

Anthropology

At the end of This lecture you are going to know :

- What means by “ Anthropology “ ?
- What are the main branches of this discipline?
- What are the main features of this science ?
- Why is it important for human life and for English language learning ?

REMINDER

We said before that ‘ anthropology’ is one of the social sciences which deal with the institutions and functioning of human society and with the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society.

What is anthropology

It is the study of human, past and present. To understand the full sweep and complexity of Cultures across all of human history. Anthropology draws and builds upon knowledge from the social and biological sciences as well as the humanities and physical sciences.

Anthropology is a global discipline where humanities , social and natural sciences are forced to confront one another; it builds up knowledge from natural sciences (including the discoveries about the origins and evolution of Homo Sapiens, human physical traits, human behavior, the variations among different groups of humans: how the evolutionary past of Homo Sapiens has influenced its social organizations and culture.

The origins

The term anthropology originates from the Greek “ anthrōpos” understood to mean the humankind or humanity and logia (study) .

Early anthropology originated in Classical Greece and Persia , studied and tied to understand observable cultural diversity.

The Anthropologist

He /She may refer to a professionally trained and qualified individual who is involved in the study and the application of origins, behavior and the social, physical and the cultural aspects of human development. The field of anthropology originated in the 19th and 20th century, after which anthropology became a distinguished field of study. Anthropologists are employed by government organizations, non-profit organizations, and educational organizations and may even work at disaster struck areas. An anthropologist analyses the consequences of overpopulation, poverty and may be involved in training and providing skills to people to tackle these problems., Anthropologists are also employed by various corporations and they can work

in any environment, for example studying primates in Africa. They may work in deserts, cities, villages, towns, schools and even underwater archaeological sites.

The Famous Anthropologists

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 01-Alfred L. Kroeber 1876-1960 | 02- Alfred Russel Wallace 1823-1913 |
| 03- Jane Goodall 1934 | 04- Louis Leakey 1903-1972 |
| 05-Margaret Mead 1901-1978 | 06- Ruth Benedict 1887-1948 |
| 07-Franz Boas 1858-1942 | 08- Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009) |
| 09- Eric Wolf (1923-1999) | 10- Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) |

How anthropologists do their Studies ?

They travel to every corner of the globe to conduct their research. The first generation of them in the late nineteenth century relied on the reports of travelers and explorers for their information.

In the twentieth century, anthropologists decided that such reports were not enough, and that they needed to go and see for themselves.

The modes of research that they initiated, designed to avoid as far as possible the pitfalls of prejudice, provide the basis of the modern discipline.

Branches or Fields of The Study

It consists of three main fields:

01- Physical Anthropology : It concerned with :

- a. The influence of evolution of natural environment on the physical characteristics of humans;
- b. Human evolution (how modern Homo Sapiens evolved from earlier species).

NB : It has another name as Biological Anthropology.

02- Cultural Anthropology or Socio-cultural Anthropology : It is the comparative study of the manifold ways in which people make sense of the world around them. While social anthropology is the study of the relationships among persons and groups., cultural anthropology is more akin to philosophy , literature and arts.

It concerned with :

- a. The attempt to understand other societies in terms of their own cultural symbols and values;
- b. The archeology or the remains of extinct ¹civilizations that left no written records;
- c. The organizations of the preliterate² societies;

¹ Extinct: not now existing

² Preliterate: not having a written language.

03- Linguistic Anthropology : It is a mixture with linguistics . We find it with another name : "Anthropological Linguistics".

Linguistic Anthropology is the comparative study of ways in which language reflects and influences social life;

NB: Linguistic Anthropologists often draw on related fields including : sociolinguistics , pragmatics , cognitive linguistics, semiotics , discourse analysis and narrative analysis.

Its main concerns are :

- a. It seeks to understand the process of human communications (verbal and nonverbal), variations in language across time and space , the social uses of language and its relationship with culture.
- b. It explores different ways in which language practices define patterns of communications , formulate categories of social identity and group membership.
- c. It equips people with common cultural representations of their natural and social world.

The Importance of Anthropology

- To teach human how to look outside of themselves and realize that what we think and what we believe are not the only ways to think and believe.
- Anthropology is the only science that emphasizes the comparative approach and comparing things across different cultures.
- To show people their perspectives of the world they controlled by their experiences; because no one can experience everything.
- When people look at the other people experiences, perspectives and understandings , their knowledge becomes greater.
- The focus of anthropology is on understanding yourself in relation to others (past and present) .

NB :

With anthropology, we can:

- Learn clear and precise record keeping skills;
- Be attentive to details;
- Have analytical reading and critical thinking skills;
- Know how to deal with unfamiliar situations.

The Relevance Of Anthropology To Language Teaching & Learning

- Anthropology is an adventure. It offers you the opportunity to explore other worlds, where lives unfold according to different understandings of the natural order of things. Different, that is, from those that you take for granted.
- It allows you to escape the claustrophobia³ of your everyday life, but anthropology is not mere escapism. On the contrary, it will demand your best efforts at understanding.
- It is argued that cultures should be taught explicitly in the language classroom.
- Both , teachers and students should become amateur anthropologists ; exploring and testing their own and others' cultures.
- The language classroom should be the neutral territory between two cultures , when culture attitudes and patterns can be freely disputed.

Ref :

- Anthropology. The Basics. Peter Metcalf . Routledge. 2005. London.
- Anthropology in Wikipedia .
- <http://harrisanthropology.blogspot.com/2014/05/10-famous-cultural-anthropologists.html>
- The Relevance of Anthropology to Language Teaching .Beverly McLeod. TESOL Quarterly .Vol. 10, No. 2 (Jun., 1976), pp. 211-220

³ Claustrophobia (n) : fear of being in closed spaces: Compare agoraphobia

Eg: He suffers from claustrophobia so he never travels on underground trains.