A Critical Standpoint on Sociolinguistics' Themes and Real-World Applications

Juan Miguel M. Enriquez[1]

Abstract

This article analyzes language as an ever-changing and evolving system. Sociolinguistics is the critical framework used to better comprehend the interconnection of language learning, cultural identities, and social structure. The foundational theories from Dell Hymes (1974), William Labov (1972), and Basil Bernstein (1971) are assessed and their contributions to the field of sociolinguistics are shown. Themes such as language variation, multilingualism, and power dynamics are still relevant and critical in highlighting the role of language in producing and shaping societal hierarchies. Furthermore, this critical review advocates for integrating sociolinguistics research in a manner that is accessible to the general public, since these concepts should not be limited to academic discourse alone, but rather should be more publicly available and understood to inform everyday situations and professional interactions. By accentuating the recurring themes of sociolinguistics, this article emphasizes the power speakers have as active participants who are responsible for their own language development, and the potential of sociolinguistics in offering a unique understanding of modern, real-world issues.

Keywords: *communicative competence, multilingualism, standardization, sociolinguistics, language learning*

Introduction

In the constant development and evolution of language, sociolinguistics has proven to be a significant field in comprehending the connection of multiple varying language factors. Sociolinguistics is commonly known as the study of the relationship between language and societies. Through the concepts of sociolinguistics, people are able to understand the interrelation of communication, identity, and social structure. Sociolinguistics is integrated into different fields and disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, and anthropology, wherein language is analyzed into how it can vary and respond to existing social factors. In this critical analysis, distinct major themes and different theoretical frameworks in the landscape of foundational literature of sociolinguistics will be explored and interpreted, particularly the concepts and ideas of Dell Hymes (1974), William Labov (1972), and Basil Bernstein (1971), which will all be assessed in terms of their relevance in modern social contexts. Moreover, this analysis also tackles the social factors that influence language evolution, which delves into language variation as one of the central themes in sociolinguistics. There is also the need for acknowledging the influence of multilingualism, wherein people often apply code-switching and language shift, which shows diversity. Lastly, the connection of language and power to the structure of sociolinguistics which implicates the modern issues in relation to standardization, authority, and language policy.

[1] **Corresponding Author:** juanmiguelenriquez@gmail.com

Sociolinguistics in itself is a complex field of study covering different paradigms of language. At the end of this paper, a critical standpoint on how courses and materials that delve into the implications of sociolinguistics should be emphasized more often to the general public, considering that sociolinguistics is already integrated in their professions, daily conversations, and the continuity of their language development as human beings interacting and socializing with one another. Furthermore, as language continues to evolve, emphasizing this sociolinguistic perspective creates opportunities for speakers to realize that they are not just passive users, but rather active participants in the process of their very own language development. It is through the ways of how people apply sociolinguistics to develop the sense of language, not just a structural system, but is tied to social implications and influences, either through factors such as culture, interaction, and contexts. Sociolinguistics contributes to uncovering social inequality and showing signs of power relations in language, which are often used to determine whether linguistic discrimination is present in such areas, from schools, the workplace, and casual conversations (Lippi-Green, 2012). Aside from simply uncovering these nuances, sociolinguistics also plays a huge role in improving education and strengthening cultural identity, wherein it can be used as a guide for language teaching, aligning the curriculum that includes communicative competence. In addition, it values the essence of identity and belonging, wherein sociolinguistics can provide support for social groups to preserve local languages, and ultimately negate and resist language homogenization, which is highly influenced by the current system of globalization across multiple countries. Moreover, this paper focuses on a sociopolitical critical standpoint that centers on the idea of how language norms can be influenced by varying power structures in areas of employment, education, and institutional communication. It is through removing the misconception that language is neutral, this paper emphasizes the existing issues wherein standard language ideologies can prioritize particular communities and groups, which marginalize others in the process. Furthermore, sociolinguistics does not simply limit itself to language variation; rather, it also addresses distinct implications on identity, linguistic justice, and equity in the modern world. All these concepts will be highlighted in the sense of assessing the evolving themes of sociolinguistics, in relation to the varying real-world applications in our modern society.

Language Variation

Language variation is one of the central themes that are encompassed by sociolinguistics. It is mainly rooted in various languages across social classes, regions, ethnic communities, and even gender and sexuality. A study that shows the implications of language variation would be Labov's (1972) study on the systematic nature of language variation that exists in various urban areas, specifically his study on African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as well as New York City English revealed a misconception wherein linguistic features that are considered as incorrect or slang were generally rule-governed and were socially meaningful to particular communities. Labov's study emphasized how language is not merely static, but it is inherently connected to identities and group affiliation. His studies surrounding sociolinguistics contributed to a wide range of comprehension wherein we are now able to understand the ways of which people speak, signals of accents, vocabulary, as well as grammatical patterns, which all belong to certain societies, whether these are known for their region, social class, ethnicity, or even peer groups. Moreover, the idea of communicative competence is also one of the central themes in the aspect of sociolinguistics. The concept, which was introduced by Dell Hymes (1974), served as a response to Noam Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence. This also criticized Chomsky's ideas, wherein it emphasizes that language comprehension is more than just the internalized knowledge when it comes to syntax and grammar.

In the essence of language ability, Hymes argues that Chomsky's view on linguistic competence, although relevant, can be too rigid as it does not include the implications of how language can function in real-life situations and on social interactions. For a person to fully comprehend and evaluate the development of language proficiency, one must also look into how language can be socially and contextually applied, and not just based on the performance of being grammatically correct. Communicative competence, therefore, extends beyond the concept of abstract rules alone. It is also embedded into a speaker's ability to select the correct words, manage and control one's tone, and choose a particular style which depends on the applicable situation. For a more closely related example of this specific context, consider a speaker's capability to communicate in certain situations. It can be through an academic setting wherein they are situated in a classroom, or the environment shifts towards a more professional situation, such a job interview where the applicant is interacting with the employer. Casual conversations with friends and families are also included in this context, wherein the speaker can resort to using informal language without the pressure of having to conform to grammatical rules and syntax. Moreover, this emphasizes that people can consider the idea of language being inherently social, wherein it can be used in such contexts where cultures and traditions from different backgrounds are present. Additionally, this idea pertains to the concept of sociolinguistics in which meaning is highly influenced by not simply the words or phrases that are stated, but also the specificity and detailed context of the language use. Hymes' ideas have continuously supported the purpose for most of the educational policies in the modern era, such as promoting the essence of prioritizing a student's capabilities in applying real-world communication skills. Furthermore, the development of their pragmatic use of language and the overall process of expanding one's cultural awareness and appreciation are also considered. Hence, standards that push through with the purpose of developing not just a speaker's linguistic capabilities, but also including the factor of their capacity to fully function across multiple diverse environments (Pamungkas & Wulandari, 2020). Through this perspective, most educational institutions are primarily shifting their language curricula in a way where educators and facilitators are focusing more on their students' development in terms of their communicative competence, and how they can adapt in this modern globalized age of multilingual contexts (Sánchez-Hernández & Barón, 2022). Hence, aside from simply enhancing the student's grammatical competence, there is now a balance wherein communicative competence is also acknowledged in language teaching environments.

One of the central themes in sociolinguistics that has similarities to the previous concept of language ability is the aspect of social stratification. Basil Bernstein is known to be one of the contributing individuals in providing research on how language can be applied in varying situations in terms of social class. Bernstein (1971) argued that social class is interconnected with the distinction of linguistic codes, particularly both the restricted code and elaborated code, and that both are incorporated in influencing how children who come from different socioeconomic backgrounds are able to interact with each other and learn in their respective educational institutions. Bernstein discusses the idea of how middle-class children often gain access to elaborated code, in comparison to the working-class children who are often classified into restricted code. Science schools and other educational institutions prioritize elaborated code; it creates an unjust system where the working-class children are experiencing setbacks not due to a lack of comprehension, but rather a mismatch between their personal communicative standards and the expected structure of formal education (Bernstein, 1975). From this perspective, it can be inferred that language now becomes an intermediary of social inequality, and this strengthens the idea of power being used and exercised through subjective preferences in schools, especially for certain linguistic styles. However, the framework can be critiqued in the sense that it implies linguistic deficit

in working-class communities, which can result in positioning language practices of the middle-class as rather more cognitively advanced than the working-class speech, which is then situated in a more limited or deficient position. Through this type of framing, there are possibilities to establish stereotypical class-based judgements, which defeats the purpose of recognizing the richness and complexity of the varying working-class practices (Morais & Neves, 2021). In the modern age of sociolinguistics, where it is applied to globalized and multicultural communities, the role of language stratification and its overall complexity can be intertwined with the existing concepts of gender, ethnicity, and the power dynamics that influence language (Ivinson, 2018). Bernstein's concepts contributed to the foundational research on how languages are closely interconnected with institutional structures, wherein these contribute to the existing body of research on communication, inequality, and education.

There have been multiple studies that discussed the role of language variation in the context of sociolinguistics, and it is crucial to point out how the concept has emphasized the notion of how language is not just limited to a structured system, but if one were to look at a more diverse perspective, language is complex and composed of dynamic phenomena which are all integrated in our society. For this particular reason, people consider language variation as a core and central theme in the field of sociolinguistics (Coupland, 2007; Drager, 2015). These variations are often reflected in the mannerism of how a person speaks, and factors such as their identity and position within an existing community is highly considered. The significance of acknowledging such variations is important in comprehending the roles and influences of such factors. Moreover, most of these variations can exist in a phonological form wherein they refer to the accents and pronunciation. In some cases, it can refer to lexical forms such as a person's choice of words, even the grammatical form of sentence structures are included, as well as the pragmatic form of how a person presents themselves depending on varying contexts.

Implications of Theories in Real-World Issues

Language theory is encompassed within the evolving nature of real-world issues, and the notion that these concepts are just within the confines of literature and old research publications are false. The ideas from Dell Hymes (1974), William Labov (1972), and Basil Bernstein (1971) have made crucial implications in different areas such as language and education, social hierarchy, as well as standardization and policy. The concept of communicative competence, which was strengthened and discussed by Hymes (1974), influenced a wide range of educational institutions in not just simply focusing on grammatical competence, but rather including other aspects of language learning, such as pragmatic functions, sociocultural interpretations, and a distinct form where there are a lot of intercultural dimensions in the use of language. These key ideas are all contributing skills for one to apply these learnings in a multilingual and globalized environment (Mootoosamy & Aryadoust, 2024). Similarly, the studies from Labov consistently develop the body of research in terms of producing concepts in relation to language variation and social stratification, and how these are currently part of the process in providing emphasis on the inevitability that socioeconomic status influences language development as well as access to sufficient resources. In some unfortunate cases, less-privileged socioeconomic communities often are placed at a disadvantage due to failing to account for variation in terms of their speech and language (Cercas Curry, Attanasio, Talat, & Hovy, 2024). In addition, Bernstein has also made valuable theoretical contributions through the application of his code theory, specifically the differentiation between restricted and elaborated codes. Inequality when it comes to educational opportunities is one of the highly discussed topics for this field of study. An example would be the closure of multiple institutions during the COVID-19 lockdown,

wherein students across lower socioeconomic backgrounds struggled to access educational discourse (Magnússon et al, 2024). When tied together in the process of uncovering the hidden nuances in language, we then get to see how these theories prove the fact that language is interconnected within the realm of power and identity, which are then used to create shifts in the evolution of current sectors, may it be in education, culture, or technology.

The theories that have been stated are not solely for the purpose of academics; they have extended their influence and have created relevant implications for real-world issues. In the context of education, sociolinguistics has been able to enhance language policy and curriculum development. According to Canale & Swain (1980), the concepts from Hymes' theory emphasized how communicative competence has shifted in terms of second language teaching, leading to communicative language teaching (CLT). This structure focuses on interaction and cultural context over the process of mere memorization. Moreover, CLT focuses on the usage of language, which can serve as a tool for real-life communication. There are four dimensions of communicative competence, which Canale and Swain have outlined, which became one of the central concepts in language teaching. *Grammatical competence* which emphasizes one's knowledge of syntax, vocabulary, morphology, and pronunciation. *Sociolinguistic competence* highlights the ability to use language appropriately in specific situations, depending on the social and cultural environment. *Discourse competence*, which refers to the ability wherein the speaker can connect sentences into speech or writing. *Strategic competence*, which emphasizes the ability to strategize the effects of communication breakdowns, either through paraphrasing, requesting clarification, or signaling gestures. All these dimensions are contributing to the shift from mere memorization and drilling to a more learner-centered approach wherein students can engage with their fellow learners in tasks such as group sharing, simulations, and problem-solving activities, where the priority is meaning-making rather than error-free grammar of the students.

The themes surrounding direct implications towards social justice and education are also evident in these theories. In the aspect of discussing potential issues of diversity in education systems, the ideas from Labov's discussion of AAVE have created multiple opportunities in forming educational approaches to language diversity. This proves to be a significant point wherein there is an advocacy for responsive pedagogy in multilingual classrooms (Rickford, 1999). Forensic sociolinguistics also has the applications of sociolinguistics wherein the legalities of analyzing courtroom discourse, interrogations, and asylum interviews are used to assess the underlying notions of credibility and detecting biases (Gibbons, 2003). When people understand the ways on how language functions in different social groups, this avoids possible linguistic misunderstanding or prejudice. Furthermore, sociolinguistics has always played a crucial role in the aspect of language planning and revitalization efforts. Marginalization has imposed a negative effect, which causes minority and indigenous languages to face extinction. With the help of sociolinguistics, we are then able to come up with various approaches to consider community traditions, culture, and values, which help sustain revitalization strategies in language (Fishman, 1991). In correlation to diverse landscapes, sociolinguistics assists in decoding how language can be adapted in online and digital environments. The modern technological advancements have proven to be more immersive, including various features for possible interaction with people, with the use of memes, emojis, and online slang that potentially reflect the construction and community formation of identity. To reiterate, Labov's concepts have created new ways of uncovering how language is deeply rooted in systems of power, identity, and, most especially, the existence of equal opportunity or the lack thereof. These validate the idea wherein sociolinguistics is not just a simple tool that can be used for the purpose of analysis, but rather it can be a driving force to establish social change.

Similarly, Bernstein's work has also produced quite an emphasis on language practices being correlated to institutional reproduction. This is explained in the sense that schools, workplaces, and even the advancement of media have shown signs of pushing for a "legitimate" language, which in turn puts those who use alternative codes at a slight disadvantage. Bernstein has highlighted the fact that when it comes to inequality, it is not just simply passed down through generations just in the means of money or resources, but rather it can also be transmitted and influence future generations through the means of linguistic capital. Moving into a more contemporary discussion, the applied theories have also influenced 21st-century multilingual and multicultural contexts. Bernstein's idea reveals ways in which digital communication is also an existing factor, wherein people are now able to be more flexible in their language, particularly between restricted and elaborated codes. An instance of this could be seen in how people are able to apply skills in either text messaging or in academic writing. Furthermore, this interplay between code choice and the varying systems of language provides the added context that language is never neutral; it is an existing and evolving concept that influences educational institutions, the workforce, societal standards, and the power of media and how people can consume information through means of language interaction. Hasan (2009) adds to the concepts from Bernstein in a way that emphasizes the ways of meaning can also influence a person's reasoning, the way they can explain and communicate, and their overall participation in modern society. Bernstein's ideas have arguably influenced the masses and the systems of how society works, by criticizing the educational systems, which led to reformations, the adaptiveness of curriculum designs for language learners, enabling linguistic justice in the face of social inequity, all of which contribute to a more progressive linguistic environment. The concepts from all three theories addressed the relationship of language and how it intersects with social structures, and they were able to achieve this through varying approaches and perspectives. Bernstein focused mainly on language codes, and these reflect social class and how it contributes to the division in terms of unequal educational outcomes. In contrast, Hymes's stance was primarily on communicative competence signifies that language is not all about grammatical structures, such as codes, which was the main discussion of Bernstein. Meanwhile, Labov negated the notion that non-standard dialects are somewhat inferior, which highlights that speech patterns are systematic and rule-governed. Looking at the differences between the three theories, Bernstein's work was critiqued for its implications on the linguistic deficiency of lower-class speakers, which is highly different from Hymes and Labov's concept, which emphasizes diverse linguistic practices. The themes of the given theories showed the interplay between language, power, and identity, however, Hymes and Labov mainly advocated for a rich linguistic diversity, whereas Bernstein opted to shed light on how language can be a factor in reinforcing social inequality.

Multilingualism

Multilingualism encompasses diversity and inclusivity in its definition, more so defined as the use of two or more languages by a certain individual or within a particular community. It is considered a global norm rather than just an exception (Grosjean, 2010). One of the phenomena that has been a key concept in multilingualism is code-switching in multilingual contexts. It is more commonly known as the back-and-forth alternation between languages in a single conversation or utterance. Gumperz (1982) identified code-switching as a socially meaningful act, and not a symptomatic deficiency of language. Code-switching allows individuals to manage social connections and mark certain functions of discourse. An example would be in the setting of multilingual communities such as India and Nigeria, where speakers can shift the language that they use in certain contexts to emphasize

solidarity, challenge authority, and assess interethnic boundaries in their culture. Language shift is also a consequence of language contact, where a social group or community abandons its native language due to major influences of a more dominant language. Fishman (1991) emphasized that this can also be due to external influences such as urbanization, education, and media, which drive a shift in minority and indigenous societies, which in result affects their language culture. Unfortunately, language shift often reveals unequal power relations wherein dominant languages are being prioritized; they are integrated into educational utilities that also promote their socioeconomic value, in comparison to minority languages which are marginalized or stigmatized. Conversely, sociolinguistics is also aligned with linguistic diversity, which includes the acknowledgment of diverse cultural and cognitive benefits of sustaining various languages. One of the commonly known frameworks that is in relation to this concept is the ethnolinguistic vitality framework (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977), which provides a systematic model that helps assess the strengths of a language in consideration of factors such as demographics, institutional, and class status. This has informed revitalization programs and projects that are directed towards the sustainability and protection of these endangered languages.

The concepts from Hymes (1974), Labov (1972), and Bernstein (1971) provide a comprehensive perspective in sociolinguistics, where they were able to discuss a lot of variables that contributed to the idea and application of multilingualism in our modern society. First, by looking at Hymes' theory, he emphasized the importance of having language be comprehended within social and cultural contexts, and not simply limited to grammar or vocabulary alone. Hymes' discussion on the importance of communicative competence shows how it is deemed relevant in the scheme of multilingualism due to knowing the appropriate situations to switch codes effectively, which also includes the use of registers, and appropriate language depending on the situation the speaker is currently at present. García & Li Wei (2014) supported and expanded on the concepts discussed by Hymes through translanguaging, which refers to the ability of multilinguals being able to be fluid in using linguistic repertoires whenever they are communicating or interacting with other people. Labov's contributions to the topic of multilingualism are evident in his concepts in relation to dialects and identity. Looking at most of his sociolinguistic studies, the majority of the ideas highlighted correlations between variation and group identities. Labov's work has ushered in new perspectives on recognizing linguistic prejudice, as it can be considered one of the forms of discrimination. An example of this would be the denial of employment opportunities simply due to having distinct accents or dialects. This implication shows how language, especially in multilingual contexts, can clash with class and community, wherein Labov emphasizes that these often include hidden biases that are integrated into different institutions. Moreover, due to his ideas promoting the value of speech for marginalized groups, it can be argued that his theories were able to affirm the idea of how language can be considered a symbol of cultural identity. This implies a strong perception of how society must preserve and legitimize minority languages and dialects, all for pushing the notion that linguistic diversity should be seen as an asset and not as a hindrance. While Labov's frameworks must helped uncover the hidden nuances of how language prejudice can serve as a socialized form of bias, which strengthens hierarchies of both racial and social contexts under the mask of linguistic correctness. His concepts that further emphasize the importance of documenting and preserving linguistic variation can be critiqued for augmenting minority speech communities. This becomes an issue wherein it lacks an in-depth discussion on the systemic power structures that exist within the discourse. Although there is a sense of validity wherein Labov foregrounds the value of marginalized varieties in a cultural perspective, his earlier works did not delve into the mechanisms that encourage institutions to change their ways in support of linguistic equity. As for Bernstein, his ideas were transmitted into the

basic foundations of perceiving multilingualism in education. One of the key concepts from his theory acknowledges the idea wherein multilingual policies must consider that the prioritization of a single language, which some would refer to as the standard language, should be removed as it reproduces language inequality. The implications of these concepts reveal new strategies and implementations towards language diversity. For instance, the mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) was established in different educational institutions. Morais & Neves (2021) support Bernstein's argument wherein communities should highlight the issues surrounding language inequality in schools, as it is one of the driving factors as to why language inequality exists, which strengthens language hierarchies.

Language and Power

Since the idea of sociolinguistics is to examine and uncover how language can function in different areas of society, people often overlook the concept of how language is not just generally used to process information, communicate, and interact with others, but rather it can serve as a tool or mechanism that creates and establishes a sense of power, which in return can affect multiple social groups through inequality and social control. The constant interplay between language and power is one of the central themes of sociolinguistics, as it can be to education and social mobility in terms of prioritizing dominant groups or languages, or even the simple structure of accent and dialects being a contributing factor that strengthens discrimination amongst language speakers (Lippi-Green, 2012). Furthermore, sociolinguistic research provides a clear emphasis on the reproduction of inequality wherein language can be used to induce linguistic prejudice through the means of linguistic profiling, where language speakers are discriminated and marginalized based on their personal accent, dialect, and even their subjective choice of language. Sociolinguistics underpins the idea that language in its simplest form is never neutral, as it shapes and reflects power dynamics and structures in communities, whether it be through systems of language policies, social stratification, or even linguistic ability, the overall concept of language and its influence can establish and grant power, instill inequality, or act as a form of resistance towards unjust systems. When people can critically assess the usage of dialects, registers, and accents, there is a possibility to uncover hidden nuances on how varieties are marginalized and stigmatized, while others are more likely to be celebrated or prioritized. This reveals how power structures are also playing a huge role in discussions surrounding linguistic judgements.

Societal structures inevitably possess underlying power dynamics in different systems of the community, may it be in education, politics, employment, or language. Hymes' (1974) theory established an understanding that a person's linguistic ability is not just limited to the confines of their grammatical competence, but rather it is also on how the speaker can appropriately apply language in situational social contexts. Hence, this highlights the concept of how power is integrated into one's pragmatic competence, which refers to their linguistic ability to navigate certain situations in terms of varying institutional and cultural environments. Some of the implications from these ideas can be perceived through the problematic idea that in order for one to have proper access, they must be able to conform to the usage of standard language in either the workplace, educational institutions, in them to gain authority and legitimacy. Recognizing how Hymes' (1974) concept of communicative competence challenged Chomsky's perspective of linguistic competence, it supported the notion that language should be comprehended through its social use by considering factors such as the speaker's expectations, and the context-specific appropriateness. However, by emphasizing this approach, it also raises concerns about who typically determines appropriate language. Social institutions can prioritize specific linguistic norms, which is most evident in dominant socioeconomic, cultural, and racial communities, which then places communicative

competence at a position where it can unintentionally reinforce the idea of linguistic gatekeeping. Canagarajah (2013) argues that in the context of multilingual communities, speakers who are often more fluent in a dominant language potentially have the advantage and possess more power. In comparison to those who use minority languages, they often go through the unfortunate process of marginalization. Similarly, the ideas from Labov's (1972) research emphasize the aspect of language variation being interconnected to social class and hierarchies. Labov further discussed the importance of acknowledging issues such as existing "prestige forms" that are somewhat related and associated with socioeconomic groups of higher status, and those varieties that are stigmatized, such as AAVE, are often associated with the notion of lacking sufficient education or intelligence, which brings an imbalance like linguistic diversity. Moreover, the findings from his research resonated with modern debates on language accent biases, as well as linguistic profiling, which are used in contexts such as employment and other legal settings (Lippi-Green, 2012). The implications from his research are quite evident in the aspect of perceiving how power is managed and applied through the idea of linguistic prejudice. A more closely related example would be dominant groups being those responsible for establishing an unjust standard that prioritizes standardized language, which reflects badly upon other languages and often delegitimizes the existence of minority or working-class speech. Furthermore, this results in the effect of language now being used as a gatekeeping mechanism to establish structure and hierarchies in employment opportunities, access to education, and social mobility. In correlation, Bernstein's concepts surrounding elaborated and restricted codes highlighted how language practices can also be associated with social class and power. The imbalance of language learning lies within the context of social inequity, playing an influential role in the system of education. Those children coming from middle-class status who have developed their linguistic ability with elaborated codes are more likely to have access to educational advantages. While in hindsight, those children from the working-class with restricted codes are facing setbacks and disadvantages in their education and academic standings. Bernstein's work showed the discriminatory act of how educational institutions are being used to establish structures, and these are all contributing to the reproduction of power in communities. Morais & Neves (2021) strengthen the insights from Bernstein in a way that they emphasized some modern contemporary education processes that have debated whether to use local languages or conform to global languages such as English. This shows the inevitability of institutions using language policies to establish power and prioritize selected groups, leaving out marginalized communities and languages.

Synthesis and Conclusion

Sociolinguistics, both as a field and a concept, emphasizes the notion that language is not a neutral system wherein it is limited only to the simple aspects of grammar, syntax, sounds, and communication. It is involved in the complex discussion of language serving as a social resource that can influence how human beings are able to interact with one another in different social contexts. The foundational theories that were previously mentioned in this paper, from Hymes, Labov, and Bernstein, of which have all continuously shaped how society can perceive social dimensions of language. It can be argued that their insights towards language variation, communicative competence, and linguistic inequality did not just merely advance perspectives towards academic discourse, rather it has also provided sufficient information on how sociolinguistic these factors are applied in real-world situations, particularly in fields such as education, digital communication, law, and language preservation. Despite the significant influences these foundational theories have on sociolinguistics, especially in comprehending how language is applied in relation to society,

power, and identity, it should be taken into account how these theories should be re-examined with the inclusion of contemporary linguistic developments. This does not take away the importance and validity of their concepts, as they have proven to be useful in discussions relating to sociolinguistics, such as Hymes' reconceptualization of communicative competency, Labov's perception and research on class-based variation, and Bernstein's discussion on the connection between linguistic codes and educational inequality, all of which are influential to sociolinguistic studies. However, it is somewhat of a consideration to be made that these concepts were shaped by the social conditions of the past, and there have been developments and evolutions in regards to sociolinguistics. Moreover, although their studies have been accounted for as being influential, they often risk the possibility of generalizing linguistic experiences into specific categories. An example would be Bernstein's contradistinction of restricted codes to elaborated codes, which can be critiqued for generalizing the complexity of the working-class speech and also implicates a deficit in terms of detail and analysis. Similarly, the concepts from Labov's categorization of dialect features are subject to not fully including developments and progress, which includes the linguistic practices that are embraced in globalized contexts at present.

It is our responsibility as language speakers that we are able to uphold and sustain the development of linguistic proficiencies. Hence, in this aspect of this course, integrating more diverse perspectives and methods will result in the sustaining of principles for navigating the complex connection and relationship between language and society. The sociolinguistic themes of multilingualism, language contact, and language and power provide relevant discussions on how language can reflect certain social structures in our communities. Moreover, the study on code-switching, language shift, and linguistic diversity shows how people react to such social identities. In the modern world where multilingualism is fostered across multiple disciplines, the relevance of sociolinguistics lies within a much higher context than it was a few decades back. It is through sociolinguistics that educators and language facilitators can design curricula that prioritize diverse communities. In correlation, sociolinguistics shape and reflect existing language policies and uncover systems that can alternatively include marginalized languages and groups, as well as provide a sense of how social groups are able to preserve their cultural identity of culture in this world where globalization influences the majority. Lastly, by highlighting the role and importance of sociolinguistics to the general public, it pushes for a more inclusive and progressive society wherein people would be able to acknowledge existing prejudices in terms of language use, to be able to challenge and negate language stereotypes, and develop a greater sense of appreciation towards language diversity across different communities. It can be argued that once society can underline these concepts and apply them in their daily lives, sociolinguistics in return will not just simply contribute to the academic knowledge of the speakers, but create opportunities to develop one's social awareness, inclusiveness, and comprehend the overall nature of language development.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Juan Miguel Enriquez is a masters' student in Language and Literature at the Far Eastern University, Manila. He is a FEU scholar and is currently a teaching assistant in the FEU General Education Department. He is a member of the FEU Graduate Student Council as the organization's Vice President for Student Affairs.

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