CHAPTER 3

MORPHOLOGICAL STUDIES BEFORE JESPERSEN
3.1.0. Early Rudiments of Morphology:

The technical use of the term 'morphology' denoting a level of language is relatively recent. The term 'morphology' has its root in the Greek word 'morphe' meaning 'shape' or 'form'. Biosciences made use of the term morphology as early as the 18th century to designate the form of plants and animals. The study of the structure of plants and animals came under morphology. It was in 19th century that the term 'morphology' appeared in manuals of linguistics to cover both in 'inflection' and 'derivation'. The knowledge that inflectional and derivational processes had much in common led linguists to the concept of 'morpheme' and further to 'morphology'. Accordingly morphology came to deal with the 'internal structure' of words and syntax with the rules governing the 'ordering' of words in sentences.

3.1.1. The Greeks:

The credit of having initiated and developed the earliest systematic grammatical trends in the west to the Greeks out of whose philosophical speculations originated the desire to analyze and study the structure of the Greek language. The earliest forms of the study of the morphology
of language remain embedded in the study of grammar in general and the distinctions and the classifications are a much later contribution.¹ The etymology of the word 'grammar' goes back to the Greek word 'gramma' meaning letter. The plural 'grammata' drew the meaning 'rudiments of learning'. The sophist distinction between a noun and a verb was the earliest contribution to the study of word-forms as part of grammar. The Greek philosophers as part of their enquiry into the nature of language studied grammar as 'the set of formal relations in which the words of a language are arranged in order to convey their meanings in the larger context of a sentence'. Greek grammars became the first comprehensive model for later grammars in the west.²

3.1.2. Latin Grammarians: The works of Priscian and Donatus were the most esteemed and most influential grammars on whose basis later grammars were modelled.³ It can be said that the works of these two authors were the earliest western contribution to the study of morphology. Priscian and Donatus attempted a scientific classification and description of the forms of the Latin language. The basic Latin declensions for nouns and conjugations of verbs were schematized by the two Latin grammarians. Priscian and Donatus in fact founded two distinct schools of Latin grammar. The 'Word and Paradigm model' which played a crucial role in the development of later

---

western grammars was the contribution of the two grammarians. The two are considered classical Latin models of western grammar.

It was recognized by these early grammarians that a fundamental way of understanding the structure of a language is by studying its words carefully. Words were understood to convey the essential meaning of language whether in speech or in writing. Words were found to be fairly easy to catch out of the sequential flow of speech. Words were perceived as the smallest units of language. Words were studied with a view to classifying these into categories and sub-categories.

3.1.3. Sanskrit Grammarians: The study of the forms of language as central to the study of traditional grammar took two distinct directions: (i) historical and (ii) descriptive. While grammatical studies of ancient India were mainly descriptive studies of the structure and elements of the Sanskrit language, the west followed the historical path inspite of the efforts of the grammarians of the west to provide descriptive accounts of the structure of language. The grammatical descriptions of ancient India are accepted today as supreme for their brevity, precision and rigorousness. Bloomfield and others acknowledged the ancient Indian grammarian, Panini's work in Sanskrit grammar as 'one of the greatest monuments of human intelligence'.

to be 'the earliest masters in linguistic observation and classification'. Panini in the 3rd century B.C. and Bhartrhari in the 7th century found it easy to penetrate the secrets of phenomena like the sound alternations in morphophonemics when at a much later period the western scholars had to make serious efforts to understand such phenomena as morphophonemics. In contrast to the speculative concerns of the western grammarians of the period, Indian grammarians were eminently descriptive in their approach.

3.1.4. Evolution of Lexical Morphology: Historical studies of the early western grammarians concentrated on the etymological aspects of word-forms and meanings, word changes, coinages, loan words and the periodic alternations in meanings. Historical enquiry into the forms and meanings of words became a fascinating area for scholars. The objective of the early controversy between the Greek analogists and anomalists was to establish the relation of words in the language and their classification.

In fact the evolution of English lexicography is rooted in the international language of the medieval European civilization: Latin. The first lexicographical lists available in the west are of Latin, made for purposes of scriptural study. The earliest English i.e., Anglo-Saxon glossary is found in the form of equivalents for difficult Latin words. These are the 'Leiden' and 'Erfurt Glosses' -

5. Jespersen. 1954. : 20
representative of the earliest written English lexical document available.

3.1.5. Early approach to Lexical Morphology: Even though the term descriptive linguistics in the technical sense is applied only to linguistic studies of the 20th century, it is equally applicable in its essential meaning to the linguistic studies of the pre-twentieth scholars of language who undertook the description of language ultimately for comparative and historical studies. No comparative study of a language is possible without a sound descriptive basis on which comparison and contrast are made. Whereas the chief grammatical preoccupation was historical by nature we find a parallel interest in descriptive word-analysis of language with a variety of objectives in view. Lexical studies in early periods were undertaken for the purpose lexicography i.e., dictionary-making rather than for the objective-analysis of the structure of the morphology of language.

The word was understood as the lexical item and was thought of as related to the meaning of the sentence in several ways. Lexicography in Latin came to be widely accepted as the model for any later attempt in the vernacular. In Latin Priscian set up basic forms for the morphological description of nouns and verbs and other inflected words. From these basic forms he proceeded to other inflected and derivational forms by a series of letter changes, the letter being for him both the minimal graphic and phonological unit.
The classical attitude to lexicography did not go much beyond lexical classification which ended in systematic lexicography. The classical Greek, Latin or early English grammarians like Bede (7th C.A.D.) or Alcuin (8th C.A.D.) did not evolve any theory of synchronic lexical analysis.

3.1.6. The Role of the Parts of Speech: The quintessence of the traditional synchronic approach to word-forms was the parts of speech from which no grammarian could considerably deviate up to the present-day. The origins of the parts of speech is traced back to Aristotle and Plato who first distinguished between the forms of the Greek words. The notion of 'gender' came from the Sophists. Aristotle also recognized the role of the tense in language. The stoic school of Greek philosophy made the distinction between form and meaning as the 'signifier and the Signified'. The stoic school developed considerable insights into 'inflections'. They coined the term for case, a notion which is still maintained in grammar.

3.2.0. Monopoly of Latin Categories:

Latin was a language with a wealth of inflectional forms, and describing other languages the same categories as found in Latin were traditionally applied even where there was nothing which really corresponded to what was found in Latin. As Jespersen himself points out 'In Danish and English grammars paradigms of noun declension were given with such cases as accusative, dative or ablative inspite of the fact that no separate forms for these cases had existed for
According to him all languages were saddled with the elaborate Latin system of tenses and moods in the verbs. By means of what may be called procrustean methods the actual facts of many languages were distorted and misinterpreted. Latin grammar thus remained throughout the Middle Ages and the early Modern period the norm for the description of other languages. 8

3.2.1. **Morpho-syntactic Categories:** The traditional approach to morphology is 'morpho-syntactic' in terms of the categories which are employed for the description. Reference is made to morpho-syntactic categories such as tense, person and number. Reference is similarly made to categories such as the imperfect, third person, singular, plural and so on as morpho-syntactic categories. These are regarded as properties of the word which have a role both in morphology and syntax. The particular form, say, 'laudabat (praise)' according to this description based on Latin grammar will mean a member of the base-form 'laudo' which has with it a set of morpho-syntactic properties such as 'third person, singular, imperfect, indicative and active'. 9

In line with the same explanation the English word 'eaten' is regarded as a derivative of the base-form 'eat' which retains a set of morphosyntactic properties such as

---

'a verb, singular and plural identical and having the property of the past participle'. The base-form is the source (the root) of derived forms. The morphosyntactic categories or properties are applied to the base-form. 'Mood' as a category qualifying verbs in terms of their modality of occurrence in the sentence is an important feature in Latin. 'Indicative-subjunctive' opposition is a familiar feature in Latin and the conjugation of verbs is partly governed by this phenomenon. Moods are represented in Latin as in the case of other categories by inflectional endings such as 'o' in como (comer: cat) or 'a' in coma or 'e' in compre (comprar: buy). Latin has Indicative, subjunctive, optative or Imperative moods.

3.2.2. Transfer of Formatives: In the traditional approach to grammar in which morphological aspects predominate we find thus oppositions and distinctions among the categories of persons, number, gender, moods, voices and tenses. In the case of Latin these morphosyntactic distinctions are formally marked i.e., each is as a rule marked by formatives. Grammarians made attempts to find the same set of formal markers in English too and they more often failed in the attempt. What is a rule in the highly inflected Latin is an exception for English and we now today that the formatives which formally mark English syntax are very few in number. While Latin is highly 'paradigmatic', English 'paradigms' are sketchy.
3.2.3. Morphological Processes: The concept of 'morphological process' is applied in the description of inflections in the traditional grammar and it is a feature that is quite central to the traditional approach. A passing mention of this will suffice for the present purpose as the text of the treatise takes care of 'morphological processes' in detail. Morphological processes pervade the entire range of morphology as traditional linguistics conceived of it. At any stage in the derivation of a word-form a rule may refer to or may be applied to any or all of the morphosyntactic properties which define the place of the form in the paradigm. The traditional understanding of the elements and processes of morphology became more or less stabilized by the early modern period i.e., by the 16th and 17th centuries. Few developments in grammar are perceived during this period. Pedagogical grammar as we may rightly call 'classroom grammar' became by this period a compartmentalized and unchangeable thing. We may say that classical grammar boiled down to pedagogical grammar by this period and a lot of orthodoxy went with it.

3.3.0. 19th Century Contributions:

By 18th Century the study of language is seen taking two different paths i.e., two apparently divergent directions. If the study of language from the time of Greeks and Romans down to the late Middle Ages can be called 'classical grammar' as Latin remained the model and lingua franca of all linguistic studies, the 16th and 17th centuries
saw the development what has been called 'philosophical grammar' developed especially by the Port Royal School of Linguists. During this period and centred around the Port Royal School of Linguists grammar became a speculative thing, centred on the speculative philosophy of the middle ages. By 18th century linguistic studies began to take empirical shape leaving its speculative stronghold and revealed a divergence between (i) the classical, pedagogical grammar, and (ii) linguistic studies which assumed a direction different from that of the classical or speculative grammars. If Jespersen and Bloomfield are thought of as contemporaries, we see that trend (i) leads to Jespersen and trend (ii) leads to Bloomfield.

3.3.1. Notion of Linguistic Degeneration: In 1818 Frederik Von Schlegel put forward his theory of 'flectional languages.' Schlegel divided all languages into two classes: one comprising of Sanskrit and its congeners, and the second all other languages. In the former group he finds an organic growth of the roots with inner changes which he calls 'flexion'; in the latter group the chief factor is the affixation process. In the former the artistic beauty of languages is being lost through a process of degeneration. But in the affix languages he sees a fully artless beginning at the same time a growth leading more and more to a perfect ordering.

as affixes are fused more and more with the main word and words became unified formal units.

Schlegel's brother A.W. Schlegel further subdivides flectional languages into two classes: synthetic and analytic. Analytic languages are found to have personal pronouns, auxiliaries and prepositions to make-up for want of the inflectional endings of synthetic languages. Rasmus Rask (1787-1832) made a significant contribution during this period by undertaking a morphological analysis of the Icelandic (Old Norse) language. Rask attempted to reveal the full inflectional system of the Icelandic language compared to the inflectional system of the classical languages. Rask's contribution is regarded as one of the major undertakings in linguistics during the 19th century.

3.3.2. Comparative Linguistics and Morphology: The study of 19th century comparative linguistics begins with Franz Bopp (1791-1867) an oriental scholar and linguist who solidly established a number of morphological facts as a result of his acquaintance with a number of European and oriental languages. Bopp studied the specific details of these languages with regard to the numerous similarities in the grammatical system of the classical languages: Latin Greek and Sanskrit, and wrote his first monograph in the conjugation system of these languages. Bopp found a valuable clue

to many verbal endings in the Sanskrit root 'es' and to many others in the root 'to be' (Sanskrit 'bhu'). He found a striking similarity between the Latin 'da - bo, bis, bit' and the Anglo-Saxon 'beo, bys and byth', a similarity which could not be brushed aside as accidental. Bopp divides all languages into three classes from the viewpoint of their morphological structure:

1. Languages with monosyllabic roots. These are the Indo-Europeans languages capable of composition and new structuralization.

2. Languages with disyllabic roots. These are the Semitic languages in which grammatical forms are created by means of composition and inner modification of roots.

3. Languages without roots proper. Chinese or Vietnamese is cited as a type in which most grammatical relations can be recognized by the position of the words in the sentence. Schlegel used the term 'flexion' exclusively in the sense we have the forms 'sing - sang - sung', while subsequent writers use the term in a much wider sense including inner and outer modifications as it is true of Sanskrit or Latin conjugations and declensions. It is from Bopp's explanation of the Aryan endings from originally independent roots that later we have the distinction between 'isolated, agglutinated and fleeting' stages of a language from the viewpoint of the structure of a language.

3.3.3. Classification based on Morphology: The 'isolating type' of language is defined as one in which all the words are invariable. Chinese and Vietnamese are cited as the most typical examples. Turkish is considered an 'agglutinating type' in which words are typically composed of a sequence of morphs with each morph representing one morpheme. Latin is regarded as the most typical inflecting type. Latin words cannot be segmented into morphs. Here 'inflecting' means 'fusional' in contrast to 'agglutinating'. An analysis of the Latin declensional system (domus, i, um, o, orum, os, is/ Rosa, ae, am, a, arum, as, is) will point out that a segmentation of these separate morphs may be done at the cost of their structural integrity and consistency.

3.3.4. Morphological Structure: In 1822 Humboldt (1767-1835) exposed the view that word order in a language gets gradually fixed;\(^{13}\) some words lose their independent use, so that in course of time these become affixes without becoming an essential unit of the roots unlike the Latin forms such as 'amavit' which is truly a fusion of two forms under one accent. The morphological theories, thus, expounded by Rask, Bopp and Humboldt the linguistic concern of the early half of the 19th century became the classification of languages on the basis of their morphological structure. Most prominent authors discussed the question if languages could be classified into the three types suggested by Bopp: isolating, 

---

Bloomfield. 1933 : 18.
agglutinating and inflecting. Another problem which constantly came up for discussion was whether each language would pass through the three stages of word-formation as discussed above. Humboldt hypothesized that a language like English may reduce its forms so as to resemble the structure of Chinese. According to him flection is the only method that gives to the word the true inner firmness and at the same time distribute the parts of the sentence according to the necessary interlacing of thoughts, and thus undoubtedly represents the pure principle of the structure of language.

3.3.5. **Language as Progressive:** In 1847 Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) discussed the development of language and we find that Grimm was influenced by several of Humboldt's ideas on the structure of language. The belief which was prevalent during the period was that the history of language is one of a descent from a state of perfection to less perfection. It meant that languages gave up their synthetic character and became more and more analytic. But Grimm came out with the view that human language is retrogressive only apparently and in particular points, but as a whole language is progressive and its intrinsic force is continually increasing.\(^{14}\)

He gives English language as an instance, which having made havoc of all the old phonetic laws and by the loss of all the inflections has acquired a great force and power such as is found perhaps in no other language.

3.3.6. Foundations of Morphological Studies: The 19th century linguists concerned themselves thus with the questions of (i) the morphological structure of language, (ii) the origin of languages, (iii) the development of languages through morphological change, (iv) the nature of the word-structure and (v) the intrinsic value of synthetic languages which are supposed to have acquired perfection through the amalgamation of forms. The 19th century scholars believed in the superiority of the classical languages over the modern languages with regard to their structure. For them language evolution was synonymous with language decay. Today every language is believed to have structured to meet the specific needs of a particular community as the community develops or declines from one phase to another. When we study the history of languages it is observed that many of the structural loses they suffer are compensated by new formations so that on balance there is often no remarkable deficit. Simplicity of morphological structure is considered to be one of the targets of language development.

It was during the 19th century itself that the term 'morphology' came in use. As mentioned above the term had its original use in biology with reference to the forms of living organisms. It occurred in the context of the theories of evolutionary biology. Languages revealed the

inflectional and derivational processes and both these aspects had something common to do with word-forms so far as their alternation in forms and grammatical function were concerned. Linguists who looked for a common term to include both inflection and derivation discovered that 'morphology' was a convenient and adequate term for this particular use. The two terms employed by traditional grammarians were 'form and function'. The usual division we find in books of the period dealing with grammar is between 'accidence', 'word-formation' and 'word-order'. Accidence included the treatment of inflections; word-formation dealt with derivational aspects; and the aspect of syntax is treated under word-order. Inflection and word-order received the most comprehensive and exclusive treatment in line with the structure of the classical languages. As Latin and Greek grammars did not as a rule give priority to the treatment of derivation, grammars which were modelled on Latin of derivation important even for English. Morphology as a new term received into grammatical descriptions came to deal with all aspects of the internal structure of words which were as a rule treated under 'accidence'. The term syntax was employed for word-order which was concerned about the rules governing the order of forms in a sentence.\textsuperscript{17}

3.4.0. \textit{Morphology in Structural Linguistics:}

The 20th century witnessed a widening of the gulf between the two streams which dealt with the science of

\textsuperscript{17} Lamberts. 1972 : 290.
language. The comparative studies of the 19th century reached its climax in the contributions which we have examined above after having employed the most rigorous empirical methodology for the analysis of language. Linguistics after this took a sharp turn in its approach to language and we find a shift in focus from the comparative studies to structural studies not of a comparative type but of a purely descriptive type. Pedagogical grammar by now distinguished clearly from linguistics proper as a science did not make any remarkable contribution during this period but assumed its own direction in line with the approaches of the traditional grammarians having their roots in the classical grammars.

3.4.1. Franz Boas: Descriptive Linguistics in America begins with Franz Boas (1858-1942) an anthropologist and psychologist. Boas wrote an introduction to the "Handbook of American Linguistics." In this he points out how one can study an unknown language. He held the view that every language has its own unique grammatical structure and it is the task of linguists to discover each language and provide the categories of description appropriate to it. To discover this Boas oped for practical linguistics. 'Field linguistics' is the term given by Boas to indicate the pragmatic aspect of linguistics. Boas was a pragmatist influenced by the philosophy of William James. Boas taught practical methods of studying unknown languages as part of field linguistics. The anthropologists and linguists faced a joint challenge in the vast field of unsurveyed languages especially in South America. We can say

that the roots of the structuralist studies in morphology lies with the work of Boas who prescribed the rudiments of the structuralist way of phonological and morphemic analysis of languages.

3.4.2. Edward Sapir: Edward Sapir (1884-1939) like Boas, was an anthropologist and linguist. In 1921 Sapir published his book: 'Language' which was one of the first major contributions to linguistics. Unlike Bloomfield does later, Sapir takes a more 'humanistic' view of language. Sapir lays stress on its cultural importance, on the priority of reason over volition and stresses the fact that language is 'purely human' and 'non-instinctive'. As an anthropologist, like Boas, Sapir followed the course of field linguistics and made significant contributions to the linguistic study of exotic languages in terms of both phonological and morphological analysis.

3.4.3. Ferdinand de Saussure: (1857-1913) is acclaimed as the Father of modern linguistics. Though the contributions of Boas and Sapir are significant it is Saussure who is today regarded as the giant linguist who spear-headed structural linguistics with all the force of a theoretician. Saussure held linguistics to be an independent science by itself: a study of language in and for itself. In his attempt to define the subject Saussure makes the famous distinction between 'parole' and 'langue'. According to Saussure before a sound can have a meaning it must be related to a concept: this relationship he defines as the essence of language.
A union is conceived between concept and expression, the 'signified and signifier' as a function rather than a thing. A form in its own right has meaning only insofar as it unites a sound and a concept and the resulting entity is labelled as a 'linguistic sign' which constitutes language. Saussure finds that there exists no intrinsic, inherent connection between the sound and the concept. The relation is conceived as arbitrary. Words change in form and meaning. This change is the product of the arbitrary relation that exists between form and meaning. While the naming of a concept relates to a single sound image, the value of the concept is determined by the context of the language. Saussure's standpoints in the theory of language especially with reference to the contrasts mentioned above are proved to have a permanent theoretical value in the history of linguistics.

3.4.4. Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1947) published his book 'Language' (1935) which came as a landmark in the history of linguistics. The study of the morphology of language which is the present concern reached a climax in Bloomfield in such a way that the resonance of his theoretical standpoints controlled the entire field of linguistics for over a period of three decades that followed. A survey of morphological studies up to the time of Jespersen comes to an end with Bloomfield who was a contemporary of Jespersen and himself a landmark in the history of linguistics. The morphological standpoints of Bloomfield may be summarized in terms of the following account:
The social function of any language is to convey information from a speaker to the listener. Phonemes have no direct connection with meaning. They are merely units by which the speaker and the hearer identify morphemes. Morphemes are short sequences of phonemes. A morpheme is defined as the smallest unit grammatically pertinent. It is 'the smallest meaningful unit' in the structure of language. By the minimum meaningful unit is meant a unit which cannot be further divided without destroying or altering the meaning. The form 'walks' consists therefore of two morphemes 'walk+s'. Similarly 'walked : walk + ed', and 'inform' consists of 'in + form'. A morpheme is not necessarily a single syllable; but a single syllable can be a morpheme as it is true of forms such as 'I or me'.

Two morphemes which are alike in expression but have different meaning are called 'homophones'. /z/ is a morpheme both in 'goes' and 'dogs', but the meanings differ. The first indicates the third person singular and the second the plural of the form 'dog'. A full understanding of morphemes involves understanding of their distribution. Morphemes may be identified only by comparing various samples of a language. If two or more samples are found whose distributions are the same that sample can be identified as a morpheme. boys, rods, dogs and girls are all forms in which the -s is a plural morpheme. The meaning of a word depends on the order of morphemes. The form 're-con-vene' has some meaning for the native speaker, but 'con-re-vene' has no meaning.
3.4.5. Bloomfield (contd.): Morphemes can be grouped under certain classes, each with a characteristic distribution: i. -s, ii - ed, iii - ing. The broadest and the most comprehensive classes are known as: roots and affixes. Forms such as 'walk, talk, follow and road' are all roots; these are generally longer and more numerous in a language. Affixes are sub-divided into prefixes and suffixes. The stem is any morpheme or combination of morphemes to which an affix can be added as in 'friendships': friend + ship + s. Some stems contain two or more roots. The distinction between the 'free form' and the 'bound form' is central to Bloomfield's morphology. By a feature modulation common to all constructions Bloomfield finds that the free form which comes as the underlying form is stressed and the bound form is unstressed.

The bound form appears several in several 'alternants' having different phonetic shapes as in class-es, pen-s and book-s [-iz - s - z]. The shape of the alternant is determined by the word-final sound of the stem. Bloomfield undertakes a survey of English plural forms and his description includes (i) an explanation of forms such as 'knife-knives' in terms of phonetic alternation and replacement, (ii) irregular phonetic modification as we find irregular past and participle forms, (iii) loss of phonemes as found in 'have-had' which he calls a 'minus-feature', and (iv) zero-alternation as found in 'sheep-sheep'.
Bloomfield develops the characteristic traditional notion of 'paradigms'. An English paradigm is thought of as consisting of an underlying word and some secondary derivatives. English has word-inflection, word-derivation and word-composition. Bloomfield finds that the constructions of compound words are most similar to the constructions of syntax. The notion of 'immediate-constituents' is developed by Bloomfield and later structuralists attempted to perfect the notion. It is significant to note that the seeds of every aspect of structural linguistics developed into full-fledged theories by later linguists are all found in the work of Bloomfield. The phrase-structure grammar on which transformational generative grammar is built is initiated by Bloomfield. The core of Bloomfield's entire work is morphology and one may say that in all the later contributions to the theory of morphology by later linguists there have been few significant departures except especially in the details of morphological procedures for the description of a language.

As mentioned earlier pedagogical grammar and linguistics followed different courses of development at the dawn of the 20th century. The course which pedagogical grammar took went almost unnoticed against the big bang of modern linguistics and the quantum of material which was produced and the research undertaken during the early decades of the century.
3.5.0. Jespersen and his Critics:

It is apt that the second part of the present chapter should be concerned with the way Jespersen was seen and studied by later grammarians and linguists. Jespersen's contemporaries saw him chiefly as a linguistic investigator laying stress both on the living language and its historic evolution. He considered speech as the noblest instrument to bind man to man, and thought to thought and therefore it deserves study on its own account. In 1930, on Jespersen's birthday Edward Sapir wrote the following characterization in a Danish newspaper addressed to Jespersen himself: "Your work has always seemed to me distinguished by its blend of exact knowledge, keenness of analysis, ease and lucidity of style, and by an imaginative warmth that is certainly not common in scientific writing." Otto Jespersen's voluminous works on language reveal the kind of intensity and enthusiasm with which he approached the problems of language.

3.5.1. Harold Hungerford: There is hardly any aspect of language with which Jespersen's generation was conversant that he has not fully treated. As Harold Hungerford recognizes, "By temperament and calling Jespersen was concerned with concrete actuality of languages, with linguistic systems and their use." It was not merely a love for language as such, but a love for the English language that he was impelled

to assume the task of explicating the structure and history of a language which he believed was the most advanced; and the ease and convenience which it offered as a mode of expression made it definitely superior to any other language.  

3.5.2. Niels Haislund: In 1943 Niels Haislund published a biographical sketch of Otto Jespersen. Haislund regards Jespersen's name as a household word to all advanced students of English. Jespersen's keen and dedicated interest in languages is the focus of Haislund's attention. He reviews an earlier paper by Jespersen, and writes that Jespersen's attack of the Neo-grammarians' thesis was most significant. Jespersen emphasizes the connection between sound and sense. Language is seen as having an outer form both phonological and grammatical, and an inner form which is the meaning. Jespersen shows that sound changes are due to inherent semantic changes. Haislund considers this an exceptionally fertile aspect of Jespersen's theory of language. The sound-meaning relationship and the idea of 'language progress' are two fundamental principles of Jespersen's theory. In addition to this he advocated that language is an activity, chiefly sound activity undertaken in order to get into touch with other individuals and communicates to them one's thoughts, feelings and will.


22. 'English Studies', 1965. 75 : 223.
The same work lays stress on Jespersen's interest in systems and symbols. He constructed his system of analphabetic symbols which was published in 1889. Jespersen's *Analytic Syntax* (1937) shows the maturation of his use of a more rigorous system of representation. Haislund views Jespersen as a theoretician whose place in the main line of principal grammarians and linguists cannot be over-stressed. All the same the treatment on Jespersen does not take into consideration or focus attention on any one aspect of linguistic significance which would prove his genius as a linguist or grammarian of eminence. No attempt is made to mark out Jespersen from among the set of his contemporary scholarly grammarians like sweet, Poutsma and Kruisinga.

3.5.3. **Raphael Green**: Another landmark in the study of Jespersen's contributions to modern linguistics is Raphael Green's *Linguistic Theory and Language Description in Jespersen* (1965). Green asks "May we not see him (Jespersen) as a proto-transformationalist, much nearer to Chomsky in explicitness and rule-formulation than were the traditionalist scholars? This paper will attempt to place Jespersen in this traditional-structural-transformational matrix by means of a comparative approach." Green evaluates traditional grammar from the structuralist and transformationalist viewpoints to see whether Jespersen can be classed among the traditionalist. He then goes on to compare Jespersen's theories and descriptive techniques with those of structuralism and transformational generative grammar to see the points of similarity and difference.
Reviewing Chomsky's position with regard to Jespersen's grammatical standpoints, Green says that Chomsky defends Jespersen's identification of 'the doctor arrived' and 'the doctor's arrival' as the same construction. Green stresses the point that the Chomskyan 'explanatory adequacy' which is said to be lacking in Jespersen, is an elusive concept and cannot be found even in the most rigorous of transformational generative grammarians. Green finds Jespersen's theory of language more systematic in analysis than other traditional treatments and more comprehensive than any 'structuralist' grammar. He finds Jespersen's *Analytic Syntax* to be not only 'immediate constituent analysis' at its best, but the work approaches the labelled bracketings of sophisticated phrase-structure grammar. Green's evaluation of Jespersen's *Analytic Syntax* may be slightly exaggerated; all the same Jespersen's attempt in this regard was more comprehensive and systematic than most individual attempts in transformational generative grammar.

3.5.4. **Formal-Morphological Position**: Green finds Jespersen's theory of language to be rigidly 'formal-morphological', in spite of the fact that he advocates a functional approach. When Jespersen deals with the feature of morphology he becomes more formal than most rigorous structuralists. His system of 'complementary morphology' (form → function → meaning) and syntax (meaning → function → form) makes his theory unnecessarily complicated. All the same we find Jespersen struggling with the formal features to present a consistent theory of language.
He is so rigidly formal that he treats the suffix -s as one ending as it occurs in the plural, third person and genitive positions. Only when he comes to function that the three uses are treated separately. But Green points out a number of discrepancies in Jespersen's treatment. Despite Jespersen's conscious attempt to be consistent in treatment, on several occasions Jespersen is found to be inconsistent and lacking in coherence. Having counted 'oxen', for instance, as a formula, because the plural suffix -en is unproductive today, he nevertheless treats -en as an ending which will yield a noun plural, and he gives the example 'oxen'. Green finally asserts that Jespersen's importance in his descriptive achievements is not surpassed by later linguists despite his conspicuous pitfalls.

3.5.5. Kenneth L. Pike: Apart from the unified and comprehensive attempts to review Jespersen as shown above, one finds considerable amount of scattered material of value on Jespersen's theory of language. Kenneth L. Pike in his Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behaviour (1945) quotes Jespersen widely in relation to his theoretical standpoints with regard to morphology. Pike notes that Jespersen's 'tertiary' serves to qualify not the real content signified by the verb but the stylistic choice of the following word which is then strongly stressed as in 'she fairly screamed' or as in 'I absolutely blushed'. Again, Noam Chomsky's recognition that transformational ideas were an important part of traditional grammar, was a significant step ahead in understanding the works of linguists.
like Jespersen who had been neglected too long under the shadow of structuralist ideas. In his *Transformational Approach to Syntax* (1968), Chomsky points out that "IC analysis can be thought of as an attempt to make more rigorous the traditional notion of parsing. Transformational ideas are of course an important part of traditional grammar. E.g. Otto Jespersen argues, on what we will reconstruct on transformational grounds, that 'the doctor's arrival' is different in structure from 'the man's house' despite superficial similarity because of its relation to the sentence 'the doctor arrives'. This observation is entirely correct."23

Jespersen is seen as the end of a generation of linguists as well as the beginning of another tradition. This is what Harold Hungerford means when he says, "when generative grammarians call him (Jespersen) traditional they mean that he was one in the long series of Western linguists which began in Pre-Christian Greece, that he did not share the ideas and methods of American structuralism."24 Many find fault with Jespersen calling him a notionalist in contrast to the modern 'formal approach',25 but a closer look into the linguistic system of Jespersen reveals that he is so well aware of the grouping of word-classes depending on the part they plan in the structure of the utterances in which these word-classes occur.26

3.5.6. **Maurice Leroy**: Maurice Leroy (1967: 43) pays homage to the Danish Linguist and phonetician, Otto Jespersen, who within the limited field of linguistic evolution tried to make the notion of 'progress' the supreme principle of explanation. Having apparently been attracted by the evolutionist philosophy of Darwin and under the influence of Schleicher who considered language as a living organism, Jespersen campaigned against the opinion that the ancient languages represented a superior stage in comparison with the modern languages were but poor relations. Jespersen who carefully avoided appealing to hypothetical or rash reconstructions and limited his study to the examination of known states of language, claimed that in the history of languages, the sum of changes shows an excess of 'progressive' changes over regressive changes and the gains in this process always outweighed losses. Jespersen's dynamic concept of linguistic progress as Leroy points out was developed to counteract the static concept that languages could easily be classified into certain ideals of perfection.

3.5.7. **Conclusion**: Numerous critical references to Jespersen indicates the tremendous influence he as a grammarian and linguist exercised on later generation. There is hardly any publication between the 40's and 60's in which Jespersen as a linguist is not referred to. Jespersen's greatest influence on present-day linguistic thinking lies in his role as a precursor of transformational generative
grammar with all its stress on the initial phrases-marker (deep-structure) - surface structure distinctions. Jespersen, of course, cannot be credited with having developed a theory of generative grammar, that is an explicit system of rules from which the structural description of sentences can be derived. But as Samuel Levin (1937) points out in his introduction to Analytic Syntax, Jespersen's concern with underlying grammatical relations, with the deep structure of sentences and with a partly rigorous formalism has marked him aside from his predecessors as a linguist of rare insights into the structure of human language in general and English language in particular.