

## Lecture 5.1

1 Explore the location of the main pidgin and creole languages in the world. Use the atlas source at:

<[http://lingweb.eva.mpg.de/apics/index.php/The\\_Atlas\\_of\\_Pidgin\\_and\\_Creole\\_Language\\_Structures\\_%28APICS%29](http://lingweb.eva.mpg.de/apics/index.php/The_Atlas_of_Pidgin_and_Creole_Language_Structures_%28APICS%29)>.

Data on individual languages can be found at *Ethnologue*:

<[http://www.ethnologue.com/site\\_search.asp](http://www.ethnologue.com/site_search.asp)>.

Type 'creole' or 'pidgin' into the search box and a list of entries will be found.

2 Develop a sense of the regional diversity of English by exploring (and, if you wish, contributing to) the online sites at the British Library:

<<http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/index.html>>

and the BBC:

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices>>.

For international dialects, see the IDEA archive at:

<<http://web.ku.edu/~idea>>.

To what extent do these databases cover adequately the kind of English you use yourself? Collect some regional forms from your area and see if they are included in these databases. If not, send them in.

3 Carry out your own survey of sociolinguistic acceptability of regional accents.

Choose a sentence and ask speakers with different accents to record it. (Don't record sentences with varying content from radio or television, as the content will influence the way listeners respond.) Then compile a questionnaire about the speakers, asking people to rate them in terms of such factors as how educated / trustworthy / intelligent / friendly / rich / physically attractive (etc) they are. Use a five-point scale from 'most' to 'least'.

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4 Write an account of the activities of one of the organizations actively concerned to document or revitalize endangered languages, such as the Foundation for Endangered Languages:

<<http://www.ogmios.org>>,

Or the Endangered Language Fund:

<<http://www.endangeredlanguagefund.org>>.

Find out as much as you can about United Nations initiatives such as International Mother Language Day:

<<http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/language>>.

5 Make a survey of the number of languages spoken in your school, or college, or town. The total is likely to be much higher than you think. One way of doing it is to establish a 'language day' (perhaps International Mother Language Day on 21 February, or the European Day of Languages on 26 September), set up a stall in school or in a public place, and ask passers-by what languages they speak.

## Lecture 5.2

1 Choose an academic subject and collect some examples of how it is presented (eg pages from a textbook or pieces of written work). Is it possible to identify a particular style associated with the subject? Pay special attention to the use of technical terms (including abbreviations and formulae), page layout, the use of illustrations, and a preference for certain grammatical constructions (eg the passive, the first person).

2 Draw up a list of the crimes that you think would involve the use of language as part of the evidence, and sketch out a plausible scenario in which a text would be used. You'll find some suggestions at:

<[http://www.thetext.co.uk/learn\\_about\\_forensic\\_linguistics.htm](http://www.thetext.co.uk/learn_about_forensic_linguistics.htm)>.

3 Investigate the range of disabilities that are dealt with by speech and language therapists / pathologists. You'll find an outline on the websites of the various professional organizations, such as (in the UK):

<[http://www.rcslt.org/speech\\_and\\_language\\_therapy/what\\_is\\_an\\_slt](http://www.rcslt.org/speech_and_language_therapy/what_is_an_slt)>

or (in the USA):

<<http://www.asha.org>>

or (in Australia):

<<http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/information-for-the-public/fact-sheets>>.

4 Carry out an authorship identification task in your group. Everyone writes something on the same theme and roughly the same length (eg an essay describing the town in which you live), and the text of each is then analysed. How long are the paragraphs and sentences (in words)? (If the essays are online, you can use a word-counter to get these results.) What sort of punctuation is used? Are there any idiosyncratic spellings or use of capital letters? Are there any favourite (repeated)

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words or idioms? Are sentences complex or simple (in terms of the number of clauses they contain)? How much use is made of optional features such as adjectives and adverbs? Does the writer use the first person ('I') or some other form? Draw up a table containing such parameters as 'number of adjectives used', 'number of words in a sentence', 'number of instances of I', 'number of commas', and so on, and see how far you can identify distinctive individual styles.

5 Analyse the clues in a crossword puzzle to see what linguistic strategies have been employed by the compiler. A useful technique is to compare two puzzles, such as an 'easy' puzzle and a 'hard' one; or puzzles from two different newspapers. Try writing your own crossword puzzle clues using the strategies you have discovered. It's harder than you think. You can get some help from online resources such as anagram generators:

<<http://wordsmith.org/anagram>>.

6 Devise a language game, such as writing a paragraph that omits a particular letter, or in which every word contains the same vowel, or in which every word begins or ends with the same letter. You'll find some examples in my *Language Play* (Penguin). Probably the most famous example of letter omission is the 50,000-word novel by Ernest Wright, readable at:

<<http://www.spinelessbooks.com/gadsby>>.

For an example of a text in which every word begins with the same letter, see:

<[http://www.davidcrystal.com/DC\\_articles/Shakespeare54.pdf](http://www.davidcrystal.com/DC_articles/Shakespeare54.pdf)>.