

Lecture 5.1

1.28 pidgin languages, creole languages

Pidgin languages are formed when two mutually unintelligible speech communities attempt to communicate – as often happened in the early days of world exploration. Although they have no native speakers, and have a reduced grammar, vocabulary, and range of styles compared with other languages, some pidgins have developed an important role as a *lingua franca*, such as in Papua New Guinea (where the local pidgin is called *Tok Pisin*). When a pidgin comes to be used as a mother-tongue, it greatly expands its expressive possibilities, and is then described as a creole.

1.51 earlier on today

Lecture 3.1, 15.10.

2.56 a study a few years ago

A common research procedure is to use a 'matched guise' technique. The output of someone capable of speaking in two authentically sounding alternative accents ('guises') is presented to listeners, who then rate the speech in terms of such factors as intelligence, competence, credibility, and criminality. The prestige accent of a community is invariably rated far more positively than a nonstandard accent, with some regional accents attracting especially negative responses.

3.31 accommodation

This widely used notion in sociolinguistics explains why people modify their style of speaking to become more like (convergence) or less like (divergence) that of their addressee. Other aspects of language (such as dialect forms) can converge and diverge, as can non-linguistic features of behaviour such as body posture.

6.29 Huw Edwards

The BBC newsreader actually comments on his accent at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/talkwales/transcripts/huw_edwards.shtml>.

Lecture Commentary

That there is still some way for the Welsh accent to go is suggested by the report at:

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/tm_objectid=16515346&method=full&siteid=50082&headline=welsh-accent--holds-you-back--name_page.html>.

Comments on the relative status of Welsh and Scottish accents can be seen at:

<<http://www.newsweek.com/2008/11/22/good-to-be-grim.html#>>.

6.38 sociolinguists do

The results of two such surveys can be found at:

<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham/voices2005/stats.shtml>>

and:

<<http://www.sciencealert.com.au/news-nz/20092010-20031-2.html>>.

6.56 RP

'Received Pronunciation' (RP) is the name given to the regionally neutral accent in British English, historically deriving from the prestige speech of the Court and the public schools in the late 18th century. The BBC originally adopted RP for its announcers because it was the form of pronunciation most likely to be nationally understood and to attract least regional criticism – hence the association of RP with the phrase 'BBC English'. Today the BBC (and educated speech at large) displays considerable regional variation, and many modified forms of RP exist. It is misleading to talk of RP speakers as 'accentless'. Everyone has an accent. It is simply that, in the case of RP, the accent conveys social not regional identity.

7.51 Churchill

My reference is to the computer-generated dog that acts as a mouthpiece for the Churchill Insurance Company in British television commercials. The company is based in Kent, but the dog's famous catch-phrase 'Oh yes' is distinctively Yorkshire. For a photograph, see:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ross_strachan/3180723170>.

Examples of Churchill's ads are at:

<<http://panto.churchill.com/new-churchill-ads-online-now>>.

Television commercials always provide a good source of information about the status of regional accents.

8.21 not just pronunciation

The term 'accent' refers to distinctive pronunciation; the term 'dialect' to grammar and vocabulary as well. It is important to appreciate that these terms are not restricted to regional variation (though that is their usual application): social accents and dialects also need to be recognized. 'Standard English', for example, is a dialect – the prestige dialect of English. Several online sites provide information about local accents, such as (in the UK) the British Library and the BBC:

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

<<http://sounds.bl.uk/BrowseCategory.aspx?category=Accents-and-dialects>>

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

For international accents and dialects, see the International Dialects of English Archive:

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

8.46 class

I reinforce my point by speaking the word 'class' in two ways: the southern British pronunciation uses a long 'ah' vowel; the northern British pronunciation uses a short 'a' vowel. The distinction is often taken as a symbol of the traditional upper- versus lower-class divide in England.

8.51 your social role

Social status is the position a person holds in the social structure of a community – such as a priest, an official, an officer, a wife, or a husband. Social roles are the conventional modes of behaviour that society expects a person to adopt when holding a particular status, such as being a supervisor or an apprentice in a

Lecture Commentary

workplace. The linguistic conventions associated with social status and role include a distinctive mode of address, an official manner of speech, a specialized vocabulary, and often an identifiable tone of voice.

8.59 gender

In some languages, males and females make use of distinctive forms of speech. For example, in traditional Koasati (an American Indian language from the Louisiana area) there are distinct forms of the verb for men and for women; other languages that have a tradition of gender difference include Japanese and Thai – though some of the old distinctions are nowadays breaking down. English has no forms that are used exclusively by one sex, though there are several differences in the frequency with which forms are used. A detailed discussion of the issue can be read at:

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=wKW1rNoWd3IC&dq=coates+women+men+language&source=bl&ots=sn71i7_3Co&sig=F_F5OWri0gk1LsjVcZUU_-e-7hs&hl=en&ei=UQHhTLCNFoKyhAfn5KDJDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CCoQ6AEwAg.

9.21 mother-in-law languages

'Avoidance languages', as they are more generally called, are common in Australian Aboriginal languages. A man 'avoids' certain relatives, such as his wife's mother and maternal uncles, and sometimes her father and sisters as well. In some tribes, avoidance of taboo relatives means total lack of contact; in others, a degree of normal speech is permitted; and in several cases a special language has developed to enable communication to take place. It is these special languages that are called 'mother-in-law' languages – though the term is a little misleading, as all taboo relatives are involved. An example is Dyirbal (in north-east Queensland), now almost extinct, where the everyday language is known as Guwal and the mother-in-law language is known as Dyalnguy.

10.49 6000 languages

The figure varies greatly, but usually falls within the range 6000 to 7000, as illustrated by the site at Ethnologue:

<<http://www.ethnologue.com/web.asp>>.

There are several reasons for the variation – in particular, it's often unclear whether communities are speaking different languages or dialects of the same language. But one fact is clear: the total is falling. I devote an entire lecture to this subject, the second item in the DVD called *The Future of Language*:

<<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415484909>>.

11.30 alive and well and growing

In the 2001 census, of all aged three and over, 582,400 (20.8% of the population) said they were able to speak Welsh. This compares with 508,100 (18.7%) in the 1991 census.

12.02 three-quarters of the population

There are no accurate statistics, as language use is rarely taken into account in national censuses. Informal estimates vary from around 60 to 80%. For a more detailed discussion, see:

<<http://www.ericdigests.org/2000-3/global.htm>>

and

<<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1788/Bilingual-Education.html>>.

12.58 Chomsky used to say

American linguist Noam Chomsky introduced the notion of a language 'organ' in the brain – an innate language ability – in the early 1960s. My point is not that this notion was misconceived – though it was certainly controversial – but that the singular form of the word 'language' is perhaps misleading. Most children grow up speaking more than one language.

14.03 *fiets*

Mateo's two words were *fiets* (Dutch) and *bicicleta* (Spanish).

Lecture 5.2

16.01 style

'Style' has developed many senses over the years, as can be seen by looking up the term in a dictionary, such as at:

<<http://www.definitions.net/definition/style>>.

From a linguistic point of view (as encountered in stylistics), the focus is on the distinctive language habits of an individual or group, whether literary or non-literary, and this is the sense I draw attention to in the lecture. There is also a more evaluative use of the word, referring to the effectiveness of a mode of expression, seen in such definitions of style as 'good manners' or 'saying the right thing in the most effective way'.

16.54 and lots of other variations

They include such notions as slang, vulgar, disparaging, taboo, archaic, and nonstandard, as well as such occupational labels as legal, chemical, botanical, biblical, poetic, and literary. Dictionaries provide a good source of stylistic labels, as can be seen at:

<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/help/dictnotes/usage.htm>>.

For a general discussion, see:

<<http://maarten.janssenweb.net/Papers/labels.pdf>>.

18.12 stylistics

Stylistics studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) in a language or dialect, with the aim of establishing principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language. It thus overlaps with both sociolinguistics and pragmatics. The term 'general stylistics' is used when the focus is on the whole range of varieties in a language. The term

Lecture Commentary

'literary stylistics' is used when the focus is on the variations encountered in literature as a genre and on the style of individual authors.

18.53 forensic linguistics

'Forensic linguistics' is the use of linguistic techniques to investigate crimes in which language data forms part of the evidence. The field of 'forensic phonetics' is often separately distinguished. See the survey at:

<<http://www.thetext.co.uk>>.

19.24 handwriting analysis

The term 'graphology', used in Lecture 3.2, should not be confused with the same term used for the interpretation of handwriting as part of a psychological or personality investigation. Illustrations of this kind of analysis can be seen at:

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

19.28 voiceprinting analysis

This refers to the use of phonetic equipment to identify the person-identifying features of the voice, as can be seen in the spectrographic display at:

<<http://science.howstuffworks.com/biometrics3.htm>>.

There are however dangers in using the term 'voiceprint', for the analogy with fingerprinting is not exact, as this report illustrates:

<<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2008/12/04/2437959.htm>>.

20.14 the speech therapist

The terms for describing those who diagnose and treat disorders of spoken language vary among languages, and even within a language. In British English, the traditional term 'speech therapist' is still used, though the official designation for this profession is 'speech and language therapist'. In several other parts of the English-speaking world, the terms 'speech pathologist' or 'language pathologist' are used. Other labels include 'communication therapist', 'logopedist', and (in French-speaking countries) '*orthophoniste*'.

Lecture Commentary

21.26 E E Cummings and James Joyce

For more on Cummings, see:

<<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/cummings.htm>>

and for some examples of his highly original use of language, see:

<http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/e__e__cummings>.

For James Joyce, see:

<http://www.online-literature.com/james_joyce>.

21.37 Robert Graves

This quotation appeared in a letter to *The Times* of 21 October 1961.

25.26 Torquemada

Torquemada can be found at:

<<http://home.freeuk.net/dharrison/ximenes/torq.htm>>;

Ximenes at:

<<http://home.freeuk.net/dharrison/ximenes/ximenes.htm>>.

The tradition continued with Azed, explained at:

<<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,6903,439507,00.html>>.

25.42 you never know ...

The allusion is to a famous Monty Python sketch, viewable at:

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uprjmoSMJ-o>>.

27.12 The Birthday Party

The interrogation scene from *The Birthday Party* can be seen at:

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mjp8Ms2t19Q>>.