**Chapter 1 Language and Human Communication**   
**An Overview**

**Objectives**  
The objectives for this chapter suggest that you would want your students to be able to discuss:

* Communication, language, and speech, and understanding the differences between them.
* Extralinguistic aspects of communication, including paralinguistics, nonlinguistics, and metalinguistics.
* The phonological, semantic, syntactic, morphological, and pragmatic components of oral language.
* Various communication modes.
* Several of the biological, cognitive, and social bases of human communication.

**Chapter Overview**  
The purpose of this chapter is to serve as an overview of the foundations of human communication and other topics that provide a platform for discussing children’s language disorders. The author discusses the terms *communication, language, speech,* and *extralinguistic elements of communication,* and looks at the different components of language and the relationship between understanding and using language. The author also considers different communication modes. Finally, there is a review of some of the biological, cognitive, and social bases of human communication.  
  
**Lecture Outline**  
Role of Human Communication

Role of listener

Role of speaker

Differentiation of Speech and Language

Language

Code or symbolic system

Expressive and receptive

Written and oral

Speech

Oral expression of language

Neurological control of movement of the articulators

Extralinguistic Aspects

Paralinguistics

Stress

Pitch

Intonation

Nonlinguistics

Nonverbal communication

Proxemics

Kinesics

Metalinguistics

Use language to think

Monitor and clarify messages

Components of Language

Phonology – speech sounds and the rules for sound sequences

Semantics – meaning

Syntax – set of rules of how words are to be used together

Morphology – rules for using grammatical markers or inflections

Pragmatics – function of language

Comprehension and Production

Receptive skills – decoding

Expressive skills – encoding

Communication Modes

Auditory – Oral System: Hearing and Speech

Visual – Graphic System: Reading and Writing

Visual – Gestural System

Manual

Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC)

Biological, Cognitive, and Social Bases of Human Communication

Biological Bases

Hearing and Listening

Speech and Talking

The Nervous System

Central Nervous System (CNS)

Peripheral Nervous System (PNS)

Cognitive Bases

Definition of cognition

Relationship between cognition and language

Information processing

Metacognition

Social Bases

Infant – Caregiver Attachment

Infant – Caregiver Interaction

Imitation and Reinforcement

**Key Terms**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Communication | Nonlinguistics | Syntax | Metacognition |
| Language | Metalinguistics | Morphology | ZPD |
| Referents | Phonotactic | Pragmatics |  |
| Speech | Phonology | Strong cognition hypothesis |  |
| Paralinguistics | Semantics | Weak cognition hypothesis |  |

**Topics for Discussion**

1. In what ways does human communication compare and contrast with animal communication?

2. What evidence is available to support the importance of infant – adult interaction and its impact on language development and eventual academic performance? How might this interaction differ by culture and socio-economic status?

3. In what ways would a disorder in one aspect of language (i.e., semantics) impact the other aspects?

4. How might an understanding of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development apply to how a mother scaffolds her young child’s learning?

**Learning Activities**

1. Present the class with a number of non-words. Ask students in groups to work out how to say the words and judge if they can occur in English. Permissible non-words might include: spode, bloot, endine, batorning, figsaly, droggle. Not permissible non-words might include: sroke, ngeeve, vladick, zhump, etsa, soosd. Ask students to give reasons for their judgments.
2. Present students with video clips of other cultures communicating with the sound turned off. Discuss how body language, proxemics, and gesture vary between cultures.
3. Present this sentence and ask students to vary stress to change the meaning at least four ways: “The girl in green was very naughty.”
4. Ask students individually to write down as many words as they can think of in one minute in the category “food.” When they have completed this task, have students share their list with their neighbor, noting words in common and strategies they used to recall the words (categories, etc.). In small groups, have students look at the lists and sort the foods into superordinate categories (e.g. junk food, breakfast, fruits and vegetables). Ask students how they could re-categorize their lists (e.g., colors, fat content, where you buy it).
5. Present students with these phrases (or others you create) and ask them to make several novel sentences from each set.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *the girl the boy saw* | *last week a gorilla* | *when walking* | *laughed at* | *the hippo* |
| *While* | *sat quietly* | *big Bobby* | *tiny Tim* | *was running* |

Discuss the variety of sentences created and then ask students to compare with their classmates. How many sentences a child of two and a half years with a 300 word vocabulary be able to create?*(Note: There are commercially available sets of magnets with words and phrases that can be used for this activity.)*

6. Ask students to find the free (root) and bound (affix) morphemes in the following words:  Hippopotamus (1 free), redesign (1 bound, 1 free), blessed (1 free, 1 bound), dentistry (1 free, 2 bound), calculation (1 free, 1 bound), photographer (2 free, 1 bound). Common errors will be counting syllables instead of morphemes and breaking what appears to be a compound word into two.

7. Divide students into groups of three. Assign each student one of the following roles without letting the other members know what the roles are: One person is assigned the role of explaining what they did on the weekend, another is assigned the role of interrupting the other by saying, “What? I don’t understand.” or “I’m sorry.” The third group member is the observer and should be prepared to report back to the others (and the whole group if you prefer) on the success of the communication within the group. Allow students to role play for 2 minutes and then ask the groups to discuss the process. Reassign the roles within the group. One person has to describe the classroom without using any nouns. The second person is to participate as a listener and ask questions and respond naturally. The observer should be prepared to report on the interaction. Let the role play run for about two minutes and then ask the groups to discuss the process. Lead a class discussion about the exercise focusing on their feelings, frustrations, and the techniques they used to repair and indicate breakdown.

8. Provide the class with a printed text of a famous speech or document, and have them “translate” it into “motherese.” Discuss how they decided which elements to maintain and which were omitted.

**Exam Questions**

***Multiple Choice***  
1. Which of the following is the best example of an extralinguistic element of communication?  
 a. phonemic code                      
 b. syntactic rules  
 c. speech code          
 d. pitch and intonation  
  
2. Which statement is true of language?  
 a.  it is unique to each person in the language community        
 b. it is largely genetically predetermined  
 c. it is the oral expression of underlying rules                  
 d.  it is rule based allowing for infinite number of utterances   
  
3. Which term refers to “sounds that create meaningful differences”?  
 a. phonemes           
 b. referents  
 c. phonetics          
 d. vowels  
  
4. The sentence, “The cat answers the phone.”, is a violation of  what aspect of language?  
 a. propositional meaning     
 b. figurative language  
 c. syntax                        
 d. pragmatics

***Multiple Choice Key***

1. d.

2. d.

3. a.

4. a.

***Short Answer/ Essay***

1. List three extralinguistic elements and give examples of each.

2. Describe the five basic components of language and give an example of each.

3. Explain the morphological rule for plural used in the English language.

4. What is meant by communicative competence?

5. Explain to a lay person the difference between speech and language.

6. How does consonant production contrast with vowel production?

7. Describe the roles of the CNS and PNS in speech production.

8. Describe Piaget's four stages of cognitive development and the influences of each stage on language

development.