

Discussion questions for 'Standard English'

The subtitle asks two important questions about 'Standard English'?

1. What is it?
2. What is it good for?
3. What's the distinction between 'non-standard' and 'ungrammatical' for linguists?
4. How do those notions, along with concepts like 'formality', help us think about language in its social context?
5. How roles do schools play in this process? Should we work to change that? If so, how?

The other thing this chapter does is talk about how non-linguists think about linguistic variation.

6. How do Americans from different parts of the country seem to think about who speaks 'correct' English? 'Pleasant' English'?
7. What kinds of factors — real world, stereotypical, imagined — might shape these views?
8. Benson's work shows us something about how Wisconsinites perceive linguistic difference within the state. To what extent does this reflect something real about dialect differences?

This is an area of exciting work and great potential for future work, especially in Wisconsin. Keep that in mind for projects!