

# Eng124: Language and Society

## Societal Multilingualism (Contd.)

# The empirical reality

- The caveats and reservations about data gathering techniques notwithstanding, multilingualism is indeed a way of life for millions of people across the world.
- With over five thousand languages and a little over two hundred nation states, considerable language contact must be taking place both within and outside the boundaries of nation states.

Suzanne Romaine

# Multilingualism as the norm

- Multilingualism is fast becoming the norm rather than the exception in many countries.
- Even in countries that traditionally were looked upon as rigorously monolingual, multilingualism has been spreading at an impressive rate.
- A case in point being Great Britain which, according to Stubbs (1986, p. 15), is today "socially multilingual".

# Mixed codes

- Equally important, though much less noticed, is the fact that many of the linguistic transactions routinely carried out in our globalised world are actually being carried out in mixed languages such as the Canadian '*frangiais*', South American '*portunbol*' and the North American '*spanglish*'- much to the dismay of language puritans.

# Protean identities

- Ours is an age of protean identities, whose hall-mark is volatility and easy adaptability to changing circumstances.
- Instead of the fixed identities that, in the ages past, privileges of birth or station in life were believed to confer upon persons, our identities have largely become a matter of 'self-fashioning'.

- Languages are best viewed as flags of allegiance rather than straightforward facts of the matter.
- This means, among other things, that such familiar phenomena as code-switching are best approached as politically motivated and symptomatic of language-related tensions that are operative in given social set-ups
- Such time-honoured concepts as 'mother-tongue' and 'native speakerhood' are to be approached as political rather than linguistic issues.

# A revealing statistics

- In a list of 200 nation states compiled by David Crystal (1987), less than a quarter give official or semi-official status to two or more languages.
- English and French are cited forty five and thirty times respectively in this list.
- Only Six nations in the list recognize three or more languages as their official or associate official languages.
- Going by this multilingualism must be a rare phenomenon.

# The monolingualism bias

- The view that multilingualism is a rare phenomenon is a consequence of the language policy promoted by many states.
- A language policy dictated by the belief that an officially proclaimed linguistic uniformity would lead to national unity.
- Allocation of resources: languages in the public sphere would need resources to support them; education, digitisation



# The monolingualism bias

- The US example
  - Every second generation American immigrant speaks English as his first language.
  - Heritage language schools in the US is a relatively recent development aimed at containing the discontent among linguistic minorities

# The monolingualism bias

- The Chinese example
  - In reality a multilingual nation proclaims a monolingual polity
  - Putonghua is an assortment several mutually unintelligible varieties.

# Indian Multilingualism

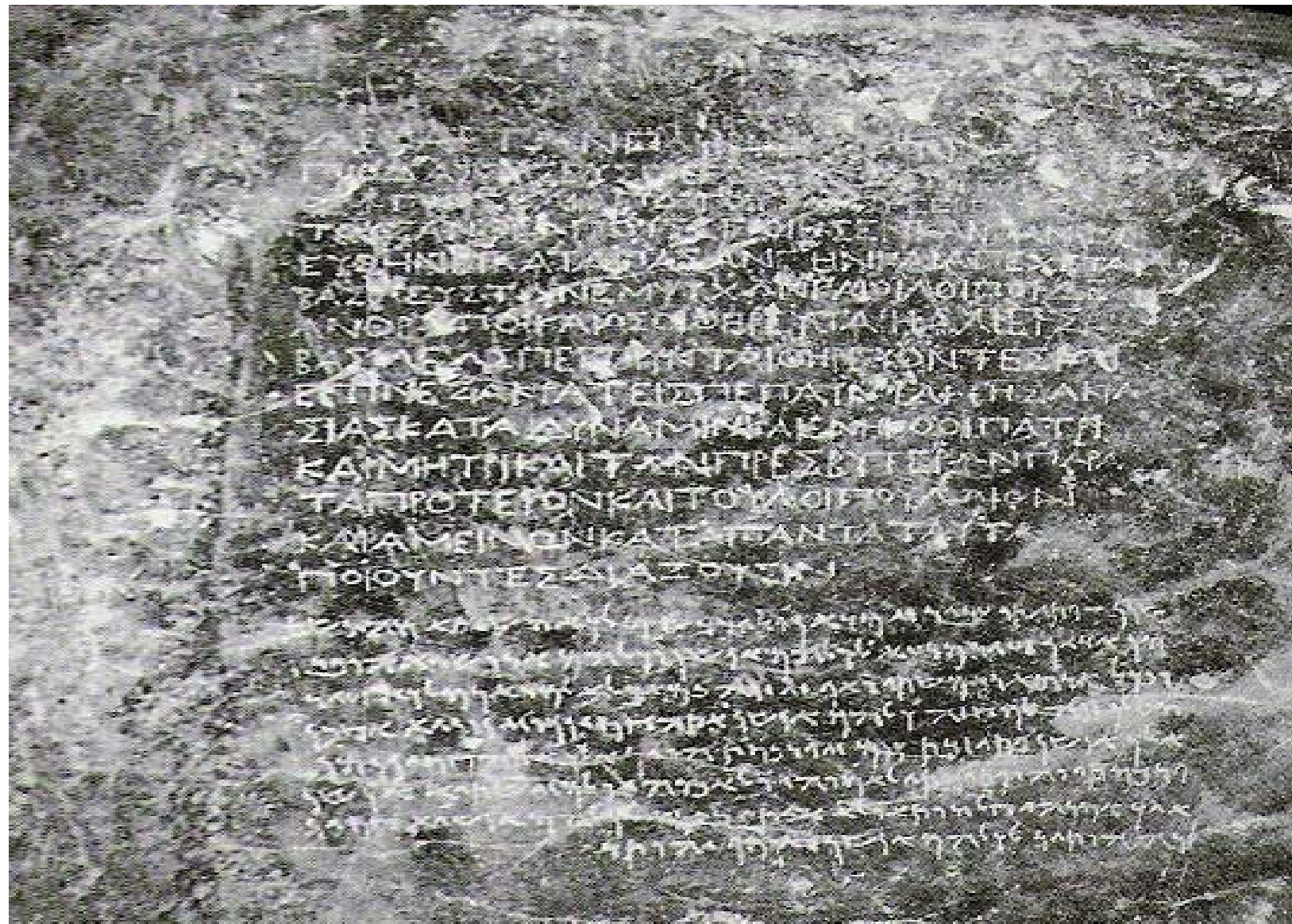
- The example of India: one of the few nation states proclaiming multilingualism as the national language policy
  - Indian multilingualism has been institutionally recognized and patronized since the ancient times, e.g, the Asokan edicts
  - India has remained an inclusive society, by and large, and has embraced even the language of the colonizers with an unprecedented ease; different from other post-colonial contexts.

# An Asokan Edict



# Description

- A fragment of an inscription in the Brahmi script. The inscription records Asoka's Sixth Edict.
- The fragment is said to have come from Meerut, and is dated to 238 BC.
- The original is in the British museum.



# Bilingual Asokan edicts

- Bilingual (Greek and Aramaic) inscriptions of Asoka in Kandahar (3rd century BC) proclaiming his doctrine of Piety.
- Preserved at the Kabul Museum until recently
- Has disappeared now. . .

# Greek

- δέκα ἐτῶν πληρη[....]ων βασι[λ]εὺς
- Πιοδασης εὐσέβεια[ν ἔδ]ε[ι]ξεν τοῖς ἀν-
- θρώποις, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου εὐσεβεστέρους
- τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐποίησεν καὶ πάντα
- εὐθηνεῖ κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν• καὶ ἀπέχεται
- βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐμψύχων καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ δὲ
- εἰ τινες ἀκρατεῖς πέπαινται τῆς ἀκρα-
- σίας κατὰ δύναμιν, καὶ ἐνήκοοι πατρὶ
- καὶ μητρὶ καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων παρὰ
- τὰ πρότερον καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ λῶιον
- καὶ ἄμεινον κατὰ πάντα ταῦτα
- ποιοῦντες διάξουσιν.



# Aramaic

- שִׁנ 10 פִּתִּיתו עֲבִיד זִי מִרְאן פִּרִידָאֲרֶשׁ מִלְכָּא קִשִּׁיטָא מִהֶקֶשֶׁט
- מִן אֲדִין זַעִיר מִרְעָא לְכֻלָּהֶם אֲנִשָּׁן וְכֻלָּהֶם אֲדוּשִׁיא הוּבַד
- וּבְכָל אֲרֻקָּא רָאֵם שְׁתִּי וְאָף זִי זִנָּה כְּמֵאכְלָא לְמִרְאן מִלְכָּא זַעִיר
- קִטְלָן זִנָּה לְמַחְזָה כֻּלָּהֶם אֲנִשָּׁן אֲתַהֲחִסִּינָן אֲזִי נוּנִיא אַחְדָן
- אֲלַךְ אֲנִשָּׁן פִּתִּיזְבַת כְּנָם זִי פִּרְבִּסְתָּ הוּיָן אֲלַךְ אֲתַהֲחִסִּינָן מִן
- פִּרְבִּסְתִּי וְהוּפְתִּיסְתִּי לְאֻמוֹהִי וּלְאֻבוֹהִי וּלְמִזִּישְׁתִּיא אֲנִסָן
- אִיךְ אֲסֻרְהִי חֻלְקוּתָא וְלֹא אִיתִי דִּינָא לְכֻלָּהֶם אֲנִשִּׁיא חִסִּין
- זִנָּה הוּתִיר לְכֻלָּהֶם אֲנִשָּׁן וְאוּסְףִּי יְהוּתֵר.

# English Rendering

Ten years (of reign) having been completed, King Piodasses (Asoka) made known (the doctrine of) Piety (*εὐσέβεια*, ) to men; and from this moment he has made men more pious, and everything thrives throughout the whole world. And the king abstains from (killing) living beings, and other men and those who (are) huntsmen and fishermen of the king have desisted from hunting. And if some (were) intemperate, they have ceased from their intemperance as was in their power; and obedient to their father and mother and to the elders, in opposition to the past also in the future, by so acting on every occasion, they will live better and more happily.

Trans. by G.P. Carratelli

# The Indian Marketplace



## Lip Service to Multilingualism: A School in the National Capital



## Monolingualism: an exclusionist ideology

- When a nation-state, despite its diversities, chooses to be monolingual, we immediately encounter questions such as ‘who is in?’ and ‘who is out?’.
- A dominant ideology of monolingualism in multilingual societies raises questions of social justice, as it excludes and discriminates against those who are either unable or unwilling to fit the monoglot standard.

- Monolingualism – inclusionist on the face of it but in reality exclusionist
- Inclusionist because many languages are taken under the umbrella of one language
- Exclusionist because many of these languages and their speakers eventually come under the threat of marginalisation.

# The Global scenario

- Even in nation states that have a majority of their population using one language (Britain, US, France, Japan, Germany), there exist sizeable groups that use languages other than the dominant one.
  - USA: About 10% of the population regularly speaks a non-English language
  - Britain: over a hundred minority languages are in routine use.
  - Japan: the most monolingual: strong Korean and Chinese speaking groups
  - Ghana, Nigeria and other officially monolingual African states: Nearly 90% of the population uses more than one languages.

# An interesting Irony

- There are more bilingual people in an officially monolingual nation state than in a multilingual one
  - In multilingual states, we tend to have a territorial separation between linguistic groups
    - Belgium (Dutch, French, German)
    - Switzerland (French, German, Italian, Romansh)
- India is an exception to the above: *de jure* and *de facto* multilingualism.



## How does multilingualism manifest itself?

- Generalizations are difficult; several visible trends:
  - Majority of the population is bilingual.
    - Spanish (official lg) and Guarani (national lg) in Paraguay
  - Only a small minority is bilingual.
    - Gaelic in Scotland
  - The bilingual population is concentrated in the cities or in those rural areas where language contact is maximal
    - Literate/urban multilingualism and grassroots multilingualism in India

## How does multilingualism manifest itself?

- Multilingualism is due to a long standing coexistence
  - Belgium: Dutch, French and German
  - India
- Or a consequence of shifting coexistence
  - Gastarbeiter (literally guest workers) in north-western Europe coming from other European or even Asian countries
  - A complex situation in the EU where people are still trying to come to terms with the linguistic imbroglio in issues of education for the migrating populations

## The European Scenario

- The xenophobia of the inter-war years replaced by the recent integration through economic and political interdependence promoting multilingualism.
- Regional and Minority Language Charter passed by the European Parliament in 1993 gives minority rights to their languages in education and media and public administration, thus accepting the multilingual norm.

# The EU Directives

- Doctrine of Supranationalism (EEC)
- Article 2: Member states shall in accordance with their national circumstances and legal system take appropriate measures to ensure. . . teaching adapted to the specific needs of such children. . .
- Article 3: Member states shall in accordance with their national circumstances and legal system, and in cooperation with the states of origin, take appropriate measures to promote. . . teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin

# Post-independence India

## Fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution

- Art 29 – protection of interests of minorities

Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

- The linguistic rights of minorities are recognised and upheld in the Constitution.

# Constitutional provisions

## Official language of the Union (Part XVII)

Art 343:

- The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagri script. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.
- Notwithstanding anything in clause 1, for a period of 15 years from the commencement of the constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement: provided that the president may, during the said period, by order authorize the use of Hindi lg in addition to the English lg . . . and the Devanagri form of numerals. . .
- Switch to Hindi after 15 years mandated, switch to be done through a government ordinance.

# Constitutional provisions

## Art 344:

A commission to be appointed by the president to make recommendations on:

- a. Progressive use of the Hindi lg for the official purposes of the Union
- b. Restrictions on the use of English
- c. The lg to be used for all or any of the purposes mentioned in article 348 (Supreme Court, High Courts, Acts of the Parliament, Bills, Orders, etc.)

Article 344: In making their recommendations, the Commission shall have **due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India, and the just claims and the interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to the public services.**

Art 345 - 347: Official language or languages of the States

Art 348: Language of the judiciary – English, unless otherwise provided by parliamentary legislation

- The anti-Hindi riots in Tamil Nadu in 1964-65, forcing the govt to withhold the implementation of a constitutional provision, that of making Hindi the sole official lg of the union.



# Constitutional provisions

- Article 351.
- It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

# Official Languages Act of 1963

- a. Continuation of English language for official purposes of the Union
- b. Where Hindi is being used, a translation into English shall also be provided.

**Other Official Languages:** Assamese, Bengali, **Bodo**, **Dogri**, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, **Maithili**, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, **Santhali**, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu

No official language status: Angika (Bihar and Jharkhand and Maldah in West Bengal), Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Marwari, Mewari, Shekhavati, Haryanvi, Bhili, Gondi, Kodava (Kodagu, Karnataka), Kutch, Tulu, Sankathi (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala)

# Minority Languages

- Art 350, 351: Special directives for minority languages:
  - a. lg to be used in representations for redress of grievances – any of the languages of the Union and the states
  - b. adequate facilities to be provided for instruction in mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups
  - c. Special Officer for safeguards to linguistic minorities
  - d. directive for the development of Hindi language

# National Language of the Indian Union?

- English proclaimed as the *associate official language* of the union of India, whereas Hindi is the official language; no national language; English as the lingua franca (Articles 343-348)
- In contrast, Namibia, a German colony until 1920s, and subsequently under South African rule until 1990, after its independence, adopted English as the official language because both Afrikaans and German were identified with oppression/colonization, and indigenous languages were far too many for any one of them to be adopted as the official language.
- Symmetrical and asymmetrical multilingualism
  - official patronage denied to some of the languages

# Language of Legislation: Union

- 120. (1) Notwithstanding anything in Part XVII, business in **Parliament** shall be transacted in Hindi or in English:
- Provided that the Chairman of the Council of States or Speaker of the House of the People, or person acting as such, as the case may be, may **permit any member who cannot adequately express himself in Hindi or in English to address the House in his mother-tongue.**

# Language of Legislation: States

- 210. (1) Notwithstanding anything in Part XVII, business in the **Legislature of a State** shall be transacted in the official language or languages of the State or in Hindi or in English.
- The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly or Chairman of the Legislative Council, or person acting as such, as the case may be, may **permit any member who cannot adequately express himself in any of the languages aforesaid to address the House in his mother tongue.**

# Adoption of languages

- Article 345. **The Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State.**
- Article 347. On a demand being made in that behalf, the President may, if he is satisfied that **a substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by that State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify.**

# Grievance submission

- Article 350. Every person shall be entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in ANY OF THE LANGUAGES used in the Union or in the State, as the case may be.
- 350A. It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.



# Languages of Education

- Freedom to choose language for education at a level as small as that of a district :

Schedule 6. Powers of the District Council to establish primary schools, etc.—

- (1) **The District Council** for an autonomous district may establish, construct, or manage primary schools, dispensaries, markets, cattle ponds, ferries, fisheries, roads, road transport and waterways in the district and may, with the previous approval of the Governor, make regulations for the regulation and control thereof and, in particular, **may prescribe the language and the manner in which primary education shall be imparted in the primary schools in the district.**

# Scheduled Languages of the Indian Union

Language	Family	Speakers (in Millions)	Region
• Assamese:	Indo-Aryan	13	Assam
• Bengali:	Indo-Aryan	83	West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Tripura
• Bodo:	Tibeto-Burman	1.2	Assam
• Dogri	Indo-Aryan	0.1	Jammu and Kashmir
• Gujarati:	Indo-Aryan	46	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu
• Hindi:	Indo-Aryan	422	Northern India
• Kannada:	Dravidian	38	Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Goa
• Kashmiri:	Dardic	5.5	Jammu and Kashmir
• Konkani:	Indo-Aryan	2.5	Konkan (Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala)

## Scheduled Languages of the Indian Union contd. ..

Language	Family	Speakers (in Million)	Region
• Maithili:	Indo-Aryan	12	Bihar
• Malayalam:	Dravidian	33	Kerala, Lakshadweep, Puducherry
• Manipuri (also Meitei or Meithei):	Tibeto-Burman	1.5	Manipur
• Marathi:	Indo-Aryan	72	Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Goa
• Nepali:	Indo-Aryan	2.5	Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam

# Scheduled Languages of the Indian Union contd. ..

Language	Family	Speakers (in Million)	Region
• Odia:	Indo-Aryan	33	Odisha
• Punjabi:	Indo-Aryan	29	Punjab, Delhi, Chandigarh, Haryana
• Sanskrit:	Indo-Aryan	0.05	Mattur/Hosahalli
• Santhali:	Munda	6.5	Santhal tribals of the Chota Nagpur Plateau (comprising the states of Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa)
• Sindhi:	Indo-Aryan	2.5	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh
• Tamil:	Dravidian	61	Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra

## Scheduled Languages of the Indian Union contd. ..

Language	Family	Speakers (in Million)	Region
• Telugu:	Dravidian	74	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Orissa
• Urdu:	Indo-Aryan	52	Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh

Not included in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule

• English:	Germanic	Across the country
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