

Chapter Themes	Discusses how language varies across cultures—including the sounds, meanings, and grammars of language—and, more importantly, how language is used in society to express, perform, and construct social relationships and institutions
Chapter Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the questions and practices of linguistic anthropology• Recognize that human language is one form of the universal communication processes among living beings• Know the key “design features” of human language• Appreciate that the mental and social skills that make language possible are the same ones that make culture itself possible• Be able to describe the modular and nested quality of human language, building from bits of sound to meaning to intelligible utterances to culturally-appropriate speech• Grasp the notion and diversity of phonology across cultures• Know how morphology or semantics varies across cultures• Understand the nature and diversity of syntax or grammar across cultures• Be able to explain why pragmatics or sociolinguistics is of particular interest to anthropologists• Describe how language style varies depending on the speakers, the subject, and the context/situation• Understand how language is not merely informative but transformative, not merely expressive but effective

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize linguistic “performatives” • Appreciate the role of language in political and other social relations, for instance gender • See the key cultural role of linguistic items like proverbs, riddles, metaphors, ritual languages, and so on • Understand the non-verbal ways in which humans communicate • Be able to discuss the major processes of language change and loss • Know and be able to critique the linguistic relativity hypothesis
Chapter Highlights	<p>Language is a part of culture but also a medium of culture.</p> <p>The same cognitive and social skills and abilities that make culture possible—the ability to learn, share, symbolize, produce, practice, and circulate—make language possible.</p> <p>Human language has a set of distinct “design features.”</p> <p>Human language is structured into a set of increasingly complex rules or practices for combining a finite number of basic linguistic elements.</p> <p>Phonology refers to which sounds are used in a language and how those sounds are used.</p> <p>Morphology/semantics refers to how meaning is created and stored by the combination and manipulation of sounds.</p>

Grammar/syntax provides the practices for combining words into intelligible utterances (usually “sentences”), expressing culturally-relevant and -relative aspects of experience (for instance, time, person, number, gender, case, etc.).

Pragmatics/sociolinguistics involves how language is used in social roles and situations to communicate cultural issues of status, respect, politeness, age, gender, class, etc.

Language does not only describe social realities but performs and even constructs these realities. “Performatives” are utterances that bring about the state of affairs that they invoke.

Language is an important aspect of achieving and exercising power.

Language also includes a community’s “folklore,” that things that it “knows” or is likely to say, including proverbs, riddles, formulaic openings and endings, and particular genres of speech (like fairy tales or political speeches).

Humans use a variety of non-verbal methods to communicate social relations, like “body language” and personal space.

In any multi-lingual situation, there are processes of competition and co-existence of languages, as well as language change and potential language

	<p>loss.</p> <p>The linguistic relativity hypothesis posits that language shapes or influences the experiences and thought processes of its speakers. It is a controversial claim, but there is some interesting evidence to support it.</p>
Chapter Key Terms	<p>Anti-language, Bound morpheme, Competence, Diglossia, Folklore, Free morpheme, Grammar, Displacement, Kinesics, Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis, Morpheme, Morphology, Paralanguage, Performatives, Phoneme, Phonology, Pragmatics, Productivity, Proxemics, Semantics, Sign, Sociolinguistics, Symbol, Syntax, Vocalizations</p>