



Language Variation



Introduction

- **Regional Variants**
- **Social Variants**
- **British and non-British variations of the English Language**
- **Australian, New Zealand and South African English**



Regional or geographical variation (I)

- **Regional varieties:**
 - regional accent
 - dialect

Regional or geographical variation (II):

The standard language.

Accent and dialect

- ***Accent:***
 - aspects of pronunciation which identify where an individual speaker is from, regionally or socially.
- ***Dialect:***
 - features of grammar and vocabulary as well as aspects of pronunciation.
- From a linguistic point of view, no one variety is 'better' than another.
- From a social point of view, some varieties are more prestigious.



Regional or geographical variation (III): *Geographical and regional dialects*

- **Geographical dialect:**
 - the variation corresponding to large speaking communities,
 - i.e. British English, American English, etc.
- **Regional dialect:**
 - the variation found in smaller communities existing within larger communities.



Regional or geographical variation (IV): *Isoglosses and dialect boundaries*

- ***Isogloss:***
 - a line representing a boundary between areas with regard to one particular linguistic characteristic.
 - Differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.
 - Indicate dialect boundaries.
- However, one variety merges into another.



Social variation (I)

- *Social dialect*
- *Occupation and social class*
- *Age*
- *Sex*
- *Ethnic background*
- *Style and register*
- *Idiolect*



Social variation (II)

- It indicates membership of different groups or different speech communities.
- Two people growing up in the same geographical area, at the same time, may speak differently due to *social* factors.



Social variation (III): *Social Dialect*

- **Social dialects**
 - varieties of language used by groups defined according to class, education, occupation, age, sex, and other social parameters.
- **The influence of written language in educated speakers.**
- **The importance of U-English.**



Social variation (IV): *Occupation and Social class*

- Occupation and social class affect the speech of individuals.
- 'Jargon'



Social variation (IV): *Age*

- Within the same social class, differences may correlate with the age or sex of the speakers.
- Grandparent-grandchild time span.



Social variation (V): *Sex*

- Females more prestigious forms?
- Differences even within the same social background.



Social variation (V): *Ethnic background*

- ***Black English***
 - absence of the copula,
 - e.g. *You crazy*
 - The use of a double negative construction
 - e.g. *He don't know nothing*



Social variation (V): *Style and Register*

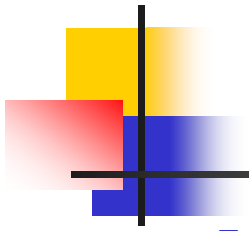
- ***Style:***
 - Formal
 - Informal, colloquial, etc.

- ***Register:***
 - variation due to the field, domain or specialty of the users due to their occupation.
 - E.g. *plaintiff*



Social variation (V): *Idiolect*

- **Idiolect:**
 - **The personal dialect of each individual speaker of a language.**

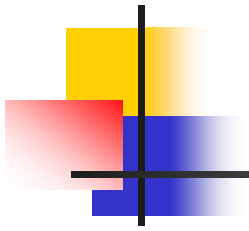


British and non-British variations of the English Language (I)

■ English:

- England
- Southern and Eastern Scotland
- Wales (but also Welsh)
- Ireland (mainly into southern Ireland from the west of England) in medieval times,
- North America in the 17th and 18th centuries,
- Northern Ireland (from Scotland),
- South Africa,
- Australia and New Zealand (not before the late 18th or 19th c.).

- South African English, Australian English and New Zealand English are phonologically similar to RP and to one another.



British and non-British variations of the English Language (II)

- **British:**
 - Southern English (RP)
 - Scottish English
 - Irish English
 - Welsh English
 - Australian English
 - New Zealand English
 - South African English
- **Non-British:**
 - American English
 - Canadian English



Australian, New Zealand and South African English

- *Australian English*
- *New Zealand English*
- *South African English*