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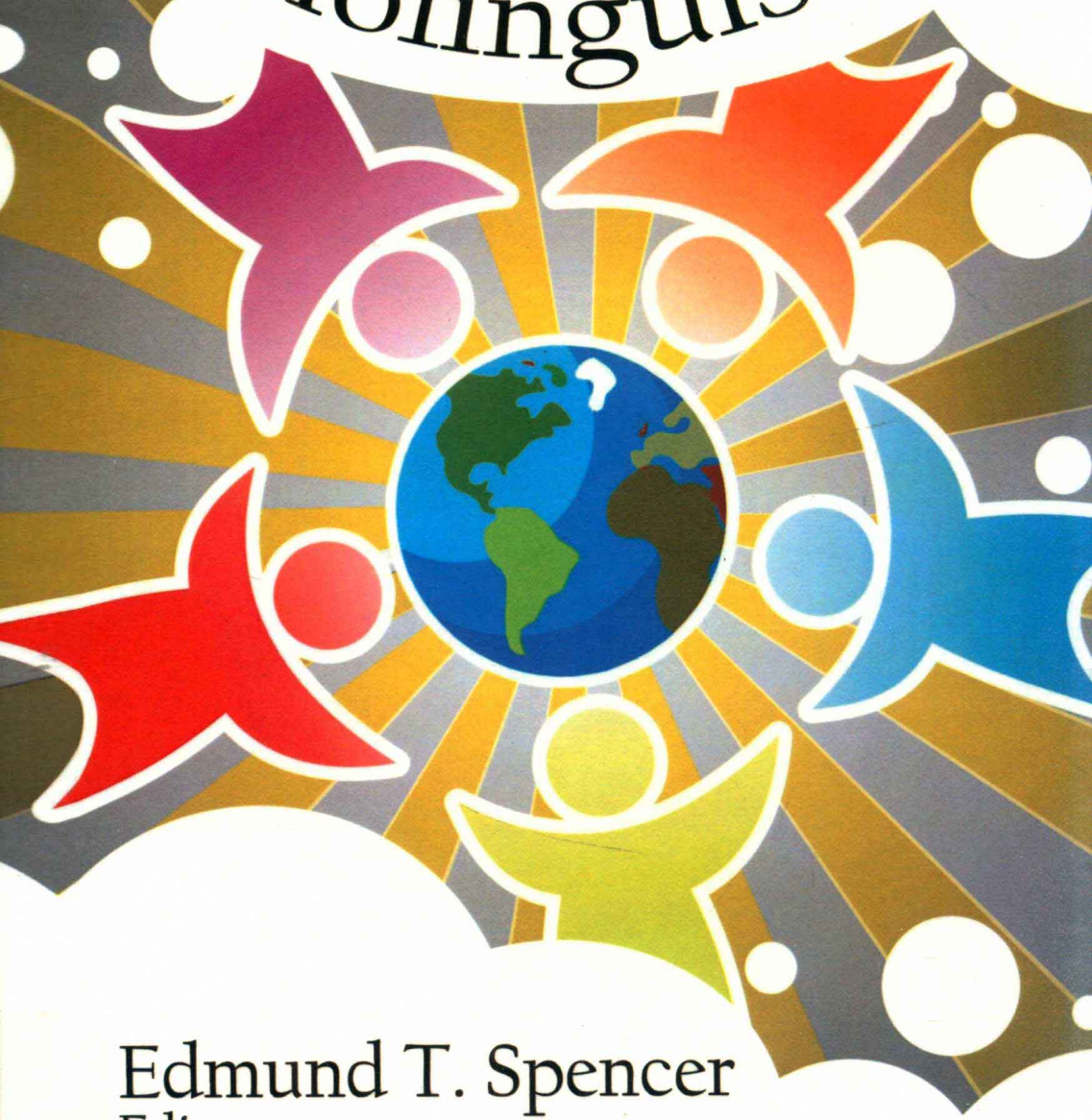
Sociolinguistics



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SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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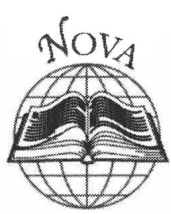

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SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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PREFACE

Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics which studies the ways in which language is integrated with human society, specifically, with reference to such notions as race, ethnicity, class, sex, and social institutions. This book presents current research in the study of sociolinguistics from authors across the globe including such topics as: language and human cognition; sequential developments in sociolinguistic methodology; address term studies in sociolinguistics; and the historical study of language and society.

Chapter 1 - The major aim of this chapter is to offer insights into future directions in sociolinguistics, broadly conceived as the study of language, culture, and society, which subsumed diverse approaches to studying language in sociocultural contexts in 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Blount 1974 [1995a]; Giglioli 1972; Gumperz and Hymes 1964, 1972; Sanches and Blount 1975).It should be noted that at present the term 'sociolinguistics' is sometimes used exclusively to refer to the variationist-quantitative paradigm (e.g., Eckert 2000; Labov 1972a, 1972b), and thus our attempt to re-broaden the denotation is 'performative' (cf. Cameron 1990).

We claim that events of language use are mediated by human cognition, which is almost a truism but has been recently underestimated, ignored, or even dismissed (cf. van Dijk 2003). Our claim is supported by the analyses of empirical data in combining the theoretical tools from cognitive linguistics (e.g., Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999), cognitive anthropology (e.g., Quinn 2005; Strauss and Quinn 1997), and semiotic anthropology (e.g., Silverstein 2004, 2007). By the analyses, we argue that cognitive aspects of language use need to be theorized and further explored in the subfields of sociolinguistics, which include the ethnography of communication (Bauman and Sherzer 1974), interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982), conversation analysis (Sacks,

Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974), and other 'socially-oriented forms of discourse analysis' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

This chapter starts with describing tensions between non-/anti-cognitive approaches and cognitively-oriented ones in sociolinguistics, all of which use discourse analysis. By adopting a view of "culture" as fundamentally "cognitive," we will see that the co-construction of coherent discourse requires by-degrees shared understandings among interlocutors in "invoke[ing] structures of knowledge about the world" (Silverstein 2004: 632). The basis of this sharedness may lie in the commonality of socio-cultural and/or embodied experiences, the latter being a salient contribution from the cognitive linguistics paradigm (e.g., Lakoff and Kövecses 1987). Empirical evidence is taken from a research interview and psychotherapeutic sessions in which we demonstrate that a cognitive theory of language use is essential to an adequate understanding of the interactions.

In the end, we summarize our main argument and briefly describe some of the promising directions in sociolinguistics in which new ground can be broken by theorizing cognition in discourse. We review a collection of classic articles in the study of language, culture, and society (Blount 1995a) by which we see a balanced and productive historical perspective on the development of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (cf. Duranti 2003). Thematic areas that will benefit from the theorization are: "language attitudes, ideologies, and metalinguistics," as well as "language, culture, and interaction" (cf. Coupland and Jaworski 2009). Finally, it is argued that by taking a cognitively-mediated perspective, variationist and non-variationist sociolinguists may be able to reestablish a dialogue against the backdrop of the current intellectual and institutional divides (cf. Bucholtz and Hall 2008).

Chapter 2 - This chapter presents the sequential development in sociolinguistic methodology. It touches on quantitative, qualitative, and formal models of data analyses. The chapter shows that in the past sociolinguistic methodology mainly correlated linguistic variants with social factors regardless of whether quantitative or qualitative methods of data analysis were used. There was even more emphasis on the methods of data collection that were employed: surveys, questionnaires, sociolinguistic interviews, or observations. Observations may take the form of short term or long term.

Long-term participant observation methods of data collection may also employ quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, or a combination of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The chapter then introduces the most current sociolinguistic methods of data analysis, such as the use of Optimality

Theory combined with various proposals to account for free variation: floating constraints, stratified grammars, and the Gradual Learning Algorithm.

The chapter shows that there are attempts in the present day to divert from the traditional methods of data analyses towards more formal models methods to depict grammatical changes that result from social factors.

Chapter 3 - I present a new model for analyzing sociolinguistic variation, proposing and incorporating a set of social constraints into Optimality Theory and the Gradual Learning Algorithm. Incorporating social constraints with linguistic constrains is essential to provide explanation of the grammar differences among speakers belonging to the same or different social groups. The naturally occurring speech of fifty-two migrant rural speakers of Colloquial Arabic to the city of Hims in Syria comprises the data set. The intra- and inter-speaker variation in the use of [q] and [ʔ] is used to demonstrate the working mechanism of the model that gives a mental representation of what occurs in a varying speaker's mind in a certain sociolinguistic setting. The shift to the use of the urban prestigious form, [ʔ], in the city indicates that social constraints are variable and setting-relative. The difference in the ranking values of social constraints among speakers influence the speakers' variable percentages of [q] and [ʔ]. Manipulating the output percentages from which speakers learn gives the specific sociolinguistic grammar of each speaker or group of speakers and their output percentages that match real life occurrences. Consequently, the model reflects on the social networks of speakers because the degree of input of a form affects the degree of acquisition of that form. Among the many advantages of this new model is giving expectation on what the speech of a speaker will sound like if certain social constraints are involved. Most importantly, this model unifies the linguistic and social aspects of language in one theoretical framework.

Chapter 4 - Address term studies have been of pivotal importance in sociolinguistics. However, address term progression has been left inadequately explored. The progression model of Brown and Ford (1961) fails to graphically demonstrate that the superior is both the pacesetter and the gatekeeper.

To overcome this inadequacy, the present paper proposes a new model, which consists of two complementary sub-models, distinguishing the address progression of power equals and power un-equals. The new model is illustrated with a typical example from a classic Chinese play *Richu* 'Sunrise' to show its explanatory strength.

Chapter 5 - Systematic study of language and society, more commonly known as sociolinguistics, in the United States dates to at least the 1950s. This paper will present a definition of the basic terminology, and a brief history of the origins of this subdiscipline in the United States. Moreover, it will provide an outline of the major areas of research in this academic domain. These include the following: A definition of the term, a short history of the discipline and a selected listing of its practitioners, and a discussion of language variation and dialectology, pidgins and creoles, bilingualism and multilingualism, code switching, language attitudes, language planning, language death, and e-discourse.

Chapter 6 - The thesis statement, though often just a single sentence in length, is arguably one of the most important components of an academic essay.Students enrolled in composition classes are taught the importance of establishing a main point within their thesis statements, very often consisting of a personal stance on the subject of their essay.Based on the author's experience of teaching undergraduates in the United Kingdom since 2003, however, it is suggested that the implications for teaching the thesis statement within UK universities are quite different.Analysis of students' essays within the Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) program, part of the School of Education at The University of Manchester, reveals that thesis statements in this specific context are often different from those within US composition classes and academic essays in general.With few exceptions, analysis of students' essays revealed that thesis statements were, from the US perspective, quite broad and lacking a specific point, in direct contrast with the principles taught in classes such as Freshman Composition.Moreover, it was also found that the offering of the student's point was confined to the conclusion, thereby representing a more 'circular' rhetorical pattern to essays, as opposed to the more linear approach expected within essays in the US.This has implications for American lecturers who teach academic writing in the UK and subsequently mark essays, regardless of subject. While the UK does not have a nationally prescribed writing class, it nonetheless has growing numbers of writing classes and writing centers.Therefore, while Ivanic (1998:75) states that Freshman Composition is becoming the basis for the theory and research of academic writing lecturers in the United Kingdom, it needs to be considered that there are certain aspects which might not 'translate' directly.

Chapter 7 - The last five decades have been marked by an upsurge in interest in functionalist approaches to language, such as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Functional Discourse Grammar, Role and Reference Grammar, Emergent Grammar, and Word Grammar, to name just a few. Of

these approaches, SFL, founded by M.A.K. Halliday, is the most influential. As a functional theory of language rather than just a theory of grammar, SFL seeks to be applicable and appliable (cf. Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Meanwhile, as a problem-oriented theory, SFL aims to solve problems people encounter in their activities in the society. Language in education is the one field in which systemic functional linguistics has been most widely deployed throughout the decades of its evolution, and the ongoing contact and exchange of ideas with educators has implicated more or less all the dimensions of the theory (Halliday and Webster, 2009: viii). In a similar vein, Bernstein's sociological theories (cf. Bernstein 1971, 1990, 1996) have been taking education as the central tenet. Is it possible to integrate methods, methodologies and approaches of these couple of different disciplines with respect to education? I reckon the answer partially lies in Language, Knowledge and Pedagogy: Functional Linguistics and Sociological Perspectives (edited by Christie and Martin), a recent collection inclusive of contributions by internationally prominent scholars in both research fields of functional linguistics and sociology. In the following sections, I would like to share with the reader an overview of the dominant ideas and theoretical considerations concerning how to integrate researches of the two fields.

This chapter focuses on knowledge structures and their expressions in various educational discourses. It offers a view of Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics and the sociology of Basil Bernstein, both of which share the nature of knowledge structures as their common concern in this book, and education their keen interest. Transdisciplinarity, therefore, as indicated by the subtitle, is the key theme of the volume. It is clear that the contributions were assembled and arranged in a manner that lays down the theoretical foundations for explaining and exploring knowledge structures by highlighting their transdisciplinary orientations, and presents corresponding applications, and points out future research directions; hence the division into three sections: the theoretical foundations; fields of discourse-disciplines of discourse, where knowledge structures in various educational discourses are examined; and research projects on uncommon sense exploration.

Chapter 8 - Which languages are actually transmitted in immigrant families? This is a crucial point in the present fierce European debate on family-language use and immigrant pupils' linguistic/educational success. Quantitative sociology often arrives at the conclusion that maintaining immigrant-family languages is counterproductive to children's educational success. Qualitative linguistics, in contrast, mainly reveals a positive maintenance effect on children's school (language) proficiency. The incipient

project deals with the question of which of these approaches is justified and how such inconsistencies could emerge. It furthermore investigates why some groups, such as the Turkish immigrants, regularly score so low in regard to educational as well as linguistic success, whether this has anything to do with their language use, as often assumed, and what new answers to these issues would mean for the present fierce educational policy debates in many European and other immigration societies.

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Chapter 1

NOTES TOWARD A COGNITIVE SOCIOLINGUISTICS: PERSPECTIVES FROM DISCOURSE IN CONTEXT

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INTRODUCTION

The major aim of this chapter is to offer insights into future directions in sociolinguistics, broadly conceived as the study of language, culture, and society, which subsumed diverse approaches to studying language in sociocultural contexts in 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Blount 1974 [1995a]; Giglioli 1972; Gumperz and Hymes 1964, 1972; Sanches and Blount 1975).[1] It should be noted that at present the term 'sociolinguistics' is sometimes used exclusively to refer to the variationist-quantitative paradigm (e.g., Eckert 2000; Labov 1972a, 1972b),[2] and thus our attempt to re-broaden the denotation is 'performative' (cf. Cameron 1990).

[1] Dell Hymes (1974[1971]: 335) defines "sociolinguistics" as "an area of research that links linguistics with anthropology and sociology" in which "ethnography of speaking" is conceptualized as "a particular approach."

[2] For example, Eckert (2008: 453) claims that "the distinction between sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology became an issue as the quantitative study of variation gained hegemony in sociolinguistics, subordinating the examination of the social to questions of

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linguistic theory and to the needs of regression analysis." To paraphrase, in her view of "sociolinguistics," the quantitative paradigm has been "hegemonic," but it does not at least exclude "the examination of the social," while "subordinating" sociocultural issues to those relevant to "linguistic theory."

reestablish a dialogue against the backdrop of the current intellectual and institutional divides (cf. Bucholtz and Hall 2008).

Theoretical Background: Non-/Anti-Cognitive Versus Cognitive Approaches

In this section, we highly selectively (and necessarily simplistically) review two strands of approaches to discourse: non-/anti-cognitive versus cognitively-oriented approaches in sociolinguistics. Our purpose is, on the one hand, to highlight the general trend of anti-cognitivism. On the other hand, it is to be noted that there are constructively critical responses to the trend. For lack of space, we can mention only several eminent sociolinguists, who are "cognitively-oriented" (e.g., Jane H. Hill, Stephen Levinson, Michael Silverstein, Claudia Strauss, Teun van Dijk, Nikolas Coupland, and Lionel Wee, among others) in North American, European, and British sociolinguistic traditions. While recognizing disagreements among those 'cognitive' scholars (e.g., Strauss 2005: 208, contra van Dijk), it is seen that they all seriously take the claim that "cognition [is] at the heart of human interaction" (Levinson 2006). Let us take a brief look at the anti-cognitive ethos and some reactions to it in sociolinguistics.

As Stephen Levinson (2006) points out, there is a widely held "misconception" in sociolinguistics in general and particularly in discourse analysis: "there are serious differences between theories of discourse that turn on the role of cognition in the theory" (2006: 85). In a similar vein, Teun A. van Dijk comments: "there is another, even more fundamental form of exclusion, [which is] the study of cognition. There is a widespread misunderstanding ... that identifies cognition with an individual and therefore nonsocial approach to language and discourse" (2003: 340, our italics). His comments are made upon Duranti (2003), who underestimates the significant and continuing contributions of cognitive anthropology in his (otherwise) insightful historical review of the U.S. linguistic anthropology. In Duranti's view, linguistic anthropology is conceptualized as a 'Kuhnian' development of the mutually non-compatible "three paradigms": the Boasian descriptive-grammatical and classificatory paradigm established in the 19th century, the 'speech event' paradigm initiated by John Gumperz and Dell Hymes in 1960s, and the practice-theoretically-oriented paradigm that connects linguistic anthropology with the other subfields in U.S. anthropology; preferred topics in the third paradigm are socio-cultural issues such as identity formation,

knowledge/power, and globalization/nationalism (also see Kronenfeld 2004 for a critique; see Blount 1995b, 1995c; 1995d for an alternative). We will come back to this issue of the 'three paradigms' at the end.

What exactly do Levinson and van Dijk mean by 'misconception,' 'misunderstanding,' and 'exclusion'? These appear to implicate two overlapping issues – that of methodology in research design, and conceptualization of what 'cognition' entails[3]. As it were, the exclusion of 'cognition' or of any other concept in any form of research is not inherently problematic. The question is whether explicit efforts are made to argue for the justification of certain exclusions. For example, it might be legitimate to consider cognitive processes as peripheral to an analysis focusing on certain formal aspects of language. It might still be reasonable to exclude cognition beyond linguistic structure, provided that such a (difficult) methodological stance is explicitly stated and argued for. Unfortunately, as we will see, this anti-cognitive stance has not always been defended with proper rigour. Somewhat ironically instead, cognitive principles have tended to be smuggled into analyses without due acknowledgement.

The second issue, as touched upon by van Dijk (2003), relates to what 'cognition' is properly taken to mean in the study of language and culture. While no universal characterization of 'cognition' yet exists even in specific subfields of cognitive science (see Wilson 2002), it is by now widely accepted that the locus of cognitive processes can be extended beyond the neural level of individual brains, to implicate dynamic interactions with the socio-cultural environments within which individuals are situated (Anderson 2003). Since language andother forms of communication (e.g. gestural systems) manifest these cognitive processes at the latter level, their investigation ought to be of primary relevance. Yet the validity of investigating the cognitive underpinnings of language has often been neglected in much of sociolinguistic inquiry.

By way of illustration, we first present influential sociolinguists' three 'negative' views on cognition (and a shared view of 'culture'), which are followed by four perspectives that inspire a 'cognitive sociolinguistics' that we are proposing in this chapter. First, by taking a behavioristic stance, Asif Agha argues: "In speaking of 'cultural values' I wish to invite no metaphysics of shared belief" (Agha 2007 [2003]) in his highly acclaimed socio-historical account of the metadiscourses of 'British accents' and Received Pronunciation (RP) in particular. His chapter, originally published in Language and

[3] We thank Benjamin Blount (personal communication) for his succinct statement of these issues.