

Introduction to Sociolinguistics:

1-Ethnicity and social networks:

* It is often possible for individuals to signal their ethnicity by the language they choose to use. Even when a complete conversation in an ethnic language is not possible, people may use short phrases, verbal fillers or linguistic tags, which signal ethnicity. For Example: In New Zealand many Maori people routinely use Maori greetings such as *kia* and *ora*, while speaking in English, to signal their ethnicity.

- **African American Vernacular English:** a distinct variety or dialect that was developed by African Americans as a symbolic way of differentiating themselves from the majority group. *Often called Ebonics, Black English.*

Some of AAVE linguistic features

- Complete absence of the copula verb *be* in some social & linguistic contexts
- The use of invariant *be* to signal recurring or repeated actions
- Mutable negation
- Constant cluster simplifications

British Black English

1-Patois: a Jamaican Creole in origin, which is used by Jamaican immigrants in London and by young British Blacks in group talks as a sign of ethnic identity.

Some of Patois linguistic features

- Lexical items such as *lick* meaning 'hit' and *kenge* meaning 'week, puny'
- Different pronunciation like *then* and *thin* are pronounced 'den' and 'tin'.
- Plural forms don't have *s* on the end.
- Tenses aren't marked by suffixes on verbs, so forms like *walk* and *jump* are used rather than *walked*, *walks*, *jumped*, and *jumps*.
- The form *mi* is used for *I*, *me* and *my* (*mi niem / my name*).
- The form *dem* is used for *they*, *them* and *their* (*dem car / their car*).

2- Midland Black English: a variety of Standard English with a west midland accent which is an informal variety with some Patois features.

3- Multi-cultural London English: a variety used by adolescents (teenagers) from a range of ethnic backgrounds, including Jamaican & Asian backgrounds. Its features include using *monophthongs* instead of *diphthongs* and a distinctive vocabulary, for example: *blood / mate* and *nang / good* and *yard / house*.

- **Social networks:** who we talk and listen to regularly is an important influence on the way we speak (regular patterns of informal social relationships among people).

Density: it refers to whether members of a person's network are in touch with each other.

Plexity: is a measure of the range of different types of transaction people are involved in with different individuals.

Uniplex relationship: is one where the link with the other person is in only one area.

Multiplex relationship: it involves interactions with others along several dimensions.

Community practice: the activities that group members share, and their shared objectives and attitudes (one belongs to many communities of practice such as family, workgroup, sports team, etc).

2-Language change:

* **Variation and Change:** the cause behind language change is the variation of use in the areas of pronunciation and vocabulary.

Post-vocal |r| its spread and its status: In many parts of England and Wales, Standard English has lost the pronunciation post-vocal *r*. The loss of *r* began in the 17th century in the south-east of England and is still spreading to other areas. Accents with post-vocal |r| are called *rhotict*, and these accents are regarded as rural and uneducated. On the other hand in cities like New York, pronouncing the letter *r* is regarded as prestigious.

The spread of vernacular forms: some times a vernacular feature in some communities as a reflection of ethnic or social identity such as what happened in Martha's Vineyard Island. Labov's 1960 study showed: when the island was invaded by summer tourists, the island community of fishermen changed their pronunciation of some word vowels to older forms from the past as a reaction to the language of tourists.

Q How do language changes spread?

1- from group to group: changes spread like waves in different directions, and social factors such as age, gender, status and social group affect the rates and directions of change.

2- from style to style: from more formal to more casual, from one individual to another, from one social group to another, and from one word to another.

- **Lexical diffusion:** the change from one word's vowel to another, the sound change begins in one word and later on in another, etc.

Q How do we study language change?

A- Apparent-time studies of language change: it is the study of comparing the speech of people from different age groups, to find out any differences that could indicate change (whether increase or decrease).

B- Studying language change in real time: in this study, the researcher studies the language in a community and then comes back to it after a number of years to study it again, and find out any changes.

Reasons for language change:

1- Social status and language change: members of the group with most social status, for example, tend to introduce changes into a speech community from neighboring communities which have greater status and prestige in their eyes.

2- Gender and change: differences in women's and men's speech are a source of variation which can result in linguistic change.

3- Interaction and language change: interaction and contact between people is crucial in providing the channels for linguistic change (social networks).

4- The influence of the media: some researcher belief that media has a great influence on people's speech patterns and new forms.

3-Style, context, and register:

* Language varies according to use and users and according to where it is used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it. The addresses and the context affect our choice of code or variety, whether language, dialect or style.

1- Addressee's influence on style: many factors influence the addressee's style such as social distance / solidarity / age / gender / social background.

2-Formal contexts and social roles: the formal setting where the social roles of participants override their personal relationship in determining the appropriate linguistic form (style).

3- Topic or function: style is sometimes determined by the function which language is used for.

- **Audience design:** the influence of the audience (listeners) on a speaker's style, *for example:* the same news is read differently by newsreaders on different radio stations during the same day, therefore producing different styles for each audience.

4-Accommodation theory:

- **Speech converges:** each person's speech converges towards the speech of the person they are talking to. It tends to happen when the speakers like one another, or where one speaker has a vested interest in pleasing the other or putting them at ease.

- **Speech diverges:** deliberately choosing a different language style not used by one's addressee, it tends to happen when a person wants to show his cultural distinctiveness, social status, ethnic identity, etc.

- **Hypercorrection:** it is the exaggeration of some lower class speakers in imitating middle class standard speech. For example: the use of 'I' rather than 'me' in constructions such as '*between you and I*'.

- **Register:** occupational style using specialized or technical jargon, it describes the language of groups of people with common interests or jobs, or the language used in situations associated with such groups, such as the language of doctors, engineers, journals, legalese, etc.

Q in sports announcer talk; what is the difference between ply-by-play commentary and color commentary?

- Play-by-play commentary: it focuses on actions by using telegraphic grammar.

- Colour commentary: it focuses on people, with heavy and long modifications or descriptions of nouns.

Black English Vernacular (BEV).

Some grammatical features

- No final S - she come. she go

- No use of be

you interested -

you going to -

- Use of be everywhere

you be eat

 speak

 read

- use of been to mark the past

you been here

you been eat

- use of be done ^{go} in the sense
of will have.

we be done washed

the cars

- use of double negation

won't nobody

do nothing -