

SLGGS Introduction to Sociolinguistics

Draft Programme

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WEEK	Title	Content
1	Varieties of English	<p>Accents and dialects (interactive, based around 6 short clips)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a dialect?• What is an accent? How do we recognize them?• ‘Matched guise’ tests: listen to 6 speakers – rate them for intelligence, trustworthiness, friendliness etc.• Letters and sounds <p>Where do these people come from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• North/South features• How we recognize regional accents <p>How did you rate the speakers? How do you think others did?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accent prejudice: Steph McGovern; Digby Jones on Alex Scott• Arbitrariness in language
2	‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ Language	<p>Setting the scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some kinds of language are more prestigious than others• Where does this idea come from? <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who do you think speaks well? (And badly?) Why?• Are there ‘sophisticated’ and ‘primitive’ languages?• Are some languages easier to learn?

		<p>Standardization and codification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do some language varieties acquire prestige and others not? (Think back to Week 1) • If all languages are equal, why do some die? • If you lived in Wales, would you learn Welsh or German? • Do our languages condition the way we think? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sapir-Whorf hypothesis <p>How English became a standard language, and later a world language</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Variation in Society (What 3 New York department stores told us about English)</p>	<p>Setting the scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we measure variation? • William Labov's experiment in Saks, Macy's and Klein's • Non-prevocalic 'r' in New York and England <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think he found? Why? • What would happen if you did this in England? • What stores would you choose? • Are you conscious of speaking differently in different situations? • Have you had a job where you speak differently to different customers? <p>What Labov found</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation tied to status of store (not necessarily of speaker) • Where all this led: sociolinguistics and language change
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">How do languages change?</p>	<p>Setting the scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know languages change: how does it happen? • Change at all levels: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of people use the following words? • Do you know people who say this? Who?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you distinguish <i>which/witch?</i> <i>Paw/pore/pour?</i> Which of these words are old-fashioned? Which would you use? • What do you think of speakers who use this kind of construction • What other changes have you noticed: things your (grand)parents might say that you don't? <p>How a change 'catches on'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>off/lost/froth</i> in British English • Non-prevocalic 'r' in British English (why Americans have it and Aussies don't) • Martha's Vineyard • Changes happening on <i>your</i> doorstep! (Estuary English isn't new!)
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Language and gender</p>	<p>Setting the scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do men and women speak differently? Are there words that only men/women use? • Do you think men and women are judged differently according to their speech? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can your brother get away with things that you can't?! • Can you recognize a person's gender from their speech (e.g. on the phone)? <p>Language, gender and class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from sociolinguistic studies • The sociolinguistic gender pattern • Covert prestige <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think we see these patterns? • Why might men appear to favour non-standard language? <p>Women, language and change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sociolinguistic gender paradox: women seem to lead linguistic change • Some examples, and a possible explanation (but come to my IVE talk in Jan!) A possible explanation (but come to my IVE lecture in Jan!)