

SOCIOLECT AND ITS TYPES

Ch. A. Narzullayeva,

Phd student of Karshi State university

***Annotation** This article discusses the concept of sociolect in linguistics, its linguistic features, definitions of sociolect, and its types. The views of scholars on the types of sociolects are analyzed, and special emphasis is placed on the study of argot, jargon, slang, and professional terms as types of sociolects.*

***Keywords:** anthropocentric linguistics, sociolect, jargon, argot, slang, professionalism, social group.*

The emergence of the anthropocentric paradigm in linguistics has enabled scholars to revisit many linguistic concepts and investigate them in relation to the language user. This paradigm shift places the speaker at the center of linguistic analysis, allowing for a deeper understanding of how language operates within social contexts. One such concept is the sociolect, a key unit of sociolinguistics, which has been interpreted in diverse ways by linguists across various theoretical frameworks.

A sociolect is a form of language developed in the course of speech practices to meet the communicative needs of specific social groups that are united by shared social characteristics. In contrast to the standard language, sociolects may permit certain deviations from linguistic norms. Just as external appearance reflects a person's social class, language too serves as an indicator of social belonging. A sociolect reflects the alignment between verbal behavior and the speaker's social status or condition.

In Western linguistics, the concept of sociolect is primarily used to describe the speech patterns of social classes or strata. However, in Russian sociolinguistics, the term refers to the set of linguistic features characteristic of a particular social group (e.g., professional, class-based, age-related, etc.) within the boundaries of the national language.

For example, the following can be considered sociolects: the speech of soldiers (military jargon), schoolchildren (school slang), criminals (criminal argot), counterculture groups like hippies (hippie slang), university students (student slang) and professionals in various fields who use occupational jargon or specific argot.

These sociolects not only serve communicative purposes but also function as markers of identity, revealing the social dynamics and internal structures of the communities in which they develop. [1;30]

The term “sociolect” is used to denote diverse and heterogeneous linguistic forms that, while differing from one another, share common social characteristics. These forms serve the communicative needs of socially restricted or bounded groups. A sociolect is considered a variety of the national language used by a specific social group, and it constitutes an object of study in sociolinguistics. According to scholarly sources, jargon, argot, slang, and secret or coded languages are all recognized as types of sociolects.

In global linguistics, numerous studies have been dedicated to the subject of social dialects. For instance, S. Goydova classifies social dialects into the following categories:

1. Authentic professional “languages” – such as the speech of fishermen, hunters, potters, and other traditional occupations;

2. Group or corporate jargons – including the language used by students, soldiers, and primarily youth groups;
3. Conditional or coded languages (argot) – as used by artisans, merchants, wool workers, etc.;
4. Jargon (argot) – spoken by beggars and other marginal groups; this is also referred to as the “thieves’ language.”

In Uzbek linguistics, the concept of the sociolect was first highlighted in the works of Q. Rasulov. According to the scholar, sociolects encompass a wide range of linguistic phenomena, existing across various social groups—such as profession, class, age, and ethnicity. Any lexical unit that signals the social domain to which a speaker or their utterance belongs can be considered a sociolect. Rasulov includes in this category occupational vocabulary, specialized terminology, and professionalisms.

In their article titled "Research and Interpretation of Sociolectal Forms in Uzbek Linguistics," Sh. Shahobiddinova and D. Satimova analyze the contemporary interpretations of the terms jargon and argot within Uzbek linguistics. They identify argot, jargon, and slang as types of sociolects and clearly outline the differences between them.

Based on the views of the aforementioned scholars, it is reasonable to classify argot, jargon, slang, and profession-related lexical units as subtypes of sociolects. These linguistic varieties acquire unique characteristics based on either the professional distinctiveness of a group, their social exclusivity, or the communicative purposes shared among the members of a specific speech community.

S. Goydova distinguishes between argot, jargon, and slang as follows:

Argot is defined as a closed lexical sub-system of special nominations that serves the interests of a narrow social group, often related to professional needs.

Jargon is considered a broader concept—a semi-open lexical-phraseological sub-system used for communication within a specific social group in order to differentiate itself from the rest of the speech community.

Slang, on the other hand, is an open lexical-phraseological sub-system of colloquial language, characterized by stylistic diversity, expressive reinforcement, and a distinct evaluative tone, used primarily in informal communication.[3.11]

In summary, a sociolect is a form of language variation that manifests in communication among individuals belonging to a particular social group. This variation is shaped by factors such as social status, profession, age, gender, culture, and level of education. Through sociolects, individuals express their group identity and distinguish themselves from members of other social groups.

Therefore, argot, jargon, slang, and professional vocabulary specific to certain social groups are considered valid types of sociolects, each playing a role in marking group membership and facilitating intra-group communication.

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