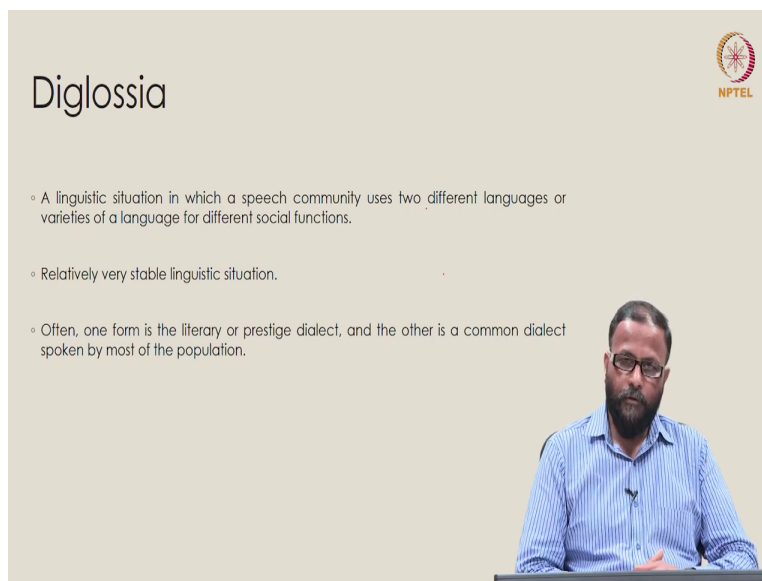


Fundamental Concepts in Sociolinguistics
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Lecture 15
Diglossia

Hello everyone, welcome. Today we are going to talk about a very important sociolinguistics situation where a speech community uses two varieties for two different social functions, and one variety supersedes the other variety. And owing to the social situations, this phenomenon is called Diglossia.

So today we are going to talk about diglossia. Now 'di' means two and 'glossia' the language, so two languages within the same speech community. Why and how this situation emerges? We will talk about it. So that is all about the diglossia that we are going to talk about today.

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The slide is titled "Diglossia" and features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. It contains three bullet points defining the concept. In the bottom right corner, there is a video inset showing Professor Doctor Om Prakesh speaking.


Diglossia

- A linguistic situation in which a speech community uses two different languages or varieties of a language for different social functions.
- Relatively very stable linguistic situation.
- Often, one form is the literary or prestige dialect, and the other is a common dialect spoken by most of the population.


Diglossia is a linguistic situation in which a speech community uses two different languages or varieties of the same language for different social functions. This is a very relatively, very stable situation where the choice of varieties in a particular social context is deliberate and socially determined. It has different social functions. Out of these two varieties, the community uses

which one form is the literary or prestige form or a prestige dialect and the other is a common colloquial dialect spoken by most of the people for ordinary everyday life situations.

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- Such a situation exists in many speech communities throughout the world—e.g., in Greece, where Katharevousa, heavily influenced by Classical Greek, is the prestige dialect and Demotic is the popular spoken language
- In the Arab world, where classical Arabic (as used in the Qur'ān) exists alongside the colloquial Arabic of Egypt, Morocco, and other countries.




Such a situation exists in many speech communities. However, diglossia is not a substitute term for bilingualism. We need to understand that diglossia definitely denotes bilingualism, but they cannot replace each other. These are two different ideas and two different concepts. Bilingualism refers to the innate ability or capacity of an individual speaker to use two languages with equal ease and diglossia refers to a specific situation where this innate bilingual capacity is in practice.

So where is it actually practised? Diglossia refers to the social context and the linguistic situation that allows a bilingual to choose a particular variety for a particular purpose. So they are not mutually replaceable terms, they cannot be replaced by one another. There are two different concepts; diglossia refers to the language used in a particular social context, whereas bilingualism refers to the innate capability and the ability of the user or the speaker to choose from two distinct languages(04:14).


So that is the difference between bilingualism and diglossia. We need to keep that in mind before we move further. So such a diglossic situation exists in many speech communities around the world. So this is not a rare phenomenon. It is a very widespread global phenomenon and we can have instances and examples of such a situation across the world across speech communities. For example, in Greece, a heavily influenced classical Greek versus demotic, a popular spoken

language or in the Arab world for that matter, classical Arabic exists alongside the colloquial Arabic, let us say in Egypt, Morocco and other countries. So these are the varieties of the same language, but both the varieties have two different purposes.

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- Diglossia also denotes the phenomenon of bilingualism, the speaking of two or more languages by the members of the same community.
- For example, in New York, members of the Hispanic community speak both Spanish and English, switching from one to the other according to the social situation or the needs of the moment.
- India is a multilingual country. Some examples:
 - Tamil Speech Community
 - Bangla Speech Community
 - Hindi-Hindustani case (broadly speaking)




India is a multilingual country, but we have diagnostic situations here as well. For example, in the Tamil speech community (05:39) established research it is considered multi diglossic, I mean within the same speech community you have multi glossia. So diglossia refers only to two varieties and multi glossia to multiple varieties.

Bangla speech community for that matter, in Bengali you have the same diglossic situation, if you look at broadly, the standard Hindi that we use for writing and informal domain is entirely different from the kind of Hindi that we use on the street, in bazaars, in markets, everyday conversation, interaction, and socialisation process.

So we have two distinct varieties, spoken Hindi is also referred to as Hindustani. There may be academic debate about the status of Hindustani and Hindi, but broadly if you look at, there are two distinct varieties, of course, as far as standard written Hindi is concerned, with spoken colloquial Hindi on the street, definitely there is a difference at all levels. And this difference is apparent, specifically in terms of lexicon, words, choice of words.


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Charles A. Ferguson (1959) Diglossia

- Of the four defining languages, Arabic diglossia seems to reach as far back as our knowledge of Arabic goes, and the superposed 'Classical' language has remained relatively stable, while Greek diglossia has roots going back many centuries, but it became fully developed only at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the renaissance of Greek literature and the creation of a literary language based in large part on previous forms of literary Greek.
- Swiss German diglossia developed as a result of long religious and political isolation from the centers of German linguistic standardization, while Haitian Creole arose from a creolization of a pidgin French, with standard French later coming to play the role of the superposed variety.
- For convenience of reference the superposed variety in diglossia will be called the H ('high') variety or simply H, and the regional dialects will be called L ('low') varieties or, collectively, simply L.


◦ Charles A. Ferguson (1959) Diglossia, WORD, 15:2,325-340, DOI:10.1080/00437956.1959.11659702



If you look at these two varieties, a diagnostic situation where two varieties are being used for two different purposes. Actually this word was coined and first introduced by Ferguson in 1959. Let us go to Ferguson in 1959, and before I move further, let me quote from Ferguson. Charles Ferguson has a very important example that he gave in his diglossia published in 1951. He says of the four defining languages, “Arabic diglossia seems to reach us as far back as our knowledge of Arabic goes.


And the superposed classical language has remained relatively stable, while Greek diglossia has roots going back many centuries, but it became fully developed only at the beginning of the 19 century with the renaissance of Greek literature and the creation of a literary language based in large part on previous form of literary Greek. Swiss German diglossia developed as a result of long religious and political isolation from the centres of German linguistic standardisation. While Haitian Creole arose from a creolization of Pidgin French with standard French, where the latter came to play the role of the superposed variety. For convenience of the reference, the superposed variety in diglossia will be called the H, high variety or simply H and the regional dialect will be called L, low varieties or collectively simply L.” This is from Ferguson 1959.

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- superposed code [H] being utilized in formal situations, whereas, the underposed code [L] is used in non-formal contexts.
- cholitbhasha or colloquial Bangla vs. sadhubhasha or 'chaste' standard Bangla language
- Schiffman (1996) describes Tamil linguistic culture as multiglossic
- Gen Tamil, Literary Tamil, Classical Tamil, probably refer to the same variety.
- Other varieties include Pandit Tamil, Modern Tamil, Substandard Colloquial Tamil, Standard Colloquial Tamil, Kofun Tamil, Formal Tamil, and so on.

◦ Schiffman, H. F., 1996. Linguistic Culture and Language Policy. London and New York: Routledge. linguistic culture as multiglossic.



Now we get the two terms; superposed variety and the other is colloquial spoken variety. So he refers to the superposed variety as capital H and the colloquial variety or the spoken variety as capital L. Now we need to understand it very clearly. It is not about asymmetry, linguistic asymmetry. It is not about putting one variety over the other variety. The word high may be a misnomer and low words may be misnomer and confusing because it is not about value judgement. It is not about value judgement that you are assigning a lot of prestige value to H and you are (())(10:43) or putting at the lower strata variety L.

He termed H and L variety or this distinct H from L and L from H, and also underlined the fact of degree of formality. So the degree of formality attached to H is higher than degree of formality attached to L. But by no means, H means high, pure, classical language, and L means low, lower on a strata, and any inferior to H.


So no inferiority value is attached to it and no superiority value is attached to it. These are the terms just to understand and do not distinguish between these two varieties. So we have to keep them in mind when we talk about high and low. So two very prominent examples, we can quote from Indian linguistic diversity or Indian linguistic ecology.

One is in the Bangla speech community. We have two varieties; Cholitbhasha and Sadhushasha. Now both are Bangla, but Cholitbhasha a colloquial Bangla versus Sadhushasha or chaste standard Bangla that you find in the poetic tradition and get in form. Schiffman (1996) describes

Tamil linguistic culture as a multi classic. They sent Tamil literary Tamil classical Tamil and probably they all refer to the same variety, that is one code which he calls H code.

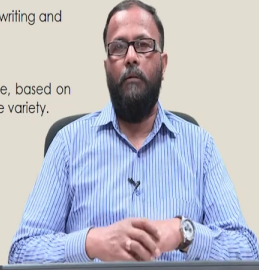
I want to call it high or low, but H code lets us understand H code as superposed code or H code. This is also known as a variety like Pandit Tamil, modern Tamil standards, colloquial Tamil standard, colloquial Tamil Kotun, Tamil formal Tamil and so on. So you find these varieties with a certain degree of formality attached to them. This degree can vary from high to low, and you can find this study in Tamil. Let us comment on Tamil in Schiffman's work in 1996, *Linguistic culture and language policy*, London and New York.

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Deductions:

- A bilingual phenomenon
- First Identified by Charlse Ferguson in 1959.
- Diglossia may devolute from various origins and eventuate in different language situations.
- Diglossia is a type of linguistic situation in which one language variety is used for writing and another for speech.
- When people are *biduallectal*, they can use two dialects of the same language, based on their surroundings or different contexts where they use one or the other language variety.



So what can we deduct from this discussion? The diglossia is definitely a bilingual phenomenon where the user or the speaker has two linguistic resources, two linguistic varieties at his or her disposal to choose from pertaining to a particular social context or context of use. It was first identified and introduced by Charles A. Ferguson in 1959.

Diglossia may develop from various origins and eventuate in different language situations. You can deduct diglossia as a type of linguistic situation in which one language variety is used for writing and another for speech, to be very broad. So we can understand broadly that there are distinct, deliberately chosen, preferred varieties of the same language in written form or in education, higher education, or in literature, or in all formal domains.

And the other one, the colloquial version of the same language used in everyday life for all non-formal social contexts and when people are by dialectal, that means, they have at their exposure two different dialects of the same variety. They can use two dialects of the same language based on their surroundings or different contexts where they use one or the other language varieties interchangeably.

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The slide features a title 'Diglossia vs. Bilingualism' in a large, dark font. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with a red and white design and the text 'NPTEL' below it. The main content consists of two bullet points: '◦ Diglossia: A linguistic situation according to the use of varieties for different social contexts within the same speech community.' and '◦ Bilingualism: The innate capacity of the speaker to use two varieties (or more, in the case of multilingualism) for different social functions.' In the bottom right corner, there is a small inset image of a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue striped shirt, sitting at a desk and looking towards the camera.

In the beginning I introduced the fact that diglossia cannot be interchanged with bilingualism. So diglossia and bilingualism are not interchangeable. They definitely denote each other. So bilingualism is denoted by a diglossic situation where the speaker or the language user has two varieties at his or her disposal and chooses from two distinct linguistic systems to use in a particular social context.


So diglossia is a linguistic situation according to the use of varieties for different social contexts within the same speech community, whereas bilingualism refers to the innate capacity of the speaker to use two varieties or more in the case of multilingualism for different social function. So diglossia refers to the situation of use of the language and bilingualism refers to the ability of the user to use varieties for different purposes. So we have to understand that distinction and make it while talking about diglossia.

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H ('high') vs. L ('low') varieties

- For convenience of reference the superposed variety in diglossia will be called the H ('high') variety or simply H, and the regional dialects will be called L ('low') varieties or, collectively, simply L.
 - [Charles A. Ferguson (1959)]
- No value judgement
- Linguistic attitude remains neutral
- The terms are used for contrast and opposition between varieties and their functions.



Now we also need to underline the fact that Ferguson called H, high variety versus low, L varieties. But this is particularly for convenience. Ferguson himself mentions it “for convenience of reference the superposed variety in diglossia will be called the H, capital H, high variety or simply H and the regional dialect will be called capital L, low varieties are collectively simply L.

So Ferguson himself makes it very clear that we are not going to assign any value judgement on these varieties. It is not about a stratification of languages in the community speech community. It is not about placing value or high prestige to the H variety and looking down on the low variety or L variety.

It is all about convenience for understanding the fact that these two varieties differ in terms of the degree of formality that we have to understand. So no value judgement assigned. Linguistic attitude remains neutral and the terms are used for contrast and opposition between varieties and their functions.

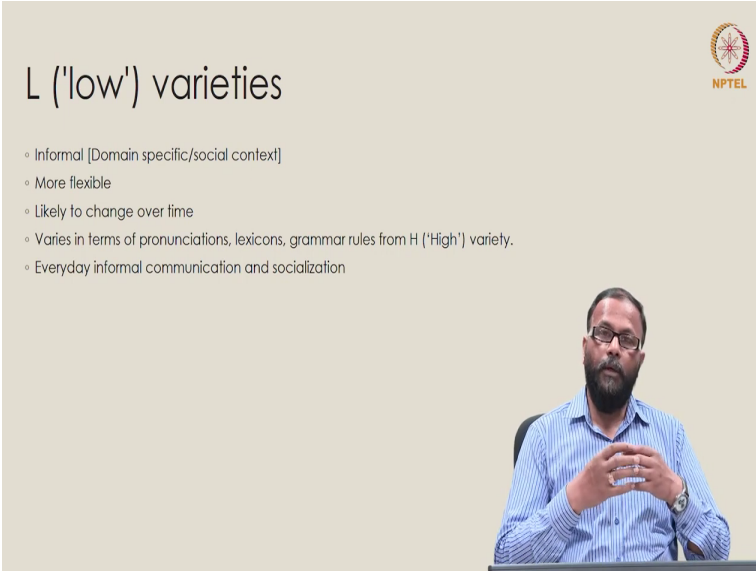
So we have to understand this very clearly, that we are not going to assign any value judgement on that. But of course, we do understand when we talk about diagnosing situations, we do understand that we have either two distinct varieties of the same language or it may be two different languages. Swiss German versus standard German. It may be the case where you choose one particular variety for colloquial, everyday transactions and the other standardised, codified, and restricted variety for all formal occasions and purposes, maybe in literary works,

maybe in formal, highly formal domains like parliamentary transactions, in judiciary, in education, so depends what domain are we talking about.

And specify this H variety is more often seen in the written form than in the spoken one. And perhaps that is the reason why I brought up the Hindi and Hindustani dilemma. Whether there may be a political debate on this example. But if we understand that Hindustani or the colloquial Hindi spoken in the market, in the train when you travel from one place to another, in all ordinary, everyday life, is entirely different in terms of choice of words and lexicons.

When we talk about standard Hindi texts, literary works, or standard writings in Parliament, transactions, or maybe in education textbooks, and other places, we do not find that colloquial variety of Hindustani. So but no value judgement at all, that is what I am trying to emphasise and we need to keep in mind.

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L ('low') varieties

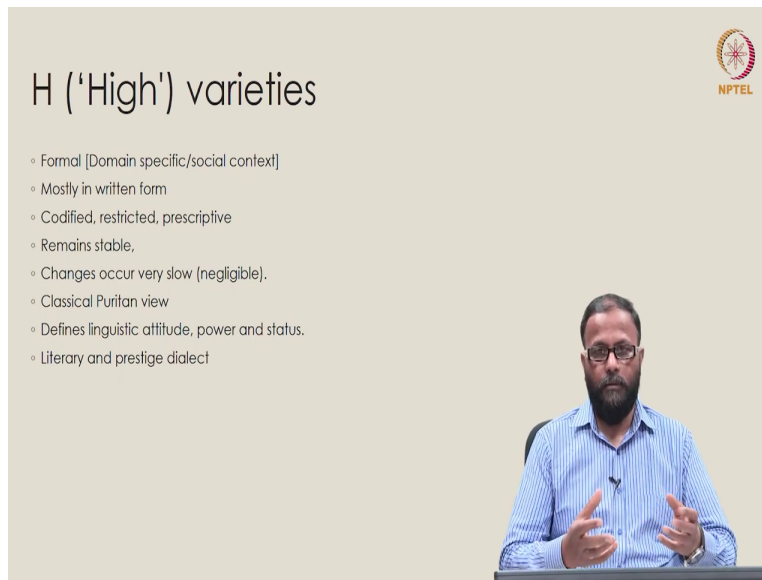
- Informal [Domain specific/social context]
- More flexible
- Likely to change over time
- Varies in terms of pronunciations, lexicons, grammar rules from H ('High') variety.
- Everyday informal communication and socialization

The slide also features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner and a video inset in the bottom right showing a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue striped shirt, speaking with his hands clasped.

So what are the characteristics and properties of this L code? Let us not talk about low variety, but let us name it as L code. What are the basic characteristics of this variety? So number one, it is domain specific. It is social context specific and highly informal, casual and informal. And this gives a lot of flexibility for you without consciously using it. It is a very natural form. In its natural form, spontaneously we are using this colloquial variety with ease, without any effort. So it gives you lots of flexibility and it changes over time and space. Because it is owned by people and not codified and prescribed.

So it has the option of growing, changing and lots of changes take place in due course of time. It varies in terms of pronunciation, choice of words. We call lexicons sometimes grammatical rules, grammar rules, also in certain cases. Tamil is one of the examples that do not use the same word for the same function. You have two different words and they are pronounced differently. So it varies in terms of pronunciation, lexicons, and grammar rules from the H code or H variety and it is used for everyday informal communication and socialisation. So these are the characters of L code.

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The slide features a title 'H ('High') varieties' in a large, dark font. To the right of the title is the NPTEL logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a sun-like symbol and the text 'NPTEL' below it. Below the title is a bulleted list of characteristics:

- Formal [Domain specific/social context]
- Mostly in written form
- Codified, restricted, prescriptive
- Remains stable,
- Changes occur very slow (negligible).
- Classical Puritan view
- Defines linguistic attitude, power and status.
- Literary and prestige dialect

In the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a video inset showing a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue striped shirt, speaking and gesturing with his hands.

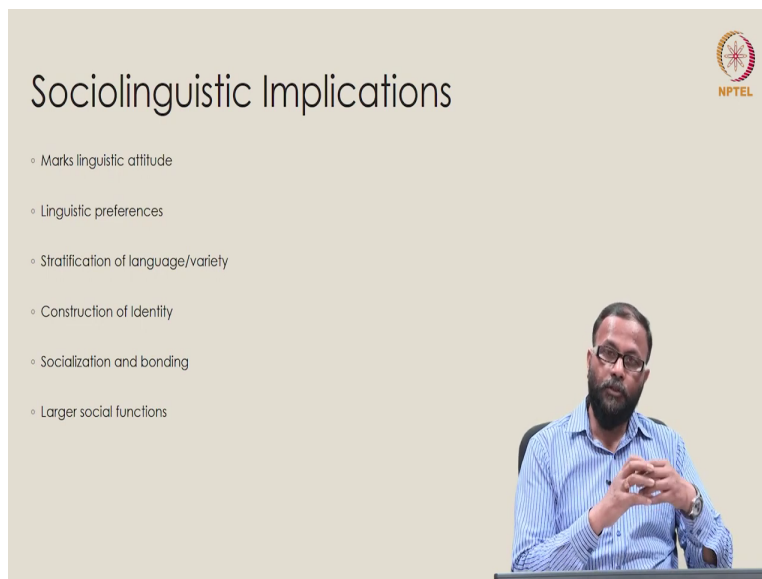
When we look at the characteristics of H code, it is highly formal, it is of course domain specific, social context specific, but degree of formality is very high. So highly formal and mostly in written form, so like in written forms, it becomes almost like a frozen variety. Because you have hardly any choice.

So it is highly codified, restricted, and prescriptive. It gets institutional support. When I say institutional support, that means it is used in education. It is used in parliamentary transactions, but not in oral form, but in written form. Because you might have seen people speaking in Parliament. They speak a natural colloquial Hindi for that matter, but when the same thing is recorded in minutes, you find a different, highly sensitised formal variety of Hindi in written form.

It remains the situation remains stable because the dynamism is in the L code, but you find less dynamic non flexible variety, which is the H code changes of course, changes take place, but very slowly as compared to the L code, changes in H code is very slow. It has a Puritan view. I mean classical Puritan view.

For example, standard Hindi in written form derives heavily from Sanskrit. It also defines linguistic attitude, power, and status. It is a literary and prestige dialect. So I hope now we are clear about L code and H code. We have to keep in mind that it can be just two distinct varieties of the same language or in certain cases, it can be two different languages where we have a degree of formality associated with these two distinct varieties. And we choose one for one purpose, the other for another, and it is like a social contract where all the speakers in the speech community understand and practice this linguistic use in the similar fashion diagnostic situation that we call.

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The slide is titled "Sociolinguistic Implications" and features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. It contains a bulleted list of six sociolinguistic implications. In the bottom right corner, there is a video inset showing a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue striped shirt, speaking and gesturing with his hands.

- Marks linguistic attitude
- Linguistic preferences
- Stratification of language/variety
- Construction of Identity
- Socialization and bonding
- Larger social functions

So what are the social linguistic implications for diglossia? It definitely marks power status and prestige attached to the H variety. It marks linguistic attitude, then it also marks linguistic preferences according to the social context where these are used. Of course, it has a stratification of the varieties where L is used for non-formal purposes in social or non-formal social contexts, where the H variety is used for highly formal social contexts, purely mostly in written form.

And it definitely, the L variety is very instrumental in construction of identity and equally H variety also determines. One of the determinants of the construction of linguistic identity, socialisation and bonding. And of course, that together marks a larger social function. So this is what all about diglossia and linguistic situations (())(27:30) We call diglossic situations where two distinct varieties of the same language or in certain cases, two distinct varieties are used for two different purposes within the same speech community.

And it denotes a bilingual innate capacity of the speaker to choose from two different linguistic sources. Diglossia and bilingualism are not interchangeable. Diglossia refers to the context of use, whereas bilingualism refers to the innate capability of the individual speaker to choose from two different linguistic sources. So I hope this sociolinguistic concept called diglossia is clear to you. We will come back to diglossia once again when we talk about bilingualism in some other video. So thank you very much.