**The Top Ten Linguists**

Dec 9th, 2008 | By [Tatiana](http://www.lexiophiles.com/author/tatiana) | Category: [English](http://www.lexiophiles.com/category/english)

Broadly defined, linguist is someone who is engaged in the study of human language. Throughout its distinguished history, language study has known thousands of names from Panini, the author of the first Sanskrit grammar, to John Grinder, the founder of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). To navigate successfully in this abundance of names, see the description of the genus *Linguist communis* below.

**a. Systematic Position**
More than 100 species of the genus *Linguist communis* have been described on the Internet.

**b. Geographical distribution**
*Linguists* are widely distributed all over the world. They naturally inhabited university buildings and libraries but in recent years the species have been introduced in the tropical forests of Papua New Guinea and in the offices in the Silicon Valley.

**c. Diagnostic Characteristics**
The *Linguist* species are normally highly educated in both the practical and theoretical elements of one or more given language. Some of them specialize in linguistics proper (grammar, syntax, semantics, and phonetics); others display passion for translation, interpreting, sociolinguistucs, or teaching.

**d. Most prominent species**
The distribution of the most prominent species on the web is given in Fig. 1. For the purpose of rating, current Google indices were used. Due to several approximations when commuting and evaluating the results, the list cannot be considered a completed scientifically based record.

Fig. 1
**1. Noam Chomsky
2. Ferdinand de Saussure
3. Roman Jakobson
4. David Crystal
5. Umberto Eco
6. George Lakoff
7. Edward Sapir
8. Joseph H. Greenberg
9. Wilhelm von Humboldt
10. Leonard Bloomfield**

The list reveals the abundance of the species in favorable time periods (at the turn of 19-20th centuries) and areas (US, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, and Italy). Because of their tolerance to a wide variety of habitat conditions and their often unlimited interest in the way words work these linguists covered the vast field from anthropology to forensic linguistics.

**e. Potential use**
N. Chomsky‘s classification of formal languages is widely used in programming, the Prague school, founded by R. Jacobson, changed development of the European phonology. J. Lakoff contributed to our understanding of rhetoric, argumentation, and metaphor. Bloomfield made general issues about language available to a broader audience.
Since these species are an important source of linguistic knowledge for the whole world, their contributions should be enlisted in a separate entry.

**f. Concluding remarks**
Although the species of the genus *Linguist communis* are extremely diverse, they can be recognized easily by their enormous passion for human language. If you know some examples meeting this criterion that are not on our list, you can contact us and help us improve our record.

References:
<http://www.knowledgerush.com/kr/encyclopedia/Linguist/>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistics>