

SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECT OF PHONOLOGY

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Annotation

The article is devoted to the issue of the functioning of social factors and their influence on his sound system. The author emphasizes that an important point is that the pronunciation features of speech, such as accents and intonation patterns, are formed under the influence of various social factors, including regional, class and cultural aspects. The accent is considered as an indicator not only of geographical origin, but also of the social affiliation of the communicant, and in some cases, the accent may indicate the level of education, professional activity, or even belonging to a certain age group.

Key words: sociolinguistics, linguistics, phonology, phonetics, cultural aspect, jargon, prosody etc.

Sociolinguistics is a field of linguistics that studies the influence of social conditions on language and, conversely, the impact of language on the social structure of society. It goes beyond a simple description of linguistic norms, analyzing how social groups use language to identify themselves, express their status, and belong to certain communities. This includes the study of dialects, jargons, social dialects (sociolects), and even such subtle phenomena as pronunciation variation depending on the communication situation.

The outstanding linguist David Crystal, one of the pioneers of modern sociolinguistics, gives a broad definition of this discipline, encompassing the study of the relationship between language and society. According to him, sociolinguistics explores the linguistic identity of various social groups, analyzing how language is used to indicate belonging to a particular social category – whether it is a professional group, an ethnic community, an age cohort or a subculture. [10, p.389]

Sociolinguists also focus on social assessments of various language variants: which language forms are considered prestigious and which are stigmatized; how attitudes towards

language affect its use in various situations. This field of linguistics delves deeply into the analysis of standard and non-standard linguistic norms, exploring their origin, distribution, and social functions. For example, sociolinguistic analysis can shed light on the causes and evolution of dialects and jargons, as well as how these language forms reflect and shape social relationships.

An interesting connection exists between sociolinguistics and phonology, the field of linguistics that studies the sound system of a language. The interaction of these disciplines is explained by the fact that social factors have a significant impact on pronunciation. Sociolinguistic analysis of the phonological features of speech makes it possible to identify how social status, region of residence, ethnicity and other social factors form individual and group pronunciation characteristics. For example, the use of certain phonemes or phonological processes can serve as a marker of belonging to a particular social group, reflecting the social stratification of society. Moreover, sociologists study how phonological variants are perceived in different social contexts and what meaning is attributed to them. For example, a certain accent may be perceived as prestigious or, conversely, as a sign of low social status, which affects the speaker's social perception and communicative effectiveness. Thus, the sociolinguistic approach to phonology allows us to reveal the complex mechanisms of interaction between language and society, demonstrating that language is not a neutral communication tool, but is an integral part of social processes. Research in this area helps to understand how social factors shape the sound picture of a language and how this sound picture, in turn, reflects the social structure of society.

Phonology, which studies the sound system of a language, does not exist in a vacuum. Pronunciation, and hence the phonological characteristics of speech, strongly depend on social factors. For example, certain phonemic variants or accent features may be markers of social affiliation, indicating the speaker's geographical origin, social status, education, or membership in a particular subculture. The study of these «sociophonetic» variations allows us to understand how social factors affect the sound structure of a language, forming and changing it over time.

A.D. Schweitzer emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of sociolinguistics. She actively uses the methods and concepts of sociology (the analysis of social groups, social stratification), social psychology (the study of perception and attitudes to language variants, the influence of social attitudes on speech behavior) and ethnography (the study of language practices in specific social contexts). The main operational units of sociolinguistics research are sociolinguistics variables – these are correlating characteristics, on the one hand, reflecting

linguistic features (phonological, morphological, lexicon-semantic), and on the other – the features of the social structure or communication situation. These variables allow us to establish statistically significant links between linguistic and social factors.. [8, p.481]

V.I. Belikov and L. P. Krysin, supplementing the definition of sociolinguistics, focus on the dynamic nature of the interaction between language and society. Language does not just reflect social reality, but actively participates in its formation and change. Sociolinguistic research allows us to trace how social changes are reflected in the language system, and vice versa, how linguistic innovations affect social processes. For example, the spread of new words and expressions, and borrowings from other languages may be associated with the processes of globalization, migration, and technological development and have a significant impact on social identity and interpersonal communication. [2, p.439]

According to the pronunciation of a certain word, it is possible to draw a conclusion about its origin and the speaker's social affiliation. Different regions have unique phonological characteristics that affect pronunciation. For example, in English, words may sound different depending on whether a British, American, or Australian accent is used.

This diversity affects the identification and perception of the speaker. For example, the British. “tomato” - /tə'mɑ:təʊ/ – american. /tə'metəʊ/; British “Schedule” /'ʃedju:l/ - american. /'skedʒu:l/; British. “advertisement” -/əd'vɜ:tismənt/ - american. /əd'vɜ:rtisment/ etc.

The first sociolinguistic studies were conducted on the basis of phonetic material, in particular, the work of M.V. Panov and U. Labov. [5, p.66]

Based on the collected phonetic data, theoretical concepts of sociolinguistics have been developed that relate to the social conditioning of language changes and the impact of social factors on linguistic variation.

M.V.Panov's work provides an in-depth analysis of the influence of various factors on phonetic changes. He argued that «There are territorial varieties of literary pronunciation that arise in the context of bilingualism..... and For each such local variety of literary language, there are differences in pronunciation between generations and between social statuses.There are only typical features of each of these pronunciation varieties; therefore, a massive phonetic survey is necessary».[5, p. 173]

One of the distinctive features of M.V. Panov as a sociolinguist is his attention to linguistic reality and pronunciation facts. In this regard, a detailed study of the current state of the pronunciation norm at a certain synchronous stage of the language helps to strengthen the

phonetic theory. The characteristics of personal pronouncing skills and habits of people (cultural figures, actors, poets, linguists, and others) form the phonetic image of a personality. And these "skills and habits characterize the expressive and stylistic use of phonetic means by the speaker.» [7, p.14]

The description of the phonetic features of a particular person often implies a characteristic of his belonging to a certain social group. For example, in the words «езжу», «брызжет», «вожжи», «дрожжи», representatives of the older generation and the intelligentsia prefer the soft [ж'], representatives of the younger generation and the intelligentsia prefer the hard variant. U. Labov calls this type of variation social, as it reflects the division of the linguistic community into different social strata and groups based on factors such as age, education level, and profession. U. Labov refers to such options, «depending on the social characteristics of the speakers, as indicators: each of these options indicates the social status of a native speaker». [10, p.66]

The choice of language options depends on the conditions of communication: in an official setting, the speaker tries to control his pronunciation, chooses options that correspond to the literary norm, and strives to make his speech understandable to the communicant. In an informal setting, he may prefer options that are typical for informal communication. Labov calls such variants "markers", as they denote different styles of speech, which include different variants of the same language unit. Thus, variability is determined by two types of factors: the social characteristics of native speakers and the situation of speech interaction.

Intonation is of significant importance for the formation of a speaker's social portrait. For example, intonation is natural in the speech of a teacher (for example, «Кто не выполнил задание?») and a doctor (for example, «Дышите! Задержите дыхание!»), but they become irrelevant when representatives of these professions go beyond business communication. Understanding in which situations and in which roles one should behave in a certain way is formed in the process of linguistic socialization.

Sociolects play an important role in linguistic variability. Sociolect is a set of linguistic features inherent in any social group (professional, class, age).[1, с.7] Examples of sociolects include the speech patterns of soldiers, schoolchildren, hippies, etc.[13] The connection of sociolects with phenological phenomena can manifest itself in the peculiarities of pronunciation. Sociolects may differ in accents and pronunciation characteristics that affect the phoneme. For example, the sound [θ] на [f] in the word «think», in some dialects of English;

[r] on the muted[r'] rural Russians. Phonetic abbreviations are often found in informal sociolects, for example, English. «gonna» instead of «going to»; Russian.: «ты что?» на «чё?», «что», «сколько? На «скока», Uzbek.: «kel» to «ke», «yoq» to «yo». These abbreviations make communication easier, but are not suitable for a formal setting. These kinds of abbreviations are usually used by young people.

Even in some dialects of the Russian language, there are relics of the “feminine” pronunciation.: the so-called “sweet voice” is the utterance instead of the sound. [p] звука [й]: бйат, бейоза (брат, береза) [1,с.7] или же вместо «хочешь» произносят «хотИшь», вместо «езжу» - ездю, и ездю etc. All these phonetic and phonological changes indicate the speaker's social status.

Phonological phenomena may be related to gender differences. Some researchers claim that “the main factor influencing gender differences in prosody is the anatomical structure of the speech organs – the larynx and vocal cords. On average, the female larynx is smaller than the male, and the vocal cords are shorter, which leads to the fact that the basic frequency of the voice in women is higher than in men. The vocal tract of women is also shorter, so their resonance frequency is usually 20% higher than that of men.” [12, p.17]

Research shows that men and women may differ in pronunciation of certain sounds. For example, in some languages, women may use more “soft” pronunciation options, while men prefer more “hard” ones. Women often use a wider range of intonations, which makes their speech more melodic. Anatomical differences between men and women can certainly influence the formation of speech style, but this is not the only factor that should be considered. If anatomical features were the only explanation for differences in speech behavior, then we would have to agree with Freud, who emphasized the biological predestination of roles, completely rejecting the concept of social construction of gender roles. However, modern science shows that speech is a complex phenomenon in which both biological and social factors interact. For example, research shows that differences in formant frequencies — the acoustic characteristics of the voice that are determined by the size and shape of the larynx and vocal tract — do vary from person to person, even within the same gender. This means that one man's voice may sound significantly higher or lower than another man's voice, which is not always related to their anatomical features. Moreover, formant frequencies can appear as early as childhood, when anatomical differences between boys and girls are not yet so pronounced. This

indicates that acoustic features associated with gender are formed not only under the influence of anatomy, but also social factors.

Prosody, which includes elements such as pitch, dynamics, articulation, speed of speech flow and stress, also plays an important role in the perception of gender identity. In a number of experiments, it has been found that the speaker's gender can be determined much faster by intonation signs, which do not depend on anatomical features, than by the frequencies of the main formants. This suggests that social and cultural factors such as upbringing, environment, and cultural norms have a significant impact on how we speak and perceive the speech of others. In addition, differences in the average values of colloquial formants can vary not only between sexes, but also between different nationalities and language groups. This highlights that culture and language also shape our voice and communication style, adding an additional layer of complexity to understanding gender differences in speech. Research shows that, for example, in some cultures, men may use a higher tone in certain social contexts, which contradicts traditional notions of a “male” and “female” voice.[11, p. 541] For example, David Crystal notes: “Intuitive ideas about femininity ... are based mainly on non-segmental signs. The concept of a languid voice often leads to the use of a wider range of pitch by women than is customary for men, i.e. with glissando effects between stressed syllables, as well as the frequent use of complex tones (for example, descending – ascending), the use of tense and modulated voices and switching from time to time to a higher falsetto register.” [11, p. 559]

Thus, the sociolinguistic aspect of the phonological structure of a word emphasizes the importance of social context in understanding sound forms and their meanings, which in turn affects communication and social interactions.

Resources

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