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UNIT 5. THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS.

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UNIT 5. THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication is possible without verbal language such as the marine animals that communicates with sounds. Artificial sign language has been also developed in order to overcome physical handicaps. However, *language* is the most perfect of tools because it is required to maintain civilization as we know it. Language is always used in a context and it is functional. According to Heidegger, the faculty of speech turns man into man.

1. The Concept of *Language:*

The word language has prompted innumerable definitions. One of the most important definitions is the one of Sapir (1921): language is a purely human non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols.

Chomsky was one of the first language researchers who tried to explain why a child learns language. According to Chomsky, children begin to produce language by a process of deduction using the input received and with natural resources construct an internal grammar.

Chomsky defined *language* as a set of sentences each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. He said that a native speaker has a subconscious knowledge of the grammatical rules of his language, which allows him to make sentences in that language. This is what Chomsky called *Communicative Competence.*

According to linguistics and psychologist, language has two main functions:

a) It is required for thought

b) It is an essential tool for communication (Crystal).

Hymes, noted that a child doesn´t know just a set of rules. He/she learns how and when to use them, and to whom. He says that when a native person speaks, he or she takes into account factors such as:

1. Systemic potential.

It means that the native speaker possesses a system that has a potential for creating a lot of language. This is similar to Chomsky competence. Whether something (word, structure...) works grammatically or not if it fits into the grammatical system.

2. Appropriateness

It means that the native speaker knows what language is appropriate in a given situation. His choice is based on the following variables: setting, participant, purpose, channel and topic. In other words, to know whether a word or structure is suitable in the context according factors such as the relative social class of the speakers, regional variations, age and status differences, the topic being discussed and so on.

3. Feasibility

It means knowing whether a construction is possible or not. It may be possible grammatically but seem ridiculous in real use such as *the use of six adverbs together.*

4. Occurrence

It means that the native speaker knows how often something is said in a language and acts accordingly.

Halliday considers that language is, indeed, learned in a functional context of use. To summarize all the above, a communicative context governs language use, and language learning implies an acquisition of these rules of use.

1.1 Functions of Language

There have been many conceptualizations during the 20th century. The ones most widespread are Jackobson and Halliday's conceptualizacions.

a) Jackobson

He extended Bühler's model. According to Jackobson there are six functions of language:

- Referential: the objective is to give information. There is a context or a reference.

- Expressive: it is characterized for the subjectivity of the speaker.

- Conative: the aim is to persuade the hearer and to provoke a response.

- Phatic: Characterized for the contact between addresser and addressee

- Poetic: it is addressed to the beauty of the message

- Metalinguistic: the aim is to explain language, such as for example, the meaning of words.

b) Halliday:

Halliday classifies the functions of language into three macro functions and six functions:

- Macro functions:

  - Ideational: it is about our experience.

  - Interpersonal: the aim is to exchange information.

  - Textual: the aim is the text in the context.

- Functions:

- Instrumental: it is based on desires or needs.

- Regulatory: the aim is to give instructions or orders.

- Interactional: greetings or thanking.

- Personal: the aim is to express feelings and attitudes.

- Heuristic: the aim is to ask questions.

- Imaginative: it is characterized for suppositions

- Informative: the aim is to inform

1.2 Language in use

Language in use is referred to the study of language in interaction, in conversation.

Halliday (1990) defined *Context* as the *environment where meanings are exchanged.* It can be analysed in terms of three factors:

- Field: what is happening.
- Tenor: who are the participants and which relation they have.
- Mode: the way and channel used.

Hymes enriched the study of the context of situation with his model called *SPEAKING:*

- S – setting and scene: time, place and physchological circunstances
- P – participants
- E – ends: the goals and outcomes of the conversation.
- A – act: speech act
- K – key: the tone and manner
- I – instrumentalities: the particular language used
- N – norms: the rules and conventions of speaking
- G – genres: the type of language used.

1.3 Speech Act Theory

Austin was the first written on this topic. He differentiated *performative utterances (verbs)* from *constatives* (true or false). Each utterance requires three steps:

- Locutionary act: grammatical utterance (form and meaning).
- Illocutionary act: the communicative purpose.
- Perlocutionary act: the effects of a speech act.

Searle, Austin's students did the most widely accepted classification of Speech Act:

- Representatives: specific idea, proposition or belief.

- Directives: attempt to get the hearer to do something.
- Commissives: commit the speaker to do something in the future. The intention os the speaker is explicit.
- Expressives: they reveal the feelings and emotions of the speaker.
- Declaratives: declarations of how the world is changing.

2. Communication

According to Halliday (1973), *communication* is the exchange and negotiation of information between at least two individuals through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, oral and written. Production and comprehension are required actions to achieve the process of communicating. Canale defined *communication* in a similar way.

Communication is more than the concept of *language*. It includes both oral communication and written communication. The first one includes language, body language and prosaic features. The second includes language and other element such as icons and drawings to remark.

The condition for communication to take place is:

- that both speaker and hearer share the same linguistic code in order than the message can be conveyed and the meaning of the message can be transferred.
- The enrichment of its meaning will depend on external factors.

- We will take into account:
    - who we are talking to
    - the purpose of the communication act

- what we are talking about.

2.1 Types of Communication

Semiotics established a classification according to the exchange of information. There are two possibilities:

a) One-way communication: when the receiver does not respond to the sender. For example, reading a book.

b) Two-way communication: when the receiver responds to the sender and the second one responds again to the receiver.

A second classification is highly used. It is the one that classifies communication according to the signs used:

a) Verbal

According to structuralism and Chomsky, the major form of communication between humans is verbal.

b) Non-verbal: gestures, facial expressions …

By the late 20th century the main focus of interest in communication seemed to be drifting away from McLuhanism and to be centring upon:

- The mass communication industries.
- Persuasive communication and the use of technology to influence dispositions
- Processes of interpersonal communication as mediators of information
- Dynamics of verbal and non-verbal (and perhaps extrasensory) communication
- Perception of different kinds of communication
- Uses of communication technology for social and artistic purposes, including education
- Development of relevant critism for artistic endeavours employing modern communication technology.

2.2 Communication features (Candlin (1980) and Widdowson(1979)).

- Communication is a form of social interaction.
- It includes a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and meaning.
- It takes place in socio-cultural contexts.
- It is carried out under limiting psychological conditions.
- There is always a purpose.
- It involves authentic language.
- The previous intention determines the successfulness.

2.3 Element of the Communicative process

Over the last 30 years, the field of communication has changed considerably. Different authors such as

Saussure, Bühler, Shannon and Jackobson have developed a model but it is the one of Jackobson that is the most widely established.

Jackobson is influenced Bühler (Functionalist model) and Shannon. According to this model, the process of communication is:

- the Adresser sends a coded message to the addressee within a context.
- Both have to share:
    - The same code
    - A contact /physical or psychological

2.4 Differences between writing and speech

- Speech uses phonic substance typically in the form of air-pressure movements
- Writing uses graphic substance typically in the form of marks on a surface.

Differences of structure and use are the product of radically different communicative situations.

❖ Crystal (1987) pointed that:

- Speech is time-bound, dynamic, transient, part of an interaction in which, typically, both participants are present, and the speaker has a specific addressee in mind.

- Writing is space-bound, static, permanent, the result of a situation in which, typically, the producer is distant from the recipient and, often, may not even know who the recipient is.

As writing can only occasionally be thought of as an interaction it is just normal that we can establish the following points of contrast:

- The permanence of writing allows repeated reading and close analysis. The spontaneity and rapidity of speech minimizes the chance of complex preplanning, and promotes features that assist to think standing up.
- The participants in written interaction cannot usually see each other, and they thus cannot rely on the context to help make clear what they mean as they would when be speaking. As a consequence, deictic expressions are normally avoided. On the other hand, feedback is available in most speech interactions.
- The majority of graphic features present a system of contrast that has no speech equivalent. Many genres of written language, such as tables, graphs, and complex formulae, cannot be conveyed by reading aloud.
- Some constructions may be found only in writing, such as the French simple past, and others only occur in speech, such as slang expressions.
- Finally, we can say that written language tends to be more formal.

Despite these differences, there are many respects in which the written and the spoken language have mutually interacted. We normally use the written language in order to improve our command of vocabulary, active or passive, spoken or written. Loan words may come into a country in a written form, and sometimes, everything we know about language is its writing.

2.5 Non-verbal Communication

In all verbal communication we are aware that the message is sent through a code that is made up of sounds travelling through the air, having been emitted through the articulation of the speaker´s speech organs. But this message is also communicated by non-verbal signals.

❖ Knapp classifies the non-verbal aspects as follows:

- Body movements:

includes gestures, movements of the body, limbs, hands, head, feet, facial expressions (smiling), eye behaviour such as blinking, direction of sight and also posture.

- Physical characteristics:

includes physical appearance, general attraction, body scents, height, hair, skin ton (these characteristics are constant).

- Paralanguage:

It refers to how something is said and not what is said. It uses the non-verbal vocal signs sourrounding speech (tone, qualities of the voice, rhythm).

- Proxemics:

it is the manner in which man uses space as specific cultural product, the study of use and perception of social and personal space. The individual determines his own space base on social and personal rules (perception and use of personal and social space).

- Tactile conduct:

kissing, hitting, guiding ... The culture will define the kind of conduct that the speaker shows (for example, Spanish people can start the communication act with a kiss, action totally forbidden for a Japanese speaker).

- Artefacts:

it includes the manipulation of objects while the interaction is being executing, which can act as non-verbal stimuli. These artefacts can be perfume, clothing, lipstick ...

- Surrounding factors:

this category includes those elements that participates in human relations which are not a direct part of it such as the furniture or the decoration of the place that surrounds the communication act.

❖ The purpose of non-verbal communication is to be part of the functional aspect

of communication:

a) to communicate emotions

b) to regulate communication/conventions.

c) To interpret.

d) To identify social status, etc.

Meaningful language includes a knowledge of these aspects for true communication. The importance of drama, mime, action songs, role-plays, simulation of real life situations to include as many non-verbal elements as possible cannot be underestimated.

2.5.1 Summarize

➢ Watch this video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nhg1_6NdDfo

2.6 Conversation analysis

Levinson classified the typology of conversations into three groups:

a) Turn talking

- One participant talks and stop. Other participant responds and stop.

- Overlap: two speakers speak simultaneously.

- Gaps between the first person speaking and another one starting

b) Adjacency Pairs: This is very important for organizing the conversation

- Question – answer
- Greeting – greeting
- Offer – acceptance

c) Overall organization:

- 1st. Opening section.
- 2nd: sequential location: introductions and closing of the topic.
- 3rd: closing section

2.6.1 Summarize

➢ Watch these video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbMUxoWCQao

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7RTRLTIuYw

2.7 The Cooperative Principle

A cooperative principle is required in order to keep a conversation and a communication. According to Limdblom, most of the time there is a big difference between what we say and what we mean. Negotiation of meaning is required whenever the confusion is originated.

According to Grice, humans have the ability of discerning what the speaker tries to communicate implicitly. When the speaker speaks, the listener constructs and evaluates a hypothesis about the speaker's meaning according to contextual and backgrounds assumptions.

- Negotiation of meaning is a concept that appeared during the 1970s and 1980s. It is:

- There is a difference between sentence meaning and utterance meaning (the context affects the second one).
- There is a difference between first and second language learning situations because the richness of the learner's language grows parallel to his discovery of the world. This process is not possible with the second language learning.
- Negotiation of the meaning is a basic principle of any situation of language acquisition.
- Negotiation of meaning is necessary when learners engage in communication. Interlanguage (Selinker, 1972) is an important factor for the dealing with the negotiation of meaning.

2.8 Communicative strategies:

Different linguistics have tried to classify the communication strategies. Celce-Murcia, M. and Olshtain, E. revised the classification of Tarone, the most universal classification of communicative strategies. According to the last revision, communication strategies are divided into five categories:

- Achievement or Compensatory Strategies

- Aproximation: for example, fish (sardine)
- Circumlocution: use of the description when I don't know a specific word.
- Word coinage: composition and derivation
- Literal translation
- Language switch: use a word from L1
- Appeal for assistance: asking for help.
- Mime: use mime to communicate and express something you don't know the words.

- Avoidance:
  - Topic avoidance
  - Message abandonment.

- Time gaining:
  - Use of fillers: *well, you know ...*
  - Self/other repetition

- Self-monitoring strategies
  - Self initiater: er….
  - Self-rephrasing: for example: this is generally accepted for everyone…

- Interaction strategies
  - Appeal for help:
    - Direct
    - Indirect

- Expression of non-understanding
- Comprehension check
- Indicator of misunderstanding:
  - Repetition
  - Clarification
  - Confirmation

2.8.1 Summarize

➢ Watch this video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdbL7jJb3JE

2.8.2 Real teaching experience:

➢ Watch this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZMxAkf-xAs

2.8.3 Practice.

- Write. Think about examples of the different communicative strategies

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
Achievement or Compensatory strategies a) Approximation b) Circumlocution c) Word coinage d) Literal translation e) Language switch f) Appeal for assistance g) mime	a) b) c) d) e) f) g)
Avoidance	
Time gaining	
Self-monitoring strategies	
Interactional strategies a) appeal for help b) non-understanding c) comprehension check	a) b) c)

d) misunderstanding	d)

- Write an invented dialogue where different communicative strategies appear

2.9 Socio –Cultural Factors

In a communication there can be geographically or culturally based factors that can intervene.

Different cultural background can cause that two receivers may decode two different messages from the same signal, causing misinterpretation.

Factors that need to be taken into account:

- Dialects
- Register (the type of language that is acceptable according to the situation).
- Denotation and connotation.

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