**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**Yahia Fares University of Medea**

**Faculty of Arts and Foreign Languages**

**Department of Foreign Languages**

**English Section**

**First Year Master Students of Applied Linguistics**

# *Course in Sociolinguistics*

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**2025-2026**

المجلس العلمي للكلية
أد: بشير بوعلو
رئيس المجلس العلمي

**Official Syllabus**

**Intitulé du Master : linguistics**
**Semestre :** 01
**Intitulé de l'UE :** Fondamentale
**Intitulé de la Matière : Sociolinguistics**
**Crédits : 4**
**Coefficients : 2**




**Objectifs de l'enseignement :**

By the end of the course, students are expected to (1) outline the main relationships between language and society. (2) Define the main sociolinguistic concepts used to analyze these relationships. (3) Identify the main features of studies of sociolinguistic variation. (4) Develop in-depth understanding of key areas in Sociolinguistics. (5) And to take issues critically and conduct practical thinking and analysis.

**Connaissances préalables recommandées :**

Linguistics, a good command of English Writing , and Analytical Thinking.

**Contenu de la Matière :** the course will cover the following chapters :

1. Introducing Sociolinguistics : Key Issues
2. Dialectology
3. Diaglossia & Bilingualism
4. Language Variation & Change: Pidgin, Creole, and Lingua Franca
5. Multilingualism & Language Choice
6. Language Planning & Policy.
7. Examination of Case Studies.

**Mode d'évaluation :** Contrôle continu

**Références :**

Holmes, *J. (2013). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics.* USA: Routledge.
*Trousdale, G. (2010). An Introduction to English Sociolinguistics.* UK: Edinburgh University Press
Wardhaugh, *R. (2010). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. Singapore*: Wiley-Blackwell

## Diagrammatic Presentation of the Unit




**Course:** Sociolinguistics

**Level:** First Year Master LMD Students

**Period:** First Semester

**Type:** Lecture and workshop Sessions

**Time Allotment:** Three Sessions per Week. One session Lecture and Two sessions Workshop

**Title:** *Course in Sociolinguistics*

## Course Content

**1.** Introducing Sociolinguistics: Key Concepts

**2.** Dialectology

**3.** Diglossia and Bilingualism

**4.** Language Variation and Change: Pidgin, Creole, and Lingua Franca

**5.** Multilingualism and Language Choice

**6.** Language Planning and Policy

**7.** Examination of Case Studies

## Course Description

This course is designed for **first-year Master's students specializing in linguistics.** These students are EFL learners who have completed a three-year BA program in English that included courses in linguistics, phonetics, literature, civilization, didactics, and study skills. This background knowledge enables them to pursue further specialization at the Master's level. Considering their future professional paths, many students aim to work as English language teachers in public or private educational institutions, while others intend to continue their academic studies by enrolling in doctoral programs in linguistics or sociolinguistics. In light of these objectives, the course has been structured to provide both a solid theoretical foundation and practical insight into sociolinguistic issues relevant to language use and education.

This course introduces students to the study of language in society—**sociolinguistics**—by examining the social and cultural embedding of language. Students will engage with a range of sociolinguistic perspectives through the exploration of social and linguistic constraints on language variation, as well as the socio-political implications of language use in society. The course covers the major areas of sociolinguistics, including dialectology, bilingualism and diglossia, language variation and change, multilingualism and language choice, and language policy and planning. In addition, selected case studies related to these topics will be examined in detail.

Throughout the course, there is a strong emphasis on collaborative learning. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions and, on occasion, to present material to the class as a whole. They are particularly encouraged to apply course concepts to new datasets and to reflect critically on their own sociolinguistic experiences. The course content provides students with a solid foundation in a research area that complements the study of **language in relation to society**.

## Course Objectives

**By the end of the course, students are expected to:**

- Outline the major relationships between language and society.
- Define the main sociolinguistic concepts used to analyze these relationships.
- Identify the main features of studies of sociolinguistic variation.
- Develop in-depth understanding of key areas in sociolinguistics.
- Take issues critically and conduct practical thinking and analysis.

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## List of Abbreviations

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**L1:** First Language/Native Language

**L2:** Second Language

# General Introduction

Course in sociolinguistics is important in the EFL classroom because it explores the interface between language and society. It examines how social factors such as age, geography, ethnicity, and social class, together with the linguistic system itself, contribute to language variation and change. To achieve the true goal of teaching English, it is therefore necessary to integrate language instruction with its social context.

Since language is a social phenomenon that emerges and develops within specific social backgrounds, sociolinguistics can enhance foreign language teaching by rearranging curricula and instructional practices in EFL classrooms. In particular, it helps promote positive attitudes toward the target language and the cultures and communities associated with it. This can also be achieved through the inclusion of cultural elements that help EFL learners, understand new language concepts, and provide meaningful contexts for their use in the classroom.

## Lecture One: Introducing Sociolinguistics: Key Concepts

**Objective of the Course:**

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

- Understand some basic concepts in the field, such as sociolinguistics, speech community, and language variety or variation.
- Distinguish **micro-sociolinguistics (sociolinguistics) and macro-sociolinguistics (sociology of language)**
- Develop clearer understanding of sociolinguistics in general and sociolinguistics concepts in particular.

### Introduction

Linguistic studies are divided into two main fields: ***micro-linguistics*** and ***macro-linguistics***. The former includes fields of inquiry purely about language itself such as phonetics, linguistics, semantics, and pragmatics. The latter refers to the study of language at a broader level, examining relationships between language and other disciplines such as society, culture, and human mind. Sociolinguistics falls under the scope of macro-linguistics; it is the subfield of linguistics that studies language in relation to society.

Most developments in sociolinguistics have occurred since the late 1960s. This does not suggest that the study of language in relation to society originated at that time. On the contrary, there has long been scholarly interest in dialect studies and in the relationship between word meaning and culture—both of which fall within our definition of sociolinguistics. What is new, however, is the widespread attention the field has received and the recognition that sociolinguistics offers valuable insights into both the nature of language and the structure of society (Hudson, 1996).

Like many academic disciplines, sociolinguistics combines empirical and theoretical approaches: it involves both the systematic collection of linguistic data and reflective analysis aimed at interpreting and explaining those data. So, what are some different definitions of sociolinguistics? What are some concepts related to it? And what are its main topics?

## 1.1. Definition of Sociolinguistics

Different scholars have defined *sociolinguistics* in various ways. *Sociolinguistics* is most commonly and easily defined as ***"the study of language in relation to society."*** (Hudson, 1996, p.1, Yule, 2006, p.205). Moreover, Gumperz (1971) claims that "***sociolinguistics is an attempt to find correlations between social structure and linguistic structure and to observe any changes that occur"*** (p. 223). In other words, it investigates how social factors such as age, social class, and gender *(social structure)* influence the use and the structure of language *(pronunciation, lexicon, grammar)*. Furthermore, Chambers (2002) states that ***"sociolinguistics is the study of the social uses of language, and the most productive studies in the four decades of sociolinguistic research have emanated from determining the social evaluation of linguistic variants"*** (p.3). This implies that sociolinguistics is not only about language structure but it is about how people use language to show their social identity. Besides, the most productive research in the field of sociolinguistics is related to *'social evaluations'* or how individuals judge others and themselves based on social signals embedded in speech.

According to Meyerhoff (2006), *sociolinguistics* is concerned with how people use language differently in various regions and with which language variety is considered vernacular and which one is recognized as a standard language. In the same respect, Holmes (2013) argues that ***"sociolinguistics is concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning"*** (p.1). This suggests that this discipline explores the ways in which language varies depending on different social parameters such as region, social status, and ethnicity, and how these variations reflect and construct social identity and relationships.

In brief, sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies all aspects of the relationship between language and society. It tackles different topics such as social attitudes to language, standard and non-standard forms of language, the patterns and needs of national language use, social varieties and levels of language, and the social basis of multilingualism, and so on (Crystal, 2008, p.441).

## 1.2. The Distinction between Micro-sociolinguistics (Sociolinguistics) and Macro-sociolinguistics (Sociology of Language)

Some researchers have made a distinction between '*sociolinguistics'* or '*micro-sociolinguistics'* and the '*sociology of language'* or '*macro-sociolinguistics*.' Hudson (1996) describes 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.'*** (p.4). Otherwise speaking, in '*sociolinguistics'* we study how society shapes language (e.g., how social factors such as age, gender, and social class influence language), while in the '*sociology of language'* we study how language influences society (e.g., language use creating social divisions or power). Correspondingly, Coulmas (1997) claims that '*micro-sociolinguistics'* examines how social structure influences speech (social class, age, and gender), whereas '*macro-sociolinguistics'* or the *'sociology of language'* studies society's use of language (social attitudes, language shift, maintenance and replacement) (p.2). In a similar vein, Wardhaugh (2010) states that '*sociolinguistics' is primarily* interested in language itself aiming to understand the structure of language and how it functions in communication within society; nevertheless, the '*sociology of language'* seeks to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language (e.g., how specific linguistic features define particular social groupings).

This distinction, however, should not be understood as a rigid division, given that both perspectives are significantly intertwined. Thus, in practice, research in *sociolinguistics* overlaps with the *sociology of language* because language both shapes and is shaped by social reality. The identification of language variation at the micro-level helps to reveal broader issues related to inequality, identity construction, and group membership. Thus, the two approaches complement, rather than oppose, each other.

Moreover, this two-way approach is vital in the study of language as a social phenomenon. Macro-sociolinguistics offers a more general view of language as a social mechanism affected by historical, political, and cultural factors, whereas micro-sociolinguistics focuses on the fine-grained details of linguistic behavior and variation during face-to-face communication. Sociolinguistics therefore requires both a microscopic and a macroscopic view of language,

enabling researchers to take into account both the structural properties of language and its social functions. Figure 1.1 illustrates the conceptual distinction between micro- and macro-sociolinguistics within the broader field of sociolinguistics.

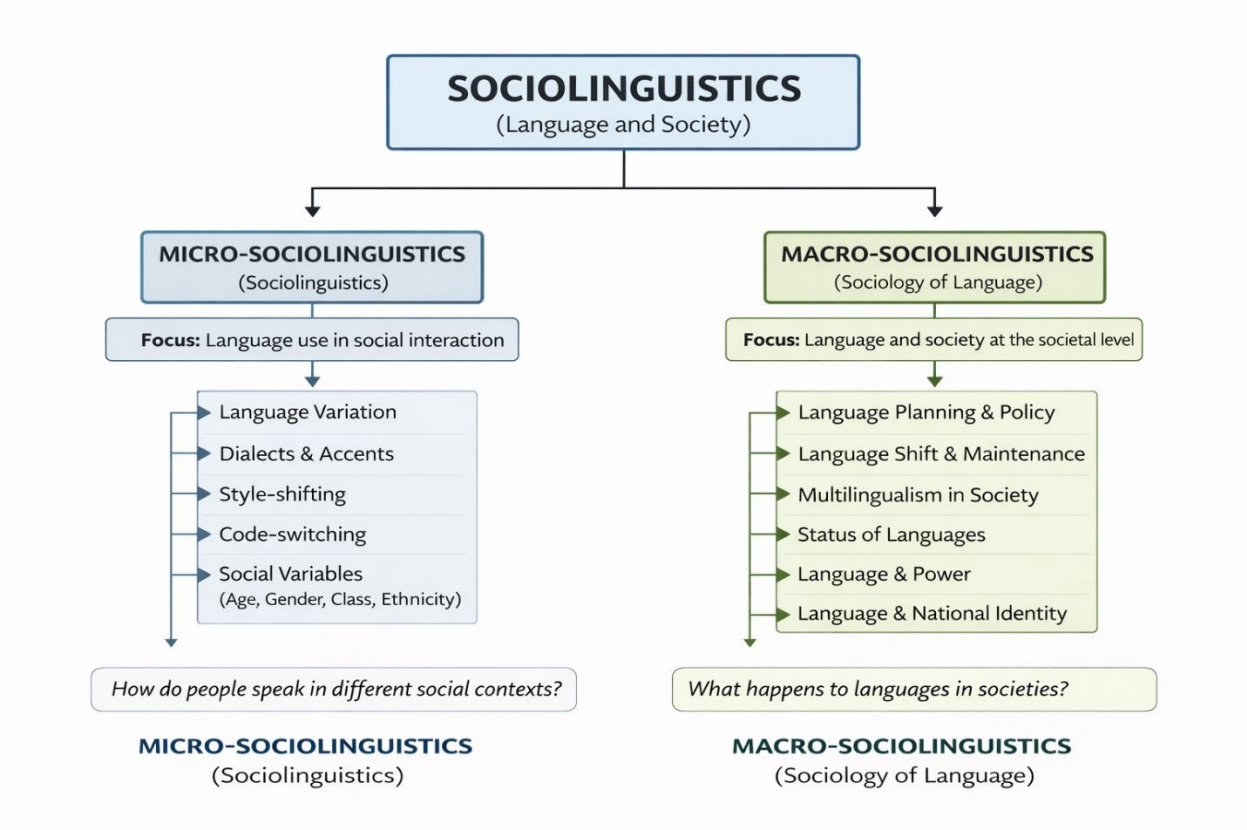



**Figure 1.1.** The Distinction between Micro-sociolinguistics (Sociolinguistics) and Macro-sociolinguistics (Sociology of Language)

## 1.3. Speech Community

The concept, *speech community*, has proved to be important in sociolinguistics in spite of a degree of conceptual *'fuzziness'* (Wardhaugh, 2010). One of the simplest definitions of *'speech community'* is that proposed by Bloomfield (1933) claimed that ***"a speech community is a group of people who interact by means of speech."*** (p.42). Bloomfield was among the first to prioritize social interaction as the defining feature of a community, rather than just geographical or political boundaries. He argued that the utility of language depends on members of a group using a shared system of speech-signals in a similar way to coordinate actions. However, Hockett (1958) referred

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to a speech community as ***"the whole set of people who communicate with each other, either directly or indirectly, via the common language."*** (p.8). In this definition, Hockett stressed the fact that the speech community is limited to the scope of a particular language system. In his view, people are considered members of the same speech community if they can communicate with one another. That is to say, vast communities—such as the English language speakers— as one *"speech community"* even if the members do not know each other, as long as they are part of a continuous chain of communication.

In the 1960s and 1970s, many scholars revisited and expanded the notion of the *speech community*. For instance, Labov's (1966) seminal research on New York City speech was particularly influential, as it shifted the focus from purely linguistic criteria to shared social evaluations within the community. As Labov noted:

***The speech community is not defined by any marked agreement in the use of language elements, so much as by participation in a set of shared norms; these norms may be observed in overt types of evaluative behavior, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to particular levels of usage.*** **(pp. 120–121)**

Labov (1966) further argued that all speakers in a community, regardless of social background, share similar attitudes toward standard speech norms. His study of New York City speech revealed that both lower working-class and higher social-class speakers held the same positive evaluation of post-vocalic **[r]** and, by extension, standard language varieties. Nevertheless, Labov's theory has been criticized by numerous researchers for over-emphasizing shared attitudes while underestimating linguistic and social diversity within communities. In contrast, Gumperz (1968) said that ***"the speech community refers to any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language use."*** He emphasized that a *"shared body"* of speech features must be used by all members of the community. Yet, he argued that a speech community might encompass more than one language variety. Meanwhile, John Lyons (1970) mentioned that ***"speech community refers to all the people who use a given language (or dialect)"*** (p.326). His definition focuses on the shared linguistic system rather than requiring shared rules for language use and social interaction. It comprises everyone who speaks a particular language or a dialect regardless of his/her physical location or interaction. Speech communities may also

overlap—particularly in cases involving bilingual individuals—and they do not necessarily exhibit social or cultural unity (Hudson, 1996). However, this definition has been widely criticized for neglecting the shared social and behavioral practices within the community. For instance, Troike (2003) notes that speakers of Cantonese and Mandarin, despite a low degree of mutual intelligibility, nevertheless consider themselves members of a single speech community. By contrast, speakers of Spanish in Spain and Argentina, although they enjoy a high degree of mutual intelligibility, do not perceive themselves as belonging to one common speech community.

A modern definition of *'speech community'* ***"is a group of people who share a set of norms and expectations regarding the use of language"*** (Yule, 2006, p.205). That is to say, the members of a given speech community understand and often enforce common rules about *how* to speak (e.g., politeness, formality, use of slang). Their regular communication solidifies these shared patterns, reinforcing collective beliefs about language. These communities are not always local; they can be formed by occupations, age groups (such as teenagers), religious affiliations, or online networks. In a similar vein, Wardhaugh (2010) states that "***a speech community is no more than some kind of social group whose speech characteristics are of interest and can be described in a coherent manner"*** (p.119). He adds that the concept of a *group* is difficult to define, yet it is important to grasp. For him, a group must consist of at least two members, although there is no upper limit to its size. People may form groups for one or more reasons: social, religious, political, cultural, familial, vocational, or avocational. A group may be temporary or quasi-permanent, and the purposes of its members—its *raison d'être*—may change over time.

A group is more than merely the sum of its members, since individuals may join or leave, may belong simultaneously to other groups, and may or may not interact face to face. The organization of a group may be tight or loose, and the importance of group membership is likely to vary among individuals, being extremely important to some and of little consequence to others. An individual's sense of identity is closely related to their feelings about the groups to which they belong, the degree of commitment (or rejection) they experience, and the success (or failure) they perceive within those groups.

In conclusion, members of any speech community share not only a common language variety but also similar social norms, patterns of speaking, and shared perceptions and attitudes toward their linguistic and cultural practices. Consequently, in order to adequately characterize a

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*speech community*, it is necessary to take into account sociocultural and attitudinal factors in addition to purely linguistic ones.

## 1.4. Linguistic Items

Hudson (1996) calls 'linguistic items,' such entities as sounds, words, grammatical structures, and so on. It is these items, their status, and their arrangements that linguists concern themselves with (p. 21). In other words, they are basic, individual units of language—ranging from sounds (phonemes) and words (lexemes) to phrases and sentences (constructions)—that serve as the building blocks for communication.

## 1.5. Linguistic Repertoire

The concept of *speech repertoire or linguistic repertoire* is most usefully applied to individuals rather than to groups, as it allows for the description of an individual speaker's communicative competence. Each person, therefore, has a distinctive speech repertoire. Nevertheless, since Platt and Platt (1975) consider both a community's and an individual's repertoire to be worthy of sociolinguistic analysis, they propose a distinction between the two (p. 36). Specifically, they suggest using the term *speech repertoire* to refer to the range of linguistic varieties utilized by a speech community and appropriately available to its members, while the term *verbal repertoire* is reserved for the linguistic varieties that are at the disposal of an individual speaker (Wardhaugh, 2010).

An individual also possesses a *speech repertoire*; that is, he or she has control over a number of varieties of a language, or of two or more languages. In many cases, individuals may have virtually identical repertoires (Wardhaugh, 2010). In such situations, it is possible to argue, as Platt and Platt (1975) do, that ***"a speech repertoire is the range of linguistic varieties which the speaker has at his or her disposal and which he or she may appropriately use as a member of a speech community."*** (p. 35).

To sum up, a *linguistic repertoire* can be defined as ***"the totality of the linguistic skills and vocabulary mastered by a particular individual, which enable him or her to communicate with others"*** (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 1994, p. 74). The linguistic repertoire of a speaker comprises at least one language or dialect and, by implication, naturally includes the speaker's idiolects (individual dialects). However, there are multilingual individuals whose linguistic repertoires

include several languages or dialects. For intercommunication to take place between individuals, their linguistic repertoires must overlap to some extent; that is, they must share a common linguistic repertoire (Ennaji & Sadiqi, 1994).

## 1.6. Language Varieties

If language is viewed as a broad phenomenon encompassing all the languages of the world, the term **language variety** (or simply *variety*) can be used to refer to its different manifestations, much as *music* can be understood as a general phenomenon with distinct varieties. What distinguishes one language variety from another is the set of linguistic features it contains. A *language variety* may therefore be defined as "a ***set of linguistic items that share a similar social distribution*****"** (Hudson, 1996, p.23).

Under this definition, a wide range of forms can be described as language varieties, including whole languages such as English or French, regional forms such as London English, functional styles such as the language of football commentaries, the speech forms used by members of a particular long-house in north-west Amazonia, or even the language or languages used by a single individual (Hudson, 1996).

In brief, language varieties are related to region, social class, educational background, and the degree of formality of a situation in which language is used. Such varieties of language include standard language, dialects, registers, pidgins, creoles, and so on.

### 1.6.1. Register

Most speakers of a language do not speak in the same way in all situations. They may use one variety when talking with friends, another during a job interview or while presenting a report in class, another when speaking to young children, and yet another when interacting with their parents. *These varieties, which are classified according to language use, are known as* **registers** (Liu & Wen, 2006).

Scholars have proposed various definitions of **register**. Ferguson (1994) states that "***people participating in recurrent communication situations tend to develop similar vocabularies, similar features of intonation, and characteristic elements of syntax and phonology that they use in these situations."*** (p.20). This type of variation is known as a *register*.

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In other words, register's special terms for recurrent objects and events, and formulaic sequences or 'routines,' seem to facilitate speedy communication; establish feelings of rapport, and fulfill purposes similar to the accommodation processes that influence dialect formation.

Wardhaugh (2010), on the other hand, claims that registers are ***"sets of linguistic items associated with specific occupational or social groups. Surgeons, airline pilots, bank managers, sales clerks, jazz fans, and pimps employ different registers"*** (p.52). Furthermore, Yule (2006) mentions that a *register* is a conventional way of using language that is appropriate to a specific context. Such contexts may be **situational** (*e.g., in church*), **occupational** (*e.g., among lawyers*), or **topical** (*e.g., when talking about language*). Specific linguistic features can be identified within different registers, such as the **religious register** (*Ye shall be blessed by Him in times of tribulation*), the **legal register** (*The plaintiff is ready to take the witness stand*), and the **linguistic register** (*In the morphology of this dialect, there are fewer inflectional suffixes*) (pp.210-211).

Of course, one person may control a variety of registers; for example, an individual may be both a stockbroker and an archaeologist, or a mountain climber and an economist. Each register helps individuals express their identity in a specific time or place, that is, how they seek to present themselves to others (Wardhaugh, 2010).

In brief, a register is a form of speech used by a speaker or a group of speakers generally sharing the same job or activity. Registers are connected with specific topics or fields. Thus, we may speak of the register of teaching, building, hunting, etc. A register may be either spoken or written.

### 1.6.2. Jargon

Jargon refers to specialized technical vocabulary *(e.g. plaintiff, suffix)* associated with a particular field of work or area of interest. From a social perspective, jargon functions to create and maintain a sense of belonging among those who identify as **insiders**, while simultaneously excluding **outsiders**. This exclusivity, especially evident in professional registers such as medical discourse *(e.g. Zanoxyn is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug used in the treatment of arthritis, bursitis, and tendonitis)*, often gives rise to criticism of what is commonly labeled *"jargonitis"*—the excessive or unnecessary use of specialized terminology (Yule, 2006, p.211).

### 1.6.3. Style

Language varieties differ from one another at all linguistic levels, they may also vary in terms of vocabulary, phonology, grammar, and semantics. They vary along several dimensions, one of the most important being **formality**. For example, people generally speak and write quite differently in *formal* and *informal* situations. *Formality* and *informality* can be viewed as opposite ends of a situational continuum along which forms of expression can be arranged (Liu & Wen, 2006). In linguistics, the transition between different levels of formality is specifically known as **style-shifting**. While the term **"style"** is often used broadly, the distinct levels themselves are called **registers**. Formal style is when we pay more careful attention to how we are speaking *(e.g., excuse me. Is the manager in his office?)* and informal style is when we pay less attention *(e.g., Hey, is that lazy dog still in bed)*. They are sometimes described as 'careful style' and 'casual style' (Yule, 1996, 2006).

The words *pickled*, *high*, *drunk*, and *intoxicated* generally share the same basic meaning, yet they clearly differ in their degree of formality. It is not difficult to rank these terms from the least formal to the most formal in the order given. There are, of course, many other expressions used to describe the state resulting from excessive alcohol consumption. In some contexts, a formal term such as *intoxicated* may be required, whereas in others, expressions like *drunk* or *under the influence* may be more appropriate. The term *bombed* is also used, particularly by younger speakers in highly informal situations. Indeed, one thesaurus lists more than 125 words or phrases for *intoxicated*; however, these expressions are far from being situationally equivalent (Liu & Wen, 2006).

*Style* is more formally encoded in some languages than others. French, for instance, has two pronouns *(tu and vous)*, corresponding to singular *you*, with the first reversed for close friends and family. Similar distinctions are seen in the *you* forms in German *(du and Sie)* and in Spanish *(tu and usted*). Differences can also be found in written language, with business letters (*e.g. I am writing to inform you…*) versus letters to friends (*Just wanted to let you know…*) (Yule, 1996).

### 1.6.4. Slang

Linguists do not offer a single, clear-cut definition of *slang*, but they generally agree that it is a dynamic and constantly evolving linguistic phenomenon found in all subcultures worldwide.

Some scholars argue that slang arises from the need to label new experiences that emerge with social change, time, and modernity. In an attempt to address the lack of definitional clarity, Dumas and Lighter (1978) propose that an expression qualifies as "true slang" if it satisfies at least two of the following criteria:

1. It temporarily diminishes the dignity of "*formal or serious speech or writing*" and is therefore likely to be regarded in such contexts as a conspicuous misuse of register.
2. Its use signals the speaker's familiarity with the referent or with a social group that regularly employs the term.
3. It is considered taboo in ordinary interaction with individuals of higher social status or greater authority.
4. It substitutes *a well-established conventional synonym*, often to avoid the discomfort associated with that term or the inconvenience of further explanation.

Similarly, Adams (2009) characterizes *slang* as "***very casual or writing words, expressions, or usages that are casual, vivid, racy, or playful replacements for standard ones, and are often short lived."*** (p.7). According to him, language is a **"liminal language,"** that is often difficult, even within context, to determine the interests or intentions it serves, as slang operates at the margins of language use. Slang dictionaries, which document thousands of such expressions, provide a broad empirical perspective on the social and linguistic forces that motivate the creation and use of slang (Partridge, 2002).

Therefore, a *slang* can be defined as a vocabulary (words, phrases, and linguistic usages) of an informal register, common in everyday conversation but avoided in formal writing and speech. It also often refers to the language exclusively used by the members of particular in-groups in order to establish group identity, exclude outsiders, or both (Slang, 2025, para 1). Examples of slang include *grass* for *marijuana*, *ghosted* to describe *ignoring someone*, and phrases such as *"ate and left no crumbs"* to express *praise and admiration*.

### 1.6.5. Idiom

According to McArthur (1992), an idiom is an expression unique to a language, especially one whose sense is not predictable from the meanings and arrangement of its elements, such as

*kick the bucket* a slang term meaning *'to die'*, which has nothing obviously to do with kicking or buckets. In linguistics, the term *idiomaticity* refers to the nature of idioms and the degree to which a usage can be regarded as idiomatic. Some expressions are more holophrastic and unanalyzable than others: for example, to take steps is literal and nonidiomatic in "*the baby took her first steps"*, is figurative, grammatically open, and semi-idiomatic in "*they took some steps to put the matter right"*, and is fully idiomatic and grammatically closed in "*she took steps to see that was done"* (p.497). Simply put, an *idiom* is that it is a phrase or sentence whose meaning is specific to the language and culture of its speakers and cannot be understood literally (Bernay & Carlson Berne, 2017). Table 1.1 summarizes the main differences between slang, idiom, and register.

| Feature | Slang | Idiom | Register |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Formality** | Very Low/Informal | Neutral/ Moderate | Neutral/ High |
| **Duration** | Short-lived (Trendy) | Long-lasting/Stable | Context Dependent |
| **Usage** | Specific sub-groups | General native speakers | Situational/ Functional |
| **Purpose** | To signal group belonging | Figurative description | To suit the context |
| **Examples** | "Bet," "Sus," "Fam" | "Piece of cake | Formal vs. Casual |

**Table 1.1.** Key Differences among Slang, Idiom, and Register

### 1.6.6. Argot

McArthur (1992) says that *argot* is derived from the French word *argot*, originally referring to a beggars' guild or criminal cant] – the specialized slang used by a restricted, often socially marginalized or suspect group. For example, Colin Smith (Observer, 26 May 1985) describes British soldiers in the Falkland Islands: ***"They have their own argot: they bimble, yomp, or tab across the peat and couth a shirt in readiness for a Saturday night bop with the Bennies (locals)."*** Similarly, the online *Merriam-Webster* dictionary refers to *argot* as the language used by a particular group of people, often consisting of a more or less secret vocabulary and idiom peculiar to that group. For example, Peter H. Lewis notes that in cyberspace, individuals can be

overwhelmed by thousands of critical messages—referred to as being "flamed" in the argot of online communities (Argot, 2026, para 1). An argot is used by various groups to prevent outsiders from understanding their conversations (Argot, 2026, para 3). It is a *"black talk"* or an *"obscure talk"*: a variety of words and phrases used by subcultures, cliques, minority groups, and professionals that are recognizable only to insiders of those groups (Ren, 2019).

### 1.6.7. Cant

*Cant* is a term referred to the chanting of friars, then to the singsong of beggars, and later to the language of members of the underworld. It denotes the specialized jargon of a class, group, or profession, often used to exclude or mislead outsiders. For example, a teenage gang member in Los Angeles might say that he was *"in his hoopty around dimday when some mud duck with a trey-eight tried to take him out of the box*" — meaning he was in his car around dusk when a woman armed with a 38-calibre pistol tried to shoot him. It is a highly changeable form of language: as outsiders adopt some expressions, the group invents new usages. Many cant terms eventually enter general slang. Examples include *moniker* (name), *bilk* (to swindle), *beef* (a complaint or to complain), and *hit* (to kill) (McArthur, 1992, p.188). Examples of *mafia cant* include words and phrases such as ***"Babbo":*** *a dope, idiot, or useless underling,* ***"do a piece of work":*** *to murder; see burn,* ***"going south":*** *stealing, passing money under the table, or going on the lam,* ***"sit-down":*** *a meeting with the Family administration to settle disputes.*

### 1.6.8. Taboo Words

Informal registers often include *slangs* and *taboo words* which are used within a particular social group, and which are avoided in more formal situations (Mesthrie et al., 2009).

*Taboo* is the prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. It is an extremely strong politeness constraint (Wardhaugh, 2010). Consequently, so far as language is concerned, *taboo terms* are words and phrases that people avoid for reasons related to religion, politeness and

prohibited behavior. They are often swearwords, typically 'bleeped' in public broadcasting (Yule, 2006).

### 1.6.9. Euphemisms

*Euphemisms* are more acceptable substitutes of taboo words. The word euphemism is taken from Greek and means *'sound good'* or *'good speech'*. *A euphemism* is a polite or more pleasant word or expression people use instead of a more direct one in order to avoid upsetting others. The use of euphemisms is not new. It is reported that the ancient Athenians used to cover up the ugliness of things with auspicious and kindly terms, giving them polite and endearing names. For example, they called taxes *contributions* (Liu & Wen, 2006).

*Euphemisms* are everywhere in English. For example, there are many ways to talk about **death and dying:** *to pass away, to expire, to be no more, to rest in peace, to be out of his or her misery, to go to his maker, to cross over the Great Divide, to go to his final resting place, go to a better place*. Euphemistic expressions are indirect and have positive connotations. Therefore, the reference to departure, rest, absence, and travel to another world, heaven, in the above expressions all soften the taboo subject of death. (Liu & Wen, 2006)

There are some terms that need to be explained which are related to language varieties, such as **prestige** and **speech accommodation**.

## 1.7. Prestige

Linguistic forms associated with higher-status speakers reflect **overt prestige**, widely valued in the community, while **covert prestige** reflects hidden social value within a group. Lower-working-class speakers may resist adopting higher-status features to maintain **group solidarity**, whereas some features associated with lower-status groups—like *I ain't doin' nuttin'* instead of *I'm not doing anything* — often carry covert prestige among younger middle-class speakers as markers of identity and peer-group belonging.

## 1.8. Speech Accommodation

Variation in speech style is also a function of speakers' perception of their listeners, not only of speakers' social class and attention to speech. This phenomenon is often referred to as **'audience design'**, but more broadly it is known as **speech accommodation**. The latter can be described as our ability to shift our speech toward or away from the perceived speech style of the people to whom we are talking. This involves adopting a speech style that converges toward the other person and using forms that are similar to those used by the people we are interacting with, a process described as **convergence** (Yule, 2006).

Below are some examples of a teenage boy asking to see some holiday photos. In the first example, he is talking to a friend, and in the second, he is talking to his friend's mother. The request remains the same, but the style is different – the speaker converges with the perceived speech style of the other (Yule, 2006).

*C'mon Tony, gizzalook, gizzalook.*
*Excuse me. Could I see your photographs too, Mrs. Hall?*

On the other hand, when a speech style is employed to emphasize social distance between speakers, the process is known as **divergence**. Speech divergence can take place by making use of overtly different forms. The speech style shifts notably in the third line compared to the first, used by a Scottish teenager (Yule, 2006).

*TEENAGER: I can't do it, sir.*
*TEACHER: Oh, come on. If I can do it, you can do it too.*
*TEENAGER: Look, I cannae dae it so . . .*

The sudden change in style seems to result not only from the need to add emphasis to his repeated statement but also from the teacher's claim that they are 'the same'. This shift in style not only reinforces his statement but also challenges the teacher's claim of similarity (Yule, 2006). Figure 1.2 shows the varieties of language in sociolinguistics.




**Figure 1.2.** An Overview of Language Varieties in Sociolinguistics

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## Conclusion

This overview has provided the scope and primary concerns of sociolinguistics within the field of linguistics. *Micro-linguistics* examines the internal structure of language, for example, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. On the other hand, *macro-linguistics*, and in particular, *sociolinguistics*, studies language as a social phenomenon that is both a product of and a contributor to social interactions. *Sociolinguistics*, which started developing in the late 1960s, is a field that studies how language varies amongst different social groups, geographical areas, and situations, and how these variations express identity, power, and social meaning.

Several scholars, including R. A. Hudson, William Labov, John J. Gumperz, Janet Holmes, Miriam Meyerhoff, and Ronald Wardhaugh, have provided definitions of sociolinguistics that highlight the relationship between social structure and linguistic structure, shared norms within speech communities, and the social evaluation of linguistic variants. All these views indicate that sociolinguistics has the major concern that goes beyond the language variations, but rather the social meanings attached to those variations.

Key concepts such as *language variety, speech community, and linguistic repertoire* demonstrate that language is multifaceted and influenced by *geography, social class, occupation, ethnicity, age, and situational context.* Rather than simply referring to language users, *speech communities* consist of people who share the same *social norms* and *expectations* regarding the use of a language. In the same way, a person's *linguistic repertoire* illustrates their communicative competence across a range of diverse linguistic varieties and registers.

The discussion of registers, style-shifting, slangs, jargons, idioms, argots, cants, and other communicative forms shows that linguistic variation occurs at multiple levels of formality and social context. Registers adapt language to situational contexts; slangs and argots are used to demonstrate a social group's identity and solidarity, while jargons reveal a community's specialized professional knowledge. Idioms, on the other hand, embody culturally embedded meanings. These forms of variation demonstrate that language is not static but is flexible, dynamic, and socially meaningful.

Finally, sociolinguistics reveals that language and society are inseparable. Language both embodies social identity, social relations, social hierarchies, and cultural values. Understanding language in a social context is just as important as examining the structural components of the language. As a result, sociolinguistics explains the essence of communication within and across communities, making it a fundamental field for understanding both linguistic behavior and social life.

## PRACTICE

**Activity One:** Choose the right answer.

**1.** *What does **register** refer to?*

**A.** The correctness of grammar **B.** Situation-based language use

**C.** Personal accent **D.** Regional dialect

**2.** ***Style** mainly depends on……..*

**A.** Place **B.** Topic **C.** Degree of formality **D.** Profession

**3.** *Which of the following is an example of **jargon?***

**A.** What's up? **B.** LOL **C.** Morpheme **D.** Break a leg

**4.** ***Argot** is best described as…….*

**A.** Everyday informal speech **B.** Professional technical vocabulary

**C.** Secret or coded vocabulary used by a specific group **D.** A regional accent

**5.** *Which pair belongs to the same category?*

**A.** Idiom — proverb **B.** Slang — jargon **C.** Jargon — argot **D.** Dialect — register

**Activity Two:** Say whether the following statements are **true/false.**

1. Style changes according to the social situation. (……)
2. Register and dialect mean the same thing. (……)
3. Slang is usually understood by outsiders. (……)
4. Jargon helps professionals communicate efficiently. (……)
5. Argot is intentionally exclusive. (……)

**Activity Three:** Match the example with the category.

| Example | Category |
|---|---|
| **1.** Spill the beans | **A.** Slang |
| **2.** Photosynthesis | **B.** Idiom |
| **3.** Bro | **C.** Jargon |
| **4.** Criminal coded vocabulary | **D.** Argot |

**Activity Four:** Provide concise responses to the questions below.

**1.** Define style and register in one or two sentences.

……
……
……

**2.** Why do professional communities create jargon?

……
……
……

**3.** Why do some communities create argots?

……
……
……

**4.** Provide one example of daily life slang and describe its meaning.

……
……
……

**Activity Five:** Discussion questions.

**1.** Can we say that some slangs have become standard languages? Explain with examples.

**2.** At what point does jargon become a barrier to communication rather than a helpful tool?

**3.** Why do younger speech communities generate fresh new slang terms in a community as opposed to the older ones that might already be in existence?

**4.** Is it true that argots focus more on secrecy than on identity?

**5.** Do social media platforms accelerate language variation?

**6.** Should teachers allow use of slang in academic writing? Why/why not?

**7.** How does altering register demonstrate politeness and social awareness?

**8.** Can misunderstanding register understanding lead to social tensions? Illustrate with an example from everyday life.

## Lecture Two: Dialectology

**By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:**

- Define **dialectology** and explain its scope and main concerns within linguistics.
- Differentiate between a **language** and a **dialect**, and critically discuss the linguistic and non-linguistic criteria used to distinguish between them (mutual intelligibility, political, cultural, and historical criteria).
- Define what is meant by a **standard language** and explain the processes involved in language standardization (selection, codification, elaboration, and acceptance).
- Distinguish between **dialect** and **accent**, explaining the linguistic levels involved (pronunciation vs. grammar and vocabulary).
- Provide a definition of **dialect** and shed light on its main **types** (e.g., regional, temporal, social, and individual).
- Explain the concept of a **dialect continuum** and illustrate how geographical proximity influences mutual intelligibility.
- Define **isoglosses** and describe their role in mapping dialect boundaries.

### Introduction

Languages are not a uniform or fixed systems; rather, they vary across regions, social groups, historical periods, and individual speakers. These different forms or variations are known as dialects, and the field that studies them is called *dialectology*. It is important to note, however, that the distinctions among varieties—and the classification of some as languages and others as dialects—are not based solely on linguistic features. Such distinctions also involve social, political, and cultural factors.

What, then, determines whether a variety is considered a language rather than a dialect? Is mutual intelligibility an adequate criterion for distinguishing between the two? Why do some varieties gain prestige and become standard languages while others remain labeled as dialects"? To what extent do structural linguistic differences matter, compared with political power and social values, in shaping these classifications?

## 2.1. Dialectology

*Dialectology* is the scientific study of dialects, which are linguistic varieties spoken in specific geographical areas and characterized by differences in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation from other varieties of the same language (Monka & Skovse, 2020, p.139; Yule, 2006; Liu & Wen, 2006).

## 2.2. Language and Dialect

This part examines two of the most widely recognized types of language variety: **language** and **dialect**. Each of these categories presents considerable difficulties. The problem lies not only in defining each term clearly and distinguishing it from the others, but also in establishing reliable criteria for identifying and delimiting varieties.

This distinction is **not universal.** Some cultures do not differentiate between *"languages"* and *"dialects"* in the same way. According to Haugen (1966), England itself did not make such a distinction until the *Renaissance*, when the word *dialect* was borrowed from Greek as a scholarly term. The Greek distinction developed because Classical Greece had several clearly differentiated written varieties, each associated with a specific region and literary tradition. Consequently, the original Greek meanings of the terms later translated into English as *language* and *dialect* were quite different from their present meanings in English. A comparison with French illustrates this further. The French word *dialecte* generally refers to regional varieties that are written and possess a literary tradition, whereas unwritten regional varieties are called *patois*. This comparison demonstrates that the English distinction between *language* and *dialect* is not absolute or universal, but culturally shaped (Yule,1996).

From a linguistic perspective, no variety of a language is inherently superior to another; they are simply different manifestations of the same linguistic system. However, certain varieties acquire greater prestige. The variety that eventually becomes the standard language is often a socially prestigious dialect, historically associated with a political or cultural center (for example, London in the case of British English and Paris in the case of French). Nevertheless, other regional varieties continue to exist and thrive alongside the standard form (Yule,1996).

## 2.3. The Delimitation of Languages and Dialects

In principle, people from different social backgrounds tend to speak different languages or dialects. The distinction between a dialect and a language is mainly sociocultural in nature, which explains the difficulty of establishing clear criteria for differentiating between them. Scholars have suggested different criteria for distinguishing language and dialect.

### 2.3.1. Hudson's Criteria for Distinguishing Languages and Dialects

Hudson (1996) suggested four criteria that are commonly used to distinguish between a language and a dialect.

1. **Possession of Literature:** According to this criterion, a language must have its own legacy of literature. However, this criterion is inadequate since all varieties including the most primitive ones possess some kind of literature, oral if not written or both.
2. **Mutual Intelligibility (Comprehensibility):** According to this criterion, two varieties of language are mutually intelligible if speakers of both varieties can understand each other. On the other hand, two varieties are mutually unintelligible, if speakers of these varieties cannot communicate with each other. Two mutually unintelligible varieties are generally regarded as two different languages.

Though mutual intelligibility is widely used, there are serious problems with its application. Popular usage does not correspond consistently to this criterion, as varieties that laypeople call different languages may be mutually intelligible (e.g., Scandinavian languages, excluding Finnish and Lapp). Conversely, varieties often categorized as the same language—such as the so-called dialects of Chinese—are not mutually intelligible.

Mutual intelligibility is a matter of degree, ranging from total intelligibility to total unintelligibility. It is not strictly a relationship between linguistic varieties but between people, as it is individuals, rather than the varieties themselves, who understand one another. Consequently, the level of mutual intelligibility depends not only on the overlap of linguistic items but also on the qualities of the speakers involved:

- **Motivation:** How much person **(A)** wants to understand person **(B).**
- **Experience:** The extent of previous exposure the hearer has had to the variety they are listening to. Naturally, the greater the previous experience, the higher the likelihood of understanding.

**Both of these qualities raise another problem regarding the use of mutual intelligibility as a criterion: it is not necessarily reciprocal.** Person **A** and Person **B** may not have the same degree of motivation to understand each other, nor the same level of previous experience with one another's linguistic varieties.

Typically, it is easier for **non-standard speakers** to understand **standard speakers** than vice versa. This occurs partly because non-standard speakers have more exposure to the standard variety through education and the media. Furthermore, they may be motivated to **minimize cultural differences** between themselves and standard speakers, whereas standard speakers may feel inclined to **emphasize these differences** to maintain social distance.

3. **Size:** According to this criterion, language is larger than a dialect, that is language contains more linguistic items (vocabulary, grammatical structures, phonological rules) than a dialect.
4. **Prestige:** According to this criterion, language is more prestigious than a dialect. In sociolinguistics, this viewpoint acknowledges that while all speech varieties are systematic and equal in their capacity for communication, one variety—the "language"—is socially, politically, and economically elevated above others, which are relegated to the status of "dialects" (Hudson, 1996). This hierarchy is often summarized by the maxim: ***"A language is a dialect with an army and a navy"*** coined by the famous Yiddish scholar, Max Weinreich (Abend, 2023).

Mutual intelligibility does not work as a criterion for delimiting languages in the “size” sense. There is no other criterion that is worth considering as an alternative; therefore, we must conclude that there is no real distinction to be drawn between *“language”* and *“dialect”*, except with reference to prestige, in which case it would be more appropriate to use the term “*standard language*” rather than simply “*language*” (Hudson, 1996).

In linguistic terms, differences between languages and dialects occur at the phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels. However, broadly speaking, the distinction

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between a dialect and a language is **socio-political** rather than **linguistic.** In this respect, Atkinson et.al (1982) remind us that: ***"the opposition between language and dialect bears on prestige and is usually associated with political or, at any rate, ethnic affirmation."*** (p.347). For instance, many countries have elevated their dialects to the status of languages. In the newly independent states of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia, the three varieties—Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian—have been accorded the status of official languages following the dismantling of former Yugoslavia.

### 2.3.2. Bell's Criteria for Distinguishing Languages and Dialects

Another sociolinguist, Roger T. Bell (1976), suggested seven criteria—standardization, vitality, historicity, autonomy, reduction, mixture, and de facto norms—to distinguish between a language and a dialect. According to him, these criteria help define what makes some languages more "developed" than others.

**1-Standardization:** It refers to the establishment of a language as a standard variety involves a series of deliberate processes. This includes the development of grammar books, dictionaries, and spelling books such as William Caxton's Bible translation, John Wycliffe's Bible translations, and Samuel Johnson's English dictionary. All these efforts require language codifiers to agree on which linguistic forms should be accepted and which should be excluded. As a result, once a standard language is established, there is often resistance to linguistic change, making the language easier to teach and regulate in formal contexts. Standardization, however, is not purely a linguistic process. It is closely connected to social, ideological, and political forces. Through standardization, certain varieties gain prestige and institutional support, while others may be marginalized. According to these criteria, *English* and *French* are considered highly standardized languages, whereas *Italian* has reached a slightly lower level of standardization. Standardization is an ongoing process in living languages, which evolve over time, such as French and German unlike dead languages such as Latin. However, it is less advanced in other languages such as Hindi due to literature deficiency and the fear of diminishing regional languages, which causes a lot of social resistance to the use of Hindi.

**2-Vitality** refers to the existence of a living community of speakers. This criterion helps to differentiate a living language from a dead one. A language which loses its vitality becomes dead

when there are no native speakers, and its sole surviving forms exist in a written form, which is studied and not used. Latin is dead because no one speaks it. Nevertheless, a language can still have power even when it is dead. For instance, Greek and Latin still have prestige in the Western world, so does Classical Arabic in the Islamic world.

**3- Historicity** refers to the extent to which a group of people derives a sense of collective identity from the use of a particular language. It represents one of the strongest forms of social bonding, whether the basis of unity is social, political, religious, or ethnic. Language may function as a central symbol of national or cultural solidarity. For example, during the nineteenth century, the unification of Germany was closely associated with the promotion of the German language as a marker of national identity. Historicity may also be long-standing; speakers of various colloquial forms of Arabic often emphasize their shared linguistic ancestry despite regional differences.

**4- Autonomy** refers to the perception that a language must be felt by its speakers to be distinct from other languages. This criterion is largely subjective, as it depends on the attitudes and beliefs of speakers rather than purely linguistic features. For instance, many Ukrainians view that Ukrainian is separate from Russian. In contrast, a large number of speakers of both Cantonese and Mandarin languages consider themselves to be speakers of the same language despite the obvious linguistic differences.

**5- Reduction** refers to the condition in which a linguistic variety is regarded as a sub-variety rather than an independent language. This status often results in limited functions, restricted domains of use, or fewer available linguistic resources. For example, a reduced variety may lack a standardized writing system or institutional support. There may be also restrictions in use; e.g., pidgin languages are reduced in their functions.

**6- Mixture** is the feelings speakers have about the 'purity' of the variety. This may be important to speakers of some languages than of others, e.g., more important to speakers of French and German than to those of English. This explains why speakers of pidgins and creoles have difficulty in classifying what they speak as full languages because these varieties are mixed of other standard language.

**7- De Facto Norms** refer to the widespread belief that within a language there are both *"good" speakers*, who represent the norms of proper usage, and *"poor" speakers* who deviate from these

norms. This perspective often leads to the elevation of a particular sub-variety as the model of "best" or "correct" usage, such as Parisian French in the case of French. When speakers collectively feel that their language is poorly spoken everywhere, the vitality of that language may be threatened. In such contexts, norms of linguistic behavior and attitudes of linguistic purism can become especially important among certain segments of society. In the case of English, there is even a profitable industry devoted to prescribing what is considered "correct" usage. These attitudes toward linguistic norms have significant consequences for understanding language variation and language change.

## 2.4. Standard Language

In George Bernard Shaw's play Pygmalion, there is an interesting passage:

***"A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere-no right to live, Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon."***

This passage suggests that one particular variety of a language may be regarded as superior to others, often because it is associated with writers and educated speakers. This dominant or prestigious variety is commonly referred to as the *standard variety or standard language*. It is the variety of a language that carries the highest prestige within a community or nation and is typically based on the speech and writing of educated native speakers. Although it is essentially an idealized variety, it exists for most people as the variety that is accepted as the official language of their community or country (Liu & Wen, 2006).

For example, **Standard English** is generally perceived as the variety found in printed materials such as newspapers and books. It is widely used in the mass media and is taught in most schools. It is also the variety typically taught to learners of English as a second or foreign language. Standard English is strongly associated with education and public communication, particularly in broadcasting, and it is often more easily described in terms of written features—such as vocabulary, spelling, and grammar—than spoken ones (Yule,1996).

In the Arab world, the standard language is **Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) (al-fusha).** In China, the standard language is **Putonghua**, which is widely used by national news broadcasters and other mass media. In Britain, **Received Pronunciation (RP)** is a prestigious accent traditionally associated with Standard British English. In the United States, the standard variety is often referred to as **Standard American English (SAE)**, a socially prestigious form commonly used in education, government, and the media. Other regional or social varieties may be described as Chicago English, Philadelphia English, or African American English (Liu & Wen, 2006).

### 2.4.1. Standardization of Languages

The concept of a *standard language* is somewhat imprecise, but a typical standard language generally undergoes the following processes (Haugen, 1966):

1. **Selection** – A particular variety of the language must be chosen to develop into the standard. This could be an **existing variety** spoken in an important political or commercial center, or an **amalgamation** of **several varieties**. The choice carries significant social and political weight because the selected variety gains **prestige**, and its native speakers benefit from this elevated status. In some cases, the chosen variety may have no native speakers at all, as in the case of **Classical Hebrew** in the so-called the state of Israel or the two **modern standards of Norwegian** (Haugen, 1994).

2. **Codification** – An authority, such as a **language academy**, produces dictionaries and grammar books to **formalize or fix** the variety. Codification ensures agreement on what is considered **correct usage.** Once this process is complete, it becomes necessary for anyone seeking social or professional advancement to learn the standard forms and avoid using "incorrect" forms from their native variety.

3. **Elaboration of Function** – The selected variety must be usable in all functions associated with government, administration, and written communication. This includes use in **parliament, law courts, bureaucratic documents, educational materials, scientific writing, and literature**. Developing the variety for these functions may require introducing new linguistic items, such as technical terminology, as well as creating conventions for using existing forms—e.g., how to write formal letters or formulate examination questions.

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4. **Acceptance** – The variety must be accepted by the relevant population as the standard for the community, usually as **the national language**. Once widely accepted, the standard language becomes a **powerful unifying force**, symbolizing the state's independence, distinguishing it from other states, and reinforcing national identity. It is precisely this symbolic role that motivates states to invest in developing a standard language.

However, it should be noted that some linguists include an additional stage between **"elaboration of function"** and **"acceptance"**, called **"implementation,"** which mainly involves governmental efforts to promote the use of the standardized variety (Yule, 2006).

## 2.5. Accent and Dialect

Every speaker has an accent, but some are more noticeable than others. A common misconception is that some people have accents while others do not, but all speakers pronounce language in ways that reflect their ethnic, educational, social, and geographical backgrounds. In simpler terms, *an accent* refers to **distinctive features** of **pronunciation** that indicate the social or geographical origins of an individual. A dialect, however, is broader in scope because it includes different aspects of **grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation** (Yule, 1996, 2006).

Consider the sentence *You don't know what you're talking about* will generally *'look'* the same whether spoken with an **American accent** or a **Scottish accent**. Both speakers will be using Standard English forms, but have different pronunciations. By contrast, the sentence *"Ye dinnae ken whit yer haverin' aboot"* conveys the same meaning as the previous example, but it represents a **Scottish English dialect** rather than Standard English. In this sentence, *whit* and *aboot* reflect differences in pronunciation, *ken* and *haverin'* illustrate different vocabulary, and *dinnae* **represents a distinct grammatical form used in Scottish dialects** (Yule, 1996, 2006).

## 2.6. Dialects

Long-established approaches to language variation existed even before sociolinguistics emerged as an independent discipline. Early scholars paid considerable attention to differences among language users, particularly those related to geographical location, historical period, and social position. A variety of a language that is used in a recognizable way within a specific region or by a particular social group is called a *dialect*.

A *dialect* is not inherently less complete, less logical, or inferior to a language. Rather, it is a variety that is sufficiently distinct to be identified as a separate entity, yet not sufficiently distinct to be classified as a separate language. In some cases, a dialect may gain prestige and eventually become the standard variety of a nation. Conversely, when speakers of closely related dialects belong to different nation-states, these dialects are often recognized as separate languages. This sociopolitical reality is captured in the well-known remark attributed to **Max Weinreich**: *"**A language is a dialect with an army and a navy.**"* (Liu & Wen, 2006). Dialects may also be referred to as by alternative terms such as **colloquial languages, vernacular languages, or informal languages**.

### 2.6.1. Types of Dialects

Dialects can be classified into several types based on factors such as **geographical region, time, social group, or ethnic community**, reflecting the ways in which language varies across different areas and social contexts.

#### 2.6.1.1. Regional/geographical Dialects

*Regional or geographical dialects* are varieties of a language spoken in specific geographical areas. Examples include the Cockney and Yorkshire dialects in Great Britain, the North Midland and South Midland dialects in the United States, and Cantonese dialect in Guangdong province in China. A regional dialect can convey a great deal of information about the speaker. In some Chinese films, Mao Zedong speaks Hunan dialect, which makes the story more authentic (Liu & Wen, 2006).

Regional variations, or dialects, exist in every language and can sometimes become a source of humor in informal contexts. In the United States, for example, a person from the **Brooklyn** neighborhood of New York may mock **a Southerner's** pronunciation when saying, **"I've bin sittin' here for tin min-its."** In response, a Southerner may jokingly ask what a **"tree guy"** is in **Brooklyn**. This question refers to the Brooklyn pronunciation **"doze tree guys"** (*doze = those*). These interactions illustrate the stereotypes associated with different regional accents (Yule, 2006).

Looking beyond stereotypes, researchers who study regional dialects have conducted extensive survey research to identify consistent features of speech in a particular geographical area compared to other regions. Such dialect surveys require meticulous attention to detail and usually rely on very specific criteria when selecting suitable informants. After all, it is crucial to ensure that the speech being recorded comes from a true representative of the regional dialect. As a result, the primary informants in the major dialect surveys of the twentieth century were **NORMS**, or **"non-mobile, older, rural, male speakers."** These speakers were selected because it was believed that they were less likely to be influenced by speech varieties from outside their region. One drawback of this criterion, however, is that the resulting dialect descriptions often reflect a period well before the time of the investigation. Nevertheless, the detailed data collected have provided the foundation for several **Linguistic Atlases** covering entire countries (e.g., England) or specific regions (e.g., the Upper Midwest of the United States) (Yule, 2006).

### 2.6.1.2. Isoglosses

Dialect geographers have always tried to represent their findings on maps in what they call **dialect atlases.** They attempt to show the geographical boundaries of the distribution of a particular linguistic feature by drawing a line on the map. Such a boundary is called an **isogloss; on one side of the line, people say one thing**, e.g., the pronunciation of *bath* with the vowel of *father*, and on the other side, they use a different pronunciation, e.g., the vowel of *cat*. It should be stated that when different linguistic features are mapped, there is a fair number of isoglosses that criss-cross one another. However, a few are noted to coincide, i.e. there is a bundle of isoglosses. Such a bundle is often said to indicate a **dialect boundary** (Wardhaugh, 2010). Similarly, Yule (2006) claims that the majority of people in one area say they carry things home from the store in a *paper bag* while the majority in another area say they use a *paper sack*, then it is usually possible to draw a line across a map separating the two areas. According to him, an **isogloss applies to only one linguistic feature (a word, pronunciation, or grammatical form).** When many isoglosses overlap, they can indicate a major dialect boundary. Figure 2.1 illustrates how isoglosses are distributed across a geographical area on a map.

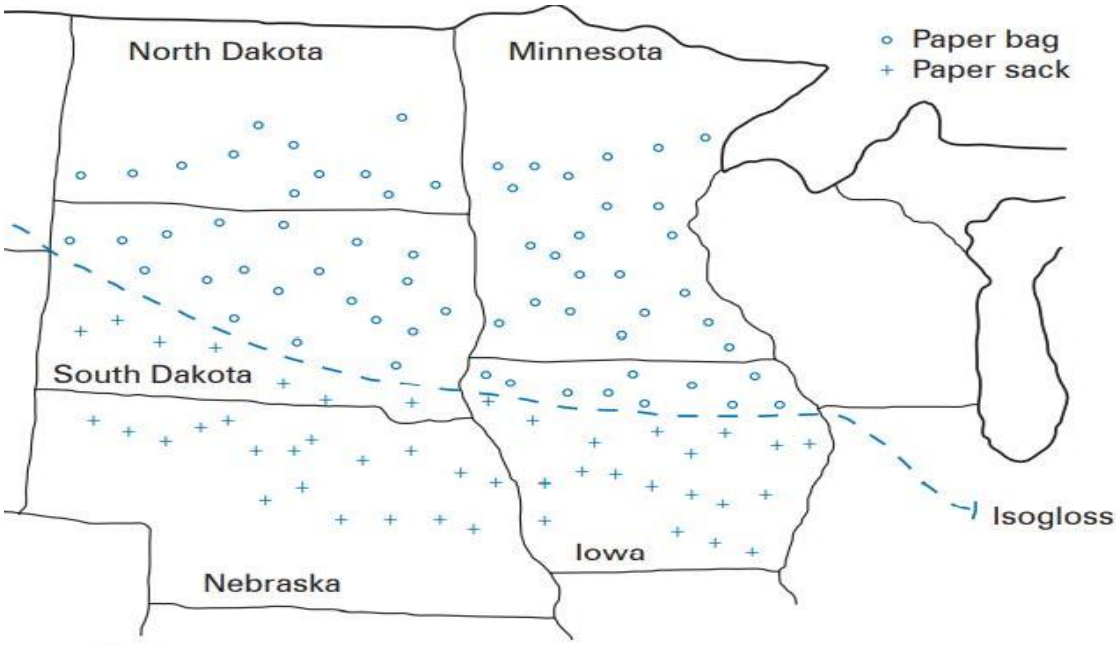



**Figure.2.1.** Map of the Upper Midwest illustrating the isogloss between "paper bag" and "paper sack" (adapted from George Yule, 2006, p. 197)

### 2.6.1.3. Dialect Continuum

The drawing of **isoglosses** and dialect boundaries is useful for gaining a broad understanding of regional dialects. However, it can give a misleading impression, because in most boundary areas, one dialect gradually merges into another rather than changing abruptly. With this in mind, regional variation is better understood as a **dialect continuum**, where differences between dialects gradually shift across regions instead of showing sharp breaks (Yule, 2006). According to Hudson (1996), a **dialect continuum** is a sequence of *neighboring varieties* in which *each adjacent pair* is *mutually intelligible*, while varieties at opposite ends of the continuum may not be understood by one another. A similar type of continuum can occur with related languages across political borders. For example, traveling from Holland into Germany, areas with concentrations of Dutch speakers gradually transition into regions where the local speech blends features of Dutch and German. As one moves further into Germany, the concentration of distinctly German speakers increases (Yule, 2006). Figure 2.2 illustrates how a dialect continuum extends across a geographical area on a map.

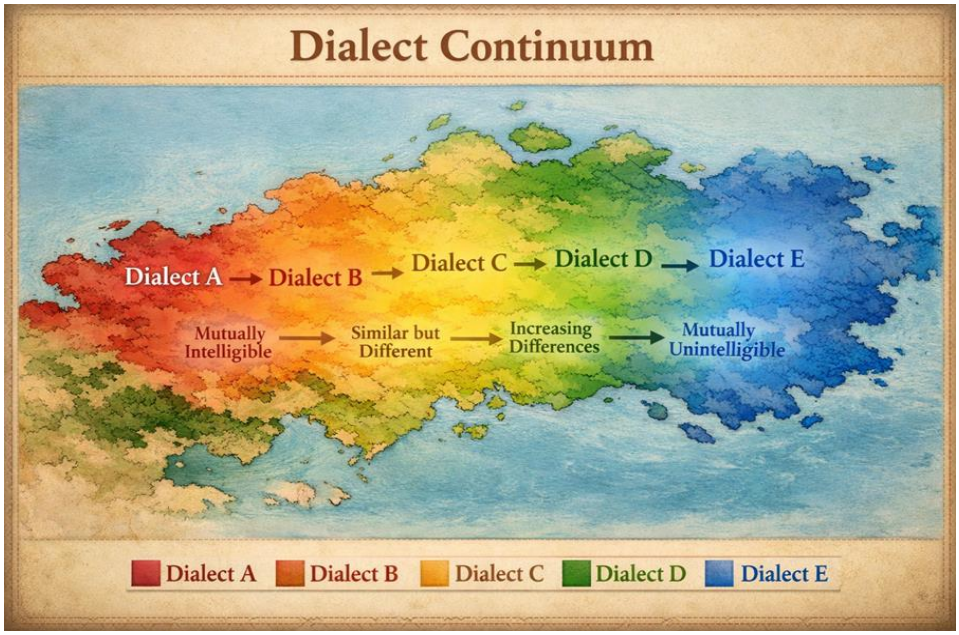



**Figure 2.2.** Geographical Distribution of a Dialect Continuum

Speakers who move across such border areas and use multiple varieties with relative ease are described as **bidialectal**, meaning they speak two dialects. Many people experience a form of bidialectalism in daily life, speaking one dialect at home or in the street and another in school. In some cases, however, the varieties may be entirely different languages. When individuals are proficient in two distinct languages, they are described as **bilingual** (Yule, 2006).

### 2.6.1.4. Temporal Dialects

Varieties of a language used at particular stages in its historical development are known as *temporal dialects*. In Arabic, for example, two major temporal varieties can be identified: Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, with several intermediate stages between them. In English, there are marked differences between Old English and Middle English, and between Middle English and Modern English. In Arabic historical television dramas, the main characters often speak something close to classical Arabic, which is very appropriate; at least they should not speak the youngsters' dialect of today, which would make them sound ridiculous (Liu & Wen, 2006). Figure 2.3 shows a comparison of Old English and Modern English excerpts from the renowned epic *Beowulf*.

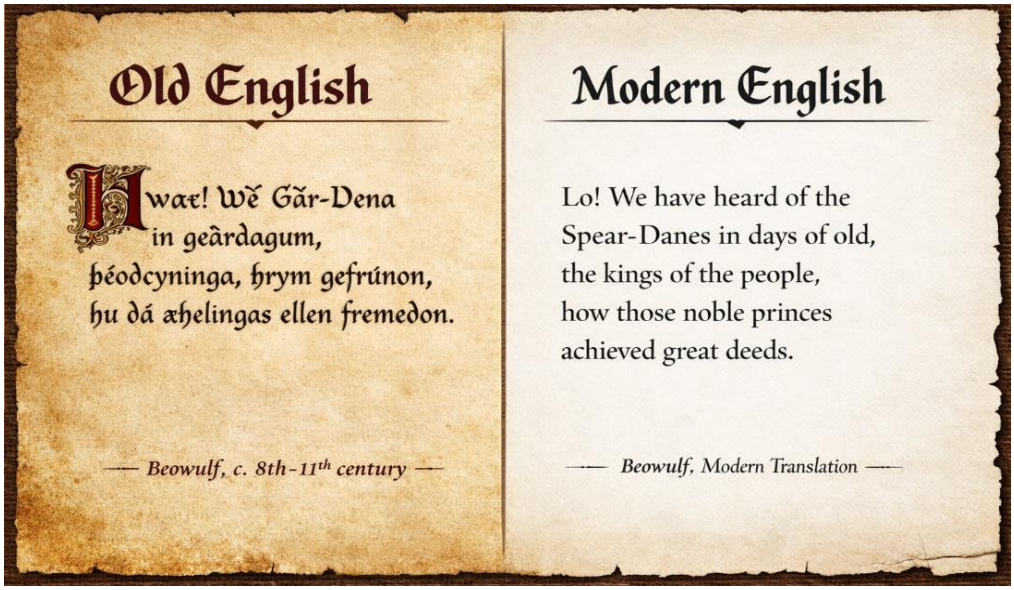



**Figure 2.3.** Illustrating the Evolution from Old English to Modern English through a Textual Example

### 2.6.1.5. Social Dialects or Sociolects

*Social dialects or sociolects* are varieties of language used by groups defined according to class, education, age, gender, and a number of other social parameters (Yule, 1996, p.240). Correspondingly, Liu & Wen (2006) state that social varieties of a language are the forms used by speakers who belong to specific social classes. Members of a speech community—that is, a group of people who share the use of a particular language or dialect—often organize themselves into groups for purposes such as mutual benefit, security, entertainment, or solidarity. As a result, they tend to adopt similar linguistic patterns. Consequently, language becomes highly stratified according to social divisions, including social class, occupational status, age, and gender. Sociolects can be classified as either high or low in social status, as illustrated by the following examples in English:

(1) *He and I were going there.* (higher-status sociolect)
(2) *'Im 'n me was goin' there.* (lower-status sociolect)

Sociolects are often confused with standard dialects because both are frequently interpreted in terms of prestige. Over time, however, the sociolect that enjoys the greatest social prestige within a society may eventually become recognized as the standard dialect of that language.

### 2.6.1.5.1. Sociolects in Relation to Education and Occupation

It is important to determine whether a group of speakers share similar educational backgrounds. Sociolinguistic studies have shown that speakers who leave the educational system at an early stage tend to use certain linguistic forms that appear less frequently in the speech of those who continue their education to the college level. For instance, expressions such as *Them boys throwed somethin'* or *It wasn't us what done it* are commonly associated with speakers who have spent less time in formal education (Yule, 1985, 1996, 2006).

In contrast, individuals who remain longer within the educational system often display more features in their spoken language that reflect prolonged exposure to written language. Consequently, forms such as *threw* are preferred over *throwed*, and *who* is more frequently used than *what* when referring to people. The remark that a teacher "talks like a book" may therefore reflect an extreme influence of written language on speech after many years of formal education (Yule, 1985, 1996, 2006).

In adulthood, the effects of educational experience are often reflected in an individual's occupation and socio-economic status. For example, the way bank executives speak to each other may differ noticeably from the way window cleaners communicate, providing linguistic evidence of the influence of social variables (Yule, 1985, 1996, 2006).

In one of the earliest sociolinguistic studies, Labov (1966) examined pronunciation differences among salespeople in three department stores in New York City. These stores represented different socio-economic levels: Saks Fifth Avenue, which sold expensive items and catered to an upper-middle-class clientele; Macy's, which offered moderately priced goods and represented the middle class; and Klein's, which sold cheaper items and was associated with the working class. Labov visited each store and asked salespeople questions such as *Where are the women's shoes?* in order to elicit the response *fourth floor*. This phrase provided two opportunities to observe the pronunciation—or absence—of postvocalic /r/, that is, the /r/ sound occurring after a vowel and before a consonant or at the end of a word.

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In the department stores, a consistent pattern appeared in the responses. The higher the socio-economic status associated with a store, the more frequently the /r/ sound was pronounced. Conversely, in stores with lower socio-economic status, employees tended to produce fewer /r/ sounds. As a result, the frequency with which this linguistic variable (/r/) occurred could be used to distinguish speech associated with the upper-middle class, the middle class, and the working class. Subsequent studies of New York City speech confirmed the existence of this same systematic pattern.

### 2.6.1.5.2. Sociolects in Relation to Age

Even among speakers who belong to the same social class, linguistic differences can still be observed, often related to factors such as the age or gender of the speakers. For instance, younger people living in a particular region may examine the results of a dialect survey conducted mainly with older informants and remark that such expressions are used by their grandparents rather than by their own generation (Yule, 1996, 2006).

Age-related variation is especially evident between grandparents and grandchildren. For example, a grandfather might still refer to the *icebox* or the *wireless*, while he may find it difficult to understand the language used by his teenage granddaughter, who prefers to say what *rules*, what *sucks*, what's *totally stoked* (Yule, 2006).

### 2.6.1.5.3. Sociolects in Relation to Gender

In recent years, there has been growing interest in how dialects vary according to the speaker's gender. Dialect studies have consistently shown that female speakers tend to use forms of a dialect that are socially more prestigious than those used by male speakers of the same social class. For example, male speech is more likely to include variants such as *I done it*, *it growed*, and *he ain't*, while female speech tends to feature *I did it*, *it grew*, and *he isn't* (Yule, 1996).

Cross-cultural examples of gender-specific language use are abundant. In the **Sidamo** language of Ethiopia, men and women do not simply select from the same set of words; certain words are unique to each gender. For instance, the word for "milk" is *ado* when spoken by a man and *gurda* when spoken by a woman. Similarly, several Native American languages, such as **Gros Ventre** (Montana) and **Koasati** (Louisiana), have speech patterns considered appropriate for each gender. In **Japanese**, men traditionally use *boku* to refer to themselves, while women use *watashi*

or *atashi*. In **Portuguese**, expressions of gratitude are gender-specific: men say *obrigado*, and women say *obrigada* (Yule, 2006).

Several studies examining interaction and conversation styles in contemporary English have revealed clear differences between men's and women's speech. In same-gender conversations, women are more likely to discuss *personal feelings*, while men tend to focus on *general, non-personal* topics such as sports or politics. When responding to emotionally charged statements, women often share *personal experiences* relevant to the situation, whereas men are more likely to offer *problem-focused solutions*.

Research in American English has shown that women typically use language to cooperate and build *social connections (solidarity)*, whereas men often use language to assert dominance and control within interactions, they seek *power* via language. In mixed-sex conversations, men are considerably more likely to interrupt women than vice versa. Women also tend to use more *tentative language*, employing hedges (e.g., *sort of, kind of*) and tag questions (e.g., *isn't it?*, *don't you?*) to soften statements or invite agreement. For example: *Well, em, I think that golf is kind of boring, don't you?* (Yule, 1996).

### 2.6.1.5.4. Sociolects in Relation to Ethnicity

In a more serious perspective, we can observe that within any society, differences in speech may arise because of the presence of different ethnic groups. In very noticeable ways, the speech of recent immigrants—and often that of their children—contains identifiable linguistic features. In some communities, where there is strong loyalty to the group's original language, many linguistic characteristics are transferred into the new language. One well-known example is **African American Vernacular English (AAVE)**, also referred to as **Black English** or **Ebonics**. This variety is used by many (though not all) African Americans, as well as by other speakers such as some Puerto Rican communities in New York. AAVE has a number of distinctive linguistic characteristics that differentiate it from **Standard English** (Yule, 1996, 2006).

A common phonological feature in AAVE and other English vernacular varieties is the **reduction of final consonant clusters**. Words ending in two consonants, such as *left hand*, may be pronounced as if they contain only one consonant (e.g., *lef han*). This process can also affect the pronunciation of past tense forms ending in *-ed*. Consequently, expressions such as *iced tea*

and *I passed the test* may sound like *ice tea* and *I pass the tess*. Another phonological characteristic involves **initial dental consonants**. Sounds such as /θ/ and /ð/ (as in *think* and *that*) are often realized as alveolar stops /t/ and /d/, producing forms like *tink* and *dat*. As a result, the definite article *the* may be pronounced as *də*, as in the expression *You da man!*.

AAVE also displays distinctive **morphological features**. For instance, possessive *–'s* (as in *John's girlfriend*) and the third-person singular *–s* (as in *she loves him*) are often absent, resulting in forms such as *John girlfriend* and *she love him*. In addition, when plural meaning is already clear from context or numerical expressions, the plural marker *–s* may be omitted (e.g., *two guy*, *one of my friend*). However, it is mainly in the domain of **grammar** that AAVE has often been stigmatized as being "illogical" or "sloppy." One commonly criticized feature is the **double negative construction**, as in *He don't know nothin* or *I ain't afraid of no ghosts*. Because the negative element appears more than once, such structures have been labeled "illogical," based on the assumption that two negatives cancel each other out. Nevertheless, similar structures occur in many other dialects of English and in other languages. For example, in French one finds the expression *il ne sait rien* ("he does not know anything"), and in Old English double negatives were also common. These constructions are not inherently illogical; rather, they often serve to **intensify the negative meaning**, as in *He don't never do nothin* (Yule, 2006).

Another source of criticism concerns the **absence of forms of the verb "to be"** in sentences such as *You crazy* or *She workin now*. A more accurate explanation is that in contexts where *are* and *is* can be contracted in casual **Standard English** (e.g., *You're*, *She's*), they may simply be omitted in AAVE. While formal styles of Standard English require the presence of *are* and *is* in such constructions, many regional dialects do not. Moreover, many other languages—such as Arabic and Russian—also omit forms of the verb *to be* in similar contexts. Therefore, this feature cannot be described as "sloppy" any more than it would be considered incorrect in those languages (Yule, 2006).

Finally, although AAVE speakers often omit the auxiliary verb *is* in sentences such as *She workin now* to describe a current action, they may use the form *be* to indicate **habitual or repeated actions**, as in *She be workin downtown now* (Yule, 2006).

### 2.6.1.6. Individual Dialects or Idiolects

An idiolect refers to the particular variety of language used by an individual speaker, characterized by distinctive features of pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Each person within a speech community communicates in a slightly different way and makes unique choices of words and expressions to convey ideas. These individual differences highlight the personal linguistic traits of each speaker. For this reason, no two individuals speak exactly the same dialect. Every speaker possesses certain distinctive features in their manner of speaking, which form their personal linguistic style. When we refer to "Shakespeare's language" or "Lu Xun's language," we are actually referring to their individual idiolects, that is, the unique linguistic patterns that characterize their personal use of language (Liu & Wen, 2006). Figure 2.4 demonstrates language variation and dialectology: types, features, and social influences.

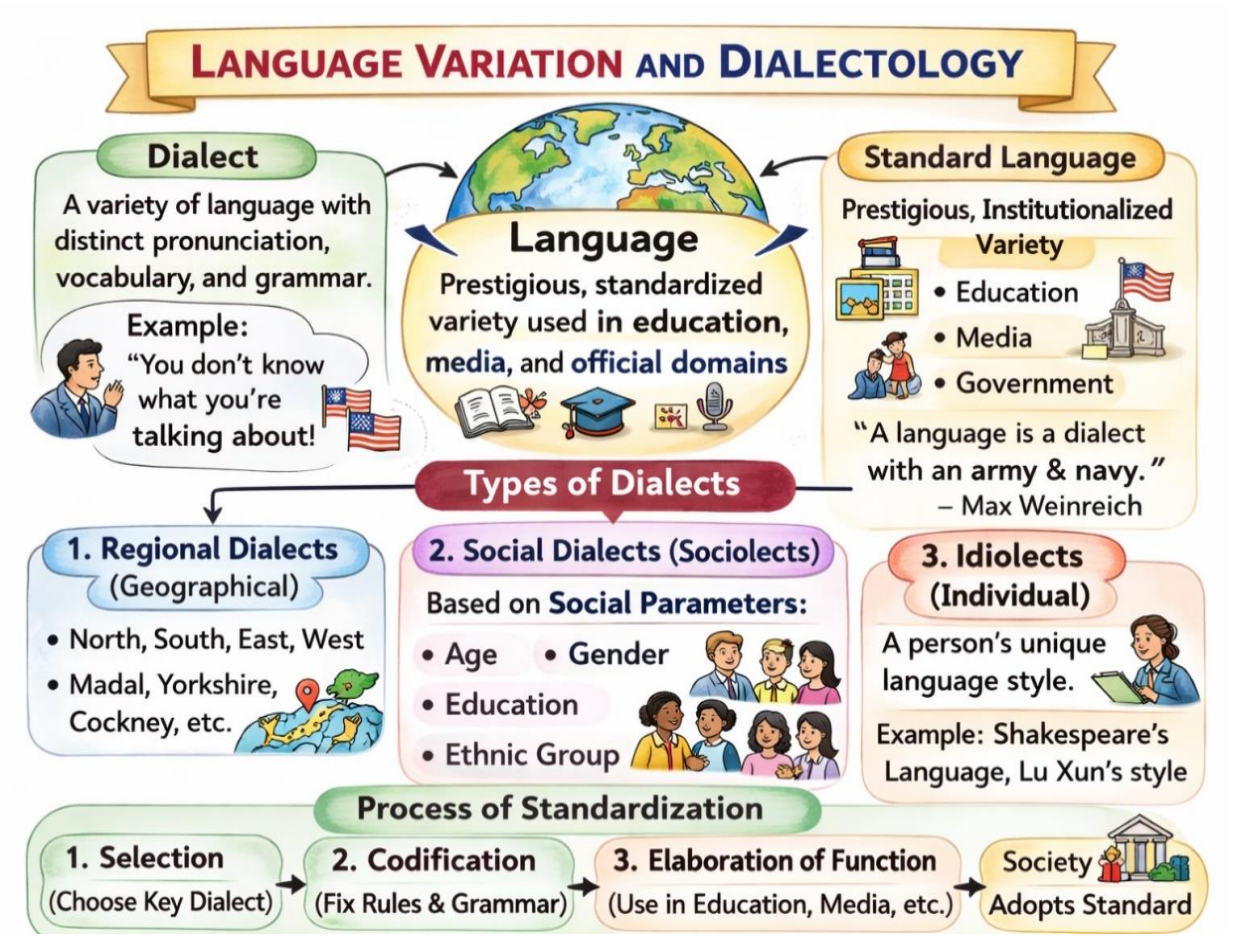



**Figure 2.4.** Language Variation and Dialectology: Understanding Varieties of Language

## Conclusion

Language is not a fixed or uniform system; rather, it is inherently variable that is often influenced by a wide range of linguistic, social, historical, and political factors. Language tends to vary over time, as do the people who use it, the contexts where it is utilized, and the social and political factors that support its use. Dialectology, or the study of language variation, shows that there are linguistic differences in language not only across geographical regions but also across social groups, historical periods and even individual users. The variations are apparent in dialects which differ in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and usage but are completely systematic and capable of communicating complex ideas.

A notable focus in dialectology and sociolinguistics concerns the difference between a language and a dialect. There are critics who caution against setting distinctions without defining measurable and observable criteria. For instance, some criteria that emerge include mutual intelligibility, size, and the possession of a standard or formal literature. In practice, language and dialect distinctions are less about structural linguistic differences and more about the sociopolitical factors such as prestige, national identity, and political authority. This utility is famously reflected in the quote, “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy.”

The emergence of standard languages is another issue which shows how social forces play a role in determining language hierarchies. A particular variety of a language may gain prestige and become the recognized standard after going through the four key processes – selection, codification, elaboration of function, and acceptance – as identified by Einar Haugen. The standardized variety typically becomes associated with education, administration, and mass media, while other varieties persist to exist as regional or social dialects.

Language variation is also manifested in a number of forms. Regional dialects reflect geographical differences, temporal dialects represent historical stages of a language, and social dialects—or sociolects—are associated with social class, education, occupation, age, and gender. In addition, every individual speaker possesses an idiolect, which represents their unique way of using language. These different forms of variation demonstrate that linguistic diversity is a natural and inevitable characteristic of human language.

Finally, the study of dialects shows the complex relationship between language and society. Although all dialects are linguistically systematic and equally capable of communication, socio-political attitudes have assigned greater prestige to some varieties over others. Knowing this reality allows linguists to better understand language as a reflection of social structures, cultural identities, and patterns of human interaction. Therefore, dialectology is not only an offshoot of the scientific study of language but also a study of the social factors that shape language diversity.

## PRACTICE

**Activity One:** Choose the right answer.

**1.** *The scientific study of …… is called* ***dialectology****.*

**A.** Methods of teaching language **B.** Dialects and language variation
**C.** Theory of translation **D.** Language acquisition

***2.*** *According to* ***Hudson*** *(1996), one of the criteria used to distinguish a language from a dialect is……...*

**A.** Phonetic similarity **B.** Prestige **C.** Number of speakers **D.** Spelling system

**3.** ***Mutual intelligibility*** is when……..

**A.** Two varieties have the same grammar
**B.** Speakers of two varieties can understand each other
**C.** Two languages have a lot of vocabulary in common
**D.** Languages belong to the same family

**4.** *The quotation* ***"A language is a dialect with an army and a navy"*** *is attributed to*

**A.** William Labov **B.** George Yule **C.** Max Weinreich **D.** Edward Sapir

**5.** *The* ***dialect*** *in a specific* ***geographical area*** *is called……*

**A.** Sociolect **B.** Regional dialect **C.** Idiolect **D.** Temporal dialect

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6. *In sociolinguistics, a **sociolect** is principally associated with:*

**A.** Geographic position **B.** Historical time **C.** Social tier or group **D.** Personal preference

7. *An **idioclect** is a term which refers to*:

**A.** The tongue of a specific nation
**B.** The personal variation of a speaker
**C.** The societal accepted language
**D.** A language of a specific historical era

8. *The term used to describe the process of construing dictionaries and grammar books **to fix a language** form is called:*

**A.** Codification **B.** Selection **C.** Elaboration **D.** Acceptance

**Activity Two: Say whether the following statements are true/false.**

1. Language as a means of social communication is a homogeneous system with a homogeneous group of speakers. (.....)
2. Mutual intelligibility is always a reliable criterion to distinguish languages from dialects. (.....)
3. Some varieties may be considered languages due to political and social factors. (.....)
4. Standard languages usually develop from socially prestigious dialects. (.....)
5. A dialect includes differences in pronunciation only. (.....)
6. Regional dialects are varieties spoken in specific geographical areas. (.....)
7. A dialect continuum refers to gradual changes in language across regions. (.....)
8. An idiolect represents the unique language use of an individual speaker. (.....)

**Activity Three: Provide concise responses to the questions**

1. What is the **branch of linguistics** that studies dialects called?

.....

.....

.....

**2.** Why is it often difficult to distinguish between a **language** and a **dialect?**

……
……
……

**3.** What is meant by the term **mutual intelligibility?**

……
……
……

**4.** What are two criteria proposed by **Richard A. Hudson (1996)** for distinguishing a language from a dialect?

……
……
……..

**5.** What is meant by the term **standard language?**

……
……
……

**6.** According to Einar Haugen, what are **two stages** involved in the development of a standard language?

……
……
…….

**7.** What is a **regional dialect**?

……
……
……

**8.** What is meant by the term **sociolect**?

……
……
……

**9.** What is an **idiolect?**

……
……
……

**10.** In dialect geography, what is meant by the term **isogloss?**

……
……
……

**Activity Four:** Discussion

**1.** Is **mutual intelligibility** a reliable criterion for distinguishing a language from a dialect? Explain.

**2.** Explain how **political and social factors** affect whether a variety is referred to as a language or a dialect?

**3.** Why do some dialects gain prestige and become **standard languages**, whereas other dialects continue to be considered non-standard?

**4.** Do you think all **dialects** should be treated **equally** in **education** and the **media**? Explain and justify your opinion.

**5.** Can you spot any examples of **dialect variation** in your **country** or **region**? What differences are identified in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar?

## Lecture Three: Bilingualism and Diglossia

**Objective of the Course:**

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

- Understand and define concepts of bilingualism and diglossia.
- Identify and explain various classifications of bilinguals, such as balanced versus dominant, early versus late, and simultaneous versus sequential bilinguals.
- Analyze the functional distribution of languages across the various domains of use.
- Identify the relationship between diglossia and bilingualism – and describe the four possible scenarios of this relationship.

### Introduction

Bilingualism and diglossia are important sociolinguistic concepts that describe the use of different language varieties by individuals and communities. Bilingualism refers to the ability of an individual to use two languages, while diglossia refers to the functional distribution of two varieties of the same language across different social domains. This brings about the questions: How do social domains determine the selection of a language in a given communicative situation? What social factors contribute to the development of bilingualism? What are the different types of bilingualism? It also calls for an investigation into the degree of interrelation between bilingualism and diglossia. Addressing these questions will give us an insight into the extent to which social, cultural, and institutional factors influence linguistic behavior.

## 3.1. Bilingualism Definition

Contrary to what is often believed, most of the world's population is bilingual or multilingual. Monolingualism is characteristic of only a minority of the world's population. According to figures reported in 1990, there are between five and eight thousand different ethnic groups living in approximately 160 nation-states. Moreover, scholars estimate that more than 5,000 distinct languages are spoken within this relatively small number of nation-states. What becomes evident from these figures is that very few nations are either monolingual or monoethnic (Valdés, 1993).

*Bilingualism* refers to the ability to use two languages (Verplaetse & Schmitt, 2010). Fluency in a second language requires competence in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing (Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). In practice, however, some of these skills are often less developed than others, and few bilinguals are equally proficient in both languages. Even when one language is dominant, performance in the other language may be superior in certain situations (Grosjean, 1985, 1989). For example, someone who is generally stronger in Russian language than in English language may find it easier to talk about baseball in English. Native speakers of two languages are sometimes referred to as *equilinguals* or *ambilinguals* when their mastery of both languages is equal (Oregon Labor Trends, 2001).

Some bilinguals are individuals who were raised by parents who each spoke a different language, or who spoke a language different from the one used in school. In some countries, particularly those with two or more official languages, schools encourage bilingualism by requiring intensive study of a second language. Bilingual speakers sometimes exhibit *code-switching*, that is, switching from one language to another in the middle of a conversation or even within the same sentence. This switching may be triggered, for example, by the use of a word that is similar in both languages (Heredia & Altarriba, 2001).

## 3.2. Domains or Fields

There are many types of bilingual individuals, and similarly, there are different kinds of bilingual communities. Nonetheless, most—if not all—bilingual communities share one common feature: a fairly clear functional differentiation between the two languages with respect to what linguists refer to as *domains*. Domains are theoretical constructs that explain the contexts in which

a particular language variety is used. They depend on factors such as the participants involved, their role relationships, the topic being discussed, and the setting (Fishman, 1972c). For example, language choice and use may vary across domains such as family, friendship, education, or transactional contexts. Thus, one language variety may function as the language of the home; that is, it is typically used for informal communication among family members about domestic matters. However, another language may be used outside the home, or even within the home when strangers are present or when the topic of conversation extends beyond domestic concerns.

## 3.3. Types of Bilingualism

The study of bilingualism has not been exempted from the scholarly tendency to create dichotomies. Common examples include *societal* versus *individual bilingualism, perfect (balanced)* versus *imperfect (dominant/unbalanced) bilingualism*, *coordinate* versus *compound bilingualism*, *early* versus *late* bilingualism, *simultaneous* versus *successive/sequential bilingualism*, and so on.

### 3.3.1. Societal Versus Individual Bilingualism

*Societal bilingualism* refers to the sociolinguistic situation of a community that has adopted two or more languages as official, national, or regional languages (Sebba, 2011). Well-known examples of bilingual countries include Canada, Cyprus, Finland, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico.

*Individual bilingualism (bilinguality)*, however, refers to a person's ability to produce or understand two languages. Some linguists have adopted a narrow definition, arguing that only individuals whose proficiency closely resembles that of two monolingual speakers should be considered bilinguals (e.g., Bloomfield, 1933). In contrast, more recent researchers studying bilingual and multilingual communities around the world advocate a broader definition. They view bilingualism as a common condition that enables individuals to function, to varying degrees, in more than one language. From this perspective, a bilingual individual is not necessarily someone with equal or native-like competence in two languages, but rather one type along a continuum of bilingual abilities. Accordingly, individuals who can, to any extent, comprehend or produce spoken or written utterances in more than one language may be considered bilinguals (e.g., Grosjean, 1985, 1989).

### 3.3.2. Perfect (Balanced) Versus Imperfect (Dominant/Unbalanced) Bilingualism

The distinction between *perfect (balanced)* and *imperfect (dominant or unbalanced)* bilingualism is based on the relationship between the fluency and proficiency of the respective languages that bilinguals master. Those who acquire similar degrees of proficiency and mastery in both languages are defined as *balanced* or *perfect bilinguals*. In other words, *perfect bilingualism* refers to a full range of competence in both languages comparable to that of a native monolingual in one (Peal & Lambert, 1962).

*Perfect or balanced bilingualism*, if it exists at all, is extremely rare, because individuals are seldom in a position to use each language across a full range of situations and thus acquire the requisite competence. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for people to approximate perfect bilingualism, being equally competent in both languages across a fairly wide range of situations (Lyons, 1981).

In contrast, *dominant (or unbalanced/imperfect) bilingualism* refers to individuals whose proficiency in one language is higher than in the other language(s). Put differently, in unbalanced bilingualism, the individual is more proficient and competent in one of the two languages, whereas a balanced bilingual is more or less equally competent and proficient in both (Peal & Lambert, 1962).

### 3.3.3. Coordinate, Compound, and Subordinative Bilingualism

This dichotomy was suggested by Weinreich (1953). According to him, whether bilinguals have acquired both languages simultaneously in childhood or have acquired one as their first language and the other somewhat later, they can be classified from a psycholinguistic viewpoint as *compound* or *coordinate* bilinguals according to whether the two language systems are integrated as one at some fairly deep level of psychological organization, or stored separately. Supposedly, the *compound bilingual* has one semantic system and two codes; the *coordinate bilingual* has two semantic systems and two codes. In *compound bilinguals*, two sets of linguistic codes (e.g. 'House' and 'Maison') are stored in one meaning unit; that is, one system of meaning serves both the mother tongue and the second language. By contrast, in *coordinate bilingualism,* each linguistic code is stored and organized separately in two semantic systems, so the bilinguals have two distinct systems of meaning—one for L1 and the another for L2. Furthermore, Weinreich suggested a third

type of bilingualism that is *subordinative*, in which one language is dominant and the other is subordinate. The latter involves a process of translation from the dominant language at a fairly superficial, though not necessarily conscious, level of the psychological programming of utterances. In *subordinate bilinguals*, linguistic codes of the second language (L2) are understood and interpreted through the first language (L1). More specifically, they are considered to possess two sets of linguistic codes, however, only one semantic system, which is accessible merely through L1.

### 3.3.4. Additive Versus Subtractive Bilingualism

According to Lambert (1974), there is a classification of bilinguals based on the impact of a second language (L2) on the first language (L1). This distinction gives rise to two types: *additive bilingualism* and *subtractive bilingualism*.

*Additive bilingualism* is an individual's acquisition or development of an L2 without compromising their proficiency in their L1. This is more likely to happen in a context in which both languages are socially valued and supported. Therefore, the development of the L2 does not interfere with the development of the L1, and both language systems develop and are reinforced simultaneously.

On the other hand, *subtractive bilingualism* occurs when the process of acquiring an L2 results in a decrease in proficiency in the L1. This normally happens in an environment where the use of the second language (L2) takes precedence over and is more preferred than the first language (L1). As a result, while proficiency in the L2 grows, the L1 may be weakened or gradually replaced. In such cases, therefore, the second language develops at the expense of the first.

### 3.3.5. Early Versus Late Bilingualism

Bilinguals can also be categorized into early and late bilinguals according to the age of exposure to two (or more) languages. *Early bilingualism* is defined as the acquisition of more than one language during the pre-adolescent phase of life, whereas *late bilingualism* is defined as the acquisition of one language first and another language after puberty.

*Early* and *late bilinguals* are distinguished based on their attainment of linguistic competence. *Early bilinguals* are generally regarded as achieving native-like linguistic competence in both

languages. In contrast, most *late bilinguals* are considered non-native speakers of the L2 who do not attain full competence, as evidenced by structural grammatical inadequacies and an inability to detect linguistic ambiguity (Beardsmore, 1986).

### 3.3.6. Simultaneous Versus Successive/Sequential Bilingualism

McLaughlin (1982/2014) made a further distinction of bilingualism, namely *simultaneous* and *successive bilingualism*. *Simultaneous bilingualism* occurs when a person learns two languages at the same time, with mostly equal emphasis given to both languages. An example of this would be a child who grows up speaking both Spanish and German at home, learning both languages simultaneously. Children exposed to *simultaneous bilingualism* typically develop proficiency in both languages, often without a distinct preference for one over the other. In contrast, *successive/sequential bilingualism* occurs in situations when a child is when a second language is introduced after a first language. An example of this would be a child learning Arabic at home, and subsequently learning English when they begin school.

### 3.3.7. Receptive Versus Productive Bilingualism

*Receptive bilingualism* involves understanding a second language-comprehending spoken or written language. *Receptive bilinguals* are reported to struggle or being unable to produce the second language through speaking or writing (Sherkina-Lieber, 2020). In contrast, *productive bilingualism* involves both receptive and expressive language skills. *Productive bilinguals* can understand, speak, read, and write in both languages. Language skills often develop receptively before productively in second language acquisition (Braunmüller, 2007).

### 3.3.8. Folk Versus Elite Bilingualism

Bilinguals can be also classified depending on various social variables. Concentrating on the social status of language, Fishman (1977) distinguishes between *'folk'* and '*elite'* bilinguals. *Folk bilinguals* typically belong to language minority communities whose native language does not hold a high status within the dominant language society in which they live. In contrast, *elite bilinguals* are individuals who speak the dominant language in a given society and also speak another language which provides them additional value and social or economic advantages.

## 3.4. Diglossia

In his seminal article, **Word (1959)**, Charles Ferguson defined ***diglossia*** as

***"A relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (…), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation."*** ***(p.245)***

In other words, *diglossia* is a situation in which two very different varieties of the same language are used side by side for two different sets of functions. Such a situation is called diglossia. Both varieties are perceived as alternatives by native speakers and usually have special names. Typically, the more standard variety is called the *High variety (H)* or *H-variety*, while the other is called the *Low variety (L)* or *L-variety* (Liu & Wen, 2006).

The *High variety* is learned in school and tends to be used in sermons, political speeches, lectures, the media, as well as in poetry and letters; as a result, it has greater social prestige. The *Low variety*, on the other hand, is used in family conversations and other relatively informal contexts. One example of diglossia can be found in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where the *High variety (Hochdeutsch)* is a form of Standard German, and the *Low variety (Schweizerdeutsch)* consists of a range of regional Swiss dialects. Diglossia also exists in most Arabic-speaking countries, where the *High variety* is used in lectures, religious speeches, and formal political talks, while the *Low variety* is the local dialect of colloquial Arabic. Throughout long periods of Western European history, diglossia existed with *Latin* as the *High variety* and local languages such as *English and French* as the *Low varieties* (Liu & Wen, 2006).

Using the examples of Greek, Arabic, and Swiss German, Ferguson (1959) pointed out several characteristics that are common across all diglossic situations. First of all, in terms of function, there is a strict division of labor between the two language varieties: while the superposed variety, or the *High variety*, is used mostly in prestigious domains, such as education and government, the vernacular, or the *Low variety*, is restricted to informal domains (e.g., family,

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neighborhood, etc.). Second, although the two varieties are genetically related to each other, the *(H) variety* is structurally more complex than the *(L) variety*.

Third, the *(H) variety* is more highly valued than the *(L) variety*. Although there is a sizable body of literature written in the *(H) variety*, the *(L) variety* is rarely used in written form except in dialect poetry and advertising.

Fourth, given its superior status as the language used in prestigious domains, the *(H) variety* also tends to be more standardized than the *(L) variety*. Grammars and dictionaries are written for the *(H) variety*, but not usually for the *(L) variety*.

Fifth, while the *(L) variety* is the language of the home, the *(H) variety* is not spoken natively by anyone in the community and has to be learned through schooling.

Finally, although the *(L) variety* may gradually replace the *(H) variety* due to factors such as more widespread literacy and broader communication among different regional and social groups, that linguistic situation is relatively stable and can persist for centuries or even millennia.

A diglossic situation is likely to arise under the following conditions: First, when literacy in the community is restricted to a small elite. Second, when there is a sizeable body of literature in a language closely related to the community's vernacular, and this literature embodies some of its fundamental values. Third, when a considerable period of time elapses following the establishment of these two conditions. Nevertheless, although these social contexts favor the emergence of diglossia, they do not necessarily lead to its development. In fact, diglossia may also develop from other origins (Ferguson, 1959).

### 3.5. Comparison between Diglossia and Bilingualism

Diglossic situations are different from other commonly found language situations in several respects. In contrast to a diglossic situation, a bilingual situation does not maintain a clear functional specialization of the two varieties. In many Arabic-speaking countries, for instance, although colloquial Arabic serves as the basic medium of interaction, Standard Arabic is still the preferred variety for formal purposes. However, in a bilingual community, such as English- or French-speaking Canada, both varieties are used to perform similar functions in formal and informal domains. Furthermore, while a diglossic situation involves two genetically related

varieties, at least according to Ferguson's definition, two or more unrelated languages often coexist in a bilingual or multilingual community, such as English, Chinese, Malay, and Tamil in Singapore. Joshua A. Fishman (1967) has outlined four kinds of relationships between diglossia and bilingualism.

### 3.5.1. Bilingualism without Diglossia

A country can be bilingual without being necessarily diglossic. For example, Canada, where both English and French are used side by side. Each language has its own functions and domains where it is usually employed, and neither of them is high or low because both, being official languages, have equal status.

### 3.5.2. Diglossia without Bilingualism

This occurs when a country is diglossic but not bilingual. An example is Greece, where *Katharevousa (H) variety* is in a diglossic relation with *Demotic (L) variety,* but apart from *Katharevousa* and *Demotic*, there is no second or additional language that is widely used in the country. Another example comes from the Middle Ages in Europe, where Latin was the high variety and in a diglossic relation with the written Romance languages.

### 3.5.3. Diglossia and Bilingualism

This is found where a country makes use of a high and low variety together with another language system. For example, in the Arabic-speaking world, particularly in the Maghreb countries, the *(H) variety,* Arabic (Classical or Standard), is used hand in hand with the *(L) variety*, dialectal or colloquial Arabic. In addition, French and Berber are widespread, with each language and variety having its own domain where it is ordinarily used. Thus, although diglossia and bilingualism are different, they can occur separately or together in a speech community.

### 3.5.4. Neither Diglossia nor Bilingualism

Only very small, isolated and undifferentiated speech communities may be said to reveal neither diglossia nor bilingualism. Language use is uniform, and there is minimal external contact or internal role specialization. Figure 3.1. explains bilingualism and diglossia.

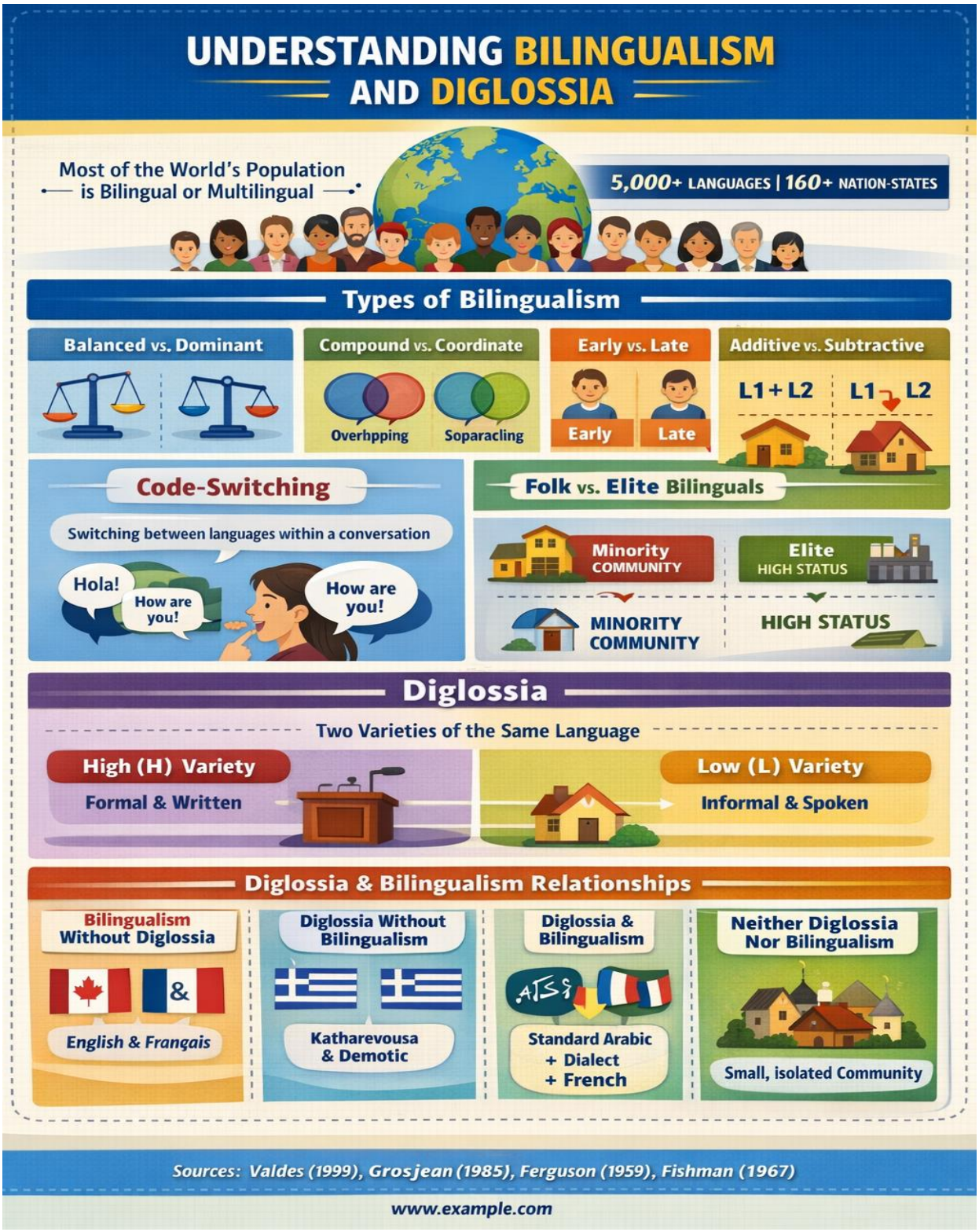



**Figure 3.1.** Bilingualism and Diglossia: Types, Features, and Sociolinguistic Relationships

## Conclusion

Bilingualism and diglossia are important concepts in sociolinguistics that reveal the complex relationship between language and society. In bilingual/multilingual settings, the choice between languages carries interactional force or implies something about the situation or the interlocutors. One language may be used for some social functions or in a specific social context, while another language is reserved for other functions and contexts. While bilingualism refers to the ability to communicate effectively in more than one language, diglossia describes a situation where two closely related languages are used in a speech community. High (H) variety used for formal contexts (e.g., sermons, newspapers) and Low (L) variety used for informal contexts (e.g., in the home, or market). The situation is supposed to be relatively stable and the languages/ varieties remain distinct. Now often extended to refer to any two languages (even typologically unrelated ones) that have this kind of social and functional distribution. The distinction between the two lies primarily in their organization: bilingualism does not necessarily require a strict separation of functions, whereas diglossia is characterized by a clear division between High (H) and Low (L) varieties according to context, purpose, and social prestige.

It has been demonstrated that bilingualism is not a single, uniform phenomenon. It is rather a continuum including multiple types, shaped by factors such as cognitive organization, age of acquisition, proficiency, sociocultural context, and status. Furthermore, diglossia is not ephemeral in nature; in fact, the opposite is true: it appears to be a persistent social and linguistic phenomenon. A key defining characteristic of diglossia is that the two varieties are kept quite apart in their functions. The notion of domains plays an important role in both phenomena, as language choice is determined by participants, settings, and communicative purposes. In addition, Fishman's typology shows that bilingualism and diglossia are not mutually exclusive; they may exist independently or together in the same speech community.

## PRACTICE

**Activity One:** Choose the right answer.

**1.** *The ability to use two languages is called ……*

**A.** Diglossia **B.** Multilingualism **C.** Bilingualism **D.** Code-switching

**2.** ***Diglossia*** refers to ……

**A.** The use of two unrelated languages **B.** The functional distribution of language varieties

**C.** Language acquisition in childhood **D.** Language loss

**3.** *In a* ***diglossic situation****, the High (H) variety is typically used in ……*

**A.** Family conversations **B.** Informal settings **C.** Formal domains **D.** Personal messages

**4.** ***Code-switching*** is ……

**A.** Mixing dialects unintentionally **B.** Switching between languages in communication

**C.** Learning a second language **D.** Translating words

**5.** ***Balanced bilingualism*** refers to ……

**A**. Equal proficiency in two languages **B.** Learning two languages at different times

**C.** Using one language only **D.** Mixing two languages

**6.** ***Additive bilingualism*** *occurs when* ……

**A.** L2 replaces L1 **B.** Both languages are equally valued

**C.** L1 is lost **D.** Only one language is used

**7.** *A* ***domain*** *in sociolinguistics refers to* ……

**A.** A grammatical rule **B.** A type of language **C.** A context of language use **D.** A speech error

**8.** *The* ***Low (L) variety*** *in diglossia is mainly used in* ……

**A.** Education **B.** Government **C.** Daily conversation **D.** Literature

**Activity Two:** Say whether the following statements are **true/false.**

1. Bilingual individuals always have equal proficiency in both languages. (……)
2. Diglossia involves a clear functional separation between language varieties. (……)
3. Code-switching can occur within a single sentence. (……)
4. Domains influence language choice. (……)
5. Additive bilingualism leads to loss of the first language. (……)
6. The High variety is usually learned at home. (……)
7. Bilingualism and diglossia cannot coexist. (……)
8. Early bilinguals are exposed to two languages in childhood. (……)

**Activity Three:** Provide concise responses to the questions.

1. What is **bilingualism**?

   ……

   …….

2. What is **diglossia**?

   ……

   ……

3. What is meant by the **High (H)** and **Low (L)** varieties?

   ……

   ……

4. What is **code-switching**?

   ……

   ……

5. What is a **domain** in sociolinguistics?

   ……

   ……

6. What is the difference between **additive** and **subtractive** bilingualism?

   ……

   ……

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7. What is **early bilingualism**?

.....

.....

8. What is meant by **balanced bilingualism**?

.....

.....

9. What is **coordinate bilingualism**?

.....

.....

10. What is meant by **receptive bilingualism**?

.....

.....

**Activity Four:** Discussion questions.

1. A distinction is sometimes made between communities in which there is *stable bilingualism* and those in which there is *unstable bilingualism*; Switzerland, Canada, and Haiti are cited as examples of the former, and the linguistic situations found in cities like New York or among many immigrant peoples as examples of the latter. Why are the terms *stable* and *unstable* useful in such circumstances?

2. The term *bilingual* is used in describing countries such as Canada, Belgium, and Switzerland (also *multilingual* in this case). What kind of bilingualism (or multilingualism) is this?

3. A speaker of English who wants to learn another language, particularly an 'exotic' one, may find the task difficult. Speakers of that other language may insist on using what little English they know rather than their own language, and there may also be compelling social reasons that prevent the would-be learner from achieving any but a most rudimentary knowledge of the target language. What factors contribute to this kind of situation? How might you seek to avoid it?

4. Is it possible to have a society in which everyone is completely bilingual in the same two languages and there is no diglossia? How stable would such a situation be?

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5. Some communities regard bilingualism as a serious threat; it has even been referred to as a 'Trojan horse,' initially attractive but ultimately fatal. Why might this be so? (Consider the experience of migration and also the sorry state of many minority languages in the world.) (The above discussion questions are adapted from Wardhaugh, 2010).

## Lecture Four: Language Variation and Change: Pidgin, Creole, and Lingua Franca

**Objective of the Course:**

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

- Define and distinguish between **pidgins, creoles, and lingua francas.**
- Explain the processes of **pidginization, creolization, and decreolization** in language contact situations.
- Identify the roles of **superstrate (lexifier)** and **substrate languages** in the formation of pidgins and creoles.
- Discuss the role of **contact languages** such as **Tok Pisin and Haitian Creole** in social **interactions.**

### Introduction

There is yet another way, apart from code-switching and borrowing, in which varieties may get mixed up with each other, namely by the process of creating a new variety out of two (or more) existing ones. This process of 'variety-synthesis' may take a number of different forms, including for instance the creation of artificial auxiliary languages like Esperanto (Yule, 2006). There are varieties created for very practical and immediate purposes of communication between people who otherwise would have no common language whatsoever, and learned by one person from another within the communities concerned as the accepted way of communicating with members of the other community such as pidgins, creoles, and lingua francas. These varieties are often referred to as *contact languages*. So, what is meant by pidgins, creoles, and lingua francas? And what is their role in language situations?

## 4.1. Pidgins

*Pidgins* arise when groups of people who do not speak a common language come into contact with each other. The creation of a pidgin depends on contact between speakers of three or more mutually unintelligible languages.) The need for the rapid development of a means of communication results in a relatively simple type of language which may draw on the languages of the groups involved. The formation of a pidgin differs from the process of 'second-language acquisition', during which one of the first languages of a group is gradually learned by others. Pidgins by contrast are not necessarily 'targeted' at one of the pre-existing languages, since the main aim of speakers is to enable communication, rather than to learn another language. In terms of structure, they do not bear close resemblance to any of the languages in contact, though they draw vocabulary items from these languages (Mesthrie et al., 2009).

In some areas, the standard language chosen may be a variety which originally had no native speakers. For example, in Papua New Guinea, the language *Tok Pisin* (known as Melanesian Pidgin and Neo-Melanesian) is used in most official business. This language is now used by over a million people, but it began as a kind of "contact" language called a *pidgin*. Thus, a *pidgin* is a variety of a language that is not a native language of anyone, but is learned on contact situations such as trading. The term *pidgin* is thought to come from the English word *"business"* as pronounced in the pidgin English which developed in China. The process by which a *pidgin* develops is called *pidginization* (Liu & Wen, 2006; Yule, 2006).

A *pidgin* is usually based on one language (*superstrate/lexifier language*, the socially dominant language often the colonial language), though it soon takes on sub- stances of other languages (*substrate languages*, the languages spoken by the subordinate groups). It is described as an '*English pidgin'* if English is the **lexifier language**, that is, the main source of words in the pidgin. It doesn't mean that those words will have the same pronunciation or meaning as in the source. For example, the word *gras* has its origins in the English word 'grass', but in *Tok Pisin* it also came to be used for 'hair'. It is part of *mausgras* ('moustache') and *gras bilong fes* ('beard') (Liu & Wen, 2006; Yule, 2006).

There are several English pidgins still used today. They are characterized by an absence of any complex **grammatical morphology, simplified pronunciation,** and a somewhat **limited vocabulary**. Inflectional suffixes such as *-s* (plural) and *-'s* (possessive) on nouns in Standard

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English are rare in pidgins, while structures like *tu buk* ('two books') and *di gyal place* ('the girl's place') are common. Functional morphemes often take the place of inflectional morphemes found in the source language. For example, instead of changing the form of *you* to *your*, as in the English phrase *your book*, English-based pidgins use a form like *bilong*, and change the word order to produce phrases like *buk bilong yu*. Moreover, they may show lack of tense inflection such as:

**(a)** *Mi go long taun.* (I go/went to the town.)

**(b)** *Yu wokabaut long rot.* (You walk/ walked along the road.)

The syntax of pidgins can be quite unlike the languages from which terms were borrowed and modified, as can be seen in this example from an earlier stage of Tok Pisin.

| *Baimbai* | *hed* | *bilongyu* | *i-arrait* | *gain* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| by and by | head | belong you | he alright | again | (Your head will soon get well again) |

Sometimes, a *pidgin* dies out of its own accord. At other times it increases in importance, and becomes used in more and more areas of life (Liu & Wen, 2006; Yule, 2006).

## 4.2. Creoles

When a *pidgin* develops beyond its role as a *trade language* and becomes the first language of a social community, it becomes a *creole*. The process by which a *pidgin* becomes a creole is called *creolization*. As Aitchison (1994) says, '***creoles arise when pidgins become mother tongues.***' (p. 3177). A creole, therefore, is a 'normal' language in almost every sense (Wardhaugh, 2010). Holmes (1992) says that '***a creole is a pidgin which has expanded in structure and vocabulary to express the range of meanings and serve the range of functions required of a first language.***' (p. 95). Thus, unlike *pidgins, creoles* have large numbers of native speakers and are not restricted at all in their uses. A *French creole* is spoken by the majority of the population in Haiti and English creoles are used in Jamaica and Sierra Leone. The separate vocabulary elements of a *pidgin* can become grammatical elements in a *creole*. The form *baimbai yu go* ('by and by you go') in early *Tok Pisin* gradually shortened to *bai yu go*, and finally to *yu bigo*, with a grammatical structure not unlike that of its English translation equivalent, 'you will go' (Yule, 2006).

In practice it is not always easy to say whether we have a *pidgin* rather than a *creole*. *Tok Pisin* and some of the West African pidgins such as *Nigerian Pidgin English* probably exist as both pidgins and creoles. They have speakers who use them only as second languages in an expanded form and also speakers for whom they are first languages. Such expanded varieties are often characteristic of urban environments in which there is likely to be considerable contact among speakers of different languages and are sometimes referred to as extended pidgins (Wardhaugh, 2010).

Once a creole is in existence, it may (i) continue almost without change, as appears to be the case for Haitian creole; (ii) become extinct; (ii) evolve further into a normal language; (iv) gradually merge with its base language (e.g. the Standard English) through *decreolization* (Liu & Wen, 2006). This process, *decreolization*, leads at one extreme to a variety that is closer to the external standard variety and leaves. An English-based creole may, therefore, become more like Standard English. At the other extreme, there is a basic variety with more local creole features. Between these two extremes, there may be a range of slightly different varieties, some with many and some with fewer creole features. This range of varieties, evolving after (= 'post') the creole has come into existence, is called the *post-creole continuum* (Yule, 2006).

In discussing the creole continuum that exists in Guyanese English, Bickerton (1975) has proposed a number of terms that may be used to refer to its different parts. He uses the term *acrolect* to refer to educated Guyanese English, a variety which really has very few differences from other varieties of Standard English. He uses the term *basilect* to refer to the variety at the other extreme of the continuum, the variety that would be least comprehensible to a speaker of the standard, perhaps even incomprehensible. *Mesolects* are intermediate varieties. However, these are not discrete entities, for one important characteristic of these intermediate mesolects is that they blend into one another to fill the 'space' between the acrolect and the basilect (p. 24).

Bickerton cites Allsopp (1958) to show how the following Guyanese varieties of the Standard English sentence *I told him* may be pronounced in the various parts of the continuum:

1. *ai təʊld him* 2. *ai to:ld hIm* 3. *ai to:l Im* 4. *ai tɛl Im* 5. *a tɛl Im* 6. *ai tɛl I*
7. *a tɛl i* 8. *mi tɛl i* 9. *mi tɛl am*

The first three varieties (1–3) exemplify middle-class usage and are typical acrolect forms. The next four (4–7) are mesolect forms found in the lower-middle and urban working classes. Item

8 is found in the rural working class, and item 9 is used by old and illiterate rural laborers: these are typical basilect forms.

## 4.3. Lingua Francas

People who speak different languages who are forced into contact with each other must find some way of communicating, a *lingua franca*. In a publication concerned with the use of vernacular languages in education published in Paris in 1953, UNESCO defined a *lingua franca* as ***'a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them.'*** A variety of other terms can be found which describe much the same phenomenon (Wardhaugh, 2010, p.59).

At one time or another, *Greek koiné* and *Vulgar Latin* were in widespread use as lingua francas in the Mediterranean world and much of Europe. *Sabir* was a *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean (and later far beyond); originating in the Middle Ages and dating back at least to the Crusades, it survived into the twentieth century. In other parts of the world *Arabic, Mandarin, Hindi, and Swahili* have served, or do serve, as *lingua francas*. Of these, *Arabic* was a *lingua franca* associated with the spread of Islam. Today, English is used in very many places and for very many purposes as a lingua franca, e.g., in travel and often in trade, commerce, and international relations (Wardhaugh, 2010, p.60).

Still another kind of lingua franca is a *mixed language*. Bakker (1997) describes one such language, *Michif*, a mixture of *Cree* and *French* spoken mainly in Canada by well under a thousand people of *métis* (aboriginal and French) ancestry. *Michif* is sometimes characterized as a language that mixes *Cree verbs* and *French nouns* but probably more accurately is one that uses *Cree grammar* and *French vocabulary*. It is a clear marker of group identity for those who use it and emerged to express 'a new ethnic identity, mixed *Cree* and *French*. A new language was needed to express that identity. The most obvious way to form a new language was through mixing the two community languages, *Cree and French'* (Bakker and Papen, 1997, p. 355).

A *lingua franca* can be spoken in a variety of ways. Although both *Greek koiné* and *Vulgar Latin* served at different times as *lingua francas* in the Ancient World, neither was a homogeneous entity. Not only were they spoken differently in different places, but individual speakers varied widely in their ability to use the languages. *English* serves today as a *lingua franca* in many parts

of the world: for some speakers it is a native language, for others a second language, and for still others a foreign language. However, in the last two categories abilities in the language may vary widely from native-like to knowledge of only some bare rudiments. This is certainly the case in India, where even though *Hindi* is the official language, *English*, spoken in all kinds of ways, is widely used as a *lingua franca*. *Swahili* is a *lingua franca* of East Africa. On the coast it has long been spoken as a native language. As *Swahili* spread inland in Tanzania, it was simplified in structure, and even further inland, in Zaïre, it underwent still further simplification. Such simplification was also accompanied by a reduction in function, i.e., the simplified varieties were not used for as many purposes as the fuller variety of the coast. In rural northern parts of Zaïre even more simplification resulted so that the *Swahili* spoken there became virtually unintelligible to coastal residents (Wardhaugh, 2010, p.60). Figure 4.1 illustrates the concepts of pidgins, creoles, and lingua francas.




**Figure 4.1.** Contact Languages: Pidgins, Creoles, and Lingua Francas

## Conclusion

*Pidgins* and *creoles* are *language varieties* that emerge out of the contact between the speakers of (usually) more than two different languages. There are usually quite marked social conditions associated with that contact. For example, the speakers may only be in contact in a reduced set of social interactions, such as trading or work. Because of the limited social contact between the speakers, they seldom have extensive access to native speaker models of each other's languages. Moreover, they may not even be particularly motivated to try to acquire native speaker-like skills in the other languages. As a consequence of all these facts, the mode of communication that emerges may be something that owes a little bit to all the sources of input and that also falls back on some features of language learners' speech in general.

Traditionally, linguists distinguish *pidgins* and *creoles* on the grounds of how they emerge, with a *pidgin* being defined as a variety, specifically created for the purpose of communicating with some *other* group, and not used by *any* community for communication among themselves. It is a variety that has no native speakers. However, a *creole* is a pidgin which has acquired native speakers.

This difference between *pidgins* and *creoles* necessarily entails differences in how and where they are used. A *pidgin*, lacking native speakers, is a contact language that has very *restricted social functions* within a community, while a *creole* serves *most or all of the functions* that any natural human language must serve.

*Lingua franca*, on the other hand, refers to a language that is used to facilitate communication between two communities which have different first languages. A *lingua franca* could be a simple pidgin or a fully developed language like English (as when a person from Algeria might communicate with a person from Japan).

## PRACTICE

**Activity One:** Choose the right answer.

**1.** *A **pidgin** is*:

**A.** A native language learned by children

**B.** A simplified language used for communication between speakers of different languages

**C.** A formal standard language **D.** A dialect of a single language

**2.** *A **creole** typically arises when*:

**A.** Adults learn a second language for trade **B.** A pidgin becomes a first language for a community

**C.** A dialect borrows words from another language **D.** A language merges with its standard form

**3.** *Which of the following is an example of a **lingua franca?***

**A.** Tok Pisin **B.** Swahili **C.** Haitian Creole **D.** French spoken only in Paris

**4.** *The process of a **creole** gradually becoming more like the **standard language** is called:*

**A.** Creolization **B.** Pidginization **C.** Decreolization **D.** Lingua Franca formation

**5.** ***Pidgins** are characterized by:*

**A.** Complex inflectional morphology **B.** Simplified grammar and limited vocabulary

**C.** Being acquired as a first language by children **D.** Being identical to the base language

**Activity Two:** Say whether the following statements are **true/false.**

1. A **pidgin** develops as a means of communication between people who do not have a common language. (…..)
2. A **creole** is a pidgin which has expanded in structure and vocabulary to express the range of meanings and serve the range of functions required of a first language. (…..)
3. A **lingua franca** is a language used for communication between people who have different native languages. (…..)
4. **Pidgins** usually have a simplified grammar, simplified pronunciation and limited vocabulary. (…..)
5. **Decreolization** is the process of evolving from a creole into a standard language or a variety of a standard language. (…..)

**Activity Three:** Provide concise responses to the questions.

**1.** In the study of pidgins, what is meant by 'substrate' and 'superstrate' languages?

……

……

……

**2.** The following example of Hawai'i Creole English (From Lum, 1990, quoted in Nichols, 2004) has some characteristic forms and structures. How would you analyze the use of *da*, *had*, *one*, *stay* and *wen* in this extract?

*Had one nudda guy in one tee-shirt was sitting at da table next to us was watching da Bag Man too. He was eating one plate lunch and afterwards, he wen take his plate ovah to da Bag Man. Still had little bit everyting on top, even had bar-ba-que meat left. "Bra," da guy tell, "you like help me finish? I stay full awready."*

……

……

……

……

**3.** It is very often said that creoles are 'simpler' than either their lexifier or their substrate. Do you think that this is true for Tok Pisin *yet*? What do you understand 'simple' to mean in your answer? In other words, how do you measure it?

……
……
……

**4.** Can you guess which European languages have contributed to the vocabulary of the languages illustrated in the following sentences?

| | |
|---|---|
| (a) *mô pe aste sa banan* | I am buying the banana |
| (b) *de bin alde luk dat big tri* | They always looked for a big tree |
| (c) *a waka go a osu* | He walked home |
| (d) *olmaan i kas-im chek* | The old man is cashing a cheque |
| (e) *li pote sa bay mo* | He brought that for me |
| (f) *ja fruher wir bleiben* | Yes at first, we remained |
| (g) *dis smol swain i bin go fo maket* | This little pig went to market |

**5.** Most research on creoles has focused on the relationship between the creole and the (usually European) lexifier language. But in the East Maroon community of Pamaka, the *lexifier language* (English) is never heard in daily interaction and nor is it an official language of Suriname. Rather people switch regularly between two creole languages, one the local rural community language Pamaka, and the other an urban creole, Sranan Tongo. What are the implications for decreolization in such a context?

……
……
……
……

**6.** The usefulness of lingua francas which have emerged naturally in a multilingual context has often resulted in them being selected as national or official languages. What factors do you think

will be relevant when selecting a language to promote as an official or national language? Are they likely to be mainly linguistic or non-linguistic factors?



.....

.....

.....

(The above questions are adapted from Holmes (2013) and Yule (2006))

**Activity Four:** Discussion questions

1. If someone told you that pidginized varieties of a language are 'corrupt' and 'ungrammatical,' and indicated that their speakers are either 'lazy' or 'inferior,' how might you try to show that person how wrong he or she is? What kinds of evidence would you use?
2. The 'stripped-down' nature of pidgins has led them to being called 'reduced' or 'minimal' languages. They have even been compared to forms of 'babytalk.' A different view is that they are 'optimal' communication systems, perfectly appropriate to the circumstances of their use. Do you see any merit in this latter view?
3. While there is little dispute about the origin of the term 'creole' when used to describe a type of language, there is some dispute about the origin of the term 'pidgin.' What can you find out about the origins of the two terms, particularly about the origin of the latter? (See especially Todd, 1990, pp. 22–4, Romaine, 1988, pp. 12–13, and Aitchison, 1994, p. 3177.).
4. A particularly interesting lingua franca is Plains Sign Language used by aboriginal peoples in North America (see Taylor, 1981, for a description of this and other aboriginal lingua francas). Try to find out in what ways Plains Sign Language must be distinguished from American Sign Language, i.e., the communication system that many deaf people use.

(The above questions are adapted from Wardhaugh, 2010)

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# Lecture Five: Multilingualism and Language Choice

**Objective of the Course:**

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

- Define **multilingualism, code switching, code mixing and borrowing.**
- Identify the different types of code switching such as **situational, metaphorical, inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag code-switching.**
- Distinguish between **code-switching and borrowing.**

## Introduction

People who speak more than one language, or who have command over more than one variety of a language, are generally very sensitive to differences in the vitality of the languages they use, and they are equally aware that in some contexts one variety will serve their needs better than another. This awareness may lead them to change the variety they use depending on where they are (Meyerhoff, 2006). For instance, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, a polyglot ruler, is reported to have said: *"I speak Spanish to God, Italian to women, French to men, and German to my horse."* This illustrates that different social roles require different forms of language. A person who can manipulate a wide range of language varieties is more likely to behave appropriately in any situation, when discussing different subjects, and when addressing different people (Liu & Wen, 2006). Therefore, what is multilingualism? What is code-switching? What are the different types of code-switching? Is code-switching similar to borrowing?

## 5.1. Multilingualism

In this coursebook, *'multilingualism'* will be used as a general term for the use of more than two languages by an individual or a community. The term thus subsumes the idea of *'bilingualism'*. Many scholars do the reverse using the term *'bilingualism'* in the more general way (to mean the use of *two or more* languages). Neither usage is quite satisfactory, and the reader has to deduce whether in certain cases *multi-* means 'two' or '*bi*' means more than two. In practice, with the aid

of context however, there is little ambiguity. Some sociolinguists, however, prefer to restrict *bilingualism* to its literal sense of commanding two languages and *multilingualism* to more than two (Mesthrie et al., 2009).

Taking this fact into account, *multilingualism* can be defined as a situation where three or more languages are used by an individual or by a group of speakers, such as the inhabitants of a particular region or nation. For example, some countries of West Africa (e.g. Nigeria, Ghana), India, Malaysia, and Singapore are multilingual. In many parts of the world, it is just a normal requirement of daily living that people speak several languages: perhaps one or more at home, another in the village, still another for the purpose of trade, and yet another for communication with the outside world of wider social or political or political organization. These various languages or varieties are usually acquired naturally and unconsciously, and the shifts from one to another are made without hesitation (Liu & Wen, 2006; Wardhaugh, 2010).

An interesting example of *multilingualism* exists among the *Tucano* of the northwest Amazon on the border between Colombia and Brazil. The *Tucano* are multilingual people because men must marry outside their language group; namely, no man may have a wife who speaks his language, for that kind of marriage relationship is not allowed and will be regarded as a sort of incest. Men choose the women they marry from various neighboring tribes who speak other languages. Furthermore, on marriage, women move into the men's households. As a result, in any village several languages are used: the language of the men, the various languages spoken by women who originate from different neighboring tribes, and the widespread regional trade language (Liu & Wen, 2006; Wardhaugh, 2010).

## 5.2. Code-switching

Bilinguals often switch between their two languages or language varieties in the middle of a conversation. This phenomenon of moving between distinct varieties is known as *code-switching* (Liu & Wen, 2006; Meyerhoff, 2006). It is an inevitable consequence of bilingualism (or, more generally, multilingualism) (Hudson, 1996). Code-switching can occur between sentences or even within a single sentence, involving phrases, words, or even parts of words. A speaker does not necessarily have to follow a single variety or dialect throughout communication. They may change from a standard dialect to a non-standard one, shift to a topic that requires the use of specialized

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terms, or move from one level of formality to another. All these linguistic behaviors fall under code-switching (Liu & Wen, 2006).

Besides being bilingual or multilingual, people tend to code-switch for various reasons. For instance, they may switch languages to include or exclude others from a conversation, such as when sharing secrets (Mabule, 2015). Moreover, they may code-switch to express aspects of their identity; for example, they may wish to demonstrate their connection to a particular culture or country. In some cases, it may also serve as an expression of social status through association with a prestigious outgroup (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Wu, 2021). In addition, people may code-switch when they are unable to express an idea easily in one language and therefore switch to another language to convey it more effectively (Wei, 2012).

## 5.3. Types of Code-switching

*Code-switching* can be classified into different types such as situational, metaphorical, inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag code-switching.

### 5.3.1. Situational Code-switching

*Situational code-switching* occurs when the language used changes according to the situation in which the participants find themselves; they speak one language in one situation and another in a different one. No topic change is involved. For example, two businessmen meet in Beijing and begin a conversation in English; they may discover in the course of the conversation that they are both native speakers of French. This discovery redefines the speech situation from one involving two businessmen meeting in Beijing but to one involving two French people coming together on a foreign soil. They might then switch to French while keeping the topic of conversation the same (Liu & Wen, 2006).

### 5.3.2. Metaphorical Code-switching

*Metaphorical code-switching* occurs when a change in topic requires a change in the language (code). It has been found bilingual speakers of Swahili and English may use Swahili when talking about education and English when talking about racial prejudice. The interesting point in here is that some topics may be discussed in either code, but the choice of code adds a distinct flavor to what is said about the topic. The choice itself encodes certain social values (Liu & Wen, 2006).

### 5.3.3. Inter-sentential Code-switching

Inter-sentential code-switching refers to language alternation at the level of sentences or clauses. The speaker switches languages between complete sentences or clauses. For example: "Sometimes I will start a sentence in English y termino en español" (Poplack, 1980).

### 5.3.4. Intra-sentential Code-switching

Intra-sentential code-switching occurs when the speaker switches languages within a single sentence or clause. For example: "I want a cup of *coffee noire* (French)" or "There are *zinaan ziyadi* (Persian) in the room" (Poplack, 1980).

### 5.3.5. Extra-sentential or Tag Code-switching

Extra-sentential, or tag code-switching, occurs when a tag or short expression from one language is inserted into an utterance in another language. For example, a Japanese speaker might say, "It is a good movie, *ne*," where *ne* functions as a tag meaning "right?" or "isn't it?". Similarly, a Spanish speaker might say, "I told the kids, *no más*, TV tonight," where *no más* means "no more." (Poplack, 1980).

## 5.4. Code Mixing

According to Wardhaugh (2010), *code-switching* and *code-mixing* are the same. He mentions that it can occur in conversations between speakers' turns or within a single speaker's turn. In the latter case, it can occur between sentences (inter-sententially) or within a single sentence (intra-sententially). In this coursebook, however, we make a distinction between code-switching and code-mixing. We at least consider *code-mixing* as a type of code-switching. In the same regard, Harmers & Blanc (2000) refer to *code mixing* as the use of elements of one language in another language. It is the transition from using linguistic units (words) of one language to using those of another language in the same sentence. It is a kind of *linguistic cocktail.*

## 5.5. Borrowing

English has for many centuries adopted and adapted words from other languages, and its speakers are today relatively liberal about accepting neologisms and *borrowings*. *Borrowing* is the

taking over of words from other languages (Mesthrie et al., 2009). Throughout its history, the English language has adopted a vast number of words from other languages, including *croissant* (French), *dope* (Dutch), *lilac* (Persian), *piano* (Italian), *pretzel* (German), *sofa* (Arabic), *tattoo* (Tahitian), *tycoon* (Japanese), *yogurt* (Turkish) and *zebra* (Bantu) (Yule, 2006).

Other languages, of course, borrow terms from English, as in the Japanese use of *suupaa* or *suupaamaaketto* ('supermarket') and *taipuraitaa* ('typewriter'), Hungarians talking about *sport*, *klub* and *futbal*, or the French discussing problems of *le stress*, over a glass of *le whisky*, during *le weekend* (Yule, 2006).

A special type of borrowing is described as **loan translation** or **calque**. In this process, there is a direct translation of the elements of a word into the borrowing language. Interesting examples are the French term*gratte-ciel*,which literally translates as 'scrape-sky', the Dutch *wolkenkrabber* ('cloud scratcher') or the German *Wolkenkratzer* ('cloud scraper'), all of which were calques for the English *skyscraper*. The English word *superman* is thought to be a loan translation of the German *U¨ bermensch*, and the term*loan word* itself is believed to have come from the German *Lehnwort*. Nowadays, some Spanish speakers eat *perros calientes* (literally 'dogs hot') or *hot dogs*. The American concept of 'boyfriend' was a borrowing, with sound modification, into Japanese as *boyifurendo*, but as a calque into Chinese as 'male friend' or *nan pengyu* (Yule, 2006).

## 5.6. Difference between Code-switching and Borrowing

Borrowing differs from code-switching in form. Borrowed words are usually adapted to the speaker's first language. They are pronounced and used grammatically as if they were part of the speaker's first language. For instance, English has borrowed the word *duchess* from French (*duchesse*). English people pronounce it as (/ˈdʌtʃəs/) stressing the first syllable with a short "u" and distinct "es" ending, while French people pronounce it as (/dy.ʃɛs/) stressing the final syllable, featuring a rounded French "u" (/y/) and a sharper, closed "e" (/ɛ/) sound before a silent or softly whispered final "e". By contrast, people who are rapidly code-switching – as opposed to borrowing the odd word – tend to switch completely between two linguistic systems –sounds, grammar and vocabulary (Holmes, 2013). Figure 5.1 demonstrates how multilingual/bilingual speakers use different codes in communication.

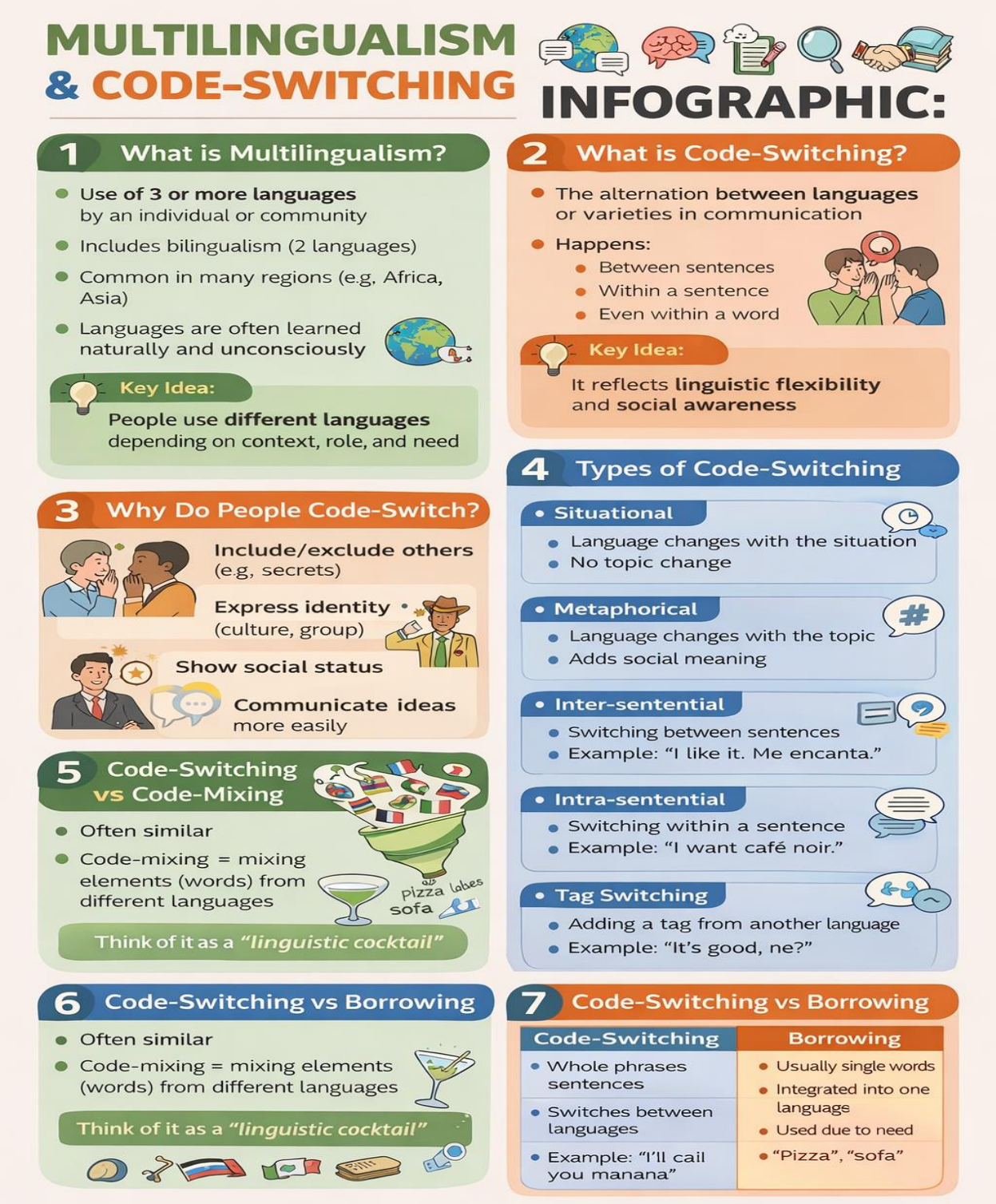



**Figure 5.1.** Multilingualism, Code-Switching, and Borrowing: Understanding Language in Use

## Conclusion

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Bilingual or multilingual speakers often choose between codes according to circumstances. The alternation between language varieties, or codes, across sentences or clause boundaries is known as *code-switching*. However, it is necessary to distinguish this type of *code-switching* from *borrowing*. The latter refers to the incorporation of an item from one language into another. People borrow words from another language to express a concept or describe an object for which has no equivalent in their first language. *Borrowing* of this kind generally involves single words – mainly nouns – and it is motivated by lexical need. It is very different from *code-switching* where speakers have a genuine choice about which words or phrases, they will use in which language.

## PRACTICE

**Activity One:** Choose the right answer.

1. ***Multilingualism*** *refers to:*

**A.** The use of one language
**B.** The use of two languages only
**C.** The use of three or more languages
**D.** The study of language

2. ***Code-switching*** *is:*

**A.** Borrowing words permanently
**B.** Alternating between languages or varieties
**C.** Learning a new language
**D.** Translating texts

3. ***Situational code-switching*** *occurs when:*

**A.** The topic changes
**B.** The situation changes
**C.** A sentence is translated
**D.** Words are borrowed

4. ***Intra-sentential code-switching*** *happens:*

**A.** Between sentences
**B.** Within a sentence

**C.** Between speakers **D.** In written texts only

**5.** ***Borrowing*** *refers to:*

**A.** Switching languages in conversation **B.** Mixing sentences

**C.** Taking words from another language **D.** Translating expressions

**6.** Which of the following is an example of tag switching?

**A.** "I like it. Me gusta." **B.** "I want café noir."

**C.** "It's nice, ne?" **D.** "Pizza is delicious."

**Activity Two:** Say whether the following statements are **true/false.**

1. **Multilingualism** always refers to exactly two languages. (…..)
2. **Code-switching** can occur within a single sentence. (…..)
3. **Situational code-switching** involves a change in topic. (…..)
4. **Code-mixing** is completely different from code-switching. (…..)
5. **Borrowing** usually involves long phrases and sentences. (…..)

**Activity Three:** Provide concise responses to the questions.

**1.** When you visit a foreign country whose language you know either well or poorly, when do you use that language and when do you not? What factors govern your choice?

……

……

……

**2.** Code-switching and borrowing are different phenomena. Try to distinguish between the two.

……

……

……

**3.** What is the difference between style-shifting and code-switching?

……

……

**4.** Using a dictionary with etymological information, identify which of the following words are borrowings and from which languages they were borrowed. Are any of them eponyms?

*assassin, clone, cockroach, denim, diesel, nickname, robot, shampoo, slogan, snoop, tomato, umbrella.*

……

……

……

(The above questions are adapted from Wardhaugh (2010) and Yule (2006))

**Activity Four:** Discussion questions

**1.** Using the example of what he calls a 'hypothetical government functionary' in Belgium, Fishman (1972a) explains how topic and domain influence linguistic choice. The domain may be social, cultural, or psychological in nature and will involve a consideration of such matters as role relationships and locales. Fishman offers the following account of the linguistic behavior of his functionary (p. 16):

*A government functionary in Brussels arrives home after stopping off at his club for a drink. He generally speaks standard French in his office, standard Dutch at his club, and a distinctly local variant of Flemish at home. In each instance he identifies himself with a different speech network to which he belongs, wants to belong, and from which he seeks acceptance. All of these networks – and more – are included in his overarching speech community, even though each is more commonly associated with one variety than with another. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to find occasions at the office in which he speaks or is spoken to in one or another variety of Flemish. There are also occasions at the club when he speaks or is addressed in French; finally, there are occasions at home when he communicates in standard Dutch or even French.*

- Show how Fishman's explanation is relevant to this account. Are you aware of any similar kinds of linguistic behavior in your own environment?

**2.** The claim is sometimes made (e.g., Gumperz, 1982a, p. 61) that in conversational code-switching 'participants immersed in the interaction itself are often quite unaware which code is used at any one time.' How would you propose to investigate such a claim? Gumperz says that this is also the case with metaphorical code-switching (p. 62). He writes as follows (p. 70):

*Code-switching occurs in conditions of change, where group boundaries are diffuse, norms and standards of evaluation vary, and where speakers' ethnic identities and social backgrounds are not matters of common agreement. Yet, if it is true that code-switching styles serve as functioning communicative systems, if members can agree on interpretations of switching in context and on categorizing others on the basis of their switching, there must be some regularities and shared perceptions on which these judgments can be based.*

- Elaborate on the various factors Gumperz mentions in the first of these two sentences. Discuss the implications of the second sentence for any theory which attempts to explain linguistic and/or communicative competence in humans.

**3.** Sumittra Suraratdecha tried to test audience design's predictions about the effect of topic in the speech of Thai university students living in the United States. She recorded them with different interlocutors and compared how often they switched back and forth between Thai and English during their group conversations.

She found that code-switching from English into Thai happened most often when the students were speaking about the supernatural, and switching from Thai into English happened more often when they were talking about travel and what they wanted to do after university.

- Why do you think the code-switching might have gone in that direction for those topics?

(The above questions are adapted from Wardhaugh (2010) and Meyerhoff (2006))

## Lecture Six: Language Planning and Policy

**Objective of the Course:**

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

- Define **language planning**.
- Identify the different types of language planning such as **status planning** and **corpus planning.**
- Recognize the importance of **language planning**.
- Differentiate between **status planning** and **corpus planning.**

### Introduction

The importance of language can never be overstated: It is central to social life, it is a ladder to power and influence and it is a symbol for social status and ethnic identity. For this very reason, governments, legal and educational organizations in many countries have to plan which variety or varieties of the language spoken in the country are to be used as official languages and which ones remain as dialects (Liu & Wen, 2006). In India, despite the fact that there were many language varieties spoken by the different ethnic groups, Hindi was chosen as the official government language. As a result, there were riots in many non-Hindi-speaking regions against this decision. Similarly, there were 'National Language Wars' in the Philippines before different groups could agree on the name of the national language (Filipino). Consider a similar question in the context of Guatemala, a country in Central America, where there are twenty-six Mayan languages spoken, as well as Spanish. If, in this situation, Spanish is selected as the language of education, are all those Mayan speakers put at an early educational disadvantage within the society? Questions of this type require answers on the basis of some type of *language planning* (Yule, 2006). So, what is meant by *language planning or language policy*? What are the different types of *language planning*.

### 6.1. Language Planning

*Language planning* has become part of modern nation-building because a noticeable trend in the modern world is to make language and nation synonymous (Wardhaugh, 2010).

Governments and academies carefully examine all the languages and dialects in the country and decide which is the standard, official language or languages and specify their scope of use. They also make plans for the regional use and/or development of other languages and dialects. This process is known as *language planning* (Liu & Wen, 2006). It should be clarified that *language policy* is sometimes used as a synonym for *language planning*. However, more precisely, *language policy* refers to the more general linguistic, political and social goals underlying the actual language planning process (Mesthrie et al., 2009).

Through language planning, an official language policy is established and implemented. For example, in Indonesia, Malay was chosen as the national language and was given the name Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language). It became the main language of education (Richards & Schmidt, 2013).

## 6.2. Types of Language Planning

Language planners may focus either on a language's status in relation to other languages or varieties, or on its internal structure, in order to change it or increase the number of its users. The first is called *status planning*, the second is *corpus planning*, and the third is *acquisition planning*.

### 6.2.1. Status Planning

*Status planning* changes the function of a language or a variety of a language and becomes the language and the right of those who use it. For example, when speakers of a minority language are suddenly denied the use of that language in educating their children, their language has lost status. On the other hand, when a government declares that two languages rather than one will be officially recognized, the newly recognized one has gained status (Liu & Wen, 2006).

### 6.2.2. Corpus Planning

*Corpus planning* seeks to develop a variety of language or a language, usually to standardize it, that is, to provide it with the means for serving most language functions in society. *Corpus*

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*planning* may involve such matters as the development of a *writing system,* new sources of *vocabulary, dictionaries, and a literature* and the deliberate cultivation of new uses so that the language may extend its use into such areas as government, education, law and trade (Liu & Wen, 2006).

### 6.2.3. Acquisition Planning

*Acquisition planning* refers to the organized efforts which aim at spreading a linguistic variety by increasing the number of its users (Holmes, 2013). For example, cultural institutions such as the British Council or the Goethe Institute are set up and supported by their respective governments to promote the learning of English and German as a second language in other countries. Another example of acquisition planning is the activities by the Maori community in New Zealand to promote the acquisition of Maori (Mesthrie et al., 2009). Figure 6.1 demonstrates the main types of language planning—status, corpus, and acquisition—and their impact on language use and society.




**Figure 6.1.** Language Planning and Policy: Types, Processes, and Societal Impact

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## Conclusion

As a result of planning decisions, a language can achieve one of many statuses. A language may be recognized as the sole official language, as French in France or English in the UK or the USA. This fact does not mean that the two or more languages may share official status in some countries, for exam status must be recognized by law; it may be a matter of long-standing practice English and French in Canada; French and Flemish in Belgium, French German, Italian and Romansh in Switzerland; English, Malay, Tamil and Chinese in Singapore.

Planning decisions can play a very large role on determining what happens to any minority language(s) in a country. They can result in deliberate attempts to eradicate a language (e.g. Franco's attempt to eliminate Basque from Spain by banning that language from public life). Official neglect may result in letting minority languages die by simply not doing anything to keep them alive. Many American Indian languages have died as such.

## PRACTICE

**Activity One:** Choose the right answer.

1. ***Language planning*** *mainly refers to:*

A. Teaching grammar rules
B. Government efforts to influence language use
C. Learning foreign languages
D. Translating texts

2. ***Status planning*** *focuses on:*

A. Increasing vocabulary
B. Changing the functions and status of a language
C. Teaching methods
D. Pronunciation rules

3. ***Corpus planning*** *is mainly concerned with:*

A. Language teaching policies
B. Increasing the number of speakers
C. Developing and standardizing a language
D. Choosing official languages

**4.** ***Acquisition planning*** *aims to:*

**A.** Eliminate minority languages **B.** Increase the number of language users

**C.** Change grammar rules **D.** Create new dialects

**5.** *Choosing* ***one language*** *for education in a* ***multilingual country*** *may*:

**A.** Have no effect **B.** Benefit all equally

**C.** Disadvantage speakers of other languages **D.** Eliminate all dialects

**Activity Three:** Provide concise responses to the questions.

**1.** List the different kinds of institutional support which can be sought by a community of people who want to maintain their minority language within a society where English is the language of the majority. Provide an example of each.

……

……

……

**2.** The development of a standard language has sometimes been described as involving the following two steps:

**(i)** create a model for imitation

**(ii)** promote it over its rivals.

Linguists are often involved as advisers at both stages. Some people have argued that linguists can provide useful linguistic expertise for achieving step (i) but they have no contribution to make to step (ii). Do you agree?

……

……

……

**3.** What steps could a government take to spread the knowledge, use and acceptance of language?

……
……
……..

**4.** Rob's family live in New Zealand where English is the dominant language. He and his wife, Anke, have decided to use German in the home to help their children develop bilingual proficiency. Decisions about which language to use in the home illustrate informal, grassroots acquisition planning. Consider religion and workplace domains. Do you think that decisions about language use at the micro-level in these domains could be considered as examples of acquisition planning?

……
……
…….

**5.** A successful national language needs to serve a variety of functions. The following have been identified as important.

***Unifying*:** it must unify the nation, and offer advantages to speakers over their dialects and vernaculars.

***Separatist*:** it must set the nation off from surrounding nations. It should be an appropriate symbol of separate national identity.

***Prestige*:** it should be recognised as a proper or 'real' language with higher status than local dialects and vernacular languages.

***Frame-of-reference function*:** the standard variety serves as a yardstick for correctness. Other varieties will be regarded as non-standard in some respect.

Are all these functions served for the Tanzanian nation by Swahili?

……
……
……..

(The above questions are adapted from Holmes (2013)

**Activity Four:** Discussion questions

**1.** The size of a country seems to be quite unrelated to the problems in language planning it may face, because both small and large countries can have problems. What seem to you to be the most important factors in creating problems and in resolving them?

**2.** Statements of the following kind have sometimes been made in an attempt to relate the number of languages spoken in a nation to the 'success' of that nation.

**a.** Linguistically homogeneous countries may be rich or poor, but, in general, they are more advanced economically and more stable than linguistically heterogeneous countries.

**b.** The latter are always less advanced or less developed in important ways.

**c.** Language uniformity is a necessary but not sufficient condition of economic development (see Fishman, 1968b, and Pool, 1972).

How correct are such observations? Are they basically correct except for one or two notable exceptions, e.g., Switzerland? Or are the observations colored entirely by their authors' value systems?

**3.** Assess the 'wisdom' of each of the following:

**a.** adopting Tok Pisin instead of English in Papua New Guinea;

**b.** giving official status to Mandarin rather than Hokkien in Singapore;

**c.** trying to effect a compromise solution to the 'two-language' problem in Norway rather than choosing one of the languages;

**d.** adopting Pinyin in China;

**e.** making Canada a country bilingual in its federal machinery from coast to coast rather than a country of two regional unilingualisms with French in Quebec and English everywhere else.

(The above questions are adapted from Wardhaugh, 2010)

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## Lecture Seven: Examination of Case Studies

**Objective of the Course:**

**By the end of this course, students will be able to:**

- Identify key sociolinguistic concepts in the different case studies such as speech community, bilingualism, diglossia, pidgins, creoles, and language planning.
- Examine how social class, identity, power relations, and cultural norms are reflected via language in each text.
- Connect the linguistic situations described in the texts to real-world issues such as language policy, multilingualism, and identity.

### Text One

**Direction:** The following text is about speech community. Under what conditions does a village become a speech community? (Roberts. P. (1958). Understanding English. Harper & Row).

Imagine a village of a thousand people all speaking the same language and never hearing any language other than their own. As the decades pass and generation succeeds generation, it will not be very apparent to the speakers of the language that any considerable language change is going on. Oldsters may occasionally be conscious of and annoyed by the speech forms of youngsters. They will notice new words, new expressions, "bad" pronunciations, but will ordinarily put these down to the irresponsibility of youth, and decide piously that the language of the younger generation will revert to decency when the generation grows up.

It doesn't revert, though. The new expressions and the new pronunciations persist, and presently there is another younger generation with its own new expressions and its own pronunciations. And thus the language changes. If members of the village could speak to one another across five hundred years, they would probably find themselves unable to communicate.

Now suppose that the village divides itself and half the people move away. They move across the river or over a mountain and form a new village. Suppose the separation is so complete that the people of New Village have no contact with the people of Old Village. The language of both villages will change, drifting away from the language of their common ancestors. But the drift will not be in the same direction. In both villages there will be new expressions and new pronunciations, but not the same ones. In the course of time the language of Old Village and New Village will be mutually unintelligible with the language they both started with. They will also be mutually unintelligible with one another.

An interesting thing—and one for which there is no perfectly clear explanation—is that the rate of change will not ordinarily be the same for both villages. The language of Old Village changes faster than the language of New Village. One might expect that the opposite would be true—that the emigrants, placed in new surroundings and new conditions, would undergo more rapid language changes. But history re¬ ports otherwise. American English, for example, despite the violence and agony and confusion to which the demands of a new continent have subjected it, is probably essentially closer to the language of Shakespeare than London English is.

Suppose one thing more. Suppose Old Village is divided sharply into an upper class and a lower class. The sons and daughters of the upper class go to preparatory school and then to the university; the children of the lower class go to work. The upper-class people learn to read and write and develop a flowering literature; the lower-class people remain illiterate. Dialects develop, and the speech of the two classes steadily diverges. One might suppose that most of the change would go on among the illiterate, that the upper-class people, conscious of their heritage, would tend to preserve the forms and pronunciations of their ancestors. Not so. The opposite is true. In speech, the educated tend to be radical and the un¬ educated conservative. In England one finds Elizabethan forms and sounds not among Oxford and Cambridge graduates but among the people of backward villages.

A village is a fairly simple kind of speech community—a group of people steadily in communication with one another, steadily hearing one another's speech. But the village is by no means the basic unit. Within the simplest village there are many smaller units—groupings based on age, class, occupation. All these groups play intricately on one another and against one another, and a language that seems at first a coherent whole will turn out on inspection to be composed of

many differing parts. Some forces tend to make these parts diverge; other forces hold them together. Thus, the language continues in tension.

## Text Two

**Direction:** The following text is a brief introduction to Black English. Do you think all speakers of Black English are black? (Falk, J. S. (1978). Linguistics and Language: A Survey of Basic Concepts and Implications (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons).

Much of the sociolinguistic research on social dialects has been concentrated on the speech of black people of the lower socioeconomic classes, largely because this group has captured the concern of society at large during the last two decades. Although much more remains to be learned, it has become clear that certain grammatical features are present in the speech of lower-class blacks throughout the country, in both urban and rural areas. This fact has led scholars to Suggest that there exists a special variety of English, which has come to be known as Black English. The term is perhaps misleading since not all black people are speakers of Black English. Black English is a social dialect, not a racial one, and it is used only by those at the lower socioeconomic levels of our society. In the past, even otherwise reputable scholars sometimes claimed that the speech of blacks differed from whites because of supposed physical and mental differences. Scientists have shown conclusively that there are no mental differences among races, and the physical differences that sometimes exist are unrelated to speech differences. Dialect variations are due to environment alone, a fact demonstrated by those blacks who speak standard English identical to that of whites of the same regional, social, and educational background.

The similarities among the speech of lower-class black people across the country must be accounted for. Neither intercommunication nor population mobility can explain these common features, since many speakers of Black English have been isolated linguistically and socially, not only from other segments of society, but from other black people in other parts of the country as well. We noted…that, when different languages are found to have features in common, this is generally due either to some form of intercommunication that has resulted in borrowing or to the fact that the languages were derived from a common source. Having ruled out the former for Black

English, we must consider the latter possibility. Most blacks in this country today are descendants of the slaves who were brought here from West Africa. Speaking no English, they had to learn the language from the minimal contact they had with the lower-class whites who were placed in immediate charge of their work and their lives. Some sociolinguists have suggested that the defining characteristics of modern Black English can be attributed to linguistic features of the languages of West Africa that the original slaves spoke. These features of the native languages were used in the imperfectly mastered English that the slaves learned as a foreign language and many have persisted until this day because of the linguistic isolation in which some black people have lived.

One feature of language that is not strongly utilized in standard English but does occur in Black English is the phenomenon of aspect, in which verbs indicate the duration, completion, or repetition of an action, sometimes with little or no attention to tense (the time at which the action occurred). For example, when asked where his mother is, a child may answer with sentence (10):

(10) *She is in the hospital.*

This sentence gives no information about the duration of the mother's absence. Sentence (10) is standard English. Consider sentences (11) and (12), which are typical forms of Black English.

(11) *She in the hospital.*

(12) *She be in the hospital.*

These two sentences convey different meanings, and the difference is one of aspect. (11), in which no form of the verb be occurs, means that the mother is there right now and that her confinement is probably unusual and has been for a relatively short time. (12), on the other hand, in which be is present, means that the mother has been hospitalized for a long time or that she is often hospitalized. It is interesting to note that a similar distinction occurs in many West African languages, a fact that may account for its presence in Black English. While such a hypothesis is appealing, it is necessary that some caution be used in accepting as fact the view that all aspects of Black English can be traced back to features in the native languages of slaves from more than a century ago. Research into Black English is a recent interest of students of language, and there may well be aspects of this social dialect that cannot be accounted for by this hypothesis.

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## Text Three

**Direction: The following text is about bilingualism and diglossia. To what extent does Fishman's broader definition of diglossia—extending beyond varieties of the same language to include different languages—enhance or weaken the conceptual clarity of the distinction between bilingualism and diglossia? (Dittmar. N. (1976). A Critical Survey of Sociolinguistics: Theory and Application. Edward Arnold).**

Ferguson has described the concept of diglossia as a stable situation of two varieties of the same language in contact, whereby the H variety prevails in all public spheres, and the L variety is the uncodified variant for the informal sphere of families and friends. Fishman (1971a; 1971b, 286ff.) maintains that this concept is a suitable criterion for classifying bilingual communities. For him, however, diglossia is that form of coexistence of two (or more) language varieties or languages where the values of social class and class-bound functions are complementary to one another: 'This separation was most often along the lines of an H(igh) language, on the one hand, utilized in conjunction with religion, education, and other aspects of High Culture, and an L(ow) language, on the other hand, utilized in conjunction with everyday pursuits of hearth, home, and lower work sphere' (Fishman 1971a, 74; 1971b, 287).

It should be noted that for Fishman the notion 'diglossia' is no longer restricted (as it was for Ferguson) by the condition that two varieties of the same language are involved. In Fishman's sense, 'diglossia' is the term to denote any situation where clearcut differences between linguistic systems correlate strictly with social class and/or class-governed social functions, whereby this strict correlation is explicitly known and respected by at least large sections of the society in question. (He agrees with Ferguson that the H variety (or language) is normally not acquired at home as a part of the primary processes of language acquisition and socialization, but rather as a result of education at school.)

The difference with Ferguson's concept of diglossia is not as slight as it might seem: there are significant differences between societies where an H variety of the same language is used and taught and those where the H system is a completely different language, without the correspondences with the L variety. Factors of national and historical coherence play an important

part in the attitudes held by members of such societies with regard to the H and L varieties of their language.

Theoretical general linguistics has so far been unable to define in any clear sense the distinction between varieties within the same language on the one hand and different languages on the other, due mainly to the widespread acceptance of Chomsky's (1965, 3) abstraction of an ideal speaker-listener in a homogeneous linguistic community, and hence the lack of any coherent notion of pluriform linguistic competence; even so, one should not be tempted to think that, therefore, no such distinction exists. The historical accident of the present-day state of linguistics does not make the distinction less real. From a purely grammatical point of view, there does not have to be a clearcut dichotomy between the notions 'variety' and 'language': there may well be a sliding scale. It may also be that the ultimate decision in applying the label 'language' or 'variety' ('dialect') rests with the members of a linguistic community and is determined by sociopolitical factors. In that case one would wish to establish what constraints are imposed by the sliding grammatical scale on the choice of such labels, and what are the causes as well as the consequences of their application.

In Fishman's terminology, bilingualism is distinguished from diglossia, not so much by the criterion of a subject's having competence in two different languages rather than in two varieties of the same language, as by the fact that linguistic differences (of any kind) are not closely correlated to institutionalized class distinctions: 'Here we see ... that bilingualism is essentially a characterization of individual linguistic versatility whereas diglossia is a characterization of the social allocation of functions to different languages or varieties' (Fishman 1971b, 295).

On the whole, Fishman's use of the term 'language' is wide and unspecific, and to some extent metaphorical. Thus we read: 'Ultimately, the language of school and government replaces the language of home and neighborhood, precisely because it comes to provide status in the latter domain as well as in the former' (ibid., 297), where it is left unclear whether the term 'language' refers to a variety (code, speech form, register, or the like) or to a grammatically-defined distinct system of communication. When Fishman continues: 'Many studies of bilingualism and intelligence or of bilingualism and school achievement have been conducted within the context of bilingualism without diglossia' (ibid., 297), he lays himself open to the very same criticisms that have been formulated earlier with regard to Bernstein's lack of conceptual clarity in this respect.

It is in this context that Fishman's scheme of the cooccurrence relations of diglossia and bilingualism within a given society should be understood.

Diglossia and bilingualism. The coexistence of both forms (stable distribution of language varieties strictly according to social functions, and a more flexible form of coexistence of two 'languages') is to be found mainly in large societies. There are few language communities in which bilingual and diglossia specific behaviour is fully developed (e.g. USA, India, Paraguay, Switzerland).

Diglossia without bilingualism. In language communities of this type there is a strict functional separation of language varieties according to H and L variants. It is mostly a question of intra group-specific behaviour of elite ruling forces (H variety), who not only live apart from the ordinary people but intentionally contrast their language with that of the masses (authoritarian dissociation from the L variety symbolized in use of language, e.g. French at German and Slavonic courts in the nineteenth century; even today in north African states, amongst others). This type of diglossia is often found in societies that have been colonized.

Bilingualism without diglossia. In a language situation, where, in Fishman's scheme, bilingualism exists, but generally not diglossia, there is a marked difference between the two: diglossia is characterized by a rigid social distribution of its functions, whereas bilingualism can occur in different ways, according to individual and social circumstances. Thus, the occurrence of bilingual behaviour varies with the situation, roles, topics and aims of communication; bilingualism without diglossia is found in most societies. Such a situation is by no means stable, but rather subject to rapid change as a result of its correlation with extremely varied social parameters (resettlement, immigration, movement of foreign workers etc.).

Neither bilingualism nor diglossia. This type applies to isolated, undifferentiated language communities that have little contact with the outside world; it is, says Fishman, now only rarely found, and is slowly dying out.

According to Fishman, the relationship between diglossia and bilingualism is a central criterion for the classification of language communities. However, these classifications are superficial: they make it look as if language were originally bilingual or diglossic in nature, or both at the same time. In any case, the reasons for the observed phenomena are not explained, although

in the case of Fishman's or Ferguson's notion of diglossia, they can certainly be partly accounted for by prevailing economic and political conditions. Apart from the shallowness of the classification proposed, a general lack of conceptual clarity is apparent, as well as the occasional contradiction.

## Text Four

**Direction:** The following text is about pidgins and creoles. Explain the concept of a post-creole continuum. In your answer, describe the roles of acrolect, basilect, and mesolect, and provide an example from the text (Holmes, J. (2013). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. (4th ed.). Routledge).

Despite their huge geographical spread – they are found in every continent – many similarities are found among pidgins and creoles. Over a hundred have been identified, but the *lexifier language* for most (about 85) is one of seven European languages: English (35), French (15), Portuguese (14), Spanish (7), German (6), Dutch (5) and Italian (3). So perhaps the similarities are not surprising.

But the fact that similarities have been found between pidgins from quite different geographical regions, and in pidgins where quite different languages have contributed to their development, suggests things are not quite so straightforward. Some have argued that all pidgins and creoles had a common origin. They claim that most pidgins can be traced back to a single fifteenth-century Portuguese pidgin, and perhaps further to a Mediterranean lingua franca, Sabir. Others argue that each pidgin arises and develops independently. They account for the similarities by pointing to two types of constraints on their development which they all share. Firstly, pidgins arise in different contexts but for the same kinds of basic functions– trade, barter, and other essentially transactional and referentially oriented functions. Secondly, these functions are expressed through structural processes which seem universal to all situations of language development – processes such as simplification and reduction of redundant features (like gender markers). It is argued that these processes will be found in any context where basic communication is the aim, so there is no

need to argue for a common origin for all pidgins. It is easy to see the fascination of the debate – and it is one which seems likely to continue for some time.

There is almost as much debate about what ultimately happens to a creole. There are a variety of answers depending on the social context. In societies with rigid social divisions, a creole may remain as a stable L variety alongside an officially sanctioned H variety, a situation illustrated in diglossic Haiti where Haitian Creole is the L variety alongside French. Where social barriers are more fluid, the creole may develop towards the standard language from which it has derived large amounts of vocabulary. When a creole is used side-by-side with the standard variety in a community where social barriers are not insuperable, features of the creole tend to change in the direction of the standard variety. This process is described as *decreolization.*

Eventually there may exist a continuum of varieties between the standard language and the creole – sometimes described as a post-creole continuum. In this situation, linguists label the variety closest to the standard an acrolect (where *acro* means 'high'), whereas the variety closest to the creole is labeled the basilect or 'deep' creole. These two varieties are often mutually unintelligible. Varieties in between these two extremes are described as mesolects or intermediate varieties. Examples can be found in Jamaica and Guyana. So in Guyanese Creole the acrolectal form 'I told him', used by educated middle class people, has a mesolectal form 'I tell im', used by lower middle class people, and a basilectal form 'mi tell am' used by old and illiterate rural labourers. Over time a creole in this situation may be engulfed by the standard language, as Negerhollands has been by Dutch in the Dutch West Indies. One further possibility is that a creole may be standardised and adopted as an official language, as Tok Pisin was in Papua New Guinea, or become a national language, as did Indonesian, a language which developed from pidgin Malay.

## Text Five

**Direction:** The following text is about attitudes toward code-switching in multilingual communities. Why is mixing Tucano with Tariana viewed negatively, while mixing Baniwa is seen as acceptable or amusing? (Meyerhoff, M. (2006). Introducing sociolinguistics (1st ed.). New York: Routledge).

In some multilingual communities mixing constituents from one language with another language can be seriously frowned upon. The terms used to describe the mixed utterances are often pejorative or jocular, like Spanglish or Franglais. Such labels provide another basis for identifying the close association between attitudes to language use and language users.

In the Tariana community, in north-west Amazonia (Brazil), many languages are in use because of cultural traditions that favour marrying someone from outside your own immediate clan or tribe. So new speakers of neighbouring languages are regularly brought into the Tariana community, and many people grow up with passive or active command of a number of local languages as well as Brazilian Portuguese and some English. But there is surprisingly little mixing of other languages into Tariana. Alexandra Aikhenvald talks about the negative reactions such internal code switching generates on the rare occasions that it happens. For example, a very old man once greeted her with the following (Tariana is in italics and Tucano is underlined):

Example 3 *Pi-nu-nikha* *mahko*

'Have you come daughter?' (Aikhenvald 2003: 10)

After the old man had left, people explained his slip, saying he was 'not all there any more' (Aikhenvald 2003: 10). Aikhenvald explains that Tariana people have very negative feelings about the insertion of Tucano into Tariana, but that attitudes about sentence internal switches (like in 3) involving other languages are seen in somewhat different ways.

For example, people seem to feel that using Baniwa (also spoken nearby) in a Tariana sentence is kind of funny rather than being just 'wrong' (as use of Tucano is). She explains this in terms of the relative vitality of the languages concerned. Tucano is spreading rapidly in the region as a lingua franca; that is, more and more people are using it to communicate when they don't share

a native language, and it is the only language in the region with any significant growth in overall numbers of speakers. Baniwa, on the other hand, is still only spoken within the traditional Baniwa villages. So Tucano is policed because it is a threat to Tariana. Baniwa is not a threat and so the occasional use of it in Tariana discourse is seen as amusing more than anything else.

## Text Six

**Direction:** The following text is about how Vanuatu managed its linguistic diversity after independence (1980). Why is mixing Tucano with Tariana viewed negatively, while mixing Baniwa is seen as acceptable or amusing? (Meyerhoff, M. (2006). Introducing sociolinguistics (1st edition). New York: Routledge).

The challenges of linguistic self-determination also arise in other post-colonial contexts around the world. Many Pacific nations gained full independence only in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Republic of Vanuatu is one such example. Vanuatu was jointly administered as a colonial outpost by both the British and French (in a unique arrangement known officially as the 'Joint Condominium' government, but generally referred to locally as the 'Joint Pandemonium') until 1980 when it became an independent nation.

The new nation was highly diverse linguistically, and as in South Africa this raised a number of issues, some practical and some ideological. In addition to the many indigenous Eastern Oceanic languages spoken on the islands, there is an English-based creole called Bislama which is widely used, especially in the main centres (the capital Port Vila and the northern town Luganville/Santo). Finally, there are the two colonial languages, French and English, which were the official languages of the Condominium government.

Upon gaining independence, Vanuatu inscribed slightly different decisions into their Constitution than South Africa did. The relevant section on 'National and official languages' in the English version of the Constitution is much shorter than the comparable section in the South African Constitution (and, interestingly, is somewhat less expansive than the Bislama version of the Constitution).

NATIONAL AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

3.(1) The national language of the Republic of Vanuatu is Bislama. The official languages are Bislama, English and French. The principal languages of education are English and French.

3.(2) The Republic of Vanuatu shall protect the different local languages which are part of the national heritage, and may declare one of them as a national language.

What clause 3. (1) does is make a three-way distinction between a national language, official languages and languages of education. It divides up these functions between French, English and Bislama, while in the next paragraph it addresses the importance and value placed on the indigenous languages which do not have any institutional status. This is articulated more explicitly in the Bislama version of the Constitution, which says: 'The indigenous languages of Vanuatu are part of the many good, traditional aspects of the country, and the government of the Republic will ensure that they are maintained' (my translation).

Clause 3. (2) allows one of the 'different local languages' to have national language status instead of or as well as Bislama. This aligns Bislama with the indigenous Eastern Oceanic languages, and suggests that Bislama's status as a national language is partly because it is not a colonial language but is considered more like an indigenous language of Vanuatu. As Ni-Vanuatu will readily tell you (Ni-Vanuatu is the adjective formed from Vanuatu), Bislama 'belongs to everyone'. Unlike the indigenous Eastern Oceanic or colonial languages it is not linked to any particular group or any particular set of vested interests. It is widely seen by Ni-Vanuatu as part of the common property of the nation, and an important way of establishing a bond between Ni-Vanuatu when they meet overseas.

## General Conclusion

It can be concluded that sociolinguistics is primarily concerned with the complex interrelationships between language and society. Language is not a static and fixed system but rather a dynamic and variable phenomenon which is influenced by social, cultural, historical and political factors. Through concepts such as *language variety*, *speech community* and *linguistic repertoire*, sociolinguistics explains how social factors such as educational background, ethnic identity, age, and gender affect individuals' linguistic choices within a specific communicative situation. These issues, go well beyond the laypeople perceptions about language that one encounters from time to time in letters to the press or in the prescriptive and literary focus on language that schools typically offer. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the full understanding of language can only be achieved by paying attention to social and historical contexts.

Moreover, the study of dialects, standardization, bilingualism, diglossia, multilingualism, and contact languages (e.g., pidgins, creoles and lingua francas), shows the diversity and adaptability of human language. In fact, these sociolinguistic phenomena are not random but systematic and socially significant, often affected by prestige, power, and sociological norms. Finally, the distinction between language and dialect, as well as the emergence of standard languages demonstrate the importance of sociopolitical forces in shaping a given community's linguistic profile.

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