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A Course of Linguistics for Students of English Language Education



f. Dr. Susilo, S.Pd, M.Pd

Preface

This book contains a brief history of linguistics, schools and theories of linguistics, branches of linguistics, and linguistics in relation to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The reason which triggers the author to write this book is the fact that students of English Language Education need a short, but clear explanation about linguistics especially dealing with some aspects which are close to language teaching. Especially for students who are still in the beginning semesters, they need books which were written in a very simple language so that they can easily digest the materials. In the curriculum of English Language Education, the substances of linguistics are very often offered in limited courses so that students need more time to read more materials on linguistics independently.

This book, which is designed for the students in English Language Education, addresses brief, but complete ideas on linguistics. The languages used in this book are easy to digest for such students and in every chapter of this book is given learning activities where the students can answer the given questions with the help of a glossary list, so that the students can easily learn linguistics by themselves after reading this book.

A Course Of Linguistics For Students Of English Language Education

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Susilo

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Chapter 1

Linguistic As A Science: The Scope And The History

As a science, Linguistics is the inquiry of the human language. The scope of this study includes all aspects of language, such as its physical forms (phones, morphs, syntax, etc.), meaning aspect (semantics, pragmatics), functional aspects (discourse analysis), and so on. In a very simple understanding, it is a scientific major or a discipline in which language is the subject matter. Language in this sense is the human language.

Every human language can be discussed from a start of talking about the very small unit of sound called 'phoneme'. Phoneme constructs the small unit of meaningful form, namely, morph. Morph is composed in such a way according to its own rules to become grammatical words,

clauses, sentences and so on. However, all those things are still not enough to be called language. It needs other aspects, such as stress, intonation, juncture, and so on. All aspects of language are combined to strengthen the system of language functioned as a means of communication. So, language is highly elaborated as a complex system. Therefore, linguists define features of human language to make it different from animal language. At least the following five features as a matter of fact distinguish human language from languages of animals.

Duality

Human language is formed by two levels, namely: speech production - physical level- and meaning production. Human being can say utterances by combining discrete sounds to create a number of meanings in the forms of any words.

Productivity

Human being has creativity in producing speech. There is infinite number of utterances which can be made by human being in order that she/he describes the facts. Linguistic resources possessed by human being can be used to describe new situation and objects.

Displacement

Human being in using language can describe any events in the past, at present and in the future. This is a very important property that animals do not have.

Arbitrariness

There is no natural connection between a linguistic form and its meaning. This is what happens in human language. For instance, the word 'chair' does not have any exact relation with the object of 'chair'.

Cultural Transmission

Human beings are born inheriting physical features like black hair, brown eyes, etc., but language is not inherited. Language is learned from generation to generation. In the process of acquiring language, people are also getting cultural transmission to their children.

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By elaborating the five features, human language can be different from any communication in animals. Thus, these features of language are properties only possessed by human beings.

In terms of viewing how language can be analyzed, there are two ways that any linguists from ancient time up to modern era used; that is, language has been viewed in both synchronic and diachronic ways. Synchronic way is a view which says language is studied at one particular time. The study of language in this way is focusing on the analysis of language in a single period of time. Modern linguistics after Ferdinand de Saussure is primarily interested in the synchronic view. Diachronic way of seeing language is an analysis of the historical development of a language. Thus, on the diachronic axis the analysis of language can be done going back and forth in time, watching the language with all its features change. Figure 1.1 describes the difference of synchronic and diachronic views.

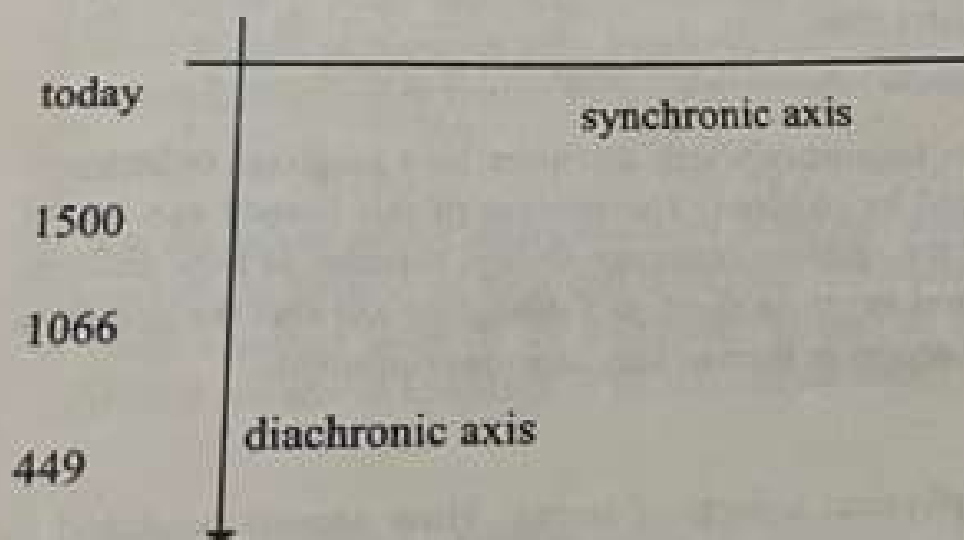


Figure 1.1.: Synchronic and Diachronic views of language

Up to the beginning of the 20th century, linguists were occupied with researches on the history of languages and the roots of words in ancient tongues, that is to say more diachronic researches. But after the new idea of Ferdinand de Saussure, modern linguists changed the analysis into synchronic view.

Linguistics as an independent discipline has various branches. The branches of linguistics can be classified into branches which discuss the

aspects of language, which is said to be cores and those which are more on the analysis of language in relation to other disciplines.

The cores are *phonetics* (a study of speech sound), *phonology* (a study of sound system of a particular language), *morphology* (a study of word formation), *syntax* (a study of sentence construction), *semantics* (a study of traditional meaning) and *pragmatics* (a study of meaning and context); meanwhile, branches that are areas of scientific investigation related to other fields are sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and so on. In detail, the followings are branches of linguistics.

Historical linguistics

It is analysis on the historical development of languages. In this analysis, *diachronic view* is more dominant. Historical linguistics studies the features of Old English, Middle English and Modern English; that is to say English over time.

Language Acquisition

It is a branch of linguistics which discusses how language is firstly or secondly acquired by children. The content of this branch can be the development of the children language ability, theories of how children learn language and so on. In short, this discipline answers the questions of psychological aspect in human language development.

Phonetics

It is a study of physical aspects of sound. How sounds produced by human beings are articulated, transmitted, and received. Therefore, phonetics talks about segmental and supra-segmental phonemes.

Phonology

Phonology is more focusing on the *functions of sounds* within a language. It talks about some rules in the systems of sounds in human language.

Morphology

Morphology is the study of the smallest meaningful elements of a language, called morpheme. It is about word formation.

Syntax

Syntax examines the structure of sentences in the broad sense.

Semantics

Semantics studies the meaning of words and phrases in a language and how they are used in context.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics studies the use of language in different situations and how context affects the meaning of words and phrases.

Psycholinguistics

It is the study of the relationship between language and the mind. It is a branch of psychology that studies how we learn and use language.

Sociolinguistics

It is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society. It is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used in different social contexts and how it changes over time.

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It is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society. It is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used in different social contexts and how it changes over time.

Syntax

Syntax examines sentence structure in language; it is a part of grammar in the broad sense. It is about sentence/clause formation.

Semantics

Semantics studies meaning of language; it focuses on what does X mean in language. It talks about the relation between symbols of language and objects/states of affair refer to.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of speaker's meaning. Different from semantics, pragmatics focuses more on the analysis of meaning in context, situation, and speaker relation.

Psycholinguistics

It is branch of linguistics which examines how language works in relation to human mental states, cognitive, and human development. It is studying language in regard with the study of psychology.

Sociolinguistics

It is a discipline which examines how language interacts with social organization. Several models can determine the variation of language in social contexts both on an individual as well as on a social-group scale. It is a study of language in relation to sociology.

A Brief History of Linguistics

That very basic information about the study of language should be traced by elaborating the historical endeavours to describe human language. That is why firstly it is important to talk about how scholars from ancient civilization to the most modern one presented language study.

The course of time which was seen as the era where scholars perceived language study differently in fact can be classified into the time of 'before' and 'after' Saussurian (i.e. linguistics that was proposed by

Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of modern linguistics). The time 'before' Saussurian was of three periods, namely: Ancient period linguistics, Middle Age, Renaissance, and the time of the late eighteenth and nineteenth Century was the so called 'after Saussurian era' or modern linguistics.

Ancient periods were started by the description of early linguists in several places. In India, the Sanskrit grammar written by Pāṇini (4th century BC) talked more about category such as noun, verb and so on, sentential usage, and phonetic units. The Greeks has already developed alphabet at that time. One of the very popular work is the so called 'homeric poems' which was considered as one of the results of introducing that alphabet system. Other monumental works in Greece were 1) Plato's *Cratylus*, a book presented the naturalistic view which said that word meanings emerge from a natural process, 2) Aristotle's works on Rhetoric and Poetics, and 3) Dialectics as a new text genre, the works of the sophists and Socrates. In Rome, it was in the 4th century that Aelius Donatus compiled the Latin grammar *Art Grammatica* that was to be the defining school text. In China, early thinkers were concerned with the relationship between names and reality, namely Confucius (6th century BCE), and later, Mohists or the group known as School of Names (ming jia, 479-221 BCE), consider that ming (名 "name") may refer to three kinds of shi (實 "actuality"): type universals (horse), individual (John), and unrestricted (thing). All were the dominant works related to linguistics in ancient time. Ancient time means the period before twelfth century since the twelfth century was said as the beginning of the so called 'middle age' period.

All that were made in relation to written texts or thought during the time span from the collapse of Roman Empire to Renaissance and Reformation were designated as 'medieval' or the more popular term 'middle age'. It was the time when the historical, social, and linguistic changes happened despite the continuity of the Roman Catholic Church. In Britain, the linguistic and cultural changes were accelerated by the Norman Conquest in 1066. At that time many people learned Arabic as a lingua franca because of the rapid expansion of Islam in the 8th century. Since then the use of Arabic language flourished

worldwide. It was Sibāwayhi (c. 760- nahw (نحو) was distinguished

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worldwide. It was noted in the history that the Persian linguist Sibawayhi (c. 760-793) wrote a monumental book called "Al-kitab fi al-nahw (كتاب في النحو), or The Book on Grammar) in which phonetics was distinguished from phonology for the first time.

The period after middle age was Renaissance. It was the time span roughly from the 14th to the 17th century, wherein it was found the exotic languages of Africa, the Orient, the New World, and, later, of Siberia, Inner Asia, Papua, Oceania, the Arctic, and Australia. In this time span, it was also showed an intensified interest in linguistics, notably for the purpose of Bible translations by the Jesuits, and this time was related to philosophical speculation on philosophical languages and the origin of language.

Modern linguistics began to develop in the late 18th century and reached its golden age in the 19th century when philology, the branch of linguistics which study about words and the historical development of words, got its popularity among linguists at that time.

The development of linguistics in the 18th century was began by the precursor of biological evolution. It was the deduction from the idea stated by Lord Monboddo who analyzed numerous languages. From this analysis, he introduced the phenomenon of the onomatopoeia - the sounds of animals or birds which become the name of those birds or animal. In addition, Sir William Jones (1786) had an idea that Sanskrit and Persian were similar to classical Greek, Latin, Gothic, and Celtic languages. As the time develops, it appeared the so called 'comparative linguistics' and 'historical linguistics', which later become one of the schools of linguistics. It happened between the late 18th century and the early 19th century. Since then, European linguistics used the comparative history to analyze Indo-European languages which resulted in many families of European languages as elaborated in the tree factor of the Indo-European language family which was very popular in the era of comparative linguistics in Europe. Then in the 1820s, a linguist named 'Wilhelm von Humboldt' made an observation and found that human language was a rule-governed system. This idea later becomes the central of syntax and semantics of language in the 20th century.

The linguistics in the nineteenth century developed following the idea introduced by "Structuralism", an approach which was adopted from the idea of Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss professor of Indo-European. He is considered to be the father of modern linguistics. The half of the 20th century was then fulfilled by the structural linguistics. Prominent structural schools of linguists at that time in the US were Leonard Bloomfield, Edward Sapir, and Benjamin L. Whorf; in Europe, there were Daniel Jones, Bronislaw Malinowski, J.R. Firth, Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (London Schools of Linguistics), Vilém Mathesius, Prince Nikolay Sergeevich Trubetzkoy, Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Karl Bühler (Prague School of Linguistics), Luis Hjelmslev (Copenhagen School of Linguistics). Even later the group of European linguists from Prague school and London school initiated the concept of language function which becomes the embryo of discourse analysis and pragmatics. Discourse analysis and pragmatics later developed after Chomskyan generative grammar declined. The 1960s saw the rise of many new fields in linguistics, such as Noam Chomsky's generative grammar, William Labov's sociolinguistics and also modern psycholinguistics. These idea stands very short, namely between 1950s to 1960s. After the decline of Chomskyan, it appeared the latest generation of modern linguistics, namely Hallidayan or Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) where its development was strongly marked by the flourish of discourse analysis and pragmatics.

From roughly 1980 onwards, Halliday's concept of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was developed by linguists both in the United States and in Europe as grounds of the analysis on language based on the pragmatic, functional, and cognitive approaches. The appearance of relatively new branches of linguistics such as discourse analysis and pragmatics seems to be the start of the paradigm shift in viewing as well as analyzing language done by most linguists at that time. Since then functional analysis of language becomes very popular. In terms of analyzing meaning, pragmatics would be the solution; in the area of syntax, functional grammar and discourse analysis were present there as the best solution, etc.