University of Batna 2

Subject: Linguistics

Level: Third year

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Chapter One: Sociolinguistics

References

- **Ronald Wardhaugh (2006), An Introduction to Sociolinguistics.**
- **Janet Holmes (2013), An Introduction to Sociolinguistics.**
- **Joan Swann, Ana Deumert, Theresa Lillis and Rajend Mesthrie (2004), A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics.**

1. Linguistic theory and Sociolinguistics

In the 19th century, the study of language was known as 'comparative philology'. Philologists studied the diachronic evolution and the change of languages over time. They also compared different languages to classify them into language families such as the Indo-European one. Yet, the comparative philology, based on the item-centered investigation, could not hold on because of the criticism of its unscientific methods and its failure to explain the fundamental problem of linguistics that of defining language as an object of scientific study.

- **De Saussure**

In the 20th century, de Saussure introduces important ideas that illustrate the influence of structuralism through his focus on the structure of language as a primary concern in the linguistic research in order to describe linguistic facts. He postulates that language should not be studied in terms of its isolated words as comparative philologists did in the 19th century, but in terms of a system of interrelated signs that constitute the structure of the language. He explains language in two concepts 'langue' and 'parole' which respectively correspond to language and speech in English. De Saussure (1915) defines langue as an abstract linguistic system of signs that exist in the minds of a group of speakers who belong to the same speech community. This social phenomenon (langue) is not complete in any individual speaker; it is fully stored in the collectivity. It is a common possession since it is shared by the members of the speech community. On the other hand, he defines parole as the actual realization and the concrete manifestation of the abstract linguistic system that can be observed when the individual speakers use interrelated signs from langue to express their thoughts. During the act of speaking, individuals can produce different sentences to express the same idea through the selection and the combination of a set of different signs that exist in langue. Accordingly, the linguistic variation is constantly observed only in parole, and not langue. This distinction between langue and parole is primarily a distinction between what is social and what is individual, what is

abstract and what is concrete, what is homogeneous and what is heterogeneous. De Saussure who was concerned with the structure of language eliminated parole from the study of language because he believed that parole cannot be structured due to its linguistic variation. Hence, his linguistic theory prioritizes the study of langue over parole. He insists on the study of langue as an abstract homogeneous linguistic system apart from the influence of social, psychological and cognitive factors that can lead to significant progress in the linguistic research.

- **Chomsky**

Noam Chomsky (1965) defends the structural ideas presented by de Saussure. He introduces a distinction between **competence** and **performance** that are, in the essence, similar to de Saussure's dichotomy of langue and parole. Chomsky (1965, p. 4) defines competence as "the speaker-hearer's **knowledge of his language**." It is an innate knowledge about the rules of the pronunciation of words (phonology), the meaning of words (semantics) and the class of words (syntax). Such mental knowledge of the linguistic system that exits in the mind of speakers governs the linguistic behavior and allows speakers to judge structures as being grammatical or ungrammatical. On the other hand, Chomsky (1965, p. 4) defines performance as "the actual use of language in concrete situations." In other words, it is the concrete linguistic behavior itself that is manifested through the selection and the execution of the abstract rules of competence. As mentioned before, Chomsky's competence–performance distinction is inspired by de Saussure's distinction between langue and parole. Chomsky's performance is very similar to de Saussure's parole. Yet, unlike langue, competence is not a social product since it consists of universal features that exist innately in the mind of individual speakers while langue exists in the collectivity. Therefore, competence is the property of the individual, not the community.

Chomsky (1975) asserts that "it is the linguist'stask to characterize what speakers know about their language, that is, their competence, not what they do with their language, that is, their performance" The use of language in the social context is not relevant to Chomsky's linguistic theory since he believes that language can be better understood when linguists describe combinatory rules and features that are universal to human languages. Thus, he sets competence as the main object of study in theoretical linguistics while performance has been excluded because, according to him, the real use of language is always subject to some limitations and constraints like errors and distraction and, consequently, it cannot significantly contribute to the study of language.

Chomsky's (1979) considers **linguistic variation** that we constantly observe in the individual performance as an error in the application of the universal rules that cannot be structured. Therefore, he believes that variation in the use of language by different speakers is not worth to be studied in theoretical linguistics.

According to Chomsky (1965, pp. 3-4):

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker–listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.

Chomsky has been criticized by many researchers for his assumption that the linguistic theory can only be developed through the study of the homogeneous speech community because language use cannot be uniform in real situations. They reject the idea of the homogeneous speech community since language does not exist in isolation of **the social context** where it is used.

Communicative Competence

The concept of Communicative Competence has been introduced by Dell Hymes (1972) as a reaction against Chomsky's linguistic competence (1965). While Chomsky (1965) focused on the innate faculty and the abstract knowledge of the system of language, Hymes (1972) was interested in the concrete use of language in social interactions. He was interested in the role of the socio-cultural factors that influence the use of language is communicative situations. He expanded the concept of linguistic competence to the concept of communicative competence which includes, beside the linguistic competence, other types of competences that are necessary to use language appropriately in daily life communications. For Hymes, (1972, p. 281), a competent speaker is able to use language in relation to:

- ✓ Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
- ✓ Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
- ✓ Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
- ✓ Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.

Many speakers may exhibit a great proficiency of grammatical, phonological and lexical rules of the language, but they fail to communicate since they do not master the appropriate use of language which is tied to "when to speak, when not… what to talk about, with whom, when, where, in what manner" (Hymes, 1972, p. 277). To select the appropriate speech acts from the existing repertoire in one context, speakers should be equipped with a kind of knowledge related to the socio-cultural norms and rules that govern the use of language in a given situation. To account for his social perspective of language theory, Hymes (1972, p. 278) writes:

There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar will be useless. Just as rules of syntax can control aspects of phonology, and just as rules of semantics perhaps control aspects of syntax, so rules of speech acts enter as a controlling factor for linguistic form as a whole.

Saville-Troike (1982) also highlighted the important role of the context in successful communications. For her, in each speech community, there are some skills and knowledge that the members must be aware of, beside their linguistic knowledge. Socio-cultural and interactional knowledge and interpersonal skills are necessary to accomplish and understand the communicative act. Similarly to Hymes view of communicative competence, Saville-Troike (1982, p. 21) explains that:

Communicative competence extends to both knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, whom one may speak to, how one may talk to persons of different statuses and roles, what appropriate nonverbal behaviours are in various contexts, what the routines for turn-taking are in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give commands, how to enforce discipline, and the like.

2. Sociolinguistics

According to the sociolinguist William Labov, "the linguistic behavior of individuals cannot be understood without knowledge of the communities that they belong to." Thus, Chomsky's knowledge of universal features (competence) is not sufficient to reach a deep understanding of language. The link between language and social context where it exists urges sociolinguists to focus on the use of language in real-life situations (performance). As speakers never use the same linguistic forms in different situations, sociolinguists view that the study of language should transcend the description of homogeneous linguistic structures, proposed by theoretical linguists, and they attempt to explain how and why **linguistic variation** that is structured by the norms of the speech community occurs within and across social groups. They relate the use of different linguistic forms to social factors like age, social class and gender. Thus, they assert that knowing a language is more than the mastery of its grammatical rules and principles; "knowing a language also means knowing how to use that language, since speakers know not only how to form sentences but also how to use them appropriately" (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 5). A great chasm between theoretical linguistics and sociolinguistics is clearly manifested in the structural and the sociolinguistic arguments. For theoretical linguists, only homogeneous speech community can be structured while linguistic variation cannot. Therefore, it has been discarded in their research. On the other hand, sociolinguists agree that variation is not an error of performance. It is a natural evidence of the link between language and society. Hence, they assert that any realistic study of the human language must take into account the social aspects of language use.

3. Definition of Sociolinguistics
- Sociolinguistics is an orientation to the study of language that stresses the inter-relationship between language and social life, rather than focusing narrowly on language structure. Whereas other branches of linguistics frequently play down the role of speakers in concentrating on grammar, phonetics or meaning, sociolinguistics highlights the communicative competence of speakers, the choices open to them and the ways in which they tailor language to different functions and interactional ends. Sociolinguistics stresses the variation inherent in a language, as speakers of different backgrounds use language not

just for the communication of information but to express (and also to create) an individual and/or group identity. The field is characterized by a diversity of approaches according to the specific concerns of groups of scholars. Whilst uniting under the banner of sociolinguistics, different research traditions foreground the social context, speaker characteristics, the nature of the interaction, the choice of one language or variety over another, the study of marginalized languages, language in educational contexts, the ideology implicit in discourse etc. (A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2004)

- Sociolinguists study the relationship between language and society. They are interested in explaining why we speak differently in different social contexts, and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning. Examining the way people use language in different social contexts provides a wealth of information about the way language works, as well as about the social relationships in a community, and the way people convey and construct aspects of their social identity through their language. (Homles, 2013)

- Holmes (1992) says that 'the sociolinguist's aim is to move towards a theory which provides a motivated account of the way language is used in a community, and of the choices people make when they use language.' For example, when we observe how varied language use is we must search for the causes.

- During the past four and a half decades, studies of the relations between language and society have coalesced to form the field of academic research known as sociolinguistics. In 1952 the late Haver C. Currie published a paper, first drafted in 1949, entitled "Projection of sociolinguistics: the relationship of speech to social status" (reprinted in 1971). It took some time for the term "sociolinguistics," for which Currie claims priority, to take root, but by the early 1960s the first sociolinguistic conferences were being held and anthologies of articles dealing with properties of language calling for the inclusion of social factors in their analysis had started to appear. In the meantime, hundreds of research papers and books on the social organization of language behavior have been published, and sociolinguistics has become a recognized branch of the social sciences with its own scholarly journals, conferences, textbooks, and readers of seminal articles. The sociolinguistic enterprise has grown so much that it is difficult to keep up with developments in its various subfields. Written by leading researchers in the field, this Handbook offers an introduction to and an overview of the state of the art in key areas of sociolinguistic inquiry. (Florian Coulmas, 1998)
- The field of Sociolinguistics was pioneered by many scholars such as Basil Bernstein in UK and William Labov in US.
- William Labov is an American sociolinguist. He is widely known as the founder of sociolinguistics. He introduced the quantitative study of language variation to explain the linguistic variation caused by social factors. His study illustrates the correlation between the social structure (social class) and the linguistic variation (ing pronunciation) in New York.

- Basil Bernstein, one of the greatest sociologists of the 20ᵗʰ century, made a significant contribution to the field of sociolinguistics. His code theory introduced the concepts of the restricted code of the working class and the elaborated code of the middle class and examined the relationship between the social class of children and their use of language.

4. **Possible Relationships between Language and Society (Wardhaugh, 2006)**

   Language is essentially a set of items, what Hudson (1996, p. 21) calls 'linguistic items,' such entities as sounds, words, grammatical structures, and so on. It is these items, their status, and their arrangements that language theorists such as Chomsky concern themselves with. On the other hand, social theorists, particularly sociologists, attempt to understand how societies are structured and how people manage to live together. To do so, they use such concepts as 'identity,' 'power,' 'class,' 'status,' 'solidarity,' 'accommodation,' 'face,' 'gender,' 'politeness,' etc

   There are several possible relationships between language and society.

- One is that **social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behavior**. Certain evidence may be adduced to support this view: the age-grading phenomenon whereby young children speak differently from older children and, in turn, children speak differently from mature adults; studies which show that the varieties of language that speakers use reflect such matters as their regional, social, or ethnic origin and possibly even their gender; and other studies which show that particular ways of speaking, choices of words, and even rules for conversing are in fact highly determined by certain social requirements.

- A second possible relationship is directly opposed to the first: **linguistic structure and/or behavior may either influence or determine social structure**. This is the view that is behind the Whorfian hypothesis, the claims of Bernstein), and many of those who argue that languages rather than speakers of these languages can be 'sexist'

- A third possible relationship is that **the influence is bi-directional: language and society may influence each other**. One variant of this approach is that this influence is dialectical in nature, a Marxist view put forward by Dittmar (1976), who argues (p. 238) that 'speech behaviour and social behaviour are in a state of constant interaction' and that 'material living conditions' are an important factor in the relationship.

- A fourth possibility is to assume that **there is no relationship at all between linguistic structure and social structure and that each is independent of the other**. A variant of this possibility would be to say that, although there might be some such relationship, present attempts to characterize it are essentially premature, given what we know about both language and society. Actually, this variant view appears to be the one that Chomsky himself holds: he prefers to develop an asocial linguistics as a preliminary to any other kind of linguistics, such an asocial approach being, in his view, logically prior.

5. Branches of Sociolinguistics

Some investigators have found it appropriate to try to introduce a distinction between **sociolinguistics or micro-sociolinguistics** and **the sociology of language or macro-sociolinguistics**. In this distinction, sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationships between language and society with the **goal** being a better understanding of the structure of language and of how languages function in communication; the equivalent goal in the sociology of language is trying to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language, e.g., how certain linguistic features serve to characterize particular social arrangements.

Hudson (1996, p. 4) has described 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.' In other words, in sociolinguistics we study language and society in order to find out as much as we can about what kind of thing language is, and in the sociology of language we reverse the direction of our interest.

Using the alternative terms given above, Coulmas (1997, p. 2) says that 'micro-sociolingustics investigates how social structure influences the way people talk and how language varieties and patterns of use correlate with social attributes such as class, sex, and age. Macro-sociolinguistics, on the other hand, studies what societies do with their languages, that is, attitudes and attachments that account for the functional distribution of speech forms in society, language shift, maintenance, and replacement, the delimitation and interaction of speech communities.'

6. Speech Community (Wardhaugh, 2006)

Sociolinguistics is the study of language use within or among groups of speakers. A group must have at least two members but there is really no upper limit to group membership. People can group together for one or more reasons: social, religious, political, cultural, familial, vocational, avocational, etc.

The kind of group that sociolinguists have generally attempted to study is called the speech community. For purely theoretical purposes, some linguists have hypothesized the existence of an 'ideal' speech community. This is actually what Chomsky (1965, pp. 3–4) proposes, his 'completely homogeneous speech community'. However, such a speech community cannot be our concern: it is a theoretical construct employed for a narrow purpose. Our speech communities, whatever they are, exist in a 'real' world. Consequently, we must try to find some alternative view of speech community, one helpful to investigations of language in society rather than necessitated by abstract linguistic theorizing.

Lyons (1970, p. 326) offers a definition of what he calls a 'real' speech community: '**all the people who use a given language (or dialect).**' However, that really shifts the issue to making the definition of a language (or of a dialect) also the definition of a speech community. If it proves virtually impossible to define language and dialect clearly and

unambiguously, then we have achieved nothing. It is really quite easy to demonstrate that a speech community is not coterminous with a language: while the **English** language is spoken in many places throughout the world, we must certainly recognize that it is also spoken in a wide variety of ways, in speech communities that are almost entirely isolated from one another, e.g., in South Africa, in New Zealand, and among expatriates in China. Alternatively, a recognizably single speech community can employ more than one language: Switzerland, Canada, Papua New Guinea, many African states, and New York City.

Using linguistic characteristics alone to determine what is or is not a speech community has proved so far to be quite impossible because people do not necessarily feel any such direct relationship between linguistic characteristics A, B, C, and so on, and speech community X. What we can be sure of is that speakers do use linguistic characteristics to achieve group identity with, and group differentiation from, other speakers, but they use other characteristics as well: social, cultural, political and ethnic.

According to Labov's definition of speech community (1972b, pp. 120–1):

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.

This definition shifts the emphasis away from an exclusive use of linguistic criteria to a search for the various characteristics which make individuals feel that they are members of the same community.

The particular norms that a community uses may or may not be exclusively linguistic in nature, and even the linguistic norms themselves may vary considerably among small sub-groups. For example, speakers of Hindi will separate themselves entirely from speakers of Urdu; most Ukrainians will separate themselves from most Russians (but possibly not vice versa); and most Chinese will see themselves as members of the same community as all other Chinese, even though speakers of Cantonese or Hokkien might not be able to express that sense of community to a speaker of Mandarin or to each other except through their shared writing system.

7. Language Variation in Sociolinguistic Research (Janet Holmes; 2013)

A range of linguistic variation can be observed in different speech communities. People may use different **pronunciations**, **vocabulary**, **grammar**, or **styles** of a language for different purposes. They may use different **dialects** of a language in different contexts. And in some communities people select different **languages** according to the situation in which they are speaking. In any community the distinguishable varieties or codes (another term sometimes used for this concept) which are available for use in different social contexts form a kind of repertoire of available options. The members of each community have their distinctive linguistic or verbal repertoires. In other words, in every community there is a range of varieties from which people select according to the context in which they are communicating. In monolingual communities these take the form of different styles and dialects.

Certain social factors have been relevant in accounting for the particular variety used. Some relate to the users of language – **the participants**; others relate to its uses – the *social setting* and **function of the interaction**. Who is talking to whom (e.g. wife – husband, customer – shopkeeper, boss – worker) is an important factor. The setting or social context (e.g. home, work, school) is generally a relevant factor too. The aim or purpose of the interaction (informative, social) may be important. And, in some cases, the topic has proved an influence on language choice.

The sociolinguist's aim is to move towards a theory which provides a motivated account of the way language is used in a community, and of the choices people make when they use language.

- **Sociolinguistic variable.**

In their quantitative study, sociolinguistic variationists concentrate on the correlation between two kinds of variables to explain language variation:

1. Linguistic variable.

Wardhaugh (2006, p. 145) defines the linguistic variable as "a linguistic item, which has identifiable variants." It refers to the realization of certain lexical, grammatical and phonological variants in the linguistic structure. In correlational research methodology, it is known as the dependent variable. For instance, the suffix -ing in British English is a linguistic variable that has two different realizations. The first variant is the alveolar nasal [n] and the second variant is the velar nasal [ŋ]. Sociolinguists explain this linguistic variation in relation to other extra-linguistic variables.

2. Extra-linguistic variables.

Extra-linguistic variables are independent variables that affect the linguistic variable. They can be divided into three categories:

- **Regional variable** that concerns the geographical location where the speech is produced.
- **Social variables** related to the speakers' age, gender, ethnic group and social class;
- **Contextual variables** related to the degree of the **formality** of the situation, the relationship between interlocutors and the topic. These factors explain language variation within the same individual.

The way the linguistic variable co-varies with the extra-linguistic factors like age and gender is known as the sociolinguistic variable. Labov (1966, p. 49) defines the sociolinguistic variable as "a linguistic feature which varies in form and has social significance." Different linguistic forms or variants can be used to say the same thing, but the use of a particular variant of the linguistic variable has a social meaning.

8. Varieties o Language

Sociolinguists agree that **variety** is a general term which is used to refer to any linguistic form. Chambers and Trudgill (1998, p. 5) define it as "a neutral term we apply to any

particular kind of language which we wish, for some purpose, to consider as a single entity." Variety can be employed to refer to all forms of languages, dialects, registers or accents in different contexts to avoid problems when drawing a distinction between these concepts. Husdon (1996) defines variety of a language as "a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution". According to this definition, the same language can be manifested in different varieties; each variety is distinguished by its linguistic items (lexical, syntactic or phonological) that are associated with social factors. In this respect, Wardhaugh (2006, p. 24) also claims that "all languages exhibit internal variation, that is, each language exists in a number of varieties and is in one sense the sum of those varieties." Some varieties are formal and standardized, others are informal and colloquial. For instance, Standard English, Canadian English, Cockney, Oxford English and Yorkshire dialect are varieties of English language.

Sociolinguists agree that the term **variety** covers dialects, accents, styles and registers of a language. However, Wardhaugh (2006) extends the use of this term to refer also to a set of languages spoken by multilingual speakers or communities. The forms of varieties that are characterized by social and geographical distributions are users-related varieties. On the other hand, Variation can be noticed even among speakers who belong to the same social group and who live in the same geographical location. Varieties that are used by the same speaker depending on the context of the use are use-related varieties.

8.1. Language variation according to users.

Dialects and accents are language varieties which deal with social and regional factors that affect the way people speak and use language like age, gender, ethnic group, social class,

geographical location… etc.

1. Dialect.

Sociolinguists attempt to make a clear distinction between language and dialect. Haugen (1966) says that language refers to a single linguistic norm or to a group of linguistic norms while dialect refers to one of these norms. For Hudson (2001), language is larger and more prestigious than dialect. A language may consist of many dialects. For example, English as a language contains many dialects like Cockney, Yorkshire… etc. Holmes (2013, p. 138) also defines language as "a collection of dialects that are usually linguistically similar, used by different social groups who choose to say that they are speakers of one language, which functions to unite and represent them to other groups." Thus, when speakers, from a social group, use their own dialects, they offer clues about their geographical and social backgrounds.

Dialect is a type of language variation that is observed at three levels of language: grammar, phonology and vocabulary. For instance, the suffix –ing in English has two pronunciations in different dialects. The standard pronunciation / Iŋ/ is associated with the upper-class dialect while the non-standard pronunciation /in/ is associated with the working-class dialect.

Mutual intelligibility

Sociolinguists assert that there should be a **mutual intelligibility** between different dialects of a given language. This means that users of dialects of the same language can understand each other when they communicate. However, there are also many languages that are mutually intelligible. For example, in Scandinavia, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish are recognized as different languages although speakers of these languages face little difficulties to understand each other when they communicate. In such situation, the criterion of mutual intelligibility is present, but we cannot say that Norwegian, Swedish and Danish are dialects of the same language. For cultural and political reasons, they are considered as autonomous languages. On the other hand, in China, speakers of Cantonese and Mandarine insist that they are speaking dialects of the same language although mutual intelligibility does not exist when speakers of these varieties communicate verbally, but they share the same writing system. For these reasons, Trudgill (1995, p. 4) asserts that "the criterion of 'mutual intelligibility', and other purely linguistic criteria, are … of less importance in the use of the terms language and dialect and they are political and cultural factors, of which the two most important are autonomy and heteronomy."

Spolsky (2010, p. 30) explains the differences between language and dialect by stating that "a language… is a dialect with a flag, or even better, with an army." This view conceives language variation as a political issue. He (2010, p. 30) adds that "the decision of what language a dialect belongs to is therefore social and political rather than purely linguistic."

Two types of dialects exist: regional and social dialects.

Regional Dialects

Regional dialect is a variety of language that is used in a distinct geographical area and differs from other dialects of the same language spoken in other regions at the level of grammar, vocabulary and phonology. This type of dialects emerges when groups of individuals are separated from each other geographically. For example, in Southern England, the word child is used while in Northern England, they use the term bairn. This example illustrates the difference between two regional dialects at the level of vocabulary. In a northern area in the eastern United States, 'grease' and 'greasy' are pronounced with a /s/, in a transitional zone, 'grease is pronounced with a /s/ and 'greasy' with a / z/, and in southern, both are pronounced as /z/. These regional dialects are identified according to the geographical areas where speakers live.

Dialect Continuum

Dialect continuum refers to a chain of dialects spoken in many regions. Speakers of one dialect can understand the dialects spoken in the neighboring regions because of the existence of mutual intelligibility between these dialects. However, this mutual intelligibility decreases as the geographical distance between dialects increases to the extent that speakers of dialects of distant regions face some problems to understand each other. For example, Arab countries are speaking dialects of the Arabic language. People living in Algeria can easily understand

speakers from neighboring countries like Tunisia and Morocco. Yet, they have more difficulties to understand speakers from distant countries like Iraq and Yemen.

Social Dialects (sociolect)

Sociolinguists assert that the selection of particular grammatical, lexical or phonological variants correlates with social factors like age, gender, social class and ethnicity. Since social dialects are spoken by particular social groups, the use of one social dialect asserts the speakers affiliation to a particular group. For instance, in USA, African Americans use the African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to distinguish themselves and to stress their ethnic belongings.

Language Variation and Social Class

Sociolinguistic research reveals a direct link between the social class and the characteristics of speech used by people. Sociolinguistic variationists contend that speech variation provides evidence of the social class of speakers since different social groups use different linguistic varieties. For instance, the verb 'ain't' is a linguistic feature that often characterizes the speech of the working class. Sociolinguists found that, contrary to the working class speakers, people from a higher class tend to adopt standard and formal linguistic features to emphasize their prestige. One of the significant studies on the relationship between language and social class is presented by Bernstein (1971) who distinguished two types of codes: the elaborated code which is a formal and a complex variety associated with the middle class, and the restricted code which is an informal and a simple variety associated with the working class. Each code is acquired by a given social group through the process of socialization. In addition, Labov (1966), in his study of language variation in New York City, found that the realization of post vocalic /r/ correlates with the socioeconomic class of the speaker.

Language Variation and Ethnicity (ethnolect

Language is considered as one of the most important constituents of the ethnic identity. For instance, in USA, the African Americans use their distinguished dialect, known as the African American English Vernacular, to signal their affiliation to their minority ethnic group. Such variety differs from other English varieties at the levels of grammar, vocabulary and phonology. Also, Irish people use consciously their own variety 'Gaeilge' to differentiate themselves from others.

Language Variation and Age

Sociolinguistic variationists are interested in the study of the linguistic characteristics that are associated with speakers from different ages and generations to investigate the relationship between the use of a particular variety of language and the age of speakers. They found that young speakers speak differently than old speakers. For instance, Rickford (1996) points out that the adolescents in U.S. use expressions like 'go, be like, and be all' instead of ' say' to introduce quotations in speech 'he's like, I'm not gonna do that, and I'm all, yes you will.' Furthermore, they notice changes in the linguistic behavior of the individual speakers as they get older. This phenomenon is known as the age grading phenomenon which means that the

same speakers exhibit different linguistic behaviors at different stages of life from the childhood to the caducity.

Language Variation and Gender

Variation studies correlate gender differences with the use of particular phonological, grammatical, lexical, conversational and stylistic features. Generally speaking, as Holmes (2013, p. 159) states "women are more linguistically polite than men" because they are more sensitive towards the social status. Hence, they use prestigious and formal forms of language to mitigate their unprivileged social status while men use less prestigious and nonstandard forms to mark masculinity. Trudgill (1995, p. 65) states that "women on average use forms which more closely approach those of the standard variety or the prestige accent than those used by men." Women tend to behave linguistically like speakers from the middle class while men speech is similar to the one of the working class. Lakoff (as cited in Holmes, 2013) lists ten features that are frequently used by women:

- Lexical hedges or fillers, e.g. you know, sort of, well, you see;
- Tag questions, e.g. she's very nice, isn't she?
- Rising intonation on declaratives, e.g. it's really good?
- 'Empty' adjectives, e.g. divine, charming, cute;
- Precise color terms, e.g. magenta, aquamarine;
- Intensifiers such as just and so, e.g. I like him so much;
- Hypercorrect grammar, e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms;
- 'Superpolite' forms, e.g. indirect requests, euphemisms;
- Avoidance of strong swear words, e.g. fudge, my goodness;
- Emphatic stress, e.g. it was a BRILLIANT performance.

Studies on language variation in relation to gender are classified into two approaches: the dominance approach and the difference approach. The dominance approach, followed by Lakoff (1975), attributes the linguistic differences between men and women speech to the dominance of men over women in society. On the other hand, the difference approach, advocated by Tennan (1994), suggests that men and women behave not only linguistically but also socially differently because they belong to different subcultures. Tennan uses the term genderlect to refer to the differences in the speech patterns of men and women. She proposes that men and women are speaking different dialects that can be termed 'genderlects'.

2.Accent

While dialect deals with grammatical, phonological and lexical variation, accent deals with the phonological variation of language. It refers to the way people pronounce stretches of words when they speak. For instance, RP or Received Pronunciation is a Standard English accent used in UK that reflects the speakers' educational and social background. The listeners can also identify the origin of the speakers from the accent employed in their speech. They can recognize that the speaker has the Oxford accent if they identify in his/her speech certain phonological features that characterize the speech of people who live there.

8.2. Language variation according to use

Language variation is also noticed among speakers from the same social group, living in the same territory because of the contextual variation. For instance, the same speaker uses don't in one situation and uses do not in another situation, depending on contextual factors such as the formality of the situation, the social distance between the interlocutors and the topic. Style and register are use-related varieties.

Register

Wardhaugh (2006, p. 52) defines it as "sets of language items associated with discrete occupational or social groups." the use of these linguistic items that characterize a distinct register indicates speakers' affiliation to a particular professional and social group. Yule (2006, pp. 210-211) defines register "is a conventional way of using language that is appropriate in a specific context, which may be identified as situational (e.g. in church), occupational (e.g. among lawyers) or topical (e.g. talking about language)." No one uses the same register all the time. It systematically varies depending on contextual factors. For instance, the religious register is used only in religious sermons. Furthermore, computer programmers employ their specific register that outsiders face difficulties to understand. Halliday (1964) identifies three variables that determine register: field, tenor and mode.

- Field: it refers to the subject matter of the interaction.
- Tenor: it refers to the relationships between the participants in the interaction.
- Mode: it refers to the channel of communication (e.g. spoken or written).

Style

In order to express the same information, the same speaker is able to use different styles that range from the extremely casual to the most formal depending on the context where language is used (sermon, lecture, home) and the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, mainly the degree of social distance and solidarity (son- father, intimate friends, teacher-student). In an informal context such as a conversation between intimate friends, the degree of solidarity increases. In this type of variation, as Holmes (2013, p. 240) claims, "the better you know someone, the more casual and relaxed the speech style you will use to them. People use considerably more standard forms to these they don't know well, and more vernacular forms to their friends." Thus, the interpersonal relationship between the interlocutors is important to select the appropriate style. In the casual style, speakers employ short sentences, simple grammatical structures, simple and common words that convey explicit meaning and nonstandard forms. In formal style, speakers use complex sentences and less frequent words. In some situations where the speaker speaks to someone from a different social background, the speaker's speech converges towards the speech style of the person he/she is talking to through the process of accommodation in order to show solidarity.

9. Other Varieties of Language

Idiolect: the language variety used by an individual speaker. Social and regional dialects can be understood as clusters of similar (but not identical) idiolects, and their linguistic

description is an abstraction from the variable speech habits of individuals. (Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2004)

Argot: A set of words and phrases used by a particular social group, usually for reasons of secrecy. Argots are often associated with criminals, street gangs or other subcultural groups who need to protect themselves from outsiders. They may include invented words, or involve various manipulations of word forms or meanings (e.g. back slang, rhymingslang, metaphor). Argots are not complete vocabularies, and may be subject to `overlexicalisation' in certain areas (i.e. contain a large number of words for similar concepts related to the group's interests and activities. They tend to change rapidly and, like other similar varieties, they may serve to maintain group boundaries. (Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2004)

Slang: Variously defined but usually seen as a set of informal and colloquial words and phrases used within particular social groups and that are not part of the `mainstream' language. Slang is often regarded as a counter-language, adopted in opposition to `main-stream' values. It tends to date rapidly, but has been collected together in numerous dictionaries. Slang has a number of social functions: as an in-group variety it may be used to maintain group solidarity or increase social distance with outsiders; like other varieties, it may be used to redefine a context or relationship (e.g. as less serious); it may also be used as a form of humor, or language play.(Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2004)

Jargon: Technical or other specialist vocabulary used within a certain social group - most frequently a professional or special interest group - and that may not be understood by outsiders. Jargon may be used to facilitate professional communication but it also has social functions, for example marking group membership and excluding non-members.

Vernacular: refers to relatively homogeneous and well-defined non-standard varieties which are used regularly by particular geographical, ethnic or social groups and which exist in opposition to a dominant (not necessarily related) standard variety (such as, for example, African American Vernacular English in the United States). The vernacular is used when talking to friends and family in informal contexts. It is acquired in childhood and is believed to be linguistically more regular than more formal, careful speech styles, which typically show varying degrees of influence from standard varieties or other local high- prestige varieties. (Dictionary of Sociolinguistics, 2004)

Standard (language, variety): A standard language is usually identified as a relatively uniform variety of a language which does not show regional variation, and which is used in a wide range of communicative functions (e.g. official language, medium of instruction, literary language, scientific language, etc.). Standard varieties tend to observe prescriptive, written norms, which are codified in grammars and dictionaries. They are thus different from non-standard varieties, whose norms are generally uncodified and unwritten. Although standard languages are often regarded as discrete varieties, it is not usually possible to establish clear boundaries that distinguish them from other varieties. In many European countries, regional standards have developed which show varying degrees of influence from the local dialects. Standard languages may, therefore, be better regarded as idealized varieties. (Dictionary of Sociolinguistics)

Language Contact

Whenever two languages or two language varieties exist in the same speech community side by side, many important sociolinguistic phenomena take place such as Diglossia, Bilingualism / multilingualism, Code switching/ Code mixing, Pidgin and Creole.

1. **Diglossia (Wardhaugh, 2006)**

A diglossic situation exists in a society when it has two distinct codes which show clear functional separation; that is one employed in one set of circumstances (H), i.e. has high prestige) and the other in an entirely different set (L), i.e. has low prestige.

Ferguson (1959:336) defines diglossia as follows:

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 section of the community for ordinary conversation.

On the other hand, Fishman (1972: 136) defines diglossia as "the phenomenon in which one language is considered higher than another". Fishman (1967) introduced the notion that diglossia could be extended to situations found in many societies where forms of two genetically unrelated (or at least historically distant) languages occupy the H and L norms, such that one of the languages (e.g. Latin in medieval Europe) is used for religious, educational, literacy and other such prestigious domains, while another language (in the case of medieval Europe, the vernacular languages of that era) is rarely used for such purposes, being only employed for more informal, primarily spoken domains.

Furthermore, Hartmann and stork (1972:67) state that:

Diglossia is the presence in a language of two standards, a 'high' language used for formal occasions and in written texts, and a 'low' used to colloquial conversation, e.g. in Swiss German, Arabic, etc. in certain situations, a middle language between the high and the low standard may be appropriate.

Holmes (2001:30) states that "diglossia is a characteristic of speech communities rather than individuals". Holmes also explains that individuals may be bilingual,but societies or communities are diglossic. In other words, the term of diglossia is used to describe societal or institutionalized bilingualism. The criteria which identify diglossic communities were initially interpreted very stringently, so that few communities qualified as diglossic. Holmes (2001:27) has described three crucial features of diglossia:

1.Two distinct varieties of the same language are used in the community, with one regarded as a high or (H) variety and the other as a low (L) variety.

2.Each of variety is used for quite distinct functions; H and L complement each other.

3. No one use the H variety in daily conversation.

We may find diglossia in Switzerland (Standard German and Swiss German), in Haiti (Standard French and Haitian Creole) and in the Arab world (Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic).

2. Bilingualism

Bilingualism is a sociolinguistic phenomenon which refers to the state of linguistic community in which two languages are in contact. It simply means the ability to communicate in two languages. According to Weinreich (1953; 1), the notion of bilingualism is "the practice of alternately using two languages." Bloomfield (1933:56) defines the bilingualism as "ability of a speaker in using two languages, in case the use of first language as good as the second language". According to Bloomfield, someone called bilingual if she/he able to use the first language as well as the second language. Generally two types of bilingualism are distinguished: societal and individual bilingualism. Societal bilingualism occurs when in a given society two different languages are spoken, a national, regional or foreign language. Individual bilingualism refers to the way two languages are used by the same person.

Other Types of Bilingualism

 -**Simultaneous Bilingualism:** means learning two languages as first languages.

  -**Sequential (successive) Bilingualism**: means learning one language after already established a first language. This is the case of adults and people who become bilingual earlier in life .

  -**Receptive/ passive bilingualism**: means being able to understand two languages, but express oneself in only one.

- **Active bilingualism:** means the ability to understand, speak and write in the two languages.

Bilingualism in Algeria is not homogeneous since not all the population is bilingual. The largest population of bilinguals lives in or around the big cities where contact with French is strong and necessary.

3. Code-switching and Code-mixing

Code-switching is a situation where the speakers deliberately change a code being used and switch from one to another. "Code-Switching has become a common term for alternate use of two or more languages, or varieties of language, or even speech styles ". (Dell hymes, 1875). This term is used to describe a phenomenon where people use more than one language or variety but choose between them in the same conversation. According to Bell (1976) "a code may be a language, a variety, or a style of a language". In the Algerian Arabic usage, Arabic and French are considered as two separate codes. Code-switching can be either

"intersentential" or "intrasentential". **Intersentential code switching** refers to the alternation of two languages between utterances. Intrasentential code switching on the other hand refers to the use of two codes within the same sentences or the same utterance.

Code-mixing: Trudgill (1992) defines code-mixing as "the process whereby speakers indulge in code switching between languages of such rapidity and density, even within sentences and phrases that it is not really possible to say at any given time which language they are speaking". Where a bilingual speaker faces problems of expressing his ideas when he is talking to another bilingual, he changes the language without any change in the situation. This is called code-mixing; it is also called metaphorical/conversational code switching. For example: /inskriyit/ lyoum f l'ecole.

Reasons to Switch or Mix their Languages (Hoffman, 1991:116):

1.Talking about a particular topic.

2.Quoting somebody else(famous expression.)

3.Being emphatic about something

4.Interjection (Inserting sentence fillers or sentence connectors).

5.Repetition used for clarification

6.Intention of clarifying the speech content for interlocutor

7.Expressing group identity

Additional Reasons Given by Saville-Troike (1986: 69)

1.To soften or strengthen request or command.

2.Because of real lexical need.

3.To exclude other people when a comment is intended for only a limited audience.

4. **Borrowing**

 "a code-switch can be of any length (a word, a phrase, a sentence) and it is a complete shift to the other language, whereas a borrowing is a word or short expression that is adapted phonologically or morphologically to the language being spoken" Grosjean(1982:308). Borrowing is the situation where words become part of another language system by being assimilated to its linguistic structural specificities. Borrowing occurs when vocabulary items, phrases; or expressions from one language are used in the target language. Borrowed words or loans are integrated in the grammatical system of the host language in the sense that they are dealt with as if they were part of the lexicon of that language. Hudson (1996:55) stated that "……..borrowing involves mixing the systems themselves, because an item is "borrowed" from one language to become part of the other language". It involves mixing languages at the

level of language-systems as opposite to code switching and code mixing that involve the mixture of languages at the level of speech.

5. Pidgins and Creoles

Pidgin is a new and initially simple form of language that arises out of language contact between two or more groups of people who do not share a common language as a means of communication. It is employed in situations such as trade. A pidgin is not the native language of any speech community. A pidgin may be built from words, sounds, or body of language from multiple other languages and cultures. Pidgins allow groups of people to communicate with each other without having any similarities.

A Creole is a stable natural language developed from the mixing of parent languages; creoles differ from pidgins (which are believed by scholars to be necessary precedents of creoles) in that they have been nativized by children as their primary language, with the result that they have features of natural languages that are normally missing from pidgin.

The vocabulary of a creole language consists of cognates from the parent languages, though there are often clear phonetic and semantic shift. On the other hand, the grammar often has original features, but may differ substantially from those of the parent languages. Most often, the vocabulary comes from the dominant group and the grammar from the subordinate group, where such stratification exists.

6. Lingua franca

A lingua franca, also known as a bridge language, common language, trade language or vehicular language, is a language used as a common means of communication among people whose native languages are mutually unintelligible. Lingua francas have developed around the world throughout human history, sometimes for commercial reasons, but also for cultural, religious, diplomatic and administrative convenience, and as a means of exchanging information between scientists and other scholars of different nationalities .

Pidgins and creoles often function as lingua francas, but many such languages are neither pidgins nor creoles. Whereas a vernacular language is used as a native language in a community, a lingua franca is used beyond the boundaries of its original community and is used as a second language for communication between groups. For example, English is a vernacular in the United Kingdom but is used as a lingua franca in the Philippines and India. Russian and French serve a similar purpose as industrial/educational lingua francas in many areas.