



TITLE

What is language?

KEY IDEA

Language is a set of words and rules that connect these words together

CONSPECTUS

1. Introduction
Language is our tool for communication.
2. Key idea
Language is a set of words and rules that connect these words together.
3. Reasons
The most important thing is to understand the meaning of words and know how to combine them with other words.
4. Consequences
Using other language is something more than translating vocabulary from our language for building sentence in another one.
5. Conclusion
It is not enough to know words; it is significant to understand how they work together in a given language.

REFERENCES

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- Miodek J. (1995), *Nie taki język straszny. O polszczyźnie do uczniów*, Gdańsk.
- Korzeniowski L. (2014), *Jak wytłumaczyć Marsjaninowi, co to znaczy pies, czyli o języku (polskim i nie tylko) inaczej i ciekawiej*, Kraków.



OBJECTIVES

1. You can identify elements of the language system and the rules governing them.
2. You can recognize correct statements that using language is building bigger parts from smaller
3. You can recognize correct statements why knowing the meaning of words in a given language is not enough to know this language.

FULL TEXT

1. Introduction

Language is something we use when we communicate with other people and when we want to express our thoughts.

2. Key idea

Language is a set of words and rules that connect these words together.

Each language are words/signs and rules for their use. So, separate elements can be combined into larger parts.

In the spoken language, we combine sounds into words, words into sentences, and sentences into whole utterances. In sign languages, various body movements are combined into signs, and signs into sign sentences and statements. Smaller elements cannot be combined any way you want, rules for building larger structures are needed. You can imagine blocks lying on the floor that do not yet make anything. You have to put them in a specific order and according to specific rules to build something from them. And only so arranged they create something that we have imagined (e.g., a house). Comparably, the knowledge on how the blocks should be set is not sufficient, if we do not have the blocks. Language works in a similar way. We need to know/understand its elements and know how to use them, how to connect them together, in order to express what we have imagined and to convey the message which we have intended. This is the



condition for being understood by another person, the condition for effective communication. Each language elements are very important, however without knowing how to combine them, communication will be difficult. We can produce words/signs, but that does not mean that we will be understood correctly. At this point, another element of the language definition appears: language is a system of signs and rules for their use which are created in the communication process, and for communication itself. Someone uses language signs and combines these signs using rules they have acquired. This person has something to say to someone else. But the other person must also understand these signs and know the patterns through which they have been combined. Without such knowledge, probably they will not understand what the other person wanted to say and communication will be difficult/ineffective. We cannot link words/signs incidentally. Language is not a set of words connected chaotically, but according to the rules that organize the process of producing and understanding the language. Which of these elements: words/signs or rules, are more important for combining them? The rules are only meant to help in combining different elements, but without them, this knowledge will not be useful to us.

3. Reasons

Words/signs are meaningful, and rules just help to connect words/signs. The most important thing is to understand the meaning of words and know how to combine them with other words.

4. Consequences

Knowing the meaning of words in a given language is not good enough. It is not enough to know words, you need to know when and how to use them when you want to communicate something. Languages are varied and they use different words to express the same things. For example, if we want to ask someone for age, we can't use the same words (translated) in every language. Because one language will use structure: "How old



are you?”, other “How many years you have?” and another one “How many you life?”
Translating vocabulary from our language for building sentence in another language very often is impossible. It is a risk, that no one will understand us.

6. Conclusion

When we speak/sign a language, we use words from that language and set them together based on different rules. People who want communicate should know the same vocabulary and the same rules. Then we will have correct understanding.

It is not enough to know words; it is significant to understand how they work together in a given language.