In order to understand the relationship between language and society further, we are going to be looking at language variations in little bit details today. We are going to look at attempts that have been made to study variation that exists within languages.

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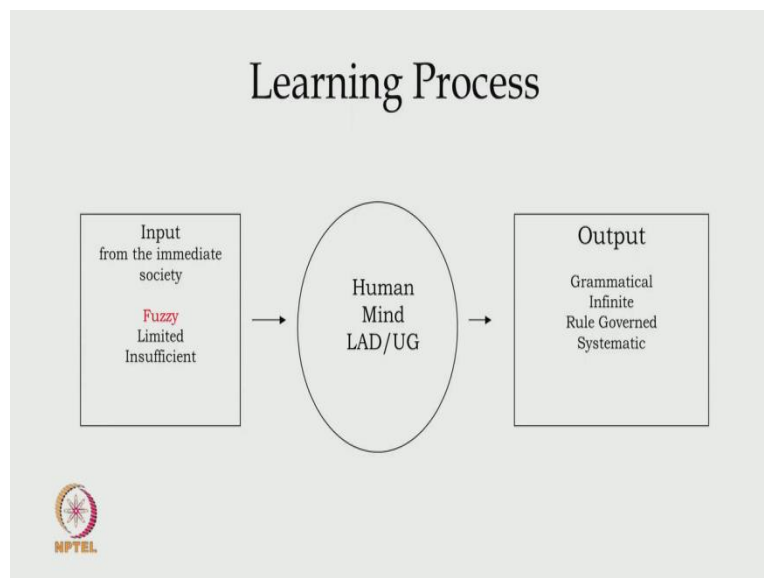
See, you will try to situate once again the idea of variation, the phenomena of variation in the understanding of language acquisition again. We know we are familiar with this diagram. We know this represents learning process where we have input and output and every kind of computation, every kind of processing takes place in human mind which is based on the idea, that on a fuzzy, limited and insufficient input we get grammatical, infinite, rule governed and systematic output.

That is possible only because of the processing that undergoes in human mind that and for which human mind is responsible. So, we are going to be looking at how this helps us understand language variation.

But follows from the process of language learning is, children do not learn Hindi, Tamil, Bangla or 'a language'. This requires careful attention. What we are saying is when children begin to acquire language at a very earlier stage and all these early stages are until the age of four. We have seen the stages involved in the language learning and the stages that have been described by Jackendoff as cooing, babbling, one word stage, two word stage and then grammar stage.

So, in all of the those stages by the age of 4 to 5 what children learn is not the language that is Hindi, Tamil, Bangla or 'a language' what they really learn is, what is spoken around them. It so happens that one of these things may be spoken around or may be more than one of these languages are spoken around them. You can replace these names with any name of the language that you want I have just used them as for the purpose of example.

So, let us establish this once again that the children do not learn 'a language' that is children do not learn either Hindi or English or Bangla or Malayalam or any language for that matter. What they learn is what is being spoken around them and when children grow up we give it. By it we mean what children speak the name and that can be one of them.

What do we learn…

- Children do not learn Hindi, Tamil, Bangla, or 'a language'.
- They learn what is spoken around them.
- The input to the system is never 'pure' and from 'a language'.
- Output is equal; and therefore multilingual.

What follows further from here is the input to the system of learning language is never pure and the input is never from 'a language'. The input is also equally quote and quote impure next and first. So from fuzzy input the output is guaranteed to be fuzzy. Therefore, the output is multilingual, multilinguality and multilingualism.

So multilinguality follows from the process of learning and it is an imbedded consequence of the process of learning. This is one point that we wanted to establish now. As you have seen the micro level distinction micro level definition of multilinguality includes the capacity of children or an individual to negotiate between varieties of the language as well.

Therefore, we are going to be applying the idea of multilingualism here at the notion of different varieties of language. And we are saying they all are connected. Once again let us look at the terms

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Language, Dialect and Variety

- Any thing that people speak is language.
- In apolitical terms, everybody speaks language.
- No one speaks a dialect.
- Also every body speaks a dialect.
- Fluidity makes language look broken into fragments.
- Each of these fragments are varieties.

Language, dialect and variety, for our clearer understanding, we want to say language is something that people speak. In political terms, everybody speaks language and only language. In other words, what we want to say is nobody speaks a dialect or whatever people speak is language. We can also replace the term language with a dialect. And we can say everybody speaks a dialect. And when we say everybody speaks a dialect it is easier for us to understand the notion of variety because we know that language varies from one place to the other and much faster than the next 10 kilometres. So the variation begins in the range of 10 kilometres.

There are noticeable and identifiable linguistic variables surfacing in different varieties of language. These varieties could be politically considered dialects of language. So in that sense, language is really a super structure like a phoneme, like the idea of a phoneme which nobody speaks; what we all speak are different variations different varied forms of language which we know as variety. And that is better possible for us to understand if we realise the notion of language, dialect and variety.

We can interchangeably use these three terms meaning the same thing. They definitely refer to the same thing. However, when we bring in political issues and political questions then which one is the dialect and which one could be considered a language becomes very difficult phenomena to describe and it becomes some messy phenomena. We will leave that part apart. However, that is an important part for us to understand in the duration of our understanding of language and society. We will get back to that as well. But, so, let us move on further. We want to use the term language, dialect and variety with an understanding of these terms interchangeably. And it is the fluidity which happens to be the fundamental nature of language that makes varieties possible. And fluidity also breaks language into fragments and each of these fragments could be a variety.

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Variation Studies

- John L Fischer (1958)
  - Variation of *ing/in* among children in New England village 12 boys, 12 girls aged 3-10.

    - Examples: com*ing* vs com*in*

  - He found that this is not a free variation, rather this could be explained.

So given this background understanding which is kind of a summary of what we have done before, we want to look at how in a systematic way, to great scholar of their time have studied variation, we are going to be discussing two classical studies on variation. And see what they meant and what their output was and what the implications of these variations a Verb and how they were rooted in how we use language and society. It definitely helps making our perspective much broader in terms of our understanding of language and its very complex interaction with the society.

The first one comes in 1958 by John Fischer . John Fischer was studying two different variables: One was the continuous aspect marker ing. ing and the other is the Truncated form of this ing.

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He studied these two variables among the children of the age groups between 3 to 10 years. And he had a sample of 12 boys and 12 girls and he did this study in New England village.

So his examples were coming versus comin these examples are easily found and people use them. Lot of people would use them interchangeably. But Fischer wanted to study any implications underlying these two variables. And what he found that this is not a free variation. It is not that people use one over the other just like that. And he also suggested that this carries source, a load. And this can be explained and here is what it looks like so it is the same variable.

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Fischer's 1958 study of the use of (ng) in New England.
(ng) singing vs. singin'

(ng)

[ŋ]   [n]
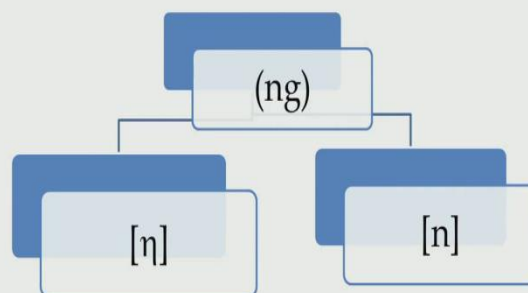
- Girls used *ing* more than boys did.
- Higher the socio-economic status of the speaker or speaker's family the higher the use of *ing*.
- The use of [in] increases with the formality of situations. The use of [in] increased when relaxed.
- [in] is used more with verbs that describe everyday activities

  Examples: Criticizing (Formal), Chewing (Informal)

In sometimes t is pronounced as n peeler nasal and the other kind it is just probably dental or Alveolar region. What he finds and then we will straight away go to the conclusions that you derive on the basis of his examples are first thing is very surprising that girls will use more ing form and the boys would use more in form which was very surprising. And he did not associate this finding, in his original finding, with the gender studies or any implications for the gender. It was just an observation. However, this may have implications for gender studies as well.

And he categorised his findings as higher, the socio-economic status of the Speaker or the Speaker's family, the higher the use of ing. That is to say, he is, he found that the ing is differences between the two, these two variables and the data that comes out of the study of the uses, of these two variables is really indicative of socio-economic status in the society. So people from higher socio-economic status would use ing.

However, the people from low socio-economic status would use merely in form and the use of in forms increases, when that was with the formality of the situations the use of in. However, increases when it is relaxed that is use of ing is suggestive of formal whereas use of just in is going to be informal uses. He found more use of in with the verbs that describe everyday activities. And something which will describe formal activities required ing form.

So he found more respondents using ing with a verb like criticize whereas when it comes swimming or chiming more common option was in. These were the interesting generalisations that we see following from Fischer study. It was, it preceded 'Labov's study of r. And it also started variations in study.

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Labov: Study of r.

- Labov investigated final and post-vocalic /r/
- While most American accents are rhotic, New York (and Boston) have distinctive non-rhotic accent
- Post-Depression, such urban accents lost prestige, and rhotic midwest accent emerged as standard
- Labov showed that rhotic use of /r/ reflected social class and aspiration, and was more widespread in younger speakers

So see he had picked up, that is, Fischer picked up, morphological variable and found social load on it and the situational load on it, stylistic load on it. And has plenty of generalisations to show it carries socio-economic load on it as well. So why someone chooses one variable over the other has lot to say about how languages vary within and either that variation could be noted in terms of geography. How, far apart, speaker are from each other are also within the same geography with different variables.

The second study which is very elaborate and very powerful and came to be was 1966 Study of Labov ,where he studied sound r and represented social ratification of the sound and found very interesting stuff

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-associated with this. I invite you to take a look at the details of this study but we will present some parts of it for a clearer understanding. So what Labov picked up was sound r and also in a very specific environment like it could be either a final sound and or final and post- vocalic r.

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So and that was because most American accents are rhotic whereas New York and Boston have distinctive non-rhotic accent. So, he picked up, probably, this was one of the reasons he picked up, New York for this study. And that was also because just to situate this in the context in the post depression such urban accents lost prestige and rhotic Midwestern accent emerged as standard one. That is, the r full of accent would be considered to prestigious Americans standard accent when r was missing.

That would not be associated as the prestige form Labov showed in his study that the rhotic use of r reflected social classes and aspiration and was more widespread in younger speakers; that is, what he finds as a broader generalisation of his study in 1966. So, we would like to see that in little bit more detail. So, what he did for this purpose, he picked up, as you know the sound r and he wanted to see the pronunciation of this in both spontaneous and careful speech so what he finds is the post-vocalic and the final r sound.

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Method of the Study

- He needed quick /r/ pronunciations in both spontaneous and careful speech
  - Walked around 3 NYC department stores, asking the location of departments he knew were on the *fourth floor*
  - By pretending not to hear, he got each informant to pronounce the two words twice, once spontaneously, and once carefully
- 3 stores catering for distinct social groups:
  - Saks (upper), Macy's (middle), S. Klein (lower)
- Informants were shop workers at different grades, giving a further possible stratification

So, for this, he is first, he wants it in the pronunciation in a spontaneous and careful speech at both. So he walked around three famous New York city departmental stores asking the location of the department. He knew were on the 4th floor. So he picked up that, his variable was located in the place 4th floor. So look at the sound r sound in floor. It is final and post-vocalic and in the 4th, it is just post-vocalic. So he goes to these, to three departmental stores which are Saks, Macys and Klein. Saks represents upper class, Macys represents middle class and Klein would represent lower class stores.

The word of caution is important here. What we mean by upper, middle and lower class is you see more of the visitors in these stores from lower economic status inclined and the workers as well. And you see you see more upper class, that is, higher socio-economic group people visiting Saks stores and there are descriptions associated with these stores like Saks are more organised, more spacious, well dressed attendance and the health available around whereas Macys falls in the middle.

Informants were the workers of at different grades giving further possible stratification. So the methodology was very simple. He would go to the store and he already knows what is located on the 4th floor. So knowing that very well, he will ask the question, let us take for example, an umbrella. If umbrella was located on the 4th floor of the store, he will ask the people working in the store, where can I find an umbrella? the expected natural answer was, on the 4th floor.

So he would want to tap that in a non-casual in a very casual and non-careful speech. At the same time, he will put some introductions and ask, "Where did you say I can find umbrellas?" and then the person very carefully would say, 4th floor. So, that was his methodology and that is how he got the data. A word of caution, New York is a very compact

city. These stores are multi storeyed stores; same stores at different parts of many Americans cities could be located at the ground floor.

So this study was probably not possible in other city or other smaller cities like Amana Champagne, Austin or St Louis or any other smaller city. For that matter, New York definitely was the place, where he could find Saks or Macys or Kleins moving all the way up to 4th floors.
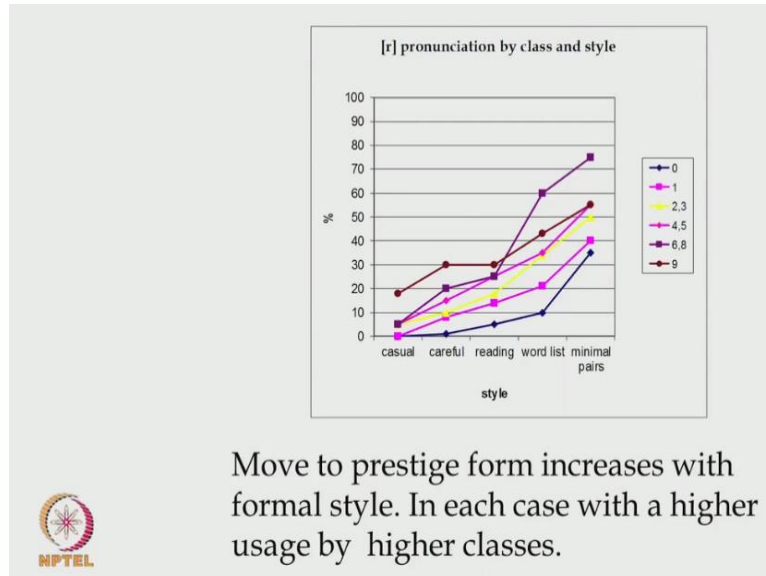
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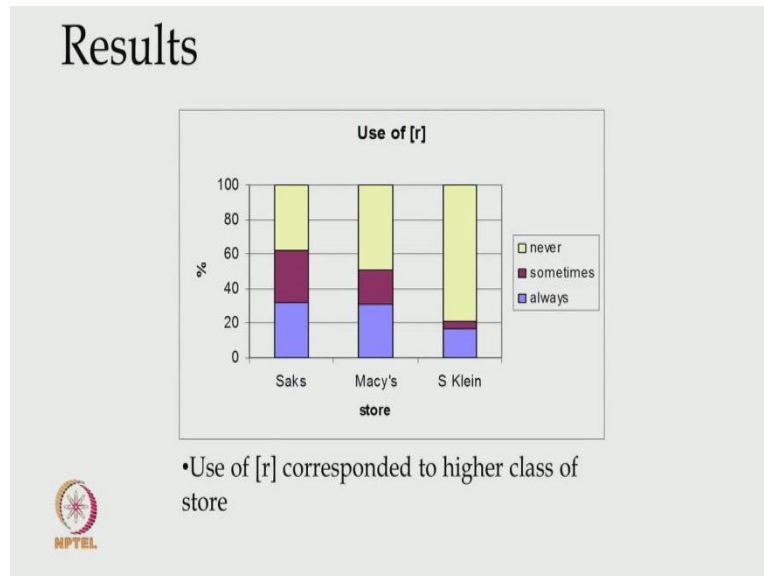
So what you find as his result is, we can look at his result as use of r. As we can see that they are suggested earlier, corresponds to higher class store. So, from the people working in those stores, you can see the most of the time people speak r less accents inclined and very few times, they would use the r full of language. However, when you see Saks, we see completely opposite results.

Only sometimes, people would see, we could use r less speech and its full r and also a combination of the two are available there. And as expected, Macy falls in the middle. So, it was very simple for him to associate the social stratification around this variable r. So, because workers used most of the time r less language, inclined, he associated that with low socio-economy and prestige status. Then, what we see is the sound r increases in a careful speech.So, in a casual speech, we have seen the results that are pretty striking. In a careful speech what we see is that the results are different in a careful speech.

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[r] pronunciation by class and style

Move to prestige form increases with formal style. In each case with a higher usage by higher classes.

The graph tells you that the use of r increases and that is more prevalent in younger, among the younger groups and people from lower socio economic status.

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Results

First and Second utterances

• Use of [r] increases in careful speech
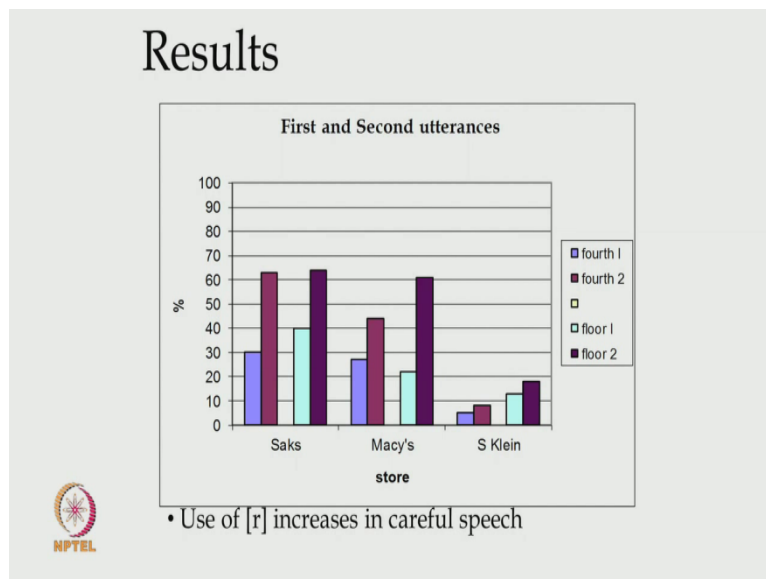
So, this was very interesting to conclude that, the move to a Prestige form increases with the formal style and in each case with a higher use by higher classes. So there already exists in higher frequency in among the people of higher socio economic status. However there was Aspiration among younger generation of lower or middle income group people to move for an upward move. And that was evident through the increase in the frequency of the use of r.

Now to conclude what we see is these variables carry huge social loads. Like I mentioned we wanted to talk about these two studies because they are paradigm studies in the study of

language. And in particular, study of variables and varieties of language. So, come back to the notion of variety. We can say the city of New York was at least using two different varieties of English: One was r full variety the other is r less variety. What we have seen in Fischer's studies is: there are boys and girls who will be using the language which has got more ing and less in.

At the same time, there is a group which uses more in than ing. These things, these, first of all, these simpler phonological or morphological variables indicate differences that exist between different varieties of language. And in a way in a very micro sense, they are much apparent; they carry lot of load on them.

And therefore, they may they appear like two different languages two different varieties would sound like two different languages. Whether they sound like two different languages or not, they definitely carry a big time social load on each one of these variables. So, with the help of these studies, what we find is the variation within languages or within language is not superficial.

They are really meaningful; they are socially meaningful in a great sense. And it is possible to identify variables which carry social loads on them. And when we teach and this is also an important point to underline here that we find these social loads on such variables only, when we understand in depth, the study of the structure of language, at the level of sounds, words and sentences.

And we need to see also the implications of these studies for understanding, how language carries, how language works in society and how it is very complex phenomena given the interactions between? How it creates very complex phenomena given the interactions between language and society? Thank you.