The Relationship between Social Psychology and Language

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Understanding the nature of language as an action and thinking about the world that shapes reality seems to be inseparable parts of social psychology. Although conversation intersects with psychology, linguistics, and sociology in many ways, participating in a conversation demands more than just linguistic competence or the psychological inclination to engage with others. It requires additional skills beyond mere linguistic knowledge and usage of language. There are many approaches to the interface between social psychology and language. Three major approaches are as follows: Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), Language Style Matching (LSM), and Discursive Psychology utilizing Conversation Analysis (DPCA) (Gasiorek et al., 2021). This paper overviews sociological and psychological perspectives on language-related issues building the bridge between social psychology and language. Language plays a key role in gathering social psychological data, but its impact on this process is less obvious. Gaining insight into how we use language can enhance our comprehension of what it means to function as a social being. Together with this aim, the main objective behind the social psychology of language is regarding language as a behavior influenced by other people and as a tool for affecting others' behavior mutually. That's why, the primary themes in this field could be seen as language use as an action, an interpersonal action, a context-dependent action, a coordinated action, and a deliberate action. To this end, in the current paper in addition to presenting a general overview, suggestions are made for developing the field taking the missing or challenging points into account.

Sosyal Psikoloji ve Dil Arasındaki İlişki

Makale Bilgisi	ÖZET
	Bir eylem olarak dilin doğasını kavramak ve gerçekliği biçimlendiren dünyayı düşünmek, sosyal psikolojinin ayrılmaz unsurları olarak görünmektedir. Her ne kadar konuşma birçok açıdan psikoloji, dilbilim ve sosyolojinin kesişim noktasında yer alsa da, bir konuşmaya katılmak salt dil bilgisine ve dili kullanma yeteneğine ya da başkalarıyla etkileşimde bulunma psikolojik eğilimine dayanmaz. Dil bilgisi ve dil kullanımının ötesinde beceriler de gerektirir. Sosyal psikoloji ile dil arasındaki etkileşim alanına yönelik çeşitli yaklaşımlar mevcuttur. Bunların başlıcaları İletişim Yerleştirme Kuramı (İYK), Dil Biçemi Eşleşmesi (DBE) ve Söylemsel Psikoloji yöntemi ile Konuşma Çözümlemesi (SPKA) yaklaşımlarıdır (Gasiorek ve ark., 2021). Bu çalışma, sosyal psikoloji ile dil arasındaki ilişkiye dair sosyolojik ve psikolojik bakış açılarını inceleyerek alana genel bir bakış sunmaktadır. Dil, sosyal psikolojik veri toplamada merkezi bir işlev üstlenmekte olup, bu sürece olan etkisi ise daha az belirgindir. Dil kullanımına dair farkındalığımızı artırmak, sosyal bir varlık olarak işlevimizin ne anlama geldiğine yönelik kavrayışımızı derinleştirebilir. Bu bağlamda, dilin sosyal psikolojisi, dili başkalarının davranışlarından etkilenen bir davranış olarak ele almanın yanı sıra, başkalarının davranışlarını karşılıklı olarak etkilemede kullanılan bir araç olarak değerlendirmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu alandaki temel temalar, dil kullanımını bir eylem olarak, kişilerarası bir etkileşim, bağlam-bağlı bir eylem, eşgüdümlü bir eylem ve kasıtlı bir eylem olarak ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, mevcut çalışmada sosyal psikoloji ve dil alanına ilişkin genel bir çerçeve sunulmakla birlikte, eksik ya da sorunlu alanlar dikkate alınarak dilin sosyal psikolojisi alanının geliştirilmesi için öneriler sunulmaktadır.

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INTRODUCTION

There are social variables that influence the way we use language and as a social being, our language have a significant effect on our social life. Perception of what we are doing by means of language could be the self-consciousness of social existence. In addition to linguistics, different fields like sociology, psychology, social psychology, communication, cognitive psychology and anthropology also deals with language related issues. Language could be considered as a multidisciplinary searching area since it reflects the reality and allows us to share our thoughts with the others and perceiving others' views. The actions when we speak involve communicating with others, as we need to collaborate with people in order to be part of a community. In fact, the reality shapes the linguistic actions because the context in which the action takes place, the interlocutors and their thoughts, their perceptions and their interpretations influence the way they communicate. In addition, interlocutors may arrange their language use according to the social context in which they are involved. Given that both the social context and the individual or collective language use of the interlocutors affect each other, it could be stated that they have a reciprocal relationship. To this end, how people express themselves in similar or different situations, how they interpret the others' and how they socially interact by means of language might be the topics of a variety of fields such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, social psychology and the others. What makes linguistics so crucial for many disciplines? Researchers in the fields of language and social psychology explore the social foundations of language and its use, how meaning is constructed, the linguistic basis of social psychological processes, and the application of language and social psychology to a range of practical issues. A social psychological perspective by viewing language as a behavior that is shaped by others and, also serves as a tool for influencing the actions of others.

There are several main approaches investigated in the field of social psychology of language. Before touching on the linguistic underpinnings, the summary of three basic theories is as the following:

1. *Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)* investigates not only the interactional adjustments of people but also the convergences and divergences in the individuals' speech style. The speech becoming similar or distinct reveals the social identity and dynamic behavior of the speech communities by facilitating comprehension and managing social relations within intergroup dynamics. There are three types of factors that communicators can utilize to understand and anticipate the behavior of others: cultural values, norms/rules; sociocultural group memberships, and psycho-cultural factors like stereotypes and prejudice. Each of these factors is closely aligned with the principles of CAT (Kim, 2003; Zhang & Giles, 2018).

2. *Language Style Matching (LSM)* is about the word selection of conversational partners. LSM involves identifying how interlocutors' employ function words and specific word classes. For instance, the overlapping and differences in such structures as pronoun, article, negation, frequency adverb, conjunction by the interlocutors are assumed to reflect attitudes or e(Ireland & Pennebaker, 2010).

3. *Discursive Psychology with Conversation Analysis (DPCA)* explores the flow of interaction by focusing on the natural points, turns in talk. Linguistic and paralinguistic features are analyzed to uncover identity, cognition, persuasive discourse and power relations in different settings. Therefore, conversation analysis is employed as a method for the investigation of the video or audio recordings that are transcribed (Keevallik & Ogden, 2020; Gasiorek et al., 2021).

These approaches holistically highlight the complex interactive relation between language, cognition, and social behavior in understanding human interaction. The following sections presents above mentioned interdisciplinary directions.

1.Interdisciplinary Directions within the Social Psychological and Linguistic Underpinnings
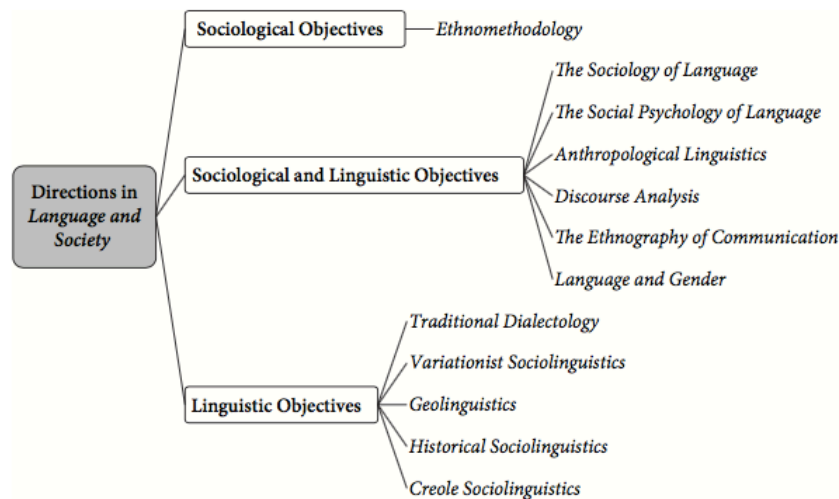
Sociological Perspective

Sociology touches on many aspects of language from a sociological point of view. Sociolinguistics, which is one of the macro branches of linguistics, mostly deals with the language phenomena in relation to the speech communities. More specifically, focusing on the socio-economic backgrounds of the interlocutors, their identities, their cultural backgrounds, their power relations, their verbal (e.g., the accent, dialect, speech rate, prosody, lexico-grammatical choices,) and non-verbal (e.g., gestures, mimics and facial expressions) language uses, the interaction between the interlocutors and how the speech activity occurs in a social context could be interpreted. In addition, how language is acquired, used and varied within a certain speech community is significant for the sociolinguists. Sociolinguistic studies date back to 1952s by Currie. The very first studies are about the linguistic variations in different speech communities. Structuralist approaches and anthropological perspectives on language (e.g., Boas, Bloomfield, Saussure and Sapir) pave the way for the foundations of sociolinguistic studies. Afterwards, in contrast to traditional Saussureean and Chomskyan approaches to sociolinguistics, Labov employed different methods to express the difficulty of studying with a real speech data, which could be summarized as: "(i) the ungrammaticallity of everyday speech, (ii) variation in speech and in the speech community, (iii) difficulties of hearing and (iv) recording real speech and the rarity of syntactic forms" (Labov, 1997, s.183-259 as cited in Hernández- Campoy, 2014). In the same vein, Trudgill (1983) also suggested that it is difficult to deschipre the the relation between language and society, since communities are sociologically and linguistically hetoregenous. In order to better understand the language and society relations, Trudgill (1978) put forth three distinctive features as can be seen in Figure 1:

Figure1.

Language and Society paradigm

Source: Trudgill, 1978 as cited in Hernández- Campoy, 2014, s. 14)

As can be seen in the Figure above, there are three main objectives, and the social psychology of language exists under the dimension of sociological and linguistic objectives. In line with these objectives, the dialectological studies, attitude and ideology of the communities, accommodation of language with respect to social distance, gender related distinctions; native or non-native reflections and many other extra and intra-linguistic factors could be studied with the administration of such methods as follows:

Table 1.

Directions in Language and Society

Discipline	Social Psychology of Language
Objectives	Sociological and linguistic
Methodology	Qualitative and quantitative
Method/Technique/Tool/Data	Survey fieldwork, matched-guise technique, attitude rating scales, mental map labeling, language boundary/difference perceptions and dialect imitation
Domains	Folk Linguistics (Perceptual Dialectology), attitudes and ideologies, Language loyalty, linguistic, accommodation, the aesthetics and prestige of dialects, gender differences, dialect distance, nativeness, etc.

Adapted from: Hernández- Campoy, 2014, s.12

As observed from the Table 1., social psychology of language discipline mixing both fields' objectives make use of qualitative and quantitative approaches. For the methodology part, different data collection tools like surveys and any data with respect to real human problems including social and linguistic dimensions could be utilized in different domains. Together with these applications, the social nature of the language phenomenon might be better understood. In addition, the social meaning of interaction and the linguistic varitations of a society which occurs in different times, places and contexts could help the researchers interpret the everyday language use in a specific variety. At its heart, sociolinguists contribute to the social psychology by questioning the mutual interaction between the language and society. In other words, the social variables and the lingusitic factors have a reciprocal relation.

Conversational understanding entails grasping the meaning and intention behind what is communicated. While some level of comprehension of the sense (meaning) and reference (what is being talked about) is necessary, conversational turns are often not well-formed or grammatically accaptable sentences. They can be fragmented, elliptical, or even ungrammatical. When isolated from the context of the conversation, these turns may seem difficult to interpret. However, for a conversation to flow meaningfully, the listener must recognize something important. It's likely that what is being recognized is the speaker's intention behind their words. In the context of speech acts, this refers to the illocutionary force of the turn, meaning the purpose or action the speaker intends to accomplish through their words (e.g., questioning, requesting, asserting).

Using language is essentially performing an action (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Performing an act serve to affect the world (as in declaratives or commands), commit to a certain perspective (as in assertive statements), or express feelings of individuals (as in expressive statements). For example, a

declarative like "I declare war game" or " Söz veriyorum, yarın geleceğim. (Eng. I promise I am going to come tomorrow.)" Dışarı çıkmanı rica ediyorum. (Eng. I am asking you to come out." directly alters reality. Every utterance is a small social action aimed at others. If language is understood as an action, the emphasis moves from grammaticality to the degree to which the speaker satisfies situational requirements, such as holding the appropriate attitudes and beliefs. Like any game, language has rules, and skilled speakers know how to turn their intents into clear, concise sentences in a variety of social settings, all the while achieving their objectives without causing offense or miscommunication. Just as games like poker or baseball require multiple players, conversations need interlocutors to recognize, validate, and respond to each other's utterances.

What, then, does a listener identify during a conversation? While comprehending the meaning and reference of a conversational turn is essential, such turns are often fragmented or ungrammatical. In order to participate meaningfully in the interaction, listeners must discern additional elements, most likely the speaker's intent or the illocutionary force behind their utterances. This process of recognition is distinct from merely comprehending the literal content of the words.For example, one might understand the sentence "I had the highest GPA last term" but fail to recognize that the speaker is bragging. Although recognition of speaker intent has received little empirical attention, intentions are likely understood across several conversational turns. Furthermore, language is not only about expressing intentions; speakers might unintentionally reveal information. A speaker's intent may be vague, conflicted, or ambiguous, allowing listeners to interpret the meaning themselves. Therefore, the pragmatic features referring to the linguistic style of the interlocutors' may have a role in identifying social and stylistic variation, dominance, power relations, individual perception in the course of the talk.

Psychological Perspective

Psychology scrutinizes how mind perceives reality and behaves accordingly. To understand the experiences of people, their tacit and explicit knowledge needs to be revealed. In this respect, psychology benefits from linguistics and it aims at identifying linguistic behaviors in terms of mental processes. Considering psycholinguistics from a historical perspective, psychologists comparatively less engaged in language studies between the 1920's and 1950's. By the 1950's, emphasis was on the behaviorism, which expressed the significance of experience, environmental factors and correct language use. The upsurge of interest in psycholinguistic studies came into being in 1950s with the studies by Chomsky, who put forth the transformational generative grammar by focusing on the innate linguistic competence of people. Following Chomsky (1965), psychological perspectives on language mostly concentrate on the comprehension, production and acquisition mechanisms of people. As a matter of fact, psycholinguists have put forward many theories to explore and reveal the structures and processes underlying the speakers' mind. More specifically, psycholinguists deal with the computation and representation of the meanings of words, phrases, sentences and discursive units in mind. The research techniques of psycholinguistics may show variation in regard to the variables that are measured, and they involve such techniques as lexical decision tests, priming tests, picture naming tests, eye-trackers, as well as neurophysiological techniques like ERPs, fMRIs and MEGs (Garrod, 2006).

In accordance with the advances in neurophysiological technology in the late 20th century, psycholinguistics is regarded as a branch of the rising discipline, which is named cognitive psychology (Carrol, 2007). The cognitive psychology investigates the mental processes including perception, memory, attention, thinking, problem solving, language processing, language acquisition and language use. Being part of mind, it could be stated that emotions such as love, hate, and fear cannot be separated from cognition, and they are represented in individuals' minds. Therefore, the cognitive psychologists try to search for the relationship between the mind and the world in order to reveal mental actions. In retrospect, the drawback of this field seems to be that it ignores social influences on mental processes

by concentrating on the individual. However, from a social cognitive point of view, cognitive psychologists influenced the social psychologists in 1970s and 1980s by paying attention to the social experiences that shape the cognitive mechanisms comprising comprehension, judgment and recall (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2013). In dealing with such cognitive mechanisms, the underlying processes regarding the knowledge of self and others attempted to be identified.

Social Psychological Perspective

Social psychology on the other hand, reflects individuals, groups and societies by dealing with real life experiences, behaviors towards the actions, relations, perceptions, emotions, values, interactions and attitudes. This means that its central focus is both on the psychological and sociological aspects of social existence. Social thinking, social influence, social relations, groups and identities are studied in social psychology. The key point in social psychology might be the construction and construal of the psychological states, which are shaped by the social influence. The social effect is assumed to involve the words, actions, beliefs and attitudes that represent the entire life of social beings. Although it seems to be quite new, there are many scholars focusing on the social psychology and language interface (e.g., Potter & Wetherall, 1987; Maas, Salvi, Arcuri, & Semin, 1989; Robinson and Giles, 1990; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Hilton, 1995; Potter, 1996, 1998; Berry, Pennebaker, Mueller, & Killer, 1997 and Holtgraves, 2013). In addition to social psychological phenomena, the self, the existence or absence of others, the interactions among the individuals seem to be significant for the language studies in relation to social psychological perspective since daily language is claimed to shape the social representations. Similarly, it is also suggested that socio-cultural values, concepts, psychological labels might be reflected by means of language. To this end, social psychology may contribute to linguistic studies in such a way that the fundamentals of language acquisition, production and comprehension mechanisms could be examined both individually and collectively within a social psychological framework. Benefitting from above mentioned and other disciplines, social psychologists might answer questions about language in regard to individual and social identity, social categorization, perception, power relation, and interpersonal, coordinated, contextualized, thoughtful actions. More specifically, the language could be investigated through face management and politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987) used by the people performing actions because they will indicate their feelings and thoughts in an interaction. The performances of people may vary according to the culture and group that they belong to, their social context and their intentions in speaking. The way we talk is significant for leaving good impression on the others. Therefore, the accent, pitch, intonation and politeness of a person may influence the perceptions of others towards himself/herself. Moreover, it is possible to get different meanings from similar conversations occurring in different contexts and the structure of a conversation, turns, topic shift and maintenance, adjacency pairs and speech acts of the interlocutors is significant for the interpretation of a coherent conversation. Following such principles in a conversation and using some politeness strategies when individuals come into contact with others may have socio-psychological implications for the presentation of self and impression management as Goffman (2017) suggested in the Self Presentation Theory. Since social psychologists are engaged in understanding the nature of social interaction, the communication and language seems to be important for them. In this respect, the meaning conveyed through the interpersonal action between the speaker and the listener may change with respect to their goals, which involve convergence and divergence as motivated by the Speech Accommodation Theory (Giles and Coupland, 1991). It could be inferred from this model that the speakers may show integration or separation by their linguistic choices. In addition, Giles and Johnson (1981) argue that language attitudes of the people show variation in regard to being in-group and out-group members, which is linked to the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory. By means of this theory, it could be stated that the language diversity in groups and the social or ethnic perspectives on language use might be determined by the linguistic strategies employed by the group boundaries. There might be

psychological, sociological and political forces behind using different language in intergroup relations. The status, solidarity, individual/group attitudes and attributes may have an influence on the different language uses of the ethnic groups. In addition, there are socially shared notions and attitudes. When people talk as belonging to a specific community, they use culturally shared vocabulary, common topics and norms as well as shared attitudes. People categorize events, behaviors and others in their mind according to their social functions. The relationship between the mind and the world depends on the input that we are exposed to, and it shapes our mental actions. The process of acquiring knowledge and understanding of the social reality through experience and sense is significant for the social cognition. The schemas are formed by thoughts and experiences, and they are used in some domains of social psychology like persuasion and attribution in accordance with the discursive strategies in speech. In this respect, persuasive discourse markers might be used to reflect cognitive processing of people. The related persuasion theory is the Expectancy Theory (Burgoon and Miller, 1985), which depend on the social values and expectations for the proper language use in sending persuasive messages. In other words, there could be consciously or unconsciously violations in normative language use, but the aim is to send suasory messages either directly or indirectly. Furthermore, information about the communicators' attributions could be understood and explained by means of their actions in certain context. Based on the Attribution Theory, the internal and external causes of the behaviors, opinions and actions could be identified in terms of the language and discursive strategies that are used (Hewstone, 1983a). Furthermore, social information sharing could be carried out with the Linguistic Category Model (LCM), developed by Semin and Fiedler (1988). This model proposes that verbs and adjectives may show different cognitive implications varying at the dimension of abstractness to concreteness. The actions performed with more abstract linguistic items are considered as more stable and persisting behaviors. In terms of this LCM model, such attributions as "the actor- observer bias, ego-centric bias, fundamental attribution bias and linguistic intergroup bias" have come to existence in relation to social cognitive processes (Fiedler et. al., 1991).

CONCLUSION

All in all, it seems that there are many theories, which are adapted from linguistics and social psychology to the field of social psychology of language. The language as a social fact is mostly examined within the frames of daily communication and the problem seems to be that social psychologists tend to look language at a relatively narrow point of view. The current studies in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* appears to be lacking some of linguistic approaches that Robinson and Giles (1990) and Holtgraves (2013) mentioned. In addition, rather than focusing on sentential or discoursal analysis, most of the studies seem to center around the lexical analysis including parts of speech elements and abstract to concrete lexical choices. It could be stated that the behaviors and social psychological states of people could be further analyzed in terms of their everyday language uses by laying further emphasis on the other linguistic fields like syntax, semantics, discourse and pragmatics. In addition, further sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic methods, some of which are above stated, could be subsumable under social psychology of language studies. On the other hand, social psychologists and linguists could create new theories or language models that better reflect language studies in a social psychological paradigm. The deficiencies in this field could be remedied by studies in different languages, spoken by different communities since cultural variations contribute to the identification of different socio- psychological processes experienced by people. In short, there are new topics in linguistics and social psychology since each discipline is dynamic and open to improvement. As Robins (1964, s. 319) suggests the languages spoken by humanity, with their intricate details and immense influence among human abilities, continue to provide a vast and potentially boundless domain for structured inquiry and systematic research. Hence, it could be stated that the new topics in both fields may contribute to future studies in social psychology of language.

Finance

No financial support was received.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Sustainable Development Goals: Does not support

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