

A Study of Language Learning and the Thinking Process

— On Language and Realization —

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I. Introduction

We must understand “the power of word” through elucidating the intrinsic nature of language. Man can think or behave by means of language; so to speak, he is “an animal that manipulates words.” So we shall be able to approach the signification of language learning and the proper method of it through clarifying the intrinsic nature of language in addition to human thinking process. What we call thought in general is our effort to guess or foresee, by combining symbols and images; the effects of our action will produce in the world of reality. Just as all thinking is the sketching out of an action, thinking in language learning is the sketching out of a verbal behavior. We shall paint the picture of our language, not without corrections, after that sketch. When our model in the brain resembles closely the real language, there is a fair change that our verbal behavior may be adjusted to our needs of communication.

Probably the thoughts of most use in the universe of discourse are those recorded upon speech organs in the form of instincts or habits. Demosthenes (384-322 B.C.), B. Disraeli (1804-1881) may have made an impressive harangue without any slip of tongue. Such a series of verbal movements inevitably implies a careful arrangement of thoughts and an exact choice of words required. But neither the arrangement nor the choice was fully conscious: both are rather spontaneous, as we experience with our vernacular. They thought with their muscles and nerves, which had been trained perfectly through their strenuous practice. Such an oratorical *tour de force* may well be likened to the gymnastic feat; the gymnast thinks with his body in performance and entirely relies upon his well-disciplined limbs. We may thus take it that bodily thinking which controls some of our actions with extraordinary precision really exists. But its range is short. The body cannot think beyond its hands or feet: some other thinking will do the further work.

II. What is a Syllogism ?

It is a common way of talking that we think with our minds. But all mental thinking or reasoning is by no means of a high standard of development. Some of them are quite simple and primitive. Most perceptions of reality belong here: for instance, we see a patch of color

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