The Language of Thought Hypothesis: A Critical exposition of Jerry Fodor's Theory

Can a common man ask whether thought has language? Is it not that we think before we write or speak? This has been, indeed, our common sense understanding till date. But of let, some philosophers have labored hard to raise a slightly more difficult question. The question is: how do we speak or write about thoughts which we do not understand ourselves? Here the common man will say, "Who told you we do not understand our own thoughts?" Of course, we do. But how do we do it? Do we understand our own thoughts while they are not communicated to ourselves? Now if they are communicated to ourselves, how will such internal communication be possible without a medium? This medium, according to some philosophers, is language of thought.

Of these philosophers, Jerry Fodor, an American philosopher, introduced the term language of thought, and in the present investigation, we shall deal with his basic claims regarding language of thought which have been elaborated in *The Language of Thought* published by Howard university press, in the year 1975.

The language of thought theorists believe that thought processes are best explained by the logical structure. Moreover, the successful employment of this process in digital computers is evidence of its workability. The language of thought theories does explain the reasoning within the thought process. The productive and systematic nature of human thought can also be explained by supposing that thinking occurs through operations upon sentential structures. We will therefore explain the thesis, focusing into three major areas.

First, it'll be shown that human thinking requires a language of thought. Consequently, how Fodor assumed this language as innate and hidden will be highlighted. The nature of mentalese and the basic arguments behind its linguistic representation will be briefly introduced too. Moreover, we will attempt to distinguish the language of thought from the natural language, which obviously is an important aspect of mentalese theories.

The next part of the thesis will elaborate on evidence of the claim that mentalese is the operational linguistic model, highlighting the ones resulting from psychological research, whereas the third part will deal with the criticisms of the concept of mentalese. The final portion of the thesis will examine the major arguments against the natural language being the language of thought. Here, the target is to establish that those arguments don't entail mentalese to be a well-formed language; neither do they trace any similarity between

language of thought and natural language. The thesis will end in explaining mentalese as the language of thought, providing answers to the arguments.

The thesis won't target to refute the existence of natural language as our language of thought. Rather the goal is to prove that the mentalese is more suited as the language of thought. The conclusion will align with the significant explanations of both mentalese and the natural language and provide the logical choice. But natural language supporters think that mentalese is indeed difficult to trace and requires the brain to expend a significant amount of resources to support its existence and that of natural language. Both the languages offer the same level of explanatory power, thereby making it easier to mark natural language as the language of thought. But we will see at the end of this research that Fodor's language of thought hypothesis is more reasonable from all sides. But there are some cases that cannot be explained with the Fodorian theory of mentalese. We also saw that language of thought cannot be explained in terms of natural language. But the natural language must be kept in some cases. Language of thought cannot be explained by excluding natural language entirely.