

Analogy, A New Concept in English Linguistics: An Investigative Study

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Abstract: *Researches and investigations in the field of language have been evolving novel and innovative methods and approaches towards effective teaching and learning. The advent of a new discipline called 'Linguistics' has enabled to fathom the innermost depths of all the aspects of human communication. No linguistic nuance is left sans study. One such device used while teaching, learning or researching is through analogical associations, may they be the domains of comparison or contrast. The role of analogy is significant as its principle enables both the teacher and the taught feasible as far as comprehension is concerned. It is a psychological process which involves connectivity between different things in which there may be similar or dissimilar elements or factors.*

Keywords: fathom, nuance, analogical, feasible, connectivity, dissimilar

1. Introduction

Analogy helps in one in understanding the inherent content of any linguistic item. It is a general principle that provides a scientific explanation. Application of the principle of analogical can be monolingual or multilingual. Analogical illustrations clear ambiguities that are present in an expression. Analogy shows connection, correlation, formation, structural variation or descriptive classification.

The Online Cambridge Dictionary defines analogy as follows:

A comparison between things that have similar features, often used to help explain a principle or idea:

He drew an analogy between the brain and a vast computer.

It sometimes easier to illustrate an abstract concept by analogy with (= by comparing it with) something concrete. 1

A great part of human cognition mainly depends on analogy. It can be used by anybody in teaching any subject. As far as the nature of analogy is concerned, one can speak of analogous relationships. Basically they are of two types: Synonymous and Antonymous. The relationship between two components may be synonymous or antonymous. At the outset of the technological era, scientists, scholars, researchers and the people invented innovative approaches in the academic and corporate domains; their intention has been to facilitate ease and feasibility towards comprehension.

All theories are taught and elucidated with the help of analogies. Even arguments and interpretations are carried out and carried on basing them on the on the analogous premises. Many a time analogical reflections too ease off the complexities and ambiguities. The upshot relieves he indistinct idea being the expression or statement.

Analogy derived from a Greek term, meaning:

'Reasoning from one point to another' is a cognitive process involving comparison whereby the information concerning one element is linked to another element through observed similarities. Analogy is related to "iconicity" (both involve parallels of form/meaning): the strong drive language users

have to describe their world through signs that have some natural connection with the object the sign refers to. Analogy is concerned with

- (1) Similarities between observable properties (material Or *horizontal* analogy)
- (2) Causal Similarities, i.e., the relations between a material Property and a function of that property (*vertical* analogy). 2

In linguistics, there are two aspects of analogy: Cognitive Ability and Mechanism. In every language, there are patterns and constraints that have to be learnt by the linguistic speakers, differentiating between lexical and grammatical aspects of the words or chunks. In the field of language, its areas are grammar, lexis, syntax and morphology.

In a nutshell, the concept of analogy covers a wide range of disciplines and domains; it may be:

- Pair Completion * Pair Selection
- Direct Analogy * Double Analogy
- Word Selection * Detection
- Analogous Multiplicity* Letter-based Analogy
- Number Analogy

Pair Completion Analogy: Two pairs of words are given and the relationship between the two words in the first pair is to be found out and then to pick the word from the given options that follows the same relationship like:

Chaos: Peace, Lanky

'Chaos and Peace' are antonyms and the antonym of 'Lanky' is 'short'. The options are: a. Short b. Lengthy c. Great d. Fine

Pair Selection: A pair of two words is given and four pairs of words are in the options. For instance, 'Dog: Bark'. The options are:

- (a) Monkey: Roar (b) Owl: Chirp
(c) Horse : Neigh (d) Sparrow : Trumpet
Answer: c.... Because 'Dogs bark', 'Horses neigh'.
The other options are incorrect pairs.

Simple or Direct Analogy: Find out the relationship and choose the related word from the options, for example:

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'Numismatics' is related to 'Coin' as 'Paleontology' is related to (a) Earth (b) Soil (c) Fossils (d) Stones. The right answer is *Fossils*.

Double Analogy: Here, an appropriate analogical two words from the options have to be chosen:

- A: Wheat: Brick : B
 (a) A. Bread B. Clay
 (b) A. Cereal B. Clay
 (c) A. Farmer B. Mason
 (d) A. Farmer B. Clay Ans: a. Bread: Clay

Similar Word Selection: Synonymous relationship is shown in the question to fill in the blank by opting for one word from the options; Take the example: a. Abandon: Forsake, Desert:

- (a) Down (b) Frown (c) Prank (d) Leave Ans: Leave

Analogy Detection: Three words are given which are defined or shown what they are in the options like:

Cinema: Press: Television:

- (a) They are means of entertainment
 (b) They are means of mass media
 (c) All are public undertakings
 (d) They give word wide news
 Ans: b

Multiple Word Analogy: A group of inter-related words is given and one has to find out the same relationship in the options given:

Pink: Red: White

- (a) Brown: Black: Blue (b) Green: Blue: Yellow
 (c) Orange: Yellow: Black (d) Yellow: Red: Green Sol.
 Ans: (b) Pink =Red+White', so Green =Blue+Yellow

In historical linguistics, analogy is a process in which lexical items change their forms by borrowing and phonetic alterations.

'Ride-Rode and Write-Wrote' come under Proportional Analogy. The set of 'Dream-dreamt/dreamed and Leap-leaped/leapt' is an example for Analogical Extension. French 'Chaise' becomes English 'Chair' is an illustration for Sound Change. 'Breakfast plus Lunch' is 'Brunch' whereas 'Smoke plus Fog' is 'Smog'.

Analogy in Literature/Grammar: Language acquisition and pedagogy are made easy by applying the analogous principles. In learning a foreign language too, it is conducive. This can be applied universally in any given situation or context. It is followed in the field of research while classifying, describing, forming or explaining the function of anything. It is a literary device that enables vivid comprehension. In grammar, Figures of Speech like simile and metaphor are tools to draw analogies. In literature, analogy is often used to delineate abstract and indistinct expressions like the utterance of Juliet in 'Romeo and Juliet' by William Shakespeare:

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
 By any other word would smell as sweet.
 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called 3

Juliet says that there is no significance in a name like if the name of a rose given a different nomenclature, it does not lose its fragrance and likewise the name 'Romeo'; so whatever name is given to Romeo, I would love him. A person is not changed if one changes his name.

Writers employ analogy to connect an unknown or unfamiliar notion with commonly used and familiar objects and concepts. It eases the tense mood of mistaking, misunderstanding or being entangled in ambiguity. Another face of the coin is readers feel it easy to understand. For instance the following analogous sentence is clear in itself: 'A doctor's diagnosis is the investigation of a detective'.

In a nutshell, analogy can be used anywhere and to illustrate any concept.

It was almost universally claimed that a person's knowledge of language is a stored set of patterns, over-learned through constant repetition and detailed training, with innovation being at most a matter of "analogy". The fact surely is, however, that the number of sentences in one's native language that one will immediately understand with no feeling of difficulty or strangeness is astronomical; and that the number of patterns underlying our normal use of language and corresponding to meaningful and easily comprehensible sentences in our language is in orders of magnitude greater than the number of seconds in a lifetime. It is in this sense that the normal use of language is innovative. 4

Sometimes, when children are learning to speak, they use erroneous analogies like 'his self' instead of 'himself'. Thus grammatical patterns and precepts are different from one language to the other. It is apt to conclude by saying that the concept of analogy pervades the all disciplines sans exception. It is no exaggeration to say that it is not feasible to justify any study or understanding without employing analogous terminology. It may be found in various and varied forms.

Analogical Reasoning is the fundamental component in the functioning of the mind. In the simplest terms, the power of thinking mainly relies on analogies. In general, it is the cognitive aspect of any language or discipline:

Analogies are widely recognized as playing an important heuristic role, as aids to discovery. They have been employed, in a wide variety of settings and with considerable success, to generate insight and to formulate possible solutions to problems. According to Joseph Priestley, a pioneer in chemistry and electricity:

Analogy is our best guide in all philosophical investigations; and all discoveries, which were not made by mere accident, have been made by the help of it. 5

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