



Alliance Française
De Port Moresby

Capturing Language '*Live*' through the Lens of Dialectics

Lecture by Professor Olga TEMPLE from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).

Abstract

What Is Human Language? How is it different from animal 'languages'? What is it that all human languages share in common? How does language make it possible for us to think and share infinite meanings? What *is* meaning? Linguists, particularly in the past two hundred years, have been trying to describe the bewildering diversity of linguistic structures. I believe we should use the wide-angle lens of dialectics to see more than just the physical structures of language – after all, how useful is examining people's anatomy, when trying to understand their character? Anatomical descriptions, however detailed, cannot capture the habits and behaviour of the individual, or explain the 'how's and 'why's of their dynamic interaction with their environment.

Dialectical linguistics does not dissect Language into structures and meaning; it views it *live* in its social environment, as a complex, interconnected and constantly changing, indivisible tool that people use to spin their 'webs of significance.' The physical structures of Language are viewed as the expression of verbal thought whose mechanism (generalization) shapes the diversity of our ideas and grammars – both.

In my presentation, I will discuss the nature of Human Understanding (Verbal Thought) and its mechanism.

Olga Temple, Linguistics & Modern Languages, SHSS, UPNG
olga.temple77@gmail.com

Venue: **Moresby Arts Theatre (M.A.T.)**

Date and time: **Sunday 21st, August 2011 at 3.00 pm**

Free entrance