

Compare and contrast the use of language by characters in two situation comedies, for example: “*The World According to the Kiepskis*” and “*Na Dobro I na Zło*”. Pay particular attention to such aspects as education, family background and social position.

Basil Bernstein was a British sociologist and linguist who suggested two categories that are used according to the situation in which we find ourselves, one is restricted code and the other one is elaborated code. “The World According to the Kiepskis” is a popular Polish sitcom. The show follows the life of a dysfunctional Polish family from Wrocław, who live in an old apartment in Wrocław on 3/4 Ćwiartki street (in Polish *Ćwiartka* means 1/4 but it often refers to 1/4 of a litre bottle of vodka). Most episodes are centred on Ferdynand Kiepski, who tries to make various schemes to improve his financial or life situation, all of which ultimately fail. The series parodies the dynamics of Polish families in a similar style to the US series *Married with Children* which in Poland goes under the name *Świat według Bundych* (*The World According To The Bundies*); in many ways it inverts the dynamics of the Bundies. It is also inspired by *The Simpsons* in many different ways.

"Kiepski" is being a term roughly translating to the English term *poor* or *crappy*). Language that has been used in “The World According to the Kiepskis” is an example of restricted code. Characters in this sitcom are quite limited and they have a basic use of syntax. When we watch it, we automatically know what they are going to say. The most common phrases that are being used are: mate, shit, crap, hag, asshole, fogley, mug. Another thing showing us that this is a restricted code, is that they pronounce some words incorrectly.

The characters in that sitcom are quite specific. Main character: Ferdynand Kiepski is the head of the family. He is unemployed since many years and he is trying to prove that he is an unappreciated genius. His character is similar to that of Peggy Bundy, who enjoys the finer things in life yet refuses to work for them, as well is similar character to Homer Simpson. His favourite pastimes are drinking "Mocny Full" ("Strong Full") beer and watching television. It shows that he isn't as genius as he thinks he is. He also did not work for a long time and he spends all of his time on watching TV so it says that he isn't well qualified and he is unable to use elaborated code. Babka Rozalia ('Babka' from 'Babcia' for Grandma in Polish) is Ferdynand's mother-in-law (but her last name is also Kiepski; she sometimes says that her name is Rozalia Małolepsza ('Not-much-better')). She is a senior citizen who lives in two worlds—real and imaginary. Her pension is a key component of the family's budget. Ferdynand constantly tries to con her out of money in order to buy more beer for himself. She loves "Koziołek Matołek", a Polish cartoon from the 1980s, and also Radio Maryja which is Polish religious, nationalist, conservative, anti-post-communists and Roman Catholic radio station and media group. Her language is quite specific because she cannot find herself in any

Compare and contrast the use of language by characters in two situation comedies, for example: *“The World According to the Kiepskis”* and *“Na Dobrze I na Złe”*. Pay particular attention to such aspects as education, family background and social position. Of those two worlds, she is belonging to. Walduś is the 25-year old son of Ferdynand and Halina. Like his father he is unemployed. His life centers on bodybuilding or drinking beer with his father, and he avoids books and studying as much as he can. Walduś had problems with finishing elementary school, but after many attempts he succeeded. He equates to Kelly Bundy as he is the family's bumbling buffoon with his own share of "Kelly-isms". Walduś is another specific character. The reason for him, not to use elaborated code is that he has struggled with school and he wasn't able to learn more complex syntax and wider range of vocabulary.

There are some other characters showing that they tend to use restricted code. Reasons for this are that they didn't get that much education or they did not get it at all. They also had a very low social position, probably the lowest one in most cases, such as Ferdynand or Walduś, because they are unemployed. These factors have influenced the way they all speak in some way.

*“Na dobre I na złe”* is another popular Polish series. In Polish: „Na dobre I na złe” means „For good or for ill”. The series tells the story of a fictional hospital placed in Warsaw, Poland. Characters presented in *“Na dobre I na złe”* use the Elaborated code because they all are well qualified as they are doctors and nurses. Their language is entropic and they use more complex syntax. They have wider range of vocabulary that is being used and they also use the discourse of medicine. The reason for this is that they have a work experience and they attended to the best schools in the past. They also spend most of their time in a hospital so that they are under pressure of practising their language.

To recap, I think that the difference between those two series and the language that is being used in both of them, is drastic. First sitcom is a typical example of the use of restricted code and the second one shows how clever elaborated code might be represented. There are many factors influencing characters using any of these two codes. These are: education, family background and social position. As we can see, the main character of the first show, Ferdynand is unemployed and he does not use wider range of vocabulary while characters from *“Na dobre I na złe”* use it all the time. In that case, it is quite obvious that social position helps to develop our language.