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AN INTRODUCTION TO  
**LINGUISTICS**

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Nanik Mariani, Fatchul Mu'in & Yusuf Al Arief



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## PREFACE

The book entitled *An Introduction to Linguistics* is intended for providing materials to our students attending the subject of Introduction to Linguistics. Up to the present time, the subject has been lectured by using the handouts as a result of our compilation of some references on language and linguistics. This book is written based on the handouts that have been used since the writers handled the subject.

The materials discussed in this book cover *What is a Language, Characteristics of Language, What is Linguistics, Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Transformational Grammar, Semantics, Sociolinguistics, and Psycholinguistics*. In *What is a language*, the writers elaborate on the definition and concept of Human Language and Animal Language. In *Characteristics of the human language*, they explain some concepts on "A language is systematic, A language is arbitrary, A language is social, A language is spoken, A language is used for communication, and A language is complete for its speakers."

In *Linguistics and Language Teaching*, they present the definition of linguistics and its branches of linguistics, and linguistics in language teaching.

In *Phonetics*, they present the concept of phonetics and organs of speech are used for producing speech sounds, both vowels, and consonants, and will be explained how to differentiate voiced from voiceless sounds. While in classification of consonants, the kinds of consonants based on (a) Manner of Articulation, namely: Plosives/Stops, Fricatives, Affricates, Nasals, Lateral/Liquids, and Semi-vowels/Glides, and (b) Place of Articulation, namely: Bilabial, Labiodental, Interdental, Alveolar, Palatal, Velar, dan Glottal sounds will be explained in detail so that the students understand the mechanism of producing the consonants. In the classification of vowels, the kinds of vowels: (a) Front, Central, Back Vowels, (b) Open, Half-open, Close, Half-close vowels, and (c) Rounded and Unrounded Vowels and (d) Tenses and Lax Vowels will be elaborated.

In *Phonology*, the definition of phonology and the difference between phonetics and phonology will be presented. Also, in this chapter, phonemes, phones, and allophones will be discussed; these sub-topics include the ways to identify phonemes and phones, and also allophonic variation. The minimal pairs and minimal sets are also presented. The other sub-topic contains a brief description of Phonological Rules and its types such as Aspiration, Vowel Lengthening, Vowel Nasalization, Flapping, dan Nasal Deletion. The description is meant to help students to classify sounds in the processes of aspiration, vowel lengthening, vowel nasalization, flapping, and nasal deletion.

In *Morphology*, the definition of morphology, differences between phonemes and morphemes, differences between morphemes dan allomorph, and types of morphemes: Free morphemes and Bound morphemes are presented. This chapter also discusses the Word-formation process to show the students the process of word-formations (inflection and derivation).

In *Syntax*, the definition of syntax, content words and functional words, syntactical construction, and its types and sub-types, syntactic devices, and syntactical analysis are presented and elaborated. In *Transformational-Generative Grammar*, the definition of TG Grammar and its principles, and types of transformation are discussed briefly.

In Semantics, the definition of semantics and its aspects are discussed. While in Pragmatics, the definition of pragmatics and the difference between pragmatics and semantics are elaborated. While in Sociolinguistics, the definition of sociolinguistics, Language in socio-cultural aspects, Language variation, Language use, etc. are explained. And, in Psycholinguistics, the definition of psycholinguistics, the relation of linguistics and psychological aspects, language acquisition and language learning, mastery of two or more languages are presented.

# Chapter I

## WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

Fatchul Mu'in

Before starting to discuss a language, sometimes we are necessary to define it. In this relation, we may make some questions such as: "What is a language?", or "What do you know about a language," or "What is meant by a language?" Someone's answer may be different from that of the other. For instance, he says: "Oh, it is what we use in communication" or the other says: "It is made up of sentences that convey meaning," or perhaps someone else says: "It is a means of communication." If those definitions are viewed from the study of language, they are insufficient ones. Let us examine the following definitions:

A language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols that permit all people in a given culture or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or to interact (Finocchiaro, in Ramelan 1984). A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication (Wardhaugh, in Ramelan, 1984). A language is an arbitrary system of articulated sounds made use of by a group of humans as a means of carrying on the affairs of their society (Francis, in Ramelan, 1984). A language is a set of rules enabling speakers to translate information from the outside world into sound (Gumperz, 1972).

Based on the definitions of a language above, we say that a language is a means of communication. But, if the definition of a language is used in the study of language, we must involve the other means of communication that are not categorized as a language. If we regard a language as consisting of sounds, the fact shows that the different means of communication may use sounds as its medium. In short, a means of interface known as a language must have some characteristics that do not belong to the other means of communication.

### Characteristics of Language

Based on the definitions of a language above, we can state some features of human language, as follows:

1. A language is a *system*.
2. A language is said to be *arbitrary*
3. A Language is *social*.
4. A language is *spoken*.
5. A *language* is productive or creative.
6. A *language* is complete for its native speakers.

### Language is systematic.

Since a language is said to be a system, it must be systematic in nature. The systematism of a language can be seen from the fact that, take an example, if we regard a language as being made up of sounds, we find out that only certain sounds occur in any one language that these occur in specific regular and predictable patterns. In English, for instance, when a name for a new shampoo was coined, *Prell* was possible but not *Srell*, because the cluster *sr* does not occur in the language.

As has been known, a sentence is a combination of some words. The sentence is not

ordered at random. In this relation, we cannot say, "Goes Ali school to every day." The English language has its own patterns of ordering some words to be a sentence. The patterns of ordering show that a language must be systematic.

As has been known, a sentence is a combination of some words. The sentence is not ordered at random. In this relation, we cannot say, "Goes Ali school to every day." The English language has its own patterns of ordering some words to be a sentence. The patterns of ordering show that a language must be systematic.

Language is a highly organized system in which each unit plays an important part which is related to other components (Boey, 1975: 1). All human languages have specific characteristics. This is to say, for instance, that a particular language, say *Bahasa Indonesia* or English, has its system. As a consequence, it has a dual structure, that is two levels of formation of systematic relationships. In other words, each language is a system consisting of two subsystems. One is the subsystem of meaningful units. The other is the subsystem of sounds, which have no meaning in themselves but which form the meaningful units.

The idea of systematicness of language as it is found in the arrangement of words implies the notion of predictability. In an English sentence a noun is usually preceded by a determiner, and so when someone hears a determiner, he can anticipate that a noun is following it; this noun, which may function as the subject of a sentence, will be followed by a verb as the central part of the predicate; this verb will take an *-s* or *-es* ending when the preceding noun functioning as subject is third-person singular actor and the sentence is in the simple present tense (Ramelan, 1984: 45).

### **A language is said to be *arbitrary***

A language is said to be *arbitrary*. This means that it is initially created based on social agreement. In this relation, there is no reasonable explanation, for instance, why a specific four-footed domestic animal is called a *dog* in English, *asu* in Javanese, or *anjing* in Indonesian. Giving a name of the animal is based on the agreement among the members of the social groups. On other words, Javanese, *English and Indonesian* people agreed to call the animal as *asu*, *dog*, and *anjing* respectively. In this relation, George Yule (1987: 118-19) states that the linguistic form has no natural relationship with that four-legged barking object. Recognizing this general fact about language leads us to conclude that a property of linguistic signs is their arbitrary relationship with the objects they are used to indicate.

### **A language is *social*.**

*Thirdly*. Language is *social*. We all know that a language is socially acquired, learned, and then used. If this statement is related to language acquisition and/or language learning, we may have an illustration that a new-born child acquires a communicative competence with a given language in a speech community; in the next step, he learns and uses the language in a speech community. Thus, a language is not genetically transmitted; but, it is socio-culturally acquired and/or learned.

In the social context, a language is not only means for communication, but also it is a vital medium for establishing and maintaining a social relationship. For instance, there are two persons sitting in a waiting room of a bus station; they begin to introduce and talk to each other. In short, they know each other. At the time of introducing, communicating, and understanding each other, they establish a social relationship, and they will probably maintain their social relations in future time. Setting and maintaining social relationship must involve

the use of language.

### **A language is *spoken*.**

A language is always spoken. This statement implies that all people the world over, regardless of their race or ethnic group, still speak a language. This means that they still have a way of communicating ideas by using sounds that are produced by their speech organs.

Human language can be said to be an oral-auditory communication system. Why? Oral-auditory communication has many advantages over other possible means of communication. A speaker and a listener do not need an instrument, as writers and readers do. This is to say that the writers and readers need writing implements and written texts, respectively. A speaker and a listener do not look at one another, like the deaf using hand-gestures language do. One can speak and listen while carrying out other activities, as long as they do not involve the mouth and the ear (Taylor, p. 6).

The kind of oral-auditory communication has some weaknesses. One weakness is that people cannot converse directly at distances greater than fifty feet. Another weakness is that speech signals are gone without a trace as soon as they are uttered. Nowadays, the spoken language can be recorded using a tape recorder.

Another means of communicating ideas is printed or written symbols, which is more prevailing and more often used in daily life. This means that they are exposed to the written language as found in newspapers, magazines, or letters so that they often confuse written language and the actual language, which is spoken. In this relation, it can be said that the spoken form of a language is primary, whereas the written form is secondary. This is to say that the written form of a language is only a representation of what is actually spoken.

### **A language is *productive or creative*.**

Another characteristic of human language is that it is productive or creative. This refers to the ability of native speakers to understand and produce any number of sentences (which they never heard before) in their native language.

The first aspect of the creative use of language is that a human being can say things that have never been said before. If we think back about our talk we have just had with our friend, we may be sure that our conversation consisted of sentences that neither we nor our conversant have heard or produced before.

### **A language is *complete for its native speakers***

A language is a part of human culture. Besides, it is used for establishing and maintaining a social relationship, and it is used for expressing human culture. A language is complete for its native speakers to express their own culture. If a language is regarded as a system of symbol, it can be used as constitutive, cognitive, expressive, and evaluative symbols. A *constitutive symbol* refers to a symbol of human belief to God or supernatural power; for instance, human beings pray to God by using a language. A *cognitive symbol* refers to a symbol created by human beings to recognize and introduce human knowledge about their environment; for instance, they create some terms that represent something existing in their surroundings. People in South Kalimantan understand some terms of water transportation means such as *jukung, klotok, ketinting*, etc. Javenese people understand some words such as *pari, gabah, beras, and nasi*; meanwhile, English people know them as *rice*.

An *expressive symbol* refers to a symbol used by the human being to express their

emotion. An evaluative symbol refers to a symbol used by the human being to state something good or bad, honest or dishonest, and the like.

### Functions of a language

Forms of sentences of a language generally serve a specific function. The sentences are created, among others, based on purposes. The purposes of creating sentences are (a) to inform something or someone to the audiences; the sentences created are called statements (declarative sentences), (b) to question about something or someone; the resultant forms are interrogative sentences, (c) to ask or command someone to do something; the consequent structures are imperative sentences, and (d) to show a surprise on someone or something; the resultant forms are exclamatory sentences.

Traditionally, there are three functions of a language. These three functions of a language are actually related from one to another. For the sake of discussion, they are discussed in separate ways. The prime function of a language has been assumed to be cognitive; a language is used to express ideas, concepts, and thought. The second function is said to be evaluative; a language has been viewed as a means of conveying attitudes and values. The third function of a language is referred to be affective; a language is used by its speakers to transmit emotions and feelings.

According to Mary Finocchiaro, there are six functions of a language are; they are as follows:

1. Personal. The personal function enables the user of a language to express his innermost thoughts; his emotions such as love, hatred, and sorrow; his needs, desires, or attitudes; and to clarify or classify ideas in his mind.
2. Interpersonal. The interpersonal function enables him to establish and maintain good social relations with individuals and groups; to express praise, sympathy, or joy at another's success; to inquire about health; to apologize; to invite.
3. *Directive function.* The directive function enables him to control the behavior of others through advice, warnings, requests, persuasion, suggestions, orders, or discussion.
4. *Referential function.* The referential function enables him to talk about objects or events in the immediate setting or environment or the culture; to discuss the present, the past, and the future.
5. *Metalinguistic function.* The metalinguistic function enables him to talk about language, for example, "What does mean?"
6. *Imaginative function.* The imaginative function enables him to use language creatively in rhyming, composing poetry, writing, or speaking (1989:1-2).

According to Roman Jakobson (in Bell, Roger T. 1976:83), functions of a language are related to aspects

ASPECT	FUNCTION
Addresser	Emotive, expressive, affective
Addressee	Conative
Context	Referential, cognitive, denotative
Message	Poetic
Contact	Phatic, interaction management
Code	Metalinguistic

Although the model is primarily connected with the nature of literary language, it provides a means of listing six primary language functions by indicating how the shift of focus from one aspect of the speech event to another determines the function of the language that is used in it. For example, (a) in relation to *emotive function*, the addresser aims at the direct expressions of his attitude to the topic or situation; (b) in relation to *conative function*, the speaker focuses on the person(s) addressed, for instance, when he calls the attention of another or requires them to carry out some action; (c) in relation to *context*, the participants of a speech act focus on the object, topic, content of the discourse; (d) in link to *message*, the speaker focuses on the message; (e) in relation to *contact*, a (particular) language is used for the initiation, continuation, and termination of linguistic encounters; and (f) in connection to *code*, a language is used to talk about the language itself.

### **Human Language and Animal 'Language'**

When human beings come together, and when they play, fight, make love, or do something else, at the same time, they talk; they use a language. They talk to their friends, their associates, their husbands or wives, their parents, and parents-in-law; and they also speak to total strangers. They may speak face to face and over the telephone (Fromkin and Roadman, p. 1).

A language is used as a means of communication. With language, human beings can express their ideas and wishes to other people such as when they need the others' help. With language, they can establish and maintain social relationships; also, with language, they can cooperate between one and another (Ramelan, 1984: 36). However, we may be still confused about whether a language is the only means of communication or whether all means of communication are known as languages.

Different people may differently perceive a language. Some regard everything used for communication as a language. This statement is based on the fact that when we discuss a topic about the definition of language, they give different statements. For example, they state that gestures and bodily movement are referred to as languages; and, that there is what is known as animal language. As a consequence, there have been, at least, two kinds of languages: a human speech and an animal language. The human language may be perceived as having some types such as oral, written and body languages. Concerning the animal language, someone may give a question: "Does an animal have and use a language or is a means of communication used by an animal regarded as a real language?". The following discussion may guide us to understand what is actually called a language.

Human beings are not only species that can communicate among themselves, as animals are often said to possess some communication system too. As has been known, animals communicate with one another using their own means of communication. For instance, dogs bark when they want to send their message to another. They will bark in a certain way when they want to show the others that there is something to eat; they will produce a different kind of barking when they are in danger. The difference in the barking sounds produced the dog can be 'understood' by the others, and so communication takes place among them.

Another example is a hen cackling to her chickens. She will cackle in a certain way when she wants to call her chickens to them food; she will produce a different kind of cackling

sounds if she wants to warn them of coming danger. Other animals such as cats, monkeys, and elephants are also said to have a means of communication, which is understood by the animals concerned (Ramelan, 1984: 38). To some extent, these sounds serve the same purposes as human language. How does human language differ from animal language? Is animal language called as a real language?

Whether animal language is a real language or not, the fact shows that both human language and animal 'language' has a similarity between the two means of communication. The similarity that can be identified is that the sounds produced by both human beings and animals are intended to convey a message. Both human being and animal produce sounds by using their mouth. However, there are great differences between the two in their varieties and their possible combination. That is to say that the human system of communication enables human beings to be able to produce various kinds of sounds, by using speech organs. The sounds produced by the speech organs are often called *speech sounds*. The types of sounds produced by human beings are rich in variation; they can produce such vowels and consonants. Speech sounds can also be combined in many ways to form many utterances. The combinations of vowels and consonants are referred to as *morphemes or words*.

They can convey unlimited messages and produce a new combination of linguistic units to meet the needs of new situations.

Ramelan (1984: 38) states that with language, human beings can communicate not only about things connected with their biological needs, or preventing themselves from dangers but almost about anything at all. They may not only inform about objects which are in their surroundings, but they can speak about things which are remote in space and time; they can talk about things which are many miles away from them, and also about events which took place in the past time, which take place at present, and which will take place many years ahead.

On the other hand, animals can only communicate about things surrounding them; their communication is only intended for the sake of biological needs or preventing themselves from dangers, and the sounds produced are minimal and the sounds are further developed. A dog, for instance, can only provide two or three kinds of barking sounds to suit the purpose throughout its whole life.

In addition to the sounds produced and the content of the message sent by both human being and animals, human language differs from animals' means of communication in how the two are transmitted to their young generation. Ability to speak for human beings is not genetically transmitted but culturally learned from their elders. For instance, someone may inherit brown eyes and dark hair from his/her parents, but he/she does not inherit their language. He/she acquires a language in a culture with other speakers and not from parental genes. An infant born from Chinese parents (who live in China and speak Cantonese), which is brought up from birth by English speakers in the United States, may have physical characteristics inherited from its natural parents, but he/she will speak English (George Yule (1987: 20). This process whereby language is passed on from one generation to the next, is described as cultural transmission. It has been believed that human beings are born with an innate predisposition to acquire language.

All human languages are acquired, and humans have to be exposed to a particular language over some length of time before they can acquire that language, by contrast, animal communication is mostly instinctive (Taylor, p. 7). If the ability to speak for human beings is

culturally learned from their elders, the ability to communicate for a dog using its barking sound is genetically transmitted. Both human beings and animals use for their medium of communication sounds that are produced in their mouth, but the sounds produced by human beings are more varied than those provided by animals. The sounds produced by animals are always the same and remain unchanged. A young animal will create the same kind of sounds as their elders for their communication. The ability to produce sounds in animals for communication is, therefore, said to be genetically transmitted; their elders never teach them. A young dog, for instance, can bark without being guided by its elders.

## **Conclusion**

Based on some definitions of a language, we can say a language is not only regarded as a means of communication but it is a means of communication that has some characteristics. In this relation, a language must be systematic; it is socially created, acquired, and used; it is basically spoken; it is productive or creative, and it is complete for its speakers. Not all characteristics of a language do not belong to an animal's means of communication.



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