**Sociolinguistics / Social Variation / Social Registers**

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| **Vocabulary and Terms (in order of presentation)** | |
| Sociolinguistics | the aspects of linguistics that are applied to the connections between language and society, and focus on how we use language in different social situations. In sociolinguistic terms, language is a social function. |
| social dialect | dialects used by members of different social groups; for example, persons of a particular profession, social status, education level, gender, sexual orientation, etc. |
| social variable | a feature relevant to social contexts; for example, one's education level, profession, or social class, etc. |
| linguistic variable | a feature relevant to language; for example, pronunciation, morphemes, syntax, lexical/semantic or pragmatic |
| idiolect | each person within a group has an individual way of speaking, a result of combining social and linguistic variables that are unique to that individual |
| vernacular | local language, the language spoken by everyday people in everyday situations, as opposed to formal, standard edited English. Some people believe the term 'vernacular' covertly implies a socially stigmatized dialect or linguistic pattern. |
| social group | also called **speech community** or **community of practice**. An aggregate of people who come together on a regular basis to engage in some enterprise; for example, family, a linguistics class, a music band, sports team, etc. The community of practice develops its own way of speaking based on tasks and shared knowledge. |
| social marker | a specific pronunciation used by members of a speech community or social group. For example, r-lessness in the northeast or a dropped [g] at the end of the -ing morpheme in some southern dialects. |
| register | a conventional way of using language within a specific context. There are 3 types of register: situational, occupational, and topical (metalinguistic). |
| situational register | how one might talk to people who inhabit different aspects of their life: minister, personal trainer, a potential employer, cashier, etc. |
| occupational register | how one might speak to other members of their profession: lawyer talk, medical talk, accountants, etc |
| topical or metalinguistic register | talking about language; for example, commenting about the way people talk, the way you yourself may have mispronounced a word, etc. |
| jargon | a specialized, technical vocabulary associated with a particular group or profession; for example attorneys use terms like *tort*, *plaintiff,* and *subpoena* which are specific to the practice of law. Jargon is one way to establish who is a member of the group and who is an outsider |
| style | refers to manner of speaking or writing for forming one's social identity in a particular situation; for example, formal or informal. Social variation is inseparable from style |
| formal style | careful, standard edited English grammar and pronunciation |
| informal style | casual, nonstandard speech style; less attention give to grammar and pronunciation |
| overt prestige | value derived when using speech that is culturally determined to be better, more correct, or more positive |
| covert prestige | value derived when using speech that shows solidarity with a non-mainstream group, one not valued by society |
| speech accommodation | speaker shifts speech style to show either solidarity with or social distance from another speaker or an audience |
| convergence | occurs after a speaker changes speech style and that change results in a reduction of social distance between the speaker and the social group he was trying to fit into. |