10

Language Variation Across Situations of Use: Registers

What Do You Think?

- Lit major Lindsey comments that the dialogue in a P. D. James novel she's reading is "awesome, totally natural." You scoff because you've recently read a transcribed deposition you'd given in connection with an insurance claim for an automobile accident, and your answers to the attorney's questions were peppered with false starts and *uhms* and *uhs*. Your answers didn't resemble the tidy fictional dialogue of novels at all. What can you tell Lindsey about what's "totally natural" in fictional dialogue?
- Ninth-grade Nina asks why her teachers dislike slang and colloquialisms. She also wonders what's the difference between them. What do you tell her?
- Classmate Caroline claims she's shocked to see contractions like *it's* and *don't* used in this textbook and claims they should be avoided in textbooks and college writing classes. You think they create an informal, relaxed tone appropriate to a linguistics textbook. What justification can you offer for your preference?
- Poring over a cookbook, Uncle Austin laments: "What strange English! 'Toast pine nuts in medium skillet. Remove and add 1 tbsp. oil and garlic. Cook 4 minutes and drain remaining liquid. Sprinkle salt and pepper inside trout cavity and stuff with spinach mixture. Brush trout with remaining oil.' What ever happened to words like *of* and *for* and *them* and *the* and the other Anglo-Saxon glue of the language?" What do you say?

Introduction

Language varieties characteristic of particular social situations—for example, *face-to-face conversation, telephone conversation, interviews,* and *biography*—are called **registers** (or styles). Across different circumstances, everyone varies language forms. For example, you may call one person *Michelle* or *Ted;* another person *Dr. Lavandera* or *Mr. Olson;* and still others *Your Honor* or *Mr. President;* to some you say *Sir* or *Madam* or *Miss.* If you use the address term *dude,* you don't use it indiscriminately for anyone at all. Speakers of French may address an individual with *tu,* the second-personal singular pronoun, but use *vous,* the grammatically plural form of the pronoun when addressing certain other individuals. In some communities, different social situations call for alternative forms of a single language; in other communities, different social situations call for different languages altogether.

Language Varies Within a Speech Community

Language Choice in Multilingual Societies

You might assume that in multilingual countries such as Switzerland, Belgium, and India different languages are spoken by different groups of people, and that's true of course. Typically, though, one language or another is also systematically allocated to specific social situations. In communities employing several languages, the choice of one language or another is not arbitrary. Instead, a particular setting such as a classroom or government office may favor or even require one language, while other languages will be appropriate to other speech situations. Although there may be roughly equivalent expressions in two languages, the social meaning that attaches to use of one particular language generally differs from that attached to use of another. As a result, speakers must attend to the social import of language choice, however unconsciously they make their choice.

Linguistic Repertoires in Brussels, Tehran, and Los Angeles

The use of selected varieties from two languages among government workers in the capital of Belgium illustrates the nature of language choice in one European community.

> Government functionaries in Brussels who are of Flemish origin do not always speak Dutch to *each other*, even when they all know Dutch *very* well and *equally* well. Not only are there occasions when they speak French to *each other* instead of Dutch, but there are some occasions when they speak standard Dutch and others when they use one or another regional variety of Dutch with each other. Indeed, some of them also use different varieties of French with each other as well, one variety being particularly loaded with governmental officialese, another corresponding to the nontechnical conversational French of highly educated and refined circles in Belgium, and still another being not only a "more colloquial French" but the colloquial French of those who are Flemings. All in all, these several varieties of Dutch and of French constitute the *linguistic repertoire* of certain social networks in Brussels (Fishman [1972], pp. 47–48).

The language variety that Brussels residents use is prompted by the setting in which the talk takes place, by the topic, by the social relations among the participants, and by certain other features of the situation. In general, the use of Dutch is associated with informal and intimate interaction, whereas French has more official or "highbrow" connotations. Given these associations, the choice to speak French or Dutch carries a social meaning in addition to the referential meaning of the words and utterances.

We use the term **linguistic repertoire** for the set of language varieties exhibited in the speaking and writing patterns of a speech community. As in Brussels, the linguistic repertoire of any speech community may consist of several languages and include several varieties of each language.

In the mid-1970s, there was considerable multilingualism in Tehran, the capital of Iran. Christian families spoke Armenian or Syriac at home and in church, Persian at school, all three in different situations while playing or shopping, and Azerbaijani Turkish at shops in the bazaar. Muslim men from northwest Iran, who were working as laborers in the then-booming capital city, spoke a variety of Persian with their supervisors at construction sites but switched to a variety of Turkish with their fellow workers and to a local Iranian dialect when they visited their home villages on holidays; in addition, they listened daily to radio broadcasts in standard Persian and heard passages from the Koran recited in Arabic. It was not uncommon for individuals to command as many as four or five languages and deploy them in different situations. Much the same situation exists today.

In Los Angeles, the Korean-speaking community supports bilingual institutions of various sorts: banks, churches, stores, and a wide range of services from pool halls and video rental shops to hotels, construction companies, and law firms. At some banks in the neighborhood known as Koreatown all the tellers are bilingual, and in the course of a day's work often switch between Korean and English. As the tellers alternate between customers, they naturally switch between Korean and English as appropriate.

Try It Yourself Identify a situation on your campus or in your community where people can be heard switching between languages in the course of a conversation, depending on who it is they're speaking with or the topic or who else is present or some other aspect of the social situation.

Switching Varieties Within a Language

If we examine the situation in Europe, besides switching between languages we see examples of language-internal switching. Brussels residents switch not only between French and Dutch but among varieties of French and varieties of Dutch. In Hemnes, a village in northern Norway, residents speak two distinct varieties of Norwegian. Ranamål, the local dialect, serves to identify speakers of that region. Bokmål, one of two forms of standard Norwegian (the other being Nynorsk), is in use for education, religion, government transactions, and the mass media. All members of the Hemnes community control both Ranamål and Bokmål and regard themselves at any given time as speaking one or the other. Between Ranamål and Bokmål there are differences of pronunciation, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax, and speakers do not perceive themselves as mixing the two varieties in their speech. Here's an illustration with a simple sentence, meaning 'Where are you from?'

ke du e ifrå	(Ranamål)
vor ær du fra	(Bokmål)

Bokmål is the expected variety in certain well-defined situations, and residents of Hemnes do not accept its use among themselves outside those situations. In situations in which speakers customarily use Ranamål, speaking Bokmål would signal social distance and disregard for community spirit. To use Bokmål in Hemnes with fellow locals is to *snakkfint* or *snakk jalat* 'put on airs.' As the researchers who reported these findings note, "Although locals show an overt preference for the dialect, they tolerate and use the standard in situations where it conveys meanings of officialdom, expertise, and politeness toward strangers who are clearly segregated from their personal life" (Blom and Gumperz [1972], pp. 433–34). Regard for the social situation is thus highly important in choosing varieties of the same language, just as it is in switching between languages.

Speech Situations

As we have seen in Hemnes, Los Angeles, Brussels, and Tehran, language switching can be triggered by a change in any one of several situational factors, including the setting and purpose of the communication, the person addressed, the social relations between the interlocutors, and the topic.

Elements of a Speech Situation

If we define a **speech situation** as the coming together of significant situational factors such as purpose, topic, and social relations, then each speech situation in a bilingual or multilingual community generally allows only one of the community's languages to be used. Table 10.1 illustrates this concept for an English/Spanish bilingual community in Los Angeles.

Table 10.1 *Linguistic Repertoire*

Situation	Relation of Speakers	Place	Topic Type	Spanish	English
A	intimate	school	not academic	X	
B	intimate	home	not academic	X	
C	not intimate	school	not academic		X
D	not intimate	home	academic		X
E	intimate	school	academic	X	X

Table 10.2 *Elements of a Speech Situation*

Purpose	**Setting**	**Participants**
Activity	Topic	Speaker
Goal	Location	Addressee
	Mode	Social roles of speaker and addressee
		Character of audience

As you see, in situation A, a variety of Spanish is appropriate, but in situation C a variety of English is. Only in the relatively uncommon case of situation E might an individual have a genuine choice between Spanish and English without calling attention to the language chosen. In situation E, the competing values of intimacy (which usually requires Spanish, as in situations A and B) and an academic topic (for which English is usually preferred) may sometimes yield Spanish and sometimes English.

Table 10.2 charts certain aspects of a speech situation that may prompt or require a change in language variety.

In terms of *purpose*, the kind of activity is crucial and so is the goal. Are you making a purchase, giving a sermon, telling a story? Entertaining, reporting information, greeting a friend, or affirming a social relationship? The activity may have an influence on your language selection.

As to *setting*, you may switch from one language to another as the *topic* switches from one of local interest, say, to one of national concern, or from a personal matter to one about your college. *Location*, too, can influence language choice in that you might well use one language in an academic setting but a different one in a religious setting or at home for otherwise roughly comparable situations. The *mode*—that is, whether you are speaking or writing (or using ten fingers or two thumbs)—can also influence the forms of language you select, as is clear, for example, in contrasting telephone conversations, word processing, and texting.

As to *participants*, the identity of the speaker will influence language choice, as will the identity of the person being addressed. Speakers typically adapt utterances to the age of an addressee. In some societies, the older a person, the higher his or her social standing; younger people must address older people more respectfully than they address their peers. As noted, in French *tu* is used to address a social equal or to express intimacy, *vous* for a person of higher social status or to mark social distance (*vous* is also used to address more than one person, irrespective of social relations). A younger person addressing an older person may be expected to use *vous*, not *tu*, unless the older person is a close relative. Given that *tu* is grammatically singular and *vous* is grammatically plural, and given that verbs exhibit agreement with their subject, French illustrates one way in which even verb morphology may vary according to the age or social status of the addressee. Persian shows similar patterns with singular *to* (pronounced [to]) and plural *shoma* [ʃomɑ] and with appropriate verbal agreement with the grammatical number of the subject, as do several European languages.

It is not just the social identity of speaker and addressee that is relevant, but also their *roles* in the particular speech situation. A judge, for example, typically speaks one variety at home—where she may be mother, wife, neighbor—and another as judge in the courtroom. A parent who works as a teacher and has his child for a student may speak different varieties at home and at school, even when topic and addressee are the same.

The various aspects of the speech situation come together in a particular choice of language variety. In each situation—a general one such as home or church or a specific one such as discussing politics in a café with a close friend—one variety is usually more appropriate than others. In fact, people get so accustomed to speaking a particular language in a given setting that they can experience difficulty using another language in that setting, no matter how familiar that language may be in other settings. (Of course, professional translators, bilingual educators, and certain businesspersons who regularly engage in negotiations with members of their own and another culture will be among the exceptions to this generalization.) As a result, switching between language varieties is common throughout the world and is known as **code switching**. It is far, far more common than many monolingual speakers might guess.

Registers in Monolingual Societies

The recognition that in multilingual societies there are settings and speech situations in which one language is appropriate but not another has a parallel in monolingual speech communities, where varieties of a single language constitute the entire linguistic repertoire. Consider the difference between the full forms of careful speech and the abbreviations and reductions characteristic of fast speech that occur in relaxed face-to-face communication: not only workaday contractions like *he's* and *I'll* but reduced sentences like *Jeetyet?* [ʤitjɛt] for 'Did you eat yet?' and *Wajjasay?* [wɑʤəse] for 'What did you say?'

To take another example, you know that you don't typically use the same terms for certain body parts when speaking to friends and when speaking to a physician. You might use *collarbone* at home and *clavicle* with a physician, while either term might be used with friends, depending on other aspects of the speech situation. Lexical choices made for more intimate body parts would be yet more strikingly different.

The distribution of alternative terms for the same referent may seem arbitrary and without communicative benefit. With body parts, for example, all the terms may be known and used by all the parties in equivalent situations. A physician may use *clavicle* speaking with her own physician, but *collarbone* with family and friends. Since all the terms could communicate referential meaning and be equally well understood, the choice of a socially appropriate variant is *cognitively* unhelpful. But such variation as has lasted for centuries in a society can be assumed to serve an important function, and you may wonder why linguistic expression differs from one speech situation to another. The answer is that different expressions for the same content can indicate different affective relationships to salient aspects of the situation (setting, topic, social relations between speaker and addressee, and so on) and even help define a situation.

From a young age, everyone learns to control several language varieties for use in different speech situations. No one is limited to a single variety in a single language. These language varieties may belong to one language or several. Just which speech situations—which purposes, settings, participants—prompt which variety depends on social norms. In one society, the presence of in-laws may call for a different variety (as in Dyirbal and other aboriginal Australian groups). In other societies, the presence of children or members of the opposite sex may be crucial. In Western societies, adults have a slew of words they avoid saying in the presence of children (and children struggle to avoid saying in the presence of adults). There are also differences associated with mode—for example, written versus spoken. You are familiar with the term *colloquial*: it is a label for informal speech.

Markers of Register

Languages differ from one another in vocabulary, phonology, grammar, and semantics, and registers of a single language may also differ at every level. Different speech situations may call for different interactional patterns as well—for example, the allocation of turns in conversation differs starkly from how turns are allocated in courtrooms and classrooms. In addition, social rules govern nonlinguistic behaviors such as physical proximity, face-to-face positioning, standing and sitting, which accompany spoken-register variation. Interactional patterns and body language are beyond the scope of this book, but they are part and parcel of social and cultural communication.

Generally speaking, when you find characteristic features of a register at one level of the grammar, corresponding features of that register appear at other levels as well. For example, to describe legalese or face-to-face conversation requires attention to characteristic vocabulary, sentence structure, semantics, and phonology. There are some provisos that need to be made in this regard. It is customary to talk about slang and jargon when discussing registers, but their characteristic linguistic features are limited to vocabulary, and the concomitant linguistic forms (for example, in pronunciation and grammar) are those of the situation in which that vocabulary is being used.

Lexical Markers of Register

Registers vary along certain social dimensions. For example, people speak (and write) in markedly different fashions in formal and informal situations. Formality and informality can be seen as polar opposites of a situational continuum along which forms of expression may be arranged.

The words *pickled*, *high*, *drunk*, and *intoxicated* may all refer to the same state of inebriation, but you can rank them on a scale of formality, and you would likely agree on a ranking from least formal to most formal in the order given. In one context, to suggest inebriation may require the word *intoxicated*, while another may require *drunk* or *under the influence*. *Bombed*, *buzzed*, and *pissed* are terms favored by younger people in situations of considerable informality. One thesaurus lists more than 125 expressions for 'intoxicated.' Needless to say, they are not situationally equivalent and cannot be substituted for one another irrespective of the social situation.

Not every word that can be glossed as 'inebriated' is suitable for use on all occasions when reference to intoxication is intended. The chosen words can indicate quite different attitudes toward the addressees, the person being described, the state of intoxication itself, and so on. It can also index the speech situation in which the term is being used as intimate or distant, formal or informal, serious or jocular. Consider this fictitious dialogue between judge and defendant at an arraignment in a courtroom:

Judge: I see the cops say you were wasted last night and drove an old junker down the middle of the road. That right?

Defendant: Your honor, if I might be permitted to address this baseless allegation, I should like to report that I was neither inebriated nor under the influence of an alcoholic beverage of any kind; for the record, I imbibed no booze last evening.

In the first place, the judge's language seems out of place: words like *cops*, *wasted*, and *junker* seem inappropriate for a judge presiding at an arraignment. The abbreviated form *That right?* may be appropriate in relaxed conversation, but it suggests a level of informality unsuitable in a courtroom interaction between a judge and someone charged with an offense. As for the defendant's response, it too seems out of place, even more so following the extremely informal language used by the judge. Even if the judge had used courtroom-appropriate language, the defendant's language seems overly formal. And, of course, it seems odd for the informal word *booze* to appear in an utterance characterized by the formal words *imbibed*, *inebriated*, *beverage*, and *allegation*.

Compare the judge's language above with the following, which seems more appropriate to an arraignment.

Judge: You are charged with driving a 2004 blue Ford while under the influence of alcohol. How do you plead?

Try It Yourself Name a speech situation of your choosing (e.g., a conference with a professor, dinner with your grandparents, a job interview) and list five words for things you would likely talk about in that situation but for which the expression you'd likely use would differ from the one you'd use for the same referent when speaking with a close friend. Provide both words.

Even within a single language, then, registers match specific situations of use.

Terms of Address Along with other lexical, grammatical, and phonological features, appropriate forms of address for a given person may differ from situation to situation. The Queen of England is addressed by her subjects and others as *Your Majesty* (or *Ma'am*), though Prince Philip, her husband, presumably uses a more intimate address term when speaking to her in private. In court, judges are addressed as *Your Honor* or *Judge*, though their friends and neighbors may call them *Judy* or *Vaughn*. Each of us is addressed in multiple ways, depending on the situation: by first name (*Pat*); family name (*Smith*); family name preceded by a title (*Doctor Smith, Ms. Jones*); the second-person pronoun (*you*); terms showing respect (*Sir, Madam*); and various informal generic terms (*guy, dude*). At the opposite end of the scale are terms of disrespect such as *buster* or *you bastard*.

Phonological Markers of Register

Registers are marked not only by lexical choices but also by features of syntax, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and, for spoken registers, phonology. In a study of New York City speechways that we will discuss further in the following chapter, considerable phonological variation was uncovered among all groups of speakers in different situations of use.

Figure 10.1 presents frequencies for the pronunciation of *-ing* as /ɪŋ/ (that is, "with the g") in three speech situations. We use *-ing* to represent the pronunciation of the suffix in words like *talking* and *eating*. The speech situations in this case consist of three kinds of interaction during a sociolinguistic interview in the homes of four groups of respondents (labeled LC, WC, LMC, and UMC). The style of the interview, with its interlaced questions and answers, can be regarded as "careful" speech. Respondents also read a set passage aloud, and "reading" style was taken to represent more careful speech than interview style. In order to prompt more relaxed speech, at the end of the interview the interviewer asked respondents whether they'd ever had a close call with death, and this gambit usually elicited a relaxed, unguarded variety, here called "casual" speech.

In their casual speech, LC respondents (LC represents lower socioeconomic class, a ranking based on a combination of income, education, and employment type) pronounced the *-ing* suffix as /ɪŋ/ 20 percent of the time, as shown in the leftmost bar in Figure 10.1. (The other 80 percent would have been pronounced as /ɪn/).

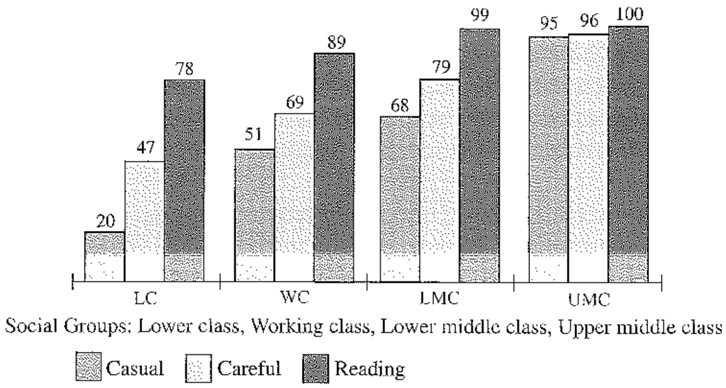

Figure 10.1 Percentage of *-ing* Pronounced as /ɪŋ/ in Three Speech Situations Among Four Social Groups in New York City

Source: Data from William Labov, *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

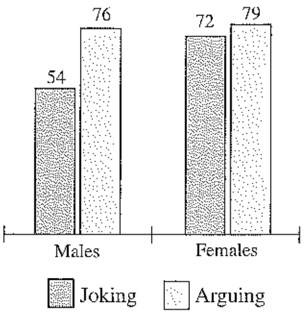

Figure 10.2 Percentage of *-ing* Pronounced as /ɪŋ/ in Two Speech Situations by Males and Females in Los Angeles

Source: Data from B. Wald and T. Shopen, "A Researcher's Guide to the Sociolinguistic Variable (ING)" in Shopen and Williams (1981), p. 247.

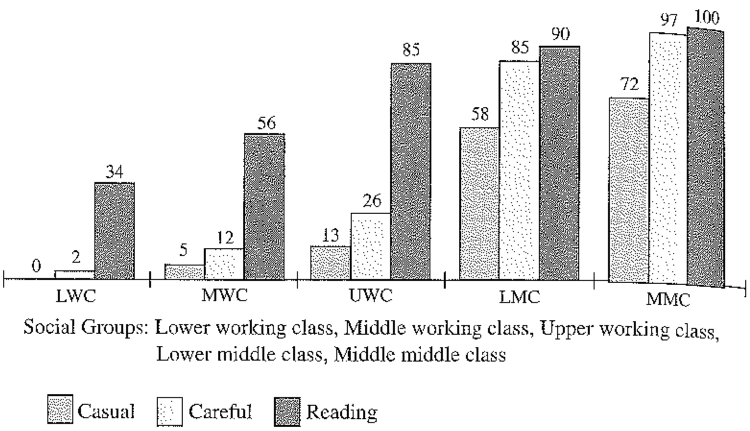

Figure 10.3 Percentage of Pronunciation of *-ing* Pronounced as /ɪŋ/ in Three Speech Situations Among Five Social Groups in Norwich, England

Source: Data from Peter Trudgill, *Sociolingistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, 4th ed. (New York: Penguin, 2000).

In their careful speech, the same group of people increased their pronunciation of *-ing* as /ɪŋ/ to 47 percent. When reading a passage aloud, those same interviewees pronounced /ɪŋ/ 78 percent of the time, a nearly fourfold increase of /ɪŋ/ pronunciations as the formality of the speech situation increased. The same overall pattern holds for the other three social groups. Each socioeconomic group used more /ɪŋ/ pronunciations in careful speech than in casual speech and more in reading style than in careful speech. In this New York City speech community, then, /ɪŋ/ indexes formality, with more frequent /ɪŋ/ pronunciations signaling increased formality of the social situation.

In another study, college students in Los Angeles gathered data showing that both males and females used more /ɪŋ/ pronunciations in arguments than in joking. Again, we can view arguing as a more careful register than joking. The frequencies are given in Figure 10.2. Although they don't have the same percentages for the distribution of *-ing* (a topic we return to in Chapter 11), both men and women exploit this phonological feature in the same way to index situations of use.

A study in Norwich, England, uncovered similar patterns. Among five social groups, the highest-ranking group in the study (the middle middle class) *always* used /ɪŋ/ in the formal register of reading style (the rightmost bar in Figure 10.3), while the lower working class socioeconomic group *never* used it in their most casual speech (the leftmost bar in Figure 10.3). Thus, while all five social groups used both pronunciations, the range of difference was 100 percentage points at the extremes of socioeconomic status and situational formality.

As the frequencies in Figures 10.1 and 10.3 show, the Norwich and New York City patterns are the same: every social group uses most /ɪŋ/ in reading style and least in casual speech, with an intermediate percentage for careful speech. It is

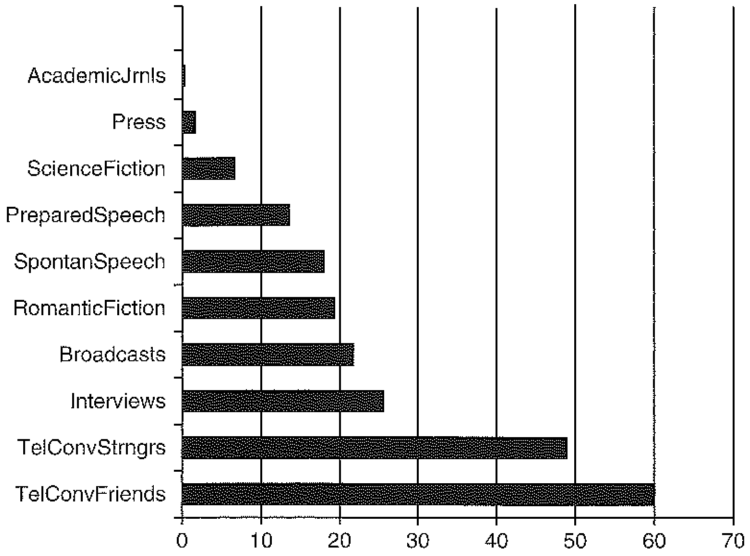

Figure 10.4 Number of Contractions per 1,000 Words in Different Registers

Source: Data from Douglas Bilber, *Variation across Speech and Writing* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

clear that widely separated English-speaking communities use /ɪŋ/ to index the formality of a situation. Note that it is not the absolute percentage that indexes situations but the *relative* percentages across situations. This linguistic marker is a continuous variable, able to indicate fine distinctions in degrees of formality across a range of speech situations.

As another example of phonological variation (or its equivalent spelling variation), the distribution of ordinary contractions like *can't, won't,* and *I'll* shows that speakers exhibit differential use of such forms across speech situations. Based on a corpus of written and spoken British English, the frequency counts in Figure 10.4 represent the average number of contractions per 1,000 words. Notice that in going from telephone conversations with friends to telephone conversations with strangers to interviews to broadcasts and so on up the list, the graded increase in formality is accompanied by fewer and fewer contractions.

Grammatical Markers of Register

Situations of use are also marked by syntactic variables. As an example, consider the occurrence of prepositions at the end of a clause or sentence. You may recall from your schooldays that some teachers frown on sentence-final prepositions. Instead of *She's the cellist I was telling you about,* they recommend *She's the cellist about whom I was telling you.* Well, it's no secret that sentence-final prepositions abound in English. But they don't occur equally in all speech situations. Using the same corpus of texts as was used for contractions, Figure 10.5 shows the number of sentence-final prepositions per 1,000 prepositions for nearly a

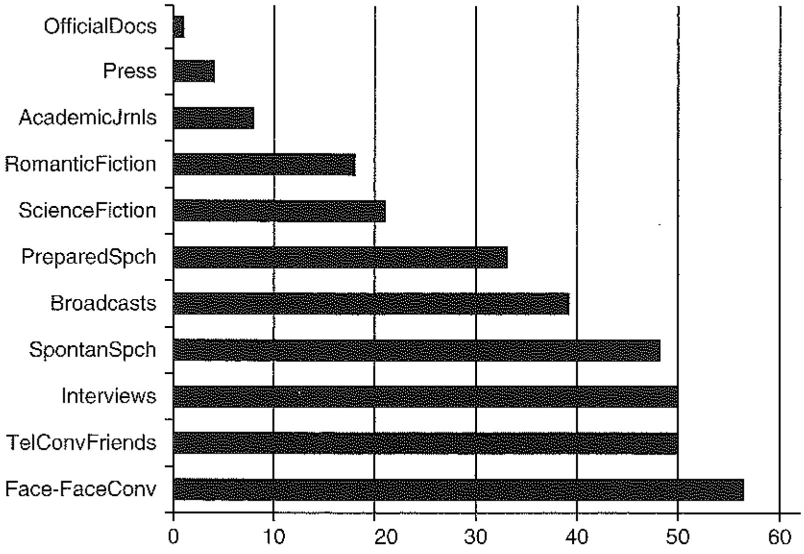

Figure 10.5 Number of Sentence-Final Prepositions per 1,000 Prepositions in Different Registers

Source: Data from Douglas Bilber, *Variation across Speech and Writing* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

dozen spoken and written registers. This figure does not show the same continuous incline from least formal to most formal that we saw with contractions in Figure 10.4. Instead, it shows a major distinction between speech and nonfiction writing, with fiction (which includes fictional dialogue) having intermediate values. In the spoken registers, average counts of between 33 and 56 prepositions per 1,000 appear in sentence-final position. In the registers of nonfiction writing, final prepositions are fewer than in any of the spoken registers. Thus, there is a notable difference between speech and writing with respect to sentence-final prepositions.

As a second, more striking, example of grammatical variation across registers, examine this brief passage of *legalese*.

> Upon request of Borrower, Lender, at Lender's option prior to full reconveyance of the Property by Trustee to Borrower, may make Future Advances to Borrower. Such Future Advances, with interest thereon, shall be secured by this Deed of Trust when evidenced by promissory notes stating that said notes are secured hereby.

This passage illustrates several syntactic features characteristic of legalese:

1. Frequent use of passive structures: *shall be secured, are secured*
2. Repeating nouns instead of using pronouns: *Lender/at Lender's option, promissory notes/said notes, Future Advances/Such Future Advances*
3. Variable omission of indefinite and definite articles: *Upon request, of Borrower, to Borrower, Lender, at Lender's, by Trustee*

At the Bar
Police-Report Register: "Chris Then Jumped Over and I Followed."

At the age of 19 Derek Bentley was convicted of murdering a policeman in London and hanged for it, despite the fact that he was known not to have pulled the trigger because he was in police custody when the bullet was fired. Bentley's sidekick the night of the killing was 16-year-old Chris Craig, who was believed to have fired the shot but, because of his age, was not subject to the death penalty. Bentley was illiterate and testified at trial that police officers had helped him with his confession, but police officers swore under oath that the confession had been transcribed verbatim from Bentley's words.

After Bentley was hanged, a 45-year campaign was waged by his parents and sister to have his conviction quashed, and the effort eventually involved a forensic linguistics aspect. Examining the "verbatim" transcription of Bentley's confession, linguist Malcolm Coulthard focused on several linguistic features. One of those features is relevant to *register analysis* because its frequency and particular syntactic positioning is a characteristic of the register that police officers use when writing reports. That feature is the temporal adverb *then*, and Derek Bentley's 582-word confession included 10 instances of it.

To explore whether temporal *then* might also be frequent in witness reports like Bentley's, Coulthard compiled two very small corpora. One corpus comprised three ordinary witness reports and the other comprised three police reports. A comparison of the corpora revealed a striking contrast between them. The witness reports contained only one occurrence of temporal *then* in 930 words, whereas the police reports showed a frequent use: once in every 78 words. Coulthard also examined a 1.5-million-word corpus of ordinary natural speech collected in a variety of venues and found that *then* (irrespective of its meaning) occurred only once in every 500 words. It thus resembled the frequency in the small corpus of witness reports but differed greatly from its frequency in the police reports.

Besides the unusually high frequency of temporal *then* in Bentley's "verbatim" confession, its syntactic positioning in the confession also resembled police-report register. Bentley's confession showed seven instances of *then* positioned *after* the grammatical subject, as in "Chris then jumped over and I followed" and "Chris then climbed up the drainpipe to the roof." These are unusual for ordinary spoken English, and an examination of the 1.5-million-word corpus of ordinary natural speech demonstrated just how unusual: in the larger corpus "Then I" occurs about 10 times as often as "I then." By contrast, "I then" occurs nine times in a single one of the police reports in the small corpus Coulthard initially constructed. In his trial testimony Derek Bentley twice used the adverb *then*—and on both occasions he positioned it before the grammatical subject: "and then the other people moved off" and "and then we came back up." In sharp contrast, one of the police officers in testimony used the characteristic pattern of police report register in two consecutive sentences: "shot him then between the eyes" and "he was then charged."

On the basis of several kinds of forensic evidence, including linguistic analysis, Derek Bentley's conviction for murder was eventually quashed—but not until 45 years after he was hanged. By that time his parents and his sister had died. ■

Semantic Markers of Register

A given word form often carries different meanings in different registers. Consider the word *notes*. As used in the legalese passage on the previous page, it means promissory note, or IOU. In its everyday meaning, *note* refers to a brief, informal written message (and it may have other senses, such as a musical note); the point is simply that the noun *note* carries a sense specific to legalese. Among words carrying one sense in everyday use but a different sense in legal register are these:

Expressions Carrying a Distinctive Sense in Legalese

- to continue
- to alienate
- to serve
- save
- party
- hearing
- action
- executed
- suit
- note
- sentence
- rider
- motion
- reasonable man
- consideration

Not only lawyers but also some of their clients may give specialized meanings to words. Criminal jargon contains many words and expressions that are in common use but carry a different meaning when used in the context of criminal behavior. The following lists are illustrative.

General Criminal Jargon

- mob
- hot
- fence
- sting
- sing
- rat
- racket
- a mark
- bug
- bird cage
- slammer
- joint ('prison')

Drug World Jargon

- crack
- coke
- snow
- rock
- dime
- pot
- grass
- toot
- high
- down
- downer
- speed
- pusher
- dealer
- joint ('marijuana cigarette')

Each of these expressions bears one sense in ordinary situations but a different sense in the underworld. While the words carry specialized meanings when used in such specific speech situations, they do not constitute separate registers with their own phonological, morphological, grammatical, and pragmatic markers. But they do index a social situation by drawing on characteristics of wider social situations such as informality and conversation, while at the same time relying on specialized words or words with situation-specific meanings.

Slang The vocabulary sometimes used in situations of extreme informality is called **slang**. Like jargon, slang functions as part of the lexicon of highly informal registers, such as conversation, instant messaging, or texting. It is sometimes said that slang signals rebellious undertones or an intentional distancing of its users from certain mainstream values, and it is certainly popular among teenagers and college students. But its use isn't limited to those groups, and by no means does it always signal rebellion or rejection of mainstream values. Slang has some of its wellsprings in specialized groups of all sorts, from physicians and computer "hackers" to police officers and stockbrokers. But, fundamentally, it is the characteristic vocabulary of highly informal usage.

While slang may change as quickly as some clothing fashions, the fact that there are slang dictionaries suggests that some slang expressions lead longer lives. These examples from the dust jacket of a slang dictionary are illustrative of relatively recent slang: *awesome, bells and whistles, cover your ass, designer drug, dork, kick ass, netiquette, pocket pool, puzzle palace, spam, tits and zits,* and *whatever!* The effectiveness of slang depends crucially on the circumstances of its use. In an appropriate situation, anyone of any age and any social standing can legitimately use slang.

Try It Yourself While some of the following expressions carry a sense that is not slang, each also carries a slang sense in extremely informal situations. Provide a slang sense for each term: the nouns *skinny*, *cougar*, *hunk*, *buzz*, *dork*, *wuss*, and *shout out*; the verbs *veg out*, *wig out*, *bomb*, and *nuke*; the adjectives *awesome*, *lame*, and *clueless*; the directives *get a life*, *get a clue*, and *get real*; and the exclamation *Not!*

College Slang: The Top 20

In *Slang and Sociability,* Connie Eble reports the top slang expressions used by students at the University of North Carolina between 1972 and 1993. Which of them are still in use on your campus? Have any gone completely out of use, so far as you know, or have any changed their meaning? Can you suggest current alternatives in use on your campus?

sweet	'excellent, superb'	*chill/chill out*	'relax'
slide	'easy course'	*blow off*	'neglect, not attend'
bag	'neglect, not attend'	*killer*	'excellent, exciting'
jam	'play music, dance, party'	*scope*	'look for partner for sex or romance'
wasted	'drunk'	*clueless*	'unaware'
diss	'belittle, criticize'	*pig out*	'eat voraciously'
bad	'good, excellent'	*crash*	'go to sleep'
cheesy	'unattractive'	*hook (up)*	'acquire partner for sex or romance'
buzz/catch a buzz	'experience slight intoxication'	*tool*	'socially inept person'
trip (out)	'have a bizarre experience'	*cool*	'completely acceptable'

Just as informal clothing can extend its welcome from informal circumstances into somewhat more formal circumstances over time, so slang expressions often climb up the social ladder, becoming acceptable in more formal circumstances. The words *mob* and *pants* are among many that were slang at an earlier period of their history but can now be used in relatively formal circumstances. As words become established in more formal circumstances, they lose their status as slang, and newer slang terms may replace them. Among the slang terms illustrated on the dust jacket of the dictionary mentioned previously is *emoticon.* Since 1995, when the dictionary was published, *emoticon* has become the standard term for facial glyphs used to indicate emotions in emails, text messages, and certain other contexts. Such a rise up the social ladder is far from uncommon, but some slang expressions endure *only* in informal circumstances. *Bones* meaning 'dice' was used by Chaucer in the fourteenth century and remains marked in some dictionaries today as informal or slang.

Jargon Specialist terms used by groups with shared specialized interests when engaged in activities surrounding those interests, including talk about them, are called jargon. **Jargon** is the specialized vocabulary associated with professions such as medicine, finance, and engineering and with activities such as sports, music, and computing. Unlike slang, jargon isn't limited to situations of extreme informality but may be used wherever professionals interact with one another (and sometimes with others). **Argot** is another term associated with "professional" language or activities, but *argot* tends to suggest the language of underground or criminal activities.

Try It Yourself Besides the baseball jargon noted in the nearby discussion, identify six additional terms (including nouns and verbs) with senses particular to baseball in the short illustrative sentence. On the basis of your familiarity with baseball or because you are unfamiliar with the sport, you should be able to identify the jargon.

Because jargon consists of terms that are used elsewhere in a different sense or perhaps not used elsewhere at all, discourse that deals with specialized topics and displays jargon may perplex the uninitiated. Here's a sentence from a *Los Angeles Times* story about a baseball game. If you're familiar with the sport, the meaning of the sentence will be transparent, but otherwise you're not likely to understand it despite its straightforward and ordinary grammatical structure:

> The momentum carried them to load the bases in the bottom of the sixth on two walks and an error, but Suppan struck out Jose Valentin and had Chavez fly to center to end the inning.

The newspaper story contains plenty of baseball jargon, including the nouns *plate, pitch, curveball, fastball, change-up, swing, hit, run, out, home run, left fielder, baseman, starter, closer, stand-in, runner, reliever, warning track,* and *pocket,* as well as the verbs *tied, doubled, pitched, singled,* and *homered.* For baseball fans, such jargon is easy to understand; for others, it can be utterly opaque.

Similarities and Differences Between Spoken and Written Registers

Although it is sometimes said that writing is simply speech written down—visual as distinct from audible language—writing and speaking ordinarily serve different purposes and have highly distinctive linguistic characteristics. Conversation is not a written register, of course, but it can be represented in novels and screenplays. Nor are legal contracts ordinarily spoken. Imagine how the words and syntax of a handwritten last testament would differ from one made by a person who leaves a will or last testament by speaking on a camcorder. Or consider the linguistic differences between a note stuck on a refrigerator door and the same basic message spoken to someone face-to-face. You'll quickly recognize that speaking and writing are not mirror images of each other.

1. **Oral communication can exploit intonation and voice pitch to convey information.** Face-to-face communication can also utilize gestures, posture, and physical proximity between participants. In writing, the only channels available are words and syntax, supplemented by typography and punctuation. In speaking, communication is possible on multiple channels simultaneously. We can criticize someone's personality in a seemingly objective manner while expressing with intonation or body language how much we greatly admire the person, or vice versa. In writing, much more must be communicated lexically and syntactically, although there are ways of achieving ironic and sarcastic tones that enable addressees to read "between the lines."
2. **Speech and writing differ in the amount of planning that is possible.** Most written registers allow time for composing and revising. But pausing to find just the right word in a highly interactive conversation can test your interlocutor's patience and cost you the floor. The difference in the available time for planning and editing in written registers produces characteristic syntactic patterns that are difficult to achieve under the real-time or "online" processing constraints imposed in spontaneous speech. Written registers typically show a more specific and varied vocabulary, in part because writers have time to choose their words carefully (or even consult a thesaurus). Of course, not every written register is more planned than every spoken register. Academic lectures and job interviews may reflect some characteristics of planned discourse more common with writing. On the other hand, some types of writing are produced with relatively little planning, and the language of an email note typed in a hurry is likely to be quite speechlike.
3. **Speakers and addressees often stand face-to-face, whereas writers and readers ordinarily do not.** In face-to-face interactions, the immediacy of the interlocutors and the contexts of interaction allow them to refer to themselves (*I think*, *you see*) and their own opinions and to be more personal in their interaction. By contrast, the contexts of writing limit the degree to which written expression can be personal. But we wouldn't want to overgeneralize. Consider, for example, a personal letter and a face-to-face friendly conversation. People

may feel they have a right to be equally personal in both contexts. An impersonal stance is thus a feature of only some written registers, as a personal stance is a feature of only some spoken registers.

4. **Written registers tend to rely less on the context of interaction than spoken registers do.** Writing is more independent of context. In spoken registers, expressions of spatial deixis (such as demonstrative pronouns like *this* and *that*) and temporal deixis (like *today* and *next Tuesday*) can be understood with reference to the here and now of the utterance. By contrast, in writing, the lack of a shared environment may make such expressions opaque or confusing. To which day would *today* refer in an undated written text? And to what would *this* refer when found in a printed document? Like other distinctions among registers, reliance on deictic expressions does not constitute an absolute difference between speech and writing. In telephone conversations, for example, you cannot say *this thing* (referring to something in the speaker's environment) without risking confusion. In contrast, you can leave a written note on the kitchen table that reads *Please don't eat this!*—provided the referent of *this* is obvious from what lies near the note; an author of a textbook can reliably refer to *this page* or *this sentence*.

There are many ways in which spoken and written registers differ. But when we examine the differences, we don't find an absolute dichotomy between them. For example, not many words could occur only in speech or only in writing, even though certain words may occur more frequently in one mode or the other. Most written registers tend to be more formal, more informational, and less personal. Along a personal/impersonal continuum, the type of writing found in biographies falls toward the impersonal end, while informal conversation tends toward the personal end. But personal letters may be close to conversation in their linguistic character, whereas instant text messages, though written, exhibit some characteristics of speech. Writing and speaking thus do not form a simple dichotomy, and to describe their differences we must observe *which* written register and *which* spoken register is being considered. With all language choices, the situation of use is the *most* influential factor in determining linguistic form.

Two Registers Compared

To illustrate the linguistic character of different registers, let's examine excerpts from two kinds of text, both biographical. The first comes from a Pulitzer Prize–winning biography of Harry S. Truman and the second from an interview with Truman. The first is thus a written text, the second a transcribed spoken text.

In 1945 Truman had been vice-president for only a few months when President Franklin D. Roosevelt died in office. In the first passage, biographer David McCullough (1992), reporting events surrounding Truman's preparing to address the American people about a nationwide steelworkers strike, takes the occasion to introduce a staffer who worked on Truman's address.

Written Biography of Harry S. Truman	**Line**	**Sentence**
But the main work, and at Truman's request,	1	1
was done by a rising new star at the White House,	2	
Navy Captain Clark Clifford, who had been posted temporarily	3	
the summer before as assistant to Jake Vardaman,	4	
and then, when Vardaman was removed,	5	
had stepped in as naval aide.	6	
Clifford was thirty-nine years old, over six feet tall,	7	2
broad in the shoulders, slim-waisted, and handsome as a screen actor,	8	
with wavy blond hair and a silky baritone voice.	9	
In his Navy uniform he looked almost too glamorous	10	3a
to be true, or to be taken seriously;	11	
but he was calm, clearheaded, polished as a career diplomat,	12	3b
and, as Truman had quickly perceived, exceedingly capable.	13	
Indeed, Clifford's almost chance presence on the staff	14	4
would prove to be one of the luckiest breaks of Truman's presidency.	15	

The second passage is from a face-to-face interview conducted with Truman by Merle Miller (1974, p. 242).

Oral Interview with Harry S. Truman	**Line**	**Sentence**
Q. What do you consider the biggest mistake you made as President?	1	1
A. That damn fool from Texas that I first made Attorney General	2	2
and then put on the Supreme Court.	3	
I don't know what got into me.	4	3
He was no damn good as Attorney General, and on the Supreme	5	4
Court . . . it doesn't seem possible, but he's been even worse.	6	
He hasn't made one right decision that I can think of.	7	5
And so when you ask me what was my biggest mistake, that's it.	8	6a
Putting Tom Clark on the Supreme Court of the United States.	9	6b
I thought maybe when he got on the Court he'd improve,	10	7
but of course, that isn't what happened.	11	
I told you when we were discussing that other fellow.	12	8a
After a certain age it's hopeless to think people are going to	13	8b
change much.	14	

It's apparent at a glance how different these passages are. They contain about the same number of words (the biography excerpt 132, the interview exchange 135), but a close examination reveals many differences. For one, their average sentence lengths differ. The biography comprises only four sentences (or, if we count 3a and 3b separately, five), while the interview contains eight sentences. (Although the interviewer represented Truman's spoken words in nine sentences, we twice combined pairs of the transcribed sentences into single sentences so as to avoid exaggerating the already small number of sentences.) That means the spoken sentences are strikingly shorter than the written ones.

Try It Yourself Before you consider the analysis that follows, examine the two passages about Truman on the previous page with some care. Compare the complexity of the syntax—for example, how much coordination occurs and whether it coordinates clauses or phrases. Consider which lexical categories are favored in each passage (more nouns or pronouns, adjectives or adverbs?) and whether both passages use active and passive voice equally. What other observations can you make?

Lexicon and Grammar

Another difference between the spoken and written registers can be seen in the lexicon of the excerpts. Truman's sometimes earthy vocabulary is characteristic of conversations, including such relatively informal interviews as the one quoted, and his language would likely strike readers of a narrative biographical passage as inappropriate except in quoted speech. By the same token, the biography contains words and phrases that might seem stiff or snooty in an interview. Striking differences in the preferred lexical categories and in syntax are also apparent, as we'll see. Such features—not in isolation but taken together—mark passages as particular kinds of text, particular *registers*, reflective of particular speech situations, including the circumstances of their production.

Vocabulary Truman's spoken language during the interview relies on short everyday words, ones that are easy to retrieve and produce in the course of real-time talking: *damn fool, what got into me, no damn good, maybe, when you ask me, that isn't what happened.* By contrast, a biographer with opportunities to reflect on word choice has time to retrieve semantically more specific words, such as *request, posted, temporarily, perceived, exceedingly,* and *polished*—and, if need be, to revise them afterward, an option not available to speakers reaching for words as they speak.

Lexical Bundles and Repetition Because conversations and interviews rely on speech production in real time, they take advantage of lexical bundles and expressions already spoken. Local repetitions are expressions that get echoed exactly or nearly exactly within a short space of time. Truman's near repetition of *and then put on the Supreme Court* (line 3) and *putting Tom Clark on the Supreme Court* (line 9) exemplifies the pattern; another example is his saying *my biggest mistake* (line 8), echoing the interviewer's *the biggest mistake you made* (line 1).

The term *lexical bundle* refers to a group of words that occur together frequently in a particular register and serve common needs of that register. In conversation and informal interviews such as Truman's, several lexical bundles serve to introduce other thoughts; they offer a ready frame for saying things. Among lexical bundles occurring frequently in conversations are several that appear in the interview: *I don't know what . . .*; *that isn't what . . .*; *I thought . . .*; and *I told you . . . .* Such lexical bundles stand ready for use as "launchers" of something to follow; they are ready-made frames for producing fluent speech in real time. Another kind of lexical bundle can be seen in *that I can think of* (line 7), which illustrates how relative clauses can help define or delimit a referent (here, *one right decision*).

Nouns and Pronouns In comparable amounts of text, the written biography contains about 30 nouns, the spoken interview only about half that number. By contrast, the interview exhibits a dozen first-person and second-person pronouns, whereas the biographical excerpt has none and shows fewer third-person pronouns than the spoken interview.

There are other differences in pronominal use as well. Truman uses the demonstrative pronoun *that* as a "sentential" pronoun, referring to an entire clause (not merely a noun phrase): *that isn't what happened* (line 11). Elsewhere, in *that's it* (line 8), *that* is used vaguely, referring back to *my biggest mistake* or ahead to *Putting Tom Clark on the Supreme Court of the United States* or to both. The biography contains no such examples and, if a vague pronoun were to find its way into a draft version, the author or an editor would likely clarify it at revision.

Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases The biography and the interview have about the same number of prepositional phrases, but the interview contains a sentence-final preposition (*He hasn't made one right decision that I can think of*), a feature that occurs rarely in formal writing of any kind but is relatively frequent in interviews and conversation, as shown in Figure 10.5.

Verbs The excerpt from the interview contains 24 verb groups (main verbs with any auxiliaries: *told, would prove, were discussing, are going to change*), twice as many as appear in the biography. Since each verb group represents a clause, the spoken interview contains twice as many clauses as the biographical excerpt. Frequent verbs—thus more frequent but shorter clauses in an equivalent number of words—are more characteristic of spontaneous speech than of planned and edited writing. As to particular verbs, Truman uses several "private" verbs such as *think* and *know*, and his interviewer uses *consider*—verbs that represent a person's internal mental state. Such private verbs are characteristic of conversation and interviews but not of the narrative portions of a biography.

Because speakers in an interview (as in a conversation) face real-time pressure to retrieve words as they speak, speech produced in real time tends to show relatively frequent use of verbs with broad semantic scope (which are apparently easier to retrieve from the internal lexicon). By contrast, written biographies and other registers whose composition allows time for retrieving semantically more precise verbs show relatively higher frequencies of verbs with narrower scope. Quite a few of Truman's verbs—*made, put, get, happen*—have broad semantic scope. Even in this short passage, he uses *made* and *got* twice each (*that I first made; he hasn't made; what got into me; he got on the Court*) and *put* (*then put on the Supreme Court*) instead of, say, *nominated* or *appointed*.

One feature of the written biography is its use of passive voice verbs (*was done, had been posted, was removed, to be*

Try It Yourself In the biographical passage about Truman, identify four instances of the auxiliary verb *be* used as part of a passive verb structure, and note whether each is a *by*-passive or an agentless passive. Then try to explain the function of including or omitting the *by* phrase in each of the passive structures.

taken), a third of all the verbs in the passage. By contrast, the spoken interview contains no passive voice verbs. This difference in our excerpts mirrors a more general contrast between active and passive verbs in written and spoken registers.

The interview concerns the years of Truman's presidency, as the preponderance of past-tense verbs reflects. Among its two dozen verb groups, more than half are in the past tense (including *made, put, got, was, thought, happened, told*), while most of the present-tense verbs refer to the ongoing interaction between Truman and his interviewer or to Truman's own thought processes in the course of the interview: *when you ask, I don't know, I can think*. The biographical passage, entirely narrative, contains past-tense verbs almost exclusively. There are also differences in verb *aspect* (see Chapter 6), but we do not address aspect here.

Try It Yourself In the biographical passage about Truman, identify an example of four conjoined adjective phrases other than those in the series of five noted in our discussion of coordination below. Can you identify any conjoined adjective phrases in the interview? What do you make of that difference?

Adverbs Truman uses adverbs for reference to time sequencing (*first, then*) and as hedges to indicate his stance toward what he is saying, as with *of course* and *maybe*. He uses the emphatic adverbs *damn* and *even* (*damn good, even worse*). In the biographical passage, adverbs refer to time sequencing (*before, then*), as in the interview, and also serve as emphatics (*too, exceedingly*) and hedges (*almost* in lines 10 and 14). Only the biographical passage exhibits manner adverbials (*temporarily, seriously, quickly*).

Coordination and Subordination The interview shows several examples of conjoining, using the conjunctions *and* and *but*, chiefly to link clauses, as in lines 5, 6, and 8. The biographical passage shows a preference for conjoining phrases rather than clauses, including noun phrases (*wavy blond hair and a silky baritone voice*), adjective phrases (*thirty-nine years old, over six feet tall, broad in the shoulders, slim-waisted, and handsome as a screen actor*), and verb phrases (*had been posted . . . and . . . had stepped aside* and *to be true, or to be taken seriously*).

By contrast, the biographical passage contains several subordinate clauses: a relative clause starting in line 3 (*who had been posted . . .*); adverbial clauses in lines 5 (*when Vardaman was removed*) and 13 (*as Truman had quickly perceived*); and the conjoined complement clauses after *glamorous* in line 10 (*to be true, or to be taken seriously*). The interview also contains several subordinate clauses, including those in lines 4, 8, 10, 12, and 13. Among other subordinate clauses are those that complement the verb *think* in lines 10 and 13. In both cases, the subordinator *that* has been omitted, rendering *I thought [that] maybe . . . he'd improve* and *it's hopeless to think [that] people are going to change much.* Omission of the complementizer *that*—especially after the verb *think* and a few others—is very frequent in conversation and informal interviews and relatively uncommon at all in academic prose and the kind of writing represented in our biographical excerpt. The excerpt happens not to have any possible examples of complementizer *that*-omission. (We are not addressing relative clauses in the interview, where *that* is sometimes omitted, as in line 1, but not invariably omitted, as in line 7).

Syntactic Shortening and Syntactic Incompleteness Syntactic shortening, a well-known linguistic feature, is particularly common in conversation and certain other kinds of interaction, including interviews. In answer to the interviewer's question in line 1, Truman does not offer a complete sentence but only a noun phrase, albeit a noun phrase containing a relative clause. Similarly, his utterance in line 9 (*Putting Tom Clark on the Supreme Court of the United States*) isn't a complete sentence (although our considering that phrase as a possible part of the preceding utterance could lead to a different syntactic analysis).

Questions Perhaps too obvious to mention, the interview contains a question (as interviews must), a syntactic structure that would be uncommon in a biography except in quotations. Notice, though, that in his reply Truman uses the syntax of a direct question (*When you ask me what was my biggest mistake*), rather than an indirect question (*When you ask me what my biggest mistake was*). His repetition of the form of the question in his answer is not uncommon in conversation and contributes to an impression of informality.

Phonology

We can't make straightforward comparisons of pronunciation because only the interview is speech-based and we don't have a phonetic transcription of Truman's words. But the interviewer's transcribed text suggests that Truman exhibited frequent phonological contraction during the interview. Instead of full forms like *do not* and *has not,* the excerpt exhibits eight contracted forms: *don't, doesn't, isn't, hasn't, he's, he'd, that's,* and *it's.* The biographical excerpt maintains (line 3) the full form *who had* rather than *who'd,* the only possible contraction in the excerpt. (Figure 10.4 shows the relative frequency of contractions in various registers, confirming the patterns in our excerpts.)

Comparing Registers

No single feature identifies the registers our excerpts exemplify. Instead, features occurring in combination characterize the first passage as a planned and revised written narrative and the second as a face-to-face spoken interview produced in real time. Truman's casual style suggests conversation more than a formal interview, perhaps the result of the interviewer's having spent several months with him, morning and afternoon. With the passing days and an increased familiarity between Truman and the interviewer, the interview came to resemble conversation between acquaintances or friends.

We have now seen some of the ways in which linguistic features differ from one speech situation to another and thus help characterize the respective registers. We've seen that there is often more frequent occurrence of a particular feature in one register as compared with another, and occasionally a feature occurs in (or is absent from) one register exclusively or almost exclusively, as with contractions. Sometimes the same linguistic form occurs in more than one register but with different meanings or uses, as we saw for example with coordination.

COMPUTERS AND THE STUDY OF REGISTER VARIATION

In artificial intelligence, expert systems, and a number of other critically important high-tech fields, the role of registers is crucial. To put the matter simply: language differs across registers, and it differs in all respects. Consider the different patterns of syntax and vocabulary that an automatic speech recognition (ASR) system would need to master if it were to operate on information given solely in the form of newspaper headlines or solely in legislative language or solely in medical history dictations. Each of those would be challenging enough but far less challenging than dealing with all three registers through a uniform system. If a corpus contained writings only from newspapers but failed to categorize the different registers within newspapers (reportage, editorials, sports commentary, business analysis, stock market reports, weather reports, display advertising, personal ads, cartoons), it would have to be immeasurably more complicated than would a system designed to handle just one of those registers. Of course, basic work in register analysis can help automatic systems identify the register of particular texts.

Now imagine going outside the realm of newspapers to include spoken registers—say, face-to-face and telephone conversations—and written registers—say, insurance policies, automobile rental agreements, and mortgage documents. Each of those registers relies, to a greater or lesser degree, on syntactic structures and vocabulary that differ from one another. If an ASR system had to deal with all of those registers at once, including their domain-specific vocabulary or domain-specific word senses, it would be overwhelmed, at least under existing capabilities.

The significant advances seen recently in ASR have come about by a reliance on corpora of highly context-specific registers. Even using brute force statistical analyses (which minimize linguistic analysis as such), the patterns uncovered and utilized in increasingly familiar human-machine interfaces have arisen from narrow ranges of requests generated in domain-specific corpora compiled separately from telephone requests for directory assistance, travel inquiries, weather inquiries, and dictated medical reports. These billions of digitally recorded inquiries constitute corpora of narrow domains with circumscribed vocabulary and constrained arrays of syntactic structures. We are still far from automated speech recognition systems that operate essentially in domain-free arenas or across a wide range of registers. ■

Summary

- Three principal elements determine each *speech situation*: setting, purpose, and participants.
- Topic and location are part of *setting*.
- Activity type and goals are part of *purpose*.
- With respect to *participants*, it is not only the people themselves who influence language form but also the roles they are playing in that speech situation.
- As we wear different clothing for different occasions and different activities, so we generally do not speak the same way in court, at dinner, and on the soccer field.
- In multilingual communities, different speech situations call sometimes for different languages and sometimes for different varieties of the same language.
- *Registers* are language varieties characteristic of particular speech situations. (Registers are sometimes also called *styles*.)
- The set of varieties used in a speech community in various speech situations is called its *linguistic repertoire* or its *verbal repertoire*.

- The linguistic repertoire of a monolingual community contains many registers, which differ from one another in their linguistic features either in an absolute sense or, usually, in a relative sense.
- Each register is characterized by a set of linguistic features, not by a single feature.
- The sum total of such features (lexical, phonological, grammatical, and semantic), together with the characteristic patterns for the use of language in a particular situation, determines a register.
- Because register or style varieties within a language draw on the same grammatical system, the differential exploitation of that system to mark different registers occurs not in absolute but in relative terms.
- Writing differs from speaking in a number of fundamental ways, but the linguistic differences between the two *modes* are not absolute.
- Spontaneous spoken language relies heavily on lexical bundles and local repetition of expressions to achieve fluency.

What Do You Think? REVISITED

- *Lindsey and fictional dialogue.* Not many people have had occasion to read a transcript of actual speech, and fewer still have transcribed an ordinary recorded conversation. Given the spontaneous character of conversation, speakers often need to search for words and sort out their syntax to convey what they intend. They sometimes wander down syntactic dead ends and have to backtrack. For Lindsey, "natural" may simply mean dialogue that seems genuinely colloquial and doesn't appear stiff. If she had to read a transcription of an actual conversation (with its hesitations and restarts and *uhms* and *uhs*), she would doubtless grow impatient. To prevent such impatience, novelists scrupulously avoid making their dialogue entirely natural.
- *Nina and slang.* Probably not all Nina's teachers dislike slang and colloquialisms, and it's a safe bet that not all of them dislike them in all situations. But teachers understand that slang is characteristic of extreme informality and probably regard most classroom interactions as relatively formal situations and written essays as an especially formal register. By definition, colloquial expressions characterize spoken language, and given that language-related school tasks focus chiefly on reading and writing, teachers may discourage "colloquial" expressions in student essays. Language appropriate to an informal conversation may not be appropriate in a written essay.
- *Caroline and contractions.* Contractions are a shortcut and in writing usually represent words as they are commonly spoken in informal situations. Written contractions thus mimic the relaxed tone of conversation. When they're used, say, in friendly letters, they reflect conversational informality. By extension, textbooks may aim for a more conversational and engaging tone by using contractions. In this textbook, something of an interactive and conversational tone is established partly by asking readers to figure things out ("Try it yourself") and answer questions ("What do you think?") and partly by using contractions that help create an informal tone.
- *Uncle Austin's recipe.* Sometimes passed on from cook to cook and written hurriedly on index cards or scraps of paper, family cooks may be inclined to omit

unnecessary words, using a kind of telegraphic language for speed and efficiency. It shouldn't be surprising, then, that any omitted words in a recipe would be ones carrying little information and easily restored from context: 'Toast **the** pine nuts in **a** medium skillet. Remove **them** and add 1 tbsp. [tablespoon] **of** oil and garlic. Cook **them for** 4 minutes and drain **the** remaining liquid. Sprinkle **some** salt and pepper inside **the** trout cavity and stuff **it** with **the** spinach mixture. Brush **the** trout with **the** remaining oil.' It's a common, if somewhat old-fashioned, recipe style. ■

Exercises

Practice Exercise

A. List five pairs of terms for body parts or bodily functions, such as *clavicle/collarbone* or *urinate/pee*, that could mark a distinction between a discussion you were having with a physician, say, and a friend on the same topic.

B. Rank the nouns in each set below in order of formality:

1) prof, teach, instructor, mentor, educator

2) guru, mullah, maestro, trainer, coach, don

C. Are any of the words in (1) or (2) above so informal as to be slang? Explain.

Based on English

10-1. Consider the following expressions.

Kindly extinguish the illumination upon exiting.

Please turn off the lights on your way out.

The content of the directive is basically the same in both expressions, but the social meanings differ notably. Identify features that highlight the differences between the two directives, then discuss the impression that each is likely to make and under which circumstances each might be appropriate.

10-2. Collections of campus slang are popular, and gathering and discussing examples can be helpful in understanding aspects of language structure and language use. At the University of Southern California, students of Professor Carmen Silva-Corvalán identified the words below as examples of slang. For each term, indicate whether you hear it used in situations of extreme informality on your campus, identify its lexical category (e.g., noun, adjective), and give a concise definition for any you are familiar with. Note, too, which processes of word formation were employed to create these slang terms (e.g., semantic shift, conversion, blending; see Chapter 2). If you regard any term as geographically limited, explain yourself. As an extension to the exercise, the next time you hear someone use any of these terms over the next week, jot down the full utterance as though you were collecting citation examples for a dictionary of slang, and note whether the speech situation was informal or not.

Ex: *bounce*. Yes, verb 'leave, usually in a quick or abrupt manner'; semantic shift.

cheese
chill
chillax
clutch
dank
hella
ride it
sick
sketch
tight
weaksauce
wingman

10-3. Here's the continuation to the Truman interview quoted in this chapter; the sentences have been numbered for reference.

Q. (1) How do you explain the fact that he's been such a bad Justice?

A. (2) The main thing is . . . well, it isn't so much that he's a *bad* man. (3) It's just that he's such a dumb son of a bitch. (4) He's about the dumbest man I think I've ever run across. (5) And lots of times that's the case. (6) Being dumb's just about the worst thing there is when it comes to holding high office, and that's especially true when it's on the Supreme Court of the United States. (7) As I say, I never will know what got into me when I made that appointment, and I'm as sorry as I can be for doing it. (Miller, 1974, p 242).

a. Is it clear what *that* refers to in *that's the case* (sentence 5) and *that's especially true* (sentence 6)? If so, what type of constituent does *that* refer to in these instances?

b. What is the name of the linguistic feature you examined in question a above?

c. Identify all instances of *be* as a main verb. How many are there?

d. What is the function of *well* in sentence 2?

e. Wherever possible, supply a noun phrase that would have the same referent as the pronoun *it* in sentences 2, 3, 6 (two instances), and 7. Explain those cases where a noun phrase could not be identified as having the same referent as *it*.

10-4. **a.** Look up the definition of *slang* in a good desk or online dictionary and, using the definition as a guideline, list as many slang words and expressions as you know for two notions each in (1) and (2) below.

1) drunk; sexually carefree person; ungenerous with money; sloppy in appearance

2) sober; chaste person; generous with money; neat and tidy

b. What is it about the notions represented in (1) that makes them more susceptible to slang words and expressions than those in (2)?

c. To the extent you could cite slang terms for the items in (2), do they carry negative or positive connotations?

d. Does the dictionary definition of slang help explain the differential distribution of slang terms in (1) and (2) and the connotations associated with the slang terms in (2)? If so, explain how. If not, revise the dictionary definition to accommodate what you have discovered about the connotations of slang terms.

10-5. Some of the most common words of English (*the, of, and, a, to, it, is, that*) appear in both the biography and the interview, as well as in nearly all other registers of English.

a. Examine *of course* in line 11 of the Truman interview. On one level it could be analyzed as a prepositional phrase consisting of the preposition *of* and the noun *course.* If instead you think of it as a compound, what lexical category would it belong to? (*Hint:* Substitute single words for the compound and decide which category the substitutes belong to.)

b. In terms of its distribution with respect to other word classes, determine which lexical category *too* belongs to in line 10 of the biography. Using the same criterion, what is the lexical category of *almost* in the same line? What about *so* in line 8 and *much* in line 14 of the interview?

c. Make a list of the determiners in the biographical passage and a list of those in the interview. Specify the particular word class for each determiner in your list (for example, article, demonstrative).

d. The biography has no examples of *that,* whereas the interview has six: lines 2 (twice), 7, 8, 11, and 12. Identify the word class for each instance of *that.*

e. Give an argument for not categorizing *in* (biography, line 6) as a preposition.

f. The passages contain several compounds (for example, the compound noun *Navy Captain* in the biography, line 3). Identify all the compounds in both passages, and note their lexical categories and the lexical categories of their parts (for example, *Navy Captain* is a noun, comprising a noun and a noun). What similarities exist in the categories of compounds in the biography and the interview? What differences?

g. Examine occurrences of *to* in the biography (lines 4, 11, 15) and the interview (twice in line 13). Which, if any, is a preposition? What are the others?

h. Assuming that the passages are typical of their registers, what generalizations can you make about the registers in terms of their exploitation of particular word classes?

10-6. Below are personal ads (slightly adapted) from a weekly newspaper published in Los Angeles. Examine their linguistic characteristics and answer the questions that follow.

1) Aquarius SWM, 33, strong build, blue eyes. You: marriage-minded, bilingual Latin Female 23–30, children ok.

2) Busty, brilliant, stunning entrepreneur, 40s (looks 30). Seeks possibly younger, tall, handsome, caring SWM, who respects individuality. Someone who lives the impossible dream, financially secure, good conversation, for relationship, n/s.

3) SWM, 28, attractive college student, works for major US airlines, enjoys traveling. Seeks Female, 23–32, humorous and intelligent for world-class romance and possibly marriage.

4) English vegetarian. SWM, 31. Sincere, sensitive, original, thinking, untypical, amusing, shy, playful, affectionate professional. Seeking warm, witty, open-minded WF, under 29, to share my life with.

5) Slim, young, GWM, straight appearance, masculine, athletic, healthy, clean-shaven, discreet. Seeks similar good-looking WM, under 25, for monogamous relationship.

6) Very romantic SBM, 24, college educated. Seeks wealthy, healthy and beautiful Lady for friendship and maybe romance. Phonies and pranksters need not apply.

7) Hispanic DF, petite but full of life, likes sports, dancing, traveling, looking for someone with same interests, 30+, race unimportant.

8) Evolved, positive thinking, spiritual, affectionate, honest, handsome, healthy, secure, 36, 6′, 160#, blue-eyed, unpretentious, unencumbered, professional. Seeking counterpart, soul mate, marriage, family.

   a. Compared to conversation, which lexical categories are very frequent in the ads? Which ones are particularly rare?

   b. Identify eight characteristic linguistic features of personal ads. They may be features of syntax, morphology, vocabulary, abbreviation conventions, and so on.

   c. List the verbs in all the ads, and identify their grammatical person (first, second, third) and number (singular, plural) where possible. (*Hint*: Supply the pronoun that would serve as subject of each verb in order to determine person and number.)

   d. Choose one of the ads and attempt to write it out fully in conversational English solely by supplying additional words; keep the word order and word forms of the original ad.

   e. On the basis of your attempt, what indication is there that the ads represent a reduced or abbreviated form of conversational English? If you judge the ads not to be reductions of the sentences of conversational English, what explanation can you offer for the form of their sentences?

   f. Which linguistic features of personal ads strike you as conventionalized to the point of requiring previous knowledge of the register in order to understand it?

10-7. Headline types vary somewhat across newspapers and other sources. Consider the linguistic characteristics of the headlines on the next page, selected from the *New York Times* (online edition) in the summer of 2013. Identify four headlines containing no prepositions and four containing two prepositions. Identify all adverbs anywhere in the headlines. Identify all definite and indefinite articles in the first 10 headlines. What accounts for the difference between the relative lack of determiners and the relatively high frequency of prepositions? What tense do these verbs exhibit: *threaten*, *sell, abound, weighs, continue, captures, dances, bolsters,* and *follows*? Identify by number any headlines in which a past-tense verb appears. Identify any that lack a verb altogether. Identify 10 headlines containing an *-ing* verb. What do you find noteworthy about the use of auxiliary verbs in 2, 3, 10? Rewrite headlines numbered 3, 10, and 18 as though they were complete sentences within the article captioned by the headline. Identify all adjectives. (Review Chapter 2 if necessary so as to distinguish between adjectives and nouns used attributively.) What distinguishes headlines 7, 11, 13, and 14 from most of the others? Identify three headlines that contain a noun or verb whose meaning is metaphorical, and explain the metaphor. Offer an explanation for which lexical categories predominate in these headlines?

1) Marijuana Crops in California Threaten Forests and Wildlife
2) Nations Buying as Hackers Sell Computer Flaws
3) Obama Words Complicating Military Trials
4) Pitfalls Abound in China's Push from Farm to City
5) Syria Weighs Its Tactics as Pillars of Its Economy Continue to Crumble
6) Air Force General Takes Over Vastly Expanded Sexual Assault Office
7) No Six-Figure Pay, but Making a Difference
8) Pirates Claw Back to Spoil Start by Mets' Torres
9) For Teams Hosting All-Star Game, Both Celebration and Opportunity
10) Cory Monteith, Star of Hit Show "Glee," Found Dead
11) Steady Move to the Right
12) Senate Digs In for Long Battle on Immigrants
13) Supporting Oil and Gas, but Resisting Encroachment
14) At Theme Parks, a V.I.P. Ticket to Ride
15) Nadal Captures His Eighth French Open Title
16) "Kinky Boots" Dances to the Top of the Tonys
17) Supreme Court Bolsters Gay Marriage with Two Major Rulings
18) Court Follows Nation's Lead
19) A Legal Blow to Sustainable Development
20) Ecuador Hints at Slow Process on Snowden Asylum

Based on English and Other Languages

10-8. Identify several instances of linguistic features that vary across registers in a foreign language you have studied. (Some features may be mentioned in your foreign language textbook, others by your instructor.) Identify at least one phonological feature, one grammatical feature, and several vocabulary items that vary across situations of use. For each feature, specify the situation in which it is appropriate and another in which it would not be. (*Hint*: Consider such differences of situation as writing versus speaking, formal versus informal, fast speech versus careful speech, interaction between you and, say, a teacher as compared with you and a close friend.)

Especially for Educators and Future Teachers

10-9. Examine a foreign language or ESL textbook, and identify any indications that the particular language varies from situation to situation. Those indications may focus on formality versus informality, differences between speech and writing, forms of address for addressees of different social status, slang terms or jargon, or any other linguistic variation that depends on situation of use. Offer an assessment as to how clear the book is about the importance of such differences in sounding like a native speaker or writing like one?

10-10. From a register listed or another you deem interesting, choose an appropriate one for your students and craft an exercise to help guide them to collect a small set of examples and analyze them appropriately: texting, instant messages, classified ads, course descriptions in college catalogs, recipes, rental agreements.

10-11. What implications for teaching ESL/EFL (or any foreign or second language) do you see in the fact that even in a brief passage like the Truman interview so much of the language is already structured either by repetition or by lexical bundling? How important a role should lexical bundles play in creating model conversations for second-language learners?

Other Resources

Internet

- **LISU Website: http://www.CengageBrain.com** For users of this textbook. Provides updated Internet links as well as supplemental material for students and instructors. Here you will find interactive learning tools.
- **British National Corpus: http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/** The home page for the British National Corpus permits you to submit queries and receive sample sentences containing the expression you queried.
- **American National Corpus: http://www.americannationalcorpus.org/** A project of the Language Data Consortium, ANC aims eventually to match the contents of the British National Corpus. ANC remains under development and welcomes documents of any kind (including student essays and email) created by native speakers of English (visit the website for details). Meanwhile, OANC (O for "open") provides material for research on American English, including transcripts of about 3.2 million words of face-to-face and telephone interactions and about 11.4 million words of written English.

Suggestions for Further Reading

- **Allan Bell. 1991. *The Language of News Media*** (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell). The most accessible in-depth analysis of a single register.
- **Vijay K. Bhatia. 1993. *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*** (London: Longman). A qualitative approach to registers, a next step beyond this textbook.
- **Robert L. Chapman, ed. 1995. *Dictionary of American Slang*, 3rd ed.** (New York: HarperCollins). A handsome dictionary of slang; also discusses the nature and sources of slang. We have taken examples of slang for illustration in this chapter from dust jackets of this volume.
- **David Crystal & Derek Davy. 1969. *Investigating English Style*** (London: Longman). Contains accessible chapters on the language of conversation, religion, newspaper reporting, and legal documents.
- **Connie Eble. 1996. *Slang and Sociability: In-group Language among College Students*** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press). Highly informative with a glossary of over 1,000 slang terms.
- **J. E. Lighter, ed. 1997. *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang*** (New York: Random House). A major work of interest to historians of American English and American slang and anyone interested in the history of particular slang terms. Two volumes (through the letter O) have been published.
- **Timothy Shopen & Joseph M. Williams, eds. 1981. *Style and Variables in English*** (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop). Essays treating discourse, literary style, and other styles.

Advanced Reading

Brown and Fraser (1979) surveys the elements of speech situations that can influence language. The description of switching in Brussels comes from Fishman (1972), while Blom and Gumperz (1972) describes switching between Bokmål and Ranamål. Biber (1988) is a quantitative study of variation in a corpus of spoken and written English, while Biber (1995) discusses textual variation in Korean, Somali, and other languages. O'Donnell and Todd (1991) treats English in the media, advertising, literature, and the classroom. Discussions of other written registers can be found in Ghadessy (1988). Crystal (2006) discusses how email, instant messaging, and chat may be influencing English, while Crystal (2009) tackles the same subject with respect to texting and argues against the widespread view that it is harming the language or young people's mastery of it. Chapters in Biber and Finegan (1994) describe sports-coaching registers, personal ads, and dinner-table conversations, as well as register variation in Somali and Korean. Andersen (1990) describes register use among children. Finegan (1992) discusses the evolution of fiction, essays, and letters over the course of several centuries, along with attitudes toward standardization during that formative period. Lambert and Tucker (1976) reports several social-psychological studies of address forms, principally in Canadian French, Puerto Rican Spanish, and Colombian Spanish. Useful and insightful discussions of French registers can be found in Sanders (1993) and George (1993), while French slang and colloquial usage is abundantly illustrated in Burke (1988). Barbour and Stevenson (1990) contains two chapters that discuss aspects of situational variation in German, and Clyne (1999) touches on situational variation as well. More advanced discussions of register can be found in Duranti and Goodwin (1992), which provides descriptive and theoretical perspectives on the importance of context. Eckert and Rickford (2001) reflects anthropological approaches to style, the traditional sociolinguistic notion of style as attention paid to speech, the important matter of audience design, and functionally motivated situational variation. Accessible chapters on American slang (by Connie Eble), rap and hip-hop (by H. Samy Alim), the language of cyberspace (by Denise E. Murray), and talk between doctors and patients (by Cynthia Hagstrom) appear in Finegan and Rickford (2004). The biographical passage about Truman comes from McCullough (1992:502) and the interview passage from Miller (1974:242). Many of the generalizations about spoken and written registers discussed in this chapter are based on information reported in Biber et al. (1999), a rich source of information about grammar and the occurrence of linguistic forms across four registers. The discussion of the Derek Bentley case relies on Coulthard (1994).

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11

Language Variation Among Social Groups: Dialects

What Do You Think?

- Returning from summer camp, your 9-year-old niece reports that one of the counselors "talked funny": he called the TV a *telly*; trucks, *lorries*; cookies, *biscuits*. What can you tell her about who "talks funny" and who doesn't?
- Daniel, a teacher in Chicago, tells you that a substitute teacher who grew up in Alabama replaced him one day when he was sick. When Daniel returned to class, his students reported that the substitute teacher spoke with a distinct Southern accent but claimed he had no accent at all. They were astonished at how the sub could possibly imagine he spoke without an accent. What explanation could Daniel offer them?
- In a discussion about whether teachers in the United States should know something about the structure and pronunciation patterns of Ebonics, Ethan claims Ebonics is "just broken English" and points to Rachel Jeantel's trial testimony in the 2013 Trayvon Martin case as evidence. He says teachers shouldn't have to study it. What arguments can you make that if Ebonics is "broken," then so is every other variety of English when viewed from the perspective of a different variety?
- In the cafeteria, you and some classmates are discussing the degree to which male and female college students talk differently. Sammy says they speak the same. What do you tell her?

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Language or Dialect: Which Do You Speak?

It is an obvious fact that people of different nations tend to use different languages: Spanish in Spain, Portuguese in Portugal, Japanese in Japan, Somali in Somalia, and so on. Along with other cultural characteristics, language is part of what distinguishes one nation from another. Of course, it isn't only across national boundaries that people speak different languages. In the Canadian province of Quebec, ethnic French Canadians maintain a strong allegiance to the French language, while ethnic Anglos maintain a loyalty to English. In India, scores of languages are spoken, some confined to small areas, others spoken regionally or nationally.

Among speakers of any widely spoken language there is considerable international variation, as with Australian, American, British, Indian, and Irish English, among others. Striking differences can be noted between the varieties of French spoken in Montreal and Paris and among the varieties of Spanish in Spain, Mexico, and various Central and South American countries. In addition, even casual observers know that residents of different parts of a country speak regional varieties of the same language. When Americans speak of a "Boston accent," a "Southern drawl," or "Brooklynese," they reveal their perception of American English as varying from place to place. These linguistic markers of region identify people as belonging to a particular social group, even when that group is as loosely bound together as are most American regional groups. In countries where regional affiliation may have social correlates of ethnicity, religion, or clan, regional varieties may be important markers of social affiliation. Like the existence of different languages, the existence of regional varieties of a language suggests that people who speak *with* one another tend to speak *like* one another. It's also reasonable to think that people who view themselves as distinct from other groups may tend to mark that distinction in their speech.

A language can be thought of as a collection of dialects that are historically related and similar in vocabulary and structure. Dialects of a single language characterize social groups whose members choose to say they are speakers of the same language.

Social Boundaries and Dialects

Language varies from region to region and also across ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender boundaries. Speakers of American English know that many white Americans and black Americans tend to speak differently, even when they live in the same city. Similarly, middle-class speakers can often be distinguished from working-class speakers. Women and men also differ from one another in their language use. Throughout the world, in addition to regional dialects, there are ethnic varieties, social-class varieties, and gender varieties. These constitute what can be called **social dialects** although the word *dialect* is also commonly limited to regional varieties.

Distinguishing Among Dialect, Register, and Accent

Dialect and Register The term **dialect** refers to the language variety characteristic of a particular regional or social group. Partly through his or her dialect we recognize a person's regional, ethnic, social, and gender affiliation. Thus the term *dialect* has to do with language *users*, with groups of speakers. In addition, as we saw in the preceding chapter, all dialects vary according to the situation in which they are used, creating what in the previous chapter we called *registers*: language varieties characteristic of *situations of use*. In this chapter we deal with *dialects*—language varieties characteristic of particular social groups. Languages, dialects, and registers are all language **varieties**. What this means is that there is no linguistic distinction between a language and a dialect. Every dialect is a language, and every language is realized in its dialects. From a linguistic point of view, what is called a language and what is called a dialect are indistinguishable.

Dialect and Accent *Dialect* refers to a language variety in its totality—including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, pragmatics, and any other aspect of the linguistic system. The terms *language* and *variety* also refer to an entire linguistic system. By contrast, the word **accent** refers to pronunciation only. When we discuss a "Southern accent" or a "Boston accent," we mean the *pronunciation* characteristic of the Southern dialect or the Boston dialect.

How Do Languages Diverge and Merge?

How is it that over time certain language varieties, once similar to one another, come to differ, while other varieties remain very much alike? There is no simple answer to that question, but the more people interact, the more alike their language remains or becomes. The less the contact between social groups, the more likely it is that their language varieties will develop distinctive characteristics.

Geographical separation and social distance promote differences in speechways. From the Proto-Indo-European language spoken about 6,000 years ago have come most of today's European languages and many languages of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Not only the Romance languages but the Germanic, Celtic, Greek, Baltic, Slavic, and Indo-Iranian languages have developed from Proto-Indo-European. When you consider that only about 200 generations have lived and died during that 6,000-year period, you can appreciate how quickly a multitude of languages can develop from a single parent language.

Just as physical distance can promote dialect distinctions, social distance can help create and maintain distinct dialects. In part, middle-class dialects differ from working-class dialects because of a relative lack of sustained interactional contacts across class boundaries in American society. African American English remains distinct from other varieties of American English partly because of the social distance between whites and many African Americans in the United States. A dialect links its users through recognition of shared linguistic characteristics, and speakers' abilities to use and understand a dialect mark them as "insiders" and allow them to identify (and exclude) "outsiders." But as we will see, it is not necessarily the case that varieties differ from one another in a tidy fashion. It may be that two varieties share vocabulary but differ in pronunciation, or share a good deal of their phonology but differ in some other respects. All language varieties change and develop continuously.

Language Merger in an Indian Village

Just as physical and social distance enable speakers of one variety to distinguish themselves from speakers of other varieties, so close contact and frequent communication foster linguistic *similarity*. As varieties of the same language spoken by people in close social contact tend to become alike, different languages spoken in a community may also tend to merge.

Kupwar is a village in India on the border between two major language families: the Indo-European family (which includes the languages of North India) and the unrelated Dravidian family (the languages of South India). Kupwar's 3,000 inhabitants fall into three groups and regularly use three languages in their daily activities. The Jains speak Kannada (a Dravidian language), the Muslims speak Urdu (an Indo-European language closely related to Hindi), and the Untouchables speak Marathi (the regional Indo-European language surrounding Kupwar and the principal literary language of the area). These groups have lived in the village for centuries, and most men are bilingual or multilingual. Over the course of time, with individuals switching back and forth among at least two of these languages, the varieties used in Kupwar have come to be more and more alike. In fact, the grammatical structures of the village varieties are now so similar that a word-for-word translation is possible among the languages because word order and other structural characteristics of the three languages are now virtually identical. This merging is remarkable because the varieties of these languages that are used elsewhere are very different from one another.

Even in Kupwar, though, where the three grammars have been merging, the vocabulary of each language has remained largely distinct. On the one hand, the need for communication among the different groups has encouraged grammatical convergence. On the other hand, the social separation needed to maintain religious and caste differences has supported the continuation of separate vocabularies. As things now stand, communication is relatively easy across groups, while affiliation and group identity remain clear. This is the linguistic equivalent of having your cake and eating it too.

In the following example sentence, the word order and morphology are relatively uniform across the three Kupwar varieties, but the vocabulary identifies which language is being spoken.

Language Merger in Kupwar

URDU	pala	jəra	kaat	ke	le	ke	a		ya
MARATHI	pala	jəra	kap	un	ghe	un	a	l	o
KANNADA	tapla	jəra	khod	i	təgond	i	bə		yn
	greens	a little	cut	having	taken	having	come	past	I

'I cut some greens and brought them.'

To a remarkable extent the three grammars have merged by combining grammatical elements from each language, while social distinctions have been preserved (and are partly maintained) by differences in vocabulary.

Language/Dialect Continua

In contrast to the situation in Kupwar, the Romance languages, which include Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese, have evolved distinct national varieties from the colloquial Latin spoken in their regions in Roman times. Whereas the varieties of language spoken in Kupwar have converged, the language varieties arising from Latin have diverged over the centuries. The reasons in both cases are the same. First, people use language to mark their social identity. Second, people who talk with one another tend to talk like one another. A corollary of the second principle is that people not talking with one another tend to become linguistically differentiated.

Today the languages of Europe look separate and tidily compartmentalized on a map. In reality they are not so neatly distinguishable. Instead, there is a continuum of variation, and languages "blend" into one another. The national border between France and Italy also serves as a dividing line between French-speaking and Italian-speaking areas. But the French spoken just inside the French border shares features with the Italian spoken just outside it. From Paris to the Italian border lies a continuum along which local French varieties become more and more "Italianlike." Likewise, from Rome to the French border, Italian varieties become more "Frenchlike."

Swedes of the far south can communicate better with Danish speakers in nearby Denmark using their local dialects than with their fellow Swedes in distant northern Sweden. A similar situation exists with residents along the border between Germany and the Netherlands. Using their own local varieties, speakers of German can communicate better with speakers of Dutch living near them than with speakers of southern German dialects. Examples of geographical dialect continua are found throughout Europe. In fact, while the standard varieties of Italian, French, Spanish, Catalan, and Portuguese are not mutually intelligible, the local varieties form a continuum from Portugal through Spain, halfway through Belgium, then through France down to the southern tip of Italy. There are also a Scandinavian dialect continuum, a West Germanic dialect continuum, and South Slavonic and North Slavonic dialect continua.

In the case of Kupwar, if there were no outside reference varieties against which to compare the varieties spoken in the village, we might be inclined to say that the varieties spoken there were dialects of one language. The residents of Kupwar, however, have found it socially valuable to continue speaking "different" languages, despite increasing grammatical similarity. What counts most in deciding on designations for language varieties, and on whether such names represent dialects of a single language or separate languages, are the views of their speakers.

National Varieties of English

In this section we briefly examine some national varieties of English, with emphasis on American English and British English.

American and British National Varieties

The principal varieties of English throughout the world are customarily divided into British and American types. British English is the basis for the varieties spoken in England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Africa. American (or North American) includes chiefly the English of Canada and the United States.

Despite the groupings just suggested, certain characteristics of Canadian English are closer to British English, while certain characteristics of Irish English are closer to North American English. And there are many differences between, say, standard British English and standard Indian English. But we can still make a number of generalizations about British-based varieties and American-based varieties, provided we recognize that neither group is completely homogeneous.

Spelling Of the well-known spelling differences between British and American English, some are systematic, others are limited to a particular word. American red, white, and blue are *colours* in Britain, and many other words ending in *-or* in American English end in *-our* in British English. Among idiosyncratic spellings are British *tyres* and *kerb* versus American *tires* and *curb*. Interestingly, Canadians use some British and some American spellings, a reflection of their close historical association with the two countries. For the most part, these spelling differences don't reflect spoken differences. Below are listed some common American-British spelling correspondences.

American	British	American	British
labor, rumor	labour, rumour	tire	tyre
license, defense	licence, defence	curb	kerb
spelled, burned, spilled	spelt, burnt, spilt	program	programme
analyze, organize	analyse, organise	pajamas	pyjamas
center, theater	centre, theatre	check	cheque
judgment, abridgment	judgement, abridgement	ton	tonne
dialed, canceled	dialled, cancelled	catalog	catalogue
installment, skillful	instalment, skilful	czar	tsar

Pronunciation Differences in vowel and consonant pronunciation, as well as in word stress and intonation, combine to create American and British accents. Speakers of both varieties pronounce the vowel of words in the *cat, fat, mat* class with /æ/. For similar words ending in a fricative such as *fast, path,* and *half,* American English has /æ/, while some British varieties have /ɑː/, the stressed vowel of *father*. Americans pronounce the vowel in the *new, tune,* and *duty* class with /u/, as though they were spelled "noo," "toon," and "dooty." Varieties of British English often pronounce them with /ju/, as though spelled "nyew," "tyune," and "dyuty," a pronunciation also heard among some older Americans.

As to consonants, perhaps the most noticeable difference has to do with intervocalic /t/. When /t/ occurs between a stressed and an unstressed vowel, Americans and Canadians usually pronounce it as a flap [ɾ]. As a result, the word

Try It Yourself Use the IPA symbols given on the inside front and back covers of this text to transcribe the word *laboratory* to represent both British and American pronunciations with four syllables.

sitter is pronounced [sɪɾər], and *latter* and *ladder* are pronounced alike. By contrast, speakers of some British varieties pronounce intervocalic /t/ as [t]. As another example, most American varieties have a retroflex /r/ in word-final position in words such as *car* and *near* and also preceding a consonant as in *cart* and *beard*, whereas some British varieties, including standard British English, do not. With respect to postvocalic /r/, speakers of Irish and Scottish English follow the American pattern, while speakers of dialects in New York City, Boston, and parts of the coastal South follow the British pattern.

Among differences of word stress, British English tends to stress the first syllable of *garage, fillet,* and *ballet,* while American English places stress on the second syllable. The same is true for *patois, massage, debris, beret,* and other borrowings from French. In certain polysyllabic words such as *laboratory, secretary,* and *lavatory* the stress patterns differ, with American English preserving a secondary stress on the next-to-last syllable.

Syntax and Grammar Some noun phrases that denote locations in time or space take an article in American English but not in British English.

American	**British**
in the hospital	in hospital
to the university	to university
the next day	next day

Some collective nouns (those that refer to groups of people or to institutions) are treated as plural in British English but usually as singular in American varieties. Contrast the American singular *has achieved* in "D.C. United has achieved a major milestone towards establishing a permanent, state-of-the-art home" with the plural *are looking* in a British newspaper comment such as "Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere is excited by rumours the club are looking to sign Rooney this summer." American English relies more on form than on sense. Thus, speaking of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim baseball team, a writer or sportscaster might say *Los Angeles has won again* or *The Angels have won again*. In both British and American English, a noun such as *police* takes a plural verb, as in *The police are attempting to assist the neighbors*.

A further illustration of the grammatical differences between the two varieties is the use of the verb *do* with auxiliaries. If asked *Have you finished the assignment?* American English permits *Yes, I have,* while British English allows that and *Yes, I have done*. Asked whether flying time to Los Angeles varies, a British Airways flight attendant might reply, *It can do*.

Vocabulary There are also vocabulary differences between American and British English, such as those below.

American	British	American	British
elevator	lift	second floor	first floor
TV	telly	flashlight	torch
hood (of a car)	bonnet	trunk (of a car)	boot
cookies	biscuits	dessert	pudding
gas/gasoline	petrol	truck	lorry
can	tin	intermission	interval
line	queue	exit	way out
washcloth/facecloth	flannel	traffic circle/rotary	roundabout

Try It Yourself In some cases, a word used in Britain is hardly known in the United States. In other cases, the most common British term happens not to be the most common American term. For each of the following, give the ordinary American English equivalent: *fortnight, holiday, motorway, diversion, roadworks, joining points, tailback, hire car, car park, windscreen, spanner.*

Regional Varieties of American English

Starting in the 1940s, investigation of vocabulary patterns in the eastern United States suggested Northern, Midland, and Southern dialects. Midland was divided into North Midland and South Midland varieties. Boston and metropolitan New York were seen as distinct varieties of the Northern dialect. Midwestern states such as Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, which had formerly been thought of as representing "General American," were seen as situated principally in the North Midland dialect, with a narrow strip of Northern dialect across their northernmost counties and a small strip belonging to the South Midland variety across their southern counties. More recent investigations suggest refinements of that scheme, such as those represented in the geographical patterns of Figure 11.1, and the term "General American" has fallen out of favor because it came to mean very little.

Mapping Dialects

To propose a map such as the one in Figure 11.1, dialectologists investigate vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammar. Typically, a researcher with a questionnaire visits a town and inquires of residents what they call certain things or how they express certain meanings. Based solely on regional vocabulary, Figure 11.1 divides the United States into two main dialects (North and South), each divided into Upper and Lower sections, with the West viewed as an extension of the North dialect. The map in Figure 11.1 relies on fieldwork undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s for the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, or *DARE*.

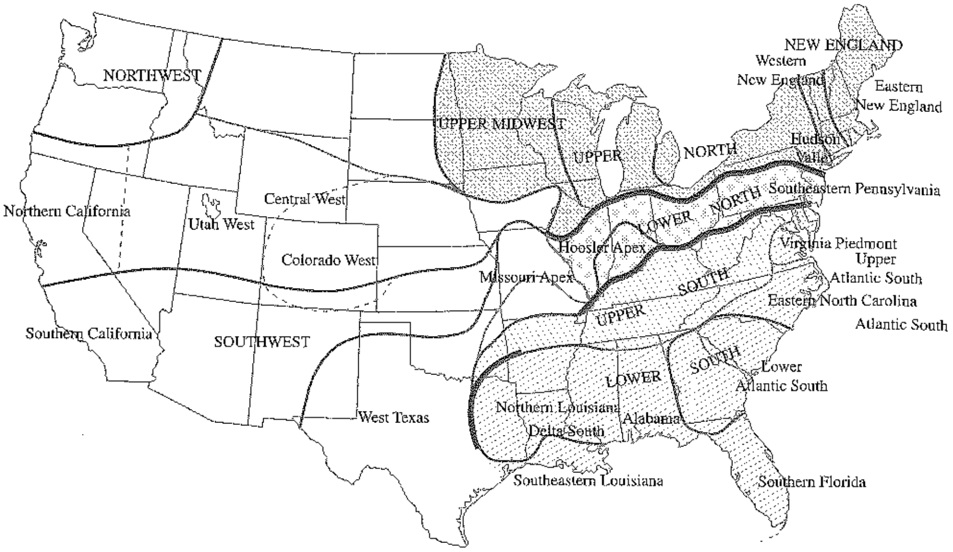
NORTHWEST
Northern California
Southern California
Utah West
Central West
Colorado West
SOUTHWEST
West Texas
UPPER MIDWEST
UPPER
NORTH
LOWER
NORTH
Hoosier Apex
Missouri Apex
UPPER
SOUTH
LOWER
SOUTH
Northern Louisiana
Delta South
Alabama
Southeastern Louisiana
Southern Florida
Lower
Atlantic South
Eastern North Carolina
Atlantic South
Virginia Piedmont
Upper
Atlantic South
Southeastern Pennsylvania
Hudson
Valley
NEW ENGLAND
Western
New England
Eastern
New England

Figure 11.1 Major Dialectic Regions of the United States, Based on Vocabulary
Source: Craig M. Carver, *American Regional Dialects: A Word Geography* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1987), 248.

Prior to *DARE*, several linguistic atlas projects were undertaken, part of a project called the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada. Data collection in several regions was completed and the results published, but parts of the project remain incomplete. Still, the data collected provide a useful view of regional variation. To take an example, when atlas investigators asked respondents for the commonly used term for the large insect with transparent wings often seen hovering over water, local terms came to light. Figure 11.2 shows *darning needle* as the most common term in New England, upstate New York, metropolitan New York (including northern and eastern New Jersey and Long Island), and northern Pennsylvania. Elsewhere, other terms predominated: *mosquito hawk* in coastal North Carolina and Virginia, *snake doctor* in inland Virginia, and *snake feeder* along the northern Ohio River in West Virginia, Ohio, western Pennsylvania, and the upper Ohio Valley toward Pittsburgh.

Figure 11.2 shows that not all the terms for 'dragonfly' were neatly distributed. In some areas only a single form occurred, in others more than one. The larger Os on the map in the six New England states indicate that *darning needle* was the only regional term found there. Figures 11.3 and 11.4 (on page 382) show that *mosquito hawk* was virtually the only regional response given in parts of southeast Texas and portions of central Texas, as well as all of Louisiana and Florida, and much of southern Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia. But *snake doctor* was the favored form in west, north, and northwest Texas, the western half of Tennessee, the northern parts of Alabama and Mississippi, and part of northwestern Georgia. *Snake feeder* occurred occasionally in Oklahoma along the Canadian and Arkansas rivers (which aren't labeled in our figure but can be identified within Oklahoma near the solid triangles of Figure 11.3). Both

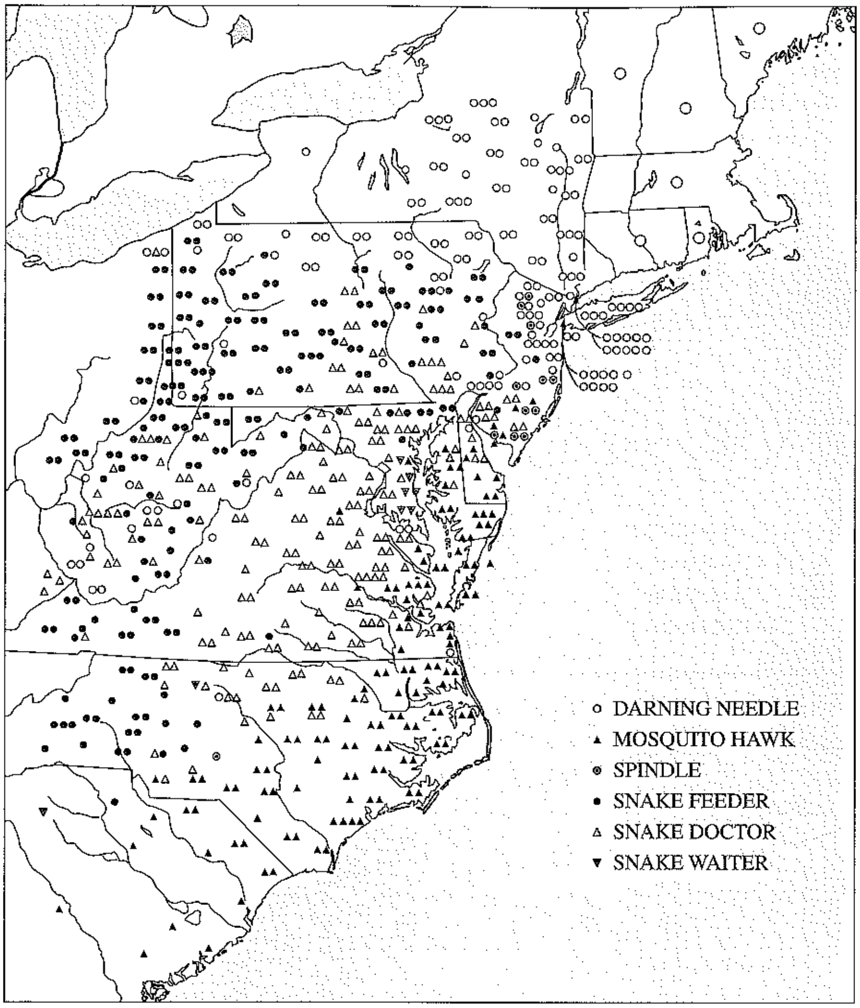

Figure 11.2 Words for 'Dragonfly' in the Eastern States
Source: Hans Kurath, *A Word Geography of the Eastern United States* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1949).

mosquito hawk and *snake doctor* were used in the southern half of Arkansas (in Figures 11.3 and 11.4). *Darning needle,* so popular in New York and New England, occurred too infrequently even to be recorded on these maps of the South. Some respondents were unacquainted with local terms and reported using only *dragonfly.* (If you live in or come from an area represented on the maps but find the terms indicated there unfamiliar, bear in mind that the data were often gathered in rural areas and represent what at the time was called "folk" speech as well as "cultivated" speech. Moreover, most of the interviews took place decades ago, and word usage may have changed in the meanwhile.)

Determining Isoglosses Once a map has been marked with symbols for various features, lines called **isoglosses** can often be drawn at the boundary of different forms. For example, in Figure 11.5 (on page 383) the four

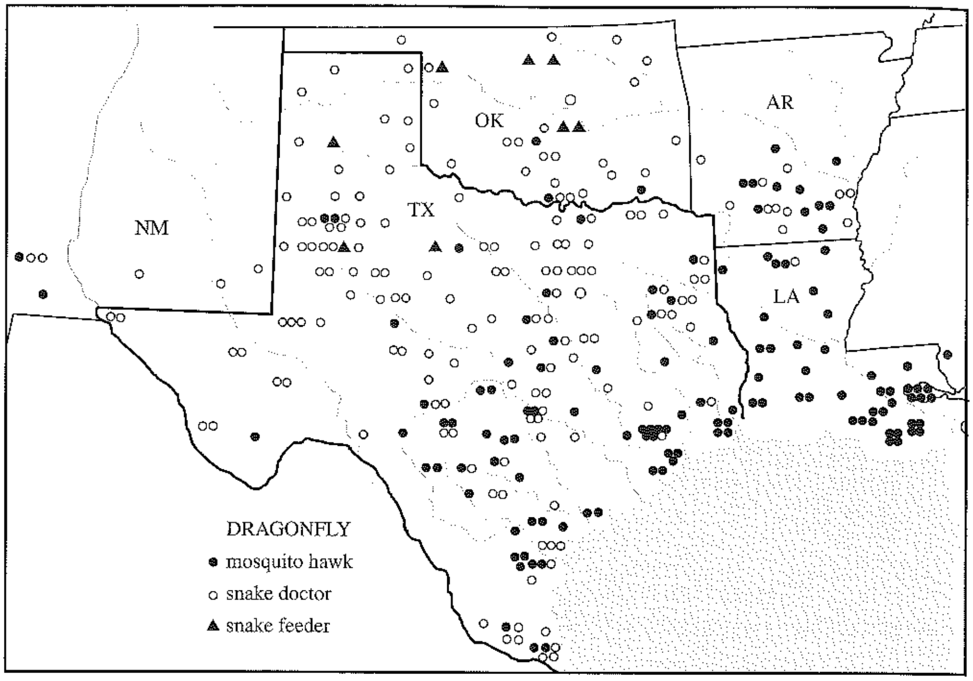
NM
TX
OK
AR
LA
DRAGONFLY
● mosquito hawk
○ snake doctor
▲ snake feeder

Figure 11.3 Words for 'Dragonfly' in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma
Source: E. Bagby Atwood, *The Regional Vocabulary of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962).

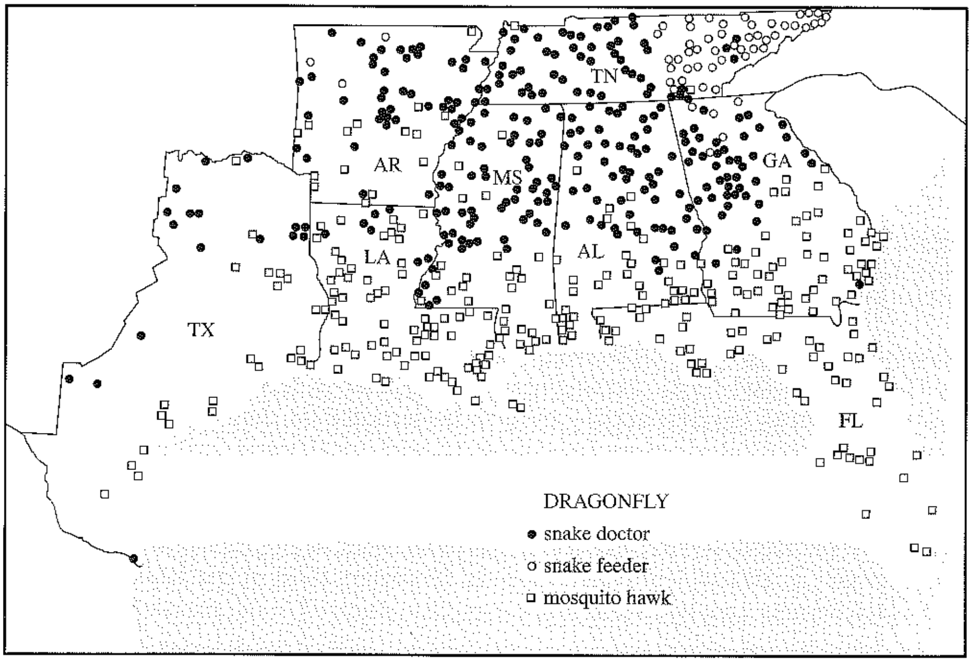
AR
TN
MS
GA
LA
AL
TX
FL
DRAGONFLY
● snake doctor
○ snake feeder
□ mosquito hawk

Figure 11.4 Words for 'Dragonfly' in the Gulf States
Source: Lee Pederson, ed., *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States, Vol. I: Handbook for the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

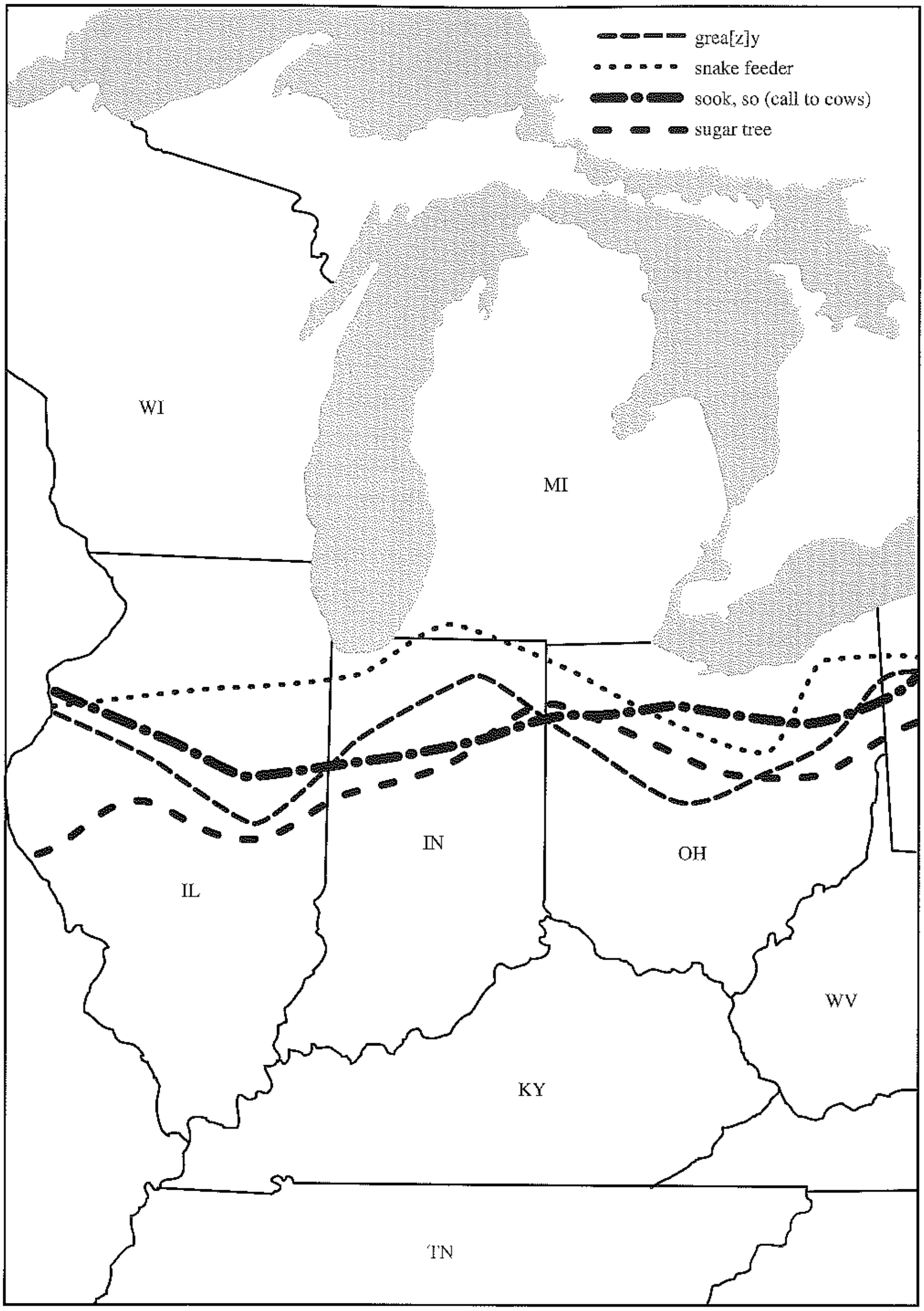
grea[z]y
snake feeder
sook, so (call to cows)
sugar tree
WI
MI
IL
IN
OH
WV
KY
TN

Figure 11.5 Four Isoglosses in the North-Central States (Northern Limits)
Source: Albert H. Marckwardt, *Principal and Subsidiary Dialect Areas in the North-Central States* (Publication of the American Dialect Society, No. 27, 1957).

isoglosses traversing the North-Central states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois represent the northernmost limits of *greasy* pronounced with a /z/ [grizi], of *snake feeder* as the term for 'dragonfly,' of *sugar tree* for 'sugar maple tree' and of a call to cows.

Figure 11.6 represents seven isoglosses in the Upper Midwest. Three of them mark the southernmost boundaries of Northern features: *humor* pronounced [hjumər] (/hj/ is represented in the map's legend as /hy/); *boulevard* referring to the grass strip between the curb and sidewalk; and *come in (fresh)*, meaning 'to give birth' and (in rural areas) usually said of a cow. The four other isoglosses mark the northernmost boundaries of Midland features: the word *on* pronounced with a rounded vowel (/ɔ/ or /ɒ/, where /ɒ/ is like /ɑ/ but pronounced with lip rounding) instead of an unrounded /ɑ/; the term *caterwampus*, meaning 'askew' or 'awry'; the term *roasting ears* for 'corn on the cob'; and *lightbread* for 'white bread.'

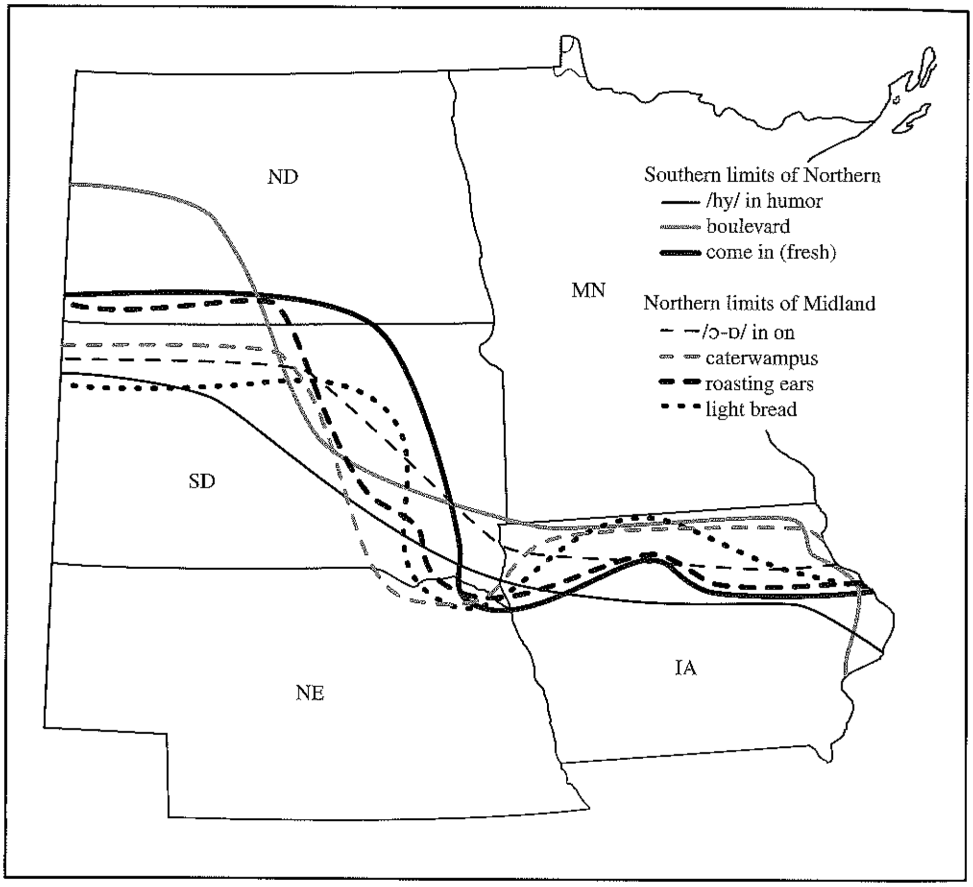
ND
MN
SD
NE
IA
Southern limits of Northern
/hy/ in humor
boulevard
come in (fresh)
Northern limits of Midland
/ɔ-ɒ/ in on
caterwampus
roasting ears
light bread

Figure 11.6 Seven Isoglosses in the Upper Midwest

Source: Albert H. Marckwardt, *Principal and Subsidiary Dialect Areas in the North-Central States* (Publication of the American Dialect Society, No. 27, 1957).

Dialect Boundaries

Imagine the isogloss maps stacked on top of one another on a transparency. The result would be a map similar to the one in Figure 11.6 and would show the extent to which the isoglosses from different maps "bundle" together. The geographical limit for the use of a particular word (say, *caterwampus*) may correspond roughly to the limit for other terms or for particular pronunciations. Where isoglosses bundle, dialectologists draw dialect boundaries. Thus, a *dialect boundary* as drawn on many traditional dialect maps represents the location of a bundle of isoglosses. The map in Figure 11.1 is a distillation of dozens of maps similar to those in Figures 11.5 and 11.6, and it should be clear that a map such as that in Figure 11.1 represents something of an idealization because the reality is that there may not be definitive boundaries between one dialect and another (as Figure 11.1 may suggest) but a gradation from one area to another, marked by isoglosses that do not coincide, as in Figures 11.5 and 11.6.

Speech patterns are influenced partly by the geographical and physical boundaries that facilitate or inhibit communication and partly by the migration routes followed in settling a place. Among the isoglosses of Figure 11.5, the one for /grisi/ versus /grizi/ essentially follows a line (now approximated by Interstate 70) that was the principal road for the westward migration of pioneers during the postcolonial settlement period.

In the western United States, the dialect situation is more complex than in the longer established areas of the East, South, and Midwest. The West drew settlers speaking dialects from various parts of the country, and California and the other Pacific coast states continue to welcome immigrants from other parts of the country—and the world.

Try It Yourself If you live in a state represented in Figures 11.5 or 11.6 (or in a neighboring state), identify the location of your town or city with respect to one of the isoglosses and determine whether your usual pronunciation of the initial sound in *humor* or the intervocalic consonant in *greasy* is accurately reflected in the figure.

Dictionary of American Regional English

The *Dictionary of American Regional English* makes available more information about regional words and expressions throughout the United States than has ever been known before.

Based on answers to more than 1,800 questions asked by field workers who traveled to 1,002 communities across the country, the maps used for exhibiting *DARE*'s findings do not represent geographical space, as most maps do, but population density. Thus the largest states on a *DARE* map are those with the largest populations. As a result, *DARE* maps depict states in somewhat unfamiliar shapes. (To view a *DARE* map with labeled state names, follow the lead given in the "Other Resources" section at the end of this chapter.)

At the DARE website <dare.wisc.edu> you can view 100 entries (at "Sample" pull-down menu). For example, *French harp* for 'harmonica' is used chiefly in Texas, some neighboring states, and the western midland states; *bear claw* 'a pastry shaped like a bear claw' is used chiefly in the Pacific coast states; *jersey mosquito* 'large mosquito' is used chiefly in the Northeast.

AT THE BAR

The Green Trash Kan on the Devil Strip

> *Do you ever want to see your precious little girl again? Put $10,000 cash in a diaper bag. Put it in the green trash kan on the devil strip at corner of 18th and Carlson. Don't bring anybody along. No kops!! Come alone! I'll be watching you all the time. Anyone with you, deal is off and dautter is dead!!!*

Forensic linguist Roger Shuy was asked to help create a criminal profile of the writer of the ransom note above, which was left at the home of the parents of a girl who had been abducted. Shuy noted that the author of the ransom note could correctly spell words like *precious* and *diaper* but misspelled familiar words like *can* ("kan"), *cops* ("kops"), and *daughter* ("dautter"). Given the pattern of spelling, coupled with standard punctuation, Shuy hypothesized that the writer of the note was likely an educated person attempting to disguise his (or her) education with the misspellings. In addition, he observed that the term *devil strip* had a very limited geographical distribution in the United States in reference to the strip of grass between the sidewalk and the curb, characterizing speakers in and around Akron, Ohio, according to the *Dictionary of American Regional English*. Shuy asked the police investigators whether their list of suspects included an educated man from Akron. It did. Confronted with this forensic linguistic analysis and other evidence, the man from Akron confessed to the abduction!

As Shuy wrote about this and other cases of linguistic profiling, "It is said that some 99% of American English is used in pretty much the same way. If this is true, only about 1% contains the variability that can be used to identify us as different from each other. Forensic linguists use this 1% to assist law enforcement agencies and private corporations in uncovering people who threaten or carry out illegal acts . . . such work is used only for narrowing down suspect lists for the crucial follow-up work carried out by investigators. *DARE* is a tremendous aid to such work . . . ." ■

As the result of various regional dialect projects, especially *DARE*, a complex picture of American English dialects emerges, as Figure 11.1 shows. In the figure, the darker the shading of a dialect area, the greater the number of vocabulary items that distinguish it from other dialect areas. As you can see, the farther west you go, the fewer the special vocabulary characteristics that appear. To judge by vocabulary, boundaries for American dialects are better established in the eastern states than in the more recently settled western ones.

Based on the vocabulary findings of *DARE*, the United States appears to have basically North and South dialects, each divided into upper and lower regions as shown in Figure 11.1. The Upper North contains the dialects of New England, the Upper Midwest, and the Northwest, with some lesser-marked dialect boundaries in the Central West and Northern California. The Southwest is also a dialect area, with Southern California having some distinct characteristics. The South is divided into Upper South and Lower South, and each of those has subsidiaries.

The Atlas of North American English

A major investigation of pronunciation in U.S. and Canadian urban areas took place in the 1990s. The *Atlas of North American English*, or *ANAE*, is independent of the *Linguistic Atlas of North America and Canada* and of *DARE* in its aims, methods, and findings. *ANAE* was created with data from a telephone survey of North American urban centers in a project called Telsur.

On the basis of telephone discussions with respondents who identified themselves as born or raised in the speech community in which they were reached, Telsur combined impressionistic judgments of pronunciation with rigorous acoustic analysis of recorded conversations. Telsur and *ANAE* focused on vowel sounds, in particular several vowel pronunciations known to be in flux.

Vowel Mergers

Among notable changes taking place in North American pronunciation are mergers of vowels that were formerly separate: /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ in words like *cot* and *caught* and /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ in words like *pin* and *pen*. To distinguish these last two items, many speakers who pronounce them the same call the first a *straight pin* or *safety pin* and the second an *ink pen*.

Cot-Caught Merger The traditional pronunciations of *cot* and *caught* have been distinct, the first with the nucleus /ɑ/ and the second with /ɔ/. Because /ɑ/ is a low back vowel and /ɔ/ is a lower-mid back vowel, the merger is often called the **low back merger**. It involves word pairs like *Don* and *Dawn*, *wok* and *walk*, and *hock* and *hawk*. For the many speakers of American English who don't merge these vowels, /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ are distinct phonemes, and those word pairs are *minimal pairs* (which we discussed in Chapter 4). With the merger of these two phonemes, the number of vowels in the English inventory is reduced, and a good many homophonous pairs may result.

Pin-Pen Merger Another merger involves the vowels in word pairs like *pin-pen*, *him-hem*, *lint-lent*, and *cinder-sender*. For many speakers, these vowels are kept distinct as [ɪ] and [ɛ], but for others they are homophonous and cannot be distinguished in speech. This merger is sometimes called the IN-EN merger.

Conditioned and Unconditioned Mergers The merger of /ɑ/ and /ɔ/ isn't limited to specific phonological environments within a word but occurs everywhere. Such an *unconditioned* merger affects all words that contain the sounds, with the result that a vowel contrast is lost. By contrast, the vowels /ɪ/ and /ɛ/ merge only when they precede the nasals /n/ or /m/ but not elsewhere. Speakers who pronounce *pin* and *pen* identically don't merge *pit* and *pet*, *lit* and *let*, *slipped* and *slept*, and so on, because these words don't match the phonological environment required for the merger.

We can summarize the discussion of mergers in the chart below.

Name	**Vowels**	**Condition**	**Examples**
cot~caught merger	/ɑ/~/ɔ/	unconditioned	*cot~caught, hock~hawk*
pin~pen merger	/ɪ/~/ɛ/	preceding /n/ or /m/	*pin~pen, cinder~sender*

Vowel Shifts

Other major changes in North American English involve shifting the pronunciation of vowels from one location in the mouth to another. The effect is that a word pronounced with a given vowel is heard by outsiders as having a different vowel. As an example, the word spelled *cod* may be heard as *cad.* You know that vowels can be represented in a chart such as the one on the inside front cover and in Figure 3.4. In addition to the simple vowels in the figure, English has three diphthongs: /aɪ/ (*my, line*), /ɔɪ/ (*toy, coin*), and /aʊ/ (*cow, town*). (In this book, we generally represent other English vowels as simple vowels, or *monophthongs*. Thus, we represent the underlying vowel of *made* as /e/, of *flowed* as /o/, and of *food* as /u/. These vowels are often pronounced as diphthongs and represented as diphthongs in some books, which give their underlying forms as, for example, /ey/, /ow/, and /uw/.)

Northern Cities Shift Across the major cities of the North—including Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo in New York, Cleveland and Akron in Ohio, Detroit in Michigan, Chicago and Rockford in Illinois, and Milwaukee and Madison in Wisconsin—a set of vowel shifts is occurring that is remarkable in its scope. They constitute the Northern Cities Shift and can be represented as in Figure 11.7. This shift includes Canadian as well as U.S. cities. The shift's characteristics include those given below. (The numbers in parentheses refer to the numbered shifts in Figure 11.7; for simplicity, we don't include shift number 6 in our list.)

1. /æ/ is raised and fronted to [iᵊ]—*man* and *bad* can even sound like the underscored vowel in *idea*: [miᵊn], [biᵊd] (1 in figure)
2. /ɑ/ is fronted to [æ]—*cod* sounds like *cad* (2 in figure)

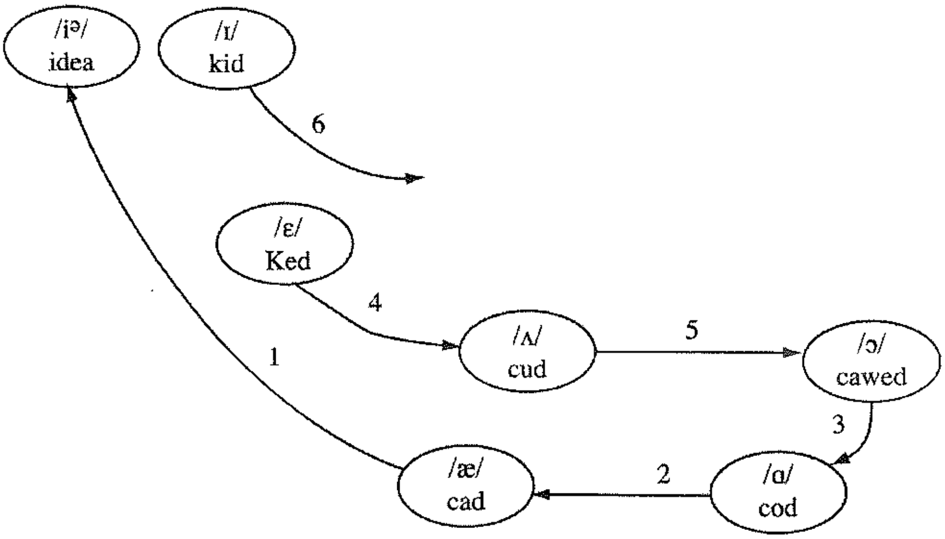

Figure 11.7 Northern Cities Shift

Source: From William Labov, "The Organization of Dialect Diversity in America." Available at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/ICSLP4.hmtl.

3. /ɔ/ is lowered and fronted to [ɑ]—*cawed* sounds like *cod* (3 in figure)
4. /ɛ/ is lowered and centered to [ʌ]—*Ked* sounds like *cud* (4 in figure)
5. /ʌ/ is backed to [ɔ]—*cud* sounds like *cawed* (5 in figure)

Southern Shift In the South, a different set of vowel shifts is occurring, as represented in Figure 11.8. This Southern Shift's qualities include the five listed below in which italicized words serve as examples. (The parentheses refer to the numbered shifts in Figure 11.8; for simplicity, we don't include shifts 7 or 8 in our list.)

1. /aɪ/ is monophthongized to [a]—*hide* sounds like [had] or [haːd] (1 in figure)
2. /e/ is lowered, centralized, and diphthongized to [aɪ]—*slade* sounds like *slide* (2 in figure)
3. /i/ is lowered, centralized to [ɪ]—*keyed* [ki-əd] sounds like *kid* [kɪ-əd] (3 in figure)
4. /o/ is fronted—*code* and *boat* sound like [kɛᵒd] and [bɛᵒt] (6 in figure)
5. /ɪ/, /ɛ/, /æ/ are raised, fronted, and diphthongized—*kid* sounds like *keyed* ([ki-əd]), *Ked* like *kid* ([kɪ-əd]), *pat* like *pet* ([pɛ-ət]) (4 in figure)
6. /u/ is fronted—*cooed* has the vowel of "kewl" ([kɪu-əl] (5 in figure)

It is worth noting the widespread diphthongization of vowels in the South, making some of the illustrative words above possibly misleading for speakers of other varieties. It may be helpful to bear in mind how a Southern linguist characterized this process when he reported the voice of a local restaurant server asking whether he wants "swuheet tuhee with a leeuhd"—sweet tea with a lid.

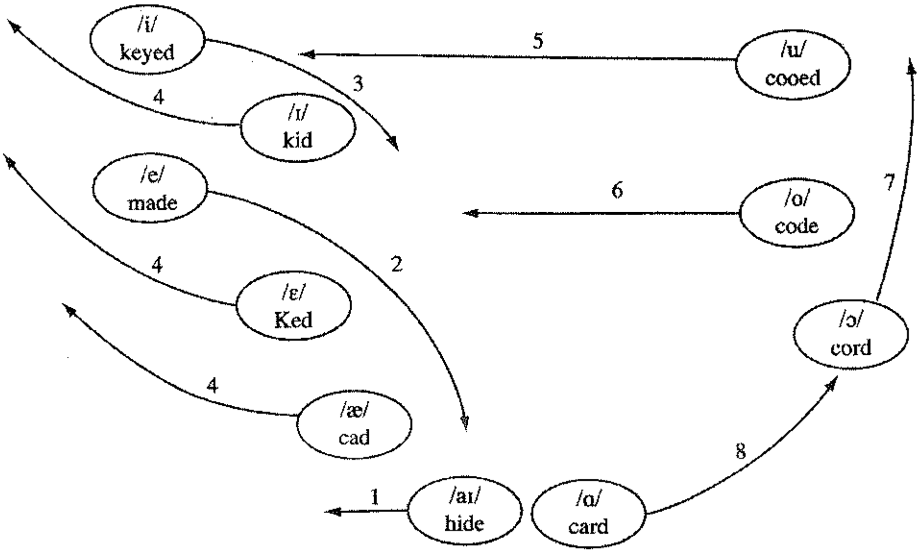

Figure 11.8 Southern Shift

Source: From William Labov, "The Organization of Dialect Diversity in America." Available at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/ICSLP4.hmtl.

ANAE Findings

Relying on 439 telephone respondents for whom acoustic analyses have been completed, the *Atlas of North American English* provides a map of the United States and Canada in which new dialect boundaries are proposed. You can get a clear picture of these results at the *ANAE* website. Meanwhile, the map in Figure 11.9 suggests the major North American dialect regions, as based on Telsur pronunciation data. The map indicates four main U.S. pronunciation regions: West, North, Midland, and South. Within the North are Inland North and Western New England dialects and within the South are Texas South and Inland South dialects. You'll also note designations for dialects named Mid-Atlantic, New York City (NYC), Eastern New England (ENE), Western Pennsylvania (W.Pa), and others. There are also two pronunciation regions in Canada—one labeled simply Canada and the other Atlantic Provinces.

On the following page is a table adapted from the *ANAE* website that indicates some salient characteristics of the pronunciation of some dialects. In keeping with the representation of Figure 11.9, we indicate characteristics of each region as a whole and sometimes of dialects within the region.

Additional data on the map are not sufficiently accessible in this black-and-white image to discuss further. Among the information you can glean from the color maps at the website are the fact that the St. Louis Corridor (which isn't marked on Figure 11.9) falls within the Midland region but nevertheless

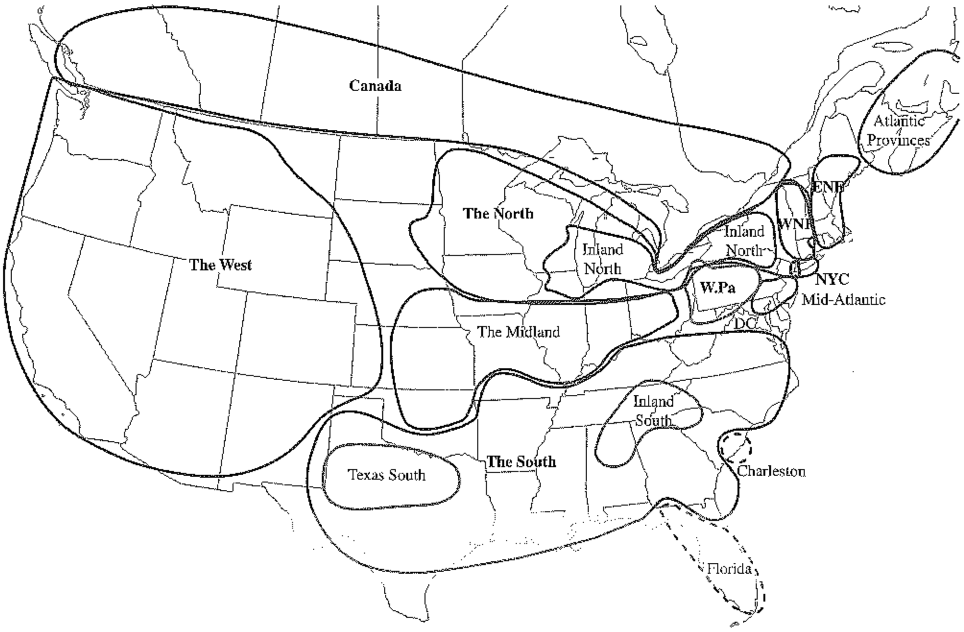

Figure 11.9 Urban Dialect Areas of the United States, Based on Pronunciation

Source: From William Labov, "The Organization of Dialect Diversity in America." Available at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/ICSLP4.hmtl.

NORTH	Less fronting of /o/ than in other areas
Inland North	Northern Cities Shift
Western New England	Less advanced Northern Cities Shift
SOUTH	Monophthongization of /aɪ/
Inland South	Southern Shift
Texas South	Southern Shift
MIDLAND	Transitional low back merger Fronting of /o/
WEST	Low back (*cot-caught*) merger Stronger fronting of /u/ than of /o/
CANADA	Low back (*cot-caught*) merger
Atlantic Provinces	No low back merger

displays the Northern Cities Shift. You can also note that nearly all of Florida lies outside the South region. This is because Florida does not participate in the Southern Shift, although it does display the fronting of /u/ (step 5 in Figure 11.8) but not of /o/ (step 6 in Figure 11.8). In Canada, the Atlantic Provinces are conservative in pronunciation and don't (at least yet) participate in the changes characteristic of other parts of Canada such as the low back (*cot-caught*) merger.

Ethnic Varieties of American English

Just as oceans and mountains separate people and may eventually lead to distinct speech patterns, so social boundaries also promote distinct speechways. Perhaps the most notable social varieties of American English are *ethnic varieties*. Ethnicity is sometimes racial and sometimes not. For example, differences in the speech of Jewish and Italian New Yorkers have been noted, and the variety of English influenced by Yiddish speakers who settled in America is sometimes called "Yinglish." But the social separation that leads to ethnic varieties of language is particularly noticeable in the characteristic speech patterns of many urban African Americans. In Philadelphia and other cities, the speech of African American residents is becoming increasingly distinct from the speech of white residents.

Such a distinction between social groups is also noticeable in the characteristic speech patterns of other ethnic groups. Spanish-speaking immigrants in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Miami, and elsewhere have learned English as a second language, and their English is marked by a foreign accent. The children and grandchildren of these immigrants acquire English as a native language (and many are bilingual), but the native variety of English that many Hispanic

Americans speak identifies them as being of Hispanic ancestry or growing up in neighborhoods with children of Hispanic ancestry.

The discussion that follows identifies certain characteristics of African American English and Chicano English. Both are bona fide varieties of American English like any other regional or social variety. Both have complete grammatical systems overlapping to a great degree with other varieties of English. And, like standard American English, both have a spectrum of registers. While both varieties share many characteristics with other varieties of American English, they also exhibit certain distinctive features and a set of shared features that taken together distinguish each of them from all others.

Like all other social varieties, these two have rules that determine what is well formed and what is ill formed. Rules govern the structures and use of all dialects, and no dialect exists without phonological, morphological, and syntactic rules. All the language universals described in Chapter 7 apply to African American English and Chicano English as well.

African American English

Not all African Americans are fluent speakers of African American English, and not all speakers of African American English are African Americans. After all, people grow up speaking the language variety around them. In an ethnically diverse metropolitan area like Los Angeles, you can meet teenaged and young adult speakers of African American English whose foreign-born parents speak Chinese or Vietnamese. The variety of English spoken by these Asian Americans reflects the characteristic speechways of their friends and of the neighborhoods in which they acquired English. To underscore an obvious but often overlooked fact, the acquisition of a particular language or dialect is as independent of skin color as it is of height or weight.

The history of African American English is not completely understood, and there are competing theories about its origins and subsequent development. But there is no disagreement concerning its structure and functioning. Like all varieties, it has characteristic phonological, morphological, and syntactic features, as well as some vocabulary of its own. Like all other social groups, speakers of African American English also share characteristic ways of interacting. In this section we examine some phonological and syntactic features of African American English, but not lexical or interactional characteristics. It is important to recognize that while it is customary to talk about regional and ethnic varieties of a language in terms of particular features, no variety is simply a set of features. Every social variety represents a rich syntax, phonology, lexicon, and pragmatics, most of which is shared with other varieties of the same language.

Phonological Features We examine four characteristic pronunciation features of African American English (AAE).

1. **Consonant cluster simplification** Consonant clusters are frequently simplified. Typical examples occur in the words *desk*, pronounced as "des" [dɛs], *passed* pronounced as "pass" [pæs], and *wild* pronounced as "wile" [waɪl]. Consonant cluster simplification also occurs in all other varieties of American

English. Among speakers of standard English, the consonant clusters in *ask* and in *wild* are also commonly simplified, as in "asthem" [æsðəm] for *ask them* and "tole" [tol] for *told*. But consonant cluster simplification occurs more frequently and to a greater extent in African American English than in other varieties.

2. **Deletion of final stop consonants** Final stop consonants, such as /d/, may be deleted in words like *side* and *borrowed*. Speakers of AAE frequently delete some word-final stops, pronouncing *side* like *sigh* and *borrowed* like *borrow*. This deletion rule is systematically influenced by the phonological and grammatical environment:
   a. Whether a word-final stop consonant represents a separate morpheme (as in the past tense marking of *followed* and *tried*) or doesn't represent a separate morpheme but is part of the word stem (as in *side* and *rapid*). Final [d] is preserved much more frequently when it is a separate morpheme.
   b. Whether word-final stops occur in a strongly stressed syllable (*tried*) or a weakly stressed syllable (*rapid*)—note that the second syllable of *rapid* is not as strongly stressed as the first syllable. Strongly stressed syllables tend to preserve final stops more than weakly stressed syllables do.
   c. Whether a vowel follows the stop (as in *side angle* and *tried it*) or a consonant follows it (as in *tried hard* and *side street*). A following vowel helps preserve the stop; in fact, it appears to be the most significant factor in determining whether a final stop is deleted.
3. **Interdental-labiodental substitution** Other phonological features are less widespread. For some speakers of AAE, the *th* of words like *both*, *with*, and *Bethlehem* may be realized not as the voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ but the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/, yielding [bof] or [wɪf], for example. Likewise the voiced interdental fricative /ð/ in words like *smooth* or *bathe* and *brother* or *mother* may be realized with the voiced labiodental fricative /v/, yielding [smuv], [bev], [brʌvə], and [mʌvə]. Note too in *brother* and *mother* the absence of word-final /r/, a feature that AAE shares with the English of New York City, eastern New England, and parts of the coastal South.
4. ***Aunt* and *ask*** Two other pronunciations are often noted. The first is that the initial vowel of *aunt* and *auntie* is pronounced as /ɑ/, a pronunciation also characteristic of eastern New England, but not of most other U.S. dialects, which have /æ/. The second is the pronunciation of *ask* as [æks] instead of [æsk]. By no means is this pronunciation unique to AAE, but it is a feature that has been stereotyped and stigmatized.

In investigations of ongoing changes in the pronunciation of American English, researchers have been surprised to discover that African Americans living in those cities affected by the Northern Cities Shift don't seem to participate in it. This is one indication that leads some observers to conclude that AAE and standard American English are diverging rather than becoming more alike.

Grammatical Features We examine four grammatical features of African American English.

1. **Copula deletion** Compare the uses of the copula—the verb BE—in African American English and standard American English below. Sentences 1 and 2 illustrate that AAE permits deletion of *be* in the present tense precisely where standard English permits a contracted form of the copula.

AFRICAN AMERICAN	STANDARD AMERICAN
1. That my bike.	That's my bike.
2. The coffee cold.	The coffee's cold.
3. The coffee be cold there.	The coffee's (always) cold there.

2. **Habitual *be*** As example 3 above indicates, speakers of AAE express recurring or habitual action by using the form *be*. It may seem to speakers of other varieties that AAE *be* is equivalent to standard American English *is*. In fact, though, in sentences such as 3 *be* is equivalent to a verb expressing a habitual or continuous state of affairs. As African American linguist Geneva Smitherman wrote about sentences such as 2 and 3, "If you the cook and *the coffee cold,* you might only just get talked about that day, but if *The coffee bees cold,* pretty soon you ain't gon have no job!" Thus, the verb *be* (or its inflected variant *bees*) is used to indicate continuous, repeated, or habitual action. The following examples further illustrate this function.

AFRICAN AMERICAN	STANDARD AMERICAN
Do they be playing all day?	Do they play all day?
Yeah, the boys do be messin' around a lot.	Yeah, the boys do mess around a lot.
I see her when I bees on my way to school.	I see her when I'm on my way to school.

3. **Existential *it*** Another feature of African American English is the use of the expression *it is* where standard American English uses *there is,* as when after Hurricane Katrina a resident of New Orleans reported, *It's nothing left.* Below are two more examples of existential *it*:

AFRICAN AMERICAN	STANDARD AMERICAN
Is it a Miss Jones in this office?	Is there a Miss Jones in this office?
She's been a wonderful wife and it's nothin' too good for her.	She's been a wonderful wife and there's nothing too good for her.

4. **Negative concord** The African American English sentences below contain more than one word marked for negation—a syntactic phenomenon technically called **negative concord** but better known as double negation or multiple negation. In AAE, multiple-negative constructions are well formed, as they are in some other varieties of American English and as they were more generally in earlier periods of English.

AFRICAN AMERICAN	STANDARD AMERICAN
Don't nobody never help me do my work.	Nobody ever helps me do my work.
He *don't never* go *nowhere.*	He *never* goes anywhere.

The fact that these constructions are not regarded as standard English today has no bearing on their grammaticality or appropriateness in other varieties.

Chicano English

Another important set of ethnic dialects of American English are those called Latino English or Hispanic English. The best known variety is Chicano English, spoken by many people of Mexican descent in major U.S. urban centers and in rural areas of the Southwest.

As with African American English and all other varieties of English, many features of Chicano English are shared with other varieties, including other varieties of Hispanic English, such as those spoken in the Cuban community of Miami and the Puerto Rican community of New York City. Chicano English comprises many registers for use in different situations. Some characteristic features doubtless result from the persistence of Spanish as one of the language varieties of the Hispanic-American community, but Chicano English has become a distinct variety of American English and cannot be regarded as English spoken with a foreign accent. It is acquired as a first language by many children and is the native language of hundreds of thousands of adults. It is thus a stable variety of American English, with characteristic patterns of grammar and pronunciation.

Try It Yourself Consider these pronunciations of Hispanic names: "deh-lah-CROOS" for *de la Cruz*; "FWEHN-tehs" for *Fuentes*; "GAHR-sah" for *Garza*, and "ehr-NAHN-dehs" for *Hernandez*. Say these names aloud as you think they would be said without an ethnic pronunciation. Compare those pronunciations with the ones in quotation marks, and identify two features in the Hispanic pronunciations that are characteristic of Chicano English. Identify two other features we did not discuss but that you think may reflect characteristics of Hispanic English.

Phonological Features Phonological features of Chicano English include consonant cluster simplification, as in [ɪs] for *it's*, "kine" for *kind*, "ole" for *old*, "bes" for *best*, and "un-erstan" [ʌnərstæn] for *understand*. Much of this can be represented in the phrase, *It's kind of hard*, which is pronounced [ɪs kɑnə hɑr]. Another notable characteristic is the devoicing of /z/, especially in word-final position. Because of the widespread occurrence of /z/ in the inflectional morphology of English (in plural nouns, possessive nouns, and third-person-singular present-tense verbs such as *goes*), this characteristic is stereotyped. Chicano English pronunciation is also characterized by the substitution of stops for the standard fricatives represented in spelling by *th*: [t] for [θ] and [d] for [ð], as in "tick" for *thick* and "den" for *then*. Also characteristic is pronunciation of verbal *-ing* as "een" [in] rather than /ɪn/ ([ən]) or /ɪŋ/, as in *waiting* or *building*. Other *-ng* words such as *sing* and *long* end with a combined velar nasal /ŋ/ and velar stop /g/, as in [sɪŋg], not [sɪŋ], and *long* [lɔŋg], not [lɔŋ]. A well-known and stereotyped feature is substitution of "ch" [ʧ] for "sh" [ʃ], as in pronouncing *she* as [ʧi] instead of [ʃi], *shoes* as [ʧuz] (homophonous with *choose*) instead of [ʃuz], and *especially* as [ɛspɛʧəli]. There is also substitution of "sh" for "ch," as in "preash" [priʃ] for *preach* and "shek" [ʃɛk] for *check* [ʧɛk], though this feature seems not to be stereotyped. Chicano English also exhibits certain intonation patterns that may strike speakers of other dialects of American English as uncertain or hesitant.

As with speakers of AAE, speakers of Hispanic varieties of English who live in cities affected by the Northern Cities Shift don't appear to be participating in these shifts, at least to the same extent as other groups.

Grammatical Features Chicano English also has characteristic syntactic patterns. It often omits the past-tense marker on verbs that end with the alveolars /t/, /d/, or /n/, yielding "wan" for *wanted* and "wait" for *waited*. At least in Los Angeles, *either . . . or either* is sometimes heard instead of *either . . . or*, as in *Either I will go buy one, or either Terry will*. Another feature is the use of dialect-specific prepositions such as *out from* for *away from*, as in *They party to get out from their problems*. As with many other varieties, Chicano English permits multiple negation, as in *You don't owe me nothing* and *Us little people don't get nothin'*.

Ethnic Varieties and Social Identification

It's important to reemphasize that some customary features of Chicano English and African American English are characteristic of other varieties of American English. In some cases, as with consonant cluster simplification, these features are widespread in mainstream varieties, including standard English. In other cases, as with negative concord, they are not characteristic of standard American English but are shared with other nonstandard varieties. What makes any variety distinct is *not* a single feature but a cluster of features, some of which may also occur in other varieties to a greater or lesser degree.

Ethnic dialects are an important ingredient in social identity, and features that are recognized as characteristic of specific social groups can be used to promote or reinforce affiliation with that identity. When speaking, an African American man or woman who wants to stress his or her social identity as an African American may choose to emphasize or exaggerate features of African American English. The same is true for speakers of Hispanic English varieties who wish to emphasize their Hispanic identity. News correspondents on English-language radio and television broadcasts generally speak without marked social group accents. To emphasize their ethnic identity, however, some correspondents use a marked ethnic pronunciation of their own names at the conclusion of a report. A broadcast journalist named Maria Hinojosa identifies herself as mah-REE-ah ee-noh-HOH-sah, with a trill /r̃/ in REE. Another, Geraldo Rivera, pronounces his first name heh-RAHL-doh. Such ethnically marked pronunciations highlight pride in one's ethnic identity.

Socioeconomic Status Varieties: English, French, and Spanish

Less striking than regional and ethnic varieties, but equally significant, are the remarkable patterns of speech that characterize different socioeconomic status groups. Here we describe some speech patterns of the English spoken in New York City and in Norwich, England, as well as of the French of Montreal and the Spanish of Argentina.

New York City

New Yorkers sometimes pronounce /r/ and sometimes drop it in words like *car* and *beer*, *cart* and *fourth* (where /r/ follows a vowel in the same syllable and appears either word finally or preceding another consonant). The presence or absence of this /r/ does not change a word's referential meaning. A "cah pahked" in a red zone is ticketed as surely as a similarly *parked car*. And whether you live in New York or "New Yoahk," you have the same mayor (or "maya").

Still, the occurrence of /r/ in these words is anything but random and anything but meaningless. Linguist William Labov hypothesized that /r/ pronunciations in New York correlated with social-class affiliation and that any two socially ranked groups of New Yorkers would differ in their pronunciation of /r/. On the basis of preliminary observations, he predicted that members of higher socioeconomic status groups would pronounce /r/ more frequently than would speakers in lower socioeconomic class groups.

To test his hypothesis, Labov investigated the speech of employees in three Manhattan department stores of different social rank: Saks Fifth Avenue, an expensive, upper-middle-class store; Macy's, a medium-priced, middle-class store; and S. Klein, a discount store patronized principally by working-class New Yorkers. He asked supervisors, sales clerks, and stock boys the whereabouts of merchandise he knew to be displayed on the fourth floor of their store. In answer to a question such as "Where can I find the lamps?" he elicited a response of *fourth floor*. Then, pretending not to have caught the answer, he said, "Excuse me?" and elicited a repeated—and more careful—utterance of *fourth floor*. Each employee thus had an opportunity to pronounce postvocalic /r/ four times (twice each in *fourth* and *floor*) in a natural and realistic setting in which language itself was *not* the focus of attention.

Employees at Saks, the highest-ranked store, pronounced /r/ more often than those at S. Klein, the lowest-ranked store. At Macy's, the middle-ranked store, employees pronounced an intermediate number. Figure 11.10 (on the next page) presents the results of Labov's survey. The darker sections represent

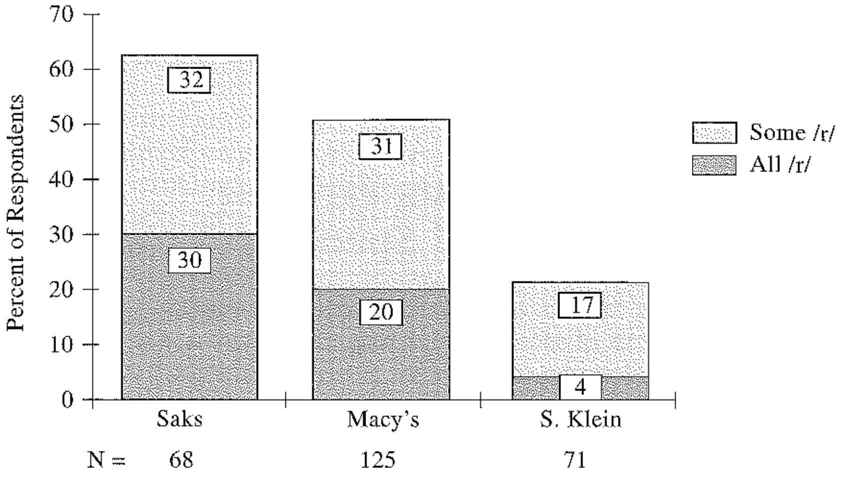

Figure 11.10 Overall Stratification of /r/ by Store in New York City

Source: Data from William Labov, "The Organization of Dialect Diversity in America." Available at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/ICSLP4.hmtl.

the percentage of employees who pronounced /r/ four times; the lighter sections above the darker areas represent the percentage who pronounced it once, twice, or three times (but not four). Employees who did not pronounce /r/ at all are not directly represented in the bar graph. As can be seen, 30 percent of the Saks employees pronounced all /r/, and an additional 32 percent pronounced some /r/. At Macy's, 20 percent pronounced /r/ four times, and an additional 31 percent pronounced some /r/. At S. Klein, only 4 percent of the employees pronounced all /r/, with an additional 17 percent pronouncing one, two, or three /r/s. Labov's hypothesis about the social stratification of postvocalic /r/ seemed strikingly confirmed.

You may be able to suggest other possible explanations for these findings because factors other than socioeconomic status might have influenced the results, as Labov recognized. For example, if he spoke to more men than women in one store or more stock boys than sales clerks, or more African Americans than whites, the difference in pronunciation of /r/ could have been produced by gender, job, or ethnic differences. As it happened, there were more white female sales clerks than any other single group, and looking at their pronunciations separately from those of everyone else would eliminate the possibility of findings skewed by gender, job, or ethnicity. Figure 11.11 reveals an overall pattern of distribution similar to that for the whole sample of respondents. The white female sales clerks at Saks pronounced more /r/ than those at Macy's, who in turn pronounced more than those at S. Klein. Thus Labov could rule out the possibility that his findings reflected ethnic, gender, or in-store job differences.

Following the department store study, Labov undertook a different and complementary kind of investigation. Equipped with detailed sociological descriptions of individual residents of Manhattan's Lower East Side, he spent

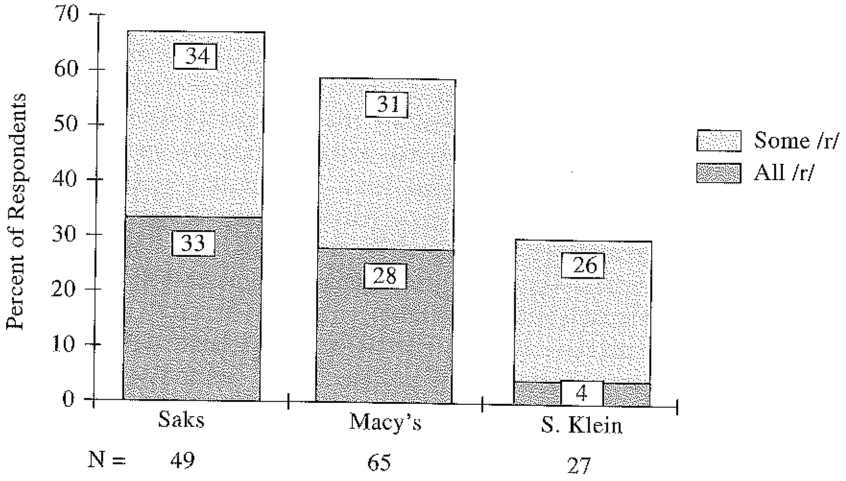

Figure 11.11 Stratification of /r/ by Store in New York City: White Female Sales Clerks

Source: Data from William Labov, "The Organization of Dialect Diversity in America." Available at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/ICSLP4.hmtl.

several hours with each of about a hundred respondents there and recorded the conversations. His interviewing techniques prompted the respondents to use speech samples characteristic of different speech situations, or registers, as we discussed in Chapter 10. Here are six variables he examined:

- postvocalic /r/ (as in the department store survey)
- *th* in words such as *thirty, through,* and *with* (New Yorkers say *thirty* sometimes with /θ/ and sometimes with /t/)
- *th* in words such as *this, them,* and *breathe* (the infamous "dis, dat, dem, and dose" words, with variants /ð/ and /d/)
- alternate pronunciation of *-ing* words like *running* and *talking,* with /ɪŋ/ and /ɪn/ variants (though often referred to as "dropping the g," you know from Chapter 3 that the alternation is between the velar nasal /ŋ/ and the alveolar nasal /n/; only the spelling has a "g" to drop)
- pronunciation of the vowel in the word class *soft, caught, coffee*
- pronunciation of the vowel in the word class *bad, care, sag*

In the interviews, Labov spoke with women and men, parents and children, African Americans and whites, Jews and Italians—a representative sample of Lower East Side residents. On the basis of extensive information about their background, he assigned each respondent to a socioeconomic status group based on a combination of three factors:

- the *education* of the respondent
- the *income* of the respondent's household
- the *occupation* of the principal breadwinner in the household

Using these criteria, he placed individuals into one of four socioeconomic status categories, which he called lower class, working class, lower middle class, and upper middle class. As expected, and as Figure 11.12 shows, upper-middle-class (UMC) respondents exhibited more /ɪŋ/ than lower-middle-class (LMC) respondents, who in turn exhibited more than working-class (WC) respondents, who used more than lower-class (LC) respondents. Each group also pronounced more /ɪŋ/ as attention paid to speech was increased in various styles. Through several graded speech registers—casual style, interview style, and reading style—respondents in all socioeconomic groups increased the percentage of /ɪŋ/ pronounced. Interview style is not shown here.

Labov found that all six variables were socially stratified. Each socioeconomic status group had characteristic patterns of pronunciation, and the percentage of pronunciation of the variants was ranked in the same way as the groups themselves. The upper middle class pronounced most /θ/ for *th* (as in *thing*), most /ð/ for *th* (as in *then*), most /ɪŋ/ (as in *running*), and most /r/ (as in *car*). The lower-class respondents pronounced fewest of these variants, while the lower middle class and working class fell in between, with the lower middle class pronouncing more than the working class. Such regular patterns of variation suggest that even subtle differences in social stratification may be reflected in language use.

The vowels were stratified in a similar way. New Yorkers have several pronunciations of the first vowel in *coffee*, ranging from high back tense [u] through mid back [ɔ] down to low back [ɑ]. The vowel of words in the *bad* class also varies—from low front lax [æ] to high front tense [iᵊ] with an **offglide**, as we saw in our discussion of the Northern Cities Shift. In New York City, higher socioeconomic status groups favored lower vowels in both cases.

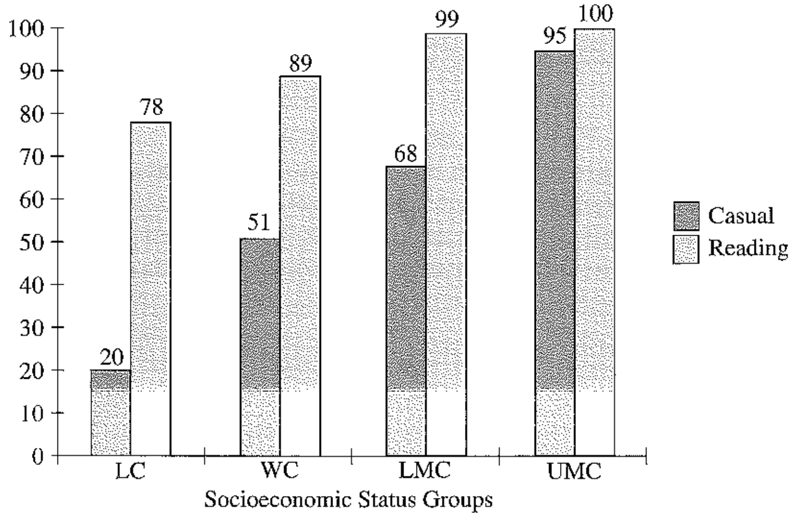

Figure 11.12 Percent of *-ing* pronounced as /ɪŋ/ by Four Socioeconomic Groups in New York City

Source: Data from William Labov, "The Organization of Dialect Diversity in America." Available at http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/ICSLP4.hmtl.

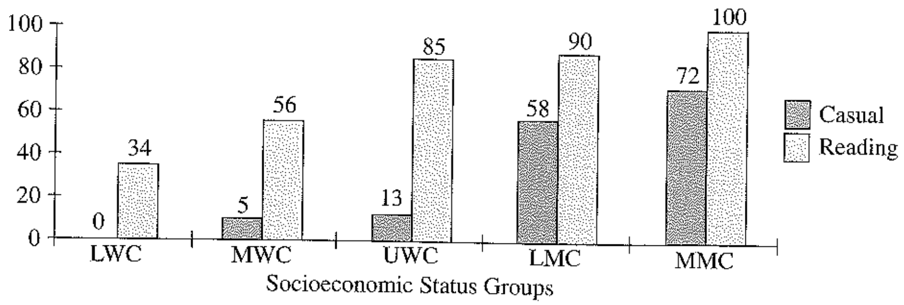

Figure 11.13 Percent of *-ing* Pronounced as /ɪŋ/ by Five Socioeconomic Groups in Norwich

Source: Data from Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, 4th ed. (New York: Penguin, 2000).

Norwich, England

British linguist Peter Trudgill investigated the speech patterns of residents of Norwich, England, and found strikingly similar results in syntactic as well as phonological variation. Respondents were divided into five groups: middle middle class (MMC), lower middle class (LMC), upper working class (UWC), middle working class (MWC), and lower working class (LWC). Figure 11.13 illustrates the distribution of final /ɪŋ/ in the suffix *-ing* among these groups in casual and reading styles.

Comparing data from New York City (Figure 11.12) and Norwich (Figure 11.13) shows that the patterns of distribution for socioeconomic status are similar in the two cities. Each successively higher socioeconomic status group pronounces more /ɪŋ/ than the group immediately below it.

Montreal, Canada

In Montreal, French speakers vary the pronunciation of pronouns and definite articles. Except in the word *le*, /l/ is sometimes pronounced and sometimes omitted in personal pronouns such as *il* 'he' and *elle* 'she' and articles (and pronouns) such as *les* 'the (plural)' and *la* 'the (feminine).' (See Table 2.11.) In the usage of two occupational groups, professionals and laborers, the laborers consistently omitted /l/ more frequently than the professionals did, as shown for four such words in Figure 11.14 (on the next page).

Argentina

Spanish speakers show similar patterns of phonological variation. To cite one example in Argentina, speakers sometimes delete /s/ before pauses (as in English, /s/ is a common word-final sound in Spanish, occurring on plural nouns and on several verb forms). In a study of six Argentinian occupational groups, the percentage of /s/-deletion was greatest in the lowest-status occupations and least in the higher-status occupations, as shown in Figure 11.15 (on the next page).

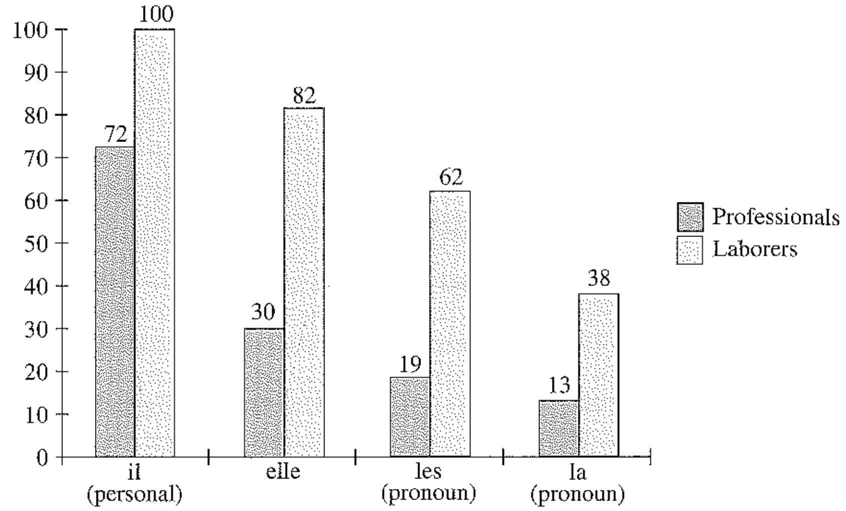

Figure 11.14 Percent of /l/-Deletion in Montreal French for Two Occupational Groups

Source: Data from Gillian Sankoff and Henrietta Cedergren, "Some Results of a Sociolinguistic Study of Montreal French," in R. Darnell, ed. *Linguistic Diversity in Canadian Society* (Edmonton: Linguistic Research, 1971), 61–87.

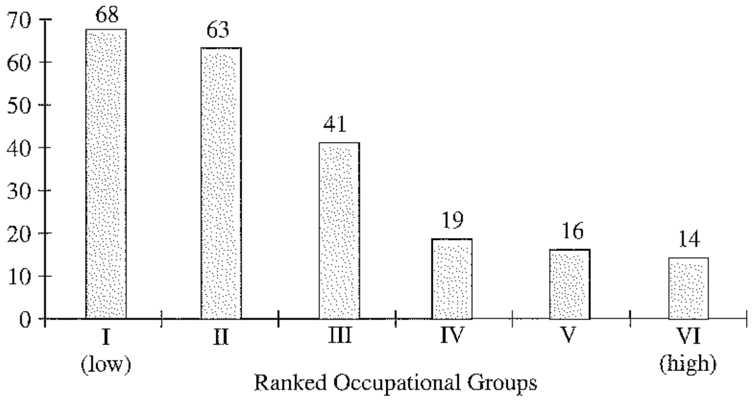

Figure 11.15 Percent of Prepausal /s/-Deletion in Argentine Spanish for Six Occupational Groups

Source: Data from Tracy C. Terrell, "Diachronic Reconstruction by Dialect Comparison of Variable Constraints," in David Sankoff and Henrietta Cedergren, eds., *Variation Omnibus* (Edmonton: Linguistic Research, 1981), 115–134.

General Comments

On the basis of evidence from these and other studies, parallel patterns of distribution may be expected for phonological variables wherever comparable social structures are found. Morphological and syntactic variation also exists, though evidence about variation at these levels of the grammar is scanty. What holds true of variation in English, French, and Spanish presumably holds true of similarly structured communities speaking other languages, although here, too, evidence is scanty.

The Language Varieties of Women and Men

You know that in many speech communities women and men don't speak identically. In the United States, certain words are associated more with women than men and may "sound" feminine as a result. Adjectives such as *lovely*, *darling*, and *cute* may carry feminine associations, as do words that describe precise shades of color, such as *mauve* and *chartreuse*.

In some languages, the differences between women's and men's speech are more dramatic than in English. In informal situations among speakers of Japanese, even the first-person pronoun 'I' differs for women (*atasi*) and men (*boku*). In French, *je* is the first-person pronoun for men and women, but because adjectives are marked for gender agreement, *Je suis heureux* 'I am happy' identifies a male speaker, while *Je suis heureuse* identifies a female speaker.

Reports of striking differences between gender varieties have been reported for Chukchee (spoken in Siberia) and for Thai. In polite Thai conversation between men and women of equal rank, women say *dičʰàn* while men say *pʰŏm* for the first-person singular pronoun 'I.' Thai also has a set of particles used differently by men and women, especially in formulaic questions and responses such as 'thank you' and 'excuse me.' The polite particle used by men is *kʰráp*, while women use *kʰá* or *kʰâ*. Because these politeness particles occur frequently in daily interaction, speech differences between men and women can seem highly marked in Thai, despite the fact that few words are so differentiated.

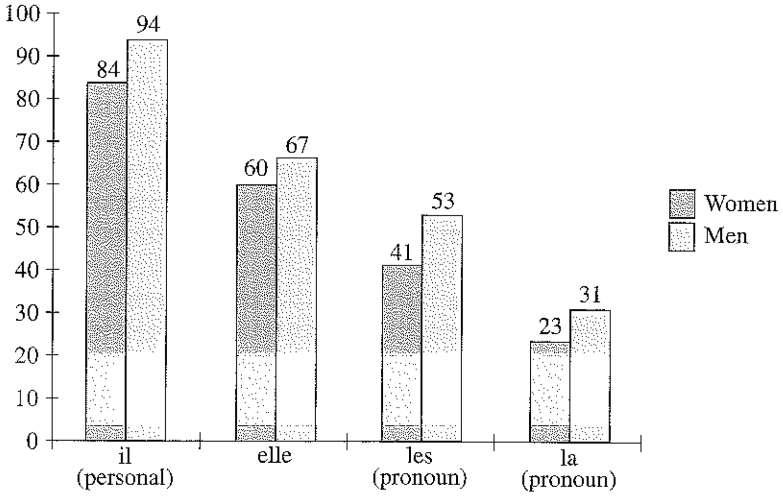

Figure 11.16 Percent of /l/-Deletion in Montreal French for Women and Men

Source: Data from Gillian Sankoff and Henrietta Cedergren, "Some Results of a Sociolinguistic Study of Montreal French," in R. Darnell, ed. *Linguistic Diversity in Canadian Society* (Edmonton: Linguistic Research, 1971).

There are also more subtle differences between men's and women's speech, the kinds of quantitative differences we saw between other social groups. For example, in Montreal, where professionals delete /l/ from articles and pronouns less frequently than laborers do, men and women also differ in pronouncing these same words. Figure 11.16 on the previous page shows that men delete /l/ more frequently than women in *il* (personal, as in *il chante* 'he sings'), in *elle*, and in the pronouns *les* and *la*.

Patterns in which women delete sounds less frequently than men also appear in New York City and Norwich. In these cities, when higher socioeconomic classes behave linguistically in one way to a greater extent than lower ones, women tend to behave like the higher socioeconomic groups to a greater extent than men do.

In English, besides vocabulary differences, more subtle linguistic differences between the sexes can go largely unnoticed. One study examined the pronunciation of the *-ing* suffix in words like *running* and *talking*. In a semirural New England village, the speech patterns of a dozen boys and a dozen girls between the ages of 3 and 10 showed that, even in such young children, all but three used both alveolar [n] and velar [ŋ] pronunciations for verbal *-ing*. But the boys and girls did not have the same preferences: twice as many girls as boys showed a preference for the /ɪŋ/ forms, as shown below.

Pronunciation of -ing by 12 Boys and 12 Girls in a New England Village

	PREFERENCE FOR /ɪŋ/	**NO PREFERENCE FOR /ɪŋ/**
GIRLS	10	2
BOYS	5	7

The finding that girls and boys differ in this way may seem surprising, given that in this New England village (as generally in Western societies) girls and boys are in frequent face-to-face contact with each other, although they also play separately. A significant separation in the communication channels, suggested earlier as a motivating factor in the differentiation of dialect speech patterns, would not appear to explain this case. What, then, is the explanation? One hypothesis is the "toughness" characteristic associated with working-class lifestyles combined with the "masculinity" characteristic associated with the *-in'* forms. In other words, an association between masculinity and "dropping the *g*" may outweigh the associations with prestige and higher socioeconomic status that otherwise accompany the *-ing* variant with the *g* (that is, [ŋ]). This analysis suggests that linguistic differences between males and females are related not to biological sex but to socially constructed gender roles.

Masculinity and the Toughness Factor

There's evidence for the greater prestige of *running* and *talking* pronunciations with [ŋ] over those that "drop the *g*" (that is, pronounce *-ing* with [n]). Here are two facts. (1) English speakers who use both variants (that's virtually all of us) tend to pronounce *-ing* with [ŋ] more often when speaking in situations of greater formality. (2) Social groups with higher socioeconomic status pronounce *-ing* with [ŋ] more often than lower status groups. Interestingly, girls and women pronounce *-ing* with [ŋ] more frequently than boys and men do. One explanation may be that women are more status conscious than men—sociologists have found that to be the case in other arenas, so why not in language, too? But linguists suggest an additional reason. Think of it as the "toughness factor." Boys and men may associate pronunciations like *runnin'* and *talkin'* with working-class "toughness"—and that connection apparently outweighs any link to prestige because the less prestigious pronunciation marks "masculinity" and masculinity outranks prestige. Now you might object that using the term *masculinity* to explain the linguistic behavior of boys and men seems to beg the question. After all, what's gained by calling a pronunciation "masculine" just because men use it more than women? Well, masculinity and femininity are not the same thing as male and female. Sex differences (male and female) are biological, and language differences don't reflect biology. Instead, what they do reflect is the phenomenon of *gender*—what it *means* to be male or female in a particular sociocultural environment. You're aware of gender differences marked by clothing, hair length, body decoration, and jewelry use. ("Wear some earrings, for God's sake," the mother of Emma Thompson's character in the movie *The Winter Guest* tells her after she's cut her hair short. "Let folks know you're a woman!") So you shouldn't be surprised that language also reflects the important social identity of gender roles.

Why Do Stigmatized Varieties Persist?

You may wonder why speakers don't give up their stigmatized varieties for more prestigious ones. The explanation lies partly in the fact that a person's identity—as a woman or a man, as an American or an Australian, as a member of a particular ethnic or socioeconomic group—is entwined with the speech patterns of the group he or she belongs to. To change the way you speak is to signal changes in *who you are* or *how you want to be perceived*. For a New Yorker transplanted to California, speaking like a Californian would relinquish some identity as a New Yorker. To give up speaking African American English would relinquish some identity as an African American. To give up working-class speech patterns acquired in childhood would be to take on a new identity. In short, to take on new speech patterns would be to reform oneself and present oneself anew.

Language is a major symbol of our social identity, and we have seen how remarkably fine-tuned to that identity it can be. If you wish to identify with "nonnative" regional, socioeconomic, or ethnic groups and have sufficient contact with them, your speech will naturally and gradually come to resemble theirs.

We can illustrate with a telling story of linguistic and social identity on Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of Massachusetts. There the vowels /aɪ/ and /aʊ/ have two principal variants, with the first element of each diphthong sometimes pronounced [a] and sometimes with a more centralized [ə]. Words like *night* and *why* may be pronounced [aɪ] or [əɪ]; words like *shout* and *how* may be pronounced with [aʊ] or the more centralized [əʊ]. These variants are not typical dialect features: they don't reflect gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Instead, vowel centralization represents identity with traditional values of the island and its life. In an investigation carried out by sociolinguist William Labov, the up-island residents showed more vowel centralization than the residents in sections catering to summer visitors. Young men intending to leave the island and lead their lives on the mainland showed the least vowel centralization, while the greatest vowel centralization was shown by a young man who had moved to the mainland but returned to Martha's Vineyard. Thus the centralized diphthongs may be viewed as representing rejection of mainland values and a positive view of the values of island life.

The symbolic value of a person's language variety cannot be overestimated. In Britain speakers of regional varieties who were asked to evaluate oral arguments rated the *quality* of an argument higher when it was presented in a standard accent but found the same argument more *persuasive* when it was made using a regional accent.

It's easy for speakers higher on the socioeconomic ladder to ask about others, "Why don't they start talking like us?" The answer is not difficult to understand: others' social identity is different, and they don't necessarily share the values of other social groups, including those higher on the socioeconomic ladder. Think about gender dialects: it is perfectly acceptable for women to speak like women and men to speak like men. Imagine men asking women to speak like them in order to get ahead in "a man's world." Or imagine a female CEO directing her company's male truck drivers to speak more like women to get ahead in "a woman's world." These are patently unacceptable scenarios.

Language is central to a person's social identity. Asking people to change their customary language patterns is not like asking them to wear different styles or colors of shoes or sweaters. It is asking them to assume a new identity and espouse values associated with that identity, the identity of speakers of a different dialect. One reason nonstandard varieties successfully resist the urgings of education is that vernacular language varieties are deeply entwined with the social identities and values of their speakers.

COMPUTERS AND THE STUDY OF DIALECT

Given the mass of both quantitative and qualitative data represented in our discussion of dialects, it is clear that dialectologists are using computers to accomplish their goals. Researchers are digitizing the kinds of data that in the past have been manually represented, as on some maps in this chapter. For example, researchers for the *Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States* (LAMSAS) have used a program called MapInfo to plot longitude and latitude coordinates for the residences of all 1,162 LAMSAS informants, thus enabling maps of various sizes and degrees of detail to represent features that were elicited from the informants. In the upper map of Figure 11.7 you saw the result of using computers to generate a nontraditional map for dialectology. In a different vein, the work represented in the Telsur project and the *Atlas of North American English* depends crucially on using computers to perform acoustic analyses of vowel sounds.

In addition to a wide variety of tasks that have used computers for map-related activities, the resources that corpora make available to researchers interested in language variation are beginning to revolutionize the study of dialects. A project called the International Corpus of English aims to provide texts totaling about one million words of written and spoken English from each of 20 centers around the world, representing the English spoken in the Caribbean, Fiji, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore, and other sites. Tagged and annotated, the texts of these corpora will make their use in dialect comparisons extremely valuable.

Perhaps the most dramatic innovations stem from a growing conviction among some dialect researchers that reliance on a single feature or small set of features (such as we saw with the isoglosses and bundles of isoglosses discussed earlier in this chapter) does not provide a sound scientific basis for drawing dialect boundaries or gauging degrees of difference between dialects. Combining quantitative and computational techniques, a new approach called dialectometry "deliberately proceeds from the scientific conviction that dialectal data are too complex to be studied one phenomenon at a time, e.g., what word is used to refer to a particular body part, farm instrument, or domestic animal, or what sound is pronounced at the end of words such as 'floor', 'walking', or 'house'. The emphasis has therefore been on the analysis of large aggregates of differences . . . ," according to two prominent practitioners. ■

Summary

- When separated physically or socially, people with shared speechways come to speak differently. Given sufficient time and separation, distinct languages can arise.
- Conversely, the speech of people talking as members of the same community can develop in unison, even tending to merge in some situations.
- There is no linguistic basis upon which to distinguish between a dialect and a language. Every language comprises dialects, and in terms of linguistic principles and linguistic universals every dialect is a language.
- Linguistic differences exist among social groups within every speech community.
- Linguistic forms can vary greatly from one social group to the next, and social groups may be defined in a number of ways besides regionally.

- Both ethnicity and socioeconomic status are bases for social group affiliation.
- Women and men may also be thought of as belonging to different social groups, called gender groups.
- Combining these different group distinctions yields a complex picture of the composition of society. Within a particular ethnic group, we find socioeconomic classes whose members are male or female. Differences in speechways support such social identities.
- Whatever the social group, its language variety will typically exhibit characteristics that distinguish it from the language varieties of other social groups.
- The linguistic features that characterize social varieties may also serve as markers (or symbols) of social identity.
- One way to stress membership in an ethnic group is to emphasize or even exaggerate the characteristic features of that ethnic language variety.
- If a woman wants to appear particularly feminine, she may choose to exhibit features associated with women's speech and avoid "masculine-sounding" expressions.
- Individuals can use socially marked language characteristics for their own purposes.
- Everyone speaks with a pronunciation that is characteristic of his or her social identity. No one can speak without an accent, though we tend to be acutely aware of the accents in the speech of others and to imagine that members of our own social group do not carry accents.

What Do You Think? REVISITED

- *Your niece talks "funny," too.* Her camp counselor appears to be a speaker of British English. As funny as the counselor's dialect may have seemed to your niece, her own dialect might have sounded just as unusual to the counselor. Every group's language variety differs—more or less—from those of other groups, and the only thing "funny" about anyone's speech is that it's different: patterns that differ from our own may seem odd simply because they differ from what we're accustomed to.
- *The sub from Alabama.* Every speaker of every language carries an accent; everyone speaks a language variety whose pronunciation reflects something about his or her social identity. Speakers of English recognize British, American, Canadian, and Australian accents, among others. Even if you could shed your native accent, you'd have to replace it with another one because you can't speak a language without an accent. Daniel's students are rightly astonished, but if they are under the impression that the sub has an accent but they themselves don't, Daniel has some convincing to do. (See Exercise 11–11a.)
- *Ethan and Ebonics.* In 1997, at the height of the Ebonics controversy, much of the comment in newspapers and other media indicated a widespread perception that a dialect of a language can legitimately be judged good or bad by how closely it resembles the "standard" variety of the language. In 2013 Rachel Jeantel's trial testimony prompted similar comments from a wide range of Americans, young and old alike. The fact is this: all language varieties differ from one another to greater or lesser degrees. If judged by the rules of Spanish,

say, then French and Japanese would be ungrammatical; if judged by the rules of British English, American English would be ungrammatical—and vice versa. Ebonics is ungrammatical if judged by the rules of standard English. And standard English is ungrammatical if judged by the rules of Ebonics or of French.

- *Women talk, men talk.* The degree to which the talk of men and women differs isn't the same from one cultural group to the next. This is also true for variation across social groups within a given culture. Research has found differences, such as different words for the same item or certain forms used more frequently by men or by women. If Sammy recalls the many ways in which boys and girls are brought up differently, she shouldn't be surprised that men and women also *speak* somewhat differently.

Exercises

Based on English

11-1. Distinguish between an accent and a dialect. Distinguish between a dialect and a language. What is meant by a "language variety"? Does it make any sense to say of a language variety that "it isn't a language, it's *only* a dialect"?

11-2. Examine a single issue of an online newspaper or magazine published in Britain (e.g., *The Economist* <www.eoconomist.com>, *The Register* <www.theregister.co.uk>, *The Spectator* <www.spectator.co.uk>) and list as many examples of differences between American and British English as you can notice on any two pages. Include at least two examples each of vocabulary, syntax, spelling, and punctuation.

11-3. Which of the following words are you familiar with? Make two lists, one consisting of those you normally use and the other consisting of those you don't use but have heard others use. With what regional or national group do you associate the words you have heard others use but don't use yourself? Compare your judgments with those of your classmates.

dragonfly	darning needle, mosquito hawk, spindle, snake feeder, snake doctor
pancake	fritter, hotcake, flannel cake, batter cake
cottage cheese	curds, curd cheese, clabber cheese, dutch cheese, pot cheese
string beans	green beans, snap beans
earthworm	night crawler, fishing worm, angle worm, rain worm, red worm, mud worm
lightning bug	firefly, fire bug
baby carriage	baby buggy, baby coach, baby cab, pram

11-4. The following questions (some slightly adapted) are from the questionnaire used to gather data for *DARE*. Answer each question yourself, and then compare your answers with those of your classmates. Do you and your classmates agree on the regions in which the particular variants are used? (*DARE* provides maps for answers to these questions.)

a. How do you speak of roads that have numbers or letters? For example, if someone asks directions to get to (supply local city name), you might say, "Take ____."

b. What names are used around here for:

  1) the part of the house below the ground floor?

  2) the kind of sandwich in a large, long bun, that's a meal in itself?

  3) a small stream of water not big enough to be a river?

  4) a round cake of dough, cooked in deep fat, with a hole in the center?

  5) a piece of cloth that a woman folds over her head and ties under her chin?

  6) the common worm used as bait?

  7) vehicles for a baby or small child, the kind it can lie down in?

  8) a mark on the skin where somebody has sucked it hard and brought the blood to the surface?

  9) a bone from the breast of a chicken, shaped like a horseshoe?

  10) the place in the elbow that gives you a strange feeling if you hit it against something?

  11) very young frogs, when they still have tails but no legs?

11-5. What was Labov's hypothesis about the occurrence of postvocalic /r/ in New York City department stores? If in your city or town there are three socially ranked stores that could be similarly investigated, name two phonological features you would expect to be socially differentiated? Design a question for each feature that would elicit the data needed to test your hypothesis. (Make the question a natural one for the kind of store you have in mind.) Would you ask your respondents to repeat their answers as Labov did? Explain why or why not.

11-6. Describe two ways in which you have noticed that the speech of women and men differs in greetings, threats, swearing, and promises. What do you think accounts for these differences? Do you think such differences are increasing or decreasing? Explain the bases for your answers.

11-7. Among many functions of the word *like* in English, it is used by certain speakers to mark the beginning of a direct quotation. Here are two examples of quotative *like*:

"And then she's like, 'I don't want to go.'"

"So he's like, 'But you promised!'"

To complete this exercise, you will need natural data from the speech of your acquaintances. Collect a total of 20 naturally occurring examples of quotative *like* from the speech of at least four people (including some people younger and others older than you). Write down the examples exactly as they were spoken, taking care not to call attention to the speech of your acquaintances or the fact that you are observing their language. Relying on five-year ranges

(15–19, 20–24, and so on), note the approximate age of all speakers you set out to observe (whether or not they actually use quotative *like*).

a. Some researchers call this feature "quotative *be like*" because their data indicate that this use of *like* generally occurs with the verb *be*, as in the examples above. Explain whether or not your data lend support to using the alternative name.

b. Identify the tense (past or nonpast) of the verbs that precede quotative *like* in your data. Identify the time (present, past, or future) that the verbs refer to. Keep in mind that tense and time are not the same phenomena.

c. In both the examples above, the verb form has been contracted to *'s*. What percentage of your examples show a similar contraction?

d. In both of the examples above, the subject of *be* in the quotative *like* clauses is a pronoun (*he, she*). What lexical categories are the subjects in your examples?

e. Identify which age groups use this feature and which don't. On the basis of your admittedly limited evidence, propose a hypothesis about whether use of this feature is age-related.

f. Compare your findings about use and age with the findings of some classmates, and reconsider your hypothesis in light of the pooled data.

g. Do you think that younger users will continue using quotative *like* as they get older (which would make it an example of language change in progress) or that they will not continue using it beyond a certain age (which would make it an age-graded feature)? Explain your view.

h. In your data, do you note any examples that represent uses of *like* other than the quotative, leaving aside its use as a preposition (*He looks like his dad*), subordinating conjunction (*Winstons taste good like a cigarette should*), or verb (*She likes asparagus*)? If so, analyze those uses and try characterizing them; what name(s) might suit them?

i. What other expressions have you heard that function like quotative *like*?

Especially for Educators and Future Teachers

11-8. a. Below are the opening words of a presentation by a college teacher to a group of Southern teachers at a professional meeting. (Imagine it spoken with a distinctive Southern accent: the college teacher was born in the South and clearly wished to play upon those affiliations.)

> "Years ago, during my first week in Wisconsin, I was asked by a fellow teacher, 'Do you mean they let *you* teach English?' The speaker was a Canadian with what I thought a very peculiar accent. Soon after that, a woman working on a degree in speech asked me with all the kindness and gentleness of which she was capable whether I would let her teach me how to talk right. If I had had her zeal and patience and kindness, I might very well have made the offer first, for I thought her speech highly unsatisfactory."

Provide answers to these questions, most of which the teacher posed to her audience:

1) Who should teach whom how to speak "right"?
2) Is there a standard pronunciation in American English and, if so, what is it?
3) Should education aim to make everyone sound like everyone else?
4) Is it possible that training could make everyone sound like everyone else?
5) If the training succeeded, how would everyone sound?
6) Assuming uniformity could be achieved, how long could it last?

b. The same college teacher reported these comments from a Southern teacher and a Southern physician ([ʍ] represents [hw]):

Teacher: [aː hæv dɪlɪbərɪtlɪ wəkt tu gɛt rɪd av ɪnɪ tresɪz av æksɪnt æz aː θɪŋk ɔwl ɛʤəketɪd pipəl ʃʊd du aː prad masɛf ðæt aː hæv nat wən ʍɪt av ɪnɪ tresəbəl æksɪnt ɪn maː spitʃ]

Physician: [mɪnɪ av ma pəɪʃəns θɪŋk aː æm fram ðə nɔəθ bɪkɔwz æz ən ɛʤəketɪd pəsən aː don av kɔəs hæv ə səðən æksɪnt]

1) After reading the comments aloud, write them out in standard orthography.
2) Give the standard orthography for these words as pronounced in the same dialect:

   i) [mɔwnɪn] ii) [kaəd] iii) [kent] iv) [hɛp] v) [spikɪn] vi) [həɪd] vii) [mɪnɪ] viii) [bɪnɪfɪt]

c. Compare Figure 11.8 and the description of the Southern Shift with the transcriptions of comments by the Southern teacher and physician. For each of these features of the Southern Shift, cite two words from the comments or the list of words in (2) that exemplify it:

(i) monophthongization of /aɪ/; (ii) /ɛ/ pronounced higher and more fronted; (iii) /æ/ pronounced higher and more fronted. (For all examples, provide the words in standard orthography and the transcribed version.)

d. Cite a pair of words in the transcriptions that indicate whether the pin-pen merger is characteristic of this dialect. Cite a pair of words with /r/-omission after vowels. Cite a pair with /l/-omission after vowels.

(Adapted from Jane Appleby, "Is Southern English Good English?" in David L. Shores and Carol P. Hines, eds., *Papers in Language Variation* [Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1977], p. 225.)

11-9. Looking at the content of what the physician and teacher reported in Exercise 11-8, answer these questions:

a. Does the physician believe that Northerners have accents?

b. Does he or she believe that education removes or should remove a regional accent?

c. Do you think the physician is pleased that the patients believe their physician is from the North?

d. The teacher twice uses the word *traces* in reference to accent. Does the choice of this term suggest whether the teacher regards regional accents positively or negatively? Had this teacher grown up speaking a Northern accent, do you think he or she would have reported trying to get rid of any *traces* of accent? What do you think of this teacher's view of the relationship between education and accent?

e. Do you like it when people recognize where you're from? Do you have an accent that outsiders admire? Has anyone ever said anything unfavorable about your accent to you? Have you ever tried to get rid of any "traces" of accent in your speech? All things considered, what do you think about your own accent?

f. Putting yourself into the frame of mind of the Southern teacher, why might he or she believe that educated people should rid themselves of any traces of accent in their speech?

g. To judge from the transcribed comments of the teacher and the physician, how easy is it for a person to get rid of all traces of accent?

11-10.a. What would it mean to speak without an accent? (Think globally as well as regionally: what would it mean to speak English without an American, British, Canadian, Australian, or other national accent? What would it mean to speak French without a North American, European, or other accent?) Why do you imagine some people appear to think it's better to be from nowhere than somewhere?

b. Provide a list of four regional features of *your own* pronunciation that others have called to your attention or you are otherwise aware of.

c. Make a list of features you admire in the speech of others. What's admirable about those features?

d. Make a list of features you dislike in the speech of others. Can you specify what it is about those features that you dislike?

e. What explanation can you offer for the fact that many people believe they speak *without* an accent?

11-11. Cockney is a British dialect spoken by working-class Londoners, and the number of Cockney speakers doubtless exceeds the estimated 1.5 million speakers of the variety of English known as RP (Received Pronunciation) or BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) English that is taught in England's private schools. Among the features of Cockney is /h/-dropping, especially in unstressed words, such as the pronouns *he, him,* and *her,* the verbs *has, have,* and *had,* as well as in all other word classes: nouns like *hospital, heaven,* and *hell,* adjectives like *hot* and *heavy,* verbs like *help* and *hiss.* Cockney speakers pronounce a glottal stop for the medial /t/ in words like *bitter* and *later* and accompanying medial /p/ as in *paper.* Also characteristic is an /f/ pronunciation for the initial consonant of words like *thin* and the final consonant of words like *with* and *mouth*, as well as the medial consonant in words like *pithy* and *Cathy*. Instead of [θɪn] for *thin*, Cockney speakers say "fin," and "wif" for *with*, and "Caffee" [kæfi] for *Cathy*. They merge /ð/ and /v/ in specific phonological environments: word finally, as in "breave" and "bave" for *breathe* and *bathe*, and in medial position, yielding "bruvver" for *brother* and "muvver" for *mother*. Comment on the phonological similarity and differences between Cockney and African American English. What do the pronunciation similarities between (largely white) Cockney speakers and black speakers of African American English indicate about the relationship between race and pronunciation? What do the similarities suggest about the systematic nature of phonological variants within dialects?

Other Resources

Internet

- **LISU Website: http://www.CengageBrain.com** For users of this textbook. Provides updated Internet links as well as supplemental material for students and instructors. Here you will find interactive learning tools.
- **Dictionary of American Regional English: http://dare.wisc.edu/?q=node/17** Contains information about *DARE*, including base map with state codes compared to a U.S. geographical map.
- **American Dialect Society: http://www.americandialect.org** Offers information about the American Dialect Society (ADS), including a special page for student members. Also provides links to pages for *DARE* and various Linguistic Atlas projects.
- **Linguistic Atlas Projects: http://www.lap.uga.edu/** An ambitious website providing information about the nine Linguistic Atlas projects. Best represented is LAMSAS—Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (ranging from New York to northern Florida and including West Virginia and Pennsylvania)—but you can find useful information about all the atlas projects.
- **Linguist List's Topic Page on Ebonics: http://linguistlist.org/topics/ebonics/** Linguist List is the major discussion list among linguists for issues of general interest. Ebonics was such a popular topic in 1996 and 1997 that the list managers collected all the information Linguist List has on it at one site.
- **The Atlas of North American English: http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/home.html** ANAE is based on a systematic telephone survey of the major urban areas of the United States and Canada in a project called Telsur, based at the University of Pennsylvania. The website presents the latest research, with color maps showing vowel pronunciation. When you visit the site, keep in mind

that in this textbook we represent only three English vowels as diphthongs, but the ANAE site uses a different set of representations, which are provided here for convenience:

LISU	ANAE	WORDS
/aʊ/	/aw/	pout, plowed
/aɪ/	/ay/	my, mine
/ɔɪ/	/oy/	boy, soy
/e/	/ey/	made, frayed
/o/	/ow/	flowed, code
/u/	/uw/	food, cooed
/ɔ/	/oh/	talk, dawn, caught
/ɛ/	/e/	pet, Seth, wedge
/ʊ/	/u/	wood, could

- **Ebonics Information Page: http://www.cal.org/topics/dialects/aae.html** Maintained by the Center for Applied Linguistics, a rich page, full of valuable discussion and analysis of African American English and issues related to Ebonics.
- **Survey of English Usage: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/** Information about the International Corpus of English, especially the million-word British contribution.
- **The Language Samples Project: http://ic-migration.webhost.uits.arizona.edu/icfiles/ic/lsp/site/** Under development at the University of Arizona, this project provides information about varieties of English, including African American English, Southern (American) English, and British English.

Video and Audio

Some of the videos and DVDs listed below are available in libraries and video rental outlets. Some can be purchased through educational video suppliers, such as Insight Media (**www.insight-media.com**) or PBS.

- **American Tongues** This award-winning video treats regional accents from Boston to Texas, with a focus on the speech of some very engaging teenagers.
- **Black on White** From the BBC's 1986 *Story of English* series narrated by Robert MacNeil, this video explores the origins and spread of African American English.
- **Communities of Speech** In this video Walt Wolfram and Deborah Tannen debate issues as they examine the concept of standard American English and other American dialects.
- **Do You Speak American?** Robert MacNeil travels the United States in 2003, exploring traditional dialect characteristics and new developments.

Suggestions for Further Reading

- **Craig M. Carver. 1987. *American Regional Dialects: A Word Geography*** (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press). An overview of American English dialects based upon vocabulary findings in the *Dictionary of American Regional English.*
- **Frederick Cassidy & Joan Houston Hall, eds. 1985–2013. *Dictionary of American Regional English*** (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press). In six volumes, the most comprehensive treatment of American regional vocabulary; "Digital *DARE*" is promised soon.
- **Edward Finegan & John R. Rickford, eds. 2004. *Language in the USA*** (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press). Treats a wide range of topics related to dialects, including American regional dialects and social varieties, Ebonics, hip-hop, slang, and adolescent language (the "Advanced Reading" section below cites several chapters in this collection).
- **Carmen Fought. 2006. *Language and Ethnicity: Key Topics in Sociolinguistics*** (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press). Ethnicity is an increasingly important topic of investigation, and this accessible treatment asks not only what ethnicity is but whether there are "white" ways of speaking and what it means to construct an ethnic identity and to borrow features of another's ethnic identity.
- **Arthur Hughes, Peter Trudgill, & Dominic Watt. 2012. *English Accents and Dialects: An Introduction to Social and Regional Varieties of English in the British Isles*, 5th ed.** (London: Routledge). Especially good on pronunciation. Includes discussion of London, Belfast, Dublin, South Wales, Edinburgh, and others—nearly 30 varieties—with online recordings containing edited interviews with the speakers available.
- **William Labov, Sharon Ash, & Charles Boberg. 2006. *The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology, and Sound Change*** (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter). A richly illustrated multimedia analysis of recent vowel pronunciation in North America, with colorful maps illustrating patterns of distribution and their relationship to older dialect patterns, this extraordinary work won the 2008 Leonard Bloomfield Book Award from the Linguistic Society of America.
- **Rosina Lippi-Green. 1997. *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States*** (London: Routledge). A provocative introduction to facts and myths surrounding discussion of accent and other aspects of dialect in the United States.
- **Salikoko S. Mufwene, John R. Rickford, Guy Bailey, & John Baugh, eds. 1998. *African American English: Structure, History and Use*** (London: Routledge). Distinguished researchers analyze the structure and use of African American English. Besides treatment of phonology, lexicon, grammar, discourse, and the history of African American English, you can learn what linguists and anthropologists think of Ebonics, the Oakland school district resolution, obscenity, hip-hop, and Ice-T.
- **Peter Trudgill. 2000. *The Dialects of England*** (Oxford: Blackwell). A reliable treatment of traditional and modern dialects in England, with maps.
- **Peter Trudgill. 2000. *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*, 4th ed.** (New York: Penguin). A basic, brief, and accessible treatment.
- **Peter Trudgill & J. K. Chambers, eds. 1991. *Dialects of English: Studies in Grammatical Variation*** (New York: Longman). Contains 22 descriptions of grammar in various dialects of the United States, Australia, Canada, Scotland, and especially England.

Advanced Reading

Chambers and Trudgill (1998), Hudson (1996), and Wardhaugh (2010) discuss dialects generally. The discussion of convergence in Kupwar in this chapter is based on Gumperz and Wilson (1971). Green (2002) is a thorough and accessible treatment of African American English. More popular treatments can be found in Rickford and Rickford (2000) and Smitherman (1986), the latter providing some of the examples in this chapter. Baugh (2004) addresses the Ebonics controversy of 1996–1997. Ornstein-Galicia (1988) and Fought (2003) are useful on Chicano English. On the sociolinguistics of French, see Sanders (1993) and Ball (1997); on German, see Stevenson (1997); on Spanish, see Mar-Molinero (1997).

Ferguson and Heath (1981) is a collection of essays describing language use among Native Americans, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italian Americans, French Americans, German Americans, and others. The principal findings for the Linguistic Atlas of the United States for the East Coast can be found in Kurath (1949), Atwood (1953), and Kurath and McDavid (1961). See Allen (1973–1976) for the Upper Midwest, Pederson (1986–1991) for the Gulf states, Bright (1971) for California and Nevada, Atwood (1962) for Texas. Discussion of the Southern Shift can be found in Nunnally (2008), which inspired several of the diphthongizations given in connection with Figure 11.9 (my thanks to Nunnally [personal communication] for the "sweet tea with a lid" report and translation in my discussion of the Southern Shift above). From a knowledgeable outsider's point of view, Tottie (2002) offers a fresh perspective on American English. For discussion of dialectometry, see Nerbonne and Kretzschmar (2013), from which our quotation by two practitioners in the Computers and Dialects section comes; see also the articles contained in the issue of *Literary and Linguistic Computing* in which their introduction appears.

The relationship between language and gender is treated in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003). A chapter-length overview, including discussion of the contributions of lesbians and women of color to an understanding of multicultural feminism can be found in Bucholtz (2004). The data in the present chapter on gender differences in Thai come from Haas (1940), who also discusses Chukchee. Fischer (1958) reports the New England *-ing* data cited here. Johnson and Meinhof (1997) is a collection of essays on masculine sociolinguistics, addressing power, conversation, gossip, expletives, and other topics. Holmes (1995) asks whether women are more polite than men. Ochs (1992) relates language and gender through social activities, social stances, and social acts. Shuy (2001) reports the details of the "devil strip" kidnap language and several others. Language and social identity—and the linguistic construction of social identity—are treated in Alim (2004a,b), Bucholtz (1999), Eckert (1989, 2000), and Fought (2006; cited in "Suggestions for Further Reading").

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