Course Description

Language has been called a "social mirror," reflecting who we are, where we are from, and who we interact with. However, language is a tool of social construction as well. It does not simply reflect some amalgamation of our past, but is critically involved in shaping our present and future. We use language to respond to and construct our identities with respect to our geographic origins and surroundings, our race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and age; we ally ourselves with some groups and distance ourselves from others, we project ourselves into some futures and away from others. However, not all these social constructions are evident to casual observers of language. Hence, one goal of our work this term is to bring to conscious awareness just how we use language as we build and interact with the societies around us.

Students will work alone or in groups to conduct original research in one of three ways: 1) collecting data on the present linguistic variations of local residents, as well as attitudes towards these variations; 2) collecting data on local groups and "communities of practice"; or 3) examining language and/or attitudes about language in the media.

Through this research project, we will come to understand how linguists gather and interpret sociolinguistic data, and the significance of linguistic variation in our society. By closely examining how it is that people use language, we should come to understand when and why we and others use it differently, and in the process, learn how we may become more adept in our own language use.

Course Requirements

- Participation 20%
  - Attendance & active engagement in class discussion
  - Weekly reading responses AND/OR reading quizzes
- Exam #1 (2/15/07) 20%
- Exam #2 (3/29/07) 20%
- Prospectuses (prelim. due 2/22, revision due 3/8)
  - plus conferences with VB, Weeks 6 & 7 5%
- Oral presentation (Wks 11-14) 15%
- Final research paper (note staggered due dates below) 20%
Total 100%

Extra Credit Opportunity

I have been asked to consult and assist with the Marquette County Historical Museum on a show called "The Anatomy of a Yooper," contributing examples, analysis, and insights on the dialect(s) and languages history of the UP, to be installed in April 2007. If you wish to participate in this, you should talk to me as soon as possible; the collection and analysis of data must be submitted by Week 9. I am particularly interested in working with anyone with UP roots.

Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HU2920</td>
<td>TR 9:35-10:50</td>
<td>Walker 323</td>
<td>Victoria Bergvall</td>
<td>TR 2-3, by appointment</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vbergval@mtu.edu">vbergval@mtu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Texts


Other readings may be placed on reserve in the Van Pelt Library or on electronic reserve accessible via my webpage (password protected).
Explanation of Course Requirements

Attendance & Active Engagement

Regular attendance and preparation are the only ways to keep up with the pace of ideas and information exchange in this class. We will frequently discuss material in class that is not covered in the books or put on reserve or e-mail. It is also YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to read the material before class and to come prepared to discuss it, and to arrange for someone to pick up any handouts or lend you notes if you miss class.

You learn linguistics by doing it; thus, active engagement in class participation is very important. If you miss class, you deprive yourself of important practice and information, as well as depriving the class of your viewpoint and ideas.

Each unexcused class absence after the first two subtracts 1 point from your Attendance grade. However, missing more than five class periods zeroes out 10% of your grade (half the participation segment). Be sure to notify me in writing of any legitimately excusable absences—in advance or on the day, if possible. If you are truly ill (e.g., with the flu), don’t come to class. Let me know by e-mail ASAP, and keep up on assignments as much as possible. I will require doctor’s proof for any extended absences to be excused. We will cope with bad-weather days as they happen.

Weekly Reading Responses

Come to class having read the assignment listed for that day! It is critical to keep up with the readings assigned so that you are able to intelligently discuss the questions we consider. To prepare for class, you will do weekly reading responses, homework, or observation assignments (typed, 1-2 pp.) or take a short-answer quiz on the reading, to help get you thinking about issues for discussion. These are due at the start of class, and they will be assessed as Excellent (+), Satisfactory (\...) or Unsatisfactory (-), or missing (0); late assignments may receive half or no credit, at my discretion.

Examinations

The two essay examinations during the semester will cover the material up to that point in class and in the texts. It is absolutely critical to read the texts. We cannot cover all material in the class, and I will assume that you will be familiar with the general issues and approaches raised by the authors. All examinations must be your own work. The two exams will be tests of your ability to understand, apply, and extend the vocabulary and basic principles covered in the readings and class lectures and discussions.

Research Project

Early in the term, you will choose a topic for your final research presentation and paper, which may be done alone or in groups. I will allow some time in class to meet with your group to choose a particular topic, but you will probably need to meet together outside of class. On Thursday, 2/22/07, you will turn in a BRIEF preliminary prospectus outlining your topic and methodological approach, to be discussed with me in conference during Weeks 6&7. Then, you will revise and extend the paragraph, submitting it with an annotated bibliography OR outline of research method, on Thursday, 3/8/07.

The presentation and final paper will come out of your in-depth study of sociolinguistic issues. Your research must contain data collected in an approved manner.

The oral presentation will be given in class in weeks 11-14 of the semester, and should take approximately 10-12 minutes per person, that is: 7-10 minutes of presentation, plus 2-5 minutes for questions. You MUST use audio-visual support for your presentation, and give copies of relevant linguistic data either on overheads or handouts. On the day of the presentation, you must turn in to me at the start of class a copy of all powerpoint slides/overheads/data, and a first draft of the paper. (However, you must not simply read your paper to the class; talk to us, not to the paper.)

Students who are not presenting that day will write up comment sheets from which attendance will be taken and credit awarded for participation.

The final paper should be carefully researched (citing all sources appropriately), exemplified with linguistic data, and well argued. All bibliographic items should be cited according the standards of the APA or MLA. The final paper (which must be submitted in a portfolio with your original and revised prospectus, and first draft) is due according to a staggered schedule weeks 13 and 14 (see the schedule for details). More information about this final paper will follow.

NOTE: Keep ALL material written this semester in a portfolio; I may require ALL writing to be turned in at the end of the semester.

Academic Integrity

True learning demands careful attention to words and ideas, our own and others. We must give others’ ideas thoughtful consideration if we desire it for ourselves. Likewise, we must respect the rights and responsibilities of intellectual property. Taking someone else’s thoughts or words and passing them off as your own is academic theft. Using others’ work without proper attribution will result in your failing the assignment, or the class, depending on the scope.

However, it is no contradiction that linguists often do their best work in consultation with others; in fact, we must observe how people use language in order to gather our data. You are encouraged to work with others as you prepare assignments for class, and in the final presentation and paper, but all exams must be your own work. Furthermore, you must contribute your fair share to any group effort, as evidenced by your active participation in the research process.

Additional Information

Libraries and Journals

You will need to be familiar with the research on sociolinguistics, so I will recommend the following readings:


Syllabus
Here are two useful websites to consult:
1) The University’s Academic Integrity Policy:
http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html
2) Purdue University’s guide to citation (APA and MLA)
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

ADA NOTE
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding
discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you
have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to
teaching or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students (x7-
2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor,
department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (x7-3310).

Guide to Abbreviations
Here are some other abbreviations I may use in class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ig.</td>
<td>language</td>
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<tr>
<td>lx.</td>
<td>linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soclx.</td>
<td>sociolinguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAE</td>
<td>African American English (also called Ebonics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAVE</td>
<td>African American Vernacular English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEV</td>
<td>Black English Vernacular</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Conversation Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMC</td>
<td>Computer Mediated Communication, also called CMD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMD</td>
<td>Computer Mediated Discourse (Electronic Discourse)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socioeconomic status</td>
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Schedule of Course Events
(subject to change depending on class needs)

In the schedule below, the readings are noted as coming from these sources:

| IS | Introducing Sociolinguistics |
| LUSA | Language in the USA |

NOTE: Generally there will be a weekly reading quiz (short answer) or 1-2 page
writing assignment due at the start of class, in response to the reading, or on
collecting and analyzing some linguistic data/event. Reading and Writing
assignments given below are due on the days they are listed. NOTE that not all
writing assignments are listed here. Be sure to look ahead to the next day/week and
check your e-mail.

Week 1

T 1/16 Introduction/Overview; syllabus, requirements. Defns: linguistics,
sociolinguistics, standards, language, dialect,
prescription/description. Social variables & language. The
International Phonetic Alphabet.

Reading: IS Chapter 1: pp.1-7 & front matter (xv-xvii, xxii-xxiii)

Th 1/18 Regional dialectology: American English variants, origin, history,
regional distribution.

Practise with the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Reading: LUSA Bailey 1: 3-17, Kretzschmer 2: 59-57

Writing due: Sociolinguistic autobiography.

Week 2

T 1/23 Variation & Language

Reading: IS 2: 8-26

Writing due: IPA/transcription assignment

Th 1/25 Regional dialectology, Am. vs. British, the DARE

Reading: LUSA Finegan 2: 18-28, Hall 6: 92-112. Preston 26:
480-492.

Week 3

T 1/30 Variation and style; social dialectology


Th 2/1 Race/Ethnicity: African American English

Reading: LUSA Green 5: 76-91, Baugh 16: 305-318.
| Week 4 | T 2/6 | Race/Ethnicity: Native, Hispanic, & Asian American |
| | Th 2/8 | NO CLASS; WINTER CARNIVAL |
| Week 5 | T 2/13 | Language attitudes, ideologies, prejudices. |
| | Th 2/15 | EXAM #1 |
| Week 6 | T 2/20 | Social Class |
| | Th 2/22 | Social Networks and Communities of Practice; Adolescent language |
| Week 7 | T 2/27 | Gender and sexuality |
| | Th 3/1 | Gender; Politeness |
| Week 8 | T 3/6 | Age; Real and Apparent Time |
| | Th 3/8 | Slang, (Hip-Hop) Music |
| Week 9 | T 3/20 | Multilingualism and language choice |
| | Th 3/22 | Language policies, English Only; Education |
| Week 10 | T 3/27 | Language Contact, Linguistic Diversity; American Sign Language; Exam review. |
| Week 11 | T 4/3 | Looking back, looking ahead; Language & cyberspace |
| Week 12 | T 4/10 | Student presentations-1 |
| | Th 4/12 | Student presentations-2 |
| Week 13 | T 4/17 | Student presentations-4 |
| | Th 4/19 | Student presentations-5 |
| Week 14 | T 4/24 | Student presentations-6 |
| | Th 4/26 | Mop-up, summary; Course evaluations; Papers due for groups 1-4 |
| Finals Week | M 5/1 | No class; no final exam; Papers due for groups 5-6 |