The Impact of Government Policies on Territorially Based Ethnic or Nationalist Movements

Editorial

MATTHIAS KOENIG
University of Marburg

T he present issue of UNESCO's *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* takes up a previously established thematic thread by addressing questions of linguistic diversity and language policy. Here, our focus is on problems of endangered minority languages and their protection through public policy-making. Whereas previous issues have investigated the legal framework of language policies at international, regional, and national level (see Vol. 3, No. 1 and Vol. 3, No. 2), the current issue, edited by Eda Derhemi, approaches the topic from a sociolinguistic perspective. It attempts to analyse the causes, circumstances and results of language endangerment as well as the social conditions and effects of political intervention in favour of the survival of endangered minority languages.

As noted in the Thematic Introduction, the debate over the preservation of endangered minority languages has gained momentum in recent years. With international organisations and policy-makers being engaged in recording endangered languages and promoting the linguistic rights of persons belonging to linguistic minorities in various regions, sociolinguists have not only renewed their interest in problems of language loss and language maintenance but, further, have situated their own work within an increasingly politicised discourse. This has led to new controversies over the desirability and the actual impact of language policies designed to preserve or even to revitalise endangered languages. What is ultimately at stake in theses controversies, is the professional role of sociolinguistics or, more precisely, the linkages between sociolinguistic research, the interests of minority speech communities, and the dynamics of public policy-making.

The contributions to this issue take different positions vis-à-vis these questions and thereby provide an overview over the current state of discussion, both in theoretical and empirical sociolinguistics. At the same time, they collectively emphasise the importance of sound scientific knowledge about the linguistic characteristics of endangered languages, about the social conditions of the respective speech communities, and about the intended and unintended consequences of political intervention for devising viable language policies. Joshua Fishman, commenting on the articles collected in this issue, underlines this point when he calls for more systematic meta-analyses of case studies on languages in demise, so as to arrive at complex and parsimonious theories that would ultimately lead to more precise evaluations of language policies.

The thematic thread of linguistic diversity will be pursued in a subsequent issue which addresses patterns of language use on the Internet. It will include discussion of relevant theoretical debates and an evaluation of current policies promoting multilingualism on the Internet. Furthermore, it will report on new original research carried out in the framework of UNESCO's B@bel project. Other issues in preparation will establish another new theme of the Journal, by addressing patterns of international migration, links between social science research and migration policies in various countries, and the relation of migration and integration policies in industrial countries. As always, readers are invited to contribute to this debate by sending their comments to the mailing list attached to this Journal.

Protecting Endangered Minority Languages: Sociolinguistic Perspectives - Thematic Introduction

EDA DERHEMI
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

1. Main Foci of this Issue

This issue is devoted to problems of endangered languages, particularly endangered languages spoken by minorities, focusing on the sociolinguistic study of the causes, circumstances and results of endangerment, and other structural and social processes related to endangered languages and to their survival. The papers analyse aspects of the loss of minority languages, either indigenous or migrant, in the presence of a dominant second language. They investigate the relationship of these languages to previous and current policies, emphasising the positive or negative impact of institutional intervention for the survival of endangered minority languages (EMLs). As shown by the different authors, EMLs are often stigmatised and communities of speakers are often marginalised and dominated populations. Matters of power and control of the speech communities are also discussed, as their role is important in accounting for language endangerment.

This issue therefore focuses first on the characteristics of EMLs, on their level of attrition and the specific characteristics of attrition from a sociolinguistic perspective. A second focus is the evaluation and assessment of the possibilities for linguistic preservation and revitalisation of EMLs. Taking as a starting point the empirical analysis of the languages discussed, the authors attempt to draw some theoretical conclusions about the chances for survival of EMLs in general, and about the specific circumstances that would facilitate their maintenance. A third focus is the empirical effects of language policies and institutional action on EMLs and on communities of EML speakers. The papers also discuss whether institutional intervention is necessary and the importance of preliminary sociolinguistic research for an effective language policy.

The authors call attention to the causal relations between the characteristics of languages and speech communities, on the one hand, and language policies and other institutional action, on the other. They examine how policies and the process of implementing them recognise or neglect the needs of the speech communities and the state of the languages, and how they contribute, in turn, to changes that occur in the language and in the linguistic behaviour of its speakers. In dealing

with language policies affecting EMLs, the speech communities involved are given particular emphasis; their efforts to preserve their native languages are seen as an active factor in the existence and implementation of language policies and for the fate of EMLs.

2. Relevant Sociolinguistic Research on First-Language Attrition

An endangered language[1] is a language that may soon vanish, ceasing to be used as a vehicle of communication, perhaps even disappearing completely from human history. As the contributions to this issue show, an endangered language is not necessarily a minority language, and not every minority language is necessarily endangered. But there is a high probability that with time a neglected minority language will become endangered.

At a time when it is estimated that "80% of the world's 6,000 or so living languages will die within the next century" (Crystal 1997, 17), when language endangerment is increasingly seen as a topic that primarily concerns linguists (Nettle and Romaine 2000, 23), and with the increase in the last decade of the number of international organisations formed to record endangered languages (Crystal 1997, 18) and to regulate and promote the linguistic rights of language communities, it is natural that there is a great interest in the field by sociolinguists, policy-makers and analysts.

Research on language endangerment shows that the social status and prestige of EMLs, one of the most important forces in the process of attrition and maintenance, depend on a complex set of economic and cultural factors, reflecting the power relations among the communities of speakers involved. In order to assess symbolic indicators of dominance and control, it is important to investigate the functional aspects of the language and its use in different registers and domains. The tendencies for change in functional roles in bilingual and diglossic situations are very important in the process of reversing language shift and revitalisation of an endangered language. The linguistic attitudes of the community members are also an important parameter. These attitudes are historical and cultural construc-tions and relate directly to the prestige of EMLs. The sociocultural and ethnic context, as well as sociolinguistic indicators of language use and attitudes of the speakers, have been at the centre of research on endangered languages in the last twenty years.

There are important landmarks in the field of endangered languages that embody the directions of research and methodological approaches outlined above. Lambert and Freed (1982) present a volume on endangered languages without separating sociolinguistic from psycholinguistic and educational approaches and language acquisition from loss. This work is important for its theoretical contributions, especially the attempt to come up with methods of measuring maintenance and

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1. Grinevald Craig (1997) presents a general discussion of language endangerment.

loss. Dorian (1989) assembles a large number of sociolinguistic contributions, mainly case studies on endangered languages, and she clearly divides the two foci of the publication: the social context of the endangered languages on the one hand, and the structural studies on grammar on the other. Robins and Uhlenbeck (1991) edit a collection of articles about endangered languages from all the continents of the world, not only in order to study the causes of language death, but also to call international attention to this phenomenon. Brenzinger (1992) publishes a number of case studies and surveys on African endangered languages, introduced by four articles pertaining to theoretical discussions on language death. Grenoble and Whaley (1998), besides the study of the mechanisms of language loss that have been traditionally investigated in language attrition studies, focus attention on the community response and the importance of linguistic diversity for human society.

Besides communicative functions and other sociolinguistic parameters of EMLs, structural indicators such as lexical and grammatical loss and marked grammatical asymmetries are also important factors in language attrition. Sociolinguists have shown a constant interest in the formal changes shown by endangered languages. Some of the main publications on attrition and death mentioned above have reserved a separate chapter for contributions on structural grammatical changes and loss. There are even a few monographs focused on the grammatical system of the endangered languages. Sociolinguists agree that structural degeneration and loss are caused by changes in the communicative domains of a language undergoing decay: "structural restrictions in grammar have been convincingly correlated with reduction in speech genres" (Tsitsipis, in Dorian 1989, 117). But, by itself, structural disintegration or structural recovery is an important factor that influences the use of the language in the community and the attitude of the speakers towards their language.

Thus research on linguistic endangerment is characterised by a holistic approach that integrates multiple methodologies and directions of inquiry. Sasse (1992) maintains that an approach that reduces the study of endangered languages to one separate domain is "unrealistic and counterintuitive". Serious studies on attrition should include the analysis of external settings, such as the history and ethnicity of the community, cultural and religious features, economic status, sociopolitical and constitutional structures. They should also include sociolinguistic analysis of speech behaviour related to the communicative functions pertaining to diglossic or just bilingual patterns, domains of use, prestige of the endangered language, and structural phenomena such as erosion of linguistic categories and forms, deviation and other changes of internal systems of endangered languages. The pivotal longitudinal work of Dorian (1981) on the Scottish Gaelic dialects and on language death in general is a good example of this approach. The interest in processes of linguistic endangerment shown by sociolinguists, ethnolinguists, psycholinguists, anthropological linguists, language policy analysts, scholars in education and even in fields not directly related to linguistics, are an indicator of the multifaceted problems involved in the study of language endangerment. Crystal, in his introduction to *Language Death*, admits that the issue of language endangerment

"is now so challenging in its unprecedented enormity that we need all hands – scholars, journalists, politicians, fundraisers, artists, actors …" (2000, ix).

Analysis of language policy is another important trend of sociolinguistic research on endangered languages. Each of the aspects of sociolinguistic studies analysed above should be seriously investigated, evaluated and reflected in the process of language planning pertaining to endangered minority languages. In return, the impact and results of language planning should be analysed from the perspective of the changes that they have stimulated in the sociolinguistic levels mentioned above. The relationship between sociolinguistic research and institutional and community action to encourage processes of maintenance and revitalisation has not been a central concern of sociolinguists working on linguistic attrition. Language policies have not been analysed in relation to the functional and structural characteristics of endangered languages.[2] An exception to this is the two volumes by Fishman, published in 1991 and 2001, in which efforts to reverse language shift have been analysed from a theoretical perspective and on the basis of a large number of longitudinal case studies. On the other hand, language policies have been thoroughly questioned and evaluated in relation to educational settings (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000) and linguistic culture (Schiffman 1996).

Concerning language policies and threatened languages, a "role dilemma" is always faced by sociolinguists: Are they researchers who objectively study endangered languages as neutral analytic machines, or do they also get involved and see their responsibilities as rescuers? Often the position of the researcher is made clear in the title of the book. It is harder to understand the role of the researcher in a volume entitled *Endangered Languages*, but it is much easier in titles such as *Vanishing Voices*, *Reversing Language Shift*, or *Linguistic Genocide in Education*. Nettle and Romaine (2000) dedicate a whole volume very rich in facts and examples from all over the world to the importance of language maintenance and the factors that threaten languages today. Their work strongly criticises the lack of care and support for endangered languages and the devastating effects of such indifference, intentional or not, on linguistic diversity. The authors consider it "a strategic error that will be regretted as time goes on" (14).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 249), being herself a sociolinguist who supports assistance and revitalisation processes, makes a thorough presentation of the arguments for and against the preservation of linguistic diversity. The main argument for language maintenance in all sociolinguistic works is that culture and language "stand for each other" (Fishman 1991, 22) and the loss of language is in fact a permanent loss of human culture and knowledge. The weakness of this argument is very well described by Fishman himself (1991, 15): "The 'whole truth' about the relationship between language and culture may be too complex and too subtle, as well as too subjective and self-fulfilling to be fully told." On the other hand, efforts to maintain endangered languages are considered by some politicians

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2 Most research of this kind consists of single papers in volumes dealing with general phenomena of endangerment.

and even researchers as "a primordialist dream, creating employment for the world's linguists" (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, 249). Their main argument is that the preservation of endangered languages is very costly and even if one decides to spend what is necessary, the result is not cost-effective. Fishman describes the proponents of this group as "reductionists": their 'realism' "reduces human values, emotions, loyalties and philosophies to little more than hard cash and brute force" (Fishman 1991, 19). In *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved* (2001), Fishman maintains his position in favour of linguistic salvation of endangered languages but with less optimism. More than anything else, he stresses the complexity and difficulties of this "struggle", and argues that it is very important to construct strategies to address the functional diversification of the languages involved, strategies that are very focused and very carefully chosen.

The dynamics of this field of research are defined by the need to document endangered languages, and the need for new case studies to consolidate theoretical findings on endangerment. In 1992 Sasse stated, "there are huge geographical areas for which no comprehensive studies are available" and "theoretical or model-establishing approaches are scarce" (9). This is still true ten years later. There is still a need for the participation of sociolinguists in longitudinal research and projects connected to single communities for the study and revitalisation of endangered languages, when it is desirable and feasible.

3. Theoretical Studies Presented in this Issue

The first three papers, by Salikoko Mufwene, Suzanne Romaine and Rajeshwari Pandharipande, deal with theoretical questions concerning language policies in cases of endangered minority languages. The contributions constitute parts of a whole picture, ranging from a more general view towards a more detailed focus. Mufwene discusses whether language policy is necessary in cases of endangered languages; Romaine assesses past policies around the world and analyses their problems, focusing on ways to raise their effectiveness; and Pandharipande links the factors of endangerment and low status of minority languages in India with the way language policy is designed and implemented in that country.

Mufwene attempts to answer the question: Is it possible and necessary to interfere with the natural development of languages through linguistic policies and change the direction of language shift in order to stop language death? He recognises sociohistorical factors that influence, accelerate and slow down language change, but supports the natural path a language takes – endangered or not – whatever the final result turns out to be. He argues that changes occurring in the linguistic behaviour of speakers are simply an adaptation to changes in the socioeconomic conditions of the speech communities, driven by interests related to costs and profits that come along with language use, and therefore they must be respected. The underlying message of Mufwene's paper is to let languages naturally compete, even eliminate each other, as they have done for thousands of years. Mufwene is sceptical about the wisdom and even the possibility of deliberate efforts to prevent

language shift. In arguing for this, he takes a historical and comparative approach, comparing languages and situations in the past and the present, their development and eventual death. Language vitality has historically been affected by contacts of languages and of populations, changes in power, and other sociopolitical factors. According to Mufwene, the process of globalisation today does not bring any special new element to the competition among languages. Therefore, in general, it does not constitute a threat for the small and less powerful languages, nor a reason for institutional intervention through language policies.

Mufwene also presents a review and analysis of the terminology and approaches in recent literature with respect to language change and colonialism, as well as language change and globalisation. As he notes in his analysis of relevant sociolinguistic literature, his view is not shared by many sociolinguistics scholars today. Mufwene sees language endangerment as an engine that produces a natural diversity, while most sociolinguists see it as a death machine that needs to be stopped. Although the author reinforces that lack or presence of practice are the real source of attrition or revival of a language (see also Romaine and Fishman in this issue), he does not account for the fact that language policy, when realistic and based in community will, can change the direction of language use and practice. Mufwene's paper, like others in this issue, emphasises the need for the description of endangered languages and for the recording of chunks of discourse from these languages before it is too late.

Romaine's paper is a response to some of the issues raised by Mufwene. Unlike Mufwene, Romaine opposes the idea of free and natural competition among languages because a "no language policy is, in reality, an anti-minority-languages policy". Along with this position, she analyses the impact of language policies, addressing two main questions: Why do languages policies often fail?; In what ways can they be more effective? Romaine bases her analysis of language policies, their implementation and their impact on minority endangered languages, on her conviction that endangered languages must be saved while it is still possible and still desired by their speakers, and that it is worth doing whatever it takes to preserve this cultural heritage. She emphatically supports and has confidence in the effectiveness of institutional action, but underlines how difficult it is to have a realistic and effective linguistic policy, and how complex the road is from the approval of a legal statement to its realisation in languages.

Romaine brings a large number of examples of problematic understanding and impact of language policies concerning EML in Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Nigeria, Senegal, Norway, Spain, Greece, Ireland, Turkey and Australia, among others. In the analysis of these cases, she focuses on the factors that prevent a linguistic policy from reaching the endangered language or the community that speaks it. She draws attention to two main factors. First, what makes a policy ineffective is the lack of congruence between what the policy states and the actual sociolinguistic conditions of the community. The outcome of this is the absence of realistic planning, which isolates the policy in itself and destroys the purpose of its

existence. Second, language policies are often available only when it is too late and the languages are practically extinct. The cultural and economic context and the attitudes of speakers towards their languages are the main variables that must be studied and considered in the design and implementation of any policy for language maintenance.

Romaine is aware of the fact that "effective language policies will and must affect all aspects of national life and will have to be sustained for decades, if not forever". In fact, the main problem that scholars less enthusiastic about language maintenance see in the institutional efforts to save endangered languages is that the costs of the maintenance and revitalisation can be great. But this issue is not often addressed by sociolinguists.

In her paper, **Pandharipande** analyses the main sociolinguistic factors that determine the high or low status of minority languages in India. She examines the low social status of minority languages in relation to linguistic endangerment and offers an explanatory basis for both phenomena. The main focus among the variables that determine and measure social status and endangerment is on the concept of "functional load". She uses the term "functional load of a language" as a synonym for "language dominance" and "language power" in the social domains of language use. She explains that she prefers this term as a diagnostic tool, because it allows a quantification of the concept of "power" of a language. She uses the concept of functional load to explain the position of a language in the power hierarchy among languages, therefore the low and endangered status of a minority language is explained by its low functional load or low ability to function in the public sphere. Functional load in this sense also accounts for the fact that a minority language is not necessarily endangered, and for the fact that one minority language can be well maintained while another is undergoing attrition. A vertical axis of power or functional load from the upper levels of technology and state languages, to the lower levels of tribal languages, symbolises the scale in which the status of any language in a linguistic repertoire can be measured and compared. Other factors, such as number of speakers, linguistic attitude, and usage in different functional domains are also considered as important variables in the process of language attrition and linguistic salvation, but in order for them to have an impact on the language, the functional load of this language must change first. In other words, the status of EMLs is connected indirectly to all the factors mentioned above, but directly only to the functional load of the languages.

Pandharipande emphasises that these sociolinguistic factors must be included in the basis of any language policy dealing with EMLs. Although Indian states have approved a central language policy intended to promote the development of indigenous vernaculars, its implementation has often not been successful. Sometimes the output of such policies, instead of raising the social status and prestige of a minority language, has lowered it even further

As Pandharipande's paper deals with the complex situation of EMLs in India, where the current norm of linguistic behaviour in any community is multilingualism, it helps to clear up some of the confusion surrounding the meaning and definitions of minority and majority Indian languages. In the same spirit as the other authors of this issue, she underlines the lack of linkage between the higher (constitutional) levels of language policy and the way the policy is transformed into action to stop or change language shift. In general, a well-intentioned language policy cannot succeed if the sociolinguistic situation in a speech community and other idiosyncrasies of the languages are ignored.

4. Empirical Studies

The two case studies of this issue reflect recent fieldwork conducted in Bolivia on the endangered language Uchumataqu, by **Pieter Muysken**, and in Sicily on the endangered Arbresh, by **Eda Derhemi**. Both papers focus on the characteristics of the languages, from a functional and structural linguistic perspective, in order to assess the viability of these EMLs and the possibilities for language shift and revitalisation through effective language policies. The issues discussed in the previous papers about the need for realistic policies based on a detailed and complex description of the sociolinguistic situation of the endangered languages are analysed in the specific settings of Uchumataqu and Arbresh.

Muysken discusses Uchumataqu, the language of the Uchuma in Bolivia, from an anthropological, ethnographic and sociolinguistic perspective, demonstrating how the prestige and state of health of this language and other languages of the Uru people have changed over time. He analyses Uchumataqu in relation to other languages used by the same community and by others nearby, such as Aymara, Quechua and Spanish. Linguistic data on functional restriction and other changes Uchumataqu has undergone, influenced by the dominant languages of the region, indicate its state of attrition. Together with the historic, ethnic and cultural features of the speech community, and its economic and political status, Muysken integrates the linguistic loyalties of the speakers and the phonological and morphological analysis of linguistic data collected by the very few semi-speakers that are left.

Muysken recognises the need for documenting Uchumataqu before it is too late, as an important source of information on the early linguistic history of Bolivia and the whole continent. But he does not give up hope for a linguistic revitalisation of Uchumataqu, based first of all on political changes in the community that have greatly improved the linguistic attitudes of the speakers towards their language. Although he stresses the capability of rural communities in "language planning", he calls for a complex and difficult range of economic and political changes that are necessary for the planning process to be successful.

Unlike Uchumataqu, which has lost most of its speakers and has no fluent speakers today, the Arbresh of Piana degli Albanesi, Sicily, is in a less-advanced stage of endangerment. Derhemi presents sociolinguistic arguments from the functional

domains of Arbresh and from structural data showing linguistic corrosion that demonstrate a clear language shift from Arbresh to Italian and the state of endangerment of Arbresh. She focuses on the sociolinguistic analysis of those features of language attrition that specifically show the importance today of a normative written form of the language, arguing that if this codified written language spreads among young speakers through the schools, it will have a strong corrective effect on the aberrant uses of forms and on the unusual free linguistic variation that is characteristic of the Arbresh speech community at present.

Considering that Arbresh is still used at different degrees and levels of competence as an informal means of communication, and considering that linguistic loyalty towards Arbresh is relatively high, there is a strong possibility that linguistic policies aiming for wider use of the language can still succeed. But the paper underlines that, in any process of language planning in Piana, linguistic codification and the use of the written form in schools are the main factors stopping the process of linguistic disintegration of Arbresh. Derhemi analyses recent implementation of linguistic policy in Piana, its effectiveness at every step, and the degree of involvement of the community elite and grassroots in such efforts. She also presents some prescriptive observations on how efforts for revitalisation of the language could be more successful, based on the specific sociolinguistic conditions of Piana degli Albanesi and its linguistic repertoire.

5. Fishman's Criticism and Some Conclusions for This Issue

In the final paper in this issue, Joshua Fishman presents some critical opinions on problems raised by the other authors and offers a few suggestions on future directions for research on endangered languages. As in recent works discussed in this thematic introduction, Fishman again stresses the need for new case studies in this field, not partial ones, but detailed and complete research that put together language as social behaviour, as well as other social phenomena related to language in a community. Language is not a variable separable from culture and other forms of social behaviour. Once a considerable amount of such case studies is available, a collective methodological and conceptual analysis that aims for further scientific parsimony and clarity is needed.

Fishman also focuses on the importance of language use and language practice in a situation of language decay. He argues that sociolinguists and other scholars dealing with EMLs should always keep in mind that language planning is only a means for change, and as long as the policy does not demonstrate any impact on language use, it has been unsuccessful. The "unplanned" and "spontaneous" use of a language by the speech community is the real arena where a language changes, and the only means of measuring the efficacy of a language policy.

Below I briefly summarise the main conclusions of sociolinguistic research on endangered languages and the impact of language policies as discussed in this issue:

- Sociolinguists are divided on whether they should press for intervention and institutional protection in cases of endangered languages or should just be passive recorders of the dying languages. Many are sceptical about possible revitalisation but consider it an important contribution to the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity. However, all the researchers agree that the most decisive factor in the future of these languages is the will and the attitude of the speech communities. Without the interest of the speech community in revitalisation, any effort to promote institutional protection would be egoistic and meaningless. The sociolinguists also agree on the complexity, immense efforts and high costs of language revitalisation.

- Language policies will have a stronger impact on EMLs if they are constructed in a realistic and effective way, on the basis of sufficient empirical and integrative sociolinguistic studies on endangered languages. With such studies, the state of endangerment will be easier to control and the process of analysing language shift and revitalisation more feasible. Sociolinguistic studies are very important in the first stages of designing a language policy, but also in the aftermath of the policy, in analysing its impact and efficacy, and in eventual undoing or redoing corpus planning.

- In order to grasp the nature of the phenomenon of language attrition and to provide a strong sociolinguistic basis for a sustainable linguistic policy, sociolinguistic studies have to be holistic in character. Extra-linguistic phenomena such as the ethnocultural settings of minorities with endangered languages, the historical, economic and political developments of these communities, the speakers' loyalties, attitudes and interests, are as important as the analysis of language use and language structures. Only extensive fieldwork by researchers in the speech communities can result in such studies.

- The main goal of any language policy should be a change that would result in spontaneous language use by a large community of speakers. This is the only indicator that can measure the efficacy of a language policy: factors such as legislative changes, the amount of money spent, the number of conferences and meetings, and the active participation of the elite are not indicators of language shift or of the impact of a language policy on endangered minority languages.

- In the process of research on linguistic endangerment and language policy, one has to face up to the complexity of the phenomenon of language attrition and death: not only the many functional, structural and cognitive aspects of language itself, and the strong influence of extra-linguistic processes all deeply different from each other, but also the implication of values, ethical stands, political advantages and disadvantages, social and

civil responsibilities, sentimental positions, even the ability to follow a dream.

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About the Author

Eda Derhemi is a doctoral student in the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States. She did her undergraduate work in language and literature at the University of Tirana, Albania, and was a member of the faculty at the same university from 1985 to 1990. From 1990 to 1995 she lived in Sicily, and worked as a journalist for Deutsche Welle. In 1995 she entered the graduate programme in linguistics at the University of Illinois, receiving her Master's degree in 1997. In 2000 she worked in Paris as an intern on UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST)

Programme. In 2001 she did extensive fieldwork in Sicily on the endangered Arbresh language. Her interests are in language contact, language change, and endangered languages and cultures. Recently she has also been working on issues of Albanian migration after the fall of communism and the cultural integration of Albanian immigrants.

Address: Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States; email: edaderhemi@yahoo.com

Colonisation, Globalisation, and the Future of Languages in the Twenty-first Century[*]

SALIKOKO S. MUFWENE
University of Chicago

The typical academic discourse on language endangerment has presented languages as anthropomorphic organisms with lives independent of their speakers and capable of negotiating on their own the terms of their coexistence. Not surprisingly it has become commonplace to read about killer languages in the same vein as language wars, language murders and linguicides. I argue below that languages are parasitic species whose vitality depends on the communicative behaviours of their speakers, who in turn respond adaptively to changes in their socio-economic ecologies. Language shift, attrition, endangerment and death are all consequences of these adaptations. We must develop a better understanding of the ways in which one ecology differs from another and how these dissimilarities can account for variation in the vitality of individual languages. Globalisation is discussed as part of the relevant language ecology. I submit that only local globalisation has endangered or driven most languages to extinction.

T his article is a general critique of the literature of the past decade on language endangerment, including the following recent major works, which are typically not cited individually here except for peculiarities that warrant singling out any one of them: Mühlhäusler (1996), Dixon (1997), Brenzinger (1998), Grenoble and Whaley (1998), Calvet (1998), Crystal (2000), Fishman (2000), Hagège (2000), Nettle and Romaine (2000), Maffi (2001) and Renard (2001). I exhort linguists to embed the subject matter in a historical perspective longer than European colonisation of the past 400 years, to highlight the competition and

selection (Mufwene 2001) that has characterised the coexistence of languages since probably the beginnings of agriculture (Nettle and Romaine 2000), and thus to shed better light than hitherto on natural trends of language shift and loss.[1] Such an approach would make the linguistic enterprise comparable to that of environmentalists concerned with endangered species, who have first sought to understand the conditions that sustain or affect biodiversity in the same econiche.

I submit that the subject matter of language endangerment will be better understood if discussed in the broader context of language vitality, with more attention paid to factors that have favoured particular languages at the expense of others, factors which lie in the changing socio-economic conditions to which speakers respond adaptively for their survival. Linguists have typically bemoaned the loss of ancestral languages and cultures especially among populations colonised by Europeans, arguing that relevant languages and cultures must be revitalised or preserved by all means. Missing from the same literature are assessments of the costs and benefits that the affected populations have derived from language shift in their particular socio-economic ecologies. Also worth addressing is the question of what actions, if any, can realistically be taken on the relevant ecologies to prevent shift from the ancestral languages. I start by articulating the senses of the notions of "colonisation" and "globalisation" (as in *global/globalised economy*) that have figured prominently in the relevant literature, highlighting how they bear on language vitality.

1. Terminology Matters

Outside population genetics, colonisation conjures up political and economic domination of one population by another. This form of control is often associated with military power, which, based on human history, is the means typically used to effect such domination. This has been made more obvious by the European colonisation of the world over the past four centuries, at least until the independence of African and Asian countries in the mid-twentieth century. Often in alternation with (neo)-colonialism, the term has also been used to describe the economic relations of less industrialised countries (LICs) with their former colonial

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[1] The dominant trend in the literature has been to discuss languages as agents with lives somewhat autonomous from their speakers. This has led to unfortunate titles such as Language Wars (Calvet 1998), which suggest something contrary to the history of language loss. Barring cases of absolute genocide, languages have typically been endangered or driven to extinction under peaceful conditions, through an insidious process of assimilation. Wars and political conflicts have fostered ethnic or national distinctiveness, which has revitalized languages as identity markers. Languages are also parasitic species whose vitality depends on the communicative behaviours of their speakers. Although I speak of them as competing with each other in a multilingual community, the notion of "competition" in this discourse, as in population genetics, means no more than a coexistence set up in which alternate entities are not equally valued. In the same vein, I also use the notion of "selection" to refer to the resolution of the competition in favour of one of the alternatives, with the agency attributed to the "ecology" of the relevant languages. This consists of speakers and the socio-economic systems in which they evolve. Much of the discussion that follows is framed by these concepts (for details on this approach, see Mufwene 2001, especially Chapters 1 and 6.).

metropoles, in which the latter have continued to determine the terms and language of economic exchange. This interpretation of colonisation is present in the current debate on language endangerment, in which European languages have been depicted as "killer languages" about to replace all other languages (see for example Crystal 2000; Nettle and Romaine 2000; Hagège 2000). Thus, power has usually been invoked as an important factor that has favoured the language of the powerful over those of the dominated, hence less powerful, populations.

Exceptions to the above observations include volumes such as Brenzinger (1998), which, by focusing on the competition among languages of the colonised, oppressed or powerless rural populations of Africa, highlight the fact that the vitality of a language often depends on factors other than power. They show that if power has any role to play, basic cost-and-benefit considerations having to do with what a speaker needs a particular language for, or to what extent a particular language facilitates survival in a changing socio-economic ecology, determine what particular languages are given up and doomed to attrition and eventual extinction. Many African languages have recently lost the competition not to languages of economic and/or political power but to peers that have guaranteed a surer economic survival. What such literature shows is that, like the emergence of new language varieties, language endangerment is one of the outcomes of language contact and is also subject to patterns of interaction among the populations in contact.

In order to understand the above view, it helps to also think of *colonisation* in its population-genetics interpretation, when a population relocates in a new territory, regardless of whether the latter is or is not inhabited by an indigenous population. Thus the eighteenth-century settlement of French colonists on Réunion and Mauritius, then uninhabited, was as much a form of colonisation as the settlement of several Caribbean islands by Europeans during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the establishments of trade forts on the African and Asian coasts in the same period, or the political and economic domination of several African and Asian countries from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. Bearing in mind that even the spread of Indo-European populations in Europe involved as much of settlement colonisation as the domination of North America and Australia by the English, history tells us that colonisation as understood in population genetics has assumed many styles involving different patterns of interaction. The more common, political notion of colonisation rests largely on the more neutral, population-genetics notion.

From the point of view of language contact, the consequences of colonisation have not been uniform. Although several languages have died in the process (e.g. Celtic languages in Western Europe and several Native American languages), new ones have also emerged (e.g. English out of the contact of Germanic languages among themselves and with Celtic languages, the Romance languages out of the contact of Vulgar Latin with continental south-western European Celtic languages, and today's pidgins and creoles out of contacts typically of Western European with

non-European languages in some extra-European colonies during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. It is not always the colonised populations that have lost their languages. Sometimes it is the colonists and colonisers, as in the case of the Norman French in England, or the Tutsi (formerly speakers of Nilotic languages) in Rwanda and Burundi, or the Peranakan Chinese in the Strait of Malacca.[2] There are also interesting cases where the old and new languages have coexisted. What is now interpreted as a threat to the more indigenous language (e.g. Basque vis-à-vis Spanish) is only a recent development in a long history.

It is thus difficult to produce a general and uniform formula of what happens when one population colonises another, no more regarding language vitality than regarding the development of new language varieties. As argued in Mufwene (2001), the ecology of every case of language contact is somewhat unique. Despite similarities among them, what happens in one setting is not necessarily replicated in another. To be sure, we cannot overlook similarities, such as the fact that language loss has been the most catastrophic in settlement colonies and new language varieties have emerged additively in trade colonies (i.e. without replacing some extant languages). On the other hand, we must still note differences from one colony to another, regardless of whether the members of the relevant subset can all be identified as plantation or non-plantation settlement colonies, or as trade or exploitation colonies. Settlement colonies of North America still differ from those of Latin America, plantation colonies of the Atlantic and Indian oceans were not quite the same as those of the Pacific, and exploitation colonies of Africa were not quite the same as those of Asia.

Like *colonisation*, the terms *globalisation* in English and *mondialisation* in French have figured prominently in the literature on language endangerment. [3]

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[2] Heeding Hoeningswald (1989), I invoke here an often-neglected aspect of language loss especially among immigrants (invaders, colonists, slavers, or otherwise), who have often lost their languages while resettling in the new land. This loss, which is partial in that only some of the diaspora population is affected, is quite relevant, because it is informative about the impact of ecological changes on the vitality of a language. Just like biological species, language may die in one setting and yet thrive in another (see also Mufwene 2001, Chapter 6). Their fates are not uniform across populations of their speakers, especially when the communities are discontinuous (on the model of what macroecologists identify as metapopulations).

The Peranakans are descendants of male Chinese traders who settled in the Strait of Malacca in the fifteenth century, married local women, and gave up Chinese while preserving some aspects of their Chinese cultural background. Their children, who spoke nothing but Baba Malay, are the Peranakans. (Literally, *Baba Malay* means Malay of the male Peranakans, based on the fact that these Chinese men were instrumental in the divergence of this variety from the local varieties.) They have formed a culturally mixed group distinct from traditional Chinese (who have only reproduced among themselves) and the local Malay and Javanese populations. Today many of them speak English as their first language and learn Chinese in school. Their cuisine, characterized as *nonya* (as female Peranakans are referred to), reflects local Malay influence. Their communities are to be found in cities such as Penang, Melaka, Singapore and Jakarta, the original Chinese trade colonies. I explain the different types of colony below.

[3] Rare are books on globalization that bother to define the term and lead the reader to some understanding of the different ways in which it can be interpreted, depending on context. Yeung Yue-man (2000) is rather exceptional in providing a discussion that makes it possible for the alert

Globalisation and *mondialisation* have typically been assumed to be cross-linguistic equivalents and therefore synonymous. Actually, they do not express the same meanings. They reflect different perspectives on the present socio-economic state of the world, which do not bear equally on language vitality. A more adequate English translation of *mondialisation* seems to be *universalisation*, having to do with worldwide distribution of some institutions such as McDonald's (hence the terms *McDonaldisation* and *macdonaldisation* in both languages), of cultural products such as Hollywood movies, American toys and pop music, and the spread of English in several parts of the world. I show below that this interpretation, related to the spread of English and other colonial European languages around the world, does not help to articulate the differential ways in which language shift and loss have proceeded around the world.

Globalisation need not be universal, as in *global warming*, or regional, as in *global war* (involving several countries but not necessarily the whole world). The most relevant interpretation on which I wish to capitalise is local (as in *global taxation*), meaning "comprehensive" and having to do with interconnectedness of parts of a complex system, as is more common in local or regional uses of the phrase *global economy* in North America or Western Europe. In fact, in the debate on language vitality, it becomes critical to address the question of whether the worldwide interpretation of *global economy* (*économie mondiale* in French) bears on the life of a language in the same way as does the local interpretation of the same phrase. I show below that the phenomena are not the same and therefore do not have the same linguistic effects. (For an informative discussion of these distinctions, see Yue-man Yeung 2000.)

Not all countries have developed (significant) local global economies. Not all of them participate equally in the worldwide global economic system. Although places like Singapore and Hong Kong depend largely on worldwide globalisation, many LICs in especially Africa participate only marginally in this networking. When a particular common language, such as English or French, is required for communication among the different branches of multinational companies that foster worldwide globalisation, not all employees of these companies are expected to be fluent in the lingua franca, especially where most of the labour is involved in the production of raw materials to be processed outside the country, or a large proportion of the adult population is unemployed and thus seriously disfranchised from the economic system. In such places, the vast majority of the populations continue to function in their ancestral or other local vernaculars, which they in fact adopt as their identity marker to distinguish themselves from the affluent minority.

To my knowledge, Caribbean territories reflect some of the earliest experiences of loss of ancestral languages by the enslaved Africans and by the Arawakans and Caribs in European settlement colonies since the sixteenth century. In most of

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reader to identify the wide range of interpretations of the term *globalization*. Another author coming close to this is Friedman (1999).

them, the creole vernaculars that later replaced these languages (through shifts to European colonial vernaculars) have become identity markers for the present mass of disfranchised proletarians who function only in the local and low sectors of their economies.[4] They stand in contrast with the acrolectal varieties spoken by minorities of the more affluent members of their societies. Creole speakers have either resisted shifting to the acrolects, or have seldom faced opportunities and real pressure to do so, despite a long history of stigmatisation of their own vernaculars.

Things are not necessarily so different in economically more affluent former colonies where English or other Western European languages appear to play an important function and have been claimed to endanger the indigenous languages. For example, as much as the participation of Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan in such multinational production networks depends on usage of English as a worldwide lingua franca, the proportion of employees that must be fluent in it is quite small. The English used by many not highly educated local people has often been described as pidgin. The reason is that locally, or nationally, the low sector of the economy is run in a local language (Cantonese, Malay or Putonghua) and English is only an interface among countries that use different vernaculars or local lingua francas. While in most parts of the United States and Canada, it would be difficult to travel and communicate with the local population without speaking English, knowledge of only English can be frustrating while travelling in Taiwan, Malaysia and Hong Kong. A visitor often comes across locals who speak no English at all, especially in less-affluent neighbourhoods. Anyone who claims that the spread of English around the world endangers indigenous languages should explain how this is possible in countries where it is only a lingua franca of an elite minority but is barely spoken by the vast majority, or a large proportion, of the population.

The above observations do not of course demonstrate that these territories have not suffered any language loss, nor that local globalisation has played no role in this process. In becoming the major business language of Taiwan, Chinese has seriously endangered the more indigenous, Formosan languages in much the same way that Japanese has caused the attrition of Ainu – just as English and the Romance languages have driven to extinction most of the Celtic languages that preceded them in Europe. The prevalence of Malay as the vernacular of Malaysia has certainly been at the expense of several other indigenous languages. Usage of these equally indigenous languages in wide and diverse sectors of the national economies has nurtured their vitality by providing them some *raison d'être* in what Bourdieu (1991) identifies as the "language market". In terms of costs and benefits relative to English as a global language, their association with lucrative functions

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[4] While it is obvious that the Arawakan and Carib languages were lost because their speakers were killed or driven out, it is an oversimplification to assume that the African languages were lost because of the pressures exerted on their speakers by slavery. As explained towards the end of Section 2, it is the particular form of assimilation exerted on the slaves of the homestead phase that, by the founder principle, doomed the vitality of African languages early in the history of settlement colonies.

in local, national and/or regional economies has limited the need for English for most Asian populations, and it has thus been confined to the role of elite supra-regional lingua franca. The division of labour is such that the threat of English to indigenous languages in Asia, as in other former European exploitation colonies, is exaggerated.

2. Importance of Distinguishing Different Colonisation Styles

It is helpful to start this section with my observation that European colonial languages have endangered other languages, or driven them to extinction, typically in settlement colonies, not in exploitation nor in trade colonies. It is also important to bear in mind that globalisation is not as recent a phenomenon as may be assumed. It is in some ways as old as colonisation in its population-genetics interpretation, to the extent that when a population relocates and/or dominates another, it more or less imposes a form of geographical globalisation by connecting the political and economic structure of the colony to that of the homeland. The colonists may import into the new territory production techniques that are more typical of the metropole, they may make the colony part of the same industrial network, and they often adopt the same business language at least for some level of the socio-economic and political system. So, even the use of European languages as the official varieties in some former colonies is a form of globalisation, to the extent that they represent some uniformity or unity (as partial as it is) in the way that business is conducted in the metropole and the colony. Thus, today's globalisation differs from its earliest ancestors, say of the time of the Roman Empire, particularly in complexity and speed of communication rather than in the fact of interconnectedness and uniformity of economic systems, technology and production of goods.

In the context of this article, in which socio-economic ecology is invoked to explain variation in the vitality of languages, the distinction between different colonisation styles sheds some light on why local globalisation is not equally extensive or integrated everywhere. Each colonisation style has determined particular patterns of interaction between the colonisers and the indigenous populations as well as the particular kind of economic structure that is now in place. The categorisation is far from being clear-cut, and there are mixed cases. However, this rough distinction, which needs refining in future work, will help to make more sense than has been suggested in most of the literature of how languages have been vanishing over the past 400 years of Western European hegemony.

Mufwene (2001) distinguishes between trade, settlement and exploitation colonies. Trade colonies (such on the west coast of Africa from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries) were the first to develop. This typically happened soon after Europeans explored new territories and established trade relations with the local people on more or less egalitarian terms, although the terms of interaction changed later, at the expense of indigenous populations (see below). The relationships were

sporadic and generally led to the development of new language varieties called pidgins, typically lexified by a European language on the west coast of Africa but by a Native American language in the Americas.

In the latter part of the world, the trade colonisation was concurrent with settlement colonisation. Europeans settled to build new homes, or better Europes than what they had left behind (Crosby 1986). The nature of regular interactions among different populations in these new colonies often led to protracted competition and selection among the languages and dialects they brought with them, leading to shifts from some to others and to the loss of several of them, as well as to the emergence of new language varieties typically lexified by European languages. Some of these have been identified as creoles (typically in plantation settlement colonies), but others have been identified as new, colonial dialects of the European lexifiers, such as American English(es) and Québécois French (in non-plantation colonies).[5] No significant language loss has so far been associated with trade colonisation, even when trade was abused to enslave and deport some of the indigenous populations.

Especially noteworthy about settlement colonies is the fact that they gradually produced local or regional monolingualism, favouring the language of the colonising nation but dooming to extinction the languages brought by the Africans (who were first to lose theirs, as explained below) and Europeans originating from countries other than the colonising one (the case of Gaelic/Irish, German, Italian, French, Dutch and Swedish in North America, except in Quebec and Ontario). Native Americans lost their languages either because they were decimated by diseases and wars, or because they were forced to relocate to places where they could not continue to speak their languages, or because they eventually got to function in the new, European-style economic world order which imposed a new language of business and industry. Unlike trade colonies, settlement colonies everywhere gradually evolved to some form of economic (and social) integration that has endangered languages other than those of the colonising European nation, or one adopted by it.[6]

The balance sheet has of course involved more losses than gains, but we must always remember that the outcome of the contacts of population and of languages in settlement colonies anywhere, including Australia and New Zealand, has not consisted of losses only. This is especially important because we do not know what

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[5] As explained in Mufwene (2000, 2001), the criteria for the distinction are social, not structural. The geographical or socio-economic distinction simply serves to identify places that coincide with the spurious opposition widely accepted to date in linguistics between creole and non-creole languages. We need not discuss this question here. Suffice it to note the emergence of new language varieties, regardless of whether they are considered as new dialects of the same European colonial languages or as separate languages.

[6] The latter was the case for English in Suriname, which evolved into creoles such as Saramaccan, Sranan and Ndjuka. Dutch serves as the language of the elite in this former plantation settlement colony, not as a vernacular. Almost the same is true of the Netherlands Antilles, where Papiamentu, a creole largely lexified by Portuguese, functions as a vernacular.

the future of creoles is, nor whether American and Australian Englishes will be considered as new dialects of English or as separate languages a couple of centuries from now, if nothing changes in the present world order and in the dynamics of the coexistence of languages.

The question of the future of creoles is relevant, because the former plantation settlement colonies in which they developed have had an economic history different from those of non-plantation settlement colonies, which are more industrialised. After the abolition of slavery, plantation settlement colonies evolved economically on a hybrid model between the non-plantation settlement colonies and the exploitation colonies (explained below). With the exception of those that have become French overseas *départements*, most of the former plantation settlement colonies have not industrialised and belong in the LIC bloc of nations, marginally engaged in the recent trend of world or regional global economy. The mass of their populations is under hardly any pressure to speak a language (variety) other than Creole. Jamaica is a good example, with Patois gaining in vitality.

The above considerations are simply a reminder that, just as colonisation has not been uniform worldwide, the vitality of languages has not been uniformly affected everywhere, not even in former settlement colonies. In future research, it will help to examine the social structures of these former colonies in terms of which have majority European populations and which do not, whether this has some correlation with economic development, and to what extent particular patterns of interaction across language or dialect boundaries are linked to the process of language endangerment.

It is also worth determining the extent to which settlement is advanced in a particular territory and what can be learned about the factors that bring about language endangerment. If the documentation provided by Nettle and Romaine (2000) is accurate, why are there proportionally more Native American languages surviving in Canada than in the USA, and why are there more indigenous languages still spoken in Latin America than in North America? Are these differences a consequence of variation in colonisation patterns within the settlement style (including patterns of interaction with the indigenous populations), are they a consequence of variation in the physical ecologies of the settlement colonies, or do they reflect a combination of both factors? For example, can the size and density of the Amazon forest be overlooked as a factor in the survival of indigenous languages in a large part of South America – any more than the role of rain forests in the preservation of linguistic diversity elsewhere? Is this phenomenon entirely different from Nettle's (1999) and Nettle and Romaine's (2000) observation that the greatest linguistic diversity obtains along the equatorial forest, in a worldwide belt between the tropics?

We cannot be shocked by the fact that indigenous languages have survived the most in exploitation colonies, which have typically replaced and expanded former trade colonies of Africa and Asia since the mid- or late-nineteenth century. Even

those languages that have died or are moribund in these territories have suffered not from European colonial languages but from other indigenous languages that have been favoured by the new socio-economic ecologies implemented by European colonisers (e.g. Swahili in East Africa, Wolof in Senegal, and Town Bemba in Zambia).

Although both settlement and exploitation colonies developed from trade colonies, in part as the consequence of European commercial greed in wanting to control the sources of raw materials and other products needed in Europe, very few colonisers planned or decided to build new homes in the exploitation colonies. As the term *exploitation colony* suggests, these colonies were intended to be exploited for the enrichment of the European metropole. The colonisers were generally civil servants or companies' employees who served limited terms and had to retire back in Europe. With the help of missionaries and their schools, they generally developed an intermediary class of indigenous bureaucrats or low-level administrators through which they communicated with the local populations or they themselves learned the most important of the local languages, but they encouraged no more than this local colonial elite to learn scholastic varieties of their languages (Brutt-Griffler 2002).

Instituting economic systems that generally reaped raw materials to be processed in metropolitan industry, the colonisers fostered a two-tiered economic system in which the overwhelming mass of the population continues to communicate in the ethnic languages or in the (new) locally-based lingua francas, such as Lingala in the Congo Basin, Sango along the Ubangi River, Swahili in East Africa, Wolof in Senegal, Songhay in parts of West Africa east of Senegal (along Arab north-south trade routes), Hausa in Nigeria, Fanagalo in the Copper Belt extending from South Africa to Zambia, and Bazaar Malay in South-East Asia. In a few places, such as Nigeria, Cameroon and Papua New Guinea, pidgins based on European languages were developing from naturalistic, trial-and-error attempts to communicate in these languages (without a teacher) by the mass of the population who participated in the lower sector of the colonial economy. The expansion of these pidgins into major lingua francas sometimes competed with, but did not eliminate (the development of), other indigenous-based lingua francas, such as Pidgin Ewondo in Cameroon or Police Motu in Papua New Guinea.

Overall, as in the case of trade colonisation, these colonial languages were just additions to local repertoires of languages and constituted little threat to the more indigenous ones, which were protected by clear divisions of labour in their functions – with the more indigenous languages functioning as vernaculars and the colonial languages, including the few indigenous ones favoured by the colonial regimes, used as lingua francas. Socio-economic changes of the late colonial and post-colonial periods, with many of the new lingua francas becoming urban vernaculars and with relatively more lucrative jobs based in urban centres and operating in them gave a competitive edge to the new indigenous lingua francas. Ethnic vernaculars fell into attrition in the cities, and the trend is expanding to

some rural areas. The collapse of LIC economies and the increasing relative economic importance and lure of urban centres, which led to rural exodus, compounded to further erode the beneficial significance of rural indigenous languages. Still, these have been eroded not by the European languages but by the indigenous lingua francas be they traditional (such as Swahili, according to Nurse and Spear 1985) or new (such as Lingala).

We really must remember that in the evolution of languages, the balance sheets from European contact with other countries look very different in settlement colonies than in their exploitation counterparts. An important reason is that the colonial agents were less socially and psychologically invested in the exploitation colonies than were the colonists in settlement colonies. The latter considered their colonies as their homes (Crosby 1986) and the patterns of their interactions with the indigenous populations gradually moved from sporadic to regular, with the involvement of the indigenous populations in the local economy growing from marginal to engaged. Also, unlike in exploitation colonies, where the European colonisers remained a small, though powerful, minority, the colonists in non-plantation settlement colonies (the continental Americas, Australia and New Zealand) became the overwhelming majorities and instituted socio-economic systems that function totally in their own dominant language.

Once demarginalised and now relatively absorbed minorities, the indigenous populations in former settlement colonies have felt more and more pressure on them to also speak the majority languages for their economic survival, especially after the transformation of their physical ecologies made it impossible for them to continue their traditional economic systems. Their gradual assimilation to the mainstream made it less and less necessary for their children to learn their ancestral language or even stick to their traditions. Demographics have played a more important role in language loss than has been highlighted in the relevant literature. In most former exploitation colonies, the local people did not even feel the same pressure to shift, because they remained the overwhelming majorities who in the rural areas have barely been affected by the economic and political transformations undergone by their territories, including the formation of nation-states. Most of them have not even had options other than to continue operating in their traditional world or, at best, to work in the low-cost colonial and post-colonial labour system that does not require a European language.

In fact, the new world order in former exploitation colonies is such that even the elite participating in the interfacing sector of the economy have had no pressure, except from their own personal attitudes, to give up their indigenous languages. If anything, unless they decided to sever links with their ancestral customs, the pressure has been just the opposite: to preserve competence in the ancestral languages in order to continue interacting with relatives in the rural areas.

The closest approximation of European values is evident in the development of urban societies, in which traditional and colonial ways have mixed and the new

indigenous lingua francas (such as Wolof, Swahili and Lingala) have gained economic power and prestige, and have gradually displaced (other) ancestral ethnic languages. It is these that can be said to have endangered indigenous languages, to the extent that some rural populations have been shifting to the urban vernaculars, abandoning some of their traditional cultural values for those practised in the city. On the other hand, the city has also been perceived as the source of some negative transformations and the main beneficiary of economic progress at the expense of the rural environment. Negative attitudes towards it have often been concurrent with resistance to its language, thus providing the ethnic languages an identity function that has slowed down their demise.

In the same vein, unemployment in cities and the ever-growing size of the proletariat in African and other LICs have also disfavoured the usage of European languages. There are fewer and fewer incentives for speaking these languages which have sometimes been interpreted as a means of exploitation by indigenous rulers. Even in more prosperous former exploitation colonies such as Singapore and Malaysia, European languages have continued to function primarily as bridges with the world outside the home, or outside the ethnic group or neighbourhood, or outside the country.[7] Otherwise, it remains natural to communicate with members of an inner group in an indigenous, or non-European, language.

We should thus not overrate the importance of European languages regarding language endangerment. The experience in former exploitation colonies has certainly not been the same as in former settlement colonies, although European colonisation has undeniably spread European languages to territories where they were not spoken 400 years ago. Moreover, former plantation settlement colonies reveal features of both exploitation and settlement colonies. They are like the latter in that the indigenous languages have generally disappeared, due to the rapid and dramatic deaths of their speakers or to the relocations of indigenous populations to places where they discontinued speaking their languages.

The settlement colonies are also similar in that several immigrants lost the languages of their homeland. The homestead period in these settlement colonies must have exerted a serious negative founder effect on the languages of the enslaved Africans. They were originally integrated as small minorities in the homesteads, which were isolated from each other. They had nobody with whom to speak their languages within the homestead, and in the rare events that they happened to know somebody on another homestead who spoke the same language, there was not enough regular interaction to have permitted the active retention of

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[7] As noted above, my categories of colonization styles are not perfect and need refining. Singapore is definitely not a typical former exploitation colony. To date, the Malays, the most indigenous of its current almost fully Asian population, represent less than 15 per cent of the total, as opposed to more than 75 per cent of Chinese. However, neither is Singapore a European-dominant settlement colony and it developed its present socio-economic structure after independence. Time will determine whether its ethnolinguistic diversity will survive the promotion of English as their common language by its political leaders.

that common language. Attrition and loss were simply caused by lack of opportunities to interact in the African languages.[8] Their Creole children learned to speak the colonial languages as their vernaculars and they would in fact become the models emulated by the mass of bozal slaves of the plantation period, those slaves who had recently arrived from Africa and were most likely to work in the field.

While the colonies were growing from homestead societies to plantation societies, Creole slaves were typically preferred to bozal slaves, as they were generally more familiar with the local customs and vernaculars (see, for example, Berlin 1998). They were often spared the hardship of working as field hands, and they thought of themselves as superior to the bozal slaves, whom they had the responsibility of seasoning. This process entailed acculturating the bozal slaves to the local vernacular. The constant decrease in opportunities to speak African languages, especially in socio-economic settings marked by high societal multilingualism, fostered more and more erosion of the African languages, and eventually their loss. The situation is somewhat reminiscent of how rural populations have been absorbed over the past century in sub-Saharan African cities, except that here the existence of ethnic neighbourhoods has slowed down the process of language shift.

As in sub-Saharan African cities, the African slaves formed the overwhelming majority of the plantation societies. People of European descent have been small minorities, with small subsets of them emerging as affluent. Yet, the countries that evolved from such plantation societies still contain large proletarian majorities that speak Creole and identify socio-economically with it. Because of lack of incentives in an economic system depending on foreign markets and industry, participating only marginally in the world's global economy, and becoming poorer and poorer, Creole has gained more vitality in relation to the acrolectal language varieties spoken by the upper class. In places such as Jamaica and Haiti, it is also clear that the overt prestige of a language does not necessarily guarantee its vitality. The underprivileged do not necessarily aspire to the varieties spoken by the more affluent members of their societies, especially if these varieties will not improve their conditions. The fact of being economically disfranchised is often a good reason for despising supposedly prestigious varieties.

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[8] This does not mean that the African languages died soon after their speakers arrived in the colonies. In Haiti, some African languages were apparently used as secret codes during the Revolution wars (Ans 1996, Manessy 1996). The fact that Voodoo and Kumina rituals contain remnants of African languages is also evidence that some African languages continued to be spoken up to the nineteenth, or perhaps the early twentieth, century, although they did not function as vernaculars. The few languages that seem to have assumed this function were reintroduced with the importation of indentured labourers from specific ethnic groups that remained segregated from the mainstream of slave descendants, who speak European-based languages. This was the case of Trinidad Yoruba, which was spoken up to the mid-twentieth century (Warner-Lewis 1996). However, the gradual integration of speakers of such languages eventually led to their demise. Usage of some African languages in nineteenth-century Haiti can certainly be associated with the bozal slaves who arrived soon before the Haitian Revolution.

3. Why Speakers Shift Languages: What Linguists Should Not Ignore

As argued in Mufwene (in press), prestige alone will not favour a particular language (variety) over others. Shifting to a particular language is typically associated with particular benefits to be derived from its usage, especially economic benefits. Otherwise, speakers stick to the languages they have traditionally spoken, although they may learn another one for interaction with outsiders. However, even this behaviour is benefit-driven. Most LIC populations will not shift to European languages, because the alternatives are not likely to improve their conditions. In the first place, the division of labour that relies on indigenous lingua francas in the lower sectors of the economy (in which most of the workforce are engaged) even makes it unnecessary to target a European language, because the jobs associated with them are very few.

Immigrants to the New World and Australia shifted to the dominant languages because they had emerged as the only languages of the colonies' economic systems and they had something to gain from the shift, or at least they avoided the danger of not being able to compete at all in the new labour markets. Although slaves gave up their languages because they often had nobody else to speak them with, an important reason why their children never bothered to learn their parents' languages (just like children in African cities) is that they had everything to gain in speaking the colonial languages as fluently as they could.

Now the question arises of whether linguists can help some languages to thrive by encouraging their speakers to have pride in their ancestral heritage, even if they lack control over situations that have led them to give up their languages. Over the past decade language endangerment has become a major preoccupation among linguists. In a seminal article (1992), Michael Krauss instilled a certain amount of guilt among linguists, accusing them of negligence to the vitality of the subject matter of their own research: languages. The number of publications has increased since then. They have typically blamed the European colonisation of the past 400 years and today's global economy for this state of affairs. Some linguists have even spoken of "killer languages", which are held guilty of linguicide (by analogy with homicide) as if languages had independent lives and weapons of their own.

The issues have sometimes become confusing, especially when language preservation and language maintenance are confused as one and the same (see below), and the very linguists whose party line is that language is primarily oral and spoken have privileged the school system and the written medium as ways of saving the endangered languages. Very little scholarship has been invested in understanding the ecology of language and what it takes to sustain the vitality of a language, especially in territories where several languages have coexisted apparently happily with one another under an efficient division of labour in the repertoires that contain them. As explained in note 1, languages have no lives that are independent of their speakers. Therefore, languages do not kill languages; their own speakers do, in giving them up, although they themselves are victims of changes in the socio-economic ecologies in which they evolve. Solutions that focus

on the victims rather than on the causes of their plights are just as bad as environmental solutions that would focus on affected species rather than on the ecologies that affect the species.

European colonisation of the past four centuries has certainly contributed to the predicament of languages around the world, as it has introduced new socio-economic world orders that have pre-empted the usefulness of some languages. However, it is helpful to put things in historical perspective too. Language shift and language loss are neither new nor recent phenomena, as evidenced by the curious fact that only 3 per cent of the world's languages are spoken in Europe (Mayor and Bindé 2001), although it is one of the most densely populated parts of the world. Today's prevalence of English (a Germanic language) in the United Kingdom and of Romance languages in south-western Europe has been accomplished at the expense of Celtic languages, only a handful of which are still spoken today. Likewise, the Indo-European languages have spread and prevailed in territories where other languages, survived today by Basque and Finnish, for example, used to be spoken.

The *Stammbaums* ('family trees') of genetic linguistics, which illustrate language diversification and therefore an increase in the number of languages, have masked the concomitant loss of indigenous languages replaced by the new, Indo-European languages. Things seem to have proceeded in the same way as they have recently, with some languages prevailing at the expense of others and being transformed in the process, becoming new varieties and eventually being recognised as separate languages. It would be informative to learn why and how Basque and Finnish survived the dispersal of Indo-European languages, while the majority of others vanished. We could then investigate similarities and differences between what happened then and what is happening now, and why some populations just cannot preserve their languages against the invaders while some invaders (e.g. the Norse and Norman French in England and the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi) have actually given up their own languages.

Linguists have typically bemoaned loss of linguistic, especially typological, diversity. Rarely have they focused on speakers themselves in terms of motivation and costs and benefits to them in giving up their languages. Seldom have they addressed the question of whether the survival of a language would entail more adequate adaptations of its speakers to the changing socio-economic ecologies. They have decried the loss of ancestral cultures as if cultures were static systems and the emergence of new ones in response to changing ecologies was necessarily maladaptive. The following questions arise from this particular approach to change: Are the ancestral cultures more adaptive to the current world order than the new ones? Are the peculiarities of the lost or endangered languages more informative about the nature of universal grammar as a biological endowment for language than are those that have survived and the new ones that have emerged? None of the treatises cited at the outset of this article addresses these questions.

It should help to recall that much of the concern for language endangerment has been modelled on environmentalists' concern about the degradation of our physical ecology due to modern industry. Like linguists, environmentalists are ecologists, scholars who have specialised in the co-evolution of species and their environments. We would really be their counterparts if there were a research area in linguistics specialising in the coevolution of speakers, their socio-economic ecologies, and their languages. The concern for language endangerment seems to have caught linguists off guard and we have been prescribing remedies without the requisite understanding of the socio-economic dynamics that have affected the vitality of languages negatively or positively in different parts of the world throughout human history.

There is another important point of difference. Environmentalists are concerned with the environment relative to humans, with the way we have coexisted with other species, and with how we have been affected by what affects them and vice versa. Their case for the preservation of biodiversity has been less for the benefit of their discipline than for various residents of our planet. However, things are not so similar in the literature on language endangerment. If languages are there to serve their speakers, it is strange that the costs and benefits to the latter have been overlooked for so long! Because languages do not have independent lives from their speakers, it is bizarre that the hosts, whose socio-economic behaviours affect them, have been ignored.

Such literature could likewise have bemoaned language change, as this process substitutes one kind of (sub)system for another. The literature has ignored the fact that speakers make their languages as they speak; and cultures are being shaped as members of particular communities behave in specific ways. These are dynamic systems that keep evolving as people behave linguistically and otherwise and as they keep adapting these systems to new situations. That is, languages co-evolve with their speakers. Language shift, which is the main cause of language endangerment and death, is part of this adaptive co-evolution, as speakers endeavour to meet their day-to-day communicative needs. It is not so much that linguistic changes are bringing about cultural changes, but that linguistic changes echo cultural changes. That is, language shift is no more than an adaptive response to changes in a particular culture, most of which I have identified as a socio-economic ecology. Arguments for language maintenance without arguments for concurrent changes in the present socio-economic ecologies of speakers seem to ignore the centrality of native speakers to the whole situation.

To suggest that native speakers will maintain or preserve their cultures if they continue speaking their language is to ignore the fact that in the first place they would not stop speaking it if they valued its association with their ancestral culture over their necessary adaptation to the current world order – a simple matter of prioritising things in their struggle for survival. The position in the average literature on the subject is also tantamount to assuming that language and culture go hand in hand, that only one language can best mirror or convey a particular

culture, and that another language cannot be adapted to convey it. Sapir (1921) argues convincingly for decoupling language and culture as separate systems.[9] The literature of indigenised English and African French, for example, have made it quite obvious that a language can be adapted to a different culture – which gives more meaning to the notion of "language appropriation" (so much preferred by Chaudenson (2001) over those of "language learning" or "language acquisition"). So populations shifting to another language have always had the option of adapting the new language to their ancestral culture. After all, it is generally influenced by their substrate systems and typically develops into a new variety.

We can perhaps argue that a language mirrors a culture because it is itself part of a culture. Changes affecting it reflect changes in a particular culture. Arguing for its maintenance when the population of its speakers behaves differently reflects a value judgement on the part of the linguist, who rates the ancestral culture more highly than the one that is being fashioned by the speakers' linguistic behaviour. A problem then arises when nothing is being done or advocated to change the ecology, to which speakers adapt. Linguists are thus different from environmentalists, who have realised that the survival of a particular species depends largely on restoring the ecology in which it thrives. Curiously, linguists' proposal for rescuing endangered languages (as articulated in, for example, Crystal 2000; Nettle and Romaine 2000) suggests that speakers must continue their traditional communicative behaviours regardless of changing socio-economic ecologies. Somebody should explain how adaptive such resistance to changing ecologies is or how a language can continue to be spoken as a vernacular when the ecological structures that used to support it barely survive.

As there are countries such as Taiwan which have succeeded in appropriating the Western capitalist economic system without losing much of the Chinese culture and language, it is obviously clear that other countries could have taken that path. It should help to know why they did not choose to do so. And the following question also remains: Can the process be reversed in nations whose cultural and linguistic experiences have been different, and under what realistic conditions?

In this context, it becomes important to distinguish between *language maintenance* (sustaining an ecology in which a population can continue to speak their language) and *language preservation* (recording texts from a particular language graphically or mechanically). If the current ecology cannot be changed, should not linguists be more realistic and focus on language preservation (Paul Newman 1998 and forthcoming) rather than on maintenance? Such a response would of course also

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[9] See especially Chapter 8: "Language, culture, and race" (207–20 in the 1949 printing). In the particular case of Athabaskan, Sapir states: "The cultural adaptability of the Athabaskan-speaking peoples is in the strangest contrast to the inaccessibility to foreign influences of the languages themselves" (214). Invoking factors that are subsumed by what I have identified here as *socio-economic ecology*, he writes: "A common language cannot indefinitely set the seal on a common culture when the geographical, political, and economic determinants of the culture are no longer the same throughout its area" (215). Much of my discussion capitalizes on this view.

entail investing more time into understanding natural laws that since the beginnings of humanity, and through colonisation, have regulated language shift, the loss of some languages, the emergence of new ones, and the balance sheets of losses and gains at different states in history. Then we would be able to deal with language endangerment with justifications other than benefits and costs to linguistics. My position remains that costs and benefits to speakers as individuals adapting to socio-economic changes that affect them should have played a more central role than is evident from the literature to date. Even from an environmentalist perspective, in which all members of an econiche matter, speakers are far more important to our planet than their languages, which are being lost through their own communicative practices.

Scholars such as Nettle and Romaine (2000, cited here because they have the most explicit discussion of all publications on this subject in 2000 and 2001) argue that a certain amount of traditional folk knowledge of their environments is lost with dying languages. The observation is undeniably true, but it fails to note that the environment itself is changing and this particular knowledge may be becoming quite irrelevant to it. Moreover, the culture and this specific knowledge must have been eroding concurrently with the language itself, if not before it; otherwise they would be transferred to the new language. One way or another, insisting on the utility of the endangered language and on bilingualism, when the socio-economic ecology can no longer sustain them, suggests that a language can be sustained regardless of whether or not it really contributes to the socialisation of the young into new realities. Yet experience everywhere suggests that linguistic behaviour is profit-driven (Bourdieu 1991). Speakers would like to invest not only in forms and structures that maximise their linguistic capital but also in a language that is beneficial to them. Individual multilingualism is possible typically when it is advantageous to the speaker. It is perhaps not by accident that in highly stratified societies multilinguals seem to be the most numerous in the lower classes. In societies that are typically monolingual, multilingualism is practised by those who can travel outside their communities and interact with outsiders. Not everyone has a vested interest in speaking more than one language. A profile of individuals or communities that give up their languages in favour of others should be informative in future research.

4.   Colonisation and Globalisation: Not Such New Phenomena

The current literature on language endangerment has presented the phenomenon primarily as one of the negative side-effects of European expansion and colonisation of most of the non-European world over the past half millennium. It is true that the geographical and political extent of European expansion has been unprecedented, for example when the size of the British Commonwealth, as discontinuous as it has been, is compared with that of the Roman Empire a millennium earlier. However, putting things in perspective, the difference in size is also seen to be a function of differences in modes of communication. About 1,500 years ago, the size of the Roman Empire was certainly also unprecedented, in fact

it was too large to have central control over, at least under the conditions of the time. Easier and faster transportation systems since the fifteenth century have allowed the European conquest of territories much farther away from the metropole. Easier and faster means of communication (especially with the invention of the telegraph and telephone, of the radio and television, and now of the Internet) have facilitated the political, military and economic controls of larger and larger colonies, making the world look even smaller. Improvements in control techniques have also facilitated the control of more and more aspects of the colonies.

However, today's colonisation differs from that of earlier times more in size and complexity than in kind. It is not so common to refer to the dispersal of the Bantu populations from the southern Nigeria and western Cameroon area into central and southern Africa as colonisation. The same applies to the spread of Indo-Europeans from Asia Minor to Europe. In reality, these are instances of colonisation, at least in the population-genetics sense of relocation to a new territory. As Nettle and Romaine (2000) point out, agriculturalists generally colonised hunter-gatherers and imposed their economic systems on them. Thus the Bantu populations have largely assimilated or decimated the Pygmies and Khoisans in central and southern Africa, and only a few of these latter populations remain today as distinct minorities in a wide area considered to be Bantu. Of the non-Indo-European languages that preceded the European languages, Basque, Finnish, and Lap are notorious exceptions whose survival conditions need uncovering. Basque is an especially interesting case, because it has survived both the Indo-European and Roman colonisations, although it has lost a lot of its geographical space. Much of the present linguistic map of Western Europe represents consequences of language shift, under colonisation, for Roman or Germanic languages. Celtic languages have become moribund minorities in a wide territory, from Germany to the British Isles, that used to be dominated by the Celts (Green 1998).

We stand to learn a lot by trying to understand similarities and differences between those earlier forms of colonisation, and between them and the recent European phenomenon of the past 400 years. For example, both the British Isles and the southern part of Western Europe were colonised by the Romans. In both places Latin was the colonial language, but the Romance languages have developed only in the latter. The subsequent colonisation of the British Isles by the Germanics can perhaps be invoked to explain this difference. However, we cannot ignore the fact that following Roman colonisation, Iberia was dominated first by the Arabs and then by the Visigoths, and France was dominated by the Frankish. Also noteworthy in this context is the fact that the colonisation of England by the Norman French caused no language shift of the kind that would produce a new language from that of the colonisers. Its main consequence was the development of the ancestor of today's Standard English varieties.

Also significant is the fact that, as in former exploitation colonies of Asia and Africa, it was after the colonisers had left that the important proportions of the

indigenous populations adopted the coloniser's language in today's Romance Europe. Can we assume that if the Germanics had not settled permanently in the British Isles, these territories would have become Romance too? Or should other factors be taken into account? Why did the Arab, Visigoth, Frankish and Norman colonisations of Iberia, France and England not have the same effects regarding the vitality of indigenous and colonial languages as did the Roman and Germanic colonisations of the same territories? Did all these cases involve colonisation of the same style, such as settlement or exploitation? If so, how did they vary?

There are nevertheless similarities between England and North America in the styles of their settlement colonisation by outsiders and in the fates of their indigenous languages. When the Germanics settled in England, they drove the Celts westwards and later they assimilated the survivors. So did the Europeans in North America, obtaining concessions on the eastern coast of North America and driving the indigenous populations westwards. Eventually, they assimilated the survivors, after the American Revolution (which was primarily the independence of European colonists from England) and the present United States had been formed.

Native Americans were really not brought into American politics and recognised as American citizens until late in the nineteenth century, and this assimilation process in itself was quite reminiscent of the gradual absorption of the Celts in the British Isles by the Germanic invaders. Colonised since the fifth century, some Celts such as the Irish did not become subjects of the United Kingdom and have to speak English as a vernacular until the nineteenth century, long after Oliver Cromwell had initiated the settlement colonisation of Ireland in the seventeenth century and potato plantations had become one of its major industries. In both cases, the loss of indigenous languages did not start until the assimilation of the local people to the current socio-economic system.[10]

Noteworthy in all such cases is the fact that absorption of the indigenous population by the colonisers has generally led to the loss of indigenous languages, especially when the colonised are kept in a subordinate position. The critical factor is their involvement in an economic system in which they must use the language of the new ruler in order to compete in the labour force and function adaptively. This is an aspect of globalisation as homogenisation, requiring that things work more or less the same way in the colony as in the metropole, especially in the exercise of power and control of the working class. Here similarities may be seen between the Germanicisation of England and the rest of the British Isles, the Islamicisation of North Africa and Iberia, and the Romanisation of south-western Europe. To the questions asked above about differential impacts of colonisation, the following can be added: Why did the eastern Roman Empire, which was colonised for longer, not undergo the same kind of language shift as did the western empire?

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[10]The case of Scotland is different because this was more a merger of kingdoms than regular colonisation. English was not imposed by the English (thus Germanic) refugees but adopted by an enthusiastic Scottish monarch who loved both an English princess and her language.

Did the Romans colonise territories of their empire on the exploitation model and is their departure comparable to the recent independence of European exploitation colonies? If so, what are the specific ecological factors that account for language shift in their western empire? Why has a similar evolution not taken place in sub-Saharan Africa, where any serious danger to minor indigenous ethnic languages arises more from the expansion of the indigenous lingua francas than from the European colonial languages (Mufwene 2001)?[11]

One noteworthy social ecological factor here is that Roman soldiers and administrators married into the local communities and obviously transmitted their language to their children. The latter, who shared power with their parents, also used their Romance languages (i.e. Celticised Vulgar Latin, such as today's Africanised French) in ruling their countries, continuing basically the same Roman administrative style. In sub-Saharan Africa, segregation was the rule and cross-race unions were relatively rare. Most such unions occurred between the European merchants with African women, but the merchants had no political or administrative power and were more disposed to speaking indigenous languages. Their children had barely more advantages than the more indigenous colonial elite, who had the same kind of colonial education and, as noted above, have not given up the indigenous languages.

Overall, as auxiliaries to colonial rule, the African elite were just intermediaries between, on the one hand, the indigenous populations and, on the other, the European colonisers. They worked for the latter but socialised more with the less-privileged indigenous mass than with their rulers. Thus, their usage of European colonial languages was highly circumscribed, despite their additional function as lingua francas between those from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds who did not share an indigenous lingua franca. Even the few mulattoes that were to be found were still under pressure to speak African languages in order to be integrated in the majority populations.

While running post-independence Africa, the elite have generally tried to maintain the socio-economic structure of colonial sub-Saharan Africa, although they have had more success in maintaining the linguistic division of labour than in sustaining the colonial economic (infra)structure. The decline of their nations' economies has in fact favoured the indigenous lingua francas over the European official languages. In the United Republic of Tanzania, Swahili has been promoted at the expense of English (although it is debatable how successful the policy has been), and in cities such as Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) Lingala has gained more prestige than French in modern popular culture, where French is often derided.

Former plantation settlement colonies are somewhat like sub-Saharan African

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[11]Exceptions to this observation appear to be Gabon, where French is spoken by the urban population, and Mozambique, where the protracted liberation war promoted Portuguese as the lingua franca of the liberation fighters and the major lingua franca of the post-independence state.

countries in that language varieties of the proletarian masses are far from being endangered by the acrolects that were privileged by the colonial systems. As a matter of fact, former English and French plantation settlement colonies were, to all intents and purposes, converted into exploitation colonies after emancipation. They were assigned administrators from the colonial metropoles. The economic systems of all these territories, which are still in the LIC group, have remained generally the same as those of sub-Saharan African countries, with the exception of French overseas *départements* whose economic discrepancies from the metropole are just being addressed now. Haiti, which became independent in 1804, before emancipation in the remaining colonies, shows perhaps the highest proportion of creole speakers. As Dejean (1993) points out, the only vernacular of the overwhelming majority of the Haitian population is far from being threatened by French.[12]

Yet students of language endangerment cannot continue to dodge interesting questions that arise from variation in colonisation styles. These linguistic developments are like natural evolution in population genetics, where it is absolutely imperative to understand what ecological factors bring about particular consequences for varying species in an econiche. The non-uniform linguistic consequences of colonisation over the world makes it compelling for linguists to have to investigate and better understand the socio-economic factors that affect language vitality, favouring colonial languages in some settings but indigenous ones in others.

It is also obvious that many of the developments today have antecedents in earlier history, especially in the colonisation of England by the Germanics and of south-western Europe by the Romans. Adequate interpretations of those earlier cases depend partly on how well we understand recent developments and what parallels we find between the latter and the former. In turn, our understanding of the past will shed new light on different aspects of what we thought we already understood about the present.

5. Imperial Languages and Language Endangerment: A Myth that Cannot Go On

As noted in Section 1, *globalisation* also applies to "the emergence of international

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[12]According to Dejean, 95 per cent of Haitians are monolingual in creole (77), many of them do not interact with French speakers (78), and members of the French-speaking elite also speak creole (76). The latter situation is similar to that of the African elite explained above. Moreover, the proletarian mass of creole speakers does not even aspire to speaking French (79). Although the size of the proletariat is apparently much greater in Haiti than other Caribbean islands, the situation described by Dejean has counterparts in them. It may in fact develop in the direction of the same Haitian extreme if their economies do not improve. In places such as Jamaica, patois seems to have gained more vitality over the past few decades, or perhaps acrolectal speakers have become more uncomfortable with speaking their variety in domains where patois is becoming the norm and where the acrolect carries no particular prestige, such as in music and local cuisine.

and regional economic networks with blurred national boundaries" as well as to "the economic monopoly that highly industrialised countries have exercised over LICs for raw materials and as outlets of their technology". It has thus led world languages such as English and French to compete with each other as imperial or hegemonic languages. These are languages that need not serve as lingua francas among the elite of the indigenous populations (although they often do) but are primarily needed to interface local economies (regardless of how globalised they are) with foreign and more globalised systems. For example, French in Haiti is needed to maintain some economic ties with France, although the elite also use it to isolate themselves from the proletarian masses (DeGraff 2002). Taiwan and Hong Kong could apparently manage locally with their Chinese varieties and without English, but they use this language to maintain their global associations with the United States and the United Kingdom. Malaysia and Singapore could probably also do without English and use only Malay as their national lingua franca if their economies did not depend so largely on American and British markets. More and more LICs, especially in Africa, have become arenas where English and French are competing with each other for monopoly.

To be sure, French as an imperial language (not as a vernacular!) has been losing ground to English in many places around the world. Works such as Hagège (2000), joined by Crystal (2000), Nettle and Romaine (2000), and Renard (2001), decry this English expansionism. They connect it with the McDonaldisation of the world or the worldwide spread of American movies and other cultural products. In fact, as if to trivialise the language endangerment "problem", *La Francophonie* claims that French is endangered by English. In a March 2002 posting in *The Linguist*, the British Professor Geoffrey Sampson made a similar absurd observation, apparently confusing the French population's now better disposition to use English as a lingua franca with an unfounded fear of seeing it used as a vernacular in France or francophone Belgium. There is no evidence of such an evolution yet in these strongholds of French as a vernacular, not even in Quebec, where the economic pressure for such a development is stronger.

Interestingly, McDonald's outlets around the world operate in the local lingua francas, if not their vernaculars (as in the case of France and Germany). Hollywood films are often translated into local lingua francas/vernaculars, although the music lyrics are not. Those who learn in English to partake in American pop culture do not even dream of using it as a vernacular — which is true of many parts of the world, including France, Germany, Latin America and Russia. What we learn here is that exportation of desirable technology often carries along the language and culture of the powerful manufacturer. However, in the vast majority of places where the imperial languages were not already adopted during the colonial period, the languages are being learned as international lingua francas. An older imperial language may become less attractive if it becomes globally less advantageous to speak it. The competition in such cases is resolved on the basis of costs and benefits to the local population. It makes little sense to characterise the losing imperial language as endangered.

Practical considerations prevail a great deal more than linguists have acknowledged. Proximity to North America has made English more attractive than French to many Haitians today. Economic or technological aid from the United States (even if only symbolic), rather than ideological drives on the part of France to propagate French culture, has made English more attractive to several LICs. Economic and professional incentives have made English an asset, albeit as a second lingua franca, even to local francophone professionals. In any case, we cannot lose sight of the fact that imperial languages are far from becoming vernaculars in those places where the elite still use their indigenous languages in domains associated with their local cultures. It is contradictory on the part of linguists to advocate multilingualism as a possible solution for the survival of languages around the world and yet discourage people from appropriating international languages that should allow them to satisfy personal economic and other cultural interests. There would perhaps be a cause to worry if the hegemonic languages were becoming vernaculars, but they are not, except in former settlement colonies, where it is too late to reverse the course of events. Even in places such as Singapore and Hong Kong, where English is widely spoken among Asians of different ethnolinguistic backgrounds, my impression is that the indigenous languages are far from being threatened by it.

There is an exaggerated view of language endangerment as a uniform problem, based only on numbers of speakers without consideration of history. This is best illustrated with Nettle and Romaine's (2000) inventory of the world's most widely spoken languages, which includes Chinese varieties, Bengali, Hindi, Japanese, Javanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Telugu alongside colonial/imperial languages, viz. English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Arabic. It is partly corroborated by the following list of "eight most widely spoken languages" produced by Mayor and Bindé (2001, 334): Chinese, English, Hindi, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Portuguese and French.

There is no doubt that colonisation of one style or another in the distant past accounts for the fact that all these languages are so widely spoken. The history of the world is marked by regular waves of population movement on small and large scales, with the stronger people assimilating or displacing those they did not kill. This is as true of the current distribution of the Bantu languages as it is of Indo-European languages.[13] Asia is no exception, and the current movement for the independence of Tibet from China is but an evolution from that old expansionist colonisation which brought together populations speaking different languages.

To be sure, with the exception of Arabic, all the non-European languages in the above lists function today primarily as vernaculars rather than lingua francas. They are also dispersed worldwide, with diasporic communities that are largely a consequence of European colonisation and its demand for labour. Even when they

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[13] See, for example, James Newman (1995), Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) and Mufwene (2001) regarding the present linguistic landscape of Africa, Martinet (1986) and Renfew (1988) for the dispersal of Indo-European, and Cavalli-Sforza (2000) regarding the world overall.

are spoken outside their homelands, Chinese, Hindi, Bengali, Japanese, Javanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Telugu function primarily as vernaculars among transplanted people from the same ethnolinguistic background. Thus, in North America and Europe, Chinese is spoken typically in Chinatowns (although we cannot even take it for granted that the younger generation is acquiring it in these neighbourhoods).

The other languages (English, French, Arabic, etc.) are recent hegemonic languages that owe their large numbers of speakers mainly to their lingua franca function. English and French in particular have more non-native than native speakers. While Chinese vernaculars may be a real threat to some Tibetan languages, they hardly compete with English in North America, the United Kingdom or the Caribbean. As noted above, English, French and Arabic are certainly no danger to many languages in the LICs, where they are spoken as second-language varieties, for highly circumscribed functions, and only by small fractions of the indigenous population. Likewise, despite France's present commitment to the economic development of its overseas *départements* (mainly by supporting their infrastructures for tourism), there is no indication that French is a threat to *créole* in these territories. Similar doubt can be cast about all territories where creoles have coexisted with their lexifiers and have derived much vitality from association with the cultures of the disfranchised proletarian majorities.[14]

It is also noteworthy that Spanish and Portuguese are widely spoken today largely thanks to the settlement colonisation of several parts of the world by their European speakers since the fifteenth century. Portugal and Spain have no economic or military hegemonies today that would make them threats to other languages outside those same settlement colonies. In more or less the same vein, note that Arabic has become so much associated with Islam that it can hardly stand up to the competition of English and French for the function of international lingua franca, even in those territories of North Africa and the Middle East where Arabic vernaculars are spoken. Reading Nettle and Romaine's statistics (2000) at their face value leads to a misinterpretation of the dynamics of competition and selection among the world's languages.

Also, as noted above, the lingua franca function is scarcely a threat to indigenous languages in those territories where the hegemonic languages do not function as vernaculars. In fact, the best lesson here comes from the fact that standard varieties of the same languages have generally not displaced their nonstandard vernaculars,

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[14]It is fundamentally inaccurate to count Nigeria and India as anglophone countries in the same way as the United States is; or the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the island of Dominica and Viet Nam as francophone in the same way as France, Quebec and Belgium are. Dejean (1993) also finds it problematic to count Haiti, with its overwhelming majority of monolingual creole speakers, as francophone. The only reason for doing so would be in considering Haitian Creole as a French dialect – a position that is defensible diachronically but is likely to be disputed politically, especially by creolists. The same seems to be true of all territories where creoles lexified by European languages have developed.

just as acrolectal varieties have not displaced basilectal and mesolectal ones in creole-speaking territories. In the now-celebrated case of Ocracoke Brogue as an endangered dialect (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1995), the dialect has actually been endangered by other vernacular varieties, not by Standard English. Not even highly stigmatised varieties such as African-American English and Appalachian English are at all threatened by Standard English. French patois, as either traditional Celtic languages or rural non-standard French dialects (*français populaires*), have been threatened by urban colloquial French, not by Standard French. Perhaps one of the very reasons why hegemonic languages are a false perceived threat to indigenous languages in several places around the world is that they are not vernaculars in the first place.

6. Conclusions

Language endangerment is a much more complex subject than most of the literature has led us to think. The process is far from being new in human history. It has been a concomitant of language diversification, which is itself a little-acknow-ledged by-product of language contact, in which a language is influenced by others into whose territory it has been taken or which have been brought into its territory. Such contacts have sometimes caused language shift (instead of sustained bi- or multilingualism). This process is directly related to language loss. The effects of language contact are far from being uniform from one territory to another, being in part correlated with variation in different colonisation styles and in the communicative functions that the new languages have assumed in various territories relative to their indigenous counterparts. They are largely a function of the new economic systems that have replaced the indigenous ones and of the extent to which local people have been absorbed, assimilated or integrated in the current systems.

Integration happens when populations coexist in some sort of peace. This state of affairs makes it ironical and inadequate to speak of language wars, rather than of competition as a coexistence relation in which alternatives have different ethno-graphic values to speakers, such that they often must select one or another alternative during their verbal interactions. It also reveals an interesting point about how language loss occurs, viz. the more highly valued language stealthily endangers the less-highly valued one(s) while speakers, unaware of the long-term effects of their repeated selections, are happy simply to be able to communicate (successfully) with others. The procedure is the same even during periods of enslavement, including the most oppressive, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries in the New World and the Indian Ocean.

Adding significance to the strength of the founder effect, the homestead societies inflicted a devastating blow on the languages of the enslaved Africans, with the Africans of the homestead phase being forced by circumstances to operate only, or most often, in colonial European vernaculars and the plantation-phase slaves being seasoned by Creole slaves into the colonial vernaculars (Chaudenson 2001;

Mufwene 2001). If a few African languages survived until the mid-twentieth century in places such as Trinidad and Brazil, it is largely thanks to the indentured labour system which replaced slavery and brought Africans from ethno-linguistically more homogeneous areas, keeping them in relative segregation from former slaves. These languages would gradually die, concurrently with the integration of (descendants of) these indentured labourers within the populations that preceded them, by the same process that likewise gradually absorbed Asian indentured labourers in the same plantation communities also at the expense of their indigenous languages. This was the same process that absorbed most later immigrants in the dominant socio-economy of the host countries and led them to lose their languages.

These relatively recent incidents of language loss also have precedents in older history. Like the enslaved Africans, the Jews enslaved in Babylon and Egypt had lost their language (Hagège 2000), through absorption in the local socio-economic infrastructure, although they had a low social status and were not integrated. On the other hand, as has been made obvious by the linguistic experience of countries with large indigenous or indigenised proletarian populations, economic marginalisation can produce just the opposite effect. The disfranchised proletarians stick to their indigenous or nonstandard vernaculars as markers of their identity and are forced by circumstances to avoid the language associated with their economic exploitation.

In the big picture of competition and selection among languages, cases of language extinction by genocide remain exceptional. Those due to absorption of demographically or economically less-powerful groups are more typical. The distinction between different colonisation styles was proposed in part to distinguish those territories where peaceful coexistence resulted in language loss from those where it did not.

Language loss is indeed one of the outcomes of competition and selection among languages sharing the same econiche. Competition and selection among languages, not just between indigenous and non-indigenous ones, is similar to that which obtains among structural features in language evolution (Mufwene 2001). Like structural features, languages or dialects can be a threat to each other only when they compete for the same functions. Languages or dialects that have separate communicative or social functions can coexist quite happily, which has typically been the case with European and indigenous languages in former exploitation colonies. Overall, it is when a language is adopted as a vernacular that it becomes a threat to the speaker's previous vernacular. European languages have been such threats to indigenous languages in former settlement colonies because they have become vernaculars, albeit in new, restructured forms. On the other hand, their status as lingua francas in exploitation colonies has made them primarily economic assets for a chosen few, the educated elite, and of rather marginal significance to the proletarian masses. No colonisation style has proceeded uniformly everywhere and more factors that distinguish one ecology from another need to be understood,

in the way advocated by Fishman (2000).

There is an advantage that follows from the distinction I have proposed between, on the one hand, plantation settlement colonies, where descendants of non-Europeans have constituted demographic majorities (as in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands), and, or the other, non-plantation settlement colonies, where descendants of Europeans have become majorities (as in the American mainland and Australia), viz. it becomes possible to explain why creoles are not as endangered as has been suggested by decreolisation hypotheses since DeCamp (1971). In plantation settlement colonies, creoles have functioned as vernaculars of large proletarian masses, assuming an ethnographic function that has not competed with the acrolectal variety spoken by the local elite and required in the white-collar sector of the economy. They have acquired a status similar to that of indigenous vernaculars in former exploitation colonies, also serving as identity markers for their speakers against their economic exploitation by the ruling elite. They are not at all threatened by the acrolectal varieties. Their ethnographic status is also similar to that of new, likewise restructured vernaculars that have emerged in other settlement colonies but have been identified as nonstandard dialects of the same European languages. These too serve as identity markers for their low-class and rural speakers and are also used in the blue-collar sectors of their economic systems. All these new vernaculars (creole and non-creole) are those that have actually driven to extinction other indigenous and non-indigenous vernaculars.

Globalisation has been a useful consideration in this essay because it sheds interesting light on the role of socio-economic structure in language vitality. There is at least a partial correlation between, on the one hand, the type and extent of globalisation in a setting and, on the other, whether or not the primary language of the economy is endangering other languages. Generally, language endangerment is most serious where local globalisation is the most advanced and inclusive of virtually all economic sectors. However, we must remember that globalisation is not necessarily implemented in a European language, and the latter may be used only for international interfacing, as in the case of Japan and Taiwan. Thus, major European languages are not necessarily threatening non-European languages everywhere. For this reason, I found it relevant to distinguish between hegemonic lingua-franca status of a European language and its vernacular function in a different territory. English is certainly a threat to other languages in polities where it functions as a vernacular, but not at all in countries where it has been adopted only to help the local economy interface with the worldwide economy. Thus it is not a threat to Japanese nor to Putonghua in Taiwan, although it seems to be a threat to French in francophone African countries, where French also has a hegemonic status.

The future of languages in the twenty-first century obviously depends on how individual nations will evolve socio-economically during that time. In some parts of the world, globalisation is progressing without any serious obstacles that can stop its effects on disfranchised languages. Then again, the economic future is

already so uncertain in some other parts of the world that no indigenous languages and cultures are being affected by the present course of events, except somewhat by the indigenous lingua francas. In most such polities, numbers matter little in determining whether or not a particular population will carry on their ancestral language, as long as the speakers remain isolated from developments outside their communities, as well noted by Mühlhäusler (1996).

While we linguists are so concerned with linguistic diversity as a dimension of biodiversity to be maintained (Maffi 2000, 2001; Nettle and Romaine 2000), we cannot ignore a moral dilemma that arises. The socio-economic ecologies of most populations around the world have changed since the recent European colonisation of the world started four centuries ago (especially during the past century), and so have their aspirations for decent living. The changes in these socio-economic ecologies have often included the emergence of new languages in which both the indigenous people and immigrants are expected to develop some competence in order to compete for jobs. Despite their attachment to their pre-globalisation traditions, the pressures of the new socio-economic systems have made it increasingly difficult to practise their ancestral languages and cultures. Lack of practice has stealthily led to attrition and eventually death of the languages. In other words, the loss of ancestral traditions is a consequence of changes in the socio-economic ecologies of speakers. Can linguists advocate the maintenance of cultural heritage without restoring the older ecology? Can it be restored and at what costs and benefits to the relevant populations? I have not seen these issues discussed in the literature.

Much of the literature on language endangerment has also promoted linguistic rights. To the list presented at the outset of this article may be added, among others, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2001). As suggested above, linguistic and human rights are not necessarily congruous. It is certainly not unnecessary to echo Ladefoged (1992) with the following questions: Can we linguists work against the aspirations of the affected populations and exhort them to hold on to their languages and cultures only in the interest of a kind of diversity that should benefit our disciplines? Note that despite Nettle and Romaine's (2000) characterisation of such questions as the "benign neglect" position, languages and cultures are nurtured by practice.[15] Practice is fostered by various ecological factors. Energy may be wasted when the prescriptions to loss of traditions pays no, or little, attention to these factors.

Typically, as suggested above, speakers do not consciously give up their languages.

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[15]As Nettle and Romaine formulate it (153), the "benign neglect" position amounts to the following: "there have always been massive extinctions, so why should we be concerned about the prospect of another?" Speakers of endangered languages "quite reasonably have more pressing concerns, such as improving their economic prospects" than worrying about the fates of their languages (153). This is not of course the position I advocate. We should be concerned with whether linguistically a particular population is adapting adequately to the changed, or changing, socio-economic ecology that affects them.

Languages die gradually and inconspicuously as a consequence of the communicative practices of the relevant population, in ecologies where the speakers themselves can be considered as victims, as they themselves have adapted to change. We cannot just encourage them to maintain their ancestral languages even if only as home varieties without providing the ecologies that can support our prescriptions.

From a purely academic perspective, language shift, endangerment and death are all part of language evolution. In order to work on them, linguists should, like environmentalists, better understand the ecology of language evolution and focus on the real factors that have brought the demise of some languages. The work should be on those factors and focus should be on the kind of socio-economic world that can be promoted. In order to convince the parties involved in all these processes to change their behaviours, we must convince them of the benefits that humanity, especially the affected populations, can derive by changing their behaviours. As both languages and cultures are dynamic and constantly (re)shaping themselves through the behaviours of the populations with which they are associated, bemoaning ancestral traditions alone will not do the job. Nor does it sound humanitarian to decry loss of linguistic diversity in the interest of research on the architecture of universal grammar, about which any kind of variation, old or new, is likely to be informative.

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About the Author

Salikoko S. Mufwene is a Distinguished Service Professor of Linguistics at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *The Ecology of Language Evolution* (Cambridge University Press 2001) and is editor of the series "Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact". His current primary research area is the development of creoles, which he approaches from a population-genetics perspective – which he has extrapolated to the evolution of other languages. He has (co)-edited several books and authored numerous essays on various linguistic topics. For more information, visit his website at: http://humanities.uchicago.edu/faculty/mufwene/.

Address: Department of Linguistics, University of Chicago, 1010 East 59th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, USA; email: s-mufwene@uchicago.edu

The Impact of Language Policy on Endangered Languages

SUZANNE ROMAINE
Merton College, University of Oxford

Evaluation of the potential and actual impact of language policy on endangered languages is complicated by lack of straightforward causal connections between types of policy and language maintenance and shift, as well as by confusion of policy and planning. Language policy is not an autonomous factor and what appears to be ostensibly the "same" policy may lead to different outcomes, depending on the situation in which it operates. Weak linkages between policy and planning render many policies ineffective. Conventions and treaties adopted by international organisations and agencies recommending the use of minority languages in education usually lack power to reinforce them. Furthermore, policies have negligible impact on home use, which is essential for continued natural transmission of endangered languages. Although survival cannot depend on legislation as its main support, legal provisions may allow speakers of endangered languages to claim some public space for their languages and cultures.

F ewer than 4 per cent of the world's languages have any kind of official status in the countries where they are spoken. The fact that most languages are unwritten, not recognised officially, restricted to local community and home functions, and spoken by very small groups of people reflects the balance of power in the global linguistic market place. Campaigns for official status and other forms of legislation supporting minority languages often figure prominently in language revitalisation efforts, despite the generally negative advice offered by experts on their efficacy. As Fishman (1997, 194) has pointed out, endangered languages become such because they lack informal intergenerational transmission and informal daily life support, not because they are not being taught in schools or lack official status. Nevertheless, because official policies banning or restricting the use of certain languages have been seen as agents of assimilation, if not also by some such as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) as tantamount to acts of genocide, it is no wonder that hopes of reversing language shift have so regularly been pinned on them. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 312), for example, maintains that "unsupported coexistence mostly ... leads to minority languages dying".

Nevertheless, we have here a good example of unwarranted and simplistic conclusions being drawn about causal relationships between language and policy, if not outright confusion of policy and planning. As Benton (1999, 23) so aptly puts it, "there is a difference between permission to speak, and actually speaking". Basque speakers in Spain's Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) have been hesitant to use their language in relations with the administration not because they are not allowed to, but because they have difficulty in doing so. A long history of dealing with officialdom in Spanish and lack of education in Basque leaves most ordinary people unfamiliar with the newly coined terminology used in this domain (Gardner 1999).

Likewise, McCarty and Watahomigie (1998, 321) observe that "in practice, language rights have not guaranteed language maintenance, which ultimately depends on the home language choices of native speakers. Such decisions are notoriously difficult for extra-familial institutions to control, even when those institutions are community controlled". Nettle and Romaine (2000, 39–40) warn in a similar vein that "conferring status on the language of a group relatively lacking in power doesn't necessarily ensure the reproduction of a language unless other measures are in place to ensure intergenerational transmission at home. ... conferring power on the people would be much more likely to do the trick".

Looking to schools and declarations of official status to assist endangered languages is much like looking for one's lost keys under the lamp-post because that is where the most light appears to shine rather than because that is where they have been lost. Just as it is easier to see under the lamp-post, it is far easier to establish schools and declare a language official than to get families to speak a threatened language to their children. Yet only the latter will guarantee transmission. This points to the negligible impact of official language policies on home use. Strubell (2001, 268) notes that "the way people bring up their families – including the language they choose – is not for the authorities to decide". In any case, these acts fall short of what is required in practical terms if the language is to survive in spoken everyday use.

Many language-policy statements are reactive ad hoc declarations lacking a planning element. The Native American Languages Act (NALA) of 1990 is one of the most explicit statements on language ever issued by the United States Congress, yet it is a classic example of a policy with no planning dimension. Among other things, NALA states that "the United States has the responsibility to act together with Native Americans to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages" and "to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages". As Schiffman (1996, 246) observes, now that the languages are practically extinct and pose no threat to anyone, we can grant them special status. Those who think that NALA is a pro-active policy rather than a recommendation lacking means of enforcement just because it is written and carries the grand name of "act" deceive themselves. However, this does not mean that policy is totally useless. As Lucas

(2000) points out in a quite different context (that of assessing the legal status of Hawaiian), the 1978 state constitutional amendments declaring Hawaiian and English as the state's official languages may provide language advocates with the tools to compel the state to take various measures to support Hawaiian, but they must be tested in court. No state courts have yet interpreted the legal implications of these provisions.

In this article I examine some of the obstacles faced in evaluating language policies and some examples of weak linkages between policy and planning which render ineffective most policies aimed at assisting endangered languages.

1. Evaluating Policies and the Fallacy of Autonomy

The ideal way to evaluate language policies in a systematic fashion would be to control all the independent variables but one, and examine the consequences. Needless to say, in practice, things are otherwise. Evaluation of the efficacy of policies is made difficult, if not impossible, by the existence of almost as many variables as there are polities and policies as well as the lack of congruence between the sociolinguistic condition of the group in question and the language policy (see Schiffman 1996, 26). A plethora of interlocking factors make it difficult to discern any direct relationship. Bourhis (2001, 114), for example, says that "cause and effect relationships are difficult to establish when evaluating the impact of language policies on language behaviour and language shift".

At first glance, a number of typologies of language policies appear to offer some guidance through the entangled thicket (see e.g. Cobarrubias 1983, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000), but upon closer examination we are forced to conclude that language policy is not an autonomous factor. As Conversi (1997, 1) puts it in a different context, "no country's politics exists independently of its culture". What is ostensibly the "same" policy may lead to different outcomes, depending on the situation in which it operates. Strubell's (1999, 27–8) comparison of the status of Catalan in Catalonia and Valencia is an insightful case in point. He concludes that "the same degree of devolution granted to Catalans and Valencians ... has not led to the same increase – or rather recovery – in the use of the (same) language" (1999, 26).

Carrington (1997, 88) furthermore notes how change of status can be used as a political instrument to neutralise those pressing for recognition of their language by reducing the rallying power of their cause. Amery (2000, 231) suggests that Australia's adoption of a "softer approach to language and culture by the federal government may be a trade-off for their hardline stance on land matters – a partial compromise which directs some additional resources to those areas which do not pose a direct threat to the economic interests of the rich and powerful". After years of suppressing the indigenous languages of New Caledonia, France provided financial support to encourage their use in education. This was clearly part of an attempt to promote peace with militant Kanaks who have long struggled against

French control, and to mitigate anti-French sentiment in advance of a referendum on independence.

Elevation in status of a previously unrecognised or unsupported minority language or efforts to extend its use to new domains may also trigger backlash from speakers of the dominant language, as in Spain where Spanish nationalists have protested against legislation in Catalonia requiring knowledge of Catalan for certain jobs. In the Basque Autonomous Community, similar efforts to "normalise" the use of Basque in education and government through legal measures prompted battles over the rights of individuals. The 1982 Basic Law for Normalising Basque Language Use made the right to use Basque an individual rather than a territorial right. The declaration of officiality, however, was challenged by the Spanish Constitutional Court, which declared that it could not affect bodies of the Spanish Government operating in the BAC. More recently in December 2000, the Navarre Government passed an Autonomous Decree regulating the use of Basque in public administrative bodies. One result is that knowledge of Basque has ceased to be a requirement for many public-service positions. The government has justified the decree as a corrective measure in face of discrimination suffered by Spanish speakers. Meanwhile, bilingual road signs, advertisements and other public notices are being replaced with Spanish monolingual ones (Peña 2001, 9). Yet another example comes from Peru, where Quechua was made co-official with Spanish in 1975, with provision made for Quechua to be taught at all levels from 1976, and from 1977 for it to be used in court actions involving Quechua speakers. Again, resistance from the Spanish-speaking majority made implementation difficult, and it has fallen far short of its ambitions.

Magga and Skutnabb-Kangas (2001, 26) underline similar difficulties in implementing the provisions of the Saami Language Act passed in 1992 in Norway, which designated certain areas as Saami administrative districts. Many of the municipalities outside these districts withdrew services in Saami, claiming that the law did not require them. Even in traditional Saami areas, where there may be one Norwegian speaker in a class, it is assumed that all teaching must be done in Norwegian. When teachers have used Saami in such contexts, allegations of discrimination against Norwegians ensued. Magga and Skutnabb-Kangas attribute such actions to a culture clash between the Saami community's collective right to develop their language and the right of individual Norwegian speakers. The choice to use Saami is thus politicised and restricted territorially.

Fishman (1991, 84) writes of the damage, both locally and beyond, done by previously disadvantaged language activists who become "cultural imperialists" themselves within their newly dominated networks. When Quebec francophones adopted various legislative measures designed to protect French, in particular a requirement for newcomers to learn it and direct financial incentives to increase the birth rate, anglophones felt threatened. Bill 101 mobilised anglophones to mount legal challenges and to boycott Montreal stores with French monolingual signs; by 1988 the Canadian Supreme Court ruled that the legal requirement for French-only

signs contravened both the Quebec and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Quebec's linguistic laws also stirred up much negative feeling among anglophones outside the province as well as outside Canada. Bourhis (2001, 133) observes how the English Only movement in the US regularly uses controversial features of Quebec language laws to justify its campaigns against minority language maintenance. Nevertheless, he sees democratically adopted language laws as necessary tools allowing modern states to harmonise class and ethnic conflicts (see also Kymlicka 1995, 2000).

In proposing such measures, Quebec's francophones sought no more than to guarantee for themselves similar "rights" to control their own reproduction that anglophone Canadians have felt unnecessary to state as policy because they were implicit in practice anyway. Quebec anglophones, in particular, benefited from the provision of a state-financed English-medium education system ranging from pre-kindergarten through university, to an extent rarely granted a linguistic minority elsewhere (except perhaps to the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland). What amounted to an affirmative action plan for Quebec anglophones passes unnoticed because it is regarded as "normal". In this way, all nations unavoidably promote and support the languages sanctioned for use in education, at the same time as they marginalise other languages denied the same public space.

This reminds us not to overlook the fact that policy is implicit even if no specific mention is made of language. Probably most majority languages dominate in many domains where they have only de facto and no legal status. As Fishman (2001*a*, 454) comments, "even the much vaunted 'no language policy' of many democracies is, in reality, an anti-minority-languages policy, because it delegitimizes such languages by studiously ignoring them, and thereby, not allowing them to be placed on the agenda of supportable general values". Proponents of what is sometimes called "benign neglect" ignore the fact that minorities experience disadvantage that majority members do not face.

Advocates of minority languages have repeatedly stressed that demographically weak languages need firm pro-active policies in order to survive and thrive (see e.g. Strubell 1999, Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). Yet the legal approach to reconciling status differences in languages with equality in a world where majority rights are implicit, and minority rights are seen as "special" and in need of justification, is fraught with difficulty. Magga and Skutnabb-Kangas (2001, 31) emphasise that "equality is misunderstood if it leads to an equal division of time and resources between a minority and a majority language". As Hickey (2001, 466–7) has observed in connection with Irish immersion pre-schools, "equal treatment of different children does not necessarily mean the same treatment is given to each child". Thus, there is an important distinction between legislating equal use of languages and guaranteeing equitable treatment of their speakers, a point to which I return below in my discussion of South Africa's post-apartheid language policy.

In assessing the impact of Quebec's protective legislation, Bourhis (2001, 115)

says that the 1996 census suggests increasing intergenerational shift towards French since 1971, although the change can be largely attributed to allophones (i.e. those whose native language is neither French or English) adopting French as their home language. In addition, unfavourable reaction to Bill 101 led to anglophone out-migration.

Schiffman (1996) says that we cannot assess the chances of success of policies without reference to culture, belief systems, and attitudes about language. The idea that linguistic rights need protection has never been part of American culture, and so they have not been seen as central to American courts unless allied with more fundamental rights such as educational equity, etc. (Schiffman 1996, 216, 246). Elsewhere, however, even international courts have opined that there is no basic human right to education in one's own language. UNESCO's (1953, 6) much-cited axiom "that the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil ..." did not lead to any widespread adoption and development of vernacular languages as media of education. In most parts of the world schooling is still virtually synonymous with learning a second language.

Although a basic right to education cannot function equitably unless the child understands the language of instruction, this is of little use to groups whose nationalities and languages do not "officially" exist (as is the case with the Kurds and Kurdish in Turkey) or to groups whose language has been so eroded by shift that their children do not speak it. A case in point is that of Hawaiian, where the Board of Education's official position is that Hawaiian immersion schools constitute a programme of choice and not of right within the public school system. Hence it has refused to recognise an affirmative duty to provide adequate funding for Hawaiian-medium schools for children desiring education through the medium of Hawaiian.

2. Weak Linkages

Although Fishman (2001*a*, 478) admits that conclusive evidence is lacking at both the state and international level to evaluate the efficacy of policies, he believes that "there is no reason to be overly optimistic in either case, because a lack of priorities and linkages seems to characterise the entire legalistic approach". He does, however, advocate monitoring certain "litigious climates" surrounding languages such as Maori and Frisian in order to gauge the likelihood and the circumstances needed for legislation, and various other legal measures to be able to make a practical difference in language revitalisation efforts. Even if such actions do make a difference, Fishman warns that they must still be distinguished from the possible effects of the conventions and treaties adopted by international agencies and organisations lacking the power to enforce their resolutions.

A good example of weak linkages is the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, created to provide a legal instrument for the protection of languages. Although it specifies no list of actual languages, the languages

concerned must belong to the European cultural tradition (which excludes "migrant" languages), have a territorial base, and be separate languages identifiable as such. The terms of reference are deliberately vague in order to leave open to each member state how to define cultural heritage and territory. Thus, each state is free to name the languages which it accepts as being within the scope of the charter (see the issue of *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* on "Lesser Used Languages and the Law in Europe" 2001*a*; and Ó Riagáin 1998, 2001, for information in the status of languages in the European Union and a summary of legislation relating to minority languages). The UK, for example, which ratified the treaty in March 2001, does not include Manx and Cornish. The effectiveness of any initiatives on the supranational level can always be undermined by individual states unless there is some way of guaranteeing the implementation of language-related measures on a supranational level. The only institutions with authority to regulate language policies exist within the political bodies of individual states, and the European Union has generally avoided taking any action that would interfere with national laws or policies concerning linguistic minorities, or for that matter with laws concerning its national languages. Moreover, the charter does not grant rights to speakers or minority language groups, but to languages.

Despite the fact that Greece is signatory to many international covenants and treaties on human rights, as well as a member of the European Union, it voted against the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992. In July 1995 Sotiris Bletsas, a member of the minority Aroumanian (Vlach) community, was arrested after he distributed publications of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages which mentioned the existence of the Aroumanian language and four other minority languages in Greece (Arvanitika, Macedonian, Turkish and Pomak). The police obliged him to make a statement saying that he was Greek. As a result of charges brought by Mr Haitidis, a right-wing Member of Parliament of the New Democracy party, Bletsas was convicted under Article 191 of the Greek Penal Code which states that dissemination of false information could create fear and unrest among Greek citizens and damage the country's international relations. The European Court of Human Rights had already ruled that this article was in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, but an Athens court gave Bletsas a 15-month sentence (suspended) and a fine. After several postponements of his appeal, much international pressure, and concern expressed to the Greek Government by the EU Commissioner for education and culture, among many others, Bletsas was finally acquitted in December 2001 by unanimous decision of the Athens Three-Member Appeal Court (see http://www.eurolang.net for coverage of this case). Meanwhile, Turkey, an aspiring member of the European Union, still maintains that it has no minorities.

Most European nation-states still apply one set of rules to the national language and another to minority languages within their boundaries, and often in addition apply differing standards to indigenous and non-indigenous minorities (see Romaine 1998). Similarly, New Zealand has progressed in its treatment of Maori language issues, while it has lagged behind in recognition of the rights of migrant

Pacific-islander communities.

Differing practices within different regions of the same country, and with respect to different minority groups, add a further dimension to the vexed problems of evaluation and implementation. The effects of policy proposed at the national level can be complex, depending on political structures. In Australia, for example, the 1990 National Language Policy did not really challenge the dominance of white anglophone society after centuries of assimilation and restrictive immigration practices (see Romaine 1991, 1994). Fishman (2001*a*, 479) offers a more recent, but equally pessimistic assessment, and Lo Bianco and Rhydwen (2001, 417) say that community language maintenance has been relegated to a subordinate status with insufficient resources to sustain the few token acclamations remaining in the policy.

Clyne (2001, 386) points out how individual states subsequently developed vastly different policies, and chose different priority languages. Lo Bianco and Rhydwen (2001, 404) explain how the "second languages policy" of the Northern Territory Government's Department of Education serves only as a recommendation to schools and does not cover the specific needs of Aboriginal communities. Neither do its Social and Cultural Education guidelines cover the kinds of programmes that Aboriginal people want to implement. The lack of strong policy support has meant that Aboriginal language and culture programmes have not achieved a secure place in the schools. In 1998 the Northern Territory abandoned public funding for indigenous bilingual education, which had originally been established by the Commonwealth Government when education in the Northern Territory was under its jurisdiction.

Lo Bianco and Rhydwen (2001, 418–19) conclude that policy can lead to change in the ongoing trend of attrition and extinction if control of resources and the means for decision-making, as well as the institutional domains where language socialisation occurs, are in the hands of those affected. They doubt whether Aboriginal Australians will be given the space for self-determination and regulation to a sufficient degree.

Benton and Benton (2001) contrast the Kura Kaupapa Maori (a special category of New Zealand state schools with a Maori language and culture orientation) with the Ataarangi movement aimed at the Maori language needs of whole families, which works through homes rather than schools. Because the latter receives no government support, it is not subject to government controls. Attempts to manage the Kura Kaupapa Maori at government level have been divisive. The Council governing these schools lobbied the House of Representatives in 1998 for a bill to require schools seeking designation as Kura Kaupapa Maori to subscribe to a particular set of philosophical principles. Not all communities favoured this move, prompting Benton and Benton (2001, 436) to comment that it remains to be seen whether what were originally independent schools will come under the ideological control of a group selected by the state to enforce a "legislatively defined" Maori

world view.

Returning to NALA as an instance of weak linkage between policy and implementation, we can see that it also illustrates how lack of federally mandated language planning has led to a hodgepodge of policies potentially in conflict with state, local or other federal rules. Legislation in Arizona and Hawaii provides at least two examples.

Hawaii is the only state with an official language in addition to English. Article XV, Section 4, states that "English and Hawaiian shall be the official languages of Hawaii". A second amendment (Article X, Section 4) contains a provision "to revive the Hawaiian language, which is essential to preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian culture". Lucas (2000, 13) mentions two cases involving legal claims brought under the auspices of NALA, both initiated by native Hawaiians. In Tagupa *v*. Odo (1994), attorney William Tagupa refused to give his deposition in English, despite his fluency in the language, on the grounds that Article XV, Section 4, of the state Constitution and NALA prohibit federal courts from mandating that deposition testimony be made in English.

In rejecting Tagupa's claim, the federal district judge argued that the intention of NALA was directed at increasing the use of Native American languages in education and not at judicial proceedings in federal courts. He also quoted President Bush's remarks on signing NALA into law to the effect that it was construed as a "statement of general policy" and should not be understood as conferring "a private right of action on any individual or group" (Lucas 2000, 26fn.76). Moreover, the judge opined that allowing deposition in Hawaiian would be contrary to the Federal Rules of Civic Procedure, which mandate the "just, speedy and inexpensive determination of every action", because additional costs and delays would be needed to appoint an interpreter.

In 1996 the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) brought a case against the Department of Education claiming that the department's failure to provide sufficient financial and technical support for the Hawaiian immersion programme was a violation of both state law and NALA. The state removed the suit from state court to federal court, where the same federal district judge who ruled against Tagupa also ruled against OHA. He said that NALA does not create affirmative duties on the states but merely evinced a federal policy to encourage states to support Native American languages. In 2000 the Department of Education and OHA reached an out-of-court settlement which provided an additional US$7.5 million to the immersion programmes under a 2:1 funding partnership, with the state to spend up to a million dollars a year for the next five years.

In November 2000, 63 per cent of Arizona voters passed Proposition 203 to end bilingual education and replace it with one year of untested English immersion marketed with the slogan "English for the children". The proposition was spearheaded by Ron Unz, who portrays himself as a strong believer in assimilation,

and backed a similar successful initiative in California in 1998 (Proposition 227). Seeing Proposition 203 as an attack on the languages spoken by Arizona's Indian tribes, Arizona State Senator Jack Jackson, a member of the Navajo nation, requested an Attorney General's opinion about whether the proposition applied to the Navajo. In February 2001, Janet Napolitano gave her opinion that it did not apply to any Arizona Indians living on or off reservations. She invoked "principles of tribal sovereignty" and NALA's provision that "the right of Native Americans to express themselves through the use of Native American languages shall not be restricted in any public proceeding, including publicly-supported education programs" (Reyhner 2001, 23).

In Nigeria, also, weak linkages prevent most schools from implementing the National Policy on Education, which stipulates that pupils' mother tongues be used in the lower levels of public education. More importantly, no government sanctions are applied to schools that do not follow the policy. Indeed, 80 per cent of African languages lack orthographies (Adegbija 2001) making it difficult to contemplate their effective use in schools. In Senegal, six African languages (Mandingo, Diola, Peul/Poular, Serer, Soninke and Wolof) have been declared official, but little effort has been made to use them in education. Various factors inhibit implementation, such as lack of funding for materials development, teacher training, parental anxiety about their children's acquisition of the dominant language, along with fear among the elite of losing their status gained through education in the colonial language. Brenzinger (1998, 95) estimates that fewer than 10 per cent of African languages are included in bilingual education programmes, with the result that more than 1,000 African languages receive no consideration in the education sector.

As Bamgbose notes (1991, 100–1) "the paradox of mother tongue education in many African countries is that while it is negligible at the primary level, it seems to flourish at university level". It is possible in Nigeria, for example, to take a degree in Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. International aid agencies, colonial regimes, former and current, often tie aid packages to economic, social and educational policies that support and maintain the colonial language. One result is that many minority languages have more status outside their territories than within them, as is evidenced in the fact that Quechua is taught in universities in the United States and elsewhere.

The new democratic regime in South Africa has recognised the linguistic reality of multilingualism that had been ignored under apartheid. Henrard (2001) points to a difference between the 1993 Interim Constitution containing a proclamation promoting the state's "equal use" of eleven official languages (among them nine indigenous languages plus the colonial languages Afrikaans and English) and the 1996 Constitution aiming at "equitable treatment" and "parity of esteem" of the official languages. The need for differential and preferential treatment of the indigenous languages, given the past history of denigration and discrimination, was recognised in the stipulation that the state must take practical and positive measures

to elevate their status and advance their use. More specifically, the national government and provincial governments must use at least two official languages. Nevertheless, this case also shows the difficulty in attempting to enforce equality of use and status legislatively among a number of languages unequal in social practice. Despite the Constitutional Court's proclamation to the contrary, the elevation in status of nine previously unrecognised indigenous languages has had the practical effect of diminishing the status of Afrikaans, just as the National Party feared. In practice, the public life of the country has actually become more monolingual (Webb 1998). Afrikaans, which no longer enjoys legal and political protection as a language co-official with English, has experienced dramatic losses, one of the most visible in the area of television, where it formerly shared equal time with English. The new broadcasting time is now more than 50 per cent for English, while Afrikaans, Zulu and Xhosa get just over 5 per cent each. Although greater emphasis is to be given to languages heretofore marginalised and more than 20 per cent of broadcasting time is supposed to be multilingual, in practice this time has been taken up mostly by English. Similarly, the South African National Defence Force, which formerly used Afrikaans, declared in 1996 that English would be the only official language for all training and daily communication. The demand for English among pupils and parents also works against implementing multilingualism in education (Kamwangamalu 1998).

These examples show that without additional measures to support teacher training, materials development, and a variety of other enabling factors, policy statements which merely permit, encourage, or recommend the use of a language in education or in other domains of public life cannot be very effective. Political ideology drives policy in particular directions, creating various divergences between stated policy and actual practice. Lo Bianco and Rhydwen (2001, 416–17) point out how in Australia the low achievement of Aboriginal children in English literacy is used to justify eliminating bilingual education, just as it is in the United States.

Gardner-Chloros (1997, 217) writes that lawyers agree that "the only way to guarantee fundamental rights effectively is to restrict declarations as to what these rights consist in to the most basic and incontrovertible one". In other words, it is pointless to think that "grand declarations of policy ... would be effective if they are not tied to a – preferably existing – legal instrument with an effective machinery for reinforcement". An interesting case of a grand declaration with no such ties is Eritrea's 1995 declaration *not* to recognise an official language. Thus, President Isayas Afewerki (Brenzinger 1998, 94):

> "When we come to the question of language as a means of instruction in schools, our principle is that the child should use its mother tongue or a language chosen by its parents in the early years of its education, irrespective of the level of development of the language.
>
> Our policy is clear and we cannot enter into bargaining. Everyone is free to learn in the language he or she prefers, and no one is going to be coerced into using this or that 'official' language."

In the case of Hawaiian, however, Lucas (2000, 17–19) suggests that a strategic opportunity lies in Article XII, Section 7, of the state Constitution, which enjoins the state to "protect all rights, customarily and traditionally exercised for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes". The Hawaii State Supreme Court has already held that this imposes an affirmative duty to protect and perpetuate traditional and customary practices. Although Lucas is doubtful whether this article would create a means of forcing increased funding of immersion schools, language activists might get the court to recognise the speaking of Hawaiian as a traditional and customary practice.

The case made for Maori under the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi is instructive. In 1974 a largely decorative amendment to the Maori Affairs Act "officially" recognised the Maori language as "the ancestral language of the population of Maori descent". While it allowed the Minister of Maori Affairs to take such steps as were considered appropriate to the encouragement of the learning of the language, it had no practical effect until five years later, when it became clear that this statement meant nothing in the courts when an appellant claimed the right to address the District Court in Maori and was refused. The High Court upheld the ruling on the basis of the Pleadings in English Act of 1362, which became part of New Zealand law by virtue of the English Laws Act of 1858 when the New Zealand legislature adopted all the laws of England in force on 14 January 1840. Ironically, the 1362 statute was passed at a time when the official language of court proceedings in England was French. The High Court's decision came as a disappointment to those activists who had seen legislation as a way of strengthening the position of Maori. It was not until 1987 that an act made Maori an official language of New Zealand and established Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Maori (the Maori Language Commission).

Maori activists have seen the efficacy of linking the struggle for language rights with natural resource management and preservation provisions guaranteed to them in the Treaty of Waitangi of 1840 signed by Maori chiefs and the British. In 1975 the Waitangi Tribunal was created to consider Maori grievances over breaches of the treaty. Although the British regard Maori assent to the treaty as the basis for their sovereignty over New Zealand, there are numerous complicating factors surrounding the treaty and its language which make its interpretation and legal status fraught with difficulties. The terms of the Maori version of the treaty guaranteed to the Maori *te tino rangatiratanga o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa*, which could be translated as "the full authority of chiefs over their lands, villages, and all their treasures". Maori activists interpret this as a guarantee rather than cession of Maori sovereignty and have pressed land claims as well as support for the Maori language. The Crown acknowledged Maori claims that the treaty obliged it not only to recognise the Maori language as a part of the country's national heritage and a treasured resource on a par with lands but to actively protect it. We have here another instance in which legislation and practices at one level (the English Laws Act) are in conflict with those at another (the Treaty of Waitangi). Recognition that the Crown had broken its promise required

affirmative action rather than passive tolerance. As Benton (1985) said in testimony before the tribunal, "rights which cannot be enforced are illusory, and protection which cannot sustain life is no protection". This points to the need for strong linkages between language policy and economic planning, which have generally been lacking. Benton (1999, 7), for example, recognises that the revitalisation of the Maori language is primarily a matter of sustainable cultural and economic development.

Unfortunately, potential sources of support for Maori language activities have felt that tribal resources should not be used to subsidise what is regarded as state responsibility under the terms of the treaty. Benton and Benton (2001, 439) write that if it could be shown that supporting Maori increased tribal monetary wealth, Maori Trust Boards and land corporations might feel more inclined to give it priority.

3. Timing: Too Little Too Late?

Much probably depends on the timing of policies and legislation. Planning in many domains, linguistic or otherwise, faces inevitable charges of "too little too late". Few communities are concerned about language transmission when all is proceeding normally, and even when it is not, various factors impede recognition of the impending loss and its consequences. In Quebec, however, Bourhis (2001, 105, 111) says that language planners were well placed to intervene in the 1970s in favour of French with strong intergenerational transmission on their side, even though a sociolinguistic analysis would have led to the conclusion that such planning was unnecessary. More than 80 per cent of the population had French as a mother tongue and more than three-quarters were monolingual French speakers. Moreover, francophones controlled most of the provincial administration, even though they lacked control of the major business and financial institutions. It was the threat to French survival in the long term in the face of declining birth rate and increased immigration of anglophones and others likely to assimilate to the anglophone population that provided the ideological impetus to mobilise. In many other cases, however, where erosion is painfully evident, communities may not recognise or wish to confront the impending loss, or feel that other concerns are more pressing.

One can contrast the case of Quebec with that of Irish, with its far weaker demographic base for reproduction of the language, where similarly aggressive legislative policies in favour of Irish have not significantly reversed language shift. Only 18 per cent (actually an overestimate) of the population was reported to be Irish-speaking in the 1926 census, just after the foundation of the Irish state. The newly independent government in 1922 promoted policies directed at altering the linguistic market, to enhance the social and legal status of Irish by declaring it the national language, to maintain it where it was spoken, and to extend its use elsewhere. Irish was required in public administration, law and media, domains in which it had not been used for centuries. Ó Riagáin (1997, viii), however, says that

the problem was not the small demographic base, but rather the social distribution of Irish, confined as it was to peripheral rural communities. The state had hoped, not unreasonably, that by supporting the agricultural sector, it would support Irish, whose speakers were primarily engaged in farming.

Meanwhile, schools were supposed to replace English with Irish as a medium of education. The policy of Gaelicising the schools was increasingly effective from the 1920s up to the 1950s, at which point just over half the state primary schools were offering an immersion programme of a full or partial type (i.e. teaching all or part of the curriculum through Irish to children whose mother tongue was English). Subsequently, the amount of bilingual or all-Irish education declined. Public opinion polls conducted in the 1960s indicated that compulsory Irish instruction was not popular. Even in the 1930s many teachers were opposed to teaching English-speaking children through the medium of Irish (Ó Riagáin 1997,19, 31).

By the early 1960s, when it was clear that supporting agriculture was not working to stem out-migration and the viability of farming, economic policy shifted to encourage small industry and the export market. By the 1970s, however, when more young people began to look towards education for upward mobility, state language policies had shifted so that Irish ceased to be a compulsory subject in public examinations at the end of secondary schooling. Hence, incentives for achieving Irish competence were weakened at a time when they were needed. In the earlier period, relatively few young people were affected by the incentives for Irish built into the education and civil service sectors. Ó Riagáin's analysis underlines a disjunction between economic policy and language policy before the 1960s and after the 1970s.

Over the past few decades the thrust of policy, in so far as there is any explicit statement of it, has been towards maintenance rather than restoration. Official rhetoric has shifted meanwhile to talking of survival rather than revival. Today the largest proportion of Irish speakers is to be found among those between 10 and 20 years old. Ó Riagáin's (1997, 283) sobering assessment, based on his examination of a century of language policy in Ireland, reveals how timing enters into the equation in another sense too:

> "Language patterns are but aspects of highly complex social systems. They are the outcome of slow, long-term processes. If language policies are to have any significant impact, they will require resources on a scale which has not been hitherto realised. Effective language policies will and must affect all aspects of national life and will have to be sustained for decades, if not forever."

4. Factors other than Legal Status

The deficiencies in the formulation and implementation of policy examined by Ó Riagáin are by no means unique to Ireland, but are typical of language-planning experiences more generally. They point back again to the autonomy fallacy. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 303) concludes that there is an urgent need for more

research before we can start understanding the importance of various factors in supporting or not supporting the world's languages.

Factors other than legal status are often more important. Again, Ó Riagáin (1997, 170–1):

> " … the power of state language policies to produce intended outcomes is severely constrained by a variety of social, political and economic structures which sociolinguists have typically not addressed, even though their consequences are profound and of far more importance than language policies themselves."

Carrington (1997, 88) comments that "real status is achieved when official action confirms an already existing situation in which significant objectives of official recognition are already operationally in place". As an example, he cites the granting of official status to Papiamento in 1985 in the Netherlands Antilles, which came long after the language was used in newspapers, signs, etc. Likewise, Gardner (1999, 86) comments that laws regulating language matters are often limited "to sanctioning what has already become reality or enabling what sociological dynamics could potentially make reality. What it cannot do in a reasonably democratic society is fulfil a coercitive [sic SR] function in any major way". Any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitude of those likely to be affected.

Ó Riagáin (1997, 174, 279) notes that while the compulsory element in pre-1973 policies enhanced the practical or economic value of Irish, many people opposed them. Although support for Irish was ostensibly high, the public was not prepared to back policies that would discriminate strongly in favour of Irish and could potentially alter the linguistic landscape. In his view, the major constraint on policy development was the absence of sustained public support and not state action per se (Ó Riagáin 1997, 23).

Strubell (2001) suggests a similar lack of support in Catalonia, while as far as Basque is concerned, Gardner (1999, 85–7) argues that the need for a monolingual heartland is paramount, but legally unobtainable. At the same time, he stresses that "granting monolingual official status to a minority language ultimately affects prestigious but relatively marginal uses of the language. Declaration by decree of a monolingual enclave cannot ensure its existence in practice". He concludes that the problem is not the limits imposed by present laws, but lack of proper awareness of priorities by language planners and Basques more generally (Gardner 1999, 88). As recent legislation in Navarre illustrates, language rights are not timeless declarations, but are time-limited, subject to shifting political regimes.

Evidence from various quarters indicates that grass-roots initiatives are often more effective than top-down directives. A case in point is the PROPELCA (Projet de Recherche Opérationnelle pour l'Enseignement des Langues Camerounaises) project in Cameroon, one of the best-documented and most complete examples of a

literacy programme which includes materials development, a teacher-training programme, and evaluation (Gerbault 1997). The project's working principle was to use local languages as instruments for scientific and technical training, rather than to maintain languages per se. Teacher training began in 1981 as an experimental programme in two Roman Catholic schools; by 1986 there were eleven experimental schools in four different provinces teaching in four of Cameroon's 236 languages. Although the pedagogical approach and its development by local specialists has been exemplary in sub-Saharan Africa, Gerbault (1997, 182) says that it has met with lack of involvement of official institutions typical of this part of the world. Only private institutions and local communities have supported the programme, even though the project workers have recommended that existing practices of using Cameroonian languages for the first three years of primary school should be made official.

Meanwhile, there had been a remarkable recent rise in entirely voluntary Irish-medium schooling in Ireland with over 150 all-Irish primary and secondary schools, and more than twice that number of all-Irish pre-schools. In Northern Ireland, a deliberately created community in Shaw's Road in urban Belfast, where parents who were not native speakers of Irish, has succeeded in raising children who are (Maguire 1991).

5. Conclusion: The Proof is in the Pudding

My assessment of the efficacy of policy in assisting endangered languages has perhaps been unduly pessimistic in an effort not to minimise the complexity and enormity of the task. In his reappraisal of the scene ten years after his 1991 book, Fishman (2001*a*, 478–9) observes that none of the dozen individual cases studied in the late 1980s and early 1990s has experienced "dramatic successes". Naturally, there are many reasons why that is the case, as the individual chapters show, so it would be hard to pinpoint policy as the unique cause or source of either success or failure. Indeed, Fishman's (2001*a*, 480) overall conclusion is an ambiguous one: although the general climate of opinion on threatened languages has improved "in an amorphous and largely still ineffectual sense", the prospects for reversing language shift have not improved much and have even deteriorated.

This does not mean that advocates of linguistic diversity should abandon the struggle to obtain legal measures at all levels supporting languages. On the contrary, we must redouble our efforts. However, we must do so in the knowledge that without well-focused action on a variety of other fronts, these will not guarantee maintenance. It is political, geographical and economic factors that support the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity. Holistic ecological planning of the kind advocated by Nettle and Romaine (2000) works towards international, regional and national policies that empower indigenous peoples and promote sustainable development. This is the key to preserving local ecosystems essential to language maintenance. Because the preservation of a language in its fullest sense ultimately entails the maintenance of the group that speaks it, the

arguments in favour of doing something to reverse language death are ultimately about preserving cultures and habitats.

Finally, however, the proof is always in the pudding. In the interests of justice, it is incumbent on liberal democracies to accommodate cultural and linguistic diversity to the fullest extent possible. Kymlicka (1995) argues that respecting minority rights is essential for enlarging the freedom of individuals, a cornerstone of liberal democracy. The issue of language rights has begun to receive serious international discussion within the last decade (see, for example, Skutnabb-Kangas et al. 1994; Benson et al. 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 2001*a*, 2001*b*). Although survival cannot depend on legislation as its main support, legal provisions may allow speakers of endangered languages to claim some public space for their languages and cultures from which we can all benefit.

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About the Author

Suzanne Romaine has been Merton Professor of English Language at the University of Oxford since 1984. Her research interests lie primarily in historical linguistics and sociolinguistics, especially in problems of societal multilingualism, linguistic diversity, language change, language acquisition, and language contact in the broadest sense. She has conducted extensive fieldwork in Europe as well as in Papua New Guinea and Hawaii. She is the author of numerous articles and books, the most recent of which is *Vanishing Voices. The Extinction of the World's Languages* (jointly with Daniel Nettle, Oxford University Press 2000). Further information at http://users.ox.ac.uk/~romaine.

Address: Merton College, University of Oxford, Oxford OX1 4JD, United Kingdom; email suzanne.romaine@ling-phil.ox.ac.uk

Minority Matters: Issues in Minority Languages in India

RAJESHWARI V. PANDHARIPANDE
University of Illinois

This paper discusses the following major issues relating to minority languages in India: (a) the definition of minority languages; (b) their status; (c) the factors contributing to their retention or attrition; and (d) the role of speakers' attitude towards their language.

The paper demonstrates that the definitions of minority languages proposed in the current literature are inadequate to define minority languages in India. It further argues that minority languages can be defined on the basis of two major features: (a) their functional load;[1] and (b) their functional transparency in the various domains of society. Minority languages are typically those which carry relatively less or marginal functional load and functional transparency. The concept of "functional load" in this context refers to the ability of languages to successfully function in one or more social domain. The load is considered to be higher or lower on the basis of the number of domains it covers. The higher the number of domains, the higher the load. For example, in India the English language covers almost all the major public domains such as business, education, national and international communication, and technology. In contrast, the tribal languages control only one (rapidly diminishing) domain, that of home. The regional languages cover private domains such as home, as well as public domains such as intra-state communication, education, government and law.

The "functional transparency" feature is important in determining the degree of functional load. Functional transparency refers to the autonomy and control that the

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[1] The term "functional load" is taken from phonology where it is used to determine the degree of contrast between phonemes. "For example, in English, the contrast between /p/ and /b/ would be said to have higher functional load than between /j/and /z/. The former contrast distinguishes many minimal pairs whereas the latter contrast distinguishes only a few. Several criteria are used in making such quantitative judgements, such as the position within a word at which the contrast is found, and the frequency of the occurrence of the words in the language" (Crystal 1985, 130). The term "functional load" in this paper is used to provide a quantitative base to evaluate the notion of "power" of the languages in a society in order to distinguish between major and minor languages. The language that successfully functions in relatively more domains is considered to have a higher functional load. Moreover, functional transparency is another concept used here as a parameter to measure "power".

language has in a particular domain. Thus the functional load is higher if the language does not share the function with other languages, i.e. there is an invariable correlation between the language and the function. In other words, if it is perceived as the most appropriate language to carry out that particular function, the language is considered to be "transparent" to the function. For example, Sanskrit is most transparent to its function of expressing Hinduism. Regional languages are most transparent to their function in state government. Similarly, English is transparent to the function of "modernity". If the function is shared by other languages, the transparency is lowered and the functional load is also lowered. For example, the function of regional languages in the domain of education is shared by English in many states, which lowers the transparency of their function and consequently lowers their functional load.

I argue that there is a hierarchy of functional load in India, where multilingualism is part of the ecology. This hierarchy coincides with the power hierarchy of languages. The higher the functional load, the more powerful the language is perceived to be. Thus, minority languages are those that carry a lower functional load and thereby hold a lower position in the power hierarchy. The hierarchy of power (political, economic and cultural) of languages in multilingual India needs to be taken into account in order to fully define and explain the status of minority languages. It is further demonstrated that decrease versus enhancement of the functional load can be seen as the major factor in the status of minority languages.

The above definition of minority languages allows us to evaluate the role of factors such as language planning and policies, and the attitudes of speakers in India towards either protecting, maintaining and promoting minority languages or causing their decay and attrition. Those factors contributing towards increasing the functional load are identified as those promoting sustenance and promotion of the languages, while those reducing the functional load are identified as those causing decay or attrition.

1. Definitions of Minority Languages

The Constitution of India recognises eighteen languages as "scheduled languages"[2] (listed in Schedule VIII, Articles 343–51) while those languages not included in the scheduled eighteen are listed as "minority languages". A close examination clearly shows that the criteria used to divide languages into "scheduled" and "non-scheduled"[3] (minority) languages fail to account for the status of languages in India. The Constitution does not provide a clear criterion for defining minority languages. The Supreme Court of India, in 1958, presented a parameter for defining a minority language as "the language of the minority community" (which is defined as a community numerically less than 50 per cent). However, this

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[2] See Annex Table 1.
[3] See Annex Table 2.

parameter is not applicable at the national level because "there is no linguistic group in India which can claim the majority status" (Chaklader 1981, 14). Hindi, the official language of the Union, is the language of only one-third of the total Indian population. Thus, as Chaklader (1981, 14) correctly points out, "the majority-minority question is considered in reference to the state only". In this context, Chaklader (1981, 14) argues for adopting a definition of minority languages at the state level. For example, a minority language can be viewed as the language of the population which is less than 50 per cent of the total population of a state and which is different from the language of the majority community and the language of the state. This parameter turns the numerical majority languages into minority languages (Bhatt and Mahboob 2002). Kashmiri, which is spoken by 53 per cent of the total population in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, is not the state language (which is Urdu). Moreover, Urdu, the official language of Jammu and Kashmir, is spoken by less than 1 per cent of the total population of the state. Similarly, English, the official language of Meghalaya, is spoken by 0.01 per cent of the total population. Thus the parameter of defining minority languages on the basis of their numerical strength is not appropriate in the context of India.

Other parameters have been proposed based on the dominance or "power" (political, economic and/or cultural) of languages (Bhatt and Mahboob 2002; Chaklader 1981; Williams 1964, among others). Languages lacking political, economic or cultural power tend to be included in the list of minority languages. A good example is that of the tribal languages,[4] speakers of which constitute 7.08 per cent of the total population of India. These languages lack political, economic and cultural power at the state or national levels, therefore they belong to the category of minority languages. In contrast, Sanskrit, which is perceived as a language of the cultural heritage of India (but not spoken natively in any state) is not labelled as a minority language. Similarly, English, though numerically a minority language, is not viewed as such owing to its high economic value at the national as well as the international level.

A very broad definition of minority provided by the United Nations captures the salient features of minority languages: "The term minority includes only those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable, ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics markedly different from those of the rest of the population."[5] The two features, "non-dominant" and "different from the rest of the population", are generally shared by the minority languages of India. Moreover, this definition points out that a language receives its minority status due to the minority status of the speech community to which it belongs. It allows a language to be labelled as a minority language if the community using it is numerically large but non-dominant.

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[4] See Annex Table 3.
[5] *UN Yearbook for Human Rights 1950*, 490; quoted in Chaklader 1981, 16.

Another phenomenon which complicated the definition of minority languages in India was the large-scale reorganisation of the states according to the concentration of languages in different parts of India (based on the Report of the States Reorganisation Commission of 1955). Although the policy behind the reorganisation was to minimise the number of linguistic minorities (and to some extent it did so), it created new minorities as no state was completely unilingual. Speech communities were distributed across state boundaries, therefore an official/majority language in one state could become a minority language in another state. For example, Telugu is an official/majority language in Andhra Pradesh while it is a minority language in Tamil Nadu.

Srivastava (1984) provided a new approach towards defining minority-majority languages based on two principles, "quantum" and "power", as shown in the diagram.

		Power	
		+	−
Quantum	+	(a) majority	(b) Janta
	−	(c) elite	(d) minority

According to this view, a language can be of four types: (a) powerful as well as majority (e.g. Marathi in Maharashtra State); (b) powerless but majority (e.g. Kashmiri in Jammu and Kashmir); (c) minority but powerful (English in all states); (d) minority and powerless (tribal languages in all states).

The above discussion shows that definitions of minority languages are based on either numerical or functional criteria. While the numerical criterion marks a language as minority if the number of speakers of the language (i.e. the speech community) is relatively low, the functional criterion marks a language with relatively low power of dominance in the economic, political and social domains. The numerical criterion (based on the size of the speech community) is inadequate to describe the status of minority languages in India. The criterion of dominance fails to take into account the fact that, in a multilingual country such as India, different languages are dominant in different domains. For example, Sanskrit is dominant in religion but not in economics, politics and business. The regional languages are dominant at home, but in higher education and business at the national level they are not. English is dominant in higher education, business and politics but not in religion. The criterion of dominance will indicate the same language as dominant and non-dominant in different domains.

In the light of the above, I propose that a different framework needs to be formulated which will take into account the multilingual profile of India, the functional distribution of languages across domains, the size of the speech community and the notion of dominance. Moreover, the framework should be able to explain various types of minority in the country, and why the same language can

have the status of minority as well as dominant language simultaneously (in different states). For example, minority languages can be divided into three groups: (a) those which have "minority (non-dominant)" status in their native state; (b) those which are reduced to "minority status" in their non-native states; and (c) languages which do not have a native state but are distributed across states (e.g. Sindhi and Konkani). This framework clearly shows that a language acquires minority status when its functional load is reduced (in a non-native state where the dominant language of that state is different, and used in many public domains), while it continues to enjoy the status of a dominant (non-minority language) in its native state.

The concept of functional load of a language provides a framework within which a comprehensive definition of "minority languages" can be presented. In this context, I argue that all the above definitions of minority languages have one feature in common – minority languages (regardless of whether they are numerically a minority or not) carry a marginal functional load, or none at all, in the public domains of society. Thus, English, though numerically a minority language, cannot be called a minority language as it carries a heavy functional load in the public domain (education, business, international and intranational communication, religion, etc.). In contrast, Kashmiri, a majority language in Jammu and Kashmir, is viewed as a minority language because it does not carry a heavy functional load in the public domain of the society within which it is located. The tribal languages are numerically minority languages, and carry a marginal functional load in the domains of education, business and inter-group communication. This definition of minority languages further allows us to identify the factors (sociopolitical) that are instrumental in creating minority languages. Moreover, it has a predictive value, in that a language which is in the process of being eliminated from the public domain (its functional load is decreasing) will be reduced to the status of a minority language. Also, this definition implicitly assumes that a stable or increasing functional load is conducive to language retention, while a decreasing functional load leads to language attrition. It also predicts that a minority language can acquire the status of a dominant language if its functional load increases in the public domain.

2. Factors Influencing the Status of Minority Languages: Language Planning and Language Policies

The following discussion indicates the factors that have contributed towards reducing the functional load of minority languages in the public domain, and thereby led to the shift of these languages to the dominant languages. In a number of cases minority languages (especially tribal languages) are facing rapid attrition. These factors are: (a) language policies; (b) modernisation; (c) speakers' attitudes towards their languages; (d) separation of the link between language and identity or a change in the speech community's perception of its identity. I point out below

how these factors can be seen as mechanisms through which the marginalisation of minority languages is taking place.

First, the impact of language policies on minority languages is discussed. The policy of reorganisation of states on a linguistic basis was seen as a strategy to homogenise a state where the language spoken by the majority (over 50 per cent of the total population of the state) would become the official language. It was assumed that this policy would bring the administration and the people together, in contrast to the British policy that had imposed English as the language of administration in India and thereby severely inhibited the growth and development of the indigenous vernaculars. In order to implement this policy, each state developed a programme to ensure the use of the majority vernacular in major domains such as legislation, education, administration and other state-controlled operations such as public transport, banking, etc. In the context of legislation at state level, the official language of the state was used for (a) introducing Bills by the Governor under Article 213 of the Constitution; (b) introducing by-laws passed by the state government or by Parliament or the state legislature, all official notifications issued by Parliament or the state government; and (c) for other official correspondence within the state (see Chaklader 1981, 45 for further discussion).

In the domain of education, the Education Commission set up in 1966 [6] recommended the use of the state language at university level. However, for high-school education, a "three-language formula" was proposed and approved by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1957 and was fully endorsed by the chief ministers of the states in 1961. The implementation of the formula was complex. The three languages were introduced at different phases of high-school education: (a) at lower-primary level (grades I–IV), either the mother tongue or the official language; (b) at higher-primary level (grades V–VII) two languages – mother tongue or regional language and Hindi (national language) or English; (c) at lower-secondary level (grades VIII–X) three languages – mother tongue/regional language, Hindi and English; (d) at higher-secondary level (grades XI–XII) any two languages including a classical language.

In the third and major domain of administration, regional vernacular languages were promoted for intra-state communication in all contexts, such as the official Gazette of the state government, the judiciary, employment procedures, and all official documents had to be in the official language of the state. For inter-state communication, the use of the associate language English was permitted. This situation continues today with varying degrees of implementation. Another major domain where the reorganisation of the states influenced the status of languages was the conditions of employment. Under Article 309 and item 41 of list I in

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[6] Report of the Education Commission 1964–66, 7, New Delhi, National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1971.

Schedule VII, the states organised Public Commissions [7] to determine the conditions of employment within the states. The members of the Commissions were appointed by the state governors. Though it was agreed by chief ministers that language should not be an obstacle to recruitment, a number of states (with the Commissions' approval) sanctioned the legislation that knowledge of the state official language should be made mandatory for all state employees. Maharashtra (Marathi), Orissa (Oriya), West Bengal (Bangla), Gujarat (Hindi and English), Haryana (Hindi) and Punjab (Hindi and Panjabi) were the early advocates of this requirement for knowledge of the respective state languages.

Regardless of the degree of success in implementing this measure in different states, the three-language formula, and the recommendations of the various Commissions towards language use, had an enormous impact on minority languages. The "functional load" of the numerically minority languages was drastically reduced in the public domain and as a result their status as non-dominant/powerless was further confirmed. They were almost completely eliminated from the dominant public spheres. Four types of response to these policies were observed: (a) language movements against the policies; (b) segregation from the "mainstream" communities; (c) assimilation with the larger, majority language communities; (d) adoption of multiple strategies. Thus the Bengali speech community in Assam (with Asamiya as the state language) demanded autonomy and rights to education in Bangla, while many communities of numerically minority languages such as Konkani (in Maharashtra and Karnataka), and many tribal languages in the north-east, have adopted a separatist attitude and maintained their languages. However, most of the minority-language speech communities have adopted the third choice, of assimilation with the majority or dominant languages within their respective geographic regions or states. Kundu (1994) explains why several tribal language communities are losing their languages in a process of assimilation with the dominant language in the north-eastern parts of India. Lack of educational facilities such as textbooks, teachers, schools with the tribal language as the medium of instruction, lack of a standard language (and script), and most importantly, marginalisation or exclusion from the major domains of social behaviour, have severely curtailed the sustenance of tribal languages. A similar situation exists with Yerva in Kerala, or Bhumj and Rajbamshiin in West Bengal. The adoption of multiple strategies (using their language at home and the dominant language at school and other public domains) to maintain their languages is seen among the minority languages in diaspora. These languages have a stable cultural and linguistic base elsewhere that provides a constant motivation for their retention.

The languages spoken by a numerical minority have clearly become non-dominant and powerless minority languages under the above language policies. Again, it

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[7] *16th Report*, Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities, 11–20, New Delhi; quoted in Chaklader 1981, 51.

should be noted that their non-functionality in the major domains of society may be seen as the reason for their low status.

3. Constitutional Safeguards

The Indian Constitution adopted several safeguards to protect linguistic minorities in the country. Articles 350(A) and 350(B) were adopted in addition to the earlier Articles 29(1), 30, 347 and 350 in order to safeguard the interests of minorities. Article 29(1) notes: "Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same." This clearly guarantees the right of minorities to conserve their cultural as well as linguistic traditions. The first clause of Article 30 of the Constitution guarantees all minorities based on religion or language to establish and administer educational institutions of their own in order to preserve their linguistic and/or cultural heritage. The second clause of Article 30 prohibits the state from discriminating against minority educational institutions in giving financial aid on the grounds that they are under the management of minorities. Thus minorities are allowed to secure state funds for their educational institutions. Article 347 allows the use of minority languages for official purposes. Accordingly, a state should be recognised as unilingual only if one language group within the state constitutes 70 per cent or more of the total population. Moreover, where there is a minority of over 30 per cent or more of the total population, the state should be recognised as bilingual for administrative purposes. A similar principle applies at the district level.

Minority languages can be majority languages at the local level. Clear cases of this are Karbi and Dimasa in the autonomous districts of south Assam; Tibetan in the Ladakh region, and Baltistan in the north, of Jammu and Kashmir; Nepali in Sikkim; Hindi in the north-eastern region of Maharashtra, etc.

Article 350(A) proclaims, " [I]t shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups." Moreover, Article 350(B) gives power to the President to appoint appropriate officers and use proper methods to investigate and safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities. Wadhwa (1975) points out that the 12th Report of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities shows that education in the minority languages is provided at the primary level in the following states and union territories: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Nagaland, Rajashtan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Goa, Daman and Diu, Pondicherry.

The above discussion shows that the Constitution of India attempts to guarantee linguistic minorities the right to use their languages in administration and edu-

cation. According to our hypothesis, this government strategy would result in increasing the functional load of the languages. The above safeguards proposed by the Constitution guarantee the use of minority languages in the domain of education, thereby identifying and guaranteeing a certain functional load to those languages. However, the implementation of these policies is not always successful for various reasons, both external and internal to linguistic minorities, which are discussed in the following sections.

4. Bilingualism and the Status of Minority Languages

13 per cent of the Indian population is bilingual and over 42 per cent of the minority population is bilingual (Singh 2001). Singh and Manoharan (1993) point out that among the 623 tribal communities with which they worked, only 123 were monolingual while 500 were bilingual. They further note, "[T]he second or third language may be either a minor language, a scheduled language or even a regional language of the area in which they reside. … Apart from the official language of the State, regional languages like Chattisgarhi, Halbi, and Tulu are also spoken for inter-group communication by Tribal communities." Each state in India is multi-lingual but the rate of minority languages varies from 10 per cent (Gujarat) to 44 per cent (Panjab) (Bhatt and Mahboob 2002, 22). Moreover, the three-language formula has further contributed to the high rate of bilingualism among minority linguistic communities. Traditionally, tribal communities lived isolated from the cities and villages and their occupations included cutting firewood, hunting, fishing and farming (for further discussion see Parvathamma 1984). The languages of those communities have been maintained due to their isolation from the main-stream population which did not interact with them. In the fifty years since India's independence in 1947, it has become necessary for tribal communities to interact with the mainstream population owing to the following changes caused by modernisation (Pandharipande 1992, 258): (a) mechanisation of the professions of farming, fishing, tanning of leather, etc., (b) deforestation and urbanisation of villages, and (c) the policy of state governments to promote education in these communities (through the three-language formula), which has accelerated the speed of learning the dominant regional language among these communities. As a result, a majority of tribal languages are shifting to the "dominant language" in almost every functional domain. The functional domain of these languages is restricted to home and intra-group communication. Several studies – Biligiri (1969), Karunakaran (1983), Khubchandani (1983), Roy Burman (1969), Raju (1977), Abbi (1995) – show that due to the lack of script, the paucity of teaching materials and the small number of speakers, a large number of tribal languages are facing attrition.

The discussion here shows that the reduction in their functional load in the public domain is leading minority languages towards attrition. It is important to note that there is a hierarchy in the shift of the minority to the dominant languages. While Kui in Andhra Pradesh and Bhili in the Nagpur area (Maharashtra) show a very

high degree of shift, Santali in Bihar and West Bengal shows a relatively lower degree of shift. In contrast, some of the tribal languages in Kerala show negligible shift or none at all.
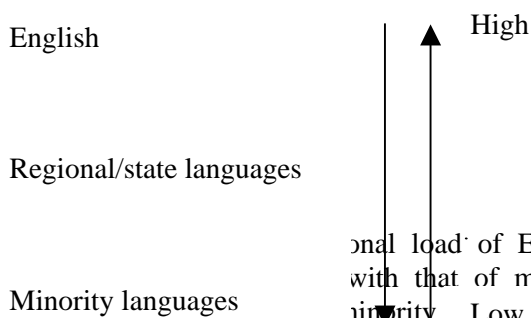
Like tribal languages, the minority languages of diaspora in different states also face pressures from state or regional languages in their respective state of immigration. Pandharipande (1992) points out that the maintenance versus shift of these languages is determined by their prestige or importance at the national level or in their native states. An example is Hindi in its non-native state of Gujarat. Although the number of Tamil and Hindi speakers in Gujarat is similar (about 1.6 per cent), the degree of maintenance of Hindi is much higher than that of Tamil, because Hindi is a national language while Tamil is only a regional and state language. Similarly, English is a minority language in every state. However, its maintenance is very high. The two cases of Hindi and English support the hypothesis of the correlation between a higher functional load and the maintenance of languages. Another important factor to note is that the implementation of the three-language formula is almost impossible when the mother tongue of the speakers is tribal and does not have a script, a standard code or literature. In the absence of these, it is not possible for the education department to produce teaching materials to ensure teaching of the mother tongue, even at the elementary/primary level. Young children who are speakers of tribal languages tend to begin to learn the state language at the primary level of education, and soon become bilingual. The use of the state language in school further causes the reduction of the domain of use of their first (tribal) language because bilingual children tend to use the state language (as opposed to their mother tongue) in most public domains. After a couple of generations, the language of home (of the tribal communities) is gradually replaced by the dominant state language, thus causing severe attrition of the tribal language. In contrast, those children who do not go to school tend to preserve their languages (tribal languages) as their use at home is maintained. This phenomenon supports the hypothesis that a guaranteed functional load (i.e. sustained use in a domain) guarantees maintenance of a language while the reduction and/or elimination of functional load leads to language attrition.

5. Language Attitudes, Functional Load and Minority Languages

This section covers some of the internal reasons for the reduction of the functional load of minority languages resulting in their rapid shift and attrition. One of the major factors affecting the maintenance or shift of minority languages is the speakers' perception of their own languages. Modernisation of Indian society has resulted (in addition to the mechanisation mentioned above) in the need to acquire a certain type of linguistic capital for sustained upward mobility in society. English, Hindi and other regional state languages (in that order) present a hierarchy of the power of linguistic capital. Technology for communication at the state, national and international levels has promoted unprecedented vigour in the use of English (although regional languages are catching up). In the domains of

production, sustenance, promotion of any product (both material and ideological), linguistic capital plays an important role. In India, the labour market in all domains is dominated by English and regional languages.

Power hierarchy

English   High

Regional/state languages

Minority languages   Low

...onal load of English and the regional languages is ... with that of minority languages, therefore it is not ... minority ... s perceive their languages as "power-less" in terms of their functionality in society. Several studies show that speakers of minority languages do not think that it is useful or important to learn their first language. Singh (2001) points out that out of the total 7.8 per cent tribal population in India, only 4 per cent speaks tribal languages. Breton (1997, 30–31) also illustrates the phase of transition of a large number of tribal languages towards the respective dominant languages. Razz and Ahmed (1990) claim that half of India's tribal population have already lost their languages, and that people have assimilated with the dominant linguistic group, adopting the dominant language as their mother tongue. Abbi (1995, 177) supports the above claim: "It is sad that the Kurux and Kharia languages are quickly disappearing from most of the urbanised area of Ranch district. This trend indicates that the urban tribals seldom consider it their privilege to speak their mother tongues. On the contrary, ignorance of the tribal languages is regarded as an enhancement of status and prestige. In speaking Hindi they feel superior in comparison to other fellow-tribals who cannot speak it." This negative attitude towards their languages has resulted in their shift to the dominant languages and a drastic reduction in their use.

The study in Pandharipande (1992) shows that the dialects of Marathi spoken around the Nagpur area corroborate the above claims about the attitudes of minority language speakers. As part of a survey, educated farmers in the 30–35 age group were interviewed. They controlled both standard Marathi and their dialect (Varhadi) of Marathi. These subjects, unlike their parents, had replaced the use of their dialect by standard Marathi, even at home. They readily admitted that the retention of their own dialect would hamper their socioeconomic success in the rapidly urbanising society of Maharashtra. However, they did not think that the loss of their code would result in the loss of their (sub)cultural identity. In fact, they thought that they could retain their identity through their rituals, foods and their "unique values" towards life. The minority speakers feel that they must control the

dominant code in order to compete and succeed in the dominant culture. A similar case is that of the Hindi dialects in the northern parts of India. These dialects, Braj, Bhaka, Bangru, Bundelkhandi, and other closely related languages such as Maghai, Maithili and Bhojpuri, are rapidly being replaced by Khadi Boli (Standard Hindi) which is the dominant language in the area. Most speakers of the dialects can also speak Hindi.

An important point to note here is that there is not an invariable correlation between maintenance of language and maintenance of culture. Diachronic evidence supports this claim. The Persian community that migrated to India in the seventh century has lost its language but has meticulously maintained its ethnic identity through preservation of a religious and cultural identity separate from the dominant culture and society.

In contrast, some minority linguistic communities seem to have strong language loyalties which they use for retention of their ethnic identity as well as to secure sociopolitical rights. The Santali language movement is a case in point (Mahapatra 1979). Santals demanded the establishment of a separate province for the tribes of Chota Nagpur and introduced Santali as the language of schools. Similarly, Sindhi and Konkani are preserved due to the extreme loyalty of the speakers towards their languages.

6. A Changing Equation of Language and Culture

Another dimension of speakers' attitudes towards their languages is a changing perception of their own cultural identity. The modernisation and technological development of the country has created a new vision of homogeneous culture with modern amenities available to all, where individuals are judged by their ability to succeed in the (apparently) fair competition. The road to success, in this view, is carved out through science and technology. As a result, languages such as English and Hindi are perceived as mechanisms to achieve the "dream of success". This overarching vision of culture is commonly shared by all, majority as well as minority communities. Their choice of language is therefore determined by their view of their "imagined or aspired" identity. The Bhils and Gonds in Maharashtra are keener to move up the economic ladder than to retain their tribal identity. When I asked a Tulu (minority language) speaker (a maid) in Mumbai why she did not speak Tulu to her children, she said, "I want her to go to law school. I do not want her to be a maid when she grows up. She should know English and Marathi." With great pride, she asked her daughter to recite an English poem to me, as if proclaiming her victory over the linguistic barrier!

7. Functional Load, Functional Transparency and Language Maintenance

I argue above that minority languages are prone to attrition as they are being replaced by other dominant languages in almost all public domains. In other words, attrition of minority languages is directly related to their reduced functional load. In the following discussion I provide evidence to support the assumption of a correlation between functional load and language maintenance. A language with a higher functional load shows a higher degree of maintenance than a language with a lower degree of functional load. For example, the regional languages in India are used in many more domains than the tribal languages. While regional languages are maintained, tribal languages face attrition, leading to death. American-Indian languages in North America and tribal languages in Australia are rapidly being replaced by the dominant languages in every domain (see Fishman 1991). Haugen's classic work on the Norwegian language in the United States (Haugen 1953) also shows that, over a period of time, the Norwegian language spoken by Norwegian immigrants was gradually replaced by English in almost all domains, leading to shift of the Norwegian language. Similar cases are also noted by Dorian in her 1982 work on loss and maintenance in contact situations, which points out that English and Russian are displacing many indigenous languages in Australia and the Soviet Union, respectively, while English is not endangering the native languages of India (Fishman 1977). The reason is that the indigenous languages in India have retained their functional domains (i.e. official context, local business, schools, etc.). Dorian (1982) also refers to Hebrew as an example of revival of a language by the national/political policy of making it functional in virtually all domains of use (Dorian 1982, 44). Derhemi (2002 and forthcoming), in her case study of Arbresh in Italy, points out how the language is in a dangerous phase of attrition in Italy due to its displacement by Italian in many public domains such as school, media, business, etc. Crystal (2000, 83), discussing why languages die, claims that in South America the indigenous languages are left alone as they are not viewed as a serious threat to national unity. However, as he points out, these languages are not used in any major public domains of prestige. "People find they have fewer opportunities to use their language, because it has been marginalised. It is not found in official domains such as local offices of civil service, and the local banks. It is not found in the media. It is not found as the language of higher education" (Crystal 2000, 83). The presence of these languages in unimportant domains creates what Fishman (1987) calls, "the 'folklorisation' of a language – the use of indigenous languages only in irrelevant or unimportant domains" (Crystal 2000, 83). Crystal further claims, " And with each loss of a domain, it should be noted, there is a loss of vocabulary, discourse patterns, and stylistic range. It is easy to see how languages would eventually die, simply because, having been denuded of most of its domains, there is hardly any subject matter left for people to talk about, and hardly any vocabulary to do it with." In his monumental work on *Reversing Language Shift*, Fishman (1991) describes the case of the Irish language, which is being consciously revived by making it functional in

the public domains of musical recitals, drama, school education, workplace, etc. These examples clearly demonstrate two points: (a) languages are endangered or die when their functional load is reduced in the public domain; and (b) they are maintained when their functional load is retained or increased.
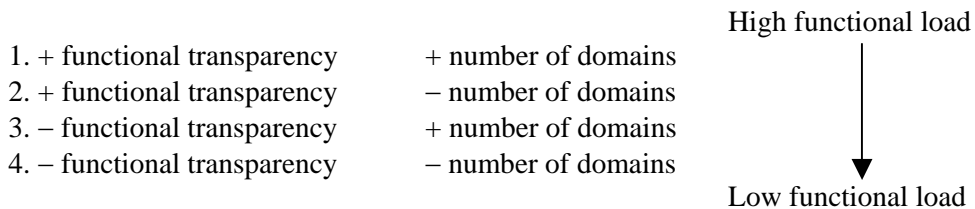
In the above discussion, it is claimed that "functional load" provides a parameter for defining minority languages. It is assumed that the degree of functional load can be measured by the number of functional domains of the languages, i.e. the higher the number, the higher the functional load. I would argue here that the number of domains is not the only parameter for measuring the degree of functional load, but that "functional transparency" is another important parameter. Functional transparency can be explained as follows: if a language A is the only language used to perform a particular function in a particular domain, then language A can be said to have "functional transparency" vis-à-vis that function. In contrast, if the same function is performed by more than one language, the languages involved are said to be not transparent (but opaque) to that function. A language with higher functional transparency can be said to have a higher functional load compared with a language that does not have functional transparency. For example, the only language used for science and technology in India is English. Therefore, English can be said to be transparent to this function. Similarly, regional languages (in their native states) are almost exclusively used at home, thereby command functional transparency in that domain. In Mumbai, the pidgin Hindi (Bazaar Hindi) is almost exclusively used as the "market language", thereby claiming transparency to the function of a link language (in the multilingual community in Mumbai). I argue that the invariable correlation between the language and its function makes the language transparent to that function.

In contrast, two languages are generally used as alternatives by immigrants in their non-native context. That is, they begin to use the dominant language (of the country/place of immigration) along with their native language in various domains (home, social gatherings, etc.) where they earlier used their native language exclusively. In this case, their native language does not remain transparent to the function. Though the number of domains in which their native language is used is higher than the domain of Bazaar Hindi, its functional load will be said to be lower than Bazaar Hindi. This situation is fairly common within minority languages in India. Many minority languages spoken exclusively at home at one point in time, gradually begin to be accompanied by the dominant language when children begin schooling in that language. This use of two languages (minority and dominant) reduces the functional transparency of minority languages.

Some other cases fall between the two extremes, where a language may not be exclusively used for a function but there is a high correlation between the language and its function. A good example of this is the Sanskrit language, which in India is

closely connected to the context of Hinduism (although other languages also perform the same or a similar function).

The hierarchy of functional load can be presented as follows:

High functional load

1. + functional transparency   + number of domains
2. + functional transparency   − number of domains
3. − functional transparency   + number of domains
4. − functional transparency   − number of domains

Low functional load

The above diagram shows relatively high/low degrees of functional load. Languages such as English and regional languages in India fall into category (1) as they all carry a high degree of transparency as well as a high number of domains. Sanskrit and Bazaar Hindi belong to category (2), where the functional transparency is high but the number of domains is low. Categories (3) and (4) show the phases of attrition of minority languages. In the first phase (3), minority languages are used along with the dominant language (thus losing functional transparency); and in the second phase (4), the dominant language displaces minority languages, leading to their disappearance.

The question of maintenance and shift of languages is related to the above. Can we assume that a high degree of functional load is a necessary as well as an adequate condition for the maintenance of a language? The answer is as follows: a language with a higher functional load has a better chance of survival than a language with a lower functional load. For example, the regional languages, with their higher functional load, are more likely to be maintained in India than the tribal languages with a very low functional load. However, a language with a higher degree of transparency (and low number of domains, see category (2)) has a better chance of survival than a language with a high number of domains but low transparency.

Evidence to support this hypothesis comes from the fact that languages involved in a diglossic situation generally show a high degree of maintenance compared with languages used to perform identical functions. In a multilingual country such as India, each (multilingual) community maintains stable bi/multilingualism as long as functional transparency is maintained across languages or, in other words, the situation is di/multiglossic.

8. Conclusion

The above discussion shows that minority languages can be defined on the basis of their low prestige, which is the result of their low functional load in the public domain. "Functional load" can be used as a diagnostic tool to predict maintenance

or attrition of languages. It is further shown that external factors (language policies, modernisation) as well as internal factors (attitudes of speakers) contribute to the enhancement or retardation of minority languages. Two main points emerge: (a) culture can be maintained without the language; and (b) perception of the (desired) identity changes over time and therefore the choice of language to express that identity also changes. The paper brings out the complexity of the issues related to definitions and the desirability of language maintenance. The hypothesis proposed makes a strong case for the need to raise the functional load of minority languages to prevent their shift and/or attrition.

Annex

Table 1: Scheduled Languages

	Language	Number of Speakers
1	Assamese	13,079,696
2	Bengali	69,595,738
3	Gujarati	40,673,814
4	Hindi	337,272,114
5	Kannada	32,753,676
6	Kashmiri	56,693
7	Konkani	1,760,607
8	Malayalam	30,337,176
9	Manipuri	1,270,216
10	Marathi	62,481,681
11	Nepali	2,076,645
12	Oriya	28,061,313
13	Panjabi	32,753,676
14	Sanskrit	49,736
15	Sindhi	2,122,848
16	Tamil	53,006,368
17	Telugu	66,017,615
18	Urdu	43,406,932

Source: Census of India, 1991: excludes figures for Jammu and Kashmir.

Table 2: Non-scheduled Languages

	Language	Number of speakers		Language	Number of speakers
1	Adi	158,409	**49**	Kuki	58,263
2	Anal	12,156	**50**	Kurukh/Oraon	1,426,618
3	Angami	97,631	**51**	Lahauli	22,027
4	Ao	172,449	**52**	Lahanda	27,386
5	Arabic/Arbi	21,975	**53**	Lakher	22,947
6	Bhili/Bhilodi	5,572,308	**54**	Lalung	33,746
7	Bhotia	55, 483	**55**	Lepcha	39,342
8	Bhumij	45,302	**56**	Liangmei	27,478
9	Bishnupuria	59,233	**57**	Limbu	28,174
10	Bodo/Boro	1,221,881	**58**	Lotha	85,802
11	Chakesang	30,985	**59**	Lushai/Mizo	538,842
12	Chakru/Chokri	48,207	**60**	Malto	108,148
13	Chang	32,478	**61**	Mao	77,810
14	Coorgi/Kadagu	97,011	**62**	Maram	10,144
15	Deori	17,901	**63**	Maring	15,268
16	Dimasa	88,543	**64**	Miri/Mishing	390,583
17	Dogri	89,681	**65**	Mishmi	29,000
18	English	178,598	**66**	Mogh	28,135
19	Gadaba	28,158	**67**	Monpa	43,226
20	Gangte	13,695	**68**	Munda	413,894
21	Garo	675,642	**69**	Mundari	816,378
22	Gondi	2,124,854	**70**	Nicobarese	26,261
23	Halabi	534,313	**71**	Nissi/Dafla	173,791
24	Halam	29,322	**72**	Nocte	30,441
25	Hmar	65,204	**73**	Paite	49,237
26	Ho	949,216	**74**	Parji	44,001
27	Jatapu	25,730	**75**	Pawi	15,346
28	Juang	16,858	**76**	Phom	65,350
29	Kabui	68,925	**77**	Pochury	11,231
30	Karbi/Mikri	366,229	**78**	Rabha	139,365
31	Khandeshi	973,709	**79**	Rengma	37,521
32	Kharia	225,556	**80**	Sangtam	47,461
33	Khasa	912,283	**81**	Santali	5,216,325
34	Kheza	13,004	**82**	Savara	273,168

35	Khiememnugan	23,544	83	Sema	166,157
36	Khond/Kondh	220,783	84	Sherpa	16,105
37	Kinnauri	61,794	85	Tangkhul	101,841
38	Kisan	162,088	86	Tangsa	28,121
39	Koch	26,179	87	Thado	107,992
40	Koda/Kora	28,200	88	Tibetan	69,416
41	Kolmi	98,281	89	Tripuri	694,040
42	Kom	13,548	90	Tulu	1,552,259
43	Konda	17,864	91	Vaiphei	26,185
44	Konyak	137,722	92	Wancho	39,600
45	Korku	466,073	93	Yimchungre	47,227
46	Korwa	27,485	94	Zeliang	35,079
47	Koya	270,994	95	Zemi	22,634
48	Kui	641,662	96	Zou	15,966

Source: Census of India, 1991.

Table 3: Numerically Significant Minority Languages in each State and Union
Territory of India

State/ Territory	Number of speakers	Per- centage	State/ Territory	Number of speakers	Per- cent age
India			**Andhra Pradesh**		
Hindi	337,272,114	40.2	Telugu	56,375,755	84.8
Bengali	69,595,738	8.3	Urdu	5,560,154	8.4
Telugu	66,017,615	7.9	Hindi	1,841,290	2.8
Arunachal Pradesh			**Assam**		
Nissi/Dafla	172,149	19.9	Assamese	12,958,088	57.8
Nepali	81,176	9.4	Bengali	2,523,040	11.3
Bengali	70,771	8.2	Bodo/Boro	1,184,569	5.3
Bihar			**Goa**		
Hindi	69,845,979	80.9	Konkani	602,626	51.5
Urdu	8,542,463	9.9	Marathi	390,270	33.4
Santhali	2,546,655	2.9	Kannada	54,323	4.6
Gujarat			**Haryana**		
Gujarati	37,792,933	91.5	Hindi	14,982,409	91.0
Hindi	1,215,825	2.9	Punjabi	1,170,225	7.1

Sindhi	704,088	1.7	Urdu	261,820	1.6
Himachal Pradesh			**Karnataka**		
Hinndi	4,595,615	88.9	Kannada	29,785,004	66.2
Punjabi	324,479	6.3	Urdu	4,480,038	10.0
Kinnarui	61,794	1.2	Telugu	3,325,062	
Kerala			**Madhya Pradesh**		
Malayalam	28,096,376	96.6	Hindi	56,619,090	85.6
Tamil	616,010	2.1	Bhili/Bhilodi	2,215,399	3.3
Kannada	75,571	0.3	Gondi	1,481,265	2.3
Maharashtra			**Manipur**		
Marathi	57,894,839	73.3	Manipuri	1,110,130	60.0
Hindi	6,168,941	7.8	Thado	103,667	5.6
Urdu	5,734,468	7.3	Tangkhul	100,088	5.4
Meghalaya			**Mizoram**		
Khasi	879,192	49.5	Lushai	518,099	75.1
Garo	547,690	30.9	Bengali	59,092	8.6
Bengali	144,262	8.1	Lakher	22,938	3.3
Nagaland			**Orissa**		
Ao	169,837	14.0	Oriya	26,199,346	82.8
Sema	152,123	12.6	Hindi	759,016	2.4
Konyak	137,539	11.4	Telugu	502,102	1.6
Punjab			**Rajasthan**		
Punjabi	18,704,461	92.2	Hindi	39,410,968	89.6
Hindi	1,478,993	7.3	Bhili/Bhilodi	2,215,399	5.0
Urdu	13,416	0.1	Urdu	953,497	2.2
Sikkim			**Tamil Nadu**		
Nepali	256,418	63.1	Tamil	48,434,744	86.7
Bhotia	32,593	8.0	Telugu	3,975,561	7.1
Lepcha	29,854	7.3	Kannada	1,208,296	2.2
Tripura			**Uttar Pradesh**		
Bengali	1,899,162	68.9	Hindi	125,348,492	90.1
Tripuri	647,847	23.5	Urdu	12,492,927	9.0
Hindi	45,803	1.7	Punjabi	661,215	0.5
West Bengal			**Andaman and Nicobar Islands**		
Bengali	58,541,519	86.0	Bengali	64,706	23.1
Hindi	4,479,170	6.6	Tamil	53,536	19.1
Urdu	1,455,649	2.1	Hindi	53,536	17.6
Chandiga			**Dadra and**		

rh			Nagar Haveli		
Hindi	392,054	61.1	Bhili/Bhilodi	76,207	55.0
Punjabi	222,890	34.7	Gujarati	30,346	21.9
Tamil	5,318	0.8	Konkani	17,062	12.3
Daman and Diu			**Delhi**		
Gujarati	92,579	91.1	Hindi	7,690,631	81.6
Hindi	3,645	3.6	Punjabi	748,145	7.9
Marathi	1,256	1.2	Urdu	512,990	5.4
Lakshadweep			**Pondicherry**		
Malayalam	43,678	84.5	Tamil	720,473	89.2
Tamil	282	0.5	Malayalam	38,392	4.8
Hindi	217	0.4	Telugu	34,799	4.3
Source: Census of India 1991: excludes figures for Jammu and Kashmir.					

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About the Author

Rajeshwari V. Pandharipande is Director of the Program for the Study of Religion and Professor of Religious Studies, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States. She received her first Ph.D. in Sanskrit Literature from Nagpur University, India, and her second Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has published four books and over fifty research articles on sociolinguistics, the syntax and semantics of South Asian languages, and the language of religion. Her two major works are *The Eternal Self and the Cycle of Samsara: Introduction to Asian Mythology and Religion* (Ginn Press 1990), and *A Grammar of Marathi* (Routledge

1997). Professor Pandharipande received the title "University Scholar" (1992–93) for her outstanding research, the Harriet and Charles Luckman All Campus Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award, and the William Prokasy Award for excellence in undergraduate teaching at the University of Illinois (1996).

Address: University of Illinois, Department of Linguistics, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA; email: raj-pan@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu

Uchumataqu: Research in Progress on the Bolivian Altiplano

PIETER MUYSKEN
Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen

In this paper the current linguistic situation of the Uru, who live near Lake Titicaca (Bolivia) is discussed. An overview is given of earlier studies of the language, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Then I focus on possible causes of the decline of the language of the Uru, Uchumataqu: persistent droughts in the 1930s, intermarriage with the surrounding Aymara and ethnic reorientation. In addition to losing ground to Aymara and Spanish, Uchumataqu has undergone considerable Aymara structural influence. Subsequently, I summarise my own research on the language, and the possibilities of linguistic studies serving community goals. Finally, the chances for survival are discussed, which depend in part on large-scale developments, or the absence thereof, in the Bolivian economy and society.

In this paper I describe and comment on the linguistic situation of the Uru of Iru-Itu (hispanicised as Irohito), a small ethnic group on the borders of Lake Titicaca, in the highlands of Bolivia. The colonial denomination for this group is Juchusuma or Ochosuma, which may be the basis for *Uchuma*, the first part of the compound *Uchuma-taqu* (*taqo* or *taqu* means "language"), the name of the group for their language, often also called Uru. Local sources suggest that Juchusuma is the traditional name for the Río Desaguadero, and thus Uchumataqu would mean "language of the Desaguadero river (people)".

I have carried out linguistic research with the Uru on three successive visits in 2001 and 2002, and have been exploring ways, together with the community leaders, to preserve the language, which has almost been lost. The history and prospects of Uchumataqu cannot be seen separately from the development of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia and surrounding countries.

I mentioned that the Uru live on the borders of Lake Titicaca, but this is slightly inaccurate. Properly speaking, they live on the banks of the Río Desaguadero, the river through which the excess water from Lake Titicaca flows towards Lake Poopo and then onwards to the salty marshes of the southern Altiplano. The Uru are surrounded by Aymara-speaking *campesinos* (peasant farmers). There were Uru communities on Lake Titicaca proper as well, but these communities have now

become Aymara-speaking.[1]

On Lake Poopo there are several Murato communities, ethnically related to the Uru. However, the Murato no longer speak a separate language, but have adopted Aymara, preserving a number of original words from an Uru-like language. In the Murato oral testimonies published in Miranda Mamani et al. (1992) a number of these words appear.

Finally, south-west of Lake Poopo on the salty marshes near Lake Coipasa there is another group related to the Uru, the Chipaya. They live in one community, Santa Ana de Chipaya, and number about 1,500. Their language has been preserved. It has been documented by Olson (e.g. 1967) and Porterie-Gutierrez (1990), and is currently being studied by Rodolfo Cerrón Palomino (Pontífica Universidad Católica Peruana, Lima). Apaza Apaza (2000), in a Aymara dialect study of the region between the *salares* (salt lake basins), of Uyuni and Coipasa, suggests that there may be lexical traces of Uru there as well, but the lexical evidence he adduces does not yet match the Uchumataqu data I have collected. Most of the non-Aymara words he found are actually Quechua, rather than Uru-like.

There has been considerable confusion about the genetic affiliation and identity of the three original Uru languages: Uchuma-taqu, Murato or *Chholo* (Miranda Mamani et al. 1992, 171), and Chipaya or *Chipaj tago* (Porterie-Gutierrez 1990, 160). In some colonial sources mention is made of the Puquina living along the shores of Lake Titicaca. The Puquina language is now extinct, but it was once important enough to receive the status of *lengua general* (general language), along with Quechua and Aymara, in the early years of the Spanish occupation.[2] Puquina has been tentatively classified as Arawakan. Since they were spoken in roughly the same area, Uru and Puquina have been subsequently confused as being the same language. This mistaken assumption was reinforced by Créqui-Montford and Rivet (1925–27), and since then many publications and museum displays link Uru to Puquina and the Arawakan language family. However, linguistically, this link is unmotivated. The grammar of the Uru languages does not resemble that of Arawakan. There is no trace of this in the Uru languages. Furthermore, what we know of the Puquina lexicon is completely unlike that of the Uru languages.[3]

Until we know more of all the languages of Amazonian northern Boliva, with which there are some lexical resemblances (Fabre 1995), it is best to treat the Uru

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1 Furthermore, preliminary results from an Aymara lexicographic dialect-survey of the people living on the banks of the Desaguadero between Lake Titicaca and Lake Poopo (Filomena Miranda, Universidad Mayor de San Andres, La Paz, personal communication) have uncovered a number of non-Aymara words in this area. These suggest that there once was an Uru-speaking population all along the Desaguadero.

2 This meant that the language could and should be used as a missionary language, even with speakers of smaller languages.

3 Torero (1987) has shown that some Puquina lexicon survives in Callahuaya, a ritual healing language from the Charazani region north of La Paz (cf. e.g. Muysken 1996; Adelaar and Muysken in prep.).

languages as a separate group. Earlier attempts by Olson (1964, 1965) to link the Uru languages to Mayan have been shown to be without foundation.

The well-known French ethnohistorian Nathan Wachtel has written a detailed "regressive" history (i.e. going back in time) of the Uru peoples (1990). He shows that at the time of the conquest by the Spaniards of the area now called Bolivia, the Uru peoples occupied a large territory from the Pacific coast in Chile through the Bolivian altiplano to the borders of Lake Titicaca. Progressively, they lost ground and many of their communities underwent ethnic restructuring. Ticona and Albó (1997) have published an absorbing account of the recent history of the Jesús de Machaqa region, the larger area that the Uru community of Irohito forms part of. They document the resurgence of the Uru of Irohito from a marginalised and dispirited small band in the 1940s to a highly self-confident and progressive group at present (see also below).

1. Earlier Research

There are several early-twentieth-century sources for the Uru languages. These include Polo (1901), a general description of the Uru people with a vocabulary (full of inaccuracies, unfortunately); Bacarreza (1910), a general description of the Chipaya; Posnansky (1915), a preliminary description of the language of the Chipaya; Créqui-Montford and Rivet (1925–27), who visited Irohito in the early 1920s; Métraux, with both linguistic and ethnographic observations (1935). However, the richest early material, largely unpublished, is probably that gathered by the German ethnographer and archaeologist Max Uhle on two successive visits in 1894 and 1896 (Uhle 1894–96). Together with the Uchumataqu material gathered by his student Walter Lehmann in 1928, it is deposited in the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin (Lehmann 1928). The material contains word lists, a sketch for a grammar, comparative studies and ethnographic notes.

However, probably the most important source on Uchumataqu is the intensive and detailed work of the French doctor Jehan Vellard, who visited the Uru on numerous occasions in 1938, the 1940s and early 1950s and left a very rich set of source materials, including detailed vocabulary lists, short phrases, stories (1949, 1950, 1951, 1967), and a French monograph, dramatically titled *Gods and Pariahs of the Andes. The Uru, those who do not want to be men* (1954).

His central thesis is that a great drought occurring between 1939 and 1948 destroyed the fluvial ecosystem on which the Uru depended, and spelt the end of them. "But the people of the lake have been struck dead. The last group of Uru will not reform itself" (1954, 12).[4] The loss of the language has been interpreted in magical terms, according to Vellard (1954, 103): "They always consider their forgetting the mother tongue as a punishment accompanied by the loss of the gifts of magic and of prophesy. By having allied themselves with men, the last Uru have

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4 "Mais le peuple du lac a été frappé à mort. Le dernier groupe ourou ne se réformera plus."

lost their language and are no longer respected."[5]

In more recent times, a team organised and financed by UNICEF visited the community in 1995, involving the French linguist Colette Grinevald (Grinevald et al. 1995). This team collected vocabulary, worked with the community on an orthography, and generally rekindled enthusiasm for reviving the language among the Urus.

In 1985 Lorenzo Inda, the most interested community leader, published a history of the Urus, including much detail about cultural practices and Uchumataqu vocabulary.

Crucially, only a small fraction of the research on Uchumataqu is available to the Bolivian people, let alone to the speakers themselves. It is either unpublished, published in obscure sources, or transcribed in notations based on German and French pronunciations, and the translations given are often in German or French.

2.   Causes of the Decay of the Language

The dramatic and gloomy predictions of Vellard did not come true. The Uru are there and continue to form a distinct group, as noted in the previous section, but they certainly do not differentiate themselves as much as they once did from the surrounding Aymara. One of the manifestations of this is that the Uru no longer speak their own language, but most of the time Aymara, in addition to some Spanish.

Vellard was right in that the shift from Uchumataqu to Aymara as the daily language of the people took place before 1950, but the language did not disappear altogether. One clear cause of language loss is that after the drought the reduced size of the group remaining in the community forced marriages with Aymara from neighbouring villages. In 1942 only six men and a few women, all elderly, were left in the community. As Vellard puts it (1954, 93): "Fifteen years ago, more than fifty persons spoke Uru fluently. With the dispersion, mixed marriages have accelerated the decay of the language. The Aymara women married to Uru refuse to speak the language of their husbands: the children, Aymaras through their mothers, do not want to be taken for Uru by speaking a despised language."[6]

In addition, as population size increased again after the 1950s, many Uru were forced to seek work outside the community, and lost contact with potential

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5 "Elles considèrent toujours l'oubli de la langue maternelle comme un châtiment accompagné de la privation du secours magique et du don de la prophétie. Pour s'être alliés aux hommes, les derniers Ourous ont perdu leur langue et ne sont plus respectés."

6 "Il y a quinze ans, plus de cinquante personnes parlaient couramment l'ourou. La dispersion venue, les mariages mixtes ont acceleré la ruine du langage. Les femmes aymaras mariées aux Ourous refusent de parler la langue de leurs maris; les enfants, étant aymaras du fait de leurs mères, ne veulent pas être pris pour des Ourous en parlant une langue méprisée."

speakers of Uchumataqu. They functioned in Spanish, Aymara, and for those who migrated to the Cochabamba area, Quechua.

3. Present Project

The primary aim of my own project is to document the language as well as possible, with the community itself as the primary beneficiary in mind, and the wider public, including the linguistic research community, as the secondary beneficiary. However, even this modest initial aim turned out to imply much more, because documenting a language in this stage of decay requires wide community support and interest in the language.

The 1992 census, analysed by Albó (1995), revealed that over half of the community in residence in Irohito, eighty-seven persons, claimed to speak Uchumataqu. This finding contrasts sharply with what I found in April 2001, when in fact no single person spoke the language well enough to do fairly simple vocabulary work with me.[7]

However, it does point to a self-perception on the part of the community as linked to Uchumataqu. When I contacted the community to do fieldwork, their enthusiasm for the language and its preservation gained the upper hand over their distrust of foreigners, particularly foreigners without lots of aid funds and connections with aid agencies. After lengthy meetings a contract was drawn up with the following main clauses:

(1) I am not to get involved with Uru women.[8]

(2) The authorship of the resulting publication lies with the community; my name appears as *asesor lingüista* (linguist advisor).

(3) I am to leave US$500 as a guarantee that I will return with a draft vocabulary on 1 August 2001.

(4) The community provides a team of consultants every night at seven to work on the language with me. They are compensated for their time with US$1 per person per hour.

On the basis of this contract we worked for a few weeks, using all the words in the Vellard material as an initial stimulus. I left with about 800 recognised words, organised in twenty-five themes (semantic fields), ranging from "the family" to

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7 At that point women were not asked to participate in the fieldwork, unfortunately, by the village leaders, I suspect because they know more than the men.

8 Some Uru say that Jehan Vellard left the community with an Uru woman. This story of a romance finds some support in his field notes, e.g. when he exemplifies: *ampt'e wira k'ucha chuni pini pek'uchay* "toi, j'aime bien beaucoup, blanc" (1951, 21) [you, I love quite a bit, white man] (spelling adapted to modern Uchumataqu orthography as introduced in 1985).

"existence and possession". I also asked children in the local school (twenty-seven pupils) to make drawings with black felt-tipped pens.

On 1 August I returned with several copies of the draft version of the vocabulary, which also includes the phrases and expressions I had gathered, illustrated with the children's drawings. Reception was good, although the community leaders probably thought the drawings awkward and childish. A new series of evening sessions started, this time with the oldest and most knowledgeable of the April consultants, Teodora Vila, and his elder sister who had just arrived from La Paz, Julia Vila. Indeed, she may be described as the only reasonably fluent speaker of the language, having been brought up in it by her grandmother. The group of speakers that Colette Grinevald had worked with had all died. Julia Vila was able to correct the pronunciation of many words I had elicited earlier, provide the Uchumatau word for many items for which we had only the Aymara equivalent so far, and give full clauses.

Currently, I am reworking all this material and attempting to write an accessible introduction to the language which takes the concrete themes as its point of departure (Muysken 2000, 2001; Distrito Nacionalidad Indígena Urus de Irohito 2002). I returned to Irohito in early 2002 to present the new version to the community. This version also includes songs written in Uchumataqu by Lorenzo Inda, and a transcribed story told by Julia Vila.

The question remains, however, whether this effort will contribute to the revitalisation of the language, and how this may be achieved. On the negative side, I must mention the fact that it is extremely hard for the Bolivian highland communities to survive at all, let alone preserve their language. Bolivia as a whole remains an economic black hole, far away from any growth poles. It borders on two poor countries, Paraguay and Peru, and on three less poor countries, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. However, the regions of these countries bordering on Bolivia are all underdeveloped. While Bolivia as a whole has zero or negative economic growth at present, in fact all new economic activity (cattle, oil, gas, tropical agriculture) is concentrated in the lowlands, and the highlands economically slowly starve to death. This leads to tremendous labour migration, and much political unrest. There is a complex system of *cargos* (annually rotating ritual obligations) operating in the highland communities, forcing a number of adult males to stay in the community and occupy a political function (president, vice-president, secretary, head of school committee) by rotation for one calendar year.[9] Apart from a small group of committed adult males, the only people permanently present are women, children and older people. However, many women, like Julia Vila, have also migrated and only come back occasionally. All adolescents are elsewhere as well, in school or working.

On the positive side, a number of factors may be mentioned. First, even after fifty

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9 Of course, they may refuse, but then they lose their status as community members.

years of disuse the language has not yet disappeared. The eighty-seven members of the community who claim to speak Uchumataqu all know a number of set phrases and most of the vocabulary related to boating, fishing and hunting of waterfowl. In fact, the Uru (in Uchumataqu *qot suñi* – "people of the lake") use their original language most when they are on the water.

Second, there is a clear interest in the language. Some years ago, the community went to the expense of paying for the time and travel costs of a Chipaya to come and teach them his language. The travel time is about a day and a half. It did not work out well, because there are a number of differences between Chipaya and Uchumataqu (roughly as between Italian and French), and perhaps also because the Chipaya involved had no experience in language teaching. The episode does illustrate the seriousness of the desire to recuperate the original language.

Third, it should be mentioned that Irohito is exceptional within its region. Far from being the destitute and down-trodden group evoked by Vellard (1954), they are now the most advanced community in the region, looked upon with some jealousy and respect by their Aymara neighbours, and not without political influence. This was the first community in the region (and the only one so far) to hoist the white flag of 100 per cent literacy (in Aymara, ironically), due to the enthusiasm of young community members who attended a secondary school nearby and returned home to carry out an alphabetisation campaign. Also, it is the only community with a number of solar panels. They applied for, and received, a computer and printer, and recently a generator was installed. A few younger members of the community have developed basic computer skills.

A fourth factor is the political constellation of the indigenous groups in Bolivia, which itself is a reflection of continent-wide, or even global, developments. While the 1952 revolution had emphasised class status (miner, peasant, etc.), in the mid-1990s a strong political movement stressing ethnic pluralism came to the fore, which in the area of education was a champion of bilingual schools. A number of special programmes were made available particularly earmarked for small groups with a separate status. This makes it advantageous for ethnic groups to strengthen their distinct character. The Banzer-Quiroga government (1998–2002) only paid lip-service to this policy, without actually discontinuing it. From 2000 onwards, however, the nationalist mobilisation of particularly the Aymara leading to much political unrest is highlighting ethnicity in politics again, and it is very possible that the outcome of the 2002 elections will be that pluralism is once again high on the political agenda. I return to this below.

A fifth factor is the growth of small-scale ethnotourism in Bolivia. Several ethnic groups are experimenting with tours visiting their communities as a way of generating extra income. The Uru are currently debating this as an option, and already have a small museum with a reed boat, fishing nets, etc.[10] Even though

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10 The Uru are traditionally associated with the technique of reed boats made famous by Thor

most tourists would hardly hear the difference between rural Spanish and Aymara, let alone between Aymara and Uchumataqu, it is clear that the Uchumataqu heritage will be one of the assets of Irohito. This holds a fortiori if the ethnotourism also involves secondary school and institutional outings from nearby La Paz, since most Paceños do know some Aymara and would be curious to learn about Uchumataqu. Note that I am not claiming that the presence of occasional tourists, "ethno" or otherwise, would itself induce the Uru to speak Uchuamataqu in their daily lives, but rather that tourism would turn the language into an asset and could constitute a base, also financial, for teaching facilities and materials in the language.

These five factors conjointly could play a role in the revival of Uchumataqu. It would not be a purely automatic and unconscious reversal of a process of language shift, of course. That shift took place much too long ago for that, and the language is too far gone. It would be a conscious effort to give the language its place alongside, not in place of, Aymara and Spanish. It would involve the activities of a small group of cultural brokers, community leaders, and be linked to processes such as folklorisation and musealisation of Uru culture. It would also need to be a modern development, relying on literacy and possibly even on modern media.

For some, this makes the possible revitalisation of Uru unreal, artificial or suspect. However, it may be the way in which many such revitalisation processes take place in different parts of the world. Situations such as that of the Uru and the Uchumataqu language cast doubt on traditional notions of authenticity and spontaneity, and show that even rural communities are capable of "language planning".

4. Changes in the Language: Aymarisation and Simplification

One aspect not discussed so far concerns the linguistic features of the Uchumataqu that have survived. It is fairly clear, when comparing the pronunciation recorded in Vellard's materials with that of younger speakers, that Uchumataqu has undergone quite a few changes in the course of time, in part perhaps under the influence of Aymara. Such changes come as no surprise, given the recent history of the language and the extensive bilingualism with Aymara (and, for many, Spanish).

The changes are clearest in the pronunciation of the language. Modern speakers have a tendency to reduce the five-vowel system of the language to a three-vowel system. Uchumataqu *e* merges with *i*, and *o* merges with *u*. However, the exact phonological environments favouring this merger have not yet been determined. Given that five-vowel systems of the Uchumataqu type *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* are not marked and the presence of the Aymara three-vowel system *a*, *i*, *u*, it is likely that the mergers are triggered by Aymara. Notice that Spanish also has a five-vowel system

Heyerdahl, even if now most of these boats on Lake Titicaca are made by the Aymara, and most boats used by the Uru themselves are crafted from wood.

of the original Uchumataqu type; it could not have triggered the merger.

Another change involves the nature of the consonants but is harder to define exactly. Vellard (1994, 100–1) writes: "The language strikes one at first sight by its sweetness, in contrast with the harder Quechua, richer in gutturals (there are four different forms of *k* in Quechua) and even more with Aymara. It is a whispering language, with countless sibilants and hissing sounds, *tch*, *ch*, *sh*, *ts*, etc."[11] The lexical data I gathered in April 2001, however, did not contrast significantly with Aymara words in their pronunciation. The full range of gutturals (presumably velars and uvulars) was present, and the number of sibilants is only slightly larger than in Aymara. A more detailed analysis of the precise phonetic form of the words in Vellard's transcription in contrast with the present form of these words can resolve this issue.

Another complicated phonological problem concerns glottalisation. Uchumataqu shares with Aymara the series of simple and aspirated stops:

$$p \qquad t \qquad ch \qquad k \qquad q$$
$$p^h \qquad t^h \qquad ch^h \qquad k^h \qquad q^h$$

However, the glottalised equivalents do not match entirely:

Aymara:	p'	t'	ch'	k'	q'
Uchumataqu:	?	?	ch'	k'	q'

The question mark indicates the one or two words with this pronunciation in Uchumataqu that have a marginal status. This gives rise to the hypothesis, no more than that at present, that glottalisation in Uchumataqu was borrowed from Aymara. Further research, involving a detailed comparison with Chipaya (which is also in close contact with Aymara, however), analysis of the earlier sources for Uru, and a reconstruction of the proto-phonology of the Uru language family, will need to clarify this issue.

A fourth change in the pronunciation of Uchumataqu concerns the structure of the syllable. A few examples of the contrast between the words gathered in April 2001 and the pronunciation of these same words by Julia Vila in August 2001 will suffice:

11"La langue frappe au premier abord par sa douceur, en contraste avec le quichoua plus dur et riche en gutturales (il y a quatre formes différentes de *k* en quichoua) et plus encore avec l'aymara. C'est une langue chuchotante, avec d'innombrables sifflantes et chuintantes, des *tch*, *ch*, *sh*, *ts*, etc."

April	August	gloss
sikuru-chay	sqknu-chay	"tie up"
tars-chay	chatsna-chay	"shake"
tik-chay	t'oxsna-chay	"cover"

It is not so much that the sound inventory has been reduced as that complex syllable clusters and word forms have been simplified, and some substitutions made.[12]

For morphology and syntax, things are less clear. In the realm of morphology, it is difficult, even in the recorded speech of Julia Vila, to discover all the suffixes mentioned in Vellard's work. As for word order, Vellard writes (1954, 102): "In the construction of phrases, the determining complement is placed before the noun. Without this being an absolute rule, the verb is ordinarily relegated to the end of the clauses. These are very short and all discourses are composed of little, very simple clauses."[13] The pattern described by Vellard coincides typologically with that of Aymara, i.e. head final. Consistent with this is the presence of postpositions and possessor-possessed constructions. If there has been Aymara influence in the realm of word order, it must surely predate the 1950s. Other aspects of Uchumataqu syntax have not yet been sufficiently studied .

In any case, it may well be that if Uru is revitalised, it will be a simplified form of the language that survives as a second language, as it has survived these last fifty years.

5.   Can we Look Ahead?: Grass-Roots and Government Support

Now that the first steps towards documenting what survives of Uchumataqu have been taken, it is time to plan ahead. In addition to the thematically organised word list mentioned above, it will be worthwhile publishing whatever traditional texts have survived in an accessible orthography, so that reading material becomes available. Vellard (1949) contains half a dozen recorded texts, mostly descriptions of fishing and hunting practices, and a few accounts of recorded recent history. A third step would be the establishment of a programme of regular meetings about the language and courses for younger people.

Whether these efforts will eventually lead to the revival of the language depends on the economic survival of Irohito as a viable community and on the politics of

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12Notice also that there is a possible case of re-etymologisation in the case of *sikuru-chay*. It looks suspiciously like Spanish *asegurar* (secure).

13"Dans la construction des phrases, le complément déterminatif se place avant le substantif. Sans être une règle absolue, le verbe est d'ordinaire rejeté à la fin des phrases. Celles-ci sont très courtes et tout le discours est composé de petites phrases fort simples."

ethnicity in the region and in Bolivia as a whole. These questions are shrouded in uncertainty.

In 2001 the Nación Originaria Uru (NOU) was formed in Oruro, a city in the centre of the Altiplano south of Irohito, representing six groups. In the spelling of the foundation document these are:

- Chipaya

- Murato

- Iruhitu

- Koro   (= San Juan de Coripata, Carangas Prov., Bolivia)

- Isluka   (= Isluga, near Chipaya, but in northern Chile)

- Uroz   (= Urus of the "floating islands" on Lake Titicaca near Puno, Peru).

Not much is known about the possible survival of Uru languages with the last three of these groups. Most probably the situation is as with the Murato: general use of Aymara, Quechua or Spanish, and knowledge of individual words with Uru etymologies. None the less, politically the formation of a larger ethnic unit in the form of NOU is important, for two reasons. First of all, it can give small groups more self-confidence and channel the exchange of expertise in revitalisation efforts (high on the NOU agenda).

Second, it may stimulate the Bolivian Government to start educational programmes specifically aimed at the Uru cultures and languages. In the mid-1990s the Reforma Educativa (Educational Reform) was launched to introduce the three major indigenous languages, Quechua, Aymara and Guaraní, into the curriculum. While preliminary research on the indigenous Amazonian and Chaco languages was carried out, establishing alphabets and studying educational needs, no programmes were set up in this area. The Uru languages, the only small highland languages that survive, were completely left out of consideration. One of the arguments was that these languages are spoken by too few people to warrant serious teaching efforts. The NOU initiative may help to draw the attention of the planners at the Section of Curriculum Development at the Ministry of Education to the Uru languages and communities.

Currently, the community itself is engaged in organizing one hour of Uru teaching a week for the children in the school, using the materials we have prepared over the last two years. In a teacher-training institution 14 km away, some students are

interested in spending a semester in Irohito as a part of their final practice period, developing teaching materials.

Bolivia is culturally and linguistically an extremely rich country. Many of the Amazonian languages in the country are linguistic isolates or belong to extremely small local language families. It is likely that the ethnolinguistic situation in Bolivia and the adjacent Brazilian state of Rondônia directly reflects a very old stage in the language development of the continent. Thus understanding the languages and cultures of Bolivia offers a key to the early history of the continent as a whole.

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About the Author

Pieter Muysken is currently professor of linguistics at Nijmegen University (the Netherlands), after having taught at the University of Amsterdam for many years and a brief stint at Leiden University. His main specialism is language contact, which he has studied in the context of the Caribbean Creoles, the relation between Quechua and Spanish, and code-switching among immigrant groups in Europe. His publications include *Mixed Categories. Nominalizations in Quechua* (with Claire Lefebvre, Kluwer 1987), *Language Contact and Bilingualism* (with René Appel, Edward Arnold 1987), *Pidgins and Creoles, an Introduction* (ed. with Jacques Arends and Norval Smith, Benjamins 1996), *One Speaker, Two Languages* (ed. with Lesley Milroy, Cambridge 1996), and *Bilingual Speech. A Typology of Code-mixing* (Cambridge 2000).

Address: Linguistics, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, Postbus 9103, NL-6500 HD Nijmegen, The Netherlands; email: p.muysken@let.ru.nl

The Endangered Arbresh Language and the Importance of Standardised Writing for its Survival:
The Case of Piana degli Albanesi, Sicily

EDA DERHEMI
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

This study covers two main topics: a presentation of the condition of the endangered Arbresh language and analysis of those features of attrition that demonstrate the importance of writing and codification of a language; and an examination of the implementation of recent linguistic policies in Piana degli Albanesi, Sicily, in interaction with the complex environment of a bilingual and diglossic minority whose language is undergoing attrition. The research concludes that the revitalisation of Arbresh in its current condition requires standard-sation of the written language and the inclusion of this language in Piana schools.

This paper discusses the condition of the Arbresh language, an Albanian dialect spoken for some 500 years in Sicily (Italy) in the community of Piana degli Albanesi. The decaying features of the language are analysed in relation to possible steps that the community and the cultural elite can undertake with the support of recent language policy.

Although Arbresh is the language used in everyday informal communication and is not stigmatised either by its speakers or by non-Arbresh, it shows clear features of language attrition. A growing number of gaps in the Arbresh linguistic system reduce its utility and frequency of use for communication, which leads in turn to further decay. If linguistic decay is not stopped, the use of the language will continue to diminish, and the effects will spread to reinforce patterns of further linguistic loss, weakening the position of Arbresh in relation to the dominant language, Italian.

Grenoble and Whaley (1998, 32–5) present an overview of the main scholarly positions on the relationship between endangered languages and literacy. The dominant view argues that literacy is essential to nationalism and to language survival in the modern world, but there are also opposing opinions that literacy

facilitates language loss. The authors of this overview maintain that literacy has a strong effect at the macrolevel, the larger and external context of linguistic endangerment, but that its effect on language vitality is primarily a result of microvariables, which are specific characteristics of each community with an endangered language (27). Both authors claim that communities with a written tradition are certainly in a stronger position to revitalise a language (34), which may need reconstruction of lost or degraded material.

Piana Arbresh does not have the advantage of a written tradition, although there have been sporadic efforts, especially in the translation of religious texts. Here I argue that the way to stop the vicious circle of structural degeneration and loss is the stabilisation of a normative form of the language and the immediate teaching of a written codified form of the language in Piana schools. For this purpose, Piana community leaders and other officials must make the best use of the opportunities afforded by the 1999 Italian law for the protection of Arbresh communities, which prescribes some specific actions and provides funding for the necessary changes. At the end of the paper some suggestions are made on certain aspects of the language policy as it functions in Piana today.

More generally, data on Arbresh show that the process of attrition can advance towards eventual death, even in cases when the language still has an important function in the community and the speakers feel positive about its use and existence. Analysis of Arbresh's endangerment indirectly suggests that communities trying to save their languages and traditions must raise awareness that a minority discourse can vanish, and not only when there are political groups that actively and deliberately fight the existence of a certain language and culture. Minority languages can also die when societies that use these languages are indifferent and lack effective institutional intervention to protect them. In such situations the commitment of the community and its efforts towards revitalisation are decisive for the future of the language.

The next section of this paper presents the history of the community of Piana, focusing on the original language and ethnicity of this community and on the specific socio-economic consequences of these characteristics. Section 2 analyses the features of language use in Piana, in the complexity of bilingual, minority and endangered linguistic environment. In the third section I present evidence on linguistic instability and loss at the structural levels, which suggest the need for a codified written language in Piana. Section 4 analyses the situation in this community since legislation for the protection of the Arbresh language and ethnicity was passed in 1999, and the steps undertaken by Piana institutions and community leaders with respect to the changed circumstances. I conclude with some observations on the future of efforts to revitalise the endangered Arbresh language.

1. Short History of the Linguistic Community

Piana degli Albanesi is a small community of 7,000 people whose ancestors settled in Sicily more than 500 years ago, with Albanian roots, language and culture, and an authentic Greek-Byzantine religious rite. The people of Piana call themselves and their language "Arbresh" and about 90 per cent of the community speak it, although the speakers show very different levels of linguistic competence. The word "Arbresh" is historically related to the word "Albanian" and the other versions of the same word used in Greece, "Arvanitika", and in Turkey, "Arnaut". The communicative patterns of Arbresh have shown rapid erosion in the last decade, and the language may be at risk of disappearing. The same process of gradual erosion leading to language death has already occurred recently in towns and villages of Albanian origin scattered in other Italian regions, which lost first their language and later their Orthodox Christian religion and their original customs, costumes and folklore. From about 100 small Arbresh communities recorded in eight Italian regions in 1837, only 50 were recorded in 1963, and 40 after another three years, in 1966 (Gjinari and Shkurtaj 1997, 255). From my observations during fieldwork in Italy between June 2001 and January 2002, more than half of these communities have lost their language. In most cases, the particularities of their dialects and cultures died uncollected and unstudied. Those that still maintain their language have lost a great number of speakers and use Arbresh in restricted situations and settings. In some dialects the language is near complete death. A concomitant of Arbresh language loss is a gradual shift to the dominant language, Italian. This situation is characterised by a proficiency continuum where one finds speakers with very different linguistic abilities, in which the relation between the speaker and the languages in the repertoire of a given community is determined by age, linguistic attitude, contact with the language(s), etc. The decrease of linguistic competence occurs first in more formal language and slowly spreads into the informal structures and vocabulary; thus it is the opposite of a "bottom-to-top death" process specified in the typology of language attrition by Campbell and Muntzel (1989, 185). The main feature of Arbresh today is the widespread existence of "semi-speakers" or non-proficient speakers, a common characteristic of languages undergoing attrition (Dorian 1981, 115).

However, Piana is one of the last strongholds of Arbresh, still showing its original characteristics in spite of linguistic decay. There are other Arbresh communities around Piana, such as Palazzo Adriano, Santa Cristina and Contessa Entellina, all in a more advanced stage of language attrition. Palazzo lost the language a few decades ago, but the oldest and most important church in the town is still of Greek-Byzantine rite, and memories of being of Albanian origin are fresh. The other two towns are in a more advanced stage of language attrition, but parts of the population still speak the language, usually the older generation. Piana is the centre of the Greek-Byzantine dioceses and also the cultural centre of Arbresh communities in Sicily, sometimes envied by the other communities for its active

social and cultural life, its enthusiastic young generation and its love for and pride in the Arbresh tradition.

In general, the Arbresh communities in Sicily have lived in a peaceful relationship with the surrounding Sicilian communities, but have often created mild negative stereotypes of Sicilians and have very rarely accepted intermarriage with them. This last characteristic has lost some of its force recently, but is still active.

The Arbresh communities in Italy are in general far from the stage of "primordial ethnicity" understood as a state of little language consciousness (Fishman 1972, 179). The community of Piana in particular has traditionally been a symbol of linguistic and cultural awareness, an example of pride in Arbresh culture and of the fight for official recognition as a minority. Historically, Piana has given to the Arbresh world well-known poets, writers, educators and researchers who have enriched both Arbresh and Italian culture with their work. There have been periods of greater or lesser awareness, but the feeling of being different – and, as interpreted by Piana people, "therefore better" – has never died in Piana. Unlike some Arbresh communities in Italy with severe economic problems and patterns of linguistic and cultural self-depreciation, Piana has enjoyed relatively high economic prosperity and has constantly regarded its different language and culture as a source of prestige and self-appreciation. But the Pianioti (as the residents of Piana are called) have never claimed or desired separation, as has been the case with other minorities in northern Italy. The Arbresh of Piana have always considered themselves to be Italians who in addition have Albanian origins, although they still feel a little discomfort at being considered Sicilians. Some decades ago not all the community spoke Italian, but now even very old speakers master Italian. Today the community demonstrates stable and widespread bilingualism and diglossia (Fishman et al. 1985, 42–3). But the weight of each language in the linguistic repertoire is changing as a consequence of recent linguistic attrition. While Arbresh speakers formerly acquired the language and continued to employ it at home throughout their life, now they often replace it with Italian, especially very young speakers.

In the last ten years which have seen a large Albanian immigration to Italy, the Arbresh of Piana have tried to distinguish themselves from Albanians from Albania, who today are stigmatised as "criminals", "related to prostitution", and so on almost everywhere in Italy. The new situation has caused changes in the linguistic attitude of the Piana elite and Arbresh speakers towards the use of Standard Albanian.

Piana, only 25 km from the city of Palermo, is situated high in the mountains, overlooking a nearby lake. The characteristic oriental religious celebrations of the Greek-Byzantine rite, with its colourful original costumes that cannot be found in non-Arbresh communities, bring many tourists from all over Italy during feasts and other events, especially in summer, which generates money and jobs for the Pianioti. The local people have also taken advantage of their proximity to Palermo,

which provides work and schooling opportunities for a large number of them. This town has also had the luck and merit to possess a strong cultural elite to guide the community in its determination to remain different, from the distant past to the present. Today there are community activists of various specialisations, teachers, writers, doctors, linguists, priests and others who are leading efforts to prevent the loss of the Arbresh language, rites and traditions. The most important organiser of these efforts is now the Piana Public Library, which has taken on the role of centre of research and other activities on behalf of Piana and other Arbresh communities. The business class of Piana, mainly small shopkeepers, artisans and restaurateurs, is very interested in maintaining the distinct language, customs and traditions, perceived by this group as further potential for investment and promotion of tourism. Hopes for the inclusion of Arbresh instruction in schools have brought Arbresh-speaking teachers who are jobless or do not have a permanent position in Piana schools, into the effort to maintain Arbresh. They have a greater chance of being appointed in Arbresh schools because this labour market excludes monolingual Italian speakers, who until now have had the same opportunities to teach in Piana schools. Other professionals who have part-time jobs in the libraries, museums, archives or other institutions that make use of Arbresh, are also interested in language maintenance and revival. The cultural elite of Piana believes that future changes in the status of the language can create even more opportunities, in many sectors, for the people of Piana.

2. Use of Arbresh as a Minority Language in Piana Degli Albanesi

The relationship between language and power reflects, in fact, the relationship that speakers of different languages used in a community have with each other and with the institutions that govern the community. What usually happens in these cases is that the speakers of the subordinate language develop a negative attitude towards their language, are ashamed to speak it or even to know it. A classic case is that of Albanian speakers of the Arvanitika dialect in Greece described by Trudgill and Tzavaras (1977) and Tsitsipis (1998). Such linguistic minorities are usually treated less favourably by society than are the speakers of the dominant language and have less access to institutional power. But Piana Arbresh, even though it is an endangered and for this reason subordinate language, does not fit the socio-linguistic framework of subordinate languages described above: the people of Piana are proud of their language and culture, and they still use it, although their linguistic competence and the functional domains of use of Arbresh are decreasing significantly. In a survey I conducted with 100 participants, Arbresh from Piana between 15 and 65 years old, ninety claim that they feel proud of being Arbresh and not just Italian, six do not answer the question and only four say they would have preferred to be just Italians instead of Italo-Albanians. Seventy-one partici-pants in the same survey believe that their being Arbresh makes Italians more interested in them, and only three participants think the contrary. These last three are part of the group of four participants who would not have wanted to be Arbresh. This high level of language loyalty is also demonstrated in the results of a survey at the beginning of school year 2001 organised by the school district, in

which 98 per cent of first-grade children and their parents declared themselves in favour of Arbresh instruction in school.

It is very unusual for the speakers of a dying language to demonstrate this attitude towards the language and their ethnicity. An example of a situation in complete contrast to that in Piana is described by Trudgill and Tzavaras (1977, 177–8), who claim that Arvanitis, the Arvanitika speakers of Greece, try to hide the fact that they speak Albanian and to deliberately lose the language. Of 200 children between the ages of 5 and 14 who were asked whether it was an advantage or a disadvantage to speak Arvanitika, only thirteen said that it was an advantage.

Yet, in spite of the positive attitude towards Arbresh in Piana, the dominant language in the community remains Italian. As Arbresh is not written and has never been systematically taught at school, Italian has replaced it in a wide range of areas that require a more formal language. Important political or cultural activities that are conducted orally use Italian exclusively. The lack of wide use of Arbresh has gradually diminished its expressive force, so that it can now only partially fulfil the needs of everyday conversation, which has strengthened the language shift towards Italian that is taking place in Piana. In a translation task of three Italian texts, each one paragraph long (first a simple conversation between two persons, the other a simple description taken from a daily newspaper, and the last, a formal analysis of a writer taken from a high-school anthology text), given to twenty Arbresh speakers who had completed high school, only the first text was partially translated with many grammatical deviances and inconsistencies. Most of the speakers failed to translate the second text and none was able to translate the third text. As this example clearly shows, the relationship between linguistic competence eroded from attrition and the functional range of a language is very strong. The Arbresh data reinforce one of the five major findings in the study of language death, as analysed by Lukas Tsitsipis, that "significant structural restrictions in grammar have been correlated with reduction in speech genres" (Tsitsipis 1989, 117). The school plays a very important role in the development of speech genres, which increases the functional abilities of a language. As mentioned above, the restricted use of language itself becomes a reason for further structural decay, in this way reinforcing the process of language attrition.

Arbresh has never been an official language of instruction, but there are still children in the early grades of elementary school who feel more comfortable when class communication is in Arbresh rather than Italian. A decade ago the number of children who had a stronger competence in Arbresh than in Italian when they started elementary school was even higher, and few decades ago the children would start school without any significant knowledge of Italian. The lack of the use of a written form of the language that can allow people to write and read it, therefore enlarging its functions and uses, and the lack of instruction of Arbresh in school, is the cause of a radical drop in the linguistic abilities of Arbresh speakers. In the survey of 100 Piana residents mentioned above, seventy-four said that they used Arbresh more easily than Italian when they started elementary school. But

only twenty reported using Arbresh more fluently than Italian at the end of middle school. There were only three participants in elementary school who felt equally at ease speaking both languages, and only four at the end of middle school. The difference is that in elementary school about 80 per cent feel more comfortable with Arbresh, while in high school about 80 per cent feel more comfortable with Italian.

This dramatic change occurs at school, during the years in which Arbresh speakers, while enriching and developing their Italian skills, do not add anything to their knowledge of the language. On the contrary, in a competition for domains, Italian wins and Arbresh loses. From interviews and observations in different settings of the community, I have noticed that although almost everybody in simple informal communication is naturally inclined to use Arbresh, it is often difficult to maintain its use in a long conversation. The language rapidly becomes overloaded with elements from Italian vocabulary and expressions, until a complete switch to Italian occurs. Often young Arbresh, because of gaps in their linguistic knowledge, feel so uncomfortable speaking Arbresh that they switch to Italian even in relaxed and informal conversations.[1] But even when the switch to Italian does not occur, Arbresh shows clear signs of grammatical and lexical attrition. Despite the functional role of Arbresh as the informal means of communication in Piana, a large number of speakers, especially younger ones, speak it less, and less fluently, than older generations. While still being used in informal settings, the language is slowly decaying and losing its expressiveness.

At present, although there are no sanctions against Arbresh in the Piana job market, neither is there any reward for knowing the language. An Arbresh speaker who wants to teach in the schools of the community or work in its offices does not have priority over an Italian candidate who does not speak Arbresh, even though a large majority of the people of Piana speak Arbresh in preference to Italian. Something written in Arbresh, as rare as that may be, is obligatorily translated into Italian even when it is intended for Piana use only, such as an advertisement for a local show; but if it is written in Italian no translation is considered necessary. The monolingual Italian media, especially television, and the lack of any Arbresh media, facilitate the shift to Italian, especially for young people and children who spend a lot of time watching television. The media pressure is forming a new negative phenomenon: the modern world is indexed in Italian, the old one in Arbresh. An old man with beautiful Arbresh but not very cultivated Italian, who needed to solve a problem in the post office – the post offices are important institutions in Italian towns and the main mediators between individuals and state or private companies – asked his niece, a university student, to go there and solve his problem. "He could not speak in Arbresh there, although the employee spoke Arbresh. And it is not

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[1] This is not the kind of code-switching to which Milroy and Muysken (1995) refer as one that "does not usually indicate lack of competence on the part of the speaker", nor one that tends to accommodate the interlocutor (Giles and Coupland 1992) or to fulfil complex interactive strategies (Gumperz 1982). This code-switching occurs because speakers cannot express themselves in Arbresh and therefore have to switch to Italian.

even useful complaining in Arbresh: nobody would solve your problem. While a person who spoke a refined Italian could be more convincing and show that he was right." Literacy is often translated as ability to develop networks of relations with the state system. The relation between the written Italian and the unwritten Arbresh produces the same negative ideological discourse described by Tsitsipis (1998:19) about Arvanitika dialect in Greek villages: "The belief that a written language has a superior status has come to be accepted in the local level through the influence of schooling and the media." A contradictory discourse between Arbresh and Italian begins to replace a non-antagonistic one, and in the relations between the two languages, Italian appears as the authoritative language.

The inequalities between Italian and Arbresh arise in the practical usage of the languages, in which Italian is fast replacing Arbresh, while Arbresh slowly degenerates structurally and the competence of its speakers declines. The inequalities are not based on the stigmatisation of Arbresh or on differences in the socio-economic status of speakers. The case of Piana shows that linguistic attitude plays an important role in the process of maintenance of a language, but it is not decisive in this process. Nor, in the case of Arbresh, is the relation of the endangered language to one particular functional discourse decisive.[2] Arbresh is still the main means of communication used in everyday conversations among members of the Arbresh community, although at very different degrees of competence. But the language is undergoing attrition because the level at which it is functioning does not have the prestige of an informal level and because its function as an informal means of communication is becoming increasingly restricted. In their preface to *Endangered Languages*, Grenoble and Whaley (1998) claim that a pervasive predictor of the use or the loss of a language is the prestige attached to it. They also list the reasons that give prestige to a language, such as "government support", "large number of speakers", "association with rich literary tradition", "use in local or national media of communication", "use in economically advanced commercial exchanges" and "use in a widely practised religion" (11). The informal use of Arbresh does not fit any of these characteristics believed to derive prestige for a language. The development of a written standardised form and the use of Arbresh in school, together with the return of past and lost literary traditions, are key factors in the process of raising the prestige and the usage of Arbresh, therefore to the revitalisation of the language.

As I mentioned earlier, the people of Piana generally do not write their language, although they gain some knowledge of Arbresh spelling in elementary school from teachers who themselves are not trained to teach Arbresh but who do it as a labour of love. However, people have never completely stopped writing the language. Over the years, used now and then by one intellectual or another, the written form of Arbresh has gained a symbolic power, precisely because very few were able to write it. But it has never reached the level of a codified language. Every writer has

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[2] The clergy sometimes use Arbresh to serve the separate Greek-Byzantine rite of Piana for special occasions and as a symbolic gesture, but other languages such as Greek, Latin and Italian are also used.

followed personal views about the choice of alphabet and correct forms. The only exception to this variability of forms and systems is the writings of some poets over the last three decades who have used Standard Albanian instead of Arbresh, and therefore show a normative consistency and lack the grammatical deviances that have now spread to different degrees throughout the community. In the struggle between written and oral, the prestige that comes through the mechanism of codification of a language goes to the languages written in the community, to Italian and, when used, to Albanian. The very sparse knowledge of written Arbresh and Arbresh grammar was once transmitted to the community through the Church. Now, as the Church no longer has much control over young members of the community, who are also the most vulnerable from a linguistic perspective, this duty falls exclusively to the schools.

3. Some Instances of Variability and Loss

Below I analyse some expressions of decay, first at the morphological level and then at the phonetic level, that demonstrate the indispensability of Arbresh instruction at school, and suggest how the inclusion of Arbresh should be structured during the implementation of language policy. The importance of the written model and a linguistic norm is also emphasised as ways to create models for speakers in the linguistic confusion created by attrition and to protect linguistic knowledge from further loss. The lack of a codified norm and written form is not the only factor that causes and accelerates the instability and loss of forms in the decaying language, but their existence would certainly have been decisive for the process of language survival and restoration, in the climate of the very positive attitude of its speakers.

The lack of a written norm for Arbresh grammatical categories and forms that is distributed throughout the community has led to the existence of multiple versions of a great number of words and grammatical structures, and a high degree of variability in the actual use of the language. The children hear words pronounced in different ways by different people and sometimes in different ways by the same person. They reflect this confusion when they communicate, particularly when they try to write in Arbresh: the phonetic and morphological image of the expression in their mind is weak and blurred. But aberrant forms at all linguistic levels are common, independently of age and education.

Some examples from the variability in the verbal system shows the advanced degree of loosening of the system and, on the other hand, the importance that a codified language and the written form has today in protecting the language from decay. In speakers between 19 and 45 years old I found five participle forms of the verb "to eat" in complete free variation: *hëndur*, *hëndër*, *hëndrur*, *hëngër* and *ngrënë*, while among older speakers who in general demonstrate a higher linguistic competence, I found only the form *ngrënë*. This is also the form testified in older written texts. The third person imperfect indicative shows variability as well: most speakers use the form ending in *-jë*, while some use the one ending in *–ëj* (e.g.

prisjë and *prisëj*– "he waited"). The most recent grammar of Arbresh, *Udhëtimi* (2001), considers the latter only as the form of the imperfect tense. Even the third person singular of the verb "to be" appears to have three forms. The lack of a written language has caused confusion about the use of the progressive aspect among young speakers. The present and imperfect forms of the progressive aspect in Arbresh are shown below.

1.	*na*	*jemi*	*e*	*biem*	
	we	are	and	fall	(first person plural, present tense) we are falling
2.	*ai*	*ish*	*e*	*pasjar*	
	he	was	and	walk	(third person singular, imperfect tense) he was walking

But the process of relaxation during informal oral communication has blurred the morphemic boundaries between the aspectual forms into the fused forms:

1'. *namebiem* (we are falling)

2'. *shepasjar* (he was walking)

Young speakers are often unaware of the relation between forms 1' and 1, and 2' and 2, and they have never seen the complete written forms of these expressions. Therefore they often perceive these forms as separate lexical items and cannot recognise them as parts of the same grammatical paradigm.

The lack of use of some verbal forms has led to their loss in Piana: the optative mode now only appears in a very few texts still used in occasional religious ceremonies, and it is remembered by Piana speakers only in those two or three expressions. Outside these contexts it is not active today. The forms of the conditional mode, although they are considered to be present in the Arbresh of Piana by *Udhëtimi* (2001), no longer exist in the specific conditional forms but have been replaced by other modes such as indicative and subjunctive. Other parts of speech forgotten through lack of use are the forms of the gerund still alive among the old. Even the forms of the imperative show erosion and the mode seems to be active only in the case of very frequently used verbs.

Another problem reflected in the spelling of many young people is the lack of any awareness of the peculiar features of the sound system of Arbresh that do not occur in Italian. This might seem an easy task for a bilingual, but it is not so easy, particularly in the young, especially in a decaying language. Young speakers often lose these sounds from their phonetic inventory, if they had ever acquired the

sounds, replacing them with similar sounds that occur in Italian. Sometimes the occurrence of these authentic Arbresh sounds in their speech is sporadic and inconsistent.[3] Such sounds are *th* and *dh*, voiceless and voiced interdental fricatives, that are reduced to *s* and *z*,; and *q* and *gj*, voiceless and voiced palatal stops that are reduced to *kj* or *k* and *g+j* or *g*. If the speakers were exposed to an Arbresh writing system, it would be easier for them to realise that different graphemes must represent different sounds of the language. This is not a guarantee of using these sounds, but at least Arbresh speakers would be more aware of their existence and it would exercise a corrective pressure on them.

In one of the best journalistic expressions of the local press in Arbresh, the newspaper *Mondo Albanese* (Albanian World) published from 1981 to 1984, more than one satirical poem and story was published on the loss of these sounds by young speakers, which tended to raise awareness of loss and tempt people into making a deliberate effort to maintain sounds.

4. Implementing the Legislation

Now that the language has reached a critical level of endangerment, a very well-researched, flexible and co-ordinated language policy is necessary. An intensive effort began in the community of Piana degli Albanesi immediately after some significant institutional steps were taken towards the recognition of the Arbresh linguistic communities in Sicily. First, in 1998 a regional law (No. 26) for the protection of linguistic minorities was passed, but it was amended and weakened by the State Commissar who thought that certain rights should remain within the competence of the state rather than the region. This legislation was further modified by a regional bill but the result, although an improvement, was still considered to be a very tardy response to a long-standing demand. What finally had a powerful impact on community efforts to revive the language was a national law (No. 482) for the protection and promotion of Albanian linguistic and cultural historic minorities that was passed in December 1999, as it was more complete and radical than the regional law. The work of implementing this legislation and breaking it up into practical projects eligible for state funding is still under way.

As community leaders have emphasised for decades, while trying to gain recognition as a minority and hence be entitled to institutional protection, the only way to change the situation of Arbresh is intervention by the Italian state. One of the main promoters of Arbresh language and culture, Pietro Manali (Damiani 1999, 5), referring to the complexity of the rights of linguistic minorities, says that the only solution to this problem is, in euphemistic terms, time: "often, as in the Italian (state intervention) case, there has been no other solution … but time, which,

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[3] Some young speakers still maintain the full inventory of Arbresh phonemes, although in current use of the language there are inconsistencies in the occurrence of such sounds. But among middle-aged and young speakers the sound system is very well maintained. The decay in the phonetic system is a sign of an advanced degree of attrition of the language: Hamp (1989, 200) observes that "in a healthy language conservative phonology is the expected thing".

always generous, fixes things and resolves the problem". But time alone is a passive factor, and it will not change the situation of Arbresh. Obviously, Manali gives no credit to the state for its very delayed action when he speaks of the intervention of time. In fact the efforts for recognition mounted in the regional and national parliaments by community leaders from Piana and other Arbresh communities in Sicily, particularly Contessa Entellina, have been unsuccessful for decades.

There is no doubt that the root cause of the recent degeneration of the Arbresh linguistic system is the long-term lack of institutional intervention. As the use of Italian intensifies in all spheres, its position strengthens in relation to Arbresh. In this competition of vocabulary and grammar, lack of use has caused Arbresh to lose many lexical units and grammatical details, especially among younger generations. The only way this loss can be recovered is through the introduction of Arbresh in the school system as an obligatory course. But such a course would require at least one good grammar textbook that sets out a normative system and a teaching model, as well as some trained instructors.

One achievement of the Piana community is that legislation now allows for the instruction of Albanian and its use in the teaching process in elementary and middle schools, and the training of the necessary instructors. Efforts by community leaders towards the implementation of the law began immediately after it was passed, awakening cultural life in Piana and generating funds that in turn accelerated the economic life of the community. In a period when Italy is in continuous economic and political turmoil, this type of prosperity is quite unusual, particularly for a small southern community like Piana. The process is now beginning to involve other Arbresh communities in Sicily, five of which are included in official statistics of Arbresh minorities in Sicily, Piana being the largest among them. Recently their action has been echoed in other parts of Sicily and Italy, even in communities that long ago lost the language, customs and religion but still have some vague remembrance of it. The municipalities of these communities are actively trying to find ways to be part of the movement centred on Piana.

Piana community leaders, especially public library activists, municipal officials, leading teachers in Piana schools, local writers, priests, and the faculty of the Department of Albanian at the University of Palermo, took immediate advantage of the favourable national and international situation after the legislation was passed. With funding from the European Commission and the authorities of Palermo Province, Palermo Commune and Piana Commune, they have constructed a three-stage project. This project is designed to create the foundation for the future protection of the language and culture of this community, especially for the addition of Arbresh as an obligatory language course in Piana schools. Below I analyse how much the legislation has achieved towards the creation of a codified language and its use in Piana schools, both goals that would contribute a great deal to the Arbresh revival, as argued above.

After the 1999 law, the Piana project was organised in three stages: "Skanderbeg 3000", "Kastriota 2001" and "Brinjat". All these names are symbolic: the first two refer to George Kastrioti Skanderbeg, the Albanian national hero who fought against the Turks just before the ancestors of the Piana Arbresh left Albania for Italy, and the third to an Arbresh place name. The main goal of the first stage was the production of a textbook for Arbresh instruction in elementary and middle schools. The goal of the second was two other volumes that are now in press: one is a guide for schoolteachers and other Arbresh instructors; the other is a full grammar at a higher level than the grammar produced at the first stage. The third stage has diverse goals, including encounters among students and teachers of different Arbresh communities in Sicily, and the publication of Piana writers who represent the strength of the past cultural and written tradition. Some of these events have already occurred. Others, such as the publication of a CD-ROM and the inauguration of various exhibitions, are ongoing.

The first stage concluded with the production of a basic text to help with Arbresh instruction in elementary and middle schools. Community leaders are aware that, as argued in the linguistic analysis earlier in this paper, the main problem today is the creation of linguistic norms for Arbresh, and the insertion of these norms and other grammatical and lexical restorative devices in the schools at all levels. This would end the haphazard and inconsistent use of forms and words and would be a first step towards neutralising and then defeating the process of obsolescence. After the law for the protection of Arbresh was passed, the commission responsible for its implementation began a complex effort to produce a manual to teach elementary schoolchildren the elements of correctly writing and reading Arbresh. Development of the contents was assigned to three authors: Giuseppina Cuccia, a prominent schoolteacher and community leader, and two of the main poets (and teachers) of Piana mentioned earlier: Giuseppe Schirò Di Modica and Giuseppe Schirò Di Maggio. Besides these three, a scientific and a technical committee of nine was appointed to oversee the work. An international seminar was held before the work began, to ensure that the book would be based on the experience and good practice of those who had worked on similar issues before.

The resulting book, *Udhëtimi*, was published in 2000, in an edition of 2,000 copies. Its 240 pages include an ABC, a grammar and an anthology of Arbresh pieces, with illustrations.

This book, although the principal result of the first stage of the project, has not yet been regularly used in Piana schools. It has been criticised by many community members who claim that its parts do not combine to make a coherent whole. It is unclear what norm the book represents: clearly not Arbresh grammar or Arbresh vocabulary, but not Albanian either. Even members of the committee involved in the compilation are dissatisfied with the result. Some instructors continue to use materials that they have collected themselves, which creates even more inconsistencies than the book itself.

The criticisms of the book have some merit, as for example whether it reflects Standard Albanian or Arbresh grammar, or a third standard based on both languages. Standard Albanian grammatical categories have been maintained, but Piana Arbresh has lost many forms that would fit into these categories. In the grammatical tables, and in various chapters, notes such as "rare" appear over certain forms, implying that the grammar is based on Arbresh. However, there are no such notes on other forms that today do not exist at all in Piana (for example, the verbal forms mentioned in Section 3), but that are erroneously considered extant in the paradigmatic tables. On the other hand, the readings in the book are neither in Standard Albanian nor Arbresh. In a group of seven boys and girls from Piana middle and high schools, none could understand the meaning of two non-conversational pieces chosen from the book. It also lacks a final overall editing to avoid inconsistencies in the use of words, forms and constructions. The direction of language attrition in Piana Arbresh, and the multiple aberrant forms described in Section 3, fully support the Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer claim that in language endangerment situations "if literacy is taught, it should be standard and consistent" (1998, 90).

The result is that, although the book is the main result of efforts to produce a codified model for the first stage of the project, schools are not yet using it. It is nevertheless the only textbook available. Any critical comments will be helpful in producing future works on the language, and should be taken into account when using it as a textbook. Community members who do not agree with the choices made in the book need to concentrate on its positive aspects, in that it is better researched and more complete than any of the groups of materials that teachers have assembled over the years. Besides, the book is relatively attractive to children, with its colourful pages and the nicely organised rubrics covering exercises, drills, grammatical rules, lexicon items and idiomatic knowledge. Those parts that cannot be understood by different users could be treated as a challenge for those who want to learn more. Hence the book can still be used, albeit critically, until a better version comes along.

On the other hand, some of these problems could be partially offset by the two books that are the goal of the second stage. Teachers who will be using the textbook can consult these other books to seek clarification and answers to any questions they may have. This assumes of course that the forthcoming guide for Arbresh instructors and the comprehensive grammar reflect in a realistic way the linguistic knowledge of the community and have taken careful, studied steps to replace the components of Piana Arbresh that have been lost in recent decades.

Although different people were responsible for developing the guide and the grammar, if these books share the same principles and position on grammatical choices concerning the lost forms of Arbresh and the way they should be replaced, together with the textbook from the first stage they will constitute a good starting point for the addition of Arbresh to the school curriculum. But even if there are differences between these books, as they are the only ones available at the moment

they need to be used and they need to be used soon. The following admonition is appropriate to the current situation of Arbresh: "to have to argue such points now is to take time out to 'rediscover the wheel' when the real issue is to use all kinds and sizes of wheels more effectively and more interactively" (Fishman 1985, 54).

As argued above, immediate intervention is needed to target the young generations in particular. This can only be achieved through schools. Based on the texts discussed above, the introduction of Arbresh instruction to all Piana schools would significantly reduce the inequalities of use between Arbresh and Italian. As many community leaders have noted, Arbresh should not be an optional course (as it was before the law for the protection of Arbresh was passed), but obligatory like Italian. Later, when teachers and students have reached a more advanced stage in the mastery of the language, the teaching of other courses in Arbresh as well as in Italian can be taken into consideration. The Director of Piana Schools, Pasquale Ferrantelli, points out that this process will be very slow and it will take years before instruction in Arbresh begins. The funding received for this purpose is only 40 per cent of the amount requested by the schools to fulfil this mission. However, Mr Ferrantelli says: "We are happy. This is better than nothing." The schools received nothing from state institutions until two years ago, and the efforts of teachers to form groups of students to study Arbresh were voluntary. The compilation of different types of grammars and other Arbresh textbooks and the use of the language in schools are now possible financially and legally thanks to the 1999 legislation. As for the means of achieving these ends, more than one type of bilingual education has been suggested for minority bilingual children (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981; Skutnabb-Kangas 1999), but the "Fishman type 4" characterised as "complete bilingualism" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981, 124), seems to be the method that this community is seeking to apply. It prescribes the use of both languages at school in all linguistic functions (understanding, speaking, reading, writing, thinking) in all domains and for all subjects. The specific goal of this method is to maintain and develop the minority language.

At present, since the passing of the minorities legislation and the financial support received, there is a wave of intense activity in Piana. But, as some community leaders have pointed out when interviewed, this wave mainly involves the upper level of the community, the intellectual elite that gathers at national and international congresses, but little is passed on to the wider community. These community leaders nostalgically recall the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Arbresh radio and the *Mondo Albanese* newspaper involved the local people. Such comments point to a Weberian social closure, described as the action of social groups that "restrict entry and exclude benefits to those outside the group in order to maximise their own advantage" (Bilton 1996, 669). In sociological literature the desire for "closure" and the need for "disclosure" is seen as occurring not only among intellectual groups, but all kinds of groups that consider themselves to be privileged in a certain direction (Lamont 2001). Although the cultural elite of Piana has reason to be proud of its work and leadership, there is always need for awareness of possible closure, which can be fatal in conditions of language

endangerment. If the movement for language reaffirmation and revitalisation is restricted to the elite, there is little hope of changing the present state of affairs in Piana. Reaching the grass roots of a community should be the main goal of a policy that targets changes in the language of that community.

But the work has begun; state institutions should satisfy the requirements prescribed by the law for the protection of Arbresh language and culture; and funds to support the change are being made available. The climate of "unprecedented European support for multilingualism and an overspill of protective enthusiasm for smaller languages" has made it possible that "even minority languages within the EC countries have gained a certain increased recognition and at least a few economic benefits" (Dorian 1998, 19). The new political and economic changes at European level[4] have favoured the realisation of the long-standing hopes and efforts of the Piana community. Future plans of the community include the reinforcement of an Arbresh "linguistic market" (Bourdieu 1991, 49), that consists first of all of new jobs for teachers of the Arbresh language, teachers of other courses who are Arbresh speakers, workers in other cultural spheres of Piana life related to the language and ethnicity. As the law allows for the use of Arbresh in institutional offices and its use in schools not only in language courses but in other courses, Arbresh-speaking teachers will no longer have to compete with mono-lingual Italian teachers from other towns and regions, and will no longer have to leave Piana in search of work. Community leaders also foresee economic growth related to the new conditions, which will not only promote the further use of Arbresh but will create better living conditions in Piana and end the dispersal of the Pianioti around Italy. Along with these improvements, Piana will be able to attract more tourism, drawn by its unique language, customs and religion. The small merchants in Piana's shops, bars and restaurants depend heavily for their existence on the tourists who often visit Piana, especially at weekends. Eventual loss of the language would probably be followed by the loss of other characteristic features, as has happened recently in tens of other small Arbresh towns, and Piana would lose its attraction for tourists, a major wealth-generating factor in this small and non-industrial town.

5.   Some Notes on the Future …

The work of many researchers, particularly Fishman (1991), clearly shows that the reversing of language shift requires reconstruction of the decaying language and language planning. Although new opportunities raise problems that are not always solved in the best possible way, there is a great deal of activity in the Piana community. To fulfil the wishes of the community requires the careful, flexible and democratic organisation of all the positive elements that now are coming together for the first time.

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[4] For more on changes in the EC, see Niamh Nic Shuibhne, 2001.

The inclusion of Arbresh teaching in Piana schools, accompanied by strengthening of the written form of the language – or an enriched version of it – will gradually raise speakers' competence. It will contribute to enlarging their vocabulary and the sphere of Arbresh use. The grammars and texts, aiming at the systematic presentation of Arbresh and filling gaps in lost knowledge, clearly cannot afford to add their inconsistencies to those of individual Arbresh speakers. The grammar should represent a single normative position chosen by the community. Examples of uncontrolled fluctuation of forms, some of which are discussed in Section 3 of this paper, show the need for a code with corrective normative pressure. Unfortunately, a norm for Piana Arbresh has still to be discussed and selected. The spread throughout the community of the written form of the language and the restoration of lost components should be one of the main objectives for the future.

There is still a chance to save Arbresh and to preserve and maintain the original characteristics of this community that are so important for its cultural and economic survival. My survey with 100 Piana Arbresh speakers introduced in section 2 shows that about half of Arbresh speakers think that their language has no problems. Often, speakers who in a survey claim that they can express themselves in Arbresh in any given situation, are unable to do so when interviewed and asked certain questions, or observed in natural conversation. The awareness of language problems is not so high among community members as is the awareness of belonging to a minority group. Perhaps this is the point where the work should begin in Piana: allow people to see the linguistic problem and realise the real danger of losing their language.

The community elite, who until the early 1990s supported the use of Standard Albanian in Piana, now supports the use of Arbresh as the language of Piana schools. This idea has travelled with incredible speed throughout the community and has been embraced by the mass of Arbresh speakers. There is a good reason for this: the Pianioti wish neither to change their language nor to learn another. But is there a way to change the status of Arbresh, from a language that does not satisfy the natural needs of its speakers to a healthy language, without a huge investment of resources in all types and forms of linguistic communication? Albanian, a language that has been written for centuries and functions today in all domains, levels and registers, has all the necessary resources that Arbresh needs. Kosovo, an Albanian-speaking community in Yugoslavia, makes full use of Standard Albanian and considers it to be the standard language of the community.[5] Although of a very different character, the Kosovar dialects are not much closer to Standard Albanian than are the Arbresh dialects. If the Piana community wishes to have its own standard language, the chances of successfully creating such a language based on Arbresh, and maintaining it with all that a language needs to function normally, for a population of 7,000 people, are very low.

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[5] The difference is that Kosovo has undergone a long, forced, severe pressure for assimilation, while the Arbresh communities have not. For Kosovars the need to grasp Standard Albanian was a vital patriotic and political act. Now that Kosovo feels freer and Serbian pressure is felt less, a movement for its own standard language has begun, although it is still limited and weak.

Thoma Rrushi, one of the members of the commission for the linguistic implementation of the 1999 law, feels that this is not the best approach for Arbresh. Instead he suggests the Kosovar way, with interaction between Albanian and Arbresh based on Standard Albanian. He considers the teaching of Standard Albanian in Piana schools to be indispensable for the successful maintenance of Arbresh (Rrushi 2000). Giuseppina Cuccia, another member of the commission, thinks that the goal for the future written language of Piana should be Standard Albanian, but a gradual passage from one language to the other should be planned and studied. On the other hand, other members of this commission, such as Schirò Di Maggio and Schirò Di Modica, think that Standard Albanian could be used as an additional resource, but the codification of Arbresh should be based on the local dialect. Another active implementer of the linguistic part of the new law, a dedicated teacher and diligent promoter of Arbresh among the young, Giuseppe Scalia, follows the same line of focusing on the local dialect. There is a basis for their opinion: the Arbresh people find it very difficult to understand Standard Albanian. But the language they propose in their grammar is in fact not understood by the community either, because of the natural tendency of the authors to fill the gaps in Arbresh with Standard Albanian, a language they know well and are able to use, and even to be creative. The language that has served as a model for *Udhëtimi* is not a codified language with a normative grammar, orthography and pronunciation. It is a simple mixture of features from Arbresh and Albanian. This, clearly, is no solution for the language of Piana.

Although implementation of the new language policies has been in progress for two years, there is no agreement yet on the selected code. A better approach would be to combine the two main views of the commission for the implementation of the legislation. One way to do this would be to adapt Standard Albanian as a written language, maintaining the oral version of the Piana dialect, thus preparing the ground for the natural combination of both. At present, Standard Albanian sounds like a foreign language to Pianioti, but after some contact with it the great similarities between the two languages will slowly become obvious. This is the mirror image of the process that has faced all the Albanians who have had contact with the Arbresh of Piana: they cannot understand a word the first day, but in a week or so they can see many similarities and in few weeks they speak Arbresh. I am confident that the written code, after being taught at school for some years, will contribute to the oral language. The way I see the future oral Arbresh of Piana is similar to the language used by Gerbino (in *Biblos*, 2001) in his translation of Dante. Unlike other poets of the community who use Albanian beautifully as their language of poetic expression, Gerbino translates 136 lines from the first canto of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in a very carefully and cleverly enriched dialect of Piana. This could be a way of avoiding forcing Standard Albanian on Arbresh speakers, and at the same time strengthening Arbresh with the help of a codified language.

There are two other theoretical possibilities concerning what code to select. They both assume the creation of a non-existent language. The first is to create a written version of Arbresh based on a mixture of old Arbresh, current Arbresh and

Standard Albanian. Gerbino's translation serves as an example. The other possibility is to elaborate the current "degenerating" mixture of Arbresh and Italian in a way that will create a healthy language from a decaying one. This task would be even more difficult, as differences between Italian and Arbresh exist at all linguistic levels. Both methods would be difficult to realise, with little chance of succeeding as natural languages, and would be extremely costly in the present climate of communication standards.

With no agreement on a selected code, efforts to stabilise the language will lead nowhere. The authorities in Piana responsible for implementing the law need to be aware of the importance of the selection of the language to be taught in schools, and of the pros and cons of their decisions, otherwise funds will be lost together with Arbresh's chances of survival. One should keep in mind that "an ethnic language once lost is far less easily recovered than other identity markers, and the cultural content that language carried is never fully recoverable" (Dorian 1999, 34). Decisions must be made not only to solve the current problems in the simplest possible way, but also in a way that will resist the passage of time and have meaning in the future. This would make the language policy of Piana a sustainable process that will satisfy the community not just today, but in the long term.[6]

In this paper I have analysed the extent of Arbresh's endangerment, focusing on the need for a written and codified form of the language. I see the process of standardisation as the basis of language reconstruction and therefore as the first step in language shift. "Standardisation is the single most technical issue in language reinforcement. Unless it is accomplished, literary production and the expansion of literacy will always be problematic, because people need both, good models and a certain amount of technical reference materials to be comfortable with literacy" (England 1998, 113). This assertion was made concerning the Mayan language, but it fits the Arbresh situation perfectly.

I support the use of Standard Albanian as a basis for only the written form of Arbresh to be used in the schools of the Piana community. The reasons for this are related to the current conditions of Arbresh and Albanian:

(1)   Arbresh is significantly damaged by attrition and needs a normative form to help the community to create a correct model at almost every linguistic level.

(2)   Arbresh is very limited in its literary functions and other oral domains, and has a very restricted amount of publications. Albanian is a cultivated language in

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[6] This section presents the situation in Piana in February 2002. From my contacts in the community I have learned that the two grammars from Schirò Di Modica and Schirò Di Maggio have recently been published, one under the name *Udhëtimi paralel* (Parallel Travel), the other *Udha e mbarë* (Have a Good Trip), but I have not yet been able to consult either. The training of Arbresh teachers in Piana has also begun this summer (although it consisted of a few hours only), and surprisingly it has been conducted mainly in Standard Albanian. Instruction in Arbresh as an obligatory language at school has not yet begun, but the book *Udhëtimi* has been used in a few courses taught this summer on a non-curricular basis, as in the years before the legislation was passed.

all forms and has publications on a large scale both within and outside Albania. It possesses the necessary "reference materials" so important to the survival of Arbresh. I do not see any possible functional expansion of Arbresh as it is today. Albanian would connect the 7,000 members of Piana with a much larger community of speakers, readers and writers – in spite of the tension between the Arbresh community and recent Albanian immigrants.

(3)   The cost of using a language that is alive and ready for use is lower than the cost of reconstructing a language and then trying to make it available to a community of speakers – even if such a reconstruction would work.

(4)   I do not propose the replacement of Arbresh with Albanian, but the existence of both in parallel, with Arbresh stronger in oral discourse and Albanian in written discourse. The contribution of Albanian, as I see it, will consist mainly of reconstructing the grammatical structure of the language, which has a very similar base. The lexical interaction, where the differences between the two languages are greater, is secondary and can proceed very gradually. The goal is not a merger of the two, but rather the use of Albanian elements to support the reconstruction of Arbresh.

The main problems raised by my proposals are:

(1)   The differences between the two languages must be dealt with, although there are fewer than in other languages with similar links, such as Jewish languages around the world and Hebrew (King 2001, 214). The main issues to be overcome here are the differences in pronunciation and vocabulary, but as I propose the use of Standard Albanian only in written discourse, ways can be found to create a natural interaction between the two languages.

(2)   A relatively unfavourable sociolinguistic situation has arisen in Piana during the last decade with regard to anything that relates to Albania, and the continuous flux of Albanians coming to Italy reinforces that tendency. I consider the matter of the social meanings of any use of Albanian literacy, described as attitudes, beliefs and values of a community (Grenoble and Whaley 1998, 33), as a very delicate and complex issue that needs more attention than the first problem I have raised.

I do not consider that my proposed strategy would work for every minority language or even for every minority endangered language. In fact the opposing opinion, that the school-selected language does not need to be a normative/standard/codified language, is not new among linguists (Spolsky 1986, 184–5). But I think that my approach takes into consideration the increasingly endangered situation of Arbresh and its specific features, including the low proficiency of its speakers, particularly the young. The decay of the language, its grammatical inconsistencies, and its variability from speaker to speaker are the main factors supporting the need for a codified written form.

In spite of my optimism regarding the survival of Arbresh, I prefer to end this paper with a very important warning from a researcher who has contributed so much to the field of endangered languages, Nancy Dorian: "The existence of a writing system and even the existence of a notable literature do not necessarily ensure that a language will survive as a living speech form, much less thrive" (1998, 11). The communities and researchers who work on issues of endangered languages should bear in mind how vulnerable this domain is and the importance of every interventional step to the future of the languages.

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About the Author

Eda Derhemi is a doctoral student in the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States. She did her undergraduate work in language and literature at the University of Tirana, Albania, and was a member of the faculty at the same university from 1985 to 1990. From 1990 to 1995 she lived in Sicily, and worked as a journalist for Deutsche Welle. In 1995 she entered the graduate programme in linguistics at the University of Illinois, receiving her Master's degree in 1997. In 2000 she worked in Paris as an intern on UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme. In 2001 she did extensive fieldwork in Sicily on the endangered Arbresh language. Her interests are in language contact, language change, and endangered languages and cultures. Recently she has also been working on issues of Albanian migration after the fall of communism and the cultural integration of Albanian immigrants.

Address: Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, United States; email: edaderhemi@yahoo.com

Endangered Minority Languages:
Prospects for Sociolinguistic Research

JOSHUA A. FISHMAN

Yeshiva University; New York and Stanford University, California

I have worked on endangered minority languages all my life (being a native speaker of one such language and having been raised – and continue to live – in a "language activist" family and social environment), and my professional involvement in this topic goes back forty years. While I do not claim any relationship whatsoever between age or years of involvement and the fruitfulness of commentary on work in this field, reading the five papers of this issue has certainly prompted a few reflections which may be of general interest. Obviously, in the limited space available it is not possible to comment directly on all the papers. Less obvious, however, may be the fact that I do not intend to excuse myself from any of my criticisms. It is precisely because the problems that I mention are so endemic in our field of inquiry that I make bold to mention them here.

1. Parsimony and Complexity

Many of the authors comment that providing assistance to threatened languages is more complicated than most of us had originally thought it would be, and indeed it is. But the origin of this complexity seems to reside not only in the phenomena under consideration but also in the theories or conceptual frameworks through which we approach these phenomena. I remember being told (over and over again) by a psychoanalytic critic of the "non-psycho dynamic" social sciences that the problems we were studying were "far more complicated" than we imagined. Finally, I screwed up the courage to interject "but perhaps the greater complexity that you note is in your own theoretical baggage rather than in the problem per se".

To some extent, of course, this is related to the well-known issue of finding the proper "level of analysis" for the topic or results being explained. There is no way of being entirely sure in advance that the explanatory variables are at the same level of analysis as are the consequent variables that we are trying to account for. Finally there is the problem of adopting a research design that permits us to tell, "at the end of the day", how much of the variation (or "variance" as it is referred to technically) in any consequent variable that happens to be the focus of inquiry has actually been explained by the antecedent variables that we have employed and

how much remains unaccounted for. Only if the latter proviso obtains (and it can obtain usefully only when the first two also obtain) can we really answer the question of whether it "pays" to either add additional antecedent variables or, indeed, even switch to a different level of analysis entirely. Needless to say, this type of research design has rarely (hardly ever) been utilised in connection with research on endangered and minority languages. Such being the case, we have each gone our own way, methodologically and conceptually, and little cumulative meeting of minds has been arrived at.

There is a long-standing preference for theoretical parsimony in scientific work. Occam's razor teaches us that the theory that explains most by taking into consideration the least number of predictors or "causes" is the best. This principle, derived from the early days of astronomy and chemistry, holds even more today than it did then, because quantitative and computerised approaches to data-analysis have allowed us to literally take an endless number of variables into simultaneous consideration. As a result, the considerations of both parsimony and complexity have increasingly come to the fore. And this is so not only in quantitative research. My psychoanalytic discussant was not urging more quantification upon me, but, rather, urging the introduction of many more qualitative variables. Indeed, the issue of parsimony versus complexity far transcends the issue of quantitative versus qualitative research. In either case, there is a need for the simultaneous appreciation of the "greater complexity" underlying the accelerated rate of decline and demise of endangered minority languages, while we also search for theoretical parsimony in our conclusions about what is going on. Obviously, both of these directions of inquiry usually cannot be going on simultaneously within the efforts of any given researcher. Are we pursuing incommensurables? My review of the papers of this issue has convinced me that such is not the case, although we are still far from grasping either the full complexity or the underlying parsimony of the factors that are in operation.

2. "From Whence Cometh my Help?"

It seems to me that in empirical science parsimony must be arrived at inductively. Only the close examination of a large number of presumably different cases (via "secondary analyses" or "meta-analyses", if you will) can lead to the ultimate recognition of the basic underlying similarities and differences between them. Thus complexity and parsimony are mutually interdependent, the first leading to the second inductively and the second suggesting further refinement deductively. At the present juncture in the study of attrition in the world's endangered minority languages, we still lack the basic constituents from which parsimony can be derived: a plethora of detailed case studies. It would be too good to be true to hope that these studies might ever be conceived and executed in accord with a common design. That is simply not the way social research is done in the modern democratic capitalist world, or anywhere else for that matter. Nevertheless, from a wealth of case studies (conducted at the same time or at different times) a parsimonious theory should be inductively derived from such studies. In a sense,

that is what I attempted in my 1991 and 2001 books, the first based on thirteen cases and the second on eighteen. These volumes contain all the case study information, the theoretical integration derived from these cases and even several independent critiques of that integration. These cases can now be subject to review and interpretation by others, but, even more urgently, their number must be added to, so that the empirical baseline for further theory can be augmented. Another desideratum, even if pie in the sky, would be to have a common research site which many different investigators could get to know well. This would overcome the regrettable redundancy between unique site and unique investigator from which our research currently suffers because the two cannot be disambiguated.

Of course, most of the foregoing comments apply to almost all social research, on any site-related topic whatsoever, and I begin with them so that it will be crystal clear why it is premature to be very happy about such research on our topic and, accordingly, much too early to take seriously any claims as to their applied value or prospects.

3. Metaphors

Where theory is weak, metaphors flourish. We already have a surfeit of metaphors in the field of minority/majority intergroup relations. Such a plethora of visual imagery is a sign of (inter-)disciplinary conceptual limitation. Where once we spoke of the "melting pot" and of the "fruit salad", we now tend to favour "globalisation" and "killer languages". While I am pleased to see both of the latter receive their deserved come-uppance in the papers under discussion, there is also the opposite danger of overly discrediting them instead of refining them so that (as has already occurred with post-Second World War inquiry into "race") no acceptable role remains for them. Thus, while it is beneficial that we realise that the price of our over-reliance on "globalisation", a virtual deus ex machina of late, is a debilitating one, it is also desirable that we continue to study the relationships between variance in age, education, location within and between countries, social class, rural/urban residence, religious and ideological variation, on the one hand, and variance in acceptance of consumerism and its attendant values and lifestyles (including language shift or repertoire enlargement and contraction), on the other. The explicit recognition of globalisation as a continuous variable, rather than merely as a dichotomy ("yes" versus "no") will add precision to our research and provide both the possibility of recognizing that some indicators are stronger than others and of disconfirming hypotheses or at least realizing the degree to which they are supported.

On the other hand, globalisation is by far "not the only process transpiring on the language front" (Fishman 1999), as some of our contributors have pointed out. It is precisely because "globalisation" and "localisation" are so commonly co-present that the designation "glocalisation" has been coined. However, it too needs to be calibrated and I am sure that it increasingly will be as time goes by. What, other than "localisation concurrently with globalisation", describes almost all our efforts

and sentiments on behalf of endangered lesser-used languages? Indeed, the ongoing tensions between independence and interdependence, between withdrawal and interaction, are at the very heart of all language planning per se (Fishman 2000), about which a little more is said below.

To some extent, our tendency to mystify and metaphorise our endeavours derives from our embarrassment that "language" is not yet a fully understood variable, not even in the so-called "language sciences". Misery loves company, it is said, and in connection with not fully grasping the significance of their central concern, we are, for once, in good company. Anthropology is still struggling to define "culture", psychology to define the "mind", sociology to define "society" and linguistics to define "language". In accordance with such lack of definite central definition, there is also a tendency for metaphors to replace one another. The suggested characteri-sation of language as a "parasite" is a case in point. It is doubly difficult to precisely investigate and conceptualise the relationship between language and culture, for example when both variables are substantially metaphorised and thereby simplified, if not even more basically misunderstood.

A language is simultaneously indexical of both the material and the non-material realia of its traditionally associated culture, symbolic of that culture (and of membership in that culture) and, therefore, like all symbols, easily politicised, and, finally, language is also part and parcel of the bulk of any culture (note the complete interdependence of language and laws, religion, education, jokes, riddles, songs, blessings, curses, greetings and the thousand pleasantries of everyday life). Culture and language are in large part identical rather than merely the co-occurrences or "fellow-travellers" that they are all too often taken to be.

Our usual problem in giving language its due is that we are trying too hard to right the centuries-old neglect of language by the social sciences as a whole. We, in the modern social sciences of language behaviour, necessarily focus on language. As a result, we easily slip into implying, without necessarily intending to do so, that language functions as a truly discrete and separable variable. We come to conceive of it ourselves and to foster the view of it among our students and readers as a "dependent variable" or as an "independent variable", rather than grasping it in its ubiquitous embeddedness, in its part-whole functioning within both society and culture. As there is also much to gain by adopting the "independent cause and consequence" conceptualisation of the sciences, we must always remember to correct ourselves and to realise that this is not really the whole story in any language in a social behaviour setting. Certainly we do not help matters by positing yet other distinctions between social-cultural-historical settings (for example, between former colonies versus non-colonies. or between "types of colonies", etc.), when such distinctions make it even more difficult to come to grips with our basic dilemma of differentiating between etic distinctions and emic differences with

respect to a particular manifestation, such as reversing language shift efforts, of language embeddedness in social behaviour[1].

4. Language Planning

I hesitate to add yet another consideration in connection with the papers under review, particularly so prominent a consideration as language planning about which so much has already been written. Certainly language planning must now be seen as part of a potentially sequential path between original planning, de-planning and re-planning, such as that which Michael Clyne has illustrated so tellingly (1997). Each of the stages along this sequential path may derive from the authoritative allocation of resources to language, no matter how different and ideologically opposed to one another the authorities involved may be. Let us take care to remember that oppositional language planning vis-à-vis RLS (Reversing Language Shift) is still language planning. But even this stagewise path, testifying eloquently to the changeability and diversity of human goals and values as it does, does not move us closer to fathoming (let alone fostering) unplanned and unplannable language use in functions of lesser and greater formality and power. However, it is precisely unplanned, informal, spontaneous and unritualised language use that constitutes the bulk of normal language use. Accordingly, it is exactly such unplanned language use that must become the crux of our investigations. This too will require a correction in perspective vis-à-vis our previous over-concentration on the language behaviours of governments and institutions. Once again, the stress must be on the speech network and the speech community. We need to learn to keep our eyes on the ball and to more often study minority and other threatened languages in situ, where language behaviour actually and unselfconsciously lives. Of course, we need to study authority structures, reward systems and organisations too, as most of us have long been doing, but the balance is now too far in that direction and some redirection of emphasis would seem to be very much in order.

The five papers under consideration here deserve to be read and their authors to be congratulated. They can certainly lead us to reflect on several directions in which we have to move if the study of minority and threatened languages is to become a source both of deeper understanding and of more efficacious assistance.

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[1] As far as I know, no one has ever followed up my 1989 finding that former Spanish/Portuguese colonies had by then become significantly less multilingual than had former British or French colonies (Fishman 1989, 59). For the continued high rate of multilingualism in most former American (as well as in most former British) colonies, see Fishman, Conrad and Rubal-Lopez (1996).

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About the Author

Joshua A. Fishman is Distinguished University Research Professor of Social Sciences at Yeshiva University, and Visiting Professor of Linguistics and Education at Stanford University. His research has made him an international leader in issues of language and ethnicity, language planning, and bilingual education, and he is also well known for his work on societal aspects of Yiddish. He is the founder and General Editor of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. He has published many books and articles, including his recent books *The Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* (2000) and *Can Threatened Language be Saved* (2001).

Email: joshuaafishman@yahoo.com