

# 语言学导论

陈林华  
编著



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## AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS

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## Preface

Linguistic science has developed very rapidly in the last few decades. Books on the subject number by the hundreds. Courses in linguistic science are very common in colleges and universities in China. Students of foreign languages and literatures are now required to take a variety of courses in linguistics.

Linguistic science has also influenced foreign language teaching. No language teacher, especially no foreign language teacher, can escape linguistic science if he or she expects to do his or her teaching work effectively and on a scientific basis.

There are some excellent introductions to linguistics published in this country. But nearly all of them are written in Chinese. Besides, they are mostly concerned with the Chinese language. Being students of English, they should have not only some common knowledge of general linguistics, but also some linguistic knowledge of their target language, which, I am sure, will help them a lot with their further study of English. AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS is an attempt to meet the needs of Chinese students of English who wish to do their linguistic course work in their target

language.

As its title suggests, this book is intended for students who have no previous knowledge of linguistics. In preparing the book I have drawn heavily on source material from a variety of publications. At the end of each chapter are some exercises designed to help the students check and reinforce the knowledge they have gained from their course work.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS is a textbook scheduled for one semester with two contact hours per week, therefore it is restricted to giving the most fundamental principles and practices of modern English science.

This book owes a great deal to Professor Zhang Yanchang and some other professors who have offered many helpful comments. My warm thanks also go to the students whose feedback has contributed to many of the important improvements on the present version.

Chen Linhua

Jan, 1989



## Contents

Introduction .....	( 1 )
1. Linguistics Is the Science of Language.....	( 1 )
2. The Scope of Linguistics.....	( 3 )
3. Approaches to the Study of Language .....	( 4 )
4. Grammar .....	( 5 )
5. Schools of Linguistics .....	( 7 )
<b>Chapter One: Language .....</b>	<b>( 11 )</b>
1. What Is Language? .....	( 12 )
1.1. Language is a special social phenomenon .....	( 12 )
1.2. Language is a well-organized system of linguistic symbols .....	( 12 )
1.3. The language system is unique to human beings.....	( 15 )
2. Social Functions of Language .....	( 17 )
2.1. Language, as a communicative means, serves society .....	( 17 )
2.2. Language is the most important communicative means.....	( 18 )
2.3. Language is the means for conceptual	

thinking .....	(20)
8. Language and the Human Brain .....	(22) ✓
3.1. The structure of the human brain .....	(22) ✓
3.2. Functions of the brain .....	(23)
4. The Conceptual Thinking of the Deaf-mute .....	(25)
5. The Origin of Language .....	(26)
⑥ Animal Communication Systems .....	(28) ✓
Exercise 1 .....	(33)

## Chapter Two, Phonetics, The Sounds of

Language .....	(34)
1. The Phonetic Alphabet .....	(35)
2. English Consonants and Vowels .....	(40)
3. The Study of Phonetics.....	(45)
4. Articulatory Phonetics .....	(46)
4.1. The articulatory organs .....	(47)
4.2. Articulation of English consonants .....	(49)
(1) Place of articulation.....	(51)
(2) Manner of articulation .....	(53)
4.3. Description of English vowels .....	(65)
5. Natural Classes of Speech Sounds .....	(69)
Exercise 2 .....	(70)

## Chapter Three, Phonology, The Sound Pattern

of Language.....	(75)
1. Phonemes, The Phonological Units of	

Language .....	(76)
1.1. Distinctive features of phonemes.....	(78)
1.2. Nondistinctive features .....	(83)
2. Suprasegmental Phonemes .....	(88)
3. Sequences of Phonemes.....	(94)
3.1. Constraints on sequences of phonemes .....	(95)
3.2. Syllables .....	(96)
4. Phonological Rules .....	(99)
5. The Formalization of Phonological Rules...	(108)
Exercise 3 .....	(113)

## Chapter Four: Morphology: The Structure of Words ..... (119)

1. Morphemes: The Smallest Meaningful Units of Language.....	(121)
1.1. What is a morpheme? .....	(121)
1.2. Morphemes, morphs, allomorphs .....	(123)
1.3. Analysis of morphemes.....	(124)
1.4. Derivational and inflectional morphemes...	(126)
2. Morphological Rules of Word Formation .....	(129)
3. Other Ways to Form Words.....	(133)
3.1. Conversion.....	(133)
3.2. Abbreviation (or Shortening) .....	(134)
3.3. Back-formation .....	(134)
3.4. Blending.....	(135)



3.5. Onomatopoeia (or Imitation) .....	(135)
3.6. Reduplication (or Repetition) .....	(136)
3.7. Sentence-condensation .....	(136)
3.8. Acronymization .....	(137)
4. The Phonetic Representation of Morphemes	
.....	(137)
Exercise 4 .....	(141)

**Chapter Five: Syntax; The Structure of Sentences**

.....	(145)
1. Grammatical Rules .....	(145)
1.1. Paradigmatic rules .....	(146)
(1) Parts of speech.....	(147)
(2) Inflection .....	(150)
(3) Grammatical categories.....	(151)
1.2. Syntagmatic rules.....	(163)
(1) Combination of morphemes into words	
.....	(163)
(2) The basic patterns of combinations of	
words .....	(164)
(3) Constituent structure .....	(167)
2. Grammatical Units.....	(173)
3. The Sentence Patterns of Language.....	(176)
3.1. The syntactic rules.....	(176)
3.2. Phrase-structure rules.....	(183)
3.3. Fitting in morphemes and words.....	(189)
3.4. Recursive rules.....	(192)

3.5. Deep and surface structures .....	(195)
3.6. Transformational rules .....	(198)
3.7. The phonological and semantic components .....	(209)
3.8. Ambiguity in surface structure and grammatical relationship revealed in deep structure .....	(210)
Exercise 5 .....	(216)

Chapter Six: Semantics; The Meaning of  
Language..... (219)

1. Meaning, Concept, Referent .....	(220)
2. Sense and Reference .....	(221)
<u>3. The Meaning of Morphemes and Words</u> .....	(222)
4. Semantic Features and Componential Analysis .....	(227)
5. Monosemy and Polysemy.....	(228)
6. Homonymy.....	(230)
7. Sense Relations between Words.....	(233)
7.1. Synonymy .....	(233)
7.2. Antonymy .....	(237)
8. Idioms .....	(241)
<u>9. Combination of Meanings of Words</u> .....	(245)
10. The Meaning of Sentences .....	(245)
11. The Study of Pragmatics .....	(250)
11.1. Context.....	(250)

11.2. Speech acts .....	(252)
Exercise 6 .....	(253)
<b>Chapter Seven: Language Acquisition .....</b>	<b>(257)</b>
1. Stages in Child Language Acquisition .....	(258)
1.1. The babbling stage.....	(259)
1.2. The holophrastic stage.....	(260)
1.3. The two-word stage .....	(261)
1.4. The telegraphic stage.....	(262)
1.5. The full language acquisition stage.....	(264)
2. Different Views on Child Language Acquisition .....	(265)
2.1. Postnatal learning .....	(265)
2.2. Innate linguistic competence .....	(269)
Exercise 7 .....	(271)
<b>Chapter Eight: Language Variation.....</b>	<b>(273)</b>
1. Dialects .....	(273)
1.1. Geographical dialects.....	(274)
1.2. Social dialects.....	(275)
1.3. Styles .....	(279)
1.4. Slang, jargon and taboo .....	(281)
1.5. Standard and nonstandard dialects.....	(284)
2. Lingua Francas .....	(285)
3. Pidgin and Creole Languages.....	(289)
4. Esperanto: An Artificial Language .....	(298)
Exercise 8 .....	(301)

## Chapter Nine: Historical-Comparative Linguistics

Exercise	.....	(303)
1. Grimm's Law and Verner's Law; Sound Correspondence	.....	(304)
2. Languages of the World	.....	(307)
3. The Genetic Classification of Languages	.....	(309)
4. Language Families	.....	(314)
4.1. The Indo-European Family	.....	(316)
4.2. The Sino-Tibetan Family	.....	(317)
4.3. The Afro-Asiatic Family	.....	(319)
4.4. The Caucasian Family	.....	(319)
4.5. The Uralic Family	.....	(320)
4.6. The Altaic Family	.....	(320)
4.7. The Dravidian Family	.....	(321)
4.8. The Malayo-Polynesian Family	.....	(321)
4.9. The Niger-Kordofanian Family	.....	(321)
5. Typological Classification of Languages	.....	(323)
5.1. Isolating languages	.....	(324)
5.2. Agglutinating languages	.....	(325)
5.3. Inflectional languages	.....	(327)
5.4. Polysynthetic languages	.....	(331)
6. Structural Classification of Languages	.....	(332)
Exercise 9	.....	(334)

<b>Chapter Ten: Language Change</b> .....	(338)
1. A Brief History of English .....	(338)
2. Phonetic Changes .....	(341)
3. Phonological Changes .....	(343)
3.1. Changes in phonemes and phonological rules .....	(344)
3.2. The Great Vowel Shift.....	(348)
4. Morphological Changes.....	(350)
5. Syntactic Changes.....	(353)
6. Lexical Changes.....	(356)
6.1. Word Coinage .....	(357)
6.2. Borrowing .....	(358)
7. Semantic Changes .....	(365)
7.1. Broadening and Narrowing .....	(365)
7.2. Elevation and Degradation .....	(367)
8. Causes of Language change .....	(368)
Exercise 10 .....	(372)

**Chapter Eleven: Writing System** ..... (374)

1. The Origin and Development of Writing .....	(376)
1.1. The origin of writing .....	(376)
1.2. The development of writing .....	(378)
2. Modern Types of Writing Systems .....	(383)
3. Reformation of Writing System .....	(385)
4. Writing and Speech .....	(390)

Exercise 11 .....	(397)
Reference Books .....	(399)
Glossory .....	(401)



# Introduction

Language has always been something of a mystery. People have been fascinated with it for thousand years. Many scholars have devoted themselves to the study of language. They have tried to reveal the mystery of the realm of language. It is, however, not an easy job, since language is an extremely complicated linguistic system. It involves great efforts, and systematic or scientific observations, analyses, descriptions and interpretations. Although great developments have been seen and tremendous achievements have been made in the study of language, even greater efforts have to be made to the final goal of fully understanding human language.

## 1. Linguistics Is the Science of Language

Linguistics is generally defined as the science of language, or the scientific study of language. This definition, unexceptionable as far as it goes, is one that will be found in a large number of textbooks and popular introductions to this subject. Linguistics, as the

science of language, means the study of language is considered worthy of learned attention] and a regular body of facts and theory is built up around it. Linguistics deals with the complicated system of language and the rules or principles operating in it. The purpose of studying linguistics is to examine the body of facts and to make general statements about its various elements that relate to regular rules.

Linguistics differs from other sciences in that it both uses language as the tool and has language as its object to study. Linguistics has, for this reason, been described as language about language.

The term "linguistics" was first used by historical linguists in the middle of the nineteenth century. The linguistic study of language before modern linguistics is the interpretation of classics for the study of philology, literature, logic and history. Such a traditional approach to the study of language is usually termed philology. 语言学

Modern linguistics, as an independent science established by the Swiss linguist, F. de Saussure (1857—1913), the founder of general linguistics, began its history in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Linguistics, the science of language, is concerned with various aspects of language. It tries to tell people "what language is", "how language originates, changes and develops", "what common properties all

languages share", "how language works" and many other facts about language.

## 2. The Scope of Linguistics

Linguistics is a general term covering a wide range of aspects of language and it is difficult to define its boundaries in modern times when sciences are highly developed, because it is closely related with many of other sciences, such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and computer science.

As far as language is concerned, linguistics may deal with the different levels of the language system: phonemes, morphemes, words and sentences. In the study of the interlinguistic relationship among different linguistic elements, there are many branches such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.

In the study of the extralinguistic relation with the outside world there are various branches of linguistics, which are rapidly developing in the modern world. Sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, neurolinguistics, mathematical linguistics and pragmatics are but a few of them. These branches of linguistics are around the central core consisting of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.