

The Nature of Language

Psycholinguistics (2nd Meeting)

Language is a means of communication which is carried out through speaking and listening.

Speaking: putting ideas into words to talk about perception, feelings, and intention

Listening: turning words into ideas and reconstructing the perception, feelings and intention of the speakers

Competence & Performance

Competence: the internalized system of rules that relates sound to meaning.

Performance: the actual application of the rules mastered by a speaker

There might be a gap between one's competence and performance. For example, an utterance of '*My mother go to the market every Sunday*' uttered by a five-semester student might illustrate such a gap, when the student understand that in a simple present tense, a third person subject should be followed with a verb+s form, instead of a stem verb.

On the other hand, a similar utterance uttered by a four year old might show a match between the competence and performance.

Structure, Function and Process

Structure: the Grammar of the Language, more particularly the expression.

Function : a description of how sentences/utterances communicate what they are meant to communicate (What specific functions do the utterances serve)

Process : A description of mental tools, materials, and procedures people use in producing or comprehending the utterances.

Complexity and creativity

Linguistic skills are very complicated, and even more complicated because of its creative nature. Speakers of a specific language can make use of limited sounds to create unlimited sentences.

The nature of being creative does not mean that language can be fully arbitrary. It should still be in the framework of any principles applicable in that language, i.e **phonological well-formedness**

Pimt **pinb** **blick**

meN+baca membaca meN+cium mencium
meN+aktifkan

The Structure of Language

Language is constructed of strings of linguistic sounds tied up to make up words, which then combined into phrases, clauses and finally a discourse consisting of contextual sentences.

Many linguists consider a sentence the basic unit of a language, a unit can best stand on its own and has the most coherent function in everyday language.

Pergi.

Pergi?

A sentence expresses a unit or units of meaning or proposition(s). A proposition consists of a *verbal unit* and one or more *nouns*.

1. George's friend, who lives in Valley Forge, likes winter because he likes snow and because he hates summer tourists.
2. a. George's friend lives in Valley Forge.
b. George's friend likes winter.
c. He likes snow.
d. He hates summer tourists.
3. The fresh young troops defeated Napoleon's army.
4. a. The troops were fresh.
b. The troops were young.
c. The army belonged to Napoleon.
d. *The troops defeated the army.*

Surface Structure and Underlying Representation

Every sentence has two levels of structure, i.e. *surface structure*, the linear arrangement of clauses, phrases, and words, and *underlying representation* or *deep structure*, the meaning, which consists of propositions interrelated in a particular way.

Surface structure is usually expressed in a hierarchical tree diagram as the following:

The above three ways of combination are so powerful that they can create almost unlimited utterances. This condition of being so powerful is because they have the nature of being ***recursive*** or being able to be applied again and again.