

DIGLOSSIA: PART 2

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

- Diglossia:

in some speech communities there is “one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play”

(Ferguson 2000 [1959]: 65), one of which is a *superposed variety, that is*, not a primary “native” variety, but one learnt in addition to the native variety.

“The varieties are called H and L, the first being generally a standard variety used for ‘high’ purposes and the second often a ‘low’ spoken vernacular. [...]

- L is typically acquired at home as a mother tongue [...]
- H, on the other hand, is learned through schooling and never at home, and is related to institutions outside the home.”

Ferguson's 9 criteria for determining diglossia (2000 [1959])

1. function
2. prestige
3. literary heritage
4. acquisition
5. standardisation
6. stability
7. grammar
8. lexicon
9. phonology

2. Prestige. In all the defining languages the speakers regard H as superior to L in a number of respects. Sometimes the feeling is so strong that H alone is regarded as real and L is reported "not to exist." Speakers of Arabic, for example, may say (in L) that so-and-so doesn't know Arabic. This normally means he doesn't know H, although he may be a fluent, effective speaker of L. If a non-speaker of Arabic asks an educated Arab for help in learning to speak Arabic the Arab will normally try to teach him H forms, insisting that these are the only ones to use. Very often, educated Arabs will maintain that they never use L at all, in spite of the fact that direct observation shows that they use it constantly in all ordinary conversation.

Situation 'high' variety 'low' variety

- Arabic: Classic Arabic Various regional colloquial varieties
- Swiss: German Standard German Swiss German
- Haitian: Standard French Haiti Creole
- Greek: Katharévousa Dhimotiki

Fishman's extended diglossia

1. Both Diglossia and bilingualism
2. Diglossia without bilingualism
3. Bilingualism without diglossia
4. Neither diglossia nor bilingualism

Both diglossia and bilingualism clearly defined or separate functions

e.g. Spanish (H) and Guaraní (a typologically unrelated indigenous language) in Paraguay "where almost the entire population speaks both" (83)

Bilingualism without diglossia

the two languages or varieties lack clearly defined or separate functions

- may be indicative of "rapid social change, of great social unrest, of widespread abandonment of prior norms before the consolidation of new ones" (85) - prone to be unstable and transitional (87)

e.g. industrialisation in the Western world with means of production from one speech community (H) and labour force from another (L) language shift from L to H

Diglossia without bilingualism

two or more speech communities "united religiously, politically or economically into a single functioning unit" (84)

- typically an impermeable group boundary between a small H-speaking elite and the L-speaking masses, i.e. bilingualism is not widespread.

e.g. French-speaking élites in a number of otherwise non-French-speaking European countries prior to World War I.

Neither diglossia nor bilingualism

theoretically possible, but perhaps only in small, isolated and undifferentiated speech communities.

but since "[a]ll communities seem to have certain ceremonies or pursuits to which access is limited", this category "tends to be self liquidating." (87)

Thank you for your kind
attention