Introduction to Linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It involves language form, language meaning, and language in context. Basically, it studies how language is formed, how it functions and how people use it. Linguistics also explores various language-related phenomena such as language variation, language acquisition, language change over time and, language storage and process in the human brain. Although some people assume that linguistics is only about the study of a particular language, this is not so. Linguistics deals with the study of particular languages, as well as the search for common properties observable in all languages or large groups of languages.

There are various subareas in linguistics as follows:
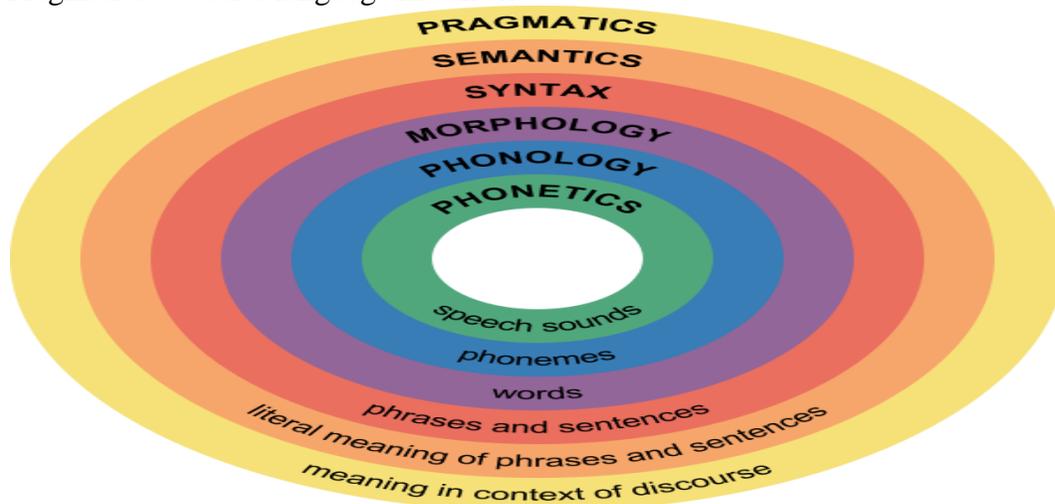
Phonetics – studies speech and sounds
Phonology – studies the patterning of sounds
Morphology – studies the structure of words
Syntax – studies the structure of sentences
Semantics – studies the literal meaning
Pragmatics – studies language in context

There are also various subfields in linguistics. Sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, historical linguistics, and neurolinguistics are some of these fields. Sociolinguistics is the study of society and language whereas historical linguistics is the study of the change of language over time. Neurolinguistics, on the other hand, is the study of the structures in the human brain that underlie grammar and communication

Applied Linguistics: It is a branch of linguistics that focuses on practical applications of language studies. In other words, it involves the practical application of linguistics-related concepts. Moreover, this is a field of study that identifies, investigates, and offers solutions to language-related problems. Thus, it helps linguists to gain insight into practical problems such as what are the best methods to teach languages or what are the existing issues in language policy formulation. Applied linguistics covers a vast number of areas such as bilingualism, multilingualism, discourse analysis, language pedagogy, language acquisition, language planning and policy, and translation. Furthermore, applied linguistics is related to various other fields such as education, communication, sociology, and anthropology.

Difference between Linguistics and Applied Linguistics: Linguistics is the scientific study of the structure and development of language in general or of particular languages. In contrast, applied linguistics is the branch of linguistics focusing on the practical applications of language

studies. So, this is the key difference between linguistics and applied linguistics. Importantly, while some branches of linguistics such as historical linguistics and comparative linguistics are more concerned with theoretical aspects of language, applied linguistics is concerned with the practical application of linguistics. Moreover, linguistics basically focuses on the scientific study of language and its structure while applied linguistics can identify, explore, and offer solutions to language-related problems. Therefore, we can consider this as the difference between linguistics and applied linguistics in terms of their function.

Scope of Applied Linguistics:
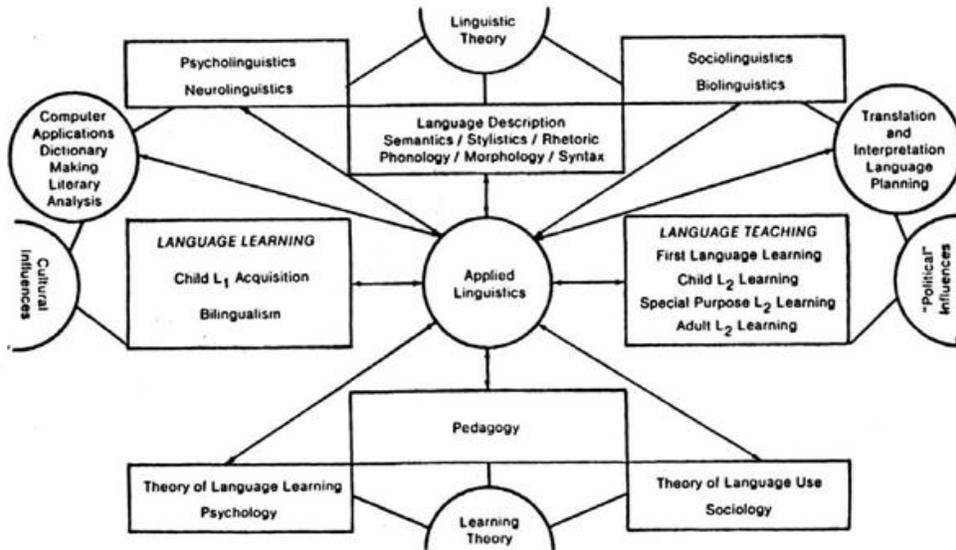
Language and Society – Socio Linguistics: Language is both a system of communication between individuals and a social phenomenon. The area of language and society – sociolinguistics – is intended to show how our use of language is governed by such factors as class, gender, race, etc. A subsection of this area is anthropological linguistics which is concerned with form and use of language in different cultures and to what extent the development of language has been influenced by cultural environment.

The study of language and society – sociolinguistics – can be dated to about the middle of the twentieth century. Before that there were authors who commented on how language use was influenced or indeed guided by socially relevant factors, such as class, profession, age or gender. Indeed the father of modern linguistics, **Ferdinand de Saussure** (1857-1913), saw language as a type of social behaviour and in this he reflected French sociological thinking of his day.

Ferdinand de Saussure was a Swiss linguist and semiotician. His ideas laid a foundation for many significant developments in both linguistics and semiology in the 20th century. He is widely considered one of the founders of 20th-century linguistics.

Langue (French, meaning "language") and **parole** (meaning "speaking") are linguistic terms distinguished by Ferdinand de Saussure in his Course in General Linguistics. Langue encompasses the abstract, systematic rules and conventions of a signifying system; it is independent of, and pre-exists, individual users. Langue involves the principles of language. Parole refers to the concrete instances of the use of langue.
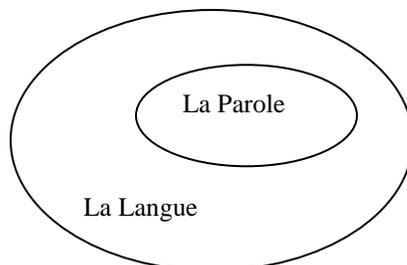
Linguistic competence is the system of linguistic knowledge possessed by native speakers of a language. It is distinguished from linguistic performance, which is the way a language system is used in communication. **Noam Chomsky** (He is an American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, historian, social critic, and political activist. Sometimes called "the father of modern linguistics") introduced this concept in his elaboration of generative grammar where it has been widely adopted and competence is the only level of language that is studied. According to Chomsky, competence is the ideal language system that enables speakers to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences in their language, and to distinguish grammatical sentences from ungrammatical sentences.

Communicative competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. The term was coined by Dell Hymes in 1966, reacting against the perceived inadequacy of Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between linguistic competence and performance. "Communicative competence is made up of four competence areas: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic.

Linguistic competence is knowing how to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. Linguistic competence asks: (What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences?). Sociolinguistic competence is knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating. Sociolinguistic competence asks: Which words and phrases fits this setting and this topic? How can I express a specific attitude (courtesy, authority, friendliness, respect) when I need to? How do I know what attitude another person is expressing?

Discourse competence is knowing how to interpret the larger context and how to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole. Discourse competence asks: How words, phrases and sentences are put together to create conversations, speeches, email messages, newspaper articles?

Strategic competence is knowing how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one's knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language and in an specific context. Strategic competence asks: How do I know when I've misunderstood or when someone has misunderstood me? What do I say then? How can I express my ideas if I don't know the name of something or the right verb form to use?"

Variations in Language: Language variation is a core concept in sociolinguistics. Sociolinguists investigate whether this linguistic variation can be attributed to differences in the social characteristics of the speakers using the language, but also investigate whether elements of the surrounding linguistic context promote or inhibit the usage of certain structures.

Variations based on Sociolinguistic factors : Social factors: The social factors are including the users, participants, social settings and functions. The users - who is talking to whom e.g. wife & husband, teacher & student. The setting and social context are also relevant such as, at home, hospital and class. The function describes - why are they speaking and another factor is what topic- what are they talking about. b. Social dimensions -The relationship between the participants is one of the factors of the social dimension.

Dialect is a variety of language, marked by a particular grammar and lexis, and used by speakers with a common regional and social background. This has its own distinctive vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. It is a sub-division of the main language and can exist with several other dialects within the one language; they are mutually intelligible. Usually **regional dialects** are the most common; in England, you can find the above mentioned under accent.

Social Dialect – Sociolects : a sociolect is a form of language (non-standard dialect, restricted register) or a set of lexical items used by a socioeconomic class, a profession, an age group or other social group. The social dialects are used in groups and defined according to class, education, age, sex and a number of their social parameters.

An idiolect is the distinctive speech of an individual, a linguistic pattern regarded as unique among speakers of a person's language or dialect.

A register is a variety of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. Registers can simply be described as variations of the language according to its use, while the dialect as a language variation based on users registers on this concept is not limited to the choice of words, but also includes the choice of the use of text structure, and texture.. - Example : English journalist. **Style** relates to the typical ways in which one or more people do a particular thing. Examples : - Formal – Informal.

Pidgins and creoles are both the result of what happens when two or more languages are blended, but they're not the same. In simple terms, a pidgin is the first-generation version of a language that forms between native speakers of different languages. It refers to a language used as a means of communication between people who do not share a common language. A Creole is a pidgin with native speakers, or one that's been passed down to a second generation of speakers who will formalize it and fortify the bridge into a robust structure with a fully developed grammar and syntax. **Bilingualism/ Multilingualism:** A bilingual individual, generally, is someone who speaks two languages. An ideal or balanced bilingual speaks each language as proficiently as an educated native speaker. Bilingualism is a specific case of multilingualism, which has no ceiling on the number of languages a speaker may dominate. **Multilingualism** is the use of more than one language, either by an individual speaker or by a group of speakers. It is believed that multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the world's population. More than half of all Europeans claim to speak at least one language other than their mother tongue. People who speak several languages are also called **polyglots**.

Enculturation is sometimes referred to as acculturation, a word recently used to more distinctively refer only to exchanges of cultural features with foreign cultures. Enculturation is the process by which people learn the dynamics of their surrounding culture and acquire values and norms appropriate or necessary in that culture and worldviews.

Formal - Informal – Technical culture: Edward T. Hall has developed a theory which treats culture as a form of communication. There are three basic modes or levels; formal, informal, and technical. Formal learning of culture takes place through observation and admonition using authority. (Ex: This is not good. We respect elders. Avoid doing this). Informal learning is through non-verbal channels of communication. (in class room, the teacher says "Would you stand up now?). Technical learning is done at the conscious level – examples – telephone etiquettes, interview procedure, etc. **Language shift**, also known as language transfer or language replacement or language assimilation, is the process whereby a community of speakers of a language shifts to speaking a completely different language, usually over an extended period of time. Often, languages that are perceived to be higher status stabilise or spread at the expense of other languages that are perceived by their own speakers to be lower-status.

Code-switching or language alternation occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more languages, or language varieties, in the context of a single conversation. Multilingual speakers of more than one language, sometimes use elements of multiple languages when conversing with each other. Thus, code-switching is the use of more than one linguistic variety in a manner consistent with the syntax and phonology of each variety.

Code Switching Choice/style:

Topic	Manner	Speaker's Choice
Sermon/Prayer	Formal/Informal	Tamil/English
Introduction to servants	Informal	Tamil
Personal letters	Informal	Tamil /English/ Tamil+English
Speech on technical Subjects (Class room seminar)	Formal	English
University Lecture (technical) – Oratorical competition	Formal	English/Tamil
Conversation	Informal	Tamil
News broadcast	Formal	Tamil/English
Buying and selling	Formal	Tamil/ English

Diglossia is a situation in which two dialects or languages are used by a single language community. In addition to the community's everyday or vernacular language variety (L for Low), a second, highly codified lect (labeled "H" or "high") is used in certain situations such as literature, formal education, or other specific settings, but not used normally for ordinary conversation. In most cases, the H variety has no native speakers but various degrees of fluency of the community in which the two languages exist.

Haugen's (1966) language planning model was initially conceived as 4 stages of language development in taking crucial steps from a "dialect" to a "language." The four sequential steps are: Norm Selection- This is the choice of a language variety for specific purposes. It is associated with official status or national roles in status planning.

Codification- This step is related to the stabilization of the norm selected. It is also related to the standardization process in corpus planning. **Implementation**-This step involves the actions of government agencies, institutions, and writers in adopting and using the selected and codified norm. It involves (among other things) the production of newspapers, textbooks, and other publications, as well as adoption for mass media. **Elaboration-**This step involves the expansion of language functions and the assignment of new codes, such as scientific and technical. It is also called language modernization by Fishman.

Language and culture : Language and culture are intertwined. A particular language usually points out to a specific group of people. When somebody interacts with another language, it means that he/she is also interacting with the culture that speaks the language. One cannot understand one's culture without accessing its language directly. When a new language is learnt, it not only involves learning its alphabet, the word arrangement and the rules of grammar, but also learning about the specific society's customs and behavior. When learning or teaching a language, it is important that the culture where the language belongs be referenced, because language is very much ingrained in the culture. **Ethnocentrism** is a term used in social sciences and anthropology to describe the act of judging another culture based on the values and standards of one's own culture are superior – especially with regards to language, behavior, customs, and religion. These aspects or categories are distinctions that define each ethnicity's unique cultural

identity. The term ethnocentrism, deriving from the Greek word etho meaning "nation, people, or cultural grouping" and the Latin word centric meaning "center," was first applied in the social sciences by American sociologist William G. Sumner.

Language and Mind: Psycholinguistics: It is an interdisciplinary field. Hence, it is studied by researchers from a variety of different backgrounds, such as psychology, cognitive science, linguistics, speech and language pathology, and discourse analysis. Psycholinguists study many different topics, but these topics can generally be divided into answering the following questions: (1) how do children acquire language (language acquisition)?; (2) how do people comprehend language (language comprehension)?; (3) how do people produce language (language production)?; and (4) how do people who already know one language acquire another one(second language acquisition)?

Phonetics and phonology are concerned with the study of speech sounds. Within psycholinguistics, research focuses on how the brain processes and understands these sounds. Morphology is the study of word structures, especially the relationships between related words (such as dog and dogs) and the formation of words based on rules (such as plural formation). Syntax is the study of the patterns which dictate how words are combined to form sentences. Semantics deals with the meaning of words and sentences. Where syntax is concerned with the formal structure of sentences, semantics deals with the actual meaning of sentences. Pragmatics is concerned with the role of context in the interpretation of meaning.

A researcher interested in language comprehension may study word recognition during reading to examine the processes involved in the extraction of orthographic, morphological, phonological, and semantic information from patterns in printed text. A researcher interested in language production might study how words are prepared to be spoken starting from the conceptual or semantic level.

Language acquisition : The innatist perspective began with Noam Chomsky's highly critical review of Skinner's book in 1959.This review helped to start what has been termed "the cognitive revolution" in psychology. Chomsky posited humans possess a special, innate ability for language and that complex syntactic features, such as recursion, are "hard-wired" in the brain. These abilities are thought to be beyond the grasp of the most intelligent and social non-humans. According to Chomsky, children acquiring a language have a vast search space to explore among all possible human grammars, yet at the time there was no evidence that children receive sufficient input to learn all the rules of their language.. Hence, there must be some other innate mechanism that endows a language ability to humans. Such a language faculty is, according to the innateness hypothesis, what defines human language and makes it different from even the most sophisticated forms of animal communication. **Piaget's** (1936) theory of cognitive development explains how a child constructs a mental model of the world. Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that children move through four different stages of mental development. His theory focuses not only on understanding how children acquire knowledge, but also on understanding the nature of intelligence.1 Piaget's stages are: 1. Sensorimotor stage: birth to 2 years

2. Preoperational stage: ages 2 to 7 3. Concrete operational stage: ages 7 to 11   4.

Formal operational stage: ages 12 and up. Piaget believed that children take an active role in the learning process, acting much like little scientists as they perform experiments, make observations, and learn about the world. As kids interact with the world around them, they continually add new knowledge, build upon existing knowledge, and adapt previously held ideas to accommodate new information.

Second Language Acquisition: Second language refers to any language learned in addition to a person's first language; although the concept is named second-language acquisition, it can also incorporate the learning of third, fourth, or subsequent languages. Second-language acquisition refers to what learners do; it does not refer to practices in language teaching, although teaching can affect acquisition. The term acquisition was originally used to emphasize the non-conscious nature of the learning process, but in recent years learning and acquisition have become largely synonymous. **Stephen Krashen** divides the process of second-language acquisition into **five stages**: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency. **The first stage**, preproduction, is also known as the silent period. Learners at this stage have a receptive vocabulary of up to 500 words, but they do not yet speak their second language. Not all learners go through a silent period. Some learners start speaking straight away, although their output may consist of imitation rather than creative language use. Others may be required to speak from the start as part of a language course. For learners that do go through a silent period, it may last around three to six months. **The second** of Krashen's stages of acquisition is early production, during which learners are able to speak in short phrases of one or two words. They can also memorize chunks of language, although they may make mistakes when using them. Learners typically have both an active and receptive vocabulary of around 1000 words. This stage normally lasts for around six months. **The third stage** is speech emergence. Learners' vocabularies increase to around 3000 words during this stage, and they can communicate using simple questions and phrases. They may often make grammatical errors. **The fourth stage** is intermediate fluency. At this stage, learners have a vocabulary of around 6000 words, and can use more complicated sentence structures. They are also able to share their thoughts and opinions. Learners may make frequent errors with more complicated sentence structures. **The final stage** is advanced fluency, which is typically reached somewhere between five and ten years of learning the language. Learners at this stage can function at a level close to native speakers.

Language and Discourse: Conversational Principles: Grice's Maxims : The maxim of quantity, where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more. The maxim of quality, where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence. The maxim of relation, where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion. The maxim of manner, when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity. According to Geoffrey Leech, there is a politeness principle with conversational maxims similar to those formulated by Paul Grice. He lists six maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. The first and second form a pair, as do the third and the fourth. These maxims vary from culture to culture: what may be considered polite in one culture may be strange or downright rude in another.