

## UNDERSTANDING LANGUAGE TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION

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**Annotation:** Language is more than a tool for communication; it shapes our thoughts, beliefs, and relationships. Through language, we express ideas, share emotions, and form our understanding of the world. It influences how we see ourselves and how we interact with others in society. This article discusses why language matters and how it affects our perceptions, identities, and social connections. By examining examples from literature, media, and everyday life, we explore the powerful role language plays in shaping both individual experiences and social dynamics.

**Key words:** Language, grammar, vocabulary, culture, humans language relies, social convention, components, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, convey meaning, utterances.

Language is a structured system of communication that consists of grammar and vocabulary. It is the primary means by which humans convey meaning, both in spoken and signed forms, and may also be conveyed through writing. Human language is characterized by its cultural and historical diversity, with significant variations observed between cultures and across time. Human languages possess the properties of productivity and displacement, which enable the creation of an infinite number of sentences, and the ability to refer to objects, events, and ideas that are not immediately present in the discourse. The use of human language relies on social convention and is acquired through learning.[1]

As it is mentioned above language is not only learning grammar or vocabulary it is a system that helps to open up a lot of doors to a new culture. One famous person said "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world", by which she meant that if one learns a language he or she can defeat all the limits that stands in front of them. Namely, by learning language people can gain not only grammar or vocabulary but also culture, people, lifestyles, food, tradition and etc. If one knows the language that person can easily say that he or she knows that nation. Let's take a simple example from real life, I have an American teacher at my university and with her help I learned

a lot about America their holidays and lifestyles and even it could change my bad habits into good one. It is simply because I used to eat drink lots of coffee and tea which can be quite harmful to my health but after talking with her I changed my habit and stop drinking these types of drinks.

Grammatically, there are many components of language, studied within the field of linguistics, include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.1) Phonology is the study of the sound patterns that occur within languages. 2) Morphology is the study of the internal construction of words.3) Syntax refers to the arrangement of words in sentences, clauses, and phrases. Semantics is the study of meaning in language, encompassing the meaning of words, phrases, and sentences.4) Pragmatics is the study of how language is used in context to convey meaning, including how utterances communicate propositions, intentions, and attitudes beyond the literal meanings of words and sentences.

Linguistically, language is a structured system of arbitrary symbols used for communication, involving sound, gesture, and writing. It is the subject of linguistics, the scientific study of language in all its aspects, including how it is structured, used, acquired, and how it changes.[2]

In this aspect of language people can learn how words are pronounced and what kind of linguistic meaning it possess, from which language it comes from and etymology. A simple example to this can be a word "hamburger" came from German and "Hamburg" was the name one of the cities of Germany.

Socially, language is a system of communication used to interact with others, reflect identity, and adhere to community norms. It includes how we choose words and body language based on context, and it shapes and is shaped by social factors like culture, age, and class. This is studied through sociolinguistics, which examines the relationship between language and society.[3]

Sometimes, language is not only a tool by the help of which different people can communicate with each other, sometimes it is a subject that can even help us to choose right path in our life. I can come up with a real life example, a few years ago when I was a teenager I chose to be a lawyer until I heard a music of Alexander Rybak which is called "Fairytale". On that moment I was impatient to know the meaning but I could not because I did not speak or even understand in English so that situation pushed me up. Nowadays I have changed my mind and choose being an English teacher and teach students and teen-agers who are eager to learn like I were a few years ago.

Despite these different viewpoints, most scholars agree that language is a uniquely human phenomenon characterized by several essential properties. Among them are arbitrariness, productivity, discreteness, duality of patterning, and displacement. Arbitrariness refers to the lack of inherent connection between a linguistic sign and its meaning. Productivity indicates the ability to generate an infinite

number of new sentences using a finite set of rules. Displacement allows language users to refer to entities and events beyond the immediate context. Duality of patterning means that a limited set of meaningless sounds (phonemes) can be combined into meaningful units (morphemes and words). These features, collectively, distinguish human language from all other forms of communication. Attempts to define language often fall into two broad categories: descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive definitions focus on observable features of language, emphasizing its structural and functional characteristics. For example, Bloomfield (1933) defined language as “the totality of utterances that can be produced in a speech community.” Explanatory definitions, by contrast, aim to identify the underlying mechanisms that make language possible. Chomsky (1965), for instance, defined language as “a set of infinite sentences generated from a finite set of rules.” Each approach offers insight but captures only part of the full phenomenon of language. Modern research in psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics adds further depth to the understanding of language. Psycholinguists investigate how language is processed, stored, and retrieved by the human mind, while neurolinguistics studies the neural mechanisms responsible for linguistic abilities. These fields demonstrate that language is not only a social and cognitive system but also a biological function distributed across specific areas of the brain, such as Broca’s and Wernicke’s regions. Studies using brain imaging technologies have revealed that language comprehension and production involve highly dynamic neural networks that interact with memory, attention, and perception systems.

Another important dimension of defining language is its evolutionary origin. Researchers studying the evolution of language explore how early hominins developed complex communication systems. Some theories propose that language evolved from gesture-based communication, while others suggest a gradual increase in vocal flexibility. Although the precise origins of language remain uncertain, most scholars agree that language evolved due to selective pressures favoring cooperation, social bonding, and cultural transmission. Given the multiplicity of approaches, any comprehensive definition of language must integrate structural, functional, cognitive, social, and biological perspectives. A synthesis of these views suggests that language can be defined as a complex, rule-governed, symbolic system used for communication, thought, cultural transmission, and social interaction, grounded in human cognition and enabled by biological mechanisms. Such a definition acknowledges the multifaceted nature of language without reducing it to a single dimension. In conclusion, defining language is an inherently interdisciplinary task that requires attention to its formal structures, communicative functions, cognitive underpinnings, cultural significance, and biological foundations. Although no single definition can fully capture the richness of language, the diversity of scholarly perspectives enhances our understanding of this uniquely human capacity. Language is not only a system of signs, a cognitive tool, or

a cultural artifact—it is all of these at once. Its complexity is precisely what makes language one of the most fascinating and essential phenomena in human life.

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