iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 12 **Issue:** X **Month of publication:** October 2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2024.64589

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 12 Issue X Oct 2024- Available at www.ijraset.com

Language and Knowledge of the World

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Abstract: ***This article addresses language and knowledge of the world within the communicative process, as it is understood that knowledge of the world plays a preponderant role in effective communication between language users. The main objective of this article was to demonstrate the relevance of knowledge of the world in the communicative process, showing that for the construction of a textual meaning or understanding of the text, several processes occur and the mastery of linguistic knowledge is not a sufficient condition for calculating the sense. This study's starting question is the following: does mastery of linguistic knowledge in itself constitute a sufficient and/or exclusive condition for the construction of textual meaning? To answer this question, bibliographical research was adopted as the study methodology, and the type and method of approach were qualitative and inductive respectively, taking into account that the inductive method starts from the examination of particular data, sufficiently verified and inferred the results of the part examined to the entire population (Marconi & Lakatos, 2003). To carry out this study, participant observation and interviews were also chosen as data collection techniques. Thus, this study showed that for effective communication, that is, construction of textual meaning within the communicative process, a large part has to do with knowledge of the world manifested through shared knowledge about sociocultural conventions and/or pragmatic aspects of language, contradicting the perceptions according to which linguistic knowledge, which is limited only to the domain of the grammatical rules of the language and the lexicon, means that the individual would be able to understand the text.***
Keywords: language; linguistic knowledge; knowledge of the world and shared knowledge.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning, humanity has used language to manifest or express its thoughts linked to its daily lives. In this view, language plays a fundamental role in articulating aspects or relationships of a historical and social nature between individuals. In this way, language will be seen as a socio-historical phenomenon that results from the articulation of aspects of an extra-linguistic or pragmatic nature and linguistic nature or form (Rojo & Batista, 2003). This perspective leads us to infer that language and the social context are linked, that is, there is a relationship between language and society, since it is through language that individuals interact in different social groups, adopting culture, the ways of thinking and acting, the beliefs and values of these groups.

This article deals with language and knowledge of the world, taking into account that language serves as a means to transmit to the individual the essential qualities of society and the nature of the social being. From this perspective, language fulfills certain general functions in all cultures, being the interpretation of any experience of the world around us and the inner world (consciousness), our values, our feelings, and our attitudes, which we accumulate and store in memory at the same time throughout our experience as social beings. This interpretation of world experiences takes us to the concept and relevance of knowledge of the world in everyday interpersonal relationships manifested through language.

This study aims to demonstrate the relevance of knowledge of the world in the communicative process and the following specific objectives are put forward: (i) to characterize language and knowledge of the world and (ii) to describe the relevance of knowledge of the world in language. Thus, this study will contribute to making the learner/speaker aware of the relevance of knowledge of the world in the process of teaching and learning a language.

To carry out this study, the following methodology was chosen: as data collection techniques, this study opted for bibliographical research; As for the approach, this study is of a qualitative nature, and qualitative or naturalistic research , according to Bogdan & Biklen (1982), involves obtaining descriptive data, obtained through the researcher's direct contact with the situation studied, emphasizing the process more than the product and is concerned with portraying the perspective of the participants.

This article has the following structure: section I presents an overview of the subject under consideration; section II presents the theoretical foundation, highlighting the different conceptual perspectives of language, the conception of knowledge of the world, the conception of shared knowledge and the conception of knowledge of sociocultural conventions; section III methodological aspects; section IV presents the analysis and discussion of the data and finally section V presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

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ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 12 Issue X Oct 2024- Available at www.ijraset.com

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

A. Conceptions of Language

Before we move forward with the conceptions of language, it is important to mention that when it comes to language, it takes us to a very complex concept that involves several perspectives that try to conceptualize language, thus, Koch (1992) points out the different ways of conceiving language and according to this author, these conceptions can be grouped into three, which we present below:

1) Language as a Representation of the World and Thought

The oldest of the three conceptions is based on the belief that the function of language is simply to represent human thought and the knowledge that man acquires through his experience. In other words, language serves to represent, to express what man thinks and what he knows.

2) Language as a Communication Tool

Language is used for people to communicate, its main function is the transmission of information from someone who acts as a sender to someone else, who is the receiver of the first.

3) Language as a Form of Interaction

Finally, the most contemporary conception of language is based on the thesis that language is an activity, a form of action, a social game whose participants behave according to their intentions.

In this way, the conceptions of language listed above, despite being from different perspectives, all emphasize or gravitate towards the purpose of exchanging information between speakers/individuals (sender and receiver), which leads us to the conclusions that it is through language that man has the possibility of acting through concrete actions in the world that surrounds him that language can be verbal, non-verbal and mixed, thus allowing, as mentioned, an exchange of information between interactants. Thus, interactants use language to carry out a plurality of actions as a privileged means of interacting socially.

Still on the conception of language, Martelotta & Kenedy (2003) advance a functionalist perspective that is based on the following premises characterizing language:

- Language as a sociocultural activity;
- Language as a structure that serves cognitive and communicative functions;
- Language as a structure that is not arbitrary, motivated and iconic.
- In language, meaning is contextually dependent and not atomic.
- In language, categories are not discrete.
- In language, structure is malleable rather than rigid.
- In language, grammars are emergent.
- In language, the rules of grammar allow for some exceptions.

These premises advanced in this functionalist perspective highlight the issue of use in the conception of language, discarding the questions of form defended by the formalist perspective, that is, the formalist perspective attributes a preponderant treatment to notions of form.

B. Knowledge of the World

In interpersonal interactions, establishing the meaning of a linguistic sequence/text plays a fundamental role in communication and depends to a large extent on the knowledge of the world of its users, and it is with this knowledge that the decisive processes will be allowed to occur. the understanding/production of meanings of the message conveyed by the interlocutors, therefore, the process of constructing a textual world is linked to pragmatic aspects that in a certain way involve beliefs about possible worlds in the users' conception, which involves the way in which the receiver interacts with the text, therefore, in order to have textual understanding, it is necessary that the textual world of the sender and the receiver have a certain degree of similarity, that is, there must be shared knowledge between the speakers.

In this sense, to make the representation of the textual world coincide with the "real world" it is necessary that there is concomitant intervention and/or mobilization of the language user's knowledge of the world at least partially among the knowledge activated from the text (linguistic knowledge) and the receiver's knowledge, stored in their long-term memory (knowledge of the world).

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In this view, knowledge of the world is seen as a kind of encyclopedic dictionary of the world and culture, archived in the memory of the language user in the form of global cognitive models (Koch & Travaglia, 2001 and Koch, 2003).

Thus, the language user's linguistic knowledge has enormous relevance for understanding the text, as this superficial structure serves as an activator of world knowledge, that is, words are clues for activating the knowledge that language users have stored in your memory. Some meanings require knowledge with a certain degree of similarity, as they are part of the knowledge of certain people.

Koch (2003) also highlights that textual processing (production and reception of text) depends on three major knowledge systems: linguistic knowledge, world knowledge and socio-interactional knowledge. Linguistic knowledge involves mastering knowledge of grammar and lexicon. World knowledge refers to declarative knowledge that points to facts in the world and episodic knowledge that points to cognitive models acquired through experience and socio-interactional knowledge that is related to forms of interaction through language.

1) Schemata

Still from this perspective on knowledge of the world, it is worth bringing up the concept of schemata, which are well-integrated packages of knowledge about the world, events, people and actions. As such, *schemata* include what are often referred to as *scripts* and *frames.* Scripts deal with knowledge about events and the consequences of events, and *frames are* knowledge structures that refer to some aspect of the world. Therefore, what we process in texts, how we process information from texts and what we remember from the texts we have depend on this information stored in our long-term memory (Koch, 2014).

C. Shared Knowledge

Knowledge of the world is important for the process of understanding the text, and for this, in addition to knowledge of the world and extra-textual aspects, there must exist between the interactants, the sender and the receiver, knowledge of the world with a certain degree of similarity. Therefore, this degree of similarity mentioned above will constitute what was agreed upon as shared knowledge that will determine the informational structure of the text in terms of what is agreed to be called data and new. Classically, information that the speaker presents is considered new as not being recoverable from the preceding text and that which is given as given. Still in the domain of shared knowledge, Grice (1975) argues that users generally conform to the principle of cooperation, working together to ensure mutual understanding. And in this context, it is important that speakers and listeners have shared knowledge (knowledge and beliefs shared between the speaker and the listener). Thus, listeners/readers have the expectation that speakers/writers will refer, above all, to the information and knowledge included in the shared knowledge and, if this does not happen, listeners/readers will experience difficulties in understanding. Therefore, this shared knowledge, as previously mentioned, refers to the knowledge and beliefs presented by a speaker/writer and a listener/reader, and its use facilitates communication. Therefore, for communication to have the desired effectiveness, efficacy and adequacy, it must be facilitated by shared knowledge because it is in shared knowledge that there are representations of information that is physically and linguistically shared, as well as cultural and socially shared information. Listeners generally understand better what a speaker is saying if they make use of shared knowledge. When shared knowledge demands a lot of effort, listeners/readers are often unable to use it and rely on egocentric heuristics, which is the strategy used by listeners/readers in which they interpret what they hear/read based on their own knowledge, in rather than knowledge shared with the speaker/writer. However, basic memory processes sometimes allow listeners/readers to use shared knowledge automatically and effortlessly (Eysenck & Keane, 2017).

D. Knowledge of Sociocultural Conventions

Furthermore, it is mentioned that effective communication has to do with cultural knowledge socially agreed upon in a speaking community and that it depends on much more than simple knowledge of the rules of grammar, lexicon and phonology of the language spoken in a community. Therefore, when the message produced is not within the rules shared by the community, it will have no meaning. The author also highlights that language users will speak legitimately and successfully if they do so within the norms culturally agreed upon by the community to express certain facts in certain contexts (Nhaombe, 2006).

Considering as a hypothetical case in which a certain boss calls his subordinates to a meeting with a specific agenda and as the meeting progresses the boss introduces a marginal subject linked to his experience acquired in one of the Nordic countries where he studied and demands from the subordinates to make some comment regarding the subject of their exclusive domain/experience.

What will happen is that subordinates will not give substantial comments about something they have not experienced in their lives, that is, the subject in reference is not part of the knowledge of the world and/or the intertextuality of the summoned subordinates, and, in In the case of an obligation to say something about the subject, they may also give marginal and inconsistent comments on the subject or may even remain silent, as they are unaware of the subject.

Another hypothetical case that can be advanced has to do with a teacher who, in front of primary school students, introduces a very advanced subject linked to macrolinguistics, such as, for example, pragmatics or psycholinguistics. These subjects at primary education level, students do not have prior knowledge about these subjects, that is, they do not yet have an intertextuality or knowledge of the world that allows them to deal with these subjects, which means that communication between the teacher and students your student/students will be committed.

Therefore, the teacher in this case will not be taking into account the knowledge of the target audience who is directing his class. In the same way that subjects or subjects taught in primary education cannot be brought into a classroom of university students, such as, for example, teaching how to count from 0 to 10, teaching basic numerical operations such as: addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. In this way and in light of the above, it became clear that to use language efficiently, effectively and appropriately requires the language user to mobilize various factors and knowledge systems, which corresponds to specific knowledge on how to put it into practice. , that is, a knowledge of the procedures or routines through which these knowledge systems are activated for information/textual processing. Such knowledge also encompasses knowledge about the peculiar practices of the sociocultural environment in which the interactants live, as well as the mastery of interaction strategies, such as the preservation of faces, positive representation, politeness, negotiation, attribution of causes for misunderstandings or Failures in communication, among others, materialize through textual/informational processing strategies (Koch, 2014).

Textual/informational processing is strategic, implying an *online mobilization* of different knowledge systems. Strategic processing depends not only on textual characteristics, but also on characteristics of language users, such as their objectives, convictions and knowledge of the world, whether episodic knowledge or more general and abstract knowledge, represented in memory semantic or encyclopedic (Koch, 2024).

The author also states that cognitive strategies are knowledge use strategies, citing (Dascal, 1982), pointing out that this author calls knowledge use strategies pragmatic psychology. And this use, in each situation, depends on the user's objectives, the amount of knowledge available from the text and the context, as well as their beliefs, opinions and attitudes, which makes it possible, at the moment of understanding, to reconstruct not only the meaning intended by the producer of the text, but also other meanings, not foreseen or even unwanted by him.

III. METHODOLOGY

This work presents bibliographical research as a methodology, as this method allowed analyzing and solving problems through theoretical references presented, which include credible books and articles. And as for the approach selected to achieve the objectives of this research, the qualitative approach was chosen, due to the fact that qualitative research involves the acquisition of descriptive data, obtained in the direct contact of the researcher with the situation studied and during this process the researcher emphasizes the process more than the product and is concerned with portraying the participants' point of view. In other words, this means that “the concern with the process is much greater than with the product” – the researcher’s interest in studying a given problem is verify how it manifests itself in activities, procedures and interactions everyday.

As for the method used, the inductive method was chosen, that is, data analysis tends to follow the inductive process, justified by the fact that researchers are not concerned with looking for evidence that proves hypotheses defined before the start of the studies. Abstractions are formed or consolidated basically from the inspection of data in a bottom-up process.

Regarding the objective of the research, this study is descriptive, seeking to understand the reality studied, its characteristics and its problems. The study accurately describes the facts and phenomena of a given reality.

This study chose observation and interview as data collection techniques, with observation being one of the basic techniques for data collection in qualitative research, it uses the senses to obtain information about certain aspects of reality, thus forcing a more direct contact with reality, helping the researcher to identify and obtain evidence regarding the objectives of which individuals are unaware, but which guide their behavior (Lakatos & Marconi, 1990).

Regarding the interview, it should be noted that it is a process of social interaction between two people in which one of them is the interviewer, whose objective is to obtain information from the other, the interviewee. Thus, the interview as a data collection technique on a given subject. It is the most used technique in the fieldwork process. Through it, researchers seek to obtain information, that is, to collect objective and subjective data. Therefore, the interview is a method of collecting information that consists of oral conversations, individual or in groups, with several carefully selected people, whose degree of pertinence, validity and reliability is analyzed from the perspective of the objectives of collecting information (Ketele & Roegiers, 1999).

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IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this data analysis and discussion, we will be based on the two textual productions of speakers/learners recorded in interviews during Covid-19 in order to analyze language and world knowledge for effective textual processing in the context of communication, mentioning that These productions are just an example of several interviews carried out in one of the basic schools in the Province of Maputo.

Text 1 (original text in Portuguese**)**

" (1) O Covid-19 surgiu em 2019, saiu da China e entrou em vigor em 03 de Março de 2020 até hoje ainda existe. (2) Covid-19 é um viro e é transmissível facilmente através de contato direito. (3) Ela entra no corpo de alguém em que sentido: quando se compartilhamos os objetos com alguém que tem essa doença logo seremos transmitido também a doença. (4) A prevenção dessa doença para prevenir se em seguinte forma: manter sempre com higene todas os dia, lavar as mão, usar máscra em local agromerado ou público, observar a distância, etc. (5) Em recomendação de Ministério da saúde, compreendo todas essas recomendações junto combateremos o covid-19. (6) Em poucas palavras o covid-19 mata e é muito perigosa, meu conhecimento terminou aqui."

Text 1 (Translated text in English)

"(1) Covid-19 emerged in 2019, left China and came into force on March 3, 2020. It still exists today. (2) Covid-19 is a virus and is easily transmissible through direct contact. (3) It enters someone's body in what sense: when we share objects with someone who has this disease, we will soon be able to transmit the disease as well (4) Prevention of this disease can be done in the following way: always maintain hygiene every day. , washing your hands, wearing a mask in crowded or public places, keeping a distance, etc. (5) On the recommendation of the Ministry of Health, I understand all these recommendations, together we will fight Covid-19 (6) In a nutshell, Covid-19. It kills and is very dangerous, my knowledge ended here."

The text above presents deviations at the level of verbal language, as well as the level of knowledge of the world. Analyzing the passage in (1) of this text*: "O Covid-19 surgiu em 2019, saiu da China e entrou em vigor em 03 de Março de 2020 até hoje ainda existe"*. In this passage highlighted above, it is observed that the textual world presented does not coincide with the real world that has been stored in memory (knowledge of the world) about this Covid-19 pandemic. The learner/speaker, using oral verbal language to represent the real world about the disease in question, presents enormous deviations in terms of linguistic knowledge, greatly impacting the establishment of textual coherence and consequently slipping into problems at the level of world knowledge. Therefore, in this production it is shown that the learner/speaker presents difficulties in linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world, which are essential elements for the production and understanding of a linguistic/textual sequence advanced by Koch (1997).

Text 2 (Original text in Portuguese)

(1) Covid-19 é um viro que manifesta no nosso organismo e os viros são muito graves e é uma doença mortífera e o seu continente especificamente na China. (2) Ela vem da china em 2019 que a doença fundamento a cada dia que passa está a contaminando o mundo todo. (3) E apela-se a adesão geral a vacinação pois é um passo normal. (4) Covid-19 ela tem as suas prevenções que nós temos que nos dar a fazer dia pois dia e as atuais medidas tem efeito positivo, que temos que lavar as mãos com sabão, uso de máscara e contando com a sua limpeza pessoal, e lavar sempre as mão com água e sabão ou usar desinfetante a base de álcool 99% e manter uma distância de dois metros. (5) É importante de ter os cuidados com esta doença ela contem um impacto grave."

Text 2 (Translated text in English language)

"(1) Covid-19 is a virus that manifests itself in our body and the viruses are very serious and it is a deadly disease and its continent is specifically in China. (2) It comes from China in 2019 and the disease spreads every day that passes is contaminating the whole world. (3) And we call for general adherence to vaccination as it is a normal step (4) Covid-19 has its preventions that we have to take every day. The current measures have a positive effect, as we have to wash our hands with soap, wear a mask and rely on personal cleanliness, and always wash our hands with soap and water or use a 99% alcohol-based disinfectant and maintain a distance of two meters. (5) It is important to be careful with this disease as it has a serious impact."

In text 2, throughout the text there is a lack of mastery of linguistic knowledge, making it possible to notice problems of agreement and the inappropriate use of the lexicon, which in a certain way ends up affecting the logic of linguistic sequences as can be seen in more detail highlight in *(1"Covid-19 é um viro que manifesta no nosso organismo e os viros são muito graves e é uma doença mortífera e o seu continente especificamente na China" e em "(2) Ela vem da china em 2019 que a doença fundamento a cada dia que passa está a contaminando o mundo todo"* Thus, similar to what was found in text (1), the text under analysis also presents

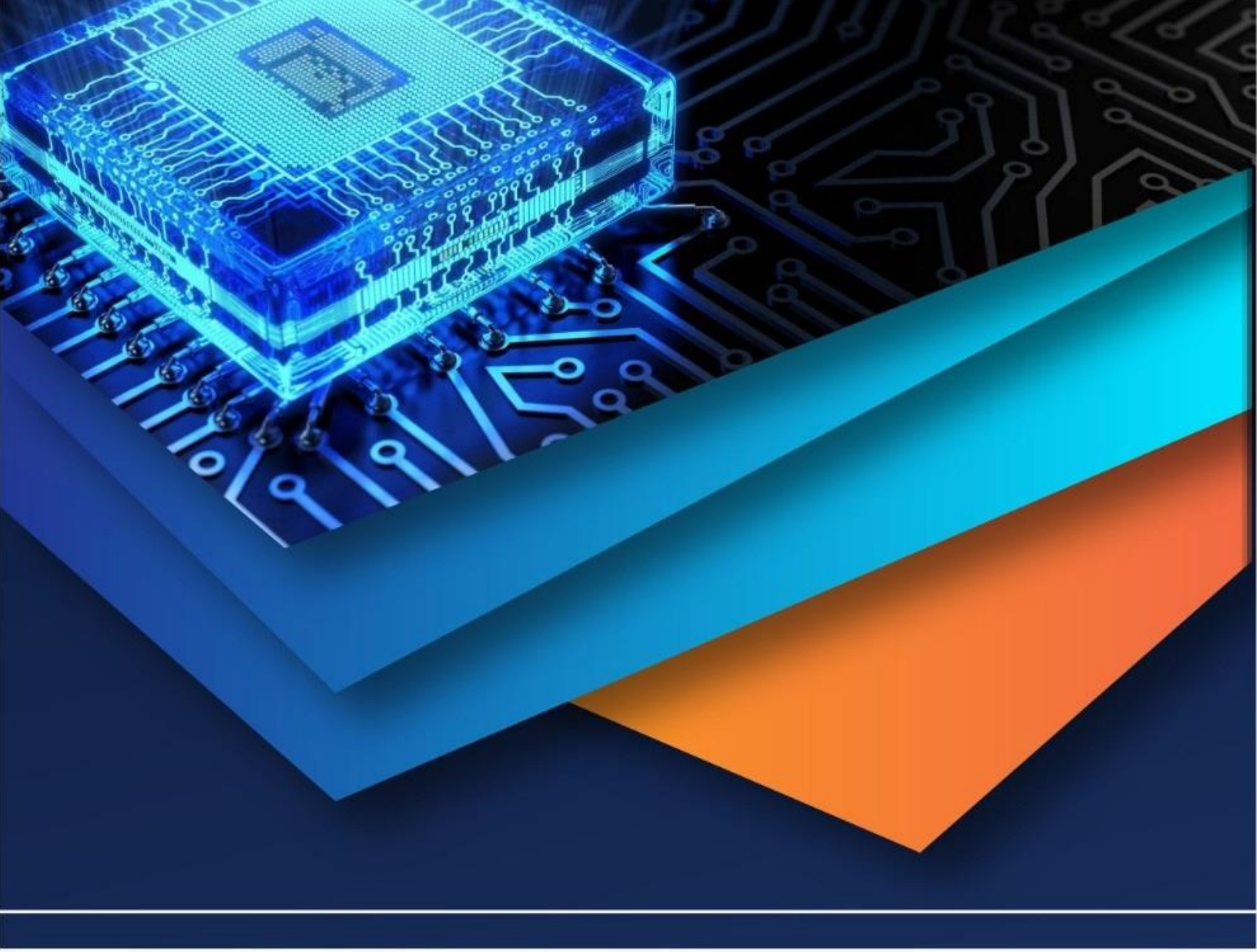
problems in terms of linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. In this way, it can be inferred that the learners/speakers, using verbal language, inappropriately used the linguistic knowledge that comprises the mastery of grammar and lexicon, being responsible for the meaning-sound articulation. It is this knowledge that is responsible for the organization of linguistic material on the textual surface, for the use of the cohesive means that the language makes available to carry out textual remission or sequencing, for the lexical selection appropriate to the theme and/or the cognitive models activated. And the knowledge of the world is that which is stored in the memory of each individual.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In the field of communication, for the production and understanding of text to be effective and as seen throughout this article, several factors are involved, including linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world, and how knowledge of the world was visualized contribute to a large extent to the production of meaning, that is, knowledge of the world contributes to a large extent to the processing of information/text. Thus, as previously mentioned, the perceptions according to which linguistic knowledge that points to the mastery of grammatical, lexical and phonological rules could be an exclusive condition for the production and understanding of the text, it has been proven that more than mastering the aspects previously mentioned, knowledge of the world that encompasses pragmatic elements to a certain extent plays a crucial role in this regard. Being on the same path, shared knowledge is essential, which will facilitate understanding through the prediction that the listener/reader makes as they listen/read the text. As the listener/reader interacts with the text, he confirms the hypotheses raised by him through the activation of the knowledge stored in his memory in the form of global cognitive models called schemata and simultaneously mobilizes the pragmatic aspects, such as context and all the norms and/or aspects culturally agreed upon by the speaking community. Therefore, only by reconciling linguistic knowledge and all socially agreed rules, would it be possible to conveniently process the information/text, that is, to effectively produce and understand the text in the field of communication.

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