Language Decoded

Essays on Language, Linguistics & Language Philosophy

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Overview

1. Aspects of Language

In this series of short articles, I am going to present fundamental concepts of linguistics, that will help non-linguists relate with the tools and concepts of linguists. In this part, we will discuss the different aspects or levels at which language operates. This will provide us an integrated overview of and help us appreciate the various functions of language.

1.1. Letters & Sounds

The letter (or a stroke or a diacritic) and corresponding sounds (consonants and vowels) are the minutest elements of language. Writing systems or alphabets are part of a discipline called **SEMIOTICS**. The science of sounds is called **PHONETICS** (and **PHONOLOGY** from the listener's perspective).

At the level of sounds and letters, there is no role of grammar and meaning. We only study or apply how sounds are created, perceived and used in language, and how they are recorded in the alphabet of a language.

This is the primary area of language study, taught in kindergarten, or in an elementary language class, or in a call centre training, when trying to improve pronunciation, diction and accent.

1.2. Word Parts

Sounds are combined to form syllables and partial words which in turn play a role in creating complete words. Look at the portions marked in red in the sentences below.

The old man regular**ly** buy**s** his wife a scintillat**ing** diamond ring with his well-earn**ed** money every month.

The old man gift**ed** his wife a scintillat**ing** diamond ring with his well-earn**ed** money last month.

Fig 1: Word-Parts

These part-words are suffixes, prefixes or in-fixes that add a dimension to the meaning of the word. They will add a dimension of tense, continuity or complet**ed**-ness, gender and number, to the main word. This is what is generally known as *grammatical* or *morpho-syntactical* meaning.

One will most likely NOT find such partial words listed in the dictionary but only find their references in books of grammar and tables of conjugation and inflection.

This area of study is called **MORPHOLOGY**, or the study of the structure and formation of words.

See another example of the word "plant" and how morpho-syntactic meaning can be added with the help of partial words:

as a thing			
a plant			
plant	**- s**		*shows plural*
as an action			
to plant			
I plant	**-**	a tree.	
He plants	**- s**	a tree.	*distinguishes who is planting - he and not I.*
We plant	**- ed**	a tree.	*changes to the past tense.*

Fig 2: Word-Parts

1.3. Complete Words

From word structure, we move to the level of the **complete word**. Every complete word has a meaning. It represents a thing, an action, a description or a concept. At this level we deal with the **meaning** of words, or what they represent. We are referring to what in technical terms is called *lexical* meaning, or *semantic* meaning.

This is a studied in detail in the branch of linguistics that is **SEMANTICS**. It deals with ideational meanings and associative connotations, and how words could be perceived and interpreted. This is perhaps the most commonly focused area in the study of translations, where translators try to find **equivalents** for words, ideas and concepts in the other language.

This is also the area where translators can get trapped, because we only deal with the literal meaning of words and not the co-textual, contextual and figurative meanings.

1.4. Utterances & Sentences

Words have little value in isolation. All the preceding elements of language, realise their utility when used in combination with each other. They could be meaningful **utterances** or complete sentences.

Examples of non-sentential utterances:

Run! Sit!
Danger!
No!

We bring together words in combinations to communicate with each other. At the level of the sentence, rules of grammar apply. These are rules of word order, and inflections based on time, gender, and number.

Here we study grammar, also known as **SYNTAX**. This covers the rules of tenses and moods. By tenses we mean the past, present and future. By mood, we mean whether a sentence is a statement, a command, or an expression of possibility.

For example:

a) The man bought her a diamond ring. He does so every year.
b) My dear man - please go buy me a diamond ring.
c) The man would have bought her a ring, if he had enough money.

In a, we are talking about what really happens. It's called the **indicative** mood.

In b, we see how the wife is giving her man an instruction - called the **imperative** mood of language.

In c, we see how we are exploring an idea that has not happened, but we still talk about possibilities - it is called the **subjunctive,** and, in some languages, the **conjunctive** or **conditional** mood.

1.5. Text, Context, Co-Text

When sentences come together in a conversation or a text such as this, greater things are achieved. A text can mean and achieve much more than the sum its constituent sentences. Because the text may create an impact due to the context in which it is used, and the purpose to which it is put. Now, this sounds like a philosophical idea. So let us make it simpler to understand.

We are by now familiar with the example of the rich man. Let us compare two texts involving identical sentences:

A. The rich man bought his wife a diamond ring every year, they say.

B. The rich man bought his wife a diamond ring every year, they say. But no diamond could buy him love.

Fig 3: Text & Context

The above is an example of how **context** determines the meaning of a text. When one reads the sentence in Text A, it appears like the presentation of a fact. However, if we read the same sentence in text B, we get the impression that this is not about a man, but a principle of life. The context and therefore the function of the same sentence changes.

There is another element called **co-text**. The significance of a word can be revealed by the words preceding and following it.

	plant		
a.	plant	adds beauty to the décor.	*noun*
b.	plant	ideas in his mind.	*an action*
	save		
a.	Save	my friend.	*= protecting*
b.	saved	the file in the wrong folder.	*= recording - technical*

Fig 3.2: Text & Co-text

At this level we graduate from the literal to the contextual and figurative meanings of words, sentences and idioms. The focus is no longer on words or sentences, but on texts as a unit.

This is an area of language studies known as **TEXT LINGUISTICS**. Related to this area of study are **conversation analysis**, **rhetoric** and **stylistics.**

1.6. Para-Linguistic Aspect of Language

Having appreciated the various levels at which language operates, from meaningless sounds to consequent texts, let us also distinguish between the **linguistic** and **paralinguistic** aspects.

The linguistic aspect relates to words and meaning. The paralinguistic relates to style and manner of use, how words are pronounced and to what use they are put.

Paralinguistic features can be at the level of phonetics, concerning with pitch, modulation, pace, and accent. This is called the study of **PROSODY**.

At a complex level we analyse the context of words beyond the literal meaning. When meaning is attributed by **who** is saying the words and to **whom**, or **why** and where, socio-economic, psycho-social and interpersonal dynamics come into the picture. This is an area of study called **PRAGMATICS**.
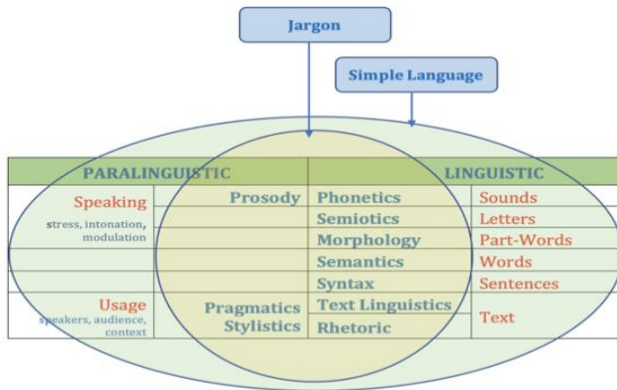
Fig 4: Aspects of Language

2. Nouns & Cases

Nouns are used holding different positions in language. These 'positions' are in relation to the central verb or action in a sentence. These positions are explained in different ways in different languages. Let us identify the positions first.

1. Nominative   -   the noun that performs the action.
2. Accusative   -   the noun on which the action is performed.
3. Dative   -   the noun FOR which an action is performed.
4. Instrumental   -   the noun BY which an action is performed.
5. Ablative   -   the noun FROM which an action is performed.
6. Genitive   -   the noun OF which another noun may be.
7. Locative   -   the noun WHERE something is being done.
8. Vocative   -   the noun WHOM

The rich man bought his wife the queen's ring with his hard-earned money with immense joy from the best jeweller at the Central mall.

In the following article we are going to do a close analysis of how noun cases, just like any other aspect of grammar, is significant in translation. Translators and linguists will pay close attention to the syntax rules of noun-cases in the source and target languages.

Now look at the nouns in the sentence.
The rich **man** bought his **wife** the **queen's** **ring** with his hard-earned **money** with immense **joy** from the best **jeweller** at the **Central Mall**.

Note that all the nouns are related to a single verb.

The rich man **bought** his wife the queen's ring with his hard-earned money with immense joy from the best jeweler at the Central mall.
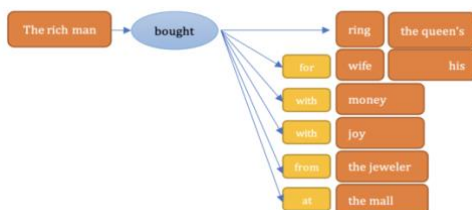
What is important is to note that ALL nouns of the sentence are related to the verb.

- the rich man **bought**
- **bought** a ring
- **bought** **for** his wife
- **bought** **with** his money
- **bought** **with** immense joy
- **bought** **from** the jeweller
- **bought** **at** the central mall

It is extremely important to understand this. It is the VERB that determines the role of a noun in a sentence. It is the CENTRAL part of any sentence. It is like a fulcrum around which all other aspects revolve or from which they hang or upon which they depend.

Each of the roles that a noun plays, as depicted in the above example, is called a CASE, i.e., the role of a noun in a sentence, in relation to a verb. In most grammars of the world, there are three essential cases, while in classical grammars there up to seven or eight. Many languages use prepositions to present the cases.

Let's analyse each of the above noun-cases:

To understand cases, we must first identify the **main verb** in the sentence. Here it is ***bought.***

1. The first case is called the ***nominative*** or the ***subject***. It represents the noun that PERFORMS the action / verb of the sentence. In this case, the rich man.
2. The next case is called the ***accusative*** or the ***direct object***. This is the noun upon which the action is performed directly. As we see, the act of buying is performed on the ring. The queen's ring, to be precise.
3. The third case is called the ***dative*** or the ***indirect object***. It represents the noun for which the action is performed indirectly. In this case, the wife.
4. The next case is called the ***instrumental***. It holds the noun, with which an action is performed. In English, it is used with the prepositions with or by.
5. The fifth case is called the ***ablative*** or represented with the preposition **from** in English. In this sentence, the Central mall is in the ablative case.
6. The sixth case is called the ***genitive*** or known as the ***possessive*** case. This may not be a classical noun-case,

and usually is a supporting noun, which shows possession, or a noun **of** which another noun is to which it belongs. For example, we spoke of the ring. It is a queen's ring. The noun 'queen' is only for qualifying, it is the noun to whom the ring belongs. Similarly, the ring is bought with money, specifically the MAN's (his) money. Therefore, the man or the pronoun his are in the genitive case in this sentence.

7. The seventh case is called the ***locative*** case which shows position, location using the various prepositions of time and space.
8. The eight case is called the ***vocative***, which is used to address a noun directly. There is no vocative case used in the example given above. It is used when we are directly addressing someone and calling out to them, usually in the second person.

How a translator, voiceover artiste, linguist and subtitling artiste addresses noun-cases may appear simple. It is important that translation agencies and translators pay close attention to the theory of cases to ensure that they are correctly applied, so that errors are avoided.

2.1. How Cases are Represented in Various Languages

In many languages such as Sanskrit and Kannada, cases are represented by suffixes or prefixes, i.e., declensions to nouns. In other languages such as English and Hindi, they are represented using prepositions to nouns.

2.1.1. The Nature of Nouns

Nouns are words that are used to represent THINGS.

Not actions, not descriptions, not connecting words.

- **Tangible things**
- **Intangible things**
- **Abstract concepts, ideas**

Tangible Nouns
Words for things one can touch and feel and grasp.
Rain, water, air, table, chair, tree, kitchen, home, fire, salt, gold etc.
All the THINGS in the world.

Intangible Nouns
Words for things that one **cannot** hold, feel or touch, but can sense with other sense organs:
Eg. sound, music, light, heat, energy, vibration, ultrasound

Abstract Nouns
Ideas, concepts, characteristics, that one
[*Distinguish what one does from what one has.*]

Adjective concept = noun	**The quality / idea /**
How someone or thing **is**	What one **has**
wise	wisdom
poor	poverty
wealthy	wealth
prosperous	prosperity
intelligent	intelligence
stupid	stupidity

What one **does** **Verb – an action concept = noun**	What one **has** **The quality / idea /**

manage	management
procrastinate	procrastination
teach	teaching
locate	location
initiate	initiative

2.1.2. Application of Noun Cases in Translation & Subtitles

Nouns Cases are one of the many elements that require close attention while translating. As we know, different languages address cases in different ways. The grammatical rules of one language cannot be applied while transferring the same message to another language.

Hence, while translating or subtitling content, we must be careful in selecting translators, and check that they have sound linguistic credentials.

3. Verbs
Moods, Tenses & Aspects, Voices

Verbs are the central element of a sentence. Most communicative elements are sentences. Except while identifying things or calling out to people, all other communication is done with sentences or simply verbs.

A verb is like a pivot of a sentence, as is evident from previous chapter on **Nouns and Cases**. A verb will determine what is the central action and thereby the central theme of the sentence, it establishes the relationship of all nouns in the sentence, and it also conveys the time zone (past, present, or future) and "mood" or "mode" of a sentence.

("Mood" here is a technical term from the field of linguistics - not referring to an emotional state but a manner in which a sentence expresses reality, imagination or instruction.)

The next few paragraphs will decipher the meanings of these technical terms.

3.1. Moods

Indicative	The statement of reality, as is, was or will be. Most language is expressed in this mood. Simply said – it is the use of language for describing and stating facts in day-to-day life. As simple as, I am hungry. Or what is for dinner today. Shall we go to the mall today? Here, there is a general reference to reality. The reader might not appreciate or fully comprehend this until one reads the section on the subjunctive mood and observes the difference.
Subjunctive	This, on the contrary, is an expression of how things might have been, or one wishes to be. This expression does not exist in reality, just like the phrase above in red suggests. What we could have eaten differently for dinner last night, or what I wish there is for dinner at my friends place tonight, how it would have been had the bomb not gone off or if our friends had not taken that flight – how we wish we had more money, or a better love life, and better children and so on and so forth.
Conditional	In some languages, the subjunctive is further divided into two parts. The other one expresses a condition for a wishful situation to arise. Had the person invested in real estate, he would be a rich man

	today. Had he selected this stock in his portfolio, he would have been a multi-millionaire today. Had India chosen not to partition based on religion, the country would have faced an extended civil war. The former phrases (marked in red) represent the condition and therefore the conditional mood in which the latter situation (marked in blue) or the subjunctive mood would arise. IN most languages there is little or no distinction in the form and structure of the conditional and the subjunctive, but in some languages, it is marked. French, Spanish and perhaps other European languages have distinct conditional and subjunctive moods.
Imperative	The imperative, in contrast to the indicative, does not STATE or DESCRIBE reality as it is, but instructs the interlocutor to perform actions. Be a good boy, is different from you ARE a good child. Hand me the gun, is not the same as - he helps me with the gun when I go hunting. While the former has the communicative function of instructing and requesting, the latter examples INDICATES a fact of life.
Benedictive	In certain classical, ancient languages, such as Sanskrit, there is even a mood in which one blesses another. Usually seers, elders and parents will bless and wish how the interlocutors' lives may be. May there be light! May you be blessed! May you be

	healthy wealth and wise. These are different from imperatives in that they are not instructions but wishes for things to happen for the other.

3.2. Tenses & Aspects

Actions are depicted in the past, presented and future. That's simple. We call that tense. However, apart from the SIMPLE past, present and future, there are also other ASPECTS of tenses.

Tense > Aspect ∨	Past	Present	Future
Simple	When a person went to college, he studied things and made friends and met his partner and made a career. All these actions happened in the past. They are a simple past tense in that they happened, as a general reality in the past.	Every day in a common man's life, one wakes up, goes about his daily routine, makes a living, comes home, hopefully to family, spends time with friends, engages in his hobbies, and the retires to bed. These are descriptions of the general reality of life in the present.	The coming days will be better than ever for the youth and aged alike. Technology will allow people to have more leisure time and they will have to struggle less for material gains and shall spend more time for higher pursuits. These actions describe a general idea about the future.
Continuous	When we met the person at the college library, he was conducting a search into a lost wallet. He was behaving strange, looking	At the time that we speak right now, the common man is ironing his shirt, cooking his breakfast, and is rushing to work.	And when we visit planet Earth, it is possible the earthlings will still be fighting among themselves. Or it's

	around in odd spaces, oblivious of our presence. This is a description of an activity at a specific occasion, and the action was continuing at that specific occasion in the past.	This is a specific activity at a particular time and the action is going on at the time of description.	possible that they will be flying inter planetary shuttle planes. One never knows. Again, a description of an action continuing during a specific occasion, albeit in the future.
Perfect	By the time we arrived at the college for the interview, the person had already left. He had written a note, stating how sorry he was, and why he had left, and had not been able to wait. These are all actions that were performed BEFORE a SPECIFIC incident in the	Today is the common man's appraisal. He has prepared himself well, (has) laid out his tools, (has) set up the presentation, and has checked the seating for the audience. The actions completed BEFORE a SPECIFIC incidence in the present,	By the time we arrive on planet Earth, I am sure the dignitaries will have organized our reception and will have made arrangements for our transition to their atmosphere. Again, actions BEFORE a specific incident in the FUTURE.

	past. The specific incident is our arrival at the college (simple past). All other actions prior to this past event, are the past perfect.	are expressed in the PRESENT PERFECT tense. The specific incident in the time of the appraisal. That is in the SIMPLE present. All actions completed BEFORE that, in preparation for it, and leading towards it, are in the PRESENT PERFECT.	
Imperfect Past	The imperfect tense is an action that is not completed unlike the perfect. It is closer to the simple tense. The distinction is hard to make in English. But we can come close to it with the following example. The sun shone, and the wind blew softly, and all the elves lived happily in Elves Ville. Every day Mary would go about picking berries and play in the fields. These actions happen on a regular basis in the past, unlike the simple past, which denotes a specific incident of the past.		

	In English there is no grammatical difference between the imperfect and the simple past. However, in Spanish, Hindi and French, they are two completely different tenses.	
	Language	**The Imperfect Past**	**The Simple Past**
	Spanish	El hombre me daba el pan.	El hombre me dió el pan.
	Hindi	वह मुझे रोटी देता था ।	उसने मुझे रोटी दी ।
	Kannada	ಅವನು ನನಗೆ ಊಟವನ್ನು ಕೊಡುವನು.	ಅವನು ನನಗೆ ಊಟವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟನು.
	English	The *man would give* me bread. *(on a regular basis)*	*The man gave me bread.* *(at a specific occasion)*

3.3. Voices

Voices refer to whether the emphasis is on the process or the doer.

In most of the sentences given above, the emphasis is on the doer, i.e. the person performing the action is significant.

In some expressions of reality, the doer is not important, but the process is. For example, in administrative services, experiments, processes and procedures, it does not matter who is doing the action. The action or procedure itself deserves emphasis.

For example:
The water is heated.
The chemicals are mixed. The participants are invited.

This is the **PASSIVE voice**, because there is no **active** doer or performer of the action.

We don't need to say that ONE must heat the water, or ONE must mix the chemicals, or that the EMPLOYEES of the company invite the participants. Because the doer is insignificant. If we did, however say it this way, it would be the **ACTIVE voice**, because someone is **actively** performing the action in the way the sentence is expressed.

3.4. Summary

Moods -   HOW verbs are used.
Tenses -   WHEN verbs are performed.
Voice   -   Whether the DOER or the PROCESS is of significance.

Verbs are among the many elements that require close attention while translating. As we know, different languages address moods and tenses in different ways. The grammatical rules of one language vary from another. Although there might be structural parallels, the functional applications may vary from language to language.

4. Speech Acts - Theory & Use

One of the most revolutionary ideas in the development of linguistics as a discipline has been the departure from a purely linguistic approach towards a pragmatic and functional study of language.

The emphasis of the Speech Act Theory is on the "act" or the function of a linguistic expression and not the grapheme, phoneme, morpheme or lexeme. It suggests a departure from linguistic analysis based on words and sentences and their semantic meaning to the meaning of "utterances" that originates from the function they fulfil, the purpose they serve or the intention with which they are used.

The Speech Act Theory has its basis in the idea that language is an instrument which is put to various uses. In other words, language is used an instrument to achieve various goals or perform various functions.

The theory is based on and brings to the forefront important facts about language:

a.   that language and its components do not have an intrinsic meaning or validity, but that they are conventions that are agreed upon by a linguistic community that:

b.   the meanings are **assigned** to words or linguistic expressions.

c.   the conventions for assigning of meaning to sounds and graphemes are arbitrary and are not based on any scientific reason or divine source.

Further, this theory makes certain important assertions about the nature of language, and which form the fundamental premises of this and other theories that build on it:

a.   Surely, we admit that the same linguistic expression can have varied uses and hence different meaning in different situations and contexts, depending on how they are used.

b.   Over and above the semantic meaning of an expression, there is a certain pragmatic meaning that an expression or utterance assumes by virtue of the intention with which it is used. In other words, the pragmatic meaning is that meaning that an expression derives by the way it is used or what it is used to convey.

To elucidate this point, let us take the example of a simple utterance – "Wow!" or "Great job!" At the face of it, these expressions have a certain semantic meaning which we are familiar with; they are used to fulfil the function of **praising**

or **congratulating** someone. However, the very same words, when used with sarcasm and in a situation that calls for contempt and disapproval, are used to **criticize**, **castigate** and **demean** the hearer.

In another situation, the same linguistic instruments may be used to **mock** and **ridicule** the listener. We see, therefore, that apart from the hitherto agreed upon semantic meaning of the words have only a partial role to play in the overall meaning (which we now call **pragmatic**) in terms of the function these expressions fulfil.

The words highlighted in the above explanation are what are known as Speech Acts! They are acts we perform when we say something. They are acts that we perform while and in using language! Praising, congratulating, criticizing, castigating, demeaning, mocking and ridiculing are few of the innumerable "acts" we can perform with the help of language. There is so much we can do with language – the list is endless and limitless.

In the sections that follow, we shall discuss in detail, the various aspects of this theory and how it is relevant. The theory has opened up a plethora of possibilities in the area of communication, psychology and philosophy. In the field of linguistics and communication, it forms the basis of discourse analysis from the point of understanding what writers and speakers do or try to achieve with their writings and speeches.

In the field of psychology, various theories of interpersonal communication have become possible with the help of the understanding of speech acts. Finally, from a philosophical

perspective, the theory has formed the basis for language philosophy and borders with esoteric studies of mysticism.

An important finding of the speech act theory, as discussed above, is that the meaning of the word is not intrinsic to it, but merely a loose connection between form and content. Even the arbitrary meanings assigned to linguistic forms are not always the same, and the meaning depends on and is assumed only when it is used for and towards a certain communicative function.

Further, the theory lends itself to the philosophical questions as to how language can be understood universally even by members of the same linguistic group, when it can be interpreted differently, especially for expressions that mean and refer to more abstract ideas. How can the intended function and intention be correctly received by the hearer or reader? Doesn't language accord the same level of reality to all nouns, be they tangible, intangible or abstract? And in that sense, isn't language misleading us to believe in the validity and the reality of the concepts and ideas to be the same as tangible objects?

These ideas have led many thinkers in the past to be sceptical about language, and they have wondered whether language is a reliable instrument of communication at all.

The Speech Act theory is an analysis of language at the meta-level, which means, we are studying language, i.e., language is the object of our analysis and observation. Ironically, in order to examine or evaluate language, one must make use of language itself as the medium of analysis! Language becomes both the object as well as the instrument of observation! The observer is the observed!

Continuing with the theory of speech acts, we speak of certain aspects of speech. Karl Bühler, a famous German philosopher, in his explication of the Organnon Model of language has explained that "*language is an* **instrument** *with which* **objectives** *can be* **achieved** *and that the instrument is not separate from the speakers and listeners, or writers and readers, in performing communicative acts.*"

An analysis of language as an instrument for communicative functions reveals that every speech comprises the following elements:

1.   the **utterance** per se – the sounds, words, phrases or sentences that are uttered – [*we do not necessarily talk of sentences in this theory, in contrast to traditional grammars – here every utterance even those without a proper sentence structure – counts as an utterance as long as it serves a communicative purpose and is, in that sense, a communicative instrument].*

2.   the **communicative act**s or functions that are performed with the help of the utterance; these are of three kinds:

a.   locutionary acts: the act of uttering words, or saying something

b. **illocutionary acts**: the intention, or intended purpose in uttering the words

c. **perlocutionary acts**: the impact the uttered words have on the recipient, listener or reader.

Let us try to understand this concept a bit more closely with the help of an example. Consider the following utterance.

(1) "*You'll see what I can do.*"

Let us now analyse the utterance by enlisting the various **acts** performed by the speaker. These are represented by verbs highlighted below:

We can imagine that in uttering the words, the speaker **screamed** or **yelled** at the listener in order to **warn** and **threaten** her or him. In doing so, the speaker indirectly and perhaps unintentionally **scares** the listener or even **coerces** her / him into falling in line.

locutionary act	*scream, yell*
illocutionary act	*threaten* or *warn*
perlocutionary act	*scare* the listener, or *coerce* him into submission

In a different context, say given the background of a Hollywood movie when the heroine finds herself in a dire situation and the hero has given up and asserts that that there is nothing more to be done, the same utterance (1) above can have completely different communicative functions:

The heroine evidently **mutters** to herself, perhaps **refusing** to give up, and **challenging** destiny, and thereby **reassures** herself and perhaps the hero too.

locutionary act	*mutter*
illocutionary act	*refuse* to accept destiny and *challenge* the situation
perlocutionary act	*reassure* self and listener; *pull* oneself together

Having understood the different kinds of acts that we perform by way of uttering something, we can now move on to analyse the central aspect of the theory. It must be noted that the central act or the main acts performed during the utterance are the illocutionary acts. These are more potent and relevant than the perlocutionary ones. All other acts are related to the illocutionary. The illocutionary force is therefore the focal point of the speech act theory and discourse analysis.

Illocutionary acts are categorized in several ways by different grammarians and linguists. The most common classification is as below:

1. **Declarations:** Expressions that change the word by the very utterance – *baptize, christen, marry someone, declare war etc.*

2. **Representations or constative acts:** Stating facts or what one believes to be true: e.g. *describing, claiming, hypothesizing, insisting, predicting.*

3. **Commissives:** Committing oneself to future action, e.g. *promising, offering, threatening, vowing, refusing, volunteering.*

4. **Directives:** Telling the listener to do something, e.g. *commanding, requesting, inviting, forbidding, suggesting.*

5. **Expressives:** Stating what one feels, e.g. *apologizing, praising, congratulating, deploring, regretting.*

Another traditional classification of illocutionary acts as taught in many schools is also the classification of sentence types as given below:

1. **Interrogative** sentences – ones that *ask* questions.

2. **Declarative** or **assertive** sentences (to be distinguished from the declarations of the previous categorization) – ones that *state* facts or *describe* or *assert* reality or fantasy (akin to the constative or representative acts in the aforementioned section)

3. **Exclamatory** sentences – those that are an *expression* of surprise, delight, pain or other extreme emotion.

4. **Imperative** sentences – ones that *ask*, *direct* or *instruct* some to do something (akin to directives above). (Pal and Katyal 2013, 2-6)

The focus of these classifications is varied. Whereas the first classification is from the pragmatic perspective, the second is really from the structural and grammarian's perspective. These two classifications have certain differences and at the same time certain overlaps. Clearly, whereas the declarations are not to be confused with the "declarative or assertive" sentences, the representations and constatives are largely akin to them. Similarly, the "imperatives" are clearly analogous with the "directives" of the first

classification. The "expressives" of the first classification align well with the "exclamatory" sentence types of the second classification. The first classification lacks the "interrogative" but has an additional "commissive" category.

Irrespective of the difference in approach and categorization, what is important is to understand that each sentence has "functions", "goals", "objectives" and "effects" that go beyond the semantic or syntactic meaning. Speech acts signify the essence of an utterance, the purpose to which communication is put.

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5. Macrostructures and Microstructures as Study-Aids in Textual Analysis and Text Creation

The concepts of micro- and macrostructures have been relegated to an academic concept in the fields on linguistics and are perhaps the subject of some research. The application of these concepts, however, can have far-reaching implications in the field of education and learning. Of special mention is the use of these concepts as a learning aid especially in the field of humanities.

5.1. Introduction

The theory of micro- and macro structures explains the summarisation and identification of the gist of a text. As a sub-branch of discourse analysis, it also studies the skeletal structure of texts. In the process, it unravels the process of textual construction while de- constructing it. This dual

analysis of text provides insights to a reader (receiver) and these insights can be used for the effective analysis, deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of the text in a learner's mind. The concepts of macro- and micro-structures and the rules related to them can be used as effective tools in the classroom to improve comprehension and memory while at the same time improving the learner's written expression. This paper attempts to use the concepts of micro-, meso- and macro structures and explains their use as an aid to effective memory and writing. With an example, it discusses how a few students were taught how to firstly extract and summarise information from a chapter, and then, based on the macro structures, reconstruct the gist of the chapter and write a précis.

The results are quite promising, and the combination of note taking and précis writing prove to be an effective learning aid for schools and colleges. In this paper, we shall analyse the notes extracted from the student's notebook in the light of the theory of macro and microstructures and try to identify what aspects of the process are responsible for the better retention of information and the effective expression in writing. This methodology can prove vital in the teaching of writing and learning skills that are so important in the academic sphere today.

5.2. Theory of Macro-Structures (Macro-Rules)

The conceptual framework provided below is based upon the theory espoused by Teun A. Van Dijk. He proposed that micro-propositions can be grouped together to form a common macro proposition. This grouping is subject to rules which he calls Makroregeln or macro-rules.

Macrostructures are semantic in nature and represent the global semantic (meaning) structure of a text or a part thereof. They provide a global understanding of the context and text-meaning (van Dijk, 1980, pp. 41-44). All macrostructures must fulfil the requirements for semantic connection as should the microstructures. The theory of macrostructures explains HOW we arrive at the respective macrostructures, what the processes are that can trace and outline the transformation and hence represent the so-called RULES that govern the process and that link the microstructures to their respective macrostructures. Hence, if visually described in an image below, every bundle of microstructures (structures at a lower level) that comes together to a macrostructure at a higher level represents a macro-rule. It is noteworthy that we are dealing with the unitisation of proposition-sequences or groups of propositions and not individual or isolated propositions. We talk here not about units but globality.

5.3. The Macro-Rules

Van Dijk described four basic rules that determine the different kinds of semantic transformations abiding by which we can arrive at macro structures. They are

1. Auslassen   -   Omission
2. Selektieren   -   Selection
3. Generalisieren   -   Generalisation
4. Integrieren   -   Reconstruction / Integration

All rules, according to Dijk, must fulfil the principle of semantic implication (Prinzip der semantischen Implikation) which means that all macrostructure arrived at by the use of macro-rules should be semantically implied by the cluster of microstructures or propositions. A macrostructure should naturally evolve out of

microstructures or clusters thereof (van Dijk, 1980, pp. 45-49)

5.4. Case Study

The following are the notes extracted from the notebook of a student from the grade V in a school at Bangalore. The child has the book entitled "Heidi" prescribed as part of their reading for English literature (Spryi, 2011).

5.5. Methodology

The student was asked to undertake the following exercise with the instructions given below:

1. Read each chapter.
2. Underline the key words and elements in the sentences and paragraphs.
3. Then categorize the chapter thematically into various segments or sections.
4. In a notebook, create a three-column table.
5. In column 1, mention the segment no. or letter.
6. In column 2, jot down the main points underlined during the reading, omitting the ones that may now appear irrelevant or of less importance after having read the entire chapter.
7. After completion of step 6 for the ENTIRE chapter, reflect and ask oneself what the MAIN idea or the gist of each segment is. At this point, the student is encouraged to merge and club segments or to rearrange, categorize and organize the information based on the overall understanding of the chapter.

5.6. Extract from Notes

Below is the extract from the notebook. Copied below is only the extract for chapter 1 of the notes. There are a total of 15 chapters in the book.

	Microproposition	Macro propositions
A	**1. Mayenfeld, Switzerland, Alps** 2. June – sunny morning 3. Two people up mountain 4. Young woman – Dete 5 y/o child – 5. Heidi wearing – 3 dresses – thick woolen shawl.	Dete is taking Heidi up the Alm Mountain to leave her with Alm Uncle. (Inference: the girl is wearing all her clothes as she is going to stay with Alm Uncle for good – and it's easier to wear the clothes than to carry them in a bag.)
B	1. 1/2 way up (at Dorfli) 2. Did not return greetings of people 3. Woman's old home. 4. Friend Barbel joins them at Dorfli.	
C	1. Dete has got a job in Frankfurt. 2. Is going to drop Heidi with Alm Uncle. 3. He is Heidi's grandfather. 4. He is an unfriendly person. 5. Barbel advises her against this. 6. Halfway up at Dorfli, her friend Barbel joins her. 7. They start a conversation.	Halfway up at Dorfli, her friend Barbel joins her. They start a conversation.
D	1. Barbel does not understand why Alm uncle is a misanthrope. 2. Why he is called Alm Uncle. 3. Barbel lived in Dorfli – she was married there.	

	4. Dete was born here till her mother died.	
	5. Had a job at Ragatz. Now a new good job at Frankfurt.	
	6. Asks Barbel why people are against Alm Uncle.	
	7. Barbel wants to know more about Alm uncle.	
	8. Dete says she knows quite a bit – but Barbel should not tell anyone.	
E	1. Barbel assures Dete that she can keep secrets.	
	2. Dete does not see Heidi.	
	3. Looks around and finds him with a goatherd – Peter.	
	4. Dete can hear the story now.	
	5. Alm uncle apparently has nothing except a hut and two goats.	
F	1. Barbel asks whether Alm Uncle ever had more.	History of Alm Uncle.
	2. Dete replies: He once owned a large farm.	
	3. He liked to spend, driving about the country, drank and played cards.	
	4. One day he lost his fortune. His mother died of grief.	
	5. He joined the army for 12 years.	
	6. He came back with a small child to his relatives in Ragatz.	
	7. His relatives disowned him. He never went to Ragatz again.	
G	1. He came to Dorfli with his child.	
	2. His wife had died soon after giving birth.	
	3. He paid for his son to learn the wood trade.	

	4. His name was Tobias. He married Dete's sister – Adelaide. 5. They both had a child – Heidi. 6. Tobias died two years later when some wood fell on him. 7. Adelaide died of shock a short while later. 8. People talked of his tale. 9. They called it a punishment from God for his ill deeds. 10. Some said it on his face. 11. Alm uncle was bitter and angry. 12. He stopped speaking with people. 13. He went to live on top of the mountain.	
H	1. Adelaide's baby was 1 year old. 2. Dete and her mother took care of Heidi. 3. The mother died a year ago and 4. Dete went to live in Ragatz. 5. She paid an old woman to take care of Heidi. 6. Now she had got a new job with a rich family in Frankfurt. 7. She had to leave the day after the next and 8. Had come to leave Heidi with Alm Uncle.	Reason for Dete to leave Heidi with Alm Uncle.
I	1. She says she cannot take Heidi to Frankfurt. 2. On the way they see a dilapidated little hut. 3. It belongs to Peter, a goatherd. 4. He took care of goats for a living. 5. He had no father. 6. He had a blind grandmother.	

a. Précis Version 1: (Short Version)

Dete is taking Heidi up the Alm Mountain to leave her with Alm Uncle, who is Heidi‟s grandfather. (1) Halfway up, at Dorfli, her friend Barbel joins her (2). They start a conversation. Dete explains the reason why she must leave Heidi with her grandfather (3, 5). They also discuss Alm uncle‟s history (4). On the way the little Heidi makes friends with Peter, a young goatherd (6). When they reach the mountain top, Dete hands Heidi over to Alm uncle and runs back, feeling guilty and sad (7).

b. Précis Version 2: (Longer Version)

Dete is taking Heidi up the Alm Mountain to leave her with Alm Uncle, who is Heidi's grandfather. (1) Halfway up, at Dorfli, her friend Barbel joins her (2). They start a conversation. Dete explains the reason why she must leave Heidi with her grandfather (3, 5). They also discuss Alm uncle's history (4). Dete shares with Barbel the story of Alm Uncle and how he had squandered his fortune in his youth and his mother had died of grief. He served in the army for 12 years and had a son. His wife had died after giving birth. His relatives disowned him. He taught his son, Tobias, the wood trade. Later, Tobias married Dete's sister Adelaide. They had a daughter together, whom they named Heidi. Tobias died in an accident and Adelaide died of grief soon after. People spoke of Alm Uncle's misfortune as a punishment from God and actually said this on his face. Alm uncle became very bitter and stopped talking with people (4). Dete and her mother took care of Heidi after Adelaide‟s death – and her mother died a year ago. Now, Dete has got a job in Frankfurt and cannot take Heidi along with her. So, she decides to leave her in the care of Alm Uncle (5).

On the way the little Heidi makes friends with Peter, a young goatherd (6). When they reach the mountain top, Dete hands Heidi over to Alm uncle and runs back, feeling guilty and sad (7).

5.8. Analysis

The process undertaken by the student results in the following internal mental processes and enables the student to achieve a better understanding of the chapter.

1. Deconstruction of the text and categorisation into segments
2. Understanding the global propositions of the various segments
3. A discerning understanding of the relevance of certain aspects, and the relative insignificance of other aspects.
4. A clear visual and mental picture of the various propositions as situated in the larger contexts.
5. Interconnecting the macrostructures to create a short summary.

This incidentally also represents of what happens in the mind and how the data gets processed for better and more effective re-presentation while writing the précis. We can see from the part I (the tabular notes) that the student has divided the chapter into 12 segments, A to L as show in column 1. For each segment, the student has noted down the main points in column 2. These represent the microstructures or the individual information and propositions that are provided in the text. It must be noted that this is already a level higher in terms of micro and macrostructures, as not all the text from the original is provided here but only selected of the key information.

After the main points were noted, the notes were reviewed briefly. With this overview and with and understanding of the global context, the candidate then re-organized the segments. This is the result of the comprehension of the ideational meaning of the chapter (the content) as well as the textual meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 2004, p. 47) which deals with the interconnectedness of the ideas, content or propositions. It is with this global understanding (ideational + textual meanings) that the student comprehends the chapter in its totality. Based on the aforementioned understanding and processing, the student then arrives at the main ideas or themes and writes them in column 3.

These are the macrostructures or macro-propositions. The student identifies correctly seven main topics or themes that are covered in this chapter. These seven points represent the macrostructures of this chapter. This provides a tree-structure where the macro structures are easily retained in memory by virtue of the power of association, and each macro structure is related to various micro propositions. The result is that the table works like a palimpsest or archive, a kind of a mental map so to speak, which makes it easy for the brain to locate large amounts of information in a systematic manner based on its relational significance and logical categorisation under the larger macro structures.

This is akin to systematic arrangement of books in a library or filing of files in an organization. The library or storage area is divided into zones for different categories or alphabet groups. This is level one of the divisions – like the macro structures. Then, within each zone, a further sub-division is done for individual sections or shelves, in which

the individual files are placed. These compared to the micro propositions of the text. This kind of organization, as we all know, assists in ease of retrieval, and the same process takes place in the mind of the learner. The cognitive ability of the student is bolstered, and the "memory" appears to have improved, when in reality, it is not memory per se, but a framework of relationships and interconnectedness that is clearly spaced out on paper and as a result, in the mind.

The macrostructures appear disjointed as they appear in the table above. Hence, in the next step, in part II of the notes, the student has re- phrased the seven macro-propositions or macro structures into a paragraph, making necessary modifications to make them connected and flow into one another (see précis version 1). Intertextuality (Renkema, Introduction to Discourse Studies, 2004, pp. 50-51) is achieved this way, and it comes forth as good writing style – and the disjointed propositions have been woven into a coherent paragraph. In the précis version 2, we see that the student has realized that the propositions (4) and (5) are of greater importance and merely mentioning the "about-ness" (Renkema, Introduction to Discourse Studies, 2004, pp. 90-91) of the themes (4) and (5) is not sufficient. She decides to add a summary of both these aspects. This is optional and a step further in the level of detail.

With the addition of the two paragraphs (italicized), the précis becomes complete and no important detail seems to have been left out. In version 1, it seems as though merely an overview of the themes has been provided (e.g. "They spoke about the history of Alm Uncle."), while keeping the actual and significant information (the history) hidden from the reader. In version 2, however, the information

seems complete and the précis can function as a summarized version of the story by itself.

5.9. Challenges

The method introduced in this paper, though effective and very useful, will have three major areas of difficulty.

1. the identification of the key elements to highlight,
2. the identification of the global or main idea from a large chunk of information,
3. the ability of the student to connect the macro structures and to weave them into an interconnected paragraph.

These skills are not always mastered by students especially in our Indian context, where the English is the medium of instruction despite being a foreign language, most learners speaking a different language at home. These challenges notwithstanding, the process itself presents an insight into the process of assimilation and integration in the mind and provides a key to clearing the blocks in the process of learning and retention of information.

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