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**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CLASS IN LITERARY WORKS: THE CASE OF LYNN NOTTAGE'S "SWEAT"****Nigar Mahir qızı Hətəmovə***Xəzər Universitetinin magistrantı***ORCID:** 0009-0000-4660-7877**E-mail:** nigarhetemova@gmail.com**Açar sözlər:** *sosiolinqvistika, sosial sinif, sosiolekt, linqvistik göstəricilər***Ключевые слова:** *социолингвистика, социальный класс, социолект, лингвистические маркеры***Key words:** *sociolinguistics, social class, sociolect, linguistic markers*

Social Class refers to separations in society based on economic and social status. These divisions manifest in people's education, work, linguistic choices, etc. Literature, which reflects life with all its transparency, has not overlooked the concept of social class, a key aspect of society. The application of the science of sociolinguistics, which studies the linguistic differences of social classes, to literary works contributes to the science of linguistics and sociology. During sociolinguistic analysis, important information is obtained about that historical period, the linguistic regularities of the period, etc. One of the famous American playwrights who describes the working class and their miserable life in her works is Lynn Nottage. Her play "Sweat" represents the labor struggle in Reading, Pennsylvania. The work touches on social problems such as injustices against the working class, the difficulties faced by representatives of this class, the difficulty of changing classes, etc. One of the most perfect aspects of the work is that the differences in social class are felt in the linguistic choices of the characters.

**Language and Social Class**

Social groups differ from each other according to the position they hold in society [1]. The idea of an inseparable link between social class and language is well-known to the scientific world. Social variations in language are directly related to class differences [2, s. 42]. Therefore, being aware of class differences plays an important role in using and understanding language. Mitford (1955) shows the difference between U-language (upper class language) and Non-U (non-upper class language) and emphasizes that Non-U language is fashionable and lavish while U language is plain [3]. Non-U language often includes loanwords, especially from French. While words like "sofa", "bike", and "sick" are included in the U-Language, their counterparts like "settee", "cycle", and "ill" are included in the Non-U language. Linguistic differences between social classes are manifested at the phonetic, lexical, and grammatical levels [4, s. 139]. Class differences in pronunciation were discovered in Labov's New York Department Store study when pronouncing the "r" sound [1]. The different pronunciations of the -ing suffix in Norwich English were studied by Trudgill [5]. According to this research, /ŋ/ is related to the middle class, while /n/ is related to the working class. Migration due to World War II also led to differences in the speech of different classes in London. [6, s. 110]

**Sociolinguistic analysis of literary works**

In literature, the reflection of social problems in the language of characters has always been the center of attention. To see what level each social group is at, it is enough to observe its linguistic choices. Bengtsson analyzes the speech of different social classes in Zadie Smith's "NW". One of the novel's protagonists, Shar, is described as poor, wearing old, dirty clothes, and financially struggling [7, s. 26]. His style of speech also does not hide his position at the bottom of society. Shar speaks with a strong working-class accent, dropping the "-g" at the end of words like "dyin" and "fuckin". He also uses double negatives such as "I ain't got no car!" [7, s. 27]

Olaniyan (2006) uses Dell Hymes' "SPEAKING" or, in other words, "Ethnography of Communication" theory, to conduct a sociolinguistic analysis of the conversations in Achebe's "A Man of People". The research shows that situation, participants, and other elements of SPEAKING can be indicators of social class in language [8, s. 104]. Thren presents several sociolinguistic characteristics of the lower class in "My Fair Lady"; for example, they say 'avin', blinkin', makin', mornin', liftin', etc., instead of using 'ng' at the end [9, s. 116]. Other characteristics of the lower class is an elision of the 'h' sound in words like 'elp', 'aving', 'alf', 'here', etc. Characters' pronunciation of vowels also creates the difference between the upper and lower classes. For example, Eliza uses "ow" and "iyee" instead of A, E, I, O, and U. She also uses multiple negations in most of her sentences like 'you ain't been near, "I ain't dirty," etc. Eliza also uses rolling "r" to indicate her lower-class status. Eliza's usage of incorrect pronouns such as "meself" is another characteristic of the lower class at work [9, s. 116].

**Class struggle in Lynn Nottage's "Sweat"**

Lynn's Sweat chronicles the struggles of working-class people in Reading, Pennsylvania, between 2000 and 2008. It portrays contemporary America with a focus on race, class, and economic issues. The work shows how Nottage turns real historical events into powerful narratives [10, s. 32]. "Sweat" acknowledges differences between people of age, race, gender, and class. It is not these differences that divide us but our exaggeration of them and our prejudices [11, s. 208]. The signing of the NAFTA agreement in 1994 hurt the working class. Workers blame NAFTA for a 60% reduction in wages. The play shows how helpless and hopeless the working class feels, seeing no help to solve their problems. The working class is mostly displayed as victims of social and economic conditions [12].

**Linguistic markers of class distinction in "Sweat"**

The characters in Sweat- Evan, Jason, Chris, Cynthia, Tracey, and others make colorful word choices, and their sentence structures reveal the relationship between language and social class. For example, in Act 1, Scene 1, Evan, the Parol Officer, is having a conversation with Jason. During the conversation, Evan presents himself as superior to Jason through his lexical choices. For example, he asserts his authority over Jason by saying, "*I'm not one of your stupid friends*" [13, s. 6]. Using the word "stupid" is a harsh and stronger emotional expression. The phrase "*your stupid friends*" creates a division between social groups, which can show superiority over the other group. However, Evan, who demonstrates his authority over Jason, often does not feel the need to maintain his formality when talking to Jason. For example, he uses "gonna," which is a reduction of "going to," like "*I'm not gonna run down everything*" [13, s. 5]. This reduction is often associated with working-class speech. Evan's sentence "*He*

*ain't going nowhere*” includes a double negation, which indicates working-class speech [13, s. 10]. On the other hand, Jason demonstrates his lower status through his limited word choices, short answers, and use of swear words. Jason's grammatical sentence patterns are deficient. He often doesn't complete sentences, and his thoughts are left unfinished, like “*I mean... I didn't do...*” [13, s. 8]. In the first scene, we see another character named Chris. The conversation between Chris and Evan is different from the conversation with Jason. Because Chris uses thoughtful, complete sentences, he expresses his concerns about life, money, and work. “*I'm talking bullshit...seven, eight dollars an hour*” demonstrates his frustration with low-wage job [13, s. 12]. As can be seen from the examples, the work provides an excellent basis for analyzing the language of social groups.

**Relevance of the topic.** One of the pressing concerns in our modern era is the class inequality that exists in nearly all countries worldwide. Interestingly, it is the way society views social class differences that creates them. The issue of social class also manifests itself in literature, which reflects life events based on artistic imagination. Language, which is one of the greatest indicators of social class differences, allows us to observe class struggle in literary works. The increasing class differences and discrimination in modern society make it relevant and important to analyze how language reflects these struggles.

**Scientific novelty of the article.** This study examines how sociolects and linguistic indicators in the play “*Sweat*” demonstrate class differences. Although social, racial, and class themes in the play have been extensively studied in previous research, there is no research about the sociolinguistic analysis of class differences. The study shows that the class diversity of the characters is manifested in their pronunciation, lexical, and grammatical choices.

**Practical significance and application of the article.** The results of this study have practical significance for literary criticism, sociolinguistics, and social sciences. Teachers working in the field of education can utilize the research results to teach students how language reflects social class differences in literary works. In addition, the study is of practical importance for sociolinguists examining the role of language both in literary works and in real social contexts. At the same time, playwrights and screenwriters can benefit from this study to more vividly and accurately reflect the speech of different social groups.

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**N.M. Hətəmovə**

**Ədəbi əsərlərdə sosial sinif konsepsiyasının sosiolinqvistik təhlili:**

**Lin Nottagenin "Sweat" nümunəsi əsasında**

**Xülasə**

Bu məqalə dilin sosial sinfi necə təmsil etdiyini Linn Nottagenin "Tər" pyesindəki personajların linqvistik seçimləri əsasında tədqiq edir. Tədqiqatda əsərdəki müxtəlif zümrələrin linqvistik göstəriciləri, diskurs fərqləri analiz edilərək, personajların dilinin onların sinfi kimliklərini necə formalaşdırdığı öyrənilir. Araşdırma dil və sosial sinif arasında əlaqəni göstərərək dilin insanların cəmiyyətdəki sosial kimliyini formalaşdıran ən mühüm amil olduğunu ortaya çıxarır.

**Н.М. Хатамова**

**Социолингвистический анализ концепции социального класса в литературных произведениях: на примере пьесы Линн Ноттидж «Пот»**

**Резюме**

Данная статья исследует, как язык представляет социальный класс на основе лингвистических выборов персонажей в пьесе Линн Ноттидж «Пот». В исследовании анализируются лингвистические маркеры различных социальных групп и дискурсивные различия в пьесе, чтобы понять, как язык персонажей формирует их классовую идентичность. Работа показывает связь между языком и социальным классом, подчеркивая, что язык является одним из важнейших факторов формирования социальной идентичности человека в обществе.

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