

What is linguistics?

Defining Linguistics

- Linguistics can be defined as “the scientific study of language, a discipline which describes language in all its aspects and formulates theories as to how it works”.
- By scientific we mean that linguistics is **objective** and **systematic**.
- Linguistics is **descriptive** (not prescriptive), it only describes language as it is and doesn't put rules for people to follow in using language
- Linguistics is interested in providing answers for different interesting questions about languages, such as “**what is language?**” and “**how does language work?**”

What is a linguist?

- A linguist is a person **specialized in linguistics**.
- A linguist **describes** languages, but does not prescribe (dictate) how to use them.
- If a linguist proposes a theory (for example a theory of language acquisition) he has to provide a tangible practical evidence as to **describe** how language is really acquired by children.

Linguistics is a discipline that covers a wide range of topics. The below figure shows the scope of linguistics:

