Literary Theory

Aporia

Greek for logical difficulty, irresolvable doubts and internal contradictions. The term has been associated with deconstructive criticism. The gap or lacuna between what a text means to say and what it is constrained to mean creates aporia.

Author

Two essays: 1. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" [1977] 2. Michael Foucault, "What is an Author? [1980] Moving from work of an individual to 'text', not a personal statement from Author-God but as 'a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture.'

Binary

Structuralist analysis searches for hierarchical strings of binary oppositions in a text under investigation as indicated in the title of Claude Levi-Strauss's *The Raw and the Cooked* (1964).

Body

Lacan, Foucault.

Écriture Féminine. Hélène Cixous in her 1975 essay "The Laugh of the Medusa"

Canon

- 1. Works which could be ascribed to a particular author. Eg. Shakespeare.
- 2. List of works set apart from other literature by virtue of their literary quality and importance.

Just as the church decided upon the Biblical canon, the universities decided of which literary works the literary canon consisted.

Feminist critics constructed rival canon, alternative to the official. This struck at the claim to universality.

For Mikhail Bakhtin, canonization hardens temporary norms into universal ones devoid of culture or time bound values. Heteroglossia is obscured and canonization standardizes and reduces the ways in which a work could be read.

Culture

Raymond Williams: Culture is ordinary. Dominant culture versus popular culture. Culture industry. Culture studies. Cultural materialism.

Deconstruction

Derrida undermines Western metaphysics. A careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text. It is different from the self-involved textual practice of "close reading" of New Critics but an element of Post-Structuralism. The author is no longer seen as

the source of meaning. Meaning of a text is always unfolded before the reader - a ceaseless play of the signifier. Nothing is fixed 'in' the text.

Discourse

For Foucault discourses are 'large groups of statements.' Discourse of medicine: a set of rules and conventions and systems which govern the way illness is talked about. All societies have procedures whereby the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organized and redistributed. Discourse makes possible disciplines and institutions which, in turn, sustain and distribute those discourses.

Ecriture

French for writing, the act of coming into language of a knowledge which is not personal; description of an ideal, future achievement than of a particular type of writing.

Elaine Showalter – American literary critic, feminist, and writer on cultural and social issues – Ecriture feminine - the inscription of the feminine BODY and female difference in language and text.

French feminists - Helene Cixous – The Laugh of the Medusa – surpass the discourse that regulates the phallocentric system.

Epistemology

The theoretical study of knowledge - its nature, how it is to be studied or achieved, what its grounds are.

Althusser – Epistemological break. See: Paradigm shift; problematic...

Feminism

A socio-political movement fighting the tyranny of patriarchy.

Femaleness – a matter of biology, Femininity – a set of culturally defined characteristics.

Showalter – A Literature of Their Own –

Feminine stage – imitating the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition and internalizing its standards of art

Feminist stage – advocacy of minority rights and values

Female stage – self discovery and search for identity.

Radical feminism - Adrienne Rich...

Gaze

The concept has been used to explore the element of desired/denied power in the voyeuristic male utilization of the gaze in cinema, very much in possession of men, depriving women of power and of significant subjectivity. Women are to be looked at, not to look; their alienation from the gaze is an aspect of their passivization and reification.

See Mulvey, Doane, bell hooks...

Grand narratives

Lyotard's book The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1984) – the view that the day of all-embracing, totalizing systems of belief has passed – now on to derive meaning from little narratives, from local justifications.

Hegemony

Hegemony, to Gramsci, is the "cultural, moral and ideological" leadership of a group over allied and subaltern groups. The ruling capitalist class – the bourgeoisie – establishes and maintains its control. The organic intellectuals and others within the working-class, need to develop alternative values and an alternative ideology in contrast to bourgeois ideology.

Humanism

Humanism situated the human essence in individual human beings rather than in social structures or cultural formations: humanism is thus idealistic, and individualistic. Humanism has been considered to be a progressive and secularizing force started to lose its credibility in the late 1960s. The notion of our own identity - gender identity, national identity, e.g. - are not stable and fixed, but rather are fluid, changing, and unstable. Rather than being innate essences, these qualities of identity are "socially constructed." A lot of the theories we'll be looking at are concerned with how such identities are constructed and how they come to look and feel so stable and constant.

Ideology

To Althusser, "ideology is a system of representations endowed with an existence and an historical role at the heart of a given society." It obscures social reality by naturalizing beliefs and by promoting values that support it. The civil society spreads ideology through the law, textbooks, religious rituals and norms so that the people imbibe them even without their knowledge. Ideology is instituted by the state through two apparatuses, Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). The RSA includes law courts, prison, police, army etc and the ISA include political parties, schools, media, churches, family, art etc.

Intertextuality

Julia Kristeva – a permutation of texts – in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersects and neutralizes one another. The concept rejects the traditional humanist notion of the text as a self-contained, autonomous entity in the view that it is but a

text is a tissue of past citations; unconscious or automatic quotations. Bits of code, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages etc. pass into the text and are redistributed within it.

Marginality

Subaltern is sometimes similar to the marginal – individuals may be subordinate positions under a determining and defining established authority. Male experience is the determining and dominating norm invalidating female experience [p 110]

Modernism and Postmodernism

Avant-gardism in art and culture. Assaulting conventional standards and attitudes of realism. Cubism, dadaism, expressionism, surrealism. Modernist literature – James Joyce, Virginia Woolf. Fragmentation – skepticism of the eternal – political and cultural disappointments – Eliot, Ezra Pound. Masculinization of Art – bohemian life-style. Woolf – *A Room of One's Own*.

Post Auratic literature. Confrontation of the reader for collaboration – welcoming, celebrative attitude towards the modern world. if one cannot prevent Rome burning then one might as well enjoy the fiddling that is left open to one. Walter Benjamin - mechanical reproduction – do not reject the popular – fabulation, metafiction. Playful non-representational, artifice of writing, self-reflective. Lyotard – incredulity towards metanarratives.

New Historicism and Cultural Materialism

North American/ British. Renaissance critic Stephen Greenblatt. Historicity of texts and the textuality of history. Shift in value and interest in reading texts. Attention to the past.

Cultural Materialism – concerned to engage with contemporary cultural practice. Marxist cultural analysis

Texts are approached contextually. The earlier historicism viewed totality or unity as a historical fact rather than the product of interpretation or of the ideological leanings of certain groups. Such a homogenizing procedure allows the unified vision of 'historical context' to serve as a fixed point of reference which could form the 'background' of literary interpretation.

Criticism

Plato.

The Republic

Art is twice removed from reality

Aristotle's Poetics.

Poetics and Rhetoric

Mimesis

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The function of poetry, according to Aristotle, is to please.

pity and fear; catharsis

Tragedy, says Aristotle, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds of being found in separate parts of the play, in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of the emotions.

Important elements in tragedy are PLOT, CHARACTER, THOUGHT, DICTION, SONG AND SPECTACLE.

Unity of time place and action

Peripetia (reversal of situation)

Anagnorisis (discovery).

Horace.

Horace was a Roman poet.

Ars Poetica: (The Art of Poetry)

Dulce et utile, sweet and useful

Decorum (the use of appropriate vocabulary and diction in each style of writing)

Purple prose (purpureus pannus, a term coined by him to mean the use of flowery language.

The Ars Poetica was first translated into English in 1566 by Thomas Drant.

A translation by Ben Jonson was published posthumously in 1640.

Longinus or Pseudo-Longinus.

Greek literary critic

On the Sublime

Epistolary

The treatise is dedicated to Posthumius Terentianus, a cultured Roman public figure

Longinus refers to a passage from Genesis, which is quite unusual for the 1st century

Example of sublime (which the author quotes in the work) is a poem by Sappho, the so-called *Ode to Jealousy*, defined as a "Sublime ode".

Longinus finds five principal sources of the sublime, the first two of which are largely the gifts of nature while the remaining three are the gifts of art

(1) grandeur of thought,

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- (2) capacity for strong emotion,
- (3) appropriate use of Figures,
- (4) Nobility of diction, and
- (5) dignity of composition or a happy synthesis of all the preceding elements.

Philip Sidney's An Apology for Poetry

Written in 1580 and published in 1595

Response to Stephen Gosson's The School of Abuse

Poetry is superior to both history and philosophy

Dryden

Neoclasical age.

Dryden and Pope

Against metaphysical poetry.

Importance to realism

Universal truth general ideas of correctness.

Unity of time place and action.

Rhyme

Historical, comparative and liberal criticism.

An Essay of Dramatic Poesy

Criticism flourished in England during the restoration of Stuarts. An Essay of Dramatic Poesy deals with the views of major critics and the tastes of men and women of the time of Dryden.

The work is in the form of a semi-drama thus making abstract theories interesting. In the late 17th century, Shakespeare was severely criticised for his careless attitude towards the mixing of genres. It was Dryden who elevated Shakespeare to height for his natural genius.

The narrative of *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* has four debaters among whom Neander is the one who holds the views of Dryden. Unlike other characters, Neander does not diminish the arguments that are on contrary to his views. Though he himself favours modern drama, he does not blame others.

The beginning of the narrative *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* or *Of Dramatic Poesie* is as follows. A battle is going on between England and the Netherlands.

Four gentlemen namely Crites, Eugenius, Lisideius and Neander are travelling by boat to see the battle and start a discussion on modern literature.

Crites opens the discussion by saying that none of his contemporaries (i.e. moderns) can equal the standards and the rules set by ancient Greeks and Romans. Eugenius restrains him from wasting time on finding demerits. He asks him to find relative merit in Greeks and Moderns.

Views of Crites

Crites favours classical drama i.e. the drama of Aristotle who believed that drama is "imitation of life". Crites holds that drama of such ancients is successful because it depicts life. He says that both classical and neoclassical favour rules and unities (time, place and action).

Views of Eugenius

Eugenius favours modern dramatists. However, instead of telling about the virtues of moderns, he criticises the faults of Classical playwrights. According to him, the Classical drama is not divided into acts and also lacks originality.

Views of Lisideius

Lisideius favours French drama of earlier 17th century. French drama led by Pierre Corneille strictly followed unities of time, pace and action. The French dramatists never mix tragedy and comedy.

Views of Neander

Neander contradicts Lisideius' arguments favouring the superiority of French drama. He talks about the greatness of Elizabethans. For him, Elizabethans fulfil the drama's requirement i.e. imitation of life.

Alexander Pope

An Essay on criticism

Little knowledge is danger

To err is human and to forgive is divine.

Enlightenment Rationality

The role of nature.

'An Essay on Criticism' is written in heroic couplets

Romantic criticism

Lyrical Ballads 1798

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"Preface to Lyrical Ballads" of 1800, William Wordsworth

emphasized nature and the importance of emotion and artistic freedom

emotion is much more powerful than rational thought.

Glorification of Nature

Awareness and Acceptance of Emotions

Celebration of Artistic Creativity (Imagination)

Emphasis on Aesthetic Beauty

Themes of Solitude

Spiritual and Supernatural Elements

Vivid Sensory Descriptions

William Wordsworth

According to Wordsworth, poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings and emotions recollected in tranquility

S T Coleridge

Biographia Literaria

Coleridge borrowed many of his theories from German philosophers without acknowledging their contribution

The three main ideas of Coleridge include the reconciliation of opposites, fancy and imagination and organic wholeness of poetic creation.

Primary and Secondary Imagination

Willing suspension of disbelief.

John Keats

Negative capability

Mathew Arnold

Study of poetry

The real estimate, the historic estimate, and the personal estimate.

'Touchstone' method

He borrows this method from Longinus

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This method was first suggested in England by Addison

Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton

Chaucer lacks the high seriousness of the classics

T S Eliot

Father of English Modernism

According to Eliot, the function of criticism is "the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste."

Impersonal theory of poetry.

TRADITION AND INDIVIDUAL TALENT

"Comparison and analysis"

Criticism is, in fact, as inevitable as breathing.

Tradition is something that cannot be inherited. It is something to be acquired through hard labour.

Linguistics

- Scientific study of language
- Polyglot-person who knows many languages
- Descriptive Linguistics-concerned with the description and analysis of the ways in which a language operates and is used by a given set of speakers at a given time
- Historical Linguistics-the study of the developments in languages in the course of time, the ways in which languages change from period to period and of the causes and results of such changes.
- Proto-language-a language from which other languages have developed or a parent language. It doesn't exist now.
- Cognate-a word which is related genetically to other words which together form a set of cognates descended from a proto-language.

Frater-Latin

Brother-English

Bhrata-Sanskrit

(These are cognates belonging to a set relating to a word which may have existed in Proto-Indo-European.

- Contrastive linguistics-when two or more descriptions of language are contrasted.
- Modern linguistics is mainly descriptive because it attempts to describe fully and accurately the structure of language as it exists at a given time.
- LEVELS OF LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS
- Phonetics-studies language at the level of sounds

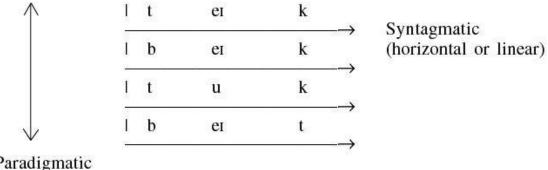
- Phonology-studies the combination of sounds into organised units of speech, the formation of syllables and larger units
- Morphology-studies the patterns of formation of words by the combination of sounds into minimal distinctive units of meaning called morphemes.
- Syntax-is the level at which we study how words combine to form phrases, phrases combine to form clauses, and clauses join to make sentences.
- Semantics-deals with the level of meaning in language.
- Pragmatics-an extension of the study of meaning or semantics is pragmatics-deals with the contextual aspects of meaning in particular situations
- Discourse-study of chunks of language which are bigger than a single sentence
- Graphology-study of the writing system of a language
- Lexicology-studies the manner in which lexical items(words) are grouped together as in the compilation of dictionaries
- Micro-linguistics-some consider the proper area of linguistics to be confined to the levels of phonology, morphology, and syntax
- Macro-linguistics perspective includes other levels of analysis also mentioned abovebroader view
- BRANCHES OF LINGUISTICS
- Psycholinguistics-since language is a mental phenomenon, mental processes are articulated in language behaviour. Psycholinguistics studies these mental processes, processes of thought, and concept formation and their articulation in language, which reveal a great deal about the structures of both human psychology and of language.
- 'Cognitive' psychology is the area which explores how meanings are understood by the human brain, how syntax and memory are linked, how messages are 'decoded' and stored.
- neurolinguistics studies the physiological basis of language and language disorders such as aphasia, loss of memory, etc.
- **sociolinguistics** -The branch of linguistics that deals with the exploration of the relation between language and society.
- **Sociolinguistics** is the study of language variation and change— how varieties of language are formed when the speakers belong to ageographical region, social class, social situation and occupation, etc.
- Varieties of a language that are formed in various geographical regions involve a change in the pronunciation as well as vocabulary. Such changes result in the formation of a distinctly different variety of the language or a **dialect**.
- Sometimes these changes may be present within the same geographical region due to the social differences between different economic sections, e.g. working class and aristocracy. These changes result in **class-dialects.**
- The study of the demarcation of dialect boundaries across a region and of specific features of each dialect is called **dialectology**.
- One dialect may be demarcated from another by listing a number of features which occur in a particular region. The point at which a certain feature (of

- pronunciation orvocabulary) ceases to be prevalent and gives way to another feature is a dialect boundary or 'isogloss'.
- Variation in language may also be due to the specific area of human activity in which language is used. Again taking the example of English, this language is used in different fields—of law, religion, science, sports etc. In each of these areas there is a specific vocabulary and manner of use of English, which defines the legal language, the scientific language etc. This variety of language according to its **use**, is called **register**.
- ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS- The evolution of language in human society and its role in the formation of culture is another aspect of language, society and culture. This is studied in **anthropological linguistics.**
- In **literary stylistics**, we read the text closely with attention to the features of language used in it, identifying and listing the particular features under the heading of 'lexis', 'grammar', 'phonology' or 'sound patterns'. When we have obtained a detailed account of all these features, we co-relate them or bring them together in an interpretation of the text. Stylistic analysis also helps in a better understanding of how metaphor, irony, paradox, ambiguity etc. operate in a literary text as these are all effects achieved through language and through the building up of a coherent linguistic structure.
- LANGUE AND PAROLE Saussure made a distinction between two aspects of language: Langue and Parole. Langue means language, that is, all the rules and conventions regarding the combinations of sounds, formation of words and sentences, pronunciation and meaning.
- Langue is social, a set of conventions shared by all the speakers of a language.
- Langue is abstract, as these particular conventions exist in the minds of the speakers who belong to that society that has created the language.
- Parole, on the other hand, belongs to the individual. When those conventions that exist in the mind as **langue** are used in a concrete form in actual speech or writing, they become instances of **parole**. **Parole** is the actual sounds and sentences produced by an individual speaker or writer. It is a concrete physical manifestation of the abstract **langue** that exists in the mind. If we hear a person speaking a language that we do not know, we hear the sounds and sentences, that is, the **parole**, but we cannot understand them because we do not share the conventions or **langue** that are behind the individual sounds and sentences. So langue is the underlying system which makes the individual performance or parole meaningful. Without it, parole would never be understood and could not serve as a means of communication.
- Thus, parole is:
- Individual performance of language in speech or writing.
- Concrete and physical. It makes use of the physiological mechanism such as speech organs, in uttering words and sentences.
- COMPETENCE AND PERFORMANCE

This concept is also explained by the American linguist NoamChomsky who made a similar distinction between **competence** and **performance**. Competence, according to Chomsky, is the nativespeaker's knowledge of his language, the mastery of the system of

rules, while performance is the production of actual sentences in usein real-life situations. So a speaker's knowledge of the structure of the language is the speaker's **linguistic competence**, and the wayin which he uses it is **linguistic performance**. While competence is a set of principles which a speaker masters, performance is what a speaker does.

- THE NATURE OF THE LINGUISTIC SIGN AND SIGN/SYMBOL DISTINCTION
- The linguistic sign consists of two parts. The **signifier** and the **signified** or the word which signifies and the object that is signified as.
- the relationship between the sounds (& words) and the concept they signify is an arbitrary one.
- That which signifies (the 'word') is the signifier. That which is signified (the 'concept') is the signified. Sign is the composite of both, i.e. it consists of the relationship between the signifier and the signified.
- THE STRUCTURE/SYSTEM DISTINCTION, SYNTAGMATIC AND PARADIGMATIC RELATIONSHIPS
- language is structured and that it is a system of systems. This means that it is structured in such a way that its elements are inter-related to form a system at each level of its structure.
- The relationship between those elements which are similar because they belong to the same class or category is called a paradigmatic relationship which holds between several elements that belong to the same class within a system, e.g. the relationship between plosive consonants in the phonological system, or the relationship between nouns in the syntactic system.
- Paradigmatic relationship = between elements in a class or system,
- only one can operate at a time.
- Syntagmatic relationship = between elements in a linear sequence, structural



Paradigmatic (vertical)

• In the paradigmatic relationship, /t/ can be replaced by /b/, /ei/ canbe replaced by /u/, /k/ can be replaced by /t/. Each can be replaced by another element from within the same system and class. So, in the above example, we cannot put a consonant in place of the vowel but we can replace one vowel by another. In the syntagmatic relationship, the elements have to be combined in the proper sequence. We cannot violate the sequential order.

• SUBSTANCE AND FORM

- Sounds and symbols such as letters of the alphabet that represent sounds in writing are the raw material of a language. They are the phonic (sound) and graphic (written) substance of the language. In themselves, they have no meaning. It is only when they are given a particular shape or order that they become meaningful. That is, it is only when they have some form that they have meaning. Substance and form are two parts of the quality of language. Substance, which is the mere sound or word is only the 'signifier' in Saussure's terms, and in order to make sense it has to be linked withthe 'signified' that is, the meaning, or the concept.
- To sum up, we can say that substance is the elements or 'raw materials' of language such as phonemes, morphemes, or graphemes, and form is the associative order in which these are brought together in a meaningful way. Linguists therefore emphasise that form is the concern of linguistic study, not substance; and it is **form** that makes it possible to study substance.
- DIACHRONIC AND SYNCHRONICAPPROACHES
- The synchronic ('Chronos' stands for 'time') approach sees language as a living whole, existing as a 'state' atone particular time.
- The diachronic approach, on the other hand 'traces the historical development of the language and records the changes that have taken place in it between successive points in time; 'diachronic' is therefore equivalent to 'historical'. Saussure (1916), who made this distinction, gives priority in linguistics to the synchronic approach, and observes that the two approaches must be kept separate.
- MODERN LINGUISTICS: A HISTORICAL SURVEY
- THE INDIAN TRADITION
- The most important name in Sanskrit linguistics is that of the grammarian Panini (around 400 BC), who gave a detailed description of Sanskrit grammar. Bloomfield (1933, p.11) wrote aboutPanini's grammar that it is "one of the greatest monuments of humanintelligence. It describes, in minute detail, every inflection, derivation and composition, and every syntactic usage of its author's speech. No other language to this day has been so perfectly described". This grammar was discovered by Europeans in the eighteenth century, and it greatly influenced the European scholars.
- It opened up a new phase in linguistics—that of the comparative study of languages.
- Panini's grammar is known as the Astadhyayi or Eight Books. It is divided into eight sections and deals chiefly with grammar.
- FEATURES
- Statement of the rules of word formation. These rules, also called 'Sutras' or threads, are in the form of short statements of the processes of word formation.
- There are rules regarding changes which occur in words at levels of phonology and morphology which are calledmorphophonemic changes. One of these is the **Sandhi** by which words are joined and compound words obtained.
- The verb was taken as the core of the sentence and other words were studied in relation to the verb

- , e.g. the relation of noun to verb was designated as 'Karaka' referring to the action and the agent of action.
- The concept of zero-representation was explained first by Panini, where an element changes a word but the change is not marked by change in the external form of the word, e.g. in English, the word for plural noun 'sheep' remains the same: sheep + O = sheep. This is a zero component.
- The theory of sentence structure, which held that words constituting the sentence must belong to appropriate grammatical classes in proper constructions, they must be semantically appropriate with respect to each other and they must be positioned appropriately.
- One of thegreat commentaries on Panini is *Mahabhasya* by Patanjali (around 150 BC). Patanjali was also a great phonetician. Patanjali gave aphonetic description of distinctive sounds and their allophonic variations according to the theory of 'dhvani' and 'sphota' ('dhvani' is the concrete sound, 'sphota' is the abstract underlying form). A sound unit is the 'varna sphota'.
- Bhartrhari, the author of *Vakyapadhiya* (around 700 AD) who analysed the sentence as an undivided utterance, and also considered metaphorical uses of language.
- Sanskrit poetics put forward theories and analyses of literary texts. An example is Anandavardhana's theory of poetic language in **Dhvanyaloka** (circa 900 AD).
- THE GREEK AND THE ROMAN TRADITIONS
- Plato's *Cratylus* (427–347 BC) was concerned with the origins of words (etymology) and gave rise to a controversy between **Analogists**, who believed that language was regular and based on logic (Plato was an analogist) and the **Anomalists**, who believed that properties of things were not related to the words used to name them, and that there was a great deal of irregular change taking place in words (this viewpoint was held by the Stoics, a school of philosophers in Greece).
- The most wellknown Greek grammarians were Dionysuis Thrax (100 BC), theauthor of *Techne*, and Apollonius (200 AD), besides others. Their studies were based on the written language (Greek).
- Chief among the Latin grammarians were Donatus (400 AD) and Priscian (500 AD).
- Varro (20 BC) had made etymological and morphological studies in which he reconciled the analogist/anomalist oppositions.
- AFTER THE RENAISSANCE
- The European Renaissance, which occurred after the 'Dark Ages' of the medieval period spanning several centuries, recovered some of the learning of the classical thinkers of Greece and Rome. With this, there was a resurgence of interest in languages. As a period of geographical exploration set in, there grew an awareness of other linguistic traditions such as the Hebrew and the Chinese.
- Port Royal School of Grammar. This school expounded a general theory of grammar based on logic through the medium of languages such as Latin and French.
- During this time too, English grammars were written. They were preceded by the work of Holder whose *Elements of Speech* was published in 1669 by the Royal Society. Holder was influenced by the English empiricist tradition and made observations on

phonetics and pronunciation, identifying consonant differences and vocalic differences.

• NINETEENTH-CENTURY LINGUISTICS

- As a result of exposure to other linguistic traditions during the age of colonial expansion, there was a great deal of interest in historical and comparative study of languages.
- Scholars were keen to explore how languages were related to one another and formed distinct language groups or 'families', e.g. the Indo-European.
- Western scholars benefitted from the techniques of analysis adopted by the ancient Sanskrit grammarians and used them to describe European languages in a similar way, e.g. Schlegel's essay 'On the Language and the Learning of the Indians' (1808).
- The philologists Rask and Grimm initiated some of these studies in which there was a systematic comparison of word forms, and matching of a sound in one language with a sound in anotherled to an important formulation (known as Grimm's Law). Rask wrote the first systematic grammars of the Old Norse and Old English, and Grimm initiated studies in Germanic linguistics. One of his important contributions has been in devising technical terms for distinctions between 'strong' and 'weak' forms in inflexions, 'ablaut' (vowel gradation) and 'umlaut' (vowel change because of its environmental conditions).
- The nineteenth century linguist von Humboldt wrote insightfully on many linguistic questions. He studied several languages and developed a theory about the essential creativity of human language which all humans have in common; however, the constitution of the formal structure of each individual language is peculiar to the group or community who speaks it.
- One of the most significant trends in linguistics towards the end of the nineteenth century was the emergence of the **Neogrammarians**. This school of linguists tried to give a scientific basis to historical linguistics, they were against theorizing and in favour of more data collection from actual languages. Their ideas had considerable influence on the American linguists such as Bloomfield and Sapir. The neogrammarians gave importance to two areas of linguistics: phonetics and dialectology.

• LINGUISTICS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

- Henry Sweet. In his *Handbook of Phonetics* (1877), he distinguished between distinctive or contrastive sounds—a distinctive sound being contrasted and set off against another sound is a phoneme (though Sweet did not use this term which came into use later to define a minimal contrasted sound unit).
- Subsequently, Daniel Jones used this distinction of English words in his *Outline of English Phonetics* (1914).

• THE AMERICAN STRUCTURALISTS AND BLOOMFIELD

- The American anthro-pologists Boas and Sapir gave a comprehensive description of American-Indian languages such as the languages of the Algonkian family, and thus laid down the basic methodology of modern descriptive linguistics.
- Leonard Bloomfield. In his seminal book *Language* (1933), he defines and delimits the area of linguistic enquiry. He rejects the universalist ideas about language on the basis

- that each individual language has its classes and categories; therefore, the only useful generalizations about language are inductive generalizations'.
- Applying the behaviourist approach, Bloomfield explains language as a pattern of stimulus and response $(S \square R)$. He posits a situation where there is a stimulus from the external world (S) which gives rise an actual response in the form of an action (R).
- In an analytic account of sentence structure, Bloomfield gave the concept of 'immediate constituents', according to which a sentence can be broken up into its constituent forms (since thesentence contains them or is constituted of them).
- Of the later American structuralists, Z. Harris attempted to find discovery procedures
 for a theory of grammar through the process of analysing data, and Pike developed the
 notion of immediate constituents in a method of grammatical analysis called
 tagmemics, which is the analysis of grammatical units according to the functions they
 perform, and brings in the aspect of meaning into syntactic functioning.
- THE CONTRIBUTION OF SAUSSURE
- Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) ushered in a revolution in linguistics and in the understanding of the structure of language.
- the distinctions between **langue** and **parole**, synchronic and diachronic, form and substance
- Saussure also introduced the concept of language as a system of signs.
- THE PRAGUE SCHOOL
- The Prague school consisted of a group of linguists who met regularly in the Czech capital Prague in the twenties and thirties, under the leadership of Count Trubetskoy, a professor from Vienna, and the author of *Principles of Phonology* (1939).
- These linguists applied Saussure's concepts of phonology.
- Other major theorists of this school include Jakobson who studied Russian phonology and discovered that there are a limited number of phonological features selected by a language.
- the Prague school linguists also emphasised the functional aspects of grammar, e.g. Mathesius made statements of all relationship between the grammatical and informational part of the sentence which was characterised as 'theme' and 'rheme' respectively as the 'given' and 'new' information.

• LATER DEVELOPMENTS

- the most significant is the development of the transformational-generative approach to language first enunciated by Chomsky in *Syntactic Structures* (1957).
- This approach overcomes the limitations of Bloomfield's immediate constituent approach which did not explain discontinuity, ambiguity and transformation in sentence structure.
- Chomsky does this by focusing on a native speaker's knowledge of his own language, which he calls 'competence'.
- The characteristic of this approach is that it integrates semantic, syntactic and phonological levels

- While in USA Chomsky led this revolution in grammar, in UK, linguists like
 J.R. Firth, a Professor of Linguistics in London, also addressed language description in
 relation to meaning and context. He gave the idea of 'context of situation' which is that
 utterances (composed of words and phrases) are functional in particular situational
 contexts.
- Firth also contributed to phonology in giving an account of prosodic phonology, i.e. connected speech in which the articulation of syllables and words is affected by factors such as stress, juncture and intonation (also known as supra segmental features). Firth's ideas were developed by the neo-Firthian school led by Halliday and others who worked out the details of the functional grammar suggested by Firth into an elaborate account of syntax known as **scale and category grammar**. This grammar links grammatical (formal) features to function in context.

LANGUAGE VARIATIONS

- Synchronic variations of English can be studied under three heading:
 - Varieties due to language contact
 - Varieties of dialect
 - Varieties of register
- It often happens that a language comes in contact with another language. This gives rise to new varieties of language that continue to co-exist along with the original languages. In modern sociolinguistics, these are also known as 'transplanted', 'nativised' or 'indigenised' varieties.
- The variety of a language according to the *user* is called 'Dialect'. Dialect is determined by a *speaker's* (user's) *social and geographicalbackground*.
- The same individual uses different varieties of a language depending upon the *situation*. This language according to the situation is called *register*.
- Registers can be classified as follows:
 - Register according to the field of discourse (or the purpose and the subject matter of communication).
 - Such registers include the register of science, the register of law, register of religion, the register of journalism, etc.
 - Register according to the mode of discourse: These refer to the register variations determined by the medium (spoken or written) used. We can talk about different varieties of language in a telegraphic message, telephone conversion, a mobile message, a radio, television or newspaper. We can also have differences between the spoken language and the written language.
 - Register according to the style or tenor of discourse: These refer to the relation [to whom] between the speaker and the addressee. These registers include the formal style, the informal style, the frozen style, the colloquial style, the intimate style, and so on.
- Idiolect is individual variation, and *style* is variation made according to some conscious purpose, to create particular effects,
 - e.g. the use of sound parallelism to create rhythm. Stylistic variation in language is important in literature. It accounts for the unique aesthetic qualities of a literary work.
- 'Pidgin language' is a special language with a very limited vocabulary and limited structures, used for purposes like trade, etc. by those people who have no common

language between themselves. Such pidgin languages have come up to be used at several places where speakers of two different languages meet for specific purposes, e.g., fish traders of India and Sri Lanka; in habitants of West Indies and Pacific islands.

- Such pidgin languages were also called 'bazaar' languages.
- When a pidgin language comes to be used for a long period by a community as a whole and it develops its own vocabulary and structures, it becomes a *Creole*. It is the product of two different languages originally used by the speakers.
- A Creole may arise when a pidgin becomes the first language of the community, and begins to be used in a wider range of communicative functions. It becomes a new, restructured system, though it may still not be used in very formal contexts. Examples are: Jamaican creole, Haitian creole, etc. New words appear in creoles, e.g., 'zozo' for 'bird', 'fingafoot' for 'toe', 'pikin' for 'child' and so on.
- *Esperanto* is a theoretical language to be used by all people all over the world. Some people continue to make an attempt to evolve such a world language, based on the vocabulary and codes of important languages in the world. However, so far, no such attempts has been successful.

• DIALECT MAP

- On the basis of differences in phonology, morphology, syntax, etc., it is possible to draw imaginary boundaries separating the geographical areas using divergent linguistic items. The boundary line that separates the users of one area using a particular linguistic item from the area using the other linguistic item is called an *Isogloss*.
- We can draw a number of isoglosses in a similar fashion. All such isoglosses may not coincide. A large number of such isoglosses may overlap and from a sort of *bundle*. The phenomenon is called *bundling*. A bundle of isoglosses is considered a *dialect boundary*. Maps of this sort are called *dialect maps*.
- **DIALECT DICTIONARY-**Since dialects are now being studied in greater detail (dialectology), the lexicons of these dialects have been compiled. Such a lexicon is called a *dialect dictionary*.
- **Sociolect:** A social dialect or a class dialect used by the members of a particular group of a speech community is called *Sociolect*. For example, *slang*, used by young people.
- **Diglossia:** Sometimes a speech community uses two dialects, but there is a strong tendency to use one of these for special, prestigious or formal occasions. This prestigious dialect is called *high*, and the informal, commonly spoken dialect is called *low*. These two are not allowed to intermingle. Such a use of two dialects by a speech community is called *Diglossia*, e.g., 'high' and 'low' Tamil, 'high' and 'low' Arabic.
- **Idiolect:** Within a given dialect one may find differences of speech between individuals. No two speaker speak exactly alike. The term 'idiolect' is used to refer to the idiosyncracies of an individual speaker.
- **GRAMMAR-**A study of grammar includes the study of five fundamental units of grammatical structure. These fundamental units are:Morpheme,Word,Phrase,Clause,Sentence.
- a morpheme is a minimal, meaningful unit in the grammatical system of a language. Morphemes combine to form words. A *word* is the principal unit of lexicography, and

each word finds a separate entry in the dictionary. Any group of words, which is grammatically equivalent to a single word and which does not have its own subject and predicate, is called a **phrase**. **A clause**, in contrast, has its own subject and predicate and is a part of a larger sentence. **A sentence** is defined as a group of words that make sense. It is the largest unit of grammatical description and is an independent linguistic form.

- Some linguists group the words into two broad divisions: **full** words and **empty** words. **Full** words are also named by some as **form classes*** while **empty** words are named by some as **structure classes**. According to these linguists, full words are those words which have a high meaning value (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs), e.g. chair, brandy, affection, play, nice, and quickly. Such words form the main body or the skeleton of the language. The list of such words is quite large and is open-ended as more and more words continue to be added to it every day.
- Form classes are also termed by some as content words or lexical items.
- Empty words, on the other hand, have a low meaning value or have no meaning at all. Their role in the language is that of grammatical linkers or markers of grammatical relationships. Such words include prepositions, conjunctions, articles, auxiliaries, etc. Their membership is small and closed. While the form of words belonging to the full words category changes so often in different sentences, the form of words belonging to the structure classes category remains the same.
- Some linguists divide words into two classes:

Open class Closed class

Words belonging to open class are those generally classified as nouns, verbs adjectives or adverbs These words are said to belong to the open class because more and more words continue to be added to this class. One can always coin new words to add to the existing stock of words in this group. Thus the membership of this group is open ended. English vocabulary is continually being extended bynew words belonging to this group.

The closed class, on the other hand, has a fixed number of words in it. No new words are added to it. The closed class includes words generally classified as Determiners Pronouns, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Modals.

• Sometimes, a particular morpheme may be represented not by the same morph but by different morphs in different environments. Such different representations of a morpheme are called *allomorphs*.--The plural morpheme in English (which combines with a noun morpheme to form a plural) is represented by three allomorphs /s/, /z/ and /Iz/ in different environments (which are phonologically conditioned).

FREE AND BOUND MORPHEMES

- In words such as **unhappy**, **disregarded**, **boyhood**, etc., morphemes such as **happy**, **regard** and **boy** can stand on their own as independent words. Such morphemes are called *free morphemes*.
- On the other hand, morphemes like un-, dis-, -ed,—hood, etc., cannot stand on their own as independent words. They are always attached to a free morpheme or a free form. Such morphemes are called 'bound morphemes'.

- Morphemes such as dis-, un-, -ed, -hood are also called affixes. The form to which an affix is attached is called a base.
- Affixes are classified as inflectional affixes and derivational affixes. Inflection is a change made in the form of a word to express its relation to other words in the sentence. Derivation, on the other hand, is the process by which new words are formed from existing words. Derivation is class-maintaining if the original word and the new word belong to the same class (e.g. boy and boyhood, both nouns, play and replay, both verbs) and is class-changing if the two words belong to different categories (e.g. able and enable: verb from adjective; season and seasonal: adjective from noun; sing and singer: noun from verb).

VARIOUS WAYS OF WORD FORMATION

- affixation, i.e. by adding a prefix or a suffix to a base called stem. Any form to which an affix (either prefix or suffix) is added is called a stem. A stem is called a root when all affixes are removed from it.
- Compound formation- Compounds are formed by joining two or more bases. These bases are, in some cases, separated by a hyphen, while in other cases, the hyphen appears to have disappeared with the passage of time. There is no rule governing the presence or absence of the hyphen.
- Reduplication- Some words are formed out of two such elements as are almost alike.
 These elements may either be identical or only slightly different. Eg.hush-hush, see-saw
- Clipping- Some words are used in shortened form by subtracting one or more syllables from a word. This shortening sometimes occurs at the beginning of a word, at the end of a word, or at both ends of a word. Photo-photograph
- Acronyms- An acronym is formed by joining together the initial letters (or sometimes a little larger parts) of other words and is pronounced as a word.-- The difference between an **acronym** and an **abbreviation** is that the latter may be formed from the initial letters in a phrase on name and is read letter by letter, e.g. IBM, BA, M.Sc., AD, and so on, while the former is formed from the first letter of each word and is normally pronounced as a word e.g. LASER, BASIC.
- Blend- Two words are sometimes clipped and the clippings joined to form a new word. Eg. brunch
- Borrowings- English (or any other language) generally borrows words from other languages with which it comes into contact. Eg. Guru(Hindi)
- Inventions- New words have to be given to new inventions. Such words (as other words of the language) are arbitrary but in the course of time, they come to stay as a part of the language. Eg. X rays
- Echoism- Some words are formed by the sounds that suggest their meaning. Eg.murmur

• TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR

• The traditional grammarians had looked upon Latin as their model. Since English is a member of the Indo-European family of languages, to which Latin and Greek also belong, it did have many grammatical elements in common with them. But many of

these had been obscured or wholly lost as a result of extensive changes that had taken place in English. Early grammarians considered these changes as a sort of degeneration in language and felt that they were duty bound to resist these changes. They, therefore, came out with a group of prescriptive rules for English on the basis of Latin. They ignored the fact that every language is unique in its own way and has to be described as autonomous in itself.

• STRUCTURALIST VIEW OF GRAMMAR

- As a reaction to the traditional approach to language study, there arose in the 20th century a group of linguists called **Structuralists**. Representative figures in this group were Franz Boas, Edward Sapir and Bloomfield. The structuralists felt that linguistics has to be **descriptive** rather than **prescriptive**. Any study of a language, they said, should be based on the observable and verifiable **facts** of the language. They emphasized the following points:
- Speech is primary; writing is only secondary.

 The synchronic study of language is more important than the diachronic study.

 Language is a system of systems. It has a structure of its own.

• The structural linguists tried to describe language in terms of its structures as it was being used. They tried to look for 'patterns' or 'regularities' in language structures. They envisaged that language structure was associated with **phoneme** as the unit of

phonology and **morpheme** as the unit of grammar. This approach was desired to be completely precise, empirical, logical and scientific.

• In order to study the structure of sentences, the structural linguists thought of dividing a sentence into its **immediate constituents**. This process is known as IC analysis. Different methods (segmentation, bracketing, tree diagrams) were used for showing the immediate constituents.

- A sentence is said to consist of an NP and a Predicate phrase. The Predicate phrase consists of a Verbal group and one or more Noun phrase(s), Adjective phrase(s), Adverbials and Preposition phrases.
- PS Grammar-PS rules or Rewrite rules S→NP+VP
- Structural grammar also fails to account for ambiguities in sentences.
- TRANSFORMATIONAL GENERATIVE GRAMMAR (TG) -had its first exponent in Noam Chomsky, an American linguist. In his book *Syntactic Structures* (1957), and later in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965), Chomsky tried to answer several questions left unanswered by the structuralists.
- A basic or a kernel sentence, it may be pointed out, is simple, assertive, declarative, and active in form.
- Transformational analysis not only shows the inter-relatedness between sentences but also explains the ambiguities between sentences that appear identical but are **transforms** from different kernels.
- A kernel sentence is the **deep** structure to which a string of transformations is applied to **generate** the surface structure.

- SUPRA-SENTENTIAL GRAMMAR- consists of items which are used to make connections between sentences. They are also called *cohesive devices*. These are syntactic conjuncts: time relators, place-relators and logical connectors. Substitution, ellipsis and discourse referenceare other types of intra-sentential connection. Lexical cohesion is achieved by use of synonyms, near-synonyms and antonyms.
- SEMANTICS- Semantics is the study of meaning in language.

• The logical or denotative meaning

• This is the literal meaning of a word indicating the **idea** or concept to which it refers. The concept is a minimal unit of meaning which could be called a 'sememe' in the same way as the unit of sound is called a 'phoneme' and is like the 'morpheme' in its structure and organisation. Just as the phoneme /b/ may be defined as a bilabial + voiced + plosive, the word 'man' may be defined as a concept consisting of a structure of meaning 'human + male + adult'

• The connotative meaning

• This is the additional meaning that a concept carries. It is defined as 'the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to over and above its purely conceptual content'.

• The social meaning

• This is the meaning that a word or a phrase conveys about the circumstances of its use. That is, the meaning of a word is understood according to the different style and situation in which the word is used, e.g. though the words 'domicile', 'residence', 'abode', 'home' all refer to the same thing (i.e. their denotative meaning is the same), each word belongs to a particular situation of use—'domicile' is used in an official context, 'residence' in a formal context, 'abode' is a poetic use and 'home' is an ordinary use. Where one is used, the other is not seen as appropriate.

• The thematic meaning

This is the meaning which is communicated by the way in which a speaker or writer organises the message in terms of ordering, focus and emphasis. – It lies in the manner in which a message is organised for emphasis.--It is often felt, for example, that an active sentence has a different meaning from its passive equivalent although its conceptual meaning seems to be the same. In the sentences:

Mrs. Smith donated the first prize

The first prize was donated by Mrs. Smith

The thematic meaning is different. In the first sentence it appears that we know who Mrs. Smith is, so the new information on which the emphasis is laid is 'the first prize'. In the second sentence, however, the emphasis is laid on 'Mrs. Smith'.

The objects in the real world are **referents**, the concept which we have of them in our minds is the **reference** and the symbol we use to refer to them is the **word**, or linguistic item.

• The relation of a word with another word is a **sense-relation**. Therefore, sense is the complex system of relationships that holds between the linguistic items themselves. Sense is concerned with the intra-linguistic relations, i.e. relations within the system of

the language itself, such as similarity between words, opposition, inclusion, and presupposition.

- Sense relations include homonymy, polysemy, synonymy and antonymy. **Homonyms** are different items (lexical items or structure words) with the same phonetic form. They differ only in meaning,
 - e.g. the item 'ear' meaning 'organ of hearing' is a homonym of the item 'ear' meaning 'a stem of wheat'.
- Homonymy may be classified as:
- Homography: a phenomenon of two or more words having the **same spellings** but different pronunciation or meaning, e.g. lead/led/ = metal; lead/li:d/ = verb.
- Homophony: a phenomenon of two or more words having the **same pronunciation** but different meanings or spellings, e.g. sea/see, knew/new, some/sum, sun/son.
- polysemy, the 'same' lexical item has different meanings, e.g. 'bank*', 'face*':
- Two lexical items can be considered as **synonyms** ifthey have the same denotative, connotative and social meaning and can replace each other in all contexts of occurrence. Only then canthey be absolutely synonymous.
- An **antonym** of a lexical item conveys the opposite sense, e.g. single-married, goodbad.
- **Hyponymy** is the relation that holds between a more general and more specific lexical item. For example, 'flower' is a more general item, and 'rose', 'lily', etc. are more specific. The more specific item is considered a hyponym of the more general item— 'rose' is a hyponym of 'flower'.
- Sentence and utterance. Sentence is the grammatical unit which contains a logical statement or proposition, utterance is the speaking or writing of a sentence by a user, in a context.
- *Entailment and presupposition*. One sentence entails another when it includes the meaning of the other sentence. One sentence presupposes another when it implies an earlier meaning which is known.
- THEORIES OF MEANING
- THE COMPONENTIAL THEORY OF MEANING
- This theory based on the structural approach gives an account of word meaning. The total meaning of a word is broken up into its basic distinct components. Each component of meaning is expressed by a feature symbol with a + or mark to indicate the presence or absence of a certain feature. In the following we can consider some features as:

HUMAN: + Human (human being)

- Human (animal) ADULT : + ADULT (adult)
- ADULT (young) MALE: + MALE (male)
- MALE (female)

Subsequently the meanings of some individual words can be expressed by the combinations of these features:

Man: + HUMAN + ADULT + MALE

• TRUTH-CONDITIONAL THEORY OF MEANING

- The basic statement is a logical proposition which is either TRUE or FALSE. Its truth or falsity is dependent or conditional upon the truth or falsity of other statements. For example, we have a sentence 'John is in his office'. This statement will be true if the statement 'John is at home' is false. Basic statements relate to other statements in terms of the following:
- **Synonymy.** Statement X is synonymous with statement Y when if X is true, Y is also true; if X is false, Y is also false. Thus 'He is married' is synonymous with 'He has a wife'.
- **Entailment.** Statement X entails statement Y when if X is true, Y is true; if X is false, Y is false. 'He is married' entails 'He has a wife'. (Entailment and synonymy are similar.)
- **Inconsistent.** Statement X is inconsistent with statement Y when if X is true, Y is false; if Y is true, X is false. 'He is not married' is inconsistent with 'He has a wife'.
- **Tautology.** Statement X is invariably true, e.g. An orphan has no father.
- **Contradiction.** Statement X is invariably false, e.g. An orphan has a father.
- **Presupposition.** Statement X presupposes statement Y when if X is true, Y is true; if negation of X is true, Y is true. 'It pleases John that the weather is hot' presupposes 'the weather is hot'.
- **Anomaly or Absurdity.** Statement X is absurd in that it presupposes a contradiction, e.g. 'The orphan's father is at home' presupposes that 'The orphan has a father' which is a contradiction, and is therefore absurd.
- The goal of truth-conditional semantics is to explain meaning by explaining all the
 entailment relations between sentences in the language. One of the limitations of this
 approach is that it takes only statements into account and does not consider other
 sentence-typessuch as questions.

• GENERATIVE THEORY OF MEANING

- The study of meaning became the subject of renewed interest with the development of the transformational-generative model of grammar. This model sought to relate meaning with syntax and sound through a set of transformations from deep structure to surface structure. **CONTEXTUAL THEORIES OF MEANING**
- In recent years, some theories have been developed which deal with the meanings of words and sentences not as isolated entities but as related to situations of occurrence and use. One such theory is the **Field Theory** developed in Europe by Trier. It explains the vocabulary or lexicon of a language as a system of inter-related networks or semantic fields. Words that are inter-related may belong to the same semantic field, e.g. 'flower', 'bloom', 'blossom', 'bud', belong to the same field. There may be overlapping between fields,
- e.g. the field of 'flower' and 'tree' may overlap in relation to such as 'plant', 'grow'. This is also the basis of the idea of collocation, since collocated items are those which habitually co-occur with certain other items, e.g. 'flowers' collocate with 'bloom', 'letters' with 'writing'. These networks and collocations are built on sense relations in a language.

•

Other contextual theories deal with the context of use of words and sentences by the speakers of a language. A term given by Firth (1957) is 'context of situation', in which meaning is related on the one hand to the external world or situation and on the other to levels of language such as the sounds, syntax and words. When we try to analyse the meaning of a word or sentence, the set of features from the external world or the 'context of situation' becomes relevant, i.e. who is the speaker, who is the hearer, what is the role of each and the relationship of the two, what situation they are in. According to Firth, language is only meaningful in the context of situation.

PRAGMATICS- Semantics is concerned with word and sentence meaning, pragmatics entails utterance meaning. An utterance can be defined as a word or sentence which is uttered by a speaker. The context of an utterance consists of: speaker, the sentence which is uttered, the act performed in the uttering of the sentence, and the hearer.

(Source: AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS: LANGUAGE, GRAMMAR AND SEMANTICS, 2ND ED. Pushpinder Syal and D.V. Jindal)