Sociolinguistics : language and society

.1. Sociolinguistics Defined

This branch to language study emphasises the fact that language is not an individual but it is mainly a social practice because when we speak, we do not only highlight our individuality, but we show our ties to a group, or a community as well. The task of sociolinguistics is to study the interaction between our linguistic practice and the social phenomena that affect it. Therefore, sociolinguistics is a term that refers to the study of the relationship between language and society. It is the outcome of the research pioneered by the brilliant linguists in the 1960s; namely William Labov, Charles Ferguson, Joshua Fishman, and Peter Trudgill, among others, who were applying their keen analytical abilities to discover and explore a variety of systematic correlations between language and society. That is, sociolinguistics is a developing branch of linguistics and sociology which examines the individual and the social variation of language.

In other words, variability within a language or a dialect and variations across languages have not been central concerns in the dominant linguistic theories of the 20th century Saussurean theory, American and Prague school structuralism, and Chomskyan theory. One consequence of this is that linguistic theories are largely based on standardised forms of languages rather than on the more variable forms of naturalistic speech that do really exist and prevail people's actual linguistic practices in every day communication. Besides, sociolinguists observe that linguistic scholars do not only focus on uniform states of languages, but also equate this uniformity with structuredness. That is, they believe that only uniform states can be structured and tend to dismiss variability in language.

Thus, sociolinguistics deals with how linguistic aspects, including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, are affected by social variables such as age, gender, social class, education, regional belonging, religion, culture, etc. Besides, due to the interdisciplinary nature of the field, the study of this correlation can either focus more on language than society or vice versa, depending on the aim of the study.

2. Major Aims of Sociolinguistics

➢ It studies the ways in which language and social contexts interact.

➢ It explains how linguistics forms interact with social categories such as socioeconomic status, gender, age, and other factors.

➢ It examines differences in language use according to people's age, social class, ethnicity, gender, education, etc.

➢ It identifies the variation in language and its relationship with social factors.

➢ It explains how and why people speak differently in different social contexts.

➢ It describes the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context on the way language is used.

➢ It analyses patterns of language use and attitudes towards language.

➢ It uncovers the social relations in a community. For instance, a person probably would not speak the same way to a boss at work as s/he would do with friends, or to strangers like family members.

➢ It describes how shifts in speech contexts cause variations in speaking styles.

➢ It lists the reasons why "standard" national dialects are problematic propositions.

➢ It studies what people do with their languages and the functions attributed to the different varieties by society.

➢ It identifies factors of multilingualism and consequences of language contact.

➢ It examines factors of language choice.

➢ It studies globalisation and its impact on languages all over the world.

3. Distinction between Micro- and Macro-Sociolinguistics

The aforementioned definitions distinguish between the two approaches of sociolinguistics. Micro-sociolinguistics (also labelled sociolinguistics), focuses on linguistic variations (items) such as aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation that result from the impact of social variables (factors) like gender, age, social class, region, ethnicity, etc. Bright (1966: n.d.) assumes in this respect that: *"the sociolinguist's task is then to show the systematic co-variance of linguistic structure and social structure"*. So, the focus of this approach is language and how it is influenced by social factors. A sociolinguist in this case, for instance, may seek to figure out differences in vocabulary and language choice between males and females. In this topic, the researcher's aim is to investigate variation in language use and choice because of the impact of gender, i.e., it is a linguistic-oriented research not sociological. Macro-sociolinguistics (also labelled the sociology of language), however, is more a societally oriented discipline, as it goes beyond linguistic aspects and seeks to find out explanations from broader social factors such as history, politics, economy, people's attitudes, etc. Referring to the same example mentioned above (gender differences in language use), macro-sociolinguistics would study it differently since the focus will not be on language but rather on the factors that lead to the systematic differences between males and females in language use. In this respect, researchers assume that language is used differently across genders because females tend to use more prestigious, standard, and polite speech forms as a strategy/resource to overcome the culturally-constructed gender roles, power relationships, and gender stereotypes, while males use casual styles to disclose themselves from feminine speech. Thus, the emphasis in this angle of study is not differences in language, but the possible social and cultural factors that determine such differences.

4. Language Variation

Variability in language is a natural consequence of language use in a particular social context. This includes who the user of language is and the situation in which the language is being used. To put it in other words, a language varies, on the one hand, according to the user's age, gender, education, economic background, regional belonging, religion, social class, etc. Indeed, aspects of people's social belonging are indicated through the way they speak, since their speech provides clues to others about who they are and where they come from. For instance, just as regional variation of language can provide a lot of information about the place the speaker is from, social variation tells about the roles performed by a given speaker within a community.

On the other hand, the way people speak is influenced by the social context of language use. This context includes who is talking (his/her age, gender, regional belonging, social class, education, etc.), to whom (wife, husband, boss, worker, a friend, etc.), the setting (home, work, school, etc.), and the topic of discussion (politics, sports, religion, gossip, cooking, etc.). That is, everyone can modify the way they speak depending on who they are with or what the situation is. This notion has been labelled by the American sociolinguist, Joshua Fishman: the domain theory. A domain of language use involves typical interactions, between typical participants in typical settings about a typical topic. Examples of these domains are family, friendship, religion, education, employment, etc. Furthermore, setting is the physical situation or the place where speech interactions occur. It has a close link with code choice; that is to say, linguistic practices vary according to the settings where communication takes place (such as home, mosque, church, school, office, etc.). See the following figure for more clarification.

5.Dialectology

Dialectology constitutes an early attempt to deal systematically with dialectal variation, regional dialects in particular. Its main tasks are to study the way in which dialects vary gradually from one region to another and to map the distribution of linguistic forms (features of pronunciation, grammar, and lexis). According to Spolsky (1998), "dialectology is the search for spatially and geographically determined differences in various aspects of language. For each village or region that they study, dialectologists want to know the typical local vocabulary or pronunciation". In other words, dialectologists study scientifically differences in linguistic aspects (vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar) across different regions, which are supposed to speak the same language (but they exhibit differences due to geographical distance like the case of the differences between the different Arabic or English dialects that are spoken in different regions).

Traditionally, the subjects of choice of dialectology were usually old people who have lived all their lives in one location and who have had minimum of education because they were looking for "pure" and "original" language. Besides, they were also interested in the historical development of linguistic items. That is to say, though dialectology tackled one of the variations of language (regional variations), it was heavily influenced by the principles of traditional grammar (subjectivity, selection, diachronic study, and lack of exhaustiveness). Actually, many features that characterise sciences were missing in their studies; their findings did not reflect the language spoken by all people such as the varieties spoken by young and educated people as well as urban dialects, which were considered as "impure" and "deviations" from the "original" form of language. Modern linguistics, however, was primarily devoted to establish a science for language study that relied on scientific methods like objectivity, exhaustiveness, and consistency and rejected accordingly the ways in which traditional grammarians studied language, including traditional dialectology.

6-What is Meant by Language Varieties?

In sociolinguistics, language variety is **a general term** for any **distinctive form** of a language. Linguists commonly use language variety (or simply variety) as **a cover term** for any of the **overlapping subcategories of a language**, including dialect, idiolect, register, and social dialect. Linguistic variety is used interchangeably with the term **"lect"**, i.e. they are used to refer to the same concept.

In The Oxford Companion to the English Language (1992), Tom McArthur identifies two broad types of language variety:

➢ **User-related varieties** are associated with a **particular people** (i.e. a variety can be determined by who the language user is: his/her age, gender, education, ethnicity, social class, regional belonging, etc.). A variety can also be related to a place or a community such as American English (referring to the place where English is spoken) and Afro-American English (referring to the Afro-American community).

➢ **Use-related varieties** are associated with the functions performed by the variety, such as the language of courts, contracts, literary texts, Internet conversations, etc. like business English, advertising English, medical English, and so on.

Some scholars feel the need for **a more open-ended term** which signifies **any linguistic variety**, whether defined by its **geographical distribution** or by **its use** by people from different social classes, castes, ages, genders, and so on. Lect/variety is intended **to cover all such varieties** – geographical dialect, sociolect, idiolect, and so on – (Lyle Campbell, Historical Linguistics: An Introduction, 2nd ed. MIT Press, 2004). In addition, Suzanne Romaine notes in "Language in Society" (2000), **"Many linguists now prefer the term variety or lect to avoid the sometimes pejorative connotations that the term 'dialect' has"**. That is, the terms variety and lect have neutral meaning that the terms language and dialect often lack, as they have positive and negative connotations respectively. Accordingly, variety has proved to be **a fairly safe term**, allowing language scholars:

➢ **to avoid being too specific** about kinds of speech and usage on occasions when being specific is not necessary and/or

➢ **when there is a risk of being charged with discrimination against a group** by calling its usage 'a dialect'.

6.1. Language Varieties

This lecture covers seven different language varieties: dialect, accent, idiolect, speech style, register, jargon, and slang.

6.1.1. Dialect

The term dialect refers to **the form of language** used by **a group of people** who belong to a specific **area, location, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, or any other group**. It is used to describe features of **grammar** and **vocabulary** as well as **pronunciation** that are used by a particular group of people and **that distinguish them from others around them**. Linguists distinguish between **two types of dialects**:

➢ **Regional dialects** are varieties of language that are spoken by **a particular group** of people who belong to **the same geographical location**, like British and American English or Algerian and Egyptian Arabic.

➢ **Social Dialects**, on the other hand, refer to differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation **across social groups**, rather than regional groups. Upper class people speak a different dialect from lower class people even if they belong to the same region. This type of dialect is also often labelled as **"sociolect"**.

It is important to recognise, from a linguistic point of view, that **none of the varieties** of a language is **inherently "better"** than any other; they are simply **different**. From a social point of view, however, some varieties do become **more prestigious**. For example, dialects spoken in **urban** areas are often considered to be more **prestigious** than the ones used in **rural** areas, though they only have **differences** in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. So, prestige is not **linguistically** determined but it is the outcome of people's **judgements** and **attitudes**.

"Some people think of dialects as **sub-standard** varieties of a language, spoken only by **low-status groups**--illustrated by such comments as **'He speaks correct English, without a trace of dialect.'** Comments of this kind fail to recognize that **standard English is as much a dialect as any other variety**--though a dialect of a rather **special kind**, because it is one to which **society has given extra prestige**. **Everyone speaks a dialect**—whether urban or rural, standard or non-standard, upper class or lower class" (Crystal, 2006).

6.1.2. Accent

Accent is often, **mistakenly**, **used interchangeably** with the term dialect, while they are quite different. Accent refers only to **distinctive pronunciation** (or variation in **phonology**), whereas dialect, as explained above, refers to differences in grammar and vocabulary as well. That is to say, accent can be perceived as being **part of dialect** as it is restricted only to variation in pronunciation. Accent may identify:

➢ **The locality/region** in which its speakers reside (for instance, you can recognise whether the person speaks American or British English from the way s/he pronounces words and expressions).

➢ **The socioeconomic status or the social class** of its speakers (e.g. accent of the working class and upper class is different).

➢ **The speakers' native language** because the pronunciation of a foreign language is often influenced by the mother tongue features, that's why it is sometimes easy to recognise the native language of a person speaking a foreign language. For example, the accents of Indian, French, Spanish, and Arab speakers of English can differ considerably and their mother tongue can be easily recognised.

Usually, **speakers of different dialects** have **different accents** (British English, American English, Canadian English are different in accent as well as in grammar and

vocabulary); but speakers of **the same dialect** may have **different accents too**. The dialect known as **"Standard English"** is used throughout the world, but it is spoken in a vast range of **regional accents**. In this respect, people from different countries would read **the same text** written in Standard English **in different accents**.

Thus, whether we think we speak a standard variety of English or not, **we all speak with an accent**. It is **a myth** that some speakers **have accents** while **others do not**. We might feel that some speakers have very **distinct** or **easily recognised** types of accent whereas others may have subtle or **less noticeable** accents but, still, **every language user speaks with an accent**.

6.1.3. Idiolect

Probably **no two people are identical** in the way they use language. Minor differences in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary are normal, so that everyone has, to a limited extent, a **'personal dialect'**. It is often useful to talk about the linguistic system as found in a **single speaker**, and this is known as an idiolect. That is, idiolect refers to **an individual way** of speaking. Like a fingerprint, idiolect is unique to a one person because it **represents** his/her **identity**, which differs from others'.

In fact, when a language is investigated, there is **no alternative** but to begin with the speech habits of **individual speakers**: idiolects are the first objects of study. Dialects can thus be seen as **an abstraction**, deriving from analysis of **a number of idiolects**; and languages, in turn, are **an abstraction** deriving from **a number of dialects**.

6.2 Speech Style

Speech style is **a social feature of language**. The most **basic distinction** in speech style is between **formal** and **informal** uses. Formal style is when we pay more **careful attention** to how we are speaking and informal style is when we pay **less attention**; they are sometimes described as **"careful style"** and **"casual style"** respectively. A change from one to the other by an individual is called **style-shifting**. People tend to shift between styles several times per a day depending on **the situation of language use**, sometimes without even being aware of that. The situation may include who **the interlocutors** are, **the setting** of the conversation, and **the topic** of discourse. That is, people shift from one speech style to another depending on **the use not on the user of language** because **the same person** uses **different styles** in **different situations**.

Interestingly, people **do not only** switch between formal and informal speech styles but they switch between **several levels of speech** that are arranged in **a continuum** stretching from the most formal to the most informal style:

➢ **Frozen or oratorical:** extremely formal manner of discourse. It is frozen in the sense that it is not subject to variation. It is a style for print, street signs, warnings, notices in public places.

➢ **Formal:** a manner of discourse used in situations when the speaker is very careful about pronunciation, choice of words, and sentence structure.

➢ **Consultative:** a style of participation and interaction. It is the norm for most conversations in English. Its main linguistic features consist of less formal terms such as might, could, would.

➢ **Casual:** a style used amongst insiders, i.e. friends, colleagues, mates, etc.

➢ **Intimate:** as the name implies, this style is used between people having very close and friendly relationship.

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6.3.. Register

Register is **a variety of language** used in **a particular situation**, for **a particular purpose**. It is also often used to describe **the conventional way** of using language that is **appropriate** in a specific **context**, which may be identified as **situational** (in a mosque), **occupational** (among lawyers), etc. We can recognise specific features that occur in the

religious register, linguistics register, and so on. In other words, register is **different** from social or regional **dialects** which are determined by **who** the users of language are **not** by **the situation** of discourse. The best **example** of registers might be the case of the different **registers** of English used in the different **modules** like linguistics, civilisation, literature, methodology, etc. Though **only English is used** in these different situations, the **language varies** considerably from one module to another. These are called different registers because they are quite **different**, yet **they are neither different languages nor dialects**. The most important feature that **distinguishes** between registers is **the kind of vocabulary** that is specific to every field of discourse.

6.3.1. Jargon

One of the defining features of a register is the use of jargon, which is the **special technical vocabulary** associated with **a specific area of work or interest**. In social terms, jargon, helps to create and maintain **connections** among those who see themselves as **"insiders"** in some way and to exclude **"outsiders"**. Accordingly, it is the special words used in a particular profession, a group, or occupation and may not be understood outside its context. So, jargon constitutes **a part of register** and it helps in **the distinction** between the different **fields of discourse**, as it is only about the **technical terms** and **expressions** used in a particular situation. For example, the language used in this handout is English, **the register** is specific to **the field of linguistics** (other fields have other registers), and what distinguishes it from other registers is the technical terms and expressions used (vocabulary), or simply **the linguistics register** is identified by its **linguistics jargon.** Hence, language varies in this case because of the field of language use (not the user of language) and variation occurs only in vocabulary (not grammar and pronunciation).

6.3.1. Slang

Whereas **jargon** is the specialised vocabulary used by those **inside established social groups** (doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians, etc.), **slang** is more typically used among those who are **outside the established higher-status groups** (used by common people is informal situations like friends discussing outside). That is to say, both of jargon and slang are only about **vocabulary**, yet they are different in **the kind of expressions** involved; as the former is used in **formal context** and it requires thus **technical terms**, while the latter is used in the most **informal situation**s and this type of vocabulary is also **informal**. Therefore, slang or **"colloquial speech"** describes words or phrases that are used instead of the more everyday terms amongst **younger speakers**. Slang is mainly identified by the following characteristics:

➢ Like clothing and music, slang is an aspect of a social life that is **subject to fashion**, especially amongst adolescents.

➢ It can be used by those **inside a group** who share ideas and attitudes as way of **distinguishing themselves from others**.

➢ Slang expressions are usually **introduced** by members of a particular social group; they may **remain the property** of that group ad serve as **a badge of group identity** or they may instead **become much more widely known and used**.

➢ The majority of slang forms are **transient**; they are used for **a few months** or **a few years** and then they **pass out of use** to be **replaced** by even **newer slang terms**.

7.What is Dialect?

At first glance, it seems clear that a language contains several sub-versions spoken in particular regions or by particular social groups. For example, British English, American English, Canadian English, and Australian English are considered to be dialects of the English language. Similarly, Algerian Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, Tunisian Arabic, Egyptian Arabic, Syrian Arabic, etc. are dialects of Arabic. Besides, Muslim, Cristian, and Jewish people in Baghdad speak different dialects of Arabic. Ethnic groups in America (such as white Americans, Afro-Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Latino Americans,

etc.) also speak different dialects of American English.
Accordingly, dialects of a language in this sense are substantially different systems of communication that may impede but do not prevent mutual comprehension (Crystal, 2021). That is to say, speakers of different dialects of the same language are supposed to exhibit systematic differences at the levels of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation but they still can understand each other. In this vein, language can be considered as a broader term and dialect comes under its shade. To put it in other words, language plays the role of a parent and dialects stem from it.

However, there are many other cases in the world that blur the dividing line between language and dialect and that make the distinction goes beyond linguistic boundaries. Actually, it is a bit harder to determine the difference between the two concepts. For instance, Portuguese and Spanish are considered as different languages, yet a Portuguese speaker can read a paper written in Spanish. Does this enable us to name them as dialects rather than languages? In addition, in Italy, there is one recognised official language (standard Italian), while other varieties such as Romanesco, Occitan, and Sicilian (recognised by the UNESCO) are considered dialects. Likewise, countries like Peru, Spain, and Columbia speak the same language but all these versions are different from each other. So, intelligibility between varieties, which has been used as a criterion for distinction, differs from one case to another due to many factors and its reliability is accordingly questioned.

8. Mutual Intelligibility

In many cases, mutual intelligibility is used as a major criterion of distinction between language and dialect, supposing that if people can understand each other in spite of language variations (in grammar, vocabulary, and accent) without training, they speak different dialects of the same language; if they can't, they speak different languages.

➢ Language has a wide geographic reach

➢ Languages are so different at all levels: phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels.

➢ Speakers of two languages have trouble understanding each other.

➢ Dialect is more concentrated geographically.

➢ Dialects are closely related varieties of one language, though they have differences at different levels.

➢ Speakers of two dialects can understand each other.

However, in hundreds of cases, considerations of this kind are in conflict with each other. The best known conflicts occur when the criteria of national identity and mutual intelligibility do not coincide. In other words:

➢ people may live in one country (they have the same national identity) but they do not understand each other (there is no mutual intelligibility) or

➢ people may belong to different countries (having different national identities) but they can understand each other (they are mutually intelligible).

The most common situation is one where two spoken varieties are mutually intelligible but for political and historical reasons, they are referred to as different languages, like:

➢ Scandinavia: Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian are said to be mutually intelligible though they are considered to be different languages not dialects,

➢ Yugoslavia: Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian are also said to be mutually intelligible though they are considered to be different languages not dialects, and

➢ India: Hindi and Urdu are also said to be mutually intelligible though they are

considered to be different languages not dialects.
These languages are mutually intelligible because they used to be dialects of the same language and they were declared as languages after the division of the countries. Hence, in such cases, political and linguistic identity merge (politics determine linguistic identity – the language that identifies the speaker's belonging).

Different languages can also be mutually intelligible when they are in close proximity (they share geographical borders); they often borrow words, sounds, and grammatical structures from each other. In this way, languages seem more alike than they really are and analysists may believe them to be dialects of the same language (not dialects of different languages). So, because of geographical proximity, varieties may be arranged in a dialect continuum, a chain of adjacent (neighbouring) varieties are mutually intelligible but pairs taken from the opposite ends of a chain are not (it means mutual intelligibility reduces whenever we get farther: neighbouring dialects are sometimes mutually intelligible though they belong to different languages and they might be mutually unintelligible with other dialects of the same language because of the huge geographical distance). One such a chain is said to link all dialects of German, Dutch and Flemish that stretches from Switzerland through Austria and Germany to the Netherlands and Belgium and another chain links dialects of Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, French, and Italian. See map of dialect continuum in Europe below.

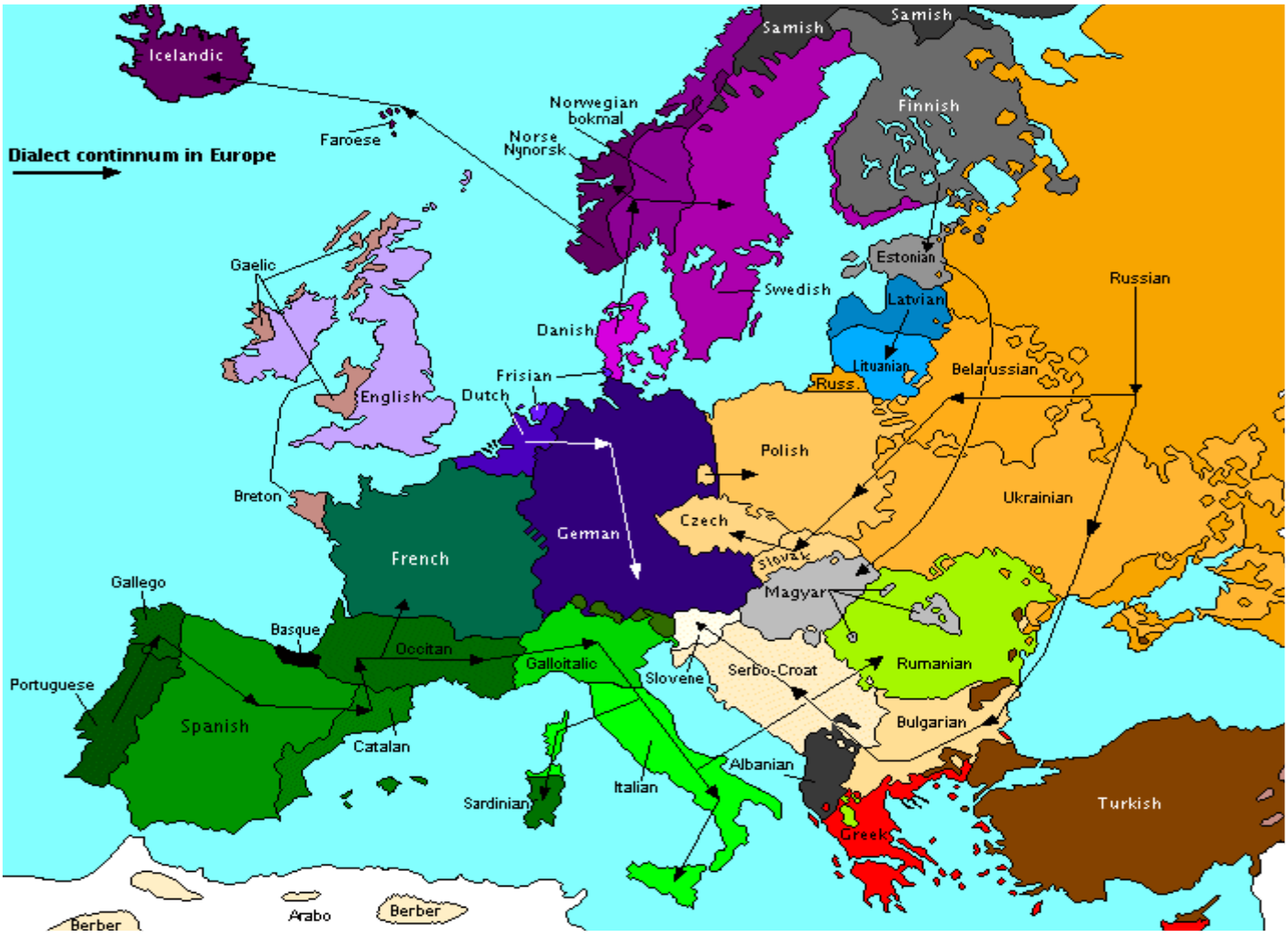

Figure 1. Dialect Continuum in Europe

The opposite situation is also quite common. In some situations, spoken varieties are mutually unintelligible but for political, historical, or cultural reasons they are nonetheless called dialects. For example, Mandarin and Cantonese are considered to be dialects of Chinese, though they are mutually unintelligible. This is also similar to the case of Berber varieties spoken in different regions in North Africa, they are called dialects while speakers do not always understand each other. In addition, intelligibility between the varieties of Arabic is not necessarily mutual, as some claim that they understand the other varieties (such as the Maghrebi people) whereas others assume they do not understand some Arabic dialects (like people of the Middle East do not understand the dialects of the Maghreb).

Thus, mutual intelligibility is not really a relation between varieties but between people since it is they and not the varieties that understand each other. So, the degree of mutual intelligibility depends not just on the amount of overlap between the linguistic items of the two varieties but on the qualities of the people concerned. On the one hand, this is determined by the extent to which people are motivated to understand speakers of other varieties and how much experience do they have of these varieties, on the other. Interestingly, motivation and experience are not always reciprocal, that's why intelligibility is not necessarily mutual. For instance, it is easier for speakers of non-standard varieties to understand speakers of the standard one than the other way round, because the former generally have more experience of the standard variety (mainly through education and media) than vice versa, and they may also be more motivated to minimize the differences between them and speakers of the standard variety, while the latter may not want to do so, but rather they may even want to emphasize the differences.

For example, the case of Afro-Americans, who speak a different variety from the dominant social group, have more experience in Standard American English because they are exposed to it all the time through media and education. In addition, they also have more motivation to learn it for pragmatic purposes such as success in education and in their social life in general (because their mother tongue – Afro-American English – is so different from Standard American English, the one used in high domains). The dominant group, however, does not necessarily have the same experience nor motivation to acquire Afro-American English, which was one day a dialect of the descendants of the slaves that is not used in media, administration, education, and many other high domains. Yet, things started to change recently due to many social and political reasons, such as attempts of the Afro-Americans to standardize their dialect as well as the emergence of influential social figures (like singers, actors, etc.) who contributed to the amelioration of their dialect's prestige.

Another typical example is the case of the Arabic varieties, in which intelligibility is not always mutual between the different speakers. Maghrebi people are said to understand people of the Middle East due to the fact that they have more experience in the dialects of this area because of media. Middle Each countries have a rich tradition of media industry. They also have many TV channels that have been launched a long time before the emergence of Maghrebi channels. Besides, most non-Arab movies and soap operas, which became so popular amongst Arab audiences mainly Turkish series, have been dubbed into Syrian and Lebanese dialects. However, Maghreb countries have had less TV broadcasts because of many social and political factors, that's why they were consumers of the Middle East productions and they accordingly have had more experience in their dialects, while the dialects of the Maghreb region were not transmitted to the other Arabic-speaking countries. This has widened the gap between the different dialects of Arabic to the extent of unintelligibility. Yet, things are changing recently, especially because of the impact of media and social networking sites as well as people's attitudes.

9. Standardisation

Standardisation is the process through which a dialect becomes a standard language. It is based on turning linguistic varieties into standard languages in two senses:

➢ First, the selected and accepted variety will be used as a norm above all other vernacular, dialectal, and colloquial varieties in certain domains like literatures, science, education, media, administration, the public sectors, etc.

➢ Second, it is a regular and codified normative system of reference supported by a standard orthography (written form), grammar, and dictionaries.

Therefore, a standard variety will enjoy recognition by the whole speech community and reflect linguistic (possibly national or even ethnic) identity. It will also serve as a high variety used for written communication in official domains on regional, national, or international level.

According to Haugen (1966), the process of standardization involves:

➢ 1) selection of a norm (a form to be followed and used as a standard by everyone),

➢ 2) acceptance by the community (because if the variety chosen is not accepted by the other subgroups, conflicts and discontent will take place),

➢ 3) codification of form (fixing its orthography, lexicon, and grammar), and

➢ 4) elaboration of function (once the chosen variety is codified it will be ready for utilitarian functions like education, administration, etc.).

In other words, for a country to standardize a dialect among the many existing ones, selection is the first step to undertake. The government should be very careful about the choice, because if this is not successful, it may lead to internal conflicts and even division. In other words, selection is often based on social, economic, political, and cultural parameters so that acceptance of the community will be guaranteed. So, people's attitudes play an important role in this process. After the variety is chosen and accepted, it will be codified for usage.

In fact, there were steady developments in the definitions of the concept in question. The first definitions were based mainly on the codified form of the variety which is selected, accepted, and used as a model by the members of the speech community. Recent definitions, however, started to shed light on the functions employed by this variety and its cultural dimensions. In other words, once the chosen variety is codified, it will be distributed to several social and cultural domains to fulfil the different communicative needs of its speech community *"that has either achieved modernization or has the desire of achieving it"* (Mejdell, 2006: 06). Subsequent definitions emphasize on another important angle that is incorporated in the selection of a variety to be codified for general social and cultural functions, as it is often the prestigious linguistic form used by a social or an educated elite.

Thus, a standard language is a particular dialect which has gained its special position as a result of social, economic, and political circumstances. A standard language has no linguistic merits, whether in vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation. It is simply the dialect of those who are politically powerful and socially prestigious. Besides, criteria of choice defer from one community to another. What makes a variety prestigious in a country is not necessarily the same in another. This can be because of religion like the case of Arabic and Hebrew, social class like in most western nations, etc.

It is important to draw a distinction between standard and official language (a language which may be used for governmental business, its function is primarily utilitarian used in official domains). In this sense, an official language must be standard, while the standard language is not necessarily official. For example, Standard Arabic is an official language in Algeria whereas English is not, though English is standard and used in education, business, international treaties, the oil and gas sectors, etc.

The official language is also contrasted to a national language.

The latter refers to the language of a political, cultural, and social unit. It is generally developed and used as a symbol of national unity (unlike the official language which has only utilitarian functions and does not symbolise unity and national identity). Its functions are to identify the nation and unite its people.

A distinction is also drawn between standard and non-standard languages/dialects (referred to as vernaculars). The term vernacular is used in a number of ways. It generally refers

to a language which has not been standardised and which does not have official status. It is also the variety which is usually acquired by people as a first language at home. This term has been used since the Middle Ages, first to describe local European languages (which have had low prestige) in contrast to Latin (high prestige), then to characterise any non-standard and spoken version of a language used by lower-status groups. Thus, the vernacular speech of a particular community is the ordinary speech used by the people (like Algerian Arabic).

10-Definition of Multilingualism

Multilingualism has been defined differently by different scholars depending on the approach from which it is studied. For Clyne (2007), *"the term multilingualism can refer to either the language use or the competence of an individual or to the language situation in an entire nation or society"*. This definition implies, on the one hand, the fact that language use is different from language competence, as in some situations people may use a language that they are not competent in (like the case of old illiterate people in Algeria, they often have to use Standard Arabic and French for official documents in spite of their lack of competence in these languages). In addition, some individuals might be competent in languages that they cannot use all the time (such as the case of Algerians who muster foreign languages like Turkish, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and so on but they cannot use them with others unless if they communicate with native speakers via the Internet, for instance). On the Other hand, multilingualism can be tackled from two perspectives: either from the individual or societal angles.

10.1 Individual Multilingualism

Early definitions of multi/bilingualism emphasised on the idea that for people to be considered as multilinguals or bilinguals, they must have equal competence in the languages concerned and they accordingly can express themselves in either language in the same contexts; yet this has been proved to be unrealistic (Van Overbeke, 1972 and Haugen, 1973 cited in ibid). Recent definitions, however, focus on language use rather than having equal competence in languages in defining the concept in question. Thus, definitions now are becoming more general to include many cases as multi/bilingualism, which have been excluded from early definitions that have been very narrow and implied native-like competence in the languages.
That is to say, definitions like: *"the ability to use more than one language"* or *"competence in more than one language"* are open to cover different levels of command (competence) or use of the various languages. In this respect, Sridhar (1996: 50 quoted in Wardhaugh, 2006: 96) says:

> *Multilingualism involving balanced, nativelike command of all the languages in the repertoire is rather uncommon. Typically, multilinguals have varying degrees of command of the different repertoires. The differences in competence in the various languages might range from command of a few lexical items, formulaic expressions such as greetings, and rudimentary conversational skills all the way to excellent command of the grammar and vocabulary and specialised register and styles.*

In other words, people's competence in two, or more, languages may be arranged in a continuum of different levels that stretches from little to nativelike command; i.e. multi/bilinguals might have different degrees of competence in each of the four skills. In this sense, the degree of bilingualism refers to the levels of linguistic proficiency a bilingual must achieve in both languages.

10.2. Societal Multilingualism

At the societal level, many issues, as far as multilingualism is concerned, are tackled. In this case, languages are seen in a general way in the entire nation or speech community, not at the individual level. So, the languages used, the domains in which they are used, factors that determine their choice, language contact, and many other phenomena are interesting to be tackled from a societal perspective.

A distinction is made between the official status of languages and the real linguistic situation of a country; as in many cases, multilingualism is not officially recognised (like the

case of most European countries which ignore minority and immigrant languages) or an officially multilingual country does not imply the fact that individuals are multilinguals (in Switzerland, for instance, multilingualism is based on a territorial principle). Hence, there is a difference between "de facto" and "official" multilingualism. The former refers to the real linguistic situation that is not openly declared in the constitution, while the latter is about the status of languages declared by the government that does not necessarily reflect reality. For example, Canada is officially a bilingual country, with both of English and French as its official languages, but it is a de facto multilingual country, since many immigrant languages are widely used by their native speakers (like Chinese, Indians, etc.) who often prefer to live in communities to practice their ethnic and linguistic identities.

10.3 Causes of Multilingualism

Many **factors** contribute to the spread of multilingualism in the world, such as **international migration** (as in America, Europe, and Australia), **colonisation** (such as Africa, Latin America, and India), **international borders** (like the border between Austria and Slovenia), and **the spread of international languages** (for example, English and Arabic). Other causes like religion (the spread of Islam led to the spread of Arabic all over the world), media (television contributed to the spread of English, for instance), Internet, business, trade, education, intermarriage, and so on. Thus, languages spread out of their original home-town because of several factors to settle and develop elsewhere, with taking new forms through time and with interaction with other languages in different contexts. This led to the emergence of many forms and consequences of bilingualism and multilingualism in the world.

11. Consequences of Language Contact

The different varieties used in the same speech community, in various language situations, are not going to stay intact from each other, but rather they keep influencing one another at the different linguistic levels (phonology, lexicon, and grammar) in different contact situations. In this respect, many sociolinguistic phenomena emerge as a result of contact between the different languages used. This issue of language contact can be tackled from two different perspectives; focus can be either placed at the linguistic level (micro-sociolinguistic approach) or on broader socio-cultural perspective (macro-sociolinguistic perspective).

As far as the linguistic consequences are concerned, the lecture sheds light on how bilinguals use the two languages alternatively in communication; as they often use both of them in the middle of the same conversation. These usages *"can take place between or even within sentences, involving phrases or words or even parts of words"* (Spolsky, 1998: 49). Thus, there can be several forms of language alternation; 1) between sentences, 2) within a sentence with preserving the original form of the words/expressions used, and 3) within a sentence with adapting the words/expressions used. These forms are generally referred to as: code-switching, code-mixing, and linguistic borrowing respectively.

It is important to note that there is no consensus in the literature about what exactly constitutes each form and what distinguishes between them, if there is a distinction at all since some of them are used as umbrella terms that incorporate other forms. As far as such issues of terminology and confusion are concerned, Edwards (1994: 76) assumes that: *"whatever labels we apply – interference, code-switching, mixing, transference, etc. – it is clear that in all cases something is 'borrowed' from another language"*. In other words, in the alternative use of codes, different elements are put together from at least two languages in the same conversation. The paper before hands adopts Herbert's (2001: 225-226 quoted in Gafaranga, 2007: 23) definition, which makes a three-way distinction between the aforementioned concepts:

> *Borrowings and code mixes are incorporated lexical items, which vary along temporal and spatial considerations. Borrowed forms are typically known and used by both bilingual and monolingual speakers, they are widely distributed through the community and they typically reveal a process of historical incorporation. Code mixes on the other hand are synchronic incorporation of lexical material from one*

language into a second. The term codeswitching is thus reserved for instances in which the operative grammar in conversation changes.

Thus, this definition distinguishes between the three concepts. While borrowing and codemixing imply adopting lexical items (vocabulary/words), code-switching incorporates changing the whole grammatical structure. A distinction is also drawn between linguistic borrowing and code-mixing in spite of the fact that they are both concerned with inserting words rather than whole sentences. The former term is often used to refer to the lexical material that has been adapted to (assimilated into) the phonological, morphological, and semantic patterns of the recipient language. In addition, loan words are widely used throughout the whole community, known by both bilinguals and monolinguals, and they are mainly the result of linguistic adaptations that occurred through different stages of history. The latter, however, refers to the synchronic adoption of lexical items by bilinguals in conversations without adapting them. Another focus of the consequences of multilingualism might be the broader phenomena that emerge as a result of the interaction between different languages in contact situations on the one hand and other social, cultural, economic, political, historical factors, on the other. Amongst the consequences of multilingualism that are widely researched and investigated by sociolinguists are:

➢ **language spread**: when a language goes beyond its original borders (such as Arabic, French, Spanish, and English),

➢ **language attrition**: loss of language skills in the individual's first language (like the case of the children of immigrants),

➢ **language shift**: when people shift completely to other languages leaving behind their mother tongues; this happens through generations (like the case of some immigrants, or Berbers surrounded by Arabic-speaking communities in Algeria in areas like Tipaza),

➢ **language change**: a variation over time in a language's features (at the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels),

➢ **language death**: when a language cease to be used as a mother tongue or to exist as a spoken language (like Latin), and

➢ **language maintenance**: when a language is preserved in spite of the many factors of eradication (like the case of Arabic during the period of European colonisations, Berbers throughout history in North Africa, or many immigrants in the world).

12 Definition of Language Planning

Language planning as a discipline is concerned with the study of language use in society. Hence, it is part of applied linguistics, which studies language in use instead of abstracting it away from extra-linguistic features; unlike twentieth-century linguistics. Interestingly, this field is often approached from a political dimension to language study, as it has strong ties with political decisions that determine language roles in society – though language planning is also related to language form and use. Language planning, in fact, is characterised by its interdisciplinary nature as it draws on several sciences such as linguistics, political sciences, anthropology, etc. Therefore, definitions differ considerably due to the different angles tackled. For instance, according to Cooper (1989: 45): *"language planning refers to deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes"*. In the same vein, Rubin and Jurnudd (1971 cited in Daoust, 1997: 438) assume that it is *"a future-oriented intervention in language which aims to influence language and language use"*. To put it in other words, implementing language plans attempts to reach particular **changes in the future** as far as language status, structures, acquisition, and functions are concerned. That is to say, it is a deliberate activity that aims at **changing linguistic behaviours** in particular contexts. Accordingly, four major types of the discipline have been distinguished.

12.1. Types of Language Planning

It is important so far to know what aspects of language and language use are involved in

the different language planning activities. This paper discusses the three widely studied types in the literature: 1) status planning, 2) corpus planning, and 3) acquisition planning.

12.2. Status Planning

The status/corpus dichotomy introduced by Kloss (1969) provides useful insights into the object of language planning. The former is concerned with attempts **to issue rules and norms that determine language use** (Spolsky, nd.) and role within society. I.e., it is the activity that is primarily **undertaken by the government** that aims to change the social position of particular varieties, leading to lowering or raising the social status of a language (Kloss, 1969). Status planning in this respect targets the official standing of languages and enacts constitutional laws and regulations for their use in public administration (**Bianco,**). Cases of status planning may include for example a decision **to make a language official or to ban another from use in school** (Spolsky, nd.).

Such kind of language planning has been observed **in Algeria**, for instance, during the period of colonisation (1830-1962) and after independence. While the French invaders banned the education of Arabic and excluded it from administrations, the Algerian regime after independence attempted displace French in favour of Arabic. Besides, after several cultural movements undertaken by the Amazigh Algerians calling for their **linguistic rights**, Tamazight was finally declared as a national language alongside Arabic in 2002 and it has been later recognised as a second official language in 2016.

12.3 Language Planning in Education

Education constitutes an important part of language planning as it is the main instrument, among others, used for the attainment of the goals designed, especially that it is compulsory and controlled by the government. Besides, *"schools are one of the key agencies of socialisation; school pupils are a captive audience, and the curriculum affords the state unequal opportunities to shape the attitudes and behaviours of the next generation"* (Ferguson, 2006: 33-34). As has been mentioned above, the type of language planning is determined by particular orientations. In this sense educational reforms mirror these policies. If the policy is assimilationist, for instance, governments use only one medium as a language of instruction in schools. Recently, with the growing impact of globalisation, multilingualism is widely promoted through education.

Indeed, education is an important tool that may bring about radical changes at the social, cultural, political, economic, and linguistic levels. This is due to the fact that education is massive and occurs at a young age and it has accordingly long-term consequences. Amongst the possible outcomes of 'acquisition planning' is increasing the numbers of users/speakers of particular languages; displacing languages; the role of mother tongues in the educational process; the choice of second/foreign languages as curricular subjects of instruction, etc.