CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION
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1.1 LINGUISTIC - CONCEPT AND DEFINITION

In view of the great complexity of language and its permeating role in society, there should have evolved an independent field of study to try to put its analysis on a sound footing. Linguistics is the usual name of this discipline. It can be defined as the “Systematic Study of Language” – a discipline which describes language in all its aspects and formulates theories as to how it works. The students who study this discipline are called “Linguists”, sometimes linguists. This term is sometimes used to avoid confusing the two streams of linguist namely the student of the discipline, language which is the sense intended here and “Speaker of many languages” – which is what is popularly meant by the word.

“Linguists” are interested in what is said, not what they think ought to be said. That is it is descriptive not prescriptive. They describe the language in all its aspects but not prescribe rules of correctiveness.

Linguists first look at the spoken word, which preceded the written. Linguists regarded spoken and written form as belonging to different,
though overlapping systems which must be analyzed separately. The spoken first then the written.

Introductory books and courses on Linguistics invariably try to get always from their rather complex, sounding titles by producing a thumbnail definition like “linguistics is the scientific study of language”. It is then explained why it is important to study language scientifically.

Only in the late 15th Century introduction to linguistics really began to increase and multiply. The study of linguistics have got into greater depth since recently. To the linguists language is both the end and means of their investigation. They have to analyze language using language. Linguistics tries to answer the basic questions ‘What is language’ and ‘How does language work’. It probes into various aspects of these problems such as

“what do all languages have in common”?
what range of variation is found in every language?
How does human language differ from animal communication?
How does a child learn to speak?
How does one write down and analyze an unwritten language?
Why do language change?
To what extent are social class differences reflected in language and so on.

**Grammar of a Language**

Phonology  →  Syntax  →  Semantics

*Linguistics covers a wide range of Topics and its boundaries are difficult to define.*
In the center is phonetics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetics</th>
<th>the study of human speech sounds.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td>It is sound patterning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>Refers arrangement and formation of words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phonology, Syntax and Semantics together constitute the grammar of a language.

Pragmatics – deals with how speakers use language in ways which cannot be predicted by linguistic knowledge alone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psycholinguistics</th>
<th>the study of language and mind.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio linguistics</td>
<td>the study of language and society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied linguistics</td>
<td>the application of linguistics to language teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computational linguistics</td>
<td>the use of computers to stimulate language and its workings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylists</td>
<td>the study of language and literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropological linguistics</td>
<td>the study of language in cross – cultural settings</td>
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</table>
Philosophical linguistics - the link between language and logical thoughts.

When we say linguistics we mean the scientific - study of a language - it is descriptively a simple statement. Understanding exactly what people are committed to, once they decide. Linguistic is an important step, an essential preliminary to any insight into the essence of the subject.

The discipline of linguistics can be linked to a path way which is being cut through the dark and mysterious forest of language. Different parts of the forest have been explored at different times, so we can depict the path as a winding one.

There has been three major directions in linguistics in the past two centuries.

**NINETEENTH CENTURY**

Historical: During this period the birth of linguistics took place. The influence of scholars on the linguistic study was strong. Before the 19th Century, language in the Western worlds was of interest mainly to philosophers. It is significant that the Greek Philosophers Plato and
Aristotle made major contribution to the study of language. Plato for eg. is said to have been the first person to distinguish between nouns and verbs.

**Early to Mid 20th Century**

Generally linguistics search for Universals. In 1957, linguistics took a new turning. It is during this time that role of linguistic in language learning gained interest.

**21st Century:**

Huge numbers of psychologists, Neurologists, anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers and others have begun to take a great interest in language and linguistics. Alongside a new theory called Optimal Theory developed. This theory is a new major theme which suggests that there are no fixed rules of language.

**1.2 LINGUISTIC BASIS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING**

The use of language is an integral part of human being. Children all over the world start putting words together at approximately the same age, and follow remarkably similar parts in their speech development language and abstract thought are closely connected, and many people think that these two characteristics above all distinguish human from animals.
Linguists try to analyses, study and understand the sign system called language, the nature of its arbitrariness, the various types of relationship found in the system and the various functions performed by them.

Users of language employ a complex system of relations inherent in language without being able to isolate and describe them. This task is left to linguistic analysis.

An inability to use language adequately can affect someone’s status in society, and may even alter their personality. Because of its crucial importance in human life, every year an increasing number of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, teachers, realist that they need to study language more deeply.

Formal linguists seeks answers to two main questions ‘What does it mean to say we “know a language”’? and how does that knowledge arise in the mind of the speaker, that is how it is acquired.

Scientific characteristics of a linguistic approach to a language study.

When it is said the “Scientific Characteristics of a linguistic study” it is not simply reducible to electronic machinery and the use of abstract
symbols and formula, though these are very much in evidence when one begins to study certain branches of linguistics. While teaching and learning a language like ‘English’ the following aspects are highlighted.

1.3 LINGUISTIC AND LANGUAGE LEARNING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CHILDREN LEARNING AT THE AGE OF 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10

English is to be taught in our schools primarily as a ‘language of comprehension’. As regards life – situations, the aim at the school stage is to enable the students to use English in ordinary everyday situations, such as carrying on ordinary conversation, listening to radio news writing personal applications and so on.

The objectives of teaching English at the early school age can be summed up as follows:

1. To understand English with age, when spoken at normal conversational speed.
2. To speak English correctly and fluently.
3. To read English with comprehension and at a reasonable speed so as to use it as a library language for gathering information and for enjoying reading.
4. To write neatly and correctly at a reasonable speed.
5. To enjoy simple poems in English.
6. To develop interest in English.
While recognizing the importance of learning English, we have to admit that it cannot occupy the same place in the school curriculum as it did in the past. It is now realized that the teaching of English should be made more practical and language oriented in order to achieve the limited objective of learning this important foreign language.

When the effect of linguistic and language learning in case of young children is discussed the following factors should be borne in mind.

1. The child acquires a mother-tongue naturally but has to learn a language when he starts schooling.
2. Comprehension in reading and writing is tested but never taught.
3. He would have to differentiate between learning a language and learning about a language.
4. He/ She will have a tendency of thinking in mother tongue and translating in English.

For eg. When a child says in Hindi ‘Aap Humara Ghar Aayiye’ – literal translation would be ‘you our house come’. The interchange of places of noun and verbs in English as compared to Hindi is a fact which puzzles a child with the introduction of articles, conjunction this aspect will be taken care of under the heading of linguistics, research in language teaching,
language learning and teacher education is now placing considerable emphasis on of language awareness, attention and learning. This can be classified under.

1. Focus on forms for language learning
2. Learning from dialogic interaction
3. Patterns of student – teacher interaction
4. Task based learning
5. Content based learning
6. Teacher as a researcher.

**Focus on forms of language learning**

Language skills, like any other skills, can be acquired only through practices. In the case of the mother tongue, the child get sufficient scope for this practice in his daily environment. He uses the language at home, in the playground, at school everywhere almost everyone with when he comes in to contact influence his learning. He has also the strongest urge to learn the language, for if he cannot express himself in his mother tongue, some of his basic needs are likely to remain unfulfilled. He learns his first language without being conscious.

In the case of his second language, particularly when it happens to be a foreign language like, English, these natural resources are not available
to the learner. Unlike the mother tongue, this language is learnt deliberately in the classroom situation.

In a learning situation various aspects are taken into consideration such as teaching methods, teacher – student relationship, classroom situations. If these aspects are met with successfully the child succeeds in the various aspects of learning. For this the child observes, analyses, describes and manipulates. It is the meta – linguistic knowledge which helps the child to face the situation and he tries to use his various meta – linguistic skills in such a learning situation.

**Aspects of learning**

1. Particular aspects of learning a language.
2. Grammar
3. Pronunciation, Vocabulary, conversational discourse.
4. Learners as individuals, process language by listening, reading.
5. Variation of learners

The meta –linguistic knowledge allows the child to observe, analyze, describe and manipulate the language. They become conscious of the arbitrary nature of words. The English word star is called differently according to context. This word can also have more than one meaning such
as an object in the sky or a person of arbitrary status. Thus children develop
a greater knowledge of word meaning as well as structure.

1.4 THE PROCESS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Language is a complex process. It is the essential component in the
social, emotional and academic development of a child. Learning will be
curtailed and encumbered by a language deficit. Reading, writing and
communicating require language learning.

Language is more a matter of habit than of knowledge. It is true
that a human child does not learn language by mere initiation. This is
particularly true in the case of learning a second language in our schools,
because by the time the pupils begin to learn the second language they have
already learnt their first language and are mature enough to apply their
minds to the learning strategy.

During the period after 1990 the term linguistics and language
learning assumed a new form. Under the heading of applied linguistics
there is a positive development in understanding the process of learning a
language especially ‘English’.
Language teacher development has also moved in new directions. Widdonson (1998a) has argued that “Certain communicative orientations, with a pervasive emphasis on natural language class room context. They also tend to ignore effective frameworks of language teaching. It has been emphasized that teachers should engage themselves in the practice of action research.

1.5 **LINGUISTIC AWARENESS ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

“Linguistic is the scientific study of language” From this definition arises the question why it is important to emphasize that linguistics is a language studied scientifically, and follow this up by analyzing the object of study, language in some detail.

It is generally agreed that the main purpose of language is to communicate hence the importance of studying ways and means of improving communication techniques is relevant to the study of language. While we say main purpose of language is to communicate the multi- various process and needs for learning a language not be left cut.
For eg., People learn a language for travel purposes, aesthetic reasons, out of interest, study as a research, and so on. Language is an enormous and very complex phenomenon.

The linguistic awareness on second language learning was commonly meant to reflect the insights of structural and functional linguist that could be applied directly to second language teaching /learning. Applied linguists become involved in matters of language assessment, language policies, and a new field of second language acquisition, focusing on learning rather on teaching.

Under the heading of applied linguistics research in language teaching, language learning and teacher education is now placing considerable emphasis on notions of language learning, task – based learning and so on.

To emphasis the importance of linguistic awareness on second language learning the linguists have classified the topic as follows:

1. **Action research**

   A emphasis for language teacher education is made. This move insist on teachers practicing action research.
2. **Critical studies**

This term covers critical awareness, critical discourse analysis, critical pedagogy, ethics in language assessment and so on.

3. **Language uses**

This places emphasis on language uses in academic, disciplinary and professional settings. Language teaching is probably the most widespread application. To learn a second language successfully all the three aspects should be stressed. A successful teacher will be one who can blend the three areas into one and impart teaching based on a principle of teaching which is desired from it.

1.6 **META-LINGUISTIC AWARENESS AMONG CHILDREN**

Human infants pay attention to language from birth. They produce recognizable words at around 12-15 months, and start putting words together at around 18 months. The urge for language to emerge at this time is very strong all normal children and some abnormal areas, will begin to speak if they hear language going on around them.

There are linguists who consider content approach which suggest that children may have a universal framework imprinted in their brains.
They are those who support a process approach and argue that children could not possibly contain specific language universals. Instead they are innately, geared to processing linguistic data.

In spite of the numerous controversies surrounding child language psycholinguists are at least in agreement on one major point. Children are not simply initialing what they near going around them as if they were parrots.

A classic study of children placed in a new cultural authinguistic environment is discussed in the findings of Finish Commission report to UNESCO (1976). This study supports the notion that the first language of the child should be developed to proficiency before another language is introduced to expect most efficient learning of both the languages. Results of a study indicated that these children who moved to Sweden from Finland at about the age of Ten, when the Finnish language was firmly established could most quickly develop proficiency in the Swedish language equivalent to children born in Sweden. These children who came to Sweden before the age of six did not do as well children who moved to Sweden at the age of 12 could develop language skills comparable to Swedes but not as quickly as the ten year old.
Meta-linguistic skills

When the child begins to read, communications and knowledge are transmitted through visual change. Two reliable indicators for success in reading and writing are a child’s meta-linguistic skills. In the early stages of reading words, phonological segments and semantic features must be brought in to conscious awareness. These children who can discriminate between sounds. Presented orally, recognize and create rhymes, segment words into their sound components and discuss aspects of language are best prepared to tackle the task of recognizing and decoding individual words. Children with a comprehension experience base large vocabulary and the ability to analyse, integrate and organizes new information are best equipped to understand sentences and paragraphs. Thus the complete process of reading is related to a variety of linguistic processes. It is found that the ability to segment words and the ability to comprehend sentences as predictive of later reading performance.

Between the ages of 4 and 8 they begin to realize that the string of sounds emerging from a speakers mouth are in fact divided into words. They also become aware of which sentences make sense and which does not.
This awareness allows the child to observe, analyze, describe and manipulate language.

After the age of seven or eight, children can concentrate on both linguistic correctness and the message meaning simultaneously. Children gradually learn to divide spoken sentences into words, words into segments or syllabus and syllabus into their separate sounds. They also become conscious of the arbitrary nature of words. The English word 'star' is called by other names in different language. This word can also have more than are meaning such as on object in the sky or a person of celebrity status. Thus children develop a greater knowledge of word meanings as well as structure.

Awareness of pragmatic character tics of language also occurs. Children begin to repair communicative break downs by requesting classification or revising utterances. They adjust their language stylistically and make variations according to the age and status of the listener.

1.7. **UNIQUE FEATURES OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Language is complex phenomena that no are view point can see it as a whole. The question we really need to ask is not which view is right, but which is useful and relevant to language learning.
He also understands that he is expected to react to the new language in particular manner expected of him. The children realize that there is no language he needs to use to study the language of English. The teacher and the learner should explore together to seek answers which are peculiar in the learning of English. The classroom language and the teaching language differs; hence the child wonder why a meaningful word in one situation becomes meaningless in another situation.

It has been seen in English that a particular letter may not correspond to a single phenomenon. Most European languages that we the same Roman alphabet are the letter phenonemically, But in English the letter new the same letter may stand for different phonon, in the same word Extra letter ‘C’ in ‘Cancel’ It is because of such well known liveful attirres that a learner of English takes longer to learn to write in it than in any other language.

In a nutshell the second language peculiarities, or uniqueness of learning can be summed up as follows:

1) Since second language speakers generally have fewer words and rules at their disposal as compared to language one speaker they may find it difficult to convey the message, as they would like to convey.
2) They may use compensatory strategies or they may avoid using words about which they feel uncertain.

3) They often carry the traces of their language one language speakers has a fully developed language, system at their disposal and may switch to their language / either deliberately or unintentionally.

4) Some times contact between languages, may give rise to a system so different from the original that it can no longer be regarded as the same language.

1.8 Summary

Man enjoys a supreme position in this Universe because of his ability to think and use his language ability. Every language has its own system of figures and sounds when learning over native language is called language learning, learning second language is called language acquisition. While language learning is a conscious process of rule learning language acquisition refers to a subconscious system. Hence it is said that first language is caught and second language is taught.

A child growing up in his own culture and learning its learning acquires the ability to handle the linguistic structures of the language and also develops an understanding of the meta-linguistic system which he uses
when he caries across to the learning of a new language, in this case “English”. The child at this stage understands that to learn English he has to have certain skills. He also looks for means to express himself in the way he understands the new language. That is he builds up his own language strategy to became proficient in the language. He also understands that he is expected to react to the new language is particular manner expected of him.

The researcher in this study has designed program to incorporate application of meta linguistic strategies towards learning process, with special reference to reading comprehension. The Researcher hence studied the learner centered criteria. The role of meta linguistic and meta linguistic awareness in language learning and reading comprehension.

For pedagogical tasks, the researcher looked into the theories of language learning and devised meta-linguistic principles to be incorporated in the program of reacting comprehension. The researcher has viewed both from students point of view and from teachers point of view in her implementation of programme for developing reading comprehension among primary school children.

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language he needs to use to study the language of English. The teacher and the learner should explore together to seek answers which are peculiar in the learning of English. The classroom language and the teaching language differs; hence the child wonder why a meaningful word in one situation becomes meanings in another solution.

For the research study English as a second language is taken into consideration. There is a saying that first language is ‘Caught’ and second language is ‘taught’. This in short is the uniqueness of second language learning.

When a child acquires his first language he begins as it were with a clean slate. As he acquires the language, its forms meanings and their association get impressed on his mind. When he is needed to express a meaning he uses the appropriate forms without any conscious thought.

When he learns a second language the situation is quite different. Language learning is not new to him, learning a new language is new to him. In learning his first language he has already acquired set of linguistic habits. When using the second language, he will have the tendency to transfer the habit of first to second language. In the case of pronunciation in English, the learners will experience the problems. This is the reason
we find a second language learner can never match a native person's pronunciation. So a child is always expected to keep his habits of the first language in check to produce the new sounds of structures. This is the unique of learning the language of English this is the reason why conscious language teaching is needed.

Second language learning is different because he / she is learning under a set atmosphere. The child at this stage understands, that to learn English he has to have certain skills. He also wonders why study the language?. He knows that it is not his native language. Because of this awareness he also looks for means to express himself in the way he understands. That is he builds up his own language strategy to become proficient in the language.