The Study Of Dialect: An Introduction To Dialectology

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Dialectology, obviously, is the study of dialect and dialects. But what exactly is a dialect? In common usage, of course, a dialect is a substandard, low-status, often rustic form of language, generally associated with the peasantry, the working class, or other groups lacking in prestige. Dialect is also a term which is often applied to forms of language, particularly those spoken in more isolated parts of the world, which have no written form. We will, on the contrary, accept the notion that all speakers are speakers of at least one dialect that standard English, for example, is just as much a dialect as any other form of English and that it does not make any kind of sense to suppose that any one dialect is in any way linguistically superior to any other. The study of dialect: An introduction to dialectology. London: Andre Deutsch Ltd. SAUSSURE, F. (1916). Cours de linguistique générale, ed. English Dialects: An Introduction. London: Athlone Press. WEINREICH, U. (1954). “Is a structural dialectology possible?” Word, 10, pp: 388-400. WILLIAMS, C.H. (1988). Language in a geographic context. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd. The structural approach to dialect study sees the treatment of linguistic forms as related to parts of a wider system or structure, as opposed to the isolated approach advocated in traditional dialect study (Chambers & Trudgill, 1998:33). Neil Bowen, Swansea University (2011) What is dialect and why study it?