Language Society and Culture
Social Dialects

Varieties of language used by groups defined according to:

- Class
- Education
- Occupation
- Age
- Sex
etc.
Education, Occupation, Social Class

It seems to be the case that a person who spends a long time going through college or university will tend to have spoken language features which derive from written language.

Some professors are recognized by "talks like a book".
Differences in occupation and social class have some effect on the speech of individuals.

Every job has a certain amount of ‘jargon’ which those not involved in a similar occupation find difficult to understand.
Bucket of mud, ❖
draw one, ❖
hold the cow ❖

A chocolate ice cream ❖
And a coffee without cream ❖
Age and Sex

Variation according to age is most noticeable across the grandparent-grandchild time span.

Grandfathers may be confused by some of the speech of a teenage granddaughter.
Female speakers tend to use more prestigious forms than male speakers with the same general background.
Some examples of ethnic differences.

The speech of recent immigrants, and often their children will contain identifying features. In some areas where there is strong language loyalty to the original language.
Black English is a widespread social dialect. When a group within a society undergoes some form of isolation, such as the discrimination or segregation experienced historically by American black.
Idiolect

The term idiolect is used for the personal dialect of each individual speaker of a language.

There are other factors, such as voice quality and physical state which contribute to the identifying features in an individual’s speech.
Style

It refers to the relations among participants in a language activity, especially the level of formality (formal, colloquial, etc.).

There is a gradation of style of speech, from very formal to the very informal.
Going for a job interview, one may say:

Excuse me, is the manager in his office? I have an appointment.
Speaking to a friend about another friend, one might be less formal;

Hey, is that lazy dog still in bed? I gotta see him about something.
Style -Shifting

**Style-shifting** occurs in all speakers to a different degree; interlocutors regularly and consistently change their linguistic forms according to context.

Style shifting refers to a single speaker changing his or her style in response to context.
Differences in style carry over into the written language. A written form of a message will be more formal in style than in spoken equivalent.

I’m writing to inform you...

Just wanted to let you know...
Register

It refers to a variety of language defined according to its use in social situation e.g. a register of scientific, religious, formal English, etc.

Language activity that takes place in various contexts makes differences in the type of language selected as appropriate to different types of situation.
Register is associated with the setting and scene in which they are used than with the people who are using them.
Levels of formality

a. How about coming to the movie tonight?
b. Would you like to come to the movie tonight?
C. Might I escort you to the movie tonight?
D. I would deem it a privilege if you would accompany me to the cinema.
Diglossia

It refers to a situation where two very different varieties of a language co-occur throughout a speech community, each with a distinct range of social function. Both varieties are felt to be alternative by native speakers.

E.g. Arabic (high: classical; low: colloquial)
Linguistic Determinism

Language determines thought.

It is your language that makes you perceive how the world is through the categories and the number of words, the choices in words.
Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

The language of American Indians led them to view the world differently from those who spoke European languages.
Language Universals

All languages have certain common properties. Every human language:
- can be learnt by children,
- employs an arbitrary symbol system, and
- can be used to send and receive messages by its users.