

ТИЛНИНГ ЛЕКСИК-СЕМАНТИК ТИЗИМИ,  
ҚИЁСИЙ ТИПОЛОГИК ИЗЛАНИШЛАР  
ВА АДАБИЁТШУНОСЛИК  
МУАММОЛАРИ

МАТЕРИАЛЛАР  
ТЎПЛАМИ  
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## WHY STUDY LINGUISTICS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS?

Rasulov Z.I. (PhD)

Today modern approaches to foreign language teaching is proving again and again that a foreign language teacher has to be acknowledged with linguistics rules and principles, methods, trends.

The reason that Halliday emphasizes the importance of teachers knowing about linguistics is that subject matter content is always developed through language. It is nearly impossible to separate the knowledge of a subject and the knowledge needed to read, write, and talk about that subject. For example, it would be hard to learn mathematics without knowing what the words *triangle* or *multiplied by* mean. As Halliday (1984) points out, we learn language, we learn through language, and we learn about language.

Teachers armed with linguistics knowledge can help all their students **learn language**. Whether her students are six years old or twenty-six, whether they speak English as the native language or are learning English as an additional language, a teacher is responsible to help all students develop their language abilities. A first-grade teacher expands her students' language knowledge by representing their experiences in writing during a language experience activity. A middle school language arts teacher helps his students discover the organizational structure of the short stories they read. A high school biology teacher shows her students how to use contextual clues to understand new science vocabulary. Teaching any subject involves teaching the language – the vocabulary and the organizational structures – common to that content area.

The second aspect of language development is **learning through language**. Go into most classrooms and what do you hear? The teacher is talking, the students are talking, the room is full of talk. Why is this? It's because one way that humans learn is through oral language. In the case of deaf children, the mode of communication is sign which include gestures, mimics rather than the signs of oral language, but language is just as much present. If you look around the classroom, you will also see written language. There are books, lists on the board, student papers on the wall, and words on computer monitors. Everywhere you look, there is written language. Students continually learn through language, both oral and written, inside and outside classrooms. And teachers continually teach their students through language.

Students also **learn about language**. Sometimes they learn that the language they came to school speaking is not valued in that setting. Sometimes they learn how to make subjects and verbs agree. Or they may learn that when two vowels go walking the first one does the talking. Every day, students learn about language. In classrooms this language study should be scientific. For example, students might work together to discover why many English words end in a silent *e* and then develop a rule for keeping or dropping the *e* before adding a suffix. This approach to language study is most common in classes where the

teacher has studied linguistics. Such a teacher has her students engage in linguistic investigations following the same approach that linguists use.

The greater a teacher's understanding of basic language structures and processes, the easier it is for that teacher to make good decisions when teaching tough topics like phonics, spelling, and grammar. A teacher with an active interest in language will arouse a similar interest in students who may be surprised to find that *hippopotamus* means "river horse," that the reason commas and periods go inside quotation marks is that typesetters didn't want to lose those little pieces of punctuation as they laid out type for printing, and that the rule about not ending a sentence with a preposition was created in a period of history when teachers decided to try to base English grammar rules on Latin rules. The more that teachers understand language, the more effectively they can help their students develop their knowledge of language.

So, Why Study Linguistics? In this article we focus on connections between linguistics and teaching, specifically teaching English learners and teaching literacy. We will show how knowledge of linguistics can help teachers work more effectively with English learners as well as with native English speakers. However, there are several other reasons for studying linguistics.

One very good reason for studying linguistics is that language is what makes us distinctly human. Lederer (1991) puts it in the strongest terms, "The birth of language is the dawn of humanity ... before we had words, we were not human beings" (3). Pinker (1994) argues that humans have a language instinct. Chomsky (1975) claims that language is innate, that it grows in the human mind the same way hair grows on our heads.

Most linguists agree that language is uniquely human; it is what distinguishes us from other living creatures. Other creatures can use signs to communicate, but only humans have syntax, the ability to combine symbols to create new symbolic meanings. Syntax expands language capacity and enables humans to communicate in unique ways. For example, there is a difference in meaning between these two sentences:

- (i) The dog bit the man. // It odammi tishladi.
- (ii) The man bit the dog. // Itni odam tishladi.

Notice that the same elements (dog, man, bit) occur in each sentence. However, English speakers use word order to convey meaning, and here the change in the word order results in a change in meaning. This illustrates how syntax enables English speakers to combine symbols in different ways to convey different meanings. As for the Uzbek language the inflection indicates the syntactic relation between the parts of the sentence which is expressed by word order in English.

Human communication is qualitatively different from animal communication. A dog might be able to communicate to its owner (or to another dog) that she is hungry, but she can't tell her master what she did yesterday or what she hopes to do tomorrow. However, the claim that only humans have

language is debatable. It's a topic students might want to investigate. Do dolphins or chimpanzees have language? How is their communication different from communication among humans? Is language what distinguishes humans from other creatures? Linguistics is the scientific study of language, and the study of linguistics gives teachers and students the tools to investigate questions such as these.

A second reason to study linguistics is that language study is interesting. Students are fascinated to discover that sandwiches got their name from the Earl of Sandwich, who spent his days (and nights) playing cards. He also loved to eat meat, but he didn't want to get grease on the cards, so he wrapped the meat in bread, and the sandwich was born! Newspaper columns, radio shows, books, and Internet websites feature information about language. Richard Lederer's (2012) books on language are best sellers. Many of his lines (*Why do we park in the driveway and drive on the parkway?*) make their rounds on the Internet as friends forward emails with lists of interesting language tidbits. However, even though language is a fascinating subject, the only exposure many students get to language study during their elementary and secondary years is through worksheets and exercises that bore them to tears and serve little practical purpose in improving their reading or writing. What students need is a new approach, and teachers who study linguistics can awaken students' interest in language and engage them in linguistic investigations.

A third reason for studying linguistics is that a well-educated person should know something about language. Unfortunately, it is usually only when students study foreign languages that they begin to learn how their own language works. Language study should be introduced early in school, and the approach to language study should be scientific. Our article is designed to help teachers build the knowledge they need to provide a scientific approach to language study for their students.

A final reason to study linguistics is that "the study of language is ultimately the study of the human mind" (Akmajian, Demers, and Harnish 1979, 5). Although linguists are interested in the structure and functioning of language, their goal in trying to understand how language works is to gain insights into how the human mind works. Even though scientists cannot examine the workings of the mind directly, they can study language, the unique product of human minds. Language reflects the inner workings of the mind. As Chomsky (1975) puts it, "language is a mirror of mind in a deep and significant sense. It is a product of human intelligence, created anew in each individual by operations that lie far beyond the reach of will or consciousness" (4).

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### **THE EFFECT OF THE MORPHOLOGICAL LEVEL OF ECONOMY ON LANGUAGE CHANGES**

**Zubaydullo Izomovich Rasulov,  
Head of English Linguistics Department,  
Foreign Languages Faculty, Bukhara State University  
Ma'mur Mansurovich Sharipov  
Master's student of English Linguistics Department,  
Foreign Languages Faculty, Bukhara State University**

Morphology is the subdiscipline of linguistics that deals with the structure of words. The study of word structure comprises two domains: inflection and word formation. Inflection deals with the formal expression of morphosyntactic properties of words (such as number, case, and tense), whereas word formation concerns the ways in which words are made. Both types of morphology can be studied from a historical perspective. Commonly, the study of changes in inflection and word formation is referred to as *diachronic morphology*, or *morphological change*. Such changes are the effects of various forms of language behavior (such as acquisition, processing, variation, storage, and lexicalization) or of language contact. The historical study of inflection focuses on three issues: how inflectional systems arise, how and why they change, and how they erode. The rise of inflection through the grammaticalization of words into inflectional affixes is an important domain of historical research. The historical study of word formation considers the emergence of and changes in word formation patterns. Syntactic structures may develop into morphological structures, and compound constituents may develop into affixes.

Word formation processes may lose their productivity or completely disappear from a language. New morphological patterns may arise through the morphologization of once phonological patterns. For instance, the German umlaut, the alternation between back vowels and front vowels, was once triggered by the presence of suffixes with high vowels but, can be used in