

Language and Society (CL2.203)

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Introduction (contd.)

Communicative competence is distinguished from simple competence – it includes decisions made *apart from* grammatical and phonological correctness, such as which language is to be spoken. This choice, for instance, is made based on *where* the conversation is happening (the situation), *what* is being spoken about (the topic) and *who* is being addressed (the addressee).

Thus, sociolinguistics focusses on the co-variation of linguistic items and social categories. *Linguistic items* include pronunciation, word choice and grammatical structures. *Social categories* are affected by identity, power, class, sex, region, politeness, status, solidarity or accommodation.

A *speech community* is a variously defined term – it usually includes, roughly, a group of people who share one or more common languages or interact with each other frequently.