## **Humanities – Linguistics** 2013



"My area of work is to look at the syntax of the world's languages, and living in India, it is to of course look at the syntax of Indian languages. By syntax we mean the arrangement of linguistic words or even units below the word, to be able to understand what underlies, or what constitutes the business of the human ability for language."

## Ayesha Kidwai

Professor, Centre for Linguistics, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

- M.A. in Linguistics from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
- Ph.D. in Linguistics from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

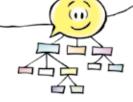
Prof. Ayesha Kidwai is an outstanding theoretical linguist. Her work has earned recognition from leading international experts, as it relates the general theoretical framework of the principles of Universal Grammar to some of the particular syntactic features of Indian languages like Hindi-Urdu, Santali, Meiteilon, Bangla and Malayalam, analyzing these within the structures of human cognitive systems and their general properties.



## Discovering the intricacies of Indian languages

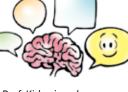


Our ability to vocalize our thoughts through a language sets us apart from other living beings and has evolved over the years. Each human language is a complex entity that allows us to communicate ideas, emotions and desires.

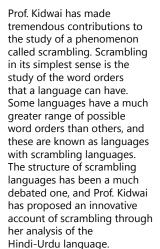


Linguistics is the study of the structure of language, how it is acquired, how it changes over time, and how it is used to convey messages and meaning. The discipline of linguistics also attempts to answer questions about what connects human languages and what makes each of them different.

Prof. Ayesha Kidwai is a theoretical linguist. She studies the scientific hypotheses that must underlie humans' knowledge of language, and the abstract principles that connect the structure of one language to another. Her work deals with these principles, within the framework of Universal Grammar, and how they relate to the characteristics and construction of sentences in Indian languages such as Hindi-Urdu, Bengali, Malayalam, Meiteilon and Santali. The theory of Universal Grammar is a model of the way in which these abstract principles interact to yield individual human languages.



Prof. Kidwai analyzes these languages within the structures of the human cognitive systems. This analysis helps in understanding how language structures are perceived within the human brain and its influence on cognition and psychology.





Along with making theoretical linguistics a significant field in Indian academia, Prof. Kidwai has also emphasized the political and cultural importance of studying India's phenomenal diversity in languages.