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CHAPTER 2 (An Introduction to Sociolinguistics by Janet Holmes)

Language Choice

in Multilingual Communities

INTRODUCTION

❑ Each language has many different forms of it.

    ❑ E.g. : Arabic has many forms such as: formal (classical Arabic), informal (Saudi dialect)…

❑ **Variety or code: A specific form of a language.**

    ◻ The standard language is a variety too.

        ■ E.g.: a variety can be a language, an accent, a dialect… etc.

❑ **Speech Community: A group of people who speak the same variety.**

    1. Monolingual community: One variety

    2. Multilingual community: More than one variety

Example 1

Kalala is 16 years old. He lives in Bukavu, an African city in eastern Zaire with a population of about 220,000. It is a multicultural city with more people coming and going for work and business reasons than people who live there permanently. Over 40 groups speaking different languages can be found in the city. Kalala, like many of his friends, is unemployed. He spends his days roaming the streets, stopping off 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.

Notes on Example 1

☐ The varieties Kalala speaks are:

Varieties		Where does he use it?
2 varieties of **Shi**, his <u>tribal</u> language	1- Formal Shi	His tribe's weddings, funerals.
	2- Informal Shi	With his family, in the market-place with vendors from his tribe.
3 varieties of **Sawahili,**	3- Formal (standard)	At school, official transactions: (e.g.: when he applies for a job).
	4- Informal: Kingwana (local)	People he meets in the streets and market-place (not from his own tribe).
	5-Informal: Indoubil	With his friends regardless of their tribes.

So What governs the variety we choose?

☐ Choosing the appropriate variety in multilingual communities depends on:

1. Social factors and dimensions
2. The **repertoire** of the addressee

☐ **Repertoire: A group of language varieties mastered by the same speaker to different degrees of proficiencies and for different purposes.**

   ■ **These varieties may include: One's first language, dialects, languages learned at school or in visits abroad… etc.**

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 meal-times. 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.

Domains of Language Use

- **Domain: Typical interactions between typical participants in typical settings.**

  - **E.g.:** In example (2), the domain of the interaction is family in which we have typical participants (family members) in the typical setting (home) about typical topics (family activities).

- **Exercise:**

Domain	Addressee	Setting	Topic	Variety/code
Family	----------	----------	----------	----------
Friendship	----------	----------	----------	----------
Religion	----------	----------	----------	----------
Education	----------	----------	----------	----------
Employment	----------	----------	----------	----------

Example 3

In Paraguay, a small South American country, two languages are used: Spanish (the language of the colonisers) and Guarani (the American Indian indigenous language). People in Paraguay are proud that they have their own language which distinguishes them from the rest of South America. Many rural Paraguayans are monolingual in Guarani, but those who live in the cities are usually bilingual. They read Spanish literature, but they gossip in both Spanish and Guarani.

☐ **Exercise:**

Domain	Addressee	Setting	Topic	Variety
-----------	Parent	Home	Planning a family party	-----------
-----------	Friend	Cafe	Telling a joke	-----------
-----------	Priest	Church	Raising money for the poor	-----------
-----------	Teacher	Primary school	Telling a story	-----------
-----------	Lecturer	University	Solving math problems	-----------

Notes

- The components of a domain **do not always** fit with each other.
  - Within any domain, individual interactions may not be the typical ones expected. People may select a particular variety because it makes it easier to discuss a particular topic regardless of where they are speaking.
    - A student may discuss school at home using the language associated with the domain of education rather than the one associated with the domain of family. This is known as **leakage.**

- **Leakage: Using the variety of a particular domain in another domain for simplicity.**

Example 6

In Eggenwill, a town in the Aargau canton of Switzerland, Silvia, a bank-teller, knows **two very <u>distinct</u> 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 national TV news is broadcast in standard German, but weather broadcasts now use dialect. The sermons her mother listens to in church are generally in standard German too, though the more radical clerics use Swiss German dialect. The novels Salvia reads also use standard German.

Diglossia

- **Diglossia: <u>Two</u> <u>distinct</u> varieties of the <u>same</u> language used in the community with one regarded as a high variety (H) and the other a low variety (L).**
  - Each variety is used for distinct functions.
  - No one uses the H variety in everyday conversation.
    - Example: Arabic, we use standard Arabic (classical Arabic) for formal situations while in everyday conversation we use informal Arabic.

Characteristics of H and L Varieties

High Variety	Low Variety
- Used for **official** and **formal** situations such as on national TV, news broadcast, newspapers, literary writing… etc.	- Used for **informal** situations and everyday conversation.
- Used for **writing** and spoken in formal events.	- Mainly **spoken**, (written in chat).
- **Technical** and **formal** terms.	- Mainly **names of objects** and everyday activities.
- **Learned** at school.	- **Acquired** at home.
- **Codified**	- **Not codified.**

Linguistic Differences between H and L

1. **H** grammar is more complicated than **L** grammar.
   - E.g.: Compare نائمون ، نائمين، نائمات، نيام in standard Arabic with نايمين in colloquial Arabic which corresponds to all.
2. There are differences in sounds and pronunciation.
   - E.g.: /g/ exists in colloquial Arabic but not in standard Arabic.
3. The vocabulary is almost the same but **H** has formal technical terms.

Attitudes Towards H and L

High Variety	Low Variety
-It is **admired** even if not understood.	- People don't think that it is worth describing.
- It is **prestigious** and thought of as having a higher status in society.	- Some people value it and believe that it is the best way to express their feelings because it is the language they use everyday.

Diglossia and Polyglossia

- **Diglossia** is a characteristic of a **speech community** rather than **individuals**.
  - **Individuals = Bilingual**
  - **Communities = Diglossic**

- **Polyglossia: More than two** distinct varieties of the same language used for clearly distinct purposes.

Example (not included in the book)

At a meeting:

Chair: Does everyone have the meeting agenda?

Employee 1: Yes we do but Sarah hasn't come yet. Oh there she is!

Sarah: السلام عليكم

Chair: وعليكم السلام … Have a seat please. Alright, we start our meeting with an overview … etc.

Exercise:

Setting: ………….……

Participants: …………..

Topic: …………………

Domain: ………………

CODE SWITCHING

☐ **Code-switching: Changing varieties across sentences boundaries.**

Code switching can be:

1. Domain-based (Situational): It depends on where we happen to be.

2. Addressee-based: When it is constrained by who we are talking to.

Why Do We code-switch?

We code-switch because of:

1- Situation: When there is an obvious change in the situation. To hide information from a third party.

- **E.g.:** The arrival of someone.

2- Topic: Achieve a better explanation of a certain concept.

- **E.g.:** When a teacher switches from English to Arabic to make sure students understand what she says.

3- Social reasons:

a. Signal solidarity and reduce social distance.

b. Increase social distance.

c. Show off, impress or persuade an audience.

d. Reflect one's ethnic identity.

- **E.g.:** Two African Americans talking in standard English in the workplace and one switches to AAVE (African American Vernacular English).

Example (not included in the book)

On the phone:

A: I'll see you tonight at the movies.

B: Alright, <u>chéri</u>. Say hi to your mum! Bye!

Exercise:

Participants:……………

Setting:………………..

Topic:………………….

Domain: ………………

Terms

- **Code Mixing: Changing varieties across phrases boundaries.** It is also called tag switching.

- **Lexical borrowing: it results from the lack of vocabulary and it involves borrowing single words – mainly nouns.**

* *Code-mixing* involves a choice between the words of two languages or varieties, but *Lexical borrowing* is a result of lack of vocabulary.

Notes

- **Switches motivated by the identity and relationship between the participants express a move along the distance scale.**
  - Preacher switches from standard to vernacular to reduce the distance and create solidarity.
  - Manager switches vernacular to standard to increase the distance and lessen solidarity.

- **Technical topics are associated with one code, usually the one taught in.**
  - Arab medical students switch to English when discussing medicine.