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اسم المحاضرة الثانية باللغة العربية: اصول اللغة

اسم المحاضرة الثانية باللغة الإنكليزية : **The origins of Language**

Speculations about The Sources of the Origins of Language:

- 1.The divine source
- 2.The natural sound source (bow-wow/ pooh-pooh theories)
- 3.The social interaction source
- 4.The physical adaptation source (teeth and lips/ mouth and tongue and larynx and pharynx)
- 5.The tool- making source (the human brain)
- 6.The genetic source (innateness hypothesis)

1.The divine source

-Divine is related to God or creator.

-In most religions, it is believed that language appears to be a divine source that provides human with language.

-Some experiments confirm that if human infant get deprived of hearing language around them, they would spontaneously begin using God or Creator- given language in the Psamtik story.

-Yet, other experiments- of children who lived in isolation without contact with humans- did not confirm the results of divine- source experiments as in the cases of Victor and Aveyron who were discovered in the 18 th century ; as they did not show a spontaneous language, as in the previous experiments.

2.The natural sound source

- This view is based on the concept that natural sounds which are attained through the auditory system that develops before birth which later develop to identify sounds in the environment.
- This will help humans to connect between a sound and the thing (or organ) producing that sound.
- Imitation of natural sounds lead to the development of primitive words (which were heard by early men and women around them).
- Jespersen (1922) called this idea of acquiring natural sounds 'Bow- wow' and 'pooh- pooh' theories.

Bow- wow theory

- It focuses on imitation of sounds then using it to refer to objects (even when they are not present), e.g. Coo- Coo.
- In every language, there are words which seem to be naturally occurring sounds such as splash and boom; which may refer to sounds similar to the noises they describe.

Pooh- pooh theory

- While this theory is based on that speech developed from the instinctive sounds people make in emotional circumstances.

-So, the original sound of language came from natural cries of emotion such as pain, anger or joy.

-Words such as Ah!, Wow!, Ooh! Are all used with sudden intakes of breath; unlike when we want to talk which is the opposite.

3.The Social interaction source

-This view is based on the idea that the source of our language is the physical effort of several people and interaction which is to be coordinated.

-It happens when a group of early humans develop a set of hums, groans....etc. that were used when they were carrying things.

-It claims that the development of human language takes place in a social context through groups.

-Groups are important particularly in the past to main communication; which had different uses within their social interaction.

4.The physical adaptation source

-This source is based on physical features human processes that are distinct from other creatures (particularly non- humans) which may have enabled speech production.

-Our(human) ancestors showed adaptation to upright posture and revised role for the front limbs.

-Adaptation (or changed) happened to fossilized skeletal structures which later began to be similar to modern humans.

-This (partial) adaptation appeared to be more relevant to speech.

Teeth and lips

- Human teeth are different from other creatures. They are suitable to produce sounds such as **F** or **V**.
- Human teeth are upright and suitable for chewing.
- Human lips have intricate muscle interlacing more than other primates.
- Human lips are appropriate to produce sounds such as **P** or **B** and **M**.

Mouth and tongue

- Human mouths are small compared to other creatures; as a part of an extended vocal tract with an L- shape not straight path from front to back.
- Human tongues are shorter, thicker and more muscular than other creatures; to produce a variety odd sounds inside the oral cavity.
- The intricate muscles in mouth and tongue and lips and teeth help to articulate a wider range of shapes and a more powerful delivery of sounds produced through these shapes.

Larynx and pharynx

- Human larynx is 'voice box' which comprises of vocal folds and vocal cords; which different from other creatures larynx.
- Larynx helps human to choke on pieces of food.
- Human pharynx has a longer cavity than many other creatures ; which works as a resonator for increased range and clarity of the sounds produced through the larynx and vocal tract.

5.The tool- making source

- It is speculated that human hands and manual gestures may have been a precursor of language.

-Two million years ago, human managed to develop preferential right – handedness and had become able to make stone tools; tool- making is evidence of a brain at work.

The human brain (1)

-The human brain is lateralized; where it has different functions for each hemisphere.

-Left hemisphere of the brain is responsible for complex vocalization and speaking.

-Interestingly, motor cortex that controls the muscles of the arms and hands is next to articulatory muscles of face and jaw .

The human brain (2)

-Many speculative proposals argue that the origins of speech is based on human producing single noises to indicate objects in their environment. Yet, it lacks structural organization. All languages require the organizing and combining of sounds and signs in specific arrangement.

The human brain (3)

-In terms of tool- making , it is not enough for human to grasp one rock (to make one sound) but need to bring two rocks to create proper contact with the first and to develop a tool.

-In terms of language structure, the human may have developed the naming ability first for producing consistent noise; then to bring another specific noise to build a complex message.

6.The genetic source (innateness hypothesis)

-The human baby is born with larynx that is higher in the throat that is to breathe and drink at the same time.

-After a few months, the larynx descends, the brain develops and start walking and talking.

-In fact, young child's language is complex and seen as more than physical adaption of species. It seems that language is an innate feature; what is known as 'innateness hypothesis'.

-The 'innateness hypothesis' refers to something in human genetics as the source, possibly a crucial mutation.

-As we consider this hypothesis, there is a movement from the physical source of adaptation towards analogies with how computer work (being pre-programmed or hardwired).