

Language as a Necessarily Required for Thought

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1. Introduction

We impossible imagine our life without the use of language and language is merely important means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. We do not live in the world alone without the particular language which become the medium of expression for our society. The language is constant ways of arranging data and it's most ordinary every days analysis of phenomena that we need to recognize the influence of the culture and personal activities.

The connection between language and thought is profound. The majority of our everyday life involves the use of language. We "tell" our ideas to others with language, we "understand" their meanings and their responses with language, and we "speak" internally to ourselves when we process this information and make logical conclusions.

It seems that thinking unavoidably involves certain degree of the use of language. This connection seems that thought is indeed utterly determined by language.

1.1 Language of Thought Hypothesis

The Language of thought hypothesis applies to thoughts which have propositional content, and as such is not meant to describe everything that goes on in the mind. However, the aim of the theory of the "Language of Thought Hypothesis" is to accurately describe the way in which our thoughts relate by providing a semantic structure for our thoughts. In the most basic form, the theory states that thought follows the same rules as language;

thought has syntax. It must claim that the linguistic symbols used in mental language must be simple concepts; of course, these simple concepts are taken together with logical rules can be manipulated to form significantly more complex concepts. (Foder;1975:212)

The Representational theory of thought claims that each propositional attitude stands in a unique relationship with subject or subjects of the attitude. In other words, there must be a mental representation which stands in some unique relationship with the subject of that representation and has specific content. The theory will also affirming that these mental representations can be connected causally to allow for complex thought.

This has been established, the theory will need to hold these representations as a part of a system of representation which follows combinatorial syntax rules. This means that complex thoughts are built from basic thoughts, and that complex thoughts get their semantic content from the content of the basic thoughts and the relations that they hold to each other. The theory must also hold that these thoughts can only be held in relation to each other in ways that does not violate the syntax of thought. This theory relies on a version of functionalist materialism, which holds that mental representations are actualized and modified by the individual which is holding the propositional attitude. In the case of human beings, this means that the brain alters our thoughts in certain ways depending on the brain's chemistry.(Foder;1975:213-214)

1.2 Language and Thought

Crystal (2002:14) mentions that Language and thought are interdependent. Language is a regular part of the process of thinking. It is not a question of one notion taking precedence over the other, but of both notions being essential.

How is language related to thought? Do people who speak different languages think differently? According to the theory, language offers the concepts and mechanisms for representing and making sense of our experience, thereby radically shaping the way we think.

First, people possess many concepts which their language does not directly encode. Second, there are often broad similarities in the ways different languages seek domains of experience. For instance, crucial properties of colour vocabularies across language appear to be shaped by universal perceptual constraints (Regier, Key and Khetarpal:2007). To take another example many languages seem to label basic tastes by distinct words (e.g., sweet, salt, sour and bitter) (Levinson; 2003:86-87).

Whorfian view maintain that, even though language does not completely determine thought, it still affects peoples habitual thought of some categories and downgrading others. Many people find language to be a powerful tool with which to manipulate their thoughts. It provides a mechanism to internally rehears, critique, and modify thoughts. Language allows us to apply a common set of faculties to our own ideas and the ideas of others presented though speech. This internal form of communication is a powerful tool for a social animal and could certainly pressures for improved language use (Whorf; 1971:132).

1.3 Thought without Language

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis proposes that language determines thought; therefore they are identical in nature. This argument in fact implies that thought is impossible without language. Language is a carrier of thought, just like water is to water waves without water acting as a medium, water waves cannot possible exist.

However, one can find quite some evidences against such claim. Consider a new born baby who has not get acquired language, experiments have shown that infants are capable, during the first day of their life, of a kind of reaching. They are able to project their arms in the direction of a visually perceived moving object (Steinberg; 1982:105-106).

The new-born's reaching behaviour manifests his capacity to process certain categories of information related to the situation and his own action. Since this reaching behaviour cannot be merely reflexive and there must be a rational cognitive process behind (Mounoud; 1988:30).

An example of thought without language is given by the higher animals, such as apes and birds. It is commonly agreed that animals do not have language; and it has been observed that these animals process at least some degree of cognitive ability, which allows them to perform cognitive processes such as problem solving tasks, matching and simple additions. When language has been taught to these animals, they could even use them creatively (Steinberg; 1982:108).

The possibility of thought without language does not appear in these non-human subjects. Even as adults with full language ability, we occasionally find ourselves better thinking in terms of imagery representations. Especially in the fields of mathematics and physics, when abstract concepts are sometimes hard to describe in words, schematic graphs are often employed to simplify the problem (Jonson; 2002:498-500).

1.4 Thought Depend on Language

It may seem that we cannot speak without thinking :but probably not because:

- 1) we may use a word correctly before we fully understand the concept.
- 2) we express ourselves in paralinguistic ways of gesture and facial expressions.
- 3) some people certainly think in images and pictures and artists express themselves in this way.
- 4) sometimes we "know" something but can't we express ourselves in a right words. (ibid)

1.4.1 The Dependence of Thought on Language

Is not the case, if language were identical to thought, we would not be able to think without language. Then we ask, is thought dependent on language, as suggested by Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis or does language determine our habitual thought? It is important to understand the term "habitual thought" Whorf has explained "habitual thought":

"I mean more than simply language, i.e. than the linguistic patterns themselves. Include all the analogical and suggestive value of the patterns (e.g. our "imaginary space" and its distant implications), and all the give-and-take between language and the culture as a whole, where is a vast amount that is not linguistic but yet shows the shaping influence of language. (Whorf; 1971:147)

Whorf has also illustrated his view by taking example from different language, there are different lexicons which classify things in different fashions, therefore we actually see the world differently. For example, there is a word for everything that flies except birds in the language Hopi, where as in English such kind of classification

seems weird and a lien, and we do not tend to see things that way (Crystal; 2002:15).

In addition, we will have to ask why there are totally different world views among the same linguistic group, if language indeed reflects world view, while people speaking different languages can share similar world views. More interestingly, what kind of world view does a multilingual hold if his world view is dependent on languages signifying contradicting world views?

Moreover, the world view of society may change while its language remains relatively unchanged. Then in what way does the language reflect the habitual thought of our thought? It seems that we are left no choices but to admit that if language determines any tendency in our thinking, it is in a very limited sense and cannot constitute what Whorf has suggested to be "habitual thought" (Steinberg; 1982:112-113).

1.5 Interdependence or Independence?

Steinberg (1982:115-116) mentions that if language does not determine or influence our thought, and it is merely existence to thought; language, then seems to us to be more like a tool of thought than a part of it. He has summarized three main functions of language to thought:

- 1) providing new ideas;
- 2) changing beliefs and values; and
- 3) assisting memory.

All of these functions only provide media for influencing our thought, but language itself does not alter the nature, content and direction of it. Steinberg noted that language itself is neutral to the thought which it conveys.

Therefore, even though language is significant in rational thinking, such importance is only due to the fact that language assists our memory and labels abstract ideas with words and sounds which can be more easily processed. For instance, when we do a calculation of one thousand plus thousand in our mind, it is difficult to picture one thousand apples on one side, one thousand on the other, and then we count them altogether. Instead, we assign a word to the abstract concept of "thousand", and follow certain arithmetic rules on these words (e.g., "one" plus "one" gives "two"). But the word thousand does not create our concept of "thousandness" (Steinberg; 1982:117-118)

Since language seeming plays only an assisting role to thought, it is then hard to argue why language and thought might be considered interdependent. Those who argue that they are interdependent because language is a regular part of everyday thinking simply do not provide a satisfactory reason (Frawley; 1992:49).

1.6 Language as Organized Thought Coupled with Sound

Language is only a system of pure value to prove this. It is enough to consider the two elements involved in its functioning: ideas and sounds. Psychologically our thought is a part from its expression, without the help of sings we would be unable to make a clear-cut, consistent distinction between two ideas. Without language thought is a vague.

The character role of language with respect to thought is not to create a material phonic means for expressing ideas but to serve as a link between thought and sound, under conditions that of necessity bring about the reciprocal limitations of units. An idea is fixed in a sound and a sound becomes the sing of an ideas, one

cannot divide sound from thought and thought from sound. (Bally and Sechehaye; 1959:111-114).

1.7 The Psychology of Language

Language is a system for communicating information, thoughts, and feelings. We use languages in our thinking even if we not speaking out loud. When we reach a decision or conclusion, we must then translate the thought into language even if we wish to communicate with others. How we learn to understand and use language is a major issue for language theorists. Learning theorists such as O. Hobart and B.F. Skinner feel that language follows the same learning principles as other basic types of behaviour. The child acquires language skills largely by imitating the speech of others and being rewarded for correct imitations. Some psycholinguists, Eric Lenneberg and Chomsky are opposed to this view. To them the ability to speak is inborn in human beings, and learned to use a language is a process of cognitive development. This explains why the development of speech follows a definite pattern (Al-Saadi and Al-Khazraji;1988:144)

1.8 linguistic structure influences the cognition of language users

From the late 1980s a new school of linguistic relativity scholars, rooted in the advances within cognitive and social linguistics, have examined the effects of differences in linguistic categorization on cognition finding broad support for the hypothesis in experimental contexts (Putz and Verspoor ;2000: 17).

Effects of linguistic relativity have been shown particularly in the domain of spatial cognition and in the social use of language, but also in the field of color perception. Recent studies have shown that color perception is particularly prone to linguistic relativity

effects when processed in the left brain hemisphere, suggesting that this brain half relies more on language than the right one (Drivonikou et al;2007:197-200). Currently a balanced view of linguistic relativity is espoused by most linguists holding that language influences certain kinds of cognitive processes in non trivial ways but that other processes are better seen as subject to universal factors. Current research is focused on exploring the ways in which language influences thought and determining to what extent (Putz and Verspoor; 2000: 18).

An infant learns the meaning of signs through interaction with its main care-givers, e.g., pointing, cries, and gurgles can express what is wanted. How verbal sounds can be used to conduct social interaction is learned through this activity, and the child begins to utilize, build, and develop this faculty, e.g., using names for objects, etc.

Language starts as a tool external to the child used for social interaction. The child guides personal behavior by using this tool in a kind of self-talk or "thinking out loud." Initially, self-talk is very much a tool of social interaction and it tapers to negligible levels when the child is alone or with deaf children. Gradually self-talk is used more as a tool for self-directed and self-regulating behavior. Then, because speaking has been appropriated and internalized, self-talk is no longer present around the time the child starts school. Self-talk "develops along a rising not a declining, curve; it goes through an evolution, not an involution. In the end, it becomes inner speech". Inner speech develops through its differentiation from social speech (Santrock; 2004:200 – 222).

Speaking has thus developed along two lines, the line of social communication and the line of inner speech, by which the child mediates and regulates her activity through her thoughts which in turn are mediated by the [semiotics](#) (the meaningful signs) of inner

speech. This is not to say that thinking cannot take place without language, but rather that it is mediated by it and thus develops to a much higher level of sophistication. Just as the birthday cake as a sign provides much deeper meaning than its physical properties allow, inner speech as signs provides much deeper meaning than the lower psychological functions would otherwise allow (Santrock; 2004:222 – 225).

2. Conclusion

Human language is distinct from the language's of other creature, if human language is indeed such unique form of communication, then it would seem in conceivable that other creatures would be able to develop an understanding of this specialized human mode of expression.

Thinking and language, could be treated as independent psychological activities. Thinking, knowledge and acting depend internally represented symbols. Thinking is an important role in the significant of the styles of education because the significant of successful conversation and discussion are coming from growing thinking up.

We speak of the value of a word, we generally think first of its property of standing for an idea and this in fact one side of linguistic value.

Inner speech is not comparable in form to external speech. External speech is the process of turning thought into words. Inner speech is the opposite; it is the conversion of speech into inward thought. Inner speech for example contains predicates only. Subjects are superfluous. Words too are used much more economically. One word in inner speech may be so replete with sense to the individual that it would take many words to express it in external speech.

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