

# Sociolinguistics, class 3

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# Language and social variables

- **Social class – aggregate. Of individuals. With similar social characteristics and it is determined by three aspects**
- **Economic standing**
- **Prestige**
- **Power**

# Language and age

- **Childhood (0 – 13), social aspects of language acquisition, the speech of adults directed to children**
- **Adolescence (13 – 18), teenage slang, teenage social groups, profound effect on their adult speech**
- **Adulthood – maturity, employed, linguistically stable group with a set of socially determined personal varieties**
- **Old Age – non-productive, linguistically – use language no longer in current use**

# Language and Gender

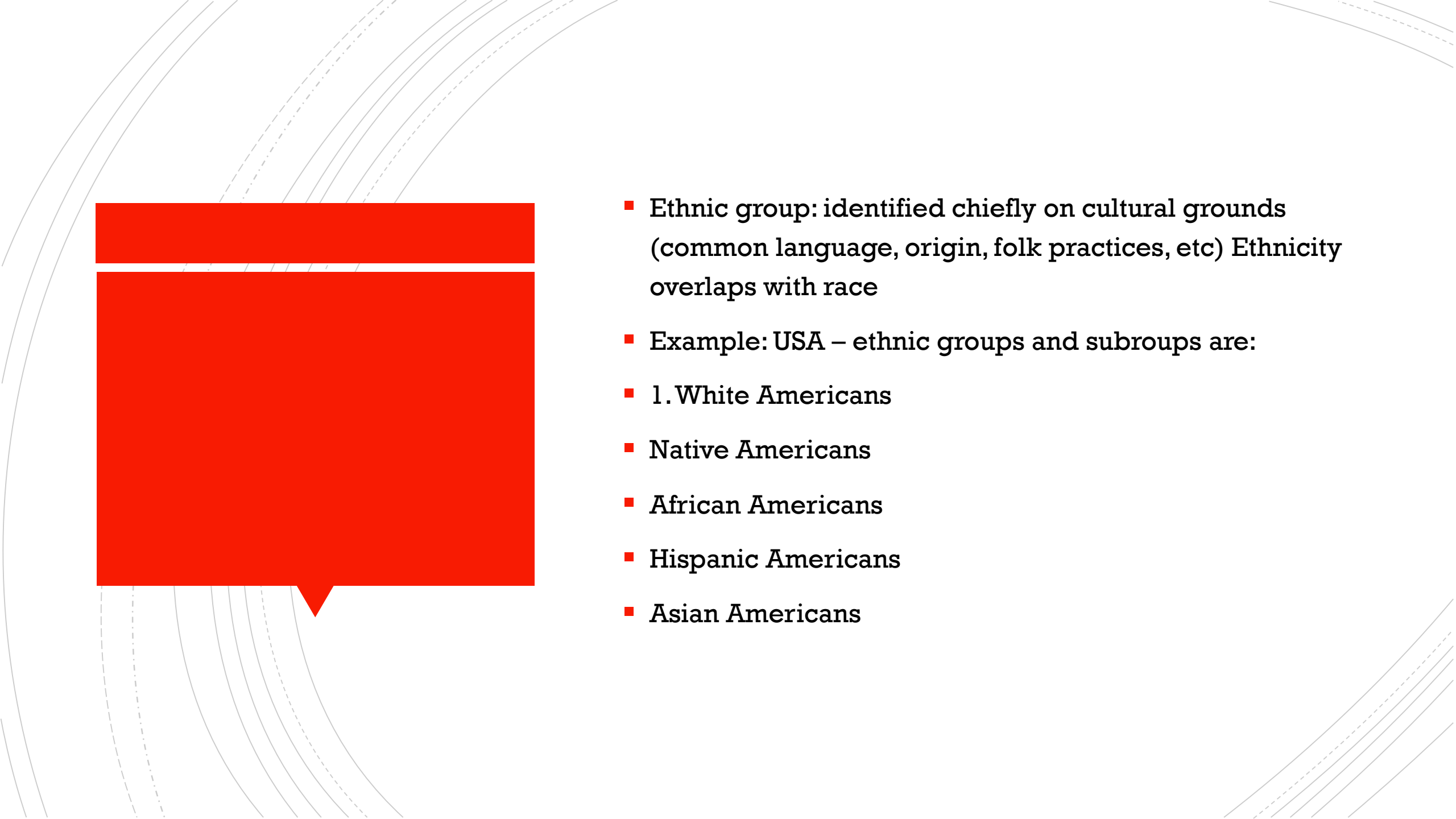
A distinction is usually made between gender and sex. **Sex** refers to a sum of biological differences forming two separate categories – male and female. **Gender**, on the other hand, refers to the expected qualities and behaviour that cultures assign to each sex. The behaviour that society expects from males and females is called a **gender role**. Gender roles, unlike sex, differ from one society to another, and change over time. For example, in some societies, women are dominant and men are supposed to be passive, emotional, and dependent. The gender variable (with its different roles in different societies) has, in common with sex, two variants – male and female.

Here are some linguistic features typical of female and male speech:

<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
<p>(a) Lexical hedges or fillers: e.g. <i>you know, sort of, kind of, you see</i></p> <p>(b) Tag questions: e.g. <i>isn't she, aren't you</i></p> <p>(c) Emotional adjectives: e.g. <i>divine, cute</i></p> <p>(d) Hypercorrect grammar</p> <p>(e) Superpolite forms: e.g. indirect requests and euphemisms</p> <p>(f) Avoidance of swearwords</p>	<p>(a) Boosting devices, intensifiers: e.g. <i>completely, absolutely, extremely</i></p> <p>(b) Avoidance of emotionally charged words: e.g. <i>divine, beautiful</i></p> <p>(c) Non-standard grammar</p> <p>(d) Swearwords</p> <p>(e) Frequent interruptions</p>

# Language and Race

- **Races: populations differing in their physical characteristics and hereditary traits**
- **Caucasoid**
- **Negroid**
- **Mongoloid**

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- Ethnic group: identified chiefly on cultural grounds (common language, origin, folk practices, etc) Ethnicity overlaps with race
  - Example: USA – ethnic groups and subgroups are:
    - 1. White Americans
    - Native Americans
    - African Americans
    - Hispanic Americans
    - Asian Americans


# Language and Culture

- **CULTURE:** social heritage of people. The learned and taught way of thinking, feeling, and acting transmitted from one generation to the next
- **CULTURE** – material and non-material
- **NON-MATERIAL:** three main components:
  - **Norms:** social rules of conduct – what is acceptable
  - **Values:** broad ideas – what is correct, desirable...
  - **Language:** socially structured system of units



# Language and Nation

- **NATION:** body of speakers associated with a particular territory, sufficiently conscious of its unit, seeking or possessing a government of its own.
- Prerequisites for its linguistic functioning are:
  - Common language
  - National language
  - Official language

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- **STANDARDIZATION:** a process of establishing a linguistic variety:
  - 1. Selection of optimal linguistic resources (corpus planning)
  - 2. Codification of the linguistic resources (normative stage)

A red speech bubble graphic with a white outline, containing the text 'Thank you!' and the email address 'pbojo@cambridge.org'. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

Thank you!

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