

Major Assignment 1 Individual Research Essay

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## **Critical analysis. Structuralism and Post-Structuralism**

This document sets out to discuss, analyze and dissect the theories of structuralism. To extract meaning and form, an opinionated, realized perspective and forecast on the understanding and relevance of the theories in contemporary time frame.

Structuralism is a theoretical method of analyzing communication in culture, derived from Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, with exponents in anthropology, literary, cultural, philosophy amongst other movements and studies.

De Saussures division of the language into two components, a physical and a mental image gives way with a further development of a system or flow of comprehension of thought, knowledge and communication.

Although this system is referred as analytical not evaluative, we may have another facet of this theory that has been overlooked. The argument presented here is that when we think analytically we utilise brain function as a primary source producing communication through thought , media and linguistics.

The signifier is thus born from media or the physical. The signified is the function of the brain which interprets the signifier media and computes or rather comprehends and translates it into meaning.

The signified thus is based on random choice or personal whim rather than analytical system or process. In the text extract there is descriptive which outlines the written word 'dog' as having dissimilar qualities to the mental image or signified suggests. We are told that this is a result of convention of cultural agreement, a result of the signifier standing on its own merit and not akin to other signifier media.

Further to this there is another descriptive which analyzes the theory that structuralism is an arbitrary thought or process between signifier media and signified thought by the use of traffic lights. At this point we can create an argument to the theory of structuralism and take or add an instance to this theory.

Lights operate within a system of four signs : red = stop, green = go, amber = prepare for red, amber and red = prepare for green. The understanding that a traffic light system would work equally well if the colors were rearranged so as the signifier and signified were switched . Perhaps this would be true for a color blind person. But for most I do not believe that this would be the case.

This theory has left out a valuable piece of primary intellect in the form of nature and human biology.

For instance inherited with animals and humans are codes of color which effect mental thought ones life span which aid in calculations processes and thought. This is an inheritance in all organisms, we on a biological level behave differently according to light. If we take the traffic light, it would only be natural that the color red would indicate danger or stop. Amber would indicate a mid ground or that the element of danger could still be apparent yet quite improbable, while green hue would give our sense the information that all safe. In nature animals conduct themselves in accordance with color and how we perceive color is through the spectrum as presented by the essence of light. In nature the color red or dark hues are associated with danger, and anything below this which is lighter is associated with life. We could argue the point that in this instance this example has failed to deliver a meaningful definition of structuralism due to the flaws of overlooking not only the mentality of language as a subject but to also analyze humans comprehension on a biological and chemical level.

For this argument we have eliminated that the traffic light example is not a true indication of structuralism as the theory suggest. Presented here is the argument that goes beyond the theory as being an arbitrary expression of self and introduces a scientific value into structuralism as used in media, linguistics and culture.

The argument of structuralist, language does not reflect an already existing reality and that it is the structure of grammar or media which makes meaning and existence of reality possible could be criticized to a degree. Take for instance immigrants who go to another country, they usually do not possess the required level of language in grammar to acquaint themselves with the new country, yet are able to partake in the new culture and live their life with the most basic level of how the new country, its language and culture operates. One could argue that the language or structure of all societies are based on economics first then the structuralism.

From ancient civilizations there has always been trade between nations and this level of immigration performed by the people of countries has always taken place. There has been mixing of language and culture yet the human race has continued to move along and evolve to fit the predicament which is faced. The utilization of structuralism has never been a hindrance, rather an anecdote of sorts with language being utilized in broken structure, which according to the theory of structuralism would not create the reality of current time and a effective means of communication .

We could take the example of Japanese language or languages that communicate based on a ideogram system, such as ancient Mayan and Egyptian which when analyzed has quite the opposite of the theory of structuralism. The language system is a far more efficient method of communication that does not require the usage of signifiers to achieve signified results. As the method of language exists in a form of ideogram, a signifier and signified is combined into a ideogram, to shorten the chain of structure as a descriptive, delivering language, meaning and a relationship between the signifier and signified without any arbitrary expression required from a human simultaneously.

Therefore in these languages reality is always existent in the language and system of structuralism and conceptualization is not dependant on the spoken language but ideograms or the signifiers. The signifiers are universal in context, although verbally pronunciation may differ, the signifiers ensure that the signified communication is delivered on a universal scale. Therefore meaning is accounted for without referencing another form of linguistics to achieve reality. Reality thought is encapsulated within the language and structure itself.

To this we can see that this form of language does indeed have ideas as the ideograms are representations of objects and notions which gives reference to physical objects and organisms in the environment. We could almost say on a evaluative level as well as on a analytical one.

Phonic differences aside ideogram of communication surpasses the so called perceived reality of structuralism. To further draw comparison we could also use the alchemist ideograms of chemical symbols and formulas which in them selves are a short hand form of communications dissimilar to the theory of structuralism.

In conclusion we have presented and analyzed the theory of structuralism as constructed by De Saussure. We have placed arguments on the validity of the theory based on forms of language which encapsulate and reverse the theory of communication and language as presented by De Saussure. We have opened the thought process to enlighten other forms of communication as we believe that language and communication as portrayed by De Saussure is targeted at languages derived from latin, this is one branch of the language system and we have portrayed another which differs in theory to De Saussure's system of structuralist communication.