1.1. Relating Language with Society

Sociolinguistics, as a branch of linguistics, studies the relationship between language and society. It is thus an interdisciplinary field of investigation bringing the linguistic and the sociological disciplines together. There are many ways of looking at the relationship between language and society. One is that linguistic structure and/or behavior may either be influenced or determined by social structure. The evidence to support this view is abundant: the *age-grading* phenomenon showing the speech of the young children as different from that of the older children, in turn, children speak differently from mature adults accounts for this view; studies which maintain that the language varieties that speakers use reflect the attributes such as social, regional or ethnic origin and possibly even their gender; and other studies which show that particular ways of speaking, choices of words, and even rules for conversing are in fact highly determined by certain social requirements. A second way of seeing the possible relationship between language and society is directly opposed to the first: social structure may either be influenced or determined by linguistic structure. Whorfian hypothesis, Bernstein’s claims, and many others whose argument is that languages on their own ask for stratification of their speakers support this second view about the relationship between language and society. Another possible relationship, the third one, between language and society is that the influence of language and society on each other is bi-directional. One of the variants of this approach is that the influence of language and society on each other is dialectical in nature. This view, in its essence, is a Marxist one proposed by Dittmar (1976), who argues that there is a constant interaction between the speech behaviour and social behaviour and material living conditions are an important factor in the relationship. Another possibility is to suppose that the linguistic and social structures are no way related and both the fields are independent of each other. According to this view, attempts to characterize any relation between language
and society are essentially premature. Chomsky himself holds this view and talks of an asocial linguistics. According to him it is logically prior to study language as a system in itself without assuming its relationship with society. The asocial approach to the study of language is preliminary to other kind of studies on linguistics.

It has been found appropriate by some scholars in the field of sociolinguistics to introduce a distinction between micro-sociolinguistics and macro-sociolinguistics. Macro-sociolinguistics is also called as sociology of language while as micro-sociolinguistics commonly goes by the name sociolinguistics proper. Both, micro-sociolinguistics and macro-sociolinguistics study the relationship between language and society but with different orientations. In this distinction, sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationships between language and society with the goal being a better understanding of the structure of language and of how languages function in communication; the equivalent goal in sociology of language is trying to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language, e.g., how certain linguistic features serve to characterize particular social arrangements. Hudson (1996) has described the difference as follows: Sociolinguistics is ‘the study of language in relation to society’, whereas the sociology of language is ‘the study of society in relation to language’. Using the alternative terms given above, Coulmas (1997) says that ‘micro-sociolinguistics investigates how social structure influences the way people talk and how language varieties and patterns of use correlate with social attributes such as class, sex, and age. Macro-sociolinguistics, on the other hand, studies what societies do with their languages, that is, attitudes and attachments that account for the functional distribution of speech forms in society, language shift, maintenance, and replacement, the delimitation and interaction of speech communities.’ sociolinguistics differs from some earlier interests in language-society relationships in that, following modern views in linguistics proper, it
considers language as well as society to be a structure, rather than merely a collection of items. The sociolinguist’s task is then to show the systematic covariance of linguistic structure and social structure---and perhaps even to show a casual relationship in one direction or the other.

1.2. The Dimensions of Sociolinguistics

The term ‘Sociolinguistics’ has a recent origin and is therefore new to the literature. Like its elder sisters, psycholinguistics and ethnolinguistics, it is fairly difficult to define with precision. These three fields are not different from each other entirely. In fact there is an overlap between the three. The subject matter of these three terms overlaps to a great extent. What distinguishes the three is not the material but the interests and approaches of the investigators. It is appropriate to say that sociolinguistic studies, like those carried out under the name ‘sociology of language’ were pertaining to the relationship between society and language. But such a statement has excessive vagueness in it. If we try to be more exact, we may find without any ambiguity that sociolinguistics as a field of studying the relationship between language and society has come a long way. There has been as shift in the approach and the earlier attempts of ascertaining the language-society relationship are different from what they are today. The modern approach views language and society as structured, not a random collection of items. The sociolinguist’s job is then to show the systematic covariance of social structure and linguistic structure---and perhaps even to show a casual relationship in one direction or the other.

However, although sociolinguists derive much of their approach from structural linguistics, at the same time they break sharply with one linguistic trend. This is the approach which treated languages as completely uniform, homogeneous or monolithic in their structure; in this view, now coming to be recognized as a pernicious one, differences in speech habits found within a community were swept under the rug as ‘free variation’. One of the major tasks of sociolinguistics is to show that such variation or diversity is not in fact
‗free‘, but is correlated with systematic social differences. In this and in still larger ways, linguistic diversity is precisely the subject matter of sociolinguistics.

To be sure, such a characterization still falls short of suggesting the broad range of sociolinguistic studies which is possible. We may perhaps come closer to describing this range by trying to identify the dimensions of sociolinguistics----the separate lines of interest which run through the field. Wherever two or more of these dimensions intersect, we may expect to find a subject of sociolinguistic study. In the following paragraphs, seven such dimensions are discussed.

The key concept in the field of sociolinguistics is diversity. It is a fact that homogeneity in language is a myth. What is uncontested in the field of sociolinguistics is that there is variation in all languages. It is also a truth that the variation in language is socially conditioned. There are a number of social dimensions that condition the variation in language. The number of social factors conditioning the variation in a language may differ but there are some factors that have been found to account for most of the linguistic variation. The three most important factors include sender, receiver and the setting.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, there are certain social factors that shape the linguistic variation. In other words, the presence of a certain linguistic marker in the speech of a speaker is enough to place him in the social structure. This can be best understood by the case of caste dialects where the caste is reflected in the particular linguistic markers of the speakers. As such, these linguistic markers reveal the social identity of the speakers. The extreme kind of differences on the basis of caste affiliations have been reported from India. Women‘s and men‘s speech also reveal the social identity in terms of the gender and roles assigned to them in the society.

It is not only the speaker‘s identity that is reflected in his speech but the receiver‘s identity is also reflected by the kind of communication taking place
between the interlocutors. The fact is that the status and roles of people in the society differ. As such different people are talked to differently and the different strategies including the special vocabulary and special speech style reflect a lot of things about the receiver. This is evident in the different ways of talking to the children and adults. Similarly, the pronominal study carried out by Brown and Gilman is evidence to the claim that the identity of the receiver is reflected in the speech directed to him. The use of deferential form of the second person pronoun reflects the power and hence the high status of the addressee. The other studies supporting the view that the identity of the receiver is reflected in speech is the study where in Sapir (1951) explored the differences in the speech styles used by Nootka in addressing different people like, dwarfs, one-eyed people, uncircumcised males etc.

The other dimension playing a very important role in conditioning the speech is the setting which includes all the elements in the context in which the communicative act takes place. The phenomenon of diglossia illustrates the conditioning potential of the context. In diglossia the formal and the informal style is determined by the setting in which the communication happens.

The social dimensions of the sender, receiver and the setting, discussed in the preceding section, are not mutually exclusive. These factors, however, commonly intersect and condition a specific type of linguistic behaviour. The complex linguistic etiquette of Javanese involves the factors of sender, receiver, and setting. It is noteworthy that the social dimensions of the sender, receiver and the setting are complex wholes and in certain instances, each of these factors needs to be broken down into smaller elements. For example a lot of small elements, like age, social rank, education etc constitute the identity of the speaker and each of these small elements can be investigated for their conditioning potential.

Apart from the dimensions of the sender, receiver and the setting, the other dimensions of sociolinguistics are based not so much on the diversity of
the linguistic behaviour but these other dimensions are based more on the scope and aims of the investigator.

Thus, research studies carried out in the field of sociolinguistics can be synchronic or diachronic. Gumperz (1958), in his study on the caste dialects in Hindi, explored the synchronic aspect and studied the present day variations in language on the basis of caste. In contrast to Gumperz, Ramanujan (1964) carried out his study to find out the historical causes for the variation in caste dialects of South India.

One more important dimension of sociolinguistics is the one that differentiates the way language is ‘used’ by people and their ‘belief’ about the linguistic behaviour of themselves and others. The latter topic is called as ‘folk linguistics’ and is of a huge concern to the sociolinguist. There are societies in the world where the people consider certain varieties as high and contrast these varieties with the so-called low varieties. Hence they confuse the terminology of high/low with that of formal/informal. The terminology used actually refers to the social status and hence high variety is associated with high status and low with the low status. In such cases, the investigator must not be deceived into accepting the folk-view as corresponding to actual linguistic behavior; at the same time he should realize that the folk-view is itself a part of the sociolinguistic situation, and worthy of study in its own right.

The other dimension of sociolinguistics is the study of the extent of diversity. The extent of diversity is a complex term and it does not refer exclusively to the geographical dimension of the diversity, nor does it refer only to the linguistic measures. The linguistic measures may include things such as shared words across the varieties of a single language. The extent of diversity refers to the difference between the different parts a society, and to the differences existing between the varieties of a same language. This gives rise to three kinds of studies. The first kind of study is the multidialectal study in which the varieties of a same language are studied and the variation is
explored. Thus the formal and informal varieties are talked about. The second type is the multilingual studies which are carried on the different languages spoken in the same multilingual society. The third classification is that of multisocietal in which different languages in different societies are studied. The objective of studying the languages in these diverse perspectives is to find out the differences in the languages and then correlate these differences with the differences in the social structures. This dimension follows in the light of Whorfian hypothesis.

The application, that is, implications of the accounts given on diversity, constitutes an important dimension of sociolinguistics. In this regard, three categories may be recognized, having to do with the interests of the three types of investigators.

The first application concerns the interest of a sociologist. Here a sociologist can use the sociolinguistic data to diagnose the social structure. In other words, linguistic variation can act as a diagnostic tool to know about the social structure or the social phenomena.

Thus, the recognition of a three-way division of caste dialects in South India, plus a two-way distinction of formality, may be correlated with other kinds of data to yield a description of the socially defined differences between people and the socially defined differences of setting which are significant for South Indians. Furthermore, once the socially relevant classifications of people and situations have been recognized in this way, the investigator can use linguistic criteria in order to classify particular individuals and situations: a man who speaks in such-and-such a way reveals himself as a Brahmin; an occasion on which such-and-such language is used is recognized as a formal occasion.

The second type of application reflects the interest of the historical linguist. The questions posed here are: Do languages change in different ways under different social circumstances? Do different social dialects of the same
language change at different rates or in different ways? How does the history of a language reflect the interaction of social dialects? The study of these questions can be undertaken either by the examination of the historical records, where available, or ---better still---by studying the currently ongoing process of linguistic change, as Labov has done on Maratha’s Vineyard and in New York (1963, 1964).

The third type of application is that made by the language planner---the linguist, educator, legislator or administrator who must work with official policies regarding language use. Thus, given an organized society in which a diversity of dialects or languages is current, the language planner must consider such questions as: What varieties are to be given recognition as „official‘ or „national‘ languages? What varieties are to be sanctioned for use in official publications, in officially encouraged literary work, in educational institutions of various levels, in courts of law? What should the official attitudes be towards varieties not sanctioned for any of these situations? To what extent should political subdivisions of a nation correspond to linguistic subdivisions? How should writing systems be developed or standardized? The most complex problems of language planning, perhaps, are those faced by the recently independent nations of Africa and Asia, and the diverse policies being followed by these nations provide current illustrations of the types of difficulties which arise.

1.3. Historical Development of Sociolinguistics

T.C. Hodson used the term sociolinguistics in 1939 in relation to language study in India. It is generally considered to be the first instance of its usage. (Le Page 1997: 19). The term was afterwards independently used by Haver Curie in 1952. Curie was a poet and philosopher. He found that the social consideration was absolutely missing in the research on linguistics. The general consensus on the use of the term sociolinguistics goes in favour of Haver Curie who is recognized to have coined the term in 1952 in his article.
The article was aimed at exploring the relationship between speech and social status. The relationship explored by Curie still remains to be one of the core areas of consideration in the field of sociolinguistics. Currie in his paper did not come up with any new data. His article basically discussed the trends that were in vogue in linguistics during that time. Currie showed that some of the trends present in dialectology could be developed into a new field of investigation. Therefore, dialectology is truly considered to be the field from which sociolinguistics emerged. What Currie had rightly noted was the trend of not restricting the dialectological studies in America to rural areas. It was probably because of the reason that the urban situation prompted for looking at the significance of social factors in the variation. Tracing other works carried out by the researchers in the field in the early days of its development, a mention of McDavid is a must. McDavid (1948) published a paper on the postvocalic-usage in South Carolina. This paper contained information on the social differences. This was not seen as an end in itself at that time; McDavid says, —A social analysis proved necessary because the data proved too complicated to be explained by merely a geographical statementl (Ibid.: 194). This implies unambiguously that social analysis of the variation was not the primary thing considered for the study. The attitude of ignoring the social aspects of variation changed over the following two decades. In the mid-1950s, the traditional methods of dialectology were being criticized on a very large scale by the sociologists of the day who had developed very refined methods of sampling and carrying out investigations on different communities. Pickford (1956) highlighted the importance of the newly developed methodology for the dialectologists. He criticized the methods that were being adopted by the dialectologists. According to Pickford, these findings of the studies adopting such methods lacked validity and reliability. As reported in Petyt (1980), studies of urban communities became more frequent, including Putnam and O’Hern (1955) who investigated black speech in Washington, DC, De Camp (1958–59) who worked in San Francisco, and Levine and Crockett (1966) on
North Carolina speech. This last study was conducted earlier than the publication date suggests, and showed considerable methodological advances over previous studies. Sampling and fieldwork techniques were more rigorously designed—taking into consideration the contributions of sociology—and this work laid down the framework for many future studies. Levine and Crockett found considerable variation in the use of postvocalic-r in North Carolina, and were able to correlate this variation with both linguistic and social factors—something that became a major concern in variationist sociolinguistics.

Another important paper of this period was Fischer (1958). He criticized the term free variation then in common use as an ―explanation‖ for variable usage of certain linguistic features. He concluded that many examples of what was termed free variation were in fact —socially conditioned variants (Ibid.: 51).

Sociolinguistics came to a much greater degree of prominence (and, subsequently, popularity) within linguistics with the work of Labov in the mid-sixties. The work on Martha’s Vineyard (Labov 1963) and in New York City (Labov 1966) developed and refined methodology and analysis, and laid the foundations for the explosion of research in this field. Variationist sociolinguistics soon spread outside the United States, and Trudgill (1979) is a good example of the application of Labov’s techniques, in this case to the city of Norwich in England. Moreover, the interests of sociolinguists also broadened from the more micro-level investigation correlating social and linguistic variables, to more macro level concerns. These latter have included topics such as the areas of bi- and multilingualism together with diglossia and code-switching, language and culture, language and power/language and gender, language change, and language planning. This last area has become ever more important in recent times with the apparent threat of extinction to a large number of the world’s languages (Crystal 2000), and within this topic we
can also include the study of language obsolescence and death (research pioneered by Dorian 1981), and language revitalization (see Fishman 1991). Indeed, the breadth of interests in sociolinguistics is evidenced by the need recently for two large handbooks to be produced to provide current guides to the field: one in traditional sociolinguistics (Coulmas 1998) and the other in language variation and change (Chambers et al., 2002).

In the 1960s the term _sociolinguistics_ started to be used mainly to refer to a broad area of studies in language and society on both sides of the Atlantic. It embraced variationist sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, anthropological linguistics, interactional sociolinguistics, symbolic interactionism, conversation analysis, discourse analysis and so on. In order to refer to this interdisciplinary coalition nowadays, Bucholtz and Hall (2008: 404), for example, use the term _sociocultural linguistics_, mainly for reasons of clarity. The term _sociolinguistics_, they say, is increasingly used, particularly in linguistics in the USA, to define the study of how variations in language relate to sociocultural phenomena. Topics covered include dialects, gender- and age-specific speech forms, professional jargon, etc. However, in Europe, Coupland and Jaworski (2009b:2), for example, conclude that _Sociolinguistics is now a broad and vibrant interdisciplinary project working across the different disciplines that were its origins_. In their edited collection they include articles from all of the fields listed above. As Bucholtz and Hall (2008: 403) point out: _the development and spread of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, along with discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and many other approaches, has created an interdisciplinary foundation for the study of language, culture, and society. These fields do not come together under a single disciplinary banner but rather forge an alliance or coalition that fosters dialogue and collaboration between complementary approaches._

Since the 1960s a very fruitful coalition has developed among scholars in linguistics interested in the relation between social phenomena and language,
while sociologists and social scientists became increasingly aware of the centrality of language in any social and cultural phenomenon (Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1968; Giglioli, 1972; Gumperz and Hymes, 1972; Hymes, 1964; Lambert, 1967; Laver and Hutcheson, 1972; Pride and Holmes, 1972). Giglioli (1972: 7–8) writes: _Some linguists have become concerned with socially conditioned linguistic phenomena, and some social scientists have become more aware of the social nature of language. The term sociolinguistics refers to this mutual convergence._ In the early days, sociolinguistics was an interdisciplinary, loosely defined field of research in which scholars, mainly in linguistics and sociology but also in anthropology, psychology, philosophy, education, gender study and so on, developed a wide variety of lines of research focusing on language and, mainly, on talk in interaction. Certainly, some perspectives in sociology and in philosophy have contributed greatly in creating an interest in language within the human sciences, in particular with regard to the importance given to discourse and situated practices (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1963; Giddens, 1976). For example, an interest in and a focus on language was developed within sociology and it converged with the interest in sociology and other human sciences that had independently developed in linguistics. In analyzing talk in interaction, conversation analysts study the problem of order in ordinary conduct: the sociological problem _par excellence_. Sacks (1984: 21), defining the field of conversation analysis, says: _I want to propose that a domain of research exists that is not part of any other established science. The domain is one that those who are pursuing it have come to call ethnomethodology /conversation analysis. That domain seeks to describe methods persons use in doing social life._ The interest in language fell within the disciplinary boundaries; in other words, conversation analysts had no interest in language per se, but language was of interest inasmuch as it could be informative in relation to the machinery that holds the social world together. It is evident that conversation analysis can be very interesting and useful to linguists; moreover,
their investigations practically converge with those in pragmatics, but this is a sort of extra bonus. Nowadays, some of these lines of research, born at the boundaries of various disciplines in the human sciences, constitute defined fields of enquiry that are closely interrelated, such as linguistic anthropology (Duranti, 2009), ethnography of communication (Saville-Troike, 2002), pragmatics (Östman and Verschueren, 2009), conversation analysis (Schegloff, 2007), discourse analysis (Schiffrin et al., 2003), critical discourse analysis (Wodak and Meyer, 2009), narrative analysis (Bamberg, 2007) and discursive psychology (Potter, 2007); in fact, looking back, the fertility of this interdisciplinary research area, based on discursive approaches to human sciences, is incredibly impressive. In language studies, variationist linguistics had a very important role. In fact, in the USA, variationist sociolinguistics and quantitative approaches to linguistics (Labov, 1972, 2001) became prevalent in the field of sociolinguistics. While urban ethnography was at the start of Labov’s work in language variation, its approach is substantially quantitative, therefore methodologically quite different from most other approaches in sociolinguistics. As Figueroa (1994: 71) points out _Labovian sociolinguistics is not a theory of parole, nor is it a study of language use for descriptive purposes, but a study of language use for what it reveals about linguistic structure. For Labov language and social context are two separate entities and sociolinguistics correlates linguistic facts (phonology, morphology and syntax) with social facts (class, gender, age)._ He studied how language changes in relation to specific cultural patterns and functional uses. Variants that have no linguistic significance have important social meaning and implications and they can mark a person as belonging to a definite social class, age group, or gender category; there can be very material consequences in terms of access to education, employment and so on tied to the use of different language varieties. Variationist sociolinguistics conceptualizes language as: _An object possessing orderly heterogeneity_ (Weinreich et al., 1968: 100). The most innovative aspect of Labov’s (1966, 1972) work was to quantify the incidence of variants
in different speech samples using large-scale quantitative studies based mainly on interview data. Studies in language variation nowadays draw on theoretical and methodological approaches developed in sociology, such as discourse analysis and conversation analysis, in order to show how linguistic forms are socially and contextually embedded; "These fields (DA and CA) are nowadays part of the general sociolinguistic programme rather than lying outside it." (Coupland and Jaworski, 2009b: 8). In fact most of the more progressive contemporary research on variation uses qualitative approaches. Variationist sociolinguistics certainly played an important part in sociolinguistic studies. Bucholtz and Hall (2008: 402) point out in relation to the definition of sociolinguistics: "By the mid 80s, sociolinguistics did not necessarily refer to the broad field originally conceptualised by Hymes and others; rather the term was often used, especially in linguistics departments, to refer to a quantitative approach to language and society. At this point a disciplinary division of labour had emerged whereby statistical analysis was primarily reserved for sociolinguistics (in this new, narrow sense) and ethnographic work was carried out largely (but not entirely) under the rubric of linguistic anthropology." However, they also specify that the term, especially outside linguistics departments in the USA, was concurrently used: "to denote a broadly interdisciplinary socio-cultural approach to language" (Bucholtz and Hall, 2008: 402). On the other hand, Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2008: 535) acknowledge the relevance of quantitative approaches to dialectological analysis in sociolinguistics: "Variationist sociolinguistics emerged as a major force in shaping American sociolinguistic research"; but at the same time they recognize an important role for anthropological linguistics and ethnography of communication in contributing to contemporary sociolinguistics. Ethnography of communication (Bauman and Sherzer, 1974; Fitch, 2001; Gumperz, 1982; Gumperz and Hymes, 1972; Hymes, 1981) is an area of research that aims to describe how particular ways of experiencing and understanding the world are reflected in different ways of speaking. For ethnographers of communication,
different patterns of talk are specific to definite cultural groups; communication is locally patterned and practised, and it is constitutive of all societal and cultural communities. Hymes (1974: 75) talks of communicative competence: ‘Within the social matrix in which [a child] acquires a system of grammar, a child acquires also a system of its use, regarding persons, places purposes, other modes of communication, etc. – all the components of communicative events together with attitudes and beliefs regarding them.’ Above all, the ethnography of communication has contributed to the understanding of culture as essentially a communicative phenomenon, locally constituted through talk (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 2008). Ethnographic studies have been conducted in different cultures as well as in a variety of social and institutional settings (courthouses, health services, schools, etc.) aimed at describing specific communication practices (Bauman, 2004; Covarrubias, 2002; Urban, 1991). The approach focuses mainly on the situated uses of language and describes locally patterned practices of communication, including various gestural dynamics, silence, visual signs, technologically mediated communication, etc. For linguists, ever since Hymes’s (1974) programmatic consideration, the focal point has been the study of language in relation to society and social phenomena. Interesting in this respect is the terminological flux, noticed by Bucholtz and Hall (2008: 402) in relation to Hymes’ early work: ‘the elision of sociology as a contributor to sociolinguistics between the 1971 and the 1974 version appear to reflect the growing attention to disciplinary boundaries in this stage of the field development’. Nevertheless, there was material cooperation among scholars in sociology and anthropology; for example, in that very period, Hymes and Goffman were coeditors of the book series ‘Conduct and communication’ from the University of Pennsylvania Press, a series on approaches to face-to-face interaction. The study of language contact (Clyne, 2003; Matras, 2009; Myers-Scotton, 2006; Thomason, 2001; Winford, 2003) is also considered by many scholars to be part of sociolinguistics (Coulmas, 2005; Coupland and Jaworski, 2009b; Holmes, 2008; Mesthrie et al., 2009;
This topic of research investigated a variety of areas such as multilingualism, Creole studies, code-switching, language death and survival, language rights and language policies. As Matras (2009: 3) explains: —Contact is, of course, a metaphor: language—systems do not genuinely touch or even influence one another. The relevant locus of contact is the language processing apparatus in communicative interaction.

It is therefore the multilingual speaker's interaction and the factors and motivations that shape it that deserve our attention in the study of language contact. Across the disciplinary boundaries most of these approaches share some common features: notably, an interest in fieldwork and a focus on interaction. Their view of language as produced in interaction corresponded to a strong commitment to use fieldwork, in particular ethnographic methods of data collection, and, especially in conversation analysis, an insistence on the use of material collected from naturally occurring occasions of everyday interaction' (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984: 2). From a linguistic perspective, the focus is shifted to language as an ongoing interactional production, that is, to actual talk and performance', as Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2008: 536) point out. A similar shift in focus occurs in sociology: social reality is conceived as socially constructed (Berger and Luckman, 1966). In ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), social reality and social order are conceptualized as ongoing interactional achievements, the product of members' work: For ethnomethodology the objective reality of social facts, in that and just how it is every society's locally, endogenously produced, naturally organized, reflexively accountable, ongoing, practical achievement, being everywhere, always, only, exactly and entirely, members' work, with no time out, and with no possible evasion, hiding out, passing, postponement, or buy-out, is thereby sociology's fundamental phenomena' (Garfinkel, 1991: 11). Some of these approaches also had in common an interest in ethnographic methods of data collection and interpretative methods of analysis. The
collection of data through interviews, ethnographic observation or participant observation were shared by many approaches in sociology, in linguistics, in anthropology and so on, and interpretative methods of analysis were increasingly recognized as being able to describe and understand better the complexity of human experience (Atkinson et al., 2001). It is precisely these common interests in fieldwork, language in interaction and qualitative methodologies that created a common ground in which cross-fertilization among different approaches became possible. It is precisely the collaboration and dialogue at the disciplinary boundaries that have proved to be so fertile. This legacy is worth preserving. A concern with social justice was also central to many of the studies from the beginning: issues of unequal access to education (Cazden and Hymes, 1972) and the role of language in education and in relation to the reproduction of the social order (Bernstein, 1972). In fact such a concern can be identified as one of the motors of the fast development of this area of research in the 1960s. Many interactionists were committed to social justice and social transformation and their studies were often devoted to describing subjective interpretations of human experience and, in particular, that of socially excluded people (Denzin, 1992). Dorothy Smith produced a radical critical approach to sociology, institutional ethnography, taking up the ‘women’s standpoint’ (Smith, 1974). This approach has a clearly emancipatory connotation: ‘Institutional ethnography works from the local of people’s experience to discover how the ruling relations both rely on and determine their everyday activities’ (Smith, 2005: 44). Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995) is also an approach motivated by social transformation that focuses on the ways social and political domination are reproduced by text and talk. The field of multilingualism and language rights is very closely linked to the struggle of people, in particular indigenous peoples, for recognition of their linguistic, cultural and human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1994). This legacy of social commitment is also worth preserving and developing.
1.4. The Linguistic Variable

The investigation of social dialects has required the development of an array of techniques quite different from those used in dialect geography. Many of these derive from the pioneering work of Labov, who, along with other sociolinguists, has attempted to describe how language varies in any community and to draw conclusions from that variation not only for linguistic theory but also sometimes for the conduct of everyday life, for example, suggestions as to how educators should view linguistic variation. As we will see, investigators now pay serious attention to such matters as stating hypotheses, sampling, statistical treatment of data, drawing conclusions, and relating these conclusions to such matters as the inherent nature of language, the processes of language acquisition and language change, and the social functions of variation. Possibly the greatest contribution has been in the development of the use of the linguistic variable, the basic conceptual tool necessary to do this kind of work. As we have just indicated, variation has long been of interest to linguists, but the use of the linguistic variable has added a new dimension to linguistic investigations. A linguistic variable is a linguistic item which has identifiable variants, which are the different forms which can be used in an environment. For example, words like *singing* and *fishing* are sometimes pronounced as *singin‘* and *fishin‘*. The final sound in these words may be called the linguistic variable (ng) with its two variants [ŋ] in *singing* and [n] in *singin‘*. Another example of a linguistic variable can be seen in words like *farm* and *far*. These words are sometimes given r-less pronunciations; in this case we have the linguistic variable (r) with two variants [r] and Ø (i.e., ‘zero’, or ‘null’). Linguists who have studied variation in this way have used a number of linguistic variables, many of which have been phonological. The (ng) variable has been widely used; Labov (2006, 259) says it has been found to have the greatest generality over the English-speaking world, and has been the subject of the most fruitful study. The (r) variable
mentioned above has also been much used. Studies of variation employing the linguistic variable are not confined solely to phonological matters. Investigators have looked at the (s) of the third-person singular, as in, *he talks*, that is, its presence or absence; the occurrence or non-occurrence of be (and of its various inflected forms) in sentences such as He’s happy, He be happy, and He happy; the occurrence (actually, virtual nonoccurrence) of the negative particle ne in French; various aspects of the phenomenon of multiple negation in English, for example, He don’t mean no harm to nobody; and the beginnings of English relative clauses, as in She is the girl who(m) I praised, She is the girl that I praised, and She is the girl I praised.

The important fact to remember is that a linguistic variable is an item in the structure of a language, an item that has alternate realizations, as one speaker realizes it one way and another speaker in a different way, or the same speaker realizes it differently on different occasions. For example, one speaker may say singing most of the time whereas another prefers singin‘, but the first is likely to say singin‘ on occasion just as the second may be found to use the occasional singing. What might be interesting is any relationship we find between these habits and either (or both) the social class to which each speaker belongs or the circumstances which bring about one pronunciation rather than the other.

### 1.5. Social Variation

Once we have identified the linguistic variable as our basic working tool, the next question is how linguistic variation relates to social variation. That is, can we correlate the use of specific linguistics features – r-lessness, for example – with membership in a particular social group? In order to address this question, the next task becomes one of collecting data concerning the variants of a linguistic variable in such a way that we can draw certain conclusions about the social distribution of these variants. To draw such conclusions, we must be able to relate the variants in some way to quantifiable
factors in society, for example, social-class membership, gender, age, ethnicity, and so on.

Sociologists use a number of different scales for classifying people when they attempt to place individuals somewhere within a social system. An occupational scale may divide people into a number of categories as follows: major professionals and executives of large businesses; lesser professionals and executives of medium sized businesses; semi-professionals; technicians and owners of small businesses; skilled workers; semi-skilled workers; and unskilled workers. An educational scale may employ the following categories: graduate or professional education; college or university degree; attendance at college or university but no degree; high school graduation; some high school education; and less than seven years of formal education. In assigning individuals to social classes, investigators may use any or all of the above criteria (and others too) and assign different weights to them. Accordingly, the resulting social-class designation given to any individual may differ from study to study. One such study on multiple variables was Dhar’s (1984) sociolinguistic study of Kamraz dialect of Kashmiri language in which religion, education, gender and age were taken into account to develop the social isoglosses of the Kashmiri spoken in North Kashmir. The other study taking into consideration the sociolinguistic variables was M. K. Koul’s (1986) study in which he studied the variation in the Anantnag district and that of Srinagar.

1.6. The Question of Co-variation

The realization of linguistic variables is not a matter of either/or. For many speakers, one can notice a preference to use one form over another, but not to the exclusion of one of these. The linguistic term for this situation is co-variation. To take one of the examples given above, some people in northern England use [bʌt] sometimes and [but] sometimes, both as realization of but. When investigating a variety which shows such co-variation the first thing is to establish is relative frequencies for the one realisation over the other. The next
task is to determine, if possible, the conditions under which one form is used rather than another. For the example just given, various motives can be recognised: northern speakers seeking acceptance by more standard-speaking southerners are likely to favour \([\text{b}\text{ʌt}]\) over \([\text{but}]\). On the other hand, northerners who gladly identify with the north can be seen to favour \([\text{b}\text{ut}]\) over \([\text{b}\text{ʌt}]\). There are various shades between these two poles. Furthermore, factors such as age and gender are important considerations, quite apart from those of class, occupation, place or residence, etc. Co-variation is also a characteristic of transitions over time. For instance, the shift from \(\text{whom}\) to \(\text{who}\) as the oblique form of the relative pronoun has lasted a couple of centuries and is not complete yet. A similar change in progress, this time from phonology, is the loss of initial \(\text{h}/\) in urban varieties of English, e.g. \(\text{/au}/\) for \(\text{/hau}/\ \text{how}\). This, like the example of \(\text{who(m)}\), is retarded by the restraining influence of standard English.

1.7. Study of Pronominals in the Light of “Linguistic Variable”

As mentioned earlier, a linguistic variable is a linguistic item which has identifiable variants, which are the different forms which can be used in an environment. The use of these variant forms in a given environment is shaped by the social factors like class, age, gender, education etc.

In many languages of the world, referential address of the hearer or the referent can be pronominal (e.g. \(\text{tu}, \text{vos}\)), nominal (e.g. using names, titles, kin terms), or verbal (verb endings). The former has been of special interest for linguists who have concerned themselves with second person singular pronouns of address and with languages that exhibit systems of more than one of such pronouns. The choice, at the disposal of a speaker/addresser to address or refer to his interlocutor/referent, provided by a language in the form of pronominals, qualifies the pronominal as a linguistic variable which can be studied in the framework of the variationist sociolinguistics pioneered by William Labov. The pronominals have been sociolinguistically studied in many
languages with Brown and Gilman (1960) being the pioneers. Kashmiri language falls in the category of the languages in which the second and the third person pronominals qualify as linguistic variables which require a sociolinguistic investigation.

In Kashmiri language, the second person pronoun has the variant forms *tsI* and *toh j*; and the third person pronoun has the variant forms *yi* and *yim* in the case of proximate, *hu* and *hum* in the case of remote within sight and *su/so* and *tim* in the case of remote out of sight referents. This study is a step in the direction to unveil the social basis of the usage of these pronominal forms by correlating their usage with the social variables like, age, gender, education etc.