



STUDY ABOUT IDEA OF SIGNIFICATION IN MODERN LANGUAGE AND INTELLECTUAL APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

Humans and language have a close bond. Human languages emerged with the beginning and development of human civilisation. Man gave expression to his experience through the development of a vast array of ideas, concepts, and meanings as civilization grew. A human knowledge system is the result of the accumulation of these ideas, concepts, and meanings. Human languages are employed as a means of meaning expression. But as a result of human experience and living, many types of thoughts and ideas have emerged. With the aid of arranged signals, man learned to communicate concepts and meaning categories. The evolution of language as a system of signs is evidence of the advancement of human civilization. Sounds, sights, language, and other manifestations of signs are used. But only when they are connected to meaning do sounds, words, and images start to function as signs. Thus, since antiquity, the subject of imbuing signals with meaning has attracted the attention of all philosophers, theorists, and linguists. There are five chapters in the research paper. The thesis' introductory chapter examines the ancient and medieval meaning theories advanced by both Western and Eastern philosophers. The referential, theological, ideational, and contextual components of signification were studied by the Western philosophers of antiquity and the middle ages, including Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Wittgenstein, the Stoics, and John Lock. The ancient Indian philosophers attempted to comprehend the signifying process by using the notions of "Dhvani," "Vakrokti," "alamkara," and "sphota." The literal, contextual, and metaphorical components of meaning were studied by the ancient philosophers.

Key words: Signification, criticism, traditional critical theories structuralism, formalism,

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of time, linguists, grammarians, critics, and philosophers in both the east and the west have worked to understand the various facets of human languages. They thus created a variety of fields to study human

languages, including semantics, phonetics, morphology, syntax, etc. However, one area of language studies the relationship between linguistic and meaning or language and thought has consistently remained a very complex one since attempts to explore this relationship from a single point of view were fruitless. This underlying link has been clarified in various ways by many perspectives, including formalist, mentalist, and functionalist. Whether meaning became related with human languages by accident, convention, naturally, or scientifically has always been up for debate. Some linguistics schools have investigated the connection between language and meaning with regard to words, whereas other linguistics schools have investigated this connection with regard to a sentence or a proposition. A phrase has traditionally been thought of as a synthetic whole made up of words connected by a relationship. The study of meaning or connotation has expanded beyond the analysis of single utterances. It has expanded from a sentence or a linguistic unit to a sentence as a communication unit. Additionally, meaning hasn't just been examined in terms of language. The study of meaning has been expanded from language to literature by critics and aestheticians. Signification is viewed as a direct process in understanding a straight forward statement. However, literary discourse is entirely distinct from daily speech. Both the eastern and western philosophies have researched significance and have developed their own distinct opinions or assessments.

Since the time of Plato & Aristotle in the fifth period (B.C), discussions on meaning and significance have taken place in ancient Greece and Rome. The theories put out by Plato, Aristotle, the Stoic Philosophers, and the Epicurean philosophers all contain disputes and disagreements about language and meaning. In all fields of knowledge, Plato's influence on the intellectual life and knowledge system of Europe may be seen. Plato was an ancient Greek philosopher. Some of Plato's most important writings are still available to readers today, including the Republic, the Symposium, the Dialogue, which includes Cratylus, and his work on language. According to Plato, language is the foundation and core of philosophy. In his dialogue The Cratylus, Plato discusses three crucial issues that are pertinent to language and linguistics, including the status of universals, the presence of innate ideas, and the debate between conventionalism and naturalism in naming concepts. Cratylus, however, concentrates on the argument between nature and custom when naming things.

Aristotle was a student of Plato. He did, however, approach knowledge and language differently from his teacher. Margaret Thomas (2011) correctly comments on the disparities between Plato and Aristotle's methodologies: Plato is typically seen as an ethereal idealist and Aristotle as an empiricist. Plato believed that mental and physical occurrences were reflections of ideal Forms, which were incorporeal but reachable via reason and (in some ways) more real than actual reality. Aristotle questioned the validity of Platonic Forms and emphasized the primacy of sensory perception and inductive reasoning as the main sources of knowing (15).

Concept of Signification in Structuralism

Language has traditionally been thought of as the means through which meaning, or connotation, is expressed. The process of communication is the exchange of meaning from the speaker to the listener or from the writer to the reader. The debate over the idea of a sign and its characteristics is introduced in Ferdinand de Saussure's book *Course in General Linguistics* (1916). Saussure (1916) disregarded the conventional theory of meaning, which views signification as a direct relationship between a thing and its name, in his book *Course in General Linguistics*. According to the traditional understanding of meaning, meaning is the process of naming something through the use of a symbol. When Saussure writes, "It assumes that ready-made ideas exist before words; it does not tell us whether a name is vocal or psychological in nature (arbor, for instance, can be considered from either viewpoint); and finally, it lets us assume that the linking of a name and a thing is a very simple operation" (65), he raises challenges to the traditionalist view of signification. According to Saussure, signs have a psychological component. A symbol doesn't always immediately relate to an object. A signifier and a signified are the components of a sign, according to Saussure. A signifier has a physical shape. It is a word made up of a string of letters arranged correctly or a combination of sounds. The concept or idea that a specific signifier is linked with is referred to as being signified. For instance, the word "dog" is composed of the three sounds /d/, /o/, and /g/ when it is said, and of the letters 'd', 'o', and 'g' when it is written. On the other hand, the term "signified" refers to the idea, representation, or significance connected to the signifier "dog". As a result, the signified is a mental or psychological notion rather than the name of an item, thing, or activity. When a person hears the term "dog," he immediately conjures up an image of a certain four-legged animal. In order to deepen the conversation on the nature of signs, Saussure refers to a sign as being arbitrary. There is no innate or natural connection between words and their meanings. With the exception of a few onomatopoeic words like "hiss," "coo," and "mew," the remaining words lack any innate or natural quality that would convey their meaning. The same concept is communicated by different signifiers in different languages due to the arbitrary nature of words. In several languages, the four-legged animal known as "the dog" is referred to using various words or signals. It is referred to as 'Kutta' in Hindi, 'sobaka' in Russian, 'chien' in French, 'Tegda' in Malvi, etc. The arbitrary nature of signals is further demonstrated by the dynamic nature of signifiers. After some time, the signified that is connected to one signifier may eventually be connected to another entirely. We are forced to consider an essential query about the meaning of words because of the signifier's arbitrary nature. How do we determine the words with which meanings are related if meanings are arbitrary. In order to resolve this conundrum, Saussure muses on the matter and develops his idea of "difference" or differential relationship. According to Saussure, a sign has no significance or meaning when considered separately. In a syntagmatic relationship, a sign's difference from other signs gives it significance. By contrast to other words like rat, dog, bat, etc. which refer to other concepts, the term "cat" denotes

a specific creature. This is not due to some mental property that the word possesses. The thoughts or ideas are recognized and valued because of how they differ from other concepts or ideas. Similarly, when uttered, words or signs are composed of sounds. When notions that sound similar appear in a contrastive or differential relationship, they gain importance.

Concept of Signification in Post-structuralism

The structuralist paradigm, which was developed by Saussure, looked at the fundamentals of the signifying process. He discovered that signs are differential and arbitrary. Signs become meaningful when they appear in differential and structural relationships. Regarding signification, Saussure examined the random, diverse, and related features of signs. Through the transformation of a sign into a myth, Barthes expanded Saussure's idea of a sign. By giving it cultural and ideological meaning, the denotative first-level sign system is converted into a myth. For Barthes, signification results from a social understanding that makes the sign universal and natural. In his study of narratives, Barthes discovered that the process of action sequencing in a story relies on the structural ideas of language, syntagm, and relationship to create a whole that expresses the story's meaning. Claude Lévi-Strauss, according to Levi Strauss, worldly physical things like plants, animals, familial relationships, etc. serve as the basis for mythology. But these distinct physical realities are changed into the common logical universe of people. Individual physical realities are structured, which contributes to the significance. According to Levi Strauss, signification in myths is similar to bricolage, in which signals are given whole distinct interpretations from what they actually signify or mean. In his study of signification, Roman Jakobson focused on the linguistic functions of referential, poetic, phatic, metalingual, emotive, and conative meaning. For him, language functions rather than linguistic aspects provide meaning. By equating the terms "metaphor" and "metonymy" with the ideas of "selection" and "combination," respectively, Jakobson explored meaning.

Greimas views narratives as syntactic constructions that employ universal patterns to further the meaning of the particular tales. His ideas on "actant" and "actor" fit well with T.G.'s notion of deep and surface levels. In terms of its meaning, an actor (a specific narrative) is equivalent to the actant (underlying principles of a narrative). Greimas also created a semiotic square to demonstrate the three levels of meaning: level of opposition, level of contradiction, level of implication, and level of complementaries. Like Greimas and Todorov, he asserts that the deep level from whence the individual stories arise is where the narrative grammar emerges. The structure of the cosmos, which takes the forms of language, art, and literature, is reflected in the narrative grammar. Last but not least, C.S. Peirce divided a sign into three categories: icon, index, and symbol. He did this because he believed that a sign was more than just a dyadic link between a signifier and a signified.

He broadened the sign's scope in this way. Thus, structuralists investigated the meaning of particular utterances or narratives in relation to the underlying structural patterns (langue) that were observable at the surface level. However, when employed for a covert purpose, such as in the fashion industry, etc., meaning takes on ideological and cultural aspects. Many of the structuralists believe that contrast or opposition is an important strategy for obtaining meaning.

Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) presented his renowned paper "Structure, Sign and Play in the Human Sciences" at the convention held at John Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1966. This essay has been criticized for departing significantly from structuralist ideas on meaning. It was the first step in the emergence of the deconstruction school of thinking. This essay identifies the ways in which Derrida used Saussure's and structuralists' theories of meaning and the ways in which he departed from them in order to express his own ideas about sign and signification. Derrida produced three significant volumes in 1967, including *Writing and Difference*, *Of Grammatology*, and *Speech and Phenomena*. The underlying ideas of deconstruction and poststructuralism are present in these books. Derrida's deconstructive endeavor that challenged the structuralist conception of meaning has also been linked to some of his other works, such as "Dissemination" (1972), "Margins of Philosophy" (1982), and "Positions" (1972).

Idea of Signification in Social Semiotics and Functional Paradigms

The structuralist and generativist linguistics paradigms of the past had a formalistic stance. They examined language in terms of its structure and the relationships between the many linguistic components. While generativists expanded their research to the deep depths of language, which they believe to be the genesis of language, structuralism restricted their studies to the language's surface level. The structural and Transformational Generative approaches, however, are atomistic and closed-ended. They looked at a language through the lens of the language. The functionalist acknowledged this restriction on the study of languages. Form was merely one of many components of language, according to the functionalist. So they developed a broad framework for including the study of language functions into the study of language form. They see language as the means through which meaning is expressed in sociocultural contexts.

This method does not view the relationship between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships in language as a study of form. Similar to how structuralists view language as a system of systems, this viewpoint sees language as a network of systems that express meaning in social circumstances. A wide framework for analyzing language or other semiotic systems as a network of meaning or semantic choices whose significance depends on the environment in which they are utilized was developed by these researchers. M.A.K. Halliday and the other functionalists are credited with this method of describing language in terms of its function within a broad

sociocultural context. Halliday cited Malinowski (1923) and Firth (1935), who viewed meaning as a consequence of the situation's environment rather than as anything formal or psychological. According to Firth (1950), a situation's context is made up of the participants, their activities, the surroundings, and the effects that the verbal acts have on them. Halliday understood the importance of situational context in the creation of meaning. According to him, the situation's context tells us a lot about the meaning that the interactants are exchanging. In his definition of a text, Halliday refers to it as "language that is functional" (10). He contends that a language is more than just a collection of isolated words, phrases, and formal constructions. Due to their disconnection from context, such words and sentences fail to communicate meaning. Language becomes active and practical in its context. Language is functional and meaningful because of the tasks it completes or the purposes it fulfills in a certain situation. "Any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation" (10), according to Halliday, is a text. A text appears to be made up of words and sentences on the surface. However, a text has significance. A text's words and sentences are merely its outside covering. They are only employed as a means of meaning expression. In words and sentences, meaning is encoded. Language is a system for codifying meaning that is utilized in communication. In order to communicate, speakers must encode meaning into signs or symbols, and listeners must decode those signs or symbols into meaning. So, in accordance with Halliday, "A text is essentially a semantic unit" (10). It is impossible to define a text in terms of its grammatical or formal structures. It cannot be distinguished based on the length of the sentences or the size of the sentences. Halliday describes a text in terms of how it expresses meaning rather than its individual words or other building blocks. He contends that a text should be read with an emphasis on both its product and process. Halliday claims.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of civilization and the birth of humans, man has been able to generate concepts and thoughts via his experience in various spheres of life. There are countless notions that have been developed as a result of man's relationship with the cosmos and his quest for survival. The development of new concepts was aided by the advancement of human civilization. These ideas were recognized as meanings by linguists and philosophers. Man must have fought and labored continuously as civilization grew in order to communicate thoughts through verbal signs. Later, man tried to develop a writing system in order to record his experiences. The development of the sign system and the connection between signs and meanings have drawn the attention of philosophers from all over the world. This research has expanded beyond just human languages. It has been said that language is essentially a system of signs. But as more and more applied fields and disciplines developed, the significance of signified expanded. The study of sign has expanded to include advertisements, politics, science, and other areas after starting with languages, rhetoric, and aesthetics. We came to the conclusion that the relationship between

words and their signification has remained a very important topic for philosophers, linguists, and grammarians since antiquity as a result of Plato's discussion of naming ideas and objects in his dialogues Cratylus in western epistemology and Yaksha's mention of the theory of sphota in Nirukta in Sanskrit epistemology. In the introduction chapter, several writers analyze and explore a thorough examination of the idea of sign and signification, as well as its various characteristics, including arbitrary, conventional, natural, ideational, contextual, theological, cognitive, literary, etc.

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