English 420 - Sociolinguistics - Summer 2005

Instructor: Dr. Charles MacQuarrie
Office: CSUB-AV room 314
Phone: 952-5098 Office hours: TBA
e-mail: cmacquarrie@csub.edu and by appointment
Web page: http://www.csubak.edu/~cmacquarrie/

Texts:

• Required

• Recommended

You should also access the following web pages:
George Dillon’s Webpage at the University of Washington and links:
http://faculty.washington.edu/dillon/homdex.html
http://classweb.gmu.edu/accent/
http://www.otago.ac.nz/anthropology/Linguistic/Sounds.html

Also access the Endangered Language Groups homepage at:
http://www.sil.org/sociolx/ndg-lg-grps.html


Sociolinguistics resources:
http://www.utexas.edu/courses/linguistics/resources/socioling/

Sociolinguistic Intro page:
http://www.unc.edu/~gerfen/Ling30Sp2002/sociolinguistics.html

The Dialectalizer: http://rinkworks.com/dialect/

Common Errors in English: http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/index.html
**Words that Work for Women:**
http://www.speakupforyourself.com/high_cost_of_yielding.htm

**Online Slang Dictionary:** http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~wrader/slang/

**Ebonics Debate:** http://www.uta.fi/FAST/US8/EO/hasdream.html

**American Accents:** http://www.americanaccent.com/

**English Only site:** http://www.us-english.org/inc/news/

http://www.pieganinstitute.org/tonguetied.pdf

http://www.bu.edu/linguistics/UG/inthenews.html

http://www.english.com/faq.php

**Introduction and Course Description:** This course introduces students to the basic concepts, tenets, and issues of general sociolinguistics; it seeks to give students special understanding of the social significance of bilingualism, dialect and accent, and of language contraction and death.

**Course Objectives:**
By the end of the course, students will:
- Possess knowledge of dialects and varieties of English.
- Understand definition and linguistic characteristics of pidgins and creoles.
- Be aware of issues relating to code switching, bilingualism, and multilingualism.
- Possess a general understanding of speech communities.
- Recognize the phonological units of the English language as they relate to dialect and accent.
- Understand the distribution and importance of linguistic variables and social variation.
- Understand Whorfian hypothesis and related problems in sociolinguistics.
- Appreciate importance of ethnography of communication.
- Recognize features of conversation and gender differences.
- Be familiar with issues in Black English and bilingual education.

**Course Requirements:** The reading schedule is provided in the tentative course schedule. It is important to complete the assigned readings prior to the relevant class meeting. Students will be expected to participate in activities and complete all course assignments on time. Unexcused late assignments will not be accepted. Homework and in-class activities will be. Test dates are indicated on
the tentative course schedule. There will be no make-up tests: extreme circumstances will be considered by the instructor on an individual basis. Students will be evaluated according to the following grade chart.

Grading: There will be a total of 1000 points possible. A total of 900 points = A, 800 points = B, 700 points = C, etc. Students will be graded according to the following point system:

Midterm paper and presentation (on a dialect or accent of English).................30%
Term paper and presentation (on a dead or dying language)....................40%
Final Exam.............................................................30%

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

Day 1 (July 18) Intro, web pages, Can Seo, and documentary.
Day 2 (July 19) Wardhaugh (hence W) chapters 1&2
  [http://faculty.washington.edu/dillon/homdex.html](http://faculty.washington.edu/dillon/homdex.html)
Day 3 (July 20) W chapter 3&4
Day 4 (July 25) W chapter 5&6 (presentations on accent)
Day 5 (July 26) W chapter 7&8 (presentations on accent)
Day 6 (July 27) Midterm [bring scantron] (presentations on accent)
Day 7 (Aug 1) W chapter 9&10
Day 8 (Aug 2) F W chapter 11&12 (group presentations on dying language)
Day 9 (Aug 3) W chapter 13&14 (group presentations on dying language)
Day 10 (Aug 8) W chapter 15&16 and Final Review (group presentations on dying language)
Day 11 (Aug 9) Final [bring scantron]
7. CASE STUDY AND PROPOSAL: The specifics of the case study assignment will be presented and discussed in class. In brief, a case study is a kind of qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) descriptive (as opposed to experimental) research. A researcher chooses a human subject (an English language learner, for example) and describes that person in terms of a number of variables that the researcher has reason to suspect are crucial. For example, imagine that you’re a teacher at an elementary school who has just had a new immigrant or migrant child assigned to your class. You notice after the first few days how socially isolated the child is. The teacher interested in doing as case study on the child might hypothesize something about the relationship of social isolation and English language development and gather “data” on the child through a variety of means (written work, drawings, observations, conversations, interviews, etc.) over a period of a few weeks. Will the child become less socially isolated (and, if so, how?), and how does the lessening social isolation—or its maintenance—affect English language development? That’s the kind of question a case study attempts to investigate.

Class members will need to identify a subject for a case study, a language user who is sociolinguistically interesting for some reason(s). Members will be asked to propose the study (i.e., justify and explain it) to the instructor and may need to get written permission from the subject or the subject’s parents in order to write it up for this class. Members will then gather a variety of data from the subject, often in a “participant-observer” role, and produce a not overly long paper that presents the initial hypotheses of the study, the ways in which data was gathered, the important variables (linguistic and/or social) identified by the data gathered, and conclusions, which should ideally be linked to the course’s texts.