**Assignment**

Subject: Cognitive Psychology Theory

Topic: Language

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Language

A **language** is a structured system of communication. Language, in a broader sense, is the method of communication that involves the use of – particularly human – languages.

The scientific study of language is called Linguistics. Questions concerning the Philosophy of Language such as whether words can represent experience, have been debated at least since Gorgias and Plato in Ancient Greece. Thinkers such as Rousseau have argued that language originated from emotions while others like Kant have held that it originated from rational and logical thought. 20th-century philosophers such as Wittgenstein argued that philosophy is really the study of language. Major figures in linguistics include Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky.

Language In Cognitive Psychology

Communication is the specific ability of humans to exchange their thoughts and ideas with the help of certain spoken signals and written signs which contain the definite meaning and can be successfully recognized by the participants of the communication process. Meaningful signals, signs, and symbols are combined in a complex known as language. Thus, language can be defined as the complex method which is used by humans in order to communicate with each other.

It is important to note that language should be structured and based on the words which are stored in the people’s minds as lexicon. From this point, if language is a system and structure to use words while speaking and writing appropriately, lexicon is the complex of those words preserving in the human mind. Adult people can preserve 50,000 words of their first language and thousands of words of the second language in the form of lexicons (Willingham, 2007).

Being preserved in the people’s memory, words from the lexicon are also classified into categories in order to help people choose the most adequate variant while speaking or writing. Thus, language processes are closely connected with the people’s cognition and memory that is why language plays an important role in cognitive psychology providing a man with the knowledge of the world and fixing this knowledge in words.

Language can be discussed as associated with the mental abilities of a man, and it is characterized by the certain features which are closely connected with the language functions and qualities. The key features of language are structure, regularity, flexibility, dynamism, arbitrariness, and productivity.

Language is a system which is highly structured. All the words which form the certain language should be organized in an effective structure to guarantee the successful functioning of language. Furthermore, this structure should function according to the regular patterns. The principle of regularity is important to explain the specifics of syntax and semantics because words are recognized according to the set meanings, and they are combined into phrases and sentences according to the regular syntax rules.

Nevertheless, language is flexible because there is the variety of patterns and structures according to which words can be used while speaking or writing. In spite of the fact language can be discussed as stable in a way, it is flexible and dynamic. Languages are dynamic because they are constantly developing.

Moreover, arbitrariness is the next important feature of language. To function effectively, flexibility and dynamism of language should be supported with its arbitrariness. Thus, arbitrariness is also associated with the people’s abilities to choose words immediately while speaking or writing to reflect their thoughts and ideas appropriately. Furthermore, arbitrariness guarantees the development of language in a variety of variants.

From this perspective, arbitrariness is necessary to promote productivity of language (Willingham, 2007). In spite of the fact the human cognition operates the set number of known words, the progress of language does not prevent its productivity when new words, structures, and meanings appear with references to the other words.

Having focused on language features, it is also necessary to determine four levels of language structure as the main feature and on the aspects of the language processing according to these levels. The process of perceiving the spoken language usually starts with recognizing different sounds. These sounds are represented in the specific form of phonemes (Willingham, 2007). Thus, phonemes are distinguished according to the qualities of different sounds.

People are able to recognize more than 40 phonemes of the English language and distinguish the phonemes of the foreign languages according to their specific qualities. Concentrating on the cognition processes, it is necessary to note that the language processing is realized at several levels in relation to this stage (Parkin, 2000). Thus, a person receives some auditory signals which are different in their frequency and intensity, begins to identify phones, and then the language processing achieves the level of phonemes.

The next level is the level of words when a person can understand the meaning of a certain word. Words form the basic structure of language because it is preserved in human minds in the form of separate words consisting definite phonemes. To represent a thought, a feeling or an idea, a person should combine words into logical chains which are known as sentences, and it is the next level of language.

At this level, language needs specific regulation with the help of syntax which preserves the basic structures to organize thoughts and ideas in complete and logical sentences to exchange them successfully. Several sentences are combined into texts (Willingham, 2007). Texts are perceived by people as complete stories telling or writing on a concrete theme and containing the definite idea.

Words, sentences, and texts can be used effectively when the person who listens to or reads them can comprehend the meaning effectively. Cognitive psychology discusses the ways according to which people can identify, interpret, and comprehend the elements of language. From this point, the language processing is complex, and it is closely connected with the man’s cognition.

Cognitive psychology studies the aspects of human cognition. Many processes of human cognition depend on language and its qualities. Thus, to realize the cognitive processes, people perceive, understand, learn, and remember a lot of information presented in the form of language. From this perspective, language is the stable structure which develops within the society, but it is perceived by persons individually.

The individual perception and understanding of language as well as abilities to formulate thoughts in the form of sentences to reflect the certain meaning should be discussed in the field of cognitive psychology (Parkin, 2000). However, in this case, the aspects of language cognition should be also examined with references to behavioral patterns used by individuals to represent their ideas and thoughts.

Thus, language is the complex phenomenon which is closely associated with the human cognition because a lot of cognitive processes are realized with the help of language. To communicate, people exchange information in the form of words which have the certain sound pattern and which are combined in sentences.

However, people understand the idea of the message only when they perceive and interpret the words and sentences appropriately. These processes are cognitive. Moreover, to perceive and recognize words, people should also have the definite knowledge of language and its words and structure. Thus, people should also remember words in the form of lexicon and know how to combine them in order to state the certain idea. As a result, language processing and human cognition with all its features and elements are closely connected.