

**XH****Humanities & Social Sciences****XH3: Linguistics****Section XH3.1: Language and Linguistics (Fundamental Concepts)**

This section covers the fundamental concepts of what language is and how linguists study it.

**What is Language?** Understanding language in its spoken, written, and signed forms; Difference between description and prescription.

**Language and Culture:** Exploring the connection between language and a community's cultural heritage; social/personal identities; linguistic determinism/relativity.

**The Science of Language:** Treating language as an object of scientific study, looking at its basic units and unique properties (design features); levels of adequacy of grammars; principles of creativity and productivity.

**Knowledge vs. Use:** Difference between a speaker's subconscious knowledge of grammar (*competence*) and their actual use of language in real-world situations (*performance*).

**History of Linguistics:** Major schools of thought in linguistics (European, American traditions, as well as the Indian Grammatical Tradition).

**Section XH3.2: Levels of Grammatical Analysis (The primary components of grammar)****A. Phonetics and Phonology (Sounds):**

**Speech Production and Perception:** Producing sounds using the vocal tract; articulation; phonation; acoustic properties of sounds; perceptual cues; auditory system.

**Sound Systems:** How languages organize sounds into a system; IPA; finding the abstract sound units (*phonemes*), analyzing their distribution (*allophones*, complementary vs. contrastive distribution); tonal, segmental and suprasegmental phonological processes and their representation (including distinctive features).

**Modern Theories:** Key ideas from theories (linear and non-linear approaches) like autosegmental phonology, generative phonology, lexical phonology, prosodic morphology, and optimality theory.

**B. Morphology (Words):**

**Building Blocks:** Identifying the smallest units of meaning (*morphemes*) and their variations (*allomorphs*); morpheme types.

**Word Formation:** The difference between grammatical changes to words (*inflection*) and creating new words (*derivation* and other processes of lexeme building); constraints on word formation; lexical and structural ambiguity; the morphology-phonology interface.

**The Mental Dictionary:** How words and the rules to create them are stored in the mind (*mental lexicon*).

**Modern Theories:** Key ideas from theories like distributed morphology, lexicalist vs paradigm based approaches, construction morphology.

**C. Syntax (Sentences):**

**Sentence Structure:** Understanding the basic units of syntax like words, phrases, and clauses, and the rules for combining them (e.g., *Phrase Structure Rules*, *X-bar Theory*); syntactic processes and representations; diagnostics of structure; sub-modules of syntax such as theta theory, case theory, binding, argument structure; valency alternations etc.; syntax-morphology and syntax-phonology interfaces; structural and semantic ambiguity.

**Major Theories:** The core principles of key syntactic theories, like generative grammar (including the Minimalist Programme), LFG, and HPSG.

**Universal Grammar:** The concept that all human languages share an underlying blueprint (*Universal Grammar*), which addresses the language acquisition problem; tacit knowledge vs. explicit knowledge; core grammar vs. peripheral grammar.

**Syntactic Analysis:** Analyzing common syntactic phenomena across languages.

**D. Semantics and Pragmatics (Meaning):**

**Literal Meaning (Semantics):** How word meanings combine to form sentence meaning (*compositionality*); truth conditions; basic logic (propositions, quantifiers); lexical semantics (e.g., *synonymy*, *antonymy*); propositional semantics (*paraphrase*, *entailment*, *contradiction* etc.); syntax-semantics and semantics-pragmatics interfaces.

**Meaning in Context (Pragmatics):** Contextual use of language including *speech* acts; implied meanings based on conversational rules (Grice's Maxims and *implicatures*), and assumed knowledge (*presuppositions*); deictic and indexical elements; discourse analysis.

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| <b>Section XH3.3:</b> | <b>Historical Linguistics (Language Change)</b> |
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**Sound Changes over time:** Sound laws (e.g., Grimm's Law, Verner's Law).

**Grammar and Meaning Change:** How grammars change (grammaticalization) and how word meanings shift over time.

**Reconstruction:** Comparative reconstruction of ancestral languages.

**Language Contact** including borrowing.

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| <b>Section XH3.4:</b> | <b>Sociolinguistics (Language and Society)</b> |
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**Language Variation:** How language varies based on social factors (e.g., creating *sociolects* or *dialects*); language contact and migration (including dialect geography); the formation of pidgins and creoles; linguistic variables and their co-variation along linguistic/social dimensions; communicative competence.

**Bi- and Multilingualism:** The study of phenomena like *code-switching* and *code-mixing*; mother tongue and other tongues.

**Language and Policy:** The role of language in society, including official language policies (especially in India); language endangerment (EGIDS), language loss, and revitalization; language maintenance and language documentation; minority and majority languages.

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| <b>Section XH3.5:</b> | <b>Typology and Universals (Language Classification)</b> |
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**Classifying Languages:** Grouping languages by their structural type (e.g., *agglutinative*, *isolating*, *fusional*) and by their family trees (*genetic classification*).

**Language Universals:** Identifying features or patterns that are common to all or most languages (e.g., Greenberg's universals on word order).

**South Asian Languages:** The key areal features of the major language families found in South Asia (*Indo-Aryan*, *Dravidian*, *Austro-Asiatic*, *Tibeto-Burman* etc.); constitutional provisions for languages.

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| <b>Section XH3.6:</b> | <b>Methods of Analysis (How to Do Linguistics)</b> |
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**Data Collection:** Methods for gathering linguistic data, such as fieldwork or experiments; elicitation techniques from speakers; sampling.

**Data Analysis:** Using both quantitative (basic statistical) and qualitative methods to analyze data.

**Ethics:** The ethical responsibilities involved in working with languages and their speakers.

**Corpora:** Development; annotation; types; analysis.

**Section XH3.7:****Applied Linguistics (Linguistics in the Real World)**

**Psycholinguistics:** The psychology of language; acquisition, production and comprehension of speech in real-time; language and the brain; bi- and multi-lingualism; language and cognition (e.g. the relationships between language, mind, and experience).

**Computational Linguistics:** Basic computational ideas of modelling and processing; corpora; parsing; LLMs; basic computational applications for speech recognition, morphological analysis or sentiment analysis etc.

**Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Language Teaching:** Principles and practices of language teaching; methods and assessment; learning vs acquisition; cognitive resources.

**Clinical Linguistics:** assessments and evidence-based therapies; language disorders (both developmental and acquired).