

The Opposition of Language and Speech: A Structural and Paradigmatic Analysis

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the structural, semantic, and functional differences between language (langue) and speech (parole) within the framework of modern linguistic approaches. Language is examined as a social memory and a system of signs, while speech is treated as an individual, dynamic realization of this system. The study investigates how basic linguistic units — phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, and structural models — function in the paradigmatic system of language and are realized syntagmatically in speech. The analysis integrates concepts from structural linguistics, functional grammar, and discourse theory, highlighting the contextual operation of language units. This study strengthens theoretical perspectives in linguistics and proposes methodological applications suitable for further research in discourse and communication studies.*

Key words: *language, speech, phoneme, morpheme, lexeme, model, structural linguistics, paradigmatic system, syntagmatic relations, linguistic units, functional approach, discourse, opposition.*

Introduction

The dichotomy of language and speech is a foundational concept in linguistics, first systematized by Ferdinand de Saussure. He conceptualized language as a social, collective system of signs and speech as the individual act of linguistic realization. Language is normative and relatively stable, while speech is dynamic, context-dependent, and individually executed.

This conceptual distinction underpins various branches of linguistics — including structural linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. Structuralism, in particular, treats linguistic units as elements of a paradigmatic system that are syntagmatically realized in speech. This study integrates cognitive perspectives by considering language not only as a social product but also as a tool of thought. The study applies content analysis, structural component identification, and paradigmatic-syntagmatic mapping. Linguistic Units Analyzed:

- **Phoneme:** The smallest sound unit with a distinctive function, e.g., /b/ in “bor” vs. /p/ in “por”.
- **Morpheme:** The smallest meaning-bearing unit, e.g., -di in “bordi” indicating tense.
- **Lexeme:** A naming unit composed of morphemes, e.g., “kitob”, “yozmoq”.
- **Model (Template):** Syntactic structures, e.g., “Noun + Verb” in “O‘quvchi keldi”.

Each unit is analyzed from both paradigmatic (choice-based) and syntagmatic (order-based) perspectives, supported by context-specific discourse examples.

Each structural unit fulfills a specific function in the linguistic system:

- Phonemes form the base of the phonological paradigm; they are abstract but realized as sounds in speech.
- Morphemes represent grammatical and lexical meanings. For instance, “yoz-di” carries the lexical morpheme “yoz” and the grammatical marker “-di”.
- Lexemes serve as the core of semantic structures and participate in synonymic, antonymic, and stylistic paradigms.
- Models guide syntactic structure. “Subject + Predicate” patterns can generate utterances like “O‘quvchi kitob o‘qidi”.

Paradigmatic systems define the selection of units (e.g., “bordi”, “boradi”), whereas syntagmatic relations define their combination and sequence

The study reveals that paradigmatic structures form the abstract core of language, enabling selection among alternatives. For instance, the verb root “bor-” allows various inflections like “bordi”, “boradi”, etc., within a paradigm.

Conversely, syntagmatic relations reflect linear, real-time expression — such as in “kitob o‘qidi”. Altering the sequence (e.g., “o‘qidi kitob”) distorts grammaticality or meaning.

This duality is essential for understanding language processing, grammar generation, and communicative clarity. For example, while “bilimdon” is a lexeme within the lexical paradigm, its meaning is activated only when syntagmatically realized in context: “Bilimdon talaba fan olimpiadasida g‘olib bo‘ldi.”

Literature Review

Linguists H. Ne‘matov and O. Bozorov analyze the relationship between language and speech on a systematic basis. These scholars examine the units of phoneme, morpheme, lexeme, and model through paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. For example, the verb root “bor-” appears in paradigmatic variants such as “bordi,” “boradi,” and “borayotgan,” while their realization in actual speech occurs within syntagmatic structures. Furthermore, linguistic units are analyzed not only as formal elements but also from the perspective of their semantic and communicative functions within context. Ferdinand de Saussure was the first to divide language into two levels: *langue* (the social system of language) and *parole* (individual speech). He interpreted paradigmatic relations as “vertical selection” and syntagmatic relations as “horizontal sequencing.” For instance, in the sentence “O‘quvchi yozdi” (“The student wrote”), the noun “o‘quvchi” may be substituted by “talaba” (student), “ustoz” (teacher), etc., representing paradigmatic variation. These views form the foundation of modern structural and functional linguistics. Saussure’s approach has established the theoretical basis for phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic analysis.

Linguist A. Hamroev explores the phonetic, morphological, and syntactic features of the Uzbek language from both theoretical and practical perspectives. For example, in words like “kitobxona” (library), “yozuvchi” (writer), and “ishxonaga” (to the workplace), the analysis of morphemic structure allows for the identification of lexical and grammatical units. His work explains the mechanisms of structural formation and the rule-based connections among language units. It serves as an essential theoretical foundation for developing a national model of language. Sh. Sharipov provides a consistent explanation of the grammatical functions of morphemes and syntactic units. For instance, he analyzes verb tenses using forms like “keladi” (comes), “kelgan” (came), and “kelmoqda” (is coming), presenting the morphemic composition of each form. He also illustrates structural models of sentence construction through examples such as “Subject + Predicate” and “Noun + Adjective + Verb.” M. Mirzaeva offers clear and accessible explanations of the basic concepts in linguistics — including language units, their hierarchy, functions, and domains of usage. She analyzes the differences among phoneme, morpheme, and lexeme, and discusses how these units integrate within syntactic models through both theoretical discussion and illustrative examples.

Conclusion

The analyses conducted in this study demonstrate that understanding the distinctions between language and speech constitutes one of the fundamental methodological foundations in linguistic research. These two phenomena differ significantly in their nature, function, and mode of expression: language is a social, stable, and collectively shared abstract system, whereas speech is an individual, contextual, practical, and real manifestation of communicative activity. These perspectives are firmly grounded in structural linguistics and serve to identify both the internal and external relations of linguistic units. The primary units of language — phoneme, morpheme, lexeme, and structural model — exist within a paradigmatic system, meaning they are organized through mutual selection (i.e., choice within a set). In speech, however, these units appear in actual syntagmatic sequences, realized linearly in utterances. These two dimensions — paradigm and syntagm — make it possible to analyze the mechanism of how language functions and how its units are used in real communication. The approaches discussed in the article confirm that structural analysis enables a deeper understanding of the inner workings of language, its systematic structure, and its realization in speech. Specifically, the positions of phonemes and morphemes in phonological and morphological paradigms, the semantic network of lexemes, and the syntactic functions of structural models are illustrated through practical examples. This proves that linguistic units are important not only for theoretical exploration but also for practical analysis. Furthermore, the study bridges contemporary methodological approaches in linguistics with traditional linguistic concept.

In summary, this article serves as a practical tool for deepening theoretical understanding, enhancing analytical skills in dealing with structural units, and examining the functional manifestation of language units in actual speech. The approach is also expected to be successfully applicable in further research within discourse analysis, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics.

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