THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE

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3. Language and Brain
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6. Language, History and Change
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WHAT’S LANGUAGE?
Language is a social system
Language is a system of signs for encoding and decoding information.
language is a formal system of signs governed by grammatical rules of combination to communicate meaning.
This definition stresses the fact that human languages can be described as closed structural systems consisting of rules that relate particular signs to particular meanings.
One definition sees language primarily as the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behaviour: to learn languages and produce and understand utterances.
Language is a tool for communication
Why do people use language?
William Jones discovered the family relation between Latin and Sanskrit, laying the ground for the discipline of Historical linguistics.
Ferdinand de Saussure developed the structuralist approach to studying language.
Noam Chomsky is one of the most important linguistic theorists of the 20th century.