

Unit four: Linguistics and other disciplines

Lesson 12: introduction to Sociolinguistics & psycholinguistics

I. Sociolinguistics

Language and social interaction have a reciprocal relationship: language shapes social interactions and social interactions shape language.

Definition of sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of the connection between language and society and the way people use language in different social situations. It is also a term that refers to the study of the relationship between language and society, and how language is used in multilingual speech communities.

Sociolinguists are interested in

- Explaining why people speak differently in different social contexts.
- The effect of social factors such as (social distance, social status, age, gender, class) on language varieties (dialects, registers, genres, etc),
- Identifying the social functions of language and the way they are used to convey social meanings.

The scope of sociolinguistics: and macro-sociolinguistics. (Fishman, 1972).

1. **Micro- sociolinguistics** studies how society influences a speaker's specific language, and also how people communicate with one another and live with different social factors. It also deals with how language varies with social attitudes, such as gender, class, and age. (effects of society on the language)
2. **Macro- sociolinguistics is also called the sociology of language**, it focuses on society in relation to language; in other words, it studies the language use to know more about the social structure.

II. Psycholinguistics

Definition of psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is the study of the language processing mechanisms. Psycholinguistics deals with the mental processes a person uses in producing and understanding language. It is concerned with the relationship between language and the human mind, for example, how word, sentence, and discourse meaning are represented and computed in the mind.

General issues of psycholinguistics:

1. language acquisition (how human beings learn language)
2. language production (how we create and express meaning through language)
3. language comprehension (how we perceive and understand speech and written language)
4. The relationship between language and thought