



WEEK2 - Languages with special roles: National and Official Languages

Official Languages/OLs and National Languages/NLs

Official Languages (OL)

- All countries need to specify the languages used in government education, law courts, and other domains of life.
- OLs are *specified* for:
 - (a) area of life/activity (e.g. teaching in schools, use in government administration etc.)
 - (b) geographical area – either all of a country or a sub-part – a state/province/region.
 - e.g. Hawaiian is an OL in Hawaii (only)
 - e.g. Bengali is an OL of West Bengal (only)

National Languages (NL)

- Many countries try to unify their population and generate loyalty to the state by stimulating a **national identity**
- Using symbols of the nation - a national anthem, flag, ceremonies celebrating the nation and its history/achievements
- NLs unify populations with a common, national spirit

OLs and NLs:

- In some countries, the language best suited for OL can also fulfill the NL role, especially where there is a high degree of homogeneity
 - Where there is a high degree of ethnic homogeneity - France, Japan, Korea, Iceland, Thailand, Vietnam
- In countries with more mixed populations, selecting an OL/NL may be more challenging

- **NL** are **symbols** of a nation's special identity and are promoted to unify populations with a common, national spirit.
- **OLs** are established for **pragmatic reasons** – to help people in their daily activities. OLs are not symbolic.

- On the difference between NLs and OLs:
 - “A national language is the language of a political, cultural, and social unit. It is generally developed and used as a symbol of national unity. Its functions are to identify the nation and unite the people of a nation. An official language, by contrast, is simply a language that may be used for government business. Its function is primarily utilitarian rather than symbolic. It is possible, of course, for one language to serve both functions.” (Holmes 1997)

Example of NL/OL choices

Aa Property	≡ Official Language (OL)	≡ National Language (NL)
<u>Untitled</u>		
<u>Paraguay</u>	Spanish	Guarani
<u>Tanzania</u>	Swahili, English	Swahili
<u>Democratic Republic of Congo</u>	French	Lingala, Tshiluba, Kikongo, Swahili
<u>Singapore</u>	Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Tamil, English	Malay
<u>Philippines</u>	Filipino, English	Filipino

Language Planning/LP

- LP is used to establish and develop new NLs and OLs.
- Two types of LP, and four steps in creating new NLs/OLs

1. **STATUS PLANNING** (Step 1)

Giving special roles to certain languages/varieties, e.g. selecting new NLs and OLs

2. **CORPUS PLANNING** (Step 2)

Further developing (standardizing) the languages selected in Step 1 through **corpus planning activities**:

- a. develop the vocabulary for use in all areas of life - **create new words** for science, medicine, law, etc.
- b. create **dictionaries** + determine which words are to be used as the standard forms of the language
- c. decide which **pronunciations** are standard
 - a. describe the **grammatical rules** of the language
 - b. decide **how the language should be written**, including choice of the script (**graphitization**) - which writing system to use: Roman alphabet, Cyrillic alphabet, Arabic script, Chinese characters, etc.

The activities above result in the **standardization** of a language.

3. **Promotion of new NLs/OLs** (Step 3)

- Spread knowledge of new NLs/OLs through:
 - mass education, adult education
 - mass media - use in tv, radio, newspapers, novel
 - positive incentives: bonuses, promotions, access to better employment - make these dependent on showing an ability in the new OLs/NLs
- Not be recommended (but sometimes done)
 - Some governments which aggressively promote new NLs/OLs also **negative deterrents** to stop people from speaking other languages,

e.g:

- **negative propaganda** - 'Speaking your home language is backward and unpatriotic - use the NL/OL!'
- **fines** - e.g. imposed on government employees in France in the 20th Century for using borrowed English words in place of French words
- **punishments in school**, for children using their home language not the new NL/OL

4. **Winning acceptance (of the new NL/OL)** (Step 4)

- Encourage people to use and be proud of/have respect for the new NL/OL.
- Emphasize the practical value of a new NL/OL.
- Emphasize that the NL/OL is a prestigious language to be proud of - speaking it gives you higher personal status/respect.
- Goal: make people become more naturally enthusiastic to use their NL/OL

Modern Japanese: the creation of a successful new NL

- Japan before modern times - no common form of Japanese.
- 1916 the government select the Tokyo variety (Yamanote area) as the model (Step 1)
- This variety is standardized (Step 2)
- It is spread through mass education and media (Step 3)
- Widespread acceptance for the new NL was won (Step 4)
- It unifies the nation and distinguishes it from other nations (the autonomy function)
- a good example of a successful **unilingual** NL/OL policy

More difficult situations

- In countries with complex populations and many languages - the choice of NL/OL is not easy
- especially in Africa and parts of Asia

- some examples from Africa

	Populations (in millions)	Number of languages spoken
Sudan	28	140
Tanzania	60	200
Cameroon	16	250
Nigeria	140	400

Different NL/OL approaches

- The widespread belief is that a country's national identity can be strengthened best if **one** language (only) is selected as NL.
- Newly independent, post-colonial nations regularly seek to build a new national identity.
- But sometimes identifying a single language as NL is difficult → different solutions are tried

Multiple NLs

- Some new states select more than one NL.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo**: 4 NLs
- Advantage: avoids inter-ethnic/regional discontent/conflict due to favoring a single NL
- Disadvantage: weakens the potential unifying force of having a single NL
- **Cameroon**: all 250 languages declared as NLs. Purely symbolic, with no practical meanings

When an NL is not suited to OL:

- If a new NL does not have a large vocabulary suited to modern life- science, education, commerce, etc.

Options tried out:

- a. Rapidly develop the NL with new words and standardize the NL as quickly as possible

- b. Add another language as OL, either permanently or temporarily while the NL is being developed
 - a. **Pakistan** at independence: NL = Urdu, temporary OL = English for 10 years
 - b. **Malaysia** at independence: NL = Malay, OL = English

Multiple OLs

- Some states have decided to establish and support more than one OL.
- Advantage: all segments of a population have equal linguistic advantages
- Disadvantage: very expensive as a policy – all official materials have to be produced in multiple languages.

Singapore	Canada	Switzerland
Malay	English	German
Mandarin	French	French
Tamil		Italian
English		Romansh

No NL, only an OL

- The OL is not promoted as an NL, just used for utilitarian purposes
- The OL is often not an indigenous language, but a major world language (often it is English, French, Spanish, or Russian)
- Advantages:
 - a. ethnically neutral
 - b. the OL is already standardized, 'ready-to-go'.
- Disadvantages:
 - a. no stimulation of national unity via an NL
 - b. the OL may have negative colonial associations
 - c. learning a non-indigenous language may be hard.

NLs vs. OLs

- NLs: symbolic, representative, binding
- OLs: utilitarian, non-symbolic
- In some countries, these terms are used 'incorrectly'
 - Polish is called an OL, but it also fulfills all typical NL functions.
 - Japanese is called NP but it also performs all OL functions
- When a single language serves both NL and OL functions, it is called a **national-official language**.

Individual case studies:

1. **Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka**.
2. **Indonesia**
3. **Singapore**

Pakistan (and Bangladesh)

- 1947 the new state of Pakistan was formed
- two parts of the country
 - West Pakistan: 25 million, very mixed population, many languages, politically more powerful
 - East Pakistan (now Bangladesh): 44 million, mostly speakers of Bengali
- **West Pakistan** declares that **Urdu** will be the NL - symbolically associate with Islam in South Asia
- But only 7% of Pakistan knew Urdu in 1947 → gives major advantages to Urdu speakers in getting government jobs
- Other languages in W. Pakistan are replaced by Urdu in higher education → causing discontent and riots.
- People in **East Pakistan** wanted **Bengali** as NL.
- Proposal rejected.

- New E. Pakistan proposal (Rejected):
 - Bengali is a third OL of the country, together with Urdu and English. Rejected.
 - Causes agitation → a new language movement → an independence movement → civil war
- 1971 E. Pakistan becomes independent of Bangladesh
- Conclusion: mismanaged language issues can cause countries to split apart.

Sri Lanka

- The population at independence (1948): 2 major groups:
 - 75% of **Sinhala** speakers
 - 25% of **Tamil** speakers
- The Tamils often got better jobs in government due to their English skills → Sinhalese was dissatisfied.
- 1956 first post-independence elections.
 - Freedom Party's leader pledge: We will make Sinhala the unique OL of Sri Lanka immediately!
 - "Sinhala only in 24 hours"
- The Freedom Party wins the election, making Sinhala the unique OL → Major advantages to Sinhala speakers.
- Deterioration in Sinhalese-Tamil relations.
 - Riots occur, and hundreds die.
- Tamil books/films from India are banned.
- → a new Tamil nationalist movement
- Civil war, terrorism.
- Still not peacefully resolved.
- **Message:** OL planning should not disadvantage major components of the population

Indonesia: a success story

- Good selection of an OL in a multi-ethnic state
- 1949 full independence from the Netherlands
- A new OL for Indonesia?
 - Not Dutch
 - negative colonial associations
 - Not Javanese
 - the most widely spoken Indonesian language
 - would give advantages to the Javanese
 - Selected a form of '**Malay**' used in trading, renamed '**Indonesian**', and developed.
- Four advantages in the choice of Malay:
 1. Ethnically neutral, mostly used as an L2 **lingua franca** (a language used for communication between members of different language groups). The L1 of just a small group, with little power.
 2. Already used in some schools and in popular novels.
 3. An indigenous language of Indonesia of the Austronesian group = like most other languages in Indonesia
 4. Used as a common language by the independence movement = positive prestige
- **Indonesian** was standardized and its vocabulary was developed very significantly.
- Now widely used in:
 - a. formal domains of communication
 - b. inter-group communication
- Other languages have not been repressed, and are used in informal speech.
- Stable bilingualism through much of Indonesia.

NLs should fulfill four special functions

1. **Unifying** – unify the nation + offer advantages to speakers that other languages don't.
2. **Separatists (Autonomy)** – should distinguish its speakers from those of other nations.
3. **Prestige** – should be seen as a 'real language' with high status.
4. **Frame-of-reference** – should provide a model of correctness = and be well-standardized.

Are these functions achieved by Indonesian?

- Indonesian is an OL, but it has also helped build a new Indonesian national identity from a very mixed population - it is more than just a utilitarian OL
1. **Unifying** - Yes
 - a. It unifies the population and gives everyone more advantages than their L1 does - accessing learning, inter-group communication
 2. **Prestige** - Yes
 - a. it is now proudly regarded as a real language.
 3. **Frame-of-reference** - Yes
 - a. It is well standardized
 4. **Separatist function** -?
 - a. Malay is also spoken in Malaysia and Singapore...
 - b. But people in Indonesia feel that Indonesian is a bit different and maybe even better than Malay, It is distinctive enough.

Singapore: success with a multi-lingual OL policy

- 1958 self-government. Challenge to unite a very mixed population:
 - 75% Chinese, 17% Malay, 6% South Asian, 2% Eurasian
- Government promotes a multi-cultural, multi-lingual society

- OLS: **Mandarin, Malay, Tamil, English** (for inter-ethnic communication and international business value)
- NL: **Malay** (for regional political reasons)
- Bilingual education for everyone.
 - Goal: get people to learn the language of other groups - improve familiarity with other groups.
 - Assessment: Singapore's policy of multilingualism has helped create **social stability** in a mixed population
- This allows for the growth of a unifying national identity based on **multi-culturalism** and broad, **traditional Asian values**
- '**Linguistic pluralism**' is challenging to maintain but has been very successful in Singapore

Further aspects of Corpus Planning: the expansion of vocabulary and its symbolic effects

- There are different ways to create new words.

1. Language-internal sourcing of new words

- Basic strategy: Create 'new' words by re-using old words or sub-parts of words already in a language, in three ways:
 - a. give a new meaning to an old word no longer use
 - a. Hausa: *jakaadaa* meant 'important palace messenger' – new meaning: 'ambassador'
 - b. promote the use of words from regional dialects
 - a. North Korea 1960s replaced thousands of foreign loanwords (from Chinese, Japanese, and English) with words from N. Korean dialects
 - c. make new combinations of existing words with new meanings - 'compounds'
 - a. English: greenhouse, wet suit, hard drive
 - b. German: Fernseher 'far see-er' = television

c. Thai: nam-taa 'water eyes' = tears

2. Language-external sourcing of new words

- Borrow a word and its meaning from another language.
- This may involve some adaptations of its pronunciation
- Words borrowed into English from other languages:
 - kungfu from Chinese gongfu
 - cockroach from Spanish cucaracha
 - tornado from Spanish tronada 'thunder'
 - $\frac{2}{3}$ of the words in English borrowed from other countries (much from Latin and French)

The symbolic nature of new words

- Countries focused on developing, maintaining, and protecting a new/existing national identity may favor the use of internal sources for new words.
- Borrowing from other languages is more common in countries that are more open to accepting outside cultural influences and inspiration, and may already have a strong, confident national identity.

Creating new words in Chinese and Japanese: a comparison

- Chinese favors internal sources for new words.
- Modern Japanese often borrows words.

	Japanese	Chinese
elevator	erebeetaa	dianti ('electric raise')
computer	conpyuutaa	diannao('electric brain')

- In the early 20thC, Japan borrowed words from English. Then in the 1930s (ultra-nationalist period), it converted them into native Japanese words:

	early 20thC	1930s
baseball	beesobooru	yakkyuu

	early 20thC	1930s
hiking	haikingu	ensoku

Language purification and vocabulary changes

- During periods of nationalism when there is a drive to emphasize national identity.
- Purging of words of foreign origin to make the national language 'pure' again.
- Borrowed words/loanwords are replaced with new native/internally-sourced words.
 1. Greece - independent 1832 → move to eliminate Turkish and Italian words from Greek, create a purified new language
 2. Italy - fascist period of the 1930s → purging of foreign words, even family names.
 - a. Foreign names changed to Italian names, even on gravestones in cemeteries
 3. N. Korea, in the 1960s, thousands of words changed → N.Korean sounds almost unintelligible to S. Koreans in 1970s in first North/South meetings after the war.

words	native Korean	Chinese-origin	western loans
South Korean	35%	60%	5%
North Korean	90%	10%	-

Linguistic protectionism

- A policy that **new** words should only be created from internal resources.
- However, old borrowed words are not eliminated (vs. language purification)
- French Academy aimed to block new English loans from being used in place of existing French words.
 - Fines for government workers using English loans.

English words	French equivalent	English loan
weekend	la fin de semaine	le weekend
drugstore	la pharmacie	le drugstore

Government interference with NL/OL writing systems

- Control of script can stop communication
- Used for political purposes.
- Former **Soviet Union** language-plannings
 - **Azerbaijan** – **Azeri** was written in **Arabic** script.
 - In the 1920s, the Soviet government imposes the **Roman** alphabet, to weaken links with Muslim groups in other countries.
 - Knowledge of Arabic script had helped communication between Azeris and other Muslims
 - 1928 Turkey switches from Arabic script to the Roman alphabet to write Turkish
 - The Soviet government worries that common use of the Roman alphabet will help a new pan-Turkic movement.
 - In the 1930s all languages spoken in the Soviet Union were ordered to switch to the use of the **Cyrillic** alphabet.
 - After Independence, three choices. Script choice and identity projection in independent Azerbaijan ⇒ **Roman** Alphabet

Linguistic assimilation and the suppression of languages

- Governments may apply pressure on minority groups to stop using their heritage language and culture.
- Encouraged or forced to adopt the national language and the cultural practices of the majority population
- Use of heritage languages is forbidden in certain places -e.g. in schools, government buildings
- State objective: create a unified, strong national identity by forcing people to assimilate culturally and linguistically.
- Does it work? What are the effects of such policies?

Taiwan

- 1895-1945 ruled by Japan
- Pressure to speak Japanese
- Suppression of Chinese and other Taiwanese languages
- Goal: stimulate a new national identity and new loyalty to Japan. What was the result?
 - Pre-1895, no national unity, different Chinese dialect groups, local Taiwanese languages
 - Japanese rule and harsh conditions → a new all-Taiwanese, anti-Japanese identity
 - Learning Japanese helped all Chinese/Taiwanese groups communicate with each other and form a unified opposition.
 - The effects of the forced assimilation policy were the opposite of those aimed for.

Nepal

- A very mixed population.
- Many groups, and languages.
- Multilingualism, multi-culturalism
- 1960 king of Nepal decides Nepal should develop a mono-cultural, unilingual national identity.
 - 'One country, one dress, one language.'
 - Pressure on people to assimilate.
- 1990: the old regime collapses.
 - What kind of new Nepal would emerge?
- Strong rejection of monolingual nationalism
 - The massive resurgence of pride in ethnolinguistic diversity.
 - A big surprise - the government thought the repression of other languages and cultures for 30 years was 'successful'

- But widespread demands for linguistic and cultural pluralism to be made national policy in education, government, etc.

→ Take home message: Like Taiwan – the forceful repression of language and culture is not an effective way to stimulate a new national identity.

The Ainu in Japan

- An ethnic group living in Hokkaido and other islands north of Japan.
- The Ainu looked and addressed very different from the Japanese, and spoke a different language
- The differences between the Ainu and the Japanese were originally viewed positively.
- The differences between the Ainu and the Japanese marked the northern border of Japan in a useful way.
- To maintain these differences, the Ainu were forbidden to learn and speak Japanese or wear Japanese clothing.
- Active **dissimilation**.

18thC changes

- The Ainu further north of Hokkaido starts to adopt Russian clothing, names, and religion.
- Japan reacts. To strengthen the Japanese border, the government decides to make Ainu living in Hokkaido into Japanese people.
- The Ainu are now encouraged to speak Japanese, wear Japanese clothing, and follow Japanese customs.
- Active **assimilation**.

Phase 3

- Late 18th, the Russian 'threat' recedes.
- → Japan stops its assimilation policy.
- The Ainu are ordered to stop wearing Japanese clothing, speaking Japanese
- New **dissimilation** policy.

Phase 4. 19-20thC.

- Japanese nationalism – emphasis on uniform national culture, ethnicity, and language.
- Pressure on the Ainu to give up their heritage language and speak Japanese. Renewed **assimilation**.
- Effects: Ainu has almost totally disappeared, with very little chance of revival. A dying language (Unit 3).

Conclusions: different OL/NL policies for different populations

Common policy types:

- [1] A single **national-official language**.
 - Where the population is very homogenous:
 - Japan, Italy, Somalia, Iceland, Vietnam, Thailand
- [2] A single NL + one (or more) OL
 - Where an NL can be chosen that is representative of the national ID, but not developed enough to serve as OL.
 - Paraguay, Malaysia (at independence)
- [3] Only an OL. No NL.
 - When creating a unified national ID through an NL is too difficult, in very mixed populations. Two variants:
 - (a) the OL is an indigenous language: Indonesian
 - (b) the OL is not an indigenous language – often English or French, in ex-colonies
 - Success = avoiding inequality and conflict through the selection of an ethnically-neutral OL.

A final note..

- Over time, a 'foreign' OL may become indigenized..
- Incorporate words and pronunciations from local languages.
- Leads to the development of very distinctive local forms of English, French etc:
- Ghanean English, Abidjanais French
- Due to their added, local properties, such foreign-imported 'OLs' may even come to signal a new local national ID in a certain way.