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Introduction to Sociolinguistics

Unit 2

2. Language, dialects, and varieties

What you should be familiar with to tackle this unit:

There is a lot of variation in every language: people speak every language differently depending on where they are from in the given language area (regional variation), who they are socially (social variation), and what situation they are using the language in (stylistic variation).

1. The topic of this unit:

This unit discusses what language is and what dialects are, and their relationship to each other. Lots of configurations of dialects vs. language and lots of examples will be discussed.

Questions to think about:

1. How would you define "dialect" on the basis of your everyday knowledge of your native language? Can you think of any dialects of it that you know by name?

2. Is it always possible for speakers of different dialects of the same language to understand each other? Can you think of an example where that is not the case, for instance, from English?

2. Language vs. dialect:

Languages have a lot of variation: they have different dialects (or varieties, as sociolinguists often call them), and all of these together constitute a language. Thus, a language is basically the sum of all of its varieties. So, English is the sum of all of its varieties: British English, American English, Australian English; Yorkshire English, New England English, Cockney; Standard American English and nonstandard English varieties, to mention just a few.

A way of speaking qualifies as a variety if it is spoken by a sufficiently large group of people in the same way (i.e. with the same grammatical features and vocabulary) and in all contexts of life. Thus, legal English is not a variety because it is only used in talking about law, but all of the Englishes mentioned in the previous paragraph are because they are used in public and private, formal and informal contexts alike.

Only very few languages do not have dialects – the Pirahã language spoken in the Amazon jungle in Brazil is such a language. It is spoken in a relatively small area by around 300 people who are just not separated enough from each other to develop dialectal features. However, such language are very rare, the great majority of languages have regional and social dialects as well.

Video task:

Watch this TED talk, "Wisdom from strangers" on youtube.com in which American linguist Dan Everett talks about his work as a linguist and missionary among the Pirahã. What else, besides having no dialects, does Pirahã seem to be different from most languages for?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=get272FyNto

2.1. Dialect = variety

The word *dialect* is used differently by (socio)linguists than by nonlinguists in everyday usage: in everyday usage, it often refers to a nonstandard or regional way of speaking which is different from the speaker's. Linguists, on the other land, use the term *dialect* neutrally, to designate any variety – standard or nonstandard, regional or social. Thus, in linguists' usage of the term, the standard variety of the language is also a dialect, as is any regional dialect or social dialect. (More on the standard dialect below.)

Questions to think about

1. In the foreign languages you speak does the equivalent for dialect have any negative connotations? What is the equivalent, and what kind of negative connotations does it have? Do a quick search on the internet to see what kind of contexts it comes up in.

2.2. Language vs. dialect

A language is always the sum of all of its varieties. It has a single linguistic norm or a group of related norms. One way of thinking of language and the dialects constituting it is with the help of the notion of mutual intelligibility: if two varieties are mutually intelligible (that is, if two speakers speak two different varieties but understand each other), they are dialects of the same language. For instance, speakers of different dialects of Hungarian all understand each other – therefore, all of these dialects are dialects of Hungarian. However, even though this is true in a lot of cases, there many exceptions! Speakers of closely related languages – such as Spanish vs. Portuguese, Czech and Slovak, Swedish and Norwegian etc. – usually understand a lot of speakers of the other language are saying, yet nobody would ever claim that Spanish and Portuguese, or Swedish and Norwegian are dialects of the same language. Why? Well, that is a complex question. They are spoken in different countries, are thought of traditionally as distinct languages, there are separate dictionaries for them, and they are tied to people's social and cultural identities.

Sometimes, however, we can witness how such defining factors change in a relatively short period of time. Before the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991-1992, Serbo-Croatian was considered to be one language (even though it was written then as it is now with the Latin script by Croats and the Cyrillic by Serbs). (See, in Table 1, the text of the Lord's prayer as well as that of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Serbian and in Croatian.) There were unified dictionaries of it (for instance, an English–Serbo-Croatian), and when it was taught to foreign learners, the course was called "a Serb-Croatian course". Very shortly after the breakup of the country into individual states in the early 1990s, the speakers of Serbo-Croatian (and with them, the rest of the world) started considering the variety spoken by Serbs as Serbian and the one spoken by Croats as Croatian, with the former becoming the official language in Serbia and the latter in Croatia. Newly published textbooks and dictionaries also started to be designated as those of Serbian or Croatian, and not of Serbo-Croatian. See Figures 1 and 2 below for pictures of dictionaries of Serbian/Serbo-Croatian from various years.

Figure 1. Hungarian–Serbo-Croatian dictionaries published in Hungary in 1958 (L) and 1968 (R).

Figure 2. Books from the 2000s: a beginning Serbian textbook (L), a Croatian travel dictionary (top R), and a Hungarian–Serbian dictionary (bottom R).

Truthfully, Serbian and Croatian are still largely mutually intelligible -- even though sometimes, driven by negative language attitudes and a desire to disassociate, speakers of one claim not to understand speakers of the other. In Table 1 you can compare the texts of the Lord's Prayer and Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Serbian vs. Croatian. (The Serbian text is given in both Cyrillic and Latin script.)

Serbian (Cyrillic script):	Serbian (Latin script):	Croatian:	English:
Оче наш који си на небесима, да се свти име Твоје, да дође *царство* Твоје, да буде воља Твоја, како на небу, тако и на земљи. *Хлеб* наш насушни дај нам данас; И *опрости* нам дугове наше као што смо и ми *опростили* дужницима својим. И не уведи нас у *искушење*, него нас избави од Злога.	Oče naš, koji si na nebesima, da se svti ime Tvoje. da dođe *carstvo* Tvoje, da bude volja Tvoja, kako na nebu, tako i na zemlji. *Hleb* naš nasušni daj nam danas, i *oprosti* nam dugove naše, kao što smo i mi *otprostili* dužnicima svojim. i ne uvedi nas u *iskušenie*, nego nas izbavi as od Zloga.	Oče naš, koji jesi na nebesima, sveti se Ime Tvoje. Dođi *kraljevstvo* Tvoje, budi volja Tvoja, kako na Nebu, tako i na Zemlji. *Kruh* naš svagdanji daj nam danas, i *otpusti* nam duge naše, kako i mi *otpuštamo* dužnicima našim. i ne uvedi nas u *napast*, nego izbavi nas od zla.	Our Father who are in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your *kingdom* come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily *bread*, and *forgive* us our debts, as we also have *forgiven* our debtors. And lead us not into *temptation*, but deliver us from the evil one.
Сва људска бића рађају се слободна и једнака у достојанству и правима. Она су обдарена разумом и свешћу и треба једни према другима да поступају у духу братства.	Sva ljudska bića rađaju se slobodna i jednaka u dostojanstvu i pravima. Ona su obdarena razumom i sviješću i trebaju jedna prema drugima postupati u duhu bratstva.	Sva ljudska bića rađaju se slobodna i jednaka u dostojanstvu i pravima. Ona su obdarena razumom i sviješću i trebaju jedna prema drugima postupati u duhu bratstva.	All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Table 1. The Lord's prayer (top) and Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (bottom) in Serbian, Croatian, and English.

As you can see italicized in Table 1 above, and listed in Table 2 below, there are few words that differ in the Lord's Prayer Serbian and Croatian. (Some grammatical forms are also different.) The reasons for these differences are manifold: for instance, the word for 'kingdom' is a Russian loanword meaning 'Tsardom' in Serbian and an old Slavic word for Western European style 'kingdom' in Croatian, a difference which is due to the fact that Serbs are traditionally Orthodox Christians like Russians, while Croats are Roman Catholic.

Serbian (in Latin script):	Croatian:	English meaning:
carstvo	kraljevstvo	kingdom
hleb	kruh	bread
oprosti	otpusti	forgive (2 person singular imperative)
iskušenie	napast	temptation

Table 2. The Serbian vs. Croatian words that are different in the Lord's Prayer

In comparison, the passage from the Universal Declaration is completely identical in the two languages.

Similarly to the Serbian vs. Croatian case, Hindi and Urdu are mutually intelligible but are considered by their speakers (and everybody else) as distinct languages, although they are also referred to as Hindustani when talking about the mutually intelligible variety that serves as a language of communication between groups of speakers (that is, as a lingua franca – see below) in India. Hindi is spoken by Hindus, primarily in India, where it is the native language of about 260 million people, and written with the Devangari script. Urdu is spoken by Muslims, in Pakistan (by about 16 million people), a country to the north of India, and in India (by about 60 million people, where it is also an official language), and written with the Arabic script. See Table 3 below for two short texts in the two languages.

Hindi	Urdu	English
अनुच्छेद 1 (एक) – सभी मनुष्यों को गौरव और अधिकारों के विषय में जन्मजात स्वतन्त्रता और समानता प्राप्त हैं। उन्हें बुद्धि और अन्तरात्मा की देन प्राप्त है और परस्पर उन्हें भाईचारे के भाव से बर्ताव करना चाहिए।	دفعہ ۱: تمام انسان آزاد اور حقوق و عزت کے اعتبار سے برابر پیدا ہوئے ہیں۔ انہیں ضمیر اور عقل ودیعت ہوئی ہے۔ اس لئے انہیں ایک دوسرے کے ساتھ بھائی چارے کا سلوک کرنا چاہیئے	All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Table 3. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Hindi, Urdu, and English.

On the other hand, in Chinese there is no mutual intelligibility in speech between speakers of different dialects, but due to the self-identification of these speakers as speakers of the Chinese language, their dialects are regarded as dialects of one and the same language. In writing the speakers of these divergent dialects understand each other completely, since the Chinese script stands for all.

2.3. Dialectization

Whether a variety is a dialect of a language or a separate language is, then, not a linguistic issue per se but a historically and politically motivated sociolinguistic issue. When the speakers of a variety that is closely related to another gain independence and acquire a country of their own, they are free to give their mother tongue the status of a language – this is what happened in Serbia and Croatia.

However, when the speakers of a variety like this constitute a minority group in a country, they might have difficulty in doing so. In Soviet times, Ukrainian, an Eastern Slavic language closely related to Russian, was regarded by a lot of Russians as "just a dialect of Russian", and it was used very little in writing in the public domain (where Russian dominated) in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the part of the USSR where most Ukrainians lived. After Ukraine gained independence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukrainian became the official language of the country used in all spheres of life. Ironically, many Ukrainian speakers now regard smaller Eastern Slavic languages closely related to Ukrainian and spoken by minority groups in Ukraine such as Rusyn and Hutsul as "just dialects of Ukrainian". Dialectization – that is, the labeling as dialects, by a dominant group, of the varieties thought to be distinct languages by their own speakers – is a common form of the display of social, cultural, and political dominance. The dynamic is captured nicely in a metaphoric form by the non-scientific definition "a language is a dialect with an army and a navy".

Research task:

1. Consider the grouping of Romance languages in Figure 3 below. Choose 5 of the varieties mentioned in it and read up on them in Wikipedia to see which ones are regarded languages, which ones dialects, and on what basis.

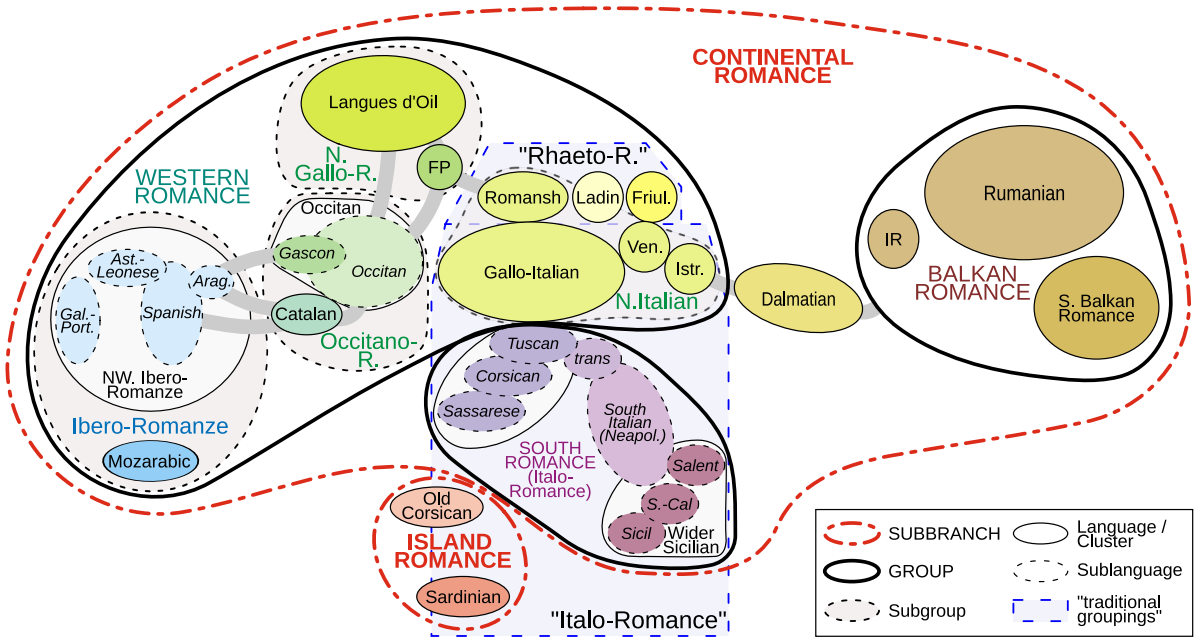

Figure 3. The grouping of Romance languages.

(By Original:Koryakov YuriVector:Mrmw - Own work based on: Romance-lg-classification-en.png:, CC0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=61617379)

2.4. Dialect continuum

In the case of closely related languages whose language areas are next to each other, it is often the matter of political decision whether a dialect is assigned to one or the other language when the political border is drawn. Such a case is found on the border of the Netherlands and Germany. Dutch and German are closely related languages of the West Germanic branch of the Germanic languages, and the regional dialects spoken on either side of the political border are very close to each other – in fact closer than they are to their own standard varieties, Standard Dutch and Standard German,

respectively. So, basically, if the political border happened to be further east or further west, speakers of the westernmost German dialect would now be considered speakers of Dutch, or those of the easternmost Dutch dialect would be considered speakers of German. This phenomenon, called dialect continuum, exists in several places in Europe where closely related languages are spoken in neighboring areas – see Map 1 below. It is only political (and to a lesser extent cultural) borders that impose the designation of what language these varieties of related languages belong to.

Map 1. European dialect continuum areas.

(By base map: User:Maix and User:Alphathonadditions: User Kanguole - File:Blank map of Europe 1956-1990.svg, CC BY-SA 2.5, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=52897901.)

Notice that dialect continuums exist only between related languages (that is, languages from the same language family) when they are also neighbors geographically. Thus, Hungarian, Finnish, and Estonian do not participate in dialect continuums since they are not Indo-European but Finno-Ugric languages, and their neighbors are Indo-European languages. If Finnish and Estonian shared a land border (rather than be separated by the Baltic Sea), they could have had a dialect continuum, since they are closely related – but they do not.

Research task:

1. Choose a dialect continuum area from Map 1 in which you have some familiarity with at least one of the languages that are part of it. For instance, if you know some German, choose the West Germanic dialect continuum. Search Wikipedia for information on (1) what languages and what dialects are part of this dialect continuum, and (2) what historical events shaped the political borders within it.

2.5. The standard dialect

The standard is also a dialect, a variety of a language. It is not "the language itself", although it sometimes might seem to be that way: dictionaries and grammars typically contain information about the standard only, and it is also the standard that is taught in foreign language classrooms as "the language".

The standard is a dialect of the language that has received a special status by being elevated to be the variety which is used for formal communication, in education, and the media. Historically, the standard is usually the regional variety used in the political, cultural, and/or economic center and by the powerful elite of the country in question. Standard French is Parisian French, standard Russian is Moscow Russian, etc. The standard is usually chosen when the need to use the given language for written formal purposes (e.g. printing books) arises, since at that point agreement is needed as to which variety will be used for this purpose. In the case of English, this happened at the time of the introduction of the printing press in English in the late

15th century: in addition to bringing printing to England, William Caxton is also, thus, credited to have contributing to the standardization of the English language.

The standard dialect is often thought or felt to be more “beautiful”, more “logical”, or “more correct” than regional or nonstandard dialects of the same language, especially by more educated speakers of the language. This is the result of their education, since it is the job of the educational system to teach the standard variety to students. No dialect is more “beautiful”, more “logical”, or “more correct” than any other dialect of a language – only our perception (influenced by our teachers and/or experiences) makes us think so.

Research task:

1. Ask 10 friends of yours who share your mother tongue for their opinions on (1) what is the most beautiful, (2) what is the most logical, (3) what is the most correct, (4) what is the ugliest dialect of this language. Compare their answers: are they similar or different? Do you recognize any patterns in the answers? Can you think of any historical or cultural reasons that shaped your friends’ answers?

2.6. Standardization

In many countries of Europe, standardization was historically a very important process closely intertwined with the self-assertion processes and independence movements of the speakers of dominated languages: Hungarians, Finns, Slovaks, Serbs, etc., all had to develop their languages – which were at some point historically used mostly in speaking and mostly by illiterate peasants, while the educated speakers of the same languages were all educated in the dominant language of the country. For Finns the dominant language was Swedish, since what is now Finland was for a long time part of the Sweden (and then, for a short time, of Czarist Russia), whereas for Hungarians, Slovaks, and other people of the Habsburg Empire, the dominant languages were Latin and German. Latin was the official language as well as the language of law and education in the Habsburg Empire until 1784, when it was replaced by German. As a result, Hungarian was used in a very limited way, mostly in speaking and not in writing.

Interestingly, the replacement of Latin with German as the official language served as a catalyst for the development of Hungarian as a fully-fledged language, since while Latin was nobody’s mother tongue in the Empire, and, therefore, equally a second language to all, German was clearly people’s first

language in Austria, and its use in formal functions was no longer an equal measure. This prompted Hungarian writers and other intellectuals to start developing the vocabulary of the language and take measures for its acceptance in formal domains, a movement known as *Nyelvújítás* (language reform; literally "language reform").

Research task:

1. Read up, in Wikipedia, on language reform in general (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_reform) as well as about a language reform in a language that you are familiar with which is listed in this Wikipedia article (see under "Examples"). What do you think necessitated this language reform in this language? What was the historical background?

2.7. Standard English(es)

It is important to note that these days Standard English is defined, linguistically, first and foremost through grammatical and lexical features rather than through pronunciation features: Standard English can be spoken with a variety of accents. This has not always been the case: until the 1980s, RP (received pronunciation) was considered to the Standard (British) English – it was rare to hear anything outside of it in the British media (like the BBC) before then.

Typically, Standard English is defined through what is NOT part of it: regional dialectal and social dialectal forms are not part of it. As is the case in every language, Standard English is codified in grammars and dictionaries.

In the English speaking world there is a number of slightly different standard Englishes: Standard British English, Standard American English, Standard Canadian English, and Standard Australian English all differ in small ways from each other. Usually, when differences between British English and American English (and occasionally, between British English and Australian or New Zealand English) are described – in books or websites – it is the standard varieties of English used in these countries that are compared.

Research tasks:

1. Find a website that details differences between British English and American English, and make note of 5 each of differences in lexicon, spelling, pronunciation (stress etc.).

2. Do the same to find differences between British English and Australian English.

3. Browse the *Speech accent archive* (http://accent.gmu.edu/browse_atlas.php) and choose one accent each from the UK, US, and Australia. Note 3 features that differentiate these accents from each other.

2.8. Vernacular

Sociolinguists call a person's first variety, that is, the variety they learn at home, from their parents, their vernacular. This can be a regional or nonstandard dialect, or it can also be the standard dialect. The vernacular usually occupies a special place in a person's life: they usually feel emotional attachment to it, and that this is the dialect which speaks from their heart, which is really "theirs".

Sociolinguists also regard the vernacular as a special variety when they do research: this is the variety they try to elicit when they want to record and describe variation, since it is the variety people use in relaxed, informal, "normal" circumstances.

2.9. Bidialectism

Many people grow up speaking a regional or nonstandard dialect of their language as the first dialect, learning it from their parents and in their family. When they go to school, they then learn the standard and become bidialectal, that is, they become speakers of two dialects of the same language. The more educated a speaker is, the better they become at using the standard. Bidialectal people typically use their first dialect in informal domains of language use, with their family and friends, and use the standard in formal domains, at school, at work, and in formal settings.

The role of educators in maintaining bidialectism is crucial: if teachers express negative attitudes to their students about their first dialect being "incorrect", "ugly", or "wrong", that can have various adverse effects, from alienating students from school and education (since they are being forced to "choose" between their first dialect, which they learned from their parents and are attached to) to alienating them from their own community (if they

decide that education is their way and the teachers are, after all, right, and in the long run abandon their first dialect). The healthy middle way is for teachers to teach the standard and stress its importance, but without attaching negative values to the students' first dialect and, at the same time, by emphasizing its importance as part of their (regional, cultural, class etc.) identity. Such positive practices are common in Flemish speaking Belgium, where most people's first dialect is Western Flemish, while Standard Dutch is taught at school.

Questions to think about:

1. Do you remember any times from your days in elementary or high school when a teacher made negative comments about your or a classmate's vernacular language use? What kind of linguistic features did the teacher comment on and what was their comment?

2. Is it a good idea for a bidialectal person to try and forget or unlearn their regional dialect and speak the standard in all situations? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of such a move?

3. Two friends of yours, who are speakers of a regional dialect of your language, want to bring up their newborn such that they always speak the standard to her, in the hope that she will have an easier time at school than they were. Would you recommend that they do this? Why or why not?

2.10. Lingua franca

A lingua franca is a language used for communication between people of different native languages. In today's world English is the first global lingua franca, that is, a lingua franca used virtually everywhere for communication between people of other language backgrounds. English is the language of airline traffic controls, finance, the internet, programming, international diplomacy, and science. German is an important lingua franca in Central and Eastern Europe, partly due to the historical role the Habsburg Empire played here. In the former Soviet Union Russian served as a lingua franca between speakers of other native languages. In East Africa Swahili is an important lingua franca.

Today English is spoken by over a billion people in the world, more than two-thirds of them being second language (L2) speakers, and one-third native (L1) speakers of the language. Table 4 below provides the figures for English speakers in a number of countries.

Country	Total English speakers (%)	L1 (%)	L2 (%)
United States	283,160,000 (95%)	234,171,000 (79%)	48,988,000 (17%)
United Kingdom	59,600,000 (98%)	54,400,000 (92%)	5,128,000 (6%)
Canada	28,360,200 (86%)	18,859,000 (57%)	9,500,000 (29%)
Australia	17,358,000 (97%)	15,014,000 (70%)	2,344,000 (17%)
Ireland	4,350,000 (98%)	4,122,100 (93%)	237,900 (5%)
South Africa	16,424,000 (31%)	4,930,000 (9%)	11,494,000 (22%)
New Zealand	3,673,600 (98%)	3,673,000 (98%)	
India	1,028,737,000 (12%)	226,000 (0.02%)	125,118,000 (12%)
Germany	45,400,000 (56%)	272,000 (0.34%)	45,100,000 (56%)
Israel	6,205,000 (85%)	100,000 (1.4%)	6,105,000 (83%)
Poland	14,300,000 (37%)	100,000 (0.26%)	14,200,000 (36%)
Netherlands	15,030,000 (90%)		15,030,000 (90%)
China	10,000,000 (<1%)		10,000,000 (<1%)
Sweden	8,2000,000 (86%)		8,2000,000 (86%)
Denmark	4,770,000 (86%)		4,770,000 (86%)
Switzerland	4,680,000 (61%)	73,400 (1%)	4,606,600 (60%)
Norway	4,500,000 (90%)		4,500,000 (90%)
Finland	3,800,000 (70%)		3,800,000 (70%)
Czechia	2,850,000 (27%)		2,850,000 (27%)
Croatia	2,200,000 (49%)		2,200,000 (49%)
Hungary	2,000,000 (20%)		2,000,000 (20%)
Slovakia	1,400,000 (26%)		1,400,000 (26%)
Slovenia	1,210,000 (59%)		1,210,000 (59%)
Cyprus	610,000 (73%)		610,000 (73%)
...	...	...	...
Total in the world	1,179,874,000	336,358,000	838,676,000

Table 4. The estimated numbers of of English speakers in some countries of the world today.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_English-speaking_population

2.11. Register

A register is the specialized vocabulary used by an occupational or other social group. Lawyers, doctors, airline pilots, sports fans, hobbyists all have their own registers that people outside the group are not familiar with.

Research task:

1. Make a list of words (in English or in your native language) that you think are part of a university students' register – if you are not sure if a word is part of this register, ask a friend or former high school classmate who is not a student whether they know it.

2.12. Dialect vs. style vs. register

It is important to stress that dialect, style and register are not the same things, and they are independent of each other. For instance, a medical doctor and a nurse could be using the same register, medical English, in a conversation about a patient while one of them is using the standard dialect and the other a regional dialect in an informal situation and a suitably informal style when they are talking about the patient privately. Or, they could be using the same register, both speaking the standard dialect and formal style in a formal consultation about the same patient with the head of their department.

3. Summary

Languages have a lot of variation in them, and a language is a sum of the regional and social dialects (or varieties). The standard is also a dialect, one that is used in formal situations and in writing. Whether two varieties are dialects of the same language or separate languages depends greatly on what their speakers think about the status of the two varieties. A person's vernacular is the dialect that they acquire as the first dialect of their language. People learn the standard dialect at school. Most people are bidialectal, speaking a regional dialect of their language and the standard. A lingua franca is a language used

by speakers of different languages for intergroup communication. Register is a specialized vocabulary used and understood by members of a professional group (such as doctors, lawyers, car enthusiasts, skiers, etc.).

Review questions:

1. Is the criterion of mutual intelligibility always applicable when deciding whether two varieties are dialects of the same language or separate languages? Can you think of cases when it cannot which were not mentioned in the text above?

2. Somebody tells you that they heard this witty saying that "language is a dialect with an army and a navy", but they don't know what it means. Explain and illustrate with examples.

3. What two dialects is a bidialectal person most likely to possess? Why these dialects?

Glossary of terms:

Bidialectism: the phenomenon that most people speak two dialects of their native language, their first dialect (or vernacular), which their have acquired at home and which is usually a regional dialect of the language, and the standard, which they learned at school.

Dialect continuum: a sequential arrangement of regional dialects such that when closely related languages are next to each other geographically, and neighboring dialects situated across the political border are more similar to each other than to their own standard dialects, so the categorization as to which language they are a dialect of is dependent on the political border rather than linguistic features.

Dialect: or variety, a form of a language used by a sufficiently large group of people in the same way in all contexts of life. Dialects can be regional or social.

Dialectization: the phenomenon when a distinct variety which is considered a separate language by its speakers is labeled a dialect by others who have some kind of power over the former.

Lingua franca: a language which is used as a means of communication by groups of people whose mother tongues are other languages. A lingua franca can be region specific.

Standard: a dialect of a language which is artificially elevated to a special position to be used in formal and written language use, in the media, administration, and education. A standard dialect is not more beautiful, not more logical, or not more correct than any other dialect of the language. It is a norm which is taught by the educational system and is codified in grammars and dictionaries of the language. Because of its latter status, it is often regarded as "the language itself", but it is not.

Variety: a dialect, regional or social, of a language.

Vernacular: The first dialect someone learns of their language, from their parents, which they speak with their family and friends. It is of special importance for sociolinguists since when people speak in informal, regular circumstances, they use their vernacular, which is what sociolinguists aim to describe.

Quizzes:
see separate documents

Further reading:

Trudgill, Peter, and Jean Hannah. 2013. *International English: A guide to the varieties of standard English*. London: Routledge.
Wardhaugh, Ronald. 1998. Language, dialects, and varieties. In: Wardhaugh, Ronald. *An introduction to sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 21–52.