

LINGUISTICS AND ITS SCOPE

Linguistics is a systematic and scientific study of language. It is, however, not the study of any particular language. It studies human language as a universal and recognizable part of human behaviour. It aims at a methodical comprehension of the space of language in human life.

Linguistics attempts to explore three main aspects of language in its completeness: language form, language meaning, and language in context. It encompasses a vast area of study including phonetics (the study of how speech sounds are made), phonology (how these sounds are organized), morphology (how sounds are organized into meaningful units), syntax (how units of meaning come together to create sentences), semantics (the study of meanings themselves), pragmatics (the relationship between language signs and language users), and socio-linguistics (the interaction of language and people or collectives). Moreover, it studies the origin, organisation, nature and development of language descriptively, historically and comparatively to formulate and arrive at general rules. Historical or diachronic linguistics studies the development and evolution of language through history. Synchronic linguistics investigates how a speech community speak and use language at a given time. Comparative linguistics studies language by comparing languages.

Linguistics also includes new approaches to the study of other aspects of human language, such as social, cultural, historical and political factors. The study of cultural discourses and dialects is the domain of sociolinguistics, which looks at the relation between linguistic variation and social structures, as well as that of discourse analysis, which examines the structure of texts and conversations. Several specialized branches of linguistics have also developed with time. Important among them are Applied Linguistics, Neurolinguistics, Anthropological Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Computational Linguistics, Forensic Linguistics and so on.

Wikipedia

Linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. There are three aspects to this study: language **form**, language **meaning**, and language in **context**. The earliest activities in the description of language have been attributed to the 4th century BCE Indian grammarian Pāṇini, who was an early student of linguistics and wrote a formal description of the Sanskrit language in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.

Linguistics analyzes human language as a system for relating sounds (or signs in signed languages) and meaning. **Phonetics** studies acoustic and articulatory properties of the production and perception of speech sounds and non-speech sounds. The study of language meaning, on the other hand, deals with how languages encode relations between entities, properties, and other aspects of the world to convey, process, and assign meaning, as well as to manage and resolve ambiguity. While the study of **semantics** typically concerns itself with truth conditions, **pragmatics** deals with how context influences meanings.

Grammar is a system of rules which govern the form of the utterances in a given language. It encompasses both sound and meaning, and includes **phonology** (how sounds and gestures function together), **morphology** (the formation and composition of words), and **syntax** (the formation and composition of phrases and sentences from words).

In the early 20th century, **Ferdinand de Saussure** distinguished between the notions of *langue* and *parole* in his formulation of **structural linguistics**. According to him, **parole** is the specific utterance of speech, whereas **langue** refers to an abstract phenomenon that theoretically defines the principles and system of rules that govern a language. This distinction resembles the one made by **Noam Chomsky** between **competence** and **performance**, where competence is individual's ideal knowledge of a language, while performance is the specific way in which it is used.

The formal study of language has also led to the growth of fields like **psycholinguistics**, which explores the representation and function of language in the mind; **neurolinguistics**, which studies language processing in the brain; and **language acquisition**, which investigates how children and adults acquire a particular language.

Linguistics also includes non-formal approaches to the study of other aspects of human language, such as social, cultural, historical and political factors. The study of cultural discourses and dialects is the domain of **sociolinguistics**, which looks at the relation between linguistic variation and social structures, as well as that of **discourse analysis**, which examines the structure of texts and **conversations**. Research on language through **historical** and **evolutionary linguistics** focuses on how languages change, and on the origin and growth of languages, particularly over an extended period of time.

Corpus linguistics takes naturally occurring texts or films (in signed languages) as its primary object of analysis, and studies the variation of grammatical and other features based on such corpora. **Stylistics** involves the study of patterns of style: within written, signed, or spoken discourse. **Language documentation** combines anthropological inquiry with linguistic inquiry to describe languages and their grammars. **Lexicography** covers the study and construction of dictionaries. **Computational linguistics** applies computer technology to address questions in theoretical linguistics, as well as to create applications for use in parsing, data retrieval, machine translation, and other areas. People can apply actual knowledge of a language in translation and interpreting, as well as in language education – the teaching of a second or foreign language. Policy makers work with governments to implement new plans in education and teaching which are based on linguistic research.

Areas of study related to linguistics include **semiotics** (the study of signs and symbols both within language and without), **literary criticism**, **translation**, and **speech-language pathology**.