LANGUAGE AND REGIONAL VARIATION

The Study of Language by George Yule
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.
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**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pidgins</th>
<th>Creoles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO</strong> native speakers.</td>
<td><strong>DO</strong> have native speakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Used for <strong>specific purposes</strong> such as trade and barter only.</td>
<td>Used also for <strong>social</strong> functions.</td>
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<td><strong>Limited</strong> vocabulary. <strong>NO</strong> inflections.</td>
<td><strong>Expanded</strong> vocabulary <strong>with</strong> inflections.</td>
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<td><strong>Simple</strong> syntax and structures.</td>
<td><strong>More sophisticated</strong> syntax and structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>More difficult</strong> to be learned as they are full of <strong>structural irregularities</strong>.</td>
<td><strong>Less difficult</strong> to be learned for they are more <strong>regularised</strong>.</td>
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<td><strong>May die</strong> because they are created for specific functions.</td>
<td><strong>Less likely to die</strong> as they have native speakers.</td>
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