

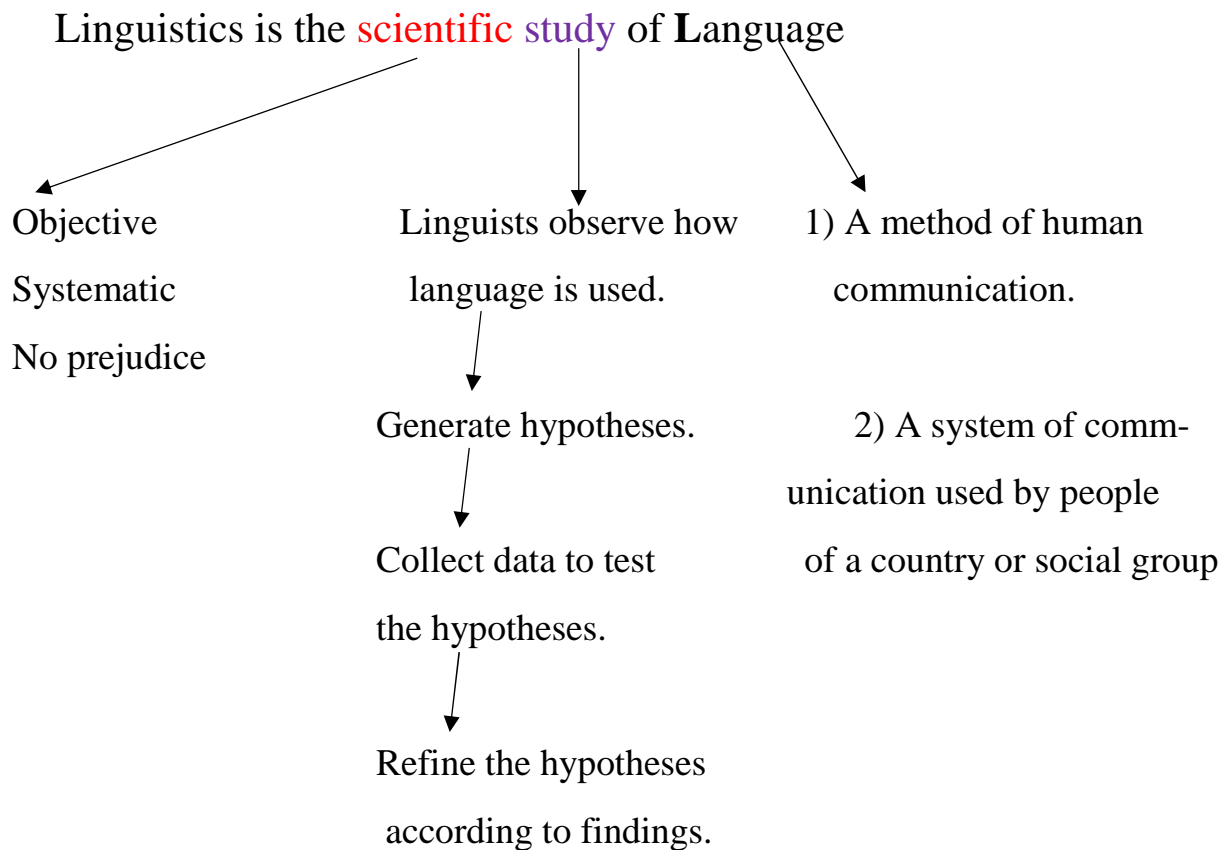
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Module: Linguistics

Level: First Year

Summary (lectures 1=>7)

1- What is Linguistics?



2- What is Language?

There are two main definitions of language:

1- **The system of human** communication, using arbitrary signs (e.g. voice sounds, hand gestures or written symbols) in combination, according to established principles/rules. It is language as **a universal human phenomenon**; language as **a cognitive or mental phenomenon**. It can all be paraphrased by the expression '*language faculty*'.

2- Such a **system as used by a nation, people or other distinct**

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Community /social group, such as English, French, Spanish...etc. It refers to **language as a social phenomenon**. It is language faculty as expressed in individual languages.

3- The Scientific / Hypothesis Cycle

It is divided into **THREE** main **STEPS** as in the following examples:

NB: the key expressions are underlined

Simple Present Formation

Step One

Initial Hypothesis: In English, to form/to build the simple present tense of verbs, we sometimes add 'S' to the stem with the third person singular (he, she, it).

Data One:

Eat => Eats

Give => Gives

Write => Writes

Step Two

But against our initial hypothesis, the following examples/ constructions/ rules/ forms are also correct/ used

Data Two:

Go => Goes

Finish => Finishes

Relax => Relaxes

Data Three:

Cry => Cries

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Dry => Dries

Study => Studies

Data Four:

Play => Plays

Stay => Stays

Display => Displays

Data Five:

To be => am/ is / are

To have => Has

Step Three

After the analysis and interpretation of data 1,2,3,4, and 5, we are now in a strong position to say that, in English, to form the simple present tense:

- 1- We add 'S' to the stem with the third person singular (he, she, it).
- 2- We add 'ES' to the stem when the verb ends with (s, ss, x, ch, sh, o, z), with the third person singular (he, she, it).
- 3- Verbs that end with a *consonant*+ y, we omit 'y' and add 'IES' to the stem.
- 4- Verbs that end with a *vowel* +y, we keep the 'y' and add 'S' to the stem.
- 5- Irregular verbs change their forms.

Homework:

Following the scientific cycle, generate a hypothesis about the pronunciation of the FINAL 'S' in English, and support it with relevant data.

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Simple Past Formation

Step One

Initial Hypothesis: In English, to form/to build the simple past tense of some verbs, we add 'ed' to the stem.

Data One:

Clean => Clean**ed**

Visit => Visit**ed**

Cook => Cook**ed**

Step Two

But against our initial hypothesis, the following examples/ constructions/ rules/ forms are also correct/ used

Data Two:

Participate => Participat**ed**

Change => Chang**ed**

Seize => Seiz**ed**

Data Three:

Play => Play**ed**

Annoy => Annoy**ed**

Obey => Obey**ed**

Data Four:

Apply => Appl**ied**

Try => Tri**ed**

Worry => Worr**ied**

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Data Five:

Beg => Begged

Jog => Jogged

To picnic => picnicked

Data Six:

To be => was/were

To have => Had

Bring => Brought

Fly => Flew

Data Seven:

Cut => Cut

Put => Put

Set => Set

Step Three

After the analysis and interpretation of data 1,2,3,4, and 5, we are now in a strong position to say that, in English, to form the simple past tense of verbs:

- 1- We add 'ED' to the stem of regular verbs.
- 2- We add 'D' to the stem of regular verbs that end with a silent 'e'.
- 3- Verbs that end with a *vowel* +y, we keep the 'y' and add 'ED' to the stem.
- 4- Verbs that end with a *consonant*+ y, we omit 'y' and add 'IED' to the stem
- 5- If there is a consonant after a stressed vowel at the end of a regular verb, double the consonant. If the vowel is not stressed, we do not double it.
- 6- Irregular verbs change their forms.
- 7- Some irregular verbs do not change their form.

Homework: Following the scientific cycle, generate a hypothesis about the pronunciation of the 'ED', and support it with relevant data.

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4-Language Mediums: Speech and writing

Language (as an abstract system) can be realized through *speech* and *writing* (concrete). They are referred to as mediums of language. Speech is usually considered as primary to writing. However, this does not mean that speech is more important; a child, generally, learns to speak first, and the writing system of that particular language is learned at a later stage of the child's language acquisition. We learn to speak almost automatically, whereas writing needs to be mastered. Writing is considered as the representation of speech.

Check Loreto Todd's book "An Introduction to Linguistics" Pages 8-9.

Activity: Discuss and Explain the following quotes from "An Introduction into Linguistics" by Loreto Todd

- "Humans have learned to make **infinite use** of **finite means**".
- "Human languages do not differ in **essence** from animal communication, they certainly differ in **degree**".
- "Language is both **arbitrary** and **systematic**".

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5-Characteristics of human language

Arbitrariness:

The association between a **linguistic form** and **the meaning** it expresses is **not inherent** but **established by conventions**. Language is arbitrary in the sense that there is no intrinsic relationship between the word and the entity or the object it represents. This explains why different languages have different signs representing a particular entity. Consider, for example, the animal that English speakers refer to as *elephant*. The linguistic sign for this entity is *gajah* in Malay. Why? Because these are the expressions that speakers of English and Malay have agreed (by established convention) should refer to this particular entity.

Productivity (creativity):

“Humans have learned to make **infinite use** of **finite means**” (Loreto Todd, 6). Taking the example of the English Language which is comprised of 44 sounds (the finite means; a limited number of sounds), out of which an unlimited number of words, expressions, sentences, texts, and meanings can be produced (infinite use). Human beings have the ability to manipulate their language systematically to produce and create new utterances for new objects and situations.

Duality of Patterning (Double Articulation):

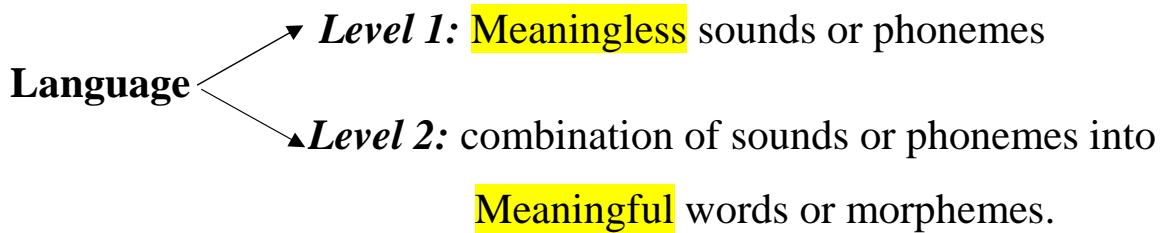
This refers to the two systems of sound and meaning. Human language is made up of **two levels**; the physical level (**sounds in isolation, meaningless**), and the level at which those **sounds are combined** into **meaningful morphemes or words**. David Ludden, "is what gives language such expressive power. Spoken languages are composed of a limited set of meaningless speech sounds that are combined according

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to rules to form meaningful words" (*The Psychology of Language: An Integrated Approach*, 2016).



Displacement:

It refers to the ability to talk across space and time. This means that humans have the ability to communicate about things that are present or happening neither HERE or NOW, and even things that do not exist.

- ***For more details check: “The Study of Language” by George Yule. Pages: 12=>16.***

Homework:

Can you explain what Juliet means when she says to Romeo: “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet”.

What characteristic does this expression highlight? Explain.

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