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**THE USE OF LOW DIGLOSSIA ON THE PARODY TV SHOWS
CHI.N.N. AND COPUSAT BY EDUCATED
FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK**
**ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ СНИЖЕННОЙ ЛЕКСИКИ В ПАРОДИЙНЫХ
ТЕЛЕВИЗИОННЫХ ШОУ CHI.N.N. И COPUSAT
ОБРАЗОВАННЫМИ ПОДПИСЧИКАМИ
СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ СЕТИ FACEBOOK**

Abstract

Lebanese TV stations are crowded with comedy shows which reflect the status quo of the country's political, economical, and social woes. Based on surveys, one type of shows in particular has gained mainstream attention among the public and that is parody shows. Parody shows tend to present the bittersweet reality in sarcastic and satirical ways. According to ratings, one show has dominated all parody shows for the past four years in Lebanon and that is Chi.N.N. The show has quite an appeal among the Lebanese population because of the simple and ingenious language used by hosts which rallied thousands of fans on the show's Facebook page. Most followers on Facebook are educated but they tend to use low language when commenting. This paper aimed to analyze why educated followers of the show use low diglossia when commenting on Facebook. This research aimed to explore whether the use of low diglossia is related to linguistic competence or social status bond to show solidarity. Corpus linguistics was adopted in this study scanning for the most repeated words in followers' comments. Sayahi's Identity approach was implemented. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted in this case study. Instrumentation carried out was manual count of the most repeated words in followers' comments. By the end of the study, results showed why educated followers use low diglossia and whether low diglossia hindered constructive discussion between parties.

Аннотация

Ливанские телевизионные станции переполнены комедийными шоу, отражающими текущие политические, экономические и социальные проблемы страны. Один из таких типов – шоу-пародия, основанное на социологических опросах, – привлёк внимание самой многочисленной аудитории. Шоу-пародии склонны представлять горести и радости повседневной жизни, прибегая к сарказму и сатире. Согласно рейтингам, одно из таких шоу – Chi.N.N. – занимает доминирующее положение, поскольку его ведущие используют простой бесхитростный язык, что привлекает тысячи фанатов на его

страницу на Фейсбуке. Большинство подписчиков – образованные люди, однако в своих комментариях на Фейсбуке они используют сниженную лексику. Цель настоящего исследования – изучить, связано ли такое использование с лингвистической компетенцией или же социальным обязательством демонстрировать солидарность. Для выявления наиболее частотных слов в комментариях подписчиков использовались методы корпусной лингвистики. Применялся подход социальной идентичности Саяхи. В изучении указанного феномена были задействованы методы количественного и качественного анализа. Подсчёты самых частотных слов в комментариях подписчиков проводились вручную. Результаты проведённого эксперимента показывают, почему подписчики используют сниженную лексику и препятствует ли она поддержанию конструктивной дискуссии между её участниками.

Keywords: low diglossia, high diglossia, societal bilingualism, parody show, educated followers, Facebook.

Ключевые слова: сниженная лексика, лексика официального стиля, билингвизм в обществе, шоу-пародия, образованные подписчики, Фейсбук.

1. Introduction

Diglossia as defined by C. A. Ferguson [Ferguson, 1959] is a relatively stable language situation, in which, in addition to the primary low variety dialects (non-prestige), there is a very high variety (prestige language) which is learned by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but not for ordinary conversation. Taken in its original literal meaning, diglossia describes the coexistence of two words, i.e., vocabulary doublets, in a given language to refer to the same concept or entity.

Statement of the Problem

The hosts of Chi.N.N. use low variety dialect on the show. The show's educated Facebook followers emulate them by using low diglossia in posting comments which leads to the page being dominated by the less dominant socio-cultural group and eclipses the more dominant sociocultural group who are users of prestige language.

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to find out why educated followers of Chi.N.N. use low diglossia in expressing their views on the show's Facebook page.

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions.

1. Is low diglossia in Lebanon related to linguistic competence or societal competence in educated people?
2. To what extent does the difference in social status between hosts and followers play a role in using low diglossia on Lebanese TV?

3. How does writing the vernacular on Facebook play a role in social identity between Lebanese?

Hypothesis

The use of low diglossia by educated people on Facebook undermines the balance between H and L and hinders constructive discussion.

Literature Review

Diglossia is a characterization of linguistic organization at the socio-cultural level [Fishman, 1967]. J. A. Fishman argued that the term should be extended to include situations with separate languages provided they are in a complementary distribution. He distinguished between bilingualism, as the individual ability to use more than one language, and diglossia as the social aspect of the languages in use within the same speech community. According to A. Hudson [Hudson, 2002], social circumstances lead to the appearance of diglossia creating two varieties of the same language constituting diglossic code-switching. Diglossic code-switching refers to the act of juxtaposing the H and the L varieties of the same historical language during a communicative event [Sayahi, 2014]. Both the illiterate speakers, often the ones who are deprived of any possible gains associated with knowing the standard form, and the educated speakers share a negative perception of the vernacular. This is called the diglossia paradox. An educated person as defined by K. P. Mohanan [Mohanan, 2005] is one who has undergone a process of learning that results in enhanced mental and thinking abilities involved in knowledge building and knowledge critiquing, and language abilities needed for clear, precise, and effective communication. In cases of bilingualism, the H variety is in fact the native language of the socio-cultural dominant group [Sayahi, 2014]. Societal bilingualism as defined by M. Clyne [Clyne, 1997] is the characteristic linguistic situation in a particular speech community in which more than one language is used. In this connection we can further distinguish between official bilingualism and de facto bilingualism. Societal bilingualism denotes the characteristic linguistic situation in a particular speech community in which more than one official language is used. De facto bilingualism refers to the difference between what is officially stated and what is the actual linguistic situation in a nation [Clyne, 1997]. Another concern rises which is the writing of the vernacular and its gradual acceptance, as an important milestone in the path towards resolving a diglossic situation. F. Coulmas [Coulmas, 2002, p. 62] rightfully postulated that “Writing of the vernacular is rarely explicitly acknowledged as an important factor in linguistic evolution.” The history of Spanish tells us that the shift from an H variety to an L variety in official writings would only happen when the difference between the two is such that the L variety is no longer perceived as a decayed form of the H variety but as a language of its own. In addition, a strong national and cultural identity needs to develop in order to open the door for adaptation of the L variety as the official

language of a state. L. Sayahi [Sayahi, 2014] states that only recently have the writing of the Arabic dialects and their use for literary production started to become tolerated, in large part thanks to the digital media. The emergence of several internet-based resources and websites that focus on promoting national Arabic vernaculars, with some referring to them as languages, are initial expressions of this linguistic identity that combines both nationalistic attitudes and an increased linguistic awareness of the legitimacy of the native vernacular as a symbol of identity. It is one thing to refer to an L variety as a dialect and another to call it a language in a society with a diglossic situation. An example is the Facebook page I Speak Tounsi “I speak Tunisian,” with some 12,000 followers. It is among the first to use the Tunisian L variety.

2. Present study

In this research, Sayahi’s identity and solidarity through using the low variety language on Facebook will be implemented.

2.1. Methodology

This research is an exploratory one. An exploratory research is conducted when researchers seek to learn about some little-known phenomenon by studying it in depth [Fraenkl and Wallen, 2008]. Corpus linguistics will be adopted in this study. Corpus linguistics studies language based on example of real life language use [McEnery & Wilson, 1996]. The corpus of this study is 140 comments posted by Facebook followers. 30 comments were excluded for not having education status on the followers’ profiles. CL looks for most repeated words and how these words existed with others in comments. The count is manual since software cannot detect written Arabic diglossic words. Microsoft Word and Excel were used to generate the figures in this research.

2.2. Data collection

Data are collected from comments from Facebook followers of one episode of the show. Comments considered for analysis are those posted during the period that separates two consecutive episodes which is one week.

2.3. Data analysis

Quantitative analysis of frequency of words in comments is done manually. It looks for the most used words which are strictly related to the hosts and topics discussed on the show and are used by followers. Qualitative analysis is the collocation of how these words exist with others in the comments. Out of the context collocations are excluded. The show is presented by six people who are: Salam, Fouad, Abed, Abbas, Abou Talal, and Juneid. It is an all-male cast. They represent different religions, sects, and regions. Fouad, Juneid, Abou Talal, and Abed are professional actors. No information on their educational backgrounds could be verified.

Host	Region
Salam	Beirut
Fouad	Achrafieh
Abed	Beirut
Abou Talal	Saida
Abbas	Dahyeh
Juneid	Alayh

Figure 1. Information about the hosts

2.4. Findings

The episode of the show on which the analysis is based discussed four topics:

- 1) the departure of one of the hosts (Salam);
- 2) Karma Khayat's tribunal;
- 3) food poisoning;
- 4) the new traffic law.

Fig. 2 shows the percentage of how much each topic was talked about among Facebook followers.

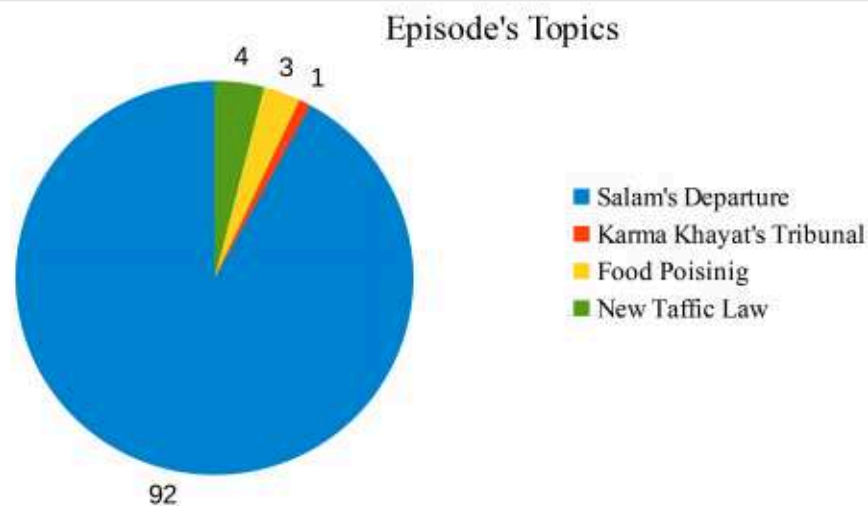


Figure 2. Information about the episode's topics

As shown in Figure 2, Salam's departure has an overwhelming percentage in comparison to the other three topics. This is mainly because Salam is the writer of the show and at the main host. His leaving the show has somewhat caused concerns among followers that the show might be canceled.

Fig. 3 shows the percentage of the most repeated written words by Facebook followers. As shown in Figure 3, host names were the most used by followers.

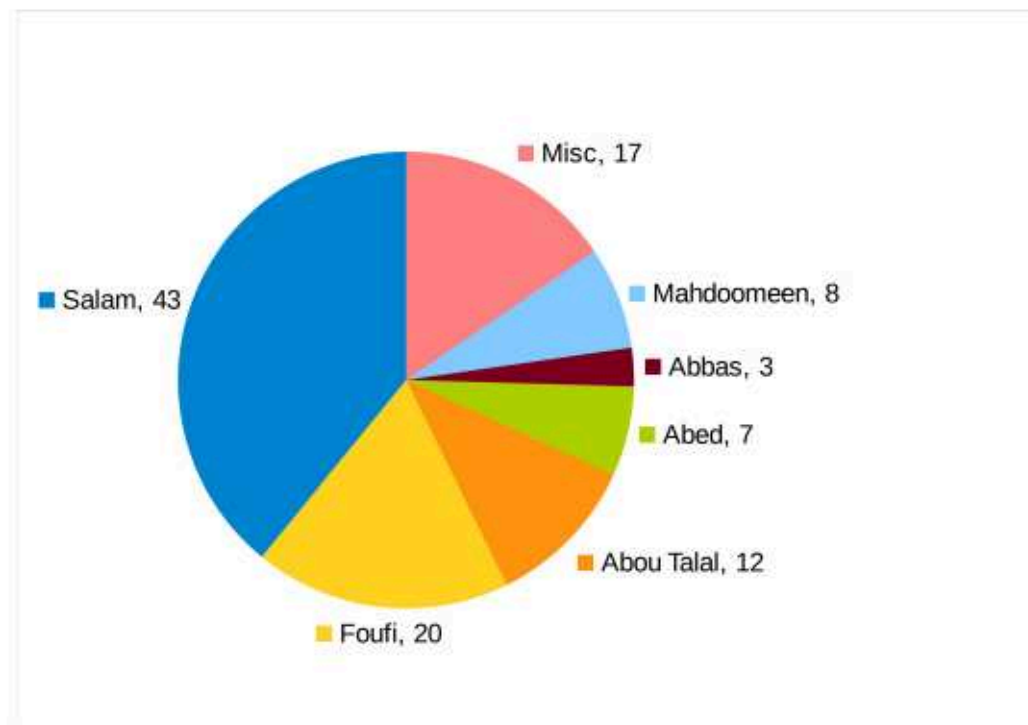


Figure 3. Percentages of most frequent words

Figure 4 displays some of the comments in Verbatim by followers. As shown in Figure 4, the majority of the followers used low variety specifically low diglossia and diglossic code-switching. English translation is provided in italics.

Figure 5 reflects the reason in percentage of why followers used low diglossia in their comments. As shown in Figure 5, 88% of followers used low variety to show solidarity with the show and the hosts. The categories were the result of a post written on the wall on the Facebook page of Chi.N.N. asking followers “why is it important for you to comment and in which language?”

Figure 6 represents the percentage of various forms of language used by followers. As shown in Figure 6, the final results show in numbers the percentages of each variety used on the show. Low variety dominates the chart despite the educational background of the followers.

3. Conclusion

By the end of the research, results showed that educated followers of Chi.N.N. used low diglossia to show solidarity and to identify with the social groups of hosts. A few percentage used low diglossia due to linguistic incompetence. Those who used H variety were followers living overseas and did not know Arabic or could not write it. From the comments, we can easily see that there is no constructive discussion or communication going on. This led the page to be controlled by the less dominant socio-cultural group and caused a rift with the dominant socio-cultural group users of high prestige language. This paper will hopefully help TV show creators to strike a balance between H and L users so they can receive constructive discussions and inputs

from their followers and be a melting pot of ideas and suggestions instead of lack of communication.

<p>... ما بتفرق البقية مضمومين It doesn't matter they're all funny (Low diglossia)</p>	<p>بس اهم شي ما يفيل عبد و عباس The main thing Abed and Abbas stay (Low diglossia)</p>
<p>استاذ سلام هو الاساس في البرنامج Mr.Salam is the essence of the show (High diglossia)</p>	<p>اه...اه لكن انساه فوفي Ah, forget it about it Foufi (Low diglossia)</p>
<p>salaam maa taa yerja3!!! Akid haa mazhaa t2ilit ldam When Salam is coming!!!This must be one lousy joke (Low diglossia)</p>	<p>فوفي شو عملتلو لزعل Foufi, what did you do to upset him? (Low diglossia)</p>
<p>is this a joke?? (Bilingualism)</p>	<p>Brilliant (Bilingualism)</p>
<p>دايما بتقنعي يا بو طلال...حبك انا You always convince me Abou Talal. Love ya (Low diglossia)</p>	<p>Abed is very smart and shows a lot of sense of humour! (Bilingualism)</p>
<p>لله معوا ابو طلال May Allah be with Abou Talal (Low diglossia)</p>	<p>must see !! (Bilingualism)</p>
<p>اهم شي عندي فؤاد صراحة هوي القصة كلها Most important to me is Fouad he's the real deal (Low diglossia)</p>	<p>بلا تخويت Stop fooling around (Low diglossia)</p>

Figure 4. Some comments in verbatim by followers

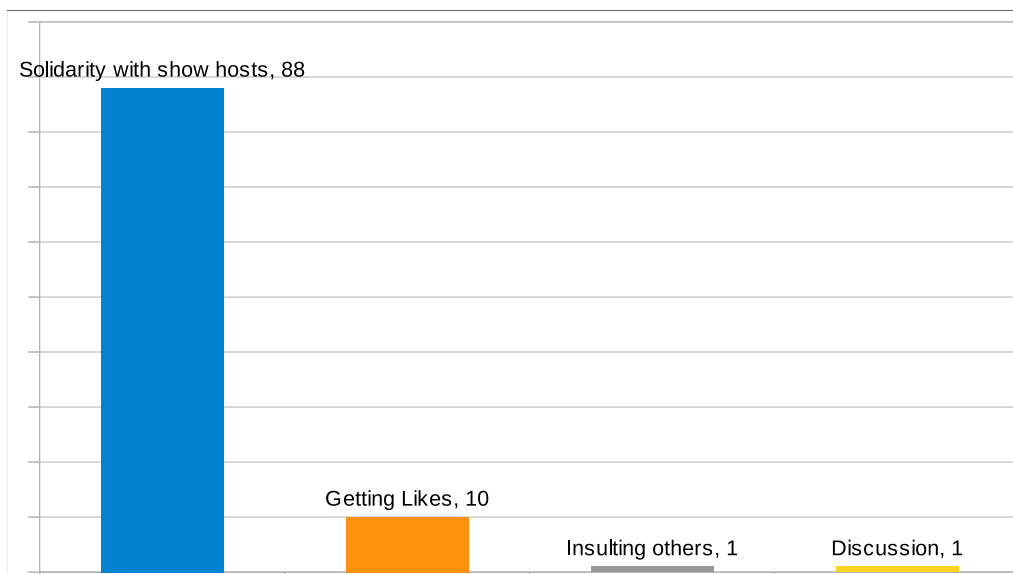


Figure 5. The reason followers used low variety

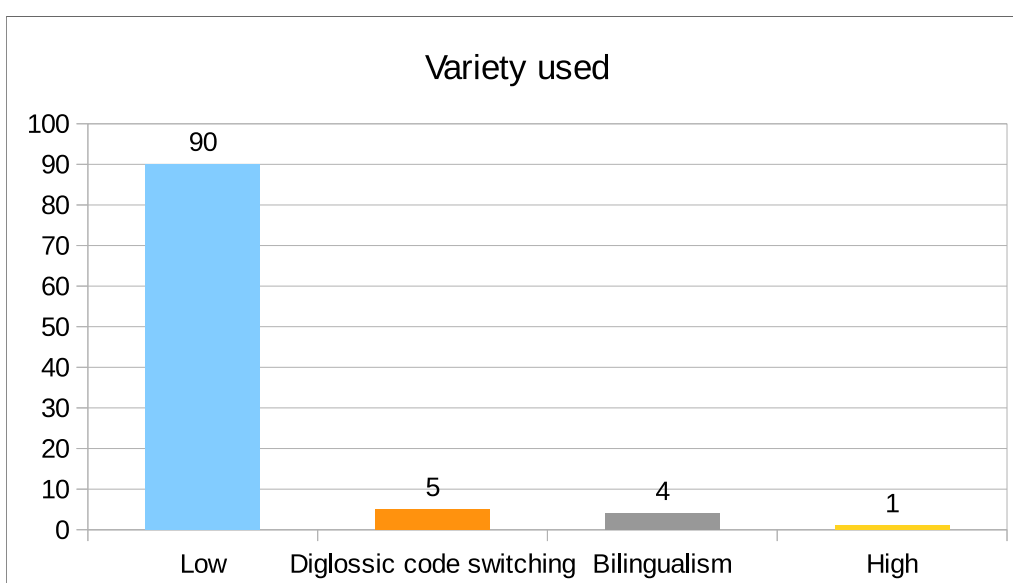


Figure 6. Final results of the language varieties

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