



Language Varieties and Communication

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 used in different socio-geographical contexts. This phenomenon is visible in 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. Still all of us use them on an everyday basis. Our aim will be to show in what ways this use of language is systematic and how it is 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. An important aspect of communication is also translation as an example of intercultural communication.

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.

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), intercultural communication (translation) 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.
- ❖ Cultural and linguistic aspects in intercultural communication (e.g. translation).

References (selected):

- 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.
- Snell-Hornby, M., Jettmarova, Z., Kaindl, K. 1997. *Translation as Intercultural Communication*. John Benjamins.
- Siemund, P. 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.