



Известия Саратовского университета. Новая серия. Серия: Социология. Политология. 2022. Т. 22, вып. 4. С. 430–433

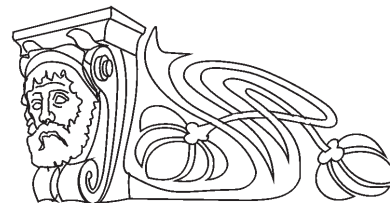
Izvestiya of Saratov University. Sociology. Politology, 2022, vol. 22, iss. 4, pp. 430–433

<https://soziopolit.sgu.ru>

<https://doi.org/10.18500/1818-9601-2022-22-4-430-433>, EDN: UDGICX

Article

From the linguistic turn to linguosociology: The problems and perspectives



B. R. Mogilevich

Saratov State University, 83 Astrakhanskaya St., Saratov 410012, Russia

Bronislava R. Mogilevich, mogilevich@sgu.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4986-9183>

Abstract. The article considers the phenomenon of linguistic turn in the humanities, sociology in particular. The natural causes of this phenomenon generation from the point of view of various methodological approaches – symbolic interactionism, discourse theory, communication acts theory are presented. The formation of the new field of theoretical sociology – linguosociology and its succession with sociology and sociolinguistics are substantiated. In conclusion, it is shown, that linguosociology is a natural phase in the development of socio-humanitarian knowledge.

Keywords: linguistic turn, linguosociology, sociolinguistics, communication, discourse, symbolic interactionism, linguistic capital, habitus

For citation: Mogilevich B. R. From the linguistic turn to linguosociology: The problems and perspectives. *Izvestiya of Saratov University. Sociology. Politology*, 2022, vol. 22, iss. 4, pp. 430–433. <https://doi.org/10.18500/1818-9601-2022-22-4-430-433>, EDN: UDGICX

This is an open access distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0)

Научная статья

УДК 316.347

От лингвистического поворота к лингвосociологии: проблемы и перспективы

Б. Р. Могилевич

Саратовский национальный исследовательский государственный университет имени Н. Г. Чернышевского, Россия, 410012, г. Саратов, ул. Астраханская, д. 83

Могилевич Бронислава Рафаиловна, доктор социологических наук, профессор кафедры английского языка для гуманитарных направлений и специальностей, mogilevich@sgu.ru, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4986-9183>

Аннотация. В статье рассмотрено явление лингвистического поворота в гуманитарных науках, в социологии в частности. Представлены закономерные причины становления этого феномена с точки зрения различных методологических подходов – символического интеракционизма, теории дискурса и теории коммуникативных актов. Обосновано появление новой отрасли теоретической социологии и ее преемственность с социологией и социолингвистикой. В заключение показано, что лингвосociология является закономерной фазой в развитии социогуманитарного знания.

Ключевые слова: лингвистический поворот, лингвосociология, социолингвистика, коммуникация, дискурс, символической итеракционизм, лингвистической капитал, габитус

Для цитирования: *Mogilevich B. R. From the linguistic turn to linguosociology: The problems and perspectives [Могилевич Б. Р. От лингвистического поворота к лингвосociологии проблемы и перспективы] // Известия Саратовского университета. Новая серия. Серия: Социология. Политология. 2022. Т. 22, вып. 4. С. 430–433. <https://doi.org/10.18500/1818-9601-2022-22-4-430-433>, EDN: UDGICX*

Статья опубликована на условиях лицензии Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0)

The linguistic turn in sociology is not the only one that took place in the humanities in the middle of the XXth century. The thing is, that these turns are connected not only with linguistics, but with history, cultural studies pragmatics, semiotics, ethics and so on [1]. The linguistic turn acquired great importance due to the formation of postindustrial information society.

In fact, traditional sociology in the period of its formation and further on did not consider the phenomenon of the language as its object of studies. The dominant sociological theories studied empiri-

cal facts, objective social acts and their interpretation. The linguistic actions were not included in the sociological contexts.

Thus, O. Conte postulated that sociology must rely on empirical facts and only they (empirical facts) are the sources of social laws. In other words, O. Conte considered social practices as the means of achieving scientific knowledge [2].

In the course of time, the sociology theories developed and widened the fields of research, but all of them did not include human languages in their spheres. For example, positivist sociology studied



only empirical facts and objective social acts, but nor human motives, feelings and intentions behind them, their languages in particular. As for M. Weber, he postulated that the main problem of sociology was the interpretation of humans' social acts, their intentions and goals. And other words, M. Weber's humanistic interpretation sociology was oriented on understanding the relationship between a human being and a society. But nevertheless, human languages, their functions and importance were neglected, as well [3]. It was G. Mead, who included language problems into the sphere of sociology. He was the first to consider symbols as human means for communication, describing the thoughts, beliefs and objects to adapt themselves to the surrounding social reality. The groups of the one language speakers possess mutual symbols' meanings. In fact, G. Mead studied language communication and symbolic interaction as social phenomena existing both in humans' inner and external worlds. Thus, symbolic interactionism was the first sociological theory to lay the corner stone in the linguistic turn in the humanities. The impact of symbolic interaction on developing sociological research in the field of human communication and behavior is far from being overestimated. In short, its main achievements can be presented as such:

- symbols usage (mainly in language forms) is the precondition of humans' social development;
- a language is the main tool of personal and mental existence;
- humans' knowledge about the external world and themselves are actualized mainly by means of languages [4].

The formation of postindustrial information society due to technological achievements meant the displacement of the focus of sociological research from objects to subjects. The information, generated and accumulated in the course of communication and its interpretation, became the main methodology tool of socio-humanitarian research. That is, linguistic actualization of humans' activity (motives, feelings, behavior, thoughts and actions) occupied the leading position in the humanities. This phenomenon was called "the linguistic turn" and really and turned the researchers' attention from objective Newton's paradigm to subjective humanitarian one. It meant that people appeared to be the center of all humanitarian studies.

The information society made it possible to change the conceptual field in the context of time and space and gave way to such notions, as: "what was said", "about what", "when", "where" and "what for". This displacement took place due to the change of people's nature – causative determinism was replaced by discourse methodology, its main concepts

being "speech acts", "an individual's association", "the forms of a dialogue" [5, p. 10–11]. Discourse practices actualize the endless variety of human life activity (processes, concepts and problems).

It is worth considering the discourse theories which generated the linguistic turn. J. Habermas's communication actions theory is of great importance for the formation, development and actualization of the linguistic turn in general, discourse methodology in particular. J. Habermas managed to unite discourse ethics, cultural policies and communication theories to successfully condition human mutual understanding. In his opinion, speech activity, language abilities, motivation, intentions and results contribute to mutual understanding in the course of communication. Therefore, pragmatic interaction activity presents itself as nothing more but communication activity. According to J. Habermas's pragmatics, speech conditions humans' activity, whereas understanding presents humans' activity main goals. It is not surprising, that the attention is drawn from a phrase semantics to a discourse and its pragmatic analysis, incorporating social humans' existence into the pragmatic communication activity [6].

In this connection, the communication theory by T. van Dyke is also worth mentioning. In his opinion, any discourse takes place at a concrete spacial and temporal context, on the one hand, and the reflects the communicators' specific features, on the other hand [7].

It is no doubt, that sociological theory of P. Bourdeu presents itself as the fullest and the most important one explaining and describing the process of constructing social reality. Thus, any language is a social construct characterizing a language speaker as a constructor of social reality. Moreover, P. Bourdeu considers any language in the context of "habitus" agglomerating the whole scope of social and genetic features (dispositions) of language speakers. Human habitus defines individual specific mental, physical and psychological characteristics of any language speakers. Habitus, as a whole, generates individual practical activity, linguistic habitus presenting the combination of dispositions formed in the course of language education (at home, in the kindergarten, at school and so on). It means that various social groups possess various types of linguistic habitus – phonetical, lexical, grammatical, stylistic and they are socially structured and function under definite social conditions (linguistic market). It is quite natural that various social groups possess unequal access possibilities for adapting to linguistic markets [8]. P. Bourdeu's sociological approach takes place in the frames of the following concepts: "habitus", "linguistic capital", "symbolic



power”, “cultural capital”, “linguistic market” [9]. The cultural concept consists of three subtypes – incorporated, objectivized and institutionalized ones. In their turn, they can be defined as follows: linguistic capital as a part of incorporated cultural capital is transmitted from generation to generation and is composed of knowledge skills, types of education systems, which taken together provide with professional and career advantages [10]. Then, any language is a kind of economic capital which can be bought, sold or exchanged. Thus, any language in the context of social existence, possesses the so – called “soft violence”. What does it mean? All social contradictions are reflected in languages and they (languages) regulate social relations. The utterances (words, texts) expressing political, economic and socio-cultural forms of control become dominant effective tools of communication [11, p. 135].

The linguistic turn in the humanities follows the methodology of discourse analysis aiming at studying social problems by means of languages inner structures. They provide for understanding social problems of communication between a society and discourse making stress on a language role in constructing social reality and getting knowledge [12]. The linguistic turn in the humanities generated problems both in linguistic and sociological studies – the formation of two scientific disciplines – sociolinguistics and linguosociology. There are two points of view on their nature and objects. Any language can be looked upon and studied depending on the goals of the research. From the linguistic point of view any language is a homogeneous object; whereas sociolinguistic approach makes any language to be heterogeneous. For example, traditional linguistics divides the object of research vertically, namely: phonetics, morphology, syntax and so on. In its turn, sociolinguistics looks upon a language horizontally, namely: a literary language, functional styles and genres, territorial and professional dialects [13]. At first, the objects of linguistics and socio linguistics seem to be the same – a language. But, linguistics studies inner language structures, their origin and development in the course of time. Sociolinguistics studies a language in its social surrounding [14].

According to J. Fishman, linguosociology studies a language on a macro level dealing with language policy, language planning, language standards, language and ethnic problems. Sociolinguistics studies social categories, namely: class, age, gender, level of education on a micro level [15].

The difference between linguosociology and sociolinguistics is determined by a researcher’s focus of attention – a language analysis or a social structure. Thus, linguosociology is a part of theo-

retical sociology together with sociology of culture and sociology education, being autonomous sociological fields. Nevertheless, they have differences of research – the former considers a language in its relation to a society and language variations; the latter is a part of sociology studying a society by means of linguistic tools [16].

To make the difference between linguosociology and sociolinguistics, it is appropriate to give the following examples. In 1920–1930s in Russia some revolutionary linguists tried to create “marxist linguistics”. Of course, they failed but marxist sociology is more than 150 years old, linguosociology being its integral part. Or, bilingualism is deeply rooted in social problems. Sometimes the elite is bilingual if it is prestigious, or monolingual in the opposite case [17].

In conclusion, it should be noted that the linguistic turn in sociology is conditioned by nature trends in modern society, by objective mutual interrelation of various fields of human knowledge. In the course of time, under postindustrial information society languages’ impact on social life grew and humankind’s dependence on languages became quite vivid as languages possess universal power over people. Linguosociology as a part of theoretical sociology provides researchers with new productive and effective tools of studies.

References

1. Romanovsky N. V. Contemporary Sociology – Determinants of Changes. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* [Sociological Studies], 2009, no. 12, pp. 26–35 (in Russian).
2. Conte O. *Discours sur L'ensemble du Positivism*. Moscow, Librokom Publ., 2011. 200 p. (in Russian).
3. Weber M. *O nekotorykh kategoriyakh ponimayushchey sotsiologii* [On Some Categories of Understanding Sociology]. Moscow, Direkt-Media Publ., 2010. 107 p. (in Russian).
4. Mead G. H. *Izbrannoe: sbornik perevodov* [Selected Works]. Moscow, INION RAN Publ., 2009. 290 p. (in Russian).
5. Makarov M. L. *Interpretativnyi analiz diskursa v maloy grupe* [Interpretative Analysis of Discourse in a Small Group]. Tver, Tver State University Publ., 1998. 200 p. (in Russian).
6. Habermas J. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Boston, Beacon press, Cop., 1979. 240 p.
7. Van Dyke T. A. *Yazyk, poznanie, kommunikatsiya* [Language. Cognition. Communication]. Moscow, Progress Publ., 1989. 310 p. (in Russian).
8. Bourdeu P. On the production and reproduction of legitimate language. *Otechestvennye zapiski* [Domestic Notes], 2005, no. 2 (23), pp. 1–27 (in Russian).
9. Bourdeu P. *Nachala. Choses Dites*. Moscow, Socio-Logos Publ., 1994. 288 p. (in Russian).



10. Mogilevich B. R. Polylinguism as a Global Linguistic Capital. *Moscow State University Bulletin. Series 18. Sociology and Political Science*, 2020, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 188–208 (in Russian). <https://doi.org/10.24290/1029-3736-2020-26-1-188-208>
11. Bourdeu P. *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1990. 224 p.
12. Foucault M. *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. New York, Vintage Books, 1980. 270 p.
13. Nikolskiy L. B. *Sinkhronnaya sotsiolingvistika (Teoriya i problema)* [Synchronic Sociolinguistics (Theory and Problems)]. Moscow, Nauka Publ., 1976. 168 p. (in Russian).
14. Liu Juan. On the Linguistic Turn in Sociology. *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya* [Sociological Studies], 2018, no. 7, pp. 115–123 (in Russian). <https://doi.org/10.31857/S013216250000185-6>
15. Fishman J. A. *Advances in the Sociology of Language*. Vol. 1. The Hague, Mouton, 1971. 418 p.
16. Hudson R. A. *Sociolinguistics*. London, Cambridge University Press, 1996. 280 p.
17. Alpatov V. M. Sociolinguistics and Other Linguistic Disciplines. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 2020, no. 1, pp. 9–16 (in Russian). <https://doi.org/10.37892/2713-2951-2020-1-1-9-16>

Поступила в редакцию 22.08.2022; одобрена после рецензирования 26.08.2022; принята к публикации 31.08.2022
The article was submitted 22.08.2022; approved after reviewing 26.08.2022; accepted for publication 31.08.2022