

**'High' and 'Low' varieties, diglossia, language contact,
and mixing: social processes and linguistic products
in a comparative perspective**

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Introduction

Apparently, all language communities have linguistic means to express or index some kind of social and/or stylistic stratification, or variation relating to different contexts. Certain linguistic features or items are associated with – and sensitive to – certain values on one or more sociocultural dimensions. Similarly, the use of several languages and/or varieties within a language community is an (almost) universal phenomenon. The workshop convened in Oslo in June 2010, whose final outcome this book is, focussed on language use in a perspective of 'High' and 'Low' status of varieties in a language community, of differences in status and functions, and of changes in status and prestige.

There exist, of course, other kinds of relationships between varieties in a language community than along the formal-informal dimension. There also exist linguistic expressions of formal vs. informal relationships and settings other than the use of two (or more) codes to mark, or reflect, this dimension. The contributions in this volume all reflect on some aspect of the coexistence of languages and varieties and the relationship between them.

This introductory chapter will take my own research interests in the field of Arabic sociolinguistics as a point of departure, i.e. issues relating to the language community repertoire and the relationship of the varieties involved in both structural and functional terms. My intention is then to engage, from this point of departure, in a kind of multiple dialogue with the other contributions in this volume.¹

Diglossia and a typology of language situations

In his seminal article "Diglossia" (1959), Ferguson intended to describe a specific kind of language situation, as a contribution to a typology of language situations. A useful, Ferguson-inspired listing of parameters for classification of language situations "non monoglossique" (Litidi 1990, cited in Koch 2008: 54) is the following:

¹ My discussion does not necessarily follow the order of appearance of the articles in this volume.

1. degree of divergence between L and H;
2. type of relation between L and H (varieties? languages?);
3. functional distribution between L and H;
4. type of acquisition of L and H;
5. degree of standardization of L and H;
6. relative prestige of L and H;
7. degree of stability of the situation;
8. distribution of linguistic competence in society.

According to these points, Ferguson's 'diglossia' would be classified as:

- 1 + 2. L and H are related, but highly divergent varieties (perceived as varieties of a language²);
3. L and H have separate functions and domains (this has later been somewhat modified, see below);
4. only L is the naturally acquired 'mother-tongue', H is secondarily acquired in formal education, i.e. no one in the language community has H as mother tongue;
5. only H is codified and standardized;
6. H has prestige as the language of culture and religion (L may have covert prestige as a language of e.g. intimacy and humour);
7. stability lasts over centuries;
8. only the educated have active competence, passive competence more widespread (both, however, are variable and questionable).²

Now, Arabists tend to think that they have a privileged position with regard to the notion of 'diglossia': several reasons lead us to think that the Arabic situation was the primary defining case for Ferguson's diglossia; Arabic diglossia thus may be said to be the prototypical case, while other language situations 'nominated' as cases of diglossia may be found more or less typical cases, fitting the original description in some characteristics, and not so much in other.

Arabists likewise tend to be gatekeepers of the original, 'narrow', definition of the term as laid out by Ferguson. We tend to reject the broadening of the term (as first proposed by Fishman 1967) to include all kinds of varieties used in a language community with obvious functional distribution, be they different languages or varieties of the same language. Such extensions of 'diglossia' obscure essential features that are characteristic of only a narrower group of language situations. As Coulmas argues:

2 Ferguson had two further criteria, which have not, however, played the same defining role as the rest, and the first of which also is questionable (at least for Arabic): that H is grammatically more complex than L; and that the L phonological system is basic, with H being an extension of it.

"there are several different arrangements of how these coexisting languages and varieties are used, are functionally distributed, and interact with each other. Diglossia is one of them, and as originally understood by Ferguson, it is specific enough to deserve a technical term of its own. Recognizing generalities is, of course, what social analysis and theory formation is all about, but interesting specificities mustn't be abstracted away in the process" (Coulmas 2002: 59).

A privileged defining criterion for scholars dealing with 'narrow' diglossic cases is the secondary acquisition of H, or rather: that the H variety is not the primary spoken idiom of anyone in the speech community, thus distinguishing 'diglossia' from 'standard-with-dialects' situations, where the standard H variety is *typically* based on the spoken variety of an educated, urban elite. The structural, as well as perceived, relatedness of the codes, is a defining characteristic distinguishing 'diglossic' from 'bilingual' language communities. Why should this matter? For an analysis of the *functional* distribution of varieties, these distinctions may not be important, but – as we shall return to below – for the analysis of the structural/linguistic products of contact between the varieties, I agree with Berruto's comment that "the degree of relatedness and structural affinity of the two varieties in a diglotic relation will in fact have important consequences on phenomena of shifting and mixing which might occur" (Berruto 1989: 560).

Latin and Romance

The historical case of Latin vs the Romance vernaculars (with their gradual transition from 'dialects' to autonomous 'languages') has been much discussed in terms of diglossia. Ferguson mentions Latin as a case of diglossia "during a period of some centuries in various parts of Europe" (1959: 337). Apparently, there have been two main ways of conceiving the Latin case: On the one hand, as above, as a classic case of diglossia, with Latin-related spoken vernaculars gradually developing and diverging from each other and from the relatively stable written 'classical' Latin norm (as in Arabic), until the emergence of written Romance 'languages' based on socially prestigious urban varieties of the vernacular in each region, putting an end to diglossia, with the status of Latin being restricted to a superposed, learned, and ecclesiastical language form. On the other hand, some scholars, and in the forefront among them Robin Wright, hold the view that until the Carolingian language reform, the relationship of Latin to the Romance vernaculars was rather like the 'standard-with-dialect' type, the fixed orthography of Latin reflecting the older stage of the language(s), but being pronounced, orally realised, in accordance (more or less) with the spoken language, thus not very different from normal monolingual situations with the standard variety as a higher register (what Wright refers to as "complex monolingualism"). The Carolingian reform introduced a new norm of pronouncing words letter by letter, reflecting a North European, not Romance

usage, creating a linguistic distance between H and L that is more typical of diglossia.

Kristin Hagemann argues along these (monolingual) lines in her article on what the various glosses in, or rather added to, her 10th century manuscript from Northern Spain – a collection of sermons written in Latin – can tell us about the situation. She challenges earlier rigid classifications of lexical forms into either ‘Latin’ or ‘Romance’, and presents a picture in which distinctions are often blurred, in an interpretative framework of pragmatic and functional considerations of formality and communicative purposes. Her examples of parallel, but contemporary, cases of orthography reflecting earlier stages of the language, while being pronounced according to actual spoken language, are very illustrative. (One can easily think of examples from English, such as the homophones ‘two’ and ‘too’ – the first word written as a reflex of a (historical) form we recognise in other Germanic languages, as ‘två’ in Swedish and ‘zwei’ in German, both pronounced with a labial – vs. ‘to’ in Norwegian with labial loss, as in English.) The orthography thus marks a semantic distinction not (no longer?) marked in phonology. Similarly, in writing vernacular forms of Arabic, for which there exist no codified norms, writers may resort to marking long vowels as they are written in the standard equivalent of the word, even when the vowel will be shortened in actual vernacular phonological realisation (short vowels are unmarked in Arabic script). If the script should follow vernacular pronunciation in this regard, the meaningful distinction between a great number of grammatical forms would be neutralised, many words hard to recognise, and understanding of written vernacular texts become quite difficult. Thus – while maybe to some extent a consequence of the influence the standard norm exerts on the mode of writing, the strategy of marking (retaining) long vowels appears to be, in many cases,³ a useful pragmatic solution.

Tore Janson, in his contribution “Vulgar Latin and Middle Arabic”, reflects on the changing perspectives in the fields of Latin and Romance studies: perspectives which are reflected in terminology as well as in the interpretation of the historical facts. Janson discusses the referent of the term ‘Vulgar Latin’ in the various traditions: does it refer to written texts in Latin which deviated from the Classical norm, or to popular spoken registers? Recent research, says Janson, breaks down the traditional dichotomy, and in line with current sociolinguistics, sees variation and change as complex phenomena which must be studied in their particular historical and sociocultural context. We have come to recognise, says Janson that “there never existed two neatly separated registers of the spoken language [but] many types of spoken Latin”, and also that in written texts, what we find is that “different types of text reveal glimpses of

various registers”, not *either* Classical Latin *or* Vulgar Latin. The changes thus reflect a growing awareness, of the sociolinguistic complexity – or sociolinguistic awareness of the linguistic complexity, of texts and contexts.

Middle Arabic and diglossia in Semitic

The tendencies evoked by Janson for Latin and Romance studies parallel developments in Arabic studies (and also regarding other language communities, as we shall see), concerning historical stages of the language as well as the contemporary language. With regard to premodern Arabic, the bulk of scholarly attention was always on the ‘Classical’ language as prescribed in early grammars and produced in high status textual fields (Muslim religious writing, high literature). The study of standard written Arabic, ‘Middle Arabic’, emerged as a special field of philological study, but has, until recently, had a rather marginal, although expanding, position. The non-classical features found in premodern Middle Arabic texts were taken to reflect interference from the spoken vernaculars, especially as they to a very high degree converged with features of contemporary spoken varieties (and were considered important evidence for the evolution of these varieties). Interestingly, some of the ambiguity of the term ‘Vulgar Latin’, which is demonstrated in Tore Janson’s article, has its parallel in the use of the term ‘Middle Arabic’ (as Janson also points out, in a welcome comparative spirit!). For some time, and for some scholars, ‘Middle Arabic’ actually appeared to refer to a chronological stage of the spoken language (between ‘Old’ Arabic and Neo-Arabic), *as well as* to the reflexes of these varieties in written texts. But in the main, and in recent research, ‘Middle Arabic’ refers to written texts with deviations from the ‘Classical’, or ‘Standard’ Arabic, norm – these deviations reflecting either vernacular forms *or* specific features proper to Middle Arabic, as Jérôme Lentin emphasises in his contribution. Since 2004 researchers working with Middle Arabic texts and with (‘mixed’) spoken data combining Standard and vernacular items and features, have convened to discuss common concerns (cf. den Heijer’s article).

One of the major issues in Middle Arabic studies has been the motivations behind the use of such standard written language. Among non-specialists (and to a lesser degree also among specialists), the common view is/has been that these writers did not have, and/or did not aspire to, the required competence to write in a correct manner, thus committed language mistakes. Jérôme Lentin, however, has repeatedly insisted that evidence points to the fact that Middle Arabic has been, throughout the ages, a preferred way of writing with many authors, a flexible variety with its proper norms, and intentionally used for a range of communicative functions. In his present contribution, he presents traces of this usage in metalinguistic comments as far back as the 10th century, and suggests that the term *latin*, usually understood as denoting incorrect language, ‘linguistic mistakes’, may, in certain contexts, refer to Middle Arabic. Lentin raises the issue of whether, and to what extent, Middle Arabic texts

3 I am thinking, in particular, of certain common active participles and *masdars*, where the phonology of Egyptian Arabic shortens long vowels whenever the form has a feminine ending.

may be classified as basically Standard, i.e. having a predominantly Standard Arabic base, or a predominantly vernacular base (in code-switching and – mixing terms: whether a matrix code may be identified). He tentatively concludes, that while important sections of these texts are clearly written in, or close to, the Standard variety, the linguistically *mixed* parts predominantly reflect a vernacular, or colloquial, base. Lentin also, importantly, emphasises that a “large set of linguistic forms and constructions were perceived as common to the ‘High’ and ‘Low’ varieties”, so that even if they had a colloquial base, they would not be stigmatised, “perhaps not even considered as non-Standard”. Lentin mentions the many challenges yet to be met in the study of Middle Arabic and mixed Arabic, and points to the fact that scholars are not entirely in consensus concerning the nature and the status of such texts.

Lentin adds a note on still another ‘variety’ in the linguistic landscape of Arabic: *Artistic Colloquial Arabic*, and quotes Heikki Palva to the effect that the language forms found in popular – mostly oral – ‘literature’ are not to be placed on the ‘diglossic continuum’ between the poles of plain colloquial/vernacular and Standard Arabic, but rather between the local vernacular dialect and the artistic colloquial style (narrative or poetic) of the community. One may, of course, discuss whether it is appropriate to label this relationship between a Low and a High register of the vernacular a second ‘diglossia’: “la diglossie du peuple” (as Lentin does, following David Cohen), but it certainly is a vital part of the repertoire of many traditional societies. Lentin also mentions the more recent genre, in urban literatures, of ‘colloquial novels’ (cf. the reference below to Madtha Doss’ paper on this phenomenon).

Artistic uses of the vernacular, is also taken up by Catherine Taine-Cheikh, who in her contribution challenges Ferguson’s diglossia model on this issue, more specifically his claim to the effect that L poetry has much less status and prestige than poetry composed in H (1959: 329). Taine-Cheikh brings in the French tradition, or perspective, on diglossia, based on Marcqais’ (1930) description of the situation in the Arabic-speaking world as ‘diglossie’. Interestingly, this French notion of ‘diglossie’ has the main focus on the oral vs. written dimension, whereas Ferguson’s version primarily operates along a formal ~ informal dimension, of H and L varieties typically being differentiated in status and prestige, and a long literary tradition being among the factors that render prestige to the H variety. Taine-Cheikh, describing a complex linguistic and ethnic society, Mauretania, in its historical context, presents the main status difference as between Arabic – including the local vernacular, *hassaniyya*, on the one hand, and the Berber idioms, *zénaga*, on the other. The status and prestige of Classical/Standard Arabic as the language of the Koran and Islam, is beyond dispute, in this Muslim society. However, the prestige of the Arabic vernacular (*hassaniyya*) is considerable, as it is associated with the prestige of the Arabic H, and of the historical, conquering, Arab elite. Like Lentin, Taine-Cheikh mentions “la diglossie du peuple”, referring to the important sociocultural role

of traditional, popular, artistic forms in *hassaniyya*. The sociolinguistic distribution of vernacular and Standard was based on the domains of oral (= vernacular) versus the written + ‘aural’ (= Standard), and, claims Taine-Cheikh, on a horizontal rather than a hierarchical axis. With the emergence, and steadily increasing use, of intermediate forms of the language, “[a]rabe médian”, the situation in Mauretania aligns with the other Arabic-speaking communities, in representing a ‘diglossic continuum’, along the range between the vernacular and the Standard.

Johannes den Heijer raises the issue of whether, or to what extent, it makes sense to speak of Christian Arabic as a separate variety of premodern Middle Arabic – as opposed to writings of Jews and Muslims in the same Arab societies. As also discussed by Lentin, a commonly held belief was that the non-Muslim Arabic-speaking minorities were less devoted to the Classical language form of the Koran, did not to the same extent as Muslims abide by its norms, and developed special (ethno-)linguistic markers. One such marker was, of course, to use a different script, which was often the case with Judeo-Arabic texts, written in Hebrew characters; similarly, many Christian Arabic texts were written in *karšīnī*.⁴ Den Heijer does not support a notion of Christian Middle Arabic as a linguistic entity different from what is found in other Middle Arabic texts – apart from specialised Christian lexical items (see below) – but points to the general dynamics of the Arabic language situation. He demonstrates the methodological intricacies involved in this research, ranging from the origins and status of manuscripts and producers and classifying their various geographical and chronological settings. Several Christian traditions are involved – Melkite (Greek Orthodox), Syriac, Maronite, and Coptic – each with concepts derived from various sources, as loans and loan translations; the multilingualism of the settings and the impact of translations being fascinating, and complicating, factors.

While Arabic is the prime case of diglossia in Semitic studies, Lutz Edzard in his contribution takes the verbal paradigms of other Semitic languages as evidence of traces of diglossia: ‘L’ varieties exhibit the feature of gender leveling, not found in the ‘H’ varieties. In Biblical Hebrew, Edzard in fact identifies a number of morphophonological phenomena which are taken to be evidence of a stylistic hierarchy – ranging from prophetic speech, via poetic and legal/cultic speech, narrative and oration, with some rare usages assumed to reflect the spoken language of the time. For Modern Israeli Hebrew, Edzard contrasts normative Hebrew (based on the Masoretic system) with colloquial varieties – positing ‘educated’ modern Hebrew as a kind of intermediate language form, and provides many examples of variants along the formal ~ informal range. Certain leveling phenomena are attributed to the younger generation of Israelis, perhaps confirming a general, ‘globalised’ trend towards social ease,

4 *karšīnī*: Arabic in Syriac-Aramaic script.

or informality? Language planning efforts notwithstanding, 'international' lexicon enters the language at the expense of neologisms proposed by the Language Academy. Edzard carefully questions the appropriateness of classifying modern Hebrew as a case of 'diglossia' (or 'polyglossia'), but suggests that the widening gap between colloquial pronunciation and the normative Hebrew code should at least be regarded as "an emerging diglossia". On the evidence presented, and in a typological perspective, there are certainly sociolinguistic features shared with the prototypical state of diglossia, and I would suggest that the Hebrew case be situated somewhere between diglossia and the kind of style variation one finds in a 'standard-with-dialects' kind of situation.

Mixed varieties in bilingual/multilingual contexts

Bernt Brendemoen traces the background and context for the emergence of a 'High' Ottoman Turkish register for literary and administrative purposes at the Ottoman sultan's court – the product of an intimate linguistic and cultural contact between the major languages and politico-cultural centers in medieval Middle East. It is the story of Turkic tribes undergoing Islamisation, a process bringing them linguistically in contact with Arabic, and on the other side living in an environment culturally dominated by the Iranians, and thus under influence of Persian language and cultural models. When Turkish language literature was developed in Anatolia, largely as court poetry at the expanding Ottoman court, eventually an important cultural center, it was more and more innuendated by Arabic and Persian elements, for pragmatic, as well as poetic, reasons. The common people, not educated in Arabic and Persian, would in general not understand this elevated, linguistically very mixed, style, which continued to be the norm for literature and administration until the early 20th century. This state of diglossia is exploited for humour and satire in the popular oral genre of the Turkish shadow plays, where linguistic puns based on misunderstandings of Ottoman expressions abound. It appears, however, to be alleviated by the use of other registers, in much simpler language: "There are also numerous texts", writes Brendemoen, "written by people outside the court circles, especially by non-Turks, which most probably reflect the actual spoken language, because they have no pretention of representing an especially 'high register' [...] partly written by the large Turkish-speaking Greek and Armenian communities in Istanbul". We suspect a kind of 'Vulgar/Middle' Turkish – or, rather, the kind of range, or (diglossic) continuum of what Brendemoen calls 'intermediate registers', between the basic vernacular and the High style.

Jan Erik Rekdal's article, "Macaronic texts in the early Irish tradition", is about bilingual textual reflexes of biculturalism following the meeting of Irish pre-Christianity with Latin Catholicism in the early Middle Ages. The term 'macaronic' has primarily been applied to literature in which the mixing of languages has a satirical or humorous function, such as comic verse where Latin inflectional endings are attached to vernacular lexical items (a popular genre

among students, it is claimed). The term is, however, also applied to other genres and texts with code-switching and code-mixing of two languages, as in the early Irish religious sermons presented and discussed by Rekdal. Rekdal suggests that the functions of, and thus motivations for, the alternating use of Latin and Irish in these texts change over time, namely, with the establishment of Irish as a written language and its eventual status as a 'High' register competing with Latin in certain domains and contexts.

Claus Peter Zoller's "Hindi bilingualism and related matters" raises several issues of language contact and variation in India, in the context of a very complex, multilingual language situation. Sanskrit, of course, being the traditional High language – from early times attributed to the gods, is even in modern times used in theatre performances as a high register, besides vernacular varieties and a range of non-related local languages. The degree of switching and mixing in some of the literary examples might, I believe, be labelled 'macaronic'. Zoller discusses the relative status of Hindi and Urdu, by some considered (ethno-religious?) varieties of the same language, by others separate languages, defined by distinct literary and cultural traditions. We are presented with several cross-over varieties, or levels: one interesting illustration is the language use in Hindi Bollywood films, where one finds an 'urduised Hindi' as the preferred variety.

The role and influence of Persian, Arabic and English, products of historical as well as contemporary cultural and linguistic contact, further complicates the Indian linguascape. Zoller presents interesting samples of mixed forms: Perso-Arabic nouns with Hindi/Sanskrit grammatical morphemes; compound nouns with lexical elements from different languages (Hindi + Perso-Arabic, Hindi + English). Finally, Zoller presents various attitudes among leading national personalities in India towards issues raised by the coexistence of languages, and the widespread practices of code-switching and mixing between Hindi (and other local languages) and English – reflecting their relative status and distribution of functions. The richness and variety of language mixing phenomenon demonstrated here invites further systematic investigation of potential restrictions on word formation, for instance in the light of the *Dominant Language Hypothesis* (referred to above). Some linguistic restrictions discussed by Zoller do in fact reflect an asymmetry of psycholinguistic status such as we observe in many cases elsewhere.⁵

Contemporary cases of mixing and diffuse borders: Arabic and Czech

The orientation towards a more flexible and less static view of – and approach to – language varieties that we find discussed in the articles above, is developed in contemporary Arabic studies, as well. The phenomenon of "unstable inter-

⁵ For Norwegian standard-and-dialect contact phenomena there has been observed a similar asymmetry, most notably in the study by Mæhlum 1986.

mediate forms of the language" (Ferguson 1959: 332) may be said to be – or at least should be – more explicitly and emphatically *incorporated* in a modified model of diglossia. Increasingly attention is being paid to more elevated registers of the spoken vernaculars, typically mixing/combining vernacular (L) and standard (H) items and features – 'mixed styles' as I prefer to label them (Mejdell 2006), and mixing finds its way into written genres as well. This research is being conducted in sociolinguistic frameworks, searching for patterns in structural, as well as functional, terms.

Without tracing the full trajectory of studies and approaches to the analysis of these intermediate forms in Arabic,⁶ we may say that at first, the linguistic continuum between H and L was analytically ordered into various layers, identified as levels of the language, defined by various social and topic-related factors correlated with linguistic features. Levels were variously ranged, from the basic conversational level through levels reflecting a higher cultural content as well as linguistic competence of speakers, with the highest level being (or approximating) the standard variety. An alternative approach treats mixed spoken language as instances of code-switching (CS) between the H and L varieties, and searches for constraints and principles that regulate the switching (and mixing).⁷ Following the influential CS-model of Myers-Scotton (the *Matrix Language Framework*-model), both Bassiouney (2006) and Boussofara (2006) report problems when trying to identify the underlying 'matrix language/variety' of certain stretches of mixed Arabic. This is because 'system', or grammatical, elements from the two codes are found to coexist, and because of many convergent forms and shared lexicon between the two basic varieties.⁸ I will continue to argue for dealing with this kind of mixed Arabic following general psycholinguistic principles, such as the *Dominant Language Hypothesis*, based on the asymmetry of two languages/varieties in contact; effects of unequal degrees of salience; frequency of occurrence; lexical conditioning on grammatical form; the effect of shared forms, frequencies; genre formation and conventionalisation – as well as language specific constraints.⁹

Karen Gammelgaard revisits her earlier research on the Czech linguistic situation and the use of L (Common Czech) features in literature (e.g., Gammelgaard 1997). When reading her and other studies on Czech, I used to sense

6 One finds introductory overviews in most major studies of the phenomena, also e.g. in Mejdell 2006a.

7 For reference to CS approaches applied to Arabic, see Mejdell 2006b.

8 Similar problems were encountered by Peter Mynskén when dealing with CS data where the languages involved are structurally close, and this made him propose a third category (besides 'alternational' and 'insertional' CS) of CS – or rather, code mixing – labelled 'congruent lexicalization' (Mynskén 2000). I address the relevance of this category for 'diglossic code-mixing', and as a bridge to monolingual 'style variation' (Mejdell 2012 forthcoming).

9 As laid out in Mejdell 2006a, 2012a, 2012b.

a striking similarity to the modern Arabic situation. The coming into being of Czech diglossia, however, is a quite different story than the long evolution of vernacular varieties of Arabic and Latin/Romance alongside a written norm, cultivated and preserved due to religious and cultural reverence. At national independence in the 19th century, Gammelgaard tells us, the Czech language cultivators "set out to codify a modern Czech standard language based on written sources from the Middle Ages" – thus imposing a H with no native speakers, but with a literary heritage. This codified language was not challenged as a national literary standard until after the fall of the communist regime in 1989 (the communists being remarkably conservative in language policies, probably resenting any challenge to authority). At the fall of the regime, streams of 'liberal' views on language matters erupted, tendencies which had always been present undercover, in favour of the recognition and use of colloquial forms of the language (apparently much like the Greek language turnover when the military regime was overturned in 1974). Gammelgaard evaluates the debate and the development in attitudes – as well as in usage – in the following two decades, based on accounts and activities of her Czech colleagues.

The picture that unfolds has very strong parallels to the Arabic scene: A quite similar linguistic distance between the two basic codes, but increasingly mixed forms and the combined use of 'Literary' ('H') and 'Common' ('L') Czech in both spoken and written language; increasing overlap taking place between the domains and functions of H and L, with L expanding into formerly H domains. The same processes apply, and have applied most of the way, to Arabic language communities. The reluctance of Czech linguists with regard to classifying their language situation as 'diglossia' is precisely due to their awareness of a lack of a functional and structural discreteness of codes, which they believe is essential to diglossia, but which in fact does not even apply to the most prototypical case, Arabic. The interplay between the varieties and "the intermediate forms of the language" should become part of the definition of diglossia itself.

Norwegian – a case apart?

We conclude by turning to the Norwegian scene, to what Ernst Håkon Jahr characterises as the special case of Norway and "an alternative sociolinguistic model to those found in most European countries". This model, we may say, lies at the opposite pole of a cline of sociolinguistic situations with Arabic at the other pole, in terms of (lack of) prescriptive norms and extent of distance between the written and spoken variety. Norway is sometimes mistakenly characterised as a diglossic community – however, the two varieties of Bokmål and Nynorsk, do not stand in a relation of H and L, but, as Jahr notes, are two official *written standards*. The special case of Norwegian, then, is "the extensive use of local dialects" also in domains which elsewhere (normally) require a more or less standard form of the language, such as in schools and in the

spoken media. Jahr traces the history behind this unusual state of affairs, in a context of national independence movements and as part of a process of defining a national identity. The language issue erupts time and again, with strong controversies at crucial moments, such as when the issue of educational reform is raised in parliament, in local communities, in the press. The linguistic battles are shown to reflect various social, class, regional, and cultural conflicts.

So, does the Norwegian case run against the commonly accepted sociolinguistic 'drift': "the fact that convergence towards the standard takes place [in modern industrial societies, characterised by high local and social mobility], sometimes merely changing, sometimes even erasing the traditional rural dialects" (Auer and di Luzio 1988: 6)? Jahr does not explicitly discuss this. He admits that "even in Norway one can find that some dialects are socially more acceptable than others". And Norway is clearly a 'standard-with-dialects' type of language community, in terms of the standard being "similar to the variety of a certain region or social group [...] which is used in ordinary conversation more or less naturally by members of the group and as a superposed variety by others" (Ferguson 1959: 3-37). Other Norwegian studies show that some convergence takes place from local rural towards local urban city, or village, varieties. That does not, however, contravene the main claim in Jahr's contribution: namely the amazing dialect-tolerance and extensive use of dialect in domains elsewhere reserved for the standard variety.

Concluding remarks

All the contributions in this volume challenge simplistic views of clearcut dichotomies, discrete and stable varieties, and unchanging status and functional domains. Across language communities, we find diffuse linguistic borders, mixed varieties, elastic continuums of speech and writing, prescriptive norms vs 'empirical' norms (i.e. what various people perceive as norms, Bartsch 1987). The sociolinguistic turn in language studies (as Janson suggests) has re-directed scholarly attention towards these complex, fuzzy and in-between phenomena.

Concerning language status and domain shift, the historical shift from Latin to Romance vernaculars in written domains remains the most obvious case, with all the uncertainties and diffuse situations recorded and discussed for the transitional stages. The language mix and 'macaronic' use demonstrated for 'High' Ottoman Turkish and religious Irish texts, are products of intense linguistic (and cultural) contact prior to the establishment of 'national' standards. The continuous Arabic tension between a unified (codified) 'High' (Classical) norm and a plethora of spoken vernaculars, has been modified and alleviated by the use of substandard, intermediate forms, the 'Middle Arabic' of written texts throughout history, the contemporary spoken 'mixed styles', also reappearing in written texts. While vernacular writing has been documented for several centuries in Egypt (Doss and Davies, forthcoming), the writing of literary fiction in

this variety is becoming less marginal, and increasingly popular in the last decade. Madtha Doss' paper on the reversal of roles for Standard and vernacular in a recent 'blog' novel – with Egyptian vernacular used as the unmarked variety for the narrative, and Standard elements used as a marked variety for humour and irony, is one example.¹⁰ We saw the same general in modern Czech, with L taking over domains of H.

This development, one suspects, may be attributed to a general sociocultural tendency towards lessening of authority and formality in social interaction seen in most Western societies,¹¹ and spreading to other parts of the world with 'globalised culture'. The gradual fall of polite pronominal forms of address in languages that have/had them (e.g. French: vous ~ tu; German: Sie ~ Du; Norwegian: De ~ du) is one sign of this phenomenon; the higher usage of vernacular, substandard forms on behalf of the standard variety may be considered another. The tendency also affects the debates on what linguistic forms should be taken as the basis of codification and standardisation – matters of language planning with cultural and ideological underpinnings. These issues link *inter alia* to prospects for change in language policy in the political processes currently sweeping the Arab world, to the infinitely less dramatic, but likewise persistent conflict about language norms in Norwegian institutions.

Worth mentioning as a common feature to the contemporary cases dealt with in this volume, is the spread of English into the lexicon of the common speech of most language communities, especially in the domains of education and business, with the globalisation of markets for culture, technology and commodities.¹² In the Hindi case, of course, this is not a recent phenomenon; the widespread use of 'Hinglish', however, shows no sign of retreat. In most Arab countries, giving one's children an English language education from kindergarten to university is a sign of social status, and represents – unless radical conservative societal change should occur – sociocultural capital regarding their future position. Even in Norway, while the spoken language and dialects are not challenged and Norwegian is firmly based in media and in all genres of literature, English language products are dominant in the popular cultural domain, lexical input is heavy in all technical fields; more and more business firms report their working language to be English, and it may be reasonably claimed that academia has already become bilingual.

¹⁰ Due to the remarkable and dramatic events in her country, Egypt, Doss did not yet find time to develop her paper into a full article.

¹¹ In the field of sociology, analysed for instance as "The fall of public man" (Sennett 1993 [1974]); Adams 2007: 29 mentions "the collapse of the Respect Society" in Britain as a factor for the fall of prestige of Received Pronunciation there.

¹² See Janson 2012: 226-232 for a discussion of the role of English as the new global language, and various reactions to it.

With regard to the various kinds and sets of authentic mixed data presented at the workshop, a next step would be a systematic follow-up across languages and time, testing the theoretical hypotheses and applying analytical tools developed in mainstream code-switching and code-mixing research (some of which have been mentioned here) to these diverse sets of languages and varieties.

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