

CHAPTER 4 (An Introduction to Sociolinguistics by Janet Holmes)

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Linguistic Varieties

Varieties

- 1- Vernacular
- 2- Standard Language
- 3- Lingua Franca
- 4- Pidgin
- 5- Creole
- 6- Dead Language

Example 1

Book, example 1, P: 74

Mr. Patel is a spice merchant who lives in Bombay. When he gets up, he talks to his wife and children in Kathiawari, their dialect of Gujarati. Every morning, he goes to the market where he uses Marathi to buy his vegetables. At the railway station, he buys his ticket into Bombay city using Hindustani, the working person's lingua franca. He reads his Gujarati newspaper on the train, and when he gets to work, he uses Kacchi, the language of the spice trade, all day. He knows enough English to enjoy an English cricket commentary on the radio, but he would find an English film difficult to follow. However, since the spice business is flourishing, his children go to an English-medium school, so he expects them to be more proficient in English than he is.

Notes on Example 1

Mr. Patel's repertoire:

Variety	Used with/ in
Kathiawari	Wife and children
Marathi	The local market
Hindustani	City market
Gujerati	Local newspaper
Kacchi	Work
Technical English	Cricket commentary



1- Vernacular:

It is the variety of a language that has **NOT been standardised or codified** and which does **NOT** have an **official status**. It is spoken at home and used for informal situations.

Characteristics:

1- Colloquial

- The most colloquial variety in one's repertoire.

2- Uncodified

3- Unregularised/ unstandardised

4- Used for informal situations (L functions)

5- Acquired as the first language

Notes on Vernaculars

- **Vernacularisation:** The process of extending the use of a H function variety to include L functions.
- **Example: Hebrew**
- It was a language of religion with **NO** native speakers.
- It was **developed** by the government to become the **National Language** of Israel.
- It changed from a language used exclusively for rituals to **become** a language of everyday communication i.e. a vernacular language.

Example 2

Book, example 2, P: 76

Do not take the **termes** of Northern-men, such as they use in **dayly talke**, whether they be noblemen or gentlemen, or of their best **clarkes** all is a matter; nor in effect any **speech** used beyond the river Trent, though no man can deny but that theirs is the purer English Saxon at this day, yet it is not so Courtly nor so current as our Southern English is, no more is the far **Westerne mans speech**; **ye** shall therefore take the **usuall speech** of the Court, and that of London and the shires lying about London within LX **myles**, and not much above.



2- Standard Language:

It is the variety used for **writing** and which had undergone some degree of **regularisation**.

Characteristics:

1- Prestigious.

2- Codified (i.e. written down in dictionaries).

3- Regularised (i.e. described in grammar book)

4- Used for formal Situations (H functions).



Standard English: It emerged in the 15th century as a **regional dialect** in London.

The development of Standard English illustrates the 3 essential criteria for a standard language:

1- It was an **influential** or *prestigious* variety.

- **Influential:** used by the **economically powerful** merchant class.
- **Prestigious:** used in court.

2- It was **codified**.

- The introduction of the first **printing press** by **Caxton** accelerated its codification. He **selected words** and consulted the best writers of the **upper class** for judgement on usage.

3- It was used for **H functions**.

- Communication at Court, literature, administration... etc.

WORLD ENGLISHES (not included in the book)

World English languages are classified into:

1- Inner Circle Englishes: *English as a native or first language* (e.g: UK, USA).

2- Outer Circle Englishes: *English as a second language with an official status* (e.g: India, Malaysia, Tanzania).

3- Expanding Circle Englishes: *English as a foreign language* (e.g: China, Japan, Russia).

Example 3

Book, example 3, P: 80

In the 1960s, a Catholic nun, Sister Dominic, was sent to Rome for a meeting between nuns from different countries. She spoke no Italian but she had been managing pretty well with her French and English until she lost her purse one evening. She simply could not explain what had happen to the local police officer. A priest overheard her struggles and came to her rescue. They proceeded to explore their linguistic repertoires trying to find a language they shared. He came from Brazil and spoke Portuguese and Spanish, but he had been living in Rome for some time, and so he was by then familiar with the local variety of Italian. Finally they found a language in which they could communicate-Latin! At that time Latin was still the language of church services and both had learned Latin to university level. As sister Dominic described it, the result was a very funny encounter, with her explaining her predicament in formal Latin and the priest then translating into the local Italian dialect.



3- Lingua Franca:

- It is a language used for **communication** between people with **DIFFERENT** native languages.
 - **Explanation:** Ahmed speaks **Arabic** and Wong speaks **Chinese**. Ahmed **DOES NOT** speak **Chinese** **NOR DOES** Wong speak **Arabic**. **Both** Ahmed and Wong **speak Spanish**.
Spanish here is considered **LINGUA FRANCA**.



Types of Lingua Franca:

- 1- Natural:** Using real existing languages for communication .
E.g. international languages such as English, French, Spanish...
etc.
- 2- Pidginised:** Using a spontaneous blend of two real languages.
All pidgins are lingua francas but not all lingua francas are
pidgins. **E.g.** Hawaiian Pidgin.
- 3- Planned:** Using artificial linguistic forms created by people. They
are similar to pidgins in that they are used for specific purposes
and they differ in that they are intentionally constructed.
E.g. Esperanto: A language created by **Zamenhof** as an
international politics-neutral language.

Notes on Lingua Franca

- In some countries, the most useful and widely used lingua franca is an official language or the national language.
 - **Examples:** **Tanzania:** When people communicate with people from different tribes they use Swahili as it is the national language of the country.
Arab World: Classical Arabic can be used as lingua franca between Algerians and Bahrainis, for example.

Example 5

Book, example 5, P: 85

Bipo tru igat wanpela liklik meri nau nem bilong em liklik retpela Hat. Em I save slip wantaim Mama na Papa bilong em long wnpela liklik haus. Papa i save wok long bus, i save katim paiawut na ol man save baim long em. Orait i gat lapun meri i stap long narapela haus. Dispela lapun emi Tumbuna Mama.

Translation:

A long time ago, there was a little girl named little Red Riding Hood. She lived with her mother and father in a little house. Father worked in the bush, cutting trees for firewood, which he sold to people. Now there was a very old lady who lived in another house. This old lady was Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother.

4- Pidgin:

- It is a language **developed** because of the **need for communication** between people who have **NO** common language. It arises for **economic reasons** in a situation where there is a dominant language and another language.

Characteristics:

- 1- Has NO native speakers.
- 2- Based on the dominant language.
 - **The prestigious language provides most of the vocabulary.**
- 3- Developed for trade and used for that purpose only.



- **The development of a pidgin requires:**

- 1- Prolonged regular **contact** between the different language communities.

- 2- A **need for communication** between them.

- 3- An **absence** of a widespread accessible **common language** between them.

- Pidgin languages are created from the **combined efforts** of people who speak **different languages**.

- **Superstrate language (Lexifier):** The language that supplies most of the vocabulary.

- **Substrate language:** The language with the most influence on the grammatical structures.

Example 8

Book, example 8, P: 86

Young visitor to Papua New Guinea:

When I first heard Pidgin English I just thought it was baby-talk. I thought anyone can do that. It had words like “liklik” for “little” and “cranky” for “wrong” and “nogat” for “bad” . It just made me laugh. Then I began to realise that it wasn’t as easy as I’d thought. People kept correcting me when I tried, and they got annoyed if I didn’t take it seriously. I soon learned better.

Attitudes towards Pidgins

Attitudes:

- 1- Pidgins do **NOT** have **high status** or **prestige** to those who do not speak them. They often seem ridiculous languages.
- 2- People find them **funny** as they sound like **baby-talk** to them. They are often a good source of jokes.
- 3- People think that they **CAN** **guess the meaning** which can lead to serious **misunderstandings**.

Example 10

Book, example 10, P: 88

Excerpt from the Pepa Bilong Inkam Takis of the Government of Papua New Guinea:

Tok Tru Olgeta:

Olgeta tok hia mekim long dispela pepa emi tru tasol. Mi soim pinis olgeta pei mani bilong mi bilong dispela yia...

Declaration:

I, the person making this return, declare that the particulars shown herein are true in every particular and disclose a full complete statement of the total income derived by me during the twelve months from...

Example 11

Book, example 11, P: 88

Austrialin Roper River Creole:

(a) im megim ginu	He makes a canoe	[present tense]
(b) im bin megim ginu	He made a canoe	[past tense]
(c) im megimbad ginu	He is making a canoe	[present continuous]
(d) im bin megimbad ginui	He was making a canoe	[past continuous]

5- Creole:

It is the result of when a **pidgin** becomes the **native** language of **newly-born generations** and acquires **additional vocabulary and grammatical structures** to **serve** their various necessary **communicative needs**. E.g. Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea.

Characteristics:

- 1- Has native speakers.
- 2- Used for social functions to express both referential and affective messages.
- 3- Linguistically complex.
 - It has affixes and inflections.

Notes on Creoles

- Many pidgins turned into creoles because they were **acquired** by **children** as their **first language** and **used** in a wide range of **domains**.
- As a pidgin develops into creoles they become more **structurally regularised**.
- Many creoles are **spoken by** descendants of the **African slaves** in **America** and the **Caribbean**.
- Once a creole is developed, there is **NO evidence** in their linguistic **structure** to reveal its **pidgin origins**. It has the same features as **well-established** languages because it became **regularised**.
- Creoles are **accepted** as **standard** languages and even **national** and **official** languages.

Attitudes towards Creoles

Attitudes:

- 1- Outsiders have **negative** attitudes towards creoles.
- 2- When creoles are the **H variety**, they are appreciated by their speakers as they are considered **prestigious**.
 - **E.g.** Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea. People use it when they apply for a job...etc.
- 3- When creoles are the **L variety**, speakers express strong loyalty to them because they show **solidarity** and best express their feelings.

Differences between PIDGINS and CREOLES

Pidgins

NO native speakers.

Generally used for **referential** functions and has **restricted domains**. Used for 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 for both **referential** and **affective** functions (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.



6- Dead Language:

It is a language that is NO LONGER used for **spoken communication**. E.g. Latin.

Characteristics:

- 1- Has NO native speakers.
- 2- NOT used for spoken communication.

Notes on Dead Languages

- When **ALL** the **people** who speak a language **die**, the **language dies** with them. The causes can be:
 - 1- **Natural**: Diseases, natural disasters.
 - 2- **Man-made**: Genocide, ethnic cleansing.
- A language is declared **dead** by the death of its **last speaker** or when there are a **few left** but **no longer** use it in **spoken communication**, particularly at home.