

Family, Theory, Rhetoric, Study, Anthropology, Children, Speech, Linguistics

Linguistic anthropology is the interdisciplinary study of languages and the impact it has on the social life. Linguist's anthropologists have always tried to study and document the languages of indigenous cultures. In pursuit of this goal, linguistic anthropologists have entered into the study of daily encounters, political events and rites, literacy events and the media. Most of the work in linguistic anthropology states that language structures imitate experiential-conceptual structures that in turn echo social structures. Through the treatise of 1725 wrote by Giambattista Vico a philosopher, who stated that individuals understand the world through the imaginative use of language. This is because it manifests itself through metaphors.

Language is a tool for gaining and preserving knowledge and as a weapon that can fuel conflicts and misunderstandings (Danesi, 2012). However, there is no worse or better language as they all serve humans in similar ways throughout the universe. 6,000 languages are spoken in the world today and this number does not include local forms of languages. More than half of the languages spoken today are deemed extinct in the next 100 years. The main areas of loss however will be the indigenous languages of America. Languages have basic factors in common; they all have resources to make words and of using language in new and different ways. Sounds are the building blocks of a language and most languages use vocal sounds of between 20 and 60 words. Languages also have grammatical structures, which are the specific principle for making words. These words are then put together to form large units of meanings known as sentences. They also do have a finite set of distinctive sounds used to make words and to convey various types of meanings. Language also has units that bear meanings of one kind or another known as words.

The strategies for using a language such as encoding information and communication are the result of customs established in a speech community. Language adapts to new situations and echo's new experiences. When an individual comes up through a new word, he or she acknowledges with that word that a part of world has changed. Language and speech may seem as the same thing but they have different meanings; language is a sign system while speech is the use of that system to transmit verbal messages. Learning a language requires only regular contact with the speakers. (Danesi, 2012) This is in relation to children who acquire it spontaneously. They listen to people speak and imitate each word as best as they can. Vocal speech is made possible by the lowering of the larynx, a phenomenon that is only unique to humans.

Greek philosopher Plato became intrigued with the easiness in which humans acquire language. Wondering how is that children whose contacts in the world is small get to know so much about language. Plato's conclusions were that much of what we know is from an earlier existence and merely awakened in each individual. The linguist who has been the most influential in the modern debate is Noah Chomsky who put forward the notion of a universal grammar explaining the

blueprint on which all grammars are built. This explains why it is natural for children to learn how to talk. When a child learns one fact about a language then he or she can learn other facts quickly. Linguist Stephen Pinker suggests that children are born with the language of thought. This means that they become grammarians and thus able to constantly infer the right syntactic rules for the various speech samples they are exposed to.

There are several demerits with the universal Grammar theory in that it accounts for the formation of sentence-formation ignoring a fundamental developmental force in early infancy. An example is that if a child has the ability to fill conceptual gaps with words and phrases in an unexpected, creative way. This will show a child perceiving words as properties. The language acquisition period is thought to end around the age of puberty as put forward by Eric Lenneberg. Eric came to this conclusion after studying a number of individuals suffering from language impairment's. The impairment is known as aphasia and is caused because of damage caused to specific areas in the brain. He states that those individuals suffering from that condition had a high probability of developing language abilities despite their impairment's. However, if the condition was incurred after puberty it tended to cause permanent impairment's. He concluded that the ability to acquire knowledge after puberty diminished completely.

The science of language is not only possible but also desirable. Greek philosopher Aristotle took step in identifying parts of sentence. His divisions of a sentence are in use up to date. The two parts of a sentence are known as subject and the predicate. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, scholars studied not only how language changed but also how they were put together. German Georg Von der Gabelentz and Poles Jan Baudoin made observations on word structures in languages. Swiss philolophist Ferdinand de Saussure put the final touches on the new science of languages blueprint by making a distinction between historical studies of sounds. He called them diachronic while the systematic study of languages at a specific point in time called them synchronic.

Linguists have always been fascinated by language. Questions as to the origin of language are most intriguing. The bubbling sounds made by babies in probable imitation of each other shows that we do not carry words from the past with us but rather individuals come equipped with the ability of language but not its memory. There are five theoretical frameworks trying to show the origin of language. Bow-Wow theory states that speech came from attempts to imitate sounds made by animals. Pooh-Pooh theory would state that it came from development of sounds and grunts made by the ancestors in relation to pain. Ding-dong shows that speech came from imitation using vocals of objects and phenomenon. La-La theory sows that speech developed as result of sounds made by the ancestors during love making sessions. The final theory is the Yo-He-Ho theory showing that speech came about because of chants made by the people as they worked and played (In Chambers & In Schilling-Estes2013). The sounds were because of people imitating each other's sound emission in response to an activity that was being undertaken. All these theories are known as echoic because they were all based on an idea of imitation.

Gestures in communication might be even older than vocal language. Modality shift probably happened because vocal language has a broader range of uses. Examples of these are that it can work at night, can go around obstacles and can be used during manual work. (North, 1994). This has been turned into a theory that is known as the mouth gesture theory. The theory claims that position and movements of the lips and tongue copied manual gestures unconsciously.

Three paradigms have emerged over the history of language. They focus on documentation of languages; engage in theoretical studies of language use and studies questions related to subfields of anthropology. The three paradigms are anthropological linguistics; linguistic anthropology and recently formulated paradigms. Anthropological linguistics was devoted to themes unique to the sub-discipline, linguistic documentation of languages then seen as extinction doomed. These were languages of native North America. The themes included grammatical description, typological and the unresolved issue of linguistic relativity. Linguistic anthropology launched by Dell Hymes fixed the name linguistic anthropology. He coined the term ethnography of speaking in describing an agenda he envisioned for the field. He introduced a new unit of analysis where much attention was devoted to speech events where performers' were held responsible for the form of linguistic performance. (Hodgen,1971). He also pioneered linguistic anthropological approach to ethno poetics. He had hoped to link linguistic anthropology more closely with mother discipline.

Anthropologists have systematically addressed themselves to problems brought about by the larger discipline of anthropology by not pursuing agendas that are alien to anthropology. They instead use linguistic data and methods. This paradigm has areas of study that include investigation of social entities and broadly shared ideologies and the construction and use of narrative in interactions. The trend contrasts with the emerging trend in continental linguistic anthropology. Jurgen Trabant helped transform the way linguistic anthropology is taken in Germany through his reading of the work of a great philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt. Humboldt argued that the spirit of linguistic communities was inextricable from the way humans contribute to the development of their language system with their speech and writing. Humboldt has yet to find many areas among linguistic anthropologists in England despite many quoting him as a source of inspiration. (Hernández, & Conde,2012).

There are several rich areas for the study of current linguistic anthropologists. They include identity, socialization, ideologies and social space. In identity, the linguistic anthropology investigates questions of sociocultural identity linguistically. A research was done by Don Kulick on how the use of two languages with and around children in Gapun village. He did this by using the traditional language known as Taiap not spoken anywhere else but that village. He also used the widely circulating language known as Tok Pisin an official language of New Guinea. To speak the Taiap language is associated with one identity. The language is considered local and backward. (Hodgen,1971). To speak Tok Pisin is to index a modern catholic identity. This is an identity linked with the will and skill to cooperate.

Socialization is the process by which children, infants and foreigners become part of a community by learning to participate in its cultures. Members of all societies socialize children through use of language. In southern California, stories that were naturally occurring were told across dinner told across dinner. (Hernández, & Conde, 2012). Both the mother and the fathers participated in replicating male dominance by the use of distribution participant roles such as protagonists. When the children united with their mothers to have their stories told, they would set themselves up to be the subject to this process.

Ideologies are known as the shared bodies of common sense about the nature of language in the world. These ideologies are not just false consciousness but they actually influence evolution of linguistic structures. Linguistic ideologies determine the attitudes that languages like Spanish and English have.

Conclusion

Language is an important aspect in the survival of all human beings. Without language, there would be no communication. Whether language used is vocal or gestures it is still an important aspect in the life of an individual. Language could be the determinant between life and death as through language we will ask for help- and be able to help

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