

ENG209

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY



Course video is available on our app

Course code: ENG209

Course title: Language and Society

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Language in Social Contexts

Series 2: Linguistic and Social Categories of Language

Series 3: Grammar of Social Interactions and Movements

Series 4: Theories and Concepts of Language Usage

Series 5: Language Change, Identity, and Multilingualism

Proposed Outline for Series 1

Part 1 Foundations of Language in Society

- 1.1.1 Definition of Language in Social Contexts
- 1.1.2 Importance of Language in Human Interaction
- 1.1.3 Relationship between Language and Society

Part 2 Registers and Varieties of English in Social Use

- 1.2.1 Concept of Registers
- 1.2.2 Formal and Informal Language Use
- 1.2.3 Language Use in Professional, Educational, and Political Settings

Part 3 Language and Social Roles

- 1.3.1 Language and Gender
- 1.3.2 Language and Identity
- 1.3.3 Language and Social Class

Part 4 Language in Everyday Social Contexts

- 1.4.1 Language in Family and Community Life
- 1.4.2 Language in Media and Technology
- 1.4.3 Language in Multilingual Societies

Introduction

Language is not only a tool for communication, it is also a mirror of society. The way people speak, write, and interact reflects their social roles, cultural backgrounds, and everyday experiences. Whether in classrooms, political debates, workplaces, or family conversations, language shapes relationships and influences how individuals perceive themselves and others. This Series will help you see language as more than words, by showing how it functions within the social fabric of human life.



The aim of this Series is to equip you with the ability to analyse how English operates in different social contexts, to evaluate its role in shaping identity and social categories, and to apply this knowledge in understanding everyday communication.

We shall commence this Series by examining the foundations of language in society, focusing on its definition, importance, and relationship with social life. Next, we will explore registers and varieties of English, considering how language shifts across formal, informal, educational, and political settings. Following that, we will move on to language and social roles, where issues of gender, identity, and class will be discussed. Finally, we will wrap up by looking at language in everyday contexts such as family, community, media, and multilingual societies, thereby rounding off the Series with practical illustrations of how language functions in daily life.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 1.1** define language in social contexts and explain its relationship with society,
- **SLO 1.2** analyse registers and varieties of English as they are used in formal, informal, educational, and political settings,
- **SLO 1.3** evaluate the role of language in shaping social roles such as gender, identity, and class,
- **SLO 1.4** apply knowledge of language use to everyday contexts including family, community, media, and multilingual societies.

1.1 Foundations of Language in Society

1.1.1 Definition of language in social contexts

Language is a structured system of communication that uses words, sounds, and symbols to convey meaning. When we speak of language in **social contexts**, we refer to how language operates within human communities, shaping interactions and reflecting cultural norms. It is not only about grammar and vocabulary, but also about how people use language to express identity, build relationships, and negotiate meaning in society.



Fill in the blank: Language in social contexts refers to how language operates within _____.



Figure 1.1 Relationship between language and society

1.1.2 Importance of language in human interaction

Language is central to human interaction because it enables individuals to share ideas, emotions, and knowledge. Without language, social organisation would be difficult to achieve. For example, political debates, classroom discussions, and family conversations all rely on language to function effectively. The importance of language lies in its ability to create social bonds and transmit cultural values across generations.

Fill in the blank: The importance of language lies in its ability to create _____ bonds and transmit cultural values.





Plate 1.1 Language as a tool for human interaction

1.1.3 Relationship between language and society

The relationship between language and society is reciprocal. Society influences language by shaping the way people speak, while language influences society by reinforcing cultural norms and social structures. For instance, the way English is spoken in political settings differs from its use in everyday family life. This demonstrates how language adapts to social needs while also shaping those needs.

Fill in the blank: The relationship between language and society is _____, meaning each influences the other.

Direction	How it Works	Example
Society → Language	Social structures, hierarchies, and cultural values dictate how we speak. Factors like class, gender, and age create different dialects and registers .	The use of formal "honorifics" in Japanese society to show respect based on social status.
Language → Society	Language can influence how a community perceives the world (Linguistic Relativity). It reinforces	The adoption of gender-neutral pronouns (like "they/them") reflects and promotes a shift in



Direction	How it Works	Example
	social norms, identities, and power dynamics.	social attitudes toward gender identity.

Box 1.1 Key features of the relationship between language and society

Pilot questions 1.1

1. Which term refers to the structured system of communication used in social contexts?
2. Why is language considered central to human interaction?
3. What type of relationship exists between language and society?
4. Give one example of how language adapts to different social settings.
5. Fill in the blank: Language transmits cultural _____ across generations.

1.2 Registers and Varieties of English in Social Use

1.2.1 Concept of registers

A **register** is a variety of language used for a particular purpose or in a specific social setting. Registers are shaped by context, audience, and the level of formality required. For example, the way you speak to a lecturer in class differs from how you chat with a friend. Registers help us adapt our language to suit different situations, ensuring communication is effective and appropriate.

Fill in the blank: A register is a variety of language used for a particular _____ or in a specific social setting.



Figure 1.2 Registers of English in social contexts

1.2.2 Formal and informal language use

Formal language refers to structured, precise, and often polite forms of communication used in professional, academic, or official settings. It avoids slang and contractions, and it often follows strict grammatical rules. **Informal language**, on the other hand, is relaxed, conversational, and commonly used among friends or in casual contexts. Both forms are important, and learners must be able to switch between them depending on the situation.



Fill in the blank: Formal language avoids slang and contractions, while _____ language is relaxed and conversational.



Plate 1.2 Formal and informal language use

1.2.3 Language use in professional, educational, and political settings

Language adapts to different social domains. In **professional settings**, English is often used with technical vocabulary and formal registers to ensure clarity and precision. In **educational settings**, language is both formal and instructional, designed to transmit knowledge and encourage learning. In **political settings**, language is persuasive, aiming to influence opinions and mobilise support. Each domain demonstrates how English shifts in style and vocabulary to meet specific social needs.

Fill in the blank: In political settings, language is often _____, aiming to influence opinions and mobilise support.

Setting	Primary Goal	Key Characteristics	Common Examples
Professional	Efficiency, clarity, and workplace hierarchy.	Use of jargon , industry-specific terminology, and standardized formats (emails, reports).	"Let's circle back to the deliverables by EOD."



Setting	Primary Goal	Key Characteristics	Common Examples
Educational	Knowledge transfer and critical inquiry.	Academic register , structured arguments, and instructional language designed for clarity.	"Analyze the thesis statement in the following passage."
Political	Persuasion, mobilization, and diplomacy.	Rhetorical devices , emotive language, slogans, and often ambiguous "we" statements.	"Together, we can build a future that works for everyone."

Box 1.2 Examples of language use in different social domains

Pilot questions 1.2

1. What is the term used to describe a variety of language used in specific social settings?
2. Which type of language avoids slang and contractions?
3. Give one example of informal language use.
4. In professional settings, why is technical vocabulary often used?
5. Fill in the blank: In educational settings, language is both _____ and instructional.

1.3 Language and Social Roles

1.3.1 Language and gender

Gender refers to the social and cultural roles, behaviours, and expectations associated with being male, female, or non-binary. Language plays a significant role in expressing and reinforcing these roles. For example, certain words, phrases, or speech patterns may be associated with masculinity or femininity. Linguists have studied how men and women may use language differently, such as in politeness strategies, choice of vocabulary, or conversational styles. These differences are not fixed, but they often reflect wider social attitudes towards gender.

Fill in the blank: Language plays a significant role in expressing and reinforcing _____ roles.





Figure 1.3 Language and gender roles

1.3.2 Language and identity

Identity is the way individuals perceive themselves and are recognised by others, often shaped by cultural, social, and personal factors. Language is a key marker of identity because it signals belonging to a particular group. For instance, accents, dialects, and choice of words can reveal regional, ethnic, or social identity. Language also allows individuals to assert their uniqueness, while at the same time connecting them to communities.

Fill in the blank: Language is a key marker of _____ because it signals belonging to a particular group.



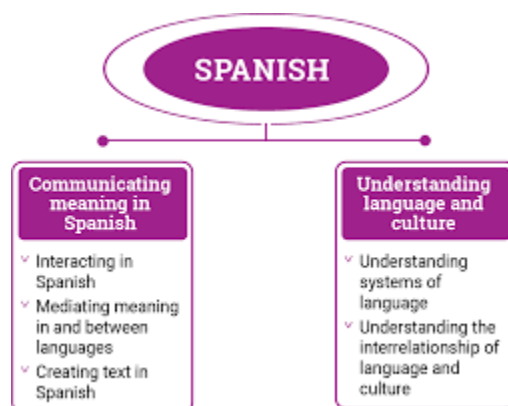
Plate 1.3 Language as a marker of identity



1.3.3 Language and social class

Social class refers to divisions in society based on economic status, occupation, and education. Language often reflects these divisions, as people from different classes may use distinct vocabulary, pronunciation, or styles of communication. For example, formal and prestigious varieties of English are often associated with higher social classes, while colloquial or regional varieties may be linked to working-class communities. These differences can influence perceptions of status and credibility.

Fill in the blank: Formal and prestigious varieties of English are often associated with _____ social classes.



Box 1.3 Examples of language and social class distinctions

Pilot questions 1.3

1. Which term refers to the social and cultural roles expressed through language?
2. How does language act as a marker of identity?
3. Give one example of how accents or dialects reveal social identity.
4. What is the relationship between language and social class?
5. Fill in the blank: Colloquial or regional varieties of English may be linked to _____ communities.

1.4 Language in Everyday Social Contexts

1.4.1 Language in family and community life

Family communication refers to the way language is used among relatives to build relationships, express emotions, and transmit values. Within families, language often includes informal registers, nicknames, and shared expressions that strengthen bonds. In **community life**, language serves as a tool for cooperation, cultural continuity, and social identity. For example, local dialects or proverbs may be used to reinforce community traditions and values.

Fill in the blank: Within families, language often includes informal registers, nicknames, and shared _____ that strengthen bonds.



[Insert Plate here] Short description: Image showing a family engaged in conversation at home and a community gathering. Caption: Plate 1.4 Language in family and community life AI prompt suggestion: “Generate an image of a family talking at dinner and a community group sharing stories.” Search string: “family communication community gathering OER image”

1.4.2 Language in media and technology

Media language refers to the way communication is shaped by newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms. It often combines formal and informal registers depending on the audience. **Technology-mediated language** includes texting, social media posts, and online chats, which are typically informal, abbreviated, and influenced by digital culture. These forms of language demonstrate how communication adapts to new platforms while still serving social purposes.

Fill in the blank: Technology-mediated language includes texting, social media posts, and online _____.

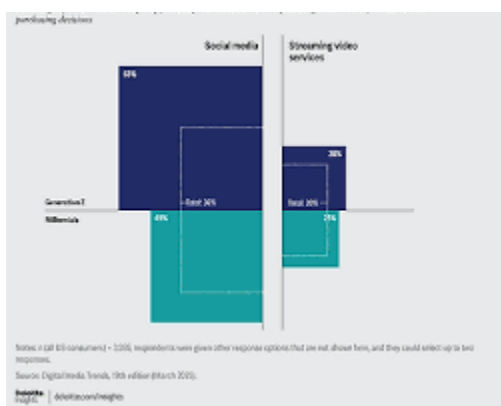


Figure 1.4 Language in media and technology

1.4.3 Language in multilingual societies

Multilingualism is the ability of individuals or communities to use more than one language. In multilingual societies, language choice often depends on context, audience, and purpose. For example, a person may use English in school, a local language at home, and a regional lingua franca in the marketplace. Multilingualism enriches communication by allowing flexibility, but it can also present challenges such as language shift or dominance of one language over others.

Fill in the blank: In multilingual societies, language choice often depends on context, _____, and purpose.

Context	Language Choice	Social Function	Example
School	Official/Standard Language	Used for formal instruction, academic writing, and official assessment.	A student in Kenya using English to write an essay or answer a teacher's question.
Home	Heritage/Native Language	Used for expressing intimacy, cultural	The same student speaking Swahili or a



Context	Language Choice	Social Function	Example
		heritage, and connecting with family members.	local mother tongue while eating dinner with their parents.
Marketplace	Lingua Franca / Slang	Used for negotiation, quick communication, and building rapport with strangers.	The student using Sheng (a mixture of Swahili and English) to bargain with a street vendor for a snack.

Box 1.4 Examples of multilingual language use in everyday life

Pilot questions 1.4

1. What type of language is commonly used within families to strengthen bonds?
2. How does media language differ from technology-mediated language?
3. Give one example of technology-mediated language.
4. What is the term used to describe the ability to use more than one language?
5. Fill in the blank: A person may use English in school, a local language at home, and a _____ in the marketplace.

Series summary

This Series has introduced you to the foundations of language in social contexts, highlighting its relevance to human interaction and societal organisation. We began by examining the definition of language in society, its importance in communication, and the reciprocal relationship between language and social structures. Then we explored registers and varieties of English, considering how language shifts between formal and informal use, and how it adapts to professional, educational, and political domains. Following that, we analysed the role of language in shaping social roles such as gender, identity, and class. Finally, we looked at language in everyday contexts, including family and community life, media and technology, and multilingual societies.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define language in social contexts and explain its relationship with society (SLO 2.1), analyse registers and varieties of English in different domains (SLO 2.2), evaluate the role of language in shaping social roles (SLO 2.3), and apply knowledge of language use to everyday situations including family, media, and multilingual communities (SLO 2.4). These skills provide a strong foundation for understanding how language functions as both a social tool and a marker of identity.

Glossary of terms

- **Family communication:** The use of language within families to build relationships, express emotions, and transmit values.



- **Formal language:** A structured and precise way of speaking or writing, often used in professional, academic, or official settings.
- **Gender:** The social and cultural roles, behaviours, and expectations associated with being male, female, or non-binary, often expressed and reinforced through language.
- **Identity:** The way individuals perceive themselves and are recognised by others, often signalled through language choices such as accents, dialects, or vocabulary.
- **Informal language:** A relaxed and conversational style of communication, commonly used among friends or in casual contexts.
- **Language in social contexts:** The study of how language operates within human communities, shaping interactions and reflecting cultural norms.
- **Media language:** The way communication is shaped by newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms, often combining formal and informal registers.
- **Multilingualism:** The ability of individuals or communities to use more than one language, often switching between them depending on context and purpose.
- **Register:** A variety of language used for a particular purpose or in a specific social setting, shaped by context, audience, and formality.
- **Social class:** Divisions in society based on economic status, occupation, and education, often reflected in language use and communication styles.
- **Technology-mediated language:** Forms of communication shaped by digital platforms such as texting, social media, and online chats, usually informal and abbreviated.

Concept check questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. Which term refers to a variety of language used for a particular purpose or in a specific social setting? (Linked to SLO 2.2)
2. Formal language is most often used in which type of setting: family, professional, or casual? (Linked to SLO 2.2)
3. Which concept describes the ability of individuals or communities to use more than one language? (Linked to SLO 2.4)
4. What type of relationship exists between language and society: reciprocal, one-sided, or neutral? (Linked to SLO 2.1)
5. Which social factor is often revealed through accents, dialects, and vocabulary choices? (Linked to SLO 2.3)

Short-answer questions

6. Define language in social contexts and explain why it is important for human interaction. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
7. Give one example of informal language use and explain why it is appropriate in that context. (Linked to SLO 2.2)



8. How does language act as a marker of identity within communities? (Linked to SLO 2.3)
9. Provide one example of how media language differs from technology-mediated language. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
10. Explain how multilingualism enriches communication in everyday life. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse how registers of English shift between formal, informal, educational, and political settings, providing examples from each domain. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
12. Evaluate the role of language in shaping social roles such as gender, identity, and class, and discuss how these roles influence communication patterns. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
13. Apply your knowledge of language in everyday contexts by designing a short scenario that demonstrates language use in family, media, and multilingual settings. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

Answers to concept check questions [Series 1]

Objective questions

1. Register
2. Professional
3. Multilingualism
4. Reciprocal
5. Identity

Short-answer questions

6. Language in social contexts refers to how language operates within human communities, shaping interactions and reflecting cultural norms. It is important because it enables communication, builds relationships, and transmits cultural values.
7. An example of informal language is using slang when chatting with friends. It is appropriate because the context is casual and does not require strict grammar or politeness.
8. Language acts as a marker of identity by signalling belonging to a group through accents, dialects, or vocabulary choices.
9. Media language may be formal and structured, such as in newspapers, while technology-mediated language is often abbreviated and informal, such as texting.
10. Multilingualism enriches communication by allowing flexibility, enabling individuals to switch languages depending on context, audience, and purpose.

Long-answer questions

11. **Basic response:** Registers of English shift depending on context. Formal registers are used in professional settings, informal registers in casual conversations, educational registers in classrooms, and political registers in debates.

Value-added response: Beyond these examples, registers also reflect power dynamics and audience expectations. For instance, political registers may use persuasive rhetoric, while educational registers balance authority with accessibility. Learners can analyse how register choice influences credibility and effectiveness in communication.



12. **Basic response:** Language shapes social roles by reflecting gender differences, signalling identity, and marking social class distinctions.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may evaluate how these roles interact. For example, gendered language may reinforce stereotypes, while class-based language differences can affect access to opportunities. Analysing these intersections provides deeper insight into how language both reflects and constructs social realities.

13. **Basic response:** A scenario could involve a family using informal language at home, media using structured language to report news, and individuals switching between English and a local language in a multilingual marketplace.

Value-added response: Learners may design scenarios that highlight challenges, such as miscommunication in multilingual contexts or the influence of digital media on family language use. This demonstrates the complexity of applying language knowledge across diverse everyday situations.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]

Part 1.1 Foundations of Language in Society

1. Language
2. It enables individuals to share ideas, emotions, and knowledge, creating social bonds.
3. Reciprocal
4. English in political debates differs from its use in family life.
5. Values

Part 1.2 Registers and Varieties of English in Social Use

1. Register
2. Formal language
3. Chatting casually with friends
4. To ensure clarity and precision
5. Formal

Part 1.3 Language and Social Roles

1. Gender
2. By signalling belonging to a group through accents, dialects, or vocabulary choices
3. Regional dialects or accents
4. Language reflects divisions in society, such as vocabulary and pronunciation differences across classes
5. Working-class

Part 1.4 Language in Everyday Social Contexts



1. Shared expressions
2. Media language may be formal and structured, while technology-mediated language is informal and abbreviated
3. Texting
4. Multilingualism
5. Regional lingua franca

References and Attributions [Series 1]

This section compiles all references and illustration attributions used or suggested in Series 1: *Language in Social Contexts*. The referencing style applied here follows APA (7th edition) guidelines for clarity and consistency.

General references

- Course content adapted from *ENG209: Language and Society* (unpublished course outline).
- Open Educational Resources (OER) consulted for suggested illustration searches.

Illustration references and attributions

- *Figure 1.1 Relationship between language and society*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a simple diagram showing language at the centre, connected to society, identity, and communication.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and society diagram OER.”
- *Plate 1.1 Language as a tool for human interaction*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of diverse people communicating in a classroom, workplace, and family setting.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “people communicating social interaction OER image.”
- *Box 1.1 Key features of the relationship between language and society*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising reciprocal relationship between language and society.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language society reciprocal relationship OER.”
- *Figure 1.2 Registers of English in social contexts*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram with four circles labelled formal, informal, technical, casual, showing examples of each.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “registers of English diagram OER.”
- *Plate 1.2 Formal and informal language use*



- AI prompt: “Generate an image showing a student giving a formal presentation and another group chatting casually.”
- Suggested OER search string: “formal vs informal language OER image.”
- *Box 1.2 Examples of language use in different social domains*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising language use in professional, educational, and political settings.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language use in professional educational political contexts OER.”
- *Figure 1.3 Language and gender roles*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing language at the centre, connected to gender roles, identity, and social expectations.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and gender roles diagram OER.”
- *Plate 1.3 Language as a marker of identity*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of diverse individuals speaking in different dialects, showing cultural identity.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and identity OER image.”
- *Box 1.3 Examples of language and social class distinctions*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of vocabulary, pronunciation, and style differences across social classes.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and social class examples OER.”
- *Plate 1.4 Language in family and community life*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of a family talking at dinner and a community group sharing stories.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “family communication community gathering OER image.”
- *Figure 1.4 Language in media and technology*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram comparing traditional media language with digital media language.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language in media and technology diagram OER.”
- *Box 1.4 Examples of multilingual language use in everyday life*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of multilingual language use in everyday contexts.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “examples of multilingualism everyday life OER.”



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Series 2: Linguistic and Social Categories of Language

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Proposed Outline for Series 2

Part 1 Linguistic categories of language

- **2.1.1 Phonological categories**
- **2.1.2 Grammatical categories**
- **2.1.3 Semantic categories**

Part 2 Social categories and language use

- **2.2.1 Language and gender roles**
- **2.2.2 Language and age groups**
- **2.2.3 Language and ethnicity**

Part 3 Language and socio-economic categories

- **2.3.1 Language and social class**
- **2.3.2 Language and occupation**
- **2.3.3 Language and education**

Part 4 Language, identity, and cultural categories

- **2.4.1 Language and cultural identity**
- **2.4.2 Language and group belonging**
- **2.4.3 Language and power relations**



Introduction

Language is not only a means of communication, it is also a reflection of the structures and categories that shape human society. Every community organises language in ways that reveal social distinctions such as gender, age, ethnicity, and class. At the same time, language itself has internal categories, including sound systems, grammar, and meaning, which influence how it is used and understood. This Series will help you appreciate how linguistic categories interact with social categories, and why this relationship is central to the study of language and society.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the ability to analyse linguistic categories alongside social categories, to evaluate how they influence communication, and to apply this knowledge in understanding identity, culture, and power relations.

We shall commence this Series by exploring linguistic categories of language, focusing on phonological, grammatical, and semantic aspects. Next, we will examine social categories and language use, considering how gender, age, and ethnicity shape communication. Following that, we will move on to language and socio-economic categories, where issues of class, occupation, and education will be discussed. Finally, we will wrap up by analysing language, identity, and cultural categories, highlighting how language expresses belonging and power within society.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 2.1** define key linguistic categories such as phonological, grammatical, and semantic features of language,
- **SLO 2.2** analyse how social categories including gender, age, and ethnicity influence language use,
- **SLO 2.3** evaluate the relationship between language and socio-economic categories such as class, occupation, and education,
- **SLO 2.4** explain how language expresses identity and cultural belonging within communities, and
- **SLO 2.5** assess the role of language in shaping and reflecting power relations in society.

2.1 Linguistic Categories of Language

2.1.1 Phonological categories

Phonology is the study of the sound system of a language, including how sounds are organised and used. Phonological categories involve elements such as consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation. These categories help speakers distinguish meaning, for example, the difference between bit and beat lies in vowel sounds. Phonology also explains how sounds change in connected speech, such as assimilation or elision.



Fill in the blank: The difference between bit and beat lies in _____ sounds.

English Sound Chart with Urdu and Hindi symbols			
Vowel Chart			
English Sound	Example	Urdu Symbol	Hindi Symbol
/æ/	Cat	اے / آ	ऐ / ए
/ɛ/	Bed	اے / آ	ए / ऐ
/ɪ/	Sit	ی / اے	इ / ई

Figure 2.1 Phonological categories of English

2.1.2 Grammatical categories

Grammar refers to the rules that govern how words are combined to form sentences. Grammatical categories include tense, number, person, case, and aspect. For example, tense distinguishes between past and present actions, while number differentiates singular and plural forms. These categories ensure that communication is structured and meaningful.

Fill in the blank: Grammatical categories such as tense and number ensure that communication is _____ and meaningful.

Category	Definition	Examples
Tense	Locates an action in time (Past, Present, Future).	<i>I walked</i> (Past) vs. <i>I walk</i> (Present).
Number	Indicates whether a noun or pronoun is singular or plural.	<i>One cat</i> vs. <i>Two cats</i> ; <i>He</i> vs. <i>They</i> .
Person	Distinguishes the speaker, the person addressed, or others.	1st: <i>I</i> ; 2nd: <i>You</i> ; 3rd: <i>She/It</i> .
Case	Shows the grammatical function of a noun or pronoun in a sentence.	<i>I</i> (Subject) vs. <i>Me</i> (Object) vs. <i>My</i> (Possessive).
Aspect	Describes the "texture" of time—whether an action is completed or ongoing.	<i>I have eaten</i> (Perfect) vs. <i>I am eating</i> (Progressive).

Box 2.1 Examples of grammatical categories in English



2.1.3 Semantic categories

Semantics is the study of meaning in language. Semantic categories include synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and polysemy. These categories explain how words relate to each other and how meaning is conveyed in communication. For example, synonyms such as big and large share similar meanings, while antonyms such as hot and cold express opposites. Semantic categories help learners analyse how meaning is constructed and interpreted.

Fill in the blank: Synonyms such as big and large share _____ meanings.

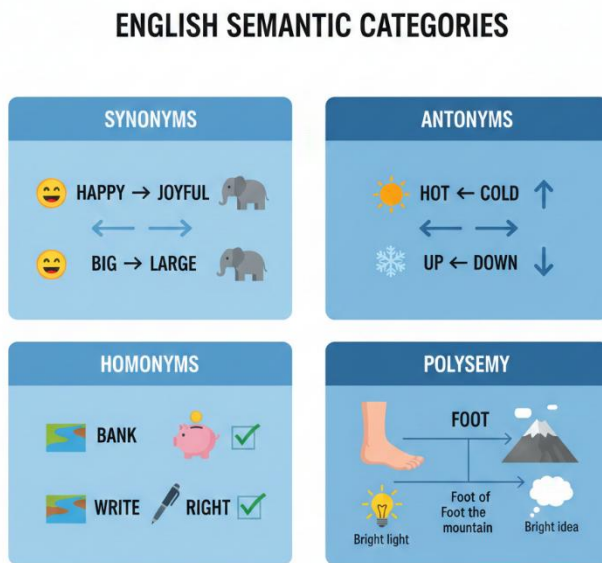


Plate 2.1 Semantic categories in English

Pilot questions 2.1

1. Which branch of linguistics studies the sound system of a language?
2. What is the difference between bit and beat an example of?
3. Name two grammatical categories in English.
4. Which branch of linguistics studies meaning in language?
5. Give one example of a pair of antonyms.

2.2 Social Categories and Language Use

2.2.1 Language and gender roles



Gender roles are the social expectations and behaviours associated with being male, female, or non-binary. Language reflects and reinforces these roles through word choice, conversational style, and even patterns of politeness. For example, research has shown that women may use more indirect forms of request, while men may prefer direct speech acts. These differences are not absolute, but they highlight how language can mirror wider cultural attitudes towards gender.

Fill in the blank: Language reflects and reinforces gender roles through word choice, conversational style, and patterns of _____.



Figure 2.2 Language and gender roles

2.2.2 Language and age groups

Age groups influence language use because people often adapt their speech depending on whether they are addressing children, peers, or elders. For instance, adults may simplify vocabulary when speaking to children, while teenagers may use slang to signal belonging to their age group. Elders may prefer more formal registers, reflecting respect and tradition. These variations show how age shapes communication styles across generations.

Fill in the blank: Teenagers may use _____ to signal belonging to their age group.



Plate 2.2 Language and age groups in communication



2.2.3 Language and ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to shared cultural heritage, traditions, and identity. Language is a key marker of ethnicity, as communities often maintain distinct dialects, accents, or languages to preserve their identity. For example, ethnic groups may use proverbs, idioms, or traditional expressions that carry cultural meaning. Language also serves as a way of resisting assimilation, helping communities maintain their distinctiveness in multicultural societies.

Fill in the blank: Language is a key marker of _____ because communities often maintain distinct dialects or accents.

Feature	Description	Example
Dialect	A regional or social variety of a language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary.	African American Vernacular English (AAVE) , featuring unique verb structures like the "habitual be."
Proverbs	Short, well-known pithy sayings that state a general truth or piece of advice rooted in cultural wisdom.	<i>"It takes a village to raise a child"</i> (African origin), emphasizing communal responsibility.
Idioms	Groups of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words.	<i>"To have a sticky beak"</i> (Australian English), meaning to be nosy or take a look at something.
Accent	A distinctive way of pronouncing a language, especially one associated with a particular nation, locality, or social class.	The Bostonese accent , characterized by "non-rhoticity" (dropping the 'r' sound in words like <i>car</i>).

Box 2.2 Examples of ethnic language features

Pilot questions 2.2

1. How does language reflect gender roles?
2. Give one example of how age influences language use.
3. What type of language might teenagers use to signal belonging?
4. Why is language considered a marker of ethnicity?
5. Fill in the blank: Ethnic groups may use _____ or idioms to preserve cultural meaning.

2.3 Language and Socio-Economic Categories

2.3.1 Language and social class



Social class refers to divisions in society based on factors such as income, occupation, and education. Language often reflects these divisions, as people from different classes may use distinct vocabulary, pronunciation, or styles of communication. For example, prestigious varieties of English are frequently associated with higher social classes, while colloquial or regional varieties may be linked to working-class communities. These differences can influence perceptions of credibility and status.

Fill in the blank: Prestigious varieties of English are frequently associated with _____ social classes.

Feature	Higher Social Class (Middle/Upper)	Lower Social Class (Working/Lower)
Vocabulary	Uses a wider range of elaborated codes ; avoids slang in formal settings; uses "prestige" terms (e.g., <i>spectacles</i> , <i>house</i>).	Frequent use of restricted codes ; higher usage of colloquialisms, regional slang, and "non-prestige" terms (e.g., <i>glasses</i> , <i>home</i>).
Pronunciation	Tends toward Standard English or Received Pronunciation (RP) ; consistent use of the rhotic "r" or "h" sounds.	Often features regional accents ; common traits include H-dropping ('ouse for <i>house</i>) or G-dropping (runnin' for <i>running</i>).
Grammar	Adheres strictly to standard grammatical rules ; uses complex, nested sentence structures and varied tenses.	Frequent use of non-standard grammar , such as double negatives (<i>I don't want none</i>) or non-standard verb forms (<i>we was</i>).
Style	Formal and "Careful" : Highly self-monitored speech, especially in professional or public settings.	Casual and Vernacular : Prioritizes social solidarity and "covert prestige" within their own community.

Box 2.3 Examples of language features across social classes

2.3.2 Language and occupation

Occupation influences language use because different professions develop specialised vocabularies and registers. For instance, medical professionals use technical terms such as diagnosis or prognosis, while lawyers employ legal jargon like plaintiff or jurisdiction. These occupational registers ensure precision and clarity within professional contexts, but they may be difficult for outsiders to understand.

Fill in the blank: Occupational registers ensure precision and clarity within _____ contexts.



OCCUPATIONAL REGISTERS

Specialized Language Across Professions

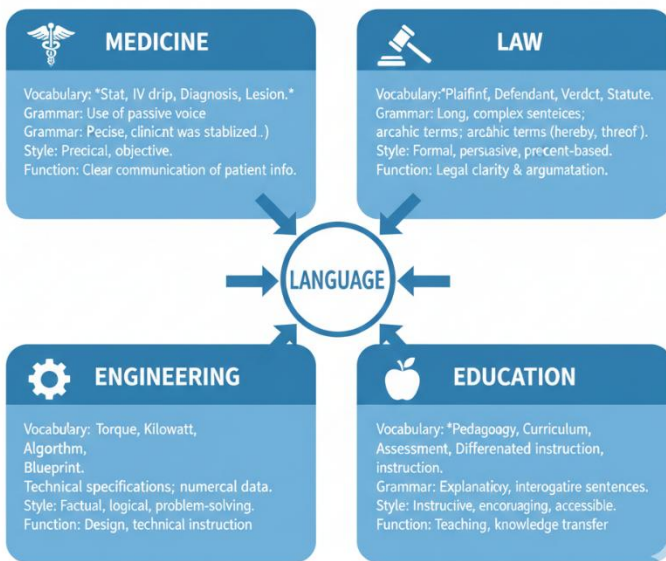


Figure 2.3 Occupational registers in professional contexts

2.3.3 Language and education

Education shapes language use by influencing vocabulary, grammar, and style. Learners exposed to formal education often acquire standard varieties of language, which are valued in professional and academic settings. Conversely, limited access to education may result in reliance on local dialects or non-standard varieties. Education therefore plays a key role in determining linguistic competence and social mobility.

Fill in the blank: Education plays a key role in determining linguistic competence and social _____.



FORMAL CLASSROOM LEARNING



INFORMAL COMMUNITY LEARNING



Plate 2.3 Language and education

Pilot questions 2.3

1. What does social class refer to?
2. Which varieties of English are often associated with higher social classes?
3. Give one example of occupational vocabulary.
4. Why are occupational registers important?
5. How does education influence language use?

2.4 Language, Identity, and Cultural Categories

2.4.1 Language and cultural identity

Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging to a particular culture, shaped by traditions, values, and shared practices. Language is a central marker of cultural identity because it carries the stories, beliefs, and customs of a community. For example, indigenous languages often preserve oral histories and cultural wisdom that may not be easily translated into other languages. By using their language, communities affirm who they are and maintain continuity across generations.

Fill in the blank: Language is a central marker of cultural _____ because it carries the traditions and values of a community.



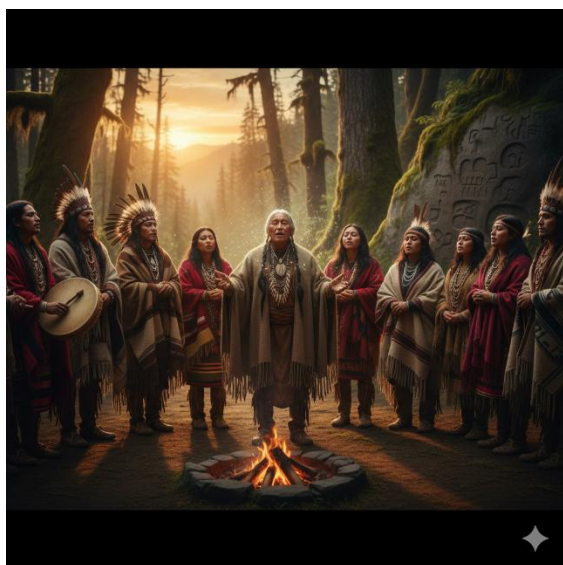


Plate 2.4 Language and cultural identity

2.4.2 Language and group belonging

Group belonging refers to the way individuals identify with and are accepted into social groups. Language plays a vital role in signalling membership, as shared expressions, slang, or dialects often act as markers of inclusion. For instance, youth groups may use specific slang to distinguish themselves from older generations, while professional groups may rely on jargon to signal expertise. Language therefore functions as both a bridge and a boundary in group interactions.

Fill in the blank: Shared expressions, slang, or dialects often act as markers of _____ in social groups.

Linguistic Marker	Function	Group Example
Slang	Informal, often ephemeral vocabulary used to establish social identity and exclude "outsiders."	Teens/Youth: Using terms like <i>rizz</i> or <i>no cap</i> to signal being "in the know" with current trends.
Jargon	Specialized technical language that allows for efficient communication within a profession or hobby.	Software Engineers: Discussing <i>back-end architecture</i> , <i>latency</i> , or <i>agile sprints</i> to signal professional expertise.
Dialect	Regional or social varieties of language that indicate geographical origin or cultural heritage.	Scottish English: Using words like <i>bairn</i> (child) or <i>bonnie</i> (beautiful) to signal regional pride and local roots.



Box 2.4 Examples of language signalling group belonging

2.4.3 Language and power relations

Power relations describe how authority and influence are distributed within society. Language reflects and reinforces these relations through forms of address, politeness strategies, and control of discourse. For example, in workplaces, managers may use directive language to assert authority, while subordinates may use deferential language to show respect. Political speeches also demonstrate how language can be used to persuade and mobilise. Analysing language in this way reveals how communication both reflects and shapes power structures.

Fill in the blank: In workplaces, managers may use _____ language to assert authority.

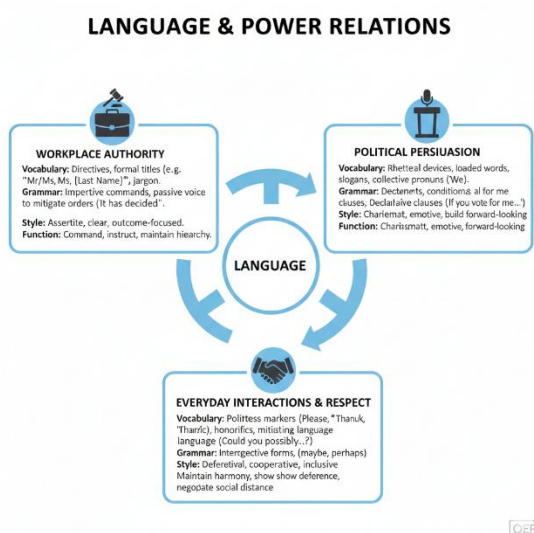


Figure 2.4 Language and power relations

Pilot questions 2.4

1. What does cultural identity refer to?
2. Why is language considered a central marker of cultural identity?
3. How does language signal group belonging?
4. Give one example of how professional groups use language to show membership.
5. In workplaces, what type of language might managers use to assert authority?

Series summary

This Series has focused on the linguistic and social categories of language, showing how language is shaped by both internal structures and external social factors. We began with linguistic categories, examining phonological, grammatical, and semantic features that organise communication. Then we explored social categories, considering how gender, age, and ethnicity



influence language use. Following that, we analysed socio-economic categories, looking at the impact of class, occupation, and education on communication. Finally, we discussed language in relation to identity and culture, highlighting how it signals belonging and reflects power relations.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define key linguistic categories (SLO 2.1), analyse how social categories influence language use (SLO 2.2), evaluate the relationship between language and socio-economic categories (SLO 2.3), explain how language expresses identity and cultural belonging (SLO 2.4), and assess the role of language in shaping and reflecting power relations (SLO 2.5). These outcomes provide you with a deeper understanding of how language operates as both a structural system and a social tool.

Glossary of terms

- **Age groups:** Categories of people based on stages of life, such as children, teenagers, adults, and elders, which influence how language is used in communication.
- **Cultural identity:** A person's sense of belonging to a particular culture, expressed through traditions, values, and language.
- **Ethnicity:** Shared cultural heritage and identity, often marked by distinct language features such as dialects, accents, proverbs, and idioms.
- **Gender roles:** Social expectations and behaviours associated with being male, female, or non-binary, often reflected and reinforced through language use.
- **Grammar:** The set of rules that govern how words are combined to form sentences, including categories such as tense, number, person, case, and aspect.
- **Group belonging:** The way individuals identify with and are accepted into social groups, often signalled through shared language features such as slang, jargon, or dialects.
- **Multilingualism:** The ability of individuals or communities to use more than one language, often switching between them depending on context and purpose.
- **Occupation:** A person's job or profession, which influences language use through specialised vocabularies and registers.
- **Phonology:** The study of the sound system of a language, including consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation.
- **Power relations:** The distribution of authority and influence in society, reflected in language through forms of address, politeness strategies, and control of discourse.
- **Semantics:** The study of meaning in language, including categories such as synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and polysemy.
- **Social class:** Divisions in society based on income, occupation, and education, often reflected in differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication styles.

Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective questions

1. Which branch of linguistics studies the sound system of a language? (Linked to SLO 2.1)



2. What grammatical category distinguishes between past and present actions? (Linked to SLO 2.1)
3. Which branch of linguistics focuses on meaning in language? (Linked to SLO 2.1)
4. Teenagers often use slang to signal what? (Linked to SLO 2.2)
5. Prestigious varieties of English are frequently associated with which social category? (Linked to SLO 2.3)

Short-answer questions

6. Define phonology and explain its role in communication. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
7. Give one example of how gender roles influence language use. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
8. Explain why language is considered a marker of ethnicity. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
9. Provide one example of occupational vocabulary and explain its purpose. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
10. How does education influence linguistic competence and social mobility? (Linked to SLO 2.3)
11. Explain how language signals group belonging. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
12. Give one example of how language reflects power relations in society. (Linked to SLO 2.5)

Long-answer questions

13. Analyse the differences between phonological, grammatical, and semantic categories, providing examples of each. (Linked to SLO 2.1)
14. Evaluate how social categories such as gender, age, and ethnicity shape language use in everyday contexts. (Linked to SLO 2.2)
15. Assess the relationship between language and socio-economic categories, focusing on class, occupation, and education. (Linked to SLO 2.3)
16. Discuss how language expresses identity and cultural belonging, and explain its role in maintaining traditions. (Linked to SLO 2.4)
17. Examine how language reflects and reinforces power relations, using examples from workplaces and politics. (Linked to SLO 2.5)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective questions

1. Phonology
2. Tense
3. Semantics
4. Group belonging
5. Higher social classes

Short-answer questions

6. Phonology is the study of the sound system of a language, including consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation. It helps speakers distinguish meaning and understand connected speech.



7. Women may use more indirect requests, while men may prefer direct speech acts, reflecting cultural expectations.
8. Language is a marker of ethnicity because communities maintain distinct dialects, accents, and expressions to preserve identity.
9. In medicine, terms like diagnosis or prognosis ensure precision and clarity in professional communication.
10. Education influences linguistic competence by promoting standard varieties of language, which support social mobility and professional opportunities.
11. Language signals group belonging through shared slang, jargon, or dialects that mark inclusion in a group.
12. In workplaces, managers may use directive language to assert authority, while subordinates use deferential language to show respect.

Long-answer questions

13. **Basic response:** Phonological categories involve sounds, grammatical categories involve structure, and semantic categories involve meaning. Examples include vowels in phonology, tense in grammar, and synonyms in semantics. **Value-added response:** Outstanding learners may compare how these categories interact. For instance, phonological differences can change meaning, grammatical categories organise communication, and semantic categories ensure clarity. Together, they form the foundation of linguistic competence.
14. **Basic response:** Gender, age, and ethnicity shape language use by influencing vocabulary, style, and dialect. **Value-added response:** Learners may evaluate how these categories intersect. For example, age-related slang may reinforce group identity, while ethnic dialects preserve cultural heritage. Analysing these overlaps shows how language reflects diverse social realities.
15. **Basic response:** Language reflects socio-economic categories through class-based varieties, occupational registers, and educational influence. **Value-added response:** Learners may assess how these categories affect access to opportunities. For instance, prestigious varieties may signal higher status, occupational registers ensure professional precision, and education promotes standard language use. This highlights language's role in social mobility.
16. **Basic response:** Language expresses identity and cultural belonging by carrying traditions, values, and shared practices. **Value-added response:** Learners may explain how indigenous languages preserve oral histories and resist assimilation. Analysing these functions shows how language maintains cultural continuity and strengthens community bonds.
17. **Basic response:** Language reflects power relations through authority in workplaces and persuasion in politics. **Value-added response:** Learners may examine how discourse control shapes social hierarchies. For example, political rhetoric mobilises support, while workplace directives establish authority. Analysing these examples reveals how language both reflects and constructs power structures.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

Part 2.1 Linguistic categories of language

1. Phonology



2. Vowel sounds
3. Tense and number
4. Semantics
5. Synonyms

Part 2.2 Social categories and language use

1. Through word choice, conversational style, and politeness patterns
2. Adults simplify vocabulary when speaking to children
3. Slang
4. It preserves distinct dialects, accents, and cultural expressions
5. Proverbs

Part 2.3 Language and socio-economic categories

1. Divisions in society based on income, occupation, and education
2. Prestigious varieties of English
3. Diagnosis (medicine) or plaintiff (law)
4. They ensure precision and clarity in professional contexts
5. By shaping vocabulary, grammar, and style, and promoting standard varieties

Part 2.4 Language, identity, and cultural categories

1. A person's sense of belonging to a particular culture
2. Because it carries traditions, values, and shared practices of a community
3. Through shared expressions, slang, or dialects
4. By using jargon to signal expertise and membership
5. Directive language

References and Attributions [Series 2]

This section compiles all references and illustration attributions used or suggested in **Series 2: Linguistic and Social Categories of Language**. The referencing style applied here follows APA (7th edition) guidelines for clarity and consistency.

General references

- Course content adapted from *ENG209: Language and Society* (unpublished course outline).
- Open Educational Resources (OER) consulted for suggested illustration searches.

Illustration references and attributions

- *Figure 2.1 Phonological categories of English*
 - AI prompt: "Generate a diagram showing consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation as phonological categories of English."



- Suggested OER search string: “phonological categories of English diagram OER.”
- *Box 2.1 Examples of grammatical categories in English*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of grammatical categories in English with short explanations.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “examples of grammatical categories English OER.”
- *Plate 2.1 Semantic categories in English*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing pairs of words illustrating synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and polysemy.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “semantic categories examples English OER image.”
- *Figure 2.2 Language and gender roles*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing language at the centre, connected to politeness, directness, and vocabulary differences by gender.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and gender roles diagram OER.”
- *Plate 2.2 Language and age groups in communication*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing adults talking to children, teenagers using slang, and elders speaking formally.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and age groups communication OER image.”
- *Box 2.2 Examples of ethnic language features*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of ethnic language features like dialects, proverbs, and idioms.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “ethnic language features examples OER.”
- *Box 2.3 Examples of language features across social classes*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of language features across social classes.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and social class examples OER.”
- *Figure 2.3 Occupational registers in professional contexts*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing examples of occupational registers in medicine, law, engineering, and education.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “occupational registers examples diagram OER.”
- *Plate 2.3 Language and education*



- AI prompt: “Generate an image showing students learning in a classroom and a community group learning informally.”
- Suggested OER search string: “language and education classroom vs informal learning OER image.”
- *Plate 2.4 Language and cultural identity*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of people participating in a cultural ceremony, speaking in their native language.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and cultural identity OER image.”
- *Box 2.4 Examples of language signalling group belonging*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of language signalling group belonging.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and group belonging examples OER.”
- *Figure 2.4 Language and power relations*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing language use in workplace authority, political persuasion, and everyday respect.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language and power relations diagram OER.”

Course code: ENG209

Course title: Language and Society

Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Language in Social Contexts

Series 2: Linguistic and Social Categories of Language

Series 3: Grammar of Social Interactions and Movements

Series 4: Theories and Concepts of Language Usage

Series 5: Language Change, Identity, and Multilingualism

Proposed Outline for Series 3

Part 1 Grammar of everyday social interactions

- **3.1.1 Conversational openings and closings**
- **3.1.2 Turn-taking and interruptions**



- **3.1.3 Politeness strategies and speech acts**

Part 2 Grammar of group and institutional communication

- **3.2.1 Formal meetings and organisational discourse**
- **3.2.2 Classroom and educational interactions**
- **3.2.3 Religious and ceremonial language use**

Part 3 Grammar of social movements and collective action

- **3.3.1 Protest language and slogans**
- **3.3.2 Persuasive rhetoric in campaigns**
- **3.3.3 Media framing of social movements**

Part 4 Grammar of digital and global interactions

- **3.4.1 Online discourse and social media grammar**
- **3.4.2 Cross-cultural communication in global contexts**
- **3.4.3 Hybrid forms of interaction (memes, hashtags, digital slogans)**

Introduction

Everyday conversations, group discussions, and even large-scale social movements all rely on patterns of language that give structure to interaction. Whether it is a polite greeting, a persuasive campaign slogan, or the grammar of online discourse, these forms of communication reveal how language both organises and reflects social life. This Series will help you recognise the underlying grammar of social interactions and movements, showing how language shapes relationships, institutions, and collective action.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the skills to analyse the grammatical structures of social communication, to evaluate how they function in different contexts, and to apply this knowledge in understanding both everyday exchanges and broader social movements.

We shall commence this Series by examining the grammar of everyday social interactions, focusing on conversational openings, turn-taking, and politeness strategies. Next, we will explore group and institutional communication, including meetings, classrooms, and ceremonial contexts. Following that, we will move on to the grammar of social movements, analysing protest language, campaign rhetoric, and media framing. Finally, we will wrap up by considering digital and global interactions, looking at online discourse, cross-cultural communication, and hybrid forms such as memes and hashtags.

Series Learning Outcomes



Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 3.1** analyse the grammatical structures of everyday social interactions, including conversational openings, turn-taking, and politeness strategies,
- **SLO 3.2** explain how group and institutional communication is organised through formal meetings, classroom discourse, and ceremonial language,
- **SLO 3.3** evaluate the grammar of social movements by examining protest language, campaign rhetoric, and media framing,
- **SLO 3.4** demonstrate how digital and global interactions employ distinctive grammatical features such as online discourse, cross-cultural communication, and hybrid forms like memes and hashtags.

3.1 Grammar of Everyday Social Interactions

3.1.1 Conversational openings and closings

Conversational openings are the ways in which people begin interactions, often using greetings, questions, or polite expressions to establish rapport. **Conversational closings** are the strategies used to end interactions smoothly, such as farewells, thanks, or summary statements. These elements are important because they set the tone of communication and help maintain social harmony.

Fill in the blank: Conversational openings often use greetings or polite expressions to establish _____.

CONVERSATIONAL OPENINGS & CLOSINGS



OER

Figure 3.1 Conversational openings and closings

3.1.2 Turn-taking and interruptions



Turn-taking refers to the way speakers alternate in conversation, ensuring that communication flows smoothly. It involves cues such as pauses, intonation, or gestures that signal when one person has finished speaking. **Interruptions** occur when a speaker takes the floor without waiting for cues, which may be seen as rude or assertive depending on context. Mastering turn-taking helps maintain balance in conversations and prevents misunderstandings.

Fill in the blank: Turn-taking involves cues such as pauses, intonation, or _____ that signal when a speaker has finished.



Plate 3.1 Turn-taking in everyday conversation

3.1.3 Politeness strategies and speech acts

Politeness strategies are linguistic choices made to show respect, maintain harmony, or avoid offence. Examples include indirect requests, hedging, or using titles. **Speech acts** are the functions performed through language, such as requesting, apologising, or promising. Together, these strategies and acts form the grammar of social interaction, shaping how people relate to one another.

Fill in the blank: Politeness strategies are linguistic choices made to show respect, maintain harmony, or avoid _____.

Category	Specific Tool	Example / Application
Speech Acts	Apologising	"I'm sorry for the delay; I'll make sure it doesn't happen again."
	Promising	"I will have the report on your desk by 5:00 PM today."
	Directives	"Could you please pass the salt?" (A request disguised as a question).
Politeness	Indirect Requests	"It's getting a bit chilly in here, isn't it?" (Implicitly asking someone to close a window).



Category	Specific Tool	Example / Application
	Hedging	" <i>I kind of think we should perhaps reconsider the budget.</i> " (Softens a potentially confrontational opinion).
	Honorifics	Using titles like <i>Doctor, Professor</i> , or <i>Sir/Ma'am</i> to show social distance and respect.

Box 3.1 Examples of politeness strategies and speech acts

Pilot questions 3.1

1. What are conversational openings and closings?
2. Give one example of a conversational opening.
3. What does turn-taking involve?
4. How might interruptions be perceived in conversation?
5. What are politeness strategies used for?

3.2 Grammar of Group and Institutional Communication

3.2.1 Formal meetings and organisational discourse

Formal meetings are structured interactions where participants follow specific rules of communication, such as agenda-setting, turn-taking, and the use of formal registers. **Organisational discourse** refers to the language practices within institutions, including reports, memos, and official statements. These forms of communication rely on clarity, precision, and hierarchy, ensuring that decisions are documented and authority is respected.

Fill in the blank: Formal meetings rely on clarity, precision, and _____ to ensure decisions are documented.



ORGANISATIONAL DISCOURSE

Language Features in Formal Settings

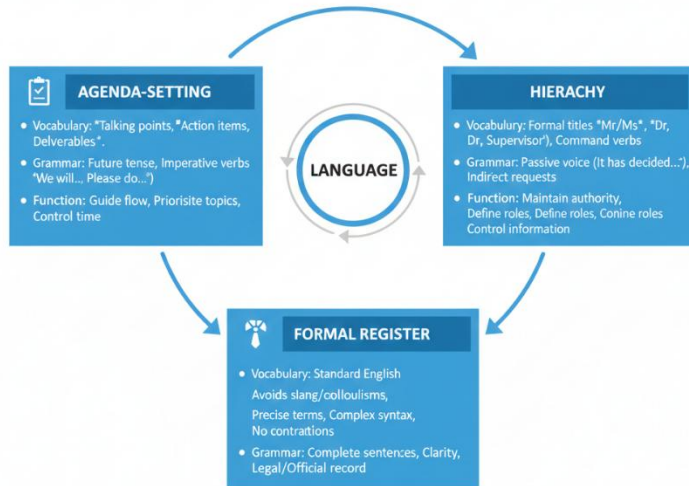


Figure 3.2 Features of organisational discourse

3.2.2 Classroom and educational interactions

Classroom interactions involve communication between teachers and learners, shaped by roles, authority, and educational goals. Teachers often use directive language to guide learning, while learners respond with questions or answers. Educational interactions also include peer discussions, group work, and presentations, each with its own grammar of participation. These patterns of communication help structure learning and maintain order in educational settings.

Fill in the blank: Teachers often use _____ language to guide learning in classroom interactions.





Plate 3.2 Classroom and educational interactions

3.2.3 Religious and ceremonial language use

Religious language refers to the specialised vocabulary and structures used in worship, prayer, and rituals. **Ceremonial language** includes formal expressions used in events such as weddings, graduations, or state functions. Both rely on repetition, symbolism, and elevated registers to convey respect and solemnity. These forms of communication reinforce shared values and collective identity within communities.

Fill in the blank: Religious and ceremonial language often relies on repetition, symbolism, and _____ registers.



Feature	Description	Example
Archaisms	The use of older forms of a language to maintain a link to historical tradition and sacred texts.	Use of " <i>Thou</i> " and " <i>Thine</i> " in English prayers or liturgical Latin in Catholic mass.
Performative Utterances	Words that do not just describe an action but <i>perform</i> it the moment they are spoken.	" <i>I now pronounce you husband and wife</i> " (Vows) or " <i>I christen this ship...</i> "
Repetition & Parallelism	Rhythmic repetition of phrases to aid memorization and create a meditative or emotional atmosphere.	Litany prayers like " <i>Lord, hear our prayer</i> " or the call-and-response in community chants.
Formulaic Expressions	Fixed phrases that must be recited exactly as written to be considered valid or "sacred."	The opening and closing of a legal or religious oath: " <i>So help me God.</i> "

Box 3.2 Examples of religious and ceremonial language

Pilot questions 3.2

1. What is organisational discourse?
2. Give one feature of communication in formal meetings.
3. What type of language do teachers often use in classrooms?
4. Name one example of ceremonial language.
5. Why is repetition important in religious language?

3.3 Grammar of Social Movements and Collective Action

3.3.1 Protest language and slogans

Protest language refers to the words, phrases, and expressions used to challenge authority and demand change. **Slogans** are short, memorable phrases that capture the essence of a movement, often repeated to unify participants and attract public attention. They rely on simplicity, rhythm, and emotional appeal to make messages powerful and persuasive.

Fill in the blank: Slogans are short, memorable phrases that capture the _____ of a movement.





Plate 3.3 Protest language and slogans

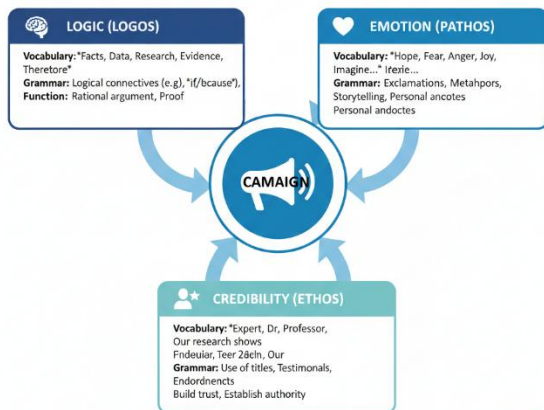
3.3.2 Persuasive rhetoric in campaigns

Rhetoric is the art of using language to persuade. In campaigns, persuasive rhetoric includes appeals to logic, emotion, and credibility. Campaign speeches, posters, and debates often use rhetorical devices such as repetition, metaphors, and contrasts to influence audiences. Effective rhetoric mobilises support and strengthens solidarity within movements.

Fill in the blank: Persuasive rhetoric in campaigns often uses repetition, metaphors, and _____ to influence audiences.

RHETHETICAL APPEALS IN CAMPAIGNS

Persuasive Communication in Public Discourse



OER

Figure 3.3 Persuasive rhetoric in campaigns

3.3.3 Media framing of social movements



Media framing refers to the way news outlets and social media present information about social movements. Frames highlight certain aspects of a movement while downplaying others, shaping public perception. For example, a protest may be framed as disruptive or as a legitimate call for justice, depending on the language used. Understanding media framing helps explain why movements are perceived differently across audiences.

Fill in the blank: Media framing highlights certain aspects of a movement while _____ others.

Frame Type	Techniques & Language	Example Descriptions
Positive Framing (Legitimization)	Focuses on the underlying cause and systemic issues. Uses humanizing language and highlights the movement's goals.	<i>"Thousands gather to advocate for climate justice," or "Peaceful assembly highlighting civil rights inequalities."</i>
Negative Framing (Marginalization)	Focuses on disruption and chaos. Uses "riot" or "clash" instead of "protest." Emphasizes economic damage or traffic delays.	<i>"Mob causes traffic gridlock," or "Vandalism and looting erupt during local disturbances."</i>
The "Protest Paradigm"	A pattern where media prioritizes the spectacle (police presence, arrests) over the actual grievances of the protesters.	Headlines focusing on the number of arrests rather than the demands listed on placards.

Box 3.3 Examples of media framing in social movements

Pilot questions 3.3

1. What is protest language used for?
2. What makes slogans effective in social movements?
3. Name one rhetorical device used in campaigns.
4. What are the three main rhetorical appeals?
5. How does media framing influence public perception of social movements?

3.4 Grammar of Digital and Global Interactions

3.4.1 Online discourse and social media grammar

Online discourse refers to the way language is used in digital platforms such as social media, blogs, and forums. **Social media grammar** includes abbreviations, emojis, hashtags, and informal



structures that differ from traditional writing. These features allow users to communicate quickly, creatively, and across large audiences. For example, hashtags group conversations around a topic, while emojis add emotional tone to otherwise plain text.

Fill in the blank: Hashtags group conversations around a _____, making it easier to follow discussions online.

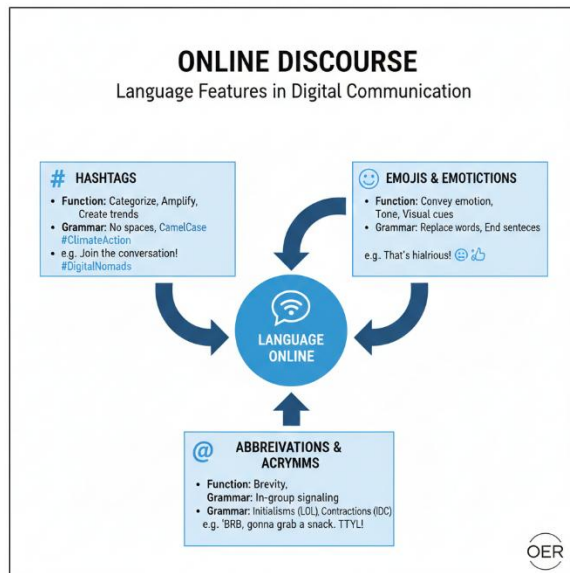


Figure 3.4 Features of online discourse and social media grammar

3.4.2 Cross-cultural communication in global contexts

Cross-cultural communication refers to interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. It requires sensitivity to differences in language use, politeness strategies, and non-verbal cues. Misunderstandings may occur when cultural norms clash, but awareness of these differences helps build effective communication. For example, directness may be valued in some cultures, while indirectness is preferred in others.

Fill in the blank: Cross-cultural communication requires sensitivity to differences in language use and _____ cues.





Plate 3.4 Cross-cultural communication in global contexts

3.4.3 Hybrid forms of interaction (memes, hashtags, digital slogans)

Hybrid forms of interaction combine traditional language with digital creativity. Memes, hashtags, and digital slogans are examples of how language adapts to online spaces. Memes use humour and visuals to convey ideas quickly, hashtags create collective identity around issues, and digital slogans mobilise support in campaigns. These forms show how global communication blends linguistic and visual elements to reach wide audiences.

Fill in the blank: Memes use humour and _____ to convey ideas quickly in digital spaces.

Tool	Communicative Function	Example
Memes	Cultural Shorthand: Relies on intertextuality to convey complex emotions or social critiques quickly through humor.	"Distracted Boyfriend": Used to represent choosing a new, shiny idea over a reliable one.
Hashtags	Metadata & Indexing: Categorizes content to make it searchable and links individual posts to a larger global conversation.	#ClimateAction: Aggregates scientific data, personal stories, and protest updates under one digital roof.
Digital Slogans	Mobilization: Uses rhythmic or repetitive phrasing to create "sticky"	"Stay Safe": Functioned as a phatic expression and a collective



Tool	Communicative Function	Example
	ideas that encourage social or political action.	reminder during global health crises.

Box 3.4 Examples of hybrid forms of digital interaction

Pilot questions 3.4

1. What is online discourse?
2. Name one feature of social media grammar.
3. Why is cross-cultural communication important in global contexts?
4. Give one example of a cultural difference in communication style.
5. What do memes use to convey ideas quickly?

Series summary

This Series has examined the grammar of social interactions and movements, highlighting how language structures everyday exchanges, institutional communication, collective action, and global digital discourse. By focusing on the ways people open and close conversations, manage turn-taking, and employ politeness strategies, we explored how language maintains social harmony. We then moved on to group and institutional contexts, considering the grammar of meetings, classrooms, and ceremonial events. Following that, we analysed the language of social movements, looking at protest slogans, persuasive rhetoric, and media framing. Finally, we concluded with digital and global interactions, where online discourse, cross-cultural communication, and hybrid forms such as memes and hashtags demonstrate the evolving nature of language.

Upon completing this Series, you should now be able to analyse everyday conversational grammar (SLO 3.1), explain how institutional communication is structured (SLO 3.2), evaluate the language of social movements (SLO 3.3), and demonstrate how digital and global interactions employ distinctive grammatical features (SLO 3.4). These outcomes provide you with practical tools to understand how language both reflects and shapes social life in diverse contexts.

Glossary of terms

- **Ceremonial language:** Formal expressions used in events such as weddings, graduations, or state functions, often marked by repetition and solemnity.
- **Conversational closings:** Strategies used to end interactions smoothly, such as farewells, thanks, or summary statements.
- **Conversational openings:** The ways in which people begin interactions, often using greetings, questions, or polite expressions to establish rapport.



- **Cross-cultural communication:** Interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds, requiring sensitivity to differences in language use and non-verbal cues.
- **Hybrid forms of interaction:** Digital communication that blends traditional language with creative elements such as memes, hashtags, and digital slogans.
- **Interruptions:** Instances where a speaker takes the floor without waiting for cues, which may be seen as rude or assertive depending on context.
- **Media framing:** The way news outlets and social media present information about social movements, highlighting certain aspects while downplaying others.
- **Online discourse:** The use of language in digital platforms such as social media, blogs, and forums, often characterised by abbreviations, emojis, and informal structures.
- **Organisational discourse:** Language practices within institutions, including reports, memos, and official statements, which rely on clarity, hierarchy, and precision.
- **Politeness strategies:** Linguistic choices made to show respect, maintain harmony, or avoid offence, such as indirect requests or hedging.
- **Protest language:** Words, phrases, and expressions used to challenge authority and demand change, often seen in demonstrations.
- **Rhetoric:** The art of using language to persuade, commonly employed in campaigns through appeals to logic, emotion, and credibility.
- **Social media grammar:** Informal structures used in online communication, including abbreviations, emojis, and hashtags.
- **Speech acts:** Functions performed through language, such as requesting, apologising, or promising.
- **Turn-taking:** The way speakers alternate in conversation, using cues such as pauses, intonation, or gestures to signal when one person has finished speaking.

Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. Which term refers to the way speakers alternate in conversation? (Linked to SLO 3.1)
2. What type of language is used in worship, prayer, and rituals? (Linked to SLO 3.2)
3. What are short, memorable phrases that capture the essence of a movement called? (Linked to SLO 3.3)
4. Which rhetorical appeal focuses on credibility in persuasive campaigns? (Linked to SLO 3.3)
5. What digital feature groups conversations around a topic online? (Linked to SLO 3.4)

Short-answer questions

6. Define conversational openings and explain their importance. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
7. Give one example of organisational discourse in institutions. (Linked to SLO 3.2)
8. Explain why slogans are effective in social movements. (Linked to SLO 3.3)
9. Provide one example of a cultural difference in communication style. (Linked to SLO 3.4)
10. What role do memes play in digital communication? (Linked to SLO 3.4)



Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the grammar of everyday social interactions, focusing on conversational openings, turn-taking, and politeness strategies. (Linked to SLO 3.1)
12. Evaluate how group and institutional communication is structured through meetings, classrooms, and ceremonial language. (Linked to SLO 3.2)
13. Assess the grammar of social movements by examining protest language, campaign rhetoric, and media framing. (Linked to SLO 3.3)
14. Discuss how digital and global interactions employ distinctive grammatical features, including online discourse, cross-cultural communication, and hybrid forms. (Linked to SLO 3.4)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective questions

1. Turn-taking
2. Religious language
3. Slogans
4. Credibility (ethos)
5. Hashtags

Short-answer questions

6. Conversational openings are ways to begin interactions, often using greetings or polite expressions. They are important because they establish rapport and set the tone of communication.
7. Examples include reports, memos, or official statements within organisations.
8. Slogans are effective because they are short, memorable, and emotionally appealing, helping unify participants and attract attention.
9. In some cultures, directness is valued, while in others indirectness is preferred.
10. Memes convey ideas quickly using humour and visuals, making them accessible and engaging in digital spaces.

Long-answer questions

11. **Basic response:** Everyday social interactions rely on conversational openings to establish rapport, turn-taking to maintain flow, and politeness strategies to show respect. **Value-added response:** Outstanding learners may analyse how these elements vary across cultures and contexts, noting that interruptions may be acceptable in some settings but rude in others, and politeness strategies can differ depending on social roles.
12. **Basic response:** Group and institutional communication is structured through formal meetings with agendas, classroom interactions guided by teacher authority, and ceremonial language marked by repetition and solemnity. **Value-added response:** Learners may evaluate how these structures reinforce hierarchy and collective identity, showing that institutional grammar both organises communication and reflects power relations.
13. **Basic response:** Social movements use protest language to challenge authority, slogans to unify participants, and rhetoric to persuade. Media framing influences how movements are



perceived. **Value-added response:** Learners may assess how positive or negative framing shapes public opinion, and how rhetorical devices like metaphors or contrasts mobilise support across diverse audiences.

14. **Basic response:** Digital and global interactions employ online discourse with hashtags and emojis, cross-cultural communication requiring sensitivity to differences, and hybrid forms such as memes and slogans. **Value-added response:** Learners may discuss how these features create new forms of collective identity, bridge cultural divides, and demonstrate the adaptability of language in globalised digital contexts.

Answers to Pilot Questions [3]

Part 3.1 Grammar of everyday social interactions

1. Conversational openings are ways of beginning interactions, while closings are strategies used to end them smoothly.
2. A greeting such as “Hello” or “Good morning.”
3. Turn-taking involves cues such as pauses, intonation, or gestures.
4. Interruptions may be perceived as rude or assertive depending on the context.
5. Politeness strategies are used to show respect, maintain harmony, or avoid offence.

Part 3.2 Grammar of group and institutional communication

1. Organisational discourse is the language practices within institutions, such as reports, memos, and official statements.
2. Agenda-setting is one feature of communication in formal meetings.
3. Teachers often use directive language in classrooms.
4. An example of ceremonial language is wedding vows.
5. Repetition is important in religious language because it reinforces shared values and solemnity.

Part 3.3 Grammar of social movements and collective action

1. Protest language is used to challenge authority and demand change.
2. Slogans are effective because they are short, memorable, and emotionally appealing.
3. One rhetorical device used in campaigns is metaphor.
4. The three main rhetorical appeals are logic, emotion, and credibility.
5. Media framing influences public perception by highlighting certain aspects of a movement while downplaying others.

Part 3.4 Grammar of digital and global interactions

1. Online discourse is the way language is used in digital platforms such as social media, blogs, and forums.
2. One feature of social media grammar is the use of emojis.
3. Cross-cultural communication is important because it helps avoid misunderstandings and builds effective global interactions.



4. An example of a cultural difference is that some cultures value directness while others prefer indirectness.
5. Memes use humour and visuals to convey ideas quickly.

References and Attributions [Series 3]

This section compiles all references and illustration attributions used or suggested in **Series 3: Grammar of Social Interactions and Movements**. The referencing style applied here follows APA (7th edition) guidelines for clarity and consistency.

General references

- Course content adapted from *ENG209: Language and Society* (unpublished course outline).
- Open Educational Resources (OER) consulted for suggested illustration searches.

Illustration references and attributions

- *Figure 3.1 Conversational openings and closings*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing conversational openings (greetings, questions) and closings (farewells, thanks).”
 - Suggested OER search string: “conversational openings and closings diagram OER.”
- *Plate 3.1 Turn-taking in everyday conversation*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of two people conversing, showing gestures and pauses as turn-taking cues.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “turn-taking in conversation OER image.”
- *Box 3.1 Examples of politeness strategies and speech acts*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of politeness strategies and speech acts in everyday communication.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “examples of politeness strategies and speech acts OER.”
- *Figure 3.2 Features of organisational discourse*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing agenda-setting, hierarchy, and formal register as features of organisational discourse.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “organisational discourse features diagram OER.”
- *Plate 3.2 Classroom and educational interactions*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of a teacher instructing students in a classroom, with learners responding.”



- Suggested OER search string: “classroom teacher student interaction OER image.”
- *Box 3.2 Examples of religious and ceremonial language*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of religious and ceremonial language features.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “religious and ceremonial language examples OER.”
- *Plate 3.3 Protest language and slogans*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of protestors holding placards with short slogans demanding change.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “protest slogans social movements OER image.”
- *Figure 3.3 Persuasive rhetoric in campaigns*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing rhetorical appeals: logic, emotion, and credibility in campaigns.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “persuasive rhetoric appeals diagram OER.”
- *Box 3.3 Examples of media framing in social movements*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of positive and negative media framing of social movements.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “media framing social movements examples OER.”
- *Figure 3.4 Features of online discourse and social media grammar*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing hashtags, emojis, and abbreviations as features of online discourse.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “online discourse social media grammar diagram OER.”
- *Plate 3.4 Cross-cultural communication in global contexts*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing diverse people from different cultures communicating in a meeting or social setting.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “cross-cultural communication global interaction OER image.”
- *Box 3.4 Examples of hybrid forms of digital interaction*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of memes, hashtags, and digital slogans with their functions.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “memes hashtags digital slogans examples OER.”



Course code: ENG209
Course title: Language and Society
Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Language in Social Contexts

Series 2: Linguistic and Social Categories of Language

Series 3: Grammar of Social Interactions and Movements

Series 4: Theories and Concepts of Language Usage

Series 5: Language Change, Identity, and Multilingualism

Proposed Outline for Series 4

Part 1 Structuralist and functionalist theories

- 4.1.1 Structuralist approaches to language
- 4.1.2 Functionalist perspectives on communication
- 4.1.3 Strengths and limitations of structuralist and functionalist views

Part 2 Sociolinguistic theories of language use

- 4.2.1 Speech community theory
- 4.2.2 Code-switching and diglossia
- 4.2.3 Language variation and social identity

Part 3 Pragmatic and discourse-based theories

- 4.3.1 Speech act theory
- 4.3.2 Politeness theory and facework
- 4.3.3 Discourse analysis and interactional sociolinguistics

Part 4 Contemporary and applied concepts

- 4.4.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)
- 4.4.2 Language ideology and power
- 4.4.3 Language usage in digital and global contexts



Introduction

In the last Series, we explored the grammar of social interactions and movements, focusing on how language shapes everyday exchanges, institutional communication, and collective action. Building on that foundation, this Series turns to the theories and concepts that explain why language is used the way it is. Understanding these frameworks is essential because they provide the tools to analyse language systematically, connect linguistic behaviour to social contexts, and appreciate the evolving nature of communication in both traditional and modern settings.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to key theories and concepts of language usage and to equip you with the ability to apply these frameworks in analysing communication across different contexts.

We shall commence this Series by examining structuralist and functionalist theories, which provide foundational perspectives on how language is organised and used. Next, we will explore sociolinguistic theories, including speech community theory, code-switching, and language variation. Following that, we will move on to pragmatic and discourse-based theories such as speech act theory, politeness theory, and discourse analysis. Finally, we will wrap up by considering contemporary and applied concepts, including critical discourse analysis, language ideology, and the role of language in digital and global contexts.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 4.1** define structuralist and functionalist theories of language and analyse their strengths and limitations,
- **SLO 4.2** explain sociolinguistic theories of language use, including speech community theory, code-switching, and diglossia,
- **SLO 4.3** analyse how language variation relates to social identity within different communities,
- **SLO 4.4** describe pragmatic and discourse-based theories such as speech act theory, politeness theory, and discourse analysis,
- **SLO 4.5** evaluate contemporary concepts including critical discourse analysis, language ideology, and the role of language in digital and global contexts.

4.1 Structuralist and Functionalist Theories

4.1.1 Structuralist approaches to language

Structuralism is a theoretical approach that views language as a system of interrelated elements, where meaning is derived from the relationships between signs rather than from individual words alone. This perspective was pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure, who distinguished between **langue** (the structured system of language shared by a community) and **parole** (individual speech



acts). Structuralism emphasises the importance of studying language as a whole system rather than focusing only on isolated expressions.

Fill in the blank: Structuralism views language as a system of interrelated _____, where meaning comes from relationships.

SAUSSURE'S STRUCTURALISM

Langue vs. Parole: The System & The Act

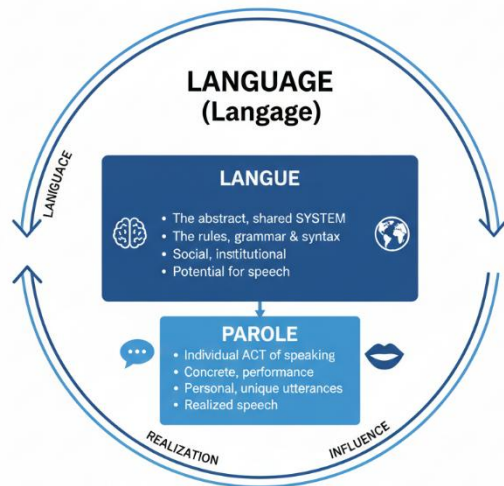


Figure 4.1 Saussure's structuralist model of language

4.1.2 Functionalist perspectives on communication

Functionalism is a theoretical approach that focuses on the role language plays in communication and society. Rather than seeing language only as a system of signs, functionalism examines how language fulfils purposes such as informing, persuading, entertaining, or maintaining social relationships. Scholars like Malinowski and Halliday emphasised that language should be studied in terms of its functions in real-life contexts.

Fill in the blank: Functionalism focuses on the role language plays in _____ and society.





OER

Plate 4.1 Functionalist perspectives on communication

4.1.3 Strengths and limitations of structuralist and functionalist views

Both structuralism and functionalism provide valuable insights into language usage. Structuralism helps us understand the underlying system and relationships between signs, while functionalism highlights the practical purposes of language in society. However, structuralism has been criticised for being too abstract and detached from real-life communication, while functionalism may overlook the deeper structures that shape meaning. Together, they offer complementary perspectives that enrich our understanding of language.

Fill in the blank: Structuralism has been criticised for being too _____ and detached from real-life communication.

Theory	Core Strengths	Main Limitations
Structuralism (e.g., Saussure)	Rigorous Analysis: Established linguistics as a formal science by breaking language into basic units (phonemes, morphemes).	Neglects Context: Often ignores how social, cultural, and historical factors change the meaning of language in real-time.
	Systematicity: Explains how language functions as a self-contained system where every part relates to the whole.	Static View: Tends to view language as a fixed set of rules, struggling to account for individual creativity and linguistic evolution.



Theory	Core Strengths	Main Limitations
Functionalism (e.g., Halliday)	Contextual Relevance: Focuses on how language is actually used in specific social situations to achieve goals.	Analytical Ambiguity: Because it prioritizes fluid usage over strict rules, it can be harder to create precise, universal grammatical models.
	Adaptability: Better explains why language changes over time and how speakers innovate to meet new communicative needs.	Complexity: Analyzing "meaning" across varied contexts is far more subjective than analyzing formal sentence structures.

Box 4.1 Strengths and limitations of structuralist and functionalist theories

Pilot questions 4.1

1. What is structuralism in language theory?
2. Who distinguished between langue and parole?
3. What does functionalism emphasise about language?
4. Name one scholar associated with functionalist perspectives.
5. What is one limitation of structuralism?

4.2 Sociolinguistic Theories of Language Use

4.2.1 Speech community theory

A **speech community** is a group of people who share a common language or variety and follow similar rules for its use. The concept highlights that language is not only a system of grammar but also a social practice shaped by community norms. Members of a speech community recognise what counts as appropriate speech, and these norms help maintain identity and cohesion.

Fill in the blank: A speech community is a group of people who share a common _____ and rules for its use.



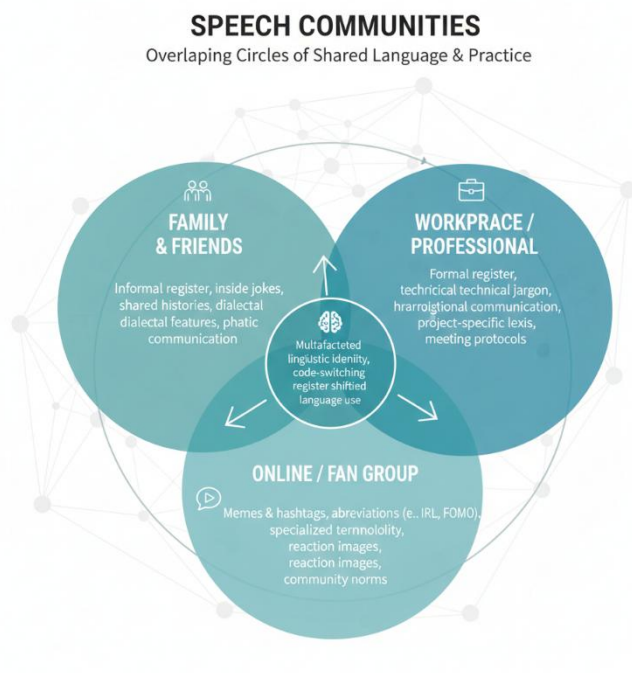


Figure 4.2 Speech communities and their overlapping norms

4.2.2 Code-switching and diglossia

Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties within a conversation, often depending on context or audience. It can signal identity, solidarity, or social positioning. **Diglossia** refers to a situation where two varieties of the same language are used in a community, with one serving formal functions (high variety) and the other used in everyday informal contexts (low variety). Both phenomena illustrate how language use reflects social structures and cultural expectations.

Fill in the blank: Diglossia refers to a situation where two varieties of the same language are used, one for formal functions and the other for _____ contexts.





OER

Plate 4.2 Code-switching in everyday communication

4.2.3 Language variation and social identity

Language variation refers to differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar across regions, social groups, or contexts. These variations are not random but often signal **social identity**, such as class, ethnicity, or profession. For example, regional dialects may mark geographical belonging, while professional jargon may indicate occupational identity. Sociolinguistic theories emphasise that variation is a resource for expressing identity and group membership.

Fill in the blank: Language variation often signals social identity, such as class, ethnicity, or _____.

Variation Type	Definition	Connection to Identity	Example
Dialect	Regional variation involving distinctive grammar, vocabulary, and accent.	Signals geographical roots and local pride; creates a sense of "home" and regional solidarity.	<i>Geordie</i> (Newcastle, UK) or <i>Appalachian English</i> (USA).



Variation Type	Definition	Connection to Identity	Example
Sociolect	A variety of language used by a specific social class or age group.	Signals social status , level of education, or peer group belonging (e.g., youth slang).	Use of <i>"it is I"</i> (High-status formal) vs. <i>"it's me"</i> (Common informal).
Jargon	Technical vocabulary used by a specific professional or hobbyist group.	Signals expertise and "in-group" membership; excludes those who do not share the knowledge.	Medical professionals using <i>"myocardial infarction"</i> instead of <i>"heart attack."</i>
Ethnolect	A variety of a language associated with a specific ethnic group .	Signals cultural heritage and ethnic identity, often maintained across generations.	<i>African American Vernacular English (AAVE)</i> or <i>Chicano English</i> .

Box 4.2 Examples of language variation and social identity

Pilot questions 4.2

1. What is a speech community?
2. What does code-switching involve?
3. Define diglossia and give one example.
4. How does language variation relate to social identity?
5. Give one example of professional jargon as a form of language variation.

4.3 Pragmatic and Discourse-Based Theories

4.3.1 Speech act theory

Speech act theory is a pragmatic approach that examines how language performs actions rather than simply conveying information. Proposed by philosophers such as J. L. Austin and John Searle, it distinguishes between three levels: **locutionary acts** (the actual words spoken), **illocutionary acts** (the intended function, such as requesting or promising), and **perlocutionary acts** (the effect on the listener). This theory highlights that communication is not only about meaning but also about action.

Fill in the blank: Speech act theory shows that language performs actions, such as requesting, promising, or _____.



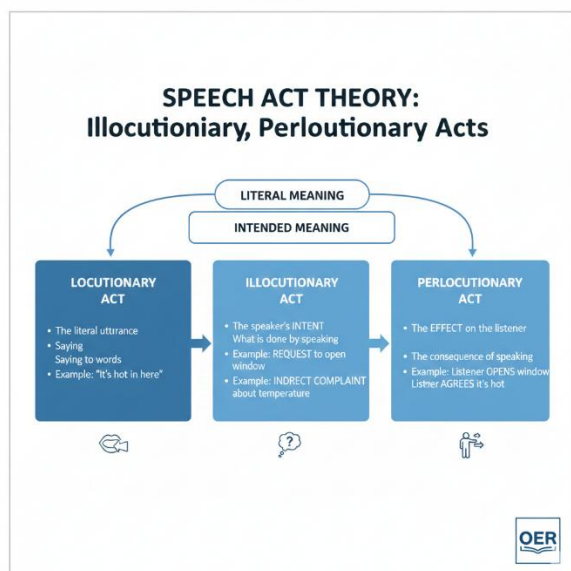


Figure 4.3 Levels of speech acts

4.3.2 Politeness theory and facework

Politeness theory, developed by Brown and Levinson, explains how speakers manage social relationships by protecting each other's **face** (public self-image). Strategies include positive politeness (showing friendliness and solidarity) and negative politeness (showing respect for autonomy and minimising imposition). **Facework** refers to the linguistic and behavioural efforts made to maintain or restore face during interaction. These concepts are crucial in understanding how politeness varies across cultures and contexts.

Fill in the blank: Politeness theory explains how speakers protect each other's _____ during communication.

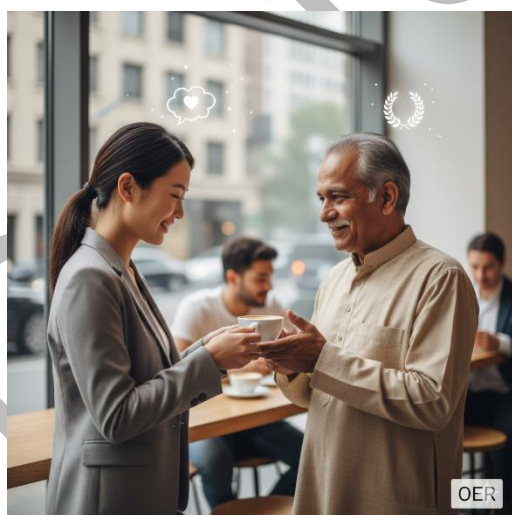


Plate 4.3 Politeness strategies in everyday interaction

4.3.3 Discourse analysis and interactional sociolinguistics

Discourse analysis studies how language is used in extended texts and conversations, focusing on patterns, coherence, and meaning beyond individual sentences. **Interactional sociolinguistics**, pioneered by John Gumperz, examines how speakers use contextual cues such as tone, pauses, or cultural references to interpret meaning in interaction. These approaches reveal how communication is shaped by both linguistic structures and social contexts, making them valuable tools for analysing everyday and institutional discourse.

Fill in the blank: Interactional sociolinguistics examines how speakers use contextual cues such as tone or _____ to interpret meaning.

Approach	Key Focus	Linguistic Features	Example
Discourse Analysis	The study of how sentences combine to create coherent meaning in extended texts (written or spoken).	Cohesion & Coherence: Use of connectors (however, therefore) and references to maintain a "thread."	Analyzing a news article to see how the sequence of events constructs a specific narrative.
Interactional Sociolinguistics	How speakers use contextual cues and cultural background to interpret meaning during live interaction.	Contextualization Cues: Changes in tone, pitch, or body language that signal how a message should be taken.	A student using a specific "joking" intonation to disagree with a teacher without being disrespectful.

Box 4.3 Key features of discourse analysis and interactional sociolinguistics

Pilot questions 4.3

1. What are the three levels of speech acts?
2. Who developed politeness theory?
3. What does facework refer to?
4. What is the focus of discourse analysis?
5. Name one contextual cue studied in interactional sociolinguistics.

4.4 Contemporary and Applied Concepts



4.4.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach that studies how language reflects and reinforces power relations in society. It examines texts, conversations, and media to uncover hidden ideologies and inequalities. For example, CDA may analyse how political speeches frame issues, or how media reports portray certain groups. The goal is to reveal how language contributes to dominance or resistance in social contexts.

Fill in the blank: Critical discourse analysis studies how language reflects and reinforces _____ relations in society.

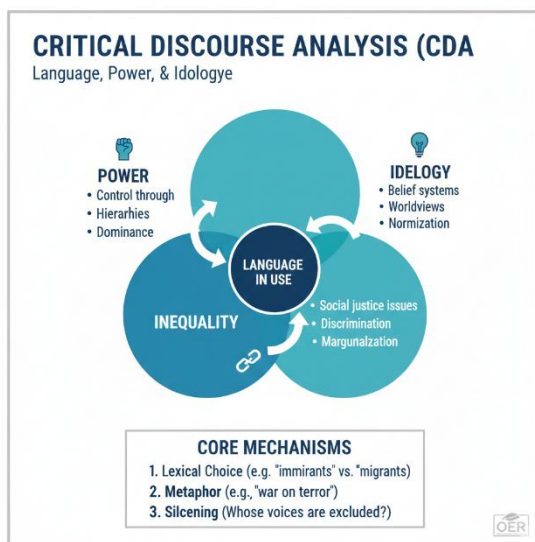


Figure 4.4 Critical discourse analysis focus areas

4.4.2 Language ideology and power

Language ideology refers to the beliefs and assumptions people hold about language, such as which varieties are considered prestigious or correct. These ideologies often reflect and reinforce **power** structures, privileging some groups while marginalising others. For instance, standard varieties may be valued in education and employment, while non-standard dialects are stigmatised. Studying language ideology helps us understand how social hierarchies are maintained through linguistic practices.

Fill in the blank: Language ideology refers to the beliefs and assumptions people hold about _____.



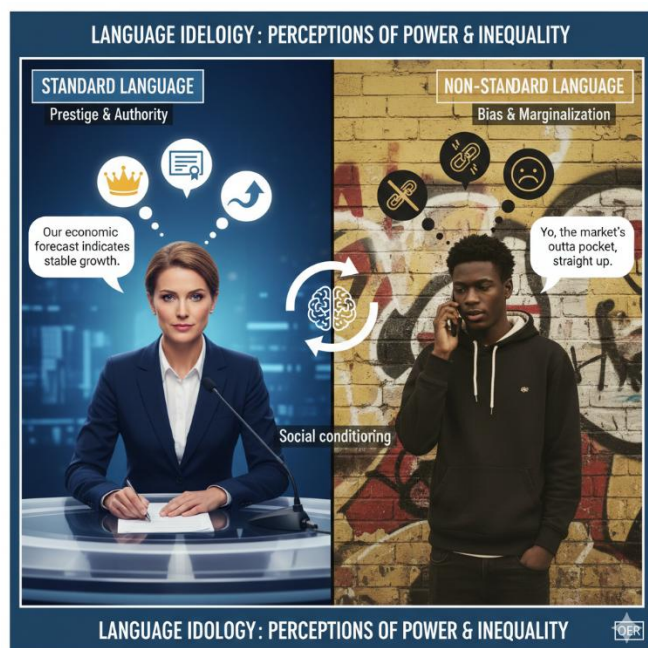


Plate 4.4 Language ideology and power

4.4.3 Language usage in digital and global contexts

Language in digital and global contexts demonstrates how communication adapts to new technologies and diverse audiences. Online platforms encourage creativity through memes, hashtags, and hybrid forms, while globalisation fosters cross-cultural exchanges. These contexts highlight how language evolves rapidly, blending traditional structures with innovative digital practices. Studying digital and global usage helps us appreciate the dynamic and interconnected nature of modern communication.

Fill in the blank: Online platforms encourage creativity through memes, hashtags, and _____ forms of communication.

Medium	Key Features	Linguistic/Global Function	Example
Memes	Multimodality: Blends images, text, and sound to create layered meanings.	Universal Shorthand: Overcomes cultural/language barriers through shared visual references and humor.	The "Duck 不必" meme, which uses a homophone to blend English and Mandarin for bilingual humor.
Hashtags	Indexicality: Links individual posts to global movements	Community Signaling: Groups disparate voices into a	#BlackLivesMatter or #TBT (Throwback Thursday) to signal



Medium	Key Features	Linguistic/Global Function	Example
	or specific interest groups.	single "digital conversation" and indexes ideological stances.	global social or personal contexts.
Glocal English	Hybridity: The blending of Global English (<i>Lingua Franca</i>) with local dialects and cultural norms.	Identity Negotiation: Allows speakers to participate in global discourse while maintaining their local cultural identity.	Use of <i>Singlish</i> (Singaporean English) in global gaming forums to signal both expertise and origin.
Micro-Linguistics	Economy: Use of acronyms, emojis, and phonetic reductions (<i>u, l8r, lol</i>).	Efficiency & Tone: Compensates for the lack of non-verbal cues (like gestures) to convey emotion and intent quickly.	Using a "Rolling Eyes" 🙄 emoji to signal sarcasm that might be lost in a plain text message.

Box 4.4 Examples of language usage in digital and global contexts

Pilot questions 4.4

1. What does critical discourse analysis study?
2. Give one example of how CDA might be applied.
3. What is language ideology?
4. How does language ideology reinforce power structures?
5. Name one feature of language usage in digital contexts.

Series summary

This Series has explored the theories and concepts of language usage, providing you with frameworks to analyse how language operates both as a structured system and as a tool for communication in society. Its purpose has been to connect theoretical perspectives with practical applications, helping you appreciate how language reflects identity, power, and global interaction.

We began with structuralist and functionalist theories, examining language as a system of signs and as a means of fulfilling social functions. Next, we considered sociolinguistic theories, including speech communities, code-switching, diglossia, and the role of variation in shaping identity. Following that, we studied pragmatic and discourse-based theories such as speech act theory, politeness strategies, and discourse analysis. Finally, we concluded with contemporary and



applied concepts, including critical discourse analysis, language ideology, and digital communication. By completing this Series, you should now be able to define and analyse classical theories (SLO 4.1), explain sociolinguistic perspectives (SLO 4.2), analyse language variation and identity (SLO 4.3), describe pragmatic and discourse-based theories (SLO 4.4), and evaluate contemporary concepts of language usage in global and digital contexts (SLO 4.5).

Glossary of terms

- **Code-switching:** The practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties within a conversation, often depending on context or audience.
- **Critical discourse analysis (CDA):** An approach that studies how language reflects and reinforces power relations, ideologies, and inequalities in society.
- **Diglossia:** A situation where two varieties of the same language are used in a community, with one serving formal functions (high variety) and the other used in everyday informal contexts (low variety).
- **Discourse analysis:** The study of how language is used in extended texts and conversations, focusing on patterns, coherence, and meaning beyond individual sentences.
- **Facework:** The linguistic and behavioural efforts made to maintain or restore a person's public self-image (face) during interaction.
- **Functionalism:** A theoretical approach that focuses on the role language plays in communication and society, examining how it fulfils purposes such as informing, persuading, or maintaining relationships.
- **Illocutionary act:** In speech act theory, the intended function of an utterance, such as requesting, apologising, or promising.
- **Interactional sociolinguistics:** An approach that studies how speakers use contextual cues such as tone, pauses, or cultural references to interpret meaning in interaction.
- **Language ideology:** The beliefs and assumptions people hold about language, including which varieties are considered prestigious or correct.
- **Language variation:** Differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar across regions, social groups, or contexts, often signalling social identity.
- **Langue:** In structuralist theory, the shared system of language used by a community.
- **Locutionary act:** In speech act theory, the actual words spoken in an utterance.
- **Parole:** In structuralist theory, individual speech acts or personal use of language.
- **Perlocutionary act:** In speech act theory, the effect an utterance has on the listener, such as persuading or inspiring.
- **Politeness theory:** A theory explaining how speakers manage social relationships by protecting each other's face through strategies of respect and friendliness.
- **Speech act theory:** A pragmatic theory that examines how language performs actions rather than simply conveying information, distinguishing between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.
- **Speech community:** A group of people who share a common language or variety and follow similar rules for its use.
- **Structuralism:** A theoretical approach that views language as a system of interrelated elements, where meaning is derived from relationships between signs.



Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions

1. Which theorist distinguished between *langue* and *parole*? (Linked to SLO 4.1)
2. What term describes alternating between two or more languages in a conversation? (Linked to SLO 4.2)
3. Which level of speech act refers to the intended function of an utterance? (Linked to SLO 4.4)
4. What does CDA stand for in language studies? (Linked to SLO 4.5)
5. Which theory explains how speakers protect each other's face during communication? (Linked to SLO 4.4)

Short-answer questions

6. Define structuralism in language theory. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
7. Give one example of diglossia in a community. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
8. Explain how language variation can signal social identity. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
9. What is facework in politeness theory? (Linked to SLO 4.4)
10. Provide one example of language ideology influencing power structures. (Linked to SLO 4.5)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the strengths and limitations of structuralist and functionalist theories of language. (Linked to SLO 4.1)
12. Evaluate how sociolinguistic theories such as speech community, code-switching, and diglossia explain language use in society. (Linked to SLO 4.2)
13. Assess the relationship between language variation and social identity, giving examples from different contexts. (Linked to SLO 4.3)
14. Discuss the contributions of speech act theory, politeness theory, and discourse analysis to understanding communication. (Linked to SLO 4.4)
15. Examine how contemporary concepts such as CDA, language ideology, and digital communication reveal the role of language in power and global contexts. (Linked to SLO 4.5)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective questions

1. Ferdinand de Saussure
2. Code-switching
3. Illocutionary act
4. Critical discourse analysis
5. Politeness theory

Short-answer questions



6. Structuralism views language as a system of interrelated elements where meaning comes from relationships between signs.
7. An example is Arabic, where Classical Arabic is used for formal contexts and local dialects for everyday speech.
8. Language variation signals identity by marking class, ethnicity, or profession, such as regional dialects or occupational jargon.
9. Facework refers to efforts made to maintain or restore a person's public self-image during interaction.
10. Standard English being valued in education and employment while non-standard dialects are stigmatised.

Long-answer questions

11. **Basic response:** Structuralism highlights language as a system of signs, while functionalism focuses on its social functions. Structuralism can be too abstract, and functionalism may overlook deeper structures. **Value-added response:** Outstanding learners may compare how these theories complement each other, noting that structuralism provides analytical depth while functionalism situates language in lived contexts, together offering a fuller picture of usage.
12. **Basic response:** Speech community theory explains shared norms, code-switching shows flexibility in multilingual contexts, and diglossia illustrates formal and informal varieties. **Value-added response:** Learners may evaluate how these theories apply to modern multilingual societies, considering how globalisation and migration reshape speech communities and increase code-switching.
13. **Basic response:** Language variation reflects social identity, with dialects marking region and jargon marking profession. **Value-added response:** Learners may assess how variation can be a source of pride or stigma, exploring examples such as African American Vernacular English or regional accents in Britain.
14. **Basic response:** Speech act theory shows language performs actions, politeness theory explains face management, and discourse analysis studies extended texts and conversations. **Value-added response:** Learners may discuss how these theories intersect, for example, how politeness strategies influence speech acts, or how discourse analysis reveals cultural differences in interaction.
15. **Basic response:** CDA uncovers power relations, language ideology explains beliefs about varieties, and digital communication shows evolving global practices. **Value-added response:** Learners may examine how CDA critiques political discourse, how ideologies shape educational policies, and how digital platforms create new hybrid forms of language that cross cultural boundaries.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Part 4.1 Structuralist and functionalist theories

1. Structuralism is a theoretical approach that views language as a system of interrelated elements.
2. Ferdinand de Saussure.
3. Functionalism emphasises the role language plays in communication and society.



4. Malinowski or Halliday.
5. Structuralism has been criticised for being too abstract and detached from real-life communication.

Part 4.2 Sociolinguistic theories of language use

1. A speech community is a group of people who share a common language or variety and rules for its use.
2. Code-switching involves alternating between two or more languages or varieties in conversation.
3. Diglossia is when two varieties of the same language are used in a community, one for formal functions and the other for informal contexts.
4. Language variation relates to social identity by signalling class, ethnicity, or profession.
5. Professional jargon, such as medical terminology used by doctors.

Part 4.3 Pragmatic and discourse-based theories

1. Locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.
2. Brown and Levinson.
3. Facework refers to efforts made to maintain or restore a person's public self-image during interaction.
4. Discourse analysis focuses on how language is used in extended texts and conversations.
5. Tone, pauses, or cultural references.

Part 4.4 Contemporary and applied concepts

1. Critical discourse analysis studies how language reflects and reinforces power relations in society.
2. CDA might be applied to political speeches or media reports to uncover hidden ideologies.
3. Language ideology refers to the beliefs and assumptions people hold about language.
4. By privileging some varieties as prestigious while stigmatising others, reinforcing social hierarchies.
5. Memes, hashtags, or hybrid forms of communication.

References and Attributions [Series 4]

This section compiles all references and illustration attributions used or suggested in **Series 4: Theories and Concepts of Language Usage**. The referencing style applied here follows APA (7th edition) guidelines for clarity and consistency.

General references

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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- Malinowski, B. (1923). *The problem of meaning in primitive languages*. Supplement to C. K. Ogden & I. A. Richards, *The meaning of meaning*. London: Routledge.
- Saussure, F. de. (1916/1974). *Course in general linguistics*. London: Fontana.
- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Illustration references and attributions

- *Figure 4.1 Saussure's structuralist model of language*
 - AI prompt: "Generate a diagram showing langue as the shared system and parole as individual speech acts."
 - Suggested OER search string: "Saussure langue parole structuralism diagram OER."
- *Plate 4.1 Functionalist perspectives on communication*
 - AI prompt: "Generate an image showing people using language in different contexts: classroom, workplace, casual conversation."
 - Suggested OER search string: "functionalism language communication contexts OER image."
- *Box 4.1 Strengths and limitations of structuralist and functionalist theories*
 - AI prompt: "Generate a text box summarising strengths and limitations of structuralist and functionalist theories."
 - Suggested OER search string: "structuralist vs functionalist theories language comparison OER."
- *Figure 4.2 Speech communities and their overlapping norms*
 - AI prompt: "Generate a diagram showing overlapping speech communities such as family, workplace, and online group."
 - Suggested OER search string: "speech community theory diagram OER."
- *Plate 4.2 Code-switching in everyday communication*
 - AI prompt: "Generate an image of a bilingual speaker switching languages between formal and informal settings."
 - Suggested OER search string: "code-switching bilingual communication OER image."
- *Box 4.2 Examples of language variation and social identity*



- AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of language variation and how they relate to social identity.”
- Suggested OER search string: “language variation social identity examples OER.”
- *Figure 4.3 Levels of speech acts*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts with examples.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “speech act theory diagram OER.”
- *Plate 4.3 Politeness strategies in everyday interaction*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image of two people conversing politely, showing gestures of respect and friendliness.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “politeness theory facework interaction OER image.”
- *Box 4.3 Key features of discourse analysis and interactional sociolinguistics*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising discourse analysis and interactional sociolinguistics with examples.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “discourse analysis interactional sociolinguistics examples OER.”
- *Figure 4.4 Critical discourse analysis focus areas*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing CDA focus areas: power, ideology, and inequality in language use.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “critical discourse analysis diagram OER.”
- *Plate 4.4 Language ideology and power*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing contrasting perceptions of standard and non-standard language varieties in society.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language ideology power examples OER.”
- *Box 4.4 Examples of language usage in digital and global contexts*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of language usage in digital and global contexts.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “digital global language usage examples OER.”

Course code: ENG209

Course title: Language and Society



Course credit load: 2 Units

Series 1: Language in Social Contexts

Series 2: Linguistic and Social Categories of Language

Series 3: Grammar of Social Interactions and Movements

Series 4: Theories and Concepts of Language Usage

Series 5: Language Change, Identity, and Multilingualism

Proposed Outline for Series 5

Part 1 Historical and social perspectives on language change

- **5.1.1 Processes of language change (phonological, lexical, syntactic)**
- **5.1.2 Causes of language change (contact, innovation, social factors)**
- **5.1.3 Case studies of language change across time**

Part 2 Language and identity

- **5.2.1 Language as a marker of personal and group identity**
- **5.2.2 Dialects, sociolects, and identity construction**
- **5.2.3 Language attitudes and identity politics**

Part 3 Multilingualism in society

- **5.3.1 Types of multilingualism (individual, societal)**
- **5.3.2 Benefits and challenges of multilingualism**
- **5.3.3 Language maintenance and shift**

Part 4 Globalisation and language contact

- **5.4.1 Lingua francas and global communication**
- **5.4.2 Language endangerment and revitalisation**
- **5.4.3 Hybrid forms and translanguaging in global contexts**

Introduction

Languages are never static. They evolve over time, shaped by social interaction, cultural identity, and contact with other languages. You may have noticed how new words enter everyday speech, how accents shift across generations, or how multilingual speakers switch between languages depending on context. These changes are not random but reflect deeper social processes that



connect language to identity and global communication. This Series will help you understand these dynamics and their relevance to the study of language and society.

The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the processes of language change, the role of language in shaping identity, and the realities of multilingualism in both local and global contexts. By the end, you will be able to analyse how languages evolve, explain how identity is expressed through language, and evaluate the impact of multilingualism and globalisation on communication.

We shall commence this Series by examining historical and social perspectives on language change, focusing on processes, causes, and case studies. Next, we will explore the relationship between language and identity, considering how dialects, sociolects, and attitudes shape personal and group identity. Following that, we will move on to multilingualism in society, looking at its types, benefits, challenges, and issues of language maintenance and shift. Finally, we will wrap up by discussing globalisation and language contact, including lingua francas, language endangerment, revitalisation, and hybrid forms such as translanguaging.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- **SLO 5.1** define key processes of language change such as phonological, lexical, and syntactic shifts,
- **SLO 5.2** explain the social and historical causes of language change, including contact and innovation,
- **SLO 5.3** analyse case studies that illustrate how languages evolve over time,
- **SLO 5.4** describe how language functions as a marker of personal and group identity,
- **SLO 5.5** evaluate the role of dialects, sociolects, and attitudes in identity construction,
- **SLO 5.6** distinguish between types of multilingualism at individual and societal levels,
- **SLO 5.7** assess the benefits and challenges of multilingualism in different contexts,
- **SLO 5.8** explain the concepts of language maintenance and language shift,
- **SLO 5.9** analyse the impact of globalisation on language contact, including the rise of lingua francas,
- **SLO 5.10** evaluate issues of language endangerment and revitalisation, and
- **SLO 5.11** describe hybrid forms of communication such as translanguaging in global contexts.

5.1 Historical and Social Perspectives on Language Change

5.1.1 Processes of language change

Language change refers to the gradual transformation of sounds, words, and structures over time. These processes can be **phonological** (changes in pronunciation), **lexical** (changes in vocabulary), or **syntactic** (changes in sentence structure). For example, the Great Vowel Shift in English altered the pronunciation of long vowels, while the adoption of new words such as “internet” reflects



lexical change. Syntactic change can be seen in the gradual loss of certain word orders or grammatical endings.

Fill in the blank: The Great Vowel Shift in English is an example of _____ change.

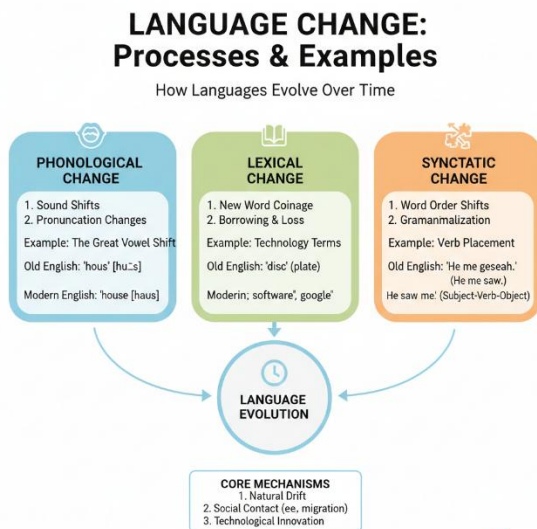


Figure 5.1 Processes of language change

5.1.2 Causes of language change

Language change is driven by several causes. **Language contact** occurs when speakers of different languages interact, leading to borrowing of words or structures. **Innovation** refers to creative changes introduced by speakers, often spreading through communities. **Social factors** such as class, age, and prestige also influence change, as certain groups adopt new forms that others imitate. Historical events, migration, and technological developments further accelerate change.

Fill in the blank: When speakers of different languages interact and borrow words, this is called language _____.





Plate 5.1 Causes of language change through contact

5.1.3 Case studies of language change across time

Studying case histories helps us see language change in action. For instance, Old English evolved into Middle English after the Norman Conquest, incorporating thousands of French words. Similarly, Latin diversified into the Romance languages such as Spanish, French, and Italian. More recent examples include the influence of American English on global vocabulary through media and technology. These case studies show that language change is both historical and ongoing.

Fill in the blank: Latin diversified into Romance languages such as Spanish, French, and _____.

Case Study	Key Transformation	Primary Catalyst	Linguistic Result
Old English to Middle English	Shift from a highly inflected Germanic language to a simplified grammatical structure.	Norman Conquest (1066): Massive influx of French-speaking nobility.	Loss of grammatical gender/case endings; massive borrowing of French vocabulary (e.g., <i>beef</i> vs. <i>cow</i>).
Latin to Romance Languages	Evolution of "Vulgar Latin" into distinct regional languages (Spanish, French, Italian).	Collapse of Roman Empire: Geographical isolation of speech communities.	Simplification of the Latin case system; development of definite articles and auxiliary verbs.
Modern Global English	Emergence of "World Englishes" and localized varieties	Globalization & Technology: Digital	Increased hybridity ; English functions as a <i>Lingua Franca</i>



Case Study	Key Transformation	Primary Catalyst	Linguistic Result
	(e.g., Hinglish, Spanglish).	interconnectedness and post-colonial legacy.	while absorbing local syntax and idioms.

Box 5.1 Selected case studies of language change

Pilot questions 5.1

1. What are the three main processes of language change?
2. What historical event influenced the transition from Old English to Middle English?
3. Define language contact.
4. Give one example of lexical change.
5. Name one Romance language that developed from Latin.

5.2 Language and Identity

5.2.1 Language as a marker of personal and group identity

Language identity refers to the way individuals and groups use language to express who they are. It can be seen in accents, vocabulary choices, or preferred languages. For example, someone may use a regional dialect to show belonging to a community, or switch to a standard variety in formal settings to project professionalism. Language identity is therefore both personal and social, shaping how people present themselves and how they are perceived.

Fill in the blank: Using a regional dialect to show belonging to a community is an example of language _____.



5.2.2 Dialects, sociolects, and identity construction

A **dialect** is a regional variety of a language, marked by differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar. A **sociolect** is a variety associated with a social group, such as class, age, or profession. Both dialects and sociolects contribute to **identity construction**, as speakers use them to signal belonging or distinction. For instance, youth slang may mark generational identity, while professional jargon may highlight occupational membership.

Fill in the blank: A sociolect is a variety of language associated with a particular _____ group.

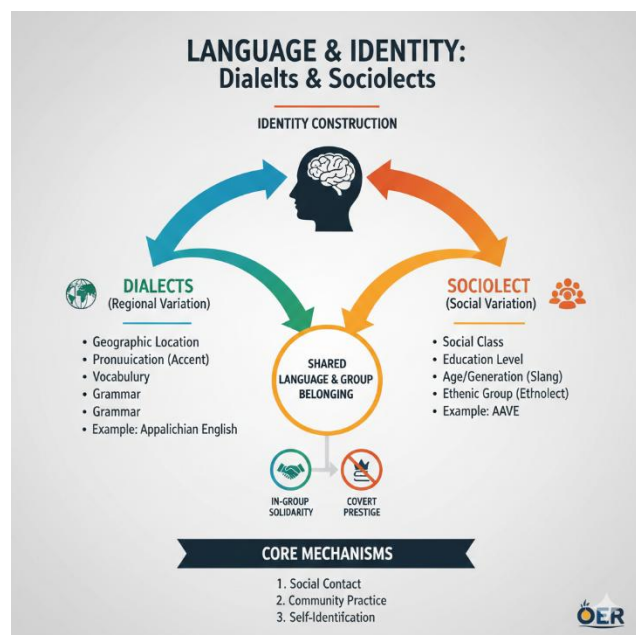


Figure 5.2 Dialects and sociolects in identity construction

5.2.3 Language attitudes and identity politics

Language attitudes are opinions or feelings people hold about different varieties, such as considering one prestigious and another inferior. These attitudes influence **identity politics**, where language becomes a symbol of pride, resistance, or exclusion. For example, speakers of minority languages may campaign for recognition, while dominant groups may promote standard varieties. Attitudes towards language therefore shape social hierarchies and cultural belonging.

Fill in the blank: Language attitudes influence identity politics by shaping social hierarchies and cultural _____.



Attitude/Action	Description	Social Impact	Example
Linguistic Pride	Reclaiming and celebrating minority or indigenous languages.	Strengthens cultural resilience and challenges historical marginalization.	The revival of Te Reo Māori in New Zealand as a core element of national identity.
Standardization	Promoting a single "Standard" variety as the only valid form for education and government.	Creates overt prestige for elite groups while delegitimizing regional or working-class speech.	The historical enforcement of " <i>The King's English</i> " in colonial administrations.
Linguistic Stigma	Associating non-standard varieties with a lack of intelligence or morality.	Leads to social exclusion , employment discrimination, and the silencing of marginalized voices.	Bias against Southern American English or AAVE in corporate or legal settings.
Linguistic Purism	The belief that a language is being "corrupted" by foreign borrowings or slang.	Often used as a tool for nationalism to define who is a "true" member of a nation.	The efforts of the <i>Académie Française</i> to prevent English "loanwords" from entering French.

Box 5.2 Examples of language attitudes and identity politics

Pilot questions 5.2

1. What does language identity refer to?
2. Give one example of how language can mark group belonging.
3. Define dialect and sociolect.
4. How do dialects and sociolects contribute to identity construction?
5. What are language attitudes, and how do they influence identity politics?

5.3 Multilingualism in Society

5.3.1 Types of multilingualism

Multilingualism refers to the ability of individuals or societies to use more than one language. At the **individual level**, a person may be bilingual or multilingual, switching between languages depending on context. At the **societal level**, communities may officially recognise multiple



languages, as seen in countries such as Switzerland or South Africa. These distinctions help us understand how multilingualism operates both personally and collectively.

Fill in the blank: Switzerland is an example of a society that officially recognises multiple _____.

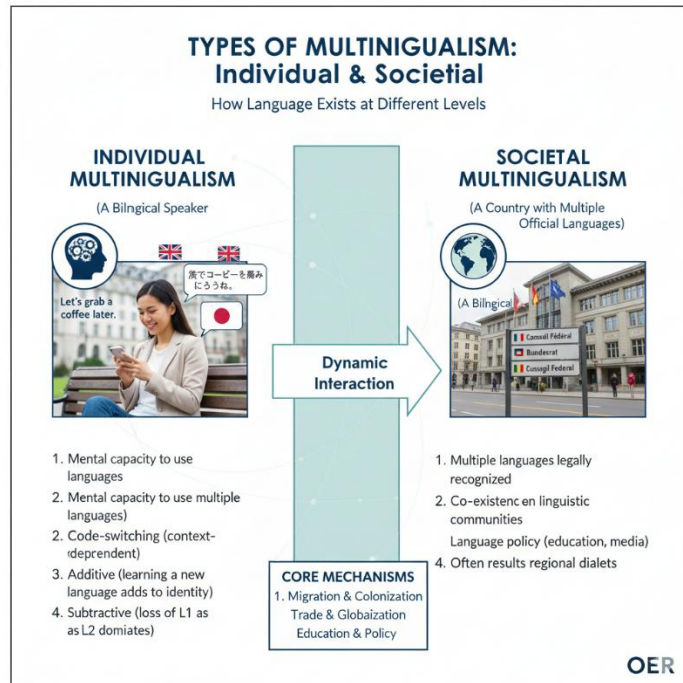


Figure 5.3 Types of multilingualism

5.3.2 Benefits and challenges of multilingualism

Multilingualism offers many benefits. It enhances **cognitive flexibility**, improves communication across cultures, and provides economic advantages in global markets. However, it also presents challenges, such as language dominance, identity conflicts, or difficulties in maintaining minority languages. Balancing these benefits and challenges is crucial for individuals and societies that navigate multilingual realities.

Fill in the blank: One benefit of multilingualism is improved _____ flexibility.





Plate 5.3 Benefits of multilingualism in cross-cultural communication

5.3.3 Language maintenance and shift

Language maintenance occurs when communities actively preserve their language across generations, often through education, cultural practices, or policy support. **Language shift** happens when speakers gradually abandon their native language in favour of a more dominant one, usually for social or economic reasons. These processes highlight the tension between preserving linguistic diversity and adapting to dominant languages in multilingual societies.

Fill in the blank: Language shift occurs when speakers gradually abandon their native language in favour of a more _____ one.

Concept	Focus	Key Factors	Global Example
Language Maintenance	The deliberate effort by a community to keep its language alive across generations.	Strong cultural identity, institutional support (schools, media), and concentrated speech communities.	The Irish Language (Gaeilge): Despite the dominance of English, maintenance is supported through <i>Gaeltacht</i> regions and Irish-medium education (<i>Gaelscoileanna</i>).
Language Shift	The gradual transition where speakers move from a heritage language to a	Economic necessity, migration, urbanisation, and social stigma	Indigenous Languages in the Americas: Many communities are shifting toward Spanish, Portuguese,



Concept	Focus	Key Factors	Global Example
	dominant "prestige" language.	attached to the original language.	or English to access broader job markets and education.

Box 5.3 Examples of language maintenance and shift

Pilot questions 5.3

1. What is the difference between individual and societal multilingualism?
2. Give one example of a country with official multilingualism.
3. Name one cognitive benefit of multilingualism.
4. What is language maintenance?
5. What is language shift, and why does it occur?

5.4 Globalisation and Language Contact

5.4.1 Lingua francas and global communication

A **lingua franca** is a language used for communication between speakers of different native languages. English is the most prominent example today, serving as a global medium in business, science, and technology. Historically, languages such as Latin and Arabic also functioned as lingua francas in their regions. The spread of lingua francas reflects globalisation, enabling communication across borders but sometimes overshadowing local languages.

Fill in the blank: English is the most prominent example of a global _____ franca today.





Figure 5.4 Lingua francas in global communication

5.4.2 Language endangerment and revitalisation

Language endangerment occurs when a language is at risk of falling out of use, often due to dominance of another language. Many indigenous languages face this challenge as younger generations adopt majority languages. **Language revitalisation** refers to efforts to preserve or revive endangered languages, through education, cultural initiatives, or policy support. Examples include the revitalisation of Māori in New Zealand and Welsh in Wales.

Fill in the blank: Language revitalisation refers to efforts to preserve or _____ endangered languages.





Plate 5.4 Language revitalisation in practice

5.4.3 Hybrid forms and translinguaging in global contexts

Hybrid forms of language emerge when speakers blend elements from different languages, creating new expressions. **Translinguaging** refers to the dynamic use of multiple languages within a single conversation or text, often seen in multilingual communities. These practices demonstrate how globalisation fosters creativity and flexibility in communication, allowing speakers to draw on their full linguistic repertoire.

Fill in the blank: Translinguaging refers to the dynamic use of multiple _____ within a single conversation or text.

Phenomenon	Core Definition	Linguistic Function	Example
Spanglish	A hybrid of Spanish and English, often incorporating the grammar of one and the lexicon of the other.	Identity & Solidarity: Signals a dual cultural identity (e.g., Latinx identity in the US).	" <i>Vamos a parquear el carro</i> " (Using the English-based verb "park" in a Spanish structure).
Hinglish	The blending of Hindi and English, prevalent in Indian media, advertising, and daily life.	Modernity & Access: Often acts as a bridge between traditional heritage	" <i>Life is set hai</i> " (Life is settled/good).



Phenomenon	Core Definition	Linguistic Function	Example
		and global professional life.	
Translanguaging	The pedagogical practice where students use their full linguistic repertoire to learn.	Cognitive Scaffolding: Allows learners to use their stronger language to grasp complex concepts in a new one.	A student discussing a science concept in their native Arabic to better write a lab report in English.
Code-Switching	Alternating between two or more languages or dialects in a single conversation.	Contextual Adaptation: Adjusting speech to match the social setting or the listener's background.	Switching from a regional dialect with family to a standard variety in a job interview.

Box 5.4 Examples of hybrid forms and translanguaging

Pilot questions 5.4

1. What is a lingua franca?
2. Give one historical example of a lingua franca.
3. What is language endangerment?
4. Define language revitalisation and give one example.
5. What does translanguaging involve?

Series summary

This Series has examined how languages change over time, how they shape identity, and how multilingualism functions in society and global contexts. Its purpose has been to highlight the dynamic nature of language, showing that it is not only a system of communication but also a marker of identity and a reflection of social and cultural forces.

We began with historical and social perspectives on language change, considering processes, causes, and case studies. We then explored language and identity, focusing on dialects, sociolects, and attitudes. Following that, we studied multilingualism in society, looking at its types, benefits, challenges, and the tension between language maintenance and shift. Finally, we concluded with globalisation and language contact, including lingua francas, language endangerment, revitalisation, and translanguaging. By completing this Series, you should now be able to define



and explain processes of language change (SLOs 5.1–5.3), analyse how language expresses identity (SLOs 5.4–5.5), evaluate multilingualism and its implications (SLOs 5.6–5.8), and assess the impact of globalisation on language contact and diversity (SLOs 5.9–5.11).

Glossary of terms

- **Dialect:** A regional variety of a language, marked by differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar.
- **Hybrid forms:** New expressions created when speakers blend elements from different languages in communication.
- **Language attitudes:** Opinions or feelings people hold about different language varieties, often influencing social hierarchies and identity.
- **Language change:** The gradual transformation of sounds, words, and structures in a language over time.
- **Language contact:** Interaction between speakers of different languages, often leading to borrowing of words or structures.
- **Language endangerment:** A situation where a language is at risk of falling out of use, usually due to dominance of another language.
- **Language identity:** The way individuals or groups use language to express who they are and how they belong.
- **Language maintenance:** Efforts made by communities to preserve their language across generations, often through education or cultural practices.
- **Language revitalisation:** Initiatives to preserve or revive endangered languages, such as teaching them in schools or promoting cultural use.
- **Language shift:** The process by which speakers gradually abandon their native language in favour of a more dominant one.
- **Lingua franca:** A language used for communication between speakers of different native languages, often across regions or globally.
- **Multilingualism:** The ability of individuals or societies to use more than one language.
- **Sociolect:** A variety of language associated with a particular social group, such as class, age, or profession.
- **Translanguaging:** The dynamic use of multiple languages within a single conversation or text, drawing on the speaker's full linguistic repertoire.

Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective questions

1. Which type of language change is illustrated by the Great Vowel Shift in English? (Linked to SLO 5.1)
2. What term describes interaction between speakers of different languages that leads to borrowing? (Linked to SLO 5.2)
3. Which Romance languages developed from Latin? Name one. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
4. What is a sociolect? (Linked to SLO 5.4)



5. Which language is currently the most prominent global lingua franca? (Linked to SLO 5.9)

Short-answer questions

6. Define language identity and give one example. (Linked to SLO 5.4)
7. Explain how dialects contribute to identity construction. (Linked to SLO 5.5)
8. Distinguish between individual and societal multilingualism. (Linked to SLO 5.6)
9. State one cognitive benefit and one challenge of multilingualism. (Linked to SLO 5.7)
10. What is language maintenance, and how does it differ from language shift? (Linked to SLO 5.8)

Long-answer questions

11. Analyse the main processes of language change, giving examples of phonological, lexical, and syntactic shifts. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
12. Evaluate the role of social and historical causes in shaping language change, with reference to case studies. (Linked to SLO 5.2, 5.3)
13. Assess how language functions as a marker of identity, considering dialects, sociolects, and language attitudes. (Linked to SLO 5.4, 5.5)
14. Discuss the benefits and challenges of multilingualism in society, including issues of language maintenance and shift. (Linked to SLO 5.6–5.8)
15. Examine the impact of globalisation on language contact, focusing on lingua francas, language endangerment, revitalisation, and translanguaging. (Linked to SLO 5.9–5.11)

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Objective questions

1. Phonological change
2. Language contact
3. Spanish, French, Italian (any one)
4. A variety of language associated with a social group
5. English

Short-answer questions

6. Language identity is how individuals or groups use language to express who they are. Example: using a regional dialect to show belonging.
7. Dialects mark regional belonging and signal cultural identity through pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.
8. Individual multilingualism refers to a person using multiple languages, while societal multilingualism refers to communities officially recognising multiple languages.
9. Benefit: cognitive flexibility. Challenge: difficulty maintaining minority languages.
10. Language maintenance preserves a language across generations, while language shift involves abandoning a native language for a dominant one.



Long-answer questions

11. **Basic response:** Phonological change alters pronunciation (e.g., Great Vowel Shift), lexical change adds or drops words (e.g., “internet”), and syntactic change modifies sentence structures. **Value-added response:** Learners may compare how these processes interact, noting that phonological shifts often accompany lexical borrowing, and syntactic changes reflect broader cultural influences.
12. **Basic response:** Causes include language contact, innovation, and social factors. Case studies include Old English evolving into Middle English after the Norman Conquest. **Value-added response:** Learners may evaluate how migration, colonisation, and technology accelerate change, drawing parallels with modern global English influenced by media.
13. **Basic response:** Language marks identity through dialects, sociolects, and attitudes. Dialects show regional belonging, sociolects mark social groups, and attitudes influence pride or stigma. **Value-added response:** Learners may assess how identity politics emerge, such as campaigns for minority language recognition or resistance to linguistic dominance.
14. **Basic response:** Multilingualism offers cognitive and cultural benefits but poses challenges such as dominance of majority languages. Maintenance preserves diversity, while shift reduces it. **Value-added response:** Learners may discuss policy implications, such as bilingual education or language planning, and evaluate how societies balance diversity with unity.
15. **Basic response:** Globalisation spreads lingua francas like English, endangers minority languages, and prompts revitalisation efforts. Translanguaging shows creative blending in multilingual contexts. **Value-added response:** Learners may examine how globalisation fosters hybrid forms like Spanglish, and evaluate revitalisation strategies such as immersion schools or digital platforms.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Part 4.1 Structuralist and functionalist theories

1. Structuralism views language as a system of interrelated elements.
2. Ferdinand de Saussure.
3. Functionalism emphasises the role language plays in communication and society.
4. Malinowski or Halliday.
5. Structuralism has been criticised for being too abstract and detached from real-life communication.

Part 4.2 Sociolinguistic theories of language use

1. A speech community is a group of people who share a common language or variety and rules for its use.
2. Code-switching involves alternating between two or more languages or varieties in conversation.
3. Diglossia is when two varieties of the same language are used in a community, one for formal functions and the other for informal contexts.
4. Language variation relates to social identity by signalling class, ethnicity, or profession.
5. Professional jargon, such as medical terminology used by doctors.



Part 4.3 Pragmatic and discourse-based theories

1. Locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts.
2. Brown and Levinson.
3. Facework refers to efforts made to maintain or restore a person's public self-image during interaction.
4. Discourse analysis focuses on how language is used in extended texts and conversations.
5. Tone, pauses, or cultural references.

Part 4.4 Contemporary and applied concepts

1. Critical discourse analysis studies how language reflects and reinforces power relations in society.
2. CDA might be applied to political speeches or media reports to uncover hidden ideologies.
3. Language ideology refers to the beliefs and assumptions people hold about language.
4. By privileging some varieties as prestigious while stigmatising others, reinforcing social hierarchies.
5. Memes, hashtags, or hybrid forms of communication.

References and Attributions [Series 5]

This section compiles all references and illustration attributions used or suggested in **Series 5: Language Change, Identity, and Multilingualism**. The referencing style applied here follows APA (7th edition) guidelines for clarity and consistency.

General references

- Crystal, D. (2010). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Holmes, J. (2013). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Romaine, S. (2000). *Language in society: An introduction to sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (1983). *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Wardhaugh, R., & Fuller, J. M. (2015). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (7th ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Illustration references and attributions

- *Figure 5.1 Processes of language change*
 - AI prompt: "Generate a diagram showing phonological, lexical, and syntactic processes of language change with examples."



- Suggested OER search string: “language change phonological lexical syntactic diagram OER.”
- *Plate 5.1 Causes of language change through contact*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing people from different linguistic backgrounds interacting and exchanging words.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language contact borrowing interaction OER image.”
- *Box 5.1 Selected case studies of language change*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising case studies of language change across time.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “case studies language change Old English Latin Romance OER.”
- *Plate 5.2 Language as a marker of identity*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing people in a community using a shared dialect to express identity.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language identity dialect community OER image.”
- *Figure 5.2 Dialects and sociolects in identity construction*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing dialects as regional varieties and sociolects as social varieties contributing to identity.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “dialects sociolects identity construction diagram OER.”
- *Box 5.2 Examples of language attitudes and identity politics*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of language attitudes and identity politics.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language attitudes identity politics examples OER.”
- *Figure 5.3 Types of multilingualism*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing individual multilingualism with a bilingual speaker and societal multilingualism with multiple official languages.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “types of multilingualism individual societal diagram OER.”
- *Plate 5.3 Benefits of multilingualism in cross-cultural communication*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing people from different cultures communicating successfully in multiple languages.”



- Suggested OER search string: “benefits of multilingualism cross-cultural communication OER image.”
- *Box 5.3 Examples of language maintenance and shift*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of language maintenance and language shift in multilingual societies.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language maintenance shift examples OER.”
- *Figure 5.4 Lingua francas in global communication*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing Latin, Arabic, and English as lingua francas with their functions.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “lingua franca global communication diagram OER.”
- *Plate 5.4 Language revitalisation in practice*
 - AI prompt: “Generate an image showing children learning an indigenous language in a classroom setting.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “language revitalisation indigenous classroom OER image.”
- *Box 5.4 Examples of hybrid forms and translanguaging*
 - AI prompt: “Generate a text box summarising examples of hybrid forms and translanguaging in global contexts.”
 - Suggested OER search string: “hybrid forms translanguaging examples OER.”



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