

**Language and a Spectrum of Related Dimensions****Dil ve İlgili Bir Dizi Boyut****Berna ARSLANTOSUN¹***Article History:* Received: 02.01.2021 / Accepted: 29.01.2021*Makale Geçmişi:* Geliş: 02.01.2021 / Kabul: 29.01.2021**Doi:** <https://doi.org/10.47806/ijesacademic.852354>**Abstract**

Used for various purposes, language is a significant characteristic of human beings. In a similar vein, having it in the center of their life, people use the language for various objectives. But what is the language that people cannot stop using in every aspect of their life? In this study, language, its functions, and structure were investigated and clarified by means of qualitative document analysis. In other words, the document analysis technique was employed through inquiring the already existing sources, documents, and records in order to bring light to the mentioned issue. It was found out that no definition has been sufficient to fully describe language. Language is the voice of thoughts. It has many different features and functions, and it is totally a complex system.

Key Words: language, structure of language, functions of language, origin of language, context.

Özet

İnsanlar tarafından çeşitli amaçlarla kullanılan dil, insanoğlunun önemli bir özelliğidir. Benzer şekilde, insanlar dili hayatlarının merkezine alarak onu çeşitli amaçlar için kullanırlar. Peki, insanların hayatlarının her alanında kullanmayı bırakmadıkları dil ne anlama gelir? Bu çalışmada dil, dilin işlevleri ve yapısı incelenmiş ve nitel doküman analizi ile netleştirilmiştir. Benzer şekilde, söz konusu konuya ışık tutmak için hâlihazırda var olan ilgili kaynak, belge ve kayıtların sorgulanmasıyla doküman analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Dili tam olarak açıklamak için yeterli bir tanımın olmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Dil düşüncelerin sesidir. Dilin çok farklı özellik ve işlevleri vardır ve dil tamamen karmaşık bir sistemdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: dil, dilin yapısı, dilin işlevleri, dilin kökeni, bağlam.

1. Introduction

The word 'language' originated in two languages, Latin 'lingua means tongue', and French 'langue' (Nelson, 1949). It is a 'completely complicated phenomenon united with human audition and verbal transmission of feelings and thoughts (Wildgen, 2004). As language is a quite complicated phenomenon, no definition could explain it completely (Yule, 2020). In the speech, language can be defined as 'organized noise' which people use in factual social cases (Halliday, 1981). Therefore, people describe it as 'contextualized systematic sounds' (Crystal, 2007). Sapir (as cited in Kay & Kempton, 1984) defines the term language as a humanly congenital technique that is used to transmit thoughts, feelings, and desires through symbols that are consciously created. Khader (n. d.) claims that there is not any extensive definition that can define the word language completely correct and with all features. Language is a complicated process that is realized through the senses rather than by intuition or reasoning. Shortly, language is a sound system organized by people. Humans use it in factual communal cases to express themselves. Language is a system of symbols, which consists of traditional, inscribed, and verbal symbols, produced by people as associates of a social community, and members of that community correspond to each other (Crystal, 2007). Fromkin and Rodman (2011) state that language is a system of meanings and sounds that are connected. The first thing that should be given importance is the usage of language in daily life because it is an essential function of the language for every person (Coates, 1966). While communicating, people have such needs as varying such as personal, sentimental, economic, social, cultural, and political. People need language to supply these needs. A very young child, who has not yet begun to walk or talk, just shows the things he needs. When this child grows up, his needs become more complicated, therefore he uses language. A person attains a phase in which he/she begins expressing his/her needs from a phase in which he/she was crying or making gurgling sounds. Language doesn't come into existence in a gap. Other systems that people have in their minds shape language, and it works. People use it to express their opinions, so its function and structure must serve these opinions and transmit them. It is impossible to define the word language with a simple definition because no description can perfectly and with all features define it (Khader, n. d.). Considering the mentioned issue, this study examines language, its functions, and structure through qualitative document analysis research.

1.1. The Purpose of the Study

This study aims to provide correct data concerning language, its function, and structure by making detailed research and gathering information from various studies that were made previously, in other words, the document analysis technique was utilized. Considering the whole data pointed out before, the goal of this study is bringing language and its connected dimensions into the open.

2. Methodology

For many years, documents and formal reports have been among the most basic tools which are utilized in qualitative research studies. Currently, the number of scientific articles in which the document analysis technique is used has increased (Xu & Croft, 2017). It is so

remarkable that various documents can be used to complete the deficiency of satisfying data in several documents. Moreover, the quite clear fact is that neither proficient researchers nor others continuously sufficiently use the document analysis technique, in research fields (Bowen, 2009). According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), document analysis is a standardized process that is followed up to analyze or review reports or documents which can be online materials or paper-based. They also claim that document analysis like other analytical techniques used in qualitative research design requires analyzing and clarifying data to achieve commentary, comprehension, and functional information. This study, which is based upon a qualitative research design, profits by document analysis technique owing to the records, documents, or scientific articles that are examined and researched by researchers (Karasar, 2012). To put it another way, the document analysis technique was used by researchers for the purpose of giving a word regarding the issue (Peute, 2013).

3. Literature Review

3.1. Functions of Language

Language is a phenomenon, which is complicated, and it has so many missions (Stern, 1975). Different people working on language tried to comprehend the functions of language and make them clear (Hebert, 2019). 6 main functions of the language are:

3.1.1. The Referential Function

People firstly used the referential function of the language so as to transmit pieces of information to each other. This was among the main reasons why people explored the language. It includes the definition of objects, cases, and intellectual conditions (Sadoughvanini, 2012).

3.1.2. The Expressive Function

This function declares the person's, who speak or write, emotions, or manners. Moreover, it also arouses emotions in the person who reads or listens. This function doesn't always require two or more people. One person can use it even he/she is alone. For instance, as one person causes her/his phone to fall into a pail which is filled with water, he/she uses some kind of words especially words like swearing to herself/himself. People use sentimental words in an affirmative atmosphere, particularly when they see beautiful things "Whew, it is so beautiful, is not it!" (Foolen, 1997).

3.1.3. The directive function

With the directive function of the language, the person directly participates in the action. People generally make use of this function in order to bring about an act or prevent it. So, it is used in directions and appeals and makes the use of vocalizations and words of commands necessary. For instance, "Entrance, come here just one time!" or "Close the window, please!" (Luria, 1959).

3.1.4. The phatic function

The phatic function comprises the language for the purpose of achieving social coaction. People use this function in salutations “Hello, how are you?” and daily conversations about the weather, for example, “The weather is very hot these days” (Kulkarni, 2014).

3.1.5. The meta-lingual function

This function lets people speak about the characteristics of language. Therefore, speaking about phrasal verbs in English can be an example of the meta-lingual function. In the situation that people use a specific word in a particular meaning, make a wordplay in an intended manner or make a linguistic equivocality, this function of the language becomes appropriate in translation (clarifying the word) (Newmark, 1977).

3.1.6. The poetic function

People use the poetic function of the language in poems and also in catchphrases. It focuses on the messages for its own purposes. This one is an esthetic function of the language (Waugh, 1980). Oxford Reference specifies that in Jakobson’s pattern of linguistic communication, a key linguistic or communicative function that brings textual characteristics into the forefront. In this model, the poetic function of the language is concerned with the message or given attention to the message for its own benefit (see also message-oriented communication). In statements in which the poetic function of the language predominates like in literary texts, language shows a tendency to be more ‘opaque’ than traditional prose in stressing the indicator and medium (and their actuality) or the style, form, or code at least as far as any represented, content, message or allusive sense. Texts in that form emphasize the action and form of phrasing and harm any sensation of a ‘natural’ or clear relationship between a descriptor and a recipient. In this respect, in the place that poetic function is attached importance, the text is self-referential; form is content and the tool is the message.

3.2. Word Systems

Knowing a language includes knowledge of its words meanings and structures. Native speakers of English know so many word senses and also know the ways of putting these words together. Moreover, they know the way of creating a new word in English. For example, in the situation that a person gives an object to another person and names it as ‘krip’, even if that person has no idea about the sense of that word, he/she can want more than one by suffixing “-s” to the term ‘krip’ and produce ‘krips’, furthermore that person can use this word with other words in a sentence “ Have you got any krip today?” or “Where are my krips?”. The skill of making use of a language contains knowing the ways that people use to formalize words (Amberg & Vause, 2010).

3.3. Sentence Structures

People whose first language is English have knowledge of the ways of creating sentences. They understand when a sentence is not correct without thinking but just by

intuition. People structure sentences by piecing some words together. Chomsky (2002) also mentioned this situation as “Colorless green ideas sleeps furiously.” There is no problem with this sentence’s grammar and structure, but there are some problems with form and sense. There are some absolute rules in language both about structure and meaning, so sentences must match to these rules (Amberg & Vause, 2010).

3.4. Sound Systems

Knowing language purports that people who speak this language know the ways of producing sounds in their mother language and they comprehend meaningful sounds and meaningless sounds. For example, as people produce guttural sounds in the throat area in many languages, some languages’ speakers such as Arabic, French, and German, American English are aware of the fact that they are not a piece of American English sound corpus. Speakers do not know by intuition that the sounds include their own language. For instance, English words can’t start with sounds that are sequentially indicated by the two letters ts, therefore, people whose mother language is English wouldn’t hope ‘ts’ at the starting of English words. The first two letters of a word may be ‘ts’, but in different languages like Japanese. Because of that situation people who speak English encounter the difficulty of pronouncing a term like ‘tsunami’ which is originated in the Japanese language, as they don’t use these two letters at the beginning of the words that they always use (Amberg & Vause, 2010).

3.5. Context

Making use of a language in specific social contexts is based on being fluent. People’s skill to use language in this situation is named communicative competence. When they answer questions conveniently, make jokes, use kind forms, command, and so forth, they disclose their adequacy (Amberg & Vause, 2010). All endeavors of people to communicate are named as language. Whether written, verbal, or implied with actions and movements of hands or body, there are specific features of language which are important and related to human communication.

3.5.1. Language is arbitrary

Language is arbitrary because there isn’t any innate connection between the words that are used in a language and their senses or the opinions transmitted by them. There isn’t any reason why a grown female person is named as a Zen in Persian, aurat in Urdu, Feminine in French, and woman in English. The section of a word chosen to represent a specific thing or thought is simply arbitrary but when people choose a word for an especial referent, it comes to stay as such. It may be said that, if the language was not arbitrary, there wouldn’t be any different language, just one (Monaghan et al., 2014).

3.5.2. Language is social

A language is a group of signals which are conventional conversational. People use these signals to communicate in society. From this side, language belongs to a community, including a group of rules which are necessary and allows people who use it to be relevant to

each other, to work together, to act with others; it is a communal institute. Language comes into being in a community, it means providing nourishment and improving culture and constructing human relationships (Holtgraves, 2013).

3.5.3. Language is systematic

Though language is symbolic, people use a specific system to set these symbols. Every single language has its own system of arrangements. Every language is a system of systems. Whole languages have grammatical and phonetics systems, and in a system, there are some other systems. For instance, in the grammatical system, there are two other systems. They are morphological and syntactic systems and in these two subsystems of the grammatical system, there are several systems like those of aspect, of mood, of tense, of plural, etc. (McCumber, 1993).

3.5.4. Language is vocal

Language is firstly composed of verbal sounds. A physiological articulatory system in the human body creates these sounds. Initially, it came in view as verbal sounds. Then, writing appeared, as a brilliant venture to symbolize verbal sounds. Writing is just the graphic acting of the sounds of the language. Therefore, people who work on language state that speaking is prime (Locke, 1995).

3.5.5. Language is non-instinctive

There is not any language that people created in 24 hours out of a shared manner upon a group of symbols by a community of humans. Language is the production of convention and evolution. The convention is passed to the next generation. All establishments of human change or disappear, grow or extend. Whole languages are companies in all social groups. As people learn it, language is non-instinctive. Language is quite different from other things like heritage, it can't be handed down. They learn it as an inherent skill (Heredia, 2011).

3.5.6. Language is productive and creative

Language is both creative and productive. The constitutional elements of human language can be put together to produce new things, both the person who speaks and audiences haven't heard that word, the person who listens, comprehend both sides easily. The needs of society shape the language (Fathman, 1975).

3.5.7. Language is Psychological

Chomsky is the most important person who declared the language as a psychological subsistence. His discussion starts with specifying the same claims to the metaphysics that people get here. Chomsky mentions that from Descartes' time to today, in philosophy it has been a wide approach to consider the availability of the natural sciences as a constant point, and metaphysics formed itself again, according to the natural sciences (Chomsky, 1995 in Santana, 2016).

3.6. The Origin of the Language

The modern human is named as ‘homo sapiens’ by biologists, in Latin, it means ‘clever man’, however, the ownership of the tongue is so essential piece of the description of the modern human that homo logues which means ‘speaking man’ would be quite a suitable name (Rousseau & Herder, 2012). Because there is no other living in the world that has a language, this communication system must be found earlier than the differentiation between humans, and chimpanzees, which is the closest agnate of humans, but it is not human (Ulbaek, 1998). Scientists usually suppose the separation happen between 5 and 7 million years ago. As the oldest livings as a kind of human are named as hominids, the first living came into view nearly 1.9 million years ago as a kind of Homo. Just a few researchers rely on this statement: language was found roughly two million years ago (Gans, 1981; Barbieri, 2010; Bouchard, 2013).

There are so many theories about the birth of languages. There are five theories that are among the oldest and widely known theories. They are:

3.6.1. The Bow-Wow Theory

In this theory, it is claimed that primitive men copied sounds they heard around them. Thus, they laid the foundation of the language (Nordquist, 2020).

What makes this theory incorrect?

There are not so many onomatopoeic words in a language, and also these words are not quite the same in different languages. For example, people who live in Brazil know the sound of a dog as au au when it barks, in Albania they know it as ham ham, and in China, it is known as wang wang. Furthermore, there are several onomatopoeic words made recently, and only some of these words are copied from sounds in nature (Nordquist, 2020).

3.6.2. The Ding-Dong Theory

This theory, which was preferred above all others by Plato and Pythagoras, puts forward that act of using language emerged in regards to the features of objects around. It is also claimed that the original sounds which were made by people were professedly compatible with their environment (Nordquist, 2020).

What makes this theory incorrect?

Except for a few examples of sound symbolism, there isn't any satisfactory proof that supports the natural relation between sense and sound, in any language (Nordquist, 2020).

3.6.3. The La-La Theory

Otto Jespersen, who is a Danish linguist, claims that may the origin of the language has a connection with the sounds related to play, love, and (particularly) song (Nordquist, 2020).

What makes this theory incorrect?

As it is mentioned in “How Language Works” (Penguin, 2005) by David Crystal, the La-la theory is unsuccessful to give reasons for the space between the sentimental and rationalistic aspects of speech expression (Nordquist, 2020).

3.6.4. The Pooh-Pooh Theory

In this theory, it is put forward that speech arose with abrupt emphatic exclamations that express feelings- an unplanned scream of ache (“Ouch!”), surprise (“Oh!”) and other feelings (“Yabba dabba do!”) (Nordquist, 2020).

What makes this theory incorrect?

There aren’t so many interjections in any language, and Crystal mentions that there is not a powerful connection between consonants in phonology and intakes of breath, the clicks and other sounds that are utilized in that way (Nordquist, 2020).

3.6.5. The Yo-He-Ho Theory

In this theory, it is pointed out that language developed from snorts, groans, and grunts that are derived from heavy physical working (Nordquist, 2020).

What makes this theory incorrect?

Even if this theory makes some definitions about the rhythmic characteristics of the language, it can’t be said that it can explain the origin of the words very well.

As it is emphasized in “Word Play: What Happens When People Talk” (Vintage, 1993) by Peter Farb ‘all these theories have critical imperfections and no one can resist the close scrutiny of information in hand today that is about the evolvement of the human beings and about the construction of the language (Nordquist, 2020).

According to William James, the most expensive and defective tool found with the purpose of expressing ideas is language (Nordquist, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Language is an important part of human life. As mentioned earlier, people cannot spend almost an hour without using language. Even if they don't talk to anyone, they talk to themselves and use language that way. Language is as important and functional to them as a part of their body. Just as every part of our body is always with us and used by us, language is always with people and provides great convenience because it is versatile and functional. Language has a wide variety of uses. For example, language can be used when criticizing a person, expressing an opinion, talking about feelings, desires, wishes, or intentions, explaining something, talking about a solution to a problem, using it to complain about something, and so forth.

Language is the voice of thoughts. It is a complex system as it has many different features and functions. This system was developed gradually by our ancestors many years ago and has been used in all areas over time. It evolved and changed as it was used. Because

language is a living being, it is affected by many different factors over time within its rules, as a result, it changes, develops, and renews.

Language is a system with various symbols and it is versatile. It consists of systems and structures that have many different functions and properties. Some people compare language to a spider web. That is, each word is compared to a single thread. When people put these words together to form sentences, create paragraphs from these sentences, and even combine these paragraphs to produce long works, it is like a spider joining each thread correctly and making a huge web. These words are brought together within certain rules and structures to create meaningful sentences. As stated in the study, none of the definitions made so far have been sufficient to fully describe the language.

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