

# **Sociolinguistic Features in Selected literary texts of Charles Dickens and Jane Austin's Novels: *Hard Times* and *Pride and Prejudice***

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## **Abstract**

The present study "Sociolinguistic features in selected literary texts of Charles Dickens and Jane Austin Novels" is carried out by the researcher with the purpose of investigating and analyzing the social linguistic influences surrounding two novels namely: *Hard times* by Charles Dickens and *Pride and prejudice* by Jane Austin

This main focus of this topic is to approach the two famous novels of Charles Dickens and Jane Austin from the point of view of sociolinguistics. The point of view is that linguistics can determine the sociological background of the speaker through various speech habits and patterns. The approach is meant to ascertain the social background of writers' characters and the correlation to the writers' method of language use.

The present study attempts to find variations within a single speech community, first by surveying the findings of some well-known sociolinguists like William Labov, Noam Chomsky, and John Gumberz who have studied the traditions of writing argumentative texts concerning variations within a single speech community and second by subjecting selected sociolinguistic texts taken from two novels to a thorough discourse analysis.

## **Introduction**

## **1-The Important Features of Sociolinguistic Analysis**

Many discourse analysts of sociolinguistic texts in general have classified the social situations into three defining characteristics: *place, role- relationship and topic*. Together, these make up a set of typical domain. One common domain is home. Domains are named usually for a place or an activity in it. Home, then is the place. The role-relationship associated with home includes family members (mother, father, sons daughters, etc.) There are a suitable set of topics such as activities of the family, news about family members, the meal, the household, etc. A particular variety of language is appropriate to the domain.

Another common domain is work. The place might be a factory or an office or school or a store. The role-relationship includes boss, workers, students, colleagues, customers, etc. The topics are work-related. It is worth mentioning that the sociolinguistic complexity occurs when two people who have one role-relationship at home (such as father and son) have another at work (boss and worker, for instance). When they speak, they can choose a register or language variety to show which relationship is dominant at that time (Spolsky, 1998:35).

So, sociolinguists have to specify the roles of speakers and hearers and their relationship, whether they were friends, strangers, young, old of equal or unequal and many other factors (Yule, 1996: 80).

### **2- Speech Community**

It is important for discourse analysts of sociolinguistic texts to know the concept of speech community. A speech community is a group of people who share a set of norms and expectations regarding the use of language (Labove, 2010:50).

A speech community comes to show a specific set of norms for language use through living and interacting together, and speech communities may therefore, emerge among all groups that interact frequently and share certain norms and ideologies. Such groups can be villages, countries, political or professional and communities with shared interests, hobbies, or life style, or even just group of friends (Trudgill, 2000:50).

Labove (1972:60) claims that speech communities may share both particular set of vocabulary and grammatical convention as well as speech style and genres, and also norms for how and when to speak in a particular way.

### **3-Speech Community from Different Points of Views**

John Gumperz defined the speech community as any human aggregates characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage (Eckert, 2006:60).

Gumperz identifies two important components of the speech community: its members share both a set of linguistic forms and a set of social norms that govern the use of those forms. Gumperz also sought to set up a typological framework for describing how linguistic systems can be in use within a single speech community. He introduced the concept of linguistic range, the degree to which the linguistic systems of the community differ so that speech communities can be multilingual, diglossic, multidialectal and heterogeneous - depending on the degree of difference among the different language systems used in the community. Secondly the notion of compartmentalization described the degree to which the use of different varieties were either set off from each other as discrete systems in interaction(Gumperz,2004:3).

None Chomsky concentrates primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.(Wardhaugh,1988:30).

Where Gumperz formulation was designed to incorporate heterogeneity, by focusing on shared norms of language use rather than a shared linguistic system, Chomsky's definition explicitly rejected it. Chomsky argued that **linguistic competence** was logically prior to **linguistic performance**, and that competence was necessarily homogeneously distributed among all speakers of a linguistic community (Labov, 2004:5).

Another influential conceptualization of the linguistic community was that of William Labov, which can be seen as a hybrid of the Chomskyan structural homogeneity and Gumperz' focus on shared norms informing variable practices.

Like that of Gumperz, Labov's formulation stressed that a speech community was defined more by shared norms rather than by shared linguistic forms. But like Chomsky, Labov also saw each of the formally distinguished linguistic varieties within a speech community as homogeneous, invariant and uniform. Labov's model was designed to see speech varieties as associated with social strata within a single speech community, and it assumed each stratum to use a single variety (Hudson, 1986:66).

Labov's model was designed to explain variation between social groups within a single speech community, and for this reason it assumed a structural integrity of the linguistic system of each social group, and it also assumed each social group within the speech community to form a

neatly bounded unit definable in terms of discrete and co-relatable variables, such as ethnicity, education, race, class, gender, age, ideology, and specific formal variables of linguistic usage (ibid: 67).

In order to substantiate the views and conclusions of the sociolinguists cited above, the researcher has found that Labov's model was designed to explain variation between social groups within a single speech community and it is closer to three defining features of social situation: *place, role-relationship and topic*, which will be our model for text analysis. The researcher has randomly chosen selected literary texts from two novels: *Hard Times and Pride and Prejudice* and subjected them to close discourse analysis.

The aim of the study is to demonstrate from texts selected that variation is found within a single speech community, since we will find in our analysis of the texts different types of characters with different relationships. The researcher is going to find these types of relationships whether they are power- relationship or solidarity and intimacy according to the characters involved. In *Hard Times*, for example, the role-relationship includes boss, workers, students, customers, etc. The topics are work related, while in *Pride and prejudice*, for example, the role-relationship associated with homes includes family members (mother, father, sons, daughters, etc.). The topics are associated with the family members.

#### Sociolinguistic features in selected texts of *Hard Times*

Three texts chosen from the novel *Hard Times*, a novel written by Charles Dickens are to be analyzed.

##### Text no.1

*Girl number twenty' said Mr Gradgrind squarely pointing with his square forefinger' I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?*

*Sissy Jupe, sir,*

*Sissy is not a name' said Mr Gradgrind. 'Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.'*

*'It is father as calls me Sissy, sir'*

*'Then he has no business to do it' said Mr Gradgrind. 'Tell him he mustn't Cecilia Jupe. Let me see .What is your father?*

*He belongs to the horse-riding if you pleas sir.*

*We don't want to know anything about that here; you mustn't tell us about that here .Your father breaks horses, doesn't he?*

*If you please, sir when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir'*

*You mustn't tell us about the ring here. Very well then. Describe your*

*Oh yes sir' said Sissy*

*Very well then .He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and a hores – breaker. Give me your definition of a horse,said Gradgrind.*

### **The Analysis**

In this text, we have two different characters belonging to two different socioeconomic classes, and this is obvious from the vocabulary used by the characters involved.

Thomas Gradgrind is a utilitarian who is the founder of the educational system in Coketown.

Cecilia (Sissy) Jupe is a circus girl of Sleary's circus, as well as a student of Thomas Gradgrind's very strict classroom. Sissy has her own set of values and beliefs which make her seem unintelligent in the Gradgrind household (House, 1993:20).

*Place:* Gradgrind's school

*Topic:* Educational lesson

*Social relationship:* is a teacher and a student by using the words (girl number twenty). Gradgrind uses the numbers to indicate to the students as means of distinguishing between the upper class (teachers) and the lower class (students). In this text Dickens makes clear the difference between the upper class and the lower class like (Gradgrind) and (Sissy)

Gradgrind refuses the name Sissy by saying " *Sissy is not a name calling yourself Cecilia*". This is an indication that the name "Sissy" belongs to the lower class and uneducated people. Even he ridicules Sissy to use the word "*horse-riding*" to tell him her father's job. He regards this word also as a word used by uneducated people and lower class. Dickens makes Gradgrind use a "special register" to indicate to the huge difference in socioeconomic class of two different characters.

So, Gradgrind uses other words as an especial register for educated people to replace one word (*horse-riding*) used by "Sissy".These words are: a horse- breaker, a veterinary surgeon and a farrier. Dickens uses different registers to indicate to the differences in socioeconomic class of his characters. In this text, there is a power relationship in a conversation between Mr. Gradgrind and Sissy by using *address terms, politeness markers, expressions and different kinds of sentences*. In Gradgrind's speech, he uses command sentences and interrogative sentences to express his power relationship over his students, for example: *who is that girl. Sissy is not a name. Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia*. Dickens also uses expressions to express power relationship like: *blushing, standing up and curtsying*. There are politeness markers and address terms in sentences: *Sissy jupe sir. It is father as calls me Sissy sir. He belongs to the horse-riding if you please sir. (Politeness markers)*

## Text No.2

*"Well Stephen said Bounderby, in his windy manner," what is this I hear? What have these pests of the earth been doing to you? Come in, and speak up?*

*Now, said Bounderby "Speak up".*

*What were it, sir, said Stephen as yo were pleased to want wi,me?*

*Why I have told you, returned Bounderby."Speak up like a man, since you are a man, and tell us about yourself and this combination.*

*Wi yor pardon sir, said Stephen Blackpool"I ha nowt to sen about it*

*I sed as I had nowt to sen, sir, not as I was fearfo" openin my lips*

*I'm as sooary as yo ,sir, when the people's leader is bad" said Stephen*

*Now you 'll think this pretty well, Harthouse" said Mr.Bounderby.*

*You 'll think this tolerably strong" "You 'll say upon my soul this is a tidy specimen of what my friends have to deal with; but this is nothing" said Bounderby.*

## The Analysis

Stephen Blackpool is a worker at one of Bounderby's mills. After a dispute with Bounderby, he is dismissed from his work at the Coketown mills and, shunned by his former fellow workers, is forced to look for work elsewhere. While absent from Coketown, he is wrongly accused of robbing Bounderby's bank. On his way back to vindicate himself, he falls down a mine-shaft. He is rescued but dies of his injuries. Josiah Bounderby is a business associate of Mr. Gradgrind. Given to boasting about being a self-made man, he employs many of the other central characters of the novel. He has risen to a position of power and wealth (ibid: 21).

*Place:* Bounderby's mill.

*Topic:* A conversation concerning work.

*Social relationship:* is a master (Bonderby) and his worker (Stephen Blackpool). From the conversation, there is a clear indication that Bounderby has a power relationship upon his worker Stephen. He uses command sentences to indicate this power relationship.

*"Well Stephen said Bounderby, in his windy manner, what is this I hear? What have these pests of the earth been doing to you? Come in, and speak up?"(Command sentences)*

*"Now, said Bounderby "Speak up" "Why I have told you, returned Bounderby."Speak up like a man, since you are a man, and tell us about and this combination yourself" (He uses sentences which express disrespect for his worker)*

In the text, there is a clear indication that Stephen is a worker and from the lower class. Ungrammatical sentences with mispronounced

words used by Stephen Blackpool indicate that he is uneducated man.  
*"Wi yor(mispronounced words) pardon sir, said Stephen Blackpool, I ha  
nowt to sen about it"(ungrammatical sentence)*

*" I sed as I had nowt to sen,(ungrammatical sentence)*

*"I'm as soary as yo, sir, (mispronounced words) said Stephen*

### **Text No.3**

*"You see my friend "Mr.Bounderby put in" We are the kind of people who  
know the value of time, and you are the kind of people who don't know  
the value of time."*

*Kidderminster, said Mr.Childers raising his voice" I was addressing my  
self to you. You may or you may not be aware that Jupe has missed his tip  
very often lately.*

*Has – what has he missed? Asked Mr.Grandgrind glancing at the potent  
Bounderby for assistance.*

*"Missed his tip at the banners and was loose in his ponging" said Mr.  
Kidderminster*

*"Nine oils, Merrylegs,missing his tip garters, banners and ponging eh"?  
ejaculated Bounderby, with laugh of laughs.*

*"You are on the Tight-Jeff, ain't you?"*

*Does this unmannerly boy mean" asked Mr.Gradgrind eyeing him in a  
sort of desperation, "by Tight-jeff?"*

### **The Analysis**

Mr. Sleary - the owner of the circus which employs Sissy's father. He  
speaks with a lisp (ibid).

*Place:* Sleary's Horsemanship.

*Topic:* Conversation concerning Sissy's father job.

*Social relationship:* It is obvious from the conversation above that  
the upper class people like: Gradgrind and Bounderby show disrespect for  
the lower class like: Kidderminster and childers. In addition,  
Kidderminster and childers who work in the circus, they use register of  
circus and ungrammatical sentences to show their social class.

*You see my friend " Mr.Bounderby put in " We are the kind of people who  
know the value of time , and you are the kind of people who don't know*

*the value of time.*"(this sentence shows disrespect for the lower class used by Bounderby).

*Merrylegs,missing his tip garters, banners and ponging(register of circus)*

*"You are on the Tight-Jeff, ain't you? (Ungrammatical sentence)*

*"Missed his tip at the banners and was loose in his ponging" (register of circus) said Mr. Kidderminster*

All these words and expressions are used by the people who work in the circus and they are strange for Gradgrind and Bounderby who represent the upper class.

Table (1) a breakdown of sociolinguistic features in ***Hard Times***

Place	Topic	Social-relationship
Gradgrind's school	AConversation concerning lecture between a student and a teacher	Power relationship
Bounderby's mill	A Conversation between the employer and the employee	Power relationship
Sleary's Horeshmanship	A Conversation between the upper class like Gradgrind and the lower class workers in the circus	Power relationship With disrespect for the lower class

**Sociolinguistic Features In Selected texts of pride and prejudice**

Three texts chosen from the novel, **pride and prejudice** , a novel written by Jane Austin are to be analyzed

**Text no.4**

*My dear Mr Bennet said his lady to him one day 'have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last.'*

*Mr Bennet replied that he had not.*

*'Do you want to know who has taken it? Cried his wife impatiently..*

*This was invitation enough.*

*What is his name?*

*Bingley.*

*Is he married or single?*

*Oh, single my dear to be sure. What a fine thing for our gils?*

*My dear Mr Bnnet replied his wife 'how can you be so tiresome? You must know that I am thinking of her marrying.*

*I see no occasion for that. You and the gils may go or you may send them by themselves,which perhaps will be still better for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr Bingley might like you the best of the party.*

**The Analysis**

In this text, we have two different characters belonging to the same socioeconomic classes of family relationship and this is obvious from the vocabulary used by the characters involved.

Mr. Bennet is the patriarch of the Bennet family, a gentleman of modest income with five unmarried daughters. Mr. Bennet has an ironic, cynical sense of humor that he uses to irritate his wife.

Mrs. Bennet is the wife of her social superior. She is frivolous, excitable and narrow minded (Alfred, 2013:30).

*Place:* Bennet's house

*Topic:* family problems

*Social relationship:* the two characters are a wife and a husband and there is intimacy and solidarity between the two characters by means of the vocabulary used by both of them. It is very obvious that both of them belong to the same socioeconomic class. From the conversation, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between the characters, since they are wife and husband by using topics concerning family members sarcastic expression and politeness markers of intimacy to indicate this relationship:

*"Oh single my dear (politeness markers of intimacy) to be sure. A single man of a large fortune; four or five thousand a year. (Sarcastic expression) What a fine thing for our girls?"(topic concerning family members)*

*"My dear Mr. Bennet(politeness markers of intimacy) replied his wife ' how can you be so tiresome? 'You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them"*

*"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better for as you are as handsome as any of them (sarcastic expression) Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party"(sarcastic expression)*

So, from these statements, it is clear that Mr. Bennet has an ironic, cynical and sarcastic sense of humor that he uses to irritate his wife. These kinds of expressions make clear that there are *intimacy* and *solidarity* between members of the family.

### **Text no.5**

*WHEN Jane and Elizabeth were alone, the former, who had been cautious in her praise of Mr. Bingley before, expressed to her sister how very much she admired him such happy manners! so much ease, with such perfect good breeding!' His character is thereby complete.'*

*'I was very much flattered by his asking me to dance a second time. I did not expect such a*

*Seeing that you were about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room. No thanks to his many a stupider person.*

*'Oh, you are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in anybody.*

*All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my Life.*

*'I would wish not to be hasty in censuring any one; but I always speak what I think.'*

*'I know you do; and it is that which makes the wonder. With your good sense, to be so honestly blind to*

### **The Analysis**

Jane Bennet is the eldest Bennet sister. Twenty-two years old when the novel begins, she is considered the most beautiful young lady in the neighbourhood. Her character is contrasted with Elizabeth's as sweeter, shyer, and equally sensible, but not as clever.

Elizabeth Bennet is the protagonist of the novel. The reader sees the unfolding plot and the other characters mostly from her viewpoint. The second of the Bennet daughters, she is intelligent, lively, playful, attractive and witty but with a tendency to judge on first impression (the "Prejudice" of the title) and perhaps to be a little selective of the evidence upon which she bases her judgments. As the plot begins, her closest relationships are with her father; her sister, Jane; her aunt, Mrs Gardiner; and her best friend (ibid: 31).

*Place:* Bennet's house

*Topic:* conversation concerning the party.

*Social relationship:* The vocabulary and kinds of sentences used in the conversation reflects the strong relationship between the two sisters. In addition, the text lacks the address terms and politeness markers which reveal a power relationship.

*"Seeing that you were about five times as pretty as every other woman in the room many a stupider person".( topic concerning family members with sarcastic expression used between family members)*

*"The entire world is good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my Life"(opinion concerning her sister)*

*'I know you do; and it is that which makes the wonder. With your good sense, to be so honestly blind to (no politeness markers between the two sisters.*

In these statements, there are words which indicate solidarity and intimacy between the two characters, since they are sisters and they belong to the same socioeconomic class. All sentences used in

conversation are to express their opinion and to continue their conversation. There are no command sentences to indicate a power relationship between them.

### **Text no.6**

*Dear Sir,—*

*'The disagreement subsisting between yourself and my late honoured father always gave me much uneasiness, and since I have had the misfortune to lose him, I have frequently Easter, I have been so fortunate as to be distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh, whose bounty and beneficence has preferred me to the valuable rectory of this parish, where it shall be my earnest endeavour to demean myself with grateful respect towards her ladyship, and be ever ready to perform those rites and ceremonies which are instituted by the Church of England. As a clergyman, moreover, I feel it my duty to promote and establish the blessing of peace in all families within in the reach o*  
*"you to reject the offered olive-branch. I cannot be otherwise than concerned at being the means of injuring your amiable daughters, and beg leave to apologise for it, as well"*

### **The Analysis**

William Collins, Mr Bennet's clergyman cousin and heir to his estate. He is "not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society". Mr Collins is obsequious, pompous, and lacking in common sense. Elizabeth's rejection of Mr Collins's proposal is welcomed by her marriage father, regardless of the financial benefit to the family of such a match (ibid).

*Place:* The church.

*Topic:* Mr. Collins's letter for marriage.

*Social relationship:* obviously, that Mr. Collins is a strange person. He is not a member of Bennet's family, since we don't find words that indicate the social relationship between the members of the family. As he is an educated and a clergyman, he has used words and sentences that manifest his social class. For instance, he has used special adjectives and politeness markers which reveal his respect to the others who read his letter and make this text differ from the others.

*"Easter, I have been so fortunate as to be distinguished by*

*The patronage of the Right Honourable (politeness markers) Lady Catherine"*

*"I cannot be otherwise*

than concerned at being the means of *injuring your amiable daughters*(*special adjective indicate his respect*)and beg leave to apologise for it as well"  
 "de Bourgh, widow of *Sir Lewis de Bourgh*,(*address terms*) whose bounty"  
 demean myself with *grateful respect* (*adjective shows his respect*) towards *her ladyship*  
 and be ever ready to perform those rites and *ceremonies* which are instituted by the *Church of England*. As a clergyman, moreover, I feel it my duty to promote and establish *the blessing of peace* in all families within in the reach of my influence"( *expressions of an educated man*)

Table (2) a breakdown of sociolinguistic features in *Pride and prejudice*

Place	Topic	Social-relationship
Mr. Bennet's house	A Conversation between a wife and husband concerning their daughters' marriage	Solidarity and intimacy With sarcastic expression
Mr. Bennet's house	A Conversation between the two sisters about the suitable suitor	Solidarity and intimacy With sarcastic expression
The Church	Mr. Collins's letter for marriage	Solidarity and intimacy with respect for the reader

#### 4-Conclusion

There is a difference between the two famous novels: *Hard times* and *Pride and prejudice*. In *Hard Times*, the social relationship is a power relationship between the characters such as the upper class like: Gradgrind and Bounderby and lower class such as: Stephen Blackpool, Sissy and Kidderminster. We see also different kinds of registers represent lower and upper classes. It represents the relationship between the masters and the workers.

While, in *Pride and prejudice* the social relationship is solidarity and intimacy. We see that the register represents the family relationship.

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحليل خصائص علم اللغة الاجتماعي في نصوص أدبية مختارة لـ جارلز دكنز ( الاوقات الصعبة ) و ( كبرياء وتحامل ) لجين أوستن .  
 نحاول في هذا البحث الى دراسة روايتي جارلز دكنز وجين أوستن من وجهة نظر علم اللغة الاجتماعي وتأثيره على المتكلم من خلال العادات اللغوية المختلفة والتي ظهرت في شخصيات الكاتبتين .

تحاول هذه الدراسة الى ايجاد الاختلافات في المجتمع الواحد أولا" من خلال ماتوصل اليه أشهر اللغويين من أمثال وليم لايف و نوم جومسكي وجون كمبرز ممن درسوا تقاليد كتابة

النصوص الجدلية لعلم اللغة الاجتماعي وثانياً من خلال تحاليل نصوص مختارة لهذه الروايتين.