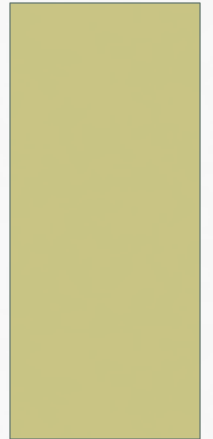


# THE RESULT OF LANGUAGE CONTACT: CONTINUED

LECTURE 5



# LANGUAGE SHIFT, ENDANGERMENT AND LANGUAGE DEATH

## REASONS: A. MULTILINGUALISM

- 1. Language shift is always preceded by bi/multilingualism.
- 2. Move from language-choice-by-audience to language-choice-by-context is a good indicator of shift.
- 3. When the situation changes such that they code-switch in some contexts, to all speakers, shift appears to be inevitable

## B. ATTITUDES, BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL:

- 1. reinforced/caused by contrasts in power/status/economic opportunity between speakers
- 2. language contact between two linguistic groups representing different social status and are at different scales of advancement
- 3. feeling of cultural inferiority results in eventual loss of the language and culture in question through a process of cultural assimilation

# LANGUAGE DEATH:

- Shift leading to death --language death is the extreme case: the complete disappearance of a language most commonly a gradual process spanning several generations.
- Reasons:
  - 1. The speech community is in physical danger, due to catastrophic natural causes
  - 2. genocide (direct confrontation &/or slow process of spreading diseases hitherto unknown to the community)
  - 3. shift in lifestyle that sees a shift away from the traditional way of life, which is central to the identity of the group, also contributes to the death of language.
  - 4. marriage outside the community

## CLASSIFICATION OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES: (UNESCO)

- potentially endangered languages, socially and economically disadvantaged, under heavy pressure from a larger language and beginning to lose child speakers
- endangered languages: have few or no child speakers, the youngest good speakers are the young adults
- seriously endangered languages: the youngest good speakers are 50 or older
- moribund languages: have only a handful of speakers, mostly very old
- extinct languages: have no speakers left

# WHY BOTHER?

- To understand the language faculty itself
- to understand the general and specific cognitive processes at work
- Language loss entails loss of cultural heritage—
- Bring to light hitherto unknown relationships among different languages, thus shedding light on prehistory of human evolution as well

# LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION: IS IT POSSIBLE?

- 1. totals immersion schools and literacy programs in the ethnic language
- 2. language policy of the Government
- 3. Case in point Hebrew, Maori, Hawaiian, certain Mexican languages etc.



DIGLOSSIA:

- The discussion on various types of dialects show that each has its own social distribution, making it the picture rather complicated. -----
- A society having many varieties at its disposal, depending on region, social class etc.
- But, in reality, very often, all the varieties are not exploited at the same time.
- To make matters simple, some societies have only two distinct varieties of a language ----- sufficiently distinct to call them different languages ----- ‘high’ and ‘low’ varieties, in societies like the Arabic speaking world, in Greece etc.

## HIGH VARIETY

- a. highly codified
- b. has a large and respected body of written literature
- c. learnt by formal education
- d. generally of a earlier period or of a different speech community
- e. used for all formal and written purposes
- f. not used for ordinary communication, therefore, cannot be learnt as a first language.

## LOW VARIETY

- a. generally less complex grammatically
- b. used for ordinary conversation and hence, learnt as a first language
- c. with or without written body of literature
- d. Differ according to region or social class etc.

- So these are different not only in terms of phonology, morphology and vocabulary,
- but also in terms of a number of social characteristics: function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization and stability.

## BI/MULTILINGUALISM

- In a society where there is no restriction on learning each other's languages, the Govt's policies encourage the same and social/cultural/political systems demand the use of more than one language, we have a fluid bilingualism. This is something we see in India where different communities, with their own language, have lived side by side through millennia thus resulting in wide spread bi/multilingualism.

# BILINGUALISM AND DIGLOSSIA

- Diglossia is characterization of linguistic organization at socio-cultural level
- whereas bilingualism has more to do with individual linguistic behavior.
- Sometimes, they co-exist , at other times they can exist without the other.
- these combinations give us four possibilities:
  - Both bilingualism and diglossia
  - Neither bilingualism nor diglossia
  - Bilingualism without diglossia
  - Diglossia without bilingualism

## Both bilingualism and diglossia

- there are communities that are both bilingual and diglossic, so much so that there are entire nations that are so.
- One such nation is Paraguay, where the entire population speaks both Spanish and Guarani.
- In Paraguay, the formerly rural population has learnt Spanish in order to enter status stressing spheres, like education, religion, government, high culture and so on.
- On the other hand, the city dwellers maintain the use of Guarani in domains of primary group solidarity and familial circumstances.
- Similarly, throughout Arab world, the upper and middle class males maintain the use of high [Koranic] and vernacular [gyptian, Syrian, Lebanese etc] Arabic



## Neither bilingualism nor diglossia

- only very small, homogenous isolated speech communities can be said to qualify for this.
- Given little role differentiation or compartmentalization and frequent face to face interaction leads to a situation where members are differentiated to a specific role

## Bilingualism without diglossia

- Both languages are used across domains.
- Sometimes, language use does not depend on domain any more but on topic.
- In the case of Singapore, the English-speaking speech community controlled the means of production. To create a level playing field, the People's Action Party (PAP) created English medium schools with mother tongue as a second language for all Singaporean children. The formal domains, like school etc maintain Tamil. There are language shifts at some places, maintenance in some other. But bilingualism without diglossia is present across all domains.

## Diglossia without bilingualism

- this happens when two or more communities are united religiously, politically or economically into a single functioning unit, even though they are socially disparate groups.
- At this macro level two language or varieties are said to exist. However, one or both groups are marked by impermeable boundaries, in such a way that for outsiders, it is impossible to have role access or linguistic access.
- Pre WWI, many European communities had this arrangements where the elites and their countrymen had a diglossic situation. The elites would often speak French or some other High variety for their intra group purposes, since these two communities rarely interacted and had severely restricted role repertoires, there was no social bilingualism.
- Similarly, nationalized diglossia did not imply large scale bilingualism for many African countries, where the westernized elites and the common people did not speak the same language