A-PDF WORD TO PDF DEMO: Purchase from www.A-PDF.com to remove the watermark

Hakim Sabzevari University

English Department

A Sociolinguistic Study of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Supervisor:
Dr M. Zolfagharkhani

Reader:
Dr S. Ghaniabadi

By
Azam Kianinezhad

June 2012

IN THE NAME OF GOD

Hakim Sabzevari University

English Department

We hereby certify that we have read this thesis written by *Azam Kianinezhad*, entitled *A Sociolinguistic Study of George Orwell's Animal Farm,* and that it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for degree of M.A in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

Supervisor:

Dr. Moslem Zolfagharkhani

Advisor:

Dr. Saeed Ghaniabadi

Examiner:

Dr. Mohamadreza Amirian

دانشگاه حکیم سبزواری

Hakim Sabzevari University

English Department

Thesis Submitted in partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of master of Science (M.Sc.) in Teaching
English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

A Sociolinguistic Study of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*

Supervisor:
Dr. Moslem Zolfagharkhani

Advisor:
Dr. Saeed Ghaniabadi

By:
Azam Kianinezhad

June 2012

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Zolfagharkhani, my supervisor, for his insightful suggestions on the choice of topic, valuable criticism on the first draft of the thesis and his scholarly guidelines. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Ghaniabadi, my reader, for his careful reading and valuable comments on the first draft of the proposal and the thesis. The researcher is also grateful to Dr. Davoudi for his very useful comments before and during the study. The researcher also wants to thank Mr. Ziayee for his helpful cooperation during the study. And last but not least, I want to thank my dear father and mother for their support and my dear husband for his attention and support and especially my little son, Arshia for all the time that he was deprived of my attention.

Abstract

The present study was conducted to see whether there are any underlying sociolinguistic meanings in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) and whether there is a relationship between the novel and its social aspects. *Animal Farm* was extracted out of many novels written by George Orwell (1903 – 1950). The reason for choosing this fiction is the sociolinguistic importance of the novel and many sociolinguistic meanings which are hidden beneath the surface of it. The aspects which are to be analyzed in the novel are the social, the satirical, and the political along with the names in *Animal Farm*. Hence, the present research relies on: social criticism of the novel; *Animal Farm* as a fable, satire, and allegory; political criticism of the novel; value of names and characters of the novel.

Through this literary work and the author's creative job, the significance of language on the one hand, and its direct joint to the social world on the other, once more are uncovered and shown to the literature admirers.

Key Terms: Sociolinguistics, Social Criticism, Political Criticism, George Orwell, and *Animal Farm.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title

Page

Acknowledgements …….. i

Abstract …… ii

Chapter One: Introduction…….....1

1.1 Overview…….……..…2

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study…….....…3

1.3 Research Question…….…..…...5

1.4 Significance and Justification of the Study……...…….…5

1.5 Definition of Key Terms……...…..……5

1.5.1 Sociolinguistics……...……5

1.5.2 Social Criticism……...……5

1.5.3 Political Criticism…….……..5

1.5.4 George Orwell…….……5

1.5.5 *Animal Farm*……...……5

Chapter Two: Review of Literature …….....……6

2.1Overview…….……7

2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks……..…...……..…8

2.2.1 External vs. Internal Language……..……....……8

2.2.2 Speech Community……..…….……..9

2.2.3 High Prestige and Low Prestige Varieties…….……....….…….10

2.2.4 Differences according to Class……..……....10

2.2.5 Class Aspiration…….…10

2.2.6 Social Language Codes……..11

2.2.7 Restricted Code…….…….11

2.2.8 Elaborated Code…….……12

2.2.9 Covert Prestige…….…….….12

2.2.10 Differences according to Ethnic Group……..…….....12

2.2.11 Differences according to Gender…….…….....…13

2.2.11.1 Minimal Responses……...…….……14

2.2.11.2 Questions…….…….…14

2.2.11.3 Turn-Taking……...…14

2.2.12 Changing the Topic of Conversation…….…….….14

2.2.13 Self-Disclosure…….....……15

2.2.14 Verbal Aggression…….15

2.2.15 Listening and Attentiveness…….……..……15

2.2.16 Dominance versus Subjection…….…..16

2.2.17 Politeness…….……..16

2.2.18 Complimentary Language……..……..….16

2.3 Different Approaches to Sociolinguistics……..……....……17

2.3.3 The Cultural Approach……17

2.3.1.1 The Essentialist Concept of Culture…….17

2.3.1.2 The Dialogical Concept of Culture……...18

2.3.2 The Sociocultural Situatedness Approach……...…….20

2.3.3 Language and Gender……...……23

2.3.4 Language and Social Relations……24

2.3.5 The Politeness Approach……..26

2.3.6 The Dialectological Approach…….27

2.3.7 The Variationist Approach…….30

2.3.8 Style……35

2.4 Biography and Beliefs of George Orwell……...……..36

2.5 *Animal Farm*…….....……45

Chapter Three: Methodology……..…….…….……...49

3.1 Overview……...…….50

3.2 Material ……...……..50

3.3 *Animal Farm*……..……50

3.4 Sources of Data …….……....……..51

3.5 Procedure……...……51

3.6 Methodological Framework of Analysis……51

3.6.1 Social Meaning……...…….……52

3.6.2 *Animal Farm* as a Fable, Satire, and Allegory…….……...……52

3.6.3 Political Criticism of the Novel……...……52

3.6.4 Value of Names and Characters of the Novel……53

Chapter Four: Analyses and Results……...…….54

4.1 Overview……55

4.2 Critical Analysis of Social Approach of the Novel…….……...55

4.3 Critical Analysis of Satirical Approach of the Novel…….56

4.4 Critical Analysis of Political Approach of the Novel…….59

4.4.1 Revolutionary Approach…….....……59

4.4.2 Illusions of Animalism, Communism, and Facsism…….……..…65

4.4.3 Religious Approach……....…….67

4.5 Critical Analysis of Characters of the Novel……..……67

4.5.1 Mr. Jones……....…….67

4.5.2 Old Major……68

4.5.3 Moses……..……69

4.5.4 Snowball……..……71

4.5.5 Napoleon……..……...……72

4.5.6 Boxer……...……73

4.5.7 Squealer……...……73

4.5.8 Mollie…….……..…74

4.5.9 Benjamin……..……...……75

4.5.10 Muriel……76

4.5.11 Pigs……76

4.5.12 Dogs……..……76

4.5.13 Animals……...……...……77

4.5.14 Frederick……...……78

4.5.15 Pilkington……...……..…….……78

4.5.16 Rats……79

4.5.17 Pigeons……..……79

Chapter Five: Conclusion …….……81

5.1 Findings……..……82

5.1.2 Interpretation of Findings…….……...……82

5.1.2.1 Interpretation of Totalitarianism……...…..82

5.1.2.2 Interpretation of Revolution and Corruption……....……..83

5.1.2.3 Interpretation of Class Warfare……..…….83

5.1.2.4 Interpretation of Language as Power……...……84

5.1.2.5 Interpretation of The Soviet Union……...…..……..84

5.2 Suggestions for Further Research …….……86

References ……..……87

Chapter One

Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

In *Studying Language, Culture, and Society* Gumpers stated:

> Sociolinguistics is the study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used, and the effects of language use on society. Sociolinguistics differs from sociology of language in that the focus of sociolinguistics is the effect of the society on the language, while the latter's focus is on the language's effect on the society (2008, p. 212).

Sociolinguistics overlaps to a considerable degree with pragmatics. It is historically closely related to linguistic anthropology and even the distinction between the two fields has been questioned recently.

It also studies how language varieties differ between groups separated by certain social variables, e.g., ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, age, etc., and how creation and adherence to these rules is used to categorize individuals in social or socioeconomic classes. As the usage of a language varies from place to place (dialect), language usage varies among social classes, and it is these sociolects that sociolinguistics studies.

There are numerous factors influencing the way people speak which are investigated by sociolinguistics:

- Social class: the position of the speaker in the society, measured by the level of education, parental background, profession and their effect on syntax and lexis used by the speaker.

- Social context: the register of the language used depending on changing situations, formal language in formal meetings and informal meetings with friends for example.
- Geographical origins: slight differences in pronunciation between speakers that point at the geographical region which the speaker comes from.
- Ethnicity: differences between the use of a given language by its native speakers and other ethnic groups.
- Nationality: clearly visible in the case of the English language: British English differs from American English, or Canadian English.
- Gender: differences in patterns of language use between men and women, such as quantity of speech, intonation patterns.
- Age: the influence of the age of the speaker on the use of vocabulary and grammar complexity.

An important factor influencing the way of formulating sentences, according to sociolinguists, is the social class of the speakers. Thus, there has been a division of social classes proposed in order to make the description accurate. Two main groups of language users, mainly those performing non-manual work and those with more years of education are the 'middle class', while those who perform some kind of manual work are 'working class'. Additional terms 'lower' and 'upper' are frequently used in order to subdivide the social classes. Therefore, differences between upper middle class can be compared with lower working class.

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

The first of Orwell's great cries of despair was *Animal Farm*, his satirical beast fable, often heralded as his lightest, gayest work. Though it resembles the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalin, it is more meaningfully an anatomy of all political

revolutions, where the revolutionary ideals of justice, equality, and fraternity shatter in the event (Davison, 2000, p. 64). Orwell paints a grim picture of the political 20th century, a time he believed marked the end of the very concept of human freedom.

Animal Farm is constructed on a circular basis to illustrate the futility of the revolution. The novel is a series of dramatic repudiations of the Seven Commandments, and a return to the tyranny and irresponsibility of the beginning. The only change will be in the identity of the masters, and ironically, that will be only partially changed.

Animal Farm is a satirical novella (which can also be understood as a modern fable or allegory) , ostensibly about a group of animals who oust the humans from the farm on which they live. They run the farm themselves, only to have it degenerate into a brutal tyranny of its own. The book was written during World War II and published in 1945, although it was not widely successful until the late 1950s.

Animal Farm is a satirical allegory of Soviet totalitarianism. Orwell based major events in the book on ones from the Soviet Union during the Stalin era. Orwell, a democratic socialist, and a member of the Independent Labour Party for many years, was a critic of Stalin, and was suspicious of Moscow-directed Stalinism after his experiences in the Spanish Civil War.

The problem is that most of the people read *Animal Farm* just as a simple beast fable, but the novel shows different kinds of meanings behind its surface. They include social, political, and cultural meanings. The aim of this research is to reveal different attitudes of the author that are concealed beneath the surface of the story. The study intends to investigate the application of sociolinguistic factors like social and political factors in *Animal Farm*.

1.3 Research Question

The following research question has been posed to be investigated in this study:

Does *Animal Farm* by George Orwell reveal sociolinguistic factors behind the surface of the story?

1.4 Significance and Justification of the Study

A brief survey of the literature in the field indicates that so far the sociolinguistic analysis of a literary text has not been investigated extensively and comprehensively so that one can speak of an overall, multi-dimensional picture of the sociolinguistic attitudes ascribed to the novel. Very few researchers have mixed the branches of sociolinguistics and literature. Lots of unanswered questions about this matter justify conducting research in this area and the significance of this study, for, at least, it might reveal sociolinguistic factors of the novel.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Sociolinguistics: It is a quickly developing branch of linguistics which investigates the individual and social variation of language.

Social criticism: It analyzes social structures which are seen as flawed and aims at practical solutions by specific measures, radical reform or even revolutionary change.

Political criticism: It (also referred to as political commentary or political discussion) is criticism that is specific of or relevant to politics, including policies, politicians, political parties, and types of government

George Orwell: George Orwell was the pen name of Eric Blair (1903-1950), who was born in India and wrote the novel of *Animal Farm* in 1945.

Animal Farm*:* It is a satirical novella (which can also be understood as a modern fable or allegory) by George Orwell, ostensibly about a group of animals who oust the humans from the farm on which they live.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Overview

Sociolinguistics is a quickly developing branch of linguistics which investigates the individual and social variation of language. Just as regional variation of language can give a lot of information about the place the speaker is from, social variation tells about the roles fulfilled by a given speaker within one community, or country (Wisniewski, 2007, pp. 201-210). Sociolinguistics is a practical scientific discipline researching the language that is actually used either by native speakers, or foreigners, in order to formulate theories about language change.

It is notable that people are acutely aware of the differences in speech patterns that mark their social class and are often able to adjust their style to the interlocutor. It is especially true for the members of the middle class who seem eager to use forms associated with upper class; however, in such efforts the forms associated with upper class are often overused by the middle class members. The above mentioned process of adopting own speech to reduce social distance is called convergence. Sometimes, however, when people want to emphasize the social distance they make use of the process called divergence purposefully using idiosyncratic forms.

Sociolinguistics investigates the way in which language changes depending on the region of country it is used in. To describe a variety of language that differs in grammar, lexis, and pronunciation from others the term dialect is used. Moreover, each member of community has a unique way of speaking due to the life experience, education, age, and aspiration. An individual personal variation of language use is called an idiolect.

There are numerous factors influencing idiolect, yet two more need to be elucidated, namely jargon and slang. Jargon is specific technical vocabulary associated with a particular field of interest, or topic.

For example words such as convergence, dialect, and social class are sociolinguistic jargon. Whereas slang is a type of language used most frequently by people from outside of high-status groups characterized by the use of unusual words and phrases. For example, a sociolinguist might determine through study of social attitudes that a particular vernacular would not be considered appropriate language use in a business or professional setting. Sociolinguists might also study the grammar, phonetics, vocabulary, and other aspects of this sociolect much as dialectologists would study the same for a regional dialect.

The study of language variation is concerned with social constraints determining language in its contextual environment. Code-switching is the term given to the use of different varieties of language in different social situations.

2.2 Conceptual and Theorettical Frameworks

Since sociolinguistics is not a specific type of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework. There are many essential factors and fundamental concepts in sociolinguistics.

While the study of sociolinguistics is very broad, there are a few fundamental concepts on which most sociolinguistic inquiries depend.

2.2.1 External vs. Internal Language

Sociolinguistics is different from many other branches of linguistics in that it studies external as opposed to internal language. Internal language applies to the study of language on the abstract level, or in the head, put simply. External language applies to language in social contexts, or outside the head. This distinction is important, because

internal language analyses, such as syntax and semantics, operate on the assumption that all native speakers of a language are quite homogeneous in how they process and perceive language. External language fields, such as sociolinguistics, attempt to explain why this is in fact not the case and different speakers of a language show different behaviours in different contexts of society. These two approaches, while distinct, complement each other in practice.

2.2.2 Speech Community

Speech community is a concept in sociolinguistics that describes a more or less discrete group of people who use language in a unique and mutually accepted way among themselves.

Definitions of speech community tend to involve varying degrees of emphasis on the following: shared community membership and shared linguistic communication.

However, the relative importance and exact definitions of these also vary. Some would argue that a speech community must be a real community, i.e. a group of people living in the same location (such as a city or a neighborhood), while more recent thinking proposes that all people are indeed part of several communities (through home location, occupation, gender, class, religious belonging, and more), and that they are also part of simultaneous speech communities.

Similarly, what shared linguistic communication entails is also a variable concept. Some would argue that a shared first language, even dialect, is necessary, while for others the ability to communicate and interact (even across language barriers) is sufficient.

A person can (and almost always does) belong to more than one speech community. For example, a gay Jewish waiter would likely speak and be spoken to differently when interacting with gay peers, Jewish peers, or his co-workers. If he

found himself in a situation with a variety of in-group and/or out-group peers, he would likely modify his speech to appeal to speakers of all the speech communities represented at that moment.

2.2.3 High Prestige and Low Prestige Varieties

Understanding language in society means that one also has to understand the social networks in which language is embedded. This may apply to the macro level of a country or a city, but also to the inter-personal level of neighborhoods or a single family. Upper classes of society use high prestige varieties and lower classes of society use low prestige varieties.

2.2.4 Differences according to Class

Sociolinguistics as a field distinct from dialectology was pioneered through the study of language variation in urban areas. Whereas dialectology studies the geographic distribution of language variation, sociolinguistics focuses on other sources of variation, among them is class. Class and occupation are among the most important linguistic markers found in society.

One of the fundamental findings of sociolinguistics, which has been hard to disprove, is that class and language variety are related. As can be implied from the example below, the working class tends to speak less standard language. The lower, middle, and upper middle class will in turn speak closer to the standard. However, the upper class, even members of the upper middle class, may often speak less standard than the middle class. This is because not only class, but also class aspirations, are important.

2.2.5 Class Aspiration

Studies, such as those by William Labov in the 1960s, have shown that social aspirations influence speech patterns. This is also true of class aspirations. In the