

## A Linguistics Summary

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### Abstract

*No matter how we look at language and all of its linguistic complexities, all people acquire one language from birth. A child's birth language, could possibly be the key to discovering new ideas and explorations in the world of language. Thus, language acquisition must be obtained from 0 - 5 years old before the age of puberty; or the person learning could suffer a backsliding effect in positive communication. In places such as the United States of America, children are taught how to read in Kindergarten, by articulating vowels, sounds and stressing on syllables. Each of the educational parts then shifts into more technical terms and foundations as the student progresses from elementary, to middle and high school.*

*In all, it is amazing to think of the complex process of L2 learning acquisition, such as in first level learners of a new language. I think it would be interesting to see how future studies are conducted in language acquisition. As well as, how to link these new forms of information on neurolinguistics and the brain to better future generations of children.*

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Let's first begin with the question, What is Linguistics? Linguistics is the scientific study of language and its structure. It involves a carefully planned out curriculum designed to help students learn English as their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th language. Some of the programs are designed to help students develop speaking, writing, reading and listening skills. When you apply it in a classroom, it is made up of many interactive problem solving activities, that include speaking, reading and writing.

Linguistics has the same uniqueness and exquisite charm, which separates it from any other commonly known subject. Language is complex and beautiful as it defines us all; by bringing us together as one entity created of multiple languages, religions, customs,

cultures, and beauty of all human characteristics. However it is very complex, as it is divided by many technical features of linguistics, grammar, and semantic systems. Some of the more commonly studied features in linguistics are: the semantics, class, and category of placement.

Along with the general or common known features are the 5 Essentials of Reading Comprehension which include: Phonemes, Phonics, Vocab Development, Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension. To better exemplify and illustrate these 5 essentials is Beth Antunez from the ReadingRockets.org website created to help struggling ESL learners. In her article titled, *English Language Learners and the Five Essential Components of Reading*

*Instruction*, she goes into a in-depth analysis of the 5 essentials of reading comprehension.

Likewise Antunez begins her analysis with *Phonemes*, as she states, “Phonemes are the smallest units that make up a spoken language, combined of syllables and words. Research suggests that activities such as word games, word walls, Songs and poems, help with memorization” (pg. 1). Then she continues on with *Phonics*, “created of letters/sounds and based on the relationship between phonemes and grapheme. Next is *Vocab Development* which she says is, The knowledge of stored info of meanings and pronunciations of words needed for communicating with others. In following is *Reading Fluency*, The ability to read words in a quick and accurate manner. Seen in reading comprehension and used in 2 ways such as oral and silent reading.” Lastly, is *Reading Comprehension* the cumulative of all reading skills related to vocab recognition/development, and made up of a relationship between the written text and the reader” (Antunez).

Moving forward is an example linguistics in a classroom for children of the age of 5- 6 years old. In the United States of America, children are taught how to read in Kindergarten, by articulating vowels, sounds and stressing on syllables. Each of these parts becomes shifted into more technical terms and foundations as the student progresses from elementary, to middle and high school. In a educational book titled, *How languages are learned*, authors Patsy M. Lightbown and Nina Spada state, “Error analysis was based on the hypothesis that, like children language, second language learner language is a system in its own right- one that is rule-governed and predictable,” (pg. 43). The struggle can often lead to dropping out of school, giving up on tests or projects if the proper educational tools aren’t presented.

In 1987, Lucille Parkinson McCarthy an author, wrote an article titled, *A Stranger in*

*Strange Lands: A College Student Writing across the Curriculum*, where she conducted research in the teaching of English. She studied the behaviors of students in the classroom and how different styles of teaching effect students learning. At the beginning of her study, she asked a student by the name of Dave how he would advise incoming freshman at school. He responded with, “Successful students are those who can, in their interactions with teachers during the semester, determine what constitutes appropriate texts in each classroom: the content, structures, language, ways of thinking, and types of evidence required in that discipline and by that teacher,” (McCarthy, pg. 233). However, the only problem with this theory was, what if the student was a second language learner and new to the United States of America?

In order to better understand the situation, McCarthy decided to run a study on new student reactions and behaviors in a learning environment. Thus, on page 234 she examined and studied the following: “Specifically, the study examined how students figured out what constituted appropriate texts in their various courses and how they went about producing them. And, further, it examined what characterized the classroom contexts which enhanced or denied students' success in this process,” (McCarthy, pg. 234). Through her study she found Dave her new student, struggled to recognize the material and what was expected of him. She continued once again with her thoughts of newer bodied students and those from another country, “This metaphor of a newcomer in a foreign country proved to be a powerful way of looking at Dave's behaviors as he worked to use the new languages in unfamiliar academic territories,” (McCarthy, pg. 234).

McCarthy proved multiple things about linguistics in the classroom by observing a student in college taking multiple classes.

She found that through a lack of communication among Dave and his teachers, he struggled to understand the material and what was expected in his written essays. In theory she found in comparison to an ESL learner, “In each new classroom community, Dave in many ways resembled a beginning language user. He focused on a limited number of new concerns, and he was unable to move beyond concrete ways of thinking and writing, the facts of the matter at hand. Moreover, skills mastered in one situation, such as the thesis-sub point organization in Freshman Composition, did not, as Dave insisted, automatically transfer to new contexts with differing problems and language and differing amounts of

knowledge that he controlled,” (McCarthy, pg. 261).

In all, Linguistics is a complex study of language and its structure. It involves a carefully planned out curriculum designed specifically to meet the needs of ESL students. When applied in a classroom, it can consist of multiple interactive problem solving activities, that include speaking, reading and writing. I think it would be interesting to see how future studies are conducted and linked to new forms of information on linguistics. Most importantly, how the new research could help future ESL teachers and students to have more successful learning experiences in a classroom setting.

### References

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