

المقياس : الترجمة في الاختصاص

المستوى: السنة الثانية ماستر

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Language :

There are several possible definitions of language, but there is one particular definition that may be most related to our purposes here. According to this definition, language is an arbitrary system of vocal symbols used to communicate ideas and express feelings among the members of a certain social community.

This definition emphasizes several points :

1. Language is a system. This indicates that language is systematic at phonetic, phonemic, morphemic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels.

2. The system of language is arbitrary. This arbitrariness means that there is no logical reason why a certain language behaves as it does. For example, there is no reason why the subject or the doer in an English statement comes before the verb whereas in Arabic the verb may come before the doer.

3. Language is basically vocal, which implies that language is mainly an oral activity and that writing is merely a secondary form of language. In other words, language is speech and writing is a representation of speech.

4. Language is symbols of referents, which implies that words, for example, are not identical with what they refer to, but just symbols for them.

5. The function of language is not only to convey ideas, but also feelings.

In addition, one has to get acquainted with other important features of language such as:

1. Language is diversified into social dialects, which are linguistic varieties that mark social classes that usually correspond to economic and educational levels.

2. Language is also diversified into geographical dialects which mark linguistic differences among the districts of a certain country.

3. Language usually has formal and informal varieties, i.e., standard and colloquial dialects.

4. Language is expressed in different media : the oral medium and the graphic medium.

5. Each individual speaks language in a rather unique manner called an idiolect.

6. Each language has these sequential levels of structure : phonemic, morphemic, lexical, and syntactic levels. These levels are hierarchically inter-related : phonemes string together to build morphemes, which may combine together to form lexemes, which are in turn juxtaposed to form sentences.