The Origin of Language: A Perspective of Meditation Shifting Towards Needs Satisfaction

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Abstract

This paper discusses the origin of language from the perspective of meditation towards the needs satisfaction of communication. Labor played a crucial part in the creation and shaping of man himself and his body parts and also in the creation of language. Labor forced man to meditate on the void left between what he needed and the means to satisfy his needs. Man shifted his meditation from the needs to needs satisfaction, which resulted in the creation of tools, typical representatives of human culture. The ability to shift meditation towards tool making is a prelude to the creation of language. The ability to conduct meditation shifting is what distinguishes man from other animals. This ability has been woven into the genetic structure of man and has become man?s innate trait.

Index terms— origin of language, meditation shifting, needs satisfaction

1 INTRODUCTION

anguage is generally viewed as one of man's most complex phenomena. Scholars of different ages have spotted different part of the language phenomenon as a target of research, and accordingly a variety of theories in linguistics have been developed in the history. Saussure (1916Saussure (/1983)) distinguished "langue" from "parole" at the beginning of the 20 th century and thought that linguists should study "langue" instead of "parole". He was mainly concerned with the cultural end-product of human language and the main focus was on the mechanisms of language operation. Through his work, the centre of interest in linguistics was directed away from searching the changes and origins of languages towards studying the structural system of language as a social phenomenon. **??**homsky (1957 **??**homsky (, 1965)) directed public attention from viewing language as a static social phenomenon to seeing it as an individual phenomenon of generation and transformation of grammatical structures. Saussure extracted language from individual speeches, i.e. paroles, and viewed it as a static social phenomenon. Chomsky placed this static and social language system back into an ideal native speaker's head and regarded it not only as a system but also as a dynamic individual linguistic distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations)."

The distinction that he noted is "related to the langueparole distinction of Saussure; but it is necessary to reject his concept of langue as merely a systematic inventory of items and to return rather to the Humbodtian conception of underlying competence as a system of generative processes." Dell Hymes (1979) put forward the concept of "communicative competence" and placed social communication at the center of investigation, with Chomsky's conception of language "competence" being part of the communicative competence. Halliday (1985) emphasized the function of language and explored how language functions in the process of social communication.

The past roughly three decades has seen the development of cognitive linguistics, which places central importance on the role of meaning, conceptual processes and embodied experience in the study of language and the mind and the way in which they intersect. According to Croft and Cruse (2004, p.1), there are three major hypotheses guiding the cognitive linguistic approach to language: language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty; grammar is conceptualization; and knowledge of language emerges from language use. These three hypotheses

represent a response by the pioneering figures in cognitive linguistics to the dominant approaches to syntax and semantics at the time, namely generative grammar and truth-conditional (logical) semantics. **??**angacker (2008, p.3) argues that portraying grammar as a purely formal system is not just wrong but wrong-headed. Grammar is meaningful. "This is so in two respects. For one thing, the elements of grammar-like vocabulary items-have meanings in their own right. Additionally, grammar allows us to construct and symbolize the more elaborate meanings of complex expressions (like phrases, clauses, and sentences). It is thus an essential aspect of the conceptual apparatus through which we apprehend and engage the world." This is entirely in opposition to the generative grammar's well-known hypothesis that language is an autonomous cognitive faculty or module, separated from non-linguistic L Research paradigms shift with the shift of focus of interest in linguistics. It is generally assumed that researchers are making progress towards the nature or essence of human language, but from the aforementioned areas of research interest that linguists have showed, we cannot see that they have approached nearer to the nature of human language. It has been repeatedly proven in the history of human scientific endeavor (especially in humanities) that the research paradigm of the time does not guarantee it is the scientific mode of thinking. Behaviorists' approach to psychology and linguistics is a typical example. Researchers frequently fail to see the wood for the trees, because they focus too much upon details and specific matters. This article attempts to circumscribe and depict the emerging and developmental picture of the origin of human language in the hope that we can see the wood as well as the trees. We come back to the scene of the origin, and the very essential nature may reveal itself. In this paper, we view human language as a human cultural phenomenon, with human -tools? being the most typical. Language is a human tool for social communication. Man's creation of tools for labor is a prelude to the creation of language for communication. Understanding the human needs, emotions, and thoughts underlying the creation process of his tools and language will better our appreciation of the nature of language and the operational mechanisms involved in speech and language acquisition. Human history is in a sense a history of culture creation and development. -Culture? in this article refers to the material and spiritual wealth man has created and accumulated in his long history. In this sense, everything is of culture that man made or developed in the course of the creation or development of himself. Language, as well as tools for labor, is culture. -Man? refers to mankind, all the people of varied societies. -Processes? are twofold: the process of culture generation/creation and the process of culture development. What man made or developed was not made or developed by one single man, but by men who worked together in a society and who were descendants of their ancestors. It is in this sense that we say human beings live in a diachronic (historical) and synchronic (contemporary) society. Therefore, a man-made thing (a tool, henceforth) that can be called culture can be viewed both from the very point of its being created, and from the course of its improvement and development. As far as language is concerned, it can be seen from the very point of creation when people desperately needed it and came up with the idea of resorting to something for the expression of the something that happened to be there in their mind. Therefore, culture is human's intended creation and invention, and human intention is embedded in his action towards his creation or invention. Investigation into the origin of human cultural products entails inquiry into the intention of the action towards creation or invention of the cultural products. The creation of a tool stems from the needs for survival and existence. His needs compel him to meditate on how to satisfy his needs. When the meditation turns onto some physical material for satisfying his needs, a tool is born, and a cultural product is produced. This is the generation or production process of culture. Once a tool is born, human's meditation will be directed towards his need for improvement of the tool, and culture enters the phase of development.

Engels (1876) asserts that labor is not only the source of all wealth, but it created man himself. Labor played a part in the shaping and making of human hand. Much more important, he further argues, is the direct, demonstrable influence of the development of the hand on the rest of the organism. Our simian ancestors were gregarious. They were the most social of all animals. The development of labor necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by increasing cases of mutual support and joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. -In short, men in the making arrived at the point where they had something to say to each other. Necessity created the organ; the undeveloped larynx of the ape was slowly but surely transformed by modulation to produce constantly more developed modulation, and the organs of the mouth gradually learned to pronounce one articulate sound after another.? The conclusion that Engels reached has made it clear that man himself was the product of labor, more exactly the byproduct of labor. Labor was not intended to create man himself. Man did not even intend to labor. The intention of labor came from the necessity for survival and existence. Accordingly, cultural products of man's labor are not the direct end-products of labor, but byproducts of labor.

Investigation into the generation process of culture entails the inquiry into the motivation of labor. First, man conducts labor in order to satisfy his material and spiritual needs. No needs, no labor. Second, man's own needs entail the intention to satisfy the needs, and labor is the action performed out of man's needs in order to fulfill his certain intention. Third, labor consists of processes of -meditation? and -action?, which alternate and contain each other. Finally, the result of man's labor is the creation and accumulation of material and spiritual Global Journal of Human Social Science Volume XII Issue IV Version I wealth, and the simultaneous creation of man's organs and mind.

Man's very needs are the internal and intrinsic force of culture generation. Although man's needs themselves are not culture, they are the motivation of culture. In essence, all cultural phenomena originate and develop in

the process of the satisfaction of man's needs. Man's ancestors were forced to change their life style from forestry life to grassland life under Meditation towards the needs and towards the satisfaction of the needs is crucial to the generation of culture. Man's meditation is first directed towards his needs, and then towards the satisfaction of the needs. For instance, man needed food to survive. Meditation towards the food needs eventually led to the meditation towards the satisfaction of the food needs. However, man's meditation differs from that of animals in that man is able to direct his meditation towards other things as a third party for help. In other words, man can go beyond direct meditation towards the thing that he needs, and turn to a third party and resort to an indirect approach to the satisfaction of his needs. In natural environment, the meditation towards the satisfaction of man's food need might be directed towards some kind of fruit. By tasting fallen fruit on the ground, man might have discovered that this kind of food could satisfy his need. Animals also could have done this. However, when the meditation towards the satisfaction of the food need pointed to the fruit up in the tree, the direction of man's meditation could shift from the fruit up there in the tree to means of reaching the fruit. The meditation at this moment had entered the process of creating tools. A tool is a result of meditation towards the approach to the solution of a problem. A prerequisite for the creation of tools is the shifting of meditation from direct to indirect approaches to the needs satisfaction. Animals cannot do the shifting of meditation. Animal's meditation pointed directly to the fruit up in the tree. An animal might have exhausted itself by jumping at the fruit up in the tree until it assured itself the impossibility of reaching the fruit. This is why the creation of tools is viewed as a sign of distinction between man and other animals. Nevertheless, tools are merely the external markers of the distinction. The crucial point in the creation of tools is the meditation towards what tools function. This is the very crucial point that distinguishes man from other animals. A branch in the natural world could be converted into a cultural tool in the problem solution process of reaching the fruit up in the tree. The cultural element does not lie in the branch itself, but in the problem solution with the branch. The shifting of meditation occurs when man meets an impediment to the satisfaction of his need. The goal of creation of a tool is the solution to the problem, and the improvement of a tool is also directed towards the solution to the problem. The key point in the creation and improvement of a tool is meditation.

As man is in a position of meditating towards his needs satisfaction, culture enters the phase of generation; as he is in a position of meditating towards the improvement of a tool, culture enters the phase of development, and as a result, tools get improved and advanced.

A study on the social-cultural process of language is to view it as a social-cultural phenomenon and study its generation and development processes under the pressure of social-cultural needs. Like any other social-cultural phenomenon, the social-cultural processes of language also entail compulsion, intrinsic needs, meditation towards needs satisfaction, shifting of meditation, and meditation towards the improvement of tools.

Just as stated above, man was forced to live and labor in groups. This way of life entailed the needs for communication among the members of the community. Engels concluded in his work that -men in the making arrived at the point where they had something to say to each other.? The creation process of human language ought to be traced back to this point -where they had something to say to each other.? -Something to say to each other? was the urgent need of the men in the making and this need for communication compelled them to find ways out of the meditation. Animals do not have language partly because they cannot conduct meditation shifting, and partly because they do not have such an urgent need for communication as men. Just as Engels (1876) asserted:

Comparison with animals proves that this explanation of the origin of language from and in the process of labour is the only correct one. The little that even the most highly-developed animals need to communicate to each other does not require articulate speech. In its natural state, no animal feels handicapped by its inability to speak or to understand human speech. It is quite different when it has been tamed by man. The dog and the horse, by association with man, have developed such a good ear for articulate speech that they easily learn to understand any language within their range of concept. Moreover they have acquired the capacity for feelings such as affection for man, gratitude, etc., which were previously foreign to them. Anyone who has had much to do with such animals will hardly be able to escape the conviction that in many cases they now feel their inability to speak as a defect, although, unfortunately, it is one that can no longer be remedied because their vocal organs are too specialised in a definite direction.

Engels's statement shows that the social environment of man's labor necessitated the need for human communication, and hence the strong desire to express the something that men in the making had.

The bringing-together of the members of society by the development of labor is the external force and the desire to express the something that the men in the making had is the internal force. Without these two the pressure of the changes of evolutionary forces, human language could never have been created. However, we argue that the reason why 2012 ebruary F animals do not have language is that they lack the external force and hence the internal capacity to meditate towards the necessity of communication. The external force occasionally make the highlydeveloped animals feel the need for communication, but they communicate in a straight and direct fashion and never demonstrate any sign of resorting to a third party for the expression of the -something? that they happen to have. Meditation towards the creation of language operates in the same way as meditation towards the creation of tools. Animals cannot create tools, and this further means that they cannot create language.

Vygotsky (1986, p.58) discussed William Stern's intellectualistic conception of speech development in the child. Stern distinguishes three roots of speech: the expressive, the social, and the -intentional? tendencies.

While the first two underlie also the rudiments of speech observed in animals, the third is specifically human. Stern defines -intentionality? in this sense as a directedness towards a certain content, or meaning. -At certain stage of his psychic development, man acquires the ability to mean something when uttering sounds, to refer to something objective.? Although there are differences between phylogenetic and ontogenetic phenomena, human individuals must have been endowed with the genetic tendency to meditate on the means of satisfying the need for communication. There is no escaping the fact that a highly-developed animal cannot acquire human language no matter how we teach it. The -something? that an individual child has to communicate with adults around him is very much like that in the men in the making, staying there as a driving force that compels the bearer to meditate towards the satisfaction of the need of expression and communication.

We may arrive at a conclusion from the studies on the creation of tools and language that the crucial point in the creation process of tools and language is the meditation shifting towards a third party for the needs satisfaction. The shifting of meditation is the recognition of the usefulness of another thing to fill the void that emerges when the need arise. For instance, food and water are man's basic needs. When he eats or drinks, he needs something to hold what he eats or drinks, and a void is left, or more exactly, created by the act of eating or drinking. This void is begging man to fill with his meditation towards a third party, anything that functions as a container. Therefore, what is important is not the material or the substance of the container, but its usefulness. The begging void is what the meditation is directed towards. What a thing is is not the thing itself, but the void that functions in man's need. You do not need to define a table when you teach a child the word -table?. Just show him how to use it, and he would refer to a stool, a stone, or even his knee as a table if he puts his bowl on it.

The nature of language is its function as a symbolic tool, i.e. the symbolic sign pointing to the intentionality that is to be expressed. Theoretically speaking, language does not rely on the sound medium. Any signs (for instance, gestures) can be the third party that serves to fill the void between the inner intentionality and the addressee and to play the role corresponding to that of man's language. Confronted with the desperate need for communication among the members of society, man first developed the ability to meditate towards the satisfaction of the communication need. This ability is one that generates the functional awareness of a third party to fill the void of conveyance. Under the pressure of the communication need plus the functional awareness, it is possible for man to shift his meditation from the communication need to the satisfaction of the need. Only when the meditation shifts towards a third party to resort to a detour can the expression of the intentionality become possible.

2 Phylogenetically

and ontogenetically, meditation is the central and crucial point in the process of language creation and acquisition. Language could not have been created without the shifting of meditation towards a detour for a resort to the satisfaction of the communicative needs. Man's ability to meditate on the communicative needs originated in the external and internal compulsion to the something that he had had to say to each other.

Intellectual and mental mutation must have occurred in the long process of meditation, and this mutation was the shifting of meditation towards a detour. It is certain that the men in the making were not conscious when they conducted the meditation or the shifting of meditation, but their desire, anxiety and desperation smoldered, simmered and seethed until their meditation found a way out. More often than not, this situation can be found with a child or a pet animal when they attempt to convey the -something? that they have. Even though the child's discovery of the function of signs is not a matter of all of sudden, but Global Journal of Human Social Science Volume XII Issue IV Version I the gradual process of communication with people around him makes it possible for him to refer to something when it is not there. This mental inward pointing towards the object in the intentionality is the actual mechanism on which speech operates. The abilities of meditation and meditation shifting in the men in the making must have been genetically woven into the genetic structure of human beings, and become an innate trait in modern humans.

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Figure 1:

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