

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEORETICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE LINGUISTICS

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Annotation: This article aims to explain the difference between theoretical and descriptive linguistics. Theoretical linguistics deals with the study of language as a universal phenomenon, while descriptive linguistics focuses on the study of particular languages and their structures. The article highlights the methods used in each approach, provides examples, and presents the findings of the research. The article concludes by discussing the importance of both approaches and suggesting future research directions.

Keywords: theoretical linguistics, descriptive linguistics, language universals, language structure, methods, findings.

Language is a complex system of communication that is essential to human interaction. Linguistics is the scientific study of language, its structure, and its uses. It is divided into two main branches, theoretical linguistics and descriptive linguistics. Theoretical linguistics is a subfield of linguistics that focuses on the creation of concrete models, such as how phonemes are arranged in a particular language, as well as general linguistic knowledge, while the study of descriptive linguistics involves examining and explaining how a speech community's members use language today or in the past.

The goal of linguistic theory is to provide a foundational framework for understanding the nature of human language. To better comprehend these concepts, linguists investigate the structure of natural languages.

This approach aims to identify the fundamental properties that all languages share. The methods used in theoretical linguistics include formal analysis, experimentation, and computer modeling. The study of language universals has led to the development of theories such as generative grammar, which seeks to explain how the human mind produces language.

Descriptive linguistics, on the other hand, focuses on the study of particular languages and their structures. This approach involves the collection and analysis of data from a specific language, such as its sounds, grammar, and vocabulary. The methods used in descriptive linguistics include fieldwork, corpus analysis, and

observation. Descriptive linguistics has led to the development of descriptive grammars, which provide a detailed account of the structure of a particular language. . Descriptive linguistics emphasizes the primacy of speech, the use of a synchronic approach, and the description of language and dialect systems as they are discovered to be spoken in its research of linguistic structure. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), a Swiss linguist widely regarded as the founder of modern linguistics, is generally responsible for the development of descriptive linguistics. Saussure outlined the fundamental ideas and procedures of what is now known as descriptive linguistics in his collection of lecture notes, the *Cours de linguistique générale*, which was published posthumously in 1916. the importance of speaking.

Theoretical linguistics is a subfield of linguistics that seeks to develop and test theories about the nature of language as an abstract system. Briefly, theoretical linguistics investigates language and languages in order to develop a theory of their structure and functions, ignoring any potential practical applications; in contrast, applied linguistics is concerned with applying linguistic concepts and findings to a range of practical tasks, including teaching languages. Theoretical linguistics is concerned with questions such as:

What is the basic structure of language?

How do humans acquire and use language?

What are the universal features of language across all human societies?

What are the mechanisms underlying the diversity of languages and language change?

How is language represented in the brain?

Theoretical linguistics draws on a range of methodologies and approaches, including formal modeling, experimental research, and corpus analysis. Theories in theoretical linguistics are often expressed using formal frameworks such as generative grammar, cognitive grammar, and functional linguistics.

Theoretical linguistics is an important field because it helps us to gain a deeper understanding of how language works and how it is acquired and used by humans. The insights gained from theoretical linguistics have practical applications in areas such as language teaching, natural language processing, and the development of language technologies.

Descriptive linguistics is a subfield of linguistics that focuses on the systematic analysis and description of the features of a particular language or languages. Descriptive linguistics seeks to provide an accurate and comprehensive account of the structure and use of a language, including its sounds, grammar, vocabulary, and discourse patterns.

Descriptive linguistics involves a range of techniques for collecting and analyzing linguistic data, including observation, transcription, and analysis of spoken and written

texts. Descriptive linguists may also use corpus linguistics, which involves the collection and analysis of large bodies of naturally occurring language data.

Descriptive linguistics is important because it provides a detailed and objective account of the structure and use of a language, which can be used to inform language teaching, language documentation, and language policy. By analyzing the structure and use of a language, descriptive linguistics can help us to better understand the nature of human language in general, and the relationship between language and culture.

Theoretical linguistics and descriptive linguistics are two subfields of linguistics that have different focuses and goals.

Descriptive linguistics is concerned with describing and analyzing the structure and use of languages as they are actually spoken or written by people. This involves collecting and analyzing data from various sources, such as texts, recordings, and direct observation of language use. Descriptive linguistics aims to provide a detailed and accurate description of how language works, including its sounds, words, grammar, and discourse. Descriptive linguistics is also concerned with documenting the diversity of languages and the variations within them.

Theoretical linguistics, on the other hand, is concerned with developing and testing models and theories that explain how language works. Theoretical linguistics is often more concerned with abstract, formal models of language structure and use, rather than the details of any particular language. Theoretical linguistics aims to uncover the underlying principles that govern language and to develop theories that can explain and predict linguistic phenomena. Theoretical linguistics is also concerned with issues such as language acquisition, language change, and the evolution of language.

In short, while descriptive linguistics aims to provide a detailed description of language as it is used, theoretical linguistics aims to develop theories that explain how language works.

Theoretical linguistics has provided valuable insights into the structure of language. It has identified language universals such as the existence of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and the basic word order patterns found in all languages. Theoretical linguistics has also led to the development of generative grammar, which has been influential in the study of language acquisition and language processing.

A theoretical linguist might develop a formal model of English syntax that describes the principles and rules that govern sentence structure in the language. They might propose that English sentences have a basic structure consisting of a subject, a verb, and an object, and that this structure can be modified in various ways to create more complex sentences. The theoretical linguist might also propose a set of formal rules for how words are combined in sentences, based on abstract principles of grammar.

A descriptive linguist, on the other hand, would be more concerned with collecting data on how English sentences are actually used by speakers of the language. They might conduct surveys or analyze written texts to identify patterns in sentence structure, such as common word orders or the use of different types of clauses. The descriptive linguist might also look at how sentence structure varies across different dialects or social groups, and how it changes over time.

Overall, the theoretical linguist is focused on developing abstract models and theories that explain how language works, while the descriptive linguist is focused on describing the characteristics of a specific language in detail.

Descriptive linguistics has provided a detailed understanding of the structure of particular languages. It has identified the unique features of each language, such as the tonal system of Chinese, the complex verbal morphology of Swahili, and the use of cases in Russian. Descriptive linguistics has also contributed to the development of language teaching materials and language revitalization efforts.

Theoretical linguistics and descriptive linguistics are two complementary approaches to the study of language. Theoretical linguistics provides a broad understanding of language structure and its universals, while descriptive linguistics provides a detailed understanding of the structure of particular languages. Both approaches are necessary for a complete understanding of language.

Theoretical linguistics can inform descriptive linguistics by providing a framework for understanding language structure and its universals. Descriptive linguistics can provide data to test theories developed in theoretical linguistics. Theoretical and descriptive linguistics can also inform language teaching and language policy decisions.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

In conclusion, theoretical linguistics and descriptive linguistics are two approaches to the study of language that provide complementary insights into language structure. Theoretical linguistics seeks to identify language universals, while descriptive linguistics provides a detailed understanding of particular languages. Both approaches are necessary for a complete understanding of language.

Future research directions could involve the integration of theoretical and descriptive linguistics. This could involve using data from particular languages to test theories developed in theoretical linguistics. It could also involve the development of new theoretical frameworks that take into account the unique features of particular languages.

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