**Linguistics as a Scientific Study of Language**General linguistics means the scientific study of language. A person who studies language or engaged in the field of linguistics is called a linguist. As with other branches of knowledge; linguistics must be studied in two ways:  
  
1 . In relation to other sciences outside itself, and  
2. In the different branches within itself.

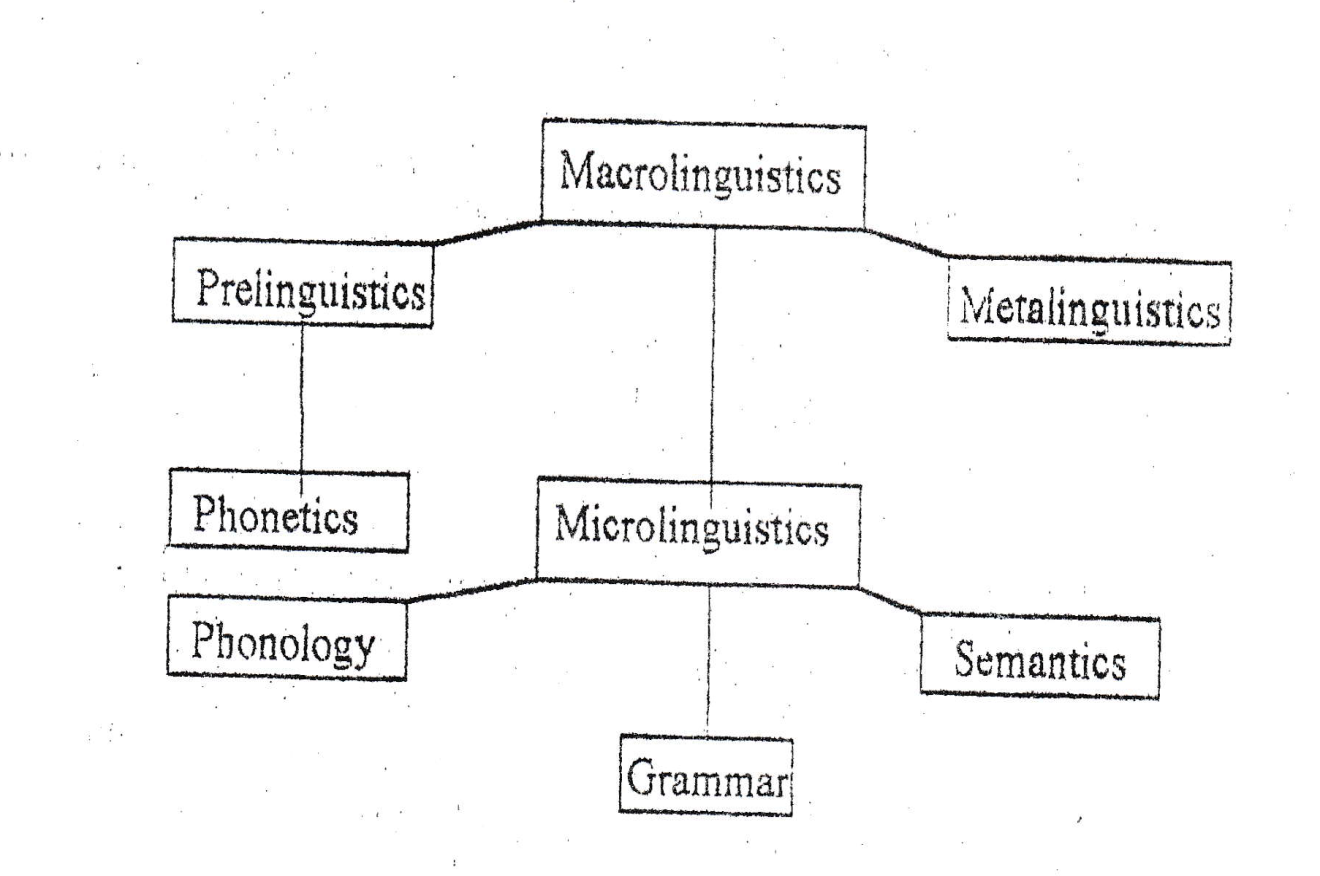
**Linguistics as a Science**The aim of following a scientific procedure in studying language is to present an analysis in such a way that every part of it can be tested and verified not only by the linguist himself, but by any one else who chooses to refer to it or to make a description of his own based on the same principles. What is required in this respect is empirical evidence and sound justifications to support one's findings or theories.

The purpose of linguistics is to examine the material and make general statements about its various elements that relate to regular rules. It is also an empirical and practical science since the material it deals with can be observed with the senses. For example, speech can be heard, the movement of the speech organs can be seen and felt or with the aid of instruments; and writing can be seen and read.

The scientific procedure followed in studying  
any science including linguistics  
  
Any scientific study should be based on:  
a. Systematic investigation of data conducted with reference to some general theory of language structure.  
  
b. Direct objective observations. Observation of events before the setting up of a hypothesis which is then carefully investigated via systematic description or experimentation and a theory developed. This is a standard procedure in linguistics as in other sciences.  
  
c. A scientific study is also concerned with the formulation of sound theoretical principles and clear and consistent terminology.

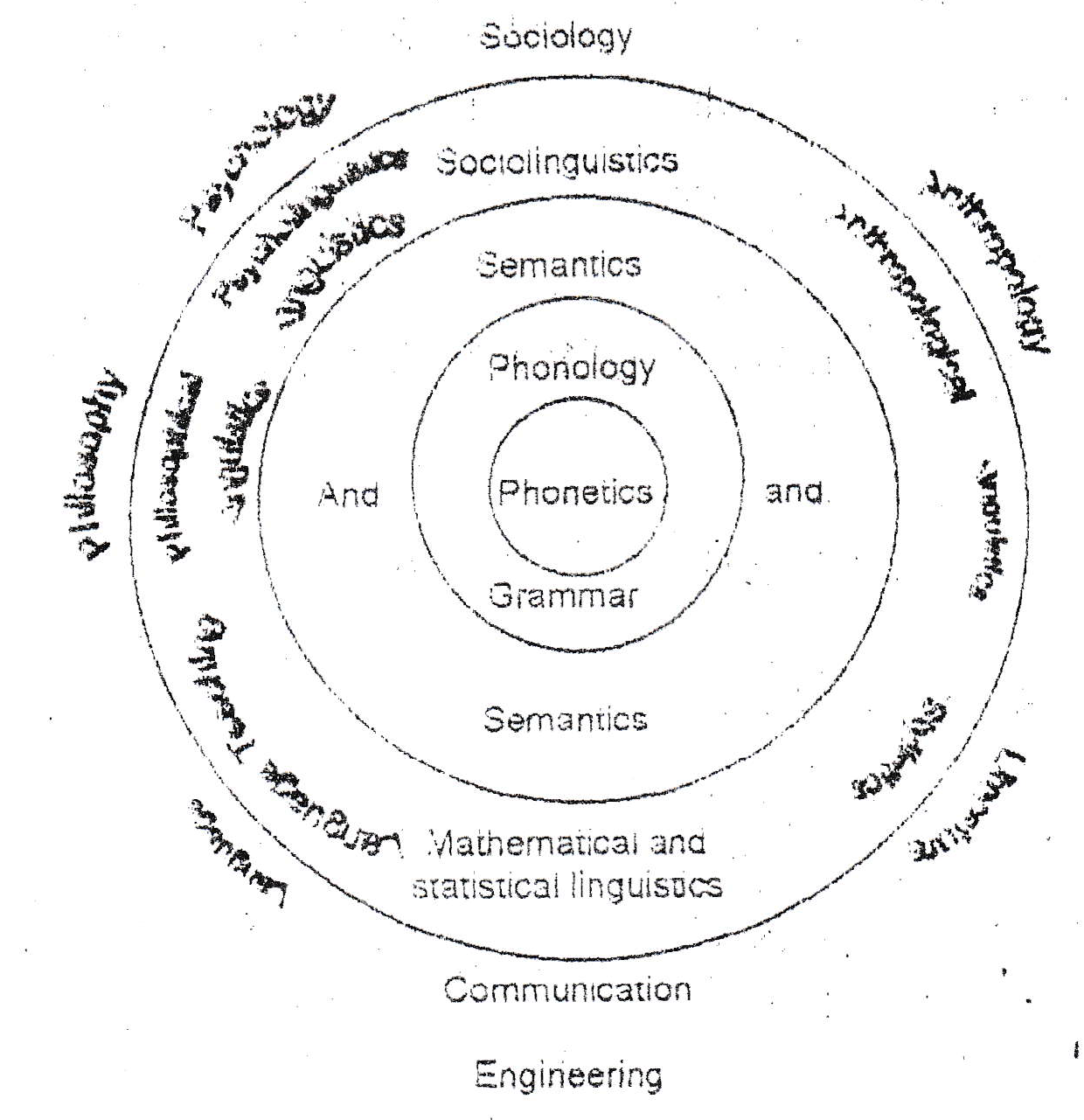
d. In order to be acceptable, a theory must be:  
  
1. Exhaustive, i.e., one which accounts for all the facts (adequate treatment of all the relevant material which should be complete).  
  
2. Economical, i.e., one which is as simple and straight forward as possible. In other words, a shorter statement or analysis employing fewer terms is to be preferred to one which is longer or more involved.  
  
3. Consistent, i.e., one in which there are no internal contradictions. The material should show agreement between its different parts.

**Branches of Linguistics**



Macrolinguistics refers to the whole study of language. it is divided into three main sub-fields including:  
  
a. Prelinguistics  
Its primary subject-mater is phonetics. It is concerned with all types of human communication including the prelinguistic phenomena such as miming, gestures and other paralinguistic features and other problems of human behaviour.  
  
b. Microlinguistics  
refers to the central core of language study, i,e.. the areas of phonology, grammar and semantics.   
  
c. Metalinguistics   
Its subject matter is the relationship between language and all extra-linguistic features or communicative behaviour including sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics and communication theory and other widely diverse fields of macrolinguistics such as speech pathology, lexicography, historical linguistics, etc. **In other words, metalinguistics is the study of language in relation to society and culture**.

**The Scope of Linguistics**



General linguistics covers a wide range of topics and its boundaries are difficult to define. A diagram in the shape of a wheel gives a rough impression of the range covered.

In the centre, there is **phonetics**. It is the study of human speech sounds. A good knowledge of phonetics is essential for a linguist. He must have knowledge of phonetics before studying linguistics.

**Phonology** is the study of languages’ sound systems. **Grammar** is the study of the language structure comprising: (a) **morphology** which is the study of the word structure and (b ) **syntax** which is the study of the sentence structure.

**Semantics** is the study of meaning. Semantics is placed outside phonology and grammar because of its closer connection with external world.

These are the core of linguistics. However, it has relation with some other disciplines of knowledge.

**Linguistics and Other Disciplines**  
  
**Psycholinguistics**  
The science concerned with the influence of psychological matters on language use and learning. It is concerned with the study of human behaviour and language. Its main interest is the relation between language and thinking.   
  
**Sociolinguistics**   
It is the science concerned with the influence of social matters on language use and learning (accent, dialect, behaviour, morals). In other words. It is a branch of linguistics which studies all aspects of the relationship between language and society.

**Philosophical Linguistics**A little-developed branch of linguistics which studies, on the one hand, the role of language in relation to the understanding of an explanation of philosophical concepts and, on the other hand, the philosophical status of linguistics theories, methods and observations.  
  
**Anthropological Linguistics**It is a branch of linguistics which studies language variation and use in relation to the cultural patterns and beliefs of man as investigated using the theories and methods of anthropology.

**Stylistics**  
It refers to the application of linguistic techniques to the study of particular kinds of language within a given speech community, such as the language of science, of law, religion, literature or the language of different social classes. There are many different varieties or styles of language that we use in the appropriate situations. Stylistics studies which variety of speech or writing is appropriate to which situation.  
  
**Language Teaching**It concerns all educational theory and practice including instruction in both the native language and the foreign language.

**Applied Linguistics**  
  
Applied linguistics refers to the application of linguistic methodology, techniques of analysis and research findings to some non- linguistic fields.  
  
**Communication Engineering**A branch of linguistics which deals with the application of the information theory to communication, i.e., the passing of   
messages from a source to a receiver via a channel.   
  
**Ethnolinguistics**   
  
The study of language in relation to culture.

**Mathematical Linguistics**Refers to a number of applications of mathematical models and procedures to linguistic studies. It begins with the counting of linguistic unites such as phonemes and vocabulary items.   
  
  
**Computational Linguistics**  
A branch of language studies which applies computer techniques to linguistic and literary research, e.g., in word frequency counts and other fields requiring statistical analysis, such as machine translation and speech recognition.