

## THE NEW TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY LINGUISTICS

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### ABSTRACT

*It describes a new direction in linguistics, called Ecolinguistics, and the main directions of its development. The author of the article tries to define the concept of ecology and outline possible ways of analyzing the text and the main parameters of ecolinguistic given by different scientists.*

**Keywords:** Ecolinguistics, Language Ecology, Ecolinguistic Parameters, Environment.

A distinctive feature of modern science is that today there are many disciplines which include several different directions and there already exists at the junction scientific paradigms. This can be explained by the fact that the human community continues to evolve and become more complex, and in order to continue to correlate the new discoveries, it is necessary to develop research in related fields.

In the twentieth century, the emergence of such a science, as ecology, has caused some very interesting changes in the focus of attention, and now the ideas expressed in biology are beginning to be applied to the consideration of the language. Linguistics twentieth century develops ideas connected with the organization of the system of language, attempting to distinguish between internal and external linguistics. Like the environment, it is becoming a key concept of the system, where scientists developed-set of ecosystems. These provisions reaffirm the fact that today many sciences because of the difficult, complex and multifaceted object the exploration develop based on several scientific fields.

One of the new directions of research that attempts to link the idea of harmonious coexistence of nature and the language is Eco linguistics or language ecology.

The development of the language ecology began with Haugens "*ecology of language*", followed by Halliday's further development of the idea on the connection of language to environmental and social issues. This development led to the thought that language expresses agent, experience and recipient in the form of grammatical structure subject, predicate and object. Ecology of language was later taken to a new height by Muhhausler. Thus, we would like to first address issues focal to Haugen's approach and then continue with ecolinguistics as developed and proposed by Muhhausler.

The term “ecology of language” is simply defined by Haugen as “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment”.Haugen further defines the environment of a language as:

*“The true environment of a language is the society that uses it as one of its codes. Language exists only in the minds of its users, and it only functions in relating these users to one another and to nature, i.e. their social and natural environment. Part of its ecology is therefore psychological: its interaction with other languages in the minds of bi- and multilingual speakers. Another part of its ecology is sociological: its interaction with the society in which it functions as a medium of communication. The ecology of a language is determined primarily by the people who learn it, use it, and transmit it to others”.* (Haugen, 1972, p. 325)

Since Haugen made this statement, the term 'language ecology' has increasingly appeared in the literature, in a range of guises. This literature on language ecology includes discussion related to cognitive development and human interaction, the maintenance and survival of languages, the promotion of linguistic diversity, language policy and planning, language, language acquisition, language evolution, language ideology, the ecology of (multilingual) classroom interaction and the ecologies of literacy, oracies and discourses. Indeed, it has been noted that there is an 'infinite world of possibilities' for language ecology (Barron et al., 2002, p. 10).

The study of language ecology is the study of diversity within specific socio-political settings where the processes of language use create, reflect and challenge particular hierarchies and hegemonies, however transient these might be. It will be at once apparent that all of the themes above (language, literacy and learning) are central to our understanding of education and an ecological perspective demands a particular view of education and classroom practice as situated and localized. However, it also views these schools and classrooms and their interactive practices as part of a bigger and more powerful political state in which ideologies function to reproduce particular balances of power.

In the same volume Haugen further explains that:

*“the analysis of ecology requires not only that one describes psychological situations of each languages, but also the effect of this situation on the language itself”*(*op.cit.* p.63).

An ecological approach does more than describe the relationships between situated speakers of different languages. Rather, it is proactive in pulling apart perceived natural language orders. That is, where a particular language and its structure and use becomes so naturalised that it is no longer seen as construing a particular ideological line, an ecological approach attempts to make this transparent. 'Unnaturalising' these discourses becomes necessary to make clear 'what kinds of language practices are valued and considered good, normal, appropriate, or correct' in particular classrooms and schools, and who are likely to be the



winners and losers in the ideological orientations (Heller and Martin-Jones, 2001, p. 2). To take this one step further, Hornberger (2002, p. 30) argues that

*'multilingual language policies are essentially about opening up ideological and implementational space in the environment for as many languages as possible'.*

Halliday (2001, pp. 43-53) proposed that language is interconnected with whatever is happening in the world, whether it is the development or the deterioration of the environment, social problems or any other problems that may arise. With this knowledge, there has also been an increasing interest in the studies of ecological and environmental problems. A number of research projects have revealed an interesting fact which has brought enthusiastic attention to the language of human beings containing "fragmentation" of the universe, that is, language expresses agent, experience and recipient hidden in the form of grammatical structure subject, predicate and object. This finding does not surprise scientists, particularly physicists. This is because that had earlier recognized lack of words in language to describe the processes that appear in their work. In other words, the language that we use reflects only our perception of the world around us and what we have not perceived as yet we will not have the vocabulary for. Since then the focus of Ecolinguistics has turned to address the linkage between the language and world knowledge existing in world languages. In addition to the linkage between language and world knowledge, the context of anthropocentrism of language is also studied.

Taking into consideration the ideas of Haugen and Halliday, Muhlhausler came up with a comprehensive and interesting theory of the relationship between language and environment. He agreed with Haugen's definition of language ecology, that it is

*"the study of interactions between any given language and its environment", and also added that: "it (ecolinguistics) considers not just a system of internal factors of a language but also wider environment factors.... Language is interconnected with the world- it both constructs and is constructed by it" (Muhlhausler, 2003, p. 2).*

The most precise definition of this science, in our opinion, it was formulated by Russian linguist N.N. Kislitsina. Ecolinguistics is called one of the modern research directions linguistic field,

*"which formulated at the interconnection of the social (the ratio of social and linguistic structures in the development of comprehending at different stages of ethnogenesis), psychological (problems of speech interaction) and philosophical (problems of general properties and regularities of society and knowledge) in the areas of linguistics".*

The human being cannot be separated from the environment in which he lives. The article N.V. Drojashiy improves that

*"Ecolinguistics is the branch which formulated at the interconnection of different disciplines, which studies the human being and society, and concentrates on occurring the common environmental and linguistic system" [5. Pp 29].*

There are several possible directions of development of this science:

- 1) Linguistic Diversity (reason function, the consequences);
- 2) Rescue endangered and minority languages;
- 3) The relationship between cultural and biological diversity;
- 4) The search for environmental and not environmental of grammar;
- 5) Analysis of the texts, problems affecting the environment;
- 6) Training ecological knowledge (knowledge of universal relationship in the world).

Muhlhausler mentioned that ecolinguistics is similar to all new theories in the sense that it encompasses and relies on earlier “building blocks” which have been “recycled”. He further states that, ecolinguistics still uses existing linguistics notions but in different or wider and larger perspectives which that later on can be expanded to address various environmental parameters. Ecolinguistics can be seen as having an interrelation with the disciplines around it and therefore parameters from outside the linguistic discipline assist immensely in the understanding of language interplay with the world and vice versa. Muhlhausler provides detailed accounts of the concepts and parameters which he employs in his theory and which can be summarized in the following table.

<b>Ecolinguistics and its Parameters</b>	
<b>Parameters from linguistic discipline</b>	<b>Parameters from non-linguistic discipline</b>
The words and things	Anthropology and enthoclassification
Tradition in historical linguistics	Cultural geography
Etymological research	Environmental history
Language and world view	Deep ecology
Semiotics of nature	Ecofeminism
Metaphor studies	Cultural studies
Functional linguistics	Environmental dictionaries
Critical linguistics	Future studies
The ecology of language perspectives	Historical studies
Sociolinguistics	Literary analysis
Deliberate creation of language	Biocultural diversity studies
Discourse and text analysis and narratology	
Linguistic naturalness	
Applied ecological linguistics	
Integrational linguistics	

Concluding all above mentioned ideas we can say that, ecolinguistics provides an adequate background in terms of theory and methods including the new dimension of worldview for further studies. It can be said that there is a whole new meaning out there waiting to be explored and thus a challenging one for linguists. Apparently, one of the challenging tasks that await ecological linguists is the play a part in the maintenance and revival of the world’s endangered languages.



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