

LANGUAGE AS ART AND COMMUNICATION TOOL

^{1*}Linda Wijaya and ²Nena Syahrani Syahaf Nasution

^{1,2}English Applied Linguistic Study Program, Postgraduate School
State University of Medan, Medan, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: huangxiurung@gmail.com

Abstract

Language acquisition is essentially needed to sustain human socialization through communication towards one another. The purpose of this paper is to show that the language functioned as a universal language can literally support the continuity of human life in the work, business, and education. Society often neglects the importance of language and only regards language as a superficial subject to be studied. As the saying goes "Language is art", needless to say, it truly proves that language is also related to literature which produces many contribution to literary works. Strong language literature is also an excellent phenomenon in human communication such as drama, poetry, and novel. Novel, a literary work that until now still in demand by literary fans, is a media that indirectly bring together the author with the reader. The author conveys his message to the reader through the novel. The findings of this research found that language plays an important role in maintaining and preserving human existence in communication. Language is a crucial element in implementing human body language. The expertise of the person in the language shows his skills and qualities.

Keywords: language, literature, acquisition, literary works

Introduction

In terms of linguistics, which is a fundamentally theoretical science, it is important to discriminate between the act of "speaking" and "language". *Speaking* is specific and concrete, it is the linguistic process as such in the act of communication. *Language*, on the contrary, is a general, abstract aspect and a sum of organisation skills and principles; it is the system that governs any concrete act of communication. Linguistics generally pays more attention to *language*, an utterly social aspect, the one that can act as a means of communication.

In our daily lives, people are actively involved in various activities which are related to language basic skills such as talking, listening, reading and writing. Needless to say, we live in a world of language. Chomsky cited in Fromkin (2003) states that when we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the "human essence", the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to man. Language has its own value not only to express meaning and information explicitly but

also to describe one's personality implicitly. This is one of the language special characteristics in playing the role in human lives. In addition to that, Chomsky as cited in Das (2006) states that language is a set of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. The way people acquire language which is a fundamental aspect is an incredible gift of God. Language is also regarded as the basis of all communication that is a social human means of exploring meaning and also an unmistakable mark of personal identity to forming interpersonal relationship Alberta (2000). Each individual, who can articulate his or her thoughts and ideas, is able to apply language in order to explain new concepts or share his or her experiences. This is to interpret that there will be a good understanding constructed towards others' perspectives; every language is the admiration of every person who uses it. Language can be said a symbol to make someone become valuable and indeed precious in society. For instance, people can show their character just by how they use language in conversation towards one another as language is a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings (Merriam in Weitzan 2013).

Fromkin (2003) says that:

The possession of language, perhaps more than any other attribute, distinguishes humans from animals. To understand our humanity, one must understand the nature of language that makes us human. According to the philosophy expressed in the myths and religions of many peoples, language is the source of human life and power.

In line, Sapir in Das (2006) explains that language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols. There are four components of natural human language: the phonological which concerned in how the words pronounce, the syntactical that concerned in how the elements arranged in sentences, the semantic that concerned in word meaning and pragmatic that concerned in the use of language as defined in Searle (2010). Language is a major component of understanding human behaviour, and most of us consider language to be an essential part of what it means to be human, and it is partly what sets us apart from other animals Harley (2005).

Crystal cited in Harley (2005) lists eight functions of language:

The primary purpose of language is of course to communicate. We can also use it to express emotion (e.g. by swearing), for social interaction (e.g. by saying "bless you!" when someone sneezes), to make use of its sounds (e.g. in various children's games), to attempt to control the environment (e.g. magical spells), to record facts, to think with, and to express identity (e.g. chanting in demonstrations).

Language described as art is quite rational; it is not only abstract (self-determination) but is also quite subjective (dependent upon the performer), Languages are subjective because the individuals can and do express ideas and opinions colored by emotions

and their specific set of life experiences that can be both nonrational and nonobjective (Senf, 2006).

Wilson in Weitzman (2013) explains communication is the action on the part of one organism (or cell) that alters the probability pattern of behavior in another organism (or cell) in a fashion adaptive to either one or both of the participants. Human communication is based on the mutual sharing of beliefs about the world, about the mind (Cohen in kurcz 2001) and how to communicate effectively with one another. Communication is a functional relationship between the behavior of one organism and the behavior of another (Catania cited in Kurcz 2001). According to Everett in Weitzman(2013), human beings have a need to communicate and a need to maintain social cohesion in order to survive as social creatures.

Theoretical Framework

Language

Adler (2006) states Language is a collection of symbols governed by rules and used to convey messages between individuals, Phonological rules govern how words sound when pronounced, while Syntactic rules govern the structure of language—the way symbols can be arranged, Semantic rules deal with the meaning of specific words, and Pragmatic rules govern how people use language in everyday interaction. He also states that language is not only describing ideas, making request and solving problem, but also shapes and reflects attitude.

Function

Crystal cited in Harley (2005) lists eight functions of language:

- a. To Communicate
- b. Express Emotion
- c. Social Interaction
- d. To Make Use of It Sound
- e. To Attempt to Control the Environment
- f. To Record Facts
- g. To Think with Identity
- h. To Express an Identity

Art

Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them; Because art is produced to share emotions, it has a kind of “union among men” as its overall purpose, the kind of emotion that is communicated does not matter. (Tolstoy,1899). Art has the same function with language and communication, which is to sharing idea, feelings, and information to other person.

Communication

Communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another; the word communication is

derived from the Latin word, *communis*, which means common. The definition underscores the fact that unless a common understanding results from exchange of information, there is no communication (Keyton in Lunenberg, 2010).

Based on Chomsky, communication competence is understood as a set of rules used to produce expressions of thought and to understand them (Chomský in Hrehova, 2010). Communication competence assumes:

- a. Language competencies, knowledge of verbal and non verbal tools for using language in various communication situations.
- b. The knowledge of both official and unofficial communication standards (i.e. code of conduct). Communication competence should comprise knowledge on how to respond in different communication situations. „The idea is that a user’s language communication should be in accord with social behaviour, social standards. This is not just a language issue, but also a social issue. It is, in fact, a matter of social tact, which determines how we should behave in terms of both language use and social interaction”, (Findra in Hrehova, 2010).
- c. Knowledge needed for self assertion in a situation involving communication (i.e. including professional, encyclopedic knowledge, etc.).

Types of Communication

Within the domain of human interaction, there are several types of communication. Each occurs in a different context. Despite, the features that all shares each have its own characteristics (Adler, 2006).

- a. Intrapersonal
- b. Dyadic/interpersonal
- c. Small group
- d. Public
- e. Mass

Results and Discussion

As a tool of communication among the members of a society, language is influenced by the very society where it functions. Moreover, being the most significant tool of communication, a particular language which is mastered only by some people (e.g. English, Mandarin, German, Korea, etc.) has often been the determining factor in turning these people into a separate group as a people, a nation or a state. The distinction between these peoples and nations mainly traces the geographical distribution in the space of the pertaining languages which has an interrelation with cultural. For instance, a European man has migrated to Indonesia for some time. The changes of this European man cover so many aspects, starting from the way he speaks, the behavior he acts out, and even he changes his lifestyle or method of thinking. It means that language does not mean only an interaction between speaker and listener to have a communication, moreover, it can be used in any kinds of types, which communication is later divided into two, verbal language and non verbal language.

All people subconsciously reflect their cultural backgrounds in day-to-day communication. Language is both a great advocate or media for communication and an important outcome of one's cultural background. Intracultural miscommunication often stems from different and conflicting styles of speech and messages. A perfectly normal intonation pattern for a native German speaker may seem angry and aggressive to a foreign listener. Connotations of words, as well as meanings of slang phrases, vary greatly across cultural lines, and a lack of tolerance and understanding of this fact often results in misinterpretations.

There is a tight relationship between the language and the culture of a community – they are inextricably related, so that one cannot understand or appreciate the one without a good knowledge of the other. Culture may reflect in body language, customs, superstitions, and even expressions of friendliness. Although all these definitely observe the cultural norms of a particular society, the impact of culture on language use is both deep and thorough. This is meant to say that culture refers to the lifestyle of a community like has been stated: the way its member behave, their beliefs, their values and, most importantly, the way they communicate.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, language mediates between the individual and the community. Language can be studied under several circumstances, coming up to the most different results that make the language become a perpetual phenomenon which needs to be developed time to time. Language takes a significant role within the community whether it becomes a mediator between the communication and the language itself.

References

- Adler, R. B. (2006). *Understanding Human Language*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Alberta. (2000). *English Language Arts*. Canada : Alberta Learning.
- Das, L. (2006). *Language & Communication*. Indian Institutes of Technology. Guhawati. India.
- Fromkin, V. , Roadman, R., & Hyams, N. (2003). *An Introduction to Language, Seventh Edition*. USA : Wadsworth Thomson.
- Harley, T. (2005). *The Psychology of Language from Data to Theory*. NewYork : Taylor & Francis Inc.
- Hrehova, D. (2010). The Significance of Communication and Language Competence for Employment and Career Development. *Human Resources Management & Ergonomics Journal* Vol.4 No.2.
- Kurcz, I. (2001). Language, Cognition, Communication. *Psychology of Language & Communication Journal* Vol.5 No.1.
- Lunenberg, F. C. (2010). Communication : The Process, Barriers, and Improving Effectiveness. *Schooling Journal* Vol.1 No.1.
- Searle, J. (2010). *Making The Social Words: The Structure of Human Civilization*. NewYork : Oxford University Press.
- Senf, G.A. (2006). The Art of Language. *Journal of Language & Linguistics* Vol.5 No.1.

Tolstoy, L. (1899). *What is Art?* Translating by Alymer Maude.

Weitzman, S. R. (2013). *A review of Language : The cultural Tool by Daniel L.Everett.*
California : California State University.