

# STRUCTURALISM

**Structural linguistics** is an approach to linguistics originating from the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. De Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, published posthumously in 1916, stressed examining language as a static system of interconnected units. Ferdinand de Saussure is the originator of the 20th century reappearance of structuralism, specifically in his 1916 book COURSE IN GENERAL LINGUISTICS, where he focused not on the use of language (parole, or talk), but rather on the underlying system of language (langue) and called his theory semiotics. This approach focused on examining how the elements of language related to each other in the present, that is, 'synchronically' rather than 'diachronically'.

Language as a system of signs is therefore a two-sided coin. On one side of this coin is the verbalised or written form of language: a sanctioned combination of sounds (syllables and intonation) or marks (letters and punctuation): this form is what Saussure names the signifier. On the second side of the coin is the idea or concept which the signifier is attempting to express. This side is called the signified.

**1) The arbitrary nature of the sign**--The sign is arbitrary because "the bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary."

Finally, he argued that linguistic signs were composed of two parts, a signifier (the sound pattern of a word, either in mental projection - as when we silently recite lines from a poem to ourselves - or in actual, physical realization as part of a speech act) and a signified (the concept or meaning of the word).

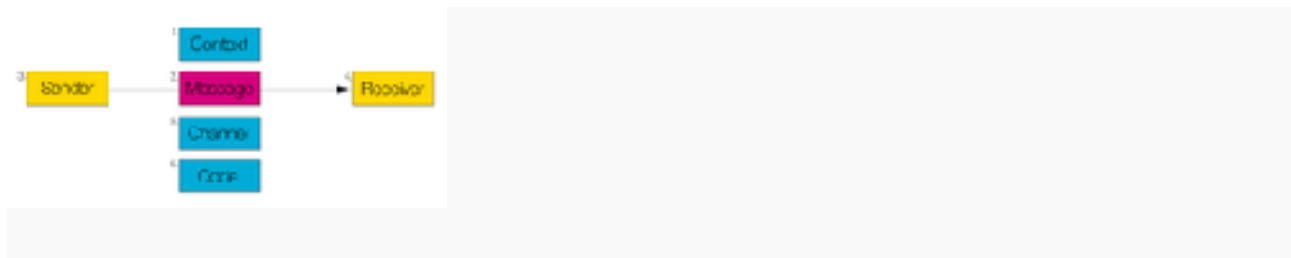
# THE PRAGUE SCHOOL

The Prague Linguistic Circle represented an important moment in the development of phonology, structuralism and linguistics in general and it prepared the grounds for research and the subsequent evolution of linguistics.

**The Prague school**, is a 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 Trubetsky and the Russian-born American linguist Roman Jakobson;

# JAKOBSON

Roman Jakobson defined six **functions of language** (or communication functions), according to which an effective act of verbal communication can be described. Each of the functions has an associated factor.



### **The Referential Function**

corresponds to the factor of Context and describes a situation, object or mental state. The descriptive statements of the referential function can consist of both definite descriptions and deictic words, e.g. "The autumn leaves have all fallen now."

### **The Expressive (alternatively called "emotive" or "affective") Function**

relates to the Addresser and is best exemplified by interjections and other sound changes that do not alter the denotative meaning of an utterance but do add information about the Addresser's (speaker's) internal state, e.g. "Wow, what a view!"

### **The Conative Function**

engages the Addressee directly and is best illustrated by vocatives and imperatives, e.g. "Tom! Come inside and eat!"

### **The Poetic Function**

focuses on "the message for its own sake"<sup>[3]</sup> and is the operative function in poetry as well as slogans.

## **The Phatic Function**

is language for the sake of interaction and is therefore associated with the Contact factor. The Phatic Function can be observed in greetings and casual discussions of the weather, particularly with strangers.

## **The Metalingual (alternatively called "metalinguistic" or "reflexive") Function**

is the use of language (what Jakobson calls "Code") to discuss or describe itself.

# FUNCTIONALISM

**functionalism**, in linguistics, is the approach to language study that is concerned with the functions performed by language, primarily in terms of cognition (relating information), expression (indicating mood), and conation (exerting influence). Especially associated with the Prague school of linguists prominent since the 1930s, the approach centres on how elements in various languages accomplish these functions, both grammatically and phonologically.

Functionalists believed 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

Distinctive functions of phonetic features, expressive function (speaker's feelings and attitude), demarcative function (suprasegmental features)

Functionalists emphasized the multifunctionality of language and the importance of its expressive and social functions in addition to its descriptive function

MARTINET

According to linguist André Martinet <sup>(1)</sup>, language can be broken down in smaller elements on two levels:

1. First, a sentence can be broken down into *minimal meaningful units* called morphemes. Minimal meaningful units are usually words, or parts of words. For example, 'bigger' contains two monemes: one for 'big', and one for 'more'.
2. Second, a moneme can be further divided in *minimal phonological units*, which have no meaning. Minimal phonological units are called phonemes, and they often correspond to letters in English, but not always. The moneme 'letter' contains 6 letters and only 4 phonemes, because 'tt' is pronounced as one t and "er" is usually pronounced as one sound <sup>(2)</sup>. On the contrary, "axis" contains 4 letters and 5 phonemes.

HALLIDAY

Halliday identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years. For Halliday, children are motivated to develop language because it serves certain purposes or functions for them. The first four functions help the child to satisfy physical, emotional and

social needs. Halliday calls them instrumental, regulatory, interactional, and personal functions.

- **Instrumental:** This is when the child uses language to express their needs (e.g. 'Want juice')

- **Regulatory:** This is where language is used to tell others what to do (e.g. 'Go away')

- **Interactional:** Here language is used to make contact with others and form relationships (e.g. 'Love you, mummy')

- **Personal:** This is the use of language to express feelings, opinions, and individual identity (e.g. 'Me good girl')

The next three functions are heuristic, imaginative, and representational, all helping the child to come to terms with his or her environment.

- **Heuristic:** This is when language is used to gain knowledge about the environment (e.g. 'What the tractor doing?')

- **Imaginative:** Here language is used to tell stories and jokes, and to create an imaginary environment.

· **Representational:** The use of language to convey facts and information.

## COPENHAGEN SCHOOL

It is a group of scholars dedicated to the study of linguistics. It was founded by Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965) and Viggo Brøndal (1887-1942). In the mid twentieth century the Copenhagen school was one of the most important centres of linguistic structuralism together with the Geneva School and the Prague School. In the late 20th and early 21st century the Copenhagen school has turned from a purely structural approach to linguistics to a functionalist one, **Danish functional grammar**, which nonetheless incorporates many insights from the founders.

The principal ideas of the school are:

- A language consists of content and expression.
- A language consists of a succession and a system.
- Content and expression are interconnected by commutation.
- There are certain relations in the succession and the system.
- There are no one-to-one correspondents between content and expression, but the signs may be divided into smaller components.

# HJELMSLEV

**Louis Hjelmslev** (October 3, 1899, Copenhagen - May 30, 1965, Copenhagen) was a Danish linguist whose ideas formed the basis of the Copenhagen School of linguistics.

Hjelmslev's sign model is a development of Saussure's bilateral sign model. Saussure considered a sign as having two sides, signifier and signified, and also distinguished between form and substance.

# BLOOMFIELD

**Leonard Bloomfield** (April 1, 1887 - April 18, 1949) was an American linguist who led the development of structural linguistics in the United States during the 1930s and the 1940s.

In the writing of *Language*, Bloomfield claimed that linguistic phenomena could properly and successfully be studied when isolated from their nonlinguistic environment. Adhering to behaviourist principles, he avoided all but empirical description.

Bloomfield is known for applying the principles of behaviorist psychology to linguistics, defining "*the meaning of a linguistic form as the situation in which the speaker utters it, and the response it calls forth in the hearer.*"

# GENERATIVISM<sup>8</sup>



Generative linguistics is a school of thought within linguistics that makes use of the concept of a generative grammar. The term 'Generative Grammar' is given by Noam Chomsky and "Generativism" is a movement or trend which follows the concept of 'Generative Grammar'

# CHOMSKY

The Chomskyan approach towards syntax, often termed generative grammar, studies grammar as a body of knowledge possessed by language users

Noam Chomsky asserts that language is innate.. he proposed his famous theories on language acquisition. According to Chomsky, language is one characteristic that is unique to humans among all other living beings. Chomsky's theories have made it easier to understand the evolution and development of the languages. Noam Chomsky postulated that the mechanism of the language acquisition is derived from the innate processes. Innate is something which is already there in mind since birth. The theory proposed by Chomsky is proved by the children living in same linguistic community. they are not influenced by the external experiences which bring about the comparable grammar.