Mohamed Khider University, Biskra
Faculty of Arts and Languages   *Department of English*
Course: linguistics   *Semester One*
Level: second year   *Teacher: Dr. SAIHI H.*

Lesson 01: Introduction to Modern Linguistics

TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR VS. MODERN LINGUISTICS

The key difference between traditional grammar and modern linguistics is that the traditional grammar is **prescriptive** whereas the modern linguistics is **descriptive**.

TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR	MODERN LINGUISTICS
Traditional grammar refers to the collection of prescriptive rules and concepts about the structure of language. The origins of traditional grammar can be traced back to 15th century B.C., to Aristotle and Plato. However, the most prominent traditional grammarians began writing in the 18th century, when English developed as a separate language. However, it is important to note that principles of Latin grammar are the main basis of Traditional English grammar.	Linguistics or modern linguistics refers to the scientific study of language and its structure. This includes the study of features such as grammar, syntax, and phonetics. Moreover, modern linguistics regards language as a system and grammar is only considered as a systematic description of a certain language, either oral or written.

Traditional Grammar vs Modern Linguistics
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	Traditional Grammar	Modern Linguistics
DEFINITION	Collection of prescriptive rules and concepts about the structure of language	Scientific study of language and its structure, including the study of grammar, syntax, and phonetics
ORIGIN	Origins can be traced back to the 15th century.	Derived from traditional grammar.
TYPE	Prescriptive	Descriptive
FOCUS	Written form	Speech
STANDARDS	Force language into a Latin-based framework	Does not force one language into the framework of another

HISTORY OF MODERN LINGUISTICS

Linguistics, as any science, has passed through many developmental stages. Many theories have been introduced to tackle various linguistics phenomena and issues. Starting, at least, from the 19th century, linguistics had been knowing interesting progressions in terms of the ways, methods, theories, and approaches of treating and conducting **linguistics issues**.

In the 19th & 20th centuries, linguistics had known recognizable developments. ***The school of historical linguistics*** was established and progressed in the 19th century. It was, later, known as ***Neogrammarianism***. At the beginning of the 20th century, ***structuralism*** came to light with the insights introduced by the Swiss-French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. In the second half of the 20th century, ***generative linguistics*** was born and developed with its founder Noam Chomsky's permanent efforts and has been the dominant theory until the present time.

- **The pre-structuralist tradition in the 19th Century**

Linguistics, as a science, began at the beginning of the 19th century. Its main interest was comparing languages to identify their historical developments and to determine their genealogical relations. The period is thus known as ***the comparative historical tradition***. Linguistics at this period was diachronic in its orientation.

- **The advent of structuralism in the 20th century**

At the beginning of the 20th century, and based on the developments linguistics had reached in the 19th century with the Neo-grammarians, there had been a turning point in linguistic theorizing, especially with the advancement put forth by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure's germinal ideas were gathered in the famous ***Cours de Linguistique Générale*** (lectures in General Linguistics), a collection of his lectures in Geneva; the book was based on Saussure's original insights and his students' notes and published in 1916 by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye after Saussure's death in 1913.

SCHOOLS MODERN OF LINGUISTICS

Modern linguistics started to flourish with the eminent work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) "***Cours De Linguistique Générale***". His concepts influenced many subsequent linguists such as Edward Sapir, André Martinet, William Pavlov and Noam Chomsky.

1. The structuralist school

It was led by Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) in Europe and Leonard Bloomfield (1933) in USA. De Saussure considered language as a structure which can be studied independently of other languages or other aspects of language. Language has its own internal structure, and the positions of words and their meanings in a language are dependent on their relationship to other words.

2. The functional school

The structuralists' view of language was opposed by the British linguist MAK Halliday (1973), the American philosopher John Searle (1971) and the French linguist André Martinet (1962). They think that language must be studied as a means of communication, not just as a structure. They stated that structure and function must be considered to understand language nature. This view also dated back to thoughts of Prague school led by Trubetzkoy and Jackobson who dealt with the functions of language.

3. The Mentalist school

The mentalist school was established by Noam Chomsky who called for the existence of mind in language studies. Influenced by Rationalist view of Descartes, Chomsky stressed the role of reason in the discussion of topics like the philosophy of mind and language acquisition.

PRINCIPLE OF MODERN LINGUISTICS

1. Structuralism	Which became the tenets of modern linguistics.
2. Descriptivism	i.e. to describe the rules and facts of language exactly as they find them without any judgements which contrasts the traditional linguistics/grammar which was based on **prescriptivism**
3. Priority of the spoken language	Traditional linguistics was based on written texts; however, there are variations in grammar and vocabulary which are not reflected in written language. As a result, both spoken and written language should be studied.
4. Equality between languages	All languages are source for data to be studied; there is no priority to primitive language. Any existing natural language is a highly developed system and its structure does not directly correlate with the stage of social development of it speech community.
5. Synchronic and diachronic description of language	Two basic principles that can be applied to the language studies. Diachronic studies is related to the historical development and change of language, yet the synchronic linguistics studies language at a single point in time.
6. Paradigmatic vs. syntagmatic relation of linguistic units	A syntagmatic relationship involves a sequence of signs that together create meaning. A paradigmatic relationship involves signs that can replace each other, usually changing the meaning with the substitution
7. functionalism	Functionalism sees functionality of language and its elements to be the key to understanding linguistic processes and structures.
8. Generativism	A linguistic theory that regards linguistics as the study of a hypothesised innate grammatical structure.

References

Sadiqi Fatima & Ennaji. (1992). Introduction to modern linguistics. Afrique Orient.
http://espace-fpn.ump.ma/ftp/etudiants/Cours%20ATM%2020-21/Introduction%20to%20modern%20linguistics%20by%20Fatima%20Sadiqi%20Moha%20Ennaji%20%28z-lib.org%29%20-%20Jaouad%20Radouani.pdf

other links

-   https://www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-traditional-grammar-and-modern-linguistics/
-   https://medium.com/linguistics-space/summary-of-the-history-of-modern-linguistics-25f79690cbb6