

# المحاضرة الأولى

المادة: مقدمة في اللغويات العامة

الفرقة: الثالثة انجليزي – عام

د. ريهام خليفة

# Linguistics

**The primary interest of linguists is the scientific study of language.**

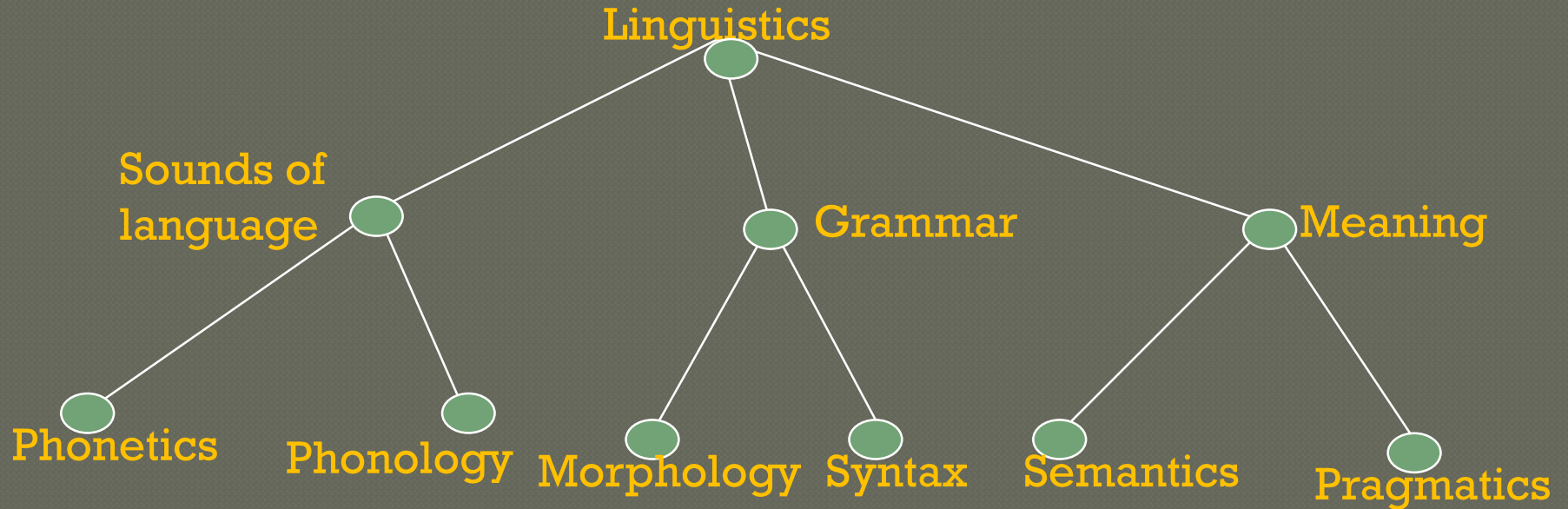
**Like a biologist studies the structure of cells, a linguist studies the structure of language: how speakers create meaning through combinations of sounds, words, and sentences that ultimately result in texts – extended stretches of language (e.g. a conversation between friends, a speech, an article in a newspaper).**

**Like other scientists, linguists examine their subject matter – language – objectively.**

**They are not interested in evaluating “good” versus “bad” uses of language, in much the same manner that a biologist does not examine cells with the goal of determining which are “pretty” and which are “ugly.”**

# Different fields of linguistics can be summarized in the following diagram

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**Language is the set of signals by which we can communicate.**

**What are the different functions of language?**

# Functions of Language

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graph TD; A[Functions of Language] --- B[Micro functions]; A --- C[Macro functions]
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**Micro functions**

**Macro functions**

# Micro Functions

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**1. to release nervous/physical energy  
(physiological function)**

**A good deal of language use has a physiological purpose.**



# Examples

**A. If you are a sports fan watching your favorite sport on TV, you may well feel the overwhelming urge at certain exciting moments in the match to shout instructions to the players; Go on, don't mess about, for God's sake shoot! The instructions are useless, they serve no communicative purpose but they allow us to release pent-up energy which otherwise would be intolerable.**

**B. Another ex. a great deal of what we say when we are angry is said to relieve the physical and nervous energy generated by emotional distress.**

**Language is not adequate enough to relieve our feelings fully and we may need to find other way of finding relief- bursting into tears, for example.**

## **2. For purposes of sociability (phatic function)**

**Sometimes we use language only for general disposition to be sociable.**

**The technical term for this is phatic communication (phatic comes from Greek and means "utterance").**

**Phatic language, fulfils important contact uses, it helps us negotiate the start and end exchanges whether in spoken or written form.**

**Failure to observe these social courtesies can cause considerable embarrassment and even bad feeling.**

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**3. To provide a record  
(recording function)**

- **We are constantly using language to record things we wish to remember.**
- **It might be:**
  - a) **a short-time record, as in shopping list or a list of things to do, or**
  - b) **a long-term record, as in a diary or history of some kind.**
- **It's the most official use of language.**
- **It's the most important function behind the development of language from being simply an oral medium to becoming a written one.**

## **4. To identify and classify things (identifying functions)**

**Language not only allow us to record, but also to identify, with considerable precision, an enormous array of objects and events, without which it would be very difficult to make sense of the world around us.**

**Learning the names of things allow us to refer quickly and accurately to them; it gives us power over them. Half the mystique of the new disciplines comes from the hidden power suggested by a new terminology. Mastering a fresh concept means mastering the terms in which it is encoded, which allows us to control and manipulate reality.**



## **5. As an instrument of thought (reasoning function)**

**All of us have a running commentary going on in our heads during our waking hours. Sometimes we talk to ourselves in a form of continuous monologue. Some other times it takes the form of a dialogue with some imagined 'other', but more often it is simply a form of silent thinking.**

**the majority of our thinking is done with words.**

**A common view of language is that it is merely a tool of thought.**

**In other words, we have ideas forming in our minds for which we need to find the appropriate words: the words are simply the expression of the ideas.**

**In practice, the words are the ideas because our ideas are generated in language; they come to us already linguistically encoded.**

**Speaking and writing are forms of thought. That is why some people feel that they have not understood something until they have been able to express it in language. Language does not just express thought, it also creates it.**

**6. As a means of communicating  
ideas and feelings  
(communicating function)**

**Most people select this function as the most important one. The need to understand and be understood, to have our feelings and ideas recognized and acknowledged, is an important one for most human beings. Language is well equipped to perform this function because the dominance and survival of the human race depend on it. All human achievement is bound up in some way with successful acts of communication. Language is the most developed and the most subtle, and it is the natural inheritance of us all as “talking animals.**

## **7. To give delight**

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**There are various kinds of pleasure which we derive from language. At the simplest level there is the sheer enjoyment of sound itself and the melody of certain combinations of sounds. Most poetry exploits this function. Devices such as onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance, all draw on the pleasure we find in euphony, as do rhythm and rhyme.**

- **Spoken English is rhythmically organized around syllables, the smallest rhythmic unit in language.**
- **We perceive some syllables to be stronger than others, and it is this pattern of strong and weak syllables which gives us the rhythm of speech.**

**At the syntactic level-the level of word order and word classes- there is pleasure we gain from the rearrangement by inversion or ellipsis of normal phrase or clause order from the conversion of words from one class to another. These changes play against out normal expectations from one the language and creates a sense of novelty.**

**A large part of the pleasure we derive from language comes from the successful exploitation of linguistic novelty at different levels of the language.**



**In sum, we have seven main functions of language:**

- 1. To release nervous/physical energy** (physiological function)
- 2. For purposes of sociability** (Phatic function)
- 3. To provide a record** (recording function)
- 4. To identify and classify things** (identifying function)
- 5. As an instrument of thought** (reasoning function)
- 6. As a means of communication** (communicating function)
- 7. To give delight** (pleasure function)