



LAN 1210 Lecture 12

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

Part 1

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INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE

"Never give up on a dream because of the time it will take to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway."

- Earl Nightingale

TODAY'S VOCABULARY PICK

□ **Hypnopædia** (*noun*):

- *Human ability to learn while asleep.*

□ **Cryptophasia** (*noun*):

- *The secret language of twin babies.*

UP NEXT...

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

Part 1

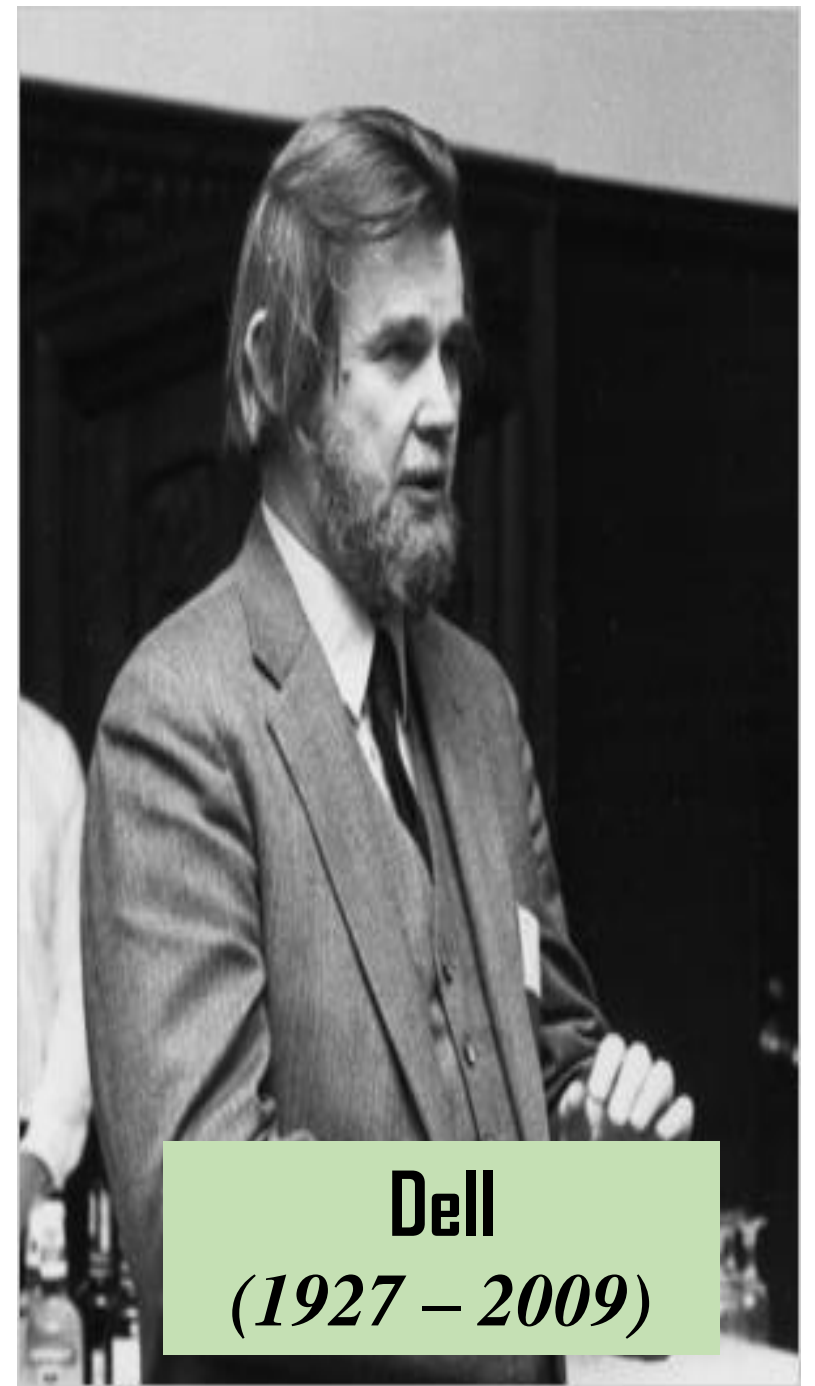
□ Language functions refer to the **uses of language in general** and/or **the uses of a particular language by a given society.**

□ Different scholars have discussed the various functions of language in general.

□ Let us take a look at some of these scholars:

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

- **DELL**



Dell
(1927 – 2009)

□ Dell argues that language performs **three** functions, notably:

1. The cognitive function

□ This is when language is used to express **ideas**, **concepts** and **thought**.



2. The evaluative function



togetherness as a family value

□ Whenever language is used to express **attitudes (e.g. behaviour towards something)**, **beliefs (e.g. spiritual and moral beliefs)** and **values (e.g. respect to elders)**, Dell calls this function the 'evaluative function'.

3. The affective function

□ This is when language is used to express **emotions** and **feelings**.



Children expressing the emotion of happiness

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

- **JAKOBSON**



Jakobson
(1896 – 1982)

□ Jakobson categorises language functions based on the **six** characteristics (aspects) of any communicative scenario/event.

□ The aspects of any communicative event are: the **addresser** (the person who addresses someone); the **addressee** (the one being addressed); **context** (the topic, object and content of conversation being discussed);

message (what is being conveyed); **Contact** (interaction between the addresser and the addressee); and **code** (use of some symbols to communicate).

□ Based on the aspects of any communicative event, Jakobson came up with the following language functions:

1. The emotive/expressive/ affective function

□ This function happens when language is used by Addresser to express **emotions, feelings** and **attitudes.**



2. Conative function

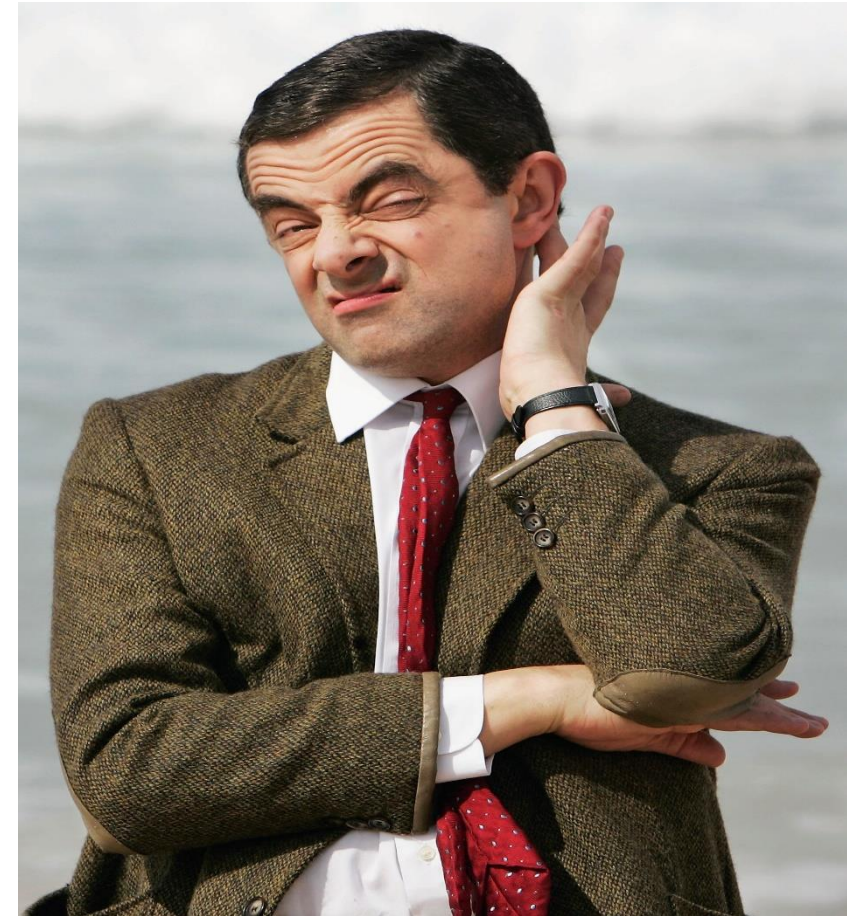
□ Whenever language is used to make the Addressee respond (e.g. through the use of **vocatives** – that is, words by which something is identified – *e.g. Mutale, Dear mum*, etc), we say that language is performing the **conative function**.

3. The referential/cognitive/ denotative function

□ Through context, we use language to focus on **the object** (a referent, concept, actual thing) topic or a content of discourse considered as verifiable facts e.g. *a telephone*.



4. Poetic function



□ According to Jakobson, when language is used for **pleasure**, we say it is performing the **poetic function**.

5. Phatic/Interactional management function

□ This is when language is used for social interaction. E.g. chatting and greeting.



6. Metalinguistic function

- This happens when language is used to talk about language. E.g. Using English (*i.e. metalanguage*) to talk about Spanish (*i.e. target language*).

LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS - HALLIDAY



Halliday
(1925 – 2008)

□ Halliday is the father of **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**.

□ According to Halliday, language performs the following functions:

1. Ideational function

□ This is when language is used to express things of our consciousness (i.e. facts) as well as things of the external world (i.e. experience, attitudes, emotion, feeling).



2. Interpersonal function



☐ Refers to the use of language to **maintain social relations** (e.g. with bosses, family, friends). (See Jakobson's 'phatic/interaction management language function').

3. Textual function

□ Focuses on how language as a whole is packaged/put together to **maintain suitable interaction through appropriate linguistic choices**. The way we say something and how we structure what we say/write is crucial in interaction. A good message can be spoiled by how we package our sentences/utterances.



End of Part 1