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Functions of Language

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2018 A.D

1439 A.H

Dedication

To our parents and our friends

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Acknowledgements

We thank God for His help. As we show our gratitude to our

supervisor **Asst.Prof . Iman Khudhair Al-Abodi** For her advice and support.

Thanks are also due to our friends for their encouragement.

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Abstract

Language is a primary means of socialization. It interacts with the social, political and economic power structures. It is the primary medium for the construction and transmission of knowledge and for the articulation of ideas. In short, language constitutes humans and their identities.

This research is divided into seven sections .Section one deals with general introduction about language, section two sheds light on uses of language while section three explains functions of language. Section four talks about functions of language according to Roman Jakobson ,while section five explains functions of language according to Geoffrey Leech .Section six classifies functions of language according to Michael Halliday .Finally, section seven focuses on functions of language according to Geoffrey Finch.

Conclusion is summed up in the last section. In this research we have tried to identify and categorize some of the principal functions of language by different

scholars. These functions are in turn related to a range of competences which are the natural inheritance of a native speaker of English.

1.1 What is Language ?

Language is the capacity to obtain and utilize complex frameworks of communication, especially the human capacity to do as such, and a language is a particular case of such a framework. Language began from feelings while others like have held that it started from sound and intelligent idea (Agha,2006:41).

Searle (2006:2) points out that all languages depend on the procedure of semiosis to relate signs to specific implications. Oral, written and body languages contain a phonological framework that administers how images are utilized to shape arrangements known as words or morphemes, and a syntactic framework that represents how words and morphemes are joined to shape expressions and articulations.

Human language has the properties of profitability and dislodging, and

depends altogether on social tradition and learning. Its mind boggling structure manages a substantially more extensive scope of articulations than any known arrangement of creature communication. Language is thought to have begun when early primates began bit by bit changing their primate communication frameworks, gaining the capacity to shape a hypothesis of different personalities and a mutual purposefulness. This advancement is sometimes thought to have concurred with an expansion in cerebrum volume, and numerous etymologists see the structures of language as having developed to serve particular informative and social capacities (Ibid.:134).

1.2 Uses of Language

Language uses as a part of a wide range of routes and for some, extraordinary purposes like compose, talk, and sign. Individuals work with language, play with language, and acquire individuals living with language. They court and tempt, purchase and offer, affront and acclaim, all by means of language (Justice et al (2006):176).

Individuals use language to express their sentiments, feeling and, enthusiasm. For instance, they may recollect when they were glad, they gather their emotions and encounters in a book called journal. At the time of using language as an instrument to communicate, they require not consider or mind who the audience or perusers. They use language just for private purposes. As a way to communicate articulation, it tells everything that is covered up in people hearts and psyche (Ibid:20.).

The role of language in communication is essential in this procedure of connections. Language shapes reality, and it cutoff points or which thoughts and ideas are accessible in a specific circumstance. In all parts of individuals life, engage with, resist, reframe with, the meanings available through language,, to offer significance to each part of life. Thoughts and understandings accessible through language shape their training in an assortment of routes in ordinary collaborations (Ibid:18).

Language is the methods by which people learn, interface and bond. Both verbal and non-verbal types of language impart inconspicuous subtleties that influence the significance of words and expressions. Communication can be sorted into three basic roles for language: enlightening, expressive and order (Hayakawa et al ,1990:67).

As indicated by Halliday (1973:42), a practical way to deal with language implies, as a matter of the first importance, exploring how language is used; endeavor to discover what the reason that language serves for individuals , and how they can accomplish these reason through talking and tuning in, perusing and composing. It means that the language function refers to the purpose itself. So the language functions lead the hearers to achieve the purpose of someone's speech.

Customarily, anyone knows independent yet quite covering capacities have been proposed for language, the qualification laying on the sorts of data being passed on by each. The prime capacity of language has been thought to be subjective: the declaration of thoughts, ideas, and thoughts. This compares well

with the 'judicious' perspective of the motivation behind language as vehicle for the outflow of thought (Bell ,1976:83).

Language likewise has numerous and social uses, for example, implying bunch characters, social stratification, and in addition social prepping and excitement. Languages advance and differentiate after some time, and the historical backdrop of their advancement can be recreated by contrasting present day languages with figure out which attributes their genealogical languages more likely than not had all together for the later formative stages to happen (Ibid.).

1.3 Functions of Language

Language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions. At the time people talk about language functions, they are talking about the reason for using language. At its most basic, the function of language is communication or usually called by speech function; people use language to give and receive messages between themselves. It is difficult to see adequately the functions of language, because it is so deeply rooted in the whole of human behavior that it may be suspected that there is little in the functional side of our conscious behavior in which language does not play its part (Newmeyer,2000:89).

1.4 Jakobson's Functions of Language

Roman Jakobson(1960:57) defined six functions of language (or communication functions), according to which an effective act of verbal communication can be described. Each of these functions has an associated factor.

1.4.1 Phatic Function

The phatic function deals with the connection between speakers. Its primary purpose is to attract/establish, prolong, check, confirm, or discontinue this connection, and may be composed of either culturally or non-culturally bound set phrases like *well, I won't keep you* 'wow' and *really*. In addition to strengthening the relationship between speakers, the use of the phatic function also increases the listener's perception of the speaker's proficiency) Narcis,2017:59-60.(

The phatic function means expressing solidarity and empathy with others. It helps to establish contact and refers to the channel of communication. It opens the channel or checking that it is working, for social reason. This function is used for sociability. Therefore sometimes vernacular words used in this function. It is characterized mainly of speech, however, in a certain types of writing it can also be noticed as in letters for example, where the beginning Dear Sir/Madam and ending Yours Faithfully also serve that purpose (Zegarac, and Clark,1999:567).

Coupland (2000:207) states that despite the growing number of publications on phatic communication, this type of social interaction calls for much further research on a number of issues, including the three which are briefly outlined here. First, analyses of phatic communication are often couched in terms of the distinction between cognitive (propositional) and social information.

1.4.2 The Poetic Function

The poetic function is defined by Jakobson as "the attitude towards the

message itself, centering on the message itself. “ The poetic function can not be reduced only to poetry or to the poetic function of the message, and consists in that it emphasizes the concrete side sign of the language, deepening the fundamental opposition between what is intelligible and what is perceptible, between the linguistic sign as a means of intelligible knowledge and the objects of the reference reality (Narcis,2017:60.(

The Poetic Function, also known as the aesthetic Function, deals with language whose primary focus is the beauty of the language itself. The richness of sound and texture ‘and the balance that makes it a work of auditory art or poetic utterance‘. The other functions need not be absent in poetic texts. They merely play a subordinate role, just as in other linguistic genres, the poetic function is not absent, but only appears in a subordinate role (in political slogans, advertising, commemorative speeches, etc) ’(Holenstein, 1974.(\ 6 ε :

1.4.3 The Metalingual Function

Metalingual function is used whenever the addresser and the addressee need to check whether they use same code and when the language is used to speak about language. For example: “What do you mean by “krill”?” , “ What is plucked?”. In the process of language learning, the acquisition of mother tongue includes wide use of metalingual actions; for example aphasia may be described as a loss of capability form metalingual actions (Tribus,2017:16(.

The clearest expression of the metalinguistic function is the metalinguistics itself, the very language of grammar. But the metalingual function is currently present in ordinary conversation as a means of control on the use of the same linguistic code by the interlocutors (Narcis,2017:59.)

1.4.4 The Emotive Function

It is also known as “expressive or affective function”. The emotive function focuses on the ‘addresser’. This function comes out when we want to express our emotions although one doesn’t speak to give an information. For example: the interjections, which are words or phrases used to express sudden surprise, pleasure or annoyance such as : “Bah!” , “Oh!” , “Yuck!”“Ouch” ,”Aie”. They are not components but equivalent of sentences (Tribus,2017:10).

1.4.5 The Conative Function:

The conative function is an orientation toward ‘addressee’. This function finds its purest grammatical expression in vocative and imperative sentences, and it helps us to make people do something and it includes orders. For example: “Drink!” or “Go Away”(Ibid:12).

It is updated by those elements of the message that directly send to the recipient, meaning that the speaker intended to influence, to some extent, the listener, engaging him in a certain way in receiving the message. The most

common grammatical expression of this function is performed by direct forms of addressing the listener with verbal forms in the imperative. The conative function often finds its expression through spontaneous interventions of the receiver at certain times during the message transmission making use of formulas such as “*you know*”, “*no offense*,” etc (Narcis, 2017: 59).

1.4.6 The Referential function

The referential function: corresponds to the factor of Context and describes a situation, object or mental state. The descriptive statements of the referential function can consist of both definite descriptions and deictic words, e.g. "The autumn leaves have all fallen now." Similarly, the referential function is associated with an element whose true value is under questioning especially when the truth value is identical in both the real and assumptive universe. (Tritsmans, 1987: 19).

The referential function of any singular term is to provide a positive answer to the question: ‘which individual is being spoken of?’, that is, to achieve determinacy of reference. What enables a singular term to carry out this function is the ‘determinant’ of the term. Demonstration is not the determinant of deictic terms because they can fulfil their referential function by appeal to utterance-relative uniqueness, or by leading candidacy given the surrounding discourse or perceptual environment. (Jakobson, 1960: 355).

1.5 Leech’s Functions of Language

Leech states that there are six functions of language that can be illustrated further before

1.5.1 The Informative Function

The informative function of language involves information of giving and receiving. The general assumption is that the content is believable and valuable. For example, language is used to offer opinions, give advice, make announcements, lecture, admonish, or news report, solicit input or ask questions. Everyday conversations center around information sharing."Informational function which every one tends to assume is most important" Leech(1974:53). In fact, this function concentrates on the message. It is used to give new information. It depends on truth and value. Let us look at this example, the car is big, the bus is crowded (Crystal,2005:227).

According to Leech (1966:59 (the informational function can be considered most important, since it helps us deliver messages, describe things, and give our listener new information. Actually, message is a word that describes this function best. The informational function is also related to such terms as a truth and a value. There are words that are used to express attitudes and feelings, which don't deliver any particular information. Obvious examples of such words are swear words, as well as various exclamations. This function of language is used not to deliver a message, but to express feelings and impressions.

1.5.2 The Expressive Function

Language expresses and evokes ideas, thoughts and feelings. Expressive language may or may not include any real information because the purpose of

expressive use of language is to convey emotion. For example, the expression “Yuck” connotes disgust, but the word itself isn't necessarily used to inform. Expressive language in literature, music and the performing arts has the power to inspire and entertain (Crystal,2005:228).

The speaker or writer tries to express his feelings. He or she reflexes his or her impression. This function could give a clear image for the personality of the speaker or writer. The best example of this kind is Poetry and literature . In fact, this function evoke certain feelings and express feelings. Examples of this kind are, *I am very happy or I spent a wonderful vacation*. One can see from the previous examples that they reflex the feelings of the speaker or the writer (Hargie,2011:166).

The power of language to express our identities varies depending on the origin of the label (self-chosen or other imposed) and the context. People are usually comfortable with the language they use to describe their own identities but may have issues with the labels others place on them. In terms of context, many people express their “Irish” identity on St. Patrick’s Day, but they may not think much about it over the rest of the year. There are many examples of people who have taken a label that was imposed on them, one that usually has negative connotations, and intentionally used it in ways that counter previous meanings(Ibid.).

1.5 .3 The Aesthetic Function

The use of language for the sake of the linguistic artifact itself, and for no purpose. This aesthetic function can have at least as much to do with conceptual as

with affective meaning. The function is associated with the message-the vehicle-as the poetic or aesthetic function: the sign is taken as an end in itself. All art understood as art is taken to embody this function, and any object valued for its beauty rather than for its ideological value or usefulness-whether a gorgeous car, an elegant teapot, or some acreage of untouched real estate-takes on this function (Ibid.).

According to Leech (1974:69) this function doesn't have any particular purpose. Here words and sentences are considered as linguistic artifacts. This function serves neither as a request nor as a message.

1.5.4 Directive Function

language is used a directive whereby we aim to influence the behavior or attitudes of others. The most straightforward instances of the directive function are commands and requests. This function of social control places emphasis on the receiver's end, rather than the originator's end of the message: but it resembles the expressive function in giving less importance, on the whole, to conceptual meaning than to other types of meaning, particularly affective and connotative meaning" (Leech ,1974:216).

Language is used to establish and maintain social order. Directive use of language establishes norms of expected behavior in certain situations. Traffic signs, laws, rules and policies are among the common forms of directive language that promote health and safety in society. "Eat your vegetables" is an example of directive use of language used in informal communication (Ibid.).

According to Perrine (2005:70) the directive function of language is used to induce certain actions or reactions. The example of such a function is a command. Another example of this function is a request. Here affective and situational meanings of a phrase are more important than a general meaning, which makes this function somewhat similar to the expressive function. The directive function is a function of social control and interpersonal interaction. Another feature of this function is that the reaction of a listener is even more important than a thought expressed by a speaker, since this reaction determines whether such a phrase achieved the target or not.

1.5 .5 The Phatic Function

Phatic Function is the function of keeping communication lines open, and keeping social relationship in good repair. This language function correlates with the channel of communication. It is used for opening, keeping or stopping communication line, to examine whether the communication can take place, or to get the attention of listener and to make sure whether the listener still follows the line of communication. In fact, the purpose of this poetic function is to keep social relationship in good repair, or of maintaining cohesion within social groups, in which the information is only for courteous, not the real one. The example of this function mostly can be found in greeting (opening the conversation), introducing, farewell and routine polite questions (Cohen ,2005:279).

1.6 Halliday's Functions of Language

For Halliday (2002:141) language is always a resource for making meaning, and even the infant who cannot talk is developing language, and thereby, learning

how to mean. Just as the infant can't walk, but is learning how to use his body, he cannot talk either at least not in the language of his mother tongue. Nonetheless, the child uses protolanguage (alternately referred to as proto conversation and protosemiosis) in order to express meaning, even before he has words in his communicative repertoire. His protolanguage, or child tongue, is created through interactions with native speakers of the mother tongue (i.e., caregivers, siblings, etc.). The child is learning through such occasions, and even though his protolanguage consists of basic content/expression pairs (not yet words, let alone higher order systems), his language nonetheless expresses meaning and performs concrete functions in the world.

Halliday (1975:43) identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years. Children are motivated to acquire language because it serves certain purposes or functions for them. They are :

1.6 .1 Instrumental: This is when the child uses language to express their needs (e.g. 'Want juice')

1.6 .2 Regulatory: This is where language is used to tell others what to do (e.g. 'Go away')

1.6 .3 Interactional: Here language is used to make contact with others and form relationships (e.g. 'Love you, mummy')

1.6 .4 Personal: This is the use of language to express feelings, opinions, and individual identity (e.g. 'Me good girl')

The next three functions are heuristic, imaginative, and representational, they helping the child to come to terms with his or her environment.

1.6 .5 Heuristic: This is when language is used to gain knowledge about the environment (e.g. 'What the tractor doing?')

1.6 .6 Imaginative: Here language is used to tell stories and jokes, and to create an imaginary environment.

1.6 .7 Representational: The use of language to convey facts and information.

According to Halliday, as the child moves into the mother tongue, these functions give way to the three metafunctions of a fully tri-stratal language (one in which there is an additional level of content inserted between the two parts of the Saussurean sign (Halliday ,2002:153).

Halliday's work represents a competing viewpoint to the formalist approach of Noam Chomsky. Halliday's concern is with what he claims to be "naturally occurring language in actual contexts of use" in a large typological range of languages whereas Chomsky is concerned only with the formal properties of languages such as English, which he thinks as indicative of the nature of what he calls Universal Grammar (Ibid.).

1.7 Finch Functions of Language

Finch(1997) mentions seven functions of language, they are

1. 1.7 Physiological Function

This may seem a rather trivial function but in fact a good deal of language use has a physiological purpose. If you are a sports fan watching your favorite sport on television you may well feel the overwhelming urge at certain exciting moments in the match to shout instructions to the players: *Go on, do not mess about, for God's sake shoot!* The instructions are perfectly useless; they serve no

communicative purpose, but they allow people to release pent-up energy which otherwise would be quite intolerable. A great deal of what they say when angry, in the heat of the moment, is said simply to relate the physical and nervous energy generated by emotional distress. It's often a mistake to take what is said in such moments literally (Finch,1997:23).

The distress, of course, is real enough but the language people use is really the equivalent of flailing about. Indeed, language is frequently not enough to relate our feelings fully and we may need to find other ways of finding relief - bursting into tears, for example. A great deal of so-called 'bad language' or swearing fulfils this function. For most people the usual outlet is a volley of oaths, the more violent the better. Clearly, words like, bloody, bugger, shit, and so on, are not being used for any conceptual content they may have. People are essentially meaningless. They are being used because they are socially taboo and because at such moments need a vocabulary of violence to match that of their feelings. The origin of many of these words is the curse and in a way they are possibly specifically cursing the object which has hurt them (Ibid:26) .

۲. ۱.۷ Phatic Function

It is surprising how often people use language for no other reason than simply to signal their general disposition to be sociable. The technical term for this is phatic communion. The word 'phatic' comes from Greek and means 'utterance'; it's the same root from which people get 'emphatic'. So Literally this is speech for its own sake (Johnson, 1958: 163).

३. १. १ Recording Function

This is a more obviously 'serious' use of language than the previous two, although not necessarily more significant even so. People are constantly using language to record things they wish to remember. It might be a short-term record, as in a shopping list or a list of things to do, or a long-term record, as in a diary or history of some kind. It's the most official use of language; bureaucracies thrive on exact records and modern commercial life would be impossible without up-to-date and accurate files. Indeed, it's probably the most significant function behind the development of language from being simply an oral medium to becoming a written one (Harris, 1988:9).

४. १. १ Identifying Function

Language not only allows people to record, but also to identify, with consideration precision, an intense array of objects and events, without which it would be very difficult to make sense of the world around us. Learning the names of things allows people to refer quickly and accurately to them; it gives us power over them. In some cultures the special name of god is sacred and not allowed to be spoken except by sacrifices because that name is strongly powerful and could be used for evil purposes. This is the origin of many taboo words. The Bible warns against using God's name 'in vain', or indiscriminately, and a special value is attached throughout the New Testament to the name of Jesus (Joyce, 1960:16).

५. १. १ Reasoning Function

All of individuals have a running commentary going on in our heads during their waking hours. For most of the time they are not aware of it; like breathing,

it's automatic. Schizophrenics are acutely conscious of it and imagine it to be coming from someone else. But the voices they hear are really parts of themselves which they are unable to acknowledge. Running for the bus or train they are constantly talking to ourselves in a form of continuous monologue. Sometimes it takes the form of a dialogue with some imagined 'other', but more often than not it is simply a form of silent thinking. As an exercise you might try thinking about something, making a conscious effort not to use words. Making your mind blank is one of the most difficult things to do because the brain is in a state of constant activity; its principal concern is with enabling us to survive, and language is an essential part of that survival process (Finegan,1994:88).

1.1.6 Communicating Function

This is probably the function that most people would select first as the principle purpose of language. And clearly it is an extremely important function. But as one has just seen, the relationship between language and meaning can be problematic. Communication is a two-way process. On the one hand people need to be able to use language to express ourselves to others, and, conversely, we need it in order to understand what they are communicating to them . There are of course a variety of reasons which may prompt the act of communication .People use language for requesting, informing, ordering, promising, and reprimanding, to mention just a few. In all these cases they could say that language is being used to perform certain speech acts, or, more specifically, 'direct' speech acts (Ibid:89).

4. 1.4 Pleasure Function

There are various kinds of pleasure which people derive from language. At the simplest level there is the sheer enjoyment of sound itself and the melody of certain combinations of sounds. Most poetry exploits this function. Devices such as onomatopoeia, alliteration, and assonance all draw on the pleasure we find in euphony, as do rhythm and rhyme. This pleasure is important in language learning. There is considerable evidence to suggest that children respond as much to the melody of the language as to any cognitive content. Indeed, spoken English is rhythmically organized around the syllable. The syllable is the smallest rhythmic unit in the language. (Kenworthy, 1991:72).

Derek Attridge in his book *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (1982) compares it to the step in dancing. If one says the following line, emphasizing the rhythm of it, you will find yourself separating the words into syllables:

Ma-ry, Ma-ry, quite con-tra-ry

Conclusion

Language is a basic instrument of human articulation and communication . Language is a fundamental apparatus that enables individuals to interface and charge, to caution and welcome, and to stay digest thought in solid words in our quest for higher learning. It is additionally an imaginative medium through which they express their mankind and word capacity can be thought of as an equivalent word for the word utilize.

People use language for an almost infinite number of purposes, from writing letters, or notes to the milkman, to gossiping with our friends, making speaks and talking to ourselves in the mirror. However, if one thinks about it, there are a number of recurring functions which, despite the many different uses individuals make of language, are generally being served.

Language is one amongst various frameworks of implying that, taken all together, constitutes human culture. Language is comprehended in its relationship to social structure. In this research we discuss the functions of language according different scholars ; Jakobson's, Leech's, Halliday's and Finch. According to Jakobson's functions of language are: phatic, poetic, metalingual, emotive, conative and referential functions.

Leech classifies functions of language in to informative, expressive, aesthetic, directive and the phatic. While Halliday mentions seven functions of language which are instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative and representational functions. Finch's classification includes physiological, phatic, recording, identifying, reasoning, communicating and pleasure functions.

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Exploration of Roman Jakobson's Theory in TESOL* Submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in TESOL degree at
SIT Graduate Institute Brattleboro.

