

LANGUAGE

Unit - I

SYNOPSIS

- * Definition of Language
- * Characteristics of Language
 - * Language is a Means of Communication
 - * Language is Arbitrary
 - * Language is a System of Systems
 - * Language is primarily vocal
 - * Language is a Form of Social Behaviour
 - * Language is a Symbol System
- * Human Communication
- * Animal Communication

Definition of Language

* Language is a symbol system based on pure or arbitrary Conventions... infinitely extendable and modifiable according to the changing needs and conditions of the speakers.

Robins [1985]

* Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of Communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a System of voluntarily produced symbols.

[Sapir 1921]

* Language is the institution whereby humans Communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols.

[Hall 1969]

* A language is a set [finite or infinite] of Sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.

Noam chomsky [1957]

* A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication.

Wardhaugh [1972]

* A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates.

Bloch and Trager [1942]

* Language is undoubtedly a kind of means of communication among human beings. It consists primarily of vocal sounds. It is articulatory, systematic, symbolic and arbitrary.

Derbyshire [1967]

* Language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, communicate.

Encyclopaedia Britannica

* Languages are the principal systems of communication used by particular groups of human beings within the particular society [linguistic community] of which they are members.

Lyons [1970].

Characteristics of Language

1. Language is a Means of Communication

Language is a systematic means of communicating by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. The cognitive processes involved in producing and understanding linguistic communication. A system of words used to name things in a particular discipline. The mental faculty or power of Vocal communication.

2. Language is Arbitrary

Language is arbitrary, conventional and traditional. Words have meaning only as parts of a system, with each word deriving its meaning solely from its difference from the other words in the system. There is no geometrical or physical resemblance between word and meaning. Words are arbitrary rather than iconic.

3. Language is a System of Systems

Mulder and Hervey's definition of language follows a functionalist perspective in which language is defined as a "genus" and as such, it should be subdivided into a smaller sub-parts, or systems.

4. Language is primarily vocal

Language is primarily made up of vocal sounds only produced by a physiological articulatory mechanism in the human body. In the beginning, it appeared as vocal sounds only. Writing came much later, as an intelligent attempt to represent vocal sounds.

5. Language is a Form of Social Behaviour

If we regard language as social behaviour, therefore, this means that we are treating it as a form of behaviour potential. It is what the speaker can do. But can do by itself is not a linguistic notion; it encompasses

types of behaviour other than language behaviour. the potential of language is a meaning potential.

6. Language is a Symbol system

Language is a symbolic system through which people communicate and through which culture is transmitted.

Some languages contain a system of symbols used for written communication, while others rely on only spoken communication and nonverbal actions.

Taken together, these symbols convey specific meanings.

Human Communication

Human Communication, or anthroposemiotics, is the field dedicated to understanding how humans communicate. Human communication is grounded in cooperative and shared intentions. Our ability to communicate with one another, can not be possible unless we have an understanding of what it is we are either referencing to, or thinking about. The field of communication is very diverse, there are multiple layers to what communication is, and how we use its different sectors and features as human beings.

Communication is a joint experience in order to get the content across and make sense in the exchanges.

Animal Communication

Animal Communication is the transfer of information from one or a group of animals to one or more other animals that affects the current or future behaviour of the receivers. Information may be sent intentionally, as in a Courtship display, or unintentionally, as in the transfer of scent from predator to prey. Information may be transferred to an audience of several receivers. Animal communication is a rapidly growing of study in disciplines including animal behaviour, sociology, neurology and animal cognition. Many aspects of animal behaviour, such as symbolic name use, emotional expression, learning and sexual behaviour, are being understood in new ways.