

General Linguistics

Language & Linguistics



What is Language?

- Language is the unique possession of man. It is God's special gift to mankind. It is present everywhere---in our thought and dreams, prayers and meditations, relations and communications and rituals.
- Language is also maker or unmake, of human relationships. It is the use of language that makes a life better or sweet.
- Without language, man would have remained only a dumb animal. It is our ability to communicate through words that makes us different from animals.

Definitions of Language:

- "Language is a primarily human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols."

-Sapir, 1921

- "Language may be defined as the expression of thought by means of speech-sounds."

-Henry Sweet, 1921.

- "A language is a device that establishes sound-meaning (LA) correlation, pairing meaning with signals to enable people to exchange ideas through observable sequences of sounds."

-Ronald W. Langacker,

Characteristics of Language:

1. Language is verbal, vocal: language is sound
2. Language is a means of communication
3. Language is a social phenomenon
4. Language is non-instinctive
5. Language is symbolic
6. Language is systematic
7. Language is unique, creative, complex and modifiable
8. Language is both linguistics and communicative competence

Language

study

linguistic

analysis

grammar

languages

Introduction of Linguistics:

- The word 'Linguistics, has been derived from Latin lingua (tongue) and istics (knowledge or science). Etymologically, therefore, linguistics is the scientific study of language.
- It studies language as a universal and recognizable part of human behaviour.
- So linguistics is that science which studies the origin, organization, nature and development of language descriptively, historically, comparatively and explicitly, and formulates the general rules related to language.

What is Linguistics?

- **Linguistics** is the scientific study of language. **Linguists** do work on specific languages, but their primary goal is to understand the nature of Language in general.
- Linguistics is primarily concerned with the nature of language and communication. There are broadly three aspects to the study, including language **form**, language **meaning**, and **language use** in discursive(informal) and communicative contexts.

Definitions of Linguistics:

- Linguistics is defined as the study of human speech including the units, nature, structure, and modification of It is the systematic study of the nature, structure, and variation of language.
- "Linguistics observes language in action as a means for determining how language has developed, how it functions today, and how it is currently evolving." (G. Duffy)
- "Linguistics is concerned with the nature of human language, how it is learned and what part it plays in the life of the individual and the community." (S. Pit Corder)
- The scientific study of human language is called linguistics. (Victoria A. Fromkin)

Diachronic and Synchronic Linguistics:

- Diachronic (historical) linguistics studies the development of language through history, through time, for example, way in which French and Italian have evolved from Latin.
- Synchronic linguistics investigates how the people speak and use language in a given speech community at a given time. In Comparative linguistics one is concerned with comparing two or more different languages.

Some questions linguistics tries to answer:

- What distinguishes human language from other animal communication systems?
- What features are common to all human languages?
- How are the modes of linguistic communication (speech, writing, sign language of the deaf) related to each other?
- How is language related to other types of human behaviour?
- What is language and how is it organized?
- How is it analysed? How are its units discovered and tested, etc.

Linguistics has two main purposes

- ❑ One is that it studies the nature of language and tries to establish a theory of language and describes languages in the light of the theory established.
- ❑ The other is that it examines all the forms of language in general and seeks a scientific understanding of the ways in which it is organized to fulfill the needs it serves and the functions it performs in human life.

Is Linguistics a science?

- Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Like all other sciences linguistics has a well-defined subject matter, natural languages, living or dead, it employs careful methods to observe, record and analyze the various phenomena related to its subject matter and hopes to produce unprejudiced, objective and verifiable descriptions. The approach and methodology of linguistics is scientific. It is as inductive as a science could be, and is based on observations, formation of hypothesis testing, verification, tentativeness and productiveness.

Is Linguistics a Science?

- Again like a scientist a linguist develops hypotheses, makes generalized statements and tests them against the facts of languages. When a linguist or a phonetician makes a statement about languages, he makes it on the basis of observation. First he observes linguistic events. He finds some similarities and contrasts on the basis of which he makes second generalization. On the basis of these generalizations hypotheses are formulated to account for the events. These are tested by further observations, and out of them is constructed a theory of how language works.
- Like any scientific discipline, linguistics too is not static. Viewpoints and theoretical models in the field, change even in fundamental ways from time to time, and different aspects come to receive primary focus at different times.

Is Linguistics a Science?

- Consequently, linguistics is getting more and more technical and sophisticated every day. Yet it is not a pure science. Its position, says R.A. Hall, is between the natural and social sciences, like that of geology. To Robins it is an 'empirical science, and within the empirical sciences it is 'one of the social sciences, because its subject matter is human, and is very much different from that of natural sciences.

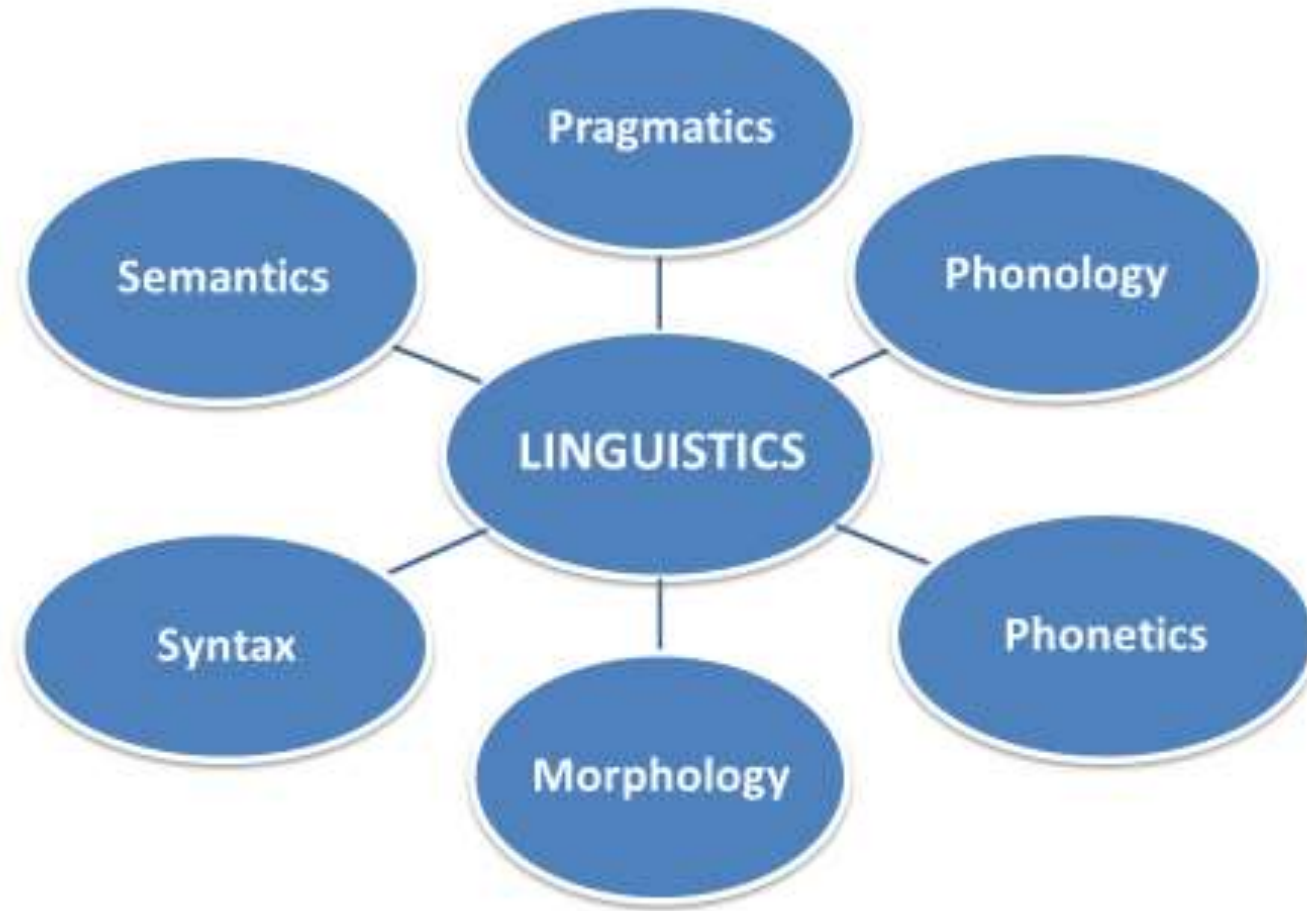
Scope of Linguistics:

- Traditionally, linguistics studies a language as a formal system consisting of four main branches, known as “**micro linguistics**”;
- Besides, the linguistic studies which are supposed as the interdisciplinary field of studies that identify, investigate and offer solutions to language-related real life problems, called “**macro linguistics** or **applied linguistics**”; and
- There are also some other linguistic branches.

Scope of linguistics

- **Microlinguistics** includes phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics.
- **Macrolinguistics** includes sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, stylistics, discourse analysis, computational linguistics, cognitive linguistics, applied linguistics.

Branches of linguistics



Microlinguistics

- Phonetics is the scientific study of speech sounds. It studies how speech sounds are articulated, transmitted, and received.
- Phonology is the study of how speech sounds function in a language, it studies the ways speech sounds are organized. It can be seen as the functional phonetics of a particular language.

Microlinguistics

- Morphology is the study of the formation of words. It is a branch of linguistics which breaks words into morphemes. It can be considered as the grammar of words as syntax is the grammar of sentences.
- Syntax deals with the combination of words into phrases, clauses and sentences. It is the grammar of sentence construction.

Microlinguistics

- Semantics is a branch of linguistics which is concerned with the study of meaning in all its formal aspects. Words have several types of meaning.
- Pragmatics can be defined as the study of language in use. It deals with how speakers use language in ways which cannot be predicted from linguistic knowledge alone, and how hearers arrive at the intended meaning of speakers.

Macrolinguistics

- Sociolinguistics studies the relations between language and society: how social factors influence the structure and use of language.
- Psycholinguistics is the study of language and mind: the mental structures and processes which are involved in the acquisition, comprehension and production of language.

Macrolinguistics

- Neurolinguistics is the study of language processing and language representation in the brain. It typically studies the disturbances of language comprehension and production caused by the damage of certain areas of the brain.
- Stylistics is the study of how literary effects can be related to linguistic features. It usually refers to the study of written language, including literary text, but it also investigates spoken language sometimes.

Macrolinguistics

- Discourse analysis, or text linguistics is the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which language is used. It deals with how sentences in spoken and written language form larger meaningful units.
- Computational linguistics is an approach to linguistics which employs mathematical techniques, often with the help of a computer.

Macrolinguistics

- Cognitive linguistics is an approach to the analysis of natural language that focuses on language as an instrument for organizing, processing, and conveying information.
- Applied linguistics is primarily concerned with the application of linguistic theories, methods and findings to the elucidation of language problems which have arisen in other areas of experience.