

MAIN PROBLEMS AND MODERN TRENDS IN TODAY'S LINGUISTIC SPHERE

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Abstract: This article explores the main problems and contemporary trends in the linguistic sphere today. It addresses the endangerment and loss of languages, the impact of technology on language, multilingualism and language policy, sociolinguistic inequality, the relationship between language and identity, and the effects of globalization on linguistic diversity. The article also discusses how technological advancements, social media, and globalization are shaping language use and evolution. Furthermore, it reflects on the future of linguistics, emphasizing the importance of maintaining linguistic diversity and equality in the face of modern challenges.

Key words: language endangerment, technology and language, multilingualism, language policy, sociolinguistic inequality, language and identity, globalization, linguistic diversity, language preservation, digital linguistics.

Introduction

Language, as the cornerstone of human communication, is constantly evolving. As societies change, so do the languages spoken within them. Today, the linguistic sphere faces a variety of challenges, alongside the rise of new trends shaped by technological, social, and cultural changes. This article explores the main problems and contemporary trends influencing the study and use of language in the 21st century.

Language Endangerment and Loss

One of the most significant issues facing the linguistic world today is the endangerment of languages. According to linguistic experts, around 40% of the world's approximately 7,000 languages are in danger of disappearing in the coming decades. Many of these languages are spoken by small communities and are not passed down to younger generations due to globalization, urbanization, and the dominance of widely spoken languages like English, Mandarin, and Spanish. The extinction of languages is not only a loss of communication tools but also of cultural heritage and identity. The disappearance of a language often means the loss of unique ways of thinking, knowledge of the environment, and rich traditions embedded in language. Efforts to preserve endangered languages, through documentation and revitalization programs, have gained momentum but face significant obstacles such as funding, political will, and community engagement.

Impact of Technology on Language

The rise of digital technologies has dramatically influenced the way language is used and understood. On one hand, technology has led to the development of new linguistic forms, such as internet slang, emojis, and abbreviations. This phenomenon, often referred to as "digital linguistics," is reshaping communication in both formal and informal settings. On the other hand, artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) technologies are creating new challenges. As machine translation and AI-driven language tools improve, they raise concerns about the loss of human nuance and cultural context in language use. While these technologies make communication easier across language barriers, they also expose the complexities of meaning, tone, and idiomatic expression that machines struggle to capture. This raises questions

about whether technology could ever fully replace human-mediated communication or whether it will always need to supplement human expertise.

Multilingualism and Language Policy

Multilingualism is increasingly common in globalized societies, where people speak more than one language for personal, educational, or professional reasons. In many countries, the ability to speak multiple languages is seen as a valuable skill in an interconnected world. However, multilingualism also presents challenges for education, public services, and social integration. Language policies that promote or limit the use of certain languages can have far-reaching social and political consequences. For example, debates surrounding the use of regional languages versus the national language in countries like Spain, Canada, and India highlight the tension between linguistic diversity and national unity. Moreover, in the age of global communication, English has become the lingua franca of business, academia, and the internet, often at the expense of other languages. The imposition of English as a dominant language can undermine local languages and cultures, leading to concerns about linguistic imperialism.

Sociolinguistic Inequality

Linguistic diversity often intersects with issues of power, inequality, and discrimination. The way people speak can influence how they are perceived and treated in society. Accent, dialect, and the use of non-standard language forms can lead to social exclusion, prejudice, and inequality. People who speak with certain accents or use non-standard grammar may face stigmatization or discrimination, particularly in professional settings. This issue is particularly pronounced in multicultural societies, where there may be significant linguistic divisions. For example, in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, non-native speakers of English or speakers of marginalized dialects may find themselves at a disadvantage in educational and professional environments. Linguistic prejudice is thus closely tied to social stratification, affecting individuals' access to opportunities and resources.

Language and Identity

Language plays a crucial role in the construction of individual and collective identity. People often express who they are through the way they speak, whether it's through dialects, accents, or the use of specific vocabulary. In a globalized world, many individuals are navigating multiple identities and may find themselves switching between languages or dialects depending on the context. One of the most significant linguistic trends today is the fluidity of identity. Social media, for instance, has allowed people to express themselves in new linguistic forms, combining elements from various languages, cultures, and subcultures. This has given rise to hybrid forms of language, such as Spanglish or Hinglish, that reflect the complexities of modern identity. While this fluidity can empower individuals, it can also raise questions about the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional forms of speech.

Linguistic Diversity and Globalization

Globalization has created a paradox in the linguistic sphere: while it has brought people closer together and facilitated communication across vast distances, it has also led to a concentration of linguistic power in a few dominant languages. The spread of global languages, particularly English, has made it easier for people from different linguistic backgrounds to communicate. However, this has also led to the marginalization of smaller languages. In response, there has been a growing movement toward promoting linguistic diversity and ensuring that smaller languages are represented in digital spaces, educational systems, and international forums. Initiatives such as the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger and various language preservation programs aim to document and protect linguistic diversity in the face of global uniformity.

The Future of Linguistics: Embracing Change

The future of linguistics is marked by both challenges and opportunities. As the world becomes more interconnected, linguists must grapple with the impact of technology, globalization, and shifting social dynamics on language. Language will continue to evolve, shaped by the needs and aspirations of speakers, technological advancements, and the changing political landscape.

Linguists are increasingly turning to interdisciplinary approaches, combining insights from sociology, anthropology, psychology, and computer science to better understand how language works in contemporary society. Additionally, as social movements advocating for linguistic rights and equality gain momentum, there is hope that the future of language will be more inclusive, diverse, and respectful of all forms of communication.

In conclusion, the linguistic sphere today is defined by both challenges and new possibilities. From the preservation of endangered languages to the effects of technology on communication, the field of linguistics is undergoing rapid transformation. As societies continue to evolve, it will be crucial to strike a balance between embracing modern trends and safeguarding linguistic diversity and equity for future generations.

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