Chapter-1

Introduction
CHAPTER - 1

Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Considerations of Language Variation

1.1.1 Variation in Language

Variation in language is a natural phenomenon. Languages vary according to the social characteristics of speakers. They also vary according to situations. No living language can remain static. It must vary according to the given social circumstances.

Language variation has been the focus of attention of linguists, sociolinguists and other language scientists. Language variation, in sociolinguistics, refers to the variation in linguistic item in accordance with social variation. The factors such as religion, age, sex, occupation, education and economic levels are responsible for variation in language and the resultant linguistic items are called linguistic or sociolinguistic variables. Since language variation takes place because of social variation, the linguistic and social variables are correlated.

The phenomenon of language variation has always attracted the attention of sociolinguists. It has also been the subject of discussion among various sociologists and language scientists. These scholars have dealt with the problems of variation in different ways. This has given rise to various theories about the phenomenon of language variation.
1.1.2 Theories of Language Variation

1.1.2.1 Ronald Wardhaugh

Wardhaugh (1986:5) asserts that “when we look closely at any language, we will discover time and time again that there is considerable internal variation, and that speakers make constant use of many different possibilities offered to them”. Since each language exists in a number of different varieties, the speakers make use of different varieties according to situations, and no individual speaker speaks in the same way all the time. Wardhaugh is of the view that speakers make changes and modifications and employ alternative expressions in their speech for a wide range of purposes in their everyday life. Wardhaugh argues that many linguists would attempted to view language as a homogeneous entity and in that case each speaker of that language would control a single style, but as a matter of fact languages undergo internal variation to a considerable extent and it would be impossible to find single-style speakers (Wardhaugh 1986:5).

Thus it can be said that languages vary in many kinds of ways and the investigations show that speakers are aware of this fact. Variation seems to be an inherent property of the language.

1.1.2.2 William Labov

Labov (1972:188) observes that “it is common for a language to have many alternate ways of saying “the same” thing. Some words like car and automobile, seem to have the same referents; others have two pronunciations, like working and workin.
There are syntactic options such as *Who is he talking to*? vs. *To whom is he talking*? or *It's easy for him to talk* vs. *For him to talk is easy*.

In light of the above statement it can be said that the speakers of any particular speech community show certain variations, modifications and alternations in the use of their language at various levels of linguistics such as phonological, lexical and syntactic levels. Labov (1972:181) also observed that it is the social structure of a speech community which is important for the change in the linguistic behaviour of that community. It has also been seen that it is impossible for any one to notice the developments of linguistic change unless and until he will be fully aware about the social structure of that community in which change occurs. Labov (1972:181) says that “internal, structure pressures and the sociolinguistic pressures act in systematic alternation in the mechanism of linguistic change”.

Moreover, it has been observed by Labov (1972:1) that the mechanism of linguistic change can be analysed into three separate problems: the origin of linguistic variation, the spread and propagation of linguistic change and the regularity of linguistic change. In this model of three way division, variation in one word or several words in the speech of one or two individuals is required as a starting point. These variations may be produced by the process of assimilation or differentiation by analogy, borrowing and fusion. Such variations mostly occur only once and are extinguished as quickly as they arise.
1.1.2.3 Andre Martinent

Among the linguists who studied language in relation to its social context, Andre Martinent is one who took this subject seriously and dealt with the phenomenon of variation very interestingly. Martinent in “Economic des changements phonothetiques” diverged the linguist’s attention from such remote and occassional factors and showed that the change that we notice in every act of communication is influenced by the constant pressure, produced by internal relations of linguistic system. In a report to the Ninth International Congress of Linguists held in 1962, Martinent declared:

“It is clear, of course that any language......is exposed to change, determined by impacts from outside, no one will doubt that man’s changing needs in general will affect his communicative needs which in turn will conditioned linguistic structure. The impacts from outside may consist in the pressures exerted on each other by two languages ‘in contact’. The linguist will feel competent to deal with the later, but he may be accused if, in his capacity as a linguist, he declines the investigation to investigate sociological conditioning” (quoted in Labov 1966:12).

From the above statement it can be concluded that when languages change under the influence of some external factors, the fact can not be denied that they change according to the choice of users also. This means that most of the speakers make deliberate changes in the use of their language according to the situation and purpose.
1.1.2.4 Edward Sapir

According to Sapir, languages also undergo variation depending on the identity of the person spoken to or the person spoken about. As a matter of fact these variations have been found to be of a very little interest to the scholars and researchers of linguistics. On account of which these types of variations have received a very little attention from different social and language scientists. The classical instances of this type of variation are found in Nootka, where the speakers make the use of separate linguistic forms in speaking to or about the children e.g. fat people, dwarf people, hunchbacks etc. (Sapir cited in Bright 1976:32). Further, it has been observed by Sapir that there is a close and simultaneous relationship between linguistic variation and identity of the person, who speaks and to whom one speaks. Thus in yana both men and women used the ‘female speech’ in speaking to women and ‘male speech’ is used only by men in speaking to men.

1.1.2.5 Peter Trudgill

Peter Trudgill emphasized the relationship between language and society. He came out with the view that the linguistic variation to which he called as ‘fuzziness’ is the result of social variation. He suggested that society and language are correlated. He (Trudgill 1974:1-35) holds the view that the social structure is reflected in linguistic behaviour of a particular speech community. Social variation can produce a corresponding linguistic variation. Trudgill claimed that in addition to the social structure and social environment, the values of society can also have a profound effect
on its language. All this happens through a process known as taboo (Trudgill 1974:29-30).

Trudgill (1974:32) maintains: "one of the main factor that has led to the growth of sociolinguistic research has been the recognition of the importance of the fact that language is a very variable phenomenon, and that this variability may have as much to do with the society as with language". Moreover, he opines that the internal differentiation of the human societies is reflected in their language and the different social groups of a particular speech community do not use the same pattern of language. But they vary considerably at various levels of linguistics (Trudgill 1974:1-35).

1.1.2.6 Fischer and Ferguson

One more important type of variation which is most commonly found in the American speech community is correlated with the difference between formal and informal situations. The theory of variation proposed by J.L. Fischer (1958) is with regard to this. His theory is about the study of (η) variable, i.e. the pronunciation like singing [ŋ] verses singin [n]. Most Americans can confirm pronunciations like huntin which are found more commonly in informal situations, while the pronunciations like hunting are found in most formal situations (Fischer 1958:50). Here the terms "formality " and "informality" have been defined in terms of a particular society or a particular speech community. The styles of speech used in formal verses informal situations are highly standardized and strictly differentiated. Ferguson (1959) has used the term 'diaglossia' for this type of linguistic variation and has described it in Arabic,
Swiss German, Haitian, French and Modern Greek languages. This type of variation may also be considered as the sociolinguistic variation.

1.1.2.7 Bailey and Bickerton

Bailey (1973: 34-5), another well known linguist of the second half of the twentieth century, vehemently criticized the different theories of linguistic variation proposed by various scholars from time to time. Bickerton (1971) supported the view held by Bailey. Both of them opine that language variation results from changes in progress. Moreover, they stated that it is the environment in which the variation occurs plays a very prominent role in the variation.

The dynamic model suggested by Bailey & Bickerton emphasized the individual speech behaviour to which they called the ‘idolect’ where as others were greatly concerned with group behaviour to which they called as ‘sociolect’. They were of the opinion that one individual controls one idolect of the language and the other controls another. These lects vary considerably from one another (Wardhaugh 1986:183).

1.1.2.8 A.D. Grimshaw

According to Grimshaw (1972:113), the variation in language appears to be of much interest to language researchers in three different possible ways. The first involves the description of variation in register (style), code and dialect or the differentiation of the languages themselves and the relation of that differentiation to the geographical location and the social attributes of the speaker. The social attributes
include socioeconomic status, caste, age, sex, religion, education, occupation and social class, etc. The second interest is in terms of command of the speaker over the variants and the third interest is associated with the functions of language and the development of communicative competence (Grimshaw 1972:113).

1.2 Historical Perspectives of Language Variation

The history of varying property of language is of course as old as the language itself. This property of language has always been a subject of discussion among a large number of researchers and language scientists from time to time. The early well documented records of this study dates back to the first half of the twentieth century. These records are associated with Edward Sapir (1915) and K. Jaberg (1936). But the empirical work in this field was for the first time carried out by Labov in the second half of the twentieth century.

According to Peter Trudgill (1983:2-3), the first and foremost study relating to the fields of language and society, which serves the linguistic purpose, was the empirical study of sound change. This study of sound change was carried out by William Labov in 1961 on a very small island called as Maratha’s Vineyard. This study of Labov is generally regarded as starting point in the study of a language in relation to its social context. In his study of Maratha’s Vineyard, Labov (1972: chapters 1 and 7) logically described the existence of systematic differences between the speakers in their use of certain linguistic variables.
Trudgill (1983: 2) says that “much work of this type falls within the framework established first and foremost by William Labov and consists of work which Labov himself has sometimes referred to as secular linguistics”.

The name of William Labov is generally associated with such issues as the relationship between language and social class. However Labov does not make his objective to learn more about any particular society, nor to examine the correlation between linguistic and social phenomena for its own sake (Trudgill 1983: 2). Rather, he is concerned to learn more about the language and to investigate the topics such as the mechanism of linguistic change and the nature of linguistic variability. In the recent years this study has lead to the development of the variation theory, i.e. the recognition of ‘fuzziness’ in the linguistic systems and the problem of incorporating variability into the linguistic description (Trudgill, 1983:3).

As a matter of fact, it is the dialectology, which has been main source of evidence for the social history of speech variation. But there are considerable numbers of studies, showing the relationship between speech and social groups. In their investigations in the Italian dialects Jaberg and Jacob Jude (Gumperz 1971: 79) have noticed considerable variations among the speakers of different social groups.

1.3 Some Language Variation Studies and their Findings

1.3.1 William Labov

Empirical work of Labov in the area of language variation begins from the grass root level. His study of sound change in 1961 on Maratha’s Vineyard is
generally considered to be the starting point for studying the language with reference to its social context. In his study of Maratha's Vineyard Labov logically described the existence of systematic differences between the speakers in their use of certain linguistic variables (Labov 1972: chapters 1 and 7).

Maratha's Vineyard is a small island with a very little population being as much as 6000 people. But during each summer the population increases due to the fact that thousands of people come to stay over there, for varying periods of time. The eastern part of the island, which is called as Down island part is mostly occupied by the permanent residents. But some summer visitors are also settled there. The western part of island called as up island part which is occupied by the rural people has its centre Chillmark. The permanent population consists of: Yankers, Portugues and native people. The Yankers are the offsprings of the early settlers. In comparison with Yankers the Portugues are fairly recent new comers, but have been on the island for several generations. The native people on remote handland, GayHead are descended from original occupation of the island (Labov 1972: chapters 4-7).

Labov (1972:12-13), focussed his attention on the fact as to how the natives of Maratha's Vineyard pronounced the vowels in two sets of words: out, house and trout and while, pie and night. It has been observed that there occurred centralization of first part of the diphthongs as [au] to [eu] and [ai] to [ei] and that the centering was more noticeable in the first set of the words than in the second set. The variable in the first set of words has been called as (aw) variable ([au]) or [3U] and that in the second set as (ay) variable ([ai] or [3i]). Labov then plotted his findings from his 69 natives of
Maratha's Vineyard on various graphs, to examine the relationship between the degree of centralization and the social factors such as age, ethnicity, occupation and place of residence.

By age level, Labov (1972:22) found the distribution of centralized variants as follows:

**TABLE 1.1: Degree of centralization of (ay) and (aw) by age level on Maratha's Vineyard.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>(ay)</th>
<th>(aw)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-75</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Labov (1972b: 22)*

From this table it is found that the centralization is most obvious in the age group of 31-45. There was also a little change more advanced in those of Yankee descent than among those in other two groups (Portugues and natives). The change was more advanced among those, who made their living from fishing than those who were from the business background, serving the summer visitors. It was also much more in the speech of those who belonged to Up-island particularly around the ‘Chillmark’, the centre of fishing industry than Down-island speech as shown in Table 1.2.
TABLE 1.2: The geographical distribution of centralization on Maratha’s Vineyard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(ay)</th>
<th>(aw)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Down-island</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgartown</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Bluffs</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vineyard Haven</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up-Island</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Bluffs</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.Tisbury</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Tisbury</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chillmark</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay Head</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labov (1972b: 25)

From Table 1.2 it is learnt that the change is most advanced in the people in their thirties and early forties, who are fishermen living in Up-Island. According to Labov (1972: 36) "when a man says [ɾòit] or [hòus], he is unconsciously establishing the fact that he belongs to the island: that he is one of the natives to whom the island really belongs". The observation made by Labov suggests that the change is merely an exaggeration of an existing tendency to centralize the first part of the diphthong. This exaggerating tendency is the characteristic of those who belong to the island. Thus in a nutshell it can be said that more one identifies with the island, more he centralizes the first part of the diphthong.
Further, Labov (1972: 39) divides his informants into three groups according to their feelings about the island. These groups include: positives, negatives and neutrals. He found a striking relationship between such feelings and centralization as shown in Table 1.3.

**TABLE 1.3: The degree of centralization and orientation toward Maratha's Vineyard.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>(ay)</th>
<th>(aw)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Positive 63</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Neutral 32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Negative 09</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Labov (1972b: 39)*

Finally Labov (1972: 181) holds that "internal structural pressures and sociolinguistic pressures act in systematic alternation in the mechanism of linguistic change". After Maratha's Vineyard Labov worked in an entirely different kind of community in New York. In the New York City in 1966 Labov wanted to try out some hypothesis which he had already formulated about the use of a single linguistic variable (r). This variable represents the presence or absence (r):[r] verses (r):(θ) of a consonantal construction corresponding to the letter in the words like *farm* and *fair*. Labov (1972: 44) states: "we begin with the general hypothesis suggested by exploratory interviews: if any two subgroups of New York City speakers are ranked in
scale of social stratification, then they will be ranked in the same order by their
differential use of (r)”.

It has been observed that r-pronunciation after the re-introduction of vowel in
the New York speech is the characteristic feature of the younger people than the older
ones. The same feature was found more likely at the end of the words like floor than
before the consonants like fourth (Labov 1972: 57).

Labov (1972:43-51) tested his hypothesis by collecting the data from three
departmental stores in New York. The three departmental stores Labov visited by him
were Sacks, Macy’s and S.Klein, representing: High, Middle and Low social classes
respectively. While collecting data in the New York departmental stores, Labov asked
for the location of departmental store situated on the ‘fourth floor’. He was replied by
the shop assistant that “the department was situated on the ‘fourth floor’. He then
wanted the careful repetition of ‘fourth floor’. So he moved forward and pretended not
having heard the first answer. Thus making the shop assistant to say it again. By
selecting the words fourth and floor he was able to test the hypothesis about the
influence of the linguistic context, because the (r) is followed by a consonant in fourth
and not in floor. The incidence of [r] use that has been found by Labov (1972:5)
among the individuals employed in three departmental stores is shown in Table 1.4.
TABLE 1.4: The % of r-use in three New York City departmental stores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sakes (%)</th>
<th>Macy's (%)</th>
<th>S. Klein (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All [r]</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some [r]</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No [r]</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labov (1972b: 51)

From this table it is seen that 32% and 31% personnel approached in Sakes and Macy’s respectively used [r] in all possible instances. But only 17 persons do so in S. Klein, 79% of the 171 employees in S. Klein who were approached did not used [r] at all. But only 38% of the employees approached in Sakes and 49% of 125 employees approached in Macy’s were [r] less.

Further, it has also been observed by Labov (1972:150) that the older people of speech community used less r-pronunciation. However, the data collected from S. Klein on the basis of the factor age produced unsatisfactory results. The data collected from Macy’s gave the results in opposite direction that is to say in Macy’s r-pronunciation appeared to increase with age. On the basis of this fact it can be concluded that the members of the highest and the lowest social groups tend not to change their pronunciation after it becomes fixed in adolescence. But the members of middle social classes do so because of their social aspiration.
Here Labov (1972:150) says “we now find that this uniform stratification of (r) in performance is accompanied by a uniform evaluation of the prestige norm by younger speakers of all classes”. Thus in the light of the above statement, it can be said that today in New York City the pronunciation of the words like ‘car’ and ‘guard’ with r-pronunciation are highly valued and these are generally associated with upper middle class.

Labov (1972:144) argues that “this r-pronunciation is the chief manifestation of the new prestige pattern which prevails in New York City”. Thus the introduction of [r] into the previously r-less dialect was not only a phonetic change but it also has a wide spread phonetic consequences. The r-pronouncing speakers can differentiate between ‘guard’ and ‘god’, ‘source’ and ‘sauce’, ‘bared’ and ‘bad’. It has also been observed that in every context the members of the said speech community are differentiated by the use of linguistic variables. According to Labov (1972), ‘it is a linguistic variable that signals both social and stylistic stratification’.

Labov (1972:145) also claimed that the New York City was r-pronouncing city in 18th century, but became r-less in 19th century. This change seemed to follow the influence of London speech, where the r-less pattern was overwhelmingly observed by Walker (1971).

1.3.2 Peter Trudgill

Another important study related to the field of linguistic variation was carried out by Trudgill (1974) in Norwich, England. This study itself is an excellent example of the ‘classical Labovian method’, using the structured interviews. The town selected
was the Norwich, the native town of Trudgill. As a result of which it was very easy for him to collect the data as he was fully aware of the social structure and accent of Norwich people. While pursuing his study, Trudgill himself used the Norwich accent in interviewing his respondents. This activity proved quite fruitful to let his respondents speak more naturally (Hudson 1980: 152).

At the time of selection of speakers, the social structure of Norwich has carefully been taken into account. The individuals had randomly been selected from four different areas, representing different types of housing and range of social status. These individuals were at first approached at their homes to see if they were willing to be interviewed or not. But it has been observed that majority of individuals reacted positively to be interviewed. Some of the individuals had to be rejected deliberately on the basis of certain reasons, such as most of them had only migrated to Norwich within only previous ten years. So vacuum created by the rejection of some was occupied by the alternate replacement at random by others, until the resultant score of 50 adults had been identified. To this number further 10 school children were added more, making sixty interviews in all.

In his study of Norwich, England, Trudgill (1972) investigated sixteen phonological variables. He stratified the Norwich speech community into 5 social classes: Middle middle class (MMC), Lower middle class (LMC), Upper working class (UWC), Middle working class (MWC) and Lower working class (LWC). His analysis of variables (n), (t) and (h) shows that, the occurrence of their variants, in the words like ‘singing’, ‘better’ and ‘hammer’ are used more frequently than the corresponding [n], [?] and Ø variants observing the social class from Lower working
class (LWC) to Upper working class (UWC). Trudgill (1974:43) observed that “if we are to obtain a correct picture of the relationship between language and social stratification we must be able to measure both linguistic and social phenomena so that we can correlate the two accurately”.

Trudgill admitted that the members of the Lower working class (LWC) in Norwich say ‘singing’ but they invariably do not use ‘ammer’ which means that each variable has its characteristic distribution of the variants. It has also been noticed that the members of Lower working class (LWC) say ‘singin’. But when they were given a list of words to read containing the words ending in –ing, they pronounced the (ng) with the (n) variant mostly. Thus there are two variants, (ng):[n] and (ng):[ŋ] out of these (ng):[ŋ] is generally considered to represent standard English and RP. Thus it can be said that (ng):[ŋ] is commonly used by speakers with high status than those with low status (Hudson 1980: 153). This fact is specified in the following figure:
Figure 1.1 represent Norwich (ng), proportion of (ng):[ŋ] in speech of five socioeconomic classes in four styles: word-list (white), reading passage (hatched), formal (dotted), casual (solid).

(Source: based on Trudgill 1974a: 92)

From the above figure, it is clear that the proposed hypotheses are confirmed by the findings made by Trudgill. The average score for one group of speakers is represented by five histograms reflecting a variety of factors such as: occupation, income, education, housing and locality (Trudgill 1974: 36).

A general rise in the proportion of (ng):[ŋ] has also been noticed from 'casual' to 'word-list styles'. However, the middle class speakers differ in their use of casual and formal styles. But for the working class the difference is between formal and reading passage style. Here Trudgill used the data as shown in Table 1.5 to show two important points; first when style is kept constant, lower the social class the greater is the incidence of non standard variant. Secondly when class is kept constant, the less formal the style, the greater is the incidence of non standard variant. (Trudgill 1983: 109-10).
### TABLE 1.5: The % use of ‘-in’ in four contextual styles of speech in Norwich.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>STYLE&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMC</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMC</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MWC</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWC</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Social Classes: MMC (Middle Middle Class), LMC (Lower Middle Class), UWC (Upper Working Class), MWC (Middle Working Class), LWC (Lower Working Class).

(b) Style: WLS (Word List), RPS (Reading Passage), FS (Formal), CS (Casual).

Source: based on Trudgill (1983b: 109-10)

Thus from the Table 1.5 it is clear that the figures therefore increase in every column from top to bottom and in every row from left to right. However, some increases are negligible and some are considerable. For example middle class speakers always seem to avoid ‘-in’ pronunciation in most formal styles. But they relax considerably more in casual styles. Lower working class speakers do not make any real distinction between two speaking styles and use ‘-in’ pronunciations in both styles. Just like the middle working class speakers, the lower working class speakers
are conscious that 'ing' pronunciations are used in reading styles and many other occasions. Another similar pattern is found in case of another variable also. As the pronunciation of |t|, which varies between standard [t] or [th] and non-standard [?] or [t?]. Among the middle class speakers there is the increased use of standard (t):[t] in reading (Trudgill 1974:96).

From the findings of Trudgill (1972) it has been noticed that there were certain changes in progress in Norwich also. The distribution of the variants of (ng) variable showed certain remarkable difference between the working class males and working class females in the usage of (ng) variable, with males favoured the (n) variant (as in the words like 'singin' and 'fishin') as compared with the females. The females have been found showing stronger affinity towards standard forms than the males. The reason for strong affinity of women to the prestigious standard than the men have been said is due to the fact that the women may be more status conscious. It is because of the fact that their social position is usually inferior to men and have developed less social networks than men. On account of which they feel less security for themselves (Trudgill 1973: 3).

1.3.3 John J. Gumperz

Another early study of linguistic variation was carried out by Gumperz (1958). The system used by him for the classification of dialect differences was outlined in an early article of Gumperz (1958). In carrying out this study Gumperz has to face some sort of problem. This is because of the fact that the society investigated by him was roughly differentiated on the basis of caste membership. During his survey Gumperz
selected a village called Khalapur as a place for data collection. This village is located in Saharanpur District of Utter Pradesh. The total population of the village was about only 1000 people. The speech of the region around the Khalapur is Khari Boli, a dialect of Western Hindi. But in Khalapur the villagers fairly use Hindi in their daily communication in various domains of social life (Grierson 1971:27-8).

Gumperz (1958) attempted to show that how the small differences in the speech can differentiate the sub groups of the speech community from one another on the basis of their linguistic usage. The social structure of the village Khalapur, which is situated at the distance of 80 miles from Delhi in its north is dominated by the Hindu caste membership with the Brahmins at top, Rajputs, Vashiyas (merchants), several groups of artisans and the labours at the lower level. But at the bottom there are untouchable castes such as Chamars (landless labours), Jatia Chamras (leather workers) and Bhangies (sweepers). The later are restricted to live in certain neighborhoods and have a lesser freedom to move in the villages as compared with members of the upper caste social groups. It has also been seen that about 10% of the total population comprises the Muslims (Gumperz 1971: 28).

According to Gumperz (1971: 158), “khalapur inhabitants are divided by profound differences in ritual status, wealth, political power, occupation and education, affecting every aspect of daily interaction”. Thus it has been observed that the ritual parameters provides 31 distinct recognized caste groups, comprised of 90% of Hindus and only 10% of Muslims. The rank of caste is of he order: Brahmin, Rajputs and merchants at the top and untouchable Chamars at the bottom. But on the basis of wealth and political power, Rajput’s occupy the top position in the society and
then are Brahmins. Though at present education is in the reach of all groups of the society equally, but the fact can not be denied that the majority of students of higher education come from Rajputs and upper caste groups (Gumperz 1971:158-9).

Further, Gumperz (1971: 30) admitted that “the standard has contrasts between simple vowels /a/, /u/, /o/ and diphthongs /ai/, /ui/, /oi/ before consonants”. It has been found that in the language of the said area, certain characteristics of the village dialect are the clear indicators of the social group membership. Moreover, it has been found that there is a phonological contrast of standard between the simple vowels /a/, /u/, /o/ and diphthongs /ai/, /ui/ and /oi/ before consonants. This contrast, which is the characteristic of upper caste groups is not found in the speech of Chamars, Jatia Chamars and Sweepers. Among the Chamars (shoemakers), Jatia Chamars and Sweepers the use of (d) is very common, but this pronunciation is generally considered as “old fashioned and low prestige”. Though the members of lower castes make much effort to adopt the standard variety, but their speech remains even distinct (Gumperz 1971: 28-32).

One thing more which has been found there is that each of the three untouchable castes therefore has a specific speech characteristic, that distinguishes it clearly from other two untouchable groups in the village. But the speech of Muslim community resembles with that of touchable classes. The variety of speech used by lower caste Bhangies (Sweepers) is close to the dialect of that area in which Khalapur is located. On the basis of this fact the upper class people are restricted to make the use of the regional dialect in order to differentiate themselves from untouchables (Gumperz 1971: 28-44).
To sum up, it can be said that the survey conducted by Gumperz (1958) shows a direct relationship between the linguistic variation and caste membership. His studies show how the social heterogeneity is reflected in the structure of language.

1.3.4 J. Cheshire

Another important study relating to linguistic variation was carried out by an eminent female scholar J. Cheshire (1978). In her study carried out in Reading, England, she focussed her attention on the use of (s) variable in the speech of three groups of boys and girls. The (s) variable in this case is the extension of third person singular verb marking all other persons e.g. "I knows", "You knows", "We has" and "They calls". While conducting her research, Cheshire collected the data from 13 boys and 12 girls. All informants belonged to the same age group of 9-17 years. They were divided into three groups, viz., one male group (Ortsread boys), a small group of three boys (Shenfield boys) and one female group (Shenfield girls).

It has been observed by Cheshire (cited in Wardhaugh 1986: 165) that all the subjects selected used non standard forms with regular verbs such as 'know' and 'call' in more than half the occasions of their daily use. It was also found that the use of 'do' was slightly preferred over 'does' which is again a non standard form. Cheshire also suggested that the form 'has' occurred only as a full verb as: '(we has a much around in there)' or before an infinitive '(I has to stop in)', but never as an auxiliary (so 'I have got', not 'I has got'). It has also been noticed by Cheshire (1978: 62) that the 'vernacular' verbs i.e. the commonly like eat, run, kill and leave have been seen to take the 's' endings in all forms in comparison with other verbs to the extent that the
use of *eats, runs, kills and leaves* is conveying with such verbs. Thus when a verb is used in third person singular it always takes the ‘s’ ending. Thus in case of a vernacular verb the ‘s’ ending is favoured in all persons. But one thing should be very clear that in case the verb has a complement in which the verb in the complement is marked for tense the ‘s’ ending does not seem to occur. Cheshire (1978) also found some social factors operated in the pattern of variation. She argued that the boys and girls in their use of (s) variable vary considerably. She also claimed that though the girls use ‘s’ endings in the same way as the boys. But the former group does not exhibit same correlation between the frequency of use and index scores. It has also been observed that (Wardhaugh 1986: 165) the girls shifted the use of ‘s’ variable towards the standard English norms in the formal situations to a greater extent than the boys.

Finally, Cheshire (1978: 68-9) came to this conclusion that both social as well the linguistic factors play a very crucial role in the ‘variation’ of language. As it has been found during her study of Reading, England that in case of boys, the norms that are central to the vernacular culture play a very important role in governing the speech variation in the form of ‘have’ and ‘do’. It was supposed to be due to the linguistic changes in progress.

1.3.5 J. L. Fischer

Another important type of variation, which is common in most of the societies is correlating with the difference between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ situations. This type of variation study was carried out by Fischer (1958). His study is one of the earliest
studies of (η) variable, i.e. the pronunciation like ‘singing’ [ŋ] versus ‘singin’ [n]. It may be pointed out that both of these variants, i.e. [ŋ] and [n] have a long history in the language. Though, it has been found that the use of [ŋ] variant in its abusive terms was to some extent common in 19th and 20th centuries. But at present in most of the areas especially the privileged ones, the use of [ŋ] variant in words like: ‘fishing’, ‘singing’ and ‘shooting’ is hardly found. What is much common today is the use of [n] variant in words, like ‘fishin’, ‘singin’ and ‘shootin’ (Wardhaugh 1983: 155).

While conducting his study in the New-England, community, Fischer interviewed twelve boys and twelve girls. All the subjects selected as informants belonged to the age group of 3-10 years. During his investigation, Fischer got his subjects involved in discussing the recent activities with one another and attempted to note their use of [ŋ] and [n] variants in formal and informal situations (Fischer 1958: 50).

Fischer’s study is a very simple account of a common variable as it involved a very little number of respondents from whom the data had been collected. The method, employed for data collection was very informal and casual and no statistical testing of findings had been performed. But it is also true to say that no attempt has come in progress to make any profound claims, i.e. no criticism has been made to Fischer’s study so far (Wardhaugh 1986: 157).

1.3.6 W. Wolfram

Another study relating to linguistic variation is the one conducted by W. Wolfram in Detroit. This study emphasized the use of the multiple negation as a
linguistic variable. From this study it has been found that the use of the multiple negation is directly relating to the social class. It has been argued (Wardhaugh 1986: 167) that it was the lower working class group, which made the use of such multiple negation more frequently than other groups on about 70% of the possible occasions. The upper working class did the same at 38% of their possible occasions, where as the lower middle class and the upper middle class groups used the multiple negation on about 11% and 2% of their possible occasions respectively.

After analysing the different variables investigated in Detroit speech, it has been found that the speakers of the said speech community show some inconsistencies and vary considerably in their linguistic behaviour. It was found that in formal situations the speakers tend to show their affinity towards the standard usage. However, the children and the male speakers had been found to exhibit the less standard of their linguistic behaviour as compared with adults and females of the same social group.

Moreover, after identifying different social groups, Wolfram, (cited in Wardhaugh 1986: 168) attempted to show how the linguistic behaviour among speakers of the Detroit speech community exhibit the inconsistencies in their linguistic behaviour. Wolfram (cited in Wardhaugh 1986: 160) investigated four phonological and four grammatical variables for the purpose.

Wolfram (1969: 60-70) also discussed a situation in Detroit in which the black speakers were found deleting the final stops in clusters and made a distinction according to the grammatical function of the stops.
As in case of the final cluster in ‘cold’, the d has no independent grammatical function, but in case of ‘burned’ it marks past tense and is grammatically the –ed ending and therefore has its own meaning.

Table 1.6: The final cluster simplification among black speakers in Detroit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>Upper middle</th>
<th>Lower middle</th>
<th>Upper working</th>
<th>Lower working</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>Burn(ed)up</td>
<td>-ed, before vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>Col(d)out</td>
<td>Not –ed, before vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>Burn(ed)coal</td>
<td>-ed, before consonant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>Col(d)cuts</td>
<td>Not –ed, before consonant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Wolfram (1969: 59-69)

To sum up, it can be said that a linguistic variable is an item in the structure of the language, which has alternate realization, as one speaker realizes it in one way and the other speaker in an entirely different way or the same speaker realizes it differently at different occasions and situations. For example, one speaker may say ‘singing’ mostly where as the other may prefer to say ‘singin’, depending upon the fact that to which social group the speaker belongs.
1.4 Social and Linguistic Variables

1.4.1 Social Variables

Most of the sociolinguistic studies are concerned with the ways in which language varies according to the social context in which it is used. It also changes according to the social group to which the user of the language belongs. In every speech community there is a social heterogeneity or social stratification, i.e. there are different social levels or different groups of people. This social heterogeneity is reflected in the linguistic behaviour of the same speech community and results in language variation among its speakers. This is because of the fact that language and society are closely related. It can therefore, be said that linguistic variability is closely linked to social variability. It can also be said that linguistic variability is due to social variability. It is assumed that for the linguistic variability certain social factors or what may be called social variables are quite responsible. Such social variables are age, sex, religion, occupation, profession, education, economic status and social class. These variables considerably modify the structure of language and give rise to linguistic variables.

1.4.2 Linguistic Variables

As said earlier, the phenomenon of variation in language has always been a subject of much discussion and interest to linguists and the concept of linguistic variable is an outcome of research in this direction. Scholars have developed tools necessary for the identification of linguistic variation among different social groups.
According to Hudson (1986: 157), "the linguistic variables which sociolinguists have studied are those where the meaning remains constant but the form varies, though in theory one could study such aspects as the different ways in which past tense forms are used as a linguistic variable". In case the above definition is used as the definition of a linguistic variable, there seems to occur a wide range of serious problems. This is because of the fact that it becomes difficult to account for the same meaning. For instance, it has been claimed that 'cat' and 'pussy' have the same meaning and could therefore be considered as a linguistic variable. In the same way, the alternative pronunciation of 'house' with and without [h] can also be considered as an example of linguistic variable (Hudson 1980: 157).

According to Ronald Wardhaugh (1986: 135), "a linguistic variable is a linguistic item which has identifiable variants". Let us say, for example, the words, like 'singing' and 'fishing' were sometimes pronounced by some people as 'singin' and 'fishin'. Thus the final sound in these words may be called the linguistic variable (\(\eta\)) with its two variants: [\(\eta\)] in 'singing' and [n] in 'singin'. Another example of linguistic variable is found in the words like: 'car' and 'card'. These words are sometimes given as r- less pronunciation. Here we can see the linguistic variable(\(r\)) with its two variants [r] and \(\emptyset\) (pronounced as 'zero'). One more example of the linguistic variable involves the vowel in the words like bend and trend, here the vowel is sometimes nasalized and sometimes not. In this case the linguistic variable (\(e\)) has a number of variants such as [\(e\)], [\(e\)]\(^1\), ..., [\(e\)]\(^n\) here the superscripts 1 to n are used to indicate the degree of utilization observed to occur, depending upon the quantity of nasalization (Wardhaugh 1986: 135).
The linguists who had been involved in studying the linguistic variation have mostly investigated the \((\eta)\) and \((r)\) variables. In addition to these two variables the other variables used include: \((h)\) variable in the words like ‘house’ and ‘hospital’, i.e. \((h)\)[h] or \(\varnothing\), the \((t)\) variable in \(bet\) and \(better\), i.e. \((t)\)[t] or [\(?\)], the \((\theta)\) and \((\delta)\) variables in ‘\(thin\)’ and ‘\(they\)’ i.e. \((\theta)\)[\(\theta\)] or [t] and \((\delta)\)[\(\delta\)]:[\(\delta\)] or [d]; \((l)\) variable in French in \(il\), i.e. \((l)\)[l] or \(\varnothing\); and consonant variables like the final \((t)\) and \((d)\) in the words like ‘\(test\)’ and ‘\(told\)’, i.e. their presence or absence. Vocalic variables used to have included the vowel \((e)\) in the words like ‘\(pen\)’ and ‘\(men\)’; the \((a)\) or \((\varnothing)\) in ‘\(dog\)’, ‘\(caught\)’ and ‘\(coffee\)’; the \((e)\) in ‘\(beg\)’; the \((\ae)\) in ‘\(back\)’, ‘\(bag\)’ and ‘\(bad\)’ and ‘\(half\)’; and the \((U)\) in ‘\(pull\)’ (Wardhaugh 1986: 135-36).