

LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

The Study of Language by George Yule

LINGUISTIC GEOGRAPHY

- Every language has a lot of **variation**, especially in the way it is **spoken**.
- **Linguistic geography:**
Investigating aspects of language variation based on where the language is used (**region** or **country**).

The Standard Language

Example:

Standard English is the one found in the mass media and taught in schools. It is associated with education and broadcasting in public contexts (written language more than spoken)

- The **standard language** is an idealised variety and exists for most people as the version that is accepted as the official language of their community or country.
- It is the variety we try to **teach** to those **who want to learn English** as a foreign or 2nd language.
 - ▣ It is found on TV and in newspapers, books and schools.

Accent and Dialect

□ ACCENT:

Aspects of the **pronunciation** of language that identify **where the speaker is from regionally** or **socially**.

- **Everyone has an accent.**

- **Example:** Hijazi and Najdi accents in Saudi Arabia.

□ DIALECT:

Features of **grammar** and **vocabulary** as well as aspects of **pronunciation** that are different among speakers.

- **Example:** Saudi , Sudanese and Moroccan dialects in the Arab world.

Dialectology

- It is the study of dialects to distinguish between two different dialects of the same language (whose speakers can usually understand each other) and two different languages (who can't usually understand each other).
- Each different dialect is worthy of analysis. Linguistically, none are better than the other – they are simply different.
- Socially, one dialect can be more prestigious than the other. Standard dialects are connected with a political or cultural center.

Regional Dialects

- A lot of research has been done on different dialects, **but where do they get their information from?**
 - ▣ Norms: *They are non-mobile, older, rural, male speakers.*
 - ▣ **Why?** They were less likely to have influences from outside the region in their speech.
- **Disadvantage:** The research is accurate of a period well before the time of the investigation.

ISOGLOSSES & DIALECT BOUNDARIES

- **Isogloss:** the boundary between areas with regard to one particular linguistic item.
- **Paper bag vs. paper sack** in the upper Midwest of the United States.
- When a number of isoglosses come together to form a thick line, they become a **dialect boundary**.

TERMS:

- **Bidialectal:** speaking two dialects.
- **Bilingual:** speaking two different languages.
 - ▣ Canada: an official bilingual country: French and English.

Why be bilingual?

- 1-Individual bilingualism tends to be for the minority group.
 - **Ex: Spanish in America.**
- 2- Two parents speaking two languages.

Diglossia

- **Two distinct varieties of a language existing in some countries.**
 - 1- **Low variety:** Acquired locally and used for everyday speech.
 - 2- **High variety:** Learned in school and used for important matters.

- **Example: Arabic and German.**

Language Planning

- Government, legal and educational organisations in many countries **have to plan which variety** or varieties of the languages spoken in the country are to be used for **official business**.
 - **Example:** Arabic is the official language in Saudi Arabia.

PIDGINS

&

CREOLES

- A variety of language that was **developed** for **practical purposes** such as **trade** among people who **needed to communicate** with each other but **didn't know each other's languages**.
- When a **pidgin** **develops beyond its use as a trade or contact language** and becomes the **first language** of a social community.

Differences between PIDGINS and CREOLES

Pidgins

NO native speakers.

Used for **specific purposes** such as trade and barter only.

Limited vocabulary. **NO** inflections.

Simple syntax and structures.

More difficult to be learned as they are full of **structural irregularities**.

May die because they are created for specific functions.

Creoles

DO have native speakers

Used also for **social** functions.

Expanded vocabulary **with** inflections.

More **sophisticated** syntax and structures.

Less difficult to be learned for they are more **regularised**.

Less likely to die as they have native speakers.