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SOCIOLINGVISTIC VARIATIONS

Qahramonova Muxlisa

scientific supervisor: **Shahnoza Quldasheva**

Student, English Philology Faculty, UzSWLU

***Abstract.** This article focuses on the branch of sociolinguistics which has come to be recognized as “language variation and change or “variationist sociolinguistics”. It provides an overview by explaining its genesis and a number of crucial roles played by variation in language the notion of orderly heterogeneity; variation being functionally and socially meaningful; variation as an implicit necessity in the process of language change.*

***Keywords.** Language variation, linguistic variability, language change, linguistic structure, age, gender, social class, constraints, style, register, stereotypes, awareness, sociolinguistic interviews, quantitative.*

Main Part. When you start to study any language, it immediately becomes clear that it contains a lot of inconsistencies and irregularities. Sometimes different people in a group speakers use one pronunciation for a word, and sometimes they use another without changing its meaning. Sometimes speakers use different word orders without that difference contributing anything substantive to what the sentence means. Often where there is this kind of variation between speakers (interspeaker variation), we also find the same variation within speakers (intraspeaker variation), in other words, the same person may alternate between different pronunciations of a word, or different ways of ordering elements in a sentence. Variation like this is central to linguistics. Indeed, there would be very little for linguists to study if, for instance, a computer had designed language and

made everything completely orderly. But languages aren't designed as perfectly regular systems. They take their shape in the way speakers use them in social and interpersonal contexts. The variation within and between speakers that we observe is partly the result of interactions between linguistic factors (that is, aspects of the grammar and phonology of the language) and partly the result of interactions between social factors and language (e.g. who the speaker and addressee are, whether the talk occurs in a formal or informal context). A close study variation involves taking all the social and linguistic factors into account, and for this reason the study of language variation is generally described as a form of sociolinguistics.

In this article, we will consider some of the more important qualities that sociolinguists have found to constrain language variation. These include a speaker's identification with different social groups, such as social class, friendship networks, gender and age. It will also review some of the more interpersonal factors that have been found to affect variation, such as the relative formality in which they are speaking, or their familiarity with others present. We will also see that variation may be studied in two ways. One way is synchronically (that is, at a single point in time), and this provides a snapshot of the social and linguistic features that show the most robust correlations with the variation observed. A second way is diachronically, that is, over a period of time. Sociolinguistics is a branch of study in the broader field of linguistics that is concerned with how language functions in society.

Understanding language change and variation is crucial for linguists, educators, and policymakers as it impacts not only communication but also cultural identity and social integration. Change and variation are important areas of study in sociolinguistics because they help us better understand the dynamic nature of language and its role in society. By examining how language changes and varies over time and among different groups, researchers can gain valuable insights into the complex relationship between language and society. All language is subject to variability: some is completely predictable, but some is not. What appears to be

free and unconstrained variation between and within individuals often proves to be subject to non-categorical linguistic and/or social constraints.

Conclusion. This structured variability may be an indication of changes taking place in the language, thus diachronic studies of change may be complemented by synchronic studies of variation. The research methods and the quantitative analysis of such variation are reviewed. Key findings in variationist linguistics are discussed: the systematic distribution of variants in different styles and across different social groups (age, class or social network, gender).

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