

# ET216-15 Sociolinguistics

**24/25**

**Department**

Applied Linguistics

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Kieran File

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

50% coursework, 50% exam

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

Why do we speak differently in different situations? Can you identify the different features of a Geordie and a Liverpool accent? Do men and women really speak differently? And what underlies these differences? In ET216 we explore questions like these as we examine the relationship between language use and social context. This course builds on ET119 (Language in Society), but goes deeper to help you develop a greater understanding of the relationship between language use and its social context. It also provides you with an opportunity to conduct your own sociolinguistic research study. After taking this module, you will be armed with a set of theories, insights and skills to be able to address questions such as those above, and explore your own questions in relation to how language works in our world.

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

The module will:

1. Introduce you to key sociolinguistic theory and concepts for explaining how our language varies in social contexts.
2. Help you develop a greater awareness of the relationships between language and social context, and how these relationships are signalled through language.

3. Help you develop an understanding of the tools and methodological insights needed to explore language variation in our social world.
4. Consider issues related to language use and social context, with particular attention to language attitudes.

## **Outline syllabus**

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The syllabus will cover the following areas, though weighting will vary:

What is Sociolinguistics? Overview and core concepts; Variation, social factors and social dimensions and Variations of English; Language variation: Multilingual speech communities; Domains and Diglossia; Code-switching and language maintenance, shift and death; Social dialectology: gender and age-grading; Social dialectology: regional dialects and ethnicity; Style, accommodation theory and audience design; Genres and registers; Language attitudes: attitudes to accents and attitudes to language; Stereotypes and sociolinguistic universals.

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Students will: Develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for how language carries social meaning. Learn and critically evaluate theoretical concepts that help to explain the relationship between language use and society. Be able to comment on sociolinguistic practice by applying theoretical concepts to the linguistic practices of a range of social groups, communities, cultures and/or countries. Explore the social consequences of decisions about the use of language at macro (country-wide) and micro (in smaller social groups) levels. Debunk stereotypical views of language and society.

## **Indicative reading list**

- Ball, M. J. (Ed.). (2010). *Routledge handbook of sociolinguistics around the world*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bayley, R., Cameron, R., & Lucas, C. (Eds.). (2013). *The Oxford handbook of sociolinguistics*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Britain, D., & Cheshire, J. (Eds.). (2003). *Social dialectology: in honour of Peter Trudgill*. Amsterdam ; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub.
- Coupland, N., & Jaworski, A. (Eds.). (1997). *Sociolinguistics: a reader and coursebook*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Gumperz, J. J., & Hymes, D. H. (1972). *Directions in sociolinguistics: the ethnography of communication*. New York ; London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Hymes, D. H. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: an ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia, Pa.
- Labov, W. (1978). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Saville-Troike, M. (1989). *The ethnography of communication: an introduction* (2nd ed). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Schilling, N. (2013). *Sociolinguistic fieldwork*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trudgill, P. (1995). *Sociolinguistics: an introduction to language and society* (Rev ed). London: Penguin.

Wardhaugh, R. (2002). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (4th ed). Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

## **Research element**

This module foregrounds research and encourages students to critically evaluate and conduct sociolinguistic studies. By the end of the module students should be able to conceptualise a sociolinguistic study of their own, collect and analyse data in order to carry it out, and report on the findings.

## **Interdisciplinary**

Sociolinguistics is interdisciplinary in nature. Sociology and psychology are particular disciplines that inform the socio-side of sociolinguistics. This module will help students to develop and support broader arguments about society and how it works through close attention to language patterns.

## **International**

This module is committed to the wider world. We draw on material from a number of different national contexts and consider global trends in the use of language as a social tool. Students are also encouraged to share insights from their own countries and contexts when applying the concepts of the module.

## **Subject specific skills**

- Develop a deeper understanding of and appreciation for how language carries social meaning.
- Learn and critically evaluate theoretical concepts that help to explain the relationship between language use and society.
- Be able to comment on sociolinguistic practice by applying theoretical concepts to the linguistic practices of a range of social groups, communities, cultures and/or countries.
- Explore the social consequences of decisions about the use of language at macro (country-wide) and micro (in smaller social groups) levels.
- Debunk stereotypical views of language and society.

## **Transferable skills**

- Recognise social patterns that are signalled and embedded in linguistic practices.
- Analyse graphs and raw data findings through the application of theoretical concepts to be able to develop arguments.
- Identify and respond to a sociolinguistic issue or situation requiring further investigation.
- Develop project management and time-management skills as you design, carry out and write up a sociolinguistic research project.
- Develop and demonstrate your resilience and problem-solving abilities.
- Practice communicating complex ideas and presenting your work in clear and engaging ways.

- Participate in group tasks and discussions and develop your ability to communicate effectively in English in mixed cultural groups
  - Develop and demonstrate intellectual curiosity in the field of sociolinguistics.
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## Study

### Study time

| Type           | Required                    |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Lectures       | 9 sessions of 2 hours (12%) |
| Seminars       | 9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)   |
| Other activity | 4 hours (3%)                |
| Private study  | 119 hours (79%)             |
| Total          | 150 hours                   |

### Private study description

Reading subject materials;  
Homework tasks;  
Assignments;  
Revision.

### Other activity description

revision sessions

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group C6

|                           | Weighting | Study time |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 2000 word assignment      | 40%       |            |
| Presentation              | 10%       |            |
| Presentation in a seminar |           |            |

|  | <b>Weighting</b> | <b>Study time</b> |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Online Examination<br>~Platforms - AEP | 50%              |                   |

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- Online examination: No Answerbook required

## **Feedback on assessment**

Written feedback on the assignment will be provided on the Centre's standard feedback sheets, which conform to Faculty regulations. This will include both summary and detailed feedback. Where appropriate, additional feedback may be provided via personal meetings with the tutor.

[Past exam papers for ET216](#)

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## **Availability**

### **Courses**

This module is Core for:

- Year 2 of ULNA-R1Q3 Undergraduate French and Linguistics
- Year 2 of ULNA-R2Q3 Undergraduate German and Linguistics
- Year 2 of ULNA-R4Q1 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies and Linguistics
- Year 2 of ULNA-R3Q3 Undergraduate Italian and Linguistics
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1A9 Undergraduate Linguistics with Arabic (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1A7 Undergraduate Linguistics with Chinese (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1R1 Undergraduate Linguistics with French
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1A1 Undergraduate Linguistics with French (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1R2 Undergraduate Linguistics with German
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1A2 Undergraduate Linguistics with German (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1A8 Undergraduate Linguistics with Japanese (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1A6 Undergraduate Linguistics with Russian (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 2 of UETA-Q1A4 Undergraduate Linguistics with Spanish (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 2 of ULNA-R9Q1 Undergraduate Modern Languages and Linguistics
- Year 2 of UETA-Q310 in English Language and Linguistics
- Year 2 of UETA-Q311 in English Language and Linguistics (with Intercalated year)

This module is Optional for:

- Year 4 of ULNA-R1Q3 Undergraduate French and Linguistics
- Year 2 of UETA-X3Q5 Undergraduate Language, Culture and Communication
- Year 2 of UETA-X3Q8 Undergraduate Language, Culture and Communication (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of ULNA-R1Q4 Undergraduate French and Linguistics (3 year)