**Univeristy of Guelma 1st year Linguistics**

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**Language as a means of communication (communication model)**

One of the primary functions of language is communication. We communicate information, ideas, feelings and experiences in order to achieve some kind of shared understanding. Without the ability to communicate using language, human interaction would be very different.

The origin of the word “communication” is ‘to communicare’ or ‘cmmunis’ which means “to Impart”, “to participate”, “to share”. Webster’s Dictionary defines Communication as “the Imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing or signs”.

To participate in the communication process, we need at least one person to share information and we also need one more person to receive that information. So, for communication to be successful and effective we need at least a sender to send (share or impart) information and a receiver to receive that information.

The various ways in which language is used to communicate messages, ideas, emotions, and information are known as **functions of language**.

**Jakobson's Functions of Language**

The Russian-American linguist Roman Jakobson looks at what needs to be present in the process of linguistic communication (verbal communication) beyond the simple relationship of sending and receiving information. He introduced a well-known theoretical model of the “function of language”.

Roman Jakobson proposed six functions of language depending on the six factors of any verbal communication (context, message, sender, receiver, channel and code). The ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE. To be operative the message requires a CONTEXT; a CODE fully, or at least partially, common to the addresser and addressee; and finally, a contact, a physical channel and psychological connexion between the addresser and the addressee, enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication. All these factors may be schematized as follows:

**CONTEXT**

**MESSAGE**

**ADDRESSER…………………………..ADDRESSEE**

**CONTACT**

**CODE**

Each of these factors determines a different function of language as follows:

**REFERENTIA**

**EMOTIVE POETIC CONATIVE**

**PHATIC**

**METALINGUAL**

**Referential Function:** The use of language to convey facts, information, or knowledge about the world. *E.g. there is a teacher behind you*

**Emotive/expressive Function:** The expression of emotions, feelings, and attitudes through language. *E.g. Ow! That hurt*

**Conative/directive Function:** Employing language to influence or persuade others, often used in commands and requests. *E.g.Ann, go clean your room.*

**Phatic Function:** Maintaining social relationships by using language for small talk and everyday interactions. *E.g.(a) Hi, how are you; (b) Hey, what’s up*

**Metalingual/ metalinguistic Function:** Using language to discuss or explain the use of language itself. *E.g. every linguistic act has six functions*

**Poetic Function:** The use of language for artistic and creative purposes, such as poetry, storytelling, or wordplay. It focuses on aesthetic feature of language. *E.g. “Simple it’s not afraid you will find for a mind maker-upper to make-up his mind”*