

Extended Abstract

Ethnicity, Attitudes, and Language Security of Non-standard Varieties of Iranian Language Speakers in Tehran

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Introduction

The theory of lectal variations in language has led to the formation of different attitudes in the minds of language speakers, attitudes and mentalities about the use of non-standard language varieties, such as geographical, social, regional, and native and register language varieties compared to the standard variety of Persian.

This research measured language speakers' individual tendency to use different language varieties and social concepts, such as attitude, identity, ethnicity, and prestige, to determine how participants' attitudes have been formed around that language variety and how it has led to identification. This research also sought to determine the sense of linguistic security among the speakers of non-standard language varieties, including Mazandarani, Turkish, Kurdish, Laki, Baluchi, Isfahani, Laki, Yazdi, Hamedani, and Mashhadi, within and outside the family environment.

This study considered two components, namely social solidarity and social status, on two ends of a continuum. The researchers aimed to discover how the use of each language variety leads to the creation of attitudes, identity, and linguistic security, and to which pole of the continuum this attitude tends.

This paper also explored the theoretical foundations of lectal variations, linguistic security or insecurity, ethnic-national identity, and etic approach.

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Materials & Methods

This was a non-experimental applied field research study in terms of purpose and a cross-sectional survey in terms of purpose. Researcher-made survey questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection tools. Linguistic data were collected from 314 participants from different social classes from ten Iranian ethno-linguistic groups using semi-random sampling. Likert scale, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and chi-square test were employed to measure questionnaire items, reliability and correlation, and interpret statistical results, respectively.

Several studies have been carried out in recent years related to the present research: domestic studies, including Ahmadipour et al. (2010) entitled "Study of similarities and Differences between Iranian ethnic groups for identification", Ahmadkhani et al. (2014) entitled "Study of Kurdish speakers' attitudes", Malmir and Abolhasani (2017) entitled "Study of the tendency to reveal linguistic identity among Turkish speakers living in Tehran", Rahimi (2021) entitled "Semiotic security or insecurity". Foreign studies including, King (1997) entitled "Analysis of linguistic security from a linguistic perspective in ethnic conflicts", Giles and Billings (2004) entitled "Study of the impact of language attitudes and discourse context", and Edwards (2009) entitled "Study of language speakers' prestige and attitude towards non-standard varieties of English".

The current research aimed to examine the effect of language speakers' attitudes and linguistic security on the use of dialect and language variations relative to social categories from a cognitive reality perspective behind the actual use of language within the framework of the theory of lectal variations.

Results & Discussion

Examining participants' feelings and attitudes on the attitude (attitudinal) continuum yielded the following results:

- Laki speakers: the highest sense of pride, power (authority), intimacy, belonging, and agreeableness;
- Kurdish speakers: the highest sense of pride, power, easy message transmission, and higher agreeableness;
- Baluchi speakers: the lowest sense of pride and agreeableness;
- Mazandarani speakers: the lowest sense of power and easy message transmission and the highest sense of intimacy;
- Turkish speakers: the lowest sense of intimacy and belonging;
- Laki speakers: the highest sense of pride, power, intimacy, and agreeableness;
- Isfahani speakers: the lowest sense of pride, power, belonging, and agreeableness;
- Hamedani speakers: the highest sense of intimacy, easy message transmission, and belonging;
- Mashhadi speakers: the lowest sense of intimacy and easy message transmission.

Regarding speakers' linguistic security, an individual shows a sense of linguistic security and uses his/her language variety whenever he/she finds that it has appropriate linguistic validity and meets the general (common) norms of the linguistic community, according to the etic approach. On the contrary, he/she feels linguistic insecurity thinking that he/she needs to enhance linguistic validity when he/she finds out that his/her non-standard language variety is far from general norms. In this case, the speaker prefers to use the standard language variety with appropriate linguistic validity (Calvet, 2000).

According to the research findings, among all languages, Laki speakers showed the highest linguistic security: 42% within the family environment and 13.3% outside the family environment. On the other hand, Mazandarani speakers showed the lowest linguistic security: 22.8% within the family environment and 2.8% outside the family environment. Hamedani speakers exhibited the highest linguistic security in the family environment (22.5%), while it reached zero outside the family environment (complete linguistic insecurity). Lori speakers showed the lowest linguistic security in the family environment (12.9%), whereas Mashhadi speakers showed the highest linguistic security outside the family environment (6.6%).

Regarding individual and social identities, Laki (83.9%) and Hamedani (90.3%) speakers exhibited the highest sense of identity to their native language variety, while Turkish (55.9%) and Mashhadi (50%) speakers showed the lowest sense of identity to their native language variety. Besides, Hamedani (90.3%) and Mashhadi (50%) speakers showed the highest and lowest real sense of identity to their native language variety, respectively. Regarding attitude, Mashhadi speakers did not exhibit a significant sense of identity in their native language variety.

Conclusion

According to the statistics obtained, language speakers showed a sense of power, credibility, and easy message transmission compared to the standard variety. While the speakers exhibited a sense of pride, belonging to a dialect, intimacy, more agreeableness, and more fairness compared to their native language variety, they showed a sense of pride compared to the standard variety. Finally, in the attitudinal continuum with two poles, i.e., social solidarity and social status, it can be stated that the participants were more inclined towards social solidarity.

Regarding linguistic security, Laki and Hamedani speakers showed the highest sense of linguistic security, while Mazandarani and Laki speakers showed the lowest sense of linguistic security within and outside the family environment.

Regarding identity, Laki speakers showed the highest sense of identity in their native language variety followed by Kurdish speakers, whereas Turkish speakers exhibited the lowest sense of identity in their native language variety. In addition, Hamedani and Mashhadi speakers showed the highest and lowest real sense of identity concerning their native language variety, respectively. To increase their social status in the host

community, some participants utilize the standard language variety as a more valuable and [so-called more] fashionable language in their linguistic communication despite the sense of identity and belonging to their native language variety.

Keywords: Language Security; Cognitive- sociolinguistics; Lectals; Language Speakers' Attitude; Ethnic Identity.

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