

Language & Dialect

- **Size:** Language is larger than dialect i.e., contains more items
- **Prestige:** language has more prestige than dialects because it is used in **formal writings** e.g., Standard English.
- **Written:** language is always in written form whereas a dialect is necessarily not.



Standard languages:



Created by Jonathan Coutinho
from Noun Project

- Standardization is directly intervened by society and results in standard language where as dialects are considered non-standard varieties.

Selection:

A variety of language is selected for conversion into standard language.

Codification:

Make dictionaries and grammar books to decide what is correct.

Elaboration of function:

To use it in all the functions associated with central government and in official writing e.g., scientific, educational, and literary texts.

Acceptance:

Variety to be accepted by the relevant population as the variety of community i.e., the National Language

Standard languages act as symbol of unifying force and Independence.

Dialects

A particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group.

Douglas Biber distinguishes two main kinds of dialects in linguistics:

Regional and social dialects. (Dimensions of Register Variation, 1995).



Types of dialects:



- **REGIONAL DIALECTS**

"Geographic dialects are varieties associated with speakers living in a particular location/ particular geographical area".

- **Example:**
- pail versus bucket)
- different pronunciations of the same word, such as farm with or without the [r].

Types of dialects:

- **SOCIAL DIALECTS**

Social dialects are varieties associated with speakers belonging to a given demographic group (e.g., women versus men, or different social classes)"

- It is not really the meaning of what you say that counts socially, but who you are when you say it."
- (Walt Wolfram, "Social Varieties of American English." *Language in the USA*, ed. by E. Finegan. Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Speakers are simultaneously affiliated with a number of different groups that include region, age, gender, and ethnicity, and some of these other factors may weigh heavily in the determination of the social stratification of language variation.

Social Dialect



Example:

"Across all social groups in Western societies, women generally use more standard grammatical forms than men and so, correspondingly, men use more vernacular forms than women..."

"[I]t is worth noting that although gender generally interacts with other social factors, such as status, class, the role of the speaker in an interaction, and the (in)formality of the context, there are cases where the gender of the speaker seems to be the most influential factor accounting for speech patterns."

<https://www.thoughtco.com/social-dialect-sociolect-1692109>

- **ISOGLOSS**

A line on a map marking an area having a distinct linguistic feature, and these lines shouldn't intersect.

One isogloss separates the area where **often** is pronounced with [t] sound and in another without it.



Example:

An example of an isogloss is the line on a map that shows the division of two populations which have different pronunciations for a specific vowel.

Registers

Register is 'varieties according to use', in contrast with dialects, defined as 'varieties according to user'

(Cheshire 1992, Downes 1994, Biber 1988).

Your dialect shows who (or what) you *are*, whilst your register shows what you are *doing*.

Example

- In writing one letter a person might start:
- **'I am writing to inform you that . . . '**,
- but in another the same person might write:
- **'I just wanted to let you know that . . . '.**

- Each time we speak or write we not only locate ourselves in relation to the rest of society, but we also relate our act of communication itself to a complex classificatory scheme of communicative behavior.
- The 'dimensions' on which an act of communication may be located are no less complex than those relevant to the social location of the speaker.

Dimensions of Register

- Michael Halliday (1978: 33) distinguishes three general types of dimension: 'field', 'mode' and 'tenor',
- **FIELD** is concerned with the *purpose and subject-matter* of the communication.
- **MODE** refers to *the means* by which communication takes place - notably, by *speech or writing*.
- **TENOR** depends on the *relations between participants*.

Dimensions of Register

- Field refers to 'why' and 'about what' a communication takes place.
- Mode is about 'how'.
- Tenor is about 'to whom' (i.e. how the speaker views the person addressed).

Another Example

- formal, technical We obtained some sodium chloride.
- formal, non-technical We obtained some salt.
- informal, technical We got some sodium chloride.
- informal, non-technical We got some salt

Diglossia



Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), 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.

Example

- In an Arabic-speaking diglossic community, the language used at home is a local version of Arabic (there may be very great differences between one 'dialect' of Arabic and another, to the point of mutual incomprehensibility), with little variation between the most educated and the least educated speakers. However, in a lecture at a university, or a sermon in a mosque, the only possibility is Standard Arabic which is known as **FUSHA**.

Mixture of Varieties

Do speakers keep them separate in speech? and

Do speakers keep them separate as language systems?

Code Switching

- the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation.
- "the conversational code-switching of the German-American bilingual community"

Bilingualism:

Anyone who speaks more than one language chooses between them according to circumstances

METAPHORICAL CODE-SWITCHING:(change in topic)

- A variety normally used in one kind of situation is used in another kind of situation because the topic is the sort which would normally arise in first kind of situation.
- the choice of language that determines the situation, are called METAPHORICAL CODE-SWITCHING (Blom and Gumperz 1971).
- In the course of a morning spent at the community administration office, we noticed that clerks used both standard and dialect phrases, depending on whether they were talking about official affairs or not. Likewise, when residents step up to a clerk's desk, greeting and inquiries about family affairs tend to be exchanged in the dialect, while the business part of the transaction is carried on in the standard. (Blom and Gumperz 1971: 425)

Situational Code Switching

(change in situation)

- the switches between languages always coincide with changes from one external situation (for example, talking to members of the family) to another (for example, talking to the neighbours).
- The choice of language is controlled by rules, which members of the community learn from their experience, so these rules are part of their total linguistic knowledge.
- bilingual speakers will use their choice of language in order to define the situation not vice versa.

Code Mixing or Conversational Code-Switching

- In code-switching the point at which the languages change corresponds to a point where the situation changes, either on its own or precisely because the language changes.
- Switching codes within one sentence, and switching many times.
- a fluent bilingual talking to another fluent bilingual changes language without any change at all in the situation.
- some syntactic (and other) categories used in analysing language are universal rather than tied to particular languages. e.g., *acha bacha*, good boy, in both these languages adjective precedes noun.

- To get the right effect the speakers balance the two languages against each other as a kind of linguistic cocktail - a few words of one language, then a few words of the other, then back to the first for a few more words and so on.

BORROWING

- an item is 'borrowed' from one language to become part of the other language. Everyday examples abound - words for foods, plants, institutions, music and so on, which most people can recognise as borrowings (or LOAN-WORDS).
- Words account for more than half of the vocabulary of English, which has borrowed a great deal from Latin, Greek and French. Words like *money*, *car*, *church* and *letter* can all be traced to borrowings from these languages, but none of us are aware of this and use them just like any other English word, without any trace of foreign associations.

- LOAN TRANSLATIONS (or 'calques'). For example, the English superman is a loan translation of the German Übermensch, and the expression I've told him I don't know how many times is a direct translation of the French Je le lui ai dit je ne sais pas combien de fois (Bloomfield 1933: 457).
- What these examples illustrate is that borrowing may involve the levels of syntax and semantics without involving pronunciation at all.

PIDGIN

- 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 and Basic English.
- These 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.

- the reason for wanting to communicate with members of the other communities is often trade, a pidgin may be what is called a TRADE LANGUAGE.
- but not all pidgins are restricted to being used as trade languages, nor are all trade languages pidgins. Instead, the ordinary language of some community in the area may be used by all the other communities as a trade language. E.g., English and French are widely used as trade languages in many parts of Africa.

- Migrant workers in countries like Germany have developed pidgin varieties based on the local national language. Each pidgin is of course specially constructed to suit the needs of its users. which means that it has to have the terminology and constructions needed in whatever kinds of contact normally arise between the communities, but need not go beyond these demands to anticipate the odd occasion on which other kinds of situation arise.
- Another requirement of a pidgin is that it should be as simple to learn as possible, especially for those who benefit *least* from learning it, and the consequence of this is that the vocabulary is generally based on the vocabulary of the dominant group and syntax and phonology is of sub-ordinate group.

- Another situation in which pidgins are needed is when people from different language backgrounds are thrown together and have to communicate with each other, and with a dominant group, in order to survive.

CREOLE

- A pidgin which has acquired native speakers is called a CREOLE LANGUAGE, or CREOLE, and the process whereby a pidgin turns into a Creole is called 'creolisation'. It is easy to see how pidgins acquire native speakers, namely by being spoken by couples who have children and rear them together.
- This happened on a large scale among the African slaves taken to the New World, and is happening on a somewhat smaller scale in urban communities in places like Papua New Guinea.
- Creole occurs to be a symbol of **their identity**.

'POST-CREOLE CONTINUUM'.

- Taking DECREOLISATION first, this is what happens when a Creole is spoken in a country where other people speak the Creole's lexical source-language (for example, English). Since the latter has so much more prestige than the Creole, Creole speakers tend to shift towards it, producing a range of intermediate varieties.

Sociolinguists call the Creole the **BASILECT** and the prestige language the **ACROLECT**, with the intermediate varieties lumped together as **MESOLECTS**. This range of varieties spanning the gap between basilect and acrolect is called a **'POST-CREOLE CONTINUUM'**.