

Introduction to Sociolinguistics

TY Linguistics



Overview of this Linguistics Module

- Topic 1 Introduction to areas of linguistics and problem-solving
- Topic 2 Historical Linguistics
- Topic 3 Phonetics
- **Topic 4 Sociolinguistics**
- Topic 5 Writing systems
- Topic 6 Language Acquisition
- Topic 7 Morphology
- Topic 8 Syntax
- Topic 9 Psycholinguistics / Neurolinguistics
- Topic 10 Machine Translation



Task 4.1 Introduction to Sociolinguistics

What is Sociolinguistics?

- Sociolinguistics is concerned with the relationship between language and society.



"I hate to be a bother, young man, but do you speak emoji?"



CartoonStock.com

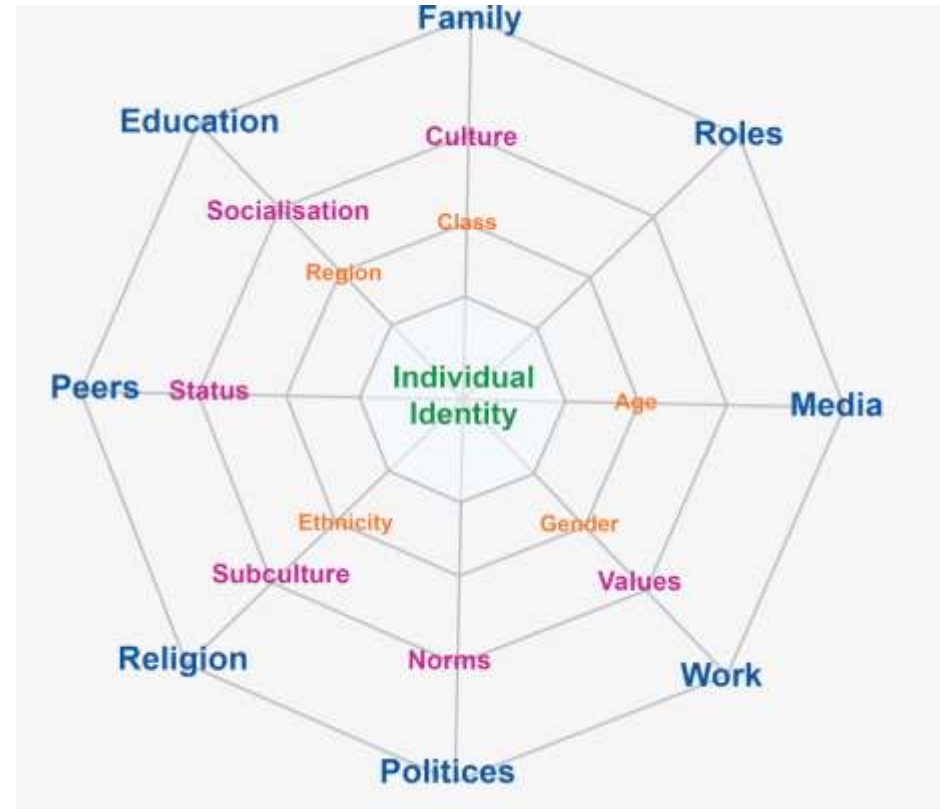
Activity 4.1.1 Select the words that YOU would associate with Sociolinguistics.

- Accent
- Age
- Change
- Code Switching
- Community
- Culture
- Education
- Ethnicity
- Family
- Gender
- Geography
- Identity
- Immigration
- Language Variety
- Register
- Religion
- Setting
- Slang
- Social Class
- Urbanization

Language and Identity

“Identity is what underlies most people’s retention of at least some of their local features because ultimately what we say is who we are”.

Clive Upton, Professor Emeritus of English Language at the University of Leeds



Activity 4.1.2 – Sociolinguistic Terminology

On the handout, match the correct linguistic term with its definition

1. Accent	J. Regional phonological or phonetic distinctions
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1. Accent	J. Regional phonological or phonetic distinctions
2. Creole	
3. Dialect	
4. Idiolect	
5. Jargon	
6. Language	
7. Pidgin	
8. Register	
9. Regional Dialect	
10. Slang	

Activity 4.1.3- Sociolinguistics Terms in Context

Complete the sentence with the correct term from the previous exercise. Answers below on a click.

1. I would never say 'How's it going?' to my school principal as that's not the correct **register** in polite conversation.
2. Lol is one of the most common **slang** terms in electronic communication, that has now also moved in to general speech.
3. My boss always tells us that it is best practice to think outside the box and give 110%. I hate corporate **jargon**.
4. Whether you say Cén chaoi a bhfuil tú? Or Conás atá tu? Or Cad é mar atá tú? depends on which **dialect** of Irish you speak. Is it Connacht, Munster or Ulster Irish?
5. Chinglish or Chinese **pidgin** English has only 700 words. It was used for over three centuries by Chinese traders in the Cantonese region of China and never developed in to a creole language.

Language and Register

This is the level of formality that you might use in a conversation or text.

- How do you decide what register is appropriate to use?
- Why is it important to know the correct register to use?
- What registers do you use?



"This is Daddy, honey. That was Daddy's office voice."

CartoonStock.com

Activity 4.1.4 - The Five Registers of Language

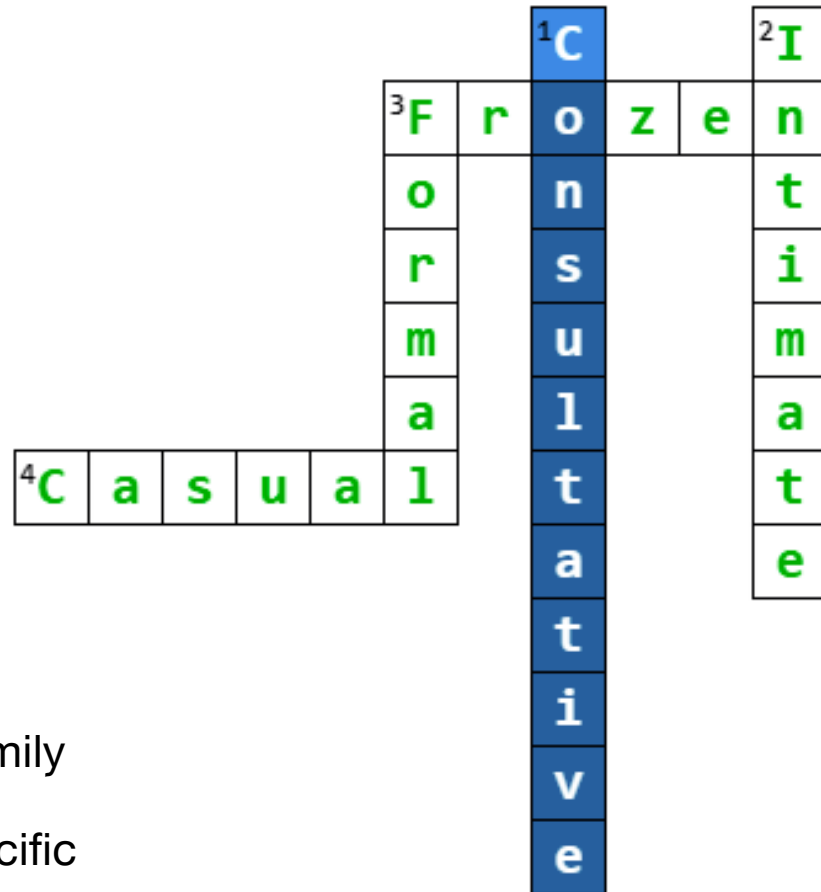
Casual, Consultative, Formal, Frozen or Intimate Register?

Across

- 3. Language that is always the same e.g. The Lord's Prayer
- 4. Language between friends. Word choice general and not specific

Down

1. Less formal standard language used in conversation
2. Language between close family or friends
3. Standard language with specific word order and complete sentences



Activity 4.1.5– Identify the Register

Please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Formal

I dunno what's the craic at all with him.

Casual

It has been confirmed that schools will reopen tomorrow.

Formal

I love you to the moon and back.

Intimate

I'd say the traffic will be chock a block later.

Casual

Give me a call if you need any more help.

Consultative

This is an announcement for flight EI412

Frozen

Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Frozen

Registers in other Languages

- In some languages there are styles or registers that must be adhered to in certain social situations.
- For example, in the MFL languages studied in Irish schools, there is a distinction between the **familiar or informal ‘you’** (speaking to a friend or family member) and the **polite or formal ‘you’** (speaking to someone in a higher position to you or in less personal encounters).

Activity 4.1.6 Register in other Languages

A. In groups, complete the table on your handout translating the formal and informal word for 'you'. Use the collective knowledge of the class first before using an online translator!

	French	German	Italian	Polish	Russian	Spanish
Informal 'You'	Tu	Du	Tu	Ty	ТЫ	Tú
Formal 'You'	Vous	Sie	Lei	Pan/Pani	Вы	Usted

B - These languages might also have to consider differentiating between singular/plural/masculine/feminine within the formal/informal register. Can you explain further and give an example?

C. Are there any other languages that you speak that also have this differentiation?

Activity 4.1.7 – Same but Different

- Create a list of words/phrases in English and any other language(s) you study or know, to highlight the different register for the same thing. When is it appropriate to use them?
- *A few examples are given to get you started:*
- **English** – loo/toilet, put up with/tolerate
- **Irish** – Le grá/Is mise le meas (letter endings -with love/yours respectfully)
- **French** – Un mec/un homme (a guy/man)
- **German** tschüss/auf wiedersehen (Goodbye)
- **Spanish** – Querido/estimado (Greeting - dear)

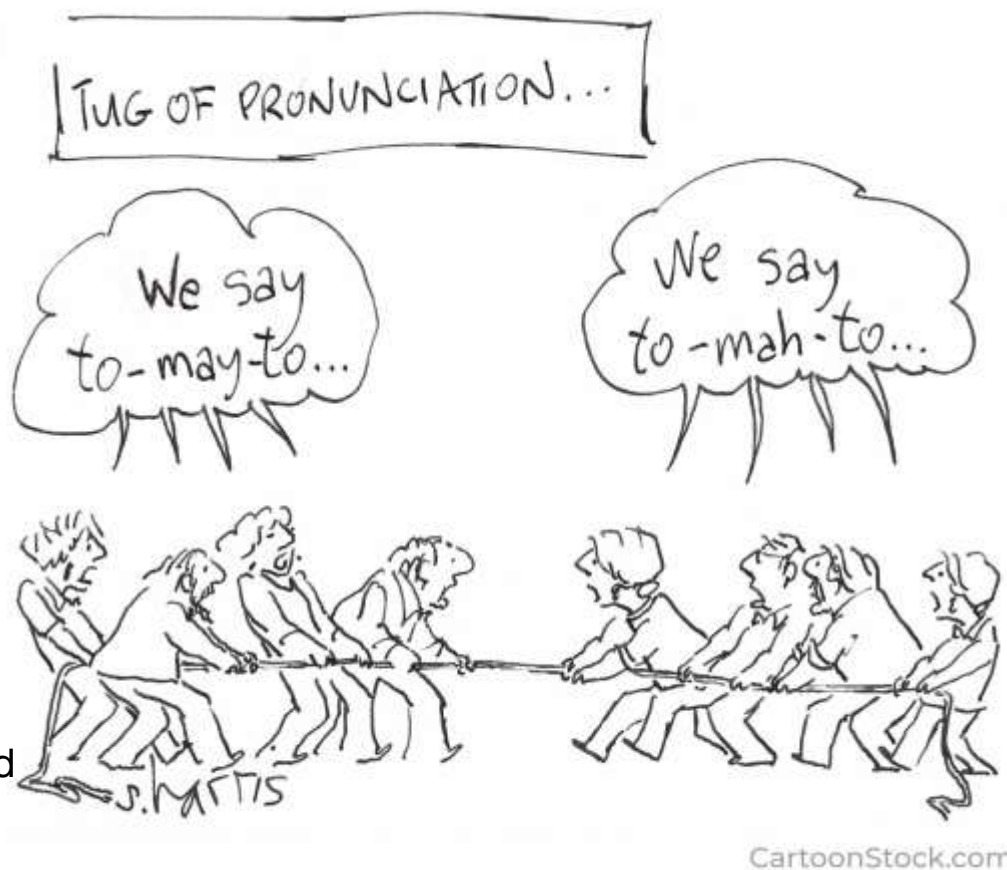
Task 4.2

Accents, Dialects and Languages of Ireland



Discussion on Accents

1. When you think of the word 'accent', what do you think of?
2. Consider all the accents that you are used to hearing around you at home, school, tv etc. What differentiates them?
3. What can an accent tell you?
4. Why do we have different accents?
5. What accents do you particularly like?
6. Are there any accents that you find more difficult to understand? Why?
7. Have you ever changed your accent? Why? In what context?
8. Have you ever judged or been judged because of your accent? Explain
9. Do you think that people might be treated differently depending on their accent? Why?



Activity 4.2.1 – The Great Scone Debate

- How do you pronounce the word? Like ‘gone’ or ‘cone’?
- Do a survey in your class, or even better, of a selection of staff in your school, to see if you all say it the same way.
- What conclusions can you draw? Why might you have different pronunciations of it?
- What or who might influence the way you say the word?



- 0-5%
- 5-10%
- 10-15%
- 15-20%
- 20-25%
- 25-30%
- 30-35%
- 35-40%
- 40-45%
- 45-50%
- 50-55%
- 55-60%
- 60-65%
- 65-70%
- 70-75%
- 75-80%
- 80-85%
- 85-90%
- 90-95%
- 95-100%

Score rhymes with "cone"

Score rhymes with "gone"

(percent who think that
scone rhymes with gone)

map by bezzleford

The Great Scone map of the United Kingdom and Ireland



Activity 4.2.2– Test your Ear

- A. Listen to the recordings from dialectsarchive.com and guess where each person is from. (country and/or region). Write your answer on your worksheet. Test your Ear Dialectsarchive.com
- A. What are your impressions when you hear these different accents? Consider the questions you discussed at the start of the lesson

Activity 4.2.3

International Dialects of English

Dialects can differ in pronunciation, grammar, spelling and/or vocabulary. The following words all mean the same things but have a different term in each dialect. How well do you know them?

For example, in **American English** they say '**elevator**' but in **British English** they use '**lift**' or the word '**movie**' is associated with **America**, whereas 'film' is traditionally used elsewhere.

Add the English word that you use for each of these too!



American English	Australian English	British English	Your English
Awesome	Beaut	Great	
Cookie	Bickie	Biscuit	
Dude	Bloke	Man	
Liquor Store	Bottle Shop	Off License	
Candy	Lollies	Sweets	
Pants	Daks	Trousers	
Lavatory	Dunny	Toilet	
Football	Footie	Soccer	
Howdy	G'day	Hi	
Gas Station	Service Station	Petrol Station	
Sneakers	Runners	Trainers	
Underpants	Undies	Underwear	

Extension Activity 4.2.4 Dialects of Ireland and the UK

- Have a go at this interactive quiz by the New York Times on the English spoken in Ireland and the UK.
- <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/15/upshot/british-irish-dialect-quiz.html>
- Is it able to indicate where you're from? How accurate is it?
- Try it out on your family or some of your teachers, especially if they are not from the same place as you.




Activity 4.2.5 The Languages of Ireland

Irish Gaelic is constitutionally the first official language of the Republic of Ireland. It is one of the oldest written languages in the world and arrived here around 2,500 years ago.

1. From the historical linguistics lessons, can you remember which group of languages within the Indo-European family that Irish Gaelic belongs to?
2. What other languages belong to the same family?
3. Which languages within that group would be more similar to Irish?
4. What are the dialects of Irish and where are they spoken?

Languages of Ireland - English

English is the second official language of Ireland and is spoken by the majority of people in Ireland. The language was first brought to Ireland in the 12th Century and started out as a minority language. However, over the course of 800 years and the political, economic and geographical climate of the times, it became the dominant language.

1. What branch of the Indo-European language tree does English belong to?

2. What languages are most similar to English? 
3. How is the structure of the English language differ to Irish? Consider the syntax and sentence structure


Sentence Order in Irish and English

- Irish – VSO
- English – SVO

Consider the English sentence “**The dog ate the food.**”

Subject: The dog

Verb: ate

Object: the food

The equivalent sentence in Irish is ***D'ith an madra an bia***:

Verb: *D'ith:* Ate

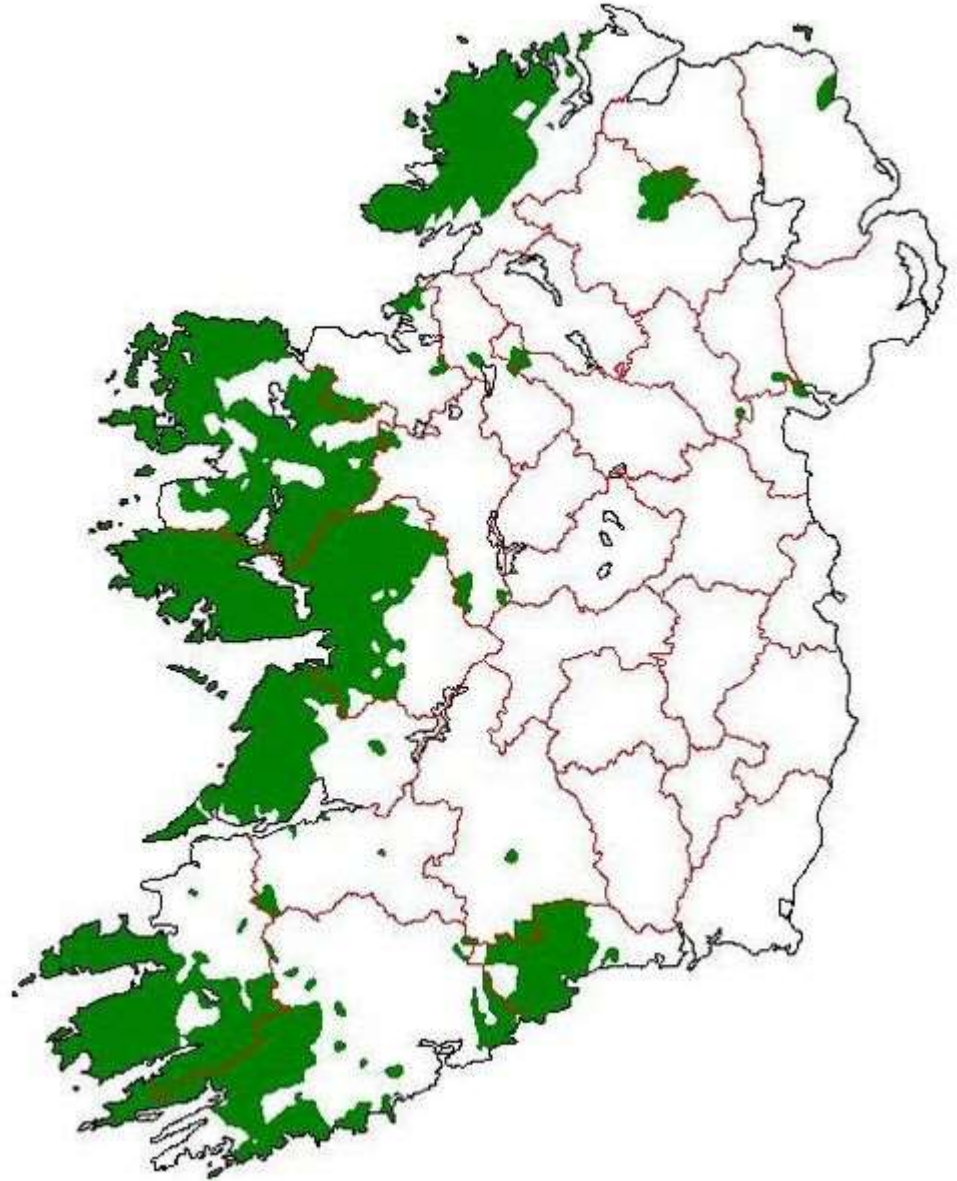
Subject: *an madra*: the dog

Object: *an bia*: the food







Activity 4.2.6

Endangered Languages

- Today Irish is spoken mainly in the Gaeltacht areas and is a required language in schools. However, it is considered an endangered language because of the small number of people that speak it here and it risks falling out of use as speakers shift to using another language e.g English.
- Consider the questions on the worksheet individually before watching the YouTube video(s) and then discussing answers in pairs or small groups. Share thoughts with the class.
- Why do Languages Die The Economist
- What does the world lose when a language dies PBS



Activity 4.2.6

1. Why would a language become endangered and potentially die?


2. What happens when a language dies out? What unexpected insights are being lost to the world with the collapse of its linguistic variety?


3. What languages are also endangered?


4. What would it mean for Ireland to have its native language, Irish, become obsolete?
5. How can we encourage minority and endangered languages within Ireland?

Surprising Endangered Languages That Are at Risk of Extinction



ENDANGERED AND EMERGING LANGUAGES ON VIKI



Activity 4.2.7 Lesser Used Languages in Ireland

- Did you know that **Ulster Scots** is known as an official minority language of Ireland? It comes from the Germanic branch of languages and is similar to English. It is found mainly in the areas of Northern Ireland where the Scottish settled and is spoken by both Protestants and Catholics.
- **Task:** Try this quiz to see how well you can understand a few Ulster Scots words and phrases. <https://discoverulsterscots.com//language-games/wheen-o-wurds-1/index.html>

Extension Activity 4.2.8 - Heritage Languages of Ireland

According to the **2016 Census**, the population of the Republic of Ireland was **4,761,865**. Of these, 612,018 Irish residents spoke a foreign language at home, an increase of 19% since 2011. Polish was the most common language, followed by French, Romanian and Lithuanian. 30% of those who spoke a foreign language at home were born in Ireland, and 57.4% of these were children.

1. Explore the Central Statistics Office website (www.cso.ie) to find out the most recent figures for the languages spoken in Ireland. You will also need the overall population for that year.
2. The CSO also provides a Census County Snapshot – find the main languages spoken in your county. How do they compare nationally?
3. Use your IT skills and create a survey for the following groups to find out what languages they know, the languages they speak at home and if and when they use Irish e.g. only in school, daily etc.
 - Again, you will need the total number for each group to be able to accurately work out percentages and charts
 - a. Your linguistics class
 - b. Transition Year Students
 - c. All students in the school (can be broken down per year group)
 - d. Staff members

Extension Activity

- 4. Input all the data you have found to an Excel Worksheet and create a chart(s) of your choice to highlight the statistics
- 5. Create a report/poster/PowerPoint to showcase all the information that you have discovered and share with the rest of the school

Task 4.3 AILO Puzzle on Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE)



4.3 AILO Puzzle on Cameroonian Pidgin English

- Student Puzzle: Cameroonian Pidgin English (and solution)
- You are tasked to match the Cameroonian Pidgin English (CPE) compounds given for each word to their likely English translations.

Thank you