(a) Language, its origin, nature and development

Language is the proud possession of human being only. As a rational being, he is capable of thinking and as a necessary corollary of his thinking he wishes to communicate his ideas. Language is the most wonderful creation of the human mind. It is a means by which a human being may communicate his ideas to another.

Man as a social being has devised some means to communicate his thoughts with others. This he can do in three distinct ways— 1) When at a distance he may make use of gestures, 2) When in closer proximity he may use at articulate speech in addition to, or entirely supplanting these gestures and 3) he may inscribe certain signs on suitable materials or otherwise embody his idea in some other— conventional material form.(1)

Its origin

Language as gradually developed must be the work of men and it is different from the immutable cries and songs of the lower creatures. The belief that language is the gift of God was widespread in ancient times. Indians call Sanskrit the "Debobhasa", and in Europe too, the legend of the Tower of Babel ascribed the origin and diversity of all languages to the direct interference of God. In one sense, this may
be considered as a correct view, considering the fact that language is the direct result of God's greatest gift to mankind—the mind. (2)

The view that God poured down ready made languages into the brains of human minds was not accepted as it was found that language is the product of evolution. The origin of articulate speech has now been accepted due to psychological processes going on within the human brain.

The eighteenth century thinker, Zohann Gottfried Herder*, vigorously and successfully attacked the orthodox view of his age that language could not have been invented by man, but was a direct gift from God. One of Herder's strongest arguments is "if language had been framed by God, and by Him instilled into the minds of men, we should expect it to be much more logical, much more imbued with pure reason then it is as an actual matter of fact. The existing language is so chaotic and ill-arranged, that it could be God's work but must come from the hand of man.

He further says that language was not deliberately framed by man but sprang out of necessity from his innermost nature.

As to the origin of language Max Muller described in his picturesque style four of the theories. He calls them the Bow Wow theory, the Pooh Pooh theory, the Ding Dong theory and the Yo-he-ho theory.

1) The Bow Wow theory:
   The Bow Wow theory (the Onomatopaetic theory) supposes that the objects are named after the sounds they produce. Thus Cuckoo in English or Miaow in Chinese are clearly the sounds produced by the animals. (But this explain only a small portion of the vocabulary of a language)

2) The Pooh Pooh theory:
   Next we get the Pooh Pooh (Interjectional) theory which takes its stand on the psychological fact that different perceptions excite different feelings and emotions in the human being, and there is an appropriate sound to express each human feeling.

3) The Ding Dong theory:
   The next one is the Ding Dong or pathogenic theory. It also gives satisfactory explanation of a certain number of words. According to this theory, specific kinds of objects so affected the primitive man, as to elicit from him, or to
make use of Max Muller's metaphor, to ring out of him, correspondingly specific utterances.

4) The Yo-he-ho-theory:

It has been observed that roots express acts which can be performed by human beings. We find that it is the habit of labourers while doing a heavy bit of work, to utter loud sounds in unison. This undoubtedly lightens the mental fatigue accompanying bodily labour. All sailors, for example, hauling the anchor, shout together Yo-he-ho and this has been cited to explain the first syllable heave. This is the Yo-he-ho theory which says that the action itself is indicated by the sounds that accompany the action.

It will be seen that no single one of these theories would explain all the facts of language. Perhaps not all of them put together would explain clearly the whole of the roots of any language. Surely there should be as many different explanations as there are mental processes which accompany articulate speech. (4)

As to the question of the ultimate origin of language Schlegel+ thinks that the diversity of linguistic structure points to different beginnings. While some languages such as Manchu, are so interwoven with onomatopoeia, that imitation of natural sounds must have played the greatest role in their

+ Schlegel, Friedrich Von - (1772-1829) was the greatest critic produced by the German romantic movement. He was a pioneer for the study of Sanskrit in Europe.
formation, this is by no means the case in other languages, and the perfection of the oldest organic or flexional languages such as Sanskrit shows that they cannot be derived from merely animal sounds.\(^{(5)}\)

**Its nature**

Language is a purely human and noninstinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. These symbols are in the first instance "auditory" and they are produced by the so called "organs of speech".\(^{(6)}\) But Edward Sapir is of the opinion that there are properly speaking no organs of speech, there are only organs that are incidently useful in the production of speech sounds. Speech is not a simple activity that is carried on by one or more organs biologically adopted to the purpose. It is an extremely complex and ever-shifting network of adjustments—in the brain, in the nervous system, and in the articulating and auditory organs—tending towards the derived end of communication.

It is true that physiological psychologists speak of the localization of speech in the brain.\(^{(7)}\)

Language is not only a mental phenomenon involving the use of mental energy, but basically it is a physiological process as well. Actually language is a psychosomatic process, it involves the organism as a whole, it correlates the brain
and the muscles. It is the whole man that speak and not a part of him. The recognition of this organismic nature of self-expression has uncovered some of the very best clues to effective methods in developing and perfecting the less

Language is primarily an auditory system of symbols. As it is articulated it is also a motor system, but the motor aspect of speech is clearly secondary to the auditory. In normal individuals the impulse to speech first takes effect in the sphere of auditory imagery and is then transmitted to the motor nerves that controls the organs of speech. The motor processes and the accompanying motor feelings are, not however, the end—the final resting point. They are merely a means and a control leading to auditory perception in both speaker and hearer. Communication which is the very object of speech is successfully effected only when the hearer's auditory perceptions are translated into the appropriate and intended imagery or thought or both combined. Robert Lado aptly remarks when he says "language in its most common, pervasive, representative and apparently central manifestation involves oral-aural communication. It consists of oral-aural symbols of communication arbitrary in their association to particular meanings and units and arbitrary in their particular shape for a given language."
Spoken and Written

The purview of language is not limited to oral-aural symbols of communication only. Man with his instinct of conservation has developed the means of inscribing certain signs on suitable materials or otherwise embody his idea in some other conventional material forms. So writing is a later development in the process of communication. It is a symbol of the spoken language, less arbitrary than the language itself since in most of the systems of writings there is an attempt to make characters correspond to sounds. A system of writing is a symbol of a symbol, just as a cheque is symbolical of paper money which is in turn symbolical of gold. Speech gives rise to writing, but once writing has come into being, the written form begins to affect the spoken language, stabilize it, mould it, change it, give it a more aesthetically pleasing form, endow it with a richer vocabulary.(11)

The advantages which speech enjoys over writing are as follows— 1) While speaking or listening, the hands and eyes of the speaker are left free, 2) Speech can express wider range and subtler shades of meanings.

The advantages that writing has over speech are—
1) Writing can be preserved and reproduced with ease.
2) The ear can detect sounds only in succession but the eye can see a number of objects at a single glance.
3) The listener has no other alternative than to accept the speech chosen by the speaker, but the reader can go at his own speed, skipping, skimming and lingering. (12)

The art of symbolizing particular forms of speech by means of particular visible marks adds to a great deal to the effective uses of language. It has made possible for the human race to develop on the basis of the accumulated knowledge. It is the most important cultural asset of the human race. Because by means of language in its written form only our cultural heritage has been presented and developed. A written record can be carried to any place, and preserved for any length of time. We can see more things at one time than we can hear, and we can deal better with visible things. The speech stimulate of distant people and especially of persons in the past are available to us through writing. This makes possible an accumulation of knowledge. (13)

(b) Functions of language

Language is essentially a means to fulfill some purposes such as the establishment of mental contact between men, exchange of thought, the adequate reception of experiences, expressions of feelings, wishes and desires. So it can be derived that apart from the primary purpose of mental communication, language also fulfills a secondary purpose in the different fields of mental activity and especially to thought, self-consciousness and expression.
The role of language in the function of thought is well known. Its role in mental operations, its function in the formulation of latent thoughts, in the process of conception and development and in the interpretation of dreams, the share it has in ordered thinking and productive thinking are all well known.\(^{(14)}\)

W. Von Humboldt* declared in one of his works that language is not only a means of representation of already recognised truths, but for more a means for the discovery of truths previously unrecognised.\(^{(15)}\) From this it can be deduced that language has an active role in the facilitating and creating thought.

**Thought and Language**

Naturally a question crops up here as to the concomitant relation between thought and language. Taraporewala\(^{(16)}\) has drawn the logical conclusion when he said that the Greeks used the word "logos" to describe human speech. As the word also meant "the power of thought" they used "aloga" for animals—signifying that the animals were without either kind of 'logos' viz. speech and the power of thought.' This indicates their conviction of the ultimate relation between speech and thought.

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* Humboldt, Wilhelm Von - (1767-1835) German statesman and Philologist. He was the first to study Basque scientifically and also worked on the languages of the East and of the South Sea Islands.
Each in modern times three typical views are maintained regarding the relation between thought and language.

First— They are identical, Second, words are the garb or clothing of thought, necessary not for thought but only for conveying it. Third, while language is not thought it is necessary for thinking as well as for communication. To subscribe to the view that language is necessary for thinking is to accept that signs are essential. Thought does not deal with bare things, but with their meanings, and meanings are embodied in sensible and particular existence called "symbols".

These views clarify that a human being who has the power of thinking possesses language which the animal do not have, and so thought and language co-exist only in the human being who can express his thought through articulate speech.

Language and thought are inseparable. Words without thought are dead sounds, thoughts without words are nothing. To think is to speak low, to speak is to think aloud. The word is the thought incarnate. There cannot be speech without previous thought. Examination of one's own experiences will easily lead to the conclusion that every act of speech is prepared and accompanied by a thought process. Further support is provided by the phenomena of sensory aphasia which indicates that disturbances in thoughts bring
about serious speech defects. That the so called 'speech' of complete idiots who are incapable of thought is not really speech in the true sense of the word is a well known fact. It would therefore appear that speech activity is inseparably associated with thought; speaking without thinking does not exist. (19)

To clarify this relationship it can be summarized as the following—

1) Human thought presupposes speech. It follows that children in the prelinguistic state, to the extent that they are unable to understand the language of their environment, and the mentally ill who are completely lacking in the function of speech are incapable of thought. Deafness does not exclude the function of speech and in aphasia the speech capacity is apparently never completely broken off.

2) Speech is introduced by thought. The content of speech and its representative and explanatory power is governed and controlled by thought.

3) Through speech, thought is accompanied by the words and sentences required for the development of ideas. Thought is supplemented with new ideas produced through verbal thinking and appreciation of relationship. It is structured by sentence formation and accentuation and receives a herbal formulation in order to become fixed and communicable. Wordless thought is inseparably associated with the linguistic function as a
result of knowledge which has previously received verbal formulation and continues to operate in the active unconsciousness.

4) Thought and speech are inseparably associated with each other despite their disparity in function, intention and structure. The existence of one presupposes the other. Speech does not exist without thought, nor thought without speech. (20)

The principal functions of linguistic communications are established on the fact that they appear in all speech situations and in all varieties of languages; they are clearly distinct from one another in their autonomy of structure and purpose. They cast light upon new and hitherto unsuspected relationship, permit an evolutionary approach and are in full agreement with the results of research in child psychology, general linguistic science and linguistic history. It needs no demonstration to show that in his social relations man is governed chiefly by two purposes, to summon his fellows to action and to indicate or to communicate something to them. Without doubt these two social necessities have been the most powerful factor in the origin and development of language since any communication of information direct or indirect, is necessarily closely related to language. (21)
So far the investigator has focussed on the origin, nature and function of language and thereby she thinks it proper to show as to how language has developed as it is being used as the most adequate means of communication of the human being in his efforts towards social and mental contact. Its basic function is to represent by phonetic symbols the contents of consciousness (sensory, ideational emotional and volitional) in the broadest sense. (22)

While tracing the development of language we find that at first language served only for mental communication and the influencing of one person by another and it is to satisfy these needs that it came into being. At a higher level of human development it also became a means of ordered thinking, self-consciousness and self-development, entailing an enrichment of the range of speech situations, conversation with one-self appearing alongside dialogue.

Language is the tool in the formation of concepts. We shall come to a more detailed discussion when we will see into the earliest stage of speech development in infancy and this proves that animals have no language because of their inability of forming conceptions or of abstract thinking. As we observe speech development of infants we see that the special linguistic functions, the imperative, indicative, and interrogative begin very early, enabling the realization of the most important aims of communication.
All present day languages, even the most primitive have far outgrown these early stages. They display a greater differentiation in their phonological and linguistic structures as in their evolutionary rank, expressive capacities and lexical richness, and their study is the task of comparative linguistic science and historical grammar. (23)

(c) Language development in Children

Effective communication with one's fellows is fundamental to successful participation in life activities. As the child grows, language develops gradually provided he is well equipped both physically and mentally. Among the various developments, language development is one of the most important—as it is the chief tool of communication of the self with others around him. This development is not sudden. It is a long and laborious process, and passes through different stages to reach his skill in the language arts.

From earliest childhood the individual possesses the urge to respond. Responses may take the form of body movement, gesture, grimace or spoken language. The felt need to give expression to one's wants and interests is innate, the ability to communicate with others through the utilization of the spoken or written word is learned. (24)

Nature provides the child with some pre-speech forms of communication till he begins acquiring language skill. The
are three pre-speech forms which normally appear in the developmental pattern. They are crying, babbling and gestures.\(^{25}\)

The sequential steps in the achievement of skill in language can be classified roughly as— 1) feeble gestures and reflex sounds, 2) babbling, 3) use of simple spoken vocabulary, 4) relatively meaningful one-word sentences, 5) combination of words into thought units— at first oral and later written, 6) development of skill in reading and 7) improved mastery of all the tools of communication.\(^{26}\)

There may be some overlapping of sequential patterns with no sharp gaps between the successive steps in language development. The rate of progress, however, may vary from sequence to sequence in the same child and differ among children. Individual differences both inherent and induced by external conditions exert a powerful influence on the rate and the limits of individual children's mastery of their language. The pre-speech form of communication changes into actual speech only with the maturation of the various parts of speech mechanism, viz. lips, tongue, throat, muscles, larynx, oral cavity, teeth etc. that help speech development of the child. The child needs to be biologically ready to learn to talk. But individuals differ in their language skill due to some influencing factors peculiar to the individual such as the degree of intelligence and sex, others are the resultants of the kind of stimulation to which the child is
exposed during his formative years. The degree of success in comprehending and using the spoken and written words depends greatly on 1) his potential ability to acquire mastery of language tools, 2) the language patterns of those around him and 3) the appropriateness of teaching learning approaches in the language arts. (27)

The inborn characteristics such as intelligence, physical status, motor development and the sex of the individual contribute much in the achievement of language skill.

**Intelligence:**

Intellectual level is a prime factor of a child's degree of language mastery. Individuals differ in their potential ability to gain meaning from language symbols and to put meaning into them. Mentally alert young children usually are what is known as "early talkers." They are able to express themselves in meaningful phrases and simple sentence and continue to excel less able children in all areas of language skill. Others are slow beginners but later develop adequate language mastery. Still others, in spite of good learning motivation continue to find clear understanding and correct usage of symbolic forms to be a difficult task. (28)

**Physical status:**

Physical defects or poor health in so far as the physical or health condition incites lack of confidence or apathy, may retard the development of effective self-expression.
Good health accompanied by wholesome curiosity motivates the child to develop interests in the people and things that surround him and the desire to express his reactions to them.\(^{(29)}\)

**Motor development:**

In the early years of life speech development has been found to parallel motor-development. As the neuro-muscular systems mature, which lay the foundations for motor skills, they lay also the foundations for speech skills. Furthermore, for most young children environmental opportunities to acquire speech parallel opportunities to acquire motor skills.\(^{(30)}\) Shirley\(^{(31)}\) found that after the age of 45 weeks babies showed some positive correlations between language development and motor-co-ordination.

**Sex differences:**

When the language development of children having equivalent intelligence ratings and the same socio-economic status is studied under similar conditions, it appears that girls tend to vocalize earlier than do their brothers.\(^{(32)}\) McCarthy\(^{(33)}\) cites evidence which indicates that girls develop language competence faster. Girls show a greater mastery of speech sounds even before they begin to talk than do boys.
Speech defects such as stammering and stuttering are more common among boys than among girls. The greater incidence of defective, slow reading and speech disabilities among males may be caused by the fact that girls achieve linguistic maturity earlier than do boys. Crow and Crow show that when members of both sexes having the same chronological age, exposed to similar language learning situations boys lag behind the girls because boys are not constitutionally ready.

**Environmental and Cultural Influences:**

Since the child is prone to imitate language patterns to which he is exposed, environmental conditions and cultural backgrounds are extremely important factors. Home and School share in providing models for the language usage of the child according to his intellectual capacities.

**Home Influence:**

Parents and other family members exert considerable influence on a child's developing language patterns. Some adults seem to believe that young children cannot understand the meaning of polysyllabic words pronounced correctly. Hence they resort to so called "baby talk" a practice that may interfere with the child's establishment of correct habits of pronunciation. The number of children in a family and the age place of a child among siblings affect linguistic development. It would seem, for example that a single child has more
need to satisfy his wants by communicating with adults and older siblings than do twins. Family background is an important factor of language development.

Children of parents in the upper socio-economic brackets generally are linguistically superior to children of less privileged families. (36)

Another factor affecting the child's linguistic progress is bilingualism. The child whose parents use a foreign language at home is confronted with the problem of bilingualism and must use a different language when he tries to communicate with outsiders. This adds confusion to the child's learning and is likely to retard his speech development in both languages. (37)

Children who grow up in homes where permissive discipline is used, talk more than children from homes where authoritarian discipline emphasises that "children should be seen not heard." First born and only children are encouraged to talk more than later born children or children from large families where the discipline is likely to be authoritarian. (38)

School:

Investigation (39) into the possible nature of relationship among teacher's attitude, teacher adjustment and teaching efficiency reveal that there exist some degree of positive correlation between the variables—teacher attitude
and teaching efficiency, teacher adjustment and teaching efficiency showing that superior efficiency goes with good adjustment. These variables then may affect language development of the pupils.

Further studies\(^{40}\) in the field of research indicate that teaching effectiveness in various subjects including language depends on---

(a) teacher's intellectual, social and emotional equipments;
(b) teacher's interest in children and teaching;
(c) professional knowledge and skill;
(d) acquaintance with principles of psychology.

These factors also may affect language development of the pupils.

Some studies\(^{41}\) in the area of classroom interaction analysis process indicate that more dominating class-room behaviour of teacher which is characterised by more of direct influence and less of indirect influence in the class-room, produce a type of class-room climate which is not conducive to better learning, whereas integrating class-room behaviour, which is characterised by more of indirect influence and less of direct influence of a teacher, creates a conducive class room climate. Studies on teacher's class-room behaviour may reveal more facts about its contribution to language development of children.
Further study on methods of teaching indicates that the achievement of pupils taught by using audio-visual aids was greater than those taught by the usual methods and the use of audio-visual aids did not require more time than what was required for ordinary teaching.

Text books:

Text-book is the centre around which teaching and study revolves throughout the course of formal education. It is the most widely used device for organising teaching experiences. Text-books are an important factor in the language development of children, because a text-book provides—
1) all the words, phrases and idioms of which the pupil has to acquire knowledge and the reproductive vocabulary; 
2) all the expressions which the pupil has to learn to read but not to use, that is: the recognition vocabulary;
3) all the grammatical construction to be learnt properly graded in difficulty.

J.M. Gwynn has stated that the primary criteria in the selection of a text-book should be include—(a) the philosophy set forth, (b) the range of materials, (c) variation for rates of individual pupil progress, (d) suitable vocabulary gradation for the age and grade level intended, (e) adequate drill and review matter and (f) adequate attention to pupil growth, learning readiness, interests and progress.
Language development— a social responsibility

Language is primarily a social instrument, demanding a social setting in which social ease and powers are developed as an essential basis for progress in the sharing of ideas. The child's development—in the art of language—is one of the major responsibilities of society. Each adult in his daily activities with children is constantly supporting and encouraging children's efforts to talk, write and read and listen with purpose, understanding and skill. Parents are concerned about the effectiveness with which their children can use language as a learning and social tool. Every child's personal, social and educational adequacy is tied to his growing competency in using language to meet his needs.