

THE TWO FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

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***Abstract.** This abstract examines the multifaceted functions of language, focusing particularly on its role in communicating identity. While language is primarily used to convey information, it serves additional purposes beyond content transmission. Language is instrumental in establishing social connections and defining social situations. By analyzing language use, individuals can communicate their identity in relation to others, revealing factors such as language variety, social class, age group, and educational background. Understanding the diverse functions of language in expressing identity is crucial for sociolinguistic research. This abstract provides an overview of the discussed concepts and serves as a foundation for a sociolinguistic study on the use of language to express identity.*

***Key words.** Social contacts, social norms, identity groups, express identity.*

The American psychologist Steven Pinker describes language as being ‘so tightly woven into human experience that it is scarcely possible to imagine human life without it’. Language is a system of communication used by humans everywhere, and is undoubtedly one of the main noticeable and provable differences between humans and the rest of the animal kingdom. The Collins Concise Dictionary states this within its entry for the term language itself, defining it as ‘a distinguishing characteristic of man, as compared with other animals’. This system of interpersonal communication allows humans to communicate messages to others in a way that no other species is able to do. This use of language for the communication of the content of messages to others is often thought of by laymen as its only function. Many linguists would argue that although the fundamental function of language is indeed that of the communication of content, that this is not, however, language’s only function. Jean Aitchison explains that a difference should be seen in why language developed and what language is used for now. In response to the first question, she argues that language now has so many functions we cannot be sure of its original function, but suggests one main function of

language is to convey information, whether this information is true or not, or is designed to be used to command, persuade or express feelings. She goes on to explain that language is particularly useful for the promotion and maintenance of social contacts. I would argue that this shows language's second main function: the communication of identity. Fasold states the second use of language is that of defining the social situation. According to Fasold, as well as to communicate content, language is used to make a statement about one's own identity, about oneself in relation to the listener, and to define the situation in which language itself is being used. On the other hand, in his 1946 publication *Mankind, Nation and Individual from a Linguistic Point of View*, the Danish linguist Otto Jespersen gives a second function of language as being its use to make a social connection with other humans. His argument here is based on the idea that even when one has very little content to communicate, one will still often use language simply to make a social connection with another human being. These arguments are not contradictory. In fact, this is exactly the point that Peter Trudgill makes at the outset of his *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. Since people will often define themselves and their own identity by means of their relationship to others and their own inclusion in or exclusion from a group, communicating when one has no clear message to express, such as in the case of small talk, is a way of establishing a connection between oneself and another, and also simultaneously of defining one's identity in relation to that other person. As he goes on to explain, a seemingly inconsequential statement from one person to another both establishes a connection between the two strangers, and defines the nature of the relationship between the two by allowing the speaker to communicate his identity both as an individual and in relation to the second person, for example, as a local, as someone friendly, and as belonging to the same social stratum as his interlocutor, or of course, as the opposite of all of these things. This is important as each person is then able to decode these messages regarding identity in order to understand how to behave towards one another. Put simply; this means that every statement one makes communicates at least two things at once. For example, even

the simplest statement allows a connection to be made between the two individuals involved, and communicates both the surface message to the listener and information about the speaker's identity in the ways described above. The information communicated about the speaker's identity informs the interlocutor on how to behave towards the speaker, based on a decoding of the exact information regarding the identity that has been displayed. In *The Seeds of Speech*, Aitchison mainly gives examples where language is used to communicate 'a minimum of information, but a maximum of supportive chat,' such as small talk, or in ritual greetings, where the focus of the communication is to convey the identity of the speaker in relation to the interlocutor rather than a specific message, such as by showing the speaker to be someone who is aware of the social rituals of the society in which he speaks, and willing to adhere to them. For example, when a British speaker asks 'How are you?' she is often not particularly interested in the response, and will be expecting the standard 'fine', yet social convention states that this question should be asked upon meeting an acquaintance in the street. The main meaning of this message is not literally to find out the health of the interlocutor, this question has a minimal information-seeking function, but rather to show friendly solidarity between the two acquaintances, following social norms. However, examples could also come where both major functions of language take place at once. For example, if a teacher commands a pupil in his class to sit down, the language he has used has told the child both that it is necessary to sit down, and highlights the teacher's position of power over the child in the classroom. The idea of language as a method of displaying one's identity can be seen in works by a range of linguists, including that of Thorn borrow, who claims that 'one of the most fundamental ways we have of establishing our identity, and of shaping other people's views of who we are, is through our use of language'. This function is indisputable and unavoidable. Whether one likes it or not, every time one uses language to communicate, membership of one or more identity groups is shown, be that as part of a group of speakers of a certain language or a certain linguistic variety, a certain social class, age group, educational background and indeed many

more. One cannot communicate using language without disclosing at least some of this information about one's identity. This second use of language - that of being a means of outward portrayal of identity is the one which will form the basis of this thesis, a sociolinguistic study specifically looking at the use of language to express identity.

In conclusion, language serves multiple functions beyond its primary role of conveying content. While the communication of information remains a fundamental purpose of language, it is not its sole function. Language also plays a significant role in establishing and expressing identity, as well as defining social situations and establishing connections between individuals. Through language, individuals convey not only the surface message but also information about their own identity, which informs others on how to interact with them. Even seemingly inconsequential statements or small talk can communicate aspects of one's identity and establish social bonds. Language is a powerful tool for shaping and presenting one's identity to others, reflecting various aspects such as language variety, social class, age group, and educational background. Understanding the multifaceted functions of language is essential for sociolinguistic studies focused on exploring the use of language in expressing identity. Language is deeply intertwined with human experience and remains a vital aspect of human life, enabling communication, social interaction, and the construction of individual and collective identities.

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REGIONAL AND SOCIAL DIALECTS

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***Annotation.** The article discusses the social and linguistic aspects of teaching English through the achievements of the world scientific community in the era of globalization. There is also talk of the importance of teaching English today.*

***Keywords.** Science, language, foreign language, linguo-philosophical, social, aspect, integration.*

The attention paid to the issue of language in our country, in particular, the efforts to raise the prestige and prestige of the state language, and the efforts to preserve our mother tongue, are in essence aimed at realizing the unfulfilled dreams of our enlightened grandfathers. It is incomparable in terms of practical actions. It is known to everyone that in the process of integration into the world community, at the time of bold and active entry into the world market, the need for knowledge of foreign languages naturally increases. Therefore, today, the criteria of all-round maturity of a specialist in the field require that he should know not one, but several foreign languages in addition to his native language. The meeting of video selectors held on May 6, 2021 under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev was dedicated to this urgent issue. "It's time to establish a new system for teaching foreign languages in our country, which will be a solid foundation for the future. Since we have set ourselves the goal of building a competitive country, from now on, graduates of schools,