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Languages and Cultures: A Wonderland through the Linguistic Binoculars

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Abstract:

This paper aims at presenting a study of Dogri language and culture on some collective basis of research interests such as language use, language and society, language and thought, etc. The topic of discussion here is whether a language has an influence on its allied culture and if yes, then how? And how the study of a particular language facilitates the knowledge about its allied culture? Simultaneously, the paper examines the influence of Language and Culture on each other, and how a specific culture can be known by its language by endowing with an impression of the relation between the studies of these two extremes.

The aim of this analysis was to point out the fields where the study of the language and the study of the culture most noticeably have common characteristics, like language use, language and society, language and thought, and different linguistic disciplines studying them, as well as to represent attention to some ways language reflects and establish a variety of arrangement of social and cognitive associations in the world around us. From the viewpoint of common language user, in their standard travelling, some suggestion and a raised responsiveness of how language works in the world might make possible the drive. On the other hand, and more considerably, the paper addresses students of language and society, and linguists and social scientists in particular, perhaps the most probing and competently best- equipped among the explorer in this Language Wonderland. The indicated pathways of probable analysis drawn by the map of this article, equally motivating and invigorating, depending on the researchers' private educational interests and predilections, are coming up to be filled in by fresh road ciphers and streetlamps of ground-breaking findings, deeper understanding and broader comprehension.

Keywords: language, culture, society, linguistics, cognitive.

1. Introduction:

Picture a passionate traveler to an alien land who is energized and excited for fresh expertise and novel information, well-possessed with some key books, perchance carrying a translating software device, having the notion that all this will help to find a way, to be more specific, to uncover translation equivalents. Yet, this condition seems a bit or little more than a bit dreamlike, not improbable to the one where Alice finds herself in Wonderland. Although there are words, things, beliefs, facets of behavior, etc. which no doubt set semblance to one's own

abode, and can be expressed through a native language, but there are many things sideways which can cause surmise. This may cause either because of the language is used in different context or the entire incorporated prototype of the world is different.

It is a manifestation which is found in human beings to relentlessly speculate the world around them, to create, re-create and comprehend things and ultimately give an expression to those thoughts through the medium of language. No wonder then that there is a rapport between language and the world and this has been at all times, an interesting area of thought. And from the advent of 20th century, the study of language and culture has been a valid, admired and blooming scholarly quest.

The topic of discussion here is whether a language has an influence on its allied culture and if yes, then how? And how the study of a particular language facilitates the knowledge about its allied culture? On a further broad extent, the paper presents an outline of the liaison amid the study of language and of culture on some collective basis of research interests such as language use, language and society, language and thought, etc.

1.1. Language and Cultural Studies

Giving a fitting explanation as to what is a culture or endowing references of the different literature dealings is not the purpose behind this paper. Rather the paper suffices to cite some dictionary definitions and spot the main rudiments of the related senses of the word. Thus, the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary explains culture as 'an integrated model of human knowledge, belief and behavior that depends upon man's capability for learning and diffusing to successive generations'. Whereas, in the same dictionary, a different usage emphasizes the social facet of culture and presents it as 'the routine attitudes, social forms, and material personas of an edifying, devout or social group'. Therefore, it nearly goes without saying that knowledge transmission, language learning or intellectual development cannot take place without language. Nor even a social group can function without using the medium of a language.

On the other hand, the scientific study of a language is the realm of linguistics. Further, different branches of study may be distinguished on the basis of linguist's focus and the range of interest. The conventional area of historical, hypothetical and descriptive linguistics, with their subcategories of phonology, morphology and syntax is what are generally taken as the 'core' linguistics. It has been nearly last fifty years that the overlying interests of linguistics and other fields has led to the setting up of new branches, generally known as 'hyphenated', in order to emphasize their interdisciplinary nature. Amongst them, the most noticeable ones are psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, text linguistics, cognitive linguistics, anthropological linguistics, and applied linguistics. It is primarily through these domains that the relationship between language and extra linguistic embraced under the term 'culture' can be analyzed.

On combining both the areas of study, i.e., language and culture, one can come up with an apparently indistinct phrase 'language and culture studies', which is in fact the name of an

academic course which is, most explicitly and undisputedly, dedicated to the study of the association between language and culture. Generally, it is a preliminary course, a precondition for higher courses such as Linguistic Anthropology, Cognitive Studies or Sociology. These courses offer a broader perception on the significance of theories of language for elucidating and understanding culture across manifold disciplines, including societal and literary theories, focusing primarily on culture and performance.

2. Language and Society

From the above mentioned definitions of culture, it is clear that the culture can be realized only within society or a social group. Perhaps the most imperative device of socialization that occurs in all human societies and cultures is language. It is chiefly by means of language that one generation passes on to the next its traditions and values, and by means of which members of a society come to be know about their place in it. The major disciplines studying society and man's place in it are sociology, ethnology and anthropology. The area where they touch upon language is the true province of linguistic disciplines such as sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, and ethno linguistics.

2.1. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the field which investigates all the aspects of the relationship between language and culture in the society as a whole. Keeping in view that all language events contain pieces of language in a social content, and that every social content establishes a particular form of language, it can be said that the potential scope of sociolinguistics is colossal. It studies how language is used in a living and multifaceted speech community, from micro sociolinguistic matters contending with association between language discrepancy and use and social groups and circumstances, to macro sociolinguistic matters such as social attitudes to language, the prototypes and requirements of national language use, etc. The second approach, which centers more on the role of language in society and advocates a greater apprehension with sociological issues instead of linguistic details, is called the sociology of language.

One of the major issues here is related to multilingualism and bilingualism as the most apparent cases of language disparity in a social group as well as in an individual speaker. To the previous discussion about relation amongst language and ethnic identity, language rights of sectional, and political aspects complementing these issues, next to be added is concept of pidgins and creoles, normal and argot languages, language reliability, diglossia, code mixing and code switching, and language rooming. They on the whole refer to diverse social situations and language behaviors where the speakers are subject to or obligated or ready to use many languages, or an array of languages.

Some additional expressions of language dissimilarities are at times less apparent to identify specifically. They take in area dialects and societal dialects, reflecting that in lots of communities it is feasible to tell from a person's speech not only about where he/she comes from but also from what class he/she belongs to, even though there is a common bent that the speech of the higher classes demonstrates a reduced amount of regional discrepancy.

Also significant is the gender-related language discrepancy, the ground of study which has particularly prospered in the past few decades. There are several situations in which the linguistic behavior of men and women from the common speech community differs – vocabulary, pronunciation, conversational practices, etc. For example, many studies have established that women tend to be more gracious, and use more of the standard forms of language in their speech, which is often explained by their social class responsiveness, their role in society, or their status in general as a subservient group (Coates 1998, Holmes 1995).

While these facets of the socially pertinent language variations spotlight frequently on language users, their traditions, gender, social milieu, etc., there are some portions which principally center on language use, reflecting exacting contexts. The manner in which people converse in court, in school, at meetings, for example, is more ceremonial than the tranquil language they use at home or with acquaintances. Similar differences are evident when we talk to people of a different age or society. Such language disparity is usually known as style, or stylistic differences, even though the word register is also used. Nevertheless, it is well again to confine the latter term to idiosyncratic styles fashioned by well-designed demands of explicit situations or activities – a sports anchor talk, for example, or an assembly of experts, for e.g. cardiologists, computer operators, carpenters, etc., talking about their area of expertise.

Stylistic variations have been primarily studied with regard to the recipients – their age and social set. For sociolinguists particularly fascinating has been the subject of politeness, the concept developed by pragmatists (Brown and Levinson 1987), which indicates to screening responsiveness of other people's communal self-image (facade) and can be apparent as positive (showing cohesion) or negative (accommodating another's right not to be obligated on).

In communiqué, orator makes suitable linguistic selection in the light of their affiliation to the receiver, in order not to make them uneasy. In all societies there exist sociolinguistic conventions, for example, polite approval or denial, greetings, dialogue topics, forms of address, and these vary cross-culturally. What is welcomed, even desirable linguistic behavior in one society may be inappropriate, even forbidden in another.

These dissimilarities may appear totally arbitrary, but they are in reality closely associated with different social standards and approaches of different societies. One of the most palpable forms of civility is the forms of address, manifesting social relationships along the social extents of expanse or solidarity and relative power or class. From Brown and Gilman (1960) on, several studies have examined forms of address, providing extensive insight into social structure, social values and social transformations. The preference varies by the means of the first name and the T pronoun (2nd person singular) to the title (last name) code and the V-pronoun (honorific form, in assorted languages 2nd person plural) varies not only across varied languages and the social order, but also across social clusters of the same society, and in the span of time. For example, the actuality that in a specific society V/title+ (last) name is worn not only by elder relatives but by parents as well, explained by Brown and Gilman's model (1960) states that it does not allocate only respect for, but also the distance and control of the addressee. Or, the diligence on T/first name address in practically all American-based international companies is a mark not of personal

friendships or lack of civility but of the striving for company cohesion and unity, persistence on communal approach and values in spite of of the variation in professional status.

From the perspective of this article it is significant to ask what connection between a language variable and an exacting social feature tell us about a particular society and culture in broad. How is the attained data to be construed in order not to be just proportional lists with value judgments and generalized explanations? For this reason, refined research methodology, as well as a hypothetical model is required, the one which can rest the data in a broader social and cultural standpoint.

2.2. Anthropological linguistics

Anthropological linguistics is generally what one primarily thinks of when discussing about the connection between language and culture. It talks about language discrepancy and use in relation to the cultural prototypes and beliefs and relies profoundly on theories, methods and sequels of anthropology (Hec 1979). The beginnings are linked with the work of the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and his investigation among the inhabitants of the Trobriand Islands. In order to explore the social aspects of the people of this area, Malinowski found it essential to study their language performance. He enhanced linguistics with the thought that language is a mode of an act rather than a guarantee of thought, as well as with the expressions such as 'phatic communication' and 'context of situation'. The first one refers to the fact that language is now and then not only used for conveying thought and bartering information, but purely for preserving social and personal affinity, like in exchange greetings or comforting a child. The second one, milieu of situation1, refers to indulgence a living language as it is in reality used by people, built-into their daily activities as their indissoluble part. However, Malinowski tended to judge this aspect of language more significant for prehistoric languages and societies. This rather supremacist and judgmental approach was soon forsaken in favor of the more intended approach enthused by the effort of the sociologist Emile Durkheim and his functionalism, as well as former by American anthropologist Franz Boas in his studies of American Indians. Boas had an huge influence on the growth of American linguistics by hypothesizing techniques for describing speech models of American Indian languages, a work soon after carried on and perfected by Edward Sapir and his cohorts.

Some of the most familiar topics of anthropological linguistics deal with the techniques some linguistic features may recognize a member of a (usually primitive) community contained by a particular social, devout or kinship group. Indeed, the composition of kinship is one of the primary topics where anthropologists profoundly draw upon linguistics, i.e. vocabulary.

The much-cited exemplar of the wide-ranging lexis for 'snow' in Eskimo and 'camel' in Arabic were time and again used to establish (or, more recently, invalidate) the relationship between language differences and cultural differences, but the connection is far from being easy and clear-cut. Even less is the alliance between one's notion and discernment of the world as dogged

by one's language, as promoted in the theory of language relativity by the proponents of American anthropological linguistics Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, which is going to be talked about later in this paper.

Present-day anthropological linguistics still have plethora of uncultivated territory to travel around. The compass of the subject- matter sheltered by linguistic anthropology is well-illustrated by the assortment of topics and analyzed languages in the chief journals in the field, *Anthropological Linguistics*, and the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*.

Concerning this linguistic discipline it should be noted that the relationship between linguistics and anthropology dates back to the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure, which laid the foundation for a new approach in sociology and anthropology, having made the study of language the replica for the study of additional systems. De Saussure's denunciation of the old philologists' idea of 'superior', 'more perfect' or 'primitive' languages was paralleled in the anthropologists' idea that culture is not something that is dispersed from the master races, and thus the culture and organization of a 'primitive' society should be looked at from the viewpoint of their efficacy to those societies. Also prominent was de Saussure's idea of language as a system of reciprocally defining entities and, especially, his theory of denotation with the concept of signifier, signified, and sign, where meaning is not accorded by a simple correspondence of a sign to a peripheral object, but by the relation of the sign to the whole code of significance. Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss recommended that not just language, however culture itself could be looked upon as a cipher of meaning in de Saussure's sense, its different aspects interrelating and supporting each other. In that way he was able to build up a fuller understanding.

2.3. Ethno-linguistics

Intersecting to some extent with anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistics is ethno linguistics, which studies language in context to the study of ethnic groups and their behavior. The chief conception is language as the mode of ethnic uniqueness, as in, for example, the demonstrations of traditions through specificities in use of an exacting language assortment, or in the selection of language variety for communicating with one more ethnic group. Language is a significant indication of cultural and chauvinistic movements since it is a very apparent trait of the life of a community and an exceedingly far-reaching one.

The problems of ethnic individuality are most often related to the demands and necessities of ethnic minorities contained in a larger community (such as immigrants, or in ethnic tribal discord, etc.), and to some chiefly sociolinguistic issues such as bilingualism and societal multilingualism.

However, in spite of the strong and apparent link among language and ethnicity in many communities, there is no uncomplicated equation. To exemplify with a very close example: regardless of the indubitable linguistic likeness between Serbian and Croatian, which linguistically leads to their categorization as a single language, the contradictory cultural and

nationalistic consciousness, which terminated in different states in the 1990s, led to the certified set up of as many as three (Bosnian contained within) separate languages (Bugarski 2001).

This condition is quite contradictory from, for example, English, a single language used by noticeably different ethnic assemblies (Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland) and nations (British, Australian, Canadian, etc.). Pointless to say, at times it is very difficult to disconnect ethno-linguistic theory and in particular experiential research from present political issues (Bugarski 1997a, 1997b, Bamgbose 1991, *inter alia*). The term ethnography of speaking (communication) at times means the same as Ethno-linguistics, but, more explicitly, it generally refers to an anthropological approach to the study of language use, developed by D. Hymes (Hajmz 1980), which is grounded on the actual surveillance of speech in the act of communication. Hymes's model of communication ascertained to be of major significance to sociolinguistics and discourse scrutiny.

3. Language Use

Even though generally speaking this one also deals with language use, but the standpoint is rather different. 'Language and society' give emphasis to the features of the social framework which impinge on the use of language and the areas studying it, while this section will focus on disciplines which inspect particular facet of language use – understanding of connotation in use (pragmatics), the construction of bigger chunks of language (spoken or written) in some framework (discourse analysis), written and oral statement crosswise languages and genres (contrastive rhetoric), and diverse areas of applied linguistics, in particular foreign and subsequent language teaching and contact.

3.1. Pragmatics and Discourse Study

The broadest area of the study of language commencing from the point of view of its use is pragmatics. It is mainly linked with language users – the choices they make, the restraints they come across in using language in social interface, the effects of their use of language on other partakers in an act of communication. Previously, the chief work was done by philosophers involved in philosophy of language, reason, connotation and extra linguistic certainty. On its linguistic face, pragmatics splits the attention in the study of the real sense with semantics, but broadens the range. In its linguistically-focused version, called pragma-linguistics, it contacts with those portions of the perspective which are officially programmed in the arrangement of a language. On its collective end, it is linked to sociolinguistics, so that the expression socio-pragmatics is used, and it learns how the situation of language use draw from the social condition, the majority of which has been talked about in the preceding sections of this paper.

Instead of investigating the connotation and the denotation of the words and expression by themselves, pragmatics takes into account what is it that people indicate by their utterance or speech in an exacting framework and how what is said is effected by the context (the situation, the conditions, the contributor, the distance or proximity (physical, theoretical and social) between them).

While talking, people do not only produce meaningful utterances, they also perform actions via those utterances, which are known as speech acts – apologizing, promising, complaining, complimenting, inviting, etc. This can be done directly or indirectly. The speech act theory (Searle 1992) states that producing a meaningful utterance is generally more than producing a considerable linguistic expression (a locutionary act). Speakers fabricate utterances with some kind of purpose in brain (illocutionary act), the communicative purpose, also known as illocutionary power. A declarative sentence "There's some pineapple juice on the table" may hence be meant as a statement, suggest, justification, confession, etc. Of course, whosoever utters that sentence, assumes that the hearer will comprehend the anticipated result, the perlocutionary effect. Whether these three facets of a speech act will overlap and whether the planned illocutionary power will be documented by the hearer is a subject of realistic concern in daily life and demands a significant vigilance in actual communication. In the study of pragmatics it deserves a lot of research, principally cross-culturally.

Pragmatics also investigates hidden meaning – how a huge deal of what is unstated is renowned as element of what is communicated. Speakers presume that certain information is already known to their listeners, that there is an extent of shared knowledge. For many years pragmatics was primarily apprehended with the rational analysis of two aspects of this phenomenon, presumption and entailment. The former refers to something that the orator presumes to be true before he makes an expression, whereas the latter is something that reasonably follows from what has been emphasized by the utterance. However, entailment should not be puzzled with another significant type of implied and additionally expressed meaning, known as implicature, which for many linguists is one of the fundamental issues in pragmatics. Though entailments can be deduced entirely by means of a logical investigation, implicatures need some supportive behavior from the side of the listener.

4. Conclusion

To wrap up this general idea of the rapport amongst the study of language and of culture, it should be noted that, although informative in its objective, it has, however, been inescapably rather discerning and far from comprehensive. The aim of this analysis was to point out the fields where the study of the language and the study of the culture most noticeably have common characteristics, like language use, language and society, language and thought, and different linguistic disciplines studying them, as well as to represent attention to some ways language reflects and establish a variety of arrangement of social and cognitive associations in the world around us.

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