

Sociolinguistics

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts

Credits: 3

Office Hours:

Course Description

This course explores different aspects of the relationship between language and society, focusing on linguistic variation, language maintenance and shift, language change, multilingualism, national language and language planning, the impact on language of such social variables as age, sex, educational level, social class, region, and ethnicity, as well as use-caused variation such as style, context, register, politeness, and stereotypes.

Objectives

- To familiarize students with the basic concepts and methods of Sociolinguistics, including the wider macro-social phenomena and micro-level analysis of face-to-face interaction.
- To examine the relations between language and society, following the progression of Sociolinguistics from the 'language reflects society', to the 'language constitutes society' perspective.
- To explore the types of linguistic variation within society, and the causes and effects of linguistic change.
- To critically examine the development of methods of investigation within Sociolinguistics, from its initial conception to the present day.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Show understanding of the basic themes and methods in the field of Sociolinguistics.

- Identify and analyze variables that can affect language use and language attitudes in a social context.
- Recognize how language variation can lead to language change.
- Show understanding of the connections between micro-level language use and wider social structures, demonstrating an awareness of language constituting a form of social action.
- Critically examine the orthodoxy of earlier studies and methodological tools in Sociolinguistics.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Resources
1 & 2	Introduction to sociolinguistics	Janet Holmes' Introduction to Sociolinguistics
3 & 4	Language Variation: Dialects; Standard vs American English; Language and Gender; Language and Ethnicity; Language and Politics	Burling's Black English; Nida's Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation Problems; Smith's Sex Markers in Speech
5	Language and Age; Language and Social Class	Eckert's Jocks and Burnouts
6	Language Attitudes	Whorf's Language, Mind, and Reality
7	Diglossia	Ferguson's Diglossia; Bergman's Variation in Colloquial Algerian as a Challenge to Diglossia
8	Code-Switching	Bentahila's The Syntax of Arabic-French Code-Switching
9	Language Change	Labov's On the Mechanism of Linguistic Change
10	Language Maintenance	Al-Khatib's Language and Cultural Maintenance Among the Gypsies of Jordan

11 & 12	Topics in Applied Sociolinguistics: Swearing; Joking	Lewis' The Killing Jokes of the American Eighties; Labov's Rules for Ritual Insults; Abd el-Jawad's Swearing in Arabic
13	Some Major Sociolinguists: Charles Ferguson; William Labov	Labov's Thinking about Charles Ferguson; Interview with William Labov
16	Final Exam	

Assessment

Test	30%	
Assignments and presentations	10%	
Term Paper	20%	
Final Exam	40%	

Attendance

Attendance is essential for successful learning and can affect the achievement of learning outcomes as well as the grade awarded. The University Attendance Policy, which is set out in your student handbook, will be followed.

Textbooks

Trudgill, P. (2000) *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. London: Penguin.

Holmes, J. (2000) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Longman.

Bibliography

In addition to the references below, specific readings will be given each week.

Some general texts

Coulmas, F. (ed.). (2000) *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Coupland, N and Jaworski, J. (eds.) (1997) *Sociolinguistics: A Reader and Coursebook*. Basingstoke, Hants: Macmillan

- Fasold, R. (1990) *The Sociolinguistics of Language*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Fishman, J. 1998-1999. The new linguistic order. *Foreign Policy* 16-40.
- Hudson, R.A. (1998) *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pride, J.B. and Holmes, J. (eds.) (1972) *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Romaine, S. (1994) *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spolsky, B. (1998) *Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (2000) *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. London: Penguin.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2002) *An introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

More specific readings

- Adams, H. D. and O. Elliot. Jr. 1997. Sources of variation in interlanguage. *IRAL* 35:87-98.
- Bader, Y. and D. Mennis. 1998. A sociolinguistic analysis of brand names in Jordan. *Abhath Al-yarmouk (Lit & Ling)* 16:31-47.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S.C. (1987) *Politeness: some universals in language use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Calvet, J-L (1998). *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cameron, D. (2001) *Working with Spoken Discourse*. London: Sage.
- Chambers, J.K and Trudgill, P (1998) *Dialectology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Cheshire, J. and Trudgill, P. (eds.) (1998) *The Sociolinguistics Reader Volume 2: Gender and Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Coates, J. (1998). *Language and Gender: A Reader* Oxford: Blackwell.
- Coates, J. and Cameron, D. (eds.) (1990) *Women in their Speech Communities: New Perspectives on Language and Sex*. New York: Longman.
- Croft, W. (2000) *Explaining Language Change*. London: Longman.
- Crystal, D. (2000). *Language Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eckert, P. (2000) *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- *Journal of Sociolinguistics*
- *Language and Communication*
- *Language in Society*
- *Language Variation and Change.*
- *Multilingua*

- *International Journal of Multilingualism*
- *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*
- *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*
- *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*