

## The Intellectual Usage of Language in Education

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This report is a part of "A study on Semantics" conducted at Kyoto University in 1953. In advance of this report, I already put in the research bulletin Vol. 5 my study on "The role to be played by language concerning meaningful experience and learning" and also presented the result of my study "How the practical and sociological usage of language plays the role in forming personality" on the subject of "Symbolic Behavior" in the department of the Educational Sociology of Kyushu association of Pedagogy in 1954, and this time I am going to study the subject of "The Intellectual Usage of Language" centering around J. Dewey's book "How we think."

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"The Intellectual Usage of Language" in nothing but the philosophical function (J. Locke) of Language, that is to say, the function of language to express our thought, thinking and reason and make them more accurate, and develop them further, thus reconstructing the system of behavior.

Needless to say, the philosophy of Dewey is the inquiry as to the guiding principle of act, so that it discusses everything in relation to our acts and experiences. Here, he divides the habit, namely the system of behavior, into two kinds. One is the conservative, which he calls "routine habit," and the other is that habit which, called "creative habit", always makes progress, reconstructing the situation (including circumstance and ourselves) creatively and developmentally.

It is what Dewey regards as established intelligence that works when creative habit is formed getting out of conservative habit, and then he attaches importance to the function of language which takes part in cultivating the ability of intelligence and in putting it in motion.

Language is the very instrument to hold meaning and make it reappear, on which our thinking is reflected. Language not only represents special experiences or meaning, but expresses interaction in experiences, so that language can be said, at the same time, to be the instrument to classify experiences according to their general character.

In this way, Dewey takes notice of the facts that experiences can be deposited only by the function of language and that the very function of language can be accomplished only when conception is systematized. Now Dewey studies the recognition of the meaning of language in the developmental process of "idea" toward "conception" and in this process, there exist experiences (as human behaviors). The word "meaning" as used by Dewey means "idea", which lies between complete understanding and spiritual anxiety. And when such an idea is acknowledged

positively, we can understand an object or a phenomenon. That is to say, when we face a matter or a situation, there rises a question, and next, when we incline to solve this question, an idea comes across our mind. Therefore, it may be said that an idea lies between complete understanding and spiritual anxiety. Then, even when an idea has not yet come to complete understanding, it is the mother's body from which understanding is, in time, to be born.

When we say the meaning has become clear, it means that so far an obscure idea is substantiated clearly. This may be gathered from the heightening process from Mao-Tsu-Tung's "Sensitive recognition" to "Reasonable recognition".

Thus, to "understand" should be, on the basis of sensitive recognition, to grasp the meaning as an idea, and to make the meaning clearer through the acts of "inquiry", and thereby to get to conception, through which to complete "Reasonable Recognition". Now, the word "conception" is, according to Dewey, "the meaning as hypothetical possibility", that is an idea that has got ground after being used as the guide for observation or behavior, and confirmed, and acknowledged. The idea confirmed in this way is to be used still unsettled and chaotic as it was. So, the word "conception" can be explained to be "established meaning" or "standardized meaning", The language which has been, at the sensitive stage, nothing but of the individual or mere sign, becomes conception, being made clear and generalized.

The functions of such a conception are as follows:

1. Conception enables us to generalize.
2. Conception makes our knowledge standardized.
3. Conception identifies the unknown things and supplements sensitive presence.

Such relations among conceptions are generalized again. So far as conceptions have been made clear positively, relations among conceptions should have been grasped positively as well. We call such a system of conception "science".

When the functions of conceptions manifest themselves most extensively, that should be science. And then, Science should make every possible effort to gather various facts from which general laws or conclusions are to be extracted. That which is composed of through such a procedure is "system of scientific conception" and here, "the world of meaning" that is fully clarified is accomplished tentatively. So called meaning has been defined as grasping facts in relation to all the other facts on the ground of simple ready-made conception. It will be natural that we should be betrayed by real facts, since they are infinite and change infinitely. What we call "a dogma" is judging facts on the basis of stock conception. Thus, in order that understanding may become worthy of the name in its true sense, so called experiences or study should not remain on the stage of simple impression or mere idea, but should be elevated to the clear grasp of conception, and further placed in the right scientific system of conception.

The word "Intellectualization" means, in fact, to orientate learners to establish

the scientific system of conception. School education must do its best at least, that learners may deposit knowledge or experiences perfectly as the basic preparation for intellectualization.

We must not leave to entirely learners, who have not yet obtained the ability of grasping meaning, to propel their study, according only to their interest, because to grasp the meaning of facts or situation is impossible for them till it is referred to the true scientific system of conception.

This is the weak point that the standpoint of negative theory in education has, and then we must know all is not fit for educational material that learners take interest in. If curriculum is composed of according to learners' interest alone, it may only result in "emergent curriculum" as C. W. Washburne pointed out.

We must say it is a matter of importance that we should not confuse the above-mentioned improvement of learners' ability for language with araming up curriculum with verbalism. The word "verbalism" used in educational field means that teachers try to introduce general meaning or conception to their learners as useful "ready-mades" only through the teachers' personal and intentional meaning, and by so doing they think they are promoting their learners to get knowledge quickly as well as effectively, being so absorbed in instilling into them conceptions estranged from their understanding or experience as to lead them into confusion on the contrary, because of the unnaturalness.

In order to get rid of such a verbal education, it must be necessary for teachers to let their learners tread the process steadily in which conception in true sense is to be composed, and to prepare for grasping the scientific truth.

Teachers must fully recognize that conception arises from experience and becomes more definite and generalized by being used, and they must let learners tread on such process. It is this consideration that shifts the everyday affair (and habit with relation to convenience) to the habit which will connect itself with "precise notion". This is what Dewey said "to make the habit of language the instrument for the precise and elastic intelligence."

After the World War II, in Japan, teaching through composition has been growing prosperous, with much effect, the central subjects of which should be for pupils to realize meaning of experience through the medium of more precise language by making composition, and furthermore, to develop their ability for appreciation, to realize how to think, and at last, to modify their own behavior.

Then, at last, there should remain a question how we can make such a habit of language the instrument for precise and elastic intelligence.

The points to which attention is to be paid are:

1. To increase vocabulary.
2. To make language more precise.
3. To form the habit of continual discussion.

The first point "To increase vocabulary" does not mean to learn all vocabulary

by heart. Dewey calls that language "negative language" which is understood by seeing or hearing, and the other "positive language" which is used intellectually, digested well to be one's own and generalized. And he says it is desirable to increase each positive language.

The second point. "To make language more precise" means to study and find the profundity of meaning of things and to name them respectively according to the degrees of the profundity, and attention should be paid to the fact that whenever we try to make language more precise there ensues the phenomenon of magnification of meaning simultaneously with that of contraction of meaning. "To contract meaning of language" is to conform it to the demonstrated precise meaning, while the magnification of meaning of language means to include in it general relations which everyday language cannot express. It may also be said that the more precise language becomes, the clearer becomes thought. (It is so called technical terms in academic fields that are used most precisely in order to express some meaning, whole meaning or the only meaning.) we must pay our attention to the fact that for the educational purpose technical terms is by no means absolute, but relative, for even if technical terms are memorized, written and spoken, it can not be said to be generalized precisely.

The third point "To form a continual habit of discussion." Since language we use is the instrument of the communication of our thought, our acquired meaning should be rightly communicated by language. The meaning itself, however, is often dogmatic, and the best way to get rid of this ultimate fault is discussion. Our systematic reflection becomes precise more and more through discussion and as the result of it, meaning of language can get its continuity.

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