**GEG S6 02 (M)**
**Exam Code: ENM6B**

# Introduction to Language and Linguistics

## SEMESTER VI

## ENGLISH

### BLOCK- 1

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

This Course entitled "Introduction to Language and Linguistics" is a compulsory course for BA English Major Programme. The purpose of this course is to introduce our learners to the basic concepts of English Language and Linguistics. With a total of fifteen units, divided into Block 1 and Block 2, the course will familiarise the learners with some of the important aspects of the history of the English Language, English Phonetics and Phonology, Morphology, Vowels and Consonants, aspects of Rhetoric and Prosody, Issues in the Pronunciation of English and Stylistics.

## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

The first block of the Course consists of eight units. The first and second units deal with the history of the English language, the early theories of language as well as the origin of the English language besides highlighting how English vocabulary has undergone changes with time and their effect on the grammatical system of the English language from the beginning. The third unit introduces the learner to the basic concepts of Language and Linguistics, throwing light on characteristics of human language, history of modern linguistics and its branches, etc. In the fourth unit, we shall look at the concept of Morphology. It is a term used in Linguistics to refer to the study of forms of words. Along with an emphasis on morpheme which is considered to be the smallest functioning unit in the composition of words, this unit shall deal in details with other important aspects with reference to the study of form of words like affix, stem, root, word formation, etc. among others. In the fifth unit, we shall take up a study on the different constituents of the sentence and look at the ways by which these constituents are structured, placing an emphasis on Immediate Constituent Analysis. The sixth unit is an introductory unit on Phonetics which is that branch of Linguistics which studies the characteristic speech sounds in terms of their production, transmission and reception. The seventh unit takes up Phonology- a level of linguistic organisation within which two branches of study are generally recognised: segmental and supra-segmental phonology. The eighth unit deals with some important issues related to pronunciation while using the English Language. The sound system of a language is exclusive to that language, and that no other language has exactly the same sound system than English. This unit thus deals with the English sound system - the pronunciation of English - for the sake of wider intelligibility of the speech.

After going through these units, you will be able to get a fair idea on the basic concepts of the English language and its origin as well as gain an idea of phonetics and other aspects related to pronunciation of the English language. While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read some relevant ideas and concepts in "Let Us Know" along the text. We have kept "Check Your Progress" questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study.The books referred during the preparation of the units have been added at the end of each Course or Block. However, this SLM is not an end in itself and the learners are strongly advised to consult the books and other resources recommended for reading.

# UNIT 1 : THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE I

## UNIT STRUCTURE


1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Early Theories of Language

1.4 Origins of the English Language

- 1.4.1 Anglo Saxon Period or Old English Period
- 1.4.2 Middle English Period
- 1.4.3 Modern English Period

1.5 Let us Sum up

1.6 Further Reading

1.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.8 Model Questions


## 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the various early theories of Language
- trace the descent of English language since the Anglo Saxon period
- describe the development of English language during the Middle English period
- develop an understanding regarding the standardisation of the English Language

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of the course entitled 'Introduction to Language and Linguistics'. This unit shall deal with the history of English Language touching upon the early theories of language. The origin of the English language is supposed to have started with the Anglo Saxon Period that traversed through the Middle English period and finally flourished in the present form. Let us first look at the early theories of language so as to gain an idea regarding the history of the language.

## 1.3 EARLY THEORIES OF LANGUAGE

One approach to conduct a study on the history of a language could be to go back to the dawn of human civilisation or even down to primitive times that may throw light on how languages originated. Some of the available theories include the following:

- **The Divine Source Theory:** This theory is based on the Biblical reference that “Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field.” (Genesis 2:20). There are other bases too. For example, according to the Hindu tradition, language is believed to have originated from Bagdevi Saraswati. Many such hypotheses exist to the effect that the earliest writing systems were associated with divine images and inspirations.
- **The Natural Sound Source Theory:** Also known as the **Bow-wow Theory**, this theory holds that the earliest speech was produced by humans imitating natural sounds of creatures or objects which they were referring to. Thus, a dog came to be associated with its bark, its bow-wow; the snake with its hiss, the cuckoo with its two-fold notes and so on. In the tendency among the human beings to imitate the natural sounds lies the origin of language.
- **The Pooh Pooh Theory:** This theory holds that like humans themselves, their language also developed from a more primitive form of emotional interjections, evoked by pleasure, pain, etc. This theory was put forward by Charles Darwin in his *Descent of Man* (1871) with the contention that our more rational language is a refinement upon these expressions of emotion. Many theorists looked down upon the theory with contempt and might have pooh-poohed it, and hence, the **Pooh Pooh Theory**.
- **The Ding Dong Theory:** This theory propounded by Max Muller, the German thinker, contends that the origin of language can be traced back to the sense of rhythm which is innate in humans. The theory contends that there is a mystic relationship between sound and meaning. The early humans had a tendency to imitate, but the

imitation of movement rather than of sound. Examples include the pushing of the stream, the swaying of trees in the wind and so on.

- **The Gesture Theory:** This theory advanced by Wilhelm Wundt and later restated by Richard Paget, contends that the earliest method of communication was through signs or gestures. Some theorists observe that every gesture of the hand is accompanied by corresponding movements of the vocal organs, thereby creating words. Our hand gestures supporting our speech underlies the basis of the theory.

These are some of the theories propounded from time to time and giving readers opportunities to speculate on how and why languages originated. These theories also help us to discuss how one should study the history of a language.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Name the theories associated with the emergence of language.

.....

.....

**Q 2:** What do you mean by “Bow Wow Theory”?

.....

.....

## 1.4 ORIGINS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Comparative philologists have identified several families of languages existing in the world. However, the parent language of the European languages is known by the term Indo-European. It has been speculated that the Indo-European speakers were nomadic tribes who wandered in the lands around the Black Sea about 3,000-4,000 years ago. These tribes split up into different groups and moved in different directions across the continents of Europe and Asia taking along their parent language. But being isolated from the others, each language developed along its own lines so that in the course of years (around 2,000 B.C.) eight different languages evolved out of the original parent

language. Subsequently, these eight languages broke up into other different languages. The primitive Germanic language which evolved out of the parent Indo-European language, broke up into Gothic, Scandinavian and West Germanic. The West Germanic language, in its turn produced Old High German, Old Low German and Anglo-Saxon or Old English.



**LET US KNOW**

**What is a Language Family?**

A language family refers to a set of languages deriving from a common ancestor or parent. A language family can be represented with the help of a family tree. Languages derived from a common parent show some common features and some shared properties. It is assumed that such systematic properties cannot be accidental. These similarities exist because the conceived languages are derived from a common parent. The languages that are derived from a common parent are referred to as daughter languages.

The main branches of the Indo-European family of languages show a neat descent of the English language. However, the origins of the English language can be best discussed with reference to three terms Anglo-Saxon, Middle English and Modern English.

### 1.4.1 Anglo-Saxon Period or Old English Period

The term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ is used to refer to the language introduced in Britain by the Angles, Saxons and Jutes–the tribes from North Germany who invaded Britain. The earliest inhabitants of Britain were the Britons who spoke a form of Celtic language. However, with the invasion of these Germanic tribes, many of the Britons fled into the hills of Wales, Cornwall and Scotland, and henceforth, the tongue of the invaders become the tongue of Britain, or England as it is now called. Today, **Old English** is the preferred term because it stresses the essential continuity of the

language as is used today.

However, Old English was not a homogenous language. It had a number of notable dialects namely– Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon and Kentish among which West Saxon was accepted as the standard form of the Vernacular. It is this dialect patronised by King Alfred, which is now accepted as the basis of our study of Old English language. Old English was a highly inflectional language. This character of the language can be examined with a close look at the various elements of grammar. For example, in Old English there were five possible endings to denote plural -as, -an, -u, -a, and -o. In addition, there were some neuter nouns that had the same forms for the singular and plural. Another characteristic of the Old English language can be seen by the arbitrariness of some of its grammatical concepts. For example, the gender system of Old English was a very arbitrary arrangement. The word *girl* was neuter gender while of the two words for *woman*, one was neuter and the other was masculine.

Though the invasions of Britain took place at different times, all were within the 5$^{th}$ century as recorded by Bede in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. However, the literary age began only after the arrival of the Roman missionaries led by Augustine, who came to Kent in 597. The rapid growth of monastic centres and a growing literary climate led to the growth of Old English lyric, elegiac, heroic and war poems among which *Beowulf* is undoubtedly the most important work of the period. The literary works provides the corpus for a study of Old English vocabulary, syntax and meanings.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Briefly comment on the Old English language.

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### 1.4.2 Middle English Period

Middle English stands midway between Old English and Modern English which, as a literary age, began with the Norman Conquest of Britain in 1066. However, the year actually does not identify the linguistic boundary between Old and Middle English. It could be due to the imposition of French as the court language of England and the gradual decay of Anglo- Saxon traditions and practices that needed some time for Middle English to emerge as a distinct development in the history of the English language.

By the end of the 12th century, French continued to be the language of the court and was taught in schools. From around 1204, there emerged a different political climate resulting from the hostilities between King John of England and King Philip of France as a consequence of which the status of French diminished and a spirit of nationalism grew. The result was the widespread use of English in speech and writing culminating in the major achievements of Middle English literature in the hands of Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, and John Gower.

The Middle English period is characterised by the emergence of a number of dialects of the language notably—Northern, Southern, West Midland, East Midland and Kentish dialects. Just as in Anglo Saxon times, the dialect of Wessex attained the position of a kind of standard, so gradually during the Middle English period, the East Midland dialect came to occupy the status of a standard. There are several reasons for this. Most importantly, it was the language spoken in and around London. As London turned increasingly important developing as the centre of English life and affairs, East Midland dialect attained some amount of importance and prestige over the other dialects. Secondly, it was the language of scholarship patronised by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Thirdly, Chaucer and a number of prominent writers of his day chose this dialect for

literary works. Moreover, this was the dialect favoured by William Caxton, who printed his earlier books in this dialect.



**LET US KNOW**

The Middle English period is characterised by a number of changes that have taken place with regard to various aspects of the languages such as

- Grammatical changes
- Changes in pronunciation
- Changes in spelling
- Changes in and addition to the vocabulary

A study of these changes reveals that the changes from Old English to Middle English have been revolutionary in nature.

At the level of grammar, the changes were in the direction of simplification by the reduction of inflection and acceptance of a fixed word order. Secondly, the substitution of natural for grammatical gender of a noun reduced a lot of arbitrariness in the language. Similarly, in pronunciation and spelling a lot of reforms were introduced especially in case of the large number of words borrowed from French which were given native spellings and pronunciation.

At the level of vocabulary, the development that took place during the Middle English period was extensive. The Normans introduced a new administrative, legal and military system in England as a consequence of which a large number of French words from these fields appeared in the English language. Other fields where the French influence is much prominent are the fields of religion, food, fashion and arts to mention a few which influenced a large number of English words.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 4:** What is the meaning of the term "Middle English"?

.....

.....

**Q 5:** Why did the East Midland dialect become prominent?

.....

.....

### 1.4.3 Modern English Period

The year 1500 is taken as the beginning of the Modern English period, because during this time the effects of the printing revolution initiated by Caxton (1422-1491) had become well established. English Historians agree that the Middle English period ends with the 15th century. When the first printed English book appeared in 1476, the phase of Middle English was virtually over. The language had assumed its modern form, except in spelling which had to wait till Dr. Johnson brought out his *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755).



**LET US KNOW**

The Renaissance opened the doors of Modern English with the exposure to new scholarship and readership. Following Renaissance it was the period of Reformation and this again, though its importance was primarily religious and political, had its effect upon the language. Among the greatest works of the Renaissance the plays of Shakespeare had exercised an overwhelming influence on the English language.

Another work of importance is the *King James Bible*. One does not have to be a Christian to experience the power of its words– which is simple in vocabulary and deeply emotional in

their impact. *King James Bible* had sewn itself into the fabric of the language. If a child is ever the apple of his/her parents' eye or an idea seems as old as the hills, if we are at death's door or at our wits' end, if we have gone through a 'baptism of fire' or are about to 'bite the dust', it seems at times the blind are leading the blind or we are casting pearls before the swine, the *King James Bible*, whether we know it or not, is speaking through us. Such is the influence of this remarkable Scripture on the English language.

The process of standardisation of the English language has been a continuous endeavour in Modern English and it is in this context that Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary* attains a position of immense significance. It is through his dictionary that the language received its first authoritative treatment. The dictionary conferred stability on the language and at least with respect to spelling. Moreover, the dictionary had succeeded in preserving the purity and ascertaining the meaning of the English idiom–an objective of the *Dictionary* as stated by Dr. Johnson himself in his 'Preface.'

The other contributors in the making of modern English include John Milton (1608-1674) who besides being the only major epic poet in English literature was a keen practitioner of the language. He not only added a number of words and phrases to the literary vocabulary but also brought about reforms in the spelling system. Like Spenser (1552-1599) and Shakespeare (1564-1616) before him, Milton's phrases which were taken from their contexts have become familiar in all kinds of extended use in the language. The now common word *pandemonium* was coined by Milton. Expressions like *to save appearances*, *a pillar of state* have become popular expressions today.

The contribution of the Romantic poets in general and William Wordsworth (1770-1850) in particular to the experimentation on poetic diction by using the language of day-to-day conversation is well known. He had professed in his poems to choose incidents from common life and to relate to them as far as possible in a

selection of language really used by men and also to colour the imagination whereby ordinary things can be presented to the mind in a diffirent light.

Charles Dickens (1812-70) is another writer who has contributed to the development of Modern English. His characters not only speak for themselves. Dickens often explicitly draws our attention to their speech, identifying the stylistic basis of the comic effect. Mr. Micawber is a striking example of the pompous use of style in speech.

Thus, the list of contributors to the growth of Modern English can be very extensive with English becoming a world language and with access to a variety of electronic mediums. Indeed, Modern English has come a long way from the language of *Beowulf*.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 6:** Name the authors whose works contributed to the standardisation of English.

.....

.....

**Q 7:** Write a brief note on the contribution of *King James Bible* in the development of the English language.

.....

.....



## 1.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have been introduced to the different theories that could throw light on how languages originated, for example, the Divine Source theory, the Pooh Pooh theory, etc. We looked at the origins of English by tracing the descent of the English language from Indo-European. We looked at the different stages of

development of the English language in its three periods namely Old English, Middle English and Modern English.



## 1.6 FURTHER READING

1) Alexander, Michael. (2009). *A History of English Literature*. London: Palgrave Foundations.

2) Baugh, A.C. & Cable, T. (1993). *A History of the English Language.*(4th Edition.). Routledge.

3) Crystal, David. (1993). *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

4) Jesperson, Otto. (1982). *Growth and Structure of the English Language.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

5) Lyons, John. (1981). *Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6) Wood, F.T. (1969). *An Outline History of the English Language*. Macmillan.

7) Wrenn, C.L. (2011). *The English Language*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.



## 1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** The Divine Source Theory, The Natural Sound Source Theory, The Pooh Pooh Theory, The Ding Dong Theory, The Gesture Theory, etc.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Bow-wow Theory holds that the earliest speech was produced by humans imitating natural sounds of creatures or objects which they were referring to. Thus, a dog came to be associated with its bark, its bow-wow; the snake with its hiss, the

cuckoo with its two-fold notes and so on.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Old English consisted of a number of notable dialects namely—Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon and Kentish among which West Saxon was accepted as the standard form of the Vernacular. Old English was a highly inflectional language. There were five possible endings to denote plural -as, -an, -u, -a, and -o. The gender system of Old English was very arbitrary. For example, the word *girl* was neuter gender while of the two words for *woman*, one was neuter and the other was masculine. The period for Old English is 5$^{th}$ to 7$^{th}$ centuries.

**Ans to Q No 4:** Middle English stands midway between Old English and Modern English which, as a literary age, began with the Norman Conquest of Britain in 1066. Among the important dialects—Northern, Southern, West Midland, East Midland and Kentish, East Midland dialect attained some amount of importance and prestige over other dialects.

**Ans to Q No 5:** It was the language spoken in and around London which became increasingly important as the centre of English life and affairs. It was the language of scholarship patronised by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Chaucer and a number of prominent writers chose this dialect for literary works.

**Ans to Q No 6:** Dr. Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* shaped the modern English language. *King James Bible* had sewn itself into the fabric of the English language. John Milton added a number of new words and phrases to the literary vocabulary. William Wordsworth used the language of day-to-day conversation. Charles Dickens often made use of the speech of his characters, identifying the stylistic basis of the comic effect. Thus, the list of contributors to the growth of Modern English can be very extensive.

**Ans to Q No 7:** King James Bible had sewn itself into the fabric of the language. If a child is ever the apple of his/her parents' eye or an idea seems as old as the hills, if we are at death's door or at out wits' end, if we have gone through a 'baptism of fire' or are about

to 'bite the dust', it seems at times the blind are leading the blind or we are casting pearls before the swine, the *King James Bible*, whether we know it or not, is speaking through us. Such is the influence of this remarkable Scripture on the English language.



## 1.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** a) Who propounded the Ding Dong Theory of Language?

b) What does the term 'Angle-Saxon' refer to?

**Q 2:** Give a brief idea of a Language Family.

**Q 3:** What are the different theories of language according to the Linguists? Discuss.

**Q 4:** Write a note on the changes in language in the Old English period.

**Q 5:** What were the changes in the English language that occurred during the Middle English period?

**Q 6:** How did the authors down the ages contribute to the development of the modern English language?

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 2 : THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE II

## UNIT STRUCTURE


2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Language Change: Vocabulary

- 2.3.1 Borrowings from Other Languages
- 2.3.2 Word Formation

2.4 Basic Concepts of Language

- 2.4.1 Arbitrariness
- 2.4.2 Base
- 2.4.3 Comparative Philology
- 2.4.4 Dialects
- 2.4.5 Standard Language

2.5 Let us Sum up

2.6 Further Reading

2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.8 Model Questions


## 2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss how changes in the vocabulary, grammar, spelling and pronunciation of English have taken place
- identify the various sources that have enriched the English language
- explain the various rules of word formation
- identify the basic concepts of language

## 2.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit is a continuation of the previous unit. We have already discussed the different theories of language and the origin of the English language from the Anglo Saxon period to the modern period in the first

unit. Here, you will also get to learn how changes in the vocabulary of the English language have taken place and how these changes have affected the grammatical system of the English language since the beginning. Thus, we shall start by looking into the changes in the English language.

## 2.3 LANGUAGE CHANGE: VOCABULARY

There are visible changes that have taken place in the vocabulary, grammar, meaning and pronunciation of the English language. However, for the present purpose, we shall focus on Vocabulary only in this unit. You will note that the vocabulary of English has been enriched in the following two ways: **Borrowings from other languages**, and **Word formation.** Let us discuss each of these in the following sub-sections.

### 2.3.1 Borrowings from Other Languages

The term 'borrowings' refers to the words or phrases that have been taken from one language and used in another language. The following are some of the sources which have enriched the English language.

- **Latin Borrowings:** The Latin influence on the English language began even prior to the arrival of Christianity. Latin words introduced into English were mostly related to :
  - Trade and commerce: ceap (cheap), pund (pound), minet (money), etc.
  - Domestic life: coc (cook), cytel (kettle), disc (dish).
  - Fruits and food: pea, plum, cheese, butter, etc.

  Christianity in England gave words like church, Bishop, priest, minister, altar, angel etc. Moreover, Latin words from the field of scholarship, medicine, plant and animal life came to English both during the Old and the Middle English periods.
- **Greek Borrowings:** Greek having been the European language which most fully and effectively developed the

expression of philosophical ideas, it is obvious that ideas drawn from classical literature, philosophy, mathematics, geometry, etc. should enter English. Most of the words of Greek origin extend the English language through Latin. Aristotle's *Poetics* has given words like tragedy, epic, comedy, theatre, theory, elegy, lyric, etc. Similarly, a large number of Greek words from the field of medical science entered English. Examples include neurology, psychology, etc.

- **French Borrowings:** With the Norman Conquest of 1066, French became the court language of England when words of French origin were loaned to English in different fields.

  **Buildings** : *castle, prison, chapel*

  **Religion** : *grace*, *mercy, service*

  **Military** : *sergeant, lieutenant, colonel*

  **Domestic life** : *basin, lamp, table, fork, plate*

  **Food** : *mutton, beef, fry, roast, pastry*, etc.

  The French influence on the English language in the area of vocabulary continues even today. English continues to borrow from French from diverse fields notably automobile and aviation.

- **Scandinavian Borrowings:** The Scandinavian influence on the English language belongs primarily to the Old English period, though their effects became visible only in Middle English to any marked extent. This is so because the Norse settlements were completed before the Norman Conquest. The contribution of these Viking settlers has been a very vital factor in the development of the English language. Indeed, a vast number of Scandinavian words came to some of the dialects of the Old English period. Most of the words are related to war and sea-faring. There are however, a few which relate to more peaceful pursuits eg.

  - **Nouns** : *husband, man, woman, father, mother, summer, winter,* etc.

- **Verbs :** *can, will, meet, come, bring, die, hit, think, smile, ride, spun,* etc.
- **Adjectives & Adverbs :** *full, good, better, best, over, under.*

Looking at the bulk of words of Scandinavian origin, there are very few words now which can be recognised as foreign. The others have become so thoroughly assimilated that it is difficult to think of them as foreign words.

- **Other borrowings:**

With the increased developments in foreign trade and commerce and colonial expansion of England, it is to be expected that a large number of words entered English both from languages within Europe as well as languages outside Europe. Within Europe, a number of Germanic languages, notably Italian, had influenced the vocabulary of English. The Italian influence can be seen in the literary borrowings of Chaucer, Spenser and few other writers.

However, borrowings from outside Europe include those from former colonies like Arabia, Africa and India and the Far East, the British settlements in New Zealand, and Australia among others. Words of Arab origin include *algebra, cipher, zenith, admiral, cotton, amber, assassin, magazine* etc. Words of Indian origin include: *sahib, mongoose, bungalow* and other such words.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Mention some of the sources of English language.

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.....

### 2.3.2 Word Formation

One of the reasons for the rapid expansion of vocabulary is that English allows the creation of new words. Though word formation is a productive process, it is governed by certain rules. Here we shall look at some of the processes of word formation in English.

- **Compounding:**

  You perhaps know that words can be classified into two categories known as simple and complex. The term simple words refer to a linguistic unit which consists of a single free morpheme or a base form. (You will read about the concept of morpheme in unit 4). The dictionary entries of a word is generally the base form. For example in dictionaries you get the word book. It is the base form of the word. They are distinguished from complex words because complex words are made up of prefixes and suffixes which are often attached to the base form. For example, book with the plural suffix attached, gives us the word books which is a complex word. Easy is a simple word, uneasy is a complex word; like is a simple word, dislike is a complex word, etc. On the other hand, compound words refer to those words that are created by the process of compounding. The process of compounding involves combining two or more existing words in order to form a new word. Look at the following examples.

  - **Verb+noun :** pick-pocket, tell-tale, search-light.
  - **Adjective+noun :** black-board, common-sense, high-way, green-house, blue-blood, quick-silver etc.
  - **Noun+noun :** goldsmith, newspaper, homework, rainbow, headmaster, night-guard.
  - **Noun+adjective :** duty-free, home-sick, sea-sick, colour-blind, life-long, world-wide, knee-deep.
  - **Adverb+Verb :** outbid, outlive, overcome, overlook, overtake, undermine, uphold, upset.

- **Verb+Adverb :** farewell, breakdown, lockup
- **Noun+verb+ing :** bird-watching, fault-finding
- **Noun+Verb+or/er :** tax-collector, news-reader
- **Verb+ing+noun :** working-girl, dressing-room

Sometimes, you may have longer constructions as compound words eg. man-of-war, lady-in-waiting. It is possible to form some *adhoc* compound words in a context eg. A buy-now-pay-later scheme.

- **Affixation:**

A very ancient process of word-formation, affixation involves the adding of prefixes and suffixes to a stem in order to create new words. During the Old English period, a large number of English words were produced by this process. Some of the examples include:

- **Suffixing:**
  - **–dom** : kingdom, freedom, boredom
  - **–ship** : friendship, fellowship, scholarship
  - **–y** : healthy, sticky
  - **–ish** : clownish, boyish, stylish
  - **–ness** : swiftness richness, happiness
  - **–hood** : childhood, manhood
  - **–ive** : attractive, affirmative
  - **–less** : helpless, childless, powerless
- **Prefixation:**
  - **a-** : adrift, ashore, alike
  - **be-** : belittle, befriend
  - **bi-** : bicycle, bilingual, bi-weekly
  - **de-** : decontrol, devalue, decentralise
  - **dis-** : dislike, disbelieve, dishonour
  - **en-** : enlist, enlarge, endanger

The extent to which words can be created by the addition of prefixes and suffixes to the base form is indeed almost unlimited.

- **Conversion:**

  It is one of the characteristics of the English language that a word from one word class can be converted to another for use in a sentence. The use of a noun as a verb or an adjective or vice versa is called conversion. Thus, from the noun park, which is an open space where cars may be left, is carried the verb to park as in I parked the car outside the gate. The noun pocket can be used as a verb as in to pocket. Nouns like head, hand, stomach, back, etc. can all be usual as verbs. We can head a ball, hand in a letter, stomach an insult, etc.

- **Reduplication:**

  In English a large number of words especially those words which describe sounds and movements are imitative in nature. Words that are created by the process of imitation of sounds or movements are said to be created by the process of reduplication. Examples include: bang, pop, buzz, click, whizz, rumble, hiss, giggle, etc. These are words belonging to this category.

- **Clipping:**

  It is a process of word formation by means of which a longer word is clipped or shortened to make it monosyllabic and thereby create a new word that may subsist at different levels of the language. They may even compete against each other for sole acceptance. eg.

  - Clipping at the end :
    pop (popular concert)
    pub (public house)
    cab (cabriolet)
    mob (mobile vulgus)
  - Clipping made at the beginning :
    bus (omnibus)
    phone (telephone)
    wig (periwig)

- Clipping made at both ends :
  flu (influenza)
  fridge (refrigerator)

Some of the clipped words have become so popular that their original forms have become almost obsolete.

- **Blending:**

Blending is a process of word formation in which a part of one word is combined with a part of another word in order to form a new word carrying with it the idea behind both the original words. For example:

- **Motel :** blend of the first part of motor and the second part of the word hotel. The word motel thus refers to a hotel where there are facilities for parking cars.
- **Brunch :** blend of the first part of breakfast and the second part of lunch. The word brunch thus refers to a snack taken after breakfast but before lunch.
- **Smog :** blend of the first part of smoke and the last part of fog.
- **Telecast :** blend of the first part of television and the last part of broadcast.
- **Motorcade :** blend of the first part of motor car and the second part of cavalcade.

- **Back Formation:**

Words created by this process are really the result of misunderstanding, though a few have been deliberate. The principle and the way it works can be explained by the adverb grovelling which existed in the 17th century to mean in an abject manner, on the ground as in *He lay grovelling in the dust* . Though the word is an adverb of manner, the word created the misunderstanding that the word is a verb + present participle-'ing' form. Thus, through misunderstanding we have got the verb to grovel. Other examples include editor, peddler, beggar and so on.

English poets and prose writers through the centuries have created new words in the language. In the 20th century the print media has contributed in a big way towards neologism, that is, the creation of new words in the language. For example, T.S. Eliot, in 1920, created the word 'fore-suffer' in "The Waste Land."



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2:** Briefly discuss the two processes which have enriched the vocabulary in English?

.....

.....

**Q 3:** State the meaning of the following processes of word formation with examples from each.

a. Reduplication

b. Clipping

c. Blending

## 2.4 BASIC CONCEPTS OF LANGUAGE

In this section, we shall take a close look at some of the basic concepts of language which are also applicable to the English language.

### 2.4.1 Arbitrariness

The term 'arbitrariness' is considered to be a defining feature of language. The arbitrary nature of the language is visible at different stages of its history. For example, the gender system in the Old English period displayed an amazing arbitrariness with the word girl as masculine gender. At another level, we talk about arbitrariness in the naming of things. In general, there is no inherent relation between the sound that makes up the word and object signified by the word. The relationship between them is arbitrary. Hence, the same animal may be called differently as dog (English),

chien (French), hund (German), kutta (Hindi), etc. in different languages – English, French, German and Hindi respectively.

### 2.4.2 Base

As a term drawn from morphology, it refers to that part of the word which appears as a unit in itself. The unit can take an affix. For example in birds, the base form is bird, while –s is the plural suffix attached to it. Similarly, in the word walked, the base form is walk and the –ed suffix attached to the base form is the past tense affix. In Old English, the base form of the noun could take as many as five different plural suffixes.

### 2.4.3 Comparative Philology

Comparative Philology refers to the study of language history. Scholars who study the history of languages are sometimes called comparative philologists or philologists. The philological tradition is one of painstaking textual analysis often related to literary history. It makes use of a fairly traditional descriptive framework. The approach of the philologists to a study of the history of languages is often complementary to the approach followed by historical linguistics.

### 2.4.4 Dialects

You have come across terms like Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, Kentish, West Midland, East Midland as names of dialects that had existed at different stages of its history. We can define such a dialect as a regionally distinctive variety of a language. A language having a reasonably large number of speakers of the language spread over a vast geographical area can develop regional features which are distinctive. Today, in England, we talk about Scottish dialect, Lancashire dialect, etc. which are regional dialects of English.

At another level, we can look at language variations from a social hierarchical point of view. The upper classes of London speak a variety of English which shows marked variations from the variety used by the working classes. These are different class or social dialects of English.

### 2.4.5 Standard Language

The term refers to a prestige variety of a language used by a speech community and cuts across regional varieties of the language called regional dialects. A standard language is an institutionalised norm which can be used by the mass media. It is the variety used for teaching the language in a formal framework besides being the language of scholarship. Very often one of the existing dialects assumes the status of a standard dialect. Or it may be that the dialect used as the standard variety is an entirely different language variety. There are a number of steps involved in the process of standardisation of a language. For example, it becomes necessary to make a selection of the variety that will have a wider acceptance as a standard form amongst the dialects used within a speech community. Secondly, it becomes necessary to codify the language in terms of grammar, pronunciation, spelling and other writing conventions. Moreover, the language should be able to elaborate its functions in the society.



## 2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we looked at the different stages of changes taking place in the English language mostly at the level of vocabulary. We have discussed in detail how borrowings from other languages like Latin, Greek, Scandinavian, French, etc. have enriched the vocabulary of English language. You are also acquainted with word formation, that is one of the factors for the rapid expansion of

vocabulary in English Language. We have also discussed the basic concepts of language in this unit.



## 2.6 FURTHER READING

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7) Wrenn, C.L. (2011). *The English Language*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.



## 2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Some of the sources which have enriched the English language are Latin borrowings, Scandinavian borrowings, French Borrowings, etc.

**Ans to Q No 2:** The vocabulary of English has been enriched in the following two ways: Borrowings from other languages, and Word formation. Major borrowings include Latin, Greek, French, Scandinavian borrowings among others. While the different processes of word formation include compounding, affixation,

conversion, reduplication, clipping, blending, back formation etc.

**Ans to Q No 3:**

a. Reduplication refers to the process by which words that are created by imitating sounds or movements. For example, words like bang, pop, buzz, click, whizz, rumble, hiss, giggle fall under this category.

b. Clipping is a process of word formation by means of which a longer word is clipped or shortened. For example, pub (for public house), phone (for telephone), flu (for influenza) etc.

c. Blending is a process in which a part of one word is combined with a part of another word in order to form a new word. For example, the word Smog which is a blend of the first part of smoke and the last part of fog.



## 2.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Write a detailed note on the different processes of word formation with reference to English.

**Q 2:** Write a note on the grammatical changes that took place in English from the Old English period till the modern age.

**Q 3:** Write short notes on:

a) Arbitrariness b) Dialect c) Standard Language

**Q 4:** Write brief notes on:

a) Latin Borrowings b) Scandinavian Borrowings

c) French Borrowings

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 3 : LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS: AN INTRODUCTION

## UNIT STRUCTURE


3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Definitions of Language

3.3.1 Distinctive Characteristics of Human Language

3.4 What is Linguistics?

3.4.1 History of Modern Linguistics

3.4.2 Levels of Linguistic Analysis

3.4.3 Branches of Linguistics

3.5 Let us Sum up

3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.7 Further Reading

3.8 Model Questions


## 3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit you will be able to:

- define the them language and explain its features
- discuss about the field of Linguistics
- explain the origin and development of Linguistics
- point out the levels of Linguistic analysis
- describe the branches of Linguistics

## 3.2 INTRODUCTION

One of the features that make human beings superior to any other species is the ability to use language for communication of thoughts and ideas. Knowledge and culture of human societies have been stored and transmitted over generations through language. Since time immemorial, people have tried to determine how the ability to use language first came to men. We have already seen in Unit 1 the different theories that explain

language origin. Here we shall see how language is a complex phenomenon with several distinct characteristics that distinguish it from any other communication system. The way human beings acquire, produce and comprehend language involves many complicated processes.Later in this unit, we shall discuss how these processes are studied in a systematic and scientific manner in the formal discipline known as 'Linguistics'.

## 3.3 DEFINITIONS OF LANGUAGE

Different thinkers have defined language in different ways. Following are some of the definitions:

- "Languages are the principle systems of communication used by particular groups of human beings within the particular society of which they are members"- Lyons
- "Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols."- Sapir
- "Language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols"- Hall
- "Language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture" – Encyclopaedia Britannica

Apart from the Divine Source theory, the Natural Sound Source theory, the Ding Dong theory, the Pooh Pooh theory and the Gesture theory (as discussed in Unit 1), we also have the Social Interaction Source theory. Also referred to as the **ye-ho-ho theory,** this suggests that that the sounds of a human being involved in physical effort could be the source of language, particularly when that effort involved several people and the interaction had to be coordinated. So, a group of primitive humans might develop a set of hums, grunts, groans and curses that were used when they were lifting and carrying large pieces of trees or dead mammoths which they hunted.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** The Social Interaction Source theory is also known as _____.

**Q 2:** Give Lyons' definition of Language.

.....

.....

### 3.3.1 Distinctive Characteristics of Human Language

Language is a species-specific property as it is only human beings who can engage in the use of language. Other species also have means to communicate among themselves but these communication systems do not possess many of the distinct qualities found in human languages. Charles F. Hockett came up with a list of such distinctive features of human language, which he termed as 'design features of language'. Some of these important features are:

- **Arbitrariness**: In human languages words are used to denote objects in the world. However, there is no direct relation between the words and the objects to which they refer. The things and the words do not share any physical similarity. For example, the sound of the word 'tree' and the letters used to write it does not resemble the trees we see in the real at all. Words serve only as symbols which are accepted as referring to an object by means of consensus of the speakers of that language. Thus, the relation between language and their meaning is arbitrary in nature.
- **Semanticity**: When human beings produce linguistic units like sounds, words or sentences, they convey some meanings. Thus meanings are inextricably attached with the language that human beings speak. Any sound without meaning is mere noise and not language.

- **Discreteness**: Language is made up of discrete units which can be combined and recombined in a number of ways to communicate different meanings. For instance, sentences can be made by combining words and the same words can be used in different combinations to form different sentences. Similarly, different combinations of discrete sounds lead to formation of several words.
- **Displacement**: Human languages can be used to refer to things, people and event that are distant in time and space. People can talk about something that happened in the past or has the possibility of happening in the future. People can also communicate about things that are physically distant or non-existent, like something happening in far off places or a fictional story. While in animal communication system, the expressions are in reaction to something in the immediate environment. For example, some monkeys cry in a particular way when they encounter enemies.
- **Productivity**: Human beings are capable of producing infinite number of utterances and novel sentences to describe new situations. They make use of the limited vocabulary and sounds to generate uncountable novel expressions. Thus, human yet language is productive in nature. Animal communication systems, on the other hand, consist of a fixed and small number of utterances, beyond which no new signal is possible to make.
- **Cultural Transmission:** Human beings acquire their language from the members of the society they live in. Although, the ability to learn a language is intrinsic in all human, yet we learn specific words and grammatical structures of the language community in which we are raised. However, in case of animals, the communication systems are purely genetic and instinctive. This is the reason as to why all dogs bark regardless of whichever place they are in.

While a human infant born to Chinese parents will speak English if he is raised by a British family.

- **Duality of Patterning**: Language involves two layers of structures. One is the physical level, the production of individual sounds. The other layer is the aspect of meaning, combination of sounds which have some meaning associated with it. Thus the process of language production is about double articulation, which means the speaker is engaged in speaking individual sounds, and meaningful words at the same time.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Human languages can be used to refer to things, people and event that are distant in time and space. This property of language is called_____.

**Q 4:** Who termed the distinctive features of human language as 'design feature of language'?

.....

.....

## 3.4 WHAT IS LINGUISTICS?

Linguistics is precisely defined as the scientific study of language. Etymologically, the word 'Linguistics' has come from the Latin terms 'lingua' which means 'tongue' and 'istics' which means 'knowledge'. Thus Linguistics refers to the study of language, how it is organised, produced, understood and made use of in different ways by human beings. Here, the object of study is not individual languages, but human language in general. According to Robins, "Linguistics is concerned with human language as a universal and recognisable part of human behaviour." Linguistics is concerned with the scientific understanding of the role of language in the lives of human beings. It studies language, describes the nature of language and develops and tests theories on different aspects

of language. Based on different approaches to the study of language, Linguistics can be divided into three major sub-disciplines:

- **Descriptive Linguistics:** In Descriptive Linguistics, linguists describe a language of a particular community as it is used by the members at a particular point in time.
- **Historical Linguistics:** Historical Linguistics studies the development of a particular language over the course of time. It is concerned with the changes a language undergoes throughout its evolution to the current state.
- **Comparative Linguistics:** Comparative Linguistics looks into the similarities and differences among different languages. The goal of comparative study of languages can be either investigating historical relation or classifying languages based on shared features.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 5:** Etymologically, the word 'Linguistics' has come from Latin/French Language. Choose the correct option.

.....

.....

**Q 6:** What are the major sub-disciplines of Linguistics?

.....

.....

### 3.4.1 History of Modern Linguistics

In the philosophical traditions of many classical civilisations, considerable discourses are found to be on the idea of language and its organisation. Ancient Greece, India and Rome in particular had quite rich grammatical traditions. In India, Sanskrit was the language of the religious texts and much emphasis was placed on learning and maintaining the language it its purest form. The most important grammarian of the Sanskrit language was Panini. He wrote the Sanskrit grammar named *Astadhyayi* (around 400

BC). Here, he dealt with aspects of sound, meaning and grammar of the language. Another grammarian named Patanjali prepared a commentary on Astadhyayi which came to be known as *Mahabhashya* around 150 BC. Later on many others like Bhartrhari also attempted to study Sanskrit systematically.

In Greece, philosophers tried giving philosophical and logical explanations of language. Plato's *Cratylus* involved discussion on the origin of words. Grammarians like Dionysius Thrax and Apollonius attempted to analyse etymology, grammar and sound systems of Greek. Later on, Latin grammarians like Donatus and Priscian explained their language using the formal terminologies developed by the Greeks.

However, modern Linguistics started developing only from the nineteenth century. The colonial expansion that was taking place at that age led to the exposure of different languages around the world. This in turn led to a growing interest in comparative and historical study of the languages. The most significant contribution to modern linguistics was from a British officer in India named William Jones. He discovered that Sanskrit and major languages of Europe were genetically related. Many western scholars followed the ancient grammatical texts and compared the modern day languages with the classical ones. Thinkers like Rusk and Grimm, Von Humboldt were engaged in comparative studies of languages that aimed at formulation of general theories. However, towards the end of nineteenth century, a new group of linguists emerged, who were known as 'neogrammarians'. This school of linguists laid more emphasis on studying living languages in their own right and describing them as they were.

The twentieth century saw a significant growth in descriptive linguistic word. Languages were being observed and studied in their natural setting. Attention was now shifted from historical change in language to structure of languages which was found to be systematic and rule-governed. Around the 1920's the

'structuralist school' started developing as a result of growing interest in organisation of sound systems and internal structure of words and sentences. In the latter half of the century, it was realised that despite having many differences, all the languages of the world shared some commonalities. The 'generative' theory initiated by the linguist Noam Chomsky in 1957 finds this fact as a consequence of the human brain being 'prewired' for particular properties of grammar. The claims of this school have been the basis of a great deal of recent linguistic research, and have been one of the most important areas of controversy in the discipline. Apart from these concerns, some linguistic studies also concentrated on meanings of language. J. R Firth, for example, addressed language description in relation to meaning in context. He brought the idea that linguistic expressions serve certain functions in different contexts.

With the exposure to more and more languages around the world, the existing theoretical frameworks of linguistic studies have undergone significant modifications. Moreover, number of studies of language in relation to other branches of knowledge has also increased over the years.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 7:** Panini wrote the Sanskrit Grammar namely, _____.

**Q 8:** *Mahabhashya* was written by _____.

**Q 9:** Name two Greek Grammarians.

.....

.....

**Q 10:** What did the Neogrammarian school emphasise on?

.....

.....

**Q 11:** The idea that properties of grammar are prewired in human being was initiated by_____.

### 3.4.2 Levels of Linguistic Analysis

Language is a system of systems. It has different component systems that are organised hierarchically. As we know, while using language we utter sounds which are combined to form words. Words are then combined together to formulate sentences. Thus, the process of language comprises several different levels. In linguistics, all these levels are analysed separately.

- **Phonetics and Phonology**: Phonetics and Phonology deals with the first level of the linguistic structure, i.e sounds. Phonetics is the study of articulation of speech sounds by the human speech mechanism and their perception through the auditory system. Phonology, on the other hand, is concerned with sound systems of individual languages. It analyses the sounds that are present in a particular language and their possible combinations in the same.
- **Morphology**: Morphology studies how words are formed by combining different sounds together. The minimal meaningful unit of a word is called a morpheme. Sounds combine to form morphemes, and words are formed through the combination of morphemes.
- **Syntax:** Words are put together in certain orders to produce phrases, which are then combined to form clauses and the combination of clause leads to the formation of complete sentences. Syntax studies formation of phrases, clauses and sentences. It deals with the rules that govern these formation processes.
- **Semantics:** Semantics is the study of meaning. It deals with meaning at both at the word-level as well the sentence-level. Different meanings are associated with different words and when words combine to form sentence, their meanings contribute to the overall meaning of the sentence.

- **Pragmatics:** Meanings of an utterance do not entirely come from the words in it. Some aspect of meaning is derived from the situation in which the utterance is made. This contextual aspect of meaning is studied in Pragmatics.
- **Discourse:** Discourse is the highest level of linguistic analysis. Human language often involves several sentences which are related to one another. Such chunks of language are called 'texts'. Discourse studies such texts and analyses how different sentences are combined to give rise to a coherent text.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 12:** The minimal meaningful unit of a word is called a _____.

**Q 13:** (Phonetics/Phonology) _____ studies sound systems of individual languages.

**Q 14:** The contextual aspect of meaning is studied in _____.

### 3.4.3 Branches of Linguistics

Language is a phenomenon which is prevalent in almost all areas of human activities. Thus, language in relation to different areas of knowledge has been of great interest for modern linguists. Such growing interest has led to the growth of several branches of linguistics over the years. We will discuss some of the important branches of linguistics below–

- **Sociolinguistics:** The branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society is known as Sociolinguistics. Use of the same language varies depending on the social identity of the speaker/listeners as well as the social situations. Sociolinguistics explores how social variables like gender, class and social relations among the users affect the use of language. It looks at how different varieties of language are found based on geographical areas, social class, occupations, etc.

- **Psycholinguistics:** Psycholinguistics considers language to be a mental process. It analyses the mental activities that underlie formulation of concepts in the brain, their articulation and perception. It also seeks explanation for occurrence of different speech disorders like dyslexia and aphasia. How human beings acquire first and second language ability is another area of interest for psycholinguists.
- **Anthropological Linguistics:** Anthropological Linguistics explores how languages evolve in human society over the years. It looks at language as an aspect of cultures of communities. It is based on the idea that studying the language of a particular society enables us to get insight about the society's cultural ideologies, values and beliefs.
- **Literary stylistics:** Literary stylistics examines how the language used in literature is different from the language used in common discourses. It studies the linguistic devices that are used in literary texts to create special effects and convey meaning in a unique manner to the readers. Here, close attention is paid to the sound patterns, word sequences and grammar employed by the writers. How all these feature contribute to the interpretation of the text is also a concern of study in Stylistics.



## 3.5 LET US SUM UP

Language is one of the unique abilities of human beings. It is an inextricable part of human activities, culture and society. Theories like the Divine Source theory, the Natural Sound Source theory, Social Interaction theory, etc. attempts at explaining the origin of language.Human language has several characteristics that distinguish it from animal communication systems. They include semanticity, arbitrariness, discreteness, duality of patterning, productivity, and cultural transmission.

Linguistics is the scientific and systematic study of language. It has three major subdisciplines, Descriptive Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, and Comparative Linguistics. Language can be viewed as system consisting of several levels. In Linguistics, each level is analysed separately. These levels are- Phonetics and Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics, and Discourse.Linguistics have further developed into different branches like Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Anthropological Linguistics and Literary Stylistics.



## 3.6 FURTHER READING

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5) Yule, G. (1985). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



## 3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Ye-ho-ho theory.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Languages are the principle systems of communication used by particular groups of human beings within the particular society of which they are members.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Displacement.

**Ans to Q No 4:** Charles F. Hockett.

**Ans to Q No 5:** Latin.

**Ans to Q No 6:** Descriptive, Historical and Comparative.

**Ans to Q No 7:** *Astadhyayi.*

**Ans to Q No 8:** Patanjali.

**Ans to Q No 9:** Dionysius Thrax and Apollonius.

**Ans to Q No 10:** Studying Living language on thier own right and describing them as they were.

**Ans to Q No 11:** Noam Chomsky.

**Ans to Q No 12:** Morpheme.

**Ans to Q No 13:** Phonology.

**Ans to Q No 14:** Pragmatics.



## 3.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** What are the features that distinguish human language from the communication system of animals?

**Q 2:** Give a brief account of the development of modern Linguistics over time.

**Q 3:** What are the different levels of linguistic analysis? Describe how study of language is organised in terms of these levels.

**Q 4:** Name some of the branches of Linguistics and explain what they study.

**Q 5:** What does literary stylistics deal with?

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 4 : MORPHOLOGY

## UNIT STRUCTURE


4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 What is Morphology?

- 4.3.1 The Morpheme
- 4.3.2 Lexical Words and Grammatical Words
- 4.3.3 Simple, Complex and Compound Words
- 4.3.4 Affix, Stem and Root

4.4 Inflectional and Derivational Morphology

- 4.4.1 Inflectional Morphology
- 4.4.2 Derivational Morphology

4.5 Word Formation

4.6 Let us Sum up

4.7 Further Reading

4.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.9 Model Questions


## 4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss morphology as an important branch of Language
- define a morpheme
- identify the structure of words
- discuss the different processes of word formation in English

## 4.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall look at the concept of Morphology, a term used in Linguistics to refer to the study of forms of words. Hence, in order to understand the concept of Morphology, it may be helpful to begin with a more familiar concept — the concept of the 'word' which is a unit of expression both in spoken and written language. The word 'a' in This

is a book has one letter. But, there are words that are made up of a large number of letters. The word unforgettable has thirteen letters. On the other hand, the word enthusiastically has fourteen letters. It was felt that words could be quite complex in structure and there was a need for a single concept to interrelate such notions as prefix, suffix, root, stem of a word. In order to address these needs, the term 'morpheme' has been used. It is the central concern of Morphology.

## 4.3 WHAT IS MORPHOLOGY?

Morphology is a study of the smallest grammatical units of language, and their formation into words. David Crystal: (1985) has defined Morphology as "the branch of Grammar which studies the structure of forms of words, primarily through use of the morpheme construct. It is traditionally distinguished from syntax which deals with the rules governing the combination of words in sentences."

Morphology is generally divided into two fields (Note the definition of Lyons): the study of inflections which is also known as Inflectional Morphology and the study of word-formation which is known as Lexical or Derivational Morphology. We shall look at these two terms in greater details when we look at the section on Word-formation in English in this unit.

### 4.3.1 The Morpheme

The term 'morpheme' in morphology refers to the smallest meaningful unit of a language. Thereby, it implies that the word is not the smallest unit of a language in terms of form. A morpheme is described as a minimal and meaningful unit of grammatical analysis.

The key words in the definition are "minimal" and "meaningful". Minimal means that a linguistic unit cannot be broken down any further without destroying the meaning. Moreover, a morpheme has to be meaningful. To illustrate the notions of minimal and meaningful, let us take the word carpet. It is a single morpheme

word; it cannot be broken down any further without destroying the meaning of the word. You may like to think that carpet consists of two words car and pet. However, the meaning of carpet has nothing to do with the individual meanings of car and pet. The word carpet is a minimal and meaningful unit in itself.

In this context you may like to consider the term phoneme which is the smallest unit in the sound system of a language. A morpheme is meaningful but a phoneme is not so; it is considered to be distinctive, thereby indicating that is has no meaning of its own. It can only bring about a difference in the meaning of a word when we replace one phoneme with another in a word. You will see that the replacement of /p/ with /m/ in the word pen gives a new word men. Individually, /p/ and /m/ are abstract concepts having no meaning of their own.

Morpheme can be of two categories namely, free morphemes and bound morphemes.

- **Free Morphemes:**

  The term 'free morpheme' is used in morphology to refer to those morphemes that can stand on their own as independent words. These are single morpheme words like dog, jump, tall etc. These words are made up of single morphemes and cannot be broken down any further. Let us consider the morphological structure of the three words referred to above:

  dog : [dɒg]

  jump : [dʒʌmp]

  tall : [tɔ:l]

  You see that these three words are made up of single morphemes yet, they enjoy the individual status of words. Such types of morphemes are referred to as free morphemes.

- **Bound Morphemes:**

  The term bound morpheme refers to those morphemes that cannot stand on their own as independent words. They always have to be attached to free morphemes. For example, we

consider the morphological structure of the words dogs, jumped and taller. These words consist of the following structures:

dogs : [dɒg] + [z]
jumped: [dʒʌmp] + [t]
taller : [tɔ:l] + [ə]

The plural ending –s [z], the past tense ending –ed [t] and the comparative degree ending –er[ə] do not have individual status of words. They have to be attached to free morphemes and hence, they are called bound morphemes.

Thus, a morpheme – which may be a free morpheme or a bound morpheme – is invariably minimal and meaningful.

- **Morphs and Allomorphs :**

In our discussion on the 'morpheme', we have found that a morpheme is a minimal grammatical unit of a language. We have seen that –

in the word dogs, -s is a bound morpheme; it is meaningful because it carries the notion of the plural form.

in the word jumped, -ed is a bound morpheme; it is meaningful because it carries the notion of the past tense form.

From the above two examples we learnt that a morpheme is a minimal grammatical unit of a language. On the other hand, a morph is its orthographic or phonological shape. For example, in cats the initial morph is cat and the final morph is–s; in horse the initial morph is horse and the final morph is–es. The final morpheme of cats and horses is the same—it is plural morpheme. But let us consider the morphological structure of these two words.

cats : [kFt] + [s]
horse : [h]:s] + [wz]

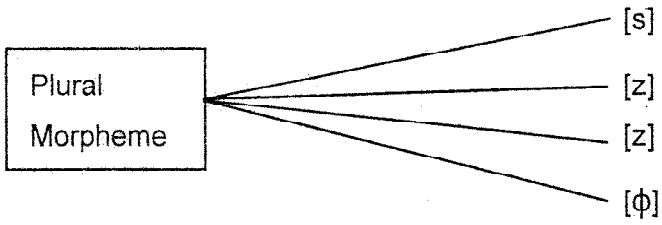
Thus, the final morph of cats and horses is not the

same. Thus, we can say that a morph is the phonological or the orthographic realisation of a phoneme.

From the example of cats and horses, we have seen that a morpheme is not always represented by the same morph; it may be represented by different morphs in different environments. We take four other words cup, boy, rose and sheep to show how morphs have different realisations.

| **Singular** | **Plural** |
|---|---|
| cup | cups |
| boy | boys |
| rose | roses |
| sheep | sheep |

In the first three words the –s ending has the same meaning; it means 'more than one'. However, in cup it is realised as [s], in boys as [z] and in roses as [wz]. On the other hand, in the plural form, sheep has no morphological realisation at all. Let us diagrammatically represent the information taken




From the above diagram, we can say that /s/, /z/ and /wz/ are variously realised morphs of the plural morpheme. The variously realised morphs of a morpheme are known as allomorphs of the morpheme.

In the case of sheep, we have found that there is no realisation at all. We use the symbol /k/ to indicate non-realisation. The nouns that do not show any change of form for the plural are said to have zero allomorphs of the plural morpheme as in the case of sheep. /k/is the symbol of zero morph.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What is the meaning of the term 'Morphology'?

.....

.....

**Q 2:** What is a morpheme? Give an example.

.....

.....

**Q 3:** Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words:

(a) Morphology includes not only _____ but also derivations.

(b) Morphology is generally divided into two fields: inflectional morphology and _____.

(c) _____refer to those morphemes that cannot stand on their own as independent words.

(d) The term _____ means that an element cannot be broken down any further.

**Q 4:** State whether the following statements are true or false:

(a) The word carpet consists of two morphemes; car and pet. T/F

(b) The final morph of cats and horses is the same. T/F

(c) The plural morpheme is not always realised as /s/ T/F

(d) /wd/ is a past tense bound morpheme. T/F

### 4.3.2 Lexical Words and Grammatical Words

Several general classifications of words have been proposed notable among which is the sub-classification that distinguishes between lexis or lexical words and grammatical words.

Lexical words are words which are viewed in relation to their meaning i.e. in relation to things, qualities, states or actions in the world. Accordingly, these words fall into grammatical

categories like noun, verb, adjective and adverb.

Secondly, depending upon its grammatical category, a lexical word may be realised by a set of grammatical forms:

- A noun may be realised as singular, plural and possessive forms e.g. girl, girls, girl's, girls'.
- A verb may be realised as present, past and participle forms e.g. take, takes, took, taken, taking.
- An adjective may be realised as positive, comparative and superlative forms eg. strong, stronger, strongest.
- An adverb may be realised variously in a clause structure as manner, time, place, reason, etc.

It is notable that the realisation (eg. takes, took, etc.) structure as manner, time, place, reason etc. It is the lexical word alone that occurs as the headword in a dictionary entry.

Thirdly, it is important to note that the lexical words are characterised by having semantic content. In order to explain semantic content of lexical words let us take the word table. The phonological word /teibl/ may be treated as two orthographic words as the basis of meaning expressed in the following two examples:

- a book on a table (a piece of furniture)
- a table in a book (display of information in columns)

So 'table' may be regarded as two or more semantic words. But the form 'table' as a noun takes the plural s in both the meanings stated above.

Lexical words or lexis are variously known as content words, full words, etc. and are distinguished from those words that are known as grammatical words, function words or form words.

Grammatical words are words that occur in a grammatical paradigm. For example, the form taking has certain properties which determine its use in a sentence which requires that it must be preceded by a form of 'be' i.e. am, is, are, was, were. These forms of the 'be' verb are grammatical words that do not have a

semantic content but are used with other words in order to establish the grammatical framework or the structure in which the lexical words operate. The different categories of grammatical words include determiners, auxiliaries, pronouns, prepositions, etc. These grammatical words are devices for fitting lexical words in an English sentence structure.

### 4.3.3 Simple, Complex and Compound Words

It has long been recognised that words must be classed into at least two categories — simple and complex. However, the formation of a new category of words by the process of compounding of simple words has resulted in the recognition of another category of words termed as compound words. Some morphologists often refer to a fourth category of words—the compound– complex words where the compounding is affected by making use of complex words. However, for the present, we shall refer to only three categories of words — the simple, complex and compound words.

- **Simple words:** The term simple words refers to a linguistic unit which consists of a single free morpheme. A simple word such as book, city, tree, etc. seems to be a minimal unit; there seems to be no way to analyse it, or break it down further into meaningful parts. These are words having a single free morpheme.
- **Complex words**: Complex words refers to words consisting of two parts — the stem and the affix attached to the stem. The morphological structure of a few complex words is given below:
  - **books :** book + s (one free morpheme + one bound)
  - **uneasy :** un + easy (one bound + one free)
  - **conceive :** con + ceive (both bound)
- **Compound words:** Compound words are linguistic units of two free morphemes or three or more morphemes of which at least two are free morphemes.

i) **Two free morphemes :**

a) **verb + noun :** pickpocket, tell-tale

b) **adjective + noun :** blackboard

c) **verb + adverb :** farewell

d) **noun + adjective :** sky blue

e) **noun + noun :** goldsmith

ii) **Two free & one bound morphemes**

a) **N + V + ing :** bird watching

b) **N + V + or/er** : tax collector

iii) **One free, one bound & one free**

**V + ing + N** : working girl

iv) **Three free & one bound**

**N + N + V + er :** football player.

By looking at the forms of the compound words, it can be concluded that they are important processes of word formation in English.

### 4.3.4 Affix, Stem and Root

The terms affix, stem and root are associated with different parts of complex words. The stem or base form is that part of the word to which an inflectional affix is added. The stem of a word may be **:**

- a simple stem consisting of only one free morpheme. Such a stem is called root.
- a root and derivational affix eg. worker (work + er)
- two to more roots eg. work + shop = workshop.

**Affixes:** Complex words in English are made up of stem and affixes. An affix is a bound morpheme attached to the stem of a word. The affix attached to the front of a stem is called prefix. When it is attached to the end of a stem, it is called a suffix. It is possible to have more than one bound morpheme in a word structure. Look at the morphological structure of the following words:

a) unhappy = un + happy

b) disbelief = dis + belief

c) goodness = good + ness

d) nicely = nice+ ly

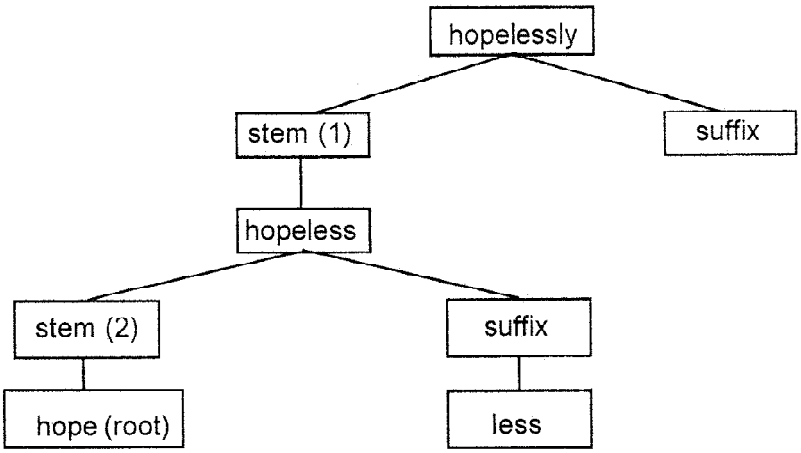
e) unlikely= un + like + ly

f) imitations = imitate+ ion + s

g) hopelessly = hope+ less + ly

You will find that the affixes are underlined. In the first two examples the affixes un and dis are prefixes. In (c) and (d) the affixes ness and ly are suffixes. In (e) you will see both a prefix and a suffix attached to the stem like. In the last two examples you find two suffixes. A stem consisting of only one free morpheme as in like in unlikely is called a root.

The morphological structures of (g) need to be examined more clearly with the help of a tree diagram. That will help us to understand the status of the two bound morphemes suffixed to the stem.




The diagram makes it clear that stem (1) is not the root. It is made up of a free morpheme and a bound morpheme. On the other hand, stem (2) consists of a free morpheme only which cannot be broken down any further and hence it is the root. In this word, both -less and –ly are bound morphemes while hope is the free morpheme.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 5:** What are lexical and grammatical words?

.....

.....

**Q 6:** Explain the meaning of terms like affix, stem and root.

.....

.....

## 4.4 INFLECTIONAL AND DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY

Morphology is generally divided into two fields: the study of inflections and the study of word formations. The study of inflections is known as Inflectional Morphology and the study of word formation is known as Lexical or Derivational Morphology. In this section, we shall look at these two concepts to enable you to distinguish between the two.

### 4.4.1 Inflectional Morphology

Inflectional Morphology is concerned with the study of the way in which words vary or inflect in order to express grammatical contrasts in sentences by making use of inflectional affixes. The following are some of the characteristics of inflectional affixes:

i) Inflectional affixes never change the word class of the stem. The stem book is a noun. The addition of the plural affix s, makes the word books without changing the class of the word.

ii) Inflectional affixes are all suffixed to the stem. They are never prefixed.

iii) Once the inflectional affix is attached to a stem, no other affixes can be attached after the inflexional affix.

Let us now look at ways by which inflectional morphemes operate in modification of the stem of words of different classes.

a) **Inflections of Nouns:** In nouns infections operate at the

levels of (i) number and (ii) genitive.

i) **Numbers :** Common nouns can have inflections in terms of singular-plural reference, eg.

cat = cat + plural = cats /kæts/

dog = dog + plural = dogs /dɒgz/

horse = horse + plural = horses /hɒsiz/

ii) **Genitive :** Genitive refers to one of the forms taken by a word usually a noun or a pronoun to express grammatical relationship by means of inflections.

1) a tiger's tail (i.e. the tail of a tiger)
2) a girls' hostel (i.e. a hostel for girls)
3) John's book (i.e. a book of John)

The genitive inflection operates in singular and plural nouns besides proper nouns.

b) **Inflections of Verbs:** In verbs, inflections operate at the levels of (i) person and number (ii) tense and (iii) aspect and (iv) voice (active-passive)

i) **Person and Number :** English verbs undergo modification of form depending upon the person (1st, 2nd and 3rd) and number (singular/ plural)

1) Full verb : I take / we take / you take / they take /he/she/ it takes /
2) Primary verb 'be' changes the form completely: I am / we are / you are/ He is /They are

ii) **Tense :** The past form of regular verbs is always the stem and the –ed (past tense morpheme) suffixed to it.

1) stop = stop + past tense = stopped
2) play = play + past tense = played
3) want = want + past tense = wanted

In case of some irregular verbs, it is seen that they form past tense by a change of vowels, e.g.

1) eat = eat + past tense = ate
2) give = give + past tense = gave

3) ring = ring + past tense = rang

In case of certain irregular forms, it is seen that these irregular verbs do not change their form in the past tense.

1) cut = cut + past tense = cut
2) hit = hit + past tense = hit

iii) **Aspect**

1) **–ing form :** The – ing form is produced by adding the infection – ing to the base form of the verb irrespective of whether it is a regular verb or are irregular verb.
   a. play + play + ing = playing
   b. swim = swim + ing = swimming
2) **Participle form :** The past participle form of regular verbs is similar to the past tense form; the –ed morpheme is suffixed to the base form in order to make the past participle form.
   a. have worked
   b. have played
   c. have waited

The morphological criteria of irregular verbs are similar to the past tense forms.

iv) **Voice :** The passive voice form is realised by the use of the passive participle which is produced by adding – ed to the regular verbs and a change of vowels to the irregular verbs generally ending with –en. Thus the passive participle is realised as be+en / be + ed.

1) The book was taken
2) The smoke was killed

c) **Inflection of Adjectives:** Inflection of adjectives takes place at the levels of comparative and superlative degrees.

❍ **Comparative degree :** The comparative degree of an adjective is formed by suffixing the bound morpheme

– er to the base form

1) tall – tall + er = taller

2) He is taller than his brother

❍ **Superlative degree :** The superlative degree of an adjective is formed by suffixing the bound morpheme – est to the base form

1) tall – taller — tall + est = tallest

2) He is the tallest boy in the class.

**Irregular Forms :** In certain adjectives the above –er/-est inflections do not operate in forming the comparative and superlative degrees. Instead, there is a complete change in the shape of the word in its various inflated forms eg:

good — better — best.

This type of irregularity in degrees is known as suppletion.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 7:** What is Inflectional Morphology? What are the characteristics of Inflectional Suffixes?

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.....

## 4.4.2 Derivational Morphology

Derivation is a process of word formation by the use of derivational affixes. The distinction between inflectional and derivational affixes in English is based on a number of factors.

a) Inflectional affixes never change the class of the word. In contrast, there are some derivational affixes that change the class of a word. These affixes are known as class changing derivational affixes. However, there are some derivational affixes also that do not change the class of a word. These derivational affixes are known as class maintaining derivational affixes.

b) Inflectional and derivational suffixes occur in a certain relative order within words as observed by Akmajian et al (2001). This means that inflectional suffixes follow derivational suffixes. If an inflectional suffix is added to a stem, then no further derivational suffix can be attached to the inflectional suffix.

c) Inflectional affixes are invariably suffixes whereas derivational affixes can be both prefixes and suffixes.

d) The occurrence of inflectional affixes take place with members of a given class. For example, the plural inflection occurs only with nouns or past tense inflection occurs only with verbs. On the other hand, derivational suffixes can occur in more than one word class.

**Class Changing Derivational Affix:** Derivational affixes like –ly, -ness, -ful, -ise, etc. change the class of a word. Eg.

a) Kind is an adjective; kindness is a noun. Hence – ness is a class changing derivational affix (CCDA).

b) Kind is an adjective; kindly is an adverb. Hence, -ly is a class changing derivational affix.

c) Beauty is noun; beautiful is adjective. Hence –full is CCDA.

d) Computer is noun; computerise is verb. Hence –ize is CCDA.

**Class Maintaining Derivational Affix :** Derivational affixes like un, dis-, re-, ir-, -dom, etc. create new words but do not change the class of the word. Eg

a) Kind is adjective; unkind, which is a different word is also an adjective. Un- is class maintaining derivational affix (CMDA).

b) Like is a verb; dislike is also a verb. Hence, dis- is a CMDA.

c) Call is a verb; recall is also a verb. Hence re- is a CMDA.

d) Relevant is an adjective; irrelevant is also an adjective. Hence is also a noun. Hence – dom is CMDA.

Below two examples are given to show how we can perform morphological analysis of words with the help of tables drawn from inflectional and derivation morphology.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 8:** Fill in the blanks of the following:

(a) 'Phonological word' contrasts with _____.

(b) Lexical words are words that are viewed in relation to things, qualities, states and _____.

(c) Table may be regarded as two or more _____.

(d) Complex words consist of a stem and _____.

(e) When a stem cannot be broken down any further, it is called_____.

(f) Inflectional affixes never _____ the word class.

(g) 's is an example of _____.

(h) -ness is a class _____ derivational affix.

## 4.5 WORD FORMATION

The words or lexical items in English can be classified into lexical words and grammatical words. While the grammatical words are a closed set, it is invariably the open set class of lexical words that we consider in our task of word formation. That is, the new words that we produce are basically lexical words. The different processes of word-formation are discussed below.

**Affixation:**

Affixation is a very ancient method of word formation which involves the adding of prefixes and suffixes to a stem or a base form. Affixation of suffixes like –dom, -ship, -ish, etc. has given us words like freedom, friendship, clownish etc. Likewise, affixation of prefixes like be – de-, dis- etc. has given us words like belittle, decontrol, disbelief, etc.

**Conversion:**

Conversion refers to a process of word formation by converting a word from one class to another class in a sentence. Thus, from the word park which is an open space where cars may be left, is coined the verb to park. Similarly, from the noun pocket we get the verb to pocket. Nouns signifying

the principal pats of the body eg. head, hand, stomach, back etc. can nearly be used as verbs. He can head a ball, hand in a letter, etc.

**Compounding:**

This point has been already discussed at subsection 4.3.3

**Reduplication:**

It refers to a process of word formation by reduplicating or imitating certain sounds. This process of word formation has given us words like bang, pop, buzz, click, whizz, rumble, mumble, hiss, giggle and so on. The name of the song–bird of spring the cuckoo is most certainly an attempt to reduplicate its call.

**Clipping:**

The process of clipping of parts of a word to create new words has given us a number of new words. Clipping has given words like pop (as in pop music) with the end portion (ular) clipped off. Other examples of new words formed by clipping of end positions include pub from public house, cab from cabriolet, mob from mobile vulgus, etc. clipping at the beginning of a word has given us bus from omnibus, phone from telephone, wig from periwig, etc. In some cases, clipping off portions of the front and the back by retaining only the middle portion, has given us flu from influenza, fridge from refrigerator, etc.

**Acronyms:**

Acronyms refer to the coinage of new words by using the initial letter of a series of words eg BBC for British Broadcasting Corporation. AIR from All India Radio, NATO from North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and so on. The acronyms are initials-turned – words and are pronounced as if they are distinct words.

**Blends:**

Blends refer to words that are formed by combining a part of one word with a part of another in order to form a new word carrying with it the meaning of both the original words from where parts were taken to form the new word. Examples include :

- motel / n / a hotel especially built for travelling motorists with facilities for parking cars. The word is a blend of motor and hotel.
- brunch / n / a late breakfast, an early lunch or a combination of the

two, The word is a blend of breakfast and lunch.

- smog / n/ a mixture of smoke and fog very common in industrial cities. The word reminds one of T.S. Eliot's lines: "Among the smoke and fog of a December afternoon / you have the scene arrange itself…."

Other examples includes electrocute, interpol, telecast, etc.

**Back Formation:**

It is a process of word formation resulting from a misunderstanding. The principle and the way in which it works can be explained by taking a few examples.

- groveling (adv) in abject manner, on the ground. The terminal –ing was mistaken for the present participle form as a result of which the verb to grovel was coined.
- beggar (n) The word in this form has created the impression that –ar is a suffix attached to the stem beg, thus creating the verb beg.

Other words of this category include editor, hawker, dancer, writer and so on.



## 4.6 LET US SUM UP

From your reading of the various sections of this unit, you have come to know that Morphology is the study of morphemes and their different forms and the way they combine. It is divided into two fields: Inflectional Morphology and Derivational Morphology. You have also learnt that Morpheme is the smallest unit of grammatical forms and is minimal and meaningful. Morphemes are realised as morphs. The variously realised morphs of a morpheme are the allomorphs of the morpheme. Morphemes can be free and bound. Simple words are single morpheme words and contrast with complex words consisting of a stem and an affix. Inflectional affixes do not change the class of a word and are suffixed to the stem. Inflections take place in nouns, verbs, adjectives, aspect, and voice. Apart from these, the different processes of word formation have also

been discussed in this unit.



## 4.7 FURTHER READING


1) Akamaijan, Adrien. et al. (2001). *Linguistics* (5th Edition).Prentice Hall of India.pp 11-64.
2) Lyons, John. (2002). *Language & Linguistics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter-IV pp 100-135.
3) Richards, et al. (1985). *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics.* Longman.
4) Verma, S.K, & Krishnaswamy N. (1989). *Modern Linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
5) Wood, F.T. (1969). *An Outline History of English Language*.(2nd Edn). Macmillan. Chapter VI pp 109-148.
6) Yule, George. (2006). *The Study of Language.* Cambridge. pp 62-72.




## 4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** There are many definitions of the term Morphology. David Crystal provides one of the important definitions: “The branch of Grammar which studies the structure of forms of words, primarily through use of the morpheme construct. It is traditionally distinguished from syntax which deals with the rules governing the combination of words in sentences.”

**Ans to Q No 2:** Morpheme in Morphology refers to the minimal and meaningful unit of a language. It implies that the word is not the smallest unit of a language in terms of form. For example, the word carpet consists of two words car and pet. However, the meaning of carpet has nothing to do with the individual meanings of car and

pet. The word carpet is a minimal and meaningful unit in itself.

**Ans to Q No 3:** (a) inflections (b) derivational morphology (c) bound morphemes (d) minimal

**Ans to Q No 4:** (a) False (b) False (c) True (d) True

**Ans to Q No 5:** Lexical words are words viewed in relation to their meaning i.e. in relation to things, qualities, states or actions in the world. Accordingly, these words fall into grammatical categories like noun, verb, adjective and adverb. Grammatical words are words that occur in a grammatical paradigm. For example, the form taking has certain properties which determine its use in a sentence which requires that it must be preceded by a form of 'be' i.e. am, is, are, was, were.

**Ans to Q No 6:** The terms affix, stem and root are associated with different parts of complex words. The stem or base form is that part of the word to which an inflectional affix is added. The stem of a word may be a simple stem consisting of only one free morpheme. Such a stem is called root, or a root and derivational affix eg. worker (work + er), or two to more roots eg. work + shop = workshop.

**Ans to Q No 7:** Inflectional Morphology is concerned with the study of the way in which words vary or inflect in order to express grammatical contrasts in sentences by making use of inflectional affixes.

**Ans to Q No 8:** (a) orthographic word (b) action (c) semantic words (d) affixes (e) root (f) change (g) genitive inflection (h) changing



## 4.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Write short notes on:

(a) Allomorph, (b) Free morphs and Bound morphs, (c) Affixes, (d) Compounding, (e) Back formation, (f) Clipping, (g) Blending

**Q 2:** Write a brief note on derivational affixes. Give five examples of class changing derivational affixes.

**Q 3:** Discuss five processes of word-formation in English.

**Q 4:** Morphologically analyse the following words using appropriate marks of inflectional and derivational morphology

(a) hopelessly (b) unlikely (c) imitations

**Q 5:** Write a note on Inflectional Morphology. How does inflection operate in modifying the stems of different classes of words?

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 5 : SYNTAX

## UNIT STRUCTURE


5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 What is Syntax?

5.4 Immediate Constituent Analysis

5.5 Let us Sum up

5.6 Further Reading

5.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.8 Model Questions


## 5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- discuss the concept of syntax with reference to English
- identify different syntactic constituents in a sentence structure
- discuss IC Analysis of a sentence structure.

## 5.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit shall have to be read in connection with the previous unit, that is, Unit 4 where we have discussed at length about the concept of Morphology. Here we shall deal with Syntax. Both Morphology and syntax are related to the forms of words. In this unit, we shall also take up, though very briefly, the different constituents of the sentence and look at the ways in which these constituents are structured. Our attempt will be to see how the constituents like *words* form part of longer constituents like *phrases* and *clauses* and even *sentences*. Apart from these, we shall briefly study the elements of syntax. Further, we shall relate it to Semantics that is the study of meaning. Let us now start our discussion by looking at the definition of syntax.

## 5.3 WHAT IS SYNTAX?

The term 'Syntax' is used in Linguistics for the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language. A syntactic analysis of a language is a description of the sentence structures. It associates with morphology, the study of word-structure to study the ways words are structured and arranged to express relationship of meaning sometimes within and sometimes between sentences. The term *syntax* in Greek means 'arrangement'. In the present context, it refers to the principle of arrangement of units formed by the processes of inflection and derivation into large constructions: the *phrase,* the *clause* and the *sentence*. There are different constituents of syntax forming a hierarchical structure of five ranks which can be shown as follows:

Sentences are analysed into clause

Are analysed into phrase

Are analysed into words

Are analysed into morpheme

Sentences are used to build clauses

Are used to build phrases

Are used to build words

Are used to build morpheme

In the description above, the morpheme is the smallest unit of grammatical inquiry. In the hierarchical structure, it is placed at one end of the scale while the sentence is placed at the other end. In between them, there are several syntactic constituents related to one another in a hierarchy. The point can be illustrated with the following examples:

The passengers had noticed that the train had been running very late.

This sentence contains the following two clauses:

a) The passengers had noticed

b) that the train had been running very late.

Clause (a) contains the following phrases:

i) The passengers

ii) had noticed

Clause (b) contains the following phrases:

i) the train

ii) had been running

iii) very late.

The sentence contains a few words made up of more than one morpheme:

- passengers = passenger + plural morpheme 's'.
- noticed = notice + past tense morpheme '–ed'.
- had = have + past tense.
- been = be + past participle '–en'.
- running = run + present participle '–ing'.

  (Note that 'that' is a mediator in the sentence.)

The above discussion makes it clear that the sentence contains a hierarchical structure of a number of constituents belonging to a restricted set of categories. By considering the nature of categories, we postulate a two level theory of categories.

- **Word level category:** Noun (N), Verb (V), Adjective (Adj.), Preposition (P), Adverb (Adv.), Modal (Mod.), Determines (Det.) etc.
- **Phrase level category:** Noun Phrase (NP), Verb Phrase (VP) Adjective Phrase (Adj. P), Preposition Phrase (PP), Adverbial Phrase (Adv. P).

## 5.4 IMMEDIATE CONSTITUENT ANALYSIS

One of the important contributions of Structural Linguistics to the theory of Syntax has been the analysis of immediate constituents of a sentence structure. Immediate Constituent Analysis, commonly known as IC Analysis, is an approach to analyse sentence structures. It works through a process of pure segmentation, dividing a sentence structure into its immediate constituents in a series of steps up to a stage where no further divisions can be made. As in the case of words (as you can find in Morphology) there is a hierarchy of structuring in sentences. Through IC analysis we can discover how units are layered in sentences, each lower-level division can be seen in terms of a constituent that is part of a higher level constituent. Let us take the sentence– *The boy chased*

*the dog* and analyse the hierarchy of structuring of constituents:

The boy chas ed the dog

In order to break up the constituents to its smallest unit known as the *ultimate constituents*, we followed the following steps.

- Identifying the two major constituents of the sentence: *The boy* and *chased the dog*.
- Dividing the next bigger constituent into *chased* and *the dog*.
- Continue dividing the constituents into two until no further division can be made *The boy* into *The* and *boy*, *chased* into *chase* and *ed*, *the dog* into *the* and *dog*.

Thus, we have *the*, *by*, *chase*, *ed*, *the*, and *dog* as the ultimate constituents of the sentence. They are ultimate constituents because these constituents cannot be broken down any further at the morphological level. Each of these units is a morpheme.

Having broken up a sentence into its constituents of different levels of hierarchy, we can start labelling the constituents. Structural Linguistics has provided several models of labelling of I C Analysis. Some structural linguists group constructions in terms of the *function* of the constituents namely:

- The structure of Predication (Subject + Predicate)
- The structure of Modification (Modifier + Head)
- The structure of Complementation (Verbal + Complement)
- The structure of Sub-ordination (Subordinator + Dependent unit)
- The structure of Co-ordination (Independent unit + Co-ordinator + Independent unit)

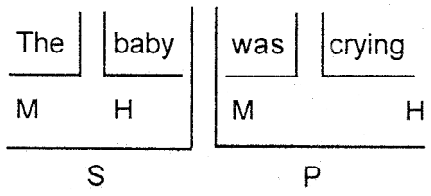
Each of these structures is briefly illustrated below:

a) **Subject + Predicate (S+P):** In the IC analysis framework, the structure of a simple sentence can be analysed in terms of *subject* (S) and *predicate* (P). The sentence– *The boy kicked the ball* can be analysed in terms of S and P by using the box diagram as follows:

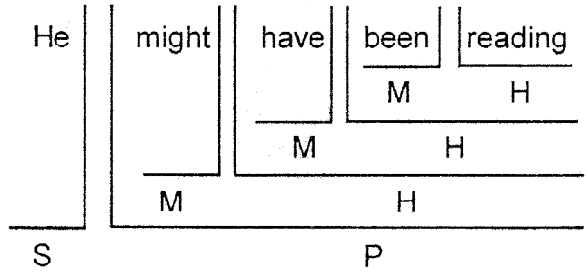
| The boy | kicked the ball |
|---|---|
| S | P |

b) **Modifier + Head (M +H) :** Modifiers usually have the functions of adjectives and adverbs. They modify nouns, verbs, adjectives, clauses and so on. Look at the examples below:

i)

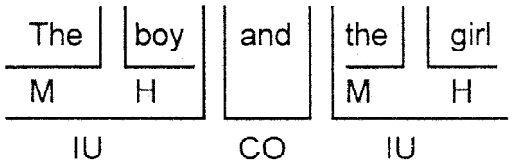



ii)




c) **Independent Unit (IU) + Co-ordinator (CO) + Independent Unit (IU):** While in all other analyses, a binary pattern, it is only in this construction that a non-binary pattern is considered acceptable. The co-ordinator is usually a conjunction joining two independent units. These independent units may be two independent clauses that traditionally make up a compound sentence as in *He is a teacher but his wife is a doctor*. A Co-ordinator may join two nouns or noun phrases (NPs) or any other equivalent components of a sentence structure. Here are two examples:

i)




**Weaknesses of IC analysis:**

One of the major weaknesses of IC analysis is that it fails to distinguish between *object* and *complement* in its analysis and treats sentences like *She is a teacher* and *She wrote the letter* both in terms of S+V+C construction. Thereby, it confuses object and complement in its analysis.

Secondly, the binary divisions do not hold good for yes-no type

interogative sentence patterns as in: *Is he coming? Are you coming?* etc. since the 'be' is a part of the verb phrase construction. One has to make use of other divisions such as:

is he coming

Such descriptions are rather difficult to comprehend.

Thirdly, depending on meaning, an ambiguous sentence or a phrase like *old men and women* would require more than one analysis. For example,

i) When both men and women are old:

| Old | men | and | women |
|---|---|---|---|
| | IU | CO | IU |
| M | | | H |

ii) When only the men are old:

| Old | men | and | women |
|---|---|---|---|
| M | H | | |
| IU | | CO | IU |

Fourthly, I C analysis fails to reveal the relationships between sentence types such as active and passive, affirmative and negative, statement and questions, simple, complex and compound sentences.

Moreover, there are several models of I C analysis. The earliest model was developed by Bloomfield but was later modified by Kenneth Pike and systematised by other linguists subsequently. With so many models available to us, one is likely to get confused with models.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What do you mean by the term Syntax?

.....

.....

**Q 2:** What is IC Analysis?

.....

.....

**Q 3:** The earliest model of I C analysis was developed by _____.

**Q 4:** Mention one weakness of I C analysis

.....

.....

It is notable that the system of I C analysis is a tool of Structural Linguistics for working out a "discovery procedure" which when applied to the data of an unknown language would yield the correct description of the language. The term *discovery procedure* refers to a set of techniques which can be automatically or mechanically applied to a sample of language and which will produce a correct grammatical analysis.

However, it has been found that it is never possible for discovery procedure to identify with certainty all the factors which lead us in the direction of a particular analysis. Besides, newer models of syntactic analysis have been evolved. In this context, the celebrated work of Noam Chomsky titled *Syntachic Structures* (1957) requires special mention. In this book Chomsky present three models of grammar, namely (a) finite state grammar, (b) phrase structure grammar and (c) transformational grammar.

Chomsky observes that the finite state grammar is an extremely simple kind of grammar. It is incapable of accounting for many important processes of sentence formation. As an alternative, he suggests the possibilities of Phrase Structure Grammar as a marked improvement over I C analysis as well as Finite State Grammar. Phrase Structure (PS) Grammar considers the sentence as a linear sequence of elements. The aim is to formulate a set of *P.S. rules* by following certain conventions and notations in formal terms (against functional).



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 5:** Write short notes on discovery procedure.

.....

.....

**Q 6:** What are the three models of grammar put forward by Chomsky in his book titled *Syntactic Structures*?

.....

.....



## 5.6 LET US SUM UP

From your reading of the various sections of this unit, you have learnt that the term Syntax is used in Linguistics to the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language. A syntactic analysis of a language is a description of the sentence structures. It associates with morphology, the study of word-structure to study the ways words are structured and arranged to express relationship of meaning sometimes within and sometimes between sentences. You have also been acquainted with the weakness of I C Analysis while also being familiarised with the elements weakness of IC Analysis while of syntax as well.



## 5.7 FURTHER READING


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## 5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** The term Syntax is used in Linguistics for the study of

the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentences in a language.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Immediate Constituent Analysis, commonly known as IC Analysis, is an approach to analyse sentence structures. It works through a process of pure segmentation, dividing a sentence structure into its immediate constituents in a series of steps up to a stage when no further divisions can be made.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Bloomfield.

**Ans to Q No 4:** I C analysis fails to reveal the relationships between sentence types such as active and passive, affirmative and negative, statement and questions, simple, complex and compound sentences.

**Ans to Q No 5:** The term discovery procedure refers to a set of techniques which can be automatically or mechanically applied to a sample of language and which will produce a correct grammatical analysis.

**Ans to Q No 6:** Chomsky present three models of grammar, namely (a) finite state grammar, (b) phrase structure grammar and (c) transformational grammar in his book.



## 5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** What do you mean by the term Syntax? Discuss.

**Q 2:** State the weaknesses of I C Analysis.

**Q 3:** How do you account for the hierarchical structure of English sentences?

**Q 4:** Write a note in IC Analysis with examples.

**Q 5:** Describe briefly Chomsky's views on grammar as reflected in his book *Syntachic Structures*.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 6 : PHONETICS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 What is Phonetics?

- 6.3.1 Acoustic Phonetics
- 6.3.2 Auditory Phonetics
- 6.3.3 Articulatory Phonetics

6.4 The Speech Sounds

- 6.4.1 Vowels
- 6.4.2 Pure Vowels
- 6.4.3 Dipthongs
- 6.4.4 Consonants

6.5 Let us Sum up

6.6 Further Reading

6.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.8 Model Questions


## 6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- discuss the concept of Phonetics
- explain the different branches of Phonetics
- identify functions of different speech organs
- gain an idea on vowels and consonants

## 6.2 INTRODUCTION

Phonetics, is that branch of Linguistics which studies the characteristic speech sounds in terms of their production, transmission and reception. Phonetics can be divided into three sub-categories namely—acoustic, auditory and articulatory phonetics. In Phonetics, we can learn the functions of different speech organs in the production of

speech sounds as well as the various articulatory features of the vowels and consonants of English. Let us look at the definition of Phonetics in the following section.

## 6.3 WHAT IS PHONETICS?

Phonetics is the science which studies the characteristics of speech sounds in terms of their production, transmission and reception. It studies the medium of spoken language. Touching upon physiology and physics, phonetics is now a pure science that studies speech processes including the anatomy, neurology and pathology of speech besides the articulation, description, classification, production and perception of speech sounds. The study of Phonetics can be divided into three main branches—Acoustic, Auditory and Articulatory Phonetics.

### 6.3.1 Acoustic Phonetics

Acoustic Phonetics is the study of the physical properties of speech sounds such as frequency and amplitude in their transmission. Acoustic Phonetics analyses the speech waves with the help of instruments. They attempt to describe the physical properties of the stream of sounds what issue forth from the mouth of the speaker. Complex sound waves produced in speech can be analysed into their component frequencies and relative amplitudes. Acoustic analysis has confirmed that speech is not made up of sequence of discrete sounds. The articulatory features like nasality, friction and obstruction, can be analysed acoustically.

### 6.3.2 Auditory Phonetics

Auditory Phonetics is the study of how speech sounds are heard and perceived. Hearing refers to what goes on in the ear proper to the sounds that are channelled down the canal of the ear leading to the ear-drum. Hearing is a very intricate process which requires interpreting the auditory sensations which the sound

signals create. The sound waves at the ear drum are transmitted to the middle ear behind the ear drum. The middle ear amplifies the sound waves before they pass them on to the inner ear, a completely enclosed gallery with rigid walls and filled with fluid, coiled round itself like a snail shell and becoming narrower as it does so. When the vibrations are passed to the fluid, they cause a membrane to vibrate activating an auditory nerve that is connected to the brain. What happens when signals from the ear reaches the brain is largely a mystery. Yet we do perceive sound, we hear high and low pitch, loudness and softness, changing sound qualities and it is this perceptual, psychological aspect that forms the central study of Auditory Phonology.

### 6.3.3 Articulatory Phonetics

Articulatory Phonetics recognises that speech is produced by some kind of speech-making approaches inside the human body and that specific sounds may be related to specific movements of the apparatus. Hence, it is the study of the movement of the speech organs in the speech mechanism. This movement is studied in terms of –

- the respiratory system which comprises the lungs along with the muscles of the chest and the wind pipe known as the trachea.
- the phonatory system which includes the larynx
- the articulatory system which comprises the tongue, the lower jaw, the lips, the teeth, the teeth ridge, the soft palate and the uvula.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Complete the following statements:

(a) The aim of Phonology is the _____ and _____ of speech sounds in a system.

(b) Phones are the physical realisations of _____.

(c) A phoneme is a _____ and _____ unit in the sound system of a language.

(d) When two words differ only in one sound, the pair of words is known as a _____.

(e) Acoustic Phonetics is the study of the _____ of speech sounds.

(f) Auditory Phonetics is the study of how speech sounds are _____ and _____.

(g) Articulatory Phonetics is the study of movement of the speech organs in the _____.

(h) The vocal cords _____ during the production of voiced sounds.

## 6.4 THE SPEECH SOUNDS

The ideas of speech sounds usually include information concerning the production, transmission, and reception of sounds. A speech sound should describe a sound in terms of the movements of the organs of speech, the nature of the sound produced and the features perceived by a listener. Words are divided into smaller units or sections. These are called syllables. A syllable is a unit of pronunciation that consists of a vowel alone or a vowel with one of more consonants. A vowel is the nucleus whereas a consonant is the marginal element in the syllable. Thus, speech sounds can be studied in terms of Vowels and Consonants.

### 6.4.1 Vowels

A vowel is a speech sound during the production of which, the air escapes through the mouth freely and continuously without any audible friction. Vowels are generally described with reference to three parameters of the tongue in the production of the vowel sounds of English. These are:

a) **The tongue position** in terms of front, central and back which gives us the front vowels, back vowels and central vowels.

b) **The height of the tongue** which can be described in terms of close, half-close, half-open and open to refer to vowels like close vowels,open vowels etc.

c) **Position of the lips** which helps in the formation of rounded and unrounded vowels.

There are two categories of vowels—the pure vowels or monophthongs numbering 12, and diphthongs or vowel glides numbering 8.

### 6.4.2 Pure Vowels

The following are the pure vowels described in terms of their three-term labels.

1) **/i:/ as in feel :** While articulating /i:/, the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate to an almost close position with the lips spread. /i:/ is a front, close, unrounded vowel sound occurring initially eat, ease), medially (meet, leaf) and finally tea, sea) in a word.

2) **/I/ as in fill :** While articulating /I/, the centralized front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hand palate to a position between close and half close with the lips loosely spread. /I/ is a centralised front, unrounded vowel between close and half-close positions. The vowel occurs initially (inn, inch) and finally (city, lady) in a word.

3) **/e/ as in bed :** While articulating /e/, the front of the tongue is raised between half-close and half-open positions with the lips loosely spread. /e/ is a front, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open positions. It occurs initially (any, end) and medially (many, head) in a word.

4) **/æ/ as in a bad :** While articulating /æ/, the front of the tongue is raised just below the half-open position with the lips being neutral. /æ/ is a front, unrounded vowel just below the half open position. The vowel occurs initially (apple, ant) and medially (hand, fan) in a word.

5) **/ʌ/ as in hut :** While articulating /ʌ/, the centre of the tongue is raised to a position between open and half open. /ʌ/ is a central, unrounded vowel between open and half open positions. The vowel occurs initially (up, utter) and medially (cup, hut) in a word.

6) **as in heart :** While articulating /ɑ:/, the back of the tongue is in a fully open position with the lips in a neutral position. /a:/ is a back, open, unrounded vowel occurring initially (ask, aunt) medially (card, part) and finally (far, bar) in a word.

7) /**ɑ**/ as in hot: While articulating /**ɒ**/, the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate and it is in a fully open position. /**ɒ**/ is a back, open, rounded vowel occurring initially (odd, of) and medially (cot, rock) in a word.

8) **/ɔ:/ as in court :** While articulating /ɔ:/, the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate to a height between half-close and half-open with the lips rounded. /ɔ:/ is a back, rounded vowel between half close and half open positions. It occurs initially (all, ought), medially (course, board), and finally (door, bore) in a word.

9) **/ʊ/ as in pull :** While articulating /ʊ/, the back of the tongue is raised to a position between close and half-close with the lips loosely spread. /v/ is a centralized back vowel between close and half close positions. It occurs medially (book, look) and finally (to,you) in a word.

10) **/u:/ as in pool :** While articulating /u:/, the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate almost to a close position with the lips closely rounded. /u:/ is a back, close, rounded vowel. It occurs initially (ooze), medially (fool, soon) and finally (two, shoe) in a word.

11) **ɜ: as in bird :** While articulating /ɜ:/, the centre of the tongue is raised in the direction of the roof of the month where the hard and soft palates meet, to a position between half close and half open. /ɜ:/ is a central, unrounded vowel

between half close and half open positions. It occurs initially (earn, earth), medially (learn, cure), and finally (fur, sir) in a word.

12) **/ə/ as in about :** While articulating /ə/ in a non-final position, it is a central, unrounded vowel between half close and half open positions. In word final position, it is a central, half open unrounded vowel. It occurs initially (above, again), medially (purpose, circus) and finally (father, mother) in a word.

### 6.4.3 Dipthongs

The following are the eight diphthongs:

1) **/eɪ/ as in gate (close to ) :** While articulating /ei/, the glide begins just below the front half-close unrounded position and moves in the direction of the vowel /i/. The vowel occurs;
   - Initially : eight, aim
   - Medially : game, late
   - Finally : say, grey

2) **/aɪ/ as in high (close to ) :** While articulating /a/, the glide begins at a point slightly behind the front open position and moves in the direction slightly associated with /ɪ/. The vowel occurs.
   - Initially : ice, island
   - Medially : bite, fight
   - Finally : try, cry

3) **/ɔɪ/ as in toy (close to ) :** While articulating /ɔɪ/, the glide begins at appoint between the back open position and moves in the direction of the position associated with /ɪ/. The vowel occurs
   - Initially : oil, ointment
   - Medially : boil, coil
   - Finally : boy, employ

4) **/əʊ/ as in old (close to ) :** The glide of this diphthong begins at a central position between half close and half

open positions and moves in the direction of /ʊ/. The diphthong occurs

- Initially : own, oath
- Medially : road, home
- Finally : foe, hoe

5) **/ɑʊ/as in now (close to ) :** The glide of this dipthong begins at a back, open, unrounded position and moves in the direction of /u/au/occurs
   - Initially : owl, hour
   - Medially : crowd, house
   - Finally : cow, how

6) **/ɪə/ as in year :** The glide of the dipthong begins from a centralised, front unrounded position just above the half-close position to the position associated with /ə/. The dipthong occurs.
   - Initially : ear, ere
   - Medially : fierce, nearly
   - Finally : hear, near

7) **/ɛə/ as in case :** The glide of this dipthong begins at the front, half-open, unrounded position and moves in the direction of /ə/. The dipthong occurs
   - initially : airy, airport
   - Medially : fairy, dairy
   - Finally : chair, fair

8) **/ʊə/ as in poor :** The glide of this dipthong begins at the back, rounded position just above the half-close position and moves in the direction of /ə/. The dipthong occurs.
   - Medially : poorly, surely
   - Finally : poor, sure

### 6.4.4 Consonants

Unlike the vowels, during the production of the consonant sound, the air-stream from the lungs is either completely blocked,

partially blocked or where the opening is so narrow that the air escapes with audible friction. A consonant sound can be described by considering.

- **The state of the glottis** to know whether the sound is voiced or voiceless.
- **The position of the soft palate** to know whether the sound is oral and nasal.
- **The articulation involved** to know whether the sound is bilabial, labio-dental, etc.
- **The nature of the strictures** involved to know whether the sound is plosive, affricate etc.

For the sake of convenience, the consonants are to be discussed under the following heads (a) Plosives, (b) Affricates, (c) Fricatives, (d) Nasals, (e) Laterals, f) Frictionless Continuants and (g) Semi-vowels.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2:** What is a syllable?

.....

.....

**Q 3:** What is a vowel? What are the three parameters to describe a vowel?

.....

.....

**Q 4:** What is a consonant? What are the parameters to describe a consonant?

.....

.....



## 6.5 LET US SUM UP

At the end of the unit, you have noted that Phonetics is the

science of speech sounds, their production, transmission and reception and the signs to represent them in general. It deals mostly with the production of speech sounds, is same for all languages of the world. Here, we have also discussed the three main branches of Phonetics– Acoustic, Auditory and Articulatory. You are now familiar with the speech sounds including vowels and cousonants. You have noted that a Vowel is a speech sound during the production of which there are certain parameters of the tongue. A consonant, on the other hand puts emphasis on the glottis, the position of the soft palate, etc. We shall deal in details with the concept of vowels and consonants in Unit 9 of the second block of this course.



## 6.6 FURTHER READING

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## 6.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** (a) selection, organisation, (b) phonemes, (c) minimal,

distinctive, (d) minimal pair, (e) physical properties, (f) heard, perceived, (g) speech mechanism, (h) vibrate.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Words are divided into smaller units or sections which are called syllables. A syllable is a unit of pronunciation that consists of a vowel alone or a vowel with one of more consonants.

**Ans to Q No 3:** A vowel is a speech sound during the production of which, the air escapes through the mouth freely and continuously without any audible friction. The three parameters to describe a vowel are: the tongue position, the height of the tongue, and the position of the lips.

**Ans to Q No 4:** During the production of the consonant sound, the air-stream from the lungs is either completely blocked, partially blocked or where the opening is so narrow that the air escapes with audible friction. A consonant sound can be described by considering the state of the glottis, the position of the soft palate, the articulation involved, the nature of the strictures involved.



## 6.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** How would you consider the concepts of Phonetics?

**Q 2:** What is a speech sound? How would you distinguish between vowel and consonant sounds?

**Q 3:** Write short notes on:

a. Acoustic Phonetics.

b. Auditory Phonetics.

c. Articulatory Phonetics.

**Q 4:** Describe the parameters in the production of vowel sounds in English.

**Q 5:** Make a list of the pure vowels and give examples of each.

**Q 6:** Write a note on Dipthongs.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 7 : PHONOLOGY

## UNIT STRUCTURE


7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 What is Phonology?

7.4 Major Concepts of Phonology

- 7.4.1 Phone
- 7.4.2 Phoneme
- 7.4.3 Allophone
- 7.4.4 Word Stress
- 7.4.5 Accent and Rhythm
- 7.4.6 Intonation

7.5 Let us Sum up

7.6 Further Reading

7.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.8 Model Questions


## 7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the concept of Phonology
- explain the concept of stress in Phonology
- gain an idea on the use of intonation.

## 7.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall deal with Phonology, which is a level of linguistic organisation within which two branches of study are generally recognised: segmental and supra-segmental phonology. Here you will also be acquainted with the concepts like the phone, phoneme, allophone as parts of segmented phonology and concepts like stress, rhythm and intonation as parts of Supra-segmental Phonology.

## 7.3 WHAT IS PHONOLOGY?

We shall consider the concept of Phonology in this unit as a level of linguistic organisation contrasted with morphology, syntax and semantics. The human vocal organs can produce a very wide range of speech sounds. The International Phonetic Association has developed and is progressively modifying a set of sound symbols known as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols to provide a precise and universal means of recording in writing the wide range of speech sounds. No language, however, makes use of all these sounds. In other words, people speaking a particular language use only a limited number of speech sounds. We can therefore say that every language makes its own selection of sounds and organises them into characteristic patterns. This selection of sounds and their organisation constitutes the Phonology of the language. Thus, we can say that the aim of Phonology is the selection and organisation of sounds in a system or pattern.

Within Phonology, two branches of study are generally recognised: segmental and supra-segmental phonology. The term segmental refers to any discrete unit that can be identified either physically or auditorily in the stream of speech. The major concepts of Segmental Phonology are phone, phoneme and allophone. While the major concepts of Supra segmental Phonology are stress, rhythm and intonation. The following sections deal with these concepts in some details.

## 7.4 MAJOR CONCEPTS OF PHONOLOGY

Let us discuss some of the major concepts of phonology in the following subsections.

### 7.41 Phone

The term ‘phone’ is used in Phonetics and Phonology to refer to the discrete segments of sounds in a stream of speech. It is “the smallest possible segment of sound abstracted from the continuum of speech’’. All the segments of sounds used in each

language can be classed into a limited number of phonemes and conversely the vowel and consonant phonemes exhaustively cover all the vowel and consonant sounds that occur in a language. Members of phonemes are often called phones or allophones. It is a common practice to write phone symbols between square brackets and phoneme symbols or the symbols of a broad transcription between oblique lines. Thus, in English [p] is a phone which is a realisation of the /p/ phoneme. From the viewpoint of Segmental Phonology phones are the physical realisation of phonemes.

### 7.4.2 Phoneme

The term 'phoneme' is used in traditional phonological theories to refer to a minimal and distinctive unit in the sound system of a language. In this definition of the phoneme, the key words are (i) minimal, (ii) distinctive and (iii) system. When we say that a phoneme is minimal, it implies that a phoneme is the smallest unit of sound. A phoneme cannot be segmented any further. As an example, it may be stated that /bi/ 'be' cannot be a single phoneme because it consists of /b/ and /i/. The symbols /b/ and /i/ cannot be broken down any further i.e., cannot be further segmented. Thus /b/ is a minimal unit of sound.

When we say that a phoneme is 'distinctive' we mean that it contrasts with another phoneme so as to bring out a meaning difference in a word. Two sounds /p/ and /b/ are distinctive or contrastive if they produce a meaning difference when one is substituted for the other. When the initial symbol /p/ in the word pet /pet/ is substituted by /b/ we get the word bet /bet/. Since pet and bet are different words having different meanings, we say that /p/ and /b/ are distinctive or contrastive in English. All the phonemes in the sound system of English, share this feature.

The term system used in the above definition, takes us to a related term structure. We talk about structure and system to

describe the sound patterns of a particular language. The concept of structure deals with the syntagmatic relations between units. Take the English word pit. The word consists of one syllable made up of consonant /p/, vowel // and another consonant /t/. The initial consonant /p/ is in syntagmatic relation with the other two units /i/ and /t/. We can substitute other sounds for the initial sound in the word pit and get other words like bit, kit, fit, hit, wit etc. We say that the sounds represented by /pit/ are in paradigmatic relation with the sounds represented by words bit /bit/, kit/kit/ etc. When two words (eg. pit and hit) differ only in one sound, the pair of words is called a minimal pair.

The term 'system' refers to the fact that phonemes of a language are meaningful only within the system of a language. If we consider the sound system of Assamese, we note that [k] and [kh] are separate phonemes in that language as the replacement of one sound with another produces a meaning difference. In Assamese and are two different words. But in English /k/ and [kh] are not two different words; [kh] is merely a realisation of the phoneme /k/. This indicates that the concept of the phoneme is applicable within the system of a given language.

### 7.4.3 Allophone

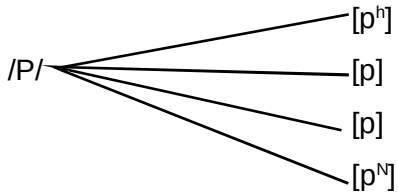
The phonemes of a language are often referred to as abstract units. These abstract units are realised as phones. The nature of the realisation of a phoneme depends to a large extent upon the environment, that is, the position that the phoneme occupies in a word. We can say that depending upon the position the phoneme /p/ can be realised differently. These different realisations of the phoneme are called the allophones of the phoneme. Let us examine the different realisations of /p/.

- When /p/ occurs in the initial position of a word as in pen, it is realised as an aspirated voiceless bi-labial plosive. We

use the symbol [$p^h$] to describe the allophonic variant of /p/ in word initial, stressed position.

- When /p/ occurs in an accented syllable preceded by /s/ as in spin, the /p/ is an unaspirated, voiceless, bilabial plosive. We use the symbol [p] to describe the allophonic variant of /p/.
- When /p/ occurs in the final position of a word as in slip, the /p/ has no audible release. We use the symbol [p ] to describe the allophonic variant /p/ with no audible release in word final position.
- When /p/ is immediately followed by /m/ as to topmost, /p/ is realised as a nasally released voiceless bilabial plosive. We use the symbol [$p^N$] to describe the allophonic variant of /p/ when it is nasally released. Thus topmost can be phonetically transcribed as [$t^hop^Nmost$].

The above account of the allophonic variants of the phoneme /p/ can be represented as follows:




The diagram shows that /p/ and /$p^h$/ are not two different phonemes in English. We say that [$p^h$] is an allophonic variant of /p/. However, in languages like Assamese, Bengali and Hindi, these two sounds are not allophonic variants. They are different phonemes.

### 7.4.4 Word Stress

'Stress' is a term used in Phonology to refer to the degree of force used in producing a syllable. The usual distinction is between stressed and unstressed syllable – the former being more prominent than the latter. The prominence is usually due to an increase in loudness of the stressed syllable, but increase in

length and often pitch may constitute to the overall impression of prominence. In general terms, stress is usually associated with emphasis or strength.

As a general rule, if a word has more than one syllable, one of the syllables stands out from the rest. In the word 'table', the first syllable ta is more prominent than the second syllable ble. Take the word committee. In this word made up of three syllables co-mmi-ttee, the second syllable is stressed. The relative prominence of a syllable is generally due to stress. The most prominent syllable is said to have the primary stress which is marked with a vertical line above in front of the syllable [ | ]. Any other prominent syllable in a word is marked with a vertical bar below and in front of the syllable. We shall deal with word stress in Unit 10 of the second block of this Course.

### 7.4.5 Accent and Rhythm

It is useful to note that in a sentence words that are important for meaning — content words like nouns, adjectives, principal verbs and adverbs — are generally accented. Grammatical words like articles, personal and relative pronouns, auxiliaries, prepositions and conjunctions are generally not accented. Look at this sentence:

I bought the book.

In this sentence, the words bought and book are accented but 'I' and 'the' are not accented. When a word of more than one syllable is accented in connected speech, the accent falls on the syllable that is normally accented when the words is uttered in isolation.eg.

The boy re'turned the bicycle.

The word boy is accented because it is a noun, returned because it is a verb and bicycle also because it is a verb. In English, the stressed or accented syllables, which are pronounced with greater force than the other syllables, form a succession of

beats coming at regular intervals of time. Spoken English shows a marked contrast between the accented and unaccented syllables. This contrast accounts for its rhythmic patterns.

In order to reproduce the rhythm of speech correctly, it becomes necessary to use the contracted form or weak forms. If a word is said in isolation or if it is stressed, the strong form is used. If a word is unstressed, it often appears in its weak form. For example, in the sentence Here's an apple, the article an is pronounced in its weak form as [n] or [ n ].

### 7.4.6 Intonation

Intonation in Supra-segmental Phonology refers to the distinction use of patterns of pitch and melody in speech. The pattern of variation of the pitch of the voice is referred to as intonation. When we speak, the pitch of the voice goes on changing. The speaker divides his/her utterance into tone groups. When you make a long utterance, you generally break up the utterance into groups or chunks. You do not speak out a long sentence in one breath rapidly without pauses in between. Each break of an utterance that you make is a tone group. Each tone group has a nucleus or a tonic syllable. It is in this tonic syllable that a noticeable pitch movement, that is, a change in the pitch of the voice is initiated. If the voice falls, we say we have a falling tone. When we write out a falling tone movement, we use the sloping mark ( \ ) to indicate a marked change in the pitch of the voice. Read these two sentences:

- She signed the letter. (statement)
- She signed the letter? (Yes/No question)

In the statement, the nuclear syllable takes a following tone whereas in yes/no type question, the nuclear syllable takes a rising tone. Intonation, then plays a very important role in conveying meaning. You will find an opportunity to learn more about Intonation in unit 8.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What is the meaning of Phonology? What are the two branches of Phonology?

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**Q 2:** What is a phoneme? Discuss briefly.

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**Q 3:** What is the meaning of the terms like Stress and Intonation?

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## 7.5 LET US SUM UP

By this time, you have realised that Phonology is the organisation of sounds into some patterns. Hence, it is the study of the formal organisation of language which is known as Phonology. Phonology is the study of the vocal sounds and the changes, phonemes and their variants in a particular language. While, Phonology in one language will differ from the Phonology of another. John Lyons has stated: "Phonetics differs from phonology…in that it considers speech sounds independently of their paradigmatic opposition and syntagmatic combinations in particular language," and that Phonology is the level at which the linguist describes the sounds of a particular language. To grasp this even better you may note that the human vocal system can produce a very large number of different speech sounds. But, the members of a particular speech community speaking a particular language however use only a limited number of these sounds. From what you have read in the sections of the unit, every language makes its own selection of sounds and organises them into some characteristic patterns. This selection of

sounds and their arrangements into characteristic patterns constitute the Phonology of a language.



## 7.6 FURTHER READING


1) Balasubramanian, T. (2011). *A Text Book of English Phonetics for Indian Students*. Macmillan.
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5) Sethi, J & Dhamija, P.V. (1999). *A Course in Phonetics and Spoken English.* Prentice Hall of India.
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7) Standard Allen, W. (1984). *Living English Speech.* Orient Longman.
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## 7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Phonology is the selection and organisation of sounds in a system or pattern. There are two branches of Phonetics: Segmental and Supra-segmental. The major concepts of Segmental Phonology are—phone, phoneme and allophone. While the major concepts of supra segmental phonology are—stress, intonation A brief introduction of each of these concepts follow:

**Ans to Q No 2:** A phoneme refers to a minimal and distinctive unit in the sound system of a language. A phoneme is minimal which implies that it is the smallest unit of sound and it cannot be segmented any further. A phoneme is 'distinctive' which means that it contrasts

with another phoneme so as to bring out a meaning difference in a word. While, system refers to the sound pattern of a particular language.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Both Stress and Intonation are part of Suprasegmental Phonology. 'Stress' is a term used in phonology to refer to the degree of force used in producing a syllable. Thus, Stress is usually associated with emphasis or strength. Intonation on the other hand refers to the distinctive use of patterns of pitch and melody in speech.



## 7.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** How would you consider the concept of Phonology?

**Q 2:** What are the differences between Phonetics and Phonology?

**Q 3:** Define the following terms with examples:

a. Phoneme

b. Allophone

c. Phone

d. Stress

e. Intonation

**Q 4:** Discuss how Phonology can be described in terms of structure and system.

**Q 5:** Write in brief on the two branches of study in Phonology.

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# UNIT 8 : ISSUES IN THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH

## UNIT STRUCTURE


8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Received Pronunciation

8.4 The Speech Mechanism

- 8.4.1 The Respiratory System
- 8.4.2 The Phonatory System
- 8.4.3 The Articulatory System
- 8.4.4 Glossary

8.5 Let us Sum up

8.6 Further Reading

8.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.8 Model Questions


## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to **:**

- explain the concept of Received Pronunciation as a spoken variety of English for international intelligibility.
- discuss the functions of the three systems of the speech mechanism.
- discuss the function of each organ of speech in the production of speech.
- identify the various issues that need to be considered for the pronunciation of English.

## 8.2 INTRODUCTION

Language is a system of communication through speech. People make use of language to communicate with those around them. People belonging to different linguistic communities use different languages for

the purpose of communication. Whatever be the linguistic community we may belong to, it is possible for us to use two mediums for linguistic communication. These are speech and writing. In order to communicate in speech, we produce a succession of sounds arranged in groups which are called words. Each word has a definite meaning in the minds of the persons using the language. To learn another language, we must learn the words that make up the language. We must use these words to speak the language.

Just as each language has its own set of words which are different from those of other languages, so each language has its own set of sounds different from the set used in any other language. Your mother tongue may be Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Hindi, Manipuri or Nepali or any other language. You use a sound system in communicating in speech in your language which is exclusive to your own language. When you speak English, you have to produce a succession of speech sounds that are exclusive to English. You may note that the sound system of a language is exclusive to that language, and that no other language has exactly the same sound system. It is, therefore, necessary for Indian speakers to make a systematic study of the English sound system - the phonetics of English - for the sake of wider intelligibility of their speech.

Many of us have a tendency to believe that it is hardly necessary to learn to speak English 'in a different way' from what we have already acquired over the years in our environments. We may even feel satisfied by thinking that even if we do not learn the sounds of English accurately, we shall still be understood. Let us suppose your mother tongue is Assamese. When you study the forty-four sounds in the sound system of English, you will discover that there are a number of sounds in English whose 'counterparts' you will never find in your own sound system. Take the vowel sound in the word bird. Unless you learn the sound, you will have a tendency to use the 'ar' sound and pronounce it as bard which will confuse the listener because in English bird and bard do not mean the same thing. This is a small example from amongst a host of examples to justify the need for acquiring the sound system of English.

Now, let us suppose, you are convinced that it is necessary to learn the proper sounds of the system of English, the question arises: How do we learn them? In course of these units there will be an attempt to devise drills of individual problem sounds. The aim is to make you 'hear' the difference between the English and the Assamese corresponding sound so as to train your ear and speech organs for the new sounds. It is important to remember that constant practice is needed to learn the right position and shape of the speech organs (tongue, lips etc.) and to fix all these things in one's speech habits.

This unit will thus help you to consider some of the important issues in the Pronunciation of English.

## 8.3 RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION

English is spoken over such a large part of the world that a number of variations even among the mother-tongue speakers of English exist. English is the mother tongue in the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, to name only a few major countries. In these countries you will discover a striking variation in the accents used by these speakers. Even within Britain, there has emerged several accents like Scottish accent, Lancashire accent, Norwich accent and so on. English is also spoken by the educated people all over the Commonwealth, and a number of different accents have therefore come into existence, each showing certain features of the speakers' mother tongue.

Bansal and Harrison, in their book *Spoken English for India* observe that English as spoken by educated people in India does not differ radically from native English in grammar and vocabulary, but in pronunciation it is different from both British and American English. (p.3) They also refer to the regional varieties of spoken English in India and observe that "these regional varieties of English are sometimes not even mutually intelligible. In every region, however, there are speakers who have excluded the improper features of regional accent and speak a more 'neutral' form of the language". It is this 'neutral' form that we should aim at.

We often hear people saying "so-and-so speaks good English". In the same way, we often hear remarks like "he speaks rather bad English". Now, how do we fix the norm of good and bad in spoken English? The norm is determined by the "degrees of approximation to native English and Standard Indian English" among others, as said by Bansal and Harison in the book mentioned above (p.4) English being a world language and its immense use by the electronic media, it is necessary for us to strive for an accent that is intelligible not only at a national level but also at an international level. It is this international variety of English that can be called Received Pronunciation (RP) in today's context.

The term Received Pronunciation, known as RP, is actually the name given to the regionally neutral accent in British English. Historically derived from the prestige speech of the courts and the public schools, the term RP seems to indicate that its prestige is the result of social factors, not linguistic ones. However, in today's context, the question of linguistic superiority or inferiority is totally redundant. Today, the efforts are towards making the speech as much regionally neutral as possible. This can be achieved by introducing ourselves to the sound system of English known as RP, primarily because it is a neutral variety of English but still more because most audio materials for speech practice are developed by making use of this sound system. Here we shall look at this sound system of English in these units.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Complete the following statements :

(a) A succession of sounds arranged in groups is called _____.

(b) Phonetics is the study of the_____.

(c) Each language has a sound system that is _____ to the language.

(d) There are _____ sounds in the sound system of English.

(e) There is a difference in the _____ used by the speakers of English in different regions of the world.

(f) The regionally neutral accent in British English is called _____.

**Q 2:** State whether the statements are true or false.

(a) We should be able to distinguish the features of a sound in English to help us to learn the sound.

(b) The English spoken by educated people of India differs radically from Native English in grammar and vocabulary.

(c) There is a variety of English called Standard Indian English.

(d) RP is a neutral variety of English.

(e) The change of one sound in a word produces no meaning difference.

**Q 3:** What is the full form of RP? Define the term.

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## 8.4 THE SPEECH MECHANISM

Human beings are distinguished from other living beings largely in their ability to produce speech sounds. Of course, other living beings have their own means of communication. The bees, for example, have a highly organised communication system. But human beings alone possess a kind of speech mechanism that distinguish them from all other living beings.

The most striking feature of the human speech mechanism is the vocal tract. It is unusual, even unique among mammals. Even the closest relatives of humans i.e., the apes, have vocal tracts which are quite different. What distinguishes the human speech mechanism as unique lies in the three systems that are followed in the production of speech sounds. These are :

- The Respiratory System
- The Phonatary System
- The Articulatory System

Here an attempt is made to show how these three systems contribute towards the production of speech sounds in general and the English speech sounds in particular.

### 8.4.1 The Respiratory System

The respiratory system consists of the lungs along with the muscles of the chest and the wind pipe known as the trachea. A brief description of each one of them is given below:

a) **The Lungs:** The lungs can be described as large sponges that are alternately filled with air and emptied of it. They are enclosed within the rib cage and are bounded at the bottom by a layer of muscles called the diaphragm. The process of the air filling the lungs is called inspiration and the emptying of it is called expiration. It is the expiratory lung air, the air that we breathe out, that is the basis for the articulation of most speech sounds. This air stream is known as the pulmonic egressive air-stream mechanism. This is the mechanism activated by the lungs that operate in the production of all English sounds.

b) **The Muscles of the Chest:** The muscles of the chest initiate the process of production of speech sounds. Moving of the air is the first requirement of speech sounds. The muscles exert pressure on the lungs to release the stream of air. The process of the air flowing into the lungs and being expelled from the lungs is controlled by the muscles of the chest.

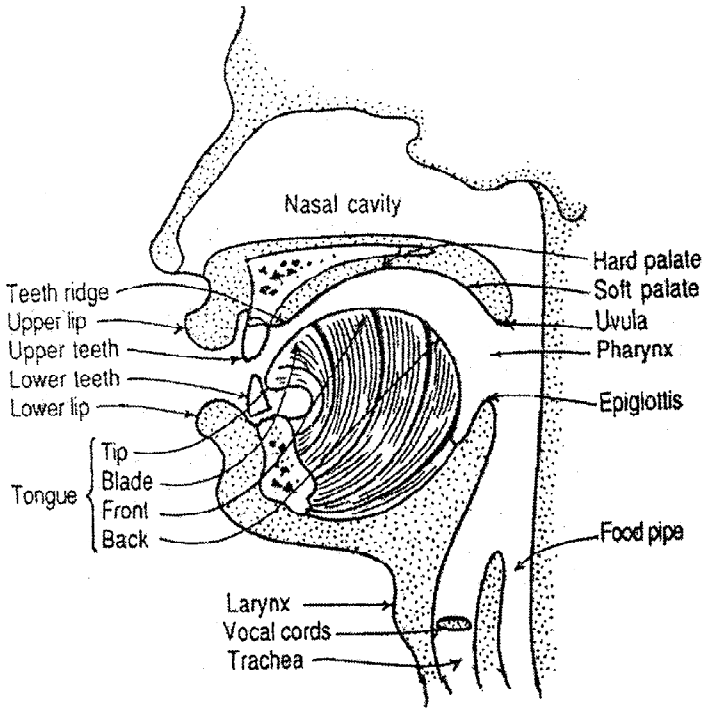
c) **The Trachea:** The trachea is the passage for the flow of air from the mouth to the oral and nasal passages for the production of speech sounds. The trachea thus contributes towards the pulmonic egressive air-stream mechanism, in addition to two other mechanisms namely the glottalic and velaric air-streams. There are no English sounds produced with the glottalic and velaric air-streams.

## 8.4.2 The Phonatory System

The air-stream released by the lungs undergoes different kinds of modifications at different stages of the vocal organs. The first of these modifications takes place in the trachea. You have already learnt that the trachea is the wind pipe in the upper part of which there is a structure called the larynx. The larynx plays an important part in the production of speech sounds. Let us refer to the diagram of the speech organs given as Fig.1, and locate the larynx. We shall now study its function in the production of speech sounds.

**The Larynx :**The Larynx can be described as a fairly rigid box made up of cartillages, or layers of muscles situated at the top of the trachea. The primary function of the cartillages is to act as a valve: when necessary, it closes off the air from and to the lungs and also prevents food from entering the trachea. Refer to the diagram given below showing the different organs of speech and the position of the larynx, the vocal cords and the trachea.

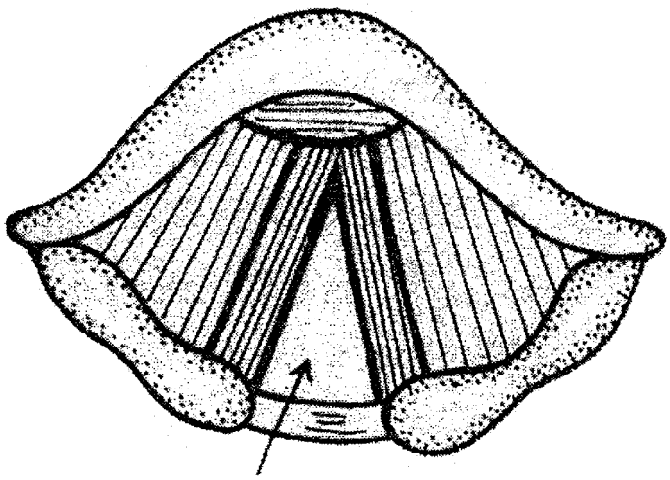
**Figure 8.1: Organs of speech**



In the larynx, there are two vocal cords that resemble a pair of lips placed horizontally from front to back. They are joined in the front but can be separated at the back and the opening between them is called the glottis. The glottis plays an important part in the production of two different types of sounds known as (a) voiceless sounds and (b) voiced sounds. Let us discuss these two types of sounds here.

a) **Voiceless Sounds:** Voiceless sounds refer to those speech sounds that are produced with the glottis being open as shown in the diagram here:

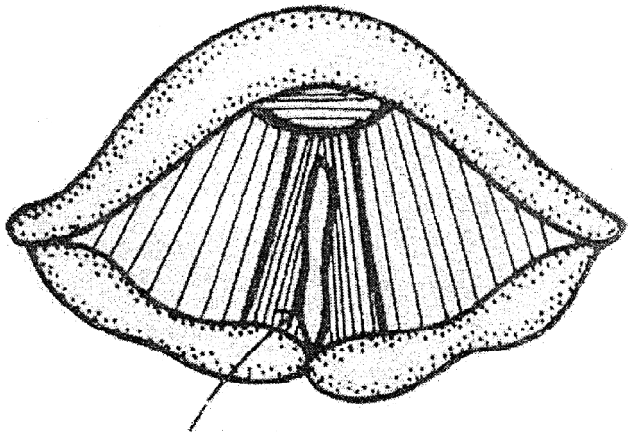
**Figure 8.2: Vocal cords drawn wide apart**




The diagram shows that the vocal cords are drawn apart allowing the air to pass in and out without vibration of the vocal cords. This is the state of the glottis during normal breathing. Speech sounds produced when the vocal cords are in this position do not have the vibration. To illustrate this point, here is an example. The consonant sound at the beginning of the word pen is /p/. Note that this figure is a sound symbol and not the letter p. Hence, you pronounce it as [pa] or . There is no vibration of the vocal cord when you pronounce this sound and hence it is a voiceless sound. Other voiceless sounds include /t/, /k/ etc.

b) **Voiced Sounds:** Voiced sounds refer to those speech sounds that are produced with the vocal cords held loosely together as shown in the diagram below :

**Figure 8.3: Vocal cords held loosely together**



Vocal Cords

At this state of the vocal cords, the pressure of the air coming from the lungs makes them vibrate. This vibration of the vocal cords helps to produce sounds that are known as voiced sounds. All the vowel sounds of English and the initial consonant sounds in words like boy, dog, gun, etc. are examples of voiced sounds.

### 8.4.3 The Articulatory System

By referring to the voiceless and voiced sounds, we have seen how the air-stream is modified while passing through the larynx. After passing through the larynx, the air-stream is further modified by the various shapes assumed by the vocal organs before it is released into the atmosphere. These modifications by different vocal organs affect the quality of the sound produced. These organs of speech constitute the articulatory system. Let us now look at the different organs of speech and the role that they play in producing the sounds of English.

a) **The Tongue:** The tongue plays a very dominant role in the production of speech sounds. The tongue can take various

positions for the articulation of different speech sounds. For convenience of description of the tongue, the surface of the tongue is divided into front and back. In a position of rest, the front of the tongue lies opposite the hard palate and the back of the tongue lies opposite the soft palate. The front of the tongue is divided into the following parts:

- **Blade of the tongue :** the part which normally lies opposite the teeth ridge.
- **Tip of the tongue :** the front edge of the tongue.
- **The edges of the tongue, also called rims :** the sides.

While describing the different sounds produced by the tongue we shall use the terms referring to different parts of the tongue. Any part of the tongue can be raised to any height or be made to touch different parts of this roof of the mouth in order to produce different speech sounds. For example, when the tip of the tongue touches the ridge at the back of your teeth (called alveolar ridge), you produce the sound /t/ as in ten, like our Assamese .

b) **The Lower Jaw:** The lower jaw is an important speech organ because of its ability to alter the shape of the mouth by its upward and downward movements. The alteration has a striking effect on the sounds produced. You will come across vowels described as close, half close, half open and open which are actually distinguished by the position of the lower jaw. For example, when you say the word feel the lower jaw comes to a close position for producing the long vowel sound /i:/ like our Assamese . However when you say hot, the lower jaw comes to an open position for producing the vowel /O/ like our Assamese .

c) **The Lips:** The lips affect the shape of the mouth through which the breath has to pass to the outer air. The lips can be tightly shut or can be made to assume different shapes

while producing different speech sounds. For example, when you say /p/ or /b/ like our Assamese and , your lips are tightly shut, but when you say /i:/ like our Assamese , your lips are spread.

d) **The Teeth:** The teeth play an important part in the production of soundslike /f/, /v/, etc., known as labio dental sounds. They are not like our and . You will learn about them in the unit on the consonants.

e) **The Teeth Ridge:** The teeth ridge or the alveolar ridge, as it is called, is the bony prominence immediately behind the upper teeth. This is also an important speech organ contributing to the production of sounds like /t/ /d/ /l/ /n/ among others. You will note that all the above sounds are produced with the tip of the tongue coming in contact with the teeth ridge.

f) **The Hard Palate:** The hard palate is the arched bony structure which forms the front part of the roof of the mouth from behind the alveolar ridge upto the area known as the soft palate or velum. It is the immobile bony area behind the alveolar ridge. The hard palate is used as the passive articulator during the production of the initial sound in words like she, shoe etc. and fine sound in words like garage.

g) **Soft Palate:** The soft palate is the mobile fleshy continuation of the roof of the mouth culminating in the uvula. The soft palate is particularly important in the production of a number of sounds. The nasal sounds /m/ /n/ and // are produced by lowering the soft palate. By raising the soft palate and blocking the nasal passage we can produce oral sounds - i.e. the sounds otherthan the three nasal sounds referred to:

h) **The Uvula:** The uvula is the fleshy pendant-like structure in which the soft palate culminates. Sounds produced by making use of the uvula are known as uvular sounds. It may be noted that there are no uvular sounds in English.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 4:** Fill in the Blanks:

a) The most striking feature of the human speech mechanism is the _____.

b) The _____ is a layer of muscles that exert pressure on the lungs to release air.

c) The mechanism for the production of English sounds by expelling lung air is called _____ mechanism.

d) The wind pipe is called _____.

e) Voiceless sounds are produced when the vocal cords are _____.

**Q 5:** State whether the statements are true or false.

a) Voiced sounds are produced when the vocal cords are wide part.

b) /k/ is a voiced sound

c) When the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge, we produce the sound /p/

d) The sound /v/ is not similar to the Assamese sound

e) The soft palate is useful for the production of nasal sounds.



## 8.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you were introduced to Received Pronunciation and various other aspects of the human speech mechanisim. You must have also gained an idea regarding the production of speech sounds. The three systems that contribute in the production of speech sounds are the respiratory system, the phonatory system and the articulatory system. This unit is introductory as it lays emphasis on the basic concepts regarding pronunciation of English.



## 8.6 FURTHER READING

1) Balasubramaniam, T.(1981). *A Textbook of English Phonetics*, Macmillan .

2) Bansal, R. K. and J.B. Harrison. (1988). *Spoken English for India*, Orient Longman.

3) Gimson, A. C.(1994). *An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English*, Edward Arnold.



## 8.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** a) Words, b) Sound system of a language, c) Exclusive, d) Forty-four, e) Accents, f) Received Pronunciation or R.P.

**Ans to Q No 2:** a) True, b) False, c) True, d) True, e) False

**Ans to Q No 3:** The full form of RP is Received Pronunciation. It is the name given to the regionally neutral accent of British English. RP derived its prestige from is use in the courts and public schools.

**Ans to Q No 4:** a) vocal tract, b) diaphragm, c) pulmonic, egress air-stream, d) trachea, e) wide apart

**Ans to Q No 5:** a) False, b) False, c) False, d) True, e) True



## 8.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** State the three systems for the production of English sounds.

**Q 2:** What is pulmonic egressive air-stream mechanism?

**Q 3:** What are the speech organs referred to by the articulatory system?

**Q 4:** What are voiced sounds? Give three examples.

**Q 5:** What are voiceless sounds? Give three examples.

**Q 6:** Draw a diagram of the section of the head showing the different organs of speech. Label at least five organs.

**Q 7:** Draw a diagram of the roof of the mouth and label the parts.

**Q 8:** Draw diagrams of the vocal cords during the production of voiced and voiceless sounds.

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