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بسمه تعالي

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هدف از این درس که جزء دروس اصلی رشته مترجمی زبان انگلیسی است، بررسی اجمالی یافته‌ها و دانش امروزی درباره زبان و شیوه‌های مورد استفاده توسط زبان‌شناسان در رسیدن به این دانش است. مطالعه علمی زبان را زبان‌شناسی می‌نامند. هر سخنگوی زبان اطلاعات ناآگاهانه بیشتری در مورد عملکرد زبان نسبت به زبان‌شناسان دارند، در این درس مفاهیم کلی و بنیادین در مطالعه زبان از جمله معنی‌شناسی، کاربردشناسی، تاریخ زبان و عوامل غیرزبانی حاکم بر عملکرد زبان مورد بررسی قرار می‌گیرند.

Unit 11: Pragmatics

The study of intended speaker meaning is called pragmatics. In the normal context of our present society, we assume that this store has not gone into the business of

selling young children over the counter, but rather that it is advertising clothes for babies. Linguistic context, also known as co-text. The co-text of a word is the set

of other words used in the same phrase or sentence.

Physical context:

If you see the word BANK on the wall of building in a city, the physical

location will influence your interpretation.

Deixis:

There are some words in the language that can not be interpreted at all unless the physical context, especially the physical

context of the speaker, is known. These are words like here, there, this, that, now, then, yesterday, as well as most pronouns, such as I, you, him, her and them.

Any expression used to point to a person (me, you, him, them) is an example of person deixis words used to point to a location (here, there, yonder) are example

of place deixis and those used to point to a time (now, then- tonight, last week) are example of time deixis. We have to define reference as an act by which

a speaker (or writer) uses language to enable a listener (or reader) to identify something. We can use names associated with things (salad) to refer to people

and names of people (Chomsky) to refer to things. The key process here is called inference. An inference is any additional information used by the listener to connect

what is said to what must be meant.

Anaphora: When we establish a referent (can I borrow your book?) and subsequently refer to the same object (Yeah, it's on the table)

we have a particular kind of referential relationship between book and it. The second (and any subsequent) referring expression is an example of anaphora and the first mention is

called the antecedent. Thus, book is the antecedent and it is the anaphoric expression. What a speaker assumes is true or is known by the hearer can be

described as a presupposition. If someone tells you “Your brother is waiting outside for you”, there is an obvious presupposition that you have a brother. One of the tests

used to check for the presuppositions underlying sentences involves negating a sentence with a particular presupposition and considering whether the presupposition remains true. Take the sentence “My car

is a wreck”. Now take the negative version of this sentence. “My car is not a wreck”. Notice that, although these two sentences have opposite meaning, the underlying presupposition,

I have a car, remains true in both. This is called the constancy under negation test for presupposition. The use of the term speech act covers actions

such as requesting; commanding, questioning and informing.

When a form such as Did he....? Are they
....? Or can you....? Is used to ask a

question, it is described as a direct speech act. Indirect speech act: Whenever one of the forms in the set above is used to perform a function other than the one

listed beside it (on the same line) the result is an indirect speech act. The following utterance has the form normally associated with a statement. You left the door open.

If you say this sentence to some one who has just come into your room (and it's pretty cold outside). You should probably be understood to have made

not a statement, but a request. You are requesting, indirectly, that the person close the door. Used in this way, it is another example of an indirect speech act.

Politeness:

There are several ways to think of politeness. These might involve ideas like being tactful, modest and nice to other people. In the study of linguistic politeness, the most relevant

concept is face. Your face in pragmatics is your public self- image. This is the emotional and social sense of self that every person has and expects every

one else to recognize. Politeness is showing awareness of another person's face. If you say some thing that represents a threat to another person's self image that is called

a face-threatening act. For example if you use a direct speech act to order some one to do something (Give me that paper) you are acting as

if you have more social power. Then you are performing a fact- threatening act. An indirect speech act in the form of a question (could you pass me that paper, please)

removes the assumption of social power. You appear to be asking about ability. This makes your request less threatening to the other person's sense of self whenever you

say something that lessens the possible threat to another's fact, it's called a fact-saving act. You have both a negative face and a positive face.

Your negative face is the need to be independent and to have freedom from imposition. Your positive face is your need to be connected, to belong to be

a member of the group. Thus, a face-saving act that emphasizes a person's negative fact will show concern about imposition (I'm sorry to bother you...; I know you're busy, but ...).

Unit 12: Discourse Analysis

As language users we make sense of what we read in texts, understand what speaker mean despite what they say, recognize connected as opposed to jumbled

or incoherent discourse, and successfully take part in that complex activity called conversation, we are undertaking what is known as discourse analysis. For example, we can make sense of notices like “No

shoes, no services”, on shop windows in summer, understanding that a conditional relation exists between the two phrases. Cohesion means ties and connections which exist within texts.

For example, in following text: “My father once bought a Lincoln convertible. He did it by saving every penny he could. The car would be worth a fortune nowadays.”

However he sold it to help to pay for my college education. Some times I think I'd rather have the convertible".

In the text we have some connections:

father- he- he- he; my- my- I; Lincoln- it;
bought- saving- penny- worth a fortune-
sold- pay; nowadays- sometimes- once.

The key to the concept of coherence is not

something which exists in the language,
but something which exists in people.
English conversation can be described as
an activity where, for the most part, two or
people take turns

at speaking. For the most part, participants wait until one speaker indicates that he or she has finished by signaling a completion point. There are different styles and

strategies of conversational interaction.

Rudeness occurs when one speaker appears to cut in on another speaker.

Shyness occurs when one speaker keeps

waiting for an opportunity to take a turn and none seems to occur the participants characterized as rude or shy in this way may simply be adhering to slightly different conventions of turn taking.

One strategy used by those who holding the floor (politicians, lecturers) designed to avoid having normal completion points.

The cooperative principle is stated in the following way: “Make your conversational

contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Supporting these principles are the four maximum: Quantity: Make your contribution as is required, but more or less than is required.

Quality: Do not say that which you

believe false or for which you lack evidence.

Relation: Berelevant.

Manner: Be clear, brief and orderly.

Hedges:

We use certain types of expressions, called hedges, to show that we

are concerned about following maxims while being co-operative participants in conversation. Hedges can be defined as words or phrases used to indicate that we're not really sure that

we're not really sure that we're saying is sufficiently correct or complete. We can use sort of or kind of as hedges on the accuracy of our statements

as in descriptions such as His hair was kind of long or the book cover is sort of yellow. These are examples of hedges on the quality maxim.

Implicatures:

Sometimes speakers implying something that is not said. Implicature is an additional conveyed meaning. In the following conversation: Carol: Are you coming to the party tonight.

Lara: I've got an exam tomorrow. Carol will immediately interpret the statement as meaning 'No' or 'probably not'.

Background Knowledge:

Consider following sentences: John was on his way school last Friday.

Most people believe that John is probably a school boy. Since this piece of information is not directly stated in the text, it must be an inference. The inferences are clearly derived

from our conventional knowledge about going to school and no reader has ever suggested that John is swimming. A schema is a general term for a conventional knowledge structure.

Unit 13: Language and the Brain

Neurolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and the brain. Broca's area is involved in the production of speech which

is located in left hemisphere. Wernike's area, in posterior speech cortex, is involved in the understanding of speech. Motor cortex controls movement of the muscles.

The word is heard and comprehended via Wernick's area. This signal is transferred to Broca's area where preparations are made to produce it. A signal is then sent

to the motor cortex to physically articulate the word. According to localization view linguistic abilities have identifiable location in the brain. In “tip of the tongue” you

feel that some word is eluding you that you know the word, but it won't come to the surface. When we make mistakes in this retrieval process,

there are strong phonological similarities between the target word and the mistake. For example, speakers produced secant, sextet, and sexton, when asked to name a particular type of navigational instrument.

These mistakes are Malapropisms. Slip of the tongue as speech error, results in tangled expressions such as “long shory stort” for make “a long story short”. This phenomenon

also known as spoonerism: Slip of the ear is error in hearing. For example instead of hearing great ape we hear grey type.

Aphasia is defined as an impairment

of language function due to localized cerebral (brain) damage which leads to difficulty in understanding any or producing linguistic forms. Broca's aphasia is characterized by reduced amount of speech,

distorted articulation and slow effortful speech. Agrammatic is the frequent omission of functional morphemes. Wernicke's aphasia or sensory aphasia is when someone produces very fluent speech which is often

difficult to make sense. In conduction aphasia people are fluent but may have disrupted rhythm because of pauses and hesitations. The technique showing the language functions must be located

in the left hemisphere is called dichotic listening test. A basic assumption is that a signal coming in the right ear will go to the left hemisphere

and a signal coming in the left ear will go to the right hemisphere. The fact that one often correctly identifies the sound which comes via the right ear

is known as the right ear advantage for linguistic sound. Right hemisphere handles non- verbal sounds. The specialization of the left hemisphere for language is described as lateralization (one- sided-ness).

A period when the human brain is ready to receive and learn a particular language is critical period. Genie grown up without hearing any sound was unable to use

language when she was first brought into care. However, within a short time, she imitated sounds and to communicate. Her syntax remained very simple.

Genie was using the right hemisphere of her brain for language functions.

Unit 14: First Language Acquisition

A child growing in the first two or three years requires interaction with other language-users in order to bring language-faculty into operation

The acquisition Schedule:

with a particular language, such as English.

All normal children, regardless of culture develop language at roughly the same time. Language acquisition schedule has the same basis as the

biologically determined development motor skill which is tied to maturation of infant's brain and the lateralization process. Noam Chomsky 1983 has proposed innateness hypothesis according to which language

development should be described as language growth because the language organ simply grows like any other body organ. This view seems to underestimate what others consider the importance of environment

and experience in the child's development of language. The simplified speech style adopted by someone who spends a lot of time interacting with a young child is called caretaker speech.

Some of its characteristics are frequent questions, and using exaggerated information. This type of speech incorporates a lot of forms associated with baby-talk. These are either simplified words'

alternative forms with repeated simple sounds, for objects in the child's environment. Caretaker speech is also characterized by simple sentence structures and a lot of repetition.

Cooing and babbling:

The pre-linguistic sounds of early stages of child language acquisition are called cooing and babbling. The period from about three months to ten months is characterized by three stage

of sound production in the infant's developing repertoire. The first sounds are cooing with velar consonants such as [k], [g] and vowels such as [i] and [u].

By six months, the child can produce different vowels and consonants such as fricatives and nasals. These sounds called babbling and may contain syllable- type sounds around nine months,

there are recognizable intonation patterns to the consonant vowel combinations being produced. One-word stage is between twelve and eighteen months, children begin to produce a variety of recognizable

single unit utterances. Term such as single-unit or single- form or holophrastic (a single form functioning as a phrase or structure) are also used.

By the time the child is two years old a variety of combinations, similar to “baby chair”, “mommy eat” will have appeared. The interpretation of those combinations depends

on the context of their utterances. Telegraphic speech, between two and three years old is characterized by strings of lexical morphemes in phrases such as “Andrew want ball”.

Morphology:

By the time the child three years old, he/she incorporates some of the inflectional morphemes of nouns and verbs. The first to appear is –ing form.

Then regular plurals like “cats” appear. Acquisition of this form is accompanied by overgeneralization. For example foots and mans. At the same time irregular plural appears. Irregular past tens like

“went” appear before regular past tense form- ed.

Syntax:

Similar evidence against imitation as the basis of a child’s speech production has been found in studies of the syntactic structure used by children.

In the formation of questions and the use of negatives, there appear to be three identifiable stages. Stage 1 occurs between 18 and 26 months, stage 2

between 22 and 30 months and stage 3
between 24 and 40 months.

Questions: The first stage has two
procedures. Add a wh- form to the
beginning of the expression

or utter the expressions with a rise in intonation towards the end. In the second stage, more complex expressions can be found, but the rising intonation strategy continue to be used.

In the third stage inversion of subject and verb occurs.

Negatives: In stage 1 no or not is placed on the beginning of the expression. In the second stage

“don’t” and “can’t” are used in front of the verb. In the third stage other auxiliaries such as won’t and didn’t occur.

Semantics: During the holophrastic stage children use their

limited vocabulary to refer to a large number of unrelated objects called overextension. In terms of hyponymy the child will use the middle level term.

Unit 15: Second language acquisition learning

Some obvious reasons for the problems experienced in second language (L2) acquisition are related to the fact the most people attempt to learn another

language during their teenage or adult years , in a few hours' each week with a lot of other occupation and with an already known language.

Acquisition and Learning:

The term acquisition when used of language refers to the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situation. The term learning applies

to a conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of language and involves knowledge about language. Activities associated with acquisition are those experienced by the

young child and analogously those who pick up another language from long periods speaking in social interaction. Activities associated with learning have some features of a second language (e.g. vocabulary, grammar)

are easier to acquire than others (e.g. phonology). After the critical periods has passed (around puberty) to acquire another language becomes difficult. In support of this view the

process of lateralization of the brain becomes a crucial factor. The optimum age for second language acquisition may be during the years from ten to sixteen when

the flexibility of the language acquisition faculty has not been lost. Affective filter describes a kind of barrier to acquisition that results from negative feelings or experiences such as

unwillingness or embarrassment, lack of motivation. These emotional reactions can be caused by dull textbooks, unpleasant classroom surroundings or an exhausting schedule.

Children seem to be less constrained by

the affective filter.

Teaching methods:

1- Grammar translation methods: This method involves long lists of words and a set of grammatical rules have to be memorized and the written language

rather than the spoken language is emphasized. And has its roots in teaching of Latin.

2- Audio lingual method: It is influenced by a belief that the

fluent use of a language was essentially a set of habits which could be developed with a lot of practices. And foreign language learning is a mechanical process of habit formation.

3- Communicative approach: It is based on the view that functions of language should be emphasized rather than the forms of language. This approach is a reaction to artificiality

of pattern-practice. The most fundamental change in the area of L2 learning is a shift from concern with the teacher, the textbook and the method to an interest

in the learner and the acquisition process.

Traditionally errors were regarded negatively and had to be eradicated. But error is not something where hindering a student's progress but

is a clue to the active learning. The example “womens” is a type of creative construction used by learners some errors are due to the transfer of expressions from L1.

If the L1 and the L2 have similar features then the learner benefits from the positive transfer of L1 knowledge. Transferring an L1 feature that is really different from

the L2 results in negative transfer or interference. Interlanguage is an in-between system used in L2 acquisition which certainly contains aspects of L1 and L2 but which

is a variable system with rules of its own.
Errors found in interlanguage seem to have
no connection to the forms of L1 or L2.
Fossilization occurs when learners

develop a fixed repertoire of L2 forms, containing many features which do not match the target language and they do not progress any further. Fossilization in pronunciation results in foreign accent.

Input and Output:

The term input is used to describe the language that the learner is exposed to. It can be made comprehensible by being simpler in structure and vocabulary as in

a variety of speech known as foreign talk. For example, instead of using the sentence “How are you getting on in your studies?”, “English class, you like it?” can be used.

Negotiated input is L2 material that the learner can acquire in interaction through requests for clarification and active attention being focused on what is said.

Communicative Competence:

Communicative competence can be defined

in terms of three components. The first is grammatical competence involves the accurate use of words and structures in the L2. Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to interpret

or produce language appropriately according to the social context. It enables the learner to know when to say “Can I have some water versus” “Give me some water”.

Strategic competence is the ability to organize a message effectively and to compensate via strategies for any difficulty.

Applied linguistics is studying language regarding communication studies,

education, psychology and sociology. In attempting to investigate the complex nature of L2 learning, we have to appeal to applied linguistics.

Unit 16: Gestures and Sign languages

Gestures:

In the study of non-verbal behavior, a distinction can be drawn between gestures and emblems. Emblems are signals such as “thumbs up”

(= things are good) or “shush” (= keep quiet) that function like fixed phrases and do not depend on speech.

Types of gestures:

Iconics are gestures that seem to be a reflection

of the meaning of what is said.

Another common group of gestures can be described as deictics.

There are other gestures, called beats, which are short quick movements of the hand or fingers.

Types of sign languages:

There are two general categories of language involving the use of signs: alternate sign languages and primary sign languages. By definition, an alternate sign language

is a system of hand signals developed by speakers for limited communication in a specific context where speech cannot be used.

In contrast, a primary sign language is the first language of a group

of people who do not use a spoken language with each other. British Sign Languages and French Sign Language as used for communication among members of the deaf communities

Oralism:

A teaching method generally known as oralism dominated deaf education for a hundred years.

The structure of signs

As a natural language functioning in the visual mode,

ASL is designed for the eyes, not the ears

Shape and orientation:

To describe the articulation of THANK-YOU in ASL, we start with the shape, or configuration

of the hand(s), used in forming sign.

Location and movement:

Whatever the shape and orientation of the hand(s), there will also be a location (or place of articulation) in relation

to the head and upper body of the signer.

The movement element in THANK-YOU is “out and downward” toward the receiver.

The difference between faster and slower

movement in signing also has an effect on meaning.

Primes, faces and finger-spelling:

The contrasting elements within these four general parameters can be analyzed into sets of primes.

finger-spelling is a system of hand configurations conventionally used to represent the letters of the alphabet.

ASL is a linguistic system designed for the visual medium.

Unit 17: Language history and change

Family tree:

Sir William Jones 1786 believed a number of languages from very different geographical areas must have some common ancestors.

During the 19th century when historical study of languages (Philology) was the goal of linguistics proto Indo-European established as the great-grand mother of many modern languages.

Cognates:

A cognate of a word in a language e.g. English is a word in another language (e.g. German) which has a similar form and is used with a similar meaning.

Comparative Construction:

Using information from cognate sets in a process called comparative reconstruction aimed to reconstruct what must have been the original or proto form in the common ancestral language.

There are some principles in this regard: If in a cognate set, three forms begin with [p] sound and one form begins with a [b] sound, the majority [p]

is original sound. The most natural development is based on the fact that certain types of sound-change are very common, where as others are extremely unlikely.

Here are some ones.

(1) Final vowels often disappear.

(2) Voiceless sounds become voiced between vowels.

(3) Stops become fricatives

(4) Consonants become voiceless at the end of words.

The historical development of English is usually divided into three major periods. The old English period is considered to last from the time of the earliest written records,

the seventh century to the end of the eleventh century. The Middle English period is from 1100 to 1500, and modern English from 1500 to the present.

There are some sound changes:
metathesis involves a reversal in position
of two adjoining sounds: frits → first.
Epenthesis involves the addition of a sound
to the middle of a word;

timr → timber. Prosthesis involves the addition of a sound to the beginning of a word. Schola → escuela.

Syntactic change involves, change of word order and loss of inflectional affixes.

Lexical changes: 1. borrowing words from other languages, 2. broadening of meaning, holyday as a religious feast becomes general break from work, 3. Narrowing in which meaning of a word

narrows down, like “hund” which was once used for any kind of dog, but now is a specific breed. Diachronic study is viewing variation in language from the historical perspective

of change through time. Synchronic study is in terms of differences within one language in different places and among different groups.

Unit 18: Language and regional variation

The standard language:

Standard language is an idealized variety, which is the version that is accepted as the official language of their community or country.

Accent and dialect:

Technically, the term 'accent' is restricted to the description of aspects of pronunciation that identify where an individual speaker is from, regionally or socially.

It is different from the term dialect, which is used to describe features of grammar and vocabulary as well as aspects of pronunciation.

Dialectology:

There is general impression of mutual intelligibility among many speakers of different dialects of English. This is one of the criteria used in the study of dialects, or dialectology,

to distinguish between two different dialects of the same language (whose speakers can usually understand each other) and two different languages (whose speakers can't usually understand each other).

Regional dialects:

Some regional dialects clearly have stereotyped pronunciations associated with them.

Informants in the major dialect surveys tended to be NORMS or 'non-mobile, older, rural, male speakers'.

Isoglosses and dialect boundaries:

If it is found, for example, that the vast majority of informants in one area say they carry things home from the store in a paper bag

while the majority in another area say they use a paper sack, then it is usually possible to draw a line across a map separating the two areas.

This line is called an isogloss and represents a boundary between the areas with regard to that one particular linguistic item.

When a number of isoglosses come together dialect boundary, can be drawn.

The dialect continuum:

At most dialect boundary areas, one dialect or language variation as existing along a dialect we can view regional variation as existing along a dialect continuum rather than as having sharp breaks.

Speakers who move back and forth across this border area, using different varieties with some ease, may be described as bidialectal (i.e. 'speaking two dialects').

in some places, there are different languages used in the street and in school. When we talk about people knowing two distinct languages, we describe them as bilingual.

Bilingualism and diglossia:

In many countries, regional variation is not simply a matter of two (or more) dialects of a single language, but can involve two (or more) quite distinct and different languages.

In such a situation, bilingualism at the level of the individual tends to be a feature of the minority group. In this form of bilingualism, a member of a minority group grows up in one linguistic community, mainly speaking one language.

A rather special situation involving two distinct varieties of a language, called diglossia, exists in some countries. In diglossia, there is a 'low' variety, acquired locally and used for everyday affairs,

and a 'high' or special variety, learned in school and used for important matters. A type of diglossia exists in Arabic speaking countries.

Language Planning:

The process of 'selection' is followed by 'codification', in which basic grammars, dictionaries and written models are used to establish the standard variety.

The process of 'elaboration' follows, with the standard variety being developed for use in all aspects of social life and the appearance of a body of literary work written in the standard

The process of 'implementation' is largely a matter of government attempts to encourage use of the standard, and 'acceptance' is the final stage when a substantial majority of the population have come to use the standard variety.

Pidgins and creoles:

A pidgin is a variety of a language that developed for some practical purpose, among groups who had a lot of contact, but who did not know each other's languages.

When a pidgin develops beyond its role as a trade or contact language and becomes the first language of a social community, it is described as a creole.

The post-creole continuum:

Just as there was development from a pidgin to a creole, known as creolization, decreolization, lends at one extreme to a variety that is closer to the external standard

model and leaves, at the other extreme, a basic variety with more local creole features. This range of varieties, is called the post-creole continuum.

Unit 19: Language and social variation

Sociolinguistics:

The term sociolinguistics is used generally for the study of the relationship between language and society. This is a broad area of investigation that

developed through the interaction of linguistics with a number of other academic disciplines. It has strong connections with anthropology through the study of language and culture.

Social dialects:

Whereas the traditional study of regional dialects tended to concentrate on the speech of people in rural areas, the study of social dialects has been mainly

concerned with speakers in towns and cities. In the social study of dialect, it is social class that is mainly used to define groups of speakers as having something in common.

The two main groups are generally identified as 'middle class', those who have more years of education and perform non-manual work, and 'working class', those who have fewer years

of education and perform manual work of some kind. So, when we refer to working-class speech', we are talking about a social dialect. The terms 'upper' and 'lower' are

used to further subdivide the groups, mainly on an economic basis, making 'upper-middle-class speech' another type of social dialect (or 'sociolect').

When we look for other examples of language use that might be characteristic of a social dialect, we treat class as the social variable and the pronunciation or word as the linguistic variable.

We can then try to investigate the extent to which there is systematic variation involving the two variables by counting how often speakers in each class use each version

of the linguistic variable. This isn't usually an all-or-nothing situation, so studies of social dialects typically report how often speakers in a particular group use a certain form

Education and occupation:

Although the unique circumstances of every life result in each of us having an individual way of speaking, a personal dialect or idiolect,

We generally tend to sound like others with whom we share similar educational backgrounds and/or occupations.

Among those who leave the educational system at an early age,

there is a general pattern of using certain forms that are relatively infrequent in the speech of those who go on to complete college.

Expressions such as those contained in them boys throwed somethin' or It wasn't us what done it are generally associated with speakers who have spent less time in education.

As adults, the outcome of our time in the educational system is usually reflected in our occupation and socio-economic status. The way bank executives, as opposed to window cleaners,

talk to each other usually provides linguistic evidence for the significance of these social variables. In one of the earliest studies in sociolinguistics, Labov (1966) combined elements from place

of occupation and socio-economic status by looking at pronunciation differences among salespeople in three New York City department stores.

Labov went into each of these stores and asked salespeople

specific questions, such as where are the women's shoes?, in order to elicit answers with the expression fourth floor. This expression contains two opportunities for the pronunciation (or not) of postvocalic /r/, that is, the /r/ sound after a vowel.

In the department stores, there was a regular pattern in the answers. The higher the socio-economic status of the store, the more /r/ sounds were produced,

and the lower the status, the fewer /r/ sounds were produced by those who worked there. So, the frequency of occurrence of this linguistic variable (r) could mark

the speech samples as upper middle class versus middle class versus working class. Other studies confirmed this regular pattern in the speech of New Yorkers.

Social markers:

The significance of the linguistic variable (r) can be virtually the opposite in terms of social status in two different places, yet in both places the patterns

illustrate how the use of this particular speech sound functions as a social marker. That is, having this feature occur frequently in your speech marks you as a member of a particular social group.

Another social marker is called ‘[h]-dropping’. It occurs at the beginning of words and can result in utterances that sound like I’m so’ ungary I could eat an’ orse.

Speech style and style-shifting:

Labov included another subtle element that allowed him to investigate not only the type of social stratification, but also speech style as a social feature of language use.

The most basic distinction in speech style is between formal uses and informal uses. Formal style is when we pay more careful attention to how we're speaking and informal style

is when we pay less attention. They are sometimes described as 'careful style' and 'casual style'. A change from one the other by an individual is called style-shifting.

Prestige:

In discussing style-shifting, we introduced the idea of a 'prestige' form as a way of explaining the direction in which certain individuals change their speech.

When that change is in the direction of a form that is more frequent in the speech of those perceived to have higher social status, we are dealing with overt prestige.

There is, another phenomenon called covert prestige. This 'hidden' status of a speech style as having positive value may explain why certain groups do not exhibit style-shifting to the same extent as other groups.

Speech accommodation:

As we look more closely at variation in speech style, we can see that it is not only a function of speakers' social class and attention to speech, but

it is also influenced by their perception of their listeners.

Speech accommodation defined as our ability to modify our speech style toward or away from the perceived style of the person(s) we're talking to.

Register and jargon:

Another influence on speech style that is tied to social identity derives from register. A register is a conventional way of using language that is appropriate

in a specific context, which may be identified as situational (e.g. in church), occupational (e.g. among lawyers) or topical (e.g. talking about language).

One of the defining features of a register is the use of jargon, which is special technical vocabulary (e.g. plaintiff, suffix) associated with a specific area of work or interest.

Slang:

Slang, or 'colloquial speech', describes words or phrases that are used instead of more everyday terms among younger speakers and other groups with special interests.

Social barriers:

In much the same way as large geographical barriers between groups foster linguistic differences in regional dialects, social barriers such as discrimination and segregation serve to create marked differences between social dialects.

Vernacular language:

Vernacular is a general expression for a kind of social dialect, spoken by a lower-status group, which is treated as 'non-standard' because of marked differences from a socially prestigious variety treated.

Unit 20: Language and Culture

Culture:

We use the term culture to refer to all the ideas and assumptions about the nature of things and people that we learn when

We become members of social groups. It can be defined as 'socially acquired knowledge'.

Categories:

Although there is a lot of variation among all the individual dogs in our experience

We can use the word dog to talk about any one of them as a member of the category. A category is a group with certain features

in common and we can think of the vocabulary we learn as an inherited set of category labels. There is no fixed relationship between the set of words we have

Learned and the way external reality is organized. However, evidence from the world's languages would suggest that the organization of external reality actually varies to some extent according to the

language being used to talk about. Although the Dani of New Guinea can see all colors of the spectrum they only use names for two of them, equivalents of

‘black’ and ‘white’. Eskimos have names for those two, plus red, green and yellow. English has names for those five colors, plus blue, brown, purple, pink, orange and gray.

It seems that languages used by groups with more technology have more color terms in languages, we can say that there are conceptual distinctions that are lexicalized into language and not in another.

Linguistic relativity:

We consider differences in language use as evidence of talking about external reality. This is often discussed in terms of linguistic relativity because it seems that

the structure of our language with its predetermined categories, must have an influence on how we perceive the world. In this weak version, this idea simply captures the fact that we

not only talk, but to a certain extent probably also think about the world of experience, using the categories provided by our language. In its strong version,

called linguistic determinism, the idea is restated as “language determines thought”, meaning that we can only think in the categories provided by our language.

A frequently quoted example used to support this view

is based on the large number of expressions the Eskimos are reported to have for talking about what, in English, is described as snow.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:

The general analytic perspective we are considering is part of what became known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis during the middle of the twentieth century.

At a time when American linguistics was still mainly carried out by scholars with strong backgrounds in anthropology, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf produced arguments that the languages of

native Americans, such as the Hopi, led them to view the world differently from those who spoke European languages. According to Whorf, the Hopi perceive the world differently from

other tribes because their language leads them to do so. In the grammar of Hopi, there is a distinction between 'animate' and 'inanimate', and among the set of entities categorized as 'animate' are clouds and stones.

Whorf claimed that the Hopi believe that clouds and stones are living entities and that it is their language that leads them to believe this.

English does not mark in its grammar that clouds and stones are ‘animate’, so English speakers do not see the world in the same way as the Hopi.

In Whorf's words, "We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages"

Moreover, the linguistic forms do not force us to ignore biological distinctions.

Eskimos and Snow:

Reconsidering the situation with Eskimos and “snow”, we recognize that English does not have a large number of words for different kinds of snow.

However, English speakers can create expressions, by manipulating their language, to refer to fresh snow, powdery snow, spring snow or the dirty stuff that is piled up on the side

of the street after the snow-plough has gone through. These may be categories of snow for English speakers, but they are non-lexicalized ('not expressed as a single word').

We inherit a language used to report knowledge, so we would expect that language to influence the organization of our knowledge in some way. However, we also inherit the ability to manipulate

and be creative with that language in order to express our perceptions. If thinking and perception were totally determined to express our perceptions. If thinking and perception were totally determined by language, then the concept of language change would be impossible.

Cognitive categories:

The fact that Hopi speakers inherit a language system in which clouds have 'animate' as a feature may tell us something about a traditional belief system, or way

of thinking, that is part of their culture and not ours. In the Yagua language, spoken in Peru, the set of entities with 'animate' as a feature includes the moon,

rocks and pineapples, as well as people. In the traditions of the Yagua, all these entities are treated as valued objects, so that their cultural interpretation of the feature 'animate'

may be closer to the concept 'having special importance in life' rather than the concept 'having life', as in the cultural interpretation of most English speakers.

Classifiers:

We know about the classification of words in languages like Yagua because of grammatical markers called classifiers that indicate the type or 'class' of noun involved.

mimea ('plants') and visu ('knives'). In fact, a conceptual distinction between raw materials (miti, 'trees') and artifacts made from them (viti, 'chairs') can be marked simply by the classifiers used.

Social categories:

Words such as uncle or grandmother, discussed earlier, provide examples of social categories. These are categories of social organization that we can use to say how we are connected or related to others.

Address terms:

When a man on the street asks another, Brother, can you spare a dollar?, the word brother is being used as an address term.

Gender:

We have already noted the difference between two uses of the word gender in chapter 8. Biological (or 'natural') gender is the distinction in sex between the 'male' and 'female' of each species.

Grammatical gender is the distinction between 'masculine' and 'feminine', which is used to classify nouns in languages such as Spanish (el sol, la luna).

A third use is for social gender, which is the distinction we make when we use words like 'man' and 'woman' to classify individuals in terms of their social roles.

Gendered words:

Is Sidamo, spoken in Ethiopia, there are some words used only by men and some used only by women, so that the translation of 'milk' would be 'ado' by a man, 'gurda' by a woman.

Gendered speech:

In general, men have longer vocal tracts, larger larynxes and thicker vocal cords than women.

There is a tendency to exaggerate the differences in many contexts in order to sound more 'like a man' or more 'like a woman'.

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