An Overview on Dialectal Variation

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Abstract- Dialectal variation has witnessed a noticeable progress in the past half –century, this progression lead to consider the dialectal variation as a very important aspect of research in sociolinguistics. This study concentrate on dialect and language in general, it also explains the differences between standard language and dialect, and it shows how a particular dialect is used in a specific region and it is considered as an identity as well, it aimed to show how dialect's groups of one language may be considered mutual intelligibility or non-mutual intelligibility, and this classification is based on the percentage of convergence and divergence among them.

Index Terms- language variation, standard language, dialect, mutual intelligibility, convergence and divergence.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Language variation is an observed phenomenon found in every language in this world. Variation is far from being a defect of a language; it is true that human being language is governed system in which a huge amount of creativity which is one of the important characteristics of language is possible. Variation is a neutral operation, and linguists could not prove that non-standard language (dialect) is less enough by means of communication than what is called standard language, so that variation does not make the language less in quality or rank , but the problem is in the speech community attitudes' to the speakers or talkers of these dialects ,speech community is the responsible to give a social rank to the different forms of language, the matter of stigmatizing and elevating some speakers depends directly on the background of the speaker and the abilities which is based on the selecting and pronouncing of some words.

Every language has its varieties or dialects, when a certain variety of a language is used according to the users then it is called dialect, dialects are normally determined by speaker's geographical background, O Grady et al. Defines dialect as "A regional or social variety of a language characterized by its own phonological, syntactical, and lexical properties". If we take English as an example .in Britain, there are huge numbers of dialects of English which differ from each other according to the geographical area e.g. the Scottish dialect, Yorkshire dialect, Lancashire dialect.

Dialect is a distinctive form of a language, it is associated with some social regional, group and ethnic, it differs from other varieties of a language by its own linguistic features such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar. Dialect in the classical form is a dialect of certain region; dialect is different way of saying the same thing where it reflects the social structure as gender, class origin.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociolinguistics is considered of why and how people use a language differently according to social contexts. It explains reasons of how and why people speak differently. Men and women are reasons behind dialectal variation; these social factors have been the focus of attention of sociolinguistics research in the mid 1970s. Coates (1998) states that it is common in all societies that "the way men speak is held in high esteem, while women's ways of talking are compared unfavorably with men's". The traditional idea that women are chatterboxes is not existed these days, because in many different researches in various social contexts- in the workplace, in the school ,in the television, companies have proved that women is less in talk than Coates(1998).

Many studies about dialect variation, Clopper and Pisoni (2004) investigated how receiver or listeners can identify dialect of regions; they used acoustic-phonetic cues in dialect categorization. Sentence-length utterances are used from 11 male speakers in their twenties from the TIMIT Acoustic-Phonetic Speech body; all of them belong to various areas of the United States. receivers or (listeners) were asked to listen to two various sentences and eight novel sentences, and their duty is to categorize each talker into one of six geographic regions, the result of this study showed the ability of the listeners to classify talkers, and it was basically because of experiment, also it was found that the listeners looked after to some certain phonetic signals in their speech, which helped them to affiliate every talker to a certain dialect.

A lot of studies in the nineteenth century on Catalan dialects are created as part of LEXDIALGRAM project, gathering a variety of research works related to this subject, and categorizing them under the following categories: dictionary, lexicon and vocabulary, lexicography and grammar and spelling guide. The fundamental object is to bring these works and researches to be more public, and also to promote the studies which analyze the case of Catalan language and its dialects in nineteenth century, computerization, design application, digitations were procedures applied to help consultation for these materials, and suggestions to add mapping in the future. Conclusion of this project is that the study of grammar corpus or body in the computerized form helps to increase the understanding of linguistic variation in time dialectal studies were not existed.

Languages across this world are noted for dialectal diffusion. English as an example has many variations including British English, Australian English, Nigerian English South-African English, etc. For instance, British English is clearly different from that of the American, and the talks of these two different groups also differ from Australian English. If speakers of a certain language speak different varieties of the language, it

is said that they speak different dialects of one language. The term 'register' came into public in 1960s, and it is described as a traditional way of using language that is appropriate in specific context. This term is different from dialect, which is described as a variety according to user, and each speaker uses one variety all the time.

III. OBJECTIVES

1) To develop the conceptual framework of language and dialectal variation.
2) T0 explain the stages of development of standard language.
3) To show when two or more languages or dialects are classified under the category of language or dialect convergence or divergence.
4) To highlight on reasons behind language variation.
5) To identify the most important concepts about language and language variation.

IV. LANGUAGE VARIATION

No human language is stable, unvarying or uniform; all languages present internal differences. Actual usage varies from people to people, and user to user, in terms of the pronunciation, or the choice of lexicon and the meaning of those lexicons, and even the use of syntactic rules. To show a known example, American's speech vary from the speech of the British, it is noticed too that the speech of these two groups in turn is distinct from the speech used in Australia. If a language is used differently by two different groups, they are often said to speak different dialects of the language.

It is not difficult to define exactly what a dialect is; in fact the term dialect has come to be used in different ways. The traditional example of a dialect is the regional dialect: the distinct variety of a language which is spoken in a certain geographical area. For example, we may speak of Appalachian dialects or Ozark dialects, on the grounds that inhabitants of these areas have certain different linguistic features that distinguish them from speakers of other varieties of English. Speakers can also speak of a social variety: the distinct form of a language spoken by group of a particular socioeconomic class, such as the ghetto languages in the United States or the working-class dialects in England. In addition, certain ethnic varieties of language can be distinguished, such as the form of English sometimes referred to as Yiddish English, which is historically associated with speakers of Eastern European Jewish ancestry.

It is important to know that dialects are never purely social, or purely ethnic or purely regional. For instance, the distinctive Appalachian and Ozark dialects are not merely dialects spoken by any of the inhabitants. As we see, regional, social, and ethnic factors combine and intersect in various ways in the identification of dialects.

Language variation does not end with the term dialects. Every noticeable dialect of a language is itself subject to be considered internal variation: not two speakers of a language, even if they speak the same dialect or variety, use and produce their language in the same way. We can recognize different individuals by their overt speech and language style; in fact, a person's language is one of the most essential features of self-identity. When the form of a language spoken by a single individual is referred to as a dialect, every speaker of a language has a distinct idiolect.

The moment we realize that variation in language is pervasive, it is obvious that there is no such thing as a single language used at all times by all speaker or users. There is no such thing as a single English language as example, there are many English languages (idiolects and dialects) it depends on who is using the language and what is the context of usage .Taking in Consideration the well-known phenomenon of variation in vocabulary words that exists among English speakers.

V. STANDARD LANGUAGE

Finegan, Edward (2007) defined Standard Language as "A language variety used by a group of people in their public discourse. Alternatively, varieties become standard by undergoing a process of standardization, during which it is organized for description in grammars and dictionaries and encoded in such reference works". The most important phenomenon of the development of language in historical times has been the establishment of the national common languages — Greek, French, English, German, etc. "standard" languages which have turn away, or are going to turn away the local dialects, most of standard languages are combined varieties that are developed over periods, and which cover characteristics from different dialects. The histories of, for example, Standard English (Nevalainen, ibid.), Standard German (Mattheier) and Standard Dutch (Willemyns, ibid.) were formed by continuous selection processes which happened by degrees over time. The outcome was a compound recombination of distinctive features from many dialects and a standard norm which is different in structure from its dialectal forms.

Language standardization is always established with the possibility of selecting between linguistic alternatives. Two major types of choosing and selecting are to be distinguished: polycentric selection and monocentric selection, Monocentric selection is the selection of a present (or also old) regional or social dialect as the foundation of the rising standard language. and the fact that some standard languages present a relatively clear regional or social origin, for instance, the "Copenhagenness" of Standard Danish as explained by Kristiansen, this volume; polycentric selection appears to be more popular in history of this language.

The process of selection is normally accompanied by debates and conflicts on finding the "best usage" and so the "best" grounds for the new standard variety. The case of the history of Italian which has been discussed under the label question Della lingua — a discussion which reflects a list of combination of issues about power and language, and about code differentiation and identification.

The non-linguistic goal of the "standardization" (e.g. scientific, national unity, or economic advancement,) is most apparent in this place of the process. Conflicts about competing standard language norms are not involved with all standard language histories. Contributions for some language as, Standard

English (Nevalainen), Standard Icelandic (Árnason) and Standard Swedish (Teleman) emerged amidst a relative quiet, but this relative quietness did not happen with the histories of some languages, German (Mattheier), Norwegian (Jahr) and Yiddish (Peltz) were described by a vast debates about standard norms
.

VI. LANGUAGE CONTRAST DIALECT

Language and dialect are terms which imply each other; the terms are very close to each other, so one may find it difficult to give a precise definition to both terms. Language from non-linguistic point of view is defined as "the most significant tool that a human being uses to communicate his or her thoughts and view of discourse", however the definition of a language from the linguistic point of view is more complex and problematic, and the linguists even have not found the precise definition to language. Most of linguists define language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which human being communicate with each other, if we look to the definitions we find the focus is on 'vocal system' and 'communication'.

In defining the term dialect as : A dialect is simply a distinct form of a language, possibly associated with a recognizable region ,social, or ethnic group, differentiated from the other forms of a language by specific linguistic features ,(for example) pronunciation, grammar or any combination of this.

Dialect is described as lack of prestige, and it is incorrect, substandard, and it does not obey the rules of grammar. This quotation make the case clear and it enables a language to be considered as a language, e.g. (has status, standard, functional, prestigious, and written) and all of these properties attached with language but dialect lacks.

VII. DIALECT AND REGION

In the advanced nations, region no longer maintains its seniority. A lot of changes in urbanization, mobility, embourgeoisement, literacy and other social factors have led to a strict leveling of regional dialects and accents. Labov (1972) says "My own studies of on-going linguistic changes indicate that dialect diversification is continuing…in spite of close contact among the social groups involved".

For more than a century, dialectologists were originally concerned in where their informants lived, and they started out their fieldworkers accordingly, from Edmond Edmond moving by cycle through the French rural areas collecting data for the Atlas linguistique de France in 1896-1900 to Raven I. McDavid motoring around the eastern seaside of the United States collecting field records for the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and Southern Atlantic States from 1945 to 1949. And for those years, dialectology was basically dialect geography considering region as an independent variable.

Warelius and the other founders of dialectology were convinced about the relationship between dialect variety and local landscape. In eighteenth century philosophers believed that language was an organic, natural, entity, like a plant, and its variation was believed to have the same source as the diversity of vegetation. It's just like vegetable life took on distinctly different appearances according to the soil and climate that nourished it, so languages took on obviously different features in different climates.

VIII. CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE

The concepts of dialect convergence (dc) and dialect divergence (dd) can be defined respectively, as the decrease and increase in similarity between dialects. while (dc) involves the linguistic unification, focusing, (dd) is as the amount of linguistic diversification, linguists define convergence as partial similarities increasing at the expense of differences (so, from their perspective, divergence is the essential subject case of diachronic dialectology).and to be clear from these definitions, divergence and convergence are relational ideas, referring to either processes or the results of processes.

Dialect change has different appearances. Within these, dialect convergence (dc) and dialect divergence (dd) which affect the relationships between related dialects or varieties. Dc and Dd are phenomena attached to dialects have existed. different historical developments, include the 'modernization' of society, have given less importance to the nature of dialects and have partly changed the strategy of (dc) and (dd); moreover, they have lead them to dialect – standard language convergence. Trudgill (2002) Dialect convergence may lead to simplification, and to the reduction of intrasystemic, especially 'quantitative', variation. However, in most studies on dialect divergence or convergence, concentration is only paid to how processes of linguistic change influence on intersystem variation, for instance, dialectal differences, these differences is related to either quantitatively variable features or categorical.

IX. MUTUAL INTELLIGIBILITY

Mutual intelligibility is considered as one of the most important aspects for dialect distribution. However, previously, it was talked about it from a personal perspective. The primary step to determine mutual intelligibility is that when we talk to person with an accent, we often attempt to set up a pattern of sound agreement. As long as the sounds of the stranger agreement to ours in a systematic manner.

The concept of mutual intelligibility seems like a rational criterion to define dialects, the situation can be considerably complex by political and social factors. In China, for instance, a northern Chinese speaker of the Beijing dialect (named as Mandarin) cannot comprehend the speech of a southern Chinese speaker of Cantonese, and vice versa. For this reason, linguists may well label Mandarin and Cantonese as two different ''languages.'' though, in classical studies of the Chinese language, both Mandarin and Cantonese are considered as ''dialects'' of Chinese, saying that they are historically related (i.e., they may have been branches of several related dialects that are existed earlier in the history of the Chinese language). Further, both Mandarin and Cantonese are spoken by the same people (the two languages are used in the same country and government), and the written language is used by the speakers of both 'dialects'', (in the form of Chinese characters) as a common language of communication. For this reasons, the tendency has

continued to use the term dialect to indicate various mutually unintelligible forms of the Chinese language.

While discussing the idea of mutual intelligibility, it is main to notice, by way of contrast, cases that might be called one-way intelligibility, involving speakers of different languages, but historically related. For example, speakers of Brazilian Portuguese who are not familiar with Spanish can often comprehend the forms of Spanish spoken in adjacent countries. The identical Spanish speakers, however, seems to find Portuguese largely unintelligible. An analogous situation holds between Swedish and Danish speakers of Danish can (more or less) comprehend Swedish, but the reverse situation is much less popular. Even if one group of users can comprehend another group, it cannot be said that the two groups speak the same language unless they comprehend each other, thus the idea of mutual intelligibility is strict in determining when two languages are the same language.

X. METHODOLOGY

The conducted study has been done to define and explain the relationships among the main concepts in the sociolinguistics field .the study was a qualitative method, in which the collection of material is mainly based on previous studies such as, papers, websites, books, articles .the study is meant to bring out the hard efforts which are done by previous scholars to be more apparent and visible.

XI. CONCLUSION

This paper is mainly talking about language and dialect .It tried to show how a language is more common (structured, correct), but dialect is less public (un-structured, incorrect) and specified to a certain geographical area, it was part of this study to show a clear distinction between dialect and language, when these two terms were the focus of intention of linguists to give a clear distinction for both terms. and finally ,this paper discussed the matter of convergence and divergence between languages or dialects , and this case still has some ambiguity, for example, languages like (Swedish, Danish) are classified as dialects of the same language, on the other hand ,some dialects of the same language are more suitable to be categorized as different languages as(Germany, Danish).

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SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends to look to dialect and language from other perspective , not only to make comparison between them , but to take dialect and language as a separate discipline, it recommends also to search why dialect are less prestigious than standard language ,while they are linguistically considered as a variety of the same language.

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