

SOCIOLINGUISTICS: LANGUAGE CHOICE, DIGLOSSIA, POLYGLOSSIA, LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT, LINGUISTIC VARIETIES, REGIONAL, SOCIAL DIALECTS, GENDER AND AGE, AND LANGUAGE CHANGE.

Language choice in multilingual communities (Choosing your variety or code)

What is your linguistic repertoire?

Example 1:

Kalala is 16 years old. He lives in Bukavu, an African city in eastern Zaire with a population about 220.000. it is a multicultural, multilingual city with more people coming and going for work and business reasons than people who live there predominantly. Over forty groups speaking different languages can be found in the city. Kalala, like many of his friends, is unemployed. He spends his days roaming the street, stopping offs periodically at regular meeting places in the market place, in the park, or at a friend's place. During a normal day he uses at least three different varieties or codes, and sometimes more.

▣ Domains of language use



▣ Example 2:

- ▣ Anahina is a bilingual Tongan New Zealander living in Auckland. At home with her family she uses Tongan almost exclusively for a wide range of topics. She often talks to her grandmother about Tongan customs, for instance. With her mother she exchanges gossip about Tongan friends and relatives. Tongan is the language the family uses at mealtimes. They discuss what they have been doing, plan family outings and share information about Tongan social events. It is only with her older sisters that she uses some English words when they are talking about school or doing their homework.

- ▣ Example 3:
- ▣ Maria is a teenager whose Portuguese parents came to London 1960s. she uses mainly Portuguese at home and to older people at the Portuguese Catholic church and community centre, but English is the appropriate variety or code for her to use at school. She uses mostly English at her after-school job serving in a local café, though occasionally older customers greet her in Portuguese.
- ▣
- ▣ Domain is clearly a very general concept which draws on three important social factors in code choice – participants, setting and topic. It is useful for capturing broad generalizations about any speech community. Using information about the domains of use in a community it is possible to draw a very simple model summarizing the norms of language use for the community. This is often particularly useful for bilingual and multilingual speech communities.

- **Diglossia**
- **A linguistic division of labour**
- Example 4:
- In Eggenwil, a town in the Aargau canton of Switzerland, Silvia, a bank-teller, knows two very distinct varieties of German. One is the local Swiss German dialect of her canton which she uses in her everyday interactions. The other is standard German which she learnt at school, and though she understands it very well indeed, she rarely uses it in speech. Newspapers are written in standard German, and when she occasionally goes to hear a lecture at the university it may be in standard German. The sermons her mother listens to in church are generally in standard German too, though more radical clerics use Swiss German dialect. The novels Silvia reads also use standard German.
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- The pattern of code or variety choice in Eggenwil is one which has been described with the term diglossia. This term has been used in both in a narrow sense and in a much broader sense. In the narrow and original sense of the term, diglossia has three crucial features:
 - Two distinct varieties of the same language are used in the community with one regarded as a high (or H) variety and the other a low (or L) variety.
 - Each variety is used for quite for quite distinct functions; H and L complement each other.
 - No one uses the H variety in everyday conversation.

- ▣ Example 5:
- ▣ Oi Lin Tan, a 20-year-old Chinese Singaporean, uses three languages regularly. At home she uses Cantonese to her mother and to her grandfather who lives with them. With her friends she generally uses Singapore English. She learned to understand Hokkien, another Chinese language, in the smaller shops and market-place but in large department stores she again uses Singapore English. At primary school she was taught for just over half the time in Mandarin Chinese, and so she often watches Channel 8, the Mandarin television station, and she regularly reads a Chinese newspaper Lianhe Zaobao, which is written in Mandarin Chinese. During the other part of the time at primary school she was taught in a formal variety of Singapore English. This is the code she uses when she has to deal with government officials, or when she applies for an office job during the university holidays. She went to an English medium secondary school and she is now studying geography and economics at English-medium university. The text books are all in English.

▣ Polyglossia



- ▣ Diglossic situations involve two contrasting varieties, H and L. sometimes; however, a more sophisticated concept is needed to describe the functional distribution of different varieties in a community. People like Kalala in Bukavu, for instance, use many different codes for different purposes. The term polyglossia has been used for situations like this where a community regularly uses more than two languages.

- ▣ **Language maintenance and shift**
- ▣ **Language shift in different communities**
- ▣ Example 6:
- ▣ Maniben is a young British Hindu woman who lives in Coventry. Her family moved to Britain from Uganda in 1970, when she was 5 years old. She started work on the shop floor in a bicycle factory when she was 16. At home Maniben speaks Gujarati with her parents and grandparents. Although she had learned English at school, she found she didn't need much at work. Many of the girls working with her also spoke Gujarati, so when it wasn't too noisy they would talk to each other in their home language. Maniben was good at her job and she got promoted to floor supervisor. In that job she needed to use English more of the time, though she could still some Gujarati with her old workmates. She went to evening classes and learned to type. Then, because she was interested, she went on to learn how to operate a word-processor. Now she works in the main office and she uses English all the time at work.

▣ Linguistic Varieties and Multilingual nation

- ▣ Language variation (linguistic varieties) could be another term of speech variety, is a also a term used instead LANGUAGE, DIALECT, SOCIOLECT, PIDGIN, CREOLE, etc, because it is considered more neutral than such terms. It may also be used for different varieties of one language, e.g. American English, Australian English, Indian English, etc. As a result this could lead to different pronunciation, grammar, or word choice within a language. Variation in a language may be related to region, to social class and/or educational background or the degree of formality of a situation in which language is used.
- ▣ Example 7:
- ▣ Mr. Patel is a spice merchant who lives in Bombay. When he gets up he talks to his wife and children in Kathiawari, their dialect of Gujerati. Every morning he goes to the local market where he uses Marathi to buy his vegetables. At the railway station he buys his ticket into Bombay city using Hindustani, the working person's lingua franca. He reads his Gujerati newspaper on the train, and when he gets to work he uses Kacchi, the language of the spice trade, all day. He knows enough English to enjoy an English cricket commentary on the radio, but he would find an English film difficult to follow. However, since the spice business is flourishing, his children go to an English medium school, so he expects them to be more proficient in English than he is.

Vernacular

- ▣ In brief, vernacular is a term used of a language or language variety:
- ▣ When it is contrasted with a classical language, such as Latin, e.g: Church services in the Roman Catholic church used to be conducted in Latin, but now they are in the vernacular. (e.g., in English, Italian, Swahili, etc)
- ▣ When it is contrasted with an internationally used language such as English, e.g: If you want to teach in that country, it will be useful to know the vernacular.
- ▣ In bilingual and multilingual countries, when it is spoken by some or most of the population but when it is not the official or the national language of a country, e.g: in addition to schools that teach in the national language, there are also vernacular schools.

▣ **Standard languages**

- ▣ Also known as standard variety and standard dialect, a standard variety of language which has the highest status in a community or nation and which is usually based on the speech and writing of educated native speakers of the language. A standard variety is generally: a. used in the news media and in literature, b. described in dictionaries and grammars, and c. taught in schools and taught to non-native speakers when they learn the language as a foreign language.

▣ **Lingua franca**

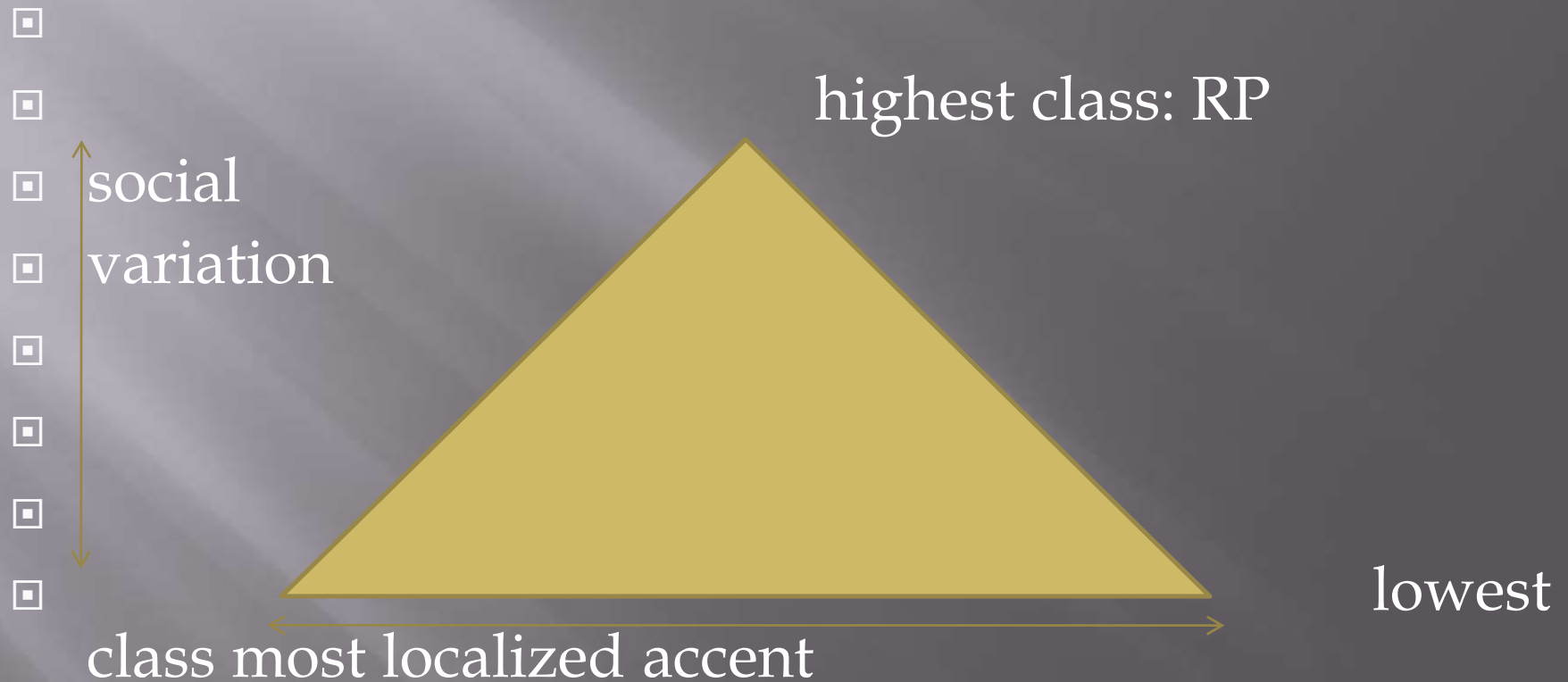
- ▣ A language that is used for communication between different groups of people, and each speaking a different language. The lingua franca could be an internationally used language of communication (e.g. English), it could be the native language of one of the groups, or it could be language which is not spoken natively by any of the groups but has a simplified sentence structure and vocabulary and is often a mixture of two or more languages (see Pidgin). The term *lingua franca* (Italian for “Frankish tongue”) originated in the Mediterranean region in the Middle Ages among crusaders and traders of different language backgrounds. The term auxiliary language is sometimes used as a synonym for lingua franca.

- ▣ **Regional and social dialects (variations)**
- ▣ **Regional variation**
- ▣ Example 8:
- ▣ A British visitor to New Zealand decided while he was in Auckland he would look up an old friend from his war days. He found the address, walked up the path and knocked on the door. “Gidday,” said the young man who opened the door. “what can I do for you?” “I’ve called to see me old mate Don Stone,” said the visitor. “Oh he’s dead now mate,” said the young man. The visitor was about to express condolences when he was thumped on the back by Don Stone himself. The young man had said, ‘Here’s dad now mate’, as his father came in the gate.

- ▣ Example 9:
- ▣ Do you have a match?
- ▣ Have you got a cigarette?
- ▣ She has gotten used to the noise.
- ▣ She's got used to the noise.
- ▣ He dove in, head first.
- ▣ He dived in head first.
- ▣ Did you eat yet?
- ▣ Have you eaten yet?

- ▣ **Social variation**
- ▣ **A social accent**
- ▣ **Example 10:**
- ▣ Diana: Have you heard – Jonathan's engaged to that northern girl from Cumbria!
- ▣ Reg : She may be northern but I assure you she is very acceptable. Her father is a lord, and rich one at that! She has the best education money can buy. Those traces of the northern accent are fashionable these days may dear!
- ▣
- ▣ In earlier centuries you could tell where an English lord or lady came from by their regional form of English. But by the early twentieth century a person who spoke with a regional accent in England was most unlikely to belong to the upper class. Upper class people had an upper-class education, and that generally meant a public (i.e. private!) school where they learned to speak RP. Stands not for 'Real Posh' (as suggested to Holmes – the author of introduction to Sociolinguistics – by a young friend), but rather for Received Pronunciation – the accent of the best educated and most prestigious members of English society. It is claimed the label derives from the accent which was 'received' at the royal court, and it is sometimes identified with 'the Queen's English', although the accent used by Queen Elizabeth II is a rather old-fashioned variety of RP.

- RP was promoted by the BBC for decades. It is essentially a social accent not a regional one. Indeed, it conceals a speaker's regional origins. This is nicely illustrated in figure 1, the accent triangle.



- Social and regional accent variation which is reproduced from Trudgill 1983a: 42)

- ▣ As the triangle suggests, the linguist will find most linguistic variation at the lowest socio-economic level where regional differences abound. Further up the social ladder the amount of observable variation reduce till one reaches the pinnacle of RP – an accent used by less than 5% of the British population.
- ▣ Figure 1.1 captured the distribution of accents in England until recently. Today a more accurate diagram might have a somewhat flatter top, suggesting accents other than RP can be heard amongst those who belong to the highest social class. (as figure 2 below). In other speech communities it is certainly possible to hear more than just one accent associated with the highest social group. Most well-educated Scots, Irish and Welsh speakers do not use RP, and there is more than one socially prestigious accent in these countries. And in ex-colonies of Britain such as Australia and Canada, other accents have displaced RP from its former position as the most admired accent of English. In fact RP now tends to be perceived by many people as somewhat affected (or ‘real posh!’)

▣ **Standard English**

▣ Example 11:

▣ I've not washed the dishes yet today

▣ I haven't washed the dishes yet today.

▣ Standard English is more accommodating than RP and allows for some variation within its boundaries. This is reflected in figure 1.2, the trapezium or tabled-topped mountain. The flat top reflects the broader range of variants (alternative linguistic forms) which qualify as part of the standard dialect of English in any country. It is estimated that up to 15 per cent of the British regularly use standard British English. So in standard English, a limited amount of grammatical variation is acceptable. A speaker of Standard English might produce either of the sentences in example 11 above.

- The dialect we grace with the name standard English is spoken with many different accents. But, as illustrated in the discussion of regional dialects, there are also many standard Englishes. American Standard English is distinguishable from Australian standard English, for instance, and both differ from the British standard dialect.

□

Highest class: standard dialect

□ Social
□ variation

□

□

□

□

□

Lowest class: most

localized non-standard

Regional variation

□

□ (figure 1.2, social and regional dialect variation – Holmes, 2001: 133 – reproduced from Trudgill 1983:41)

- ▣ In social terms, linguistic forms which are not part of Standard English are by definition non-standard. Because the standard dialect is always the first to be codified, it is difficult to avoid defining other dialects without contrasting them with the standard. And then, because such non-standard forms are associated with the speech of less prestigious social group, the label inevitably acquires negative connotations. But it should be clear that there is nothing linguistically inferior about non-standard forms. They are simply different from the forms which happen to be used by more socially prestigious speakers. To avoid the implication that non-standard forms are inadequate deviations from the standard, some sociolinguists use the terms vernacular as an alternative to non-standard.

- ▣ Gender and age
- ▣ Gender-exclusive speech differences: non-Western communities
- ▣ Example 12:
- ▣ Tayana is a young Amazonian Indian woman from the north-west Amazon Basin. She lives with her husband and children and a number of other families in a longhouse beside the river. The language of her longhouse is Tuyuka, which is the language of all men in this tribe, and the language she uses to talk to her children. She comes from a different tribe and her first language is Desano. She uses Desano to her husband; and he replies in Tuyuka.

- Women and men do not speak in exactly the same way as each other in any community. The Amazon Indians provide an extreme example. As described in the example above, in any longhouse the language used by a child's mother is different from her father's language, because men must marry outside their own tribe, and each tribe is distinguished by a different language. In this community, women and men speak different languages.
- Less dramatically, there are communities where the language is shared by women and men, but particular linguistic features occur only in the women's speech or only in the men's speech. These features are usually small differences in pronunciation or word-shape (morphology). In Montana, for instance, there are pronunciation differences in the Gros Ventre American Indian tribe. Where the women say [kja'tsa] for 'bread' the men say [dʒa'tsa]. In this community if a person uses the wrong form for their gender, the older members of the community consider them bisexual. In Bengali, a language of India, the women use an initial [l] where the men use an initial [n] in some words.

- Word-shape in other languages contrast because women and men use different affixes. In Yana, a North American Indian language, and Chiquita, a South American Indian language, some of the words used between men are longer than the equivalent words used by women and to women, because the men's forms sometimes add a suffix, as illustrated in the example below:

- Example 13:

- Yana

- Women's form

- Men's form

- Ba

- ba-na

- 'deer'

- Yaa

- yaa-na

- 'person'

- Nisaaklu

- nisaaklu-?i

- 'he might go away'

- ?au

- ?au-na

- 'fire'

- ▣ In Japanese, too, some of the men's forms are longer, while female forms of nouns are frequently prefixed by o-, a marker of polite or formal style. In some languages, there are also differences between the vocabulary items used by women and men, though these are never very extensive. Traditional Japanese provides some clear examples.

- ▣ Example 14:

- ▣ Japanese

- ▣ Women's form

- ▣ Men's form

- ▣ otoosan

- ▣ oyaji

- ▣ 'father'

- ▣ onaka

- ▣ hara

- ▣ 'stomach'

- ▣ oishii

- ▣ umai

- ▣ 'delicious'

- ▣ taberu

- ▣ kuu

- ▣ 'eat'

▣ Gender and social class

▣ Example 15

- ▣ Linda lives in the south of England and her dad is a lawyer. When she was 10 years old she went to stay for a whole school term with her uncle Tom and auntie Bet in Wigan, Lancashire town, while her mother was recovering from a car accident. She was made to feel very welcome both in her auntie's house and at the local school. When she went home she tried to describe to her teacher what she had noticed about the way her uncle and auntie talked. 'Uncle Tom is a plumber' she told Mrs. Button ' and he talks just like the other men on the building site where he works — a bit broad. He says 'ouse' and 'ome' and [kup] and [bus]. When she's at home auntie Bet talks a bit like uncle Tom. She says "Me feet are killin' me [luv]. I've ad enough standin' [up] for today'. But she works in a shop and when she's talking to customers she talks more like you do Mrs. Button. She say *house* and *home* she talks real nice — just like a lady.

▣

- ▣ The linguistic features which differ in the speech of women and men in Western communities are usually features which also distinguish the speech of people from different social classes. So how does gender interact with social class? Does the speech of women in one social class resemble that of women from different classes, or does it more closely resemble the speech of the men from their own social class? The answer to this question is quite complicated, and is different for different linguistic features. These are, however, some general patterns which can be identified.

- ▣ **Some simple Explanations of Women's linguistic behavior**
- ▣ 'Why can't a woman be more like a man?' (a quotation taken from Janet Holmes' *Sociolinguistics: the introduction's My Fair Lady*). When this pattern first emerged, social dialectologists asked: 'why do women use more standard form than men?' at least four different (though not mutually exclusive) explanations were suggested. The first appeals to social class and its related status for an explanation, the second refers to women's role in society, the third to women's status as a subordinate group, and the fourth to the function of speech in expressing masculinity.

▣

▣ Ethnicity and social networks

- ▣ When people belong to the same group, they often speak similarly. But there are many different groups in a community, and so any individual may share linguistic features with a range of other speakers. Some features indicate a person's social status; others distinguish women and men or identify a person as a teenager rather than a middle-aged citizen. There are also linguistic clues to a person's ethnicity, and closely related to all these are linguistic features which reflect the regular interactions people have — those they talk to most often. Individuals draw on all these resources when they construct their social identities.

▣ Language change

- ▣ This term refers to change in a language which takes place over time. All living languages have changed and continue to change. For example, in English, changes which have recently been occurring include the following:
- ▣ The distinction in pronunciation between words such as *what* and *watt* is disappearing
- ▣ *hopefully* may be used instead of *I hope, we hope, it is to be hoped*
- ▣ new words and expressions are constantly entering the language, e.g. *drop-out, alternative society, culture shock*.

Thank you

- ▣ All critics and suggestions are welcome