

HUMAN SPEECH

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Human speech is always a part of the structure of the social system relations, so researchers' increased interest towards the problem of the social extralinguistics factors influence on the individual verbal behaviour in a particular state of language isn't a surprise. Many researchers consider the research of the speech in the intersection of social and psychological disciplines to be topical nowadays.

The sociolinguistics investigations are of interest not only to linguists, but also to sociologists, philosophers, psychologists. It allows to illuminate deeper and more versatile the nature of phenomena that are of value for the interests of the related disciplines.

Sociolinguistics is the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used. The social aspects of language were in the modern sense first studied by Indian and Japanese linguists in the 1930s, and also by Gauchat in Switzerland in the early 1900s. Sociolinguistics in the west first appeared in the 1960s and was pioneered by linguists such as William Labov in the US and Basil Bernstein in the UK. Labov specifies the ideal sociolinguistic variable to: be high in frequency; have a certain immunity from conscious suppression; be an integral part of larger structures; be easily quantified on a linear scale.

Fundamental concepts in sociolinguistics are speech community, high prestige and low prestige varieties, social networks. Speech community is a concept in sociolinguistics that describes a more or less discrete group of people who use language in a unique and mutually accepted way among themselves. Members of speech communities will often develop slang or jargon to serve the group's special purposes and priorities.

A person can (and almost always does) belong to more than one speech community. And he modifies his speech according to the present community. A variation on this concept is code-switching. The adoption of the concept speech community as a focus of linguistic analysis emerged in the 1960s. This was due to the pioneering work by William Labov.

A prestige dialect is the dialect spoken by the most prestigious people in a speech community which is large enough to sustain more than one dialect. The most prestigious people are those with the greatest influence on the community. Studies, particularly by Labov, have shown that positive prestige is more often overt, whilst negative prestige is more often covert (avoidance of the unmentionable).

A social network is another way of describing a particular speech community in term of relations between individual members in a community. A network could be **loose** or **tight** depending on members interact with each other. The looseness or tightness of a social network may affect speech patterns adopted by a speaker. A social network may apply to the macro level

of a country or a city, but also to the inter-personal level of neighbourhoods or a single family. Recently, social networks have been formed by the Internet.

Class and occupation are among the most important linguistic markers found in society. It is generally assumed that non-standard language is low-prestige language. However, in certain groups, such as traditional working class neighbourhoods, standard language may be considered undesirable in many contexts.

A sub-field of historical linguistics is Dialectology, the scientific study of linguistic dialect. It studies variations in language based primarily on geographic distribution and their associated features (as opposed to variations based on social factors, which are studied in sociolinguistics). William Labov is one of the most prominent researchers in this field. Dialect researchers typically use questionnaires to gather data on the dialect they are researching. There are two main types of questionnaires, direct and indirect.

The sociolinguistics also studies the differences in male and female conversations. Men and women, on average, tend to use slightly different language styles. These differences tend to be quantitative rather than qualitative. Men have a report style, aiming to communicate factual information, whereas women have a rapport style, more concerned with building and maintaining relationships. In a mixed-gender group, gender differences tend to be less pronounced. A similarly important observation is that this accommodation is usually towards the language style, not the gender of the person. For men, a question is usually a genuine request for information whereas with women it can often be a rhetorical.

Therefore women use questions more frequently. Males tend to change subject more frequently than females. Female tendencies toward self-disclosure, i.e., sharing their problems and experiences with others, often to offer sympathy, contrasts with male tendencies to non-self disclosure and professing advice or offering a solution when confronted with another's problems. Men tend to be more verbally aggressive in conversing, frequently using threats, profanities, yelling and name-calling. It appears that women attach more weight than men to the importance of listening in conversation, women have a lower rate of interruption. Males are afforded more attention in the context of the classroom and that this can lead to their gaining more attention in scientific and technical subjects, which in turn can lead to their achieving better success in those areas, ultimately leading to their having more power in a technocratic society.

The level of development of a branch of science is defined by the state of its basic principles – the theory, conceptual apparatus and methods. Concerning the sociolinguistics it means that, providing research in this field, we must also pay attention to the development of the theory of the sociolinguistics, its methods and systematize its conceptual apparatus. Without developing of the fundamental problems, the sociolinguistics research will remain factionary, unfit for wide generalisations and theoretical conclusions.

This danger for the sociolinguistics is realer, because its problems are widely discussed by the specialists of different branches of science and by the society. The lack of the general theoretical foundation promotes the absence of a single concept, hinders the common ground to appear.

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