

Features of Human Communication

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● Arbitrariness

- In animal communication, there is frequently a connection between the signals and the messages sent. For instance, an animal who wishes to warn an opponent may simulate an attacking attitude. A cat, for example, will arch its back, spit and appear ready to pounce.
- In human language, there is no “natural” link between a linguistic form and its meaning. For example: the word Dog and four legged animal it's symbolized. It can equally be called kutta (Hindi), hund (German), chein (French).



● The need for learning

It appears that the role played by 'learning' in animal communication is very little. Their language is more or less genetically inbuilt. For example, bee-dancing, which is used by the bees to convey information about the course of nectar, is quite the same in bee colonies all over the world. And since, we do not expect the bees all over the world to be holding international conferences, we have to agree with the hypothesis that they are born with the language. Another interesting thing to notice is that if a human child is brought up in isolation, s/he does not acquire language, whereas birds reared in isolation sing songs that are recognizable. Human beings require a long exposure to language in order to acquire. This does not mean that human language is totally conditioned by the environment.

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- **Displacement:**

Most animals can communicate about things in the immediate environment only. An animal utters its cry of danger only when danger is present. It cannot give information about a peril which is removed in time and place. Human languages, on the other hand, can communicate about things that are absent as easily as about things that are present. This property of human language is called displacement.

