

Unit - II

What is Linguistics?

Synopsis:

* Introduction

* What is Linguistics?

* Linguistics as a science

* Scope of Linguistics

* Descriptive, comparative and Historical Linguistics

* Levels of Linguistic Analysis

* Branches of Linguistics

i) psycholinguistics

ii) Sociolinguistics

iii) Anthropological Linguistics

iv) Literary stylistics

* conclusion

Introduction :-

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. The word 'language' here means language in general, not a particular language. Language is all around us. Language allows us to share complicated thought, negotiate agreements, and make communal plans. The field of scholarship that tries to answer the question "How does language work?" is called "linguistics", and the scholars who study it are called "linguists".

What is Linguistics:

"Linguistics is the scientific study of language." The word 'Language' here means language in general, not a particular language. Linguistics does not study an individual language, it studies 'Language' in general.

Linguistics as a science:

Linguistics can be understood as a science, in both general and specific terms. Generally, we use the term 'science' for any knowledge that is based on clear, systematic and rational understanding. Thus we often speak of the 'science of politics' or 'statecraft', or 'the science of cooking'. However, we also use the term 'science'

- i) it is empirical and objective
- ii) Its explanation of language is based on observation of language phenomena; and
- iii) Its explanations are consistent and economical

Scope of Linguistics:

The concern of Linguistics (its scope) is (a) to describe language, (b) to study the nature of language, and (c) to establish a theory of language.

In undertaking language study, linguists follow several approaches;

1. Descriptive approach
2. Comparative approach
3. Historical approach

Descriptive, Comparative and Historical Linguistics:

- * Descriptive linguistics is concerned with the description and analysis of the ways in which a language operates and is used by a given set of speakers at a given time.
- * Historical linguistics is the study of the developments in languages in the course of time, the ways in which languages change from period to period and of the causes and result of such changes... it must be based on a description of two or more stages in the development of the language being studied.
- * Comparative Linguistics which entails comparing languages and establish correspondences between them.

Levels of Linguistic Analysis:

The levels of linguistic analysis, corresponding to the levels of language structure, are: Phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, which take sounds, words, sentences and meanings, respectively as discrete units. Discourse is the level of language beyond the sentence.

Levels of Analysis

Phonetics and phonology

Morphology

Syntax

Semantics

Discourse

Levels of structure

Sounds

word Formation

Sentence Formation

Meanings

connected sentences

BRANCHES OF LINGUISTICS:

Various branches of linguistics have grown because language is intimately related both to the inner world of man's mind and to the outer world of society relationships. Each of these aspects has led to the study of psycho-linguistics and sociolinguistics, respectively.

i) psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is concerned with the learning of language at various states; the early acquisition of a first language by children and later states in acquisition of first and other languages. Psycholinguists attempt to answer questions such as whether the human brain has an inborn language ability structured in such a way that certain grammatical and semantic patterns are embedded in it, which can explain how all human beings are capable of learning a language.

ii) sociolinguistics:

Sociolinguistics is the study of language variation and change - how varieties of language are formed when the speaker belongs to a geographical region, social class, social situation and occupation,

iii) Anthropological Linguistics:

The evolution of language in human society and its role in the formation of culture is another aspect of language, society and culture. This is studied in anthropological linguistics. The structure of language has a social and cultural basis in the same way as other customs, conventions

and codes such as those related to dress and food. Each culture organises its world in its own way, giving names to objects, identifying areas of significance or value and suppressing other areas.

iv) Literary Stylistics :-

The study of variation in language and the use of language in communication has also led to new ways of studying literary texts and nature of literary communication. If you consider again the notion of registers discussed above, you may realise that register is in fact a kind of 'language' that is considered appropriate for a particular subject matter e.g. the style of a religious sermon, the style of sports commentary. Similarly we may describe its features at the levels of phonology, syntax, lexis, etc. to distinguish it from other texts and to appreciate how it achieves some unique effects through the use of languages. This kind of study is called

Literary Stylistics

Conclusion:

As a modern linguistics has developed, it has grown from an autonomous discipline to one linked with various other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, literary studies, etc. Research in all these areas has facilitated the application of insights from linguistics in language teaching and planning of language education and policies.