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UNIT-I

INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS

1.0

1.1 Linguistics/lnɪ'gwɪstɪks/ refers to the scientific study of language and its structure, including the study of grammar, syntax, and phonetics. Specific branches of linguistics include sociolinguistics, dialectology, psycholinguistics, computational linguistics, comparative linguistics, and structural linguistics.

WHAT IS LINGUISTICS?

Linguistics is defined as the scientific study of language. It is the systematic study of the elements of language and the principles governing their combination and organization.

Linguistics provides for a rigorous experimentation with the elements or aspects of language that are actually in use by the speech community. It is based on observation and the data collected thereby from the users of the language, a scientific analysis is made by the investigator and at the end of it he comes out with a satisfactory explanation relating to his field of study. This sort of systematic study of language has rendered the traditional method language study outmoded or unfit for any theorization.

Linguistics analyzes human language as a system for relating sounds (or signs in signed languages) and meaning. Phonetics studies acoustic and articulatory properties of the production and perception of speech sounds and non-speech sounds. The study of language meaning, on the other hand, deals with how languages encode relations between entities, properties, and other aspects of the world to convey, process, and assign meaning, as well as to manage and resolve ambiguity. While the study of semantics typically concerns itself with truth conditions, pragmatics deals with how context influences meanings.

Grammar is a system of rules which govern the form of the utterances in a given language. It encompasses both sound and meaning, and includes phonology (how sounds or gestures function together), morphology (the formation and composition of words), and syntax (the formation and composition of phrases and sentences from words).

SCIENTIFIC NATURE OF LINGUISTICS:

Is language amenable to scientific study? To answer such a question, the term Science needs to be defined. Science can be defined as a systematic, explicit and objective study of an object or a phenomenon, natural or social. Science engages in: Analysis of the data; Gathering of data in a methodical manner ; Determination of the relationship between facts; Verification and validation of Data; Formulation of causal explanation ; Generalization in relation to explanations and predictions .In short, Science is committed to empirically provable/proven ideas. Empirical proof or objective truth is the hallmark of science.

In the context of language study, Science implies a systematic investigation into language by means of controlled and objectively verifiable propositions based on observations and within the framework of some general theories governing language. Linguistic procedure involves generating testable hypothesis in order to make predictions about language. In case the

hypothesis is found to be false and does not fit into a generalized theoretical framework, it is modified or refuted and an alternative hypothesis is formulated with a view to arriving at absolute truth unshakable by criticism. In this respect linguistics is supposed to have the hallmark of Science (Linguistics is a Science because it follows the general methodology of science, i.e. controlled observation, hypothesis-formation, analysis, generalization, prediction, testing the further observation and confirmation, modification or rejection of the hypothesis with a goal to formulate an alternative hypothesis).

Linguistics has two major aims:

i. to study the nature of language and establish a theory of language and ii. to describe a language and all languages by applying the theory established. To be scientific, the linguistic procedure should satisfy three essential conditions -- explicitness, systematicity and objectivity. In traditional grammar, there is no explicitness at all. Traditional grammar begins with definitions. Many of these definitions lack clarification. The noun, for example, is defined as the name of a person, place or a thing. This definition does not encompass human qualities such as love, sympathy, beauty, etc. However they are treated under the head of abstract nouns. But the definition of noun does not give any information about abstract nouns.

In traditional grammar, words such as truth, beauty, courage, love, hatred etc. are categorized as noun but the question arises whether they are the names of things at all as the definition claims. The classification of words into parts of speech is also problematic. Traditional Grammarians say that parts of speech are eight in number:- noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjections. Again the question arises whether the articles “a”, “an” and “the” and the demonstrators, “this” and “that” are not parts of speech at all. Similarly the traditional definition of a verb as “a doing, being or having word” is also narrow and defective. This definition does not take into consideration the verbal nouns or gerunds such as running, washing and swimming etc. It ignores that these words can be used both as verbs and as nouns. In short, traditional grammar lacks explicitness. It is rather vague. Language study, should never be vague.

Another thing to be considered is that the study of language should be systematic. Systematicness can be ensured by following the steps in scientific method. It involves formulation of hypothesis, observation, collection, classification and analysis of data, generalization, verification, modification, or rejection of hypothesis and theorization. In short, systematicness implies linguistic framework, procedures and consistency throughout the study.

Objectivity is another criterion of scientific study of language. Objectivity means a relative freedom from subjective biases which inevitably distort the accuracy of a research report. Objectivity means an observation uninfluenced by one’s personal biases, prejudices, beliefs or values. In other words, the problem of objectivity in linguistics is in fact one of knowing reality about language in general.

MODERN LINGUISTICS

Linguistics is the systematic study of the elements of language and the principles governing their combination and organization. Philology was the older term used to refer to the study of language. Philology was rather comparative and historical. A comparative study of language focuses on the similarities and differences within a family of related languages. A historical

study analyses the evolution of a family of languages or the changes that occur within a particular language, over a long course of time. This type of study of the changes in language over a span of time is called diachronic study. On the other hand, an analysis of the systematic interrelation of the elements of a single language at a particular time is called synchronic study.

A new approach to the study of language began with the experiments and observation made by Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist. He is regarded as the father of modern linguistics. He considered language as a self-sufficient system. His lectures on language were published from student's notes in 1916, three years after his death. These lectures have been translated as *Course in General Linguistics*.

Important contributions to linguistics were also made by American descriptive and structural linguists. Edward Sapir and Leonard Bloom Field were notable among them. A basic text in American linguistics is Bloomfield's 'Language' (1919).

Saussure introduced new concepts and procedures in analyzing language. The following are some of the major terms and concepts introduced by him.

SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC APPROACH

Saussure introduced time concept in the study of language. Language can be studied over a span of time as well as at a point of time. The former, he called diachronic, and the latter, synchronic. Diachronic approach to the language study focuses on the changes in language over language over a span of time. Language is evolutionary and is not static. If we compare a passage from the fourteenth century English poet Geoffrey Chaucer with modern English, it will be clear that language has changed considerably. Diachronic study implies the study of the changes in language over a span of time.

Synchronic approach to the study of language focuses on the systematic interconnections and rules of a long course of time. It is rather comparative and historical. It is comparative in the sense that it analyses the similarities and differences within a family of related languages. It is historical, because it focuses on the evolution of a family of languages or on the changes that occur within a particular combinations and organization of the constituent elements of a single language at a particular time.

Saussure emphasizes the importance of seeing language as a living phenomenon. He laid the stress on studying speech habits of the community speaking a given language. He analyzes the underlying system of a language in order to demonstrate the integrated structure. He placed language in social context. As against the total historical study of language, Saussure stressed the importance of seeing language existing as a state at particular point of time. Synchronic linguistics sees language as a living whole.

LANGUE AND PAROLE

Saussure introduced an important distinction between langue and parole. A parole is any particular meaningful utterance. It may be spoken or written. It refers to the actual concrete act of speaking on the part of the individual. It is personal, dynamic and social activity. It exists at a particular time and place and in a particular context. It is the only object available for direct observation by linguists. It is similar to Chomsky's idea of performance.

Langue, on the other hand implies the underlying rules governing the combination and organization of the elements of language. It is the implicit system of elements, of distinctions and oppositions. It is the langue which makes it possible for a speaker to make an utterance and the listener to understand the same. In short, langue = grammar + vocabulary + pronunciation system of a linguistic community.

Competence and performance Noam Chomsky has substituted Saussure's concept of language and parole with competence and performance. Competence is the tacit knowledge on the part of native speakers who have mastered or internalized the implicit conventions and rules of a language system. It is the competence which enables the speaker to make meaningful utterances and the listener to understand well-formed and meaningful utterances. Performance on the other hand is the actual utterance of particular sentences.

Semiotics and Semiology

The terms semiotics and semiology are alternative names used to refer to the systematic study of signs. The only difference is that the term semiotics was introduced by the American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce and the term semiology was used by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure held the view that language is a semiotic system. (i.e. language is a system signs). Each linguistic sign is composed of a 'signifier' and the 'signified' 'Signifier' + signified -> sign. Signifier is the phonic or the graphic part of the sign. The signified is the referent or the concept or idea behind the signifier. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is purely arbitrary. This means that there is no positive relationship between the signifier and the signified.

Linguistics is descriptive

The modern linguists value all varieties of language. The distinction between spoken or written, formal or informal, regional or social and domestic or professional varieties of language has become blurred in modern linguistics. Language is never static but dynamic. A particular variety of language cannot be considered to be superior to the other varieties. The concept of homogeneity of language has no place in modern linguistics. It is not possible that all members of a given speech community speak exactly the same language. There exist differences in accent, vocabulary, and style even among people who speak the same language. This gives rise to the notion of idiolect or the speech of a given person and dialect or the speech habits of the people inhabiting a given geographical area. Countless varieties are possible in human speech. Register, jargon, slang and cant are examples of such varieties. If a language variety has certain features which are typical of certain disciplines/topics/occupation and social roles placed by the speaker, it is referred to as register. E.g. the journalistic register and the legal register, scientific register. Jargon is a term used to refer to set of words or expressions used by a specific group among themselves. Every trade has its own jargon. Slang is an extreme form of informality in the use of language. Cant is a term used to mean the secret language used by a class or sect.

The task of linguists is to describe the way people actually speak or write their language. Their task is not to prescribe the rules governing the use of language. This is what Saussure meant when he says that Linguistics is descriptive, not prescriptive.

The traditional grammarians were prescriptive. The prescriptive grammarians tell the speakers what forms they should use and what they should not. They blindly follow the conventions

accepted by their predecessors. But modern linguists describe how language functions. Both the prescriptive and descriptive linguists use rules. But the prescriptive rules are rigid whereas the rule of descriptive grammar is flexible. The descriptive linguists agree to the idea that linguistic change is natural. The prescriptive grammarians have the false notion of the purity of language. They conceived language as static. They considered the spoken form of language inferior to the written form.

INTER DISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN LINGUISTICS

Interdisciplinary approach in linguistics implies connecting the study to other branches of knowledge and areas of life and experience. Linguistics has developed various dimensions. Scientists say that language is connected with the brain functions. This has led to the development of a new discipline called Neurolinguistics. Neurolinguists have studied the biological foundations of language and the brain mechanism underlying its acquisition and use. They have found that language is the function of the left hemisphere of the brain. Injuries to the left hemisphere result in language disorders called aphasia. Noam Chomsky, the great American linguist regards language as a cognitive system. According to him, the speaker of a language has certain mental structure which is different from that of a speaker who speaks another language. The study of the linguistic cognitive system has led to the growth of new disciplines such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and Neurolinguistics.

Psycholinguistics deals with the connection between language and the mind. It is the study of how the mentally represented grammar of language is employed in the production and comprehension of speech. In Chomskian terms, the mentally represented grammar of language is linguistic competence and the actual production and comprehension of utterance is linguistic performance. Language acquisition by children is one of the most prominent areas of Psycholinguistics.

Socio linguistics is the study of language in relation to society. It is the study of how human beings acquire language and how we use language to speak and understand. Sociolinguistics is the converging point where the methodological perspectives in both sociology and linguistics converge in the analysis of language in connection with society. Each language follows its own pattern and system. It is culture and societal relationships that determine such things. Sociolinguistics studies the verbal behavior of the individual who is a member of the speech community. Language behavior is manifested as individual speaker's utterances. The speaker, the listener as well as the observer can observe the language behavior of people engaged in communication. A language system is a social phenomenon which is purely abstract and has no physical existence. It gets actualized on particular occasions in the language behavior of individual members of a linguistic community. Sociolinguistics emphasizes the variability of language. They acknowledge the multiplicity of languages.

Idiolect, dialect, register, bilingualism, multilingualism are some of the basic terms associated with it. Dialects are varieties of a language which differ in grammar vocabulary and pronunciation. Dialect refers to the linguistic norm specific to a geographical area, social class or status affecting mutual intelligibility. No individual speaks alike. Idiolect is the totality of the speech habits of an individual. A collection of similar idiolects make up dialect. If a language variety has certain features which are typical of certain disciplines/topics/fields/occupations and social roles played by a speaker, it is referred to a register (e.g. Journalistic register or the language of the journalists; the legal register, the

language of law/ lawyers; the scientific register, the language of science, and so on). Two or more languages that come into contact may influence one other. A monolingual person is someone who has the ability to use only one language. A bilingual person can use two languages. A multilingual person can use more than two languages. All these concepts come under the purview of sociolinguistics.

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Many topics fall under this umbrella. At the heart of linguistics is an understanding of:

- the unconscious knowledge that humans have about language
- how children acquire language
- the structure of language in general and of particular languages
- how languages vary
- how language influences the way in which we interact with each other and think about the world

Linguistics is considered as a science:

Linguists investigate how people acquire their knowledge about language, how this knowledge interacts with other cognitive processes, how it varies across speakers and geographic regions, and how to model this knowledge computationally. They study how to represent the structure of the various aspects of language (such as sounds or meaning), how to account for different linguistic patterns theoretically, and how the different components of language interact with each other. Linguists develop and test scientific hypotheses. Many linguists appeal to statistical analysis, mathematics, and logical formalism to account for the patterns they observe.

Linguistics offers insight into one of the most intriguing aspects of human knowledge and behavior. Doing linguistics means that one will learn about many aspects of human language, including sounds (phonetics, phonology), words (morphology), sentences (syntax), and meaning (semantics). It can involve looking at how languages change over time (historical linguistics); how language varies from situation to situation, group to group, and place to place (sociolinguistics, dialectology); how people use language in context (pragmatics, discourse analysis); how to model aspects of language (computational linguistics); how people acquire or learn language (language acquisition); and how people process language (psycholinguistics, experimental linguistics).

Linguistics programs may be organized around different aspects of the field. For example, in addition to or instead of the above areas, a program might choose to focus on a particular language or group of languages; how language relates to historical, social, and cultural issues (anthropological linguistics); how language is taught in a classroom setting, or how students learn language (applied linguistics); or how linguistics is situated in the cognitive sciences. (<http://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/why-major-linguistics>)

Goals for the Students of Linguistics

Doing linguistics may also complement the linguistic studies with courses in related areas, such as cognitive psychology, cognitive science, philosophy, anthropology, computer science, or communication sciences. Doing linguistics forms part of an interdisciplinary program of study. If one goes for a secondary specialization in one of the areas - cognitive psychology, cognitive science, philosophy, anthropology, computer science, or communication sciences, one gets to find how the other subject area knowledge complements

linguistics nicely, and brings one additional training and enhanced efficiency to handle research, do laboratory work, arrive at valid inferences and concrete findings in the best spirit of scientific study

The Students of Linguistics are certain to find the Study of Linguistics helpful to develop appreciation of general properties of language, including systematicity of language. They may account for how language can spread geographically; how languages change over time ;what are common cross-linguistic patterns; what are language universals; what is the scientific importance of all languages/dialects; what are the properties of signed as well as spoken languages; what could be the potential effects of social factors; what is the value of describing language as a formal system.

They are also to learn ways to study language in a scientific way gathering data and making observations; hypothesis formation and testing; making predictions about possible vs. impossible patterns; gaining empirical advantages of working with large amounts of data. They can develop competence in linguistic analysis, including analysis of sound, word, and sentence structures of individual languages; do modelling language as a formal system; improve general academic skills, writing skills, reasoning skills, and strengthen ability to focus on/pinpoint a problem.

In other words, Goals of the Linguistics Program are those to make students aware of the intricacies of their native language ,to give students tools to learn other languages, to make them better language learners, to prepare students to work with people of different linguistic backgrounds ,to help students understand the role language plays in human society, to make students aware of the causes of language stereotypes, such as those dealing with Black English, regional accents and sign language ,to encourage students to discuss and evaluate language policies, such as bilingual education and “English Only” laws, to add a linguistic component to their major field of study, be it in humanities, education, social sciences, behavioral sciences, or natural sciences.(<http://linguistics.missouristate.edu/61848.htm>)

Science is the pursuit of objective knowledge/understanding (Greek *epistēmē*, German *Erkenntnis*). The attainment of such knowledge is its ultimate goal. This goal is itself subordinate to the goal of human life, which is the improvement of the *conditio humana*.

It is in the nature of human cognition – as opposed to God's cognition –, that it can be fully achieved only in communication. To say that the goal is objective knowledge is therefore almost tantamount to saying that it is rational communication. This rephrasing also serves the purpose of avoiding a static conception of ‘objective knowledge’. In the more specific discussion below, the role of communication in the achievements of the goals of a science will come up again.

Understanding has two sides, a spiritual and a practical one.

- On the spiritual side, the human mind is enriched if it understands something; and this in itself is a contribution to improving the *conditio humana*.
- On the practical side, understanding something is a presupposition for controlling it. Controlling¹ the world in which we live is another contribution to improving the *conditio humana*.

Some sciences make a stronger contribution to the spiritual side, others make a stronger contribution to the practical side. This is the basis for the distinction between pure and applied science.

Linguistics is the study of human language. Understanding this object has a purely spiritual aspect, which constitutes what might be called “pure linguistics” and what is more commonly called general linguistics. It also has a practical aspect, which concerns the role of languages in human lives and societies and the possibilities of improving it. This epistemic interest constitutes applied linguistics.

Given the divergence in the epistemic interest of pure and applied science, there can be no universal schema by which the goals and tasks of a science should be systematized. There is a basic distinction between logical, empirical and hermeneutic approaches. Linguistics shares components of all of them. Here we will focus on the tasks of linguistics as an empirical discipline. For such a discipline, the main tasks are:

1. elaboration of a theory of its object
2. documentation and description of its object
3. elaboration of procedures for the solution of practical problems in the object area.

In what follows, the main goals of linguistics will be characterized, at a general level, according to this schema.

Theory: the nature of human language

The spiritual aspect of the human understanding of some object is realized in the elaboration of a theory of that object. In this respect, the task of linguistics consists in the elaboration of a theory of human language and its relation to the languages. Its most important aspects include

- the structure(s) and function(s) of human language and languages
- the relationship between unity and diversity of human languages
- linguistic change
- acquisition of one's native language

In characterizing the nature of human language, linguistic theory also delimits it against other kinds of semiosis, both synchronically in the comparison of spoken and written languages with sign languages, whistling languages and, furthermore, with animal languages, and diachronically in the comparison with primate semiotic systems from which human language may have evolved.

Empiry: documentation and description of languages

As recalled above, linguistics is (among other things) an empirical science. In such a discipline, there is a necessary interrelation between the elaboration of a theory of the object and the description of the object; one informs the other. Furthermore, since speech and even languages are volatile, they have to be documented. The tasks of linguistics in this area may be systematized as follows:

1. language documentation: recording, representation, analysis and archiving of speech events and texts that represent a certain language
2. language description:

1. the setting of the language
 - ethnographic
 - social/cultural
 - genealogical
2. the language system:
 - semantic system: grammar, lexicon
 - expression systems: phonology, writing

The documentation of a language must be such that people who do not have access to the language itself can use the documentation as a surrogate for as many purposes as possible. In particular, it should be possible to develop a description of a language on the basis of its documentation.

The description makes explicit the meanings that the language expresses and the functions it fulfils – what it codes and what it leaves uncoded –, and represents the structure of the expressions that afford this. It does all of this in the most systematic and comprehensive way possible. Such a description may be used for a variety of purposes, most of which are mentioned below in the section on applied linguistics.

Both documentation and description take the historical dimension of the object into account. That is, in the synchronic perspective, they are systematic, while in the diachronic perspective, they are historical.

Practice: application of linguistics

The daily use of language for communication and cognition is replete with all kinds of tasks and problems that require science for a proper solution. Some of them are:

- compilation of grammars, dictionaries and text editions for various purposes
- native and foreign language teaching
- testing of linguistic proficiency
- standardizing and planning languages
- devising and improving writing systems
- development and maintenance of special languages and terminologies
- analysis and alleviation of communication problems in social settings
- diagnosis and therapy of aphasic impairments
- intercultural communication, translation and interpreting
- communication technology: speech technology, automatic speech and text production and analysis, machine translation, corpus exploitation ...

The descriptions produced in “pure” linguistics – not only descriptive linguistics, but also socio-, psycho-, neuro-, ethno- etc. linguistics – are exploited for the formulation of technical procedures by which tasks arising in the fields enumerated may be solved. And contrariwise, the demands arising from those practical fields are taken as challenges by theoretical and descriptive linguistics to produce theories and descriptions that respond to them.

Methodology: epistemological reflection and working tools

The nature of the goal of science – objective knowledge – requires the elaboration and testing of methods by which putative knowledge may be attained, verified/falsified and applied in the solution of practical or interdisciplinary problems.

- The epistemological side of this activity is a stock-taking of the particular nature of the activity of the linguist, its goals, conditions and possibilities. There will be reflection on the logical, empirical and hermeneutic nature of the object of linguistics and the approaches appropriate to each facet.
- The operational side of methodology is the elaboration of particular methods within such a methodological frame of the discipline. Given the interplay of specific aspects of the linguistic object with specific problems and purposes, specific sets of methods may be developed to deal adequately with such aspects of the object, to solve such problems and serve such purposes. This involves
 - in the deductive perspective, the operationalization of concepts and theorems and the elaboration of tests
 - in the inductive perspective, the elaboration of standards of representation of linguistic data and of tools for processing them.

While a contribution from general epistemology may be expected for the epistemological side of linguistic methodology, its operational side is entirely the responsibility of the particular discipline. Its status as a scientific discipline crucially depends on its fulfillment of this task.

Cooperation: interdisciplinary fertilization

The articulation of science into disciplines is, first of all, a necessity of the division of labor. As observed above, a particular discipline is constituted by the combination of an object with an epistemic interest. The object is just a segment of the overall object area susceptible of scientific insight, the epistemic interest depends on all kinds of factors, and the combinations of these two elements are consequently manifold. In other words, no discipline is autonomous and self-contained. The contribution that it makes to human understanding can only be assessed if it is compared and combined with other disciplines.

The theories developed by a discipline must define their object in such a way that it becomes transparent where they leave off, i.e. where the interfaces for the combination of related theories are. And they must be formulated in such a way that non-specialists can understand them and relate them to the epistemic interest pursued by them. Thus, a linguistic theory has to make explicit what it purports to cover and what not – for instance, only the linguistic system, not its use –; and linguists should say what they think is required for taking care of the rest. Moreover, the products of linguistic description and documentation must be represented in such a way that non-linguists may use them. For instance, there must be

- grammars usable by foreign language curriculum designers
- semantic descriptions usable by ethnographers
- models of linguistic competence testable by neurologists
- formal grammatical descriptions usable by programmers.

Finally, linguistics must be capable of and receptive in taking up insights and challenges from other disciplines. For instance,

- phonological concepts must be related to phonetic concepts
- models of linguistic activity must be inspired by findings of psychology and neurology

- models of linguistic competence must be able to account for the performance of plurilingual persons.

Interdisciplinary cooperation is the touchstone of the communicative capacity of a scientific community. A discipline that can neither inspire other disciplines nor be inspired by them gets isolated and unnecessary.

Variation in linguistics

Variation is a basic fact about language and has to be accounted for by every linguistic theory. One of the very first issues in designing a research project is how one is going to deal with the kinds of variation that appear in the data. We will first discuss variation in the data and then theoretical approaches to variation.

1. Variation in the data

The general object of any linguistic description is a certain language. Naturally, no single scientific investigation can hope to grasp a language in its entirety. Even if the topic is restricted to a very specific problem of the language system, e.g. the structure of the relative clause, the object language still has to be delimited by reference to the **dimensions of variation of language use (diachronic, diatopic, diastratic, diaphasic)**.

Here the task of the linguist is janus-headed:

1. Delimit the variety to be described explicitly against everything else. For instance, if all your data comes from one dialect of the language, then that dialect, and not the entire language, is the object of your study.
2. See to it that the remaining variation allowed for by your definition and actually occurring in the variety you are describing is adequately represented in your data.

The twofold principle demands that the researcher diversify his database so that it exhibits all the variation possible within the scope of his concern. On the other hand, if one has not been able to represent the factual variation adequately in one's data, or if variants have crept into the data that belong to varieties that had been excluded in the delimitation of the object, then data representing varieties that one cannot responsibly account for may be eliminated. For instance, it is often practically impossible to obtain data from all the dialects of the object language. On the other hand, as a consequence of mobility, the speech community providing the informants and the data may be heterogeneous in terms of provenience, and, thus, of dialects spoken. Consequently, in analysing the data, it may be necessary to throw out data stemming from other dialects.

If one wants to hedge one's empirical generalizations statistically, one must obtain a **sample** of data that is statistically representative. For a sample to be **representative** means that every element in the population has the same chance of being included in the sample. The safe way of achieving this is to take a random sample. Often, that is not possible for practical reasons. Then one may structure the sample along a parameter that is of practical importance and that may prove influential; and one then takes a sample of equal size for each of the values of that parameter. For instance, if I study Shakespeare's language, I might take a random sample from all of his works. The more practical, and probably more interesting, alternative is to take 100 running lines from each of five selected pieces and code all of the data as to which of the pieces they stem from. One may then observe the variation in each of the five samples, calculate the **statistical parameters** for them, and by comparing these (technically, by calculating the **standard error**), one may ascertain the probability that the

five pieces one had selected are representative of the population, i.e. Shakespeare's work (technically, that any other five Shakespearian pieces would have yielded the same statistical mean).

Similarly, if one strives for representativeness of one's data of a language, one may try to achieve it for those parameters that one knows, i.e. that one knows the possible values of. For instance, if I want my generalizations to be valid both for the spoken and for the written variety of a language, I take two samples, one of each variety.

In linguistics, the proportion that each of the possible parameter values occupies in the population is practically never known. For instance, it may seem relevant to represent the spoken and the written variety of a language proportionately according to their quantitative share in everyday communication. However, that notion is impossible to operationalize. Consequently, representativity of linguistic data practically never means statistical representativity. In practice, one must be content to have the existent varieties represented in the corpus at all.

2. Variation in linguistic theory

Any empirical generalization is a statement about a principle obtaining in the variation. Since linguistic activity is goal-directed, it obeys a **teleonomic hierarchy**. Consequently, any generalization abides at a certain level of abstractness. It ascertains something which, at that level, may appear as an **invariant**, but which at a higher level of the hierarchy may just be a variant means for a higher goal.

Consider **color terminology** as an example. Starting with Berlin & Kay 1969, there was much comparative linguistic research in basic color terminology. It found out that the basic color terms of a language form a system structured by a couple of implicational generalizations which permitted setting up a hierarchy of basic color terms. This, in turn, was related to the physiology of color perception.

Now the existence of basic color terms in languages is an empirical fact which is not deducible from any theory. There might be a language that lacks basic color terms. According to Levinson 2000, Yéǎidnye is such a language. Now the issue is what to make of the methodological situation reached by that finding. There was a set of generalizations on basic color terminology that were thought to represent a universal about human language. Now these generalizations have been falsified in a certain respect. However, just as it was wrong to mistake the generalizations for universals, so it would be wrong to now discard them as worthless because they were falsified. Instead, what we have is a set of languages – apparently the vast majority – that follows one principle, providing basic terms for a set of colors, and another set of languages – apparently the far minority – that designates color perceptions by reusing words from other semantic areas. The two alternative principles are obviously variants subordinate to an even more abstract principle having to do with color perception and its linguistic representation. The principle remains to be found. If the scientist finds out that no generalization is possible at a certain level, he does not throw in the towel or think he has found an important argument for linguistic relativism or particularism, but instead he learns that his principle was not abstract enough and that he must look for a higher principle.

Major Branches of Linguistics

The following section deals with various branches of linguistics:

Subfields of linguistics

- Theoretical linguistics - the study of language in abstract and model form
 - Cognitive linguistics - the study of language and cognition (thinking)
 - Generative linguistics - the theory of grammar as a mental system that generates complete sentences
 - Functional theories of grammar - language as used and coming from use
 - Quantitative linguistics - the study of mathematical language laws and corresponding general theories
 - Phonology - the usage of vocalized sounds and systems of sounds to form language
 - Graphemics - the study of language writing systems
 - Morphology - the property of sound and meaning change in language
 - Syntax - the property of grammar that governs sentence structure
 - Lexis - the complete set of words in a language
 - Semantics - the study of meaning as encoded in language
 - Pragmatics - the study of how context contributes to meaning
- Descriptive linguistics - describing how a particular language is used
 - Anthropological linguistics - *the place of language in its wider social and cultural context, and its role in making and maintaining cultural practices and societal structures*
 - Historical linguistics - study of historical language change over time
 - Comparative linguistics - comparing languages to find similarities and historical connections
 - Phonetics - the study of the speech faculty
 - Graphetics - the study of writing shapes as assigned to sounds or ideas
 - Etymology - the study of word histories and origins
 - Sociolinguistics - the study of society's effects on language
- Applied linguistics - finding solutions to real-life problems related to language
 - Computational linguistics - the use of computation applied to language databasing, analysis, translation, and synthesis
 - Forensic linguistics - language science applied to the processes of law and justice
 - Internet linguistics - the study of language usage on the Internet
 - Language assessment - assessing first or second language faculty in individuals
 - Language documentation - comprehensive description of the grammar and use practices of languages of a particular group
 - Language revitalization - *is an attempt to halt or reverse the decline of a language or to revive an extinct one*
 - Language education - teaching specific language and language science
 - Linguistic anthropology - *study of how language influences social life*
- Psycholinguistics - *is the study of the psychological and neurobiological factors that enable humans to acquire, use, comprehend and produce language*
 - Language acquisition - the study of how children and adults acquire language knowledge and ability
 - Language development - the study of early language formation
 - Second-language acquisition - the study of how a second language is learned
 - Neurolinguistics - study of language from a neuroscience perspective

- Evolutionary linguistics - is a subfield of psycholinguistics that studies the psychosocial and cultural factors involved in the origin of language and the development of linguistic universals

Subfields, by linguistic structures studied

Sub-fields of structure-focused linguistics include:

- Phonetics – study of the physical properties of speech (or signed) production and perception
- Phonology – study of sounds (or signs) as discrete, abstract elements in the speaker's mind that distinguish meaning
- Morphology – study of internal structures of words and how they can be modified
- Syntax – study of how words combine to form grammatical sentences
- Semantics – study of the meaning of words (lexical semantics) and fixed word combinations (phraseology), and how these combine to form the meanings of sentences
- Pragmatics – study of how utterances are used in communicative acts – and the role played by context and nonlinguistic knowledge in the transmission of meaning
- Discourse analysis – analysis of language use in texts (spoken, written, or signed)
- Linguistic typology – comparative study of the similarities and differences between language structures in the world's languages.

Subfields, by nonlinguistic factors studied

- Applied linguistics – study of language-related issues applied in everyday life, notably language policies, planning, and education. (Constructed language fits under Applied linguistics.)
- Biolinguistics – study of natural as well as human-taught communication systems in animals, compared to human language.
- Clinical linguistics – application of linguistic theory to the field of Speech-Language Pathology.
- Computational linguistics – study of linguistic issues in a way that is 'computationally responsible', i.e., taking careful note of computational consideration of algorithmic specification and computational complexity, so that the linguistic theories devised can be shown to exhibit certain desirable computational properties implementations.
- Developmental linguistics – study of the development of linguistic ability in individuals, particularly the acquisition of language in childhood.
- Evolutionary linguistics – study of the origin and subsequent development of language by the human species.
- Historical linguistics – study of language change over time. Also called diachronic linguistics.
- Language geography – study of the geographical distribution of languages and linguistic features.
- Neurolinguistics – study of the structures in the human brain that underlie grammar and communication.
- Psycholinguistics – study of the cognitive processes and representations underlying language use.
- Sociolinguistics – study of variation in language and its relationship with social factors.

- Stylistics – study of linguistic factors that place a discourse in context.

Other subfields of linguistics

- Contrastive linguistics
- Corpus linguistics
- Dialectology
- Discourse analysis
- Grammar
- Interlinguistics
- Language didactics
- Language learning
- Language teaching
- Language for specific purposes
- Lexicology
- Linguistic statistics
- Orthography
- Rhetoric
- Text linguistics

Major Linguists and their Contribution

Scholars having a significant influence on the development of the field of Linguistics include the following noteworthy figures. Their contribution is immense in the shaping of Linguistics as an important field of study. Some of them need to be discussed here for an understanding of their major role in the emergence and establishment of Linguistics as a distinct field of study. We have discussed the following figures here: John Langshaw Austin, Leonard Bloomfield, Noam Chomsky, M.A.K. Halliday, Louis Hjelmslev, Roman Jakobson, Edward Sapir, Ferdinand de Saussure, John R. Searle, and Benjamin Lee Whorf.

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-

<https://linguistics.washington.edu/learning-goals>) .

<http://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/why-major-linguistics>)

EXERCISES

A. Answer the following questions in one or two sentences each.

1. Define the term ‘linguistics’

2. Distinguish between langue and parole.

of the elements of language. It is the implicit system of elements, of distinctions and opposition

3. What is Dialect?

4. What is Idiolect?

5. Distinguish between the signifier and the signified.

6. Distinguish between Competence and performance.

7. What is a sign?

8. Descriptive and prescriptive approaches to the study of language,

9. What is Psycho-linguistics?

10. What is Socio-linguistics?

11. What is Neuro-linguistics?

12. Distinguish between Semiology and Semiotics.

13. What is Register?

14. Bilingualism. It refers to an individual’s equal and native command of two or more languages.

B. Answer the following questions in a paragraph:

1. Distinguish between the synchronic and diachronic approach to language study.

C. Write an essay on the following questions in not more than 400 words.

1. Basic assumption of modern linguistics.

UNIT II: PHONOLOGY OF ENGLISH AND PHONETICS

2.0 Introduction

Phonetics (from the Greek word *phone* which means ‘sound’ or ‘voice’) is a branch of linguistics that studies speech sounds and their production, audition, and Perception. There are three main areas of phonetics:

- a) Articulatory phonetics: it deals with the production of speech sounds, their description, and transcription (i.e. writing them with the help of symbols)
- b) Acoustic Phonetics: it deals with the transmission of speech sounds through the air. Various instruments are used to measure the characteristic of these sound waves.
- c) Auditory phonetics- it deals with how speech sounds are received and perceived by the listener.

After reading this unit you will be able to describe in detail the stages, processes, and organs involved in the production of human speech.

2.1 Objectives

In this unit you will learn:

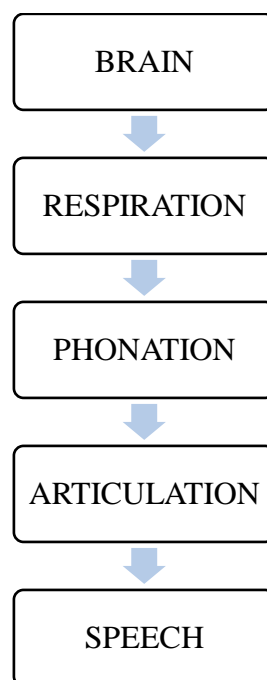
- about mechanism of speech production
- about organs of speech

2.2 Mechanism of Speech Production

Speech is the result of many interlinked intricate processes that need to be performed with precision. The term ‘speech’ refers to the human ability to articulate thoughts in an audible form. In this unit, our discussion will be delimited to the physiological processes involved in the production of different sounds. These include the brain, the respiratory organs, and the organs in our neck and mouth.

A Speech event involves a series of operations. It starts as a concept in the brain and its linguistic codification and transmitted by the nerves to the speech organs, i.e. it moves

through the physiological processes of respiration, phonation and articulation to produce sounds or 'speech'. The movement of these organs create sound waves in the air which are received by the listener's ear. These sounds are then received and perceived through biological and neurological processes in the listener's brain, where they are interpreted in linguistic terms. The lungs are the primary organs involved in the respiratory stage, the larynx is involved in the phonation stage and the organs in the mouth are involved in the articulatory stage.



Check Your Progress/Self Assessment Questions

1. _____ refers to the scientific study of speech sounds.
2. Acoustic phonetics deals with the _____ of speech sounds.
3. The _____ are the primary organs involved in the respiratory stage

2.3 Organs of speech

It may be surprising to know that half of the human body is needed for the production of speech. The organs of the human body which produce speech sounds are called organs of speech. The air that flows out of our mouth is modified into speech by the action of certain organs of our body which can be divided into the following groups:

- a. **The Respiratory System:** this comprises the lungs, the muscles of the chest and the windpipe which is also called the trachea.
- b. **The Phonatory System:** this comprises the Larynx. The vocal cords and glottis are situated in the larynx.
- c. **The Articulatory System:** this comprises of pharynx, oral and nasal cavities. The chief articulators in this system are the teeth, the tongue, the roof of the mouth and the lips

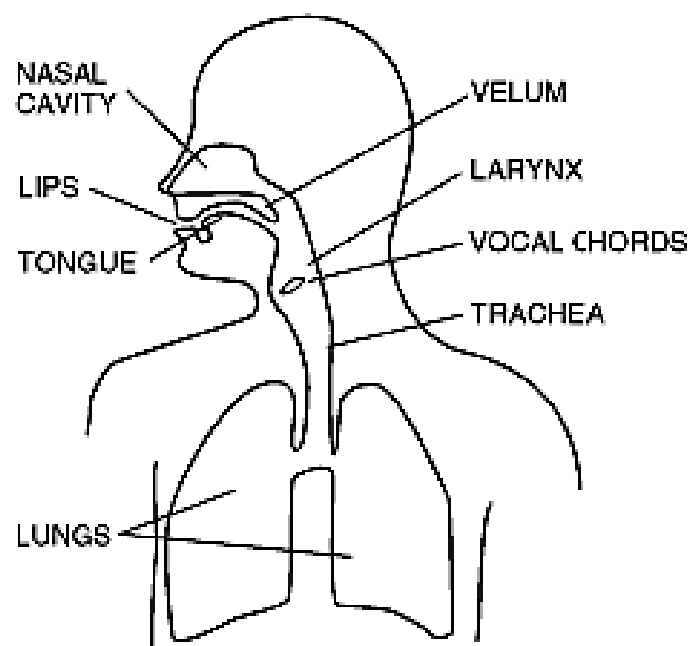


Fig:

Source: <http://easyenglish.yoo7.com/t30-topic>

2.3.1 The Respiratory System

The Respiratory system consists of the lungs and the respiratory muscles. The lungs are spongy bodies and they are made up of small sacs called the alveoli. It is in these sacs that the blood is cleaned of its carbon dioxide and provided with fresh oxygen from the outer air. Air is supplied to the alveoli by small tubes called bronchioles. The bronchioles come together into two large tubes called the bronchi which join the trachea or the windpipe. It is through the trachea that the air that we breathe in passes through the throat into the lungs. The act that is commonly known as respiration involves two processes:

- i. INSPIRATION: taking outer air into the lungs.
- ii. EXPIRATION: throwing out air from the lungs into the outer atmosphere

And here the walls of the lungs act as the initiator. They are moved by the respiratory muscles so that the air is drawn into the lungs or pushed out of them. When the air stream mechanism is used to push air out, it is called 'EGRESSIVE' and when it is used to draw air in; it is called 'INGRESSIVE'.

It is to be noted that most speech sounds make use of a pulmonic egressive air-stream mechanism. In fact all the sounds of English and most Indian languages (except Sindhi) are produced with this air stream mechanism.

2.3.2 The Phonatory System

The phonatory system comprises of the larynx, which is popularly called the Adam's Apple and is situated at the top of the windpipe. The air from the lungs has to come out through the windpipe and the larynx. In the larynx are situated a pair of lip-like structures called the Vocal Cords and these are horizontally placed from front to back. They are joined in the front but can be separated at the back, and the opening between them is called glottis.

Glottal position:

- i. When we breathe in and out, the vocal cords are drawn wide apart and thus the glottis is open. When we produce any speech sounds with open glottis, they are called VOICELESS SOUND/BREATHED SOUNDS. For example, the initial sound in the English words ‘fan’, ‘this’, ‘sell’, ‘hell’ etc.
- ii. The major role of the vocal cords is that of a vibrator in the production of voice, or phonation. If the vocal cords are loosely held together, the pressure of the air from the lungs makes them open and close rapidly. This is called the vibration of the vocal cords and the sounds produced when the vocal cords vibrate are called voiced sounds. For example, all the vowel sounds and the initial consonant sounds in the words ‘valley’, ‘zero’, ‘mad’, and ‘nail’ are voiced sounds.
- iii. The glottis may be held tightly closed to produce glottal stop or glottal catch (such as when the speakers of English make between the two ‘oh’s of “Oh-Oh” when said in surprise or reproof. The glottis may also be held open in such a way that, when the air passes through with sufficient energy, there is an audible glottal friction as in consonant sound /h/. In fact when we swallow food or water the vocal cords shut the glottis to stop food or water from entering the windpipe. Further, the number of times the vocal cords open or close per second determines the ‘pitch’ of our voice.

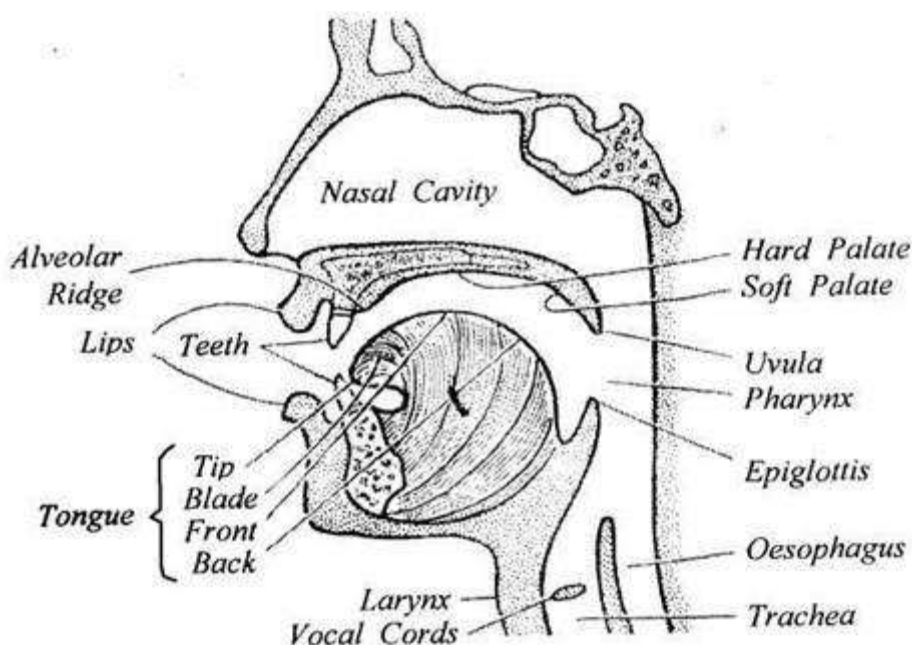
2.3.3 The Articulatory System

a. The Soft Palate: The roof of the mouth comprises the **teeth-ridge**, the **hard palate**, the **soft palate** and the **uvula**. If you run your tongue along the surface of the roof, you will find the first half of the palate, hard and the second half, soft. Of the organs comprising the roof of the mouth, the soft palate or the velum has to be considered in some detail. The soft palate acts like a valve in opening and closing the nasal passage of air. If the soft palate is raised so

that it touches the back wall of pharynx, the nasal passage is blocked. The air then cannot escape through the nose at all. There is no blockage of the oral passage of air and the air escapes through the mouth. The sounds during the production of which the air escapes only through the mouth are called ORAL sounds. All English sounds except /m/ /n/ /ŋ/ are oral sounds.

For example /p/, /b/ /t/, /ð/ as in the English words

The closure of the nasal passage of air by raising the velum is called VELIC CLOSURE.



Source: <https://mylektsii.ru/13-82697.html>

If the soft palate is lowered, the passage into the nose is opened. With the soft palate lowered, if the passage into the mouth is blocked (either by closing the lips or by making the tongue touch firmly some part of the roof of the mouth) the air from the lungs will escape into the outer atmosphere only through the nose. Sounds during the production of which the air escapes only through the nose are called NASAL SOUNDS.

For example /m/ /n/ /ŋ/ as in the English words ‘moon’, noon, ‘king’

Nasalised Sounds

There are certain sounds, during the articulation of which the soft palate is lowered, thus opening the nasal passage of air. But the oral passage of air is not blocked and thus both the oral and nasal passages are open. The air from the lungs will then escape simultaneously through the nose and the mouth. Such sounds are called NASALISED sounds. For example the last sound in the French word *Bon* (Good).

b. The Tongue: Among the organs of speech, the tongue is the chief articulator. It is capable of assuming a great variety of positions in the articulation of both vowels and consonants. The tongue is divided into the tip, the blade, the front, and the back. It is the position of the tongue which is largely responsible for the difference in the sounds of various vowels.

c. The Lips: The lips also have an important role to play in the production of speech sounds. The lips play their part in the articulation of certain consonants. For example, the consonant sounds /p/ and /b/ as in the words ‘pill’ and ‘bill’ are produced by closing the lips tightly and then releasing the closure abruptly to let out the air built up behind the closure. Lips also play an important part during the articulation of vowel sounds. For example, in producing the vowel sound /i:/ as in the word ‘seat’ the lips are spread. But when we produce the vowel sound /u:/ as in the word ‘food’ the lips are rounded.

d. Teeth and Teeth Ridge: Some consonants which are called dental sounds are produced with the help of teeth. For example, the initial consonants in the words ‘**th**ink’ and ‘**th**at’ are dental sounds. The teeth ridge is also called alveolar ridge. It is the convex part of the roof of the mouth situated behind the upper row of teeth. Sounds produced with the tongue touching the teeth-ridge are called alveolar sounds.

2.3.4 The Air-stream Mechanism

The energy for the production of speech is provided by the air-stream mechanism. There are three types of air-stream mechanism:

- a. **Pulmonic** air-stream mechanism- the lungs and the respiratory muscles set the air-stream in motion.
- b. **Glottalic** air-stream mechanism- the larynx with the glottis firmly closed, is moved up or down to initiate the air-stream.
- c. **Velaric** air-stream mechanism- the back of the tongue is in firm contact with the soft palate, and is pushed forward or pulled back to initiate the air stream.

Check Your Progress/Self Assessment Questions

4. The larynx is an articulator. (State whether true or false)
5. _____ air-stream mechanism uses the lungs and the respiratory muscles to set the air-stream in motion.
6. Sounds produced with the help of teeth are called _____ sounds.

2.4 Let us sum up

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Phonetics (from the Greek word *phone* which means ‘sound’ or ‘voice’) is a branch of linguistics that studies speech sounds and their production, audition, and Perception.
- A Speech event involves a series of operations. It starts as a concept in the brain and its linguistic codification and transmitted by the nerves to the speech organs, i.e. it moves through the physiological processes of respiration, phonation and articulation

to produce sounds or 'speech'. The movement of these organs create sound waves in the air which are received by the listener's ear. These sounds are then received and perceived through biological and neurological processes in the listener's brain, where they are interpreted in linguistic terms.

- The organs of the human body which produce speech sounds are called organs of speech. The air that flows out of our mouth is modified into speech by the action of certain organs of our body which can be divided into the following groups: the Respiratory system, the Phonatory system, and the Articulatory system.
- The lungs are the primary organs involved in the respiratory stage, the larynx is involved in the phonation stage and the organs in the mouth are involved in the articulatory stage.
- The energy for the production of speech is provided by the air-stream mechanism. There are three types of air-stream mechanism: **Pulmonic**, **Glottalic**, and **Velaric** air-stream mechanism.

2.5 Key Terms

- **Phonetics**
- **Articulatory Phonetics**
- **Acoustic phonetics**
- **Auditory phonetics**
- **Air-stream Mechanism**

2.6 Questions and Answers

2.6.1 Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the mechanism of speech production.

2. Write a note on air-stream mechanism.
3. Describe the role of the phonatory system in speech production.

2.6.2 Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the various organs of speech responsible for the production of speech sounds.
2. Distinguish between the phonatory system and articulatory system.

2.7 Further Readings/Suggested Readings

Balasubramanian, T. *A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students*. Macmillan, New Delhi, 1981.

Laver, John. *Principles of Phonetics*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.

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UNIT III: PHONOLOGY OF ENGLISH AND PHONETICS (CONTUNUED)

3.0 Introduction

Phonetics (from the Greek word *phone* which means ‘sound’ or ‘voice’) is a branch of linguistics that studies speech sounds and their production, audition, and Perception. Phonology refers to the study or description of the distinctive sound units of a language (phonemes) by means of distinctive features. Every language has a limited number of distinctive sound-units called ‘phonemes’. They are the smallest distinctive sound units in a specified language that distinguishes one word from another. The present unit deals with the production of speech sounds or phonemes in British English (R.P. i.e. Received Pronunciation), their description, and transcription (i.e. writing them with the help of symbols).

After reading this unit you will be able to identify and describe the vowels and consonant sounds in English.

3.1 Objectives

In this unit you will learn:

- about the vowel and consonant sounds in English
- about consonant clusters in English
- about word accent/stress and intonation

3.2 Description and Classification of Vowels and Consonants

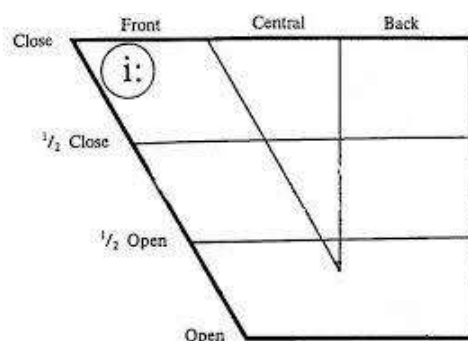
All speech sounds are divided into two broad categories- vowels and consonants. In the production of vowel sounds the air comes out freely through the mouth. There is no closure of air passage, or any friction or contact of the tongue or lips. Whereas in the production of

consonant sounds, the air passage is obstructed, or the flow of air is stopped as a result of narrowing, partial or complete closure of the air passage.

3.2.1 Description of Vowel Sounds

In the production of vowels the air from the lungs comes out in a continuous stream through the mouth, and the vocal cords vibrate to produce 'voice'. Vowels are generally described according to the following criteria:

- a) The part of the tongue that is raised towards the roof of the mouth- **front, centre, back**: Vowels in the production of which the part of the tongue that is raised is front are called front vowels; those in which it is the back are called back vowels, and those in which it is the centre are called central vowels.
- b) The extent to which the tongue is raised in the direction of the roof/plate- **close, half-close, half-open, open**: According to the degree to which the tongue is raised, vowels are divided into four categories- close (as near as possible to the roof of the mouth without causing friction or making a closure); half-close; half-open; and open.

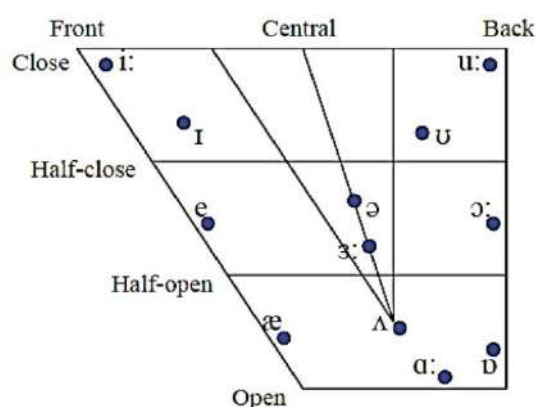


Source: <http://www.as.uniheidelberg.de/personen/Nesselhauf/files/downloads/Phonetics%20Nesselhauf%20Part%20III.pdf>

c) The kind of opening made at the lips- the lips can be spread or rounded: According to the degrees of lip rounding or spreading, vowels are described as **rounded** or **unrounded**.

Description of Pure Vowels in English

Vowels that are produced with the tongue remaining at just one position are called pure vowels. In pure vowels, the quality of the vowel does not change. The 12 (twelve) pure vowels in English (R.P.) are described below.

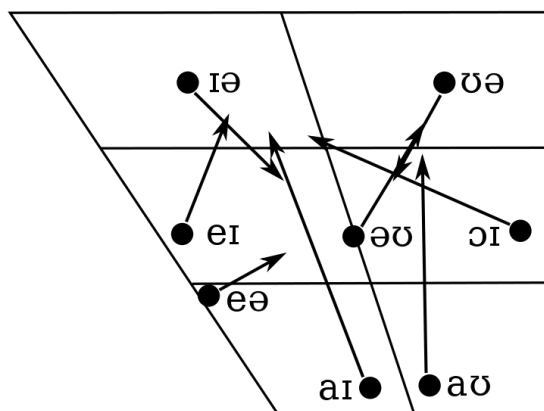


| Vowel | Description |
|-------|---|
| /ə/ | A central, unrounded vowel between half close and half-open |
| /ɑ:/ | A back, open unrounded vowel |
| /ɪ/ | A centralized front, just above half close, unrounded vowel |
| /i:/ | A front, close unrounded vowel |
| /ʊ/ | A centralised, back, rounded vowel just above half-close position |
| /u:/ | A back, close, rounded vowel |
| /e/ | A front, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open |
| /æ/ | A front, unrounded vowel just below the half-open position |
| /ʌ/ | A central, unrounded vowel, between open and half-open |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| /ɜ:/ or /ə:/ | A central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open |
| /ɒ/ or /ɔ:/ | A back, open, rounded vowel |
| /ɔ:/ | A back, rounded vowel, between half-open and half-close |

Description of Diphthongs or Glides in English

Vowels which involve a gliding movement from one quality to another are called diphthongs, if the glide takes place within the same syllable. During the production of these sounds the tongue glides from one point of articulation to another. The 8 (eight) diphthongs in English (R.P.) are described below.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/da/RP_English_diphthongs_chart.svg

| Vowel | Description |
|-------|---|
| /eɪ/ | A glide from a front, unrounded vowel just below half-close to a centralized, front, unrounded vowel just above half close. |
| /aɪ/ | A glide from a front, open, unrounded vowel to a centralized, front, unrounded vowel just above half close. |

| | |
|------|---|
| /ɔɪ/ | A glide from a back, rounded vowel between open and half-open to a centralized, front, unrounded vowel just above half close. |
| /ɪə/ | A glide from a centralized, front, unrounded vowel just above half-close to a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open. |
| /eə/ | A glide from a front, half-open unrounded vowel to a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open. |
| /ʊə/ | A glide from a centralized, back, rounded vowel just above half-close to a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open. |
| /aʊ/ | A glide from back, open, unrounded position to a centralized, back rounded vowel just above the half-close position. |
| /əʊ/ | A glide from a central, unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open to a centralized, back rounded vowel just above the half-close position. |

Occurrence of Vowel Sounds in English

Pure Vowels

| Vowel | Initial | Medial | Final |
|--------------|----------|--------|--------|
| /ə/ | account | taboo | father |
| /ɑː/ | art | card | car |
| /ɪ/ | it | bit | city |
| /iː/ | eat | beat | tree |
| /ʊ/ | oomph | pull | you |
| /uː/ | ooze | pool | shoe |
| /e/ | elephant | bed | _____ |
| /æ/ | apple | bad | _____ |
| /ʌ/ | under | bus | _____ |
| /ɜː/ or /əː/ | earn | serve | fur |
| /ɒ/ or /ɔ/ | on | cot | _____ |
| /ɔː/ | almighty | caught | jaw |

Diphthongs

| Vowel | Initial | Medial | Final |
|-------|---------|----------|-------|
| /eɪ/ | aim | gate | may |
| /aɪ/ | isle | bite | fry |
| /ɔɪ/ | oil | boil | joy |
| /ɪə/ | ear | cheering | fear |
| /eə/ | air | sharing | hair |
| /ʊə/ | _____ | touring | poor |
| /aʊ/ | out | house | how |
| /əʊ/ | over | home | go |

3.2.2 Description of Consonant Sounds

To describe a consonant fully you have to understand and indicate-

- a) The state of the Glottis- whether the sound is voiced or voiceless, that is, whether the vocal cords vibrate or not.
- b) The place of articulation, that is, where the closure or narrowing takes place.
- c) The manner of articulation, that is, the kind of closure or narrowing.

All English sounds are produced with pulmonic egressive air stream mechanism

a) Consonants: voiceless or voiced

The voiceless consonants in English are /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /θ/, /s/, /ʃ/, /h/, and /tʃ/. The voiced consonants in English are /b/, /d/, /g/, /dʒ/, /v/, /ð/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /z/, /ʒ/, /r/, /l/, /j/, and /w/

a) Consonants: place of articulation

Consonants can be classified according to the place of articulation as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bilabial: | The active articulator is the lower lip and the passive articulator is the upper lip. The consonants /p/, /b/, and /m/ are bilabial sounds in English |
| Labio-dental: | The active articulator is the lower lip and the passive articulators are the upper front teeth. The consonants /f/ and /v/ are labio-dental sounds in English |
| Dental | The active articulator is the blade of the tongue and the passive articulators are the upper front teeth. The consonants /θ/ and /ð/ are dental sounds in English |
| Alveolar | The tip or the blade of the tongue is the active articulator and the teeth-ridge (the alveolar ridge, or alveolum) is the passive articulator. The consonants /t/, /d/, /s/, /z/, /n/, and /l/ are alveolar sounds in English |
| Post-alveolar | The tip of the tongue is the active articulator and the part of the roof of the mouth that lies immediately after the teeth ridge is the passive articulator. The one post-alveolar sound that occurs in English is /r/ |
| Palato-alveolar | The blade of the tongue and the front of the tongue are the active articulators and the teeth-ridge and the hard palate the passive articulators. The consonants /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /ʃ/, and /ʒ/ are palate-alveolar sounds in English |
| Palatal | The front of the tongue is the active articulator and the hard plate is the passive articulator. The sound /j/ is a palatal sound in English |
| Velar | The back of the tongue is the active articulator and the soft-palate (or velum) is the passive articulator. The consonants /k/, /g/, and /ŋ/ are velar sounds in English |
| Glottal | The two vocal cords are the articulators involved. The sound /h/ is a glottal sound in English |

c) Consonants: manner of articulation

The closure at the place of articulation can be either complete or partial, or there may only be a narrowing that causes friction. Consonants can be classified according to the manner of articulation as follows.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Plosive or Stop | There is complete closure of the air passage; pressure is built up, and then the air is suddenly released with explosion |
| Affricate | There is complete closure of the air passage; pressure is built up, and then the air is slowly released with friction |
| Fricative | There is a narrow passage for the air between the two organs, and friction is produced when the air passes through it |
| Nasal | There is complete closure of the air passage in the mouth; the soft palate is lowered and the air escapes through the nose |
| Lateral | At some point in the mouth, there is a closure in the middle, but the air escapes through the sides |
| Frictionless Continuant | There is no closure or friction, but the sound has a consonantal function |
| Semi-Vowels | A vowel glide with a consonantal function |

Description of Consonants in English

The following are the 24 (twenty four) consonant sounds in English:

| Consonant | Description |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| /p/ | A voiceless bi-labial plosive |
| /b/ | A voice bilabial plosive |
| /t/ | A voiceless alveolar plosive |
| /d/ | A voiced alveolar Plosive |
| /k/ | A voiceless velar plosive |
| /g/ | A voiced velar plosive |

| | |
|------|---|
| /tʃ/ | A voiceless palato-alveolar affricate |
| /dʒ/ | A voiced palato-alveolar affricate |
| /f/ | A voiceless labio-dental fricative |
| /v/ | A voiced labio-dental fricative |
| /θ/ | A voiceless dental fricative |
| /ð/ | A voiced dental fricative |
| /s/ | A voiceless alveolar fricative |
| /z/ | A voiced alveolar fricative |
| /ʃ/ | A voiceless palate-alveolar fricative |
| /ʒ/ | A voiced palate-alveolar fricative |
| /h/ | A voiceless glottal fricative |
| /m/ | A voiced bi-labial nasal |
| /n/ | A voiced alveolar nasal |
| /ŋ/ | A voiced velar nasal |
| /l/ | A voiced alveolar lateral |
| /r/ | A voiced post-alveolar frictionless continuant or lateral approximant |
| /w/ | A voiced palatal semi-vowel or lateral approximant |
| /j/ | A voiced bi-labial semi-vowel or lateral approximant |

Occurrence of Consonant Sounds in English

| Consonant | Initial | Medial | Final |
|-----------|---------|---------|-------|
| /p/ | pot | topper | cap |
| /b/ | bat | baby | tub |
| /t/ | top | cattle | cat |
| /d/ | dog | garden | sad |
| /k/ | kite | package | pack |
| /g/ | go | ago | leg |

| | | | |
|------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| /tʃ/ | ch urch | pitch er | rich |
| /dʒ/ | j udge | mag i c | cab ag e |
| /f/ | f an | loft y | cal f |
| /v/ | v an | river | wav e |
| /θ/ | th ick | path etic | bat h |
| /ð/ | th ey | fat h er | breath e |
| /s/ | s ea | mas ter | gas |
| /z/ | z oo | puzz le | qu iz |
| /ʃ/ | sh ine | cush ion | pus h |
| /ʒ/ | g enre | pleas ur e | garag e |
| /h/ | h ut | re h earse | _____ |
| /m/ | m ug | rum o ur | tr im |
| /n/ | n est | man n er | bin |
| /ŋ/ | _____ | sing er | song |
| /l/ | l augh | gl ad | oil |
| /r/ | r ose | mar ri age | _____ |
| /w/ | w est | bet w een | _____ |
| /j/ | y oung | bet y ond | _____ |

3.2.3 The Syllable

The next higher unit in the hierarchy of speech sounds that comes after phoneme is called the syllable. Every word in English is made up of one or more syllables. A syllable consists of vowels and consonants. In each syllable, there is one sound (called the **nucleus**) that is more prominent than the rest. Usually it is a vowel sound, e.g. in a syllable like ‘beat’ (/bi:t/), the vowel sound /i:/ is the nucleus. However, there are some syllables in which the consonant

sound is the nucleus, e.g. in the second syllable of the word ‘table’ (/teɪbl/), the consonant sound /l/ is the nucleus. Such a syllable is called syllabic consonant.

Some examples of syllable:

In the word ‘remote’ /rɪməʊt/, the syllables are /rɪ/ and /məʊt/.

In the word ‘cotton’ /kɒtn/, the syllables are /kɒ/ and /tn/.

In the word ‘pill’ /pɪl/, there is only one syllable /pɪl/.

In the word ‘about’ /əbaʊt/, the syllables are /ə/ and /baʊt/.

In the last example, the first syllable is just a single vowel. It shows that a single vowel sound can itself constitute a syllable.

3.2.4 Consonant Clusters

A consonant cluster in a word is a group of consonants with no vowels between them. A consonant cluster is a sequence of two or more consonants which can occur in words initially, medially or finally.

Consonant clusters with two initial consonants:

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|-----|------------------------------|
| 1. | /p/ followed by | /l/ | play, plan, plate, please |
| | | /r/ | pray, prey, praise, prince |
| | | /j/ | pure, purify, peon, putative |
| 2. | /b/ followed by | /l/ | blood, block, blue, blur |
| | | /r/ | break, bread, brass, brave |
| | | /j/ | beauty |
| 3. | /t/ followed by | /r/ | trail, trade, tree, try |
| | | /j/ | tune, tutor, tube |
| | | /w/ | twin, tweet, twist, twinkle |
| 4. | /d/ followed by | /r/ | draft, drill, dry, drink |
| | | /j/ | due, duty, dude, dupe |

| | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| | | /w/ | dwell, dwindle, |
| 5. | /k/ followed by | /l/ | class, cloud, clock, close |
| | | /r/ | cross, cry, crowd, cream |
| | | /j/ | cupid, cure, cute |
| 6. | /g/ followed by | /l/ | glade, glass, glue, glee |
| | | /r/ | grass, grant, great, groan |
| 7. | /f/ followed by | /l/ | flat, flaw, fleet, flock |
| | | /r/ | free, frown, fresh, fruit |
| | | /j/ | few, fury, futile, future |
| 8. | /θ/ə followed by | /r/ | three, throw, thrive, throne |
| 9. | /s/ followed by | /p/ | spot, spin, speed, space |
| 10. | /h/ followed by | /j/ | humid, human, huge, |
| 11. | /m/ followed by | /j/ | mew, mute, muse, music |
| 12. | /n/ followed by | /j/ | new, news, nuke |
| 13. | /ʃ/ followed by | /r/ | shrink, shroud |

Consonant clusters with three initial consonants:

| | | | |
|----|------------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 1. | /sp/ followed by | /l/ | splendid, splash, split, spleen |
| | | /r/ | sprout, spring, spray, sprinkle |
| 2. | /st/ followed by | /r/ | strike, strain, strive, stream |
| | | /j/ | stupid, studio, student |
| 3. | /sk/ followed by | /r/ | screen, scream, scrutiny, |
| | | /j/ | Skewer, skewed |
| | | /w/ | Squash, square, squeeze |

Consonant clusters with two final consonants:

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|------|------------------------------|
| 1. | /p/ preceded by | /s/ | clasp, wasp, grasp |
| | | /l/ | Help, pulp |
| | | /m/ | damp, ramp, jump, hump, pump |
| 2. | /b/ preceded by | /l/ | bulb, |
| 3. | /t/ preceded by | /p/ | kept, kept, helped, concept |
| | | /k/ | tract, pact, fact, dialect |
| | | /tʃ/ | reached |

| | | | |
|------------|------------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| | | /f/ | left, cleft, theft, bluffed |
| | | /s/ | last, fast, vast, past |
| | | /ʃ/ | |
| | | /n/ | Want, rent, paint, joint |
| | | /l/ | Felt, knelt, tilt, quilt |
| 4. | /d/ preceded by | /b/ | robbed, rubbed, clubbed |
| | | /g/ | begged, plugged |
| | | /v/ | saved, paved, carved |
| | | /ð/ | wreathed, bathed, breathed |
| | | /z/ | surprised, praised |
| | | /m/ | Summed, brimmed |
| | | /n/ | band, sound, round, |
| | | /ŋ/ | longed, wronged |
| | | /l/ | wild, mild, child |
| 5. | /k/ preceded by | /s/ | task, desk, flask |
| | | /ŋ/ | bank, tank, sink, flank |
| | | /l/ | silk, milk, bulk |
| 6. | /tʃ/ preceded by | /n/ | brunch, lunch, bench |
| | | /l/ | belch, |
| | | | |
| 7 | /dʒ/ preceded by | /n/ | arrange, change, cringe, binge |
| | | /l/ | divulge, bulge |
| 8. | /f/ preceded by | /l/ | self, pelf, elf, shelf |
| 9. | /v/ preceded by | /l/ | solve, revolve, evolve |
| 10. | /θ/ preceded by | /p/ | depth |
| | | /d/ | Width, breadth |
| | | /f/ | fifth |
| | | /m/ | warmth |
| | | /n/ | month |
| | | /ŋ/ | length, strength |
| 11. | /s/ preceded by | /p/ | taps, caps, maps, claps |
| | | /t/ | cuts, mates, eats |
| | | /k/ | talks, works, box |
| | | /f/ | sniffs, puffs |

Consonant clusters with three final consonants

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|------|---------------|
| 1. | /t/ preceded by | /ds/ | midst |
| | | /ks/ | context, next |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|-------|-------------------|
| | | /mp/ | attempt, contempt |
| | | /ntʃ/ | drenched |
| | | /ns/ | against |
| | | /nk/ | thanked |
| | | /ŋs/ | amongst |
| | | /lp/ | helped |
| 2. | /d/ preceded by | /ndʒ/ | arranged |
| 3. | /θ/ preceded by | /ks/ | sixth |
| | | /lf/ | twelfth |

Check Your Progress/Self Assessment Questions

1. The initial sound in the word 'pill' is _____.
2. The medial sound in the word 'cat' is _____.
3. The final sound in the word 'king' is _____.
4. The consonant cluster in the beginning of the word 'screw' is _____.

UNIT III: STRESS AND INTONATION

3.3.1 Word Accent/Stress

In some languages, each syllable in each word is pronounced with the exact same stress. But English is not one of those languages. English has its own rhythm, complete with its own vocal music. This means that one part of a certain word is said louder and longer than other parts of the same word. It is something that is completely natural for English speakers, but something ESL (English as a Second Language) learners can learn the correct way to pronounce new words, practicing their conversational skills, and by learning the rules for using word stress.

The beauty of the English language lies in its pronunciation. The correct accent/stress makes your English sound natural and beautiful. In phonetics, accent/stress means expending extra breath on a particular syllable in a word. It is a matter of greater prominence and audibility. Accent plays a crucial role in making your speech intelligible. For example, there is a slight difference between the pronunciation of the two English words *career* /kə'riə/ and *carrier* /kæriə/ and you can bring out clear difference between the two only by accenting them on the right syllables. In the word 'career' /kə'riə/ the stress is on the second syllable and in the word 'carrier' /'kæriə/ the stress is on the first syllable.

The mark (') on the top of a syllable in a word indicates that the particular syllable is stressed. This is known as primary stress. Primary stress indicates that the syllable is more prominent than the other syllables in the word. In some cases there might also be a mark (,) below on a syllable in a word. This is known as secondary stress. Secondary stress indicates that the particular syllable is the next most prominent syllable in the word. But it is the primary stress which is most important in making our speech intelligible.

The following words have stress on different syllables:

1. Primary stress on the first syllable in two syllable words:

'brother, 'lovely, 'table, 'printer

2. Primary stress on the second syllable in two syllable words:

es'cape, for'get, re'lax, en'joy

3. Primary stress on the first syllable in three syllable words:

'beautiful, 'confident, 'orderly, 'easier

4. Primary stress on the second syllable in three syllable words:

i'conic, at'tention, nu'trition, pro'vision

5. Primary stress on the third syllable in three syllable words:

after'noon, lemo'nade, guaran'tee, engi'neer, souve'nir

6. Primary stress on the first syllable in four syllable words:

'applicable, 'accurately, 'comfortable, 'honourable

7. Primary stress on the second syllable in four and five syllable words:

il'literate, al'ternative, par'ticular, ca'tastrophe

8. Primary stress on the third syllable in four and five syllable words:

popu'larity, irre'sponsible, elec'tricity, inde'pendent

9. Primary stress on the fourth syllable in five and six syllable words:

partici'pation, civili'zation, exami'nation, acade'mician

Word Stress Rules

The word stress rules in English are complicated. **There are many exceptions to the rules.** Therefore, you should always consult a good dictionary to learn how words are pronounced and where they are to be stressed. It is important that you stress the right syllables so that people can hear and understand your words. A few word stress rules in

English are given here but you must be careful while applying them as there are some exceptions to these rules.

Rule 1

In most two syllable nouns and adjectives, the first syllable takes on the stress. Whereas in most two syllable verbs and prepositions, the stress is on the second syllable

| Nouns/Adjectives | Verbs/Prepositions |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 'absent | ab'sent |
| 'convert | con'vert |
| 'extract | ex'tract |
| 'import | im'port |
| 'object | ob'ject |
| 'purple | re'ceive |
| 'happy | be'tween |
| 'India | a'mong |

Rule 2

In two syllable words with weak prefixes, the stress is on the root. The following are examples of words with weak prefix namely 'a-', 'be-', 're-'.

| | | |
|--------|---------|---------|
| a'wake | be'moan | re'mind |
| a'rise | be'fore | re'duce |
| a'lone | be'low | re'load |

Rule 3

In most two syllable verbs beginning with the prefix dis-, the stress is on the last syllable. For example:

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| dis'like | dis'pel | dis'count |
| dis'obey | dis'close | dis'card |
| dis'own | di'scuss | dis'able |

Rule 4

In two syllable verbs ending in ‘-ate’, ‘-ise’, ‘-ize’, ‘-ct’, the stress is on the last syllable. For example:

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| dic'tate | com'prise | contact |
| ro'tate | ad'vise | attract |
| mi'grate | ap'prise | tran'sact |

Rule 5

In verbs with more than two syllables that end in -ate, -ise/ize, and -ify, the stress is on the third syllable from the end. For example:

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| 'indicate | 'advertise | 'classify |
| 'demonstrate | 'compromise | 'justify |
| 'concentrate | 'supervise | 'purify |

Rule 6**Rule 7**

In words ending in the suffix ‘-ion’, the stress is on the penultimate (second from the last) syllable. For example:

| | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| infor'mation | desti'nation | edu'cation |
| Si'tuation | presen'tation | moti'vation |
| at'tention | popu'lation | culti'vation |

Rule 8

In words ending in ‘-ity’, the stress is on the third syllable from the end. For example:

| | | |
|-------------|------------------|------------|
| uni'versity | re,sponsi'bility | ca'pacity |
| ne'cessity | nationality | eth'nicity |

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| hu'manity | e'quality | pri'ority |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|

Rule 9

In words ending in the suffixes –ic, -ical, -ically, -ial, -ially, -ian, the stress is on the syllable before the suffix. For example:

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
| apolo'getic | apolo'getically | die'tician |
| stra'tegic | stra'tegically | co'median |
| dra'matic | dra'matically | elec'trician |

Rule 10

In words ending in the suffixes –ious, -eous, the stress is on the syllable preceding or before the suffix. For example:

| -ious | -ious | -eous | -eous |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| am'bitious | re'ligious | cou'rageous | ,simul'taneous |
| 'previous | re'bellious | 'gorgeous | ,misce'llaneous |
| 'curious | 'studious | spontaneous | 'righteous |

Rule 11

In words ending in the suffixes –cracy, -crat, the stress is on the antepenultimate (third from the last) syllable. For example:

| -cracy | -crat |
|---------------|--------------|
| de'mocracy | 'democrat |
| aris'tocracy | 'aristocrat |
| tech'nocracy | 'technocrat |
| bu'reaucracy | 'bureaucrat |

Rule 12

In words ending in the suffixes –graph, -graphy, -meter, -logy, the stress is on the antepenultimate syllable. For example:

| -graph | -graphy | -meter | -logy |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 'photograph | pho'tography | di'ameter | pho'nology |
| 'paragraph | car'tography | ba'rometer | bi'ology |
| 'monograph | ge'oigraphy | ther'mometer | soci'ology |

Rule 13

In words ending with the following suffixes, the primary stress is on the suffix itself:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| -aire | billio'naire | doctri'naire | question'naire | millio'naire |
| -eer | volun'teer | ca'reer | mountai'neer | puppe'teer |
| -ental | judge'mental | acci'dental | senti'mental | experi'mental |
| -ese | Assa'mese | mothe'rese | Japa'nese | Naga'mese |
| -esce | | | | |
| -escence | effer'vescence | ado'lescence | conva'lescence | |
| -escent | effer'vescent | ado'lescent | conva'lescent | acqui'escent |
| -ique | u'nique | phy'sique | cri'tique | tech'nique |
| -esque | bur'lesque | pictu'resque | gro'tesque | carniva'lesque |
| -itis | gas'tritis | tonsi'litis | neu'ritis | ar'thritis |
| -ee | adres'see | employ'ee | absen'tee | pay'ee |
| -ette | cas'sette | towe'lette | eti'quette | ciga'rette |

| | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| -ete | com'plete | de'plete | re'plete | de'lete |
| -ade | ar'cade | lemo'nade | cru'sade | barri'cade |

Rule 14

In a compound word, the primary stress is on the first element is stressed if it conveys a meaning entirely different from that of its individual components. For example:

| | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| 'sunflower | 'honeymoon | 'underworld |
| 'ladybird | 'backlog | 'blacksmith |
| 'blackbird | 'skyscraper | 'earbud |

Rule 15

In words ending with –self, –selves, the primary stress is on the suffix itself. For example:

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| my'self | your'self |
| him'self | your'selves |
| her'self | our'selves |

3.3.2 Intonation

The rate at which our vocal cords vibrate when we speak or sing determines the pitch of our voice. The higher the frequency of vibration, the higher is the pitch of the voice; and the lower the frequency, the lower is the pitch. You must have realized that we always don't speak on the same pitch. There is modulation in the sense that the pitch keeps changing. Sometimes the pitch rises, sometimes it falls, and at times the pitch remains level. These patterns of variations are called tones and constitute the intonation of a language.

Major Tones in English

There are four major tones in English. Using these tones, you will be able to convey your message and attitude clearly. The four important tones that are used in English are as follows:

- Falling tone (`)
- Rising tone (,)
- Falling-rising tone (v)
- Rising-falling tone (^)

Falling Tone

Falling intonation describes how the voice falls on the final stressed syllable of a phrase or a group of words. Falling tone is used in complete statements, wh-questions, commands, exclamations, choice questions and in question tags when the speaker is sure that his/her remark is correct and the listener will agree. For example:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Statements | He is a pro`fessor. She is a `doctor. |
| Wh-questions | What is your `qualification? Where are you `going? |
| Commands | Open the `door. Stand `up. |
| Exclamations | What a pleasant `surprise! How `sad he looks! |
| Choice questions | Do you want tea or `coffee? Should I go right or `left? |
| Question tags | You want a `job, `don't you? She is looking so `beautiful, `isn't she? |

Rising Tone

Rising intonation describes how the voice rises at the end of a sentence. Rising tone conveys the impression that the utterance is incomplete and something is to follow. It is used in incomplete statements, yes/no questions, question-tags for enquiry and in wh-questions when used politely. For example:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Yes/no questions | Do you want ,this? Can you ,sing? |
| Wh-questions used politely | How are ,you? What is ,your name? |
| Question tags for enquiry | You can speak Chinese, ,can't you? He is a singer, ,isn't he? |
| Incomplete statements | I met ,everyone (before leaving) She came ,quietly (and started shouting) |

Falling-Rising Tone

Fall-rise intonation describes how the voice falls and then rises. The falling-rising is the falling of the pitch from a moderately high to low fall and is followed by a rise in the pitch from low to medium. We use fall-rise intonation at the end of statements when we want to say that we are not sure, or when we may have more to add. This tone is used for special implications which are not verbally expressed. The term special implications can include veiled insult, apology, reassurance, insinuations, happiness or doubt on the part of the speaker as to the validity of his remark. For example:

| |
|--|
| Do you play cricket? vSometimes. (Not always, surely) |
|--|

When should we discuss the matter? vNow. (**doubtful**)

She is vbeautiful. (**but not very clever**)

I vknow him. (**but I don't like him**)

Rising-Falling Tone

This tone is a combination of a rise and a fall. The rising-falling tone is the rising of the pitch from low to about mid and then falls again to low. The rise reinforces the meaning conveyed by the following fall. In addition, the initial rise may indicate warmth, or sarcasm. This tone is used for the following types of expressions.

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Enthusiastic Agreement | <p>^Yes. (Do you like it?)</p> <p>It is ^fine.</p> |
| Suspicious interest | But is her name in the ^list? |
| Suspicious, mocking | Are you sure he will ^win? |
| Sarcastic | How ^interesting? |

Check Your Progress/Self Assessment Questions

5. The rate at which our vocal cords vibrate determines the _____ of our voice.
6. The patterns of variation of the pitch of our voice constitute the _____ of a language.

3.4 Let us sum up

- Every language has a limited number of distinctive sound-units called ‘phonemes’. They are the smallest distinctive sound units in a specified language that distinguishes one word from another.
- All speech sounds are divided into two broad categories- vowels and consonants. In the production of vowel sounds the air comes out freely through the mouth. There is no closure of air passage, or any friction or contact of the tongue or lips. Whereas in the production of consonant sounds, the air passage is obstructed, or the flow of air is stopped as a result of narrowing, partial or complete closure of the air passage.
- Vowels that are produced with the tongue remaining at just one position are called pure vowels. In pure vowels, the quality of the vowel does not change. There are 12 (twelve) pure vowels in English (R.P.).
- Vowels which involve a gliding movement from one quality to another are called diphthongs, if the glide takes place within the same syllable. During the production of these sounds the tongue glides from one point of articulation to another. There are 8 (eight) diphthongs in English (R.P.).
- There are the 24 (twenty four) consonant sounds in English.
- The next higher unit in the hierarchy of speech sounds that comes after phoneme is called the syllable. Every word in English is made up of one or more syllables. A syllable consists of vowels and consonants. In each syllable, there is one sound (called the **nucleus**) that is more prominent than the rest.
- A consonant cluster in a word is a group of consonants with no vowels between them. A consonant cluster is a sequence of two or more consonants which can occur in words initially, medially or finally.
- The beauty of the English language lies in its pronunciation. The correct accent/stress makes your English sound natural and beautiful. In phonetics, accent/stress means

expending extra breath on a particular syllable in a word. It is a matter of greater prominence and audibility.

3.5 Key Terms

- **Vowels**
- **Consonants**
- **Consonant cluster**
- **Syllable**
- **Intonation**

3.6 Questions and Answers

3.6.1 Short-Answer Questions

1. What is a front vowel?
2. What is a central vowel?
3. What is a syllable?
4. Give examples of consonant clusters.
5. Write a short note on consonants.

3.6.2 Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of vowels in detail.
2. Describe the consonant sounds in English with examples.
3. Discuss in detail the various functions of Intonation.

3.7 Further Readings/Suggested Readings

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Unit V: SOCIOLINGUISTICS

4.0 Introduction

Languages are spoken by human beings who live in societies. The study of language in relation to society is called sociolinguistics. The study of sociolinguistics constitutes a vast and complex area as it investigates different aspects of language, such as, the varieties of language, language contact, language and culture, language and word view, language and gender, linguistic politeness, and language planning. Sociolinguistics also studies how language becomes the marker of a person's identity- whether class identity, gender identity, group identity, or national identity. Fishman comments that sociolinguistics is about 'who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom and when and to what end.' Sociolinguists are interested in explaining why people speak differently in different social contexts. They study the effect of social factors such as (social distance, social status, age gender, class) on language varieties (dialects, registers, etc.), and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the way they are used to convey social meanings.

In this unit, you will study language variation or Varieties of Language.

4.1 Objectives

After going through this unit, you will learn about:

- Varieties of language: Dialect and Register
- Language contact: Pidgin and Creole

4.2 Definitions of Sociolinguistics

1. Trudgill (1983) defines sociolinguistics as "that part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. It investigates the field of language and society and has close connections with the social sciences, especially social psychology, anthropology, human geography and sociology." (p.32)

2. According to William Downes (1984) “sociolinguistics is that branch of linguistics which studies just those properties of language and languages which require reference to social, including contextual, factors in their explanation”. (p.15)
3. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines sociolinguistics “as the study of the sociological aspects of language. The discipline concerns itself with the part language plays in maintaining the social roles in a community. Sociolinguists attempt to isolate those linguistic features that are used in particular situations and that mark the various social relationships among the participants and the significant elements of the situation.”

4.3 Language Variation or Varieties of Language

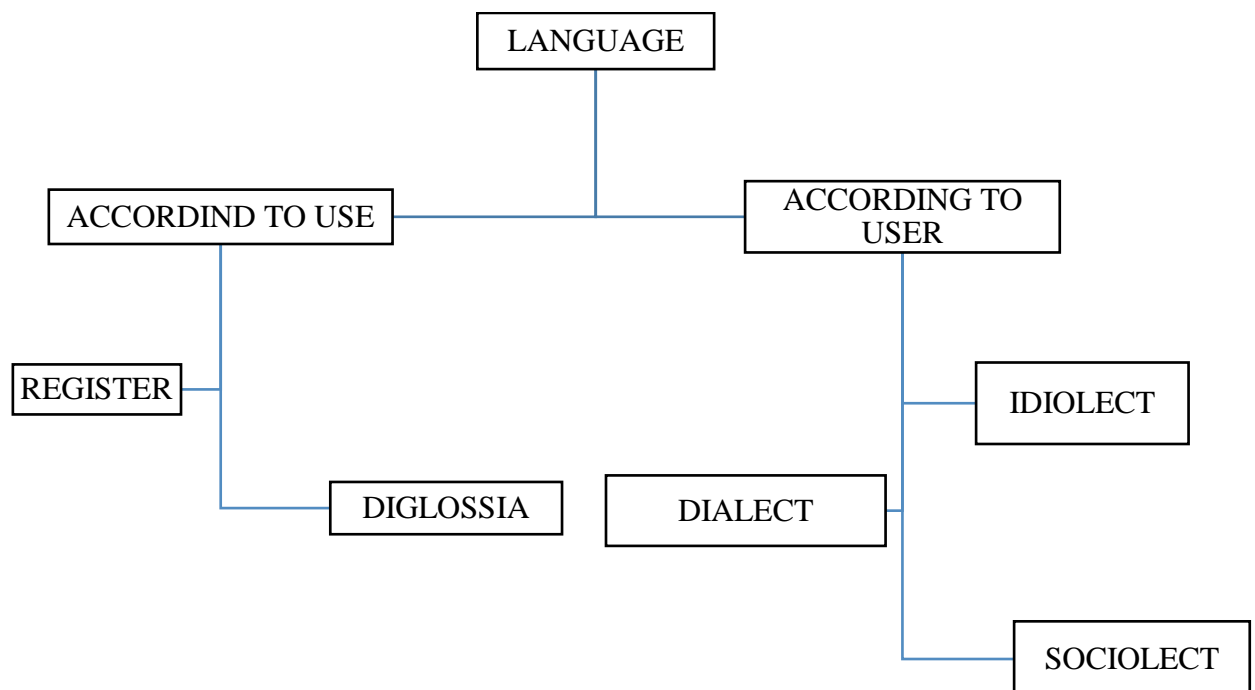
One of the most primary and basic concerns of Sociolinguistics is variations in language. Variations in language and language use takes place for various reasons such as geographical separation, gender, age, education, social background, class and caste, and these variations can be studied at various levels such as phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and others.

Variation is an essential characteristic of any language. Between the speakers of any language there is variation in the way that they use their language. Speakers may vary in pronunciation, word choice, or morphology and syntax. But, while the diversity of variation is great, there seem to be boundaries on variation--- speakers do not generally make drastic alterations in sentence word order or use new sounds that are completely foreign to the language being spoken. Language variation does not equate with language ungrammaticality as speakers are always (often unconsciously) sensitive to what is and is not possible in their language.

Language is not a static entity but a dynamic one. For example, when we say ‘the English language’ we do not mean just one set of words in a single pronunciation and grammar which does not vary at all. We as language users are aware of differences in pronunciation, words,

grammar and meaning in the use of the same language when it is used by a different user or is used in a different situation. A language, then, is the sum total of all its varieties. Therefore, what we call languages are merely abstractions and what really exist are the varieties of a language. So, there is no such thing as the English language; there are several varieties which are mutually intelligible and which we add together to call their sum total English. There is, for instance, British Standard English, American Standard English, Australian Standard English, and Canadian Standard English. These are standardised varieties of native-speaker Englishes.

The varieties of a language can be classified as below:



According to User:

Dialect (Dialectal Variation)

Sociolect (Social Variation)

Idiolect (Individual Variation)

According to Use:

Register (Registral Variation)

Diglossia

4.3.1 Dialects

Traditionally, the term ‘dialect’ has been popularly used to refer only to a language which primarily existed in the spoken form without any script or written form of it, and notions like the standard variety being the ‘pure’ language and dialects as non-standard/ lesser varieties also existed. However, according to the modern linguistic view, dialects are varieties of the same language and a language is the sum total of all its dialects. Thus, what everybody speaks or writes is a dialect or variety and by language we mean the sum total of all mutually intelligible varieties of a language. So, the dichotomy between a language and a dialect actually does not exist. Sometimes, a dialect gains status and becomes the standard variety. Even then, the standard variety still remains one of the dialects of the language. The decision to recognise and accept one dialect to be the standard variety is socio-political rather than a linguistic one as all dialects are equal. Their structure is similar and there are no scientific or linguistic reasons for calling one of them superior or inferior.

The term ‘dialect’ is synonymously used with ‘regional dialect’ which refers to a variety of a language used in one part of a country or a particular geographical area, which is different in some words, grammar, and/or pronunciation from other forms of the same language. For example, Cockney, Scottish English, Yorkshire English, etc. are dialects of the English language used in Great Britain. The study of the regional variations of a language is known as dialectology.

4.3.2 Sociolect

‘Sociolect’ refers to the variety of a language that people in a particular social group speak. Trudgill defines it concisely as ‘a variety or lect which is thought of as being related to its speakers’ social background rather geographical background. In other words, it is the language spoken by a particular social group, class or subculture, whose determinants include

such parameter as gender, age, occupation, and possibly a few others. What distinguishes a sociolect from a standard variety is above all its lexical repertoire, which is activated in group-specific context.

4.3.3 Idiolect

An idiolect is a person's specific way of speaking. Every one of us has his or her very own idiolect that differs from the way other people talk. Idiolect is an individual's distinctive and unique use of language, including speech. This unique usage encompasses vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. For example, one can notice several minor differences in the way two speakers of the same language pronounce words or use grammatical rules. These differences are often ignored or called personal idiosyncrasies, but, they provide sufficient evidence of the fact that every individual uses a different (however minor the differences are) form/variety of language which we call his or her idiolect.

4.3.4 Register

When people talk to others they work with about their work, they generally use a particular variety of language, which they do not use at home. Such a language variety is called a register. While dialects are user oriented, registers are use oriented. Variation between speakers give rise to dialect and variation based on occasion gives rise to registers. 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). Trudgill defines a register as linguistic varieties that are linked to occupations or professions, for example, the register of law is different from the register of medicine, which in turn is different from the language of engineering- and so on. One can recognise specific features that occur in different registers in the following examples:

Religious register (“Ye shall be blessed by Him in times of tribulation”)

Legal register (“The plaintiff is ready to take the witness stand”)

Linguistic register (“The first sound in the word is a voiced bilabial plosive”)

Registers may have distinctive features at the levels of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, such as the voice quality associated with the register of church services. However, registers are usually characterized solely by vocabulary differences: either by the use of particular word, or by the use of words in a particular sense. Moreover, there are words or lexical items that indicate a certain register almost by themselves, e.g. ‘prescription’ (register of medicine), ‘debit’ (banking and business register), ‘free-kick’ (register of football or sports). Often it is not the lexical item alone but the collocation of two or more lexical items that is specific to one register, e.g., ‘kick’ is presumably neutral but ‘free-kick’ is from the language of football. Another distinction is made among different varieties of registers according to Medium, Domain or Tenor as the following:

Medium: Written register and spoken register

Domain (Subject matter or field): Register of Science, Register of Law, etc

Tenor (how politely or formally you speak): Formal Register and Informal Register

4.3.5 Diglossia

Diglossia refers to a rather special situation in which two distinct varieties of a language are used for different purposes in the same language community. The varieties are called **H** (high) and **L** (low), the first being generally learned in school and used for ‘high’ purposes or important matters and the second ‘low’ spoken vernacular acquired locally or at home and used for ordinary day-to-day affairs. For example, in most Arabic-speaking countries, the **H** variety (Classical Arabic) is used in sermons, academic lectures, political speeches, and news presentations. Whereas the **L** variety (Egyptian Arabic or Lebanese Arabic) is used for everyday communication, such as informal conversation, instruction to servants, etc. Thus, the most important hallmark of Diglossia is specialization. **H** being appropriate in one set of situations, **L** in another.

Explaining a situation closer home, in Lower Assam or West Assam, the Standard Assamese is used for official, academic, and literary purposes and a colloquial dialect (Barpetia, Nalbaria, Palasbaria) is used for everyday affairs. In his article “Diglossia”, Charles A. Ferguson described diglossia as a bilingual situation where **H** and **L** are closely related. Joshua Fishman expanded the definition of diglossia to include the use of unrelated languages as high and low varieties. For example, for a long period in European history, a diglossic situation existed as Latin was used as the official or ‘high’ variety and the local European languages as the vernacular or ‘low’ variety.

Check Your Progress/Self Assessment Questions

1. The study of language in relation to society is called _____.
2. A language is the sum total of all its _____.
3. _____ is the language spoken by a particular social group, class or subculture.
4. _____ is an individual’s distinctive and unique use of language, including speech.
5. While dialects are user oriented, _____ are use oriented.

4.4 Language Contact: Pidgin and Creole

Language contact occurs when two or more languages or language varieties come into contact with each other. A contact or encounter between two different language communities is a natural phenomenon. These contacts may be of different types and may have different types of effect on the languages concerned. Some of the possible consequences of such situations are as follows:

- Vocabulary and Grammar 'Borrowing'
- Code Switching
- Language Convergence
- Pidginisation
- Creolisation
- Language Mixing or Language Intertwining

4.4.1 Borrowing

Borrowing is the process of taking a word from one language and integrating it to another. It generally takes place when speakers of one culture come into contact with speakers of another culture. According to linguists, the most common way in which languages influence each other is the exchange of words.

Borrowing is neither unique nor a new phenomenon. It is a universal process which occurs whenever two languages come into contact. English is one of the richest languages that have borrowed extensively from other languages. English is well known for its mixed vocabulary and affinity with foreign words and is often considered as an absorbent language. The following are some borrowed words in English:

- a) From German: Biology, Ozone, Boxer
- b) From Turkish: Jackal, Yogurt
- c) From Czech: Robot, Pistol

- d) From French: Perfume, Bizarre, Café, Rendezvous
- e) From Aramaic: Coffee, Alcohol
- f) From Dutch: Boss, Leak
- g) From Spanish: Guitar, Cigar, Barbeque

4.4.2 Code Mixing and Code Switching

Code mixing refers to the mixing of two codes or languages, usually without a change of topic. Bilingual or multilingual speaker often use it when they think that one of their languages, e.g. English, has more appropriate lexical items for expressing something and incorporate these into the grammatical structure of the other language. For example, the mixing of English words in the following Hindi utterances:

Time kya ho raha he?

Tension nahi lene ka

Pyar ke **side effects**

Yel dil mane mire

Love aaj kal

Mission Mangal

Code switching refers to a change or shift by a speaker or writer from one language or language variety to another one. In the following sentences, the speaker switches between English and Hindi

You don't know, *wo kaun he*. she is the daughter of the CEO, *tumhe naukri se nikal bhi sakto he*

4.4.3 Pidgin

A Pidgin is a combination of linguistic features of two or more languages and it is a result of social and economic dealings between two groups or more speaking different languages. A pidgin is a restricted language which arises for the purpose 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. Therefore, of the many languages that come into contact, the language of the socially superior group undergoes a process of restriction and simplification originating pidgin. This process is known as pidginization.

A pidgin is a variety of a language which developed for some practical purpose, such as trading among groups of people who had a lot of contact, but who did not know each other's languages. Therefore, a pidgin is no one's native language or first language. A pidgin is also referred to as a 'trade language' or 'contact language'. Such a language is restricted in its range as it serves a definite purpose, namely basic communication with the colonist. Primarily, a pidgin grows out of economic necessity. Economic relations of trade or enforced labour make it essential for the different groups to resort to a common language. The origin of the term pidgin is thought of to be from a Chinese version of the English word "business". In Papua New Guinea, most official business is conducted in Tok Pisin, a language sometimes described as Malenesian Pidgin.

A pidgin is described as an "English pidgin" if English is the lexifier language, that is, the main source of words adopted in the pidgin. There are several English pidgins still used today. For example, the word 'gras' has its origin in the English word 'grass,' but in Tok Pisin it also came to be used for 'hair'. It is part of 'mausgras' ("moustache") and 'gras belong fes' ("beard"). In Tok Pisin, a distinction developed between 'yumi' ("me and you") and 'mipela' ("me and others"), marking two different senses of "we" not found in standard English. Further, these pidgins are characterized by an absence of any complex spelling, grammatical morphology and a somewhat limited vocabulary. Inflectional suffixes such as "s" (plural) and "-'s" (possessive) are required on nouns in standard English, but are rare in English pidgins, while structures like 'tu buk' ("two books") and 'di gyal place' ("the girl's place") are common. The "-ed" suffix of standard English is typically missing as in 'smok

meat'. Instead of changing the form of "you" to "your", English based Pidgins use a form like 'bilong,' and change the word order to produce phrases like 'buk bilong yu' ("your book").

4.4.4 CREOLE

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. **Tok Pisin** is now a creole. The first language of a large number of people in Hawai'i is also a creole and, though locally referred to as "pidgin," is more accurately described as **Hawai'i Creole English**. A French-based Creole is spoken by the majority of the population in Haiti and English-based Creoles are used in Jamaica and Sierra Leone. In practice, it is not always easy to say whether we have a pidgin rather than a Creole. **Tok Pisin** and some of the West African pidgins such as **Nigerian Pidgin English** probably exist as both pidgins and creoles.

A creole initially develops as the first language of children growing up in a pidgin-using community and becomes more complex as it serves more communicative purposes. This process of development of pidgin into a creole is called Creolisation. Creoles are much more expanded version of pidgin and have arisen in situations in which there was a break in the natural linguistic continuity of a community. Homes (1992) says that 'a Creole is a pidgin which has expanded in structure and vocabulary to express the range of meanings and serve the range of functions required of a first language'.

What are reasons for Creole Development?

Creoles may arise in one of two basic situations:

- One is where speakers of pidgins are put in a situation in which they cannot use their respective mother tongue.

- A second situation is where a pidgin is regarded by a social group as a higher language variety and deliberately cultivated.

The outcome of these situations is that the children in the community end up using the pidgin as a first language, thus rendering it Creole with the attendant relinquishing of the native language of their parents and the expansion of all linguistic levels for the new creole to act as a full-fledged language. Thus, a Creole may be defined as a pidgin that has become the first language of a new generation of speakers. A Creole therefore is a normal language in almost every sense’.

Some examples of Creole are:

Hawai’i Creole English

A French Creole (in Haiti)

English Creoles (Jamaica and Sierra Leone)

Nagamese (Assamese-based Creole) (Nagaland)

Check Your Progress/Self Assessment Questions

6. The process of taking a word from one language and integrating it to another is called _____.
7. A _____ is also referred to as a ‘trade language’ or ‘contact language’.

4.5 Let us sum up

- The study of language in relation to society is called sociolinguistics. The study of sociolinguistics constitutes a vast and complex area as it investigates different aspects

of language, such as, the varieties of language, language contact, language and culture, language and word view, language and gender, linguistic politeness, and language planning.

- One of the most primary and basic concerns of Sociolinguistics is variations in language. Variations in language and language use takes place for various reasons such as geographical separation, gender, age, education, social background, class and caste, and these variations can be studied at various levels such as phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and others.
- According to the modern linguistic view, dialects are varieties of the same language and a language is the sum total of all its dialects. Thus, what everybody speaks or writes is a dialect or variety and by language we mean the sum total of all mutually intelligible varieties of a language.
- Variation between speakers give rise to dialect and variation based on occasion gives rise to registers. 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).
- Language contact occurs when two or more languages or language varieties come into contact with each other. A contact or encounter between two different language communities is a natural phenomenon. These contacts may be of different types and may have different types of effect on the languages concerned.
- A Pidgin is a combination of linguistic features of two or more languages and it is a result of social and economic dealings between two groups or more speaking different languages. A pidgin is a restricted language which arises for the purpose 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.

- 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.

4.6 Key Terms

- **Dialect**
- **Sociolect**
- **Idiolect**
- **Register**
- **Pidgin**
- **Creole**

4.7 Questions and Answers

4.7.1 Short-Answer Questions

1. Define Dialect and Register
2. Mention two situations where a 'high variety is used in diglossia,
3. What is a pidgin?
4. What is creolization?
5. What is code-mixing?

4.7.2 Long-Answer Questions

1. One of the most primary and basic concerns of Sociolinguistics is variations in language. Discuss.
2. Explain the differences between Pidgin and Creole.
3. Discuss Register as a variable in Sociolinguistics.

4.8 Further Readings/Suggested Readings

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