

At the end of this lecture, you are going to learn the following :

- What is meant by language studies ?*
 - Where can we find this kind of studies?*
 - What is meant by language itself?*
 - What is the topic of ancient languages studies?*
 - What characterize language from other means of communication used by beings?*
 - What 's the importance of studying modern and ancient Languages ?*
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- Introduction :**

The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study and interpretation of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; law jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts. Also, the humanities are academic disciplines that study the human condition, using methods that are primarily analytical, critical, or speculative, as distinguished from the mainly empirical approaches of the natural sciences.

- The scientific study of language**

*While the scientific study of language is known as **linguistics** and is generally considered a **social science** or a **cognitive science**, the study of languages is still central to the humanities. A good deal of twentieth-century and twenty-first-century philosophy has been devoted to the analysis of language and to the question of whether, as **Wittgenstein** claimed, many of our philosophical confusions derive from the vocabulary we use; literary theory has explored the rhetorical, associative, and ordering features of language; and historical linguists have studied the development of languages across time.*

*Tip : **Literature**, covering a variety of uses of language including prose forms (such as the novel), poetry and drama, also lies at the heart of the modern humanities curriculum.*

- Where can we find it ?**

*University-level programs in a **language faculties** usually include study of important works of the literature in that language, as well as the language itself.*

- What means by language?**

*As an object of linguistic study, "language" has two primary meanings: an abstract concept, and a specific linguistic system, e.g. "French". The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who defined the modern discipline of linguistics, first explicitly formulated the distinction using the French word **langage** for language as a **concept**, **langue** as a specific instance of a language*

system, and parole for the concrete usage of speech in a particular language. By and large, language is a system of communication that enables humans to exchange verbal or symbolic utterances. This definition stresses the social functions of language and the fact that humans use it to express themselves and to manipulate objects in their environment.

□ **The Topic of the Ancient Languages Studies :**

- Ancient Languages and culture discipline examines **the Greek and Roman culture, the Latin and Greek languages, and utilizes original sources in Latin and Greek.** The goal of programme is to **utilize historical linguistics in order to familiarize the students with Greco-Roman culture as well as its influence on modern cultures and languages.**
- Ancient Languages and Culture is an **especially suitable minor subject** for students of **history and archaeology**, but it is also **suitable for students of languages, arts and culture and other students.**

□ Ancient Languages and Culture can be studied by any student presently registered and enrolled at the University. To begin the studies it is essential to acquire a sufficient knowledge of Latin/Greek. NB: Here in Algeria, we haven't a special department to teach student Latin, Greek or any other ancient language, we can find this study under different courses such as : history, archaeology or literature ...

□ **The ancient of languages vs. the modern ones :**

- Thousands of years ago, in ancient times, people expressed their thoughts and feelings in other languages than they use today.
- The world spoke Latin, ancient Greek and Hebrew, and even earlier on, Egyptian. In time these languages changed and developed into today's modern tongues. For a long time Latin stayed the common language of the educated, and every school required its students to learn Latin and Greek. Then, slowly, people stopped studying Latin and especially ancient Greek. Now only a few schools require their students to study Latin, and fewer still even offer Greek or Hebrew.
- .Of course it may be true that the use of ancient languages as actual communication tools today is limited. Only in the Vatican is Latin still actually spoken, and only enthusiastic philologists deny the fact that the ancient languages are extinct. In a sense, though, they are right. These languages can be kept alive by studying them.

□ **Language as a Human Attribute**

- Language sets people apart from all other creatures.
- Every known human society has had a language and though some nonhumans may be able to communicate with one another in fairly complex ways, none of their

communication systems begins to approach language in its ability to convey information. Nor is the transmission of complex and varied information such an integral part of the everyday lives of other creatures.

- *Nor do other communication systems share many of the **design features** of human language, such as the ability to communicate about events .*
- *It is difficult to conceive of a human society without a language.*

N.B : Language, like culture, is notable for its unity in diversity: there are many languages and many cultures, all different but all fundamentally the same, because there is one human nature and because a fundamental property of this human nature is the way in which it allows such diversity in both language and culture.

□ ***The importance of studying modern and ancient Languages :***

- *Languages are fundamentally modes of being in the world and uniquely reveal the way that we exist as human beings.*
- *Far from being a mechanical tool, language study encourages self-examination and cross-cultural understanding, offering a **vantage point**¹ from which to evaluate personal and cultural assumptions, prejudices, and certainties.*
- *Learning a new language is not about putting into another verbal system what you want or know how to say in your own language; rather, it is about learning by listening and reading and by gaining the ability to think in fundamentally different ways.*
- *Studying languages stresses the development of communicative skills such as speaking, listening comprehension, reading, and writing, as well as the study of literature written in these languages.*
- *Studying ancient languages emphasizes the exploration of ancient texts in their original historical, political, artistic, and social contexts and encouraging assessment of ancient works on their own terms as a means of **elucidating**² both timeless and contemporary human issues and concerns.*
- *Studying Greek or Latin is so valuable because it is so analytical. It's a great exercise for the mind, in addition to being tremendous fun and very rigorous. It exercises your*

¹ **vantage point** /'vɑːn.tɪdʒ.pɔɪnt / / 'væn.tɪdʒ- / noun [C] (**PLACE**) a place, especially a high place, which provides a good, clear view of an area: e.g: *From our lofty vantage point, we could see the city spread out below us.* ©Cambridge University Press 2013

² **e lucidate** /ɪ'luː.sɪ.deɪt / verb [I or T] formal to explain something or make something clear: *A group of languages that descend from a common ancestor is known as a language family.*

memory, enhances your ability to be precise and your ability to hold information in your head before coming to a conclusion. It also helps with a general understanding of

language: participles, clauses, syntax, etc.

- *By studying the roots of today's modern languages, it becomes easier for people to see the likenesses between them, and picking up a new modern language becomes less difficult.*

Ref :

- www.wikipedia.com
- <http://4humanities.org/2014/12/what-are-the-humanities/#sthash.3PNALjn.m.dpuf>
- [http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Language_\(linguistics\)](http://www.scholarpedia.org/article/Language_(linguistics))
- <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-linguistics-ancient-modern-languages>
- Anna Tagliabue: The Continuing Importance of Learning Ancient Languages

Book to read :

- The Relative Importance of Ancient and Modern Languages Considered as Branches of General Education