

Linguistic Principles and Theories:

- Language influences the way we speak.
- Language can contribute to our identity.
- Personal and social factors influence our language use.
- Students will continue to learn the **six language levels: Language Level 1 – Lexis and Semantics; Language Level 2 – Lexis and Semantics; Language Level 3 – Phonetics, Phonology and Prosodics; Language Level 4 – Graphology; Language Level 5 – Pragmatics; Language Level 6 – Discourse**
- Language can be investigated in a huge range of contexts and modes. Most texts will be categorised under **written** or **spoken** modes to an extent; however, numerous texts are **multi-modal**, i.e. they possess features of both writing and speech.
- **Identity** can be something that is created by individual characteristics, thus creating a personal identity. It can also be linked to a particular social group where members of the group share common characteristics. A range of factors helps us to create identity and the consensus is that we begin to think about identity in our teenage years.
- The sociolinguist Joanna Thornborrow (2004) stated ‘One of the most fundamental ways we have of establishing our identity, and of shaping other people’s view of who we are, is through our use of language’. This use may include: specific lexical choices to help form this identity, grammatical constructions in speech and variations in phonology (or a combination of the three)
- **Standard English** is the dialect of English that is considered to have the most prestige and is used in the education system and in formal written texts
- **Slang** refers to words and phrases which are considered informal
- **Dialect** can be lexical features or variations in grammar. In the Yorkshire dialect, for example, lexical examples include ‘snicket’ (an alleyway), ‘spice’ (sweets), ‘laiking/leeking out’ (playing outside) and ‘beefing’ (crying). Grammatical variations in this dialect include ellipsis of the definite article (‘Let’s go to shops’) and the use of ‘were’ in place of ‘was’ (I were late).
- Our dialect is so ingrained in the way we speak that we rarely consider its origins. A significant aspect of our dialect is also the lexis we use depending on where in the country we live or where we were brought up.
- Dialect is not just about the words a person uses: it is also about how both syntax and morphology can vary.
- Only approximately two percent of the British population speak with Received Pronunciation (RP); the vast majority of the population speak with a regional accent.
- Language varies between different age groups.
- **Gender representation** refers to how images of men and women are constructed and portrayed in, for example, books, advertisements, scripts and media. It is about the image an audience is given of men and women. This image may reinforce stereotypes and our perceived idea of male and female roles. Conversely, the representation may challenge our stereotypical attitudes.
- There are numerous theories about how men and women use speech differently:
 - **Jennifer Coates (1989)** – Coates argues that girls and boys tend to belong to same-sex friendship groups when growing up and subsequently develop different styles of speaking. Coates theorises that female language is cooperative in single-sex conversations. She views tag questions and modality as characteristics that help make women’s talk supportive and cooperative.
 - **Jane Pilkington (1992)** – Pilkington found that women in same sex conversations were collaborative and used positive politeness strategies. She found that men in same sex talk were a lot less collaborative, less complimentary and less supportive than women.

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- **Language and occupation** – Research clearly shows that almost every occupation has its own special lexicon – a vocabulary that is specific to its occupation.
- **Occupational register** is the words and phrases that are used solely in a particular job, or on occasions, have originated in a particular occupation before becoming more widely used.
- **Language and sexuality** is a relatively new area of linguistic study, for example the use of non-gender specific pronouns.
- **Technology influenced words and phrases** – There is evidence that certain social groups use words and phrases in their speech which are normally associated with written technology forms such as tweets, texts and other forms of instant messages. A common example is ‘imho’: in my honest/humble opinion.
- **Neologisms** – New words are constantly entering the English language. In 2013 and 2014, new additions to the *Oxford English Dictionary* included: ‘bestie’, ‘selfie’, ‘me time’, ‘twerking’, ‘unlike’, ‘emoji’ and ‘geek chic’.
- **Occupational registers** – Sometimes stemming from personal interests, an occupational register or jargon is largely based on shared understanding between certain groups or individuals. An example could be the jargon used by ‘gamers’. The website The Circular lists a large range of jargon and claims ‘game players have developed a unique language of their own’.
- **Received pronunciation** is the accent used in the teaching of English as a foreign language and is used in dictionaries which give pronunciations. This has led to it being viewed as the ‘correct’ and most esteemed accent; it is often associated with prestige and formality: for example, the Queen’s speech and salutary speech in the Houses of Parliament.
- **Regional accent** – RP is not associated with a particular area of the country. In contrast, one of the key aspects of language diversity is regional accent. This is the way you pronounce certain words depending on where you live.
- **Language Level 1: Lexis and Semantics** – Lexis is the term that we use in language studies and linguistics to refer to vocabulary. One of the most obvious ways we can do this is by grouping words together on the basis of the particular roles and functions they play both in written and spoken modes of language. These groups are known as **word classes**. **Semantics** is the study of **meaning** in language.
- **Language Level 2: Grammar** – Grammar includes the study of two main elements: **morphology** (the study of word formation) and **syntax** (the study of how words form larger structures such as phrases, clauses and sentences). **Grammar** therefore, is the whole system and structure of the language.
- **Language Level 3: Phonetics, Phonology and Prosodics** – **Phonetics** and **phonology** both refer to areas of language study that focus on sound. **Phonology** is the area of study that refers to the abstract sound system. **Phonetics** is concerned with investigating how sounds are actually produced by language users. **Prosodics** is the study of how speakers can shape meanings through emphasising certain aspects of intonation, speed and volume.
- **Language Level 4: Graphology** – Many texts rely on the use of layout, space, images, colour and different font types to help convey their meaning. Often these can be used in very obvious ways to help support meaning; at other times, their use may be more subtle. In all cases, graphological features tend to combine with other language levels to help support interpretation.
- **Language Level 5: Pragmatics** – **Pragmatics** is the area of language study associated with how contextual factors influence meaning.
- **Language Level 6: Discourse** – **Discourse** is the level of language concerned with larger stretches of text including spoken, written and multi-modal.

- **Dialect** – variation in words and structures associated with a particular geographical region
- **Accent** – variation in pronunciation associated with a particular geographical region
- **Idiomatic phrases** – a phrases that has an accepted and known meaning that is different from the dictionary definition of each individual word – for example: he's *part of the furniture* now; I wish you wouldn't *stick your oar in*; I'd do that *at the drop of a hat*; you've *hit the nail on the head*.
- **Social mobility** – a phrase that is used to describe a person's move from one social class or level to another – this may occur through changing jobs, getting married or through a change in a person's economic or financial situation
- **Code-switching** – occurs when a bilingual speaker will use and alternate between different languages while talking
- **Multiple negation** – when a sentence or utterance contains more than one negative
- **Plural marking** – the method of making a singular noun into its plural form
- **Unmarked plurality** – when a singular form of a noun is used rather than the plural
- **Dialect levelling** – the process by which language forms of different parts of the country converge and become more similar over time, with the loss of regional features and reduced diversity of language
- **Convergence** – when we use language to resemble that used by those around us
- **Divergence** – when we use language to distance ourselves from others