

# Chapter 7 Notes (Part 2)

## Language

- Language- the system of symbols, sounds, meanings, and rules for their combination that constitutes the primary mode of communication among humans
- **Language and Thought**
  - Whorfian hypothesis of linguistic relativity- the idea that language shapes thought
  - People whose language provides numerous terms for distinguishing subtypes within a category perceive the world differently from people with more limited language (ex: languages that have many different words for rice)
  - Not applicable to all things; ex: color is universal, but number of words for colors is not constant
  - The way people in different cultures think about visual scenes does not mirror aspects of the language
  - Different languages call to attention different information (English language calls to attention person's gender: his, hers)
  - Thought can occur independently of language (putting thoughts into words)
  - People visualize activities or behaviors without putting thoughts about those activities into language (athletes mentally rehearsing plays)
  - Language evolves to express new concepts
- **Transforming Sounds and Symbols into Meaning**
  - Elements of Language
    - Phonemes- the smallest units of speech that distinguish one linguistic utterance from another; strung together to create meaningful utterances
    - Morphemes- the smallest units of meaning (words, suffixes, and prefixes)
    - Phrases- groups of words that act as a unit and convey a meaning
    - Sentences- units of language that combine a subject and predicate and express a thought or meaning
  - Syntax: The Rules for Organizing Words and Phrases
    - We can't place words wherever we want in sentences
    - Syntax- rules that govern the placement of specific words or phrases within a sentence
    - Linguists- study the way languages operate

- Psycholinguists- study the way people use and acquire language
- Grammar- system of rules for generating understandable and acceptable language utterances
- Grammar is generative; people can generate an infinite number of sentences they have never heard before
- We can reword sentences; they have same underlying meaning but different syntactic construction
- Semantics- rules that govern the meanings, rather than the order, or morphemes, words, phrases, and sentences
- Interaction between syntax and semantics
- **The Use of Language in Everyday Life**
  - Pragmatics- the way language is used and understood in everyday life
  - Discourse- the way people ordinarily speak, hear, read, and write in interconnected sentences
  - Multiple Levels of Discourse
    - People represent discourse at multiple levels; lowest level is exact wording of sentences
    - People don't remember exact wording of sentences; they remember gist of sentence
    - One step higher is communication level, which reflects what communicator is trying to do
    - Broadest level is general type of discourse, such as a story, news report, or joke
  - Principles of Communication
    - Communication is not only guided by syntactic rules but also by a set of shared rules of conversation that are implicit in the minds of both participants
    - Use various cues to signal important information
  - Nonverbal Communication
    - Mode of communication that relies on gestures, expressions, intonation, body language, and other unspoken signals