**Course Description**

**Um El Qura University**: Female Sector

**Academic Year**: 2016/2017

**Subject**: Sociolinguistics (2 hours)

**Instructor**: Eman Al-hazmi

**Introduction:** The course is directed towards shedding light on sociolinguistics as a field of study that is fundamentally related to human communication and cultural exchange. It is going to focus on basic key concepts in the study and how they are practically used. The course aims at achieving a good understanding of the various questions in sociolinguistics and enhancing the student’s linguistic skills.

**The course’s outline:**

1. What is sociolinguistics? What do we mean by the Varieties of language?
2. Style / Context, and Register
3. Code Switching and Diaglossia
4. Language and identity
5. Language shift and maintenance
6. English as an international language.

**Umm El Qura’s University**

**Omaya Fahmawi**

**Sociolinguistics**

**2015/2016**

1. ***Sociolinguistics and the varieties of* *Language***

* ***What’s Sociolinguistics?***

\*Sociolinguistics is the study of how language serves and is shaped by the social nature of human beings. In its broadest conception, sociolinguistics analyzes the many and diverse ways in which language and society entwine.

\*This vast field of inquiry requires and combines insights from a number of disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, psychology and anthropology.

\*Sociolinguistics examines the interplay of language and society, with language as the starting point. Variation is the key concept, applied to language itself and to its use.

\*The basic premise of sociolinguistics is that language is variable and changing.  As a result, language is not homogeneous — not for the individual user and not within or among groups of speakers who use the same language.

* ***Varieties of language:***

**Dialect / Register / Languages / Mixture of varieties**

1. ***What is dialect?***

\*It is any regional, social or ethnic variety of a language. By that definition, the English taught in school as correct and used in non-personal writing is only one dialect of contemporary American English. Usually called Standard American English or Edited American English, it is the dialect used in this essay.

\*Dialectology studies the geographical distribution of linguistic items. Its shows how the dialect can change according to the regional context. Isogloss tries to show the geographic boundary of the same tongue.

\*Social Dialects tries to look for social mobility and how sex, gender, age, and class can perfectly impact the accent or the dialect used in a specific area

1. ***What is Register?***

\*If the dialect shows who you are, register indicates what you are. It is about the jargon used and the common vocabulary and language that people use in a specific field.

\*The register reflects membership and belonging, it is about accommodation and *convergence.*

1. ***Languages***:

\*The term refers to the various languages spoken in the world like English, French, Italian, Arabic, Spanish….

\*Languages are one of the definable features of a specific culture. They are the tongue that allows them to be open to other backgrounds, it signals one’s identity.

\*Languages can be classified and studied according to their importance and primacy: For instance the English language is recognized as an international language.

1. ***Mixture of Varieties:***
2. **Code switching**: **code-switching** occurs when a speaker alternates between two or

more [languages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language), or language [varieties](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variety_(linguistics)), in the context of a single conversation.

\*[Multilinguals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multilingualism" \o "Multilingualism)—speakers of more than one language sometimes use elements of multiple languages when conversing with each other. Thus, code-switching is the use of more than one linguistic variety in a manner consistent with the [syntax](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syntax) and [phonology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonology) of each variety.

\*Code-switching is distinct from other [language contact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_contact) phenomena, such

as [borrowing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loanword), [pidgins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidgin) and [creoles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creole_language), [loan translation (calques)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calque), and[language transfer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_transfer) (language interference)

\*Some scholars of literature use the term to describe literary styles which include

elements from more than one language, as in novels by Chinese-American, Anglo-Indian, or Latino writers.

\* In popular usage, *code-switching* is sometimes used to refer to relatively stable

informal [mixtures of two languages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code-mixing#Code-mixing_as_fused_lect), such as [Spanglish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanglish), [Franponais](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franponais" \o "Franponais) or [Portuñol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portu%C3%B1ol).

1. **Code mixing:** While linguists who are primarily interested in the structure or form of

code-mixing may have relatively little interest to separate code-mixing from code switching, some sociolinguists have gone to great lengths to differentiate the two phenomena.

\* In this tradition, the terms **code-mixing** or **language alternation** are used to describe more stable situations in which multiple languages are used without such pragmatic effects. See also [Code-mixing as fused lect](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code-mixing#Code-mixing_as_fused_lect), below.

1. **Pidgins:** A pidgin is a restricted language which arises for the purposes of communication

between two social groups of which one is in a more dominant position than the other. The less dominant group is the one which develops the pidgin

\* Historically, pidgins arose in colonial situations where the representatives of the

particular colonial power, officials, tradesmen, sailors, etc., came in contact with natives. Such a language was restricted in its range as it served a definite purpose, namely basic communication with the colonists.

1. **A creole language**, or simply a **creole**, is a stable [natural language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_language) that has developed from a [pidgin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidgin), i.e. a simplified version of a language. Creoles differ from [pidgins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pidgin) because creoles have been [nativized](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativization" \o "Nativization) by children as their primary language, with the result that they have features of natural languages that are normally missing from pidgins, which are not anyone's first language.
2. ***Style / Context/ Register***
3. **Style:**

Style is language variation which reflects changes in situational factors, such as addressee, setting, task or topic. Style is often analyzed along a scale of formality, the level of formality is influenced by some factors like the various differences among the participants, topic, emotionalinvolvement, etc. (Janet Holmes, 2001)

**What is the difference between style and variety?**Style is "the range of variation within the speech of an individual speaker." Just as there is code-switching, there would be "style-shifting" – this would be within a monolingual society. Style could mean the personal “social dialect” of a speaker based on the relatively permanent aspects of his/her identity (ethnicity, region etc.) and is therefore a very individual set of linguistic features. Register seems to be determined by less permanent aspects of identity (student to teacher, salesman to customer, etc.). Register is seen as falling within the larger idea of style.

**Addressee as an Influence on Style**  
**Age of addressee** ==> People generally talk to the very young and to the very old. For example: Baby-talk.  
**Social background of addresse**e ==> People talk differently to the higher class and to the lower class. For example: The pronunciation of newsreaders on different radio station  (Janet Holmes, 2001).

**Some Examples of Context, Style and Class**

* Formal contexts and social roles
* Different style within an interview
* Colloquial style or the vernacular
* The interaction of social class and style

**How language variation correlates with social situations**

People’s styles of speech and written communication reflect and express not only aspects of their identity such as their ethnicity, age, gender, and social background -- they also indicate the contexts in which language is being used. Formality and status are at play here.

**What aspects of language vary across speakers, setting, attitude, and other contextual factors?**

Language varies according to use and users and according to where it is used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it. The addresses and the context affect our choice of code or variety, whether language, dialect or style.

1. Accommodation Theory

The **Communication Accommodation Theory** explores the reasons why people use speech in order to emphasize or minimize the social differences between themselves and their listener. It evolved from the Accommodation Theory and was developed by Howard Giles, professor of linguistics and psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The roots of the theory trace back to the Social Identity theory, which explores how a person’s identity is tied to his/her social identity.

**Speech converges**: each person's speech converges towards the speech of the person they are talking to. It tends to happen when the speakers like one another, or where one speaker has a vested interest in pleasing the other or putting them at ease.  
  
**Speech diverges**: deliberately choosing a different language style not used by one's addressee, it tends to happen when a person wants to show his cultural distinctiveness, social status, ethnic identity, etc.  
Hypercorrection: it is the exaggeration of some lower class speakers in imitating middle class standard speech. For example: the use of 'I' rather than 'me' in constructions such as 'between you and I'.  
  
**Register**: occupational style using specialized or technical jargon, it describes the language of groups of people with common interests or jobs, or the language used in situations associated with such groups, such as the language of doctors, engineers, journals, legalese, etc

**Politeness**: it is the consideration of social factors (social distance in terms of solidarity or formality), social status, type of situation or context, intonation, etc when communicating with others.  
  
[One may ask somebody to sit down by using different utterances:  
Sit down / please sit down / I want you to sit down / won't you sit down / you sit down / why don't you make yourself more comfortable?]  
  
**Positive politeness**: a type of politeness based on solidarity between speakers and hearers who share values and attitudes, and in which formal expressions in addressing are avoided.  
  
**Negative politeness**: a type of politeness based on formality between speakers and hearers in which formal expressions in addressing are used in order to protect hearers' face and avoid intruding on them.

1. **Political Correctness**

It has been often said that "all politics is local." Speaking in the context of sociolinguistics, that might be amended to -- all politeness is local. Local involves both regional and personal dimensions. What's polite in Washington, DC may not be in London, England -- and polite conversation between two buddies in a locker-room is quite different than a polite talk at a lunch meeting between a male boss and a new female hire.  
  
Politeness is not the same as polity. Polity can be defined as the shrewd or artful managing of public affairs. Polite talk connotes a mere formality -- the perfunctory 'please and thank-yous' pasted to the ends of sentences. But political correctness in speech is a rejection of the lingua-centric, "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" top-down perspective. To be politic implies that both the speaker and the addressee have the responsibility to be culturally competent.

1. ***Diglossia in Sociolinguistics***

In [linguistics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistics), refers to a situation in which two [dialects](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialects) or usually closely related [languages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages) are used by a single language community. In addition to the community's everyday or [vernacular](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernacular) language variety (labelled "L" or "low" variety), a second, highly codified variety (labelled "H" or "high") is used in certain situations such as literature, formal education, or other specific settings, but not used for ordinary conversation.

The high variety may be an older stage of the same language (e.g. [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language) in the early Middle Ages), or a distinct yet closely related present day dialect (e.g. [Norwegian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian_language) with [Bokmål](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bokm%C3%A5l) and [Nynorsk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nynorsk), or [Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_language) with [Mandarin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Chinese) as the official, literary standard and colloquial topolects/dialects used in everyday communication).

As an aspect of study of the relationships between [codes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codes) and [social structure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_structure), diglossia is an important concept in the field of [sociolinguistics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociolinguistics). At the social level, each of the two dialects has certain spheres of social interaction assigned to it and in the assigned spheres it is the only socially acceptable dialect (with minor exceptions).

At the grammatical level, differences may involve pronunciation, [inflection](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inflection), and/or [syntax](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syntax) (sentence structure). Differences can range from minor (although conspicuous) to extreme. In many cases of diglossia, the two dialects are so divergent that they are distinct languages as defined by [linguists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistics): they are not [mutually intelligible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutually_intelligible).

The dialect which is the original [mother tongue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_tongue) is almost always of low [prestige](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prestige_dialect). Its spheres of use involve informal, interpersonal [communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication): conversation in the home, among friends, in marketplaces.

In some diglossias, this vernacular dialect is virtually unwritten. Those who try to give it a literature may be severely criticized or even persecuted. The other dialect is held in high esteem and is devoted to written communication and formal spoken communication, such as university instruction, primary education, sermons, and speeches by government officials. It is usually not possible to acquire proficiency in the formal, "high" dialect without formal study of it.

Thus in those [diglossic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diglossic" \o "Diglossic) societies which are also characterized by extreme [inequality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_inequality) of [social classes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_classes), most people are not proficient in speaking the high dialect, and if the high dialect is grammatically different enough, as in the case of Arabic diglossia, then these uneducated classes cannot understand most of the [public speeches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_speeches) they might hear on television and radio. The high prestige dialect (or language) tends to be the more formalised, and its forms and vocabulary often 'filter down' into the vernacular, though often in a changed form.

In many diglossic areas there is controversy and [polarization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attitude_polarization) of opinions of native speakers regarding the relationship between the two dialects and their respective [statuses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_status). In cases where the "high" dialect is objectively not [intelligible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_intelligibility) to those exposed only to the [vernacular](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernacular), some people insist that the two dialects are nevertheless a common language.

The pioneering scholar of diglossia, [Charles A. Ferguson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_A._Ferguson), observed that [native speakers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_speakers) proficient in the high prestige dialect will commonly try to avoid using the vernacular dialect with foreigners and may even deny its existence, even though the vernacular is the only socially appropriate one for themselves to use when speaking to their relatives and friends. Yet another common attitude is that the low dialect—which is everyone's [native language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_language)—ought to be abandoned in favor of the high dialect, which presently is nobody's native language.

1. ***Language and Identity***

Language use and identity are conceptualised rather differently in a sociocultural

perspective on human action. Here, identity is not seen as singular, fixed, and intrinsic to the individual. Rather, it is viewed as socially constituted, a reflexive, dynamic product of the social, historical and political contexts of an individual’s lived experiences.

This view has helped to set innovative directions for research in applied linguistics. The purpose of this chapter is to lay out some of the more signifi cant assumptions embodied in contemporary understandings of identity and its connection to culture and language use. Included is a discussion of some of the routes current research on language, culture and identity is taking.

our various social identities are not simply labels that we fill with our own intentions. Rather, they embody particular histories that have been developed over time by other group members enacting similar roles. In their histories of enactments, these identities become associated

with particular sets of linguistic actions for realising the activities, and with attitudes and beliefs about them.

**Ethnolinguistic Identity:**

Ethnolinguistics (sometimes called **cultural linguistics**) is a field of [linguistics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistics) which studies the relationship between language and culture, and the way different ethnic groups perceive the world. It is the combination between [ethnology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnology) and linguistics. The former refers to the way of life of an entire community, i.e., all the characteristics which distinguish one community from the other. Those characteristics make the cultural aspects of a community or a society.

Ethnolinguists study the way perception and conceptualization influences language, and show how this is linked to different cultures and societies. An example is the way spatial orientation is expressed in various cultures.

**Cultural Linguistics** (capitalized) refers to a related branch of linguistics that explores the relationship between language, [culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_anthropology), and[conceptualisation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conceptualisation). Cultural Linguistics draws on, but is not limited to, the theoretical notions and analytical tools of [cognitive linguistics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_linguistics) and[cognitive anthropology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_anthropology). Central to the approach of Cultural Linguistics are notions of "cultural [schema](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schema_(psychology))" and "cultural model".

It examines how various features of language encode cultural schemas and cultural models.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnolinguistics#cite_note-5) In Cultural Linguistics, language is viewed as deeply entrenched in the group-level, cultural cognition of communities of speakers. Thus far, the approach of Cultural Linguistics has been adopted in several areas of [applied linguistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applied_linguistic) research, including [intercultural communication](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercultural_communication), [second language learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_language_learning), and [World Englishes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Englishes).

In Ethnolinguistic Identity people tend some times to converge to the mainstream stream culture for the objectives of conformity and being easily accepted, recognized and integrated.

### Social network

Understanding language in society means that one also has to understand the [social networks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network) in which language is embedded. A social network is another way of describing a particular speech community in terms of relations between individual members in a community. A network could be *loose* or *tight* depending on how members interact with each other.For instance, an office or factory may be considered a tight community because all members interact with each other.

A large course with 100+ students would be a looser community because students may only interact with the instructor and maybe 1–2 other students. A *multiplex* community is one in which members have multiple relationships with each other. For instance, in some neighborhoods, members may live on the same street, work for the same employer and even intermarry.

The looseness or tightness of a social network may affect speech patterns adopted by a speaker. For instance, Sylvie Dubois and Barbara Horvath found that speakers in one Cajun Louisiana community were more likely to pronounce English "th" [θ] as [t] (or [ð] as [d]) if they participated in a relatively dense social network (i.e. had strong local ties and interacted with many other speakers in the community), and less likely if their networks were looser (i.e. fewer local ties).

A social network may apply to the macro level of a country or a city, but also to the inter-personal level of neighborhoods or a single family. Recently, social networks have been formed by the Internet, through chat rooms, MySpace groups, organizations, and online dating services.

1. ***Language Shift and Maintenance***

The study of language shift and maintenance constitutes a central focus of contemporary linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. Even though someof its central aspects have a rather long history in the field of study known as language, culture, and society, in the most recent research agenda interest in linguistic shift and maintenance has touched on almost all crucial areas of the study of dynamic language phenomena.

**Non-migrant communities.** Language shift is not always the result of migration. For this community the home is the one most under any family’s control, language may be maintained in more domains than just the home.

o   **Migrant majorities** When language shift occurs, it is always shift towards the language of the domain powerful group. A domain group has no incentive to adopt the language of minority. The domain language is associated with status, prestige, and social success. When a language dies gradually, as opposed to all its speakers being wiped out by a massacre or epidemic, and the function of the language are taken over in one domain after another by another.

**Attitudes and values**. Positive attitudes support efforts to use the minority language in a variety of domains, and this helps people resist the pressure from the majority group to switch their language. There are certain social factors which seem to retard wholesale language shift for a minority language group, at least for a time.

First, where language is considered an important symbol of a minority group’s identity. Second, if families a minority group live near each other frequently. Another factor which may contribute to language maintenance for those who emigrate is the degree and frequency of contact with the homeland. Factors contributing to language shift, those are economic, social, and political factors. The most obvious factor is that the community sees an important reason for learning the second language.

The second important factor is their ethnic language. Demographic factor are also relevant in accounting for the speed of language shift. Resistance to language shift tends to last longer in rural than in urban areas. Shift tends to occur faster in some groups than in other. The size of the group is sometimes a critical factor.

Although the pressures to shift are strong, members of a minority community can take active steps to protect its language. Where a language is rated as high in status by its users, and yet also regarded as a language of solidarity to be used between minority group members. Different factors combine in different ways in each social context, and the result are rarely predictable. Monolingualism is regarded as normal, bilingualism is considered unusual. Bilingualism and multilingulism which is normal.

**Factors contributing to language shift:**

1.      Economic, social and political factor

1-The dominant language is associated with social status and prestige

2-Obtaining work is the obvious economic reason for learning another language

3-The pressure of institutional domains such as schools and the media

2.      Demographic factors

1-Language shift is faster in urban areas than rural

2-The size of the group is some times a critical factor

3-Intermarriage between groups can accelerate language shift

3.      Attitudes and values

Language shift is slower among communities where the minority language is highly valued, therefore when the language is seen as an important symbol of ethnic identity its generally maintained longer, and visa versa.

·         **LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE**

Language maintenance is the degree to which an individual or grups continues to use their language, particulary in bilingual or multilingual area or among imigrant grup whereas language shift is the process by which a new language is acquired by new community usually resulting with the loss of the community’s first language.

Language maintenance refers to the situation where speech commuity continues to use its traditional language in the face of a host of condition that might foster a shift to another language.

If language maintenance does not occur, there can be several results. One is language death; speakers become bilingual, younger speakers become dominant in another language, and the language is said to die. The speakers or the community does not die, of course, they just become a subset of speakers of another language. The end result is language shift for the population, and if the language isn't spoken elsewhere, it dies.

1. *English as an International language*

\*English is the language on which sun does not set, and whose users never sleep.

\*English is manifested in the form of a Triad or three major circles:

1. English as a National language: ENL
2. English as a Second language:ESL
3. English as a Foreign language:EFL

\*The major factors that contribute to the survival of English are:

1. The role played by Media and Laws.
2. The cultural and economic conditions.
3. Colonialism and Globalization.
4. Historical events: WWs and the Industrial revolution.

\*English leaves the ground for a wide range of controversial questions:

1. The issue of prestige.
2. The globalization of English gives birth to the notion of ‘englishes’.
3. The idea of intelligibility and mutual understanding.
4. The difference between Speech community and Speech Fellowship.
5. The nativization of English and the Englishization of other languages.

\*Quirk insists on the necessity of codification and the maintenance of a standard English.