

TILNING LEKSIK-SEMANTIK TIZIMI,  
QIYOSIY TIPOLOGIK IZLANISHLAR VA  
ADABIYOTSHUNOSLIK MUAMMOLARI

# MATERIALLAR TO‘PLAMI

# XV



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INNOVATSIYALAR VAZIRLIGI**

**BUXORO DAVLAT UNIVERSITETI**

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**To'plovchi va nashrga tayyorlovchi:**

**M.I.Gadoyeva** filologiya fanlari doktori (DSc),

**Taqrizchilar:**

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**Qobilova N.S.**, BuxDU Ingliz tilshunosligi kafedrasida dotsenti, f.f.f.d.(PhD)

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## THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL FACTORS ON COMMUNICATION

**N.D.Djumaeva**

*BSU, Associate professor of English Linguistics department*

**S.Sh.Gafurova**

*BSU, 3<sup>rd</sup> year student of English Linguistics department*

**Abstract.** This article primarily examines five significant social factors in sociolinguistics—social class, gender, ethnicity, age, and region—that influence linguistic patterns both within and among communities.

**Key words:** Language variation, social class, gender, ethnicity, regional dialects, language and/society, cultural norms, social factors, linguistic diversity.

Sociolinguistics is a subfield of linguistics dedicated to exploring language use in social media and daily interactions, as well as the influence of legal and cultural frameworks on this use. This discipline investigates a variety of factors that affect language, such as gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographic location, while also examining the role of language within educational settings.

*Social class* significantly impacts linguistic expression, making it a central theme in sociolinguistic studies that explore how socioeconomic backgrounds contribute to linguistic diversity. A pivotal figure in this area is William Labov, whose research has deepened our understanding of the relationship between language usage and social class. His seminal study conducted in New York City during the 1960s analyzed the pronunciation of the postvocalic /r/—the "r" sound following vowels—across various department stores serving different socioeconomic groups. For example, employees at upscale retailers like Saks Fifth Avenue were more likely to articulate "floor" as /flɔr/, whereas those at budget stores typically pronounced it as /flo:/. Labov's findings indicated that individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were more prone to pronounce the /r/ sound, while their lower-class counterparts often omitted it.

Another illustration of this trend can be seen in the pronunciation of "butter" in England, where individuals from lower socioeconomic

backgrounds frequently produce the /t/ sound as a glottal stop, resulting in "bu'er." Conversely, those from higher socioeconomic strata usually articulate it clearly as "butter." In Russian sociolinguistic contexts, upper-class speech patterns often exhibit a more formal style and a sophisticated lexicon. Educated individuals, particularly from Moscow, are expected to adhere to the literary standards of Russian, avoiding slang and colloquialisms. In contrast, working-class speakers may use jargon and informal styles of communication. For instance, a highly educated person might greet someone with "Здравствуйте" (a formal greeting), while a working-class individual might opt for the more casual "Привет" (informal "hi").

*Gender* is a vital social factor influencing language use. Research by scholars like Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen has highlighted the differing linguistic styles of men and women. In her 1975 work "Language and Woman's Place," Lakoff argued that women's language often exhibits more politeness, indirectness, and deference, shaped by societal expectations. She noted that women frequently employ hedging phrases (e.g., "*I think*," "*maybe*") and tag questions (e.g., "It's nice, isn't it?"), which reflect their subordinate social status. In Russian, women commonly use more diminutives and affectionate terms while avoiding harsh language in formal contexts. In contrast, men may prefer informal speech and slang; for example, a Russian woman might say 'Пирожок' (the diminutive for 'small pie'), while a man would simply say 'Пирог' (meaning pie).

Deborah Tannen, a linguist and professor, expanded on Lakoff's ideas with her concept of "gendered communication styles." In her popular book, "You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation" (1990), Tannen argued that men and women approach conversations with different aims: men often use language to assert dominance and independence, while women use it to build rapport and maintain relationships. Theory suggests that men and women belong to different "speech communities," which explains why they may have different conversational goals. Tannen portrayed that these differences can lead to misunderstandings in cross-gender communication, especially in the workplace, where men's more assertive speech can be perceived as more authoritative, while women's more cooperative speech may be seen as weaker.

*Ethnicity* plays a role in shaping how language is used, as distinct languages or dialects often serve as markers of cultural identity within various ethnic groups. Sociolinguists have investigated the impact of ethnicity on language practices both within specific communities and across broader societal contexts. Key contributors to this field include John Gumperz and William Labov. John Gumperz is particularly noted for his studies on interactional sociolinguistics and the phenomenon of code-switching, which involves alternating between different languages or dialects during conversation. His research in multilingual settings revealed that individuals often switch languages to negotiate their ethnic identities and social connections. For instance, Gumperz's investigations of South Asian immigrants in London illustrated how speakers toggled between Hindi and English based on the social context, reflecting either their solidarity with their ethnic group or their adaptation to the predominant English-speaking culture.

*Age* significantly influences language change within English-speaking communities. As noted by **Penelope Eckert**, adolescents are often at the forefront of linguistic innovation, generating new slang and speech patterns that gradually permeate older generations. For instance, the usage of "like" as a discourse marker ("I was like, 'What?'" ) originated with younger speakers before becoming widespread. Similarly, the evolution of internet language, with expressions like "LOL" and "YOLO," illustrates how younger generations impact linguistic development.

*Regional dialects and accents* arise from historical settlement patterns, migration, and cultural influences. These variations can impact pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. For instance, within English-speaking countries, distinct accents emerge from regions such as the American South, the UK's West Country, and Australia's Outback, each showcasing significant differences despite being part of the same language family. Sociolinguists are particularly interested in how these regional dialects reflect local identities and foster social cohesion. While some dialects are celebrated as symbols of cultural pride, others may face stigma, particularly if they are linked to economically disadvantaged areas. This dynamic illustrates the intricate relationship between language and social perception. Examples from English include:

1. Southern Drawl: In the American South, speakers often have a distinctive accent characterized by a slower pace and elongated vowels. For example, they might say “Y’all” to mean “you all.”

2. New York Accent: New Yorkers often drop the /r/ sound in words such as “car,” pronounced as “cah.” An example would be, “I’m going to the cah.”

3. Scottish English: Speakers of Scottish English typically roll their r's and employ unique vocabulary, using “Aye” for “yes.”

4. Liverpool Scouse Accent: Scouse speakers exhibit a nasal tone and utilize local terms, such as “Lad” to refer to a boy.

5. Australian English: This variant includes distinct expressions like “mate” and often features a rising intonation at the end of sentences, as in “G’day, mate!”

Sociolinguistics uncovers the deep connections between language and social variables. Through the analysis of how factors such as social class, gender, ethnicity, age, and context affect language use, we gain important insights into the intricate nature of human communication and societal structures.

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