**THE SCOPE OF THEORETICAL GRAMMAR. BASIC LINGUISTIC NOTIONS.**

**1.Theoretical grammar and its subject.**

Man is not well defined as *“Homo sapiens”* (“man with wisdom”). For what do we mean by wisdom? It has not been proved so far that animals do not possess it. Those of you who have pets can easily prove the contrary. Most recently anthropologists have started defining human beings as “man the toolmaker”. However, apes can also make primitive tools. What sets man apart from the rest of animal kingdom is the ability to speak: he “can easily object by saying that animals can also speak*Homo loquens”* – “man the speaking animal”. But their sounds are meaningless, and there is no link between sound and meaning (or if there is, it is of a very primitive kind) and such link for man is grammar. Only with the help of grammar we can combine words to form sentences and texts. Man is not merely *Homo loquens*, he is *Homo Grammaticus.*

The main aim of theoretical grammar is to present a theoretical description of the grammatical system of the English language. The language is a means of forming and storing ideas as reflections of reality. Grammatical system of the language consisits of morphology and syntax. Grammatical elements of language preserve unity of meaning and form in the formation of utterances. The main notions of theoretical grammar are grammatical form, grammatical meaning and grammatical categories.

Grammar studies the relations between elements of the language system. The term “grammar” goes back to a Greek word that may be translated as the “art of writing”. But later this word received a much wider sense and came to embrace the whole study of language. Now it is often used as the synonym of Linguistics. A question comes immediately to mind: what does this study involve?

Grammar may be practical and theoretical. The aim of practical grammar is the description of grammar rules that are necessary to understand and formulate sentences. The aim of theoretical grammar is to offer explanation for these rules. Generally speaking, theoretical grammar deals with the language as a functional system.

**2. General principles of grammatical analysis.**

According to the Bible: ‘In the beginning there was the Word’. In fact, the word is considered to be the central (but not the only) linguistic unit (одиниця) of the language. Linguistic units (or in other words – signs) can go into three types of relations:

a) The relation between a unit and an object in the world around us (objective reality). E.g. the word ‘table’ refers to a definite piece of furniture. It may be not only an object but a process, state, quality, etc.

This type of meaning is called referential meaning of a unit. It is semantics that studies the referential meaning of units.

b) The relation between a unit and other units (inner relations between units). No unit can be used independently; it serves as an element in the system of other units. This kind of meaning is called syntactic. Formal relation of units to one another is studied by Syntactics (or Syntax).

c) The relation between a unit and a person who uses it. As we know too well, when we are saying something, we usually have some purpose in mind. We use the language as an instrument for our purpose (e.g.). One and the same word or sentence may acquire different meanings in communication. This type of meaning is called pragmatic. The study of the relationship between linguistic units and the users of those units is done by Pragmatics.

Thus there are three models of linguistic description: semantic, syntactic and pragmatic. To illustrate the difference between these different ways of linguistic analysis, let us consider the following sentence: *Students are students*.

The first part of the XXth century can be characterized by a formal approach to the language study. Only inner (syntactic) relations between linguistic units served the basis for linguistic analysis while the reference of words to the objective reality and language users were actually not considered. Later, semantic language analysis came into use. However, it was surely not enough for a detailed language study. Language certainly figures centrally in our lives. We discover our identity as individuals and social beings when we acquire it during childhood. It serves as a means of cognition and communication: it enables us to think for ourselves and to cooperate with other people in our community. Therefore, the pragmatic side of the language should not be ignored either.

Functional approach in language analysis deals with the language ‘in action’. Naturally, in order to get a broad description of the language, all the three approaches must be combined.

**3. General characteristics of language as a functional system.**

Any human language has two main functions: the communicative function and the expressive or representative function – human language is the living form of thought. These two functions are closely interrelated as the expressive function of language is realized in the process of speech communication.

The expressive function of language is performed by means of linguistic signs and that is why we say that language is a semiotic system. It means that linguistic signs are of semiotic nature: they are informative and meaningful. There are other examples of semiotic systems but all of them are no doubt much simpler. For instance, traffic lights use a system of colours to instruct drivers and people to go or to stop. Some more examples: Code Morse, Brighton Alphabet, computer languages, etc. What is the difference between language as a semiotic system and other semiotic systems? Language is universal, natural, it is used by all members of society while any other sign systems are artificial and depend on the sphere of usage.

**4. Notions of ‘system’ and ‘structure’. General characteristics of linguistic units.**

Language is regarded as a system of elements (or: signs, units) such as sounds, words, etc. These elements have no value without each other, they depend on each other, they exist only in a system, and they are nothing without a system. System implies the characterization of a complex object as made up of separate parts (e.g. the system of sounds). Language is a structural system. Structure means hierarchical layering of parts in `constituting the whole. In the structure of language there are four main structural levels: phonological, morphological, syntactical (синтаксичний) and supersyntatical. The levels are represented by the corresponding level units:

The phonological level is the lowest level. The phonological level unit is the`phoneme. It is a distinctive unit (*bag – back*).

The morphological level has two level units:

1. The morpheme – the lowest meaningful unit (*teach – teacher*);
2. The word - the main naming (`nominative) unit of language.

The syntactical level has two level units as well:

1. The word-group – the dependent syntactic unit;
2. The sentence – the main communicative unit.

The supersyntactical level has the text as its level unit.

All structural levels are subject matters of different levels of linguistic analysis. At different levels of analysis we focus attention on different features of language. Generally speaking, the larger the units we deal with, the closer we get to the actuality of people’s experience of language.

To sum it up, each level has its own system. Therefore, language is regarded as a system of systems. The level units are built up in the same way and that is why the units of a lower level serve the building material for the units of a higher level. This similarity and likeness of organization of linguistic units is called isomorphism. This is how language works – a small number of elements at one level can enter thousands of different combinations to form units at the other level.

We have arrived at the conclusion that the notions of system and structure are not synonyms – any system has its own structure (compare: the system of Ukrainian education vs. the structure of Ukrainian education; school organization).

Any linguistic unit is a double entity. It unites a concept and a sound image. The two elements are intimately united and each recalls the other. Accordingly, we distinguish the content side and the expression side. The forms of linguistic units bear no natural resemblance to their meaning. The link between them is a matter of convention, and conventions differ radically across languages. Thus, the English word ‘dog’ happens to denote a particular four-footed domesticated creature, the same creature that is denoted in Ukrainian by the completely different form. Neither form looks like a dog, or sounds like one.

**5. Language and speech.**

The distinction between language and speech was made by Ferdinand de Saussure, the Swiss scholar usually credited with establishing principles of modern linguistics. Language is a collective body of knowledge, it is a set of basic elements, but these elements can form a great variety of combinations. In fact the number of these combinations is endless. Speech is closely connected with language, as it is the result of using the language, the result of a definite act of speaking. Speech is individual, personal while language is common for all individuals. To illustrate the difference between language and speech let us compare a definite *game of chess* and *a set of rules* how to play chess.

Language is opposed to speech and accordingly language units are opposed to speech units. The language unit *phoneme* is opposed to the speech unit – *sound*: phoneme /s/ can sound differently in speech - /s/ and /z/). The *sentence* is opposed to the *utterance;* the *text* is opposed to the *discourse*.

**6. Systemic relations in language. Paradigmatic (прагматичні) and Syntagmatic (синтагматичні) relations.**

A linguistic unit can enter into relations of two different kinds. It enters into paradigmatic relationswith all the units that can also occur in the same environment. PR are relations based on the principles of similarity. They exist between the units that can substitute one another. For instance, in the word-group *A PINT OF MILK* the word *PINT* is in paradigmatic relations with the words *bottle, cup,* etc. The article *A* can enter into PR with the units *the, this, one, same,* etc. According to different principles of similarity PR can be of three types: semantic, formal and functional.

1. Semantic PR are based on the similarity of meaning: *a book to read = a book for reading*. *He used to practice English every day – He would practice English every day.*
2. Formal PR are based on the similarity of forms. Such relations exist between the members of a paradigm: *man – men; play – played – will play – is playing*.
3. Functional PR are based on the similarity of function. They are established between the elements that can occur in the same position. For instance, noun determiners: *a, the, this, his, Ann’s, some, each,* etc.

PR are associated with the sphere of ‘language’.

A linguistic unit enters into syntagmatic relations with other units of the same level it occurs with. SR exist at every language level. E.g. in the word-group A PINT OF MILK the word PINT contrasts SR with A, OF, MILK; within the word PINT – P, I, N and T are in syntagmatic relations. SR are linear relations, that is why they are manifested in speech. They can be of three different types: coordinate (головні), subordinate (підрядні) and predicative (предикативні).

1. Coordinate SR exist between the homogeneous (однорідними) linguistic units that are equal in rank, that is, they are the relations of independence: *you* and *me*; They were *tired* but *happy*.
2. Subordinate SR are the relations of dependence when one linguistic unit depends on the other: *teach + er* – morphological level; *a smart student* – word-group level; predicative and subordinate clauses – sentence level.
3. Predicative SR are the relations of interdependence (взаємозалежність): primary and secondary predication.

As mentioned above, SR may be observed in utterances, which is impossible when we deal with PR. Therefore, PR are identified with ‘language’ while SR are identified with ‘speech’.

**7. General characteristics of the grammatical structure of language.**

The grammatical structure of language is a system of means used to turn linguistic units into communicative ones, in other words – the units of language into the units of speech. Such means are inflexions, affixation, word order, function (службові) words and phonological means.

Generally speaking, Indo-European languages are classified into two structural types – synthetic and analytic. Synthetic languages are defined as ones of ‘internal’ grammar of the word – most of grammatical meanings and grammatical relations of words are expressed with the help of inflexions (Ukrainian - *зроблю*, Russian, Latin, etc). Analytical languages are those of ‘external’ grammar because most grammatical meanings and grammatical forms are expressed with the help of words (*will do*). However, we cannot speak of languages as purely synthetic or analytic – the English language (Modern English) possesses analytical forms as prevailing, while in the Ukrainian language synthetic devices are dominant. In the process of time English has become more analytical as compared to Old English. Analytical changes in Modern English (especially American) are still under way.

**8. Morphology and syntax as two parts of linguistic description.**

As the word is the main unit of traditional grammatical theory, it serves the basis of the distinction which is frequently drawn between morphology and syntax. Morphology deals with the internal structure of words, peculiarities of their grammatical categories and their semantics while traditional syntax deals with the rules governing combination of words in sentences (and texts in modern linguistics). We can therefore say that the word is the main unit of morphology.

It is difficult to arrive at a one-sentence definition of such a complex linguistic unit as the word. First of all, word is the main expressive unit of human language which ensures the thought-forming function of the language. It is also the basic nominative unit of language with the help of which the naming function of language is realized. As any linguistic sign the word is a level unit. In the structure of language it belongs to the upper stage of the morphological level. It is a unit of the sphere of ‘language’ and it exists only through its speech actualization. One of the most characteristic features of the word is its indivisibility (неподільність). As any other linguistic unit the word is a bilateral entity. It unites a concept (поняття, ідея) and a sound image and thus has two sides – the content and expression sides (план змісту та план вислову): concept and sound form.

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