QuickNotes

FREE STUDY NOTES · PDF

UGC NET Paper 2

Linguistics (031)
Complete revision notes — all 10 units

10 units | Tables & formulas | Key revision points

01 Nature of Language
02 Phonetics
03 Phonology
04 Morphology
05 Syntax
06 Semantics and Pragmatics
07 Historical Linguistics
08 Sociolinguistics
09 Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics
10 Indian Linguistic Tradition and Languages of India

getquicknotes.com
Edition: November 2026

CONTENTS

What's inside

Ten units of focused revision notes. Each unit ends with a box of key revision points.

01 **Nature of Language** — Properties of human language and foundational ideas. 3

02 **Phonetics** — Speech sounds and their description. 4

03 **Phonology** — Sound systems, phonemes and phonological processes. 5

04 **Morphology** — Structure of words and morphological typology. 6

05 **Syntax** — Sentence structure and generative grammar. 7

06 **Semantics and Pragmatics** — Meaning in language and in context. 8

07 **Historical Linguistics** — Language change, families and comparative method. 9

08 **Sociolinguistics** — Language in society: variation, bilingualism and planning. 10

09 **Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics** — Language acquisition, processing and the brain. 11

10 **Indian Linguistic Tradition and Languages of India** — Panini and Indian grammarians; language families and policy. 12

How to use these notes

- Read one unit at a time, then test yourself with its key revision points.
- Make your own short notes on topics you find difficult.
- Units follow the main areas of the official syllabus — the exact unit list can change between sessions.
- Always check the latest syllabus and notices on the official UGC NET portal: **ugcnet.nta.ac.in**.

UNIT 01

Nature of Language

Properties of human language and foundational ideas.

- Hockett's design features: arbitrariness, duality of patterning, productivity, displacement, cultural transmission.
- **Saussure** (*Course in General Linguistics*, 1916): langue/parole, signifier/signified, synchronic/diachronic, syntagmatic/paradigmatic.

★ Key revision points

- Design features = Hockett.
- Langue/parole = Saussure.
- Synchronic = at one time; diachronic = over time.
- Arbitrariness: no natural link between sound and meaning.

UNIT 02

Phonetics

Speech sounds and their description.

- Branches: articulatory, acoustic, auditory.
- Consonants by place (bilabial, dental, alveolar, retroflex, velar…), manner (stop, fricative, nasal, approximant), and voicing.
- Vowels by height, backness and lip rounding; cardinal vowels (Daniel Jones).
- International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

★ Key revision points

- Retroflex sounds are common in Indian languages.
- Cardinal vowels = Daniel Jones.
- Voicing: vocal cord vibration.
- IPA = one symbol per sound.

UNIT 03

Phonology

Sound systems, phonemes and phonological processes.

- **Phoneme** — smallest contrastive sound unit; **allophones** — variants of a phoneme.
- **Minimal pairs** (pin/bin) prove phonemic contrast.
- Processes: assimilation, elision, epenthesis.
- Distinctive features — Jakobson, Chomsky and Halle (*The Sound Pattern of English*, 1968).

★ Key revision points

- Minimal pairs show phonemes.
- Allophones do not change meaning.
- SPE = Chomsky and Halle (1968).
- Assimilation = sounds becoming alike.

UNIT 04

Morphology

Structure of words and morphological typology.

Concept	Meaning
Morpheme	Smallest meaningful unit; free or bound
Inflection	Grammatical change, same word class (walk → walked)
Derivation	New word, often new class (happy → happiness)
Isolating languages	Words don't change (e.g. Chinese)
Agglutinative	Clear affix chains (e.g. Tamil, Turkish)
Fusional	Affixes fuse meanings (e.g. Sanskrit)

★ Key revision points

- Morpheme = smallest meaningful unit.
- Tamil is agglutinative.
- Inflection keeps word class.
- Bound morphemes can't stand alone.

UNIT 05

Syntax

Sentence structure and generative grammar.

- Chomsky — *Syntactic Structures* (1957): transformational-generative grammar; competence vs performance.
- Phrase structure, X-bar theory, Government and Binding (1981), Minimalist Program (1995).
- Word order typology: SOV (Hindi), SVO (English), VSO.

★ Key revision points

- *Syntactic Structures*: 1957.
- Hindi is SOV; English is SVO.
- Minimalist Program: 1995.
- Competence vs performance = Chomsky.

UNIT 06

Semantics and Pragmatics

Meaning in language and in context.

- Lexical relations: synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, polysemy, homonymy.
- **Speech acts** — J. L. Austin (locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary); John Searle.
- **Grice's cooperative principle**: maxims of quantity, quality, relation, manner; implicature.
- Politeness theory — Brown and Levinson (face).

★ Key revision points

- Speech acts = Austin, Searle.
- Four maxims = Grice.
- Hyponymy: rose is a hyponym of flower.
- Face = Brown and Levinson.

UNIT 07

Historical Linguistics

Language change, families and comparative method.

- Sir William Jones (1786): kinship of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin → Indo-European.
- **Grimm's law** — consonant shift in Germanic; Verner's law.
- Comparative method reconstructs proto-languages.

★ Key revision points

- Indo-European kinship: William Jones, 1786.
- Grimm's law = Germanic consonant shift.
- Comparative method reconstructs proto-forms.
- Neogrammarians: sound laws are regular.

UNIT 08

Sociolinguistics

Language in society: variation, bilingualism and planning.

- William Labov — variationist sociolinguistics (New York department stores study).
- **Diglossia** — Charles Ferguson (1959); extended by Fishman.
- Code-switching and code-mixing; pidgins and creoles.
- Language planning: status, corpus, acquisition planning.

★ Key revision points

- Diglossia = Ferguson (1959).
- Variation studies = Labov.
- Creole = pidgin with native speakers.
- Code-switching = alternating languages.

UNIT 09

Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics

Language acquisition, processing and the brain.

- Critical period hypothesis — Eric Lenneberg (1967).
- Aphasias: Broca's (production), Wernicke's (comprehension).
- Acquisition theories: behaviourist (Skinner), nativist (Chomsky — LAD), interactionist.

★ Key revision points

- Critical period = Lenneberg.
- Broca = production; Wernicke = comprehension.
- LAD = Chomsky.
- Skinner = behaviourist view.

UNIT 10

Indian Linguistic Tradition and Languages of India

Panini and Indian grammarians; language families and policy.

- Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* (~4,000 sutras); Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*; Bhartrihari's *Vakyapadiya* (sphota theory).
- Language families: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austroasiatic, Tibeto-Burman.
- **Eighth Schedule**: 22 languages. George Grierson — *Linguistic Survey of India*.

★ Key revision points

- *Ashtadhyayi* = Panini.
- Sphota theory = Bhartrihari.
- 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule.
- Linguistic Survey of India = Grierson.

QuickNotes

Learn Quickly. Prepare Smartly.

More free study notes

Free PDFs for UGC NET Paper 1, every Paper 2 subject, IBPS RRB and SSC CHSL — no sign-up.

www.getquicknotes.com

Free for personal study — not for sale. You may share this PDF unchanged and free of charge.

QuickNotes is an independent educational platform. It is not affiliated with, endorsed by or connected to the University Grants Commission (UGC), the National Testing Agency (NTA) or any government examination authority. These are original revision notes; always refer to the official notification for exam dates, eligibility, pattern and syllabus.

Found a mistake? Email support@getquicknotes.com · Edition: November 2026