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The Main Research Targets in Sociolinguistics

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Abstract: This thesis deals with problems related to one of the newest disciplines in modern linguistics – sociolinguistics. The history of its coming out, the main targets, objects in this subject are analyzed. Cognitive images that are formed in human minds are also related to social factors and social influence, some information concerning this matter is also discussed. The main research targets in sociolinguistics are to understand the relationship between language and society by investigating how social factors influence language use, and in turn, how language shapes social dynamics and cultural norms. The article focuses on theoretical basis of the issue as well.

Keys words: cultural studies, social organization, social contexts, social factors, linguistic features, linguistic diversity, language maintenance, cognitive images, social meaning, and social semiotics.

Sociolinguistics is an academic field that studies the intersection of language and society. While its core data is typically linguistic (speech, text, sign), visual elements and data collection methods are used to understand social context.

Sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary area of study, with many inputs. Since about the 1960s it has crystallized into its own field. Sociolinguistics is generally understood as being rooted in linguistics, but it has been influenced by many other disciplines, including anthropology, cultural studies, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and more. Because language is connected to all dimensions of human interaction and social organization, theories and concepts from other disciplines are useful in analyzing the complexities of language in society. In return, sociolinguistic research has influenced other fields by contributing insights about the relationships between people, language, culture, and society, as well as about methods for studying them.

Sociolinguistics is a study of one's everyday lives, including how language is used in our informal interactions and the media we have access to, as well as the existence of society norms, rules, and laws addressing language. Sociolinguistics is the study that examines the relationship between society and language, as well as how language is applied in social contexts. Language variation primarily studies language use in real-life situations and categorizes different language variations based on distribution across diverse social demographics. The foundations of variations in sociolinguistics are grounded in the simple observation that differences in everyday speech are grammatically inconsequential but socially meaningful.

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society, including how language varies and changes in different social contexts. Sociolinguistics reviews take note of any social factors in society that affect language usage. The social factor is: * Social status; * Educational level; * Age; * Economic level; * Religion; * Gender.

There are several types or branches of sociolinguistics. Here are a few prominent ones:

1. Language variation and change: this branch focuses on studying how language varies and changes in different social groups, regions, and contexts. It aims to understand why and how certain linguistic features are used and how they can shift over time.
2. Language attitudes and ideologies: this area examines people's attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions towards different languages and language varieties. It explores the social, cultural, and political factors that shape language ideologies and the implications these attitudes have for linguistic diversity and language policies.
3. Multilingualism: multilingualism studies the use and acquisition of multiple languages by individuals and communities. It examines the dynamics of language contact, code-switching, and language maintenance among multilingual populations.
4. Language planning and policy: this branch investigates how language policies are formulated, implemented, and experienced within societies. It examines issues related to language choices, standardization, language rights, linguistic discrimination, and language planning strategies.
5. Language and identity: language is closely tied to one's identity and group affiliations. This area of sociolinguistics explores how language use and choice contribute to the construction and negotiation of personal and social identities.
6. Language and social interaction: this branch focuses on how language is used in everyday social interactions. It examines conversational patterns, speech acts, politeness, discourse analysis, and sociocultural aspects of communication.

Different images that are born people's minds are also studied in sociolinguistics. Below are examples of how images are used in sociolinguistics, along with related resources.

Images in sociolinguistics are generally used as research tools, data points, or illustrations for theoretical concepts rather than as general visual representations of the field itself. Photo-Elicitation interviews: researchers use photographs or a list of images to prompt discussion and gather data on language use, attitudes, and awareness of language variations within a community. For example, informants might be asked to identify pictured objects in their mother tongue to study the use of loanwords. Linguistic landscapes: a growing area of study analyzes the use of "language on signs in public space". Images of street signs, advertisements, and public notices are used to document multilingualism, language policy, and the functional distribution of different languages in urban areas. Multimodal text analysis: researchers analyze the interplay between linguistic and visual modalities in media and communication to understand how both convey meaning and rhetorical function. This involves looking at static images and text together in various contexts. Illustrating social factors: textbooks and research papers often use images (charts, diagrams, or contextual photos) to illustrate how language is tied to social attributes like class, age, gender, and ethnicity.

The intersection of sociolinguistics and cognitive images is primarily explored within the emerging field of cognitive sociolinguistics and related areas of multimodal communication. This interdisciplinary approach examines how social factors influence the mental processes, conceptualizations, and nonverbal cues (including images) that shape communication. Sociolinguistics traditionally studies how language is affected by social factors like age, gender, education, and social status. This scope has expanded to include nonverbal communication (paralinguistics), which also varies across social and cultural contexts. Paralinguistic means: these include gestures, gaze, facial expressions, and body posture, all of which are analyzed for their social meaning and are tied to a person's mental activity and cultural background.

Social semiotics and visual design: This field provides a "grammar of visual design" to account for meaning in visual artifacts like images, sculptures, and multimodal texts, extending sociolinguistic principles beyond spoken language. Language is a key mechanism that intersects with social structures

and social categories—from gender to race and ethnicity, among many others—to influence a person's access to the rights, privileges, and opportunities that are afforded by social institutions. Around the world, many of the most pervasive societal challenges, systemic biases, and social inequalities have linguistic dimensions—such as illiteracy and restricted education for women and girls, migrants and refugees, Indigenous peoples, and those from other marginalized and minoritized groups. Linguistic bias and miscommunication can also impede access to health care, affect workplace interactions, limit job opportunities, and inhibit fair treatment by legal systems.

In conclusion we can state that problems that are studied in sociolinguistics is essential for comprehending relationship between language and society. The role of them forms a bridge between very important foundations in language, culture and society.

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