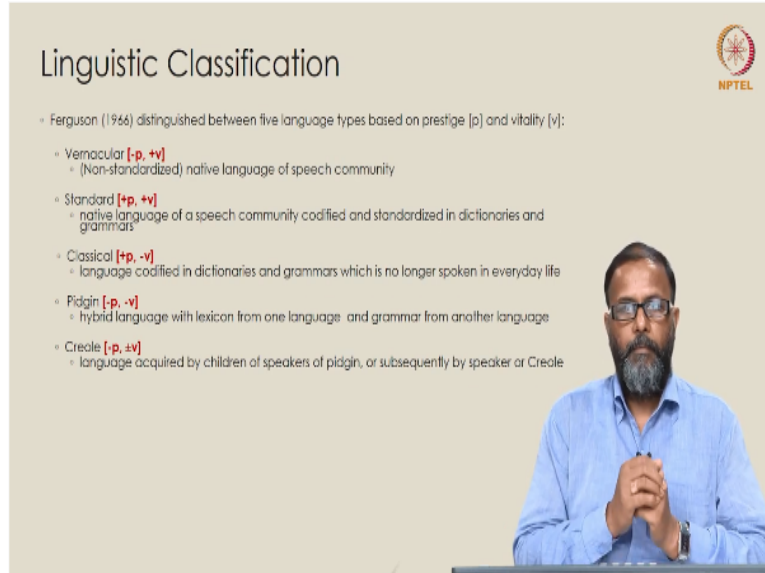


Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics
Doctor Om Prakash
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, UP-201312
Varieties of Language

Welcome to class, today we are going to talk about varieties of language and why there is a need to talk about variety of language? The fact is that we have so many nomenclature and names of the language we speak, we know them by a variety of names, are they different, are these names stand for something different or are they represent the same thing. So do we have multiple names of the same thing? So, you can say tongue, you can say language, you can say dialect, you say Pidgin, you say Creole, you say vernacular and many other names. Are they same or different or are they related or are they different categories? This question arises because most of us confuse them from one with another.

And though we have already done a detailed discussion on each of these varieties, each of these names, the way we call them, but what I am going to do today, I am going to put them all in single lecture and very briefly, we will not get into details of each of these, but I will tell you the crux, the brief explanation of these terms that we assign to different varieties. So be it language, be it dialect, be it social, be it regional dialect, be it register, be it style be it lingua franca, be it pidgin, be it creole, a lot of names of in quotes the same thing, this is what we are going to do today we are going to talk about varieties of language.

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The slide is titled "Linguistic Classification" and features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. It lists five language types based on prestige (p) and vitality (v):

- Vernacular [-p, +v]
 - (Non-standardized) native language of speech community
- Standard [+p, +v]
 - native language of a speech community codified and standardized in dictionaries and grammars
- Classical [+p, -v]
 - language codified in dictionaries and grammars which is no longer spoken in everyday life
- Pidgin [-p, -v]
 - hybrid language with lexicon from one language and grammar from another language
- Creole [+p, ±v]
 - language acquired by children of speakers of pidgin, or subsequently by speaker or Creole

A video inset in the bottom right shows a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue shirt, sitting at a desk with his hands clasped.

If you look at Ferguson 1966, he did a linguistic classification of these varieties and he assigned value in terms of prestige denoted by p and vitality denoted by v. So if you have positive p and positive v you can have negative p but positive v, you can have negative v but positive p, you can have both negative p and v both are negative. So depending on these values, Ferguson 1966 classifies these varieties, some of them are here like vernacular. What is the vernacular? And you can see the p value, the prestige value of a vernacular is negative, low, however, the vitality, the expectancy or potential of language to survive for a longer time because a huge number of speakers is speaking. So, the vitality is positive, prestige it is lower on prestige but higher on vitality and what is it, it is a non-standardized, in quotes, every time I use this term standard, I have reservation, because it is an artificially assigned value to a particular variety because of sociocultural contexts and institutional decisions and support.

Every dialect, every variety has a potential to become a standard language, but the process of standardization is external to language, we assign this prestige value. In order to understand the process of standardization you can watch the video on the same theme and you can know in detail the process of how we go about standardizing a particular variety. So coming back to vernacular, it is a non-standardized native language of speakers of a speech community and acquired at home as first language by young

children and because it is non-standardized, the domain of use is limited, it has a low value in terms of prestige, however, high value in terms of vitality.

The second variety is standard variety, standard language and if you look at standard language, the prestige value is very high. At the same time vitality value is very high and the reason is that it has institutional support, it has a very elaborate domain of use, it is used in media, it is used in education, it is used in administration, supported by government agencies, used on formal occasions so all kinds of support extended to it and it gets a wide domain of use and that is why it has a very high vitality and very high on prestige as well. So, a standard variety or language is a variety of a speech community codified and standardized in dictionaries, grammars, thesaurus and users manuals, so the whole set of resources are created to make it standard uniform and allow an assigned a very high prestige value to be used in all official occasions and supported by social and government institutions.

Then look at classical language, now when we say classical language, as predicted it will have high prestige value but negative vitality and cases are where you may not have a fluent speaker of this language but that is a variety of classical language, like Sanskrit in India, like Greek, classical Greek, Latin. So we do not have speakers, fluent speakers of these languages, these languages are not acquired as mother tongue but they are language of our texts, they are language of rituals so they are high on prestige low on vitality. So they have prestige value positive, vitality value negative.


Then we have pidgin, if you want to know more about pidgin, you watch the video on pidgin. What is pidgin? Pidgin is a language, a contact language, a hybrid language and very restricted in grammatical character, which arises out of a sustained contact between two speech communities which have no language in common and it is required for communication and exchanges and interaction. So, it is a hybrid language with lexicons from one language, the words from one language and simple grammar and structure from the other language. And this is how it is a negotiated variety between two speech communities who have no language common for interaction and mixing. So definitely it will have a negative prestige value, because nobody owns it as a mother tongue and it

will have very negative vitality because it is not going to sustain for a long time this variety, it has to change. And the extended pidgin is called Creole.

So, what is the creole, when the extended pidgin when the pidgin extends its use, domain of use and influence, the vocabulary of this variety becomes very rich. The communication function expands and little social value assigned, prestige value assigned and a time comes when the next generation starts acquiring it as mother tongue and then that extended pidgin which is acquired as mother tongue by the next generation is called creole. So predictively you will have plus minus vitality. Why plus minus vitality? It will be negotiated and depends some of the creoles still survive because of trade contact and migration and colonial outer, we have many European languages based creoles all over the world, English-based creoles, French-based creoles, so if you want to understand pidgin and creole you should watch the video that we did on pidgin and creole and birth of a new language.


But this is the classification by Ferguson 66. So you have vernacular, you have standard language, you have classical language, you have pidgin, you have a creole.

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Cause and Effect of Language Contact

- Language Extinction/Death: no native speakers
- Language Shift: One language replaces another
- Language Maintenance: A relatively stable bi-/ multilingual society
- Pidgin: a rudimentary system of communication
- Creole: creation of a new language based on pidgins or languages in contact
- Lingua Franca: Any variety that serves as the tool of communication for people who speak varieties which are not mutually intelligible



So the varieties because of the mobility and mixing of population throughout history, we have instances of continuous language contact. So this continuous language contact, when the communities come in contact with each other, it does have influence in both directions. So both of the varieties which come in contact, both of the groups of speakers who come in contact and this contact is sustained for a longer period of time is going to have an effect and influence in both the directions. So causes an effect of language contact, what happens, it may create language extinction and death for because of a shift in to other language, so it may result into language shift, where the speakers of one language shift to another language and subsequent generations start acquiring a new language at their mother tongue and their original language is lost.

So they have shifted to another language because of migration and other sociocultural reasons. What is language maintenance? Language maintenance in a contact situation where the community or the speakers try to maintain the language, the linguistic structures and cultural practices and they also acquire the dominant or majority language in that case but they also maintain their own language at the minority one. So they become bilingual, another cause and effect for contact is pidgin, birth of a new code, linguistic code which is very rudimentary in nature, very basic and it fulfills a very basic communicative need. So pidgin are born, pidgin are created, when these pidgin are

extended because of their extended social functions they fulfill a lot of other communication needs, the domain of influence expands, they are called extended pidgins.

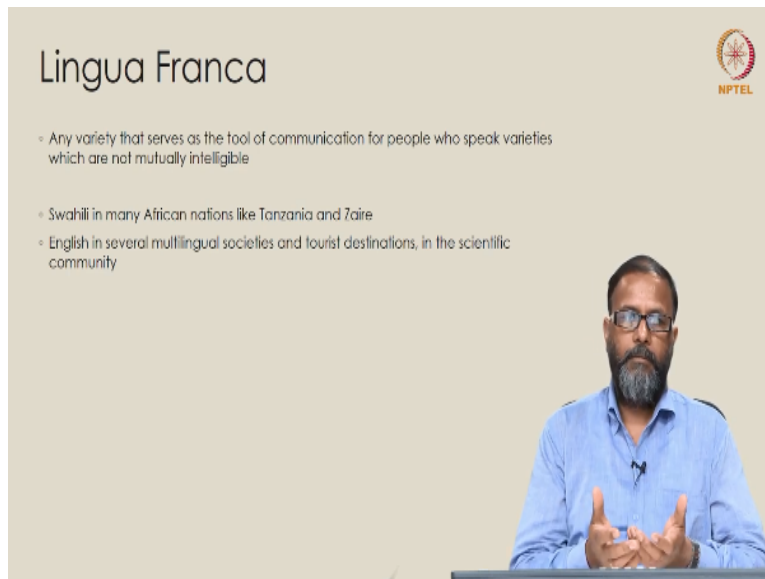
And extended pidgin can be acquired as mother tongue by the next generation, coming generations and that becomes a creole, so creole is an extended pidgin acquired as mother tongue, and this is how a new language is created. It all starts with language contact, then rudimentary structure with a very limited number of words and a very restricted communication function. But later on gradually over a period of time the vocabulary gets richer because of extended social functions of the language, of the code and also sentences get complicated and longer. So we have syntactic richness, we have lexical richness, extension in the social function and extension in their domain of influence, that is called extended pidgin, this extended pidgin later on is acquired by subsequent generations as their mother tongue and this is how a new quote, a new language is born called creole.

Then because of contact we also have lingua franca, so a variety or a code, any variety that serves as a tool for communication for people who speak a variety which are not mutually intelligible. So they do not have any single quote common, they are not mutually intelligible to each other, in that case two things can happen either pidgin is born or a third language is used as a lingua franca, as a code to negotiate.

So it is a negotiated linguistic code in a situation, social linguistic situation where two communities or two groups of people meet and interact and sustain contact for a longer period of time without any language in common. So that variety is called lingua franca. For example, English is a lingua franca, in most of the regions where Hindi may not be there in India, English becomes lingua franca when you go and travel Europe, you may not know Spanish, you may not know French, you may not know German but because you know English, it works as a lingua franca for you to go to tourist destinations in such locations in Europe. So, lingua franca is a code or a language, any language can be lingua franca in any socio linguistic situation, it is not a typical different variety but the function of a particular language which is a negotiated acceptance between two communities or two sets of speakers where no language is common.

So English is lingua franca in some regions, French is lingua franca in some regions, Hindi is lingua franca in most of the most part of the country. So when you go to north east go to Manipur, go to Arunachal, go to Mizoram and even if you do not know English you know Hindi, Hindi becomes lingua franca, so Hindi is primarily located in north but in south, in east and west wherever you go it becomes a lingua franca for those people who do not have any language in common.

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The slide is titled "Lingua Franca" and features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. It contains three bullet points:

- Any variety that serves as the tool of communication for people who speak varieties which are not mutually intelligible
- Swahili in many African nations like Tanzania and Zaire
- English in several multilingual societies and tourist destinations, in the scientific community

In the bottom right corner, there is a video inset showing a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue shirt, speaking and gesturing with his hands.


So this is what I was talking about Swahili for that matter in many African nations like Tanzania and Zaire is a lingua franca, English in several multilingual societies and tourist destinations in scientific communities, in trade and commerce English is lingua franca.

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Vernacular

- (Non-standardized) native language of speech community. There are three defining characteristics:
 - Lack of codification and elaboration
 - A language learned at home
 - Functionally restricted
 - Domain of use limited
 - Hardly any written text

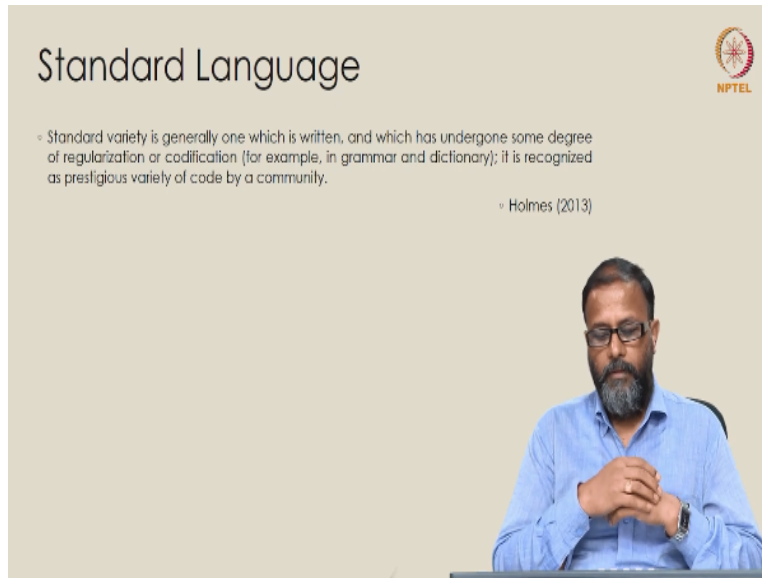


Now vernacular we just talked about another variety, a non-standardized native language of a speech community and there are four defining characteristics. I have listed five but you know one or two are overlapping, so do not go by the numbers but these are the defining characteristics, like lack of codification and elaboration.

Of course, if you recall what we discussed in our standardization process, you know that selection, codification, elaboration, acceptance are four stages. So vernacular is a vernacular because it has not been standardized, so any language which is not standardized and which is acquired as native language by a vast number of speakers is a vernacular. I do not call it non-standardized variety because this entire process of standardization is sociopolitical, so a language to be qualified as a standard or non-standard is all about socio political support extended to a particular dialect or variety, it has nothing to do with, it has no linguistic basis. So that is why we should avoid using non-standard, the term non-standard because every language is equally potential of becoming a standard. The only thing is that it's a historical development in the history of a language or it is a political intervention, social intervention where institutions and statutory bodies make deliberate attempt to standardize a particular code, particular dialect and it becomes standard language.

So a language which is spoken at your home has functional restrictions because it is not a language of media, it is not language of print media, it is not language of texts, have we hardly have printed resources, so that variety is called vernacular.

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However, you might have heard the term vernacular press, as opposed to so vernacular is a notion which is seen as in contrast with the standard press where for example, let us say Hindi press, English press, Tamil press, let us say they use standard varieties and there are languages where we have like Mizoram, Mizo so we have Mizo daily, so you have publications in Mizo. However, it is not schedule language Mizo's is not scheduled but we have a lot of media programs, we have a lot of radio broadcast, we have a lot of journals and pamphlets and dailies which are published. So vernacular press, so this is an artificially assigned terminology, we should not be confused with that, there is no linguistic basis for it.

Then of course standard language and let us go by Holmes definition of it. So, standard variety is generally one which is written. Now, this is another parameter how people judge it, which has undergone some degree of regularization or codification. For example, in grammar and dictionary, it is recognized as a prestigious variety of code by the community that is standard language. It is all about the attitude of the community


towards a particular language, they assign prestige value to it and it becomes standard with certain qualifications and modifications extended to it by statutory agencies.

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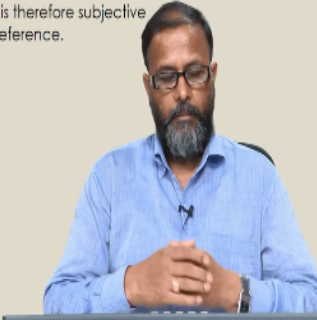
So if you look at the process how it happens we have already talked in detail but just quickly selection. So a particular dialect is selected. Codification, then it is codified, grammars are standardized, list of words and vocabulary and dictionaries are created, thesaurus are created, then they take help of language experts. They create a user's manual, script is fixed, so things are standardized and tailor-made and then acceptance where community, speech community accepts it as standard and it is taught in schools it becomes subject in the universities and this is how a dialect becomes standard language.

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Dialect and Language

- The debate on language and dialects is very old and continues till date.
- It refers to the linguistic attitude and values that we assign to a variety.
- The idea is socially, culturally, and politically rooted.
- There is no difference between a language and a dialect in terms of linguistic characteristics.
- The distinction (dichotomy) between dialect and language is therefore subjective (arbitrary) and depends upon the user's preferred frame of reference.

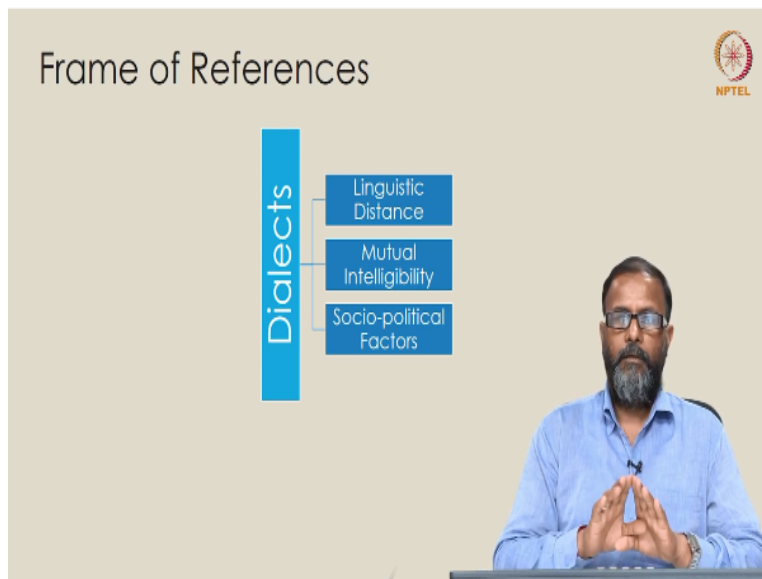


Now very interchangeably used word dialect and language and we all have our own understanding. If you go and ask any speaker which language we speak, they will name a particular variety or code, if you ask if it is a dialect or a language. Now here the confusion comes and then what happens? It depends on the prestige value that the speaker assigns to that variety and this is what exactly happens in our census data collection. So when the enumerators go and specifically in north India it is very prevalent where the generators go and the speakers Bhojpuri speakers, Bajika speakers, Braj speakers, Agri speakers, Bundali speakers, majority of them identify Hindi as their mother tongue. And we have more than 40 languages listed under Hindi as its dialect, interesting, and you need to understand that Hindi is relatively a new language compared to because if you look at the history Bhojpuri, history of the Awadhi, history of Braj, Hindi has emerged out of upper branch later part of it history but Hindi includes because of the intelligibility Hindi includes all these languages as is dialect.

It is all about the attitude of the speaker towards the language and we have done a very detailed discussion on language and dialect but just a quick review here to make you understand. Dialect refers to the linguistic attitude and values that we assign to a particular variety and this idea is socially and culturally, politically motivated, otherwise linguistically there is no difference between language and dialect. If I am speaking

English I am speaking a particular dialect of English. So nobody speaks the language, we all speak a particular variety, a particular dialect, if you are speaking Tamil, which Tamil are you talking about. If I speak Hindi, which Hindi I am talking about, which variety of Hindi I am talking about. So we all speak a dialect, though we aspire to speak a standard form of it but we will speak a dialect, we call it language because we assign high prestige value to what we speak.

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And if you want to understand the frames of references how we judge a language and dialect there are three frameworks linguistic distance, so we need to see whether language A is closely related to standard variety, it may be closely related, it is a dialect, if it is distant whether linguistic differences are more at the level of morphology, syntax and usages, it is a distinct language. Dialects are also determined in terms of mutual intelligibility, so if two varieties are mutually intelligible, even if they look so different but if people understand each other they are considered dialects of the same language, dialects of a language. And of course, socio-political factors where the prestige value is important, so what value the speaker assigns to a particular variety, the speaker will choose to call it a dialect or language. So there is hardly any difference, as a linguist we do not distinguish.

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REGIONAL DIALECTS



Regional dialects are spoken by the people of a particular geographical area within a speech community;


- Madurai Tamil
- Chennai Tamil
- Bhojpuri- Nagpuriya, Purabi
- Angika etc.



So regional dialects, the regional variety, the standard language and this variant spoken in a particular geographical location like Madurai Tamil, Chennai Tamil, so Tamil standard Tamil and then we have varieties, differences but they are mutually intelligible but distinctions and differences can be seen. Madurai Tamil a dialect, a regional dialect, Chennai Tamil regional dialect or other parts of Tamil.


Bhojpuri for that matter, now Bhojpuri is one language but nobody speaks Bhojpuri, everybody speaks a variety of it. So Nagpuriya, Purabi depending on which location are you talking about Angika for that matter. So regional dialects are those dialects which are restricted to a particular region or geographical location, so a variety of language which is restricted to a particular geographical region is called traditional direct.

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SOCIOLECTS

- Socioclects are spoken by the members of a particular group or stratum of a speech community.
- A variety of language used at a particular stage in its historical development may be termed as temporal dialects such as Prakrit and Pali in Ancient India.




Then Socioclects, so within the same speech community, a particular social class speaks a particular variety, the same language but with but some differences in terms of lexical choices in terms of some syntactical structures, expressions, so that you find differences and these differences are associated with a particular social class, socioclects.

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Register

- **Register generally denotes specific ways of speaking associated with particular professions or social groups;**
- Registers are, therefore, situationally conditioned discourse oriented varieties of a language.
 - scientific,
 - religious,
 - legal,
 - commercial,
 - of airport/Railway announcers,
 - of telephone operators,
 - call centres etc.




Then register this is also a very widely used term. So registers generally denote specific ways of speaking associated with a particular profession and social group. So it is not a

distinct language it is a variation which is restricted in a particular domain, so I am speaking Hindi, but if I am giving a speech, let us say on any topic in physics, I will be speaking Hindi but I will use certain words which are not used in common everyday's life, common expressions. So a very niche and categorized expressions used in a particular profession, so science has its own register, irrespective of the fact that you are an English speaker you are also an English speaker but you do not speak English the way you speak in the streets and the way you speak while giving lecture on quantum physics.

So you will be using a different set of jargon, technical words, expressions which are not commonly used, so you have religious registers, you have scientific registers, you have legal registers, you have commercial registers, you might have seen airport, railway announcements they are frozen.

Similar announcements everywhere, particular style, a particular set of words, a telephone as operators call centers the way they talk, they have their own register. So such professions and domains of use also determine what variety are you going to use of the same language, so that is not a dialect, that is not a different language it is domain specific, specific user-centric use of language called register.


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Style

- When we speak very formally or very informally, our choice is governed by circumstances.
- Ceremonial occasions: Highly formal speech;
- Public lectures: Less formal;
- Casual conversation: Quite informal; and
- conversations between intimates: Informal and casual.
- **Style is most often used to discuss differences in formality.**
- Level of formality depends on a variety of factors:
 - the kind of occasion;
 - the various social, age, and other differences that exist between the participants;
 - the particular task that is involved: writing or speaking;
 - the emotional involvement of one or more of the participants; etc.

◦ Ref: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics, Seventh Edition by Ronald Wardhaugh and Janet M. Fuller, 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



And then finally style, style refers to degree of formality and you might have noticed when you talk to your friend your style is different, when you talk to your father your style is different, when you talk to a teacher in a classroom your style is different, when you talk to the same teacher in a market style is different. So a style refers to degree of formality, the setting and occasion when you speak, so when are you giving public lecture like our leaders they are less formal but when you are doing casual conversation with friends and family very informal, but when you are making announcements in a public place highly formal, if you are performing a religious ritual, highly formal.

So the degree of formality determines your style, is it formal, is it informal, is it highly formal, is it less formal, highly informal, less informal, casual, so it is most often used to discuss differences in formality. So these are some names associated with the variety we speak, the code we have, the language we speak and they are all overlapping and these distinctions in case of language, dialect, vernacular and standard are all very categorical in the sense that standard language is not a linguistic term.

We give this term a standard language because the particular dialect has undergone some standardization process and a high prestige value is assigned, institutional, it gets institutional support, so it is not superior to any other dialect which is not standard. Language is not superior to vernacular, dialect is not superior to vernacular, dialect is not

inferior to a standard language. It is all about how we assign a prestige value. Linguistically speaking, there is no difference between language and dialect. Linguistically speaking, there is no difference between vernacular and language. Any variety which is being acquired by a human child as a mother tongue is a language. Now if you call it a dialect, if you call it a vernacular it is socio-political position that we take and prestige value that we assign.

So which is external to language, but if you look at it from a purely linguistic point of view, language, dialect, vernacular they are all the same, we all speak a dialect. A language becomes language because we assign certain external elements to it like writing system, so we believe that some languages which do not have a writing system are dialects, some languages which do not have a standard form and are not used in formal occasions are called vernaculars. So, these are all our socio-political positions that we take towards a particular language and they all refer to linguistic attitudes. So this is it for now we will continue our discussion with some more themes in our next class, thank you very much.