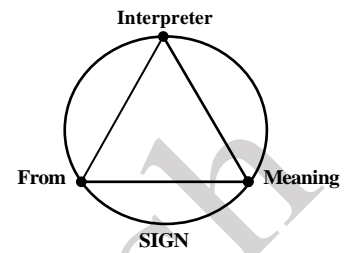# Chapter One: Preliminaries of Linguistics

1. SIGN

Sign → an intersection or relationship of form and meaning

Saussure offered a dyadic or two-part model:

- 'signifier' (signifiant)
- 'signified' (signifié)

2. THREE TYPES OF SIGNS

Icon → form has actual characteristics of its meanings

Index → form has characteristics which are only associated in nature with its meaning

Symbol → form is arbitrarily or conventionally associated with its meaning

3. LINGUISTIC SIGNS

3.1. Evidence for the Symbolic Nature of Linguistic Signs

- Translation equivalents
- Synonyms
- Iconically expressible meanings

3.2. An Exception to the Symbolic Nature of Linguistic Signs

- Sound symbolism → words whose pronunciation suggests the meaning
  - *Mimetic = Onomatopoeic words* sound like what they mean
  - To draw out the pronunciation of words

4. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE vs. LINGUISTIC PERFORMANCE

Linguistic competence → unconscious knowledge about sounds, meanings, and syntax possessed by speakers

Linguistic performance → actual use of linguistic competence in the production and comprehension of language

5. THREE SUBSTRUCTURES OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

5.1. Knowledge of Sound System

Knowing what sounds are in a language and what sounds are not → **Phonetics**

Knowing the way speech sounds form patterns → **Phonology**

5.2. Knowledge of Words

Knowing certain strings of sounds stand for certain meanings → **Semantics**

Knowing the smallest meaningful units of language, the internal structure of words, and the rules by which words are formed → **Morphology**

5.3. Knowledge of Sentences and Non-Sentences
Concerns the combinations of words as phrases and of phrases as sentence → **Syntax**

6. DESCRIPTIVE vs. PRESCRIPTIVE APPROACH

Descriptive → a description of the underlying, mental linguistic competence of its speakers
Prescriptive → contain rules of what the language should be. These grammars attempt to change actual language use by prohibiting certain forms