

The Concept of Diglossia Revisited.

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Abstract:

It is clear that Ferguson's Classification/Model of Diglossia provides new dimensions especially in the area where language functions. Fishman, Fasold, and many other scholars discussed and elaborated the concept of Diglossia. Ferguson selects four linguistic communities where he tries to apply his model of Diglossia. These four communities are Arabic, Swiss German, Greek, and Haitian Creole. In his classification he claims that in the speech form there is pure high form (H) of address in a certain setting, while there is a pure low form (L) of address in another form of address. He proposes a very popular Model for his notion of Diglossia. It is a fact that the form of address is greatly influenced by the known sociological factors such as age, gender, education, topic, setting, etc. The researcher believes that the relationship between French and Haitian Creole is not like the relationship in the other three communities chosen by Ferguson. The primary L and H arise mainly from different languages rather than one language (French). His generalizations that that Haitian Creole arose from a Creolization of pidgin French, and that creole is a dialect of French, may not be fully acceptable. Also, the researcher believes that in the case of the Shaigiyya dialect, there is no pure H or pure L, but a mixture of both

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The Concept of Diglossia Revisited.

Introduction:

The term Diglossia is a specialized term used in Linguistic, socio-linguistic, and psycholinguistic literature. Ferguson's article on Diglossia has the virtue of stimulating many discussions and insights and thoughts about the sociocultural and sociolinguistic settings. It is a situation in which there are two different forms of the same language used by the same community, used in different social situation. In this paper the researcher discusses the notion of Diglossia presented by Charles Ferguson as well as the other scholars e.g. Fishman, Fasold and others. Special attention is given to Ferguson's notion of function. He selected four diglossic communities i.e. Arabic, Swiss German, Greek, and Haitian creole. If we test these communities according to Ferguson's Model, we will see that his classification of Diglossia deserves further investigation especially his notion of function.

History and definitions of Diglossia:

Many scholars tried to define and explain the phenomenon of Diglossia. In 1902, discussion was first raised by Karl Krumbacher in his book *Das Problem der neugriechischen Schriftsprache*, in which he dealt with the nature, origin and development of diglossia with special reference to the Greek and Arabic situations. (Paulston & Tucker, 2003). In 1930, the term was first coined by Marçais, a French linguist, in his book *La Diglossie arabe* (Paulston & Tucker, 2003), who defined it in relation to Arabic as a competition between written literary language and vernacular. (Zughoul, 1980). In 1958, it became famous in linguistic studies after being used by Charles Ferguson in a symposium on urbanization and standard languages and then in his article '*Diglossia*' in 1959 where he dealt with four linguistic situations. (Paulston & Tucker, 2003). In 1964, Hymes viewed diglossia as "an excellent example of coexistence in the same community of mutually unintelligible codes", (the high and low variety Ferguson talked about), correlated with values and situations. (Zughoul, 1980). In 1967, Fishman proposes that diglossia may be, in addition to Ferguson's original idea, extended to cover even situations where two (or more) genetically unrelated or at least historically distant language varieties occupy the H and L niches. (Schiffman, 2004). In 1972, Kaye described Ferguson's definition of diglossia as "impressionistic" and viewed the diglossic situation of a language like Arabic as "flexible and changeable" rather than stable as Ferguson stated. (Ibid, 2002). Kaye (2001) also believed that Ferguson's original conception of diglossia sharply contrasted with bilingualism, since he states that diglossia is different from "the analogous situation where two distinct (related or unrelated) languages are used side by side throughout a speech community, each with a clearly defined role" (Kaye, 2001). The use of two or more varieties of the same language by some speakers under different conditions in many speech communities. (Ferguson, 1959).

The term was widely spread after Ferguson's definition of Diglossia. In this paper the concept of diglossia will be discussed with special attention to Ferguson's notion of function.

Ferguson defined Diglossia as "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." (Ferguson, Word, 1959:336)

Ferguson's Four Defining Languages Communities:

Ferguson selects four languages to apply his notion of Diglossia. These four communities are: Arabic, Modern Greek, Swiss German, and Haitian Creole.

1. Arabic diglossia reaches far back, and the superposed 'Classical' language has remained relatively stable.
2. Greek diglossia has roots going back many centuries.
3. Swiss German diglossia developed as a result of long religious and political isolation from the centres of German linguistic standardization.
4. Haitian Creole arose from a creolization of a pidgin French, with standard French later coming to play the role of the superposed variety. (Ferguson, 1959).

Ferguson called the superposed variety the H ('high'), and the regional dialects L ('low') varieties.

Ferguson selects nine features of Diglossia: Function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon, and phonology. He gave special consideration to "function", but the researcher believes that he inadequately presented it. Data from a Sudanese Arabic community in Northern Sudan where Arabic is spoken as a native language (Shaaygiya area) will be presented and discussed. Also, his choice of Haitian Creole diglossic situation will be tested since the relationship with French as H and Haitian Creole as L have not the same as colloquial Arabic and Classical/Standard Arabic. In Arabic both varieties belong to the same Arabic Language, while French and Creole are different languages, especially if we look to their structure.

Outline of Characteristic Features of Diglossia by Ferguson :

1. Function.

There are specific functions for H and specific functions for L.

Situation						Use
H	L					H
	1. Sermon in church or mosque				X	L
	2. Instructions to servants, waiters, workmen, clerks					H
	X					H
	3. Personal letters				X	L
	4. Speech in parliament, political speech				X	H
	5. University lecture				X	L
	6. Conversation with family, friends, colleagues					H
	X					L
	7. News broadcast				X	H
	8. Radio "soap opera"				X	L
	9. Newspaper editorial, news story, caption on picture				X	
	10. Caption on political cartoon				X	
	11. Poetry				X	
	12. Folk literature				X	

Ferguson's Model of Diglossia (Word,1959).

1. Function:

. A person who learns to speak fluent, accurate L and uses it in a formal speech could become an object of ridicule.

. A member of the speech community who uses H in a purely conversational situation or in an informal activity like shopping is equally an object of ridicule.

. In all the defining languages, someone can read aloud from a newspaper written in H and then proceed to discuss the contents in L or to listen to a formal speech then discuss it, often with the speaker himself, in L.

The researcher thinks that it is very hard to draw a sharp line between H and L in all situations. The choice of the language used is governed by many factors as: The form of speech, the person speaking, to whom, the setting whether formal or informal, the gender factors, the age, etc.

Fishman in his 1972 work used the term "language situation" to refer to a set of factors that include who (ages, socioeconomic classes, ethnic and regional groups, ... speaks with what level of proficiency, what language varieties (social and regional dialects, registers, autonomous language) to whom (ages, socioeconomic classes, ethnic and regional groups, etc..) for what purpose, (business and trade, religion, education, government activity). (j. Fishman,1972).

2. Prestige.

a. The speakers regard H as superior to L in a number of respects. H alone is regarded as real and L is reported "not to exist."

e.g. Speakers of Arabic may say that a person doesn't know Arabic if he doesn't know H, although he may be a fluent, effective speaker of L.

b. H is somehow more beautiful, more logical, better able to express important thoughts.

e.g. Many speakers prefer to hear a political speech in H even if they don't understand it fully.

c. Arabic, it is the language of the Qur'an. H is connected with religion.

3. Literary heritage.

- Written literature is in H and held in high esteem by the speech community.
- body of literature may either have been produced long time ago in the past history of the community or be in continuous production in another speech community in which H serves as the standard variety of the language.
- When the body of literature represents a long time span (as in Arabic), contemporary writers-and readers-tend to employ the expressions and would be called good literary taste.

4. Acquisition.

- Adults use L in speaking to children and children use L in speaking to one another.
- As a result, L is learned by children in what may be regarded as the "normal" way of learning one's mother tongue.
- The actual learning of H is chiefly accomplished by the means of formal education, whether this be traditional Qur'anic schools, modern government schools, or private tutors.

5. Standardization.

- The H form of the language has grammars, dictionaries, pronunciation rules, style, and so on.
- The orthography is well established and has little variation.

By contrast, there is no settled orthography and there is wide variation in pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary in L varieties forms. Kaye (2001).

6. Stability.

- Diglossia historically persists for centuries. Evidence in some cases shows that it can last well over a thousand years. The common tensions which arise in the diglossia situation may be resolved by the use of relatively uncoded, unstable, intermediate forms of the language.

7. Grammar.

-One of the most striking differences between H and L is in the grammatical structure:

- H has grammatical categories not present in L and has an inflectional system of nouns and verbs which is much reduced or totally absent in L.

For example, Classical Arabic has three cases in the noun, marked by endings; colloquial dialects have none.

8. Lexicon.

- The bulk of the vocabulary of H and L is shared, of course with variations in form and with differences of use and meaning.
- Popular expressions and the names of very homely objects are in L with no H equivalents.
- Many paired items, one H and one L, exist in Diglossia, referring to fairly common concepts frequently used in both H and L. For example, in Arabic the H word for 'see' is **ra'a**, the L word is **shaf**. The word **ra'a** would never occur in ordinary conversation and **shaf** would not be used in normal written Arabic. (Ferguson,1959).

9. Phonology.

H and L phonology may be quite close, as in Greek; moderately different, as in Arabic or Haitian Creole; or strikingly divergent, as in Swiss German. There are two statements about phonology proposed by Ferguson:

The sound systems of H and L constitute a single phonological structure of which the L phonology is the basic system and the divergent features of H phonology are either a subsystem or a para-system.

(b) If "pure" H items have phonemes not found in "pure" L items, L phonemes frequently substitute for these in oral use of H and regularly replace them.

Diglossia according to Fishman

Fishman (1967) broadened the definition of the term to include such diverse phenomena as completely separate languages or mere style differences within a language or dialect. However, the two varieties of language must enter into kind of functional relationship specified by Ferguson. He also refined thinking on *diglossia* by noting that *diglossia* could develop with or without widespread bilingualism in a community. After, investigating some samples of societies which are distinguished by diglossia and bilingualism, he emphasized a distinction between

them, arguing that the former is a feature of society to be dealt with by sociologists and sociolinguists, whereas the latter is a matter for psychologists and psycholinguists as it refers to an individual's ability to behave linguistically in more than one language. (Schiffman, 2004)

Diglossia according to Fasold

Fasold adopts a somewhat middle ground between Fishman and Ferguson and proposes a distinction between broad diglossia and classic diglossia: "*BROAD DIGLOSSIA is the reservation of highly valued segments of a community's linguistic repertoire (which are not the first to be learned, but are learned later and more consciously, usually through formal education), for situations perceived as more formal and guarded; and the reservation of less highly valued segments (which are learned first with little or no conscious effort), of any degree of linguistic relatedness to the higher valued segments, from stylistic differences to separate languages, for situations perceived as more informal and intimate.*" (Fasold, 1984:53).

Diglossia and Bilingualism

- Diglossia and bilingualism are two major constructs of psychological and sociological literature; bilingualism (from the point of psychology) and diglossia (from the point of sociology)

- Bilingualism is essentially a characterization of individual linguistic behavior whereas diglossia is a characterization of linguistic organization at the socio-cultural levels.

There are speech communities in which both diglossia and bilingualism occur.

An example of this type of nation is Paraguay, where almost the entire population speaks both Spanish and Guarani (Rubin, 1962; 1966).

The majority of city dwellers (being relatively new from the country) maintain Guarani for matters of intimacy and primary group solidarity even in the midst of Spanish urbanity.

Diglossia in the Arab World:

Many scholars view Arabic as the most clearly representative example of diglossia. Anwar S. dil elaborated on Diglossia in the arab world.(Al-Huri, 2012) Badawi (1973) state that Arab tribes who lived before Islam used different dialects; however, when communicating with each other for commercial reasons, they use the H form as a medium communication. This Qureshi dialect has become what is known now as " Classical Arabic" or "Afusha". Badawi (1973) classifies Arabic into five levels of speech: Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Educated Spoken Arabic, Semiliterate Spoken Arabic, and Illiterate Spoken Arabic. (Badawi, ibid). Arabs speak different dialects, but MSA is the same everywhere. However, students who learn to speak only MSA will not be able to use it in conversation; not only will they sound funny, but also find it very difficult. (Palmer, 2007).In Arabic, (MSA) functions as a High variety used in the media, religious sermons , whereas colloquial Arabic functions as a Low variety, the mother tongue used in family talk, shopping, talking with friends and everyday communication. In the Arab world there are different dialects of the Arabic Language.but they can communicate with each other. (The wave line represents the overlap between the varieties and its thickness represents the approximate divergence between adjacent varieties)

Diglossia and Education in the Arab World:

-Maamouri (1989) draws our attention to the "low quality results" due to the diglossic situations in our schools and the linguistic distance between the various Arabic colloquial forms and MSA.

- One of the consequences growing out of the dramatic diglossic situation in Arab schools could be "the growing use of the colloquial forms in formal and non-formal education and in other numerous daily activities" (Maamouri & ibid, 1989).

- Zughoul is also one of the Arab sociolinguists who regarded diglossia in the Arabic language as one of the significant linguistic issues confronting the Arab World and greatly affect the social, psychological, and educational aspects of the society. - Zughoul (1980) regards the high rate of illiteracy in any society as one of the most important reasons standing behind the expansion of the linguistic distance between MSA and its colloquial forms in the Arab World.

- Kaye (2001) mentions that because diglossia and bidialectal variations exist in Arabic-speaking countries, "some educated Arabs find it difficult to carry on a conversation in MSA". I agree with him giving the example of the diglossic situations Northern African Arab countries (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia).

Diglossia and the Sudanese (Shaijiyya Community).

The shaijiyya tribe is by the River Nile in the Northern Sudan. It is one of the biggest tribes in Sudan. The researcher belongs to this community. Education is widely spread and they have great cultural influence on most of the Sudan. In the Shigiyya area Arabic is spoken as a native language.. They speak no other language. Diglossia is widely spread among the speakers. In the shaijiyya area. The researcher believes that there is no pure H or pure L, but a mixture of the two varieties. Ferguson's assumption that in one situation only H is appropriate, and that in another situation only L is suitable, doesn't represent the situation in the Shaijiyya area. It is a fact that all the speech is a mixture of the two varieties. The choice of the form depends on the stand taken. For example, in public speeches mostly H is used with very little L. On the contrary , when someone engages in folk tales, a small portion of H is introduced. In cases where both H and L are used frequently, as in addressing an unknown person, the portion of H or L depends on the speaker's expectations of what and who that unknown person is. If he thinks that person is educated, more H is expected, and if not, more L is expected, but always a mixture of both H and L. Ferguson's classification of Diglossia needs more investigations.

Conclusion:

Many other linguists discussed and elaborated the concept of Diglossia. Ferguson Model of Diglossia has taken most of their attention. Ferguson selects four linguistic communities where he tries to apply his model of Diglossia. These four communities are Arabic, Swiss German, Greek, and Haitian Creole. The researcher concluded that Ferguson's classification of Diglossia is inadequately represented . The researcher chooses his own dialect of the Shaijiyya area in Northern Sudan where there is a diglossic situation. It is clear that in the Shaijiyya area there is no pure H or pure L, and not The situation in the Shaijiyya dialect is a mixture of both depended on the setting. The researcher also, believes that the relationship between French and Haitian Creole is not like the relationship in the other three communities chosen by Ferguson. The concept of Diglossia witnessed a lot of attention from different linguists, but I think further studies are needed.

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