

**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**English 327
Sociolinguistics**

Course Syllabus

Course Objectives

This seminar is intended to introduce students to the issues related to the study of the interaction between language and society. Students will learn about the various sociolinguistic approaches and the methods used for collecting representative data for the study of language in society. Furthermore, students will learn about dialectal and stylistic variation and how such variation affects language attitudes and social stereotypes. Finally, students will learn about the interaction between language and social factors such as gender, ethnicity, political orientation, and social trends. Needless to say, students are expected to apply what they learn in the research they conduct for their presentation and final paper.

By the end of the semester, students are expected to be able to do the following:

1. Define and provide examples of all the relevant terms, concepts, and expressions discussed in the course.
2. Write a minimum of two article critiques and two book reviews.
3. Review all available literature on a sociolinguistic topic and present it in the class.
4. Critique other students' presentations and make suggestions for improvement.
5. Identify the major traits of the various quantitative and qualitative methods in the study of social dialects.
6. Conduct field research, analyze results, and present findings in a final research paper.

Course Content

The course covers such topics as geographical and social dialects, ethnography of speaking, discourse analysis, language planning, and motivation to learn language. More specifically, the course addresses the following topics: language and gender, language in education, conversational analysis, multilingualism and multiculturalism, code switching and code mixing, pidgins and creoles, non-standard language varieties, variationist sociolinguistics, language and identity, language attitudes, and language and culture

Required Textbook

The following three textbooks will serve as basic reading materials; however, the course requires extensive readings that go beyond the scope of these three sources.

Coupland, N. & Jaworski, A. 1997. *Sociolinguistics: A Reader and Coursebook*. London: Macmillan.

Downes, W. 1998. *Language and Society*. Cambridge University Press.

Johnstone, B. 2000. *Qualitative Methods in Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Readings from various books and journal articles are also assigned for each topic listed in the syllabus.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Those who miss **three** sessions or more, no matter what their excuses are, will be dropped automatically from the course. Needless to say, students will be held responsible for any materials covered during their absence from class.

Policy on Plagiarism

As students in this course are expected to conduct both library and field research, it is imperative that they maintain the ethical standards required of researchers. It is essential, therefore, to point out that the work done should be theirs and theirs only. They should consult sources and references for their research projects, but they should not copy the relevant materials. In case there are direct or indirect quotations, the references should be listed. Students caught cheating will get a grade of zero on the assigned task and will be referred to the Student Affairs Committee for further disciplinary action.

Evaluation of Students' Performance

Presentations (Oral and Written)	25%
Projects (Critiques and Reviews)	25%
Active Participation	10%
Research Paper	40%

SYLLABUS

Week 1	Introduction to Sociolinguistics	(Bolton, Ch.1) (Coupland & Jaworski, Pt.1) (Romaine, Ch. 1)
	Communicative language functions	
	Language variation	
	Language and society	
	Scope of sociolinguistics	
Week 2	Language Varieties	(Wardhaugh, Ch. 2)
	Regional dialects	(Romaine, Ch. 3)
	Social dialects	(Francis)
	Styles and registers	
	Linguistic variation and social function	
Week 3	Research Methods in Sociolinguistics	(Coupland & Jaworski, Pt. 2)
	Field linguistics	
	Field methods in the study of social dialects	(Wolfram & Ethnographic approaches to language study Fasold, Ch. 3)
	Research ethics	(Johnstone)
Weeks 4 & 5	Language in Society	(Labov, 72)
	Social dialects	(Wardhaugh, Chs. 6 & 7)
	Variation studies	(Coupland & Jaworski, Pt. 3)
	Bilingualism and Multilingualism	(Wei)
	Diglossia	(Romaine, Chs. 5 & 6)
	Stylistic variation	
	Pidgins and Creoles	
	Presentations	
Week 6	Language and Gender	(Coates, 89 & 97)
	Gender differences in language use	
	Mixed talk	(Johnson & Meinhof)
	Same-sex talk	(Coupland & Jaworski, Chs. 17 & 29)
	Language, gender, and power relations	
	Presentations	
Week 7	Code Switching	(Auer)
	Mixing and switching	(Coupland & Jaworski, Ch. 28)
	Reasons, forms, and attitudes	
	Code switching and language acquisition	
	Switching and borrowing	
Week 8	Language Attitudes	(Coupland & Jaworski, Pt. 5)

Reaction to speech of others
Language use and social stereotypes
Language policies and language attitudes

Weeks 9 & 10

Language Planning and Language policies
Language in education (Wardhaugh, Ch. 15)
Language standardization (Fishman, 74)
Language roles in society and education

Week 11

Ethnography of Communication (Coupland & Jaworski, Pt. 7)
Varieties of talk
Systematics of verbal interaction
Frame analysis

Weeks 12 & 13

Language and Culture (Coupland & Jaworski, Pt. 8)
Whorf-Sapir hypothesis
Kinship systems
Taboo and euphemism
Rules for rituals
Address forms
Names and naming practices

Week 14

Issues in Arabic Sociolinguistics Suleiman (94 & 96)
Language and ethnic identity Shaaban (00)
The role of the foreign language
Multilingualism
Language policies
Fusha and vernacular

Week 15

Presentations of Research Projects

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JOURNALS TO BE CONSULTED

Language in Society
The international Journal of the Sociology of Language
Language Problems and Language Planning
World Englishes
Al-Abhath
Abhath Al-Yarmouk
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Foreign Language Annals
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