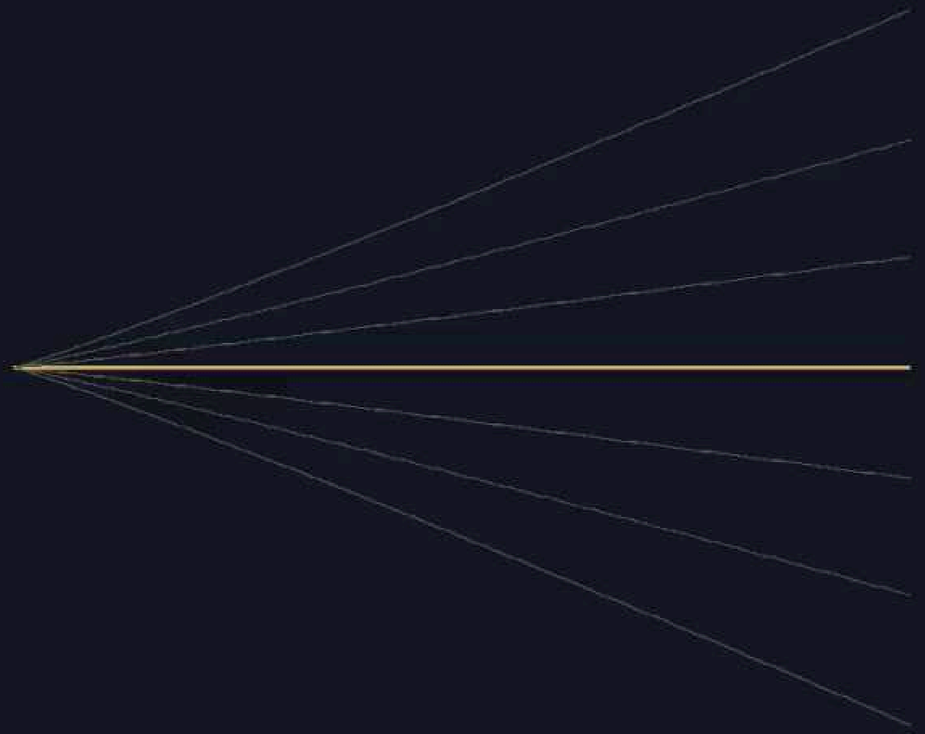
ANDERSON ACADEMY

LING 101 B · Introduction to Linguistics (Brief course)

Lecture 6 · about 7 min

Variation and Change



A library of university-level courses

Dialect and accent

Dialect

- Dialect
- Sounds, words, and grammar
- A full variety

Accent

- Accent
- Pronunciation only
- Part of a dialect

¶ 6.1

Everyone speaks a dialect and has an accent, including speakers of the standard variety.

Standard languages

- Used in schools and print
- Based on a powerful region or class
- Useful for wide communication
- Not linguistically superior

¶ 6.2

Standards are useful for communication across regions, but linguistically they are not more logical or correct than other dialects.

A grammatical distinction

Habitual

- He be working
- Works habitually
- African American English

Current

- He working
- Is working now
- Also African American English

¶ 6.3

The linguist William Labov showed in the 1960s and 1970s that such varieties are as systematic as any other.

Language or dialect?

Scandinavian

- Scandinavian languages
- Mutually intelligible
- Called separate languages

Chinese

- Chinese varieties
- Not mutually intelligible
- Often called dialects

¶ 6.4

Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish are largely mutually intelligible but count as separate languages because they belong to separate nations,

Labov's department store study

- Saks: most r pronounced
- Macy's: in between
- Klein's: least r pronounced
- r as a mark of prestige

¶ 6.5

Staff at Saks pronounced the r sounds most often, Klein's least.

Social variation

- Style shifting by situation
- Differences by class and gender
- Young people lead change
- Language marks identity

¶ 6.6

Young people often lead changes, and new forms spread through social networks.

Questions or feedback: garyanderson@mail.grokbot.com · @garyanderson

Stages of English

- **450 to 1100** Old English, Beowulf
- **1100 to 1500** Middle English, Chaucer
- **1500 to 1700** Early Modern, Shakespeare
- **1700 onward** Modern English

¶ 6.7

Chaucer's Middle English of the late fourteenth century is easier but still strange.

The Great Vowel Shift



¶ 6.8

Words like bite, once pronounced like beet, and house, once like hoose, took their modern sounds.

Change in grammar and meaning

- Case endings lost
- Word order fixed
- nice once meant foolish
- meat once meant any food

¶ 6.9

Change happens through children's learning, contact between languages, and social choices about how to speak.

Historical linguistics

- **1786** William Jones on Sanskrit
- **1822** Grimm's law
- **1800s** Reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European
- **Today** Language families worldwide

¶ 6.10

The comparative method compares systematic sound correspondences between related languages to reconstruct their ancestor, such as Proto-Indo-European.

Grimm's law

Latin	English
Latin p	English f
pater	father
piscis	fish

¶ 6.11

Where Latin has k, English often has h: Latin cornu and English horn.

Language families

- Indo-European: English, Spanish, Hindi
- Uralic: Finnish, Hungarian
- Austronesian: Malay, Maori
- Isolates: Basque

¶ 6.12

Other families include Sino-Tibetan, Afro-Asiatic, Niger-Congo, Austronesian, and Uralic, which includes Finnish and Hungarian.

Endangered languages

- About 7,000 languages
- About half endangered
- Documentation and revival
- Hebrew, Welsh, Maori, Hawaiian

¶ 6.13

Linguists work with communities to document and revive languages, and successes such as Hebrew, Welsh, Maori,

The course in review

- What language is
- Sounds
- Words
- Sentences and meaning
- Acquisition and brain
- Variation and change

¶ 6.14

Lecture five followed acquisition and the brain.

Three big ideas

- Structure
- Variation
- Change

¶ 6.15

Change: all living languages change regularly, and their histories can be reconstructed.

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Next steps

- Linguistics 150 B, Phonetics
- Language courses
- Lecture quizzes
- Final exam and tripos paper

¶ 6.16

Thank you for taking Linguistics 101 B, Introduction to Linguistics.

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¶ 6.16

and our language courses let you apply what you know.

Pay it forward

- Be of service to humanity
- Tell us how you did it
- Email or a post on X
- Full compensation

¶ 6.17

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