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**Level: 3rd Year**

**Subject: Linguistics (Sociolinguistics)**

**1. Introduction to language Contact**

Within a single nation there may exist a myriad of language. The more communication barriers are, the stronger linguistic differences will be. Barriers can be regional (e.g. mountains) as they can be social (religion, ethnicity, etc). In the present era, isolation is less pronounced (mass media, and transportation)

Wars conquests slavery migration trade urbanization etc (**contact motivations**)

Contact between different groups is obviously a social phenomenon; a phenomenon that very often incorporates a *linguistic* dimension. Once different linguistic groups are in (direct/distant) contact, they have a natural, spontaneous tendency to seek ways to bypass the language barrier facing them. The more frequently they are in contact, the stronger the influence on their languages is. Such influence depends a great deal on some factors, notably long-term contact. Interesting scholarship about language contact has started during the second half of the 20th century, especially with Weinreich (Languages in Contact, 1953).Since then, a plethora of research has mushroomed the literature. Language contact may lead/involve phenomena, such as lingua francas, pidgins and creoles, bilingualism and its associated phenomena, like code switching, borrowing and language death.

**1.1 Diglossia: Functional distribution of Codes**

The concept of diglossia gained fame with Charles Ferguson and his influential article of 1959, in which diglossia is used to refer to a situation “where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play” (Ferguson, 1972:232). Ferguson’s definition makes a division between a High (H) variety and a Low (L) variety. Such varieties are “linguistically related to but significantly different from” one another (Trudgill, 1992:27)

Ferguson (1959) approached diglossia on the basis of four speech communities. In all such cases, Fergsuon identifies a high (H) variety and a low one:

**H L**

**Arab World** Standard Arabic vs. Colloquial Arabic

**Greece** Katharevousa vs. Dimotiki

**Haiti** French vs. Haitian Creole

**German-speaking Switzerland** German vs. Swiss German

Ferguson set out to expound this sociolinguistic condition under nine rubrics which are prioritized according to **function**, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon, and phonology. The **functional distribution**, or the specialization of function, is the chief feature of diglossia. This implies that H and L are used in different settings and for different purposes. About this, Wardhaugh (2006:89) argues that “a diglossic situation exists in a society when it has two distinct codes which show clear functional separation; that is, one code is employed in one set of circumstances, and the other in an entirely different set”. The identification of the H and L varieties does not pose a problem, suffice it to say that “H and L have disjoint functions: where H is appropriate, L is inappropriate and vice versa” (Sebba, 2011: 450)

**1.1.1 Characterizing Diglossia with reference to Arabic**

* Function:

Standard Arabic (SA for short) has the H status and functions. It is allocated to official and formal contexts. It is used in literacy and for literary purposes, giving political speeches, delivering religious preaches, broadcasting news, etc. Colloquial Arabic (a number of mutually intelligible regional dialects) represents the L variety and is attached to informality, used in casual conversations in the home, street and the market. It is also used in informal TV and radio programmes (soaps).

However, it is of significance to mention that overlaps that nullify the complementary distribution of SA and Colloquial Arabic are abundant in that H and L are not always kept separate. For example, Ferguson insists that the function dictates the choice of the linguistic variety, but counter examples are ample. Ferguson claims that political speech is presented in H, but it actually appears in the two forms of Arabic. Many times, politicians, being competent or not in SA, favour Colloquial Arabic to address the mass as they see it the language of the people and hence more appropriate to get the message across.

* Prestige:

SA enjoys high prestige and is regarded as a revered (sacred) language due to its association with the Quran. It is also highly valued by virtue of its association with a bulk of literature ranging from pre-Islamic poetry to the very contemporary writings. Colloquial Arabic is often referred to as *dialect*, *colloquial* or *vernacular* (*al-āmmiyya* or *ad-dārija*)*,* and felt to be less worthy and broken. These attitudes remain societal judgments , however. It follows that, on linguistic grounds, all varieties have the same footing as far as they fulfill communication tasks.

* Literary Heritage:

Just like other diglossic communities, most of the Arabic literature is available in SA. Literature in Colloquial Arabic may at best relate to folk literature.

* acquisition:

SA is the mother tongue of no one in the society. It is a ‘learned’ variety, generally accessible through schooling. Colloquial Arabic is the true mother tongue, being naturally acquired since babyhood.

* standardization:

SA is the only standard variety. There had (has) been many attempts, especially during the colonial era, to standardize national dialects of Arabic (namely in the Middle East and the Levant). Colonial masters, and later some native followers, pushed towards such enterprise on the basis that Colloquial Arabic is the mother tongue, and as such it is the medium which ensures better academic attainment and learning efficiency. However, this project has always faced failure and no regional vernacular could become a standard norm.

* Stability:

SA is a stable linguistic system because of its association with writing and education. Colloquial Arabic displays variation and is more subject to change.

* Grammar:

SA has a more complex grammar (complex tense systems, gender systems, etc). Colloquial Arabic grammar is more simplified.

* Lexicon:

SA has a rich dictionary. The lexicon of Colloquial Arabic is often less and many times draws from H vocabulary to fill in lexical gaps. Besides internal borrowings, Colloquial Arabic includes a large number of loanwords which are largely taken from English and French (depending on the colonial past of the region).

* Phonology:

SA has a fixed and organized phonological system. The phonemic system of Colloquial Arabic might contain elements that are of a foreign origin, such as /P/and /v/.

It should be made clear that Ferguson’s conceptualization is not always valid nor it is enough comprehensive to cover all diglossic communities for it has a number of flaws which have since been pointed out. In some situations, the nine rubrics meet what Ferguson suggests; in some others only some rubrics are met while the others are missed. For instance, when dealing with the Fergusonian criterion of prestige in Switzerland, Hogg et al (1984)argue that we would maintain that High German is *not* afforded greater prestige or status than Swiss German.

**1.1.2 Fishman’s Further Elaboration of Diglossia**

By 1967 Ferguson’s original concept had undergone some changes when Fishman refined the definition arguing that diglossia can also be extended to cover situations where two (or more) unrelated, or at least historically distant, language varieties are used for different functions. This is referred to as ‘extended diglossia’. As an illustration, Fishman (1967) cites Paraguay as a case in point where Spanish (H variety) and Guarani (an Indian language genetically unrelated to Spanish) fulfill different functions throughout the community. In his reformulation of the concept of diglossia, Fishman draws a boundary between diglossia and bilingualism. As such, Fishman stresses the point that the former characterizes the societal level (a matter of sociologists and sociolinguists), whereas the latter is analyzed at the individual level (a matter of psychologists and psycholinguists).

The point that should be emphasized is that both Ferguson’s formulation and Fishman’s extension of the notion of diglossia firmly stress the complementary distribution of the two existing codes. The rubric of ‘function’ remains the cornerstone of diglossia and, as Fasold (1984:53) puts it, “only function remains unchallenged; it is the very heart and soul of the diglossia concept”.

**Assignment**: Characterize diglossia in Algeria