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ADVANCES
IN THE
SOCIOLOGY
OF
LANGUAGE

EDITED BY
J. R. H. SPENCER

III

Advances in the Sociology of Language

Volume I. Basic Concepts, Theories and Problems: Alternative Approaches.

Four monograph-length essays by leading sociolinguistic researchers and theoreticians, revealing the extent to which this field has become (a) more *integrated* around systematic questions and concepts, and (b) more *interdisciplinary*, utilizing both linguistic and social science skills at an advanced level.

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Volume II. Selected Studies and Applications.

Twenty-four selections, all of very recent vintage, grouped into five clusters and revealing the extent to which this field has become (a) more *data oriented* (as distinct from merely programmatic) and (b) more *quantitative* (rather than primarily ethnographic or anecdotal).

Contributions to the Sociology of Language

2

Edited by

Joshua A. Fishman



Advances in the Sociology of Language

VOLUME II

Selected Studies and Applications

Edited by

JOSHUA A. FISHMAN

Yeshiva University

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*For Gele,
Monele,
Dovidl,
and Avremele,
with boundless affection*

Preface

Joshua A. Fishman

ADVANCES IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

In many fields of inquiry books of readings have recently proliferated to such an extent that it has become necessary to consider whether or not they contribute to scholarship (Onuf 1969). The sociology of language, I believe, is not yet overburdened with such collections and it is my hope that the present two-volume collection may be as well received and as much utilized by colleagues and students as was the one that it attempts to update (Fishman 1968).

A FORMATIVE HALF-DECADE

Much has happened to the sociology of language in the six years that have elapsed since the summer of 1964 when the Committee on Sociolinguistics of the Social Science Research Council convened a group of linguists and social scientists for eight weeks of joint study (Ferguson 1965). Not the least of these has been the alacrity with which the co-existence of *the sociology of language* and *sociolinguistics* has been accepted by various segments of the scholarly community. Writing in 1964 (when the first *Readings* were actually completed, only to be delayed for four years on the publisher's assembly line) it seemed clear to me that *sociology of language* implied a broader field of interest, and one that was less linguacentric, than did *sociolinguistic*. In the last few years I have found linguists more willing to grant this point and sociologists more insistent in connection with it than I had ever dreamt would be the case. Therefore, after having succumbed briefly to the more exotic appellation (e.g. Fishman 1970), I have subsequently returned whole-heartedly to my original usage and to the one which is in closer

agreement with my own interests and sympathies (Fishman 1971). I believe that many of those who still refer to "sociolinguistics" in the current collection will also come to prefer "the sociology of language" in the years to come, particularly as the differing implications of these two names and the approaches they signify become more widely recognized.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS

After all is said and done, the differences between these two areas or emphases of specialization may well be far less significant than their similarities. Both are concerned with the interpenetration between societally patterned variation in language usage and variation in other societally patterned behavior, whether viewed in intra-communal or in inter-communal perspective. However, the adherents of *sociolinguistics* tend to stress the first part of this definition ("societally patterned variation in language usage"), finding in such emphasis a welcome expansion of the more traditional approaches to the underlying regularity of language. Sociolinguistics has been viewed, very largely, as a means of widening the contextual horizons of linguistics, beyond the phrase, beyond the sentence, beyond the utterance, to the speech act, the speech event and the speech occasion. Social units such as the latter (and other units by means of which they are ethnographically detailed) can be demonstrated to regulate, predict or generate systematic phonological, syntactic, morphological and semantic patterns where only free variation or weak structure would be evident without their aid.

Essentially then, sociolinguistics has normally accepted the linguistic pursuit of system-in-language, although it has usually derived such system from the data of natural speaking (or natural writing) per se, rather than from more artificial corpuses elicited from informants. As a result, in the space of half a decade, erstwhile sociolinguists have come to claim or admit that what they were doing was "really linguistics" – perhaps of a somewhat broader, newer kind, a kind that recognized social-contextual units as well as the more traditional intra-code units – and that the term sociolinguistics might ultimately no longer be needed once most linguists came to recognize and accept the newer approaches and goals with which the broader contextualization of language structures was associated. Thus, the leading advocates and adherents of sociolinguistics are also commonly the ones that prophesy its earliest demise, not for lack of success but, on the contrary, as a result of hopefully carrying the day within the fold of linguistics proper.

SOCIOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

No such self-liquidating prophecy characterizes the sociology of language. It does not seek to capture or replace sociology as a whole or any of its specializations. Nor does it merely seek to relate communicative content or whole-code designations to social categories or social structures. Certainly it seeks whatever level of linguistic sophistication may be necessary in focusing upon micro-level or macro-level social processes and social problems. Rather than emphasize the ethnography of communication as an end in and of itself *the sociology of language* would hope to utilize the ethnography of communication, as it would utilize sociolinguistics and social science more generally, in order to more fully explain variation in societally patterned behaviors pertaining to language maintenance and language shift, language nationalism and language planning, etc. However, not only are supportive and adversary behaviors toward particular languages or language varieties close to the heart of the sociology of language but so are group self-identification behaviors, group formation and dissolution processes, network permeability differentials, referential membership behaviors, language attitudes and beliefs, etc. All in all then, the *sociology of language* is concerned with language varieties as targets, as obstacles and as facilitators, and with the users and uses of language varieties as aspects of *more encompassing social patterns or processes*.

The relationship between the sociology of language and sociolinguistics is thus a part-whole relationship, with the whole not only being greater than any of the parts but also greater than the sum of all of the parts taken separately. While continuing to use the adjectival and adverbial modifier *sociolinguistic* it is now clearer to me than it was in the past that the sociology of language has a path of its own to follow. Those colleagues who joined and encouraged me in the organization of committees on the sociology of language in the International Sociological Association and in the American Sociological Association have in many instances seen this path more quickly and more clearly than I and have increasingly clarified the differences between the sociology of language and sociolinguistics which I initially recognized largely on an intuitive level in 1964.

SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The current two volume collection reflects the increased sophistication, subtlety and interdisciplinary grasp of specialists in the sociology of language in comparison to that which obtained half a decade earlier. In comparison to the collection that preceded the present one the

sociology of language currently appears to be:

(a) substantially more *integrated* around systematic questions rather than merely descriptive, fragmentary or accidental in focus;

(b) substantially more *data oriented*, as distinct from merely programmatic or argumentative;

(c) substantially more *quantitative*, as distinct from ethnographic, anecdotal or observational in so far as data analysis is concerned, and

(d) substantially more *interdisciplinary*, combining both linguistic and social science skills at an advanced level, rather than referring to one parent discipline or the other in a purely passive or ceremonial vein.

All four of the above mentioned characteristics or trends of more recent sociology of language strike the compiler of this collection not only as being essentially praiseworthy but also as further justifying and solidifying the designation of the field itself. The movement from bias to theory and from theory to data (and, by and large, to publicly verifiable data) should not only make possible better theory in the future but should also make possible a stronger movement from data to application. The tendency to quantify is not only a tendency toward greater precision and rigor but also makes possible more difficult questions as well as more complex models than would otherwise be feasible. The genuinely interdisciplinary nature of the work indicates that one who is merely a "linguistics appreciator" in the sociology of language will soon be as dated and as limited as one who is merely a "music appreciator" in the field of musicology. Hopefully, "sociology appreciators" will also become increasingly rare among linguists who claim to have serious interests in language and society. There is much evidence of such a trend too in many of the papers included in this collection.

A final indication of the greater maturation and stabilization of this field relative to its position half a decade ago is the fact that most of those whose work is sampled in this collection are fully identified with the sociology of language or an allied field, are continuing to revise and advance their work in this connection, and may be expected to remain active in it for many years to come.

SPECIALIZED AND GENERAL INTEREST

In order to fully reflect tendencies (a) and (d), above, volume I of this 2 volume collection has been specifically devoted to *Basic Concepts, Theories and Problems: Alternative Approaches*. In order to fully reflect tendencies (b) and (c), above, volume II has been particularly devoted to *Selected Studies and Applications*. Although there is undoubtedly a direct relationship between these four matters the separation into two

volumes should permit students and instructors to more intensively utilize one *or* the other, if that is in accord with their preference, and to do so with greater ease (and at lower cost) than would be the case with a doubly large one-volume collection. Instructors eager to stress theoretical issues and to illustrate them via their own favorite choice of up-to-date as well as "classical" readings may well prefer to require volume I, leaving volume II for less intensive library use in conjunction with journal articles of a varied nature. However, in those settings (academic and applied) in which a balanced variety of recent empirical studies and applied considerations is more difficult to come by than is a personally pleasing integrative approach, volume II may well represent required reading, while volume I may be consulted less intensively. Finally, the current and prospective specialist or devotee, for whom the sociology of language as a whole is a field of wide ranging and rather permanent interest and concern, may well find both volumes to be essential in his study and research. Such, at least, is my hope and expectation.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

The truly international nature of the sociology of language as a field of inquiry is somewhat masked in this collection by the monolingual nature of its contents. Nevertheless, the uniformity of language of publication is of far less significance with respect to the richness of this field than is the great and welcome diversity in the backgrounds of the scholars involved in it and the even greater diversity in the societies and social settings that these scholars have examined.

THANKS

Obviously, a rather large group of students, colleagues and friends deserves to be thanked for helping with the selection of papers and with the preparation of this collection more generally. In this connection I would like to particularly thank not only those authors (and publishers) who gladly granted the permissions without which this volume could not have appeared, but also those authors who helped persuade various publishers to permit republication, and even those authors who sought to influence their publishers along similar lines but who were not successful in doing so. To all of them go my heartfelt thanks for their implied complement, both to me and to the sociology of language.

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