



# **Voice Quality, Accent, Dialect, Pidgin and Creole**

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## Voice Quality

It is an idiosyncratic feature and it is excluded from language. It is a relatively permanent feature of our speech and it is different from the rest of our utterance. It only alters with age or physical change. It represents a personal quality so it is not a language. Whenever we speak, we make known our identity to the outside world. There are features of every one's voice which allow others to recognize individuals without seeing them. Normally, people can do nothing about their voice quality, nor do they usually want to change it – unless they have some professional interest in mimicry or acting.

*Note: Mimics refers to people who deliberately imitate another's voice quality.*

## Accent and Dialect

Accent is not excluded from language. It is a more general phenomenon, which refers to the totality of sonic features a person has including his voice quality. It is usually restricted to the non-idiosyncratic features of pronunciation, i.e., to those sounds which would also be used by a number of other people and which inform us that someone comes from a particular region or social group. Thus, voice quality tells us who people are, accent where they are from.

- **Note (1):** Idiosyncratic features of vocal communication are not to be considered as language, since language is essentially a controlled behaviour shared by all the people in a given speech community. Language goes beyond the range of idiosyncrasy. Unless we all share basically the same set of vocal conventions, we should not be able to communicate with

each other. Society does not permit too many idiosyncrasies, too much originally in language.

- **Note (2):** 'Accent' refers to a variety of language differing from the standard, particularly in pronunciation, for instance, in the speech of foreigners. The term 'dialect', on the other hand, refers to a variety of a language, differing in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary from the standard language, which is in itself a socially favoured dialect.

There are Three Types of Dialects:

- 1. Regional Dialects:** (Local or geographical) are spoken by the people of a particular geographical area within a speech community, e.g., Cockney in London.
- 2. Social Dialects:** (class dialects) are spoken by the members of a particular group or stratum of a speech community, e.g., the dialect of the Nobles in old English or the dialects of other social class, i.e., of the working class.
- 3. Temporal dialects:** historical dialects of states of language represent a variety of a language used at a particular stage in its historical development, e.g., mid 19th C. British English. Dialect Regional Social Temporal.

*Note: One dialect may dominate as the official or standard form of the language and this is the variety which may come to be written down.*

## **What is the Difference Between Dialect and Language?**

Dialects are sub-divisions of languages. It is usually said that people speak different languages when they do not understand each other. But, many of the so-called dialects of Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, Pekingese) are mutually unintelligible in their spoken forms. However, they share the same written

language, which is the main reason why one talks of them as dialects of Chinese. And the opposite situation occurs: Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes are generally able to understand each other, but their separate histories, cultures, literature and political structure make them being referred to as different languages.

### **The Difference Between Pidgin and Creole**

Creole is a dialect of French, Spanish or English spoken by persons of mixed European and African descent in North and South America and West Indies. All known languages are of equal complexity, as far as their grammatical structure is concerned. The only exception of such generalization is in respect of Pidgin language. It is a native language of no one. It is formed by two speech communities attempting to communicate each approximating to the more obvious and common features of others' language. Pidgin languages are specialized ones, used for trade or similar purposes by those who have no other common language. They have simplified grammar and a highly restricted vocabulary by comparison with the language or languages upon which they are based. But they are used for very restricted purposes. Moreover, when what originated as a 'pidgin' comes to be used as the mother tongue of a speech community, it not only extends its vocabulary, but also develops its own grammatical complexity, i.e., pidgins become creolized when they become the mother tongues of communities.