structuralists and drew their inspiration, at least partly, from Saussure (cf.6.5). However, it would seem that Saussure himself believed, rightly or wrongly, that all changes originated outside the language-system itself and did not take account of what were later to be identified as structural pressures within the system operating as internal causal factors of language-change. No more need be said about this.

Little need be said either about Saussure's dichotomy between *langue* and *parole*: between the **language-system** and language-behaviour (cf.1.3,2.6). What must be emphasized, at this point, is the abstractness of Saussure's conception of the language-system. A language (*langue*), says Saussure, is a form, not a substance. The term 'form' is well established in this sense in philosophy and relates, on the one hand, to Wilhelm von Humboldt's notion of the inner form of a language (*innere Sprachform*) and, on the other, to the Russian formalists' notion of form as opposed to content in literary analysis. But it is potentially misleading. We are not doing violence to Saussure's thought if we say that a language is a structure, implying by the use of this term that it is independent of the physical substance, or medium, in which it is realized. 'Structure', in this sense, is more or

less equivalent to 'system': a language is a two-level system of syntagmatic and substitutional (or paradigmatic) relation (cf.3.6). It is this sense of 'structure'-the sense in which particular emphasis is given to the internal combinatorial and contrastive relations within a language-system-that make the term 'structuralism' appropriate to several different twentieth century schools of linguistics, which might differ one from another in various respects, including the abstractness of their conception of language-systems and their attitudes to the fiction of homogeneity. As we shall see later, generativism is also a particular version of structuralism in this very general sense.

But there are other features of Saussurean structuralism that are more distinctive of it. One is the assertion that "the one and only true object of linguistics is the language-system (la langue) envisaged in itself and for itself". Actually, this famous quotation from the last sentence of the Course may not accurately represent Saussure's view, since the sentence appears to have been added by the editors without warrant in the lectures themselves. There is some doubt, too, as to what exactly is meant by "in itself and for itself" ("en elle-meme et pour elle-meme"). However in the Saussurean tradition it has usually been taken to imply that a language-system is a structure that can be abstracted, not only from the historical forces that have brought it into being, but also from the social matrix in which it operates and the psychological process by which it is acquired and made available for use in language-behaviour. Thus interpreted, the saussurean slogan, whether it originated with the master himself or not, has often been used to justify the principle of the autonomy of linguistics (i.e. its independence of other disciplines) and a methodological distinction of the kind that was drawn in an earlier chapter between microlinguistics and macrolinguistics. We shall come back to this point .

There might seem to be some conflict between Saussure's view (if indeed it was his view) that the language-system should be studied in abstraction from the society in which it operates and the view (which he certainly did hold) that languages are social facts. The conflict is only apparent. For even if they are social facts – in the sense in which the term 'social fact' was employed by the great French sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Saussure's contemporary- they have their own unique constitutive principles. As we have seen, a structural analysis of a language-system is not to be confused with a causal account of how the system came to be as it is. In saying that language-

systems are social facts, Saussure was asserting several things: that they are different from, though no less real than, material objects; that they are external to the individual and make him subject to their constraining force; that they are systems of values maintained by social convention.

More particularly, he took the view that they are semiotic systems in which that which is signified (*le signifié*) is arbitrarily associated with that which signifies (*le signifiant*). This is Saussure's famous principle of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign (*l'arbitraire du signe*) – a principle which was discussed, independently of the role it fulfils in Saussurean structuralism). In an earlier chapter. . . The important point to note here, and it is essential for the understanding of Saussurean structuralism, is that the sign is not a meaningful form: it is a composite entity which results from the imposition of structure on two kinds of substance by the combinatorial and contrastive relations of the language-system. Meanings cannot exist independently of the forms with which they are associated; and vice versa. We must not think of a language as a nomenclature, says Saussure: that is, as a set of names, or labels, for pre-existing concepts, or meaning of a word – or rather, that aspect of its meaning which Saussure called the 'signifié' (that aspect of meaning which is wholly internal to the language-system; its sense, rather than its reference or denotation: is the product of the semantic relations which hold between that word and others in the same language-system. To invoke the traditional philosophical distinction between essence and existence, it derives not only its essence (what it is), but also its existence, it derives not only its essence (what it is), but also its existence (the fact that it is) from the relational structure that is imposed by the language system upon the otherwise unstructured substance of thought. Similarly, what Saussure calls the 'signifiant' of a word – its phonological shape, as it were – results ultimately from the network of contrasts and equivalences that a particular language-system imposes upon the continuum of sound.

We need proceed no further with our investigation of Saussurean structuralism as such. What has just been said is no doubt difficult to comprehend when it is formulated in such general terms, as it has been here. It should be comprehensible, however, as far as the imposition of structure on the substance of sound is concerned, in the light of the distinction drawn earlier between phonetics and phonology . . . Whether we can legitimately talk of the

imposition of structure upon the substance of thought in the same sort of way is, to say the least, problematical.

The Saussurean view of the uniqueness of language-systems and of the relation between structure and substance leads naturally, though by no means inevitably, to the thesis of Linguistic relativity: the thesis that there are no universal properties of human languages (other than such very general semiotic properties as arbitrariness, productivity, duality and discreteness: the thesis that every language is, as it were, a law unto itself. Any movement or attitude in linguistics which accepts this point of view may be referred to conveniently, as relativism and contrasted with universalism. Relativism, in a stronger or weaker form, has been associated with most kinds of twentieth-century structuralism. In part, it can be seen as a methodologically healthy reaction to the tendency to describe the indigenous languages of the New World in terms of the categories of Western traditional grammar. But relativism has also been defended by its proponents, in association with structuralism, in the more controversial context of the discussion of such traditional philosophical issues as the relation between language and mind and the role played by language in the acquisition and representation of knowledge. Both philosophical and methodological relativism have been rejected, by Chomsky and his followers, as we shall see, in their formulation of the principles of generativism. What needs to be emphasized here is the fact that, although there is a strong historical connection between structuralism and relativism, there have been many structuralists – notably Roman Jakobson and other members of the Prague School – who never accepted the more extreme forms of relativism. This holds not only within linguistics, but also in other disciplines, such as social anthropology, in which structuralism has been an important twentieth-century influence.

We cannot go into the relation between structural linguistics and structuralism in other fields of investigation. It must be appreciated, however, that structuralism is very much an interdisciplinary movement. Saussurean structuralism, in particular, has been a powerful force in the development of a characteristically French approach to semiotics (or semiology) and its application to literary criticism, on the one hand, and to the analysis of society and culture, on the other. Taking 'structuralism' in a more general sense, we can say, as the philosopher Ernst Cassirer did in 1945: "Structuralism is no isolated phenomenon; it is, rather, the expression of a general tendency of thought that, in

these last decades, has become more and more prominent in almost all fields of scientific research". What characterizes structuralism, in this more general sense, is a greater concern with the relations which hold among entities than with the entities themselves. There is a natural affinity, in this respect, between structuralism and mathematics; and one of the criticisms most commonly made of structuralism is that it exaggerates the orderliness, elegance and generality of the relational patterns in the data that it investigates.

Some modern schools and movements

FUNCTIONALISM

The terms 'functionalism' and 'structuralism' are often employed in anthropology and sociology to refer to contrasting theories or methods of analysis. In linguistics, however, functionalism is best seen as a particular movement within structuralism. It is characterized by the belief that the phonological, grammatical and semantic structure of languages is determined by the functions that they have to perform in the societies in which they operate. The best-known representatives of functionalism, in this sense of the term, are the members of the Prague School, which had its origin in the Prague Linguistic Circle, founded in 1926 and particularly influential in European linguistics in the period preceding the Second World War. Not all the members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, incidentally, were based in Prague; nor were they all Czech. Two of its most influential members Roman Jakobson and Nikolaj, Trubetzkoy, were émigré Russian, the former teaching in Brno and the latter in Vienna. From 1928, when the Prague School manifesto (as one might call it) was presented to the First International Congress of Linguists held at The Hague, scholars from many other European countries began to associate themselves, more or less closely, with the movement. The Prague School has always acknowledged its debt to Saussurean structuralism, although it has tended to reject Saussure's point of view on certain issues, especially on the sharpness of the distinction between synchronic and diachronic linguistics and on the homogeneity of the language-system.

It was in phonology that the Prague School first made its impact. In fact, the notion of functional contrast, which was invoked above in drawing the distinction between phonetics and phonology, is essentially that of Trubetzkoy, whose concept of distinctive features, as modified by Jakobson and later by Halle

(working in collaboration with Chomsky), has been incorporated within the theory of generative phonology (cf.3.5). But the distinctive function of phonetic features is only one kind of linguistically relevant function recognized by Trubetzkoy and his followers. Also to be noted are demarcative function, on the one hand, and expressive function, on the other.

Many of the suprasegmental features referred to above—stress, tone, length, etc. (cf. 3.5) – have a demarcative, rather than a distinctive, function in particular language-systems: they are what Trubetzkoy called boundary-signals (*Grenzsignale*). They do not serve to distinguish one form from another on the substitutional (or, in Saussurean terms, paradigmatic) dimension of contrast; they reinforce the phonological cohesion of forms and help to identify them syntagmatically as units by marking the boundary between one form and another in the chain of speech. For example, in many languages, including English, there is no more than one primary stress associated with each word-form; its position is only partly predictable, its association with one syllable rather than another does not identify word-boundaries quite so clearly as it does in languages (such as Polish, Czech or Finnish) with so-called fixed stress. Nevertheless, word-stress does have an important demarcative function in English. So too does the occurrence of particular sequences of phonemes. For example, /h/ rarely occurs in English (otherwise than in proper names) except at the beginning of a morpheme, and /n/ never occurs without a following consonant except at the end. The occurrence of either of these phonemes can serve therefore to indicate the position of a morpheme-boundary. It is not just prosodic features that have demarcative function in a language-system; and this is something that phonologists have often failed to appreciate. The fact that not all sequences of phonemes are possible word-forms of a language is of importance for the identification of those forms that do occur in utterances.

By the expressive function of a phonological feature is meant its indication of the speaker's feelings or attitude. For example, word-stress is not distinctive in French; and it does not play a demarcative role, as it does in many languages. There is, however, a particular kind of emphatic pronunciation of the beginning of the word which has an acknowledged expressive function. It is probably true to say that every language puts a rich set of phonological resources at the disposal of its users for the expression of feeling. Unless the notion of linguistic meaning is restricted to that which is relevant to the making of true and false

statement, it is surely right to treat the expressive function of language on equal terms with its descriptive function.

It is not only in phonology that members of the Prague School demonstrate their functionalism, and more especially their readiness to take full account of the expressive and interpersonal functions of language. From the outset, they have opposed, not only the historicism and positivism of the Neogrammarian approach to language, but also the intellectualism of the pre - nineteenth - century Western philosophical tradition, according to which language is the externalization or expression of thought (and 'thought' is understood to mean propositional thought). Intellectualism, as we shall see, is one of the components of that complex and heterogeneous movement in modern linguistics to which we are giving the label 'generativism'. There is no logical contradiction between functionalism and intellectualism. After all, one might as an intellectualist take the view that the sole or primary function of language is the expression of propositional thought and yet as a functionalist maintain that the structure of language - system is determined their teleological adaptation to this their sole of primary function. In practice, however, not only Prague School, linguists, but also others who have called themselves functionalists, have tended to emphasize the multifunctionality of language and the importance of its expressive, social and conative functions, in contrast with or in addition to its descriptive function.

One of the enduring interests of the Prague School, as far as the grammatical structure of languages is concerned has been functional sentence perspective (to use the term which emphasizes the functionalist motivation of research on this topic). It was pointed out in an earlier chapter that.

(I) This morning he got up late and

(II) He got up late this morning

Might be regarded as different versions of the same sentence or, alternatively, as different sentences. Whichever point of view the adopt, two things are clear,; first, that (I) (2) truth - conditionally equivalent and therefore, on a narrow inter truth - conditionally equivalent and therefore, on a narrow ineterpretation of 'meaning' second that the context in which (i) would be uttered differ systematically from the context in which (2) would be uttered. In so far as word - order is held to be a matter of syntax, we can say that, in some

languages at least, the syntactic structure of utterances (or of sentences, under a definition of 'sentence' which would make (1) and (2) different sentences) is determined by the communicative setting of the utterance, and in particular by what is taken for granted or given as background information and what is presented against this background as being new to the hearer and thus genuinely informative. Considerations of this kind are involved in the definition of what Prague School linguists have called functional sentence perspective. There are differences of terminology and of interpretation which make it difficult to compare the various functionalist treatments of the communicative settings of utterances within a common theoretical framework. What they all share is the conviction that the structure of utterances is determined by the use to which they are put and the communicative context in which they occur.

In general, we can say that functionalism in linguistics has tended to emphasize the instrumental character of language. There is a natural affinity, therefore, between the functionalist view point and that of the sociolinguist or of such philosophers of language as have subordinated language – behavior under the more embracing notion of social interaction. Functionalism is, in this respect and in others, firmly opposed to generativism.

But is it true, as the functionalist maintains, that the structure of natural language is determined by the several interdependent semiotic functions – expressive, social and descriptive – that they fulfil? If it were, there would be in this respect no arbitrariness; and in so far as different language – systems fulfilled the same semiotic functions, they could be expected to be similar, if not identical in structure. Now it is possible that linguists have at times exaggerated the arbitrariness of grammatical processes and have failed to give due weight to functional considerations in the description of particular phenomena. It is also possible that functional explanations will ultimately be found for many facts which at present seem to be quite arbitrary: For example the fact that the adjective regularly precedes the noun in noun phrases in English but usually follows its noun in French; the fact that the verb is put at the end of subordinate clauses in German; and so on. In certain instances it has been noted that the presence of one such apparently arbitrary property in a language tends to imply the presence or absence of another apparently arbitrary property. But so far at least implicational universals of this kind have not been satisfactorily explained in functional terms. It would seem that there is indeed a good deal of

arbitrariness in the non verbal components of language – systems, and more particularly in their grammatical structure (cf.7.4) ; and that functionalism, as defined above, is unfunctionalism, according to which the structure of language systems is partly though not wholly, determined by function are equally untenable. And linguists who call themselves functionalists tend to adopt one of the weaker versions.

GENERATIVISM

The term ‘generativism’ is being used here to refer to the theory of language that has been developed, over the last twenty years or so, by Chomsky and his followers. Generativism, in this sense, has been enormously influential not only in linguistics, but also in philosophy, psychology and other disciplines concerned with languages.

Generativism carries with it a commitment to the usefulness and feasibility of describing human languages by means of generative grammars of one type or another. But there is much more to generativism than this. As has already been pointed out, although a commitment to the tenets of generativism necessarily implies an interest in generative grammar, the converse does not hold true. Indeed, relatively few of the linguists who were impressed by the technical advantages and heuristic value of Chomsky’s system of transformational – generative grammar when he first put this forward in the late 1950s have ever explicitly associated themselves with the body of assumptions and doctrines that is now identifiable as generativism. It is also worth emphasizing that these assumptions and doctrines are, for the most part, logically unconnected. Some of them, as I shall indicate below, are more widely accepted than others. However, the influence of chomskyan generativism upon all modern linguistic theory has been so deep and so pervasive that even those who reject this or that aspect of it tend to do so in terms that Chomsky has made available to them.

Generativism is usually presented as having developed out of, and in reaction to, the previously dominant school of post Bloomfieldian American descriptivism: a particular version of structuralism. Up to a point, it is historically justifiable to see the origin of generativism within linguistics in this light. But, as Chomsky himself came to realize later, there are many respects in which generativism constitutes a return to older and more traditional views about

language. There are others in which generativism simply takes over, without due criticism, features of post Bloomfieldian structuralism which have never found much favour in other schools of linguistics. It is impossible to deal satisfactorily with the historical connections between Chomskyan generativism and the views of his predecessors in this book; and for present purposes, it is unnecessary to attempt to do so I will merely pick out and comment briefly upon, the most important of the recognizably Chomskyan components of present – day generativism.

As was noted in chapter I language – systems are productive, in the sense that they allow for the construction and comprehension of indefinitely many utterances that have never previously occurred in the experience of any of their users. In fact from the assumption that human languages have the property of recursiveness – and this appears to be a valid assumption it follows that the set of potential utterances in any given language is, quite literally, infinite in number. Chomsky drew attention to this fact, in his earliest work, in his criticism of the widely held view that children learn their native language by reproducing, in whole or in part, the utterances of adult speakers. Obviously, if children, from a fairly early age, are able to produce novel utterances which a competent speaker of the language will recognize as grammatically well – formed, there must be something other than imitation involved. They must have inferred, learned, or otherwise acquired the grammatical rules by virtue of which the utterances that they produce are judged to be well – formed. We shall be looking further at the question of language – acquisition. Here, it is sufficient to note that, whether Chomsky is right or wrong about other issues that he has raised in this connection, there can be no doubt that children do not learn language – utterances by rote and then simply reproduce them in response to environmental stimuli.

I have deliberately used the words ‘stimulus’ and ‘response’ at this point. They are key – terms of the school of psychology known as behaviourism, which was very influential in America before and after the Second World War. According to the behaviourists everything that is commonly described as being the product of the human mind – including language – can be satisfactorily accounted for in terms of the reinforcement and conditioning of purely psychological reflexes: ultimately, in terms of habits, or stimulus – response patterns, built up by the same kind of conditioning as that which enables

experimental psychologists to train laboratory rats to run through a maze. Since Bloom field himself had come to accept the principles of behaviourism and had explicitly advocated them as a basis for the scientific study of language in his classic textbook (1935), these principles were widely accepted in America, not only by psychologists, but also by linguists, throughout the so – called post – Bloomfieldian period.

Chomsky has done more than anyone else to demonstrate the sterility of the behaviourists' theory of language. He has pointed out that much of the technical vocabulary of behaviourism (stimulus, 'response' , 'conditioning', 'reinforcement', etc. if taken seriously, cannot be shown to have any relevance to the acquisition and the use of human language. He has shown that the behaviourists' refusal to countenance the existence of anything other than imitation to attempt to do so I will merely pick out and comment briefly upon, the most important of the recognizably Chomskyan components of present – day generativism.

As was noted in chapter I language – systems are productive, in the sense that they allow for the construction and comprehension of indefinitely many utterances that have never previously occurred in the experience of any of their users (cf.I.5). In fact from the assumption that human languages have the property of recursiveness – and this appears to be a valid assumption (cf.4.5) – it follows that the set of potential utterances in any given language is, quite literally, infinite in number. Chomsky drew attention to this fact, in his earliest work, in his criticism of the widely held view that children learn their native language by reproducing, in whole or in part, the utterances of adult speakers. Obviously, if children, from a fairly early age, are able to produce novel utterances which a competent speaker of the language will recognize as grammatically well – formed, there must be something other than imitation involved. They must have inferred, learned, or otherwise acquired the grammatical rules by virtue of which the utterances that they produce are judged to be well – formed. We shall be looking further at the question of language – acquisition in a later chapter (cf.8.4) Here, it is sufficient to note that, whether Chomsky is right or wrong about other issues that he has raised in this connection, there can be no doubt that children do not learn language – utterances by rote and then simply reproduce them in response to environmental stimuli.

I have deliberately used the words 'stimulus' and 'response' at this point. They are key – terms of the school of psychology known as behaviourism, which was very influential in America before and after the Second World War. According to the behaviourists everything that is commonly described as being the product of the human mind – including language – can be satisfactorily accounted for in terms of the reinforcement and conditioning of purely psychological reflexes: ultimately, in terms of habits, or stimulus – response patterns, built up by the same kind of conditioning as that which enables experimental psychologists to train laboratory rats to run through a maze. Since Bloomfield himself had come to accept the principles of behaviourism and had explicitly advocated them as a basis for the scientific study of language in his classic textbook (1935), these principles were widely accepted in America, not only by psychologists, but also by linguists, throughout the so – called post – Bloomfieldian period.

Chomsky has done more than anyone else to demonstrate the sterility of the behaviourists' theory of language. He has pointed out that much of the technical vocabulary of behaviourism (stimulus, 'response', 'conditioning', 'reinforcement', etc. if taken seriously, cannot be shown to have any relevance to the acquisition and the use of human language. He has shown that the behaviourists' refusal to countenance the existence of anything other than the diversity of languages (as did the majority of post Saussurean structuralists : cf.7.2). Generativists, in contrast are more interested in what languages have in common. In this respect generativism represents a return to the older tradition of universal grammar – as exemplified. Most notably by the Port - Royal grammar of 1660 and a large number of eighteenth – century treatises on language – which both Bloomfield and Saussure condemned as speculative and unscientific. But Chomsky's position is interestingly different from that of his predecessors in the same tradition. Whereas they tended to deduce the essential properties of language from what they held to be the universally valid categories of logic or properties of language as cannot be so accounted for : in short, with what is universal, but arbitrary (cf.1.5) . Another difference is that he attaches more importance to the formal properties of languages and to the nature of the rules that their description requires than he does to the relations that hold between language and the world.

The reason for this change of emphasis is that Chomsky is looking for evidence to support his view that the human language – faculty is innate and species – specific. i.e. genetically transmitted and unique to the species. Any universal property of language that can be accounted for in terms of its functional utility or its reflection of the structure of the physical world or of the categories of logic can be discounted from this point of view. According to Chomsky, there are several complex formal properties which are found in all languages, and yet are arbitrary in the sense that they serve no known purpose and cannot be deduced from anything else that we know of human beings or of the world in which they live.

Whether there are indeed such universal formal properties in language, of the kind that the generativists have postulated, is as yet uncertain. But the search for them and the attempt to construct a general theory of language – structure within which they would find their place has been responsible for some of the most interesting work in both theoretical and descriptive linguistics in recent years. And many of the results that have been obtained are independently valuable, regardless of whether they lend support to Chomsky’s hypothesis about the innateness and species – specificity of the language – faculty or not.

A further difference between generativism and Bloomfieldian and post – Bloomfieldian structuralism – though in this respect generativism is closer to Sussurean structuralism – relates to the distinction that Chomsky draw between competence and performance. A speaker’s linguistic competence is that part of his knowledge – his – knowledge of the language – system as such – by virtue of which he is able to produce the indefinitely large set of sentences that constitutes his language (in Chomsky’s definition of a language as a set of sentences : cf 2.6). Performance, on the other hand, is language – behavior ; and this is said to be determined , not only by the speaker’s linguistic competence , but also by a variety of non- linguistic factors including, on the one hand, social conventions, beliefs about the world, the speaker’s emotional attitudes towards what he is saying, his assumption about his interlocutor’s attitudes, etc. and on the other hand, the operation of the psychological and physiological mechanisms involved in the production of utterances.

The competence – performance distinction, thus drawn, is at the very heart of generativism. As presented in recent years, it relates to mentalism and

universalism in the following way. A speaker's linguistic competence is a set of rules which he has constructed in his mind by virtue of his application of his innate capacity for language – acquisition to the language – data that he has heard around him in childhood. The grammar that the linguist constructs for the language – system in question can be seen as a model of the native speaker's competence. To the extent that it successfully models such properties of linguistic competence as the ability to produce and understand an indefinitely large number of sentences, it will serve as a model of one of the faculties, or organs, of the mind. To the extent that the theory of generative grammar can identify, and construct a model for, that part of linguistic competence which, being universal (and arbitrary) is held to be innate, it can be regarded as falling within the province of cognitive psychology and as making its own unique contribution to the study of man. It is of course, this aspect of generativism, with its reinterpretation and revitalization of the traditional notion of universal grammar, which has excited the attention of psychologists and philosophers.

The distinction between competence and performance, as drawn by Chomsky, is similar to Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*. Both of them rest upon the feasibility of separating what is linguistic from what is non-linguistic; and they both subscribe to the fiction of the homogeneity of the language – system (cf.I.6). As for the differences between the two distinctions, it is arguable that Saussure's has less of a psychological slant to it than Chomsky's; though Saussure himself is far from clear on this point, many of his followers have taken the language – system to be something quite abstract and other than even the idealized speaker's knowledge of it. A more clearly identifiable difference has to do with the role that is assigned to the rules of syntax. Saussure gives the impression that the sentences of a language are instances of *parole*; both he and his followers talk of a *langue* as a system of relations and say little or nothing about the rules that are required to generate sentences. Chomsky, on the other hand, has insisted from the out-set that the capacity to produce and understand syntactically well – formed sentences is a central part – indeed, the central part – of a speaker's linguistic competence. In this respect, Chomskyan generativism undoubtedly constitutes an advance upon Saussurean structuralism.

Chomsky's competence – performance distinction has come in for a lot of criticism. Some of this has to do with the validity of what I have called the fiction

of homogeneity: for languages, this line of criticism may be discounted. With the same proviso we may also discount the criticism that Chomsky draw too sharp a distinction between linguistic competence and the other kinds of knowledge and cognitive ability that are involved in the use of language as far as grammatical and phonological structure is concerned. Semantic analysis is more problematical. At the same time it must be recognized that the terms 'competence' and 'performance' are inappropriate and misleading as far as the distinction between what is linguistic and what is non-linguistic is concerned. Granted that language - behavior, in so far as it is systematic, presupposes various kinds of cognitive ability, or competence, and that one kind is the speaker's knowledge of the rules and vocabulary of the language - system it is confusing, to say the least, to restrict the term 'competence', as Chomskyan generativists do, to what is assumed to pertain to the language - system, lumping everything else under the catch - all term 'performance'. It would have been preferable to talk about linguistic and non-linguistic competence, on the one hand, and about performance, or actual language - behavior, on the other. And it is worth noting that in his most recent work Chomsky himself distinguishes grammatical competence from what he calls pragmatic competence.

By far the most controversial aspects of generativism are its association with mentalism and its reassertion of the traditional philosophical doctrine of innate knowledge. As far as the more narrowly linguistic part of generativism is concerned (the microlinguistic part there is also much that is controversial. But most of this it shares with post - Bloomfieldian structuralism - out of which it emerged, or with other schools of linguistics, including Saussurean structuralism and the Prague School, with which, in one respect or another, it has now associated itself. For example, it continues the post - Bloomfieldian tradition in syntax, by making the morpheme the basic unit of analysis and by attaching more importance to constituency - relations than it does to dependency. Its commitment to the autonomy of syntax (i.e. to the view that the syntactic structure of languages can be described without recourse to semantic considerations) may also be attributed to its post - Bloomfieldian heritage, though many other linguists, outside the post - Bloomfieldian tradition, have taken the same view. As we have seen, Chomskyan generativism is closer to Saussurean, and post - Saussurean, structuralism on the necessity of drawing a distinction between the language - system and the use of that system in particular contexts of utterance. It is also closer to Saussurean structuralism and

some of its European developments in its attitude towards semantics. Finally, it has drawn heavily upon Prague School notions in phonology without however accepting the principles of functionalism. Generativism is all too often presented as an integrated whole in which the technical details of formalization are on a par with a number of logically unconnected ideas about language and the philosophy of science. These need to be disentangled and evaluated on their merits.

FURTHER READING.

On the recent history of linguistics: Ivic (1965); Leroy (1963) ; Malmberg (1964); Mohrmann, Sommerfelt & Whatmough (1961) ; Norman & Sommerfelt (1963) ; Robins (1979b).

On Saussurean and post – Saussurean structuralism: additionally Culler (1976) ; Ehrmann (1970); Hawkes (1977) ; Lane (1970); Lepschy (1970). For those who read French, Sanders (1979) provides an excellent introduction to Saussure's Cours, and to the more specialized critical editions and commentaries.

On Prague School structuralism and functionalism : additionally Garvin (1964) ; Jakobson (1973) ; Vachek (1964,1966). See also Halliday (1970,1976) for a partly independent approach.

On Chomskyan generativism, the literature both popular and scholarly is by now immense. Much of it is controversial, misleading or outdated. Lyons (1977a) will serve as a relatively straightforward introduction to Chomsky's own views and writings, and provides a bibliography and suggestions for further reading. To the works listed there, one may now add : Matthews (1979), a lively critique of the central tenets of generativism; Piattelli – Palmarini (1979), which is particularly interesting for Chomsky's own comments on the biological and psychological aspects of generativism; Sampson (1980), which develops and in part modifies Sampson (1975) ; Smith & Wilson (1979), a spirited and readable account of linguistics from a Chomskyan point of view. Chomsky's own most recent publications have tended to be rather technical, but Chomsky (1979) will bring the reader more or less up to date.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What is historicism? How does it differ from evolutionism? What role have they both played in the formation of twentieth – century linguistics?
2. What do you take to be the most important features of Saussuran structuralism?
3. Distinguish clearly between ‘structuralism’ in its more general sense and in the sense in which it is opposed to ‘generativism’.
4. “structuralism is based, in the first instance, on the realization that if human actions or productions have a meaning there must be an underlying system of conventions which make this meaning possible” (Culler , 1973 : 21-2). Discuss.
5. Explain what is meant by functionalism in linguistics with particular reference to the work of the Prague School.
6. “Chomsky has done more than anyone else to demonstrate the sterility of the behaviourists’ theory of language “. (p.230). Discuss
7. “The term ‘deep structure’ has, unfortunately, proved to be very misleading. It has led a number of people to suppose that it is the deep structures and their properties that are truly ‘deep’ in the non – technical sense of the word, while the rest is superficial, unimportant, variable across languages, and so on. This was never intended “(Chomsky, 1976: 82) How did Chomsky draw the deep/surface distinction in Aspects (1965)? What is its status today in Chomsky;s own work and that of other generativists?
8. Why does Chomsky attach so much importance to the notion of formal universals?
9. “There is far less difference between Bloomfield’s and chomsky’s views of the nature and scope of linguistics than one might expect” (p231). Discuss.
10. “We have plenty of our own problems to mind. And if we mind those we will rediscover the genuine virtues of generative grammar, as one technique of linguistic description, which is especially appropriate for syntax, and not as a model of competence “ (Matthews , 1979:106). Is this fair comment? Do the author’s arguments justify his conclusions?

MODULE -IV

SEMANTICS

Linguistic change was broadly classified under two heads the Phonetic change and Semantic change. We have so far dealt with the first and now we proceed to deal with Semantic change Semantics is a branch of linguistics which had a comparatively recent development. People of all times have noticed the fact that the meaning of all words changed in course of time , but a serious and scientific study of the branch was first undertaken by the French scholar Breal, and since then many scholars of repute have devoted much time and thought on this subject. While the phonetic changes could be explained by formulating laws and giving a number of examples by a comparative study of languages, the semantic changes cannot be explained so well for want of information regarding the exact meaning in which the words were used in the early periods. Even Yaska, the great Etymologist has expressed the difficulty in explaining the meaning of many Vedic words, Moreover, the poets and writers to express their ideas for which they find there are no separate appropriate words . The readers too, not knowing the exact meaning in which the words are used , interpret them differently.

It is obvious that the human mind is the principal factor in the change of meaning and hence it is no possible to predict the way in which the meaning of a word may change, But, after the change has taken place , it is possible to explain it and classify the change into various types.

It is worth nothing that Sanskrit Grammarians and Philosophers have played an important part from very early period in the sphere of speculations on semantics . The three great Indian system of thought *Nyaya*, *Vyakarana*, and *Mimamsa* have contributed much for the study of meaning. The various principles laid down by them such as *Abhida*, *Lakshna*, *Tatpariyam* etc. are scientific and largely.

CLASSIFICATION OF SEMANTIC CHANGES

Modern Philologist to accept the four fold division of *Sabda*, *as Rudha*, *Yougiga* and *Yogarudha* as based on proper Philosophical thinking on language.

According to Tucker, all semantic changes can be broadly classified under three heads:-

- I. Specialisation-Narrowing or Contraction of meaning
- II. Generalisation- Widening or expansion of meaning
- III. Transference- Shifting of meaning

I. SPECIALISATION

Here a word having a general and wide significance comes to be restricted to a certain special aspect while another word is used for the original significance. Example of this type are naturally numerous because, a general word is more often used in a special sense than a special word in general sense e.g.

	<u>Words</u>	<u>Original general meaning</u>	<u>Special meaning</u>
Skt.	Mata	Atmosphere	mother
	Sakuna	flight of birds	omen
	Pankaja	mud-born	lotus
	Mrga	animal	deer
	Vacaniya	speech-worthy	censurable
	Vidhva	cheated women	widow
Eng.	Voyage	journey	sea-journey
	Meat	food	flesh food
	Ghost	life	sprit of the dead

It may be noted the specialization of *pankaja* , *mrga*, *vidhva* etc are the examples of *nirudha lakshna*.

II. GENARALIZATION

Here a word having a special sense becomes to be used in wider sense e.g.

	<u>Words</u>	<u>Original general meaning</u>	<u>Wider meaning</u>
Skt.	Mantra	a Vedic passage	a mystic formula
	Kusala	grass cutter	clever or skilled
	Taila	oil of sesame	oil in general
	Darsana	sight or seeing	philosophy
	Gavesana	searching a cow	research
Eng.	Lady	aristocratic woman	a woman in general
	Book	bark or tablet	book

A careful examination of above words would show that they are mostly examples of *gounivrti*, a variety of *lakshna*.

III. TRANSFERENCE

Owing to association of ideas , it often happens that a secondary sense attaches itself to a word and that a secondary sense itself to comes to be regarded as the primary sense.

	<u>Words</u>	<u>Original general meaning</u>	<u>Transferred sense</u>
Skt.	Gramya	rural	vulgar
	Kaviih	learned man	poet
	Asura	god	demon
Eng.	Wit	knowledge	humor
	Knave	boy	rouge

OTHER DIVISION OF SEMANTIC CHANGE

The two other types of semantic changes like Pejoration and Elevation are also mentioned here:

I. PEJORATION

This denotes two kinds of semantic changes- 1.Deterioration in the sense of a word and 2. Veiled expression of what is disagreeable or repulsive.

1. Examples of Deterioration of meaning

<u>Words</u>	<u>Original meaning</u>	<u>Deteriorated meaning</u>
Devanam priya	beloved of gods	fool
Bhramabantu	kinsman of Brahmin	unworthy Brahmin
Punyajana	righteous man	a demon
Devedasi	a woman in the service of god	a courtesan
Asura	God	demon

2. Examples of Veiled Expression

<u>Direct Expression</u>	<u>Veiled Expression</u>
Mrth: panchatvam	gath: attained the five elements
Paralokam	gath: went to the other world
Died	passed away

II. ELEVATION

Elevation is attaching a dignified meaning to word e.g. The word *palaka* which is originally meant the protector of cows was later on used in the elevated sense of the protector of earth; ie the king. The use of word soma which originally meant a creeper used for sacrifice, to denote the moon or Siva associated with Parvathi (*umaya sah: vartate iti somh:*) is also an example of Elevation. The word Gopala to denote Lord Krishna is another example of elevation.
