

**The Interface of Syntax and Sociolinguistics: Sociolinguistic
Analysis of some Persian Syntactic Structures based on Labov'
Variation Theory¹**

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Abstract

Sociolinguists consider language variation as one of the inherent characteristics of languages. They believe that social factors including gender, social class, education, age and ethnicity are playing a fundamental role in creating and distributing language variation. In this research, the effects of social class, education and gender on frequency and distribution of syntactic variation in every day and scientific colloquial discourse of Persian are explored. Men used scrambling, cleft construction and focus adverbs more than women in every day colloquial discourse and contrarily, women used scrambling and cleft construction more than men in scientific colloquial discourse. Upper social class people used scrambling more than middle and low classes and low class social societies used cleft construction and focus adverbs more than other social classes in every day colloquial discourse. In scientific discourse, high social class used scrambling more than other social classes. MA and BA graduates used scrambling more than high school graduates in every day colloquial discourse and high school graduates used

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cleft construction more than other educated people. Also, MA graduates used scrambling more than other graduates in scientific colloquial discourse. Findings of the present research indicate that we must include sociolinguistic considerations in linguistic studies in addition to using generative grammar. The existence of syntactic variations in Persian speech in different social contexts and styles represents the status and value of variation theory in linguistic explorations. In this research, the existence of three different syntactic structures representing the sameness of core meaning and also discursal meaning indicates that generative grammar is not able to analyze them. These syntactic structure variations and distribution of them in every day and scientific discourses may be analyzed only through Variation Theory. Findings of the present research are convergent with studies of King(2005) in the field of morpho-syntactic variation in Acadian French; and also studies of Barbiers(2005) in the field of word order variation in Dutch dialect.

Keywords: Variation Theory, scrambling, cleft construction, focus adverbs, social class, education, gender, discourse