SOCIO-LINGUISTIC ISSUES ON DIALECT AND LANGUAGE, REGIONAL DIALECTS, SOCIAL DIALECTS, REGISTERS, BELIEFS, AND STYLES

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ABSTRACT

The diversity and universality of language stand as a colossal phenomenon,in the development of any language. This paper seeks to provide answers to the following as so raised by the paper such sociolinguistic issues as regional and social dialects. It went ahead to focus its attention an language registers, beliefs, and styles.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to focus on some crucial areas of socio-linguistics and to provide the in-depth explanation. It will look at the issues of language and dialect by making a comparative survey of the two regional dialects, and social dialects will also receive the attention of this paper. The paper will dissect styles, registers and beliefs to providing clear explanations of all the socio-linguistic concepts mentioned.

LANGUAGE AND DIALECT

Users of language have universal spread, and they know the language they speak, they cannot claim absolute superiority in the use of language since it is a characterization of many linguistic items and that it is rule-governed. Speakers, therefore, may not always by a claim to be speakers of that language. Moreover, so speakers experience difficulty in deciding whether what they speak should be called a language proper or a dialect of the language. These indecisions are not surprising as to whether a speaker speakers a proper language or a dialect. Such questions asfor how do we decide what is language? Moreover, what is a dialect of a language? What criteria can be used to determine that variety? A is a language, whereas variety B is only a dialect of it. Another question is what are the main differences between a language and a dialect?

According to Haugen (1966), he pointed out that language and dialect are ambiguous terms as people use them interchangeably as ordinary people use them freely in speech, Dialect is almost certainly no more than a non prestigious variety of a real language, in contracts, therefore, experience considerable problem in deciding whether one form should be used rather than the other in certain situations. He further explains that the confusion goes back to the use of the two terms to ancient Greek. The Greek language constitutes a group of local varieties, and later the various spoken varieties converged on a dialect of the major administrative center.

Haugen then posited that the Greek situation had cleared the issue of language and dialect as it provided the model for all later usages of the two terms with the resulting ambiguity. Accordingto him, language can be used to refer to a single linguistic norm or a group of related norms while a dialect refers to one of it.

Haugen is also of the view that speaker of English has never adopted patois seriouslyas a term to be used in the description of a language. Instead, they have tried to use both language and dialect in some conflicting senses. It is used for local varieties of English,e.g**.,** Yorkshire dialect and various types of informal, lower class or rural speech. With this, can it be said that dialects are part of a language or that a dialect stands on its own? The basic fact is that they are by their nature and linguistic form can be said to be standing on their own but struggling for supremacy to become standard language, and this can only happen if a dialect possesses the requirements to be accepted as a standard language.

If notit can be regarded as a nonstandard or even substandard. Moreover, when such connotations are used the speakers of a dialect are regarded inferior when compared to for instance to the users of Standard English. Since language is a social tool, the issue of inferiority is carried to those who speak the dialect.

Other beneficial questions are which language do you speak? Alternatively, which dialect do you speak? They can be answered differently by different people. Gumperz (1982) said that many countries of the world provide plenty of evidence for what he calls "a bewildering array of language and dialects."

He, therefore, adds that socio-historical background playsa crucial role in determining the boundaries between the language of a given society and its dialects. The Hausa language is a typical example with strips of dialects existing along socio-historical backgrounds, Sakkwatanci, Kanani, katsinanci, are all dialects in Hausa language and they struggle for supremacy to become standard Hausa. During the colonial era, Kanani was chosen as the simplest of the existing Hausa dialects to emerge and was adopted as astandard, so all the other dialects were left to their speakers. With this Hausa used in the mass media and other communicative activities are carried out using Kanani as standard Hausa. Sakkwatanci was regarded as the most difficult dialect to be adopted, and that other uses of the languagewould have suffered as Sakkwatanci proved to be the most difficult dialect.

CRITERIA FOR DIFFERENT KINDS OF LANGUAGE

Bell (1976) has listed seven criteria that are useful in discussing different kinds of language. According to Bell, it includes:

i.   Standardization
ii.   Validity
iii.   Historicity
iv.   Autonomy
v.   Reduction
vi.   Mixture
vii.   De factor norms

Using the above criteria provided by Bell, it will be easier to distinguish some languages using from others. They also make it possible to either say that itis developed in a certain way

than others and so this addresses the issue of language and dialect distinction as speakers have a feeling that some are better than others.

Standardization: It refers to the process of language codification. This process usually concerns itself with the development of such thing as standard grammar, spelling, books, dictionary and possibly with the provision of a literature of a given language in question. Standardization can be associated with some events or items,e.g., Wycliffe's and others translations of the Bible into English and German respectfully. William Caxton's establishment of a printing press in England and Dr. Johnson's dictionary of English published in 1955.

Looking at the issue of standardization, one, therefore, will, accepts that a language can be as standard and not a dialect if it meets the requirements of standardization. Standardization makes itbe used in schools and all formal situations. Such as being a language of government and other areas such as ideological, social, cultural and political dimensions, and so it goes beyond linguistic work. This criterion, therefore, made English, French and another language standardized.

Haugen (1966) also said that there are some steps that mustbe followed if a variety of a language is to become standardized. He raised the issues of codification and elaboration. According to him, codification refers to the ability of a language variety to develop such things as grammars, dictionaries. Elaboration, therefore, the variety must develop to a certain extent that must be used in such areas as literature, the courts, education, administration, and commerce.

Functions of standardization
According to Mathiot and Garvin (1975) standardization functions are as follows;
i.   Itserves as a unifying factor among individuals and groups within a community
ii.   It can also be used to reflect and symbolize regional, social, ethnic and or regional identities.
iii.   Standard variety also gives prestige to its speakers.

Historically, looking at the process through which the standard variety of English developed after the Norman conquest. It became the most preferred of all the English dialects by the educated class. Later it was developed and modified to the extent that it became a standard English for communication. Standard English today is such an extent that the structures of grammar and vocabulary are the same and accepted globally. Standard English became the most preferred and suggestible that exerts as remarkable press on all local varies of English. This made the extended aged dialects of England, the lowlands and Scotland to lost their adequacy, and the standard English has consumed their popularity and all other local verities of English.
Validity: Bells second criteria, refers to a living community with its speakers. This criterion can be used to distinguished the living and dead languages. In the United Kingdom, Manx and after

the World War II and Cornish died in the eighteen century when the last speaker of Cornish language Dorothy Pentreath of Mousehole died.

With the issue of validity therefore so many languages are currently dead or on their way to entirely be out of use as there are languages presently without native speaks. Latin does not have native speakers as a native language, it only lives in a written form and pronounced not spoken and also studied and not used. In fact, some are failing, and their number of their speaker's decreases every year ad diminishing process cannot be averted to save it from dying.

We should understand that a language maintain a force to be reckoned with even if it is no longer spoken as the first language and exist only in writing for and it cannot be acquired and its knowledge can only be learned through the formal education. The examples of these languages are classified as Greek and Latin.

Historicity: This is a situation whereby a group of people finds a sense of identity through using a particular language. The language belongs to them socially, culturally, religiously and ethnically, they are so attached to the language as a bound of unity among them. In the nineteenth century the German nation was unified and the German language so also the Russian language in the past also became united under a revitalized Russian language.

Autonomy: It merely refers to the language speakers having feeling that a language spoken by them is autonomous and that their language is different from other languages. Ukrainians say that their language is different from the Russian language. Some speakers of African American vernacular English they maintain that it is not a variety of English, but they claim that it is a language on its own and refer to it as Ebonics.

Reduction: It refers to a variety that is regarded as a sub-variety rather than an independent variety. Cockney speakers will say that they are speakers of an English variety and they also admit that they are notStandard English speakers and also they recognize other varieties of English as equal to their status. Looking at reduction, it can happenregarding limited opportunities given to users of a variety of English or the problem of resources; it may be lacking a written system. It may also be placed on restriction list as pidgin languages cannot be for official societal functions in contrasts to the standardized languages.

Mixture: This criterion refers to the feelings of speakers about the purity of the varieties they speak. This is important to speakers of French and German languages than to speakers of English. Another issue of themixture can be seen in speakers of pidgin and creates who have difficulty in classifying what they also have a feeling that their varieties are debased deficient, degenerates or marginalized varieties of other languages.

De factor norms: It simply refers to a categorization of some speakers as being either good or bad and that the good speakers represent the speakers of standardized languages. In a situation whereby all speakers of a language feel that is badly spoken or badly written. The language will then have minute chances of survival and such are indicators are often associated with a dying language.

REGIONAL DIALECTS

In a language, there exists regional dialects as speakers of the same language are naturally distributed within the geographical areas of a particular region in which the said language exists. Regional dialect can be said to be the easiest way of observing a variety in a language. In fact, if one travels within a linguistically geographical zone in which a particular language is spoken. Moreover,this can only happen if that particular language in question is spoken in the area for hundreds of years. In this case, one is certain to notice that there exist a differentiation of pronunciations as travelers move within alinguistically geographical zone in which a particular language is spoken. Moreover, this can only happen if that particular language in question is spoken in the area for hundreds of years. In this case, one is certain to notice that there exist a differentiation of pronunciations as travelers move within a geographical setting. These differences can be in the choices of words andsyntax, and this gives a picture of regional dialects. As you also move yoube bound to notice very distinctive local colorations in the language as you move from one location to the other. All these distinctive varieties in a geographical set up are called regional dialects in the submission of Wardhaugh (2006).

Social dialects   Just like the regional dialect that deals with the spread of differences in choices of word and syntax within a region. Social dialects according to Yule(1996) is defined as: "A study of social dialects which are varieties of language used by groups defined according to class, education, age, sex and some other social parameters."

Based on the above, the scholar, therefore, is trying to tell us that a social dialect exists as different people speak according to their social classes and this refers to the social strata that exist in the society consisting of the upper class, middle class and the lower class all these distinctively speak in consonance with their social classes.

Looking at the levels of education of a speaker that it determines the kind of language a person speaks. In social interactions, we must look at prestige, and this can be found in discussions in language use, and the term prestige is divided into two, we have the over standing which is described and recognized as the positively valued way of speaking within a community. Another one is the covert prestige; this is another positive value attached to non-standard forms and expressions by members of sub-group, members of this group make use of English in a nonstandard figure as markets of social solidarity. Schoolboys globally attached covert prestige to the use of language as schoolboys are users of awful language and their use of English is not valued within the community.

Styles: In socio-linguistic styleis a linguistic, social factor. Using it is a situation whereby language can be used in both formal and informal. Style, therefore,is a characterization of speech; style, therefore, is a product of talk as demanded by the situation, during ceremonies speeches are delivered according to situational usages, style can also be used in the markets, places of worship,etc.

Yule (1996) viewed style that there exist variations found in written language as can be seen with business letters and letters to friends as useful illustrations of stylistic usages. Infact, written language is more formal than is spoken equivalent.

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REGISTERS

This is another distinctive and complicated area in the study of language varieties. Registers are language items that are associated with occupational or social groups of lawyers, engineers of different kinds, aviation experts, maritime workers,etc. These are linguistic items that are occupationally associated with a given occupation. This is to say that these social groups have their choices of vocabulary, the use of both written and spoken language. This infact is what differentiate one social group from the other.

According to Ferguson (1994), he says that people participating in recurrent communication situations tend to develop similar vocabularies, similar features of intonation and characteristics bits of syntax and phonology that they use.

Based on the above submission he summed all as a characterization of what is called register. Register therefore according to Ferguson is that all people in social groups who use similar vocabularies, features of intonation, phonology, and syntax that are used while undergoing their formal or informal functions in the society. Such individuals using this linguistic parameter can be identified through their daily use of language.

Yule (1996) also said that there exist variations in the use of language in specific situations. He gave examples of religion register, legal register and linguistic register with such vocabulary as the morphology of this dialect contains fewer inflectional suffixes.

It is evident that the uniquefunction of the register is the use of distinctive jargon which is very technical that is associated with any social group. By using the jargons, the social group can now function as insiders having the intellectual capacity to use all the vocabularies existing in a given social group. This differentiates the "insider" with another social group, they did not master the jargons of a given social group and so unable to function in it.

BELIEFS

Language as a controversial phenomenon with many people holding beliefs on various issues having to do with it and are quite willing to issue their judgments based on their belief in language.

Buar and Trudgill 1998, Niedzielski and Preston 1999 and Wardhaugh 1999 all these are of the belief that some languages lack grammar since they lag in linguistic development and so could not develop. There is also a belief that you can speak English without an accent. Another is that pronunciation should be based on spelling. Parents teach their children to speak, that primitive language exists. All these are endless and a conclusive since there isan abstraction in this long battling issue of belief in language.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively this paper attempted discussing some socio-linguistic issues as language and dialect, social dialect, regional dialect, registers, styles, and beliefs. As these are socio-linguistic issues as it relates to language. All these are discussed critically providing input on the places they occupy in socio-linguistics. Recommendations will be providedto link the paper with the

requirements of the socio-linguistics issues to the classroom teacher whose responsibility is to implement them for linguistic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It discussed socio-linguisticsto providing useful recommendations that will help the classroom teacher to take into cognizance that these issues exist, though some of them are controversial while others are not. The following will help the classroom teacher since children are by-products of these socio-linguistic issues.

i.   The formation of individuals of different dialectal differences, a teacher should, therefore, treat children as unique individuals by emphasizing strictly on the standard British English (SBE) to neutralize the differences in dialects either as a result of regional or social dialects most especially to convert prestige of the social dialect which affects school boys.

ii.   Student's readers should be fair to different language resisters bearing in mind that using them will help them to build enough registers to enable them to function very well in the society in which they live to beusers of language as well as enable them to fix themselves socio-linguistically.

iii.   Taking style into cognizance, the classroom teacher should use language in its formal way since an informal use is a pressure demand for language in the society. It can only be obtained in the classroom, and so right structures of grammar should be taught.

iv.   Belief is a socio-linguistic issue regarding the language challenging grammar, accent, pronunciation, and the problem of parents teaching language to their children. The language teacher should, therefore, teach grammar with (SBE) accent and that pronunciation should be based not on spelling but as the (SBE) naturally provides. The issue of belief should there be left to socio-linguistics as academic issues and not a matter of implementation in the classroom.

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