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EBS423SW Varieties of English

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Language variation

- There are two kinds of language variation: synchronic variation and diachronic variation.
- Synchronic variation is language variation at one point in time and is usually called dialect variation. The difference between British and American English is an example of synchronic variation.
- Diachronic variation is language variation between two points in time and is usually referred to as language change. The difference between old English and modern English is an example of diachronic variation.

Varieties of language: Variation According to Use

- a regional variety of language distinguished by features of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation from other regional varieties and constituting together with them a single language the Doric dialect of ancient Greek a dialect of Chinese spoken in Hong Kong.
- In sociolinguistics, a sociolect is a form of language (non-standard dialect, restricted register) or a set of lexical items used by a socioeconomic class, a profession, an age group or other social group.
- A genderlect is a set of linguistic features that characterizes the language production of a socially defined gender category (typically “woman/girl” and “man/boy”).
- “Idiolect” refers to an individual's unique variety and/or use of language, from the level of the phoneme to the level of discourse. This meaning is reflected in the etymology of the word: the two morphemes idio- and -lect.

Varieties of language: Variation According to Use

- In sociolinguistics, acrolect is a creole variety that tends to command respect because its grammatical structures do not deviate significantly from those of the standard variety of the language. Adjective: acrolectal.
- Contrast with basilect, a language variety that is significantly different from the standard variety. The term mesolect refers to intermediate points in the post-creole continuum.
- The term acrolect was introduced in the 1960s by William A. Stewart and later popularized by linguist Derek Bickerton in *Dynamics of a Creole System* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975)
- Observations
- "Acrolects . . . are better described as linguistic innovations characterized by the incorporation of linguistic features which have their origin in the contact situation itself. Unlike standard languages, acrolects usually have no overt set of linguistic norms and are pragmatically motivated (i.e. depend on the formality of the situation). In other words, the concept of the acrolect is both absolute (on the level of the speech community) and relative (on the level of the individual) . . ."
- (Ana Deumert, *Language Standardization and Language Change: The Dynamics of Cape Dutch*. John Benjamins, 2004)

Variation Defined by Use

- Register
- In linguistics, a register is a variety of language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. According to Halliday, register is 'variation according to use': that is, we typically use certain recognisable configurations of linguistic resources in certain contexts.
- Some linguists call register a specific vocabulary (Wardhaugh, 1986), which one might call slang, jargon, argot, etc. So in a more general sense it means the language used by a group of people who share similar work or interests, such as doctors or lawyers.
- It is thus language use according to degree of formality. E.g. when speaking in a formal context/setting a speaker is more likely to use features of prescribed grammar (standard grammar) than in an informal setting;
- E.g. words ending with -ing may be pronounced with a velar nasal instead of an alveolar nasal an (e.g. walking, not walkin). Lexicon, one may choose more formal words e.g. father vs. dad, child vs. kid, etc.

Variation Defined by Use

- Halliday and Hassan (1976) see register as the linguistic features which are typically associated with situation of use-with particular values of the field/domain, mode/medium and tenor.
- That is, there are three main dimensions of variation that characterise any register:
 - A. Domain/Field (what is being talked about and the role of language in the activity that is going on.

Domain/Field: language changes according to the domain that the language is related to, which includes (a) the subject matter being spoken or written about (e.g. the language of science, the language of law, economics, policy science, etc. and (b) the function that the language is being used for (e.g. the language of advertisement, the language of government, politics, etc. All of these determine the vocabulary to be used.

Variation Defined by Use

B. Mode (how the language is functioning in the interaction – e.g. whether it is written or spoken).

Medium/Mode (channel), whether it is spoken or written, extempore or prepared. Language changes according to the medium used (e.g. speech, the language of writing).

Variation Defined by Use

C. Tenor (the relationships between the interlocutors or the people involved in the communication, both in general and moment-by-moment);

Tenor (style/formality): how politely or formally you speak changes according to (a) who you are talking or writing to (e.g. the language we use when talking to close friends compared with that used when talking to strangers or people who are socially distant from us, and (b) the social situation you find yourself in (e.g a child whose mother is a teacher will talk to her in different ways, depending on whether they are at home or at school).

Variation Defined by Use

- Each of these (tenor, mode, field) corresponds to one of the metafunctions: e.g. the field mainly determines, and is construed by, the experiential meanings that are expressed; the tenor mainly determines, and is construed by, the interpersonal meanings; and the mode mainly determines, and is construed by, the textual meanings

English Register Levels

- There are five language registers or styles. Each level has an appropriate use that is determined by differing situations. It would certainly be inappropriate to use language and vocabulary reserved for a boyfriend or girlfriend when speaking in the classroom. Thus the appropriate language register depends upon the audience (who), the topic (what), purpose (why) and location (where).
- High formal
- It is the level of language that you would use to address the Queen, an archbishop, president or prime minister.
- Formal
- This language is used in formal settings and is one-way in nature. This use of language usually follows a commonly accepted format. It is usually impersonal and formal. A common format for this register are speeches. e.g. sermons, rhetorical statements and questions, speeches, pronouncements made by judges, announcements. It is used when one speaks or writes to one's boss, a client or in a transactional letter. It is also called the consultative register when, for example, referring to or talking to your doctor and using the polite address of Dr.

English Register Levels

- Neutral

It is the formal or conventional language level one uses in report writing, business plans and marketing presentations.

- Informal

This is informal language used by peers and friends. An informal or casual register is used when one speaks or writes emails to friends, family or work colleagues. Slang, vulgarities and colloquialisms are normal in this type of register. This is group language. One must be member to engage in this register. e.g. buddies, teammates, chats and emails, and blogs, and letters to friends.

- Vulgar

This is an intimate register that contains the type of language we use when we talk to immediate family members, very close friends, a child or a family pet.

- **Rule of Language Use:**

- One can usually transition from one language register to an adjacent one without encountering repercussions. However, skipping one or more levels is usually considered inappropriate and even offensive.

Genre

- Genre, meaning a 'kind of' or 'sort of' any form or type of communication in any mode (written, spoken, digital, artistic, etc.) with socially-agreed conventions developed over time.
- Genre is mostly known as a style, category or kind of literature, music, art, or other forms of entertainment, whether written or spoken, audio or visual, based on some set of stylistic criteria. But genres can be aesthetic, rhetorical, communicative, or functional.
- E.g. Literary genre: is a category of literary composition which has its conventions. Genres may be determined by literary technics, tone, content or even (as in the case of fiction) length. The most general genres in literature are epic (narrates story of heroes in society), novel and short story.
- We can have a genre within a genre, e.g. genres of prose could be tragedy or comedy. Also, a genre such as satire might appear in any of the above, not only as a sub-genre but also as a mixture of genres: tragedy-comedy.

Discourse

- According to (i) Post-colonial theory: discourse is a system of domination,
- (ii) in Anthropology: discourse is a culture or ideology
- (iii) Sociolinguistics: discourse is a speech style or register
- (iv) Psychology: discourse is a physical or bodily practice
- (v) Feminist theory: discourse is a type of subject (Sawyer, 2002:434).
- (vi) Language use beyond the a word.
- There are different views of what a discourse is. It is defined depending on the subject area or the theoretical orientation of the researcher. Discourse is about language: e.g. one view sees discourse simply as a word for language use (Potter, 2004; Widdosson, 2007).
- Discourse analysis e.g. focuses on what people do in their everyday usage of the language consciously and unconsciously.

Discourse: Formal vs Informal English

- When it comes to writing in English, there are two main styles of writing: Formal and Informal.
- The style of writing, or the way we use words to say what we want to say differs in different situations; the difference in the styles of writing is what is known as formality and informality in writing.
- E.g. the way we write in academic and scientific settings differs from the way we write to a friend or close one. E.g. (i) the tone, (ii) vocabulary, and (iii) syntax, as well as phonology, all change as the occasion changes.
- We say two texts differ because one is 'formal' and the other is 'informal'. The main thing to remember is that both are correct, it is just a matter of tone and setting.

Formal vs Informal English

- Formal English is used mainly in academic writing and business communications, whereas Informal English is casual and is appropriate when communicating with friends and other close ones. Choose the style of writing keeping in mind what you are writing and to whom. But whichever style you write in – formal or informal – be sure to keep it consistent, do not mix the two.

Formal vs Informal English

- **The difference between Formal and Informal Writing**

1. Both formal and informal words are used in spoken and written language. However, while colloquial words and expressions are accepted in informal writings, they are usually avoided in formal writings. Informal writing is as good as spoken conversation. Words such as kids, guys, dad, mum, bro, lad, awesome, a lot, are accepted in informal writing those such as children, man/boy, father, mother, brother, boy, wonderful, many, etc. are accepted in formal writing.

2. Usage of person: Informal writing uses a personal tone to relate directly to the reader. Personal style of writing is avoided in formal writing. Except for business letters where first person may be used, formal writing is usually in third person. In informal writing, however the writer is disconnected from the subject matter and thus does use the point of view of the first person; first, second, or sometimes third person e.g. I, we or second person i.e. you.

Formal vs Informal English

3. Abbreviated words: It is advisable to use full-words and avoid using abbreviated words in formal writing. Words like photograph, television, etc. are used in full in formal writing. The use of short forms and abbreviations such as photo (photograph), tele or TV, (television), etc. are accepted in informal writing but unacceptable in formal writing.

4. Active voice and passive voice: Passive voice is used in formal writing; e.g. It has been noticed that....). Active voice is used in informal writing, We have noticed that.....)

5. Sentence formation: Complex sentences are used in formal writing. In formal style of writing, information are normally written in detailed and as elaborate as possible. Every point should have an introduction, elaboration, and conclusion. Informal writing is made up of much shorter sentences. Information shared is brief and in an informal tone.

Formal vs Informal English

6. Informal writing may accept cliches (e.g. loads of, conspicuous by absence, etc.). Formal writing style however avoid cliches, e.g. use many, was absent, etc.).

7. Informal: May address readers using second person pronouns, e.g. you, your, etc.). Formal writing however avoids the use of you, your and instead uses one, one's, the reader ('s), etc.

- Common and uncommon words are often words such as linking words.
- 'And', 'but' and 'so' are informal, while 'furthermore', 'however', and 'therefore' are the formal equivalents.
- Vulgar words are, ta for thank you, ta-ta or tra for goodbye, tummy for the stomach and belly button for the navel, etc.

Written vs Spoken language

- **Differences between speech and writing**
- Speech is different from writing, e.g. speech is produced by the speaker, and processed by the hearer in real time. Speech thus has shorter constructions, e.g. fewer cases of subordination, but more co-ordination, incomplete structures (sentence fragments), etc.
- Other differences are due to the conversational interplay between the participants in the speech sample, such as the high number of pronouns (especially first- and second-person). There is more use of a zero that clause especially in post-modification of nouns in NP than the full that clause, etc.

Semantic Aspects of Ghanaian and Nigerian English

- Semantics is the branch of linguistics and logic concerned with meaning. The two main areas are logical semantics, concerned with matters such as sense and reference, and presupposition and implication. The second area is lexical semantics, concerned with the analysis of word meanings and relations between them.

Semantic Aspects of Ghanaian and Nigerian English

SEMANTIC RESTRICTION

- This refers to cases where the meaning of a word is restricted to only a limited area within its Target English semantic field. Examples:
 - a) Missus – a wife named according to the western European custom; not a wife married according to native Ghanaian custom
 - b) Chaser – philanderer
 - c) Fitter – restricted to a motor mechanic
 - d) Guy – a tough man who gives the impression of being fearless; one admired for defying unpopular activity
- The combination of semantic restriction and extension refers to cases where a restricted Ghanaian English meaning of a word has an additional meaning unknown in Target English. Examples:

Semantic restriction

- a) Herbalist – restricted to someone who cures by the use of medicinal herbs. This has an additional Ghanaian English as one supposed to have supernatural powers which helps him or her in the diagnosis of disease and offer human afflictions and the prescription of the appropriate remedies and sacrifices (Sey 1973:71-72).
- b) Madam – as a form of polite address. It is restricted to educated elderly women.
- c) Soup – any soup containing pieces of meat will probably be described as ‘soup’ in Educated Ghanaian English. Other soups, such as clear consommé and vegetable soups would be nondescript to Educated Ghanaian English speakers who are not already familiar with them.

Semantic Aspects of Ghanaian and Nigerian English

SEMANTIC TRANSFER

- This refers to cases where words are used almost completely outside its normal Target English semantic field. Example:
 - a) Vulcanizer – refers to someone who mends tyres and this word has survived to date
 - b) Town council – the sanitary department, especially the laborers and lower ranking officers.

SEMANTIC SHIFT

This is the arrangement of the characteristic patterns within the semantic field of a word so that its central contexts become marginal or archaic and technical words come to replace commoner everyday ones, in ordinary everyday discourse' (Sey 1973:72). Sey provides some examples as:

- a) Park – football field. In Target English, it means 'amusement grounds' and this is marginal in Ghanaian English usage
 - b) Kerosene – a fuel for domestic use. Target English prefers the word paraffin which is rarely used in this sense in Educated Ghanaian English.
- Across all six classifications, many of the entries are still in use while a number of them may be described as rare in contemporary usage. Currently, a notable Ghanaian English usage is 'orphaned constituency' which means that a political party lost a seat in that particular constituency.

Semantic Aspects of Ghanaian and Nigerian English

SEMANTIC NARROWING

- Meanings of existing English words are semantically narrowed to have a contracted scope as in ;
- a) Kerosene is more expensive than fuel.
- b) The family has a boy, now they are expecting a baby.
- c) My globe shines brighter than yours.
- Fuel is narrowed to mean petrol, baby narrowed to mean baby girl and globe is contracted to mean electric bulb.

Semantic Extension

These are cases where a word retains its Target English meaning but acquires additional ones in Educated Ghanaian English; unknown in Target English, although in most cases, it is possible to discover connection between these extended meanings and the Target English meanings. Examples:

- a) Cloth – has the additional meaning ‘any Ghanaian dress’
- b) Concert – any stage performance

Semantic Extension

- Often in Nigerian English, there is the extension of the semantic boundaries of existing English words to cover strange meanings. What Akindele and Adegble (1992) refers to as 'addition of meanings to a Standard English word. Typical example of semantic extension in the English usage in Nigeria could be found in the examples:
 - a) I gave the policeman kolanut before I was released.
 - b) He has a stranger (visitor) this evening.
 - c) Musa hears English.
- The highlighted words kolanut, stranger and hears maintain their Standard English meanings but also acquired different ones. 'Kolanut' refers to the seed of a tree that can be chewed but can be extended to mean bribe, 'stranger' (someone you don't know) means visitor, 'hears' expanded to mean understand.

Semantic Aspects of Ghanaian and Nigerian English

- SEMANTIC REDUPLICATION
- Nigerian English Expressions contain unnecessary repetition of the same idea. The phenomenon referred to as tautology. Example:
 - a) Repeat what you said again.
 - b) That is my person opinion.
- The word 'Repeat' means to do or say again so making use of the terms 'repeat' and 'again' in the same sentence is a tautology. The term 'Opinion' in example 2 means a subjective belief so it is wrong to say 'that is my person opinion'.
- LOANS AND COINAGES
- Transfers from Nigerian language are found in the areas of clothing such as Agbanda, food like eba, akara and titles of rulers like the Emir of Kano, Ori of Ife, and many more. There are coined words like high life music, head-tie, tight-friend, go-slow, talking-drum, and many more.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- The nature of proofreading and editing is similar yet different. Both provide the opportunity to ensure that your work is ideal before publishing it.
- But how they manage to do that is where they differ. Whether you write a blog or an academic paper, it is essential to proofread and edit your work before submitting it. If you are a writer, a university student, or even an editor, you need to know the difference between proofreading vs editing.
- Try and keep both the terms separate and understand the needs of your drafts. Proofreading is done when the writer wants to eliminate minor errors such as spelling, grammar, and other typographic issues from the document.
- While editing is a more thorough process that can change the document dramatically. Many people use the terms proofread and editing interchangeably. However, it is important to understand the difference between proofreading and editing as they are quite different.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- What Is Proofreading?
- When you have finalized the document and are prepared to publish it, you must proofread it to check for spelling or punctuation errors. In addition, proofreading helps eliminate the minor mistakes made by the writer. It also rectifies minor errors that were ignored by the editor while editing the document.
- Proofreading does not consume much time as the goal is to skim the text and correct grammatical mistakes. However, it does perform an essential role as the proofreader understands the different conventions of writing. It helps in correcting inconsistent spellings and formatting of the text. There are different rules of formatting which the proofreader is aware of. These minor mistakes can leave a negative impression on the reader if they are not corrected or missed.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- It is a high-level skill, and people hire proofreaders to ensure that the work they are publishing meets certain quality standards. Two examples of proofreading are given below:
 - 1. “A lot of people enjoy reading.” Proofreading can help eliminate spelling errors, such as: “A lot of people enjoy reading.”
 - 2. “Let's go out for an ice cream.” It can also help with punctuations, such as: “Let’s, go out for an ice cream.”

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- What is Editing?
- Editing goes beyond the technical details of the drafts. It is mostly concerned with eliminating the ambiguity of the text. Editing is performed on the first draft prepared by the writer. It can help eliminate inconsistent structuring, improve the quality of the work, and increase readability.
- It is all about checking if the meaning of the text makes sense or not. It even checks the facts and figures used by the writer. Editing focuses on providing comprehensible consistency of language in the text. It ensures that your write-up is perfect and the intended ideas are well connected.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- You need to edit your first draft to make the text truly shine. There are also times when the writer chooses a phrase that does not make sense. Editing can help in replacing it, so the argument and the context remain on point. Two examples of editing are given below:
 - 1. “Money is counted by bankers.” This sentence is in a passive voice. After editing, it can be corrected as; “Banker counts the money.”
 - 2. “We ate dinner then baked dessert.” The sentence structure can be improved as; “We ate dinner and baked a dessert.”
- **Basic Differences Between Proofreading and Editing**
- Proofreading and editing differ from each other in many ways. So, if you are confused about proofreading vs editing? Please continue reading to understand the primary differences between editing and proofreading.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- 1. Turnaround Time
 - Editing has a longer turnaround time because it is done on the first draft. The editor has to edit the text's tone, the appropriateness of the chosen words, and the structure of the text.
 - The job of the proofreader is to read each sentence and check whether it makes sense or not. Therefore, the turnaround time of proofreading is slightly shorter as the proofreader is checking for spelling mistakes, punctuations, and formatting. Proofreading is the final check before the draft is deemed ready for publishing.
- 2. Stages at Which They Are Done
 - Editing takes place on the first draft prepared by the writer. After that, the editor can take the document through multiple revisions or drafts. This process goes on until the document can be classified as the final draft.
 - On the other hand, proofreading is done on the final draft to correct minor mistakes that the editor might have missed or ignored. It also further improves the formatting of the final document before publishing.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- 3. Reduction of Words
- In the editing process, unnecessary words are reduced to ensure that the text becomes clear and concise. It is important to ensure that the words used make sense and the text is easy to read.
- On the other hand, when you proofread the final draft, you check the words' spellings but do not remove any words.
- 4. Time Consumed
- A lot of time is consumed during editing as the editor aims to make sure that the text makes sense. The overall quality of the text is checked line by line, which is a time-consuming process. During editing, passive voice, syntax, and semantics of the sentences are also checked.
- Proofreading is done to check the spelling mistakes and modify the formatting errors of the draft. Comparatively, less time is required to proofread a document as it does not involve major changes.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- 5. Problems Addressed
- The editor suggests changes in the sentence structure and checks the document to ensure its factual accuracy. The proofreader's job is to point out grammatical and spelling errors in the document and make it perfect.
- Which Service Do You Need - Proofreading vs Editing?
- Editing and proofreading are two different processes of revision. The choice of which service is right for you depends on your needs. No need to get confused about proofreading vs editing services; this article covers everything for you. Before you spend your money on any service, be sure about what you need? Consider the requirements of the document and decide whether you need a proofreader vs editor.

Proofreading Vs Editing -What's The Difference?

- Proofreading
- A proofreading service can eliminate the surface-level errors in your writings. So, essentially it is an opportunity to give your work a final polish before it goes to publishing and in the hands of the readers.
- 1. Students and Researchers
- Students and researchers should use proofreading as it corrects minor mistakes in their documents. If you are a student, you need to submit error-free assignments to get good grades. It is a crucial step before submission, as your grades depend upon your use of language.
- If you are a researcher, you need a proofreader who can eliminate your documents' grammatical and punctuation errors. So, you can publish your work without facing rejection due to minor errors. As a researcher, you even have to make sure that your text does not have capitalization issues. Proofreading is the final check that can ensure that your work is free from mistakes before being submitted for publishing.

Reference

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