CHAPTER II
VARIOUS GRAMMARS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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"Even the greatest experts in the field do not know exactly how a knowledge of grammar might assist in the language learning process; and certainly as every mother and child shows, a language can be completely mastered without a knowledge of its formal grammar."\(^1\)

2.1 Traditional Grammar - Its Contribution to Language Learning

Here the author has a view against 'grammar-grind'. According to him "the knowledge of grammar of a language is not essential for the efficient learning or using that language".

Let us examine some of the views of the experts in the field of grammar in a historical perspective.

Lowth says:

"The principal design of a grammar of any language is to teach us to express with propriety in that language; and to enable us to judge of every phrase and form of construction.

The plain way of doing this is to lay down rules and illustrate them by examples."

"The early grammarians aimed to do three things:
(1) to codify the principles of the language and reduce it to rule
(2) to settle disputed points and decide cases of divided usage and
(3) to point out common errors or what were supposed to be errors and thus correct and improve the language."\(^2\)

2.2 The Beginning of Prescriptive Grammar

To prescribe and to proscribe seem to have been co-ordinate aims of the grammarians. The distinction between 'lie' and 'lay' was apparent first specifically made in the second half of the eighteenth century. The expressions, "had rather", "had better", were condemned by Johnson, Lowth and Campbell. The preference for 'different from' rather than "different to", the condemnation of "between you and I", "It is me", "Who is it?" - are among the attitudes which generally speaking have been subsequently approved in the standard speech.

Such is the case also with the differentiation of "between" and "among"; the use of comparative rather than

superlative where only two things are involved ('the larger', not 'largest', of two'); the feeling that incomparables (viz., perfect, chief, round) should not be compared (more perfect etc).  

Some of the following usages found in literature of the time were also defended and disputed by the grammarians (viz. from hence, this here, that there, you was). Webster also defended the usages.

While on the other hand Harris, Lowth and others accepted the genuine construction in English (viz., 'he is older than she', 'he likes you better than me' etc.).

Previous to 1622 A.D. no English grammar recognized any distinction between the usage of 'shall' and 'will'.

In 1653 A.D. Wallis in his, "Grammatica Linguae Anglicanne" stated that in declarative sentences simple futurity should be expressed by 'shall' in the first person, by 'will' in the second and third. It was not until the second half of the eighteenth century, however, that the usage in questions and subordinate clauses was defined. In 1762 A.D. Lowth stated the rules for questions and in 1765 A.D. William Ward, in his "Grammar of the English Language" drew up for the first time the full set of prescriptions which underlies, with individual variations, 

3. Ibid. p. 336.
The grammarians seem to have been making absolute what was apparently a common but not universal tendency in written language, evident in the latter writers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

"If we attempt to view the work of the eighteenth century grammarians in retrospect and estimate the results that they achieved, we shall find them not inconsiderable. It must be remembered that consciously or unconsciously, these persons were attempting to 'ascertain' the language and to give definiteness and order to a body of hitherto uncodified practice. As a consequence it could no longer be said that English was a language with rules. It might almost be said that we had too many rules. Some of them have since been set aside. Others are of doubtful validity, although they still find a place in our grammar-books and are imposed upon those who consider confirmity to supposed authority, a sufficient criterion of correctness. But though we may recognize that the grounds on which decisions themselves

were often arbitrary, we must admit that a considerable
number of disputed points, rightly or wrongly were settled
and have since become established. With the codification of
usage and settlement of many matters which were in disputes
much of the uncertainty that troubled 'Dryden' and 'Swift'
was removed. For this and other reasons English escaped the
artificial restraints and the repressive influence of an
academy".5

2.3 Weakness of Early Grammarians

"While acknowledging the results attained by the
eighteenth-century grammarians and reformers, it is necessary
to emphasize the serious limitations in nearly all of them.
Their greatest weakness was, of course, their failure, except
in one or two conspicuous cases, to recognize the importance
of usages as the sole arbiter in linguistic matters. They
did not realise or refused to acknowledge that changes in
language often appears to be capricious and unreasonable in
other words are the result of forces too complex to be fully
analysed or predicted. Accordingly they approached most
questions in the belief that they could be solved by logic
and that the solutions could be imposed upon the world by
authoritative decree. Hence the constant attempt to legislate
one construction into use and another out of use. In this
attempt little or no recognition was shown for the legitimacy

5. Ibid. p. 344.
of divided usage. Thus, as Noah Webster pointed out, every time they refused to base their statements on the facts of current use they were also refusing to preserve an agreement between books and practice and were contributing "very much to create and perpetuate the differences between the written and spoken language."

"At the root of all their mistakes was their ignorance of the process of linguistic change. The historical study of English was still in its infancy and thought the materials were rapidly becoming available on which sound opinions could be formed, most men in the eighteenth century did not realize their importance."\(^6\)

For the last two centuries the most commonly used grammar of English was that of classical grammarians. This classical approach provided a frame work for an extremely detailed and sensitive description of English, it had however a number of short comings:

(a) It was based on the description made of Latin and Greek languages which differed in many important respects from English. For example, they retained a case system of nouns, including the 'Vocative Case', which frequently did not actually exist in English.

\(^6\) Ibid. p. 344.
(b) It did not use a consistent frame for defining grammatical facts and relationships. For example, a sentence was said to 'express a complete thought' and for this purpose was said to require a finite verb - an interdependence of different modes of explanation, one semantic, the other structural. In defining 'parts of speech' some were described in semantic terms viz., 'the name of a person, place or thing' for 'nouns', and the others in formal terms viz., the function of 'qualifying' for adverbs.

(c) It tended to set up prescriptive rules which language had to obey rather than to take accepted usage as a starting point. This tendency was closely related to almost exclusive attention to careful written English, other kinds of use being regarded as inferior slang or colloquialism.

Let us examine some of demerits of traditional grammars according to Eddy Roulet:

"Traditional grammars indicate that they act as useful aids neither to the mastery of oral expression nor to that of written expression; both important objectives of modern language teaching.

"In fact, the implicit aim of traditional school- grammars, teaching pupils to construct correct sentences, could not be achieved because of the nature of the 'content' of these grammars and their manner of presentation of grammatical data."
There are six major gaps in it which are damaging the modern language teaching practice. 7

(1) **Traditional grammars take no account of present day language usage:**

They set prescriptive attitudes. They were referring to great authors of the past in order to support their attitudes.

Whatever interests a certain category of students may have in classical or poetic language, the grammarian ought first to describe the language in current use, it is that language which the students rely on for daily communication.

(2) **Even the most recent traditional manuals only describe the written language and either take no account of spoken language or mix the two codes:**

(a) The majority of words form their plural by adding an 's' which is pronounced. For example, a boy, two boys (*b iz*). Here 's' is not pronounced as 's'. It further mentions plurals in 'es' and 'ies' (in written language) ignoring the (*s, z, iz*) forms of spoken language.

(b) The regular simple past is formed by adding 'ed' to the infinitive stem; e.g. call (called). When the infinitive stem ends in 'e' we add 'd' e.g. smile (smiled). In monosyllabic verbs ending in single consonant preceded by a single vowel we double the final consonant before adding 'ed' e.g. stop (stopped), clap (clapped). All forms of written language, where spoken form 'd' 't' 'id' are not taken into consideration.

(3) Traditional course books devote a great deal of time to secondary grammatical points:
(viz., orthography; but pay little to important constructions.

(4) More generally, traditional course books give a predominant place to morphology and neglect syntax.

(5) Traditional grammars present definitions, rules and explanations very frequently which are insufficiently explicit and they are often false and therefore both dangerous and of little value. For example
"A sentence is more or less complex expression offering the complete sense of a thought, feeling or wish." 

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This is a definition so vague that it would apply perfectly adequately to a 'word', to a 'sentence' and to 'paragraph'. The terms 'more or less' are also imprecise.

While defining 'object' these grammars write: "The 'object' of the verb is the term indicating the being or the object acted upon". Such a definition is still false because it would apply equally easily to the 'subjects' of the sentences.

One would cite a large number of examples to provide evidence for weaknesses of traditional grammars.

(6) Traditional grammars give grammatical information in compartmentalized and diffuse manner. For examples:

- articles, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs etc (all the parts of speech).

(7) Traditional grammars follow too closely the grammatical systems of Greek and Latin which are not appropriate for the description of modern languages e.g.

Father (nominative)
O father (vocative)
Father (accusative)
Of the father (genitive)
to, by or from the father (dative)

(8) A further important fault with traditional grammar is that the rules are not ordered in any way. As a result they did not provide the teacher with any information on the progression he is to follow in his course and to the pupils they give no assistance on the manner of how the rules are to be applied.

(9) Traditional manuals had an analytic presentation which may eventually aid the pupil in grasping the structure of ready-made sentence patterns, but which is of little value and use to him for the construction of phrases.

Finally traditional grammars do not provide the teacher with a satisfactory description of the language he is teaching, nor provide for the pupil a sufficient description of the language which he needs to learn. It is quite natural therefore, that teachers turn against linguists, who for almost fifty years under the influence of de Saussure of Palmer and Bloomfield. As Chomsky writes:

"The most careful and compendious traditional grammar give a full account of exceptions and irregularities but it provides only examples and paradigmatic instances of regular constructions, together with various informal hints and remarks as how the reader is to generalise from these utterances. The basic regular processes of sentence-construction remain unexpressed. These grammarians thought that the language can be mastered if a person knew the forms and rules very well." 10

Altogether classical English grammar failed either a satisfactory basis of description or a model for profitable teaching to language learners. In an attempt to overcome the deficiencies of a classical grammar there have arisen other types of grammar. We shall deal with them in a subsequent chapter.

Modern linguists have charged the traditional grammarians with confusing speech and writing, with slavishly copying the dogmas that previous grammarians have expounded trying to force all languages into the Latin mould. English verbs were found according to a paradigmatic scheme of Latin.

e.g.

Laudo (I praise) Laudamus (We praise)
Ladas (You praise) Laudatis (You praise)
Laudat (He/She/It praises) Laudant (They praise)

"Grammar is a set of phrase structure rules for the derivation of simple, active, declarative sentences, combined with a set of transformational rules which, when applied to the sentences derived by the phrase structure rules, add to, subtract from or modify the order, within them, or combine them in a complex way".11

2.4 Various Grammatical Approaches

"Certainly the kind of grammar taught twenty or thirty years ago is under sharp attack indeed with a group of increasingly numerous and increasingly vocal linguistic scientists asserting that traditional grammar does not give an adequate description of English, especially of English as it is used in today's world. For the first time in perhaps a century and a half, the English teacher is questioning what was once thought of as the most stable material of the curriculum .... Now-a-days the teacher of English should know that the structural linguists who are leading to attack on traditional grammar are thoroughly acquainted with it. 'Structural linguistics is in no sense anti-intellectual.'

Edwin Saucer gives many examples that how complexities are found in traditional grammars (pp. 54-55).

Western grammatical tradition can be traced to the ancient Greeks who raised the question of whether there is something essential in the relation between a word and the thing to which it refers or whether the relation is an arbitrary one. The Greeks are with the notion that the elements of a language can be classified into parts of speech.

The grammatical practice of the Roman was based on that of the Greek. Throughout the medieval period Latin occupied a central position in world of education and scholarship. When one studied grammar one usually studied Latin grammar. Even in modern times the Latin grammar has been often used as a model of description of other languages.

Modern English Language has been studied by grammarians and linguists of various schools of thought. The scholarly grammarians have organised their grammars around parts of speech and sentence elements. The European scholarly tradition includes three great grammars produced in the first part of the present century. One is Henrik Poutsma's "A grammar of late modern English" (1914), another is Etsko Kruisinga's "A handbook of present day English (1929) and the third is Otto Jesperson's, "A modern English grammar on historical principles" (1909-1949). The later edition in the series by R.W. Zandvoort in the middle of present century is, "A hand book of English Grammar", a treatise on the same traditional scholarly line. All these grammars have been written under the influence of historical linguistics: descriptive linguistics developed late in Europe.

2.5 A Linguistic Approach to Language

Descriptive linguistics can be said to have begun in the United States with the enunciation of the phoneme theory by Edward Sapir in the twenties of the present century.
Sapir's theory was reformulated and already stated by Leonard Bloomfield. He made it a central point in his synthesis that was published in the form of his book 'Language' (1913) which yielded a tremendous influence on the growth of the discipline in the U.S.A. and elsewhere in the subsequent years.

Bloomfield propounded the concepts of morphemes and immediate constituents (we shall deal with later in this chapter) that have since been employed extensively for language analysis and comparative studies of language structures because the concepts gave rise to the theory of language as 'a system of structures'. This theory was further elaborated and systematized during the later years by a number of linguists. Its application to the English language revealed many features of the language hitherto unknown.

The first attempt to give a comprehensive description of English within the framework of American descriptive linguists was that of George L. Trager and Henry Lee Smith, Jr., through their book 'An outline of English Grammar (1951). By explaining the grammatical significance of stress, pitch and juncture they pointed out a new dimension of the structure of English. Their approach to the English language through its phonologic structure, later inspired other scholars to analyse the language accordingly. A notable study of the type is by A.A. Hill (1958). In 1952 C.C. Fries published
'The Structure of English' which is a classic on the lines of Bloomfieldian linguistics based on structuralism. He rejected the traditional parts of speech and gave four major form classes and fifteen groups of function words. He has also described a number of basic sentence patterns in English and explained their structure through formulas. He has also devised a systematic technique of analysing English Sentence Patterns into immediate constituents. The form-classes, function words and syntactical devices advocated by Fries have immensely contributed towards a better understanding of the structure of the language and the subsequent evolution of instrumental programmes, particularly for teaching English as a second language in many parts of the world. In 1958 A.A. Hill's work entitled: "Introduction to linguistic structures: from sound to sentences in English" was published. This was an approach similar to the one adopted by Trager and Smith, but on a wider scale. The Structure of English was explained in terms of its phonologic syntax with elaborated treatment of phonotactics, morphotactics and Structure of English sentence.

Hill's work was followed by Eugene A. Nida's "A Synopsis of English Syntax" (1960) which is again a comprehensive treatment of the syntax of English. It is based on the analytical technique of immediate constituents. Through this technique, Nida has elaborated the concept of structural linguistics as applied to syntax of English.
The transformational generative grammar (which is to be dealt in its all possible details later in this chapter) has entered the field since the late fifties. In 1957 Noam Chomsky published his 'Syntactic Structures' advocating the use of 'Transformations' as an instrument for description of syntax. Accordingly, some sentences were to be described in the established way being built up of immediate constituents. The remaining were formed by applying transformational rules. The rules were formulated as processes operating on one structure to produce another. Thus for the first time in American linguistics process statements began to be used to describe syntax. The transformational generative theory is in the state of rapid evolution. Yet there is no comprehensive grammar of English available based totally on Transformational Generative Model. (We have: The Study of Syntax" - The generative Transformational Approach to the Structure of American English by D.T. Langendoen (1969) and such other books, which are not fully adequate).

Paul Roberts in 'English Syntax' (1964) describes the essentials of the Structure of English through frames of Linear programming. Syrell Rogvin's, "Modern English Sentence Structure" (1964) is also a programmed treatment but it does not go so deep into transformations as Paul Roberts has done. The approach to grammar through the transformational-generative model does promise to unravel many mysteries of the language at the level of its deep structure.
2.6 A Linguistic look into the description of language

"Language does not exist, it happens. It is neither an organism, as many nineteenth-century linguists saw it, nor as an edifice, as it was regarded in the early modern 'structuralist' period of linguistics language is activity, activity of basically four kinds: speaking, listening, writing and reading. These activities entail certain material processes which are observable. When we speak, the bodily movements we perform, can be observed and measured so can the disturbances in the air which result, specifically and directly, from these movements. In spoken language, we are interested in both stages of activity, precisely because the properties of a sound wave are uniquely determined by articulatory movements performed to produce it. In writing, however, the link between the movements and the resulting marks, on paper or blackboard is fluid... There are of course other material processes in language which we cannot yet observe. In particular the perpetual stages of language activity, the processes associated with listening and reading that take place in the sense organs, the nervous system and the brain are the well understood. Meanwhile the processes that can be observed, accurately in details, are so revealing for purposes of describing language in its material aspects."13

Three types of patterning are derived. Substance, Form, Context. The 'substance' is the raw material of language; auditory (Phonic substance) or visual (graphic substance). The 'form' is the internal substance. The context is the relation of language, which is in fact a relation of its internal patterns, its form, to other features of situations in which language operates. The linguistic sciences have to account for language at all these levels.\textsuperscript{14}

The perfect description of language would cover all its forms and all its uses in all kinds of context. Any activity is fully meaningful only in its context.

Contexts are of two types: (1) Situational context (2) Linguistic context.

"If we saw a man running up and down in a field dodging and turning in different directions, we might think him rather a foolish. But if we saw that he was kicking a football and that a number of other men were playing with him, his actions would not look foolish. The actions have a 'meaning' in the context of a game of football. Language also can play a part in such activities. It is called a situational context."\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. p. 11.

Another type of context is the linguistic one. We can understand a word with reference to its language environment. Sometimes we pass the door of a room in which two people are talking. We hear scraps of conversation such as "yesterday morning... 'possible'... won't get one" and have no idea about the topic of the conversation. This is because we do not know the linguistic environment of the phrases we hear. We will call this environment the verbal context or co-text.\textsuperscript{16}

We can illustrate the relationship of substance, form and context by the following diagram:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonic</td>
<td>Graphic</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<pre><code>   |       |       |       |       | (Co-text) |
</code></pre>
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We have discussed 'substance' and 'context'. Now we shall discuss and describe the linguistic 'form'.

'Sounds' are organised in 'syllables', 'words' are organised in groups; clauses, in sentences, and so on.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. p. 3.
Whenever we put words together to make group or clauses to make sentences, we have a large number of alternatives from which to make our choice. The problem is to recognize and account for all those places in the language where there is a possibility of meaningful choice.\textsuperscript{17}

In some instances we face a choice among a very small number of possibilities. This happens for instance when we have to choose between 'this' and 'that' or between singular and plural; or between past, present and future, or between positive and negative. There are some places in every language where we have to make choices, we cannot avoid them or remain neutral, and there is a limited number of possibilities to choose from. Moreover the range of choice is exhaustive: where 'positive' can be chosen, 'negative' is only possible alternative. There are other places, however, where we are choosing from a very large number of possibilities; we cannot count them or draw a clear line round them such as will separate what is possible from what is impossible. In a clause which begins, 'he was sitting on the .... ' certain items - chair, bench, stool and so on - are quite likely to follow, but very many others are perfectly possible and probably not two people would agree on the hundred most likely items.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid. p. 3.
"This is the basis of the difference between grammar and lexis. Grammar is concerned with choices of the first kind, where there is a small fixed number of possibilities and a clear line between what is possible and what is not. The second kind of choice is the domain of lexis. These two types of choice are known respectively as 'closed' and 'open'; the range of possibilities in a closed choice is called technically a 'SYSTEM', that in an open as choice a SET. As a reminder of this distinction it is often said 'closed system' and 'open set'. The closed system is thus characteristic of grammar, the open set of lexis'.

It is not the case, however, that all choices in language are clearly of the type or the other, closed or open. What we find is really a gradient or a 'cline': that is, there is a continuous gradation in the patterns of formal choice in language. At one end we have large number of systems interacting with one another in highly complex ways, but with a small number of fixed possibilities in each: here we are clearly in grammar. At the other end, we have 'open sets' in very simple inter-relations with one another but with much wider range of choice, in each, whose limits are hard to define: here we are clearly in lexis. But every language has choices which are round about

the middle of this cline, where the number of possibilities is limited but large and the interaction of one choice with others is still fairly complex. Instances of items entering into choices of this intermediate type in English are "in, at, on, under", if, seeing that, provided that, in case, often, never, sometimes always" etc.

"Language therefore does not draw a clear distinction between grammar and lexis. In the formal patterns of language, closed system in complex inter-relations, at one end of the scale, shade gradually into open sets in simple inter-relations at the other. Linguistics, however, has to draw a line, because these two types of phenomenon need different theories to account for them: that is to say, we cannot account for both patterns of the grammatical-type relations. This has been recognized since the earliest days of linguistics; we take it for granted that we need both a grammar and a dictionary to describe the form of a language, though we may seldom ask exactly how they differ."

"There is in fact some confusion about the difference between the grammar and the dictionary, including three familiar notions all of which are misleading. One is that a dictionary deals with words and a grammar with everything else, including smaller things that words are made up out of." 

19. Ibid. p. 22.
of and larger things that words are made up into. Another is that a dictionary deals with the items of a language and a grammar with its abstract relations; this is the 'meat and bones' or 'bricks and mortar' view of language. The third is that a dictionary deals with meaning and a grammar with form.  

In grammar and lexis we account for the FORMAL ITEMS of language. A 'formal item' is any meaningful stretch of language, of any extent, like, 'the' or 'chair' or 'in case' or 'I've thrown it away' or the '-s' in a plural like 'chairs'. The reason for calling this a 'formal item' instead of simple 'item' is that it is defined within linguistic form and is thus itself the product of a process of abstraction: 'the formal item "the" is an abstraction from countless actual and potential events that make up the English language.

In English for example 'chair' is a lexical item: it operates as an item in open set choices. In 'the chairs' 'the' 'chair' and '-s' are grammatical items.

There are four fundamental categories of this model of grammar. "Unit, structure, class and system".

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20. Ibid. p. 23.
These theoretical categories are not things like 'sentence', 'clause', 'verb', 'noun' or 'subject'. Such items as these are 'descriptive categories': that is to say they belong to the descriptions of particular languages. They are therefore 'instances' of the underlying theoretical categories. Thus 'sentence' and 'clause' are instances of the category of UNIT; 'verb' and 'noun' of the category of CLASS, 'subject' and 'complement' of the category of STRUCTURE (say elements of structure).

This amounts to saying that all languages have 'units', 'structure', 'classes' and 'systems', whereas not all languages have anything that could be called 'clauses' or 'verbs' or 'subjects'. The former are thus categories of the 'theory of grammar', the latter are descriptive categories.

"The 'unit' is the stretch of language that carries grammatical patterns. Whatever a grammatical choice is made, there is a unit that carries that choice. It is a property of all languages that one can recognize units in their grammar, and that these units are built up one inside the other. English like many other languages has, if we start with the sentence, five units carrying its grammatical patterns: sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. The 'morpheme' is the term used to name the smallest unit in the grammar of any language. To be more explicit it can be said:
"Every sentence consists of one or more than one complete clause, every clause of one or more than one complete group, every group of one or more than one complete word, and every word of one or more than one complete morpheme."\textsuperscript{21}

In the first chapter we discussed some of the major weaknesses of 'traditional grammar'. As a consequence some new approaches to language have come into existence. Let us examine the main features of some major approaches.

2.7 Scale-Category Grammar

This term is often used to describe the approach to grammar associated with the names of Firth and Halliday whose descriptions are made in terms of the categories - unit, structure, class and system.

'To make it easier sometimes this approach is called as SPCA approach. 's' stands for subject, 'p' for 'predicate' 'c' for 'complement' and 'A' for Adjuncts. This has been extensively used by teachers in class rooms. The four elements were in a sequence of any English clause. This approach was found easier by teachers (viz the Grocer(s)/ lifted (P)/ the box(C)/ from the car (A)).\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid. p. 25. \\
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. p. 26. \\
\end{tabular}
At the surface of language, when we segment a structure, we can group similar events together. Thus noun-phrases, verb-phrases, prepositional phrases can be labelled.

CLAUSE

N.P. V.P. N.P. P.P.

Mayank has paid ten rupees for his ticket.

(This phrase-structure model is nearer to transformational generative grammar in one way, but does not clarify the surface order as it is found in IC approach).

2.8 Structural Grammar

American structuralists like Wells, Harris, Pike tried to avoid the dangers of traditional grammars.

The process usually followed four stages:

(1) Field recording of a corpus of data as representative as possible of language under study.

(2) Segmentation of utterances of the corpus at different levels: Phoneme, Morpheme, 'Word' 'Clause' and 'Sentence'.

(3) Listing of an inventory of forms thus obtained from each level and stating the distribution of the forms.

(4) Classifying the forms and utterances of the language being studied.
It is always better to strike two fences than start with one.

This is more leadership display.

This technique is not at all relevant.
It seems as if 'structuralist grammar' would be likely to avoid the principal drawbacks of traditional grammars and as such might furnish, both by its contents and by its form, a solid basis for modern language teaching.

**Merits:**

1. Structuralist grammar describes the spoken language which the pupil needs as an instrument of communication.

2. Structuralist's descriptions were the first to provide analysis of phonological systems which could serve as a basis for the systematic teaching of pronunciation and studies of phonemic - graphemic correspondences which could in turn furnish a much more solid basis for extending the methodology of teaching reading.

**Demerits:**

1. Structuralist grammars present an incomplete description of grammatical system of language. They simply provide an inventory of forms and constructions which is in a limited corpus. They do not provide the rules needed to construct an infinite range of grammatical sentences.

2. They attach excessive weight to grammatical facts of secondary importance just as traditional grammar attached too much importance to secondary graphic facts and neglected important generalizations.23

Let us examine a view of Noam Chomsky as regards this approach:

"Modern structural linguistic has reached levels of vigour that often exceed those of traditional grammar, and it has revealed previously unrecognized aspects of linguistic structure. However, it provides little insight into the processes of formation and interpretation of sentences. Study of these questions has been outside the scope of modern structuralism, which has limited itself, almost completely, to the system of inventories of elements (phonemes, morphemes) and to analytic procedures that may assist in determining these elements. There has been some discussion of syntactic patterns, but it has been fairly primitive as compared with traditional grammar. If structuralist grammars constituted a step forward from traditional grammar as far as language 'form' was concerned, in the area of language 'content' they marked rather a step backward."24.

(1) Traditional grammars had deductive mode of presentation which was replaced by an inductive method in structuralist grammar.

Viz: (a) Presentation of forms (b) Examples

Grammatical rules of use Structure-drills
Examples Tests
Tests * Diagram according to structuralist grammar

* Diagram according to traditional grammar

(4) So far as structuralist grammars only describe the surface structure of sentences, they cannot adequately take account of important grammatical facts.

Chomsky's well-known example makes this point clear:

\[ \text{e.g.} \]

John is easy to please.
John is eager to please.

The illustration presents the same structure. John is object of please in the first sentence (means: it is easy to please John), while in the second John is a subject (means: John is ready to please someone).

This shows that even with the identical surface structure, the sentences have different deep structures.

Hornby in his "A guide to patterns and usages in English" gives the following substitution table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wanted</th>
<th>Bill wished</th>
<th>John to paint the picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taught</td>
<td>(d)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminded</td>
<td>(e)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Here the structural exercise has identical surface structures from (a) to (e) with great underlying differences (of deep structures).
Thus the structural exercises often present information which is inexplicit. Such structural grammars fail to provide pupils with the means of correctly expressing himself.

2.9 Immediate Constituents

"Basic sentence pattern consists first of all of a subject and a predicate. These are what are called the immediate constituents of the sentences.

They are 'constituents' in the sense that they constitute or make up the sentence, they are 'immediate' in the sense that they act immediately on one another: the whole meaning of the one applies to the whole meaning of the other.

Since the subject of a basic sentence is a noun-cluster and the predicate is a verb cluster, we can say that the immediate constituents (IC for short) of a sentence are a noun-cluster and verb-cluster. These are the two parts of a sentence that apply their meaning directly to each other. Each of IC's of the sentence can in turn be divided to get IC's at the next lower level. For example, the noun cluster of a sentence may consist of a determiner plus a noun (the man .... ). In this case, the construction may be cut between the determiner and the noun i.e. the/man. The IC's of this noun-cluster are 'the' and 'man'. The verb cluster of a sentence may be a verb plus a noun cluster (e.g. 'liked the' movie. liked/the movie). The IC's of the construction are
the verb and the noun cluster that function, as its object. The following diagram displays the successive breaking down of each unit into two immediate constituents.25

Ambiguity in IC

When the constituents of a sentence are not clearly shown, the writer can fall into the trouble: e.g.

"The people who saw the play frequently praised it".

This sentence can be cut in two ways:

(1) The people who saw the play/frequently praised it.
(2) The people who saw the play frequently/praised it. It is not clear that whether 'frequently' goes with 'saw' or 'praised'.

There is no conventional way of solving this problem by punctuation:

(1) Ambiguity in noun clusters:
   e.g. The girl in the car that had moved;
   (a) The girl/in the car that had moved.
   (b) The girl in the car / that had moved.

(2) Ambiguity in verb clusters:
   e.g. Defended the man she loved with all her heart,
   (a) defended the man/she loved with all her heart.
   (b) defended/the man she loved with all her heart/
   Here it is not clear whether she defended or loved 'the man'.

Charles Carpenter Fries in his book 'The Structure of English' states:

"Time after time, in the descriptive statements of the forms and arrangements that constitute the various sets of structural signals, particular situations were pointed out in which structural ambiguities commonly occur. In these instances, it was always possible to state specifically the precise features of the signals that were not present or which overlapped. There were, for examples, such expressions as the following:

(a) the requirements of the courses which are listed
(b) the dependents of the man who are members
(c) the equipment of the class which is there.

The structural ambiguity of each of these expressions is not just a vague matter of "failure to place the modifiers as near as possible to the words they modify".
The following expressions made in the same pattern have no such ambiguity:

(a) the uniforms of regiment which is there.
(b) the uniforms of regiment which are there.
(a) an examination of the students which is thorough
(b) an examination of the students who are here now”.26

"Immediate constituent analysis" is associated with American linguists, Bloomfield, Fries and Block. This approach tries as far as is possible to analyse all the structures in terms of the constituent elements immediately below them (see the diagram showing ICS of a sentence). In this way a sentence could be arranged in 'layers' of elements which had a special relationship to the other elements at the same level as well as above and below that level. Immediate constituent analysis does have a place in modern linguistic analysis.”27

2.0 Transformational Generative Grammar: A revolutionary Approach

Transformational generative grammar (usually known as 'TG' Grammar), associated with the American Noam Chomsky is probably the most revolutionary and promising line of approach.

towards the explanation of linguistic behaviour. The transformationalists do not reject the categories of traditional or other grammars, but redefine their boundaries and go deeper into the springs of language.

While considering traditional grammar Chomsky says:

"Nevertheless, the insights of traditional grammar are deeper, and its contributions greater than its critics tend to realize. It is much easier to make sweeping criticisms than to evaluate with care and understanding many centuries of work. As our theories of language structure become more sophisticated we become more conscious of the fact that traditional grammarians were not so far off the track." 28

"Linguistic elements do fall into classes, like nouns and verbs, although there are many more such classes than the traditional grammarians realized. Linguistics have come to the conclusion that all human languages are similarly designed, but many traditional grammarians anticipated them long ago by engaging in the investigation of universal grammar. Traditional grammar books are not really wrong, but they do share with all other attempts, to describe languages, including the most advances, the inevitable fault of being incomplete." 29

28. Carroll E. Reed. The Learning of Language (New York: Publication of the National Council of Teachers in English), p. 76.
29. Ibid. p. 73.
From 1955 onwards the TG model appears as a synthesis of the most interesting contributions of traditional and structural grammar.

"At the time when Nelson Francis was concerned with recalling all the faults of traditional grammars and presenting structural grammar as a revolution and in so doing reflecting the opinion of the majority of linguists, Chomsky was maintaining the paradox that traditional grammar though the aims it set itself and information it provided, reflected a more satisfying conception of the nature of language." 30

The vague, ambiguous or incomprehensible character of the definitions, rules and explanations in traditional grammars indicated for Chomsky that it had been formulated in an insufficiently precise metalanguage; everyday language enriched by a number of technical terms like 'gerundive' or 'subjunctive'.

As far as structuralist grammar was concerned Chomsky retained 'immediate constituent analysis' as a first stage of his grammar, but went much further in satisfying the demands of precision in the formulation of his grammars. His major criticisms against structural grammar were the following:

(a) It limited itself to the inventory and analysis of utterances from a corpus without seeking to characterize the rules which permit all native speakers to produce an infinity of grammatical utterances.

(b) It did not take account of intuitively recognized linguistic facts, e.g. declarative, interrogative, negative and passive paraphrase relationships of a single utterance.

(c) In remaining at the surface structure level it missed making a number of deep generalizations.

In filling these gaps, Chomsky conceived of transformational generative grammar as a system of rewrite rules which, beginning from the initial symbol 's' plus a lexicon, permitted the generation of a series of deep structure symbols containing in principle all the necessary semantic information for the interpretation of sentences.

"Chomsky makes it clear that it is impossible to attain the deep structures via direct observation and by analysis of the products of a corpus as was maintained by structuralist grammarians. Linguists could no longer content themselves with making inventories and classifications of the products of a corpus. What was necessary was for them to characterize in the form of an abstract hypothesis that system of rules for which permits us to understand and generate an infinity of novel sentences." 31

31. Ibid. p. 41.
In traditional structural grammars the observational facts were labelled. When linguists utilized 'the base elements and 'deep structures', only direct observation was not sufficient.

Chomsky himself pointed out in 1964:

"I should like to make it clear from the outset that I am participating in this conference not as an expert on any aspect of the teaching of languages, but rather as some one whose primary concern is with the structure of language and, more generally, the nature of cognitive processes. Further more, I am frankly rather sceptical about the significance for the teaching of languages of such insights and understanding as have been obtained in linguistics and psychology. Surely the teacher of language would do well to keep informed of progress and discussion in these fields and the efforts of linguists and psychologists to approach to the problems of language teaching from a principled point of view are extremely worthwhile from an intellectual as well as a social point of view. Still it is difficult to believe that either linguistics or psychology has achieved a level of theoretical understanding that might enable it to support a 'technology' of language teaching." 32

32. Ibid. p. 42.
In last two decades a new linguistic theory, the transformational grammar, has arisen, in direct opposition to the behaviour structuralist theories within which so many language texts have been written.

"As far as language and language learning are concerned, it has much in common with the beliefs of rational grammarians. One very significant added element in the modern theory, of course is the existence of transformational rules, the form of which and the sphere of applicability of which are strictly controlled by the theory itself avoiding the fuzziness, arbitrariness and the ad hoc treatments of data that characterize the 'intuitive' rationalist school. In non-transformational intuitive grammar, sentences are related to one another on no grounds except the intuition of the writer."  

Transformational theory as exemplified most fully perhaps in 'Chomsky's "Aspects and the theory of syntax' formalized these intuitive concept so that they could be checked, constrained and tested.

Here Chomsky assumed two levels of grammar and a set of transformational rules mediating between them. At the level of deep structure, everything is present, that enables one to know what the sentence means: identical


words, later deleted, abstract elements of various sorts that leave syntactical markings elsewhere in the sentences and so forth. Transformational rules delete these, under various conditions, producing surface structures. Therefore transformational analysis of a sentence (i.e.)

(I) "I saw a boy that hates icecream" assumes a deep structure in which the noun phrase (NP : a boy) occurs twice: once where it will occur in the surface structure, as the object of the main clause, and once where 'that' occurs in the superficial structure.

Transformational grammar assumes that most sentences in language are formed by combination of two or more smaller sentences.

In the above sentences the two smaller sentences are:
(a) I saw a boy.
(b) A boy hates ice-cream.

No doubt there will be constraints on what kinds of sentences can be combined if the transformational rule yielding relative sentences is to apply properly.

As Chomsky pointed out, on the basis of facts such as these, language learning must be viewed as a process depending on reasoning rather than on memorization. Let us have some more examples:
(1) I saw the boy that hates ice-cream.
(2) I saw the boy, who was running fast.

The first has a restrictive relative clause, and the second sentence has a non-restrictive relative clause.

"Language serves as a means of communication. Therefore it is more than a system of arbitrarily connected symbols; each of its sentences conveys meaning. One of the tasks of the study of syntax is to determine precisely how it is that sentences convey meaning. This leads us to the study of the meaningfulness of words and of their combination into sentences. Semantics concerns itself with the nature of meaning. The same meaning can be conveyed by a number of different sentences, while two sentences which look very much alike may be associated with two different meanings."34

2.10.1 Deep and Surface Structures

The deep structure of a sentence is a representation of the meaning of that sentence; however, it is not deep structures which are spoken and written by people, but rather surface structures. Despite this, fluent speakers have no difficulty in saying what they mean, nor do they have trouble in understanding what other people say to them.

Here in all likelihood they do not use rules of grammar but rather a set of processes.

Sometimes in a sentence a clause is completely enclosed on its surface. This clause is called "self-embedded". Understanding of this embedded structure can give the understanding of deep-structure.

Let us consider some sentences at surface level and deep level.

(a) Take these clothes to the laundry.
   At surface level this sentence has no subject, but at deep level it has 'you' as a subject.

"The surface level structure (i.e. surface structure is obtained from deep level structure (i.e. deep structures) by means of rules which rearrange or delete the constituents. This is 'Grammatical Transformation'."

(b) That the president of the ladies' association is really uneducated comes as no surprise to many people.
(c) It comes as no surprise to many people that the president of the ladies' association is really uneducated.

(b) and (c) do not differ in meaning. They represent two different ways of saying exactly the same thing. In (c)

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35. Ibid. p. 24.
'It' pronoun has been placed at 'subject position.' Here there is a transformational rule of EXTRA POSITION.

There are other transformational rules of TO-BE DELETION and THAT-DELETION as well as RELATIVE CLAUSE TRANSFORMATION. (These rules are described in details with many examples and diagrams by D.T. Langendoen in his 'The Study of Syntax' from pp 52 to 95). Yet research on transformational rules is being intensively pursued.

2.10.2 Basic sentences and their transforms

Paul Roberts in his book 'ENGLISH SENTENCES' writes:

"'Basic sentence patterns' are all statements (that is not questions, request, greetings, calls or exclamations) and they are all active, not passive (that is like 'Raman Saw Magan and not like 'Magan was seen by Raman').

'Birds sing', 'Snakes crawl', 'Buildings crumble' are also basic patterns. The speaker speaks the transformations more frequently than the basic patterns e.g. 'Can that bird sing?', 'The birds kept singing all the time' are the examples of frequently used in talk, yet they are not basic, they are transforms." 36

There are two fundamentally different kinds of sentences. There is first of all a kernel or a base - a rather small set of sentence types which we call 'basic sentence'. The bulk of these is small. The rest of English is 'transformations'. That is all the more complicated sentences of English can be explained as deriving from the basic sentences:

1. 'A man is here' is a basic sentence.
2. 'There is a man here' is a transformation.
3. 'Can Manu go?' is easily seen to be related to the statement.
4. Manu can go.'

So '3' is a transformation while (4) is basic.

Inversion, substitution, addition, deletion, are the main processes of drawing out 'transforms' from basic sentences.

Paul Roberts considers the following to be the basic sentences ('English Sentences' p. 53).

1. The boy looks sick.
2. John went away.
3. He became my friend.
4. My father shot a moose.
5. I gave the boy a dollar.
6. They elected Jim treasurer.
7. He is here.
8. Margery is pretty.
(9) They considered him a fool.
(10) The boss is a bore.

While the following to be transforms respectively.
(1) The boy will look sick.
(2) John may go away.
(3) He could become my friend.
(4) My father may shoot a moose.
(5) I shall give the boy a dollar.
(6) They should elect Jim treasurer.
(7) He may be here.
(8) Margery might be pretty.
(9) They would consider him a fool.
(10) The boss can be bore.

N.B. Use of all models make the sentences 'Transforms'.

Moreover use of v-ing, v-en, also make 'Transforms'.

Paul Roberts in his book 'Patterns of English' gives some more basic sentences. They are basic in nature because they are not derived from any other constructions (p. 71) viz.
(1) Birds sing.
(2) Birds are beautiful.
(3) Sparrows are birds.
(4) Sparrows eat worms.

(1) Transformational generative grammar presents an overall conception of the system of language which is more accurate and more complete than other models of grammar.

(2) It would be wrong to see TG Grammar as constituting for language teaching a damaging break away from the grammatical models which upto now have dominated language teaching pedagogy. What it strives to do is to provide a synthesis of the most important contributions of both traditional grammar and structuralist grammar.

(3) Transformational generative grammar does not simply provide a list of forms and structures as did structuralist grammar. What it does is to provide rules which, contrary to those of traditional grammar, are clear and formally explicit.

(4) Contrary to those of traditional grammar, transformative rules are ordered.

(5) Transformal generative grammar provides indispensable information for structural exercises of transformational type which occupy an important place in language teaching pedagogy.

(6) TG grammar provides rules which allow for the systematic construction of complex sentences; as such it provides an excellent basis for the teaching of writing (viz., Insert/matrix and Result).
(7) TG grammar provides a system of rules permitting the generation of an infinite number of grammatical constructions.

(8) From the time of its early description of English, TG Grammar has shown very clearly that it possesses great generating power and is able to classify underlying regularities, up to now ignored by grammarians.

(9) TG grammar makes a distinction between the surface structure and the deep structure of an utterance.

(10) TG grammar in a return to tradition admits the existence of linguistic universals; and analogies between languages at the level of deep structure.

(11) In postulating the existence of linguistic universals and of structures common to several languages, TG grammar provides the basis for necessary transfer from one language to another implicit in the areas of translation and contrastive analysis, important to language teaching.

(12) TG Grammar can characterize notions of grammaticality, ungrammaticality and degree of grammaticality which are indispensable for foreign language teaching particularly in the areas of evaluation and error-analysis.

(13) TG grammar can substantiate notions of deviation and style, thus providing a precise instrument for the stylistic analysis of literary texts.
The most recent developments of TG grammar in the areas of phonology and semantics provide novel and more systematic information which will come to play a more and more important role in language teaching.

2.10.4 Some demerits of TG grammar

(1) TG grammar only describes, that competence common to all native speakers of a language for generating an infinity of grammatical sentences and leaves out of account the description of performance, the actual realization of competence in communicative situations. (N.B. Here 'performance-' means the rules applied to the performance of every day speech).

(2) TG grammar restricts itself in general to the description of sentences and as a result does not provide information on the structure of dialogues and paragraphs (i.e. varied spoken performance of dialogue-structure and writing performance of paragraph-structure).

(3) TG descriptions of major languages being taught are still too rare and too partial and often based on different versions of the theory.

(4) TG theory is in such a rapid state of flux that one hardly has time to apply one version of it to language teaching before that version is outdated and replaced by new modifications.
2.10.5 All about the TG grammar approach

(a) "The coming of TG has not in any way lessened the debate between the teacher and linguist, and in some ways it has produced a polemic which is as violent as Bloomfield's was in the early stages of structuralism".

(b) "The term 'generative' in Chomsky's theory is critical to the proper understanding of TG. It is not used in its lay sense of 'Produce'. Unfortunately, this term, and several others in TG widely misinterpreted by teachers - McNeill (1968).

(c) "The notion of creative use of language in speech and writing which has directed much of the latest work in English has made some teachers link Chomsky's prestigious remarks about 'Creation of Language' with 'creative writing' or 'creative talk' in classroom. 'Generative' means two things in TG Theory (1) that the theory is maximally predictive and (ii) that it is maximally formal in its proofs. (Lyons, 1966)

(d) "There is at least one sense in which the notion of transformation in TG finds acceptance by teachers of language. The definition of transformation in its weakest form might be held to refer to any process by which hypothesized underlying structure might be related to the actual output of language in utterance."
In its strong form the definition of transformation is T. rules which operate on the symbols of deep structure and relate them to the symbols of output.

In more recent years Chomsky has taken up a more open stand as a philosopher and a psychologist. His 'Language and Mind' asserts that linguistics is merely an aspect of psychology. This has been further elaborated in a BBC radio talk (1968) and in his John Locke lectures, given in Oxford in 1969.

He seems to have said very little about the formulation of TG in these recent years and to have focussed more on what might loosely be called 'the social implications of language theory'. This change of emphasis is closely connected with difficulties, within TG relating to the handling of semantics. Much of this is of peripheral interest only to teachers, but for those interested in the progress of ideas the latest Chomsky's titles are fascinating reading and are much more readable than his early works which were jargon bound.

Finally Lyons' Splendid little book 'Chomsky' (1970) presents a very clear and exciting picture of the man and his theories which any well-informed teacher of language or languages should read at the first opportunity.

Let us conclude this chapter by valuable remark from Noam Chomsky in his 'Aspects of Theory of Syntax' (p. 118).
"It is commonly held that modern linguistic and anthropological investigation have conclusively refuted the doctrines of classical universal grammar, but this claim seems to me very much exaggerated. Modern work has, indeed, shown a great diversity in the surface structures of languages. However, since the study of deep structures has not been its concern, it has not attempted to show a corresponding diversity of underlying structures, and in fact, the evidence that has been accumulated in modern study of language does not appear to suggest anything of this sort."