Sociocultural Nuances and Semiological Implications

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Abstract

Considering basic socio-cultural assumptions that constitute the skeletal map of our signifying order, this paper rigorously addresses major semiological implications that evolve within the predominantly close interaction between social semiotics, on the one hand, and sociolinguistics as well as sociology of language, on the other hand. Therefore, the scope of this research shoots beyond the narrow onomasiological components of meaning, and thus it is designated to encompassing and highlighting crucial macro-factors that delineate how language and language users do intricately function and actively interact. Three major issues non-exclusively pertinent to the way such sociocultural interrelation operates have been pinpointed and examined, mainly, language and gender; sociology of language and spread of foreign languages as well as the revolutionary impacts of visualized languages.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, onomasiology, language planning, sign language, semiology, social semiotics, spread of language

1. Introduction

Language is one of the most interesting and sophisticated fields of social sciences and humanities. Its inseparable existence and coexistence in all our daily experiences can reflect how this interrelatedness can be hard and even impossible to understand without understanding a myriad of issues that shape our intricate reality. The infinite signifying value of language transcends the simplistic scope of basic syntactic structures and the compositional lexical content of morphemes and words (Lorde 1984). Thus, any signification process of language and language users should be appropriately contextualized not only linguistically but also socioculturally (Kress 1996). Studying language within a comprehensive framework that hinges upon the semiological implications of language as *social semiotics* can help researchers tackle many problematic areas that require a synergy of efforts to be deeply and appropriate investigated (Halliday 1978; Hlliday and Hasan 1985; Van Leeuwen 2005; *et al*).

Furthermore, the semiological readings and analyses can be conducive to minimizing differences and marginalizing clashing interpretations of the innate mechanism of language as a limitless self-motivated dynamism that operates within linguistic and cultural parametrical constituents socially, ethically, physically and psychologically. Such a 'generalist' approach satisfies a vast number of requirements that linguists have been in a vehement quest for. Thereby, such a maximalist approach can incorporate any advantageously interdisciplinary method, tool or hypothesis that may in the final analysis provide rationalistic viewpoints concerning encyclopedic cognitive paradigms that start minimally with our lexicon semantics and expand maximally to vitally cover world knowledge through which it can be possible to cope with systematic creativity and productivity of world languages beyond the mere boundaries of the formalism of 'metaphors we live by' (cf. George Lakoff 1981).

2. Language and Gender

One of the most heated arguments researchers can encounter in this socio-cultural context is what gender-biased analyses may engender upon tackling a world of linguistic and non-linguistic issues (see Smith 1985, Romaine 1994, *et al*). Though interestingly and controversially presented on sociolinguistics arena since the rigorous advent of feminism, inequities have existed ever since the onset of creation between men and women, white and black, northerners and southerners and so on and so forth. This is the core argument of many feminists and philosophers, so Lodre (1984: 114) maintains, "MUCH OF WESTERN EUROPEAN history conditions us to see human differences in simplistic opposition to each other: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior."

This inequity for sure has its diverse manifestations as revealed through language use, but it can never be the overwhelmingly decisive factor that determines the privilege of any language over another. Of course, inequity is a salient result of power and dominance of a particular group in any speech community. However, such a domineering group must not superimpose the superiority of its language or its dialect at the macro-sociolinguistic level.

Women and men are by definition biologically different to some extent, but this difference is not intended and should not be understood as a powerful source to create clashing forces; rather, it should be deemed to be collaboratively assimilated and integrated within a wider signifying order. This means that the existence of one sex does by no means constitute a jeopardy to another. On the contrary, each sex is crucially needed to complement and to assist the other thus to shape the meaning and the identity of each other as a model of *sign interaction.* The dilemma emerges when one party perceives or rather misperceives the role of the other in a sense of animosity and rivalry, and this annihilate the basic assumptions of any theory of meaning that envisages signs as minimal meaningful entities.

According to many feminist linguists, especially those following R. Lakoff's stream of thought, the mere sense of *lexical disparity* necessarily reflects an evident social inequity *vis-a-vis* the status of women. Thus the whole argument is associated with the salient differences based on the duality of gender and its social manifestations. Therefore, it is predictable that such an argument would be focusing such differences as crucial sociolinguistic factors as Robin Lakoff (1973, 45) maintains:

Our use of language embodies attitudes as well as referential Meanings. 'Woman's language' has as foundation the attitude that women are marginal to the serious concerns of life, which are pre-empted by men. The marginality and powerlessness of women is reflected In both the ways women are expected to speak, and the ways in which women are spoken of. In appropriate women's speech, strong expression of feeling is avoided, expression of uncertainty is favored, and means of expression in regard to subject-matter deemed 'trivial' to the 'real' world are elaborated. Speech about women implies an object, whose sexual nature requires euphemism, and whose social roles are derivative and dependent in relation to men.

Unfortunately, this social behavior can be the norm in many societies; however, we can positively approach 'lexical disparity' as a tool that can reflect the richness of language, on the one hand, and the specificity of usage, on the other hand. That is why we have two separate signs that stand for two different lexemes, i.e. 'man' and 'woman'. Is it reasonable to coin one single word that refers to both without any different denotations? It is quite predictable and justifiable that women tend to use more precise terms such as those pertaining to colors such as beige, ecru, lavender, and so on where as men would seem less interested in such distinctions. Additionally, women, but not men, are often referred to as cute, biscuit, butter, kittens and babes. These examples are used by Lakoff to prove how women are depicted inferior to men although this should operate the other way around. These indications can be interpreted in a way that women are more precise, more intelligent and more alluring than men, who subsequently should feel inferior to women as a result of their imprecision and uncouthness by analogy; and this duality contradicts with any basic systematic assumption of any linguistic and semiotic theory.

The appropriate interpretation of such gender-based signs can be contextualized in semblance with what William Shakespeare postulates as Cassius concludes once, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings." Julius Caesar (I, ii). This is the mainstream argument of the structural paradigm of sign system. Saussure, therefore, assumes that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and results from daily procedural sociocultural interaction as elaborately summarized by Harris (1988: IX):

Language is no longer regarded as peripheral to our grasp of the world we live in, but as central to it. Words are not mere vocal labels or communicational adjuncts superimposed upon an already given order of things. They are collective products of social interaction, essential instruments through which human beings constitute and articulate their world. This typically twentieth-century view of language has profoundly influenced developments throughout the whole range of human sciences.

Consequently, there is no honor in the word 'man' nor is there any disgrace in the word 'woman'; neither does the fallacious sophistry of women, being the 'woe of man', nor the fallacy of 'history' being the 'story of man' make any sense or any tangible reality.

Admittedly, we live in a patriarchal world where men more often than not take over most senior posts, but this does not rationalize that women should be subservient and how they should be subjected to submerging the signification of their identity and their existence to the extent that they must subsist on men's mercy under the yoke of servitude; and ultimately to be dictated upon how to use language. Where is the resonance of the Western lyric that celebrates 'free choice' day and night then? When a woman takes her husband's family name in the United States, one of the most liberal countries on the globe, is she thus undergoing true linguistic prejudice; and is she thereby subservient? What about women in Saudi Arabia, a country abysmally-classified by some international organizations concerning the deterioration of women's rights, yet they retain their maiden names even within the strict nuptial framework! This would relatively go in an opposite direction to R. Lakoff's (1973: 65) assumption that persistently stresses the following:

In every aspect of life, a woman is identified in terms of the men she relates to. The opposite is not usually true of men: they act in the world as autonomous individuals, but women are only 'John's wife', or 'Harry's girl friend'.

Apparently, R. Lakoff is somehow impressionistic in her judgment all through her argument about women and linguistic choice in "Why Women Are Ladies". One aspect that evidently lacks scholarly empiricism in her analysis is the one concerning politeness as she believes that women are assumed to be more polite than men. Therefore, she maintains "we were all taught as children: women's speech differs from men's in that women are more polite, which is precisely as it should be, since women are the preservers of morality and civility…women are the experts at euphemism". (*ibid*: 77). Of course, this remark is a covert dysphemistic utterance that implies how men are outrageously and maybe innately impolite *fait accompli*! Though, some linguists try to perspectivize and understand that in good faith.

In the same vein, Swan (1995) seems replicating R. Lakoff as she follows the same clashing order of sign system in social semiotics (cf. Halliday, 1978). Their argument contradicts the rules of the thumb of any sound reason since it hinges upon a sweep generalization that emanates from a categorical feminist's approach rather than any objective linguistic approach. Politeness is a universal phenomenon that relatively applies to all human communities and all cultures. Of course there are various degrees, forms, strategies and aspects of politeness that can be attributed to cultural-specifics, yet politeness is an essential daily need that all humans cannot dispense with (Brown and Levinson, 1987). So, how can someone claim that a certain group of people is more polite than the other based on gender, age or race? Are Chinese more polite than Koreans? Are Arabs more polite than Germans? If we are inclined to accepting such irrational assumptions, then we might end up with many chauvinistic views that would distort the very scientific nature of any linguistic discipline!

Coulmas (2013) frequently argues that language does not change; rather the linguistic choice of the users of that language is subject to such changes. This linguistic choice does not operate in vacuum; on the contrary, it interfaces with all other semiotic components that necessarily stem from social, economical and political factors that simultaneously do interact together. It ensues by default, therefore, that politeness is not merely a predominant linguistic choice pertaining to a specific group as such, say women in R. Lakoff's argument. As a matter of fact, it is a specific choice – and by 'specific' the researcher means that interlocutors do not have an absolute variety of options, yet they can have a long list of signifying options to use and to conveniently replace one another. Any of these choices, representing and creating particular speech act/acts, is undoubtedly subject to myriads of contextual parameters that constitute a particular speech event within its vast signifying order beyond the mere restrictions of gender differences although such specifications should not be fully ignored.

Taking these variables into consideration will ultimately lead us not to postulate any argument advocating that group X *is* or *is supposed to be more polite than group Y because we need to know who is speaking to whom, when, how and where* (see Searle 1969, 1975, 1991). All these considerations are of paramount importance and immensely indispensable. Therefore, taking one of these parameters at the expense of others is absolutely absurd and fruitless, and it ultimately procures no beneficial results from a technical semiotic perspective. Thus we are all language users whether women or men, so politeness is critically determined by accompanying speech events prior to any gender mismatches. On one particular occasion, an indecent woman/man can be more considerate and more polite than the Pope himself while in another particular situation that very person *needs* to be less polite, rude and more immoral than the Devil, yet we need to know and tell for sure how impolite the Devil is and how polite the Pope might be!

3. From Onomasiology to Sociology

In addition to the vitality of drawing upon onomasiology beyond the limited concerns of semasiology, where the former banks on meaning relations while the latter invests in demarcating individual meaning borderlines; more interdisciplinary comprehensive approaches to language and society can definitely set a wider perspective that enables linguists fathom the real implications and motivations of such a socio-cultural issue. Fishman (1972) is one of the most remarkable pioneers in this field. He poignantly sets his claim since the onset of founding this approach, stressing the notion that the sociology of language is primarily concerned with a wide spectrum of interrelated issues of the social organization of language behavior 'including not only language usage *per se* but also language attitudes' in terms of human behavior 'toward language and language users'. Therefore, in order to show how serious the issue is, Fishman (*ibid*) cites some exciting examples of repulsive attitudes towards using some 'alien' languages in some regions of the world such as the Province of Quebec, Flemings in Belgium and Dutch in Brussels. This concern ultimately extends to be a priority that should be systematically addressed by both political and educational leaders (see Spolsky 2009).

In order to better understand such unique relation of language and society we need to differentiate between two types of language sociology as pinpointed by Fishman, mainly, descriptive sociology and dynamic sociology; the former, on the one hand, aims at explaining 'who speaks/writes what language/variety to whom and when and to what end'. The latter, on the other hand, aims at explaining why and how speech communities/networks diverge in quite different 'social organization of language use and behavior toward language'. Thus, it can be crystal clear why Flemish government functionaries in Brussels, for instance, do not always speak Dutch to each other although they master Dutch and why many presidents to lesser extent even speak some other languages when they tour overseas. This attitude of a certain speech network or speech community can be evident in the alternations between one variety and another among individuals with shared reservoir of particular varieties. However, this phenomenon is not confined to bilingual or multilingual speech networks. It can be evidently common in monolingual speech communities where different regional, economic or social marking varieties exist. These choices can be phonologically, morphologically or lexically different as it can be observed in the case of native-born New Yorkers, (cf. Splosky 2002).

Fishman (1991) underscores a crucial issue concerning the unconscious dimension of 'situational shifting' which necessitate that individuals of a certain speech network recognize when and how to shift in different situations and what variety to use accordingly. In principle, this can be socioculturally governed by what Dell Hymes (1967) refers to as 'sociolinguistic communicative competence'. Therefore, speakers of the same speech community are not necessary fully conscious of the normative guidelines that delimit their linguistic behavior in this respect. Hence, Fishman, stresses the significance of identifying the boundaries that mark this kind of situational shifting, and he refers to these classes of situations as 'domains'. Furthermore, Fishman introduces 'metaphorical switching' where a speaker unexpectedly shifts to another variety in a 'non-reciprocal' manner which communicatively signals emphasis or contrast (using Cockney where RP is expected).

At the Dynamic level of the sociology of language, endangered languages lie in the core of such sociolinguistics interests. Fishman (2000) and Spolsky (2002) *et al* argue that the societal functional allocation of a certain variety may undergo changes when interacting with some neighboring speech networks. To illustrate this point, Fishman (*ibid*) presents two groups of immigrants. One was forced to lose their mother tongue within one to three generations in order to acquire American English, so they raised their children in English. On the other hand, the other group (French in Montreal) starts off monolingual in French then acquires English at a later stage without losing their mother tongue; on the contrary, they inherit their language to their children and they have their French enterprises, schools and churches. Thus, Fishman, concludes that such interaction leads to 'unstable bilingualism' in the case of the first group *vs.* 'stable bilingualism' in the case of the second group, (cf. Fishman 1982).

Furthermore, the sociology of language has significant applied implications in native/foreign language teaching, translation, language policy, *etc*. In addition, it would be fruitful to converge efforts in creating confluence between applied linguistics and applied sociology. This can automatically touch briefly upon factors that determine other vital issues such as the creation or revision of writing systems since such problems are not linguistic proper; rather, some political and sociocultural factors can intervene therein and may drastically affect the dominance of some relevant choices.

This can be obviously traced in the twentieth century as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stipulated radical changes on the Turkish graphization (Özelli 1974; Landau 1983, *et al*). That's why language planning *per se* falls short unless a wider and deeper socio-political planning is incorporated, (see Fishman 1978; Edwards 1996; Feguson 2006, *et al*).

Such sophisticated issues and their subsequent implications may overshadow any simplistic views to language, so integrated multi-dimensional approaches that highlight semiotics in its sociopolitical and socio-economic frameworks are direly recommended. This can be conspicuously deemed in hundreds of current instances such as issues tackling some significant reasons pertaining to the vast spread of English worldwide, in general, and in the Arab world in particular. It would be somehow conducive to build upon such analyses and to incorporate Halliday's (2003) "Written Language, Standard Language Global Language" in order to elicit the relationship between this vehement spread and the absence of mature language planning policies in many Arab countries, if not all. Coulmas (2013) stresses that in any fruitful collective language planning policy, "acceptance is crucial". Bamgbosi (1998), on the other hand, points that English is undeniably a 'recurring decimal in language policy and planning". The researcher's claims can never go in opposition to these two assumptions, but the problem is in the stumbling planning policy in the Arab World at the collective institutional level. This awkward planning, if it would be ever called 'planning' is behind outrageous aspects of backwardness, deterioration and cultural decadence , and it has unfortunately lead to uncontrollable or even unpredictable consequences at various levels. Some of these respects can be seen at the political level where twenty two so-called 'states', with a geographical area smaller than the united States, are entirely war-torn and disintegrated without any glimpse of hope of any reforms in the horizon for most peoples: one with blind allegiance and servitude to France, another to USA, another to Britain, another to Russia, and so on and so forth.

The logic of pertinent argumentation might seem so weird, if even to be called 'logic' at all. However, the researcher can present his argument in a nutshell- though it might take volumes to be thoroughly explain. First, we need to know that people who are in charge of planning language policies in these countries lack the scientific tools of successful planning: some of them are not academically specialized; some of them belong to the ivory-tower elite; some of them represent sectarianism; some of them don't care about the national interests; some of them give priority to their clannish or at large their tribal concerns; some of them are just nonchalant. All in all, they do not represent nor feel the pulse of the masses of the grassroots. These cumulative bleeding cuts subsequently create schizophrenic communities with ambivalent and aimless attitudes and behavior; ironically, this can be manifested as "Moroccan Arabic functions as the mother tongue of the majority of Moroccans, French and Classical Arabic are learned at school" (Ennaji 1998: 9).

Fortunately or maybe unfortunately, there are about ten Arabic Academies in Amman, Damascus, Baghdad, Rubbat, Cairo, *etc*. equipped with a group of *academically* well-versed figures of high caliber. Nonetheless, to what extent have these academies contributed to the policy of language planning in the Arab World? (cf. Ferguson 1959, Versteegh1984, *et al*). These academies have been deliberately marginalized by decision makers in these countries to the extent that many educated Arabs, let alone the uneducated, have no idea about the real role or even the existence of these Academies although they have been established long decades ago. So, who is in charge of language policies there? A naïve person can tell that the onus of planning is on the ministerial staff and the Cabinets! Since these countries witness every now and then ministerial reshuffles, then it is not abnormal that these planning policies are unstable and haphazardly oriented.

Thus, we have a minister who has a British allegiance one day, so we have to expect a revolution in the English curricula in an anti-American spirit or vice versa. Within six months, a new minister with a Marxist or any extremist ideology will take the same post, so you can predict what his policy is going to be; radical changes will ensue (cf. Hornberger 2005). Worse than that is when a new minister without any experience or know-how is nominated to such a post, this happens frequently for tribal considerations; in this case, the country definitely witnesses tornadoes in all directions in accordance with his/her temperamental mood and under the influence of his milieu. This will accordingly impact the fate of millions who have to passively or unconsciously watch this farcical soap opera every day. Nonetheless, English spreads over and over because "meanings get reshaped, not by decree but through ongoing interaction in the semiotic contexts of daily life", (Halliday 1985: 363); so does the spread of language.

Over the past five decades or more, English has unmatchable spread like wild fire all over the globe. Truchot (1994) explicitly states right from the very beginning that his objective is not to confine his analysis to the spread of English in France; rather to perceive the implications of this spread within a wider perspective worldwide. This may lead us to raise the following rhetorical question: is it a power of language or a language of power that may enhance and accelerate such spread?

The most influential factor of this permeating influence is undoubtedly political. The political dimension has strong affiliations with the colonizing British Empire, which reigned many parts of the Arab World. The Levant, Iraq and Gulf States, where English has been competing with the first language there unlike countries which were colonized by France where English is still lagging behind French in importance. Such political factors would not have this great impact if it had not been reinforced by the leading role of the United States as a super-power in the world, needless to say in the region. I would not divulge a secret if we said that the first priority of the elite politicians and tycoons in the Arab World is to raise their children in USA or less favorably in UK just to brag that they are native or native-like to the extent that the majority of those young generations tend not use their native language (see Kachru 1990).

The second decisive factor, which is pragmatically akin to the previous factor – if not the extension of it- is an economic one. If any applicant is trying to get employed anywhere whether in the private or the public sector, she/he must prove a certain level of English proficiency. Main daily newspapers in Jordan and some Gulf countries during the past twenty years have insisted that applicants has to speak and/or write English fluently. It would not be any kind of exaggeration to claim that English was a must even for those socially stigmatized vacant posts that do not require any verbal or written skills whatsoever: how ironic to imagine a meagerly paid dust man toiling under the burning sun in KSA talking to nobody but to himself if he had the desire to, yet he has to speak English! Therefore, the equation glaringly goes beyond the boundaries of the merits of language learning as such to having an indispensible of survival (cf. Kachru 2006).

Third, Hollywood and American film industry has played an indispensable role in spreading English in this region in particular for two major reasons. The first reason is associated with the two aforementioned factors and the motivation behind learning English. In the second place and as can be figured out in Bolinger (1980) and Fairclough (1989), it is a deplorable fact that these countries have no film industry in the professional sense. That is why the young generations are deeply under the spell of Hollywood stars in every respect of their lives: language, attire appearance, *etc*. One important thing that reflects this ginormous impact can be manifested in the fact that almost all American movies are broadcast on Arab TV and Space Channels usually without dubbing and in many cases without subtitling even, where as all Spanish and Latin American movies– if ever transmitted- have to be dubbed.

The attitude towards learning English, therefore, varies between two unreasonable extremes on the arena with a third moderate force in between, though less loudly expressed. The first extreme voice comes from those who believe that learning English can be the panacea for all problems and backwardness. The other dogmatic extreme believes that all our trouble has been caused by USA and UK; therefore, learning English is paramount to social taboos and religious. The third party is the voice of reason which believes that English is the language of the age, scientifically, economically and educationally. Therefore, we have to learn it if we want really to prosper and achieve much progress. Such sound of reason worldwide is essentially reflected in most recent Western studies such as Milroy (1987), Wodak (1989), Talbot, Mary, Karen Atkinson (2003), *et al*.

4. Vocalized vs. Visualized Signs

The researcher's semiological view necessarily caters for both vocalized and visualized modes of language, i.e. it addresses what has been conventionally labeled as verbal vs. signed languages (see Dirksen (2008). In order to achieve this goal, we are required first to present the two different clashing views of deafness. The first view is the medical view, which is definitely represented by people from the *hearing world*: audiologists, psychologists, special educators and other professional experts. This party misperceives the essence of deafness and tends to use some terms like 'deaf-dumb' and 'deaf-mute'; using such terms reflects a negative and even a pejorative attitude towards the deaf as language users first and most. Thus, the medical view deems the deaf to be somehow retarded people, in a sense that there is something wrong to be fixed with those deaf people, (cf, Moser H.M., O'Neill, *et al* 1960).

The second view is the cultural view representing the deaf people and their proponents from the *hearing world*, of course. This view definitely delimits the problem within its appropriate context. Therefore, the problem is with 'the hearing community', which constitutes a barrier because members of this community unfortunately cannot understand the language of the 'deaf community', so the former community should be blamed, not the latter according to the American Deaf Community (cf. Aronoff, Meir and Sandler 2005).

Many significant issues may accordingly arise in this respect. There is no doubt that there has been unjustifiable prejudice against Deaf Communities in many parts in the world because many people and even linguists have ignored basic linguistics universals that apply to both vocalized as well as signed languages abreast (Sandler and Diane 2006). Therefore, Gallaudet University protest in 1988, which has been known as *Deaf President Now (DPN)*, was a historic revolution and a decisive turning point in the history of not only American Deaf Community but all deaf communities and maybe other minorities all over the globe (Gannon 1989). Almost three decades have passed since Gallaudet University's protest took place, but are the Deaf Community members quite satisfied with what they have achieved since that date? In fact, many people have never thought that deaf people might be in such a distress or that they might be discriminated against in this awful way Montgomery (2002).

What happened in Gallaudet before 1988, not having deaf president all through its long history though founded to primarily serve the deaf, reveals how *the hearing world* is criminally indicted. Worse than what cruelty incarnate may represent was Gallaudet's x-president's cynical comment that 'deaf people are not ready to work in the hearing world'. Socio-culturally, Gallaudet's protest must be a spark of hope for all deaf communities in the world in resemblance to the symbolic revolutionary protest in G. Orwell's Animal Farm, though Gallaudet's ultimate goals are entirely nobler and more crucial. Therefore, Shapiro (1995) recapitulates that mistreated Deaf communities in all parts of the globe should persist and strongly fight for more constitutional rights that the 'hearing world' has usurped.

The increasing sway of signed languages and the proliferation of relevant studies in this field may prove to the world that Sign Languages are undoubtedly like all other natural languages at all levels (Emmorey 2002). They are neither artificial nor primitive as some nonspecialists might claim; in fact, they have meticulous sets of linguistic conventions and systems as well (Hopkins 2008). What might be expressed in any natural language can be equally and accurately expressed in Sign Language. This linguistic facet is evidently tangible if one objectively ponders on the prosperity and the diversity of some Sign Language linguistics research, dictionaries, newspapers and magazines (see Battison 1978; Reilly 2005; Boudreault & Mayberry 2006; *et al*). However, much more should be elaborately investigated in various areas of these sign languages to demystify many prevalent issues and certain fallacies that may envisage such languages as mere movements of daily body language employed by hearing people as well.

5. Conclusion

In summary, this paper has shed light on some intrinsic semiological realizations and implications that draw upon fundamental sociological, sociolinguistic and sociocultural factors. The utter impact of such intertwined areas can be best exemplified in some controversial aspects of *social semiotics* where language in its sociocultural context flexibly lends itself to a diversity of intervening factors and components, resulting in problematic bearings regarding gender and dominance; gender and power; gender and inequities; language and power; spread of language; language and minorities as well as the revolutionary nature of persisting on having sign languages in tandem with all other vocalized languages.

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