

“pooh-pooh” which is often used as an exclamation of contempt or disgust. The expression has come to acquire a definite meaning. The verb “to pooh-pooh” has become accepted in ordinary usage. It is used with the meaning of belittling somebody or something. The supporters of theory believe that all language originated in this way.

3. The Social Interaction Source Theory

Another proposal involving natural sounds was nicknamed the “yo-he-ho” theory. The idea is that the sounds of a person involved in physical effort could be the source of our language, especially when that physical effort involved several people and the interaction had to be coordinated. So, a group of early humans might develop a set of hums, grunts, groans and curses that were used when they were lifting and carrying large bits of trees or lifeless hairy mammoths. So, human sounds, however they were produced, must have had some principled use within the life and social interaction of early human groups. This is an important idea that may relate to the uses of humanly produced sounds.

4. The Gesture Theory

The proponents of this theory believe that every human gesture is followed by movements of tongue, the lips and the jaws. Most primitive means of communication among human being was by means of gesture made with hand. The sign language is still employed by us when we have to communicate with a deaf person or with a person whose language is not known to us. We beckon with hand when we want him or her to come to us. Similarly we nod the head in agreement and shake it from side to side when we want to express disagreement. The upholders of this theory argue that a gesture by hand is usually accompanied by a corresponding movement of the vocal organs.

5. Glossogenetics

Our ancestors became bipedal (standing and walking on their two legs) about 3.5 million years ago. When these humans could stand on their two legs, their larynx (a speech organ behind Adam’s apple in the human throat) changed in a way to allow humans to produce vowel and consonant sounds in human languages. Human language developed as a result of this evolutionary change.

Lecture № 03: Nonverbal and Verbal Communication

A. Communication

Communication is defined as the transfer of meaning from one mind to another. It is a sharing of meaning through the transmission of information via mutually understood signs. Because meanings exist in the human mind, they cannot be shared or communicated except through some external vehicle. The human



body, for example, is capable of making sounds and movements which in turn can create a system of vehicles for sharing inner meanings and ideas with others. In general terms, such elements that codify meaning are called signs and the discipline that is concerned with study of such signs is called *semiotics*.

B. Signs

Signs are units of expression which convey meaning. Signs also are called signals or cues. Semiotics identifies three types of signs: icons, symbols, and indices.

1. Icon



An icon is a sign which physically resembles what it represents. A map is an icon of the geographic locality it represents. A picture of rocks falling is an icon of a rock slide. Also, icons show different degrees of iconicity, or natural resemblance to what they signify. For instance, some pictures and photographs are very exact representations; other pictures may be more abstract such as the conventionalized shapes of a man and a woman on bathroom doors. A very small number of words are also iconic to varying degrees, examples being words such as "tick", "bomb", or "zip". Iconic words are known by the Greek term *onomatopoeia*. In every instance, to at least a recognizable degree, an icon actually looks or sounds like what it represents.

Icon	Representation
	Falling Rocks
	William Shakespeare
/tɪktɒk/	The sound made by a clock

2. Symbol

A symbol is a sign which bears no readily recognizable physical resemblance to what it signifies. Most words in any language are symbols. For instance, the word "apple" neither looks nor sounds like an apple. The relation between the word-symbol "apple" and the fruit it signifies is arbitrary, established by a convention handed down by word of mouth in a given speech community. For this reason, this fruit is

signified by completely different sounds in other languages. In Mandarin Chinese it would be "ping guo"; in Cherokee "sunta"; in Spanish "manzana".

Symbol	Representation
	Restaurant
	Algeria
Apple	an edible fruit

3. Index

Signs (icons and symbols) can also be classified according to how they are used. They may be used to point directly to what they signify, such as a country's flag (a symbol) or a rock slide sign (an icon). A sign which is used in direct temporal and spatial connection to what it signifies is said to be used as an **index**. The same sign used without such a direct connection, such as a stolen stop sign leaning against the wall of a garage, is a **non-index**. The whistling sound of wind is an index of real wind, but a storyteller's imitation is a non-index used to conjure up the image of wind in a setting where there is no real wind. The stylized icons of a man and a woman are used as an index of the presence of a man's or woman's bathroom, but a painting of Mona Lisa (also an icon) is a non-index, since you won't find the real Mona Lisa nearby. Words may be used either as an index or a non-index. For instance, the word apple may be uttered to indicate the presence of a real apple (word used as index) or simply to mention the concept apple in the complete absence of any real apple.

C. Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is the process of communicating through sending and receiving wordless messages. Such messages can be communicated through gesture, body posture, facial expression and eye contact. Object communication such as clothing, hairstyles, and movement are highly communicative. Human beings can communicate with each other. We are able to exchange knowledge, beliefs, opinions, wishes, threats, commands, thanks, promises, declarations, and feelings. We can laugh to express amusement, happiness, or disrespect, we can smile to express amusement, pleasure, approval, or bitter feelings, we can shriek to express anger, excitement, or fear, etc; we can clench our fists to express determination, anger or a threat, and we can raise our eyebrows to express surprise or disapproval.

Paralanguage refers to vocal sounds such as murmurs and gasps and vocal qualities such as volume, rhythm, pitch and intonation. These vocal cues act as signals for others to interpret what we say

as a joke, threat, statement, question etc. Voices can also be used to communicate feelings. For example, whispering indicates secrecy and intimacy while shouting conveys anger. *Silence* can communicate powerful messages. It can communicate different meanings. For instance, it can signal awkwardness or disconfirm others – we deliberately ignore others when we are angry with them.

D. Verbal Communication

Human beings communicate in lots of ways, but the most effective way of human communication is linguistic communication, i.e. the use of language. The basic signs used in linguistic communication are words. Words are predominantly symbolic signs, though a small subset of them (onomatopoeia) are partly iconic. The linguistic signs and the rules for their combinations used by a community constitute a linguistic code (a language).

1. Language

Since linguistics is the scientific study of language, it is imperative for linguists to know what language is. Language is a very complex human phenomenon; all attempts to define it have proved inadequate. The term language can be understood better in terms of its properties or characteristics. Some linguists, however, have been trying to define language in their own ways even though all these definitions have been far from satisfactory. Here are some of these definitions:

According to R. H. Robins: “*Language is a symbol system based on pure or arbitrary conventions... infinitely extendable and modifiable according to the changing needs and conditions of the speakers.*”

According to Edward Sapir: “*Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.*”

According to R. A. Hall: “*Language is the institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols.*”

According to Noam Chomsky: “*A language is a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.*”

According to Wardaugh: “*A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for*

human communication.”

According to Bloch and Trager: “*A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates.*”

According to Derbyshire: “*Language is undoubtedly a kind of means of communication among human beings. It consists primarily of vocal sounds. It is articulatory, systematic, symbolic and arbitrary.*”

2. Speech and Writing

Speech and writing are the two basic manifestations of language. As a means of communication, both the spoken and the written mediums of language are equally important. In human speech, we make use of vocal organs for the articulation of definite sounds. These sounds, when arranged according to set patterns, form the words of a given language.


The written forms of language always come later than the spoken form. Written form of language implies the use of certain symbols for the speech sounds, while the spoken form of a word is a symbol of the thing referred to by that word. The written form is the symbol of the spoken form. Therefore, the written form may be conceived of as a symbol of a symbol.

Language is primarily something that is spoken, not written. The introduction of a system of recording thought and speech by writing was a very important step. Without it, we should be very largely ignorant of the ways of life and the modes of thought of our ancestors.

3. Systems of Writing

The system of writing may be categorized into:

a) Pictographic or ideographic

In pictographic writing each sign corresponds to a *thing, an object* or an *idea*. Pictures represented messages. For example, the picture of the Sun, and that of the Moon represented these objects respectively. In ancient Egyptian writing, the ideogram for water was  .

b) Logographic

In logographic writing, each sign corresponds to a *word*. Modern logograms in English are forms such as \$, 8, &, where each symbol represents one word.

c) Syllabic

In this system of writing, each sign corresponds to a syllable. In the Cherokee examples below, we can see that the written symbol in each case does not correspond to a single consonant (C) or a single vowel (V), but to a syllable (CV):

Ტ ("ge") Უ ("ho") Ფ ("sa")
 Ქ ("gu") Ღ ("hu") Ყ ("si")

d) Alphabetic

Each sign corresponds to a sound unit that makes a difference in meaning.

English	Hebrew	Arabic
tiger	טיגר	فهد

3. Functions of language

a) **Phatic function:** Language is used to establish an atmosphere or maintain social contact between the speaker and the hearer. Greetings, farewells, and comments on the weather serve this function. For example, the expressions such as “How do you do?” and “Ah, here you are”, do not convey any meaning, but are used to establish a common sentiment between the speaker and the hearer.

b) **Directive function:** Language is used to get the hearer to do something. Most imperative sentences are of this function. For example, the sentence “Close your book and listen to me carefully!” performs a directive function.

c) **Informative function:** Language is used to tell something, to give information, or to reason things out. Declarative sentences serve this function. For instance, the symbol “Road Closed” on a road has such an informative function.

d) **Interrogative function:** Language is used to ask for information from others. All questions expecting replies serve this function. “What’s your idea?”, “What time is it now?”, “What is it like?”, “How old are you?”, and the like are quite commonly used to perform the interrogative function. However, rhetorical questions do not have the interrogative function, such as Shelly’s famous line “If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?”

f) **Expressive function:** Language is used to reveal the speaker’s attitudes and feelings. Ejaculations serve this function, such as “My God!” and “Good heavens!”

g) *Evocative function:* Language is used to create certain feelings in the hearers. Jokes, advertising, and propaganda serve this function.

h) *Performative function:* Language is used to do things or to perform acts. The judge's imprisonment sentences, the president's declaration of war or the Queen's naming of a ship, etc., serve this function. At a meeting, for instance, as soon as the chairman says "I declare the meeting open", the meeting has started.