

### 1. Linguistics:

- The scientific study of languages.
- If you know a language, you can understand it and communicate using it. Furthermore, you know which sounds exist and don't exist in that language.  
Lastly, you know which sentences are correct or incorrect.
- **Linguistic knowledge/competence** is unconscious.
- **Performance** is how the speaker uses his/her competence to produce and understand speech.
- **Register/Style** refers to the levels of formality. I.e. Formal/Informal.
- When you know a language, you know its real-world usage. You can make a distinction between familiarity and formality.

### 2. Grammar (Mental Grammar):

- A mental system of rules that exists in the heads of native speakers. This system of rules allows native speakers of a language to produce and understand sentences that have never been produced or heard before.
- Same as competence.
- Grammar has 5 components:
  1. **Phonetics:** Deals with perception and articulation of speech sounds.
  2. **Phonology:** Deals with possible sound combinations.
  3. **Morphology:** Deals with the structure of words.
  4. **Syntax:** Deals with the structure of sentences.
  5. **Semantics:** Deals with the meaning and interpretation of sentences.

### 3. Prescriptive Grammar/Traditional Grammar:

- Prescriptive grammarians believe in an absolute standard of correctness. This approach governs the version of English considered appropriate for use by educated speakers.
- A set of rules about language based on how people think language should be used.
- Deals with the should and shouldn'ts of grammar.
- Prescriptive grammarians believe that:
  1. Language is either correct or incorrect.
  2. One form is more logical than the other.
  3. There is an appeal to classical forms.
  4. There is a preference for older forms of the language.
  5. There is an injunction against the use of foreign/borrowed words.

### 4. Descriptive Grammar:

- Studies and characterizes the language of specific groups of people in a range of situations.
- A set of rules based on how language is actually used.
- Doesn't bring any preconceived notions of "correctness" to the task, nor does it favour one language of one social group over others.
- Describes how grammatical systems operate.
- Linguists are descriptive grammarians.
- Deals with the do's and don'ts of grammar.

- Descriptive rules form the basis for grammaticality judgements, which are made relative to a particular dialect.
- Descriptive grammarians believe the following:
  1. All varieties of languages are valid systems with their own logic and conventions.
  2. There is no scientific reason to expect one language to match the mold of another.
  3. Languages are continually changing in subtle ways without reducing their usefulness, preciseness or aesthetic value.
  4. All languages have adopted words from other languages.

**5. Characteristics of Grammar:**

**1. Generality:**

All languages/dialects/speakers/signers have a grammar. However, individual grammatical systems differ in the use of structure formation rules

**2. Parity:**

All grammars are equal. There is no such thing as a “primitive”, “good” or “bad” grammar. All grammars unconsciously instruct people how to form and interpret words and sentences of their language.

**3. Mutability:**

Grammars change over time, but they change within strict limits. Furthermore, older varieties of grammar cannot be better than newer versions. There is no reason to accept that languages attain a state of perfection and new changes corrupt or deteriorate it.

**4. Inaccessibility:**

Grammatical knowledge is unconscious. (Competence)

**5. Universally:**

All grammars are alike in basic ways and share an inventory or principles and properties (including the so called universals).

**6. Standard/Non-Standard:**

- There are many varieties of English.
- A standard language is the variety of any given language spoken by the most powerful people in a community. (Political elites or upper-class)
- This variety is seen as “correct” by prescriptive grammarians.
- People are considered standard speakers as long as they don’t use any strongly stigmatized forms.
- Non-standard languages does NOT mean it is grammatically incorrect.
- A sentence can be both informal/non-standard and grammatically correct.
- A sentence that is grammatically incorrect in one dialect may be grammatically correct in another.