

Some Key Concepts in Modern Linguistics

Each human language is a composite of knowledge and abilities allowing speakers of the language to communicate with each other, to express ideas, hypotheses, emotions, desires, and all the other things that need expressing. Linguistics is the study of these knowledge systems in all their aspects: how is such a knowledge system structured, how is it acquired, how is it used in the production and comprehension of messages, how does it change over time? Linguists consequently are concerned with a number of particular questions about the nature of language. What characteristics do all human languages have in common? How do languages differ, and to what extent are the differences systematic, that is to say, can we find patterns in the differences? How do children acquire such complete knowledge of a language in such a short time? What are the ways in which languages can change over time, and are there limitations to how languages change? What is the nature of the cognitive processes that come into play when we produce and understand language?

Ferdinand de Saussure is the first to say publically that language is a system, and it must be studied independently without referring to something else. He is the father of European structuralism and one of the founders of Contemporary Linguistics of the twentieth century. Saussure's presented his ideas in dichotomies : Diachronic vs. Synchronic Linguistics, Signifier vs. Signified, Langue vs. Parole, Paradigmatic vs. Syntagmatic Relations. His ideas had a major impact on linguistic theory in Europe and America and over the world. Saussure's most influential ideas are presented throughout the lesson.

1.Diachronic vs. Synchronic Linguistics

The Greek etymology of diachronic and synchronic may help comprehending their meaning in Linguistics. The -chron- part they share comes from Greek khronos, meaning "time" (or "pertaining to time").The prefix syn- means "together", "with"; the prefix dia- means "through". Both can be used to describe an approach, a phenomenon or an activity by analyzing its behaviour in regards to a timeline. If an approach, phenomenon or activity is described as "synchronic" it means it isn't affected by past and future, and that it simply emphasizes on a specific point in time. For example, chess is defined as a synchronic game. In fact, at any time you can resume a chess game someone else started and then abandoned and what moves were made before you resumed the game do not concern you. If an approach, phenomenon or activity is described as "diachronic", on the other hand, it means such approach, phenomenon or activity focuses on an evolution of some kind through time.

Therefore, Diachronic linguistics deals with the development of languages through time, the similarities and the differences that exist between them, and the families they descend from. However, Synchronic linguistics is the study of the state of a language at a given point in time. Synchronic linguistics sees language as a living whole (generally the present), existing as a state at a particular point in time (as *état de langue* as Saussure put it). Saussure focuses on synchronic linguistics in contrast to diachronic linguistics. On the one hand, in a diachronic study, people ignore the history of their language , whereas, in a synchronic study they can check the validity of the statements by studying the utterances of living speakers. On the other hand, the diachronic study can falsify and contaminate the synchronic study. The twentieth century has known a shift from historical linguistics to synchronic linguistics because of the aforementioned reasons.

An example of a synchronic study can be the language of modern English. In order to study this, linguists will collect samples from native speakers, describing them without any historical considerations. And of a diachronic study can be the evolution of English from Old English to Middle English.

Language is a system of interrelated items and the value of these items is defined by their place in the system rather than by their history. Saussure criticized current linguistics as seeking to understand language changes but not why it changed or what underlying factors were really changing. Widely considered the founder of modern linguistics, Saussure's perspectives thus evolved from a diachronic linguistic perspective (how languages change and branch off throughout time), to the introduction of synchronic linguistics (the study of a single language as it existed at a particular point in time), a perspective that ultimately changed the course of linguistic thought. He believed that the study of linguistics should not presume to prescribe how people should speak, but simply describe how they do.

2.Langue vs. Parole

Langue: is the language system which is shared by all the members of the speech community. It is also an institution, a set of interpersonal rules and norms. Langue=grammar+vocabulary+pronunciation. Parole: is the actual manifestation of language in speech or writing. It is idiosyncratic (proper to the individual and specific to the situation on in which it occurs. In other words, Langue is a system in that it has a large number of elements whereby meaning is created in the arrangements of its elements and the consequent relationships between these arranged elements. Parole is the concrete use of the language, the actual utterances. It is an external manifestation of langue. It is the usage of the system, but not the system.

The distinction between langue and parole can be summed up as follows:

1. Langue is a language system shared by a community of speakers.

Parole is the individual realization of that system.

2. Langue is a social phenomenon

Parole is an individual phenomenon.

3. Langue is what is potential

Parole is what is actual.

4. Langue is a static situation

Parole is a dynamic situation

5. Langue is a concept.

Parole is the sound image of that concept

6. Langue is a rule

Parole is behaviour.

By defining Langue and Parole, Saussure differentiates between langue and how it is used, and therefore enabling these two very different things to be studied as separate entities. As a structuralist, Saussure was interested more in langue than parole. It was the system by which meaning could be created that was of interest rather than individual instances of its use.

Thus, Saussurean contribution was to cut up the total phenomenon of language (langage) into:—actual speech production (parole), including the role of the individual will, and— the socially shared system of signs (langue) that makes production and comprehension possible. Although Saussure spoke of linguistics of parole that would cover the phonetic side of language and the product of individual will, he made it

clear that the Linguistics of langue is the essential, real Linguistics. Langue is beyond the direct reach of the individual will.

3. Signifier vs. Signified

signifier (signifiant): is the word given arbitrarily to the concept it defines. It is also referred to sound image. It is different from one language to another. Signified (signifié): is the concept referred to. It is the same in all language.

The sign, as union of a signifier and a signified, has two main characteristics.

1. The bond between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. De Saussure says language is a symbolic system based on pure or arbitrary conventions infinitely extendable and modifiable according to the changing needs and conditions of the speakers. There is nothing in either the thing or the word that makes the two go together, no natural, intrinsic, or logical relation between a particular sound image and a concept. An example of this is the fact that there are different words, in different languages, for the same thing. Dog is "dog" in English, "perro" in Spanish, "chien" in French, "Hund" in German.

2. The second characteristic of the sign is that the signifier (here, meaning the spoken word or auditory signifier) exists in time, and that time can be measured as linear. You can't say two words at one time; you have to say one and then the next, in a linear fashion. (The same is true for written language: you have to write one word at a time (though you can write over an already written word) and you generally write the words in a straight line).

"Signifier" and "signified" are terms used in linguistics to describe the components of a sign: the signifier is the word, and the signified is the thing or idea it represents. Signifiers needn't be confined to words; they can include any system of representation, including drawings, traffic lights, body language, and so on. Much of

the literary criticism of the last twenty-five years has focused on the relationship between the signifier and signified, and therefore on the very nature of meaning. Therefore, linguists cannot explain the relation between signifier and signified, but rather they should focus on how arbitrary signs fit together in an internally coherent system.

4. Syntagmatic vs. Paradigmatic Relations

One of the most striking characteristics of language as Saussure's was the first to emphasize, is that units are not given in a positive and unequivocal fashion but must be discovered and defined in relational terms. Eventually, there are two principal types of relations: the syntagmatic relations (relations of combination; that is to say, the way in which linguistic units can be combined into larger structures), and the associative relations (now generally paradigmatic, they are relations of substitution; it means the relations between units that can substitute for one another in the same spot in a linguistic structure. Paradigmatic immediately relations are relations of exclusion; the presence of one unit excludes the presence of the other).

The following examples illustrate both dimensions:

We-must-respect-laws→syntagmatic relations

She should be quiet.

I will be happy.

You can leave now.

There is a syntagmatic relation between We+must+respect+laws, and a paradigmatic relation between (We, She), (must, should) and (respect, be).....etc.

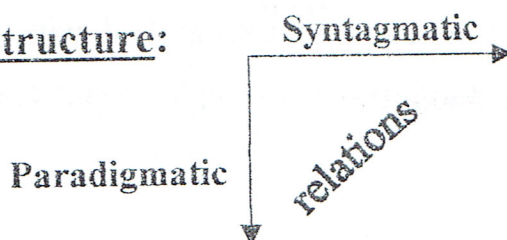
Thus, syntagmatic relations are seen according to a horizontal dimension or level and paradigmatic relations are viewed according to a vertical level or a vertical dimension. They exist at all levels of linguistic description: lexical, grammatical and

phonological. Saussurean notion of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations became the hallmark of the 20th century Linguistics: first, because it proposed that a single principle of structure unites all the levels at which language functions — sound, forms, and meaning; second, because it suggested a way of analyzing language that would not depend on a simple listing of elements with their “translation” into either another language or some sort of philosophical interpretation. Elements could henceforth be analyzed according to the relations they maintained with other elements, and the language could be understood as the vast system — not of these elements — but of these relations.

De Saussure's contribution to modern linguistics was responsible for three key directions in the study of language. He distinguished between Synchrony and Diachrony, between langue and parole, between signified and signifier. He also contributed by describing the distinction between syntagmatic and paradigmatic, the theory of associative value. Saussure's contributions to linguistics are given below: The contribution Saussure had on language was revolutionary. His work had a profound influence on many aspects of linguistics. Lastly the following statement from Benevise will reflect his contribution: "a forerunner in doctrines which in the post fifty years have transformed the theory of language, he has opened us unforgettable vistas on the highest and mysterious faculty of man... he has contributed to the advent of formal thought in the sciences of society and culture and to the founding of a general semiology". There is not a single general theory which doesn't mention his name. In sum, Major schools of linguistics in the world have incorporated the basic notions of Ferdinand de Saussure's thought in forming the central tenets of structural linguistics. The ideas are still valid and taught all over the world. Saussure's work in fact goes beyond linguistics and has influenced other disciplines such as

anthropology, sociology and literary criticism. It has also influenced and inspired many different interpretations.

Basic Levels of Structure:



In language, everything is based on relations of various kinds and in order to examine the **distribution** of linguistic units, i.e., the range or whole set of contexts in which they may occur, it is important to consider the types of relationships they enter into.

Linguistic units have a **paradigmatic** relation with all words which can occur in the same context and **syntagmatic** relation with all words forming their context, for example,

1. read this book
2. read this letter

3. donne moi cette fleur
4. donne moi cette lettre

5. البنت في الحديقة
6. الولد في الحديقة

There is a syntagmatic relation between **read+ this+ book** in the first example and a syntagmatic relation between **read+ this+ letter** in the second example. On the other hand, there is a paradigmatic relation between **book** and **letter**, because they can occur or replace one another in the same context. In other words, a syntagmatic relation is a linear relation that holds between the elements which are present in the sentence or context. Each element is in syntagmatic relation with the elements that constitute its context as in examples 1 and 2 or 3 and 4 or 5 and 6 whereas a paradigmatic relation holds between an element present in a sentence or context and another element which is not present in the sentence or context but which can stand in the same

position and have the same function as exemplified with **book** and **letter** in examples 1 and 2; with **fleur** and **letter** in examples 3 and 4; with **البنات** and **الولد** in examples 5 and 6.

Therefore, syntagmatic relations are viewed according to a horizontal level or horizontal dimension and paradigmatic relations are viewed according to a vertical level or vertical dimension. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations exist at all levels of linguistic description: lexical, grammatical and phonological. For instance, at the word level, we may have a combination of three units: **un+ friend+ ly** in **unfriendly**. At the phonological level, we have **c+ v+ c (consonant + vowel + consonant)** in **cut**.

Fixed and Free Sequence in syntagmatic relations

Another aspect of syntagmatic relations is the influence of word order. This means that syntagmatic relations, i.e., relations between units which are co-present, may or may not be in sequence. In some languages, the sequence is **free**; in others, it is **fixed**. There are languages where the sequence can be free or fixed. For example, at the phonological level in English, the sequence tends to be rather fixed since we can have **c+ v+ c** as in **cat**, **c+ v+ 0** as in **tea**, **c+ c+ c+ v+ c** as in **strange** but not **c+ c+ c+ c+ v**.

We can find a certain flexibility at the grammatical level, for example:

7. **He whispered the answer softly.**
8. **Softly he whispered the answer.**
9. **He softly whispered the answer.**

In these examples, the permutation of the adverb does not alter the meaning. Therefore, the sequence is free. In French, we can have fixed and free sequence, e.g.,

10. C'est une immense université.

11. C'est une université immense.

This pair of sentences illustrates free sequence since the meaning is not affected, whereas the following pairs:

12. Un homme brave (brave, courageous)

13. Un brave homme (kind, generous, helpful)

and,

14. Un homme grand (tall)

15. Un grand homme (exceptional, remarkable from the personality and professional point of view)

illustrate fixed sequence since the meaning changes in each case.

At the lexical level, the sequence tends to be fixed, but sometimes it can be free, e.g.,

16. She is nice looking.

17. She looks nice.

In these examples, the permutation of the two lexical items which constitute or form the combination looks+ nice and nice+ looking does not affect the meaning. In other cases, changing the sequence or word order is not possible as in all cases of idiomatic expressions such as idioms, proverbs, fixed combinations, compound words and so on, for example, heavy smoker, headmaster, to put up with (tolerate), tout ce qui brille n'est pas or, للجبران آذان etc.

Free Variation and Contrast in Paradigmatic Relations

Another important aspect of these relations is that the elements having a paradigmatic relation can be similar or different in meaning, consider the following examples:

18. She is terribly nice.
19. She is remarkably nice.

Terribly and **remarkably** are in paradigmatic relation because they can occur in the same context and without changing the meaning. So, they are **synonymous** or in **free variation**. However, in the following examples:

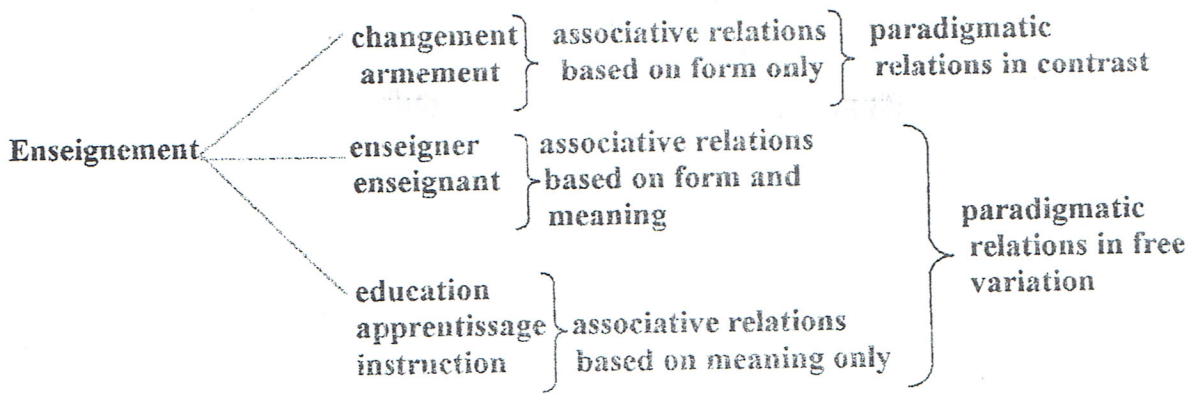
20. The girl came to see us yesterday.
21. The boy came to see us yesterday.

the elements which function as subject of the verb, i.e., **the boy** and **the girl** are in paradigmatic relation and different in meaning. So, they are **in contrast**.

According to De Saussure, these paradigmatic relations are no more than the **associative relations**, i.e., relations between words which have something in common but which are not always present in the same context. They belong to the individual's **internalized knowledge** or **langue**. These associative relations can be based on:

- Form: **unbelievable**
unreadable
- Form and meaning: **teaching**
teacher
teach
- Meaning: **change**
variation
modification

If we take Saussure's example, we will see once again that the associative relations are no more than the current notions of paradigmatic relations:



To conclude, we can say that every linguistic unit in any human language has a certain place in a system of relationships. Each unit or element has both a syntagmatic and a paradigmatic role: syntagmatic role because of its capacity to combine with other units to form structures (phrases or groups, clauses or sentences) and paradigmatic role by virtue of being part of a system or sub-system. This is exactly what De Saussure meant when he said that any language constitutes an integrated system of relations, i.e., "un système où tout se tient".

Linguistic units

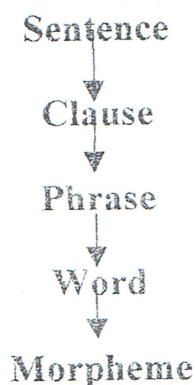
The linguistic units which compose the language, whether spoken or written, are more commonly referred to as grammatical units.

The Basic Units of Grammar

Traditionally, linguistic theory operates with two fundamental units of grammatical description: the word and the sentence, with the word as the basic unit. But some linguists have reacted against this and argue that the classical grammarians were little concerned with the analysis of words into smaller units. However, it is clear that, in many languages at least, such elements exist. For instance, the English word **unacceptable** is made up of three smaller units, each of which has a characteristic distribution: **un + accept+ able**, moreover, these are minimal units in that they cannot be analysed further into distributionally-classifiable units of English. Such minimal units of grammatical analysis, of which words may be composed, are referred to as **morphemes**. We have therefore three different units of grammatical description to consider: **sentences, words, and morphemes**. Intermediate between the word and the sentence, two other units are commonly recognised by grammarians: **phrases** and **clauses**. Traditionally, the distinction between the two was formulated somewhat as follows: any group of words which is grammatically equivalent to a single word and which does not have its own subject and predicate is a **phrase**; on the other hand, a group of words with its own subject and predicate, if it is included in a larger sentence, is a **clause**.

The relation between the five units of grammatical description is one of composition. If we call the sentence the 'highest' unit and the morpheme the 'lowest', we can arrange all five units on a scale of rank (sentence, clause, phrase, word,

morpheme), saying that units of higher rank are composed of units of lower rank as in the following diagram:



The Sentence

According to Bloomfield, a sentence is "an independent linguistic form, not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in a larger linguistic form." The point of Bloomfield's definition can be stated more concisely as follows: The sentence is the largest unit of grammatical description.

e.g.: **How are you? It's a fine day. Are you going to play tennis this afternoon?** are all distributionally independent of one another, and for that reason they are recognised as three distinct sentences.

De Saussure distinguished two senses of the term 'sentence': **utterances** and **sentences**. **Utterances** are stretches of **parole** produced by native speakers out of **sentences** generated by the system of elements and rules which constitute the **langue**. The linguist describes instances of parole by establishing the langue.

In traditional grammar, sentences are classified into different types in two ways: First of all by **function**, as statements, questions, exclamation and commands. Secondly, according to their **structural complexity** as **simple** or

compound. Complex sentences are made up of a number of **simple sentences** or **clauses**.

e.g.: I saw him yesterday and I shall be seeing him again tomorrow.
If I had money, I would buy a car.
When I was young, I used to collect stamps.

Ready-made Utterances

They do not correspond directly to sentences generated by the grammar. These are what De Saussure called "locutions toutes faites", i.e., expressions which are learned as unanalysable wholes and employed on particular occasions by native speakers.

e.g.: **How do you do?**

Though this utterance is conventionally punctuated as a question, it is not normally interpreted as such. The stock of proverbs provides many instances of ready-made utterances,

e.g.: **Easy come easy go**
All that glitters is not gold

On ne fait pas d'omelette sans casser d'œufs
C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron

لأنما تعرف الشجرة من ثمرها
ليس كل ما يلمع ذهبًا

The internal structure of such sentences is not accounted for by means of rules which specify the permissible combinations of words. They are to be accounted for simply by listing them in the dictionary with an indication of the situations in which they are used and their meanings.

The Word

The word is the unit par excellence of traditional grammatical theory. It is the basis of the distinction which is frequently drawn between morphology and syntax and it is the principal unit of **lexicography** or **dictionary-making**. According to a common formulation of the distinction between morphology and syntax, morphology deals with the internal structure of words and syntax with the rules governing their combination in sentences.

According to Bloomfield, the word is "a minimum free form"; this depends upon the prior distinction of **free** and **bound** forms in the following sense: forms which never occur alone as whole utterances (in some normal situation) are **bound forms**, and forms which may occur alone as utterances are **free forms**. The sentence is a free linguistic form and the word is its minimal version.

Most languages contain both variable and invariable words. **Variable words** are those in which ordered and regular series of grammatically different word forms are found, wherein part remains relatively constant and the variations in the other parts are matched by similar variations in other words.

e.g.: **walk walks walking** **cat cats**
 follow follows following **house houses**

These are variable words and the ordered series of forms (such as **walk, walks, walking**) are called **paradigms**.

Words appearing in only one form are **invariable words**.

e.g.: **since, when, seldom** etc...

Languages differ in the number and complexity of the paradigms of their variable words. French, for example, has more grammatical word form variation than English, Arabic more than French etc... as illustrated below:

- In English I/ you/ she/ he/ we/ they will walk (only one form for the future)
- In French, the future tense paradigms are different according to the person and the number (*je marcherai, tu marcheras, il/ elle marchera, nous marcherons, vous marcherez, Ils/ elles marcheront* etc.)
- In Arabic, according to the person, the number, and the gender. (سأذهب - ستذهبن - سيدذهبون - ستذهبان - سيذهبان - ستذهب - سيدذهب (سنذهب))

The Morpheme

□ The morpheme as the minimal grammatical unit

The word has been treated in this account of grammatical analysis as a fundamental and unique grammatical unit but it is demonstrably not the minimal or smallest grammatical unit. The comparison of such word forms as **cats**, **dogs** and **horses** with **cat**, **dog** and **horse** reveals the divisibility of the word into two grammatically significant elements: **cat**, **dog**, **horse** and **-s** (in phonological transcription /s/, /z/, and /iz/.)

These minimal grammatical units are called **morphemes**. Morphemes are established and delimited in a language by comparing word forms with one another and noting the recurrent pieces that compose them and every word is wholly analysable into one or more morphemes.

e.g.: - s /s/ is revealed by comparing **cat**, **cats**, **cap**, **caps** etc...
 - ment /mənt/ by comparing **establish**, **establishment** etc...

Morphemes may be represented by, or correspond to, any phonological feature or shape, and may be monosyllabic or polysyllabic.

- e.g.:
- /z/ in /dɒgz/ is a single consonant.
 - /li/ in /lʌvli/ shows a cv structure.
 - /i/ in /fɒgi/ is a single vowel.
 - tobacco /təbækoʊ/ contains three syllables.

□ Morphemes variants (allomorphs)

Most variant morpheme shapes are strictly dependent on their environment within the word. Thus, the regular formatives of English noun plurals /s/, /z/, and /ɪz/ are distributed according to the final vowel or consonant of the word base or singular form.

- words ending in a voiced consonant, other than /z/, /ʒ/, or /dʒ/ or in a vowel (which are all voiced in English), have /z/.
e.g.: dogs /dɒgz/, cows /kaʊz/, hens /henz/.
- Those ending in a voiceless consonant other than /s/, /f/ or /tʃ/ have /s/.
e.g.: cats /kæts/, cups /kʌps/.
- Those ending in /s/, /z/, /f/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ have /ɪz/.
e.g.: horses /hɔːsɪz/, rushes /rʌʃɪz/, churches /tʃɜːtʃɪz/ and judges /dʒʌdʒɪz/.

These different shapes /s/, /z/, and /ɪz/ of the plural morpheme -s are called **morphs** or **allomorphs**. In the examples given they are phonologically predictable, but there are plenty of examples of allomorphs which are not predictable by any phonological criteria.

e.g.: The irregular plurals of nouns such as: **ox, oxen; child, children; foot, feet; man, men etc...**

Such plurals have to be learned individually in learning English. The analysis of the different forms taken by the English noun plural morpheme, discussed in this section, is part of the morphophonological or morphophonemic analysis of English.

□ Bound and Free morphemes

Morphemes can be bound or free. A **free morpheme** is one that may constitute a word (free form) by itself. A **bound morpheme** is one that must appear with at least one other morpheme bound or free in a word.

e.g.: in English **cats**, **cat** is free since **cat** is a word in its own right and **-s** is bound as it is not a word in its own right.

Free morphemes constitute **monomorphemic** words (one word one morpheme).

Polymorphemic words consist wholly of free morphemes being accorded word-status. They are often called 'compound words'.

e.g.: **house-work**, **penknife**, **aircraft** etc ...

The number of free and bound morphemes varies considerably in different languages.

Word Classes and Grammatical Categories

Word Classes or Parts of Speech

Sentences are composed of units which can be referred to as **parts of speech** or **word classes** as **articles, nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions** etc. These can be exemplified in English as follows:

- **Closed -system items:** the set of items are closed in the sense that they cannot normally be extended by the creation of additional members. The decision to use one item in a given structure excludes the possibility of using any other.

e.g.: **articles** (the, a(n)), **demonstratives** (this, that, etc.), **pronouns** (he, which, anybody, etc.), **prepositions** (of, at, without, etc.), **conjunctions** (and, but, when, etc.) and **interjections** (oh, ah, ugh, etc.).

- **Open -class items:** The class is open in the sense that it is indefinitely extendable. New items are constantly created.

e.g.: **nouns** (John, room, answer, etc.), **adjectives** (happy, large, new, etc.), **adverbs** (completely, then, very, etc.), and **verbs** (search, be, grow, have, etc.)

Grammatical Categories

In many languages, the forms of a word vary, in order to express such contrasts as **number, gender, case, voice, tense, aspect, person and mood**.

Number: Number is a category referring to quantities. There is a category for one, **singular** (table, man, sheep, knife), and a category for more than one,

plural (tables, men, sheep, knives). The Arabic number system has a category for two, **dual (شخصان - منزلان - فتاتان)**.

Gender: gender is traditionally associated with sex: **feminine, masculine** and sometimes **neuter**. English makes very few gender distinctions compared to other languages. There is no gender concord in English as is the case in French and Arabic.

e.g.: Il est beau, elle est belle
Il est venu, elle est venue

ما أجملها ، ما أجملها
هو قادم ، هي قادمة

Gender, in English depends upon the classification of persons and objects as **male (uncle), female (aunt), or inanimate (box)**. **Dual gender** includes words such as: **artist, doctor, teacher, professor, neighbour, etc.** For clarity, it is sometimes necessary to use a **gender marker**:

e.g.: boy friend girl friend
man student woman student

Case: The English noun system has two cases: the **-s genitive** and the **of genitive**. The **-s genitive** is sometimes called the **possessive**, but it can express other meanings than possession.

e.g.: A women's college, i.e., A college for women
Ten days' absence, i.e., the absence lasted ten days
A summer's day, i.e., a day in the summer
The general's letter, i.e., the general wrote a letter

Voice: voice is a category specifying the relation of the subject to the action expressed by the verb. English has two voices: an **active**, indicating that the subject performs the action expressed by the verb and a **passive**, indicating that the subject undergoes the action.

e.g.: **I read many books**
Many books were read by me

Tense: tense is one of the categories directly associated with the verb where traditionally a division is made between **past**, **present** and **future**. But tense is not a universal category and there is not always correspondence between tense and time. In fact, tense is not found in all languages. For instance, we cannot say that English has a proper future tense because what is traditionally described as such is realized by means of the auxiliaries: **will** and **shall**. But **will** and **shall** do not necessarily occur in sentences with a future time reference.

e.g.: **Shall we go?**
Will you close the door, please? } **No future in these cases**

Future time can be referred to by means of other tenses.

e.g.: **I finish my course in June**
She is coming next week.

Aspect: reflects the status of the action. An action may be completed or incompleted. If completed, the aspect is called **perfective**, if incompleted, the aspect is **imperfective**. The imperfective is also referred to as **continuous** or **progressive** aspect.

e.g.: { **The girl drowned in the lake** (She died)
 { **The girl was drowning in the lake** (someone rescued her)

{ **He has eaten my chocolates** (they are all gone)
 { **He was eating my chocolates** (but I stopped him)
 { **He has been eating my chocolates** (but there are some left)

Person: There are three persons. Persons refer to **the speaker** (first person), **the person addressed** (second person), and **the person referred to but not addressed** (third person). Different forms for each person category are found; they are distinguished as singular and plural in the category number.

Mood: This category relates the action to such conditions as **certainty, obligation, necessity, possibility**, etc. Mood can be realized by means of **modal auxiliaries** expressing statements, commands, probabilities, wishes etc. as illustrated in the following examples:

- e.g.:
- **He can speak English but he can't write it very well.** (He is able to speak.../ capable of speaking...)
 - **Can/ May I smoke in here?** (Am I allowed to smoke...?)
 - **The road may be blocked.** (It is possible that the road is blocked)
 - **I will do it, whatever you say.** (I insist on doing it)
 - **That would be his mother.** (probability)
 - **I must be back by 10 o'clock.** (obligation)
 - **Come here.** (command)

Standard Arabic has only two moods: **indicative** (past, present and future) and **imperative**.

e.g.: أصغى إلى الأستاذ
قد تـتـخـيـر النـتـيـجـة

Macro-linguistic Branches or the scientific study of language in relation to the extra-linguistic world

Macrolinguistics is generally defined as the study of language beyond the language, i.e., in relation to what is not purely linguistic or non-linguistic such as the social and cultural context in which the language is used, the psychological features involved, the various fields of application or domains for which we need the language and so on. In a macro-linguistic study, language is therefore viewed not as a system in itself and for itself but as a system in relation to the world of experience or extralinguistic world. Some of the most significant branches are defined below:

➤ **Psycholinguistics**: this sub-discipline can be defined as Lyons (1984, p. 240) puts it “The intersection of psychology and linguistics”. This branch is about language and the individual or more particularly the study of language and mind. The most important area is the investigation of the acquisition of language by children. Psycholinguistics investigates also the psychological mechanisms responsible for linguistic behaviour.

➤ **Sociolinguistics**: similarly, this sub-discipline can also be seen as the intersection of sociology and linguistics. This branch is about language and the community or more particularly the study of language in relation to society as it is commonly defined by linguists. It studies the ways in which language interacts with society. It is the study of the way in which the structure of language changes in response to its (i.e., language) different social functions. Sociolinguistics is also concerned with the definition of the different functions of language.

➤ **Ethnolinguistics**: this branch refers to the linguistic correlates and problems of ethnic groups, for example, the linguistic consequences of immigration. To some extent, it overlaps with anthropological linguistics in the sense that it can also be defined as the study of language in relation to culture.

➤ **Anthropological linguistics**: this branch studies languages as part of the investigation of their associated cultures.

➤ **Applied linguistics**: A very important branch which is concerned with the application of linguistic knowledge to practical areas or domains such as language teaching and learning, translation, lexicography or dictionary making etc.

Some other branches can be considered as intermediate, i.e., between micro and macro-linguistics:

➤ **Comparative linguistics**: It studies the similarities between different languages at different levels: phonological, grammatical or lexical.

➤ **Contrastive linguistics**: A very important branch which studies the differences or contrasts between different languages at different levels: phonological, morpho-syntactic, grammatical, lexical or semantic. Contrastive linguistics studies are undertaken mainly for applied linguistic purposes.

➤ **Historical linguistics**: It is the study of language history. It studies the changes that occur in a language through time in order to determine what changes have taken place in the course of the historical development of language.

The above branches are a clear evidence of the practical applications deriving from linguistic research. We can even say that it is difficult to think of an aspect of human behaviour which is not concerned with language. Hence, all fields of human experience can benefit from linguistics.