

## **An approach to linguistics. Fundamentals of semantics, pragmatics and deconstruction**

### **O abordare lingvistică. Principii de bază ale semanticii, pragmaticii și deconstructivismului**

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#### **Abstract**

*The present paper approaches linguistics and the mechanisms of language and communication. There are several dimensions essential for everyday life, which either consciously or unconsciously occur in the individual's speech. The study of languages involves understanding meaning, the way in which it is inferred from words and from context, how people acquire language. The paper provides an overview to the study of language outlining the contribution of some scholars to the development of semantics, structuralism or deconstruction. Linguistics opens doors and is a pathway to successful careers teaching about the structure of language and about the relationship between structure and meaning.*

#### **Rezumat**

*Prezenta lucrare abordează elemente lingvistice precum și mecanismele limbajului și ale comunicării. Există mai multe dimensiuni esențiale în viața de zi cu zi, care, constient sau nu, se manifestă în vorbirea fiecărui individ. Studiul limbilor și limbajelor implică o înțelegere a semnificației, modul în care aceasta este dedusă din cuvinte și din context, modul în care oamenii își însușesc limba. Lucrarea furnizează o perspectivă de ansamblu asupra studiului limbii, subliniind contribuția unor oameni de știință la dezvoltarea semanticii, structuralismului sau deconstrucției. Lingvistica deschide uși și reprezintă o traiectorie către o carieră de succes, popularizând structura limbajului și relația dintre structura și semnificație.*

**Keywords:** *linguistics, language, semantics, pragmatics, meaning, structuralism, deconstruction*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *lingvistica, limba, semantica, pragmatica, semnificație, structuralism, deconstrucție*

**“Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone.”[1]**

Language dwells in the minds and on the lips of living people and it adapts and adjusts according to the social demands and changes of humanity. Every person knows at least one language even though verbal language is not the only form of communication. If zoologists talk about animal language and psychologists emphasize the importance of body language, human beings can also communicate through images or music. Although verbal language represents the most sophisticated and complicated form of communication on earth, non-verbal communication betrays feelings or emotions, or reveals the truth by means of unconscious gestures, eye movements.

Language can be analyzed from different perspectives: as an individual competence, in groups of individuals, as a system of signs or from a cultural point of view and it allows human beings to express their personality. People do not rely exclusively on the formal system of language, but they also consider their social context, as language has a huge impact on economic, political or any other kind of human interaction. The linguistics of communication between individuals, the way they interact with each other is called pragmatics. The process of analyzing this type of

communication is known as discourse analysis. Taking into consideration the fact that language is closely related to the social environment and is governed by social convention, as mentioned above, scientists have noticed the development of sociolinguistics. And because of this, people are often either correctly categorized or misjudged due to the way they use their skills, intelligence or work habits. The way in which animals communicate involves codes in the same way human communication relies on such codes to convey meaning. Language helps us to think, to communicate with ourselves and to take decisions. Human communication is a much more complex process, because while the individual has the ability to name things, animal cries do not have a similar function. Children, for example, become aware of the real meaning of words only at about the age of 18 months they begin to distinguish between the meaning of the word “toy” and the meaning of the sentence “I want my toy”; they understand the difference between words naming actions, that is verbs, and words naming attributes, that is adjectives. Animal cries and early utterances of children represent the world directly, while human speech sounds represent words. As the sounds of a word can be used in different combinations in order to obtain new words, a grammatical system has emerged. It formulates a set of rules for drawing up sentences and clauses. Some animals may understand the meaning of certain words or commands, but they cannot recombine sounds to make new meanings. On the other hand, due to the articulation function of human language, people can detach words and reconstruct new meanings. Creativity, which enables humans to invent new words, shows that human language is an open system of communication.

In the book entitled *The English Language and Linguistics Companion*, the authors, Keith Allan, Julie Bradshaw, Geoffrey Finch, Kate Burridge and Georgina Heydon, underline four macro-functions of language: ideational, interpersonal, textual and poetic. The first one helps us to represent the world to ourselves; the second dimension is a means of representing feelings and emotions; the textual function helps us to build coherent sentences and phrases; the fourth function refers to the aesthetic devices of language.

Linguistics is the science that studies language, that is, sounds, words or grammar rules. It is concerned with the way we understand spoken and written language. While in nature there are beautiful plants and weeds, in the same way language has to offer both nice and polite rules as well as bad connotations of words. Therefore, any language needs a set of rules, a linguistic behaviour or social etiquette. But the emphasis is on principles used by native speakers to talk and write. As Noam Chomsky observed, people’s ability to form grammatically accurate sentences is called linguistic competence. Linguists consider that people have an innate ability to acquire language. As long as people are exposed to a certain language from a very early age, they will learn it in the same way they learn their mother tongue. But they also have to recognize morphology, syntax and phonetics rules. We must be able to arrange words in sentences and phrases and to understand how rhythm and stress contribute to the way we pronounce words. While speaking is a natural process that is easily acquired, writing has to be learned. The meaning of a word is given by the context in which it is used. The process of understanding such meanings is closely related to semantics and pragmatics, to communicative competence. When asked something, the individual should give an appropriate answer to the question and not only a grammatically correct one. Thus we enter the area of pragmatics, which is concerned with the significance of language and meaning of words. There are several branches of linguistics of which the most notable one would be applied linguistics. It is very broad and important as it deals with real-world problems and issues of everyday life. According to the above-mentioned authors, one sub-category is forensic linguistics which studies the language specific for law, or the clinical linguistics which focuses on the study of language disorders.

Languages are different in terms of grammar, vocabulary and not only. As mentioned in a paper published in the Romanian magazine *Studii de Stiinta si Cultura*, „Der kommunikative Ansatz verarbeitet Anregungen der Sprechakttheorie und der kommunikativen Kompetenz. Die Sprache wird pragmatisch gesehen, die Muster der unterschiedlichen Sprechabsichten stehen im Vordergrund.”[2] Many linguists are concerned with the research of such differences in an effort to

show the principles that contribute to language changes in time. One of the latest developments in the study of language is computational linguistics which refers to the conversion of written text into spoken form and the vice-versa. Style is essential in any form of communication. People must know what style to approach and be able to adapt it to the situation. Linguistics is a relatively new discipline as it has emerged and has been regarded as a discipline in its own right only beginning with the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its main focus is on helping individuals understand language better.

The study of language is a lifelong learning activity whether it refers to writing and speaking better or to understand the human mind and the world around us. *The English Language and Linguistics Companion* provides an example in this respect. Racial tension is not set forth only by colour or culture but also by language use and misunderstandings. Therefore, John Gumperz exemplified with a West Indian bus driver in London who always greeted his passengers with the phrase: *Exact change please*. Sometimes, in order to make himself better understood, he would repeat the phrase with a pause between last two words. British speakers perceived this pause as being rude and impolite while for West Indians it represented a manner of being extra polite. Due to its various meanings and interpretations, language is a very powerful tool not only for advertising but also for economics and politics. It can influence, persuade and manipulate persons and opinions. There are not only different perceptions and ways of communicating in the world, but also lots of dialects and even dying languages. Linguists have compared the loss of a linguistic system with the extinction of a species and their research has proved that Chinese, Spanish and English have the largest number of speakers. As mentioned before, languages are closely related to the business environment or to politics, because the place of work, the school or sometimes even the family requires the use of several languages, and therefore many people become bilingual. Language has been characterized as a vehicle of culture, or a competitive tool on local markets, being a political term more than a linguistic one. There is a maze or a mosaic of languages in the world and they all interact from a regional or international point of view.

### **Human existence – a matter of semantics and pragmatics**

“The ambiguities of language, both in terms of vocabulary and syntax, are fascinating: how important connotation is, what is lost and what is gained in the linguistic transition.” [3]

Semantics deals with the relationship between signifiers (words, sentences) and what they stand for. It studies the meaning used by people to express themselves. Semiotics is another form of semantics. This refers to a series of ideas, often used in everyday speech in order to denote a problem of understanding or connotation. Formal semantics has often been confronted with the problem of understanding.

Semantics deals with aspects of meaning that remain constant while pragmatics is focused on context-dependent characteristics of language. The latter one has to do with the idea or the meaning speakers try to convey when using the expressions. When analyzing a complex expression one should also consider the meanings of the parts from which it is constructed as part of the semantic process. Pragmatics studies the way people use language in different social contexts; semantics focuses on meaning without taking into account communication or context. Semantics derives from the way people use language. Semantics and pragmatics depend on each other. Words are like bricks for language construction and meaning is one of their properties. But the meaning of words cannot be determined by its constituent parts. Such words are called listemes. The listeme is a language expression that is memorized as a combination of form and meaning, because it is not generated by a rule. As exemplified in *The English Language and Linguistics Companion*, the word *killed* is composed from the listemes *kill* and *-ed* and the morphosyntactic relationship between the two. The authors of the same book mentioned above observed that: “The principle of compositionality is that any complex language expression can be analyzed in terms of simpler

constituent expressions down to listemes and the structures that combine them. The flip-side of compositionality is generativity: language has a structure that permits boundless meanings to be created from a finite set of listemes. Human languages are the objects that we study in semantics. For that reason, the language under investigation is known as the object language. The language that a linguist uses to describe and analyse the object language is called metalanguage. The programme for semantic theory includes: specifying the rules for translating sentences of the object language into a metalanguage that captures their proper semantic components; identifying the rules for combining these components in such a way as to interpret the input sentences of the object language.” [4] It is difficult to draw a distinction and to explain semantics and pragmatics due to the several definitions that have emerged over the years. Therefore, it is much easier to exemplify in order to decide whether a linguistic phenomenon can be classified as semantic or pragmatic. Context often becomes indispensable in explaining the two notions. The meaning of a linguistic sentence is given by context, because there are lost of different things the speaker may refer to. So in the process of communication count both the facts about words alone and the facts about the circumstances in which they are used. There are two types of contextual information. One of them has a restricted role in the process of combining with linguistics information in the purpose of determining content. It is limited to the identity of the speaker and hearer, to time and place. In order to determine the speaker’s communicative intention, contextual information is essential as we often hear or even say that we can understand what a speaker means, according to the context. In the pragmatic sense, context does not determine content.

### **Structuralism and Deconstruction – affirmation or questioning**

If discussing about semantics and pragmatics, about connotations and denotations the best means for exemplifying is literature. In the subchapter above I have explained a few theoretical ideas and assumptions related to such issues. But as the British contemporary writer, David Lodge, underlined, a book or a text should not reveal all its meanings from the very beginning. Speaking about his own literary output, he believes in the power of words, of interpretation and connotations: “As I write, I make the same demands upon my own text as I do, in my critical capacity, on the texts of other writers. Every part of a novel, every incident, character, word even, must make an identifiable contribution to the whole... On the other hand I would not claim that, because I could explicate my own novel line by line, that is all it could mean and I am well aware of the danger of inhibiting the interpretative freedom of the reader by a premature display of my own as it were, ‘authorized’ interpretation. A novel is in one sense a game, a game that requires at least two players, a reader as well as a writer. The writer who seeks to control or dictate the responses of his reader outside the boundaries of the text itself, is comparable to a card player who gets up periodically from his place, goes round the table to look at his opponent’s hand and advises him what cards to play.”[5] He first expressed ideas of criticism in *Language of Fiction*. He underlines the importance of language in literary matters, asserting that the literary criticism of a novel can be reduced to questions about the language. But this solution becomes problematic, as content and context are not easily ignored. Lodge decides that it is impossible to encounter neutrality in fiction. The same opinion is shared by Bakhtin who admits that literary criticism cannot be reduced to a pure study of language: “To study the words as such, ignoring the impulse that reaches out beyond it, is just as senseless as to study psychological experience outside the context of that real life toward which it was directed and by which it is determined.” [6] As fact and fiction are opposites, observes David Lodge, the novel as a literary form is based on contradiction, on reconciliations, on elements that the novelists have tried to conceal by various devices: parody, intertextuality, framing narratives, metafiction.

Structuralism is a complex intellectual movement that became important in France around 1950 and included the work of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and literary critic Roland Barthes. By the 1970’s their influence was considerable in England and the United States. The roots of structuralism are diverse, but usually traced to the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. His

theory of language is based on a system of internal differences rather than in resemblances to objects in the material world. By the early 1950's and 1960's people such as Roland Barthes and Claude Levi-Strauss had extended Saussure's semiological approach to literature and culture in general. In this new vision, the sign's ability to reflect the nature and the human psyche gave way to this study of how the words and images work as a system of structural relations. (Semiology – studies all the signs that make up a culture. This means that words have both a signifier and a signified. The signifier represents the acoustic sound or material written word, while the signified is the concept the signifier refers to). The use of language as a model for understanding aspects of reality that are predominantly non-linguistic in character established structuralism, particularly in the 1960s, as a powerful alternative to empiricist (functional) methods of analysis. Literature seemed appropriate to a structuralist approach since it was wholly made up of language. Thus, structuralist literary criticism tends to emphasize the system of conventions which makes literature possible and to attach little importance to authorial or historical considerations or to questions regarding meaning. Structuralist literary criticism inevitably concerned itself with poetics as a general science of literature. Individual texts were used mainly to exemplify general characteristics of literature as a whole. Formalism's focus on what is internal to the linguistic constructions prepared the ground for the structuralist criticism, exemplified by Roland Barthes. He claims that criticism is not concerned with *the world* but with certain *linguistic formulations*. It is a secondary language talking about a primary language. The question of *truth* does not arise; only the question of *validity*. The critic is not occupied in discovering hidden things in an author's work, but in fitting together in one piece of furniture, the language of his day and that of the author. Literature is susceptible of infinite reinterpretations because it conveys no message but a system of signs. He considers it is time to give the reader the primacy, placing the author and the critic on the second place. The question whether a given text has any representative significance in relation to the real world (the extra-linguistic world) is not a limited technical question of interest only to literary scholars.

Semiotics is closely related to structuralism. The term *semiotic* was coined in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (by the American philosopher C. S. Peirce), to denote the formal doctrine of signs. Saussure argued that linguistics was only part of a general science of signs, which he called semiology. The basis of semiotics is the sign. Not only are languages and communication systems (e.g. Morse code) constituted by signs, but the world itself as it relates to the human mind consists entirely of signs, since there can be no unmediated relationship with reality. Language being the fundamental sign system for human beings, non-verbal signs such as gestures, forms of dress, conventionalized social practices such as eating can be seen as a language, in that they are constituted by signs which take on meaning and communicate by virtue of the relations between signs. Literary criticism should not concern itself with literary meaning as such, but with how that meaning is produced. There has been formulated a theory according to which, each work has *a* meaning and the critic's quest for knowledge is an attempt to discover that meaning. Semiotics seeks to find the operations by which any signifying practice (e.g. literature) produces its observable effects of meaning. A semiotics of literature is based on two assumptions: first, that literature should be treated as a mode of signification and communication, in that, a proper description of a literary work must refer to the meanings it has for its readers; and secondly, that one can identify the effects of signification one wants to account for. Objections to the first assumption insist on the importance of attempting to separate the work itself from interpretations of it. Interpretations vary in unpredictable ways. They are determined by factors external to the work. Even if interpretations and responses do not belong to the structure of the work, they are an important cultural activity that should be studied.

One can study literary signification by attempting to describe the conventions and semiotic operations responsible for these interpretations. Such a semiotics would be a theory of reading and its object would not be literary works themselves, but their intelligibility: the ways in which they make sense, the ways in which readers have made sense of them. The semiotic program may be better expressed by the concepts of "sense" and "making sense" than by the concept of "meaning".

For while “meaning” suggests a property of a text (a text “has” meaning), and thus encourages one to distinguish an intrinsic (though perhaps ungraspable) meaning from the interpretations of readers, “sense”, links the qualities of a text to the operations one performs upon it. A text can make sense and someone can make sense of a text. If a text which at first did not make sense comes to make sense, it is because someone has made sense of it.

Structuralism enables both the reader of texts and the reading of cultures: through semiotics, structuralism leads us to see everything as “textual” that is, composed of signs, governed by conventions of meaning, ordered according to a pattern of relationships. Reality as we understand it is constructed of certain deep structural principles which may be configured differently as we understand them differently. There is no unmediated knowledge of “reality”: knowledge is symbolic; what we “know” are signs; signs gain their meaning from their distinction from other signs. Therefore there is no knowledge of “reality” but only of symbolized, constructed experience. Theorists of semiotics believe that there is no “pure” knowledge of reality. At an instantaneous and inarticulate level, one can experience but not know reality in itself. This does not mean that this experience of the real is not real. But we live in our particular codification, in our system of signs. If we cannot translate any experience into symbolic form, then we cannot “know” it in a way that is useful to us. If we do “know”, then our knowledge is only knowledge through our codes and our signifying systems, that is, mediated knowledge. (e.g. As when we experience an earthquake without immediately knowing what it is, for a moment, we experience only something like disoriented panic). All texts are mediated in many ways: by language, by cultural systems, including ideologies and symbols. Texts cannot, by definition, simply transfer an author’s idea. Our mediated knowledge works as all signs systems work, not by identification but by differences and through codes. David Lodge shared this interest in structuralism and described it as having two branches: “One is [...] classical structuralism. It is concerned with the analysis and understanding of culture as a series of systems, of which language is usually taken as the ideal model for explanatory purposes. This structuralism aims to do for literature [...] what grammar does for language: to understand and explain how these systems work... The second branch of structuralism, perhaps more properly called post-structuralism, is ideological in orientation.” [7]

In another book, entitled *The Modes of Modern Writing*, the author tried an interpretation of the history of the twentieth century literature from the metaphor-metonymy point of view. Metaphor refers to things in terms of resemblance while metonymy in terms of association. David Lodge himself says: “We are not discussing a distinction between two mutually exclusive types of discourse, but a distinction based on dominance. The metaphoric work cannot totally neglect metonymic continuity if it is to be intelligible at all.”[8] He considers that there is a cyclical pattern in literary history which is analyzed by means of metaphor and metonymy. While metaphor is based on similarity, metonymy emphasizes the contiguity, the combination and the context. Along time, literature has oscillated between these two elements.

David Lodge claims that his aim is to work with structuralism without being totally dominated by it. He discusses the link between his type of writing and the major literary trends, that is, modernism, anti-modernism and postmodernism. He wants to emphasize the fact that there is no single method to ever be sufficient; the problems regarding literature and theory shall always continue. The comical approach is also significant for literary criticism. It establishes a bridge between the author and his creative practice. As the author has underlined, the funny things presented in books, do not happen by accident. They are created by writers. He considers that human discourse is a continuing process where words always imply other words. Thus he acknowledges that *The Modes of Modern Writing* was “not entirely free from the tendency of most stylistic criticism to treat the language of a novel as if it were a homogeneous entity”. But Bakhtin explains that there is no such thing as *the* style or *the* language of a novel, because a novel combines several styles and methods. However, David Lodge finds a pertinent answer for this remark: “For the prose artist, the world is full of other people’s words, among which he must orient himself and whose speech characteristics he must be able to perceive with a very keen ear” [9] To exemplify, I

mention the protagonists of his novel, *Nice Work*, that is, Vic Wilcox and Robyn Penrose. The first one is representative for the industrial environment exclaiming: “Why can’t you people take things at their face value? ... Highbrows, intellectuals. You’re always trying to find hidden meanings in things” [10]. The other one, the woman, who is a lecturer, responds: “Signs are never innocent. Semiotics teaches us that.” [11] “She holds that character is a bourgeois myth, an illusion created to reinforce the ideology of capitalism. As evidence for this assertion she will point to the fact that the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century coincided with the rise of capitalism; that the triumph of the novel over all other literary genres in the nineteenth century coincided with the triumph of capitalism; and that the modernist and postmodernist deconstruction of the classic novel in the twentieth century has coincided with the terminal crisis of capitalism.” [12] As the writer and literary critic Brian Connery has observed, the readers of David Lodge’s work must be capable of decoding the parody in order to understand the text. With reference to this process of *encoding* and *decoding* there is a major project involved, that is, deconstruction.

Deconstruction is a school of philosophy and literary criticism. It is a theory of reading which aims to undermine the logic of opposition within texts. Deconstruction is a poststructuralist theory based on the writings of Jacques Derrida. It is in the first instance, a philosophical theory directed towards the re-reading of philosophical writings. Its impact on literature is based on the fact that deconstruction sees all writing as a complex historical, cultural process rooted in the relations of texts to each other and in the institutions and conventions of writing. On the other hand, deconstruction is based on the sophistication and intensity of its sense that human knowledge is not controllable. Language operates in subtle and often contradictory ways so that certainty will always elude us. Deconstruction, declines the structuralist assumption that structural principles are essences, that there are universal structural principles of language which exist “before” the incidence of language. All principles of existence, of experience are historically situated and are structured by the interplay of individual experience, institutional force through language, symbols oppositions of the moment. There is *no outside* of the text. Everything that we can know is text, that is, is constructed of signs in relationship. This claim does not mean that there is nothing outside of language; the claim refers to the realm of human knowledge, not to the realm of concrete existence. Deconstruction does not deny the existence of an independent physical world. All texts are constituted by difference from other texts. Any text includes that which it excludes and exists in its differences with other texts. Opposites are already united; they cannot be opposites otherwise; nor can they be a unity. Meaning circulates; it is always meaning by difference, by being other. Truth depends on error; without the concept of error, truth does not exist.

The Algerian-born French philosopher Jacques Derrida has had an enormous impact on intellectual life around the world. He came into prominence in America with his critical approach of deconstruction. His deconstructionist works are related to the more general phenomenon of postmodernism. Postmodernist theories and attitudes come in a variety of forms. In the realm of social and political theory, what unites them is a *challenge to*, and a *rejection of*, both the pragmatic capacity for achieving justice or peace of the modern system of political and economic institutions, as well as the very ways in which we know and act to explain and understand ourselves. When asked what deconstruction is, Jacques Derrida answered: “I often describe deconstruction as something which happens. It’s not purely linguistic, involving text or books. You can deconstruct gestures, choreography. That’s why I enlarged the concept of text.”[13] He generally deconstructs philosophical writing, showing the metaphysical contradictions and the historicity of writing. Literature is open to deconstructive reading; it relies on the multiple meanings of words, on exclusions, on substitutions, on repetition. The more “metaphysical” or universal and “meaningful” a text, the more powerfully it can provoke deconstructive reading. Some attributes of literature in the deconstructive view mention that literature is an institution brought into being by legal, social and political processes. On the other hand, literature speaks the heart of the individual and shows how the individual is made possible only by institution, law, structures and meanings outside

oneself. Literature is also analyzed as both a singular, unrepeatable event and an experience that can be generalized.

The term of deconstruction denotes a particular kind of practice in reading and a method of criticism and mode of critical analytical inquiry. Barbara Johnson clarifies the term: “Deconstruction is not synonymous with “destruction” however. It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word “analysis” itself, which etymologically means “to undo” – a virtual synonym for “to de-construct”. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. A deconstructive reading is a reading which analyses the specificity of a text’s critical difference from itself.” [14]

Deconstruction displays the instability of signification. If one looks up the word *chair* in the dictionary, one will soon find oneself wandering from a “movable four-legged seat” to talk of professorial posts, positions, chairmanship and the like. Jacques Derrida attacked the “logocentrism” which by giving primacy to speech over writing presupposes a fusion between the signifier and the signified. In his studies, he gives primacy to writing, realizing that the meaning is always postponed by the very fact that it will always be read and re-interpreted in the future. This fact separates the *signified* from *signifier* temporally. Deconstruction marginalizes the author or seeks to replace him with the “author-function”, that is, a culturally and historically determined role over which the individual writer has no control. His position as a philosopher is to get rid of “hierarchical” formulations of relationship by firstly reversing them – speech\writing; nature\civilization; good\evil- (changing to opposite) and then getting rid of the reversal. In literature this process of deconstruction enables us to identify when and where a text breaks the framework, thus disintegrating.

As Roland Barthes observed, the work that the writer puts into composing his text is brushed aside as of no importance. Rather it is the text that “works”, and the text is not something that the author creates and hands over to the reader, but that the reader produces in the act of reading – and by writing his own text. Most writers regard the novel as a creation of a particular human being, who has a particular vision of the world, which he tries to communicate to his readers by employing the codes of narrative and language in a particular way and is responsible for the novel’s success or failure. In the opinion of David Lodge, a difficulty related to deconstruction is the idea of the novel as an international act of communication. Until the writer has completed the work, he doesn’t know what is that he is communicating, and perhaps doesn’t know even then. One discovers what it is one has to say in the process of saying it.

## Conclusions

People have always taken an interest in the language they speak, while scientists and researchers focused on the mechanisms of language and thus developed an independent discipline known as linguistics, which is essential for human life. Language represents a fundamental feature of communication and social cohesion. It has several applications in the film industry, information technology, advertising, education, politics, medicine, law and of course writing. Linguistics is focused on solving problems arising from human interaction, collection and analysis of data, being essential for one’s career. In the business climate of today’s society, in the context of globalization, people with knowledge of several languages and with an awareness of the ways languages function and differ socially, enjoy tangible everyday benefits and have more opportunities of succeeding in life.

In conclusion, semantics helps understanding the meanings of words and phrases, enabling people to identify the topic in a sentence. On the other hand, pragmatics studies the use of language in different social contexts, or to put it simply, it is about knowing what to say, how to say it and when to say it. Besides semantics and pragmatics, the paper above refers to semiotics which explores the nature and function of signs and the processes of signification. In linguistics signs are represented by words. They are made up of concepts and sound images called signified and

signifier. Learning a language does not mean memorizing a set of utterances; it is more about understanding some rules and perceiving relations among sentences and phrases. Besides structuralism, deconstruction is another literary trend that examines the language, questioning the conceptual distinctions and the traditional assumptions about certainty and truth. Deconstruction criticized the possibility of creating detached scientific metalanguages and it played a major role in dealing with questions about the nature of language and the production of meaning.

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