

Briefing note on philosophy article



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Explaining Language Use The concept of language ability isn't realistically explainable in theory divorced from the full model of how the human function is organized. The full model of how the human function is organized is not realistic because we don't have a clear picture of ourselves as a scientific definition. There are different ways of looking at a definition for natural kinds. In the scientific method, we're searching for an understandable theory that explains who we are with the known design of the natural sciences. Natural theories focus more on the nature of the function and reasonable goals for that function as opposed to the actual achievement of function. Chomsky asserts that certain linguists postulate that when thinking of words, a picture associated with that word forms in the individual's mind; however that doesn't define the word as to meaning for that individual. He further asserts that language use is not able to be subjected to scientific definition or study, and neither can anything be learned from studying the functionality of the brain with regards to how it processes language concepts. Language use is thought to be part of our common sense understanding with a special place in helping to define human life and thought processes. Concrete objects are not subject to scientific theory, rather they have value dependent upon whatever value we give them. The scientific function of the mind acts to perform scientific theory similarly as the language function acts to acquire and use language; through sharpening the focus to enable complete understanding. Language function develops with time and is relational to semantics and belief systems, being widely variable. Language concepts are based on their event related potential and vary largely based on phrase and structure rules, word meaning expectations, local conditions of use, and specific reference

conditions. Chomsky refers to the study done on ERP (event-related potentiality) in which there were noted to be five categories of structure regarding patterns of electrical activity within the brain associated with language. Of note was one category related to non-deviance from the common concept and the four deviant categories associated with the previously mentioned language concepts. This study focused on two levels of scientific inquiry; the computational-relational approach, and the electrical activity of the brain. The study used the CR(computational-relational) approach to maximize the definition of language use as to clarity. It discovered that I-language, which represents the initial language faculty of the individual, develops experientially. Throughout the development process, it produces a system of language with highly structured lexical ability with associated grammar elements, connected to a sound system, with ready access and becomes learnable. Language expression is generated by I-language with performance related concepts. It was noted that individuals may have the same language faculty, however very different performances. By studying human language, it was found that I-language is integrated into performance systems that articulate, interpret, express beliefs and desires, refer and tell stories. It was discovered that there are two types of performance systems, as well as two interface levels. The types of performance systems, articulatory-perceptual and conceptual-intentional, use instructions and information to convey messages of communication. The two interface levels, phonetic form and logical form, are the vehicle through which this communication is delivered. Chomsky postulates that clear definition of acquired and applied shared language structures simply don't exist. He feels that instead of implying that language concepts don't exist we

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should try to isolate and tap into the already coherent systems that generate linguistic expression to further understand and interpret human thinking. When people communicate, they assume that each is like the other with minor variances. Although the process is unreflective and automatic, the only real shared structure is I-language. There are other types of shared structures, such as ethnic and colloquial languages; however there is no way to be absolute when interpreting language, since there are no idealizations or categories. Most people apply the public usage concept, based on the premise that most humans think alike, applying it to what is being communicated in order to understand what is being said. This doesn't take into account the semantics of communication and relies heavily on referential differences between what is heard and what is actually being said. Questions to this approach involve the contrast between lexical expression and that arising from belief systems, however understanding lexical semantics helps resolve miscommunication issues. There is little information as to how and where belief systems are stored in the brain, but it is reasonable to postulate that belief systems vary individually. While there may be some widely held beliefs across subsets or cultures, it is not reasonable to reference these identifying beliefs as a basis for similarly shared structures, especially as judgment depends also on the circumstances of varied interpretation and often conflict. Therefore, I-language is primarily comprised of unlearned internal semantics with potential for more formal associative relationships, giving it a generalized conceptual and functional quality. In conclusion, I-language is an outcome of the language faculty; it contains semantic relations, interpretive perspectives, and I-beliefs. It is a construct of the mind which should be

studied more along the lines of how thoughts are articulated and interpreted rather than scientifically. Bibliography Chomsky, N. Explaining Language Use. Philosophy Topics. Vol 20: 1 (1992 Spring) p. 205.