CHAPTER ONE

((Basics))

1. Sign

We seem as a species to be driven by a desire to make meanings. Distinctively, we make meanings through our creation and interpretation of 'signs'. Signs take the form of words, images, sounds, odors, flavors, acts or objects, but such things have no intrinsic meaning and become signs only when we invest them with meaning. Anything can be a sign as long as someone interprets it as 'signifying' something –referring to or standing for something.

In other words, a sign is "whatever that signifies or stands for something" and as can be inferred from above it may be understood as an intersection or relationship between *form* and *meaning*, where form is something concrete and meaning is the concept or object that appears in our minds when we encounter the form.

Saussure offered a 'dyadic' or two-part model of the sign. He defined a sign as being composed of:

- a 'signifier' (signifiant) - the form which the sign takes; and
- the 'signified' (signifié) - the concept it represents

If we take a linguistic example, the word 'Open' (when it is invested with meaning by someone who encounters it on a shop doorway) is a sign consisting of:

- a signifier (form): the written word **open**;
- a signified concept (meaning): that the shop is open for business

The word 'table' (when it is invested with meaning by someone who hears it) is a sign consisting of:

- a signifier (form): the oral word **table**;
- a signified concept (meaning): a wooden object with four legs

If somebody has a red nose (when it is invested with meaning by someone who sees it) is a sign consisting of:

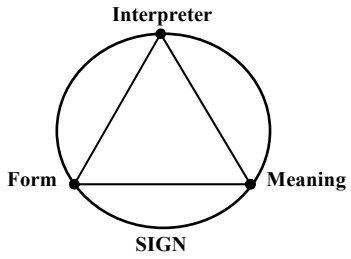
- a signifier (form): a physical form;
- a signified concept (meaning): the person is afflicted with allergy or cold

The schematic representation of sign would look like:

As illustrated in the examples, a form without a meaning is not sign, nor is a meaning without a form. It may be argued that form and meaning cannot exist apart from one another, and it is not easy to argue otherwise.

Here, we can define communication as 'the use of signs' in which one presents the signs to others. Accordingly we can define a third component for sign which is called *interpreter*. The relationship between the form of a sign and its meaning must be part of the knowledge of its interpreter. In the course of communication the speaker may attach a meaning to the form she presents while the interpreter or third party may attach another meaning to that form. As a result, interpreter adds an aspect or dimension of variability to our understanding of sign, because different interpreters may recognize different aspects of meaning in association with different forms.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir



Sign آن است که بر چیزی دلالت دارد و یا مظهر آن چیز است. می‌توان sign را همان رابطه میان form (صورت) و meaning (معنا) دانست. برای مثال وقتی کسی کلمه "کتاب" را که در جایی نوشته شده می بیند. sign به from نوشتار است و در ذهن شی‌ای را تداعی می‌کند که از کاغذ و جوهر درست شده است. و وقتی کسی کلمه "میز" را ادا می‌کند sign به form گفتار است و در ذهن فرد یک شی چوبی با ۴ پایه تداعی می‌کند. شاید بتوان گفت form و meaning هیچ کدام به تنهایی و جدا از یکدیگر وجود ندارند.

در حقیقت ایجاد ارتباط، استفاده از همین sign هاست. عامل سومی هم در این میان وجود دارد که به آن interpreter گفته می شود. در حقیقت رابطه میان form و meaning باید بخشی از دانش interpreter باشد زیرا ممکن است گوینده یک meaning خاص را به یک form خاص بدهد در حالی که interpreter معنای دیگری را برای همان form در ذهن داشته باشد. به همین دلیل interpreter نیز عاملی است که نقش تعیین کننده‌ای دارد.

There are three types of signs, which differ according to the three types of relationship that exist between form and meaning:

Icon: is a sign whose form has actual characteristics of its meanings. For example the sign shown on the left, means man. Its meaning is so obvious because the sign has the actual characteristics of the meaning.

Index: is a sign whose form has characteristics which are only associated in nature with its meaning. For example, skull and crossed bones traditionally mean ‘poison’. Let’s consider the indexical nature of this signs. You can *infer* that if you drink the content of the container, in a few months you will look like this.

Ball

Symbol: is a sign whose form is arbitrarily or conventionally associated with its meaning. For example, the symbol on the left, which has written modality, has no relationship with its meaning; that is, by no means can you bring to your mind that ‘round plastic’ object by seeing the form. In fact, nothing in nature associates this form with this meaning.

2. Linguistic Competence vs. Linguistic Performance

Language and speech are not synonyms. **Speech** is a concrete, physical act – the production of specific utterances containing particular words arranged in particular ways and expressed by means of certain sounds. **Language** is a mental phenomenon, a body of knowledge about sounds, meanings and syntax which resides in the mind. This knowledge can be put to use but the speech, or writing, that results is merely a representation of the language.

The knowledge of language is rarely conscious; that is, speakers of a language are not aware of what they know. Furthermore, our use of this unconscious knowledge is often subject to error. Our linguistic knowledge permits us to form longer and longer sentences by joining sentences and phrases together or adding modifiers to a noun. Very long sentences are theoretically possible, but they are highly improbable. Evidently, there is a difference between having the knowledge necessary to produce sentences of a language and applying this knowledge. It is a difference between linguistic competence and linguistic performance. **Linguistic competence** is the unconscious body of knowledge that accounts for speakers’ linguistic ability and creativity. **Linguistic performance**, on the other hand, is the actual use of linguistic competence in the production and comprehension of language; it is behavior as distinguished from lingustic knowledge.

Being a mental reality and not directly observable, linguistic competence is determined by two ways by linguists. First, they can investigate language by noting instances of actual language behavior. Linguists observe the sentences produced by speakers as well as those comprehended by listeners and attempt to determine the kinds of linguistic knowledge that people must have to use language as they do. Second, speakers of language can make judgments about sentences; they can tell when a sentence is ambiguous, or when it is ungrammatical. To make such judgments requires an underlying knowledge of the language, and thus speakers’ judgments about sentences provide the linguists with further insight into that knowledge.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

3. Three Sub-structures of Language/ Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence is composed of three components.

3.1. Knowledge of the Sound System

This knowledge consists of two parts; phonetics and phonology. **Phonetics** is the study of speech sounds. To describe speech sounds, it is necessary to know what an individual sound is, and how each sound differs from all others. Besides, we know which sounds may start a word, end a word, and follow each other; this is phonology. **Phonology** could be defined as the way speech sounds form patterns. These patterns may be as simple as the fact that the velar nasal cannot begin a syllable in English, or as complex as why the *g* in *sign* is silent, but is pronounced in the related word *signature*.

3.2. Knowledge of Words

Knowing the sounds and sound patterns in our language constitutes only one part of our linguistic knowledge. Knowing a language means also knowing that certain sequences of sounds signify certain concepts or meanings. Speakers of English know what *boy* means, and that it is different from *girl*. Technically speaking, this substructure is called *morphology* which concerns the classes of morphemes, and their co-occurrence in sentences and combination as words. *Morphological rules* express the possible combination of morphemes as words. For example, [dʌg] combines with [z] to yield [dʌgz] while [kæt] combines with [s] to yield [kæts].

3.3. Knowledge of Sentences and Non-sentences

To memorize and store an infinite set of sentences would require an infinite storage capacity. However, the brain is finite, and even if it were not, we could not store novel sentences. When you learn a language you must learn something finite that can be stored. If putting one word after another in any order always formed sentences, then language could simply be a set of words. However, words are not enough and that is why we reject *What are drinking and go home?* as unacceptable. Therefore, in addition to knowing the words of the language, linguistic knowledge includes rules for forming sentences, called knowledge of *syntax*, i.e. the ability to distinguish grammatical sentences from ungrammatical ones. Syntax concerns the combinations of words as phrases and of phrases as sentence. Every language has words, which combine as phrases and sentences. The possibilities of combination are strictly limited, so every language has syntax or sentence structure. *Syntactic rules* specify the possible combinations of words as phrases and as sentences of general types, such as affirmative, statements, etc.

4. Grammar

The word grammar has two usages. In one sense, grammar refers to the **mental grammar** speakers have in their brain, i.e. it refers to the knowledge speakers have about the units and rules of their language—rules for combining sounds into words (called **phonology**), rules of word formation (called **morphology**), rules for combining words into phrases and phrases into sentences (called **syntax**), as well as the rules for assigning meaning (called **semantics**). In another sense grammar refers to the systematic, formal, explicit description of this linguistic knowledge. The second sense will be discussed in more details below.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

5. Descriptive vs. Prescriptive Approach

As an elaboration on the second sense of grammar, to the extent that the linguist's description is a true model of the speakers' linguistic capacity, it is a successful description of the grammar and of the language. Such a model is called a **descriptive approach**. It does not tell you how you should speak; it describes your basic linguistic knowledge. The rules in such a grammar are *constitutive* – rules that are essential for the very existence of an activity or phenomenon.

The view of grammar as a set of rules specifying the 'proper' use of a language is best characterized as the **prescriptive approach**. Proponents of this approach wished to prescribe rather than describe the rules of grammar; the rules in such a grammar are *regulative* – rules that regulate an already existing activity (in this case, language). Some familiar examples of prescriptive rules for English sentences are:

- You must not split an infinitive.
- You must not end a sentence with a preposition.

Following these types of rules, traditional teachers would correct sentences like *Who did you go with?* to *With whom did you go?*

6. Teaching Grammar

Prescriptive grammar of a language is different from a **teaching/ pedagogical grammar** which is used to learn another language or dialect. Teaching grammars are used in school to fulfill language requirements. They can be helpful to people who do not spak the standard or prestige dialect, but find it would be advantageous socially and economically to do so. Teaching grammars state explicitly the rules of the language, list the words and their pronunications, and aid in learning a new language or dialect.

Teaching grammar assumes that the student already knows one language and compares the grammar of the target language with the grammar of the native language. The meaning of a word is given by providing a **gloss** – the parallel word in the student's native language such as خانه for *house*. Sounds of the target language that do not occur in the native language are often described by reference to known sounds. The rules on how to put words together to form grammatical sentences also refer to the learner's

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

CHAPTER EIGHT

((Phonetics))

When you know a language you know the sounds of the language, and you know how to combine those sounds into words. Although languages may contain different sounds, the sounds of all the languages of the world together constitute a class of sounds that the human vocal tract is designed to make. This chapter will discuss these speech sounds, how they are produce, and how they may be classified.

The general study of the characteristics of speech sound is called **phonetics**. All sounds, whether notes, animal noises, or human speech, are simply patterns or waves of energy that move through the air. The field of study devoted to the investigation of sound waves (physical properties of sounds) is known as **acoustic phonetics**. Sounds may also be studied in terms of their origin, that is, how they are produced. When the means of production is the human vocal apparatus, the study is called **articulatory phonetics**. The sound waves move in the air and we hear to interpret them. **Auditory phonetics** is concerned with how listeners perceive these sounds. Many aspects of the highly detailed descriptions of speech sounds are of only marginal interest to the linguist.

One other area, called **forensic phonetic**, has applications in legal cases involving speaker identification and the analysis of recorded utterances.

مطالعه عام خصوصیات اصوات گفتاری راPhonetics (آواشناسی) گویند. Phonetics به سه قسمت تقسیم می‌شوند:

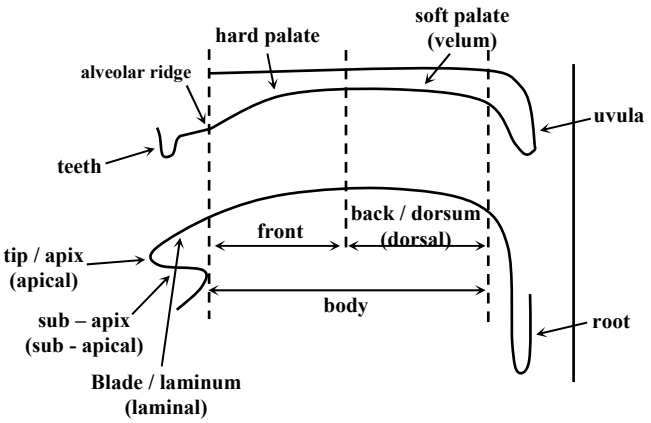
Articulatory phonetics: که به مطالعه نحوه تولید اصوات گفتاری می‌پردازد.

Acoustic phonetics: که به ویژگی‌های فیزیکی گفتار به عنوان امواج صوتی در فضا می‌پردازد.

Auditory phonetics: که به درک اصوات گفتار از طریق گوش می‌پردازد. برای مثال، چگونه تفاوت بین "p" دمشی و "p" غیر دمشی را می‌فهمیم.

1. Articulatory Phonetics

The production of any sound involves the movement of air. Most speech sounds are produced by pushing lung air through vocal cords up the throat, and into the mouth or nose, and finally out of the body. A brief anatomy lesson is in order. The opening between the vocal cords is the **glottis** and is located in the voice box or **larynx**. The tubular part of throat above the larynx is the **pharynx**. What sensible people call 'the mouth' we linguists call the **oral cavity** to distinguish it from **nasal cavity**, which is the nose and the plumbing that connects it to the throat, plus your sinuses. All of it together is the **vocal tract**.



www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

2. Sound Descriptions

Linguists differ regarding the particular set of features they utilize in their descriptions of sounds.
In traditional linguistics we investigate consonants and vowels from the following perspectives:

Consonants	Vowels
place of articulation	high vs. low
manner of articulation	front vs. back
voiced vs. voiceless	lip rounding
	lax vs. tense

2.1. Consonants

As was mentioned earlier, in traditional phonetics, consonants are investigated from three points of view; place of articulation, manner of articulation, voiced vs. voiceless.

- ***Place of articulation:*** we classify consonants according to where in the vocal tract the airflow restriction occurs, called the *place of articulation*. Movement of the tongue and lips creates the constriction, reshaping the oral cavity in various ways to produce the various sounds.

جایگاه تولید یعنی محلی در داخل دهان که در آن گرفتگی و تنگی ایجاد می‌شود. عباراتی که برای توصیف اصوات گوناگون بکار می‌روند، همانهایی هستند که مربوط به جایگاه تولید صوت می‌شوند.

Bilabials [p], [b], [m], [w] are produced using both (=bi) upper and lower lips (=labia); ([w] is also treated as a labio-velar).

Labiodentals [f], [v] are articulated by touching the bottom lips to the upper teeth.

❖ Bilabials and labiodentals are called **labials**.

Interdentals [θ], [ð] are spelled *th* and pronounced by inserting the tip of the tongue between the teeth. However, for some speakers the tongue merely touches behind the teeth, making a sound more correctly called **dental**.

Alveolars [t], [d], [n], [s], [z], [r], [l] are produced with the tongue raised in various ways to the alveolar ridge.

❖ For [r] most English speakers either curl the tip of the tongue back behind the alveolar ridge – a **retroflex** sound – or they bunch up the top of the tongue behind the ridge.

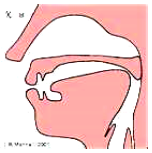
Palatals/ Post-alveolars/ Palato-alveolars/ Alveo-palatals [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [j] are articulated by the constriction that occurs by raising the front part of the tongue to the palate.

❖ To make a finer distinction, **[j]** is palatal and **[ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ]** are Post-alveolars/ Palato-alveolars/ Alveo-palatals.

❖ The first four sounds have alternative forms respectively as **[š]**, **[ž]**, **[č]** and **[ǰ]**.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

Velars [x] (Persian خ), **[k], [g], [ŋ]** are produced by raising the back of the tongue to the soft palate.



Uvulars [ʀ] *(French sound)*, **[G]** *(Arabic غ)*, **[q]** *(Arabic ق)* are formed by raising the back of the tongue to the uvula, the fleshy protuberance that hangs down in the back of our throat.

Glottals [h], [ʔ]: the sound [h] is from the flow of air through the open glottis, and past the tongue and lips as they prepare to pronounce a vowel sound, which always follows [h].
If the air is stopped completely at the glottis by tightly closed vocal cords, the sound upon release of the cords is a glottal stop [ʔ]. The interjection un-oh that you hope never to hear your dentist utter, has two glottal stops and is spelled phonetically [ʔʌʔo].
Labio-velar [w] is produced by both raising back of the tongue toward the velum and simultaneously rounding the lips. (According to Yule, [w] is bilabial, but Fromkin and Hudson recognize [w] as labio-velar.)

- [ʍ], a voiceless version of [w], appears in some English dialects in pronunciations of words like *when* and *which*, spelled with *wh*. Here this phone is considered to be [h] followed by [w].

- ***Manner of articulation:*** speech sounds also vary in the way the airstream is affected as it flows from the lungs up and out of the mouth and nose. It may be blocked or partially blocked; the vocal cords may vibrate or not vibrate. We refer to this as the manner of articulation.

اکنون می‌خواهیم اصوات را از لحاظ چگونگی شیوهٔ تولید نیز توصیف کنیم. این چنین توصیفی زمانی التزامی است که بخواهیم بین برخی اصوات که در بحث قبل در یک دسته‌بندی قرار دادیم، تمایز قائل شویم.

Stops [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g], [ʔ], [m], [n], [ŋ] are consonants in which the airstream is completely blocked in the oral cavity for a short period and then let go abruptly.

- **Oral stops = plosives [p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g], [ʔ]** are produced with the velum up, blocking the air from escaping through the nose
- **Nasal stops [m], [n], [ŋ]** are produced when the velum is not in its raised position, and thus air escapes through both the nose and the mouth.

(The division of consonants into nasal and oral is not specific to stops. Generally, consonants are divided into nasal and oral: all of the following classifications are oral sounds. It could be said that only [m], [n] and [ŋ] are nasal sounds and the remaining sounds are oral).

Fricatives [f], [v], [ð], [θ], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [x] (Persian خ), **[h]** involve almost blocking the airstream and having the air push through the very narrow opening; ([h] is also treated as a glide).

Affricates [tʃ], [dʒ] are produced by a stop closure followed immediately by a gradual release of the closure that produces an effect characteristic of a fricative.

Approximants [r], [l], [w], [j], [h] are speech sounds that involve the articulators approaching each other but not narrowly enough or with enough articulatory precision to create turbulent airflow. Approximants are further classified as liquids and glides.

- **Liquids [r], [l]** in which there is some obstruction of the airstream in the mouth, but not enough to cause any real constriction or friction. They are grouped as a class because they are acoustically similar. The [l] sound is called a lateral liquid and is formed by letting the airstream flow around the sides of the tongue as the tip of the tongue makes contact with the middle of the alveolar ridge. It is worth mentioning that [l] is the only [+lateral] sound segment in English.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

- **Glides [w], [j], [h]** are typically produced with the tongue in motion or gliding to or from the position of a vowel (i.e. they are transitional sounds) and are thus sometimes called semi-vowels. (Fromkin recognize [h] as fricative.)

Trill is produced by rapid vibrations of an articulator. An alveolar trill [r] is produced by vibrating the tongue tip against the alveolar ridge. It is found in the Spanish word *perro*. Also, uvular [ʀ] in French is produced by vibrating the uvula.

Tap/Flap [ɾ]/[D] another r-sound is called a flap and is produced by a flick of the tongue against the alveolar ridge. It sounds like a 'very fast d'. Most Americans produce a flap instead of a [t] or [d] in words like *rider* and *writer*.

- ***Voiced vs. Voiceless:*** as was mentioned earlier, air pushes through the larynx (voice box). Inside the larynx are your vocal cords, which take two basic positions:
  - When the vocal cords are spread apart, the air from the lungs passes between them unimpeded. Sounds produced in this way are described as **voiceless** or **fortis.**
  - When the vocal cords are drawn together, the air from the lungs repeatedly pushes them apart as it passes through, creating a vibration effect. Sounds produced in this way are described as **voiced** or **lenis**.

Consonant	Symbol name	Description	Example Words
[p]	lower case *p*	voiceless bilabial stop	***p**eace, **p**ray*
[b]	lower case *b*	voiced bilabial stop	***b**ook, **b**rand*
[t]	lower case *t*	voiceless alveolar stop	***t**rill, **t**owel*
[d]	lower case *d*	voiced alveolar stop	***d**rink, **d**ash*
[k]	lower case *k*	voiceless velar stop	***c**ream, **c**ase*
[g]	lower case *g*	voiced velar stop	***g**lue, **g**erm*
[ʔ]	–	voiceless glottal stop	***u**h-**o**h*
[f]	lower case *f*	voiceless labiodental fricative	***f**lower, **f**ool*
[v]	lower case *v*	voiced labiodental fricative	***v**alue, **v**elar*
[θ]	theta	voiceless (inter)dental fricative	***th**ree, **th**ank*
[ð]	eth	voiced (inter)dental fricative	***th**ough, **th**is*
[s]	lower case *s*	voiceless alveolar fricative	***s**low, **s**ew*
[z]	lower case *z*	voiced alveolar fricative	***z**ip,**z**oo*
[ʃ]	esh	voiceless post-alveolar fricative	***sh**rink, **sh**y*
[ʒ]	yogh	voiced post-alveolar fricative	*vi**s**ion, a**z**ure*
[tʃ]	–	voiceless post-alveolar affricate	***ch**air, ma**t**ure*
[dʒ]	–	voiced post-alveolar affricate	***j**ury, **j**ack*
[m]	lower case *m*	voiced bilabial nasal	***m**eal, **m**edical*
[n]	lower case *n*	voiced alveolar nasal	***n**eck, **n**ative*
[ŋ]	ang/angma	voiced velar nasal	*thi**nk**, wro**ng***
[l]	lower case *l*	voiced alveolar liquid	***l**eather, **l**ake*
*[r]	lower case *r*	voiced alveolar liquid	***r**eal, **r**ule*
[w]	lower case *w*	voiced labio-velar/bilabial glide	***w**ash, **w**orry*
[j]	lower case *j*	voiced palatal glide	***y**ell, **y**awn*
[h]	lower case *h*	voiceless glottal glide/fricative	***h**appy, **h**ello*

*[r] and [l] are distinguished by the additional feature of [+lateral] for [l].

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
((Language in Society))

The term **sociolinguistics** is used generally for the study of the relationship between language and society. This is a broad area of investigation that developed through the interaction of linguistic with a number of other academic disciplines.

1. Dialect

All speakers of English can talk to each other and pretty much understand each other. Yet, no two speakers speak exactly alike. Some differences are the result of age, sex, social situation, and where and when the language was learned. These differences are reflected in word choices, the pronunciation of words, and grammatical rules. The unique characteristics of the language of an individual speaker are referred to as the speaker's **idiolect**.

If we study many samples of idiolects from all over the world, we find that some idiolects are more similar to one another than are other idiolects. In other words, certain idiolects share linguistic features not found in others. By comparing idiolects in this way, we can divide the speakers of a language into groups, where speech of each group contains certain features not found in the other groups. Where there are systematic differences in the way different groups speak a language, we say that each group speaks a **dialect** of that language. In the study of dialects or **dialectology**, dialects are defined as mutually intelligible forms of a language that differ in systematic ways.

It is not always easy to decide whether the systematic difference between two speech communities reflects two dialects or two languages. The difference between them is a matter of degree. There is a kind of hierarchy in the organization of idiolects, dialects and languages. If we start with individual speakers and their idiolects, we can see that a dialect is simply a set of similar idiolects, and a language is a set of similar dialects. Generally, a rule-of-thumb definition says: when dialects become mutually unintelligible, these dialects become different languages.

Another closely related concept is accent. Regional phonological or phonetic distinctions are often referred to as different accents. **Accent** refers to the characteristics of speech that convey information about the speaker's dialect, which may reveal in what part of the country the speaker grew up or to which sociolinguistic group the speaker belongs. The term accent is also used to refer to the speech of non-native speakers, that is, someone who has learned the language as a second language. It is different from the term dialect, which is used to describe features of grammar and vocabulary as well as aspects of pronunciation.

1.1. Regional Dialect

A change that occurs in one region and fails to spread to other regions of the language community creates dialect differences. When enough such differences accumulate in a particular region, the language spoken has its own character, and that version of the language is referred to as a **regional dialect**.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

The chief factor involved in the creation of dialects or related languages is the degree of *intercommunication* among the speakers of a language. If all speakers of a language come into contact with all other speakers, then, although linguistic change will occur, it will not result in division of the language into dialects or new languages.
Just as lack of intercommunication tends to create dialect distinction, so the existence of intercommunication may prevent the development of separate dialects. In fact, intercommunication may even bring about **dialect leveling**, the situation in which dialect differences disappear. *Population mobility* is one of the chief factors involved in the dialect leveling. As people move from one region to another, they carry with them their original dialect. Encountering a new dialect, they may then lose some of their old features while at the same time acquiring new ones. Other possible causes of dialect leveling may be increased exposure to various forms of *mass communication* and *ease of travel* (though little evidence supports this theory).
To investigate regional dialects, it is important to know if the person whose speech you are recording really is a typical representative of the region's dialect. Consequently, the informants in the major dialect surveys of the twentieth century tended to be **NORMS** or 'non-mobile, older, rural, male speakers'. Such speakers were selected because it was believed that they were less likely to have influences from outside the region in their speech. One unfortunate consequence of using such criteria is that the resulting dialect description tends to be more accurate of a period well before the time of investigation.

1.1.1. Isogloss and Dialect Areas

Studies by dialectologists show that people who live in different regional dialects have phonological differences. For example, one dialect may pronounce *herb* as [hɛrb] while another dialect pronounces it as [ɛrb]. Regional dialects may differ in the vocabulary and syntax people use for the same object, as well as in phonology. The aim of the surveys of this type is naturally to find a number of significant differences in the speech of those living in different areas and to be able to chart where the boundaries are, between those areas. All the information collected through these surveys is transferred into **dialect maps** which show the areas where specific dialectal characteristics occur in the speech of the region (a book of dialect maps is called **dialect atlas**). If it is found, for example, that the vast majority of informants in one area say they carry things home from the store in a *paper bag* while the majority in another area say they use a *paper sack*, then it is usually possible to draw a line across a map separating the two areas. This line is called an **isogloss**. These separated areas which are distinguished by different word usages and varying pronunciations, among other linguistic differences, are called **dialect areas**. When you cross an isogloss, you are passing from one dialect area to another. If a very similar distribution is found for another two items, then another isogloss, probably overlapping the first, can be drawn on the map. When a number of isoglosses coincide in this way, a more solid line, indicating a **dialect boundary** can be drawn.

1.1.2. Dialect Continuum

It is worth mentioning that at most dialect boundary areas, one dialect or language variety merges into another. Suppose we start moving from West, where everybody uses the term *pail*, to East. As we move further East the number of speakers who uses *pail* gradually decreases; on the other hand, the number of those who use the term *bucket* increase. Keeping this in mind, we can view regional variation as existing along a **dialect continuum** rather as having sharp breaks from one region to the next. Those who move back and forth across a border area, using different varieties with some ease (in the above example, using both *pail* and *bucket*) may be described as **bidialectal**.

1.2. Social Dialect

In many respects, social boundaries and class differences are as confining as the physical barriers that often define regional dialects. It is therefore not surprising that different dialects of a language evolve within social groups. The social boundaries that give rise to dialect variation are numerous. They may be based on socioeconomic status, ethnic or racial differences, country or origin, education, and even gender. Dialect differences that seem to come about because of social factors are called **social dialects/ sociolect**, as opposed to regional dialects, which are spawned by geographical factors.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

What distinguishes people as belonging to one group or another is the use of **social markers** – a linguistic feature that marks the speaker as a member of a particular social group. For example in US, people with high socioeconomic status tend to produce /r/ after vowels as in *fourth floor*, while the working class produced less /r/ after vowels.

Note 1: When we look for other examples of language use that might be characteristic of a social dialect, we treat class as the *social variable* and the pronunciation or word as the *linguistic variable*.

1.2.1. Standard dialect

In most societies, there is some model of language usage that members identify as highly acceptable. Those who use this particular variety of the language are accorded some prestige, and speakers of other varieties may attempt to model their own speech after this variety. In such cases, we may speak of the standard dialect of the language.

1.2.2. Non-standard dialect

Other dialects, which differ from this standard, are sometimes subject to criticism from those who use the standard dialect. Dialects that differ to some extent from the standard are referred to as non-standard.

The bases for classifying a dialect as standard or non-standard have little or nothing to do with the linguistic facts about the dialect. Rather, such judgments are based on nonlinguistic facts. The selection of a standard dialect is determined by such matters as the political or social prestige of those who speak the dialect. Then, dialects are intimately related to the notion of prestige within a society. Basically, the standard dialect is the dialect that is associated with prestige in the society at large. Since most prestigious people speak the standard it is easy to associate the standard with prestige.

Progress Check

1- …… refers only to distinctive pronunciation, whereas …… refers to grammar and vocabulary as well.

1) Accent - dialect 2) Nation dialect - accent 3) Dialect - register 4) Register - accent

2- The speech of every particular individual speaker of a language is referred to as ……

1) accent 2) dialect 3) idiolect 4) sociolect

3- When a number of isoglosses come together, …… is formed.

1) overt prestige 2) social dialect 3) dialect leveling 4) dialect boundary

4- When due to natural obstacles, a change fails to affect the speech of the people beyond the obstacle, …… is created.

1) idiolect 2) regional dialect 3) non-standard dialect 4) accent

5- Dialect leveling may be created as a result of ……

1) different social groups 2) mass communication
3) high number of speakers in one region 4) economic growth in an area

Answers

1- Choice ""

Dialect is a variety of a language that is distinguished from other varieties of the same language by features of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary and pronunciation.

Accent is a mode of pronunciation, as pitch or tone, emphasis pattern, or intonation, characteristic of or peculiar to the speech of a particular person, group, or locality.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

2- Choice "3"

The speech of every particular individual speaker of a language is referred to as idiolect.

3- Choice "4"

When a number of isoglosses come together, dialect boundary is formed

4- Choice "2"

A change that occurs in one region and fails to spread to other regions of the language community creates regional dialect.

5- Choice "2"

Causes of dialect leveling are mass communication, ease of travel and population mobility.

2. Languages in Contact

2.1. Bilingualism and Code-switching

In many countries, regional variation is not simply a matter of two (or more) dialects of a single language, but can involve two (or more) quite distinct and different languages. Canada, for example, was an English speaking country with a French-speaking minority group. In such a situation, the members of the minority group have the feature of **bilingualism**; on the one hand they grow up in a linguistic community, mainly speaking one language (French), on the other they learn another language (English) to take part in the larger dominant linguistic community.

When Quebecois in Canada speak French, they may insert an English word or phrase into *a single* sentence or move back and forth between French and English, a process called **code-switching**.

2.2. Diglossia and Vernacular

A rather special situation involving two distinct varieties of a language, called **diglossia**, exists in some countries. In diglossia, there is a 'low' variety (demotic), acquired locally and used for everyday affairs, and a 'high' or special variety, learned in school and used for important matters. A type of diglossia existed in Europe with Latin as the high variety and one of the local languages of Europe (early versions of French, Spanish, etc.) as the low variety or 'vernacular'.

Vernacular is a general expression for a kind of social dialect, typically spoken by a lower-status group, which is treated as non-standard because of marked differences from a socially prestigious variety treated as the standard language. This term has been used since the Middle Ages, first to describe local European languages (low prestige) in contrast to Latin (high prestige), then to recognize any non-standard spoken version of a language used by lower-status groups.

2.3. Language Planning

In situations where many languages are spoken in a community, government, legal and educational organizations in many countries have to plan which variety or varieties of the languages spoken in the country to be used for official business. This is referred to as **language planning** – choosing and developing an official language or languages for use in government and education. Language planning consists of the following stages:

- **Selection:** is choosing an official language
- **Codification:** in which basic grammars, dictionaries and written models are used to establish the Standard variety
- **Elaboration:** in which standard variety is developed for use in all aspects of social life and the appearance of a body of literary word written in the standard
- **Implementation:** is largely a matter of government attempts to encourage use of the standard
- **Acceptance:** is the final stage when a substantial majority of the population has come to use the standard and to think of it as the national language, playing a part in not only social, but also national, identity.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir

2.4. Lingua Franca

Many areas of the world are populated by people who speak diverse languages. In such areas, where groups desire social or commercial communication, one language is often used by common agreement. Such a language is called a **lingua franca**. For example, English has been called 'the lingua franca of the whole world' and French at one time was 'the lingua franca of diplomacy'.

2.5. Pidgins

Often in history, traders and missionaries from one part of the world have visited and attempted to communicate with peoples residing in another distant part. In such cases, the contact is too specialized for one language to function effectively as a lingua franca. Instead the two (or possibly more) groups use their native languages as a basis for a rudimentary lingua franca with few lexical items and less complex grammatical rules. Generally, most of the lexical items are chosen from a dominant language, called the **lexifier language/ superstrate language**. The other language(s), called the **substrate language(s)** contribute only marginally to the lexicon and grammar. A language created in such a way is known as a **pidgin**. Pidgins have the following properties:

- Although pidgins are in some sense rudimentary, they are not devoid of rules. The phonological system is rule-governed, as in any human language. The inventory of phonemes is generally small, and each phoneme may has many allophonic pronunciations.
- Although pidgins are in some sense rudimentary, there are also grammatical rules. For example in some pidgins, verbs that take a direct object must have the suffix *–m or –im*.
- They don't have any complex grammatical morphology and with their small vocabularies, pidgins are not good at expressing fine distinctions of meaning. Many lexical items bear a heavy semantic burden, with context relied on to remove ambiguity. Also, much circumlocution and metaphorical extension is necessary.
- Functional morphemes often take the place of inflectional morphemes found in the source language.
- They have no native speakers.

2.6. Creoles

When children are exposed to a pidgin as their linguistic input, they develop a language that is no longer a pidgin but that is more complicated and shares many of the fundamental characteristics of a non-pidgin human language. One that is far richer and more complex than the pidgin that the children heard when growing up. Such a language is called a **creole**.

Note 2: The biggest difference between pidgin and creole is that the former doesn't have native speakers but the latter does.

2.7. The Post-creole Continuum

In many contemporary situations where creoles evolved, there is usually evidence of another process at work. Just as there was development from a pidgin to a creole, known as *creolization*, there is now a retreat from the use of creole by those in contact with a standard variety of the language. Where education and greater social prestige are associated with a higher variety, a number of speakers tend to use fewer creole forms and structures. This is called *decreolization* which leads, at one extreme, to a variety that is closer to the external standard model and leaves, at the other extreme, a basic variety with more local creole features. The more basic variety is called the **basilect** and the variety closer to the external model is called the **acrolect**. Between these two extremes there are other varieties called **mesolect**.

www.modaresanesharif.ac.ir