

**THEORETICAL GRAMMAR  
OF ENGLISH /  
COMPARATIVE GRAMMAR  
*2021-22***

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# THEORETICAL GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH ON THE CURRICULUM

- **Status of the discipline:** cycle of professional courses; compulsory course
- **Course volume** - 4 ECTS; 32 hours of class work (lectures – 24; practical classes – 8 (28.10; 4.11; 11.11; 18.11); self-study – 88)
- **Form of final control:** examination (multiple choice test)
- **Course prerequisites:** level of English – C1; Introduction to General Linguistics, Introduction to Germanic Philology; History of the English Language; English Lexicology

# GRADING

- **THEMES 1 AND 2 – 60 points:**
  - continuous assessment – 20 points (attendance – 1 point per lecture *(e.g. 12)*;  
participation – 1 point per appropriate contribution *(e.g. 4)*;
  - 2 progress tests (10 multiple choice questions, 1 point for each question answered correctly) *(e.g. 20)*
  - individual projects (5 points x 2 = 10) + presentation (5 points x 2=10)

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A score lower than 30 points for two themes = no admission to the exam

- **EXAMINATION – 40 points** (20 multiple choice questions, 2 points for each question answered correctly)
- **THE SUM TOTAL** - 100 points
  - 90-100 – “excellent / A”;
  - 70-89 – “good / B-C”,
  - 50-69 – “satisfactory /D ”,
  - 0-49 – “unsatisfactory / F”

## **Theme 1: MORPHOLOGY**

Theme 1.1 – an overview of the grammatical system of the English language and an introduction to the methods of researching grammar phenomena

Themes 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 – parts of speech in the grammatical system of the English language

## **Theme 2: SYNTAX**

Theme 2.1 – an overview of syntax and its units; the phrase

Theme 2.2 – the sentence

Themes 2.3 and 2.4 – structural syntax

Theme 2.5 – semantic syntax

Theme 2.6 – pragmatic syntax

# RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

- Blokh M.Y. A Course in Theoretical English Grammar. M., 1983/ 2000. 383 p.
- Volkova L.M. Theoretical Grammar of English: Modern Approach. K.: Освіта України, 2009. 253 p.
- Иванова И.П., Бурлакова В.В., Почепцов Г.Г. Теоретическая грамматика английского языка. Москва, 1981. 285 с.
- Морозова О.І. Теоретична граматика сучасної англійської мови: матеріали до лекційного курсу та завдання для самостійної роботи. – Харків, 2010. – 60 с.

<http://dSPACE.univer.kharkov.ua/handle/123456789/5872>

# THEME 1

## THEORETICAL GRAMMAR OF ENGLISH AS A SUBFIELD OF LINGUISTICS

1. The content of the term “grammar”
2. Varieties of grammatical description of a language
  - 2.1. Universal vs. particular grammars
  - 2.2. Descriptive vs. prescriptive grammars
  - 2.3. Semantic vs. formalist grammars
  - 2.4. Active vs. passive grammars
  - 2.5. Comparative vs. contrastive grammars

# 1. THE CONTENT OF THE TERM “GRAMMAR”

Gk *grammatikē* - “the art of writing”

ME *gramarye*

- “learning in general, knowledge peculiar to the learned classes”
- “any sort of scholarship, especially occult learning”

In the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, the two meanings of the word *gramarye* (“learning” and “enchantment”) came to be associated with different sound forms – *grammar* and *glamour* – and went their separate ways.

# *grammar*

- **doing grammar** (expressing oneself in conformity with the norms of the language), e.g. *She said his grammar was terrible;*
- **knowing about grammar** (being aware of how it works), e.g. *He knows all grammar rules.*
- **a written account** for grammatical constructions, e.g. *I have at least six different grammars of English on my bookshelf.*



# SOME SCIENCES AND INFORMAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PHENOMENA THEY ARE CONCERNED WITH

<b>Science</b>	<b>Subject Matter</b>
<b>chemistry</b>	how substances combine to form other substances
<b>psychology</b>	how individuals behave
<b>sociology</b>	how people behave in groups
<b>cultural anthropology</b>	how human cultures resemble and differ from each other
<b>linguistics</b>	how language works

***Linguistics*** is the science of language:

it treats language and the ways people use it  
as phenomena to be studied  
(much as a geologist treats the earth).

**Language** - a human system of communication that uses  
conventional signals, such as voice sounds and written symbols.

**Theoretical grammar** is a branch of linguistics aiming to  
explain the grammar system of a language.

*Is there a single grammar for one particular  
language?*

## 2. VARIETIES OF GRAMMATICAL DESCRIPTION OF A LANGUAGE

*One and the same grammar phenomenon can be given various scientific treatments.*

Hence one can speak of different kinds of grammars, the relationship between which is not wholly uncontroversial.

Below we are going to consider distinctions between:

- 2.1. Universal and particular grammars
- 2.2. Descriptive and prescriptive grammars
- 2.3. Formalist and semantic grammars
- 2.4. Active and passive grammars
- 2.5. Comparative and contrastive grammars

## 2.1. Universal vs particular grammars

English	<i>language1</i>	<i>language2</i>
Ukrainian	<i>мова</i>	<i>мовлення</i>
French	<i>langage</i>	<i>langue</i>
Italian	<i>linguaggio</i>	<i>lingua</i>
Spanish	<i>lenguaje</i>	<i>lengua</i>

*language1* – “a unique human ability to communicate with conventional signs” (general)

*language2* “a particular system of signs” (specific)

Thus English allows its speakers to say, of some person, not only that s/he possesses a language (English, Chinese, Malay, Swahili, etc.) but that s/he possesses language.

***Universal / General Linguistics*** is a theoretical study of language. The field of General Linguistics comprises a number of subfields: Universal Grammar, Phonology, Lexicology, Semantics, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Textlinguistics, etc.

Each of these subfields has a counterpart in ***Linguistics of a particular language*** which considers a distinct natural language.

*[Analogy: knowing how cars work in general  
vs servicing one's own car]*

The object matter of ***English Linguistics*** is ***the English language***.

# Subfields of English Linguistics

- Theoretical Grammar
  - Phonology
  - Lexicology
    - Stylistics
    - Semantics
    - Pragmatics
  - Sociolinguistics
  - Psycholinguistics
- Ethnography of speaking
  - Textlinguistics
  - History of English
  - .....
  - .....

## 2.2. Descriptive vs prescriptive grammars

**descriptive** = theoretical, fundamental

**prescriptive** = pedagogical, applied/practical

In sum:

- the term *prescriptive* is used to tell how language should be
- the term *descriptive* tells how language is.

e.g. It's I / me; *advices* (18 mln hits); *I wish she were / was listening*

In an ideal world, descriptive and prescriptive approaches to language would follow this harmonious relationship: linguists would describe the rules of a language, and pedagogues would use those descriptions to make textbooks to teach language learners.

In the real world followers of the two approaches often separate themselves into two hostile camps – “linguistic conservatives” (prescriptivists) and “linguistic liberals” (descriptivists).



There is a place for both description and prescription in studying grammar.

When adults learn a foreign language, they typically want someone to tell them how to speak (= to prescribe a particular set of rules to follow).

But how do teachers know what rules to prescribe? At some point in time, someone had to describe the language and infer those rules.

**Good prescription depends on adequate description.**

## 2.3. Semantic vs formalist grammars

Language can be viewed as a system of linguistic signs. As such, it is considered to be part of **semiotics** – a science concerned with signs.

**Signs** are phenomena that represent other phenomena.

Anything can function as a sign.

e.g. the slant of the trees, a red nose, an old photograph

We also encounter signs that we fail to comprehend:

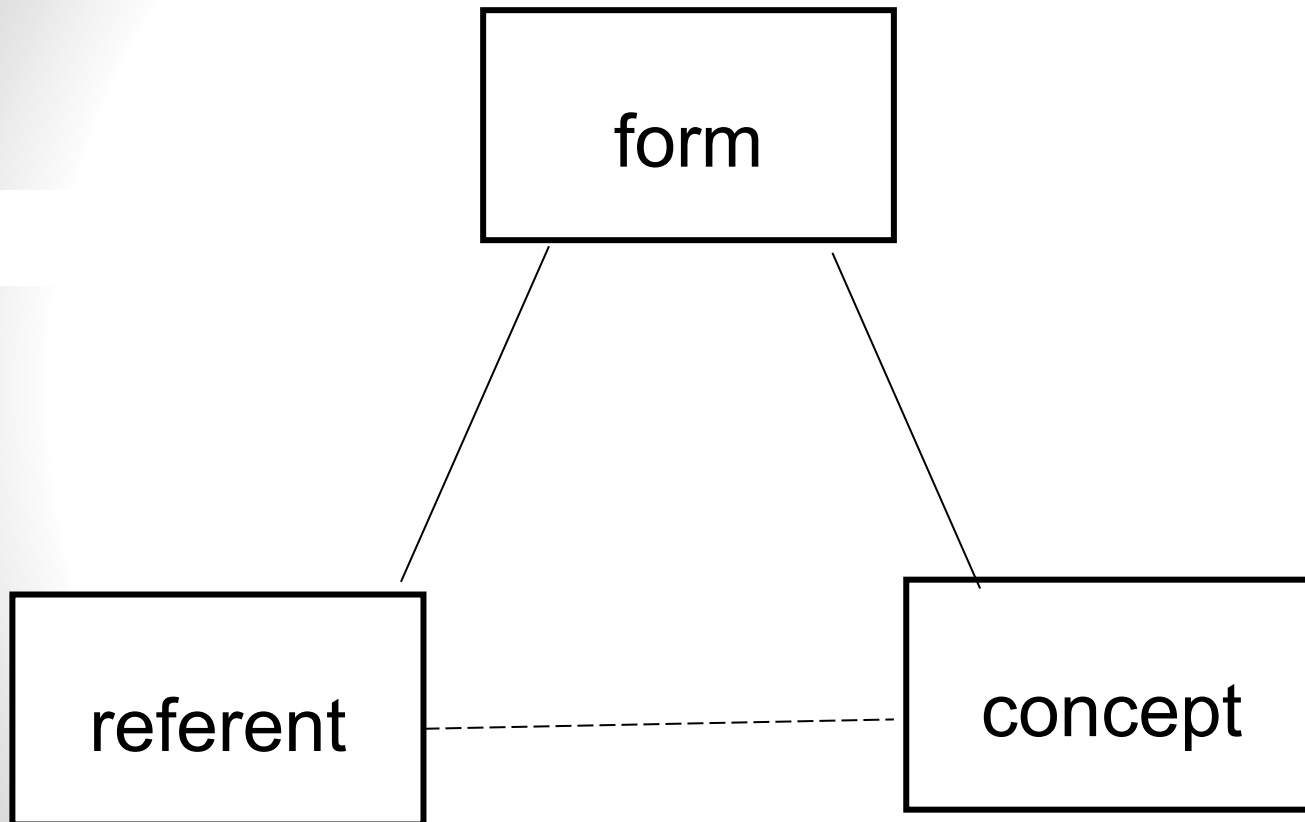
e.g. someone else's strange behaviour / emotional expression;

gestures used in foreign cultures; long and cryptic words.

The **SIGN**, in the broad sense, consists of three interconnected elements:

- (1) the sign in the narrow sense (**the form**), i.e. that which represents something else;
- (2) the object (**the referent**), i.e. that which the sign stands for, that which is represented by it;
- (3) the meaning (**the concept**) the sign allows for.

# LINGUISTIC SIGN

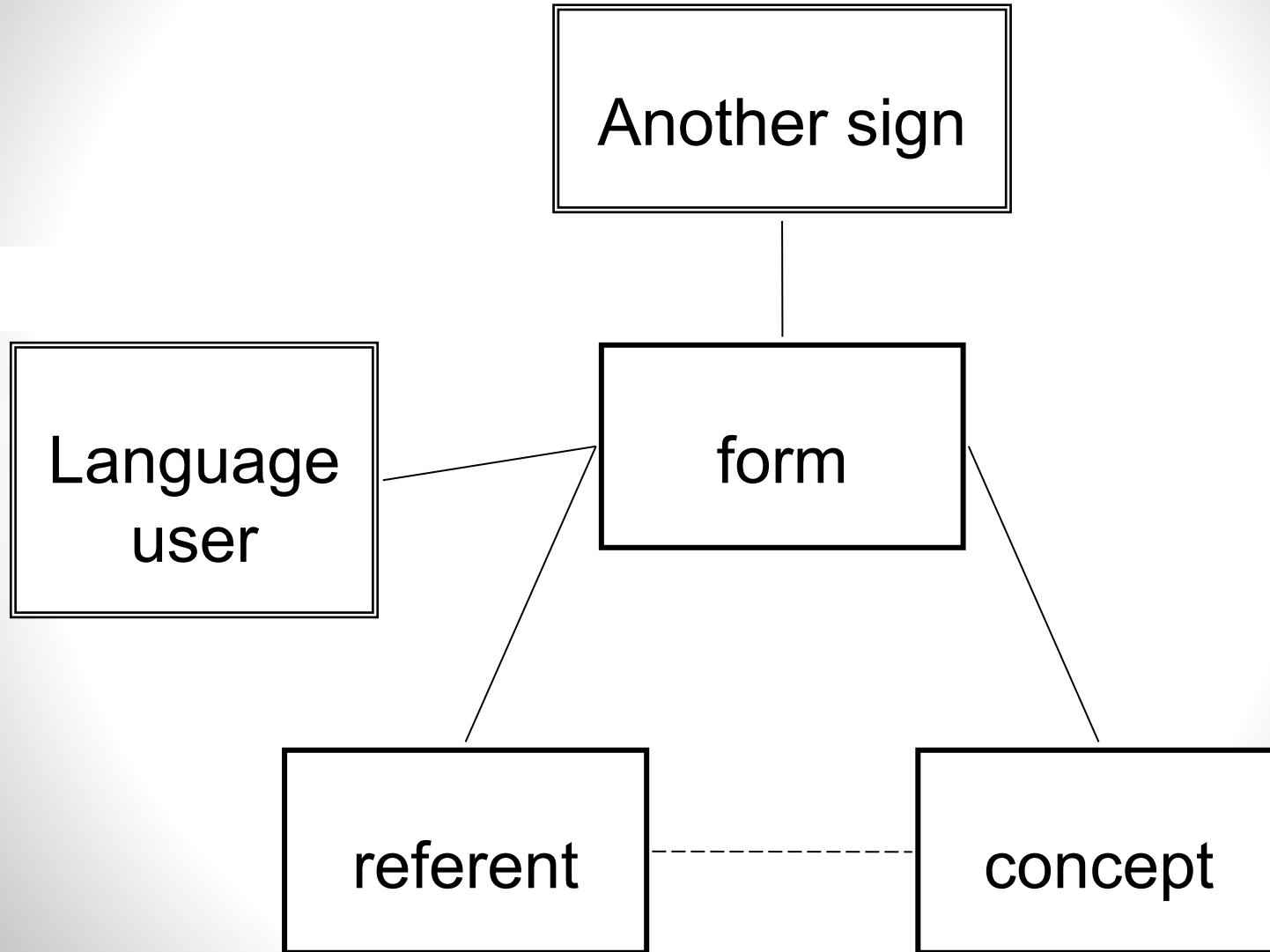


# Connections of the linguistic sign

Any linguistic sign/form can be viewed in its relationship to:

- other linguistic forms
- the concept
- the referent
- the users of the linguistic sign  
(speaker/addressor and hearer/addressee).

# CONNECTIONS OF THE LINGUISTIC SIGN



# Classification of grammars based on the connections of the linguistic sign

**Communicative grammars** study the features of grammatical forms which are conditioned by their usage (“sign – user of the sign”).

**Situational /referential grammars** proceed from the specific features of extralinguistic objects and their relationship (“sign – referent”).

**Semantic/cognitive grammars** focus on the relationship between grammatical and mental categories (“sign – concept”).

**Structural grammars** deal primarily with the structural characteristics of grammatical forms (“sign – another sign”).

- **mentalist grammars:** communicative, referential and semantic/cognitive

VS

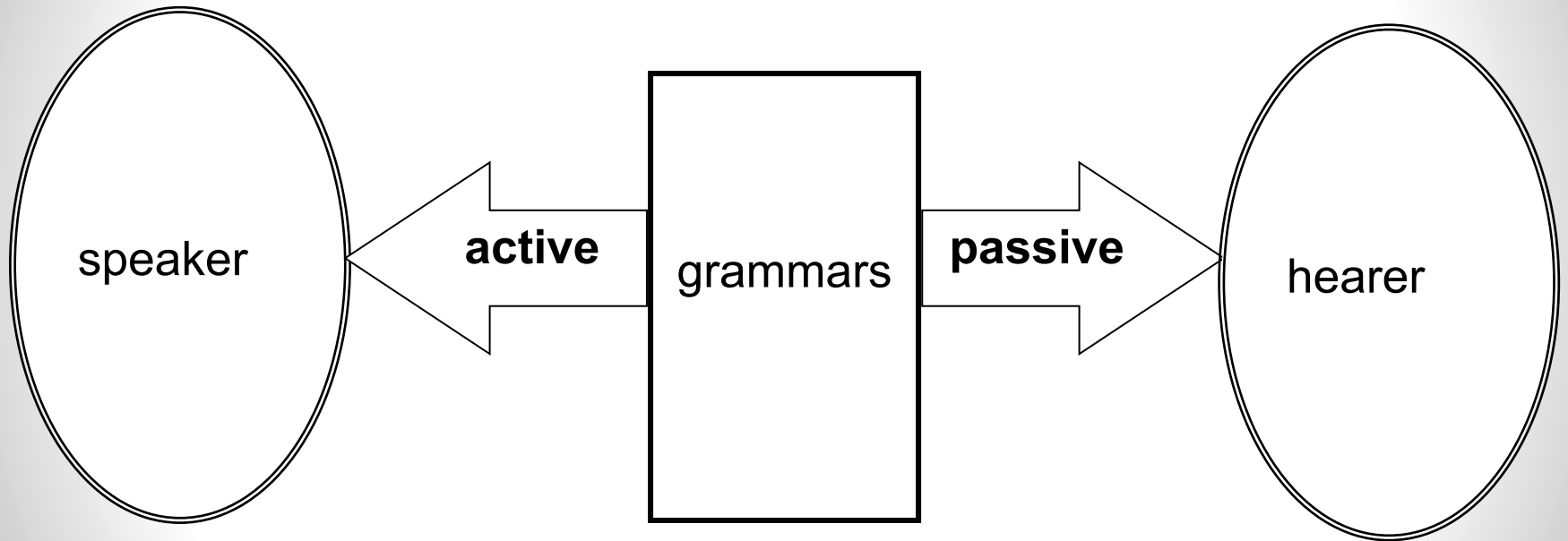
- **structural/formalist grammars**



## 2.4. Active vs passive grammars

- **Passive** grammars are those of decoding, listener-oriented. Their approach is **semasiological** (from form to meaning): e.g. the meanings of the *of*-phrases are those of possession.
- **Active** grammars are those of coding, speaker-oriented. Their approach is **onomasiological** (from meaning to form): e.g. interrogative meanings as rendered in English by interrogative words, inversion, intonation, etc. The onomasiological approach is usually adopted by researchers who consider units of different levels.

# Grammars: oriented at the speaker or the hearer



## 2.5. Comparative vs. contrastive grammars

- **Comparative grammar** is the branch of linguistics primarily concerned with the **comparison** of the grammatical structures of **related languages**. The term "comparative grammar" was commonly used by 19th-century philologists.
- **Contrastive grammar** (зіставна / контрастивна грамати́ка) is the branch of linguistics concerned with the contrast of **a pair of languages** with a view of identifying their **differences** (allomorphic, divergent features) and **similarities** (isomorphic, common features).
- □ sometimes called **differential** grammar

# Different languages

are not different designations of things, they are different views (impressions, understandings) of things (W. von Humboldt)

English	Ukrainian
spyhole	вічко (рос. дверной глазок)
brown bread	чорний хліб
egg-plant	баклажан

Contrastive study of languages is a study into different world pictures, unique linguistic cultures, ethnic specificity of environment perception.

# **Applied aspects of contrastive grammar of English and Ukrainian:**

- to provide the ground for translation theory and practice
- to avoid unnecessary interference of English and Ukrainian in the practice of teaching English to Ukrainians

In a way of conclusion:

## *Why does grammar matter?*

Grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language.

Grammar is important because it is **the language that makes it possible for us to talk about language.** And *knowing about* grammar offers a window into the human mind and into our amazingly complex mental capacity.

## TEST 0

5 minutes

*This test consists of 5 numbered items. Each of them contains a question and four variants of answers to it, or a beginning of a statement and four ways of completing it, or a term and four definitions. Only one choice is correct. On your answer sheet, find the number of the question and circle the letter that stands for the answer you have chosen. Criteria: -1 point: "excellent", -2 points: "good", -3 points: "satisfactory". Start with writing your name and your group number.*

1. The English equivalent for the French word *langage* is:

- a. a language
- b. some language
- c. language
- d. languages

2. The statement *Lexicology is one of the core linguistic disciplines* is:

- a. true
- b. false
- c. *a* or *b* depending on the context
- d. not mentioned in the lecture

3. \_\_\_\_\_ grammars study the way people express themselves in their everyday life.

- a. universal
- b. particular
- c. descriptive
- d. prescriptive

4. Grammars which focus on the relation of a language sign to other signs are called:

- a. psychological
- b. cognitive
- c. structural
- d. referential

5. Onomasiological approach \_\_\_\_\_

- a. considers linguistic signs in the direction “from meaning to form”
- b. considers linguistic signs in the direction “from form to meaning”
- c. is adopted by researchers who deal with linguistic units of different levels
- d. a+c