

On the Components of Language Environments

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The great leader Comrade **Kim Jong Il** said as follows.

“Natural environments and social conditions have a great effect on human activity.”

(“ON THE JUCHE IDEA” P. 11)

Language environments have a great effect on human language life.

Language has not only its own meaning, the vocabulary-grammatical meaning, but also the meanings behind speech, that is, various pragmatic meanings which appears according to the language environments.

Language environments are the internal and external factors and conditions which restrict realization of meaning of language units used in speech act.

This means that it is very important to have a correct understanding, say in a way best suited to the language environments and understand speech meaning correctly in accord with the language environments.

Language environments are defined as the internal and external factors and conditions which restrict realization of meaning of language units used in speech act.

Language environments are composed of the subjective factors such as ideological consciousness, feeling, cultural and moral levels, degree of awareness, psychology, action and others which exert a great influence upon speech act, and the objective factors such as place, time, situation, context, etc. which exist outside dialogists and influence on their speech act. These factors influence on the human speech act and restrict realization of meaning of language units.

First of all, human ideological consciousness belongs to language environments. It plays an important role in language life and speech act. Progressive ideas help to recognize correctly the essence and correlation of the objective world and the law-governed process of its development, and have language accomplish its mission and role as the weapon of revolution and construction. On the contrary, erroneous ideas give a wrong understanding of and distort the essence of things and phenomena, thus exert a negative influence. Like this, an ideological consciousness of the speaker plays an important part in speech act and regulates all the contents which are reflected on language.

Next, feeling belongs to language environments.

Feeling influences on reflecting independent demand of man about the objective world.

In general, feeling is something that you feel through the mind or through the sense. (page 541, “Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary”, 2004, Oxford University Press)

Undulation occurs in mind when people are faced with such and such a happening or a fact. This appears just as feeling. Feeling of people gets together with an idea as one and composes their inner world. Therefore, sometimes man’s idea is expressed directly in life, but there are more cases that it is expressed together with various feelings. Thus people feel pleasure and satisfaction when their independent demand is realized, but they feel displeasure and dissatisfaction when it is contradictory to their demand. Feeling has some relation with the other subjective factors, but individual consciousness, basis of feeling, by all means is an idea. An idea restricts speech act and becomes basis

of other subjective factors which are reflected on language as well as feeling.

Language environments have knowledge, too, in their composition.

Man's capacity of realizing the objective world is based on level of knowledge. People express as much as they know. They cannot say what they don't know. That the level of knowledge is high means they know as much as such; that they know much means they understand and approach speech act widely. The higher the level of knowledge of a speaker is, the more correctly and the deeper and wider the essence of the objective world is reflected in his words.

And language environments have the level of people's culture and morality in their composition.

The level of people's culture and morality reflected in their words are formed in the course of social life, too, and it is related with their preparedness and the qualitative level of words. Besides, the level of people's culture and morality is related with the attitude towards collectives and comrades. A man who has a high level of culture and morality may say noble and beautiful words and treat his opponent in a kind, modest and generous way. For example, when a speaker wants to make his opponent be quiet he is not good to say; "Be quiet!", if the opponent is senior in an age or a rank, but he should say politely; "Will you please be quiet?" or "Would you lower your voice a little, please?"

Psychology is one of language environments.

Psychology is the whole of the subjective and the ideal that the objective reality is reflected on the brain.

Psychology finds mainly its expression in the language as feeling and emotional colors. The feeling and emotional colors of language are colors of speech act which are decided and reflected in the correlation of objective objects with psychology of a speaker in a situation, different from colors of words.

Under the same language situation people receive different impressions and experience different feelings and emotions and they show different attitude toward them. Such a difference in psychology exerts not a little influence on understanding the meaning of language and receiving impressions. Psychology which is reflected on language is not a consciousness separated from social life of people. Ideas of people are formed under the situation of social life and their communications are realized in the social life. We cannot say about any ideas and psychology kept far from social life of people.

National emotion is one of language environments.

National emotion is formed on the basis of knowing well national characters of language system and recognizing correctly the social and natural environments where every nation is placed, and it plays an important role in understanding cultural background of a given national language. In particular, only when they know well about national emotion of a given nation, they can find and use a lot of vocabulary and expressions which are related with history and life customs of the nation and use well grammatical structures which national characters are reflected.

The objective factors of language environments are incomparably much more multifarious and complex than the subjective factors and the range is very wide. First of all, place of communication belongs to the objective factors of language environments.

The place where speech is told has some language meanings itself in accordance with environments, thus it gives an influence on speech act.

Any speech act goes on in a place, so that the actual meaning of words receives the restriction of communication place unavoidably. For example, if a student says “The teacher is coming.” to his classmates who play in the classroom in a disorderly manner. The real meaning of his speech is; “The classroom should be in order.”, and the speaker’s idea is “Stop trifling.” This example shows that we cannot understand the contents and the idea of speech act in disregard of the detailed surroundings.

Time of communication is one of the objective factors of language environments. It is an objective factor which determines pragmatic deixis of all the time reflected communication contents. The reason time is required in communication necessarily is to know the detailed time deixis reflected on communication. The pragmatic meaning of words is interpreted differently according to the detailed time deixis. For example, “All aboard!” means “All get on a ship/train!” if it is used before passengers get on a ship or on a train, but if it is used after passengers have got on a ship or on a train, it means “Getting on a ship/train has finished!”

Context is also one of the objective factors of language environments.

The context takes a particularly important position among the factors of language environments which realize a sentence meaning used in speech act, communication.

Context is the semantic relation which exists between language units.

Language units always do not exist in an isolated way, but they exist relying and restricting one another logically-semantically having a close relation with other language units.

Context creates actual condition which helps to recognize correctly polysemy and ambiguity that different language units express and realize them as one communicative and information meaning.

Context limits various communicative meanings of multivocal language units to one real meaning

ex.: The hall was already packed with people. How could I make my way through it? So I gave up my intention and went away.

In this example, the second sentence “How could I make my way through it?” has the possibility of interpreting it as various meanings, but it means “I could not make my way through it.” still more emphatically by means of consequence of semantic interaction. It is the context, the relation of semantic interaction of three sentences. That restricts the meaning of the second sentence as “I could not make my way through it.”

There are some opinions that context is found only in the written language as it plays a decisive role in the written language.

However, it cannot be connected only with written languages. Sentences in oral communication, as in written communication, cannot but be influenced by context since various language units participate in oral communication just like in written language and language standard and language customs exert influence on oral communication.

ex: A: Go there and meet him.

B: Why (should I go there)?

A: (You should go there.) because he is your friend. It’s your responsibility to help him.

In this example, it is quite impossible to restore and understand the meaning of the omitted parts without help of context, the correlation of sentences in front and in rear. Because not only language

units but also auxiliary means outside the language such as gestures, waves of hand and facial expressions participate in oral speech, there must be a context in oral communication. But as the role of its context is less than the one of the written communication it doesn't attract attention of people much.

Besides, there are so many factors including ways and contents of communication, objects of treatment and others.

A speaker or a writer grasps quickly what the both sides all can understand objective factors of language environments and what factors only one side knows. That's why a speaker or a writer should watch whether there are necessary factors in order that not only he himself but also a listener or a reader could understand the meaning at the moment of speech act and he should speak or write what they can understand by means of environmental factors.

We should make a more profound study of all the problems which exert influences to the language life and apply the successes in the education of foreign languages.