**Lesson 01 : Introduction to the Psycholinguistics**

**Introduction:**

What is be like if humans do not have language? Imagine how you will order breakfast, ask someone to do a favor, and ask a friend to drive you to school. Can you imagine where you would be or how you would be now if there was no language in this world? Language serves a central role in our daily lives because no language means no life. Language is everywhere in human society, across every culture. It is an effortless ability that most people acquire before they learn how to dress. Fernández & Cairns (2010) stated that

Language is a system that allows people immense creativity. This is not the same creativity as people who write essays, fiction, or poetry. Instead, this is the linguistic creativity that is commonplace to every person who knows a language. Human language's creativity is different from any other animal's communication system in several respects. For one, speakers of a language can create and understand novel sentences for an entire lifetime. Consider the fact that almost every sentence that a person hears every day is a brand-new event not previously experienced, but which can be understood with little difficulty. Similarly, people constantly produce novel sentences with no conscious effort when speaking. This is true for every person who speaks or has ever spoken a language. We can extend this observation to every person who uses signed language to produce and comprehend novel sentences.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Psychology of language learning and teaching. Over the past two decades, the field of applied linguistics has witnessed a “social turn” and, more recently, an “emotional turn,” and has shifted its focus from pure cognitive approaches. [[2]](#footnote-3)

The field is one that integrates various areas of research that have been traditionally discussed as distinct entities, such as motivation, identity, beliefs, strategies and self-regulation, and it also explores other less familiar concepts for a language education audience, such as emotions, the self and positive psychology approaches. In theoretical terms, the new field represents a dynamic interface between psychology and foreign language education. [[3]](#footnote-4)

Language is everywhere in human society, across every culture. For most people, it is an effortless ability that we acquire before we learn how to dress ourselves. Some people feel that they even think using language, that an important part of their thoughts involves a kind of internal monologue. Yet, language is not a simple thing—it is actually quite complex and we need to be able to use it quickly. In fact, its timing is so crucial that even minor delays during the processing of language are thought to have profound consequences. So, by understanding how language works and how we are able to use it, we can understand a vital yet complex part of our daily lives, offer ideas for how to help people with language disorders, and perhaps even shed light on how we think.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Language characterizes one of the most important and pervasive aspects of human behavior. Through both written and vocal means, language allows us to express our thoughts and feelings to others as well as obtaining information from the world around us. Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine the sense of isolation or the probability of surviving in a society whose members are unable to communicate with one another.[[5]](#footnote-6)

This course explores the relationship between language and thought by investigating how language is mentally represented and processed; how various aspects of language interact with

each other; and how language interacts with other aspects of cognition including perception, concepts, world knowledge, and memory.[[6]](#footnote-7)

|  |
| --- |
|  The usage of language is believed to be one of the indicators to differentiate humans from beast. Evidence from neurology, psychology and linguistics jointly indicates the uniqueness of language processing, compared to other non-linguistic processing.[[7]](#footnote-8) |

**1-Fast facts on psychology:**

 Psychology is the study of behavior and the mind.

 We are unable to physically see mental processes such as thoughts, memories, dreams and perceptions.

 Clinical psychology is an integration science, theory, and practice.

 Cognitive psychology investigates internal mental processes such as how people think, perceive and communicate.

 Developmental psychology is the study of how a person develops

psychologically over the course of their life.

 Evolutionary psychology examines how psychological adjustments during evolution have affected human behavior.

Psycholinguistics research falls into six major areas , some of which overlap:

 Language processing.

 Language storage and access.

 Comprehension theory.

 Language and brain.

 Language in exceptional circumstances.

 First language acquisition : It deals with how do infants come to acquire their first language and what stages do they go through in developing syntax, vocabulary and phonology , what evidence is there that we possess an innate faculty for language which enables us to acquire our first language, despite the supposedly poor quality of the input we receive? Some commentators include second language acquisition in the study of psycholinguistics. However, SLA is best regarded as a different discipline. Its content ranges widely over topics drawn from sociolinguistics, from social psychology and from educational psychology. [[8]](#footnote-9)

**2-Definition of Psycholinguistics:**

As the name implies, psycholinguistics has two important things that are related to each other; psychology and linguistics. Cowles stated that linguistics is the scientific study of language whereas psychology is the scientific study of human behavior and cognition (i.e., how we think). Some people feel that they even think using language, that an important part of their thoughts involves a kind of internal monologue.

Fernández & Cairns (2010) define psycholinguistics as an interdisciplinary field of study in which the goals are to understand how people acquire language, how people use language to speak and understand one another, and how language is represented and processed in the brain. Psycholinguistics is primarily a sub-discipline of psychology and linguistics, but it is also related to developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, neurolinguistics, and speech science.

Yet, language is not a simple thing—it is quite complex and we need to be able to use it quickly. Its timing is so crucial that even minor delays during the processing of language are thought to have profound consequences. So, by understanding how language works and how we can use it, we can understand a vital yet complex part of our daily lives offer ideas for how to help people with language disorders, and perhaps even shed light on how we think.

Let’s start with an analogy—walking around is also pretty easy for most people and it is something that we usually learn to do even before we learn how to talk. But can you explain exactly how it works—how each muscle, bone, and tendon allow us to defy gravity at every step? It’s easy to do but hard for a layman to explain how it works—instead, it takes an army of biologists, physiologists, and others to explain this “easy” skill.

 Language is very much the same—its function is easy to master (when you’re young), but hard to explain. And, like walking, we have a lot to gain by understanding it. Language is considered as meaning-making resources (segala sesuatu yang memungkinkan kita untuk bisa berkomunikasi).

 Language is used to express meanings and perform various functions in different contexts and situations in our daily lives. Grammar is ‘how a language is organized.’ Furthermore, when we talk about someone's internalized grammar, the term grammar is used in a broader sense than the grammatical meaning we find in various textbooks. System language refers to a person's overall knowledge of the language. Grammar is not only a matter of sentence structure but also phonology and semantics.[[9]](#footnote-10)

The term psycholinguistics was introduced by American psychologist Jacob Robert Kantor in his 1936 book, "An Objective Psychology of Grammar."

The term was popularized by one of Kantor's students, Nicholas Henry Pronko, in a 1946 article "Language and Psycholinguistics: A Review." The

emergence of psycholinguistics as an academic discipline is generally linked to an influential seminar at Cornell University in 1951.

1. Lastri Wahyuni Manurung : **Psycholinguistics’ Teaching Materials** , **ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,**  **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ,** **FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION,**  **HKBP NOMMENSEN UNIVERSITY, 2022, p 01** [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Yingna Wang](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Wang%20Y%5BAuthor%5D)\* and [Mateusz Marecki](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=Marecki%20M%5BAuthor%5D) : **The Psychological Experience of Integrating Content and Language**, Multilingual Matters, 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Sarah Mercer and Stephen Ryan: Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Field, J :(2004). **Psycholinguistics : The Key Concepts. London: Routledge.**  [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Marilyn Boltz : **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE** , **Haverford College,** **Psychology 238, Fall 2013** P01 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Nora Isacoff : **Language and Mind** [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. |  |
| --- |
|  Psychology of Language: Milestones and Theories of Language Development , APSS3211 / for the academic year of 2022-2023, p01 |

 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Nagham Q . Yahya : **Introduction to Psycholinguistics**, Tikrit University College of Education for Humanities English Department, 2023, p04 , 05 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Lastri Wahyuni Manurung : **Psycholinguistics’ Teaching Materials** , **ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,**  **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM ,** **FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION,**  **HKBP NOMMENSEN UNIVERSITY, 2022, p 01, 02** [↑](#footnote-ref-10)