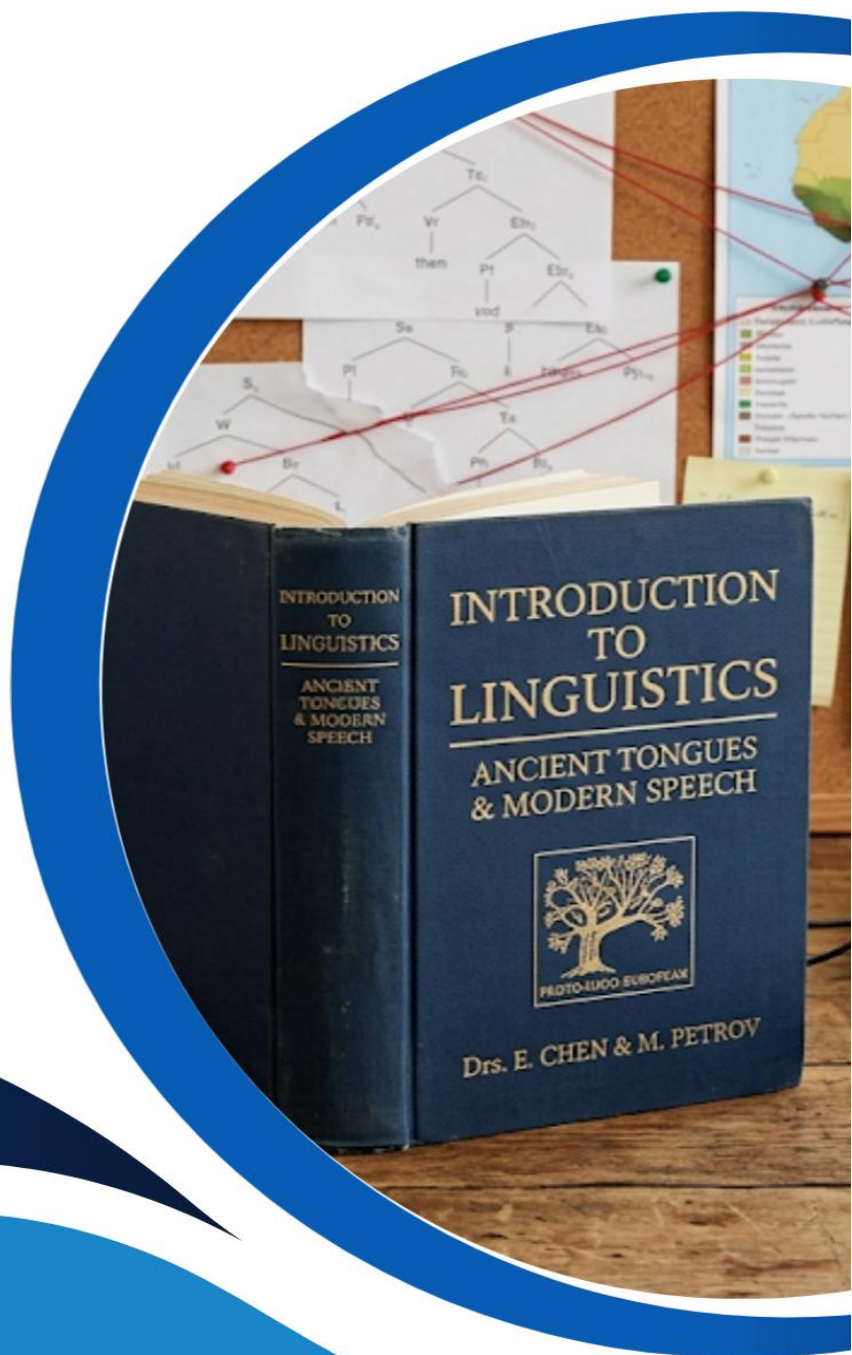


LIN101

INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS



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Course code: LIN 101

Course title: Introduction to Linguistics

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: **Foundations of Linguistics**

Series 2: **The Nature of Language**

Series 3: **Levels of Language Analysis**

Series 4: **Branches of Linguistics**

Series 5: **Concepts and Methods in Linguistics**

Proposed Outline for Series 1

Part .1 The Scope of Linguistics

- 1.1.1 Definition of Linguistics
- 1.1.2 Linguistics as a Scientific Discipline
- 1.1.3 Importance of Linguistics in Human Communication

Part .2 Historical Development of Linguistics

- 1.2.1 Early Traditions of Language Study
- 1.2.2 Emergence of Modern Linguistics
- 1.2.3 Key Figures and Milestones

Part .3 Core Areas of Linguistic Inquiry

- 1.3.1 Phonetics and Phonology
- 1.3.2 Morphology and Syntax
- 1.3.3 Semantics and Pragmatics

Part .4 Linguistics and Related Disciplines

- 1.4.1 Linguistics and Psychology
- 1.4.2 Linguistics and Sociology
- 1.4.3 Linguistics and Anthropology



Introduction

Language is central to human life, shaping how we communicate, think, and interact with the world around us. Yet, behind every spoken word or written sentence lies a complex system that scholars have studied for centuries. This Series introduces you to the foundations of linguistics, the scientific study of language, and prepares you to appreciate its scope, history, and connections to other disciplines. By beginning here, you will be equipped with the essential background needed to progress through the rest of the course.

The aim of this Series is to provide you with a clear understanding of what linguistics is, how it developed as a field of study, and the major areas it covers. It also seeks to highlight the relevance of linguistics to related disciplines, thereby giving you a strong base for exploring more specialised topics in subsequent Series.

We shall commence this Series by examining the scope of linguistics, including its definition, scientific nature, and importance in human communication. Next, we will trace the historical development of linguistics, considering early traditions and the emergence of modern approaches. Following that, we will explore the core areas of linguistic inquiry, such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Finally, we will wrap up by discussing how linguistics interacts with other disciplines like psychology, sociology, and anthropology, thereby rounding off the Series with a holistic view of the field.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 1.1** define linguistics clearly and explain its scope as a scientific study of language,
- **SLO 1.2** analyse the historical development of linguistics by identifying key traditions, figures, and milestones,
- **SLO 1.3** describe the core areas of linguistic inquiry, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics,
- **SLO 1.4** evaluate the relationship between linguistics and related disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology.

1.1 The Scope of Linguistics

1.1.1 Definition of linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It examines how language is structured, how it functions, and how it is used in communication. Unlike casual reflection on language, linguistics applies systematic methods to analyse language patterns and uncover the rules that govern them. By treating language as a subject of inquiry, linguistics allows us to explore both spoken and written forms, as well as the social and cognitive processes behind them.



Fill in the blank: Linguistics is the _____ study of language.

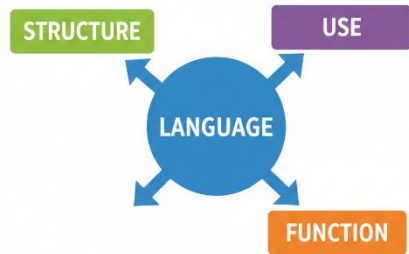


Figure 1.1 Scope of linguistics

1.1.2 Linguistics as a scientific discipline

To call linguistics a science means that it relies on **systematic observation** and **analysis** rather than intuition alone. Linguists collect data from real-life language use, whether spoken or written, and then apply theories to explain patterns. For example, phonologists study sound systems, while syntacticians examine sentence structures. This scientific approach ensures that conclusions are testable and not based on personal opinion.

Fill in the blank: Linguistics is considered a _____ discipline because it relies on systematic observation and analysis.

Linguistics as a Science

- ✓ **Systematic Observation:** Analyzing language patterns in a structured, objective manner
- ✓ **Data Collection:** Gathering linguistic evidence through corpora, fieldwork, or experiments
- ✓ **Hypothesis Testing:** Forming and checking predictions against real-world linguistic data
- ✓ **Theory Building:** Constructing models to explain how language works and why it changes



Box 1.1 Key features of linguistics as a science

1.1.3 Importance of linguistics in human communication

Language is the primary tool humans use to share ideas, emotions, and knowledge. By studying linguistics, we gain insight into how communication works and why misunderstandings occur. For instance, semantics helps us analyse meaning, while pragmatics explains how context influences interpretation. Linguistics also has practical applications in education, translation, technology, and even artificial intelligence.

Fill in the blank: The study of _____ helps us analyse meaning in communication.



HUMAN COMMUNICATION
LINGUISTICS OER

Plate 1.1 Linguistics and human communication

Pilot questions 1.1

1. Which term refers to the scientific study of language?
2. What makes linguistics a scientific discipline?
3. Which branch of linguistics focuses on sound systems?
4. Why is linguistics important in human communication?
5. Which branch of linguistics explains how context influences interpretation?

1.2 Historical Development of Linguistics

1.2.1 Early traditions of language study

The study of language has ancient roots. Early traditions in places such as India, Greece, and China explored language primarily for practical purposes like preserving sacred texts, teaching rhetoric, or maintaining cultural identity. For example, **Panini**, an Indian grammarian, produced one of the earliest systematic descriptions of Sanskrit, which remains a landmark in linguistic analysis. In Greece, philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle debated the relationship between words and meaning. These traditions laid the groundwork for later scientific approaches.



Fill in the blank: The grammarian _____ produced one of the earliest systematic descriptions of Sanskrit.



EARLY LANGUAGE STUDY
PĀṆINI & SANSKRIT LINGUISTICS

Plate 1.2 Early traditions of language study

1.2.2 Emergence of modern linguistics

Modern linguistics began to take shape in the nineteenth century, influenced by the comparative study of languages. Scholars examined similarities and differences across languages to trace their historical development. This gave rise to **comparative philology**, the study of language history and relationships. Later, linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure introduced structural approaches, emphasising the systematic nature of language. His ideas about **langue** (the structured system of language) and **parole** (individual speech acts) became foundational concepts.

Fill in the blank: The study of language history and relationships is known as _____ philology.



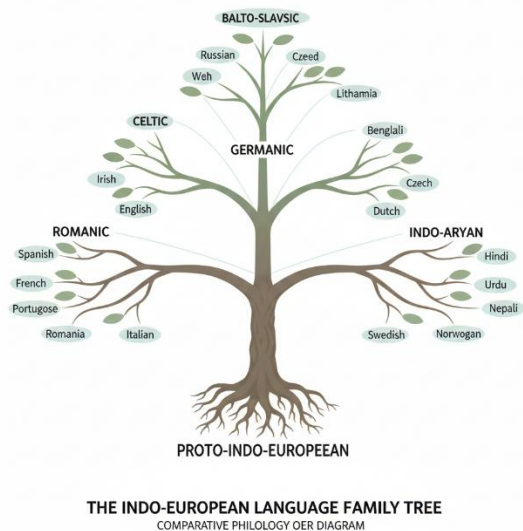


Figure 1.2 Emergence of modern linguistics

1.2.3 Key figures and milestones

Several figures shaped the development of linguistics into a modern discipline. **Ferdinand de Saussure** is often regarded as the father of modern linguistics for his structuralist theories. Later, **Noam Chomsky** revolutionised the field with his theory of **generative grammar**, which explains how humans can produce an infinite number of sentences from a finite set of rules. These milestones shifted linguistics from descriptive traditions to a more analytical and theoretical science.

Fill in the blank: _____ introduced the theory of generative grammar, revolutionising modern linguistics.



Key Figures in Linguistics

- ✓ **Pāṇini:** Developed the formal rules of Sanskrit grammar, laying the groundwork for descriptive linguistics.
- ✓ **Ferdinand de Saussure:** Known as the father of Structuralism, focusing on the relationship between the 'signifier' and 'signified'.
- ✓ **Noam Chomsky:** Revolutionized the field with Generative Grammar, proposing that a ability to learn language is innate to humans

LINGUISTICS HISTORY MILESTONES OER

Box 1.2 Selected milestones in linguistic history

Pilot questions 1.2

1. Who produced one of the earliest systematic descriptions of Sanskrit?
2. What is comparative philology concerned with?
3. Which linguist introduced the concepts of langue and parole?
4. Who is regarded as the father of modern linguistics?
5. Which theory explains how humans generate infinite sentences from finite rules?

1.3 Core Areas of Linguistic Inquiry

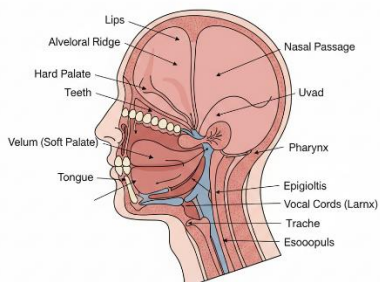
1.3.1 Phonetics and phonology

Phonetics is the study of the physical sounds of human speech. It examines how sounds are produced by the vocal organs, how they are transmitted through the air, and how they are perceived by the ear. **Phonology**, on the other hand, focuses on the abstract sound systems of languages, analysing how sounds function and interact within a particular language. Together, phonetics and phonology help us understand why sounds differ across languages and how speakers organise them into meaningful patterns.

Fill in the blank: _____ is the study of the physical sounds of human speech.



HUMAN VOCAL TRACT & ARTICULATORS



PHONETICS VOCAL TRACT DIAGRAM OER

Figure 1.3 Phonetics and phonology

1.3.2 Morphology and syntax

Morphology is the study of word formation and structure. It investigates how smaller units called **morphemes** (the smallest meaningful units of language) combine to form words. For example, the word “unhappiness” consists of three morphemes: “un-”, “happy”, and “-ness”. **Syntax** is the study of sentence structure, focusing on how words combine to form phrases and sentences. Syntax explains why certain word orders are acceptable in a language while others are not.

Fill in the blank: The smallest meaningful units of language are called _____.

ENGLISH MORPHOSES & EXAMPLES

Morpheme	Type	Example Word
un-	Prefix (Bound)	unhappy
happy	Root/Base (Free)	unhappy, happiness
-ness	Suffix (Bound)	happiness

MORPHOLOGY: EXAMPLES OF MORPHOSES
ENGLISH OER TABLE

Table 1.1 Examples of morphemes in English



1.3.3 Semantics and pragmatics

Semantics is the study of meaning in language. It explores how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning, and how these meanings can change depending on context. **Pragmatics** goes further by examining how meaning is influenced by social and situational factors. For instance, the sentence “Can you pass the salt?” is semantically a question about ability, but pragmatically it functions as a polite request. These two areas show how meaning is not fixed but shaped by both linguistic and social contexts.

Fill in the blank: The study of meaning in language is called _____.

Feature	Semantics	Pragmatics
Focus	Literal, dictionary meaning of words and sentences.	Meaning in context; speaker's intent.
Example	<i>"Can you pass the salt?"</i>	<i>"Can you pass the salt?"</i>
Interpretation	A question about the physical ability of the listener to lift and move the salt.	A polite request for the listener to actually give the salt to the speaker.
Goal	Decoding the linguistic signal.	Understanding the social function of the utterance.

Box 1.3 Semantics versus pragmatics

Pilot questions 1.3

1. What is the difference between phonetics and phonology?
2. Which term refers to the smallest meaningful unit of language?
3. What does morphology study?
4. Which branch of linguistics focuses on sentence structure?
5. How does pragmatics differ from semantics?

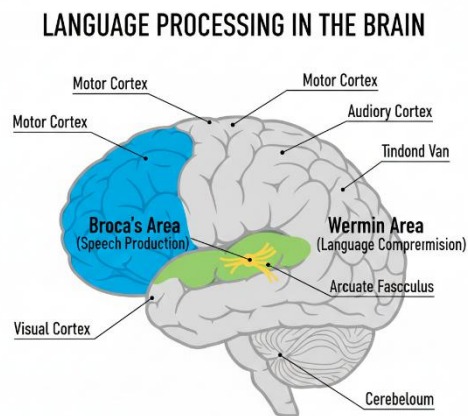
1.4 Linguistics and Related Disciplines

1.4.1 Linguistics and psychology

Psycholinguistics is the branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and the human mind. It explores how people acquire language, how they produce and comprehend speech, and how language is stored in memory. For example, children learn their first language remarkably quickly, which raises questions about whether humans are born with an innate ability for language. Psycholinguistics also investigates language disorders, such as aphasia, to understand how brain damage affects communication.



Fill in the blank: The study of the relationship between language and the human mind is called _____.



PSYCHOLINGUISTICS OVER DIAGRAM

Figure 1.4 Linguistics and psychology

1.4.2 Linguistics and sociology

Sociolinguistics examines the relationship between language and society. It studies how social factors such as class, gender, age, and ethnicity influence the way people speak. For instance, speakers may use different forms of language depending on whether they are in a formal or informal setting. Sociolinguistics also investigates language variation, dialects, and multilingualism. This area of study helps us understand how language both reflects and shapes social identity.

Fill in the blank: The study of how social factors influence language use is called _____.



SOCIOLINGUISTICS



LANGUAGE IN SOCIETY

OER IMAGE

Plate 1.2 Linguistics and sociology

1.4.3 Linguistics and anthropology

Anthropological linguistics focuses on the relationship between language and culture. It explores how language reflects cultural practices, beliefs, and traditions. For example, the vocabulary of a community often reveals what is most important in their daily lives. Anthropological linguistics also studies endangered languages, aiming to preserve them as part of cultural heritage. By examining language in its cultural context, this field highlights the deep connection between communication and human identity.

Fill in the blank: The study of the relationship between language and culture is called _____ linguistics.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON LANGUAGE

✓ **Kinship Terms:**

Specific vocabulary for family relations, reflecting social structure (e.g., separate words for maternal vs. paternal uncles).

✓ **Rituals:**

Specialized language used in ceremonies and traditions (e.g., wedding vows, religious chants).

✓ **Greetings:**

Social formulas and gestures showing showing respect, hierarchy, or community (e.g., formal vs. informal hellos).

ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS OER EXAMPLES



Box 1.4 Language and culture connections

Pilot questions 1.4

1. Which branch of linguistics studies the relationship between language and the human mind?
2. What does sociolinguistics investigate?
3. How do social factors such as class and gender influence language use?
4. Which branch of linguistics focuses on language and culture?
5. Why is the study of endangered languages important in anthropology?

Series Summary

This Series has introduced you to the foundations of linguistics, providing a strong base for your study of language as a scientific discipline. Its purpose was to familiarise you with the scope of linguistics, its historical development, its core areas of inquiry, and its connections with related fields. By engaging with these topics, you have gained insight into why linguistics is central to understanding human communication and how it has evolved into a modern science.

We began by defining linguistics and considering its scope as a scientific study of language. Then we traced its historical development, from early traditions to modern theories shaped by key figures. Following that, we explored the core areas of linguistic inquiry, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Finally, we examined how linguistics interacts with psychology, sociology, and anthropology. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to define linguistics clearly, analyse its historical development, describe its core areas, and evaluate its relationship with other disciplines.

Glossary of Terms

- **Anthropological linguistics:** The study of the relationship between language and culture, focusing on how language reflects cultural practices, beliefs, and traditions.
- **Comparative philology:** The study of the history and relationships of languages by comparing similarities and differences across them.
- **Generative grammar:** A theory introduced by Noam Chomsky that explains how humans can produce an infinite number of sentences from a finite set of rules.
- **Langue:** A term introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure referring to the structured system of language shared by a community.
- **Linguistics:** The scientific study of language, including its structure, function, and use in communication.
- **Morphology:** The study of word formation and structure, focusing on how smaller units called morphemes combine to form words.
- **Morpheme:** The smallest meaningful unit of language, such as a prefix, root, or suffix.
- **Parole:** A term introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure referring to individual speech acts or personal use of language.



- **Phonetics:** The study of the physical sounds of human speech, including how they are produced, transmitted, and perceived.
- **Phonology:** The study of the abstract sound systems of languages, analysing how sounds function and interact within a language.
- **Pragmatics:** The study of how meaning in language is influenced by social and situational context.
- **Psycholinguistics:** The study of the relationship between language and the human mind, including language acquisition, production, and comprehension.
- **Semantics:** The study of meaning in language, focusing on how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning.
- **Sociolinguistics:** The study of the relationship between language and society, examining how social factors such as class, gender, and age influence language use.
- **Structuralism:** An approach to linguistics introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure that emphasises the systematic and organised nature of language.

Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. Linguistics is defined as the _____ study of language. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
2. Which linguist introduced the concepts of *langue* and *parole*? (Linked to SLO 2.2)
3. The smallest meaningful unit of language is called a _____. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
4. Which branch of linguistics studies the relationship between language and society? (Linked to SLO 2.4)
5. Who introduced the theory of generative grammar? (Linked to SLO 2.2)

Short-answer questions

6. Define phonology and explain how it differs from phonetics. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
7. Describe the importance of linguistics in human communication. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
8. Identify one way in which sociolinguistics contributes to our understanding of social identity. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
9. Explain the role of semantics in analysing meaning. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
10. State one contribution of Panini to the study of language. (Linked to SLO 2.2)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the historical development of linguistics, highlighting key figures and milestones. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
12. Evaluate the relationship between linguistics and psychology, sociology, and anthropology, showing how each discipline benefits from linguistic insights. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
13. Describe the core areas of linguistic inquiry and illustrate their relevance with examples. (Linked to SLO 2.3)



Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. Scientific
2. Ferdinand de Saussure
3. Morpheme
4. Sociolinguistics
5. Noam Chomsky

Short-answer questions

6. Phonology studies the abstract sound systems of languages, while phonetics studies the physical sounds of speech.
7. Linguistics helps us understand how communication works, why misunderstandings occur, and how language is applied in education, translation, and technology.
8. Sociolinguistics shows how language reflects social identity, for example through dialects or speech styles linked to class or gender.
9. Semantics analyses meaning in words, phrases, and sentences, helping us interpret communication accurately.
10. Panini produced one of the earliest systematic descriptions of Sanskrit grammar.

Long-answer questions

11. *Basic response:* Linguistics developed from early traditions such as Panini's grammar and Greek philosophy. In the nineteenth century, comparative philology studied language relationships. Saussure introduced structuralism, and Chomsky later developed generative grammar. *Value-added response:* Outstanding learners may connect these milestones to broader intellectual movements, such as the rise of scientific inquiry in the nineteenth century, or link Chomsky's theories to cognitive science and artificial intelligence.
12. *Basic response:* Linguistics relates to psychology through psycholinguistics, sociology through sociolinguistics, and anthropology through anthropological linguistics. Each field uses language study to understand human behaviour and culture. *Value-added response:* Outstanding learners may evaluate how these relationships contribute to applied fields, such as language therapy in psychology, language policy in sociology, and cultural preservation in anthropology.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]

Answers to Pilot Questions 1.1

1. Linguistics
2. It relies on systematic observation and analysis
3. Phonology
4. It helps us understand communication and its role in sharing ideas, emotions, and knowledge
5. Pragmatics



Answers to Pilot Questions 1.2

1. Panini
2. Comparative philology
3. Ferdinand de Saussure
4. Ferdinand de Saussure
5. Generative grammar

Answers to Pilot Questions 1.3

1. Phonetics studies physical sounds, while phonology studies abstract sound systems
2. Morpheme
3. Word formation and structure
4. Syntax
5. Pragmatics considers context, while semantics focuses on literal meaning

Answers to Pilot Questions 1.4

1. Psycholinguistics
2. The relationship between language and society
3. They influence variation in speech, dialects, and choice of language forms
4. Anthropological linguistics
5. To preserve cultural heritage and identity through language

References and Attributions [Series 1]

The following references and attributions cover the instructional content and illustration placeholders used in **Series 1: Foundations of Linguistics**. Entries are presented in APA style for clarity and consistency.

Core references

- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Panini. (circa 500 BCE). *Astadhyayi* [Classical Sanskrit grammar].
- Saussure, F. de. (1916). *Course in general linguistics*. Edited by C. Bally & A. Sechehaye. London: Duckworth.
- Trask, R. L. (1996). *A dictionary of phonetics and phonology*. London: Routledge.
- Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2015). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (7th ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Illustration placeholders and attributions

- *Figure 1.1 Scope of linguistics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a clean educational diagram showing language at the centre with three branches labelled structure, function, and use.”



- Search string: “scope of linguistics diagram OER”
- *Box 1.1 Key features of linguistics as a science*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a simple text box with four bullet points: systematic observation, data collection, hypothesis testing, theory building.”
 - Search string: “linguistics scientific discipline features OER”
- *Plate 1.1 Linguistics and human communication*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an educational illustration showing diverse people talking, with speech bubbles to represent communication.”
 - Search string: “human communication linguistics OER image”
- *Plate 1.2 Early traditions of language study*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an educational illustration of an ancient manuscript scroll with text symbols to represent early language study.”
 - Search string: “Panini Sanskrit manuscript OER image”
- *Figure 1.2 Emergence of modern linguistics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram of a language family tree showing branches from a common ancestor.”
 - Search string: “comparative philology language family tree OER diagram”
- *Box 1.2 Selected milestones in linguistic history*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a simple text box listing Panini (Sanskrit grammar), Saussure (structuralism), Chomsky (generative grammar).”
 - Search string: “linguistics history milestones OER”
- *Figure 1.3 Phonetics and phonology*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a labelled diagram of the human vocal tract showing articulators used in speech.”
 - Search string: “phonetics vocal tract diagram OER”
- *Table 1.1 Examples of morphemes in English*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a simple educational table showing examples of morphemes in English with their types.”
 - Search string: “examples of morphemes English OER table”
- *Box 1.3 Semantics versus pragmatics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box comparing semantics and pragmatics with examples like ‘Can you pass the salt?’.”
 - Search string: “semantics vs pragmatics examples OER”



- *Figure 1.4 Linguistics and psychology*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a labelled diagram of the human brain highlighting areas involved in language processing.”
 - Search string: “psycholinguistics brain language processing diagram OER”
- *Plate 1.2 Linguistics and sociology*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an educational illustration showing diverse people talking in different social settings.”
 - Search string: “sociolinguistics language society OER image”
- *Box 1.4 Language and culture connections*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing examples of how culture influences language: kinship terms, rituals, greetings.”
 - Search string: “anthropological linguistics language culture OER examples”

Course code: LIN 101

Course title: Introduction to Linguistics

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Linguistics

Series 2: The Nature of Language

Series 3: Levels of Language Analysis

Series 4: Branches of Linguistics

Series 5: Concepts and Methods in Linguistics

Proposed Outline for Series 2

Part .1 Defining Language

- 2.1.1 What is language?
- 2.1.2 Language versus communication
- 2.1.3 Human language and its uniqueness

Part .2 Properties of Human Language

- 2.2.1 Arbitrariness
- 2.2.2 Productivity
- 2.2.3 Displacement



- 2.2.4 Cultural transmission

Part .3 Language Functions

- 2.3.1 Expressive function
- 2.3.2 Informative function
- 2.3.3 Directive function
- 2.3.4 Phatic function

Part .4 Language Variation and Universals

- 2.4.1 Dialects and registers
- 2.4.2 Language universals
- 2.4.3 The diversity of world languages

Introduction

Language is one of the most distinctive features of human life, shaping how we express ourselves, share knowledge, and build societies. Unlike other forms of communication found in animals, human language possesses unique qualities that allow us to create new ideas, talk about things beyond the present moment, and transmit culture across generations. This Series will help you explore what makes language special and why it is central to the study of linguistics.

The aim of this Series is to examine the defining characteristics of human language, its functions in communication, and the ways in which it varies yet also displays universal features. By doing so, the Series intends to equip you with the ability to critically analyse language as both a system and a social tool.

We shall commence this Series by defining language and distinguishing it from general communication, highlighting the uniqueness of human language. Next, we will study the properties of human language, such as arbitrariness, productivity, displacement, and cultural transmission. Following that, we will explore the functions of language, including expressive, informative, directive, and phatic uses. Finally, we will wrap up by considering language variation and universals, showing how languages differ yet share common features across the world.



Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

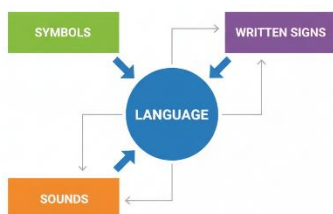
- **SLO 2.1** define language clearly and distinguish it from general communication,
- **SLO 2.2** explain the unique characteristics of human language,
- **SLO 2.3** analyse the properties of human language, including arbitrariness, productivity, displacement, and cultural transmission,
- **SLO 2.4** describe the main functions of language, such as expressive, informative, directive, and phatic uses,
- **SLO 2.5** evaluate language variation through dialects and registers, and
- **SLO 2.6** identify language universals and illustrate their relevance to the diversity of world languages.

2.1 Defining Language

2.1.1 What is language?

Language is a structured system of communication that uses symbols, sounds, or written signs to convey meaning. Unlike simple signals, language allows humans to express complex ideas, emotions, and abstract concepts. It is both a social tool and a cognitive ability, enabling us to interact with others and organise our thoughts.

Fill in the blank: Language is a structured system of _____ used to convey meaning.



LANGUAGE COMPONENTS DIAGRAM OER

Figure 2.1 Components of language

2.1.2 Language versus communication

Communication refers to the general process of transmitting information between individuals, which can occur through gestures, facial expressions, sounds, or signals. **Language**, however, is a specialised form of communication that uses structured rules and symbols to create infinite



possibilities of expression. For example, animals may communicate danger through calls, but human language allows us to describe past events, imagine future scenarios, and discuss abstract ideas.

Fill in the blank: While communication can occur through gestures or signals, language relies on _____ rules and symbols.

COMMUNICATION vs. LANGUAGE	
COMMUNICATION	LANGUAGE
• General transfer of information • Can be verbal or non-verbal • Examples: Animal calls, body language traffic signals	• Structured symbolic system • Specific to humans • Governed by grammar rules • Examples: Human speech, sign language, written text

OER EXAMPLES

Box 2.1 Language versus communication

2.1.3 Human language and its uniqueness

Human language is unique because it possesses properties not found in other communication systems. These include **arbitrariness** (words are not naturally tied to their meanings), **productivity** (the ability to create new expressions), and **displacement** (the ability to talk about things beyond the here and now). These features make human language flexible and powerful, enabling cultural transmission across generations.

Fill in the blank: The ability to talk about things beyond the present moment is called _____.



HUMAN LANGUAGE: DISPLACEMENT



TALKING ABOUT ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

SOCIOLINGUISTICS OER IMAGE

Plate 2.1 Human language and its uniqueness

Pilot questions 2.1

1. What is language defined as?
2. How does language differ from general communication?
3. Which property of human language allows us to create new expressions?
4. What is the term for the ability to talk about things beyond the present moment?
5. Why is human language considered unique compared to other communication systems?

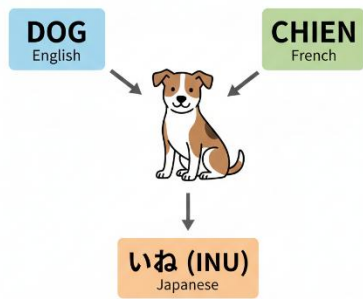
2.2 Properties of Human Language

2.2.1 Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness refers to the fact that there is no natural connection between a word and its meaning. For example, the word “dog” does not inherently resemble the animal it represents. Different languages use entirely different words for the same concept, showing that the link between sound and meaning is conventional rather than natural. This property allows languages to be flexible and diverse.

Fill in the blank: The property of language that shows no natural connection between words and their meanings is called _____.





ARBITRARIENESS IN LANGUAGE
OER DIAGRAM

Figure 2.2 Arbitrariness in language

2.2.2 Productivity

Productivity is the ability of human language to create new expressions and sentences that have never been spoken before. With a finite set of words and rules, speakers can generate an infinite number of messages. For instance, you can combine words to describe a completely new invention or idea. This property demonstrates the creative potential of language.

Fill in the blank: The property of language that allows speakers to generate infinite sentences from finite rules is called _____.

PRODUCTIVITY IN HUMAN LANGUAGE

Language allows us to create and understand of infinite of new messages.

- ✓ **New Inventions:** Creating for technology that didn't exist previously, like "smartphone", "blog", or "nanobot."
- ✓ **Imaginary:** Describing things for aren't real, such
- ✓ **Imaginary Creatures:** Describing 'a fire-breathing dragon with polka-dot wings' or 'a three-headed space hamster.'
- ✓ **Future Scenarios:** Discussing hypothetical events, like 'In the year 2050, humans might establish a colony on Mars.'

OER EXAMPLES

Box 2.2 Examples of productivity in language

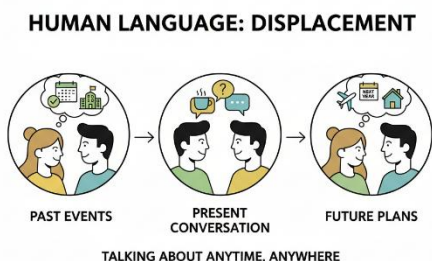
2.2.3 Displacement

Displacement is the property of language that allows us to talk about things beyond the immediate time and place. Humans can discuss past events, imagine future possibilities, or describe distant



locations. This sets human language apart from most animal communication, which is usually restricted to the present moment.

Fill in the blank: The property of language that allows us to talk about things beyond the here and now is called _____.



PSYCHOLINGUISTICS OER IMAGE

Plate 2.2 Displacement in human language

2.2.4 Cultural transmission

Cultural transmission refers to the way language is passed from one generation to another through learning, not genetics. Unlike animal communication systems that are largely instinctive, human language must be acquired through social interaction. Children learn the language of their community by listening, imitating, and practising. This property explains why language is both a social and cultural phenomenon.

Fill in the blank: The property of language that shows it is learned through social interaction rather than inherited biologically is called _____.

Context	Example of Cultural Transmission
First Language Acquisition	Children learning their mother tongue from parents and caregivers.
Second Language Acquisition	Immigrants acquiring the language of their new community through immersion.
Bilingualism	Children in bilingual households growing up with two languages based on social exposure.



Context	Example of Cultural Transmission
Regional Dialects	Individuals picking up specific accents or slang from their local peer groups.

Table 2.1 Examples of cultural transmission

Pilot questions 2.2

1. What does arbitrariness in language mean?
2. Which property of language allows speakers to create new expressions?
3. What is the term for the ability to talk about things beyond the present moment?
4. How is human language transmitted across generations?
5. Why is productivity considered a unique property of human language?

2.3 Language Functions

2.3.1 Expressive function

The **expressive function** of language allows speakers to convey emotions, attitudes, and personal feelings. For example, when someone says “I am happy” or “I feel tired,” they are using language to express their inner state. This function highlights the personal and emotional dimension of communication.

Fill in the blank: The function of language that conveys emotions and personal feelings is called the _____ function.

EXPRESSIVE FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE



SOCIOLINGUISTICS OR IMAGE

Plate 2.3 Expressive function of language

2.3.2 Informative function



The **informative function** of language is used to share facts, knowledge, or information. For instance, a teacher explaining a scientific concept or a news reporter delivering updates is using language informatively. This function is essential for education, journalism, and everyday communication where accuracy matters.

Fill in the blank: The function of language that shares facts and knowledge is called the _____ function.

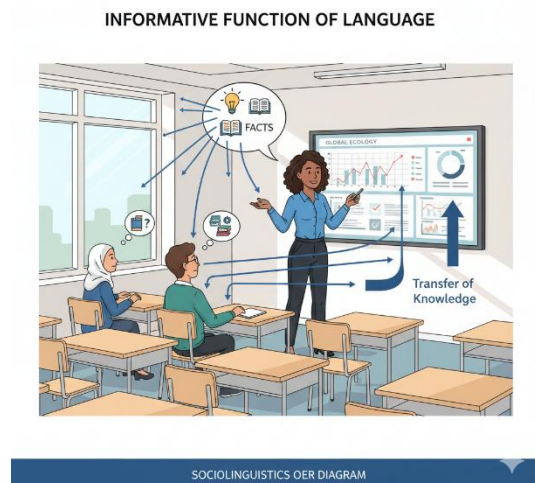


Figure 2.3 Informative function of language

2.3.3 Directive function

The **directive function** of language is used to influence the behaviour of others. Commands, requests, and instructions fall under this category. For example, “Close the door” or “Please sit down” are directive uses of language. This function demonstrates how language can be used to organise actions and guide social interaction.

Fill in the blank: The function of language that influences the behaviour of others is called the _____ function.

Type	Example
Command	"Close the door."
Instruction	"Follow the rules."
Request	"Please sit down."
Suggestion	"You should try the soup."



Box 2.3 Examples of directive language

2.3.4 Phatic function

The **phatic function** of language is used to establish or maintain social relationships rather than convey information. Greetings such as “Hello,” small talk like “Nice weather today,” or polite expressions such as “How are you?” serve phatic purposes. This function shows how language helps build connections and maintain social harmony.

Fill in the blank: The function of language that maintains social relationships is called the _____ function.

THE PHATIC FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE

Building Social Connections



Plate 2.4 Phatic function of language

Pilot questions 2.3

1. Which function of language conveys emotions and personal feelings?
2. What is the function of language that shares facts and knowledge?
3. Which function of language influences the behaviour of others?
4. What is the function of language that maintains social relationships?
5. Give one example of directive language.

2.4 Language Variation and Universals

2.4.1 Dialects and registers

A **dialect** is a regional or social variety of a language that differs in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar from the standard form. For example, British English and American English are dialects of the same language, yet they differ in certain words and expressions. A **register** refers to the level of formality or style of language used in different contexts, such as casual conversation,



academic writing, or legal documents. Both dialects and registers show how language adapts to social and situational needs.

Fill in the blank: A regional or social variety of a language is called a _____.

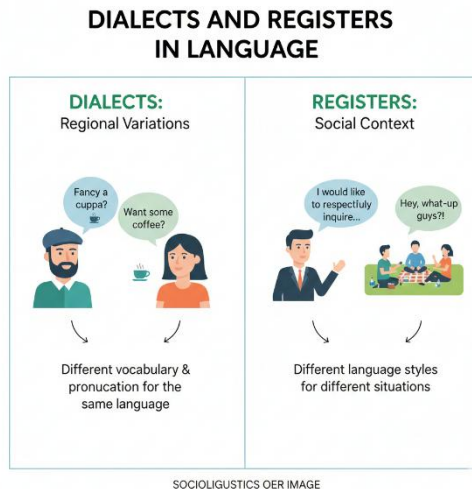


Plate 2.5 Dialects and registers in language use

2.4.2 Language universals

Language universals are features or patterns that are common to all human languages. Examples include the presence of nouns and verbs, the ability to form questions, and the use of negation. These universals suggest that despite differences, all languages share certain structural properties. Linguists study universals to understand the underlying principles of human language and its cognitive basis.

Fill in the blank: Features or patterns that are common to all human languages are called language _____.



LANGUAGE UNIVERSALS: SHARED FEATURES ACROSS LANGUAGES

OER Diagram | CC BY-SA

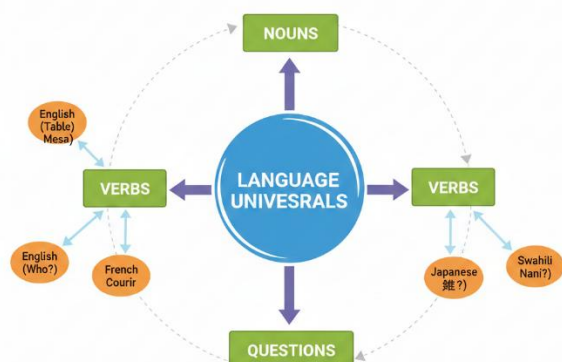


Figure 2.4 Language universals

2.4.3 The diversity of world languages

Human languages are incredibly diverse, with thousands spoken across the globe. This diversity reflects cultural identity, history, and social interaction. Some languages have millions of speakers, while others are endangered with only a few speakers left. Studying this diversity helps linguists appreciate the richness of human communication and the importance of preserving linguistic heritage.

Fill in the blank: Languages with very few speakers left are described as _____.

Category	Language Example	Description
Global Language	English	Spoken as a first or second language by millions worldwide; used in international business and science.
Regional Language	Yoruba	A major language in West Africa, primarily Nigeria, with tens of millions of speakers and a rich cultural heritage.
Endangered Language	Ainu	An indigenous language of Japan with very few fluent speakers remaining, currently undergoing revitalization efforts.

Table 2.2 Examples of language diversity



Pilot questions 2.4

1. What is a dialect?
2. What does the term register refer to in language use?
3. What are language universals?
4. Give two examples of language universals.
5. Why is it important to study the diversity of world languages?

Series Summary

This Series has focused on exploring the nature of language, helping you to appreciate what makes human language distinctive and why it is central to the study of linguistics. Its purpose was to highlight the defining features of language, its functions in communication, and the balance between diversity and universality across the world's languages. By engaging with these topics, you have gained a clearer understanding of language as both a structured system and a social phenomenon.

We began by defining language and distinguishing it from general communication, before examining the unique properties of human language such as arbitrariness, productivity, displacement, and cultural transmission. We then considered the functions of language, including expressive, informative, directive, and phatic uses, and concluded with a discussion of variation and universals, showing how languages differ yet share common features. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to define language, explain its unique characteristics, analyse its properties, describe its functions, evaluate variation, and identify universals that underpin human communication.

Glossary of Terms

- **Arbitrariness:** The property of language showing that words have no natural connection to their meanings, but are based on convention.
- **Communication:** The general process of transmitting information between individuals, which can occur through gestures, signals, or sounds.
- **Cultural transmission:** The property of language that shows it is learned socially and passed from one generation to another, rather than inherited biologically.
- **Dialect:** A regional or social variety of a language that differs in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar from the standard form.
- **Displacement:** The property of language that allows speakers to talk about things beyond the immediate time and place, such as past events or future possibilities.
- **Expressive function:** The use of language to convey emotions, attitudes, and personal feelings.
- **Informative function:** The use of language to share facts, knowledge, or information.
- **Language:** A structured system of symbols, sounds, or written signs used to convey meaning and enable human communication.
- **Language universals:** Features or patterns that are common to all human languages, such as the presence of nouns and verbs.



- **Phatic function:** The use of language to establish or maintain social relationships, often through greetings or small talk.
- **Productivity:** The property of language that allows speakers to generate an infinite number of sentences and expressions from a finite set of rules.
- **Register:** The level of formality or style of language used in different contexts, such as casual conversation or academic writing.
- **Directive function:** The use of language to influence the behaviour of others, often through commands, requests, or instructions.

Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective questions

1. Language is defined as a structured system of _____ used to convey meaning. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
2. Which property of human language allows speakers to generate infinite sentences from finite rules? (Linked to SLO 2.3)
3. The function of language that maintains social relationships is called the _____ function. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
4. A regional or social variety of a language is called a _____. (Linked to SLO 2.5)
5. Features or patterns that are common to all human languages are called language _____. (Linked to SLO 2.6)

Short-answer questions

6. Explain how language differs from general communication. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
7. Describe the property of displacement in human language. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
8. Give one example of the directive function of language. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
9. What does the term register refer to in language use? (Linked to SLO 2.5)
10. State two examples of language universals. (Linked to SLO 2.6)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the unique properties of human language, highlighting how they distinguish it from other communication systems. (Linked to SLO 2.2 and SLO 2.3)
12. Evaluate the functions of language in human interaction, showing how each contributes to communication. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
13. Discuss language variation and universals, illustrating their relevance to the diversity of world languages. (Linked to SLO 2.5 and SLO 2.6)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective questions

1. Communication



2. Productivity
3. Phatic
4. Dialect
5. Universals

Short-answer questions

6. Communication is the general transfer of information, while language is a structured system using rules and symbols to create infinite expressions.
7. Displacement is the property of language that allows humans to talk about things beyond the immediate time and place, such as past events or future possibilities.
8. Example: “Close the door.”
9. Register refers to the level of formality or style of language used in different contexts, such as casual conversation or academic writing.
10. Examples: All languages have nouns and verbs; all languages can form questions.

Long-answer questions

11. *Basic response:* Human language is unique because it is arbitrary, productive, capable of displacement, and transmitted culturally. These properties distinguish it from animal communication, which is often instinctive and limited to the present. *Value-added response:* Outstanding learners may connect these properties to broader themes, such as creativity in literature, the role of displacement in scientific discovery, or the importance of cultural transmission in preserving endangered languages.
12. *Basic response:* Language functions include expressive (conveying emotions), informative (sharing facts), directive (influencing behaviour), and phatic (maintaining social relationships). Each contributes to communication in different ways. *Value-added response:* Outstanding learners may evaluate how these functions operate in specific contexts, such as education, politics, or digital communication, showing how language adapts to meet diverse human needs.
13. *Basic response:* Language variation includes dialects and registers, while universals are features common to all languages. Together, they show both diversity and shared structures in human communication. *Value-added response:* Outstanding learners may illustrate variation with examples from world languages, discuss the importance of universals in linguistic theory, and reflect on how studying diversity supports cultural preservation and global understanding.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

Answers to Pilot Questions 2.1

1. A structured system of communication using symbols, sounds, or written signs.
2. Language relies on structured rules and symbols.
3. Displacement.
4. Because it possesses properties such as arbitrariness, productivity, displacement, and cultural transmission.

Answers to Pilot Questions 2.2



1. Words have no natural connection to their meanings but are based on convention.
2. Productivity.
3. Displacement.
4. Through cultural transmission, by learning from social interaction across generations.
5. Because it allows speakers to generate infinite sentences from finite rules.

Answers to Pilot Questions 2.3

1. Expressive function.
2. Informative function.
3. Directive function.
4. Phatic function.
5. Example: “Close the door.”

Answers to Pilot Questions 2.4

1. A regional or social variety of a language.
2. The level of formality or style of language used in different contexts.
3. Features or patterns common to all human languages.
4. Examples: All languages have nouns and verbs; all languages can form questions.
5. Because it helps us appreciate human communication, cultural identity, and the need to preserve endangered languages.

References and Attributions [Series 2]

The following references and attributions cover the instructional content and illustration placeholders used in **Series 2: The Nature of Language**. Entries are presented in APA style for clarity and consistency.

Core references

- Crystal, D. (2003). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2018). *An introduction to language* (11th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Lyons, J. (1981). *Language and linguistics: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2015). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (7th ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Illustration placeholders and attributions

- *Figure 2.1 Components of language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a simple educational diagram showing language at the centre with branches labelled symbols, sounds, and written signs.”



- Search string: “language components diagram OER”
- *Box 2.1 Language versus communication*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box comparing communication and language, with examples of animal calls versus human speech.”
 - Search string: “language vs communication OER examples”
- *Plate 2.1 Human language and its uniqueness*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of diverse people talking, with thought bubbles showing past, present, and future events.”
 - Search string: “human language uniqueness displacement OER image”
- *Figure 2.2 Arbitrariness in language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the word dog in English, French, and Japanese pointing to the same animal.”
 - Search string: “arbitrariness in language examples OER diagram”
- *Box 2.2 Examples of productivity in language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing examples of productivity in language: new inventions, imaginary creatures, future scenarios.”
 - Search string: “productivity property of language examples OER”
- *Plate 2.2 Displacement in human language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of people talking, with thought bubbles showing past, present, and future events.”
 - Search string: “displacement property of language OER image”
- *Table 2.1 Examples of cultural transmission*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a simple educational table showing examples of cultural transmission in language learning.”
 - Search string: “cultural transmission language examples OER table”
- *Plate 2.3 Expressive function of language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of a person speaking with expressive facial emotions such as happiness and sadness.”
 - Search string: “expressive function of language OER image”
- *Figure 2.3 Informative function of language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram of a teacher explaining information to students in a classroom.”
 - Search string: “informative function of language OER diagram”



- *Box 2.3 Examples of directive language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing examples of directive language such as commands and requests.”
 - Search string: “directive function of language examples OER”
- *Plate 2.4 Phatic function of language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of two people greeting each other with a handshake or casual talk.”
 - Search string: “phatic function of language OER image”
- *Plate 2.5 Dialects and registers in language use*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of two people speaking English with different accents or vocabulary.”
 - Search string: “dialects and registers examples OER image”
- *Figure 2.4 Language universals*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing different languages connected to shared features like nouns, verbs, and questions.”
 - Search string: “language universals examples OER diagram”
- *Table 2.2 Examples of language diversity*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a simple educational table showing examples of global, regional, and endangered languages.”
 - Search string: “diversity of world languages OER examples”

Course code: LIN 101

Course title: Introduction to Linguistics

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Linguistics

Series 2: The Nature of Language

Series 3: Levels of Language Analysis

Series 4: Branches of Linguistics

Series 5: Concepts and Methods in Linguistics



Proposed Outline for Series 3

Part .1 Phonetics and Phonology

- 3.1.1 Phonetics: the study of speech sounds
- 3.1.2 Phonology: sound systems and patterns
- 3.1.3 Differences between phonetics and phonology

Part .2 Morphology

- 3.2.1 Morphemes: the smallest units of meaning
- 3.2.2 Word formation processes
- 3.2.3 Inflection and derivation

Part .3 Syntax

- 3.3.1 Sentence structure and rules
- 3.3.2 Phrase structure and constituents
- 3.3.3 Transformations and grammatical relations

Part .4 Semantics and Pragmatics

- 3.4.1 Semantics: meaning in words and sentences
- 3.4.2 Pragmatics: meaning in context
- 3.4.3 Differences between semantics and pragmatics

Introduction

In the last Series, we explored the nature of language, examining its defining properties, functions, and the balance between variation and universals. Building on that foundation, this Series takes you deeper into the study of linguistics by focusing on the different levels at which language can be analysed. Understanding these levels is essential because they reveal how sounds, words, sentences, and meanings work together to form the complex system we call language.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the major levels of language analysis and to equip you with the skills needed to describe, explain, and evaluate how language operates at each level. By the end, you will be able to recognise the distinct components of language and appreciate how they interact to create meaningful communication.

We shall commence this Series by exploring phonetics and phonology, which deal with speech sounds and sound systems. Next, we will move on to morphology, where we examine how words are formed from smaller units of meaning. Following that, we will study syntax, focusing on sentence structure and grammatical relations. Finally, we will wrap up with semantics and



pragmatics, considering how meaning is conveyed both through words and within context. This progression will provide you with a comprehensive view of language analysis, preparing you to engage critically with linguistic study.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 3.1** define phonetics as the study of speech sounds,
- **SLO 3.2** explain phonology as the study of sound systems and patterns,
- **SLO 3.3** distinguish between phonetics and phonology,
- **SLO 3.4** identify morphemes as the smallest units of meaning in language,
- **SLO 3.5** describe common word formation processes in morphology,
- **SLO 3.6** analyse the difference between inflection and derivation,
- **SLO 3.7** explain the basic rules of sentence structure in syntax,
- **SLO 3.8** demonstrate how phrases and constituents are organised within sentences,
- **SLO 3.9** evaluate transformations and grammatical relations in syntax,
- **SLO 3.10** define semantics as the study of meaning in words and sentences,
- **SLO 3.11** explain pragmatics as the study of meaning in context, and
- **SLO 3.12** distinguish between semantics and pragmatics with clear examples.

3.1 Phonetics and Phonology

3.1.1 Phonetics: the study of speech sounds

Phonetics is the branch of linguistics concerned with the physical production, transmission, and perception of speech sounds. It examines how sounds are articulated by the vocal organs, how they travel as sound waves, and how they are heard and interpreted by listeners. Phonetics is divided into three main areas: articulatory phonetics (how sounds are made), acoustic phonetics (the physical properties of sound waves), and auditory phonetics (how sounds are perceived).

Fill in the blank: The study of how speech sounds are physically produced and perceived is called _____.



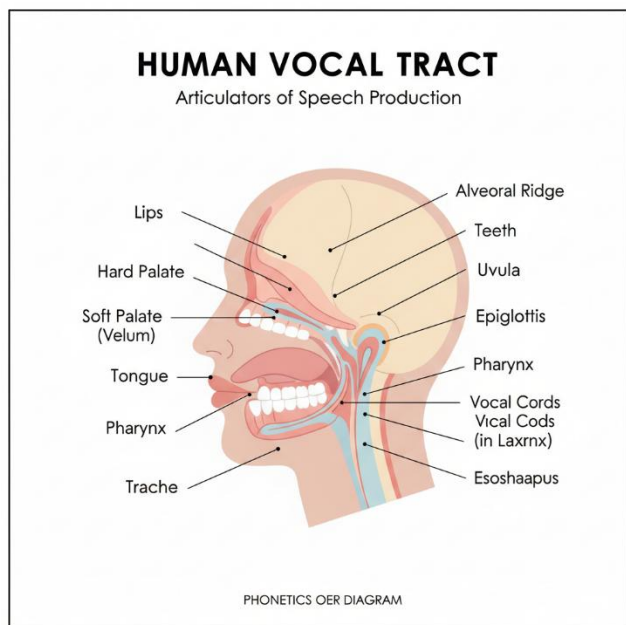


Figure 3.1 The human vocal tract in phonetics

3.1.2 Phonology: sound systems and patterns

Phonology is the study of how sounds function within a particular language or languages. Unlike phonetics, which focuses on the physical properties of sounds, phonology examines the abstract rules and patterns that govern how sounds are organised and used. For example, English allows certain consonant clusters at the beginning of words (like 'str' in 'street') but not others. Phonology helps us understand why some sound combinations are possible while others are not.

Fill in the blank: The study of how sounds are organised and patterned in a language is called _____.

Feature	Phonetics	Phonology
Focus	Physical properties of sounds.	Abstract patterns and systems.
Key Areas	Articulation (how sounds are made), Perception (how sounds are heard).	Sound systems, rules of combination, and patterns (phonemes).
Example	The physical act of vibrating vocal cords to produce a [b] sound.	The rule in English that tells us "st-" is a valid start to a word, but "sb-" is not.

Box 3.1 Key differences between phonetics and phonology

3.1.3 Differences between phonetics and phonology

Although closely related, phonetics and phonology differ in scope and focus. Phonetics deals with the physical reality of sounds, while phonology deals with their abstract organisation in a language system. Together, they provide a complete picture of how speech sounds work.

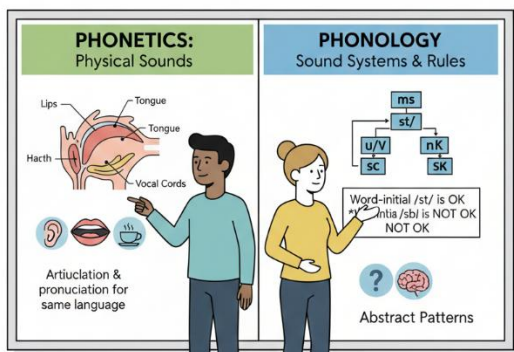


Phonetics explains how sounds are made and heard, while phonology explains how they are used to create meaning and structure in communication.

Fill in the blank: Phonetics focuses on the physical reality of sounds, while phonology focuses on their _____ organisation.

PHONETICS vs. PHONOLOGY:

Understanding Speech



LINGUISTICS OER OER IMAGE

Plate 3.1 Comparing phonetics and phonology

Pilot questions 3.1

1. What is phonetics concerned with?
2. Name the three main areas of phonetics.
3. What does phonology study in language?
4. Give one example of a phonological rule in English.
5. How does phonetics differ from phonology?

3.2 Morphology

3.2.1 Morphemes: the smallest units of meaning

Morphology is the branch of linguistics that studies the structure of words and how they are formed. The basic building blocks of morphology are **morphemes**, which are the smallest units of meaning in a language. For example, the word “unhappiness” contains three morphemes: “un-” (meaning not), “happy” (the root word), and “-ness” (indicating a state or quality). Morphemes can be free (able to stand alone as words) or bound (attached to other morphemes to create meaning).

Fill in the blank: The smallest unit of meaning in a language is called a _____.



MORPHEMES: WORD STRUCTURE

Breaking Down “UNHAPPINESS”

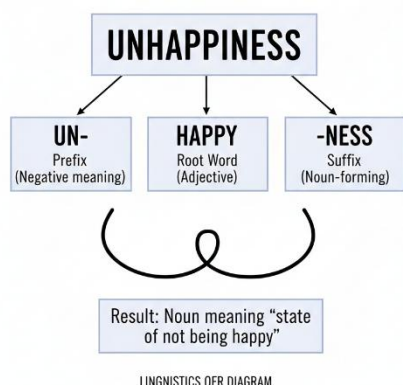


Figure 3.2 Morphemes in word structure

3.2.2 Word formation processes

Languages use different processes to form new words. Some common processes include **affixation** (adding prefixes or suffixes, e.g., “re-write”), **compounding** (joining two words, e.g., “toothbrush”), **conversion** (changing word class without altering form, e.g., “to email” from “email”), and **blending** (combining parts of words, e.g., “smog” from “smoke” and “fog”). These processes show the creativity and flexibility of language in expanding vocabulary.

Fill in the blank: The process of joining two words together to form a new word is called _____.

Process	Definition	Example
Affixation	Adding a prefix or suffix to a base word.	Un- + happy = <i>Unhappy</i>
Compounding	Combining two or more free morphemes.	Sun + flower = <i>Sunflower</i>
Conversion	Changing a word's category without changing its form.	Butter (noun) $\rightarrow$ butter (verb)
Blending	Joining parts of two words to create a new one.	Smoke + fog = <i>Smog</i>

Box 3.2 Common word formation processes

3.2.3 Inflection and derivation

Inflection refers to changes made to a word to express grammatical features such as tense, number, or case. For example, “walk” becomes “walked” to indicate past tense, and “cat” becomes “cats” to indicate plural. Inflection does not change the core meaning or word class.



Derivation, on the other hand, creates new words by adding affixes that change meaning or word class. For example, “happy” becomes “unhappy” (change in meaning), and “teach” becomes “teacher” (change in word class).

Fill in the blank: Adding affixes to a word to create a new meaning or change its word class is called _____.

Process	Example	Type of Change
Inflection	walk $\rightarrow$ walked	Grammatical: Changes tense, but the word remains a verb.
Inflection	cat $\rightarrow$ cats	Grammatical: Changes number (singular to plural), but the word remains a noun.
Derivation	happy $\rightarrow$ unhappy	Semantic: Changes the meaning to the opposite (antonym).
Derivation	teach $\rightarrow$ teacher	Category: Changes the word from a verb to a noun.

Table 3.1 Examples of inflection and derivation

Pilot questions 3.2

1. What is morphology concerned with?
2. What is the smallest unit of meaning in a language?
3. Give one example of compounding in word formation.
4. What is the difference between inflection and derivation?
5. Provide one example of derivation that changes word class.

3.3 Syntax

3.3.1 Sentence structure and rules

Syntax is the branch of linguistics that studies how words are arranged to form sentences. It focuses on the rules and principles that govern sentence construction. For example, in English, a typical sentence follows the Subject–Verb–Object order, as in “The boy kicked the ball.” Syntax helps us understand why certain word orders are acceptable while others are not.

Fill in the blank: The branch of linguistics that studies how words are arranged to form sentences is called _____.



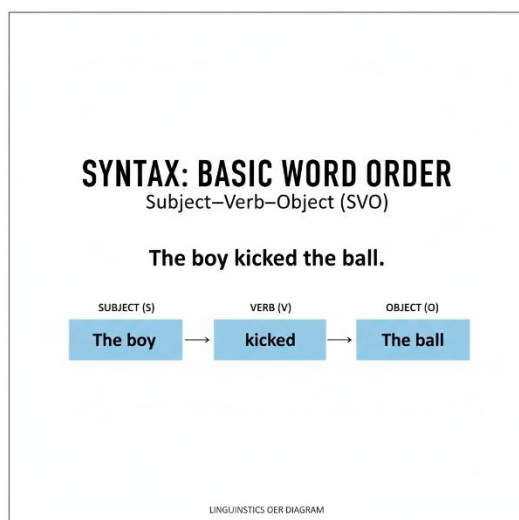


Figure 3.3 Sentence structure in English syntax

3.3.2 Phrase structure and constituents

A **constituent** is a group of words that function together as a unit within a sentence. Syntax examines how these constituents combine to form phrases and sentences. For example, in the sentence “The tall boy kicked the ball,” “The tall boy” is a noun phrase, while “kicked the ball” is a verb phrase. Phrase structure rules explain how these constituents are organised.

Fill in the blank: A group of words that function together as a unit within a sentence is called a _____.

Phrase Type	Definition	Examples
Noun Phrase (NP)	A phrase built around a noun or pronoun.	<i>The tall student, They, A delicious apple</i>
Verb Phrase (VP)	A phrase built around a main verb.	<i>ran quickly, ate the sandwich, is sleeping</i>
Prepositional Phrase (PP)	A phrase starting with a preposition.	<i>on the table, with a pen, under the bridge</i>

Box 3.3 Examples of constituents in sentences

3.3.3 Transformations and grammatical relations

Transformations refer to changes in sentence structure that preserve meaning, such as turning a statement into a question. For example, “The boy kicked the ball” can be transformed into “Did the boy kick the ball?” **Grammatical relations** describe the roles words play in sentences, such as subject, object, and predicate. These relations help us analyse how meaning is conveyed through sentence organisation.



Fill in the blank: Changing a statement into a question while preserving meaning is an example of a _____.

Transformation / Relation	Original Structure	Transformed Structure
Statement $\rightarrow$ Question	<i>You are eating.</i>	<i>Are you eating?</i>
Active $\rightarrow$ Passive	<i>The chef prepared the meal.</i>	<i>The meal was prepared by the chef.</i>
Subject $\rightarrow$ Object	She (Subject) saw him.	He saw her (Object).

Table 3.2 Examples of transformations and grammatical relations

Pilot questions 3.3

1. What does syntax study in linguistics?
2. What is the typical sentence order in English?
3. What is a constituent in syntax?
4. Give one example of a phrase structure rule.
5. What is meant by transformations in syntax?

3.4 Semantics and Pragmatics

3.4.1 Semantics: meaning in words and sentences

Semantics is the study of meaning in language. It focuses on how words, phrases, and sentences convey meaning. For example, the word “dog” refers to a specific type of animal, and the sentence “The dog is sleeping” communicates a clear idea. Semantics deals with literal meaning, including word definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and sentence interpretation.

Fill in the blank: The study of meaning in words and sentences is called _____.

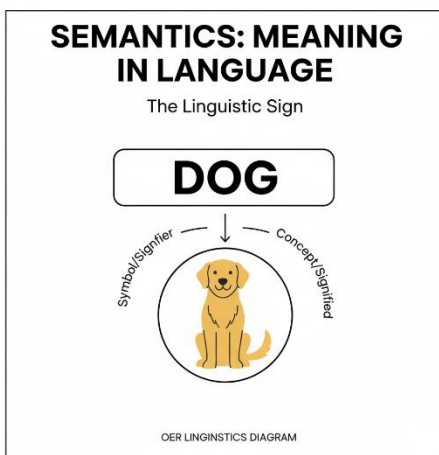


Figure 3.4 Semantics in language

3.4.2 Pragmatics: meaning in context

Pragmatics is the study of how meaning is shaped by context. It goes beyond literal meaning to consider factors such as speaker intention, social relationships, and situational context. For example, the phrase “Can you pass the salt?” is literally a question about ability, but pragmatically it functions as a polite request. Pragmatics helps us understand implied meanings, politeness strategies, and conversational norms.

Fill in the blank: The study of how meaning is shaped by context is called _____.

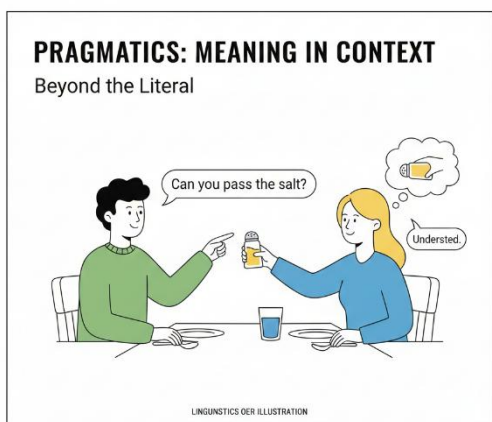


Plate 3.2 Pragmatics in everyday communication

3.4.3 Differences between semantics and pragmatics

Although both deal with meaning, semantics and pragmatics differ in focus. Semantics is concerned with the literal meaning of words and sentences, while pragmatics considers meaning in relation to context and usage. Together, they provide a fuller understanding of how language conveys meaning. For instance, “It’s cold in here” may semantically describe temperature, but pragmatically it could imply a request to close the window.

Fill in the blank: Semantics focuses on literal meaning, while pragmatics focuses on meaning in _____.

Feature	Semantics	Pragmatics
Focus	Literal, objective meaning of words and sentences.	Meaning in context; the speaker's intent.
Question Asked	What does this word/sentence mean?	What does the speaker <i>mean by</i> saying this?



Feature	Semantics	Pragmatics
Example	"It's cold in here." (A statement about the ambient temperature.)	"It's cold in here." (A request for someone to close a window.)

Box 3.4 Key differences between semantics and pragmatics

Pilot questions 3.4

1. What does semantics study in language?
2. Give one example of literal meaning in semantics.
3. What does pragmatics focus on in communication?
4. Provide one example of pragmatics in everyday speech.
5. How does semantics differ from pragmatics?

Series Summary

This Series has explored the different levels at which linguists analyse language, showing how sounds, words, sentences, and meanings interact to form communication. Its purpose was to provide you with a structured understanding of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, and to highlight how each level contributes to the overall system of language.

We began with phonetics and phonology, focusing on speech sounds and sound systems. Then we examined morphology, looking at morphemes, word formation processes, and the distinction between inflection and derivation. Following that, we studied syntax, considering sentence structure, phrase organisation, and transformations. Finally, we explored semantics and pragmatics, distinguishing between literal meaning and meaning in context. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to define and explain each level of analysis, distinguish between related concepts, and evaluate how these levels interact to form human language.

Glossary of Terms

- **Affixation:** The process of adding prefixes or suffixes to a word to create new meaning.
- **Constituent:** A group of words functioning together as a unit within a sentence.
- **Derivation:** The process of creating new words by adding affixes that change meaning or word class.



- **Inflection:** The modification of a word to express grammatical features such as tense or number.
- **Morphology:** The study of the structure of words and how they are formed.
- **Morpheme:** The smallest unit of meaning in a language.
- **Phonetics:** The study of the physical production, transmission, and perception of speech sounds.
- **Phonology:** The study of sound systems and patterns within a language.
- **Pragmatics:** The study of meaning in context, considering speaker intention and social factors.
- **Semantics:** The study of meaning in words and sentences.
- **Syntax:** The study of how words are arranged to form sentences.
- **Transformation:** A change in sentence structure that preserves meaning, such as turning a statement into a question.

Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. The smallest unit of meaning in a language is called a _____. (Linked to SLO 3.4)
2. Which branch of linguistics studies speech sounds? (Linked to SLO 3.1)
3. Changing “The boy kicked the ball” into “Did the boy kick the ball?” is an example of a _____. (Linked to SLO 3.9)
4. The study of meaning in context is called _____. (Linked to SLO 3.11)
5. Inflection changes grammatical features but does not change _____. (Linked to SLO 3.6)

Short-answer questions

6. Define phonology. (Linked to SLO 3.2)
7. Give one example of compounding in word formation. (Linked to SLO 3.5)
8. What is a constituent in syntax? (Linked to SLO 3.8)
9. Provide one example of semantics in everyday language. (Linked to SLO 3.10)
10. How does derivation differ from inflection? (Linked to SLO 3.6)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the differences between phonetics and phonology, highlighting their scope and focus. (Linked to SLO 3.3)



12. Evaluate the role of morphology in expanding vocabulary, with examples of word formation processes. (Linked to SLO 3.5)
13. Discuss the importance of syntax in sentence organisation, illustrating with examples of transformations and grammatical relations. (Linked to SLO 3.7–3.9)
14. Compare semantics and pragmatics, showing how they complement each other in communication. (Linked to SLO 3.12)

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 3]

Answers to Pilot Questions 3.1

1. Phonetics is concerned with the physical production, transmission, and perception of speech sounds.
2. Articulatory, acoustic, and auditory phonetics.
3. Phonology studies sound systems and patterns in language.
4. Example: English allows “str” at the beginning of words but not “bn.”
5. Phonetics deals with physical sounds, phonology with abstract organisation.

Answers to Pilot Questions 3.2

1. Morphology studies the structure of words and how they are formed.
2. Morpheme.
3. Example: “toothbrush.”
4. Inflection modifies grammatical features, derivation creates new words or changes word class.
5. Example: “teach” → “teacher.”

Answers to Pilot Questions 3.3

1. Syntax studies how words are arranged to form sentences.
2. Subject–Verb–Object.
3. A constituent is a group of words functioning as a unit.
4. Example: A noun phrase consists of a determiner and a noun.
5. Transformations are changes in sentence structure that preserve meaning.

Answers to Pilot Questions 3.4

1. Semantics studies meaning in words and sentences.
2. Example: “The dog is sleeping.”
3. Pragmatics focuses on meaning shaped by context.
4. Example: “Can you pass the salt?” functioning as a request.



5. Semantics is literal meaning, pragmatics is contextual meaning.

References and Attributions [Series 3]

Core references

- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2018). *An introduction to language* (11th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan.
- Lyons, J. (1981). *Language and linguistics: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Radford, A. (2004). *English syntax: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Illustration placeholders and attributions

- *Figure 3.1 The human vocal tract in phonetics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a labelled diagram of the human vocal tract showing articulators used in speech.”
 - Search string: “phonetics vocal tract diagram OER”
- *Box 3.1 Key differences between phonetics and phonology*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box comparing phonetics and phonology with examples of physical sounds versus sound rules.”
 - Search string: “phonetics vs phonology OER examples”
- *Plate 3.1 Comparing phonetics and phonology*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of two learners comparing phonetics (speech sounds) and phonology (sound rules).”
 - Search string: “phonetics and phonology comparison OER image”
- *Figure 3.2 Morphemes in word structure*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the word unhappiness split into un-, happy, and -ness.”
 - Search string: “morpheme word structure diagram OER”
- *Box 3.2 Common word formation processes*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing word formation processes with examples: affixation, compounding, conversion, blending.”
 - Search string: “word formation processes examples OER”
- *Table 3.1 Examples of inflection and derivation*



- Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a simple table showing examples of inflection and derivation in English words.”
- Search string: “inflection vs derivation examples OER table”
- *Figure 3.3 Sentence structure in English syntax*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing Subject–Verb–Object order with the sentence The boy kicked the ball.”
 - Search string: “syntax sentence structure diagram OER”
- *Box 3.3 Examples of constituents in sentences*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing examples of constituents such as noun phrases, verb phrases, and prepositional phrases.”
 - Search string: “syntax constituents examples OER”
- *Table 3.2 Examples of transformations and grammatical relations*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a table showing examples of transformations (statement to question, active to passive) and grammatical relations.”
 - Search string: “syntax transformations grammatical relations OER table”
- *Figure 3.4 Semantics in language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the word dog connected to an image of a dog to illustrate semantics.”
 - Search string: “semantics meaning in language OER diagram”
- *Plate 3.2 Pragmatics in everyday communication*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of two people at a dinner table, one asking Can you pass the salt.”
 - Search string: “pragmatics meaning in context OER image”
- *Box 3.4 Key differences between semantics and pragmatics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box comparing semantics and pragmatics with examples of literal versus contextual meaning.”
 - Search string: “semantics vs pragmatics examples OER”

Course code: LIN 101

Course title: Introduction to Linguistics

Course credit load: 2 Units



Series 1: Foundations of Linguistics

Series 2: The Nature of Language

Series 3: Levels of Language Analysis

Series 4: Branches of Linguistics

Series 5: Concepts and Methods in Linguistics

Proposed Outline for Series 4

Part .1 Theoretical branches

- 4.1.1 Phonetics and phonology
- 4.1.2 Morphology
- 4.1.3 Syntax
- 4.1.4 Semantics and pragmatics

Part .2 Applied branches

- 4.2.1 Sociolinguistics
- 4.2.2 Psycholinguistics
- 4.2.3 Computational linguistics
- 4.2.4 Language acquisition and teaching

Part .3 Interdisciplinary branches

- 4.3.1 Historical linguistics
- 4.3.2 Anthropological linguistics
- 4.3.3 Forensic linguistics
- 4.3.4 Neurolinguistics

Part .4 Emerging and specialised branches

- 4.4.1 Discourse analysis
- 4.4.2 Pragmatic stylistics
- 4.4.3 Corpus linguistics
- 4.4.4 Evolutionary linguistics

Introduction

In the last Series, we examined the different levels of language analysis, moving from sounds to words, sentences, and meaning. That exploration provided you with the tools to understand how



language is structured and interpreted. In this Series, we shift our attention to the broader picture by looking at the major branches of linguistics. This is important because linguistics is not a single, uniform field but a collection of interconnected areas, each offering unique insights into how language works in theory, practice, and society.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the principal branches of linguistics and to equip you with the ability to describe, differentiate, and evaluate their scope and relevance. By the end, you will be able to identify the theoretical foundations of linguistics, recognise its applied dimensions, and appreciate its interdisciplinary and emerging areas.

We shall commence this Series by exploring the theoretical branches, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Next, we will move on to applied branches such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, and language acquisition. Following that, we will examine interdisciplinary branches, including historical, anthropological, forensic, and neurolinguistics. Finally, we will wrap up by considering emerging and specialised branches such as discourse analysis, stylistics, corpus linguistics, and evolutionary linguistics. This progression will provide you with a comprehensive overview of the discipline, showing how linguistics connects theory, practice, and innovation.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 4.1** define the theoretical branches of linguistics, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics,
- **SLO 4.2** explain the scope and applications of applied branches such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, and language acquisition,
- **SLO 4.3** analyse the contributions of interdisciplinary branches, including historical, anthropological, forensic, and neurolinguistics, to the study of language, and
- **SLO 4.4** evaluate the relevance of emerging and specialised branches such as discourse analysis, stylistics, corpus linguistics, and evolutionary linguistics in modern linguistic research.

4.1 Theoretical Branches

4.1.1 Phonetics and phonology

Phonetics is the study of the physical properties of speech sounds, including how they are produced, transmitted, and perceived. It focuses on the mechanics of articulation, the acoustic features of sound waves, and the auditory processes involved in hearing. **Phonology**, on the other hand, examines how sounds are organised within a language system. It deals with abstract rules and patterns, such as why certain sound combinations are permissible in a language while others



are not. Together, phonetics and phonology provide the foundation for understanding the sound systems of human language.

Fill in the blank: The study of how sounds are organised and patterned in a language is called _____.

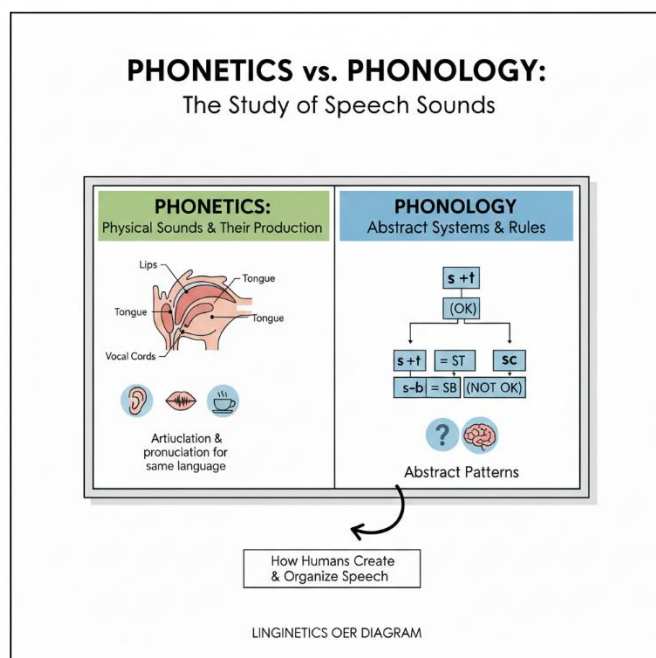


Figure 4.1 Phonetics and phonology compared

4.1.2 Morphology

Morphology is the branch of linguistics concerned with the structure of words. It studies how words are formed from smaller units of meaning called **morphemes**. For example, the word “unhappiness” contains three morphemes: “un-” (prefix meaning not), “happy” (root word), and “-ness” (suffix meaning state or quality). Morphology also examines processes such as inflection (changes to indicate tense, number, or case) and derivation (creating new words by adding affixes).

Fill in the blank: The smallest unit of meaning in a language is called a _____.

Process	Definition	Examples
Inflection	Modifies a word to express grammatical categories like tense, number, or case without changing the word's core meaning or class.	walk $\rightarrow$ walked (tense)



Process	Definition	Examples
		cat $\rightarrow$ cats (plural)
Derivation	Creates a new word, often changing the lexical category (e.g., verb to noun) or significantly altering the meaning.	teach (verb) $\rightarrow$ teacher (noun) happy $\rightarrow$ unhappy (opposite meaning)

Box 4.1 Examples of morphological processes

4.1.3 Syntax

Syntax is the study of how words are arranged to form sentences. It focuses on the rules and principles that govern sentence construction. For example, English typically follows a Subject–Verb–Object order, as in “The boy kicked the ball.” Syntax also examines constituents, which are groups of words functioning as units, such as noun phrases and verb phrases. Transformations, such as changing a statement into a question, are also part of syntactic analysis.

Fill in the blank: A group of words that function together as a unit within a sentence is called a _____.



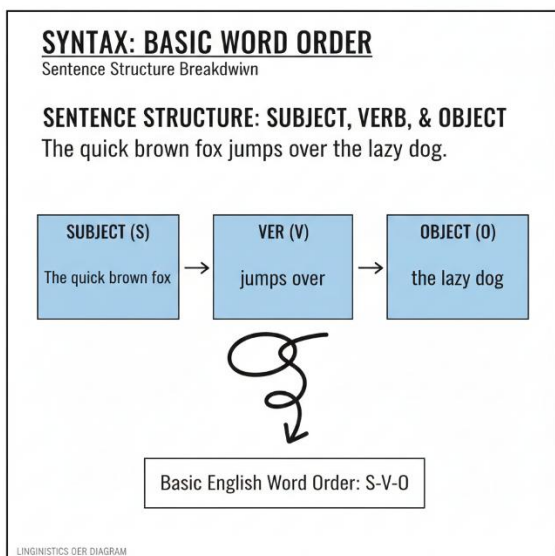


Figure 4.2 Sentence structure in syntax

4.1.4 Semantics and pragmatics

Semantics is the study of meaning in words and sentences. It deals with literal meaning, including definitions, synonyms, antonyms, and sentence interpretation. For example, the word “dog” refers to a specific type of animal, and the sentence “The dog is sleeping” conveys a clear idea. **Pragmatics**, however, focuses on meaning in context. It considers speaker intention, social relationships, and situational factors. For instance, “Can you pass the salt?” is semantically a question about ability but pragmatically functions as a polite request.

Fill in the blank: Semantics focuses on literal meaning, while pragmatics focuses on meaning in _____.

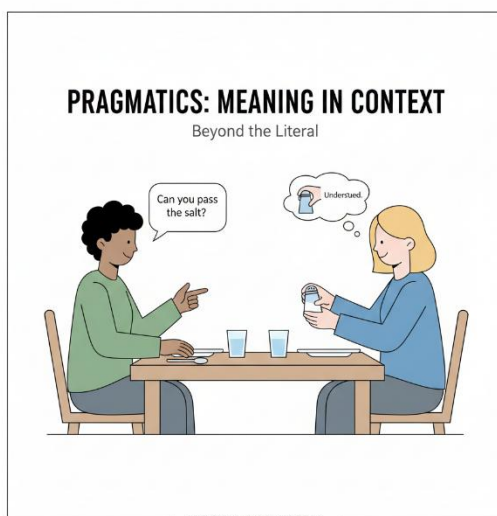


Plate 4.1 Pragmatics in everyday communication

Pilot questions 4.1

1. What does phonetics study in linguistics?
2. How does phonology differ from phonetics?
3. What is the smallest unit of meaning in a language?
4. What is a constituent in syntax?
5. How does semantics differ from pragmatics?

4.2 Applied Branches

4.2.1 Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. It explores how factors such as social class, gender, age, and region influence the way people speak. For example, speakers may use different dialects or registers depending on whether they are in a formal or informal setting. Sociolinguistics also examines language variation, language attitudes, and issues of identity.

Fill in the blank: The branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and society is called _____.



Plate 4.2 Sociolinguistics and language variation

4.2.2 Psycholinguistics



Psycholinguistics investigates how language is processed in the mind. It studies how people acquire, produce, and comprehend language. For instance, it looks at how children learn their first language, how adults process sentences in real time, and how memory and cognition support communication. Psycholinguistics also examines language disorders and how they affect communication.

Fill in the blank: The study of how language is processed in the mind is called _____.

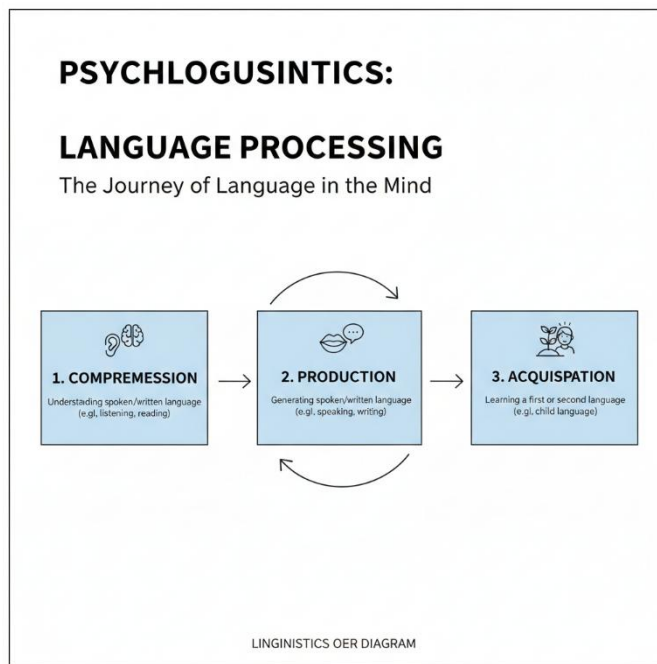


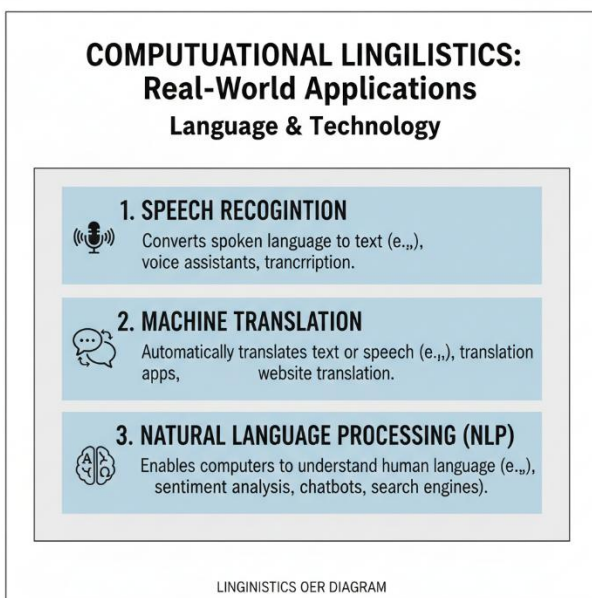
Figure 4.3 Psycholinguistic processes

4.2.3 Computational linguistics

Computational linguistics applies computer science techniques to the study of language. It involves developing algorithms and models that allow machines to process human language. Examples include speech recognition systems, machine translation, and natural language processing applications. Computational linguistics bridges linguistics and technology, making language analysis more efficient and practical.

Fill in the blank: The branch of linguistics that applies computer science techniques to language study is called _____.





Box 4.2 Applications of computational linguistics

4.2.4 Language acquisition and teaching

Language acquisition refers to the process by which humans learn language, either as a first language or additional languages. It examines stages of development, strategies, and influences such as environment and exposure. **Language teaching** applies linguistic knowledge to help learners acquire new languages effectively. It involves methods, approaches, and tools designed to support language learning in educational contexts.

Fill in the blank: The process by which humans learn language is called _____.



APPLIED LINGUISTICS: LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

First vs. Second Language Learning

Feature	Process Natural, Acquisition Implicit	Second Acquisition Explicit Sound Systems, Textbooks
1. Process	Natural, Implicit	Formal
2. Setting	Home, Environment	Classroom
4. Cognitive	Early Childhood (0-6 yrs) Unconscious, Effortless	4. Later in Life (Child-Adult)
5. Example	A baby learning their parents' native tongue.	5. Example: A high school student taking Spanish class.

LINGUISTICS OVER DIAGRAM

Table 4.1 Differences between first and second language acquisition

Pilot questions 4.2

1. What does sociolinguistics study?
2. What is psycholinguistics concerned with?
3. Give one application of computational linguistics.
4. What is language acquisition?
5. How does first language acquisition differ from second language acquisition?

4.3 Interdisciplinary Branches

4.3.1 Historical linguistics

Historical linguistics is the study of how languages change over time. It examines processes such as sound change, word borrowing, and the development of new grammatical structures. For example, English has borrowed words from Latin, French, and other languages, which explains much of its vocabulary diversity. Historical linguistics also investigates language families and reconstructs proto-languages to trace linguistic ancestry.

Fill in the blank: The study of how languages change over time is called _____.



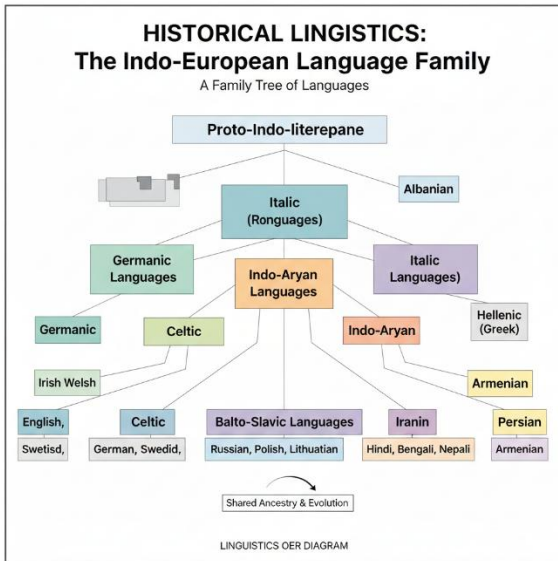


Figure 4.4 Language family tree in historical linguistics

4.3.2 Anthropological linguistics

Anthropological linguistics explores the relationship between language and culture. It studies how language reflects cultural practices, beliefs, and social organisation. For instance, kinship terms in different societies reveal cultural values about family relationships. Anthropological linguistics also examines how language is used in rituals, traditions, and storytelling.

Fill in the blank: The branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and culture is called _____.

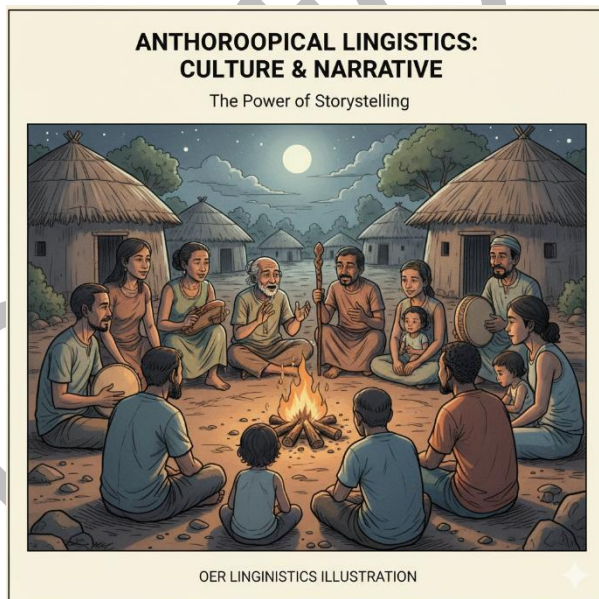


Plate 4.3 Anthropological linguistics and culture

4.3.3 Forensic linguistics

Forensic linguistics applies linguistic analysis to legal and criminal contexts. It involves examining written or spoken language to provide evidence in investigations. For example, forensic linguists may analyse ransom notes, disputed authorship, or courtroom discourse. This branch highlights the practical importance of linguistics in solving real-world problems.

Fill in the blank: The application of linguistic analysis to legal and criminal contexts is called _____.

Application Area	Description	Examples
Authorship Identification	Determining the likely author of a text based on unique linguistic patterns (the "linguistic fingerprint").	Analyzing ransom notes, anonymous emails, or disputed social media posts.
Analysis of Legal Texts	Examining the language of legislation, contracts, and legal documents for clarity and interpretation.	Interpreting the specific meaning of a statute or identifying ambiguity in a contract.
Courtroom Discourse	Studying the use of language during trials and legal proceedings.	Analyzing cross-examination techniques or the impact of leading questions on witness testimony.

Box 4.3 Applications of forensic linguistics

4.3.4 Neurolinguistics

Neurolinguistics studies the relationship between language and the brain. It investigates how language is represented, processed, and sometimes impaired due to brain injury or neurological disorders. For example, conditions such as aphasia provide insights into how different brain regions support language functions. Neurolinguistics combines linguistics with neuroscience to understand the biological foundations of communication.

Fill in the blank: The study of the relationship between language and the brain is called _____.



Type of Aphasia	Brain Region	Primary Effect	Speech Characteristics
Broca's Aphasia	Frontal Lobe (Broca's Area)	Production deficit	"Telegraphic" speech; slow, labored, and halting. Meaning is clear, but grammar is lost.
Wernicke's Aphasia	Temporal Lobe (Wernicke's Area)	Comprehension deficit	"Word Salad"; speech is fluent and rhythmic but makes no sense. Often uses made-up words.
Global Aphasia	Multiple Regions	Total deficit	Severe impairment in both understanding and producing any form of language.
Anomic Aphasia	Varied	Naming deficit	Fluent speech and good comprehension, but a persistent "tip-of-the-tongue" inability to name objects.

Table 4.2 Types of aphasia and their effects on language

Pilot questions 4.3

1. What does historical linguistics study?
2. Give one example of how English has changed over time.
3. What is anthropological linguistics concerned with?
4. Provide one application of forensic linguistics.
5. What does neurolinguistics investigate?

4.4 Emerging and Specialised Branches

4.4.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is the study of language use beyond the sentence level. It examines how texts and conversations are structured, how meaning is conveyed through cohesion and coherence, and how speakers achieve communication goals in interaction. For example, discourse analysis can be applied to political speeches, classroom discussions, or everyday conversations to reveal patterns of organisation and power relations.

Fill in the blank: The study of language use beyond the sentence level is called _____.



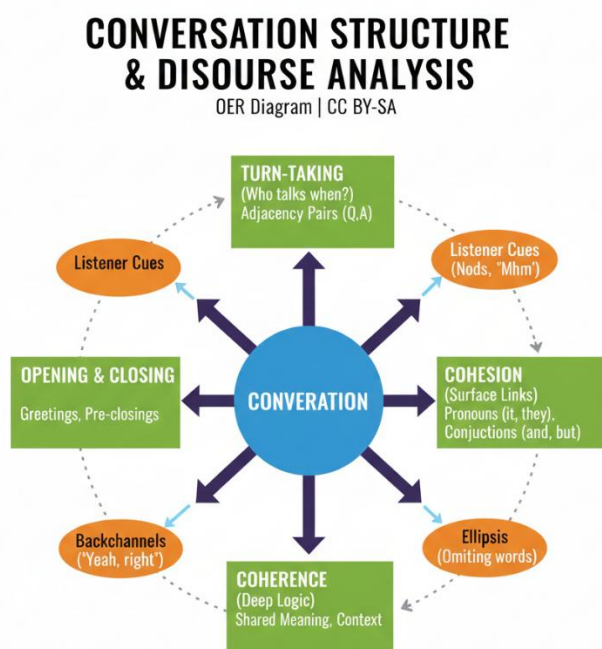


Figure 4.5 Discourse analysis in communication

4.4.2 Pragmatic stylistics

Pragmatic stylistics combines insights from pragmatics and stylistics to study how meaning and style interact in texts. It looks at how authors use language choices to achieve effects, such as irony, persuasion, or humour, and how readers interpret these choices in context. For instance, pragmatic stylistics can be applied to literature, advertisements, or media texts to uncover how language style influences interpretation.

Fill in the blank: The branch of linguistics that studies how meaning and style interact in texts is called _____.

Plate 4.4 Pragmatic stylistics in literature

Short description: Image showing a reader interpreting irony in a literary text. Suggestion of AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of a reader interpreting irony in a literary text.” Search string: “pragmatic stylistics examples OER image”

4.4.3 Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is the study of language based on large collections of texts, known as corpora. It uses computer tools to analyse patterns of word usage, frequency, and collocation across



thousands or millions of words. For example, corpus linguistics can reveal how often certain phrases occur in academic writing compared to everyday speech. It is widely used in dictionary-making, language teaching, and computational applications.

Fill in the blank: The study of language based on large collections of texts is called _____.

Application	Description
Dictionary-Making (Lexicography)	Modern dictionaries (like Oxford or Merriam-Webster) use corpora to identify new words, track shifts in meaning, and provide authentic usage examples.
Language Teaching & Learning	Moving away from "textbook" English to "real-world" English. It helps in creating frequency-based vocabulary lists and identifying common learner errors.
Computational Analysis & NLP	Training AI models, sentiment analysis, and machine translation (like Google Translate) by feeding them vast amounts of natural language data.
Grammar & Discourse Research	Studying how grammar varies across different genres (e.g., academic writing vs. casual texting) or identifying ideological bias in media.
Forensic Linguistics	Using linguistic patterns in a corpus to help identify authors of anonymous texts or detect plagiarism in legal cases.

Box 4.4 Applications of corpus linguistics

4.4.4 Evolutionary linguistics

Evolutionary linguistics investigates the origins and development of language in humans. It explores how language may have evolved from earlier communication systems, the biological adaptations that support language, and the cultural processes that shaped its growth. For example, evolutionary linguistics considers how gestures, vocalisations, and social cooperation contributed to the emergence of complex language.

Fill in the blank: The branch of linguistics that studies the origins and development of human language is called _____.

Theory	Primary Driver	Core Argument	Supporting Evidence
Gesture-First	Manual Signs	Language evolved from hand signals and body	Great apes use intentional gestures more flexibly than



Theory	Primary Driver	Core Argument	Supporting Evidence
		movements, only later migrating to the mouth.	vocalizations; the "mirror neuron" system links action to perception.
Vocalisation-First	Oral Sounds	Language began with primate-like calls (emotional or referential) that gradually became more complex.	Human infants produce "protophones" (vocal sounds) far more frequently than intentional gestures from birth.
Social Cooperation	Group Dynamics	Language evolved to facilitate complex social bonds, resource sharing, and collective labor.	The "Social Brain Hypothesis"; the need for coordination in hunting/foraging drove the evolution of shared intent.
Musical Protolanguage	Pitch & Rhythm	Language and music share a common ancestor ("musilanguage") used for mating displays or group bonding.	Many cultures use tonal languages; infants are highly sensitive to the prosody (melody) of "motherese."

Table 4.3 Theories of language evolution

Pilot questions 4.4

1. What does discourse analysis study?
2. What is pragmatic stylistics concerned with?
3. What is a corpus in linguistics?
4. Give one application of corpus linguistics.
5. What does evolutionary linguistics investigate?

Series Summary

This Series has introduced you to the major branches of linguistics, highlighting how the discipline is organised into theoretical, applied, interdisciplinary, and emerging areas. Its purpose was to show the breadth of linguistic study and to help you appreciate how each branch contributes to our understanding of language in different contexts.

We began with the theoretical branches, covering phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Then we moved on to applied branches such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, and language acquisition. Following that, we



examined interdisciplinary branches including historical, anthropological, forensic, and neurolinguistics. Finally, we explored emerging and specialised branches such as discourse analysis, pragmatic stylistics, corpus linguistics, and evolutionary linguistics. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to define the theoretical foundations, explain the scope of applied branches, analyse the contributions of interdisciplinary areas, and evaluate the relevance of emerging branches in modern linguistic research.

Glossary of Terms

- **Anthropological linguistics:** The study of how language reflects and shapes cultural practices, beliefs, and social organisation.
- **Corpus linguistics:** The study of language using large collections of texts (corpora) to analyse patterns of word use and frequency.
- **Derivation:** A morphological process that creates new words by adding affixes which change meaning or word class.
- **Discourse analysis:** The study of language use beyond the sentence level, focusing on how texts and conversations are structured.
- **Evolutionary linguistics:** The branch of linguistics that investigates the origins and development of human language.
- **Forensic linguistics:** The application of linguistic analysis to legal and criminal contexts, such as authorship identification or courtroom discourse.
- **Historical linguistics:** The study of how languages change over time, including sound changes, borrowing, and the development of language families.
- **Inflection:** A morphological process that modifies a word to express grammatical features such as tense, number, or case without changing its core meaning.
- **Language acquisition:** The process by which humans learn language, either as a first language or additional languages.
- **Morphology:** The branch of linguistics concerned with the structure of words and how they are formed from smaller units of meaning.
- **Morpheme:** The smallest unit of meaning in a language, such as “un-” in “unhappy.”
- **Neurolinguistics:** The study of the relationship between language and the brain, including how language is processed and affected by neurological disorders.
- **Phonetics:** The study of the physical properties of speech sounds, including their production, transmission, and perception.
- **Phonology:** The study of how sounds are organised and patterned within a language system.
- **Pragmatics:** The study of meaning in context, considering speaker intention, social relationships, and situational factors.
- **Pragmatic stylistics:** The study of how meaning and style interact in texts, combining insights from pragmatics and stylistics.
- **Psycholinguistics:** The study of how language is processed in the mind, including acquisition, comprehension, and production.
- **Semantics:** The study of meaning in words and sentences, focusing on literal meaning.
- **Sociolinguistics:** The study of the relationship between language and society, including variation across social groups and contexts.



- **Syntax:** The study of how words are arranged to form sentences, including rules of sentence structure and transformations.
- **Transformation:** A syntactic process that changes sentence structure while preserving meaning, such as turning a statement into a question.

Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective Questions

1. The study of how sounds are organised and patterned in a language is called _____. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
2. Which applied branch of linguistics investigates how language is processed in the mind? (Linked to SLO 4.2)
3. The application of linguistic analysis to legal and criminal contexts is known as _____. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
4. The study of language based on large collections of texts is called _____. (Linked to SLO 4.4)
5. Inflection modifies a word to express grammatical features but does not change its _____. (Linked to SLO 4.1)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Define morphology and give one example of a morphological process. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
7. Explain one application of computational linguistics in everyday technology. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
8. What is the main focus of anthropological linguistics? (Linked to SLO 4.3)
9. Provide one example of how pragmatics differs from semantics. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
10. Identify one difference between first and second language acquisition. (Linked to SLO 4.2)

Long-Answer Questions

11. Analyse the differences between phonetics and phonology, highlighting their scope and focus. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
12. Evaluate the contributions of sociolinguistics to our understanding of language variation. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
13. Discuss the importance of neurolinguistics in understanding language and the brain, with examples of language disorders. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
14. Compare corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, showing how each contributes to modern linguistic research. (Linked to SLO 4.4)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective Questions

1. Phonology.



2. Psycholinguistics.
3. Forensic linguistics.
4. Corpus linguistics.
5. Core meaning or word class.

Short-Answer Questions

6. Morphology is the study of word structure. Example: inflection, such as “walk” → “walked.”
7. Computational linguistics is used in machine translation, such as Google Translate.
8. Anthropological linguistics focuses on the relationship between language and culture.
9. Semantics is literal meaning, while pragmatics considers meaning in context. Example: “Can you pass the salt?” is pragmatically a request.
10. First language acquisition is natural and unconscious, while second language acquisition is often formal and conscious.

Long-Answer Questions

11. **Basic response:** Phonetics studies the physical properties of speech sounds, while phonology studies their organisation in a language system. **Value-added response:** Phonetics involves articulatory, acoustic, and auditory aspects, while phonology examines rules such as permissible sound combinations. Together, they explain both the physical and abstract dimensions of sound.
12. **Basic response:** Sociolinguistics studies how language varies across social groups and contexts. **Value-added response:** It explains phenomena such as dialects, code-switching, and language attitudes, showing how social identity and power relations influence communication.
13. **Basic response:** Neurolinguistics studies the relationship between language and the brain, including disorders such as aphasia. **Value-added response:** It highlights how Broca’s aphasia affects speech production and Wernicke’s aphasia affects comprehension, providing insights into brain regions responsible for language.
14. **Basic response:** Corpus linguistics analyses large collections of texts, while discourse analysis studies language use beyond the sentence level. **Value-added response:** Corpus linguistics provides quantitative evidence of patterns, while discourse analysis reveals qualitative insights into cohesion, coherence, and power relations in communication. Together, they enrich modern linguistic research by combining data-driven and interpretive approaches.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Part 4.1 Theoretical Branches

1. Phonetics studies the physical properties of speech sounds, including their production, transmission, and perception.
2. Phonology differs from phonetics by focusing on the abstract organisation and patterns of sounds in a language system.
3. A morpheme.
4. A constituent is a group of words that function together as a unit within a sentence.



5. Semantics focuses on literal meaning, while pragmatics focuses on meaning in context.

Part 4.2 Applied Branches

1. Sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society.
2. Psycholinguistics is concerned with how language is processed in the mind, including acquisition, comprehension, and production.
3. One application of computational linguistics is machine translation.
4. Language acquisition is the process by which humans learn language.
5. First language acquisition is natural and unconscious, while second language acquisition is often formal and conscious.

Part 4.3 Interdisciplinary Branches

1. Historical linguistics studies how languages change over time.
2. English has changed by borrowing words from Latin, French, and other languages.
3. Anthropological linguistics is concerned with the relationship between language and culture.
4. One application of forensic linguistics is authorship identification.
5. Neurolinguistics investigates the relationship between language and the brain, including how disorders affect communication.

Part 4.4 Emerging and Specialised Branches

1. Discourse analysis studies language use beyond the sentence level.
2. Pragmatic stylistics is concerned with how meaning and style interact in texts.
3. A corpus is a large collection of texts used for linguistic analysis.
4. One application of corpus linguistics is dictionary-making.
5. Evolutionary linguistics investigates the origins and development of human language.

References and Attributions [Series 4]

Core References

- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2018). *An introduction to language* (11th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan.
- Lyons, J. (1981). *Language and linguistics: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Radford, A. (2004). *English syntax: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Illustrations (Figures, Plates, Tables, Boxes)

- *Figure 4.1 Phonetics and phonology compared*



- Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram comparing phonetics (speech sounds) and phonology (sound patterns).”
- Search string: “phonetics vs phonology diagram OER”
- Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Box 4.1 Examples of morphological processes*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing examples of inflection and derivation in morphology.”
 - Search string: “morphology inflection derivation examples OER”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Figure 4.2 Sentence structure in syntax*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing sentence structure with subject, verb, and object highlighted.”
 - Search string: “syntax sentence structure diagram OER”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Plate 4.1 Pragmatics in everyday communication*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of two people at a dinner table, one asking Can you pass the salt.”
 - Search string: “pragmatics meaning in context OER image”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Plate 4.2 Sociolinguistics and language variation*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of people from different social backgrounds speaking in varied dialects.”
 - Search string: “sociolinguistics language variation OER image”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Figure 4.3 Psycholinguistic processes*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing stages of language processing: comprehension, production, and acquisition.”
 - Search string: “psycholinguistics language processing diagram OER”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Box 4.2 Applications of computational linguistics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing applications of computational linguistics such as speech recognition and machine translation.”



- Search string: “computational linguistics applications OER examples”
- Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Table 4.1 Differences between first and second language acquisition*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a table comparing first and second language acquisition with examples.”
 - Search string: “first vs second language acquisition OER table”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Figure 4.4 Language family tree in historical linguistics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the Indo-European language family tree.”
 - Search string: “Indo-European language family tree OER diagram”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Plate 4.3 Anthropological linguistics and culture*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of a community storytelling scene around a fire.”
 - Search string: “anthropological linguistics culture OER image”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Box 4.3 Applications of forensic linguistics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing applications of forensic linguistics such as authorship identification and courtroom discourse.”
 - Search string: “forensic linguistics applications OER examples”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Table 4.2 Types of aphasia and their effects on language*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a table showing types of aphasia and their effects on language.”
 - Search string: “aphasia types neurolinguistics OER table”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Figure 4.5 Discourse analysis in communication*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing the structure of a conversation with turns and cohesion markers.”
 - Search string: “discourse analysis conversation structure OER diagram”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.



- *Plate 4.4 Pragmatic stylistics in literature*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate an illustration of a reader interpreting irony in a literary text.”
 - Search string: “pragmatic stylistics examples OER image”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Box 4.4 Applications of corpus linguistics*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Create a text box listing applications of corpus linguistics such as dictionary-making and language teaching.”
 - Search string: “corpus linguistics applications OER examples”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.
- *Table 4.3 Theories of language evolution*
 - Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a table comparing theories of language evolution such as gesture-first and vocalisation-first.”
 - Search string: “evolutionary linguistics theories OER table”
 - Attribution: AI-generated illustration using Copilot graphic tool.

Course code: LIN 101

Course title: Introduction to Linguistics

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Foundations of Linguistics

Series 2: The Nature of Language

Series 3: Levels of Language Analysis

Series 4: Branches of Linguistics

Series 5: Concepts and Methods in Linguistics

Proposed Outline for Series 5

Part .1 Fundamental concepts in linguistics

- 5.1.1 Language as a system of communication
- 5.1.2 Competence and performance
- 5.1.3 Descriptive vs prescriptive approaches
- 5.1.4 Universals and diversity in language



Part .2 Methods of linguistic analysis

- 5.2.1 Data collection in linguistics (fieldwork, corpora, experiments)
- 5.2.2 Comparative and historical methods
- 5.2.3 Structural and functional approaches
- 5.2.4 Quantitative and computational methods

Part .3 Applications of linguistic methods

- 5.3.1 Language documentation and preservation
- 5.3.2 Language teaching and pedagogy
- 5.3.3 Translation and interpretation studies
- 5.3.4 Speech technology and natural language processing

Part .4 Critical perspectives in linguistics

- 5.4.1 Ethical issues in linguistic research
- 5.4.2 Power, ideology, and language
- 5.4.3 Interdisciplinary critiques (philosophy, sociology, anthropology)
- 5.4.4 Future directions in linguistic methods

Introduction

In the last Series, we explored the different branches of linguistics, ranging from theoretical foundations to applied, interdisciplinary, and emerging areas. That overview provided you with a broad understanding of how linguistics is organised as a discipline. In this Series, we turn our attention to the concepts and methods that underpin linguistic study. This is important because linguistics is not only about what we study but also about how we study it, and the approaches we use determine the quality and reliability of our insights.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the core concepts and methodological approaches in linguistics, equipping you with the ability to describe key ideas, apply analytical methods, and evaluate their relevance in different contexts.

We shall commence this Series by examining fundamental concepts such as language as a system of communication, competence and performance, descriptive versus prescriptive approaches, and universals and diversity in language. Next, we will move on to methods of linguistic analysis, including data collection, comparative and historical approaches, structural and functional perspectives, and computational techniques. Following that, we will consider applications of these methods in areas such as language documentation, teaching, translation, and speech technology. Finally, we will wrap up by exploring critical perspectives, including ethical issues, power and ideology, interdisciplinary critiques, and future directions in linguistic methods. This progression will provide you with both the conceptual grounding and practical tools needed to engage meaningfully with the study of language.



Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 5.1** define key concepts in linguistics such as language as a system, competence and performance, and descriptive versus prescriptive approaches,
- **SLO 5.2** explain the significance of language universals and diversity in shaping linguistic study,
- **SLO 5.3** demonstrate methods of linguistic data collection including fieldwork, corpus analysis, and experimental approaches,
- **SLO 5.4** analyse comparative, historical, structural, and functional methods of linguistic analysis,
- **SLO 5.5** apply quantitative and computational techniques to basic linguistic problems,
- **SLO 5.6** evaluate the applications of linguistic methods in language documentation, teaching, translation, and speech technology, and
- **SLO 5.7** critically assess ethical issues, power relations, and interdisciplinary perspectives in linguistic research.

5.1 Fundamental Concepts in Linguistics

5.1.1 Language as a system of communication

Language is a structured system of communication that uses sounds, symbols, and rules to convey meaning. It is distinguished from other forms of communication, such as animal signals, by its complexity, creativity, and ability to express abstract ideas. Linguists view language as both a social tool and a cognitive system, enabling humans to share information, build relationships, and transmit culture.

Fill in the blank: Unlike animal signals, human _____ allows for creativity and the expression of abstract ideas.



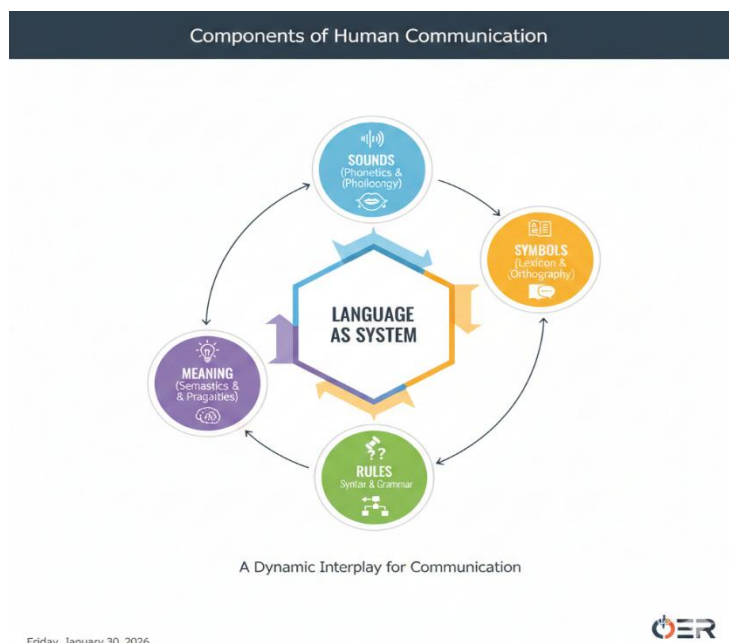


Figure 5.1 Language as a system of communication

5.1.2 Competence and performance

Competence refers to a speaker's internal knowledge of their language, including grammar, vocabulary, and rules. It is the idealised capacity to produce and understand sentences. **Performance**, however, is the actual use of language in real situations, which may be influenced by memory limits, distractions, or errors. For example, someone may have the competence to form a complex sentence but may hesitate or make mistakes when speaking under pressure.

Fill in the blank: The actual use of language in real situations, influenced by factors such as memory, is called _____.

Feature	Competence	Performance
Focus	Potential / Ability	Actual execution
Errors	Impossible (at this level)	Common (slips of the tongue)
Linguistic Goal	Mapping the "Mental Grammar"	Studying language in social context

Box 5.1 Distinction between competence and performance

5.1.3 Descriptive vs prescriptive approaches

A **descriptive approach** in linguistics records and analyses how language is actually used by speakers, without judging correctness. For example, noting that many English speakers say



“gonna” instead of “going to.” A **prescriptive approach**, on the other hand, sets rules about how language should be used, often based on tradition or authority. For instance, insisting that sentences should not end with prepositions. Linguists generally adopt descriptive approaches, as they aim to study language as it exists rather than how it ought to be.

Fill in the blank: The approach that records and analyses how language is actually used is called _____.



Plate 5.1 Descriptive and prescriptive approaches contrasted

5.1.4 Universals and diversity in language

Language universals are features or principles common to all human languages, such as the presence of nouns and verbs or the ability to form questions. **Language diversity** refers to the wide variation across languages in sounds, structures, and meanings. For example, while all languages have ways to express negation, the specific forms differ greatly. Studying both universals and diversity helps linguists understand what is shared across humanity and what is unique to particular communities.

Fill in the blank: Features or principles common to all human languages are called language _____.

Feature	Linguistic Universals (The Commonalities)	Examples of Linguistic Diversity (The Differences)
Parts of Speech	All languages have categories for Nouns (objects/people) and Verbs (actions).	Some languages (like Salish) make very little distinction between nouns and



Feature	Linguistic Universals (The Commonalities)	Examples of Linguistic Diversity (The Differences)
		verbs, while others have dozens of noun classes.
Word Order	Almost all languages use a consistent basic order (e.g., Subject-Verb-Object).	English: "The cat (S) ate (V) the fish (O)." Japanese: "The cat (S) the fish (O) ate (V)." Irish: "Ate (V) the cat (S) the fish (O)."
Functionality	Every language has a way to form Questions , negate statements, and indicate time.	Some languages use specific words for questions, others use only pitch changes (intonation), and others use "tags" at the end of sentences.
Sound Systems	All spoken languages use a combination of Vowels and Consonants .	Rotokas has only 11 phonemes (sounds), while !Xóõ has over 100, including complex "click" sounds.
Abstractness	All languages can talk about things that aren't there (displacement) or abstract ideas.	Different cultures categorize the world differently; for example, some languages have many specific words for "snow" or "colors" that don't exist in others.

Table 5.1 Examples of language universals and diversity

Pilot questions 5.1

1. What makes human language distinct from animal communication?
2. What is competence in linguistics?
3. What is performance in linguistics?
4. Which approach records language as it is used, descriptive or prescriptive?
5. Give one example of a language universal.



5.2 Methods of Linguistic Analysis

5.2.1 Data collection in linguistics

Data collection in linguistics refers to the techniques used to gather language samples for analysis. These may include **fieldwork** (direct observation and recording of speakers in natural contexts), **corpus analysis** (using large databases of texts or speech), and **experimental methods** (controlled studies of language behaviour). Each method has its strengths: fieldwork captures authentic usage, corpora provide large-scale evidence, and experiments allow for testing specific hypotheses.

Fill in the blank: Collecting language samples through direct observation and recording of speakers is called _____.

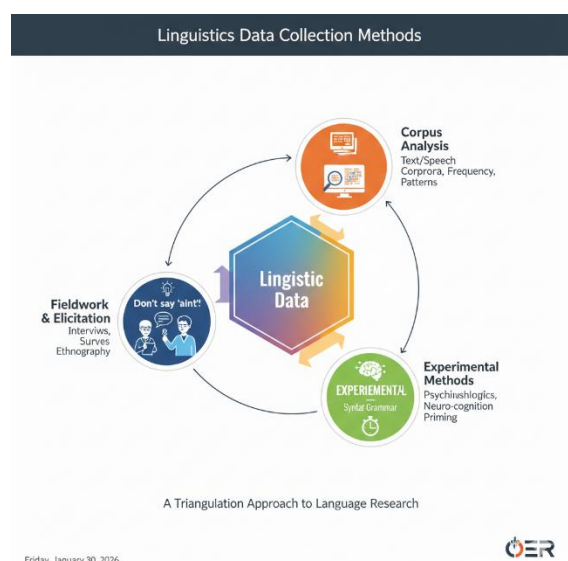


Figure 5.2 Methods of linguistic data collection

5.2.2 Comparative and historical methods

Comparative methods involve studying similarities and differences across languages to identify patterns and relationships. For example, comparing cognates (words with shared origins) across languages can reveal historical connections. **Historical methods** trace language change over time, reconstruct proto-languages, and explain how modern languages evolved. Together, these methods help linguists understand both synchronic (current) and diachronic (historical) aspects of language.

Fill in the blank: Studying how languages change over time is part of the _____ method.



Feature	Comparative Method	Historical Method (Diachronic)
Primary Goal	To identify genetic relationships between different languages and reconstruct "ancestor" languages (Proto-languages).	To describe and account for the changes that occur within a specific language over a period of time.
Core Process	Comparing cognates (words with a common origin) across multiple languages to find systematic sound correspondences.	Analyzing texts from different eras (e.g., Old English vs. Middle English) to identify shifts in phonology, syntax, and meaning.
Direction of Analysis	Horizontal: Looks across different language families or branches simultaneously.	Vertical: Looks down a single timeline to see how "Language A" became "Language B."
Key Output	A Language Family Tree or a reconstructed "Proto-Word" (e.g., Proto-Indo-European <i>*ph₂tér</i> for "father").	A timeline of Internal Changes (e.g., how the "Great Vowel Shift" changed the pronunciation of English).
Example Question	"Are Hindi, Spanish, and Greek related to a single ancient source?"	"Why did English stop using 'thou' and start using 'you' for everyone?"

Table 5.2 Comparative and historical methods in linguistics

5.2.3 Structural and functional approaches

Structural approaches focus on analysing the internal organisation of language, such as phonemes, morphemes, and syntactic rules. They treat language as a system of interrelated parts. **Functional approaches**, however, emphasise the role of language in communication, considering how linguistic forms serve social and pragmatic purposes. For instance, while structuralists may analyse sentence patterns, functionalists ask why a speaker chooses one form over another in a given context.

Fill in the blank: Approaches that emphasise the role of language in communication are called _____ approaches.



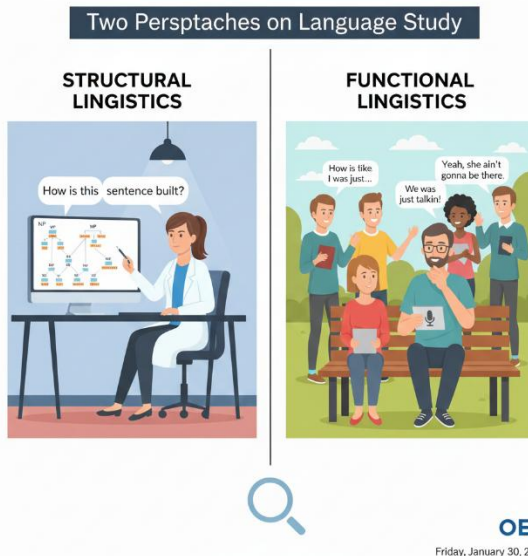


Plate 5.2 Structural and functional approaches contrasted

5.2.4 Quantitative and computational methods

Quantitative methods use statistical tools to measure language features, such as frequency of word use or distribution of sounds. **Computational methods** apply algorithms and computer models to process and analyse language data. Examples include natural language processing, machine translation, and speech recognition. These methods allow linguists to handle large datasets and uncover patterns that may not be visible through manual analysis.

Fill in the blank: Using algorithms and computer models to analyse language data is part of _____ methods.

Application	Description	Real-World Examples
Natural Language Processing (NLP)	The broad field of teaching computers to "read" and "understand" text, including identifying parts of speech and sentiment.	Grammarly (grammar checking), Sentiment Analysis (gauging public mood on social media).
Machine Translation (MT)	Automated translation of text or speech from one language to another using neural networks and statistical models.	Google Translate , DeepL , and real-time translation features in video calls.
Speech Recognition	Converting spoken audio into digital text. This involves mapping acoustic signals to phonemes and words.	Siri , Alexa , and automated transcription services (like YouTube's auto-captions).



Application	Description	Real-World Examples
Natural Language Generation (NLG)	The process of turning structured data or "thoughts" into readable, human-like sentences.	ChatGPT and other LLMs, automated weather reports, and sports summaries.
Information Extraction (IE)	Automatically pulling specific data (names, dates, prices) out of large, unstructured text documents.	Email filters (identifying flight times or package tracking) and search engine "snippets."

Box 5.2 Applications of computational linguistics

Pilot questions 5.2

1. What are three methods of data collection in linguistics?
2. What do comparative methods study?
3. What do historical methods trace?
4. What is the main focus of structural approaches?
5. Give one application of computational methods in linguistics.

5.3 Applications of Linguistic Methods

5.3.1 Language documentation and preservation

Language documentation involves systematically recording a language's vocabulary, grammar, and usage, often through fieldwork and collaboration with native speakers. It is especially important for endangered languages, as documentation helps preserve cultural heritage and provides resources for revitalisation. **Language preservation** refers to efforts to maintain and promote the continued use of a language within its community, such as through education or media.

Fill in the blank: Systematically recording a language's vocabulary, grammar, and usage is called _____.





Plate 5.3 Language documentation in practice

5.3.2 Language teaching and pedagogy

Language teaching applies linguistic knowledge to help learners acquire new languages effectively. **Pedagogy** refers to the methods and practices of teaching, including approaches such as grammar-translation, communicative language teaching, and task-based learning. Linguistic methods inform pedagogy by identifying learner needs, designing curricula, and evaluating teaching outcomes.

Fill in the blank: The methods and practices of teaching are collectively referred to as _____.

Method	Focus	Key Characteristics
Grammar-Translation	Accuracy & Literature	Students learn by translating texts between the target language and their native tongue. Focuses heavily on memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary.
Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)	Fluency & Interaction	Prioritizes "meaning over form." The goal is to enable students to communicate effectively in real-life situations rather than just mastering perfect grammar.
Task-Based Learning (TBL)	Solving Problems	Lessons are designed around a central task (e.g., "Plan a vacation" or "Solve a mystery"). Grammar is taught as a tool to help complete the task.
The Direct Method	Immersion	Strictly forbids the use of the student's native language. Concepts are taught through



Method	Focus	Key Characteristics
		pantomime, objects, and pictures to create a direct mental link.
Audiolingual Method	Habits & Repetition	Based on behaviorism; uses "drills" and repetition to make language patterns automatic. Popularized by the military in the 1940s.

Box 5.3 Approaches in language teaching

5.3.3 Translation and interpretation studies

Translation studies focus on transferring meaning from one language to another in written form, while **interpretation studies** deal with spoken language transfer in real time. Both fields rely on linguistic methods to ensure accuracy, equivalence, and cultural appropriateness. For example, translators must consider semantics and pragmatics to avoid miscommunication, while interpreters must manage performance under time constraints.

Fill in the blank: The transfer of meaning from one language to another in spoken form is called _____.

Figure 5.3 Translation and interpretation compared

Short description: Diagram showing translation (written) versus interpretation (spoken) processes. Suggestion of AI prompt: "Generate a diagram comparing translation (written) and interpretation (spoken) processes." Search string: "translation vs interpretation linguistics OER diagram"

5.3.4 Speech technology and natural language processing

Speech technology refers to tools that enable machines to recognise, generate, or interact with human speech, such as voice assistants. **Natural language processing (NLP)** is a computational approach to analysing and generating human language, used in applications like chatbots, sentiment analysis, and machine translation. These technologies rely heavily on linguistic methods to model grammar, meaning, and context.

Fill in the blank: Computational approaches to analysing and generating human language are known as _____.



Application	Technology Used	Core Function	Example Use Case
Voice Assistants	Speech Recognition + NLP + TTS	Understands spoken commands and provides spoken or visual answers.	Amazon Alexa or Apple Siri setting a timer or playing music.
Chatbots / AI Agents	Natural Language Understanding (NLU)	Simulates human-like text conversations to provide support or info.	Sephora's beauty bot or ChatGPT answering customer inquiries 24/7.
Sentiment Analysis	Text Classification / NLP	Identifies the emotional tone (positive, negative, neutral) of a text.	Brand Monitoring: Analyzing Twitter posts to see if people like a new movie.
Machine Translation	Neural Machine Translation (NMT)	Automatically translates text or speech from one language to another.	Google Translate or DeepL helping a tourist read a menu in Japan.
Speech-to-Text (ASR)	Acoustic Modeling	Transcribes live or recorded audio into written digital text.	Otter.ai or YouTube Auto-Captions for accessibility and meeting notes.
Predictive Text	Language Modeling	Suggests the next likely word or corrects spelling as a user types.	Smart Compose in Gmail or Autocorrect on a smartphone keyboard.

Table 5.3 Applications of speech technology and NLP

Pilot questions 5.3

1. What is language documentation?
2. What does pedagogy refer to in language teaching?
3. What is the difference between translation and interpretation?
4. Give one application of speech technology.
5. What does NLP stand for?

5.4 Critical Perspectives in Linguistics

5.4.1 Ethical issues in linguistic research



Ethical issues in linguistics concern the responsibilities researchers have when collecting, analysing, and sharing language data. These include obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' privacy, and ensuring that communities benefit from the research. For example, when documenting an endangered language, researchers must respect cultural practices and avoid exploiting speakers. Ethics ensures that linguistic research is conducted with integrity and fairness.

Fill in the blank: Protecting participants' privacy and obtaining informed consent are examples of _____ issues in linguistic research.

Principle	Description & Application
Informed Consent	The Core: Participants must fully understand the study's purpose, how their data will be used, and that they can withdraw at any time. In Practice: This often involves translating consent forms into the local language or using oral consent for non-literate communities.
Privacy & Anonymization	The Core: Protecting the speaker's identity by removing names, locations, or specific biographical markers from transcripts and datasets. In Practice: Using pseudonyms and ensuring voice recordings cannot be easily linked back to a specific individual in small groups.
Community Benefit	The Core: Research should be a two-way street, not "extractive." Linguists should provide the community with useful materials like dictionaries or literacy primers. In Practice: Collaborative research where the community helps set the research agenda to ensure it meets their actual needs.



Interdisciplinary critiques involve perspectives from fields such as philosophy, sociology, and anthropology that challenge or enrich linguistic methods. For example, philosophers may question assumptions about meaning, while sociologists highlight the role of social structures in shaping language. These critiques encourage linguists to refine their approaches and remain open to insights from other disciplines.

Fill in the blank: Perspectives from sociology and anthropology that challenge linguistic methods are called _____ critiques.

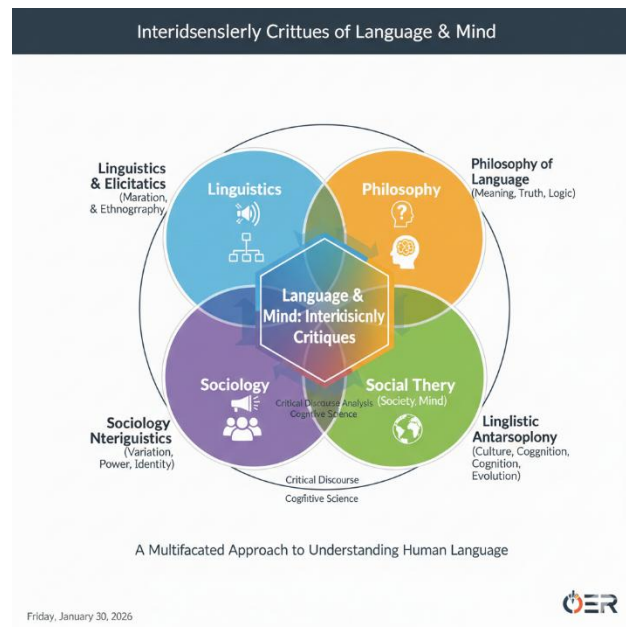


Figure 5.4 Interdisciplinary critiques of linguistics

5.4.4 Future directions in linguistic methods

Future directions in linguistics point to emerging technologies and approaches that will shape the discipline. These include advances in computational linguistics, integration with neuroscience, and greater emphasis on multilingualism and language policy. The future of linguistic methods lies in combining traditional approaches with innovative tools to address global challenges such as language endangerment and digital communication.

Fill in the blank: Advances in computational linguistics and neuroscience represent _____ directions in linguistic methods.



Future Directions in Linguistic Research Methods

Emerging Direction	Description & Key Focus	Impact on Methodology
1. Computational Linguistics & AI	Integrating machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and large language models (LLMs) for automated text/speech change and pattern recognition	Automated corpus analysis, predictive modeling of modeling of language change, and AI-driven language documentation
2. Neuroscience Integration	Combining linguistics with fMRI, EEG, and brain-computer interface interfaces to study neural basis of language	Neurolinguistic insights into syntax, real-time language processing, and understanding language disorders
3. Multilingualism & Diversity Studies	Shifting from monolingual biases to research on multilingual code-switching, and language contact phenomena	Sophisticated statistical models for language interaction, ethnohistoric studies of communities and diverse data collection
4. Language Policy & Planning	Focus on the social, political and aspects of language, including reutilizing communities and linguistic rights	Community-based participatory research, research, policy analysis and evaluating language education programs
5. Digital Fieldwork & Crowdsourcing	Using digital tools, mobile apps, mobile app data collection, especially for endangered languages	Remote data collection, citizen science initiatives, and collaborative language archiving

Friday, January 30, 2026

A Glimpse into the Evolution of Language Science



Table 5.4 Emerging directions in linguistic methods

Pilot questions 5.4

1. What are two examples of ethical issues in linguistic research?
2. How does language reflect power relations in society?
3. What do interdisciplinary critiques contribute to linguistics?
4. Give one example of a future direction in linguistic methods.

Series Summary

This Series was designed to introduce you to the core concepts and methodological approaches that underpin the study of linguistics. Its purpose has been to show not only what linguists study but also how they study it, highlighting the relevance of concepts and methods to the broader discipline.

We began with fundamental concepts such as language as a system of communication, competence and performance, descriptive versus prescriptive approaches, and the balance between universals and diversity. Then we explored methods of linguistic analysis, including data collection, comparative and historical approaches, structural and functional perspectives, and computational techniques. Following that, we examined applications of these methods in language documentation, teaching, translation, and speech technology. Finally, we considered critical perspectives, focusing on ethics, power and ideology, interdisciplinary critiques, and future



directions. In line with the Series Learning Outcomes, you should now be able to define key concepts, explain universals and diversity, demonstrate methods of data collection, analyse comparative and structural approaches, apply computational techniques, evaluate practical applications, and critically assess ethical and interdisciplinary perspectives in linguistic research.

Glossary of Terms

- **Competence:** A speaker's internal knowledge of their language, including grammar, vocabulary, and rules.
- **Computational methods:** Approaches that use algorithms and computer models to analyse and process language data.
- **Corpus analysis:** The study of language using large collections of texts or speech samples stored in databases.
- **Data collection:** Techniques used to gather language samples for analysis, such as fieldwork, corpora, or experiments.
- **Descriptive approach:** A way of studying language that records and analyses how speakers actually use it, without judging correctness.
- **Ethical issues:** Concerns in linguistic research such as informed consent, privacy, and ensuring community benefit.
- **Experimental methods:** Controlled studies designed to test specific aspects of language behaviour.
- **Fieldwork:** Collecting language data directly from speakers in natural contexts, often through interviews or recordings.
- **Functional approaches:** Methods that emphasise the role of language in communication and its social or pragmatic purposes.
- **Historical methods:** Approaches that trace how languages change over time and reconstruct earlier forms.
- **Ideology:** A set of beliefs or values that influence how language is used and perceived in society.
- **Interpretation studies:** The study of transferring meaning from one language to another in spoken form, usually in real time.
- **Language documentation:** Systematic recording of a language's vocabulary, grammar, and usage, often for preservation purposes.
- **Language preservation:** Efforts to maintain and promote the continued use of a language within its community.
- **Language universals:** Features or principles common to all human languages, such as the presence of nouns and verbs.
- **Natural language processing (NLP):** Computational techniques for analysing and generating human language, used in tools like chatbots and translation software.
- **Pedagogy:** The methods and practices of teaching, especially in language education.
- **Performance:** The actual use of language in real situations, which may be influenced by memory limits, distractions, or errors.
- **Prescriptive approach:** A way of studying language that sets rules about how it should be used, often based on tradition or authority.



- **Quantitative methods:** Approaches that use statistical tools to measure and analyse language features such as frequency or distribution.
- **Speech technology:** Tools that enable machines to recognise, generate, or interact with human speech, such as voice assistants.
- **Structural approaches:** Methods that focus on analysing the internal organisation of language, such as sounds, words, and sentence patterns.
- **Translation studies:** The study of transferring meaning from one language to another in written form.
- **Universals and diversity:** The balance between features shared across all languages and the unique variations found in specific languages.

Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective Questions

1. The study of how speakers actually use language without judging correctness is called _____. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
2. Which term refers to a speaker's internal knowledge of grammar and rules? (Linked to SLO 5.1)
3. Using algorithms and computer models to analyse language data is part of _____ methods. (Linked to SLO 5.5)
4. The transfer of meaning from one language to another in spoken form is called _____. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
5. Protecting participants' privacy and obtaining informed consent are examples of _____ issues in linguistic research. (Linked to SLO 5.7)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Define language universals and give one example. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
7. Explain one difference between comparative and historical methods. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
8. What is the main focus of structural approaches in linguistics? (Linked to SLO 5.4)
9. Identify one application of language documentation and preservation. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
10. What does NLP stand for, and what is one of its applications? (Linked to SLO 5.5)

Long-Answer Questions

11. Analyse the distinction between competence and performance, giving examples of each. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
12. Evaluate the contributions of functional approaches to understanding language use in society. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
13. Discuss the role of translation and interpretation studies in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
14. Critically assess ethical issues in linguistic research, highlighting why they are important. (Linked to SLO 5.7)



Objective Questions

1. Descriptive approach.
2. Competence.
3. Computational methods.
4. Interpretation.
5. Ethical issues.

Short-Answer Questions

6. Language universals are features common to all human languages, such as the presence of nouns and verbs.
7. Comparative methods study similarities across languages at a given time, while historical methods trace language change over time.
8. Structural approaches focus on the internal organisation of language, such as sounds, words, and sentence patterns.
9. Language documentation provides resources for revitalising endangered languages.
10. NLP stands for Natural Language Processing, and one application is machine translation.

Long-Answer Questions

11. **Basic response:** Competence is a speaker's internal knowledge of language rules, while performance is the actual use of language in real situations. **Value-added response:** Competence includes grammar and vocabulary knowledge, while performance may be influenced by memory limits or distractions. For example, a speaker may know how to form a complex sentence but hesitate when speaking under pressure.
12. **Basic response:** Functional approaches emphasise the role of language in communication and social interaction. **Value-added response:** They show how linguistic forms serve pragmatic purposes, such as politeness strategies or persuasive speech, highlighting the social dimension of language beyond structural rules.
13. **Basic response:** Translation studies deal with written language transfer, while interpretation studies focus on spoken language transfer. Both help bridge communication gaps. **Value-added response:** They also ensure cultural appropriateness, manage semantic and pragmatic differences, and support global communication in diplomacy, business, and education.
14. **Basic response:** Ethical issues include informed consent, privacy, and ensuring community benefit in linguistic research. **Value-added response:** They are crucial because research often involves vulnerable communities, and ethical practices protect participants, promote trust, and ensure that linguistic work contributes positively to society.

Part 5.1 Fundamental concepts in linguistics

1. Human language allows for creativity and the expression of abstract ideas.



2. Competence is a speaker's internal knowledge of their language.
3. Performance is the actual use of language in real situations.
4. Descriptive approach.
5. One example is the presence of nouns and verbs in all languages.

Part 5.2 Methods of Linguistic Analysis

1. Fieldwork, corpus analysis, and experimental methods.
2. Comparative methods study similarities and differences across languages.
3. Historical methods trace language change over time.
4. Structural approaches focus on the internal organisation of language.
5. One application is machine translation.

Part 5.3 Applications of Linguistic Methods

1. Language documentation is the systematic recording of a language's vocabulary, grammar, and usage.
2. Pedagogy refers to the methods and practices of teaching.
3. Translation is written transfer, while interpretation is spoken transfer.
4. One application is voice assistants.
5. NLP stands for Natural Language Processing.

Part 5.4 Critical Perspectives in Linguistics

1. Informed consent and privacy.
2. Language reflects power relations through dominance, such as English in global communication.
3. They contribute insights from other disciplines that challenge or enrich linguistic methods.
4. One example

References and Attributions [Series 5]

Core References

- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2018). *An introduction to language* (11th ed.). Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Katamba, F. (1993). *Morphology*. London: Macmillan.
- Lyons, J. (1981). *Language and linguistics: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Radford, A. (2004). *English syntax: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Illustrations (Figures, Plates, Tables, Boxes)

- *Figure 5.1 Language as a system of communication*



- Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
- Prompt: “Generate a diagram showing language as a system with sounds, symbols, rules, and meaning.”
- Suggested OER search string: “language system communication diagram OER.”
- *Box 5.1 Distinction between competence and performance*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Create a text box summarising competence vs performance in linguistics.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “competence vs performance linguistics OER examples.”
- *Plate 5.1 Descriptive and prescriptive approaches contrasted*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate an illustration showing a teacher correcting grammar versus a linguist observing everyday speech.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “descriptive vs prescriptive linguistics OER image.”
- *Table 5.1 Examples of language universals and diversity*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate a table listing examples of language universals and diversity.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language universals and diversity OER table.”
- *Figure 5.2 Methods of linguistic data collection*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate a diagram showing fieldwork, corpus analysis, and experimental methods in linguistics.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “linguistics data collection methods diagram OER.”
- *Table 5.2 Comparative and historical methods in linguistics*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate a table contrasting comparative and historical methods in linguistics.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “comparative vs historical linguistics OER table.”
- *Plate 5.2 Structural and functional approaches contrasted*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.



- Prompt: “Generate an illustration showing a linguist analysing sentence structure versus another observing conversation.”
- Suggested OER search string: “structural vs functional linguistics OER image.”
- *Box 5.2 Applications of computational linguistics*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Create a text box listing applications of computational linguistics such as NLP and machine translation.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “computational linguistics applications OER examples.”
- *Plate 5.3 Language documentation in practice*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate an illustration of a linguist recording oral traditions with community elders.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language documentation preservation OER image.”
- *Box 5.3 Approaches in language teaching*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Create a text box listing approaches in language teaching such as grammar-translation and communicative methods.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language teaching pedagogy approaches OER examples.”
- *Figure 5.3 Translation and interpretation compared*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate a diagram comparing translation (written) and interpretation (spoken) processes.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “translation vs interpretation linguistics OER diagram.”
- *Table 5.3 Applications of speech technology and NLP*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate a table listing applications of speech technology and NLP.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “speech technology NLP applications OER table.”
- *Box 5.4 Ethical principles in linguistic research*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.



- Prompt: “Create a text box listing ethical principles in linguistic research such as consent and privacy.”
- Suggested OER search string: “ethics in linguistic research OER examples.”
- *Plate 5.4 Power and ideology in language use*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate an illustration of a political rally with slogans showing language and ideology.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language power ideology OER image.”
- *Figure 5.4 Interdisciplinary critiques of linguistics*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate a diagram showing overlapping circles of linguistics, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “interdisciplinary critiques linguistics OER diagram.”
- *Table 5.4 Emerging directions in linguistic methods*
 - Attribution: AI-generated using Copilot graphic tool.
 - Prompt: “Generate a table listing emerging directions in linguistic methods such as computational linguistics and neuroscience.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “future directions in linguistics OER table.”

