



WEEK 3 - Languages Under Pressure

Minority groups and their heritage/ancestral languages

- Two very common types of minority groups.

[1] Immigrant minorities

- E.g. Spleaers of Tagalogg in the USA

[2] Indigenous minorities

- Examples: Native American groups in the USA, ethnic minorities in China, the Ainu in Japan

[3] A third scenario: 'border-change minorities'

- The borders of two states change as a result of international conflict.
- One portion of the territory of LG2 is taken by LG1.
- Examples: Texas becomes part of the USA, South Tirol becomes part of Italy

The three-generation pattern of language shift and loss (among immigrant groups)

- Common language shift from Heritage Language/HL to the Local Majority Language/LML across three generations.
 - Example: Hmong immigrants from Laos settle in Fresno, CA.

Generation 1	Fluent in HL. Learn 'survival skills in the local majority language (LML)	Fluent in Hmong. Poor skills in English.
Generation 2	Bilingual in HL and LML.	speak both Hmong and English well
Generation 3	Fluent in LML. Poor skills in HL.	Speak English very well, but little Hmong.

- Are you a second Korean-American, a third-generation Italian-American, a first-generation Armenian-American

Generation 1	Generartion 2	Generation 3
You are a permanent resident of the USA (citizen or Green Card holder)	You and your parents live in the USA.	You and your parents live in the USA.
You were born outside the USA	Your parents were born outside the USA. You were born in the USA.	Your parents were born in the USA. Your grandparents were born outside the USA.
Your first language was not English.	Your parent's first language is not English.	Your grandparent's first language was not English.

Other more complex characterizations

- 'Julie' is now 21 years old.
- She was born in Hong Kong and lived there for 10 years.
- At age 10, she moved with her family to the USA.
- Julie is not a typical Generation 1 Chinese-American, because she is fluent in English and spent all her teenage years in the US.
- But she is not exactly like Generation 2 Chinese-Americans, who spent all their childhood and teenage years in the USA
- Julie has a complex dual childhood in the USA + Hong Kong.
- The many people with backgrounds likes Julie are sometimes called members of '**Generation 1.5**'

Deviations from the typical 3 generation model of language shift and loss

- Some factors speed up language loss.
- Other factors may slow it down and help the maintenance of HLs.

What causes speakers not to learn their Heritage Languages (HLs)?

1. Political factors
2. Social pressures
3. Economic factors
4. Social status
5. Inter-marriage
6. The influence of school
7. Children's lack of motivation to learn/use the HL

Factors helping the transmission and maintenance of the

1. The size and concentration of minority/HL groups
 - a. Korean Town: Korean
 - b. China Town: Different dialects of Cantonese
 - c. Garden Grove: Vietenese
2. The arrival of new, monolingual immigrants
3. Media availability on HL
 - a. TV, radio, newspapers in Spanish, Korean, Chinese, etc.
4. Isolated communities
 - a. Amish in Pennsylvania
5. Visits to the home country
6. Parents committed to the transmission of HLs to their children
 - Why do parents think HLs are important?
 - a. Children should learn about their family's cultural identity and ethnic traditions.
 - b. HLs have potential value for getting employment.
 - c. Family cohesion.
7. Opportunities to learn the HL in school

The Generation 4 Effect

- Increasing prosperity/economic stability → desire to reconnect with heritage background.

Generation 1	Fluent in HL. Poor skills in LML	Low-paid employment
Generation 2	Bilingual in HL and LML	Better-paid employment
Generation 3	Fluent in LML. Poor skills in HL.	Stable economic situation
Generation 4	Often largely monolingual in LML. Curious about my ethnic background. Want to learn the HL. Sometimes blame their parents and grandparents for losing/not transmitting the HL.	Stable economic situation, potentially prosperous.

Capacity-Opportunity-Desire/COD

- A framework for assessing prospects for HL maintenance to be successful.
- **Capacity** = abilities that individuals develop in the HL
- **Opportunity** = the chances that speakers have to use the HL outside the home in daily life: restaurants, stores, ...

- **Desire** = the eagerness that individuals have to use the HL – positive attitudes to speaking the HL
- All C-O-D is argued to be necessary for the successful transmission and maintenance of HLs.

Example: COD and Pahari in the UK

- 75% of people from **Pakistan** living in the **UK** come from the **Mirpur** area: 600,000
- **Pahari** is the second largest language spoken in the UK, after English.
- Pahari is stable and **well-maintained**. Why?
 - **Capacity** – MP is learned well
 - mothers teach their children MP.
 - **Opportunity**
 - speakers can use MP in the local area
 - on regular trips to Pakistan
 - **Desire** – strongly positive attitude to MP, even younger people use it to each other

Example: COD and Hindi in the USA

- South Asians are the fastest-growing minority group in the USA, second after Mexican-Americans.
 - 1960: 12,000
 - Now: 2,000,000+
 - Hindi-HL group: 500,000.
- heavily concentrated in CA + four other states.
- But **poor transmission** of Hindi to G2 (and G3). Why?
 - **Capacity** – parents often don't help children to learn Hindi much.
 - **Opportunity** – Hindi is not widely used in South Asian communities – English is used as a lingua franca.
 - **Desire** – attitudes to Hindi are positive.
- But without sufficient Capacity and Opportunity, Hindi is not being passed on well.

Endangered Languages

- Due to changes in modern life, many of the world's languages are now endangered and may die out in the 21st century.
- Many linguists suggest that if a language has 20,000 speakers or less, and is in ongoing decline, it should be classified as endangered.

Language endangerment and language death

- Need to study patterns of decline.
- Common belief: if a language has many speakers, it must be 'safe'.
- But the rate of decline can be very fast.
- Breton (France) 1905: 1.5 million speakers
- Now: 200,000 speakers.
- Still seems a lot, but if the rate of decline continues, Breton will die out this century.

Languages all over the world are becoming "moribund"

- If a language is not being transmitted well to younger generations, creating new speakers, it is 'moribund'.
 - 80% of native American languages in the USA are moribund and likely to die out
- A language group may have many older speakers, but few new speakers.
- A study of indigenous languages in Canada:
 - Canadian tribal languages: 80% of age 80+ speak the language and 40% of age 40+

Age	% using the tribal language
around 80	60%
around 40	30%

Large languages and small languages

- There are 6,000-7,000 languages in the world.
- But most of the world's 7 billion population speak one of a very few languages as their L1.
- There are 8 languages with 100+ million (each) L1 speakers.
 - These account for 3 billion of the world's population.
 - English, Mandarin, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, Portuguese, Hindi, Bengali

English	Mandarin	Spanish	Portuguese
Russian	Japanese	Hindi	Bengali

- The 20 largest languages in the world are the L1 of 3.7 billion people.
- 96% of the world's languages are spoken by only 4% of the world's population.
 - There are very many languages with few speakers.

Number of total speakers	Less than 10	Less than 100	Less than 1,000	Less than 10,000	Less than 20,000
--------------------------	--------------	---------------	-----------------	------------------	------------------

Number of total speakers	Less than 10	Less than 100	Less than 1,000	Less than 10,000	Less than 20,000
Number of languages	200	500	1,500	3,000	4,000

Major Conclusion

- If a language with 20,000 speakers or less should be characterized as endangered, then:

2/3 of the world's languages are currently endangered, and may completely disappear during the course of the 21st Century

- **The survival of the world's languages is threatened as at no previous point in history.**
- Current estimation: one language now dying every two weeks
 - A random sample from recent times:

Language	Location	Extinct	Final speaker
Tehuelche	Argentina	Jan 4, 2019	Dora Manchado
Klallam	Washington	Feb 4, 2014	Hazel Sampson

Where is language endangerment most severe

- Language endangerment and language death have been most serious in the Americas and Australia
- In the past, less serious in Africa and Asia
- But now, new documentation shows increased language endangerment in these areas too.

Reasons to be concerned about the loss of the world's languages

1. **The language of every group is an expression of its cultural identity.**
 - HLs are important for ethnolinguistic minorities themselves.
2. **Language death is leading to a massive loss of global cultural diversity.**
 - The existence of balanced cultural diversity may be beneficial for everyone – healthy and enriching.
3. **Different languages may be able to provide us with much knowledge about the physical world – e.g. about diverse local plant life, and medicines.**

Causes of language endangerment

- **Economic factors**
- **Social factors**
- **The growth of larger languages**
- **Globalization**

- **Urbanization**
- **Invasion and colonization**
- **Physical causes.** Disease, crop failure, famine, earthquakes, tsunamis.
 - European settlers in the Americas brought diseases with them which caused 90% of the indigenous population to die in 200 years.

Example: The Oroqen in NW China

- Originally nomads, no fixed home location.
- From the 1950s on, the Chinese government improved the living conditions of minority groups – a good thing.
- Better health care, educational opportunities, affirmative action - university entrance places reserved for Oroqen people.
- More Han Chinese settle in the area where the Oroqen live. Marry with Oroqen due special privileges – better housing, no one-child-per-family restriction.
- Causes language shift and loss of Oroqen.
- **Important question:** Are there ways to balance socio-economic improvement with the maintenance of HLs and distinct cultural traditions?
 - YES! **The take-home message: Bilingualism!**
 - Learning LMLs does not mean that individuals have to stop speaking their HLs at home and passing them on to their children.

Positive reactions to language endangerment

- Two major initiatives:
 - **Language documentation**
 - **Language revitalization**
- Organizations all over the world are now helping EL communities to stabilize their HLs.
 - The Endangered Language Foundation
 - The Summer Institute of Linguistics/SIL
 - Yunnan Minority Languages Institute
 - USC Problems Without Passports program.

Language Documentation

- Goal: establish good descriptions and records of ELs before they disappear.
- Linguists trained in skills at analyzing unfamiliar languages create dictionaries and grammatical descriptions of ELs.

Language Revitalization

- Primary activities: teaching-spreading new knowledge of ELs among HL communities.
- Different ways that this is done:
 1. The EL is taught as a subject
 2. Bilingual education
 3. Summer language camps
 4. Pre-school 'language nests'
 5. Master-apprentice language-learning

The importance of establishing realistic goals

- Full language revitalization may take decades to achieve.
- But very useful, more modest goals can be achieved in shorter periods of time
 - e.g. getting all community members to use basic HL expressions with each other (greetings and small talks)
- Creates a foundation for more extensive HL use
- Even small steps in regaining HLs can have major positive psychological effects in an EL community

Reviving “extinct”/“dormant” languages

Example: Hebrew – a revitalization miracle

- Hebrew was not used as a regular spoken language for 2,000 years.
- Only used for religious purposes – prayers, services, and to read holy scriptures/the Torah
- No native speakers
- Early 20thC revived in Israel by dedicated language activists (esp. Ben Yehuda).
- Large numbers of new words were created to modernize the language.
- Hebrew was introduced into schools
- Parents (learning Hebrew) tried to talk to their children in the language.
- New literature was created, and newspapers in Hebrew.
- Now Hebrew is used in all domains of everyday life.

Example: Maori, New Zealand

- Spoken by everyone in **New Zealand** before the arrival of the British in the 19th century.
- In 1867 the British enforced English-only in schools. Using Maori resulted in punishments.

- Post-WWII urbanization → pressure on Maori – English needed to get jobs.
- Maori was expected to die out.
- In the 1980s, a new revival movement.

The revitalization of Maori:

- Innovation in New Zealand: **language nests** – pre-school centers where elders spoke Maori with children.
- 800 language nest centers by the 1990s.
- So successful, Maori teaching spread to high schools.
- Created a new generation of speakers.
- 1987 **government declares Maori an OL of NZ.**
- Provides financial support for Maori tv and radio programming.
- Sets up a **Maori Language Commission.**
- Maori is now well-revived.

Recent News

- In 2021, Lorde released an EP of her recent album *Solar Power* translated and sung in Maori
- Everyone knows the Maori Haka.

Example: Hawaiian

- Widely spoken until the end of the 19th century.
- 1893 Hawaiian monarchy overthrown by US military, invited in by wealthy Anglo-American community owning plantations.
- Hawaii became part of the USA.
- Hawaiian was forbidden from schools + pressured to use English even at the home.
- But the teachers of English were not well-trained → local people developed **Hawaiian Creole English** (aka 'Pidgin').
- A mixture of English + Hawaiian + Japanese + Chinese.
- In the 1970s a new interest in Hawaiian culture.
- The Hawaiian language is promoted and used in group activities (sports, clubs, meetings..)
- 1978 **Hawaiian declared an OL of Hawaii.**
- The NZ **language nest** model is adopted.
- 1986 the official ban on Hawaiian in primary and secondary schools was lifted.
- Hawaiian was reintroduced to schools and now has to be taught in some form in all schools.

- The most successful case of revitalization in the US – shows what a dedicated community can do.

Example: Miami

- A native American tribe living in Indiana-Kansas-Oklahoma. Aka Myaamia.
- In the 1980s no native speakers anymore.
- Now revived and used as an L2 in many interactions.
- Keys to the success of Miami revitalization:
 - (a) a detailed description of Miami in a grad student's Ph.D. dissertation (lesson: individuals can play a big role in revitalization work).
 - (b) the establishment of central coordinating revitalization efforts, in **Miami University**, Ohio.

Final points and questions

- We now know what strategies best help EL revitalization.
- Question: So will it now be possible to save all ELs?
- Answer: Not likely. The necessary resources and conditions for successful revitalization are not available in many places.
- But, many EL communities are revitalizing their HLs.
- This provides new hope and inspiration. Positive reactions to language loss are increasing everywhere.

Two very important points

- [1] All documentation and revitalization work is potentially valuable.
 - It creates positive new attitudes, pride, and enthusiasm among EL communities and a foundation for more extensive revitalization work.
- [2] Speakers of ELs don't need to abandon their HLs to acquire another major language.
 - They can become bilingual, like most of the world's population.