Chapter 1 – What is language?

- Introduction
  Even though we use language constantly, we don’t normally pay attention to it. When we do, it’s usually because we’re interested in the topic or the speaker. Everyone has his own way of using language; language varies depending on the people using it, context or society in which it all takes place. Language can tell us about people as individuals, as members of group and about how people interact with other people. Linguistics describe language as a system of rules that allows people to tell jokes, write poetry, pay a compliment, it allows us to be precise and persuasive, ambiguous or charming.

- Why study language?
  Fairclough argues that the ability to understand how language functions, to think about it in different ways, is important to understand society and other people. Thinking about language can help to understand power, how people live together, it can assist in resisting oppression, protecting the powerless and building a good society. Language can tell us about: how our brains understand and process language (psycholinguistics), how we learn languages and so how best to teach them, how social factors (like age, gender, class, ethnicity) affect the way people use language, what is distinctive about literature and poetry (we talk about style) and how people in different cultures use language to do things.

The rules of language: prescription vs description
  For linguistics, meaning is use: we don’t judge a use of a word as correct or incorrect but what the word means using it in different ways. We have to realize a distinction between description and prescription.

  **Description:** is describing what people do with language.

  **Prescription:** we talk about prescription when people make rules to say that a certain use is correct. Language and use of language change. The prescriptive rules don’t seem to have changed, but usage rules have. Prescriptivists seem to think that if language changes, if their rules are broken, the heart of language will be torn out. For linguists, these changes are inevitable, as a language is used, rules change, while old rules may no longer work, new ones can be found. Prescriptivists think that breaking the rules will lead to breaking the language itself, language has particular rules which should be followed, and those who don’t adhere to rules are responsible for ‘ruining’ the language. For example, they blame Americanisms like ‘vacation’ for the destruction of the standard English.

Bad language: jargon
  Another complaint is about the use of jargon, which is not about rules being broken but about language changing such that it becomes incomprehensible. We can define ‘jargon’ as the use of specialised words and expressions that are difficult to understand for people not part of the specialised group. It’s important to remember that the use of specialised words is something necessary. These is an important element of power involved in jargon; this language has different kinds of powers one of these is the power to make us laugh. Jargon is something that needs to be learnt, in a semantic and syntactic level, this acquisition is not easy but impressive.

- What is language?
  The answer at the question ‘what is language?’ can only be done once we know why we’re asking it. We know that different groups of people can be represented by a use of a language, but to understand it, we need to know what it means to say that ‘language is a system’.
Language: a system
If we look closely at language, we find that it is in fact a rule-governed system. This may make it sound like language is “controlled” by rules that prevent it from changing, but this is not what we mean by “system”. Language is not governed by rules in the same way that society is governed by laws. Linguists don’t decide rules and try to make everyone follow them, they look at language to discover the rules that make the communication possible. As language changes, new rules are described. The rules in a language tell people how to use different parts of that language; for example, if we hear a word that we don’t know, probably we would already know how to use it in a sentence, or how to make its plural. Linguists work at discovering these rules in a particular language, this work can be used to say something about language in general, so we can come to conclusions about all languages, grouping them according to some structural criteria. Every systems of communication have rules, for example the light of the traffic signal tell us if we can walk or if we must stay.

Rules in theory and practice
The theorical linguist Noam Chomsky made an important distinction between competence and performance. To have competence in a language means to have knowledge of the grammar. Grammar is all rules that need to be followed according to produce well-formed sentences, so a competent speaker have to know the syntax, the morphology, the semantics, the phonetics and the phonology that make up the grammar of the language. Performance is putting our knowledges in practice; the way people use language. It’s possible however, for a well-formed sentence to be inappropriate, the speaker may have a grammatical competence, but lack communicative competence (sociolinguistic competence).

The potential to create new meanings
Rules of language allow us to create new words, which is something vary important because when objects are made, for example, we need to know how to call them. In deciding this, we follow the rules about how to construct an acceptable word in whatever language we’re using. We can also use a word in a new way, like when we say “sick!” used as “cool”. It’s possible to create new words by changing their function, for example by changing them from a noun to a verb or from a erb to an adjective. What’s fascinating about new words is that most of the time we understand what they mean without having to look them up in a dictionary.

Language: multiple functions
Language can have different functions, it can be used to refer to things, to demonstrate power or to amuse. Roma Jakobson argues that “language must be investigated in all the variety of its functions”. He made a distinction between “code” and “message”; on one side of his schema we find the speaker, the person who is speaking, on the other side we find the addressee, the person being spoken. For the message to be communicated, there has to be a medium of communication, which may be verbal, written or even visual, this will have some influence on how the message is decoded. Wherever code is chosen (words or hand signals) it must be one that both addresser and adressee have access to. The message will also be sent and received in a context (a social and linguistic environement that frames the message). Jacobson identify six factors, each one of them determines a different function of language:

FACTORSFUNCTIONS:

**Addresser; emotive:** to the addresser, he gives an emotive function. When we pay attention to the speaker and about what the speaker says.

**Context; referential:** to the context he gives a referential function. It allows us to ask someone something.
Message; poetic: to the message he gives a poetic function. We pay attention to the appearance of the message.

Contact; phatic: to the contact he gives a phatic function. The channel of communication.

Code; metalingual: to the code he gives a metalingual function. When we use language to talk about language.

Addressee; conative: to the addressee he gives a conative function. This function helps us to describe messages that are intended to have an effect on the audience.

Language diversity
Even though English is widely used around the world, there are many varieties. We can classify these varieties according to linguistic and political considerations, even though we might think that a language variety can be identified only geographically. For example, we may think that everyone in England speaks the same English and everyone in America speaks the same American English, but actually there are differences in the way in which people pronounce words so differences can be dealt with in terms of accent and dialect. However, this doesn’t make understanding difficult because today we can find many varieties of English in the same city.

- Power
We saw that language has many functions, that means that there are different ways in which power can be exercised. With language, it’s possible to insult, persuade, command, compliment, encourage or make a promise.

Ideology
In everyday contexts, when we talk about ‘ideology’ we usually mean something negative or marked. Actually, ideology is a way of describing beliefs or behaviors that are natural. Ideology is a way of talking about ideas that we believe in, is a way of talking about our ways of thinking or acting. Power is supported by ideologies, and everyone has their own ideology. Looking at language closely allows us to map these ideologies.

The manufacture of consent (produzione del consenso)
The notion of the manufacture of consent was created by Noam Chomsky. He examines media and political representation of events. He identifies five ‘filters’ that influence the representations finally produced, some of these filters were ownership, where our new stories come from, how groups and individuals respond to stories or if they complain. The fifth filter is that communism must be avoided at all costs. The manufacture of consent seeks to capture the effect of these five filters.

Ideology in action: advertising
Powerful words and slogans are common when companies want us to buy something. Advertisements are an excellent place to see the way in which language can have power. The use of celebrities is not accidental. Audiences have a positive emotional connection with these famous people: they want to be successful and beautiful too. For example if a supermodel says that she uses a particular face cream, people are influenced to believe her and the words she uses, so we talk about the power to persuade people, thanks to the words and the speaker.

Interpellation
Language is used to address people and thus position them. For example, when a police officer speaks to a person, that person is positioned in relation to the officer as an individual and also positioned in a relationship of power. This positioning is called ‘interpellation’, a word that describes the way people are addressed and positioned by ideologies.

Summary
Understanding language as a system, with rules, is important in exploring the kinds of variation that we find. Studying language allows us to understand the way in which people exercise power. The rules that
we’re interested in are those which explain what people actually do. Language changing is inescapable and unstoppable.

Chapteer 2 – Language thought and representation

- Language as a system of representation

Language is a way to representing reality, but there are other signs that we can use to do this, like taking a photo or paint a picture. All signs have two parts: a concept and something that is connected to the concept. For example the pedestrian signals that tell us when we can walk or not, are signs because of the connection between the red light and the concept of stopping. Words in language are signs. For de Saussure, a sign is made up of two things: a signifier (significante) and signified (significato). A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern. A signifier needs at least one signified to be a sign. The arbitrary connection between words and their meaning was one of F. de Saussure’s greatest insights. De Saussure is the founder of structuralism, which had great influence on linguistics.

Different kinds of language

De Saussure distinguishes three kinds of language. The first of these is ‘langage’ which has been translated ad ‘human speech’ including its psychological and physical aspects, belonging both to the individual and to societies. It is the most general category and contains the following two. This two parts of langage are ‘langue’ and ‘parole’. We can think of langue as competence and parole as performance (Chomsky). Langue is the system that makes parole possible, we can think of it as the rules of a game, and it exists only within a collectivity. Every instance of language in the world is parole. As speakers, we performe parole acts. It’s the relationship between langue and parole that is important. The system and rules of langue can be changed; one way of doing it is to legislate, like the dictator Turkmenistan did, but this is vary uncommon, is more usual for change to be slow and to involve many people. For example individuals start using a new word, or an existing word in a new way, and when most of people actually use this word we can say that it has become part of the langue, a word that everybody has accepted and that everybody understands. We don’t have a direct access to langue, the only way we have to access to langue is through parole acts.

Signs and structure

A sign needs a signifier and a signified to be a sign, but actually, a sign needs some more, it needs other signs. This means that, the meaning of a linguistic sign depends on its relation to other signs. In language whatever distinguishes one sign from the others constitutes it. We know that language changes, and we can talk about these changes over time with the terms ‘synchronic’ and ‘diachronic’. The first, synchronic, refers to a particular point in time. The second, diachronic, allows u sto talk about how language changes over time.

- Linguistic diversity

Because of the relationship between signifier and signified, and because signs take their meaning from their relationship to other signs, there is manyways for languages to describe reality. We can call this linguistic diversity, and it is the first part of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, an anthropological linguist.

Linguistic relativism and determinism

In every language there are many ways of representing the world, these representation are the result of a particular way of thinking about the world. For example, a botanist thinks and talks about plants depends on the botanical language, if a new plant is discovered, that will have to be named and the botanist has to use botanic terms to do it. So this botanist’s worldview can be call ideology of botany, that includes values, ideas and features that define botany as a discipline. An
ideology derives from beliefs and values which are shared collectively by social groups, and when an ideology is the ideology of a particularly powerful social group, it is said to be dominant, and here is when ideology become power, when it changes the way things are represented according to its values.

- Other angles of telling
  When we speak or write, we constantly make choices. We decide which word we use from a number of possible alternatives, and we decide what kind of grammatical structure we’ll use, maybe we’ll use an active form or passive form. When these choices are made, we’re making a decision not only about language ans signs, but also about how we represent the world. There are two axes we refer to in order to discuss the choices that are made in a sentence. The syntagmatic axis describes the order in which words are placed, the paradigmatic axis is used to refer to all the other words that could have been chosen.

Transitivity
  Transivity verb needs to take a direct object; for example, ‘hit’ requires a direct object (someone being hit) while ‘sit’ doesn’t. Transivity analysis is concerned with who does what to whom and to do it we can refer to a trasivity model that specify the actor, the process, the goal and the circumstances of the phrase. The actor is the doer, the process is the verb, the goal is that which is done to and the circumstances are the details that are often given.

- Summary
  The way the world is represented matters. Every language choice, whether we intend it or not, demostrates an ideology. It’s important to remember that we all have habitual ways of thinking about the world and this is reflected in the habitual choices we make in language. Because it’s habitual, when we agree, we may well describe the language use as jergon or political correctness. To be able to think about these issues of representation we need tools such as transitivity analysis to describe these choices.

Chapter 3, Language and Politics

- What do we mean by ‘politics’?
  Politics is a term most often connected to those who run states and cities, but actually when we talk about ‘politics‘ we talk about a way to show power, a power that can obviously be practise on people but it’s a kind of power that can be used to change the language and like a tool of persuation.

Tools of persuation
  Politics could be a tool of persuation, for example, we can mention the Obama’s slogan ‘yes we can’ that focused on the need of America for change. This art of persuation is called “rhetoric”, which is a skill that can help us to persuade an audience. In making a persuasive speech we have to follow five steps: idea, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. The style is fundamental for communication and persuasion; it’s the way that a person shapes a message that can influence people. Politicians use language to promote, protect and legitimate their power and authority, they make speeches that have to be really carefully crafted to be heard as the voice of collectivity, so they pay atteention to every single word they use in their speeches, and they use thigs like metaphors or similes to increase the concept, the rule of three (that can make things easier to remember), parallelisms, euphemisms and dyseuphemisms.
• Hidden and plain sight
We have to know that everything is political; that means that all situations we are involved in are a result of politics but we are not always aware of this. We don’t always consider that perhaps our thoughts, ideas and actions have been formed by others.

How to do the hiding
Presuppositions and implicature are the terms used to describe assumptions which can be drawn from a text or what someone communicates, but not in an explicit manner. This means that someone can have an intended message but he/she doesn’t make it clear; using these techniques allows the speaker “to clutch at straws”, so if I might understand something, the other speaker can deny my conclusion. Presupposition is like an assumption, something that is taken for granted. An implicature is a conclusion based on what is said that depends on what we know about the world and the communicative situation.

• Ideological choice as political choice
Politics has to do with power, governing and authority. Politicians can persuade people to give them that power using language some rhetorical skills that they have, and ideologies. Ideologies can be explained as a set of ideas that are used to view the world, everyone has an ideology and when there is a dominant world view, we can describe it as the hegemonic ideology.

New Media
It is important to remember that media allow to share persuasive messages to many people. Digital technology connects people all over the world, and the internet has become a place for social engagement. Now everyone can participate in political discussions and ideological debate without censorship or restrictions. For example, on YouTube people can share videos where they can give their own ideas or reflections, then people can comment or like it, which is more like “agree”, and unlike it, which is more like “disagree”. Some vlogger, which are guys that have a channel on YouTube, use language and their particular identities to persuade people to watch their channel.

Chapter 4, Language and the media
• Introduction
Media include television, radio and mass media, and it is in a constant state of flux. The speaker’s message can be shaped in a various ways, it depends on the form of the media, like newspapers or television programs.

• News coverage
When we tell a new story, the choice that we make in using language can change the message, for example, ‘A shot B’ is different then ‘B was shot’, we can make some people or events more visible than others, that is what Fairclough calls ‘degrees of presence’. When we talk about a news, for example, it’s more indicated to be in a neutral position, here is when we talk about ‘ideological square’ which consists of an ‘us’ vs ‘them’ with good and bad acts of both parts and things can be emphasize or mitigate in both parts. A tabloid is a newspaper of small format, usually with illustrated material. A broadsheet is a newspaper of larger format which gives news in a more extended form.

• Media voices: accent, dialect
When we listen a news in television, for example, most of the time we listen a standard variety of the official language with a middle-class accent; for example it’s more possible to hear ‘six O’clock’ then ‘six a clock’. This choice has a lot to do with power; the news has authority only when it is presented in a standard language, because it makes you appear more cultured and (as Fairclough said) when you have knowledge you have power.
**Register: hoaxes, satire and comedy**

When we are listening to a news we usually aspect to hear topics presented in a formal way; here is when we talk about register. The register is a kind of language that we use in a specific situation to be appropriated. It has been defined as linguistic variation according to the context of use, and if you have competence in registers it can be a way to access to power. There are three aspects to register: field, which is the topic or subject, the tenor, which is the style and the mode, which is the channel of communication used. Obviously, there are different kinds of register, depending on the kind of programme, for example we can play with register to make satirical comments, or ironic utterances. Fairclough suggests that it is useful to think of genres in terms of the choices made in four different categories: the first is activity type, that is what’s going on in the texts (interview, work meeting), the second is style, that can be formal or informal, the third is mode of communication (spoken, written, visual) and the fourth is voice, that is who is speaking in the text.

**Public participation in the media**

There are lot’s of opportunities to be heard and red in the media, that’s because of new technology that give us new kinds of audience participation. For example, we have discussion programmes that allow people to discuss about some issues, they can talk about their own experiences and give their ideas. In some programme there even are a way to involve people using social networks. But people can be not only partecipat but they can be producers, for example with youtube, where you can create your own channel and you can talk about some issues and people can comment and put a like you to say ‘I agree’ or they can unlike you to say ‘I disagree’.

**Mobile and online interaction**

Talking about ‘media’ and new technology, we have to mention the accessibility of internet on mobile phone that allows us to be connected to the world constantly. However, the mobile communication and online communication have the power to make us closer but also to make a distance between us. For example, with texting and emailing the face to face or voice to voice is missing, unless we use something like Skype where we can do both things, but it is still a problem because it ruins the connection with people, for example we can mention the global phenomenon of the fired by message.

**Rules and standards in new modes**

Today texting is vary popular among young people, today we talk about ‘textspeak’ which is a creative way of texting, in which we can communicate that we are happy or sad with an emoticon, of we can say something using only a single character to say an entire word like the “@” to say “at”. This phenomenon is vary developed, and today we have smartphones that come with emoticons as standard, young people have created a kind of “creative code”, that they have made understandable to be sure to be understood.

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Chapter 5, Language and Gender

**Views of gender**

Before talking about language and gender we have to make a distinction between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’; sex is a biolocal thing, gender is a cultural thing.

**Sexism in the language system**

When we talk about gender, we usually have to mention the sexism that is hidden in language. When we talk about ‘sexism in language’ we usually refer to some characteristics and stereotypes in our language.
Symmetry and asymmetry
In lexis, for example, we can mention words like ‘man’, to make the female form we have to put the prefix ‘wo’ to make the word ‘woman’, and the same for ‘male’ and ‘female’.

Titles
Another way of sexism in language is hidden in titles; for example, if we say ‘Mr’ we refer to a man but also to a young man, but when we have to refer to a woman or young girl we have to make a distinction, so we use ‘Miss’ or ‘Mrs’.

Unmarked and marked terms
We can also find some examples of sexist language in the use of marked or unmarked terms; for example, ‘lion’ is an unmarked word that refers to any lion, but we can make a distinction, if I say ‘lion’ I could refer to a male lion, but if I put the suffix ‘ess’ I can make the female form ‘lioness’.
Other examples are prince and princess or actor and actress.

Semantic
Another example of sexism in language, is hidden in semantic. For example, if I want to refer to a boy who is single I’ll use the word ‘bachelor’ that has a positive connotation, but if I want to refer to a girl who is single, I’ll use the word ‘spinstor’ that has not a positive connotation.

The talk of woman and man
Stereotyped views shared by people and studies on language and gender tell us that there are gender differences in speech style, like when we say that women talk too much, but actually researches have reported that man talk more than woman. Researchers have found interesting differences between woman and man in the way they use language in everyday life; for example, we can say that women tend to use a standard forms of pronunciation and grammar than man.

Turn-taking
There are gender differences with respect to turn-taking. Man interrupt woman systematically in everyday conversation with friends or partners, but it also depends on the status of both parts; for example it’s easier that a man interrupt his girlfriend than his female boss. We also have to make a differentiation between interruptions and overlaps which is a very short instance of simultaneous speech. For example, we can mention minimal responses like ‘mhm’ or ‘yeah’ which are a sign of active listenership used by woman most of the time.

Hedges
There is a widespread belief that woman use more hedges such as ‘well’, ‘you know’, ‘like’, terms like ‘maybe’ or ‘perhaps’ and modal form like ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘would’. All these forms are used to mitigate the utterance, and most of the time this is helped by an intonation.

Chapter 6, Language and ethnicity

What do we mean by ‘ethnicity’?
Before talking about how ethnicity may be expressed in language, we have to know what actually we mean when we say ‘ethnicity’. With this word we indicate people who believe themselves to be part of the same group, which can be large or a small group, or a socially dominant or subordinate group. However, we have to say that usually dominant group don’t define themselves as ‘ethnicity’ but they use this word to indicate people with different connations than their, because it is the dominant group, it is not generally problematic in terms of definition.

How many languages?
Places like USA or UK are characterized by a predominant language, which is English in this case. But monolingualism is not the norm in many places; there are some places in which people speak more than one language, that phenomenon is called bingualism, that means that one person can
speak two or more languages, so that person can be bilingual or multilingual. In some continents, such as Africa, speaking more than one language is not only a social thing but is actually a fact of life; something that you have to do in order to communicate with the people you come into contact with.

- **Only one English?**
  We know that there are many different varieties of English, which we can call non-standard varieties, spoken by ethnic minorities, that have their own rules, grammar and logic. Some people can’t tolerate an English that is different from the correct form of the standard English, which is spoken by the majority of people and it makes it the dominant language, and dominant language have access to power.

- **Ethnicity and Racism**
  The word ‘ethnicity’ is often associated with a minority group, in terms of number or power. When we talk about ethnicity in language we usually deal with racism. So, first of all, we have to make a distinction between race and ethnicity; that is race refers to a physical thing and ethnicity is a sociocultural thing. When someone does racism obviously uses language to make discourse, in writing or speaking, and uses pejorative words to emphasize differences and deviances, or uses stereotyped belief, for example when we talk about immigrants, it’s easy to hear someone calling them ‘terrorists’.

- **Ethnolect, ethnic group + dialect**
  The ethnolect is a variety of a language associated with a certain ethnic or cultural subgroup. For example, ebonics is an ethnolect of African Americans. The HRT (high rising terminal) is used to describe the way a speaker’s intonation goes up at the end of the utterances.

- **What makes an authentic ethnicity?**
  To be part of a particular ethnicity we have to show some characteristics, sometimes having a particular ability to speak a language it’s enough to have an ethnic identity (covert prestige), but sometimes we need to show some markers like some kinds of moves, or a way to wear cloche or even being able to dance in a certain way.

- **Language as a marker of ethnicity**
  A person’s first or native language is called L1. The language(s) a person learns after the L1 is called L2 or second language.

- **Code-Switching and Crossing**
  Code switching is a term that refers to the use of two or more codes in a conversation or even in the same utterance. It can happen consciously or unconsciously and there are a variety of reasons why a speaker may switch codes, for example it can happen when we talk with someone who can only use a particular code. Crossing or code crossing, is the practice of using language varieties that belong to ethnic groups that the speaker doesn’t belong to.

Chapter 7, language and age

- **Age as a factor in language variation**
  Language is a fundamental human activity through which we communicate our particular representation of the world, that allows us to transmit values and beliefs from one generation to the next. We often used some features of the language to have a clue about the age of the speaker; for example we know that a child usually call his father ‘daddy’ or a mother can call her son ‘darling’. There are many linguistic differences between age groups, for example some researchers have found that older people are less likely to pronounce the /r/ in words such as ‘floor’ or that the pronunciation of the vowel in words such as ‘bell’ or ‘tell’ varied according to the age of the
speaker. Age distinctions are frequently reflected in the world’s languages, for example in Italian children are usually addressed with the second person ‘tu’. There are two factors that are useful to know; first, children and the elderly are differentiated from the rest of society not only by the special social, economic and legal status but also by the language which is used to describe and categorize them; second, they have their own particular communication abilities.

- **How can a language reflect the status of children and older people?**
  Age can determine when you can leave school, marry, drink alcohol, vote, or draw a pension. We are usually given a label to age groups for people under 5, between 20 and 60 and over 65, for example ‘baby’, woman or elder. There are some adjectives that seem to belong to a particular age group, for example we usually use words like ‘wise’ for older people and ‘cute’ for children. We also use many metaphors referring to children and older people, for example sunrise and sunset. Also, there are many negative words that we usually use referring to them, such as ‘brat’ or ‘punk’ for children, and ‘hag’ and ‘biddy’ for older people.

- **Talking to young children and the elderly**
  Young children’s language takes its characteristics ‘style’ from the fact that they are apprentice speakers. During the first years of life, children are still in the process of acquiring the grammar and their speech has a particular sound, for example their pitch is higher than ours and their pronunciation of some words is different. Older people are experienced language users, but they speak slowly because of their vocal cords.

- **Child Directed Language (CDL)**
  Child directed language (CDL) sometimes called baby talk, is a special style used in speech to young children. It has several characteristics:
  - Calling the child by name, often using a pet name.
  - Shorter and simpler phrases.
  - More repetition
  - Use of questions and tag questions

  CDL also has a characteristic ‘sound’:
  - Higher pitch
  - Slower speed
  - More pauses between phrases
  - Clearer pronunciation
  - Sometimes children use an exaggerated intonation.

**Chapter 8, Language and social class**

- **What is social class?**
  Linguistic variation is also linked to social class. Talking about social class we usually pay attention to the language used by people in discourse, but also we pay attention to cloche we wear, style, brands, how people walk, stand and sit and we usually make a judgement on these basis. First of all, we have to say that the majority of people usually aim high, they aim to an economic serenity, because that gives you power. There are some stereotypes in social class, for example we usually think that plumbers belong to a lower social class, but actually they earn enough. Traditionally, the term ‘social class’ has been used to define and analyse identities and relations between groups located at different levels of the socio-economic hierarchy. Obviously, any status have their own characteristics, for example if you want to be a lawyer you have to speak a really good standard English, but if you want to be part of hip hop community you have to speak and have a certain attitude.
Social and regional variation
Talking about the differences between castes, for example in England, we can say that people who belong to the higher class usually use the same accent typical of standard English (received pronunciation) and speakers who belong to the lower class are vary influenced by regional variations using forms like ‘I are’ or ‘I be’, they use a kind of dialect which is associated with a particular accent, so people who use a regional dialect will also be more likely to have the corresponding regional accent. In some parts of the country, there is a process called ‘levelling’ which is a convergence of accents and dialects that make differences disappear. Also we have to say that during the last century, we’ve seen a phenomenon of “standardisation” that refers to families that have abandoned traditional rural dialects in favour of a type of English closer to standard English. Sometimes (usually at work) people meet other people with a higher status and they try to accommodate their speech to them, this phenomenon is called upward convergence.

Variationist sociolinguistics
The aim of variationist sociolinguistics is to correlate linguistic variation (that is a dependent variable) with independent variables such as social categories. Dependent linguistic variables can be morphemes, lexical items or grammatical constructions. Examples of independent variables can be gender or social class.

Research on linguistic variation
There are many studies about linguistic variation, for example according to researchers the higher a person’s position on the social scale, the closer their linguistic variety is to prestige form. Other studies aim to investigate the situation in which a speaker needs the use of the standard language in his life, other studies focus on the meaning and function that local everyday forms of speech have for small communities. Other studies made by Eckert, show that individual high school students construct themselves as ‘jockes’ (middle class culture) and ‘burnouts’ in terms of their language, clothing, attitudes and behaviour.

Chapter 9, language and identity

What is identity?
Identity is defined as one’s conception of self in the world, something solid and relatively stable. If we look at the use of individual’s language, however, we can realise that we actually have multiple identity, according to relationship with people, for example the language that we’d use with our close friend will be different from the language we’ll use with our teacher, it depends on social roles. The way people present themselves to the world, and the way in which they are perceived by others are all relevant to the concept of identity, in presenting to others an individual can exercise agency (or control). Social factors such as age, ethnicity, gender and social class are more or less agentive depending on the ideology of the culture in which you live. Pierre Bourdieu sets out the concept of ‘symbolic capital’, which refers to assets and abilities that individuals accumulate in their presentation, speech, relationships, education and so on, all things that can be used to procure things. He also created the concept of ‘symbolic violence’ which indicates the negative repercussions of displaying behaviours that are not valued by an individual’s culture.

Representing yourself through language: dialect and identity
Using certain pronunciations, terms or grammatical costructions can mark out individuals as being from a certain class, geographic area, ethnicity, gender or age group. If we consider geography first, dialectologists traditionally define geographic dialect limits by looking for groups of isoglosses. An isogloss is an idealised geographic limit between the use of one linguistic variable or feature and
another. The language that an individual speaks is unique and different to those from similar age, ethnic, class castes, it is typical on an individual and it’s called ‘ideolect’.

- **Naming**
  The most obvious way in which we relate to the world through language is by what we choose to call ourselves. The closer you are socially to your interlocutor the more likely will be to use a less formal version of your name. Parents ordinarily use their child’s first name but may use the full name in anger if a child has done something wrong. The parent uses the full name to indicate the social distance to the child. Because naming is connected to relationships, speakers may attempt to manipulate social distance through terms of address. When a beggar, for example, make a request for money he may say ‘any change, mate?’, he uses ‘mate’ to try to reduce the social distance.

- **Social relations and grammatical form**
  Each language and culture chooses to encode certain social relationships grammatically, through morphology or special vocabulary. The special form used in the ‘calling’ context is known as the vocative, which is a grammaticalisation of socially directed speech. It is a special marker that tells the named person they are being searched for or spoken to. Relationships can also be encoded through use of special pronouns. Some languages allow for a polite/informal distinction for example ‘you’ in standard english. Deciding if you have to use formal or informal pronouns can be quite a complicated social procedure, which involves to realise how well you know an individual, how formal the environment is, and if you want to show solidarity with or distance from your addressee. Use of the inappropriate pronoun can make your addressee feel you are trying to be too familiar, or thinking that you are unfriendly, depending on the context.

- **Language variation: style**
  When you go to a job interview you would use more formal language then you would when talking with your best friend. You change the way you talk to conform to the language norms on the context you find yourself in. Adopting the style, or shifting your talk, can be a way of get power. Labov explained ‘style’ in relation to the attention paid to speech by the speaker. The less attention paid, the more informal the situation will be. For example, we tend to pay much less attention to our speech among friends and much more if we were reading written text aloud. Attention paid to speech was not enough to explain style shifting, so Alan Bell developed a theory of audience design based on the language used by DJs, which use a speech in compliance to audience’s expectations, a type of accommodation, which can be regarded a san attempt on the part of the speaker to modify his person in order to make it more acceptable to the person addressed. A speaker may change his style to show affinity with a group, or use features associated with a group because of his own relation to the group.

- **Production of group identities**
  Language can be the means of classifying individuals into groups, and a means by which we express our group identity. Sociolinguistists have found that around the world, language variation can be associated with identity features. Labov divides linguistic variables into indicators and markers, depending on whether speakers who use these forms style shift when using them. It is only through perception of group’s linguistic difference that styles can emerge. If people don’t notice the difference, it can’t be used to demonstrate identity.
Chapter 10, Language standardization

- **Introduction**
  All written forms of language are in some way a representation of their spoken equivalents, but this is not always straightforward. Not every language in the world has a fixed written form: some languages have no writing systems at all.

- **Language Planning**
  Standardisation can take place for both written and spoken language and is supported through their use in powerful cultural institutions. Received Pronunciation (RP) used to be widely recognised as the pronunciation or accent of a spoken prestige variety in British English. It was used by upper-class speakers. When a culture gets closer to standardisation, first a language variety is selected, which means that spellings and/or pronunciations and grammatical constructions are fixed and codified. Selection and codification of a written language variety involves ‘corpus planning’, that is agreeing on which alphabet and spelling system to use to encode a chosen variety. Language professionals, educators, editors, linguists and others are involved in corpus planning. Once forms are selected and codified, by this expert elite, the domain of use for those forms is expanded. So, if the spoken form of one community is chosen as the new National written standard, other communities within the nation will first need to accept the new forms, and then begin using them in new contexts. Haugen calls this ‘elaboration of function’. A consequence of selecting a variety and elevating it to the position of standard is that the forms used by users are not just different but not appropriated for use in powerful cultural institutions.

- **English and standardisation**
  Once the sounds of a language are encoded into symbols there is a one to one, sound-symbol correspondence. English’s spelling system is notoriously difficult to acquire because many words spellings are not obvious from their pronunciations. Take a word such as ‘knife’: the ‘k’ and the ‘e’ are not pronounced, and the ‘i’ represents two vowel sounds together, which is a diphthong. English began the process of standardization after William Caxton brought the printing press to England in 1476. Previously, documents written in English varied in their grammar and spelling conventions, depending on the geographic origins of the writer. The technological advancement of the printing press came together with the philosophical movement of the Renaissance in Europe, which saw a broadening of access to education and literacy. Buyers needed to understand what was written in books, so publishers chose the variety of English spoken in the south-east of England.

- **Global standards/Global English**
  After European colonialism, languages such as English began to be spoken by many groups of people. Once the USA established itself as politically free from the UK, there was social space available for creating new language standards. America did not need to look to England for its government and was free to develop language norms, spelling conventions of its own. English is used in many nations, such as Ireland, Canada, Australia etc. A lingua franca is a language that is not native but is used for communication.

- **Pidgin and creoles and standardisation**
  Pidgin and creoles are a special types of language varieties. A pidgin is an emergency communication language, a highly variable simplified variety, with no native speakers. Linguists see creoles as the blossoming of a pidgin into a fully developed language once they acquire native speakers in a second generation.

- **Language attitudes**
  There are several ways to investigate language attitudes. One is to simply ask people what they think about certain codes, but people may be reluctant to express negative attitudes for fear of
causing offence, so they have developed marche guised testing to determine language attitudes without direct questioning.

- **Linguistic imperialism and diglossia**
  Linguistic imperilism is the imposition of one culture’s language upon another culture. After European colonialism, many of the world’s languages were under threat, and when a language dies, a particular view on interpreting the world is lost. Diglossia is a phenomenon that happen when there are two varieties of a language, the High variety and the Low variety, used in the same speech community.

**INTERNET LINGUISTIC: A STUDENT GUIDE**

**Chapter 1, Linguistic perspectives**

- **Introduction:** Linguists describe and analyse manifestations of language everywhere, and in the last twenty years a new field is emerging, Internet linguistics. In the 1990s, computers-mediated communication became widely known, which was much reinforced when it appeared in the title of an internet publication, the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication. From a linguistic point of view, this term presented a problem: it was too broad. It included all forms of communication, such as music, photographs, drawings and video as well as the language in the strict sense of the word. It is this strictt sense that forms the foundations of any course of linguistics, where linguists point out the important difference between spoken, written and signed language and such figurative notions as the language of painting, of the face etc. The terms language and communication are not synonymous. Many people have begun to use the more inclusive names ‘electronically mediated communication (EMC)’ or ‘digitally mediated communication (DMC)’. It is too soon to say which of these will become standard, of if other words will emerge from the cyberspace, but from a linguistic point of view they are still too broad. ‘Internet linguistic’ is the most convenient name for the scientific study of all manifestations of language in the electronic medium.

- **Misconceptions:** an important part of the linguist’s job is to eliminate popular misconceptions, and internet is full of these. Many people attribute every contemporary linguistic worry to the new technology, for example when text-messaging became popular in the UK and in the USA, many people saw it as a linguistic disaster. There was a widespread belief that texting had evolved as a modern phenomenon, full of abbreviations that were being used in homework and exams by a young generation that had lost its sense of standards. In texting we use single letters, numerals, and symbols to represent words or parts of words, as ‘B’ to say ‘Be’ or ‘2’ to say ‘to’, another characteristic of sms is the omission of letters, like msg to say message. However, several studies have shown that hysteria about the linguistic problem of sms is misplaced. All the popular beliefs about texting are wrong.

- **Terminological Caution:** students of internet linguistics need to be aware that some of the terminology they associate with the subject of linguistic science appears on the internet in a different guise.

**Chapter 2, The internet as a medium**

- **Intro:** linguists have been used to thinking of language in terms of speech, with the phonic medium (air), writing, with the graphic medium (marks) and signing, with the visual medium (hand movement). Now we have a fourth dimension of linguistic communication, an electronic or digital medium, that makes internet language different from other mediums.
• **Speech VS Writing:** after year of research in linguistic domains such as grammar, lexic, style and language teaching, they have identified the differences between speech and writing. Speech is time bound, dynamic, and transient; it is part of an interaction with a speaker and an audience. Writing is space bound, static and permanent; the writer is usually distant from the reader, and often doesn’t know who the reader is going to be. With speech there is no time lag between production and reception; the pressure to think while talking promotes looser constructions, repetition, rephrasing and comment clauses like 'you know', intonation and pauses are important to make us be understood. By contrast, in writing there is always a time lag between production and reception; writers must anticipate the effects of this lag because their language may be not understood. Writing allows close analysis, more ways of expressions and intricate sentence structure. In speech, participants are usually face to face, they can rely on extralinguistic skills, like gesture to get a feedback, while in writing we have a lack of visual contact, so is more difficult to make our meaning clear. Many words and constructions are characteristic of speech, such as contracted forms, other characteristics belong to writing, such as the use of a complicated syntax. In speech errors, once spoken, cannot be withdrawn, but in writing they can.

• **A new medium:** the language of the internet cannot be identified with spoken language or written language, even if it shares features with both. The electronic medium facilitates human strategies of communication in different ways. Among its limits we have limited message size, message lag, and lack of simultaneous feedback. Among the facilitations we have emoticons, and the opportunities provided by multiple conversations.

**Chapter 3, Twitter**

• **Intro:** twitter is one of the most important internet brand now a days, is a microblogging platform that permits users to send and receive message called 'tweets' that can’t exceed over 140 characters. Those who use this platform are called tweeters or tweeples. When a user make a message it is composed by the author’s name and the message, then we have the data and the option of reply. If you want to tag or respond to someone, you can use a @ and write the name of the person, you can also share tweets of someone else, they call it 'retweeting'. You can also put a URI, which is the Uniform Resource Indicator, with 34 characters limit, but some links are much longer and then twitter will make it shorter. Another function of twitter is the use of hashtag, that consists of using the hash sign with a word, for example #language, then you will find every recent tweet that include that hashtag.

• **Content issues:** tweets are characterized by the using of features. For example tweeters do not make the maximum use of the 140 character space, but they always try to be as short as possible. They use abbreviations like ‘lol’, logograms like ‘&’ to say ‘and’ or shorter forms of words like ‘r’ to say ‘are’, or ‘wat’ to say ‘what’. Even ellipsis dots have a function, most of the time people use dotsto hide something, for example a bad mood or they use them when they are upset.

• **Grammar issues:** when we examine the internal grammatical structure of tweets, we find some problems. The use of shortening techniques plus the use of non standard punctuation make analysing the utterance vary difficult. Some features that we can find in twitter are minor sentences, like yeah or hey, self-reference, like 'must get up earlyer'.

• **Pragmatic issues:** linguistic analysis of twitter cannot restrict itself to matters of formal sentence description, but we need a pragmatic perspective that provides explanations for uses of language. So we have to look at the purpose, the reason why we choose a structure instead of another or why we use a tone instead of another.
Chapter 4, Language change

- **Intro:** changes in language typically take years, or even lifetimes before they are established. But history is no guide, when it comes to electronic technology. In olden time, it would take years before a new word would enter in language, today a new word can achieve a global use in few hours. It seems like the internet speed up the process of language change.

- **Vocabulary:** vocabulary is the area in which linguistic change becomes immediately evident as innovative technology introduces new words, social media platforms invent their own terminology, and old words acquire new meanings (like format, tools or font). For example, now we have a Twictionary, which is the Twitter vocabulary with around 600 words connected to the platform. We have always new neologisms, like ‘blargon’ which is the blog jargon, vlog, which is a video blog.

- **Orthography:** orthography is influenced by factors such as users’ age, gender, educational background, linguistic taste, personality and the nature of the content they produce. For example, older people tend to be linguistically more conservative than younger or woman tend to use punctuation marks than men.

- **Grammar:** grammatical changes are less noticeable, resembling those found in non-electronic media. We can find for example the use of –z to replace the –s when we refer to pirated versions of software, so we say downloadz or gamez.

Chapter 5, A multilingual internet

- **Intro:** today the internet offers a home for all languages, as soon as their communities have an electricity supply and computer technology. For time there was the impression that English dominates the Internet but now we know that that conclusion was wrong, and the presence of other languages, such as Chinese and Spanish, is constantly rising, but it is true that not all languages are equal online.

- **Policy and technology:** for a truly multilingual Internet there needs to be policy agreement and technological implementation. At policy level, we have to mention the thirty-second UNESCO’s general conference in October 2003, in which they made a set of recommendations concerning the promotion and use of multilingualism in cyberspace. We have to mention the first five recommendations that support the development of multilingualism.

1. People should work to provide the necessary resources and take the necessary measures to alleviate language barriers and promote human interaction.
2. Member states should support the production of local and indigenous content on the internet.
3. Member states should formulate appropriate National policies on the issue of the language survival in cyberspace, maybe promoting the teaching of language.
4. Member states should encourage the research and development of online multilingual dictionaries and terminologies.
5. Unesco should establish a policy and rules relating to multilingualism and multilingual resource and applications.