

# **Sociolinguistics**

## **(ENG-305)**



**Compiled by: Zulqernain Anwar**  
**Govt. Jinnah Islamia Graduate**  
**College, Sialkot.**

# Contents:

## Functions of Language in Society

- Domains of Language Use
- Variation and Variety in Language
- Speech Community
- Dialects, Accents, Registers, Pidgin and Creoles
- National Language, Standard Language
- Language, Culture and Thought
- Multilingualism and Bilingualism
- Dimensions of bilingualism
- Bilingualism and Diglossia
- Causes of bilingualism
- Effects of bilingualism

- a. Language conflicts
- b. Language attitudes
- c. Language maintenance
- d. Language shift
- e. Language death

## ➤ What is Sociolinguistics?

**Sociolinguistics is the descriptive study of the effect of any or all aspects of society, including cultural, norms, expectations, and context, on language and the ways it is used. It can overlap with the sociology of language, which focuses on the effect of language on society.** Sociolinguistics is the study of the sociological aspects of language. The discipline examines how different social factors, such as ethnicity, gender, age, class, occupation, education, and geographical location can influence language use and maintain social roles within a community. In simple terms, sociolinguistics is interested in the social dimensions of language. Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. It examines how language is used within social groups, how it varies across different social contexts, and how it is influenced by factors such as culture, ethnicity, gender, social class, and power dynamics. Sociolinguists investigate various aspects of language, including its structure, usage, variation, and attitudes towards different linguistic features. They explore questions such as why people speak differently in different situations, how language reflects and shapes social identities, and how language change occurs over time within communities. Overall, sociolinguistics provides insights into the complex interplay between language and society.

Sociolinguistic phenomena can be observed in various aspects of language use within the Pakistani community. Here are some examples:

**Code-switching and Code-mixing:** Pakistani communities often engage in code-switching and code-mixing, where they alternate between languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and English within a single conversation. This phenomenon reflects the multilingual nature of Pakistani society and the social dynamics of language use.

**Language Variation Across Social Classes:** There may be variations in language use across different social classes in Pakistan. For instance, certain linguistic features or accents might be associated with higher or lower socioeconomic status. This variation can be observed in vocabulary choice, pronunciation, and grammatical structures.

**Language and Gender:** Sociolinguistic research in Pakistan may explore how language is used differently by men and women. For example, there might be specific linguistic features or speech patterns associated with masculinity or femininity, and these could vary across different regions or communities within Pakistan.

**Language and Ethnicity:** Pakistan is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, each with its own language or dialect. Sociolinguistic studies may investigate how language is used to express ethnic identity and solidarity, as well as how language attitudes towards different ethnic varieties influence social interactions and perceptions.

**Language Policy and Education:** Sociolinguists may also examine language policies and practices in Pakistani educational institutions. This could include issues related to language-in-education policies, bilingual or multilingual education initiatives, and the role of language in shaping educational opportunities and social mobility.

These examples illustrate how sociolinguistic principles can be applied to understand the complexities of language use and social dynamics within the Pakistani community.

## ❖ Function of language in society

Language serves numerous functions in society, playing a crucial role in communication, culture, identity, and social interaction. Here are some key functions of language in society:

### **Communication:**

Perhaps the most fundamental function of language is to facilitate communication between individuals and groups. Language allows people to convey thoughts, ideas, emotions, and information to others, enabling cooperation, coordination, and the sharing of knowledge.

### **Expressing Identity and Culture:**

Language is closely tied to identity and culture. It reflects aspects of a person's or a group's identity, including their ethnicity, nationality, religion, and social status. Through language, individuals express their cultural heritage, values, beliefs, and worldview, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity within communities.

### **Social Interaction:**

Language plays a crucial role in social interaction, shaping how individuals interact with one another and navigate social relationships. It enables people to establish rapport, negotiate meanings, express politeness, and coordinate social activities. Different social contexts and relationships may require different styles or registers of language.

### **Preserving and Transmitting Knowledge:**

Language serves as a vehicle for preserving and transmitting knowledge across generations. Through oral tradition, storytelling, literature, and education, societies pass down accumulated wisdom, history, customs, and traditions from one generation to the next. Language also enables the development and dissemination of scientific, technological, and academic knowledge.

### **Exercising Power and Influence:**

Language can be a tool for exercising power and influence in society. Those who have command over prestigious or dominant languages may hold social, economic, and political advantages. Language can be used to persuade, manipulate, mobilize, and control others, influencing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Creating and

### **Maintaining Social Cohesion:**

Language contributes to the creation and maintenance of social cohesion within communities. Shared linguistic norms and conventions help establish common ground and foster a sense of collective identity. Language also facilitates cooperation, collaboration, and collective action, enabling communities to work together towards common goals.

### **Reflecting and Shaping Social Reality:**

Language both reflects and shapes social reality. The words and concepts available in a language influence how people perceive and interpret the world around them. Language can reinforce existing social norms and hierarchies or challenge them by introducing new ideas, perspectives, and forms of expression.

### **Social Change:**

Language both reflects and contributes to social change within societies. It evolves over time in response to societal shifts, technological advancements, globalization, and cultural influences. Language can be a catalyst for social movements, political change, and the dissemination of new ideas.

### **Identity Construction:**

Language is instrumental in the construction and negotiation of social identities. It reflects and shapes individuals' identities based on factors such as ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, and social class. Language choice and usage contribute to the formation of group identities and the expression of individual identities.

These functions of language demonstrate its central role in shaping human societies, facilitating communication and social interaction, preserving culture, constructing identities, and reflecting societal dynamics and power structure.

## **❖ DOMAINS OF LANGUAGE USE**

### **What is Domain ?**

In Sociolinguistics, the term domain is usually used to denote the “social context of interaction”. Domain is an area of human activity in which one particular speech variety or a combination of several varieties is regularly used. A domain can be considered as a group related to social situations. Speech communities are made up of a number of domains which organize and define social life.

### **Domains of language**

The first person who proposed domains is Schmidt Rohr in 1932. It is developed by Fishman. Barber and Barker formulated domains at level of socio-psychological analysis.

These are:

- Informal.
- Formal.
- Intimate.
- Intergroup.

In informal domain, we are very closely related to others and are emotionally attached. Therefore, we use informal type of language, for example family, friends and siblings. In formal domain, we are not closely attached in relation, for example teacher and student relation. In intimate domain, there is less intimacy in formal relationships and high intimacy in informal relations or groups. Intergroup are related to informal group relations as in class groups.

## **Factors**

Fishman states that the factors which influence the concept of domain are topic, role-relation and place and these three factors together make up a set of typical domain. For example, a common domain is home which is place. The role relationship ( the people involved in speech events) associated with home includes family members (mother, father and siblings etc). There are a suitable set of topics (depending upon the cultural patterns) such as activities of family, news about family members, the meal and the household.

## **Principles of language use.**

- **Politeness** Wardaugh says that “politeness seems to be very important principle in language use”. It indicates that people must consider others feelings while they are speaking. Since politeness becomes very important in speaking people will be very careful in their speech. It is called as language awareness shown through the general “politeness”, determined socially.
- **Formality** Geerts says that social relationship between speaker and listener affect the language style. Wardaugh states that speaker apply different style of speaking, for instance, formal and informal style. Both styles were used in different conditions. In ceremonial occasions, speakers use very formal speech whereas informal speech is used in conversation between inmates.

## **Domains of language.**

There are five domains suggested by Schmidt Rohr in 1932. These are as follows:

The family, religious, employment, friendship and educational domain. However, other linguists added more domains such as workplace and playground domains. Each domain has distinctive addressee, setting and topic.

### **1. Family Domain.**

The language used in this domain is informal and it is typical one that is spoken at home. It is the language that someone is most comfortable with. Family members are obviously the main addressee or role relations in the family domain. The home location would be the setting and everyday family matters would be the topics. Role can be changed, mother speaks to father, father speaks to son, sister speaks to brother. Topics can also be different but the place remains the same. In multilingual community different languages may well be considered appropriate for different role relationships in a domain. For instance, in a Pakistani community, husband and wife may speak in Punjabi but they will speak in Urdu with their children.

### **2. Religious Domain.**

In this domain, the language used is mostly formal. The addressee and the topics will be changed according to the situation. The place will be usually a mosque or madrissa. The topic will be related to religion and the addressee will be ‘Qari saab’ or a religious scholar.

### **3. Educational Domain.**

In this domain the language is usually formal. The language is used according to the role. The setting can be a school or any other educational institution. The topic can be a math problem or any other lecture delivered by the teacher.

### **4. Employment Domain.**

In this domain, the setting will be any workplace, and topic can be related to marketing OR applying for a job. The use of language will be formal and change according to the Role.

### **5. Friendship Domain.**

In this domain, the setting will be school, college or any other place. The topic can be a conversation, a game or any other friendly activity. The language used is usually informal.

Apart from these some linguists also add some other domains. These are as follows:

#### **• The listening domain**

Listening is a process in which a person strives to understand oral communication as presented by the speaker and accompanied by body language or visual or graphic clues. The listener must interpret what he hears and evaluate spoken language in a variety of situations, such as in restaurants, social transportation hubs, in job or career-related settings as well as in academic settings.

#### **• The speaking domain**

A distinction is clearly made between social speech and academic speech. Our speech will be different in both of these domains as our social speech will be informal and academic speech will be formal.

#### **• The reading domain**

Reading is a process that goes beyond simply decoding a language's words. Reading means comprehending, that is, reading includes skills of understanding, interpreting and evaluating a variety of texts that represent written language in all forms. The students will need experiences with a variety of texts including the use of digital media, exposure to poetry, non fictional books and articles, newspapers and magazines.

#### **• The writing domain**

The ability to communicate by writing varies widely among both second language learners and native language speakers depending upon the purpose and the setting. For instance, the skills needed to write a formal business letter vary greatly in both technicality and complexity from those needed to write a social letter.

### **Conclusion.**

In linguistics, the term domain is usually used to denote the social context of interaction. The factors that influence a domain are topic, role relation and setting or place. There are several domains and we use different topics and language style in different domains according to our roles

## ❖ Variation and Variety in Language

- In sociolinguistics, variation refers to the way language change depending upon the social factor contexts and individual speaker.
- It is the study of how language differs across regions, social groups, contacts or individual preferences.
- This variation can occur in pronunciation grammar vocabulary or even the way language is used in different situations.
- Variations is at the heart of sociolinguistics because it reveals how language adapts to social dynamics and how speakers shape language based on identity, group member and interaction patterns.

### Different Varieties of language

- Varieties of a language develop for or because of number of reasons like different geographical locations, distinct dialects and different academic and professional backgrounds and sometimes different preferences of individual.

#### a) Dialect: (Regional or social variety)

The term dialect is derived from the Greek word which contains “dia” meaning “across” and “legein” meaning “speak”. A dialect is regional or social variety of a language, distinguished by pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. The terms is often used to characterize a way of speaking that differs from the standard variety of language. Certain dialects gain negative connotations in many parts of the world. The discrimination based on a person’s dialect or way of speaking is called **dialect prejudice**. This has always been a point of contentions among linguistics as to which varieties of language should be regarded as standard and or what bases.

#### b) Register:

It is specific to a single person. It is a way a speaker used it differently in different circumstances. This variation includes variation of words, tone of voice, and even body language.

Example: A person behaves/speaks differently when he is talking to some senior person rather than when he is speaking to his friend.

This is also called **stylistics variation** according to some linguistics.

#### Factors:

\_Register is determined by such factors as social occasion, context, purpose and audience.

\_Registers are marked by variety of specialized vocabulary and turns of connoquialisms and intonation and grammar.



c) **Jargon:**

Jargon refers to specialized language of a professional or occupational gap. Such language is meaningless to an outsider. Jargon is a faux method of creating a dialect that only those inside group can understand. It is a way of making those who understand particular variety of language more erudite and learner because those who are members of group can understand that language are considered smart.

d) **Slang:**

Slang refers to informal words and expressions often used within certain age or social group particularly among younger people as in highly dynamic and can change rapidly.

e) **Pidgin:**

Pidgins are simplified languages that developed as a mean of communication between speakers of different native languages.

Example: Two persons of different languages create a language for trading and that language becomes a mother tongue of another nation like Urdu.

f) **Creole:**

Creole develops when a pidgin becomes a first language of a community evolving into a more complex and stable language , and this process is called **creolization**.

➤ **Accent:**

An accent refers to the unique way someone speaks a language, especially how they pronounce words. This pronunciation can be influenced by where they were raised, their family background, or even the other languages they know. Accents don't usually change the grammar or vocabulary of a language; instead, they give it a different "sound" or "tone."

**For example**, people from the United States and people from the UK both speak English, but they have different accents, so words like "water" or "tomato" might sound quite different when they say them.

## ❖ **Speech Community**

In sociolinguistics, a speech community is a group of people who share a common language, dialect, or variety of language, and who interact with each other using that language. The concept of speech community highlights the social aspect of language use, emphasizing that language is not just a tool for communication, but also a marker of identity, culture, and social belonging.

A speech community can be defined by various factors, including:

- 1. Geographical location:** People living in a specific region or area may form a speech community.
- 2. Social networks:** Friends, family, colleagues, or social groups may form a speech community.
- 3. Ethnic or cultural identity:** Members of a particular ethnic or cultural group may share a common language or dialect.
- 4. Socioeconomic status:** People from similar socioeconomic backgrounds may form a speech community.
- 5. Language variety:** Speakers of a particular dialect, register, or language may form a speech community.

### **Importance:**

The concept of speech community is important in sociolinguistics because it:

- \_ Influences language use and language change
- \_ Shapes language attitudes and language policy
- \_ Reflects social identity and social relationships
- \_ Determines language norms and language standards
- \_ Affects language teaching and language learning

### **Key features:**

Some key features of speech communities include:

- Shared language norms and conventions
- Common language use and communication patterns
- Similar language attitudes and beliefs
- Social relationships and social networks
- Cultural and social identity

Understanding speech communities is essential in sociolinguistics, as it helps us comprehend how language is used in social contexts, how language varies and changes, and how language reflects and shapes social relationships and identity.

## ➤ Speech Community Examples

In the Pakistani context, there are several speech communities that represent the diverse linguistic and cultural landscape of the country. Here are some examples:

**Urdu-speaking Community:** The Urdu-speaking community, also known as Muhajirs, primarily resides in urban centers such as Karachi, Hyderabad, and Lahore. They migrated from India to Pakistan during the partition in 1947 and form a significant linguistic and cultural group in the country. Urdu serves as their primary language of communication.

**Punjabi-speaking Community:** Punjabi is one of the major languages spoken in Pakistan, particularly in the Punjab province. The Punjabi-speaking community is diverse and includes various subgroups such as Jatt, Rajput, and Arain. They predominantly use Punjabi in their daily interactions and cultural expressions. **Sindhi-speaking Community:** Sindhi is the official language of Sindh province, and the Sindhi-speaking community is primarily concentrated in this region. They have a rich cultural heritage, including literature, music, and traditions, which are expressed through the Sindhi language.

**Pashto-speaking Community:** Pashto is the language of the Pashtun ethnic group, which mainly inhabits the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. Pashto speakers have a distinct cultural identity and often use Pashto as their primary language of communication. **Balochi-speaking Community:** The Balochi-speaking community primarily resides in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan. Balochi is their native language, and they have a unique cultural heritage characterized by traditions such as Balochi music, dance, and literature.

**Saraiki-speaking Community:** Saraiki is spoken in southern Punjab and parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces. The Saraiki-speaking community has its own linguistic and cultural identity, with Saraiki literature and music contributing to its rich heritage.

These are just a few examples of the diverse speech communities within Pakistan, each with its own language, culture, and identity. The linguistic landscape of Pakistan is characterized by multilingualism and cultural pluralism, reflecting the country's rich history and ethnic diversity.

The **Punjabi Speech Community** represents a significant linguistic and cultural group within Pakistan. Here's a more detailed explanation of the Punjabi speech community:

**Language:** Punjabi is an Indo-Aryan language and is one of the most widely spoken languages in Pakistan. It is the native language of the Punjabi people, who primarily inhabit the Punjab province but also have a presence in other parts of the country and around the world. Punjabi is written in the Shanmukhi script in Pakistan, while in India, it is commonly written in the Gurmukhi script.

**Demographics:** The Punjabi speech community is diverse and includes various subgroups such as Jatt, Rajput, Arain, and others. Punjabi speakers constitute a significant portion of Pakistan's population, with the majority residing in the Punjab province. However, Punjabi speakers can also be found in other provinces such as Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Baluchistan, as well as in diaspora communities worldwide.

**Culture:** The Punjabi speech community has a rich cultural heritage that includes traditions such as folk music, dance (e.g., Bhangra and Giddha), poetry, and cuisine.

Punjabi literature, including works by famous poets like Baba Farid, Bulleh Shah, and Waris Shah, reflects the community's cultural values, history, and ethos. **Socioeconomic Diversity:** Within the Punjabi speech community, there is a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, from rural

farmers to urban professionals. This diversity contributes to the richness of Punjabi culture and language, with different groups bringing their own traditions and practices to the community. Identity: Language plays a crucial role in shaping the identity of the Punjabi speech community. Many Punjabi speakers have a strong attachment to their language and culture, which they express through various means such as literature, music, festivals, and religious ceremonies. However, there are also challenges to the promotion and preservation of Punjabi identity, including issues related to language policy, education, and urbanization.

Overall, the Punjabi speech community is a vibrant and diverse linguistic group that contributes significantly to the cultural mosaic of Pakistan. Despite various challenges, Punjabi speakers continue to take pride in their language and heritage, fostering a sense of belonging and community among themselves.

## ❖ National Language, Standard Language

### ➤ National Language

#### **What is a National Language?**

A national language is a language chosen to represent the whole country. It's a symbol of the nation's identity and culture. A national language isn't always spoken by everyone, but it helps to bring people together and creates a feeling of unity.

#### **Why is a National Language Important?**

A national language helps people from different backgrounds feel connected to each other. In countries where many languages are spoken, the national language acts as a common thread that everyone can relate to. It's often used in things like national celebrations, patriotic songs, and official ceremonies.

#### **Examples of National Languages:**

**Pakistan:** Urdu is the national language. Although people speak other languages (like Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto), Urdu is a symbol of unity and is widely understood.

**Indonesia:** Indonesian is the national language, even though the country has hundreds of regional languages. Indonesian is used for common communication and identity.

#### **Key Points:**

The national language is a symbol of the country and its culture.

It creates unity among people from different regions.

It may not be the main language everyone speaks but is respected as a shared language.

## ➤ **Standard Language**

### **What is a Standard Language?**

A standard language is the "official" version of a language that has agreed-upon rules. It includes specific rules for spelling, grammar, and pronunciation. Standard language is often the form of a language that is taught in schools, used in government documents, and seen in the media (like news or books).

### **Why is a Standard Language Important?**

A standard language makes communication clear and consistent, especially in formal settings. No matter where someone is from, they can understand the same “official” way of speaking or writing. Even though people may have different accents or dialects, a standard language ensures everyone can communicate easily in important situations like school, work, or law.

### **Examples of Standard Languages:**

**English:** Standard English is used in the UK, US, and other countries. Although accents and some words may differ, Standard English follows the same grammar and is used in formal writing.

**Chinese:** Mandarin is the standard language of China, even though there are many Chinese dialects. Standard Mandarin is used for formal communication.

### **Key Points:**

The standard language is used in formal settings (schools, government, media).

It has official rules that everyone learns, making it easy to understand in formal situations.

It is often required for official jobs, documents, and education

### **Key Differences**

**National Language:** Focuses on unity and culture; represents the country’s identity.

**Standard Language:** Focuses on consistency and official rules; makes communication clear in formal settings.

In some countries, the national language and standard language can be the same, but in others, they might be different based on how they are used.

# ❖ Language, Culture and Thought

In sociolinguistics, the study of language, culture, and thought explores how these three aspects are connected. Let's look at each in simple wording and see how they relate to each other in society.

## 1. Language

### What is Language?

Language is a system of words and symbols that people use to communicate. It's a way to share ideas, express feelings, and connect with others. Language has words, grammar, sounds, and rules that people in a group understand.

### Language as a Tool for Communication:

Language allows people to communicate clearly. For example, English speakers use English words and grammar to express ideas. In every language, words have specific meanings that help people share information, describe experiences, or ask questions.

### Language Reflects Society:

Language also shows what is important in a society. Some languages have words for things that may not exist in other languages, based on what is common or valued in their culture. For example:

**Inuit Language:** The Inuit people, who live in Arctic regions, have many words for different types of snow because snow is a big part of their lives.

**Arabic Language:** Arabic has many words to describe types of camels because camels are important in Arab culture.

This connection between language and society shows us how people's lives shape the words they use.

## 2. Culture

### What is Culture?

Culture is the collection of beliefs, customs, traditions, and behaviors that are shared by a group of people. It includes everything from how people dress, eat, and celebrate, to their values, art, and religion. Culture is passed down from one generation to another.

### **Culture and Language:**

Language is a big part of culture. People in the same culture often share a language, which helps them connect and feel part of a group. Through language, people can share stories, teach customs, and pass on their history. For example:

**Japanese Culture:** In Japan, people use polite words and forms to show respect. This reflects the cultural value of respecting elders and maintaining harmony in society.

**African Cultures:** Many African cultures use oral storytelling, where stories are passed down by word of mouth. Language plays a big role in preserving these cultural stories and teachings.

### **Language as a Carrier of Culture:**

Language carries the culture of a society. When people speak a language, they also share cultural practices, ideas, and ways of thinking. For instance, when people greet each other in different cultures, they might use phrases or gestures unique to that culture, like bowing in Japan or saying “As-salam u Alaikum” in Islamic culture.

## **3. Thought**

### **What is Thought?**

Thought is the process of thinking, reasoning, and understanding ideas. It’s the way people make sense of the world and form opinions. Thought includes everything from basic ideas to complex beliefs.

### **Language Shapes Thought (Linguistic Relativity)**

One of the ideas in sociolinguistics is that language influences how people think. This is known as linguistic relativity (or the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis). According to this theory, the language you speak can shape the way you view the world.

### **For example:**

**Color Perception:** In some languages, there are fewer words for colors. This might affect how speakers of those languages notice or categorize colors.

**Time Perception:** In English, people talk about time as if it moves horizontally (e.g., “moving forward with plans”). In Mandarin Chinese, people often describe time vertically. This can influence how people visualize time.

### **Thought Influences Language:**

While language shapes thought, thought also influences language. People create words for ideas that are important to them. For instance, if technology advances in a society, people invent new words to describe new inventions (like “internet,” “smartphone,” etc.). So, the ideas people have can lead to changes in their language.

## **Language, Culture, and Thought Together**

Language, culture, and thought are deeply connected. Language carries culture, which influences how people think, and the way people think can change language over time. This is why sociolinguists study all three to understand how they impact each other.

### **Summary**

**Language** is the system we use to communicate. It reflects the society it comes from.

**Culture** is the set of beliefs and practices of a group. Language helps pass down culture and keeps it alive.

**Thought** is how people think and understand the world. Language can shape thought, and thought can influence the language people create.

In sociolinguistics, studying these three together helps us understand how language affects people's beliefs, behaviors, and understanding of the world around them. This connection also shows why different societies have different ways of speaking and seeing the world.



## ❖ Multilingualism and Bilingualism

### MULTILINGUALISM

**Multilingualism** is the use of more than one language, either by an individual speaker or by a group of speakers. It is believed that multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the world's population. More than half of all Europeans claim to speak at least one language other than their mother tongue; but many read and write in one language.

Multilingualism is advantageous for people wanting to participate in trade, globalization and cultural openness. Owing to the ease of access to information facilitated by the Internet, individuals' exposure to multiple languages has become increasingly possible. People who speak several languages are also called **polyglots**.

.Multilingual speakers have acquired and maintained at least one language during childhood, the so-called first language (L1). The first language (sometimes also referred to as the mothertongue) is usually acquired without formal education, by mechanisms about which scholars disagree. Children acquiring two languages natively from these early years are called **simultaneous bilinguals**. It is common for young simultaneous bilinguals to be more proficient in one language than the other.

People who speak more than one language have been reported to be more adept at language learning compared to monolinguals.

Multilingualism in computing can be considered part of a continuum between internationalization and localization. Due to the status of English in computing, software development nearly always uses it (but not in the case of non-English-based programming languages). Some commercial software is initially available in an English version, and multilingual versions, if any, may be produced as alternative options based on the English original.

### HISTORY

The first recorded use of the word multilingualism originated in the English language in the 1800s as a combination of multi (many) and lingual (pertaining to languages, with the word existing in the Middle Ages). The phenomenon however, is old as different languages themselves.

---

Together, like many different languages, modern-day multilingualism is still encountered by some people who speak the same language. Bilingual signs represent a multitude of languages in an evolutive variety of texts with each writing.

1992, Vivian Cook has argued that most multilingual speakers fall somewhere between minimal and maximal definitions. Cook calls these speaker **MULTI COMPETENT**.

---

## ACQUISITION

One view is that of the linguist Noam Chomsky in what he calls the human language acquisition device—a mechanism which enables a learner to recreate correctly the rules and certain other characteristics of language used by surrounding speakers. This device, according to Chomsky, wears out over time, and is not normally available by puberty, which he uses to explain the poor results some adolescents and adults have when learning aspects of a second language.

If language learning is a cognitive process, rather than a language acquisition device, as the school led by Stephen Krashen suggests, there would only be relative, not categorical, differences between the two types of language learning.

---

Rod Ellis quotes research finding that the earlier children learn a second language, the better off they are, in terms of pronunciation. European schools generally offer secondary language classes for their students early on, due to the interconnectedness with neighbor countries with different languages. Most European students now study at least two foreign languages, a process strongly encouraged by the European Union.

Based on the research in Ann Fathman's *The Relationship between age and second language productive ability*, there is a difference in the rate of learning of English morphology, syntax and phonology based upon differences in age, but that the order of acquisition in second language learning does not change with age.

In second language class, students will commonly face difficulties in thinking in the target language because they are influenced by their native language and culture patterns.

On the other hand, students may also experience negative transfer – interference from languages learned at an earlier stage of development while learning a new language later in life.

Translanguaging also supports the acquisition of new languages. It helps the development of new languages by making connections between languages.

## ***Receptive Bilingualism***

Receptive bilinguals are those who can understand a second language but who cannot speak it or whose abilities to speak it are inhibited by psychological barriers. Receptive bilingualism is frequently encountered among adult immigrants to the U.S. who do not speak English as a native language but who have children who do speak English natively, usually in part because those children's education has been conducted in English; while the immigrant parents can understand both their native language and English, they speak only their native language to their children. If their children are likewise receptively bilingual but productively English-monolingual, throughout the conversation the parents will speak their native language and the children will speak English. If their children are productively bilingual, however, those children may answer in the parents' native language, in English, or in a combination of both languages, varying their choice of language depending on factors such as the communication's content, context or emotional intensity and the presence or absence of third-party speakers of one language or the other. The third alternative represents the phenomenon of "code-switching" in which the productively bilingual party to a communication switches languages in the course of that communication. Receptively bilingual persons, especially children, may rapidly achieve oral fluency by spending extended time in situations where they are required to speak the language that they theretofore understood only passively. Until both generations achieve oral fluency, not all definitions of bilingualism accurately characterize the family as a whole, but the linguistic differences between the family's generations often constitute little or no impairment to the family's functionality. Receptive bilingualism in one language as

exhibited by a speaker of another language, or even as exhibited by most speakers of that language, is not the same as **mutual intelligibility** of languages; the latter is a property of a pair of *languages*, namely a consequence of objectively high lexical and grammatical similarities between the languages themselves (e.g., Norwegian and Swedish), whereas the former is a property of one or more *persons* and is determined by subjective or intersubjective factors such as the respective languages' prevalence in the life history (including family upbringing, educational setting, and ambient culture) of the person or persons.

### ***Order of Acquisition***

In **sequential bilingualism**, learners receive literacy instruction in their native language until they acquire a "threshold" literacy proficiency. Some researchers use age three as the age when a child has basic communicative competence in their first language (Kessler, 1984).

Children may go through a process of sequential acquisition if they migrate at a young age to a country where a different language is spoken, or if the child exclusively speaks his or her heritage language at home until he/she is immersed in a school setting where instruction is offered in a different language.

In **simultaneous bilingualism**, the native language and the community language are simultaneously taught. The advantage is literacy in two languages as the outcome.

### ***Multilingual Individuals***

A multilingual person is someone who can communicate in more than one language actively (through speaking, writing, or signing). Multilingual people can speak any language they write in, but cannot necessarily write in any language they speak. More specifically, bilingual and trilingual people are those in comparable situations involving two or three languages, respectively. A multilingual person is generally referred to as a **polyglot**, a term that may also refer to people who learn multiple languages as a hobby. Multilingual speakers have acquired and maintained at least one language during childhood, the so-called **first language** (L1). The first language (sometimes also referred to as the mother tongue) is acquired without formal education, by mechanisms heavily disputed. Children acquiring two languages in this way are called **simultaneous bilinguals**. Even in the case of simultaneous bilinguals, one language usually dominates over the other.

In linguistics, first language acquisition is closely related to the concept of a "native speaker". According to a view widely held by linguists, a native speaker of a given language has in some respects a level of skill which a second (or subsequent) language learner cannot easily accomplish. Consequently, descriptive empirical studies of languages are usually carried out using only native speakers. This view is, however, slightly problematic, particularly as many non-native speakers demonstrably not only successfully engage with and in their non-native language societies, but in fact may become culturally and even linguistically important contributors (as, for example, writers, politicians, media personalities and performing artists) in their non-native language. In recent years, linguistic research has focused attention on the use of widely known world languages, such as English, as a **lingua franca** or a shared common language of professional and commercial communities. In lingua franca situations, most speakers of the common language are functionally multilingual.

The reverse phenomenon, where people who know more than one language end up losing command of some or all of their additional languages, is called **language attrition**. It has

been documented that, under certain conditions, individuals may lose their L1 language proficiency completely, after switching to the exclusive use of another language, and effectively "become native" in a language that was once secondary after the L1 undergoes total attrition.

This is most commonly seen among immigrant communities and has been the subject of substantial academic study. The most important factor in spontaneous, total L1 loss appears to be age; in the absence of neurological dysfunction or injury, only young children typically are at risk of forgetting their native language and switching to a new one. Once they pass an age that seems to correlate closely with the critical period, around the age of 12, total loss of a native language is not typical, although it is still possible for speakers to experience diminished expressive capacity if the language is never practiced.

### **Cognitive Ability**

People who use more than one language have been reported to be more adept at language learning compared to monolinguals. Individuals who are highly proficient in two or more languages have been reported to have enhanced executive functions, such as inhibitory control or cognitive flexibility, or even have reduced-risk for dementia. More recently, however, this claim has come under strong criticism with repeated failures to replicate. One possible reason for this discrepancy is that bilingualism is rich and diverse; bilingualism can take different forms according to the context and geographic location in which it is studied.

### ***Auditory Ability***

Bilingual and multilingual individuals are shown to have superior auditory processing abilities compared to monolingual individuals. Several investigations have compared auditory processing abilities of monolingual and bilingual individuals using tasks such as gap detection, temporal ordering, pitch pattern recognition etc. In general, results of studies have reported superior performance among bilingual and multilingual individuals. Further, among bilingual individuals, the level of proficiency in the second language was also reported to have an influence on the auditory processing abilities.

### ***Economic Benefits***

Bilinguals might have important labor market advantages over monolingual individuals as bilingual people can carry out duties that monolinguals cannot, such as interacting with customers who only speak a minority language. A study in Switzerland has found that multilingualism is positively correlated with an individual's salary, the productivity of firms, and the gross domestic production (GDP); the authors state that Switzerland's GDP is augmented by 10% by multilingualism.

### ***Psychological Benefits of Multilingualism***

A study in 2012 has shown that using a foreign language reduces decision-making biases. It was surmised that the framing effect disappeared when choices are presented in a second language. As human reasoning is shaped by two distinct modes of thought: one that is systematic, analytical and cognition-intensive, and another that is fast, unconscious and emotionally charged, it was believed that a second language provides a useful cognitive distance from automatic processes, promoting analytical thought and reducing unthinking, emotional reaction. Therefore, those who speak two languages have better critical thinking and decision-making skills.

## ***Effects of Multilingualism on Personality***

Because it is difficult or impossible to master many of the high-level semantic aspects of a language (including but not limited to its idioms and eponyms) without first understanding the culture and history of the region in which that language evolved, as a practical matter an in-depth familiarity with multiple cultures is a prerequisite for high-level multilingualism. This knowledge of cultures individually and comparatively can form an important part of both what one considers one's identity to be and what others consider that identity to be. Some studies have found that groups of multilingual individuals get higher average scores on tests for certain personality traits such as cultural empathy, open-mindedness and social initiative. The idea of linguistic relativity, which claims that the language people speak influences the way they see the world, can be interpreted to mean that individuals who speak multiple languages have a broader, more diverse view of the world, even when speaking only one language at a time. Some bilinguals feel that their personality changes depending on which language they are speaking; thus multilingualism is said to create multiple personalities. However, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which states that a language shapes our vision of the world, may suggest that a language learned by a grown-up may have much fewer emotional connotations and therefore allow a more serene discussion than a language learned by a child and to that respect more or less bound to a child's perception of the world.

## ***Hyperpolyglots***

While many polyglots know up to six languages, the number drops off sharply past this point. People who speak many more than this—Michael Erard suggests eleven or more—are sometimes classed as *hyperpolyglots*. Giuseppe Caspar Mezzofanti, for example, was an Italian priest reputed to have spoken anywhere from 30 to 72 languages. The causes of advanced language aptitude are still under research; one theory suggests that a spike in a baby's testosterone levels while in the uterus can increase brain asymmetry, which may relate to music and language ability, among other effects.

While the term *savant* generally refers to an individual with a natural or innate talent for a particular field, people diagnosed with savant syndrome are typically individuals with significant mental disabilities who demonstrate profound and prodigious capacities or abilities far in excess of what would be considered normal, occasionally including the capacity for languages. The condition is associated with an increased memory capacity, which would aid in the storage and retrieval of knowledge of a language.

## ***Neuroscience of Multilingualism***

---

Various aspects of multilingualism have been studied in the field of neurology. These include the representation of different language systems in the brain, the effects of multilingualism on the brain's structural plasticity, aphasia in multilingual individuals, and bimodal bilinguals (people who can speak one sign language and one oral language). Neurological studies of multilingualism are carried out with **functional neuroimaging**, **electrophysiology**, and through observation of people who have suffered brain damage.

The brain contains areas that are specialized to deal with language, located in the **perisylvian cortex** of the left hemisphere. These areas are crucial for performing language tasks, but they are not the only areas that are used; disparate parts of both right and left brain hemispheres are active during language production. In multilingual individuals, there is a great deal of

similarity in the brain areas used for each of their languages. Insights into the neurology of multilingualism have been gained by the study of multilingual individuals with aphasia, or the loss of one or more languages as a result of brain damage. **Bilingual aphasics** can show several different patterns of recovery; they may recover one language but not another, they may recover both languages simultaneously, or they may involuntarily mix different languages during language production during the recovery period. These patterns are explained by the *dynamic view* of bilingual aphasia, which holds that the language system of representation and control is compromised as a result of brain damage.

Research has also been carried out into the neurology of bimodal bilinguals, or people who can speak one oral language and one sign language. Studies with bimodal bilinguals have also provided insight into the tip of the tongue phenomenon, working memory, and patterns of neural activity when recognizing facial expressions, signing, and speaking.

### ***Multilingualism Regarding Communities***

Widespread multilingualism is one form of **language contact**. Multilingualism was common in the past: in early times, when most people were members of small language communities, it was necessary to know two or more languages for trade or any other dealings outside one's town or village, and this holds good today in places of high linguistic diversity such as Sub-Saharan Africa and India. Linguist Ekkehard Wolff estimates that 50% of the population of Africa is multilingual.

In multilingual societies, not all speakers need to be multilingual. Some states can have multilingual policies and recognize several official languages, such as Canada (English and French). In some states, particular languages may be associated with particular regions in the state (e.g., Canada) or with particular ethnicities (e.g., Malaysia and Singapore). When all speakers are multilingual, linguists classify the community according to the functional distribution of the languages involved:

- **Diglossia**: if there is a structural-functional distribution of the languages involved, the society is termed 'diglossic'. Typical diglossic areas are those areas in Europe where a regional language is used in informal, usually oral, contexts, while the state language is used in more formal situations. Frisia (with Frisian and German or Dutch) and Lusatia (with Sorbian and German) are well-known examples.

- **Ambilingualism**: a region is called ambilingual if this functional distribution is not observed. In a typical ambilingual area it is nearly impossible to predict which language will be used in a given setting. True ambilingualism is rare. Ambilingual tendencies can be found in small states with multiple heritages like Luxembourg, which has a combined Franco-Germanic heritage, or Malaysia and Singapore, which fuses the cultures of Malays, China, and India or communities with high rates of deafness like Martha's Vineyard where historically most inhabitants spoke both MVSL and English or in southern Israel where locals speak both Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language and either Arabic or Hebrew.

- **Bipart-lingualism**: if more than one language can be heard in a small area, but the large majority of speakers are monolinguals, who have little contact with speakers from neighboring ethnic groups, an area is called 'bipart-lingual'. An example of this is the Balkans.

N.B. the terms given above all refer to situations describing only two languages. In cases of an unspecified number of languages, the terms , omnilingualism, and multipart-lingualism are more appropriate.

Taxell's paradox refers to the notion that monolingual solutions are essential to the realization of functional bilingualism, with multilingual solutions ultimately leading to monolingualism. The theory is based on the observation of the Swedish language in Finland in environments such as schools is subordinated to the majority language Finnish for practical and social reasons, despite the positive characteristics associated with mutual language learning.

### ***Interaction between speakers of different languages***

---

Whenever two people meet, negotiations take place. If they want to express solidarity and sympathy, they tend to seek common features in their behavior. If speakers wish to express distance towards or even dislike of the person they are speaking to, the reverse is true, and differences are sought. This mechanism also extends to language, as described in the Communication Accommodation Theory.

Some multilinguals use code-switching, which involves swapping between languages. In many cases, code-switching allows speakers to participate in more than one cultural group or environment. Code-switching may also function as a strategy where proficiency is lacking.

Such strategies are common if the vocabulary of one of the languages is not very elaborated for certain fields, or if the speakers have not developed proficiency in certain lexical domains, as in the case of immigrant languages.

This code-switching appears in many forms. If a speaker has a positive attitude towards both languages and towards code-switching, many switches can be found, even within the same sentence. If however, the speaker is reluctant to use code-switching, as in the case of a lack of proficiency, he might knowingly or unknowingly try to camouflage his attempt by converting elements of one language into elements of the other language through calquing. This results in speakers using words like *courrier noir* (literally mail that is black) in French, instead of the proper word for blackmail, *chantage*.

Sometimes a pidgin language may develop. A pidgin language is a fusion of two languages that is mutually understandable for both speakers. Some pidgin languages develop into real languages (such as Papiamentu in Curaçao or Singlish in Singapore) while others remain as slangs or jargons (such as Helsinki slang, which is more or less mutually intelligible both in Finnish and Swedish)<sup>1</sup> In other cases, prolonged influence of languages on each other may have the effect of changing one or both to the point where it may be considered that a new language is born.

In multilingual countries such as Belgium (Dutch, French, and German), Finland (Finnish and Swedish), Switzerland (German, French, Italian and Romansh), Luxembourg (Luxembourgish, French and German) or Spain (Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician), it is common to see employees mastering two or even three of those languages.

Many minor Russian ethnic groups, such as Tatars, Bashkirs and others, are also multilingual.



## Literature

### Fiction

---

Multilingual stories, essays, and novels are often written by immigrants and second generation American authors. Chicana author Gloria E. Anzaldúa, a major figure in the fields Third World Feminism, Postcolonial Feminism, and Latino philosophy explained the author's existential sense of obligation to write multilingual literature. An often quoted passage, from her collection of stories and essays entitled Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, states:

"Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without always having to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate. I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue – my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence".

Multilingual novels by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie display phrases in Igbo with translations, as in her early works Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun. Chicano literature has untranslated, but italicized, Spanish words and phrases throughout the text.

### Poetry

Multilingual poetry is prevalent in US Latino literature where code-switching and translanguaging between English, Spanish, and Spanglish is common within a single poem or throughout a book of poems. Latino poetry is also written in Portuguese and can include phrases in Nahuatl, Mayan, Huichol, Arawakan, and other indigenous languages related to the Latino experience. Contemporary multilingual poets include Giannina Braschi, Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros, and Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

### Film

---

The 2021 Indian documentary film Dreaming of Words traces the life and work of Njattiyela Sreedharan, a fourth standard drop-out, who compiled a multilingual dictionary connecting four major Dravidian languages: Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. Travelling across four states and doing extensive research, he spent twenty five years making this multilingual dictionary.

## ➤ BILINGUALISM

**Bilingualism** refers to the coexistence of two language systems in a person or community's communication.

**Monolingualism** refers to the ability to speak only one language.

- Bilingualism falls under the wider label of '**Multilingualism**', which is the use of **more than one language**. For that reason, someone who is bilingual could also be referred to as being multilingual.
- Bilingualism is a term that can also be used to refer to the use of **more than two languages** (for example 3, 4, or more languages), however, it primarily refers to **two languages**.



## Types of bilingualism

Now that we know for sure what bilingualism is, let's dive into the different types! There are several criteria linguists use to define bilingualism, so we'll look at these in turn.

When looking at bilingualism in the context of '**who it is that's able to speak more than onelanguage?**' there are different definitions to refer to one bilingual person versus a bilingual community:

- **Individual Bilingualism** - refers to **one individual** being able to use two languages proficiently.
- **Societal Bilingualism** - refers to a **whole community or country** being able to use two languages proficiently.

In terms of how people **develop bilingualism**, there are three key types of bilingualism:

- **Compound Bilingualism** - when an individual develops an understanding of and proficiency in two languages **simultaneously in a single context**. For example, a child that has been brought up learning and speaking two different languages from infancy will have acquired these two languages simultaneously. They would therefore use both languages for everyday interaction with their parents.
- **Coordinate Bilingualism** - when an individual learns two different languages in **distinctly different contexts**, often by different means. For example, if an English-speaking child begins learning French at a young age in school and goes on to become quite proficient in it, this child would be considered a coordinate bilingual, as they have learned English from their parents, and French through lessons at school (two distinctly different contexts).
- **Sub-coordinate Bilingualism** - when an individual learns a second language by **filtering information through their native language**. For example, when a Spanish person hears the English word 'book', they will begin to associate it with the equivalent word in Spanish, 'libro'. This process of association requires the Spanish speaker to filter the English word through their knowledge of Spanish in order to understand the meaning of the word 'book'

## CAUSES OF BILINGUALISM

It might be strange to think of bilingualism as having a 'cause' exactly, but what we're referring to here is the reasons why bilingualism might occur in different individuals and communities.

A primary cause of bilingualism is **extensive language contact**.

Language contact refers to the **interaction that takes place between speakers who speak different languages or language varieties**. In the case of bilingualism, we are talking about speakers who speak different languages.

Within this wider umbrella, there are many circumstances that can lead to extensive language contact between speakers of different languages, such as:

- having **parents of different nationalities** who speak two different languages (presumably speaking a shared language as well). This would mean that the child grows up exposed to both languages, therefore learning both as they develop.
- **moving to a country where the language is something other than a person's native tongue.** This would immerse the person in the new language in many different modes including hearing it spoken by the native people of that country, seeing it written on signs and in public places, and possibly having it taught in school or language lessons.
- requiring to learn a second language for **business purposes.** A person working for an international company might be required to learn a second language in order to communicate effectively with colleagues or clients from other countries.
- having a **personal desire to learn a second language.** Learning a language is not just a linguistic endeavour; it is also a **cognitive** one. Many people enjoy learning languages as a means of not only broadening their communicative ability, but also a means of expanding their cognitive prowess.

### **Bilingualism: English as a Lingua Franca**

Through your English Language studies so far, you might have come across the term '**Lingua Franca**'.

A lingua franca is a **language that is adopted as the common language used between speakers whose native languages are not the same.** In other words, a lingua franca is a language learned by people speaking different native languages to enable them to communicate with one another.

On a global scale, English is the most significant lingua franca, and has become the **language of business and the language of computer science** among many other fields.

### **English is the most used Lingua Franca across the world – Pixabay**

Fun Fact: English is an official language in 67 countries around the world, as well as 27 non-sovereign entities!

In many countries around the world, the ability to speak English is not only held in high esteem, it is also necessary to facilitate business and foster professional international relationships.

In Singapore, English is spoken by approximately **37% of the population as a primary language.** This is more than the 35% Mandarin, 13% Chinese dialects, 10% Malay, 3% Tamil, and 2% spread across other minority languages.

English is an **official language of Singapore** (alongside Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil), and is also the **language of business and government.** This is an example of societal bilingualism.

Because English is so significant all over the world, many people in many countries speak English as well as their native language; many people are bilingual due to English's prevalence as a lingua franca.

### **Other reasons why someone might become bilingual**

- **Religious studies:** certain religious studies might require a fairly extensive understanding of a secondary language to a person's native language. For example,

Catholicism uses Latin which, although technically a dead language, might still be necessary in order to understand ancient religious texts. The need to understand Latin for religious studies would be more significant than in scientific fields that use some Latin terms but do not rely on full Latin comprehension, such as botany (eg. plant names) or medicine (eg. bonenames).

- **Geography:** in some countries, different communities speak different languages (for example, Nigeria is home to many different languages including Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and Kanuri). In order to facilitate everyday communication between different language speakers within a single country, it is necessary for the people to learn a common language. This could mean learning a second language, or even a third!

### **Benefits of being bilingual**

There are so many benefits to being bilingual, so let's take a closer look:

- **wider communicative ability** - the most obvious advantage to being bilingual is the increased ability to communicate with more people and in more countries. Speaking two or more languages opens up many opportunities for people, whether those opportunities be professional, educational, creative, or explorative.
- **privacy** - people who are bilingual have the ability to code-switch. If two bilingual friends found themselves in a situation where they didn't want the people around them to understand what they were talking about, they could code-switch from one language to the other in order to keep their conversation private.

Code-switching is the ability to switch between different languages or language varieties within a single speech exchange.

- **increased cultural awareness** - because culture and language are often so closely linked, being able to speak more than one language could give the speaker greater cultural insight and understanding. For example, if a child is born to Spanish parents, has grown up in England, but speaks both Spanish and English fluently, their understanding and awareness of their Spanish heritage may be a lot stronger than if they only spoke English. This child would likely have solid cultural awareness of both their Spanish roots and British culture, as a result of being bilingual.
- **competitiveness in the job market** - as we've now seen, languages play an important role in business and professional settings. Being bilingual presents people with an advantage over their monolingual competitors and sets them apart as being able to reach more colleagues and clients.
- **ease of learning a third language** - as with anything, practice makes perfect. If you already have a firm grasp of two languages, learning a third is made much easier.
- **creative expression** - bilingual people have the unique ability to mix the best parts of the languages they speak. With a bit of creative code-switching, bilingual people are able to pack more punch into their discourse by adding impactful words in different languages. Sometimes idiomatic language and other kinds of phrases in one language do not translate well into others. Being bilingual enables the speaker to still use these evocative words and phrases without having to dilute their meaning by translating.

## **Bilingualism is an advantage in employment - Pixabay**

### ***Common bilingualism features***

- Bilingual people most commonly **belong to two different cultures** or have roots in two different nationalities.
- Bilingual people may **use their different languages in different aspects of their lives** (for example, an individual might speak English at school or work but Spanish at home).
- Bilingualism **does not always mean the speaker speaks both languages to the same proficiency**. This is often assumed but is not always the case.
- Being bilingual **doesn't automatically mean the speaker will be able to translate between languages instantaneously**; sometimes some extra thought will be required to translate things, especially if the speaker has varying proficiencies of each language.
- Bilingual people who speak the same languages as each other will **often mix languages and code-switch in conversation**.
- It is common for bilingual people to sometimes **struggle to find a word in one language**, so they might explain what they mean in another way.

## **CONCLUSION**

**Bilingualism is an ability** to speak two languages. It may be acquired early by children in regions where most adults speak two languages (e.g., French and dialectal German in Alsace). Children may also become bilingual by learning languages in two different social settings; for example, British children in British India learned an Indian language from their nurses and family servants. A second language can also be acquired in school. *Bilingualism* can also refer to the use of two languages in teaching, especially to foster learning in students trying to learn a new language. Bilingualism speeds learning in all subjects for children who speak a foreign language at home and prevents them from being marginalized in English-language schools.

## **❖ Dimensions of bilingualism**

*'Sociolinguistics situation in which two languages are involved is called bilingualism.'* (Peter Trudgill)  
Dimension is a concept according to which objects or individual can be distinguished. There are two dimensions of bilingualism. First is Psychological dimensions and the other one is behavioral dimensions of bilingualism. Let's look at the details of both dimensions.

### **Psychological dimensions:**

***According to the competence of both languages.*** The dimension of competence enables us to take into account the relative nature of bilinguality, since it focuses on the relationship between two linguistic competences, one in each language. A distinction has been made between the balanced bilingual who has equivalent competence in both languages and the dominant bilingual for whom competence in one of the languages, more often the mother tongue, is superior to his competence in the other (Lambert, 1955). Balanced bilinguality should not be confused with a very high degree of competence in the two languages; it is rather a question of a state of equilibrium reached by the levels of competence attained in the two languages as compared to monolingual competence. Equivalent competence should not be equated with the ability to use both languages for all functions and domains.

Regardless of the state of equilibrium, bilinguality may differ on other dimensions. For example, ***age and context of acquisition*** may lead to differences in cognitive functioning. This distinction, often misinterpreted in the literature, has to do with a difference of cognitive organization and not with a difference in the degree of competence, or a difference in the age or context of acquisition. Indeed, an individual who learned both languages as a child in the same context is more likely to have a single cognitive representation for two translation equivalents, whereas one who learned an L2 in a context different from that of his L1 will probably have a coordinate organization, that is, he will have separate representations for two translation equivalents.

**The age of acquisition** plays a part not only in respect of cognitive representation but also in other aspects of the bilingual's development, particularly his linguistic, neuropsychological, cognitive and sociocultural development. Age of acquisition combines with other data from the subject's language biography, such as context of acquisition and use of the two languages. Indeed, age and context often go together: for instance, early acquisition of two languages often occurs in the same family context, while later acquisition of the second language often takes place in a distinct school context from a family context for the first language. A distinction must first be made between childhood bilinguality, adolescent bilinguality and adult bilinguality.

- (a) *simultaneous, early or infant bilinguality* when the child develops two mother tongues from the onset of language, which we call L1 and L2 as for example the child of a mixed-lingual family; and
- (b) *consecutive childhood bilinguality* when he acquires a second language early in childhood but after the basic linguistic acquisition of his mother tongue has been achieved. In this case and in all other cases of consecutive bilingual acquisition we refer to the mother tongue as L1 and to the second language as L2. While the development of simultaneous bilinguality takes place through informal, unintentional learning, consecutive childhood bilinguality may occur informally, as in the case of the child of an immigrant family, but may also result from intentional learning, as in certain bilingual educational programs.

In respect of cognitive development, the type of bilinguality is also dependent on the ***sociocultural environment***, in particular the relative status of the two languages in the community. According to whether the two languages are socially valued in his environment, the child will develop different forms of bilinguality. If the two languages are sufficiently valued, the child's cognitive development will derive maximum benefit from the bilingual experience, which will act as an enriching stimulation leading to greater cognitive flexibility compared to his monolingual counterpart; on the other hand, if the sociocultural context is such that the mother tongue is devalued in the child's environment, his cognitive development may be delayed in comparison with a monolingual peer's; in extreme cases, the bilingual child may not be able to make up for this delay. The former type of bilingual experience has been called additive bilinguality; the latter subtractive bilinguality (Lambert, 1974). This distinction relates to the conceptual-linguistic consequences of the sociocultural context of bilingual development.

Finally, bilinguals can be distinguished in terms of their ***cultural identity***. A bilingual may identify positively with the two cultural groups that speak his languages and be recognized by each group as a member: in this case he is also bicultural. Bilingual development can also lead a person to renounce the cultural identity of his mother-tongue group and adopt that of the second language group, in which case he will become an L2-aculturated bilingual. Sometimes, however, the bilingual may give up his own cultural identity but at the same time fail to identify with the L2 cultural group, and as a result become anomic and deculturated.

### **Behavioral dimensions of bilingualism:**

*“... bilinguals find themselves at various points along a situational continuum which induces different language modes. At one end of the continuum, bilinguals are in a totally monolingual mode in that they are communicating with monolinguals of one—or the other—of the languages that they know. At the other end of the continuum, bilinguals find themselves in a bilingual language mode in that they are communicating with bilinguals who share their two languages and with whom they normally mix their languages.”*

What Grosjean means is that when with their monolingual counterparts (of any of the two languages that they speak), bilinguals will ‘turn off’ or ‘deactivate’ the second language and will only converse with the language their interlocutor speaks or understands. This is known as the **monolingual language mode of the bilinguals**. It is these bilinguals who can completely manage to deactivate their second language in such situations who have made linguists conclude that a bilingual is actually “the sum of two monolinguals”. But complete deactivation is often a rare case and researches opine that some sort of ‘interference’ always takes place in the hidden mechanics of bilingualism. Haugen defines ‘interference’ as “the overlapping of two languages, or application of two systems to the same item.” As Sridhar comments that “multilingualism involving balances, native-like command of all the languages in the repertoire is rather uncommon.” This interference could be lexical, phonological or of some other sort.

In their **bilingual language mode**, the bilingual first chooses a ‘base language’ and then switches to and fro with the ‘embedded language’. This involves the processes of **code-switching** and **borrowing**. Gumperz defines the former as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems.” Johanson defines the latter as “the copying of a form from one language system into another.”

Between the two languages which one to choose as the base language and which to choose as the embedded, is based upon the setting and the situation, competency and nature of the interlocutors, type and function of the discourse and several such reasons. This was a brief overview of the linguistic behavior of many bilinguals.

## ❖ **Bilingualism and Diglossia**

The **main difference between bilingualism and diglossia** is that bilingualism is the ability to speak and communicate using two [languages](#), whereas diglossia is the use of different varieties or [dialects](#) in the same language.

Bilingualism and diglossia are two linguistic phenomena prevalent in many speech communities. Although both bilingualism and diglossia require code-switching, there are several differences between bilingualism and diglossia.

### **What is Bilingualism**

Bilingualism refers to an individual’s ability to express herself or himself using two different languages. Bilingualism can be commonly seen in children when the parents speak two languages. Children of immigrant families also speak more than one language. Children often learn two languages from two different language contexts. For example, children learn one language at home, and the other language at school.

People become bilingual for different purposes. Bilingualism can vary from one person to the other. At the same time, it is not necessary to become fluent in languages under bilingualism. There are many benefits of being bilingual. By being bilingual, a person gets the opportunity to be exposed to a larger world. Being bilingual does not merely mean learning of language. When a person learns a language, he or she gets exposure to its culture. Thus, becoming bilingual means that the person has experience and knowledge in two different cultural contexts.

Bilinguals have the capacity to switch to the language that they want to speak, and through that, the speaker steps into another culture. There are several bilingual countries in the world, like Canada, Belgium, and Finland.

### **What is Diglossia**

Diglossia refers to the existence of two varieties of the same language in a speech community. Generally, there are two varieties of dialects. One variety is the prestige dialect, and the other variety is the common dialect the community uses. Most of the population of the community uses the common dialect. Diglossia occurs in most speech communities around the world. In such conditions, the mass media, academic, and officials of the country uses the prestige language, whereas the community uses the common variety. In some instances, we call the prestige variety and common variety of the language the high and low languages. The context in which the high and low languages are called domains. There are different domains, such as family, work, school, and church. Thus, each domain uses either high or low language.

For example, in America, African Americans have their own distinction of English, which functions as a low language. It has been used only for [colloquial](#) contexts. Moreover, the regular language is the high or standard language. African Americans use low language at home, and they switch to standard language when they go out of the house and when they are in society. The condition of diglossia is also prevalent in Arabic countries. They use Arabic dialects for spoken purposes and pure Arabic for paperwork.

### **Similarities Between Bilingualism and Diglossia**

- Bilingualism and diglossia are prevalent in speech communities around the world.
- Moreover, both bilingualism and diglossia require code-switching.

### **Difference Between Bilingualism and Diglossia**

- Bilingualism refers to the ability to speak two languages, while diglossia refers to the use of two varieties of the same language in a speech society.
- Although bilingualism has two different languages, diglossia has two varieties of the same language: high language and low language.
- In diglossia, there are domains, and according to the domain, high or low language is used, whereas, in bilingualism, languages are used according to the nature of the speech community.
- Diglossia is used to talk within the same speech society, whereas bilingualism is not only used in the same society but also in other different speech societies.

- Although bilingualism is experienced by one individual, diglossia is not experienced by one individual but by a speech community.

### Conclusion

Bilingualism and diglossia are two linguistic phenomena prevalent in many speech communities. The main difference between bilingualism and diglossia is that bilingualism is the ability to speak and communicate using two languages, whereas diglossia refers to the use of different varieties or dialects in the same language.

## ❖ Causes of bilingualism

### TYPES, CAUSES AND BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM

**Bilingualism is an ability** to speak two languages. It may be acquired early by children in regions where most adults speak two languages (e.g., French and dialectal German in Alsace). Children may also become bilingual by learning languages in two different social settings; for example, British children in British India learned an Indian language from their nurses and family servants. A second language can also be acquired in

school. *Bilingualism* can also refer to the use of two languages in teaching, especially to foster learning in students trying to learn a new language. Advocates of bilingual education in the U.S. argue that it speeds learning in all subjects for children who speak a foreign language at home and prevents them from being marginalized in English-language schools. Detractors counter that it hinders such children from mastering the language of the larger society and limits their opportunities for employment and higher education.

### TYPES OF BILINGUALISM

Now that we know for sure what bilingualism is, let's dive into the different types! There are several criteria linguists use to define bilingualism, so we'll look at these in turn.

When looking at bilingualism in the context of '**who it is that's able to speak more than one language?**' there are different definitions to refer to one bilingual person versus a bilingual community:

- **Individual Bilingualism** - refers to **one individual** being able to use two languages proficiently.
- **Societal Bilingualism** - refers to a **whole community or country** being able to use two languages proficiently.

In terms of how people **develop bilingualism**, there are three key types of bilingualism:

- **Compound Bilingualism** - when an individual develops an understanding of and proficiency in two languages **simultaneously in a single context**. For example, a child that has been brought up learning and speaking two different languages from infancy will have acquired these two languages simultaneously. They would therefore use both languages for everyday interaction with their parents.
- **Coordinate Bilingualism** - when an individual learns two different languages

in **distinctly different contexts**, often by different means. For example, if an English-speaking child begins learning French at a young age in school and goes on to become quite proficient in it, this child would be considered a coordinate bilingual, as they have learned English from their parents, and French through lessons at school (two distinctly different contexts).



***Sub-coordinate Bilingualism*** - when an individual learns a second language by **filtering information through their native language**. For example, when a Spanish person hears the English word 'book', they will begin to associate it with the equivalent word in Spanish, 'libro'. This process of association requires the Spanish speaker to filter the English word through their knowledge of Spanish in order to understand the meaning of the word 'book'.

## **CAUSES OF BILINGUALISM**

It might be strange to think of bilingualism as having a 'cause' exactly, but what we're referring to here is the reasons why bilingualism might occur in different individuals and communities.

### **A. Extensive Language Contact.**

Language contact refers to the **interaction that takes place between speakers who speak different languages or language varieties**. In the case of bilingualism, we're talking about speakers who speak different languages.

Within this wider umbrella, there are many circumstances that can lead to extensive language contact between speakers of different languages, such as:

- having **parents of different nationalities** who speak two different languages (presumably speaking a shared language as well). This would mean that the child grows up exposed to both languages, therefore learning both as they develop.
- **moving to a country where the language is something other than a person's native tongue**. This would immerse the person in the new language in many different modes including hearing it spoken by the native people of that country, seeing it written on signs and in public places, and possibly having it taught in school or language lessons.
- requiring to learn a second language for **business purposes**. A person working for an international company might be required to learn a second language in order to communicate effectively with colleagues or clients from other countries.
- having a **personal desire to learn a second language**. Learning a language is not just a linguistic endeavor; it is also a **cognitive** one. Many people enjoy learning languages as a means of not only broadening their communicative ability, but also a means of expanding their cognitive prowess.

### **B. Bilingualism: English as a Lingua Franca**

Through your English Language studies so far, you might have come across the term '**Lingua Franca**'. A lingua franca is a **language that is adopted as the common language used between speakers whose native languages are not the same**. In other words, a lingua franca is a language learned by people speaking different native languages to enable them to communicate with one another. On a global scale, English is the most significant lingua franca, and has become the **language of business and the language of computer science** among many other fields.

Fun Fact: English is an official language in 67 countries around the world, as well as 27 non- sovereign entities!

In many countries around the world, the ability to speak English is not only held in high esteem, it is also necessary to facilitate business and foster professional international relationships.

In Singapore, English is spoken by approximately **37% of the population as a primary language**. This is more than the 35% Mandarin, 13% Chinese dialects, 10% Malay, 3% Tamil, and 2% spread across other minority languages.

English is an **official language of Singapore** (alongside Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil), and is also the **language of business and government**. This is an example of societal bilingualism.

Because English is so significant all over the world, many people in many countries speak English as well as their native language; many people are bilingual due to English's prevalence as a lingua franca.

### **C. Other Reasons Why Someone Might Become Bilingual**

- **Religious studies:** certain religious studies might require a fairly extensive understanding of a secondary language to a person's native language. For example, Catholicism uses Latin which, although technically a dead language, might still be necessary in order to understand ancient religious texts. The need to understand Latin for religious studies would be more significant than in scientific fields that use some Latin terms but do not rely on full Latin comprehension, such as botany (eg. plant names) or medicine (eg. bone names).
- **Geography:** in some countries, different communities speak different languages (for example, Nigeria is home to many different languages including Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and Kanuri). In order to facilitate everyday communication between different language speakers within a single country, it is necessary for the people to learn a common language. This could mean learning a second language, or even a third!

### **BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM**

As we said in the beginning of this article, being bilingual is like a superpower! There are so many benefits to being bilingual, so let's take a closer look:

- ***Wider Communicative Ability*** - the most obvious advantage to being bilingual is the increased ability to communicate with more people and in more countries. Speaking two or more languages opens up many opportunities for people, whether those opportunities be professional, educational, creative, or explorative.
- ***Privacy*** - people who are bilingual have the ability to code-switch. If two bilingual friends found themselves in a situation where they didn't want the people around them to understand what they were talking about, they could code-switch from one language to the other in order to keep their conversation private.

Code-switching is the ability to switch between different languages or language varieties within a single speech exchange.

- ***Increased Cultural Awareness*** - because culture and language are often so closely linked, being able to speak more than one language could give the speaker greater cultural insight and understanding. For example, if a child is born to Spanish parents, has grown up in England, but speaks both Spanish and English fluently, their understanding and awareness of their Spanish heritage may be a lot stronger than if they only spoke English. This child would likely have solid cultural awareness of both their Spanish roots and British culture, as a result of being bilingual.
- ***Competitiveness in the Job Market*** - as we've now seen, languages play an important role in business and professional settings. Being bilingual presents people with an advantage over their monolingual competitors and sets them apart as being able to reach more colleagues and clients.
- ***Ease of Learning a Third Language*** - as with anything, practice makes perfect. If you already have a firm grasp of two languages, learning a third is made much easier.

***Creative Expression*** - bilingual people have the unique ability to mix the best parts of the languages they speak. With a bit of creative code-switching, bilingual people are able to pack more punch into their discourse by adding impactful words in different languages. Sometimes idiomatic language and other kinds of phrases in one language do not translate well into others. Being bilingual enables the speaker to still use these evocative words and phrases without having to dilute their meaning by translating.

### **COMMON FEATURES OF BILINGUALISM**

- Bilingual people most commonly **belong to two different cultures** or have roots in two different nationalities.
- Bilingual people may **use their different languages in different aspects of their lives** (for example, an individual might speak English at school or work but Spanish at home).
- Bilingualism **does not always mean the speaker speaks both languages to the same proficiency**. This is often assumed but is not always the case.
- Being bilingual **doesn't automatically mean the speaker will be able to translate between languages instantaneously**; sometimes some extra thought will be required to translate things, especially if the speaker has varying proficiencies of each language.
- Bilingual people who speak the same languages as each other will **often mix languages and code-switch in conversation**.

It is common for bilingual people to sometimes **struggle to find a word in one language**, so they might explain what they mean in another way.

## **❖ Effects of bilingualism**

Bilingualism is when a person can speak and understand two languages. Learning and using more than one language has both positive and negative effects on a person's brain, social skills, and even how they understand the world. Let's break down these effects in simple terms:

### **1. Mental Flexibility and Problem-Solving**

**Mental Flexibility:** Bilingual people often switch between languages, which makes their brains more flexible. This means they can easily switch their thinking or "mental gears." It's like their brain gets extra exercise, which makes it better at adjusting to new information or solving puzzles.

**Problem-Solving Skills:** Research shows that people who know two languages are often better at problem-solving. Because they juggle different languages, they get used to focusing, ignoring unnecessary information, and thinking creatively.

### **2. Improved Memory and Attention**

**Memory Boost:** Bilingual people usually have a stronger memory. They can remember things like names, numbers, and directions better because their brain is used to handling two sets of words and meanings.

**Better Attention Control:** Switching between languages makes bilinguals good at focusing. They learn to ignore distractions and concentrate better, which is useful for studying, working, and even socializing.

### 3. Enhanced Social Skills and Cultural Awareness

**Cultural Understanding:** Knowing two languages often means being exposed to two cultures. This helps bilingual people understand and respect different viewpoints, traditions, and ways of life.

**Social Connections:** Speaking multiple languages can help people connect with a wider range of people. It becomes easier to make friends or understand different cultural settings. Bilinguals often find it easier to adapt to new places or people.

### 4. Delaying Cognitive Decline (Brain Aging)

**Brain Health:** Studies show that bilingualism can slow down brain aging. Older adults who speak two languages are less likely to experience conditions like dementia or Alzheimer's disease as early as those who know only one language.

**Longer Mental Sharpness:** Bilingualism keeps the brain active for longer, so bilingual people may stay mentally sharp well into their old age.

### 5. Language Confusion and Mix-Ups

**Mixing Up Languages:** One downside is that sometimes bilinguals mix languages, especially when they're learning. For instance, they might accidentally switch to the other language in the middle of a sentence. This mix-up can be confusing but often gets better with practice.

**Word-Finding Issues:** Bilinguals may sometimes struggle to find the right word, especially if they haven't practiced one language in a while. This is because their brain has to choose from a larger "word bank" in two languages.

### 6. Challenges in Academics

**Academic Adjustment:** In schools, bilingual students sometimes face challenges because they are learning and using two languages. They may take longer to learn vocabulary and grammar in each language compared to monolingual (single language) students.

**Misunderstandings:** In subjects taught in their weaker language, bilinguals may struggle more with technical terms. For example, a bilingual student who speaks Spanish at home but learns science in English might find it harder to understand scientific terms in English.

### 7. Economic and Career Advantages

**Job Opportunities:** Bilingualism can be a big plus in the job market. Many companies value employees who can speak more than one language, especially in fields like international business, customer service, translation, and tourism.

**Higher Earning Potential:** Studies show that bilingual people often have an edge in jobs and can earn more than monolingual employees, simply because they have an extra skill that's in demand.

## 8. Bicultural Identity

**Sense of Identity:** Bilinguals may feel connected to two cultures, which can create a strong sense of identity. This can be positive because they feel part of two worlds. However, sometimes it can lead to confusion if they feel like they don't fully belong to either culture.

### Summary

Bilingualism is a powerful skill that can strengthen the brain, improve memory, and increase cultural awareness. However, it also comes with challenges, like occasional language mix-ups and academic adjustment issues. In today's world, being bilingual is becoming increasingly valuable and can open up more social and career opportunities. Overall, while there are some minor challenges, the benefits of bilingualism usually outweigh them, making it a valuable skill in our globalized society.

## ❖ Language conflicts

Language conflict refers to disagreements, disputes, or tension arising from differences in language usage, interpretation, or identity. It can occur between individuals, communities, or even nations due to varying linguistic backgrounds, dialects, or official language policies.

Language conflict occurs when differences in language usage, interpretation, or identity lead to disagreements, disputes, or tension. These conflicts can arise at various levels, from interpersonal interactions to societal and international relations. Here's a detailed breakdown of its causes and effects:

### Causes of Language Conflict:

**1. Linguistic Diversity:** Societies with multiple languages spoken often face conflicts due to differences in language preferences, dialects, or linguistic identities.

**2. Language Policy:** Government policies regarding official languages, language education, or language rights can lead to tensions among linguistic groups, especially if one language is favored over others.

**3. Historical Factors:** Historical events, such as colonization or assimilation policies, can contribute to language conflicts by marginalizing certain languages or communities.

**4. Cultural Identity:** Language is closely tied to cultural identity. Attempts to suppress or devalue a particular language can spark conflict as communities seek to preserve their cultural heritage.

**5. Economic Disparities:** Socioeconomic factors, such as access to education or job opportunities, can exacerbate language conflicts if certain languages are associated with higher social status or economic advantages.

**6. Media and Communication:** Differences in language representation and portrayal in media or communication channels can fuel perceptions of inequality or discrimination.

### Effects of Language Conflict:

**1. Social Division:** Language conflicts can deepen divisions within society, leading to polarization and mistrust between linguistic groups.

**2. Political Instability:** In regions with significant language diversity, conflicts over language can destabilize governments or fuel separatist movements seeking linguistic autonomy.

**3. Economic Disruption:** Language conflicts may hinder economic development by impeding communication, trade, and cooperation among linguistic groups.

**4. Cultural Erosion:** Suppression or neglect of minority languages can result in the erosion of cultural traditions, knowledge, and identity.

**5. Psychological Impact:** Language conflicts can have psychological effects on individuals, leading to feelings of alienation, discrimination, or insecurity about one's cultural identity.

**6. Educational Challenges:** Disputes over language in education systems can affect the quality and accessibility of education for linguistic minority groups, perpetuating social inequalities.

Overall, language conflicts are complex phenomena with deep-rooted historical, cultural, and socio-political dimensions. Addressing these conflicts often requires efforts to promote linguistic diversity, respect linguistic rights, and foster inclusive policies that recognize and accommodate the plurality of languages within society.

## ❖Language attitudes

Language attitude refers to the feelings, beliefs, and evaluations that individuals or groups hold towards a particular language or languages. These attitudes can vary widely and are influenced by various factors such as cultural background, social context, personal experiences, and societal norms. Here's a detailed explanation of language attitude:

### Components of Language Attitude:

**1. Affective Component:** This aspect of language attitude relates to emotions and feelings towards a language. Positive affective attitudes may include pride, affection, or attachment towards one's native language or a language associated with a particular culture. Negative affective attitudes may involve feelings of disdain, shame, or resentment towards certain languages, often due to societal stigma or discrimination.

**2. Cognitive Component:** Language attitude also involves cognitive evaluations and beliefs about the characteristics, status, and utility of a language. Positive cognitive attitudes may include perceptions of a language as prestigious, beautiful, or useful for communication and cultural expression. Negative cognitive attitudes may stem from stereotypes, misconceptions, or prejudices about a language's speakers, grammar, or vocabulary.

**3. Behavioral Component:** Language attitude can influence individuals' language-related behaviors, including language choice, use, and maintenance. Positive attitudes towards a language may lead to active efforts to preserve, promote, or learn the language, while negative attitudes may result in avoidance, language shift, or loss of proficiency over time.

### **Factors Influencing Language Attitude:**

**1. Cultural and Social Factors:** Cultural norms, values, and societal attitudes towards language diversity, multilingualism, and linguistic identity can shape individuals' language attitudes. Historical events, language policies, and intergroup relations may also influence perceptions of language status and prestige.

**2. Personal Experiences:** Individuals' personal experiences with language, such as interactions with speakers of different languages, educational background, or exposure to diverse linguistic environments, can impact their language attitudes. Positive or negative experiences may shape perceptions of language competence, identity, and belonging.

**3. Media and Language Representation:** Media portrayal, linguistic stereotypes, and language ideologies conveyed through mass media, literature, and popular culture can influence individuals' attitudes towards specific languages and language varieties. Positive or negative representations may reinforce existing language attitudes or challenge stereotypes.

**4. Education and Language Policy:** Language education, policies, and practices in schools, institutions, and society can shape individuals' perceptions of language value, status, and relevance. Language policies promoting multilingualism, language rights, and inclusive language practices may foster positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity.

### **Implications of Language Attitude:**

**1. Language Maintenance and Shift:** Positive language attitudes can contribute to the preservation and vitality of a language within a community, while negative attitudes may accelerate language shift or endangerment.

**2. Language Policy and Planning:** Language attitudes influence language policy decisions regarding language education, promotion, and preservation efforts. Understanding language attitudes is essential for developing effective language policies that reflect community needs and preferences.

**3. Intergroup Relations:** Language attitudes can impact intergroup relations, identity formation, and social cohesion within diverse linguistic communities. Positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity can foster inclusive environments and intercultural understanding, while negative attitudes may contribute to social prejudice and discrimination.

Overall, language attitude plays a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions, behaviors, and interactions related to language, contributing to the complex dynamics of language use, maintenance, and change within societies. Understanding and addressing language attitudes are crucial for promoting linguistic diversity, fostering cultural appreciation, and building inclusive communities.

## ❖ Language maintenance

Language maintenance refers to the continued use, transmission, and vitality of a language within a community across generations. It involves active efforts by speakers to preserve their language, culture, and identity in the face of various challenges, including globalization, language shift, and cultural assimilation. Here's an overview of language maintenance, along with its causes and effects:

### Causes of Language Maintenance:

- 1. Cultural Identity:** Language is closely tied to cultural identity and heritage. Communities may engage in language maintenance efforts to preserve their unique cultural traditions, values, and ways of life transmitted through language.
- 2. Interethnic Relations:** Language can serve as a marker of group identity and solidarity within multiethnic or multicultural societies. Language maintenance may be motivated by a desire to maintain distinct group identities and foster social cohesion among community members.
- 3. Family and Community Support:** Language transmission within families and communities plays a crucial role in language maintenance. Supportive language policies, educational programs, and community organizations can facilitate intergenerational language transmission and usage.
- 4. Language Revitalization Movements:** In response to language endangerment or loss, grassroots movements, advocacy groups, and community initiatives may emerge to revitalize and promote endangered languages through language education, cultural events, and media outreach.
- 5. Linguistic Rights:** Recognition of linguistic rights, including the right to use, preserve, and develop one's language, can motivate language maintenance efforts. Legal protections, language policies, and international agreements may support linguistic diversity and minority language rights.

### Effects of Language Maintenance:

- 1. Cultural Preservation:** Language maintenance efforts contribute to the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge, oral traditions, folklore, and cultural practices embedded in language. This helps safeguard cultural heritage and identity for future generations.
- 2. Interethnic Harmony:** Language maintenance can foster interethnic understanding, cooperation, and solidarity within diverse communities. Multilingualism and language diversity may be celebrated as sources of cultural richness and social cohesion.
- 3. Psychological Well-being:** For individuals belonging to language communities, language maintenance provides a sense of belonging, pride, and connection to their cultural roots. Maintaining proficiency in one's native language can enhance self-esteem and psychological well-being.
- 4. Intellectual Diversity:** Language maintenance contributes to linguistic diversity and intellectual pluralism in society. Each language carries unique ways of expressing ideas, knowledge systems, and worldviews, enriching human communication and understanding.



**5. Social Resilience:** Strong language communities with active language maintenance practices are more resilient in the face of external pressures, such as globalization, migration, or cultural assimilation. Language serves as a source of resilience and resistance against cultural homogenization.

**6. Sustainable Development:** Language maintenance is linked to sustainable development goals, including cultural sustainability, social inclusion, and community empowerment. By preserving linguistic diversity, societies can foster inclusive development that respects and values diverse cultural perspectives.

Overall, language maintenance is essential for preserving linguistic diversity, cultural heritage, and social cohesion in a rapidly changing world. Efforts to support language maintenance require collaboration among communities, governments, educators, and policymakers to ensure the vitality and resilience of languages spoken around the world.

## ❖Language shift

Language shift refers to the gradual decline or displacement of one language by another language within a community or population. It occurs when speakers of a particular language adopt and increasingly use another language for communication, often resulting in the eventual loss of proficiency and transmission of the original language. Here's a detailed discussion of the causes and effects of language shift:

### Causes of Language Shift:

**1. Social and Economic Factors:** Economic opportunities, urbanization, and migration can drive language shift as speakers of minority languages migrate to urban centers or regions where the dominant language is spoken. Economic incentives, such as job prospects and access to services, may encourage individuals to adopt the dominant language for social mobility and integration.

**2. Language Contact:** Contact between speakers of different languages can lead to language shift through processes such as bilingualism, language mixing, and language borrowing. Prolonged contact with speakers of a dominant language may result in the gradual assimilation and adoption of that language by minority language speakers.

**3. Education and Media:** Language shift can be influenced by educational policies and media representation favoring the dominant language. Schools, government institutions, and mass media often use the dominant language as the medium of instruction and communication, leading to decreased use and prestige of minority languages.

**4. Cultural Dominance:** Sociopolitical factors, including colonization, assimilation policies, and cultural hegemony, can contribute to language shift by marginalizing minority languages and imposing the dominant language as a symbol of power, prestige, and modernity.

**5. Generational Transmission:** Language shift often occurs across generations as younger speakers, influenced by societal trends and peer groups, adopt the dominant language over their native or ancestral language. Inter-generational language transmission may weaken due to changes in family dynamics, language attitudes, and language use patterns.

## Effects of Language Shift:

1. **Loss of Linguistic Diversity:** Language shift leads to the loss of linguistic diversity as minority languages decline or become extinct. This results in the loss of unique linguistic features, cultural expressions, and traditional knowledge embedded in the endangered languages.

2. **Cultural Erosion:** Language shift can contribute to the erosion of cultural identity, heritage, and traditions associated with minority language communities. Cultural practices, oral traditions, and cultural values transmitted through language may be lost or diluted as speakers adopt the dominant language.

3. **Social Disruption:** Language shift can disrupt social cohesion and intergenerational communication within communities, particularly when language loss leads to generational divides and cultural discontinuity. Social inequalities may also arise between speakers of the dominant language and minority language speakers.

4. **Psychological Impact:** Language shift can have psychological effects on individuals, including feelings of linguistic insecurity, cultural alienation, and identity crisis. Loss of proficiency in one's native language may lead to a sense of disconnection from one's cultural roots and community.

5. **Educational Challenges:** Language shift poses challenges for education systems, particularly in regions with linguistic diversity. Minority language speakers may face barriers to accessing quality education in their native language, leading to lower educational attainment and social mobility.

6. **Economic Disadvantages:** Language shift can perpetuate economic disparities between speakers of the dominant language and minority language speakers. Limited proficiency in the dominant language may hinder employment opportunities, access to services, and socioeconomic advancement for minority language speakers.

Overall, language shift is a complex phenomenon with far-reaching cultural, social, and economic implications. Efforts to address language shift often involve promoting linguistic diversity, supporting language revitalization initiatives, and fostering inclusive language policies that recognize and value the plurality of languages within society.

## ❖ Language death

Language death, also known as language extinction, refers to the complete cessation of use and transmission of a language, resulting in the loss of all native speakers. It occurs when a language no longer has any speakers who use it as their primary means of communication in everyday life. Language death represents a significant loss of cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. Here's a detailed discussion of the causes and effects of language death:

### **Causes of Language Death:**

**1. Shift to Dominant Languages:** One of the primary causes of language death is the gradual shift of speakers from minority or endangered languages to dominant languages spoken in the region. Economic, social, and political factors often drive this shift, leading to the abandonment of the minority language in favor of the dominant language, which may offer better opportunities for education, employment, and social integration.

**2. Displacement and Cultural Assimilation:** Language death can also occur as a result of cultural assimilation and displacement of indigenous or minority communities. Historically, colonization, forced relocation, and cultural suppression by dominant groups have led to the loss of indigenous languages as speakers adopt the language and cultural practices of the dominant group.

**3. Intermarriage and Intergenerational Transmission:** Intermarriage between speakers of different linguistic backgrounds can contribute to language death as children from mixed-language marriages may not acquire proficiency in their parents' native languages. Without strong intergenerational transmission, languages may not be passed on to the next generation, hastening their decline and eventual extinction.

**4. Decline in Language Use and Prestige:** Societal attitudes and perceptions of language prestige can influence language vitality and survival. If a language is perceived as inferior or lacking utility in modern contexts, speakers may abandon it in favor of languages considered more prestigious or practical, leading to a decline in language use and eventual extinction.

**5. Lack of Language Support and Revitalization Efforts:** Languages facing endangerment often lack institutional support, resources, and revitalization efforts needed to maintain their vitality and transmission. Without adequate language documentation, education programs, and community initiatives, endangered languages may continue to decline and eventually disappear.

### **Effects of Language Death:**

**1. Loss of Cultural Heritage:** Language death represents a loss of cultural heritage, including traditional knowledge, folklore, oral literature, and cultural practices embedded in the language. Indigenous languages often encode unique cultural perspectives, environmental knowledge, and historical narratives that are lost when the language disappears.

**2. Erosion of Linguistic Diversity:** Language death contributes to the erosion of linguistic diversity globally, as each language represents a unique system of communication and cultural expression. With the extinction of languages, valuable linguistic diversity is lost, limiting our understanding of human language and cultural variation.

**3. Social Disruption and Identity Loss:** Language death can lead to social disruption and identity loss within affected communities. Speakers of endangered languages may experience feelings of cultural alienation, linguistic insecurity, and disconnection from their cultural heritage as their language disappears.

**4. Knowledge and Memory Loss:** Endangered languages often contain specialized knowledge about local ecosystems, medicinal plants, and cultural practices that are not documented elsewhere. With the loss of the language, this valuable knowledge may be lost forever, affecting scientific research, environmental conservation, and cultural continuity.

**5. Inequality and Marginalization:** Language death can perpetuate inequalities and marginalization, particularly for minority language speakers who may face discrimination and stigmatization in society. Without language rights and recognition, speakers of endangered languages may struggle to access education, employment, and civic participation.

Overall, language death represents a profound loss of linguistic and cultural diversity with far-reaching consequences for affected communities and global heritage. Efforts to preserve and revitalize endangered languages are essential for maintaining linguistic diversity, promoting cultural sustainability, and respecting the rights and identities of language communities.



# UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB

B.S. 4 Years Program / Fifth Semester – Spring 2022

Paper: Sociolinguistics

Course Code: ENG-305

Roll No. ....
Time: 3 Hrs.      Marks: 60

**THE ANSWERS MUST BE ATTEMPTED ON THE ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED**

**Q.1. Answer the following short questions. (3x5=15)**

- Explain Language Shift and its effects on culture.
- Define and elucidate Language Policy.
- What are Pidgin and Creole? Briefly explain.

**Q.2. Answer the following questions. (3x15=45)**

- Discuss the role of language in the development of thought and culture supporting your answer with examples.
- Define and explain National Language, Official Language and Standard Language.
- Define Multiculturalism. What are its causes, effects and importance with special reference to Pakistan?



**UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB**  
**B.S. 4 Years Program : Fifth Semester – Fall 2021**

Paper: Sociolinguistics

Course Code: ENG-305

Roll No. ....  
Time: 3 Hrs. Marks: 60

**Q.1. Give short answers to these questions. (3x5=15)**

- i. Write a note on types of REGISTER with reference to a speech community.
- ii. Define and explain SAPIR – WHORF HYPOTHESIS.
- iii. Discuss the importance and causes of LANGUAGE SHIFT.

**Q.2. Attempt the following questions. (3x15=45)**

- i. Write a note on DIGLOSSIA. Briefly discuss the high and low language varieties used in Lahore.
- ii. It is said that BILINGUALISM is a norm in the world. Why and how? Discuss its causes.
- iii. How does a language play an importance role in culture development and thought formation, discuss in detail.



# UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB

Fifth Semester – 2019

Examination: B.S. 4 Years Program

Roll No. ....

**PAPER: Sociolinguistics**

**Course Code: ENG-305**

**MAX. TIME: 3 Hrs.**

**MAX. MARKS: 60**

**Q1. Write the short answers for the following questions. (15)**

1. Briefly discuss the VARIATIONS IN LANGUAGE USE in speech community. (5)
2. Discuss the differences in DIALECT and ACCENT with examples. (5)
3. Define and explain SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS. (5)

**Q2. Write the long answers for the following questions. (45)**

1. Can language play an important role in culture development and thought formation? Support your arguments with examples. (15)
2. What is the difference between CODE MIXING and CODE SWITCHING?  
Write a comprehensive note on all situations where a BILINGUAL prefer code switching or code mixing. (15)
3. Discuss the causes and effects of LANGUAGE ATTITUDES on multilingual society.