Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası M. Füzuli adına Əlyazmalar İnstitutu, *ISSN 2224-9257*
Filologiya məsələləri № 2, 2026
Səh. 246-253

https://doi.org/10.62837/2026.2.246

SABINA BAGHIROVA QASHQAY
YAGUT AHMADOVA HUSEYN
Azerbaijan Technological University
Department of Foreign Languages
103 Shah Ismayil Khatai Avenue,
Ganja, Azerbaijan
Mail:s.bagirova@atu,edu.az
Mail:y.ahmedova@atu.edu.az

THE EVOLUTION OF LINGUISTIC THEORY

SUMMARY

The evolution of linguistic theory shows how scholars' views of language have changed over time. Linguistics is the scientific field that studies the structure, meaning, use, acquisition, and development of language. Linguistic theory, in turn, provides a systematic framework and principles to explain how language works, how it is structured, how people acquire it, and how meaning is created.Structuralism, proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure, explains language as a system of signs. According to this theory, a sign consists of two parts: the "signifier" and the "signified." Structuralism focuses more on the internal structure of language and the relationships between signs rather than on its historical development.Generative Grammar, introduced by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s, shifted attention to the human mind. According to this theory, humans are born with an innate language capacity called "Universal Grammar." The aim is to identify the fundamental principles that enable speakers to produce an infinite number of sentences.Functionalism argues that the structure of language is shaped by its communicative and social functions. Both Functionalism and Behaviorism focus more on external factors. Behaviorism explains language as a learned habit formed through environmental stimuli, while Functionalism claims that language structure is shaped by its communicative purpose and social role. Cognitive Linguistics further expands this view by stating that language is not a separate mental "module," but is closely connected with general cognitive processes such as perception and memory.Finally, Interactionism and Sociolinguistics bridge the gap between biology and environment, emphasizing that language development results from the continuous interaction between a child's innate abilities and their social environment.Together, these theories provide a broad and comprehensive framework for explaining how language is structured, how it is acquired, and how meaning is created.

Key words: Universal Grammar, Functionalism, communicative function, Cognitive Linguistics, social environment, Interactionism

Introduction. The evolution of linguistic theory reflects the changing perspectives on how language is understood, analyzed, and explained. Over time, different schools of thought have shaped the development of linguistics as a scientific discipline. Each theory contributed new concepts, methods, and research directions, significantly influencing modern linguistic studies.

What is the Linguistics and Linguistic Theory? Linguistics studies the nature, structure, and use of language. Linguistics is the scientific study of language structure, meaning, use, and development.It examines how languages are formed, how they function, how people acquire them, and how they change over time. Linguistic theory is a set of scientifically grounded assumptions and analytical tools used to describe and explain the nature, structure, and function of language.Below are the **main linguistic theories**: structuralism, generative grammar, functionalism, cognitive linguistics, behaviorism (in language study), sociolinguistics.Linguistic theory is a systematic framework that explains how language works, how it is structured, how it is acquired, and how it is used in communication.It provides principles and models to answer fundamental questions such as:What is the structure of language? How do humans acquire language? How is meaning created? Why do languages differ and yet share similarities?

Generative Grammar (Noam Chomsky). It focuses on the innate capacity for language, proposing that humans are born with a "Universal Grammar" or Language Acquisition Device. In linguistics, generative grammar is grammar that indicates the structure and interpretation of sentences that native speakers of a language accept as belonging to their language.Adopting the term generative from mathematics, linguist Noam Chomsky introduced the concept of generative grammar in the 1950s. This theory is also known as transformational grammar, a term still used today.Generative grammar is a theory of grammar, first developed by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s, that is based on the idea that all humans have an innate language capacity. Linguists who study generative grammar are not interested in prescriptive rules; rather, they are interested in uncovering the foundational principals that guide all language production.It accepts as a basic premise that native speakers of a language will find certain sentences grammatical or ungrammatical and that these judgments give insight into the rules governing the use of that language.“While 18th-century grammarians were busy telling people not to split infinitives, Noam Chomsky revolutionized the field by suggesting that language isn't a set of social etiquettes, but a window into the human mind itself."

Structuralism (Ferdinand de Saussure). He analyzes language as a system of signs and rules, emphasizing the structure over the historical development (diachronic vs. synchronic).Ferdinand de Saussure was a Swiss linguist whose ideas on structure in language laid the foundation for much of the approach to and progress of the linguistic sciences in the 20th century.The origins of structuralism

are connected with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure on linguistics along with the linguistics of the Prague and Moscow schools. In brief, Saussure's structural linguistics propounded three related concepts. Saussure argued for a distinction between langue (an idealized abstraction of language) and parole (language as actually used in daily life). He argued that a "sign" is composed of a "signified" (signifié, i.e. an abstract concept or idea) and a "signifier" (signifiant, i.e. the perceived sound/visual image).Because different languages have different words to refer to the same objects or concepts, there is no intrinsic reason why a specific signifier is used to express a given concept or idea. It is thus "arbitrary."Signs gain their meaning from their relationships and contrasts with other signs. As he wrote, "in language, there are only differences 'without positive terms.

Functionalism. It argues that language structure is shaped by its communicative function, focusing on how language is used in social contexts.

Functionalism in the philosophy of mind is the doctrine that what makes something a mental state of a particular type does not depend on its internal constitution, but rather on the way it functions, or the role it plays, in the system of which it is a part. This doctrine is rooted in Aristotle's conception of the soul, and has antecedents in Hobbes's conception of the mind as a "calculating machine", but it has become fully articulated (and popularly endorsed) only in the last third of the 20th century. Though the term 'functionalism' is used to designate a variety of positions in a variety of other disciplines, including psychology, sociology, economics, and architecture, this entry focuses exclusively on functionalism as a philosophical thesis about the nature of mental states. Functionalism is the doctrine that what makes something a thought, desire, pain (or any other type of mental state) depends not on its internal constitution, but solely on its function, or the role it plays, in the cognitive system of which it is a part. More precisely, functionalist theories take the identity of a mental state to be determined by its causal relations to sensory stimulations, other mental states, and behavior.

For (an avowedly simplistic) example, a functionalist theory might characterize *pain* as the state that tends to be caused by bodily injury, to produce the belief that something is wrong with the body and the desire to be out of that state, to produce anxiety, and, in the absence of any stronger, conflicting desires, to cause wincing or moaning. According to this theory, all and only creatures with internal states that can meet this condition, or play this role, are capable of being in pain, and an individual is in pain at time *t* if and only if they are in a state that is playing this role at *t*.

Suppose that, in humans, there is some distinctive kind of neural activity (C-fiber stimulation, for example) that plays this role. If so, then according to this functionalist theory, humans can be in pain simply by undergoing C-fiber stimulation. But the theory permits creatures with very different physical

constitutions to have mental states as well: if there are silicon-based states of hypothetical Martians or inorganic states of hypothetical androids that also meet these conditions, then these creatures, too, can be in pain. As functionalists often put it, pain can be *realized* by different types of physical states in different kinds of creatures, or *multiply realized*. (See entry on multiple realizability.) Indeed, since descriptions that make explicit reference only to a state's causal relations with stimulations, behavior, and one another are what have come to be known as "topic-neutral" (Smart 1959) – that is, as imposing no logical restrictions on the nature of the items that satisfy the descriptions – then it's also logically possible for *non*-physical states to play the relevant roles, and thus realize mental states, in some systems as well. So functionalism is compatible with the sort of dualism that takes mental states to cause, and be caused by, physical states.

Other important recent antecedents of functionalism are the behaviorist theories that emerged in the early-to-mid twentieth century. These include both the "logical" or "analytical" behaviorism of philosophers such as Malcolm (1968) and Ryle (1949) (and, arguably, Wittgenstein 1953) and the empirical psychological theories associated primarily with Watson and Skinner.

Logical behaviorism is a thesis about the meanings of our mental state terms or concepts – in particular, that all statements about mental states and processes are equivalent in meaning to statements about behavioral dispositions. So, for (again, an overly simplified) example, "Henry has a toothache" would be equivalent in meaning to a statement such as "Henry is disposed (all things being equal) to cry out or moan and to rub his jaw". And "Amelia is thirsty" would be equivalent to a statement such as "If Amelia is offered some water, she will be disposed (all things being equal) to drink it." These candidate translations, like all behavioristic statements, eschew reference to any internal states of the organism, and thus do not threaten to denote, or otherwise induce commitment to, properties or processes (directly) observable only by introspection. In addition, logical behaviorists argued that if statements about mental states were equivalent in meaning to statements about behavioral dispositions, there could be an unproblematic account of how mental state terms could be applied both to oneself and others, and how they could be taught and learned.In contrast, scientific behaviorism is an empirical theory that attempts to explain the behavior of humans (and other animals) by appealing solely to behavioral dispositions, that is, to the lawlike tendencies of organisms to behave in certain ways, given certain environmental stimulations. Stimulations and behavior, unlike thoughts, feelings, and other internal states that can be directly observed only by introspection, are objectively observable, and are indisputably part of the natural world. Thus behavioral dispositions seemed to be fit entities to figure centrally in the emerging science of psychology, allowing for a science of human behavior as objective and explanatory as other "higher-level" sciences such as chemistry and biology. Also,

behaviorist theories promised to avoid a potential regress that appeared to threaten psychological explanations invoking internal representations, namely, that to specify how such representations produce the behaviors in question, one must appeal to an internal intelligent agent (a "homunculus") who interprets the representations, and whose skills would themselves have to be explained.

Both varieties of behaviorism, however, faced a common problem.

As many philosophers have pointed out (e.g. Chisholm 1957; Geach 1957), logical behaviorism provides an implausible account of the meanings of our mental state terms, since, intuitively, a subject can have the mental states in question without the relevant behavioral dispositions – and vice versa. For example, Gene may believe that it's going to rain even if he's not disposed to wear a raincoat and take an umbrella when leaving the house (or to perform any other cluster of rain-avoiding behaviors), if Gene doesn't mind, or actively enjoys, singing in the rain. And subjects with the requisite motivation can suppress their tendencies to pain behavior even in the presence of excruciating pain, while skilled actors can perfect the lawlike disposition to produce pain behavior under certain conditions, even if they don't actually feel pain. (See e.g. Putnam 1965) The problem, these philosophers argued, is that no mental state, by itself, can plausibly be assumed to give rise to any particular behavior unless one also assumes that the subject possesses additional mental states of various types. And so, it seemed, it is not in fact possible to give meaning-preserving translations of statements invoking pains, beliefs, and desires in purely behavioristic terms; one needs to include reference to the subject's other mental states as well. Nonetheless, the idea that our common sense concepts of mental states reveal an essential tie between mental states and their typical behavioral expressions is retained, and elaborated, in contemporary "analytic" functionalist theories.

Scientific behaviorism faced similar challenges. The theories of Watson, Skinner, et al had some early successes, especially in the domain of animal learning, and its principles are still used, at least for heuristic purposes, in various areas of psychology. But as many psychologists (and others, e.g. Chomsky 1959) have argued, the successes of behaviorism seem to depend upon the experimenters' implicit control of certain variables which, when made explicit, involve ineliminable reference to organisms' other mental states. For example, rats are typically placed into an experimental situation at a certain fraction of their normal body weight – and thus can be assumed to feel hunger and to *want* the food rewards contingent upon behaving in certain ways. Similarly, it is assumed that humans, in analogous experimental situations, *want* to cooperate with the experimenters, and understand and know how to follow the instructions. It seemed to the critics of behaviorism, therefore, that theories that explicitly appeal to an organism's beliefs, desires, and other mental states, as well as to stimulations and behavior, would provide a fuller and more accurate account of why organisms behave as they do.

They could do so, moreover, without compromising the objectivity of psychology as long as the mental states to which these theories appeal are introduced as states that together play a role in the production of behavior, rather than states identifiable solely by introspection. Thus work was begun on a range of "cognitive" psychological theories which reflected these presumptions, and an important strain of contemporary functionalism, "psychofunctionalism" (Fodor 1968, Block and Fodor 1972) can be seen a philosophical endorsement of these new cognitive theories of mind.

Cognitive linguistics. It is an interdisciplinary branch of linguistics, combining knowledge and research from cognitive science, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology and linguistics.https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki /Cognitive linguistics - cite note-1 Models and theoretical accounts of cognitive linguistics are considered as psychologically real, and research in cognitive linguistics aims to help understand cognition in general and is seen as a road into the human mind.

There has been scientific and terminological controversy around the label "cognitive linguistics"; there is no consensus on what specifically is meant with the term. Cognitive linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that explores the relationship between language and the mind, focusing on how language conveys meaning and is shaped by cognitive processes. Emerging in the 1970s, it offers a flexible framework rather than a single theory, evolving with ongoing research and new insights. Key tenets include the idea that language emerges from usage, that theories of language should align with knowledge from cognitive sciences, and that language serves primarily to communicate meaning. Prominent figures in this area, such as Ronald Langacker and George Lakoff, argue against the notion of language as an autonomous cognitive faculty, instead proposing that grammar and semantics are deeply intertwined with conceptual thought and everyday experiences.

Interactionism: It combines biological and social factors, suggesting that language development is driven by the interaction between a child's innate abilities and their environment.

Sociology is the scientific study of human behavior, social relationships, and social institutions. While these elements were explored by philosophers throughout history, the idea of using science as a way to examine society was first proposed by French philosopher Auguste Comte in the nineteenth century. There are generally considered three fundamental perspectives, or theories, that govern sociology. The oldest is called functionalism and was based on the work of English philosopher Herbert Spencer. Inspired by Charles Darwin's concepts on evolution, Spencer believed society consisted of interconnected parts that acted together as a whole in much the same way as a living organism. Families, for example, were sources of social learning and nurturing, education was a vehicle to pass down cultural information through generations, and politics was a means of maintaining order. If

one aspect of the social "body" experienced a problem, other aspects would suffer as well. The conflict perspective also viewed society as consisting of different parts of a whole, but in this theory, the parts were in competition with each other. The perspective, which originated in the writings of socialist philosopher Karl Max holds that society is constantly striving for wealth and power to control unequally distributed resources. The third sociological perspective is called symbolic interactionism. Unlike the other main theories, this concept was an example of microsociology, an idea that viewed human behavior as being influenced on a smaller social level. Symbolic interactionism sees society as being molded by the symbols and cultural messages shared between individuals in day-to-day interactions. The idea was first touched upon by German sociologist Max Weber in the early twentieth century and further developed by American sociologist George Herbert Mead at the University of Chicago. The term itself was coined in 1969 by American sociologist Herbert Blumer.

Literature

1. Chomsky, N. (1965). Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. MIT Press.
2. Saussure, F. de (1916). Cours de linguistique générale. Payot
3. Langacker, R. W. (1987). Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Stanford University Press.
4. . Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). Language as Social Semiotic. Edward Arnold.
5. Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2018). An Introduction to Language. Cengage Learning

Xülasə

Dilçilik Nəzəriyyəsinin Təkamülü

Dilçilik nəzəriyyəsinin təkamülü alimlərin dilə baxışının zamanla necə dəyişdiyini göstərir. Dilçilik dilin quruluşunu, mənasını, istifadəsini, mənimsənilməsini və inkişafını öyrənən elmi sahədir. Dilçilik nəzəriyyəsi isə dilin necə işlədiyini, necə qurulduğunu, insanların onu necə mənimsədiyini və mənanın necə yarandığını izah edən sistemli çərçivə və prinsiplər təqdim edir.

Strukturizm, Ferdinand de Saussure tərəfindən irəli sürülmüşdür və dili işarələr sistemı kimi izah edir. Bu nəzəriyyəyə görə işarə "işarə edən" və "işarə olunan" hissələrdən ibarətdir. Strukturizm dilin tarixi inkişafından çox onun daxili quruluşuna və işarələr arasındakı münasibətlərə diqqət yetirir.Generativ Qrammatika, Noam Chomsky tərəfindən 1950-ci illərdə irəli sürülmüşdür və diqqəti insan zehninə yönəltmişdir. Bu nəzəriyyəyə görə insanlar "Universal Qrammatika" adlanan fitri dil qabiliyyəti ilə doğulurlar. Məqsəd danışanların sonsuz sayda cümlə qurmasına imkan verən əsas prinsipləri aşkar etməkdir.Funksionalizm dilin quruluşunun onun kommunikativ və sosial funksiyası ilə formalaşdığını müdafiə edir. Funksionalizm və Behaviorizm daha çox xarici amillərə diqqət yetirmişdir. Behaviorizm dili mühitdən

gələn stimullar nəticəsində formalaşan öyrənilmiş bir vərdiş kimi izah edir. Funksionalizm isə dilin strukturunun onun kommunikativ məqsədi və sosial funksiyası ilə formalaşdığını iddia edir. Koqnitiv Dilçilik bu yanaşmanı daha da genişləndirərək bildirir ki, dil ayrıca bir zehni "modul" deyil, əksinə, qavrayış və yaddaş kimi ümumi koqnitiv proseslərlə sıx bağlıdır. Nəhayət, İnteraksionizm və Sosiolinqvistika biologiya ilə mühit arasındakı boşluğu doldurараq, dil inkişafının uşağın fitri qabiliyyətləri ilə onun sosial mühiti arasındakı davamlı qarşılıqlı təsir nəticəsində baş verdiyini vurğulayır.

Bu nəzəriyyələrin hamısı birlikdə dilin necə qurulduğunu, necə mənimsənildiyini və mənanın necə yaradıldığını izah edən geniş və əhatəli bir çərçivə təqdim edir.

Açar sözlər: Universal Qrammatika, Funksionalizm, Kommunikativ funksiya, Koqnitiv Dilçilik, Sosial mühit, İnteraksionizm

Багирова Сабина Гашгай
Ахмедова Ягут Гусейн

РЕЗЮМЕ
ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ТЕОРИИ

Эволюция лингвистической теории показывает, как со временем менялись взгляды учёных на язык. Лингвистика — это научная дисциплина, изучающая структуру, значение, использование, усвоение и развитие языка. Лингвистическая теория, в свою очередь, представляет собой систематическую совокупность принципов и подходов, объясняющих, как функционирует язык, как он устроен, как люди его усваивают и как создаётся значение.

Структурализм, предложенный Фердинандом де Соссюром, рассматривает язык как систему знаков. Согласно этой теории, знак состоит из двух частей: «означающего» и «означаемого». Структурализм уделяет больше внимания внутренней структуре языка и отношениям между знаками, чем его историческому развитию.

Порождающая грамматика, разработанная Ноамом Хомским в 1950-х годах, сместила акцент на человеческий разум. Согласно этой теории, люди рождаются с врождённой языковой способностью, называемой «Универсальной грамматикой». Целью является выявление основных принципов, которые позволяют носителям языка создавать бесконечное количество предложений.

Ключевые слова: Универсальная грамматика, Функционализм, Коммуникативная функция, Когнитивная лингвистика, Социальная среда, Интеракционизм

Rəyçi: dosent, f.f.d, Aslanova Gülnara Valeh qızı