NAVIGATING LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES: THE INTERPLAY OF TRADITIONAL, HISTORICAL, STRUCTURAL, GENERATIVE, AND FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the foundational principles and contributions of five major schools of linguistics: Traditional Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Structural Linguistics, Generative Linguistics, and Functional Linguistics. Traditional Linguistics emphasizes the prescriptive and normative analysis of language, often grounded in classical grammar. Historical Linguistics investigates the diachronic development of languages, providing insights into language change and evolution. Structural Linguistics, pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure, prioritizes the synchronic study of language structures, introducing the concepts of signifier and signified. Generative Linguistics, initiated by Noam Chomsky, focuses on the innate mechanisms of language acquisition and the formal systems underlying linguistic competence. Finally, Functional Linguistics examines the role of context and pragmatics in shaping linguistic forms and functions. The paper highlights the interconnectivity and distinctions among these paradigms, emphasizing their enduring relevance in linguistic theory and application. Curriculum designer and policymakers might benefit from a multifaceted understanding of linguistics that combines insights from various schools to create more effective language education programs and promote language preservation efforts.

Keywords: Generative Linguistics, Functional Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Structural Linguistics, Traditional Linguistics 2.

1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistics, as the scientific study of language, has developed through various schools of thought, each contributing distinct perspectives and methodologies to understanding language structure, history, and use [1]. Linguistics, as the scientific study of language, encompasses a wide array of disciplines aimed at understanding the nature, structure, and use of language. It involves the analysis of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, offering insights into how humans produce, comprehend, and communicate through language. Modern linguistics also explores the social, cognitive, and historical aspects of language, bridging fields like sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and historical linguistics [1]. By investigating universal patterns and unique linguistic features, it contributes to broader discussions on human cognition and culture [2].The following overview introduces five key schools in linguistics: Traditional Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Structural Linguistics, Generative Linguistics, and Functional Linguistics.

1.1. Traditional Linguistics

Traditional linguistics focuses on prescriptive grammar, emphasizing the proper use of language based on established norms and rules. Originating from classical studies of Latin and

Greek, it aims to define standards of correctness and refine linguistic style. This approach often involves the analysis of literary texts to establish grammatical rules. In this realm we can refer to Dionysius Thrax, Panini [3].

1.2. Historical Linguistics
Historical linguistics, or diachronic linguistics, studies the evolution and history of languages over time. It explores how languages change in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, as well as their relationships through language families and reconstructions of proto-languages. A major breakthrough in this field was the comparative method, which revealed connections among Indo-European languages. William Jones, Franz Bopp, Jacob Grimm are dominant characters in this school [4]

1.3. Structural Linguistics
Structural linguistics, rooted in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, focuses on the systematic study of language as a structured system of signs. This school emphasizes the relationships between linguistic elements rather than their historical development, distinguishing between langue (system) and parole (use). Structuralism laid the foundation for modern linguistic theory. Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson are dominant characters in this school [5].

1.4. Generative Linguistics
1.Generative linguistics, pioneered by Noam Chomsky, seeks to uncover the innate structures of the human mind that govern language use. This school introduced concepts like transformational grammar and universal grammar, proposing that humans have a biologically determined capacity for language acquisition. It marked a shift towards understanding the cognitive aspects of language. Noam Chomsky is dominant character in this perspective [6].

1.5. Functional Linguistics
Functional linguistics studies language concerning its social and communicative functions. This school posits that language structure is shaped by its use in real-world contexts, emphasizing 3

meaning and pragmatic aspects. It contrasts with formal approaches by prioritizing the purposes language serves in communication. In this realm, Michael Halliday, Simon Dik are significant characters [7].

Each linguistic school offers unique insights into understanding language. Traditional linguistics laid the groundwork for grammatical analysis [8]. Historical linguistics traced language evolution, identifying systematic sound changes and reconstructing proto-languages [1]. Structural linguistics introduced systemic study, analyzing language as a structured system of interrelated signs [9]. Generative linguistics revolutionized cognitive perspectives by proposing the concept of Universal Grammar and exploring innate linguistic capacities [10]. Functional linguistics highlighted the role of language in communication and its interaction with social and cultural contexts [11]. Together, these frameworks enrich the multidimensional field of linguistics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
The study of language has been shaped by several influential schools of thought, each contributing a unique lens to linguistic analysis. This literature review explores the foundational ideas, methodologies, and contributions of Traditional Linguistics, Historical

Linguistics, Structural Linguistics, Generative Linguistics, and Functional Linguistics. Traditional linguistics, also known as prescriptive linguistics, focuses on the codification of grammatical rules based on classical languages such as Latin and Greek. This approach primarily deals with linguistic correctness, literary style, and normative grammar. It formed the basis for early linguistic study, emphasizing the establishment of proper usage over linguistic diversity. The Greek grammarian Dionysius Thrax's "The Art of Grammar" was one of the earliest attempts to formalize grammatical rules [12, 13]. It is worth noting that traditional linguistics often disregards the dynamic and evolving nature of language.

Historical linguistics emerged as a systematic study of language change over time. It introduced the comparative method, enabling linguists to identify relationships among languages and reconstruct proto-languages such as Proto-Indo-European. This school has significantly contributed to understanding of phonological, morphological, and syntactic evolution. Historical linguistics provided insights into how social, cultural, and environmental factors influence language change. [14].

Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916) introduced a paradigm shift by focusing on language as a structured system of signs. Structural linguistics emphasizes the interrelation of linguistic elements (langue) rather than their historical or individual usage (parole). This approach influenced many other disciplines, including anthropology and literary theory. Structuralism, as developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, emphasizes analyzing language as a structured system of interdependent elements, focusing on the relationships between linguistic signs rather than their individual meaning in isolation. It introduced the distinction between *langue* (the abstract system of language) and *parole* (individual speech acts), highlighting how meaning [4] arises from differences between signs within a linguistic system [9]. Structuralism laid the foundation for subsequent linguistic theories by formalizing the study of phonemes, morphemes, and syntax, treating language as a self-contained system with rules and structures.

It is worth noting that Structuralism's focus on static systems has been critiqued for neglecting the variability and fluidity of language in use, particularly how meaning is shaped by context, culture, and interaction [15]. Critics argue that its synchronic approach—studying language at a specific point in time—fails to address how language evolves dynamically through historical and social processes. Additionally, the binary oppositions central to structural analysis have been challenged for oversimplifying the complexities of linguistic and cultural phenomena, prompting the development of post-structuralist and functional approaches [15].

Then, Noam Chomsky's generative linguistics, introduced in the 1950s, emphasized the cognitive basis of language. Chomsky proposed that humans possess an innate language faculty governed by universal grammar (UG). His transformational grammar provides rules to describe deep and surface structures in sentences. As a key contribution Generative Linguistics influenced psycholinguistics and computational linguistics by focusing on the mental representations of grammar [6].

Subsequently, functional linguistics, associated with scholars such as Michael Halliday, examines language in terms of its communicative functions. It posits that linguistic structure is shaped by its use in social contexts, emphasizing meaning over form. Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG) integrates semantics, syntax, and pragmatics into a unified framework. Here, language serves three meta functions: ideational (content), interpersonal (interaction), and textual (organization of discourse) [7]. On the other hand, critics argue that functional linguistics may lack the precision of formal grammatical models.

Traditional linguistics emphasizes prescriptive grammar, codifying rules based on classical languages such as Latin and Greek. It focuses on the "correct" usage of language, largely

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ignoring linguistic diversity and change. This approach laid the foundation for early studies in grammar and syntax. Dionysius Thrax's The Art of Grammar (100 BCE) was among the earliest formal treatises, focusing on morphology and syntax [16]. Traditional linguistics influenced educational practices and early philological studies. Its rigid adherence to normative rules fails to accommodate the dynamic and evolving nature of language in modern linguistics [13].

Additionally, historical linguistics focuses on diachronic language changes and the reconstruction of proto-languages. It introduced the comparative method, enabling linguists to identify language families and trace their evolution. Jacob Grimm's articulation of Grimm's Law (1822) and August Schleicher's Compendium of the Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages (1861) exemplify foundational contributions [4]. Besides, key findings include sound laws, morphological shifts, and the influence of external factors (e.g., cultural, social, environmental) on language change. Historical linguistics informs sociolinguistics, etymology, and the development [5]of modern language policies. However, the focus on historical relationships often overlooks the synchronic analysis of living languages [17].

 It is worth noting that Ferdinand de Saussure revolutionized linguistic theory with his synchronic approach in a *Course in General Linguistics* in1916. Structural linguistics conceptualizes language as a system of interdependent signs. Here, *Langue* is the structured system of language and *Parole* is individual speech acts. Besides, the *signifier refers to* (sound pattern) and *signified* is (concept) relationship (Saussure, 1983). Structuralism shaped disciplines like semiotics, anthropology (Lévi-Strauss), and literary criticism. It provided tools for analyzing phonology, morphology, and syntax. However, structural linguistics has been criticized for its static approach and neglect of language variation and pragmatic use in real-life contexts [15].

Generative linguistics, pioneered by Noam Chomsky, investigates the cognitive structures underlying linguistic competence. Chomsky's theory of transformational-generative grammar introduced deep structures (abstract syntactic forms) and surface structures (realized sentences).

The concept of Universal Grammar (UG), positing innate linguistic structures shared by all humans. Likewise, transformational rules explains how sentences are derived [10]. Generative linguistics has informed computational linguistics (e.g., natural language processing) and psycholinguistics. It is a cornerstone for understanding language acquisition. On the other side, the abstraction of generative grammar often overlooks sociolinguistic and contextual factors [18].[6].[19, 20]

Functional linguistics, particularly Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), examines how linguistic forms are shaped by their communicative functions in social contexts.

Key Ideas of Functional Linguistics are highlighted here. Language performs three meta functions such as , ideational (representing experience), interpersonal (facilitating interaction) , textual (structuring discourse coherently) where meaning takes precedence over form [7]. The functional linguistics has practical implications for discourse analysis, language teaching, and it is useful for understanding cross-cultural communication. On the other phase, critics argue that functional linguistics focus on meaning which may lack the precision of formal grammatical models, limit its explanatory power in certain contexts [21] [7] [22].

Traditional linguistics provided the initial framework for linguistic studies by focusing on prescriptive grammar derived from classical languages like Latin and Greek. It prioritized establishing linguistic norms and codifying rules, often neglecting natural language variation and change. In historical context we can refer to the work like Dionysius Thrax's *The Art of Grammar* (100 BCE) laid early foundations, influencing later European grammarians during

the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods [23]. Its significant contribution is the formalization of grammar in classical languages which has influenced modern language standardization and lexicography [12]. Besides, traditional linguistics guided the creation of early dictionaries and grammar texts, including Samuel Johnson's A Dictionary of the English Language (1755). Critics argue that this 6

approach lacks flexibility, disregarding how languages naturally evolve. Modern linguistics has shifted towards descriptive analysis to reflect real-world usage [24] [3] [25]. [26].

Historical linguistics has contributed extensively to understanding how languages change over time, focusing on diachronic studies. It examines sound changes, morphological evolution, and syntactic shifts, providing insights into linguistic ancestry and relationships. The key concepts and contributions are related to Grimm's Law, Jacob Grimm (1822) where introduced the first systematic phonological shift in Indo-European languages, marking the foundation of historical phonology. Here, comparative method developed by scholars like Franz Bopp and August Schleicher, this method enabled the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European [4]. The other one is wave model, proposed by Johannes Schmidt (1872), emphasizing language change as a gradual diffusion of features across dialects.

Historical linguistics has informed sociolinguistics, helping to understand the role of migration, trade, and conquest in language change [27]. It aids in deciphering ancient languages and reconstructing lost languages. On the other side, critics suggest that historical linguistics often neglects synchronic language dynamics, focusing narrowly on long-term evolution [28] [4] [29]. [17].

Structural linguistics, spearheaded by Ferdinand de Saussure, revolutionized linguistics by shifting from a diachronic to a synchronic focus. It analyzes language as a system of interrelated signs, with meaning derived from the structure rather than individual elements. [30].[31]. It has influenced disciplines such as semiotics [32] and anthropology (Lévi-Strauss). Besides, it has provided analytical tools for phonology and syntax, particularly in identifying phonemes and morphemes [33]

Critics like Chomsky (1965) argue that structuralism's emphasis on static systems neglects the cognitive processes underlying language and Saussure's original works for misrepresentation in posthumous compilations considered this school of thought. [34]. [34] [35] [36] [37].

Generative linguistics, pioneered by Noam Chomsky, introduced a formal model for understanding the innate cognitive structures that underlie language acquisition and production. It emphasizes the universality of grammar across languages. The theory of Universal Grammar (UG) proposes that all humans share an inherent linguistic framework [10]. Transformational grammar, explains how deep structures are converted into surface structures, and forms the basis for syntax analysis [19].

It has influenced computational linguistics, particularly natural language processing and machine translation systems. Besides, psycholinguistic studies have drawn on generative principles to examine language acquisition in children. On the other hand, functional linguists argue that generative linguistics overlooks the role of context and social interaction in shaping language [38]. Besides, Tomasello (2003) critiques focuses on innate mechanisms, advocating a usage-based approach. [6] [19] [20]. 7

Functional linguistics focuses on the relationship between language and its social and communicative functions. It examines how linguistic structures are shaped by their use in real-

world contexts. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) identifies three meta functions:
•   Ideational: Language represents experience and ideas.
•   Interpersonal: Language facilitates interaction and conveys relationships.
•   Textual: Language organizes messages into coherent discourse [7]

This school is widely used in discourse analysis, second language acquisition, and pedagogical studies. Provides insights into cross-cultural communication by analyzing language in different sociocultural contexts [21]. Critics argue that functional approaches may lack the precision of formal models like generative grammar, particularly in syntax analysis [39] [7] [40] [41]. Traditional linguistics emphasizes prescriptive norms derived from classical languages, serving as the basis for early grammar studies. Its focus is on linguistic correctness, literary style, and codification. Panini's Ashtadhyayi , an ancient Sanskrit grammar, dating back to the 4th century BCE, which introduced formal rules for phonology, morphology, and syntax. It remains one of the most sophisticated linguistic models in history [42]. European traditions heavily influenced by Panini's work shaped Latin and Greek grammar studies during the Renaissance. Traditional linguistics is critiqued for prioritizing rigid norms, which often overlook spoken language dynamics and sociolinguistic factors [43] [42]. [44].

Historical linguistics investigates the diachronic evolution of languages, focusing on phonological, morphological, and syntactic changes over time. Contributions of this outlook is related to the Neogrammarian Hypothesis. This 19th-century theory proposed that sound changes occur according to systematic and exceptionless rules, fundamentally shaping historical phonology [45]. In this regard, *Verner's Law* merit further attention. This refinement of Grimm's Law, proposed by Karl Verner in 1875, explained exceptions in Indo-European sound changes, demonstrating the interplay of phonetic and grammatical environments [46]. Historical linguistics has informed the study of language contact phenomena, such as creoles and pidgins, providing insights into linguistic hybridity [47] [48].[49].

Structural linguistics, introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure, conceptualized language as a system of interrelated signs. This paradigm shifted linguistics from historical analysis to synchronic study. Roman Jakobson's Binary Features: Jakobson expanded Saussurean principles to phonology, introducing distinctive features such as [+/- voiced] and [+/- nasal], forming the foundation of modern phonological analysis [50]. Hjelmslev's Glossematics: Louis Hjelmslev introduced the idea of glossemes, the smallest meaningful units, extending structural principles to semantics [51]. Structuralism's focused on synchronic analysis which has been criticized for downplaying sociolinguistic variability and historical context [52]. [35] [53] [54]. 8

Generative linguistics, pioneered by Noam Chomsky, introduced formal models to understand the cognitive structures underpinning linguistic competence. Contributions of this school is related to the Extended Standard Theory. This refinement of transformational grammar incorporated semantics into syntactic analysis, bridging the gap between syntax and meaning [55]. Besides, X-bar theory, as a formal structure proposed within generative grammar, representing syntactic constituency hierarchically and universally across languages [56]. It lead to advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning, particularly in natural language processing [57]. Critics like Geoffrey Sampson argue that generative linguistics overemphasizes innate mechanisms, overlooking the influence of social and cultural learning [58]. [55] [59].[60].

Functional linguistics examines how linguistic structures arise from their communicative purposes and social contexts. In this regard, Givón's Discourse-Pragmatic Principles, is

suggested which has emphasized the role of discourse and pragmatics in shaping syntax and challenging purely formal approaches [61]. Van Valin's Role and Reference Grammar suggested Robert Van Valin extended functional grammar principles to syntax, focusing on the relationship between meaning and structure [62]. The application is related to functional linguistics which has practical applications in analyzing multilingual contexts, second language learning, and discourse-level phenomena [63]. Critics argue that functional linguistics, while contextually rich, may lack the formal precision required for computational or psycholinguistic models [64].

Each linguistic school addresses different facets of language, providing complementary perspectives. Traditional linguistics laid the groundwork for grammar, historical linguistics uncovered the dynamic evolution of languages, structural linguistics systematized linguistic analysis, generative linguistics explored cognitive underpinnings, and functional linguistics emphasized communication and context. Together, they form a comprehensive framework for understanding language's complexity.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study is descriptive library research, relying on a literature review. The paper examines the foundational principles, theoretical underpinnings, and contributions of the selected linguistic schools: Traditional Linguistics, Historical Linguistics, Structural Linguistics, Generative Linguistics, and Functional Linguistics. By analyzing seminal works, academic publications, and textbooks, the study synthesizes key concepts, historical developments, and the influence of these schools on modern linguistics.

The research process involved the following steps:

- Identification of Core Texts: Foundational works and scholarly publications by key figures such as Ferdinand de Saussure (Structural Linguistics), Noam Chomsky (Generative Linguistics), and M.A.K. Halliday (Functional Linguistics) were identified as primary sources for analysis.
- Comparative Analysis: The principles and methodologies of each linguistic school were compared to highlight both distinctions and intersections.
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- Contextual Examination: Historical and social contexts influencing the development of each school were considered to provide a holistic understanding.
- Evaluation of Relevance: The enduring relevance and application of these schools in contemporary linguistic research were assessed.

This methodological framework enables a structured and comprehensive examination of the subject matter, ensuring an accurate representation of the theoretical contributions of these linguistic paradigms. [65].

4. RESULTS

The analysis of the five major linguistic schools—Traditional, Historical, Structural, Generative, and Functional Linguistics—yields the following key findings.

Traditional Linguistics is primarily normative and prescriptive, rooted in classical grammar frameworks such as those of Latin and Greek. Its focus on rules and correctness laid the groundwork for modern linguistic inquiry. However, its prescriptive nature has been critiqued for overlooking language variation and evolution [12].

Historical Linguistics reveals the dynamic nature of language through diachronic studies. Key findings include the identification of regular sound shifts, such as Grimm's Law, and the

comparative method, which has established relationships among language families [4].This school highlights the significance of understanding the origins and evolution of languages to contextualize modern linguistic phenomena.

Structural Linguistics revolutionized linguistic study by emphasizing synchronic analysis and rejecting the prescriptive tradition. Saussure's distinction between *langue* (language system) and *parole* (speech) remains influential. This school demonstrates that linguistic elements gain meaning from their relationship within the system, which shifted the focus to the underlying structure of language [66].

Generative Linguistics has provided profound insights into the cognitive and universal aspects of language. Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar introduced the concept of an innate Universal Grammar (UG), explaining language acquisition as a biologically rooted process. The emphasis on formal rules has shaped computational linguistics and psycholinguistics [10]. Functional Linguistics emphasizes the interaction between linguistic forms and their communicative purposes. Halliday's systemic functional grammar underscores the role of context, offering insights into how linguistic choices are shaped by social and pragmatic factors. This school has significantly influenced applied linguistics, particularly in language teaching and discourse analysis [67]. These results demonstrate the complementary contributions of each linguistic school, illustrating how they collectively enrich our understanding of language structure, use, and evolution**.** [2].

5. DISCUSSION

The findings from the analysis of Traditional, Historical, Structural, Generative, and Functional Linguistics reveal how these schools collectively contribute to our understanding of language while emphasizing different perspectives. 10

Each school offers unique insights. Traditional Linguistics provides foundational concepts and serves as a historical anchor, despite its prescriptive limitations [12]. Historical Linguistics contributes to understanding language evolution, crucial for tracing linguistic relationships and reconstructing proto-languages [4]Shifts in Focus: From Normative to Descriptive. The transition from Traditional Linguistics to Structural Linguistics marks a paradigm shift. Saussure's structural approach rejected prescriptivism, focusing instead on how language functions as a system of interrelated signs [66]. This shift laid the groundwork for modern linguistic theory, emphasizing description over prescription. The emergence of Generative Linguistics shifted attention to the innate cognitive structures underlying language. Chomsky's Universal Grammar provides a theoretical model for understanding language acquisition and generative capacity [10]However, critics argue that its abstract and formal nature overlooks sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors, which are central to Functional Linguistics [67]Functional Linguistics emphasizes the communicative and contextual nature of language, addressing real-world usage in a way Generative Linguistics does not. These schools remain relevant in various fields for instance, Structural Linguistics influences semiotics and phonological studies, Generative Linguistics has shaped computational linguistics and AI language models , Functional Linguistics informs applied fields such as language teaching, emphasizing contextual language use. The interplay between these schools enriches linguistic research. For example, integrating cognitive insights from Generative Linguistics with the contextual emphasis of Functional Linguistics can offer a holistic approach to discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. In conclusion, while each linguistic school has its strengths and limitations, their combined contributions provide a comprehensive framework for

understanding the multifaceted nature of language. Future research could focus on synthesizing these perspectives to address linguistic challenges in interdisciplinary fields [1 , 2] .

6. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDY (IDENTIFICATION OF LINGUISTICS AS A FIELD OF STUDY)

Linguistics is identified as the scientific study of language, encompassing its structure, use, and cognitive aspects. This field examines various levels of language, including phonetics (sounds), phonology (sound systems), morphology (word formation), syntax (sentence structure), semantics (meaning), and pragmatics (language in context) [68]. It aims to uncover universal principles underlying all human languages while acknowledging the diversity of linguistic forms and functions across cultures and societies. The study of linguistics is interdisciplinary, intersecting with psychology, anthropology, computer science, and more, as it explores language's role in human cognition, communication, and social organization [1]

7. CONCLUSION

The exploration of Traditional, Historical, Structural, Generative, and Functional Linguistics demonstrates the diverse yet interconnected approaches to understanding language. Each school has contributed significantly to linguistic theory and its practical applications. Traditional Linguistics established the foundation for linguistic study by emphasizing grammatical norms and prescriptive analysis, though its focus on rules limits its adaptability to language variation [12]. 11

Historical Linguistics provides insights into language evolution, emphasizing diachronic change and the relationships among languages, which remain essential for understanding linguistic diversity [4]. Structural Linguistics revolutionized linguistic analysis by focusing on synchronic studies and systemic relationships within language, offering a scientific framework that persists in semiotics and phonology [66]. Generative Linguistics brought cognitive insights to the forefront, focusing on innate linguistic structures and universal grammar, significantly influencing computational linguistics and psycholinguistics [10]. Functional Linguistics highlights the role of language in context, emphasizing communicative purposes and pragmatic factors, which are increasingly relevant in applied linguistics and language teaching [67].

The collective contributions of these schools underscore the multifaceted nature of language and its study. Their varying focuses—from prescriptive norms and historical evolution to cognitive mechanisms and communicative purposes—offer complementary perspectives that enrich linguistic research. Future research and interdisciplinary approaches that integrate these perspectives could yield deeper insights into language's complexity, facilitating advances in areas such as artificial intelligence, sociolinguistics, and education. The enduring relevance of these schools affirms their pivotal role in shaping the linguistic sciences. [2]. 12

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