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Providence Theological Seminary  
Otterburne, Manitoba

GS6202 Sociolinguistics  
(November 15-19, 2010)

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## **SYLLABUS**

### **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society and the various functions of language in society. Implications for language learning and teaching will be explored.

### **II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

In this course learners will do the following:

- Demonstrate understanding basic socio-cultural aspects of language
- Demonstrate understanding of the connections between sociolinguistics and TESOL

### **III. COURSE TEXTBOOK**

Wardhaugh, Ronald. An Introduction to Sociolinguistics 6<sup>th</sup> Edition Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2009

**IV. PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Wardhaugh Chapters</b>
1	Nov 15	Introduction <b>Language and Society</b> Sociolinguistic Competence Methods of Enquiry Historical Linguistics/History of English Language Change	Introduction - chapter 1
2	Nov 16	<b>Language and Communities</b> Dialects & Varieties Pidgins and Creoles Bilingualism and Multilingualism Codes: Diglossia, code-switching/mixing World English Speech Communities	Part I - chapters 2-5
3	Nov 17	<b>Language Variation</b> Attitudes to Language Language and Culture Gender and Language Non-verbal Communication Language and Literacy	Part II - chapters 6-8 Part III- chapter 9 Part IV- chapter 13
4	Nov 18	<b>Words at Work</b> Ethnographies Language and Identity Solidarity and Politeness Pragmatics Speech Acts	Part III -chapters 10-12
5	Nov 19	<b>Understanding and Intervening</b> Language Shift/ Language Death Planning Language and Education Applications to Teaching English Conclusions	Part IV- chapters 14-16

**V. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:**

**You will choose at least 4 assignment types (other than the required assignment) from the following for a total of 100%.**

**Submit your personal contract for the course to the instructor by October 31, 2010 (see the back page for a template of the contract)**

1. **Reading the text prior to class sessions (required)10%**
2. Sociolinguistic Tasks x 5%
3. Essays x 5%
4. TESOL Workshop x 25%
5. Research Paper x 25%
6. Sociolinguistic Project x 25%
7. EL/EFL Sociolinguistic Class Unit x 25%
8. Book Reports x 10%(over 300 pages) x 5% (under 300 pages)

A+ 100-98 A 97-94 A- 93-90 B+ 89-87 B 86-83 B- 82-80 C+ 79-77 C 76-73 C- 72-70 D+ 69-67 D 66-63 D- 62-60

## **VI. ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance and participation: Attendance is important. A certain amount of learning takes place in class interaction which is not necessarily reflected in any of the other graded assignments. Class participation promotes learning. **There is no grade value assigned to attendance and participation but if students are absent or do not participate, up to 10% will be subtracted from the final grade.**

1. **Assigned reading of text:** Prior to the beginning of the class sessions. Students are expected to have read the course textbook and to be prepared to enter into discussion of the topics.

Criteria: completeness

Value: 10%

2-8 Various Options: (see options below). **You will plan your own learning program for the remaining 90% of their grade.** You may choose from the following learning tasks in a combination that entails **at least 4 assignment types --other than the required reading assignment** to make up your own personal learning agenda.

2. **Sociolinguistic Tasks:** Complete the task as outlined. Submit the report on the day the appropriate topic is discussed. Be prepared to discuss your results in class.

Criteria: thoroughness, following directions, insights, style, punctuality,  
Value: 5% Each

### Sociolinguistic Tasks

#### *Day 1 - Historical Linguistics and Language Change*

i. Children learn relatively late the "rules" about the kinds of speech that are appropriate in various circumstances. From your own experience, give some examples of children's use of language that, given the social context, was inappropriate.

ii. Most people have "some idea -- usually a prejudice or stereotype" -- about different languages and dialects. Define the terms *prejudice* and *stereotype*. Then, test this theory by asking five people what they think of (a) the languages and dialects, or (b) the speakers of the languages and dialects. Study the responses and describe any prejudices or stereotypes that you find.

iii. Consider the following nine fundamental ideas about language

1. Children learn their native language, swiftly, efficiently and largely with out instruction,
2. Language operates by rules.
3. All language have 3 major components: sound system, vocabulary and a system of grammar.
4. Everyone speaks a dialect.
5. Speakers of all languages employ a range of styles and a set of sub-dialects or jargon.
6. Language change is normal.
7. Languages are intimately related to the societies and individuals who use them.
8. Value judgments about different languages or dialects are matters of taste.
9. Writing is a derivative of speech.

Show these ideas to five people who are not in your class and invite their opinions e.g. do they agree or disagree with these statements? Summarize their reactions. Are some of the ideas more controversial or less accepted than others?

iv. The following are reconstructed Indo-European roots (as indicated by the asterisks) from which English words and words in cognate languages have developed: \*mater-, \*agh-, \*eis-, \*nekw-, \*dhe-, \*kwon-. Identify one English word and at least one cognate word in a contemporary language that have developed from each of these roots. (Note: You will find *The American Heritage Dictionary* especially useful in doing this exercise.)

v. Observe a young child talking. Tape-record or write down exactly what he

or she says. Explain what rule(s) you think he or she has formed that lead to error.

vi. Listen to a foreign person speak English and write down every word for which the English word sounds foreign because the wrong allophone\* was used. (That is, the sound is close to the way an English speaker would pronounce it, but is a little "off.") Try to figure what the rule for that allophone is in English and how it must differ from the foreign language. Alternatively, try to pronounce words in another language to someone who is a native speaker of that language. Have the person tell you which words are being said with an American or English accent. Can you hear the difference?

\* An *allophone* is one of two or more variants of the same phoneme e.g. the aspirated  $\text{p}$  of *pin* and the unaspirated  $\text{p}$  of *spin* are *allophones* of the phoneme  $\text{p}$ .

vii. You want to find out whether or not males are more likely than females to try to solve problems rather than to sympathize with someone's problem, or to find out if males are more competitive in their speech than females. How would you set up a study to investigate any such problem? What pitfalls would you anticipate and how would you try to avoid them?

viii. Take a five-minute tape recording of anybody speaking. Try to transcribe it. How long does it take? Have someone else check your transcription. Do they find you have transcribed something wrong? Or differently from how they would? Were there any portions of the tape you couldn't transcribe? What does this experience tell you about dealing with large amounts of oral language in a study?

ix. Make up an informed consent form that you might use in a study of your own. Also make up a questionnaire that asks for background information.

Day 2 – Language Communities, Dialects and Varieties, World Englishes, Pidgins, Creoles, speech communities.

i. What "speech communities" do you find in your school, workplace, or place of residence? How would you try to determine what these speech communities are? What variable(s) seem to operate in these communities? How do these seem to relate to national, regional, or ethnic variables?

ii. Make up a brief speech evaluation survey and poll your friends to see their attitudes towards some variable pronunciation in use of your community. Which variant does each of these friends use? What does each friend report him - or herself as using?

If you are bilingual, or know someone who is, investigate the conditions under which code-switching occurs.

### *Day 2- Bilingualism and Multilingualism*

- i. If you come from a bilingual or multilingual home, try to observe code-switching in your family or amongst your friends. Chart the topics of conversation which seem to cause the code-switching. What emotional message, if any, does each language seem to signal? Do more formal situations elicit one form of language rather than another?
- ii. Poll your English-speaking peers as to their attitudes toward foreign languages. How many languages does each speak? What languages would he or she be willing to learn? Why would they or would they not want to learn any other language? How do they feel about the foreign language classes they have already taken. Alternatively, poll immigrants or other bilingual peers, creating a questionnaire that would uncover their attitudes to English and their other language.

### *Day 3 - Language and Variation*

- i. Listen to a song or view a movie or television sequence in which a dialect of English unfamiliar to you is spoken. What problems do you find in understanding? What seems to be the difference between this dialect and your own?
- ii. Look in three or four college writing handbooks (Harcourt-Brace, Prentice-Hall, etc.), books on advice to writers, or books commenting about how to use English (like Fowler, Newman, John Simons) for advice on using the phrase *in regard to*. Do all of your sources agree? Take any of the alternatives any of them suggest (e.g., *as regards*, *with regards to*, *regarding*) and look those up. Do the sources agree? What can you conclude about the validity of such pronouncements? If you wished to express the thought encoded in any of these, how would you do so, based upon your researches?
- iii. Make up a list of words which you think have dialectal variants. Make up a definition for each word. Then poll your friends to see what they call them. For instance, "What do you call the square of toweling that you wash yourself with?" Alternatively, ask people if they know what a *facecloth* or *hoagie* (or any other dialectal variant) refers to.

Ask several people what kind of "accent" they have. How many say something like "General Canadian" or "Vanilla English"? Ask them where they were raised. Can you detect differences in their speech? Who is likely to say that they have

an accent? Where were they raised?

Ask those who said they have a General Canadian accent how they would pronounce the following pairs:

Talk	tock
orange	coffee
cot	caught
sense	cents
tournament	turn
hurry	her
right	ride

(Add any items you think will be pronounced differently by your participants.)

Do all of the General Canadian speakers pronounce these the same way?

iv. It is believed that there are marked differences between the speech communities of one generation and the next. Observe and describe speech differences between students and faculty in your school. Compare your findings with those of your instructor. Is age the only factor here? What kinds of differences exist between your speech and that of your grandparents? What, in general, are people's attitudes toward these differences?

v. The names of cities, towns, rivers, and mountains often provide clues to settlement and migration patterns. Using a map of your area, list three local place names and discuss their significance. For example, you may wish to find out the meaning of each name and whether or not any of the names appear elsewhere in the country (and, if so, whether or not they are related). You will find the following references useful: Kelsie B. Hardner's *Illustrated Dictionary of Place Names* (1976) and George R. Stewart's *American Place-Names* (1970).

vi. Study the history of your community so that you can write a report in which you discuss the ways in which settlement patterns, population shifts, and physical geography have influenced the speech of the area.

vii. The readings in this section deal with differences in speech among people of different regions and social class. Among the students in your class, devise a list of what may be considered "slang" or "popular" terms. Your list may or may not include words such as: "not" (an exclamation), "crunchy" (a type of person), "to dis" (verb), or "choice" (adjective). With your list of words, create some form of survey in which you ask whether your subject has heard the term before, whether he or she uses the term, what word if any the subject uses in this word's place, what other words the person has heard that mean the same as your "slang" term, and where your subject believes that your term originated. You may wish to record your subject's age group and sex to help in the analysis of

your data.

Take your survey to your hometown, and prepare a report of your results. Are there any distinct characteristics that you observe? Are there words that may be considered masculine or feminine? Which terms are new and which ones borrowed? Compare your results with others in class. What does this tell you about Canadian dialects or words geographies?

### *Day 3 - Language & Gender*

i. Examine how girls and boys are portrayed in children's books. Preferably select books for a certain age group and make a table of who does the talking in each, what kind of talking each does (advising, complaining, informing, comforting, rebelling, etc.). How much talking do men, women, girls, and boys do relative to each other? Does your research suggest that children are taught at an early age to value male speech more than female?

ii. Carefully observe and record the number of interruptions in male-male, female-female, and male-female dyads. Do your findings support those in this chapter? What tactics does each gender employ to deal with interruptions? Are there strong gender differences?

Observe one group of boys and one of girls talking together (or playing games). Do you find differences in interactional patterns?

iii. Write down all of the words you can find which refer to females either on television shows, movies, or just your own circles. Do your observations verify that women are still defined in terms of their sexuality and their submissiveness?

Make up a list of words like *intelligent*, *hungry*, and *athletic*, which you think might be associated with males rather than females. Ask your cohorts to use a sample sentence with the word. Do they choose female or male subjects, or neither. What can you conclude about the semantic features on words associated with each gender?

iv. In an article, John Pfeiffer introduces us to differences in the communication styles of boys and girls. In order to observe these differences on your own, visit a local school and conduct video sessions of girls and boys in a room with nothing other than two chairs. If you don't own your own video equipment, check with your department or with media services to obtain the use of a video camera.

Your task is to observe how girls at different ages communicate, how boys at different ages communicate, and how the two react in conversation with one another.

Select three ages to examine: age five, age ten, and age thirteen. Set your camera up in the room and send your couples in with no other instructions other than to talk to one another. When you have finished your recording, show the tapes to your class. Do you observe any distinct differences in the communication styles of little girls and boys? What happened in the mixed groups? What does this tell you about the styles of communication used by men and women?

v. An alternative method to use to observe the different communication styles of men and women is to record conversation groups in your class. Select a topic for debate, and have a tape recorder ready. After the discussion/debate has finished, listen to the tape, record your observations, and analyze your results, keeping in mind such things as length of time talking, interruptions, topics introduced in the conversation, and roles played by different members of the group. What do you expect to find? What do you find? Transcribe the tapes. Do you notice anything that went undetected in your initial observations? What do your results tell you about girls and boys, men and women in conversation?

### *Day 3 - Kinesics or Non Verbal Communication*

i. Keep track for a day of the way people you meet use their eyes to make or avoid eye contact. Write a brief description of the behavior you have observed. Particularly notice how Canadians use their eyes.

ii. Most of our feelings of territoriality are unconscious unless and until "our territory" is violated. Prepare a report in which you describe the reactions of another person when you do some or all of the following: (a) after a class has been meeting for at least three weeks, deliberately sit in a seat that you know has regularly been occupied by someone else; (b) in your library or snack bar, move someone else's books or food and sit down while the person is temporarily away; (c) in an uncrowded library or classroom, deliberately sit right next to another individual; (d) in your dorm room or at home, deliberately sit (in a chair, at a desk, etc.) where you know someone else "belongs."

iii. Prepare answers to the following questions: (a) What are your three most common gestures? What are your instructor's three most common gestures? What conclusions (about personality, setting, etc.) can you draw from these? (b) In a conversation, how do you know when someone is losing interest? Is not losing interest? (c) What aspects of a person's appearance cause you to feel (at least initially) friendly? Hostile? (d) In what ways do you act differently at home from the way you do at a friend's? Why?

iv. Consider the most common classroom seating arrangements. Devise an

experiment that will test the effects on behaviour of various arrangements. You may wish to poll the feelings of members of a number of classes and elicit reasons for their feelings. Which arrangement was judged most comfortable? Least comfortable? Why? Is there any relationship between seating arrangements and class size? Between seating arrangements and class or grade level? Between seating arrangements and types of classroom activities or subject matter? Explain.

#### *Day 4 - Language & Interaction*

i. How many registers do you think you usually command? Give examples of each along with a description of the circumstances that evoke each. What are the components of each register?

Observe the difference in address forms that you give and receive in two different social situations (work, school, home, church, party, etc.) Do not work from memory. From these forms can you make any judgments about the social structure of the community you observed?

ii. Try to violate co-occurrence restrictions in greetings and address with people you know well. How do they respond? Do they attempt repairs, and, if so, how? Can you formulate any general principles of repair?

iii. Observe the same person speaking in two very different situations, such as at a funeral and at dinner. What changes in style do you notice alternatively; notice whether someone's style changes as topics of conversation change. Does a person speak of a death in the same way as a party, for instance? What are some of the signals which signal 'this is unpleasant/serious/funny, etc.?'

iv. Note all the instances of positive and negative face rituals in contrasting interactions. For instance, what differences do you find between same-sex peers and an older high status person with a younger, lower status person (such as a professor and a student)? Do your observations substantiate the idea that Americans rely on positive face rituals? If you use interactions between people of another culture, analyze whether or not they use positive or negative face rituals and when.

#### *Day 4 - Pragmatics*

i. The three implicit illocutionary forces are assertion, imperative, and question (interrogative). Why is it important, in actual conversations, that the hearer identify these implicit illocutionary forces? Give an example from your own experience of an utterance or exchange involving a discrepancy between implicit and explicit illocutionary force. Did the social context make clear the actual intentions of the speaker? If so, describe how.

ii. Just as speakers expect certain behavior on the part of their audience, so too audiences have expectations about speaker behavior called conversational principles. In general, Grice says, audiences assume (1) that a speaker is sincere; (2) that a speaker is telling the truth; (3) that what a speaker says will be relevant to the topic under discussion; and (4) that the speaker will neither withhold important information nor monopolize the conversation. (Actually, all the participants in a conversation share these expectations.) Describe a situation in which all the conversational principles were observed and one in which one or more was violated. What conclusions can you draw?

iii. Presuppositions involve both speakers and hearers; and all utterances, even the simplest, involve a number of presuppositions. Examine the following sentences and list the presuppositions for each:

- a. Mary's husband works for IBM.
- b. Even though Bob promised never to lie to me again, he told me today that he  
didn't go to the  
movies with  
Sherry.
- c. That C- I got on the Psych quiz you missed is really going to hurt my average.
- d. Nonsmokers have rights too!

iv. Record a short, but not intimate, conversation in a setting of your choice and count all of the repetitions in it. Did they enhance the conversation or make it boring; what seemed to be the purpose of the repetitions? Warn the speakers that their words are being recorded.

v. Poll friends of different religions about when it is all right to talk in church and when it is not and under what conditions one calls out responses. How much variability do you find? Try to explain the varying practices in accordance with religious beliefs.

vi. Using evidence from dinner-table conversation, explain whether your family belongs to a high or low involvement culture. Alternatively, determine the kinds of culture friends belong to by observing their behavior during a meal or a visit.

vii. Give the first part of utterance pairs to friends or family and record the responses. Do your results conform to those presented in this chapter? Can you find a type of pair not mentioned here?

ix. Collect several instances of repair and explain how they work. Do these verify the regulatory nature of repair and/or the ways that repair helps maintain the status quo?

x. Collect examples of speech acts as opposed to communicative speech amongst your friends or family. How can you distinguish between the two?

#### Day 4- Speech Acts –

i. Collect some ritual insults amongst your friends. What topics are permissible? What topics are not? That is, what insults are taken as true insults. What reactions do you get from ritual insults? How do these differ from reactions to true insults?

ii. Listen to some comic monologue on TV, tapes, or at a live performance and count the derogatory jokes about females. How many of these concern a female's sexual activities? What other characteristics of females are joked on. Are there similarly derogatory jokes about any other segment of society, such as all males, the Chinese, Native Americans, or fathers?

iii. What kinds of boasting activities can you collect from your peers? What is permissible to boast about? Do you find any ego-boosting, tale-telling (such as the stories of the bar flies discussed in this chapter), or are the boasts fantastic, like those of Craig in this chapter? Who seems to boast? How is this boasting evaluated by others in your group? To what degree does the locale or social situation determine the degree to which boasting is positively valued?

#### *Day 5 - Discourse and Language Education*

i. Summarize the rules of telephone conversation in Canada. Then describe the rules of another culture, and compare them with those of Canada.

ii. Drawing on your own experience, describe a situation in which a semantically appropriate response would not actually be used.

iii. Test people's (parents, spouse, siblings or friends) reactions to persistent compliments. Write a brief report summarizing your results.

iv. Explain the concept of "preconditions for speech acts." Illustrate it by an original example of such a situation.

#### *Day 5 - Broader Perspectives in Sociolinguistics*

i. Find a contract or lease in your home. The statement of credit liability on a bill for a credit card is fine. What elements of legalese do you find on the document you chose.

Examine the language of a prayer of your choice. What archaic or unusual

words or syntax can you find in it. Translate the prayer into everyday casual speech. What is the effect?

ii. If you and a friend are studying the same foreign language, or if you have studied one that you know another friend has also studied, give yourself a topic of conversation and prepare what you want to say about it in the foreign language. Now try conversing with the friend. What difficulties do you find in expressing yourself.

### **3. Essays:**

Write a 4-5 page essay from the list. Submit on the appropriate day for the topic. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class.

Criteria: Content, following directions, insights, style, punctuality

Value: 5% Each

*Day 1 - Introduction to Sociolinguistics - Historical Linguistics and Language Change*

i. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that the structure and vocabulary of people's languages influence their cultural and social beliefs, as well as their view of the world. Prepare an essay explaining and analyzing the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Be sure to include examples of the ways in which language allegedly conditions perceptions.

ii. Using "Language Shapes Reality" as the thesis and title of a short paper, describe incidents from your own experience that clearly exemplify the shaping power of language. For example, consider some of the recent purchases you have made. Have any of them been influenced by brand names, advertisements, or language used by salespersons? Did you ever find yourself taking or avoiding a course primarily because of its name?

iii. The *Oxford English Dictionary* with all of its supplements comprises the most complete history of the English language we have. Find a word in the dictionary, familiar to you and still used today, that has at least five meaning changes. Describe the word's history and how the word meanings have changed over time. Can you easily trace the meaning changes and how they changed? What groups of people may have been responsible for the changes in meaning? Has the spelling of your word changed? What events in our language's history have led to the spelling changes? After you have finished your study, find a word in the dictionary that may already require an updated meaning. What classes of words are changing most rapidly? Why?

*Day 2 - Non Standard English, etc.*

i. How do pidgins and creoles develop? When is a pidgin said to become a

creole? For this reason, which language is more likely to become extinct? How would the size of the population using the language influence the outcome? Give reasons for your explanation.

ii. Describe the ways in which Black American speech structures the community for communicative purposes. Are you surprised by what Whatley refers to as the "unexpected complexity in the order of turn taking" used among Black speakers?

iii. The concept of "standard English" has caused much misunderstanding and debate. For many people, "standard" implies that one variety of English is more correct or more functional than other varieties. Investigate the history of the concept of "standard English." How, for example, did the concept develop? How do various linguists define it? Is "standard English" a social dialect? What exactly is the power or mystique of "standard English"?

iv. Select the work of an author whose characters speak a social or regional variety of English -- e.g., William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*; Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (particularly "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral"); Bret Harte, *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches*; Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*; Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus and Br'er Rabbit*; William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*; Willa Cather, *My Antonia*; John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; or Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep*. Identify the dialect presented and discuss the devices that the author uses to represent dialect. Read a passage aloud; how closely does it approximate actual speech?

v. Following his selection, "Pidgins and Creoles," in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, David Crystal lists one hundred different pidgin and creole languages of the world along with a map to illustrate their locations. Some of the most prominent or most widely used of those listed include:

1. Hawaiian Pidgin/Creole, est. 500,000 speakers
2. Gullah, est. 150,000-300,000 speakers
3. Louisiana Creole French
4. Papiamentu (Papiamentu), est. 200,000 speakers
5. Haitian French Creole, est. four million speakers
6. Sranan, est. 80,000 speakers
7. Cocoliche
8. Bagot Creole English
9. Australian Pidgin
10. Cameroon Pidgin English, est. two million speakers
11. Tok Pisin (Neo-Malasian), est. one million speakers
12. Congo Pidgins

Select one of these pidgin or creole languages, or go to the library and pick one of your own. After some library research, prepare an essay on this language. Where did this pidgin or creole language originate? What other languages or dialects does it influence? What appears to be the future of this language?

### *Day 2 - Bilingualism and Multilingualism*

- i. Check a historical dictionary such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *Random House, 2nd ed.* as to the origin of words used in science, religion, music, native American animals (such as the raccoon, possum, and squirrel) or any other sphere of interest you wish. Does the set of words you chose show heavy borrowing from another language or languages? By checking an encyclopedia or other source, try to formulate a hypothesis to explain the borrowings from the language. Remember that no language ever has to borrow a word from another language. Consider the reasons that people are likely to borrow in your response.
- ii. Look up a newspaper and magazine articles written in the past two or three years about resistance to bilingualism in the United States. This has taken the form of organizations -- or individuals -- devoted to making English the official language of the United States or of severely limiting such conveniences as bilingual signs in public places or bilingual notices on telephone bills. What are the arguments given for 'English only' sentiments? In light of what you have learned in this chapter about bilingualism, prepare a short report on the wisdom of such attitudes towards bilingualism.
- iii. Pretend that a position becomes available to head up a new bilingual program for speakers of a language or group of languages of your choice. Apply for the position, explaining why a study of sociolinguistics and bilingualism is vital to setting up an effective program. Consider especially issues in individual bilingualism, such as problems of languages in contact, attitudes toward native and target languages, and the social situations in which bilinguals are likely to use each language.

### *Day 3 - Language and Variation: Regional & Social*

- i. As Shuy states, "That people speak different dialects in no way stems from their intelligence or judgment. They speak the dialect which enables them to get along with the other members of their social and geographical group." Despite this fact, many people consider dialects different from their own as "funny sounding," "strange," or even "wrong" -- and these feelings about language are often transferred to the speakers of the different dialects. Drawing on your own experiences and attitudes, discuss the situation described above. For example, what are its implications for a family moving from, say, the Maritimes to Ontario?
- ii. Discuss, using your own specific examples, how vocabulary can reveal facts about a person's age, sex, education, occupation, and geographical and

cultural origins.

### *Day 3- Language & Gender*

- i. Given the disparity in the ways that males and females are socialized to speak, what problems would you expect to find when females have male bosses, and vice versa. Also, what kinds of problems would occur in mixed gender interviewing situations or committee meetings.
- ii. Can you think of any words in our language that are perceived of as "feminine," which if used to describe a mixed-sex group are not perceived as an insult? Are there any "masculine" terms that are applied to women without insult? What does this trend say about our language? Can you cite examples that suggest that our language might be undergoing change?
- iii. Pfeiffer explains that men spend considerable time playing the dominance game, either at a joking level or for real. This "I-can-top-that" atmosphere is a seemingly male communications trait. How does this differ from the atmosphere of women communicating? What possible explanations can be offered for these two different styles besides the difference in gender?
- iv. Briefly discuss the differences in the socialization patterns of little boys and girls. In what ways do the methods of "play" differ for the two groups? How might these tendencies contribute to adult speech differences?

### *Day 3- Kinesics or Non Verbal Communication*

- i. Miller asserts that along with their language, children also learn certain nonverbal "cultural norms" that "are communicated to the child nonverbally." Drawing from your own experience, describe three of the cultural norms that Canadian children learn.
- ii. Spatial norms vary from culture to culture. Describe any differences between Canadian norms and those of other countries that you have noticed while traveling abroad. If you haven't had such experiences, ask two or three of your friends about theirs.
- iii. Miller uses two examples of the use of clothing to communicate. Based on your own experience, give two additional examples.
- iv. Study a short movie while the sound is turned off. Make notes on your observations of proxemics and body language and what you learn from these aspects of behavior. Turn on the sound and make notes on your findings once again. Write a paper that discusses the quantitative and qualitative differences in what you learned from both viewings. Ideally, you should try to determine the

relative importance of body language, verbal communication, and proxemics.

#### *Day 4 - Language & Interaction*

i. If you were writing an etiquette book, what rules for address forms, offering, asking, inviting, accepting, greeting, register and style would you include for work, school, parties, sporting events, funerals, weddings, formal dances, or graduation ceremonies? Try to think of some rules which were not covered in this chapter.

Compare your politeness rules to that of another culture. For instance, if you are a native English speaker what do you do in your speech to compensate for the lack of distinction between formal and informal *you*? Or what do you do to compensate for the lack of honorifics or dishonorifics in English?

#### *Day 4- Discourse*

i. Explain the paradox: "Language makes us free as individuals but chains us socially."

ii. Explain the relationship among speech events, genres, and performance.

iii. "It is easy to manipulate people subtly by plugging them into the presuppositions and preconditions behind statements." Write a description of a real or imaginary instance of such manipulation.

iv. Explain the statement, "In normal conversation, everything has to be subordinated to topic, whatever is being talked about."

#### *Day 4 - Pragmatics*

i. Develop the many implications of the statement that pragmatics "looks at speech performance as primarily a social act ruled by various social conventions."

ii. Heatherington suggests that "the more intimate the register, the more disguised the implicit illocutionary force in any speech act. Conversely, the more formal is the register, the less disguised the force." Do you agree? Support your answer with specific examples.

#### *Day 4 - Speech Acts -*

i. Jarrett says that one recognizes immediately that a song does not belong to the genre of the Blues if it contains references to nature. Analyze the lyrics of your favorite kind of music (rap, rock, punk, heavy metal, etc.) and note what

topics are never mentioned. What are the usual topics of these songs? You may instead want to compare two groups, such as Bruce Springsteen and U2.

ii. According to Hughes, "ideographic writing" is "properly in no sense either language or writing." How does he support this statement? Do you agree or disagree? Defend your answer.

iii. The characters of written Chinese each represent, in general, one morpheme or one word. Explain the advantages of such a system, which does not involve any linking of sound to the written characters, to the Chinese as a nation. What are the disadvantages of such a system?

iv. Why is alphabetic writing "the most efficient writing system possible"?

v. If you know Russian, prepare a comparison of the Cyrillic and Roman alphabets. Which alphabet is a better fit for Russian? For English? Why?

#### *Day 5- Broader Perspectives in Sociolinguistics*

i. "All the defining properties of human language . . . are present in ASL; there are equivalent levels of phonology, morphology, and syntax." Discuss this statement, keeping in mind the reactions towards languages used by other minorities in our society.

ii. Yule repeatedly refers to misconceptions and erroneous assumptions the vocal-auditory world makes with respect to ASL and other signed languages. What are some of these misconceptions? Why might such assumptions exist?

iii. What are the nontraditional ways in which dictionaries can be organized? Include in your answer the ways in which computers are challenging the definition of *dictionary*.

v. Why must we preserve as much information about endangered and minority languages as possible? What purposes would this information serve? Diamond asserts that we are not helpless to prevent the process of language extinction. In what ways can we help to slow this process? Can you make any suggestions?

vi. Consider the role of sociolinguistic investigation in discovering what kind of talk is persuasive, the best dialect to use, the kinds of kinesics, and how that might be applied to teaching effective pastoral counselling or selling used cars.

#### **4. Workshop for TESOL teachers:**

Present a workshop for TESOL teachers to the class. The workshop should deal with the topic assigned to the day. The implications of the topic for TESOL teachers should be clearly demonstrated. The time allotted for the workshop is 1 hr.

Criteria: Content, balance of theory & practice, handout, appropriateness, presentation

Value: 25 % each

#### **5. Research paper:**

Write an 18-20 page research paper on a topic of interest in the field of sociolinguistics. The paper should also provide insights for language teaching.

Criteria: Content, organization, style, following directions, punctuality.

Due: April. 15<sup>th</sup>

Value: 25 % each

#### **6 Sociolinguistic Project:**

Conduct a research project in sociolinguistics.

Criteria: Methodology, thoroughness, insights

Due: April 15

Value: 25% each

#### **7. Sociolinguistic Unit:**

Prepare a unit of study for ESL/EFL learners based in sociolinguistic, e.g. Speech Arts, Non-Verbal Communication, etc.

Criteria: Content, organization, appropriateness

Due: April 15

Value: 25% each

#### **8. Book Report**

Choose a book from the bibliography below to read. Write a 3-5 page book report summarizing the content and the importance of the book for the training of ESL/EFL teachers.

Criteria: Accuracy of summary, insightfulness of value

Value: 10% each if the book is more than 300 pages

5 % each if the book is 300 pages or less.

Personal Contract  
for

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Submit to instructor by October 31, 2010

You must choose **at least four different task types** in addition to the reading.

Indicate your  
choice:

**1. Reading of**

10%

**textbook ..... 10%**

2. Tasks @ 5% Due Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Essays @ 5% Due Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Workshop for TESOL teachers @ 25 %

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Research paper @ 25% Due

6. Sociolinguistics Project @ 25% Due December 15

7. ESL/EFL Sociolinguistic Unit @ 25% Due December 15.

8. Book Report @ 10% Due December 15

OR Book Report @ 5% Due December 15

TOTAL

100%

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