



## Language Varieties across Registers and Regions

**Course type:** MA seminar

**Year of studies:** 1ZSM (2022/2023)

**Instructor:** Adam Biały, PhD

**Prerequisites:** Rudimentary knowledge and interest in linguistics

**Aims and objectives:** The seminar focuses on language variety, that is different forms of language which are used depending on the context. This phenomenon is ubiquitous and concerns all aspects of language. Whenever we communicate we have to choose a variety of language as determined by the context. Terms such as dialect, sociolect, accent, jargon, register may appear to be purely technical not having much to do with our everyday communication. However, even though a single speaker may not know the definition of these terms, they use these types of language on an everyday basis. Our aim will be to show how this can be explained and what implications it has for our understanding of language and how these aspects are relevant in communication including cross-cultural communication.

Language variety defines language as a flexible system and its study from this perspective is in the domain of sociolinguistics. The seminar will focus to a large extent on the principles of sociolinguistics in relation to culture and communication. Both differences between languages (the interlingual perspective) and differences within one language (the intralingual perspective) will be studied.

The discussion of the topics covered during the course will enable students to select the area of further study and formulate the topics of their MA theses.

### Topics (to be discussed in class):

1. Scope and objective of sociolinguistics.
2. Regional and social dialects.
3. Gender and age.
4. Social networks.
5. Language change.
6. Style, context and register.
7. Language, cognition and culture.
8. Speech functions and politeness.
9. Dealing with language variety in (cross-cultural) communication.
10. Slang and antilanguage.

11. Language typology.
12. Classification of languages.
13. World Englishes.
14. English as a Lingua Franca.

**Assessment details:** Students will be evaluated on the basis of their class participation and progress in their work on the MA thesis.

### **Range of (MA thesis) topics:**

The topics of MA theses can range within sociolinguistics (language and society), pragmatics (language and context), ethnolinguistics (language and culture), or any other (interesting and sufficient) area of linguistics.

### **Examples of topics:**

- ❖ The dialect of gender and age.
- ❖ English as an international language.
- ❖ Slang, its function in a linguistic community.
- ❖ Approaches to dealing with sociolinguistic aspects (e.g., dialect, sociolect, jargon, register).
- ❖ Attitudes to language variability (accents and dialects).
- ❖ Diglossia and linguistic oppression.
- ❖ Dialects of English and their development.
- ❖ The language of new media.
- ❖ The constraints of codeswitching.
- ❖ The language of politeness.
- ❖ Analysis of regional dialects of English (e.g. Estuary English (or another selected dialect)), from its beginning to current state.

### **References (selected items):**

- Aronoff, M. and Rees-Miller, J. (eds.) 2003. *The Handbook of Linguistics*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Bartmiński, J. 2006. *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata*. Wydawnictwo UMCS.
- Bayley, R, Cameron, R., and Lucas, S. (eds) 2013. *The Oxford Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Britain, David & Jenny Cheshire (eds) 2003. *Social Dialectology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Burke, Peter & Roy Porter (eds) 1991. *Language, Self, and Society. A Social History of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chambers, J. K. & Natalie Schilling (eds) 2013. *Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Holmes, J. 2013. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Routledge.
- Siemund, Peter 2013. *Varieties of English: A Typological Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tabakowska, E. 2001. *Kognitywne podstawy języka i językoznawstwa*. Universitas, Kraków.
- Yule, G. 1996. *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.