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P.G. SEM-III  
CC-14  
UNIT 4

# Introduction and Development of Linguistics

As stated by R. H. Robins language is a symbol system of arbitrary conventions which helps the people of a particular community to interact and communicate according to their changing needs and conditions.

Other animal species communication has varied systems such as (a) Sound: Birds and others can communicate by a call that a territory belongs to them and should not be encroached upon.

(b) Odour: an ant releases a chemical on demise and the other ants then carry it to the compost heap.

(c) Body movement: Honey bee dances to indicate food source to its hive mates.

Communication is basically both signals and symbols. such as crying, laughing, animal cries.

In this case most animal communication includes, barking, hoots, grunts etc.

This can lead to the conclusion that

animal communication is primarily of signals  
In contrast, human communication is channelised through both medium of signals

self evident meaning such as traffic light.

Besides this human species has been conferred with the special gift of speech.

As per Hockett, some design characteristics features, which when taken in account as whole, help us to isolate language (Human)

Communication from animal communication.

(i) Duality of structure or patterning: Two levels of structure patterning:

(a) Primary level - compounding of sounds into words

(b) Secondary level - compounding of words into sentence

(ii) Creativity or productivity → the ability to produce new messages at any topic any time.

(iii) Interchangeability → sending and receiving messages is true of human language.

(iv) Cultural Transmissions → set of language communication pattern & convention which develops & grows as result of living of large number of people.

(v) Displacement → Human language is context free whereas animal communication is context bound.

(vi) Specialization → This implies that there should not be a total physical involvement in the act of communication.

(vii) Arbitrariness

(viii) Redundancy.

(ix) Discreteness

(x) Reflexiveness

Broadly speaking development of linguistics can be divided into three phases of evolving, with changing times:

- (a) Traditional
- (b) Structural
- (c) Cognitive

Traditional approach of linguistics refers to the origins of linguistics. Panini <sup>(Sanskrit)</sup> & Plato <sup>(Greek)</sup> gave us reasonably complete grammar-daten. Scholars like Dionysius, Thrax, Aristotle investigated aspects of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Later Latin grammarians came who followed the Greek Model.

Traditionalists took meaning into account to describe grammatical categories. They had more belief in syntax. They were also interested in language as a tool for analysing reality because structure of the language was result of reason. Linguistic, thus found a subordinate to philosophy and language.

In the second phase, development of linguistics started in <sup>late</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> century with Ferdinand de Saussure in Europe and Leonard Bloomfield in America.

As a reaction against the traditionalists and due to discovery of new languages (during this period the European & American linguists visited many countries and discovered/encountered different languages) compelled the linguists to describe each language in its own term. Therefore,

form to the spoken form of language.  
 As a consequence language variety, dialects and registers part of language became descriptive, as opposed to the traditional prescriptive grammars.

The structuralists described, identified and classified languages. As stated by Saussure language is a system of systems. The structuralists proposed discovery procedures which were set of techniques which when applied to unknown languages, helped in discovering correct grammar.

They were though satisfied with the identification and classification of the linguistic facts. They did not give much emphasis on <sup>linguists</sup> intuitive knowledge of language.

	TRADITIONAL APPROACH	STRUCTURALISTS
Status of linguistics	Subordinate to logic & philosophy: focus on syntax	linguistics as autonomous science of languages.
Concept of language learning	did not focus on language learning	Behaviourists view of language learning -
Linguists	Aristotle, Panini Patanjali Katyayana Dionysius etc.	Saussure, Bloomfield, Sapir, Humboldt etc.