

# Speech Style and Style Shifting

In 1960s, William Labov, a sociolinguist spoke about speech style.

## Speech Style:

A social frame of language use is called Speech Style. It is a way of speaking.

## Types of Speech Styles:

There are two types of speech styles.

1. Formal/ Careful Speech Style
2. Informal/ Casual Speech Style

## Formal Style of Speech:

The speaker pays more careful attention in the speech. It is also called **Careful** style.

## Informal Style of Speech:

The speaker pays less attention in the speech. It is also called **Casual** Style.

## Style Shifting:

A change from one speech style to another is called Style Shifting. An individual speaker changes his style often. There are no single style speakers. The context of the speech influences style shifting in an individual.

## Types of Style Shifting:

### 1. Casual to Formal

This shift occurs when the speaker reduces casual speech features, such as pronunciation of the **-ing** ending, not using the non-standard speech features e.g. not using double negatives, not using slang or taboo terms. They tend to use lot of Latinate terms.

E.g. The speakers will not use **I ain't doin' nuttin.** (Usage of double negative and / n/ pronunciation of -ing,

Instead they will use **I am not doing anything.**

### 2. Formal to Informal:

This shift occurs when the speakers start using informal speech features such as usage of **ain't**

**The formal as well as informal shift occurs at the level of**

**Phonology**

**Grammar**

**Lexicon**

# Speech Style and Style Shifting

## Semantics

## Pragmatics

### 3. Shifts in dialects and Register:

This shift occurs when the speaker changes from one regional, ethnic, and social style to another.

The speaker's knowledge of the old style and the new one makes this happen. (Positive

Sometimes this kind of style shift happens when the speaker tries to make fun of the new style. (Negative )

Middle class speakers shift their style of speaking in the direction of upper middle- class style. In their attempt, they try to use the careful style.

### Hyper Correction:

It happens when the speakers can produce different forms or pronunciation in an attempt to 'speak better'.

The lower middle class and upper working class are involved in this hyper correction, as they want a better social status.

### Prestige:

The two varieties of prestige are

#### 1.Overt Prestige

#### 2.Covert Prestige

#### Overt Prestige:

The Speakers who shift their speaking style to better their social status is because of their Overt Prestige.

#### Covert Prestige:

Certain Speakers do not try to shift their style at all. This 'hidden' status of a speech style explains why working - class people do not change their style.

Even younger middle- class speakers have the Covert Prestige. They love to say **I ain't doin' nuttin** instead of **I am not doing anything**.

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