



## **SOCIOCULTURAL FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE AND ITS ROLE IN SPEECH FORMATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The present scientific article is devoted to analysis of social side of a language and its role in society, in human communication. Language has been investigated as historical document that preserves national culture and human experience. The main functions of language have been enumerated and analyzed in the article as well as the role of language in speech formation has been defined.*

**KEY WORDS:** *communication, language, social, pragmatic, speech, sociolinguistic, language function.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a historical document that allows to restore the "model of the world", the inner world of people of the past eras, even when there are no physical or written evidence left of them. The language inherited from our ancient ancestors allows us to make this reconstruction – up to the remote past, to the origins of prehistory, where human thinking and human language were born.

Modern linguistics is the result of the centuries-old development of the science of language. Brought to life by the practical needs of society, linguistics has been conceptualizing itself theoretically for centuries. The history of linguistics is the history of the formation and development of scientific logic, overcoming its own contradictions, deepening and expanding linguistic theory, mastering areas of practical application, improving techniques and methods of linguistic analysis. For thousands of years, a colossal amount of linguistic facts has been accumulated, the subject of science has been clarified, research methods have become more reliable. Studying the history of linguistics, it is necessary to take into account this fact: in different epochs and in different countries, the science of language has developed very unevenly. This is due to the level of development and practical needs of society, the social struggle, the dominance of certain philosophical and scientific principles, the logic of the development of science itself and its place in the knowledge system, national traditions, etc.

By the beginning of the third millennium, the relationship between language and ethnicity, on the one hand,

and language and society, on the other, became particularly relevant, which caused the problem of this work.

Even ancient scientists were convinced that there is an interdependent relationship between human society and language. Thus, Aristotle wrote: "Of all living beings, only man is gifted with speech." At the same time, Aristotle and his followers proceeded from such a basic purpose of language as serving as a means of communication between people, clearly understanding that language is inherent in a public person, and not just an individual.

The concepts of language in modern general linguistics are represented primarily by the works of F. de Saussure, L. Elmslev, L. Bloomfield, N. Chomsky, the Prague School, etc. For the most part, these concepts exclude social and cultural factors from the concept of language and thereby greatly narrow the subject of their research, resulting in an inadequate description of it. Language appears as a static homogeneous formation, common to all members of this linguistic community, considered undifferentiated. The representative function of the language is investigated, first of all. At the same time, the speaker and the listener and the dynamics of their relationship are excluded from consideration. Thus, specific situations of language communication, varieties of language usage and their evolution also fall out of sight.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The relevance of the research topic lies in the fact that sociolinguistics overcomes an abstract approach to language learning and shows the presence in one linguistic



community of various systems of rules for using language, based on specific usages caused by social and cultural-historical factors. The need to learn a language in close connection with diverse social factors has been universally recognized. The sociolinguistic approach to learning foreign languages is a new and important step in linguistics. The connection between language and society did not immediately become the subject of a special scientific study. However, many scientists have repeatedly expressed the idea of the urgent need to create a so-called "external linguistics", which usually meant the whole set of connections of language with extralinguistic phenomena. Here, first of all, we should mention such linguists as I.A. Baudouin de Courtenay, F.F. Fortunatov, A.A. Shakhmatov, etc.

The following factor is also relevant for language: the special role of language in society, its inseparable connection with thinking determine the variety of elements used in language, the complexity of the organization of language, in other words, determine the complexity and specificity of language as a system-structural education.

The uniqueness of language as a system of signs is associated with a special role, a special purpose of language in the life of human society, in which it acts as a leading means of communication. This is what determines the multiplicity and diversity of the language signs used, the inadmissibility of their arbitrary change, the relationship between the stability and variability of the language sign. The last circumstance drew the attention of the outstanding French linguist Charles Bally, who wrote: "... languages are constantly changing, but they can function only without changing" [Sh. Bally, 1961, p. 29]. Indeed, the language must be stable, because otherwise it will not be able to fulfill its main function - to serve as the most important means of communication.

Along with this, the language must change, because the development of society, the complication of all forms of human practical activity, the development of his thinking determine the urgent need for constant development and enrichment of the language.

Everything in the language is subject to change. Language is always changing, but at the same time it is extremely stable. In other words, at any historical moment, language is something permanent and immediately transitory. Each individual continuously influences the language. And each generation influences it - even if not always in the basic lexical fund and in the material of grammatical forms, but in the nature of their use - by all means. Hence language is a continuous creative process, a constant creative activity that turns sounding matter into an expression of thought. "Another Humboldt antinomy of language is formulated here: language is as much an activity as a work. In other words: on the one hand, an individual creates language at the moment of speech and language is what is being produced at the moment, and on the other hand, language is what has already been produced, it is the result of the activities of previous generations, the product and property of the human collective" [V. Humboldt, 1984, p. 339].

Hence, there is a clear need to develop a theory that would link together the problems of language structure, language dynamics and the functioning of language in speech. And this requires attention to such areas as 1) language variation and language change, 2) semantics, 3) pragmatics. So, in the first area, "only taking into account non-linguistic factors makes it possible not only to describe, but also to explain language variation and language changes."

Language - as an exceptionally complex entity - can be defined from different points of view depending on which side or sides of the language stand out. In this case, definitions are possible:

1) From the point of view of the function of language (or the functions of language): language is a means of communicating people and, as such, is a means of forming, expressing and communicating thoughts;

2) From the point of view of the device (mechanism) of language: language is a set of some units and rules for using these units, i.e. combining units; these units are formed by speakers at the moment;

3) From the point of view of the existence of language: language is the result of a social, collective skill of forming units of sound matter by correlating some sounds with some meaning;

4) From a semiotic point of view, language is a system of signs, i.e. material objects (sounds) with the property of denoting something that exists outside of themselves;

5) From the point of view of information theory: language is a code by which semantic information is encoded.

As can be seen, it is impossible to give an exhaustive definition of the language in one definition. Therefore, usually in scientific usage, the most concise interpretation of such general content is used, as: "language is the most important means of human communication" with appropriate specification as needed.

For the first time in linguistics, V. Humboldt justified the need to distinguish between language and speech, who wrote: "Language, as a mass of everything produced by living speech, is not the same as this speech itself in the mouths of the people," i.e. language - as a whole - differs from individual sounds of speech activity [V. Humboldt, 1984, p. 58].

The relationship between the concepts of speech (*la parole*) and language (*la langue*) was already crucial at the beginning of the XX century for the formulation of the theoretical position of F. de Saussure. A description of these concepts is given in a number of places in his general linguistics course. Thus, F. de Saussure writes: "By separating language and speech, we thereby separate:

- a) Social from individual;
- b) Essential from collateral and more or less accidental" [F. de Saussure, 1977, p. 38].

Speech is the sum of everything that people say. It includes:

- 1) Individual combinations depending on the will of the speakers;



2) All kinds of acts of speaking, i.e. there is nothing collective here. Speech is individual and instantaneous.

Language, in contrast to speech, is a social element of speech activity in general. In relation to the individual, it is an external element. Moreover, any individual - by himself - is not able to create a language or change it. "Language is a treasure trove, accumulated by the practice of speech in all who belong to one social collective, it is a grammatical system that potentially exists in every brain, or better to say, in the brains of a whole set of individuals, because language does not exist completely in any of them, it exists fully only in the mass" [T.A. Bushuy, 2017, p. 91]. So, speech (speech act) and language are correlated, assuming each other. Language is necessary to ensure the understanding of speech and the scale of its implementation. Historically, speech precedes language, ensuring its installation.

Speech is a decisive factor in the genesis of culture, and it is also the main means used by people to communicate and form concepts. All forms of communication between people depend to some extent on speech. By the way, the difference between language communication and communication with the help of works of art lies primarily in the fact that these forms of communication "transcribe" reality in different ways: art conveys mainly sensory and emotional information, language – mainly conceptual and logical. Unlike all possible "languages" of art, the actual language has a level of metalanguage, developed grammar and logic, because it is the only means of communication that has a "double division". Language is primarily logical, whereas "languages" are aesthetic.

Along with the term "sociolinguistics", many researchers use the term "sociology of language". Some consider them synonyms, others insist on the need to differentiate the concepts behind them, considering sociolinguistics one of the directions of the sociology of language. At the same time, sometimes one or another author tries to theoretically differentiate these areas of research, but using their names in specific descriptions of the language from a social point of view, interchanges the terms "sociolinguistics" and "sociology of language" as complete synonyms. For example, the American scientist J. Fishman believes that sociolinguistics explores first of all the "socially conditioned variability of language use", the sociology of language considers socially conditioned language variants (what has already been established by sociolinguistics) "as goals, as obstacles and as stimulators" of social interaction, and the "language users themselves and the ways they use language variants - as aspects of more general social systems and processes" [J. Fishman, 1999, p. 8]. However, in a large work placed in the same volume as the quoted preface, J. Fishman does not distinguish between the terms sociolinguistics and sociology of language, using them as synonyms.

According to the opinion shared by many modern researchers, the main difference between the concepts discussed is that sociolinguistics is a field of linguistics, and it studies linguistic phenomena with the involvement of social

factors (determining the development and functioning of these phenomena), and the sociology of language is an interdisciplinary, intermediate field of research combining sociological goals and research methods with linguistic material. Developing this view, it can be said that sociolinguistics studies linguistic relations and processes, involving social factors for their interpretation, and the sociology of language studies social relations and processes, paying attention to linguistic phenomena that are reflected in these relations and processes. Unlike sociolinguistics, which studies the variability of language depending on the social conditions of its existence, the sociology of language is interested in how language is distributed, in particular language variants in various social groups, and how these groups achieve their goals with the help of language.

Intercultural competence is formed in the process of teaching foreign language communication, taking into account the cultural and mental differences of native speakers and is a prerequisite for a successful dialogue of cultures [L. Cummings, 2005, p. 112-113]. What is the essence of the background vocabulary is that if we compare conceptually equivalent words in different languages, they will differ from each other due to the fact that each of them is associated with a certain set of knowledge. Therefore, the background vocabulary forms the most complex group, in terms of determining their national and cultural content. As already mentioned, the study of the problem of the existence of a special component in the meaning of the word, which at least to some extent contained information about the socio-historical reality in which a particular language exists and functions, has been conducted by Russian linguists for many years. However, the first fundamental monograph devoted to the study, description, and most importantly - proof of the linguistic nature of the new concept - "lexical background" - was devoted to the book by E.M. Vereshagin and V.G. Kostomarov "Linguistic theory of the word". In it, the authors investigate the significance of background knowledge for communication in meaningful communication, that is, a detailed sociolinguistic analysis of a word as a unit of language functioning in a certain social context is carried out [E.M. Vereshagin, V.G. Kostomarov, 1990, p. 156].

A linguistic norm is what is considered right as opposed to what is wrong (i.e., it is considered wrong and is perceived as a violation of the norm). Norm and violation of norm (= right and wrong) are correlative concepts: one is not only realized in opposition to the other, but also necessarily presupposes its presence. The language itself is social, because it is the essence of a set of norms.

The violation of the old norm and the emergence of a new one may also result from the influence of a foreign language or the influence of one dialect on another, the influence of a literary language on dialects. Together, there cannot be two norms within a language at the same time, although all kinds of fluctuations in individual indicators of the norm are quite typical. It is obvious that the formation of new norms and the elimination of old ones is a clear manifestation of the general dynamics of the language.



The term "linguistic situation" is most often defined as a set of functionally stratified linguistic formations (languages, territorial dialects, local dialects) serving communication in a given territory or within one state. The dynamics of the language situation is a change in the established, relatively stable correlation of functionally stratified language formations (languages and dialects). This process proceeds with varying degrees of intensity under the influence of a complex complex of objective and subjective factors [R.A. Hudson, 2004, p. 67].

The language situation includes the following mandatory components:

- 1) Social conditions of language functioning;
- 2) Spheres and environments of its use;
- 3) The form of its existence.

The social conditions of the existence of a language include:

- 1) socio-economic formations;
- 2) Forms of ethnic community;
- 3) The level of sovereignty;
- 4) The form of state autonomy;
- 5) The level of cultural development;
- 6) The number of people and their territorial compactness;
- 7) Ethnic environment.

The areas of language use are the most important component of the language situation. They are determined by the topic of communication, the time and place of communication, the area of social activity.

The most important areas are:

- 1) Economic activity,
- 2) socio-political activity,
- 3) Everyday life,
- 4) organized training,
- 5) Fiction,
- 6) Mass media,
- 7) Aesthetic impact,
- 8) Oral folk art,
- 9) Science,
- 10) All types of office work,
- 11) Personal correspondence,
- 12) Religious cult.

The given list of spheres is not canonical and may decrease or increase in relation to a particular language.

Idioethnic features, apparently, are more strongly manifested in the sphere of everyday life, fiction, mass communication, aesthetic influence, oral folk art, personal correspondence and are smoothed out in the spheres of socio-political activity, organized education, science, all types of clerical work and religious worship.

The medium of language use is communication:

- 1) Within the family,
- 2) Inside the production team,
- 3) Within a social group,
- 4) Within a locality or region,
- 5) Inside a temporarily organized concentration of

people,

- 6) Inside the whole nation,
- 7) International,
- 8) Universal.

## CONCLUSION

The language of any nation keeps an exceptionally fascinating narrative about the centuries-old history of everyday creative efforts of people to know, comprehend and subjugate the objective reality surrounding them. Therefore, the importance of ethnolinguistic research is obvious, designed to penetrate into the secrets of the formation of designations of objects of the world around a person – concrete objects and abstract concepts.

However, the sociology of language is not limited to using the results obtained by sociolinguists for the linguistic characteristics of certain groups. Its tasks are much broader. Coming "from society", i.e. depending on the linguistic characteristics of society and its constituent social groups, the sociologist of language determines which languages and language subsystems a particular group uses, in which areas of communication and with what regularity, what are the numerical ratios of persons who own different communicative codes and subcodes, establishes quantitative indicators characterizing the use of language (languages, language subsystems) in the media, in science, in education, artistic creativity, etc. Such studies are especially relevant in multilingual societies, where important parameters of language situations are the distribution of languages in different social and ethnic groups, the characteristics of groups in terms of their use of these languages for various communicative purposes, public assessments of "their" and "foreign" languages, etc.

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