

Learning Book

INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTIC

Agnes O. Manek, S.S., M. Hum.

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PREFACE

Praise be to God Almighty for His grace and blessings, which have enabled the completion of this textbook, Introduction to Linguistics. This book is designed as a learning guide for students studying the basics of linguistics, covering both theoretical and practical aspects.

Linguistics is a discipline that examines language as a complex and dynamic system of human communication. This book is structured to provide a fundamental understanding of various aspects of linguistics, including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, as well as their application in everyday life.

The textbook is written in clear and accessible language, accompanied by relevant examples to help students grasp the concepts presented. Additionally, at the end of each chapter, exercises are provided to help students assess their understanding of the material.

I acknowledge that this book is far from perfect. Therefore, constructive feedback and suggestions from readers are highly appreciated for future improvements.

In conclusion, I hope this textbook will be beneficial to students, lecturers, and all individuals involved in the field of linguistics. May this book serve as a useful reference in understanding the science of language.

Thank you

Agnes O. Manek

Kupang, 11 Juni 2024

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UNDERSTANDING AND SCOPE OF LINGUISTICS

1. Definition of Linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific and systematic study of language. This field involves the analysis of language structure, including sounds (phonology), word formation (morphology), sentence structure (syntax), and meaning (semantics), as well as how language is used in everyday communication (pragmatics). Linguistics also investigates how language is acquired, how it evolves, and how it functions within social and cultural contexts. As a science, linguistics aims to understand and explain language phenomena through an objective and evidence-based approach.

The word "linguistics" originates from the Latin word "lingua," which means "language" or "tongue." In Latin, "lingua" was used to refer both to the physical organ used for speaking (the tongue) and to language itself as a system of communication. From this root, the term "linguisticus" was formed, meaning "related to language." The term "linguistics" began to be used in a scientific context in the 19th century when the study of language emerged as an independent discipline. This word was then adopted into various languages, including English ("linguistics") and Indonesian ("linguistik"), to refer to the scientific and systematic study of language.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) was a Swiss linguist who is considered one of the founders of modern linguistics. His contributions had a significant impact on the development of structuralist linguistic theories. Here are some key aspects of Saussure's thought:

1.1 Language Structure: Langue and Parole

Saussure distinguished between "langue" and "parole". Langue refers to the abstract language system shared by members of a society. It includes the rules and structures underlying language use. Langue is a relatively stable system that can be studied and learned. Parole refers to the concrete use of language by individuals in everyday communication situations. It is the actual manifestation of langue, often varying between individuals and contexts.

1.2. Theory of Signs

Saussure developed the theory of the linguistic sign, which involves two main components. Signifier is the physical form of the sign, such as a word or sound. Signified is the concept or meaning associated with the signifier. Saussure argued that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary (not natural) and based on social convention.

1.3. Structure and System

Saussure argued that language is a structural system in which elements are interrelated. He introduced the concepts of "synchrony" and "diachrony". Synchrony is the study of language at a specific point in time. Saussure emphasized the importance of synchronic analysis for understanding language structure. Diachrony is the study of language change over time. While important, Saussure focused more on synchronic analysis.

Saussure's ideas laid the foundation for the development of structuralism in linguistics and other social sciences. Structuralism emphasizes the analysis of language and cultural systems based on their internal relationships rather than historical or external contexts. Saussure's work had a profound influence on many areas of linguistic and semiotic study. He became a key figure in modern linguistics, and many theorists, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Derrida, developed their ideas based on Saussure's theories.

2. Functions and Goals of Linguistic Study

2.1 Functions of Linguistic Study

2.1.1. Description and Analysis of Language

Linguistics functions to systematically describe languages. This includes identifying and explaining the structural components of language, such as phonology (sounds), morphology (word formation), syntax (sentence structure), and semantics (meaning). Linguistics analyzes how these language elements interact within the language system. This involves examining how words and phrases are formed, how sentences are structured, and how meaning is conveyed through language.

2.1.2 Understanding Language Structure and Function

Linguistics helps in understanding how language is structurally organized, including grammatical rules and phonological patterns. It also explores how language serves communicative purposes, including social functions, pragmatics, and how language is used to achieve specific communication goals.

2.1.3. Development of Linguistic Theories

Linguistics aims to develop theories about how language is organized and processed. This includes theories such as Noam Chomsky's generative grammar or M.A.K. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. It studies how languages change over time in both structure and usage.

2.1.4. Application of Linguistics in Practical Contexts

Linguistics is applied in teaching and learning languages, including curriculum development and instructional methods. Linguistic study supports translation and localization by understanding nuances and meanings in different languages.

2.1.5. Social and Cultural Research

Linguistics aids in researching how language relates to social factors such as class, gender, and ethnicity. It analyzes how language is used in social contexts and communication to understand meaning in various situations.

2.2 Goals of Linguistic Study

2.2.1. Understanding Fundamental Principles of Language

The primary goal of linguistic study is to understand the fundamental principles underlying all human languages. This involves identifying universal rules and structures applicable across different languages.

2.2.2. Explaining Language Variation and Change

Linguistics aims to explain language variation across different linguistic communities and changes in language over time. This includes studying dialects, language acquisition, and language evolution.

2.2.3. Enhancing Language Skills

Linguistic study can improve language skills, both in first and second languages, by providing a better understanding of language structure and usage.

2.2.4. Supporting Interdisciplinary Research

Linguistics supports research in various other disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, and computer science, particularly in areas like natural language processing (NLP) and cognitive studies.

2.2.5. Addressing Practical Issues

The study of linguistics seeks to address practical issues related to language, such as developing translation software, language learning, and language therapy for individuals with speech disorders.

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