



Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics
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MAK Halliday and His Work

Welcome to class, today we will talk about MAK Halliday and his work. Though he is not included among the scholars of sociolinguistics, he did work on the aspect of language in society. So conventionally, he is regarded as a generalist and attributed for developing a new linguistic model called Systemic Functional Grammar. In 'Systemic Functions of Language' (SFL), his entire thrust was on establishing the fact his language is all about meaning making.

So, he looked at language in a sociocultural context and how meaning is made out of it. And my, you know, attempt to include him in this discussion is to underline the fact that even if he is considered as a generalist (this is how he called himself) and you know not as a core sociolinguist, his contribution in understanding language from a social perspective cannot be ruled out.

Because after all, if you are talking about meaning-making, we are talking about language in society, language in context we are talking about use of language, language use and that's the reason why I have included MAK Halliday in our discussion.

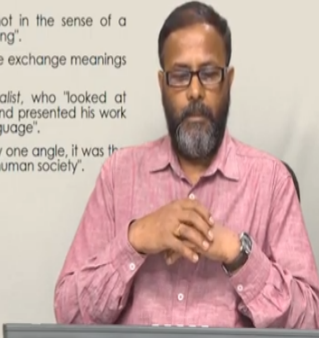
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M. A. K. Halliday

Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday
13 April 1925 – 15 April 2018

- He developed the internationally influential Systemic Functional Linguistics [SFL] model.
- Halliday described language as a semiotic, "not in the sense of a system of signs, but a systemic resource for meaning".
- He defined linguistics as the study of "how people exchange meanings by languaging".
- Halliday always described himself as a generalist, who "looked at language from every possible vantage point", and presented his work as "wander[ing] the highways and byways of language".
- But he said that "to the extent that I favoured any one angle, it was the social: language as the creature and creator of human society".



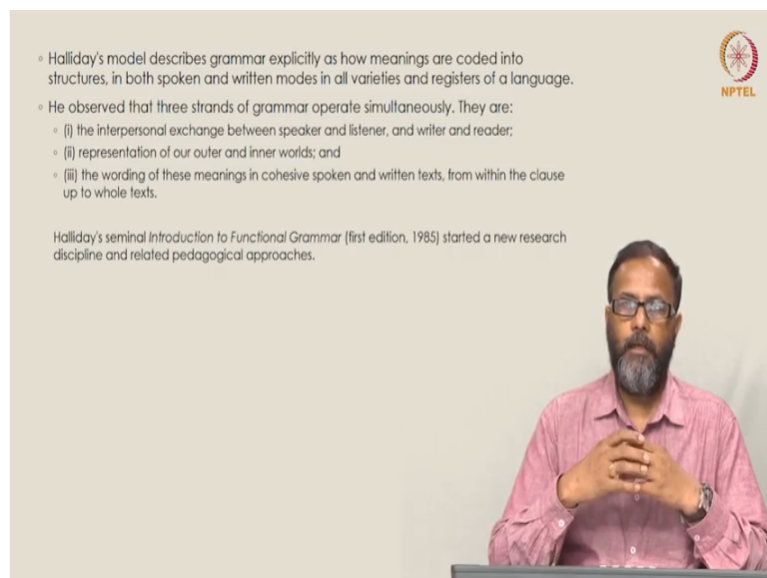
And towards the end of the discussion, we will be able to understand the reason behind including MAK Halliday in this list of all other scholars in sociolinguistics. He was a British scholar and linguist, MAK Halliday. His full name is Michael Alexander Kirkwood

Halliday—popularly known as MAK Halliday. He was born on thirteenth April, 1925 and died on fifteenth April, 2018.

He developed the Internationally influential Systemic Functional Linguistics that is called the SFL model. Halliday described language as semiotic, but not in the sense of a system of signs, but as a systematic resource for meaning. He defined linguistics as the study of “how people exchange meanings by ‘linguaging’”.

Halliday always described himself as a generalist who looked at language from every possible vantage point, and presented his work as “wandering the highways and byways of language”. But he said that “to the extent that I favour any one angle, it was the social language as a creature and creator of human society”. And perhaps this is the one test point why I wanted to include MAK Halliday in this list.

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◦ Halliday's model describes grammar explicitly as how meanings are coded into structures, in both spoken and written modes in all varieties and registers of a language.

◦ He observed that three strands of grammar operate simultaneously. They are:

- (i) the interpersonal exchange between speaker and listener, and writer and reader;
- (ii) representation of our outer and inner worlds; and
- (iii) the wording of these meanings in cohesive spoken and written texts, from within the clause up to whole texts.

Halliday's seminal *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (first edition, 1985) started a new research discipline and related pedagogical approaches.

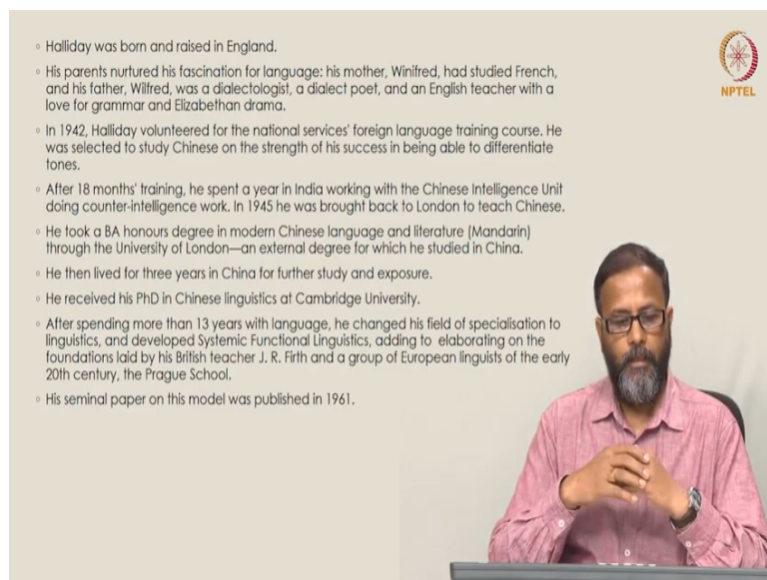
NPTEL

Halliday’s model describes grammar explicitly as how meanings are coded into structures, in both spoken and written modes, in all varieties and registers of a language. So, meaning is encoded in the structure, this is what he believed and he believes that the three strands of grammar operate simultaneously. And what are these three strands? Number one, the interpersonal exchange between speaker and listener, writer and reader. Number 2, representation of our outer and inner worlds; and number 3; the wording of these meanings in cohesive spoken and written texts, from within the clause up to the whole text. So he locates, he situates the meaning in the structure—meaning is embedded in the structure, so form and

function both are embedded in each other. And perhaps you can recall the broader argument of Dell Hymes's communicative competence, which comes close to this.

So, they are not so different, and both stand in opposition to the Chomskyan idea of computational aspect and abstract structure of language in human mind, and perhaps this is the reason why I want to put him in this list of discussions of scholars who gave directions to sociolinguistics. Halliday's seminal introduction to functional grammar started a new research in the discipline and related pedagogical approaches.

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- Halliday was born and raised in England.
- His parents nurtured his fascination for language: his mother, Winifred, had studied French, and his father, Wilfred, was a dialectologist, a dialect poet, and an English teacher with a love for grammar and Elizabethan drama.
- In 1942, Halliday volunteered for the national services' foreign language training course. He was selected to study Chinese on the strength of his success in being able to differentiate tones.
- After 18 months' training, he spent a year in India working with the Chinese Intelligence Unit doing counter-intelligence work. In 1945 he was brought back to London to teach Chinese.
- He took a BA honours degree in modern Chinese language and literature (Mandarin) through the University of London—an external degree for which he studied in China.
- He then lived for three years in China for further study and exposure.
- He received his PhD in Chinese linguistics at Cambridge University.
- After spending more than 13 years with language, he changed his field of specialisation to linguistics, and developed Systemic Functional Linguistics, adding to elaborating on the foundations laid by his British teacher J. R. Firth and a group of European linguists of the early 20th century, the Prague School.
- His seminal paper on this model was published in 1961.

About his journey now. He was born and raised in England. His parents nurtured his fascination for language because his father himself was a dialectologist, a dialect poet and had deep interest in Elizabethan drama: he was himself an English teacher. His mother had studied French apart from her mother tongue English. So, he got this, he inherited a deep interest and a profound love for language from his parents.

In 1942, Halliday volunteered for a national service foreign language training course and he was selected to study Chinese on the strength of his success in being able to differentiate tones. After 18 months of training, he spent a year in India working with the Chinese Intelligence Unit during counter-intelligence work and in 1945 he was brought back to London to teach Chinese.


He took a BA Honours degree in modern Chinese language and literature that is what we call Mandarin, through the University of London's programme which was an external degree program that required students to study at the location. So, he studied in China and got a

degree from the University of London. He then lived for three years in China for further study and exposure and he worked with many Chinese scholars. He received his PhD degree in Chinese Linguistics at Cambridge University.

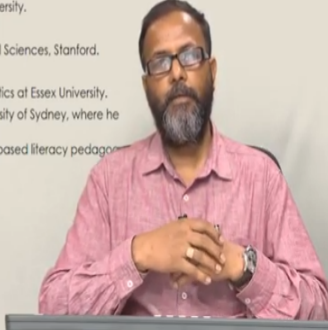
And after spending more than 13 years with language, he changed his field to a specialisation in linguistics, and developed Systemic Functional Linguistics that we talked about, SFL; adding to and elaborating on the foundations laid by his British teacher J.R Firth and a group of European linguists of the early twentieth century, who belonged to the Prague School.

So, they all had a deep impact on his understanding of language and his handling of language development of SFL and you know switching from Chinese studies to core linguistics as a specialisation. His seminal paper in this SFL model was published first in 1961 and he kept on developing the model.

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- Halliday's first academic position was as assistant lecturer in Chinese, at Cambridge University, from 1954 to 1958.
- In 1958 he moved to Edinburgh, where he was lecturer in general linguistics until 1960, and reader from 1960 to 1963.
- From 1963 to 1965 he was the director of the Communication Research Centre at University College, London.
- During 1964, he was also Linguistic Society of America Professor, at Indiana University.
- From 1965 to 1971 he was professor of linguistics at UCL.
- In 1972-73 he was a fellow at the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences, Stanford.
- In 1973-74 professor of linguistics at the University of Illinois.
- In 1974 he briefly moved back to Britain to be professor of language and linguistics at Essex University.
- In 1976 he moved to Australia as foundation professor of linguistics at the University of Sydney, where he remained until he retired in 1987.
- While at the University of Sydney Halliday founded the Sydney School, a genre-based literacy pedagogy in 1979 at the Working Conference on Language in Education.




Halliday's first academic position was as an Assistant Lecturer in Chinese at Cambridge University from 1954 to 1958. In 1958, he moved to Edinburgh, where he was Lecturer in General Linguistics until 1960, and Reader from 1960 to 1963. From 1963 to 1965 he was the director of the Communication Research Centre at the University College, London. During 1964, he was also the Linguistic Society of America Professor, at Indiana University. From 1965 to 1971, he was Professor of Linguistics at University of California.

In 1972-73, he was a fellow at the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences, Stanford. In 1973 and 74 he became Professor of Linguistics at University of Illinois, Urbana.


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In 1976, he moved to Australia as Foundation Professor of Linguistics at the University of Sydney where he remained until he retired in 1987, and while he was at University of Sydney, he founded Sydney School—a genre-based literacy pedagogy in 1979 at the Working Conference on Language in Education.

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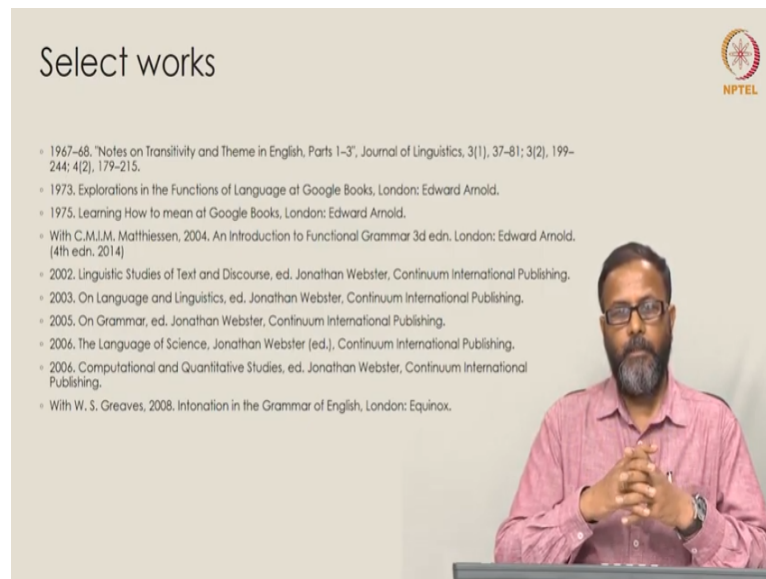
- Halliday worked in multiple areas of linguistics, both theoretical and applied, and was especially concerned with applying the understanding of the basic principles of language to the theory and practices of education.
- In 1987 he was awarded the status of Emeritus Professor of the University of Sydney and Macquarie University, Sydney.
- He has honorary doctorates from:
 - University of Birmingham (1987),
 - York University (1988),
 - the University of Athens (1995),
 - Macquarie University (1996),
 - Lingnan University (1999) and
 - Beijing Normal University(2011).



You know, moving on from his biographical note to the meaningful work, inspiring work he has produced; he worked in multiple areas of linguistics, both theoretical and applied, and was especially concerned with applying the understanding of basic principles of language to the theory and practice of education. In 1987, he was awarded the status of Emeritus Professor of University of Sydney and Macquarie University, Sydney.

He has honorary doctorates, he was bestowed upon honorary doctorates by various universities. To name a few: University of Birmingham 1987, York University 1988, The University of Athens 1995, Macquarie University 1996, Lingnan University 1999, and Beijing Normal University 2011. And all these honorary doctorates bestowed upon him are the testimony of his immense contribution to the field of linguistics and understanding language as a meaning-making enterprise.

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Select works

- 1967-68. 'Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Parts 1-3', *Journal of Linguistics*, 3(1), 37-81; 3(2), 199-244; 4(2), 179-215.
- 1973. *Explorations in the Functions of Language* at Google Books, London: Edward Arnold.
- 1975. *Learning How to mean* at Google Books, London: Edward Arnold.
- With C.M.J.M. Matthiessen, 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* 3d edn. London: Edward Arnold. (4th edn. 2014)
- 2002. *Linguistic Studies of Text and Discourse*, ed. Jonathan Webster, Continuum International Publishing.
- 2003. *On Language and Linguistics*, ed. Jonathan Webster, Continuum International Publishing.
- 2005. *On Grammar*, ed. Jonathan Webster, Continuum International Publishing.
- 2006. *The Language of Science*, Jonathan Webster (ed.), Continuum International Publishing.
- 2006. *Computational and Quantitative Studies*, ed. Jonathan Webster, Continuum International Publishing.
- With W. S. Greaves, 2008. *Intonation in the Grammar of English*, London: Equinox.


Going through a few selected works, I will mention his systemic functions of language later on in the lecture, but let us first survey some important works he produced and they have been published, printed and reprinted in multiple editions. You know, they are available in Google Books. So, these later years correspond to their later editions. 1967-68, he published 'Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Part 1-3', in *Journal of Linguistics*. In 1973, he published 'Explorations in the Functions of Language'. In 1975, 'Learning How to Mean'. In 2004, 'An Introduction to Functional Grammar ,Third Edition. In 2002, 'Linguistic Studies of Text and Discourse'. In 2003, 'On Language and Linguistics'. In 2005, 'On Grammar'. In 2006, 'The Language of Science'. In 2006 again, 'Computational and Quantitative Studies' and in 2008, 'Intonation in the Grammar of English'.

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o "... if we say that linguistic structure "reflects" social structure, we are really assigning to language a role that is too passive ... Rather we should say that linguistic structure is the realization of social structure, actively symbolizing it in a process of mutual creativity. Because it stands as a metaphor for society, language has the property of not only transmitting the social order but also maintaining and potentially modifying it. (This is undoubtedly the explanation of the violent attitudes that under certain social conditions come to be held by one group towards the speech of others.)"

Holliday, M.A.K. 1978. "An Interpretation of the functional relationship between language and social structure", 3-42, Vol. 10 of the Collected Works, 2007.



Why I have included MAK Halliday in the list becomes very clear and evident if you go by the quotation by Halliday himself, what he says in his own words, he says, "if you say that linguistic structure 'reflects' social structure, we are really assigning to the language a role that is too passive...Rather we should say that linguistic structure is the realisation of social structure, actively symbolising it in a process of mutual creativity". And that is a little departure from the rest of the sociolinguists who, like William Labov himself, correlated linguistic structures with social structures.

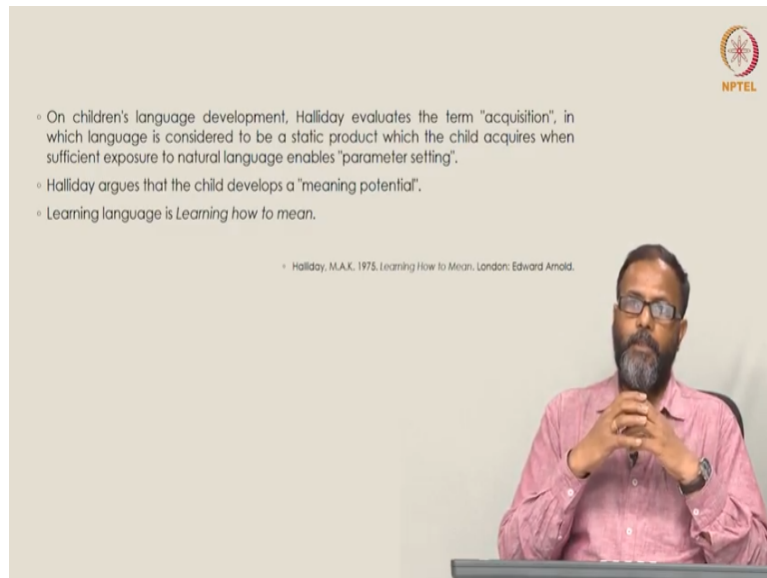
But he is saying that linguistics has a dynamic role in this relationship and that is what he means by saying that we are really assigning to language a role that is too passive when we only correlate the structures. Rather, we should say that linguistic structure is the realisation of social structure, actively symbolising it in a process of mutual creativity. A little departure from the widely-held belief in sociolinguistics about language and social structure.

Because it stands as a metaphor for society, language has the property of not only transmitting the social order but also maintaining and potentially modifying it. This is undoubtedly the explanation of the violent attitudes that under certain social conditions come to be held by one group towards the speech of others.

So, he looks at language from a dynamic perspective and he looks at language as a dynamic social entity which is not passively correlating with the social structures but actively demonstrating dominance and mutual creativity. So, language is not at the receiving end but it

has a very significant dynamic role in society. And language is all about meaning making, the sense that defines our understanding and that, you know, outlines the social structure.

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One of the important influential works that made a huge change in the way we looked at language acquisition, and which also, combined with Dell Hymes's Communicative Competence, advocated for new methods of language teaching that we call Communicative Language Teaching, was Halliday's idea of Functions of Language. Here two elements were very instrumental, one the idea of Communicative Competence by Dell Hymes and the other, MAK Halliday's Functions of Language. That gives foundation to the emergence of this new teaching method called Communicative Language Teaching. And I am referring to the functions of language as put forward by MAK Halliday.

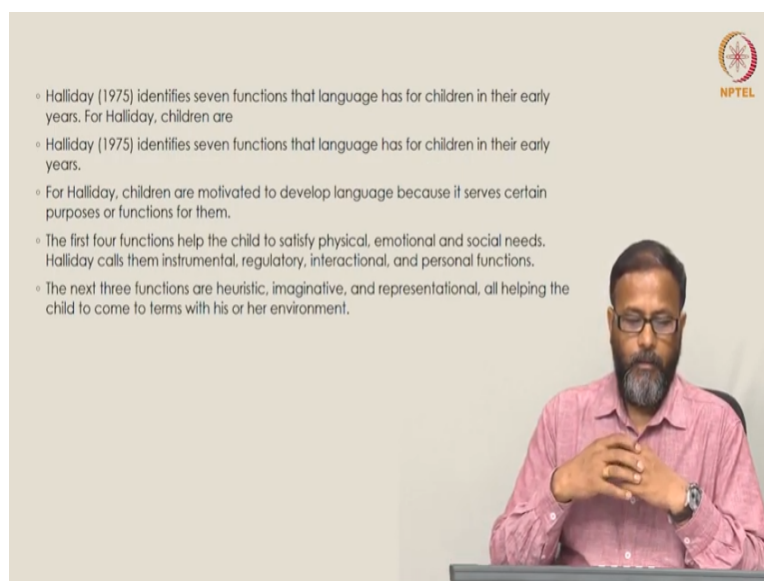
So, on children's language development, Halliday evaluates the term 'acquisition' in which language is considered to be a static product which the child acquires when sufficient exposure to natural language enables "parameter setting". Remember and recall this word "parameter". It comes from a Chomskyan tradition, so the whole idea of language acquisition process, and principles and parameters. He looked at the same phenomena from a different perspective.

The Chomskyan phenomena is structure centric, but the MAK Halliday phenomena is all about meaning making. So, meaning becomes primary, and as encoded in the structure. And this is somewhere closer to Dell Hymes's idea of communicative competence, where he talked about pragmatic competence and grammatical competence as intertwined.

And the Chomskyan idea of I-language and E-language at two separate levels were also seen as not tenable. These are also codes in this idea that Halliday puts forward. So, he examines the concept of language acquisition and examines the idea of principles and parameter setting. So, Halliday argues that children develop a meaning potential.

So, it is not structure alone because the structure without meaning is nothing. The child does not only acquire a structure but the child acquires the capability of meaning-making, meaning which is embedded in the structure. So, learning language is learning how to “mean right”. The name of MAK Halliday’s 1975 publication is ‘Learning How to Mean’.

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The slide contains a list of five bullet points on the left and a video frame on the right showing a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a pink shirt, speaking. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner of the slide.

- Halliday (1975) identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years. For Halliday, children are
- Halliday (1975) identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years.
- For Halliday, children are motivated to develop language because it serves certain purposes or functions for them.
- The first four functions help the child to satisfy physical, emotional and social needs. Halliday calls them instrumental, regulatory, interactional, and personal functions.
- The next three functions are heuristic, imaginative, and representational, all helping the child to come to terms with his or her environment.

In ‘75, he identified 7 functions that language has for children in their early years. Halliday identifies 7 functions and he says that children are motivated to develop language because it serves certain purposes or functions for them. The first four functions he identifies help the child to satisfy physical, emotional and social needs. Halliday calls them instrumental, regulatory, interactional, and personal functions.

So, out of seven, the first four are there to meet the emotional and social needs of the child. And that is why they work as a motivational factor for the child to learn a language. And what are these functions, number 1: instrumental, number 2: regulatory, number 3: interactional, and number 4: personal functions.

And the last three, you know, functions that he identifies are superior. These are the primitive and the fundamental functions. Then the next three functions are heuristic, imaginative and representational—all helping the child to come to terms with his or her environment. If you

want to know more about these functions of language you can watch the video on systemic functions of language by MAK Halliday that we did earlier. You can watch it again and you can know more about the functions of language in terms of Halliday's framework.

So this is it for now and we will continue a total assessment of all these people's work and its impact on the overall discipline of sociolinguistics. We will evaluate the contributions of all these galaxies of scholars who inspired the discipline, their contributions, how their contributions gave a definite shape to the discipline and helped it emerge as an independent discipline in linguistics. With these, stay tuned in. See you in the next class, thank you.