



WHAT IS LINGUISTICS?

Lecture 1

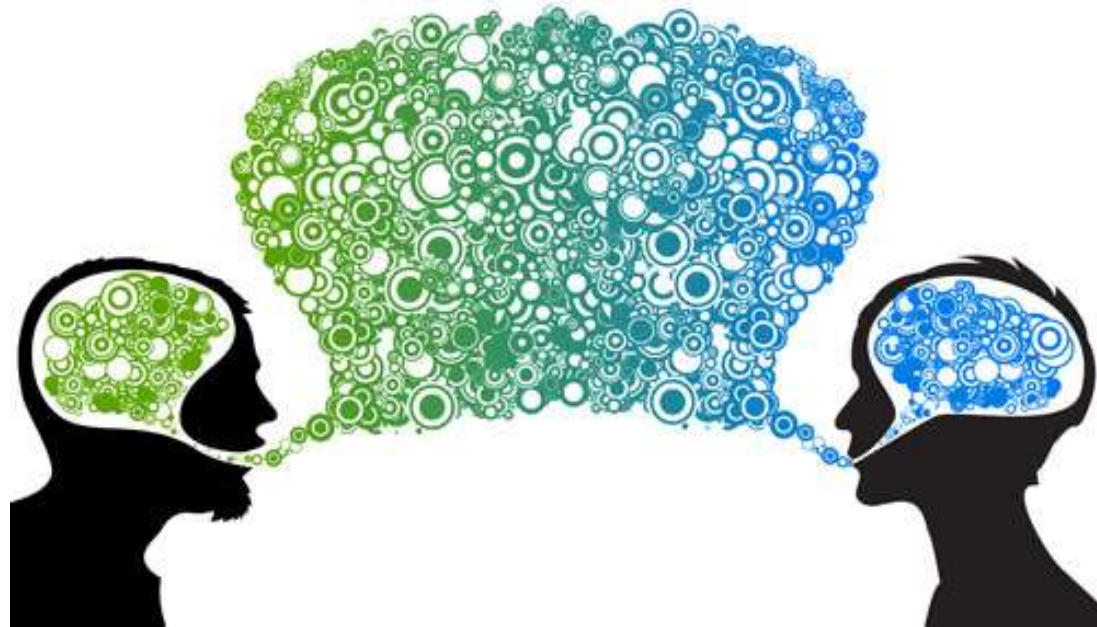
Misconceptions

- ❑ Linguistics is **NOT**
 - ❑ a historical study;
 - ❑ speaking a language;
 - ❑ literary criticism;
 - ❑ traditional study of grammar.



Lynne Murphy:

“asking a linguist how many languages s/he speaks is like asking a doctor how many diseases s/he has had”



Linguistics

- The *goal* of linguistics is to provide valid analyses of language structure.
- *Linguistic theory* is concerned with establishing a coherent set of independent principles to explain phenomena in language.

In brief

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

Linguistics tries to answer such questions

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

Linguistics investigates

- ❑ the general phenomenon of human language;
- ❑ different families of languages (example: Germanic, including English, German etc.);
- ❑ specific languages (example: Arabic, Mandarin and French);
- ❑ communicative codes or behaviors (the language of recent immigrants, the ways by which bilinguals choose one or another language in certain settings).

Language

- ❑ a system of *vocal signs* with an *internal structure* and used for the purposes of *human communication*. Language usually has a secondary function of carrying a social message.



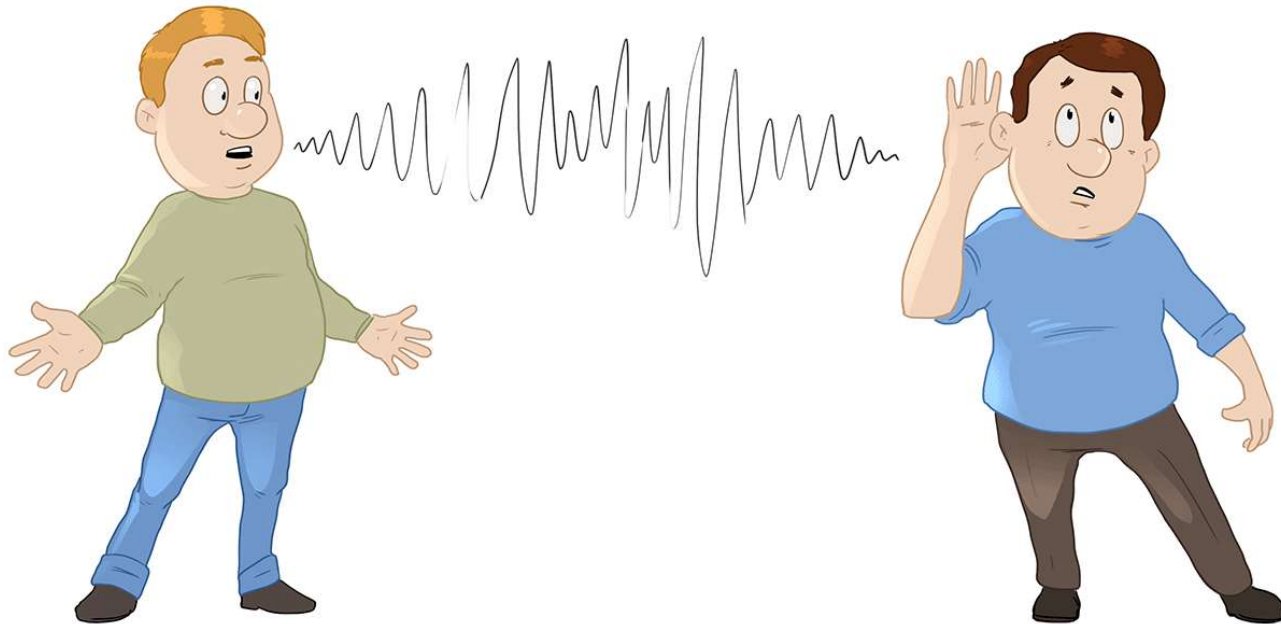
Central Branches of Linguistics

Phonetics	Morphology	Semantics
Phonology	Syntax	Pragmatics



Phonetics

- a branch of linguistics that studies the sound means of language as articulatory and acoustic units.



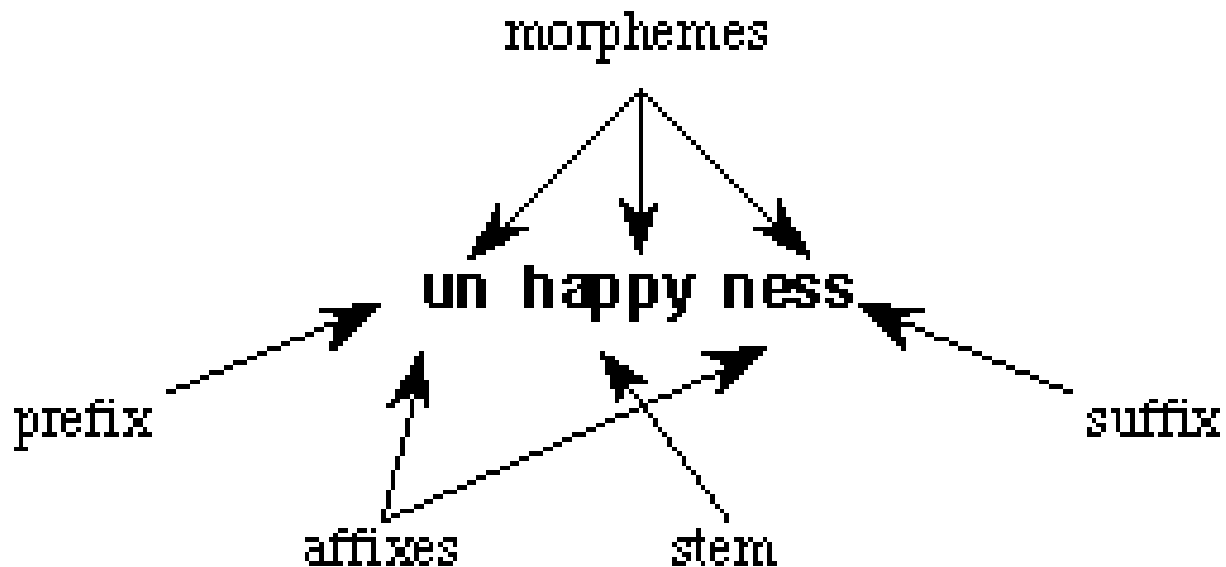
Phonology

- ❑ (functional or linguistic phonetics) a linguistic branch of phonetics that studies sounds as units, which serve people for communicative purposes, the way they function in speech continuum. Its primary aim is to discover the principles that govern the way the sounds are organized in languages.



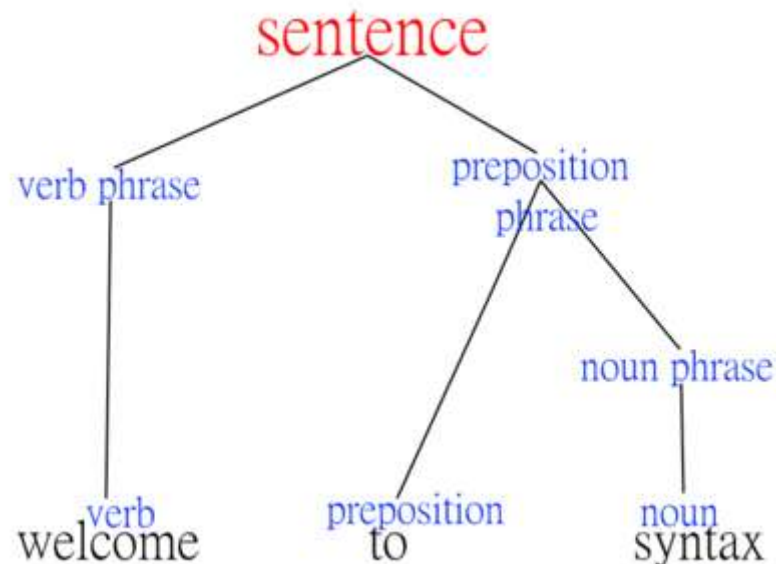
Morphology

- a branch of linguistics that studies how sounds are organized into units of meaning. It analyzes the structure of words and parts of words, such as stems, root words, prefixes, and suffixes.



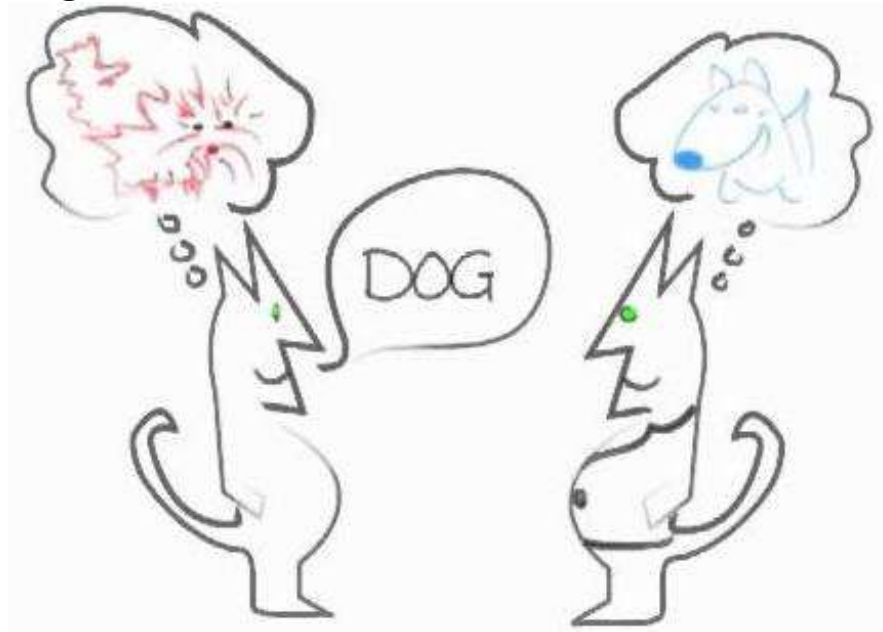
Syntax

- a branch of linguistics that studies how units of meaning come together to create utterances. It investigates the arrangement of words in sentences, clauses, and phrases, and studies the formation of sentences and the relationship of their component parts.



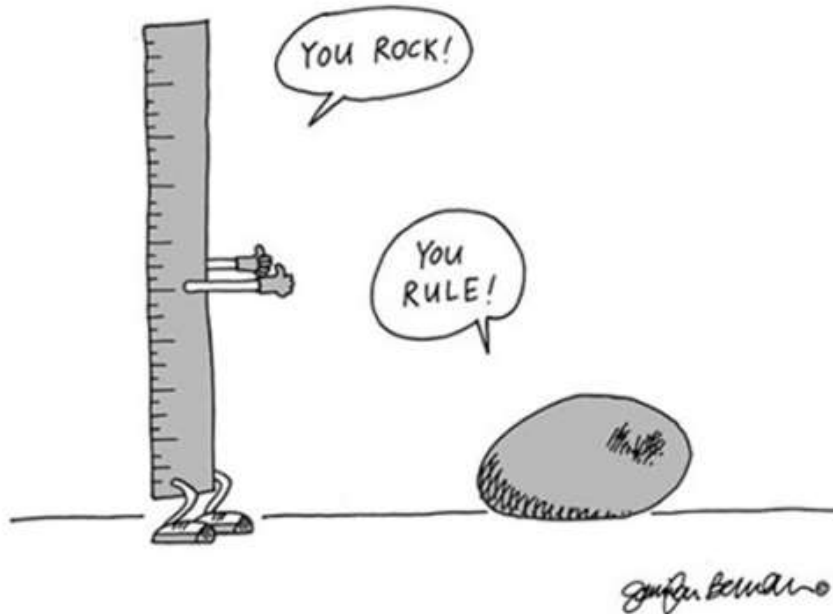
Semantics

- a branch of linguistics that studies the nature of meanings. It investigates the relationship between words and how we draw meaning from those words as people can absolutely differently interpret words and draw different meanings from them.

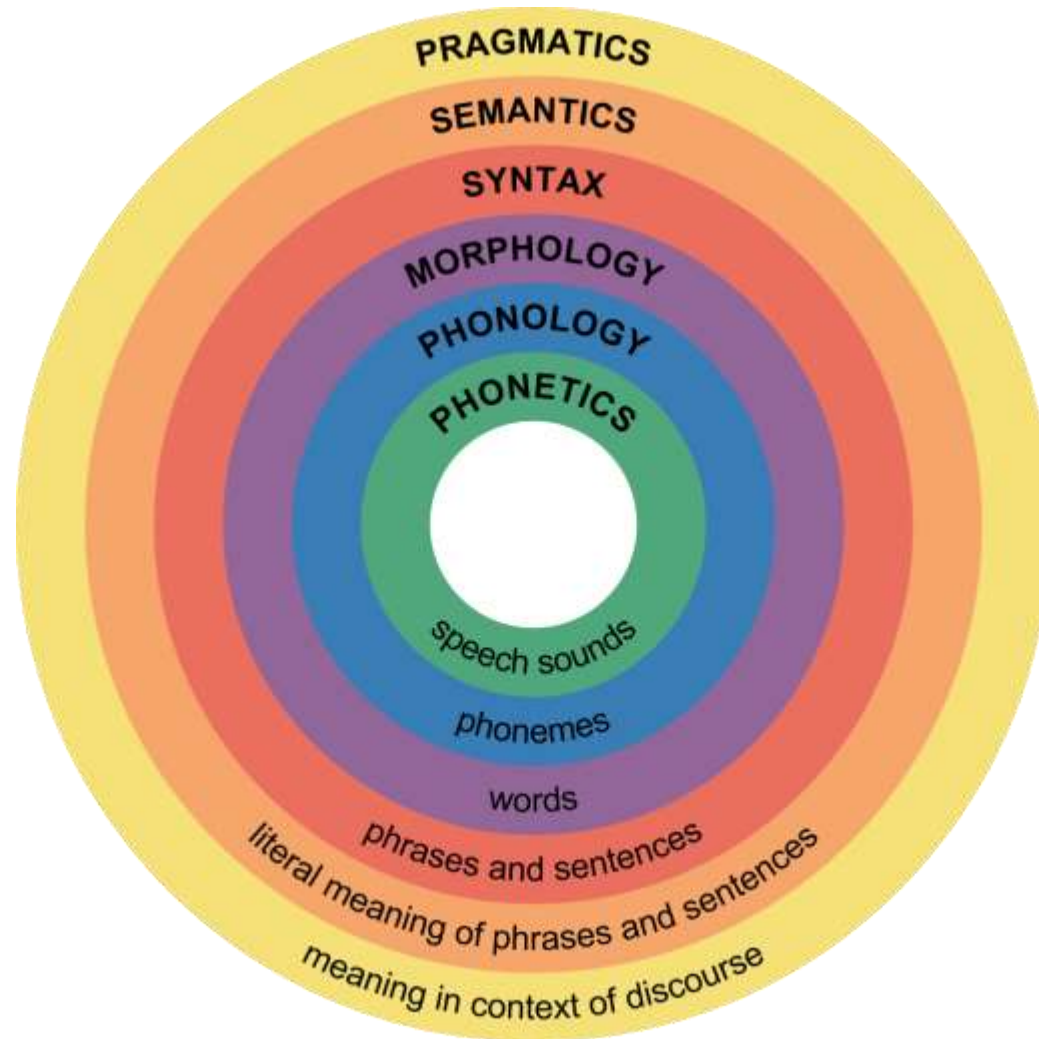


Pragmatics

- a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language signs and language users. It is the study of language as it is used in a social context, including its effect on the interlocutors.



Linguistics



Linguists study

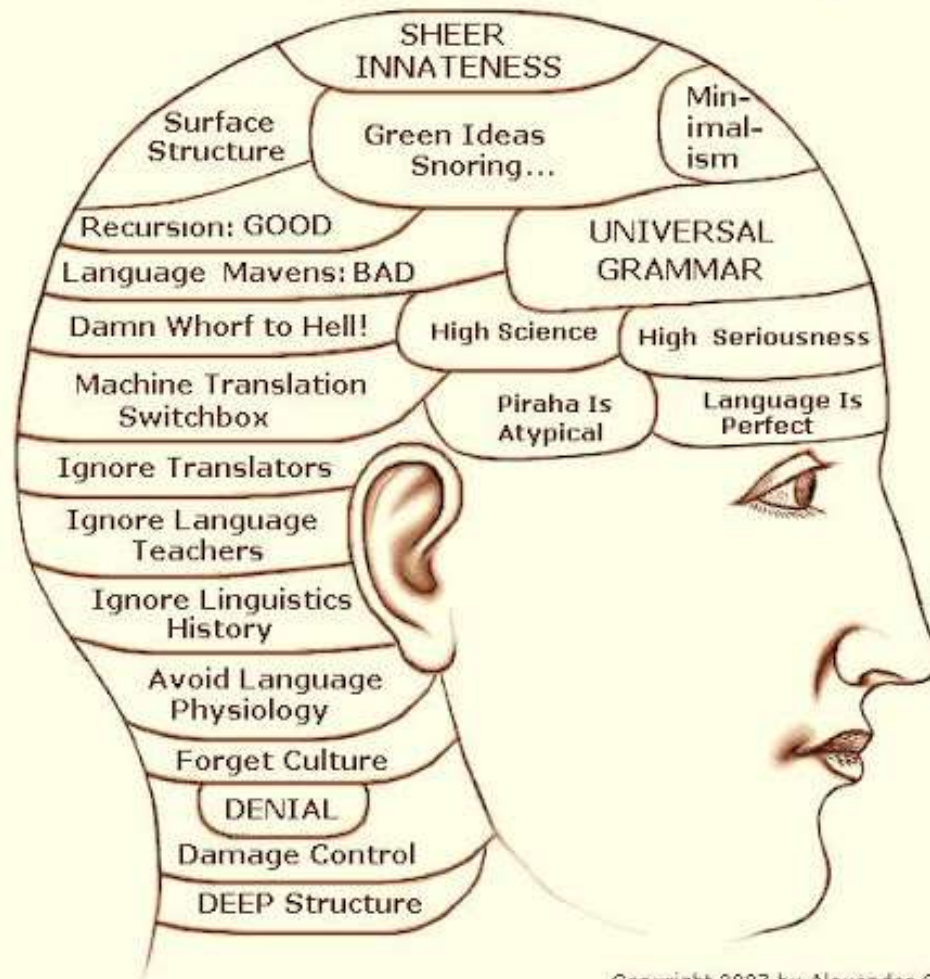
- ❑ language structure;
- ❑ linguistic patterns;
- ❑ how language components interact with one another;
- ❑ how people gain knowledge of language;
- ❑ the way knowledge of language interacts with other cognitive processes;
- ❑ how language varies.

Linguists

- ❑ learn how to computationally model knowledge about language;
- ❑ search databases;
- ❑ work with people who speak different languages to discover patterns;
- ❑ run experiments with children and adults in the field, classroom and lab.

Linguist Mind =)

Inside the Mind of a Mainstream Linguist



Linguists can work in the field of:

- ❑ **Historical linguistics:** The study of how language changes over time
- ❑ **Sociolinguistics:** The study of language based on social factors, such as region, social class, occupation, and gender
- ❑ **Dialectology:** The study of language variation based on geographic distribution
- ❑ **Pragmatics:** The study of how context contributes to meaning

Linguists can work in the field of:

- **Discourse analysis:** The study of how language is used
- **Computational linguistics:** The application of computational programs to model aspects of language
- **Language acquisition:** The study of how people acquire or learn a language
- **Psycholinguistics:** The study of how people process language

Linguists can work in the field of:

- **Experimental linguistics:** The study of theories of linguistics representation (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics) based on evidence
- **Neurolinguistics:** The study of how language affects the structure and function of the brain
- **Lexicography:** The compilation and study of dictionaries with context, history, grammar, and pronunciation in mind
- **Forensic linguistics:** The study of language and the law
- **Corpus linguistics:** The study of language through a collection of naturally occurring texts

Benefits of Linguistics Study

- ❑ language teachers can better understand their subject matter;
- ❑ communication becomes more effective and persuasive;
- ❑ public speakers get to know about the value of such hidden things as affect or intonation;
- ❑ businessmen better understand the role language plays in their contacts and communications;

Benefits of Linguistics Study

- ❑ historians and politicians can realize the role played by language and by peoples' views of language in past and current events;
- ❑ delegates can build better international friendships and help communities and individuals understand and respect one another.

Seminar 1

Introduction to Linguistics

- ❑ Scope and nature of linguistics.
- ❑ Branches of linguistics.
- ❑ Language and Communication.
- ❑ Definition of language. Characteristics of language.
- ❑ Theories regarding the origin of language.