Chapter 6

Multilingualism and language choice

Key terms in this chapter:

- vitality
- diglossia
- High variety
- Low variety
- code switching
- domain
- situational
- passive knowledge
- active knowledge
- code mixing
- speech levels

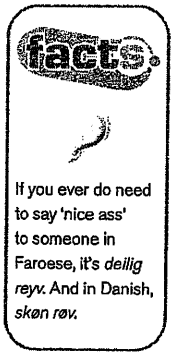
INTRODUCTION

It's late evening on the hills above the town of Tórshavn, in the Faroe Islands. Because the islands are so far north, even in August the sky is light until quite late and the children can play outside until 10 p.m. or later. Tonight some boys – about ten years old – are playing in an outdoor playground that belongs to the local nursery. The language of everyday life in the Faroes is Føroyske (Faroese), a Germanic language closely related to Icelandic, and the boys are talking in Faroese as they play. One of them climbs to the front of a mock ship and straddles the foredeck and the cabin with one foot on each. As he does this, another boy reaches up trying to slap his backside. With each swipe, the second boy calls out in English, 'Nice ass, nice ass'.

The use of English at this point obviously means something more than the words themselves do. All of these boys would have been completely fluent in Faroese, and by the age of ten they would have been very fluent in Danish. Both Faroese and Danish certainly have the lexical resources to say 'nice ass'. So why did he choose English instead?

In Chapters 3 and 4, we have already seen a number of cases where the choice of a word or even the pronunciation of a word may signal social and attitudinal information over and above the purely referential information carried by the word itself. We've also looked at analyses that explain intraspeaker variation in terms of who the speaker is talking to and whether they want to stress likeness and commonality with their addressee. In the different approaches to style-shifting, we have seen that different ways of talking carry different social meaning, perhaps signalling casualness and intimacy, or authority, formality and prestige.

In this chapter, we are going to look at how choosing between languages can be invested with the same kinds of social and affective meaning as choosing *styles* in one language. The



If you ever do need to say 'nice ass' to someone in Faroese, it's *deilig reyv*. And in Danish, *skøn røv*.

fact that languages can be invested with this kind of additional interactional meaning means the process of drawing up official policies of language planning and language in education can be a charged one. Decisions made about the official use and recognition of languages can have a powerful impact on the long-term strength of a language. We will use the term **vitality** to describe the likelihood that a language will continue being used for a range of social functions by a community of speakers, and we will see that vitality is influenced by institutional, social and demographic factors.

Vitality

Demographic, social and institutional strength of a language and its speakers.

We will then examine some more specific cases where the vitality of different language varieties manifests itself in a division of social labour. That is, we will see that in multilingual communities, different languages have more or less vitality in different (institutional, social or personal) domains. In multilingual settings, the choice between languages carries interactional force or implies something about the situation or the interlocutors. One language may be used for some social functions or in a specific social context, while another language is reserved for other functions and contexts. This can be called **diglossia**, and we will look at some communities that have been described as diglossic, including speech communities with elaborated registers that are used in different situations and with different addressees.

CHAPTER 12, RSR

Diglossia

Classically defined as a situation where two closely related languages are used in a speech community. One for *High* (H) functions (e.g., church, newspapers) and one for *Low* (L) functions (e.g., in the home, or market). The situation is supposed to be relatively stable and the languages/varieties remain distinct (cf. *creole* outcomes of language contact). Now often extended to refer to any two languages (even typologically unrelated ones) that have this kind of social and functional distribution.

LANGUAGE POLICY AND LANGUAGE PLANNING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES

No nation in the world is completely monolingual. In some cases, this is due to the way modern nation-states have been composed on the basis of rough geographic boundaries and because of historical political allegiances and conquest. Nowadays, it is also because of the ease and speed of movements of people between different nations. However, some nations officially consider themselves to be monolingual (e.g., Greece), and the historical reasons why they decide to foreground a single language in education and politics gives us interesting insights into how ideas about culture, race, self-determination and identity have developed in parallel to one another.

However, even in communities or nations that embrace their multilingualism, issues of self-determination, identity and culture are central. As we have seen in earlier chapters, speakers can use quite fine phonetic detail as the means for establishing group boundaries or personal identities. In other words, quite subtle and even unconsciously controlled forms of linguistic variation can have strong social effects. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that intense negotiation of collective values takes place when a community is making decisions about which language(s) will be officially or nationally recognised. In the next sections I outline how two new nations dealt with intense multilingualism and a colonial history when it came to shaping language policies that would contribute to defining a new national identity.

CHAPTER 10, RSR

National languages and language policies

Two examples of highly multilingual societies can be compared in this respect: the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Vanuatu, one located in the southern-most part of the African continent, and one in the south-west Pacific. Both, relatively recently, have had the task of formulating a national constitution, and as multilingual nations both wanted to codify language policies in their constitutions.

LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S CONSTITUTION

The South African Constitution was drawn up with the shift to full suffrage and equal rights for all citizens following the dismantling of the apartheid regime in 1994. *Apartheid* means 'separation' in Afrikaans, the language of the White Afrikaner population who were socially – though by no means numerically – dominant in South Africa until the 1990s. Under apartheid, legislation concentrated power and control of land and other economic resources in the hands of the 15 per cent of the population who were ethnically White, while the very large Black majority and the Indian and mixed-race sectors of the population were actively discriminated against. They were not, for instance, allowed to vote or have a say in changes to land law and local educational policy. The White population subdivided into two further groups: the English (descendants of the English settlers of South Africa) and the Afrikaners (who traced their descent to the first Dutch colonists). The two groups maintained their heritage languages, though of course they were subject to the kinds of changes that would affect any language over that time. Afrikaans looks and sounds quite different from Dutch today, and South African English has undergone a number of independent changes to the vowel system and its vocabulary, all of which make it sound quite distinct from modern British English (Lass 2002).

With the dominance of these two groups came the authority to legislate and control matters relating to language. Under apartheid, the ruling class of Afrikaners was able to stipulate that official business in the nation-state should be conducted in their language, Afrikaans. The law that dictated that Afrikaans would be the medium of instruction in Black schools became one of the most hated aspects of the apartheid regime and served as a lightning rod for acts of resistance. During the apartheid years this language law was often the focus of protests in the Black community against the injustice of the whole apartheid regime. The most widely known instance was the student uprising in Soweto that started in 1976, when Black students began protesting about the required use of Afrikaans as the medium of education. Protests continued into the 1980s and hundreds of protesters (including more than a hundred schoolchildren) were killed in clashes with the government's armed forces.

Connections with theory

Review the discussion of Tajfel in Chapter 4 (p. 63). How does the student protest in Soweto fit into his theory of intergroup relations? What does this form of creativity say about students' perceptions of the *justice* and *stability* of the situation? Why do you think they felt they had to boycott the classes rather than, for instance, try using their preferred language(s) in school instead of Afrikaans? What more does that suggest to you about the perceived stability of the situation?

exercise

Language choice in education

Why do you think the Black population of South Africa hated the law requiring them to be taught in Afrikaans in school so much?

Do you think that there is any similarity between the resistance to use of Afrikaans as a medium of education in South Africa and calls for 'Ebonics', or African American English, to be recognised and used in US schools?

You can also find coverage of the Soweto uprising from 16 June 1976 on the Internet or by searching back-files of major newspapers in a library. To what extent is the role of language discussed in the media reports? Do you think linguistic issues are well-covered? Why (not)?

A new start and new language policies

The apartheid regime in South Africa finally collapsed in the 1990s, partly as a consequence of political, sporting and economic boycotts. Equal rights and full suffrage were extended to all ethnic groups, and power transferred from the White minority to the Black majority (though to say it like this papers over a good deal of political and social diversity among different groups of Black Africans in the new South Africa). A new constitution was drawn up for the new state, and all of section 6 – which includes many paragraphs – is given over to language rights in the new nation.

The Constitutional Court of South Africa reproduces the Constitution on its website. The first thing the Constitution says about language is:

> 6.(1) The official languages of the Republic are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.

In other words, the new state was to define itself in terms of linguistic pluralities, giving equal status to 11 languages. There are, of course, smaller language groups whose languages have not been given official recognition and support, and this does create a hierarchy within the larger sociolinguistic picture of the new South Africa. Another thing to note about the principal statement on national languages is that in the Constitution the official languages are not seen as being purely functional, but also as of affective importance. A few clauses later, the Constitution says 'all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably'.

exercise

Enjoyment of language

Why do you think the writers used the verb 'enjoy' in the last quote? What is 'enjoy' trying to capture? In your opinion, to what extent can or should 'enjoyment' of a language be considered a basic human or constitutional right?

The South African Constitution then goes on to say a number of other things, some of which clearly reflect the new nation's desire to distance itself from values and unjust practices of the past:

> 6.(2) Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.

As we have already noted, there are many other languages used in daily interaction and for specific purposes in South Africa. While these are not afforded the institutional support of the official languages, the Constitution again recognises the linguistic pluralism of the new nation. So, the rights of speakers of other languages should be addressed in future language planning and policy. To this end, the Constitution specifies that a Language Board, functioning independently of the government, must be established, whose brief is to promote official and non-official languages in South Africa.

This examination of the South African Constitution indicates how vitally important the new nation perceives language rights to be. They help define core values which the nation wants in order to shape the development of a new South African identity now and into the future. The multilingual, multicultural nature of South Africa is a synchronic fact that contributes to these needs, but the needs also arise from the historical role that language has played in a history of oppression. For that reason, the Constitution writers have felt it important to address aspects specific to the *history* of South Africa, aspects of its *current* state of affairs, and their *aspirations* for the future in the document. What is interesting, sociolinguistically, is that they have recognised all of these dimensions as being directly related to policy and planning about language use, and spelled this out overtly in a way that is rather unusual.

LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN VANUATU'S CONSTITUTION

The challenges of linguistic self-determination also arise in other post-colonial contexts around the world. Many Pacific nations gained full independence only in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Republic of Vanuatu is one such example. Vanuatu was jointly administered as a colonial outpost by both the British and French (in a unique arrangement known officially as the 'Joint Condominium' government, but generally referred to locally as the 'Joint Pandemonium') until 1980 when it became an independent nation.

The new nation was highly diverse linguistically, and as in South Africa this raised a number of issues, some practical and some ideological. In addition to the many indigenous Eastern Oceanic languages spoken on the islands, there is an English-based creole called Bislama which is widely used, especially in the main centres (the capital Port Vila and the northern town Luganville/Santo). Finally, there are the two colonial languages, French and English, which were the official languages of the Condominium government.

National and official languages in Vanuatu

Upon gaining independence, Vanuatu inscribed slightly different decisions into their Constitution than South Africa did. The relevant section on 'National and official languages'

No, really?

Vanuatu is a nation made up of an archipelago of 83 islands. Its population is growing rapidly, and currently stands at around 200,000 people. As many as 114 distinct languages may be spoken there – linguists are still arguing and counting. They all agree that it is the country with the highest density of languages per head of population anywhere in the world.

in the English version of the Constitution is much shorter than the comparable section in the South African Constitution (and, interestingly, is somewhat less expansive than the Bislama version of the Constitution).

> NATIONAL AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES
>
> 3.(1) The national language of the Republic of Vanuatu is Bislama. The official languages are Bislama, English and French. The principal languages of education are English and French.
>
> 3.(2) The Republic of Vanuatu shall protect the different local languages which are part of the national heritage, and may declare one of them as a national language.

What clause 3.(1) does is make a three-way distinction between a *national* language, *official* languages and languages of *education*. It divides up these functions between French, English and Bislama, while in the next paragraph it addresses the importance and value placed on the indigenous languages which do not have any institutional status. This is articulated more explicitly in the Bislama version of the Constitution, which says: 'The indigenous languages of Vanuatu are part of the many good, traditional aspects of the country, and the government of the Republic will ensure that they are maintained' (my translation).

Clause 3.(2) allows one of the 'different local languages' to have national language status instead of or as well as Bislama. This aligns Bislama with the indigenous Eastern Oceanic languages, and suggests that Bislama's status as a national language is partly because it is *not* a colonial language but is considered more like an indigenous language of Vanuatu. As Ni-Vanuatu will readily tell you (*Ni-Vanuatu* is the adjective formed from *Vanuatu*), Bislama 'belongs to everyone'. Unlike the indigenous Eastern Oceanic or colonial languages it is not linked to any particular group or any particular set of vested interests. It is widely seen by Ni-Vanuatu as part of the common property of the nation, and an important way of establishing a bond between Ni-Vanuatu when they meet overseas.

ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY

The negotiation of official status for languages in multilingual communities or nations involves a number of social, political and attitudinal factors. These factors all contribute to what we can call the 'ethnolinguistic vitality' of the different linguistic varieties. The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality comes from work on the social psychology of language. Researchers were

interested initially in the relationship between groups of speakers and the languages in use in their community. They asked questions such as 'why do some languages remain strong in the face of social change, while others are abandoned within a few generations?' and 'what role does language play in defining a group or ethnic identity?' The term 'ethnolinguistic vitality' takes its name from two issues that were fundamental to the early research. A linguistic variety has relatively high 'vitality' if it is spoken and used widely. This kind of vitality is a good indicator of whether or not that particular language will continue to be spoken in successive generations, or whether speakers are likely to shift to another language. The word 'ethnolinguistic' reflects the researchers' belief that the use of a particular language variety is an extremely significant factor in defining a cultural or ethnic identity. The demographics of the (ethnic) group speaking a language, the status afforded to a language, and the institutional support provided for a language are all important considerations for evaluating the relative strength or vitality of languages.

The model of ethnolinguistic vitality that we are going to look at was not only intended to provide a reasonably reliable means for describing and comparing the relative vitality or strength of languages but has also been used as a frame for discussing what kinds of action or intervention might promote long-term maintenance of less vital varieties. We will see shortly that some work in this framework has been conducted in active collaboration with speakers of languages that are threatened by, for instance, the increasing use of English. The three pillars of ethnolinguistic vitality are represented in Figure 6.1. This figure represents vitality as being a function of three clusters of factors: the status (of a variety or of the speakers of that variety in different contexts), the demographics of the group identified and identifying with that variety, and institutional measures supporting or recognising a variety.

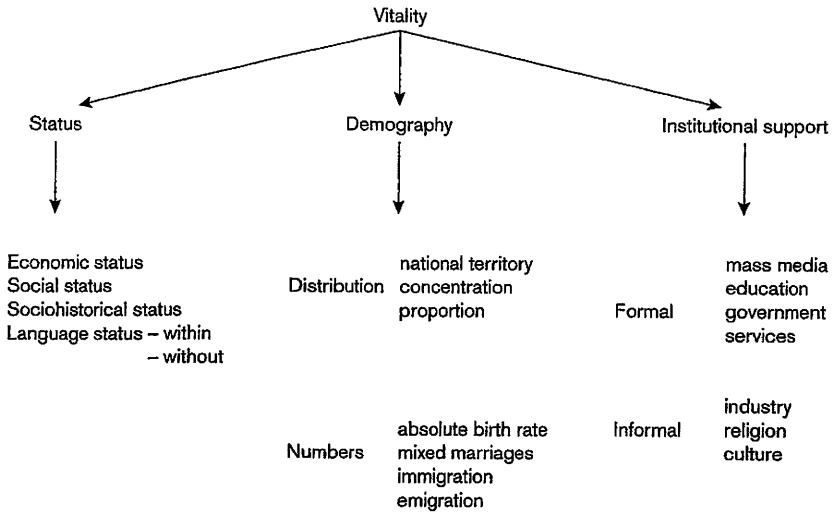


Figure 6.1 Factors contributing to ethnolinguistic vitality. (Source, Giles *et al.* 1977.)

Status factors influencing language vitality

If the speakers of a language have relatively high social status within the larger community – perhaps because they have higher social or economic status – the ethnolinguistic vitality of that variety will be higher too. This is the situation with what we would call the 'standard' language. The status of the language within the community *and* outside the community also matters. So too does the historical status that variety has had in the community in question. For example, Latin maintained relatively high vitality in Europe many centuries after it died out as a language of day-to-day communication. This was partly because it scored highly on all the status measures. The people who did acquire proficiency in Latin had greater economic and social status, and even people who did not have command of the language respected others' acquisition of it (that is, it had high status outside of the community of Latin users).

Institutional factors influencing language vitality

Institutional support also contributes to increased vitality of a language and therefore promotes its maintenance and use. Widespread use of a language in the popular mass media, as the medium of education, and in official government business all increase its relative vitality. This is the kind of vitality that both the South African and Vanuatu Constitutions try to foster by naming official and/or national languages.

More local and home-based activities, such as maintenance of a language for religious purposes and for regular cultural events, mean that even if the language is not widely used for daily conversation, it can retain a degree of vitality; this will also favour its long-term maintenance. A case of this can be found in the complex sociolinguistic situation found in Mauritius.

Mauritius is an ethnically and linguistically diverse nation in the Indian Ocean. The population mainly speaks Mauritian Creole at home and in daily business interactions, but English and French also have official uses. In addition, the very large population of Indo-Mauritians maintain (to a greater or lesser extent) use of their heritage Indian languages (e.g., Gujarati, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu). These are the languages, still sometimes used in the home, of the descendants of the migrant indentured labourers who came to Mauritius from what is now India and Pakistan. So French and English have high vitality on formal institutional measures, and Mauritian Creole has high vitality on other (mainly demographic) measures.

At the same time, *informal* institutional support can also play a significant part in determining the vitality of a language. In the last two Mauritian censuses, a number of people identified 'Arabic' as their heritage language (Rajah-Carrim 2003). Closer analysis of trends across the last few censuses suggests that some Muslim respondents are reporting Arabic as their heritage language. Virtually all the Muslims on Mauritius are Indo-Mauritian and not Middle Eastern, so we would expect that they would indicate something like Urdu or Gujarati as their heritage language (indeed, this is what earlier censuses seemed to show). One interpretation of this increase in how many people report using Arabic is that because Arabic is the language of the Koran and Hadith this gives it considerable informal institutional vitality within the Muslim community. Furthermore, the language of the Koran and Hadith have high sociohistorical status in the Muslim community (the books are an important factor in providing a sense of cultural continuity for the community). It is possible that under the influence of these measures of high vitality, some Indo-Mauritians are now identifying Arabic as their

'heritage' language, even though, unlike the other heritage languages of the community, Arabic is seldom – if ever – spoken in anyone's home.

Demographic factors influencing vitality

Finally, the model notes the importance of demographic factors in determining the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language. A language might have relatively little social and economic status and relatively little institutional support, but if the group of people speaking the language appreciably outnumber the speakers of other languages, and particularly if they are relatively concentrated in a specific area, then the long-term prognosis for the maintenance of that language is improved. We can see the importance of having concentrated populations of speakers of a language by considering the impact of New Zealand's policies of relocating Māori in the mid-twentieth century. The movement of Māori into urban areas was accompanied by a deliberate policy that was known as 'pepper-potting'; that is, Māori were housed so as to avoid significant concentrations of Māori in one area. This rupture of Māori social networks had a profound effect on the transmission of key cultural information – including the language – to the next generation, a disruption that is only gradually, and with tremendous effort, being reversed.

USING THE MODEL OF LANGUAGE VITALITY

Although Figure 6.1 is a useful overview of the many factors that are involved in maintaining a lively and vital linguistic community, there are a few reasons why we should use it carefully. First of all, although each factor itemised in Figure 6.1 is presented as if it were discrete and independent of the other factors, this is something of an idealisation. In particular, you can probably see how measures of institutional support overlap with measures of status. Similarly, some measures of (informal) institutional support might be more likely to follow from demographic facts, such as high concentrations of speakers in one area and whether there are high rates of immigration. Immigration is important because it provides a ready 'top-up' of proficient users of a language variety and the associated social and cultural traditions. Some varieties of Central American Spanish spoken in the US have benefited from the vitality of steady immigration over several generations.

It might be possible to correct for some of these problems by weighting the different factors shown in Figure 6.1. Deciding on which factors to weight more than others would have to be based on in-depth research in a particular community. In fact, this is how the framework has been deployed by some researchers, and we will look at the results of some of the work on language revitalisation and language maintenance that have drawn on this framework.

Canada's First Nations languages

Canada is well known as a multicultural and multilingual nation. Both French and English are recognised as national languages and, in the province of Quebec, French is keenly protected and promoted as a language of all official and public discourse. In addition, there are numerous languages spoken by more recent immigrants to Canada, such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and Spanish. Some of these languages, while lacking the formal institutional support

that gives French and English their relative vitality, nonetheless retain a degree of vitality by virtue of informal and demographic factors.

Canada is also home to the languages of the First Nations. 'First Nations' is the term used in Canada to refer to the native North American peoples who lived in what is now Canada before it became a European colony. They currently make up about 2 per cent of Canada's overall population. Many of the First Nations people have left their traditional or reservation lands in Canada and more than 25 per cent now live in Canada's 11 largest cities. In general, the language rights of the First Nations have little formal institutional support. Quebec, the Northwest Territories, and the recently formed Nunavut are the only states with language policies affording protection to First Nation languages.

Itesh Sachdev is a sociolinguist who has worked for many years with speakers of various minority language communities in Canada, including speakers of First Nations languages. Some of his more recent work has been in the Fisher River Cree community (in Manitoba) (Sachdev 1998) and the Haida Gwaii community (on Queen Charlotte Island in British Columbia). In both these communities English is the dominant language and has high status and a lot of institutional support. Cree and Haida have comparatively low status and little institutional support. They are taught as subjects in the schools, but do not serve as the medium for education in any subject. They are only spoken fluently by a small number of elders in each community – indeed, the number of native speakers is so small that Sachdev has been able to meet *all* the fluent speakers in both communities.

Despite the low vitality of Cree and Haida, the communities are keen to find ways of promoting their use and maintaining them in the younger generations. Sachdev has worked with both communities to try and determine what kinds of intervention strategies are most likely to work in each place. In doing this, he is trying to make practical use of the model of ethnolinguistic vitality discussed above, combining it with the strength of local researchers' knowledge and interview skills. Some striking findings emerged from his combination of interviews, surveys and language attitudes questionnaires.

He found that in both communities there was an almost universal perception that the Haida and Cree languages are a very important index of Haida or Cree identity. However, he also found that people who were taught Cree or Haida in school expressed more negative attitudes towards the language than towards English, while people who had learnt Haida or Cree at home, or people who had never learnt the languages, evaluated English and their heritage language roughly equally.

Obviously, this poses problems for possible intervention. It suggests that maintenance of the languages in these communities may actually be harmed if the principal efforts towards their revitalisation are made in the schools. And yet promoting use of the languages in families requires quite subtle forms of intervention and support.

Sachdev and his colleagues in the Cree and Haida communities turned their attention to other kinds of markers that might play an important role in influencing the long-term vitality and maintenance of these languages. Among other things, they have looked at how individuals label themselves within those communities, and how these labels correlate with other factors.

Group labels can be tremendously rich in the kinds of attitudes and values they evoke. Research in Canada has found that when White Canadians were asked about their attitudes to the First Nations, they gave very different responses depending on the label or name the researchers used to describe the First Nations. Similarly, Sachdev found that there were big differences in how members of the Haida and Cree communities described themselves and their language profile. For example, people who self-categorised as 'Indian' showed greater identification with colonial ideologies, and these people tended to favour use of English over

use of Haida or Cree. On the other hand, members of the community who self-categorised as 'Cree' or 'Haida' showed the opposite tendency, and they favoured the First Nations languages.

Sachdev and the local researchers in both communities concluded that language revitalisation is likely to be more successful if underlying ideologies about colonialism and self-determination are addressed. In terms of ethnolinguistic vitality, they have found that status issues need to be addressed as urgently as institutional ones if the Cree and Haida languages are going to thrive in coming generations.

Wales: identity and language post-devolution

The challenges facing a language like Welsh are rather different from those of the First Nations. Aggressive revitalisation and language maintenance efforts have been a feature of the social and political landscape in Wales for somewhat longer than they have been among the Canadian First Nations. The (partial) devolution of political and economic decision-making from the British Parliament to the Welsh Assembly has enabled even more direct funding of language maintenance initiatives.

However, the activities that are emphasised in Wales are beginning to shift from promoting Welsh as a core cultural value to dealing with the difficulties that are associated with funding and staffing the revitalisation programmes that have already been established. What this means is that the groups responsible for promoting the status of Welsh within the country are critically evaluating where they get the best return on funding and resources, and they are trying to identify key, and successful, groups and strategies. There has been a shift from simply bolstering the vitality of the language in terms of social status, or institutional support. This involves a careful evaluation of how demographic factors interact with the newly achieved institutional support.

Colin Williams, of the Welsh Language Board (WLB), notes that in most cases statistics on minority language use are woefully inadequate. Census data may give a rough idea about how many speakers there are of a language, but these figures can be very misleading. The 1991 census records 600,000 speakers of Welsh, which seems like a very healthy base figure and suggests that current policies and practices encouraging language maintenance have been very successful. However, this figure may include people who do not use Welsh daily, and it may exclude people who hesitate to call themselves 'Welsh speakers' because they are comparing their abilities with those of native speakers.

To date, most of the efforts towards revitalising Welsh have been focused in the formal institutional domain of school and regional government. Twenty-seven per cent of Welsh children are now in Welsh immersion programmes, and all children under 16 have to take Welsh along with English and Maths as a core subject in school. The promotion of Welsh has led to some changes in its status. In the past, research on language attitudes has shown appreciable distrust of bilingualism in the wider community, but this is much less true now. Promotion of the language in school, along with work on perceptions of bilingualism, has had as much impact on increasing the use of Welsh as statutory reform has.

Because of the relatively high institutional support for Welsh in Wales, the focus of the WLB is now shifting to status and demographic issues affecting the long-term vitality of the language. Among the demographic facts that give cause for concern at this stage is the finding that 50 per cent of families have only one parent who is competent in Welsh and in these families that the children tend not to speak the language at all. In addition, the WLB

has found that bilingual teenagers use less and less Welsh as they get older, and it has identified the ages of 9, 14–15 and 18–20 as being particularly important points at which people tend to shift away from using Welsh. Intervening to promote and maintain the language at these points requires close work with the individuals, and the WLB has found that this is not easily done by a national body. As a response to the need for very local responses to language shift, they have established Mentrau Iaith Cymru.

Mentrau Iaith Cymru are small and very local groups that identify local domains and practices that can be targeted for introducing Welsh into. They are likened to linguistic *animateurs*, little cells of political activists, and the kinds of activities they have undertaken include (in West Wales) providing special gift packs for new parents. These are distributed by midwives, and the information provided in them seems to have led to a doubling of the intake in Welsh medium nurseries over recent years. The Mentrau Iaith Cymru have also targeted specific workplaces, working closely with fire stations or police stations, in order to promote the use of Welsh there.

Some promoters of Welsh now argue that the community needs to move beyond the old rhetoric of protection of Welsh to a discourse that focuses on promoting bilingualism. That is, the community needs to move beyond seeing Welsh as a marker of nationalism to a point where it becomes an index of inclusive pluralism. This might entail the community changing its tactics from producing reactive policies to pursuing purposive growth. These activists argue that just as languages and the communities that use them are constantly changing, so too must the strategies and discourses change for effective maintenance of the vitality of a minority language.

No, really?

Colin Williams also stresses that real language revitalisation means that a language functions in *all* social networks and all social domains. He tells a story about a Harvard professor visiting Caernarvon, in north-west Wales, for a conference on minority languages. Walking back to his hotel, he was approached by a man speaking to him in Welsh. Though he understood nothing of what the man said, it was clear from his tone and gestures that he was not friendly. After unsuccessful attempts to communicate, the professor was soundly thumped, abused and his wallet was stolen. As he picked himself up from his mugging, he took some small consolation: 'My, my. Welsh *is* a living language.'

DIGLOSSIA IN A COMMUNITY

In some multilingual communities, the different measures that determine the vitality of language varieties are more rigidly demarcated than in others. Charles Ferguson noted this when writing about the relationship between Classical Arabic and the vernacular spoken varieties of Arabic used throughout the Middle East, and the relationship between European French and Haitian Creole in Haiti. In both the Middle East and Haiti, Ferguson observed that although the languages in each locale were more or less historically related, there was strict differentiation of the domains and functions for which the different languages were used.

Vernacular varieties of Arabic and Haitian were acquired naturally by children and were the everyday medium of communication in the home and with family and friends. On the other hand, Classical Arabic and European French were used for written media (e.g., newspapers and government documents) and when reading aloud from a script or set texts (e.g., radio news broadcasts or teachings in a church or a mosque). In addition, no one natively acquired Classical Arabic or European French in these speech communities. The languages had to be formally taught, and had thoroughly standardised grammars which were the subject of conscious study. Ferguson called this situation of societal bilingualism and institutionalised code-switching, **diglossia** (from Greek, meaning 'two languages').

Ferguson called the language with higher overt prestige, and which is used in more formal contexts and for writing, the **High variety** (or H, for short), and the vernacular variety the **Low variety** (or L). In his original case studies of diglossia, the two varieties in use in the community had some historical link to each other, and one could be argued to have its roots in the other.

Since then, the notion of diglossia has been applied more widely. Joshua Fishman suggested that it should be extended to apply to a functional or domain-based distinction in when you use different languages, registers or styles. He argued that on functional grounds, there was no reason to limit diglossia only to situations where the varieties were diachronically related. This shifts the emphasis from language structure to shared norms for acquisition and use in the community, thus making diglossia very clearly a sociolinguistic phenomenon.

Since then, researchers have noted numerous situations in which more than two languages seem to enter into the same kind of sociohistorical relationships that characterise the classic cases of (either Ferguson's or Fishman's) diglossia. So, among other things, you can find references to 'nested' or 'overlapping' diglossia. An overlap might occur if you had three or more languages. Some people have argued that the sociolinguistic situation in Tanzania is a case of this. In some domains the local vernaculars function as the L to Swahili's H. But in other domains, Swahili is the L to English's H.

For the rest of this chapter, the notion of diglossia will not play a large part. In general, the chapter will try to keep focused on the notions of vitality, and also on how domain of use determines which variety of language a speaker chooses. However, there are obvious connections with the key characteristics of diglossia, and moreover the term is still often used in linguistics. So it is worth having a sense of how it complements or sometimes intersects with the sociolinguistic perspectives that will be developed more fully.

Diglossia

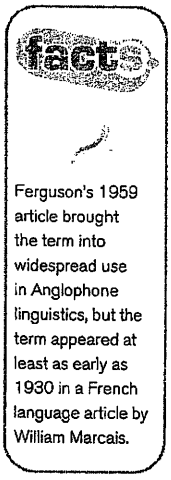
Two languages with distinct functional roles in one community.

High (H) variety

See *Diglossia*.

Low (L) variety

See *Diglossia*.



Ferguson's 1959 article brought the term into widespread use in Anglophone linguistics, but the term appeared at least as early as 1930 in a French language article by William Marcais.

IS 'VITALITY' THE SAME AS 'PRESTIGE'?

An obvious point of possible intersection is between *vitality* and *prestige*. The two terms capture similar intuitions about the importance of institutional support and attitudes to the use of a variety. But the terms do not mean the same thing. Probably if a language ranks highly in terms of institutional measures of vitality, it will always have a degree of overt prestige associated with it (see Chapter 3). For example, government jobs usually pay reasonably well and are usually pretty steady, so as soon as knowing a language becomes a requirement for holding a government position, it is going to become reasonably desirable to a number of people. And if the official business of state and governance takes place in that language it will have external recognition, which also affords it a measure of overt prestige.

The notion of ethnolinguistic vitality therefore has some advantages over prestige. It gets away from any confusion or indeterminacy surrounding terms like prestige, because it avoids

No, really?

In 1998 the Mauritian government issued new bank notes. As with the old notes, there were inscriptions in English, Tamil and Hindi. But on the new notes, Tamil followed Hindi. Bitter arguments followed. Tamils argued that, as one of the first communities in Mauritius, Tamil should precede Hindi. Hindus argued that because they make up a larger section of the population, Hindi should precede Tamil. Finally, at huge cost, the government recalled the notes and replaced them with new ones on which the old order of languages was reinstated. The dispute highlighted differences in the sociohistorical and demographic vitality of the two languages and their associated ethnic groups.

the need to make a distinction between norms that people are consciously orienting to (overt prestige) and those that they seem to be less consciously orienting to (covert prestige). For this reason, it may sometimes be a more useful framework for discussing the social dynamic between languages or language varieties. On the other hand, if you are actually interested in the question of *how* speakers orient to different linguistic norms, then it may be more appropriate to focus on the conscious awareness that is inherent in the notions of (c)overt prestige.

Connections with theory

In studies of language contact, emphasis is placed on determining when different groups of speakers came into contact with one another. Many researchers have noted that the first speakers to arrive when dialects or languages come into contact may have a greater effect on the ultimate structure of the newly emergent variety than later arrivals do. This has been variously called things like the principle of first-past-the-post (Sankoff 1980) or the founder principle (Mufwene (1996), who borrows the term from population genetics). These principles draw on demographic factors and sociohistorical status for describing diachronic processes in a manner very similar to the way ethnolinguistic vitality does to describe synchronic states of affairs.

CODE SWITCHING AND CODE MIXING

People who speak more than one language, or who have command over more than one variety of any language, are generally very sensitive to the differences in the vitality of the languages they use and they are equally aware that in some contexts one variety will serve their needs better than another. This may lead them to change the variety they use depending on where they are. So a speaker of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) may know that when they are applying for a building permit to add an extension on their house, things

may simply go a lot faster if they switch into Standard American English (or the regional White vernacular) when they are talking to the White clerk at City Hall. However, when they go home and are telling their neighbours about what kind of extension they are putting in, it may be more appropriate to use AAVE.

This phenomenon of moving between distinct varieties is known as **code switching**. When code switching is constrained by where speakers happen to be, it can be called **domain**-based or **situational** code switching. When it is constrained by who a speaker happens to be talking to it can be called addressee-based. In addition, there are other more metaphorical motivations for code switching, and we will look at examples that illustrate these points.

It might be fair to say that a diglossic community is one that is characterised by highly predictable domain-based code switching. I would prefer to treat code switching as distinct from diglossia because code switching is not necessarily insitutionalised in the way diglossia is. There is more individual creativity and flexibility involved.

It is sometimes difficut to say just whether it is the domain of the interaction that determines what linguistic variety a speaker will choose, or whether the person they are talking to is what determines their choice. As we have seen in earlier chapters, speakers choose different styles of a language depending on where they are, who they are talking to and what kind of impression or persona they want to communicate to their interlocutors. The same thing holds for shifts between different language varieties when people code switch.

Code switching

In its most specific sense, the alternation between varieties, or codes, across sentences or clause boundaries. Often used as a cover term including *code mixing* as well.

Domain

The social and physical setting in which speakers find themselves.

exercise

Switching styles and languages

Guy is a lawyer in Honolulu. In court, and when meeting with clients, he wears a suit and tie and he speaks the supra-localised variety of American English he acquired growing up in a family that moved often. Outside work hours he wears T-shirts and jeans, and when he stops an employee at the drugstore to ask for help, he switches into Pidgin, 'Cuz, get dakine pukka beads here?' ('Hey mate, do you have any of those, like, surfer beads here?').

Why do you think Guy uses Pidgin instead of Standard American English in the local store? Can you imagine situations where he might want to use Pidgin in his legal work?

A nice example that shows how domain and addressee influences can blur into each other are the factors determining which language you might speak in the market in Kondoa, a township in inland Tanzania. Swahili is the national language of Tanzania and is the language generally used for education, politics and business. However, the vernacular language spoken in the region around Kondoa is Rangi, so there are at least two languages to choose from when you go to market to do business.

Suppose you want to buy the favourite vegetable of the area (it looks something like spinach but, when cooked, has a consistency like okra or bhindi). You would go to the Kondoa town market, the only permanent one in the area, and you could say to a market vendor '*Naomba mlenda*' ('I want spinach/okra' in Swahili). If you point to a large bundle sufficient to feed ten people, the seller will tell you it costs around 300 Tanzanian shillings (the equivalent of about 50 US cents in 2004). You might haggle a bit, saying something like,

Situation(al)

A more idiosyncratic and personalised view of the context or situation of language use (cf. *domain*). In this text, used to describe one of the motivations for *code switching*.

'*Naomba unipunguzie bei*' ('I want you to decrease the price' in Swahili), and they might give it to you for 250 shillings. Good job.

Well, no. Because if you had asked the vendor the same thing in Rangi, '***nooloomba kiruumbu***' ('I want spinach/okra'), they still would have initially asked 300 shillings for the bundle of spinach. But if, during the process of haggling, you use the traditional Rangi formula '*Heeriheeri*' ('What's your bottom-line price?'), chances are they will sell it to you for 200 shillings. In other words, speaking Rangi is worth a 20 per cent discount. The local community uses people's language skills as a means of identifying ingroup members over outgroup members, and once they have been identified they favour them.

On the other hand, if you have business to conduct at the Kondoa branch of the national bank, you better be able to speak Swahili. Banks draw on a national pool of employees, so many are non-Rangi and simply won't understand you unless you speak Swahili. Secondly, coming in speaking Rangi may leave you open to a charge of political tribalism. As a consequence you may be seen as a bad risk for a loan or in a business contract.

These examples show that domain (where you are) is important in determining which language variety you would choose to use in Kondoa, but they also very clearly show that deciding which variety to use requires a good deal of cultural knowledge. The use of Swahili in the bank is not just dictated by the domain, it is also determined by who your interlocutor is likely to be, their linguistic skills, and the inferences about your political stance that might be drawn from your use of either Rangi or Swahili. The convention of using Swahili in a bank arises not just from associations between Swahili and a certain level of education, though this is certainly part of it, but also from people's conventional understanding of what different languages represent about a speaker's political and interpersonal disposition. In other words, there are several ideologies about language that converge in making Swahili the unmarked choice in finance.

Similarly, the use of Rangi in the marketplace requires more than just knowing that both Swahili and Rangi are acceptable means of communication in the Kondoa market. It requires knowing more than just that the vegetable seller is a speaker of Rangi. In order to get the Rangi discount, you also need to know a conventional formula, *heeriheeri*, and you have to know when it is the right time to use it. In other words, you have to understand the conversational give-and-take for buying and selling, and how these are the same and different from turn-taking in conversation. So, this requires a lot of knowledge about Rangi culture and interactional norms.

Deciding when to use which code

Speakers may conceptualise the relationship between location, addressee and ingroup identity in different ways. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 are decision trees, representing what two groups of students at the University of Hawai'i said they bear in mind when they try to decide whether to use Pidgin or Standard American English. Each box in a decision tree marks a point where the students felt they would ask themselves a crucial question. If they answered 'yes' to that question, they would follow one path out from that box; if they answered 'no' they would follow another path from the box. Sometimes the domain and addressee factors pile up on each other and they felt that one decision follows another before they would come to a decision about which variety to use. At other times, the decision is simple, and a 'yes' answer would take them directly to the choice of one variety rather than another.

In Figure 6.2, the students have used the classic notation of a decision tree and there is almost always a 'yes' and a 'no' route out from each question they ask themselves. (The only exception to this is the box 'At work?', where there is only a 'yes' route out. Presumably, if the answer is 'no' there are other domains that might be checked.) The second group of students (Figure 6.3) felt that their domain or location was the most meaningful place to start. But notice how important it is for them whether or not their addressee can speak Pidgin. Whereas the first group in Figure 6.2 indicate that they would always use Pidgin with their friends, the second group say they would generally only do so if they were speaking to a friend who also speaks Pidgin. You might think it is a little odd to address someone in a language that they cannot speak, but there are several reasons why speakers might choose to use Pidgin with friends and peers regardless. One is that friends may have **passive knowledge** of Pidgin even if they are not fluent speakers themselves (passive knowledge of a language

Passive knowledge

The ability to understand, but not speak, a language. (See also *Active knowledge*.)

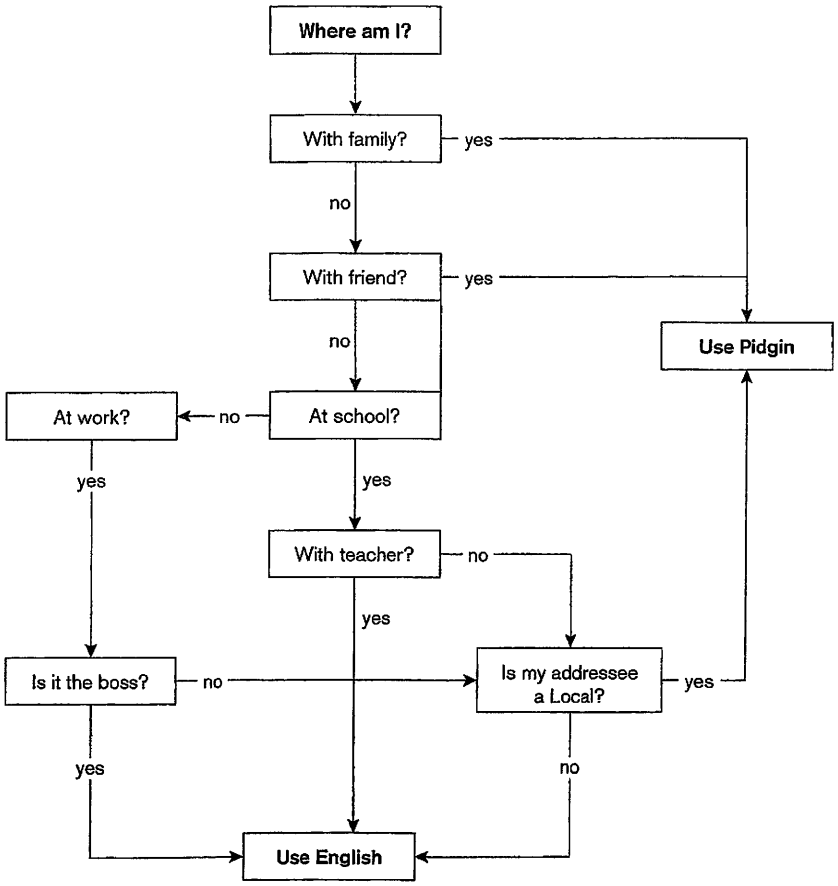


Figure 6.2 Decision tree for when to use Pidgin or Standard US English for six university students in Honolulu, Hawai'i. (Note the ranking of addressee above domain or location and above social role of the interlocutor.)

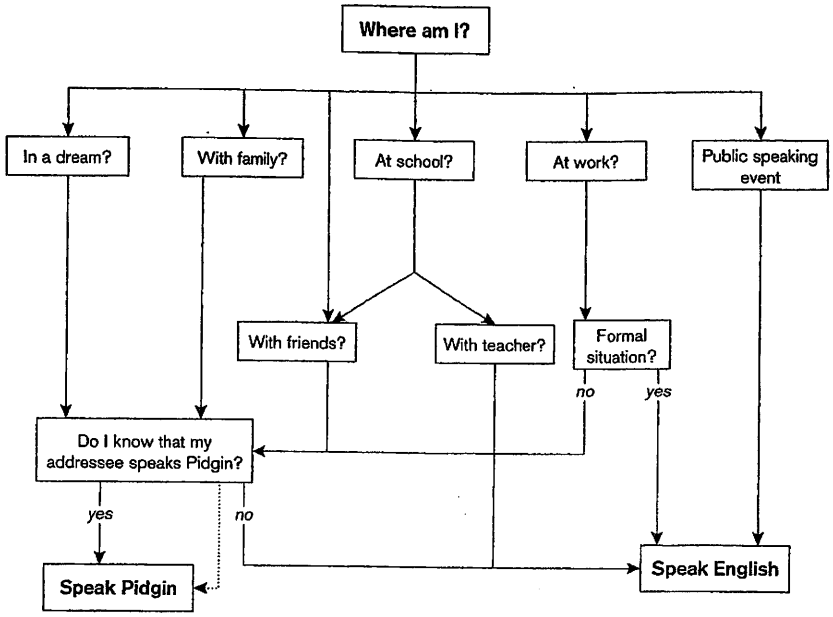


Figure 6.3 Decision tree for when to use Pidgin or Standard US English for four university students in Honolulu, Hawai'i. (Note the ranking of domain above speaker and hearer social roles, and consideration of the interlocutor's own competence in Pidgin. The dotted line indicates a less frequent, but possible, choice.)

Active knowledge

Knowledge of a linguistic *variety* that includes the ability to produce and use that variety, and not only understand it. (See also *Passive knowledge*.)

means you can understand it, while **active knowledge** means you can understand and produce it). Another reason is that using Pidgin in every peer interaction may be a way in which these students can assert the importance of Pidgin as a marker of ingroup and Local (native to Hawai'i) identity.

Another thing that is interesting about the second group of students' decision tree is that they explicitly note that sometimes they violate their own norms or expectations. The dotted line shows that under some circumstances they would deliberately choose to use Pidgin with an addressee even if they know that person doesn't speak the language and may have trouble understanding. Many of the junctures in the decision trees are completely below the level of conscious control or awareness. People will tell you that they simply know that it feels right to speak one variety or another in certain places or with certain people. However, on occasions speakers will play with and flout those norms or expectations.

exercise

Mapping your language choices

A lot of people use a different language variety at home than they do in school or at work. If you are someone who falls into this categry, try drawing a decision tree for yourself, mapping the process by which you consciously or subsconsciously choose one variety

over another. Give it to someone else and ask them to interpret it. (You may be surprised how much socolinguistic work you have bundled into any one point.)

If you do not have appreciably different language varieties to choose from, try finding someone else to interview and draw a decision tree for them. Drawing one for yourself and one for someone else requires very different skills.

Switching within and between turns

The kinds of code switching we have looked at up to this point present the choice between languages or varieties as being something like an 'either–or' question. Either the interaction takes place in Rangi, or it takes place in Swahili. Either it is in Pidgin or it is in English. In practice, there can be a lot of mixing of codes during a single exchange or even within a single speaker's turn. If we want to, we can talk about switches within turns as **code mixing**, but not all researchers think the processes underlying switches within turns and between different conversational episodes are sufficiently different to warrant completely separate terminology.

Code mixing

Generally refers to alternations between varieties, or codes, within a clause or phrase. Often elicits more strongly negative evaluations than alternations or *code switching* across clauses.

It seems that the kinds of interpersonal or affective functions associated with use of Pidgin in Hawai'i or use of Rangi in Kondoa also play a role in switching within turns. So there are mixed codes which signal ingroup humour and affection. Conversely, they can show hostility to outsiders who may not understand all the mixed constituents or may not understand the conventions governing how the codes are mixed.

Miki Makihara's work on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) discusses the way in which a mixed code has been emerging there since the 1970s or 1980s. This indigenous interactional code is now used by children and adults alike. It involves extensive mixing of Rapa Nui (a Polynesian language) and Spanish (Rapa Nui is administered as part of Chile, so both Chilean Spanish and a Rapa Nui variety of Spanish are spoken in Rapa Nui). Makihara believes that this mixed variety functions as an important marker of an emerging sense of Rapa Nui solidarity and identity, and probably first emerged in informal conversations; Makihara also discusses the social functions it seems to index within informal conversations. For instance, in Example 1 we can see it being used for teasing and joking between a married couple and their friends. (I follow Makihara's layout of the text: the original forms are on the left, the English translation is on the right. Text in *italics* is Rapa Nui; text that is <u>underlined</u> is Spanish.)

CHAPTER 17, RSR

There are switches between Rapa Nui and Spanish after turn 1 and turn 5, and within turns 2 and 5. Notice that the husband and wife also playfully use the resources of Spanish in turns 2–4, with the husband using the formal 'you' to his wife, which she returns with the informal 'you'. So the ingroup nature of the exchange is realised at a number of different levels – the teasing about who can or should be called *korohu'a* ('old man') and the husband's mock formal way of addressing of his wife. In addition, the switching between Rapa Nui and Spanish forms between and within turns is characteristic of local and intimate conversation on Rapa Nui.

CHAPTER 13, RSR

The extent of the mixing between Rapa Nui and Spanish can involve some (syntactically) quite complex alternations, going well beyond the use of a noun or adverb as in turns 2, 5 and 6 in Example 1. Makihara also gives examples where speakers mix nouns and determiners or verbs and tense markers from different languages.

Wife:	*'I hē ia te korohu'a nei?*	1 W:	*Where's the old man?*
Husband:	Me está diciendo *korohu'a* otra vez.	2 H:	You (formal) are calling me *old man* again.
	¿A quién está diciendo *korohu'a* mi amor?		Who are you (formal) calling *old man* my dear?
All:	[laughter]	3 All:	[laughter]
Wife:	No, a tí no, a mi papa.	4 W:	No, not to you (informal), to my dad.
Husband:	Acuérdese que yo soy joven *'ā*	5 H:	Remember (formal) that I am *still* young.
Friend:	Cómo será *ia, ahani e ´apa pa´ari ro 'ā, ko ture mai 'ā.*	6 F:	What will *it* be, *(he) is barely half-adult but is already talking back.*
All:	[laughter]	7 All:	[laughter]

Example 1 Mixed Rapa Nui interactional code being used for joking among intimates. *Italics* = Rapa Nui, underline = Spanish. (Source, Makihara 2004: 532; slightly modified.)

Connections with theory

There is a lot of debate among linguists about whether switching within turns can happen at any point or whether there are formal linguistic constraints that make it possible or impossible to switch between different constituents. Some linguists argue that switching within turns happens at the level of surface strings (so constraints may be determined by processing or linear word order of the languages involved). Other linguists argue that more subtle factors are involved and that these are consistent with theories of syntax that posit underlying structure to a clause. Mahootian (2006) gives a good summary of different formal perspectives on code switching.

In longer stretches of interaction it also becomes quite clear that the mixing is very much a dynamic process, involving call and response from different participants. This, too, adds to the sense that the mixed code serves as a solidarity marker. You can see this echoing effect across turns in Example 2 where Mario (a 6-year-old) is talking to his grandfather, his aunt Elena and his 6-year-old cousin Mariana. Elena's joking comment recycles Mariana's previous turn and incorporates Mariana's Spanish into Elena's Rapa Nui sentence. Speakers can use a discourse strategy like this to create coherence within a text.

Mario:	*Koro!* Vamo al *uta* mañana?	1 Mario:	*Grandpa!* Let's go *inland* tomorrow?
Mariana:	¡A pie!	2 Mariana:	By foot!
Aunts:	[laughter]	3 Aunts:	[laughter]
Elena:	*He kī ki ta'a korohu'a he iri* a pie!	4 E:	*Tell the old man [grandpa] to go up* by foot!

Example 2 Mixed Rapa Nui interactional code showing switches within turns that echo previous discourse. *Italics* = Rapa Nui, underline = Spanish. (Source, Makihara 2005 [modified].)

An interesting example of a variety that draws on and mixes several others can be found in *tsotsitaal*, spoken in the townships in South Africa. This code takes its name from the combination of two words, *tsotsi* 'gangster, criminal' and *taal* 'language' and is used to refer to the street varieties associated primarily with young, Black urban males. It draws on the lexical resources of many languages, as you can see in the following extract. Example 3 is a simplified transcription of a scene from the film *Tsotsi* (Hood 2005). In the transcription you can see that the speakers draw on a number of the official languages of South Africa, as well as using some tsotsitaal-specific slang items. In this short exchange two of the principal characters debate the notion of 'decency', initially arguing that their friend (who is nicknamed Tsotsi) doesn't understand what it means. Gradually Teacher Boy challenges Fela (a local gang leader), asking if Fela knows what decency is. (Butcher is another teenager currying favour with Fela.)

Teacher Boy: Tsotsi akayanga *sigela*. Hy verstaan nie "decency".	1	Tsotsi never went *to school*. He doesn't understand "decency".
Teacher Boy: *O a tseba* Fela, "decency"?	2	*Do you know* Fela, 'decency'?
Butcher: Heyi, wena na. *S'ukucala* met jou fokken groot woorde.	3	Hey you. *Don't start* with your fuckin' big words.
Teacher Boy: Ha *o tsebe* noku skrywe ne?	4	*You don't know how* to even write [it] hey?
Fela: "Decency". Athi ndibone.	5	'Decency'. Let me just see.
Fela: D.E.C.E.N.C.Y. Decency. *Ugrand*?	6	D.E.C.E.N.C.Y. Decency. Is it fine?
Teacher Boy: *E*-mina-*ng*?	7	*What does it* mean?
Fela: 'Decency' means making a fuckin' decent living, sonny.	8	
Teacher Boy: Respect man, for yourself. Dit het fok all om te doen met goeie lewe, ja.	9	Respect man, for yourself. It has fuck all to do with the good life, yes.
Fela: Sokhuluma nge "respect" manje.	10	We will talk about 'respect' now.
Fela: *Yazi, i*respect *iva*. The day u-stop *ukudl' imbomboshe uncande i*driver's licence... Anginaso isikhathi sesidakwa. *Ngifuna bo*driver. Fok jou decency wena.	11	*You know* 'respect' *is right*. The day you stop *getting drunk* (lit. eating the bottle) *and get a* driver's licence... I don't have it (time) for a drunkard. *I want* drivers. Fuck your 'decency' man.
Teacher Boy: Ja. Fuck my decency.	12	Yes. Fuck my decency.
Fela: Nx! Hey – fok off wena man.	13	(Contempt/anger)! Hey fuck off man.

Example 3: 'Decency' (from *Tsotsi*, director Gavin Hood 2005). (Transcription by Tessa Dowland and Claire Cowie; I have simplified the data typographically by collapsing distinctions between Zulu and Xhosa that Dowland originally made.)

Key to languages used: Underlined = Zulu/Xhosa; *italic* = township slang; plain = English; **bold** = Afrikaans; *underlined italic* = Sesotho

This extract provides a good example of the rapidity of switching between words and morphemes of different languages that is typical of tsotsitaal. It also illustrates quite well why Raj Mesthrie (2008) argues that tsotsitaal should not be analysed as code switching, and it should not be analysed as a separate language of its own (as some linguists previously have done). Instead, he argues that tsotsitaal is a register or style in which any one of the languages spoken in the main cities in South Africa can be expressed. In the tsotsitaal style, lexical items from different languages penetrate (to a greater or lesser extent) what remains fundamentally an informal or urban variety of, say, Xhosa or Sesotho. He points out that the lexis which is dropped in tends to be restricted to certain semantic fields and often involves semantic twists from the source language.

exercise

What kind of tsotsitaal?

Consider the tsotsitaal data in Example 3. Mesthrie makes two major claims about tsotsitaal:

(i) it is best understood as a register of another language; and
(ii) lexical material tends to be inserted in 'certain semantic fields'.

In this extract, do you think you are looking at a Zulu/Xhosa tsotsitaal, an English tsotsitaal, and Afrikaans tsotsitaal or a Sesotho tsotsitaal?

Once you have decided that, look again and see if you find any evidence that lexical items from certain languages tend to be inserted in certain semantic fields. If so, what are they?

Connections with theory

Michael Halliday suggested that linguists should recognise formal and informal forms of a language, and also *anti-language* forms. Anti-language, at its simplest, involves the deliberate replacement of lexical items in the standard language with words that make the variety incomprehensible to speakers of the standard. Classic examples are thieves' and prison jargon, which create 'an alternative reality' (Halliday 1976: 575). Like the distinction between formal and informal, Halliday's notion of anti-language is not a separate variety, but 'a category to which any given instance approximates more or less' (1976: 583).

No, really?

Gobbledygook **is generally said to be a coinage of an American senator, who was likening bureaucratic language to the senseless gobbling of a turkey. Halliday claims the term originally referred to a humorous working class Victorian anti-language.**

Attitudes to switching between varieties

In some multilingual communities mixing constituents from one language with another language can be seriously frowned upon. The terms used to describe the mixed utterances are often pejorative or jocular, like *Spanglish* or *Franglais*. Such labels provide another basis for identifying the close association between attitudes to language use and language users which we discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

In the Tariana community, in north-west Amazonia (Brazil), many languages are in use because of cultural traditions that favour marrying someone from outside your own immediate clan or tribe. So new speakers of neighbouring languages are regularly brought into the Tariana community, and many people grow up with passive or active command of a number of local languages as well as Brazilian Portuguese and some English. But there is surprisingly little mixing of other languages into Tariana. Alexandra Aikhenvald talks about the negative reactions such internal code switching generates on the rare occasions that it happens. For example, a very old man once greeted her with the following (Tariana is in *italics* and Tucano is underlined):

Example 3	*Pi-nu-nikha*	mahkõ
	'Have you come	daughter?' (Aikhenvald 2003: 10)

After the old man had left, people explained his slip, saying he was 'not all there any more' (Aikhenvald 2003: 10). Aikhenvald explains that Tariana people have very negative feelings about the insertion of Tucano into Tariana, but that attitudes about sentence internal switches (like in 3) involving other languages are seen in somewhat different ways.

For example, people seem to feel that using Baniwa (also spoken nearby) in a Tariana sentence is kind of funny rather than being just 'wrong' (as use of Tucano is). She explains this in terms of the relative vitality of the languages concerned. Tucano is spreading rapidly in the region as a *lingua franca* (these are discussed further in Chapter 11); that is, more and more people are using it to communicate when they don't share a native language, and it is the only language in the region with any significant growth in overall numbers of speakers. Baniwa, on the other hand, is still only spoken within the traditional Baniwa villages. So Tucano is policed because it is a threat to Tariana. Baniwa is not a threat and so the occasional use of it in Tariana discourse is seen as amusing more than anything else.

exercise

Borrowing or co-opting?

What do you think when someone borrows extensively from languages or styles that they don't (as it were) 'natively' command? For example, if an English speaker uses words like *hombre* or *mucho* in a predominantly English sentence? Do you feel the same way about borrowing from non-native languages when it occurs in, for example, the media personalities adopted by someone like Sasha Baron-Cohen (for instance, his personas Ali G and Borat Sagdiyev)?

SPEECH LEVELS AS DIFFERENT CODES

Speech levels

Replacement of vocabulary with sometimes radically different forms in the different styles associated with different social groups or *castes*.

As we saw in Chapter 3 and have seen again here, the person you are talking to may have a considerable effect on your speaking style. In some languages these effects are codified, and there are different **speech levels** that must be used when you are talking to someone of higher or lower status than you. These speech levels are characterised by vocabularies that sometimes differentiate thousands of words. Some of the best-known examples of these kinds of speech levels come from Indonesian languages such as Javanese, which is typical of the languages in Indonesia in distinguishing *low, mid* and *high* speech levels. The structure of a sentence does not change radically according to speech level, but the vocabulary can be entirely replaced.

In Sasak, spoken by about 3 million people on Lombok, an island about 65 km long and 65 km wide in eastern Indonesia, all dialects have three speech levels. Sasak has a traditional (and still strong) caste system: the highest caste are the *mènak* (about 6 per cent of the population), there is a very small second caste called the *prewangse*, a third caste known as *jajarkarang* (about 80–85 per cent of the population), and the lowest caste is the *sepangan* (traditionally the servants of the *mènak*). What caste someone belongs to determines what speech style you should use when you are talking to them. So a *mènak* speaker will use the high style and should also have high forms addressed to him or her (this mark of honour is nowadays also extended to Muslims who have completed the *hajj* – the pilgrimage to Mecca).

Sasak speakers have high conscious awareness of this system, and the styles have specific names. The ordinary or low speech level is called *biase* or *jamaq*. The middle level is called *madie*, and the high level is called *alus* ('smooth, refined'); there is also another style known as *kasar* ('coarse, vulgar'), which will not concern us here.

The differences between *biase/jamaq, madie* and *alus* are illustrated in Table 6.1. This shows how the sentence 'I have already eaten but you have not yet eaten' would be rendered in three speech levels for Sasak.

Table 6.1 Speech levels in Sasak illustrated in the sentence 'I have already eaten but you have not yet eaten'. (N.B. In *alus* the order of 'I' and 'already' are reversed.) (Source, Nothofer 2000: 60.)

Jamaq	*aku*	*uah*	*mangan*	*kamu*	*ndèq man*	*mangan*
Madie	*aku*	*uah*	*mangan*	*side*	*ndèq man*	*bekelór*
Alus	*sampun*	*tiang*	*mangan*	*pelinggih*	*nènten man*	*madaran*
gloss	I	already	eat	you	not yet	eat

No, really?

People on Lombok recognise five different varieties of Sasak. These are identified by a shibboleth. The different pronunciations of 'like this' are generalised as the name for the variety. So people who pronounce 'like this' *menó* are *Menó-Mené*. People who pronounce it *Menu* are *Menu-meni*. And likewise there are the *Ngenó-Ngené*, the *Meriaq-Meriku* and *Kuto-Kuté*. The independent linguistic status of the last one is somewhat disputed, and indeed all five may have more to do with five historical Sasak kingdoms than they do with different linguistic systems.

A *jajarkarang* speaker would use *jamaq* (low level) to another *jajarkarang*, and *madie* (middle) when speaking to or about their father (same caste but where you want to show some respect). *Alus* would typically be used from one *mènak* to another. *Mènak* will insist on use of *alus*, but many *jajarkarang* do not know very many *alus* forms. They therefore adopt various avoidance strategies, such as getting someone else to speak to a *mènak* for them.

Variations in the use of speech levels

It is important to note that the situation with speech levels in Sasak (and other Indonesian languages) is not cast in stone. There are a number of social considerations that temper whether or not the speech styles are used in the idealised manner. A speaker's competence may override what is prescribed as the ideal – not all speakers know all the *alus* vocabulary. Similarly, a speaker's interactional goals can override the ideal.

The speech levels of Javanese, spoken by 75 million people on the most populous island in Indonesia, were described by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz in the 1960s, and Geertz's data and analysis have been widely cited in linguistics texts ever since. But E. Uhlenbeck, a scholar of Javanese, provides a critical evaluation of Geertz's description of the system. Uhlenbeck – taking his lead from Indonesian scholars themselves – shows that in actual practice the way people use these speech levels is tempered by sometimes highly local or immediate needs and goals.

The Javanese low, middle and high levels are (respectively) *ngoko*, *madya* and *krama*. Uhlenbeck shows that in a popular novel, dialogues between the hero and his sister illustrate nicely the social and psychological complexity governing use of these forms. Early in the book, the sister is pleading with her brother to tell her a secret he is hiding. She uses *krama* (the high forms) as she tries to coax an answer from him. However, shortly afterwards she interrupts him when he says something that she disagrees with. To do this she uses *ngoko* (with a *madya* pronoun). Towards the end of the book, she is trying to persuade her brother to go to his bride, and for this she uses *madya* with some *krama* forms (Uhlenbeck 1970: 454).

exercise

Cross-over between speech levels in Sasak

Look at the third column of Table 6.1, the first token of 'eat' in Sasak. Compare this to the last column, and the second token of 'eat'. The first token remains in the 'low' or *jamaq* form. Why do you think a *mènak* would use a low form here instead of the *alus* form *madaran*? (How do the two halves of the sentence differ?)

Uhlenbeck is not trying to dispute the fact that there are different speech levels in Javanese; what he is trying to do is to bring to our attention some of the tricky questions about *how many* speech levels there are, questions which have troubled Indonesian linguists for some time. Perhaps a useful consequence of his work is that the Javanese situation looks a little less exotic to readers unfamilar with languages like these. It makes the fundamental way in which people use the system seem a bit more familiar to those of us who are used to other kinds of register and style-shifting.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

So why do 10-year-olds in Tórshavn switch into English to tease each other? In this chapter we have looked at a number of different ways in which we might understand the relationship between languages or varieties in multilingual communities, and we have seen that the choice of one language rather than another can serve a number of different purposes.

We have seen that language can play a key part in the collective definition of a national identity. Some nations write principles and beliefs about language rights and language use into their Constitution. The fact that some nations do not mention language in their founding documents at all doesn't necessarily mean language is not important to them. On the contrary, it may simply tell us something about what is marked and unmarked or taken for granted.

We also saw that institutional measures like legal protection for a language or for a language's users are only one means of ensuring the vitality of a language. Other social and attitudinal factors, some historical, some economic and some demographic, are all also important in determining the relative and long-term vitality of a variety. Since these factors vary depending on the particular community under investigation, we can't talk about a language (e.g., Brazilian Portuguese) having 'high vitality' or 'low vitality'. It depends where you are when you ask about its vitality. Brazilian Portuguese has very high vitality in Brazil, but in the sometimes quite large immigrant communities of Brazilians in New Jersey it may have relatively low vitality compared to American English – especially among younger speakers. And as we saw, languages can be relatively high in vitality on some measures but not on others. How we might want to weight these disparate factors – or even whether weighting of them is the most appropriate step forward – remains an open question. Nevertheless, some speakers of minority languages that are threatened by languages with higher vitality have found this framework useful for diagnosing where intervention might be best directed.

Prestige, vitality and even the technical term 'diglossia' all capture interesting facts about the way languages in multilingual communities are specialised. But they differ in the extent to which they focus on speakers' creativity, societal rigidity, and the role of the addressee. In the section on code switching we saw that even groups of students who are much the same

age and who have much the same fluency in two community languages can see their linguistic choices very differently, some focusing more on whether they are talking to ingroup or outgroup addressees and others focusing more on where they are. Our example from Rangi showed us how the two factors are entwined with each other.

Even other formalised systems of alternating codes, such as the different speech levels or registers used in Sasak and Javanese, involved balancing different, and sometimes competing, norms for how speakers talk about themselves and about others. These addressee effects were more constrained than the ones we looked at in Chapters 3 and 4, but ultimately we are struck by similarities between the kinds of factors that play a role in determining what forms speakers will choose or whether code switching and mixing is considered a mark of a speaker's competence or a sign of their lack of competence.

I can't say for sure what the boys in Tórshavn were doing when they switched into English to say 'nice ass', because I can't get inside their heads, and it was just a chance comment that I overheard. The fact that they made the switch suggests to me something about the relative vitality of Faroese and English – clearly English is felt to be an effective medium for teasing, perhaps drawing attention to the tease, perhaps making the speaker appear more cool and in command of (yet another) language.

I suspect that this example tells us something about the functions of code switching in that community. The evolution of ingroup norms that involve teasing or even coercion – strengthening ingroup ties by explicitly or implicitly contrasting 'us' and 'them' – will play a part in the next chapters we are moving into. We'll see that just as it is difficult to talk about a single motivation or function for a switch between codes, it is sometimes difficult to say how or why a particular form 'fits' or not.

As we continue to examine the complexity of addressee effects and speakers' attitudes to language, this complexity will become a backdrop for our discussion in later chapters of how differences in the way people talk simultaneously constitute and reflect membership in or identification with social categories like gender, age, and social class or social network.

FURTHER READING

In addition to the references provided in the text of this chapter, you may find the following works helpful:

Haeri (2003) and Joseph (2004) – on language ideology and politics of standard languages.
Mesthrie (2002, 2008) and Early (1999) – on the linguistic situation in South Africa and Vanuatu.
Landry and Bourhis (1997) – ethnolinguistic vitality of French in Canada.
Barker *et al.* (2001) – on the English Only movement in the US.
Edwards (1998) – on languages in Canada generally.
Blommaert (2004) – on politics of language in literacy in Africa.
Ferguson (2006) – language planning for education in multilingual societies.
Williams (2000) – on Welsh revitalisation.
Makihara (2001) – structural factors in Rapa Nui mixed languages.
Aikhenvald (2002: chapters 8, 9, 11) – on Tariana code-switching norms.
Laver (1981) and Holmes (2001) – more examples of decision trees with sociolinguistic variables.

There is a vast literature on code switching and code mixing. Some useful starting points, providing very different perspectives, are: Auer (1998), Myers-Scotton (1993a, 1993b), Poplack (1980), McCormick (2002, with a focus on a South African community), Mahootian and Santorini (1996), Rampton (1995).