THE INTERACTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Language is a system of signs (sounds, words, grammatical rules) used for communication, transmission of information, and expression of thoughts. The means of communication consist of a system of words and rules used by people or a group of people in one exact society, country, or continent; for example, Russian and English. This article explores the connection between the language and the social environment. This study delves into existing research papers and media analysis to compare language shifts and adaptations. This analysis opens up the idea that language is shaped by both the speaker and the receiver of the speech. It reveals that the media, globalization, and migration impact the emergence of hybrid language forms, like Spanglish and Singlish.

Key words:

Language; society; adaptations; communication; globalization; culture; generation.

Introduction

Language is a bridge through which humans get connected with others in unusual paths. For some it can as easy as a cracking an egg, however, for others, it may cause some trouble, and this is, possibly, attributed to people's characteristics or mood. In today's fast- paced world, individuals, regardless of their diverse social and political backgrounds, interact with each other using a single tool for communication- language, and this incorporates their identity, culture, and attitude; and there are various means of communication, depending on people's condition-considering current advancements in technology, it can be virtual- different social media platforms-X, Facebook, and Instagram, to name a few; or face-to-face- dialogues, interviews or just casual conversation. While some may argue that there can be negative effects of societal engagement on language, the benefits of using language within the societal settings far exceed them. In other words, this article will study the influence of language on the society and how they interfere with one another.

Main Body

Changes in language

As the world develops, the things start to change, and the language is also not an exception. Spoken language is subject to rapid changes under the influence of various factors, such as media and technology, globalization and youth culture. There is a hot debate over its benefits versus drawbacks. Some scholars, like Nettle and Romaine (2000) estimated that about half of the existing 5,000-6,000 languages may become extinct within the next century, and this is because of the globalization. Another issue, as it was cited is the barriers created by the emersion of slangs by Gen Z (short for Generation Z, people born between 1997 and 2012). This generation creates and uses its own words and internet slangs and apply in their day-to-day lives. For example, from the sources like Stanford's *The Power of Language*

Slang Term	Meaning	Origin	Common Usage	Social Context Reflected
No Cap	Truthכולה	AAVE, 1980s	Widespread	AAVE influence, youth culture
Boujee	Luxurious	AAVE, 2010s	Moderate	Materialism, pop culture
Square	Uncool	1940s jazz	Declining	Historical subculture
Slay	Excel	AAVE, queer culture	Widespread	Empowerment, performance

Nonetheless, they are lacking awareness in its negatives, especially in formation of misunderstanding among older generation who rarely browse on the internet and follow trends. Displacement of local languages in media. The reason why it is happening is because of the overrepresentation of English online. In fact, TOPPAN Digital Language proposed that 61% of web content is in English, while only about 25% of internet users are native English speakers. By contrast, despite having around 20% Chinese speakers online, online content makes up merely 1,3%.

Another feature can be the occurrence of hybrid languages like Spanglish and Singlish. The former refers to the mixture of linguistic characteristics of Spanish and English, basically in the USA and Puerto Rico. Historically, as [Thomas Moore Devlin on December 14, 2023] stated when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded large parts of Mexican territory to the U.S., leaving many Spanish speakers in an English-dominant environment. This created a need for bilingual communication. The latter, on the other hand, Singlish, short for Singapore Colloquial English, uses elements from various languages, English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil. The history is rooted in Singapore, a British colony until 1963, adopted English as a unifying language in a multilingual society with Chinese, Malay, and Tamil communities. After independence in 1965, English became the language of education and administration, but local languages influenced informal speech, giving rise to

Singlish. [Simon Horobin].

The role society plays in the way people's communication shapes

The essence of human interaction is defined by how they refer each other verbally (words, phrases, sentences) or using signs (gestures, body language and eye contact). In order to build a conversation, it is necessary to have two people- one is a listener, who receives the information, the other is a speaker, who gives the information. Whether to have a meaningful and informational talk or not is really connected to the fact that how people understand their partner's case while listening to them. When they lack the ability to convey the speech, they end up not talking to each other, in the worst-case scenario, and the occurrence of this type of misunderstanding is hard-wired to a number of reasons, like cultural difference, mindset, age, to name a few. Research, for example, has shown that people can detect social class from speech, even in brief interactions (Kraus et al., 2019). Thus, people need to have a background knowledge about the people that they are talking to, so that they can engage in the conversation and foster deep connection.

Influence of formal and informal speech

Depending on the environment, people tend to alter their tone, word choice and behavior. In educational setting, teacher-student interaction is highly likely based on formality in order to show respect and keep a particular distance, and this is applied in professional atmosphere, so that co-workers keep respect level on top and feel the working environment. However, in peer relationships in academic fields, such as schools and universities, the opposite is true, where the stress is on the mutual comfort. A 2025 study found that teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and cooperation positively predict students' willingness to communicate in a second language (WTC) in meaning-focused activities.

Opponents may say that such differentiation has its drawbacks, as it may create emotional distance. When employees or students communicate with others in a formal way, they may feel cold, stiff or impersonal. As a result, they may hesitate in expressing their thoughts clearly. In one case, for example, instead of referring to the student by using kind words, teachers choose to sound rude, as if thinking of keeping formality. Apart from that, it can create misunderstanding and misinterpretation, particularly among international students. When teachers use formal vocabulary and complex sentences to show authority, they can confuse non-native speakers or young learners who lack familiarity with the context.

Proponents, nevertheless, think that the favorable effect of such approach surpasses the negative consequences. First and foremost, it shows respect and professionalism. Formality demonstrates respect, especially in hierarchical communities of Asian countries, such as China, South Korea and Japan, where since historical times formal language is a core value in workplace or education. Not only it represents cultural importance but also builds credibility and authority. By sticking to formal language,

people may appear more knowledgeable, serious and honest in the eyes of colleagues. It is certainly significant while standing in front of the bid audience and giving presentations or leading meetings. With learners, likewise, it encourages proper communication skills and enhances academic performance. Students who are exposed to formal speech prone to cope with academic texts more easily compared to those who does not. In fact, the more they engage in formal conversation, the easier and faster they complete the academic tasks, like writing reports or case studies, which in turn brings higher scores and motivates students to study harder. In conclusion, although formal speech may not appeal for many because of creating misunderstanding and emotional distance, in general, it improves productivity level as well as sense of belonging.

Language shapes social development

From birth, children perceive the world through language, they can be exposed to such condition with the help of adults, such as parents, caregivers and siblings, who have already built familiarity with the language. In addition, the way children speak, express themselves and behave largely depends on those particular people, who serve as a role model for them. A child, for example, who is brought up in an atmosphere where family members speak in two or more languages in home setting, there is a higher chance of him or her to be bilingual. Similar approach goes for educational setting. University students, who come from different linguistic backgrounds, create their own method of interaction with each other, through mix and match, have a tendency to spread those words to others and easily make them viral on social media platforms, end up making them one of the widely used words around the globe. Therefore, social environment plays a crucial role in forming children's communication skills.

The environment influences language use

Diverse contexts demand diverse ways of speaking. People opt for casual and comfortable talk when they are around with their friends and families, but where formal language is applicable, this informal speech is highly avoided, for instance, around colleagues and managers. This shift in language shows how people can adjust their speech, tone and manner, regarding the situation that they are in. Individuals learn this skill over time as they experience many social and professional circumstances. In multicultural societies, there are some obvious features where cultures go through the process of mixture, which leads to the creation of new words, slangs and accents. Take globalization and migration as examples. In other words, people moving from one country to another encounter different language barriers, so they try to implement the same approach to another language in hope of acquiring local language skills easily.

Conclusion

The interaction of language and the social environment is a complex and dynamic process in which language acts both as a mirror and an architect of social realities. Slang, as a vivid element of language, illustrates this relationship: terms such as "No Cap," "Slay," and "Skibidi" reflect social contexts ranging from African-American culture to Internet memes generated by Generation Z. These expressions not only emphasize the identity of the groups, but also strengthen social cohesion by creating unique cultural codes. For example, "Tea" from the subculture of drag shows has become global thanks to social media, showing how language unites people through common stories. At the same time, language shapes society by introducing new norms, such as gender-neutral pronouns that promote inclusivity, or terms like "Ghost" that reflect the digital realities of modern relationships.

Social platforms such as X, TikTok, and Instagram play a key role in accelerating language evolution by spreading slang around the world and creating new communication contexts. However, this interaction is not without problems: cultural appropriation, as in the case of AAVE terms, is controversial, emphasizing the need to respect the origin of words. Globalization, with its dominance of English (61% of online content, according to TOPPAN Digital Language), threatens local languages, but also generates hybrid forms such as Spanglish. In the future, with the development of technology and the strengthening of global connections, the language will continue to evolve, reflecting social changes and forming new ways of interaction. By studying slang and its social roots, we gain a deeper understanding of how words connect people, redefine identities, and pave the way for a more inclusive society. The task of our time is to use this power of language responsibly, preserving cultural diversity and respecting its origins.

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