

PART 2

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Part 2 introduces the following important concepts associated with language and speech, and with other aspects and forms of communication.

KEY DEFINITIONS

A **symbol** is anything people can perceive with their senses that stands for something else.

Language is a system of cultural knowledge used to generate and interpret speech.

Speech refers to the behavior that produces vocal sounds.

Phonology consists of the categories and rules for forming vocal symbols.

Phonemes are the minimal categories of speech sounds that serve to keep utterances apart.

Grammar refers to the categories and rules for combining vocal symbols.

Morphemes are the minimal units of meaning in any language.

Semantics refers to the categories and rules for relating vocal symbols to their referents.

Sociolinguistic rules combine meaningful utterances with social situations into appropriate messages.

Nonlinguistic symbols are symbols outside of language that carry meaning for human beings.

Metaphors represent a comparison, usually linguistic, that suggests how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in another.

Frames are social constructions of social phenomena.

PART 2 QUESTIONS

True or False?

F 1. Language refers to the behavior that produces vocal sounds.

- T 2. Language is a system of cultural knowledge used to generate and interpret speech.
- F 3. Things other than vocal sounds that can stand for other things are part of language.
- F 4. For most people, language uses the channel of sight for communication.
- F 5. Grammar refers to the categories and rules for linking vocal symbols with their referents.
- T 6. People can communicate using nonlinguistic symbols.
- F 7. A metaphor is an alternative word for something.
- T 8. The minimal categories of speech sounds that serve to keep utterances apart are called phonemes

Multiple Choice

- 1. The behavior that produces vocal sounds is called
 - a. semantics.
 - b. language.
 - c. speech.
 - d. phonology.Correct Answer: c
- 2. Phonology consists of the categories and rules for forming symbols that engage which of the channels available to humans for communication?
 - a. sight
 - b. touch
 - c. taste
 - d. soundCorrect Answer: d
- 3. Minimal categories of speech sounds that serve to keep utterances apart are called
 - a. morphemes.
 - b. minimal pairs.
 - c. words.
 - d. phonemes.Correct Answer: d

4. Hindi speakers hear which of the following two English phonemes as a single phoneme?
- a. /t/ and /d/
 - b. /k/ and /g/
 - c. /b/ and /d/
 - d. /v/ and /w/

Correct Answer: d

5. The categories and rules for combining vocal symbols are called
- a. phonemes.
 - b. grammar.
 - c. sociolinguistic rules.
 - d. speech.

Correct Answer: b

6. The phrase “tax burden” is a good example of the use of
- a. hyperbole.
 - b. metaphor.
 - c. non-linguistic symbols.
 - d. linguistic crossover.

Correct Answer: b

7. When linguistic anthropologists search for minimal pairs of words from informants, they are most likely to be looking for
- a. morphemes.
 - b. metaphors.
 - c. phonemes.
 - d. sociolinguistic rules.

Correct Answer: c

8. English speakers do not use /ng/ (the final sound in going, for example) when they speak. This behavior would best be classified as a
- a. framing rule.
 - b. sociolinguistic rule.
 - c. non-linguistic rule.
 - d. phonological rule.

Correct Answer: d

Article 5

Shakespeare in the Bush

LAURA BOHANNAN

Summary This article illustrates the concept of *naive realism*, the idea that members of one group believe that everyone else sees the world the way they do, and shows how this belief leads to cross-cultural misunderstanding. Convinced that people everywhere can understand the basic theme of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Bohannon tries to tell the story to Tiv elders during fieldwork in West Africa. From the beginning, she finds that the Tiv translate the story into their own cultural categories. Because the Tiv have no category for spirits of the dead who can talk, they believe Hamlet's father's ghost must really be an omen sent by a witch, or a zombie. And for the Tiv, instead of committing an impropriety, Hamlet's mother did well to marry her dead husband's brother within a month of her spouse's death. The Tiv employ the custom of levirate on such occasions, so it is expected for a woman to marry her dead husband's brother. The Tiv think Polonius should be pleased that Hamlet is attracted to his daughter Ophelia. If they cannot marry, she can at least become his mistress, and sons of chiefs give large gifts to the fathers of their mistresses among the Tiv. At each turn in the story, the Tiv view events as they would in their own society, identifying facts according to their own cultural map and reinterpreting motives. The result is a very different *Hamlet* than Shakespeare wrote, and an excellent example of how culture defines a people's social world.

ARTICLE 5 QUESTIONS

True or False?

- F 1. Bohannon finds that with minor alterations in terminology, the English and the Tiv can understand Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the same way.
- T 2. The Tiv lack a concept for what Europeans call a ghost.
- F 3. The Tiv felt it was a good omen for Hamlet's father's ghost to return and talk with Hamlet.
- T 4. The Tiv approved of Hamlet's mother's marriage to her husband's brother within a month of her husband's death.
- T 5. The Tiv felt that Laertes bewitched his sister, Ophelia, so that he could sell her body to raise money to repay gambling debts.
- F 6. The Tiv example demonstrates that naive realism is a human condition that occurs when people hold mistaken ideas about their own nature of their social and natural environment.

Multiple Choice

1. In her article, "Shakespeare in the Bush," Laura Bohannon shows that
 - a. the story of *Hamlet* does not retain its original meaning when told to a Tiv audience.
 - b. the story of *Hamlet* retains Shakespeare's meaning for both the English and the Tiv.
 - c. the Tiv misunderstood why Hamlet's father's ghost would seek revenge.
 - d. the Tiv were shocked by the quick marriage of Hamlet's mother to his uncle.Correct Answer: a

2. One of the concepts that the Tiv found it necessary to reinterpret when they were told the story of *Hamlet* was the English category for
 - a. revenge.
 - b. omen.
 - c. zombie.
 - d. ghost.Correct Answer: d

3. Three of the following describe ways the Tiv interpreted the story of *Hamlet*? Which one does **not**?
 - a. The Tiv felt that the ghost of Hamlet's father was really an omen sent by a witch.
 - b. The Tiv decided that Laertes killed his sister, Ophelia, through witchcraft.
 - c. The Tiv were pleased by the quick marriage of Hamlet's mother to her dead husband's brother.
 - d. The Tiv approved of Hamlet's desire to kill his father's brother.Correct Answer: d

4. When the Tiv informed Laura Bohannon that she must be wrong about Hamlet's father's ghost because the dead cannot talk, they displayed what anthropologists call
 - a. culture shock.
 - b. naïve realism.
 - c. tacit culture.
 - d. cross-cultural solidarity.Correct Answer: b

5. According to Bohannon, the Tiv approved of
 - a. Hamlet's desire to kill his father's brother.
 - b. Hamlet's desire to kill Polonius.
 - c. Ophelia's attraction to Polonius.
 - d. Hamlet's mother's hasty marriage to her dead husband's brother.Correct Answer: d

Article 6

Manipulating Meaning: The Military Name Game

SARAH BOXER

Summary Today, several linguists (*See* work by George Lakoff, for example) have looked at the way metaphor is used to *frame* a particular view of an event or policy. This selection by Sarah Boxer provides an excellent example of the framing process. Using information drawn from an article entitled “The Art of Naming Operations” by Lt. Col. Gregory C. Sieminski, she shows how the names for military operations have shifted in purpose from an inside code to a public symbol meant to shape public perception. She concludes that the process is more difficult than one might think.

The naming of operations began during World War II by the Germans who initiated the process as an inside secret code. The British did the same but with rules laid down by Winston Churchill, who felt operations’ names should not be boastful, despondent, or frivolous.

After World War II, the U.S. Pentagon started to name military operations for public consumption, which inevitably led to controversies about what names should convey. During the Korean conflict, for example, General MacArthur used aggressive names such as “thunderbolt” and “ripper” for operations. The Vietnam War saw Lyndon Johnson veto aggressive names; for him, the suggested operations name “masher” sounded too aggressive and he replaced it with “white wing.” Following Vietnam, the Pentagon bureaucracy codified the process. Each area command was given two-letter sequences that would start two-word operations names. Further, the Pentagon developed a computer program entitled “Code Word, Nickname, and Exercise Term System” (called “NICKA” for short).

More recent operations naming involves a verb-noun sequence such as “promote liberty” and “restore hope.” Because almost any choice of words seems to offend someone, Boxer concludes that the new game is to find words without meaning. Readers should note that today the first word of the two-word phrase does not need to be a verb. “Iraqi Freedom,” is a case in point.

ARTICLE 6 QUESTIONS

True or False?

- F 1. According to Boxer’s article “The Military Name Game,” names for military operations have little effect on the way the public perceives such actions.
- T 2. According to Boxer in “The Military Name Game,” the military uses a two-word sequence to describe military operations.

- F 3. In “The Military Name Game,” Boxer asserts that the original World War II purpose of naming military operations was to generate public approval for them.
- T 4. According to Boxer in “The Military Name Game,” despite every effort to make them benign, most recent attempts at naming military operations manage to offend someone.
- F 5. In “The Military Name Game,” Boxer shows how a modern computer program entitled “Code Word, Nickname, and Exercise Term System,” or NICKA for short, has solved most of the problems encountered by the Pentagon as it generates code names for military operations.
- T 6. According to Boxer in “The Military Name Game,” code names for military operations originated with the Germans in World War II and were intended to be secret.

Multiple Choice

1. In her article “The Military Name Game,” Boxer argues that at the time she wrote the article, naming military operations involved using
- a two-word verb-noun phrase that is positive but that is almost meaningless.
 - mythology and religion because of their positive moral overtones.
 - words that are intended to remain secret.
 - aggressive terms such as “Masher,” “Thunderbolt,” and “Ripper.”
- Correct Answer: a
2. According to Boxer in “The Military Name Game,” the first name given to U.S. operations in Afghanistan was
- Desert Storm.
 - Mountain Shield.
 - Enduring Freedom.
 - Infinite Justice.
- Correct Answer: d
3. According to Boxer in “The Military Name Game,” the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff created a _____ nicknamed _____ to generate names for military operations.
- military command committee, “COMAT”
 - computer program, “NICKA”
 - three-service bureau, “BOCAB”
 - military swat team, “SWATNOM”
- Correct Answer: b

4. In “The Military Name Game,” Boxer notes that the name for U.S. operations in Afghanistan, “Infinite Justice,” was dropped because
- a. the term, “justice,” implied a legal rationale for pursuing the conflict and there was none.
 - b. the phrase was too general and meaningless.
 - c. the Council on American-Islamic Relations felt it implied a godly role for the U.S.
 - d. the phrase angered the U.S.’s Arab allies.

Correct Answer: c

5. According to Boxer in “The Military Name Game,” military operations’ names such as Roundup, Killer, Ripper, Courageous, Audacious, and Dauntless were used by _____ during _____.
- a. General MacArthur, the Korean War
 - b. Winston Churchill, World War II
 - c. General Abrams, the Vietnam War
 - d. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the war with Iraq

Correct Answer: a

Article 7

Conversation Style: Talking on the Job

DEBORAH TANNEN

Summary In this selection excerpted from her book *Talking from 9 to 5*, Deborah Tannen describes misunderstandings in the work place based on the different *speaking styles* of men and women. Tannen notes that most people blame miscommunication on the intentions, different abilities, and character of others, or on their own failure or the failure of the relationship. Miscommunication in the work place, however, often occurs between men and women because gender is a basic indicator of identity and because men and women learn different styles of speaking.

Tannen introduces an example of gender-based misunderstanding in which a female manager first uses praise then follows with suggestions to improve a male employee's substandard report. The manager thinks she is diplomatic; the employee mistakes her comments solely as praise and miscommunication occurs. When the revised report is submitted, few of the suggested changes appear, and the employee thinks the manager has been dishonest by first praising and now criticizing the report. The differences, argues Tanner, have to do with different styles of speaking. Men avoid being put in a one-down position by using oppositions such as banter, joking, teasing, and playful put-downs. Women seek the appearance of equality and try to avoid flexing their muscles to get jobs done. The misunderstandings occur when actors take each other's speaking styles literally.

The remainder of the selection deals with a particular male speaking style, the reluctance to ask directions. Women ask directions because it seems to be the fastest way to get things done. Men hesitate to ask questions, claiming that they develop their navigation skills by going at things independently. Tannen argues that men avoid asking questions because it puts them in a one-down position. Each style has its pitfalls. Male pilots or doctors who fail to ask questions may endanger their own or other people's lives. Female doctors and managers who ask too many questions may risk signaling that they are tentative or unsure of themselves.

Tannen concludes by saying that neither style is inherently wrong, just different, and that speakers should be aware of gender-based speaking styles and flexible in their own use of them.

ARTICLE 7 QUESTIONS

True or False?

- F 1. In Tannen's article "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," claims that women's speaking styles, based on a need to create the appearance of equality, are a better form of communication in the work place than men's more direct speaking styles.
- T 2. According to Tannen in "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," speaking styles are ritualized forms of verbal interaction that often differ between men and women.
- F 3. In "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," Tannen argues that most people blame misunderstandings on the ambivalence of words used by men and women when they talk at work.
- T 4. According to Tannen in "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," most people think that miscommunication is caused by the intention, differing capabilities, and character of others; by their own failure; or a poor relationship.
- F 5. In "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," Tannen claims that men's failure to ask for directions is a serious flaw in communications between the sexes in the workplace and should be changed.
- T 6. In "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," Tannen argues that in the workplace, men often refrain from asking for directions because it puts them in a one-down position.

Multiple Choice

- 1. In "Conversation Style: Talking on the Job," Tannen argues that in the workplace
 - a. men often refrain from asking for directions while women often seek to create the appearance of equality in a conversation.
 - b. gender does not affect talking styles.
 - c. women seek a one up position in conversation whereas men diffuse speech domination by joking about it.
 - d. men are more likely than women to ask for directions.
- Correct Answer: a

2. According to Tannen in “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job,” women’s conversation often works at the appearance of equality. Men’s conversation, on the other hand, is often directed at
- an attempt to put others in a one-down position by bragging or inferring superior knowledge.
 - avoiding the one-down position by acting as if they don’t know what the other person means.
 - avoiding the one-down position by ignoring other people.
 - avoiding the one-down position by using oppositions such as banter, joking, teasing, and playful putdowns.

Correct Answer: d

3. According to Tannen in “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job,” men often avoid asking directions because
- their over-direct style does not yield accurate answers.
 - asking puts them in a one-down position.
 - they fail to listen to the answers they get.
 - they don’t want others to perceive them as uninformed.

Correct Answer: b

4. In “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job,” Tannen tells the story of how Amy, a manager, tried to tell her employee, Donald, how to change an unsatisfactory report. Her approach led to misunderstanding because
- she was too direct.
 - she put Donald in a one-down position by demonstrating her superior knowledge.
 - she praised the good parts of the report before suggesting changes.
 - Donald took her comments as a personal criticism.

Correct Answer: c

5. In “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job,” Tannen notes that of all the examples of conversational-style differences between men and women that lead to troublesome outcomes, _____ has attracted the most attention of her readers.
- men’s tendency to interrupt women in normal conversation
 - women’s tendency to criticize men when they talk with other women
 - women’s tendency to be indirect when they talk with men
 - men’s tendency to avoid asking directions of other people

Correct Answer: d

6. In “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job,” Tannen argues that one negative consequence for women who ask questions is
- that they may seem
- uninformed and less intelligent.
 - uninterested in the subject matter.
 - less politically savvy.
 - unwilling to learn.

Correct Answer: a

7. According to Tannen in “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job,” which is **not** an advantage cited by men for refraining from asking questions?
- a. They avoid receiving incorrect information.
 - b. They learn to discover answers for themselves.
 - c. They can feel superior to other people by not showing their ignorance.
 - d. They avoid injuring the feelings of the individual sharing information.

Correct Answer: d

8. In “Conversation Style: Talking on the Job,” Tannen notes that men often fail to ask for directions and that women usually do ask for directions. Because it is easy to show that not asking for directions can have dire consequences, she suggests that men
- a. should change and ask for directions.
 - b. should ask for directions but in an indirect manner.
 - c. should be flexible, asking for directions when it seems appropriate to do so.
 - d. should have a female companion ask for directions.

Correct Answer: c