

1: Table of contents for Sociolinguistics

The Sociolinguistics Reader presents a state-of-the-art account of the discipline in the closing years of the twentieth century. Volume 2: Gender and Discourse in the first section looks at patterns of language variation, examining how gender identities are accomplished through language, and the importance of gender in accounting for language behaviour.

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2: Sociolinguistics / Soziolinguistik - Volume 2

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Applications[edit] For example, a sociolinguist might determine through study of social attitudes that a particular vernacular would not be considered appropriate language use in a business or professional setting. Sociolinguists might also study the grammar , phonetics , vocabulary , and other aspects of this sociolect much as dialectologists would study the same for a regional dialect. The study of language variation is concerned with social constraints determining language in its contextual environment. Code-switching is the term given to the use of different varieties of language in different social situations. William Labov is often regarded as the founder of the study of sociolinguistics. He is especially noted for introducing the quantitative study of language variation and change, [8] making the sociology of language into a scientific discipline. Traditional sociolinguistic interview[edit] Sociolinguistic interviews are an integral part of collecting data for sociolinguistic studies. There is an interviewer, who is conducting the study, and a subject, or informant , who is the interviewee. In order to get a grasp on a specific linguistic form and how it is used in the dialect of the subject, a variety of methods are used to elicit certain registers of speech. There are five different styles, ranging from formal to casual. The most formal style would be elicited by having the subject read a list of minimal pairs MP. Minimal pairs are pairs of words that differ in only one phoneme, such as cat and bat. Having the subject read a word list WL will elicit a formal register, but generally not as formal as MP. The reading passage RP style is next down on the formal register, and the interview style IS is when an interviewer can finally get into eliciting a more casual speech from the subject. During the IS the interviewer can converse with the subject and try to draw out of them an even more casual sort of speech by asking him to recall childhood memories or maybe a near death experience, in which case the subject will get deeply involved with the story since strong emotions are often attached to these memories. Of course, the most sought-after type of speech is the casual style CS. The closest one might come to CS in an interview is when the subject is interrupted by a close friend or family member, or perhaps must answer the phone. CS is used in a completely unmonitored environment where the subject feels most comfortable and will use their natural vernacular without overtly thinking about it. Fundamental concepts[edit] While the study of sociolinguistics is very broad, there are a few fundamental concepts on which many sociolinguistic inquiries depend. Speech community Speech community is a concept in sociolinguistics that describes a distinct group of people who use language in a unique and mutually accepted way among themselves. This is sometimes referred to as a Sprechbund. To be considered part of a speech community, one must have a communicative competence. That is, the speaker has the ability to use language in a way that is appropriate in the given situation. It is possible for a speaker to be communicatively competent in more than one language. Community of Practice allows for sociolinguistics to examine the relationship between socialization, competence, and identity. Since identity is a very complex structure, studying language socialization is a means to examine the micro-interactional level of practical activity everyday activities. The learning of a language is greatly influenced by family but it is supported by the larger local surroundings, such as school, sports teams, or religion. Speech communities may exist within a larger community of practice. Prestige sociolinguistics Crucial to sociolinguistic analysis is the concept of prestige; certain speech habits are assigned a positive or a negative value, which is then applied to the speaker. This can operate on many levels. The terms acrolectal high and basilectal low are also used to distinguish between a more standard dialect and a dialect of less prestige. A social network is another way of describing a particular speech community in terms of relations between individual members in a community. A network could be loose or tight depending on how members interact with each other. A multiplex community is one in which members have multiple relationships with each other. The looseness or tightness of a social network may affect speech patterns adopted by a speaker. Recently, social networks have been formed by the Internet, through chat rooms, Facebook groups, organizations, and online dating services. Differences according to class[edit] Further information: Linguistic insecurity Sociolinguistics as a field

distinct from dialectology was pioneered through the study of language variation in urban areas. Whereas dialectology studies the geographic distribution of language variation, sociolinguistics focuses on other sources of variation, among them class. Class and occupation are among the most important linguistic markers found in society. One of the fundamental findings of sociolinguistics, which has been hard to disprove, is that class and language variety are related. Members of the working class tend to speak less standard language, while the lower, middle, and upper middle class will, in turn, speak closer to the standard. This is because not only class but class aspirations, are important. Class aspiration[edit] Studies, such as those by William Labov in the s, have shown that social aspirations influence speech patterns. This is also true of class aspirations. In the process of wishing to be associated with a certain class usually the upper class and upper middle class people who are moving in that direction socio-economically will adjust their speech patterns to sound like them. However, not being native upper-class speakers, they often hypercorrect, which involves overcorrecting their speech to the point of introducing new errors. The same is true for individuals moving down in socio-economic status. In any contact situation, there is a power dynamic, be it a teacher-student or employee-customer situation, this power dynamic results in a hierarchical differentiation between languages. He claimed that factors like family orientation, social control, verbal feedback, and possibly social class contributed to the development of the two codes: His theory places this code within environments that operate according to established social structures that predetermine the roles of their members, in which the commonality of interests and intents due to a shared local identity creates a predictability of discrete intent and therefore a simplification of verbal utterances. Such environments may include military, religious, and legal atmospheres, criminal and prison subcultures, long-term married relationships and friendships between children. Due to the strong bonds between speakers, explicit verbal communication is often rendered unnecessary and individual expression irrelevant. However, simplification is not a sign of a lack of intelligence or complexity within the code; rather, communication is performed more through extraverbal means facial expression, touch, etc. Bernstein notes the example of a young man asking a stranger to dance: As such, implied meaning plays a greater role in this code than in the elaborated code. Restricted code also operates to unify speakers and foster solidarity. This code is typical in environments where a variety of social roles are available to the individual, to be chosen based upon disposition and temperament. Most of the time, speakers of elaborated code utilize a broader lexicon and demonstrate less syntactic predictability than speakers of restricted code. The lack of predetermined structure and solidarity requires explicit verbal communication of discrete intent by the individual in order to achieve educational and career success. Bernstein notes, with caution, the association of this code with upper classes while restricted code is associated with lower classes, where the abundance of available resources allows persons to choose their social roles, warning, however, that studies associating the codes with separate social classes used small samples and were subject to significant variation. He also asserts that elaborated code originates due to differences in social context rather than intellectual advantages; as such, elaborated code differs from restricted code according to the context-based emphasis on individual advancement over assertion of communal bonds. For instance, a child exposed solely to restricted code learns extraverbal communication over verbal, and therefore may have a less extensive vocabulary than a child raised with exposure to both codes. While there is no inherent lack of value to restricted code, a child without exposure to elaborated code may encounter difficulties upon entering formal education, in which standard, clear verbal communication and comprehension is necessary for learning and effective interaction both with instructors and other students from differing backgrounds. As such, it may be beneficial for children who have been exposed solely to restricted code to enter pre-school training in elaborated code in order to acquire a manner of speaking that is considered appropriate and widely comprehensible within the education environment. Additionally, Bernstein notes several studies in language development according to social class. In, the Committee for Higher Education conducted a study on verbal IQ that showed a deterioration in individuals from lower working classes ages 8â”11 and years in comparison to those from middle classes having been exposed to both restricted and elaborated codes.

Volume 2 of this two-volume text looks first at patterns of language variation, how gender identities are accomplished through language, and the importance of gender in accounting for language behavior. It goes on to examine sociolinguistic issues surrounding discourse, with reference to the.

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6: Sociolinguistics Reader Vol 2 - Gender by Peter Trudgill

Volume 2 of this two-volume text looks first at patterns of language variation, how gender identities are accomplished through language, and the importance of gender in accounting for language behavior.

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