

## Defining the Postmodern Aspect of the Social Factor of Language Variation

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**Abstract:** *The article highlights the trends of the present world, the informatization of society, the intensive development of innovative technologies entails a rethinking of values in art and language environment. Learning a language certainly includes considering a whole range of external circumstances in which it really develops and actively functions: the society that uses the language, its social structure, age difference between native speakers, social status, level of culture and education, place of residence, as well as differences in their speech behavior depending on the language situation. The relevance of the study is determined by the change in human consciousness during the postmodern cultural era, a feature of which is the rethinking of values, the definition of specific trends in the philosophical essence of the postmodern. The study presents the theoretical foundations of postmodern reflection in the social manifestation of speech. Postmodern forms a value attitude to progress as a single unchanging constant, formed throughout historical development.*

*The article examines the conditions of equality of social factors between men and women who choose different strategies of speech behavior, manifested in the models of text construction, use of linguistic means, associations arising in both sexes as one of the aspects of postmodern semantic representation. In the course of the study the concept of "ethnicity" is defined, replacing the concept of "ethnos" and denoting the existence of separate ethnic groups.*

*The study is based on the method of analysis and synthesis, the research, descriptive and scientific method was used to determine the postmodern aspect of the social factor of language variation. The results of the study are the basis for determining the social factor of speech in the context of postmodern society.*

**Keywords:** *gender category; intercultural communication; ethnicity; social status; age categories of speakers; deviations from norms.*

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## Introduction

Now the process of language functioning is considered by linguistic scientists from the point of view of the development of the theory of norms and implementation. Linguists emphasize the importance of a structural-systems approach to language learning, because this structure is a self-regulating system. This fact was a powerful impetus to the problem of the normativity of language.

The relevance of the research is determined by the need to analyze the meaning-making conditions of the postmodern era in the development of global society, which is in the process of searching for new solutions in the self-realization of itself in society. It is in the postmodern era the problem of critical perception of the values of humanity, developed in the process of historical and cultural development, in particular, under the morality and spirituality loses importance for the formation of personality in the period of informative postmodern society. Awareness of the value of past achievements, rethinking them to prioritize the choice of the future is the main aspect of the development of postmodern society. Consequently, the postmodern rethinking of values toward freedom, equality, democracy is necessary for the further self-preservation of humanity as a unique association in cultural progress.

The concept of ethnicity presupposes the existence of homogeneous, functional and static characteristics that distinguish one group from another endowed with a different set of these characteristics. An individual's social status is one of the main parameters of communication, and the ability of individuals to move vertically up or down in the social hierarchy has a significant impact on the choice of appropriate linguistic behavior by individuals. Age categories of speakers are categorized into age groups such as: "children", "teenagers", "adults" and "old people" (the so-called "third age"). In the language of all groups, distinctive features characteristic of each group are observed, namely: children and the elderly have the greatest number of deviations from the norm.

For the linguistic norm, the concepts of "*language*", "*system*" and "*usus*" are important. The term "*norm*", like other definitions in linguistics, is multitudinous.

We can confidently assert that taking into account the interaction of the concepts of the triad "*system*" - "*usus*" - "*norm*", all these three concepts are interconnected, but each of them performs its function. The *system* represents certain options (existing or potential). The combination of these options for using the language system is a *usus*, which is a rather spontaneous

concept (but not chaotic). A *norm* is the result of a conscious activity that seeks to identify the use cases of the system as right / wrong, exemplary / nondescript.

The language norm problem is the problem of the relation between certain variants and invariants, variable forms and hyperforms. That is, the task of codification (norms) depends on the results of the search for forms, which allows them to organize and deduce a unified system of rules. The statics of normalization and codification of pronunciation can be provided only to support multilateral language practice with an emphasis on reforms, and sociolect - on communicative features and types of oral activity (Stepanov, 1969, pp. 226-235).

In the early 90s, Braun P. (1998) argued that each language is a "polysystem" of forms, Vasileva (2000, p. 23). For example, the English language is characterized by such forms of existence as a variant of the national literary language, common language, social and territorial dialects. In this regard, it is important to distinguish between the concepts of "*variability*", "*variance*" and "*variation*". According to the definitions of L.A. Verbitskaya (2001, pp. 14-15) and A.A. Selivanova (2008), *linguistic variability* is a semiotic feature of any language. In modern linguistics, this concept is interpreted as a general social feature and a way of existence of the language system and language norm. It is customary to refer to two areas of the concept of linguistic change or variability: intra-linguistic history or historical linguistics (reconstruction of proto-languages based on existing historical monuments) and externally linguistic history ("history of language", which reflects changes in the structure of the language in its connection with the socio-economic environment) (Gampertz, 1972, p. 299). *Variation*, in turn, is not provoked by language, but resolved by it, that is, it represents two different ways of implementing one unit (for example, two variants of pronunciation of a certain word) (Byganova, 2008, pp. 14-15). In addition, variants can be presented at all language levels (for example, variants of pronunciation of words, variants of morphemes identical in content, lexical or syntactic synonymy, syntactic derivation) (Selivanova, 2008, p. 346). In a broader sense, variance is considered as the differences in language into national-state variants of the language, variance of sociolects (for example, professional vocabulary), age language variance, variance of male and female speech, that is, the gender aspect of the language (Shakhbagova, 1986, pp. 10-11). Researchers of variants of national languages suggest the term "*variance*" to denote *paradigmatic variation*, which is due to the divergent (versatile) mutual influence of related languages, and the concept of "*variability*" - syntagmatic variation, which arises during the distribution of

variants (Derbilov, 1986, p. 33). Since variability permeates the entire language system and its functioning, this allows us to consider it in various research planes. In the aspect of the connection between language and society, as well as the influence of extra-linguistic factors on the language, sociolinguistic, regional, textual variability is distinguished, as well as individual, which means the variability of sociolects: gender, age, ethnicity, class etc. (Petrenko et al., 2009, p. 121) notes that *social variability* manifests itself in two varieties: stratification, which is associated with the social structure of society, and situational, which is expressed with the variation of linguistic means depending on the communicative situation. V. Stepanov (1976, p. 100) made a significant achievement in the development of linguistic variability, he created the concept of a "national variant", which is understood as "such forms of the national language that do not show serious structural differences, but at the same time acquire autonomy, supported and recognized within each national community".

In turn, variation is a difference precisely in the formation of linguistic units, it means a change in the sound composition of these units or structural meaning without loss of identity (Golovina, 1983, pp. 58-63).

Due to the fact that a language is usually considered as a set of its varieties, taking into account territorial, social and other types of stratification, variability, variance and variation are extremely important linguistic phenomena that require careful study.

Postmodern in a linguistic context expresses a cultural phenomenon in a certain chaotic dimension, the content of which is not definitively defined. The aesthetic function of postmodern art reflects the combination of different artistic systems. Postmodernism emerges under the conditions of comprehending the end of a certain historical era, the realization that something new unknown begins. The linguistic interpretation of postmodern representation is an exponent of scientific, artistic reinterpretation as a fundamental aspect of the expression of the "postmodern mentality". Language expresses the ironic perception of the postmodern context of the world order. A sign of the speech essence in postmodernism is "ironic quotation thinking", mockery of the processes of life, reflected in the ironic combination of different genres, styles. Language is a tool for displaying the sense-life principles that emerged in the era of postmodernism.

Analysis and comprehension of the linguistic content of today's communication becomes the basis for defining postmodernism as an image and style system that combines the stylistic features of previous eras. The

peculiarity of postmodernism is an intellectual search for the right variant of speech interpretation in the historical search for truth (Bell, 1980).

In general, the structure of present English cannot be a general rule of pronunciation, because it is influenced by the so-called "environmental pollution" in the form of the functioning of uncodified linguistic units, like any other language. Pronunciation codification of standard abstraction reflects the activity of normal pronunciation. The study of its norm remains relevant, because the norm itself is the least conservative in comparison with other linguistic varieties, such as: spelling, grammar, vocabulary, syntax. This norm is the most flexible and varies considerably, even with a relatively small amount of time, therefore the ecology of the language is a currently important and insufficiently studied science (Crowley, 1989).

The aim of the article is to analyze the scholarly works, to determine the features of the social factors of language variation in the context of postmodern.

The purpose of the article determined the following tasks:

- To analyze the theoretical basis of the social factors of speech
- To define the peculiarities of the variability of language as a manifestation of the postmodern worldview
- To investigate the social factors of the variability of language.

### **Gender variability of language**

The dependence of the choice of language forms on a certain sociolinguistic variable was emphasized by linguists at different stages of the development of the science of language. In the 70s of the XX century, Labov W. (1986) presented a systematic methodology for the study of social dialects based on such social factors: gender, age, ethnicity and class.

The subject of the study of the social component of any language is a sociolect - this is the main unit of social stratification, which is typical for a certain social group of native speakers, where one of the characteristics is the gender factor of speakers (Erofeeva, 2008, p. 35).

In the linguistic studies of domestic and foreign scientists, the problem of identifying differential differences by sex is actively investigated, taking into account both universal (typical for women and men) and special (typical for either women or men) information (Petrenko et al., 2009). Particular attention is paid to issues related to gender aspects, the center of which is cultural and social factors that determine the attitude of society towards men and women, as well as stereotypical ideas about men and women qualities (Martynyuk, 1996).

Studies of the gender component first appeared in the West and were carried out on the material of the Germanic and Romance languages. The appearance of works in this area was caused by the interest of many linguists in the language of men and women representatives, their characteristic features in the pronunciation and use of certain lexical units (Sapir, 2002).

In order to reveal the influence of the gender factor on the language, we will consider the linguistic apparatus of the necessary concepts and terms.

The division into the criteria "male" / "female" is in the center of attention of medicine, biology, psychology, sociology, cultural studies and other sciences. In connection with the development of the women's movement in Western Europe and the USA, the linguistic concept of gender was introduced into terminological circulation in the 60s of the XX century. The term *gender* is derived from the Latin "*genus*" (grammatical gender) and the English "*gender*" and denotes the physical, anatomical and psychological differences between people. The concept of "gender" was introduced into scientific circulation in order to draw a line between biological sex (sexus) and social and cultural aspects that are present in the concept of "male - female": the division of roles, cultural traditions, power relations due to the gender of people (Vasilieva, 2000, p. 24). I.V. Groshev (2004, p. 71) qualifies gender as the sum of representation and expectations associated in society with "femininity" and "manhood". According to Sinelnikova & Bogdanovich (2001, p. 4), gender is "a social sex that synthesizes cultural and biological in a person". Thus, gender functions to designate and reveal the social and cultural conditionality of sex and provides for a socio-cultural concept, this is formed within the system of ethnically determined stereotypical representations.

The initial criteria in the study of gender and its influence on spoken language were differences in the perception of the intellectual abilities of men and women provided by nature (Davis & Houck, 1992). It was believed that all the features of the language of both sexes are due only to the biological sex. However, subsequently, the angle of language learning shifted somewhat, which was facilitated by the studies of Jespersen O. (1922) and Mauthner F. (1982), who take gender as a basis not only as a biological criterion, but consider it from the point of view of social and historical factors.

Gender research is carried out within several approaches:

- 1) gender as a tool for social analysis;
- 2) gender as a tool for women's research;

3) gender as a cultural interpretation (Kletsin, 1997, pp. 5-11).

According to A.A. Kletsin (1997) the first approach is based on the social nature of women and men in accordance with the distribution of social power in society. Therefore, speakers of both sexes occupy different links in this structure, and the language performs a passing function from the main language, which is certainly reflected in the choice of certain linguistic tools and semantic differences.

To construct psycholinguistic theories of male and female types of behavior, the second approach studies the linguistic functioning of both sexes. The third approach assumes cognitive differences in language models of representatives of both genders (Kletsin, 1997).

Theoretical processing of foreign and domestic scientific sources has shown that the gender of the speaker to a certain extent affects the quality of the utterance (Labov, 1975; Trudgill, 1992). In the process of studying the gender aspect of the language on the material of other European languages, similar results were obtained by domestic researchers (Stavytska, 2005; Verbitskaya, 2001).

Let us emphasize that it was W. Labov (1975, p. 223), who was a pioneer in the study of the morphological plane of language, who focused on the use of various parts of speech, their categories and word forms, which were based on the results he obtained when analyzing the language of many informants. Note that the speech of women and men varies when using certain language tools and pronouncing the same option in different cases in a different way.

According to the research results of Trudgill P. (1992, p. 79), women always try to adhere to the prestigious forms of the language, thereby they communicate their status, and sometimes try to improve it. Men, unlike women, use non-prestigious forms of language.

The concept of male dominance and female subordination in the language is based on the position that the male structures of society are reflected in communication, therefore, the focus is on speech acts occurring between persons of different sexes. From the point of view of modern converse analysis, the question is posed as follows: how are relations between male dominance and female discrimination established during communication? (Sacks et al., 1974), within the framework of this technique, investigated a number of speech acts between persons of different genders and deduced the features of the female and male communicative styles concerning the rules of communication (Who breaks the rules? Who interrupts whom? Who when enters the conversation and speaks longer? Who is the initiator new topic? Who ends someone else's

sentences<sup>2</sup>). It turned out that the male communicative style is characterized by competitiveness and confrontation, and the female - by cooperativity, an orientation towards cooperation, not confrontation (Zangwill, 2005, p. 167).

Note that studying gender as a factor of influence on the language, the female version of the language is often a more interesting object for study than the male one, because it is they (women) who try to be more mobile in the modern urbanized world and learn the "advanced" forms of pronunciation and lexical units.

Lakoff R. (1973) noted in his studies that the speech of women is considered hyper-correct and polite. This idea is also associated with the subordinate position of women in the social hierarchy and their lack of power. Let's define the main differences between the female version of the language and the male one:

In our opinion, the most complete is the characteristic presented in the work of I.V. Konovalenko (2003), who highlights such properties of the women language:

1) the use of intonation patterns that are associated with expressions of politeness (Rossolatos, 2015)

2) the use of an ascending tone for the purpose of expressing unambiguous and uncertainty (Lakoff, 1973);

3) the use of euphemisms (Jespersen, 1922);

4) the use of polite grammatical forms (Lakoff, 1973);

5) the use of invective, in smaller quantities than men (Sternin, 2000).

6) the use of dividing questions (Fishman, 1997a; Lakoff, 1973);

7) the use of indirect requests, instead of orders (Trudgill, 1992);

8) hyper-correctness and tact in the formulation of orders; attentiveness to the needs of the interlocutor (Tannen, 2003);

9) "hypercorrect" speech behavior (Trudgill, 1992);

10) most of the polite forms (Martynyuk, 1996);

11) the tendency to not violate the turn of the conversation and the tendency to apologize for excessive talkativeness (Coates, 1986);

12) using compliments in return (Konovalenko, 2003, pp. 62-63).

According to Lakoff R. (1973, p. 64), a woman's speech behavior is characterized as insecure, less aggressive (compared to male), humane, attentive, compromising, non-dominant and such that it concentrates all its attention on the interlocutor. Such incompetence and self-doubt creates a negative impact on the image of women. However, in modern society, it is quite often possible to observe the use of "man" language tactics by a woman. In such situations, she is perceived as an unfeminine, arrogant,



feminist person, whose behavior can lead to communication problems (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). This speech behavior is called "doublebind".

The results obtained are not absolute, and made it necessary to take into account extra-lingual factors when explaining linguistic features depending on the gender of the speaker. At the end of the twentieth century O'Barr W. (1980, p. 97) conducted a study that questioned the views of Lakoff R. (1973) on the so-called "feminine language". The object of study was 150 hours of audio recordings of witnesses during speeches in the courtroom. The conclusion was the statement that the demonstration of this type of behavior ("female language") is possible not only from women, but also from men. The researchers found that powerless language was used by persons of low social status and / or those who had no experience of testifying in court, highlighting the fact that language differences arise on the basis of specific authority of power, not gender category (Filin, 1982).

According to Tannen D. (2003), the main reason for the difference in the languages of men and women is the purpose of communication: for most women, conversation is a means of rapprochement and development of relationships, while men use language to try to maintain their own independence and support their status in society (O'Barr, 1980, p. 319). Researchers (Weber, 2012) confirm the data of Tannen D. (2003) on the difference between the goals of communication between men and women (Usachenko, 2013, p. 54).

Holmes J. (1995, p. 63) made an assumption about the difference between the languages of men and women. In her opinion, these signs (speech of men and women) can claim the title of sociolinguistic universals, however, the need to take into account specific communicative situations canceled the idea of universalization.

In the works of foreign researchers (Fishman, 1997a; Holmes, 1995), it was found that women, who more often do "dirty work" and maintain conversation with men, use particles and questions that signal attention to the speaker and thus provide a change topics of interlocutors. Men, on the other hand, are more focused on the topic that is being discussed and do not pay attention to changing topics or interlocutors. Zimmerman D. (1975) in the course of the study established the presence of verbal aggression on the part of men (Zelinsky, 1989).

As pointed out by N.B. Mechkovskaya (2001, p. 312) and other researchers (Groshev, 2004; Sinelnikova & Bogdanovich 2001), women's speech is saturated with attractive and emotive vocabulary and more diverse and contrast-stylistic than men's, moreover, women are less likely to use

such an amount of abusive expressions and vulgarisms than men (Zirka, 2006, p. 58). Among other differences between male and female speech, the following stand out: male speech is more conservative, female, on the contrary, is replete with emotionally evaluative, affectionate diminutive words, euphemisms; women are more sensitive to speech fashion and more often adopt prestigious variants of the language; men use hyper-correct options less; male speech is syntactically simpler and less intellectually saturated; the neutral language of women contains a greater number of emotionally marked elements and intonationally more diverse than the male language (Fishman, 1997b).

In sociological studies, the main characteristic features of the language of women and men have a long history, according to which gender should be considered not as a demographic category, but in the light of social criteria affecting speakers of both genders. With the equality of other social categories (social and professional status, age, communicative role), men and women choose different strategies of speech behavior, which are manifested in the models of building communication and in the use of language resources, as well as in associations that arise in men and women. Gender variability of speech behavior is studied at different levels of the language: phonetic, lexicological, grammatical (Hassan, 1987). It should be noted that the distribution of language by gender (female / male) is rather arbitrary. The nature of the speakers, the communicative situation, as well as the social status of individuals are important. All of the above confirms that it is necessary to consider gender variability in the context of other social factors, such as ethnic and social affiliation, age, education, which constitutes the linguistic portrait of women and men and distinguishes them from each other.

Gender variation in language is formed in the process of life and is a consequence of the inequality between women and men throughout historical development. However, in the context of the postmodern perception of the world, gender loses its content. The essential feature of the postmodern worldview is gender equality, which will be reflected in the linguistic environment in prospective development.

### **Ethnic variability of language**

It is relevant to consider such a concept as ethnic variability of a language for the analysis of any dialect. *The ethnicity of* speakers implies the presence of a homogeneous ethnic group, functional and static characteristics that distinguish one group from another, having another set of similar characteristics. The concept of ethnicity doubts this view of

culture and primarily draws attention to the multicultural nature of most modern societies and the absence of cultural isolates, which are considered as the practice of improving the speech communication of individuals in the context of society transformation (linguistic culture) (Cherednychenko, 1995, pp. 99-111).

There is also no consensus among scientists about the concept of "ethnicity", however, scientists from various relevant disciplines, including sociolinguistics, take as a basis three main approaches to solving the problem of defining this concept, namely:

- 1) identifying ethnicity in isolation
- 2) definition of ethnic group and ethnicity as a consequence of the term;
- 3) determination of ethnicity in relation to race. Each of them has its own advantages and disadvantages.

The definition of ethnicity or ethnic groups can be found in the following interpretation: "*Ethnicity*, that is, a set of gendered cultural identifiers used to determine the belonging of individuals to groups" (Barth, 1969, p. 387). Ethnic groups are understood as groups of people that differ in common origin due to similar physical type or customs (O'Barr, 1980). According to Barth F. (1969), *an ethnic group* is a biologically shared membership that shares the fundamental cultural values that identify it and constitutes a field of communication and interaction. Zelinsky W. (1989) proposed to generalize all these definitions and identify an *ethnic group* as "a current social structure that is constantly changing and has a unique set of cultural and historical communities, which is inherent in individuals with common physical characteristics and in the same social space" (Zangwill, 2005, p. 44).

Considering the concept of ethnicity, it is necessary to mention an important term for our research - race. The definition of race is also difficult meaning. In some cases, scientists do not clearly define the ethnicity of the race (Usachenko, 2013). As defined by DuBois W.E.B. (1975), "a race is a huge family of people, which, as a rule, has a common language, history, traditions and strives to fulfill together some more or less vividly conceived ideals of life" (Usachenko, 2013, p. 53). Omi & Winant (1994) does not provide a clear definition of ethnicity, although it notes that ethnicity is different from race. Researchers define race as "a concept that means and symbolizes social conflicts and interests, referring to different types of human bodies" (Weber, 1980, p. 55). In other cases, race and ethnicity are deliberately separated by criteria related to physical appearance. Therefore, race is based on the identification of a physical marker, while ethnicity is a

set of individual, group and cultural attributes associated with a physical marker (Usachenko, 2013).

Along with the concept of a single ethnicity, there is also the so-called mixed ethnicity, which implies the mixing of representatives of several races, due to the existence of a multiracial population integrated in the social hierarchy of countries around the world (Davis, 1999). The number of countries that have a "mixed race" population is increasing dramatically. These countries certainly include the United States of America (Zangwill, 2005, p. 22-23). Now in the US, there are common cases where people whose parents are of different races must choose how to identify their belonging to a particular ethnic group, and this self-identification can change over time.

Thus, ethnic identity is a rather difficult phenomenon to define; it is formed and exists in the context of social experience and the process whereby people identify themselves or others as members of a particular ethnic group. If we look at such a group from the inside, identity is based on a set of cultural characteristics with the help of which members of one group distinguish themselves from all other groups, even if they are very close (Kurath & Arbor, 1949). As a rule, the differences between the groups are quite definite and multilevel, while the external ideas about the group generalize the stereotypical criteria in the formulation of the characteristics of the group. In the internal and external definitions of what constitutes an ethnic group (people), there are both objective and subjective criteria. Sometimes consanguinity or other objective criteria do not play a decisive role.

Ethnicity as a factor of speech is reflected in a new way in postmodern\ . Postmodern\ is a manifestation of disillusionment with the rules of art, and also criticizes the limitations and functionalism of previous eras. Nevertheless, postmodern is formed in the context of a combination of features and characteristics of previous cultural eras, so ethnicity is one of the factors of postmodern. The ironic perception of values and experiences of human activity determines the desire to erase nationality and functionality in speech, and to define individuality as an important factor in the formation of new styles of speech in the context of postmodern.

Ethnic reality presupposes the existence of social markers recognized as a means of differentiating groups that coexist in a wider field of social interaction. These distinctive features are formed on a different basis, including appearance, geographic origin, professional specialization, religion, language. From the point of view of ethnic richness, the interaction between languages in order to preserve multilingual diversity determines the

preservation of uncodified linguistic units that are characteristic of the use of certain groups of individuals.

### **Class variability of language**

The subject of many studies is precisely the influence on the language of various factors of the inhabitants of certain territories. It is necessary to reveal precisely the nature of the term "influence" in order to maximally analyze this issue. Influence is often understood as "an action that a certain object (in our case, a "factor") or phenomenon reveals in relation to another object ("language") (Tkachenko, 1998). That is, influence is the process of changing a person's language through the control of certain factors, and it is social categories that play a crucial role in the formation of the speech of residents of different territories, that is, we are talking about social influence on the language. One of the most influential categories that interferes with the functioning of the language in any territory is the social status of speakers, as one of the main parameters of communication, it manifests itself in the postulates of communication and speech acts, methods of influence and characteristics of the mode of expression, as well as in the pragmatic meanings of linguistic units (Mozheyko, 2015, p. 115).

An important feature of social differentiation, as well as highlighting the connection between language and a social category is the characteristic of *the social environment* in which a person exists (Nerubasska et al., 2020; Nerubasska & Maksymchuk, 2020; Onishchuk et al., 2020), his belonging to a certain *social group*, and his *social status*.

The concept of "*social environment*", introduced by E. Durkheim (2006) to denote socio-cultural differences is later widely used by researchers (Kutsenko, 2006, p. 56-57). In particular, S. Hradil (2021) considers the social environment as an association of people based not only on the basis of relations of kinship, neighborhood, community, professional affiliation, passion, but also such general characteristics as moral rules, identity, tastes, lifestyle and habit.

K. Davis (1999) noted the importance of the role of family ties for establishing the degree of openness or closedness of society. According to the views of K. Davis (1999), the type of stratification of society probably varies from a completely closed type, for example, the caste system of India, to a completely open type, the class system of the United States. The main difference between the two types is the function of the family. Along with the demographic reproduction and socialization of children, the family is able to limit or enhance stratification by transferring status characteristics, which in turn help or hinder the achievement of their own status. In India,

the son of a scavenger becomes a scavenger, in other words, there is an absolute inheritance of parental status. In open class societies, the influence of parental status on the status of children is manifested in a different way, in particular, the individual has the opportunity to receive benefits, for example, the manner of speaking and dressing, knowledge, education in a prestigious institution, self-confidence, awareness, the number of useful connections and financial support. Thus, K. Davis (1999, p. 110) recognizes that, in addition to the biological qualities of the individual, provided by the system of equal opportunities declared by the American society in the struggle for social success, social differences have a significant impact, since they guarantee preference to individuals who have inherited the characteristics of high status parents.

P. Sorokin (1992) indicates the presence in society of "vertical mobility", that is, the ability of individuals to move up or down in the social hierarchy from one level to another, using channels of social circulation, the role of which is played by various social institutions. The most important of these institutions are: education, army, church, marriage, professional organizations, organizations for the creation of material values (Fudorova, 2009, p. 112).

Note that status consists of a combination of economic, political and professional factors. Professional stratification is determined by two groups of factors (Sorokin, 1992). First, certain professional groups have always been at the top of the social hierarchy, while others have always been at the bottom. Secondly, stratification takes place within each professional group. Thus, the totality of these groups, as well as the totality of positions within each of them, constitute a system of social coordinates and allow us to determine the social position of any individual.

Parsons T. (1960) distinguishes three groups of signs of status position. The first group is formed from the characteristics that a person is endowed with from birth (ethnicity, family ties, physical and intellectual characteristics). The second contains signs related to the performance of roles. It includes various types of professional and labor activities. The third group consists of the elements of "ownership", that is, property, material and spiritual values, privileges (Filippov, 2012, p. 306-313).

In our opinion, the most apt definition is: "social status is a formally or informally established place of an individual, which is recognized in society and in the hierarchy of a social group" (Bell, 1980, p. 318). It should be added that the status of an individual in a certain social group is determined by a number of his characteristics: age, gender, education,

position held, the presence or absence of certain skills and abilities in an individual that are valuable for the group, etc. (Formanovskaya, 1984, p. 68).

The study of the category of social status in linguistics includes:

1) determination of the social status of an individual as a social category, identifies the specifics and methods of choosing certain signs of the social status of an individual;

2) substantiation of the main ways of expression of signs of a person's social status in lexical semantics;

3) the study of the combinatorics of signs of social status in the sense of words and phrases with signs of modality, features that describe the stylistic register (Filippov, 2012).

In American and British linguistics, the dependence of language on status characteristics is reflected in studies on the spontaneous speech of representatives of African American and working communities, these studies have shown that certain language variants are associated with the language of representatives of certain social groups and stratum of society (Usachenko, 2013; Warner, 1960). Today, researchers study the linguistic and speech means of expressing the category of social status, the influence of the speaker's social characteristics on informal dialogical communication (Schweitzer, 1982, p. 199).

Social inequality was formed in the context of specific historical factors. The very fact of social differentiation expresses a postmodern rethinking of the values of social development. People from different social classes express their thoughts differently. Postmodernism embodies rationalist approaches to communication. Language in postmodernism reflects today's approaches to social development. Trends of social differentiation in postmodernism determine human behavior and the choice of linguistic style. Information technology is intensively developing a separate style of speech that spreads in social networks. A peculiarity of the language of today is the use of slang, which levels social differentiation in social networks in the conditions of postmodernism.

Thus, social status is considered within the framework of the manifestation of the ratio of the status of speakers, which affects the choice of the appropriate speech behavior. Since the social component plays an important role, it is the main way of influencing one participant in communication in relation to another. The structure of social differentiation of society and the structure of social differentiation of language is a multidimensional formation that functions in different dimensions.

## Age variability of language

Recently, a person's age has become one of the components of a person's status in society. In our opinion, it is one of the most important features in language learning. In relation to language, age is the study of sociolinguistic variation. Sociolinguistics refers to the age of speakers to describe how changes in language (phonetic, lexical and grammatical) are picked up by speakers of a certain age and passed on to future generations. An individual speaker or age group represents both a place in history and a stage in life. Age can reflect changes in the language of a community, how it moves in time (historical changes), as well as modifications in an individual's language, how he or she moves through life (graduation age). Lexical and syntactic preferences change with age, and speakers at each stage of their lives are aware of which new lexical units fill in their vocabulary.

In the early years of an individual's childhood, studies of quantitative changes in any language began quite recently. The work of (Roberts & Labov, 1995) showed that children's language at an early age is formed by adults, and therefore it is similar to the language of older people who serve as models (Wetmore, 1995).

Over time, the child's language changes. Interaction with parents, siblings, neighbors and friends affects young children and their changes. In accordance with belonging to a particular social group, differences in children's friendships also leave certain imprints on the development of younger children. In working-class areas, older children look after younger children, so that the latter speaks in a manner similar to that of their relatives and their friends (Wetmore, 1995).

*The language of adolescents* and young people is of particular importance for sociolinguistics, because the basic language skills of individuals are laid down precisely during reaching puberty and these categories of speakers experience corresponding changes in social status, which in turn are manifested in their speech behavior. It is clear that this does not mean biological age, but the corresponding period of life, the level of socialization of the speakers (Mushnikova, 2012, pp. 59-60).

*Adults* are more conservative in using variables than younger age groups (Petrenko et al., 2009). Conservatism is associated with the use of a standard language in the workplace. Therefore, it is the representatives of this age group that have the highest social status, which is undoubtedly manifested in the choice of certain language tools and the use of the language in general.



*Elderly speakers* are distinguished by a low social status, since they have the least degree of participation in the social productivity of the activities of society, and therefore their speech has a large degree of deviation from the norm (Mushnikova, 2012, pp. 59-60).

Postmodern is a manifestation of changes in society, formed as a sign of changes in society, the gap between the values of the present and the historical past. This context determines the speech of adolescents, who reinterpret knowledge and skills. Young people are the most mobile, intensively using new technologies, modeling and reproducing the perception of the world, expressing their thoughts as ideas that can be put into practice. This tendency defines the main conceptual provisions of youth language variability, which is a relevant manifestation of postmodern.

However, not all changes in a person's language are explained solely by the influence of time and age. Therefore, in order to achieve maximum objectivity in the study of age differentiation of the language, it is necessary to take into account the role of the influence of the entire complex of *social factors*. The age factor is certainly associated with the social status factor, because later the speakers change their social position, moving up or down the vertical (social) scale, while using the language relevant for this social group.

## **Conclusions**

In our work, variability is a common property and way of existence of the language system and the language norm, which, in connection with its socio-economic environment, reflects changes in the structure of the language. Variability is understood as the division of the language into national-state variants, as well as those that depend on the influence of social factors: gender, age, social status, etc. In turn, variation is a difference precisely in the formation of linguistic units (a change in the sound composition or structural meaning without loss of identity).

The influence of the gender category on the language expands the understanding of the nature and causes of linguistic variance, features of speech behavior, interpersonal and intercultural communication. With equal social factors, men and women choose different strategies of speech behavior, which are manifested in the models of text construction, the use of linguistic means, associations that arise in representatives of both sexes. Gender variability of speech behavior is studied at different levels of the language: phonetic and lexical.

Gender variation in speech behavior is studied at different levels of language: phonetic and lexical, which is the context of postmodern reinterpretation.

Postmodern, on the one hand, erases national limitations, and on the other, defines individuality as the basis of perspective development. Appropriateness is a testament to postmodern, and embodies ethnic heterogeneity.

"Ethnicity" replaces the concept of "ethnos", which means the existence of separate ethnic groups. The concept of ethnos implies the existence of homogeneous, functional and static characteristics that distinguish one group from another, endowed with a different set of these characteristics.

The social status of a person is one of the main parameters of communication and the ability of individuals to move vertically along the social ladder up or down can influence the choice of the appropriate speech behavior by individuals. The most important components of social status are: education received, attitude to church, stay or not being married, a certain profession, etc. The social component plays an important role in the differentiation of speech, since it is the main way of influencing one participant of communication in relation to another. The differentiation of speech, which emerged in the context of historical remnants, is reoriented toward the formation of a unity of linguistic expression, which is a manifestation of the postmodern worldview.

The age categories of speakers are divided into the following age groups: "children", "adolescents", "adults" and "old people" (the so-called "third age"). Distinctive features characteristic of each of the groups are observed in the language of all groups, namely: children and the elderly have the greatest number of deviations from the norm. Adolescents show differences in speech behavior in connection with puberty, which is certainly reflected in a certain choice of language tools. Only the speech of adults is the closest to the norm, because they are more conservative and have a high social status. The age-related properties of the language are manifested in the form of deviations from the literary language at the phonetic and lexical levels. This phenomenon of variability, determined by the age characteristics of modernity is a manifestation of postmodern thinking.

As a result of the study it was found that one of the factors of the postmodern formation of language is the gender variation of language. Gender variation represents psycholinguistic differences in speech between male and female genders.

It is determined that ethnic variation in language is one of the most common factors in the formation of speech in the world. The ethnic heterogeneity of society is expressed mainly through the speech of people. Accordingly, each person expresses himself as a representative of a particular nation through the peculiarities of speech.

It is also investigated that the class variation of language reflects the historical features of the existence of different strata of the population in different countries of the world, which also differed in their speech. It is the belonging to a certain state that is expressed through language, formed in different cultural epochs and clearly displayed in the postmodern period.

The study summarizes the research on the age variability of speech. Each period of human life, starting with childhood, has its own distinctive feature of speech.

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