

ENG510 SHORT HANDOUTS

MIDTERM

Lesson 01 to 05

(ENG510)Sociolinguistics

Lesson 01

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Topic 001: What Is Sociolinguistics?

What is the definition of sociolinguistics?

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society.

How does sociolinguistics differ from the sociology of language?

Sociolinguistics studies the effect of society on language, while the sociology of language studies the effect of language on society.

Who is often regarded as the founder of sociolinguistics?

William Labov is often regarded as the founder of sociolinguistics.

What are some of the social variables that sociolinguistics studies in relation to language?

Sociolinguistics studies social variables such as ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, and age.

What are some major English-language journals dedicated to sociolinguistics?

Some major journals include Language in Society, Language Variation and Change, and International Journal of the Sociology of Language.

When did most of the growth in sociolinguistics take place?

Most of the growth in sociolinguistics has taken place since the late 1960s.

Why is empirical research important in sociolinguistics?

Empirical research is crucial in sociolinguistics because it provides concrete data and discoveries about language in society.

What is the "Armchair approach" in sociolinguistics, and why is it considered limited?

The "Armchair approach" is based on personal experience alone and is limited because it doesn't account for the wide range of speech variations and societal differences.

What are some applications of sociolinguistics?

Sociolinguistics can help determine appropriate language use in different contexts, study grammar, phonetics, vocabulary, and analyze language variations within a society.

How has the field of sociolinguistics evolved over time?

Sociolinguistics has seen significant growth since the late 1960s, although it has historical roots in linguistic anthropology. Its growth is attributed to empirical discoveries made through systematic research.

Topic 002: Some Definitions of Sociolinguistics

Provide a definition of sociolinguistics from Oxford Living Dictionaries.

"The study of language in relation to social factors, including differences of regional, class, and occupational dialect, gender differences, and bilingualism."

How does Cambridge English Dictionary define sociolinguistics?

"The study of how language is used by different groups in society."

Define sociolinguistics according to Fishman (1972).

"Socially, the language use involves who speaks, what language, to whom, when, and where."

According to Holmes (2001), what is the focus of sociolinguistics?

Sociolinguistics is concerned with the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, studying how people speak differently in various social contexts.

How does Wardhaugh (1986) define sociolinguistics?

Wardhaugh defines sociolinguistics as the study that investigates the relationship between language and society to better understand language structure and its functions in communication.

Topic 003: Sociolinguistics and Linguistics

How does linguistics differ from sociolinguistics?

Linguistics focuses solely on the structure of language, while sociolinguistics considers the social contexts in which language is learned and used.

What is the primary task of linguists?

Linguists work to establish the rules of a particular language (e.g., 'the rules of language X').

Why is it important for sociolinguists to consider the social context of language?

Language is inherently tied to society, and understanding the social context is essential because speech has a social function and serves as a means of communication and group identification.

Why is the social function of speech significant in sociolinguistics?

The social function of speech is essential because it serves as a means of communication and identification of social groups. Understanding this function helps reveal the relationship between language and society.

Topic 004: Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language

What is the primary focus of sociolinguistics?

Sociolinguistics focuses on the relationship between language and society.

How does the sociology of language differ from sociolinguistics?

The sociology of language studies the effect of language on society, while sociolinguistics studies the effect of society on language.

What does the sociology of language seek to understand?

It aims to understand how social dynamics are affected by individuals and how language is used to establish group identity and communication.

What is the difference between sociolinguistics and the sociology of language?

Sociolinguistics focuses on the impact of society on language, whereas the sociology of language examines how language influences society, including aspects like multilingualism and identity formation through language use.

Topic 005: Sociolinguistics and Other Disciplines

Name two perspectives on the study of language mentioned in the lesson.

The two perspectives are the "Anatomy of Language (Structure)" and the "Physiology of Language (Functioning)."

How does sociolinguistics overlap with other disciplines?

Sociolinguistics overlaps with disciplines such as Sociology, Philosophy, Linguistic Anthropology, Psychology, Dialectology, Historical linguistics, Geographical linguistics, Descriptive linguistics, Comparative and Contrastive linguistics, Psycholinguistics, and Ethnolinguistics.

What is the difference between sociology of language and sociolinguistics?

Sociology of language focuses on the effect of language on society, while sociolinguistics focuses on the effect of society on language.

How does sociolinguistics relate to other disciplines?

Sociolinguistics shares common goals with disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, linguistic anthropology, psychology, and dialectology, as it aims to describe language and its relationship with society, culture, and social behavior.

Lesson 02

SOCIOLINGUISTIC PHENOMENA

Topic 006: Sociolinguistic Phenomena and an Imaginary World

What are the characteristics of the imaginary world described in this lesson?

The imaginary world in this lesson is a perfectly homogeneous society with one language, no social influences on language, and no cultural connections to language.

Why is language change ruled out in this imaginary world?

Language change is ruled out because there are no differences between generations, and every change would need to affect every member of the community absolutely and simultaneously.

What is the concept of the "little world" in the context of sociolinguistic phenomena?

The "little world" is an imaginary society and language where everyone speaks the same language, has the same constructions, and no social influences or cultural connections affect language. It is an unlikely scenario aimed at exploring the absence of sociolinguistic phenomena.

Topic 007: Sociolinguistic Phenomena and a Real but Exotic World

What linguistic challenges arise in the north-west Amazon as described in this lesson?

The linguistic challenges in the north-west Amazon include the diversity of indigenous languages, exogamous marriage rules, and the practice of "patrilingual marriage," which affects language transmission.

How do residents of the north-west Amazon choose the language they use in social interaction?

The choice of language in social interaction is based solely on convenience, except for the rule that requires wives to use their husbands' language when speaking to their children.

How does patrilingual marriage affect the language spoken by children in the north-west Amazon?

Patrilingual marriage results in children learning a language from their mother that she speaks as a foreigner, not her mother tongue. As a result, it's challenging to refer to this language as their "mother-tongue."

Topic 008: Sociolinguistic Phenomena and a Real and Familiar World

What questions does the lesson suggest one might ask about their own familiar world to understand sociolinguistic phenomena?

The lesson suggests questions about the familiar world, such as greetings, meal terminology, special ways of talking to children, language use in different contexts, and pronunciation variations.

What is the main point of the exercise related to these questions?

The exercise aims to make readers aware of how much there is to say about language in relation to society and how sociolinguistic phenomena are intertwined with daily life.

What is the purpose of the exercise mentioned in the lesson regarding asking questions about one's own world?

The exercise aims to make readers aware of the extensive connections between language and society and how sociolinguistic phenomena are deeply embedded in our everyday lives.

Topic 009: Sociolinguistic Phenomena and We

What are sociolinguistic phenomena, and why are they not purely linguistic?

Sociolinguistic phenomena are the effects of society, culture, and context on language use. They are not purely linguistic because they emerge when language is put into use in society.

Why are sociolinguistic phenomena interconnected and cannot be studied in isolation?

Sociolinguistic phenomena are interconnected because they are outcomes of the complex dynamics between society and language, and they function together in an integrated setting.

Why is it important to study sociolinguistic phenomena as integrated constructs rather than separately analyzing society and language?

Sociolinguistic phenomena are outcomes of complex interactions between society and language, and they function together in an integrated manner. Studying them in isolation would fail to capture their organic and functional relationships.

Topic 010: Sociolinguistic Phenomena and the Changing World

What are some unique features of today's changing world mentioned in the lesson?

Unique features of the changing world include super diversity, multilingualism, the spread of hegemonic languages like English, increased population mobility, and rapid changes in language practices.

What is the concept of linguistic hegemony, and how does it relate to globalization?

Linguistic hegemony involves the dominance of certain languages, such as English, in a global context. It relates to globalization as these hegemonic languages have spread worldwide due to increased interconnectedness and population mobility.

How does linguistic hegemony relate to globalization, and what are its implications?

Linguistic hegemony involves the dominance of certain languages, like English, on a global scale due to increased interconnectedness. This has implications for language diversity, communication, and cultural exchange, impacting the way people use and perceive language in the changing world.

Lesson 03

SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND VARIETIES OF LANGUAGE

Topic 011: The Question of Varieties of Language in Sociolinguistics

What is the term 'varieties' referring to in sociolinguistics?

In sociolinguistics, the term 'varieties' refers to distinctive forms or manifestations of language.

How can we differentiate one variety of language from another?

One way to differentiate varieties of language is by the linguistic items they contain, with similar social distribution.

What does the term 'variety' encompass in sociolinguistics?

The term 'variety' encompasses languages, dialects, and registers, serving as a general term to cover these concepts.

Why do some linguistic varieties get categorized as different languages while others as dialects?

The distinction between languages and dialects is often based on social and political factors rather than strict linguistic criteria.

Provide examples of language varieties that range from general to specific.

Examples include English (a language), French (another language), London English (a dialect), the English of football commentaries (a register), languages spoken by members of a long-house in the Amazon (a language), and the language used by a particular person (an idiolect).

Topic 012: What Are Linguistic Items?

How are lexical items different from other linguistic items?

Lexical items are listed in a lexicon and include words with meanings and characteristics, while other linguistic items like sounds and constructions are defined by general rules.

Why is the distinction between lexical and other linguistic items significant in sociolinguistics?

The distinction raises theoretical questions about why items treated differently in grammar may still share socio-linguistic characteristics.

Topic 013: The Terms - Variety and Lect

What does the term 'variety' refer to in sociolinguistics?

In sociolinguistics, 'variety' is a general term for any distinctive form of a language or linguistic expression.

What is a 'lect' in sociolinguistics?

A 'lect' is a specific form of a language or language cluster, which can encompass languages, dialects, registers, styles, or other language forms.

Topic 014: Types and Significance of Varieties of Language

What are the two broad types of language variety mentioned in sociolinguistics?

The two broad types of language variety are user-related varieties (associated with particular people or places) and use-related varieties (associated with specific functions).

How can varieties relate to both place or community and uses?

Varieties can relate to place or community (e.g., Indian English) or uses (e.g., legal English), and sometimes a combination of both (e.g., British legal English).

Topic 015: Attitude Towards Language Varieties

What does 'language attitude' refer to in sociolinguistics?

'Language attitude' refers to the feelings and opinions people have about their own language variety or the languages spoken by others.

What are some implications of language attitudes?

Language attitudes can influence various aspects, including how people perceive speakers, sound changes, teaching methods, second language learning, and mutual intelligibility.

How do stereotypes play a role in language attitudes?

Stereotypes are important in shaping language attitudes, influencing whether people have positive or negative opinions about pronunciation, words, grammar, and other aspects of language.

What are some questions to consider when examining your own language attitudes?

When examining your own language attitudes, you can think about your opinions towards different varieties of English and local dialects.

Lesson 04

SPEECH COMMUNITIES

Topic 016: What Are Speech Communities?

What is the concept of a speech community?

A speech community refers to a group of people who share linguistic norms and expectations in their language usage, effectively employing the same code and belonging to the same community.

Why is language considered both an individual and social possession?

Language is both an individual possession and a social possession because it is used by individuals but is influenced by social context, leading to shared linguistic behaviors within speech communities.

What is a speech community, and how does it relate to language and social interactions?

A speech community refers to a group of people who share linguistic norms and expectations in their language usage. This means they may speak the same language, dialect, or variety and use a common code. Speech communities are

both individual and social possessions, reflecting shared linguistic behaviors among individuals.

Topic 017: Some Definitions of Speech Communities

How did Bloomfield define a speech community?

Bloomfield defined a speech community as "a group of people who interact by means of speech."

According to Labov, what defines a speech community?

Labov defined a speech community based on participation in shared norms rather than marked agreement in language usage.

How do speech communities relate to language and dialect?

Speech communities are not coterminous with language or dialect, as they can exist within various linguistic variations.

Is a speech community equivalent to a language or dialect, and why is it important to distinguish them?

A speech community is not equivalent to a language or dialect. It encompasses a group's linguistic characteristics, but language and dialect definitions don't fully encompass the concept. Distinguishing between speech communities and languages/dialects is essential because linguistic characteristics alone are insufficient to define them; social, cultural, and ethnic factors also play a significant role.

Topic 018: Intersecting Communities

How does urbanization affect linguistic boundaries?

Urbanization erodes linguistic frontiers by creating bilingual and bidialectal speakers, challenging the association of a dialect with a specific place.

Why is it challenging to relate the concept of "speech community" to language or groups?

The concept of "speech community" is challenging to relate to language because linguistic characteristics alone are insufficient to define it, as individuals use various social, cultural, and ethnic factors for identity and differentiation.

How does urbanization affect speech communities, and what challenges arise in defining speech communities in large, diverse cities like London?

Urbanization erodes linguistic boundaries, creating bilingual and bidialectal speakers, especially in large cities like London. Defining speech communities in such settings is challenging due to their size, diversity, and changing social factors. Boundaries may be porous, and people may belong to multiple overlapping communities based on social, cultural, or professional factors.

Topic 019: Rejecting the Idea of Speech Communities

What is an "ideal" speech community, and why is it mainly a theoretical construct?

An "ideal" speech community is a completely homogeneous speech community proposed by Chomsky for theoretical purposes. It's theoretical because real speech communities exist in the real world.

Why is the concept of "speech community" less useful than other concepts?

The concept of "speech community" may be less useful than other concepts like "group" or "community of practice" because it has limitations in explaining the complex interplay of linguistic and social factors.

Should researchers focus on the concept of 'groups' or 'speech communities,' and what are the consequences of each choice?

Both 'groups' and 'speech communities' have their merits, and the choice depends on the research context. 'Groups' offer a broader view, considering various affiliations, while 'speech communities' focus on linguistic aspects. Researchers must consider the specific goals and consequences of each concept in their studies.

Topic 020: Networks and Repertoires

How can we determine an individual's network in society?

An individual's network in society can be determined by examining their interactions with other individuals and how they link together in various activities.

What is a linguistic repertoire, and why is it important?

A linguistic repertoire is the range of linguistic varieties a speaker can use. It is essential in describing an individual's communicative competence within a speech community.

How does Platt and Platt differentiate between speech repertoire and verbal repertoire?

Speech repertoire refers to the linguistic varieties used by a speech community, while verbal repertoire pertains to the linguistic varieties available to a particular speaker.

What is a linguistic repertoire, and why is it more useful when applied to individuals rather than groups?

A linguistic repertoire is the range of linguistic varieties an individual can use within their speech community. It is more useful when applied to individuals because each person has a unique set of linguistic resources. Groups may share some linguistic elements, but individuals within a group can have diverse repertoires.

How does the concept of verbal repertoire differ from speech repertoire, and why is this distinction relevant?

Verbal repertoire refers to the linguistic varieties available to an individual, while speech repertoire relates to the varieties used within a speech community. This distinction is relevant because it highlights individual variation and helps describe an individual's communicative competence.

Lesson 05

LANGUAGE CONTACT AND VARIATION- I

Topic 021: Sociolinguistic Constraints on Language Contact

What is language contact?

Language contact occurs when speakers of two or more languages or varieties interact and influence each other.

What is the study of language contact called?

The study of language contact is called contact linguistics.

What are some examples of language contact phenomena?

Examples include creole language formation, variable spreading in English, and the introduction of new variants into stable systems.

What constraints affect the outcomes of language contact?

Constraints related to space, speaker attitudes, social factors, and social rigidity can influence language contact outcomes.

What are the common products of language contact?

Common products include pidgins, creoles, code-switching, and mixed languages.

What is the study of language contact called, and what are some examples of language contact phenomena?

The study of language contact is known as contact linguistics. In this field, linguists examine the effects of language contact on the languages involved. Examples of language contact phenomena include the development of creole languages, the spread of linguistic variables due to contact between different varieties of a language (like English dialects), and the introduction of new linguistic variants into a stable linguistic system.

Topic 022: Wave Model of Language Contact and Change

What does the wave model of language contact propose?

The wave model suggests that language change starts from a central point and spreads gradually in concentric circles.

What metaphor is often used to describe the spread of linguistic innovations in the wave model?

The metaphor of ripples spreading in water, like when a stone is thrown into a pond, is used.

How does the wave model explain the spread of linguistic innovations?

It suggests that changes start in environments favoring them most strongly and move outward in waves.

Why has the wave model faced limited acceptance in the study of language change?

The model has seen limited acceptance due to shortcomings, and other models are considered more useful.

Why has the wave model faced limited acceptance in the study of language change?

The wave model of language change has encountered limited acceptance in linguistic research, particularly in the 20th century, except for certain cases like dialect continua. This limited acceptance is because it doesn't explain how

changes spread uniformly over physical space. In many cases, other models have proven to be more useful. Its popularity has waned due to its shortcomings compared to alternative models like the tree model of languages.

Topic 023: Spatial Diffusion by Gravity

What is the gravity model in sociolinguistics?

The gravity model predicts that larger population centers are more likely to adopt innovations sooner.

What is the "gravitational force" in the gravity model?

The gravitational force is the influence exerted by the sheer number of people in a given locale.

What does the gravity model explain about the spread of innovations?

It explains that innovations often move from large cities to smaller towns and villages.

How is the gravity model applied to the spread of innovations?

The gravity model was originally used to describe the diffusion of non-linguistic innovations, such as new car brands or seed types. It observed that innovations often moved irregularly across physical space, starting in larger cities and gradually reaching smaller ones. Even if a smaller town was close to the innovation's starting point, its residents might adopt it relatively late. This model demonstrates that access to innovations is influenced by the population size of cities.

Topic 024: Access to the Codes

What did Robert Le Page emphasize regarding variation in creole-speaking communities?

Le Page emphasized that variation should be seen as acts of identity.

Why is access to a language variety important for its acquisition?

Access to a variety is essential because without contact with speakers of that variety, acquiring it is challenging.

What factors influence the ease of acquiring different aspects of language varieties?

Factors include exposure, meaningful social networks, and the relative difficulty of specific linguistic features.

Why is access to a language variety important for its acquisition, according to Le Page?

Le Page emphasized that access to a language variety is crucial for its acquisition because without contact with speakers of that variety, it becomes challenging to learn and use it effectively. Just as with learning a language, exposure to and interaction with speakers of a specific style or variety are essential for its mastery.

Topic 025: Rigidity of the Social Matrix

What linguistic situation is observed in Kupwar, India?

In Kupwar, languages like Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada have remained distinct codes despite frequent switching.

How do the languages in Kupwar differ from their standard varieties?

They differ in subtle syntactic changes that have brought them closer in line with each other.

What social factor influences the maintenance of language distinctions in Kupwar?

The caste system, which assigns languages to specific castes, plays a role in maintaining language distinctions despite convergence.

What factors contributed to the maintenance of language distinctions in Kupwar despite contact-induced convergence?

Factors contributing to the maintenance of language distinctions in Kupwar included the historical and social associations between languages and specific social castes. The caste system played a significant role in determining language affiliations, which motivated the retention of language distinctions in terms of vocabulary, even when there was structural convergence.

Working on the Next Lessons