Key Topics of Language Variation in Sociolinguistics, Stylistics, Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis

Key Topics of Language Variation in Sociolinguistics, Stylistics, Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis

By

Bahaa-Eddin A. Hassan

To My Family

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

This book is meant to be a resource for undergraduate students studying a course in language variation, focused both on various topics and on practice materials in sociolinguistics, stylistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. It is designed to improve students' understanding of language variation.

The connection between language and society is deeply-rooted as society influences language; the physical environment of a society may be reflected in its language. Whereas English has only one word for "snow", Eskimo has 50 words. Social structure can also be reflected in language. For example, kinship vocabulary reflects a society's kinship system. In English, for example, the distinction between a maternal and paternal aunt is not important in the English society and is not reflected in the English lexicon. In Njamal, kinship terms such as "mama" are used to denote "father, uncle, and mother's sister's husband", and "Karna" to denote "mother's brother and father's sister's husband". Furthermore, social change can produce a corresponding linguistic change. Vocabulary, for example, may well reflect the traditionally male-dominated structure of our society. The words "man" and "mankind" are used to refer to both male and female. With the rise of the feminist movement, came the introduction and general use of such neutral words as "chairperson" and "salesperson" instead of "chairman" and "salesman".

Moreover, the values of a society can also have an effect on its language. This is clear through the phenomenon known as 'taboo'. Socially, a 'taboo' is characterized as being concerned with behavior which is believed to be forbidden. Language judgments are determined by social rather than linguistic factors. In New York City, post-vocalic /r/ is considered a prestige accent (Labov 1966). To the contrary, in England, accents without postvocalic /r/ have more status and are considered more correct than accents with. Received Pronunciation (RP), the prestige accent, doesn't have this /r/. Non-standard dialects are considered less prestigious in some communities. However, a non-standard dialect is highly prestigious in other

communities. In Britain, for example, the use of rural speech is widespread even in urbanized Britain. This attitude is not in the United States. Linguistic structure may also influence society. This view is called the Whorfian hypothesis. It refers to the view that the language one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality. This view is most usually associated with the linguist Edward Sapir and his student Lee Whorf. An example of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is sexist language. It influences the way in which our society views men and women.

Language variation is one of the areas which reflects the relationship between language and society. It refers to social, regional and contextual differences in the use of a particular language. In all the language communities throughout the world, there are more or less obvious differences between accent and dialect. The term "accent" is restricted to varieties of pronunciation, whereas the term "dialect" covers differences of grammar and vocabulary. An individual may have his/her own dialect variety in his/her repertory and switch from one to the other according to the situation in which he/she finds themselves. The standardization of a particular dialect in relation to one or more dialects is not necessarily the result of deliberate policy. The standard dialect is based upon what was, in earlier times, the speech of the upper classes. Standard English is the form of English which is usually used in public official settings and print publications. Generally speaking, however Standard English has a widely accepted, codified grammar and vocabulary; it has much more status and prestige than any other English dialect. Linguistically speaking, Standard English cannot be considered better than any other variety. The scientific study of language has convinced most scholars that all languages, and all dialects, are equally good as linguistic systems.

This book works on diverse issues that broadly relate to language variation. It reflects the vitality of language variation and its multifaceted pursuits. The book views language variation as a common key theme among the different branches of linguistics. This view does not limit its scope to sociolinguistics; rather it includes other branches such as stylistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. All these disciplines reflect variable usages. This variability is what allows languages to function as means of communication and social interaction. Linguistic variation and change over

the past forty years focused on historical linguistics and sociolinguistics. This book presents a different view of language variation. It presents how to study this aspect of language in a different perspective. The topics I enlisted to write about are not relatively recent. However, the spread of variationist methods into neighboring subject areas or branches encouraged me to combine these topics under the umbrella of language variation.

Evolution of language, as explained in Chapter One, is the starting point in language variation. It involves how languages evolve over time, and can be considered analogous to biological evolution. Chapter Two explains how any language variation is the result of social, historical, and linguistic factors that might affect individual performances. Chapter Three shows how style can also be viewed as variation in language use. Chapter Four, then, exhibits the interrelation between language variation and identity. It explains how sociolinguistic variation in a certain community constitutes its own collective identity. Chapter Five deals with the idea that linguistic diversity is also reflected in issues such as language policies and multilingualism. Communication styles preferred and used in societies, as explained in Chapter Five, are choices of language variants. Chapter Six show how linguistic variation is utilized in pragmatics and discourse analysis as disciplines of language use. Finally, Chapter Seven is a collection of practice materials and example questions related to language variation.

Finally, I hope that the selection of chapters will prove an interesting course book to students of language variation. I also hope that this book may whet the reader's appetite and encourage him/her to read further.

—Bahaa-eddin A. Hassan

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

LANGUAGE AS A LIVING ENTITY

Language is steadily evolving; modern linguistic theory views language as a living being that is subject to the norms of evolution. The two main functions of language; to serve as a medium of representation in human minds of the external world and to serve as a medium of communication among people, have been recognized in most of the approaches to the study of natural languages. The process of understanding and producing language requires the simultaneous mastery of lexical, syntactic and semantic skills. Chomsky demonstrated the importance of syntax in natural language. According to Chomsky, syntax can be independent of meaning, of context, of the information stored in the speaker's memory and of what the speaker wants to communicate. He gave the example of 'colorless green ideas sleep furiously' as an example of a sentence that is grammatically correct but semantically nonsense. Linguists such as George Lakoff disagreed with Chomsky's approach. Lakoff instead depended on conceptual metaphors based on our bodily experiences to introduce language analysis. He focuses on the use of metaphors as a tool of thought. The words that we know from a mental lexicon share connected meanings that enable our mind to construct categories or to create concepts, i.e. general, abstract mental representations. Concepts make language a tool that helps us expand our cognitive capacities. A language system develops through the genetic code and cultural evolution via collective memory and oral tradition.

1.1 The Genetic Code

Only human language, as Chomsky claims after Humboldt, can 'make infinite use of finite means'. And from the three language components –

phonology, semantics, and syntax – only the last one is responsible for this unique achievement. For these reasons, syntax (or Universal Grammar in the narrow sense of the term) was treated by Chomsky and other generativists (with the exception of Ray Jackendoff /1997/) as the only generative component of linguistic competence or I-language (internal, intentional). Chomsky introduced the notion of Universal Grammar (UG) as the genetic basis of human linguistic competence or faculty, i.e. the component of the human mind/brain dedicated to language.

Given that syntax is decisive for the functioning of linguistic competence, is it at all possible to use language without syntax? The answer is yes. It would be a sort of protolanguage, presumably the prelinguistic forms of human language in phylogenesis and ontogenesis. Derek Bickerton (1990), the well-known researcher in the domain of protolanguages, distinguishes four different forms still in existence in Homo sapiens and, under special conditions, the chimpanzees.

What does a protolanguage look like? We can imagine it as a list of lexical entries without syntax. It is simply the first level of symbol patterning. Its existing forms are the following:

1. Pidgin (but not creole where syntax is in full use);
2. Language of the child under 2 years of age;
3. Language of the child not exposed to any human language until puberty (the famous case of Genie described by Susan Curtiss 1977);
4. Language spoken in very disturbed conditions;
5. American Sign Language (ASL) used by chimps.

Knowledge has been construed in language in different periods of history. The increasing gap in our society between those who know and those who don't know has become a worldwide phenomenon schema. If we map knowledge into the schemata of language, we realize the different ways of codifying and transmitting knowledge. As Halliday and Webster (2013: 243) state, narrative is the genre which played a significant role in the evolution of knowledge. It documents the accounts of past and imaginary events we inherit and the events which capsulate the accumulated

experience of the community. This mode of knowing is illustrated in narratives which have particular protagonists along with their particular themes. The narrative of the ancient Greeks and 'The Iliad' of Homer gave rise to complex sentences, cause and effect and abstract nouns.

Classic Latin and classic Chinese became the vehicle of systematic knowledge in the last two millennia. A parcel of evolution was taking place in China. The semantic system continues to evolve. This language of abstract learning is not isolated from other discourse. It always interacts with the language of technology. The contact between Europe and China was frequently disrupted but was never totally lost. It was mediated by a succession of people who had, or at least acquired, similar semantic resources such as the Arabs who opened up the whole continent of Europe and so help paved the way for a further phase of linguistic construing of knowledge. Knowledge in the present time is created by a parallel semiotic universe of virtual things, especially virtual entities and virtual processes, all of which are good for thinking with. Knowledge now takes the form of theories which are explanatory and predictive and which generate a hypothesis. These can be tested to be validated and improved.

In terms of the development of the individual, specialized technical knowledge is taught at secondary school. Our meaning potential evolves with the emergence of Homo sapiens and along with our body's brains. The semantic resources that supported the lives of the first nations have retained the inherited patterns of knowledge. The ways of meaning that supported this knowledge have become the foundational part of the human experience. The pattern of lexical grammar is reflected in our semantic model of the social environment of our social groups. The meaning potential, i.e. the brain's capacity to mean, is common to all human beings (Berwick and Chomsky 2016). The meaning potential of the individual expands as they learn their first language throughout childhood and adolescence. It also expands if they learn other languages. In England, the invention of printing increased the meaning potential of English. It made it expand as a language of administration, law and commerce. Where writing had disseminated religious knowledge, printing promotes technical and scientific knowledge. The combination of the new medium, i.e. the printed text with the context of language use, was effective in English. All

languages use the printed text to create knowledge in increasingly specialized domains. In Arabic, for example, the pattern is diglossic in which there is a gap between two codes: written and spoken Arabic. The low rate of social mobility constrains the growth of meaning potential. The meaning potential tends to increase but we can't measure it in the fellowship nor in the individual.

In England, some individuals do carry special weight in expanding the meaning potential. It is called the Hamlet Factor (found in the text of Hamlet). Other possible candidates in England were the King James Bible, Milton, Jonathan Swift, Francis Bacon, Jane Austin, Dickens, and Lewis Carrol. Particular pieces of wording can be found in Oxford Dictionary or quotation. Berwick and Chomsky (2016) discuss whether writers, through the impact of their writings as a whole, enlarge or reshape the meaning potential of a language. In social reform in Norway or the Czech Republic, the way of writing manifests to establish new, natural language rather than a model. Reforming statesmen such as Ataturk succeeded in releasing a huge amount of semiotic energy among his citizens. The probability of the language system contributes to its ongoing revolution. The meaning potential is statistically modulated and transmitted from one generation to next. The grammatical system is destabilized as one of the terms comes less and less frequent, and then, disappears altogether. This happens in English with sentence modality. New systems may arise often by grammaticalization (the distinction between derivational suffixes 'less' and 'free' and they have different interpersonal loading (e.g. careless, carefree, valueless and value free). These accumulate as speakers interact. It is the habit of human beings to interfere in the process of evolution to try to improve them by introducing design (what we call 'language planning'). However, there is a clear line between planning and evolution. What speeds up or inhibits the evolution of a language? Now, the field of information technology dictates our spelling and puts restrains on our range of vocabulary. Chomsky called for systemizing the vocabulary (old words clearly logically interrelated) and reforming the grammar.

1.2 Linguistic Creativity

Creativity is not meant to refer to Chomsky's (1966) concept of generating an infinite set of grammatically well-formed sentences. It is the ability of all human beings to create various ways to communicate. Language is a creative system; it makes new meanings by speakers in the broadest sense of language use. Thus, language is a medium in which thought is conducted; a means of expressing an infinite variety of different ideas and it can react in the different situations. Creativity is a transdisciplinary cognitive skill. The notion of linguistic creativity, as introduced by Chomsky (1966), here called 'generative creativity', means the ability of the ideal speaker in a homogenous speech community to combine a finite known stock of elements on the basis of a finite known stock of computational patterns. Semantic change is normal for all languages. Blank (1999) has listed the forces which trigger semantic change.

linguistic forces
psychological forces
socio-cultural forces
cultural / encyclopedic forces

Bloomfield (1933) gives examples of the types of semantic change: narrowing, widening, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, meiosis, degeneration and elevation. According to Breal (1899) semantic change can be observed via three types:

1. Restriction of sense: change from a general to a specific meaning
2. Enlargement of sense: change from a special to a general meaning
3. Thickening of sense: change from an abstract to a concrete meaning

Put simply, we can summarize it in duality.

1. narrowing of sense vs. widening of sense
2. change from a concrete to an abstract meaning vs. change from an abstract to a concrete meaning.

Language users also have the potential to create metaphors from truth and truth from metaphors. After Hegel's analysis of a metaphor, Nietzsche wrote about truth and metaphor in language. He tacitly suggested that we, as a society, have forgotten the connection between truths and metaphors. Truths are purely metaphors we no longer recognize as such. Arabic linguistics has contributed in this area. It was the question of al-Syyuti and Ibn Jennie. But modern linguistics imbues it with the approach.

Ex. Bottleneck, teeth of a saw/a comb, or foot of a page/a mountain

Meaning potential is then diagnosed by the componential analysis of meaning. This technique is developed by Eugene Nida. Language evolution can be assessed via meaning potential and form/structure potential. The study argues that meaning potential is usually based on evolution but structure potential is based on its stability.

Examples:

1- Valency: It is the number of arguments controlled by a verbal predicate. It includes all arguments including the subject, which makes it different from verb transitivity.

    a) avalent (dummy subject)
    b) monovalent (intransitive)
    c) divalent (transitive)
    d) trivalent (ditransitive)
    e) tetravalent (tritransitive)

2- Wide derivational processes:

Language users are systematic about how they create new words from old words on the basis of the abstract rules. That is, language exhibits rules which make it easier for learners and speakers to be productive. For each of the abstract relations, they need a morpheme to combine with a word, or a lexical root, to form the new word. This process is called derivation. It is common in the modern languages of the world. In English some verbs are derived from adjectives by adding the suffix -en to the adjective.

Ex. 'weaken', 'shorten', 'lighten', 'blacken', 'sharpen', 'soften', and 'loosen'

Notice that this process doesn't apply to 'long' (verb: lengthen), 'big' (verb: grow), or 'thin' (verb: thin). Derivational rules do not occur without exceptions. Notice the (a) list which contains some adjectives to which negative 'un-' can be attached and others which seem impossible or at least somewhat odd. The (b) list contains some verbs to which a reversative 'un-' can attach and others which seem impossible

  a. Unhappy, *unsad, unlovely, *unugly, *unstupid
  b. Untie, unwind, unknot, *unyawn, unexplode

There are many types of word formation processes. Coinage is one of the word formation processes in which a new word is created either deliberately, or accidentally, without using the other word formation processes. For example, the following list of words provides some common coinages found in everyday English: aspirin. escalator. Conversion, also called zero derivation or null derivation, is a kind of word formation which involves the creation of a word (of a new word class) from an existing word (of a different word class) without any change in form, which is to say, derivation using only zero. Neologism is also defined as a new word; a new use for an old word, or the act of making up new words. An example of a neologism is the word 'webinar', for a seminar on the web or the Internet. An example of neologism is a comedian coining new terms on a TV show like Stephen Colbert's creation of the term "truthiness." All in all, languages which are used all over the world are living in the sense that they are ever changing in terms of their sound systems, their vocabulary (lexicon), and many other features. In this way, languages are like living entities. A living entity is ever changing and never ceases to change until it is dead.

Exercise

1. What is Chomsky's theory of language acquisition?
2. How does Chomsky define language?
3. What are the theories of language development?
4. What is meaning potential?
5. Is language a living entity?

.

CHAPTER TWO

LANGUAGE AND CONTEXT:
A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Language varies according to the social characteristics of the speaker such as social class, ethnic group, age, sex and the social context in which they find themselves. The same speaker uses different linguistic varieties in different situation and for different purposes. The totality of the linguistic varieties used by a particular community of speakers can be called a linguistic community's "verbal repertoire". Many factors are taken into consideration in order to select which variety is actually to be used on a particular occasion. Among these are register, the medium of communication, the context of the addressee, and style. First, register is the occupational linguistic variety which differs from one situation to another. The speaker will constantly select certain vocabulary appropriate to his occupation. The language of a soccer player, for instance, differs from that of a layman when he comments on a football match. The legal language is different from the language of an academic lecture. The speaker may switch registers or mix them. Second, another important element is whether language is written or spoken. Written language tends to be more complex than spoken one.

Third, the context of the addressee is another important factor. For example, speech between individuals of unequal rank is likely to be less relaxed and more formal than that between equals. A good example of this is that people use different forms of address that are produced by different degrees to show status difference or intimacy. For example, if a physician is called John, he might expect Doctor from a patient, Dad from his son, 'John' from his brother, 'Dear' from his wife, and 'Sir' from a police officer who stops him if he drives too fast. Solidarity is also an important factor in human relations. The tu-vous (T/V) distinction is very useful in

our discussion. The T-form is described as the familiar form and the V-form as the polite one. Now the V-form symbolizes all types of social difference and distance. T-usage becomes more probable between speakers of a larger degree of intimacy. Fourthly, style is also important. Linguistic varieties employed on a particular occasion can be referred to as different styles. Style varies according to degrees of formality. Formality varies from formal to informal contexts. It includes many factors including familiarity, kinship-relationship, politeness, seriousness, and so on. For example, the words 'Father', and 'endeavor' are more formal than 'Dad', and 'try'. The passive voice is much more frequent in formal styles in English. The speaker may shift their style according to the situation.

Code choice is involved in the social context. The particular dialect or language that people choose to use on any occasion is a code or a system used for communication among them. A situational change may result in code-switching. For example, two people conducting business in English in Kenya might suddenly switch to Swahili or to a local vernacular when the topic of conversation changes from business to more personal matters. Some countries are officially bilingual or multilingual in the sense that they have two or more official languages. A well-known example of a bilingual country is Canada. An equally well-known example of a multilingual country is Switzerland or Belgium. A particular kind of bilingualism is called diglossia. Diglossia is a particular kind of language standardization when two distinct varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the speech community. Members of such a community use one dialect for more public, formal purposes and the other in more informal, colloquial situations. We can distinguish a high (H) and a low (L) dialect in the distinction between the formal and the colloquial. The high variety is more prestigious than the low. An example of language communities which are diglossic is found in Arabic. Many of the differences between the high classical variety and the low variety are vocabulary differences. For example, in Cairene Arabic the form [ra?a:] 'to see' indicates the high variety, however, [ša:f] is the low variety. The differences may be grammatical as follows:

	High	Low
I cannot	[la:ʔastaTiˤu]	[maʔdarši]

A continuum of dialects often occurs when a large number of different, but not usually distinct, non-standard dialects are connected by a chain of similarity, but with the dialects at either end of the chain being very dissimilar. Differences between dialects may be lexical, e.g., the word 'scarecrow' in Standard English corresponds to 'bogle', 'bogeyman', 'mawkin', and several others. Differences may also be grammatical. There is also a continuum of accents ranging from Received Pronunciation (RP), through various local accents, to the most localized accent.

2.1 Ethnic Context

Questions of ethnolinguistic identity, in fact, arise most often in relation to the demands and needs of those who are in an ethnic minority within a community. One of the clearest examples of ethnic linguistic variety is provided by "African-American Vernacular English" (AAVE), referring to the non-standard English spoken by African Americans. Some linguists view AAVE as historically derived from English. Another alternative view argues that the origins of AAVE lie in the use of a Creole English. Some grammatical features characterize the use of AAVE:

1- No final 's' in the third-person singular present tense, e.g. he walk.
2- No use of forms of the verb 'be' in the present tense, e.g. They real fine.
3- The use of the invariant 'be' to mark habitual meaning, e.g. they be walking.
4- Use of 'been' to express the meaning of poet activity, e.g. I been know your name.
5- Use of double negations involving the auxiliary verb at the beginning of a sentence, e.g. "Can't nobody tell me nothing".

All in all, theories of ethnolinguistic identity address the social and psychological factors involved in the relationship between ethnicity and language.

2.2 Language and Gender

One topic that has come to the forefront of sociolinguistics in recent years is the connection between language and gender. Men and women do not speak different languages. Rather, they speak varieties of the same language. Linguists have tried to find reasons for this difference. They depended on the "invasion" theory to account for the language difference of the men and women of the Carib people in the West Indies. Men use expressions which women do not use and women use a whole variety of words which are not found in men's speech. Historically, this is due to the fact that long ago an army of Carib warriors invaded an area inhabited by Arawak-speaking people and killed all the Arawak men. The women, who remained, then continued to speak Arawak while their new husbands spoke the Carib language. Nowadays, the Carib and Arawak languages have become largely mixed, but there are many words of Arawak origin which just occur in the speech of women, and many words of Carib origin which are only used by males (Simpson 2019: 352-353). Otto Jespersen has introduced another explanation. He suggests that sex differentiation, in some cases, may be the result of the phenomenon of taboo. In Zulu, women would not be able to use the tabooed name with the sound /z/, such as 'amanzi' which means "water". They convert it to 'amandabi' (Jespersen 1922). It seems clear that linguistic sex varieties arise because language, as a social phenomenon, is closely related to social attitudes. Men and women play different social roles in a given society. Women care for prestige in society. Thus, the language of women may be expected to be more correct and prestigious than that of men. For example, schoolgirls in Scotland apparently pronounce the "t" in words like "water" and "got" more often than schoolboys, who prefer to substitute a glottal stop (Beltran 2013). In the speech of the black community of Detroit, for instance, women use a far higher percentage of postvocalic /r/ (a prestige feature as in New York) than men.

The language of men and women may not only differ in the lexical or phonological levels but also in the grammatical level. If we consider forms of non-standard multiple negations (e.g. I don't want none), we will discover that women use fewer such forms than men do. Women use a higher percentage of better forms than men do. English is also claimed to be sexist. The word "mankind" is used to describe the human race. Certain words in Persian with unpleasant meaning have no male equivalents, e.g., /bive/ "divorcee", /pi:rdoXtar/ "old maid", and /zanzalil/ "hen pecked" (Mirsaeedi and Salehi 2011). With the rise of the feminist movement came the introduction and general use of such neutral words as "chairperson" and "salesperson".

2.3 Language and Social Class

The more heterogeneous a society is, the more heterogeneous is its' language. Language variation is determined by extra-linguistic factors in a quite predictable way. If an individual is of a certain social class, age and sex, he would use a language variant in a given situation. The work of William Labov is usually regarded as setting the pattern for quantitative studies of linguistic variation. By methods such as random sampling and tape-reordering, Labov was able to claim that the speech of informants was truly representative of that of New York. One of his earliest studies of linguistic variation was an investigation of the (r) variable in New York City (Labov 1966). Labov believed that r-pronunciation is related to social class and level of formality. It would be more likely to occur as the formality level in speech increased, and would be more likely at the ends of words, as in 'floor' than before consonants, as in 'fourth'. Labov found that r-pronunciation was favored in the upper-class to a greater extent than in the middle-class but much less so in the lower-class. Labov (1966) argues that New York City pronunciations of words like 'car' and 'guard' with the [r] pronounced are considered a feature of prestigious speech. The use of postvocalic /r/ has been increasing since World War II, possibly as a result of large population movements to the city. Labov's lower middle-class speakers outperformed his upper-class speakers as an instance of hypercorrection.

Trudgill (1974) investigated different variables of English in Norwich. He demonstrates, in the same way as Labov does in New York, how language varieties are related to social class. Trudgill's analysis of the variables like /ng/, /t/, and /h/ shows, for example, that the [ŋ], [t], and [h] variants in words like 'singing', 'butter', and 'hammer' are used more frequently in higher social classes than the corresponding [n], [?] and [Ø] variants. However, each variable has its own characteristic distribution of variants. Whereas members of the lower working class almost say "singin'", they don't say "'ammer". The work of Basil Bernstein (1962) has been very influential in the relationship between language and social class. What is of particular concern to Bernstein are the quite different types of language that different social groups employ. He claims that there are two distinct variations of language. He calls one variety "the elaborated code" (originally formal code) and the other variety "the restricted code" (originally public code). Elaborated code makes use of accurate syntax; it uses complex sentences and a wide range of adjectives and prepositions. In contrast, restricted code employs short, grammatically simple sentences. According to Bernstein, every speaker has access to the restricted code because it is the language of intimacy between families. However, not all social classes have equal access to the elaborated code, particularly lower working-class people and their children. There are serious consequences for the children of the lower working class when they come to school because elaborated code is used as a medium of instruction.

2.4 Language and Nation

An important area in the relationship between language and context is language policy in the community. Monolingualism, that is, the ability to use but a single language code, is such a widely accepted norm in so many parts of the western world. In fact, a monolingual speaker would be regarded as underprivileged in today's world, lacking an important skill in society; the skill of being able to interact freely with speakers of other languages. In many parts of the world, it is a normal requirement that people speak several languages. Some countries are officially bilingual (or multilingual) in the sense that they have two (or more) official languages. Some people are bi-dialectal in the sense that they speak varieties of non-

standard dialects at home, with friends, and in certain circumstances. Multilingual nations exist in all parts of the world, and many examples could be cited. Almost many European countries are multilingual to a certain extent. Perhaps the most multilingual of all the countries is Romania. Multilingualism on any scale though, also brings with it problems for individuals and governments. The nations of many minority languages suffer from multilingualism and bilingualism. Such communities regard them as a serious threat. Members of linguistic minorities face challenges to function as full members of the national community in which they live. Examples of the minority languages are Welsh and Scottish Gaelic in the UK. In extreme cases, the minority language may not be formally forbidden but strongly disapproved in schools. This was formally true both of Welsh in Wales and Gaelic in Scotland. Gaelic has been allowed in schools in Gaelic-speaking Scottish areas since 1918, although it was not really used as a medium of instruction until 1958 (Education Act 1918). The position of Welsh in the UK is healthier than that of Gaelic. Today the situation is much improved. Children in Wales are taught both Welsh and English. In fact, a child of a minority group should be taught both, the minority language, and the majority language. This approach has the effect of recognizing the child's social and cultural identity and integrity. At the same, like the bidialectal approach, it does not deny the child's access to the majority language which is essential for upward social mobility. Many governments regard multilingualism as a problem because language can act as a focus of discontent for minorities wanting more power and independence. This problem is clear in the Republic of Ireland.

2.5 Lingua Franca

A lingua franca is a language which is used as a means of communication among people who have no native language in common. In Kampala, for instance, people are able to communicate with each other easily, in spite of the fact that they did not know each other's languages, because they are also familiar with other languages like Luganda, Swahili and English: each of these languages is capable of functioning as a lingua franca. A further solution has sometimes been advocated for problems of multilingualism;

an artificial language such as Esperanto should be adopted as a lingua franca. But Esperanto, being a neutral language, is not national in any way.

2.6 Language and Geography

Firstly, distance is an important factor in the spread of linguistic forms. Languages within the same geographical location usually share linguistic innovations; e.g., usage, pronunciation, etc. A good example of a linguistic innovation which has been subject to this kind of process is the loss in English of postvocalic /r/ in words like 'cart' and 'car'. Trudgill, differentiating between urban and rural accents in England, argues that linguistic innovations often spread from one urban place to the surrounding countryside. This is because of the general economic and cultural dominance of town over the country. Social distance may be as important as geographical distance. For example, two towns may be socially "closer" to each other than they are to the intervening stretches of countryside. Similarly, the speech of Manchester is in many ways more like that of London than of nearby rural Cheshire. Linguistic innovations also spread from one language into another. An interesting example of a linguistic feature that has spread in this way is the European uvular /r/. This phenomenon spread to Dutch and English as a local accent in parts of Northumberland. There are countries where several languages are spoken, although they have a number of features in common. One of the most interesting areas of this kind in Europe is the Balkans, comprising of Yugoslavian, Albanian, Greek, Bulgarian and Romanian. Another example is provided by the languages of Bantu including Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa. These languages have a number of phonetic features in common, notably the presence of "clicks" as consonants.

Pidgins and Creole are also interesting areas in linguistic innovation. They arise from a basic need that people who speak different languages have to find a common system of communication. It is "a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them" as UNESCO quoted in Adler (1977: 103). A pidgin is a language which has no native speakers: it is a contact language. It results from a multilingual situation in which language

users must find a common code to enable them to do so. It is sometimes considered as a "reduced" variety of a "normal" language, with a simplification of the grammar and vocabulary of that language. The process of "pidginization" requires a situation that involves at least three languages, one of which is dominant over the others. When three or more languages are involved and one is dominant, the speakers of the two or more that are inferior seem to play a critical role in the development of a pidgin. They speak to those who are in the dominant position and to each other as well. To do this, they simply use the dominant language; Pidgin Chinese English is a good example. In contrast to a pidgin, a creole, often defined as a pidgin that has become the first language of a new generation of speakers, is a normal language in every sense. A creole has a complex relationship with the usual standardized language with which it is associated. Pidginization generally involves some kind of simplification of a language. On the other hand, creolization involves an expansion of the morphology and syntax, and a deliberate increase in the number of functions.

Figure 1 Pidginization and Creolization

2.7 Language Variation and Literature

Linguistics & Literature are so inseparable that the two disciplines can illuminate one another in many ways. Literature is considered the art that uses language. It is the work of men who are especially sensitive to the language of their time. Thus, the end product of literature, the text, is always capable of linguistic investigation. Literature, then, seems to offer language which is different from what may be loosely termed "normal" or "everyday" in the usage of a speech-community. A serious researcher may approach a literary text "linguistically". S/he may identify the aim of the writer. The meaning intended is illustrated through the many levels of language. At least three levels should be available to the writer; the

phonological level, the syntactic level and the lexical level. Sounds, for example, could reflect the meaning intended. The very syntax of a poem could go hand in hand with the meaning. Word choice is also a very important element. To sum up, literature could be linguistically analyzed on various levels.

Exercise

1. What is an example of code switching?
2. Do males and females use language differently?
3. What is the relationship between language and social class?
4. What is monolingualism and bilingualism?
5. Is bilingualism an advantage?
6. Why is English the current lingua franca?
7. What is a pidgin and Creole?
8. Can a pidgin become a Creole?
9. Is Creole a dead language?
10. What country speaks Creole?
11. What is Pidgin example?
12. Where is pidgin English spoken?