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КОММУНИКАТИВНАЯ ЛИНГВИСТИКА

Учебно-методический комплекс
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РЕЦЕНЗЕНТЫ

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Представлены содержание курса, его цели и задачи, а также требования к студентам, нормы и критерии оценки.

Приведены темы изучаемого курса, их объем в часах лекционных и практических занятий. Предложен материал, разъясняющий основные положения курса, включены задания для самостоятельной работы студентов, в том числе научно-исследовательского характера, а также краткие тесты для самоконтроля.

Предназначен для преподавателей и студентов лингвистических специальностей.

FOREWORD

Communicative Linguistics has been written for senior university students of Philological departments as an introductory course into the theory of speech communication. Always with the students in mind the author has tried to show major topics in the theory which seem to be of special interest for future teachers, translators, philologists and all those who deal with language in use.

The introductory chapters are concerned with the most basic concepts of communicative linguistics. As the English saying puts it, before you run, you must learn to walk. The first three units of the course cover those topics and terms that are necessary for understanding almost anything else that concerns communication and language in use. Thus units 1 and 2 present the concept of model and show how language and other codes work together to produce meaningful communicative events.

Further, in unit 3, the course focusses on the basic unit of communicative linguistics which is speech act.

Understanding the theory of speech acts gives basis for going deep into the origin of language in a communicative subject. Comprehension of the ontogeny issues together with the knowledge of the basic concepts uncovered in units 1 – 3 really allows students to 'walk' in communicative linguistics. Now the issue of the ontogeny is generally considered within the scope of acquisitional linguistics. But since the curriculum of philological departments doesn't normally include the subject we thought it wise to have the issue of the ontogeny in our list of major themes in communicative linguistics for future teachers and philologists. It radically widens the horizons of the readers and helps them to understand much better the role of language as an activity and form of human behaviour. Besides it is of tremendous practical value for future teachers and parents, as well as for philologists and translators.

The author also hopes that the theory of technological determinism and the theory of implicature with its four basic maxims of conversation will encourage students to reconsider their understanding of how language works to achieve effectively various goals of communicators, both speakers' and listeners'. They will also encourage them to think of the impact modern media have on linguistical aspect of human messages, and hence on language.

Final chapters are focussed on prime forms of communication, oral and written.

The course gives the students an ample opportunity to get acquainted with fragments of important books and articles which present widely debated and often contradictory ideas of the issues covered in the book. The students also

have a chance to try out the theories presented in the course in a series of case studies or discussion questions or else in specially devised tests. The latter are only seemingly easy and simple.

The author has made a special effort to produce a course that students could enjoy and appreciate for its practical emphasis. The material incorporated in the book has been tested with students of the English department at Polotsk State University for five years. That's why the improved version presented in the course is truly the result of a team effort. The author would especially like to thank a group of students of the English department who had the course in 2006/2007 academic year and who actively cooperated with the author to make the publication of the book possible. The most active and devoted 'friends of communicative linguistics' are on the photo at the back cover of the book. They are K. Maksimovich, V. Botkina, M. Brykoon, T. Prashkovich, A. Pushnyakova, L. Anufrienko.

The author would also like to thank the reviewers of the book for their helpful critiques. They are lecturers of Minsk Linguistic University: doctor of philological sciences, professor D.G. Bogushevich and candidate of philological sciences, assistant professor A.M. Fyodorov.

The author is quite well aware of the fact that the units of the book only scratch the surface of the major field of study which is communicative linguistics nowadays. Yet, they are essential to set the stage for what is to come. A general understanding of the themes covered in the course is sure to provide the reader with a solid foundation from which further linguistic education within master courses or post graduate courses can start.

In constructing our units we drew heavily from I. Tokareva (Minsk, 1997, units 1, 2, 4), M.A.K. Halliday (OUP, 1992, units 3, 7) and supported our presentation of linguistical theries with data given in a number of other well-known books.

THE COURSE CONTENT

Theme 1. Communicative Linguistics as a science. Objectives of Communicative Linguistics. Language as an object of modelling.

Theme 2. Modelling of Speech behaviour. Branches or directions in Communicative Linguistics.

Theme 3. The origin of language in a speaking subject.

Theme 4. Speech Acts. Philosophical Background and limitations of the theory.

Theme 5. The medium. What part does it have to play? Medium and discourse (text) characteristics.

Theme 6. Universal conversational principles. Rules of cooperation.

Theme 7. Written Communication. The complexity of written language.

Theme 8. Spoken language.

Tentative Content of the Seminars for the course

Theme 1. Language as the centre of many scientific inquiries. Model as the basic notion to explain any scientific approach to phenomena. Models of language and their types. Language as the organizer of human activity. General view of language from the perspective of communicative linguistics.

Theme 2. Communicative approach to modelling. Communication and its constituent parts. Motives, intentions, addresser, addressee, media, codes, settings, noise.

Theme 3. The issue of the origin. What is protolanguage? M.A.K. Halliday's hypothesis. The developmental analogy. Chomsky's view. Evolutionary interpretations.

Theme 4. The originators of the speech acts theory. Illocutionary acts. Perlocutions, Locutions, Performatives. Interpretation of the theory.

Theme 5. The Medium is the message. Media as extensions of some Human faculties. Electronic media and the theory of global village. Media and discourse characteristics.

Theme 6. Cooperative Principles of Grice. The conversational conventions or maxims, which support the principle: quantity, quality, relation, manner. Maxim of politeness.

Theme 7. The role played by written language. Its complexity. Lexical density theory. Frequency parameter. The clause. Nouns and nominality.

Theme 8. Speech and transcription. Prosodic features of spoken language. Specific structure of spontaneous speech. Lexical sparsity. Complexity of speaking.

CREDITS FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

№/№	Activity	Credits
1	Essay.	35
2	Publication of an article on any issue of the course.	40
3	Summary on any item from the bibliography list.	12
4	Review of any article from the main or additional lists for further reading.	7
5	Review of any book from the main or additional lists.	2
6	Thematic talk on the above books or articles.	10
7	Research into any issue of Communicative Linguistics.	30
8	Attending conferences on the subject.	4
9	Attending classes in Communicative Linguistics.	2
10	Reviewing other students' presentations.	2
11	Notes of preparation for the seminars.	2
12	Final testing.	2
13	Course Paper on any issue of the subject.	100
14	Diploma Paper.	100
15	Translation of any chapter or article on the issues of Communicative Linguistics.	35
16	Developing a list of further or additional reading on any block from the course.	4
17	Presentations at the conferences on the subject.	40

Based on «Справочник студента психологии» / Бел. гос. пед. ун-т им. М. Танка. – Минск, 2002. – С. 10 – 12.

UNIT 1: LANGUAGE AS AN OBJECT OF MODELLING

I. Outline

1. The significance of language for the study of human nature and communicatuion.
2. Model as the basic notion of any scientific enquiry.
3. Functionalism as an approach to language study.

II. Objectives

After reading the below stuff you should be able to:

– explain why language has always been of particular significance for the study of human nature;
– define what model is;
– specify what models of language are available nowadays;
– comprehend the interdependence between language structure and its function.

III. Key words: *miniature, activity, cognitive, archtype, inference, generative, representation, functional, communicative, static, analysis, entity, dynamic, synthesis, structural, endowment, generalisation.*

IV. Models of language

Consider the below fragment of communication:

A₁: Why didn't you talk to me the first time I approached you?
B₁: I didn't know what to say.
A₂: You have trouble talking to people?
B₂: I got out of practice.

<div align="right">(Bernard Slade, Tribute)</div>

Does the speaker in B₂ mean to say that he doesn't know the language or that he is out of the habit of using it?
Is using language a special field then?

Linguistics nowadays can shed a lot of light on how we use language when communicating. Linguistics has always been in the center of many scientific inquiries dealing with human beings. It is concerned with shedding light on the essence of human nature, the work of the brain, the laws of human society, the process of cognition; on the acquisition of knowledge, its accumulation and transition; on the mystery of ethnic diversity of the humanity, cultural heritage and political conflicts, and a lot of other things proper to human beings.

There are several reasons why language has been and will be of particular significance for the study of human nature. "One is that language appears to be a true species property, unique to the human species in its essentials and a common part of our shared biological endowment, with little variation among humans... Furthermore,

language enters in a crucial way into thought, action, and social relations. Finally, language is relatively accessible to study" (N. Chomsky, 1986, p. 2).

Language penetrates into different spheres of human activity as well as the "activity" of language itself, and linguistics is related to other sciences and human activities where it shows itself to be a very practical study.

To begin with, let us draw a line between our knowledge of language as our common endowment, on the one hand, and the scientific modelling of language as an object of study. To make this distinction clear, I will borrow a comparison with facts from our everyday life.

Every user knows how to handle a TV-set. We know that TV-sets may be different in qualities, capabilities and prices. But not all people understand how a TV-set works, nor do they understand the structure of a TV-set. That is, few can build or repair one. These few are acquainted with the principles of modelling and not just the principles of using. Likewise, every human being knows some language and uses it without doubts about its nature and functions, but only few know its general principles, laws and structure. These few are linguists, and they understand how to build and interpret linguistic models. This example accentuates the significance of the scientific approach to different phenomena, including language, and later we will see how true this is.

The basic notion that explains any scientific approach to phenomena is "model" (from Latin *modulus* – small measure). **Model** is a copy, image, structural design, miniature representation of an object, a pattern of something to be made, a system of postulates, data and inferences as a description of an entity or state of affairs, archtype. The process of modelling, then, consists in planning, construction of a model or an archtype, imitation. It follows, therefore, that acquisition of any scientific knowledge differs essentially from that of common-sense knowledge. These two perspectives may be called empirical and theoretical ones respectively. Scholars in their inquiries aim to discover the inner (deep) structure and nature of their object, to comprehend, model and interpret the hidden and the unobservable. The process of scientific cognition unlike common-sense observation includes analysis, synthesis, generalisations and inferences leading to conceptual foundations of science.This distinction explains the difference between a person who speaks a language and a linguist concerned with the representations of language laws, i.e., models of language.

Models of language are of different types depending on the particular goal of their creators. There are static and dynamic models, structural and cognitive models, generative, functional and communicative models, each providing a picture of this or that facet of language. Thus, the arrangement and configuration of language units, their system and hierarchy are presented in structural models; functions of these units are described by functional models; the way language works when placed in a certain external environment, like society, ethnicity, context, etc., is central to various communicative or anthropological models.

Many of them draw on each other to make our understanding of linguistic mechanism more penetrating.

Let us remember the model most currently referred to in the process of language teaching. This model is structural and functional at the same time, and it originates from the folowing considerations and inferences.

When approaching language, a scholar faces a number of questions. The first, classical one is: What is language? There are many definitions of language, and searching for a "true" one would be a wild goose chase because a definition always depends on the point of view of the scholar. Therefore, let us rather ask ourselves: What is language used for? Probably, most people with some education will answer that language is necessary for communication. This answer relates to the well known definition of language as a means of communication. People are used to communicating, and normally they do not realize what a difference it would make if we were deprived of this possibility.

Language organizes human activity, it f u n c t i o n s in order to format our behavior. And with this functioning, language itself should be formatted or structured so that it can fulfill its role within human community. It should operate on certain units, like phonemes, words, morphemes, sentences. These units in their turn should be arranged in systems, coherent and appropriate to cope with their functions.

Consequently, we may conclude that language structure (model) depends on its function. If we destroy this structure, language will cease to function and serve us. Actually, it happens when someone speaks a language he/she does not know well enough, and when communication is impossible.

But when we speak about the structure of language, we mean an ideal, generalized model, devised by scholars for the convenience of language study. Every component of this model is endowed with a certain function, subordinated to the "global" function of language – to organize social and interpersonal activity. Compare this notion of language structure with that of any complex appliance like a computer, or a TV-set. Each detail in them is functional, and, we cannot remove or damage these basic units of our appliance without affecting the function of the entire machine. The same is true about language structure and its component parts: due to their properties, numbers, relations and inner laws they ensure the process of communication .

This approach to language structure, considering language and its units from the point of view of their configuration and functions, is known as f u n c t i o n a l i s m . It is amply represented in linguistics by British, American and native scholars, followers of F. de Saussure, the famous Swiss linguist, the founder of structuralism and related models of language in modern science.

Students of foreign languages encounter the notion of structural-functional models of language in the course of theoretical linguistics, including phonetics, grammar and lexicology. These disciplines systemically discuss the properties and

laws of respective units in language mechanism as an ideal generalized functional model devised on the basis of close study of different languages.

Certainly, this model is not the only one in linguistics, though it has been the most reputed and developed during the 20th century. At this point we need to remind outselves that communication occurs whenever one person assigns significance or meaning to the behaviour of another person. But equally at this point we might ask, "So what? Will knowing what has been said enable me to understand or establish better and more satisfying relationships with my friends, my parents, my teachers, my employer, my spouse, my children? Will it help B from the above fragment to get into the habit of talking?" The answer is YES!

If you understand the importance of modelling you will comprehend the role and constitutive parts of the so-called communicative model much better. And the latter will help you to see the forces that can impede or forster any kind of effective communication.

V. Further Reading

From: Chomsky N. Language and the Problems of Knowledge. New Yourk: Praeger, 1986. – P. 2 – 8.

Leading figures in the study of language and thought understood philosophical grammar (or general grammar, or universal grammar) to be a deductive science concerned with the "immutable and general principles of spoken or written language", principles that form a part of common human nature and that are "the same as those that direct human reason in its intellectual operations."

A person who speaks a language has developed a certain system of knowledge, represented somehow in the mind and, ultimately, in the brain in some physical configuration. In pursuing an inquiry into these topics, then, we face a series of questions, among them:

1. What is the system of knowledge? What is in the mind/brain of the speaker of English or Spanish?
2. How does this system of knowledge arise in the mind/brain?
3. How is this knowledge put to use in speech?
4. What are the physical mechanisms that serve as the material basis for this system of knowledge and for the use of this knowledge?

When we speak of the mind, we are speaking at some level of abstraction of yet unknown physical mechanisms of the brain, much as those who spoke of the valence of oxygen or the benzene ring were speaking at some level of abstraction about physical mechanisms, then unknown. Just as the discoveries of the chemist set the stage for further inquiry into underlying mechanisms, so today the discoveries of the linguist set the stage for further inquiry into brain mechanisms ...

We may ask whether the linguist's constructions are correct or whether they should be modified or replaced. But there are few meaningful questions

about the "reality" of these constructions... just as there are few meaningful questions about the physical reality of the chemist's constructions, though it is always possible to question their accuracy. At every stage of inquiry we try to construct theories that enable us to gain insight into the nature of the world, focusing our attention on those phenomena of the world that provide enlightening evidence for these theoretical endeavors. In the study of language we proceed abstractly, and we also hope to be able to gain understanding of how the entities constructed at this abstract level and their properties and the principles that govern them can be accounted for in terms of properties of the brain…These may well remain the appropriate concepts for explanation and prediction now fortified by an understanding of their relation to more fundamental physical entities – or further inquiry may show that they should be replaced by other abstract conceptions, better suited to the task of explanation and prediction.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1) How did the leading figures in the study of language and thought understand universal grammar?

2) What issues are of importance for those who pursue an inquiry into the nature of knowledge and language?

3) Why do we proceed abstractly in the study of language?

<div align="center">*******</div>

From: Widdowson H.G. Linguistics. Oxford University Press, 2000.– P. 18 – 20.

The experience of language, as cognition and communication, is, as we have seen, inordinately complex. The purpose of linguistics is to provide some explanation of this complexity by abstracting from it what seems to be of essential significance. Abstraction involves the idealization of actual data, as part of the process of constructing **models** of linguistic description. These models are necessarily at a remove from familiar reality and may indeed bear little resemblance to it. There is, again, nothing peculiar about linguistics in this regard. Other disciplines devise models of a similar sort. The way in which the discipline of physics models the physical world in terms of waves and particles bears no relationship to the way we experience it. This does not invalidate the model. On the contrary, its very validity lies precisely in the fact that it reveals what is *not* apparent.

The purpose of linguistics, then, is to provide models of language which reveal features which are not immediately apparent. That being so, they are necessarily an abstraction, at a remove from familiar experience. A model is an idealized version of reality: those features which are considered incidental are stripped away in order to give prominence to those features which are considered essential. In this respect, models can be likened to maps.

A map does not show things as they really are. No matter what its scale, a vast amount of detail is inevitably left out because there is no room for it. And

even when there is room, details will be excluded to avoid clutter which might distract attention from what is considered essential.

And so it is with models of the complex landscape of language. They will identify certain features as being of particular significance and give them prominence by avoiding the distraction of detail. Other features will be disregarded. And, naturally, different models will work to different scales and give preference to different features. Like maps, all models are simplified and selective. They are idealized versions of reality, designed to reveal certain things by concealing others. There can be no all-purpose model, any more than there can be an all-purpose map. Their validity is always relative, never absolute. They are designed to explain experience, and so they should not be expected to correspond with it. None of them can capture the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If they did that, they would cease to be models, of course, just as a map which corresponded exactly to the terrain would cease to be a map. In both cartography and linguistics the problem is to know what scale to use, what dimensions to identify, and where, in the interests of explanation, to draw the line between idealized abstractions and actual particulars.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1) How does the author view abstraction?
2) What is the greatest validity of the model?
3) What is the purpose of the linguistical model?
4) Can there be an all-purpose model?
5) Can models be really likened to maps? Why?

<div align="center">***</div>

From: Halliday M.A.K. Language Structure And Language Function // New Horizons in Linguistics; ed. John Lyons. – Penguin, 1970. – P. 142 – 143.

> Chomsky's reason for studying language is psychological: it is because the form it takes derives from universal principles of the human mind. Halliday's reason, as outlined in the following text, is sociological: in his view, the form language takes as a system of signs (or semiotic) depends on the social functions it has evolved to serve. This is what he means by language as social semiotic.

The particular form taken by the grammatical system of language is closely related to the social and personal needs that language is required to serve. But in order to bring this out it is necessary to look at both the system of language and its functions at the same time; otherwise we will lack any theoretical basis for generalizations about how language is used.

It is fairly obvious that language is used to serve a variety of different needs, but until we examine its grammar there is no clear reason for classifying its uses in any particular way. However, when we examine the meaning potential of language itself, we find that the vast numbers of options embodied in it combine into a very few relatively independent

'networks'; and these networks of options correspond to certain basic functions of language. This enables us to give an account of the different functions of language that is relevant to the general understanding of linguistic structure rather than to any particular psychological or sociological investigation.

1. Language serves for the expression of 'content': that is, of the speaker's experience of the real world, including the inner world of his own consciousness. We may call this the *ideational* function ... In serving this function, language also gives structure to experience, and helps to determine our way of looking at things, so that it requires some intellectual effort to see them in any other way than that which our language suggests to us.

2. Language serves to establish and maintain social relations: for the expression of social roles, which include the communication roles created by language itself – for example the roles of questioner or respondent, which we take on by asking or answering a question; and also for getting things done, by means of the interaction between one person and another. Through this function, which we may refer to as *interpersonal*, social groups are delimited, and the individual is identified and reinforced, since by enabling him to interact with others' language also serves in the expression and development of his own personality.

3. Finally, language has to provide for making links with itself and with features of the situation in which it is used. We may call this the *textual* function, since this is what enables the speaker or writer to construct 'texts', or connected passages of discourse that is situationally relevant; and enables the listener or reader to distinguish a text from a random set of sentences.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1) What is the relationship between the networks of options in the grammar and the basic functions of language?

2) The ideational function of language 'gives structure to experience'. What do you think Halliday means by saying that this 'helps to determine our way of looking at things'?

3) How do you think it is possible for social roles to be 'created by language itself'?

4) How do you see the textual function as relating to the other two?

VI. Test Yourself

A. *See if you can dwell on the following:*

1) What makes language central to many scientific inquiries?

2) What is the difference between a speaker's and a linguist's view upon language?

3) What is the role of linguistic modelling in the process of cognition?

4) How are models constructed? How do their types depend on the specific goals of language inquiry?

5) Recall the configuration of the structural model of language and define those functional properties of its units which ensure the process of communication.

B. *The same or different?*

1) model – structural design
2) functional model – anthropological model

C. *False or True?*

1) Models are necessarily an abstraction and simplification

VII. References

1. Tokareva I. Directions in Communicative Linguistics (Basic Text), 1997.– P. 8 – 13.

2. Widdowson H.G. Linguistics. Oxford University Press, 2000.– P. 11 – 15.

3. Землянова Л.М. Зарубежная коммуникативистика в преддверии информационного общества: Толковый словарь терминов и концепций. – М.: Изд-во Московского гос. ун-та, 1999.

VIII. Recommended Reading for Further Study

1. Brown E.K. Linguistics Today. Fontana, 1994, Chapter 2. The Nature of Models.

2. Chomsky N. Language and the Problems of Knowledge. New York: Praeger, 1986.

3. Hymes D.H. On communicative Competence//J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.): Sociolinguistics. Penguin, 1972. – P. 278 – 281.

UNIT 2: COMMUNICATIVE LINGUISTICS. MODELLING OF SPEECH BEHAVIOUR

I. Outline

1. Two crucial characteristics of communication.
2. The communicative/anthropocentric approach to language modelling.
3. Microlinguistics and macrolinguistics.
4. Models of communication.
5. Language as an activity and a form of social behaviour as the starting assumption of exploration in communicative linguistics.

II. Objectives

After reading the below stuff you should be able to comprehend:

– the essence of the communicative approach and why it is called anthropocentric;

– the difference which exists in microlinguistical and macrolinguistical analyses of language;

– dwell on the model of the communication process;

– interpret definitions of language developed by those who work in the field of communicative linguistics.

III. Key words: *signal, addresser, motive, addressee, intention, mode and content of communication, communicative setting, channel, communicative episode, interference, speech act, dynamic, irreversible, accumulative.*

IV. Patterning Communicative Behaviour of Language Users

All types of communication, interpersonal communication, small-group communication and public communication share at least two general characteristics.

Communication is dynamic. When we call communication a *dynamic* process, we mean that all its elements constantly interact with and affect each other. Since all people are interconnected, whatever happens to one person determines in part what happens to others.

Like the human interactants who compose them, interpersonal, small-group and public communication relationships constantly evolve from and affect one another. Nothing about communication is static. Everything is accumulative. We communicate as long as we live, and thus every interaction that we engage in is a part of connected happenings. In other words, all our present communication experiences may be thought of as points of arrival from past encounters and as points of departure for further ones.

Communication is unrepeatable and irreversible. Every human contact we experience is unique. It has never happened before, and never again will it happen in just the same way. One interpretation of the old adage "You can never

step into the same river twice" is that the experience and time changes both you and the river forever. Similarly, a communication encounter affects and changes the interactants so that the encounter can never happen in exactly the same way again. Thus communication is both unrepeatable and irreversible. We can neither "take back" anything we have said nor "erase" the effects of something we have done. And although we may be greatly influenced by our past, we can never reclaim it. In the words of an old Chinese proverb, "Even the emperor cannot buy back one single day".

How are we supposed to study communication then, if it is dynamic, unrepeatable and irreversible? Modelling as always is the best way out.

In the first unit we discussed the scientific approach to language in general and the idea of language modelling. We illustrated these notions by using the model that regards language as a structure and system of units, as a functioning mechanism. Structural integrity and purposefulness of the mechanism provide language with the capacity of being an adequate means of communication. This functional view upon language which we adopted for our sample modelling, gave scholars the possibility to penetrate into the laws and regularities of language as a whole, as well as into the functions and interrelations of its constituent parts, or language units like phonemes, morphemes, words, sentences and texts. These language units were abstracted from the language structure on the basis of their specific system building functions, like differentiation, nomination, identification, etc. The ideal model thus received was deduced from our initial hypothetic assumption that language is a means of communication, functioning irrespective of its users and circumstances.

Now let us look at language from a different perspective. Let us focus on the various functions of the language mechanism in the life of human society, in other words, on the patterning of communicative behavior of language users.

This, **communicative** approach to language modelling, was escaping structural linguistics of the beginning of the 20th century mainly because the clarification and interpretation of the communicative process calls for the study of a wide range of scientific domains, those outside the language structure proper. When studying language as it functions for definite interpersonal contacts, as it is used within a particular society, culture, group, or context, we evidently need to introduce and explore some psychological, cultural, sociological, or ethnographic knowledge. All these domains are directly related to humans, together with linguistics they study human beings and their behaviour, communication including. This common object unites linguistics and other sciences as anthropological ones.

The term *anthropology* comes from Greek. It means the science of man, the study of man in relation to distribution, origin, classification, and relationship of races, physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture. When linguists adopted this attitude to language as a facet of social relation, they

therefore launched the so called *anthropological linguistics* which is not really a special branch of language studies, but rather a special point of view upon language, its structure, patterning and functions. This shift of the focus of studies from system to the user of this system might be called *anthropocentric* as it considers man to be the most important entity of linguistic explorations.

Let us put it in other words. The ways in which the various schools of linguistics regard language divide up this science into two types.

Microlinguistics (or linguistics proper). It deals with the structure of message independent of the characteristics of either speakers or hearers. Microlinguistics prevailed in science in the 1950s and 1970s carrying on the ideas of N. Chomsky of looking at language in abstraction, as an independent system governed by rules. These rules were described in the transformational theory and its later developments which showed no interest in how, in pursuing various social purposes, interactants combine utterances. Structural linguistics devised the theory of inner rules of language, but it did not recognize that language is used by people for doing something, for realizing activity.

Macrolinguistics (or metalinguistics, or exolinguistics). It covers all other aspects of language study which concern relations between the characteristics of messages and the characteristics of individuals who produce and receive them, including both, their behavior and culture. Macrolinguistics is concerned with all psychological and social influence upon the selection, use and interpretation of language (messages): attitudes, cultural meanings, social roles, values, etc. Therefore, macrolinguistics is basically a language activity, or human communication. At present the term communicative linguistics is widely used to denote this field of linguistic knowledge.

As with any other scientific deductive approach, we need to adopt a hypothesis, a starting point of our exploration of the communicative linguistics. Let me suggest the following assumption: **language is an activity and a form of social behaviour.**

The process of the verification of this statement and anthropological modelling of language from this perspective are then the goals of our further inquiry.

In order to understand the prerequisites of language activity (communication), and to comprehend its essence, let us begin with the following question: Why, when and how do people use language? To answer this question let us take a simple communicative episode from our everyday activities. Imagine that you have an appointment with a friend, that you do not want to be late, but you do not know what time it is. You ask someone who has a watch and get the answer. The communicative episode is completed. Now we shall try to model it in terms of constituents and causes.

Speakers use language to express their thoughts and to influence others. Even when we talk to ourselves (in case of inner speech), we subconsciously

pursue the same goal: to influence, but in this case ourselves. Therefore, communication demands at least two participants of the process: addresser (otherwise called source or speaker) and addressee (otherwise called receiver or listener). Both the addresser and the addressee may be individual and collective: people may speak on behalf of a group, co-author their messages, address them to large audiences or even unknown prospective receivers. But in any case both, addressers and addressees possess certain psychological and social characteristics, like age, education, ethnicity, political and other views, social status and others. All of them to some extent influence the mode and content of communication and should be considered in our model. These are the first two prerequisites of communication which can function under certain circumstances or conditions.

In the most general sense, we have communication whenever one system, a source, influences another system, a receiver, by manipulation of the signals which can be carried in the channel connecting them. For example, in the telephone communication system the messages produced by a speaker are in the form of variable sound pressures and frequences carried over wire (channel) to a receiver to be utilized by him. Channel is an essential component of the communicative model. Channels through which information is transmitted may be oral or written; direct (face-to-face) or indirect (radio, telephone conversation, letters which represent indirect communication suspended in time).

Anything that produces unpredictable interference in the channel may be called *noise*. This general model of the communication process used in the theory of information, however, does not provide us with a satisfactory picture of human communication as it disregards individual human functions in the process; it is not designed to take into account the meaning of signals, i.e., their significance when viewed from the receiving side, and their intention when viewed from the addresser's side. Therefore, we need to supplement our model of communication with several other prerequisites.

People do not embark on communication without any strong reason, or inducement. In my example above, the person had no watch but did not want to be late for the appointment. This inducement for communication may be called a motive – something (as a need or desire) that causes a person to speak, a stimulus to communication. Motive is a psychological category as it characterizes the state of mind, i.e., an individual's idea which urges him or her to speak.

The motive further leads a person to a certain intention to reach a desired end. In the example above, the person needed to know what time it was. Intention is a determination to act in a certain way, to speak in order to achieve something, and thus it can be viewed as a derivative of a motive, a design of action aimed at bringing about a desired goal. Evidently, one motive may cause different intentions, which depend on the personality of the addresser and the circumstances of communication. Hence, intention also belongs to the domain of communicators' psychology and constitutes another unit of our model of communication.

Communication occurs in a certain place, at some period of time, under some essential circumstances which facilitate or hamper it, like family circle or street crowd, friendly face-to-face encounter or public presentation at a conference. All these surrounding circumstances of physical and social origin are called a communicative setting (another term being communicative situation). Any user of a language knows how much setting matters for our language strategies and manners, and hence, we include setting in the model of communication.

All the above discussed constituents as one entity make up the model of the communication process, an episode of human interactivity. This model may be diagrammed in the following way:

motive – **intention** – **addresser** – **channel** – **addressee**

I

noise

I

setting

The fragment of activity represented in this diagram has acquired different terminological names in communicative linguistics. They are: communicative episode, communicative act, speech action, to name a few. But whatever terms are applied, the concept of human communicative activity remains intact. Different scholars, certainly, modify, reduce or specify the model and its components, which is but natural in any science, but nevertheless the anthropological communicative approach to this language unit can neither be denied nor blurred.

When linguists adopt the communicative point of view on language they inevitably have to focus on social, cultural, psychological, and ethnic conditions or aspects of language behaviour of individuals and whole speech communities because these aspects are indicative of variable speech strategies and have an explanatory force. The general theory developed on these methodological premises has been often referred to as the theory of speech activity. This is a generic term for a number of theoretical disciplines and related branches of language exploration. I will discuss each of them in more detail in my further lectures. Here I shall permit myself one remark concerning the historical roots of the theory of speech activity.

Though this theory as a trend in linguistics appeared and was recognized as such in the second half of the 20th century, linguists of older generations were not indifferent to the problems of communication and human communicative behaviour. Actually, the track for modern explorations was laid by outstanding thinkers earlier. Among the founding fathers of the theory of speech activity, we should name a great German linguist and philosopher of language W. von Humboldt who introduced the notion of language as activity and initiated numerous studies of language in the context of culture, national spirit, and

ethnicity. Humboldt thus postulated the exploration of language "extensively", i.e., in the framework of sociology, psychology, ethnography and other related fields which actually predetermine the existence of functioning language, or activity.

The modern theory of speech activity exists as a set of linguistic schools or branches. The separation of these domains depends on their particular interests in either the psychological aspect of speech (we use the term speech as synonymous to language activity), or its social background, or its relation to culture, etc. Though all these foci are interrelated (as they study communication in a wider context than structural studies do), each of the branches answers a number of specific basic questions and views speech as a psychological, social, pragmatic, or cultural phenomenon. Let me explain this point with the following example.

When a scholar is interested in the process of speech production as a mental phenomenon, and when the motives and intentions of speakers are studied alongside with the work of the mind, the mechanism of thinking, then this scholar represents the domain of psycholinguistics. When a scholar is interested in the speech strategies of a speaker pursuing certain communicative intentions, then we encounter a representative of pragmalinguistics. The interest in social variability of speech brings about the study called sociolinguistics.

A survey of the special goals and methods of language exploration within these complex disciplines constitutes the subject of our further discussion.

V. Further Reading

From: Osgood Ch.E., Sebeok Th.A. Models of the Communication Process // Psycholinguistics. A Survey of Theory and Research Problems. Ed. by Ch. Osgood and Th. Sebeok, Bloomfield and L.: Indiana. University Press, 1967. – P. 62 – 63.

Human communication is chiefly a social affair. Any adequate model must therefore include at least two communicating units, a source unit (speaker) and a destination unit (hearer). Between any two such units, connecting them into a single system is what we may call the *message.* We will define message as that part of the total output (responses) of a source unit which simultaneously may be a part of the total input (stimuli) to a destination unit. When individual A talks to individual B, for example, his postures, gestures, facial expressions and even manipulations with objects may all be part of the message, as of course are events in the sound wave channel. But other parts of A's total behaviour (e.g., breathing, thinking) may not affect B at all – these events are not part of the message as we use the term. These message events (reactions of one individual that produce stimuli for another) may be either immediate or mediate – ordinary face-to-face conversation illustrates the former and written communication illustrates the latter.

Figure 2.1 presents a model of the essential communication act, encoding of a message by a source unit and decoding of that message by a destination unit. Since the distinction between source and destination within the same com-

municator seems relevant only with respect to the direction of information exchange (e.g., whether the communicator is decoding or encoding), we substitute the single term mediator for that system which intervenes between receiving and transmitting operations. The way in which the various sciences concerned with human communication impinge upon and divide up the total process can be shown in relation to this figure.
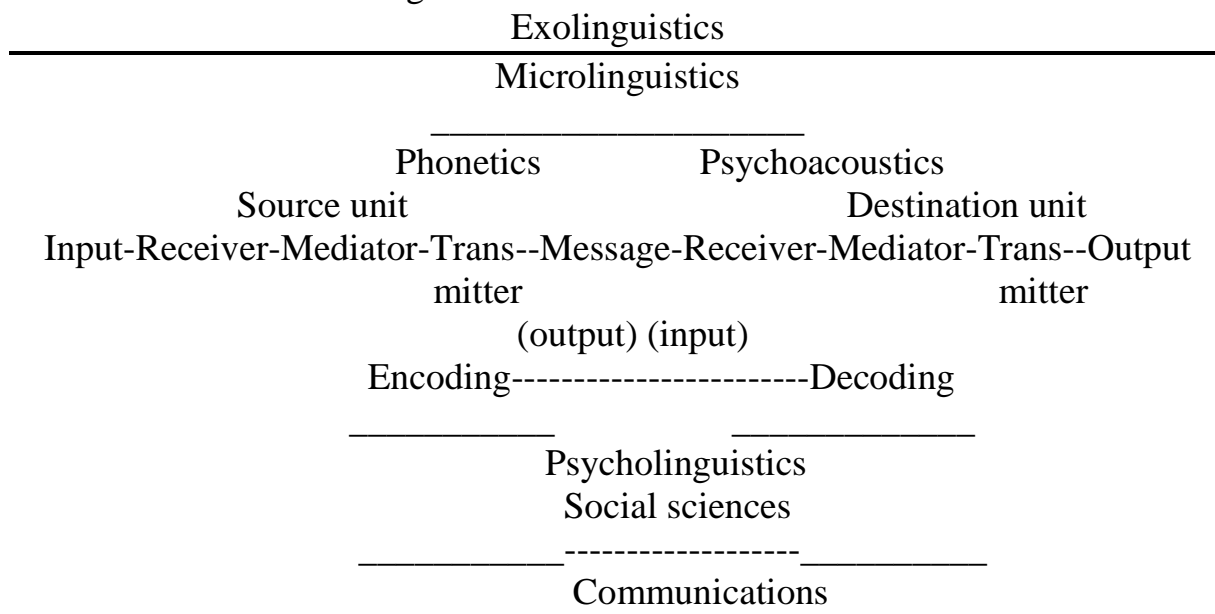
Exolinguistics

Microlinguistics

_____

Phonetics   Psychoacoustics

Source unit   Destination unit

Input-Receiver-Mediator-Trans--Message-Receiver-Mediator-Trans--Output
                   mitter   mitter

(output) (input)

Encoding-----------------------Decoding

_____   _____

Psycholinguistics

Social sciences

_____-------------------_____

Communications

Fig. 2.1. Model of the essential communication act.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1) What is *message*? Is it the same as *sentence*?

2) What is *mediator*?

3) Is the chart presented in figure 3 really representative of various approaches to communication modelling?

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From: Jakobson R. Linguistics and Poetics // Language in Literature. Harvard University Press, Cambr., London, 1994. – P. 66.

Language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions. Before discussing the poetic function we must define its place among the other functions of language. An outline of these functions demands a concise survey of the constitutive factors in any speech event, in any act of verbal communication. The **addresser** sends a **message** to the **addressee**. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT referred to (the "referent" in another, somewhat ambiguous, nomenclature), graspable by the addressee, and either verbal or capable of being verbalized; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee (or in other words, to the encoder and decoder of the message); and, finally, a CONTACT, a physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser and the addressee, enabling

both of them to enter and stay in communication. All these factors inalienably involved in verbal communication may be schematized as follows:

<div align="center">

CONTEXT

ADDRESSER   **MESSAGE**   **ADDRESSEE**

CONTACT

CODE

</div>

Each of these six factors determines a different function of language. Although we distinguish six basic aspects of language, we could, however, hardly find verbal messages that would fulfill only one function. The diversity lies not in a monopoly of some one of these several functions but in a different hierarchical order of functions. The verbal structure of a message depends primarily on the predominant function. But even though a set (*Einstellung)* toward the referent, an orientation toward the context – briefly, the so-called *referential*, "denotative", "cognitive" function – is the leading task of numerous messages, the accessory participation of the other functions in such messages must be taken into account by the observant linguist.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1) What is the importance of a thorough survey of the constitutive factors in any speech event?

2) What is the predominant function of language and how is it related to the elicited constitutive factors?

<div align="center">

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From: Gamble T.K., Gamble M. Communication works. N.Y, Milan, L.: McGrawHill, INC., 1993. – P. 21 – 23.
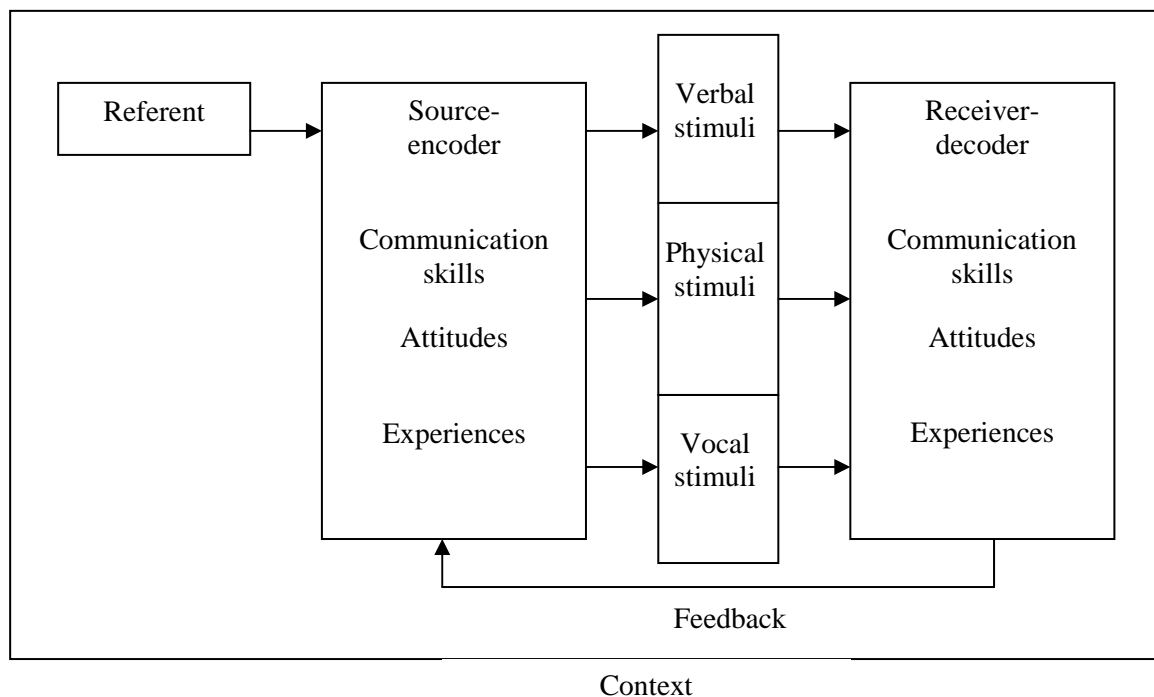

Fig. 2.2. Miller's Model of Communication

Figure 2.2 is a model adapted from the work of the communication researcher Gerald R. Miller. It illustrates how a *source-encoder* (a person) sends out a message to a receiver-decoder (another person) about some *referent* (an object, act, situation, experience, or idea). The source-encoder's message is made up of at least three elements: *verbal stimuli* (words), *physical stimuli* such as gestures, facial expressions, and movements), and *vocal stimuli* (such as rate of speaking, loudness and pitch of voice, and emphasis). The receiver-encoder who receives the message that has been consciously or unconsciously sent by the source-encoder responds to it in some way (positive or negative feedback). Both the source's message and the receiver's response are affected by the context and by each person's communication skills, attitudes, and past experiences. The message sent differs from the message received because of noise, even though noise is not shown as an element in this model.

As an illustration of Miller's model, let's analyze the following dialogue between a husband and wife:

SHE: *What's the matter with you? You're late again. We'll never get to the Adamses' on time.*
HE: *I tried my best.*
SHE: (Sarcastically) *Sure, you tried your best. You always try your best, don't you?* (shaking her finger) *I'm not going to put up with this much longer.*
HE: (raising his voice) *You don't say! I happen to have been tied up at the office.*
SHE: *My job is every bit as demanding as yours, you know.*
HE: (Lowering his voice) *OK. OK. I know you work hard too. I don't question that. Listen, I really did get stuck in a conference.* (Puts his hand on her shoulder.) *Let's not blow this up. Come on. I'll tell you about it on the way to Bill and Ellen's.*

What message is the wife (the initial source-encoder) sending to her husband (the receiver-encoder)? She is letting him know with her words, her voice, and her physical actions that she is upset and angry. Her husband responds in kind, using words, vocal cues, and gestures in an effort to explain his behaviour. Both are affected by the nature of the situation (they are late for an appointment), by their attitudes (how they feel about what is occurring), and by their past experiences.

Next, consider a model developed by the communication expert Wilbur Schramm.

This model shows us more explicitly that human communication is a circle rather than a one-way event. Here each party to the communication process is perceived as both an encoder and a decoder. In addition, each party acts as an interpreter, understanding the messages he or she receives in a somewhat different way. This is because we are each affected by a field of experience or a psychological frame of reference (a form of noise) that we carry with us wherever we go.
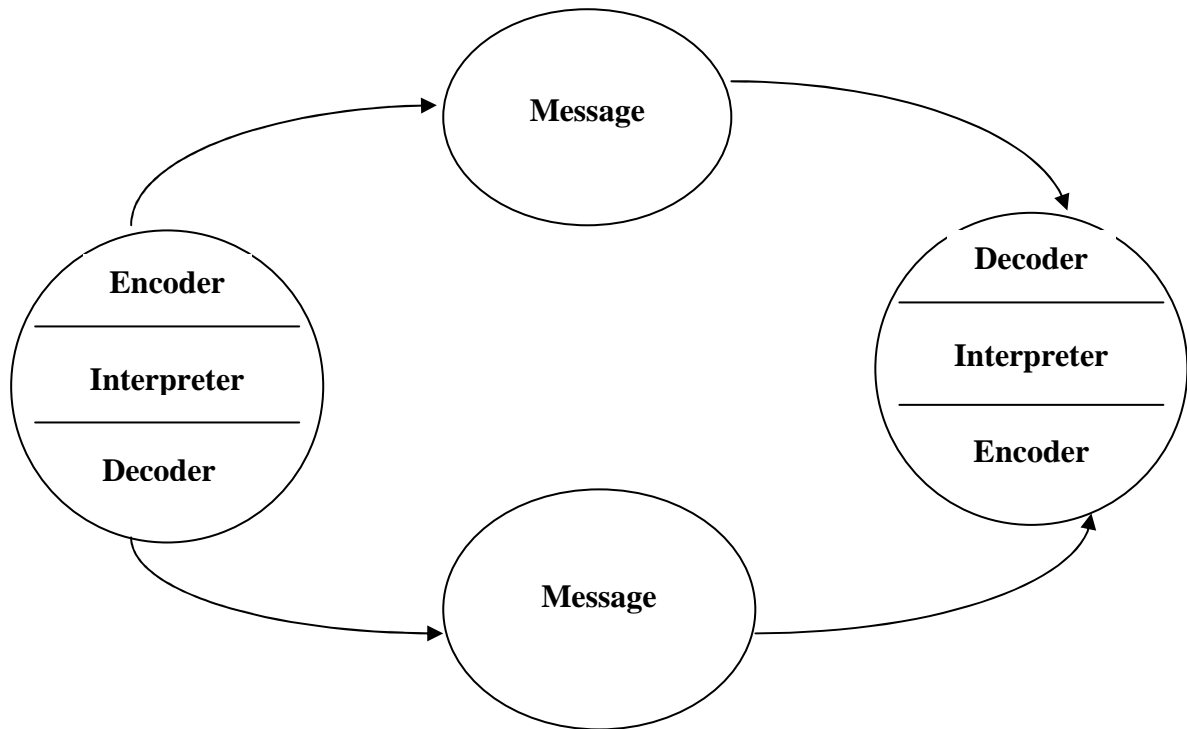
Fig. 2.3. Schramm's model of communication

Consider this brief dialogue:

WIFE: *Hey, kids, don't bother dad now. He's really tired. I'll play with you.*
HUSBAND: *Don't isolate me from my own children! You always need to have all their attention.*
WIFE: *I'm not trying to do that. I just know what it's like to have a really trying day and feel that I have to close my eyes to get back to myself.*
HUSBAND: *I sure must be wound up.*
WIFE: *I understand.*

Here we see how one's psychological frame of reference can influence the meaning given to a message received. In addition, we come to realize that neither party to the communicative encounter functions solely as a sender or a receiver of messages. Rather, each sends and receives messages simultaneously. The wife receives the message that her husband is exhausted and sends a message that the kids should let him rest. The husband receives a message that his wife is trying to "alienate" him from the children and sends a message expressing his concern. By listening to her husband's message, the wife is able to determine how he has interpreted *her* message and is thus able to avoid a serious misunderstanding.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1) Are the models of Miller and Schramm more effective than the ones designed by Osgood, Jakobson, etc.?

2) How many codes are active in the fragments used as illustrations by Miller and Schramm?

VI. Test Yourself

A. *See if you can answer the following questions*.

1) How do the models of communication process differ from those of structural linguistics?

2) Are there conceptual grounds to differentiate anthropological and structural linguistics?

3) Do you agree that communication is a separate type of human behavior? Find arguments to prove your point.

4) Do you accept the suggested models of the communicative act? How would you prove the importance of each of its constituents for communication?

5) What branches of communicative linguistics have sprung up and what are their objectives?

B. *The same or different?*

1) addresser – encoder
2) channel – code
3) message – code

VII. Case Study

Modelling Communication

1. Draw or build something that represents your understanding of communication. You can focus on any or all of the components of the processes we have examined thus far. Your model can be lifelike or abstract. Be ready to present it to the class. Specifically, be sure to do the following:

a) Describe what your model suggests about the essential elements of the communication process (whether pictured or implied).

b) Explain what your model says about the communicative process.

c) Develop a saying or epigram that sums up your perception of the state of being in communication.

d) Explain how your model reflects one or more of the axioms of communication.

e) Suggest what insights into interpersonal, small-group, and public communication are provided by your model.

2. Identify an important message you want to communicate or must communicate to some person or group within the next few days. Analyze the following:

a) How you will encode the message
b) What channel or channels you will use to deliver the message

c) How the environment or setting might affect the encoding and decoding of your message

d) How noise could interfere at different points in the process

e) What feedback you might receive

f) How one or more of the axioms of communication will come into play during the interaction

g) What the outcome of the communication transaction will be.

VIII. References

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3. Schramm W. How Communication Works // The Process and Effects of Mass Communication. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1954. – P. 3 – 4.

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IX. Recommended Reading for Further Study

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2. Лотман Ю.М. Культура как коллективный интеллект и проблемы искусственного разума // АН СССР. Научный совет по комплексной программе "Кибернетика". Предварительная публикация. – М., 1977. – С. 12 – 13.

3. Dance F.E.X. Human Communication theory: Original essays. N.Y.: Halt, Rinehart and Winston, 3rd ed, 1997. – P. 106 – 110.

UNIT 3: DEVELOPMENT OF SPEECH IN A SPEAKING SUBJECT

I. Outline

1. Distinctions between human communication and communication in other species.

2. The general developmental model. Hypothesis about the developmental analogy.

3. Symbolic and non-symbolic acts.

4. Starting to mean.

5. Characteristics of one child's protolanguage.

6. Evolutionary interpretations of the data obtained about protolanguage.

7. From protolanguage to language.

II. Objectives

After soaking into the below stuff, you should be able to:

– understand the meaning of the terms *protolanguage* (as viewed by adherents of M. Halliday's hypothesis), *ontogeny*, *phylogeny*;

– interpret the issue of distinctions between humans and other species;

– expound on the general developmental model as well as on the hypothesis about the protolanguage;

– comprehend what symbolic and non-symbolic acts are;

– dwell on the case study carried out by M.A.K. Halliday;

– supply your own examples either to prove or disprove the claims of the protolanguage theory;

– interpret all theories described in the unit about how language develops in a specific speaking subject.

III. Key words: *acquisition, recapitulation, iconic, pragmatic, mathetic, protolanguage, non-symbolic, symbolic, social, biological, phylogeny, ontogeny, change, mammal, amphibian, embryo, fish, evolution, meaning.*

Stop and think:

- How old were you when you started using your first signs ("words") in communication with others?
- What kind of signs were they? Words? Gestures? Cries?

IV. Development of Speech. Issue of Origin

As you can remember from the course of Introduction into Special Philology, the issue of language origin has always been of interest to scholars. There were many legends about the origin of the first language.

The oldest recorded account of a study of language origin comes from Herodotus, a contemporary of Sophocles. Herodotus, who lived from about 484 to 425 B.C., wrote about King Psammetichus of Egypt, who ordered

shepherds to raise two children in isolation caring for their needs but never speaking to them. The King wanted to prove that the children would develop the language of the Egyptians all by themselves. When they began to speak, however, they uttered the word "bekos" which was interpreted as the Phrygian word for "bread" (Gleason, 1985). The unavoidable conclusion, therefore, was that Phrygian language must have been the world's original tongue, and that the Phrygian race was more primeval than the race of Psammetichus.

As you know speculations about the origin of language were stopped at the turn of the 20th century, when the Linguistic Society of Paris made a statement barring papers on the origin of language from its members (Crystal, 1996) for there was no evidence, no experimental test, which could be brought to support any point of view. But the issue of origin has another perspective, which focuses not on the appearance of the first language in human history, but on how it originates in specific speaking subjects.

How does it happen that a human child begins to talk? By this question we mean that we'd like to know how language as an activity and a form of verbal behaviour starts functioning in each specific human being. This includes how it started working in you and me, and how it comes round in our children. Nowadays the issue is named as acquisition of language. It has always been one of the major themes of communicative linguistics.

Evolution of Language

It seems likely that human beings have been around in the world for quite some time: say 2 – 3 million years, according to the findings of some researchers. If we met one of our ancestors of that antiquity, we would recognise him or her as quite like one of ourselves.

The distinctively human characteristics of walking upright, using tools, and talking were already appearing well over a million years ago. These are supposed to mark us off from the rest of creation, including our immediate forebears. It is customary nowadays to emphasise the continuity – that which we share with other species – rather than the discontinuity; and to interpret what distinguishes us against the background of what we have in common – with the apes, and with our more distant but also highly intelligent cousins the dolphins. So let us look at language in this light.

What is it that distinguishes human language from communication in other species? There have been many attempts to demonstrate that apes could acquire human-like language; that although their articulatory organs are not shaped to produce speech sounds, if we free them from the constraints of articulation and allow them to use some other form of output, like pressing particular keys in particular sequences, it can be shown that they would be intellectually capable of learning our kind of language.

The results are impressive, although they turn out on examination to be not as startling as was initially claimed. The idea that "they could talk if they wanted; they just don't need to" is somewhat naive, based on an oversimplified account of what human language is really like. (It also seems rather unlikely, one must admit.) So let us speculate about how, on the basis of our present knowledge, human language probably evolved; and see at what point and in what respects our ancestors set out along a new semiotic track.

The Developmental Analogy

It is often pointed out that in many respects the individual recapitulates the history of the species. The idea is an old one, first formulated as an explicit principle by Ernst Häckel (Halliday, 1992). In the words of a recent BBC television series, 'as an embryo growing in the womb, each one of us takes the form of fish, then amphibian and mammal, and finally prepares for life as a member of much the most varied and flexible species to have evolved on earth'.

The evolutionary process does not stop at birth; but it changes direction, because the born child is a social being and will therefore develop social characteristics alongside the purely biological ones. As he learns to walk, he also learns to talk. (It is quite likely that he has learnt something of his mother tongue even before he is born; the rhythm of speech begins in the diaphragm, and the child must feel the regular variation in pressure that is produced by the muscles controlling the outflow of air as his mother talks. If so, he may already be predisposed at birth to the rhythmic patterns of his 'mother tongue', in the strict sense of the term: the language that is spoken by his mother.)

If the notion that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny is in general valid as a principle of biological development, we may also find it to be valid for certain aspects of social development – at least for one particular aspect, that of the learning of language. There is a caution to be given here, however. Where biological development is concerned, the evolution of the species is established on other grounds; the evidence is independent of any developmental findings and hence if we find the individual retracing the history of the species we are discovering something new.

In the case of language, however, we cannot reconstruct the early stages of its evolution. Almost the only evidence we have for this is derived from what we know about how children learn language. The independent information is simply the probability that early humans in this period did have language, as is suggested:

➢ by the size of their brains and
➢ by the fact that they used tools.

But these tell us nothing about what kind of a language they had or how it evolved. For this we have to guess from studying the development of the child.

Such guesses are just that – guesswork. On the other hand, there are some striking features about language development in early childhood that suggest

that here too the parallel may be fairly close: in particular, the fact of the protolanguage – that children typically start by creating language for themselves before moving over to the language they hear around them. Before the mother tongue there is a 'child tongue', and the forms and functions that that takes look very much like evolutionary steps towards what we know as language today.

Symbolic and Non-symbolic Acts

Children begin to communicate more or less from birth. A newborn child can already 'pay attention': when his mother talks to him, he listens. Within three or four weeks he is contributing his own share of the 'discussion', responding with animated movements of his body – his arms and legs, and also his tongue and his lips.

This bodily activity is not yet language. Colwyn Trevarthen (1979), who was one of the first to study these processes, calls the tongue and lip movements 'pre-speech', because the baby seems to be rehearsing the muscular activity that will be used to produce speech later on; just as with his arms he performs a sequence of reaching out, grasping, and pulling towards him that is like taking hold of an object - 'pre-reaching', in Trevarthen's terms. He is preparing himself, so to speak, for the two basic skills he will first have to master – using tools, and talking. In the first, he will be using his limbs, and extensions of his limbs, to control his environment directly, and to orient and manoeuvre himself within it. With the second, speech, he will be using other muscular movements and postures, those of articulation – also to control his environment; but in this case to control it indirectly, by acting on others so that they will control it for him. For this he has to learn to act symbolically.

Let us make this distinction clear, the distinction between symbolic and non-symbolic acts. If I am hungry, and want to eat an apple, I can act directly on the apple by going and getting it myself – moving to where it is in reach, reaching out, and then grabbing it. But – provided there are other human beings around – I can get hold of it in another way, by acting not directly but symbolically. I can say to a sympathetic member of my family "Fetch me an apple".

This is a symbolic act, an act of meaning. It has to be addressed to someone – not necessarily some particular person, maybe just to the world at large; but unless there is a receiver it will not work. Acts of meaning are by their nature social acts, and all symbolic systems are social systems. Of course, once a system of symbols has come into being, it can be played with, fought with, turned into an art form; it can be used to address oneself, a deity, or even animals or inanimate objects. But these are secondary, derivative uses; the symbols could never have evolved to serve these functions, because they depend on values the symbols have already acquired in use.

Somewhere around the middle of the first year of life, the child lays the foundations for these two modes of action, the direct and the symbolic. He learns

to reach out, grasp, and pull things towards him, and he learns the complementary action of hitting things to knock them away: 'I want', 'I don't want'. This, typically, starts around 4 – 5 months. Not long afterwards, he begins to explore the alternative, symbolic mode – getting others to achieve the effect for him.

The 'Child Tongue'

But there is a problem with symbolic acts. A symbol has to be understood. If I start speaking Chinese to you, that is a perfectly good act of meaning; but if you do not understand Chinese, the only message you will get is that I am talking – you will have no idea what I am talking about. Even if what I am saying is the Chinese equivalent of 'bring me an apple' (ná pínguŏ lái gĕi wŏ), it is unlikely that the apple will arrive.

So how does a human infant go about creating a set of symbols, such that those around him will understand? It used to be assumed that he went straight into the mother tongue, copying the words as well as he could and eventually learning to combine them. Later on, in his second year, that is what he does; but a great deal has already happened before he starts on the mother tongue. Before he takes over the language of others, he starts by creating one for himself – by himself in interaction with the small group of others who learn it along with him.

At 7 – 8 months, he is ready to act symbolically. But he cannot start straightaway on the mother tongue: not only because he could not yet control its **sounds**, though this is true too, but more importantly because he could not yet control its **forms** and its **meanings**. Adult languages are organised around a grammar (more accurately, a **lexico-grammar**, a code consisting of words-in-structure), which has the function of translating the meanings into the sounds; but an eight-month-old can have no idea of what a word is, since it is something that involves a particular kind of abstraction. So he has to create a symbolic system of his own, one that does not contain either vocabulary or grammar but consists of a little set of SIGNS. These signs are made by voice, or gesture, or some combination of the two.

There have been very few studies of the first step, the initial symbolic acts of meaning by which an infant starts to 'mean'; so it is impossible to give a general account of how this happens. Instead, we shall start with the story of how it happened with one particular child – a boy whose name, for present purposes, is Nigel. Here is a brief account of how Nigel created his first language.

Starting to Mean

One day at eight months old, Nigel was sitting on his mother's knee. She was writing. As she paused, with the pen held lightly in her fingers, Nigel reached out for it. He closed his fist firmly around it, looked at her face for a moment, and then, after another moment, let go. He had not tried to pull it towards him.

His mother said "You want the pen, do you? All right – you can hold it, for a little while".

This was an act of meaning; and it had worked. His mother had understood. Nigel was, of course, quite capable of grabbing the pen and pulling it towards him; that was his normal way of getting something. But on this occasion, he had not taken it; he had asked for it. He had created a symbol, by the use of his hand – it was gestural, not vocal; and he had waited for the response. There was a clear distinction between the two kinds of act: the direct, non-symbolic action on the object itself, and the indirect, symbolic action 'on' (i.e. directed towards) the object but through (mediated by) the person addressed.

Nigel had solved the basic problem, that of creating a symbol that could be understood; and he had solved it iconically – that is, by creating a symbol that bore a natural resemblance to its meaning. The gesture of grasping an object firmly and holding on to it for a measurable time before letting go is a very reasonable way of encoding the meaning 'I want that thing', 'let me hold it', 'give it to me'. And his mother's response showed him she had understood. (She had acted entirely spontaneously, not at all becoming conscious of the fact that both Nigel and she had performed something entirely new.)

Nigel was encouraged by his success and created two more symbols within the same week, both of them also iconic. I was entertaining him by throwing his toy cat up in the air, and catching it as it came down. When I stopped, he leant forward and touched it: neither grasping it nor pushing it away, but keeping his fingers pressed against it for a measurable time.

'You want me to throw it up again?' Every time I stopped, he repeated the gesture, until I got tired and refused. But it was clear that I had got the message; and Nigel himself made it clear, by the satisfaction he showed at being understood.

A day or two later, his mother offered him his woolly dog to play with. He touched it with just one finger, very lightly and for the briefest instant, then took his hand away. She offered it to him again; he repeated the gesture. It meant 'No, I don't want it; take it away'. She understood, said 'Don't you want it?', and put it down. Again, it was a symbolic gesture; he could push objects away if he didn't want them, but this was quite distinct. He was 'saying' 'I don't want it', and his mother was responding to the symbol.

These were not, in fact, the very first symbols Nigel had created; these had appeared two weeks earlier, at shortly before the age of eight months. They were vocal, not gestural; and each consisted of a single vowel, the same vowel [oe] (like the French word oeufs) but with a slight difference in tone. One, on a low, breathy tone, meant 'yes it's me, and here we are together'.

His mother came to him. 'Hello, bootie', she said.

'oe', he replied.

'There's my bootie!'

'oe'.

'That's nice, yes.'

'oe'.

This would go on for as long as she kept the conversation going.

The other was also [oe], but on a higher, falling tone, and without the breathy, sighing quality of the first. It meant 'That's interesting – what's happening?', and was used when Nigel's attention was caught by some commotion, like a flock of birds taking off from the ground or a bus revving up its engine. This was addressed mainly to himself; but often someone responded, saying what the commotion was all about.

'Those are pigeons', his mother said. 'Weren't they noisy?'

One Child's Protolanguage

So at eight months Nigel had a language. It consisted of five signs, which were frequently repeated when the occasion arose; and those around him, the small group that made up his immediate family, understood them and gave a reply. They replied, of course, in their own language, not in his; Nigel would no doubt have been insulted to have his own signs served back to him, but it never occurred to anyone to try. What mattered was that he could now converse: he could initiate a conversation and be understood. From that moment, his route into language was open.

For its relevance to linguistic evolution, we need to interpret this little system, and then to follow Nigel through one stage further.

The ability to mean is important to Nigel because it is functional. He is creating a language for a purpose, to do something with it. If we watch him at eight months and notice the environments in which he is using these signs (the **context of situation**, in linguistic terminology), we will be aware of two kinds of motive that lead him to communicate. One is a pragmatic one: he wants to be given something, or he wants something to be done for him; and for these purposes he used the iconic gestures of grasping and touching. The other is a more thoughtful mode; either he is expressing curiosity about what is going on around him, or he is just 'being together', expressing his awareness that he is one person, his mother is another, and that they are sharing an experience. These he expresses by sound, his first true speech sounds. Having established his ability to mean, and gained recognition as a conversation partner, at 9½ – 10 months, he set about creating a rich protolanguage that would serve him until he was ready to start on English. At 10½ months, he had a range of twelve distinct signs; by 12 months, this had increased to 20; by 13½ months, to 27; by 15 months, to 31; and by 16½ months, to 50. By this time, however, he is beginning the transition into the mother tongue and his language is no longer of the strictly 'proto' kind.

If we look at the period of roughly six months that constitutes, with Nigel, the period of the true protolanguage – say 9½ – 15½ months of age – we find a very clear pattern of functional development, which we can interpret in terms of these same two motifs. Let us exemplify from right in the middle of this six-month

period, when Nigel is just over one year of age and just about beginning to walk. On the one hand, he has a range of pragmatic signs including the following:

'give me that'	na ...	(mid fall)
'yes I want that thing there'	yi ...	(high level)
'yes I want what you just said'	a:	(high rise-fall)
'do that again'	ʒ	(mid fall)
'do that right now!'	mnŋ	(high fall; loud)
'yes (let's) do that'	ʒ ...	(low fall)
'no, don't (let's) do that'	a/a	(mid fall + mid fall)
'let's go out for a walk'		(slow glottal creak)

Note: . . . indicates that the sound was repeated, normally three or four times over.

On the other hand, he had a range of signs in the interactional and personal areas, including:

'hallo Anna!'	an:na	(high level + high level)
'yes it's me; I'm here'	ɛ:	(low fall, long drawn out)
'look, a picture; you say what it is'	a::da	(high rise + mid fall)
'nice to see you; let's look at this'	ɛdɛdɛdɛ	(proclitic + high level + high fall)
'I can hear an aeroplane'	œ.œ	(low fall + low fall)
'that's nice'	æyi:	(mid level + mid fall)
'that's funny (where's it gone?)'	mnŋ	high rise-fall)
'a lot of talk!'	bwgabwga	(low fall + low fall)
'I'm sleepy'	g'ʷɣl ...	(low level)

Apart from some instances of the last, which he also used in the special sense of playing a game of pretending to go to sleep, curling up on the floor in a little ball and closing his eyes tight, these all expressed some form of the relationship between himself and his environment: either interaction with another person, or pleasure, curiosity, disgust etc. in the outside world (or, in the last case, withdrawal from it). In one or two critical cases, the two components are combined: a fundamental theme in the protolanguage is that of 'let's look at this together', typically a greeting or calling to attention of the other person with an invitation to share an experience. It turns out that this sharing of experience by attending to some object that both can focus on – Nigel and his mother looking at a picture together, for example – is an important step towards the child's conception of a name, and hence towards the development of language in the adult sense.

What is the primary function of signs such as these? If those of the first group represent language in a 'doing' function – that which we refer to as **pragmatic** – then the signs of the second group have more of a 'thinking'

function: Nigel is using his ability to create meanings as a way of projecting himself on to the environment, expressing his concern with it – what's in it for him, so to speak – and so beginning systematically to explore it. In my own work I have referred to this as the **mathetic** function, meaning 'for learning with'.

Nigel's protolanguage, from its earliest origins, displays these two symbolic modes: to put it in other terms, it is at once both a means of action and a means of reflection. Parallel studies that have been carried out with other children suggest that this twofold functional orientation is a general feature of children's language construction; see, in particular, Clare Painter's book *Learning the Mother Tongue*. We shall not pursue the story further here. But it is important to point out, as we move away from the developmental perspective, that this complementarity of action and reflection persists way beyond the protolinguistic stage. In the first place, it serves as the central strategy by which children move out of their protolanguage and make the transition to the language (or languages) of their cultural environment. And finally, it is also the fundamental organising principle that lies behind the whole of adult language. Every human language is a potential for meaning in these two ways: it is a resource for doing with, and it is a resource for thinking with. This is the most important single fact about human language, and a motif to which we shall return in our study of speech and writing.

Evolutionary Interpretations

Returning to Trevarthen for a moment: he made some films, in the early 1970s, showing mothers interacting with small infants, 8 – 10 weeks old. The mother and child were facing each other; but Trevarthen had two cameras synchronised, and the picture was spliced so that each could be seen full face at the same time. The impression was striking: a kind of *pas de deux*, in which mother and baby, though performing what were obviously totally different movements, were yet in a curious way involved in a dance together, with remarkable synchrony. Then the film was shown in slow motion; and you could see that the child's movements were slightly ahead of the mother's. So although the child did not become animated until the mother's attention was directed to him – the initial invitation came from the mother – once the music started, so to speak, it was the child who was leading the dance.

This is the pattern of all subsequent language learning – except that, once he is mobile, the child does not wait to be invited; he can initiate the interaction. But the impetus always comes from the child; he is pushing forward the frontiers of language, with the mother, and others close enough to be in his little speech fellowship, tracking as he goes along. The others 'know' the language too – quite unconsciously; if you ask a mother who is conversing with a child at the protolinguistic stage what the child is saying, she will probably answer the way one such mother did to M. Halliday, rather scornfully: 'He's not saying

anything. He can't talk yet' – this at the end of an animated exchange between the two of them in which the child had been talking a large part of the time. It is a natural human tendency to want to mean.

It seems plausible – though it cannot be proved or disproved – *that the child's way in to language is somehow analogous to the way language evolved in the human species*. According to such an account, language would have begun in the form of a small number of signs for expressing general meanings relating to the needs of human beings in their relations with others: meanings such as 'give me (some object)', 'do (some service) for me', 'behave (in a certain way) for me', and also 'be together with me', 'come and look (at this) with me', 'I like (that)', 'I'm curious (about that)', 'I don't like (that)', and so on. The essential function of the symbol is that of sharing: shared action, or shared reflection.

Then (following the model of the child), particular (individual) persons and particular (classes of) objects come to be associated in regular, repetitive contexts with general meanings of this kind. So a particular sign evolves as 'I want to be together **with you**' and that becomes a name of a person or a kin relationship; another evolves as 'give me (a particular kind of) food', and so becomes the word for food, or some class of edible things; another as 'I'm curious about (the animal that's making) **that noise**', and so becomes the name of the animal species; and so on. The process by which a sign meaning some such unanalysed semantic complex turns into a name can be directly observed with a small child, so we know that it can happen; and the fact that this seems to be the **typical** developmental pattern suggests that the human experience may not have been very different.

Note that we are not here discussing the origin of the **form** of the expression: the phonetic or gestural shape of the protolinguistic sign. It is possible to say something about that too, from what can be observed of the way small children create the expressions for their protolanguage; the picture is far from clear, in any detail, at this stage, but the principle that the most effective symbol is one that is in some sense 'natural' – related iconically to its meaning – has presumably always held good.

1. We can see, for example, how children take the sounds they have heard themselves make naturally and turn them into protolinguistic signs: Nigel's long-drawn-out and breathy [ɛ::] 'yes it's me, I'm here' (subsequently 'yes that's what I meant', a signal that his meaning had been properly interpreted) originated as a sigh, a release of tension on being called by a voice he recognised; while his [g'ᵂγi] was a self-imitation of the sound he had heard himself make when going to sleep, thumb in front of lips and breath going in and out creating suction noises.

2. We can easily recognise 'other-imitations', the noise of ducks and cats and aeroplanes.

3. There is a tendency that is not well understood for small children's pragmatic signs to incorporate nasality; perhaps simply because it takes a positive muscular effort to close off the nasal passage.

4. Some prosodic and paralinguistic features seem naturally related to certain meanings: loudness with intensity of feeling, falling tone with definitiveness (certainty), rising tone with tentativeness (uncertainty), and so on.

All these factors may have played a part in the evolution of language; we cannot say. Languages change very quickly; they have had so many generations to evolve – say 50 000 generations at least – that there is no trace of their origin left in modern speech. (Onomatopoeic words are not relics from the remote past; they are remodelled every few generations.) It is perhaps useful to be reminded here that there is no such thing as a 'primitive' language: all languages in the world today are equally the product of this long process of evolution, and all are equally well adapted to the cultures whose needs they serve.

From Protolanguage to Language

In other words, all human languages are equally far removed from the 'protolanguage' stage we must have passed through in the early evolution of *homo loquens*. But as to exactly how the protolanguage may have evolved into a language of the type represented by all languages today, we can say very little – because here even the developmental evidence is lacking.

The reason for this is an interesting one. If we are right, then for the first 6 – 9 months after creating his first symbolic signs, a child is in some sense recapitulating the history of language. But then he takes a leap. There is, after all, no need for him to go through the whole process, step by laborious step; as soon as he is ready to take up the mother tongue, he can do so. He has in fact been listening to it for a long time; when he has reached the point where he can understand how grammar works – typically a few months into the second year – he can start building it up for himself. (Some children like to think about it for quite a long time before actually plunging in, and worry their parents by remaining quite uncommunicative till they are three years old; but provided they show understanding of what is said to them, the development is still taking place.)

Since there was no more advanced model around when our ancestors were evolving language, presumably they did not take any such leap – although we cannot be sure. There is a critical difference between a protolanguage and a language, a threshold that has to be crossed; there is no intermediate stage. (There can be a **mixture** between the two, and typically there is with children; the first features of 'language', in the adult sense, may appear quite early in the proto-linguistic phase, while equally, protolanguage features may continue well on into the development of language. Some are in fact still present in adult speech: so-called 'interjections' like *Ah!* and *Ow!* are in fact relics of

protolanguage that have survived in adult speech.) So it may be that there is a leap at this point in evolution as well.

What is significant for our present discussion is not how the transition was made, but the nature of the transition itself. What is the essential difference between language and protolanguage?

Essentially, the difference is this. A language is a three-level ('tristratal') system. It consists of meanings, which are coded in wordings, which are then recoded in sounds. In technical linguistic terms, it consists of three levels, or 'strata': a **semantic** level, a **grammatical** (strictly, 'lexico-grammatical') level, and a phonological level. It does not code meaning directly into sound.

A protolanguage, on the other hand, is a two-level ('bistratal') system. It consists of meanings that are coded directly into sounds. Or rather, we should say into 'expressions', since as we have seen, the protolinguistic sign may be expressed either in sound or in gesture. (When language evolved, sound took over as the primary medium of expression – it has the obvious advantage that the receiver does not need to watch what the sender is doing, or even to be able to see the sender at all.) So let us say protolanguage consists simply of meanings and expressions.

As far as we know, all communication systems in species other than man are protolanguages. It may be that, as claimed in some of the studies referred to earlier, chimpanzees or gorillas are capable of operating with language; but this is doubtful – none of the examples given is conclusive in this respect, and it seems strange that if their brain is capable of doing so, they have not in fact begun to evolve any such system among themselves. Nearer home, we find protolanguage in our pets: cats and dogs communicate in this way, at least to us (apparently rather less among themselves). In all these species, the basic unit of communication is a protolinguistic sign: some unanalysed semantic bundle (for example, 'I'm hungry – feed me!') coded into some fixed expression (for example, a particular miaow, or a rubbing of the head against some object).

A system of this kind is subject to various limitations, the principal one being that it is impossible to mean more than one thing at once. To do that, it is necessary to be able to take the elements of a message apart and recombine them in all sorts of different ways; but the constituents of a two-level system are fixed and immutable, like a system of traffic signals – they have to be, otherwise the system would not work. They cannot be taken apart and recombined. (They can be strung out in a sequence, which gives an appearance of flexibility; but falsely, since the meaning of the sequence is simply the sum of its parts.) To be able to signal 'My friend here is hungry', or 'Are you hungry?', or even 'I'm not hungry', you have to have a three-level system, in which the various components of meaning can be teased apart, coded separately by different devices (selection, modification, ordering, prosodic modulation, etc. – all the paraphernalia of grammar and vocabulary, in fact), and then recoded into a single integrated output.

There comes a point, therefore, in the life of the individual, when the protolanguage can no longer serve his needs; and the same thing must have happened in the history of the race. It may be possible to use tools, with only a protolanguage; but it is certainly not possible to make them. To become toolmakers, we had to have language.

For a diagrammatic representation of the difference between language and protolanguage, see Figure 3.1.
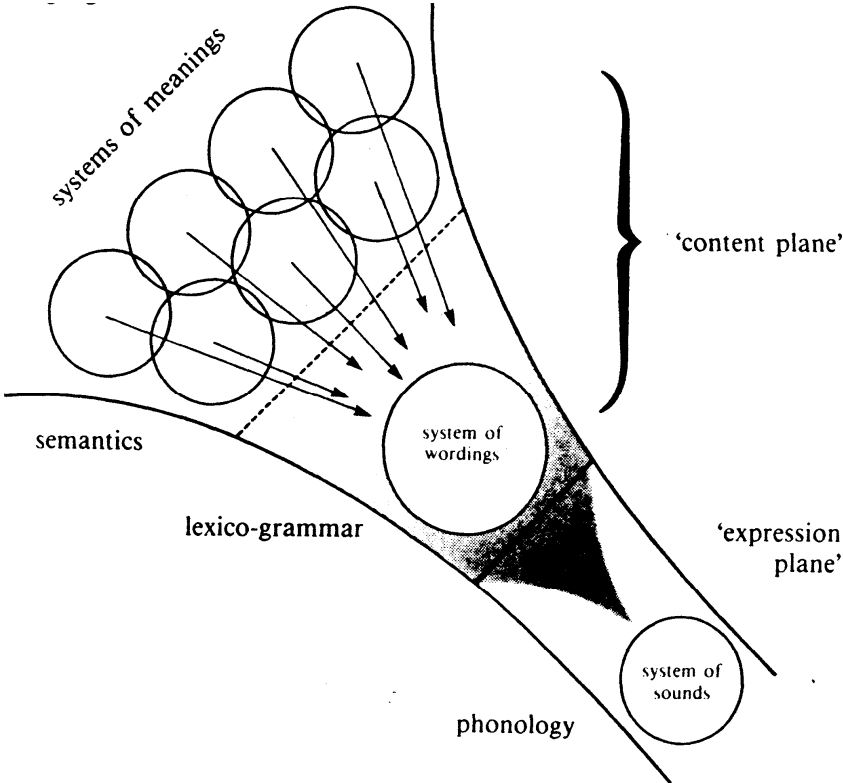
(a) protolanguage
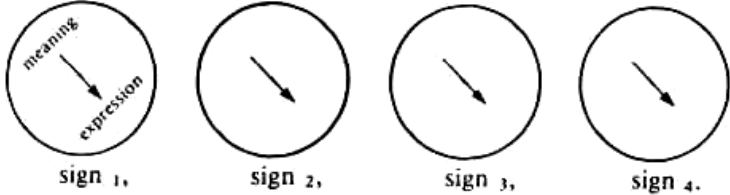
(b) language

Fig. 3.1. Language and protolanguage

The theory described above is only one in a series of many others striving to explain the origin of language in a specific speaking subject. Later in the course of Linguistics, you will learn about another famous hypothesis, the so-called innatist theory of language development, worked out by H. Chomsky. Below are given fragments describing a yet another version of language acquisition process. We hope that acquaintance with them will stir up your own interest in the fascinating field of language development.

V. Further Reading

Children's Language Acquisition

The development of speech in children is summarized in Table 3.1. This development is the same for children throughout the world regardless of the language. French and Thai children babble between the ages of 3 and 6 months just as children who grow up in English-speaking countries do. Children who are language delayed because of mental retardation nevertheless still acquire language in the same order as children of average or above average intelligence.

Table 3.1

The Development of Vocalization

Crying	Birth
Cooing, crying	1 – 2 months
Babbling, cooing, crying	3 – 6 months
First words	8 – 14 months
First sentences (telegraphic speech)	18 – 24 months
Simple syntactic structures	3 – 4 years
Speech sounds correctly pronounced	4 – 8 years
Most semantic distinctions understood	9 – 11 years

At birth, a baby is capable of producing sounds, none of which arc articulate or understandable. The infant is not yet equipped to produce speech. However, within a relatively short time, the baby refines vocalization until the first word is produced.

Newborns are usually exposed to large amounts of stimulation: auditory, visual, and tactile. They quickly learn to distinguish human voices from environmental noises. By 2 weeks of age, infants can recognize their mothers' voices. Between 1 and 2 months of age, infants start producing "human" noises in the form of cooing as they make sounds that have a vowel-like *oo* quality. They use intonation. Soon they can understand some simple words and phrases.

Babbling

About midway through their first year, babies begin to babble. This sign of linguistic capacity is indicated when they repeat consonant-vowel combinations such as *na-na-na* or *ga-ga-ga*. Unlike cooing, babbling tends to occur when the babies are not attempting to communicate with others; in fact, some babies actually babble more when they are alone than when people are present in the room with them.

During babbling, babies do not produce all possible sounds: they produce only a small subset of sounds. Indeed, sounds produced early in the babbling period are seemingly abandoned as experimentation begins with new combinations of sounds. Research by Oller and Eilers (1982) has shown that late babbling contains sounds similar to those used in producing early words such as *da-da-da*.

Semantic Development

Young children first acquire meaning in a contentbound way, as a part of their experiences in the world that are largely related to a daily routine. Mother may say. "It's story time," but the youngster is already alerted by the picture book in Mother's hand. "It's time for you to take a bath" may not convey the message by itself; the time of day or evening and the presence of a towel, washcloth, and toys for the tub also give clues. Since the sharing of stories and baths are a regular part of the child's daily routine, the young child has mapped out language in terms of observations.

Around their first birthday, babies produce their first word. Typically, *dada*, *mama*, *bye-bye*, or *papa* are characteristic first words; they all have two syllables that begin with a consonant and end with a vowel.

Because youngsters' first words convey much meaning for them, most first words are nouns or names: *juice*, *dada*, *doggie*, and *horsie*. Verbs such *as go* and *bye-bye*, in this case meaning to go, quickly follow. Content-laden words dominate children's vocabulary at this age, and they possess few function words such as *an*, *through*, and *around*.

The use of one word to convey a meaningful message is called a *holophrase*. For instance, "cookie" means "I want a cookie."

First words may be overapplied. "Doggie" may refer to a four-legged animal with a tail. The neighbor's pet cat would also qualify. Tony, age 14 months, lived next to a large cattle-feeding operation. *Cow* was one of his first words. When Tony saw a large dog or horse, he immediately identified the animal as a "cow." Later, Tony refined his definition to refer only to female cattle as "cows."

Semantic development in children is interesting, for speaking and listening abilities can vary with the same child. Gina, an 18-month-old, was playing when her uncle pointed to a clock and asked, "What's that?" Getting no response, he pointed to other objects in the room: the television set, the fireplace, and a table. Each time her uncle asked, "What's that?" Gina merely looked at him. He decided she didn't know the names of the objects. To test his theory, he tried a new line of questioning. He asked Gina: "Where's the table? Where's the clock? Where's the fireplace? Where's the television set?" Each time, Gina pointed to the correct object. Gina's listening vocabulary exceeded her speaking vocabulary. In the next few months, she began using the names of the same objects in her speaking vocabulary, as the objects became more important to her conveying of messages.

Vygotsky argued that young children initially use language only as a tool for social interaction. Later, they use language both in talking aloud during play and in verbalizing their intentions or actions.

Telegraphic Speech

After producing their first word, children rapidly develop their vocabulary, acquiring about 50 words in the next 6 months. At this time, children begin putting words together to express even more meaning than that found in a single word. In this way, children convey their thoughts, but they omit function words such as articles and prepositions. Brown and Fraser (1963) call these two-word utterances *telegraphic* because they resemble telegrams that adults would send.

The limited number of words in telegraphic speech permits children to get their message across to others very economically. For instance, Sarah, age 20 months, says, "More juice" instead of, "I want another glass of juice." The resultant message is essentially the same as the more elaborate sentence.

Overgeneralization

Young children acquire the grammatical rules of English, but often they tend to *overgeneralize*. For example, a 3-year-old may refer to *mouses* and *foots* rather than *mice* and *feet*. *Comed* may be substituted for *came* and, similarly, *falled* for *fell*. Such overgeneralization indicates evidence of the creativity and productivity of the child's morphology because these forms are neither spoken by an adult nor heard by the child.

In early childhood, children tend to invent new words as part of their creativity. Clark (1981, 1982) observed children between the ages of 2 and 6 years and found that they devised or invented new words to fill gaps in their vocabularies. Clark found that if children had forgotten or did not know a noun, the likelihood of word invention increased. *Pourer* was used for *cup* and *plant-man* for *gardener* in such instances. Verbs are often invented in a similar fashion, yet the verbs tend to evolve from nouns the children know. One 4-year-old created such a verb from the noun *cracker* when she referred to putting soda crackers in her soup as "I'm cracking my soup".

Children often substitute words that they know for words that are unfamiliar to them. A 3-year-old was taken by her grandmother to see *The Nutcracker*. After intently watching the ballet for a period of time, the child inquired, "Is that the can opener?"

Children tend to regularize the new words they create, just as they overgeneralize words they already know. Thus, a child may refer to a person who rides a bicycle as a "bicycler," employing the frequently used *-er* adjective pattern rather than the rare, irregular *-ist* form to create the word *bicyclist*.

Semantic development occurs at a slower rate than do phonological development and syntactic development. The grammar, or syntax, of a 5-year-old approaches that of an adult. The child can actually carry on a sensible conversation with an adult. There are only a few grammatical patterns, such as the passive voice and relative clauses, yet to be acquired at this age.

By age 4, a child understands all of the sounds in a language; however, the child may be 8 years old before he or she is able to produce the sounds correctly. For example, Jeff, age 3 ½, was going shopping with his mother and her friend Penny. While they were waiting for his mother to get ready, Penny noticed that Jeff had a wallet and some money. She asked Jeff what he planned to buy. Jeff said, "A purse." "A purse?" Penny asked. To this question, Jeff insisted. "No, I want a purse." Since the boy seemed to enjoy playing with trucks and cars, Penny was quite confused so she changed the conversation. At the shopping mall, Penny volunteered to help Jeff with his shopping. She asked Jeff to show her what he wanted to buy, thinking perhaps a carrying case for miniature cars was what he had in mind. Jeff led her to a large display of blue, red, and white things in the department store. Penny smiled and said, "You want a Smurf!" Jeff beamed, "Yes, I want a purse." Jeff obviously could distinguish the difference between the words *Smurf* and *purse* when someone else said them, but the words sounded identical to him when he produced them.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Are the data given by P. Farris of any practical and theoretical interest? Why?

2. Do all kids acquire language exactly as it is described in Table 3.1?

3. Is linguistic capacity really indicated when kids repeat consonant-vowel combinations such as na-na-na?

4. Does P. Farris's account really explains to us how we start communicating?

5. What about children who start talking at 3, 4 or even 5 or 6 and become celebrities (Consider the story of the famous Maxwell)?

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From: Santrock J.W. Biological Influences // Children. Madison: Brown and Benchmark, 1995. – P. 204 – 205.

Biological Influences

The strongest evidence for the biological basis of language is that children all over the world acquire language milestones at about the same time developmentally and in about the same order, despite the vast variation in language input they receive. For example, in some cultures adults never talk to infants under one year of age, yet the infants still acquire language. Also, there is no other convincing way to explain how *quickly* children learn language than through biological foundations.

With these thoughts in mind, let's now explore the following questions related to biological influences on language: How strongly is language influenced by biological evolution? Are children biologically prewired to learn language? Do animals have language? Is there a critical period for language?

Biological Evolution

A number of experts stress the biological foundations of language. They believe it is undeniable that biological evolution shaped humans into linguistic creatures. In terms of biological evolution, the brain, nervous system, and vocal system changed over hundreds of thousands of years. Prior to *Homo sapiens*, the physical equipment to produce language was not present. *Homo sapiens* went beyond the groans and shrieks of their predecessors with the development of abstract speech. Estimates vary as to how long ago humans acquired language – from about 20,000 to 70,000 years ago. In evolutionary time, then, language is a very recent acquisition.

Biological Prewiring

Linguist Noam Chomsky (1957) believes humans are biologically prewired to learn language at a certain time and in a certain way. He said that children are born into the world with a **language acquisition device (LAD)**, *a biological prewiring that enables the child to detect certain language categories, such as phonology, syntax, and semantics*. LAD is an innate grammatical ability that underlies all human languages.

Do Animals Have Language?

Many animal species have complex and ingenious ways to signal danger and to communicate about basic needs, such as food and sex. For example, in one species of firefly, the females have learned to imitate the flashing signal of another species to lure the aliens into their territory. Then they eat the aliens. However, is this language in the human sense? What about higher animals, such as apes? Is ape language similar to human language? Can we teach language to them?

Some researchers believe that apes can learn language. One simian celebrity in this field is a chimp named Washoe, who was adopted when she was about 10 months old. Since apes do not have the vocal apparatus to speak, the researchers tried to teach Washoe American Sign Language, one of the sign languages of the deaf. Washoe used sign language during everyday activities, such as meals, play, and car rides. In 2 years, Washoe learned 38 signs and, by the age of 5, she had a vocabulary of 160 signs. Washoe learned how to put signs together in novel ways, such as "you drink" and "you me tickle." A number of other efforts to teach language to chimps have had similar results.

The debate about chimpanzees' ability to use language focuses on two key issues. Can apes understand the meaning of symbols – that is, can they comprehend that one thing stands for another – and can apes learn syntax – that is, can they learn the mechanics and rules that give human language its creative productivity? The first of these issues may have been settled recently by Sue Savage-Rumbaugh and her colleagues (1993). They claim that pygmy chimpanzees have a communication system that can combine a set of visual geometric symbols and responses to spoken English words. They state that these

animals often come up with novel combinations of words and that their language knowledge is broader than that of common chimpanzees.

The debate over whether or not animals can use language to express thoughts is far from resolved. Researchers agree that animals can communicate with each other and that some can be trained to manipulate languagelike symbols. However, although such accomplishments may be remarkable, they fall far short of human language, with its infinite number of novel phrases to convey the richness and subtleties of meaning that are the foundation of human relationships and communication.

Is There a Critical Period for Learning Language?

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's heavy German accent illustrates the theory that there is a critical period for learning language. According to this theory, people who emigrate after the age of 12 will probably speak the new country's language with a foreign accent the rest of their lives, but, if people emigrate as young children, the accent goes away as the new language is learned. Acquiring an accent is less related to how long you have lived somewhere than to the age at which you moved there. For example, if you move to a certain part of New York City before you turn 12 you'll probably "tawk" like a native. Apparently, puberty marks the close of a critical period for acquiring the phonological rules of various languages and dialects.

The stunted language development of a modern "wild child" also supports the idea of a critical-period for language acquisition. In 1970 a California social worker made a routine visit to the home of a partially blind woman who had applied for public assistance. The social worker discovered that the woman and her husband had kept their 13-year-old daughter Genie locked away from the world. Kept in almost total isolation during childhood, Genie could not speak or stand erect. During the day, she was left to sit naked on a child's potty seat, restrained by a harness her father had made – she could move only her hands and feet. At night she was placed in a kind of straitjacket and caged in a crib with wire mesh sides and a cover. Whenever Genie made a noise, her father beat her. He never communicated with her in words but growled and barked at her instead.

Genie spent a number of years in extensive rehabilitation programs, such as speech and physical therapy. She eventually learned to walk with a jerky motion and to use the toilet. Genie also learned to recognize many words and to speak in rudimentary sentences. At first she spoke in one-word utterances. Later she was able to string together two-word combinations, such as "big teeth," "little marble," and "two hand." Consistent with the language development of most children, three-word combinations followed – for example, "small two cup." Unlike normal children, however, Genie did not learn how to ask questions and she doesn't understand grammar. Genie is not able to distinguish between pronouns or passive and active verbs. Four years after she began stringing words

together, her speech still sounded like a garbled telegram. As an adult she speaks in short, mangled sentences, such as "father hit leg," "big wood," and "Genie hurt."

Children who are abandoned, abused, and not exposed to language for years, such as Genie, rarely learn to speak normally. Such tragic evidence supports the critical period hypothesis in language development. Researchers debated the actual cutoff for a critical period in language development. Some argue that the age of 5 is the endpoint of a critical period; others say puberty.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Do you share the author's conviction that there are biological foundations to language development? Why yes? And why no?
2. Are children really biologically prewired to learn language?
3. Do animals have language?
4. Is there a critical period for language acquisition?
5. What is the basis for the critical period, biology or social environment?

VI. Glossary

ontogeny – tracing structures back historically to the infancy or childhood of the individual;

phylogeny – tracing structures back historically to the infancy or childhood of the human race;

babble – the combination of a consonant sound and a vowel sound that is repeated; example, "da-da-da";

holophrastic speech – a one-word utterance first used by children between the ages of 12 and 18 months to convey meaning; example, "Juice" for "I want more juice";

telegraphic speech – two-word utterances first used by children between 18 and 24 months of age to convey meaning; example, "Doggie allgone" for "The dog is gone".

VII. Case Study

Interview three to five parents to find out about the first vocal and gestural signs their kids used in communication. Interpret the results from the perspectives outlined in the unit.

VIII. Test Yourself

Match As and Bs

A.

1) In the case of language development all the evidence we can have is…
2) A symbolic act is an act of meaning which is…
3) The ability to mean is important to any kid, because it is…
4) A language is…
5) The system of a protolanguage is…

B.

1) …addressed to someone; unless there is a receiver it will not work.

2) …derived from what we know about how children learn language.

3) …a three-level system. It consists of meanings, which are coded in wordings, which are then recoded in sounds.

4) …functional. Language is created for a purpose, to do something with it.

5) …subject to various limitations, the principle one being that it is impossible to mean more than one thing at a time.

IX. References

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X. Recommended Reading for Further Study

1. Burling R. The Talking Ape. Oxford University Press, 2007. – 298 p.
   A very convincing and witty account of the origin of language.

2. Chomsky N. Syntactic structures. The Hague: Mouton, 1957. – 244 p.
   A very exciting book defining linguistics as principally concerned with the universals of the human mind.

3. Danon-Boileau L. The Silent Child. Oxford University Press, 2007. – 198 p.
   Case-based analysis of how children with pathology find their way towards speech.

4. Dessalles J.-L.Why we Talk. Oxford University Press, 2007. – 320 p.
   Clear, multidisciplinary investigation of the origins of language.

UNIT 4: THE THEORY OF SPEECH ACTS AND PRAGMATICS

I. Outline

1. The object of study of communicative linguistics.
2. General outline of speech acts theory.
3. Illocutions.
4. Perlocutions.
5. Locutions.
6. Pragmatics.
7. Language through the perspective of speech acts theory and pragmatics.

II. Objectives

After reading the below stuff, you should be able to

– outline briefly what communicative linguistics is involved with in its study of language;
– explain the approach of the theory to the basic unit of language as activity;
– define the main constituents of the speech acts;
– comprehend how language is viewed from the perspective of pragmatics and the theory of speech acts;
– explain how speech acts are performed, classify them into groups and interpret their major dimensions.

III. Key words: *structuralism, perlocution, macrolinguistic model, locution, complete, performative, meaningful, type, functional, direct, intentional, indirect, illocutionary, pragmatics, sentence, utterance.*

IV. Horizons of the Speech Acts Theory and Pragmatics

In the previous lecture we touched upon symbolic and non-symbolic acts. And we emphasized that when learning to talk a child communicates not with words or any other linguistic structural units but with acts to control his or her environment, and we defined the acts as symbolic

What are the acts? How are they different from the units of structural linguistics? The latter are constituent elements of language viewed as a structure, which functions irrespective of the environment. Communicative linguistics deals with actual human interactions conditioned by a great variety of factors which taken together constitute the model of communication. That is communicative linguistics describes communication as it really manifests itself in human society.

Communicative linguistics deals with what people mean by the language they use, how they actualize its meaning potential as a communicative resource.

In other words, while structural linguistics analyzes and models the system of constituent units of language and their functions inside the mechanism of language, communicative linguistics deals with actual human interactions conditioned by communicative intentions, psychology, cultural values and relations of speakers, i.e., it describes the role of communication in the human community.

The Theory of Speech Acts

It is evident that studying language as behaviour (activity) communicative linguistics cannot operate on the structural units, like phonemes, morphemes, words, and sentences as they break down the process of communication: none of these units can function separately and fulfill the communicative function. Besides, even the largest structural units, like utterances, are of little help for the theory of speech activity because their definition and singling out is based on formal criteria which disregards intentions, motives and contexts. Consider the following example of interaction:

A: *What's your problem?*
B: *I am fine!*

This dialogue presents a clear-cut sample of speech episode as a unit of language structure. But it tells us very little about the speakers' intentions and it allows of several interpretations unless we examine the whole macrolinguistic model of this episode: motives, channels, characteristic features of the speakers.

For the analysis of actual communication centered around the human speaker we need to model a different unit. It should be a complete, meaningful, functional, intentional, socially purposeful unit of motivated speech. This unit has acquired the name of **speech act** and its further exploration has led to the formation of the theory of speech acts (**the speech act theory**).

The theory of speech acts as a special discipline was devised initially by the philosophers of language J. Austin and J. Searle in the 50s and 60s of this century. Then, it attracted the efforts of philosophers and logicians who have also contributed much to the interpretation of communication as a purposeful (otherwise called illocutionary) act. This theory as well as the theory of speech activity on the whole, was developed in opposition to structuralism, and as an expansion and prolongation of the ideas of W.von Humboldt who defined language as activity many decades ago, and it certainly laid the foundation of future pragmalinguistics.

It was the hope of the early speech act philosophers that to study speech acts would be to study linguistic communication. J. Austin and J. Searle wanted to get away from the study of structural units, like sentences and words and instead concentrate on action-based units and their performance: ''The reason for concentrating on the study of speech acts is simply this, – said J. Searle – all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts. The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act'' (J. Searle, 1969).

On the basis of this functional orientation, the philosophers of language developed the theory of how acts are performed in utterances. According to their illocutions (aims, purposes) the speech acts were classified into types and

therefore we single out: requests, orders, suggestions, abuses, statements, performatives, proposals, commitments (promises), etc. Naturally, scholars hold different views on the number, essence and classification of illocutions, and the lists of speech acts may vary with authors (we observed the variability of communicative models before). But on the whole, the lists of speech acts coincide with the lists of activity goals which people pursue and express linguistically.

Now it is important to note how the notion of speech act in this theory actually differs from the notion of sentence in structuralism. In early works of the philosophers of language the speech act was defined as structurally identical with the sentence, and on this formal principle speech acts were extracted from texts (discourse). Later on this limitation was reconsidered, but not completely, and in many instances these two phenomena (speech act and sentence) coincide in form. Let us observe the following simple example:

— *This is my home.*

When pronounced outside the context this chunk of speech may be regarded as a sentence. It has no addressee, no purpose, no illocution. But in real communication it should be motivated and purposeful, otherwise it would be not uttered at all. And it happens so that one sentence may represent several speech acts:

— *This is my home. (Do come in!) – sounds as an invitation.*
— *This is my home. (Do not come in!) – sounds as a prohibition.*
— *This is my home. (Look around) – sounds as a statement, etc.*

Different speech acts here lead to different effects on the addressees (these effects are otherwise called ''perlocutions''). On the other hand, one illocutionary act may be verbalized in the form of different sentences (these forms are otherwise called ''locutions''), like in the following example featuring the act of invitation:

— *This is my home!*
— *Come in, please!*
— *Welcome!*
— *Make yourself at home!*

The choice of each variant in communication will depend on the relations of people, time, place and other settings of speech. Besides, illocutions may be expressed directly (like in *Welcome! Come in, please!)* or indirectly (like in *This is my home!).* And, therefore, we differentiate direct speech acts in which the form coincides with the purpose expressed (or in academic terms: locution coincides with illocution), and indirect speech acts in which the form is not indicative of illocutionary force but can be nevertheless decoded by the listener in the context of speech (compare, for example, how we understand rhetorical questions).

Hence, to understand the illocution (aim) of a speech act we need to know all the components and participants of the communicative process because the effect and successfulness of our speech depends on them. This idea unites the

theory of speech acts with other branches of communicative linguistics. At the same time, the theory of speech acts in particular explains the forms of structuring of different acts, their regular grammatical models and types, the way indirect acts are created in the language (like, for example, a formal statement: *I like it* in a context turns into a threat or abuse or suggestion). Therefore it is evident that the theory of speech acts is closely related to grammar and text linguistics.

But let me show you that this theory is not free of limitations. Although a conception of language as part of a theory of action initially sounded promising, later it lead people to disappointments. In spite of its functional orientation philosophy of language has shown no interest in the way members of society actually behave in different types of social encounters, how they manipulate language to achieve their goals, and what rules govern this manipulation. It disregarded sociology and psychology of speech behavior of individuals and was criticized for it. But nevertheless, its appearance in linguistics is an outstanding event, an attempt to classify speech behavior, i.e., to model live speech.

Now, our next objective is to show how communicative linguistics overcame some of the limitations of the Speech Act Theory by expanding its object (speech acts) to include pragmatic strategies of speakers. This new branch has acquired the name of pragmatics or pragmalinguistics.

Pragmalinguistics

To begin with, let us ask ourselves the following question: How should speakers behave in order to make their speech effective?

It is commonly known that to achieve their goals people resort to different strategies in their behaviour. Do analogous strategies exist in speech? The answer is, certainly, yes. The attempt to study, describe and interpret these strategies directed at successful and competent speech behaviour has brought about new branch in the communicative linguistics, namely, pragmalinguistics.

The term originates from Greek 'pragma', meaning 'deed'. First it was used in science to name a branch of semiotics – pragmatics that deals with the relation between signs and their users. As a linguistic discipline pragmalinguistics (otherwise called linguistic pragmatics) is comparatively young. It sprang up in the 70s of the last century when the interest of linguists to the social aspects of language was especially strong. Its recognition is due to the fact that the importance of contextual factors in recognizing speech act functions became widely agreed upon and a level was needed to account for such considerations. Thus, for example, G. Leech, who is a celebrity of American linguistics, and who once strongly opposed 'contextualism' and considered pragmatics as the 'ragbag of linguistics', had to admit that we cannot really understand the nature of language itself unless we understand pragmatics: how language is used for communication. His later publications, like 'Principles of Pragmatics' made a valid contribution in the development of the theory.

The new science also borrowed some older ideas of the philosophers of language, especially the ideas of L. Wittgenstein, the famous German philosopher. L. Wittgenstein considered that language as any other social activity is rule-governed; these rules lie outside the language itself in the extralinguistic reality, and they determine the choice of certain 'linguistic games', i.e. speech strategies: special forms of behavior necessary for communication to be successful. These rules of linguistic behaviour are fixed in the habits, norms and traditions of speakers, and their knowledge is a sign of an individual's proper socialization.

The idea of speech strategies was further developed by N. Chomsky who introduced the notion of 'communicative competence' meaning speakers' command of the interactionally proper and useful rules of speech behaviour (N. Chomsky, 1965). Let us illustrate the nature of these rules.

The question we have to answer now is: What should speakers know to ensure successful communication? Is it only the knowledge of language structures, like words, phonetics, grammar? Anyone would answer that a competent speaker should know a lot more.

D. Hymes considers that communicative competence involves not only the knowledge of language structure, but a lot of social and cultural information which enables speakers to understand the communicative value of linguistic forms (D. Hymes, 1972). Any speakers of a foreign language will find it easy to recall the situations when they were not sure how to express their anger or gratitude in a proper way, how to react to an invitation, or compliment, or offer, etc. These doubts always result from a low communicative competence, lack of knowledge of how conventional norms of behavior should be represented in linguistic forms.

One may ask if there are any general rules governing pragmatically adequate speech behavior. H.P. Grice, the American linguist and philosopher has answered this question positively. H.P. Grice investigated this issue and in the 70s he worked out and published the system of such basic rules, conversational postulates effective in any language community. These postulates (also known as Gricean Maxims) originate from his general Principle of Cooperation which reads that the speaker's communicative contribution at every stage of encounter (dialogue) should be adequate to the common goal of this encounter. In other words, every speaker's utterance in its quality, quantity, manner and mode should lead to success in communication (H.P. Grice, 1968).

Grice's rules of cooperation list numerous communicative conditions under which speech is most efficient. Among these pragmatic, (i.e. *useful*) rules there are, for example, the following:

(1) Communication is more successful when the interlocutors have some common background knowledge.

(2) Communication is more successful when the interlocutors are mutually interested in the topic and results of interaction.

(3) The more the interlocutors know about each other the more successful is communication (H.P. Grice, 1968).

Therefore, pragmatics focuses on the intentions of speakers, on the conditions of communication and communicative strategies which lead to an effective organization of social activities. Language is modelled by pragmalinguistics in the form of activity organizing rules, also known as pragmatic norms. These norms are transmitted from generation to generation in every society alongside with other social institutions. Some of the pragmatic norms are systematized, like the norms of etiquette or the rules of politeness. Politeness makes up one of the closely studied fields of pragmalinguistics. G. Leech devoted his study of pragmatic rules to a discussion of the interpersonal rhetoric, principles of politeness and irony, to the principles of processibility, clarity, economy and expressivity. Other norms, though not recorded, are known to every educated speaker as rules of behaviour, like: speech should be brief, intelligeable, appropriate, etc. This interest in speech strategies modeling the process of adequate interaction within the society makes pragmalinguistics a very practical study.

Summing up what has been said above we may say that the authors working in the field of pragmatics claim that language provides a means whereby certain actions may be performed. Any human utterance, the speech-act theory claims, is not first of all a species of language, but is rather a species of action. Language, in this view, provides a means whereby certain actions may be performed. The main thesis is that communicants use language to form an utterance; in so doing, they also perform related actions and make possible the performance of certain actions in the response by the listeners or readers.

Focusing on language and other sign systems, structuralist and semiotic models regard language as a self-contained system whose manifestations are to be understood primarily through structural analysis. The discussed theory views it differently. In the view of its authors and followers language is not a semiotic system which absorbs and contains history, but one which emerges from history.

The speech-acts theory and pragmatics offer a new approach to the understanding of language by actually claiming that action is a larger and more basic category than language. Language is not prior to or more primary than action, but it is a product of human action and also a means whereby we perform certain kinds of action. Language is never autonomous and context-free. It is a means, an instrument, an enabling device for some of the actions of human beings. If everything that human beings do or can do is an instance of action, then both the development and use of language are actions, and even the working and reading of texts are actions. The speech-act theory and its followers, thus, try to show how language and texts function in the context of all human actions.

Below are extracts from books dealing with the issues discussed. See how the authors' arguments correlate with what was said in the lecture.

V. Further Reading

From: Searle J. What is a speech act // Language and social context. Ed. P.P. Giglioli. England: Penguin Books, 1980. – P. 136 – 137.

In a typical speech situation involving a speaker, a hearer, and an utterance by the speaker, there are many kinds of acts associated with the speaker's utterance. The speaker will characteristically have moved his jaw and tongue and made noises. In addition, he will characteristically have performed some acts within the class which includes informing or irritating or boring his hearers; he will further characteristically have performed acts within the class which includes referring to Kennedy or Khrushev or the North Pole; and he will also have performed acts within the class which includes asking questions, issuing commands, giving reports, greeting and warning. The members of this last class are what Austin called illocutionary acts and it is with this class that I shall be concerned in this paper, so the paper might have been called 'What is an Illocutionary Act?' I do not attempt to define the expression 'illocutionary act', although if my analysis of a particular illocutionary act succeeds it may provide the basis for a definition. Some of the English verbs and verb phrases associated with illocutionary acts are: state, assert, describe, warn, remark, comment, command, order, request, criticize, apologize, censure, approve, welcome, promise, express approval and express regret. Austin claimed that there were over a thousand such expressions.

By way of introduction, perhaps I can say why I think it is of interest and importance in the philosophy of language to study speech acts, or as they are sometimes called, language acts or linguistic acts. I think it is essential to any specimen of linguistic communication that it involve a linguistic act. It is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol or word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol or word or sentence, which is the unit of linguistic communication, but rather it is the production of the token in the performance of the speech act that constitutes the basic unit of linguistic communication. To put this point more precisely, the production of the sentence token under certain conditions is the illocutionary act, and the illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. What are some of the English verbs which have to do with illocutionary acts?
2. What constitutes the basic unit of verbal communication?
3. How does the author define the illocutionary act?

<center>***</center>

> In this text, the objection to the orthodox idealization of language for linguistics is based on the observation that language is much more than an abstract system of rules for linking form and meaning: it is also the use of such rules to communicate. A valid model of language should therefore also account for its use in 'communicative conduct and social life'.

We break irrevocably with the model that restricts the design of language to one face toward referential meaning, one toward sound, and that defines the organization of language as solely consisting of rules for linking the two. Such a model implies naming to be the sole use of speech, as if languages were never organized to lament, rejoice, beseech, admonish, aphorize, inveigh, for the many varied forms of persuasion, direction, expression and symbolic play. A model of language must design it with a face toward communicative conduct and social life.

Attention to the social dimension is thus not restricted to occasions on which social factors seem to interfere with or restrict the grammatical. The engagement of language in social life has a positive, productive aspect. There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless. Just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as semantic rules perhaps control aspects of syntax, so rules of speech acts enter as a controlling factor for linguistic form as a whole.

The acquisition of competence for use, indeed, can be stated in the same terms as acquisition of competence for grammar. Within the developmental matrix in which knowledge of the sentences of a language is acquired, children also acquire knowledge of a set of ways in which sentences are used. From a finite experience of speech acts and their interdependence with sociocultural features, they develop a general theory of the speaking appropriate in their community, which they employ, like other forms of tacit cultural knowledge (competence) in conducting and interpreting social life.

There are several sectors of communicative competence, of which the grammatical is one. Put otherwise, there is behavior, and underlying it, there are several systems of rules reflected in the judgements and abilities of those whose messages the behavior manifests.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. 'There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless'. What do you think Hymes has in mind here? Can you think of examples of such 'rules of use'?

2. Halliday talks about 'functions of language' and Hymes, in this text, talks about 'rules of use' and 'rules of speech acts'. Do you think that the three expressions mean much the same thing?

<center>55</center>

Texts 3 and 4 deal with the relationship between the speech act, the sentence, and the utterance, and therefore with the distinction between semantics and pragmatics. In this text, Searle argues that the study of the meanings of speech acts is not essentially different from the study of sentence meaning, and is therefore part of semantics. And yet the meaning of a speech act is dependent too on its being performed in an appropriate (non-linguistic) context.

There are, therefore, not two irreducibly distinct semantic studies, one a study of the meanings of sentences and one a study of the performances of speech acts. For just as it is part of our notion of the meaning of a sentence that a literal utterance of that sentence with that meaning in a certain context would be the performance of a particular speech act, so it is part of our notion of a speech act that there is a possible sentence (or sentences) the utterance of which in a certain context would in virtue of its (or their) meaning constitute a performance of that speech act.

The speech act or acts performed in the utterance of a sentence are in general a function of the meaning of the sentence. The meaning of a sentence does not in all cases uniquely determine what speech act is performed in a given utterance of that sentence, for a speaker may mean more than what he actually says, but it is always in principle possible for him to say exactly what he means. Therefore, it is in principle possible for every speech act one performs or could perform to be uniquely determined by a given sentence (or set of sentences), given by the assumptions that the speaker is speaking literally and that the context is appropriate. And for these reasons a study of the meaning of sentences is not in principle distinct from a study of speech acts. Properly construed, they are the same study. Since every meaningful sentence in virtue of its meaning can be used to perform a particular speech act (or range of speech acts), and since every possible speech act can in principle be given an exact formulation in a sentence or sentences (assuming an appropriate context of utterance), the study of the meanings of sentences and the study of speech acts are not two independent studies but one study from two different points of view.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Speech acts are referred to by Hymes in the previous extract. He associates them with rules of use. Is this consistent with the view of speech acts expressed by Searle in this text?

2. Why are the study of the meaning of sentence and the study of speech acts not two independent studies?

<center>**✲✲✲**</center>

From: Blakemore D. Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics. Blackwell, 1992. – P. 39 – 40.

> The writer here draws a clear distinction between semantics and pragmatics, and, in respect to the latter, acknowledges the relevance of non-linguistic knowledge (which would include the knowledge of appropriate contexts for speech acts) in the interpretation of utterances. An utterance can be acceptable (that is to say, appropriate in context) without being grammatically well-formed as a sentence. This would seem to suggest that speech-act meaning cannot, after all, be subsumed under the study of sentence meaning.

Since an utterance consists of a certain sequence or phrase with a certain syntactic structure and made up of words with certain meanings, its interpretation will depend on the hearer's linguistic knowledge. However, since it is produced by a particular speaker on a particular occasion and the hearer's task is to discover what the speaker meant on that occasion, its interpretation will also depend on the non-linguistic knowledge that she brings to bear. …

The assumption is that there is a distinction between a hearer's knowledge of her language and her knowledge of the world. In this section I shall argue that it is this distinction that underlies the distinction between *semantics* and *pragmatics.* ...

The assumption that there is a distinction between linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge marks our approach as *modular*, and thus as consistent with the view of language found in Chomskyan generative grammar. According to this approach, knowledge of language is one of a system of interacting modules which make up the mind, each of which has its own particular properties. This implies that the mind does not develop as a whole, but with specific capacities developing in their own ways and in their own time. In other words, knowledge of language cannot be regarded as the result of general intelligence. It also implies that actual linguistic performance – that is, the way we use language – is a result of the interaction of a number of different systems, and that the acceptability of an utterance may be affected by factors other than its grammatical well-formedness. An utterance may consist of a perfectly grammatical sentence and still be unacceptable. Equally, an ungrammatical sentence may be used in the production of a perfectly acceptable utterance.

<center>***Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities***</center>

1. How do the last two sentences in this text key in with the points made by D.H. Hymes?

2. Reference is made here to the 'occasion' of utterance. In extract 3 from J.R. Searle's Speech Acts reference is made to the 'context' of utterance. Do they mean the same, and are they given the same weight in the description of meaning?

<center>57</center>

The field of discourse politeness seems to provide us with an outstanding topic for some basic studies in pragmatics. Rules of discourse politeness govern facets and forms of linguistic activity. Very often such politeness practice has a history of its own, which might render a seemingly innocent convention explanatorily pregnant, unlike many ordinary conventions.

Moreover, practices of discourse politeness apparently vary so much with period, culture, society… that a very narrow view of the nature of discourse politeness is not prone to emerge from responsible studies of it …

However, the whole history of discourse politeness is not one of effortless attempts. Sometimes you are required to spare your fellow's feelings at your own expense. This is illustrated by the following paragraph of the Book of Ladies' Etiquette: "Never anticipate the point or joke of any anecdote told in your presence. If you have heard the story before, it may be new to others, and the narrator should be allowed to finish it in his own words."…

Now, the question arises, whether there are some basic rules of discourse politeness, that underlie the rules that are explicitly prescribed by manuals of politeness and those that are implicitly commended by their courteous followers.

A simple answer seems to suggest itself. Geoffrey Leech, in his recent book "Principles of Pragmatics" expresses it in the following way: other things being equal, minimize the expression of beliefs which are unfavourable to the hearer or to a third party, according to some relevant scale of values.

Coming under this general Principle of Politeness are several maxims of politeness, such as the Tact Maxim, reading: other things being equal, minimize the expression of beliefs which express or imply cost to the addressee or a directly related third party.

These maxims and the underlying Principle of Politeness focus on a scale of values which is not the speaker's, but rather that of the addressee or of designated third party. However, each of those maxims has a twin maxim that focuses on the speaker's point of view. Thus, beside the Tact Maxim, of minimizing cost to others, there is a Generosity Maxim, of minimizing benefit to oneself.

Admittedly, the maxims that focus on the speaker are less important than those that focus on the others, in terms of politeness practices, but, to be sure, they do have regulative as well as explanatory power.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Do rules of discourse politeness really exist?
2. Do you agree with Leech's definition of the basic politeness rule?
3. What do maxims of politeness focus on?
4. Do maxims of politeness have any power?

VI. Summing Up Discussion

1) How far has the speech act theory advanced in the study of human communication in comparison with structuralism?

2) What limitations of this theory as devised by the philosophers of language were noticed and criticized by linguists later?

3) How is the speech act defined, extracted from speech and functionally interpreted by scholars? Have you noticed any difference in their approaches?

4) Could you think of some speech acts? Give them some labels and explain their illocutionary and perlocutionary force (effect).

5) How do you understand the subject matter of pragmalinguistics? In what terms does this study model speech behaviour (unlike the speech act theory)?

6) What are the universal conversational principles? Rules of cooperation? Try to illustrate how they organize speech.

7) How are Grice's conversational principles related to Leech's principles of politeness in terms of pragmalinguistics? Give some examples from each of the sets of principles.

8) What are speech strategies? How are they treated by pragmalinguistics? How do you assess the role of their description for linguistics?

9) What do you think about the role of pragmalinguistic research for practical needs of communication?

VII. Test Yourself

A. *The same or different?*

1) illocutionary – purposeful
2) pragmatics – performance
3) perlocution – effect
4) locution – location

B. *False or True?*

1) One sentence can represent only one speech act.
2) One illocutionary act may be verbalized in the form of different locutions.

C. *Fill in the missing word*

1) Speech acts in which the form coincides with illocution are called _____.

2) Speech acts in which the form is not indicative of the illocutionary force but can be nevertheless decoded by the listener in the contexts of speech, are classified as _____.
    a) permative;   b) direct;   c) indirect

VIII. References

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IX. Recommended Reading for Further Study

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UNIT 5: THE IMPORTANCE OF CHANNEL AND THE THEORY OF TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

I. Outline

1. Mode of communication as the ruling factor in the course of history.
2. Medium as message.
3. Subordinate role of content.
4. Medium as the mass-age.
5. Media as extensions of some human faculty.
6. Printed book adding much to the cult of individualism.
7. Medium and a global village.
8. Critical view of the technological determinism theory.

II. Objectives

After soaking into the below stuff you should be able to:

– understand the important role played by the channel constituent in organizing human communication;

– work out if content retains its high position in the hierarchy of communication model constituents;

– interpret the theory of technological determinism and find out its merits and demerits;

– think of your own examples of the relative importance of the media;

– understand the influence of the medium on the linguistic aspect of the message.

III. Key words: *mode of communication; media; culture; change; technology; message; simultaneous world; retribalizing; acoustic space; visual; involvement; detachment; software; hardware; printing press; oral; written; electronic; extension; amplify; organize; dominate; interpret; alphabet; linear logic; global village; post literate.*

IV. Mode of Communication and Its Role

Channel is numbered among constituents of communication model by many authors (Jacobson, Hymes). But its actual role hasn't been investigated properly so far. That's why opinions differ. One of the most ardent defenders of the decisive impact of the channel constituent was a well known Canadian theorist Marshal McLuhan. The lecture is based on his theory because it magnifies the role of the channel which otherwise might be considered absolutely secondary in importance. Yet, it is very difficult to expound on M. McLuhan's claims because

a) they have always been surrounded by public and academic controversy;

b) the language of the theorist is rather difficult for understanding, for he obviously preferred puns and wit over logic as a way to support his ideas.

He also liked one-liners. McLuhan was a gifted phrasemaker who tried to encapsulate key ideas in memorable slogans. More often than not, his aphorisms were metaphorical. For example, *"People don't actually read newspapers – they get into them every morning like taking a hot bath."* McLuhan never claimed to present a coherent body of truth. In fact he warned the readers not to worry if they spotted contradictions. He explained that he worked more from the intuitive right hemisphere of the brain rather than out of the logical left side. In tongue-in-cheek fashion he acknowledged the confusion his "theory" created:

I don't pretend to understand it. After all, my stuff is very difficult [1, p. 13].

Determining the Course of History

Coming to his study of culture through a background in English literature McLuhan pictured himself as a blind man tapping his cane in all directions to discover the nature of his media environment. He referred to his ideas as "probes", the tentative gropings of one who takes "the numb stance of the technological idiot." Whereas Karl Marx believed that change in modes of *production* determine the course of history, McLuhan concluded that changes in modes of *communication* determine the course of history. All of his writings probe the casual relationship between media and culture, but his greater satisfaction came from discovering linkages, not proving them. He cited art rather than repeatable data as evidence of their validity.

McLuhan initially accepted the inevitability of media's influence:

I'm not advocating; I'm merely probing and predicting trends. Even if I opposed them or thought them disastrous, I couldn't stop them, so why waste my time lamenting... Resisting a new technology will not halt its progress [1, p. 14]

Yet he later held out hope that an understanding of the electronic revolution could blunt some of its agonizing effects. Instead of scurrying into a corner and wailing about what the media are doing to us, one should charge straight ahead and kick them in the electrodes.

McLuhan tried to avoid moral judgments as he described the rise of nationalism, sexual license, destruction of neighborhoods, the increase of drug usage, and the loss of privacy – all of which he attributed to changes in communication technology. But as a devout Christian he admitted: "*No one could be less enthusiastic about these radical changes.*" He hoped to provide a survival strategy for those who were going through electronic culture shock without even knowing it. His book *Understanding Media* may not have completed the task, but it introduced his most famous line.

The Medium is the Message

Students of McLuhan continue to debate what the Canadian theorist meant by this apparently simple equation. Sometimes he seemed to indicate that the words chosen are irrelevant: " *The content or message of any particular medium*

has about as much importance as the stenciling on the casing of an atomic bomb." On other occasions he made the significance of the symbols a matter of degree: "*I'm not suggesting that content plays* no *role – merely that it plays a distinctly subordinate role.*" Either way, he obviously believed that the medium changes people more than the sum total of all the messages of that medium. Alternatively, the same words spoken face-to-face, printed on paper, or presented on television, provide three different messages. He warns that the content of a medium "*is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind.*" [1, p. 18].

The word *message* lends itself to a pun which further illustrates McLuhan's conviction that the media work us over. "*The medium is the* message," he claimed – an idea consistent with his warm bath metaphor. He talked about television roughing up the viewer. He also described the turbulent 1960s with another variation of the theme: "*The medium is the* mass-age." Although McLuhan obviously had fun with his play on words, he was serious about the core idea. Be it oral, written, or electronic, the primary channel of communication changes the way we perceive the world. The dominant medium of any age dominates people.

All Media are Extensions of Some Human Faculty

McLuhan believed that the book is an extension of the eye. The wheel is an extension of the foot. Clothing is an extension of the skin. Electronic circuitry (especially the computer) is an extension of the central nervous system. You can see by these examples that McLuhan avoids a narrow definition of media. Media are anything that amplify or intensify a bodily organ, sense, or function. Media not only extend our reach and increase our efficiency, they also act as a filter to organize and interpret our social existence.

He pictured out prehistoric ancestors as "*noble primitives*" who possessed a harmonious balance of the five senses. They perceived the world equally through hearing, touch, sight and taste. Communication inventions altered this balance. Tom Wolfe, an analyst of popular culture, summarizes McLuhan's thesis in the following way:

> *The new technologies…radically alter the entire way people use their five senses, the way they react to things, and therefore, their entire lives and the entire society. It doesn't matter what the content of a medium like TV is… twenty hours a day of sadistic cowboys caving in people's teeth or… Pablo Casals droning away on his cello* [3, p. 293].

The idea that distinct forms of communication engage our senses differently was not original with McLuhan. Specialists in communication had already suggested that sudden extensions of communication are reflected in cultural disturbances. And writing to establish speech as a discipline distinct from English, one of them claimed that words for the ears serve a different

function than words for the eyes. A speech is not merely "*an essay standing on its hind legs.*" [2, p. 21].

But McLuhan was unique in claiming that channels of communication are the primary cause of cultural change. Whereas some researchers regarded an institution as "*the lengthened shadow of a man*", McLuhan was sure that cultural institutions are lengthened shadows of human inventions – specifically the alphabet, the printing press, and the electronic media. As with all of his ideas, he had a catchy way of putting it: " *We shape our tools and they in turn shape us.*" [1, p. 30].

Exchanging an Eye for an Ear

According to McLuhan, the tribal village was an acoustic place where the senses of hearing, touch, taste and smell were developed far beyond the ability to visualize. The right hemisphere of the brain dominated the left hemisphere. The ear was king; hearing was believing. Members of this oral culture were unable to adopt the role of the detached observer – they acted and emotionally reacted at the same time.

Then someone invented letters. McLuhan wrote that the phonetic alphabet fell into the acoustic world like a bombshell, installing sight at the head of the hierarchy of senses. Of course the reader is free to disagree, illustrating McLuhan's belief that a private left-brain point of view becomes possible in a visual society. Both writer and reader are separated from the text. Literacy jarred people out of collective tribal involvement into "civilized" private detachment. Print made it possible to leave the tribe without being cut off from a flow of information.

He also claimed that the phonetic alphabet established the line as the organizing principle in life. In writing, letter follows letter in a connected, orderly line. Logic is modelled on that step-by-step linear progression. According to McLuhan, when literary people say, "*I don't follow you,*" they mean, "*I don't think you are logical.*" He alleged that the invention of the alphabet fostered the sudden emergence of mathematics, science, and philosophy in ancient Greece. He cited the current cultural upheaval in Africa as evidence that literacy triggers an ear to eye switch which isolates the reader.

The Printed Book Added Much to the New Cult of Individualism

If the phonetic alphabet made visual dependence possible, the printing press made it widespread. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan wrote that repeatability is the most important characteristic of movable type, and a run of 100,000 copies of his book suggest that he's right. Because the print revolution demonstrated mass production of identical products, McLuhan called it the forerunner of the industrial revolution.

He saw other unintended side effects of Gutenberg's invention. The rise of nationalism followed the homogenization of fluid regional tongues into a fixed national language. Printing deified not only the Gutenberg Bible, but all written words. The press turns words into The Word, and McLuhan labelled literate people as "natural suckers" for propaganda. But he regarded the fragmentation of society as the most significant outcome of the new innovation:

> *Printing, a ditto device, confirmed and extended the new visual stress. It created the portable book, which men could read in privacy and in isolation from others* [1, p. 50].

Many libraries have the words of Jesus – "The truth will set you free" – carved in stone above the main entrance. McLuhan said that the books entice free readers to be alienated from others in their literate culture.

Electronic Media are Turning the Planet into a Global Village

McLuhan was certain that we live in a unique revolutionary age, a balance point in history. The power of the printed word is over: "The age of print… had its obituary tapped out by the telegraph." But Marconi's invention was only the first of the electronic communication devices that would make the corner Radio Shack seem like a magic shop to previous generations.

	Telegraph	*Telephone*		*Radio*
	Film projector	*Phonograph*		
Television	*Photo copier*	*Answering machine*		
	Computer	*VCR*		*Compact disc*
Holograph	*Cellular phone*	*FAX*		

Before his death in 1980, McLuhan predicted that even the staggering cultural impact of communication hardware would be insignificant compared to the upheaval caused by the computer software to come.

He insisted that the electronic media are retribalizing the human race. Instant communication has returned us to a prealphabetic, oral tradition where sound and touch are more important than sight:

> *The day of the individualist, of privacy, of fragmented or "applied" knowledge, of "points of view" and specialist goals is being replaced be the over-all awareness of a mosaic world in which space and time are overcome by television, jets and computers – a simultaneous, "all-at-once" world in which everything resonates with everything else as in a total electrical field* [1, p. 30].

Linear logic is useless in the electronic society that McLuhan described. Acoustic people no longer inquire, "*Do you see my point*?" Instead we ask, "*How does that grab you?*" What we feel is more important than what we think. Leaders today can survive without vision, but they can't make it without charisma. Ted Koppel and David Letterman are late-night heroes because they know how to talk to the nation on TV in the same personal style that the town crier used in a preprint era.

McLuhan felt that all of us are members of a global village. The electronic media bring us in touch with everyone, everywhere, instantaneously. Closed human systems no longer exist. The rumble of tank treads crushing students in China vibrates in the living rooms of Chattanooga. We are the first postliterate generation. Privacy is both a luxury and a curse of the past. The planet is like a twelve-way party line or an Ann Landers column written large. Citizens of the world are back in acoustic space.

Television is a Cool Medium

McLuhan classified media as either hot or cool. Hot media are high-definition channels of communication and are usually beamed at a single sense receptor. Print is a hot, visual medium; so are photographs and motion pictures. They package lots of data in a way that requires little work on the part of the viewer. McLuhan would have labeled the text of this book hot but judged the cartoons as cool. Cool media's low definition draws a person in, requiring high participation to fill in the blanks.

McLuhan said a lecture is hot; discussions are cool. The hard sell is hot; the soft sell is cool. Plato's syllogisms were hot; Aristotle's enthymemes were cool. Despite radio's claim to be "the theater of the mind", he called it hot because the broadcast wave carries detailed information over a single channel. Yet he considered the telephone cool because its personal nature demands a response.

Note the parallel between McLuhan's categories of hot and cool and the distinctions between left brain and right brain. Hot media tend to be highly visual, logical, and private. They are organized to communicate packets of discrete information. Cool media tend to be aural, intuitive, and emotionally involving. Unlike the hot camera which focuses on the figure in the foreground, cool (right brain) media clarify the surrounding context and let perceivers insert themselves into the story. People naturally think of television as a visual medium, but McLuhan disputed that notion. He classified TV as an aural and tactile medium – very, very cool.

Television is cool because it requires involvement and participation to fill in its vague and blurry image. The low-definition video display presents a series of widely spaced dots which viewers must connect on their internal mental screens. Unlike radio or print, television doesn't bypass either sight or sound. You can probably study while listening to the radio, but television doesn't work well as background.

McLuhan's claim that TV engages our sense of touch was obviously controversial. He contended that "TV tattoos its message directly on our skins," and linked that "fact" to increased touch, nudity, and public sexuality of recent decades. Because television is a tactile medium, when we turn on the set, we do the same thing to ourselves.

We Look at the Present through a Rear-view Mirror

McLuhan charged that in this age of software, we still believe we're living in the age of hardware. Mechanics has given way to electronics, yet we insist that the world continues to be visual rather than acoustic. He admits that our rear-view mirror approach is nothing new. Greece looked back to the age of Homer for guidance; Rome looked back to Greece; the Renaissance looked back to Rome; and so on. People living in the midst of innovation often cling to what *was*, as opposed to what *is*. He considered education a prime example.

By the time Johnny starts school, he has already watched over 10,000 hours of television. According to McLuhan, the child craves in-depth involvement, not linear detachment. "But suddenly, he is snatched from the cool, inclusive womb of television and exposed – within a vast bureaucratic structure of courses and credits – to the hot medium of print." Johnny's friend Jenny discovers that unlike *Sesame Street,* her Tuesday class is not sponsored by the number *four*. Words plod along a blackboard one by one rather than prance in patterns on a user-friendly screen. McLuhan claimed that today's child knows that going to school is an interruption to his or her education. Because the teacher still considers video an audiovisual aid rather than the primary tool of learning, the information level for Jenny and Johnny takes a dip when they walk into he classroom.

The acoustic media are a threat to an educational establishment that has a vested interest in books. They run the schools as "intellectual penal institutions," with visual, print-minded teachers as mindguards. The result is a triumphant and bitter cry of "School's out forever" in Alice Cooper's countercultural song. The irony, from McLuhan's perspective, is that schools don't have to offer a rear-view mirror image of the world. If teachers would "plunge into the vortex of electronic technology," they could turn an outdated "ivory tower" into a modern day "control tower."

Critique of the Theory and the True Role of the Channel

The critique of the theory is enormous. Below are a few typical lines.

"[McLuhan] prefers to rape our attention rather than seduce our understanding." [3, p. 298].

"He has looted all culture from cave painting to *Mad* magazine for fragments to shore up his system against ruin." [3, p. 298].

"The style… is a viscous fog through which loom stumbling metaphors." [3, p. 298].

There is a lot in the theory to support the critics. Yet, its focus on the channel is really overwhelming. You have to sit up and think of it, which is especially important for those who mean to concentrate on the peculiarities of written, oral and electronic channels, and that is exactly the purpose of the follow up stuff.

The main drawbacks of the technological determinism theory may be summarized as follows:

1. It maintains that everything in communication is connected to one single factor – media. Its system of references can be to a degree valid only within itself.

2. It takes into consideration only turning points in the development of media. It is highly probable that the role of content may be to some extent blurred at the turning points, when the appearance of a new and highly prestigious channel may for a while shadow others and the content manifested through new media may seem more important and attractive to some groups of the communicants. But when the users are within the same channel then its role is invisible and the part played by the content is more distinct.

3. The theory of technological determinism doesn't consider linguistic aspect of the message at all, finding it unimportant. But one and the same content is sure to be realized differently depending on the media. Having focused on the latter the theory overlooked the interrelation between media and language.

V. Further Reading

From: Ellis A., Beattie G. The Psychology of Language and Communication. L.: Lawrence Erlbaum 2nd ed., 1992. – P. 17 – 19.

We communicate when we talk and we communicate by our silence when we don't. Speech may be the channel of communication *par excellence*, but speech is never naturally disembodied. In face-to-face conversations people will speak whilst maintaining a distinctive posture and at a certain distance. They may smile as they produce the sentence and gesture in the middle of it; their speech will have a distinctive tone and they may 'um' and 'ah' whilst they are saying it. They may look their partner in the eye and then, suddenly, break eye contact. They will have a distinctive appearance. When we think of communication we may naturally think of speech, but speech is just part of the stream of communicative behaviour – the behaviours which accompany speech may emphasize it, contradict it or even substitute for it. In order to understand human communication we have to understand the functional role of the separate channels which go to make up the stream of behaviour and how they interact. Some of the channels are relatively static; these have been termed 'standing features'. These *relatively* unchanging aspects of an interaction such as interpersonal distance and the appearance of the participants can themselves be used to communicate. Others are more dynamic. Thus speech itself, the vocal accompaniments of speech – the posture, gesture and looking behaviour of the participants – are constantly in a state of flux.

In Table 1 we have set out the five primary systems of communication beginning with the verbal system – speech itself – through to the standing features of the interaction that we have already mentioned.

Table 5.1

Systems of human communication
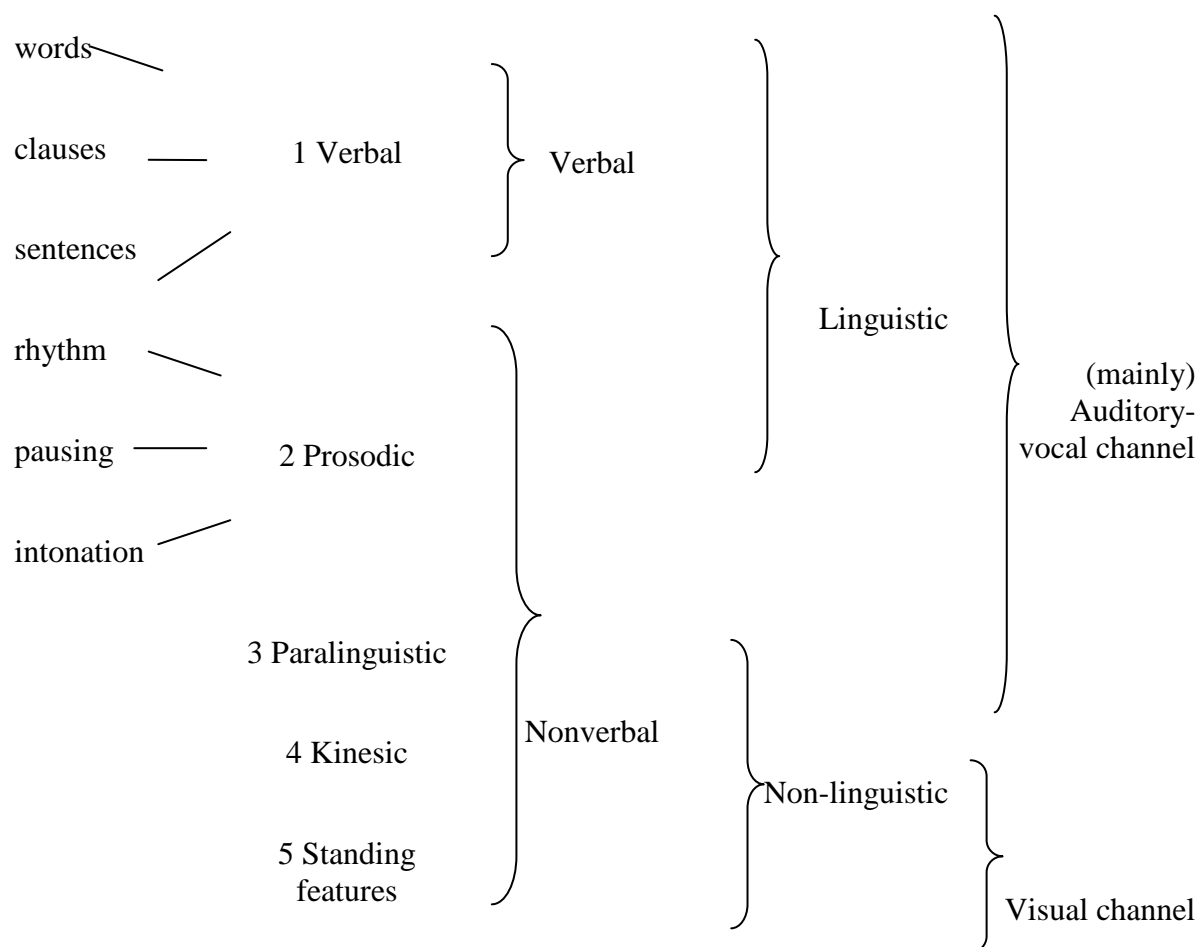
Verbal: The verbal system comprises speech itself. Speech is made up of words, clauses and sentences, which are themselves connected into higher-order units. The words are made up of morphemes, the smallest linguistic units that carry meaning, and phonemes, the sound units of language.

Prosodic: Prosody comprises intonation, rhythm and those pauses in speech whose position and function are linguistically determined. The positioning of pauses in speech can affect meaning. Intonation is the pitch pattern of speech. Intonation affects meaning.

Paralinguistic: When we speak we do more than use the verbal and prosodic system of language. We 'um' and we 'ah', we laugh and we cry, we whine and yawn. These are all vocal behaviours which form part of what is called 'paralanguage'.

Kinesic: The main kinesic channels of communication are movements of the face, head and body, posture and gesture.

Standing features of interaction: The principal standing features of interaction are interpersonal distance (and touch), orientation and appearance.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Do the authors use the word channel in the same way as M. McLuhan?

2. Do you agree with them that the language can only be manifested through the oral channel? (see table 5.1)

3. Consider the term code. Could it suit better to express the author's view of communicative behaviour?

<center>***</center>

From: Jakobson R. A Glance at the Development of Semiotics // Language in Literature, Harvard University Press, 1987. – P. 446.

Saussure underlines the fact that the language is far from being the only system of signs. There are many others: writing, visual, nautical signs, military trumpet signals, gestures of politeness, ceremonies, sets of rites; in the eyes of Saussure, "Customs have a semiological character." The laws of transformation of the systems of signs will have completely topical analogies with language's laws of transformation; and, on the other hand, these laws will reveal enormous differences. Saussure envisions certain dissimilarities in the nature of different signs and in their social value: the personal or impersonal factor, a thought-out act or an unconscious one, dependence or independence vis-à-vis the individual or social will, ubiquity or limitedness. If one compares the different systems of signs with language, one will witness, according to Saussure, the surfacing of aspects which one had not suspected; in studying rites or any other system separately, one will notice that all of these systems yield a common study – that of the specific life of signs, semiology.

According to the thesis Saussure maintained from the time of his preparation in 1894 of an unfinished study on William Dwight Whitney, "language is nothing more than one *particular case* of the Theory of Signs," and

> *this will be the major reaction of the study of language in the theory of signs, this will be the ever new horizon which it will have opened – to have taught and revealed to the theory of signs* a whole other and new side of the sign, *that is to say that the sign does not begin to be really known until we have seen that it is not only a transmissible thing but by its very nature a thing destined to be transmitted.*

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. What does Saussure mean when using the term system of signs – codes or channels?

2. Can Saussure's statement contradict the theory of technological development?

VI. Case Studies

Case Study 1

Read the below fragments from the book "The Valley of Horses", which describes how people can communicate in the situation when they don` t know each other's language. The author of the book, Jean M. Auel is an international phenomenon nowadays. In the below fragments she describes a very special case of communication. Study it carefully from the perspective of media.

Here are some important steps in your study:

1. Decide upon the number of media used.
2. Consider the effectiveness of each code/medium.
3. Interpret the choice of the heroine to learn the verbal code of other communicator.

"Ayla stared at the man. She couldn't help herself, though she knew it was discourteous. It was not only impolite to stare, a woman was never supposed to look directly at a man, especially a stranger. "Where's my brother, woman?" Jondalar shouted, grabbing her arms and shaking her. "Where is Thonolan?"

Ayla was shocked by his outburst. The loudness of his voice, the anger, the frustration, the uncontrolled emotions she could hear in his tone and see in his actions, all disturbed her. Men of the Clan would never have displayed their emotions so openly. They might feel as strongly, but manliness was measured by self-control.

There was grief in his eyes, though, and she could read from the tension in his shoulders and the tightening of his jaw that he was fighting the truth he knew but did not want to accept. The people she had grown up among communicated by more than simple hand signs and gestures. Stance, posture, expression, all gave shades of meaning that were part of the vocabulary. The flexion of a muscle could reveal a nuance. Ayla was accustomed to reading the language of the body, and the loss of a loved one was a universal affliction.

She returned to the fireplace to heat the soup. He watched her, still trying to fathom who she was. "That smells good," he said, when the meaty aroma wafted toward him.

The sound of his voice seemed out of place. He wasn't sure why, but it was something more than knowing he would not be understood. When he had first met the Sharamudoi, neither he nor they understood a word of each other's language, yet there had been speech - immediate and voluble speech – as each strove to exchange words that would begin the process of communication. This woman made no attempt to begin a mutual exchange of words, and she responded to his efforts with only puzzled looks. She seemed not only to lack an understanding of the languages he knew, but to have no desire to communicate.

No, he thought. That wasn't quite true. They had communicated. She had given him water when he wanted it, and she had given him a container to make

his stream, though he wasn't sure how she knew he needed one. He didn't form a specific thought for the communication they had shared when he gave vent to his grief – the pain was still too fresh – but he had felt it and included it in his wonderings about her.

"I know you can't understand me," he said, rather tentatively. He didn't know quite what to say to her, but he felt a need to say something. Once he started, words came easier. "Who are you? Where are the rest of your people?" He could not see much beyond the circle of light shed by the fire and the lamp, but he had not seen any other people, nor any evidence of them. "Why don't you want to talk?" She looked at him but said nothing.

A strange thought then began to insinuate itself into his mind. He recalled sitting near a fire in the dark before with a healer, and he remembered the Shamud talking about certain tests Those Who Served the Mother had to put themselves through. Wasn't there something about spending periods of time alone? Periods of silence when they could not speak to anyone? Periods of abstinence and fasting?

"You live here alone, don't you?"

Ayla glanced at him again, surprised to see a look of wonder on his face – as though he were seeing her for the first time. For some reason, it made her conscious of her discourtesy again, and she quickly looked down at the broth. Yet he had seemed unaware of her indiscretion. He was looking around at her cave and making his mouth sounds. She filled a bowl, then sat down in front of him with it and bowed her head, trying to give him the opportunity to tap her shoulder and acknowledge her presence. She felt no tap, and when she looked up, he was gazing at her questioningly and speaking his words. He doesn't know!

He doesn't see what I'm asking. I don't think he knows any signals at all. With sudden insight, a thought occurred to her. How are we going to communicate if he doesn't see my signals, and I don't know his words?

She was jarred by a memory of the time Creb had been trying to teach her to talk, but she didn't know he was talking with his hands. She didn't know people could talk with their hands; she had only spoken with sounds! She had spoken the language of the Clan for so long that she could not remember the meaning of words.

But I am not a woman of the Clan any more. I am dead. I was cursed. I can never go back. I must live with the Others now, and I must speak the way they speak. I must learn to understand words again, and I must learn to speak them, or I will never be understood. Even if I had found a clan of Others, I would not have been able to talk to them, and they would not have known what I was saying. Is that why my totem made me stay? Until this man could be brought? So he could teach me to speak again? She shuddered, feeling a sudden cold, but there had been no draught.

Jondalar had been rambling on, asking questions for which he didn't expect answers, just to hear himself talk. There had been no response from the woman, and he thought he knew the reason. He felt sure she was either training to be, or in the Service of the Mother. It answered so many questions: her healing skills, her power over the horse, why she was living alone and would not speak to him, perhaps , even how she had found him and brought him to this cave..."

Ayla had been trying to think of some way to begin to learn his words, and then she remembered how Creb had begun, with the name sounds. Steeling herself, she looked directly in his eyes, tapped her chest, and said 'Ayla'.

Jondalar's eyes opened wide. "So you have decided to talk after all! Was that your name?" He pointed at her. "Say it again" 'Ayla'.

She had a strange accent. The two parts of the word were clipped, the insides pronounced back in her throat as though she were swallowing them. He had heard many languages, but none had the quality of the sounds she made. He couldn't quite say them, but tried for the closest approximation: "Aaay-lah."

She almost couldn't recognize the sounds he made as her name. Some people in the Clan had had great difficulty, but none said it the way he did. He strung the sounds together, altered the pitch so that the first syllable rose and the second dropped. She couldn't ever remember hearing her name said that way, yet it seemed so right. She pointed at him and leaned forward expectantly.

"Jondalar," he said. "My name is Jondalar of the Zelan-donii."

It was too much; she couldn't get it at all. She shook her head and pointed again. He could see she was confused.

"Jondalar," he said, then slower, "Jondalar."

Ayla strained to make her mouth work the same way. "Duh-dah," was as close as she could come.

He could tell she was having trouble making the right sounds, but she was trying so hard. He wondered if she had some deformity in her mouth that kept her from speaking. Is that why she hadn't been talking? Because she couldn't? He said his name again, slowly, making each sound as clear as he could, as though he were speaking to a child, or someone lacking adequate intelligence, "Jon-da-lar . . . Jonnn-dah-larrr."

"Don-da-lah," she tried again.

"Much better!" he said, nodding approvingly and smiling. She had really made an effort that time. He wasn't so sure if his analysis of her as someone who was studying to Serve the Mother was correct. She didn't seem bright enough. He kept smiling and nodding.

He was making the happy face! No one else in the Clan ever smiled like that, except Durc. Yet it had come so naturally to her, and now he was doing it.

Her look of surprise was so funny that Jondalar had to suppress a chuckle, but his smile deepened and his eyes sparkled with amusement. The feeling was

contagious. Ayla's mouth turned up at the corners and, when his answering grin encouraged her, she responded with a full, wide, delighted smile.

"Oh, woman," Jondalar said. "You may not talk much, but you are lovely when you smile!" The maleness in him began to see her as a woman, as a very attractive woman, and he looked at her that way.

Something was different. The smile was still there, but his eyes ... Ayla noticed that his eyes in the firelight were deep violet, and they held more than amusement. She didn't know what it was about his look, but her body did. It recognized the invitation and responded with the same drawing, tingling sensations deep inside that she had felt when she was watching Whinney and the bay stallion. His eyes were so compelling that she had to force herself to look away with a jerk of her head. She fumbled around straightening his bed coverings, then picked up the bowl and stood up, avoiding his eyes.

"I believe you're shy," Jondalar said, softening the intensity of his gaze. She reminded him of a young woman before her First Rites. He felt the gentle but urgent desire he always had for a young woman during that ceremony, and the eager pull in his loins. And then the pain in his right thigh. "It's just as well," he said with a wry grin. "I'm in no shape for it anyway."

He talked to her and asked her where she had learned healing, not expecting an answer. She recognized her name, but nothing else. She wanted to ask him to teach her the meaning of his words, but she didn't know how. She went out, to get wood for the fireplace in the cave, feeling frustrated. She was hungry to learn to talk, but how could they even begin?" [p. 400 – 406]

"Great Mother! How did you get that fire started so fast?"

Ayla turned at his outburst with a quizzical look.

"How did you start that fire?" he asked again, sitting forward. "Oh, Doni! She doesn't understand a word I'm saying." He threw his hands up in exasperation. "Do you even know what you've done? Come here, Ayla," he said, beckoning to her.

She went to him immediately; it was the first time she had seen him use a hand motion in any purposeful way. He was greatly concerned about something, and she frowned, concentrating on his words, wishing she could understand.

"How did you make that fire?" he asked again, saying the words slowly and carefully as though, somehow, that would enable her to understand - and flung his arm towards the fire.

"Fy . . . ?" she made a tentative attempt to repeat his last word. Something was important. She was shaking with concentration, trying to will herself to understand him.

"Fire! Fire! Yes, fire," he shouted, gesticulating towards the flames. "Do you have any idea what it could mean to make a fire that fast?"

"Fyr...?"

"Yes, like that over there," he said, jabbing his finger in the air at the fireplace. "How did you make it?"

She got up, went to the fireplace and pointed to it. "Fyr?" she said.

He heaved a sigh and leaned back on the furs, suddenly realizing he had been trying to force her to understand words she didn't know. "I'm sorry, Ayla. That was stupid of me. How can you tell me what you did when you don't know what I'm asking?"

The tension was gone. Jondalar closed his eyes feeling drained and frustrated, but Ayla was excited. She had a word. Only one, but it was a beginning. Now, how could she keep it going? How could she tell him to teach her more, that she had to learn more.

"Don-da-lah . . . ?" He opened his eyes. She pointed to the fireplace again, "Fyr?"

"Fire, yes, that's fire," he said nodding affirmatively. Then he closed his eyes again, feeling tired, a little silly for getting so excited, and in pain, physically and emotionally. .

He wasn't interested. What could she do to make him understand? She felt so thwarted, so angry that she couldn't think of some way to communicate her need to him. She tried one more time.

"Dona-da-lah," she waited until he opened his eyes again, "Fyr ...?" she said with hopeful appeal in her eyes.

What does she want? Jondalar thought, his curiosity aroused. "What about that fire, Ayla?"

She could sense he was asking a question, in the set of his shoulders and the expression on his face. He was paying attention. She looked around, trying to think of some way to tell him, and she saw the wood beside the fire. She picked up a stick, brought it to him, and held it up with the same hopeful look.

His forehead knotted in puzzlement, then smoothed as he thought he was beginning to understand. "Do you want the word for that?" he asked, wondering at her sudden interest in learning his language, when she seemed not to have any interest in speaking before. Speaking! She wasn't exchanging a language with him, she was trying to speak! Could that be why she was so silent? Because she didn't know how to speak?

He touched the stick in her hand. "Wood," he said.

Her breath exploded out; she didn't know she had been holding it. "Ud ...?" she tried.

"Wood," he said slowly, exaggerating his mouth to enunciate clearly.

"Ooo-ud," she said, trying to make her mouth mimic his.

"That's better," he said, nodding.

Her heart was pounding. Did he understand? She searched again, frantically, for something to keep it going. Her eyes fell on the cup. She picked it up and held it out.

"Are you trying to get me to teach you to talk?"

She didn't understand, shook her head, and held the cup up again.

"Who are you, Ayla? Where do you come from? How can you do... everything you do, and not know how to talk? You are an enigma, but if I'm ever going to learn about you, I think I'm going to have to teach you to talk."

She sat on her fur beside him, waiting anxiously, still holding the cup. She was afraid that with all the words he was saying he would forget the one she asked for. She held the cup out to him once again.

"What do you want, 'drink' or 'cup'? I don't suppose it matters." He touched the vessel she was holding. "Cup," he said.

"Guh," she responded, then smiled with relief.

Jondalar followed through on the idea. He reached for the waterbag of fresh water she had left for him and poured some into the cup. "Water," he said.

"Ahddah.", "Try it again, water," he encouraged.

"Ooo-ah-dah."

Jondalar nodded, then held the cup to his lips and took a sip. "Drink," he said. "Drink water."

"Drringk," she replied, quite clearly except for rolling the r and swallowing the word somewhat. "Drringk ooahdah."

(Auel J.M. The Valley of Horses. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982. – P. 387 – 406)

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Case Study 2

One of the definitions of language runs as follows: Language is another being. Study the case described in the below fragment taken from the newspaper Vmeste, 2007, June 15 and try either to prove or disprove the above definition. See if it overshadows the famous one-liner "Medium is the message".

РУКИ ЗАМЕНЯЮТ ГЛАЗА

Слышала об удивительной книге, которую написала слепая женщина. Хотелось бы подробнее узнать о человеке, сумевшем, благодаря огромному упорству и целеустремлённости, преодолеть своё несчастье.

А. Мирон, г. Минск

Вероятно, речь идёт о книге «Как я воспринимаю, представляю и понимаю окружающий мир». Неповторимость, уникальность этой книги заключена в том, что её автор, Ольга Скороходова, была слепоглухонемой.

Родилась Ольга в 1914 году в Украине, в бедной крестьянской семье. Заболев менингитом, 5-летняя девочка потеряла зрение, слух, а потом и речь. Но, как говорят, беда одна не ходит. Вскоре умирает мать, единственный человек, который опекал беспомощную девочку. Ольга попадает в одесскую школу слепых, потом в харьковскую клинику для слепоглухонемых детей, которой руководил крупный учёный Иван Соколянский. Начинал он с обучения простейшим навыкам, с развития ощущения пространства, умения пользоваться осязанием. И только потом знакомил с азбукой Брайля и учил речи. Затем главным стало чтение. «Читатель может верить мне или не

верить, это его воля, – пишет Скороходова, – но знаниями и литературной речью я обязана чтению, чтению и ещё раз чтению книг, и в первую очередь художественной литературе».

Грянула Великая Отечественная война. Харьков заняли оккупанты. Гитлеровцы, ворвавшись в школу Ивана Соколянского, убили всех воспитанников. Лишь двоим чудом удалось спастись. Одной из уцелевших была Ольга Скороходова.

После войны вместе со своим учителем она переехала в Москву, стала учиться дальше. Трудная дорога, которую преодолевала Скороходова, привела её к потрясающим успехам. Сорока семи лет Ольга Скороходова защитила диссертацию, став кандидатом педагогических наук. Свидетели этой необыкновенной защиты рассказывают о том волнении, которое охватило переполненный зал, когда раздался ровный, немного глуховатый голос диссертантки. Ольга Ивановна не только прочла вступительную речь – она отвечала на вопросы слушателей («переводчики», касаясь её руки, выстукивали эти вопросы по особой азбуке). И лишь порой неточные интонации и чересчур низкий тембр голоса обнаруживали, что способность говорить свойственна учёному не от природы, а приобретена долгим и большим трудом.

Новые грани таланта Скороходовой открылись с выходом из печати её книги «Как я воспринимаю, представляю и понимаю окружающий мир», в которой она не только описывала свою жизнь, но и постаралась собрать материалы, представляющие большую научную ценность. Труд Ольги Скороходовой – это своеобразное руководство при воспитании глухонемых. Писатель глубоко исследует процесс восприятия слепоглухонемого. Оказывается, с помощью рук можно узнать человека, которого не видел несколько лет. И не только узнать, но даже определить его душевное состояние, его настроение. Так руки заменяют глаза.

В книге описывается также, что слепой и глухой человек способен «слушать» и наслаждаться музыкой и пением. Происходит это вновь при помощи рук – им передаётся вибрация инструмента, на котором играют, так человек «слышит». Впечатления Скороходовой от музыкального произведения всегда точны, верно воссоздают смысл произведения. Тонко чувствует она и природу. Любит цветы, наслаждается морем, солнцем, утренней свежестью. Её представления о мире не только верны, но и образны. Так, море она представляет в образе мифологического Посейдона, оно «представляется мне великим, широкоплечим, длинноруким, с пушистыми длинными кудрями из морской тины и такой же пышной бородой. Когда Посейдон сердится, он сильно раскачивает своей головой, развивающиеся кудри и борода нарушают спокойствие воздуха, и тогда начинается буря…».

И ночь с её тишиной и прохладой вызывает у автора поэтический образ: «Иногда я люблю идти по улице тихой, тёплой ночью. Всё кругом тихо-тихо, в домах замолкла дневная жизнь и шум, люди спят, тёмные прямоугольники окон не освещают улицы комнатным светом. Никто не знает, что я иду по улице одна и ничего не боюсь. И в таких случаях мне хочется представить ночь… в образе одинокой женщины. Чтобы обойти землю, она выскальзывает из уединённого дома, укутавшись тёмным покрывалом, идёт вокруг города, разливая запахи ночной сырости и навевая прохладу свои длинным покрывалом…».

Включенные в книгу очерки «В Музее-усадьбе Л.Н. Толстого», «О Байроне», «О Пушкине и Гоголе», «О том, как мне представляется Герцен», «А.М. Горький жив» и другие свидетельствуют не только о глубоком знании Скороходовой сочинений этих писателей, но и о своём, подчас очень оригинальном взгляде на их творчество. Эти очерки, а также подборка авторских стихов, которыми заканчивается книга, говорят ещё и о незаурядном литературном даровании автора.

Да, поистине нет предела возможностям человека!

К сожалению, Ольги Ивановны больше нет с нами. Но её жизнь останется огромным воспитательным примером стойкости и силы духа не только для многочисленных воспитанников Загорской школы слепоглухонемых, что под Москвой, но и многих других людей.

(*Подготовила Лилия Зизико*)

VII. Test Yourself

The same or different?

a) medium – channel
b) medium – message
c) meaning – message
d) code – medium

VII. References

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VIII. Recommended Reading for Further Study

1. Gordon G.N. An End to McLuhancy // Educational Technology. January 1982. – P. 39 – 45.
2. Rosenthal R. (ed) McLuhan: Pro and Con, N. Y.: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968. – P. 16 – 22.

UNIT 6: THE THEORY OF IMPLICATURE AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR COMMUNICATIVE LINGUISTICS

I. Outline

1. Communication as a transaction.
2. Conventional implicatures and conversational implicatures, or natural meaning and non-natural meaning (meaning-nn).
3. The Cooperative Principle of Grice.
4. The conversational conventions supporting the cooperative principle.
5. The maxim of quantity.
6. The maxim of quality.
7. Relation (relevance) maxim.
8. The maxim of manner.
9. Exhaustiveness of Grice's list. The maxim of politeness.
10. Interpretation of the Implicature Theory.

II. Objectives

After reading the essay you should be able

– to write out what principles guide communicants in their choice of linguistical and non-linguistical means for performing their communicative roles;

– to understand how these principles may affect interpretation of communicative acts.

III. Key words: *intention, cooperative principle, inference, maxim, quality, relevance, manner, politeness, open character.*

IV. Abstract

Effective choice of linguistical and non-linguistical means is based on the general assumption that each communicant should make her or his conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which she or he are engaged. There is an open number of conversational conventions, the most recognized of them being those of quantity, quality, relation, manner and politeness.

V. Glossary

conventional implicature – an additional unstated meaning associated with the use of a specific word, e.g. *A but B* implies a contrast between A and B, so 'contrast' is a conventional implicature of 'but';

conversational implicature – an additional unstated meaning that has to be assumed in order to maintain the cooperative principle, e.g. if someone says *The President is a mouse*, something that is literally false, the hearer must assume the speaker means to convey more than is being said;

cooperative principle – a basic assumption in conversation that each participant will attempt to contribute appropriately, at the required time, to the current exchange of talk.

generalized conversational implicature – an additional unstated meaning that does not depend on special or local knowledge: cf. *conversational implicature;*

hedges – cautions notes expressed about how an utterance is to be taken, e.g. *as far as I know* used when giving some information;

implicature – a short version of conversational implicature;

inference – the listener's use of additional knowledge to make sense of what is not explicit in an utterance;

manner – one of the maxims, in which the speaker is to be clear, brief and orderly;

maxim – one of the four sub-principles of the *cooperative principle;*

particularized conversational implicature – an additional unstated meaning that depends on special or local knowledge: cf. *conversational implicature;*

quality – one of the *maxims,* in which the speaker has to be truthful;

quantity – one of the *maxims,* in which the speaker has to be neither more or less informative than is necessary;

relation – one of the *maxims,* in which the speaker has to be relevant;

tautology – an apparently meaningless expression in which one word is defined as itself, e.g. *business is business*.

VI. Communication As a Transaction

Before soaking into the theory of implicature let us remember some basic facts about communication.

A. Definition of Communication

> Communication is a process in which people share information,
> ideas and feelings (6, 6)

B. The Elements of Communication

> The communication process is made up of various elements. These
> elements are: senders and receivers, codes, messages, media, noise,
> feedback, and setting

A communication transaction involves not only the physical act of communicating but also an expieriential and psychological ones: knowledge and impressions are being formed in the minds of the people who are communicating. As I communicate with you, for example, what I think and know of you will directly affect my communication with you.

The Three Principles of Transactional Communication

Communication as a transaction – **transactional communication** – involves three important principles. First, people engaged in communication are sending messages continuously and simultaneously. Second, communication events have a past, present, and future. Third, participants in communication play certain roles. Let's consider each of these principles in turn.

Participation is Continuous and Simultaneous

Even if you are not actually talking in a communication situation, you are actively involved in getting and giving symbols. For example, let's say you stop to ask directions to a particular building on campus. From the directions the person is giving, you are determining how far away the building is and how easy it will be to reach. At the same time you are giving feedback on how well you are receiving and understanding the directions. You may also be making some judgments about how effective the person giving the directions is as a communicator. You are participating continuously and simultaneously. You can see, then, that you are both a sender and a receiver.

All Communications Have a Past, Present, and Future

To understand the importance of past, present, and future in a communication, let's look in on Stewart and Chris, husband and wife, who are engaged in a heated argument. Stewart wants to go south for Thanksgiving; Chris wants to visit relatives instead.

It is impossible to understand this argument without knowing some history and how it affects what is going on now. During the last holiday (past), they visited Stewart's parents. Now Chris is trying to get Stewart to be fair and visit her family. Knowing some future implications can also be helpful. Chris knows that for the next holiday (future), Stewart has already made plans to go to a professional convention in the South. This will mean two trips south and none to see her relatives in St. Paul. The heated argument (present) is occurring because Chris is feeling cheated. The past and future are affecting Chris's ideas and feelings in the present. Stewart, however, seems to be ignoring both past and future.

Even if you have never met someone before, the past still affects your communication with that person – because your response to new people you meet is based on your past experience. You might respond to the physical type (short, tall, fat, thin), to the occupation (accountant, gym teacher), or even to a name (remember how a boy named Eugene always tormented you and you've mistrusted all Eugenes ever since?). Any of these things you call up from your past might influence how you respond to these people – at least at the beginning.

The future also influences communication. If you want a relationship to continue, you will say and do things in the present to make sure it does. (*Thanks for dinner, I always enjoy your cooking.*) If you think you will never see a

person again, this also might affect your communication. You might be more businesslike, leaving the personal aspects of your life out of the communication.

Consider This
At any point, each person is both reacting to and causing a reaction in others. Most of us tend to see ourselves as responding to what others say, without realizing that what they are saying may be a reaction to us. We are keenly aware that we said what we did because of what she said, but it may not occur to us that she said what she did because of what we said – just before, yesterday, or last year. Communication is a continuous stream in which everything is simultaneously a reaction and an instigation, an instigation and a reaction. We keep moving in a complex dance that is always different but made up of familiar steps.
Source: Deborah Tannen, That's Not What I Meant!

All Communicators Play Roles

Roles are parts we play or how we behave with others. And those roles are established by society or by individual relationships. For example, Carol, the student, is supposed to communicate in a particular way with her instructor, Professor Jones. Because she is in the role of student and he is in the role of teacher, she is expected to show him a certain amount of respect, not call him by his first name, and so on. Communication changes as roles change. When Carol later talks to her father, they will probably communicate from the roles of parent and child. When she goes to work, she will communicate with her boss in the role of employee.

As Carol plays the role of student, child, and employee, we can make some predictions about how she will communicate, since the society in which we live gives us some idea of what is expected in these roles. (*Don't talk back to your father. Let your boss know you're energetic*). In other cases the role is not so clear, and it may change according to how the participants define their relationship. Let's say, for example, that Carol meets her boyfriend after work. As she comes out to the parking lot, he says, *Get in the car*. This sentence tells us a good deal about their relationship and how they have defined it. If, instead, he gets out of the car, walks to meet her, puts his arm around her shoulder, and says, *Hi, honey*, we have a completely different impression of their relationship. How we communicate, then, is based on our roles in relation to one another. That is why no two communications are the same; they change to meet the needs of each particular relationship.

The roles we play – whether established by individual relationships or by the society – are also perceived differently by different people. These different perceptions **affect** the communication that results. For example, Tom in his role of youth director is well organized and maintains tight control over the classes he teaches. The kids who take his classes know they have to behave, or they'll

be in big trouble. Therefore they speak to him in a respectful voice and stay quiet when they're supposed to. To other kids, however, Tom's discipline indicates rigidity and inflexibility. These kids don't go by the Youth Center; they choose not to communicate with him at all.

The Principles in Action

Let's see how the three principles of transactional communication work as we listen to a conversation between Jane and Stacy:

1. Jane: *Hey, Stacy. Can I borrow your sweater?*
    Stacy: (Steps back, slight frown) *Well...*
    Jane: (Steps forward) *You know. The brown one with the white ducks.*
    Stacy: (Folds her arms in front of her) *What happened to all those new sweaters you got for your birthday?*

We know right away in this scene that Stacy does not want to cooperate, even though she never says so. As Jane speaks, Stacy simultaneously and continuously sends out signals: she frowns, she steps back, she folds her arms in front of her - all nonverbal symbols of resistance. Jane reinforces her verbal symbols by stepping forward - a nonverbal way of showing assertiveness.

This scene between Jane and Stacy would probably take no more than thirty seconds in real life, yet it is filled with symbols – some of which non-participants would be unable to detect. For example, let's speculate on the past and future aspects of this communication. How many times has Jane borrowed things from Stacy? How willing has Stacy been to lend them before? What has been their condition upon return? What is Jane and Stacy's relationship? Do they get along? Do they respect each other and each other's property?

We must also look at the roles that Jane and Stacy play. Their roles seem to be equal because they are friends. From their conversation, however, Jane is willing to play the role of borrower but Stacy is not willing to play the role of lender. The roles they play in this transaction will depend on the experience they have had with these roles in the past. If in the past Jane had returned a sweater dirty, this might make Stacy reluctant to continue in the role of lender.

When we look at this conversation between Jane and Stacy, we can see how complicated even a simple conversation can be. Still, we can never really understand what goes on in communication unless we look at it from a transactional perspective. Then we can begin to see the complexity and uniqueness of each communication event. As Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher, once observed, we cannot step into the same river twice because not only are we different but so is the river. The same is true of communication.

There is something always different. And what is more there are usually many modifications and changes in the form of every transaction.

How do we manage to communicate then? Is there anything invariant, unchanging that underlies the vast sea of ever changing characteristics?

Let us consider the above description of communication again. The account of communication in it may seem to be exhaustive. Yet there are very important issues which it doesn't cover at all.

Here is one of the most typical interactions. Each of us comes across dozens of them every time we communicate ourselves or watch others doing it.

2.   A.   *Where's the dean?*
           B.   *There was a notice downstairs about the staff meeting at 14.30.*

The two utterances seem to be totally unrelated. There are no obvious and direct semantic or formal ties between them. How do we understand then that they form an interaction and that the second utterance contains a hint of where the dean might be. What directs us in our inferences that the dean may be at the staff meeting? The other communicant doesn't say that directly.

Can the knowledge about continuality and simultaneity help us? Or that about past, present and future of all communications we have encountered? Do the above principles uncover what guides us both in the construction of our messages and in the interpretation of them? Most helpful and descriptive as they are, they leave certain important issues totally untouched. First of all the issues of *what...* and *how...*

1) What are the principles that underlie any role, any transactional event and either make them successive or most unhappy?
2) What guides us in our choice of meanings and means?
3) How do we manage to make an appropriate choice and achieve our goals when performing our communicative roles?
4) What is the basis for 'familiar steps'?

Think of a possible answer to questions 1 – 4 and then study the stuff below and try to answer the same questions again.

Grice's Theory of Implicature

Unlike many other topics in pragmatics, implicature does not have an extended history. The key ideas were proposed by Grice in the William James lectures delivered at Harvard in 1967 and still only partially published (Grice, 1975, 1978). The proposals were relatively brief and only suggestive of how future work might proceed.

The term *implicature* is used by Grice (1975) to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says. There are **conventional implicatures** which are, according to Grice, determined by 'the conventional meaning of the words used' (1975: 44). In the following example (3), the speaker doesn't directly assert that one property (being brave) follows from another property (being an Englishman), but the form of expression used conventionally implicates that such a relation does hold.

3.   *He is an Englishman, he is therefore, brave.*

If it should turn out that the individual in question is an Englishman and is not brave, then the implicature is mistaken, but the utterance, Grice suggests, need not be false. The same is true about the below statement.

4.   *A lot of sunshine dries out the soil.*

Of much greater interest to the discourse analyst is the notion of conversational implicature.

Consider the following.

5.   A: *There is no way for us to collect the money.*
          B: *Land is getting up again.*
          A: *What do you mean?*

There is no obvious conventional connection between the two statements (5A and 5B). But the speaker A is certainly **hoping** for one by asking his question. He is obviously looking for such connection, which is classed as a conversational implicature, or non-natural meaning or else meaning-nn in Grice's theory. According to Grice the latter, that is meaning-nn, or conversational implicature is derived from a general principle of conversation plus a number of maxims which speakers will normally obey. The general principle is called Cooperative Principle which Grice (1975: 45) presents in the following terms:

> *Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.*

The conversational conventions, or maxims, which support this principle are as follows:

Quantity: make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Relation: Be relevant.

Manner: Be perspicuous. [pəˈspɪkjʊəs] – ясный, понятный
             Avoid obscurity of expression. Avoid ambiguity.
             Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
             Be orderly.

Grice does nor suggest that this is an exhaustive list – he notes that a maxim such as *Be polite* is also normally observed – nor that equal weight should be attached to each of the stated maxims. (The maxim of manner, for example, does not obviously apply to primarily interactional conversation). We might observe that the instruction *Be relevant* covers all other instructions.

However by providing a description of the norms speakers operate with in conversation Grice makes it possible to describe what types of meaning a speaker can convey by floating one of these maxims. This floating of a maxim results in the speaker conveying, in addition to the literal meaning of his utterance, an additional meaning, which is a conversational implicature. As a brief example we can consider the following exchange:

6.	A: *I'm out of petrol.*
	B: *There is a garage round the corner.*

In this exchange Grice (1975:51) suggests that B would be infringing the instruction *Be relevant* if he was gratuitously stating a fact about the world via the literal meaning of his utterance. The implicature, derived from the assumption that speaker B is adhering to the Cooperative principle, is that the garage is not only round the corner, but also will be open and selling petrol. We might also note that, in order to arrive at the implicature, we have to know certain facts about the world, that garages sell petrol, and that *round the corner* is not a great distance away. We also have to interpret A's remarks not only as a description of a particular state of affairs, but as a request for help, for instance. Once the analysis of intended meaning goes beyond the literal meaning of the 'sentences-on-the-page', a vast number of related issues have to be considered.

As a brief account of how the term 'implicature' is used in discourse analysis, we have summarised the important points in Grice's proposal. We would like to emphasize the fact that implicatures are pragmatic aspects of meaning and have certain identifiable characteristics. They are partially derived from the conventional or literal meaning of an utterance, produced in a specific context which is shared by the speaker and the hearer, and depend on a recognition by the speaker and the hearer of the Cooperative Principle and its maxims. For the analyst, as well as the hearer, conversational implicatures must be treated as inherently indeterminate since they derive from the supposition that the speaker has the intention of conveying meaning and of obeying the Cooperative Principle. Since the analyst has only limited access to what the speaker intended, or how sincerely he was behaving, in the production of a discourse fragment, any claims regarding the implicatures identified will have the status of interpretations. In this respect, the discourse analyst is not in the apparently secure position of the formal linguist who has 'rules' of the language which are or are not satisfied, but rather, in the position of the hearer who has interpretations of the discourse, which do, or do not, make sense. (For a more detailed treatment of conversational implicature see Levinson, 1995).

Let us consider maxims in a greater detail.

Quality

7.	*John has two PhDs*
	+> I believe he has, and have adequate evidence that he has.

8.	*Does your farm contain 400 acres?*
	+> I don't know that it does, and I want to know that it does.

The first of these provides an explanation for 'Moore's paradox', namely the unacceptability of utterances like the following:

9.   *John has two PhDs but I don't believe he has.*

This sentence is pragmatically anomalous because it contradicts the standard Quality implicature that one believes what one asserts. The example in (9) simply extends the scope of quality by viewing *truth* as a special sub-case of sincerity applied to assertions; when one asks a question, one may standardly be taken to be asking sincerely and hence to be indeed lacking and requiring the requested information. Normally then, in co-operative circumstances, when one asserts something one implicates that one believes it, when one asks a question one implicates that one sincerely desires an answer and, by extension, when one promises to do x, one implicates that one sincerely intends to do x, and so on. Any other use of such utterances is likely to be a spurious or counterfeit one, and thus liable to violate the maxim of Quality.

Quantity

This maxim provides some of the most interesting of the standard implicatures. Suppose I say:

10.   *Nigel has fourteen children.*

I shall implicate that Nigel has only fourteen children, although it would be compatible with the truth of (10) that Nigel in fact has twenty children. I shall be taken to implicate that he has only fourteen and no more because had he had twenty, then by the maxim of Quantity ('say as much as it required') I should have said so. Since I haven't, I must intend to convey that Nigel has only fourteen. Similarly, consider the example below:

11.   *The flag is white.*

Since I have given no further information about other colours the flag may contain, which might indeed be highly relevant to the proceedings, I may be taken to implicate that the flag has no other colours and is thus wholly white. Or again suppose we overhear the following exchange:

12.   A: *How did Harry fare in court the other day*?
       B: *Oh, he got a fine.*

If it later transpires, that Harry got a life sentence too, then B (if he knew this all along) would certainly be guilty of misleading A, for he has failed to provide all the information that might reasonably be required in the situation.

All these examples involve the first sub-maxim of Quantity, which appears to be the important one, in which the provision of full information is enjoined. The effect of the maxim is to add to most utterances a pragmatic inference to the effect that the statement presented is the strongest, or most informative, that can be made in the situation; in many cases the implicatures can be glossed by

adding *only* to the prepositional content of the sentence, e.g. *Nigel has only fourteen children; the flag is only white; Harry only got a fine*.

Relevance

The technical use of the term *relevance* in the analysis of conversation is derived from the conversational maxims proposed by Grice (1975). If, as Grice suggests, there is a general agreement of co-operation between participants in conversation, then each participant can expect the other to conform to certain conventions in speaking. These conventions or maxims have to do with the *quantity* (or informativeness), the *quality* (truthfulness), the *manner* (clearness) and *relevance* of conversational contributions. Although he discusses and exemplifies the other maxims, Grice does not elaborate on the simple instruction 'Be relevant'. The discourse analyst wishing to make use of this notion is immediately confronted with the problem of deciding 'relevant to what?' One way of solving this problem is to translate the maxim 'Be relevant' into a more practically useful form as 'Make your contribution relevant in terms of the existing topic framework.'

What we have characterised as a convention of conversational discourse – 'making your contribution relevant in terns of existing topic framework' - could be captured more succinctly in the expression **speaking topically.** We could say that the discourse participant is 'speaking topically' when he makes his contribution fit closely to the most recent elements incorporated in the topic framework. This is most noticeable in conversations where each participant 'picks up' elements from the contribution of the preceding speaker and incorporates them in his contribution, as in the following fragment:

13.　　E:　　*I went to Yosemite National Park.*
　　　　F:　　*Did you?*
　　　　E:　　*yeah – it's beautiful there right throughout the year.*
　　　　F:　　*I have relations in California and that's their favourite Park because they … enjoy camping a lot.*
　　　　E:　　*Oh yeah.*
　　　　F:　　*They go round camping.*
　　　　E:　　*I must admit I hate camping.*

This type of 'speaking topically' is an obvious feature of casual conversation in which each participant contributes equally and there is no fixed direction for the conversation to go. In contrast, there is the type of conversational situation in which the participants are concentrating their talk on one particular entity, individual or issue. In such a situation, the participants may, in fact, 'speak topically', but they might also be said to be **speaking on a topic.** An extreme example of 'speaking on a topic' would be in a debate where one participant ignored the previous speaker's contribution on 'capital punishment', for example, and presented his talk quite independently of any connection with what went before. In practice, we should find that any

conversational fragment will exhibit patterns of talk in which both 'speaking topically' and 'speaking on a topic' are present.

The maxim of relevance is responsible for producing a large range of standard implicatures. For example, where possible imperatives will be interpreted as relevant to the present interaction, and thus as requests to implement some action at the present time. Hence:

14.   *Pass the salt*
      + > pass the salt now

Or consider another example:

15.   A: *Can you tell me the time?*
      B: *Well, the milkman has come.*

It is only on the basis of assuming the relevance of B's response that we can understand it as providing a partial answer to A's question. The inference seems to work roughly like this: assume B's utterance is relevant; if it's relevant then given that A asked a question, B should be providing an answer; the only way one can reconcile the assumption that B is co-operatively answering A's question with the content of B's utterance is to assume that B is not in a position to provide the full information, but thinks that the milkman's coming might provide A with the means of deriving a partial answer. Hence A may infer that B intends to convey that the time is at least after whenever the milkman normally calls. Below is yet another example:

16.   A: *Where is Bill?*
      B: *There's a yellow VW outside Sue's house.*

Exactly similar inferences can be made in cases like example (16), and it is clear that such inferences are fundamental to our sense of coherence in discourse: if the implicatures were not constructed on the basis of the assumption of relevance, many adjacent utterances in conversation would appear quite unconnected.

Manner

Finally, a number of different kinds of inference arise from the assumption that the maxim of Manner is being observed. For example, by the third sub-maxim of Manner ('be brief'), wherever I avoid some simple expression in favour of some more complex paraphrase, it may be assumed that I do not do so wantonly, but because the details are somehow relevant to the present enterprise.

If, instead of (17), I say (18), then I direct you to pay particular attention and care to each of the operations involved in doing (17), this being an implicature of the use of the longer expression:

17.   *Open the door.*
18.   *Walk up to the door, turn the door handle clockwise as far as it will go, and then pull gently towards you.*

But perhaps the most important of the sub-maxims of Manner is the fourth 'be orderly'. For this can be used to explain the oddity of (19):

19.   *The lone ranger rode into the sunset and jumped on his horse.*

This violates our expectations that events are recounted in the order in which they happened. But it is just because participants in conversation may be expected to observe the sub-maxim 'be orderly' that we have that expectation. Presented with (20) we therefore read it as a sequence of two events that occurred in that order:

20.   *Alfred went to the store and bought some whisky.*

We now see how the semanticist armed with the notion of implicature can extricate himself from the dilemmas raised above. He need not claim that there are two words *and* in English, one meaning simply that both conjuncts are true, the other having the same meaning plus a notion of sequentiality. For the sequentiality , the 'and then' sense of *and* in sentences like (20), is simply a standard implicature due to the fourth sub-maxim of Manner, which provides a pragmatic overlay on the semantic content of *and* wherever descriptions of two events, which might be sequentially ordered, are conjoined.

Implicatures that are 'triggered' in this unostentatious way, simply by the assumption that the maxims are being observed, have so far been of the greater interest to linguists. This is because such inferences often arise wherever features of the context do not actually block them, with the result that they can be easily confused with the permanent aspects of the semantics of the expressions involved. Consequently, a semantic theory can become plagued by a proliferation of hypothetical senses and internal contradictions in ways we shall spell out below. Before returning to these implicatures in the next section, let us first illustrate the other major kind of implicatures that Grice had in mind.

The second kind of implicatures come about by overtly and blatantly *not* following some maxims, in order to exploit it for communicative purposes. Grice calls such usages **floutings** or **exploitations** of the maxims, and they can be seen to give rise to many of the traditional 'figures of speech'. These inferences are based on the remarkable robustness of the assumption of co-operation: if someone drastically and dramatically deviates from maxim-type behaviour, then his utterances are still read as underlyingly co-operative, if this is at all possible. Thus by overtly infringing some maxim the speaker can force the hearer to do extensive inferencing to some set of propositions, such that if the speaker can be assumed to be conveying these then at least the over-arching co-operative principle would be sustained.

Interpretation

In fact, Grice has provided little more than a sketch of the large area and the numerous separate issues that might be illuminated by a fully

worked out theory of conversational implicature (7, 118). So if use to be made of these ideas in a systematic way within linguistic theory, much has to be done to tighten up the concepts employed by Grice and to work out exactly how they apply to particular cases.

So far the theory though is of such broad scope, is basically too general. Yet even now it plays a principle role in linguistic theory, it is crucial for understanding communication, for the issues of the theory are universal. Really, if the maxims are derivable from conversations of rational cooperation, we should expect them to be universal in application at least in co-operative kinds of interaction.

Implicatures increase manifold the capacity of the signs to relate to meaning. They don't need creation of new special signs. They are actually derived from

a) what is said

b) the assumption that at least the co-operative principle is being maintained. Thanks to them the comparatively limited number of signs can produce endless diversity of meanings and ways of their expression. Below are but some example of it:

21.   A: *What on earth has happened to the roast-beef?*
        B: *The dog is looking very happy.*
22.   C: *England is a sinking ship.*
        D: *War is war.*

In any case it is clear that implicature plays a major role in interactions as well as in language change, triggering both syntactic and semantic changes. Indeed it seems to be one of the single most important mechanisms whereby matters of language usage feed back into and affect matters of language structure. It is thus a major route for functional pressures and in general for communicative needs to leave their impact on the language [7, p. 166].

VII. Further reading

From: Levinson S.C. Pragmatics. CUP, 1995. – 420 p.

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So the notion that pragmatics can be the study of aspects of meaning not covered in semantics certainly has some cogency. But we need to know how the broad sense of meaning, on which the definition relies, is to be delimited. This broad sense should include the ironic, metaphoric and implicit communicative content of an utterance, and so it can't be restricted to the conventional content of what is said. But does it include *all* the inferences that can be made from a) what is said and b) all the available facts about the world known to participants? Suppose that Moriarty says that his watch broke, and from this Sherlock Holmes infers that he perpetrated the crime: although the information may have been indirectly conveyed, we should be loath to say that Moriarty communicated it.

For communication involves the notions of intention and agency, and only those inferences that are openly intended to be conveyed can properly be said to have been communicated. To help us draw a line between the incidental transfer of information, and communication proper, we may appeal to an important idea of the philosopher Grice (1957). Distinguishing between what he calls **natural meaning** (as in *These black clouds mean rain),* and **non-natural meaning** or **meaning-nn** (equivalent to the notion of intentional communication), Grice gives the following characterization of meaning-nn:

S *meant-nn* z by uttering U if and only if:
(i) S intended U to cause some effect z in recipient H
(ii) S intended (i) to be achieved simply by H recognizing that intention (i)

Here, S stands for speaker (in the case of spoken communication; for sender or communicator in other cases); H for hearer, or more accurately, the intended recipient; 'uttering U' for utterance of a linguistic token, i.e. a sentence parts (or the production of non-linguistic communicative acts); and Z for (roughly) some belief or volition invoked in H.

Such a definition is likely to be opaque at first reading, but what it essentially states is that communication consists of the 'sender' intending to cause the 'receiver' to think or do something, just by getting the 'receiver' to recognize that the 'sender' is trying to cause that thought or action. So communication is a complex kind of intention that is achieved or satisfied just by being recognized. In the process of communication, the 'sender's communicative intention' becomes **mutual knowledge** to 'sender' (S) and 'receiver' (H), i.e. S knows that H knows that S knows that H knows (and so ad inflnitum) that S has this particular intention. Attaining this state of mutual knowledge of a communicative intention is to have successfully communicated. A simple illustration may help to clarify the concept: it distinguishes between two kinds of 'boos' or attempts to frighten someone.

Suppose I leap out from behind a tree, and by sheer surprise frighten you. I have caused an effect in you by 'natural' means. But now suppose that you know I am behind the tree, you are expecting me to leap out, and I know you know all that: I can still (maybe) frighten you by leaping out, just by getting you to realize that I intend to frighten you. Only the second is an instance of communication (meaning-nn) in Grice's sense.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Which inferences relate to natural meaning?
2. Which inferences are responsible for meaning-nn?
3. What is communication in Levinson's terms?
4. What is successful communication?

Conversational Implicature. Introduction

The notion of **conversational implicature** is one of the single most important ideas in pragmatics (we shall often refer to the notion simply as **implicature** as a shorthand, although distinctions between this and other kinds of implicature will be introduced below). The salience of the concept in recent work in pragmatics is due to a number of sources. First, implicature stands as a paradigmatic example of the nature and power of pragmatic explanations of linguistic phenomena. The sources of this species of pragmatic inference can be shown to lie outside the organization of language, in some general principles for co-operative interaction, and yet these principles have a pervasive effect upon the structure of language. The concept of implicature, therefore, seems to offer some significant functional explanations of linguistic facts.

A second important contribution made by the notion of implicature is that it provides some explicit account of how it is possible to mean (in some general sense) more than what is actually 'said' (i.e. more than what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered). Consider, for example:

1.   A: *Can you tell me the time*?
        B: *Well, the milkman has come*.

All that we can reasonably expect a semantic theory to tell us about this minimal exchange is that there is at least one reading that we might paraphrase as follows:

2.   A: *Do you have the ability to tell me the time*?
        B. [pragmatically interpreted particle] *the milkman came at some time prior to the time of speaking*.

Yet it is clear to native speakers that what would ordinarily be communicated by such an exchange involves considerably more, along the lines of the italicized material in (3):

3.   A: *Do you have the ability to tell me the time of the present moment, as standardly indicated on a watch, and if so please do so tell me.*
        B: *No I don't know the exact time of the present moment, but I can provide some information from which you may be able to deduce the approximate time, namely the milkman has come.*

Clearly the whole *point* of the exchange, namely a request for specific information and an attempt to provide as much of that information as possible, is not directly expressed in (2) at all; so the gap between what is literally *said* in (2) and what is conveyed in (3) is so substantial that we cannot expect a semantic theory to provide more than a small part of an account of how we communicate using language. The notion of implicature promises to bridge the gap, by giving some account of how at least large portions of the italicized material in (3) are effectively conveyed.

Thirdly, the notion of implicature seems likely to effect substantial simplifications in both the structure and the content of semantic descriptions. For example, consider:

4.   *The lone ranger jumped on his horse and rode into the sunset.*
5.   *The capital of France is Paris and the capital of England is London.*
6.   *?? The lone ranger rode into the sunset and jumped on his horse.*
7.   *The capital of England is London and the capital of France is Paris.*

The sense of *and* in (4) and (5) seems to be rather different: in (4) it seems to mean 'and then' and thus (6) is strange in that it is hard to imagine the reverse ordering of the two events. But in (5) there is no 'and then' sense; *and* here seems to mean just what the standard truth table for & would have it mean - namely that the whole is true just in case both conjuncts are true; hence the reversal of the conjuncts in (7) doesn't affect the conceptual import at all. Faced with examples like that, the semanticist has traditionally taken one of two tacks: he can either hold that there are two distinct senses of the word *and,* which is thus simply ambiguous, or he can claim the meanings of words are in general vague and protean and are influenced by collocational environments. If the semanticist takes the first tack, he soon finds himself in the business of adducing an apparently endless proliferation of senses of the simplest looking words. He might for example be led by (8) and (9) to suggest that white is ambiguous, for in (8) it seems to mean 'only or wholly white' while in (9) it can only mean 'partially white'.

8.   *The flag is white.*
9.   *The flag is white, red and blue.*

The semanticist who takes the other tack, that natural language senses are protean, sloppy and variable, is hardly in a better position: how do hearers then know (which they certainly do) just which variable value of *white* is involved in (8)? Nor will it do just to ignore the problem, for if one does one soon finds that one's semantics is self-contradictory. For example, (10) certainly seems to mean (11); but if we then build the 'uncertainty' interpretation in (11) into the meaning *of possible,* (12) should be an outright contradiction. But it is not.

10.   It's possible that there's life on Mars.
11.   It's possible that there's life on Mars and it is possible that there is no life on Mars.
12.   It's possible that there's life on Mars, and.in fact it is certain that there is.

Now from this set of dilemmas the notion of implicature offers a way out, for it allows one to claim that natural language expressions do tend to have simple, stable and unitary senses (in many cases anyway), but that this stable semantic core often has an unstable, context-specific pragmatic overlay – namely a set of implicatures. As long as some specific predictive content can be given to the notion of implicature, this is a genuine and substantial solution to the sorts of problems we have just illustrated.

An important point to note is that this simplification of semantics is not just a reduction of problems in the lexicon; it also makes possible the adoption of a semantics built on simple logical principles. It does this by demonstrating that once pragmatic implications of the sort we shall call implicature are taken into account, the apparently radical differences between logic and natural language seem to fade away. We shall explore this below when we come to consider the 'logical' words in English, *and, or, if... then, not,* the quantifiers and the modals.

Fourthly, implicature, or at least some closely related concept, seems to be simply essential if various basic facts about language are to be accounted for properly. For example, particles like *well, anyway, by the way* require some meaning specification in a theory of meaning just like all the other words in English; but when we come to consider what their meaning is, we shall find ourselves referring to the pragmatic mechanisms that produce implicatures. We shall also see that certain syntactic rules appear at least to be sensitive to implicature, and that implicature puts interesting constraints on what can be a possible lexical item in natural languages.

Finally, the principles that generate implicatures have a very general explanatory power: a few basic principles provide explanations for a large array of apparently unrelated facts. For example, explanations will be offered below for why English has no lexical item *nail* meaning 'not all', for why Aristotle got his logics wrong, for 'Moore's paradox', for why obvious tautologies like *War is war* can convey any conceptual import, for how metaphors work and many other phenomena besides.

Discussion Questions /Professional Development Activities

1. Why is the notion of conversational implicature so important?
2. What is the role of the cooperative principle in creating the special position of implicature in communicative linguistics?

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From: Yule G. Pragmatics. OUP, 2000. – 138 p.

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Cooperation and Implicature

In much of the preceding discussion, we have assumed that speakers and listeners involved in conversation are generally cooperating with each other. For example, for reference to be successful, it was proposed that collaboration was a necessary factor. In accepting speakers' presuppositions, listeners normally have to assume that a speaker who says *my car* really does have the car that is mentioned and isn't trying to mislead the listener. This sense of cooperation is simply one in which people having a conversation are not normally assumed to be trying to confuse, trick, or withhold relevant information from each other. In most circumstances, this kind of cooperation is only the starting point for making sense of what is said.

In the middle of their lunch hour, one woman asks another how she likes the hamburger she is eating, and receives the answer in (1).

1.　　*A hamburger is a hamburger.*

From a purely logical perspective, the reply in (1) seems to have no communicative value since it expresses something completely obvious. The example in (1) and other apparently pointless expressions like 'business is business' or 'boys will be boys', are called tautologies. If they are used in a conversation, clearly the speaker intends to communicate more than is said.

When the listener hears the expression in (1), she first has to assume that the speaker is being cooperative and intends to communicate something. That something must be more than just what the words mean. It is an additional conveyed meaning, called an implicature. By stating (1), the speaker expects that the listener will be able to work out, on the basis of what is already known, the implicature intended in this context.

Given the opportunity to evaluate the hamburger, the speaker of (1) has responded without an evaluation, thus one implicature is that she has no opinion, either good or bad, to express. Depending on other aspects of the context, additional implicatures (for example, the speaker thinks all hamburgers are the same) might he inferred.

Implicatures are primary examples of more being communicated than is said, but in order for them to be interpreted, some basic cooperative principle must first be assumed to be in operation.

The Cooperative Principle

Consider the following scenario. There is a woman sitting on a park bench and a large dog lying on the ground in front of the bench. A man comes along and sits down on the bench.

2.　　Man:　　*Does your dog bite?*
　　　　Woman: *No.*
　(The man reaches down to pet the dog. The dog bites the man's hand.)
　　　　Man:　　*Ouch! Hey! You said your dog doesn't bite.*
　　　　Woman: *He doesn't. But that's not my dog.*

One of the problems in this scenario has to do with communication. Specifically, it seems to be a problem caused by the man's assumption that more was communicated than was said. It isn't a problem with presupposition because the assumption in *your dog* (i.e. the woman has a dog) is true for both speakers. The problem is the man's assumption that his question *Does your dog bite?* and the woman's answer *No* both apply to the dog in front of them. From the man's perspective, the woman's answer provides less information than expected. In other words, she might be expected to provide the information stated in the last line. Of course, if she had mentioned this information's earlier, the story

wouldn't be as funny. For the event to be funny, the woman has to give less information than is expected.

The concept of there being an expected amount of information provided in conversation is just one aspect of the more general idea that people involved in a conversation will cooperate with each other. (Of course, the woman in (2) may actually be indicating that she does not want to take part in any cooperative interaction with the stranger.) In most circumstances, the assumption of cooperation is so pervasive that it can be stated as a **cooperative principle** of conversation and elaborated in four sub-principles, called **maxims,** as shown in Table 6.1.

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

<div align="right">Table 6.1</div>

<div align="center">The cooperative principle (following Grice, 1975)</div>

The maxims
Quantity 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
Quality Try to make your contribution one that is true. 1. Do not say what you believe to be false. 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
Relation Be relevant.
Manner Be perspicuous. 1. Avoid obscurity of expression. 2. Avoid ambiguity. 3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity). 4. Be orderly.

It is important to recognize these maxims as unstated assumptions we have in conversations. We assume that people are normally going to provide an appropriate amount of information (unlike the woman in (2)); we assume that they are telling the truth, being relevant, and trying to be as clear as they can. Because these principles are assumed in normal interaction, speakers rarely mention them. However, there are certain kinds of expressions speakers use to mark that they may be in danger of *not fully* adhering to the principles. These kinds of expressions are called hedges.

Hedges. The importance of the maxim of **quality** for cooperative interaction in English may be best measured by the number of expressions we use to indicate that what we're saying may not be totally accurate. The initial

phrases in (3a – c) and the final phrase in (3d) are notes to the listener regarding the accuracy of the main statement.

3. a. *As far as I know, they're married.*
    b. *I may be mistaken, but I thought I saw a wedding ring on her finger.*
    c. *I'm not sure if this is right, but I heard it was a secret ceremony in Hawaii.*
    d. *He couldn't live without her, I guess.*

The conversational context for the examples in (3) might be a recent rumour involving a couple known to the speakers. Cautious notes, or **hedges,** of this type can also be used to show that the speaker is conscious of the **quantity** maxim, as in the initial phrases in (4a – c), produced in the course of a speaker's account of her recent vacation.

4. a. *As you probably know, I am terrified of bugs.*
    b. *So, to cut a long story short, we grabbed our stuff and ran.*
    c. *I won't bore you with all the details, but it was an exciting trip.*

Markers tied to the expectation of relevance (from the maxim of **relation)** can be found in the middle of speakers' talk when they say things like 'Oh, by the way' and go on to mention some potentially unconnected information during a conversation. Speakers also seem to use expressions like 'anyway', or 'well, anyway', to indicate that they may have drifted into a discussion of some possibly non-relevant material and want to stop. Some expressions which may act as hedges on the expectation of relevance are shown as the initial phrases in (5a – c), from an office meeting.

5. a. *I don't know if this is important, but some of the files are missing.*
    b. *This may sound like a dumb question, but whose hand writing is this?*
    c. *Not to change the subject, but is this related to the budget?*

The awareness of the expectations of **manner** may also lead speakers to produce hedges of the type shown in the initial phrases in (6a – c), heard during an account of a crash.

6. a. *This may be a bit confused, but I remember being in a car.*
    b. *I'm not sure if this makes sense, but the car had no lights.*
    c. *I don't know if this is clear at all, but I think the other car was reversing.*

All of these examples of hedges are good indications that the speakers are not only aware of the maxims, but that they want to show that they are trying to observe them. Perhaps such forms also communicate the speakers' concern that their listeners judge them to be cooperative conversational partners.

There are, however, some circumstances where speakers may not follow the expectations of the cooperative principle. In courtrooms and classrooms, witnesses and students are often called upon to tell people things which are already well-known to those people (thereby violating the quantity maxim). Such specialized institutional talk is clearly different from conversation.

However, even in conversation, a speaker may 'opt out' of the maxim expectations by using expressions like 'No comment' or 'My lips are sealed' in response to a question. An interesting aspect of such expressions is that, although they are typically not 'as informative as is required' in the context, they are naturally interpreted as communicating more than is said (i.e. the speaker knows the answer). This typical reaction (i.e. there must be something 'special' here) of listeners to any apparent violation of the maxims is actually the key to the notion of conversational implicature.

Conversational Implicature

The basic assumption in conversation is that, unless otherwise indicated, the participants are adhering to the cooperative principle and the maxims. In example (7), Dexter may appear to be violating the requirements of the quantity maxim.

> 7.   Charlene: *I hope you brought the bread and the cheese.*
> Dexter: *Ah, I brought the bread.*

After hearing Dexter's response in [7], Charlene has to assume that Dexter is cooperating and not totally unaware of the quantity maxim. But he didn't mention the cheese. If he had brought the cheese, he would say so, because he would be adhering to the quantity maxim. He must intend that she infer that what is not mentioned was not brought. In this case, Dexter has conveyed more than he said via a **conversational implicature.**

We can represent the structure of what was said, with *b* (= bread) and c (= cheese) as in (8). Using the symbol +> for an implicature, we can also represent the additional conveyed meaning.

> 8.   Charlene: *b* & c?
> Dexter: b   (+>NOTc)

It is important to note that it is speakers who communicate meaning via implicatures and it is listeners who recognize those communicated meanings via inference. The inferences selected are those which will preserve the assumption of cooperation.

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Conventional Implicatures

In contrast to all the conversational implicatures discussed so far, **conventional implicatures** are not based on the cooperative principle or the maxims. They don't have to occur in conversation, and they don't depend on special contexts for their interpretation. Not unlike lexical presuppositions, conventional implicatures are associated with specific words and result in additional conveyed meanings when those words are used. The English conjunction 'but' is one of these words. The interpretation of any utterance of the type *p but q* will be based on the conjunction *p* & *q* plus an implicature of 'contrast' between the information in *p* and the information in p. In (8), the fact

that 'Mary suggested black' (= *p)* is contrasted, via the conventional implicature of 'but', with my choosing white (= *q).*

> 9. a. *Mary suggested black, but I chose white,*
>   b. *p* &<j (+>p is in contrast to *q)*

Other English words such as 'even' and 'yet' also have conventional implicatures. When 'even' is included in any sentence describing an event, there is an implicature of 'contrary to expectation'. Thus, in (10) there are two events reported (i.e. John's coming and John's helping) with the conventional implicature of 'even' adding a 'contrary to expectation' interpretation of those events.

> 10. a. *Even John came to the party.*
>   b. *He even helped tidy up afterwards.*

The conventional implicature of 'yet' is that the present situation is expected to be different, or perhaps the opposite, at a later time. In uttering the statement in (11a), the speaker produces an implicature that she expects the statement 'Dennis is here' (= *p)* to be true later, as indicated in (11b).

> 11. a. *Dennis isn't here yet.*   (=NOT p]
>   b. NOT *p* is true   (+> *p* expected to be true later)

It may be possible to treat the so-called different 'meanings' of 'and' in English as instances of conventional implicature in different structures. When two statements containing static information are joined by 'and', as in [12a], the implicature is simply 'in addition' or 'plus'. When the two statements contain dynamic, action-related information, as in (12b), the implicature of 'and' is 'and then' indicating sequence.

> 12. a. *Yesterday, Mary was happy and ready to work.* (p &cq, +>pplus q)
>   b. *She put on her clothes and left the house.*   (p &cq, +>q afterp)

Because of the different implicatures, the two parts of (12a) can be reversed with little difference in meaning, but there is a change in meaning if the two parts of (12b) are reversed.

For many linguists, the notion of 'implicature' is one of the central concepts in pragmatics. An implicature is certainly a prime example of more being communicated than is said. For those same linguists, another central concept in pragmatics is the observation that utterances perform actions, generally known as 'speech acts'.

<div align="center">✲✲✲</div>

From: Grice P. «Logic and conversation» in P. Cole and J.L. Morgan (eds.): Syntax and Semantics Volume 3: Speech Acts. Academic Press, 1975. – p. 48.

Cooperation and Implicature

I would like to be able to think of the standard type of conversational practice not merely as something that all or most do IN FACT follow but as

something that it is REASONABLE for us to follow, that we SHOULD NOT abandon. For a time, I was attracted by the idea that observance of the CP [co-operative principle] and the maxims, in a talk exchange, could be thought of as a quasi-contractual matter, with parallels outside the realm of discourse. If you pass by when I am struggling with my stranded car, I no doubt have some degree of expectation that you will offer help, but once you join me in tinkering under the hood, my expectations become stronger and take more specific forms (in the absence of indications that you are merely an incompetent meddler); and talk exchanges seemed to me to exhibit, characteristically, certain features that jointly distinguish cooperative transactions:

1. The participants have some common immediate aim, like getting a car mended; their ultimate aims may, of course, be independent and even in conflict – each may want to get the car mended in order to drive off, leaving the other stranded. In characteristic talk exchanges, there is a common aim even if, as in an over-the-wall chat, it is a second order one, namely that each party should, for the time being, identify himself with the transitory conversational interests of the other.

2. The contributions of the participants should be dovetailed, mutually dependent.

3. There is some sort of understanding (which may be explicit but which is often tacit) that, other things being equal, the transaction should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate. You do not just shove off or start doing something else.

But while some such quasi-contractual basis as this may apply to some cases, there are too many types of exchange, like quarrelling and letter writing, that it fails to fit comfortably.

Discussion Question/Professional Development Activities

1. Can you spell out why 'quarreling and letter writing' do not fit comfortably with the conditions presented here?

2. What would you call the three features' listed here if you were to make them into maxims for cooperative transactions?

3. Grice emphasizes the word 'reasonable' as he describes his consideration of the cooperative principle and his maxims as a kind of contract. Would the cooperative principle, the maxims, and the three features listed here be treated as 'reasonable' in all societies and cultures?

✱✱✱

From: Morgan J.L. «Two types of convention in indirect speech acts» in P. Cole (ed.): Syntax and Semantics Volume 9: Pragmatics. Academic Press, 1978. – P. 277 – 278.

Just above I presented cases involving particular expressions and the conventionalization of their use for certain implicatures, as in the case of *If you've seen one, you've seen them all,* or the original example, *Can you pass the salt?* I said in the latter case that it had become a convention of usage to use this expression, with its literal meaning, to convey an implicature of request. The question now arises, can there be this kind of conventionalization of rules of conversation? I think there can. For example, it is more or less conventional to challenge the wisdom of suggested course of action by questioning the mental health of the suggestor, by ANY appropriate linguistic means, as in:

13. *Are you crazy?*
14. *Have you lost your mind?*
15. *Are you out of your gourd?*

and so on. Most Americans have two or three stock expressions usable as answers to obvious questions, as in:

16. *Is the Pope Catholic?*
17. *Do bagels wear bikinis?*

But for some speakers the convention does not specify a particular expression, and new ones are manufactured as they are needed. It seems that here a schema for implicature has been conventionalized: Answer an obvious yes/no question by replying with another question whose answer is very obvious and the same as the answer you intend to convey.

In a similar way, most speakers have a small number of expressions usable as replies to assertions, with the implicature that the assertion is transparently false-(42), for example:

18. *Yes, and Fm Marie the Queen of Romania.*

But again, for some speakers the convention specifies only a general strategy, rather than a particular expression: To convey that an assertion is transparently false, reply with another assertion even more transparently false.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Do you know any other 'stock expressions' for these types of occasions (request, challenge, answer to obvious questions, reply to a false assertion)? How would you explain (to someone learning English as a foreign language for example) how to work out the communicated meaning from the literal meaning?

2. The author uses the term 'convention' in talking about the kinds of implicatures involved here. Do you think that the examples presented here can be analyzed in terms of conventional implicatures?

3. What do you think about the idea that an implicature may begin by being based on inference, but can become so conventionalized that no one has to make the inference any more? Is that the same process as we use in interpreting idioms?

VIII. Test yourself

1. The same or different?

1) conventional implicature – conversational implicature
2) natural meaning – non-natural meaning – meaning-nn
3) relevant – topical
4) prolix – perspicuous

2. False or true?

1. The maxim of Quality helps to make our contribution truly expressive and remarkable.

2. The maxim of Quantity helps us to limit our presentation of information so as our contribution might be informative, as is required for current purposes of the interaction.

3. The maxim of Manner makes us be brief.

4. Conversational implicatures are largely based on the co-operative principle.

IX. References

1. Brown G., Yule G. Discourse analysis. – Cambridge University Press, 1996. – 288 p.

2. Grice H.P. Utterer's meaning, sentence-meaning, and word-meaning // Foundations of Language. – 1968. – 4. – P. 1 – 18.

3. Grice H.P. Meaning (1957) // Semantics. An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics and Psychology. Eds. Steinberg D., Jakobovits L. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971. – P. 53 – 59

4. Grice H.P. Further notes on logic and conversation // Syntax and semantics 9: Pragmatics. Ed. Cole P., N.Y: Academic Press, 1978. – P. 113 – 128.

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6. Hybels S., Wearer R.L. Communicating Effectively. – N.Y: Random House, 1989. – 431 p.

7. Levinson S.C. Pragmatics. – Cambridge University Press, 1995. – 420 p.

X. Recommended Reading for Further Study

1. DIANE BLAKEMORE: *Understanding Utterances. An Introduction to Pragmatics.* Blackwell, 1992.

This is an introduction to pragmatics in which Relevance is taken to be the central concept, that is why it is important for communicative linguistics.

2. LAURENCE HORN: Toward a new taxonomy for pragmatic inference: 'Q-based and R-based implicature' in Deborah Schiffrin (ed.): *Meaning, Form and Use in Context: Linguistic Applications.* Georgetown University Press, 1984.

This paper proposes an alternative approach to analyzing how implicatures arise, using two instead of four maxims.

3. PAUL GRICE: *Studies in the Way of Words.* Harvard University Press, 1989.

This volume includes the collected papers of the philosopher whose ideas are considered by many to be the foundation of contemporary pragmatics and communication theory.

4. *Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistic Society* 16, 1990.

There is a collection of sixteen papers, presented as a parasession within these published proceedings, on the legacy of Grice, covering a wide range of issues in the analysis of meaning.

5. DAN SPERBER and DEIDRE WILSON: Relevance. Blackwell 1986.

Presented as a study of human communication, this book takes the single maxim of Relevance as a key. Arguments and illustrations are presented to support the contention that 'communicated information comes with a guarantee of relevance'.

UNIT 7: WRITTEN LANGUAGE

I. Outline

1. Grammatical and lexical items.
2. Density as the criterion of difference between written and spoken language.
3. Comparing written and oral language.
4. Relative frequency.
5. Clause as an elastic body.
6. Clause complex and its role.
7. Nouns and nominality.
8. The structure of the nominal group.
9. The structure of the clause.

II. Objectives

After you have completed the unit you should be able to

– understand different kinds of complexity;

– internalize the significance of lexical density ratio;

– comprehend the importance of relative frequency of one lexical item to another;

– outline what a clause is and explain its significance in the structure of a language;

– expound on what a clause complex is;

– pick out your own fragments of written language proving the importance of lexical density in a clause;

– account of nouns and nominality;

– interpret written texts from the perspectives of density, relative frequency and nominality.

III. Key words: *content/function word, lexical/grammatical item, closed/open system, preposition, conjunction, adverb, determiner, finite verb, proportion, density, sparse, complexity, intricacy, continuum, frequency, relative, clause, clause complex, nominality.*

IV. The Complexity of Written Language

Consider the following fragments:

A. *The Arlington Reader is organized into ten thematic chapters on general interest topics.* (Bloom L.Z., Smith L.Z. The Arlington Reader. N.Y.: Bedford / St. Martins, 2003, p. viii).

B. *The continuing emission of greenhouse gases would create protracted crop-destroying droughts in continental interiors.* (Bloom L.Z., Smith L.Z. op.cit, p. xvi).

C. *Государство принимает участие в формировании доходов бюджетов местного самоуправления, финансово поддерживает местное самоуправление. Расходы органов местного самоуправления, возникшие вследствие органов государственной власти, компенсируются государством* (Земельный кодекс Украины. Харьков: Одиссей, 1998, с. 5).

Fragment A consists of 13 words, 4 of them are grammatical, 9 are lexical. Fragment B is made of 15 words. Of these, 11 are lexical items (content words) and 4 are grammatical items (function words).

Grammatical items are those that function in closed systems in the language: in English, determiners, pronouns, most prepositions, conjunctions, some classes of adverb, and finite verbs. (Determiners include the articles.) In example A, the grammatical words are *the, is, into, on.*

In other words, there are twice as many lexical words as there are grammatical words. Compare this with the below fragment, taken from oral conversation:

The only real accident that I've ever had was in fog and ice.

Counting **I've** as one word, this has 13 words; of these, *the, only, that, I've, ever, had, was, in,* and *and* are grammatical items; the lexical items are *real, accident, fog,* and *ice.* Here the proportions are reversed: twice as many grammatical as lexical.

This is a characteristic difference between spoken and written language. Written language displays a much higher ratio of lexical items to total running words. This is not just a consequence of the subject-matter.

Here is a 'translation' of fragment B into a spoken form. This is how the written statement was presented by its author when she was speaking at one of the environment meetings.

Figures in brackets show the numbers of lexical (L) and grammatical (G) words.

> If we keep emitting green house gases then of course it would create droughts, most disastrous droughts, very long droughts which are sure to destroy all crops in our continental interiors .*Yeah* (L.: 13; G.: 17).

Below are some more examples to illustrate written and spoken correspondencies (Table 7.1).

We can explain the significance of this distinction as follows. The difference between written and spoken language is one of **density**: the density with which the information is presented. Relative to each other, written language is dense, spoken language is sparse.

A number of factors contribute to this density; it is a fairly complex phenomenon, as we would discover if we tried to quantify it in an exact way. But it is mainly the product of a small number of variables, and these we can observe without a complicated battery of measurements.

One caution should be given. By expressing the distinction in this way, we have already 'loaded' it semantically. To say that written language is 'more dense' is to suggest that, if we start from spoken language, then written language will be shown to be more complex.

Table 7.1

Lexical and grammatical words frequency in written and oral statements

A. Investment in a rail facility implies long-term commitment. (L:7; G:3)	If you invest in a rail facility, this implies that you are going to be committed for a long term. (L:7; G:13)
The growth of attachment between infant and mother signals the first step in the development of a child's capacity to discriminate amongst people. (L:12; G:11)	When an infant and its mother start to grow attached to each other, this is a sign that the child is beginning to discriminate amongst people, (L:10; G:16)
Business community lunchers relax in this dappled midcity sanctuary while saving something for the resident seagulls. (L:10; G:6)	Members of the business community relax while they lunch in this dappled sanctuary in the middle of the city, and save something for the seagulls who live there. (L:12; G:16)
She said such an exercise had the potential for intrusions by the government into the legitimate privacy of non-government schools. (L:10; G.10)	She said if that was done it would make it possible for the government to intrude into non-governmental schools, which had a right to their own privacy. (L:10; G:17)
Some migrants acted upon encouraging advice from relatives and friends who had preceded them to the colonies. (L:8; G:9)	Some people migrated because they were encouraged by the advice they got from their relatives and friends who had gone to the colonies before them. (L:9; G:16)
B. Slavish imitation of models is nowhere implied. (L:4; G:3)	It is not implied anywhere that there are models which should be slavishly imitated. (L:4; G:10)
C. A grey-faced Dr Coffin unlocked the door. (L:6; G:2)	Dr Coffin unlocked the door, and as he did so his face was grey. (L:5; G:9)

We could have looked at the same phenomenon from the other end. We could have said that the difference between spoken language and written language is one of intricacy, the intricacy with which the information is organised. Spoken language is more intricate than written.

In the next chapter, we shall look into the phenomenon of intricacy – which is in fact a related phenomenon, but seen from the opposite perspective. From that point of view, it will appear that spoken language is more complex than written. The conclusion will be that each is complex in its own way. Written language displays one kind of complexity, spoken language another. Our aim will be to make clear what these are.

After considering both kinds of complexity, we shall try to account for them under a single generalisation. This will relate to the concept of lexico-

grammar: the level of 'wording' in language. One way of expressing the matter – rather oversimplified, but it provides a pointer in the right direction – that the complexity of written language is lexical, while that of spoken language is grammatical.

What we are examining now, therefore, with the notion of 'density', is a kind of complexity that arises in the deployment of words.

Lexical Density

The distinction we have to recognise at this point is one we have referred to already: that between lexical items and grammatical items. Lexical items are often called 'content words'. Technically, they are **items** (i.e. constituents of variable length) rather than words in the usual sense, because they may consist of more than one word: for example, *stand up, take over, call off,* and other phrasal verbs all function as single lexical items. They are **lexical** because they function in lexical sets not grammatical systems: that is to say, they enter into open not closed contrasts.

A grammatical item enters into a closed system. For example, the personal pronoun *him* contrasts on one dimension with *he, his;* on another dimension with *me, you, her, it, us, them, one;* but that is all. There are no more items in these classes and we cannot add any. With a lexical item, however, we cannot close off its class membership; it enters into an open set, which is indefinitely extendable. So the word *door* is in contrast with *gate* and *screen;* also with *window, wall, floor* and *ceiling;* with *knob, handle, panel,* and *sill;* with *room, house, hall;* with *entrance, opening, portal* – there is no way of closing off the sets of items that it is related to, and new items can always come into the picture.

As you would expect, there is a continuum from lexis into grammar: while many items in a language are clearly of one kind or the other, there are always likely to be intermediate cases. In English, prepositions and certain classes of adverb (for example, modal adverbs like *always, perhaps)* are on this borderline. For purposes of comparing spoken and written English it does not matter exactly where we draw the line provided we do it consistently.

Like many other features of language, the distinction is quite clear in our unconscious understanding (which is never troubled by borderline cases, unlike our conscious mind). Children are clearly well aware of it – one of the developmental strategies used by many children for constructing sentences in the mother tongue is to leave out all grammatical items; and some children re-use this strategy when first learning to write (see Mackay et al. 1998).

We have already pointed out that the distinction is embodied in our spelling system, since grammatical items may have only one or two letters in them, whereas lexical items require a minimum of three (showing incidentally that prepositions, at least the common ones, belong to the 'grammatical' class, because of words like *at, in, to, on,* which otherwise would have to be spelt *att,*

inn, too, onn). And there are some 'special languages' around the world that are based entirely on this distinction, since they require all lexical items to be altered while all grammatical ones remain unchanged – for example the mother-in-law language in Dyirbal, North Queensland (see Dixon 1980). So it is not surprising that the distinction is fundamental to the difference between speech and writing.

In principle a grammatical item has no place in a dictionary. But our tradition of dictionary-making is to include all words, grammatical as well as lexical; so the dictionary solemnly enters *the* and *it,* even though it has nothing to say about them – nothing, that is, that falls within the scope of lexicology. A more consistent practice is that of *Roget's Thesaurus,* which does leave out most of the grammatical words; those that are included are there because Roget treats them lexically, for example lining up *me* with *personality, ego, spirit* (and not with *you* and *us).*

As a first approximation to a measure of lexical density, therefore, we can draw the distinction between lexical and grammatical items, simplifying it by treating each **word** (in the sense of what is treated as a word in the writing system, being written with a space on either side) as the relevant item, and counting the ratio of lexical to grammatical words. We then express this as a proportion of the total number of running words. If there are 12 lexical and 8 grammatical items, this gives the proportion of lexical items to the total as 12 out of 20, which we show as a lexical density of 60 per cent, or 0.6. In general, the more 'written' the language being used, the higher will be the proportion of lexical words to the total number of running words in the text.

Frequency

The next thing to take account of is probability. Another aspect of the distinction between lexical and grammatical words is that grammatical items tend to be considerably more frequent in occurrence. A list of the most frequently occurring words in the English language will always be headed by grammatical items like *the* and *and* and *it.* Lexical items are repeated much less often.

This in itself is entirely predictable, and of no great significance to the present point. What is significant is the relative frequency of one lexical item to another.

We have been assuming a simple measure in which all lexical items count the same. But the actual effect that we are responding to is one in which the relative frequency of the item plays a significant part. The relative frequency of grammatical items can be ignored, since all of them fall into the relatively frequent bracket. But the relative frequency of lexical items is an important factor in the situation.

The vocabulary of every language includes a number of highly frequent words, often general terms for large classes of phenomena. Examples from English are *thing, people, way, do, make, get, have, go, good, many.* These are lexical items, but on the borderline of grammar; they often perform functions

that are really grammatical – for example *thing* as a general noun (almost a pronoun) as in *that's a thing I could well do without; make* as a general verb, as in *you make me tired, it makes no difference.* They therefore contribute very little to the lexical density.

By contrast, a lexical item of rather low frequency in the language contributes a great deal. Clearly there is a difference between the following examples in the feeling of density that they give: compare

- *the mechanism of sex determination varies in different organisms with*
- *the way the sex is decided differs with different creatures*

or

- *different creatures have their sex decided in different ways.*

The proportion of lexical items is about the same in all three; but the last two 'feel' less dense because they include very frequent items such as *have* and *way.*

Another factor that operates here is that the last two examples incorporate a repetition, the item *differ/different.* Repetition also reduces the effect of density – since even if a word is intrinsically rare, its occurrence sets up the expectation that it will occur again. Note that normally all the members of a morphological paradigm are the same lexical item: for example, *differ, differed, different, difference, differing, differently* are all instances of the one lexical item (but not *differential* in *differential equation).* This is another difference between 'lexical item' and 'word'.

For a systematic, formal investigation of lexical density in texts we should have to adopt some weighting whereby lexical items of lower frequency 'scored' more highly than common ones. Word-frequency lists have been available for some time, and there are now large bodies of written and spoken text in machine-readable form in various places from which such information can readily be obtained.

But for immediate practical purposes, either all lexical items can be treated alike – this will still show up the difference between spoken and written texts – or a list can be drawn up of high-frequency lexical items to be given half of the value of the others. This is equivalent to recognising three categories rather than two: grammatical items, high-frequency lexical items, and low-frequency lexical items.

A more Revealing Measure of Lexical Density

So far we have assumed that the feature of lexical density was just something to do with words. The measurements we have suggested have been concerned with the pattern of distribution of words of different kinds in spoken and written texts. We started with a classification of all words into two categories – grammatical and lexical – and envisaged the possibility of refining this by taking into account the frequency of a word in the language (i.e. its unconditioned probability of occurrence at any point) – either crudely, but

enough to allow for the much greater effect of low-frequency lexical items, or more delicately by building in a differential system of weightings for all.

However far we took such refinements, we should still be measuring words against words. But this is rather one-sided, because it suggests that spoken language is simply to be characterised by a negative feature, the relative absence of (or low level of) density of information. Is there any way of reinterpreting this notion so that it tells us something positive about spoken language as well?

Let us examine the notion of density further. It has to do, as already suggested, with how closely packed the information is. This is why the probability of the item is important: a word of low probability carries more information. But words are not packed inside other words; they are packaged in larger grammatical units – sentences, and their component parts. It is this packaging into larger grammatical structures that really determines the informational density of a passage of text.

Which is the most relevant of these larger structures? There is one that clearly stands out as the unit where meanings are organised and wrapped up together, and that is the **clause.** The clause is the grammatical unit in which semantic constructs of different kinds are brought together and integrated into a whole.

This always appears a difficult notion at first, because of the inconsistency with which the terms 'clause' and 'sentence' are used in traditional grammars. But in fact it is not excessively complicated. If we take as our starting point the observation that a so-called 'simple sentence' is a sentence **consisting of one clause**, then much of the difficulty disappears. What is traditionally known as a 'compound sentence' will still consist of two or more clauses; and each of them potentially carries the same load of information as the single clause of a 'simple sentence'.

Eventually we shall discard the term 'sentence' from the grammar altogether; it can then be used unambiguously to refer to a unit of the **writing system –** that which extends from a capital letter following a full stop up to the next full stop. In place of 'sentence' in the grammar we shall use **clause complex**, because that will allow us to refer both to written and to spoken language in a way that makes the two comparable. We cannot identify a 'sentence' in the spoken language; or rather, we can identify a sentence in spoken language only by defining it as a clause complex. And since the notion of a 'complex' can be formally defined, and yields not only clause complexes but also phrase complexes, group complexes, and word complexes, it seems simpler to adopt this term throughout.

The clause complex is, in fact, what the sentence (in writing) comes from. The unit that was intuitively recognised by our ancestors when they first introduced the 'stop' as a punctuation mark was the clause complex; that is, a sequence of clauses all structurally linked.

For our notation, we will use three vertical strokes to mark a sentence boundary (still using the term 'sentence' pro tem; but gradually phasing it out), and two vertical strokes to mark a clause boundary. For example:

||| *The basic 'stuff' of living organisms is protoplasm.* ||| *There is no set composition of this* || *and it varies between one individual and the next.* |||

The clause is the gateway from the semantics to the grammar. It provides a more powerful and more relevant organising concept for measuring lexical density, and, more generally, for enabling us to capture the special properties of both spoken and written language. Instead of counting the number of lexical items as a ratio of the total number of running words, we will count the number of lexical items as a ratio of the total number of clauses. LEXICAL DENSITY will be measured as the number of lexical items per clause.

Keeping to the simplest classification (each word is either a lexical item or a grammatical item), the three clauses in the above text contain, respectively, five *(basic, stuff, living, organisms, protoplasm),* two *(set, composition),* and two *(varies, individual)* lexical items; a total of nine, giving an average of three per clause. We will therefore say that this text has a mean lexical density of 3.0.

The Clause

What we are measuring, then, for any text, spoken or written, is the average amount of lexical information per clause. No account need be taken, for purposes of this particular measurement, of the number and organisation of clauses in the sentence (clause complex). But it will be necessary to identify explicitly what is a clause.

It is not always easy, however, to recognise what a clause is. Again, for comparative purposes, the main requirement is consistency; but since this category is perhaps the most fundamental category in the whole of linguistics, as well as being critical to the **unity** of spoken and written language, it is important to devote a section to the discussion of it.

Precisely because it is so fundamental a category, the clause is also impossible to define; nor is there just one right way of describing it. Being so complex and many-sided, it lends itself to different theoretical interpretations; there are very many different kinds of generalisation that a linguist may be interested in, for different purposes, and the clause is likely to come out looking somewhat different in each case. But all interpretations will also have something in common.

The brief outline, given below represents an interpretation that has been found useful in the general context of educational linguistics. It is a theoretical interpretation with a strongly pragmatic motive behind it, derived from two complementary aspects of experience – that theories are developed for the purpose of being applied, but that unless you develop a theory you will not have anything to apply. The principal purposes for which this interpretation has been used are text analysis, from natural conversation to literature; the study

of functional variation (register) in language; language teaching, including mother tongue and foreign language; child language development; and artificial intelligence research.

According to this interpretation, the clause is a functional unit with a triple construction of meaning: it functions simultaneously (l) as the representation of the phenomena of experience, as these are interpreted by the members of the culture; (2) as the expression of speech function, through the categories of mood and (3) as the bearer of the message, which is organised in the form of theme plus exposition.

To each of these functions corresponds a structural configuration, (1) in terms of a process (action, event, behaviour, mental process, verbal process, existence, or relation) together with participants in the process and circumstances attendant on it ('Medium', Agent, Beneficiary, Time, Cause, etc.); (2) in terms of an element embodying an arguable proposition (Subject plus Finite) and residual elements (Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct); (3) in terms of a thematic element, given prominence as what the message is about, and a residual element summarised as the 'Rheme'). In addition, (4) the clause provides a reference point for the information structure in spoken discourse, closely related to (3) – there is systematic interplay between the Theme – Rheme organisation of the clause and the Given – New organisation of the information unit (realised as a tone group) (for details see Halliday 1985, 2000).

An example of the analysis of a clause in these terms is given in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2

Analysis of a clause

	Why	are there	more floods in houses	in the **basement**
transitivity	circumstance Cause	process Existential	partipant Medium/Existent	circumstance Location/Spatial

	Adjunct	Finite	Subject	Complement	Adjunct
mood	Resi	Mood		due	

	topic	Rheme
theme	Theme	

	New	focus
information		

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The 'systems' (sets of options that embody the choices in meaning) that are expressed through the various functional configurations (1), (2), and (3) above are, respectively, those of TRANSITIVITY, MOOD, and THEME. Let us tabulate the principal categories that come under the first two of these headings (see Table 7.2). (We shall return to the concept of theme at a later point.)

A clause, then, can be defined as the locus of choices in transitivity, mood, and theme. This does not imply that all choices under these headings are open to all clauses; they are not. But every clause embodies some pattern of selection in these three functional components of the grammar.

In the developmental perspective, picking up what was being discussed in the third chapter, the systems of mood and transitivity are the **evolved** reflexes of the child's twofold functional demands on language. Mood has evolved out of the requirement that language should serve as a means of action, a way of exchanging goods-and-services and information. Transitivity has evolved out of the requirement that language should serve as a means of reflection, a way of learning and knowing about the world. And the clause has evolved out of the need to combine the two functions in a single semiotic act.

Table 7.3

Principal categories of transitivity and mood in English

System	Options	Elements of structure	Class by which typically realised
transitivity	material (action, event) behavioural mental (perception, affection, cognition) verbal relational (attributive, identifying) existential	process	verbal group
		Participants (Medium, Agent, Beneficiary, Range, Attribute)	nominal group
		circumstances (Extent, Location, Cause, Manner, Accompaniment, Matter, Role)	adverbial group or prepositional phrase
mood	declarative yes/no interrogative WH-interrogative imperative	Subject; Complement	nominal group
		Finite Predicator	verbal group
		Adjunct	adverbial group or prepositional phrase

It can be seen that the amount of lexical information that may be incorporated into a clause is extremely varied. There may be none at all, in a clause such as *Don't!* or *It is.* There may be a very great deal, as in

The most advantageous shell colours are yellow in green areas, pink on leaf litter, and reds and browns in beach woods with red litter and numerous exposures of blackish soil.

(C. Jarman, *Evolution of Life,* Sun Books, Melbourne, 1970, p. 70)

which has nineteen lexical items in it. It is precisely the great flexibility of the clause in this respect that has made possible the evolution of written forms of discourse.

The Clause As an Elastic Body

If the clause can accommodate such large quantities of lexical information, it must have considerable elasticity. Let us see where its flexible points are. Consider the following clause (from Bertrand Russell's *ABC of Relativity,* George Allen & Unwin, London, 1969, p. 118):

- *In the Newtonian system, bodies under the action of no forces move in straight lines with uniform velocity.*

We need to introduce one more notational convention: a single vertical line separating elements of clause structure:

|| in the Newtonian system | bodies under the action of no forces | move | in straight lines | with uniform velocity ||

1. Out of the ten lexical items, all except *bodies* and *move* occur in prepositional phrases. The prepositional phrases may function (1) as circumstantial elements in the clause, or (2) as postmodifying elements in the nominal group.

Here the circumstantial phrases are *in the Newtonian system* (location), *in straight lines* (manner), *with uniform velocity* (manner).

The postmodifying phrases are *under the action of no forces* and *of no forces.* How does this work? (1) *of no forces* is a postmodifier in the nominal group *the action of no forces,* of which the head noun is *action.* (2) *under the action of no forces* is postmodifier in the nominal group *bodies under the action of no forces,* of which *bodies* is the head noun. We can represent this diagrammatically as in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4

Typical structure of postmodifying elements in the nominal group

	bodies	under	the action	of	no forces
nominal group	Head	Postmodifier			
	prepositional phrase	preposition	Complement		
		nominal group	Head	Postmodifier	
			prepositional phrase	preposition	Complement
				nominal group	Head

Table 7.4 shows how the prepositional phrase can occur many times in a single clause: (1) by having a circumstantial function in the clause itself, (2) by having a postmodifying function inside a nominal group functioning in the clause.

2. Now let us turn to the nominal group. Likewise, a nominal group may function (1) as a participant in the clause, and (2) as a participant in a prepositional phrase. In this example we have

(a) bodies under the action of no forces   (in clause)
(b) the Newtonian system   (in prepositional phrase)
    the action of no forces   "
    no forces   "
    straight lines   "
    uniform velocity   "

In other words, six nominal groups, five of them functioning inside prepositional phrases.

There is therefore a recursive principle at work in the clause, such that nominal groups can function inside prepositional phrases and prepositional phrases can function inside nominal groups. Such elements are said to be 'down-ranked' or 'embedded'. This structure can accommodate a great deal of lexical material.

3. Later in the same paragraph we find

|| *our apparent imaginative understanding of these processes | is | quite fallacious* |||

Here there is a nominal group *our apparent imaginative understanding of these processes,* which also contains a prepositional phrase as postmodifier *of these processes,* which in turn contains a nominal group, *these processes,* on the same principle as those above.

But this nominal group also has lexical items **before** the head, in premodifying function: *apparent, imaginative.* These premodifying sequences can be considerably longer:

the current nineteenth-century analytical procedures
natural whole wheat biscuits
timber promotion council small diameter timber pile research project

4. And some way below that, there is a clause containing the nominal group

| *a physicist who has assumed the formula for interval which is used in the special theory of relativity* |

Here again it is the postmodifying element that contains the lexical, information: the whole wording is one nominal group with head *physicist.* The postmodifier is, as usual, embedded; but here it is by a down-ranked **clause,** functioning as a defining relative clause beginning at *who.* This relative clause, in turn, contains a nominal group *the formula for interval which is used in the*

special theory of relativity; this has head *formula* and two postmodifying elements, both embedded – the prepositional phrase *for interval* and the defining relative clause *which is used in the special theory of relativity* (which in turn contains a prepositional phrase with a nominal group *the special theory of relativity* as complement; and this in its turn has both a pre- and a post-modifier in it).

Let us now represent all of these using an additional symbol to show embedding: | | for a down-ranked group or phrase, || || for a down-ranked clause. The examples in (l)-(4) will appear as follows: || in [$_N$ the Newtonian system]|$_N$ bodies [' under [$_N$ the action [of [$_N$ no forces | move | in [$_N$ straight lines]| with [$_N$ uniform velocity]||

|| $_N$ our apparent imaginative understanding [of [$_N$ these processes]]| is |$_N$ quite fallacious ||

|| $_N$ he | supposes |$_N$ a physicist [[N who | has assumed |$_N$ the formula [for [$_N$ interval]] which | is used | in [$_N$ the special theory [of [$_N$ relativity]]]]]]]||

In this instance we have added a small $_N$ at the beginning of each constituent that is a nominal group. This will show which of the lexical items occur in nominal groups and which occur outside them. In these three examples the picture is as follows:

• in nominal groups: Newtonian, system, bodies, action, forces, straight, lines, uniform, velocity; apparent, imaginative, understanding, processes, fallacious; physicist, formula, interval, special, theory, relativity.
• in verbal groups: move; is; supposes, assumed, used.

In other words, the overwhelming proportion of 'content', in the sense of lexicalised meaning, is carried in the nominal groups – by nouns and their premodifying nouns and adjectives. In these three clauses, there are five verbs, all high-frequency items carrying little lexical information; and two of those *(assume, use)* are in clauses that are themselves embedded in nominal groups. All the meat of the message is in the nominals.

Nouns and Nominality

It is commonly said of modern English, usually in rather disparaging terms, that it is a 'highly nominalised' language – or, at least, that if the language is not inherently nominalised, people use it that way.
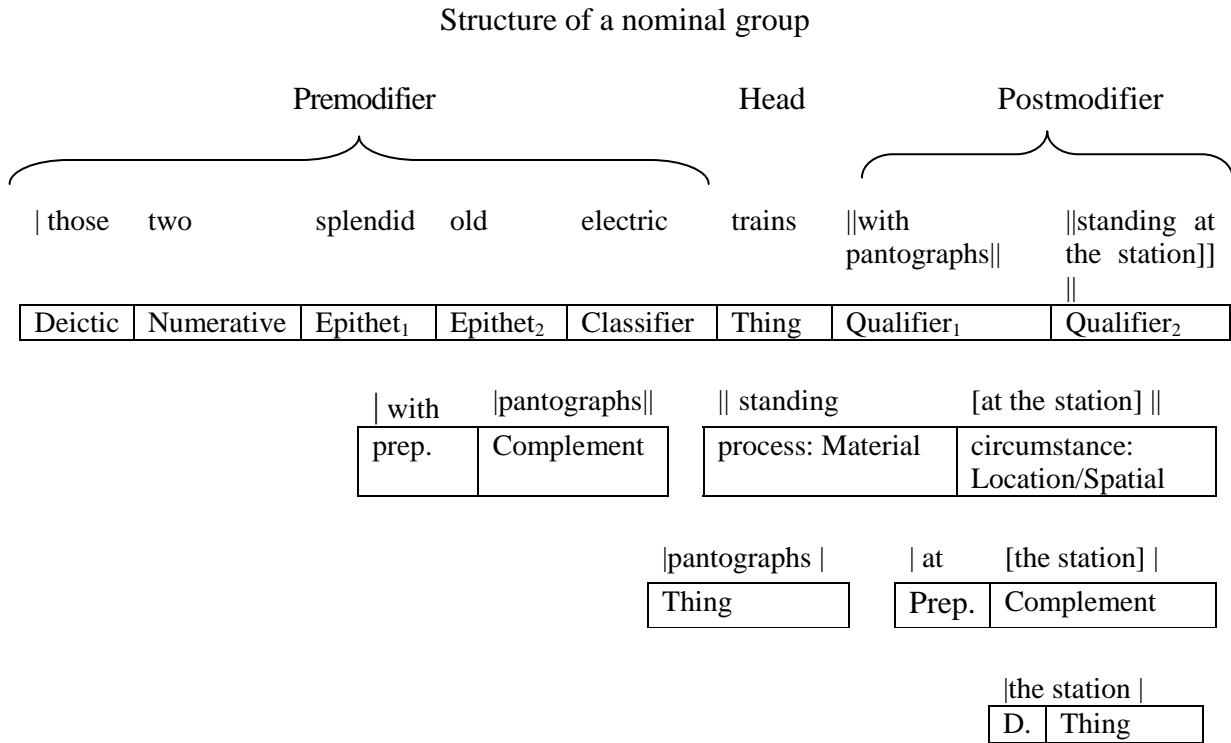
We have chosen examples from Bertrand Russell because we do not think he is someone who would normally be criticised for having an over-nominalised style. Yet in these extracts – which are not untypical – it is clear that the lexical meaning is largely carried in the nouns. Is there any reason for this?

Essentially there are two reasons, both to be found within the grammar of English. One is the structure of the nominal group; the other is the structure of the clause.

The Structure of the Nominal Group

The nominal group consists of a Head that may be preceded and/or followed by modifying elements – premodifiers and postmodifiers. Their functions can be illustrated as follows (Table 7.5).

<div align="right">Table 7.5</div>

<div align="center">Structure of a nominal group</div>

	Premodifier				Head	Postmodifier	
						‖with pantographs‖	‖standing at the station]] ‖
| those	two	splendid	old	electric	trains		
Deictic	Numerative	Epithet$_1$	Epithet$_2$	Classifier	Thing	Qualifier$_1$	Qualifier$_2$

| with	|pantographs‖
prep.	Complement

‖ standing	[at the station] ‖
process: Material	circumstance: Location/Spatial

|pantographs |
Thing

| at	[the station] |
Prep.	Complement

|the station |	
D.	Thing

In addition to the Head noun, which represents the 'Thing' – the class of phenomena being referred to – there are other functions, those of Classifier and Epithet, which also contain lexical information: the subclass *(electric trains* as opposed to *steam* or *diesel)* and qualities of various kinds (for example, *old),* including those expressing the speaker's attitude (for example, *splendid).* All these are present without embedding; if in addition we add down-ranked prepositional phrases and clauses, as Qualifiers, then each of these opens up the possibility of further nominal groups, which in turn may contain Epithets, or Classifiers; and so forth.

Verbal groups, on the other hand, contain only one lexical element: the verb itself. Other lexical material may be expressed in adverbial groups; but these are very limited in scope. About the only nominal group in these clauses that could have been replaced by an adverbial group is *(with) uniform velocity,* where we might have had *steadily fast;* but it is not very easy – all the expressions usually used in this general sense encode 'fast' as a noun and 'steadily' as an adjective: *(with) uniform velocity, (at) constant speed, (at) a steady pace,* and so on.

Thus there are a lot of things that can only be said in nominal con-structions; especially in registers that have to do with the world of science and technology, where things, and the ideas behind them, are multiplying and

proliferating all the time. That is to say; they can only be said this way **in the grammar of modern English.** The question whether the grammar had to evolve this way in order to say them is a fundamental issue that, regretfully, would require a whole further treatise to itself. And even then we would not find the answer.

The Structure of the Clause

As far as the structure of the clause is concerned, there is another source of pressure towards nominalisation. This has to do with the category of theme, which was referred to briefly above.

In addition to its organisation as representation of a process (transitivity) and as bearer of a speech function (mood), every clause is also structured as a message. It consists of two parts: a Theme, which is the point of departure – what the message is about; and another element that constitutes the body of the message, known as the Rheme.

In some languages there are special particles for indicating what is the Theme. In English, the message structure is expressed by word order: the Theme comes first.

The Theme itself can be a fairly complex structure, but what concerns us here is the topical element within it – the portion that functions in transitivity. In the examples above, the topical component of the Theme is (1) *in the Newtonian system,* (2) *our apparent imaginative understanding of these processes,* and (3) *he.*

The Theme is an important part of the message, since it is here that the speaker announces his intentions: the peg on which the message is to hang. In spoken language it is often a pronoun, most typically *I* or *you.* But in writing, with its more strongly 'third person' orientation, it is usually some other phenomenon; and again this is typically a nominal element.

It cannot, except in special circumstances, be a verbal group; so this is another reason why lexical material tends to be packaged in nouns. It can be a prepositional phrase, as in (1) above; but here, as we have already seen, the content is in the nominal group that is embedded inside it. It can be an adverbial group; but these, as has been observed, have a fairly limited semantic scope.

Furthermore, there is a special structure in English that has evolved as a means of packaging the message in the desired thematic form. These are what in formal grammars are called 'cleft' and 'pseudo-cleft' constructions. Consider the clause (made up for purposes of the discussion) *the force of gravity attracts the planets to the sun.* Let us suppose, now, that we want to vary this message in different ways. There are many possibilities; we will illustrate two.

1. Suppose we want the *force of gravity* to be the focus of information, the New element in the information structure. If we were **saying** this, we could say it as

//1 ˄ the / force of / **gravity** at/tracts the / planets to the / sun //

In writing we cannot do this; instead we assume an unmarked information structure, with the New at the end, and write

- *The planets are attracted to the sun by the force of gravity.*

This will now be 'read' with the focus on *gravity.* However, we have now disturbed the thematic structure; instead of *the force of gravity* being Theme, the Theme is now *the planets.* If the writer wants to have *the force of gravity* both as Theme and as New ('this is what I'm talking about – and it's also what I want you particularly to attend to'), he introduces a special structural device for PREDICATING the Theme:

- *It is the force of gravity that attracts the planets to the sun.*

This puts the tonic back on *gravity.*

2. Suppose on the other hand that the writer (or speaker, in this case; here both will need a resource for the purpose) wants to have, not just *the planets* as Theme but the whole of *the planets are attracted to the sun:* 'I want to tell you about planet-to-sun attraction'. The only way of achieving this is to package all of these up together:

- *What attracts the planets to the sun is the force of gravity.*

This has the effect of making the whole of *what attracts the planets to the sun* into the Theme, and then IDENTIFYING this Theme, by means of the verb *be,* with *the force of gravity* as Rheme.

Let us set these out with the structural notation:

(a) || it | is | the force of gravity | [[that attracts the planets to the sun]] ||
(b) || [[what attracts the planets to the sun]] | is | the force of gravity ||

In (b), *what attracts the planets to the sun* is both Theme and Subject. In (a), the Subject is again *it . . . that attracts the planets to the sun;* but the Theme is *the force of gravity.* This is what is known as a 'marked' Theme: one that has special prominence precisely because it is **not** the Subject.

In both these cases, the writer has depended on NOMINALISATION to get the meaning he wants. In other words, even things that are not expressed as nouns have to **behave like** nouns in order to gain their appropriate status in the thematic and information structure. This is the second of the kinds of pressure that tend towards nominalised forms of expression in English. In order to exploit the full potential of the language for mapping any transitivity structure – any configuration of process, participants, and circumstances – on to any desired message structure (Theme and Rheme, Given and New, in all their possible combinations), one has to be prepared to express oneself in a nominalised form.

So the structure of the modern world and the structure of the language combine together to make the written language what it is: a language with a high lexical density, measured in the number (and informational load) of lexical items per clause, and a strong tendency to encode this lexical content in a nominal form: in head nouns, other items (nouns and adjectives) in the nominal group, and nominalised clauses. It is these nominal structures that give the clause its enormous elasticity.

This is not to say they are never overused: it is always possible to overdo a good thing. But it is important, if one is critical of such tendencies, to understand how the patterns in question are functional in the language.

V. Further Reading

From: Johansson S. The Three Major Word Classes // Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English. L. Longman, 1999. – P. 55 – 57.

The Three Major Word Classes

Words can be broadly grouped into three classes according to their main functions and their grammatical behaviour: **lexical words, function words**, and **inserts**.

Lexical words. Lexical words are the main carriers of meaning in a text. In speech they are generally stressed. They are characteristically the words that remain in the information-dense language of telegrams, lecture notes, headlines, etc.:

> *Arriving tomorrow* (telegram)
> *Family killed in fire* (newspaper headline)

Lexical words are numerous and are members of open classes. They often have a complex internal structure, and they can be the heads of phrases. There are four classes of lexical words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

Function words. While lexical words are the main building blocks of texts, function words provide the mortar which binds the text together. Function words often have a wide range of meanings and serve two major roles: indicating relationships between lexical words or larger units, or indicating the way in which a lexical word or larger unit is to be interpreted.

Function words are members of closed systems. They are characteristically short and lack internal structure. In speech they are generally unstressed. They are frequent and tend to occur in any text, whereas the occurrence of individual nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs varies greatly in frequency and is bound to the topic of the text. As we shall see later, however, there is also a great deal of variation in the frequency of function words depending upon the type of text. The most important differences between function words and lexical words are summarized in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6

Typical differences between lexical words and function words

features	lexical words	function words
frequency	low	high
head of phrase	yes	no
length	long	short
lexical meaning	yes	no
morphology	variable	invariable
openness	open	closed
number	large	small
stress	strong	weak

Inserts. Inserts are a relatively newly recognized category of word. They do not form an integral part of a syntactic structure, but are inserted rather freely in the text. They are often marked off by intonation, pauses, or by punctuation marks of writing/ They characteristically carry emotional and interactional meanings and are especially frequent in spoken texts. Some examples are:

> **Hm hm,** *very good.* (CONV)   **Yeah,** *I will.* **Bye.** (CONVɬ)
> **Cheers** *man.* (CONV)

Inserts are generally simple in form, though they often have a deviant phonological structure (e.g. *hm, uhhuh, ugh, yeah*).

Inserts are more marginal than lexical words and function words. It can indeed be debated whether some of the forms in our conversation passage should be recognized as words at all. But there is no doubt that they play an important role in communication. If we are to describe spoken language adequately, we need to pay more attention to them than has traditionally been done.

Traditionally, interejctions are the only type of insert that has been described in most grammars. Inspection of the examples in our conversation texts shows, however, that there is a variety of forms and that the traditional term 'interjection' (*LDOCE*: 'a phrase, word, or set of sounds used as a sudden remark usu. expressing feeling') is inappropriate, except perhaps in the etymological sense of 'something thrown in between.' Hence, the new term 'insert'.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1. Is it adequate to single out three groups of words establishing inserts as a special category of words?

2. How would M.A.K. Halliday interpret inserts?

3. Which groups of inserts are definitely open and allow free formation of new items?

4. Do freely created inserts really belong to the same group as greetings and response words?

5. Are inserts regular constituents of written texts?

VI. Case Study

Select two or three written texts and study them for density of nominal elements. Then present texts:

a) with nominals only

and

b) with the nominals eliminated.

Compare the two variants of texts to decide upon which of them can give more clues as to what the text is about.

What is your density ratio indicative of?

VII. Test Yourself

False or True

1) Lexical items of rather low frequency in the language contribute a great deal to the meaning of the specific text in which they come up.

2) When evaluating density of information, all the members of a morphological paradigm can be interpreted as the same lexical item.

3) It is wise to recognize three categories of words rather than two: high frequency items, low frequency items and inserts.

4) Elasticity is one of the basic characteristics of the clause.

5) The Theme is actually the message.

VIII. References

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IX. Recommended Reading for Further Study

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UNIT 8: INTERPRETING SPOKEN COMMUNICATION

I. Outline

    1. Traditional account of speech.
    2. Speech as no less structured entity than writing.
    3. Lexical sparsity in spoken language.
    4. Representing experience in talk.
    5. The clause complex in spoken language.
    6. Longer fragments of speech.
    7. Two kinds of complexity.
    8. Transcribing spoken texts.

II. Objectives

After you have completed the unit you should be able to

    – outline traditional interpretations of spoken language;
    – prove the existence of a specific organization in any conversation;
    – describe lexical sparsity in spoken language and explain the reasons for it;
    – provide evidence for the claim that experience has several ways of showing itself in talking;
    – reveal peculiarities of the spoken clause complex;
    – compare two kinds of complexity: spoken and written ones;
    – bring examples of existing transcriptions for representing spoken texts.

III. Key Words and Expressions: *dense, code, product, object, process, dynamic, intricate, complex, sparse, organized, nuance, medium, context, transcription, low in content, unstructured, spur-of-the-moment, tentative, clause complex, hesitations, silences, false starts, repetitions, filled pauses, parenthetic remarks, grammatical reduction.*

IV. Spoken Language: Grammatical Intricacy

Speech No Less Structured Than Writing

It is a well known fact nowadays that spoken language is the primordial means through which social world is structured and transacted, the identities of its participants are affirmed or denied and its cultures are transmitted, renewed and modified.

What properties of spoken language allow it to act like that? In the previous unit we dwell in some detail on writing and written texts. It is time to return to the spoken language, and to ask: what does the spoken language do instead? Is it merely characterised by the absence of certain features that are found in writing, or has it got particular characteristics of its own?

There is a tradition of regarding spoken language as formless and featureless. Thus for example:

Spontaneous speech is unlike written text. It contains many mistakes, sentences are usually brief and indeed the whole fabric of verbal expression is riddled with hesitations and silences. To take a very simple example: in a seminar which was recorded, an articulate (and well-known) linguist was attempting to say the following:

No. I'm coming back to the judgements question. Indeterminacy appears to be rife. I don't think it is if one sorts out which are counterexamples to judgement.

But what he actually said was:

No I'm saying I'm coming back to the judgements question (267) <u>you know</u> <u>there appear</u> to (200) <u>ah</u> indeterminacy (1467) appears to be rife. I don't think it is (200) <u>if one</u> (267) if one sorts out which are counterexamples (267) to judgement. I mean observing.

Here, the brief silences (unfilled pauses) have been measured in milliseconds and marked (these are the numbers in brackets) and all other types of hesitation or disfluency– false starts, repetitions, filled pauses and parenthetic remarks are underlined. It is these hesitations or disfluencies (both filled and unfilled) which dominate spontaneous speech and give it its distinctive structure and feeling [1, p. 33].

All this amounts to is that in speech you cannot destroy the earlier drafts. If we had access to the original manuscript or typescript of the above author and published that with all the crossingsout, misspellings, redraftings, and periods of silent thought measured in thirtieths of a second, we could say 'But what he actually wrote was …'

Here is another example:

'Yer saw the Star Trek film, eh? What ya think of it then?'
'Oh, dunno. S'alright I s'pose [shrugs expressively] . . . good effects . . . yeah . . . beaut effects. And they've got these things . . . these spaceships . . . sort of sailing along . . . and the music . . . wow, that was something. But it wasn't all that . . . [Waves hand disparagingly] you know ...'
'Boring?'
'Yeah ... no ... what I mean is ... well in Star Wars they were really up against something, weren't they ... it got you in, didn't it? Don't you reckon? Yeah, but in this film . . . well, there's no one there when they get there. Too much . . . no, too little, happens ... I dunno . . . give me Star Wars'.

Did you notice how formless, tentative and spur-of-the-moment the sample of speech . . . was? Yet, although it looks shabby in printed form, the original conversation would have seemed quite sensible to the participants (try reading it aloud). Why? Because speech is, by its nature, usually unstructured, superficial and low in content [4, p. 4, 5].

In this case the accompanying discussion is more helpful; but there are still some mistakes along the way. The sample of speech was tentative and spur-of-the-moment; but it was not formless. Speech is, by its nature 'low in content' –in the special sense of lexical density as described in Chapter 7 above; but it is not 'low in content' in the general sense of lacking information; and it is certainly not unstructured and superficial.

The 'formlessness' of speech is an artefact of the transcription; if a written text is reproduced with all the planning processes left in, then it too will appear formless. But even the most sympathetic transcription will not make spoken language look good in writing, for an obvious reason: it wasn't meant to be written down. In the same way, most written English does not sound too good in speech: try reading the following out loud as if it was conversation.

THE DICTIONARY OF WORLD LITERATURE: CRITICISM – FORMS – TECHNIQUE presents a consideration of critics and criticism, of literary schools, movements, forms, and techniques – including drama and the theatre in eastern and western lands from the earliest times: of literary and critical terms and ideas: with other material that may provide background of understanding to all who, as creator, critic, or receptor, approach a literary or theatrical work. All the material here included has been written especially for this volume. Every item is the product of planning, consultation, and consideration both before and after writing. As far as possible, especially in the longer articles, the style of every contributor has been respected. With some of the factual items principally (as in the classical field) the editor has had to use a freer hand, where a topic was covered for various periods by different scholars, or presented in detail beyond the proportioned capacity of this volume. The several problems of cuts and interlinkings have been met with the work as a whole in mind, in the effort to combine accuracy and adequacy of presentation with due proportion and scope. Bibliographies indicate further avenues of inquiry.

The listing of the contributors' names is no measure of their service. (In one or two discussions of current topics, the editor has inserted reference to the authors, who had modestly withheld such mention.) Many have been helpful, beyond any indication of their initials, in the organization of the material as well as in its final shaping. Suggestions have come most generously from Fernand Baldensperger: G.A. Borgese; A.K. Coomaraswamy; Marian Harman; Urban T. Holmes, Jr.; William S. Knickerbocker; Manuel Komroff; J. Craig La Driere; Eliseo Vivas. Allardyce Nicoll has been richly responsive with material concerning the theatre. In addition to contributing therein, William A. Oldfather has supervised the wide range of the classics. Walter A. Reichart has organized and edited the Germanic field.

(From Preface to *Dictionary of World Literature: Criticism, Forms, Technique* ed. J. T. Shipley, Routledge, London 1945, p.v)

Representing one through the lens of the other is rather like judging **a** painting by whether or not it makes a good photograph.

One has to think of both written and spoken language in terms of three interrelated aspects: the nature of the medium, the functions served, and the formal properties displayed – let us say function, medium, and form (Figure 8.1)
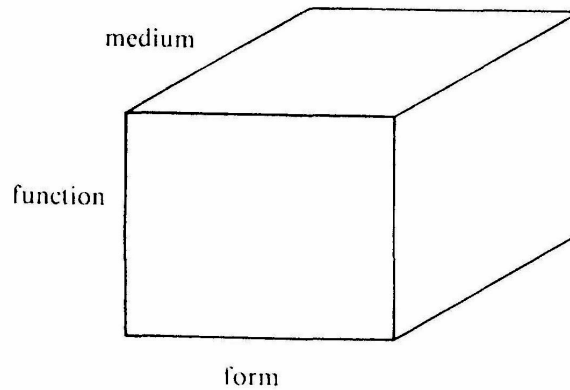

Fig. 8.1. Interrelated aspects of written and spoken language

The three go together. So the spoken medium, in which text is a process (and becomes a product only by translation – being 'written down'), displays certain properties of organization, and is appropriate to certain functions. It can be produced very quickly, make rapid adjustments in the light of the changing context, and express subtle nuances of interpersonal meaning. It tends to be disvalued in written cultures because it is not the primary means of access to power and privilege. But before writing ever existed the spoken language was the vehicle *of* poetry, oratory, and the sacred; and even in our own culture it has not entirely lost its rhetorical value. At the very least we appreciate a good conversationalist.

The spoken language is, in fact, no less structured and highly organised than the written. It could not be otherwise, since both are manifestations of the same system.

Spoken English and written English are both kinds of English, and the greater part of their patterning is exactly the same. But just as we were able to identify a feature that is particularly found in written English, that of high lexical density, so we can point out a related property that is especially characteristic of the spoken language – one that is not simply the absence of the feature already described.

Spoken English has, in fact, its own kind of complexity, arising out of the nature of the medium. In order to investigate this we shall have to make one further exploration into English grammar, up to the rank of what we are calling the CLAUSE COMPLEX. This is what lies behind the sentence as a written unit; but it does not depend on the written language, and is well developed in the speech of children a long time before they can read or write. The clause complex plays an important part in the processes of oral communication.

Lexical Sparsity In Spoken Language

Let us come back to the notion of lexical density. Here is a comparison between a sentence from a written text and a possible rendering ot it in spoken form:

||| The use of this method of control unquestionably leads to safer and faster train running in the most adverse weather conditions. |||

This is a single clause; it contains twelve lexical items, so it would have a lexical density of 12. A typical spoken variant might be:

||| If this method of control is used || trains will unquestionably (be able to) run more safely and faster || (even) when the weather conditions are most adverse |||

Here the same twelve lexical items are distributed among three clauses: density 4.

The second version was still not very colloquial: the aim was to alter the vocabulary as little as possible. A more natural spoken version might go something like the following:

||| You can control the trains this way || and if you do that || you can be quite sure || that the''ll be able to run more safely and more quickly || than they would otherwise || || no matter how bad the weather gets |||

Here the lexical items are *control, trains, way,* (not *do,* which is a proverb here.) *sure, run, safely, quickly, had, weather, gets:* ten altogether, including some very common ones. The number of clauses has now risen to five (not counting the embedded one); so the figure for lexical density is down to 2.

But notice how this effect has been achieved. It is not by any significant change in the total number of lexical items. We have abandoned one or two unnecessary ones (*leads to, conditions),* and replaced one or two others (*method* by *way, adverse* by *bad);* but by and large the vocabulary has remained the same. What has changed is the grammar.

Let us check this by taking a text in spoken English and 'translating' it into writing:

||| Or they could be in an aeroplane || and there was a great electrical storm || and they were blown off course || and the electricity made all the radio go dead || so there were no radio sounds || and nobody could hear them |||

Six clauses with thirteen lexical items; lexical density just over 2. Here is a possible 'translation:

||| Alternatively they might be in an aeroplane, || which was blown off course by a violent electrical-storm; || the electricity silenced the radio, || so that they could no longer be heard |||

Twelve lexical items distributed over four clauses; density 3. Taking a further step in the 'written' direction:

||| As a possible alternative, the aeroplane || in which they were travelling || might have been deflected from its course by a violent electrical storm, || which disrupted radio communication || and prevented them from being audible |||

Thirteen lexical items, three clauses – again, omitting the embedded one; density just over 4. (Embedded clauses are not counted separately, since they function inside another clause – if they were counted, then the lexical items inside them would have to be counted twice, as they would be occurring **both** within the embedded clause **and** within the outer clause.)

We shall not continue with the counting – the figures themselves are of no great significance: they are necessary simply to establish the point. On the basis of various samples it is found that a typical average lexical density for spoken English is between 1.5 and 2, whereas the figure for written English settles down somewhere between 3 and 6, depending on the level of formality in the writing. Obviously, the figures themselves will vary considerably according to the theoretical basis of the analysis – criteria for deciding what is a lexical item, and criteria for deciding what is a clause, as well as whether to count only ranking clauses or to include embedded ones. But provided whatever criteria are adopted are applied consistently, the lexical density of written language is likely to be of the order of twice as high as that for speech; and the discrepancy will be greater if other factors such as the relative probability of lexical items are taken into account.

In the next section we shall examine what it is that gives this low lexical density to spoken English.

Representing Experience In Talk

If we compare pairs of wordings that are paraphrases of each other, one typical of writing, the other typical of speech, we find regular patterns such as the following:

Written	**Spoken**
Every previous visit had left me with a sense of the futility of further action on my part.	*Whenever I'd visited there before, I'd ended up feeling that it would be futile if I tried to do anything more.*
Violence changed the face of once peaceful Swiss cities.	*The cities in Switzerland had once been peaceful, but they changed when people became violent.*
Improvements in technology have reduced the risks and high costs associated with simultaneous installation.	*Because the technology has improved it's less risky than it used to be when you install them at the same time, and it doesn't cost so much either.*
Opinion in the colony greeted the promised change with enthusiasm.	*The people in the colony rejoiced when it was promised that things would change in this way.*

The basis of the distinction is this. Written language represents phenomena as **products.** Spoken language represents phenomena as processes. And this corresponds to the difference between written and spoken discourse.

Each code represents reality as being like itself. A piece of writing is an object; so what is represented by written language is also given the form of an object. Hence *visit, sense, futility, action, violence, improvements, costs, installation, opinion, change, enthusiasm* are all nouns.

But when you talk, you are doing; so when you represent by talking you say that something happened or something was done. Hence *had visited, had ended up feeling, tried to do, had been, has improved, install, doesn't cost, rejoiced, change* are all verbs.

We can express the same thing from the point of view of the reader or listener. When you read, the text is presented to you synoptically: it exists, spread out on the page. So you arc predisposed to take a synoptic view of what it means. Behind it is a tableau – like the pictures from which writing originally evolved. When you listen, the text is presented to you dynamically: it happens, as waves travel through the air. So you are predisposed to take a dynamic view of what it means. Behind it, things are happening – the visual analogue is a film, not a painting.

With modern technology, the distinction is being blurred. We have tape repeaters and transcribing machines that enable us to listen to small chunks of speech, say two to five seconds of it, over and over again, so that it becomes just another kind of **thing.** And on the other hand, with computers, much of our reading matter is now fed to us in the form of moving text, line following line up the screen with only two or three lines visible at a time: here written text has turned into a process.

So the period of our semiotic history which began with the invention of printing in the Tang dynasty in China, and reached Europe just in time for the Renaissance, a period in which speech and writing were pushed very far apart by the application of technology to writing, may now be coming to an end. At least one of the factors that has led to the difference between spoken and written language, the effect of the medium on the message (to hark back to McLuhan's formulation in the 1960s), may now be disappearing; not that the medium will cease to have an effect, but that in both cases – both speech and writing – the nature of the medium itself has begun to change.

This is not, of course, the only factor involved; there are also differences between what tends to be written about and what tends to be spoken about, reflecting the different functions of speech and writing in our culture. But these are changing too. And just as in the past, when new demands are made on language so the language changes in response to them, as in the centuries after the age of Chaucer in English, now that once again we are making language

work for us in ways it never had to do before, it will have to become a different language in order to cope. Exactly how this will happen – and whether we need to intervene with some language planning in order to help it to happen – is one of the fascinating problems confronting linguistics today.

The Clause Complex In Spoken Language

Meanwhile we need to investigate the consequences, for spoken language, of the fact that it interprets experience for us in the way it does: not as 'action' and 'event' but as 'is doing' and 'is happening'.

To refer to an object takes a noun; but to say that something is happening takes more than a verb – it takes a clause. The immediate reason for this lies in the grammar: verbs do not occur by themselves, except in the kind of clause that is used to demand goods-and-services, where *Catch!* is interpreted as 'you do it now'. In other speech functions, a process in English requires a battery of accompanying features: various associated participants, 'doer', 'done to', 'done for', and so on; a POLARITY – 'it is happening', or else 'it isn't happening', or some intermediate stage (known as MODALITY) 'it may be happening'; and a time base. Of course, these features can be added to a noun; but it still remains a nominal group – whereas when they are added to a verb, it becomes a clause:

(an) approach:	*(to) approach:*
their approach to the government for possible future assistance.	*they approached the government to ask if they might be able to help them.*

As this example shows, the 'process' form of expression may need not just one clause to match an equivalent 'product' form; it may need two or more. The examples in Chapter 7 above illustrated the same point.

But a sequence of such clauses cannot simply be strung together. If the matter is being represented as a complex phenomenon, or us a set of interrelated phenomena, then the relationship has also to be brought out. This is the function of the clause complex.

A clause complex is the grammar's way of showing (1) **that** and (2) **how** the processes going together in a sequence are all related to each other. There are essentially two ways of doing this:

1. They can be treated as equal, none being dependent on any other (PARATAXIS)

2. They can be treated as unequal, one being dependent on another (HYPOTAXIS).

These two possibilities arise between any pair of related clauses. Examples of parataxis are (Table 8.1):

Table 8.1

Parataxis

Clause 1	*Clause 2*
It's less risky	and/or/but/so it costs less.
It's quite safe:	There's no danger.
Thomas said.	'There's no danger'.

Examples of hypotaxis are:

Clause α	*Clause β*
They approached the government	instead of fending for themselves.
They approached the government	who rejected their appeal.
They approached the government	asking/(in order) to ask for a loan.
They said	they would approach the government.

Clause β	*Clause α*
Instead of fending for themselves.	they approached the government
Because they needed a loan	they approached the government
They would approach the government.	they said.

It will be seen that parataxis and hypotaxis are related to the traditional notions of co-ordination and subordination. But the traditional categories are rather differently defined, so it would be misleading to use these terms. Parataxis includes:

1. (a) 'and/or'-type complexes (traditionally 'co-ordinate')
   (b) 'i.e./e.g.'-type complexes (traditionally a kind of apposition)
   (c) 'then/so/but'-type complexes

2. direct (quoted) speech complexes.

Hypotaxis includes:

1. (a) 'besides/instead of' - type complexes
   (b) 'non-defining relative' complexes
   (c) 'when/because/if' - type complexes

2. indirect (reported) speech complexes

The dependent clause (marked as *β* in the notation) may be finite or non-finite (whereas non-finite clauses are not recognised in traditional grammar). On

the other hand, hypotaxis does not include embedding, which is a very different kind of phenomenon. In the following examples:

1. *Have you seen my husband, who came in with me?*   (hypotaxis)
2. *Have you seen the man who came in with me?*   (embedding)

(1) is a **clause complex** consisting of two clauses, structure *α⌃β*. It will be spoken on two tone groups (possibly with a silent beat between); and it is possible to respond to either clause – the listener could reply *Did he?* as well as *I haven't.*

(2) is a single **clause**; it happens to have another one embedded inside it. It will be spoken on one tone group; and it is not possible to respond to the embedded clause – it does not make sense to reply *Did he?*

Combining clause and tone group notation we get the following:

1. |||//2 have you / seen my / **husband** || who //2 came in / **with**
me |||//
2. |||//2 have you / seen the / man || who / came in / **with** me || |||//

In mathematical terms, the hypotactic relation is one of iteration, whereas embedding is one of recursion.

Parataxis and hypotaxis are relations between pairs of clauses. A typical clause complex will combine both, for example:

Table 8.2

Typical Clause complex examples

|||Swiss cities had but once been peaceful	||but they changed ||	when people ||| became violent.	
1 {1	2α 2(α	2β β)}	
|||because the technology has improved	|| it's less risky	when you || install them	and it doesn't ||| cost so much either
β [β	α1α α{1(α	α1β β)	α2 2}]

Such sequences can be represented by bracketing, or by repeating the symbols. If the structure is written out in a line, the 'concatenation' symbol (a circumflex) can be used to mark off each symbol complex:

β⌃α1α⌃α1α⌃α2

Some Longer Passages of Speech

Let us now consider some longer sequences. Here are three passages taken from spontaneous speech by different people talking about their experiences of breeding and showing dogs:

A. How it actually started was that both my wife and myself were working – she was a secretary at the particular time. I was with a commercial company, commercially travelling; and we liked the Basenji as a breed of dog. but we felt we weren't in a position to own one at the time because we were out normal working days and things like this, and at that particular time we were living in a big home unit but it wasn't what you'd call suitable for a dog. and it was virtually when we got into our own first business, which was contract cleaning, that we decided that we were in a position timewise to look alter one.

B. And I had to wait. I had to wait till it was born and till it got to about eight or ten weeks of age, then I bought my first dachs-hund, a black-and-tan bitch puppy – as they told me I should have bought a bitch puppy to start off with, because if she wasn't a hundred per cent good I could choose a top champion dog to mate her to and then produce something that was good, which would be in my own kennel prefix.

C. So we rang up the breeder, and she sort of tried to describe the dog to us, which was very hard to do over the phone, so we went over to have a look to sec what they were like, and we bought Sheba, because at that stage Bob was away a lot on .semi-trailers with the army and it used to get quite bad with the exercises – you'd have prowlers and perverts through the married quarters, so if we – you know – got a dog. which we could do because it didn't matter what sort of dog anyone had, it'd bark and they wouldn't bother us.

The structure of the last of these was as follows:

Table 8.3

Extract 3 Structure

so we rang up the breeder	*1*
and she tried to describe the dog to us	*2α*
which was very hard to do over the phone	*2β*
so we went over	*3α*
to have a look	*3β*
to see	*3γα*
what they were like	*3γβ*
and we bought Sheba	*4α*
because at that stage Bob was away a lot with the army	*4β1*
and it used to get quite bad with the exercises	*4β21*
you'd have prowlers through the married quarters	*4β22*
so if we got a dog	*4β3βα*
which we could do	*4β3ββα*
because it didn't matter what sort of dog anyone had	*4β3βββ*
it'd bark	*4β3α1*
and they wouldn't bother us	*4β3α2*

To show that discourse of this kind is not special to dog fanciers here are three other extracts: one from a mother helping her daughter with her homework, one from an academic, and one from a child aged 6; 4:

D. The more tests you do, and the more different ways that questions arc put to you, the more you're going to understand what the questions are about. So what you're doing is sort of having a big bath of scientific language, and the more times you get into the bath the better you swim. And these kinds of tests are really good, because at school the

teacher knows what she's taught you, and she knows the words she's used and everything else: these tests are sort of generalised, so there's no way they can know exactly what you've learnt, but they know approximately what you should be learning about, so they ask you questions to test how much of the information has gone into your brain and been assimilated so that you can reproduce it even if the question is slightly different.

E. The one comment I'd have has to do with her writing this up. The dissertation was written within the frame 'these are the extant theories; let's use these to derive hypotheses and get some data and cast them against the theories', and that's fine, but it's also a limit, because it leads her for example not to ask such questions as the kind of thing I was pushing her on a little bit, what alternative meanings might be given to the class variable other than the socialization – it is true that in this literature the class variable is interpreted as a socialization variable, but that's not necessarily the case if you start from the more general question of how can we explain radicalism rather than the more particular question of given the theories currently used to explain radicalism.

F. When we ride on a train in the railway museum it's an old-fashioned train but we call it a new-fashioned train though it's old-fashioned because it's newer than the trains that have only got one.
    - One what?
    - One driving wheel. But when we ride on a Deltic not in a museum we call it an old-fashioned train.

It is often thought that sequences of conversational discourse like this are simply strings of 'ands'. These extracts make it clear that they are not. Rather, they are intricate constructions of clauses, varying not only in the kind of interdependency (parataxis or hypotaxis) but also in the logical semantic relationships involved. These include not only three basic types of expansion – adding a new point, restating or exemplifying the previous one, or adding a qualification – but also the relationship of projection, whereby the speaker brings in what somebody else says or thinks and incorporates it grammatically into his own discourse.

The clause complex is the resource whereby all this is achieved. It embodies the fundamental iterative potential of the grammar. This potential is found with words and groups as well as with clauses; for example, the long strings of nouns that we find in headlines, machine part names, and catalogues. But as a particular feature of spoken language its main contribution is at the rank of the clause. The natural consequence of the spoken language's preference for representing things as processes is that it has to be able to represent not one process after another in isolation but whole configurations of processes related to each other in a number of different ways. This is what the clause complex is about.

Two Kinds of Complexity

It is wrong, therefore, to think of the written language as highly organised, structured, and complex while the spoken language is dis-organised, fragmentary, and simple. The spoken language is every bit as

highly organised as the written, and is capable of just as great a degree of complexity. Only, it is complex in a different way.

The complexity of the written language is static and dense. That of the spoken language is dynamic and intricate. Grammatical intricacy takes the place of lexical density. The highly information-packed, lexically dense passages of writing often tend to be extremely simple in their grammatical structure, as far as the organisation of the sentence (clause complex) is concerned. Here is a passage from a philosophical work:

> We have defined the content of a scientific discipline by reference to three interrelated sets of elements: (I) the current explanatory goals of the science, (2) its current repertory of concepts and explanatory procedures, and (3) the accumulated experience of the scientists working in this particular discipline- i.e., the outcome of their efforts to fulfil their current explanatory ambitions, by applying the available repertory of concepts and explanatory procedures. So understood, of course, the 'experience' of scientists is not at all the sort of thing assumed, either by sensationalist philosophers like Mach, for whom the ultimate data of science were supposedly 'sense-impressions', or by physicalist philosophers such as the logical empiricists, for whom 'scientific experience' simply comprises straightforward factual generalizations. Rather, the experience of scientists resembles that of other professional men: for example, lawyers, engineers or airline pilots.
>
> (Stephen Toulmin, *Human Understanding,* vol. 1, Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1972. 175-6)

The **argument** is of course complex; but the sentence grammar is extremely simple. There are some embedded clauses inside the nominal groups, but even taking these into account the passage does not display any of the kind of dynamic complexity that is regularly associated with natural, spontaneous speech. The complexity of the written language is its density of substance, solid like that of a diamond formed under pressure. By contrast, the complexity of spoken language is its intricacy of movement, liquid like that of a rapidly running river. To use a behavioural analogy, the structure of spoken language is of a choreographic kind.

Of course, much conversation is fragmentary, with speakers taking very short turns; and here the potential for creating these dynamic patterns docs not get fully exploited. But the difference is not so great as it might seem, because what happens in dialogue is that the speakers share in the production of the discourse; so that although the grammar does not show the paratactic and hypotactic patterns of the clause complex in the way that those appear when the same speaker holds the floor, some of the same semantic relations may be present across turns.

Transcribing Spoken Texts

Why has it become customary to regard the spoken language as disjointed and shapeless? There seem to be three main reasons for this misunderstanding.

One is that of the value systems of literate cultures, already referred to earlier. In an 'oral' culture (i.e. one without writing; to say 'non-literate' gives too much of a negative flavour), the registers of language which are highly valued, and the highly valued texts within those registers, are, obviously, spoken, since speech is all that there is. Once writing evolves, these texts are written down, because writing is felt to be a more reliable way of preserving them; which means that the value is now transferred to written language, and speech comes to be regarded as *transitory* and *inconsequential*.

The second reason is that when people begin to transcribe spoken texts, in the age of tape recorders, they are so taken up with the hesitations and 'false starts' (the 'crossing out' phenomenon in speech), the coughs and splutters and clearings of the throat, that they put them all in as a great novelty, and then judge the text on the basis of their transcription of it. (Anyone who had learnt to listen to language would have been aware of these things without the aid of tape recorders, and they would have come as no great surprise; but unless you are trained as a linguist you are likely to process speech without attending to its sounds and its wordings – very naturally so, since this is what is necessary for survival.) But transcribing these features into writing is rather like printing a written text with all the author's crossings out and slips of the pen, all the preliminary drafting mixed up with the final version – and then saying 'Wow! What a mess'. (Imagine reading out a unedited manuscript in this way to someone who is illiterate – that is exactly the picture he would get of what written language is like.)

The third reason seems to be that when philosophers of language began recording speech they started with academic seminars, because they were easiest to get at: there is a lot of talk, the interactants, since no great personal secrets were likely to be revealed. But this is just the kind of discourse that is most disjointed, because those taking part are having to think about what they are saying, and work out the arguments as they go along. The ordinary everyday exchanges in the family, the gossip among neighbours, the dialogue-with-narrative that people typically *bandy* around when sitting together over a meal or at the bar – and also the pragmatic discourse that is *engendered* when people are engaged in some co-operative enterprise – these tend to be much more fluent and articulated, because the speakers are not having to think all the time about what they are saying.

If one's aim is to bring out all the features that go into the planning of speech, then it is appropriate to transcribe it that way; this is like making a photocopy of an author's original manuscript of a poem, or preserving all the stages that have gone into children's composition – it is a special research task. But one would not use these documents to represent written language. In the same way, if one wants to understand what spoken language is like (as distinct from having some special research purpose of this kind), one looks for a form of transcription that is informative, in that it incorporates the systematic and meaningful properties of speech that ordinary writing leaves out, but that does not put in all the *tacking* and the bits of material that were left over in the cutting process.

The following are some of the transcription systems for spoken English that are in current use; the references show where they may be found.

1. Survey of English Usage system
   R. Quirk & J. Svartvik, *A Corpus of English Conversation* (Longman, London, 1980).
2. D. Brazil, *Pronunciation for Advanced learners of English*. Student's Book (Oxford University Press, 1994).
3. Conversational Analysis system
   H. Sacks, E.A. Schegloff & G. Jefferson, 'A simplest systematics for the analysing of turn-taking in conversation', *Language*, vol. 50, 1974.
4. Language Development Notation
   L. Bloom, *Language Development: Form and Function in Emerging Grammars* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970).
5. Communication Linguistics system
   K. Malcolm, 'Communication linguistics: A sample analysis', J.D. Benson & W.S. Greaves (ed.), *Systemic Perspectives on Discvourse* (Ablex, Norwood, New Jersey, 1984).
6. Systemic-functional system
   M.A.K. Halliday, *A Course in Spoken English: Part 3, Intonation* (Oxford University Press, London, 1970).

The last of these is the one that is being used here. It was originally devised for teaching spoken English to foreign students, but has since been used for a variety of linguistic and educational purposes.

For very many purposes, however, there is nothing wrong with transcribing into ordinary orthography. This is easy to read and avoids making the text look exotic. The important requirement if one does use straightforward orthography is to punctuate the text intelligently. We have emphasised all along that writing is not speech written down, nor is speech writing that is read aloud. But the two are manifestations of the same underlying system; anf if the one is being represented through the eyes, or ears, of the other, it is important to use the resources in the appropriate way. If you read written language aloud, you do your best to make it sound meaningful. The same guiding principle applies when you write spoken language down.

V. Further Reading

P. 1040 – 1042
An example of conversation

Before going further, we present a conversational extract (labelled 'Damn chilli') which illustrates many typical grammatical features of conversation. It will be used as a sample from which to exemplify such features in the functional survey which follows. From the transcription, it is not always clear what is occuring among the interlocutors, in spite of the relatively straightforward syntax and vocabulary of this extract. It will help to know something of the setting: a family of four is sitting down to dinner; *P* is the mother, *J* the father, and David (*D*) and Michael (*M*) are their 20-year-old and 17-year-old sons.

D1: *Mom, I, give me a rest, give it a rest. I didn't think about you. I mean, I would rather do it. <unclear> some other instance in my mind.*

P1: *Yeah, well I can understand you know, I mean [unclear] Hi I'm David's mother, try to ignore me.*

D2: *I went with a girl like you once. Let's serve this damn chilli.*

M1: *Okay, let's serve the chilli. Are you serving or not dad?*

J1: *Doesn't matter.*

P2: *Would you get those chips in there. Michael, could you put them with the crackers.*

J2: *Here, I'll come and serve it honey if you want me to.*

P3: *Oh wait, we still have quite a few.*

D3: *I don't see any others.*

P4: *I know you don't.*

D4: *We don't have any others.*

P5: *Yes, I got you the big bag I think it will be a help to you.*

J3: *Here's mom's.*

M2: *Now this isn't according to grandpa now.*

P6: *Okay.*

M3: *The same man who told me it's okay <unclear>*

P7: *Are you going to put water in our cups? Whose bowl is that.*

M4: *Mine.*

P8: *Mike put all the water in here. Well, here we are*

J4: *What.*

P9: *Will y'all turn off the TV*

J5: *Pie, I'll kill you, I said I'd take you to the bathroom.*

P10: *Man, get your tail out of the soup – Oh, sorry – Did you hear I saw Sarah's sister's baby?*

M5: *How is it?*

P11: *She's cute, pretty really.* (AmE CONV)

This dinner table interaction touches on several seemingly unrelated topics. Reference is made not only to the dinner and its accompaniments (e.g. water, chilli, crackers, cups, bowl) and to other people (grandpa, Sarah's sister's baby) and apparently to a household pet named Pie, but also to an imaginary situation in which *P* speaks (in *P1*), to switching off the television, to past meetings, etc.).

Some lines are opaque out of context (e.g. *No this isn't according to grandpa now; Oh sorry*; and *Man, get your tail out of the soup*). Even the interpretation of *J*'s *What* (*J4*) can only be guessed at. The shared background information and the shared physical and temporal space required to fully understand this excerpt are considerable. In this respect, although the difficulty of making sense of it on the page may be unfamiliar and disorienting experience for many readers, the extract is typical of conversation.

A functional survey of conversation

In the following subsections, we identify a spectrum of 'external' (social, psychological, and physical) determinants of conversation, and use these to identify and explain many of the striking grammatical characteristics of conversation noted in earlier chapters.

Unlike most other registers, conversation cannot be easily characterized in terms of communicative goals or social functions. The most that can be claimed is that it is a pervasive activity among human beings, and that its primary function appears to be to establish and maintain social cohesion through the sharing of experience, although secondarily it may promote other goals such as entertainment (e.g. through jokes and narratives), exchange of information and control of others' behaviour. Our operational definition of conversation is inclusive enough to subsume many more specific types of verbal behaviour, such as instructing, counselling, insulting, swapping anecdotes or conducting a business telephone call.

Conversation takes place in the spoken medium

Conversation takes place in speech – by use of an oral-auditory channel. Perhaps this point is so obvious that it does not need labouring.

Unfortunately, the Corpus data we are using lacks some important evidence on the nature of spoken grammar. The LSWE conversational subcorpus has only orthographic transcriptions, lacking phonetic and prosodic information, to represent the complex auditory events of spoken discourse. Other features which could be included in an ideal transcription include:

- Tone units; nuclear tones; varying degrees of stress
- Varying lengths of pause
- Paralinguistic features such as tempo and loudness
- Voice qualities such as whisper and breathy voice.

Of these, the prosodic and pausal phenomena in the first two lines are the most important for conveying grammatically relevant distinctions. The use of orthographic devices such as the question mark (?) cannot compensate for the absence of indicators of intonation and stress. Let us examine two fragments of transcribed speech where these types of information could be impotant:

One of my friends is bisexual, **Sam**. (BrE)

The function of the final noun Sam is unclear: is it a vocative, or a noun in apposition to *one of my friends*? Almost certainly, pause and intonation would have resolved the ambiguity of the transcription. On the other hand, a glance at the header information for the text in question will let us know that the person addressed in this case was not called 'Sam', and therefore for all practical purposes resolve the ambiguity.

> *I told you what she said **didn't I**?* (BrE)

In English, question tags have a somewhat different meaning, according to whether they have a rising or falling nucleas. The transcription does not disambiguate this, although the use of the question mark makes a rising tone more likely.

On the other hand, for many purposes of grammatical research, the absence of prosodic information may make comparatively little difference, since the context generally resolves ambiguities left by lack of intonation. Even in cases where the context sometimes does not help very much, as in the case of the question tag, it can be reasonably argued that we are not dealing with a grammatical distinction here, but with a semantic or pragmatic distinction realized directly through intonation. In other words, the difference between falling and rising tones in a question tag does not need to be treated in grammar, although it is relevant to other aspects of linguistic description.

Nevertheless, our description here lacks important layers of information which would be retrievable from the sound recording of a conversation, or, even more, from a video recording. This lack requires us to be careful in not attributing too much certainty to the conclusions we reach and the interpretations we make on the basis of written evidence only. Despite careful training of the transcribers, the written form of the transcription is likely to reflect individual styles of transcribers: for example, in the placing of commas or periods, in the choice between conventional and non-standard spelling (e.g. in *gotta* and *got to*), and in the use of contractions. At the same time, the choice made by the transcriber is likely to reflect the realities of the spoken recording, when measured in broad quantitative terms.

It also needs to be emphasized that transcription is a highly conventionalized practice, adopting virtually wholesale the rigid orthographic habits (e.g. in the spelling of words, and the marking of spaces between them) which have grown up for the written language. This remark even applies to cases where the standard orthography has been avoided, in order to represent something approximating to the spoken pronuncation, as in abbreviated forms such as *gotta*, *gonna*, and *cos*. These semi-standardized 'informal spellings' are themselves governed by convention. For example, the familiar spellings *ain't* and *eh?* represent words whose actual pronunciation can be more similar to /ɪnt/ and /eɪ/ respectively.

1) What information would you like to get to understand the conversation "Damn chilli"?

2) What determinants explain many of the striking grammatical characteristics of conversation?

3) Why are characteristics of the spoken medium indispensable for expounding on the nature of conversation?

4) Can you give your own example of the importance of the spoken medium?

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P. 1042 – 1043

Conversation takes place in shared context

Conversation is typically carried out in face-to-face interaction with others, e.g. family members or friends, with whom we share a great deal of contextual background. Face-to-face interaction means that we share not just an immediate physical context of time and space, but a large amount of specific social, cultural, and institutional knowledge.

In keeping with this shared knowledge, conversation is marked grammatically by a very high frequency of pronouns, as contrasted with a very low frequency of nouns. The user of personal pronouns (by far the most common class of pronouns) normally assumes that we share knowledge of the intended reference of *you, she, it*, etc. This sharing of situational knowledge is most obvious in the case of first and second person pronouns (especially *I* and *you*) which, referring directly to participants in the conversation, are the most common in this variety. (They account for 29 of the 47 personal pronouns in 'Damn chilli'.) Pronoun reference, however, represents only the most common variety of **grammatical reduction** that characterizes conversation, others being the use of ellipsis and of substitute proforms (e.g. *one/ones* substituting for a nominal and *do it/that* substituting for a verb or verb phrase). In the extract 'Damn chilli', substitution is illustrated by:

I mean, I would rather do it. (D1)

and both substitution and ellipsis (signalled by <->) are illustrated in this sequence of turns:

Here, I'll come and serve it honey if you want me to <->. (J2)
*Oh wait, we still have quite **a few**. (P3)*
*I don't see any **others**. (D3)*
I know you don't <->. (P4)

Obviously such structure-erasing devices signal dependence of communication on contextual clues – which may, or may not, have been overtly signalled in the preceding discourse. The frequency of ellipsis in conversation shows up especially in situational ellipsis (e.g. *Doesn't matter* in 'Damn chilli' [*J1*], in

ellipsis across turns (as seen in turn *P4* above), and also commonly in answers to questions. Reduction means the simplification of grammatical structure, hence the reduction of the number of words uttered, by reliance on implicit meaning or reference, as supplied by mutual knowledge. Often this implicit meaning is retrieved anaphorically, by a previous verbal reference (as in *she* in 'Damn chilli', co-referring to *Sarah's sister's baby* in (*P10*)), but frequently it is retrieved from the situation outside language. Another type of reliance on situational reference is through the use of dietic items (*this, that, these, those, there, then, now*, etc.), most of which again are particularly common in conversation. In 'Damn chilli', we note particularly the use of dietics in *D2* (*this damn chilli*), *P2* (*those chips in there*), *J3* (*Here's mom's*), *M2* (*Now this isn't according to grandpa*), and *P7* (*Whose bowl is that?*). The more private the conversation, the more the understanding of it tends to rely on such dietic identification of reference.

As the 'Damn chilli' example shows, another factor which contributes to the difficulty of making sense of a transcription is the use of **non-clausal** or grammatically fragmentary components in speech. Although such material can be found in written language (e/g/ in headlines and lists), it is far more pervasive and varied in speech. The word-class of **inserts**, including grammatical isolates such as *yeah* (*P1*), *okay* (*M1*), and *sorry* (*P10*), is the clearest case of material which cannot be fitted into canonical grammatical structures such as clauses and phrases. These 'stand-alone' words rely heavily for their interpretation on situational factors, which may be expressed through language but also through other means. For example, *thanks* or *sorry* may be a follow-up to a non-verbal action, as well as to a verbal one (as the example *Oh, sorry* in *P10* shows).

To the extent that conversation is dependent for its meanings on the immediate context, it is less dependent on the articulation of overt grammatical structure. The occurrence of inserts at the word level is matched by the occurrence of distinctive elements such as **prefaces** and **noun phrase tags** at the phrase level: a further realization of the context-bound nature of conversation. Yet a further manifestation of this is the not-infrequent occurrence in conversation of **unembedded dependent clauses** such as *When you're ready* or *If you don't mind* as complete grammatical units. In our analysis, these are counted as examples of non-clausal rather than clausal units, since they lack the normally expected main clause structure.

Discussion Questions/Professional Development Activities

1) What is grammatical reduction? How is it related to Halliday's theory of density?

2) What are non-clausal components of speech?

3) Why do inserts and non-clausal components rely heavily on situational factors for their interpretations?

VI. Case Study

Record an authentic conversation. Study the variety of possibilities to transcribe it, given in the chapter about transcription and write the transcript of your conversation. Then

1) Prove your choice of transcription.
2) Analyse the characteristic features of the language of the conversation.

VII. Test Yourself

A. *False or True?*

1) Spoken language is formless and featureless.

2) We can think of both written and spoken language in terms of three interrelated aspects: the nature of the medium, the functions served, and the formal properties displayed.

3) Spoken language is as highly organized as written, but its organization is very much special and different from the written language.

4) Transcribing conversations with all their hesitations and silences and false starts is rather like printing a written text with all the author's crossings out and slips of pen, and is not helpful at all for the interpreter of the language.

VIII. References

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IX. Recommended Reading for Further Study

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2. Biber D. On the complexity of discourse complexiy: a multidimensional analysis // Discourse Processes, 1992. – № 15. – P. 133 – 163.
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KEY

Unit 1 -   B: 1-same; 2-different**.**

                 C: 1-T.

Unit 2 -   B: 1-same; 2-different; 3-different.

Unit 3 -   A1-B2; A2-B1; A3-B4; A4-B3; A5-B5.

Unit 4 -   A: 1-same; 2-different; 3-same; 4-different.

                 B: 1-F; 2-T.

                 C: 1-b; 2-c.

Unit 5 -   a-the same; b-different; c-the same; d-different

Unit 6 -   1. 1-different; 2-different; 3-same; 4-different.

                 2. 1-F; 2-T; 3-T; 4-T

Unit 7 -   1-T; 2-T; 3-F; 4-T; 5-F.

Unit 8 -   1-F; 2-T; 3-T; 4-F.

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