

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

B.1. Theoretical Framework

This research primarily focuses on the sociolinguistics field, specifically the social dialect or sociolect. The sociolect theory by Holmes (2013) is employed in this study by applying it to the dialogue of the characters in “*A Streetcar Named Desire*” 1951 movie version. The main focus of this research is the usage of sociolect by the characters in the movie who have different social classes and how the social backgrounds of each character influenced the use of sociolect in their dialogue.

In this chapter, an elaboration on sociolinguistics as the base of knowledge for this study is provided. Specifically, this study discusses the field of language variation referred to as sociolect. A several discussions about the object of the research, “*A Streetcar Named Desire*” 1951 movie version, is provided as well. Alongside its storyline, explanations of the social class and the historical background of the United States' circumstances in the 1940s—where the story sets—ia given as supplementary informations to support this research output.

B.1.1. Sociolinguistics

The term sociolinguistics is derived from the two words, sociology and linguistics. Sociology, according to Britannica, is a social science that studies human societies, human interactions, and the processes that

preserve and change them by examining the constituent parts of the societies such as institutions, communities, populations, and gender, racial, or age groups. It also discusses social status, social mobility, social change, and societal disorder. Meanwhile, linguistics, according to Oxford Learner Dictionaries, means the scientific study of language. It is concerned with the vocabulary and grammar of languages (Matthew, 2005).

The study of language that is concerned with all aspects that exist and occur in society, therefore, is called sociolinguistics. Wardhaugh (2010) defines sociolinguistics as the study of the social variation of language. He stated that in sociolinguistics, the data for the analysis tend to be sought, in order to create a generalization about language in society, yet also to question the findings and the process (Wardhaugh, 2015). Van Dijk (2009) highlighted a similar concept, where he argued that sociolinguistics explores the relationship between language and its sociocultural context.

Hymes (2020) emphasizes that there are three orientations of the main viewpoint in sociolinguistics, namely:

- a. Social as well as linguistics refers to the social issues that influence language and its use in a particular society.
- b. Socially realistic linguistics refers to the extended linguistic issues that focus on society's speech, notably variation and validity.
- c. Socially constituted linguistics recognizes the view that social function gives the shape of language by identifying the social process

by which linguistic characteristics are selected and organized together.

In this way, it is undeniably proven how strongly linked language and society have always been.

According to Heller (1984), there are two subfields of sociolinguistics, namely interactionist sociolinguistics and variationist sociolinguistics. The focus of interactionist sociolinguistics is more on the social significance of language usage, as well as what language use can reveal about social processes. Variationist sociolinguistics, on the other hand, concentrates more on how language and social systems interact, and how language changes as a result of how language varieties are distributed in society.

Sociolinguistics focuses on two different aspects distinguished in two different terms. The first aspect, microsociolinguistics, focuses on the language system that is influenced by social factors. Meanwhile, macrosociolinguistics, the second aspect, focuses on the social distribution of language and how it relates to social processes, set these two basic concepts apart (Fishman cited in Heller, 1984). Additionally, Hudson in Wardhaugh (2015) supports those claims in which he defines macrosociolinguistics as the study of society in relation to language, while microsociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society.

From the explanation above, therefore, this research remains focused on the subfields of variationist sociolinguistics and microsociolinguistics because its primary objective is in line with the purpose of this study, which is to investigate how speakers' use of language to communicate with one another was influenced by their social circumstances. One of the discussions in sociolinguistics that is focused on this area is called a language variation.

B.1.2. Language Variation

Language variation relates to differences in the ways a language is used according to regional, social, and contextual factors (Trask, 2007). He claims that the issues of language variation include all elements of language, such as phonemes, morphemes, grammatical constructions, and meanings. Variations in language use among groups of people appear in pronunciation, lexical choice, and preferences for a particular pattern of grammatical form.

Language variations are distinguished into three types of categories which based on the geographic and social background of the speakers, the medium that is used, and the subject of the conversation (Hartman and Stork cited in Setyowati and Setiawati, 2021). According to Chaer and Agustina (1995), there are four types of language variations based on the speakers, namely:

a. Idiolect

Language variation that is acquired by a particular individual, concerns the voice color, lexical choice, language style, and order of sentences of the speaker. It occurs very personally and the trait is totally up to the speaker itself. For an instance, a dialogue below shows the use of idiolect in the language spoken by Huck, from the well-known novel *"The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn"* (Twain, 1884):
"Pap warn't in a good humor—so he was his natural self."

b. Dialect

Language variation that is spoken by a certain group of people who live all together in one particular place, region, or area. For instance, instead of saying "hello", Southern American greets people by saying "howdy" (Cortez, 2022).

c. Sociolect

Language variation that is associated with social class. It has relation to all the personal social issues of the speakers such as age, gender, occupation, education level, and economic level. The example, taken from Scene 3 of *"A Streetcar Named Desire"*, can be seen below:

EUNICE : Stella?

STELLA : Yes, Eunice?

EUNICE : You tell them guys the kettle's on the stove.

The sociolect occurs in Eunice's dialogue where she uses "them guys" instead of "them" or "the guys" to address a group of men.

d. Temporal Dialect

Language variation that is used by a certain social group at a particular time. This occurs in the development of the English language—Old, Middle, Early Modern, and Modern—that is always changed. As an example, Shakespeare’s Sonnet 11 entitled “*As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou growest*” which was published in 1609 used Early Modern English dialect.

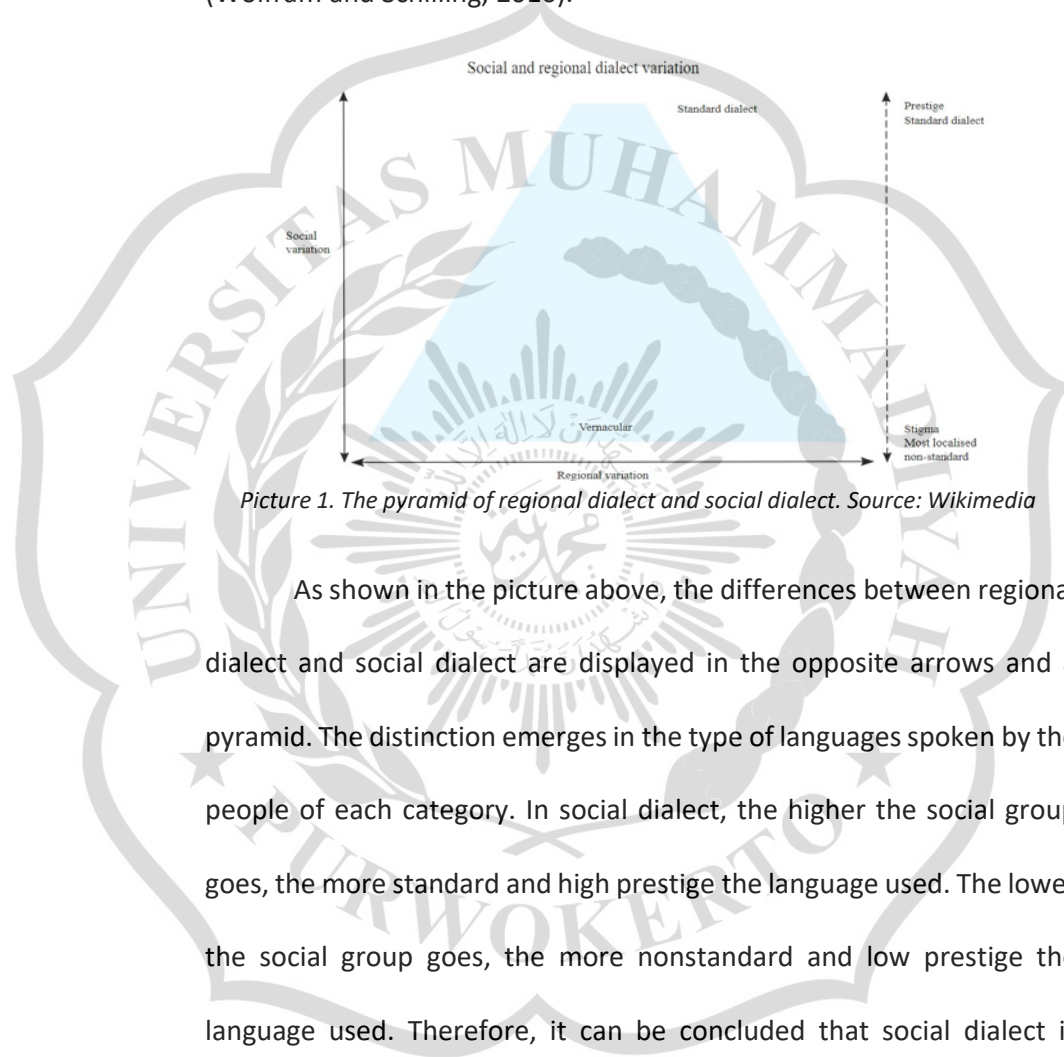
B.1.3. Dialect

A dialect is a variation in grammar and vocabulary in addition to sound variation (Ellis, 1999). It is a complex concept that makes one group of speakers noticeably differ from another group of speakers of the same language (Barzan and Heydari, 2019). Hence, dialect can be said as a variety of a particular language that is spoken by a group of speakers that is signaled by systematic markers such as syntactical, phonological, and grammatical (Budiarsa, 2017).

Even so, dialect also often subsumes by many linguists with differences in accent (Lyons, 1981). The difference between them occurs in their variations. Dialect emphasizes the most variations in terms of lexical choice and grammatical form, while accent focuses on pronunciation variations (Lyons, 1981).

Dialect, according to Spolsky (1998), denotes the variations that are concerned with something regionally or socially. Though mostly the

term is addressed the speech form based on regional factors, dialect is also able to be defined by social class or ethnicity (Merriam Webster). A dialect that is associated with social class can be called sociolect (Wolfram and Schilling, 2016).



Picture 1. The pyramid of regional dialect and social dialect. Source: Wikimedia

As shown in the picture above, the differences between regional dialect and social dialect are displayed in the opposite arrows and a pyramid. The distinction emerges in the type of languages spoken by the people of each category. In social dialect, the higher the social group goes, the more standard and high prestige the language used. The lower the social group goes, the more nonstandard and low prestige the language used. Therefore, it can be concluded that social dialect is always either a high-prestige language spoken by upper social groups or a nonstandard language spoken by lower social groups.

On the other hand, the regional dialect does not differentiate the language by its prestige level. Rather, a regional dialect is spoken widely

by the individuals of the social groups who live all together in a particular region, area, or place. The dialect they used functioned as a unique character for their social identity, which could represent what kind of place they are living in.

B.1.4. Sociolect

Sociolect is a language variation distinguished by the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation of speech produced by people from various social groups (Holmes, 2013). The term also used to describe the differences in speech which associated with various social groups or social classes (Wardhaugh, 2015). The essential sociolect identifiers which occur in a particular speech group include social class, age, gender, and ethnicity (Agha, 2007). The basic idea that underlies the sociolect is that people speak in accordance with their social group they belong to.

According to Labov (2012), individuals are trained to learn how to communicate in a way that fits the general pattern of their own groups. People determine their speech production by associating it with their environment, which encompasses their languages, habits, and behaviors. As the branch of linguistic study, sociolect examines the ways people speak in regard to their social differences (Wardhaugh, 2015). In conclusion, sociolect is a language variation that is always correlated with social status and class (Chaer and Agustina, 1995).

Holmes (2013) claimed that speech conveys social information. Since the individuals of social groups share similar characteristics of speech, it then becomes important for their speech output to distinguish one social group from another in order to represent their social identity. Thus, the usage of sociolect can indicate what social class the speakers are from. Furthermore, the sociolect is then classified into two types:

1. Standard Dialect

According to Wardhaugh (2015), dialects are often connected to the standard variety due to its latter's sociopolitical salience. He also mentions that the standard variety of any language is actually the preferred dialect of that language to serve as either the model or the norm for other varieties. As the examples, Parisian French or Florentine Italian. This made the standard dialect is sometimes regarded as the language itself rather than dialect.

The standard dialect is spoken by well-educated English speakers all over the world, according to Holmes (2013). It is taught in schools, used in national broadcasting media, used by governments, is required for international communications, and is frequently acquired by people with prestigious jobs such as doctors and lawyers (Holmes, 2013; Barzan and Heydari, 2019).

Historically, the standard dialect was created between the 15th and 16th centuries. The spelling and grammar were based on the

dialects spoken by people who lived in London and the East Midlands. Later, it was used by the high-class Londoners who worked in government. Eventually, the standard dialect became the formal language of literature, science, politics, and education (Nevalainen cited in Stein, 2007).

An example of standard dialect use in “*A Streetcar Named Desire*” 1951 movie version can be seen in the dialogue below:

BLANCHE : Hello, Stanley. Here I am, all freshly bathed and scented and feeling like a brand-new human being.
STANLEY : Oh, that's good.
BLANCHE : Will you excuse me while I put on my pretty new dress?
STANLEY : Go ahead.

The dialogue above, taken from Scene 2, involves two characters. Blanche is an aristocrat, and Stanley is a factory worker. The language used by Blanche showcases the well-structured grammatical form. She also picks formal vocabulary up to put in her sentences, which actually aims to address very simple actions that have been done and will be done by her, which are finishing take bath and putting on a new dress.

The way she uses her language is supported by her social background. Blanche was born, raised, and grew up in an environment of wealthy upper class. Coming from a noble-prestige family, Blanche pays more attention to the way she speaks by speaking in the polite

manner of language and producing a clear pronunciation of each word. She also works as an English teacher in a high school, so it is reasonable for her to execute her speech in such a way.

2. Nonstandard Dialect

Nonstandard dialect, as opposed to standard dialect, refers to linguistic forms that do not become part of Standard English (Holmes, 2013). It refers to any dialect of English that differs from the standard dialect. The nonstandard dialect is linked with lower-status social groups, which is the social group that spoke the dialect the vast majority of the time.

Non-linguists sometimes use the word nonstandard to describe 'bad' or 'incorrect' English (Nordquist, 2019). According to Trudgill (1992), nonstandard dialect differs most significantly from standard dialect at the level of grammatical. Nonstandard grammatical forms, for example, include multiple negations, whereas standard dialect would view multiple negations to be a grammatical error.

An example of nonstandard dialect in "A Streetcar Named Desire" 1951 movie version can be seen in the dialogue below:

EUNICE : What's the matter, honey? **You lost?**
BLANCHE : I'm looking for Elysian Fields.
EUNICE : This is Elysian Fields. **What number you looking for?**
BLANCHE : Six forty-two.
EUNICE : **You don't need to look no further.**

The dialogue above, taken from Scene 1, involves two characters. Blanche is an aristocrat, and Eunice is a housewife of a factory worker husband. The grammatical pattern used by Eunice showcases the missing of copula 'are' in her dialogues, specifically "You lost?" and "What number you looking for?". Also, she employs double negations in her last dialogue.

The way Eunice produces her language is influenced by her social background. She belongs to a lower social group and is married to a man who works as a factory worker. The environment and surroundings around in her neighborhood apparently speak a similar way as her, which is the nonstandard dialect, where the speakers tend to speak in 'incorrect' language and structured a 'bad' grammatical form.

B.1.5. Social Class

People live in a society where it comprises groups of people who have several distinct characteristics. Berger (1967) stated that society is created by humans, and it influences the shape of the individuals who live in it. Every group builds its own identity in order to distinguish itself from another by sharing several similarities, such as goals, interaction, interdependence in relation, structure, and unity (Forsyth, 2010). As a result, they will establish a social identity, to differentiate them from other groups.

Tajfel (1979) defines social identity as a sense of membership in a group. This feeling of belonging leads to pride in one's own self-regard. Social identity is constructed from a variety of identities, namely age, ability, ethnicity and race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religion or spirituality, and social status. Those characteristics are built as the boundaries between one group and another. The social identity that is examined in this study is the socioeconomic status-based social identity, known as social class.

Social class refers to the interest that is commonly shared in terms of economic level and status or prestige by people in particular groups in certain circumstances (Weber, 1947). It is a crucial aspect of examining the value of the people of each social class. Chambers (2003) stated that social class is divided into three types, namely upper class, middle class, and lower class.

Since social class exists as a concept where people are categorized according to their resemblance, there are several elements that set one social class apart from another. One of them is language. Aside from its primary role as a communication tool, language allows humans to develop and claim their own identities.

Identity, thus, is defined as the linguistics construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories' (Kroskrity cited in Wardhaugh, 2015). Trudgill (2000), then, completed by stating that

language functions to establish the social relationship between people. Language choices and usage are both crucial factors in people's perceptions of themselves in relation to their natural and social environments (Blot, 1986). In conclusion, there is no doubt that language has always had a very close connection with one's social status.

B.1.6. A Streetcar Named Desire

a. Overview

"A Streetcar Named Desire" was originally written by Tennessee Williams as a play. Upon its premiere in 1947, it broke stereotypes of common plays, which were dominated at the time by musicals at the time, by reflecting the society after the Great Depression in the 1930s and World War II in the 1940s which hugely affected the majority of the people in the United States (National Theatre). Four years after the play's success, an American movie director, Elia Kazan, who also directed the Broadway production, adapted it into a movie.

Takes place between May and September in the 1940s after the War, several themes are covered in the movie including class conflict, desire and death, fantasy versus reality, toxic masculinity, and female dependency. The most notable one is the class conflict between the Old South and New South. The Old South was acknowledged mostly for wealth and aristocracy. They stayed in a mansion, owned large amount of land and plantation, and were

segregated from the common people. Meanwhile, the New South, the working-class generation, did not make much money. They were all about impermanent personal ownership and integration.

b. Storyline

Belle Reve, the ancestral home of DuBois in Auriol, Mississippi, has been lost to a creditor. The only family member left is Blanche, who works as a high school English teacher. Before the loss, Blanche had stayed behind to care for their elderly and dying family. The youngest, Stella, had left the home ten years before to New Orleans, Louisiana, to make a new life and marry Stanley. The story started when Blanche, with no home to go to, is decided to pay a visit to Stella's cramped flat in the lower class neighborhood in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Living in a suburban area while still channeling aristocratic manners, the superiority of Blanche wins Stanley's curiosity. He believes that Blanche has swindled them out of Stella's and his share of the family inheritance. When Stanley tries to find out the reasons for Belle Reve's loss, Blanche tries to persuade Stella to leave her husband, stating that Stanley is violent, apelike, and animalistic, which they should not be living with altogether.

When the tension between Blanche and Stanley arises, Blanche meets Mitch, one of Stanley's best friends. They become close and fall in love. Stanley later discovers the truth of Blanche's

disreputable, sordid past. He reveals to Stella and Mitch, claiming that she was kicked out of her school due to her affair with a seventeen-year-old, and she was evicted from Auriol due to her numerous sexual liaisons with the people in the city.

Blanche then lived her life unable to distinguish reality and fantasy after her past was leaked. She keeps hallucinating that she is invited to a cruise vacation by her old boyfriend. The reality is that Stella told her to rest in the country in which the appointment has been prepared by herself. Ironically, it covers another reality that Blanche will be sent to asylum since both Stella and Stanley cannot stand with her any longer.

B.1.7. The United States in the 1940s

The situation depicted in "*A Streetcar Named Desire*" is based on real-life events in the United States following the Great Depression and World War II. The United States was still in the process of recovery during the 1940s because those two enormous tragedies directly impacted all people who lived in the country and significantly changed the cycle of society, economics, and so on.

The economic situation in the 1930s following the stock market crisis resulted in massive unemployment, decreasing investment, and failed industries (History). The majority of people were suffering just to make ends meet. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the industrial sectors

began to shift into war-oriented production in order to manufacture weapons. After the war, it was revived to supply daily necessities for people.

To repair the country's conditions, the government insisted on putting all Americans back to work by paying them to work on infrastructure and also assisting artists and writers in revitalizing American culture through a program known as WPA or Work Progress Administration (Bickham, 2017). "*A Streetcar Named Desire*" was one of the literary works that emerged during the period and gained massive fame for its authentic theme by depicting a realistic representation of what Americans were going through at the time. Class conflict is one of the most prevalent social circumstances discussed in the work.

The class struggle is represented by the friction between the two opposing generations, in which the New South perceives the Old South to be overly privileged and judgmental, while the Old South views the New South to be disgusting and disturbing. This depicted how the life impact of the Great Depression and World War II caused a shift in societal standards in the United States.

The Old South was known for its wealth and aristocracy. They were nobles who lived in a mansion, owned a large tract of land, and were segregated from the rest of society (Bickham, 2017; Spires, 2021). Meanwhile, the New South, the working-class generation of the South, did not have much money and did not live in luxury. They were about fleeing

personal ownership and social and racial integration (Bickham, 2017; Spires, 2021) They mirrored the shifting scene that was occurring at the time.

The Old South began to crumble eventually. In many ways, the Depression and the War were a great equalizer, since the ultimate result was there were no more super-wealthy people; even those who had managed to own lands and property could no longer hold them. Yet, the New South's society continued to progress. They moved to the city, lived in a flat, worked in a factory, and played sports in their leisure time. The integration of class and race began as well. People managed to merge with one another.

B.2. Review of Related Research

This study used several sources as references, as well as to support the data analysis process. The main ones are three journal articles that focus on the use of sociolect in literary works and movies.

The first is an article entitled “*A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Freedom Writers Movie*” (Zewitra, 2019). It investigated the use of language and its relation to the social context. The data is derived from the characters' utterances by employing Holmes' theory of sociolect. The utterances are analyzed based on the use of phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. The findings are the use of standard language used by the upper class white American, and the use of nonstandard language by multiethnic students from Asia, South America, and Africa. Their social, family and educational backgrounds are the factors influencing the use of sociolect.

The second article is entitled "*Speech and Social Class in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights*" (Ali, 2019). It examines the characters' speech in terms of spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. The data is the characters' speeches, which are analyzed to identify the effects of their social background on the language use choice. The study applied Chapman's theory, which claims that human social connections indicate class division through social class structures showing differentiation in language use. The upper class speak Standard English, while the lower class spoke Pidgin, which was highly impacted by vernacular language.

The third article is entitled "*An Analysis of Social Dialect in My Fair Lady Movie*" (Khodijah, 2021). It discusses the sociolect used by the characters, which reflected their social backgrounds. It used Holmes' theory, which eventually discovered that there are four types of dialects spoken, including sociolect based on social status, sex/gender, age, and ethnicity. The data is gathered from the dialogue of the characters.

Based on the review of the three previous pieces of research, they all discuss the language variation based on the social class of the speakers' social class, called sociolect. Individuals in each social class have distinct identities, including social status, family background, education level, occupation, gender, age, and ethnicity. Those factors influence how they produce and organize their language to build communication with their surroundings. Thus, it is possible to conclude that sociolect occurs as a variation of the language spoken by different social classes based on those three researches.

Therefore, the findings of the previous researches set the direction of this research to investigate the sociolect that occurs in *“A Streetcar Named Desire”* 1951 movie version. This leads to the discussion and findings of this study by providing the types of sociolect found and its examinations of each feature which is influenced strongly by the various social backgrounds of each character.

In general, the major purpose set by the researcher for undertaking this study is due to the few discussions on both the topics of sociolect, as well as the discussion of *“A Streetcar Named Desire”* from a linguistic perspective. Besides, the sociolect occurring in the movie has never been examined as far as the researcher acknowledges.

Although the related studies also employed a similar issue and theory, this research distinguished itself as a complementary study to present the development of language. As the previous researches show the sociolect use in the 1800s, 1910s, and 1990s, this research aims to complete the missing puzzle of the gap of the year of sociolect development by placing itself in the middle as *“A Streetcar Named Desire”* presents the language used in the year of 1940s.

Another purpose the researcher would like to convey is how the English language is always shifting from time to time. Its development is also strongly influenced by the diverse society that is always changing and always dynamically progressing. Hence, the researcher hopes that the study of sociolect can be recognized as one of the elements in linguistics that bring a huge impact on the dynamics of English language development.