Mohamed Khider University, Biskra
Faculty of Arts and Languages
Course: linguistics
Level: second year

Department of English
Semester One
Teacher: Dr. SAIHI H.

Unit two: Modern linguistics (European structuralism)

Lesson 04: introduction to Modern Linguistics

Modern linguistics began to develop in the 18th century with work almost entirely centering around Indo-European studies and leading to a highly elaborate and consistent reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European language. The first half of the 20th century was marked by the structuralist school, based on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure in Europe and Edward Sapir and Leonard Bloomfield in the United States. The 1960s saw the rise of many new fields in linguistics, such as Noam Chomsky's generative grammar, William Labov's sociolinguistics, Michael Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and also modern psycholinguistics.

1. Historical linguistics

During the 18th century, linguistics was based on linguistics and anthropology. In his The Sanscrit Language (1786), Sir William Jones proposed that Sanskrit and Persian had resemblances to Classical Greek, Latin, Gothic, and Celtic languages. From this idea sprung the field of comparative linguistics and historical linguistics. Through the 19th century, European linguistics centered on the comparative history of the Indo-European languages.

2. Structuralism

In Europe there was a development of structural linguistics, initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss professor of Indo-European and general linguistics, whose lectures on general linguistics, published posthumously by his students, set the direction of European linguistic analysis from the 1920s on; his approach has been widely

3. Descriptive linguistics

During World War II, North American linguists Leonard Bloomfield, William Mandeville Austin and several of his students and colleagues developed teaching materials for a variety of languages whose knowledge was needed for the war effort. This work led to an increasing prominence of the field of

4. Generative linguistics

It is a school of thought within linguistics that makes use of the concept of a generative grammar. The term 'generative' is a concept borrowed from mathematics, indicating a set of definitions rather than a system that creates something. It is most closely associated with the work of Noam Chomsky.

5. Functionalism

Functional theories of language propose that since language is fundamentally a tool, it is reasonable to assume that its structures are best analyzed and understood with reference to the functions they carry out. This means that functional theories of grammar tend to pay attention to the way language is actually used, and not just to the formal relations between linguistic elements.

Functional theories then describe language in term of functions existing on all levels of language.

- Phonological function   Semantic function   Syntactic functions   Pragmatic functions

6. Cognitive linguistics

In the 1970s and 1980s, a new school of thought known as cognitive linguistics emerged as a reaction to generativist theory. Led by theorists such as Ronald Langacker and George Lakoff, linguists working within the realm of cognitive linguistics propose that language is an emergent property of basic, general-purpose cognitive processes.

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Lesson 05: Emergence of European Structural linguistics (GENEVA SCHOOL)

STRUCTURAL LINGUISTICS IS an approach to <u>LINGUISTICS</u> which treats language as an interwoven structure, in which every item acquires identity and validity only in relation to the other items in the system. All linguistics in the 20c is structural in this sense, as opposed to much work in the 19c, when it was common to trace the history of individual words. Structuralism attempted to lay down a rigorous methodology for the analysis of any language.

In Europe, Saussure influenced:

(1) the Geneva School of Albert Sechehaye and Charles Bally,

(2) the Prague School of Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy, whose work would prove hugely influential,

　　particularly concerning phonology,

(3) the Copenhagen School of Louis Hjelmslev, and

(4) the Paris School of Algirdas Julien Greimas. Structural linguistics also had an influence on other

　　disciplines in Europe, including anthropology, psychoanalysis and Marxism, bringing about the movement

　　known as structuralism

FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE

- **Structural linguistics** was depicted by Swiss linguist **Ferdinand de Saussure.**

- Saussure's most influential work, *Course in General Linguistics* (*Cours de linguistique générale*), was published posthumously in 1916 by former students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye on the basis of notes taken from Saussure's lectures at the University of Geneva.

- The course stressed examining language as a static system of interconnected units. He is thus known as **<u>a father of modern linguistics.</u>**

Synchronic vesrus diachronic one	The semiotic theory: 'Signifier' and 'signifiant'	Langage, langue and parole	Descriptive vs prescriptive study of language	Paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations of language

Some concepts proposed by de Saussure (dichotomies)

1. Saussure's Approach (Dichotomies)

Synchronic versus Diachronic	
Synchronic: the description of a language at a particular point or period in time **E.g** the modern system of modern English	**Diachronic**: the documentation and explanation of linguistic change E.g. . the change in sound system of English from old English to modern English

signifier versus signified	
Signifier The linguistic sign, according to de Saussure, consists of two inseparable parts: a sound sequence, called **signifier** (French *signifiant*),	**signified** a concept, called **signified** (French *signifié*) The **signified** is what these visible/audible aspects mean to us.

The association between the two parts of a linguistic sign, is **arbitrary**, but **conventional**.

Langage, Langue and Parole		
Langage: Language in general - The most abstract concept of means of communication using verbal signs, both in written and spoken form. - This concept doesn't refer to any particular languages in the world. The ideal form of language. Human's possession	**Langue** : A particular language - The system of language, that is the arrangement of sounds and words which speakers of a language have a shared language of or 'agree to use' • Referring to any particular languages, such as Bahasa Indonesia, English, French, Javanese etc. • Language as social possession • The most significant concept because the use of **langue** always relates to particular societies.	**Parole** : The language of an individual The actual use of language by people in speech or writing The language of an individual Examples: my language, yours, somebody else's

Descriptive grammar vs. Prescriptive grammar	
Descriptive grammar: the systematic study and description of a language. Descriptive grammar refers to the structure of a language as it is actually used by speakers and writers.	**Prescriptive grammar**: a set of rules and examples dealing with the syntax and word structures of a language, usually intended as an aid to the learning of that language. Prescriptive grammar refers to the structure of a language as certain people think it *should be* used. (Khedr, 2014)

Syntagmatic vs. paradigmatic relations	
Syntagmatic relation is a type of sematic relations between words that co-occur in the same sentence or text (Asher, 1994).	**Paradigmatic relation** is a different type of sematic relations between words that can be substituted with another word in the same categories (Hj⊘rland, 2014).

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Lesson 06 : PRAGUE SCHOOL

School of linguistic thought and analysis established in Prague in the 1920s by VILÉM MATHESIUS. It included among its most prominent members the Russian linguist Nikolay Trubetskoy and the Russian-born American linguist Roman Jakobson; the school was most active during the 1920s and '30s.

Prince Nikolay Sergeyevich Trubetzkoy 1890-1938 • Roman Jakobson 1896-1982

Basic concepts of the Prague school

1. Combination of structuralism and functionalism

Prague school approach is a combination of structuralism with functionalism. The latter term (like "structuralism") has been used in a variety of senses in linguistics. It is the diversity of functions fulfilled by language and a theoretical recognition that the structure of languages is in large part determined by their characteristic functions. Functionalism, taken in this sense, manifests itself in many of the more particular tenets of Prague school doctrine.

2. Phonological contributions (distinctive-feature analysis of sounds)

The Prague school was best known for its work on phonology. Unlike the American phonologists, Trubetskoy and his followers did not take the phoneme to be the minimal unit of analysis. Instead, they defined phonemes as sets of distinctive features. For example, in English, /b/ differs from /p/ in the same way that /d/ differs from /t/ and /ɡ/ from /k/.

3. Theory of markedness

The notion of markedness was first developed in Prague school phonology but was subsequently extended to morphology and syntax. When two phonemes are distinguished by the presence or absence of a single distinctive feature, one of them is said to be **marked** and the other unmarked for the feature in question. For example, /b/ is marked and /p/ unmarked with respect to voicing. Similarly, in morphology, the regular English verb can be said to be marked for past tense (by the suffixation of -*ed*) but to be unmarked in the present (*compare* "jumped" versus "jump").

Later contributions (postwar Prague school)

- **Theme** and **rheme:**

By the **theme** of a sentence is meant that part that refers to what is already known or given in the context (sometimes called, by other scholars, the topic or psychological subject); by the **rheme**, the part that conveys new information (the comment or psychological predicate).

- **Functional sentence perspective & communicative dynamism**

The first one is the syntactic structure of a sentence which is in part determined by the communicative function of its various constituents and the way in which they relate to the context of utterance.
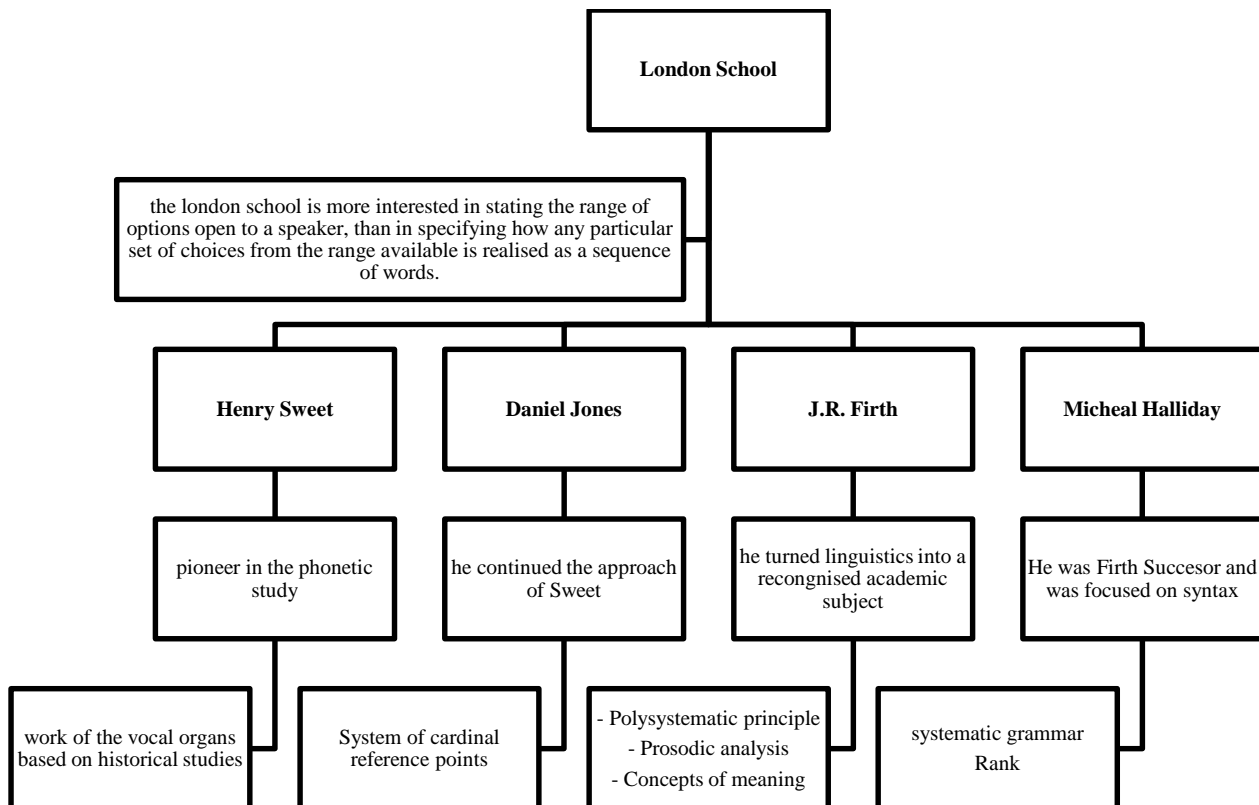
Lesson 07: London School of Linguistics
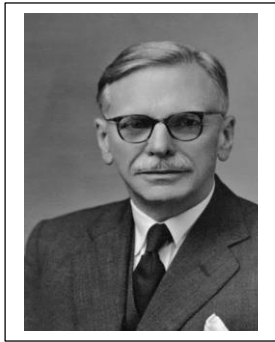
The London School of Linguistics is involved with the study of language on the descriptive plane (synchrony), the distinguishing of structural (syntagmatics) and systemic (paradigmatics) concepts, and the social aspects of language. Semantics is in the forefront.

The approach to language advocated by J.R. Firth during the 1950s. is now known as the **London School of linguistics**. Long before the distinction between semantics and pragmatics had been established, **Firth** argued for the primacy of the context of situation in the communication of meanings.

The school's primary contribution to linguistics has been the situational theory of meaning in semantics (the dependence of the meaning of a linguistic unit on its use in a standard context by a definite person; functional variations in speech are distinguished on the basis of typical contexts) and the prosodic analysis in phonology (the consideration of the phenomena accruing to a sound: the number and nature of syllables, the character of sound sequences, morpheme boundaries, stress, and so on).

London School

the london school is more interested in stating the range of options open to a speaker, than in specifying how any particular set of choices from the range available is realised as a sequence of words.

Henry Sweet	Daniel Jones	J.R. Firth	Micheal Halliday
pioneer in the phonetic study	he continued the approach of Sweet	he turned linguistics into a recongnised academic subject	He was Firth Succesor and was focused on syntax
work of the vocal organs based on historical studies	System of cardinal reference points	- Polysystematic principle - Prosodic analysis - Concepts of meaning	systematic grammar Rank

Lesson 08: COPENHAGEN SCHOOL

The Copenhagen School was a centre of structural linguistics founded by Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965) and Viggo Brøndal (1887-1942). The school was one of the most important centres of structuralism together with the Geneva School and the <u>Prague School</u>.

source : http://linguistic-theoryii.blogspot.com/2012/03/

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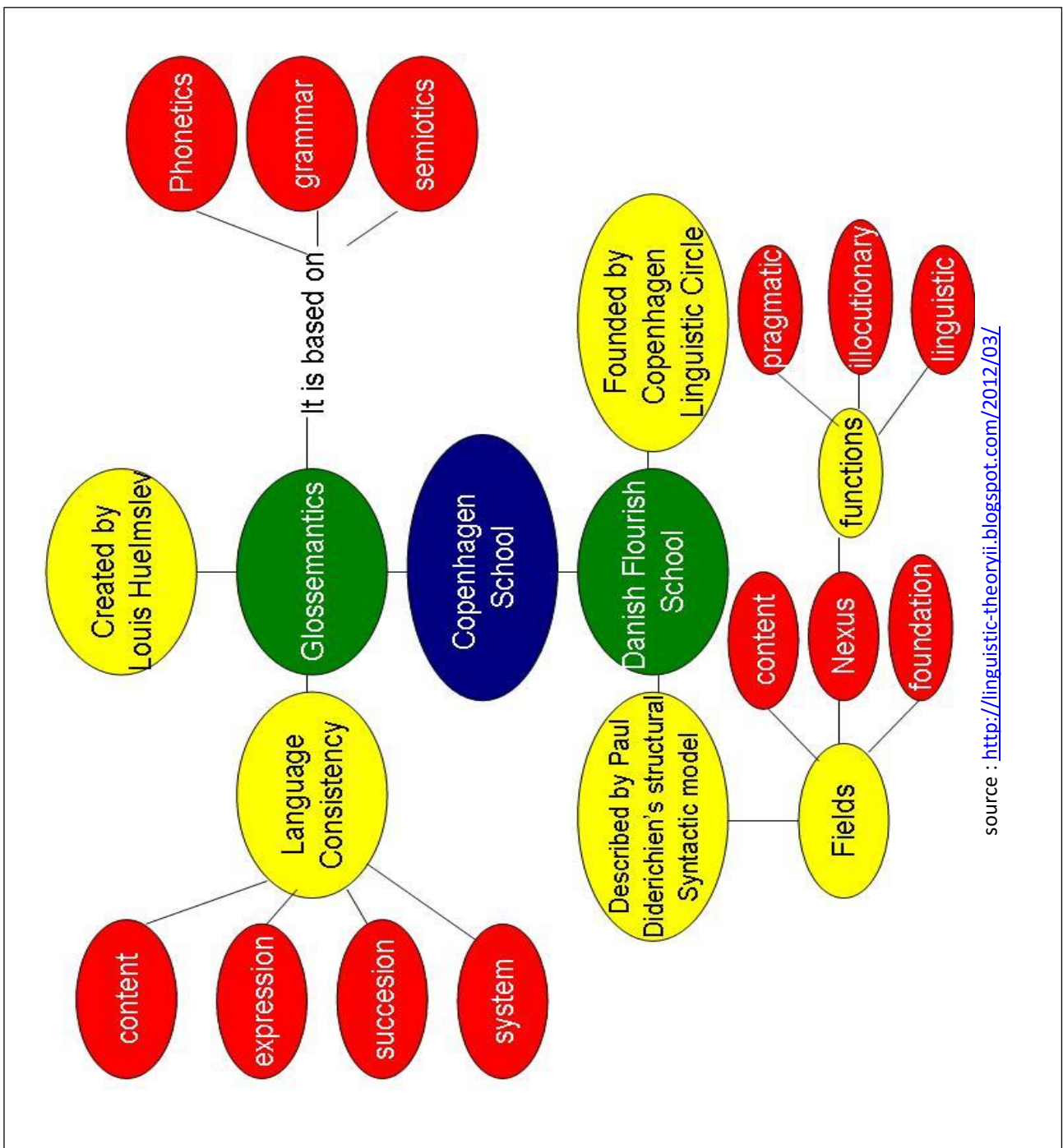
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- Brown, R. (1973) A First Language: The Early Stages, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Other links

- https://www.britannica.com/science/linguistics

- http://www.hbcse.tifr.res.in/jrmcont/notespart1/node99.html