

Are Evolving Paradigms in Sociolinguistics Turning It into a Well-Developed Discipline?

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Abstract

The current review aims at highlighting the main theoretical assumptions of historical sociolinguistics associated with its origins with special attention given to how these theoretical assumptions can assist language activists in their endeavor to provide the right conditions for analyzing linguistic variations and changes. Clearly, this review is organized around closely related paragraphs accompanied by commentaries on the historical sociolinguistics. This review provides a clearly written and concise introduction to the origins, philosophical developments, motivations, and main paradigms in historical sociolinguistics with a particular focus on the basic research done in the field over the last four decades with its diverse foundations in sociolinguistics, social history, historical linguistics, histories of individual languages, corpus linguistics, philology, discourse studies, socio-pragmatics, and traditional dialectology. Comparing the first four decades based on the studies conducted in the area, it is clearly observed that various studies have been carried out based on genre, speaker variables, and integration, respectively. This review also demystifies the fundamental distinction between principles and generalizations.

Keywords: historical sociolinguistics, origins, paradigms, linguistic variations, traditional dialectology, philosophical developments

INTRODUCTION

Language is an inevitable phenomenon of the world and plays a momentous role in human life. Nevertheless, there is no denying that majority of people still consider the rigorous scrutiny of language as dispensable and a venue that does not deserve ample consideration. According to Bloomfield (1993), "Perhaps because of its familiarity, we rarely observe it, taking it rather for granted, as we do breathing or walking. The effects of language are remarkable, and include much of what distinguishes man from the animals" (p.3).

Language is closely intertwined with society; it gets diminished to a set of pure linguistic details such as sounds, lexis and syntactic forms when factored out from the social contexts in which it is utilized. The increasing grasp of the interplay between language and society has led to the advent of the scholarly field known as 'sociolinguistics'. A scrutiny of language and its users undertaken concurrently may be said to establish the discipline of Sociolinguistics. A person may not constantly utilize one analogous language variation for verbal communication under all circumstances. He may be utilizing more than one variety. The variations of language he uses are caused by socio-cultural determinants. Sociolinguistics, accordingly, studies the verbal demeanor of the person who is an affiliate of a speech territory. Coulmas (2001) points out that

Sociolinguistics is the empirical study of how language is used in a society. Combining linguistic and sociological theories and methods, it is an interdisciplinary field of research, which attaches great significance both to the variability of language and to the multiplicity of languages, and language forms in a given society (p.563).

In many cases, people appraise others not only from the veritable content of what they say or write but also from the manner they apply language. What compels people to resort to the manner they utilize language and what differentiates one individual's variety from another's are complicated conundrums dealt with in sociolinguistics. The close association between language and culture or linguistic construction and social construction can easily be illustrated with the instance of a boy whose linguistic utterances differ with the interlocutor and the social setting despite he may be expressing the identical view. The boy tells his friends, 'Come along with me'. But he does not utilize the same linguistic structure if the recipient is his father. He uses the more polite form, 'Father, please come along with me'. The boy turns to the much more formal and polite usage, 'Sir could you please accompany along with me', when the recipient is someone socially preeminent to him and a social proximity does not exist between them.

How individuals deviate from each other in the manner they speak and what leads to such variations shape a provocative field of study. Some of the variations in speech may be idiosyncratic, but beyond that there are diversities associated with group or class, gender, context and many such determinants. Males vary from females in their pitch and further in the way they use language. Correspondingly, an adult never communicates like a teen-aged individual. These two are biologically attributed to diversities of language use. Other than these two, there are spectrums of social variation in language influenced by other factors. Discrepancies in social status, cultivation, affluence, and power do make significant impact on the mode of speech. In the words of Guy (1988):

Bankers clearly do not talk the same as bus boys, and professors don't sound like plumbers. They signal the social differences between them by features of their phonology, grammar and lexical choice, just as they do extra-linguistically by their choices in clothing, cars, and so on (p.37).

As commented by Trudgill (1995):

Language is very much a social phenomenon. A study of language totally without reference to its social context inevitably leads to the omission of some of the more complex and interesting aspects of language and to the loss of opportunities for further theoretical progress. One of the main factors that have led to the growth of sociolinguistic research has been the recognition of the importance of the fact that language is a very variable phenomenon, and that this variability may have as much to do with society as with language (p.20).

The territory of sociolinguistics has broadened further. Some of the issues covered under sociolinguistics include: language and variationism, identity, ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion, globalization, relativity, and dialogic meaning.

LINGUISTIC VARIATION AND LINGUISTIC CHANGE

This section addresses the evolution of two seemingly uncompromising sides of the same coin in the study of language variation and change (i.e. diachrony and synchrony) which the scope of historical sociolinguistics tries to hybridize in a kind of supportive companion piece. Differently stated, this part has been built upon the controversy surrounding the relationship between diachrony and synchrony that may be attributed to the apparent differences in the essence of each one. The uncompromising approach to the issue of diachrony and synchrony is that used by Saussure (1959) to distinguish two approaches to the study of language: diachronic as opposed to synchronic. He demystifies the distinction as follows: “[e]verything that relates to the static side of our science is synchronic; everything that has to do with evolution is diachronic”. Correspondingly, synchrony and diachrony designate respectively a language-state and an evolutionary phase. To clarify this point, Janda and Joseph (2003) point out that

[t]he utilization of all reasonable means to extend our knowledge of what might have been going on in the past, even though it is not directly observable. Normally, this will involve a heavy concentration on the immediate present, but it is in fact more realistic just to say we wish to gain a maximum of information from a maximum of potential sources: different times and different places – and, in the case of language, also different regional and social dialects, different contexts, different styles, different topics, and so on (p.37).

Nevertheless, contrary to scholars who try to show that diachrony and synchrony are irreconcilable, Jakobson (1972) says about the impossibility of separating diachrony from synchrony. In other words, he believes that integration of the static with the dynamic is one of the most fundamental dialectic paradoxes that determine the sprite of the language. This statement by Jakobson is supported by many others. As a case in point, Labov (1972) supports such integration by admitting: “ [t]he same mechanisms which operated to produce the large scale changes of the past may be observed operating in the current changes taking place around us”. However, it would be a mistake to reach a compromise in all diachronic/synchronic hurdles (e.g. layering, polysemy).

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Interest in languages has had a long history and it can be traced back as far as the ancient Greeks when great philosophers of the time sought to discover the most effective sources of rhetorics in order to support polemical discourse underlying their philosophical views about life and universe (Howatt, 1999). Since then, attempts to describe what language is, how it is learned and how it is used for solving language related problems in real life have gained momentum and have established a voluminous body of discourse whose main goal has been to demystify the complexities of human language.

Unsurprisingly, a substantial part of long discourse has been focused on the nature of language and how it works. Under such perspectivization, linguistics – the study of language scientifically – has created a wealth of useful information revolutionizing the development of an insightful technical dialectic, which has promoted our understanding of the role of language in human affairs. Language is mainly used for a myriad of purposes in the real civic ecology, and here is where sociolinguistics steps in – trying to solve the language problems influencing human life (Schmitt, 2002). This is in fact the main objective of sociolinguistics in a narrow sense. However, Wilkins (1996) defines sociolinguistics in a broad sense stating that:

...sociolinguistics is concerned with increasing understanding of the major function of language in human affairs and thereby with providing the knowledge necessary for those who are one responsible for taking language – related decisions whether the need for those arises in the classroom, the workplace, the law court, or the laboratory (p.7).

In the course of the past four and half decenniums, studies of the interplays between language and society have amalgamated to constitute the field of scholarly study known as sociolinguistics. Differently stated, it is in the twentieth century that the field of sociolinguistics elevated to the position of an independent discipline; but it is observed that systematized examination of human speech commenced with the nineteenth century itself. Even from the end of the eighteenth century, taking inspiration from Rousseau's ideas, many scholarly figures and practitioners initiated to manifest much enthusiasm in the study of native dialect and promptly they were accompanied by the linguists who were keen to indicate that dialects along with literary languages had creditable pedigrees in received philosophy. A scholarly event that gave a voice to this movement was the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 that was the result of a collaborative effort by Wordsworth and Coleridge. It included poems divergent from those that had composed in English language until that time.

In the prologue to the *Lyrical Ballads*, the authors picked holes in the manipulated diction of the poems composed in the eighteenth century and upheld that poetry should be composed in the undoctored language of people. In fact they developed the momentum to form the language of poetry, notably dialogue to consider current diction and to make the speech of its characters less stilted.

The major characters dealt with in poetry to that time had been largely members of upper echelon urbanites. But Wordsworth's (1793) concern deviated strongly from such people and contemplated on the peasants who lived in close proximity and communion to nature. Differently stated, for him, real people comprised of ordinary people from the proletariat and members of classes other than the upper-class urbanites. In this way Wordsworth (1793) notified the death of the Augustan era and the commencement of Romanticism which placed emphasis on the spirit of the folk in language, markedly as depicted in dialect.

TRADITIONAL DIALECTOLOGY AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS

It is very enlightening to catch a fleeting glimpse of how dialect studies of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century have paved way to sociolinguistics of the present. Nowadays, sociolinguistics is much seen as quantitative sociolinguistics and/or urban dialectology since it occupies a good portion of sociolinguistics despite the fact it covers other issues as well. The dialectologists of the second half of the 19th century focused attention on aggregating details about geographically dispersed and mostly rustic variations of language. Their plan was mainly tracing the evolution of modern languages from prior varieties. Scholars of urban dialectology, on the other hand, have been endeavoring to evaluate the features of urban diversities with a perspective to associating them with social determinants. They perceive of their study as one of the numerous lines of doing linguistics. As Trudgill (1995) puts it, contemporary inquiry on the subject:

[...] is concerned to learn more about language, and to investigate topics such as the mechanisms of linguistic change, the nature of linguistic variability, and the structure of linguistic systems. All work in this category is aimed ultimately at improving linguistic theory and at developing our understanding of the nature of language (p.11).

The effort made by dialectologists helped contend the social implication of language; but apart from that not much work carried out in this area. It took some more time before the subject came out of its immaturity and grew in to a well-developed discipline.

Plenty of progression in sociolinguistics has been made since the late 1960s. In the recent decades there has emerged a far-reaching consensus in the discipline due to the apprehension that sociolinguistics can shed further light on the nature of language and the nature of society concurrently. The discipline is proceeding along the course of development and it is interested more in the study of languages of urban societies. Accordingly, many of the traditional notions have been redefined in accord with the developing language usage.

Many of the nineteenth century linguistic practitioners were especially involved with the documentation of historical transformations leading to the evolution of languages and they diverged in the source materials they employed in their works. One group of philologists made use of document remains of dead languages or classical scripts, inscriptions or documents shedding light on the earlier levels of modern literary

languages. Their procedure of tracking the advancement of modern languages from earlier prehistoric varieties of protolanguages greatly resembled the process executed by biological scientists in scrutinizing the evolution of animal beings.

A second group of philologists became involved in the categorical study of oral practices of rural populace and ethnic groups who, according to them, provided living proof of evolutionary sequences. They turned away from written documents for the empirical study of authentic diction. Practitioners of dialectology inclined in this direction launched in to a series of field studies in which rustic speech was analyzed either through mail questionnaires or directly through fieldwork by inquirers who frequently walked many miles in order to amass dialect samples by means of direct methods.

These designs of inquiry had many pitfalls; but they served to demystify that language is fundamentally a social construction and that social constituents are much complicated in language variation, thus denouncing earlier ideas of biological or geographical determinism. According to Lehrmann (1973), a significant contribution of dialect geography to the present lies in making us cognizant of the great variety in language. Through the variation and wealth of forms it has uncovered, dialect geography has widened considerably our views on language. Historical grammars no longer treat languages as single strata, but rather as complexes composed of numerous data. A given speaker masters some of these. But the complete language is discernible only as one collects material from a variety of speakers. Lehrmann (1973) adds:

But even the early dialect geographers went on to scrutinize the geographically differing layers of language. Subsequent study caused concern for strata determined also by social, functional and occupational discrepancies. In this way a view of language more complex than that of the founders of historical linguistics has been contributed to historical linguistics by the study of dialect geography. Contemporary study of language variation according to geographical, occupational, and social groups is conducted in the field of sociolinguistics (p.127).

Thus, it can be noticed that the plotting of dialect distributions based on territorial variation has been traditionally recognized as dialect geography and it has engaged many methods and assumptions from another ramification of linguistics known as historical/diachronic linguistics. According to dialect geographers, the dialects of a language are developed as the users segregate themselves from each other over time and space. Clearly, the diversification of a language in to dialects comes to such an extent that the users are no longer intelligible to each other; this contributes to the derivation of new languages from the dialects. This is how, Latin, over a long amount of time transformed into many languages like French, Spanish, and Italian. This kind of diversification takes in to consideration only the two determinants, time and space. As an illustration, the British and American varieties of English are set apart by a few centuries of political independence and by the Atlantic Ocean. In a like manner, Northumbrian and Cockney English are separated by approximately three hundred miles and many centuries apart.

20TH CENTURY AND THE ADVENT OF NEW IDEAS

In America, since the first decades of the twentieth century, up till the advent of Chomsky's generative grammar, the accepted linguistics of the time was become heavily involved in the prompt and detailed description of a vast number of dying native American languages. The descriptive linguist considered language as a single entity standing alone outside the domain of the social structure. The descriptive analysis of a language provided insights based on its structure stated categorically in terms of linguistic features. In such formalistic description, the addresser, the addressee, the theme, and the scope and situations of its use were not considered pertinent to structural description. The adoption of various styles of communication in case of a monolingual and use of different language varieties and styles in case of multilingual was not regarded something to be discerned by a linguist. The descriptive linguist was fulfilled with providing an account of the language variety a person used; it was none of his interest as to why a person utilized various speech styles or language varieties. It did not happen to the linguist that employment of a language or divergent registers or styles of it constituted a system, which could be unwinded by dint of the social structure. The scrutiny of semantics was also factored out from the scope of linguistics.

The second half of the twentieth century is characterized by a refreshed enthusiasm in the study of language in its socio-cultural context triggered by a controversy over Chomskian principles associated with the autonomy of language. Chomskian linguistics was erected on the autonomy of the syntax and it had the competence-performance binary as one of its strong foundations. Lavandera (1988) in her article entitled, "The Study of Language in its Socio-cultural Context" appraises the situation thus: "It does not seem far-fetched to hold Chomsky indirectly responsible for the accelerated development of sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics at the end of the 1960 and for the emphasis laid upon pragmatics and discourse analysis in the mid 1970" (p.1).

Classifications like *langue-parole* and competence-performance as developed by Saussure and Chomsky respectively, require a little more details, as they are pivotal to fathoming how historical/descriptive linguistics increasingly smoothed the path for 'socially realistic linguistics' (Labov, 1966). During the period of times when linguists have been in pursuit of the pure, optimum form of language amongst the wide variations utilized by individuals. De Saussure, the Swiss linguist postulated that the homogeneous, pure system of language kept in the 'collective mind' of the society and for Chomsky it was roughly theoretical - it existed in the mind of the ideal speaker-interlocutor. Chomsky refuses to accept Saussure's ideas of *langue* as a frame of material or a repertoire of ideas from which the individual locutor selects his *parole*. On the contrary, Chomsky observes language as comprising of the locutor, or recipient's innate knowledge of his language (competence) and his actual application of language in plausible contexts (performance).

According to Chomsky (1965), competence is a fundamental generative process, which will find ever more potential acts of performance. Albeit very limited is really known of the process and how it is operated, a case study of the five-year-old forming sentences

he has not heard before theorizes the likelihood of an internal grammar, which authorizes the formation of new material. In the same vein, Bernstein (1972) believes that:

Chomsky neatly severs the study of the rule system of language from the study of the social rules, which determine their contextual use. He does this by drawing an absolute and principled distinction between competence and performance. Competence refers to the child's tacit understanding of the rule system, performance relates to the essential social use to which the rule system is put. Competence refers to man abstracted from contextual constraints. Performance refers to man in the grip of the contextual constraints, which determine his speech acts (p.160).

Saussure, who early in the 20th century viewed language as a 'social fact', suggested that a language is a social product and that every society manifests itself through language. Nevertheless, Saussure never troubled to scrutinize the social side of language; differently stated, he was intrigued in studying language as a structural phenomenon with its own inherent set of rules.

Saussurean idea was that parole or language in actual application by various individuals was too altered to authorize inquiry and only langue could be analyzed. However, empirical hindrance emerged when descriptive linguists commenced to examine langue because langue was not accessible to close observation by the senses. Langue was existed in the 'collective awareness' of the speech populace and what could be inspected was the parole only. An empirical approach meant intense scrutiny of language in actual use and so a tough adoption of Saussure's doctrine became a difficulty for the descriptive/historical linguist who found performance, parole, or usage fluctuating to be defined. The sociologists who regarded language as part of society and culture were specifically concerned with language in actual application and so they disintegrated from any study or theory that did not give due importance to performance or parole. Lavandera (1988) remarks upon the situation thus:

The reaction to Chomsky's position that the systematicity of language is confined to competence took a number of different forms. Some, seeing systematicity outside of competence in Chomsky's narrow use of the term, attempted to extend the notion of competence to cover most of the aspects that Chomsky ascribed to performance. An example is Hymes's 'communicative competence' (Models..) which he defined as the knowledge of the abstract rules of a language required to produce sound / meaning correspondences and the ability to use those correspondences between sound, meaning and form in socially and culturally appropriate ways. On the other hand some saw system in performance as well and began to develop theories specifically of the former. But whichever path was taken, a growing core of investigators was united in the conviction that the Chomskian paradigm was too narrow to accommodate most of the interesting questions about language (p.1).

ORIGINS AND MAIN FIGURES

Over a span of time, many linguists came forward with the assertion that an asocial linguistics is not beneficial and that clear understandings in to language can be acquired only if such matters as diversity and application are involved as part of the data which must be clarified in an adequate linguistic theory; an adequate theory of language must have something to suggest about the applications of language. An understanding and appreciation of linguistic variation connotes that language is not just an abstract system of rules or object of study. It is something that people utilize for all sorts of conversational encounters. Accordingly, there provided fertile grounds of studying language hinged on its use and not as a mere object.

Some of the preeminent researchers and practitioners that contributed to the tremendous development of sociolinguistics as a discipline in its formative stages on a parallel with other disciplines (such as linguistics, sociology, philosophy, anthropology and others) are: Humboldt, Boas, Sapir, Whorf, Bloomfield, Malinowsky, and Firth.

The tantalizing notion that language has a powerful impact on the speakers' thinking and cultural world view has long been one of the most significant discussions in psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research. Building on Humboldt's (1836) polemical views about language, Sapir and his student Whorf claimed that language and culture are interrelated. Edward Sapir is probably the first linguist of the century to declare that an individual's view of his or her own immediate surrounding is influenced by the native language s/he applies. Sapir's ideas on language were backed up by Benjamin Lee Whorf, whose analogous study of American Indian language Hopi and the European languages equipped him with adequate information in support of his ideas.

Whorf (1956) maintained that language is not simply a vehicle for expressing ideas but rather it serves as "the shaper of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock of trade...." (pp. 212-214). As such, different speech communities possess typical and unique codified patterns of language by which they can view the realities of the world in particular ways.

The strong version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis known as linguistic determinism holds that members of a given speech community think differently because their background linguistic system by its very nature makes them perceive the world through the lenses that are exclusively cut and shaped for them. Although most sociolinguists oppose the theoretical claims of the strong version, the majority adopt the weak version of Whorfian hypothesis labeled as linguistic relativity, asserting that perceptions, thoughts, and even behaviors of individuals belonging to a particular speech community are influenced by the language they speak.

Clearly, they used this analogy not because of the abstract meaning of truth relativism demystified above, but as a remark to Einstein's theory of relativity, which inform us that diversities in one's perceptions are the outcome of discrepancies in his speed and

position. As such, Sapir contends that a divergence in language, like in speed and position, indicates a difference in perspective or point of view, and must accordingly be taken into consideration. This difference is the product of the impact language has on a person's conceptual system. Differently stated, the grammar of a language shapes our knowledge of the world and leads the speaker to different ways of understanding.

In this perspectivization, words and structural patterns in every language not only differ from other languages but they also ascribe culturally defined significances and meanings to different conceptual categories in the environment surrounding them. Accordingly, the words and structural features comprising the linguistic system used by the speakers of a specific language are completely unique to that system and can be found in no other languages. This is how Whorf (1956) provided his perspective on the interplay between language and thought:

[---] the background linguistic system (in other words the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the programme and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade. Formulation of ideas is not an independent process, strictly rational in the old sense, but is part of a particular grammar and differs, from slightly to greatly, between different grammars. We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds - and this means largely by the linguistic system in our minds [. . .]. We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated (p.26).

Whorf here enunciates about how our thought is influenced by the grammar of our language. The footprint of lexis on thought is possibly more evident; but it is difficult to digest the contention of Sapir and Whorf that linguistic experience is the sole type of experience that affects our thought patterns. However, it is out of expectation that the Whorfian hypothesis will be confirmed in the strong form. For one thing, all humans enjoy similar conceptualization potentialities so much so the likelihood of universalities across different cultures with regard to conceptual capacities of human beings is very strong. As a consequence, it is logical to assume that human beings have certain common conceptual processes which make them observe certain realities of the world on a universal basis. The interesting point is that human beings may also differ in their conceptualization of the world because certain cognitive abilities have been shaped and influenced by language specific features. Not surprisingly, such overlapping basis makes people of the world conceive thought patterns in both similar and different ways.

Joseph (2005), an illustrious Keralian writer, accentuates the interplay between language and culture thus: "when a new word emerges in a language, it will introduce a

new culture and life-style into that social territory” (p.15). Not surprisingly, the codability of object realities is not consistently and/or uniformly realized since culture has a direct bearing on linguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of language which act as a medium for the symbolic manifestation of culture. As a consequence, understanding particular speakers’ knowledge about categorization is prerequisite to the demystification of the factors motivating their interaction with the world (Biria & Bahadoran-Baghbaderani, 2016; Gilbert et al. 2008). As an illustration, when we see a sparrow, a car, or a priest, we use our knowledge of categorization to make inferences about their functional utility by making a rapid analysis of typical characteristics defining their actions and behaviors. Overall, categorical thinking helps reduce our cognitive efforts when interacting with the world.

Malinowsky and Firth, as an anthropologist and linguist respectively, have been highly authoritative in the rise of sociolinguistics in Britain. Firth's (1957) assertion was that he and his colleagues studied language as part of the social dynamic process and that a 'key idea' to their method was the idea of the 'context of situation'—a description of the contextual factors influencing an utterance —provided by Malinowsky. They discussed meaning in terms of function in context and repudiated all approaches to the study of language, which sought to leave out the study of meaning. The primary communication theories had confined languages to mere conveyance of information while in the functionalist perspective of linguists such as Firth and Malinowsky, the concept of 'context of situation' is indispensable and must incorporate the participants in speech situations, the action taking place and other pertinent determinants. Building on this perspective, a given language proposition is noticed as felicitous to a peculiar application within a specific cultural context; in a diverse linguistic and cultural environment, slight changes have to be addressed. Firth contend that this context of situation would be evaluated not as a vague and impetuous breach of faith , shifting background to a speech event, but more zealously in terms of relevant classifications at a different level from syntactic classifications but rather of the identical abstract feature structures. He did not enlarge upon it but did propose that such classifications could be:

I. Interior Relations

a) The relevant features of participants, persons, and personalities.

1) The verbal action of the participants.

2) The non-verbal action of the participants.

b) The relevant objects.

c) The effect of the verbal action

II. Exterior Relations

a) Economic, religious, social structures to which participants belong.

b) Types of discourse-monologue, narrative.

c) Personal Interchanges-age, sex of participants.

d) Types of speech-social flattery, cursing.

Bloomfield (1933) in his book "Language" brought up the topic of various speech communities and in it he elucidates our perception of the mechanisms by which social variables exert influence on language variation. As Bloomfield said later, linguistic diversification in human communities is closely allied to the amount of verbal production or bulk of communication among interactants. Precursory practitioners had made efforts to find direct correlations between language and different context-sensitive factors; but he hypothesizes an intervening level of human communication, which reconciles between linguistic and nonlinguistic phenomena. According to him, financial, political, and even regional facets are not overtly manifested in speech. They influence language only to the extent that they can be shown to direct verbal communication among interactants, triggering certain individuals to have more verbal interaction directly with some than with others and thereby affecting the rate at which innovations diffuse innovations diffuse and are adopted at the individual level. In the words of Bloomfield (1933):

Envisage a chart with a dot for every speaker in the society, and envisage that every time any speaker uttered a sentence, an arrow was drawn in to the chart printing from his dot to the dot representing each one of his interlocutors. At the end of a given period of time, say 70 years, that chart would depict us the density of communication in the community....we believe that the differences in communication are not only personal and individual but that the community is divided into various systems of subgroups, such that persons within a subgroup speak much more to each other than to persons outside their subgroup.... sub groups are separated by lines of weakness in this net of oral communication (pp.46-47).

All the linguists cited above contributed to an increased significance of social determinants in language and language inquiry; but they could not form any coalition in linguistics provoking the acceptance of linguistic diversity as an influential factor. Even Sapir was not geared up to include the element of variation in to his study of language. Sapir and the scholars that came after him did not set up any flow devoted to incorporating the diversity factor of language. Sapir who had come up with the pithy remark, "Unfortunately or luckily, no grammar is tyrannically consistent. All grammars leak" (p.38) adopted in practice a very strong form of the axiom of categoricity. Chambers (2003) describes the axiom of categoricity as "the simplifying assumption that data for linguistic analysis must be regularized to eliminate real-world variability (p.12).

When linguists detected the presence of variations in language use, they viewed them either as belonging to different synchronal/coexistent linguistic systems or as dormant free alternates. The various forms employed by community members were never debated or investigated seriously and were considered simply as haphazard alternations between varieties. Those who strongly favored the idea of synchronal/coexistent linguistic units took the view that interactants applied distinctive lexis, grammar, and phonology that gave them availability to more than one code but shifting over to the varieties should not be intermittent. All in all, fluctuating between

the spectrums of variations should not take place to the extent that the conditions surrounding the speech situation remain untouched. But, in practice, many interactants are observed to be shifting over from one variety to another in the same sentence itself. A vast group of speakers resort to this sort of code-mixing in alike contexts. The linguistic demeanor of such group of people provides testimony for a singular system in which varieties coexist rather than the coexistence of various linguistic systems.

In the opinion of Coulmas (2001), categoricity has superseded by frequency, i.e. the frequency of occurrence of variant features of language use in a given speech community. He observes thus:

Instead of categorizing a certain pronunciation or a certain construction as either belonging to or not belonging to a language L, sociolinguistics would measure the frequencies with which such features and constructions occurred in variety X compared with variety Y. The fact that speech communities and individual speakers had a wide range of possible speech forms at their command was recognized as an essential rather than a haphazard condition of the social functioning of language. Discovering systematic patterns underlying the actual occurrences of variant speech forms and relating them to social characteristics of speakers and speech situations turned in to be the major challenge that sociolinguistics set out to confront (p.565).

LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

Hudson (2001) characterizes a variable as a "collection of alternatives which have something in common" (p.169). A linguistic variable is a linguistic form with two or more identifiable alternatives employed in covariation with other social and/or linguistic variables (Chambers & Trudgill). A much discussed example is the use of variant pronunciations for the suffix *-ing* which are symbolized as (ng): [g] and (ng): [n].

Variables of this kind require to be inspected in sociolinguistic terms because other sorts of explanations are beside the point here. This fact becomes more evident when we notice that the variation between the same two sounds at the end of *sin* and *sing* does not fall under the domain of sociolinguistics because they can be categorized as lexical items. An individual who is familiar with the meaning and application of these words recognizes accurately the reason why it is *sin* on one situation and *sing* on another (Biria & Bahadoran-Baghbaderani, 2015). Similarly, the selection between the words *sing* and *sings* comes under the rules of grammar. The social determinant has utterly no pertinence in the study of the selection of these sounds. Linguistic scholars expound these facts without regarding at the social context or the social variables. Consequently, it has to be accentuated that linguistic variables that call for a sociolinguistic explanation only can be called as 'sociolinguistic variables.'

Hudson identifies different types of sociolinguistic variables based on the level of language (phonetics, phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax) at which the variants are different.

PARADIGMS

The macro/micro distinction

Sociolinguistics is a fertile ground for social practitioners and linguists, some of whom strive to uncover the social facets of language while others are mainly interested in the linguistic manifestations of society. Accordingly, there have arisen two centers of gravity, recognized as microsociolinguistics and macrosociolinguistics, respectively. These delineate diverse inquiry-based agendas and theoretical frameworks, macrosociolinguistics deals with the sociolinguistics of society, issues such as societal multilingualism, language policy and standardization, whereas microsociolinguistics puts premium on the sociolinguistics of language, the influence of social interaction in language use. The broad perspective concerning the divergence between macrosociolinguistics or sociology of language and microsociolinguistics or sociolinguistics is this: Sociolinguistics is the inspection of language touching on society while sociology of language is the scrutiny of society dealing with language. The discrepancy between the two lies principally in the point of emphasis, whether the researcher is interested more in society or language.

Wardhaugh (2010) demarcates the two by noting that sociolinguistics deals with observing the symbiotic interplays between society and language with the purpose being a better awareness of the structural properties of language and of how languages operate in communicative discourse; the parallel aim in the sociology of language is endeavoring to discern how civic structure can be better fathomed through the study of language, e.g., how particular linguistic constituents function to specify certain social adjustment.

Micro-sociolinguistics examines how social construct affects the way inhabitants of a language ecology speak and how social peculiarities like gender, age, and class are pertained to language diversities. Motifs like language policy, language attitude, language planning, language birth, maintenance, death or to put it in a nutshell what civic colonies do with their language comes within the realm of microsociolinguistics.

Wardhaugh, albeit he acknowledges this sort of dichotomy, is of the opinion that it is not feasible to make a clear separation between the two because they imbricate in several strata. In his perspective adamant micro-macro dichotomy seems highly dubious and futile in the current state of knowledge concerning the manifold interplays between societal and linguistic patterns.

Gendered Power Structures and Sociolinguistics

The general propensity is a relocation from language as structure towards language use with references to those of Wittgenstein's meaning-as-use thesis and Austin's speech act theory (how to do things with words). Foucault's poststructuralist perspective associates discourse with power structures. Scholars coming from different disciplines take different angles.

Some confusion exists over the distinction between sex and gender. Individuals often confuse sex with gender. Gender performativity implies the ways in which a person expresses his/her gender identity through gendered behavior. Gender construction suggests the way that socialization envisages appropriate gendered behavior to be the hegemonic account of what it actually signifies to be a man or a woman.

According to Butler (1990), gender performativity is how an individual performs his/her preferred gender identity. Gender is not permanent and fixed. It does not physically connect to our sexuality or our biological sex category. As long as gender is a construction, a person can construct what gender to play and how to play it. Drag queens are served as an instance of how gender is not a permanent absolute. There is no truly existing male or female gender (gender dichotomy) they are constructions, and as such can be shaped and a diversity of genders can be performed.

Differently stated, Butler (1990) contends that gender can be acted out in ways that deepen sociocultural understandings of what gender (a social category) is and ought to be. It also can destabilize social constructions and recognitions of what gender is - Butler's use of drag performance to problematize these assumptions and provide the likelihood of transgressing gender categories and sex/gender binaries has become the focus of a variety of critiques.

The crux of the matter about the Foucault's approach to power is that it goes beyond politics and considers power as a socialized and embodied phenomenon. Foucault's theory of power is evasive and lifted from the agency that there seems to be little room for practical action. But he has been authoritative in manifesting the ways that norms can be so entrenched as to be beyond our perception. According to Foucault (1998, p.93), "...power is everywhere and comes from everywhere. It is always already there and one is never outside it". Apparently, in this sense is neither a structure nor an agency. Foucault utilizes the term power to indicate that power is created through authorized forms of knowledge and truth.

The power and discourse foundation provokes practitioners to reflect about the likelihood of freedom for the subjects they scrutinize. Power and freedom are prerequisites of each other. To be free is the absence of pressure or obligation; to have power is to be able to coerce or oblige another. Clearly, freedom is the absence of others' power over us; power is the absence of others' freedom from us.

CONCLUSION

Over the past four decades, developments in social issues have heightened the need for cross-disciplinary interactions which satisfy the pressing demands of the avid sociocultural-linguistic researchers throughout the globe. To satisfy such demanding goals and to provide a more effective solution, many practitioners are recently taking advantage of collaboration opportunities involving diverse methodological and conceptual tools in order to expand the realm of research in contemporary research on language, culture, and society.

Indubitably, the nature of sociolinguistics studies can greatly be influenced by the views reported by Hymes (1964), Pride and Holmes (1972), and Duranti (2003). These writers make deliberate links between linguistics and anthropology in which the production and selection of diverse methodological and conceptual tools are managed differently.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the necessity of interdisciplinary connections in all fields of study, and sociolinguistics is not by no means an exception. The effective coalition of anthropological and linguistic approaches to sociolinguistics issues, as an important professional endeavor, has widely been recognized in the research contexts (Duranti 2001, 2003; Gumperz 1972, 1982, 1999; Koerner 1991; Lerner, 2004; Murray 1998; Paulston & Tucker, 1997; Shuy 1990). As Knoblauch and Kotthoff (2001) put it, the intellectual coalition of these and many other strands of scholarship toward interdisciplinary research indicates that there are problem areas and sets of issues that previous methods of analysis overlooked.

In the new global professionalism in the domain of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, appropriate methodology has long been at the heart of scholarly inquiry about culture and society. What makes the research significant is largely dependent upon the on points of interdisciplinary (and intradisciplinary) intersection. The coalition between sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics leads to affective and innovative problem-solving engagement. This type of involvement creates a methodological readiness which is an important facilitator for implementing the sociocultural linguistic studies.

All in all, despite the existing discrepancies in their theoretical and methodological commitments, the cooperative and complementary work between sociolinguistics and associated fields (e.g. linguistic anthropology, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, language, gender, etc.) amplify a dialogue across intellectual divides and moving sociocultural linguistic inquiry in fresh ways.

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