

SOCIAL FACTORS FOUND IN TERA FABIÁNOVÁ'S *HOW I WENT TO SCHOOL*

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Abstract: This paper aims at revealing social factors happened in a short story by Tera Fabiánová called *How I went to School*. Sociolinguistics theory was used to collect the data which was how the social factors are depicted through the story. The results of the analysis presented that social factors in the story were speaker and setting/scene. In speaker, it was found certain aspects such as class, position, age, and relations. Moreover, in setting, three aspects were identified namely crowd, private, and group. Moreover, this story gives a moral value to the audience, that education is a powerful thing to change people's lives in order to have a brighter future.

Keywords: *Social factors, Linguistics theory, Tera Fabiánová, How I Went to School*

INTRODUCTION

This certain story was written by one of the oldest Roma writers, Tera Fabianova and she was surprisingly fluent in four languages. Her works were mostly popular as the works discussing the theme of the stigma of being gypsy. Unfortunately, she died in March at the age of 76. Moreover, "How I Went to School" was story written by Tera Fabianova in which it expressed the struggles in life experienced by one particular Romani girl such as having hard times to fit into education during the time. During the time, there existed two separated society namely Gadjos group which was referring to the people who were high-class, and Romani group/gypsy which was referring to the people of low-class. The family of this girl was included as gypsy family, therefore her mum had to go to village to work for Gadjos and came back at night, and her dad worked as bricks maker but sometimes worked for Gadjos as well. This Romani girl had three sisters and one brother, and she was the one who always made trouble at home. So, her mum decided to send her to school, but the other sisters were not, so that she did not cause any troubles at home anymore, which was what her mum wanted. In addition, another reason why her mum sent her to school was because of the order of the village mayor, that all 'gypsy' children must go school since he wanted them not become stupid, and if those kids did not obey the rule, they would lock their fathers up. Actually, her mum did not that happy that her girl went to school since it did not really help their economic condition, but they were left with no choice. This Romani girl had only one set of clothes which was not really clean, and she had to wear that every day in school. Also, this girl never combed her hair while in the school. Because of that, she often got mocked by the Gadjos kids and teachers in the school and sometimes got beaten by the teachers for mistakes she made. Obviously, that was hard for her to face that every day, but she did not give up instead she kept on trying to fit in the class until she succeeds. Years had passed, a new teacher came to the class and he was such a kind person and was the one wanted these Romani kids had bright future. This new teacher had a very close

attention to these Romani kids for their equality of education that they deserved a better education as what the Gadjos kids had.

In analyzing this short story, I used sociolinguistics theory to support this analysis. According to Holmes (2013), “sociolinguistics study the relationship between language and society (p.1)”. Therefore, the purpose was to see the social factors affecting the direct utterances used by the characters in the story. After analyzing the short story, three main social factors affecting the character’s utterance were found such as speaker and setting/scene. In speaker factor, there are aspects of age, class, position, and relations. Meanwhile, the setting/scene of crowd, private, and group were also identified.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Holmes (2013) stated that Sociolinguists investigate the relationship between language and society. They are concerned in explaining why we speak inversely in different social contexts, and they are interested in identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning. He also argued that investigating the way people practice language in different social contexts offers a treasure of information about how language works, as well as about the social relationships in a community, and the way people take and construct aspects of their social identity through their language (2013, p. 1).

Furthermore, there several aspects which are crucial when finding social factors in a text. They are the participants (who is speaking and who are they speaking to), the setting or social context of the interaction (where are they speaking), the topic (what is being talked about), the function (why are they speaking). They are basic components in sociolinguistic descriptions of why people do not all speak the same way.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

No	Factor	Aspect	Frequency	%
1	Speaker	Age	3	6
		<i>Social status:</i>		
		Class	25	50
		Position	10	20
		Relations	9	18
2	Setting/Scene	Private (House)	20	40
		Group (Classroom)	27	54
		Crowd (Celebrations place)	3	6

	TOTAL	50	100%
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Table 1. Factors Affecting the Characters' Utterance in the Short Story *How I Went to School*

Based on the findings, social factors affecting the utterances conveyed by the characters in the story were found. Below is the discussion of the findings revealed in the study.

1. Speaker

Start off with the first social factor namely the speaker, the most dominant aspect in this factor was class aspect with 50% of occurrence. Some examples of which were *'Look at that skirt on her! Why haven't you washed? Why haven't you combed your hair? Where's your bag? You have nothing, you don't even have a bag! How will you study?'* and *'Why do you go around so dirty? You don't even have proper clothes!'*. The person who conveyed this utterance was an old Gadjoo (high-class group) pointing out to the Romani girl when she wanted to get in to the school. The utterance signified how the speaker of this sentence was regarded himself as if he was a better human being than this Gypsy girl. By stressing what the girl did not bring any school stuff led to how this old man did not care much about her feeling being asked the kind of question. He should had known that she was a poor girl so that impossible for her to gain that sort of stuff. The same situation was in the second example when the teacher asked her that kind of question, showing how the teacher should had known her condition being a poor girl. Another example of *'My mother has no money'* was the answer from the girl, showing that she clarified the condition she experienced at the moment that she was a low-class person.

Another significant aspect was position with 20% of occurrence. Such examples are *He said: 'you go there, you there, you there', 'Why are you lying? Stick your tongue out! You'll get something to make sure you don't lie next time!'*, and *'Come out from behind your desk! You'll get your bottom smacked for having no manners!'* The first utterance was conveyed by the headmaster of the school. It was pretty obvious that the headmaster had a higher position than the students especially the Romani kids so that it led him to ask, do, and order as he wished and students could not resist that. The second was conveyed by the teacher when in the class students were asked what they had for meal. The Romani girl answered that she had biscuit with cottage cheese, soup, and so on. However, the teacher did not believe, knowing the fact that that girl was a poor one, and got upset with her so that he said that sort of utterance. Again, the utterance conveyed by the teacher reflected that the teacher has a higher position so that the teacher was freer to order or to decide something what to do. It was also similar with the third example of utterance.

Further, the next aspect was relations (18%). *'Look, boys and girls, you have to study so that you won't be stupid! So that the Gadjos can't do whatever they want with you. If you study, you will be cleverer than your parents. You will hold your heads up high; you will know how to find your own place among the other people. Study, and pay no attention if I shout at you, or if I box your ears. I cannot get angry with those who treat you in such a way, so I have to vent my anger on you. Oh God! When I see how the Gadjoo children eat so*

well and bring bread with dripping, and you eat your hunger, how the anger rises in me! How am I supposed to help you? Grow up good and honorable, so that the gentlemen see that your poverty is not your fault but theirs.' This long utterance was conveyed by the new teacher that came into the school, which he felt concerned about what the Romani students had been through. This long utterance signified how the relationship between him and particularly students of Romani was exceptional. He had so much love for these Romani students, that he wanted the best for them, for the future.

Two other examples were *'Don't you dare go into the village! The other children will beat you up'* and *'Listen, you go to the circus – and whatever you see there, you can tell us about it afterwards!'* The first one was conveyed by the Romani girl's mother, that signified how the relationship between mother and kid. The mother gave a warning to her not to go into the village by herself otherwise something bad would happen to her. Her mother said this just because she cared about her so much that she did not want her daughter to be involved at any kinds of danger. The next one was conveyed by one of friends of the Romani girl in which showing how the relationship between them looked like. They regarded this girl as their friend and they wanted the best for best friend so that they said that to let her came in to the circus instead of themselves.

The next aspects were age (6%). Example of age was *'I'll give you 'A's! Do you think we can live off your A grades? A grade, A grades – at home you do everything to avoid working! At home you couldn't care less about work!'* The utterance was conveyed by the mother of the Romani girl, showing that age aspect had influenced what she was saying. Obviously, the mother was way older than her kids, thus she had more rights to decide things or say something to her kids. This utterance happened because she was sick of her girl seeing her causing a lot of trouble at home.

2. Setting/Scene

Following the explanation above, I had also identified another factor influencing the utterances found in the story namely setting/scene. This factor was further divided into three aspects namely crowd, private, and group.

The most dominant one was group setting with 54% occurrence. Such example of utterance affected by this particular setting was in *'Look, boys and girls, you have to study so that you won't be stupid! So that the Gadjos can't do whatever they want with you. If you study, you will be cleverer than your parents. You will hold your heads up high; you will know how to find your own place among the other people. Study, and pay no attention if I shout at you, or if I box your ears. I cannot get angry with those who treat you in such a way, so I have to vent my anger on you. Oh God! When I see how the Gadjo children eat so well and bring bread with dripping, and you eat your hunger, how the anger rises in me! How am I supposed to help you? Grow up good and honorable, so that the gentlemen see that your poverty is not your fault but theirs.'* This utterance was stated by the new teacher in the class with group of Romani students. This event happened in a setting of group when there was only the new teacher and some Romani students. Supported by this setting and knowing what the Romani had been through, the new teacher said this utterance to ensure those students by giving some encouraging words that they also had rights to study so that they all would have a better future they deserve.

Another one revealed was private setting with 40% occurrence. One of examples of utterance was in *'Run away! There isn't enough to buy bread, and you want a book from me! Just keep on going, so they don't take your father and lock him up.'* This utterance happened in a situation of private in which there was only the mother and her daughter at the time in their house. The daughter wanted her mum to buy a book and pencil for school, yet the mother was not happy with that instead. Supporting with a private setting, it allowed the mother to say that sentence in angry tone to her daughter in expressing her disagreement of what the daughter's desire. Perhaps, the mother would have not said it if they both were in public situation/setting. Last setting found was crowd, in which could be identified in such example *'Now let me introduce my pupils to you'*. This happened when the new teacher and the Romani students went to a celebration and delivered performances in there. Some students were singing and playing music, and one Romani girl was reciting a poem. Surprisingly every single one person enjoyed it. The setting at the time was obviously in crowded situation and the utterance stated by the new teacher was to show the Romani students' talent to all the people there especially the Gadjos group. Knowing already what the Romani students had been through all this time and supported by the situation in there, it pushed the new teacher to say that sentence out loud to them, showing how proud he was having these Romani kids as his students who were talented as well.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, after reading this story and analyzing it, in general it can be seen how much struggles that the Romani/Gypsy group had been through during the time. Furthermore, by applying sociolinguistics theory to analyze the social factors in the story, it helped a lot to have further understanding of the message contained in the story by looking at and analyzing closer the utterances encompassed in the story. Moreover, looking at the analysis, the factors such as speaker and setting/scene were found. In speaker, I found certain aspects revealed such as, class, position, age, and relations. The most dominant aspect found in speaker factor was class (50%). Finally, in setting, I identified three aspects namely crowd, private, and group, yet the dominant aspect of setting revealed based on the language choices was group aspect (54%).

REFERENCE

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