**Lecture Seven: Anthropolgy**

1. **Definition**

The term anthropology is a combination of two words derived from the Greek language; *anthropos* meaning ‘man’ or ‘human being’ and *logus* meaning ‘study’ or ‘science’. Hence,

Anthropology is the science or study of man or humanity. The first who used of the term "anthropology" in English to refer to a natural science of humanity was Richard Harvey's 1593. **Mead** and **Boas** are very famous anthropologists. The latter is regarded as both the “father of modern anthropology” and the “father of American anthropology.” He was the first to apply the scientific method to anthropology.

Anthropology is a broad scientific discipline that deals with the comparative study of human beings as a group, starting from the first appearance on the earth to the present stage of development. It is a vast field of study which views man from different angles; a science that tells us about the various aspects of man life, be it physical or cultural. It is, probably, the most comprehensive science dealing with man and his works.

1. **Characteristics of Anthropology**

There are three main characteristics of anthropology:

* **It has a broad scope:**

A good way to emphasize this broad scope is to say that anthropologists are interested in all human beings (i.e. living or dead, primitive or civilized). Hence, they are interested in different aspects of human life including their skin, color, family lives, marriages, personality types, languages….

* **It is unique through its approaches**:

Anthropology is *holistic* which means that anthropologists tend to study one aspect of people’s life through relating it to other complex related aspects of life.

Anthropology is *comparative* in the sense that it studies certain cultural aspect of a particular group of people by comparing it across societies and across time i.e. the present with the past, the modern with the traditional and so on.

* **Emphasis on insiders’ view:**

Anthropologists focus on how people understand their world. It digs to find out their point of view about their behaviours, culture, society and the entire world around them.

# The Scope of Anthropology

Anthropology has its root in the work and ideas of ancient Greek, Roman, social thinkers and Hebrew philosophers. These people were interested in the nature, origin, destiny, morality and ethics of people and their relationships. Yet, anthropology as a separate academic discipline was developed during the 19th century (mid 1800). The scope of anthropology is very vast. It covers all the aspects of human life including their culture and social relationships.

At the beginning, anthropologists concentrated on applying « the theory of evolution ». This theory states that human beings are not the product of special creation but they are parts of natural evolutionary process. Evolutionists argued that man was originated from lower animals i.e. mammals like Gorillas, chimpanzees. On the other hand, creationists believed that human beings are the product of special creation i.e. they are created in the image and likeness of God. Yet, this debate was philosophical and cannot be supported by concrete evidence.

They were interested in some of the following questions and issues about human beings:

- Where did human species come from (i.e. what are the origins of mankind?)

-Was Man created in the image and likeness of God? Or was Man just the product of millions of years of the natural evolutionary process?

- In what ways does Man differ from other animal spices?

-How did human beings arrive at the present stage of biological, intellectual, and cultural development?

At the end of the 19th century, anthropologists focused on human differences and characteristics of human beings instead of their origins and development. They believed that the cultures of the indigenous people in America, Africa, Australia, Asia, and Europe should be studied before these cultures were corrupted and changed by contact with the modern world. The work of anthropologists in America (e.g. Boas, Sapir, Whorf…) contributed in the development of the field of linguistics.

# The Sub-fields of Anthropology

Anthropologists generally divide anthropology into four branches:

# Archaeology: It examines our past ways of life through the analysis and interpretation of the physical remains that people left behind i.e. animal bones, Tools, written records, and oral traditions.

# Physical Anthropology or Biological Anthropology: It deals with the evolution of the human body, mind and behavior in comparison with behavior and anatomy of other species.

# Cultural Anthropology (social Anthropology): This branch is concerned with the social and cultural dimensions of human beings. It explores the diversity of existing human ways of life, how they work, how they change, and how they interrelate in the modern world.

# Linguistic Anthropology: Linguistic anthropology examines the structure and diversity of language in addition to, how language shapes communication, forms social identity and relationships between people.

Linguistic anthropology seeks to understand human language, written and non-written, verbal and non- verbal.

# The Importance of Anthropology

* Anthropology teaches humans how to look ‘*outside the box’,* In other words, to be able to understand others’ ways of thinking, and to realize that what personal perspectives and ways of thinking are not absolute.
* Anthropology is the only science that compares things across different cultures and different times.
* It raises individuals’ awareness and consciousness about their cultures. It shows people their perspectives and points of view about the world, which they have experienced.
* When people look at the other people’s experiences, perspectives, and understandings, their knowledge becomes greater.
* It aims to understand ourselves in relation to the understanding of others.

**Practice**

**Q1.** What is the relation between anthropology and language?

**Q2**. Doesindividuals’ culture influence their language?

**Q3.** Find examples where the peoples’ culture is reflected in their language.