

Metalinguistic awareness essays example

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Metalinguistic awareness refers to the ability of language recognition as an object. The objectification of language makes it easy for study with respect to transfer of knowledge between languages. Therefore, Metalinguistic awareness is the recognition by an individual of their knowledge of a certain language.

For the complete knowledge of a certain language, an individual must possess a grasp of certain facets of the language for their reference as individuals who are wholly conversant with the language. These facets are phonology, semantic, morpho-syntactic, pragmatic and literate.

Phonology is the study of sound arrangement within a language. This being so; the acquisition of skills needed to identify correct sound arrangement is necessary for language learning. Each language has a unique sequencing of sounds implicitly understood by all people conversant with the language. It is possible for one to identify a language by the sequencing of sounds without comprehending the meaning of the words used in a particular context. This capacity develops when one is at the formative level of language comprehension. Elementary school marks the beginning of this progress where one encounters vowels and consonants. At that early age, some patterns begin to emerge such as frequency of use of some sounds, and impossible sound combinations in the language. A case in point from the poem, 'jabberwocky', while the language used here is primordial, sounds of some incomprehensible words are easily identifiable as English in nature. These words include brillig, toves, slithy, gyre, etc, as they appear in the first stanza. Their pronunciation makes them conformant to the English language due to their consonant and vowel sequencing. It is rare for instant

to have consecutive consonant sounds in the same word within the English language.

Semantics, being the meaning derived from words used in language, is arguably the most important segment in metalinguistics. The purpose of language is communication. Communication occurs where an individual can decipher information passed on to them. When communication occurs through language, it is important the recipient understands the intended meaning either through verbal or written language. The acquisition of a semantic prowess occurs mainly by assessing words used in their context. In this respect, semantic prowess of an individual grows with time as they learn and decode the meaning of more words by interacting with them during normal conversation. In the poem for instance, in line 9, the ‘frumious bandersnatch’ makes no impression when considered on its own. However, in consideration of the preceding line, ‘Beware the jujub bird and shun...,’ ‘frumious’ is revealed as an adjective while ‘bandersnatch’ comes across as a noun being described by the adjective.

Morphosyntax is the knowledge of words organization within a sentence to create the desired meaning. Words structure is a skill gained first from listening to how other people use their words to construct a message. Rules governing the structure of sentences are acquired subconsciously first, if the learner is a speaker of the language as a first language. If the learner interacts with the language as a second language, however, these skills are classroom taught whereby instruction. First, phrase construction is mastered, after which the learner learns phrase combinations to deliver complex messages. To all learners, sentence structures’ learning occurs externally.

For example, a natural English speaker would have no problem in communicating using sentences, at least verbally. However, when it comes to the written language, subject predicate combination rules apply, which necessitates their learning. Further, complex and compound sentence punctuation in the written form of language is challenging and needs learning. The sentence structure in the poem applies these rules, as each phrase contains full meaning. (He took his Vorpall sword in hand; long time the manxome foe he sought--)

The two phrases from the third stanza fulfill sentence structure rules as each has a meaning in its own, but complement each other as a whole.

Pragmatism in language is concerned with the social function of language. Certain language is effective in certain situations. In this respect, therefore, it is important to learn the different applications of phrases and sentences before applying them in specific, socially sensitive scenarios. The use of language in a pragmatic manner is a skill learnt in both the classroom and the contextual use of language. A person's early influences in life teach them on what is appropriate to say or not to say to people of varying social standing. For example, it is improper not to address one's elders without respect. The classroom plays a role where etiquette, a major role of language is taught. The poem displays these traits in the sixth stanza where a person, presumably the boy's father exalts in the glory of his son having killed the jabberwocky. The words used here express joy, and it is evident that the social context of their usage is celebratory.

Literacy is the ability of an individual read efficiently in a given language. The acquisition of this skill is through classroom teaching. A visual

representation of the words taught helps in creating a relation between the written word and the sound. When a student can replicate sounds correctly, after identifying them on paper then they are literate. However, reading does not involve pronunciation of words in an appropriate manner, as the reader has to know their meaning as well in order to understand them fully. The first stanza is readable. However, its meaning is not easily deciphered. It is necessary the meaning of words read is understood for a person's consideration as literate in the language.