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Usage of Language

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ABSTRACT: Language is the expression of ideas by means of which speech sounds are combined to form words, words are combined into sentences and combination of sentences gives answering to our ideas and thoughts. A language may be said to be any means of expressing emotional or mental conceptions by any living being whatsoever and of communicating them to or receiving them from other living beings.

FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

Language plays an important role in human life. The fact is that human life has been made better by the use of a language. Language is a means of expression. It helps in the process of communication. No communication would have taken place in the absence of language. We also find that the knowledge of mother tongue helps in learning the language. In many ways, it hinders the effective learning of English. Every individual has some feelings, emotions, ideas and one wants to give an outlet to those experiences of life. By using a language in a correct way, the individual is able to express his views. Language helps to interact between the two individuals.

Sapir says about language as, “Thought is that form of communication in which the speaker and the person addressed are identified in one person.” Language is primarily a vocal actualisation of the tendency to see realities symbolically...” and it is this tendency which makes it an efficient vehicle of communication. Language is a great force of socialisation probably the greatest that exists.” This means that ‘significant social intercourse’ could have hardly existed without language.

Language is a behavioural process

Language is not automatic process to learn. It is a behavioural process that behaviour is acquired by making some efforts. It does not come to the human being like walking, crawling of a child. We have to learn the language by making efforts. Take a new born baby, he does not know to communicate, he does not know any language. He is continuously placed among people in the society and there he learns a language through imitation, facial expressions and practice. Within a short period, he can able to produce a language. If the child born to the Indian mother is placed in America for an year, the language he spoken is only English not Tamil. Because the child is placed in an environment where all around only English is spoken, so the child acquire only English and not the Indian language. He learns the language by observing imitation and practice.

Language is a unique system

Language is a unique system like our human body system. How our body functions through different organs like heart, lungs, brain, etc., in the same way language functions through sounds, words, and structures. In the functioning of human body, all the organs are equally important. Likewise, language cannot be meaningful if the words or structures fails. If we want to say something the sentence should be complete, it should have some meaning. We have to make use of vocabulary, the sounds and some sentence patterns. We cannot speak or write the language only on the basis of vocabulary. For example: I do exercise regularly. We cannot say the same sentence as I regularly exercise do, if we did it would be meaningless.

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II. STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE

Language involves sounds (phonology), words (morphology) and structures (syntax). These different elements in themselves are systems as the various sounds function in some particular fashion. The phonology of a language forms its own system as the various sounds function in a systematic way. So is the case with vocabulary and structures of language. In the same way, the human body has a blood circulation system, a nervous system and a bone structure system. Likewise, the language has the three main systems as sounds, structures and vocabulary. The body cannot function properly if any one of the system like blood or nervous fails and whole body stops to function. The same is true with the language. If any one of the system of language fails to operate, the language the person speak will not be correct. The expression one have to say also become wrong, the language will break down. For example, if the person is pronouncing the words correctly but not putting the words into correct order, he will not be understood the actual meaning of the sentence. The person should follow the tenses properly when he want to utter something. If he want express future time but using 'ed' instead at the end of the verbs, the total language will be collapsed. For example: I will come to college tomorrow. If the person use the above future sentence as past tense ; I came to college tomorrow. If we look at the sentence one cannot understand properly.

Symbol of language

Different words used in a language are the symbols. The language will function well if its symbols are known both to the speaker and the person for whom they are being used. The various symbols of a language are the words. If we examine these symbols, we find that they have sounds and meanings. The language will function through the symbols if meanings are attached to them, otherwise not. For example, the word 'cat' has three sounds. It is a symbol of English because the person who use it have given it a meanin. But if we take up the same three sounds in a reversible way, that is not a symbol of English language as no mening has been attached to that by the person using the language.

In arbitrary symbols there is no visual relationship between the language itme and object for which it stands. A man is called man traditionally in English. There is no visual similarity between the symbol 'man' and the actual man. In English, we used to say as man, it will be same in other languages like 'Hindi' or even in 'punjabi'. None of them is better than the other. In fact, we call a man 'man' because people have agreed to use it in that sense.

Different symbols used in a language are vocal. Ther are other kinds of symbols used by men in society which cannot be called vocal symbols. For example, gestures, postures, signal lights, etc. are visual symbols and beating of a drum to reveal the condolence and ringing of bells in schools and colleges are auditory symbols. They do not form language. In language, the sounds are produced through vocal organs. The symbols of language are primarily meant for speaking; writing is for secondary importance. Speech is the primary form of language. Without spoken form the language cannot be function. But all the sounds produced by the human vocal organs cannot be included in symbols. For example, sneeze, cough etc. have no symbolic value. They have some meaning in public when used by the people. For example, hickup of a child for that mother has taken a glass of water to the child has a symbolic value only in that particular situation. But speaking from general language point of view, sounds of this type do not have any symbolic value.

Language is unique

Language is unique because it has its own style of function. The sounds, vocabulary and structures of every language have their own speciality. One language differs from the other in geographical and cultural diversities. Each language is given unique importance.

Language is a Skill Subject

Learning of a language is a skiled subject. Language should be learned like a skill. A lot of repition is needed in speaking, reading or writing of the language. Then only one can able to speak fleuntly and write grammatically. Later language becomes a habit of the person. It is skill like swimming, singing, dancing etc. if the person can practice these skills properly itwill comes to the person automatically without making efforts. Likewise if one can learn to speak, to read, or to write a language it comes to the person automatically. So all these skills can be learnt through practice.

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Language is for communicative purpose

Language is mainly used for the purpose of communication. Only through language we can share our thoughts and ideas to others. Without language, we shall not be able to express ourselves. The ideas kept remain in our mind. Language becomes the essential part of a person. Everything will be going smooth if the better communication takes place in all the situations. Ben Johnson rightly says, "Speech is the instrument of society."

Language is related to Culture

Every language has its deep concern with the culture of the people to which the language belongs. We can't think of any language existing in a vacuum. Each language is the product of the society. C.C. Fries says, "The only basis for 'correctness' in a language is the usage of its native speakers." Language develops a cultural context and meets the needs of the society in which it develops. For example, one African language has 120 separate words for "walking". Because in that society walking is the only means of moving from one place to another and different ways a person moves (walks) are expressed through different words.

In an English culture we move by motor bike, car or even cycle. So we give less importance to walking and, therefore, English has fewer words to use in order to express this type of movement. So we can see that each language will reflect the need of the culture to which it belongs. If a society has a need for words to describe certain things, those words will be developed. If the need is not there, the words will not be evolved or developed.

Language is ever changing

Pt. Nehru said, "we live in a changing world: we can't possibly think in terms of state of affairs in language or anything else. And our regional languages, as we go through this process of scientific and industrial revolution, will themselves be changing and developing." No language on this earth is static. Every language has to undergo changes. The changing aspect of English language become clear if we take into consideration some of the changes which have taken place.

In 16th century, the letter 'K' was sounded in the words- know, knife, knowledge but now it is considered funny if the same 'K' is sounded in the above said words. A few centuries ago, the letter 'V' was not existing. The word 'diverse' was written as 'diurse'.

III.CONCLUSION

With the passage of time, some words become old and obsolete and they are used rarely. The word 'whom' is being replaced by 'who'. Some new words has also been coined by the people according to their requirements. For example, the words 'Brunch' was newly coined by the people. Breakfast + Lunch = Brunch. On weekend, people sleep for long time till 10'O clock in the morning and take their breakfast after 11. So food is taken in between breakfast and lunch is said to be 'Brunch'. Likewise many words are coined newly in English.

Even the meanings of the words also change with the passage of time. For example, the word 'nice' is happily used these days, it means 'pleasant', 'good-natured'. In 12th or 13th century, it meant 'delicate' and in 6th century, the same word meant 'foolish'. How far the meaning of the same word has been changed. In the same way, several words and their meanings are to be changed from century to century. So every one have to read the books day by day in order to acquire the new words.

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