

Sociolect

In sociolinguistics, a sociolect or social dialect is a variety of language associated with a social group such as a socioeconomic class, an ethnic group, or an age group, etc.

Sociolects involve both passive acquisition of particular communicative practices through association with a local community as well as active learning and choice among speech or writing forms to demonstrate identification with particular groups.

Individuals who study sociolects are called sociolinguists. Sociolinguists study language variation. Sociolinguists define a sociolect by examining the social distribution of specific linguistic terms. For example, a sociolinguist would examine the use of the second person pronoun 'you' for its use within the population. If one distinct social group used 'yous' as the plural form of the pronoun then this could indicate the existence of a sociolect. A sociolect is distinct from a dialect because social class rather than geographical subdivision determines its unique linguistic features.