Linguistics is a scientific study.

The word Linguistics has been derived from Latin lingua (tongue) and istics (knowledge or science). Linguistics is the scientific study of language. But it is the study of not of one particular language but of human language in general. It studies language as a universal and recognizable part of human behaviour. It attempts to describe and analyze language. The field of linguistics comprises understanding of the place of language in human life, the ways in which it is organized to fulfil the needs it serves and the functions it performs.

So linguistics is that science which studies the origin, organisation, nature and development of language descriptively, historically, comparatively and explicitly and formulates the general rules related to language. Linguistics, therefore, is the science that describes and classifies languages. The linguist identifies and describes the units and patterns of the sound system the words and morphemes, and the phrases and sentences, that a the structure of language, as completely, accurately and economically as possible. Like all other sciences linguistics has a well defined subject matter, viz. natural languages, living or dead. It employs careful methods to observe, record and analyse the various phenomena related to its subject matter and hopes to present

inductive-reasoning.

hypothesis.- a supposition put forward as a basis for reasoning

unprejudiced, objective and verifiable descriptions.

The approach and methodology of linguistics is scientific. It is as inductive as a science could be, and is based on observations, formation of hypothesis, testing, verification, tentativeness and predictiveness. Like a scientist a linguist observes his data, some of his methods of observation include simple listening, phonetic transcription, and the use of various instruments such as oscillograph, sonograph, kymograph, endoscopé etc, Records and cassettes made in these ways help in various kinds of objective description. A linguist has his language laboratory too,

Again, like a scientist a linguist develops hypotheses, makes generalized statements and tests them against the facts of languages. When a linguist or a phonetician makes a statement about languages, he makes it on the basis of observation. Hypotheses are formulated to account for the events these are tested by further observations, and out of them is constructed a theory of how language works From the theory are derived methods for making statement about linguistic events. The statements link the theory to the events. It is set up to account for, and they can now be evaluated by reference

both to the theory and to the events. The best statements are those which make maximum use of the theory to account most fully for the facts.

The linguist also hopes to be in position to make prediction about uncbserved linguistic data on the basis of those observed, and build a general theory which would explain and predict all the facts to be found in individual languages. Prediction about grammars and dictionaries can be made by him. And finally like a true scientist, he is constantly engaged in discovering more about languages, in refining his methods of investigation, and in constructing better theories. He also tries to find out linguistic ~~levels~~ universals.

Like any scientific discipline, linguistics too is not stable. View points and theoretical methods in the field change even in fundamental ways from time to time and different aspects come to receive primary focus at different times. Linguistics has more than its share of unresolved controversies and unsolved questions, which is a part of its fascination and challenge.

Finally the closeness of Linguistics with other natural sciences like mathematics, physics, physiology, zoology, biology, etc.

is another proof of its scientific nature. It touches on physics through acoustics, on physiology through the structure of the human vocal organs, on zoology through the comparative study of the communicative systems of living beings. As mentioned by R.H. Robins linguistics in its operations and statements is guided by three canons of science (1) exhaustiveness - the adequate treatment of all the relevant material (2) Consistency, the absence of contradiction between different parts of the total statement, and within the limits imposed by the two preceding principles, (3) economy. whereby, other things being equal, a shorter statement or analysis employing fewer terms is to be preferred the one that is longer or more involved. Consequently linguistics is getting more and more technical and sophisticated every day. Yet it is not a pure science. R.A. Hall says its position is between natural and social sciences, like that of geology. To Robins it is an empirical science, and within the empirical sciences it is one of the social sciences, because its subject matter concerns human beings, and is very much different from that of natural sciences.

Nevertheless, linguistics is the scientific study of language. It may be inductive or deductive; it is however, objective, precise, tentative and systematic, it is concerned with reportable facts, methods, and principle. It works by means of observations, hypotheses experiments and tests, postulates, and inferences, It makes generalization and predictions, It formulates theories, Its products are descriptive verbal or algebraic statements about language.