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MODERN ASPECTS OF SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDIES

Abstract. The article covers the main directions of modern research in the field of sociolinguistics. General scientific and practical interest in the functioning of language, language policy, language change is due to the need to find solutions to current sociolinguistic problems. We have paid special attention to the approaches to the analysis of the relationship between language and society, highlighted in the works of foreign linguists, as the globalization processes of today more than ever touch on the integrity of world ethnic groups, preserving their uniqueness, and this is primarily related to language assimilation; declining and disappearance of languages; proper modeling of language policy by governments of countries where language issues are particularly relevant.

Key words: sociolinguistics, language policy, language and society, terminology of sociolinguistics, sociolinguistic research.

Relevance of the study. Sociolinguistics is a relatively young field of scientific knowledge concerning the study of the peculiarities of the functioning of language as a social phenomenon. It has emerged as a result of the earliest studies in the branch of language acquisition by different social and ethnic groups of people as well as the study of other social aspects of language functioning. The term "sociolinguistics" is associated with the name of American sociolinguist Haver Cecil Currie – a linguistics professor at the University of Houston, Texas Lutheran University and one of the developers of the field of sociolinguisitcs. However, the problem of studying the specifics of the functioning of languages is the subject of interest not only to linguists, but also to sociologists. And this is quite logically, because the methodological basis, used by linguists, belongs to the tools of sociological science. However, borrowing these methods from sociologists, linguists use them creatively in relation to the tasks of language learning, and in addition, they develop their own methodological techniques for working with linguistic facts and native speakers. General scientific and practical interest in the issues of language functioning, language policy, language change is caused by the necessity of finding the solution of current sociolinguistic problems and the problems of conscious regulation of language situation within one country and in the global context as well. A multifaceted and comprehensive study of the language situation contributes to the realizing of all the complexity of the real language life of human communities, especially polyethnic, in which languages never function in isolation from each other, but are always interdependent and interconnected into complex and multidimensional macrosystems. Language policy and language situation issues are relevant at any stage of the human society development. These especially concern the interaction in multilingual societies, when the problem of choosing the means of communication for mutual understanding and arrangement of public life emerges and when there is a desire to use native language in any situation and at any circumstances. So now, at the beginning of the 21st century, scholars differentiate two aspects of sociolinguistic researches: the first one focuses on the impact of society structure on language, the second one – on language as a factor influencing society. And the major topic of sociolinguistic researches is the relationship between language and society.

Recent publications review. Since the term "sociolinguistics" has been implemented in the terminological apparatus of linguistics it has become possible to distinguish sociolinguistics as a new branch of science that merged theoretical and methodological frameworks of sociology and linguistics as well. The researches that followed in the next decades discussed gradually different phenomena revealed by the data obtained experimentally through the interviews and surveys of different groups of language speakers. Certainly, the scientific works of previous years have created the basis for modern research in the field of sociolinguistics. Of course, sociolinguistics has its own tradition in each country, but the topics for scientists are common. So, among the scientists whose works have appeared in the last two decades, worth mentioning are the following: Fatchul Mu'in – Doctor of Philosophy who currently works at the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat; Jan Blommaert – was a Belgian sociolinguist and linguistic anthropologist, Professor of Language, Culture and Globalization and Director of the Babylon Center at Tilburg University who was considered to be one of the world's most prominent sociolinguists; Ronald Wardhaugh – Professor Emeritus (University of Toronto); Sali A. Tagliamonte – a Professor of sociolinguistics at the University of Toronto whose main area of research is the field of language variation and change; Miriam Meyerhoff – a New Zealand sociolinguist; Isabella Paoletti – Doctor of Philosophy (Nova University Lisbon); Peter Stockwell – Professor of Literary Linguistics at the University of Nottingham; Svitlana Sokolova – Professor (Institute of Ukrainian language NAS of the Ukraine).

The article's objective is to analyze modern scientific works in the field of sociolinguistics. This will allow to give an objective assessment of the current state of sociolinguistic science and to identify the directions of its further development in the 21st century.

Discussion. Every science at the beginning of its formation needs to work out the terminological base as well as the theoretical and methodological apparatus. "Sociolinguistics" is not an exception. "Sociolinguistics" and "Language and Society" are terms that are often used interchangeably to refer to an interdisciplinary field of research in which linguistics and sociology, and other human sciences, join together to study verbal and other human conducts; but in fact their definition is a highly controversial matter [1, p. 1]. So we see that for more than half a century of its existence, sociolinguistics still has no common view on its name. Fatchul Mu'in believes that: "When some aspects of sociology are adopted in studying a language, this means it presents an interdisciplinary study; and its name represents a combination of sociology and linguistics. In this relation, some experts call it as sociology of language; and some others call it as sociolinguistics" [2, p. 1]. In his book he tries to find out the question of what is language, what humanity knows about the language etc. The scientist consistently substantiates the understanding of language as a system, as a social phenomenon, as a means of communication. He also defines sociolinguistics as a branch of scientific knowledge that is concerned with the relationship between language and the context in which it is used. In other words, it studies the relationship between language and society [2]. Fatchul Mu'in pays special attention to the social units of language use: speech community, speech situation, speech event, speech act, speech styles (a frozen (oratorical) style, a formal (deliberative) style, a consultative style, a casual conversations, an intimate style), ways of speaking and components of speech. The scholar believes that language is socio and culturally acquired and proves his idea by explaining such phenomena as babies' speech and dialects. It is necessary to emphasize that in the context of sociolinguistics the relationship between language and culture should be considered. Language is part of culture. Language is both a component of culture and a central network through which the other components are expressed, language reflects culture. Language is the symbolic representation of a people, and it comprises their historical and cultural background as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking, and cultural features vary not only synchronically from speech community to speech community, they also change diachronically within the same speech community, and this change also reflects change of language, which will cope with the change of society actively [2, p. 65].

Canadian scholar Ronald Wardhaugh also pays special attention to the terminological base of sociolinguistics. He claims that a worthwhile sociolinguistics, however, must be something more than just a simple mixing of linguistics and sociology which takes concepts and findings from the two disciplines and attempts to relate them in simple ways [3, p. 11]. He also tries to explain the difference between terms sociolinguistics or micro-sociolinguistics and

the sociology of language or macro-linguistics. In this distinction, sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationships between language and society with the goal being a better understanding of the structure of language and of how languages function in communication; the equivalent goal in the sociology of language is trying to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language, e.g., how certain linguistic features serve to characterize particular social arrangements [3, p. 13]. The scientist analyzes the terms language and dialect and explains the common features of these two phenomena. He believes that it is possible to speak of languages such as English, German, French, Russian, and Hindi as Indo-European dialects. In this case the assumption is that there was once a single language, Indo-European, that the speakers of that language (which may have had various dialects) spread to different parts of the world, and that the original language eventually diverged into the various languages we subsume today under the Indo-European family of languages [3, p. 33].

Discussing how languages can differ from one another he comes to the concept of standardization which refers to the process by which a language has been codified in some way and becomes of great importance as it usually involves the development of such things as grammars, spelling books, and dictionaries, and possibly a literature. Moreover, since a language is standardized it becomes possible to teach it in a deliberate manner. It is a well known fact that the major condition of socialization is learning of language that is widely spoken in certain society. Due to this, language takes on ideological dimensions – social, cultural, and sometimes political – beyond the purely linguistic ones [3].

Sali A. Tagliamonte [4] pays special attention to the methodology of sociolinguistic research. She describes step by step the procedures for conducting interviews; collecting and analyzing the data obtained; hypothesis formulation; variations, distributional and multivariate types of analysis. She emphasizes the significance of statistics and the correct interpretation of research results as well.

One of the relevant issues in modern sociolinguistics is the phenomenon of code-switching in bilingual and multilingual situations. Ronald Wardhaugh treats codes as neutral terms while such terms like dialect, language, style, standard language, pidgin, and creole are, in scholar opinion, inclined to arouse emotions. So, the term code can be used to refer to any kind of system that two or more people employ for communication [3, p. 88]. The question is how do people choose codes when they speak, why do they prefer one code to another. Finding out the answer to this question is one of the tasks of sociolinguistics in the modern globalized world. Language policy issues are extremely relevant today. Language appears to be the main identifier of belonging to a particular society. That is why finding out the problems that arise in multilingual societies requires the involvement of a wide range of methodological resources. And this, in turn, determines the emergence and formation of new areas of sociolinguistic researches. Isabella Paoletti distinguishes some of the research areas that have been included under sociolinguistics, in various combinations and according to different authors. This grouping of research areas is useful for descriptive reasons, but in fact many of these fields of research are strictly interrelated: Quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of language and variations sociolinguistics; ethnographic and anthropological approaches to the study of language; Language contact: Creole studies, code-switching, language death and survival, language rights and language policy; Discursive approaches to sociology and other human sciences [1]. Thus, the methodological tools used by scientists within these approaches, determine the specifics of the data obtained. The scholar especially emphasizes the importance of the interdisciplinary nature of sociolinguistic researches as the development of these interdisciplinary areas of research is dependent on flexibility at the institutional level and consequent availability of jobs in these areas. The importance of sustaining interdisciplinary research at the institutional level can never be stressed enough, for example, the creation of specific laboratories sustained by different university departments, and based on definite interdisciplinary research objectives, would seem a feasible solution [1, p. 6].

The emergence of new methods and approaches to the study of linguistic phenomena within sociolinguistics leads to new research topics, among which, in particular, it is necessary to highlight such as improved understanding of indexical meaning, exploitation of new methods and technology, and exploration of new languages and cultural contexts.

Since its inception, sociolinguistics has combined concepts and methods not only from sociology, anthropology and linguistics. The expansion of cognitive science has influenced the study of language in its connection with the social phenomena as well. The recent development of cognitive approaches to sociolinguistic issues is a manifestation of this more general

convergence between social science and cognitive science [5]. Scientists characterize the major areas of convergence between cognitive science and sociolinguistics – cognitive sociolinguistics, sociolinguistic cognition, computational modeling of language variation and change, the study of language acquisition, and comparison of variation in human language. The first area of contact between sociolinguistics and cognitive science (cognitive sociolinguistics) explores language-internal or cross-linguistic variation linked to social dimensions, grounds on solid empirical methods and studies how language interacts with cognition. The second area of contact – sociolinguistic cognition – explores the cognitive and cerebral mechanisms underpinning the ability to encode sociolinguistic variation, to implement it during speech production, and to process it during speech perception. The third area of contact between sociolinguistics and cognitive science – computational modeling – explores the links between society, sociolinguistic variation and language change benefits and allows us to test, in a concentrated time frame, the long-term effect of parameters that are hard to control in experiments or in the usual conditions of language use. The fourth area of contact – the study of language acquisition – explores how learners acquire sociolinguistic patterns and indexical meanings, and how they stabilize linguistic knowledge by combining linguistic and social information encountered in the variable environment. And the fifth area of contact between sociolinguistics and cognitive science – comparison of variation in human language – compares dialects in human language with variation in the communication systems of many different animal species, what presents an especially promising way to improve our understanding of sociability and its links with communication and cognition [5]. In our opinion, such interdisciplinary researches contribute significantly to better understanding the relationship between human mental/cognitive processes and social behavior.

Miriam Meyerhoff [6] emphasizes the importance of the interdisciplinary aspect of sociolinguistics. Moreover, she pays special attention to the practical approach and methods of collecting material for further sociolinguistic analysis. Thus, the researcher identifies two ways of obtaining data for the analysis. In her opinion, some sociolinguistic patterns can only be observed systematically through close examination of lots of recorded speech and a good understanding about the speaker's background or place in a community. On the other hand, sociolinguists who are interested in investigating national language policies might never need to use any audio or video recordings at all. A lot of relevant information on language planning can be gleaned from library and archive materials, or from more free-form discussions with members of the communities being studied. A significant detail of her studies is taking into account the concept gender. Miriam Meyerhoff consider the field of language and gender to be one of the most dynamic in sociolinguistics [6, p. 201]. British scholar Peter Stockwell also includes this issue in his field of scientific interest. He analyzes the difference between men and women's manners of speaking, choice of language means, mixed=sex conversation. "Gender certainly seems to affect every different level, from accent variation to lexical choice and syntactic preference. One of the most interesting areas of research has been in studying gender differences at the level of discursive strategies: how men and women perceive spoken discourse differently and so behave differently in conversation" [8, p. 66].

One of the current areas of sociolinguistic research in recent decades is also the study of the relationship between language and society in the context of globalization. Jan Blommaert a Belgian sociolinguist linguistic anthropologists, who had contributed substantially to sociolinguistic globalization theory, focused on historical as well as contemporary patterns of the spread of languages and forms of literacy, and on lasting and new forms of inequality emerging from globalization processes. As the scholar concluded, modern sociolinguistics drew an artefactualized image of language into time and space [9, p. 4], – and this new view of language and society can find answers to many relevant questions, such as the assimilation of languages and, consequently, ethnic groups; death of languages, etc., and make a significant contribution to the understanding of the proper modeling of language policy by governments in the 21st century.

In Ukraine problems dealt with by sociolinguists concerned the corpus planning of the Ukrainian language (creation of card indexes for dictionaries and dictionaries themselves, discussion of spelling, organization of terminology) [10]. The language issue in Ukraine is extremely relevant and still remains the subject of manipulation by various political forces. Therefore, the practical application of the results of sociolinguistic research, the development of models for the implementation of laws relating to the language issue are extremely acute. Accordingly, such a situation in society determines the scientific interests of sociolinguists. So, still, according to Ukrainian scientist Svitlana Sokolova, such areas of microsociolinguistic

research as speech of representatives of certain sociogroups (professional, age, by sex, intrafamily, foreign speech and problems of linguistics; study of professional jargon, slang); features of speech in different communicative situations; features of certain discursive practices; broadcasting of the city and village; patterns of language choice and switching language codes in the conditions bi- and polylingualism; problems of language stability and language lability are still relevant [10, p. 39].

Conclusions. The major characteristic feature of sociolinguistics in the second half of the 20th century is the transition from theoretical works to the experimental testing of hypotheses and mathematical description of data obtained. Modern sociolinguistics is characterized by consistency, strict focus on data collection, quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis of facts, combination of linguistic and sociological aspects of research and a diversity of new topics.

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Алла СІРАНТ
СУЧАСНІ АСПЕКТИ СОЦІОЛІНГВІСТИЧНИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ

Анотація. У статті йдеться про основні напрямки сучасних досліджень в галузі соціолінгвістики. Загальнонауковий і практичний інтерес до питань функціонування мови, мовної політики, мовних змін зумовлений необхідністю пошуку вирішення актуальних соціолінгвістичних проблем, а також проблем свідомого регулювання мовної ситуації в межах однієї країни, а також у глобальному контексті. Багатоаспектне і всебічне вивчення мовної ситуації сприяє усвідомленню всієї складності реального мовного життя людських спільнот, особливо поліетнічних, в яких мови ніколи не функціонують ізольовано одна від одної, а завжди взаємозалежні та взаємопов'язані у складні та багатовимірні. макросистеми. Питання мовної політики та мовної ситуації є актуальними на будь-якому етапі розвитку людського суспільства. Особливо це стосується взаємодії в багатомовних суспільствах, коли виникає проблема вибору засобів спілкування для взаєморозуміння та влаштування суспільного життя і коли виникає бажання використовувати рідну мову в будь-якій ситуації та за будь-яких обставин. Тому зараз, на початку XXI століття, вчені розрізняють два аспекти соціолінгвістичних досліджень: перший зосереджується на впливі структури суспільства на мову, другий – на мові як факторі впливу на суспільство. А головною темою соціолінгвістичних досліджень є відносини між мовою і суспільством. Особливу увагу ми звернули на підходи до аналізу проблем взаємовідносин мови та суспільства, висвітлені в працях зарубіжних мовознавців, оскільки глобалізаційні процеси сучасності як ніколи гостро торкаються питання цілісності світових етносів, збереження їхньої унікальності, а це, насамперед, пов'язано з питаннями мовної асиміляції, занепаду та зникнення мов, правильного моделювання мовної політики урядами тих країн, де мовні питання є особливо актуальними.

Ключові слова: *соціолінгвістика, мовна політика, мова і суспільство, термінологія соціолінгвістики, соціолінгвістичні дослідження.*