



“T” LANGUAGE AND “E” LANGUAGE IN THEORETICAL LINGUISTICS – A PRACTICAL VIEW

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ABSTRACT

Noam Chomsky introduced the term I-Language and E-Language. As most of the theoretical linguistics is found in psychology, this terms help a lot to study the language. The psychological functioning of language learning and its methods can be represented easily by using this terms. Use of these expressions in linguistics literature made it more technical and accurate in understanding the subject. The paper aims to study the concept of ‘I’ and ‘E’ language, its history and uses and it discusses the findings in the conclusion part.

Key Words: *I-Language, E-Language, Chomsky, Theoretical Linguistics.*

INTRODUCTION

Noam Chomsky has introduced a number of innovative terms into the linguistics literature like I-Language, E-Language, performance, competence, Faculty of Language in Narrow Sense (FLN), Faculty of Language in the Broad Sense (FLB). He is famous and respected for his mathematical notations because he expressed all his generative rules by his notations which made the linguistic more accurate and easy to study. These terms paved the way to serious linguistics and it invited the language research in broad sense. The following words of Chomsky proves his views on expressions.

“It seems that other cognitive systems-in particular, our system of beliefs concerning things in the world and their behaviour – play an essential part in our judgments of meaning and reference, in an extremely intricate manner, and it is not at all clear that much will remain if we try to separate the purely linguistic components of what in informal usage or even in technical discussion we call ‘the meaning of linguistic expression.’ (Chomsky 1977) p.142.

He believed in generative as well as transformational grammar and he invented Transformational Generative Grammar in that regard. His deep structure and surface

structure of language learning and usage invited discussion all over the world. Most of his critics argued against his views but his followers and supporters had an another view like R.H.Robins, “Essentially, Transformation is a modern grammatical concept developed by Chomsky school of thought in linguistics. It states how the deep and surface structures of many sentences in languages can be generated or transformed formally as the result of specific transformations communication to in basic type of sentence structures”. In 1986, Chomsky introduced the terms I-Language and E-Language which means Internal language and External Language.

I-Language

I-Language denotes a mental or psychological part of a language which means “what a speaker knows”. Chomsky made it strong that this term points out the following meanings, ‘individual’, ‘internal’ and ‘intensional’. The first meaning, “Individual” made it clear that the property of language can only possible to individuals. Language properties like geographical, historical, political, social and family will develop the minds of individual, hence the I-Language is a psychological and individual property of an individual. The Second meaning, “Internal” means I-Language is a state of the mind of an individual. It will be better understood by Chomsky’s words.

“...is a strictly internalist, individualist approach to language, analogous in this respect to studies of the visual system. If the cognitive system of Jones’s language faculty is in state L, we will say that Jones has the I-language L.

(Chomsky 1995)pg.13.

As he argues further like, “The same considerations apply to the study of visual perception along lines pioneered by David Marr, which has been much discussed in this connection. This work is mostly concerned with operations carried out by the retina; loosely put, the mapping of retinal images to the visual cortex. Marr’s famous three levels of analysis-computational. Algorithmic, and implementation-have to do with ways of construing such mappings. Again, the theory applies to a brain in a vat exactly as it does to a person seeing an object in motion.” (Chomsky 1995) pg.52. Chomsky made it rich by adding the community experiences, predictable behaviour traits and internal states of mind in language learning of individuals.

The third meaning, “Intensional” adds the meaning of logic and semantics. In a similar way, the expression of a language can be like a word sequence, tree structure, derivation etc. is extensional view but it can also be identified intensionally by the individual. This can be better understood by Chomsky’s words, where H is a human being, L is a language and R is a relation of knowing. “H to know L is for H to have a certain I-language. The statements of the grammar are statements of the theory of mind about the I-language, hence structures of

the brain formulated at a certain level of abstraction from mechanisms. These structures are specific things in the world, with their properties... The I-language L may be the one used by a speaker but not the I-language L' even if the two generate the same class of expressions (or other formal objects) ...L' may not even be a possible human I-language, one attainable by the language faculty." (Chomsky 1986)pg.23. This view clearly state that two different individuals can have two different I-languages that can possible generate exactly the same and even exactly the same structures.

E-Language

E-Language denotes the meaning of extensional. It further explains the external language which is non-mental. The extensional language can be radically different from individual to individual. Chomsky is not comfortable with both the corpus-based and mathematical linguistics because those are not having an essential connection with the mental. External meaning was folded into the neologism, hence the E-language is inter-subjectively accessible and used by a community people. For example, there is a gradual valley-to-valley change in the language spoken and it is politically defined geographical border so it is not dealing with the intrinsic properties of the dialects. Hence it will encourage to view this variety as two different languages.

"A shprakh iz a dialect mit an armey un flot" ('A language is a dialect with an army and navy'; he actually credits the remark to an unnamed student). The implication is that E-languages are defined in terms of non-linguistic, non-essential properties."
(Max Weinreich 1945).

So as Chomsky also concluded his view on E-Language, "languages cannot be defined or individuated extensionally or mind-externally, and hence the only scientifically interesting conception of a 'language' is the I-Language."(Chomsky 1986)Pg.25, and "all scientific approaches have simply abandoned these elements of what is called 'language' in common usage"(Chomsky 1988)Pg.37, "we can define E-Language in one way or another or not at all, since the concept appears to play no role in the theory of language" (Chomsky 1986) pg.26. As the E-Language encompasses all the required notions what a language can be like a form of knowledge and communicative habits shared by a community. Hence, E-Language cannot be a coherent concept in itself, because of this notions, Chomsky opined that such notions of language are not useful in the study of innate linguistic knowledge even if it seems sensible and intuitive the same time it can be useful in other areas of study.

Conclusion

Chomsky proposed a clear distinction between the I-Language and E-Language. He has taken the I-Language to be the object of study in linguistic theory because it represented



linguistic with the innate knowledge which a native speaker of a language naturally has and this perspective of I-language is belongs to the theoretical linguistics is a branch of psychology. Hence, Chomsky degrades the E-language as either undeserving of study or as a fictional entity and promotes the I-Language as the only scientifically respectable object of study for a serious linguistics.

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