

Language and society

Downes, William, author

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Abstrak

Language is indissolubly linked with the members of the society in which it is spoken, and social factors are inevitably reflected in their speech. In this accessible introduction, Downes surveys the various ways that language can be studied as a social phenomenon. He discusses the known relationships between language variation and large-scale social factors, showing how the variation runs along 'fault lines in social structure', such as divisions between social classes, the sexes and different ethnic groups. Topics covered include domains of language use, language change, code-switching, speech as social action and the nature of meaning and understanding. This thoroughly revised edition includes an up-to-date analysis of language standardisation, language conflict and planning, and a critique of the pragmatic theory of communication. It explains and illustrates the notion of register, and examines the issues surrounding language ideology and power.