II DEFINITION OF LNGUISTICS

Linguistics in a broader sense: collective term for sciences which study language (language philosophy- philology- dialectology,…)

General Linguistics /Linguistics in a narrower sense: study of systematic properties of natural language.

Systematic properties of language: Language is as system; i.e.; an entity of elements which are in relation to each other, making the system work.

Main property of a system: a system has structure (pattern of interrelated elements.) Thus, General linguistics studies the structure of language.

The system we describe is not a real object, but a model of reality. It can not be true or false, only more or less adequate.

Linguistics, basically, is the scientific study of language. The founder of modern linguistics is accepted as the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) who proposed that language should be analyzed synchronically and systematically as opposed to diachronic analysis. He suggested language is the modeling of human language in non human animal systems. While the term is widely used, most researchers agree that animal languages are not as complex or expressive as that which they attempt to model .

Linguistics makes use of a descriptivist methodology ,i.e., scientific methods of clarifying /describing properties of language without passing value judgments or normative rules.

Linguistics can be studied under two basic approaches:

Synchronic linguistics: study of language at a given point of time.(for example colloquial constructions in present – day English).

Diachronic linguistic study: study of language change (for example historical phonology).

II 1 LINGUISTICS AND OTHER APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE

Language has long been a concern for manhood throughout centuries and was studied by ancient civilizations like Greeks and Romans. There were also comparative and historical linguistics; however our concern here is the scientific study of language, so we will mainly focus on modern linguistics. Linguistics may be studied and well understood drawing upon Lyon's distinction among micro and macro linguistics. This distinction clearly shows how linguistics is scientific in itself and how it is interrelated with other disciplines like sociology, psychology, anthropology, neurology etc.

II.1.1. Micro-linguistics

Micro-linguistics is concerned solely with the structure of language systems in itself and for itself. It includes phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The case about semantics seems to be problematic; since semantics may be concerned beyond sentential level. Therefore, it is a question of debate among linguists. For some linguists, semantics – the scientific study of meaning- should be located in macro-linguistics, because studying meaning needs a holistic approach.

a) Phonetics:

Phonetics is the study of the production, classification and transcription of the speech sounds. There are three corresponding branches of phonetics: articulatory (the analysis of speech production), acoustic (acoustic properties of production) and auditory (the audition of speech production) phonetics (Demirezen: 1987).

Phonetic alphabet is an indispensable guide for a language teacher as it is an important reference for appropriate articulation. If we consider the fact that a language teacher is a model for students, his knowledge in phonetics becomes an important determinant in the learning environment.

b) Phonology:

Phonology is the study of the distribution and patterning of speech sounds in a language. It is the study of the distinctive sounds of a language, the so-called phonemes. Phonology examines the *functions of sounds* within a language. Focus in phonetics is on finding gross characteristics of speech sounds that are adequate for description and classification of phone perception in language use.

Phonetics and phonology may help to a language teacher in various ways. He/she may use the contrastive analysis of sound patterns among the native language and target language. In addition to this, examples of minimal pairs or exercises on problematic sounds may help students overcome problems in target language pronunciation.
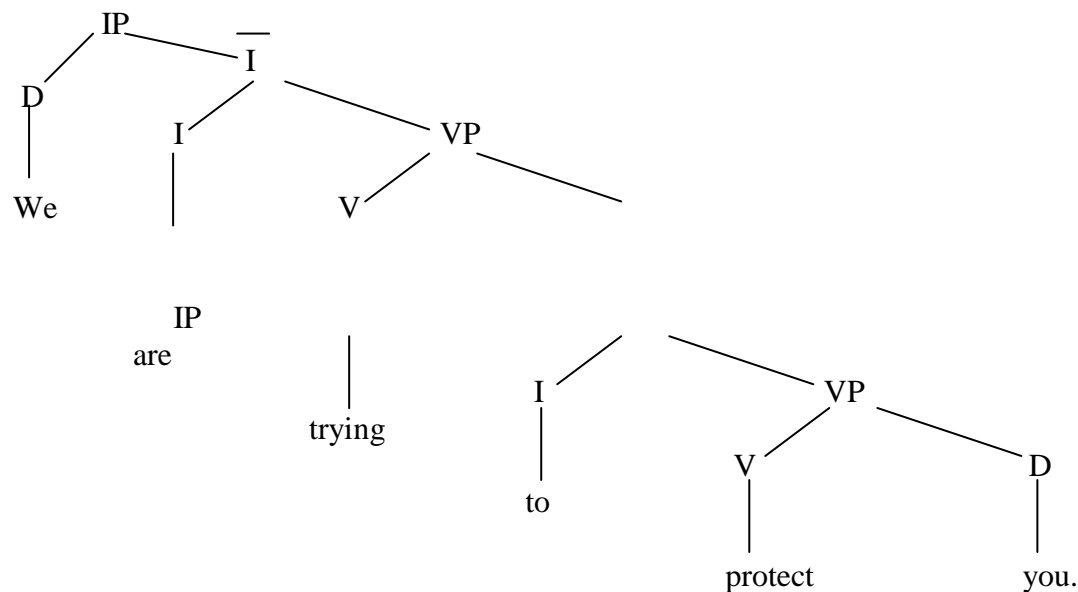
c) Morphology:

Morphology, basically, is the study of how words are formed out of smaller units. Morphology studies the smallest meaningful elements of a language, which are called morphemes.There are free and bound morphemes. The former can stand alone within a given discourse. Morphology can be divided into two areas as derivational and inflectional. Affixes play the primary role in this distinction.

Affixes may be in three forms: suffix (attached to the end of a word), infix (attached within a word) and prefix (attached to the beginning of a word). Derivational affixes have the potential to change the part of speech of a word. In English, infixes are not so common (except examples like mother-in-law etc.). In Turkish, there are not so much prefixes except the examples like namusait, namağlup which have an Arabic origin.

d)Syntax:

Basically, syntax is concerned with the ways in which words can be combined together to form phrases and sentences(Radford:1997). It deals with the structural or grammatical rules that define how symbols in a language are to be combined to form words, phrases, expressions, and other allowable constructs. In syntactic analysis, tree diagrams are used in order to reveal how phrases come together and form grammatical sentences:

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        IP          ‾
       ╱  ╲────── I
      D          ╱    ╲
      │         I        VP
     We         │       ╱  ╲
      IP        │      V
     are      trying
              │       I        VP
                      │       ╱  ╲
                      to     V      D
                             │      │
                          protect  you.
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Chomsky's transformational generative grammar and the recent minimalist approach mainly drew upon syntactic analysis. However, he was severely criticized as he generally used isolated sentences in his analysis which are free from their context. Many linguists believe that naturally occurring data should be used in any form of language analysis; isolated sentences neglect semantic and contextual considerations. A language teacher, surely, should have a broad knowledge on the syntactic structures of both his native language and the language to be taught. Therefore, it may be claimed that a pre-performed syntactic and morpho-syntactic study will be helpful for a language teacher and relatedly for a student. Syntactic knowledge of a speaker will obviously lead to a comprehensive and holistic competence in a particular grammar.

e) Semantics:

In simple terms, semantics is the study of meaning. Meaning in a specific discourse may be analyzed in terms of lexis, sentence, grammar and utterance. The relation between lexical meaning, sentence meaning, grammatical meaning and utterance meaning is mutual; as they can not be saperated from each other in revealing the meaning in a particular discourse.

Therefore, it does not seem to be appropriate to put semantics in micro-linguistics, as it would narrow its scope. Semantics deals with meaning at also beyond-sentence level, which is a fact that John Lyons may have missed in building a distinction between micro and macro linguistics.

II 1.2 Macro-linguistics:

Macro-linguistics is concerned with everything that pertains in any way at all to language and languages (Lyons:1981). It is also named as applied linguistics by many scholars drawing upon its interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary nature. It builds relations with other sciences like sociology, psychology, neurology, anthropology etc.

There are plenty of sub-disciplines in macro-linguistics like anthropological linguistics, geographical linguistics, computational linguistics, corpus linguistics, bio-linguistics, field linguistics, clinical linguistics, forensic linguistics, philo

sophical linguistics etc. But here, it is not possible to deal with all these macro-linguistic areas; so some important ones, namely sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, semiotics and educational linguistics will be explained briefly.

a) Sociolinguistics:

In general terms, sociolinguistics may be defined as the study of language in relation to society. It has become a thriving area within linguistics since 1960s, and the father of sociolinguistics is claimed to be William Labov. Sociolinguistics studies issues like accents, dialects, language change, age, gender, etchnicity, social context, pidgins and creoles, language planning, power, code-switching and code-mixing etc. (Bloomer&Trott:1988).

Sociolinguistic research in language teaching may be performed in different ways. As classroom is a heterogeneous social group, there may be different students from different cultural backgrounds, ethnic identities, genders, socio-economic backgrounds etc. Revealing these diversities in discourse may help a language teacher overcome some difficulties in learning by modifying the classroom discourse.

b) Psycholinguistics:

Psycholinguistics is concerned with language and the brain. In other terms, it builds relations with psychology and linguistics. A Psycholinguist should have a comprehensive understanding of neurology (brain mechanisms), psychology (the processes by which we interpret the world) and linguistics (the variety of cathegories that are found in human language) (Bloomer&Trott:1988).

Psychological mood of a learner is an effective determinant in the success of learning in a language classroom setting. A language teacher should have the capability to analyze and overcome the psycholinguistic problems of a learner by analyzing the language use. This will obviously lead to betterment in the learning process.

c) Discourse analysis:

Discourse analysis is defined as the analysis of language 'beyond the sentence'. Discourse analysts study larger chunks of language as they flow together. Although it's originated back to the birth of rhetoric 2000 years ago, 1960s may be suggested as the emergence of modern Discourse Analysis. A discourse analyst deals with naturally occuring data unlike a sentence grammarian who uses isolated sentences in studying language. Discourse analysis studies discourse markers, turn-taking, speech acts, conversation analysis as well as the discourse of media, politics, sports etc.

Discourse Analysis has a lot to serve to language teachers. In adressing the importance of discourse analysis, Mc Carthy (1991) states that " Discourse analysis is of immediate interest to language teachers because we too have long had the question of how people use language uppermost in our minds when we design teaching materials, or when we engage learners in exercises and activities aimed at making them proficient users of their target language...".

d) Pragmatics:

Pragmatics is the study of the use of signs and the relationship between signs and their users. The distinction between pragmatics and discourse analysis is that pragmatics is mainly concerned with written texts; whereas discourse analysis is concerned with naturally occuring discourse of daily language used in various contexts.

Language teachers use various written materials in their courses, and they also get written assignments or exam papers from their students. Both in the written materials to be used in class or in evaluating the papers of the students, knowledge in pragmatics is of great importance for a language teacher.

e) Semiotics/ Semiology:

Semiotics (or semiology within Saussurean trend), basically, is the systemic study of signs in communication processes. The foundation of semiotics as a scientific discipline dates back to the works of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). The sign is the basic unit in semiotics and is handled in different ways by the co-founders of semiotics, F. Saussure and C.S.Peirce. Saussure defines sign as being composed of a signifier (the form that the sign takes) and signified (concept to which sign refers) and asserts that the relation between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. Peirce has a triadic model of sign as representement (the form which the sign takes, an interpretant (the sense of the sign) and an object (to which the sign refers). Peirce introduces types of sign as icon, symbol and index (Chandler: 2002).

Social signs and codes play an important role in semiotics and lead to the emergence of cultural semiotics and educational semiotics as scientific areas of study. These areas are of great importance for a language teacher; since he/she should teach the cultural signs and codes of the target language to his students keeping in mind that teaching of a language can not be isolated from teaching its culture.

f) Educational Linguistics:

Educational linguistics tries to build links between pedagogy and linguistics and focuses on language use in educational contexts for educational purposes. In addition to analysis of classroom discourse, it is mainly concerned with teacher training and teacher development (Stubbs:1986).

It has a multi-disciplinary nature as it is in close relationship with macro-linguistics (especially discourse analysis and almost any form of applied linguistics) and disciplines like psychology, pedagogy, sociology etc. Although ELT is located in Applied linguistics by many scholars, the exact location of ELT seems to be within educational linguistics. The reason is that Educational linguistics builds direct relations between education as an interdisciplinary area and any form of linguistic research-either micro or macro. However, Applied linguistics is an umbrella term referring to any form of linguistic study which is applied.

II 2. Trends in linguistics:

Linguistics –like any scientific discipline- has undergone an evolution in relation to advances in other social sciences throughout the history. There have been eras in linguistics called historical linguistics, comparative linguistics etc. But here, we will deal with structuralism, functionalism, and generativism; as our aim is to reflect the development of linguistics as a science in the scientific era. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that if diachronic and comparative studies did not exist, language families could not have been established.

I. Structuralism

The birth of structuralism in linguistics traces back to the publication of Saussure's "Cours de linguistique generale" (Course in General Linguistics) in 1916. According to the structuralists every language system is unique and should be

described on its own terms. Because the relation between the signifier and signified is arbitrary; so the linguistic sign is not a meaningful form. The phonological shape of a word results from the network of contrasts and equivalences that a particular language system imposes upon the continuum of sound (Lyons:1981).

Structuralism is mainly concerned with the relations which hold among entities than with the entities themselves. In other words, the synergy of the system (in our case language) is much more than the amount of the total energy of the sum of each element in the system. This structuralist view reveals the consideration of a particular language as a whole system.

II 2 2. Functionalism:

Functionalism is characterized by the belief that the phonological, grammatical and the semantic structure of languages is determined by the functions that they have to perform in the societies in which they operate (Lyons:1981). The best known figures of functionalism are Roman Jakobson and Nikolaj Trubetskoy representing the Prague Linguistic Circle founded in 1926.

Functionalists emphasize the multifunctionality of language and the importance of its expressive , social and conative functions, in contrast with or in addition to its descriptive function. Although it seems to be a new trend in structuralism, it should be considered as a separate trend with its new ideas on functionality and evolutionary steps through scientifity.

II 2 3. Generativism:

Generativism, the founder of which is Noam Chomsky, describes human languages by means of generative grammars. Chomsky opposes to behaviorists (like Bloomfield and Skinner) in saying that human behaviour and language acquisition includes creativity; they can not be described with stimuli-response patterns and conditioning. This creativity serves as the basis of transformational generative grammar: It is possible to create an infinite number of sentences from finite grammatical structures.

Generativists emphasized language universals as opposed to structuralists like Bloomfield who defended the structural diversity of languages. Innateness hypotheses (human beings have an innate capacity to acquire language), mentalism, universal grammar and the competence-performance distinction are key concepts in generativism and Chomskyan revolution.