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**Course Title:** Diglossia Summarized: High vs. Low Varieties

The concept of diglossia has first appeared with Charlse Ferguson in 1959 in his article studying four different languages from all over the world where the diglossic situation is exercised. For its definition, diglossia refers to the linguistic 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). This means that diglossia is a situation wherein a society’s language is having two (or more) varieties with a distinct *never-overlapping* function attributed to each in the sense that in certain conditions only one of these varieties can be used; if the other is uttered, it will surely be awkward or contextually inappropriate.

For this reason, Ferguson has made a distinction between the two co-existing varieties of the same language by labelling them: High and Low varieties. Whereas the former refers to the superposed variety (generally the standard one), lower varieties are the different regional dialects spoken within a community for everyday casual conversations. In this vein, Wardhaugh (2006: 89) states that “a diglossic situation exists 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”.

However, in some speech communities, the distinction between H and L is not limited to varieties of the same language but to two historically and originally divergent languages. This has been put forward by Fishman (1967) who has labelled it as Extended Diglossia. This phenomenon is different from bilingualism which is psychological in nature since diglossia is a purely sociolinguistic one. Yet, it must be noted that the term ‘function’ is central when discussing any version of diglossia.