LANGUAGE AS A SOURCE OF SOCIAL MARKERS: A STUDY OF LANGUAGE USE VARIATION
Keywords: identity, social variables, linguistic variables.

ABEER HADI MUKHEEF   **PROF. KHALIL ISMAIL RIJIA (Ph.D.)**
University of Diyala   **University of Diyala**
College of Education for Humanities   **College of Education for Humanities**

abeerhadee9@gmail.com   Khalil_rajia@yahoo.com

ASST. PROF GHAZWAN ADNAN MOHAMMED (PH.D.)
College of Education for Humanities
Department of English Language
Cezancezar77@gmail.com

Abstract

Language is indeed an important source of social markers. By using language, people do not only communicate meanings but also establish and maintain social relations. This means that when somebody says or writes something, the linguistic and even the extra-linguistic features involved in his speech and writings can convey some information about his social affiliation whether in the dimension of socioeconomic class, gender, age, ethnicity and personality. This paper is concerned with this sociolinguistic phenomenon but within the scope of learners of English as a Foreign Language. Formal Standard English is the dialect spoken by educated people, and RP is the accent normally taught to foreigners seeking to learn English. But at the same time, virtually no one in Britain speaks the exact pure version of the Standard. Trudgill (1999: 124) estimates that only 12-15 per cent of the population of England use it. The current study seeks to represent the students' attitudes towards the variation used by native speakers of English.

The data were collected from students' writings. The researcher asked 100 students in the University of Diyala, College of Education for Humanities, Department of English, third grade to answer a group of questions in the questionnaire. The findings of this paper prove that the students are more aware of the physical markers (age and gender) than social (ethnicity, class) and psychological markers (personality).

Introduction

No one can deny the fact that all languages change whether under the control of social, physical or psychological factors. Language has the ability to be a source of social markers because of the variation in the linguistic forms between the groups of language users. Social markers depend on variation between

individuals because without such variation no markers would be found. So, if people speak in the same way regardless their age, gender, educational position and other characteristics, no social groups will be identified.

The principal problem to be handled in this research study is the need to investigate the extent to which students of English as a Foreign language are aware of such linguistic variables as well as their awareness of the social background of such variables. In other words, do they aware of the fact that the native speakers might use particular variables influenced by his class, gender, age, ethnicity, personality? Meanwhile, do they know that their use of English can mark them as a member of a particular social group rather than the other?

1- Language and Social Markers

The use of language as a marker of social group can be traced back to Jephthah's era when Jephthah led Gileadites to fight against Ephraimites. The Gileadites managed to seize the fords that lead to Jordan. In order to ensure whether men who came after them were really from their group, Gileadites ordered them to pronounce the word Shibboleth (means stream in flood or ear of corn). Those who pronounced it with initial /s / instead of / ʃ / were not Gileadites and they regarded them as enemies (Jordan,1985:217).

Yule (2010:256) explains **social markers** in the sense of linguistic features that "having this features occur frequently in your speech (or not) marks you as a member of a particular social group, whether you realize it or not. Concerning the term marker, Scherer and Giles (1979:xi) define **marker** as "speech cues that potentially biological, psychological and social characteristics." They consider that the terms sign, index, symptom, indicator and clues are alternative to the term marker.

The assumption that language is a reliable source of social markers can be reinforced by the fact that it fulfills the criteria of being a reliable source of social markers. Cohen (2012:594-600) confirms that an ideal marker must be:

     a- salient guide to social identity
     b- can be easily discriminated
     c- mainly characteristic of the individual and secondarily of a group
     d- comparable along uninterrupted dimension
     e- not easy to fake
     f- easy to inherit
     g- can be developed
     h- dynamic and flexible
     i- evolutionarily ancient and
     j- universal characteristic of all humans.

2 Linguistic Variables

2.1 Preliminaries

Linguists have found that some linguistic features are variables and that some features tend to be more exhibited to variation than others. The term *linguistic variable* is used in order to capture and describe these features. The term linguistic variable is defined by Wardhaugh (2006:143) as "a linguistic item which has identifiable variants". Some researchers have continued their investigation and discovered that such variables have special social significance.

In this respect, it is not sufficient to refer to the linguistic meaning of these characteristics because their social meaning plays an important role. The term *sociolinguistic variable* refers to the linguistic variables that are sensitive to social or stylistic context. The occurrence of a particular feature in people's speech or its disappearance marks them as a member of a particular social group. Sometimes people recognize such variation and sometimes they do not.

2.2 phonological Markers

"Pronunciation is a domain within which one's identity is expressed."

(Zuengler, 1988,34)

Studies on social identity and markers have focused mainly on the use of sounds and their variation as markers of social groups. Mugglestone (2003:43) argues that accent is not only a marker of group membership but also a signal of solidarity. Therefore, the phonetic realization of any word can identify a speaker as member of a particular social group. Thus, accent conveys a lot of information about the speaker's identity like class, gender, age and other characteristics. In English, native speakers distinguish between different varieties like Australian, Scottish or Jamaican. This distinction is the key used by people to judge social group membership (Rogerson-Revell, 2011:18).

Variation in pronunciation has various forms. In some cases, this variation refers to the difference in the pronunciation of a single word such as the pronunciation of the word *controversy*. Across the UK, older speakers place the main stress on the first syllable /ˈkɒntrəvɜːsi/. However, it is the second syllable that is stressed /kənˈtrɒvəsi/ when the speakers are younger. In other cases, the phonological variation can affect the pronunciation of a particular segment. Thus, its impact involves a large group of words.

http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/changing-voices/phonological-change/

It is useful here to refer to /h/ dropping in order to illustrate the correlation between pronunciation and social discrimination. The term /h/ dropping refers to cases in which the speaker do not pronounce the sound /h/ at the beginning of words such as hat /æt/ instead of /hæt/, hungry /ˈʌŋgri/ instead of /ˈhʌŋgri/,

_____

horse /ɔ:s/ rather than /hɔ:s/ and humble /ˈʌmb(ə)l/ rather than /ˈhʌmb(ə)l/. Throughout the English-speaking world, /h/ dropping seems to be a fairly stable indication of lower class and uneducated people (Yule, 2010:256).

2.3 Grammatical markers

In fact, linguists agree that linguistic variability is not restricted to phonological features. Grammatical markers can also be regarded as variations that correlate to social groups. A clear example is the use of double negation like *"I do not want none"* instead of *"I do not want any"* as a marker of social class. Grammatical markers, unlike phonological markers, occur less frequently (Laver and Trudgill,1979:22). Moreover, the scope of grammatical varieties involves spoken as well as written language.

It is difficult to limit grammatical markers to those that refer to the distinction between the use of standard and nonstandard forms. Beside this distinction, proportion of the use of certain standard forms can also serve as markers of certain social groups. For instance, some speakers use a nominal style, which means high proportion of nouns, adjectives and pronouns. Other speakers prefer verbal style which refers to high proportion of verbs, adverbs and prepositions (Brown and Fraser, 1979:49). Bernstein (1971:75-83) claims that these proportions can be markers of social identity as well as individual markers. The individual markers mean those which distinguish one individual from others. The receivers are able to judge the speech or writings of others as impressive, boring, tentative, etc. They depend largely on the use of grammatical aspects.

2.4 Lexical markers

Vocabulary is the most obvious and important area in which language (spoken or written) can function as a source of social markers. The word wireless, for instance, can be a marker that leads the receivers to assume that this statement was said by an old person since the word radio is the common one nowadays. Younger speakers today use *wireless* as an adjective rather than a noun when they use expressions like wireless technology. Though vocabulary is easy for the receiver to observe and make confident assertions about lexical markers, it is the most difficult area to study and investigate since lexical items occur infrequently, so linguists and sociolinguists have little to offer in this aspect. The speakers and writers can control their use of lexical items since they are liable to conscious suppression (ibid, 25).

The speakers of one language share the majority of its vocabulary. However, certain set of lexical items are restricted to particular group. For instance, the technical terms can be used as markers of occupations, interest, education and others. The terms used by doctors when talking about particular topic differ from those used by teachers, lawyers and other careers. In addition, it may also

_____

be that minority groups, like drug addicts and criminals, have their own vocabulary that reflects their interest and reinforces their affiliation and excludes those who are not familiar with their items (Brown and Fraser, 1979:51). Thus, each group has its own words and expressions that not only differ but may not be comprehensible to outsiders. This is why one finds dictionaries which translate these technical terms into common words. Lexical markers are found profusely in the use of slang. According to Andersson and Trudgill (1990:73), slang is mainly a matter of vocabulary rather than grammar because there are not many grammatical features of slang.

3 Social Variables

3.1 Socioeconomic Status

According to Chambers (2003:43), social class can be regarded as "the most linguistically marked aspect of our social being." He uses two epithets in his observation of this variable. One of these epithets is the working class [WC] which refers to manual workers. The other epithet is the middle class [MC] which refers to non-manual workers. Moreover, these classes can be divided into sub-classes like upper, mid and low. Though scholars agree on the existence of a hierarchy scale, there is no consensus on the economic, social and cultural factors that define hierarchy (Kerswill, 2007:4). Most of linguists like Labov (1966:171) argue that social class is related to occupation, education and income. Other linguists like Warner et al. (1960:168-169), these factors extend these factors to involve not only occupation, education and income but even the person's wealth. Family, clubs and fraternities, friends, speech, manners and general behaviors are predictors of rating man on the social scale.

3.1.1 Grammatical Markers

Cheshire et al., (1993:64-65) make a study which clarifies that the following non-standard features are common among the members of working class:

1- The use of *them* as a demonstrative adjective, e.g., "Look at *them* big spiders."

2- The absence of *plural marking* in words that are used as measurements, e.g., Three *pound* of sugar.

3- When *never* is used as 'negator' of the past tense, e.g., No, he *never* said that.

4- The use of *what* as a relative pronoun like " The film *what* was on last night was good."

5- Participle *stood* and *sat*, for example, he was *stood* over there looking at his father.

6- Non-standard *was* and *were,* e.g., We *was* playing but he *were* not.

7- Adverbial *quick*, for instance, he likes pasta, he cooks really *quick*.

8- The use of *in't* or *ain't* for hasn't, haven't, isn't and aren't. For example, she *ain't* lying.

9- *Multiple negation*. For example, I do *not* like *none*.

10- The use of third person present tense –s with *I, they, you, we* as well as its use with he, she and it. For instance, you *likes*, we *likes*, I *likes* and we *likes*.

The following two features are mentioned by Mallinson (2007:156) in addition to other features that are similar to those mentioned above:

11- Absence of *third person singular –s*, e.g., If she *move* away.

12- Absence of *Copula*, e.g., He *brave*.

3.1.2 Lexical Markers

In his study, Fox (2004:77) finds that some phonological and lexical differences are tied to SES. He uses the words *serviette* vs. *table-napkin* as one of the common social class markers. He concludes that the word serviette is more commonly used by working class and the word table-napkin is used by members of middle class. Fries (1940) (cited in Robinson, 1979:226) analyzes letters that have been written by people from different status. He recognizes that individuals from lower SES use grammatical forms that are not available in Standard American English. In addition, he shows the high incidence of particular lexical items *like*, *do*, *can*, *awful*, *would*, *get*, *but*, *pretty* and the like.

3.2 Gender

According to Attyat (2016:1) the word gender refers to the "social and contextual anticipations that are distinguished by society for each of males and females in both cultural and social aspects." This is the reason behind using the word gender instead of sex which refers to biological differences between both males and females. In West Indies (the Caribbean Basin), women have their own language that is different from the language spoken by men. However, they can communicate and understand each other. Meanwhile, it is not appropriate for each man to use women's language since he would be the laughing stock of others. The same thing would happen if a woman uses the language spoken by men (Hanafiyeh and Afghari, 2014:1169).

3.2.1 Grammatical Markers

Holmes (2001:286) refers to a list of linguistic features that are pioneered by Lakoff for the purpose of characterizing women's speech. The grammatical variables include:

1- Tag questions, e.g. they are so funny*, aren't they?*
2- Super polite forms like *euphemisms* and *indirect questions* to make requests.
3- Intensifiers like *just*, *so*, *too*, etc. for example, I am *so* proud of you.
4- The rising of intonation to convey question, e.g. This car is *so* extensive?

_____

5- The use of standard forms "hyper correct grammar."

6- Verb negation like I do not want this shirt.

Moreover, females prefer to make suggestions by means of interrogative (Laver and Trudgill, 1979:24). Argamon et al., (2003:321) state that women use more *pronouns* than men. Men, on the other hand, use more *noun modifiers* than women. Women send the message that the addressee knows what they are referring to, therefore they present the information as if they both know it. The use of noun specifier by men send the message that there are further information about the things being referred to.

3.2.2 Lexical Markers

In the previous section (Grammatical Markers), the researcher refers to Holmes' (2001:286) grammatical markers that are common in females' speech, Holmes (ibid) adds the following lexical markers to women's speech:

1- Lexical hedges, e.g. *you know*, *sort of*, *well*, etc.

2- Empty adjectives, e.g. *cute*, *charming*, *divine*.

3- Women avoid words that indicate strong swear such as *my goodness* and *fudge*. They also use less rude vocabulary.

4- The use of Precise color terms such as *aquamarine* and *magenta*.

Tannen (1994:87-88) concludes that women prefer to talk about relationships more than males. They also use more apologies and compliments (Holmes, 1989:194-213). According to Argamon et al., (2003:334), men's speech involves references to quantity and location more than women. In addition, when women communicate with each other, they usually prefer to talk about personal topics like *cooking*, *shopping* and *daily problems*. As a result, social words like *sister* and *friend* and psychological processes like *remember*; *nervous*; *easy* and *mad* are common features in women's speech. On the contrary, men avoid personal topics and prefer public ones such as *political* and *economic issues*, *sports*, etc. (Newman, et al., 2008:211).

3.3 Age Grading

According to Wagner (2012: 378), age grading is "identified as a repetition of age-appropriate linguistic behavior in each generation whether or not the linguistic variable is stable in the community." With the passage of time, each individual grows older. As a result, s/he abandons the features that are associated with the earlier stages in order to speak like the members of the group above them. Throughout the course of an individual's life time, his form of speech changes from earliest babblings to senile mutterings. However, the attempts to accurately determine what changes take place at each stage require careful investigation (Macaulay, 2009:5). In this study, the researcher explains briefly three basic stages: childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

3.3.1 Childhood

During this stage, children's abilities to interpret, process and produce language flourish in an amazing way. Below is a table which shows the stages that children come through in their developing of linguistic behavior (Yule, 2010:173- 177).

Table (1) The Stages of Children's Linguistic Behavior Development

Stage	Linguistic behavior
From birth to 6 months	Cooing
From 6 to 11 months	Babbling
Between 12 to 18 months	One-word utterances such as "milk" to indicate that they are hungry
18 to 20 months	Two-word utterances like "Mommy sock."
Between two and two-and-a-half years old	Telegraphic speech (multiple-word utterances like daddy go bye-bye.
After two-and-a-half year (morphological development)	Development morphology which follows the following order: 1) -ing-form 2) –s plural and they overgeneralize this rule for regular nouns like " two books" and irregular nouns like "two feets" 3) Verb "to be" 4) –ed past tense and also overgeneralize the rule even with irregular verbs like "comed" 5) –s third person singular present tense
18-26 months (syntactic development)	They simply add no or not to the beginning of an expression to negate it such as "no sit here" and add Wh-form to the beginning of an expression to make question such as "where horse go?"
22-30 months	Don't and can't appear in children's speech. Don't, can't, no and not precede the verb such as "He no bite you." In questions, children start to use complex expressions like "Why you smiling?"
24-40 months	Other auxiliaries like won't, didn't, isn't and other become common "I didn't caught it." In forming question, the auxiliary-subject inversion becomes evident "Did I caught it?"

_____

3.3.2 Adolescence

Unlike children, adolescents begin to observe and talk about abstract concepts like love, religion, faith, friendship, etc. (Mahdad, 2012:30, 32). Eckert (1997:163) adds that adolescents try to construct their identities independently of their elders by representing sound change and using vernacular forms of language.

Slang has attracted the attention of most sociolinguists and they demonstrate that slang is a variety of age grading since teenagers usually use slang words that are not common among other age groups like children or adults. Some examples of these slangs are *gnarly* "gross" and *rad* "cool" (Labov, 1992:350). Another example is from America and particularly in California and West Coast, teenagers there tend to substitute *say* by *go, be all* and *be like* when they want to convey somethings that have been said by someone else (reported speech). For example, *He is like, "I am not gonna do that."* Furthermore, they also have their own grammatical structures sine they use *be all* and *be like* with pronouns rather than full noun phrases. For instance, *She's all* instead of **The intelligent girl's all*. They also use be all and be like only with contracted forms. Thus they do not say **She is all* (Rickford, 1996:167).

3.3.3 Adulthood

Unlike childhood and adolescence, adulthood has been neglected by linguists because they believe that it is "the empty stage" because the linguistic repertoires are stabilized after adolescence. Adult people also become constant in their opinions and tastes (Coupland, 2001:185). Eckert (1997:157) uses the expression "a vast wasteland" to describe adulthood. However, this is not always the case because the use of language may develop as one grows older. The reason is that old people usually adjust their use of language to the norms of society. Furthermore, some of the important events in adults' life can affect people's social attitudes and relations (Osorno, 2011:15).

Adults usually use more prestigious forms than young people because adults have greater responsibilities at work and at home. Thus, language tends to be more standardized because of their occupations and as response to the norms and requirements of the "labour market" (Chambers, 2009:190). Old people, generally speaking, tend to use more positive words and less negative words. They also make fewer references to themselves. On the contrary, young people tend to talk more about themselves (Nguyen et al., 2013:440).

3.4 Ethnicity

According to Omi and Winant (1994:55) the term ethnicity is associated with distinctions that are based on national origin, language, shared history, memories common things in the past, the homeland, a sense of solidarity,

cultural heritage which include aspects like ritual, religion, mythology, cuisine, dress, music and other cultural markers. That is why Fought (2006:6) describes ethnicity as a multi-faced variable. Ethnic groups are defined by Weber (1978:389) as

Human groups that entertain a subject belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration . . . it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.

3.4.1 Grammatical Markers

Most of the researchers have focused their attention on the grammatical differences between *White* and *Black* speakers in the United States. African American Vernacular English (AAVE) is a variety that is used by African American in the USA. Trudgill, (1974:73) refers to four grammatical features that are common among Black Americans. First, invariable *be* is used to refer to some actions that are repeated but non-continuous such as *Sometimes he be playing*. Second, black Americans delete –s third-person singular present-tense suffix such as *He play football.* Third, the absence of the copula in the present tense like *They good students.* Fourth, the negative auxiliaries such as *cannot* and *does not* can be placed at the beginning of the sentence followed by negative indefinite such as *nothing* or *nobody*. For example, *Can't nobody do nothing about it.*

Rickford (1996:175-176) adds that African Americans use *done* to ensure the completed nature of actions. For example, *They done did it* instead of *They have already done it*. Stressed *BIN* is used to express remote phases. For example, *She BIN* married instead of *She has been married for a long time* (and still is). Multiple negation is also common among African American such as *She do not do nothing* instead of *She does not do anything*.

Dillard (1973:2-5) points to more features that are common in Black English (BE). When more than one verb is included in the same sentence, African Americans show that only one of these verbs need be marked for past or present tense such as *She fed the dog and wash the clothes and sweep the floor*. BE also does not differentiate between masculine and feminine. Thus, it seems possible to hear "*He a nice little girl.*" While embedded clauses are expressed as *I do not know whether she can walk,* people speaking BE say *I do not know can she*

walk. Concerning conjunction, BE uses time instead of when such as the sentence *"Time they get there we be gone."*

3.4.2 Lexical Markers

Trudgill (1974:62) shows that Moslems, Serbs and Croats all speak the Yugoslav Language. However, the members of each group have different forms to refer to the word *train.* That is to say Moslems use the word *čaršija*, Serbs use *varos* and Croats use *grad.* This, nevertheless, does not mean that the members of each group cannot use each other words but Croats and Serbs do not prefer to use the words used by Moslems for window and love. Furthermore, two groups might use the same word but it will connote differently in each group. The word "nigger," for instance, is viewed negatively when it is said by American white but positively when it is said by American Blacks (Giles, 1979:264).

3.5 Personality

In fact, language is considered as the major source of information about people's personality. At the same time, the impact of personality can be emphasized by the fact that differences in personality manifest themselves in people's use of language (Beukeboom et al., 2012:191). In order to formalize personality, one can follow the standard way of the Big Five Model introduced by Norman (1963:24). The Big Five traits are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.

3.5.1 Openness

People in this trait appreciate unusual ideas, variety of experience, curiosity and creativity since they prefer variety and novelty. High scorers are curious, imaginative, flexible, moved by art, creative, original, untraditional and novelty seeking. Low scorers are conservative, unartistic, conventional and practical (Asmali, 2014:5). People with high openness are characterized as using fewer words that are related to sleep (Lee et al., 2007:409). Perceptual processes are commonly used among individuals who belong to this trait (Hirsh and Peterson, 2009:227). Words like dream, music, universe, soul and other words which are within the artistic domain are commonly used by people with high openness. This trait is also related to the use of long words and certainty words like *sure, guarantee, definite,* etc. (Mehl et al., 2012:32). Kern et al., (2013,6) emphasize that openness is viewed by the greater use of articles (*a, an, the, a lot*).

On the other hand, those with low openness tend to reflect low cultural and intellectual sophistication. They are also likely to use shorthand language, misspelling and reduced contractions such as *dont* instead of *don't* (ibid: 4).

3.5.2 Conscientiousness

Psychologists characterize people with high consciousness as being careful, dependable, responsible, thorough and hardworking (Lee et al., 2007:409). Low scorers are careless, aimless, negligent, late, unreliable and lazy (Asmali, 2014:5). Kern et al., (2013:4) refer to the following linguistic markers that are associated with conscientious people:

1- People within this trait are more likely to include words that reflect achievement (*beat*, *master*, *plan*, *accomplish*, *play*), schools and work.

2- They also show high frequency of activities which support relaxation like *weekend*, *vacation*, *workout*, *day off*, *lunch with* and so on.

3- They prefer general enjoyment like *enjoy*, *fun*, *blessed*, *wonderful*.

4- Emotional stability which is reflected by positive social relationships like *team* and *group*.

5- Individuals high in conscientiousness avoid swear words. Swear words, in general, are prevalent for low conscientiousness, low agreeableness and high neuroticism.

6- Low conscientiousness and low extraversion are similar in their use of computer related words like *bored*, *Youtube*, *pokemon*, etc.

7- Low conscientiousness and low openness use shorthand text as well as emoticons.

8- People who belong to this trait are less likely to discuss body-related topics (Hirsh and Peterson, 2009:526).

9- Individuals who are scored high on consciousness tend to use more positive emotion words than negative emotion words (Lee et al., 2007:411).

3.5.3 Extroversion (also Extraversion)

People high in this trait prefer excitement and take risks. People lower in the extroversion trait (Introversion) tend to be introspective, shy, lonely and do not crave excitement. Introverts are introspective, quiet and retiring. Extroverts usually have more active social life than introverts. The following linguistic features can be used to distinguish an extrovert people from introvert ones and also from people who belong to other traits:

1- Extroverts' language shows how confident they are through their avoidance of powerless speech particularly hedges.

2- Extroverts are likely to shift from one topic to another but Introverts prefer to discuss and concentrate on one topic.

_____

3- Concerning connectives, Introverts prefer coordinating conjunction such as *and, but,* etc. Extroverts prefer subordinating like *which*, *who* etc.

Beukeboom et al. (2012:191-194) add the following observations:

4- Introverts' language also involves higher frequency of negation.

5- Descriptive verbs are common among Introverts. These words describe observable actions such as the sentence *Jack talks to Mary*. State verbs, on the contrary, are common among Extroverts such as *Jack loves Mary* and *Jack is flirtatious.*

6- *Hi* is used by Extroverts and *hello* is used by introverts.

It is also important to consider the following characteristics:

7- Extroverts tend to use more social words like *girls*, *party* and the like.

8- The language spoken or written by Extroverts is less formal including more verbs, adverbs and pronouns rather than prepositions, nouns and adjectives (Gill, 2004:18).

9- Words with positive emotion like happy, hope, gentle, humor, proud, hugs, joyful and the like are usually related to extroversion (Park, 2015:934).

3.5.4 Agreeableness

It is the individual's tendency to be a cooperative and compassionate person rather than being antagonistic and suspicious towards other people (Celli and Polonio, 2013:43). One can consider the following characteristic:

1- High agreeableness involves religious and family words (Kern et al.,2013:4).

2- Agreeable people are less likely to use body-related words as well as the words which reflects suspicion and critical words. (Hirsh and Peterson, 2009:526).

3- Men high in agreeableness are more likely to use words which refer to holidays. However women high in agreeable use words which reflect gratitude (*thank you*, *thanks*) (Kern et al., 2013:6)

4- People with low agreeableness are usually characterized by aggressiveness and by using words that reflect their adverse attitudes to the world like *kill*, *knife*, *punch*, *hate*, *idiots*, *racist*, etc. (ibid:4).

3.5.5 Neuroticism

High scorers are moody, worrying, insecure, anxious, depressed, easily upset, embarrassed and emotional. Low scorers (Emotional Stability) are unemotional,

relaxed, calm, comfortable, self-satisfied and tempered (Asmali, 2014:6). People high in neuroticism use more negative words like *lonely*, *depression*, *kill*, *sadness*, *fear*, *pain* and so on. According to Kern et al., (2013:4), it is possible to distinguish low emotional stability through the use of words about loneliness, depression, psychosomatic symptom like *headache*.

Emotional stability involves sport words like *soccer*, *basketball* and the like (ibid, 6). Neurotic people are more likely to discuss body-related topics (Hirsh and Peterson, 2009: 526). Furthermore, first person singular pronouns are used more frequently by people scoring high on neuroticism (Park et al., 2015:934).

4 The Questionnaire

In this method, the students are given statements that are supposed to be said by natives. The students are asked to determine which social variable controls the use of these linguistic features or variables. Sometimes they need to choose between two or more alternatives and sometimes they need to express their opinions. The main purpose of this method is to elicit the students' reactions to the different varieties.

A. The Results of Socioeconomic Status as a Social Variable

In order to determine the extent to which students are aware of this social variable, they were given the following questions:

1-Imagine that you are talking with a native speaker. During your interaction, s/he uses the following non-standard forms:

You: Did John said that " the film was not interesting."
Native speaker: No, he *never said* that.

You: Please tell me your opinion on Italian food.
Native speaker: I didn't eat *none*.
In your opinion, what is the social background of this person?

51 out of 100 participants know that it is the native's socioeconomic status that led him to use such ungrammatical sentences. Most of those participants explain that this person is uneducated. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the participants usually associate this social variable to people's level of education rather than economic or other levels.

_____

2- **If you have eaten everything on your plate and you want to convey that you have completed your breakfast. Which of the following comments would you choose?**

- There is nothing left on my plate, I am finished.

-There is nothing left on my plate, I am done.

The participants here are not asked to express their opinion but to choose the statement that they feel suitable to their position in the social level. The researcher told them that the choice of a particular statement rather than the other will determine whether they are of high or low status. According to William Hanson, an etiquette expert, the first statement is used by upper classes and the second statement is usually used by lower classes. 56 of the participants use the first statement and 44 of them declare that they would use the second one. As a conclusion, 51 plus 56 equals 107. 107 divided by 2 is (53.5 %). The last percentage refers to the level of students' awareness of socioeconomic status as a social variable.

B. The Results of Gender as a Social Variable

In an attempt to study this variable, 3 pairs of statements are given to students and they are asked to determine which statements have been said by John (male) and the statements that have been said by Mary (female).

Identify which of the following sentences have been said by John and which of them have been said by Mary? Why?

1) - I think that everything will be ok.

    - Do not worry, everything will be ok.

89 out of 100 participants state that the first statement was said by Mary and the second one was said by John. However, most of them do not know the accurate reason. They refer to many reasons like direct and indirect speech, negation, imperative etc. Others know that it is the use of hedges which indicate that the first statement is said by Mary.

2) - I want to tell you that it is a brilliant present.

    - I just want to tell you that it is so cute and lovely present.

95 out of 100 participants choose the correct answer and state that the first statement was said by John and the second one was said by Mary. They also clarify that words like cute and lovely are common among women rather than men.

3) - Pass me that paper!

    - I would appreciate it if you pass me that paper.

87 participants know that the first statement was said by John and the second one was said by Mary. Some of them explain the reason by declaring that

_____

women usually talk in details so the second statement must be said by a women. Others are more accurate since they explained that direct speech and the speech act of imperative are common among men than women. 89 plus 95 and 87 equals 271. 271 divided by 3 is (90.333 %). It is possible to conclude that students' awareness of gender is higher than other social variables.

C. The Results of Age as a Social Variable

In order to check students' knowledge of this variable, the following question is used.

While you are watching "The Florida Project" especially the scene in which the little girl "Jancey" says the following sentence:

Jancey: This is the best jelly I ever *eated*.

Can you comment on the reason behind this non-standard form?

87 of the participants write that because Jancey is a child and children are not usually aware of all the grammatical criterion of their language. The word *little* mentioned above might make it easy for participants to determine the social variable. The researcher considers that this word plays the same role like that of phonological features and physical features when one hears and sees children respectively.

D. The Results of Ethnicity as a Social Variable

The following question is used to analyze the participants' information about ethnicity.

Imagine that you are Frank in the following dialogue. In your own words, what will you comment on such cases?

Frank: Is she married?
Mary: She *BIN* married. (BIN is emphatic, heavily stressed).

Only 13 participants out of 100 know that it is Mary's ethnicity that led her to use such nonstandard form. Among those 13 students, only 7 know that Mary belongs to African American. Thus, most of the participants are not aware of this social variable.

E. The Results of Personality as a Social Variable

The researcher has included the following question for the purpose of analyzing the students' awareness of the dimensions of personality.

1-Determine who is high in openness and who is low in openness:

Joseph: I prefer to *sleep* before midnight since sleeping before midnight is worth three after.

Sarah: Kind words are really the *music* of the words.

74 students state that Joseph is high in openness and Sarah is low in openness. These students could guess the correct answer since they usually regard art and artists as being characteristic of high openness.

2-Determine who is high in Conscientiousness and who is low in conscientiousness:

Sam: *Achievement* provides the pleasure in human's life.

Tom: It is possible to do this job equally well by a *computer*.

57 out of 100 students state that the first statement refers to the fact that Sam is high in conscientiousness and the second one indicates that Tom is low in conscientiousness. However, 53 participants could not differentiate between high and low conscientiousness.

3- Determine who is extrovert and who is introvert:

Sally: I *talk* to Sarah and I am sure she will *prepare* the food.

Sam: I *think* she will *refuse* and go to bed instead.

Only 31, out of 100 participants, know that Sally is an extrovert person and Sam is an introvert person. Most students even those who choose the correct answers find it difficult to negotiate the correlation between these markers to the speakers' personality.

4- Determine who is high in agreeableness and who is low in agreeableness:

Suzan: All her *daughters* look alike because of their black hair and big brown eyes.

Dina: I want to *destroy* everything in this room because it reminds me of bad memories.

85 participants declare that Suzan is a girl high in agreeableness but Mary is low in agreeableness.

5- Determine who is Emotional Stability and who is Neuroticism:

Mary: I do *yoga* to benefit from an increased feeling of well-being.

John: I feel *lonely* in this country since my family are no longer by me.

Most people know that yoga is a really famous sport through which people can get rid of stress and anxiety. That is why 92 of the participants state that the first statement refers to emotional Stability but the second statement refers to neuroticism.

As a conclusion, 74 plus 57 plus 31 plus 85 plus 92 is 339 divided by 5 equals (67.8 %). The last number refers to students' awareness of personality as a variable that marks the encoders' psychological and social group. Finally, the following figure displays the results that have been obtained from the questionnaire.
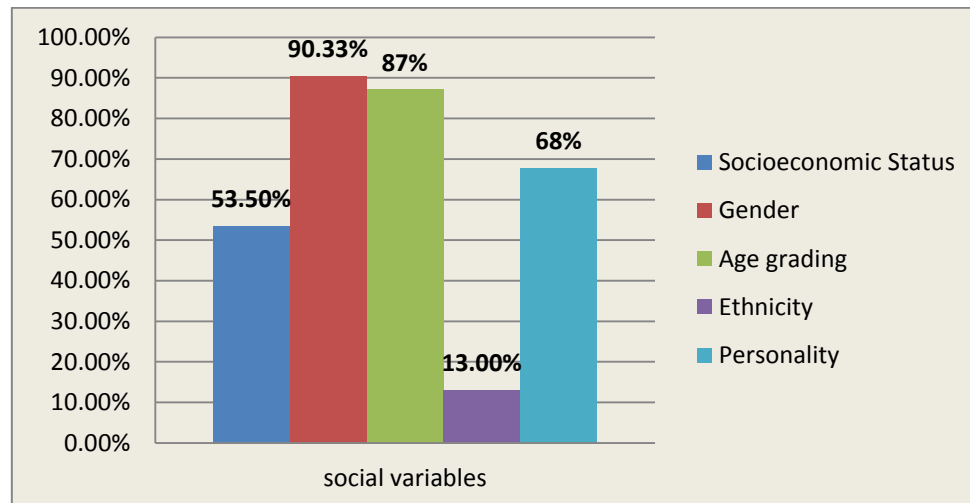
The Outcome of Each Social Variable in The Questionnaire

Conclusions

1- Linguistic variations are not random nor inconsistent since they are affected by social variables like socioeconomic status, gender, age, ethnicity and personality.

2- Social dialects can differ both qualitatively and quantitatively. They differ qualitatively in the sense that while dialect A has a particular feature, dialect B has another feature. However, the difference between dialects is quantitative if both A and B have the same feature but is more common in A than in B.

3- Language is traditionally viewed as a means of communication through which people hold relationships with others, express their feelings and so on. However, this is not the only fact because it can also be a means of discrimination if we put into consideration the attitudes of ingroups towards outgroups.

4- the following conclusions are derived from the questionnaire:

     a- The students' awareness of gender is higher than other social variables because they are able to determine the difference between males and females' statements. The researcher looks for the reason behind this awareness and finds that the students in third grade have a topic about *Language and sex* in their text book. So, they have some information about this variable.

_____

b- After gender, age is the second variable according to students' awareness. The word *little girl* mentioned in the question gave them the hint to the correct answer. The same is true if they see a little girl in the aural communication. Furthermore, they can also determine whether the words given are old or common (84. 812 %).

c- The learners of English as a foreign language are able to determine which trait of personality controls the use of a particular statement through vocabulary more than grammar.

d- Concerning socioeconomic status. most of the natives' nonstandard forms are associated to low educated people rather than other factors like occupation, incomes, wealth, etc. Half of the students know the accurate correlation between linguistic variables and the socioeconomic background of the speaker or writer.

e- The Students' awareness of ethnicity as a social variable is less than other variables.

<div dir="rtl">

اللغة كمصدر للدلالات الاجتماعية: دراسة تنوع استخدام اللغة

أ.د. خليل اسماعيل رجية   عبير هادي مخيف

جامعة ديالى/كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

Khalil_rajia@yahoo.com   abeerhadee9@gmail.com

أ.م.د. غزوان عدنان محمد

جامعة ديالى/كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

Cezancezar77@gmail.com

الملخص

تُعدُّ اللغةَ مصدراً مهماً للدلالات الاجتماعية كونها الوسيلة التي يعبر بها أفراد المجتمع عن متطلباتهم الحياتية و تعاملاتهم اليومية و ما يشعرون به من فرح او حزن و ما الى ذلك ، إذ يستخدمها الناس ليس من أجل توصيل المعاني فقط ، و إنما لإنشاء علاقات اجتماعية أيضاً و للمحافظة على ديمومتها و تطورها ، فعندما ينطقُ الشخصُ كلمةً أو جملةً معينةً أو يقومُ بكتابتها فإنَّ الخصائصَ اللغويةَ و حتى غير اللغوية الموجودة في كلامه أو كتاباته تفصحُ عن معلوماتٍ حول انتمائه الاجتماعي سواء في معرفةِ عمرِ الشخص الذي أمامَه و جنسه و الطبقة الاجتماعية و الاقتصادية التي ينتمي اليها و ايضا الانتماء القومي و الشخصية . و بهذا فإنَّ الغرضَ الرئيسيَّ مِنَ الدِّلالاتِ الاجتماعيةِ هو ملاحظةُ الفرقِ

</div>

_____

لغوياً و اجتماعياً بين مفهومي الانتماء و عدمَ الانتماءِ، لذا في بحثي هذا اوليتُ اهتماماً بهذه الظاهرةِ الاجتماعيةِ و لكن ضـمن نطـاقٍ متعلمـي اللغـة الانكليزيـة ، إذ تـهدف هـذه الدراسـة الى ملاحظةِ مدى إدراكِ الطـلاب الجامعيين للتغير اللغوي و المتغيرات الاجتماعية التي تقفُ وراءَ ذلك ، إذ تسعى الدراسةُ ايضاً الى توضيحِ مواقفِ الطـلابِ من النماذجِ غير القياسيةِ المستخدمةِ بوساطة المتحدثين الأصليين للغة الانكليزية.

إنَّ الفرضـيةَ الرئيسـةَ التـي قامـت عليهـا هـذه الدراسـة هـي أنَّ الطـلابَ يسـتخدمونَ اللغـةِ الانكليزية الفصحى في كتاباتهم مع بعض الاخطاء غير المقصودة ، فهم يستطيعون أيضا تحديدَ النماذج غير القياسية و لكنهم يواجهونَ صعوبةً في تحديدِ المتغيرات الاجتماعية التي تسببها.

جُمعت عينة البحث من كتابات ١٠٠ طالب جامعيّ في المرحلة الثالثة، إذ طُلب منهم أن يجيبوا عن مجموعـة مـن الاسئلة في الاستبيان.و انتهيت الى خاتمـة أجملت فيها أهم النتائج و التوصيات التي توصلت اليها و ايضا اقتراحات لدراسات أخرى فتح لها المجال من خلال دراستي هذه ، إذ اثبتت النتائج أنَّ أيّةَ لغةٍ هي ليست كائناً منفرداً ، لكنّها شيءٌ يتغيّرُ بالإعتمادِ على عمر المتحدث أو الكاتبِ ، طبقته الاجتماعية ، جنسه ، انتمائه القومي و شخصيته ، فمعرفة هذا الجزء من الحقيقة مهم لمتعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغةٍ ثانيةٍ أو أجنبيةٍ ، فجاءت النتائج شاملة لكل الاستنتاجات العامة و التي تتفق مع فرضيات الدراسة

Bibliography

Andersson, L. and Trudgill, P. (1990) *Bad Language.* London: Penguin.

Argamon, S., Koppel, M., Fine J. and Shimoni A. R. (2003) "Gender, Genre, and Writing Style in Formal Written Texts". *Text*, 23(3), pp. 321-346.

Asmali, M. (2014) "The Relationship Between The Big Five Personality Traits and Language Strategies" *The Journal of Social Sciences Institute,* Balikesir: Turkey, vol. 17 (32).

Attyat, N. M. (2016) "The Effect of Gender and Social Class in Second Language Writing Style: Theoretical Review." *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics,* vol. 21.

Bernstein, B. (1971) *Class, Codes and Control,* vol. ١.London.

Beukeboom, C. J., Tanis, M. and Vermeulen, I. E. (2012) "The Language of Extraversion: Extraverted People Talk More Abstractly, Introverts Are More Concrete" *Journal of Language and Social Psychology.* SAGE Publications, 32(2) pp. 191–201.

Brown, P. and Fraser, C. (1979) "Speech as a marker of situation." In Scherer K. R. and Giles H. (eds.) *Social Markers in Speech*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Celli, F. and Polonio, L. (2013) "Relationships between personality and interaction in Facebook" *Social Networking: Recent Trends, Emerging Issues and Future Outlook,* Nova Science Publishers, Inc. pp. 41-53.

Chambers, J. K. (2003) *Sociolinguistic theory: linguistic variation and its social significance*. (2nd ed). Oxford: Blackwell.

_____ (2009) *Sociolinguistic Theory: Revised Edition*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Cheshire, J., Edwards, V. and Whittle, P. (1993). "Non-standard English and dialect levelling". In Milroy, J. and Milroy, L. (eds.). *Real English. The grammar of English dialects in the British Isle*s. London: Longman, PP. 53–96.

Cohen, E (2012). "The evolution of tag-based cooperation in humans: the case for accent." *Current Anthropology* 53(5) pp. 588–616.

Coupland, N. (2001). "Language, situation, and the relational self : theorizing dialect-style in sociolinguistic." In Eckert, P. and Rickford, J. (eds.) Style and Sociolinguistic Variation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 185-210.

Dillard, J. L. (1973). Black English: Its history and usage in the United States. New York: Vintage Books.

Eckert, P. (1997) "Age as a sociolinguistic variable". In Florian Coulmas (ed.), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, 151-167. Oxford : Blackwell.

Fought, C. (2006) *Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fox, K. (2004) *Watching the English: The Hidden rules of the English Behaviour*. London, Hodder & Stoughton.

Giles, H., Scherer, K. R. and Taylor, D. M. (1979) "Speech markers in social interaction." In Scherer, K. R. and Giles, H (eds.) *Social Markers in Speech*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Hanafiyeh, M. and Afghari, A. (2014) "Gender Differences in the Use of Hedges, Tag Questions, Intensifiers, Empty Adjectives, and Adverbs: A Comparative Study in the Speech of Men and Women." *Indian Journal of Fundamental and Applied Life Sciences*, Vol. 4 (S4), pp. 1168-1177.

Hirsh, J. B. and Peterson, J. B. (2009) "Personality and language use in self-narratives" *Journal of Research in Personality*, (43) pp. 524–527.

Holmes, J. (1989) "Sex differences and apologies: One aspect of communicative competence". *Applied Linguistics*, 10(2) pp. 194—213.

_____ (2001) *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Longman.

Jordan. J. B. (1985) *Judges: God's War Against Humanism.* Tyler, Texas: Geneva Ministries.

Kern, M. L., Eichstaedt, J. C., Schwartz, H. A., Dziurzynski, L., Ungar, L. H., Stillwell, D. J. Kosinski, M. Ramones, S. M. and Seligman, E. P. (2013) "The Online Social Self: An Open Vocabulary Approach to Personality." *Article*, vol. xx(x) pp. 1-12.

Kerswill, P. (2007) "Social class". In Carmen Llamas and Peter Stockwell (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Sociolinguistics*. London: Routledge, pp. 51–61.

Labov, T. (1992) "Social and language boundaries among adolescents" *American Speech,* 67, pp. 339-366.

Labov, W. (1966) *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Laver, J. and Trudgill, P. (1979) "Phonetic and linguistic markers in speech." In Scherer K. R. and Giles H. (eds.) *Social Markers in Speech*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Lee, C. H., Kim, K., Seo, Y. S. and Chung, C. K. (2007) "The Relations Between Personality and Language Use" *The Journal of General Psychology,* 134(4), pp. 405–413.

Macaulay, R. K. S. (2009) *Quantitative Methods in Sociolinguistics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mahdad, H. (2012) *Language Change and Lexical Variation in Youth Language: Tlemcen Speech Community* (Thesis). University of Tlemcen.

Mallinson, C. (2007) "Social Class, Social Status and Stratification: Revisiting Familiar Concepts in Sociolinguistics" *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics.* Vol. (13) issue (2) article (12).

Mehl, M. R., Robbins, M. L. and Holleran, S. E. (2012) "How Taking a Word for a Word Can Be Problematic: Context-Dependent Linguistic Markers of Extraversion and Neuroticism." *Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences,* Vol.3, No. 2, pp. 30-50.

Mugglestone, L. (2003). *Talking proper: The rise of accent as social symbol* (2 nd ed.). Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Newman, M. L., Groom, C. J., Handelman, L. D. and Pennebaker, J. W. (2008) "Gender differences in language use: An analysis of 14,000 textsamples". *Discourse Processes, 45*, pp.122-236.

Nguyen, D., Gravel, R., Trieschnigg, D. and Meder, T. (2013) "How Old Do You Think I Am?": A Study of Language and Age in Twitter. In *Proceedings of the Seventh International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media.* AAAI Press, pp. 439-448.

Norman, W., T. (1963) "Toward an adequate taxonomy of personality attributes: Replicated factor structure in peer nomination personality rating." In *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 66. pp. 574–583.

Omi, M. and Winant, H. (1994) *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.

Osorno, C., H. (2011) Sociolinguistic Variation and Change in Cardiff English: *A Real-Time Study of Five Linguistic Variables and their Social Stratification.* MA thesis, Department of international language studies and computational linguistics, Copenhagen Business School.

Rickford, J. (1996) "Regional and social variation." In S. L. McKay and N. Hornberger (eds.) *Social Linguistics and Language Teaching.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Robinson, W. P. (1979) "Speech markers and social class". In Scherer K. R. and Giles H. (eds.) *Social Markers in Speech*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Rogerson-Revell, P. (2011). *English Phonology and Pronunciation Teaching.* India: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Scherer, K. and Giles, H. (1997) *Social Markers in Speech.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tannen, D. (1994) *Gender and Discourse*. Oxford University Press.

Trudgill, P. (1974) The Social Differences of English in Norwich. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____ (1999) "Standard English: What it isn't." In Bex, T and Watts, R.J. (eds.) Standard English: The Widening Debate. London: Routledge, pp. 117-128.

Wagner, S. E. (2012) "Age Grading in Sociolinguistic Theory." In *Language and Linguistics Compass* 6(6) : pp. 371–382.

Wardhaugh, R. (2006). An Introduction to Sociolinguistics. 5th Edition. Blackwell Publishing LTD.

Warner, W., Meeker, M. and Eells, K. (1960). *Social Class in America: A Manual of Procedure for the Measurement of Social Status*. New York: Harper Press.

Weber, M. (1978) *Economy and Society,* (ed.). Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Yule, G. (2010) *The Study of Language*. (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zuengler, J. (1988) "Identity Markers and L2 Pronunciation." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition,vol.*10(1) pp.33-50.

http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/changing-voices/phonological-change/