SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACH AND GENDER STUDIES IN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract:

The formulation of the topic and the related issues are determined by the main requirements concerning one of the language functions, particularly the communicative one which plays a leading role in human communication. The theory of the socio-cultural approach is based on understanding the social nature of language. The communication process involves the use of the social context forming a broad socio-cultural context of the interaction of subjects in communication, along with the cultural one. The sociolinguistic component, the embodiment of the ethnosocial linguistic culture, acts as an external and internal condition for speech activity. The article discusses the main approaches to the research of the social role of language in communication, presented by the works of famous scientists. Language as one of the main tools of human communication is inherently a social phenomenon. Its functioning is determined by such social factors as cultural norms, traditions, values of different societies. Additionally, the society itself contains differences between native speakers: their age, gender differences, social status, level of culture and education, region of residence, as well as differences in speech behavior depending on the situation and participants in communication. The sociality of the language determines the linguistic changes assimilated by society and manifested in speech.

Keywords: sociolinguistic approach, human gender studies, cultural linguistics, gender, status-role relations, discourse, speech behavior.

Introduction

For a successful implementation of intercultural communication, it is necessary to consider the influence of social factors on the speech behavior of communicants in addition to linguistic knowledge. This means sociolinguistic knowledge, allowing a successful integration into the society of the country of the chosen language. In each specific communicative situation, it is necessary to take into account the cultural and

social characteristics of communication partners, correctly choose and consistently implement a communication strategy for the productive construction of intercultural communication in the context of expanding cooperation, integration processes, and globalization. As a social product that functions in a specific social and historical reality and absorbs the entire cultural experience of society, language becomes an expression of sociolinguistic culture that determines the characteristics of communication. The connection between language and society, language and culture presupposes skills not only of the language code but also of the sociolinguistic knowledge and cultural norms of the given linguistic community, including gender characteristics, manifested in the speech behavior of men and women. The sociolinguistic component is presented in the text as a product of speech activity in oral and written forms, meeting the purposes of communication in all discourses, including gender (Lebedeva et al., 2018; Zheltukhina et al., 2020). The sociality of the language determines linguistic changes adapted by society and manifested in the language. The interaction between the language and gender of the speaker in a particular language is considered within the research of social variability of the language, which is understood as the socially determined existence of language variants serving various subgroups of the general linguistic community.

History of the Issue

The understanding of the foremost aspect of learning language as a form of social behavior with the help of linguistic analysis first appears in the work of the American researcher N. Chomsky (1965). In his work he draws the line between "grammatical competence" and "practical implementation of linguistic laws." He defines the first as the linguistic knowledge of an ideal native speaker, the biological functioning of the brain, allowing a person to create an endless series of grammatically correct statements that make up the language. The second is the actual utterance of the language in specific situations. In the future W. Labov (1966) argues about the sociality of the language, introducing the concept of linguistic variation. In his opinion, free variation

becomes a kind of a dump for various types of linguistic variability - expressive-stylistic, social, etc. The researcher notes that when interpreting linguistic variations, one should consider not only the attitude within the language system but also the influence of external sociolinguistic factors. Therefore, the linguistic variability is not determined by the interaction of relations within the linguistic system but as a socially conditioned fragmentation of the language into different variants. He describes his conclusion based on phonetic variations (Labov, 1966). In this scientific field, specialists direct their attention, not to the internal structure of the language but study how people use the language in different societies. By this, all factors which can affect the functioning and the use of the language, are considered: from the various social characteristics of the speakers themselves (age, gender, level of education and culture, type of professional activity) to the social conditions of a particular speech act.

Systematic gender studies improve in connection to the formation and development of sociolinguistics as a branch of linguistics when the understanding of the sociality of the language as such appears (Baktiyarova et al., 2021). The research of linguistic variability from the side of sociolinguistics is essential for gender studies since the choice of language variants is influenced by social variability, which includes gender differences between native speakers, along with the conditions of the process of the communicative act.

Results and Discussion

The most covered and detailed model about the social determinants of speech activity was described by D. Hymes (1972), according to whom the sociolinguistic description should take into account the interconnection and interaction between a variety of components: the form of the message, being equally important as the content itself, the intonation, and how the message is formed; the social situation is somehow reflected in the form of a message; the setting or "scene" of a speech act, meaning physical environment of the speech act, time and place, "psychological environment"; "key," meaning the expressive and stylistic coloring of the speech act,

reflecting the social situation - role relationships between communicants, their status. The Component "canal" means a choice in language transition - written, oral, etc. The Component - speech forms, different organization forms of the speech resources of a collective, includes languages and dialects, specialized functional varieties of the language what may be called functional styles or registers; and various argos and jargons. The norms of interaction mean all the rules of speech behavior that are socially normative, specific types of behavior that accompany speech. The interaction norms should be analyzed by knowing the social structure of the community and its typical social relations, often specific to a particular culture. Knowledge of the norms of interpretation of speech behavior is crucial in a communicative act between the representatives of different ethnic groups (Hymes, 1972: 58-59). The works of S.J. Savignon (1997) contributed to the development of the communication theory, identifying four components covering its content, highlighting the social rules of using the language, understanding the roles of participants in communication, the information they exchange and the functions of their interaction; the component of the utterance, being the ability to perceive or produce a superphrasal unity, not only a separate sentence; a component of speech strategy used to compensate for the imperfection of knowledge of the rules, possession of something, when an individual wants to let the interlocutor know that he intends to continue communication, but must collect his thoughts, did not understand any word, etc. (Savignon, 1997: 8).

The notion of social variability, the main principle in sociolinguistics, which is understood as the primary component of the influence on the choice of linguistic means of formulating an utterance, lies on two opposite ideas - stratification and situational. The first is a reflection of the social class structure of society. "The unit of the stratification measurement of a language is linguistic communities with their social and communicative resources. The unit of the situational dimension of the language is the roles, which reflect the socially conditioned relations between the participants in the communicative act" (Karasik, 1992: 21-22).

Stratification variability supposes different rules for linguistic resources in the components of the national language (literary language - socio dialects and territorial dialects) while situational variability determines the predominant use of certain linguistic resources, depending on the social situation. Stratification variability finds its expression in linguistic and speech differences which are found between the representatives of different social strata and groups. Situational variability manifests itself in the change of language, in the alternation of dialects.

Social and linguistic variability are in a relationship of complementarity. M.K. Halliday (1978) defines linguistic variability as variability relative to the speaker ("dialect") and relative to the language ("register" or "diatype"), which truly correlates with the division of social variability into stratification and situational ones (Halliday, 1978; Alekseeva et al., 2015)

Naturally, there are communication rules in various societies that ensure the success of a dialogue. They are formulated in the well-known postulates of V.P. Grace (1985: 217-237). These postulates, presuppositions, performatives, and other concepts of modern linguistics of speech are not sociolinguistic in the usual sense of the word since it has to operate in any society and is associated with the universal laws of human behavior. However, these rules are subjected to restrictions related to the specifics of this particular society, which is already the subject of the sociolinguistics study.

The commonplace in the analyzed definitions is the sociolinguistic context of the communicative act.

Linguistic markers of social relations, norms of politeness, expressions of folk wisdom, communication registers, dialects, and accents. Markers of social relations including the choice and the use of greeting formulas, forms of communication, exclamations, conventions in dialogue, vary depending on the status of the communicators, their relationships, the situation, and the register of communication.

It is necessary to dwell on the relationship between the concepts of "social status" and "social role". Social status, according to several researchers, is "a collection of rights and

obligations". The role is "a dynamic aspect of status. When an individual exercises his rights and obligations, he fulfills a role" (Karasik, 1992: 5). The status answers the question: "Who is he?", And the role answers the question: "What is he doing?" In the monograph by V.I. Karasik (1992), the term "social status" refers to "the relative position of a person in the social system, which includes rights and obligations and the resulting mutual expectations of behavior. At the same time, the personal characteristics of a man recede into the background". That is, it is a formal structural social characteristic of a person. A social role is a system of expected behavior determined by the normative duties and the rights corresponding to these duties.

Linguistic markers of social relations include courtesy rules, etiquette formulas, proverbs, idioms, catchphrases, and so on.

Within the framework of the problems under consideration, the question of the registers of communication arises, under which A.D. Schweitzer and L.V. Nikolsky (1978) understand "the system and the patterns of selection of linguistic means depending on the social situation" (p. 75). The register of communication varies widely, so, within the framework of the same linguistic community, you can find various types of communication from high style to vernacular and even familiarity, which are formalized by the appropriate linguistic means.

Following M.K. Halliday's (1978: 35) semiotic model, the communication register is interpreted as "the area of meanings and means of expression determined by the situation" and is conditioned by three variables: 1) what happens, 2) who is involved, 3) what role language plays. These three variables are the main conditions to determine the register of communication, which can vary from situation to situation and depends on the type of discourse and stylistic means used in communication.

Situational types have three dimensions: field, tonality, and mode. The field is the subject area of communication; tonality characterizes the degree of formalization of the relations of communicants, the presence of seniority and hierarchy, the degree of acquaintance, and others; modus is associated with a channel of communication (oral or written, prepared or spontaneous communication) (Karasik, 1992; Gubaidullina et al., 2016). Situational types of communication are diverse in nature, in which the social side, and so on, all kinds and channels of communication - the linguistic component, are in interaction and interdependence.

Subsystems of a particular language are also distinguished based on gender. By themselves, linguistic differences can be studied structurally, but social aspects are also superimposed on them.

During the period the existence awareness of a unique form of the female language, an attitude arose towards it as a subordinate to the male language, expressed in the so-called Androcentric rule, which postulates the priority of male speech and speech behavior as correct and exemplary over female speech, which was initially considered as a deviation from the norm. The naive-linguistic representation of the model of a woman's speech behavior is established on the stereotypes existing in society, on the opinion about the existence of specific female themes due to the sphere of her life, about what is permissible and undesirable in female speech (Coates, 1993) According to N.G. Bozhanova (2012: 71), the opinion of scientists who considered the systems of the language of men and women as two separate languages turned out to be wrong. Under consideration of female and male speech behavior from the point of view of modern sociolinguistics, it concludes that the phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, stylistic, and discursive features of these two systems suggest that the gender of the speaker only predetermines the choice of form.

Speaking about the origin of the scientific linguistic theory of gender, the name of R. Lakoff (1973: 64-44) should be mentioned; he identified the main distinctive features of the female language, namely: a specific vocabulary reflecting the sphere of female activity; features of more detailed color and shade nominations; the use of affective definitions and intensifier words in speech; the use of dividing questions; the desire for restraint and softening of statements, hypercorrectness, expressed in a tendency to use euphemisms.

The followers of the Sapir-Whorf theory also contributed to the development of gender studies in linguistics, postulating the following statements: language imposes its restrictions on human perception and thinking, and, consequently, on the surrounding reality, its representation in the linguistic picture of the world; men control the language, meaning a determination of the meaning and norms during the use of linguistic means, from which follows the following statement that a woman is initially placed at a disadvantage as a user of the language because she is forced to use the masculine language (Bozhanova, 2012: 72). In our opinion, this point of view can exist for human groups to this day, it is true for human collectives, characterized by gender inequality, which, of course, is reflected in the linguistic behavior of men and women. Nevertheless, gender differences between two systems of the same language exist, and they have a different sociolinguistic nature. In today's consumer society, offering various services, there are different audiences - male and female - that must be accounted for in different areas of advertising, commerce, entertainment, and others. The woman occupies an increasingly notable place in society, which cannot but affect the dynamics of the language. In connection with the last statement, the research of A.V. Kirilina (2003) is of interest, who was the first to draw the attention to the distinction between purely feminist and scientific approaches to the study of gender linguistic manifestations, and also proposed a language model consisting of two levels - metagender (common for both sexes) and gender (by sex), used for different purposes. A priori, considering that the concepts of sex and gender are not equivalent, she once again raised the issue of the relationship between gender and sociolinguistics (Kirilina, 2002: 11). Sex is a biological concept, while gender is understood as a specific group having its discourse. Sociolinguistics is directly related to the concept of discourse. W. Bright (1966: 249) points to the systematic nature of the interdependence between linguistic and social structures, between which the establishment of a cause-and-effect relationship is possible. This conclusion is required to determine the relationship existing between gender and the linguistic design of a discourse utterance.

Many researchers spoke about the connection between the social side of language, influencing the choice of linguistic means that determine any discourse, scientists such as A. Ek Jan van (2000), T.A. Van Dijk and V. Kinch (1988), M. Canale and M. Swain (1980). These authors introduced the concept of "situational context of speech interaction" and showed how language is used in social situations to perform communicative functions, how utterance and communicative functions can be combined following the principles of discourse. The concept of discourse means a coherent text or a superphrasal unity. Already M. Canale and M. Swain (1980) highlighted the discursive competence including two basic concepts - "cohesion" and "coherence." Cohesion means the cohesion of words in a sentence and the cohesion of sentences in a text. Coherence implies grammatical, stylistic, and logical-semantic integrity of the text. M. Canale and M. Swain (1980: 27-31) understands discourse as the ability to combine grammatical forms and meaning to achieve the unity of spoken and written text. Discourse involves the use of appropriate communication strategies and the interpretation of texts. The text means any fragment of the spoken or written text of any volume notable for its unity. The relationship between a text and discourse is expressed in the following: text is an abstract-formal construction but discourse is a text generated as a result of communication. N.D. Arutyunova (1990: 136-137) designates discourse as a text placed in speech.

Therefore, the text is understood as a complex communicative mechanism, as a communication mediator, materializing the addressee's strategic program, perceived and interpreted by the addressee.

A sociolinguistic analysis of discourse is implemented accounting the institutions that have developed in society (education, medicine, legal proceedings, army, sports, politics, commerce, religion, science, and others), each of which corresponds to a special institutional type of discourse reflecting communication within the given framework of status role relationship. It is logical to assume that gender discourse requires specific sociolinguistic resources of communication design. It includes participants, conditions, organization, methods, and material of

communication, that is, people in their status-role and situational-communicative roles, the sphere of communication and the communicative environment, motives, goals, strategies, channel, register, tonality, style, and genre of communication, and finally, body sign communication (text and/or non-verbal signs). The minimum unit of discourse is usually considered an utterance or phrase, which is part of a dialogical unity (oral mode of discourse), or sphere phrase unity (written mode of discourse). Higher-order units are considered a communicative episode (fragment) and a discursive event (text).

All of the above is indicative and can be summarized as a conclusion. Gender research in linguistics is implemented in several directions, which come down to the study of various points of the language that have a sign of gender. In our opinion, in this regard, comparative historical studies are highly promising, in the course of which the relationship mechanism between language and thinking is clarified and defined, the model for constructing a linguistic picture of the world from a gender point of view on the material of various languages. Gender research in the communicative aspect is developed in discourse theory. Social variability affects linguistic, meaning the choice of linguistic means for expressing thoughts. This opinion can be supplemented by the statement of J. Coates (1993): "... there are no forms associated with only one sex, but there is a tendency to preference for certain forms by men and women". The study of linguistic variability in the gender aspect is the task of modern gender linguistics.

Conclusion

As is known, the language is the property of the entire linguistic community, but due to the existence of various socio-cultural and other groups in a particular society, the ability of the language to varying itself is manifested depending on the purpose and tasks of communication in a certain situation between communicants who have different or the same status-role, as well as gender relations. In other words, the process of choosing a language option for creating a socially correct statement is influenced by such factors as the role

relationships and social status of communicants, their orientation towards certain social values and norms, place of residence, origin, ethnicity, and occupation, as well as belonging to a particular gender, which finds its linguistic expression in the organization of their speech behavior following social variability.

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