

# N

**narrative** (*adj./n.*) An application of the everyday use of this term, as part of the linguistic study of DISCOURSE, which aims to determine the principles governing the structure of narrative TEXTS. A narrative is seen as a recapitulation of past experience in which language is used to structure a sequence of (real or fictitious) events. The structural study of narrative is known as **narratology**. Structural elements are proposed, such as those which initiate a narrative (e.g. a summarizing abstract, a story orientation) or those which close it (a closing summary, a narrator's evaluation). There is a focus on such notions as theme, plot, character, role and point of view, especially in studies of literary narrative.

**narratology** (*n.*) see NARRATIVE

**narrow** (*adj.*) (1) A term used in the classification of types of PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION. A 'narrow' transcription is more detailed than a 'broad' transcription. (2) A term used in the description of types of VOWEL, referring to a vowel which is articulated with less PHARYNX width than another with the same TONGUE and lip configuration; it is opposed to WIDE.

**narrowing** (*n.*) In HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS, a term used in the classification of types of SEMANTIC change, referring to a restriction of meaning in a LEXICAL item; opposed to EXTENSION. For example, in Old English *mete* 'meat' referred to food in general, whereas today it refers to only one kind of food.

**n-ary feature** see BINARY FEATURE

**nasal** (*adj.*) A term used in the PHONETIC classification of speech sounds on the basis of MANNER OF ARTICULATION: it refers to sounds produced while the soft PALATE is lowered to allow an audible escape of air through the nose. Both CONSONANTS and VOWELS may be articulated in this way. **Nasal consonants** (sometimes represented as a class by N or **nas**) occur when there is a complete CLOSURE in the mouth, and all the air thus escapes through the nose. Examples in English are the final consonants of *ram, ran, rang* [ram, ran, raŋ], where the closures are in BILABIAL, ALVEOLAR and VELAR positions respectively. Several other nasal sounds are possible, e.g. in PALATAL positions [ɲ], as in Spanish *mañana*. VOICELESS nasal sounds also occur, as when a nasal consonant follows

[s] in English, e.g. *small*, *snooze*. In **nasal** (or **nasalized**) vowels, air escapes through nose and mouth simultaneously; the vowels are transcribed with [~], above the symbol, e.g. [ã]. Nasal vowels are opposed to ORAL vowels in a language, as in French and Portuguese. English has no distinct nasal vowels, but **nasalization** is often heard on English vowels, when they display the articulatory influence of an adjacent nasal consonant, as in *mat* or *band*. The vowel in a word like *man* may be articulated with the soft palate lowered throughout, because of this influence – an instance of ANTICIPATORY COARTICULATION. Such cases, where the nasality comes from other sounds, would be referred to as ‘nasalized’ vowels; the term ‘nasal vowel’, on the other hand, suggests that the nasality is an essential identifying feature of the sound. A ‘nasalized consonant’, likewise, would refer to a consonant which, though normally oral in a language, was being articulated in a nasal manner because of some adjacent nasal sound.

Stop consonants (and sometimes fricatives) may be articulated with a **pre-nasal** onset or **post-nasal** release, depending on the timing of the velic closure relative to the oral closure: Swahili, for example, has a series of **pre-nasalized** stops. The opposite term is **denasalized**, which would be applied only to sounds which normally were articulated with a nasal component (as when one speaks through a blocked nose). In certain clinical conditions, such as cleft palate, abnormal degrees of nasalization may be present: excessively nasal (or **hypernasal**) speech is here opposed to reduced nasality (or **hyponasal** speech).

Other nasal effects may be heard in a language. A PLOSIVE sound, for example, when followed by a nasal articulated in the same position, may be released through the nose instead of the mouth, and the resulting auditory effect is one of **nasal plosion**, as in *sudden* [sʌdɳ], which is rather more likely than [sʌdən]. **Nasal twang** is not a term with a precise phonetic definition, as it refers to any degree of nasal effect in a speaker or ACCENT, seen in contrast with speech which is more oral in character.

The opposition between **nasal** and **oral** is given a special technical status in the DISTINCTIVE FEATURE theory of PHONOLOGY, where it works alongside other two-way CONTRASTS as part of the complete specification of a sound system. In Chomsky and Halle’s theory (see CHOMSKYAN), for example, it is classified as a CAVITY feature, and grouped along with LATERAL under the specific heading of SECONDARY APERTURES. See also -ISE/-IZE.

**nasalize** (*v.*), **nasalization** (*n.*) see NASAL

**native-speaker** (*n.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS to refer to someone for whom a particular LANGUAGE is a first language or mother-tongue. The implication is that this **native language**, having been acquired naturally during childhood, is the one about which a speaker will have the most reliable INTUITIONS, and whose judgements about the way the language is used can therefore be trusted. In investigating a language, accordingly, one is wise to try to obtain information from **native-speaking** informants, rather than from those who may have learned it as a SECOND or foreign language (even if they are highly proficient). Many people do, however, develop a ‘native-like’ command of a foreign language, and in bilingualism one has the case of someone who has a native command of two languages (see BILINGUAL). The term has become a sensitive one in those parts of the world where *native* has developed demeaning connotations.

**nativist hypothesis** see INNATENESS HYPOTHESIS

**natural class** see CLASS, NATURALNESS

**natural gender** see GENDER

**natural generative phonology (NGP)** A model of PHONOLOGY which requires that phonological RULES and REPRESENTATIONS bear a direct relation to SURFACE linguistic forms. This differs from natural phonology (see PHONOLOGY) in several respects (in particular, it allows less abstractness in its UNDERLYING representation). Its aim is to formulate the strongest possible (UNIVERSAL) CONSTRAINTS on phonological rules ('P-rules'), all of which make generalizations about the surface forms of the language.

**natural-kind terms** In the SEMANTIC analysis of NOUNS, a type of general term for entities which have an identity in nature (as opposed to artefactual, abstract and other general terms). They include some SORTAL terms (e.g. *lion*), where a notion of individuation is involved, and some mass terms (e.g. *water*), where there is no such notion. Their study has been important in the development of theories of DIRECT REFERENCE.

**natural language processing (NLP)** In COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS, the computational processing of TEXTUAL materials in natural human languages. The aim is to devise techniques which will automatically analyse large quantities of spoken (transcribed) or written text in ways which are broadly parallel to what happens when humans carry out this task. The field emerged out of machine translation in the 1950s, and came to be much influenced by research in artificial intelligence. Later work concentrated on devising 'intelligent programs' (or 'expert systems') which would simulate aspects of human behaviour, such as the way people use their knowledge of the world and their ability to draw inferences in order to make interpretations and reach conclusions. A more specifically linguistic contribution involves detailed SYNTACTIC, SEMANTIC and DISCOURSE analysis, often on a much larger scale than hitherto, and using the large amounts of lexical data currently available in computer CORPORA.

**natural morphology** see MORPHOLOGY

**naturalness** (*n.*) A notion introduced into (especially GENERATIVE) LINGUISTIC theory to refer to the PHONETIC plausibility of an analysis, which is seen as an important criterion in evaluating analyses alongside such other criteria as SIMPLICITY. An analysis, it is argued, must make phonetic sense, if it is to have any explanatory role in relation to the speaker's behaviour, e.g. such factors as relative ease of ARTICULATION must be taken into account. One of the first steps in defining naturalness more formally is to recognize the notion of **natural class**. A set of SEGMENTS is said to constitute a natural class if fewer phonetic FEATURES are needed to specify the set as a whole than to specify any one member of the set. The set of VOICED PLOSIVE segments in English is a natural class, on this basis: /b/, /d/ and /g/ all share the features of VOICING, INSTANTANEOUS RELEASE and INTERRUPTED; but, to specify any one of these, further features would be required (e.g. /d/ would be CORONAL, in addition).

The term in this sense applies to any set of speech segments which can be shown to have a highest common factor in this way; but as it stands the criterion needs to be supplemented by others, as it is too general (e.g. it would allow for all sounds in a language to be considered a natural class, on the grounds that they are all PULMONIC EGRESSIVE). Several other relevant criteria have been suggested, e.g. that the set of sounds all turn up in the same PHONOLOGICAL RULES, undergoing similar processes together. Also, there are several difficulties in working with the notion in terms of features, e.g. the more natural solution is not always the simpler. The notion of naturalness has thus been developed to take into account the relative naturalness of (1) segments (mainly through the use of the MARKING convention), (2) sound SYSTEMS (by computing the relative complexity of its units, this being defined in terms of marking values) and (3) phonological rules (based on the tendency for some phonological processes to be more frequent and phonetically more expected than others, e.g. /i/ becoming /u/ rather than /u/, or certain types of ASSIMILATION or SYLLABLE structures being preferred). These developments are continuing.

**natural order hypothesis** In LANGUAGE LEARNING, the view that people follow essentially the same path in learning a foreign language that they used when learning their mother tongue. The motivation for the hypothesis comes from observing the way many learners make similar errors (e.g. *I going*), regardless of their language background. It is suggested that a universal creative process is at work, learners following a natural 'internal syllabus' (as opposed to the 'external' syllabus of the classroom). Because several of the errors closely resemble those made by children learning their first language, a parallel is proposed between the natural order of first language ACQUISITION and the way people acquire a foreign language.

**natural phonology** see PHONOLOGY

**negation** (*n.*) A process or construction in GRAMMATICAL and SEMANTIC analysis which typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence's meaning. In English grammar, it is expressed by the presence of the **negative particle** (**neg**, **NEG**) *not* or *n't* (the CONTRACTED negative); in LEXIS, there are several possible means, e.g. PREFIXES such as *un-*, *non-*, or words such as *deny*. Some LANGUAGES use more than one PARTICLE in a single CLAUSE to express negation (as in French *ne . . . pas*). The use of more than one negative form in the same clause (as in **double negatives**) is a characteristic of some English DIALECTS, e.g. *I'm not unhappy* (which is a STYLISTICALLY MARKED mode of assertion) and *I've not done nothing* (which is not acceptable in STANDARD English). See also CONCORD.

A topic of particular interest has been the range of sentence STRUCTURE affected by the position of a negative particle, e.g. *I think John isn't coming v. I don't think John is coming*: such variations in the SCOPE of negation affect the logical structure as well as the semantic analysis of the sentence. The opposite 'pole' to negative is POSITIVE (or AFFIRMATIVE), and the system of contrasts made by a language in this area is often referred to as POLARITY. **Negative polarity** items are those words or phrases which can appear only in a negative environment in a sentence, e.g. *any* in *I haven't got any books* (cf. *\*I've got any books*).

**negative concord** see CONCORD

**negative face** see FACE

**negative transfer** see INTERFERENCE

**neo-Davidsonian** (*adj.*) see DAVIDSONIAN SEMANTICS

**neo-Firthian** (*adj.*) see FIRTHIAN

**neogrammarian** (*adj./n.*) A follower of, or characteristic of the principles of, a nineteenth-century school of thought in COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY, initiated by the German scholars K. Brugmann (1849–1919) and S. A. Leskien (1840–1916). Their main tenet was that sound laws admitted no exceptions (the **neogrammarian hypothesis**). Their nickname in German *Junggrammatiker* ('young grammarians') arose from the attitude of older scholars who, while not necessarily rejecting the principle, objected to the forceful way in which it was promulgated.

**neologism** (*n.*) see NONCE

**nesting** (*n.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS to refer to the INSERTION of one or more linguistic UNITS (usually PHRASES or CLAUSES) within the STRUCTURE of an ENDOCENTRIC phrase. A phrase such as *the table in the corner with the candlesticks near the window* shows several MODIFYING phrases RECURSIVELY **nested** (see EMBEDDED).

**network** (*n.*) In SOCIOLINGUISTICS a term which defines the set of linguistic interactions that a speaker has with others. In a **uniplex network** people relate to each other in just one way – such as through the family, work, church, or a sporting activity. In a **multiplex network**, people relate to each other in a variety of ways, repeatedly renewing their contact through sharing a range of social activities.

**Network English** see GENERAL AMERICAN

**network grammar** A term used for a class of GRAMMARS which have developed out of the concerns of COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS and artificial intelligence, to show how LANGUAGE understanding can be simulated. A **network** is a state-and-path REPRESENTATION of a SENTENCE – 'states' being the points at which a new condition can be introduced, in putting together a CONSTRUCTION, and 'paths' being the transitions between states, which are dependent on a condition being met. Two main types of network grammar have been proposed: PROCEDURAL GRAMMARS and augmented TRANSITION NETWORK GRAMMARS. These grammars extract and store information from a TEXT, and use the results to decide what grammatical and SEMANTIC structures lie behind it. The grammatical breakdown of a text is known as a PARSE, which contains SYNTACTIC, semantic and REFERENTIAL information. In this approach, the analysis is presented pictorially (using rectangles, circles and lines) as well as in words and formulae.

**Network Standard** see GENERAL AMERICAN

**neural network** see CONNECTIONISM

**neural program** see NEUROLINGUISTICS

**neurolinguistics** (*n.*) A branch of LINGUISTICS, sometimes called **neurological linguistics**, which studies the neurological basis of LANGUAGE development and use, and attempts to construct a MODEL of the brain's control over the processes of speaking, listening, reading, writing and signing. The main approach has been to postulate the stages of a **neural program(me)**, which would explain the observed phenomena of temporal ARTICULATORY co-ordination, SEQUENCING and other features of SPEECH PRODUCTION. Central to this approach has been the research findings from two main areas: the study of CLINICAL LINGUISTIC conditions (such as aphasia, dysarthria, stuttering), in an attempt to deduce the nature of the underlying system from the analysis of its various stages of breakdown; and the study of speech production in PARAMETRIC articulatory phonetic terms – especially of the ‘normal’ ERRORS which are introduced into speech (e.g. TONGUE-SLIPS, HESITATIONS). There is a tenuous connection with the use of the term in **neurolinguistic programming (NLP)**, which is a technique in alternative medicine that shows people how to change (‘reprogramme’) their habitual patterns of thought and behaviour, using various mental exercises to create new ways of thinking and feeling.

**neurological linguistics** see NEUROLINGUISTICS

**neuter** (*adj.*) see GENDER

**neutral** (*adj.*) (1) A term used in the classification of lip position in PHONETICS, referring to the visual appearance of the lips when they are held in a relaxed position, with no lip-ROUNDING, and a medium lowering of the jaw, as in the vowels of *pet* or *bird*. It is contrasted with SPREAD, OPEN and rounded lip positions.

(2) A term used in the classification of VOWEL sounds, to refer to a LAX vowel made in the centre of the vowel ARTICULATION area, with the TONGUE neutral with respect to FRONT, BACK, HIGH or LOW positions. The most widely encountered vowel of this quality is heard in the first vowel of *asleep*, *balloon*, or the last vowel in *mother*, *cover*. It is usually referred to as SCHWA [ə]. Several terms for this quality have been proposed, including ‘central’, ‘medium’ and ‘murmured’ vowel.

**neutralization** (*n.*) A term used in PHONOLOGY to describe what happens when the distinction between two PHONEMES is lost in a particular ENVIRONMENT. For example, in English, the contrast between ASPIRATED (voiceless) and unaspirated (VOICED) PLOSIVES is normally crucial, e.g. *tip* *v.* *dip*, but this contrast is lost, or **neutralized**, when the plosive is preceded by /s/, as in *stop*, *skin*, *speech*, and as a result, there are no pairs of words in the language of the type /skin/ *v.* /\*sgin/. From a PHONETIC point of view, the explanation lies in the phonetic change

which happens to /k/ in this position: the /k/ lacks aspiration and comes to be physically indistinguishable from /g/. In the original PRAGUE SCHOOL formulation of this notion, **neutralizable** was seen as a type of OPPOSITION, and contrasted with CONSTANT. The neutralization of a contrast in a particular location (e.g. at the end of a word) is referred to as **positional neutralization**. In early GENERATIVE phonology, **absolute neutralization** refers to cases where an underlying form is never given a phonetic REALIZATION. In OPTIMALITY THEORY, neutralization is used for cases where a feature occurs in an inventory, but a context-specific condition overrides general considerations of FAITHFULNESS. See also SYNCRETISM.

**new** (*adj.*) A term used by some LINGUISTS in a two-part analysis of utterances on the basis of INFORMATION structure; ‘new’ information is opposed to GIVEN. (The contrast between FOCUS and PRESUPPOSITION makes an analogous distinction.) ‘New’, as its name suggests, refers to information which is additional to that already supplied by the previous CONTEXT of speaking; ‘given’, by contrast, refers to the information already available. In the clearest cases, new information is identified by INTONATIONAL emphasis within the TONE UNIT, the NUCLEAR tone (or primary STRESS) signalling its focus, e.g. *I’ve got thrèe books in my bag v. I’ve got three books in my bàg*, and so on. Several problems arise in determining the scope of the new information, with reference to the previous CONTEXT, however, which have been the subject of much discussion, e.g. A: *What can you see?* B: *I can see ‘three mèn*, where the *three* is plainly part of the new information, but does not carry the nuclear tone.

**New Englishes** In SOCIOLINGUISTIC approaches to English, the name often given to the national VARIETIES of the language which have emerged around the globe, especially since the 1960s in those countries which opted to make English an official language upon independence. Regionally distinctive use of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar is found in all such countries, but often only on a very limited scale. The term is really applicable only when there has been considerable linguistic development away from the traditional STANDARDS of British and American English, with some degree of local standardization (e.g. in the press), as has happened in India, Ghana and Singapore, and several other countries where English is used as a second language. It has thus also come to be applied to first-language situations, such as in Canada, Australia and South Africa, as well as in areas where CREOLE or PIDGIN Englishes are important, such as the Caribbean and Papua New Guinea – even though in these cases the Englishes in question have a considerable history behind them.

**nexus** (*n.*), (plural **nexi**) (1) In the approach to GRAMMAR of Otto Jespersen (1860–1943), a term which describes the kind of relationship which exists between an element and its PREDICATE, such as ‘subject of’ or ‘object of’ (as in *the dog barks*); it is distinguished from a **junction**, which is a relationship between a primary word and an ADJUNCT (e.g. *the barking dog*). Several other notions were derived from this basic terminology, e.g. ‘nexus-word’, ‘nexus-question’.

(2) A term used in ROLE AND REFERENCE GRAMMAR to describe that part of the grammar which deals with the SYNTACTIC relationships obtaining between subCLAUSAL units. It is seen in association with a theory of JUNCTURE.







**NOUN PHRASE** (often a single noun or PRONOUN) when it is the SUBJECT of a VERB. The ‘nominative case’ (‘the nominative’) is usually the first form to be listed in a grammatical PARADIGM, or in a dictionary, and is often the UNMARKED form (see OBLIQUE), e.g. in Latin, *homo* (‘man’) is nominative singular (cf. *hominem*, *hominis*, etc.) The term is also used in GENERATIVE grammar, to refer to the CASE assigned to the subject NP in a FINITE CLAUSE. In the phrase **nominative island condition**, it refers to a type of CONSTRAINT on the freedom of MOVEMENT of items occurring inside a clause containing a nominative-marked subject. In GOVERNMENT-BINDING THEORY, NOM CASE is assigned to the NP GOVERNED by I with AGR, i.e. to the subject in a finite clause.

**non-affixal morphology** see AFFIXAL MORPHOLOGY

**non-agentive** (*adj./n.*) see PASSIVE

**non-anterior** (*adj.*) see ANTERIOR

**non-areal** (*adj.*) see AREA

**non-back** (*adj.*) see BACK

**non-branching** (*adj.*) see BRANCHING

**non-breathy** (*adj.*) see BREATHY

**non-bridge verbs** see BRIDGE VERBS

**non-causative** (*adj.*) see CAUSATIVE

**nonce** (*adj.*) A term describing a LINGUISTIC FORM which a speaker consciously invents or accidentally uses on a single occasion: a **nonce word** or a **nonce formation** (which may involve UNITS larger than the WORD). Many factors account for their use, e.g. a speaker cannot remember a particular word, so coins an alternative approximation (as in *linguistified*, heard from a student who felt he was getting nowhere with linguistics), or is constrained by circumstances to produce a new form (as in newspaper headlines). Nonce formations have occasionally come to be adopted by the community – in which case they cease by definition to be ‘nonce’ (forms used ‘for the (n)once’), and become **neologisms**.

**non-collective** (*adj.*) see COLLECTIVE

**non-configurational languages** Languages with fairly free WORD-ORDER and seemingly ‘FLAT’ CONSTITUENT structure, such as Japanese and the Dravidian and Australian languages; contrasted with CONFIGURATIONAL LANGUAGES. Both types have received a great deal of attention in GOVERNMENT-BINDING THEORY, where non-configurational languages are also known as **W\*** (**w-star**) languages.

**non-consonantal** (*adj.*) see CONSONANT

**non-contiguous assimilation** see ASSIMILATION

**non-continuant** (*adj./n.*) see CONTINUANT

**non-continuous** (*adj.*) see CONTINUOUS

**non-conventional implicature** see IMPLICATURE

**non-co-referential** (*adj.*) see REFERENTIAL INDICES

**non-core rule** see CORE (1)

**non-coronal** (*adj.*) see CORONAL

**non-count(able)** (*adj.*) see COUNTABLE

**non-covered** (*adj.*) see COVERED

**non-defining** (*adj.*) see RELATIVE

**non-definite** (*adj.*) see ARTICLE, DEFINITE, INDEFINITE

**non-derivational** (*adj.*) see DERIVATION

**non-discrete** (*adj.*) see DISCRETE

**non-discrete grammar** The name given to a LINGUISTIC MODEL suggested by the American linguist John Robert Ross (b. 1938) in the early 1970s (as an alternative to the EXTENDED STANDARD THEORY of TRANSFORMATIONAL GRAMMAR), which analyses LANGUAGE as a series of DISCRETE contrasts (e.g. grammatical *v.* ungrammatical, applicability *v.* non-applicability of RULES). In non-discrete grammar, however, such notions as grammaticality, rule applicability, CLASS membership, etc., are seen as matters of degree. Accounting for the existence of marginally grammatical sentences, SEMI-SENTENCES, and so on, is conceived as a major aim of linguistic theory, and INDETERMINACY of this kind is seen as an essential feature of COMPETENCE. The idiosyncratic terminology which this model uses (e.g. SQUISH, 'nouniness', 'clausematiness', etc.) has endeared it to some, and been a source of irritation to others. Its emphasis on the analysis of problematic DATA has been welcomed, but so far there has been relatively little development of the approach in linguistics as a whole, and its theoretical significance is controversial.

**non-distributed** (*adj.*) see DISTRIBUTED

**non-echo** (*n.*) see ECHO

**non-equivalent** (*adj.*) see EQUIVALENT

**non-factive** (*adj.*) see FACTIVE

**non-favourite** (*adj.*) see FAVOURITE

**non-finite** (*adj.*) see FINITE

**non-headed** (*adj.*) see HEAD (1)

**non-high** (*adj.*) see HIGH

**non-iterative** (*adj.*) see ITERATIVE

**non-lateral** (*adj.*) see LATERAL

**non-linear phonology** In PHONOLOGY, any model which avoids a linear REPRESENTATION of the phonological structure of a word. 'Linear', in this context, refers to a representation of structure as a series of SEGMENTS occurring in a strict horizontal sequence, each segment being analysed (vertically) as an unordered column of FEATURES – [s], for example, being [–syllabic], [–voice], [–nasal], [+coronal], etc. A recognized weakness of these two-dimensional matrices is their inability to handle features which extend over DOMAINS greater than an individual segment (e.g. certain properties of TONES, VOWEL HARMONY); another is their inability to represent structure relationships (functional or 'natural' classes) within columns of features. The result has been the development of non-linear models, such as Firth's PROSODIC PHONOLOGY (see FIRTHIAN), and (since the 1970s) such models as METRICAL PHONOLOGY, AUTOSEGMENTAL PHONOLOGY and DEPENDENCY PHONOLOGY. In these approaches, features which extend over domains greater than a single segment are taken out of feature matrices and represented on separate levels (TIERS) of their own. There is now a large class of non-linear models in contemporary phonology.

**non-low** (*adj.*) see LOW

**non-native varieties** A term used in SOCIOLINGUISTICS and foreign language teaching, to refer to VARIETIES of a LANGUAGE which have emerged in speech communities where most of the speakers do not have the language as a mother tongue. The notion has been chiefly used in the context of English as a world language, and specifically in relation to the kind of English which has grown up in India, Singapore and many of the countries of Africa.

**non-palatalized** (*adj.*) see PALATAL

**non-perfective** (*adj.*) see PERFECT

**non-phonemic phonology** see PHONEME

**non-predicative** (*adj.*) see PREDICATE

**non-primitive** (*adj.*) see PRIMITIVE

**non-pro-drop** (*adj.*) see PRO-DROP

**non-productive** (*adj.*) see PRODUCTIVE

**non-progressive** (*adj.*) see PROGRESSIVE (1)

**non-restrictive** (*adj.*) see RESTRICTIVE

**non-rhotic** (*adj.*) see RHOTIC

**non-rounded** (*adj.*) see ROUNDING

**non-segmental** (*adj./n.*) see SUPRASEGMENTAL

**nonsense** (*n.*) In several contexts in LINGUISTICS and PHONETICS, this term is used in a rather more restricted sense than in everyday use. In phonetics, it is applied to the invented phonetic SEQUENCES (**nonsense words**) used as part of EAR-TRAINING exercises. In linguistics it refers, first, to SENTENCES which may be GENERATED by a GRAMMAR (i.e. they are grammatical), but which are not SEMANTICALLY ACCEPTABLE, e.g. *\*The stone is sleeping*, *\*He drank the car in a table*. Such meaningless sentences are often called **anomalous**. The term is also used in grammar, as part of a technique for testing PRODUCTIVITY. Often used here is an extract from Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*, where phrases such as *all mimsy were the borogoves* display WORD-CLASS identities clearly, e.g. *mimsy* (adjective) and *borogoves* (nouns). The technique is also used in language ACQUISITION, e.g. in language production tasks, to see if the child has acquired a grammatical unit (as in the WUGS experiment).

**nonsexist language** see INCLUSION (5)

**non-sibilant** (*adj./n.*) see SIBILANT

**non-sonorant** (*adj./n.*) see SONORANT

**non-sortal** (*adj.*) see SORTAL

**non-standard** (*adj.*) see STANDARD

**non-strident** (*adj.*) see STRIDENT

**non-tense** (*adj.*) see TENSION

**non-term** (*adj.*) see TERM

**non-terminal** (*adj.*) see NODE, TERMINAL

**non-transformational grammar** see TRANSFORMATION

**non-verbal communication** see COMMUNICATION

**non-vocalic** (*adj.*) see VOCALIC

**non-voiced** (*adj.*) see VOICE (1)

**non-volition** (*adj.*) see VOLITION

**no-ordering condition** see ORDER (1)

**norm** (*n.*) The general sense of this term is used in LINGUISTICS to refer to a standard practice in speech or writing. The 'norm' in question may apply to groups of varying size within a SPEECH community, or to the community as a whole. For example, several kinds of scientific English make use of impersonal CONSTRUCTIONS much more frequently than is the case in conversational English, which may be seen as the norm for purposes of STYLISTIC comparison. Often, the norms of different groups conflict, and **normative rules** may be imposed by one group on another (e.g. stating the 'correct' use of *whom*, *shall* or *will*; insisting that PREPOSITIONS should not be used at the end of SENTENCES). A collection of such rules is known as a **normative grammar**: such GRAMMARS were particularly current in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this tradition still exercises considerable influence. In contrast with this PRESCRIPTIVE concern to maintain an imagined set of linguistic standards, linguistics emphasizes the description of actual USAGE in the community, and SOCIOLINGUISTICS emphasizes the need to take into account the relative APPROPRIATENESS of different VARIETIES of language in different situations.

**normalization** (*n.*) A term used in AUDITORY PHONETICS for a type of compensation made when people are listening to speech, so that they allow for such variations as changes between speakers or alterations in speech RATE. For example, males and females perceive each other to be using the same set of INTONATION patterns, even though the FREQUENCY range of their voices is very different.

**normative** (*adj.*) see NORM

**notation** (*n.*) A term used in LINGUISTICS and PHONETICS to refer to any system of GRAPHIC representation of speech (as in a 'PHONEMIC notation', where the term TRANSCRIPTION is widely used). Specifically, it refers to the set of symbols which represent a mode of linguistic analysis, as in the 'PHRASE STRUCTURE notation' in GENERATIVE GRAMMAR. An analytic convention, in this sense, which is introduced into an analysis to facilitate the formulation of a statement, such as a RULE, is often called a **notational device**, e.g. the use of () to indicate OPTIONALITY in generative syntax. See also ALPHA NOTATION, BRACKETING, TRANSCRIPTION.

**notional** (*adj.*) A characteristic of much TRADITIONAL grammatical analysis, which assumed that there existed EXTRALINGUISTIC categories in terms of which the UNITS of GRAMMAR could be defined. Well-known notional definitions are of the NOUN as the name of a 'person, place or thing', of the VERB as a 'doing word', of a SENTENCE as a 'complete thought' and so on. A grammar which makes regular use of such definitions is a **notional grammar**. LINGUISTICS is critical of the notional approach in so far as the 'notions' involved are incapable of systematic and consistent exposition, and replaces it with an emphasis on FORMAL criteria.

**noun** (*n.*) (**n**, **N**) A term used in the GRAMMATICAL classification of WORDS, traditionally defined as the ‘name of a person, place or thing’, but the vagueness associated with the notions of ‘name’ and ‘thing’ (e.g. is *beauty* a thing?) has led LINGUISTIC descriptions to analyse this class in terms of the FORMAL and FUNCTIONAL criteria of SYNTAX and MORPHOLOGY. In linguistic terms, then, nouns are ITEMS which display certain types of INFLECTION (e.g. of CASE or NUMBER), have a specific DISTRIBUTION (e.g. they may follow PREPOSITIONS but not, say, MODALS), and perform a specific syntactic function (e.g. as SUBJECT or OBJECT of a sentence). Nouns are generally subclassified into COMMON and PROPER types, and analysed in terms of NUMBER, GENDER, CASE and COUNTABILITY.

The CONSTRUCTIONS into which nouns most commonly enter, and of which they are the HEAD word, are generally called **noun phrases** (NP) or NOMINAL GROUPS. The structure of a noun phrase consists minimally of the noun (or noun substitute, such as a PRONOUN); the constructions preceding and following the noun are often described under the headings of PREMODIFICATION and POST-modification respectively. There are many derived notions, including COMPLEX NPs, HEAVY NPs and NP-MOVEMENT. **Noun incorporation** is found in some languages (such as Iroquoian languages), where a generic noun (e.g. ‘vehicle’) is syntactically included within a verb, thereby cross-classifying a specific noun (e.g. ‘car’) that is governed by the verb. See also COLLECTIVE, INCORPORATION, TRACE, WH-.

**noun incorporation** see INCORPORATION, NOUN

**noun phrase** see NOUN, PHRASE

**NP-movement** (*n.*) One of the two major MOVEMENT PROCESSES assumed in EXTENDED STANDARD THEORY and early GOVERNMENT-BINDING THEORY, the other being WH-movement. NP-movement moves a NOUN PHRASE from one ARGUMENT position to another. It is involved in the formation of PASSIVE and (subject) RAISING sentences. What kinds of NP-movement are possible is largely determined by THETA (sub-)THEORY and BINDING (sub-)THEORY, while CASE (sub-)THEORY makes NP-movement obligatory in certain circumstances.

**Nuclear English** The name of a proposal to adapt the English language to produce a core system of STRUCTURE and VOCABULARY for international use. Suggested by the British linguist Randolph Quirk (see QUIRK GRAMMAR), it was presented as a possible solution to problems of communication arising from the emergence of international VARIETIES of English. Nuclear English would eliminate all features that were ‘dispensable’, in the sense that the language has an alternative means available for their expression (e.g. one of the two INDIRECT object constructions, or the range of TAG questions). A COMMUNICATIVE nucleus would remain, which could be the focus for international purposes.

**nuclear predication** see NUCLEUS (2)

**nuclear scope** A term used in FILE CHANGE SEMANTICS and related frameworks, referring to that portion of a LOGICAL FORM corresponding to the SCOPE of a QUANTIFIER, but excluding any CLAUSES indicating a restriction on the quantifier.

**nuclear stress/tone** see NUCLEUS (1)

**nucleus** (*n.*) (1) A term used by some INTONATION analysts, particularly those working within the British tradition, to refer to the SYLLABLE in a TONE UNIT which carries maximal PROMINENCE, usually due to a major PITCH change. The **nuclear syllable** (sometimes represented as N) is also referred to as the TONIC syllable. In GENERATIVE PHONOLOGY, the analogous notion is **nuclear stress**, with the relevant STRESS-ASSIGNMENT RULE referred to as the **Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR)**. In the normal, unemphatic version of the sentence *The lady saw the dog*, the last word is nuclear, and will carry one of the possible nuclear tones in English. The **nuclear tone** is the most prominent pitch movement in a tone unit. In English, analyses of nuclear tones vary, but most recognize such contrasts as FALLING (transcribed with ` above or before the SYLLABLE in question), RISING ´, rising-falling ^, falling-rising ˇ and level ¯. Others are possible, including distinctions within these types, such as ‘high’ *v.* ‘low’ fall.

(2) In GRAMMAR and SEMANTICS, the term is sometimes used to refer to the essential SUBJECT–PREDICATE or NP–VP STRUCTURE of a simple SENTENCE. **Nuclear predications** play a central role in FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR.

**null** (*adj.*) An application in GENERATIVE GRAMMAR of the mathematical use of this term, with the general meaning of EMPTY or ZERO, as in ‘null subject’ (a phonologically empty constituent, PRO) or ‘null element’. In some models of PHONOLOGY, a ‘null SEGMENT’ is one carrying a full SURFACE specification, but behaving as if it lacks (some or all) FEATURE values. An example is the EPENTHETIC VOWEL when this is analysed not as an UNDERLYING segment, but as a vowel inserted late in the DERIVATION, and attached to an empty PLACE-holder.

**number** (*n.*) (NUM) A GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY used for the analysis of WORD-CLASSES displaying such CONTRASTS as **singular** (**sg**, **SG**, **sing**), plural (**pl**, **PL**), **dual** (**du**) (‘two’), **trial** (‘three’), **paucal** (‘few’), etc., as in English *boy v. boys, he walks v. they walk*. The contrasts generally correspond to the number of real-world entities referred to, but LINGUISTIC discussion has drawn attention to the problems involved in proposing any such straightforward one-to-one correlation. A NOUN, for example, may ‘look’ singular, but refer to a multiplicity of entities (e.g. *the committee are agreed*; see COLLECTIVE), and nouns which ‘look’ plural may refer to a single entity (e.g. *billiards*). There are in addition several analytical difficulties in relating the notion of number to that of COUNTABILITY (to explain the absence of such forms as *\*a butter*).

**numeration** (*n.*) In the MINIMALIST PROGRAMME, the set of items taken from the LEXICON for the purpose of building a STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION. The COMPUTATIONAL SYSTEM selects elements from the numeration and combines them into structures.

**n-valued feature** see BINARY FEATURE