Communicate! 16e Chapter 4:

Verbal Messages

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1.   Explain the nature and characteristics of language.

2.   Compose effective verbal messages based on semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic meanings.

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All languages are based on exchanging utterances

Utterance:

a complete unit of talk bounded by the speaker's silence

It's your turn **to speak**

Turn-taking:

exchanging utterances

What is language?

Lexicon

a dictionary for a particular language, including pronunciation, usage, and origins.

Phonology

how sounds are organized and used in languages

Syntax and Grammar

how sentences are formed in a language

Syntax

the set of rules that determines how words are arranged to form sentences.

Grammar

includes syntax and other elements like punctuation, verb tenses, and word forms. Grammar is a language's overall system and structure, including how words change form and combine with other words to express meaning.

Language community:

all people who understand a particular language

Dialect: a unique form of a more general language spoken by a specific culture or co-culture

Speech communities:

smaller groups that speak a common dialect

Idiolect:

"personal" symbol system that includes active vocabularies and unique pronunciations, grammar, and syntax
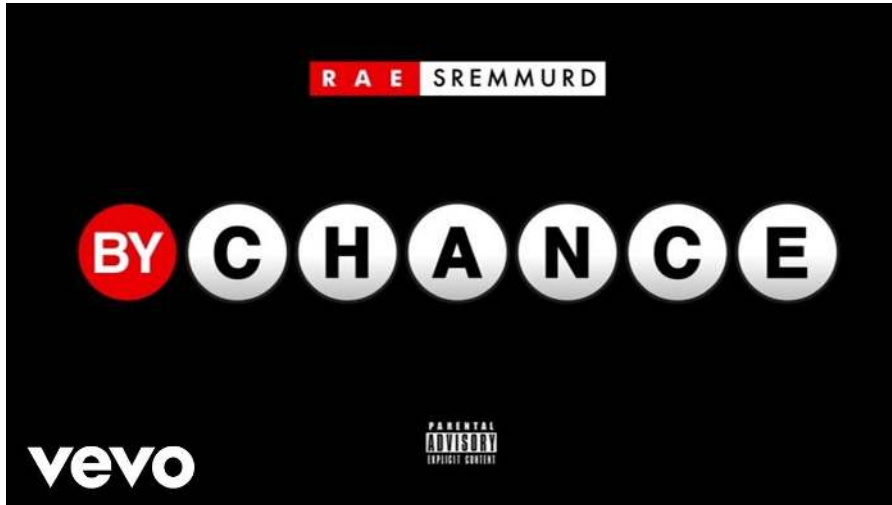
Protolanguage:

languages derived from similar linguistic roots

Characteristics of Language

Language is Arbitrary

the link between words and their meanings is based on social agreement rather than any intrinsic relationship.

Language is Abstract

means that words are not concrete objects or things, but rather symbols or concepts used to represent ideas, feelings, or objects.

Language Changes over Time

Dialect Leveling

distinct features of each dialect may be lost, and a more uniform way of speaking emerges.

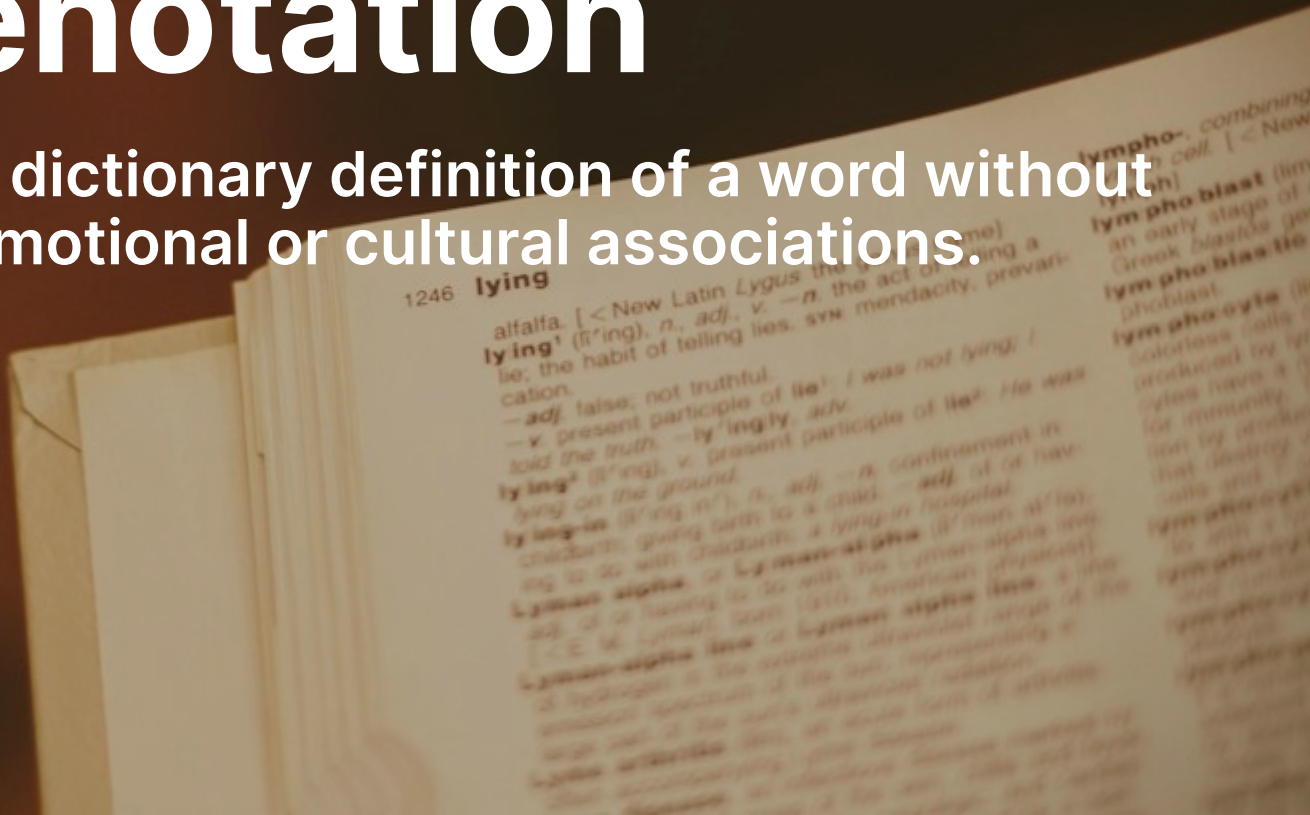# The Relationship Between Language and Meaning

Semantic Meaning

comes from the words used and their arrangement in sentences. This determines the message or idea being conveyed.

Denotation

is the dictionary definition of a word without any emotional or cultural associations.

Connotation

the feelings or ideas that a word suggests beyond its basic meaning.

Guidelines for Improving Semantics

Use specific language

use precise descriptive words...

Use Concrete Language

to appeal to the senses: see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.

Use Familiar Language

keeping it simple and universally understood

"Wherry" versus " Row Boat"

Use Descriptive Details and Examples

Demonstrate Linguistic Sensitivity

being inclusive and respectful

Pragmatics

interpreting a message related to the conversational context.

Speech Act

is what a speaker does by saying something and the expected response it suggests from the listener.

Guidelines for improving pragmatics

- **Tell the truth.**

- Provide the right amount of information.
- Relate what you say to the topic being discussed.
- Acknowledge when your message violates a guideline.
- Assume the best first.

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Sociolinguistics

changes based on the cultural or social group norms where it's used.

soda or pop

Idioms

are phrases where the words together have a different meaning than their individual meanings.

Direct & Indirect Verbal

Guidelines for improving sociolinguistic understanding:

- **Develop intercultural competence.**

- Practice mindfulness.
- Respect and adapt to the sociolinguistic practices of others.

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