

On Language Variation in Bilingualism from the Perspective of Language Ideology—With Canadian English and French as Examples

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Abstract: *In this paper, the theoretical concept of language consciousness is used as the angle and starting point to study the language variation under the bilingual phenomenon. First of all, this thesis introduces the Language Variation and analyzes the Canadian English and French in detail. This theory serves as the theoretical framework to facilitate the conversational analysis. Then, the writer selects some typical examples and analyzes them through the theory of Language Ideology. From this way, the readers can better understand Language Variation in Bilingualism and it clarifies the validity of taking pragmatic theory into text analysis.*

Keywords: *Language ideology, Language variation, Bilingualism, Canada*

1. Introduction

In fact, every language has more than one variation, especially in the way it is spoken. This kind of speech variation is an important and recognized phenomenon. The author chooses two kinds of Canadian language variants to explain the formation of language variants. However, in many countries, regional variation is not only a matter of two dialects of one language, but also a matter of two different languages. In fact, when we study language variation, the use of language variation in a country is much more complicated than the concept of language variation. There is a phenomenon called bilingualism or multilingualism, which can help us to explain and understand the changes of language variation. It represents a linguistic phenomenon that a social person can speak more than one language. In other words, he or she speaks a language other than his or her native language. Canada, for example, is an official multilingual country with two official languages. The multilingual phenomenon in the world attracts the enthusiasm of linguists, who have written some important works for it. Therefore, we can realize that at least two language variants exist and are used at the same time.

The theory of linguistic ideology provides the connection between language users and language variation. The author believes that this phenomenon and language situation are worth analyzing with the theory of linguistic ideology, which pays full attention to the response of language users. The language variation under the bilingual education policy of Canada will be the basis of this paper. This paper expounds the formation of language variation under the bilingual phenomenon.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Bilinguals and Bilingualism

Bilingualism refers to the sociolinguistic situation in which two languages are used side by side in a speech community with each having a different role to play; and language switching occurs when the situation changes.

Different scholars have different explanations for the definition of bilingual phenomenon. In sociolinguistics, Mr. Xing Fuyi pointed out that “bilingualism refers to the coexistence of two languages in the same speech group. That is to say, a country, a nation or a region is a member of a speech group. According to the needs of communication, two languages are used alternately. “Jing Tiwei believes that bilingualism is a way for individuals (or groups of people) to master two languages and use them for normal communication; Kang Jialong believes that bilingualism refers to the existence of two or more national language variants in a society.

From the above explanations of bilingual phenomenon, it is clear that their views are basically the same. As the name implies, “bilingual phenomenon” refers to the phenomenon that individuals or groups use two languages.

2.2 Definition of Language Variation

In the study of modern language variation, scholars pay attention to the social background of language users. Some social factors are believed to affect our language behavior in the social environment. It mainly includes class, gender, age, national identity, education background, occupation, religious belief, etc.

In the mid-1960s, William Labov, a famous sociolinguist, conducted a survey to investigate the relationship between the speaker's social status and its phonetic variation. In his opinion, class and style are the first two factors that influence the speaker's choice of a phonetic variation. In this article, the author will describe only a few of the examples used to explain the language situation in Canada.

2.3 Definition of Language Ideology

Among the linguistic studies, different linguists keep different understanding of language ideology. Hawkins claimed that language ideology refers to language knowledge in a broader sense that is because of that he believed that the well understanding of language ideology can benefit the learning of a language. So language ideology can cultivate students to pay attention to language distinctions and usage consciously. Paul Kroskrity, a linguistic anthropologist describes language ideology as a “cluster concept, consisting of a number of converging dimensions” with several “partially overlapping but analytically distinguishable layers of significance,(2004: 496-517). Alan Rumsey describes language ideology as “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world's which is one of the broadest definitions. (1990: 346-361). Michael Silverstein defines linguistic ideologies as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use., (1979: 193-248).

Language ideology is the link between the speaker and the social and cultural system. The study of language ideology can help scholars and language learners understand how these ideologies interact with each other in political, economic and social issues. Based on the linguistic structure and variation of bilingualism, this paper uses linguistic ideology to examine the relationship between language and speaker.

2.4 Research Methodology

The study of linguistic ideology involves different fields, and different perspectives determine the research methods of linguistic ideology.

There are two ways to study linguistic ideology. One is neutral, the other is critical. It's easy to understand the literal meaning of these two different methods, but we need to understand the concepts and differences between them. The neutral approach examines the views of language users on their spoken or learned language, which are influenced by social and cultural factors. However, this method does not pay attention to the language variation in society, it only uses language ideology to identify specific communities or cultures. For example, in Anthropology and ethnography, language ideology is neutral. Another basic method is critical method, which is used to study the ruling efficiency of language ideology in society and its supporting function. Ideological distortion is a critical method, which can explain and characterize language policy, language groups and social classes. In contrast, neutral studies emphasize the variability and contradiction of ideology, while critical studies take linguistic ideology as a concept.

The use of language ideology is the basis of shaping people. This is the basis of social discrimination based on the way one speaks. Therefore, the author believes that language users can speak different language varieties under the influence of language ideology. For example, residents of Canadian society may be related to a certain way of speaking. The theory of linguistic ideology points out that when any member of the society speaks in this way, all assumptions and prejudices about the whole group will automatically transfer to the person.

3. Theory Introduction

3.1 Features of Language Ideology

Kathryn A. Woolard finds that language ideology has four central features after reviewing and analyzing related essays and debates. The following is a brief introduction about them.

The first characteristic is related to consciousness. Ideology is usually regarded as a concept or concept, related to consciousness, belief, concept or idea. Halliday put forward the theory of language metafunction, including conceptual function, interpersonal function and textual function. Linguistic ideology focuses on the conceptual function of language.

The second characteristic is related to society. According to Kathryn A. Woolard, the concept or concept of ideology is close to the experience or interest of specific social status. The research object of linguistic ideology is language users, and society is the only place to find ideological evidence.

The third feature relates to power and rights. Like the Qing Dynasty in ancient China, Emperor Qianlong launched a project to strengthen his leadership by controlling literacy and language use, which is known as “literacy persecution”,,. It has a negative impact on the development of language and society. Ideology as a tool to rule certain social groups

The fourth feature is the negative influence of language ideology on human language.

3.2 Language Use and Structure

Linguistic ideology has not only been applied in speech act theory, but also played an important role in language use and structure, which has been recognized by many linguists and sociologists. For different language users, language ideology has different levels, which will lead to different language variants. In the language society, the most extensive language ideology will become the main influence of language development. Besides Silverstein, Alan Rumsey has the same ideology of language. Rumsey believes that the ideology of language users on language structure and use will affect bilingual ability and degree. For example, a Swiss German speaker takes Chinese as his or her second language, and the order of sentences and structures in Swiss German matches the order of everyday Chinese many times. Therefore, when he / she speaks Chinese sentences in daily communication, his / her grammatical mistakes may be consistent with the rules of spoken Chinese.

4. Case Analysis

4.1 Language Variation in Canadian English

4.1.1 The Definition of Canadian English

There are three different views on Canadian English. First, Canadian English is British English, and Canadian English is a direct part of British English. The second view is that Canadian English is influenced by American English and should be a part of American English. Bloomfield (1948) thinks that Canadian English is a variant of American English. Lilles (2000) thinks that Canadian English is just a myth, because Canadian English does not have its own phonetic and orthographic standards at all, and lacks a large number of unique native Canadian vocabulary. Baugh believes that Canadian English “has a lot in common with American English and retains some features of British English, such as spelling and pronunciation”. The third view is that Canadian English is a mixture of British English and American English. For example, Dean (1963) and Avis (1982) think that Canadian English is a mixture of British English and American English with Canadian characteristics.

In my opinion, Canadian English, as the “National English”, ranks first in the world with American English, British English, Australian English, Indian English and Singapore English. Canadian English has formed different vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling features from American English and British English in its own development process.

4.1.2 Standard English and Canadian English

Canadian English is conservative in pronunciation like American English. Canadian English keeps the pronunciation habit of British English in the 17th and 18th century, so there is a big difference between Canadian English and modern British English, which is closer to American English. For

example, when most Canadians pronounce words such as North, Lord and bark, they obviously pronounce [R]. Vowels [B:] are often produced as [a] in Canadian English, especially in front of consonants [S], [M], [n], [F], etc., such as past [past], dance [dans], sample [ˈsmɑmpəl], etc. The sound is the pronunciation of early modern English. When the consonant [R] appears in the middle and at the end of the word, Canadians and Americans make the same sound, such as park, darn, murder, dirty, etc. When the consonant [t] of Qing Dynasty has a vowel behind it, Canadian English often becomes turbid and produces a sound similar to [D]. Therefore, the words such as latter / ladder, waiting / waiting, sealed / seeded, metal / mettle sound almost the same and hard to distinguish.

Additionally, in the usage of spelling, if a word is spelled differently in British English and American English, Canadian English generally uses British usage. However, there are different usages. Generally speaking, American usages are used, while the formal style is basically the same as that in England. But both usage and spelling are correct in Canadian English.

4.1.3 Causes of the Language Variation

The formation and development of Canadian English is the result of the interaction of Canadian history, society, culture, geography and other factors. Canadian English has the same place as British and American English in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and other aspects, but also has its own unique aspects.

4.2 Language Variation in Canadian French

4.2.1 The Definition of Canadian French

Canadian French is also called ruyal. According to the results of the Canada 2001 census, about 6.7 million Canadians now speak Canadian French as their mother tongue, accounting for 23% of the national population.

French has a special status in Canada. The government of Quebec encourages new immigrants to learn French, supports French learning and fosters French culture.

The French dialects used by Canadians are mainly divided into three types, which are collectively called Canadian French.

4.2.2 Standard French and Canadian French

The most obvious difference between Quebec French and French native French is the pronunciation and intonation. Foreigners who use French are not accustomed to the French, especially the intonation, spoken by the local people when they first arrive in Quebec. The main features of this kind of intonation are: the tendency of compound vowels to stress shift, impure tone and rhythm. Quebec French mainly stayed in the Old French period of Louis 14, but did not develop. The change and development of French native had little influence on Quebec French.

Most of the ancient French have been eliminated in France, some have lost their original meaning or added new ideas, but they still exist in a large number in Quebec. On the other hand, the French immigrants from the 17th to 18th century not only came from all over France, but also had different occupations, identities and cultural qualities, so there were various dialect jargon in French. Most of the immigrants are fishermen in the west of France, especially in Quebec dialect.

The influence of ancient French, news and loanwords is another major feature of Quebec French. A variety of features are interwoven, which gives Quebec French a gorgeous local color and makes it a language with strong vitality. Some call it Quebec French, some call it new French, some even call it rurl (the popular spoken language in Montreal), Quebec People are proud of their unique language.

4.2.3 Causes of the Language Variation

For many reasons, such as the geographical estrangement, the political estrangement between France and Canada, the invasion of Britain, and the evolution of language over the centuries, there is some difference between Canadian French and European French.

5. Conclusion

Canadian English and Canadian French are different from the standard language. They have the characteristics of pronunciation, intonation, sentence structure and grammar habits. In order to explain

these characteristics more clearly, the author lists several examples after each characteristic. When necessary, the translation of these examples is intended to show the relationship between different language versions. Based on the analysis of Canadian English and French, this paper finds out the formal factors and success reasons of them, which are related to the four characteristics of linguistic ideology. They are a kind of language's consciousness concern, social connection, power and right support mechanism and two side effects.

In fact, it is not enough to explain a language or a language variant with only one paper. With the continuous development of language, there are still many meaningful examples and viewpoints to explain the language variant in bilingual. Maybe the research of this paper is not complete, but I hope to continue to pay attention to this topic, and I believe that the development of Canadian language is conducive to Chinese language learning and research to a certain extent.

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