

Linguistics

The course is taught by;

Dr. Aras A. Amin

PhD. in Applied Linguistics/ELT

Language

- Language is an evolutionary adaptation.
- It evolved to fit the growing needs of humans to convey information from one person to another.

Examples:

Old English:

• "cyning" (meaning *king*) "wīf" (meaning *woman*) "scip" (meaning *ship*)

Modern English:

"biology" (from Greek *bios*, meaning *life*, and *logos*, meaning *study of*)

• "coffee" (borrowed from Arabic *qahwa*)

• "piano" (from Italian *piano-forte*, meaning *soft-loud*)

Language

- It evolved out of calls, gestures, or signs.
- *Buzz* (imitates the sound of a bee) Thumbs up, "good job"
- It the most remarkable tool that mankind possesses, an essential and distinguishing feature of the species.
- For instance, the ability to discuss hypothesis (e.g., *could*, *might*, *should*) allows humans to plan in ways that no other species can.
- The ability to use language gives individuals identity and makes them human.

- It is probably the best window available on the workings of the human mind.
- The capability for language relies on the use of one or more language codes, which must be learnt.
- Language is infinitely flexible: it can describe past memories, present needs, and future plans.
- Language is dynamic: it changes over time to adapt to social and cultural evolution, or in response to contact with other languages.
- This is evidenced by the fact that new vocabulary items are invented to describe new experiences and old vocabulary items take on new meanings. Every language has its own distinctive system of patterns.

What Is Language?

- “Language is doubtlessly the most significant, influential and vivid system of communication used by speakers in various communicative events and situations to achieve different purposes” (Mukhalad & Aras, P. 74, 2018)
- language may be defined as a system of elements, verbal or graphic, combined into patterned expressions, a set of symbols, spoken or written, used mainly for communication. i.e. The cat sat on the mat.
- The symbols are used for the expression of thought or the exchange of knowledge. *i.e. That tree is an oak.*

What Is Language?

- The deaf use sign languages in which they use visual–manual modality to convey meaning.
- As a means of communication, human language differs from all other animal and artificial languages because of its capacity to support and thrive through creativity. It differs from other means of communication such as gestural and facial expressions in that it involves the combination of arbitrary elements, creating meaning out of meaningless parts. i.e. /b/, /a/, and /t/

- Language is a social fact, a product of collective action; it is produced by society. The word "selfie," for instance
- But it is also a mental reality, existing in the brain.
- Language is a system in which elements interrelate and interact in meaningful ways. She runs quickly.
- It has a set of rules governing its structure, meaning, and use which enable speakers to produce grammatical and meaningful utterances.

Language is inherently symbolic in nature

- In English, the word "*heart*" is inherently symbolic. It doesn't literally mean the physical organ but is often used metaphorically to represent emotions or love.
- For instance, when someone says, "*She spoke from the heart,*" the word "*heart*" symbolizes deep, genuine emotions.
- This symbolic nature of language allows words and phrases to convey complex and abstract concepts beyond their literal meanings.

Any linguistic expression can be viewed as a three-sided figure

1- Phonological structure: which is its form

2- Semantic structure: which is its meaning

3- Symbolic structure: which is the link between the two.

phonological structure and semantic structure, **form and meaning**

- Meaning is represented symbolically using combinations of sounds, letters, and gestures. Equally important in producing and interpreting expressions is the **context**.
- To grasp the intended meaning of a speaker, a listener must consider the context in which the expression occurs. Without attention to such contexts, one cannot understand how language works.
- **Pragmatics**