

ДИСКУРСИВНІСТЬ ЛІНГВОПРАГМАТИКИ
В СУЧАСНОМУ МОВОЗНАВСТВІ

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DIALECTOLOGY AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS
IN THE EAST SLAVIC LINGUISTIC TRADITION:
A SHORT SURVEY

***Abstract.** The question whether dialectology should be considered as part of sociolinguistics or as a separate, autonomous discipline has often beset linguists and remains, to a certain extent, of topical interest today. In the East Slavic, especially Ukrainian, linguistic tradition the relationship between dialectology and sociolinguistics seems to have been less affected by linguistic debates. There are, undoubtedly, attempts at clarifying the connection between these two interdependent disciplines. Nonetheless such discussions show a marginal and rather sporadic character. In the article we present a preliminary insight into the problem.*

***Key words:** dialectology, sociolinguistics, East Slavic languages.*

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ДІАЛЕКТОЛОГІЯ ТА СОЦІОЛІНГВІСТИКА
У СХІДНОСЛОВ'ЯНСЬКІЙ МОВНІЙ ТРАДИЦІЇ:
КОРОТКИЙ ОГЛЯД

***Анотація.** Питання щодо можливості розглядати діалектологію як частину соціолінгвістики чи як окрему, самостійну дисципліну, було часто приводом для дискусії в західноєвропейській лінгвістиці й, певною мірою, залишається актуальним сьогодні. У*

східнослов'янській, зокрема українській, лінгвістичній традиції, питанню про зв'язок між діалектологією та соціолінгвістикою не присвячено особливу увагу в лінгвістичних дискусіях. Безсумнівно, є спроби, спрямовані на з'ясування зв'язку між цими двома взаємозалежними дисциплінами. Проте в таких дискусіях спостерігається маргінальний і спорадичний характер.

У статті ми окреслюємо підхід до цієї проблеми в українській, російській та білоруській лінгвістиці.

Ключові слова: діалектологія, соціолінгвістика, східнослов'янські мови.

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ДИАЛЕКТОЛОГИЯ И СОЦИОЛИНГВИСТИКА В ВОСТОЧНОСЛАВЯНСКОЙ ЯЗЫКОВОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ: КРАТКИЙ ОЧЕРК

Аннотация. *Вопрос, можно ли рассматривать диалектологию как часть социолингвистики или как отдельную, самостоятельную дисциплину, был часто поводом для научной дискуссии в западноевропейской лингвистической традиции. В восточнославянской, и особенно в украинской лингвистической традиции, взаимосвязь между диалектологией и социолингвистикой не была предметом специфического внимания в лингвистической дискуссии. Бесспорно, в научной литературе можно обнаружить ряд попыток найти взаимосвязь между этими двумя дисциплинами. Однако в таких дискуссиях наблюдается маргинальный и спорадический характер. В статье мы предлагаем подход к этой проблеме в украинской, русской и белорусской лингвистике.*

Ключевые слова: диалектология, социолингвистика, восточнославянские языки.

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1. Preliminary remarks

Since the publication of Trudgill's article [6] on the relationship between dialectology and sociolinguistics more than a decade has elapsed. Yet an attempt at clarifying the correlation occurring between these two related disciplines has not lost its topicality in some circles of the western European linguistic tradition and in East Slavia.

As pointed out by Trudgill, the first question to be posited is to understand what does and does not constitute sociolinguistics and its research objectives. He is not particularly inclined to consider as pure sociolinguists those scholars who investigate language for a better understanding of social processes, e.g. Bernstein. At the other end of the scale, he positioned those linguists like Labov for whom sociolinguistics has 'secular' linguistic¹ objectives and it is a way of doing linguistics, thus supplying additional elements for a better understanding of a theory of language. In this framework one can try to fit dialectology. The latter shares with 'secular' linguistics at least the fact that its objectives are primarily linguistic. At the same time dialectology also studies language in its social context and tries to examine the nature of linguistic changes. In this sense, Trudgill regards it as part of sociolinguistics. In another way, the fact that dialectology is a much older discipline, with its research approaches, traditions and literature makes it independent from sociolinguistics [6, p. 2-3].

The primacy of dialectology over sociolinguistics was claimed in the first three quarters of the 20th century by the majority of dialectologists, historical linguists and philologists in most western European linguistic traditions².

¹ Labov called sociolinguistics *secular linguistics*, "in reaction to the contention among many linguists working in a broadly Chomsky an framework that language can be dissociated from its social functions".

Cf. <http://grammar.about.com/od/rs/g/sociolinguisticterm.htm> (07.03.2016) [30].

² The history of what some linguists refer to as "dialect geography" or "traditional dialectology" saw a period of expansion until the mid of the 20th century, followed, with due exceptions, by a gradual decrease of these

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The new discipline dealing with "social dialects" was subordinated to its older counterpart which boasted a long research tradition going back to the middle of the 19th century or earlier. As one of the initiators of this new research field Labov, in common with many other early sociolinguists of the 1960s, made large use of dialectological findings in his works [4].

On the other hand, sociolinguists, thanks to the rapid increase of their discipline, especially from the 1980s onwards, began to consider dialectology as a somewhat obsolete branch of sociolinguistics.

Criticisms addressed to dialectology relied on a number of concomitant factors, among which one can mention:

- a) Insufficient linguistic theory;
- b) Data collection as an end in itself;
- c) Difficulty of financing research and publishing of large-scale surveys;
- d) Rigid interview techniques.

As to the first point, dialectologists were criticized for being more interested in the study of details which hardly contributed to the further understanding of the functioning of language in its entirety. The inevitable result was that a gap grew between dialectology and linguistics. Secondly, practitioners of dialectology, in spite of the development of new linguistic and social theories appeared to be concerned with the collection and description of data as an end in itself. Although, as correctly pointed out a few times, no one can deny that data collection has an undoubtable practical value for the later re-analysis of language facts and, with the computerization of linguistics, for the building of corpora [2]. Thirdly, the use of technical devices along with well-aimed, more economic field work research, supported by new sociological methods, neglected large-scale surveys of the dialectal type. Finally, the rigid approach of interview techniques, for example, direct elicitation of single lexical items, the absence of a

studies. The reasons behind this decline can be attributed in the first instance to the development of related disciplines such as urban dialectology and /or sociolinguistics.

variable or the restricted selection of informants³ etc., may not give the expected results.

In Western Europe, studies on variation brought, more recently, a rapprochement between the two disciplines, since the study of dialects is a central source of variation data [1, p. 17]. The recent research direction focuses on urban dialectology rather than rural, and on the interaction of independent variables with linguistic variables. Therefore, the future of dialect geography depends upon the ability of its researchers to adopt and incorporate the approach and the methodology of urban dialectology [1, p. 23].

Crystal likewise points out the complexity of this issue and notes that the "study of dialects is sometimes seen as a branch of sociolinguistics, and sometimes differentiated from it" [3, p. 142; p. 441].

The necessity of combining a solid theoretic apparatus of dialectal research with new sociolinguistic achievements is also indirectly expressed by German dialectologists [5, pp. 35-37]. In this respect we fully agree with the statement that traditional dialectology, macro-sociolinguistics and micro-sociolinguistics represent three correlated sides [6, p. 4].

In the next sections we are going to give a preliminary outline of the relation between dialectology and sociolinguistics in the East Slavic linguistic tradition.

1. Dialectology and Sociolinguistics in the East Slavic Linguistic Tradition

In western European linguistics the works of Chambers and Trudgill have significantly contributed to the creation of a framework under which to consider the place, the relation and the interaction of the respective research fields existing between dialectology and sociolinguistics. Whether the same can be extended to contemporary east Slavic linguistics is a difficult statement. The praxis still shows a rigid separation of the two disciplines. This is visible in the various linguistic institutes of the Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainian

³ The choice of informants in most dialectal research has consisted of *non-mobile, older, rural males* (cf. acronym: NORMs).

Academies of Science where the departments of dialectology and sociolinguistics work independently from each other and are separated⁴. Their research objectives and methods may only occasionally overlap. Nonetheless the issue of the correlation of these two disciplines, at least formally, has been raised a few times by different scholars.

In most reference books on dialectology and sociolinguistics, encyclopedias on language and / or linguistics, published in Belarus', Russia and Ukraine, one can basically read the general statement that sociolinguistics is strictly related to other linguistic branches such as dialectology, and that one can refer to "social dialects" as the object of study of sociolinguistics. For example, under the entry "sociolinguistics" of the online version of the "Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary" by Jarceva[32]⁵, originally issued by the Russian Academy of Sciences, besides the fact that territorial and social dialects are part of the "language situation" of a country, one finds no explicit mention of the connection between the research field of dialectology and sociolinguistics. In a similar way the dictionary of "Linguistic Terms" by Achmanova speaks in general terms of social dialectology and social dialects as an object of study of sociolinguistics. The definition given under the entry "dialectology" does not add new information either [7, p. 132; 444-445]⁶.

In the academic Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian language, under the entry "Sociolinhvistyka", Brytsyn in a concise and well-presented article points out all the essential issues of Ukrainian sociolinguistics. Nevertheless there is no mention of dialectology [9, p. 631; 10, p. 654]. Hrycenko, on the other hand, in his articles on dialectology, published in the same Encyclopedia, briefly acknowledges the interaction between dialects and "social dialects"

⁴ In some traditional universities, such as the university of Kyiv T. Ševčenko, a formal teaching of sociolinguistics does not even exist; elements of sociolinguistics are taught in the course of general linguistics. Dialectology is still taught with a very traditional approach.

⁵ <http://tapemark.narod.ru/les/481c.html>.

⁶ Also see: http://www.classes.ru/grammar/174.Akhmanova/source/worddocuments/_8.htm [33].

and that the latter are to be considered as part of sociolinguistics. He also defines the object of study of social dialectology, and adds that *"Крім синхронії та історичної діалектології, виділяють діалектологію як частину соціолінгвістики, що вивчає соціальну, професійну, вікову диференціацію мови. Предмет соціальної діалектології – арго, жаргони, сленги, суржик"*⁷ [11, pp. 149-151; 12, p. 155].

2. Dialectology and Sociolinguistics in Ukraine

In Ukraine, Rusaniv'sky in an article called "Sociolinhvistyka i Dialektolohija" which appeared in the leading Ukrainian journal of linguistics "Movoznavstvo", tried to address the question of the relationship between these two linguistic branches [27, pp. 3-7]. Nevertheless, in spite of some interesting introductory remarks as, for example, the use of similar methods in contemporary dialectological and sociolinguistic research, the existence of some linguistic trends which looked with favour on the levelling of dialects since this would have meant the full establishment of sociolinguistics as a discipline at the expense of dialectology, the linguist shifted over other related topics thus leaving the issue unquestioned.

Selivanova in her voluminous "Contemporary Ukrainian Linguistics" deals with the concept of dialect within the chapter devoted to sociolinguistics. Yet the linguist seems not to pay particular attention to the connection occurring between these two correlated branches. The only thing she says to this purpose, relying on Žimurskij [13, p. 23], is that the difference between territorial and social dialects is superfluous [28, pp. 327-329].

Not much is said on the topic by other principal Ukrainian sociolinguists. Masenko in her "Outline of Sociolinguistics", for example, only remarks that the study of language as a social phenomenon was historically related to dialectology in France and, paraphrasing Tyščenko [29, p. 71], she underlines that linguistic

⁷ Besides synchrony and historic dialectology, one can distinguish dialectology as part of sociolinguistics which studies the social, professional, age-specific differentiation of the language. The object of study of social dialectology are: argot, jargon, slang, suržyk [translated by the author].

geography also played an important role in the development of German sociolinguistics [18, p. 8].

Macjuk, in the section of her monograph devoted to the "question of social dialectology" concisely illustrates the historical framework of the first three decades of the 20th century when some leading Soviet linguists and dialectologists of the time raised the necessity of introducing and studying the social aspect in dialectology [19, pp. 337-338]. In another article she speaks about the interaction of sociolinguistics with other disciplines, mentioning Trudgill's view on the connection between dialectology and sociolinguistics expressed in the introductory lines [20, p. 6]. Finally, dialectology and sociolinguistics are treated as separate disciplines also in Kočerhan's substantial work on "General linguistics" [14].

3. Dialectology and Sociolinguistics in Belarus'

In the Encyclopedia of the Belarusian language⁸ there is no entry under "sociolinguistics" as such but under the rather more old-fashioned headword "social linguistics". This can be probably explained by the fact that this edition goes back to the mid-1990s, and the reference work was probably still conceived in Soviet times, when sociolinguistics was classified according to other parameters. The article, besides giving an extremely generic outline of the research field and objectives of sociolinguistics, paying particular attention to its development in Belarus', does not provide an account of typical sociolinguistic concepts and terms [24, pp. 471-472].

The article on "dialectology", within the same encyclopedia, is a historical outline of the discipline in Belarus' and barely refers to other related disciplines. There is no mention whatsoever of sociolinguistics [15, p. 88-189].

The article "sociolinguistics" in the Belarusian Encyclopedia does not add facts worthy of note for our discussion either, except for the mentioning of social dialects [23, p. 212].

Since Belarusian linguistics often works within the path of the dominating Russian linguistics, it is probable, as shown in Mečkovskaja [21] that many sociolinguistic works issued in Belarus'

⁸ This is the main reference work for Belarusian linguistic studies.

are not just written in Russian but they are also based on corresponding Russian research. It is therefore plausible that the relationship or the distinction between dialectology and sociolinguistics can be found in this area of research as shown in the next section⁹.

4. Dialectology and Sociolinguistics in Russia

Belikov and Krysin in their influential work on Sociolinguistics only devote a short paragraph to the description of dialect within the framework of sociolinguistic studies in Russia. After a definition of the etymon "dialect" which basically refers to the variety spoken by country people, they point out that in the literature the terms "social dialects" ("социальные диалекты"), "urban dialects" ("городские диалекты") and "professional dialects" ("профессиональные диалекты") are also used [8, p. 30]. They refer to Polivanov who supported the necessity of establishing a social dialectology which should include traditional dialectology. A few lines later they seem to imply the importance of the relation existing between dialects and social factors quoting Žirmuns'kyj. The latter emphasized that "the traditional division of dialects between territorial and social is fictitious and that all kinds of territorial dialectology should be in fact part of a social dialectology"¹⁰ [13, p. 23]. The role of some early Soviet linguists who can be defined sociolinguists *ante litteram*, such as Polivanov [26], to a lesser extent, Larin [16] and, later, the above mentioned Žimurskij in underlying the necessity of describing dialects from a sociolinguistic perspective was also emphasized by Michal'čenko and Krjučkova [22, pp. 117-118].

The fundamental research objectives of dialectology and sociolinguistics and, to some extent, the relation unifying these two

⁹ The introductory character of this article did not allow us to examine a high number of contributions on sociolinguistics but only the most well-known.

¹⁰Original citation: "традиционное деление диалектов на территориальные и социальные является мнимым, что всякая территориальная диалектология в соответствии с самой языковой действительностью должна быть и диалектологией социальной".

disciplines, is concisely illustrated in a short online article [31]¹¹. The authors appropriately remark that today the majority of sociolinguists would probably include dialectology within sociolinguistics. The reasons behind this choice rely on the fact that the study of dialects traditionally focused on speech habits of those social groups who are different from the rest of the society because they use a ‘language’ system which does not coincide with the standard, being, therefore, a variety or a sub-variety. Further they try to demonstrate the reciprocal autonomy of the respective research fields of each of these two disciplines.

Dialectology should be considered as a separate branch since its interests and approaches are chiefly diachronic. Moreover this discipline tries to answer two basic questions:

- a) how is one dialect historically related to another?
- b) which archaic features of a literary language can be found in a particular dialect?

Therefore dialectology prevalently concentrates on the forms and their correspondences and less on the verbal habits of the speakers and the way they use them.

As to the diachronic approach, we can object by saying that this was typical of the early phases of dialectal studies. As to the second question (b), the search for correspondences of archaic features in dialects and literary language is no longer the focus of attention of most dialectological research.

The view that sociolinguistics, on the other hand, tends to a synchronic approach, selecting language samples in a certain period of time, trying to correlate the choice made by the speakers with extralinguistic criteria, is true. Yet the authors do not consider some modern developments of sociolinguistics, e.g. historical sociolinguistics.

On the other hand, we can agree with the statement that dialectology tendentially considers dialects and languages as if they were monolithic structures, hence the concept of isoglosses.

¹¹<http://www.soclogos.ru/principy-variativnosti/dialektologiya-i-sotsiolingvistika.html> [31].

Sociolinguistics, instead, concentrates on social groups and their use of linguistic variables, trying to find the correlation between these variables and social-demographic factors such as age, sex, socio-economic class, status etc.

The authors of this short paper appropriately recognize that not all dialectology is historically orientated and, to this purpose, they provide the example of the Linguistic Atlas of USA and Canada, started in 1929, in which both approaches were used. They seem to indirectly imply the existence of a certain kind of rapprochement between these two disciplines.

Suggestions and Perspectives

After a first assessment of the most significant reference sources of East Slavic sociolinguistics, the question whether dialectology can be considered part of sociolinguistics or the reverse, whether the latter can be viewed as a development of the former and older field of research remains unclear.

Most of the mainstream sociolinguistic and dialectal works tend to stress the relevance of a social perspective in dialectal studies and they all refer to ‘social dialects’ as peculiar to sociolinguistics.

The necessity of applying a social dimension to the study of dialects was already raised and advocated by early Soviet linguists, long before sociolinguistics was recognized as an autonomous linguistic branch of research in the 1960s. Nonetheless, and in spite of the changed approaches to contemporary dialectal research in which one may note an overlapping of methodological conceptions and approaches typical of sociolinguistics, for example the classification of informants according to specific social parameters, recording techniques etc., most scholars in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus’ are still inclined to consider dialectology and sociolinguistics as two separate areas of research.

The timid attempts at relating the methods and aims of dialectology and sociolinguistics, as it has emerged, have not affected the general tendency of conforming to the rigid parameters of certain linguistic tradition. We are however confident that the evident relationship of these two complementary research areas will

eventually have full theoretical and practical recognition also in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

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ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

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