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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE BEHAVIORS IN HUMAN ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *Language behaviors are fundamental to human communication, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal interactions across diverse contexts. This article examines the theoretical underpinnings and typology of language behaviors, focusing on their role in shaping communication, identity, and social interaction. Drawing on sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, pragmatic, and discourse-based approaches, the study highlights the complex interplay of linguistic choices, intentions, and contextual factors. Special attention is given to Roman Jakobson's six language functions and their impact on communicative practices. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of understanding language behaviors for analyzing human activities in social, cultural, and professional domains.*

Keywords: *language behavior, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, communication, identity, human, activities.*

Human language is more than a tool for conveying information; it is a reflection of thought, identity, and social structure. As Roman Jakobson once argued, communication is not limited to the transfer of messages but extends to functions that shape human interaction. Understanding how individuals use language in different contexts is therefore essential for both theoretical linguistics and applied studies. This article addresses the definition, typology, and theoretical foundations of language behaviors, while highlighting their role in everyday human activities. The study is particularly relevant for scholars in linguistics, communication sciences, and social psychology.

Language behaviors are dynamic and evolve over time, adapting to technological changes such as digital communication and social media interactions. In virtual contexts, emojis, abbreviations, and multimodal elements enrich traditional verbal and non-verbal communication. Power relations are often reflected in language behaviors, where choice of words and registers can either reinforce or challenge social hierarchies. Code-switching, or alternating between two languages or dialects, is another significant manifestation of language behavior that highlights identity and social positioning. Miscommunication frequently arises when interlocutors interpret verbal, non-verbal, or paraverbal signals differently, underlining the importance of context in understanding meaning. Ultimately, language behaviors illustrate the inseparable link between communication practices and the broader social environment in which they occur. Language behavior refers to the concrete use of language in a given situation. It encompasses verbal, non-verbal, and paraverbal acts that arise during communication. For example, a political speech (formal verbal), a friendly conversation (informal verbal), a smile (non-verbal), or a shift in intonation (paraverbal) are

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all instances of language behavior. According to the Office québécois de la langue française, language behavior is shaped by social, cultural, and psychological factors that guide how individuals or communities use language in context.

Typology of language behaviors.

Language behaviors can be classified as follows:

Formal and Informal: Public speeches and professional correspondence contrast with casual conversations among friends.

Oral and Written: Spoken interactions differ from written communication in structure, function, and impact.

Production and Reception: Speaking and writing (production) differ from listening and reading (reception).

Strategic behaviors: Such as persuasion, negotiation, and adaptation of speech to context.

Identity-based behaviors: Use of dialects, slang, or jargon to express group belonging.

Channels of Communication

Language behavior manifests through three main channels:

Verbal: Words and sentences in oral or written form.

Non-verbal: Gestures, facial expressions, posture.

Paraverbal: Intonation, volume, rhythm, and vocal tone.

Research shows these channels work together, creating nuanced meanings in interaction. In multilingual cities, street conversations often shift rapidly between languages, showing how code-switching functions as a natural strategy of adaptation. For example, a shopkeeper may greet a tourist in English, switch to Russian for negotiation, and then return to his native language for casual remarks. Online gaming communities also illustrate unique language behaviors, where players develop jargon, abbreviations, and humor specific to their group identity. Similarly, classroom interactions reveal how teachers adjust their speech—simplifying vocabulary, slowing down rhythm, or adding gestures—to ensure comprehension among diverse learners.

Communicative Intentions and Jakobson's Functions. Roman Jakobson identified six functions of language, each reflecting communicative intention:

1. Referential: Conveying factual information (e.g., reporting the weather).

2. Expressive: Expressing emotions and feelings ("I'm so happy I passed my exam!").

3. Conative: Directing or persuading others ("Please close the door").

4. Phatic: Establishing social contact ("Hello, can you hear me?").

5. Metalinguistic: Clarifying language itself ("By culture, I mean shared social practices").

6. Poetic: Focusing on the form and aesthetics of language (poetry, slogans).

These functions illustrate how language serves multiple roles beyond information transfer, shaping social interaction and meaning-making.

5. Sociolinguistic and Cultural Factors

Language behaviors are influenced by:

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Age: Children, teenagers, and adults use different registers.

Gender: Studies show women often use more expressive and relational language, while men may adopt more direct speech.

Social status: Higher-status individuals often use more formal registers.

Culture: Norms differ across societies; for instance, some cultures value ritualized greetings while others favor informality.

6. Identity and Social Belonging

Language behaviors are key to constructing individual and collective identity. Dialects, accents, and stylistic choices often signal social, cultural, or professional affiliation. Thus, language is both a communicative tool and a marker of identity. Language behaviors also play a crucial role in conflict resolution, as the choice of words and tone can either escalate or de-escalate tensions between interlocutors. In addition, they contribute to knowledge transmission, allowing cultural values, traditions, and collective memories to be preserved and passed on through generations.

CONCLUSION

The study of language behaviors reveals the multifaceted nature of human communication. By analyzing how individuals use language according to context, intention, and identity, we gain insight into the social dynamics of interaction. Theoretical approaches such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis highlight the complexity of language behaviors. Ultimately, these behaviors not only enable communication but also reinforce cultural norms, social relationships, and personal identity. Moreover, language behaviors demonstrate the adaptability of human communication in diverse situations, from informal conversations to professional discourse. They also serve as indicators of social belonging, reflecting the values, traditions, and expectations of different communities. Understanding these mechanisms allows researchers and practitioners to better address issues of intercultural communication, language education, and social integration. In this sense, studying language behaviors is not limited to linguistic theory but extends to practical implications in education, media, and everyday interaction. Thus, language remains at the heart of human activity, shaping both individual expression and collective identity.

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