

THE OBJECT OF STUDY, AIMS AND TASKS OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT: This article explores the theoretical foundations, object of study, aims, and key tasks of sociolinguistics as a dynamic and interdisciplinary field within modern linguistics. The research focuses on the intricate relationship between language and society, emphasizing language variation, multilingual practices, discourse patterns, and the influence of social variables on linguistic behavior. Employing a combination of theoretical analysis, descriptive methodology, and discourse-oriented approaches, the study examines how sociolinguistic phenomena manifest in contemporary communicative environments. Particular attention is paid to the impact of globalization, digital communication, and language policy on linguistic evolution. The findings suggest that sociolinguistics plays a crucial role in understanding language as a socially embedded system and contributes significantly to education, intercultural communication, and social integration.

KEYWORDS: Sociolinguistics, language variation, multilingualism, discourse, pragmatics, language policy, digital communication.

Sociolinguistics has emerged as a prominent branch of linguistics that systematically investigates the relationship between language and society. Unlike traditional linguistic approaches that primarily focus on structural aspects of language, sociolinguistics conceptualizes language as a socially situated phenomenon shaped by cultural, political, and economic factors. Language serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a marker of social identity, group membership, and ideological positioning. Therefore, linguistic practices cannot be fully understood without considering the social contexts in which they occur. This perspective has led to a paradigm shift in linguistic research, emphasizing variability, heterogeneity, and contextual dependency. The development of sociolinguistics as an independent discipline in the mid-20th century marked a significant turning point in language studies. Empirical investigations into language variation demonstrated that linguistic differences are systematically correlated with social variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

In the context of globalization and rapid technological advancement, language is undergoing continuous transformation. Digital communication platforms, transnational mobility, and cultural exchange have intensified language contact, resulting in new hybrid forms of expression. These developments highlight the growing relevance of sociolinguistic inquiry in understanding contemporary linguistic realities. Unlike traditional linguistics, which primarily focuses on grammatical structures and formal properties of language, sociolinguistics investigates how language is used in real-life social contexts and how it is influenced by social variables. Sociolinguistics can be defined as the scientific study of how language interacts with social factors such as age,

gender, ethnicity, social class, and cultural norms. Language is not only a system of rules but also a social practice. It functions as:

- a medium of communication
- a marker of identity
- a carrier of culture
- a tool of social interaction

In contemporary society, characterized by globalization and digitalization, language is constantly evolving. The increasing interaction between cultures and communities has led to new forms of communication, including hybrid language practices and digital discourse. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to analyze the object of sociolinguistics, define its aims and tasks, and explain its relevance in modern society.

This study employs a qualitative research design and is based on theoretical and analytical approaches. Theoretical Analysis- a comprehensive review of sociolinguistic literature was conducted to establish a conceptual framework and identify key theoretical perspectives. Descriptive Method-Language use in different social contexts was described to identify patterns of variation and communicative behavior. Variationist Approach-This method examines systematic differences in language use across social groups. The variationist approach studies how linguistic variation correlates with social variables and demonstrates that such variation is structured rather than random. Discourse analysis was used to examine how meaning is constructed in communication. Discourse analysis is the study of language beyond the sentence level, focusing on how context influences meaning. Comparative Analysis-different linguistic behaviors were compared across social groups and communicative situations. The findings of the study highlight several key sociolinguistic phenomena. Language Variation-Language variation refers to the existence of multiple forms of a language influenced by social, regional, and contextual factors. Language variation can be categorized into:

- ✓ Dialect – regional variation
- ✓ Sociolect – variation based on social class
- ✓ Register – variation based on context and situation

Language is inherently variable. Speakers adjust their language depending on who they are talking to, where they are, and what they are talking about.

Formal: “I would like to request your assistance.”

Informal: “Can you help me?”

A speech community is a group of people who share common linguistic norms, rules, and expectations regarding language use.

Speech communities are not only defined by language but also by shared social practices and cultural values. Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages within a single conversation or utterance. This phenomenon is common in multilingual societies and reflects both linguistic competence and social identity.

Example:

“I will call you later, hozir busy-man.”

Multilingualism refers to the ability of individuals or communities to use multiple languages effectively. Multilingualism promotes intercultural communication and provides cognitive and social advantages.

Pragmatics is the study of how context influences the interpretation of meaning. The same sentence can have different meanings depending on the situation.

Example:

“It’s cold here” may imply a request to close a window.

Discourse refers to language use in real communicative contexts, including conversations, texts, and media. It focuses on how meaning is constructed through interaction. Modern technology has significantly transformed language use.

Key features:

- ❖ use of emojis
- ❖ abbreviations (LOL, BTW)
- ❖ informal digital language

This has blurred the boundary between spoken and written communication. The results demonstrate that language is deeply embedded in social structures and is both influenced by and influences society. Language plays a central role in constructing identity. Linguistic identity refers to how individuals express their social identity through language. People use language to signal:

- group membership
- social status
- cultural background

Language is closely related to power and ideology. Dominant languages often control communication, influence education and media, marginalize minority languages. Globalization has increased language contact and diversity. Effects: spread of global languages (especially English), emergence of hybrid forms, risk of language extinction. Language policy refers to official decisions regarding language use in a society. It includes: status planning, corpus planning, acquisition planning. Language policy affects education, administration, and national identity. Digital communication has created new linguistic environments. It has a lot of features such as: rapid language change, informal style, multimodal communication. This study has demonstrated that sociolinguistics is essential for understanding the complex relationship between language and society. The object of sociolinguistics is the social nature of language, while its aims include analyzing language variation, multilingualism, and communicative practices. The findings confirm that: language is dynamic and socially influenced, sociolinguistics has both theoretical and practical importance, modern developments such as globalization and technology continue to shape language. In conclusion, sociolinguistics plays a crucial role in education, intercultural communication, and social development.

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