



C. Thinking About Language

Read the following piece of information from The Encyclopedia of Language by David Crystal.

“Egyptian is now extinct: its history dates from before the 3rd millennium BC, preserved in many hieroglyphic inscriptions and papyrus manuscripts. Around the 2nd century AD, it developed into a language known as Coptic. Coptic may still have been used as late as the early 19th century and is still used as a religious language by Monophysite Christians in Egypt.”

Question 1. What do you think are the reasons for the extinction of languages?

Answer: A language becomes extinct when its use is restricted to certain classes or categories of people. Secondly, the harshness of rules and lack of flexibility in usage also contribute to the extinction of languages.

Question 2. Do you think it is important to preserve languages?

Answer: I think it is important to preserve languages. Various languages are the vehicles of thought and medium of interaction between the users of that language and the outside world. A language has intimate connection with the lives, culture and civilization of the people and reflects their thinking.

Question 3. In what ways do you think we could help prevent the extinction of languages and dialects?

Answer: Certain steps must be taken to help prevent the extinction of languages and dialects. The most important is to encourage its use. A language thrives as long as it is used by masses. Measures should be taken to propagate the languages and dialects used in certain areas. The help of interpreters may be provided for interaction between native users of language/dialect and non-users. Certain incentives in the form of stipends, scholarships, preferences in jobs etc. may also prove handy in attracting the youth towards languages and dialects which are on the verge of extinction. State patronage can also help in the preservation of languages.

D. Working With Words

Question 1. Given below are some interesting combinations of words. Explain why they have been used together:

(a) ghostly dust devils

(b) desert sky

(c) stunning artifacts

(d) funerary treasures

(e) scientific detachment

(f) dark-bellied clouds

(g) casket gray

(h) eternal brilliance

(i) ritual resins

(j) virtual body

Answer:

In each combination of words, one word is an adjective and it modifies as well as reinforces the meaning of the noun following/preceding it. Let us try to understand the meaning of each combination of words:

- ghostly dust devils: ghost-like wicked evil spirits formed by dust.
- dark-bellied clouds: bulging/swelling clouds

- desert sky: the sky over the desert
- casket gray: the grey sky hiding the stars in it
- stunning artifacts: extremely attractive man-made objects if)
- eternal brilliance: everlasting shine
- funerary treasures: treasures stored following rituals of funeral
- ritual resins: resins applied according to religious rites
- scientific detachment: aloofness of a scientist
- virtual body: body made to appear to exist by computer software.

II. Here are some commonly used medical terms. Find out their meanings:

CT scan	MRI	tomography
autopsy	dialysis	ECG
post mortem	angiography	biopsy

Answer:

- CT scan: a medical-test in which a machine produces a three dimensional picture of the inside of a person's body on a computer screen after taking X-rays.
- MRI: an abbreviation for magnetic resonance imaging—a technique for producing images of body organs by measuring the properties of atomic nuclei in a strong magnetic field.
- Tomography: a technique for displaying a cross section through a human body (or other solid object) using X-rays or ultrasound.
- Autopsy: an examination of a dead body to discover the cause of death or the extent of disease.
- Dialysis: a technique of clinical purification of blood, as a substitute for the normal functions of the kidney.
- ECG: abbreviation for electrocardiogram or electrocardiograph; preparing a graph showing the measurement and recording the activity in the heart using electrodes placed on the skin.
- Post mortem: medical examination of the body of a dead person in order to find out how he died.
- Angiography : radiography of blood or lymph vessels, carried out after introduction of a substance that is opaque to X-ray.
- Biopsy: an examination of tissue taken from the body to discover the presence, cause, or extent of a disease.

III. Notice these expressions in the text. Guess the meaning from the context.

➤ <i>forensic reconstruction</i>	➤ <i>scudded across</i>
➤ <i>casket gray</i>	➤ <i>resurrection</i>
➤ <i>funerary treasures</i>	➤ <i>circumvented</i>
➤ <i>computed tomography</i>	➤ <i>eerie detail</i>

Answer:

- forensic reconstruction:activity of building again something damaged or to help/scientific test to solve a crime
- scudded across:moved quickly across something
- casket gray: a small gray box or grey sky
- resurrection:a new beginning for something which is old
- funerary treasures:collection of valuable things used at a funeral
- circumvented:found a way of avoiding a difficulty or a rule
- eerie detail:strange and frightening little bits of facts.

E. Things to do

I. The constellation Orion is associated with the legend of Osiris, the

god of the after life.

Find out the astronomic descriptions and legends associated with the following:

- (i) Ursa Major (Saptarishi Mandala)
- (ii) Polaris (Dhruva tara)
- (iii) Pegasus (Winged horse)
- (iv) Sirius (Dog star)
- (v) Gemini (Mithuna)

Answer:

(i) Ursa Major (Saptarishi mandala): This bright constellation can be observed all year long as it never sinks below the horizon. It is also known as 'Greater Bear' as it represents the back and tail of the bear. According to Sanskrit mythology this group of seven sages (sapta rishi) also moves around the constant star 'Dhruva Tara' known as Polaris.

(ii) Polaris (Dhruva tara): This star remains constant and always points to the North. The direction of Ursa Major keeps changing with the passage of the night, but Polaris remains unchanged. It is associated with the legend of Dhruva, the six year old boy who was blessed by Lord Vishnu with a permanent and constant abode in the universe.

(iii) Pegasus (Winged horse): This is associated with Greek mythology as the winged horse, sprung from Medusa's blood. It carries lightning bolts for Zeus. Pegasus' constellation may be seen when stars are out.

(iv) Sirius (Dog star): This is associated with the legend of Orion. It is called 'Dog Star' as it represents Orion's large hunting dog. The first glimpse of Sirius in dawn announced the rising of the Nile in ancient Egypt.

(v) Gemini (Mithuna): A combination of two Nakshatras—Aardhara and Punarvasu and having contradictory qualities.

II. Some of the leaves and flowers mentioned in the passage for adorning the dead are willow, olive, celery, lotus, cornflower. Which of these are common in our country?

Answer: Willow, olive, lotus and cornflower are common in our country.

III. Name some leaves and flowers that are used as adornments in our country.

Answer: Roses, Lotus, myrtles, marigolds, champa and chameli flowers and the leaves of mango, peepal, banana and basil are used as adornments in our country.

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