

Introduction to the course

This course is about Language, which many of us so often take for granted. It is also about the relationship between Language and Thought, because abstract, symbolic Thought is what makes human language different from animal ‘languages.’

Language is central to human existence and success in every human endeavor. Knowledge of what it is and how it works will improve your communication skills and will enable you to use language more effectively.

By the time you have completed this course, you should have a good idea of what Language is, and how it differs from animal communication systems. You will also have learnt a lot about the scope and basic direction of the linguistic science, and acquired a substantial understanding of language structure.

Course organization and content

Structurally, this course has three distinct parts:

1. Part I ~ Language as a Complex Whole, where we will view language dialectically with the aim of grasping its complexity and beauty.
2. Part II ~ The Physical *Forms* of Language focuses on the more ‘traditional’ aspects of descriptive linguistics (syntax, morphology, phonetics and phonology – all the *physical forms* of language)
3. Part III is really the Conclusion, the ‘putting it all together again’; it will help you to put things that you have learnt into perspective.

Week	Unit
1	<p>Introduction ~ Unit 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Linguistics – a <i>scientific</i> study of Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ the Scientific Method and scientific reasoning ⇒ Sciences vs. Arts 2. Brief outline of the history of Linguistics 3. The Scope of Linguistics, Its ‘Core’ Domains & how the study of linguistics will benefit you 4. Symbols in human communication (iconic and arbitrary, and aural /visual) 5. Ambiguity (lexical and structural)
2	<p>Unit 2 ~ What Is Language?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language – Gordian Knot of Contradictions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Physical Nature of Language b. The Psychological Nature of Language c. The Psycho-physical Basis of Speech d. The Social and Historical Nature of Language 2. Saussure’s Solution: Structuralism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fundamentals of Saussure’s Structuralism b. The Language Mechanism 3. Dialectical Linguistics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Difference of Dialectics b. The Concept of <i>Living</i> Structure 4. Analysis into Units: <i>Word-Meaning</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Main points of Vygotsky’s Analysis into Units 5. Every Word Is a Generalization <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What IS <i>generalization</i>? 6. How do we generalize? Three Principles of Human Understanding <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Synthesis & Analysis

	b. Dialectics & the Study of Language
3	Unit 3 ~ Language & Thought – a Dynamic Structure of Meaning 1. Thought & Language: learning to <i>think</i> 'human' through Language 2. Piaget's 4 stages of cognitive development 3. Word-meanings develop: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In individual minds and In the collective mind of the community The concept of grammaticalization 4. Meaning as use - ambiguity is natural to Language
4	Unit 4 ~ Language Origins & History 1. Language & Thought <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Development of thought in infants 2. Speech & Thought are <i>structurally</i> different <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Inner speech is an autonomous function of Language 3. Language Origins <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Divine Creation perspective The Evolutionary perspective 4. Generalization – the Beating <i>Heart</i> of Language <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How and why did our ancestors begin to generalize? What was Language like, in its infancy? Biological evolution vs. Language change
5	Unit 5 ~ Syntax & Meaning 1. Syntax – Patterns of Words in the Sentence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Concepts – Revised <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Sentence – Unit of Meaning; 4 types of Sentence Structure Parts of Speech <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Phrases Subordinate Clauses Verb Conjugations, Tenses, Active/ Passive Voice, & Moods) 2. The Language Mechanism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Syntax & its role in meaning creation Recursion Synthesis and Analysis in Sentence Structure (G-nalysis)
6	Unit 6 ~ Syntax & Meaning – Limitations of Arbitrariness 1. Grammaticality 2. Practical sentence analysis
7	Unit 7 ~ Syntax – the Rules of the System 1. Grammaticalisation Revisited 2. Practical sentence analysis
8	Unit 8 ~ Morphology 1 1. Morpheme: concept 2. Morpheme Classification: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Free <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lexical Functional Bound <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Inflectional Derivational

	3. Word formation processes in English
9	Unit 9 ~ Morphology 2 1. Allomorphy 2. Linguistic Typology - Morphological types <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Analytical (isolating) b. Synthetic (agglutinating, inflectional, fusional) 3. Linguistic Change
10	Unit 10 ~ The Sounds of Language 1. Phonetics vs. Phonology 2. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) 3. Organs of Speech 4. Classification of speech sounds
11	Unit 11 ~ Sounds - the Elements of Language 1. Phonology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ phonemes, allophones, phones ⇒ minimal pairs & minimal sets Phonemes 2. Connected Speech: Assimilation 3. Phonological rules
12	Unit 12: Semantics – the Study of Meaning 1. Semantic properties & semantic features 2. Lexical relations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>synonymy</i> b. <i>antonomy</i> c. <i>homonymy/ homophony/ homography</i> d. <i>polysemy</i> 3. Metaphor & Metonymy - the ‘drivers’ of semantic change 4. Four types of semantic change: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Widening</i> of meaning: raise of quantity b. <i>Narrowing</i> of meaning: loss of quantity c. <i>Amelioration</i> of meaning: raise of quality d. <i>Pejoration</i> of meaning: loss of quality
13	Language - One Complex Whole again 1. Quick Revision of Main Points 2. Synthesis after Analysis – Rising to a New Level of Understanding 3. The Language Mechanism