

Definition of Grammar from different perspectives:

- Grammar is the set of rules that describe how words and groups of words can be arranged to form sentences in a particular language (Cowan,2009, p.3). The term grammar is derived from Greek word ' **grammatike**' meant the art of writing, a part of philosophy or a way of purifying language. It has been defined variously by different scholars but crux of them is ' the study of language descriptively, prescriptively and communicatively in a pedagogic manner'.

Some perspectives on defining or conceptualizing grammar

- **Traditional perspectives**, i.e. grammar as a set of normative or prescriptive rules established in order to preserve the purity and standard of language.
- Structural/ descriptive perspectives**, i.e. grammar is a device by which words are combined into larger units of discourse or it is the study of organization of words into various combinations often representing many layers of structures such as phrase, sentences and utterances.
- **Generative perspectives**, i.e. grammar is the model of native speakers' competence which contains a finite set of rules that generate infinite number of all grammatical sentences in that language.
- Pedagogical perspectives**, i.e. grammar is a book specially designed for language teaching and learning consisting both descriptive and prescriptive rules.
- **Communicative perspectives**, i.e. grammar as the communicative end in mind or a way language manipulates and combines words so as to express certain kinds of meaning in context with various functions.

Hewings and Hewings (2005, p.4) conclude:-

Grammar is a really complicated area. It refers to:

- a. The way in which words are organized in a language in order to make correct sentences.
- b. A book in which those organizing principles are laid out and the study of a rules of a language.
- c. A particular theory of language description.
- d. Communication in context of use.

Conceptualizing grammar: Diachronic and Synchronic interpretations

Grammar can be interpreted in terms of historical and descriptive perspectives which are commonly known as : diachronic and synchronic interpretations respectively. These are two main temporal dimensions of linguistic investigation introduced by Ferdinand De Saussure (Crystal, 2003. p. 135)

- In diachronic study, grammars or languages are studied from the point of their historical development . For example- the changes which have taken place between Old and Modern English in terms of phonological, grammatical and semantics level throughout the time. Diachronic interpretation is also known as historical linguistics or comparative philology.

-Diachrony is the study of language throughout the time. It talks about the grammatical changes through the time.

-Diachronic grammar will study relations that bind together the successive terms not perceived by the collective mind but substituted for each other without forming a system.

- In synchronic grammar or linguistics, languages are studied at theoretical point in time. It means, one describes a 'state' of a language, disregarding whatever changes might be taking place. For example- one can carry out a synchronic description of the language of Chaucer or of the 16th century or modern day English. **Varshney (2003.p. 26)** states that synchrony is the study of language in a given time. It studies a language at one period in time or in a point of time.

- **Saussure** (1938, as cited in Varshney) says : Synchronic grammar will be concerned with the logical and psychological relations that bind together co-existing terms and form a system in the collective mind of speakers.

- Synchronic grammar deals with system and diachronic with units.

- **Saussure** says that synchronic study is more important because when we study the facts of language in their succession, we become more concerned to the particular changes.