

LANGUAGE FUNCTION IN SOCIAL LIFE AND ITS INFLUENCES

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Abstract

Language becomes a necessary thing because it helps the world having the interaction. In addition, a language is a structured system of communication used by humans. Languages consist of spoken sounds in spoken languages or written elements in written languages. There are some functions of language such as communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release. Additionally, a language may consist of other symbolic elements like hand gestures in sign languages. Language becomes a necessary thing because it helps the world having the interaction. There are some functions of language such as communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release. Human needs social life and social life need human. The functions of language give big impact to many aspects especially in social life. In this study, the use of language and how the function of language can give impact to society.

Keywords: *function of language, society, system.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language pervades social life. It is the principal vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge, and the primary means by which we gain access to the contents of others' minds. Language is a form, not the substance (in Chaer Lyons 1995:60). While Chaer (1995:14) mentions the

characteristics that constitute the essence of language as a symbol of the sound system, are arbitrary, productive, dynamic, diverse, and humane. In addition, language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols that permit all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or to interact (Finocchioro, in Ramelan

1984). As general, language is a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. People use language to put their purposes across. Language becomes a necessary thing because it helps the world having the interaction. Language has its function as the aim of communication. There are some functions of language such as communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release. Language is a center to social interaction in every society, regardless of location and time period. Language and social interaction have a reciprocal relationship: language shapes social interactions and social interactions shape language. These functions give big impact to many aspects especially social life. It is clearly seen that the target is society, which language become a need for society.

The effects of language can influence society depend on how society apply the language and use it as their need. In this article, the use of language and how the function of language can give big impact to society will be discussed. The discussion is

supported by many interrelated sources.

II. DISCUSSION

In this study, there are some experts mentioned their thoughts. Michael Halliday (2003:80) stated seven functions of language:

- (1) **Regulatory function** means that language can influence people's behavior. In fact, this function make people give command/ask for help/requesting/persuade people.
- (2) **Interactional function** means that people can develop their social life and relationship with others by giving more attention such as "I love you and need you to stay with me"
- (3) **Personal function.** According to its name, personal function means that people can express their identity, feeling, emotions, personal preferences, or opinion and anything relate to personal things.
- (4) **Heuristic function** is used to learn and explore the environment.
- (5) **Imaginative function:** when the language is used to explore, and create the imagination or

ideas. It usually use when someone want to tell a joke or story.

- (6) **Instrumental function:** when language is used to express what the peoples need.

More over Roman Jakobson (1960, pp. 350-377) stated that functions of language consist of six:

- (1) **Referential function:** this function is used to indicate things or facts.

- (2) **Emotive function:** when language is used to express emotions, but people do not use the words to be spoken, it's only about people expressions without saying words.

- (3) **Conative function:** it is used to give command and request. It is about orders and prayers.

- (4) **Phatic function:** it is used to maintain the communication. It can be asking the weather, or just saying hello when answering call on phone.

- (5) **Metalingual:** when the language is used to talk about language such as grammar, linguistics, and etc.

- (6) **Poetic:** it is used when someone want to focus only on a message. This function encompasses more than poetry.

From those thoughts, there are many functions of language in social life. And human being is a social creature. Human needs social life and social life need human. In fact, man is a receiver and sender of messages who assembles and distributes information (Greimas, 1970). Sapir insists that “every cultural pattern and every single act of social behavior involves communication in either an explicit or implicit sense” (p. 104). The tool for this communication is language.

Language is used in social life as the tools to communicate and interact with others. It is necessary to have relationship, express emotion, deliver and receive the meaning, and prevent misunderstanding to have an objective assessment of something.

According to international journal of humanities and social science, concerning about the discussion of function of language and society, Sapir-Whorf hypothesis the following points appear in the mind:

1. We are, in all our thinking and forever, at the understanding of the particular language which has become the means of expression for our society, we experience and practice our expression by means of the characteristics, peculiarities,

and sometimes literary words encoded in our language.

2. The characteristics, peculiarities, and literary words encoded in one language system are distinctive, typical, and unique to that system and they are dissimilar as well as incomparable with those of other systems.
3. Since the culture of a particular place or nation is different from others, sometimes the misunderstanding and misconception occurs when one from another nation uses the language of that nation
4. In order to understand the specific words, literary terms, and even sometimes the simple words in one language, we must be familiar with the culture of that nation.

From the points above, it can be stated that language is used to express emotion using or without specific words, but it's not only about understand the specific words to express something in society, but we need to understand the culture while using language.

As human being, society is important and society can be created by having relation. According to the Halliday and Jakobson above, the function of

language has been applied in the social life. People live by caring each other and build the relationship. Relationship has different level for every person and it depends on how they use language to improve their relationship. As explained above, function of language not only to improve relation such as feeling or emotion, language help people to interact with stranger for the sake of survival such as selling, asking for help, deliver and receive the information and many more. Language function emanate from an intra psychological perspective, in which language is seen as primarily a system operating within the individual's brain that is then applied for social purposes (e.g., Caramazza & Hillis, 1990; Kay, Lesser, & Coltheart, 1996). The relation of language and emotion in development is most often thought about in terms of how language describes emotional experiences with words that name different feelings.

Language is a communication tool used by everyone in their daily life as a means to convey information and arguments to others. In this case, the language cannot be

separated from culture because language represent its nation and has close relation to the attitude or behavior of groups of speakers of the languages. The skills in speaking, writing and reading are integral to everyday life, where language is the primary tool for expression and communication. Studying how people use language what words and phrases they unconsciously choose and combine can help us better understand ourselves and why we behave the way we do. Linguistics scholars seek to determine what is unique and universal about the language we use, how it is acquired and the ways it changes over time. It considers language as a cultural, social and psychological phenomenon.

III. CONCLUSION

In concluding, language function and its influences has many impacts especially in social life of humans. The function of language has big impacts on social life. These impacts can be in the form of increased social relations, emotional expression, needs to survive, and the most important is giving and getting information. Basically, language helps people to convey messages, process messages, and receive messages in the form of words (spoken and written) or just showing expressions.

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