

# SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Topic to discuss today

**What do sociolinguists study?**

**Why do we say the same thing in different ways?**

**Language choice in multilingual communities**

**Language maintenance and Shift**

**Linguistic Varieties and Multilingual nation**

**National Languages and language planning**

# What Sociolinguistics is

Example 1:

Randy : I'm coming! (as he always greets his mother soon after school)

Mother: Hi honey, you're late

Randy : Yeah sorry mum that stingy old man kept us in again.

Mother: Grandma is here.

Randy : Ups sorry. Where is she?

## Example 2:

- Randy : Good afternoon, sir.
- Principal : what are you doing at this moment? Why you are still here?
- Randy : Yes sir, Mr. Norman kept us in.

- The way people talk is influenced by the social context in which they are talking. It matters who can hear us and where we are talking, as well as how we are feeling. The same message may be expressed very differently to different people. We use different expressions in different styles in different social contexts.
- The response reflects Randy's awareness of the social factors which influence the choice of appropriate ways of speaking in different social contexts. *Sociolinguistics* is concerned with the relationship between language and the context in which it is used.

# Why do we say the same thing in different ways?

## Example 3

- Every afternoon my friend packs her bag and leaves her Cardiff office at about 5 o'clock. As she leaves, her business partner says *goodbye Margaret*, (she replies *goodbye Mike*) her secretary says *goodbye Mrs.Walker*, (she replies *goodbyes Jill*) and the caretaker says *Bye Mrs.Walker* (to which she responds *goodbye Andy*). As she arrives home she is greeted by *Hi mum* from her daughter, Jenny, *hello dear, have a great day?*, from her mother, and and simply *you're late again!* from her husband. Later, in the evening the president of the local flower club class to ask if she would like to join. *Good evening is that Mrs. Billington?* She asks. *No, it's MsWalker, but my husband's name is David Billington*, she answers. *What can I do for you?* Finally a friend calls *Hello Meg, sut wyt ti?*

- Example 4:
- Refuse should be deposited in the receptacle provided
- Put your rubbish in the bin, Jill
- Please tender exact fare and state destination
- Give me the right money and tell me where you're going.

- Languages provide a variety of ways of saying the same thing—addressing and greeting others, describing things and greeting others, describing things, paying compliment. As in examples 1 and 2, the final choice reflects factors such as the relationship between the people in the particular situation, and how the speaker feels about the person addressed. In example 3, her mother’s choice of *dear* reflects her affectionate feelings towards Margaret. If she had been annoyed with her daughter, she would have used her full name *Margaret*. Her friend’s use of *sut wyt ti?* (how are you?) as a greeting reflects her Welsh ethnicity. The choice of one linguistic form rather than another is a useful clue to non-linguistic. Linguistic variation can provide social information.

- Some social factors are attributes of the speaker — for example, age, gender, socio-economic class, ethnicity and educational level. Many studies have shown that these factors commonly correlate both with variation within the language itself (such as the pronunciation of final consonant clusters) and with variation in the use of language (such as the use of more or less formal vocabulary, depending on the audience). These findings match our everyday experience; most people are well aware that men and women use the language differently, that poor people often speak differently from rich people, and that educated people use language differently from uneducated people.
- People adjust the way they talk to their social situation. It is common knowledge that people also adjust the way they talk to their social situation. Socio-situational variation, sometimes called register, depends on the subject matter, the occasion and the relationship between participants — in addition to the previously mentioned attributes of region, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age and gender.



- **Language choice in multilingual communities**
- In multilingual communities, more than one language is used. It means that people living in this situation may speak more than one language. Thus, they can have linguistic repertoire. When interacting with others, they can choose a code or a variety which is appropriate with participants, topic and location. These factors are known as domains of language use.
- Language choice is also determined by social distance, status, formality and function. The process of switching back and forth between one language or dialect and another within the same conversation is called code switching.

- **Language maintenance and Shift**

- The degree to which an individual or group continues to use their language, particularly in a BILINGUAL or MULTILINGUAL are or among immigrant groups.
- Shift can be considered a change (shift) from the use of language to the use of another language. This often occurs when people migrate to another country where the main language is different, as in the case of immigrants to the USA and Australia from non-English-speaking countries.

- **Linguistic Varieties and Multilingual nation**
- Language variation (linguistic varieties) could be another term of speech variety, is a also a term used instead LANGUAGE, DIALECT, SOCIOLECT, PIDGIN, CREOLE, etc, because it is considered more neutral than such terms. It may also be used for different varieties of one language, e.g. American English, Australian English, Indian English, etc. As a result this could lead to different pronunciation, grammar, or word choice within a language. Variation in a language may be related to region, to social class and/or educational background or the degree of formality of a situation in which language is used.

- **National Languages and language planning**
- These terms above could be best described into two definitions. First is a national language is a language which is usually considered to be the main language of a nation. A government may declare a particular language or dialect to be the national language of a nation, e.g. Bahasa Malaysia (standard Malay) in Malaysia and Pilipino in Philippines. Usually, the national language is also the official language; that is the language used in government and courts of law, and for official business.
- Language planning is usually by a government or government agency, concerning choice of national or official language(s), ways of spreading the use of a language, spelling reforms, the addition of new words to the language, and other language issue. Through language planning, an official language policy is established and/or implemented. For example in Indonesia, Malay was chosen as the national language and was given the name Bahasa Indonesia. It became the main language of education. There were several spelling reforms and a national planning agency was established to deal with problems such as the development of scientific terms.

# Conclusion

- Language is basic to social interactions, affecting them and being affected by them.
- Sociolinguistics is the study of how language serves and is shaped by the social nature of human beings. In its broadest conception, sociolinguistics analyzes the many and diverse ways in which language and society intertwine.
- Sociolinguistics examines the interplay of language and society, with language as the starting point. Variation is the key concept, applied to language itself and to its use. The basic premise of sociolinguistics is that language is variable and changing.

# Thank You

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