

## **Technical Communication – Unit 1**

### **Assignment 5**

#### **Q.1 Elaborate Language as a tool of communication (including characteristics)?**

##### **Language as a tool of communication:**

In order to express his ideas emphatically, man needs some common medium of expression.

Physical gestures or certain noises like crying in anger, weeping or laughing may help a person to communicate some of his feelings, just as a little baby weeps when he is hungry. In both the above examples communication takes place without words. But man needs some means of linguistic communication in order to express his fine ideas and emotions.

Man invented language which helps him to communicate and converse with different sorts of people. Today it has become an important tool of socialization as well as of trade and commerce. Globalization is the staple (essence) of the modern civilization. Hence in order to progress in various fields of life on the international scene, people have to be proficient in linguistic communication.

##### **Characteristics of Language:**

Communication is the soul of our life. We need it to survive and effective communication is made possible with the help of language. Language employs a combination of words to communicate ideas in a meaningful way. By changing the word order in a sentence, you can change its meaning, and even make it meaningless. Language is created by people. It doesn't exist in isolation or outside the minds of people. It is created by people as they need it. Humans attach meaning to words as they need and modify these meanings according to changing needs.

Language is one of the most powerful tools in human communication. Words are meant to establish and maintain friendly contact. Through words, people shape their identities. People can express their feelings, attitudes, and experiences to each other through words. By speaking, you can give others information about yourself and the world around you. Language is used as a tool for communication because of certain characteristics it possesses.

- a. Language is Arbitrary (Illogical or random):
- b. Language is Artificial (Manmade):
- c. Language is Restricted (limitations):
- d. Language is Abstract (conceptual):
- e. Language is Recursive:
- f. Language is Social
- g. Displacement

##### **a. Language is Arbitrary (Illogical or random):**

Language is arbitrary (illogical) in the sense that there is no inherent relation between the words of a language and their meanings or the ideas conveyed by them. There is no reason why a female adult human being be called a Woman in English, Aurat in Urdu, Zen in Persian and Feminine in French. The choice of a word selected to mean a particular thing or idea is purely arbitrary but once a word is selected for a particular reference, it comes to stay as such. It may

be noted that, had language not been arbitrary, there would have been only one language in the world. Mentioned below are examples of new words:

Hench - of a person having a powerful, muscular physique; fit, strong

hir - Used as a gender-neutral possessive adjective (his/her/hir watch)

**b. Language is Artificial (Man-made):**

Language is created by people, it is man made. It did not exist in isolation or outside the minds of people. It is created by humans based on their needs, so language is artificial.

**c. Language is Restricted (limitations):**

When we think and translate our thoughts into language, some meaning is lost in the process. No symbol or word can transmit our exact perception. Language has its limitations.

**d. Language is Abstract (General):**

Language is abstract because it represents generalized ideas or thoughts. A word could represent different ideas at different times. A 'table' can be of different shapes and sizes, and still be a table. Even if you have never seen a table with three legs, you can still identify it as a table. This happens because the meaning gets associated with symbols and users keep expanding the range of meaning.

**e. Language is Recursive (Repetitive):**

Recursion is the characteristics of language which enables one to generate any number of sentences using the same grammatical pattern. It also allows one to express any idea, thought or feeling using the same finite vocabulary.

**f. Language is Social:**

Language helps people to socialize. Language is a set of conventional communicative signals used by humans for communication in a community. Language in this sense is a possession of a social group, comprising an indispensable set of rules which permits its members to relate to each other, to interact with each other, to co-operate with each other; it is a social institution. Language exists in society; it is a means of nourishing and developing culture and establishing human relations.

**g. Displacement (Distant & Non-existing)**

This means that the speaker can talk about things which are not present, either spatially or temporally. For example, human language allows speakers to talk about the past and the future, as well as the present. Speakers can also talk about things that are physically distant (such as other countries, the moon, etc.). They can even refer to things and events that do not actually exist (they are not present in reality) such as the Easter Bunny, the Earth having an emperor, etc.