

HISTORY OF SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND ITS FUNCTION IN MODERN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract: In global linguistics, applied linguistics deals with the practical realization of linguistic potential and the effective use of language. It addresses pressing issues within various modern fields such as sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmalinguistics, cognitive linguistics, linguistic cultural studies, neurolinguistics, computational linguistics, and corpus linguistics. The fact that contemporary linguistic research has already established new directions that examine the interrelation of language with practice, speech, society, culture, national thinking, and even artificial intelligence sets new tasks for our field. Such factors indicate the emergence of diverse new goals and objectives within the realm of sociolinguistics. The development of this discipline, which emerged at the intersection of sociology and linguistics, naturally depends on the extent to which these fields have been studied. In other words, it is only natural that social events and phenomena occurring in everyday life are reflected in language to some degree.

Keywords: *sociolinguistics, language variation, language change, language attitudes, language ideologies, language and identity, multilingualism, language policy, social context, communication.*

Sociolinguistics is a fascinating field that explores the intricate relationship between language and society. It recognizes that language is not merely a system of communication, but also a social phenomenon influenced by various social factors such as culture, power dynamics, and social identities. By studying language in its social context, sociolinguists aim to uncover the underlying patterns, processes, and dynamics that shape language use and its impact on individuals and communities.

Methods. One of the key areas of study in sociolinguistics is language variation and change. Languages vary across regions, social groups, and even individuals. Sociolinguists investigate how and why these variations occur, examining factors such as geographical location, social class, age, gender, ethnicity, and education. They also explore language change over time, tracking linguistic shifts and understanding the social motivations behind them. Language attitudes and ideologies are another important focus within sociolinguistics. People hold beliefs and opinions about different languages and dialects, which can lead to language discrimination or prejudice. Sociolinguists examine these attitudes and ideologies, exploring how they shape social perceptions, interactions, and language policies. They also investigate language planning and language policy, which involve

decisions about which languages are promoted, suppressed, or recognized within a given society.

According to I. Sheglova, sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the social existence of language and the conditions of social development.[1,9c.] Additionally, this field deals with the following issues:

- a) The relationship between language and social life phenomena; active processes in language development under the influence of non-linguistic factors;
- b) Changes in the ratio between the spoken and written forms of language due to the widespread dissemination of radio, television, and cinema; the tasks and forms of language policy implementation;
- c) Enhancing the speech culture of the general public.

Results. Language and identity is a central theme in sociolinguistic research. Language plays a significant role in constructing and expressing personal and group identities. Sociolinguists study how individuals use language to signal their social identities, such as ethnicity, nationality, gender, or social class. They investigate the ways in which language choices, accents, and dialects contribute to the construction and negotiation of identity.

Multilingualism is another area of interest in sociolinguistics. Many societies are characterized by linguistic diversity, with individuals speaking multiple languages. Sociolinguists explore the dynamics of multilingual communities, examining language contact, code-switching (shifting between languages within a conversation), language maintenance, and language shift. They investigate how multilingual individuals navigate between different languages and how multilingualism impacts social interactions and identities.[2,34-41c]

The relevance of sociolinguistics extends beyond academia. It has practical implications in various domains, including education, language policy, and communication in multicultural societies. Sociolinguistic research can inform language teaching methodologies, promote linguistic inclusivity, and enhance intercultural communication by raising awareness of language variation and cultural differences.

Discussion. The analysis of scientific and theoretical sources reveals that sociolinguistics identifies three main functions of language, which are classified as follows:

- 1) Fundamental function
- 2) Ethnosocial function
- 3) Social function

The fundamental function is primarily aimed at ensuring communication. The ethnosocial function reflects socio-ethnic historical events and contemporary occurrences through various ethnic languages. The social function, on the other hand, manifests in expressing aspects such as a nation's history, customs, traditions, the lifestyle and rituals of other peoples, culture, art, literature, economic condition, national wealth, and dialects.

The study of sociolinguistics provides a deeper understanding of the complexities of human communication and the interplay between language and

society. One of the critical discussions in this field revolves around the role of sociolinguistics in addressing linguistic inequality and social justice. Language is often intertwined with power structures, and certain languages or dialects may be privileged over others. Sociolinguistic research plays a vital role in uncovering and challenging these disparities, promoting linguistic diversity and equity.

Another important discussion centers on the impact of globalization and technology on sociolinguistic dynamics. Globalization has led to increased linguistic contact and the emergence of hybrid languages, while technology has transformed the way people communicate. Social media, for instance, has given rise to new linguistic forms and practices, providing sociolinguists with novel avenues for research.

Furthermore, sociolinguistics emphasizes the importance of preserving endangered languages and fostering multilingualism. As languages disappear at an alarming rate, sociolinguistic research advocates for initiatives to document and revitalize these languages, recognizing their cultural and historical significance.

Lastly, the application of sociolinguistic findings in educational contexts remains a significant area of discussion. By understanding how language shapes learning and interaction, educators can develop more effective teaching strategies that cater to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students. This can help create inclusive learning environments and reduce barriers faced by speakers of minority languages.

Sociolinguistics is an active and vibrant academic field that throws light on the intricate and multifaceted interconnectedness of language and society. By exploring some of the key issues such as language variation, language attitudes, identity construction, multilingualism, and language policy, sociolinguists can learn more about how language operates in different social, cultural, and political contexts. This field not only contributes to our understanding of how language evolves and adapts due to social change but also highlights its essential role in the formation of human relationships and experiences.

Through their work, sociolinguists are contributing to greater appreciation of language diversity, countering deeply entrenched language stereotypes and prejudices, and advocating for more equitable and fairer language policies. Their work is essential in bridging communication barriers, preserving minority languages and endangered languages, and promoting cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. Lastly, sociolinguistics emphasizes the role played by language as a product and producer of social life, reinforcing its intrinsic importance in human existence.

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