

# Study of Phonology, Grammar and Semantic Changes within Historical Linguistics

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the study of phonology in historical linguistics, the ways through which it evolves. In a specific language, words and their meaning changes over time. There exist various reasons for such changes such as one generation's meaning of a particular word varies from another reason. This research analyses the history of historical linguistics and what it is all about. The findings of the research article reveal that the study of phonology is important to know the development of the sound structure. This article discusses various doctrines related to the study of phonology such as dependency phonology, metrical phonology, lexicon phonology, and the unit of phonological sound speech known as phonemes.*

*The article further discusses the importance of Neo-grammarians and their academic views on linguistics. The paper inquires the function of grammatical devices while expressing meaning and the ways these meanings change over time. This article shows the role of native speakers of different languages while adopting English words in their vocabulary to cause semantic changes in a language. The finding of the research also shows that children through their grammatical errors or by forming grammatical structure from limited data cause changes in a given language. The research discusses that word and their meaning varies and forsakes the existing meanings when semantic changes occur in a language.*

## Keywords

*Grammar changes, historical linguistics, linguistics, phonetics, and phonology, semantics changes, the study of phonology.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Historical linguistics is a part of linguistics mainly focused on the study of phonology, semantic, and grammar changes. This is also known as diachronic linguistics. This is mainly concerned with the ways earlier phases of languages change and the forces and methods that reconstruct and modify them. It also deals with new processes of the methods through which the genetic relationships among various languages can be exhibited. It has its inception in the etymological hypothesis of the earlier times especially during the medieval and classical period, in the comparative study of Latin and Greek which are formed during the Renaissance period. It has its theories of academics as to the languages from which other languages of the society were developed.

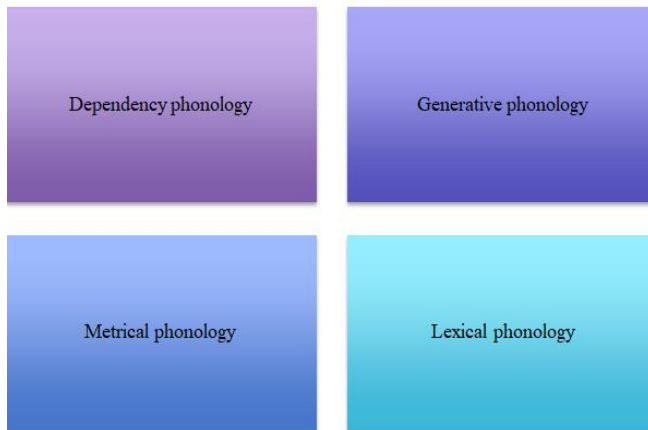
During the 19th century, only the various scientific processes and adequate data on Indo-European languages combined to build the new fundamentals which are now used by diachronic linguistics. It should be mentioned here that Neo-grammarians are important in the sense in which they formed sound correlations in the Indo-European languages. Neo-grammarians are a community of German academics and linguists who gained recognition during the 1870s. Historical linguistics expanded its branches to include non-Indo-European languages as well in the 20th century. This paper examines *phonology, grammar, and semantic changes within Historical linguistics and the ways they develop over time.*

## STUDY OF PHONOLOGY IN HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

The study of phonology deals with the sound structures that now exist or cease to exist in a particular language. This study also focuses on relative approaches to linguistics studies between various timelines, languages, and accents or dialects. According to [11] (2019), it is also concerned with the ways in which sound systems of the same component change as a purpose of the sounds in its conditions. On the contrary, according to the words of [6] (2018), it is the study of categorical structuring of speech sounds and the ways these speeches are formulated in the mind and developed to bring meanings.

The study of phonology is related to many linguistics doctrines such as cognitive science, language acquisition, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics. The fundamentals of it also can be used to analyses speech pathologies.

There are various theories of phonology that are developed over time; these are Dependency Phonology, Generative phonology, Metrical phonology, and Lexical phonology.



**Figure 1:** Types of Phonology  
(Source: Inspired by [12], 2017)

### Dependency phonology

This theory focuses on representing phonological sequences and segments. It has its roots in the studies of other parts of nonlinear phonology. The name of this theory is developed from its exercise of the relation of dependency, which is, an unstressed syllable segment is dependent on the stressed one. This relation of dependency has an expanded application in comparison with metrical relation ([12], 2017). This theoretical approach is mainly concerned with representing internal structures; the phonological characteristic of which a segment is formed can also reflect the dependency correlation of them.

### Generative phonology

This theory is based on rules, statements, and sections that produce all types of well-structured utterances of a specific language. This theory is developed to make definite and precise the capability for native speakers to form utterances of a specific language.

### Metrical phonology

According to [7] (2017), this theory is focused on forming segments into sections of comparative prominence. These segments are again formed into syllables which later formed into metrical feet. These metrical feet are later organized into phonological words which are lastly organised into bigger units.

### Lexical phonology

This theory is mainly focused on structure grammar. Specifically, this theory deals with the relation between morphology, phonology, and lexicon. As per the words of [3]. (2020), this theory is of the opinion that morphological methods and especially phonological processes are put through into the lexicon.

In conclusion, the accent of a word is a principal part of the sentence structure and the fundamentals of accents in a language change over time. This leads to the fact that the study of phonology eventually includes other domains of linguistics.

## GRAMMAR AND SEMANTIC CHANGES IN HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

### Grammar Changes

As per the words of [5] (2018), grammatical change is the process of transforming the regularities that specify a language system at a specific time. The grammatical distinction of a language varies over time and even includes new distinctions, for example, while English evolved the progressive (“she is playing”) in contrast to the simple present (“she plays”). According to [10]. (2017), one grammatical device which is used to express one meaning can be used to express another meaning, for example in the earlier versions of Indo-European languages in a sentence structure the syntactic purpose of nouns and noun phrases were demonstrated mainly by means of case endings. This means that the subject and object of the sentence are in the nominative case and in the accusative case. It should be mentioned here that according to [2] (2020), when grammatical changes occur it leaves the deep structure unchanged eventually but change the ways the deeper syntax operates and distinctions are demonstrated, for example, in the morphological process by word order, by the use of auxiliary verbs and prepositions. As per the words of [1]. (2018), grammatical change is the process of transforming the regularities that specify a language system at a specific time. Thus, understanding basic grammar and phonology are necessary to gain knowledge regarding linguistics.

### Semantic Changes

In historical linguistics semantic changes attempt to examine the changes in senses. It can refer to any changes in the meaning that normally happens in the course of time. This is also known as somatic shift or progression and lexical change. There are various kinds of semantic changes that exists which is semantic narrowing and broadening, metonymy, metaphor, bleaching, and amelioration. Semantic changes can also occur when a native speaker of a different language uses English phrases and other words on a daily basis. According to [4] (2018), when semantic changes happen to any word that word no longer holds the existing meaning. This happens because the speaker uses words constantly to express a new meaning and the meaning also changes over time. This also suggests the fact that a word has various connotations and in the course of time, these connotations can be changed, added, and removed.

## METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The data collection method is the process through which various required information from authentic and reliable sources are gathered to develop the research, examine the hypothesis and theories related to the research topic. The data collection method is an integral part of a research thesis as it assists in answering the proposed question of the research article and evaluating the research findings ([8], 2021). There exist two ways through which the required data are collected which are primary and secondary data. Secondary data refers

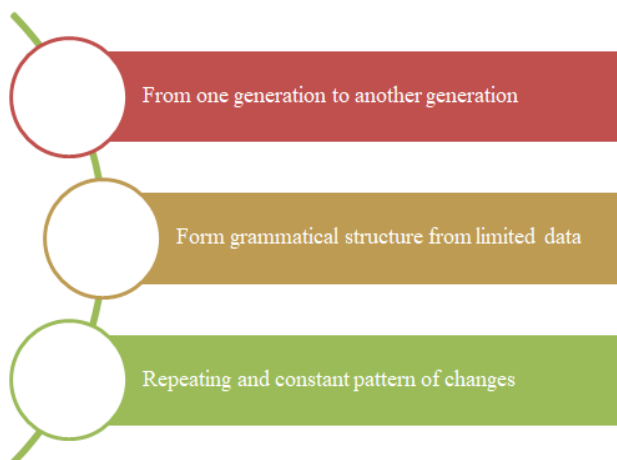
to the published journals, books and articles, and also other research papers which are available on online websites. This research is developed by collecting *secondary qualitative data* from Google Scholar by searching keywords such as historical linguistics, phonology and grammar, and semantic changes. All the data collected from these sources to develop the research article are reliable, authentic, and recent data.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Historical linguistics, which is the study of the changes that occur in languages, includes both the extensive study of language changes and the history of various languages and their branches. The main focus of historical linguistics is the ways in which languages are related. In other words, this can be represented by showing the way different languages have a vast number of common words that are not acquired or borrowed. This is a common thing that often languages borrow words from other languages. It is not that difficult to demonstrate how major number words, their pronunciation or dialect, and grammatical structure have changed over the course of time if an interconnected group of languages has been researched in depth.

### Reasons for language change

- Languages change over time because a particle language is passed on from one generation to another generation.



**Figure 2:** Reasons for Language Changes  
(Sources: Inspired by [9], 2017)

- Individuals in their early stages, for example, children when learning a language they don't follow a proper grammatical structure and only learn from the available sources, this resulted in differences in a language.
- Furthermore, this change becomes constant and follows a repeating pattern in all the languages which leads to language change over time.

### Phonology and phonetics

It is important to distinguish between phonetics and phonology. According to [9] (2017) Phonetics is concerned

with the study of sounds and speech sounds especially their perception, audition, and production. On the other hand, phonology is focused on the ways sounds operate within a specific language. It also deals with the function of sound at the level of sound structure and its abstract units.

### Phonemes

Phonemes are the unit of speech sound and that is only recognised in an individual's mind rather than spoken or heard. These phonemes have sounds that are allophones. Allophones represent the sound when it is brought out in a surrounding.

Often within the part of semantic change, the meaning of the word is shifted to another point which is used in modern terms. According to [13]. (2018) however, the original use of the word is not presented in the proper sequence through semantic change. The semantic change mechanism can be referred to as the conceptual anonymisation which is motivated through invited interferences or subjectification In other words; the meaning of the speaker's perspective is shifted in the semantic change method. A basic understanding of semantic changes is necessary for understanding the evolution of different words and changes in the language.

## CONCLUSION

In order to include, the importance of historical linguistics allows an individual; to understand different methodologies and from this understanding, one can conclude which methodology is efficient enough to provide information. Historical linguistics also gives opportunities to understand and learn more about those languages that do not exist anymore such as Latin and Old English. The study of phonology is an integral part of understanding the history of languages and the ways they evolve over time. The function of sound systems in languages and their transformation are studied in the study of phonology. The purpose of this study is to examine the fundamentals that made an impact on the way sounds are formed in a language and to express the changes that happen. The semantic changes in historical linguistics are also necessary to understand the different connotations of various languages and the ways they can be modified according to the needs of speakers.

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