Module: Linguistics

Level: L1- FILA

Time Allotted: 90 min

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Lecture 1: What is Linguistics?

1. **Definition**

The term linguistics refers to the “scientific study of language”. That is, it is based on the systematic (fixed and organized) investigation of a body of data within a coherent general theory of language structure. Its task is to discover and describe the nature underlying the language system.

1. **The Scientific Criteria in Linguistic Research**

Narrowly, the term “scientific” denotes the application of three basic criteria:

***1. Empiricism:*** i.e. the language’s investigations should rely on observation and experiment.

***2. Exactness:*** i.e. any linguistic theory should be correct in every detail, and valid in terms of time and place.

***3. Objectivity:*** i.e. the linguist’s judgment should be impartial.

**Science**

(**Language)**

**Linguistics**

**Exactness**

**Empiricism**

**Objectivity**

P.M. Cook (Cited in Singh, 2006) states the scientific characteristics of research in the following quotation:

**“*Research is an honest, exhaustive, intelligent searching for fact and their meanings or implications with reference to a given problem. The product of findings of a given piece of research should be an authentic, verifiable, and contribution to knowledge in the field studied”.***

Accordingly, linguistics is the science of language, and linguists are scientists who apply the scientific method to questions about the nature and function of language. In other words, they are researchers dedicated to the systematic study of language and concerned with observing facts about language, setting up hypotheses, testing their validity, and accepting or rejecting them. A linguist is generally concerned with how a language works not how it should work. The term ‘research’ consists of two words:

*Research: Re+ search*

‘*Re*’ means again and again and ‘*search*’ means to find out something. The following is the process:

Observes Collection of data

Person --------------------------> Phenomena ------------------------> Conclusions

Again and again Analysis of data