REVIEW ARTICLE

LINGUISTICS AND LEVELS OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS: A STUDY

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Abstract

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It applies the scientific method to conduct formal studies of speech sounds and gestures, grammatical structures, and meaning of language. It helps to master valuable intellectual skills like analytical reasoning, critical-thinking, argumentation, and the ability to express clearly in writing. Studying linguistics one understands the structures, rules, and manners of how we communicate with words. It facilitates the English teachers to explain the English components and structures to the students. The important sub-fields of linguistics are Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics, that study language on different levels. The paper attempts to study human speech including the components, nature, patterns, structure, and modification of language.

Keywords: Grammatical structures, phonemes, morphemes, modifiers, signifiers, semiotics, lexicology, transmission, etymology, transcription, ambiguity.

Introduction

Linguistics is associated with language form, language meaning, and language in context. In the early 20th century, **Ferdinand de Saussure**, the founding father of modern linguistics, distinguished between the notions of *langue* and *parole* in his formulation of structural linguistics. According to him, *parole* is the specific utterance of speech, whereas *langue* refers to an abstract phenomenon that theoretically defines the principles and system of rules that govern a language. He views language as having an inner duality, which is manifested by the interaction of the synchronic and diachronic, the syntagmatic and associative, and the signifier and signified. Languages are governed by grammatical rules. In the views of Linguist **Noam Chomsky,** the

human brain is set up to understand these rules. He was the best known and the most influential linguist of the second half of the 20th century. He had made a number of strong claims about language. He defines that we are born with a set of rules about language in our heads which he calls Universal Grammar. The theory of Universal Grammar is based on the notion that the grammar of all human language is based on a set of innate principles. He says that the study of language is understanding the character of mental processes i.e. "language is a mirror of mind".

Linguistics has real-world applications that can make a difference in people's lives. Speech recognition technology is an exclusive example of this sort. By the thrilling knowledge of linguistics,

Engineers are able to create systems that can transcribe spoken language into written text, opening up a world of possibilities for individuals with disabilities. The study of language has also revealed incredible things about how we communicate and the differences and similarities between cultures around the world.

## Levels of Linguistic Analysis

The goal of Linguistic analysis is to understand the content of the text. Statistical methods are used to find the most probable meaning of the text. Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics are known as the levels of linguistic analysis and can be studied in the following manner.

1) Phonetics

Phonetics the study of speech sounds and their physiological production and acoustic qualities. It deals with the configuration of the vocal tract used to produce speech sounds, the acoustic properties of speech sounds, and the manner of combining sounds so as to make syllables, words, and sentences. Collins English Dictionary defines *Phonetics* as a scientific study of human speech sounds and their production, transmission, and reception, and their analysis, classification, and transcription.

Domains of Phonetics

There are three domains of phonetics such as Articulatory Phonetics, Acoustic Phonetics, and Auditory Phonetics.
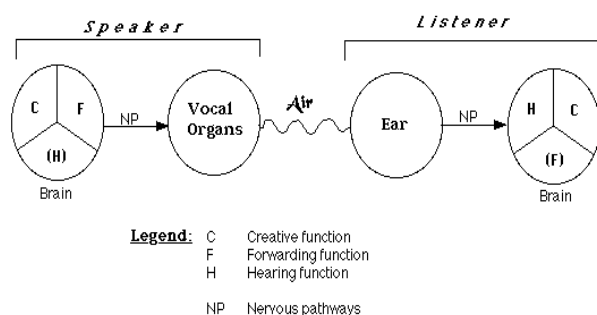

This diagram reflects the mechanism of above-mentioned domains of phonetics. Let's study these domains of phonetics in the following manner.

1) **Articulatory Phonetics**: Being the branch of phonetics, it refers to its aspects which look at how the sounds of speech are made with the organs of the vocal tract. Look at the following diagram to understand the concept better.
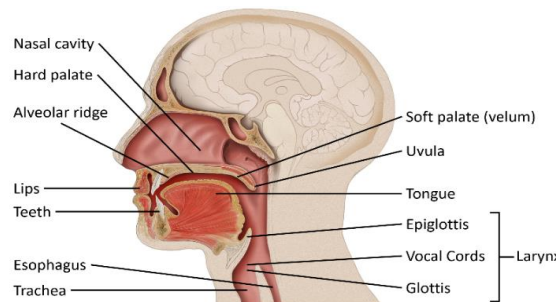

It can be seen as classified into three areas to describe consonants i.e. Voice, Place, and Manner, respectively. Producing speech means employing one's vocal organs to modify a regressive airstream created by the lungs. In normal breathing, there is no pressure to this air flow. However, the organs that form part of the vocal tract, most notably the larynx, velum, tongue, and lips, are subject to conscious muscular activity which modifies their positions and thereby the shape of the cavities through which the air needs to pass. In articulatory phonetics, speech sounds are classified by the relative positions of the vocal organs and by their effects on the air flow.

2) **Acoustic Phonetics**: Acoustic phonetics is the branch of phonetics, where we study the loudness, frequency, pressure, and distance of different sounds. The following diagram reflects low and high frequency waves, its pressure, period, and time.
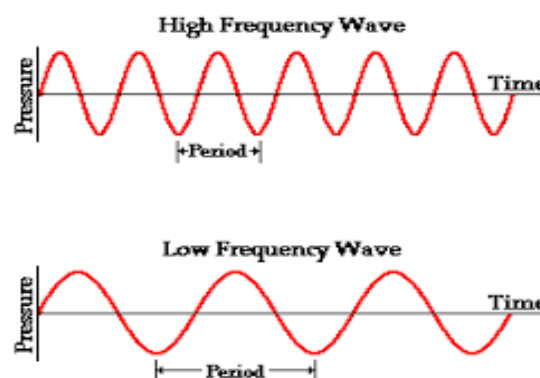
It's the study of the physical properties of speech as sound waves in the air.

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3) **Auditory Phonetics**: Being the branch of phonetics, it is concerned with the perception of speech sounds, that is, with how they are heard.
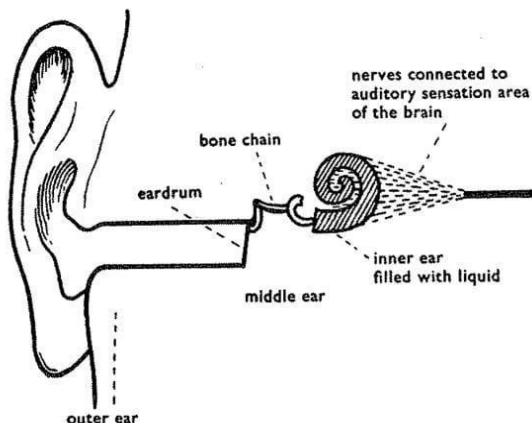
A Schematic Diagram of the Mechanism of the Ear

It's the study of the perception of speech sounds through the air. It researches into the way the human ear and brain perceive and analyze different speech sounds. It would be interested in the ability of a person to notice and grasp the skillful differences in sounds (phonemes) in the words like mat, hat, and sat.

2) Phonology: Phonology is the study of sound patterns and their meanings, within and across languages. Take for example- Speak out loud the word "*bakes*" and notice the ending sound. Now say the word **"waves"** loud enough so we notice the ending sound. What did we observe? Though the words end with the same letter "s" they sound different, right? The word **"bakes"** ends with the sound of "s" whereas "*waves*" end with the sound of "z". The reason behind this difference can be studied through Phonology. Hence, if we have to define Phonology, we can say that it is the study of speech sounds and how they transform depending on situations or their position in syllables, words, and sentences.

3) Morphology: Morphology is a scientific study of words and their structure. Linguistically speaking, it is the study and description of how words are formed in language. The word morphology originated in German from the word **morph + logie/ logy**. It was first used in the year 1830. It is basically known as **morpheme**, the smallest meaningful unit of the language, which is grammatically relevant.

Morphology: Bound and Free

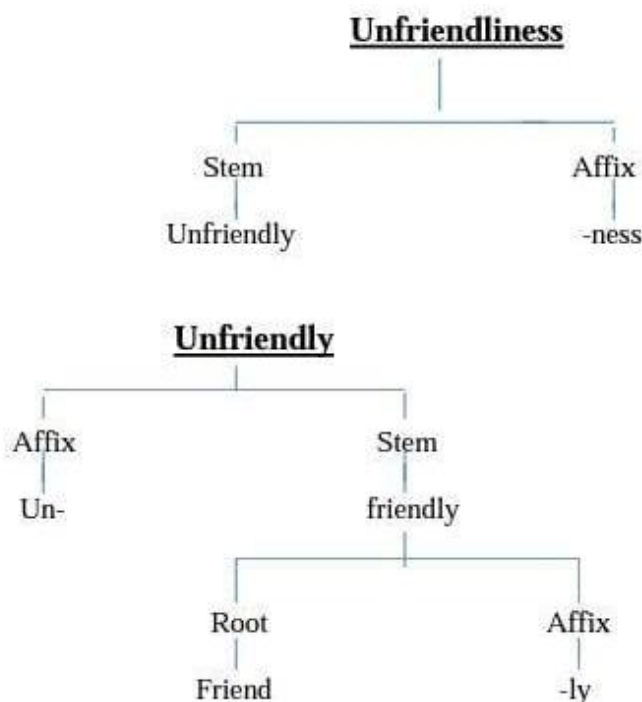Let's study the word **'delimit'**, for instance. It consists of two units: **'de**' and **'limit'**. Both the units are referred to as morphemes. The first unit **'de'** is called a **bound morpheme**, because it does not occur independently. The other unit **'limit'** is called a **free morpheme,** because it occurs independently*.* Thus, a form which cannot occur independently, and is always attached to some other form, is known as a **bound morpheme** *and* the form which occurs independently is called a **free form**. We may take another instance, that of the word **'Enthusiastically'**. The morphological structure of the word can be indicated as below:

Enthuse + iast + ic + al + ly

'Enthusiastically' is **a free form**, whereas **'Enthusiastical'** is **a bound form**, because it cannot occur independently. **'Enthusiastic'**, **'Enthusiast'**, and **'Enthuse'** are all **free forms**. But, in all these, **'Enthuse'** alone is a **free morpheme**. It means that it is a word in its original form (which is also referred to as a **'root'**) without any affix. This implies again that it is incapable of further division.

Affixes, Stems and Roots

A bound morpheme, when attached to a form, is called an **Affix**. The form to which the **affix** is attached is called a **Stem***.* The stem which is incapable of further division is called a **Root***.* Let's consider the morphological analysis and structure of the word **'Unfriendliness'**.

Unfriendliness

Stem — Unfriendly

Affix — -ness

Unfriendly

Affix — Un-

Stem — friendly

Root — Friend

Affix — -ly

Types of Affixes

Affixes are of two types in English:

1) **Prefixes**

2) **Suffixes**

The **Affix** that is attached at the beginning of a stem is called a *Prefix,* and the affix that is attached at the end of a stem is called a *Suffix.* In the word *'Unfriendliness'* *'un'* is a *prefix*, whereas *'-ly'* and *'-ness'* are *suffixes.* The *suffixes* are of two types:

1) **Derivational Suffix**

Derivational suffixes form new words from the stem. For instance, *'Man'* is a word and by attaching the derivational suffix *'-hood'.* we obtain a new word *'manhood'.*

2) **Inflectional Suffix**

Inflectional suffixes do not form new words. For instance, in the word *'Boys'* we have *'Boy'* and the plural suffix *'s'*, but *'boy'* and *'boys'* are not seen as two separate words like *'Man'* and *'Manhood'.*

4) Syntax: Syntax is basically the structure of sentences. Sentences have to follow certain structural rules in order to make sense. You can't just throw any words together to make a sentence! For instance-

Order words make sense need to… this doesn't make sense!

Words need order to make sense…. Ahh! Much better!

So, what is the structure of a sentence? How do we know what is supposed to go where? We all have tacit knowledge of sentence structure. This means we seem to instinctively know things but can't quite explain them. We can tell the first sentence doesn't make any sense, but the second sentence is perfectly fine. So, let's investigate what sentences are made up of in order to understand the structure.

Phrases

Sentences are made up of smaller phrases. There are several different types of phrases that can be used in a sentence, but the two phrases which must be used in a sentence for it to make sense are a noun and verb phrase. In a phrase, we must have a word which is called the head. This is the core of the phrase, what the phrase can't exist without. So, in a phrase like *'the dog'* or *'ran far away'*, in the first phrase *'dog'* is the head because it is the main part

of the phrase, and in the second phrase **'ran'** is the head because it is essential for the phrase to exist. We can have **'dog ran'**, which isn't grammatical, but this still makes sense since we can understand that the dog ran. But we can't have **'the far away'**; this makes no sense to us.

Modifiers

So, **'the'** and **'faraway'** have to be given a name to distinguish them from the head. We call these modifiers. They modify the head and give it specific meaning. The determiner **'the'** modifies the **'dog'** because it lets us know which dog we are referring to. The phrase **'faraway'** modifies the verb **'ran'** by letting us know the extent to which the dog ran. Don't worry, this will all become a lot easier with some practice.
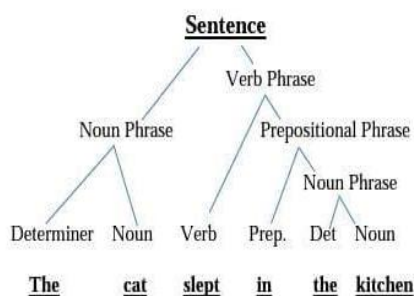
Syntax Trees

Example-1 <u>Tom pushed the car</u>
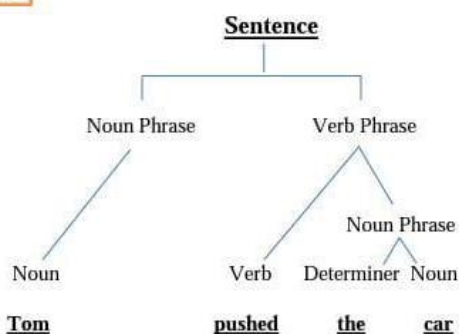
Example-2 <u>The cat slept in the kitchen</u>

5) Semantics: Semantics is the study of meaning. It is a wide subject within the general study of language. An understanding of semantics is essential to the study of language acquisition (how language users acquire a sense of meaning, as speakers and writers, listeners and readers) and of language change (how meanings alter over time). It is important for understanding language in social contexts, as these are likely to affect meaning, and for understanding varieties of English and effects of style. It is thus one of the most fundamental concepts in linguistics. The study of semantics includes the study of how meaning is constructed, interpreted, clarified, obscured, illustrated, simplified, negotiated, contradicted and paraphrased.

Semantics focuses on the relation between **signifiers**, like **words, phrases, signs**, and **symbols,** and what they stand for. Linguistic semantics is the study of meaning that is used for understanding human expression through language. Other forms of semantics include the semantics of programming languages, formal logics, and semiotics. In international scientific vocabulary semantics is also called **semiology**. The formal study of semantics intersects with many other fields of inquiry, including lexicology, syntax, pragmatics, etymology and others.

6) Pragmatics: Pragmatics is a field of linguistics associated with what a speaker implies and a listener ascertains depends on dispensing aspects like the situational context, the individuals' mental states, and the preceding dialogues. Pragmatics dates back to antiquity when rhetoric was one of the three liberal arts. The more modern idea of pragmatics arose between 1780 and 1830 in Britain, France, and Germany. The term got much popularity in those days.

The term pragmatics is used in contrast to semantics. Semantics denotes the actual meaning of a word or text whereas Pragmatics refers to how words are used in a practical sense. Words can mean different things, and often the same word can mean something different depending on the context in which it is used. Words can also carry symbolic meaning and in practice, or practical situations, we will apply our understanding of symbols as we read or listen to others, this is how it creates an ambiguity. For Instance, ***Will you crack open the door? I am getting hot.***

Semantically, the word **"crack"** would mean to break, but pragmatically we know that the speaker means to open the door just a little to let in some air.

Conclusion

Linguistic analysis can be used to describe the unconscious rules and processes that speakers of a language use to create spoken or written language, and this can be useful to those who want to learn a language or translate from one language to another. In this way, the present paper talks about linguistics as a core branch of modern English structure and the different levels of linguistic analysis in depth. Linguistics, no doubt, has a strong impact on the English language in general.

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