



TITLE

Why speech is not a language?

KEY IDEA

Speech is the physical usage of a language.

CONSPECTUS

1. Introduction

Language is a system of words/signs and rules for connecting these words/signs.

2. Key idea

Speech is only the usage of language, but not language itself.

3. Reasons

3.1. Learning only speech is not learning a language.

3.2 Language can exist without speech and sound production.

4. Consequences

You can lost ability to speak, but still you will have language in your brain.

5. Conclusion

Language is more than just ability to speech.

REFERENCES

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Korzeniowski L. (2014), *Jak wytłumaczyć Marsjaninowi, co to znaczy pies, czyli o języku (polskim i nie tylko) inaczej i ciekawiej*, Kraków.

Kowal J. (2012), *Język polski jako obcy w nauczaniu milczących cudzoziemców*, rozprawa doktorska, Wrocław.

OBJECTIVES

1. You can recognize correct statements about speech.



2. You can list the features of speech and language.
3. You can clarify the difference between speech and language.

FULL TEXT

1. Introduction

Language is a system of words/signs and rules for connecting these words/signs. If we say that someone knows a language, it means he/she has words/signs and the rules of using these words/signs in his/her mind. And this is language. Speech is loud representation of language, and signing is the production of language through signs and body movements. If we speak/sign a message, it will simply be spoken or gestural language usage. Not the language as a system, but usage of the language.

2. Key idea

We think in language, and then we express these thoughts through speech/signing. Therefore, speech is only the usage of language, its physical manifestation, but not language itself.

3. Reasons

When we want to learn a new language, we should learn its vocabulary and rules which help to connect these words together. If we want to actually speak/sign in this language, we should learn pronunciation/movements and facial expressions. Correct pronunciation in spoken languages is the production of sounds with proper positions of speech organs in the mouth (tongue, lips, teeth). Correct signing is the proper use of hands, facial movements and the entire body. The process of speaking and signing is using your own body to express language. You can learn a language from books, audio and video recordings, but not spend any time learning the right pronunciation. Does it mean that we do not know the language in this situation? Not necessarily. We already know the language, we understand everything, but we cannot speak/sign. We simply cannot produce a correct message. However, you can imagine the opposite situation. Someone



does not learn the language, does not know the meaning of words/signs or any rules of connecting different words/signs together. But he devote a lot of time to learning the correct pronunciation/correct signing. After some time, this person will produce signs or spoken words perfectly, but they will still not know the language well, they will not understand the language that they are producing.

4. Consequences

Language can exist without speech and sound production, but speech alone is only a passive/unconscious use of language. If someone for some reason loses the ability to speak, it does not mean that his language has disappeared from his head. He/she still knows the language (he/she have the words and rules in his/her brain, but he/she do not produce the corresponding sounds. Language comes first, because first you think of the sentence you want to express in your head. Then comes the actual expression of the sentence, which is speech, and that is secondary. Similarly, written language is secondary to spoken language. Writing is just a graphic version of speech. It is not a speech as such. You can learn nice writing/nice calligraphy, but without understanding the language, writing will be just drawing signs, copying them passively.

Language → Speech → Written language

Sing Language → Signing → Signwriting

If someone cannot write, it does not mean he cannot speak. Therefore, if one does not speak, we cannot yet say that he/she does not know the language.

5. Conclusion

You can teach someone to speak (say words), but through this, you do not teach a person language. Language is more than just ability to speech.