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## **A Review of Dialectology**

*(Chambers, J. K. Trudgill, P. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004,  
pp.216)*

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Dialectology is a very informative book written by J. K. Chambers and Peter Trudgill and published by Cambridge University Press. The book explains what dialectology is as a discipline, how geographical and social differences effect dialects, gives information about their boundaries, transitions and variations. Moreover, the book explains diffusion of dialects from sociolinguistic, lexical and geographical perspectives. It has twelve chapters. In each chapter, different dimensions of dialects are discussed in detail.

Dialect means the varieties which are grammatically as well as phonologically different from other varieties. It may come out as a result of geographical distances, which is called “geographical dialect continua”. For instance, in a country, village A and village C may have different dialects; however, the people may understand each under. On the other hand, village A and village Z may have different dialects but cannot understand each other. Dialects may also come out as a result of social classification of a community, which is called “social dialect continua”. The dialect the upper and lower class people use may be different. Moreover, there are some other dimensions that effect dialect which are not linguistic but

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political or cultural such as autonomy and heteronomy. Thus, in the first chapter the authors explain the term “dialect” and some factors affecting it to form a basis for the following chapters.

In the second chapter, the authors discuss some of the studies of dialect geography historically and the ultimate aim of them. They emphasize that dialect geography seeks to provide an empirical basis for conclusions about the linguistic variety that occurs in a certain scale. Furthermore, they give details about the methods of dialect geography research such as questionnaires, linguistic maps and informants. They provide examples of questionnaires conducted previously, explain the types and function of linguistic maps. Finally, they mention about the features of ideal informants in dialect geography research and limitations about informants as they may have been affected as a result of their mobility.

The third chapter focuses on the two disciplines, dialectology and linguistics, what they share and what they do not. The authors also imply that the traditional dialectology has been more isolated from other disciplines, while modern dialectology is proved to be highly interrelated with linguistics as it is seen in structural dialectology and generative dialectology.

The fourth chapter concentrates on a missing side of dialectology, which is urban dialectology. The focus has been on rural dialectology most of the time, and the reason for this can be the understanding of term “dialect” as the defected language mostly used in rural regions as stated in the first chapter. However, the authors state that all speakers have a social background as well as a regional location, and their speech indicates their social class, age group, and other social characteristics. Inspired by this fact, the authors discuss the components of research about urban dialectology in terms of the representativeness of the target group, gathering data, classifying informants and linguistic variable with some differences from rural dialectology research.

In the fifth chapter, the results of the research about social differentiation and language are discussed. The relationship between language and the variables such as social class, formal and casual styles, sex, ethnic group, social network and individual characteristics were examined. For instance, the relationship between language and the other variables was investigated through the use of /ng/ sound. Even if one can predict how the relationships are, reading about the information of language differentiations based on scientific studies makes it more interesting.

Chapter six considers correlations between variables such as social class, formality, style shift and their social significance. Here the authors emphasize the difference between indicators and markers. Markers are variables which are subjected to stylistic variation as well as sex, age, or class variations. Indicators are variables which are not involved in systematic stylistic variation. Besides markers and indicator, they mention about phonological contrast in linguistic studies and give the example of changes in modern English. For instance, the sound /j/ after /r/ in the pronunciation of words such as “rude” or “rule” was /rju:d/ and /rju:l/; however, it no longer occurs. About the study of linguistic change, the authors mention two types of study. One is Real Time study, which means investigating a community’s language and after twenty years doing a research again and analyzing the changes. The other one is Apparent Time study, which means comparing the speech of older and younger people. Finally, they explain how stylistic variation, sex and prestige may play a role in linguistic change and gives related examples from a study.

The seventh chapter introduces isoglosses as a marker of dialect variation and discusses their function and usefulness in dialectology. Isoglosses are lines that marks the boundaries between two regions differ with respect to some linguistic features. The authors, moreover, explain in which ways isoglosses may occur as being criss- cross, transition and relic areas by giving examples. They also mention about the variables that can be taken into consideration while categorizing and grading isoglosses. In short, the authors attempt to introduce linguistic and social factors which are to bear in mind while composing isoglosses.

In chapter eight, the contrasting side of isoglosses and transitions are mentioned as variability vanishes isogloss. The author states that transitions between dialects seems to be gradual, not abrupt, occurs as a result of the interaction between neighbors and here the Mixed and Fudged Lects are introduced which occur in this gradual process. These are explained through examples from a study carried out in England. Furthermore, the authors introduce factors effecting mapping the dialect regions, and they exemplify mapping variabilities about relic feature in west midlands, the interplay of social and geographical variation and mapping social variation directly .

In chapter nine, the authors bring two opposing views to the idea of variable in language as a structural unit. One is variability perceived as fully accidental and therefore unpredictable, and the other one is variability as being an essential phenomenon; thus, a structural unit equivalent to other structural units such as the phone, the phoneme and others.

They, on the other hand, give some examples related to implicational scales used in language studies. Moreover, they mention some important points about handling the quantitative data and about the importance of qualitative data at the same time by giving examples from dialect studies. Finally, the author introduces scales that can be used in quantifying geographic variables in the studies of dialectology.

Chapter ten starts with introducing two types of data, real time and apparent time. Real time means gathering data with the same subjects after a certain amount of time. Apparent time, on the other hand, means collecting data among people of different ages in the same community, while controlling other independent variables (sex, class, ethnicity). The authors continue by explaining innovators of change as variables that takes precedence over all others and discussing who the innovators of change are. In relation to innovators of change, they also have the readers discover the social factors behind the pattern of diffusion by presenting some studies from urban dialectology. Towards the end of the chapter, the authors discuss the words that undergo a phonological change one at a time by explaining the process of lexical diffusion. Thus, they enlighten researchers and people who are interested in dialectology and a component of it “sociolinguistic and lexical diffusions” by providing different point of views and examples.

In chapter eleven, the authors discuss the dimensions of geographical diffusion and the reasons of this innovation which makes an impact at different rates for different social groups. They introduce the term Spatial Diffusion of Language and the rise of it. They state that dialect geographers thought that dialect maps could be a research tool in investigating the possible route of linguistic change in enlightening problems such as the relative age of two current linguistic forms, consequently spatial diffusion has come to stages. Moreover, they assert that it often constitutes a reflection of the other types of diffusion. On the other hand, they discuss another issue that contributes to the study of geographical diffusion, which is Linguistic Area. Findings of studies related to geographical diffusion of language are interpreted to make issues clear. Furthermore, the role of sociolinguistics is stated as analyzing how geographical distribution of linguistics forms comes to be what it is now. They attempt to explain the construction of geographical diffusion through studies and provide a geolinguistic model accounting for the spread of the changes.

In chapter twelve, the authors summarize the book. They mention about the relationship of dialectology with some other disciplines such as anthropology, sociolinguistics

and geography and briefly give information about how these disciplines have worked together and how they have completed the studies of dialectology. Besides, the contribution of urban dialectology to rural dialectology is mentioned.

All in all, the book provides a detailed idea about the study of dialectology, from the early periods to the recent developments about it. It is clearly seen that the study of dialectology is quite interdisciplinary. Besides that, it is highly parallel with sociolinguistics, especially the studies of urban dialectology seems to be reasonably related. Without doubt, it provides a valuable introduction to the field of dialectology, its basic notions and research methodology. On the other hand, as the book has an academic use of language, it is hard to read at one sweep. The readers should take their time to internalize it and it takes the reader to the right destination if their aim is to have an exciting journey towards the field of dialectology.