

The background features a series of concentric circles in light gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A large red speech bubble shape is centered on the page, containing the title and author information.

Rudiments of Sociolinguistic Research

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Variables in Sociolinguistic research

- **A Variable:** collection of alternatives which have something in common. Each variable is a category which contains some elements
- **These elements – variants, values**
- **Variable vs variant:** /fɑ:m/, /fɑ:rm/ - variable (r) has two variants - /r/ or 0
- **Sociolinguistics:** correlation between variants of the variable

Linguistic variables

- Linguistic unit with different realizations, which is studied in relation to some other variable (social, situational, geographical)

Types of linguistic variables

- **Phonetic variables:** the same phoneme (variable) can have different allophonic realizations (variants)
- **Phonological variables:** the same lexeme can have alternative phonological structures
- **Morphological variable:** the same word has alternative morphological structures (presence or absence of morphemes)
- **Lexical variables:** the same meaning can be expressed by two or more lexical items.
- **Syntactic variable:** The same meaning is expressed by different syntactic structures

Social, situational and Geographical Variables

- **A social variable: social category with different sub-categories, which is studied in relation to some other variable (linguistic, situational, or geographical)...e.g. Social class, sex, gender, age, race, thnic group...**
- **A situational variable the context in which communication takes place, and it can be studied in relation to other variebles (linguistic, social, geographical) ..e.g...medium, field, genre, style role relationship...**
- **A geographical variable: has a number of sub-variables: geographical regions exhibiting some linguistic characteristics. (a town, a city, a valley, a country...A country can have such variants as towns, villages...**

Dependent, Independent and Control Variables

- **Dependent variable:** one that researcher wishes to explain or predict. E.g. In sociolinguistics it is some linguistic item (a speech sound, morpheme, lexeme, etc.) the variation of which the sociolinguist is trying to explain
- **Independent variable:** causes or determines the dependent variable. The variants of the dependent variable are caused by the variants of the independent variable.
- **Control variable:** is held constant across all speakers (all members of the sample),
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Examples

- **DEPENDENT VARIABLE:** any variable that the researcher is trying to explain
- **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:** pronunciation of /t/ - dependent variable, age, gender, social class – independent variable
- **CONTROL VARIABLE:** if we want to prove that the choice between types of pronunciation is really caused by the independent variable – social class, all other variables (age, gender, race, style) must be held constant

Hypotheses in Sociolinguistic Research

- 1. research question 2. research hypothesis
- Hypothesis – a scientific assumption, a tentative answer to a research problem
- Hypothesis: specifies the relationship between variable
- Hypothesis relates measurable variables – can be tested and evaluated through measurement and observation.
- Hypothesis: expresses relations between variables



Thank you!