

LANGUAGE AND PLACE

Text creates a sense of place in 2 main ways:

- through description of places (provides geographical background and sometimes a symbolic dimension – see *Wuthering Heights*)
- through the particular ways in which characters (and sometimes narrator) speak

Language variations and varieties:

- accents
- dialects
- registers- variety switching, repertoire available to individual speakers according to the situation of use

Attitudes to language varieties – uneven, traditionally a question of hierarchy, related to historical, social and political changes in society

Language variety in lit. texts:

Before 16th century – English, Latin and French

Change in the Elizabethan period

18th c - eminent literary qualities of English

Dialect representation – within the constraints of the genre style, illusion of speech to give an aura of authenticity or to establish the social diversification of the characters

Modernism - polyphony of voices but still subordinated to an authoritative standard voice of the narrator

Postmodernism – multiplicity, equality, post-colonialism – different experiences of place and connections between voice, region and sense of identity

LANGUAGE AND TIME

All languages change over the course of time

A text may be a force for a language change or may retard it

Theories of language change:

- as an anonymous process
- as a politically motivated process

LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Language - crucial to the creation and maintenance of both social relationship and social identities. The ways we use language – important signals about the social order and our own place within it

LANGUAGE AND CONTEXT

Contexts which affect register

1. the mode or medium (spoken, written)
2. the social relationships or participants in the situation, which determine the tone
3. the purpose

LANGUAGE AND GENDER

Language plays an important role in shaping the social scene and constructing social identities

Male as the norm – see generic use of “man” or “he”

Female as downgraded or derogated – see asymmetrical distribution of “master” – “mistress”, “Mr” – “Mrs”, “Miss”

Change in the 70s

V. Woolf: a woman’s sentence

Some types of language change:

Archaism

Feminist changes to language

Politically correct speech

Some other terms

Euphemism

Pleonasm

Tautology