**Lecture: Traditional and Modern approaches to Language Study**

Language is the primary means of interaction and communication. This is the reason why it has always been under study and investigation since very ancient times. Over the centuries, scholars have devised different models for the study and teaching of languages. From traditional grammar to modern linguistics, language was the central issue that was addressed with different perspectives.

**1. Traditional Grammar**

Traditional grammar, which is a framework for language analysis, can be traced back to the ancient times, and is based on classical languages like Greek and Latin. It attempted to explain the whole structure of language and its nature. However, it has many weaknesses because its model was not suitable for many other languages.

The main characteristics of traditional grammar are:

* Traditional grammar is a prescriptive approach; it prescribes how language should be used.
* Traditional grammar gives priority to the standard language and neglects the other varieties.
* Traditional grammar is rule-driven i.e. it is characterized by the adoption of strict grammatical rules.
* Traditional grammar defines what is correct and what is not i.e., it emphasizes the notion of correctness.
* Traditional grammar gives priority to the written form of language and neglects the spoken form.

**2. Modern Linguistics**

Modern linguistics began during the nineteenth century with Ferdinand de Saussure, the Swiss Linguist. In this regard, Lyons (1968) maintains that “the nineteenth century saw the birth

of the scientific study of language in the western world… it was in the course of the nineteenth century that facts of language came to be carefully and objectively investigated” (p. 22).

The main characteristics of modern linguistics are:

* Modern linguistics is scientific i.e. it is based on empirical studies.
* Modern linguistics is descriptive; it describes and analyses language as it is used by its speakers.
* Modern linguistics considers speech as the primary form of language.
* Modern linguistics studies language objectively.
* Modern linguistics emphasizes the notion of appropriateness.

**Suggested References**

Lyons, J. (1968). *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

Ramdas, R. P. (2018). Traditional grammar and its drawbacks. *Pune Research: An International Journal in English, 4*(1).