Topics for Term Paper

Subject: Sociolinguistics

Class: MA Linguistics Semester 3

Sociolinguistic Fieldwork

1. Attitudes to Foreign Language Learning
2. Language and Identity
3. World Englishes
4. Language and Ethnicity
5. Language Policy in Pakistan
6. Politeness in Teaching
7. Language Attrition
8. Sociolinguistic Fieldwork

Description of the Fields

1. Language Attrition

Language attrition describes the loss of, or changes to, grammatical and other features of a language as a result of declining use by speakers who have changed their linguistic environment and language habits. In such a situation there may, for example, be simplification in the tense system or in certain properties of subordinate clauses; some vocabulary items might fall into disuse and phonetic features may be restructured. These changes can be affected by features of the speaker's environment, but also by his or her attitudes and processes of identification.

1. Attitudes to language

 Language attitudes and language ideologies permeate our daily lives. Our competence, intelligence, friendliness, trustworthiness, social status, group memberships, and so on, are often judged from the way we communicate. Even the speed at which we speak can evoke reactions. And we often try to anticipate such judgments as we communicate. The term paper on this topic will encircle positive n negative attitudes to language as well.

1. Language and identity

The language we use forms an important part of our sense of who we are - of our identity. This book outlines the relationship between our identity as members of groups - ethnic, national, religious and gender - and the language varieties important to each group. What is a language? What is a dialect? Are there such things as language 'rights'? Must every national group have its own unique language? How have languages, large and small, been used to spread religious ideas? Why have particular religious and linguistic 'markers' been so central, singly or in combination, to the ways in which we think about ourselves and others? Using a rich variety of examples, this term paper/assignment will highlight the linkages among languages, dialects and identities, with special attention given to religious, ethnic and national allegiances.

1. World Englishes:

The Study of New Linguistic Varieties deals with this inescapable result of colonization and globalization from a social and linguistic perspective. The main focus of the term paper/assignment would be on the second-language varieties of English that have developed in the former British colonies of East and West Africa, the Caribbean, South and South-East Asia. The paper must also provide a historical overview of the common circumstances that gave rise to these varieties, and a detailed account of their recurrent similarities in structure, patterns of usage, vocabulary and accents, and other current developments in a world of global travel and migration.

1. Language and ethnicity

What is ethnicity? Is there a 'white' way of speaking? Why do people sometimes borrow features of another ethnic group's language? Why do we sometimes hear an accent that isn't there? This assignment must reveal the fascinating relationship between language and ethnic identity, exploring the crucial role it plays in both revealing a speaker's ethnicity and helping to construct it. The work must elaborate upon how language contributes to the social and psychological processes involved in the formation of ethnic identity, exploring both the linguistic features of ethnic language varieties and also the ways in which language is used by different ethnic groups.

The students willing to work on this term paper or assignment are expected to implicate their ideas to Pakistani regional languages and ethnic groups.

1. Language policy

Language policy is an issue of critical importance in the world today. Debates at the forefront of language policy are on the ideas of correctness and bad language; bilingualism and multilingualism; language death and efforts to preserve endangered languages; language choice as a human and civil right; and language education policy.

The students willing to work on this topic should write on the language practices, beliefs and management of social groups, modern national language policy and national identity.

1. Politeness

'Polite' and 'impolite' utterances inevitably involve their users in a struggle for power. A radically new account of linguistic politeness will appeal to students teachers and researchers in a wide range of disciplines, in linguistics and the social sciences.

1. Sociolinguistic Fields

Looking for an easy-to-use, practical guide to conducting fieldwork in sociolinguistics? This invaluable textbook will give you the skills and knowledge required for carrying out research projects in 'the field', including: How to select and enter a community How to design a research sample What recording equipment to choose and how to operate it How to collect, store and manage data How to interact effectively with participants and communities What ethical issues you should be aware of, is the rationale behind to work on this topic.