

SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND ITS DEVELOPMENT AS AN INDEPENDENT SCIENCE

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ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqola sotsiolingvistika va uning mustaqil fan sifatida rivojlanishi haqidagi g'oyalarning nazariy asoslari va evolyutsiyasi to'g'risida umumiy ma'lumot berishga qaratilgan. Maqolaning asosiy maqsadi taniqli tilshunos va ularning asarlari, nazariyalari va taxminlarini sotsiolingvistikaning asosi davrida ko'rsatishdir. Muallif tomonidan boshqa fanlar va sotsiologiya o'rtasidagi aloqalar ham eslatib o'tilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Sotsiolingvistika, fanlararo, til va jamiyat, ijtimoiy kontekst, faoliyat, omillar

ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide an overview of theoretical background and evolution of the ideas on sociolinguistics and its development as an independent science. The main goal of the article is to show prominent linguist and their works, theories and assumptions in the foundation period of sociolinguistics. Interlinks between other disciplines and sociology are also mentioned by the author.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, interdisciplinary, language and society, social context, functioning, factors

Introduction

One of the modern linguistic disciplines that study the language and its connection with the society and culture is sociolinguistics. This science deals with the social situations and different contexts where and when language functioning takes place. The historical evolutionary basis of sociolinguistics took a long period and different linguists gave various theories and concepts on learning a language from social perspective and learning it as a social phenomenon. This condition resulted in multilevel study of object and subject of sociolinguistics. Moreover, the differentiation in the object area of the science can be impacted by its interdisciplinary character too. It has

connection with linguistic disciplines as stylistics, pragma linguistics, semiotics, psycho linguistics on one hand, and with non-linguistics sciences as sociology, anthropology, ethnography and etc., on another. In this article, the background and perspectives of sociolinguistics will be analyzed before its interrelationship and interdependence with linguistic is being discussed.

Theoretical background of a study

In the evolutionary ladder of linguistic studies, there have are two prominent approaches to learning a language: structural and functional. The flow of Structural Linguistics was born in the early twentieth century or precisely in the year of 1916, because in that year a book entitled “Course de Linguistique Generale” by Ferdinand de Saussure was published. This book was a breakthrough in studying linguistic phenomena and held the main points of the structural theory as well as the thoughts of modern linguistics (Irmawati, Hum, 2014:116). Another famous linguist Chomsky followed him and developed new theories in the field of structuralism. Linguistics, before Chomsky, was in Searle’s (1974: 3) words, “a sort of verbal botany” in the sense that linguists would design methods to classify the linguistic elements of a given corpus. The purpose of structural linguistics was either to find regularities in a corpus in order to catalogue the phonemes, morphemes, words and phrases of a particular language and to be able to make predictions in that language as a whole; or to gather sufficient information and be able to produce utterances just like a native speaker of the language would (Harris 1951:365).

According to Chomsky’s theories, languages are studied in isolation which means that the interactions and the relationship among speakers, as well as the social context where language takes place, are not taken into account by the linguists. This implication generated some reactions from sociologists who argued that natural languages constituted a social entity so that it is a “fruitless and unrewarding task” (Labov 1977: 124) to construct grammars of natural languages without paying attention to speakers and/or society where a given natural language exists. This linguistic approach foregrounded by William Labov suggests a different ontology of language. Followed by Saussure’s conception of *langue*, Labovian sociolinguistics studies a language from social perspective and claims that a language is a shared property of a community. The ideas of Labov gave rise to a new approach in linguistics of West, which is also called functionalism. Labov is considered as the founder of sociolinguistics in West countries.

Famous linguist Dell Hymes (1974) has drawn a distinction between the structural and functional approaches in linguistics.

The structural approach, as the term indicates focuses on the structure of language (code) and the analysis of code is given the primary importance. On the other hand, the functional approach focuses on the functional aspect of language, in other words, its use in society (Nisa, 2019:5). Sociolinguistics studies the relationship between language and society. According to Fishman sociolinguists are interested in knowing “*who speaks, which language to whom and when*”.

The term "sociolinguistics" was introduced into scientific circulation in 1952 by the American linguist G. Currie (Currie 1952). However, it should be mentioned that conceptions about the interrelationship between language and society were explored by Russian linguists some years earlier than in the West countries. After the World War II, newly formed young countries that were released from Soviet Union faced the problems connected with sociolinguistic situations. Those problems basically included forming “official” language of each independent but multinational country, developing modernization of old or archaic forms languages of those countries, developing cultural aspect of Indo-European languages, enhancing literal and scientific style of language by implementing them more in mass media products, etc. (Schweitzer, Nikolskiy, 1978:4). These problems shed light into the new assumptions about learning language in connection with society and changes of social norms.

Russian linguist Polivanov developed a program about the problematic issues of sociolinguistics, which included following concepts: 1) the definition of language as a socio-historical fact; 2) description of languages and dialects from a sociological point of view; 3) evaluative analysis of the given language as a tool of communication; 4) the study of causal relationships between socio-economic and linguistic phenomena; 5) evaluative analysis of the language (and its individual aspects) as a means of struggle for existence; 6) creation of a general typological scheme of the evolution of the language in connection with the history of culture; 7) applied issues of social linguistics: language policy (Polivanov, 1968). In one of his works, he writes that in specific situations of communication, due to the knowledge of several languages and their forms, variants, and the ability to use them in certain communicative acts, the individual is considered as a potential participant of communication with representatives of various social groups (Polivanov, 1968). By this conception he implies to the theory of social roles which was introduced later by western linguists.

Determining the status of sociolinguistics, most linguists agree that it is being formed as a single discipline at the intersection of various sciences (Deseriev, 1977; Zvegintsev, 1976; Nikolsky, 1976; Schweitzer, 1976). Such an understanding of this discipline

largely determines the definition of its subject and the choice of research methods. There are different views on the object and subject of sociolinguistics.

According to Deseriev, the sociological aspect of language learning covers the entire set of problems associated with the characterization of all linguistic phenomena caused by the development of society, with its impact on the interaction of languages in general and on the interaction of linguistic elements in the functioning of each particular language (Deseriev, 1973).

A.D. Schweitzer, accepting this definition as a whole, considers it necessary to emphasize that “the field of sociolinguistic research includes both the study of the influence of social factors on the functional use of language in the process of speech communication, and the analysis of the impact of these factors on the very structure of the language, their reflections in the language structure. This explores not only the relationship between language and objective social factors, such as various elements of social structure, but also the reflection in language and speech activity of subjective social factors, such as social attitudes and social values” (Schweitzer, 1976).

L.B Nikolskiy points out that the subject area of sociolinguistics also includes problems related to the role that language plays in society. Thus, the subject of sociolinguistics as a single boundary discipline undergoes differentiation depending on the type of connection between language and society (language as a reflection of society and language as a social factor) (Nikolsky, 1974). A.A. Avrorin proposed a much narrower understanding of sociolinguistics, believing that the only specific object of language study within the framework of sociolinguistics could be “the functioning of languages and linguistic situations characteristic of ethnic groups” (Avrorin, 1974).

According to Labov, it studies the language in its social context; especially taking into account both linguistic and extra linguistic factors (the age, gender, social status, culture, religion of speakers) that influence on how the language is used (Labov, 1975). So, the object of sociolinguistics is the language in its functioning. And on- how language functions in a society with a certain social structure, insofar as one can speak of sociolinguistics as a science, studying language in a social context (W. Labov's formula).

Like any science that claims for an independent status, sociolinguistics operates with a certain set of concepts specific to it (and terms corresponding to them): *language community, language situation, social-communicative system, language socialization, communicative competence, language code, code switching, bilingualism*

(*bilingualism*), *diglossia*, *language policy* and a number of others. In addition, some concepts that are derived from other areas of linguistics: *language norm*, *verbal communication*, *speech behavior*, *speech act*, *language contact*, *mixing of languages*, *language mediator*, etc., as well as from sociology, social psychology: *social structure of society*, *social status*, *social role*, *social fact* and some others (Belikov, Krysin, 2001). The principles of creating this kind of sectorial conceptual apparatus are well demonstrated by A.D. Schweitzer on the example of the concepts of socially determined language variability. The following concepts are considered as key concepts: *language community*, *speech community*, *socio-communicative system*, *socio-communicative subsystem*, *stratification variable*, *stratification-situational variable*, *set of values*, *status*, *role*, *social attitude*, *value orientations*. Between these sociolinguistic and sociological concepts, systemic connections of different levels are established (Schweitzer, 1976).

Interdisciplinary Character of Sociolinguistics

Much attention is given to the interdisciplinary character and interconnection of sociolinguistics with other linguistic and non-linguistic sciences as it will help to identify subject matter area of this discipline. Most linguists generally claim that sociolinguistics was born in the crossing point of sociology and linguistics. That's why, the connection with these sciences is of primary importance for sociolinguistic studies. Sociolinguistics implements methods of analysis also from the methods of disciplines as survey fieldwork, ethnographic fieldwork, sampling, natural speech, recorded interview, questionnaires and others.

Sociolinguistics and semiotics

The question of link of sociolinguistics with semiotics is especially important because by studying the general properties of sign systems, semiotics occupies a position of bridge among a number of sciences, on the interaction of which sociolinguistics is built upon (linguistics, on the one hand, and sociology, ethnography and psychology, on the other) (Stepanov, 1971: 3).

As it is widely known, in semiotics there are three main aspects of the theory of sign systems - syntax, which studies relations between signs, the semantics in which analyses the relationship between sign and denotative (denoted by the subject) and pragmatics, which studies relationship "man - sign". Sociolinguistics is closely related with pragma linguistics as both of these disciplines mainly study the relationship between language and society, the functioning of language in society. Scientists from the GDR R.

Grosse and A. Neubert believe that partial coincidence of the tasks of sociolinguistics and linguistic pragmatics is due to the fact that both disciplines are designed to analyze the functioning of the language in the social life. Therefore, one of the joint tasks of sociolinguistics and pragmatics is a systematized description of communicative situations and communicative acts. It is in the light of the pragmatic theory data from sociolinguistic research that are of particular importance for the management of public processes, as well as for their prediction. However, a pragmatic interpretation cannot be considered exhaustive without taking into account sociolinguistic data (Schweitzer, 1976:58).

However, it seems to us that the interests and the tasks of these disciplines can not completely coincide. It is necessary to take into account that pragmatics, considering the relation "sign - man" does not consider a person as a member of society and, moreover, a member of a linguistic or speech community. An important difference between pragmatic and sociolinguistic analysis of language and speech is the lack of pragmatic analysis of explicitly expressed social orientation. This means that by examining speech activity, representatives of pragmatics, unlike sociolinguists, take into account far not all social and socio-psychological factors, affecting speech activity.

Sociolinguistics and stylistics

Sociolinguistics and stylistics are partly united by the fact that both disciplines show interest in language variants, subsystems of language, in patterns and factors that determine the speaker's choice of one or another form of utterance, register or style. In other words, both stylistics and sociolinguistics focus on linguistic variants, represented by stylistic synonyms, with on the one hand, and linguistic units with identical values, but used by different social groups. For example, in English word in its neutral variant "man" can be used differently in among various social groups and contexts; bean, bezer, cag, egg, pimple (Schweitzer, 1976:65). We also can give an example of the word "money". In the Collins dictionary, there are stylistic synonyms of this word as funds, cash, finance, necessary (informal), silver, tin (slang), brass (Northern England, dialect), dough (slang), dosh (British, Australian, slang), needful (informal), shekels (informal), wonga (slang), dibs (slang), ackers (slang), spondulicks (slang), rhino (British, slang).

In linguistic stylistics, the concepts of "style" or "functional style" are of primary importance, which are most often understood as "socially conscious and functionally conditioned, internal set of methods of use, selection and combination of means of speech

communication in the field of one or another national, national language » [21, 6].

Sociolinguists come from a slightly different understanding of style, for which the style is associated before all with socially determined language variability. In sociolinguistics, there are two types of variations connected with "techniques, use, selection and combination of means of speech communication" - variations due to the use these means in different areas of communication and variations determined by the social situation. It is the consideration of the social situation of communication and the allocation on this basis of discrete levels is specific for sociolinguistics.

Not only linguists and sociolinguists are interested in the study of language in society but also researchers from a variety of other disciplines like anthropologists, psychologists, educators, language planners, etc. are interested in unfolding the mystery of language. In this sense, we could claim that sociolinguistics is interrelated with extra-linguistic sciences too. For example, anthropologists have explored the kinship systems and some psychologists are concerned with the possible effects of linguistic structure on social and psychological behavior. Many educators are involved in language planning, development of language and teaching of the standard language. From this point of view, it should be well noted that sociolinguistics and foreign language methodology are also interconnected.

On the basis of sociolinguistic data, language policies are organized and implemented in different regions of countries. Sociolinguistic observations may show us where and how many percentage of nation can speak the foreign languages, their literacy level. According to the statistics of applied sociolinguistics, national programs of foreign language teaching and testing are developed. Further to this, by analyzing needs analysis and educational and social background of language users, appropriate course books, methodologies and practical activities are designed by teachers. These conditions can be proof for close contact between two mentioned disciplines exists.

Conclusion

In the end of the article, it is worthy to mention that historical development of sociology was affected by different factors and theories. The first ideas about the importance of studying the language in social context were found in the works of Soviet linguists a little earlier than in the works of European and American linguists. However, linguistic schools of each country had developed different theories based on the social perspective of language learning. The object and subject area of sociolinguistics have not yet been limited by certain concepts. This is mainly because it studies the language in

its social functioning and society and linguistic situation in this society changes continuously. Moreover, interdisciplinary feature of sociolinguistics leads to the variety of subject matter of the discipline. It has close relationships with linguistic and non-linguistic sciences which were discussed by the author.

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