

Language choice of Iranian postgraduate students residing in Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the language choice of Iranian postgraduate students in a public university in Malaysia, and its relation to gender. The study uses Fishman's (1972) 'who speaks what language to whom and when' model of domain analysis to determine their language choice and use. Results of this study indicate that language choice and use are domain specific. They use different languages in different domains. In the family domain, Persian is almost the only language they use, as family is an intimate domain. In formal domains such as education, English is the language, which is used in most of the situations, as medium of the instruction in the University is English. As for the media domain, writing and reading domains, students use English and Persian in different situations. The contribution of gender to language choice was also examined. In general, no significant difference was found between male and female in language choice and use except for some domains in which males used English more than females.

Keyword: Language choice; Gender; Domain analysis; English; Mother tongue